



Agency Board Meeting
27 July 2010

Board Report Number: SEPA 31/10

Strategic Communications Plan 2010 - 2011

Synopsis:	This paper presents a high level, strategic communications plan that aims to align all SEPA internal and external communications around the AOP. The objectives are to set the framework for consistent, effective internal and external communication; to further build upon SEPA's reputation as an excellent regulator and advisor; to help support the development of a positive corporate culture; and to help develop communication skills across the organisation.
Risks:	<p>The plan is fully aligned to the AOP, has links with all parts of SEPA business, and has strong interdependencies with the other corporate change programmes. The plan provides opportunities to improve internal and external communications, which are especially important at this time of significant change.</p> <p>This plan has been developed with significant inputs from SMT members, Chief Officers and other staff involved in the AOP and change programmes. Board buddies (Lesley Bloomer and Helen Zealley) have received a presentation from communications department staff highlighting how SEPA's communications work is developed, delivered and measured. Copies of the near final draft plan were sent to the buddies on 1 July.</p>
Financial Implications:	With the possible exception of a budget for staff and customer surveys, this plan will be delivered within existing resources, and it is anticipated that increasing the effectiveness of SEPA communications is likely to help achieve efficiencies.
Staffing Implications:	No additional staffing resources required.
Environmental and Carbon Impact:	SEPA's 'zero print' policy should continue to reduce costs and environmental impacts.
Purpose of the report:	For approval
Report Author:	Monica Straughan, Chief Officer, Strategic Communications
Appendices:	Strategic Communications Plan

Strategic Communications Plan 2010–2011

1. Aims and objectives

“Effective communication will strengthen and build the understanding necessary to deliver our priorities and targets, and ultimately improve organisational performance.”

From SEPA’s Annual operating plan 2010-11.

1.1 The aim of this high level, strategic plan is to align all SEPA internal and external communications around the overall aim of achieving SEPA’s corporate outcomes and the intent and activities of our strategic change programmes, as set out in the Annual operating plan 2010-11 (the AOP).

1.2 In the course of its normal business SEPA communicates with a very wide range of internal and external customers and stakeholders, about a wide range of issues, using a wide range of methods and channels on a daily basis. During this period of significant corporate change it is important that corporate communications are purposeful, clear, open and trusted, consistent and cohesive. Our audiences need to understand what SEPA does, how and why SEPA is changing, and what it will mean for them.

1.3 The objectives of this plan are:

- To set the framework for consistent, effective internal and external communication of SEPA’s mission, the AOP and SEPA’s change agenda;
- Further build upon SEPA’s reputation as an excellent regulator and advisor;
- Help support the development of a positive corporate culture;
- Help develop communication skills across the organisation.

