



FNR Communication Guidelines for Beneficiaries

Research = communication + promotion. See what's behind.

The FNR wishes to strengthen the link between science and society. Therefore, the FNR focuses an essential part of its activities on the development of a scientific culture by means of a more active approach of the public at large.

The promotion of scientific culture is intended to stimulate the sensitivity for scientific issues among the Luxembourg population, but the main target group are young people, since they will be tomorrow's citizens and researchers. The objective is to create a profound understanding for the necessity of science and research as a guarantee for life quality and to fill youngsters with enthusiasm for scientific professions.

PSC
PROMOTION DE LA
CULTURE SCIENTIFIQUE

 Fonds National de la
Recherche Luxembourg

INVESTIGATING FUTURE CHALLENGES



FNR COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

FOR BENEFICIARIES¹

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¹ **Source:** *The present guidelines are based on the 'Communications Toolkit' by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).*

1. WHY COMMUNICATE?

One of the FNR's strategic objectives is to strengthen the links between science and society. We would like policymakers, research users, the media and the general public to feel concerned with research. The potential impact of good research is enormous and this is lost if it is not promoted as widely as possible. Done well, effective communication will raise the profile not only of your research, but also of your institution / university / company and the FNR.

These guidelines are targeted at beneficiaries of FNR funding in the framework of

- **FNR-funded research projects (CORE, INTER, ATTRACT, PEARL)**
- **FNR Accompanying Measures**

The objective of the guidelines is to provide detailed information on

- the FNR's expectations regarding the dissemination of research results to policymakers, research users, the media and the general public
- how to acknowledge FNR funding in your communications

Note: If you are an AFR grant beneficiary, please refer to the document “AFR Communication Guidelines for Beneficiaries”, available on <http://www.afr.lu/en/AFR-Grants-Activities/Forms,-Guidelines-Logos>.

Do not hesitate to ask for further advice from the FNR Communications Team where necessary:

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(Tel. 26 19 25 43; Email: michele.jentges@fnr.lu)
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We also invite you to take advantage of the communication workshops provided by the FNR annually.

Most importantly, do not forget to contact your institution's / university's / company's communications department and press office for help. Communication is a professional discipline and they will be able to help and advise you on a range of issues, from media relations to the production of publicity material to event management.

2. WHAT THE FNR EXPECTS

2.1 GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

The FNR would like policy makers, research users, the media and the general public to feel concerned with research. Effective communication of research results is essential to achieve this objective.

The FNR itself takes action to ensure scientific results are disseminated to different target groups. In this context FNR beneficiaries are expected to support the FNR's communication efforts.

FNR beneficiaries are expected to:

- Communicate their research to potential users and beneficiaries, also to target groups outside academia or research, through appropriate publications, the media, seminars, conferences, exhibitions, electronic outlets, etc. (see also point 2.2 “How to plan your communications”).
- Identify proactively scientific themes and results that are appropriate to be disseminated to the different target groups, and communicate in a way that the targeted public will understand.
- Ensure efficient media relations, responding actively and professionally to any media enquiries.
- Acknowledge FNR support in presentations, posters, brochures, articles, publications, websites, events, etc. (see also point 3 “How to acknowledge FNR funding”).
- If planning an important event or (press) conference, invite a representative of the FNR to be present.
- On demand, provide the FNR with an abstract of your research for use in FNR publications such as annual reports, press articles, etc.
- Participate as far as possible in public outreach activities like the Science Festival or the Researchers' Night.
- If working in a team, promote the importance of communication and outreach activities among their team members and encourage colleagues to invest time in acquiring communication skills and taking part in outreach activities. Time invested in communication is well invested; effective communication will raise the profile not only of your research, but also of your institution / university / company and the FNR.
- Contact their institution's / university's / company's communications department and press office, or the FNR, for help and assistance on communication and public relations.
- Take advantage of the communication workshops provided by the FNR and also encourage colleagues to take part.

2.2 HOW TO PLAN YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

We strongly encourage you to plan your communication and to talk and meet with the Communications team of your institution / university / company, or the FNR, for assistance. If working in a team, it is also important to include all your colleagues in the communication process.

A Few Tips:

1. Check external perceptions of your centre/programme among potential target audiences before you start (what they know, what they do not know, what interests them). This will help you develop a communication strategy that gives you a distinct and credible voice.
2. Be clear about your target audiences and user groups and prioritise them according to importance and influence relative to your objectives. Do not just think about the 'usual suspects'.
3. Develop some simple messages and model how these might work in different contexts - a press release, a report, a newspaper article, a website page. Remember that you can be succinct without 'dumbing down'.
4. Think about both the actual and preferred channels your target audiences might use and challenge yourself about whether you are planning to use the right ones for maximum impact.

Communication Strategy

Every communication strategy should begin with a clear statement of the objectives in communicating. Research projects are often by their nature long and complex, but where possible the communication objectives should be as simple, and measurable, as possible.

