



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# USAID Municipal Competitiveness Project

## MANUAL FOR DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE MUNICIPAL COMPETITIVENESS MODEL

**April 2015**

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by RTI International.

# **MANUAL FOR DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE MUNICIPAL COMPETITIVENESS MODEL**

## **USAID Municipal Competitiveness Project**

Contract No.: EPP-I-00-04-00037-00  
April 2015

Prepared for  
Sandra Lorena Duarte  
Contracting Officer's Representative  
Economic Growth Office  
USAID/EI Salvador  
Telephone: (503) 2501-3362  
sduarte@usaid.gov

Prepared by  
RTI International  
3040 Cornwallis Road  
Post Office Box 12194  
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194

This document has been made possible thanks to the support of the people of the United States of America through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The views/opinions here in are those of RTI International and do not necessarily reflect those of USAID or the US Government.

RTI International is one of the world's leading research institutes, dedicated to improving the human condition by turning knowledge into practice. Our staff of more than 3,700 provides research and technical services to governments and businesses in more than 75 countries in the areas of health and pharmaceuticals, education and training, surveys and statistics, advanced technology, international development, economic and social policy, energy and the environment, and laboratory testing and chemical analysis.

RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.

---

# CONTENT

---

Acronyms.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Presentation .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Municipal Competitiveness Project Background .....	1
Introduction.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
I. How should the communication be.....	9
II. A communication plan includes the following: .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
A. Five steps to better communication.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1. Create a communications planning team .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2. Define the scope of work and assign time to the process ....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3. Review the scope of the communication plan and its compliance .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4. Develop an action plan and a timeline of communication.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
5. Implement the plan.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
B. Evaluation of the Communication Plan.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 1: Template for assessment of communication.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
III. Action Plan for the municipality .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
A. General Purpose .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
B. Specific Objectives.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1. Support to activities.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2. Promotion of the impacts at the local level.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
C. Hearings.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
D. Actions for the municipality .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1. Communication materials.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2. Interviews with media .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3. Events .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4. Optimizing Web and social networks .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
5. Social Media.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6. Social Networks.....	18
7. Guide to tell a success story.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.9</b>

Appendixes.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appendix 1 EMPRE .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appendix 2 PAE .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appendix 3 Publications.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

---

## ACRONYMS

---

MCC	Municipal Competitiveness Committee
PPD	Public-Private Dialogue
EMPRE	Municipal Unit for Business Development
MCI	Municipal Competitiveness Index
MCP	Municipal Competitiveness Project
USAID	<i>United States Agency for International Development</i> /Agencia de los Estados Unidos para el Desarrollo Internacional
SAP	Business Service Points
SMART	Specific – Measurable – Achievable – Realistic – Timed

---

## PREFACE

---

The purpose of this manual is to guide and facilitate the implementation of a communications strategy when implementing the Municipal Competitiveness Development Model that emerged from the Municipal Competitiveness Project (MCP) funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

The manual contains information on the design, implementation, and monitoring of a communication strategy for the implementation of a competitiveness model. The implementation of technical tools should be adjusted to the reality and experience of each municipality.

The manual is based on the process of creation and implementation of 50 models in 50 municipalities. The content was adapted to the observations and experiences of the assisted municipalities by the MCP.

---

## MUNICIPAL COMPETITIVENESS PROJECT BACKGROUND

---

The MCP provided technical assistance to 50 municipalities for a period of 54 months (September 2010–March 2015). It was created to improve municipal management and strengthen the investment climate, facilitating the establishment and operation of businesses based on the opportunities identified in measuring the Municipal Competitiveness Index (MCI) 2009.

The MCP included seven components: (1) strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of municipal capacity to provide services to entrepreneurs; (2) building organizational capacity, including linking and cooperation between municipalities and between municipalities and the private sector; (3) development of measurements of the MCI 2011 and 2013; (4) support actions to prevent violence under the Domestic Finance for Development or DF4D; (5) creation of 14 and strengthening of six Municipal Units for Business Development (EMPRE); (6) strengthening of 20 Municipal Competitiveness Committees (MCC); and (7) enhancing institutional capacity of local subcontractors of the MCP.

Established MCCs were made up of representatives from the municipalities and local private sector to promote improvement initiatives for the business climate in the city. The MCCs developed and implemented 50 Municipal Competitiveness Plans, signed 50 transparency pacts, and changed the view of municipal officials from that of public service providers to promoters of local economic development.