2. Priorities and interdependencies

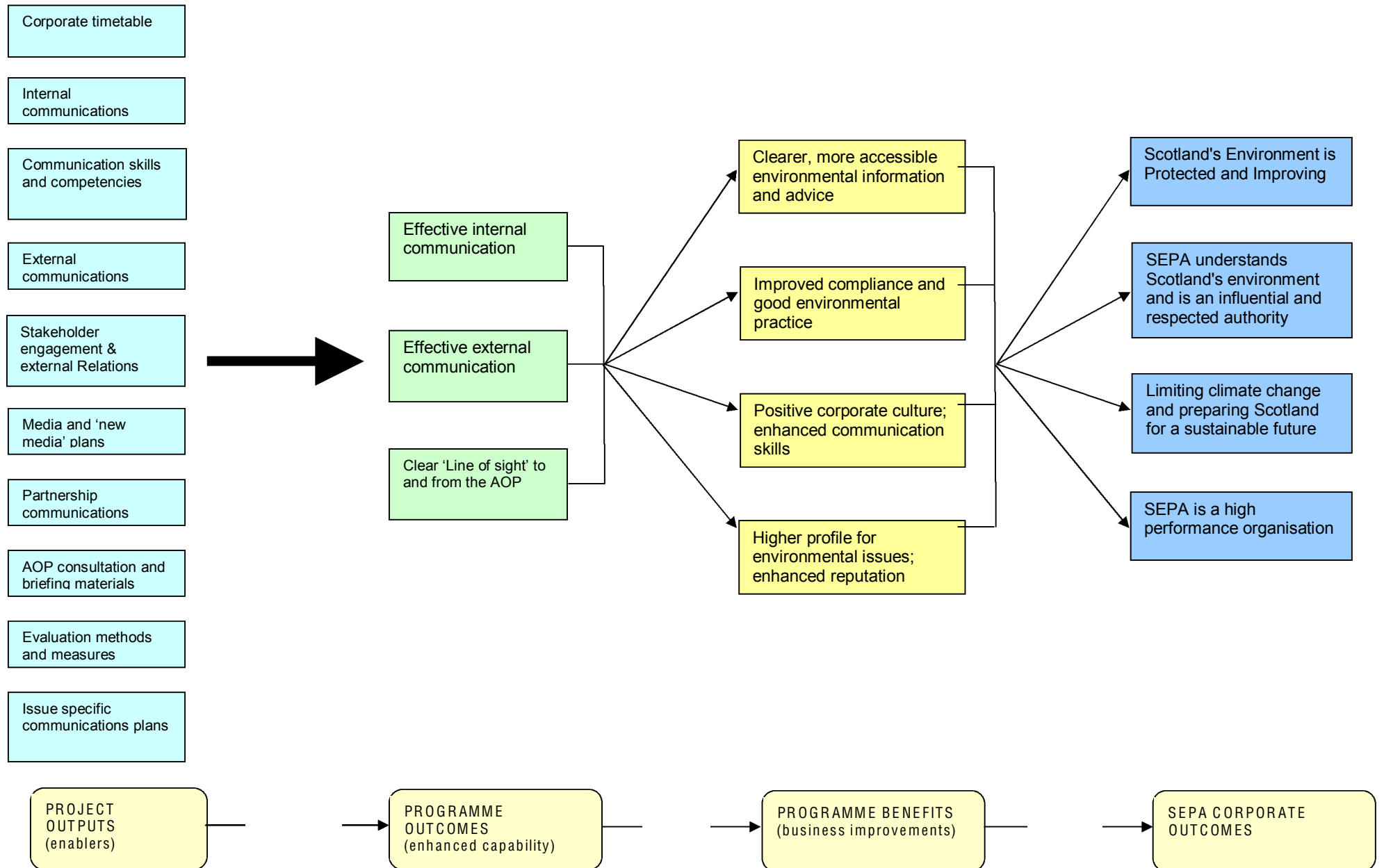
2.1 SEPA’s communications priorities are driven by the corporate priorities set out in the AOP and this strategic plan has been designed to have a clear ‘line of sight’ from the AOP (see figure 1).

2.2 There are strong interdependencies between this strategic plan and SEPA’s corporate change programmes. The corporate timetable is being developed to support delivery of the AOP. It is a ‘living’ timetable designed to help align key dates relating to SEPA issues, outcomes and projects and linkages across the corporate change programmes taking other significant external dates and drivers into account. The timetable forms the basis for detailed communications planning and delivery during the year. Communications messaging, scheduling and planning will evolve in light of its ongoing development.

2.3 The AOP itself includes (on page 9) a diagram showing where SEPA’s outcomes and subsequent activities directly contribute to the Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework. A similar ‘benefits map’ diagram (figure 1 overleaf) demonstrates how this strategy and its subsequent activities directly contribute to the AOP.

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Figure 1: BENEFITS MAP



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3. Audiences

3.1 At strategic level SEPA's audiences (customers and stakeholders) can be grouped into five broad categories. The following list is illustrative and does not attempt comprehensively to include every individual customer group, and clearly some customers will fit into more than one of the categories. However, the broad categories of 'political', 'business and industry' 'partners', 'the public' and the 'internal audience' are useful for communications planning at a strategic level:

- 'Political' – as a public body, SEPA is accountable to the Scottish Parliament via Scottish Ministers and our relationship with the Scottish Government and Parliamentary committees is particularly important. To operate effectively SEPA also needs to monitor and understand its political context and the drivers of environmental policy and public sector priorities at UK and European levels. This year there needs to be a particular focus on the implications of the Scottish Parliamentary election (5 May 2011).
- Business and industry – this includes those we regulate and those we don't regulate but do want to influence. We want to equip these customers with the information they need to understand their environmental responsibilities and comply as simply and cost effectively as possible.
- Partners – this includes the many and various organisations we work with, in the public, private and voluntary sectors. We want to realise as many mutual benefits as we can by cooperating, learning from each other and sharing our knowledge, our experience and in some cases our services.
- The public: Scotland's citizens and communities – the people whose interests are protected by environmental laws, whose taxes provide part of our funding and on whose behalf we protect the environment. We also provide environmental information and advice and deliver essential public protection and information services.
- Our internal audience – this includes all of us who work in SEPA as board members or employees. Effective internal communication is fundamental to SEPA's success in terms of operational delivery and corporate reputation.

