



# Communications Toolkit

Developed for Multi-Stakeholder Groups  
November 2009

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# Introduction

This **Communications Toolkit** has been developed by the CoST International Secretariat to provide support and advice on the development and implementation of communication strategies for CoST pilot projects.

The Toolkit is in two parts:

- **Part 1. Developing a Communications Strategy:** Describes the five steps that it is best to complete when developing your strategy.
- **Part 2. Communications Strategy Template:** The knowledge generated through completing Part One is entered into the template and when complete it constitutes the basis of your communications strategy.

The toolkit also includes some additional information in the form of annexes that comprise a generic terms of reference for a local communication specialist (if needed), some useful communication resources and guidance on using ambassadors and celebrity support.

You may choose simply to follow the format and methods suggested in the toolkit or to adapt them or even use alternatives. All of these options are appropriate, as long as the resulting communications strategy is aligned with CoST objectives, is efficient in the use of resources, reflects the knowledge and experience of the members of the MSG and is realistic and achievable.

One person should take responsibility for developing the strategy. In most cases this will be the MSG coordinator who will need to work closely with members of the MSG. The toolkit has been developed for users who are not communications specialists. The International Secretariat can provide additional support if necessary and there may be circumstances where the use of consultancy support is justified. If you think you may need additional support, please contact the International Secretariat.

CoST Secretariat, November 2009

# PART 1: DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

## Introduction

Good internal and external communication is an essential requirement of multi-stakeholder working. It is the basis for building consensus, creating awareness, stimulating participation, informing decisions and avoiding conflict. Good communication is vital to the success of CoST and for that reason it is important that MSGs invest the time and resources that are necessary to do it effectively. The following sections explain five steps to developing an external communications strategy. The steps are summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Communications Cycle



Communication activities are not isolated from other project activities. They should therefore appear in your budgets and work plans and be treated in the same way as other activities for the purposes of monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

## Step 1: Setting objectives

Your communications strategy should begin with a clear statement of what you intend to achieve. These questions can help structure a discussion within the MSG:

- Why are you communicating?
- What are you hoping to achieve?
- What do you want people to do as a result of receiving your communications?
- How will you know if it has made a difference?
- Who will you communicate with? (Note: this question is addressed directly in Step 2)

The discussion should eventually lead to a consensus that should be captured in clear

objectives. Typical objectives are likely to include reference to:

- Building awareness of CoST amongst a defined group of audiences.
- Securing the commitment of a defined group of stakeholders to CoST objectives.
- Influencing specific policies or policymakers around transparency and accountability.
- Encouraging the participation of stakeholders.

It is also important to consider how you will measure progress against your objectives (see Step 5). Think about building in performance indicators and evaluation measures. These could include for example:

- Interviews or surveys of primary audiences (see Step 2) before and after your communications activities to determine how their awareness of CoST has changed.
- Asking those who attend CoST events to provide feedback on how useful they were. This can be done by asking them to complete evaluation forms or by interviews.
- Track media coverage (including TV, radio and newspapers) including the volume and tone of the coverage.
- Track parliamentary discussion of CoST.
- Monitor the usage of your website.

## Step 2: Identifying and profiling the audiences

You should identify those audiences with whom you need to communicate to achieve the CoST objectives. You will probably already have a good idea about who they are, but write them down to ensure that none are left out. It is likely that you will come up with a long list, so given that time and resources are limited, it is important that you prioritise them.

Looking at your list, which audiences is it critical to reach in order to meet your objectives? Those selected become your **primary audiences**. Now consider who else will be affected by or interested in CoST. These become your **secondary audiences**.

It is likely that you will communicate with these audiences in different ways and that you will devote different resources to them. The better you understand the audiences existing knowledge and behaviour, how they communicate and what the barriers might be to them supporting you, the more effective your communications efforts will be. Develop a profile of each audience using the template in Section B of Part 2 of this toolkit.

## Step 3: Developing key messages

Key messages summarise the most important aspects of a CoST pilot project that you want your target audiences to hear and remember. With your audiences in mind and focused on your objectives, you should work out in advance of actually communicating, what you must say about CoST to influence people and/or change their behaviour.

