

Communication plan guide and template

FRDC has developed this guide to assist Principal Investigators in creating a Communication plan for their project. To view the template, visit this [link](#).

Communication Plan contents

Objectives

Describe the objectives – what end-users will gain from the information and outputs delivered from your research project?

A method commonly used for creating objectives is the **S.M.A.R.T** goal setting method (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). Dot points are preferred for objectives. For example:

Instead of:

Western Australian research organisations will implement and use the research software.

Try:

The research software (**Specific**) will be taught and presented to seven research organisations (**Measurable**) located in Perth (**Relevant**) within six months (December 2024) (**Time-bound & Achievable**).

Audiences

Identify the specific target audiences to communicate with. Try to think more specifically than a target market and focus on specific audience types. You may also want to identify your geographical scope, i.e. Is it all over Australia? Is it a specific fishery or bay? Are there multiple locations or one specific city or area?

Instead of:

'Universities', more specific entries could include:

- Students enrolled in a Bachelor of Marine and Antarctic Science degree
- PhD students who are engaged in marine science
- Professors of marine science
- Diversity and inclusion managers
- Curriculum writers

Only target the key people and/or organisations. You could segment these into a primary and secondary target audience. Communication efforts will be vastly more effective if you hit the very specific needs of a few important audiences, rather than trying to cover all touchpoints of multiple audiences.

Example

Instead of:

- Research Organisations
- Industry Peak Bodies
- Schools
- Recreational fishers
- Broader Community

Try:

Primary Audiences

- Esperance Bay wholesalers
- Albany wholesalers

Secondary Audiences

- Esperance wild-catch vessel owners
- Great Southern region of WA high schools
- Recfishwest

Key Messages

Identify the key message(s) you want to communicate to the target audiences. These should be short and concise statements. The best key messages are illustrations of a narrative, which should never be directly rehearsed or delivered, but rather woven into conversation.

Methods

Identify the methods by which you are going to deliver the communication products/activities to the target audiences during and after the project. Ensure that you have consulted with end-users prior to commencing communications about how they would like the information communicated.

Examples of methods include:

- Presentations (be specific about where you will present e.g., Schools, Conferences, Universities, Public open days,)
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn etc.)
- Podcast
- Webinar
- Quarterly Milestone reports
- Newsletter articles
- News Stories
- Media Releases

Please note:

If you are planning on developing project collateral that you want to share broadly, such as issuing media releases, publishing social media posts, creating brochures, making public presentations or writing articles for publication, this will need to be approved by the FRDC Communication team, before it is published, as clearly outlined in our project agreement contract.

When producing collateral, you must also acknowledge that the project received funding from the Australian Government through Fisheries Research and Development Corporation. Wording is up to your discretion, but some examples are outlined below.

Example

“The Australian Government through the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation has contributed \$XXX,000 to the projects funding”; or

“The study will be/is/was funded through the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and X, Y&Z”; or

“This research was supported by Fisheries Research and Development Corporation on behalf of the Australian Government.”

Or, for presentations, webinars, podcasts, etc. you should verbally acknowledge FRDC’s support and include the words: Funded by <insert FRDC logo> on slides/screens.

If you are planning on producing printed collateral, for example, brochures, fact sheets, promotional giveaways, you will need to think about (& cost into your project budget):

- Quantity
- Price
- Target audience/s
- Location it will be used
- When it will be used

Action Plan

Communications plans should also include an action plan outlining the communications method, who is responsible for developing the communications product/activity, whether this method will be used during or after the project or both, estimated completion date, and how you will measure success.

Example

Method	Responsibility	During/After/Both	Completion Date	Measurement of Success	Primary Target Audience
Presentation at Curtin University	Principal Investigator	After the project	Once project has completed (Est. September 2026)	Feedback survey will be administered at the end of presentation	University students taking marine science
Social Media Updates	Principal Investigator & Co-investigators	Both	Throughout the project when opportunities arise (Est. Once a month) Social Media	Impressions, Likes, Reposts	Broader Western Australian community, especially those aged 20-45yrs

Evaluation

Establish how you will evaluate the success of the communications activities/collateral. This may include surveys of target audiences, recording of media coverage, analytics on social media reach/impressions, or sales of publications. If revenue is anticipated from any of these a more detailed plan should be included as part of the project plan, including keeping the Intellectual property register up to date.

The S.M.A.R.T objective measurement approach can be applied to the evaluation metrics for Communications methods.

Example

Instead of:

- Positive social media reception
- Over 500 people attending the presentations.

Try:

- 10,000 Social Media Impressions on Facebook by December 2026.
- 80% of surveyed users recall three out of four key messages from the presentation

Please feel free to contact the FRDC Communications Team if you need assistance planning your project communications: comms@frdc.com.au