

Communication guide for IMI projects

About this guide

Communication is an important activity for all IMI projects, a fact that is recognised in the legislation creating IMI and the model Grant Agreements¹ for both IMI1 and IMI2 projects.

The IMI Communications Team created this guide to support IMI projects in their communications activities.

It highlights some **rules that all IMI projects must follow** when preparing communication products (with reference to the relevant articles of the Grant Agreement).

It also sets out ways in which we at the Programme Office can help to **promote projects' achievements**, activities, events, etc. (and vice-versa).

The guide was updated in 2022 to reflect the creation of the Innovative Health Initiative (IHI). The legislation creating IHI replaces the legislation behind IMI, so from a practical point of view this means that the (now IHI) Programme Office continues to manage all IMI projects. However, IMI projects are still IMI projects, not IHI projects, and you should continue to acknowledge IMI in all project communications as described below.

Compulsory elements to be included in all IMI project communications

In line with the **IMI Grant Agreement**, all communication activities and products on IMI projects (articles, project websites, presentations, flyers, press releases, social media, videos etc.) **must include all of the following elements²**, details of which are given below:

- A formal **acknowledgement** of IMI's support
- A link to the IHI **website** – ihi.europa.eu
- IMI, EU, EFPIA, Associated Partner **logos**
- A **disclaimer**

Formal acknowledgement of IMI support

Communications must include the following **phrase** referring to the **IMI/EU funding, EFPIA's contribution**, and (for certain IMI2 projects), the contributions of **Associated Partners**.

- **IMI2 projects – communication activities**
This project has received funding from the Innovative Medicines Initiative 2 Joint Undertaking under grant agreement No [xxxxx]. This Joint Undertaking receives support from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme and EFPIA [and [insert names of Associated Partners]].

¹ Both IMI 1 and IMI 2 model Grant Agreements can be found in the 'project reporting documents' section at <https://www.ihi.europa.eu/resources-projects>.

² Relevant articles of the Grant Agreements:

IMI1 model Grant Agreement, Annex II, Article II.11 paragraph 1; Article II.26 paragraph 5

IMI2 model Grant Agreement, Article 38

- **IMI2 projects – infrastructure, equipment and major results**

This [infrastructure][equipment][insert type of result] is part of a project that has received funding from the Innovative Medicines Initiative 2 Joint Undertaking under grant agreement No [xxxxx]. This Joint Undertaking receives support from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme and EFPIA [and [insert names of Associated Partners]].

- **IMI1 projects (all communications and products)**

The research leading to these results has received support from the Innovative Medicines Initiative Joint Undertaking under grant agreement n° [xxxxxx], resources of which are composed of financial contribution from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) and EFPIA companies' in kind contribution.

This statement should be translated into the language of the communication product.

If the **character count** of the communications format does not allow the full acknowledgement to be used (e.g. for abstracts), the **following phrase** is permitted:

- This work has received support from the EU/EFPIA/[Associated Partner] Innovative Medicines Initiative [2] Joint Undertaking ([ProjectAcronym] grant n° [xxxxxx]).

Link to the IHI website

Communications should include a link to the IHI website: www.ih.europa.eu

In previous editions of this guide, we asked you to link to the IMI website. However, as this is no longer active, we now ask you to link to the IHI website, which includes information on IMI and all IMI project factsheets.

Logos

Communications should include the following logos:

- **IMI** logo
- **EU** emblem (not to be confused with the European Commission logo)
- **EFPIA** logo
- (For certain IMI2 projects), the logo(s) of **Associated Partner(s)**.

Logos should be displayed in their **entire and original forms**, and always separately from the IMI project logo. E.g. you should not remove the words 'Innovative Medicines Initiative' from the IMI logo.

IMI, EU and EFPIA logos can be downloaded from the [Project Communications page](#) of the IMI website. If your project includes Associated Partners, you should ask them for their logos yourself.

The use of these logos should not create confusion between the user and IMI, the European Union institutions, EFPIA, or the Associated Partners. To this end, no other trademark, service mark, symbol, design or trade name should be used in conjunction with the logos.

