

Tool 6: Communication strategy tool

Phase	Phase 1: Getting organised and initial set-up
Sub-phase	Sub-phase 1.1: Getting organised
Name of tool	Communication strategy tool
Objective	<p>The communication strategy tool is an instrument that facilitates the planning of the communication process within the CDS. The communication strategy will provide a plan for involving specific target groups in all CDS phases, with specific actions, timing and budgets. It will look at the communication objectives for each target group, the nature of the message to be sent, and the channels to be used.</p> <p>The specific objectives of a communication strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify the needs/demands of specific target groups, and address them in the CDS; ▪ Provide timely and accurate information on the development process of the CDS; ▪ Involve stakeholders in the decision making process during the CDS; ▪ Emphasize the city government commitment to respond to the population needs, and the need for community support; ▪ Improve public understanding and awareness; ▪ Promote the local government activities and the city image.
When to use the tool	<p>Use communication strategy tool:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ When organizing the CDS process, and planning the participatory process. ✓ When assigning tasks to different stakeholders, and making sure that different target groups receive the right message at the right moment in the CDS development. ✓ To promote the CDS process and raise the community interest to participate and support its formulation and implementation.
Main actor(s) responsible	Communication /marketing specialist (in the municipality, or in the community), with support of planning team
Target / beneficiary	Stakeholders groups – community residents, private and NGO sectors, etc.
Description of tool	<p>A communication strategy tool can be built in a series of steps, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify publics, audiences and stakeholders 2. Formulate the message

	<p>3. Select marketing and communication instruments to distribute the message</p> <p>4. Build a conceptual framework to connect the target audiences to CDS phases through communication instruments that ensure a market oriented process</p> <p>5. Plan the communication activities and events, assign budgets and responsible persons</p> <p><u>Step 1. Identify publics, audiences and stakeholders</u></p> <p>The first step is linked to the stakeholders analysis phase. The main target groups include: residents and employees, business and industry, visitors, public or semi-public organizations (local and central government, universities, international agencies, NGOs), city management, etc. Besides their interests in the city development and development projects, this step also assesses their availability to participate in the CDS process, and the messages to be sent in order to reach them effectively.</p> <p><u>Step 2. Formulate the message</u></p> <p>To formulate the message, the first thing is to determine the message objective: what do we want to achieve with the message? Is Feedback required (yes/no)?</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Awareness creation ▪ Coordination of interventions ▪ Receiving information ▪ Support ▪ Receiving funding, etc. <p><u>Step 3. Select marketing and communication instruments to distribute the message</u></p> <p>City planners and marketing/communication specialists can use various instruments to distribute their message. These include¹:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advertising is the use of any paid form of non-personal presentation of ideas, goods or services. Thus, the purchase of printed space (magazines, newspapers, billboards), or broadcast time (television, radio, Internet) constitutes advertising. As a communication tool, it can be used to build a long-term image for a city, or on the other, to launch quick messages on punctual activities, which are going on in the city. ▪ Direct marketing encompasses the use of communication media to reach individuals, or groups of individuals in the audience, where the effect is measurable. The two traditional instruments of direct marketing are direct mail, e-mails, and telephone. Individuals in the database can be sent appropriate newsletters and brochures.
--	--

¹ Based on Kotler, P.; Haider, D. P., Rein, I.(1993), Marketing places : attracting investments, industry and tourism to cities, states, and nations, New York, Free Press

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public relations is the effort to build good relations with the public, by obtaining favourable publicity, building up a good public image, and handling or heading off unfavourable rumours, stories and events. Major public relations tools include press relations, event publicity, meetings/conferences, and lobbying. ▪ As a particular form of direct marketing, the stakeholders’ forum is used as an approach of direct public consultation and involvement in the city development. The Stakeholders Forum might have a sectoral approach, with consultative aim, representing specific groups or interests of the city community. It provides advice, and makes recommendations on broad planning goals and policies, and on sectoral development fields, where the development strategy requests consultation. <p>A combination of communication instruments, according to the expected feedback is presented in table 1.</p> <p><u>Step 4. Build a conceptual framework</u></p> <p>This step connects the target audiences to CDS phases through the selection of the appropriate communication instrument. See table 2 for an example</p> <p><u>Step 5. Plan the communication activities and events, assign budgets and responsible persons</u></p> <p>The last step is responsible for design the communication plan: When and where should the communication take place? Which message will be distributed to each target group? Which instrument will be used? Who is in charge? What resources will be necessary? How to monitor the impact? (See table 3)</p>
<p>Advantages and disadvantages of this tool</p>	<p>Advantages (+)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The communication strategy tool provides a framework for the communication process to be organized for the whole CDS process. + It allows communication activities to be planned in advance (attractive locations to be booked in advance, resources to be made available) + It offers a framework to monitor communication activities and to evaluate feedback. <p>Disadvantages (--)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – It requires specialized expertise to organize the communication strategy and to identify the most appropriate instruments. – It needs close monitoring, as the CDS process might register delays, and consequently the communication plan must be flexible enough to adapt to new deadlines. – It needs additional budget to implement the activities in the communication plan.

<p>Related tools</p>	<p>This tool is linked to the stakeholders’ analysis tool, as it starts with identification of the target audience.</p> <p>It also provides the framework to develop additional specific tools for public participation in the different phases of the CDS process.</p>
<p>References and further resources</p>	<p><u>Generally accessible documents:</u></p> <p><u>Academic documents (access may be limited):</u></p> <p>Economic Policy Agency, Tbilisi City Hall, 2010, City Development Strategy for Sustainable Development – Marketing brochure, Tbilisi, Economic Policy Agency, Tbilisi City Hall [Institute for Housing and Urban Development Strategies (IHS) and IHS Romania].</p> <p>Kotler, P.; Haider, D. and Rein, I. 1993, Marketing places : attracting investment, industry and tourism to cities, states and nations, New York, Free Press.</p> <p>Wates N., (ed.) 2006, The community planning handbook : how people can shape their cities, towns and villages in any part of the world, London, Earthscan.</p>