3.2 More detailed customer segmentation is undertaken in relation to individual communications to ensure audience needs are met and messages are well targeted. Last year, SEPA's Customer Focus Programme developed a customer segmentation model that is used to guide the planning and targeting of SEPA communications to achieve the best environmental outcomes.

3.3 Communication is a multi-way, not a one way process. This plan, and all the activities that will deliver it, are based in the principle that effective communication is about providing information to, advising, talking with, listening to, influencing and learning from stakeholders, and communicating in ways that enable productive interactions.

4. Key messages

4.1 Over the past year SEPA, led by the Chairman and Chief Executive, has been setting out its vision for the future. This vision is summarised by the Chairman and CEO's joint introduction to the AOP 2010-2011. The key messages at its core are:

'We aim to be a smaller, more flexible, more responsive and more innovative organisation, doing a better job at lower cost to the tax payer and charge payers.'

“We will be an effective adviser, delivering excellent environmental information and advice to citizens, businesses and communities, not just winning hearts but also promoting good environmental practice.

“As a regulator we will be firm but fair – encouraging and enabling compliance with environmental laws, simplifying where we can and seeking to penalise offenders robustly.”

4.2 Reinforcing this vision is a key driver of this strategic communications plan. These high level messages will be communicated throughout the year across the full range of SEPA’s communication activities, in styles and formats.

4.3 They will be supplemented by more specific, targeted messages, appropriate to the particular issue, context and target audience needs. Again, the specific messages will be drawn from the AOP.

5. Guiding principles

5.1 The pace and scale of change that SEPA is currently undergoing presents many challenges, not least in relation to communicating change and uncertainty. The following guiding principles will be followed to help ensure corporate communications are deployed as effectively as possible in order to deliver the AOP.

Figure 2 – internal communication principles

Guiding principles - internal communications
♥ The AOP vision and its core messages will be consistently reinforced during the year to help staff understand how SEPA is changing, why and what the implications are for them.
♥ Staff will be updated regularly about progress with SEPA change programmes and other significant corporate issues to help reduce unfounded speculation.
♥ Internal communications will be targeted appropriately, taking account of both the need for corporate consistency and the need to relate change communications to individual circumstances (‘what does this mean for me/my team/my function’ etc).
♥ Targeting will be considered on the basis of factors such as geographic area, function, degree of impact and influence, grade etc.
♥ Key decisions, including difficult decisions, will be communicated clearly and openly as soon as possible after the decisions are made to help minimise uncertainty.
♥ Where there is uncertainty about major changes and issues, staff and managers will be kept informed, at least about the processes and timetables for decision making.
♥ As key corporate communicators, managers (at all levels) will be briefed regularly to help them understand, ‘own’ and deliver corporate messages, and to lead, inform and engage their staff on corporate changes.
♥ Opportunities will be promoted to encourage staff to provide feedback, ideas and questions. Prompt responses, feedback and answers will continue to be provided through the most appropriate routes.

- ♥ Internal communications will be delivered using as wide a range of channels and methods as possible to maximise their reach and impact.
- ♥ Managers and staff will be encouraged to consider the wider impacts of 'business as usual' issues they are dealing with and to keep senior managers and the communications department informed of issues likely to be of interest to the media and other external interests.
- ♥ Strategic communications priorities will continue to be closely linked to the Developing our People change programme eg development of management and staff competencies, corporate values, customer focus, staff surveys etc.
- ♥ The Hub intranet site will be the repository for all change communications, so they can be referenced by staff at any time.

