# Communications Plan – Guidance & Template

This document is part of the SO Europe Eurasia Foundation (SOEEF) Framework guidance to support event organizers to:

* Create a formal stakeholder communication plan that delivers against the sustainability communication aims of the event
* Use communications to encourage and promote sustainable behaviors, both internally and externally
* Work with event partners (athletes, sponsors, host city) to amplify your sustainability communications
* Showcase sustainability initiatives and good practice being implemented at the event
* Consider sustainability communications pre-event, during event and post-event

The communication plan should engage stakeholders, informing and empowering stakeholders to make sustainable decisions to reduce their impact throughout their engagement with the event. This plan works in tandem with the stakeholder mapping plan. This communication plan should include, but is not limited to:

* Press releases
* Event website
* Social media content
* On-site signage (back and front of house)
* The full ‘fan journey’ considering all touchpoints that a fan may interact with and how sustainability messaging could be integrated at each of these points (e.g. digital communications, social media, posters in venue explaining sustainability initiatives and many more)
* Different event locations and traditions, e.g. fan village, opening and closing ceremonies

## Key Guidance

Engage with your marketing and communications team to ensure the integration of sustainability aims and messaging into your event’s broader communications plan, and work with them to identify ongoing opportunities for sustainability related communications.

Look for alignment of sustainability messaging with event partners such as sponsors, the host city, athletes and suppliers to amplify the messages or calls to action. As part of the stakeholder mapping exercise, consider communication opportunities and the promotion of shared goals. Create messaging to inspire action and include sustainability messaging in all your internal communications, as well as your external communications. Include sustainability communications across all platforms.

Further information can be found by contacting Colin Kenny, Senior Manager of Projects and Grants at SOEEF, [ckenny@specialolympics.org](mailto:ckenny@specialolympics.org).

**Communications Plan – Template**

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**Key Contacts**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Role** | **E-mail Address** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

# Introduction

[Provide introductory background and context of the event, for example:

* What the event is, when and where it is taking place?
* Link out to any other relevant info (e.g. event website)
* Overview of key stakeholders (e.g. funding partners, host city, delivery partners etc.)]

This document is the Communications Plan for [insert event], which will develop and evolve over as the event moves closer. It details the main objectives of the event, key marketing milestones and top-line marketing and PR opportunities over the different phases of the marketing and communications campaign.

Sustainability is not a standalone topic, it should be integrated into all aspects of communications as much as possible, supported by ‘highlights’ that might carry their own stories.

# Vision and Mission

[Insert overview of the event’s overall vision and mission]

# Marketing and communications objectives

Through the implementation of this communications plan and associated campaigns, we aim to support the event’s ambitions, including sustainability ambitions, by:

* [insert marketing and communications objectives]

# Event Audiences

To ensure we are achieving our objectives, we have identified and categorized our stakeholders based on their relevance, interest, and influence.

[Note: The activities include in the matrix below are for guidance only and purely indicative. Please rearrange, add in/remove activities as relevant to your event.]

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Event Organizers | Participants | Community | Event Partners | Other stakeholders |
| Event organizer staff | Athletes / Teams | Local residents and community | Host City | National media |
| Contractors | Technical Officials | Host city population | Commercial partners | International media |
| Suppliers | Volunteers | Local sports clubs | Funding partner | Local media |
| Host venue | Fans and spectators | Local schools | Special Olympics | Wider sports fans |
|  |  | Local businesses | Regional/National Delivery partner |  |
|  |  | Local ID nonprofits | National federation |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

# Target Audiences

[Guidance: Your target audience is a subset of stakeholders that you want to reach and communicate with. They are the ones who have the highest relevance, interest, and influence for your communication goals.]

[From the list of event audiences, prioritize your audiences into primary, secondary and other stakeholders – and then think about their key attributes and what the key messages are]

The target audiences for this event have been identified as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Primary Audiences – core audiences with high relevance, interest and influence** | | |
| **Who?** | **Attributes** | **Key messages** |
| Event Organizer’s Staff | * *Experienced event deliverers & supporters.* * *Fully committed and integral to making the event a success.* * *Decision-makers and enablers of sustainable solutions* | * *Sustainability is core to the events ethos* * *You can play a key role in making sustainability a core consideration in your decisions and this will have a positive impact* * *You are the experts in your areas - help us find new creative solutions that are more sustainable to the typical ways of doing things* |
| Partners and suppliers |
| Competing athletes/participants | * *Highly interested and involved in sport.* * *Participate competitively.* * *Knowledgeable.*   *Follow sports news through multi-channels including social media* |  |
| Technical officials |  |  |
| Fans |  |  |
| National Federation |  |  |
| [other local primary audiences] |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Secondary Audiences – audiences who are not priority but who are still identified as important to your objectives** | | |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Other Stakeholder Audiences** | | |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

# Key Messages

As an overarching theme, [insert event name] will tell the story of:

* [Provide an overview of the key messages to communicate to stakeholders relating to the event]

[Link out to any other key documents that may be relevant to key messages]

# Key milestones and content

Detailed below are some of the event key milestones and activities focused through each phase of the event. The content of this grid will be developed and updated throughout the build up to the event.

