





Communication in Formas applications

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Science communication @LTV

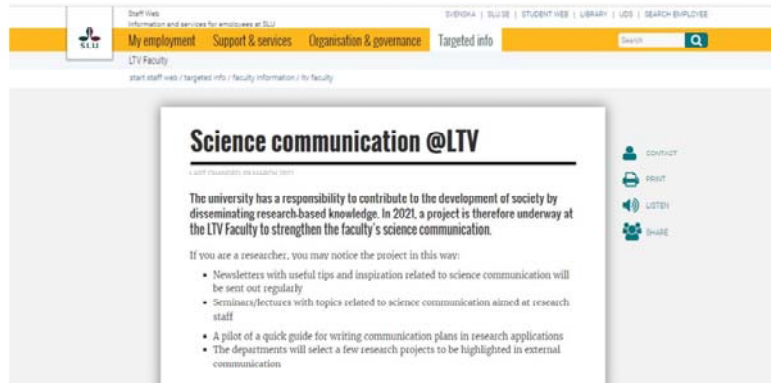


Workshop 25 March 2021

1. Presentation
2. Formas grounds of assessment of societal relevance and communication
3. Societal relevance
4. Why, who, where, when and more
5. Practical example
6. Have in mind!
7. Summary

SCIENCE AND
EDUCATION
**FOR
SUSTAINABLE
LIFE**

Support material and links – internt.slu.se/en/science-com-ltv



The screenshot shows a web page with a navigation bar at the top. The navigation bar includes links for 'My employment', 'Support & services', 'Organisation & governance', and 'Targeted info'. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'Science communication @LTV'. The main content area contains the following text:

Science communication @LTV

2021-01-20 10:00:00

The university has a responsibility to contribute to the development of society by disseminating research-based knowledge. In 2021, a project is therefore underway at the LTV Faculty to strengthen the faculty's science communication.

If you are a researcher, you may notice the project in this way:

- Newsletters with useful tips and inspiration related to science communication will be sent out regularly
- Seminars/lectures with topics related to science communication aimed at research staff
- A pilot of a quick guide for writing communication plans in research applications
- The departments will select a few research projects to be highlighted in external communication

On the right side of the page, there are social media and utility icons: CONTACT, PRINT, LISTEN, and SHARE.

Material and ppt-presentation will be published on the page internt.slu.se/en/science-com-ltv

As preparations for this workshop we have read a number of actual Formas-applications from the last three years, both accepted and declined applications. And our material is based on this and on Formas own grounds for assessment.



Formas grounds for assessment

New support material

[support-grounds-of-assessment-societal-relevance-communication.pdf \(formas.se\)](#)

In Swedish:

[stod-bedomningsgrunden-samhallsnytta-kommunikation.pdf \(formas.se\)](#)

FORMAS



Formas has updated their support material to address the grounds of assessment for societal relevance and communication from 2021.

They have formulated a number of questions to assist you in addressing the grounds of assessment for societal relevance and communication. The same questions are used to support the review panels evaluating the applications.

They have made this change since they see communication and societal relevance strongly interconnected. Communication is one of several tools for making research and the results of research available, thereby creating societal relevance.



In the assessment they want to know how your project interacts with other actors and in what context your research project is significant for those you think will benefit from it. In other words, who you want to communicate with. Both during the time the project is running but also when it is completed or continued. That is not different from before.

But with this new grounds for assessment they emphasize that societal relevance and communication go hand in hand.

Societal relevance?



SHOW THAT THE RESULTS FROM YOUR PROJECT IS GOING TO ADDRESS AT LEAST ONE WELL KNOWN SOCIETAL PROBLEM.



WHAT NEW KNOWLEDGE IS THE PROJECT GOING TO PRODUCE AND HOW DOES THAT KNOWLEDGE FIT INTO VISIONS OF A BETTER FUTURE? CONTEXTUALIZE!



SHOW THAT YOUR PROJECT IS RELEVANT FOR A CONSIDERABLE PART OF SOCIETY. CONTEXTUALIZE!