Avoiding confusion between IMI and IHI

You are still IMI projects and you should therefore keep acknowledging IMI (and the EU and EFPIA plus Associated Partners for projects that have them) in all project communications, as set out in the grant agreements. You should not use the IHI logo or refer to yourselves as IHI projects.

Dealing with space constraints

Some communication formats (e.g. articles in peer reviewed scientific journals) may not allow the inclusion of logos and web addresses. In these cases, the acknowledgement phrase alone will suffice.

Disclaimer

It should be made clear in the text and layout that the **communication reflects the author's view** and that neither IMI nor the European Union, EFPIA, or any Associated Partners are responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein

Review of communication products by the IMI Programme Office

All project communication products should be **sent to the IHI Communications Team for review** before publication or release. At least **two working days** should be allowed for this.

- E-mail: communications@ihi.europa.eu

The aim of this review is to provide us with the opportunity to verify that the communication rules have been applied correctly; prevent misunderstandings (e.g. IMI projects are sometimes confused with other FP7/Horizon 2020 projects); and provide useful input.

Project-specific rules

Projects may have their **own specific rules on communication** (e.g. specific things to mention, logos to include, people to consult). Project participants should also familiarise themselves with these rules and respect them accordingly.

Checklist

- Acknowledgement phrase
- IMI logo
- EU emblem
- EFPIA logo
- Associated Partner logo(s)
- Link to IHI website
- Disclaimer
- Follows project's communication rules
- Sent to IMI Communications Team for review

IMI communication resources and assistance

We can provide projects with the following resources and materials:

- The IMI logo can be downloaded in different formats from the [IHI website](#). If you need a different format, please contact us.
- The EFPIA logo can be downloaded in different formats from the [IHI website](#).
- The EU logo can be downloaded in various formats and resolutions at http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/flag/index_en.htm.
- Texts explaining IMI and its activities for use in your communication materials.
- Speakers from IHI for your events.
- IMI communication materials for distribution at your events/in your offices and labs.

How we can help you – using IHI to promote your project

We are always keen to promote IMI projects' successes and activities, so **please inform us of your news. The earlier you inform us of your plans to communicate on something, the better.**

We are interested in:

- Project **results** (especially if published in a peer-reviewed journal / presented at a conference, etc.)
- Creation of new **tools / databases** for drug discovery
- Public project **events** (including symposia held during scientific and other conferences, exhibition booths at conferences, etc.)
- Major **press coverage** of your project
- The launch of a **new activity** in your project (e.g. a new clinical study)
- Any aspect of your project where you need **input** from the wider drug development community (e.g. a survey)
- **Anything else** you think might be interesting to the wider IMI stakeholder community – **if in doubt, ask!**

If you send us some news, we will decide when and how best to make use of it; an overview of the channels we use is provided in the table below.

Please also provide us with the following from your project:

- Your project **logo** (in print and web resolutions – jpg, png, eps, gif files)
- Your project **website address**
- Project **social media** links (e.g. Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.)
- Any **changes** in your project, e.g. addition of new partners, changes in contact people
- Examples of **printed materials, videos**, etc.

Examples of how IHI promotes IMI projects and their activities	
IHI website	<p>All IMI projects have a dedicated project page on the IHI website. The page provides an overview of the project, contact details, finance information, and links to the project's own website and any social media channels.</p> <p>If you have project leaflets, brochures, posters we can add these to your project's web page.</p> <p>We also regularly write about IMI projects in our newsroom.</p>
IHI newsletter	<p>The IHI newsletter is sent out monthly and includes news from IMI projects.</p>
Social media	<p>Twitter @IHIEurope We regularly tweet about news from IMI projects and retweet IMI projects' tweets. If your project is on Twitter, please let us know so that we can follow you / mention you in tweets / retweet you.</p> <p>LinkedIn We have a LinkedIn profile page where we regularly post IMI project stories.</p> <p>YouTube We have a YouTube channel where we can post videos from IMI projects.</p>