Figure 3 – external communication principles

Guiding principles - external communications
<ul style="list-style-type: none">♥ The AOP and its core messages will be consistently reinforced during the year help stakeholders and customers understand how SEPA is changing, why and what the implications are for them.♥ SEPA will be as proactive as possible in communicating with customers, stakeholders, partners and the public about all areas of SEPA's work.♥ External communications will be targeted appropriately, taking account of the nature of the issue, the purpose of the communication, the audiences involved and the degree of influence and impact (audience segmentation modelling).♥ Key customers and stakeholders will be informed about and, where appropriate, consulted on major changes that affect them, with their views and responses used both to inform SEPA's thinking and to develop further partnerships and shared approaches♥ Communications will be delivered using as wide a range of channels and methods as possible to maximise their reach and impact.♥ Innovative, more cost effective communications channels and methods will be used wherever possible to help reduce costs.♥ Communications products and activities will be designed to be as sustainable as possible to reduce their environmental impact.♥ The SEPA website will be a key communications tool.♥ SEPA works with many other organisations to protect the environment and deliver environmental advice and public services. As many opportunities as possible will be sought for partnership communications which increase the impact of our environmental messages.

6. Key outputs

6.1 Corporate timetable

The corporate timetable (see paragraph 2.2 above) will map all the major corporate issues and activities that require strategic communication in 2010-2011. The timetable will be a live and evolving document that will be used in planning and

scheduling key corporate communications activities during the year. The timetable will include, for example, key milestones in SEPA's strategic change programmes, ongoing business and other major programmes; external factors (eg the spending review and the Scottish Parliamentary elections) and key SEPA dates (eg Board meetings).

6.2 Internal communications

Internal communications will be aligned to the corporate timetable and corporate messages. The main focus will be on change communication, informing and engaging with managers and staff, seeking and responding to their views and ensuring they understand what corporate changes will be made, why and how they will impact on them.

Particular emphasis will be given to informing and engaging SEPA managers in the process of understanding and delivering corporate messages. Managers at all levels have a pivotal role to play in leading, managing and communicating change and in building a positive corporate culture, especially during the challenging months ahead.

There are strong links and synergies between this strategic communications plan and the Developing our People change programme and a number of actions will be jointly delivered, for example:

- ♥ embedding the new corporate values across SEPA
- ♥ including communication competencies in the SEPA competencies framework
- ♥ ensuring in particular that communications competencies and training are integral to managers objectives and the management development programme
- ♥ undertaking staff surveys
- ♥ delivering the leadership and management development programme
- ♥ embedding communication objectives into managers' performance and development reviews
- ♥ ensuring that managers and staff continue to be reminded of the importance of engaging Communications staff in the early stages of issue and project management
- ♥ encouraging all managers and staff to see the 'big picture' and alert Communications staff to potential issues and story opportunities

Other key internal communications deliverables include a schedule for regular communication about change {see annex 1: table 1, page 11}, and deployment of a wide range of communications tools and methods to ensure different audience needs are met. Key links to other corporate programmes include:

- the programme for staff meetings/office visits will be shaped around the corporate timetable, issues and messages across the year, as will the programme for engaging with SEPA's external customers and stakeholders, locally and nationally;
- Better Regulation and Step Change in Science: change communications are key to these programmes because they have wide implications for staff.

6.3 External communications

External communications will be aligned to the corporate timetable and corporate messages. The main focus will be on keeping SEPA 'on the front foot', being as proactive as possible in communicating consistent messages about environmental

issues and the corporate change process. The implications of the Better Regulation and Step Change in Science programmes in particular will drive messaging, stakeholder engagement and consultation. Key deliverables include:

- ♥ Ongoing delivery of tailored communication plans for individual environmental issues, SEPA projects and corporate change programmes. Our communications plan template is attached to illustrate the approach taken (annex 3, page 16);
- ♥ Customer segmentation processes will be embedded in each communications plan to ensure effective targeting;
- ♥ Briefing/consultation documents – drawn from the AOP, these will be developed for use to brief and/or consult with specific customers and stakeholders about specific SEPA issues, including change;
- ♥ A media relations plan will be developed to further enhance the impact of our corporate and environmental messages. This will include our 24-7 emergency media response and our major incident communications management service;
- ♥ Plans will be implemented for the use of ‘new media’ to increase the reach and impact of our messages and reduce costs;
- ♥ Partnership communication opportunities will be increasingly sought, with SEARS and other partner organisations;
- ♥ Major public information campaigns will be delivered for flooding issues, including the annual Floodline (flood awareness) campaign and the launch (in March 2011) of the new Floodline Warnings Direct service;
- ♥ Other regular external communications products and activities will include (annex 2: table 2, page 13):
 - SEPA View (with an increased emphasis on online subscriptions to reduce cost and environmental impact). SEPA View currently has some 4500 subscribers for printed copies, and 500 subscribers for the online version;
 - SEPA Update: our weekly news e-bulletin (currently has 1991 subscribers);
 - The website will continue to be developed as a primary source of SEPA information and advice;
 - Events, particularly partnership events such as the Royal Highland Show.
- ♥ Working with other corporate programmes, eg:
 - stakeholder engagement programme, shaped around the corporate timetable, key issues and messages across the year;
 - further developing SEPA’s understanding of political issues and drivers of environmental policy and public sector priorities. This year there will be a particular focus on the Scottish Parliamentary election (5 May 2011);
 - building on SEPA’s existing customer focus work, including the corporate values, customer segmentation model, service charter and standards, customer insight.

6.4 Core briefing materials

The AOP itself is the source of SEPA’s key priorities and core messages. Drawing from the AOP, a set of core messages and briefing materials for both corporate and individual programmes and issues, will be produced for deployment in all communications activities as appropriate to the individual circumstances.

Deliverables will include:

- Key messages (aligned to the corporate messages in section 4 above) in relation to each corporate change programme;

- o Consultation documents for issues that are to be the subject of consultation with the appropriate customers and stakeholders;
- o Briefings and 'Frequently Asked Questions' documents.

7. Activity and impact measures

7.1 Understanding levels of awareness of and satisfaction with SEPA and its services, and the reach, impact and effectiveness of our communications, are important for driving improvement.

7.2 Measures for assessing the impact of our communications plans, products and activities are already integral to many communications activities. SEPA also carries out public awareness, customer satisfaction surveys and staff surveys. The results of these forms of 'market research' are used to identify strengths and weaknesses and shape future thinking about the individual issues and audiences concerned.

Figure 4 - some examples of measures routinely used

Activity	Methods	Reporting	Use of intel
Media coverage	Media monitoring	Daily media summaries issued to management and placed on Intranet	Assessment of corporate profile and reputation; decisions on response requirements
	Coverage analysis by subject, tone, topic, source etc	Monthly statistics in corporate performance reports; also included in Board reports	Informs media relations plan
Media relations	Formal and informal feedback from journalists. Telephone or online surveys, seeking journalists' views on SEPA service.	Ongoing assessment and reporting to Communications press desk & managers	Understand impact and effectiveness of media relations activities and the impact/reach of news releases and publicity. Informs media relations plan
SEPA publications & events	Readership surveys, delegate feedback forms, online or telephone surveys.	Ongoing assessment and reporting to Communications managers	Understand readers'/delegates' views and impact of messages; informs future planning
	Voice of reader – eg feedback forms, online		Understand readers' views and preferences for

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	questionnaires. Trend analysis – eg changes in no. of direct subscribers to SEPA View in print or online		content/format. Inform decisions on future content/format; assess effectiveness of magazine in communicating SEPA issues
SEPA website	Statistical analysis – eg no of visits, page hits, downloads Voice of customer – eg online surveys	Monthly corporate performance reports; inclusion in Board reports	Assessment of corporate profile and reputation, trends and levels of interest in SEPA issues. Customer views used to improve service
Staff surveys	Online, anonymous surveys; includes questions about communications	corporate management and Agency Board	Understanding staff communication preferences and needs; improving corporate approaches
Staff briefings	Random 'spot checks' on delivery and effectiveness of briefing by managers	Senior managers	Ensuring management briefs are delivered and questions and ideas responded to; improving internal communications
Regulated industry surveys	Focus groups, telephone interviews	corporate management and Agency Board	Understand regulated customer needs; improve services.
Customer awareness and satisfaction surveys	(as above but for non regulated customers). Surveys may be done in partnership with other organisations	corporate management and Agency Board	Understand levels of awareness of issues or services; improve service delivery

7.3 An overall process for collating and assessing the combined findings from these forms of market research will be put in place, to allow the overall knowledge gained

to shape future corporate communications needs. By doing this we will be able to consider benchmarks and develop future communications plans.