In March 2015, 38 municipalities had set up 50 one-stop windows of service to entrepreneurs offering simplified procedures for registration and issuance of permits and licenses for business operation. Additionally, six municipalities established EMPREs as a new model to serve the business community.

To consolidate the success of the EMPREs and contribute to the sustainability of the MCC, USAID extended the life of the project from March 31, 2014, to March 28, 2015. As of June 7, 2014, the MCP worked with 14 of the 50 original municipalities: Candelaria de la Frontera, Chalatenango, Ciudad Arce, Ciudad Barrios, Nahuizalco, San Martin, San Salvador, Santa Tecla, Santiago Nonualco, Sensuntepeque, Suchitoto, Tecoluca, and Zacatecoluca.

The work focused on three major activities: (1) replicate the EMPRE model to improve municipal services and increase access of entrepreneurs to business development services; (2) strengthen the 14 MCCs; and (3) improve the institutional capacity of two local subcontractors. Additional work will consolidate the benefits of public-private dialogue (PPD) initiated by the MCC, support efficient government administration and service to the private sector.

In conclusion, the MCCs, designed and implemented by the MCP, have become a structure that is motivating the PPD that El Salvador needs. They allow both sectors to discuss ideas and projects together with one common vision. Therefore, it is important to continue promoting such

activities to finalize the implementation of joint projects, ensure sustainability, and replicate the model in other municipalities that were not benefited by the MCP.

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

Public Governments should work to improve the quality and service to the public showing more transparency and greater opportunities for the relationship between citizens and the administration. The administrations should work for the common good, seeking to be open and transparent and, ultimately, closer to the citizens, so that communication can bridge the gap between them. Close relationships with citizens should be one of the objectives of public communication. In addition, governments have an obligation to communicate and publish information about public services they develop.

Public communication needs a clear and direct communication strategy. Therefore, a communication plan must be designed for the activities that governments carry out and those they plan to implement in the future.

The perception or idea that people construct about a business based off of open communication, is the root of a transparent, helpful relationship between consumer and business. What matters is what people say and believe (perceived perception) and not what the brand or entity communicates (projected perception). Through the perceptions of individuals, institutions, or companies, a brand is built that contributes to the creation of the public image of an institution.

---

## I. HOW SHOULD THE COMMUNICATION BE ACCOMPLISHED

---

To communicate effectively, you need to plan what you want to get from it and what needs to be done to achieve this goal. The drafting of a communication plan demands effort. However, once it is prepared, a written plan will make everything easier; it helps set priorities, relieves the stress of last minute happenings, and brings order and focus to activities that would otherwise remain randomly contingent.

The communication plan should pursue the following objectives:

- Inform potential beneficiaries about the services offered
- Attract potential volunteers to contribute some of their time
- Share success stories with the community
- Inform the public about the work, which includes providing recognition to those who contribute

---

## II. A COMMUNICATION PLAN INCLUDES

---

- Strategic objectives
- Activities or tactics to achieve these objectives
- How are these objectives and activities supported?
- Expected outcomes (goals) by which you can measure the success of each activity

### A. Five steps to better communication

#### 1. Create a communications planning team

To achieve efficiency and improve the chances that the plan will be useful, involve the people who are responsible for implementing the plan.

If the organization has a communications manager, he/she should lead the process. If not, choose someone on staff with the expertise to guide a team through the process.

#### 2. Define the scope of work and allot time to the process

Be clear about the functions performed by each participant. Spend a total of three to five days (at once or distributed over time) the first time you do it.

It is important to separate the work you can do from what you should do. Set goals that focus on what needs to be done and ensure that these goals can be achieved.

#### 3. Review the scope of the communication plan and its compliance

Think about what you are doing and saying to various audiences, including beneficiaries, donors, nongovernmental organizations, and potential volunteers. To begin, look for news articles and samples of all existing materials such as letterheads, flyers, and brochures. Also, pay attention to what is communicated in the external environment about your sector/issue and by the competition.