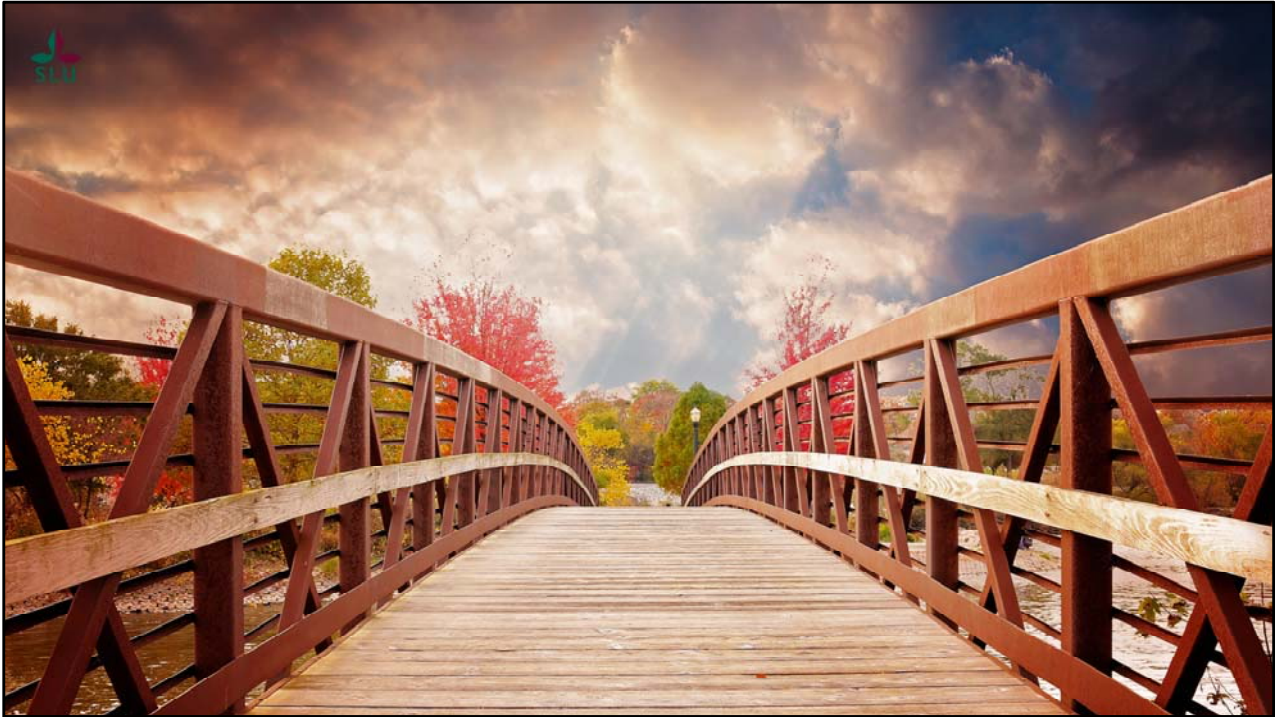
BE SPECIFIC. WHO IS GOING TO FIND THE CONTACTS WITH AND RESULTS FROM YOUR PROJECT USEFUL? WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO AS A RESULT OF THEIR NEW KNOWLEDGE?

Connect to SDG goals where possible
Short term/long term

This is also a part of the message you will include in the communication.

- Show that the results from your project is going to address a well known societal problem. Exemplify to make your project relatable on an individual level.
- What new knowledge is the project going to produce and how does that knowledge fit into visions of a better future? Contextualize a bit! (for example SDG:s or visions/missions at the national level)

- Show that your project is relevant for society in numbers. Contextualize!
(for example national and international statistics about crops/parks, people and money)
- Be specific. Who is going to find the contacts with your project and results from your project useful?



Why?

Formas assessment q 2: What do you want to achieve? Is it making it available, spreading the word or co-creating? Formas wants to know what you are aiming to do, not what you want to achieve with different efforts.

- Raise interest
- Raise awareness
- Encourage feedback about findings
- Support decision making
- Identify expectations
- Spread the word
- Disseminate results in strategic and targeted ways
- Making the research available
- Have end users adopting new technologies
- Co-creating

Who? Recipient/target group

1. Who do you need to have an exchange with when the project is running?
3. Who will you reach when the project is running and in what way may you and the project benefit from these contacts?
4. Who are the recipients of the results and how are you going to reach them?

