

Communication guide for IMI projects

About this document

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

This guide highlights the **rules that all IMI projects must follow** when preparing communication products (with reference to the relevant articles of the Grant Agreement). It also includes communications advice for IMI projects, and describes how we can promote your project through our channels. Finally, it sets out how projects can support wider IHI communications activities.

Avoiding confusion between IMI and IHI

The document 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 (and the EU and EFPIA plus Associated Partners for projects that have them) in all project communications, as set out in the grant agreements. Do not use the IHI logo or refer to yourselves as IHI projects.

IHI projects should refer to the separate communications guide for IHI projects which can be found on the [project communications page](#) of the IHI website.

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 elements**², 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**

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

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]].

- **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 IHI 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.

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.

Communications advice for projects

In April 2019, the IMI Programme Office held a special workshop dedicated to project communications. Much of the advice given below comes from the event, and from other conversations with people from our projects over the years. It is therefore based on the experience of people working on project communications.

During the project: ensuring motivation and message coherence in a large consortium

- **Make it easy for project partners to communicate well and consistently:**
 - Create a project narrative, including a slogan and what you stand for.
 - Ensure your logo and branding elements are easily accessible to your project partners.
 - Make templates for PowerPoint presentations, e-mails, posters and messages, and encourage your colleagues to use them. This will save them 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 a few one-pagers to summarise the key points of your communication plans and regularly remind your colleagues of the materials available.
 - Provide materials such as captioned images, ready-to-use social media posts, and guidance documents (but remember to strike the right balance to avoid flooding your colleagues!)

- Create an effective Q&A to help people manage the unexpected.
- **Engage your project partners in communication decisions**, such as voting for your project logo, so as to encourage them to feel ownership of communication projects. Call for volunteers, especially young researchers, to engage in the project communication activities.
- **Find opportunities to put project partners in the spotlight**. Highlight successes and give key project partners visibility: other colleagues may want to follow the example.
- **Remind colleagues** of the importance of communications and dissemination activities. Send project partners regular updates, 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 contacts**: it may prove useful if there is a need for urgent contact and the main PR person is not available.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Set up an internal bulletin** to share information and updates. You can also use tools such as WhatsApp or Slack as informal communications channels within your project.

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

Some projects work in sensitive areas that may generate a negative response among some stakeholders. The advice below is designed to address some of these issues up front so that they don't become communications crises.

- **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.

Dealing with criticism: what to do when negative opinions of your project reach the public domain?

- **Prepare a mitigation plan early in the project.** 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. 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). Prepare pre-approved messages to be used if/when criticism hits.
- **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.
- **Build long-term relationships with policy-makers and opinion-leaders**, in order to cultivate positive support around you.
- **React fast!** When facing a crisis, time is of the essence.
- **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 industry partners.
- **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.
- **Compile a positive story** about the work you are doing.
- **Take the discussion offline** whenever possible.

Communicating about the end of a project

When a project ends, you will need to think about a number of points:

- How will you communicate the results, impact and legacy of the project to the wider health community?
- How long will you maintain the project website and social media accounts? And even if you stop updating the website content, how long will you keep paying for the domain name?
- Many significant results and impacts (e.g. publication of key papers, regulatory procedures, impacts in organisations and on healthcare...) happen after the official end of the project. Who will inform the IHI Programme Office and the wider community when these things happen?

Once your project has ended, we will contact you to get the information we need on the project results and impacts so that we can update the project factsheet on the IHI website. At this point, we can also update the website link to that of any legacy organisation (if relevant) and add links to key publications summarising the results of the project.

How we promote your project

We are always keen to promote our 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.)
- A project result with an impact – e.g. on regulatory processes, organisational procedures, healthcare...
- Creation of new tools / databases for drug discovery
- Public project events (including symposia held during scientific and other conferences, exhibition booths at conferences, etc.)
- 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/IHI 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.

Examples of how the IHI Programme Office promotes projects and their activities

Project factsheet on IHI website All IMI and IHI projects have a [factsheet](#) in the 'projects and results' section of the IHI website. The page provides an overview of the project, its partners, finance information, and links to the project's own website and any social media channels. We write the text of the factsheet and send it to the projects for an accuracy check. You should send us your logo, website address and any social media links so that we can add these to the page as well. If you have a general project leaflet, brochure, or video, we can also add these to the factsheet.

News stories We regularly write news stories about our projects. Articles are published in our website [newsroom](#) and promoted through our newsletter and social media. The articles also appear on the project factsheet.

IHI newsletter The [IHI newsletter](#) is sent out monthly and includes news from our projects.

Social media We are active on X, LinkedIn and Mastodon and we share or like most of our projects' posts. If you are on these platforms, send us your handle so that we can follow you, and tag us in your posts to increase the chance of us seeing them:

X: [@IHIEurope](#)

LinkedIn: [Innovative Health Initiative \(IHI\)](#)

Mastodon: [@IHI@social.network.europa.eu](#)

We also have a [YouTube channel](#) where we can post videos from projects.

We are not currently active on other social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram. However, we can link to your pages/profiles on these platforms from your project's factsheet on the IHI website

Events IHI events: We often invite project representatives to give presentations at events we organise ourselves.

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 project 'success stories'.

Media

Interviews: We often cite project success stories in our answers to questions from journalists, and in some cases, we may direct journalists to specific projects.

Press releases: If your project has big news, a joint IHI-project press release could be an option. 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. If you are issuing your own press release, we can also provide you with a quote from an IHI staff member if appropriate.

Reports, brochures and other publications

Our Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) includes a lot of success stories from our projects. We also produce ad hoc brochures and leaflets and these often include information on our projects.

Scientific publications

IHI staff occasionally write papers for scientific journals, and these often cite our projects and their successes.

Our partners' channels

The IHI partners (i.e. the European Commission plus COCIR, EFPIA, EuropaBio, MedTech Europe and Vaccines Europe) regularly promote our projects through their communications channels, including social media, websites, newsletters, podcasts, etc.

How you can help us – projects promoting IHI

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

- Include information on IMI and/or IHI 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 IHI as the source, you are free to copy texts from our newsletter, website, and brochures in your own materials. NB texts on IMI/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 social media** and share our posts.
- **Tag IHI on social media** and support our communications campaigns by using relevant hashtags.
- Include information on IMI/IHI in your **presentations**.
- Distribute 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.