	<p>We are currently not on other social media platforms such as Facebook. However, we can link to your pages/profiles on these platforms from your project's page on the IHI website.</p>
Press	<p>Interviews IMI often receives interview requests from journalists, and while most queries are dealt with in-house, sometimes we may direct journalists to the projects. In addition, we often cite project success stories in interviews.</p> <p>Press releases If your project has big news, a joint IHI-project press release could be an option. We can also provide you with a quote from an IHI staff member if appropriate.</p> <p>NB This requires a lot of planning and work, so if you are interested in doing this, you should get in touch with the IHI Communications Team as soon as possible.</p>
Brochures, articles and other material	<p>We regularly write articles and update our brochures and promotional material, and for that we need stories from our projects. New content used by the Programme Office in brochures is sent to the projects for review.</p>
Events	<p>IHI events We often invite project representatives to give presentations at our events and invite projects to send materials for display/inclusion in participant packs.</p> <p>Other events IHI staff are often invited to give presentations at external events to a wide range of stakeholders. Their presentations often include a sample of IMI 'success stories'.</p>
Scientific publications	<p>IHI staff occasionally write articles for scientific publications, and these often cite IMI projects and their successes.</p>
European Commission channels	<p>We promote IMI projects through the European Commission's communication channels, including Horizon Magazine, the EU Research Success Stories, and social media.</p>

Advice and resources on communicating about your project

The European Commission's Funding and Tenders Portal offers extensive guidance on [communicating about projects](#), including:

- the brochure [Communicating EU research and innovation guidance for project participants](#) which offers an overview of best practices and a check list on how to build a communication strategy;
- a [social media guide](#).

In April 2019, the IMI Programme Office held a special workshop dedicated to IMI project communications. Much of the advice given below comes from the event, and so is based on the experience of people working on IMI project communications.

Communications advice for new projects

Start early! We strongly advise projects to start thinking about communication and working on their communication strategy as early as possible – i.e. before the Grant Agreement is signed.

Provide sufficient resources for communications. It is vital that you ensure that your communications work is allocated sufficient resources (both human and financial) to do a good job. Doing communications well takes time and, for many tasks (e.g. creating videos) can be quite expensive.

Use communications professionals. We also recommend you use experienced communications professionals to guide your communications work. At the start of the project, they will be well placed to help you put together a strong communications strategy with clearly defined goals, audiences, messages and channels. As the project evolves, they will help you to adapt the strategy accordingly.

Don't forget internal communications. Your project partners are key to the success of your external communications activities. Setting up good internal communications systems will ensure that all partners contribute to the project's communications efforts in a consistent way.

Ensuring motivation and message consistency in a large consortium

- Find opportunities to **put project partners in the spotlight**.
- **Motivate through the example of others** by creating situations of success and visibility for project partners: other colleagues may want to follow the example.
- **Project partners can help**, be nice to them!
- Remind colleagues of the **importance of communications and dissemination** activities.
- **Update your colleagues regularly**: send regular updates to your project partners, and ask them to share.
- **The phone is your friend**: call your project partners! Or, whenever possible, opt for face-to-face meetings. Do not rely on e-mails and, when you have to, putting the project coordinator in copy can be helpful.
- Nominate one or two people as **communications contact persons**: it may prove useful if there is a need for urgent contact and the main PR person is not available.
- **Invite project partners to contribute** to your communications plans in order to engage them in the project communications.
- **Support** colleagues who don't have a big back office.
- **Identify the communication challenges in your project** and be aware of cultural differences: these may be due to different nationalities, different company cultures, or even different cultures according to the field that project partners specialise in.
- **Call for volunteers**, especially young researchers, to engage in the project communication activities.
- **Lead the way!** You are an expert in the communication field, make your voice heard and don't expect others to do the work for you.
- **Engage your project partners in suitable communication decisions**, such as voting for your project logo, so as to encourage them to feel ownership of communication projects.
- **Create a project narrative**, including a slogan and what you stand for.
- Set up an **internal bulletin** to share information and updates.
- Get ready: create an **effective Q&A** to help people manage the unexpected.
- Make a few **one-pagers** to summarise the key points of your communication plans and regularly remind your colleagues of the materials available.
- Make your **logo and branding elements** available and easily accessible to your project partners.