As with any planning process, it also involves answering some basic questions:

- Why do we want to communicate with groups outside our organization (objectives)?
- What do we want to achieve (outcomes)?
- Who are our communications directed to (public)?
- What do we want to communicate (message)?
- Why do others need these services? (i.e. how they will benefit from them); Who made this work possible (provide an acknowledgment to the donor and host government)?
- Who will communicate the message (messengers)?
- How do we want to communicate (channels)?
- What language (s) do they speak?
- Where and how you can communicate with them? What is the best way to present them with our message?
- What cultural considerations should be taken into account?

#### 4. Develop an action plan and a timeline of communication

The answers to questions above will become the basis of your action plan. Try to design communication activities that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timed). Be sure to include as part of your communications plan enough budget and manpower to implement the planned activities.

#### 5. Implement the plan

Based on the information gathered, you are ready to develop your materials and disseminate your message(s). Be sure to track and evaluate your initiatives. Check your plan after a few months and adjust your approach as needed. If the beginning is overwhelming, start with some simple tasks. The momentum you get with a small advance can energize the organization to undertake greater challenges.

### B. Evaluation of the Communication Plan

Figure 1: Template for assessment of communication

This template is an example of a whole series of questions to check every aspect of the plan that has been proposed and developed.

<b>PURPOSE</b>	<p>Why do we want to communicate with groups outside of our organization (objectives)?          What do we want to achieve (outcomes)?          What are our priorities?</p>
<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<p>Who are our target audiences (be specific)? (Select from a list).          * Beneficiaries          * Donors          * Opinion Leaders          * Media          * General public          * Legislators / other governmental entities _____          * Other stakeholders (specify _____)</p> <p>What is the profile of each one of them?          • What language is spoken? _____          • What cultural considerations should be taken into account?</p>
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<p>Tactics</p> <p>Which of the following methods (tactics) have we used to promote the organization and its core messages in the last 12 months? Do we have examples?          * Brochures          * Flyers          * Posters          * Billboards          * Press Releases          * Website          * Presentations          * Newsletters          * Events          * Advertising in the local newspaper          * Advertising on local radio          * Business cards          * Email          * Other _____</p> <p>What are the best methods (tactics) to reach our target audience; in other words, what is the best way to "come before them" with our message? (Match audiences with effective tactics exposed above).</p> <p>* Beneficiaries          * Donors          * Opinion Leaders          * Media          * General public          * Legislators / other government entities          * Stakeholder (specify _____)</p> <p>What we want to communicate to each audience (message)?          • The services we offer.          • Why they need these services (that is, how to benefit from them).          • Who makes this work possible (that is, provide an acknowledgment to the donor and the host government).</p>
<b>IMPLEMENTATION (continued)</b>	<p>Who will communicate the message (messengers)?          How do we want to communicate (methods / tactics)?          What resources do we have available for the implementation at this time?          How are these resources being allocated?          What resources do we lack? Time, materials, money?          What works?          What does not work?</p> <p>Are there skills / abilities we consider useful to better do our job?          • If so, what are they?          • How can we get them?</p> <p>Review          Who should review and give approval to products / materials for external communication?</p>
<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	<p>How do we track the success (e.g. surveys and newspapers)?          What were our most effective communication tactics?          How do we measure the impact of our initiatives?          What are the biggest obstacles to effectively reach our target audiences with our messages?          Name one thing that the organization could do to improve communication immediately.</p>
<b>GENERAL</b>	<p>What was the biggest communication challenge faced by the organization in recent 12 months?          What we think are the biggest challenges for the organization over the course next year?</p>

---

### III. ACTION PLAN FOR THE MUNICIPALITY

---

#### A. General Purpose

The communications action plan should complement the work of the MCC. Communication must be effective and consistent, informative, participatory, and innovative to clearly articulate its objectives and results; and also to increase its effectiveness.

In turn, it is essential that each interest group is attended with information and through means that adjust with its role in the change that you want to generate in the municipalities.

#### B. Specific Objectives

##### 1. Support to activities

Introduce to local entrepreneurs, universities, donors, central government, and the general public what the MCC does and its results and benefits for the local private sector and the communities.

##### 2. Promotion of the impacts at the local level

Raise awareness of the impact of the public-private dialogue and the efforts to strengthen the responsiveness of the municipality. Market the services performed on behalf of local entrepreneurs and the community by the MCC, EMPREs, and Business Service Points.

#### C. Hearings

Small, medium, and large businesses in each territory should be informed. Also include partners; universities; donors; central government; the general population; and people with different levels of education, professions, and trades in urban and rural areas.