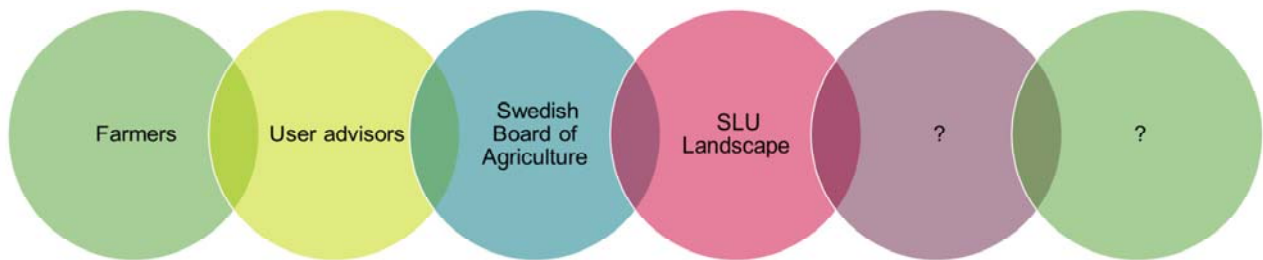


A cornerstone of communication is to start with your target audience, why interesting to them and what is the goal of communicating with them? For example, if it is aimed at the general public, why do you do it, why do you want to do it? Can the research benefit that target group?

That is also one thing Formas stress in their new grounds for assessment is the target group. They want to know how your project interacts with other actors and in what context your research project is significant for those you think will benefit from it.

As you can see in the relevant questions to address in the application, 3 of the 4 questions is aimed at the target group.

Start with the who



How?

If you haven't already - Identify people and organizations likely to have an interest or stake in the project – stakeholders. Map, classify and value their importance.

What issues are they likely to raise? When thinking of issues for the stakeholder, maybe there are others concern with the same issue in connection to your project. You do this to ensure that key stakeholders are not left out.

You do this as a help to pick the target groups for communication. Not every stakeholder needs to be communicated with separately but you need to have thought of them in your analysis/planning.

- Civil society/end users, specify like farmers (LRF), growers, home gardeners, end user advisors (Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies)
- Management like Advisory board and/or reference group and/or
- Related projects, networks or researchers which you are part of or have contact with (in regards of the project)
- Regulatory and government agencies (Swedish Board of Agriculture, Swedish

Chemicals Agency, Swedish Forest Agency), research institutes (RISE, The Forestry Research Institute of Sweden), societies (Nordic Beet Research Foundation, Växtskyddsrådet)

- Industry collaborations partners
- Innovation businesses
- Collaboration platforms (SLU Grogrund, Plant Link, SLU Landscape, Future platforms at SLU, SLU Partnerskap Alnarp, Plant Protection Platform at SLU, ...)
- Internal other activities of importance for dissemination, lecturers, professors
- Students – be specific! Which students and how will they use the knowledge?
- Other researchers – be specific! Which researchers and how will you and they benefit from the contacts with your project?
- General public – why is it relevant for the general public? Why? In connection to what? Be specific!

Who to communicate with – target groups

- Who
 - do you need to have an exchange with when the project is running?
 - will you reach when the project is running?
 - Are the recipients of the results?
- In what way may you and the project benefit from the contacts?



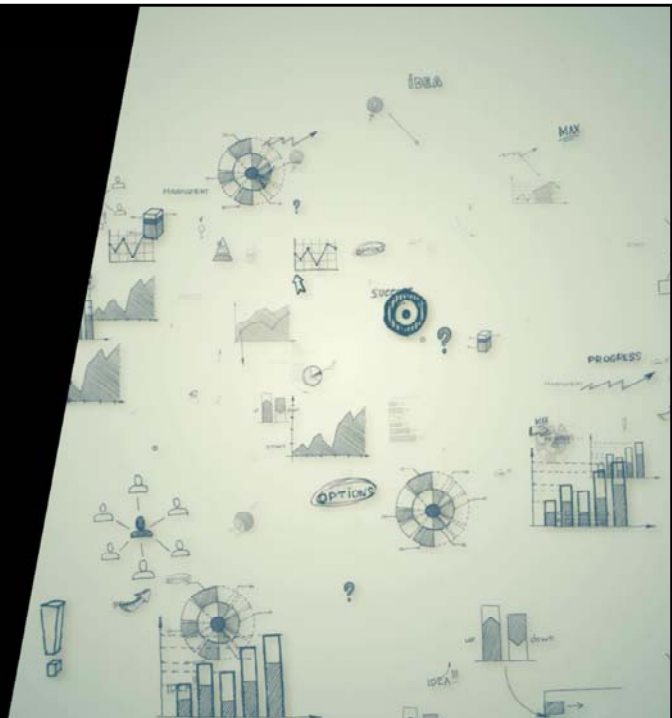
Address the stakeholders you want to communicate with – your target group.

