



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil



EPA Research Programme 2021-2030

EPA Research Project

Communication

May 2021

The EPA Research Programme is a Government of Ireland initiative funded by the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment.

EPA Research Programme 2021 – 2030

EPA Research Project Communication

This document provides guidance on the preparation and ongoing evaluation of communications plans for Project-Based Awards and Research Fellowships funded by the EPA Research Programme. It also covers the requirements for EPA review of project communications and publications, and the inclusion of logos, acknowledgements, disclaimers and Notes to the Editor.

This document does not replace, but is complimentary to the:

1. EPA Research Call Technical Description Documents
2. EPA Research Guides and Terms & Conditions for Support of Grant Awards 3.
Guidelines for EPA-Funded Research Project Twitter Accounts

The above documents are available to download from the [EPA's Online Grant Management and Application Portal](#) or from the [Research section of the EPA Website](#).

More Information

For further information or assistance please contact research@epa.ie.

Disclaimer

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the material contained in this publication, complete accuracy cannot be guaranteed. The Environmental Protection Agency, the author(s) and the steering committee members do not accept any responsibility whatsoever for loss or damage occasioned, or claimed to have been occasioned, in part or in full, as a consequence of any person acting, or refraining from acting, as a result of a matter contained in this publication. Any opinions, findings or recommendations expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not reflect a position or recommendation of the EPA. All or part of this publication may be reproduced without further permission, provided the source is acknowledged.

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Robust evidence-based policy is more effective and efficient in delivering meaningful outcomes. Evidence to support policy must be timely, accessible and actionable. The knowledge generated by EPA Research can help Irish people make better choices about their futures - from the government using our knowledge and data to inform their policy making, to enabling individual citizens to make more sustainable and healthier decisions in their daily lives.

Project Communications Plans

A communications plan is a core document within a project management plan. Although communications plans should be customised to suit the project, the first questions that should be addressed when putting a communications plan together are:

- Who do you want to communicate to?
- What message(s) do you want to communicate?
- When do you want to communicate?
- What is the best communication channel to use?
- Why do you want to communicate?
- How are you going to communicate?

A good communications plan will give the researcher or project team a focus on the messages of the project and will build credibility and visibility for both the organisation undertaking the research and the EPA. Communications plans should consider the following:

- Stakeholders
- Key Messages
- Stakeholder-Specific Messages
- Channels
- SMART Goals
- Outputs
- Budget
- Ongoing Evaluation

Stakeholders

Relevant stakeholders include:

- The people who need to know about your project;
- The people you want to know about your project; and
- All interested parties, or those who may be affected by the research.

Key Messages

The key messages may be different for different groups, i.e. the message for policy makers could be different to the message for a technical audience. Please ensure that you:

- include the main points that people want and need know about the project once it is complete.
- link the main objectives and outputs of the project, (e.g. if you are producing a database, you should communicate that the database is available and explain why it is of benefit to your stakeholders).

Stakeholder-Specific Messages

Consider using stakeholder-specific messages if you need a certain stakeholder to know something that may not be relevant to other groups, or if the outcomes of your project will have an importance for a certain stakeholder group, e.g. policymakers, it may be appropriate to have a tailored message specifically for communicating with these groups. This will not be applicable for all projects and should be limited.

Channels

Please consider the methods (channels) you will use to communicate your key messages and stakeholder specific messages, (e.g. website, social media, events, publications, etc.).

It is important to communicate that project outputs (final reports, peer reviewed papers, posters, presentations, etc.) have been produced, so just generating a report or a journal article is not sufficient. The channels to be used to communicate to stakeholders need to be captured in this section.

SMART Goals

A Communications plan needs to include Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound goals for each channel that has been listed (e.g. set up a website within 6 months of project start and update when new project information is available). The purpose of setting SMART goals is to keep focus by setting time limits and to make evaluation easier.

Ongoing Evaluation

It is essential that evaluation of your communication plan takes place whilst the project is ongoing as well as once it has been completed. This allows for improvements and amendments to be made to the plan, if needed.

The evaluation should:

- Be linked to SMART Goals – how will progress be evaluated?
- Constantly evaluate what is working and what is not. Not all channels are suitable for all projects.
- Consider and recommend appropriate corrective actions to be adopted if necessary, (e.g., If a channel is not working, evaluate if more time or resources should be invested, or if something else should be focused on).
- Review metrics to support the effectiveness of various communication activities to different audiences, (e.g., number of Twitter followers, number of hits on project website, number of attendees at lunch-and-learn events, newspaper circulation, radio/TV audience, number of downloads, etc.)
- Consider what success looks like and work backwards.