- **Show consistency and efficiency:** make templates not only for PowerPoint presentations, but also for e-mails, posters and messages, and encourage your colleagues to use them. This will save their time!
- In particular, **prepare a PowerPoint slide library** with consistent messages and branding and update it regularly, so that partners can pick and choose slides to build their presentation. Tip: include one single slide that summarises the project, so that they can use it to promote the consortium's work whenever speaking opportunities arise.
- Prepare materials such as **captioned images, ready-to-use tweets, and guidance documents** (but remember to strike the right balance to avoid flooding your colleagues!)
- Make your **website** your one-stop shop for external stakeholders; and use **SharePoint** for all your internal stakeholders.
- Use tools such as WhatsApp or Slack as **informal communications channels** within your project.

Dealing with criticism: what to do when negative opinions of your project reaches the public domain / social media?

- Consider the need for **different types of strategies**, depending on the nature of the criticism you are facing: whether it comes from an external party, or from within the project or its immediate surroundings (e.g. other researchers, other professional partners and collaborators).
- When facing a crisis, **time is of the essence:** react fast!
- **Mitigation plan:** you need to have one ready!
- **Involve the IHI Programme Office as soon as possible.** The IHI team can support you and liaise with other essential parties such as the European Commission and EFPIA.
- Handling a crisis requires **positivity and sensitivity:** do not engage in conflict; build a constructive attitude; try to understand the other party's concerns as well as shared interests you may have; make sure your message is clear and works.
- **Know your community:** if you know that your community has specific sensitivities, address them in a proactive way, maybe through a long-term strategy to plan ahead.
- Compile a **positive story** about the work you are doing.
- **Preventive measures:** at an early stage, discuss with the project the procedures to follow in case of a communications crisis - who should be contacted and how, within a short time frame.
- You have to 'prepare for war in peace-time': use social media **monitoring; prepare pre-approved messages** for your social media channels to be used if/when criticism hits.
- Whenever possible, **take the discussion offline.**
- Look for third party **endorsement.**
- Build **long-term relationships** with policy-makers, in order to cultivate positive support around you.
- Ultimately, build a **thick skin!** You cannot please everyone.

How to build a communication strategy to prevent strong public opposition to the objectives of your project

- **Listen** to and **have empathy** with people who are for and against your project objectives.
- **Share all the information you have:** scientific facts; information on safety, ethics and regulation. Explain what you do and why you do it, and the medical need underlying this decision.
- Have a great, **clear position statement:** acknowledge the fact that you are aware of a different way of thinking, but here is what you do, and why.

- **Engage** with social influencers, or people who are opposed to your project, ideally in non-public forums; invite them to seminars or focus groups.
- **Humanise the project through a proactive strategy:** have case studies ready introducing people (and their families) who are interested in taking a treatment, in participating in a study or trial, and explain that it is a choice. Tip: interview them!
- **Language:** be careful with your choice of words.
- **Translation:** we have to go beyond speaking in English; consider translating your stories and website.

How you can help us – projects promoting IMI/IHI

The rules outlined above and in the Grant Agreement ensure that project communications also help to promote IMI/IHI. However, projects should also consider other ways they can promote IMI/IHI to their stakeholders (this will also help to put the project into its broader context).

- Include information on IMI on your **project website** and in **printed materials** (we can provide you with texts for this).
- Include IMI/IHI news in your **project newsletters**. As long as you acknowledge IMI/IHI as the source, you are free to copy texts from the IMI newsletter, website, and brochures in your own materials. NB texts on IMI or IHI in external publications and on other websites may be subject to copyright – you should contact the publisher/web manager for permission to reuse these materials.
- **Follow IHI on Twitter and LinkedIn** and share our posts.
- **Tag IHI on Twitter and LinkedIn** and support our communications campaigns by using relevant hashtags.
- Promote IHI's news and activities on your **other social media** platforms.
- Include information on IMI/IHI in your **presentations**.
- Distribute IMI/IHI materials at **your events** and in **your offices / laboratories**.

Questions?

We are always happy to hear from our projects, so if you have a question about IMI, IHI, project communications, or anything else, feel free to contact us at communications@ihi.europa.eu.