7.4 Work will be undertaken to investigate the potential for introducing further key performance measures to demonstrate and help improve the impact and reach of SEPA communications. Examples and case studies will continue to be sought from partners' communications teams. Members of the SEARS Communications group have already expressed an interest in joint working on this area to share experience and develop shared approaches. A number of shared concerns have already been identified including the challenge of establishing meaningful qualitative as well as quantitative measures time & cost effectively, and methods of assessing the effectiveness of the messaging rather than the impact of the content of the message.

8. Routine communications business

8.1 During the development of this strategic plan, the Communications Department business plan is delivering, and will continue to deliver, the full range of normal communications activities and services in support of all SEPA priority issues. The AOP themes and key messages will be built into this 'business as usual' work.

8.2 Communications staff will continue to develop, manage and promote SEPA's corporate brand and corporate communications standards, processes and procedures. They will also raise awareness and deliver training on these issues to SEPA managers and staff on an ongoing basis. In particular they will use every opportunity to encourage managers and staff to alert Communications to issues and story opportunities.

9. Timescales

The corporate timetable will drive the delivery of SEPA communications activities during the year.

The Communications Department's business plan is already in place and will ensure ongoing delivery of corporate communications throughout the year.

The main outputs and activities will be operational by September.

10 Key players – who does what?

10.1 The success of this plan depends on it being owned and delivered by everyone in SEPA, with managers playing a crucial role in communicating as well as managing change.

- o The Strategic Management Team will oversee the delivery of this strategic plan with the Director of Science and Strategy having lead responsibility.
- o The Business Management Team will 'own' this plan and act as its steering group, with the Chief Officer, Strategic Communications leading its development and delivery.
- o SEPA Managers have a pivotal role in leading the delivery of corporate communications, internally and externally.
- o The Communications Department will support delivery of the plan and will deliver corporate communications plans, advice, products and activities.
- o Other staff will contribute to delivering the communications outputs set out in this plan, for example change programme leads, Secretariat etc.

10.2 The Board has a key role to play both in providing overall strategic direction and as individual members acting as SEPA champions and communicators, for example through the stakeholder engagement programme.

11. Resources

11.1 This plan will be delivered within existing resources. Indeed, increasing the effectiveness of SEPA communications is likely to help achieve efficiencies, for instance through:

- ♥ use of new, most cost effective communications channels (eg new media);
- ♥ more online publishing leading to reduced print costs;
- ♥ clearer, more targeted, more accessible environmental information and advice;
- ♥ development of more online processes eg licence applications.

11.2 The only exception may be the resourcing of staff and customer/stakeholder surveys. In the past, these have been funded from different sources, sometimes on an ad hoc basis. SMT guidance is sought on what funds might be available for this, where that budget(s) should sit and how it might best be managed.

ends

Annexes

1. Schedule of regular internal communications (table 1)
2. Sample communications plan template
3. Schedule of external communications (table 3)

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Annex 1: Table 1 - Internal communications schedule

What? (activity)	About what? (contents)	When? (frequency)	Who for? (audience)	Who by? (who leads to make it happen?)	Who from? (in whose name is it?)	How? (method)	How well? (evaluation)
Staff bulletin	Brief updates on BAU issues	Weekly (every Friday)	All staff	Staff submissions – edited & issued by Comms Dept	SEPA	E bulletin	Q in staff survey?
Management brief (stage 1)	SMT & BMT updates, major corporate issues or changes	Monthly (after BMT & SMT meetings)	Senior managers	Secretariat	SMT	Email to senior mgrs (using Mgt Brief template)	Spot checks with follow up reports to BMT
Management brief (stage 2)	As above	Monthly (asap after receipt of brief)	Functional teams	All senior managers and their mgt cascades	SEPA	Face to face with their team(s) – can be via telecon or video conference but not by email only	“
Leadership events	Strategic direction, major corporate issues, sharing of Directorate or programme specific developments	Minimum quarterly (more if required). This year – 2 July; plus dates in Oct & Jan/Feb?	Senior managers	Developing our People programme	SMT	Meetings and workshops	Event evaluation forms
CEO monthly messages	SEPA vision, direction and	Monthly (first week of the	All staff	MS/MW	CEO	email	Feedback via responses to email and/or