EPA Requirements for Media Releases

This section covers the requirements for advance notification to the EPA, EPA review, and including [acknowledgements](#), [logos](#), [disclaimers](#) and [notes to the editor](#) for media releases.

Media releases comprise:

- Newspaper and Magazine Articles
- Press Releases
- Television and Radio Interviews and Features

For Newspaper and magazines articles and press releases, you are required to send a draft of an article to the EPA at least 28 working days before the planned release date to give sufficient notice and allow for its review.

NB: If you wish to include a quote from the EPA, the quote must be approved by the EPA before being released.

The principal investigator is requested to be available to provide an overview/update on the project to the media (e.g. contributing to newspaper or trade magazine articles which relate to the project, giving radio or television interviews, participation in webinars or podcasts, taking part in panel discussions on television or radio, etc.).

Please ensure:

1. The EPA Research Programme and all co-funders are acknowledged.
2. The EPA Research logo and all co-funders logos are included.
3. The media disclaimer is included.
4. Notes to the Editor are included.

EPA Requirements for Project Outputs

This section covers the requirements for advance notification to the EPA, EPA review, and including [Acknowledgements](#), [logos](#), [disclaimers](#) and [notes to the editor](#) for project outputs.

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Please ensure the EPA Research Programme and all co-funders are acknowledged.

Final Reports

All final reports should be submitted in accordance with the Guidelines on the Preparation of Final Reports using the EPA Research Report Layout Template, available to download from the [EPA website](#).

Data and Information Resources

Where data and/or information resources are to be made available on a repository other than the EPA Research Data Archive (SAFER), please ensure (in addition to the requirements outlined in the following pages) the following are included:

1. The EPA Research Programme and all co-funders are acknowledged.
2. Where possible, the EPA Research logo and all co-funders logos are included.
3. The data and information resources disclaimer is included.

Events, Workshops and Webinars

Advance notice of project-related events or workshops should be provided to the EPA at least 28 working days prior to the event taking place.

For any associated materials, please ensure:

1. The EPA Research Programme and all co-funders are acknowledged.
2. The EPA Research logo and all co-funders logos are included.
3. The media disclaimer is included.

Other Outputs

Other outputs include, but are not limited to, for example:

- Infographics;
- Newsletters;
- Other Literature¹;
- Podcast;
- Policy Briefs;
- Posters;
- Smartphone & Computer Applications;
- Videos;

¹ Other literature may include good practice guides, leaflets, brochures, and other project-related materials for dissemination at events or workshops.

- Websites and Hosted Webpages.

Please ensure (where space permits):

1. The EPA Research Programme and all co-funders are acknowledged.
2. The EPA Research logo and all co-funders logos are included.
3. The media disclaimer is included.

EPA Requirements for Social Media

IMPORTANT: Social media account names and user names/handles must not be prefixed with or include “EPA” – the account name/handle should relate to the project only (for example, it may include the project acronym).

Twitter Profiles

The EPA Research Programme must be acknowledged using either: “@EPAResearchNews funded project” or “This project is funded by @EPAResearchNews” in the Twitter Bio section.

Please also refer to the published [Guidelines for EPA-Funded Research Project Twitter Accounts](#) for full details of the requirements.

Other Social Media Profiles

Where space permits, please ensure:

1. The EPA Research Programme and all co-funders are acknowledged.
2. The EPA Research logo and all co-funders logos are included.
3. The media disclaimer is included.

Using EPA Research and Co-Funder Logos on Social Media Profiles

The EPA Research and co-funder logos must not be used as the account profile image, or the homepage banner/background image, but may be incorporated as inserts into a larger homepage banner/background image if used in conjunction with the full acknowledgment.

IMPORTANT: The main EPA logo should not be used – please ensure any background or homepage banner images incorporate the EPA Research logo. To obtain a copy of the EPA Research logo please contact research@epa.ie.

Responsibility for Social Media Activity and Content

The Grantees are responsible for all activity and content on EPA-funded project social media accounts – the EPA does not act as a moderator.

Project-related social media accounts must not be used for posting, reposting, sharing, replying to, direct messaging, or otherwise publishing or engaging with unsuitable/inappropriate content (including but not limited to content which may be in any way offensive, defamatory, violent, abusive, hateful, libellous, obscene, sensitive or illegal) or any content which is in violation of the rules of the social media platform.

Where necessary, grantees must ensure they have obtained any appropriate permission(s) to post content which includes or references:

- Personal information
- Intellectual property
- Copy-righted, trademarked or otherwise protected material
- Reproduced material

NB: the above list is non-exhaustive – please ensure you have obtained all necessary permissions before posting content through social media accounts.