#### D. Actions for the municipality

##### 1. Communication materials

Communication materials should be designed for a specific purpose, as mentioned below.

a. **Municipal Unit for Business Development**

To position the service of EMPRE the logo designed should still be used, which has elements and colors easily identifiable. Maintain adequate information and signage in the municipality. This way there is identity and unification to promote this service that is tailored and personalized to the municipality. Based on the above, have business cards, letterhead, envelopes, flyers, posters, and banners. The municipality has a CD with editable materials, for impressions or making changes to the information. (See *Appendix 1*)

The information to be included in the materials produced to communicate the function of EMPRE must contain the following:

- EMPRE logo
- Logo of the municipality
- A brief description of the EMPRE
- A description of services offered to the entrepreneur
- The contact person responsible for the EMPRE office
- Email address of the manager
- The telephone number
- The address of the office
- The hours the EMPRE is open to the public

Make announcements in the press and local radio spots, as determined, to promote the service and give examples of results that are inviting to beneficiaries. Also, create a website for EMPRE, use the website and the municipality website.

b. **Business Service Point**

It should supply material to the Business Service Point to identify them. The PAE materials are below. See *Appendix 2* for more details.

- Label to record your business
- Detailed zoning plan

- Matrix regarding land use
- Label of location for the entrance of the municipality
- Labels for the one-stop window
- Label alluding the priority to pregnant women, elderly, and disabled.
- Single form of business procedures
- Brochure for the User Guide
- Suggestions Form

It is also important to communicate the satisfaction of entrepreneurs regarding this service through leaflets with photographs and testimonials that are exhibited for visitors and to send to contacts. Make short videos of these testimonials and upload them on the YouTube channel of the municipality, linking to the website and the Fanpage.

#### c. Municipal Competitiveness Committee

A logo should be developed to identify the MCC and to be used in communication materials and promotional items. A newsletter must be produced every three months that includes the logo of the MCC and the municipality, where activities, events, and achievements during this period are described. This will be distributed via hard copy (print) and electronically to contacts in the municipality, employees, local business people, members of the MCC, and the general community. An example of newsletter can be seen in *Appendix 3*.

Additionally, develop success stories that tell about changes, improvements, changes in people and the municipality made through the work of the MCC. Take videos of these activities and upload them to the YouTube channel of the municipality, linking to the website and the Fanpage.

It is important to make t-shirts so that the MCC members are identified in the various activities carried out. Also invest in some kind of promotional items, such as pens that can be handed out during the activities.

## 2. Interviews with media

It is important to use the media, print, and local radio to promote the work of the MCC, EMPRE, and SAP. Entrepreneurs and the general public should be aware of the work done to get their support. Spokespersons must be chosen from the public and private sectors. The contribution of beneficiaries is important as it gives veracity to

the work done. Always prepare a press release to inform about the activities (include date, place, and time), the objectives, and results.

### 3. Events

Different types of events or initiatives of the EMPRE, PAE, and MCC should be carried out and the mayor, representatives of municipalities and the private sector, other government institutions, aid agencies, and community partners should be invited. It is important that the person responsible of the organizing the event oversees the actions of the plan to ensure its success.

To plan an event you should

- Define the team that will support different tasks
- Set the date, time, and location
- Develop a list of guests (depending on the event, invite the media)
- Design invitations containing all the information necessary to attend
- Print invitations
- Develop customized invitations
- Organize hard copy or electronic delivery of the invitations
- Track RSVPs
- Develop the agenda for the event
- Design the event/develop the presentation
- Define honorary members, if any
- Send letters inviting honorary members
- Designate a Master of Ceremonies
- Design and display support materials, such as banners and flyers
- Depending on the event, take into account the stage, sound equipment, screens, podium, honorary members table, flags, anthems, stage and speaker for media, registration desk, reserve chairs for very important people, microphones, identification tags for invitees
- Purchase floral arrangement for stage, if necessary
- If you are inviting the media, contact them and prepare a press release
- Conduct a photo shoot of participants

#### 4. Optimizing Web and social networks

Social networks and the website should be used in a complementary manner, but not favor one tool over another or discard its use.