*[Example milestones are provided in italics, for guidance only, and the table should be adapted and further built out relevant to your event milestones.]*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Milestone** | **Date** |
| **Event Phase 1: Launch** | **[Date range]** |
| Website Launch |  |
| Social Media Channel Launch |  |
| 1 year to go: brand Launch |  |
| Look and feel development – space for sustainability communication to be integrated and planned for |  |
| **Event Phase 2: Pre-event** | **[Date range]** |
| Ticket Sale Launch |  |
| 6-months to go – Launch of sustainability strategy |  |
| 3-months to go - Partner announcement 1 (inc. sustainability related messaging) |  |
| 1-month to go - Sustainability/Social Impact related story 2 |  |
| 1-week to go – spectator comms around sustainable travel options |  |
| Partner announcement 2 (including sustainability related messaging) |  |
| Sustainability/Social Impact related story/initiative 2 |  |
| Sustainability/Social Impact related story/initiative 3 |  |
| **Event Phase 3: During event** | **[Date range]** |
| Social Media plan inc. sustainability messaging |  |
| Sustainability/Social Impact related initiative story 1 |  |
| Sustainability/Social Impact related initiative story 2 |  |
| Athlete ambassador – inc. sustainability messaging |  |
|  |  |
| **Event Phase 4: Post-event** | **[Date range]** |
| Post-event sustainability report |  |

# Key deliverables

The communications plan will be developed around the following key areas and associated deliverables.

[*For example;*

* *Brand development and promotion (ensuring the brand captures environmental sustainability)*
* *Venue look and feel (including any local area branding, if relevant)*
* *Digital Channels (using digital channels and social media to distribute messaging and raise awareness)*
* *Media & PR (integrating sustainability into media and PR opportunities)*
* *Communication Operations (reducing the impact of how communications operates itself)*
* *Event time communications]*

Throughout, there will be an emphasis on meeting the ambitions of the event’s strategy and showcasing how we are delivering against our strategy’s pillars, for example; [Insert key themes of your event, e.g. Sustainability, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, access to Sport and Physical Activity].

[In particular, the Communications functional area will work to a ‘digital first’ approach, reducing the need for print and ensuring all physical items required are as sustainable as possible.]

# The fan journey

[Based on the above milestones and deliverables, outline how sustainability will be integrated into the fan experience. Think about what fans see and hear on event, and how sustainability can be made part of that story]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Milestone of fan journey** | **What will the fans and event attendees see from a sustainability and social impact perspective?** |
| **Awareness of the event** |  |
| *Brand launch* | *How is the brand conscious of sustainability– how are you telling this story?* |
| *Website Launch* | *Sustainability pages part of the website design* |
| *Social Media Channel* | *Sustainability stories integrated into wider comms plan* |
|  |  |
| **Buying a ticket** |  |
| *Ticket purchase process* | *Integration of a ‘how do you expect to travel to the event?’ question as part of ticket details to help understand the impact of fan travel, and uptake of sustainable travel options* |
| *Ticket purchase confirmation email* | *Provide link to sustainability webpage of the website and perhaps travel page – where the focus is on public transport*  *Include specific calls to action at this point that might be relevant – e.g. you can use public transport to get to the event – find out more here, remember to bring you reusable bottle – there will be refill stations etc.* |
| **Preparing to go to the event** |  |
| *Website communications* | *Emphasizing a ‘public transport first’ approach, other calls to action that may be relevant* |
| *Pre-event email communications to ticket holders* | *As above* |
| *Social media channels* | *As above, as well as specific sustainability stories and highlights to increase the profile and awareness of these* |
|  |  |
| **Attending the event** |  |
| *Look and feel – venue dress* | *There will be posters, sustainability wall featuring the sustainability ‘highlights’ of the events efforts, perhaps a local charity has some space to exhibit, people will see sustainability messaging at all key touch points -catering outlets, concourses* |
| *Digital signage* | * *Use of digital screens to show sustainability related messaging* |
| *Event presentation* | * *Big screen includes sustainability related messaging* |
| *Back of house areas – workforce breakout areas, media center* | * *Media is provided a brief of sustainability initiatives and highlights happening at the event* * *Sustainability highlights poster, or equivalent, visible in the media center* |
| *Volunteers* | * *Green volunteers onsite for further information on sustainability at the event* |
| *City/Local Community activation* |  |
| **Event Phase 4: Post-event** |  |
| *Post-event survey* | *Questions integrated include:*   * *Where have you travelled from?* * *How did you travel to the event (mode of transport)?* * *Did you stay in overnight accommodation (not your own) to attend the event?* * *Were you aware of the sustainability initiatives of the event?* |
| *Post-event communications – thank you email* | * *Include a couple of ‘sustainability’ highlights as part of the round-up/thank you email* |
| *Social media content* | * *Launch of post-event sustainability report* |
|  |  |

# Post-event reporting and data collection

Data relating to sustainability communications of the event will be reported by [insert who is responsible for reporting this data].

The below types of data will be collected:

* Social media analysis (number of posts, engagements, views)
* Summary of media coverage
* Number and type of briefings provided to event staff

[Provide an overview on any data collection and reporting you are planning to do relating to communications. Provide details on the audiences and stakeholders you have engaged and communicated with]

[Relevant data and reporting could include, but not limited to:

* + Quotes and endorsements from key stakeholders
  + A measure of awareness of sustainability initiatives captured within post-event survey
  + Photo and/or screenshot evidence of sustainability communications]

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