EPRA Media Literacy Taskforce

Top tips to engage with stakeholders

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A number of national regulatory authorities (NRAs) already have established a MIL network[1] or are cooperating with stakeholders in some way. Following up on the previous work conducted by EPRA in this field (comparative background paper on the role of regulators for the EPRA Vienna meeting[2], guidelines on how to establish Media Literacy Networks[3] and the previous discussion within the EPRA MIL Taskforce), the group agreed that the next milestone would be to draft top tips on how to communicate and collaborate with stakeholders on Media and Information Literacy matters. This document summarises key points to take in consideration when communicating and collaborating with stakeholders, and to keep them engaged.

The Norwegian Media Authority (NMA) established a national Media Literacy Network in 2011 in partnership with the Ministry of Culture. The network is the foundation of NMA's work on media literacy and necessary for keeping an overview of MIL at a national level regarding initiatives, research, projects and actions. NMA coordinates the national network and ensures that the stakeholders meet twice a year and share a communication platform. The work within the network has resulted in several collaboration activities over the years including research, seminars, surveys and campaigns. Based on NMA's work and experience with coordinating a national network on MIL for seven years, NMA presents in the following document its top tips to engage with stakeholders.

1.1 Task anchored in the leadership

A general tip for optimal use of the network by the NRA is to have a clear mandate and that the function of the network is rooted in corporate management.

1.2 Regular meetings

Regular face-to-face meetings are significant to get to know each other and to establish and keep connections. NMA arranges the network's meetings twice a year (usually in November and April). NMA sees to that hosting the meetings rotate between stakeholders each time. This can be important for creating extra commitment to the network and is an opportunity to show your workplace to other stakeholders. NMA organises all the practical details for the meetings, for example setting the date, putting together the agenda, leading the meeting and recording the minutes of the meeting. On the other side, a principle for the meetings is that stakeholders contribute with content, presentations, sharing and discussion. NMA's experience is that a dual meeting point will create opportunities for stakeholders to share experiences and foster new partnerships and collaborations.

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[1] Agency for Electronic Media (HR), Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (IE), Agency for Audio and Audio-visual Media Services of Macedonia (MK), Norwegian Media Authority (NO)

[2] Background Document EPRA/2017/10 by content producer Martina Chapman with Emmanuelle Machet and Tone Gunhild Haugan-Hepsø, for the Working group 1 on Media Literacy: Focus on the role of regulators which convened in Vienna on 12 October 2017 (Final post-meeting version of 12 December 2017), available at the following link: https://www.epra.org/attachments/vienna-wg-i-media-literacy-focus-on-the-role-of-regulators-background-document

[3] Media Literacy Networks – Guidelines of 22 May 2018 of EPRA MIL Taskforce: https://www.epra.org/attachments/media-literacy-networks-guidelines/

1.3 Relationships are a key factor

In NMA's experience, getting to know and developing relationships with stakeholders' results in increased trust. And where there is trust, people tend to work together more easily and effectively. Investing effort in identifying and building stakeholder relationships increases confidence in the network and minimises uncertainty. Personal relationships can help to build trust and understanding between members and facilitate information exchange, networking and willingness for cooperation.

1.4 Communication between meetings

To keep the network "alive" between meetings is essential for its significance and survival. To establish communication channels that are best for the network, it can be important to agree on the following factors:
- how the network will communicate about its work
- how public communication will be
- what communication channels will be best to use, e.g. website, social network profiles etc.
- who will be managing these tasks.

The Norwegian MIL Network uses a closed Facebook-page for communication between meetings for sharing, discussion and planning the meetings. In addition to this formal and collective communication channel, NMA also keeps regularly in touch with stakeholders by phone and e-mails and occasionally with one-on-one meetings.

1.5 Sharing of information

For NRAs who coordinate a network, it may be natural to take an overall responsibility for sharing relevant professional information with the network. That sort of information can for example be:

- new research at national or international level
- news articles of common interest that lead to discussions
- information from international organisations such as UNESCO, EU and the Council of Europe.

1.6 Taking responsibility

The work with stakeholders' engagement should not be the job of one person of the project team within the NRA. It is important that the project team, as well as the management team, understands the responsibility and benefits to follow the right approach to communication and engagement with the network and stakeholders.

1.7 Executing collective projects

Joining a partnership with one or several stakeholders in a specific subject, project, initiative, action etc., may result in lots of benefits for all parties. Firstly, you strengthen your partnership. Secondly, the quality of the content may increase. Thirdly, the potential of spreading initiatives, information and interest for the action amplifies.

1.7.1 Consult often

A project, particularly in the early stages, may be unclear for stakeholders for example in terms of purpose, scope, risks and approach. Regular contacts are essential to ensure that the project plan and time-line are understood in the same way by the NRA and the stakeholder(s).

1.7.2   Discuss criteria for success with your stakeholders

The success of a project may mean different things to different people. You may need to establish criteria of success for the stakeholders involved[4].

1.8 Support stakeholders' initiatives

When a stakeholder in your network is launching a project, activity, conference etc., it is important that the NRA shows its support. Examples of showing support can be to participate at the conference, share/like the resource on social media and in general show interest. By showing your support in various ways, the stakeholder gets an impression of being taken into account.

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[4] More details could be found in the guidelines for evaluating media literacy projects, produced by Stephanie Comey (BAI, IE) https://www.epra.org/attachments/mil-taskforce-top-tips-for-evaluating-media-literacy-projects