A typical set of communication objectives might be to:

- Build awareness of the project among a wide but defined group of audiences and user groups, such as the general public.
- Secure the commitment of a defined group of stakeholders to the project aims.
- Influence specific policies or policymakers around key aspects.
- Encourage participation among researchers or partner bodies.

In a long project, communication objectives and activities may change over time. In the early stages, there may be a higher priority for building awareness rather than seeking influence, for example.

Build in some simple evaluation measures at the start so that you will know if and how you have succeeded in meeting your communication objectives.

Prioritising Audiences

It is vital to know who you are communicating with. You should have a clear idea of your key audiences and user groups. It is easy to end up with a long list, so it is a good

discipline to rank them according to importance and influence relative to your communications objectives.

When targeting multiple audiences, it will be important to keep track of who has been contacted for what purpose. How you manage your contacts with audiences is as important as gaining them in the first place.

Potential audiences may be: potential employees, peers, policymakers, public administrations and ministries, partner bodies, potential business partners, the general public, the media, schools etc.

What Is Worth Communicating to Policymakers, the Public and the Media?

Do not make the mistake to think that communication to policymakers, the media or the general public will happen only at the beginning or the end of your project. Sometimes things come up during the course of your project – expectedly or unexpectedly – that are well worth disseminating.

Questions to ask yourself to test whether your information is worth communicating:

- Why should the public be informed about my news?
- What makes my news worth to be communicated to other target groups than an audience of peers or specialists?
- What aspect is exceptional, exciting, unexpected about my research or my research results? Will the public be provided with new information on an otherwise well-known topic? Is this a good time to communicate my news?
- Is there any link to be made with ongoing public discussions?
- What could be the consequences of my work (possibly alarming to the public)?
- What link is there to be made between my work and people's everyday lives? What is the use of my work for society?
- Are there any analogies I can use to illustrate my work in a comprehensible way? How can I explain complicated processes as easily as possible? What examples could I give?
- Will the target group be touched or diverted by my news?

Developing Messages

Any communication needs to have succinct and clear messages. This is often anathema to researchers who feel their work is often not appropriate to be 'packaged' in such a way. But the principles of good communication are the same in the research world as elsewhere.

It may be difficult to develop 'key messages' at the beginning of a complex research project. But it is a useful discipline to consider whether there are over-arching messages that can be used while it is underway, or any specific messages for any particular parts of the project.

When developing key messages for policymakers, the public and the media, you should avoid bland statements, overly complex statements, and having too many messages. A good benchmark is the following test: if you explained your message to someone you

had just met in a pub, would they understand what you meant? You can be succinct without 'dumbing down'. Remember that key audiences such as journalists and policymakers are overloaded with information and simply will not remember your messages if they are too complex.

Examples:

- The UK's Institute for Social and Economic Research published a report called 'The Impact of Atypical Employment on Individual Wellbeing'. The press release had the more compelling title of 'What Kind of Work is Bad for Your Health?' The first line of the release summed up the research finding: 'Temporary jobs and part-time employment do not have adverse consequences for people's health'. The researchers also coined the phrase 'mini-job' to describe jobs of under 15 hours a week, one of the key aspects of the study. In this case, a communications adviser was involved in developing the material.
- A scientist working on the genetics of circadian rhythms in plants could start by saying: "We humans get up in the morning, feel hungry at certain times, and then feel tired in the evening. Plants also have their daily rhythms, and that is what we are trying to understand." Use analogies: the more visual, the better.

Choosing Channels

Having derived a prioritised list of audiences and messages, it is then important to think about the most appropriate channels to reach them.

Think about both the actual and preferred channels. For example, a standard quarterly newsletter may be an accepted channel of communication for one audience, but smaller networking meetings may actually be their preferred method of receiving information. Do not forget the value of personal, direct contact with audiences.

When thinking about audiences and appropriate channels, it is also useful to think about the different timeframes, imperatives, languages and objectives of your target audience. Remember that just because an audience is important to you, you should not assume you are important to them. Many will be suffering from information overload and you need to demonstrate your relevance to them. You may have to reframe what you say and how you say it.

Potential communication channels and supports may be: Press releases, press conferences, a report, a newspaper article, a website page, a newsletter (print or electronic), networking meetings, a brochure, direct mailing, a scientific publication, a scientific conference, a public conference (e.g. a science café), a workshop/talk in a school, a workshop during a public outreach activity (e.g. Researchers' Night, Science Festival), a visit in your laboratory, etc.

Please always contact your institution's / university's / company's communications department and press office for help and assistance with all topics mentioned above, and always ask them for advice when you are wondering whether your news are worth communicating to the media or not.

Note: Through its Accompanying Measures, the FNR provides several funding opportunities for

- the promotion of scientific culture (activities for schools, the young and the general public),
- the organisation of scientific conferences in Luxembourg.

For further information and submission deadlines, please go to <http://fnr.lu/en/Grants-Activities/Accompanying-Measures>.

2.3 EFFECTIVE MEDIA RELATIONS

One of the most effective ways of reaching your target audiences, influencing policy and public opinion is to make use of the media in a planned way, through press releases and/or conferences.