The Environmental Protection Agency does not accept any responsibility whatsoever for loss or damage occasioned or damages claimed to have been occasioned, in part or in full, as a consequence of any activity or content on EPA-funded project social media accounts.

Summary Table of Requirements for Media Releases and Project Outputs

The following table summarises the requirements by media and output type – please also refer to the individual output sections in this document:

EPA Requirements by Media and Output Type	EPA Review/Notification	Acknowledgements	Logos	Disclaimer	Notes to Editor
Data and Information Resources		✓	✓	✓	
Events and Workshops	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Final Reports	See notes under the Final Reports section				
Infographics		✓	✓	✓	
Newsletters		✓	✓	✓	
Newspaper and Magazine Articles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other Literature		✓	✓	✓	
Peer-Reviewed Publications		✓	✓		
Press Releases	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Podcasts		✓*	✓	✓*	
Policy Briefs	✓	✓	✓		✓
Posters		✓	✓	✓	
Radio Interviews and Features	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Smartphone and Computer Applications		✓	✓	✓	

Social Media		✓	✓*	✓*	
Television Interview and Features	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Videos		✓	✓	✓	
Webinars		✓	✓	✓	
Websites and Hosted Webpages		✓	✓	✓	

*Where space permits

Disclaimers

The EPA requires disclaimers to be added to data/information resources, media releases and project outputs as identified in this document. The following disclaimers should be used:

Data and Information Resources Disclaimer

The following disclaimer is to be used when publishing data and information resources on data repositories other than the EPA Research Data Archive (SAFER):

“The EPA gives no warranty, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these datasets and/or information resources. It is strongly recommended that these datasets and/or information resources be verified with their designated Responsible Parties (as outlined in the metadata) and not through other sources that may have changed the dataset/information resource in some way.

THE ENTIRE RISK OF USE OF THE DATA AND/OR INFORMATION RESOURCE SHALL BE WITH THE USER.

The EPA does not express or imply warranty made regarding the utility of the data and/or information resources on other systems for general or scientific purposes nor shall the act of distribution to the public or other agencies constitute any such warranty. This disclaimer applies both to individual use of the data and/or information resources and aggregate use with other data/information resources.

To use the data and/or information resources, we ask that you agree to this liability disclaimer and that you use proper citation (as will be provided in the metadata) on any materials (digital or printed) in which this information appears, and that you use the data/information resource appropriately.”

Media Disclaimer

All project media releases and some project outputs must include a disclaimer. The following standard wording should be used:

“DISCLAIMER: Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the material contained in this INSERT MEDIA TYPE, complete accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Neither the Environmental Protection Agency nor the authors accept any responsibility whatsoever for loss or damage occasioned or claimed to have been occasioned, in part or in full, as a consequence of any person acting or refraining from acting, as a result of a matter contained in this INSERT MEDIA TYPE.”

Acknowledgements

The EPA Research Programme and all co-funders must be acknowledged in all project media releases, communications and outputs using the following standard wording:

“This project is funded under the EPA Research Programme 2021-2030 [and co-funded by INSERT NAME OF CO-FUNDER(S)]². The EPA Research Programme is a Government of Ireland initiative funded by the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment.”

Logos

The EPA Research logo and the logos of all co-funders must be included on all project media releases, communications and outputs³. The EPA Research logo is available in a range of formats. If you require a copy of the logo please contact research@epa.ie.

Notes to the Editor

All project media releases and some project outputs must include Notes to the Editor. The following text (including the hyperlink to the EPA website) should be used:

“EPA Research 2030 is the ten-year high-level framework for the EPA’s research programming (2021-2030), designed to be agile, responsive and flexible. EPA Research 2030 thematic structure comprises four interconnected hubs (Addressing climate change needs, Facilitating a green and circular economy, Delivering a healthy environment, Protecting and restoring our natural environment) that bring an integrated and cross-sectoral approach, enabling holistic management and protection of our environment.

More information about the EPA Research Programme can be found by visiting the [EPA website](#) where you can subscribe to the [Research Newsletter](#). This provides news and updates about research calls, events and publications that are of relevance to researchers and other interested parties. You can also follow EPA Research on Twitter [@EPAResearchNews](#) for the information and developments about the Research Programme and its projects.”

For any queries not covered in this document please contact research@epa.ie.

² Delete reference to co-funders as applicable

³ Co-funder logos are not included on project Final Reports published by the EPA Research Programme