Some of your key messages may be relevant to a number of audiences; others may be specific to particular audiences. The key messages for your pilot project should be consistent with the messages for the international CoST programme, but also reflect specific national priorities. Points to keep in mind when developing key messages include:

- **Clarity** - Messages should be short (ideally one or two sentences), avoid unnecessary technical or bureaucratic jargon and avoid being open to misunderstanding.
- **Consistency** - Your messages should be consistent with each other and with those developed for the CoST international programme.
- **Relevancy** – For your messages to stand out amongst all the other information that your audience is exposed to, they must be based on what the target audience perceives as being most important to them. Taken together the messages must explain not only **what** will change, but also **why** and **how** your audiences will benefit.

The key messages developed by the International Secretariat are available at [www.constructiontransparency.org](http://www.constructiontransparency.org). They include for example:

- CoST is an international initiative designed to enable stakeholders to ‘get what they pay for’ on publicly funded construction projects.
- CoST will help improve government funded construction projects by improving transparency and accountability on the true price and quality of construction projects.
- A fairer construction market will provide an incentive for better qualified, less corrupt companies to bid for work, enhancing the likelihood of good quality construction.

#### Step 4: Selecting channels of communication

Having prioritised your audiences and developed key messages, it is important to consider the best ways to communicate with them. Messages can be communicated through a range of different channels including radio and television, newspapers, websites, newsletters, briefing notes, press releases and public meetings. Also, don't forget the value of personal and direct contact with audiences. You should consider meeting with individuals and key groups to give them specialist briefings. In all cases it is important to understand your audiences, where they usually get their information from and what is most likely to work with them.

Some audiences will need targeted communication, whereas others can be reached through general communication. For example, it could be an important step for Parliament to understand and endorse CoST. For this, you probably need to have a specially targeted event and it is likely that a presentation from a senior person, such as the Champion, will be needed. The presentation will need to focus heavily on the public and political benefits of improving transparency in construction.

Professionals involved in the construction industry can be reached through their professional institutions. Think about placing articles in their publications and speaking at their annual conferences and other events. The focus will need to be on the benefits for the profession.

Key civil society representatives may need to be approached separately and in targeted communication by the civil society representatives on the MSGs or other credible ‘ambassadors’. They are likely to be interested in the public benefits as well as the impact on governance and infrastructure delivery.

The use of ‘mass media’ (e.g. radio, television and print media) is very effective for getting your messages to large numbers of people very quickly. Newspaper articles and coverage on radio and television can reach hundreds of thousands of people at one time and help

create a 'national conversation'. It is important to think carefully about the relative advantages and disadvantages of different types of mass communication. There are some resources in Annex 2 that can help you.

Remember to be efficient in the use of resources. It is unlikely for example that you will need to reach all of your secondary audiences directly. An article placed in an in-house publication of a respected umbrella organisation, such as a contractors association, will probably be as effective as mailing each member a copy of a publication.

Two way communication is essential if you are to build relationships with your key audiences. Think about what channels you are you going to use to get feedback from them and how you are going to communicate what you did as a result of what they told you.

Feedback is the way that the Sender:

- Checks that the Receiver has received the message.
- Checks that the Receiver understands the message.
- Discovers their opinions, attitudes and ideas about the message.
- Allows the Receiver the chance to ask questions about the message.