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	key corporate developments	month)					change@sepa email box
Office visits	Details to come						
SEPA Blog	Specific topics for staff discussion, views, ideas. Posts must be short (c200 words)	Every six weeks	All staff	MS/MW + Comms	CEO, Chairman, SMT members	Blog (on Intranet), promoted via staff message (in CEO message or weekly bulletin)	Review responses
Podcasts	Highlighting key issues or events	When required	To be decided in relation to the subject involved	MW + Comms	CEO, Chairman	Audio or video files	Staff feedback
The Hub intranet site	Repository for all information about change	Ongoing	All staff	Comms	SEPA	Intranet site	Staff feedback
Hub Updates	Progress reports on change programmes	Every 2 months (minimum)	All staff	Comms	SEPA	E bulletins	Staff feedback
change@sepa	Staff comments and questions	Ongoing	Secretariat	All staff can submit comments and questions about change. Answers are provided by senior	SEPA	Email box	Monitoring of comments; identification of common issues

				managers			
ideas@sepa	Staff ideas and suggestions	ongoing	'ideas' group	All staff can submit suggestions	SEPA	Email box	Suggestions are evaluated by the group. Selected ideas are implemented

Annex 3 Table 2 - External communications schedule

What? (activity)	About what? (contents)	When? (frequency)	Who for? (audience)	Who by? (who leads to make it happen?)	Who from? (in whose name is it?)	How? (method)	How well? (evaluation)
SEPA View	Features on priority corporate work, environmental issues and partners' activities.	Quarterly	Subscribers. Political, business, partners, public & internal. Also distributed more widely through public libraries, partners, SEPA offices and at events (eg Highland Show)	Comms, drawing stories from internal contacts and external partners.	SEPA	Printed and online.	Readership surveys and informal feedback from readers. Download stats from website. No. of direct subscribers - currently c4600 for printed version; 500 for online. (NB some direct subscribers get multiple copies for onward distribution)

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SEPA Update	Signposting key SEPA stories.	Weekly (Fridays)	Subscribers. Political, business, partners, public & internal.	Comms	SEPA	Email	'Click through' stats. No. of subscribers (currently c2000)
Website	All aspects of the organisation.	Ongoing	All	Comms & IS. All directorates contribute.	SEPA	Online	Web statistics
Media management	Any/all SEPA issues	Ongoing	Journalists; partners; all SEPA audiences (via website);	Comms lead. Input from relevant directorate.	SEPA	Print, broadcast & online	Media monitoring
New media	Key corporate and directorate messages	When required	All or targeted dependent on subject.	Comms	SEPA	Webinars, blogs, podcasts, social media.	Web statistics, sign up rates, formal comments, post event surveys.
Events	Corporate or partnership issues	When required	Targeted to audiences relevant to the specific issue	Comms	SEPA	Exhibitions, seminars, etc	Post event surveys and feedback
Publications	Corporate, subject	When required	Targeted to relevant readership	Comms lead	SEPA	Online – zero print policy (although some limited print may be required).	Informal/formal feedback. Web stats.
Advertising	Topic specific	When required	Targeted to	Comms lead	SEPA	Radio, online,	Media monitoring

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		to promote important public services eg flood warnings, pollution reporting)	specific audience.	input from other depts.		print.	
Direct marketing	Topic specific	Limited use, but required to promote important public services (eg this year, registering for new direct flood alert service)	Targeted to specific audience.	Comms work with relevant dept.	SEPA	Electronic or mailing.	Response rates, 'click through' stats
Sponsorship	Corporate	When required (limited funding, but can be 'in kind')	Targeted to specific audience	Comms lead	SEPA	Sector exhibitions, awards events etc.	Media coverage,

These activities can be used as stand alone items or as part of integrated communications plans

Annex 4 - Sample communications plan template

This annex is included to illustrate how a communications plan for any given SEPA issue is developed. This template is used in discussions between Communications staff and the 'client' (the SEPA staff member requesting the work) to shape the plan.