- Not every stakeholder needs to be in your target groups
- Be specific and name groups or people to address if possible
- Value their importance
- And in what way may you and the project benefit from the contacts?

Show that you know who in society the project should reach and that you have access to specific communication channels and networks for reaching them.

Group them and give specific examples. End-users like farmers, gardeners, planning personnel at municipalities, advisors, policy makers etc.. If you don't have access to specific channels, show that people/organizations in your network has access.

"using channels in combination to achieve greater societal impact"



What activities are undertaken following publication (if so) to increase societal impact?

Address each target group, how will you reach them? Which channels do your target groups use? Show that you know. Be specific.

Use existing modes and channels of communication or creating new one? It is a strategic decision, explain how you will do in your project.

Some examples:

- Internal and/or external meetings and network activities
- Workshops/seminars/symposiums
- Scientific and/or popular science publications

- Academic conference and/or popular presentations
- Policy briefs
- Internal and external platforms
- Personal contact
- Flyers, infographs, printed material
- Teaching activities
- Pressreleases
- Interviews
- Web page
- Social media outreach

“In combination with other social media and compared to the full text reads of my research papers, more are reached by social media.”

“A conference gives very good opportunities to engage in discussions

with researchers in the same field and potential end users of the results
(industry developing new technology, clinicians)”

Citations from Springer Nature: [Towards societal impact: How do researchers maximize relevance? | For Researchers | Springer Nature](#)



Please note that Formas expects you to communicate both *during* and *after* your project.



Practical examples

Laura Grenville Briggs

Laura will give her examples on how to work with stakeholder analysis and how she from that write the communication part of the application.

Have in mind:

- Target the application to a “non-expert expert”
- Write in a clear way
- Edit yourself, but also enlist help
- Be specific – all projects are different
- When writing – ask yourself who and why every time
- Plan the communication both during and after actual project time
- Budget for communication!

Have in mind:

- Target the application to a non-expert expert
- Write in a clear way and avoid long sentences (shorter sentences, have someone not expert in your area proof-read, check language – Plain English Language)
- Edit Yourself, but also Enlist Help: If possible, make the communication plan or at least the stakeholder analysis together with co-applicants – if different people write different sections, make sure one person is the editor to make the content consistent.
- Be specific– all projects are different and the communication plan needs to be specific – what do you want the target groups to do, feel, think about your project/results or add to your project/results
- Do not forget to have a budget for communication!

Summary: Boxes to tick in your application



Show how your project is a puzzle piece in getting closer to a greater vision for society



Show why the knowledge from your project will benefit society



Show that you know who your stakeholder groups are and give specific examples



Show that you know where your stakeholders are and that you have access



Show that you are a part of a bigger specific context (e. g. different networks)



Show that you have a plan for what you will do and when it will happen

Our recommendation on the basis of having read a number of granted (and not granted) applications.

- Show how your project is a puzzle piece in getting closer to a greater vision for society.
- Show why the knowledge from your project will become useful in and benefit society through outreach to stakeholders

- Show that you know your stakeholder groups and give specific examples
- Show that you are a part of a bigger specific context (e.g. different networks) that will be useful for communicating your project with these stakeholders.
- Show that you know where your stakeholders are and that you have access to the communication channels that really reach them and networking opportunities that makes it possible for you to hear what they have say to you.
- Show that you have a plan for what you will do and when it will happen.



Thank you for your attention and good luck with your applications!

Webb:

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