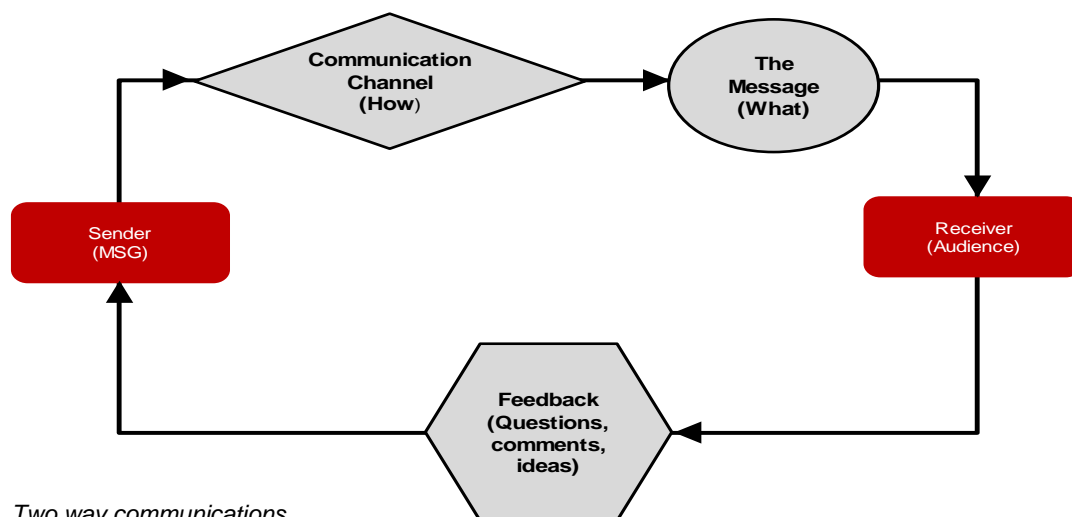


Figure 2. Two way communications

## Step 5: Measuring success

Using Step 1 you should have developed objectives for your communication strategy. You should also have developed performance indicators and evaluation measures to help you measure progress towards those objectives. It is important to establish a process through which you analyse the data gathered and use what is learned to review your strategy. In this way your strategy remains relevant and will continue to support CoST objectives.

# PART 2: COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY TEMPLATE

## A. Agree the objective

A. What is the overall objective of the communications strategy?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

B. What tangible outcomes do you expect to achieve?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

C. What performance indicators and evaluation measures will you use to measure success?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

## B. Identify and profile the audiences

Your audiences should fit into one of the following categories.

<b>A. Primary Audiences:</b> Which audiences identified is it critical to inform and/or influence in order to achieve the CoST objectives? Also, which ones are in a position to significantly influence the project?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

<b>B. Secondary Audiences:</b> Which audiences will be affected by CoST?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

Develop a profile for each of your key audiences (use separate sheets for each audience)

<b>Audience:</b>
<i>Describe what you know about this audiences knowledge, attitude and behaviour as they relate to transparency and accountability in construction:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
<i>What barriers exist that might prevent this audience fully supporting or participating in reaching the CoST objectives:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
<i>What are the characteristics of this audience? How is it influenced? What makes new ideas credible for them?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

### C. Develop key messages

Record your key messages in this table. Remember your messages should be:

- **Believable** - support them with evidence
- **Relevant** – responding to your audiences understanding of the challenges
- **Distinctive** – standing out from other initiatives
- **Agreed** – by the MSG

<p><i>Messages for all audiences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><i>Messages for primary audiences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><i>Messages for secondary audiences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

### D. Select channels of communication

Summarise the channels of communication that you will use to reach your audiences in the following template. It is important that you keep a record of who has been contacted, for what purpose and what the outcome was.

<b>Audience</b>	<b>Preferred channels of communication</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<p><i>Example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with Minister or Deputy Minister</li> <li>• Provide hard copies of CoST reports to Minister and Deputy Minister</li> <li>• Electronic CoST newsletter to senior officials by e mail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual</li> <li>• When available</li> <li>• Every six months</li> </ul>

## E. Measure progress

The MSG should:

- Specify how often it will reflect on progress in implementing the communications strategy.
- Receive reports on communications activities on a regular basis.
- Determine the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy whilst it is being implemented.
- Review the strategy based on its success (or the lack of it) and introduce changes where necessary.

# Annex 1. Terms of reference for a communications consultant

## 1. Project Title [Insert name of project]

## 2. Objective

[Insert name of procuring entity] is seeking a consultant to develop a communications strategy for the [insert name of project].

## 3. Background

[Insert a one or two paragraph summary of your project].

## 4. Scope of work

The consultant will be required to:

- Examine the [insert name of project] to determine the communication requirements that must be met to support the project's objectives.
- Assess existing communications capacity
- Develop a written communications strategy that includes:
  - Communications objectives
  - Audience identification and prioritisation
  - Key messages
  - Channels of communication
  - A process to measure progress against the objectives
- Develop an implementation plan for the approved strategy including a budget and schedule of activities.