Some use Facebook as their website because they consider it cheaper than operating a website for their business. However, without a website you are missing the opportunity to reach a larger number of consumers. The choice should, therefore, not be between social media like Facebook and a website, but rather have both platforms as part of the digital business strategy.

Social networks are communities of people who are connected around a particular subject who keep in touch and share experiences and knowledge daily. The networks allow people to be “close”, even if they are miles away. Social networks also allow you to interact and share content from the web, enriching the social life of the user.

You need to have clear objectives to determine in which social media platform to participate. Among the most popular is Facebook, a network of contacts and interests; Twitter invites you to follow people and start your own conversations; Flickr is a community of photography; and YouTube shares videos: conferences, promotional, etc.

The feedback from users is a fundamental aspect and social networks can be easily achieved. You can get firsthand information about the products and services offered

#### 5. Social Media

##### a. Disseminate what you do

- Define objectives: Who do I want to reach? What do I want to say? What do I want to know? What response do we expect? Listen - Involve.
- Choose the most appropriate social networks. Each social network offers something different.
- Appoint a person to be in charge: Should a team or a one team member be assigned to manage profiles? A volunteer? It should be someone qualified.
- Put together a publication calendar.
- Measure the results and monitor the activity.

##### b. The content

- Simple: communicate only the most important and essential information.
- Unexpected: present information in new, surprising ways.
- Concrete: use specific language, images, examples, and information.
- Credible: use numbers to get your point across.
- Emotional: remember that the community comprises real people with feelings and experiences.
- Tell stories and experiences.
- Social media is a conversation.
- Offer visibility, allow more people to learn.
- The effect of this presence is often viral and has a continuous feedback loop.
- Allows incorporation of new perspectives and opportunities.

## 6. Social Networks

### a. Facebook

#### Recommendations

- Profile vs. Page vs. Group: to create a public space for the organization, consider the various page types of Facebook. You can also create a private group.
- You can publish texts and messages, but can also add videos, photos, and links to other sites.
- If you would like more visibility, consider Facebook ads.
- Use Facebook applications to increase followers and engage them in the cause, conduct informal surveys, etc.
- Always post links.
- Search others to “friend” that share common goals.
- Use hashtags (#) to create special campaigns. For example: #ayudamicausa. You can get many people to join the cause this way.
- The pages should have managers who may also have their own profiles.
- Statistics show important data on the activity of the page and its followers or fans.
- First the fans are sought through the managers’ friends.
- You can use Facebook to advertise, but you have to pay for it.
- From the Administration Panel you can see the notifications of the page.
- You can also access the private messages sent by people.

With the "hashtags", themes and phrases mentioned in the personal biography or the page become links that can be clicked. Thus, users can more easily find publications on topics you are interested in. To use a hashtag, write # with a theme or phrase and add it to the publication. For example: I was at a forum on #competitiveness.

The hashtag on Facebook has the function of grouping discussions around a topic and it is capable of creating a unique URL for each of these hashtags, which is very useful for content marketing.

#### b. Twitter

Twitter is the social network that introduced the hashtag and it can have a very positive effect if used correct. "Tweets" that contain one or more hashtags have a 55% chance of being retweeted and also promote a greater degree of commitment among users who read them.

### 7. Guide to tell a success story

#### a. What is a success story?

It is a powerful tool that describes the impact of work in addition to preserving and transferring knowledge in order to improve future cooperation programs. See *Appendix 3 for* one example of a success story.

#### b. What is a success story good for?

- Updated news
- Details the results of the work
- Shows the challenges encountered and the course of action taken ("blood, sweat, and tears").
- Describes the impact on the lives of persons covered (i.e., anecdotes, and photos).
- Increases program credibility without fear of including the negative aspects, conflicts, or challenges.

#### c. Key questions to find good stories

- What is the challenge? Success stories should clearly and simply define the problem, opportunity, or challenge.
- Does it describe the initiative taken? The success stories must show or explain the strategy and actions used to overcome the problem or to take the chance.

- What are the results? Demonstrate results with measurable data.
- Does it explain how the assistance of donors or collaborators had a deep impact?
- Is there a citation of the beneficiaries? A quote from the beneficiary adds a human touch to the stories.
- Are the Who, Why, When, and Where explained?
- What strategic issue is explaining the story?
- Who is the audience for this story?
- Why was the photo selected? Photos help make the narrative come alive.
- What type or format must be used?