By working with the media, you can:

- **Influence policy**
The public profile it provides establishes a reputation for advice, which policymakers may follow up. For politicians in particular, a piece of research may only become 'real' when it has appeared in a newspaper.
- **Raise the profile**
 - Media profile can help with raising additional funding for research, attracting offers of consultancy work and promoting the brand of your institution and the FNR.
 - Media attention can also raise the public profile of your discipline and increase public discussion of research.
 - A raised profile may also make it easier to gather data, research participants and case studies for further research.
- **Focus your thinking**
Meeting the challenge of explaining why your research is important clearly and succinctly to a general audience can help to focus your thinking and sharpen your research agenda.

Effective Media Handling

Effective media handling is essential. The way and the speed in which you respond to media enquiries (of any nature) will influence the media's perception of you and your institution - and therefore the kind of coverage you get. Always call back a journalist if requested, do not let them wait (they have very tight deadlines) and always respond proactively and rapidly to any demands for further information.

Media Training

If you expect to be doing a lot of media work in the future, ask your institution's press officer whether they can get you some training and/or take advantage of the communication workshops provided annually by the FNR.

Please contact your institution's / university's / company's communications department and press office for help and assistance with media relations, and always ask them for advice when you are wondering whether your news are worth communicating to the media or not.

3. HOW TO ACKNOWLEDGE FNR FUNDING

3.1 ON PRINT & ELECTRONIC MATERIALS, AND ON WEBSITES

The FNR's brand is a valuable asset. The FNR aims to protect and develop its corporate identity by setting standards for the consistent use of its logo, corporate colours and typography.

The FNR expects that all project-related printed and electronic materials (presentations, films, posters, flyers, articles, books and all other form of publications) as well as websites should – as far as possible – include the FNR logo in a prominent and appropriate position and always acknowledge FNR funding, using one of the following:

- FR: Soutenu par le Fonds National de la Recherche, Luxembourg (+ AM/Project Code)
- DE: Mit der Unterstützung des Fonds National de la Recherche, Luxembourg (+ AM/Project Code)
- GB: Supported by the National Research Fund, Luxembourg (+ AM/Project Code)

Before using the FNR logo, please read the “FNR Corporate Identity Guidelines for Beneficiaries” first.

Copies of the FNR master logos and the ‘FNR Corporate Identity Guidelines for Beneficiaries’ are available for download on <http://fnr.lu/en/Grants-Activities/Forms,-Formulaires,-Guidelines-Logos>.

The FNR reserves the right to proceed to random controls in order to check whether the FNR guidelines are respected by FNR beneficiaries.

Note: The promotion of the FNR brand is also about more than just a logo. Poor design of publications and websites reflects as badly on the funding body as it does on the operating organisation or researcher.

3.2 IN MEDIA RELATIONS

All press releases (print or electronic) and other material (e.g. fact sheets) sent to the media on FNR-funded projects should mention the FNR's support. All material should include the FNR logo in a prominent and appropriate position and should always acknowledge FNR funding, using the following:

- FR: Soutenu par le Fonds National de la Recherche, Luxembourg (+ Project Code)
- DE: Mit der Unterstützung des Fonds National de la Recherche, Luxemburg (+ Project Code)
- GB: Supported by the National Research Fund, Luxembourg (+ Project Code)

In case of direct interviews with journalists (all media), FNR beneficiaries are also expected to mention the FNR's support.

If you are organising an important press conference, you may also decide to invite an FNR representative. Please do so at the latest two weeks before the press conference.

Before using the FNR logo, please read the 'FNR Corporate Identity Guidelines for Beneficiaries' first.

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3.3 DURING EVENTS

For all events organised in the framework of an FNR-funded project (scientific conferences, press conferences, conferences for the general public, public workshops, etc.), the FNR's support should be mentioned in presentations, handouts, publicity material, posters, publications, films etc. (see point 3.1).

If a website is created specifically for an event, the FNR's support should be acknowledged on the site (see point 3.1).

If you are organising a major event or conference, you may also decide to invite an FNR representative. Please do so at the latest two weeks before the date.

For all events, the FNR may provide FNR brochures (FNR General, AFR, CORE, INTER, ATTRACT, PEARL, ACCOMPANYING MEASURES) that should be displayed and/or distributed to the participants of the event. The brochures may be ordered at the FNR (by email to Elvire Geiben at elvire.geiben@fnr.lu) at the latest three weeks before the event.

The FNR reserves the right to proceed to random controls in order to check whether the FNR guidelines are respected by FNR beneficiaries.

3.4 ON FNR-FUNDED EQUIPMENT

For equipment that has been purchased with the financial support of the FNR and that is of a value > EUR 25,000, the FNR's support must be visually displayed.

For this, stickers are available at the FNR, to be displayed in a prominent and appropriate position on your equipment. These stickers may be obtained at the FNR (by email to Elvire Geiben at elvire.geiben@fnr.lu).

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For further information or advice, please contact the FNR's Communication Team:

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