## 5. Deliverables

- A draft communication strategy document that is subject to the approval of the MSG.
- A final communication strategy document that is subject to the approval of the MSG and that incorporates the comments made to the draft version.
- An in person presentation of the communications strategy to the MSG.

## 6. Timing

The consultant is required to start work by [insert date] and to deliver the final communications strategy by [insert date].

## 7. Qualifications and experience

- Eligible consultants must be qualified in a relevant discipline such as mass communication, public relations, communication analysis or marketing.
- The individual consultant, or leader of the consultancy team, must have a minimum of six years work experience.

- The consultant must have experience in conducting communications needs analysis and strategy development as well as managing communications campaigns.

## 8. Applications

Applicants should submit a technical and financial proposal no later that [insert time and date]. Applications should be submitted to [insert name and address of individual responsible to receive applications].

# Annex 2. Communications resources

## Sources that were used in the development of this toolkit include:

Economic & Social Research Council, Communications Toolkit, accessed 11<sup>th</sup> November 2009, <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/esrcinfocentre/CTK/default.aspx>

Overseas Development Institute, Successful Communication, accessed 11<sup>th</sup> November 2009 <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/155.pdf>

W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Communications Toolkit, accessed 11<sup>th</sup> November 2009, <http://www.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=75&CID=385&NID=61&LanguageID=0>

AIDSCAP: Behaviour Change Through Mass Communication, <http://www.fhi.org/nr/rdonlyres/eqg2ouf22rmz3ccqkxyg4hoo5tktywh72kthnm55mpyagi6nekqukpsv2ihqnfzsqh4u7khr2atzdf/behchangmasscomm.pdf>, accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

Contact a Family: Patrons and Celebrity Support, <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/pdfs/GAPPatronCeleb.pdf>, accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

## Other resources that you might find useful include:

The Communication Initiative Network, accessed <http://www.comminet.com/>, accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

Communication for Social Change Consortium <http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/> accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

MeTA Communication Toolkit: How to improve media engagement [http://www.medicinetransparency.org/uploads/media/How\\_to\\_improve\\_media\\_engagement.pdf](http://www.medicinetransparency.org/uploads/media/How_to_improve_media_engagement.pdf), accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

MeTA Communication Toolkit: How to write clearly in English [http://www.medicinetransparency.org/uploads/media/How\\_to\\_write\\_clearly.pdf](http://www.medicinetransparency.org/uploads/media/How_to_write_clearly.pdf), accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

CIVICUS World alliance for Citizen Participation: Communication and Media Toolkits <http://www.civicus.org/toolkits/communications-and-media>, accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

World Bank: Development Communication, <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTDEV/COMMENG/0,,menuPK:34000201~pagePK:34000189~piPK:34000199~theSitePK:423815,00.html>, accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

## Annex 3. Ambassadors and celebrity support

An ambassador is a celebrity or other public figure who agrees to use their public profile to promote a particular cause. They don't take on any formal, legal or managerial responsibility for the cause. Their contribution is usually made on a voluntary basis because they have a personal interest and commitment to the cause.

Ambassadors could potentially support a CoST pilot project through:

- Being named in publicity materials
- Generating media coverage
- Giving interviews to the media
- Hosting or attending events
- Attracting new supporters
- Persuading key individuals to give their support.

Potential difficulties that should be considered include:

- The time taken to brief and look after the ambassador
- Risk of them losing their positive public image
- Risk if they begin to attract unwanted or negative publicity.

If you decide to recruit an ambassador, think carefully about the type of person who will meet your needs. It is unlikely that any individual will appeal to all your audiences, so decide which audiences you want to target and try to find someone who will appeal to them. Individuals who have connections to or relevant experience of CoST related areas such as construction, good governance or transparency could be particularly appropriate.

Explain to potential ambassadors what it is that you would like them to do for you. Let them know what amount of time you will expect them to commit to the project. Once you have reached agreement in principle about how the relationship will work, write it down and share it with him or her to help ensure that there isn't any misunderstanding.

Consider appointing your ambassador for a particular period of time. It might help persuade them to become involved if they know that they are not being asked to participate for an indefinite period. You may also find it useful as way of ending the relationship if your ambassador loses their public profile or if the needs of the project change.

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