Communications Plan: [insert topic here]

Context Analysis

Overall, the CA is all about understanding the key market and communications drivers that are likely to influence the communications plan and/or the SEPA brand. It is about presenting information and clues about what the communications plan needs to achieve – the rationale for its existence. Essentially, it should highlight, very briefly, "Where are we now?"

[insert brief summary of context analysis in a few sentences]

Customer context

This could be the type of characteristics of the segment you are trying to reach, levels of awareness and attitudes towards SEPA or one of its brands. It could be details about how involved or engaged a group of customers are with the subject being communicated or about the characteristics of the decision makers being targeted.

- ♥ [insert bulleted list here]
- ♥ [insert bulleted list here]
- ♥ [insert bulleted list here]

Business context

This is about our corporate position in terms of strategy and plans in relation to our external environment. Where SEPA is currently positioned in relation to the topic being considered, the strength of the brand on the audience etc.

- ♥ [insert bulleted list here]
- ♥ [insert bulleted list here]
- ♥ [insert bulleted list here]

Internal context

This is about what SEPA's strengths and weaknesses are in relation to the topic being communicated. It could be financial constraints, SEPA's values and priorities, any limiting factors or mitigating circumstances.

- ♥ [insert bulleted list here]
- ♥ [insert bulleted list here]
- ♥ [insert bulleted list here]

External context

Who are our key audiences in relation to this plan? Why are they important? What are their communications needs? Are there social, political, economic and technological opportunities or constraints?

- ♥ [insert bulleted list here]
- ♥ [insert bulleted list here]
- ♥ [insert bulleted list here]

Communications Objectives

Having compiled and reviewed the context analysis, this section should make it clear what needs to be achieved in terms of communications by using SMART objectives. It should also make it clear how the communications objectives relate to SEPA's overall communications plan objectives and also which corporate objective from the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) it links to.

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AOP Objective

♥ [insert highest level objective here]

SEPA Communications Objectives

♥ [insert highest level objective here]

Programme Communications Objectives

♥ [insert highest level objective here]

Positioning

This is just a very brief statement about how we want SEPA to be perceived by our target audience (eg effective enforcer, enabler, advisor, tough regulator, scientifically advanced, and so on). This is "How do we want to be seen?"

Communications Strategy

This should briefly state how you will use each of the generic strategies: push, and/or pull, and/or profile. You should also indicate what percentage weighting you are giving each and this is also used for budgeting. This is "Which way is best?"

Push Strategy (%)

[insert a short statement about which customers are targeted, the message focus and what you intend to achieve by using this strategy]

Pull Strategy (%)

[insert a short statement about which customers are targeted, the message focus and what you intend to achieve by using this strategy]

Profile Strategy (%)

[insert a short statement about which customers are targeted, the message focus and what you intend to achieve by using this strategy]

Co-ordinated communications mix

Key messages

♥ .
♥ .

Style and content

This is a short statement about whether the content should be long or short, emotional or rational, formal or informal?

Concepts (if appropriate)

Bring in your creativity at this point to outline any concepts, ideas and creative.

Communications tools (push)

Insert what methods and tools you will use for each of your strategies with a very short justification behind your thinking.

♥ [insert comms tool and justification]
♥ [insert comms tool and justification]

Communications tools (pull)

Insert what methods and tools you will use for each of your strategies with a very short justification behind your thinking.

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- ♥ [insert comms tool and justification]
- ♥ [insert comms tool and justification]

Communications tools (profile)

Insert what methods and tools you will use for each of your strategies with a very short justification behind your thinking.

- ♥ [insert comms tool and justification]
- ♥ [insert comms tool and justification]

Scheduling & Resources

Scheduling is best taken care of by developing a Gantt spreadsheet as an appendix. It should detail what is happening when and also who will deliver various activities – either personally or service area (eg editors, design etc).

The financial and budget resources should either be stated in the text of this section with a very high level listing or with a separate spreadsheet as an appendix.

Control and evaluation

Here you should state how you will go about monitoring this plan to see that it is on track to achieve its objectives. You should state, if possible, at what point you will take corrective action if the plan starts to deviate from what is forecast.

You should also state how you will evaluate each of the tools success in the plan and also the plan itself. Evaluation is hard but measurement is an important part of the plan so that we can see what worked well ... and what didn't. That way, we can improve.