



FACTSHEET

Your project story How to get better heard?

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INTRODUCTION

Every project has a story; a great one! After all, it is what has brought all the partners in your project together. However, your great story will remain silent and unheard if you do not speak up! Your project stories can have different formats and styles. It can put into the spotlight selected aspects of project implementation or comprehensively explain the essence of your project. But every project story is an authentic testimony of joint efforts and your incredible work as if there were no borders. It is proof that responding to a joint challenge unites people across countries, regions, and sectors. Most of all, each project story is about people: those who stand up for the region and those who benefit from the project in the long run. All these project stories exemplify what Interreg is about.

Interreg Baltic Sea Region Managing Authority/ Joint Secretariat

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● WHAT IS A PROJECT STORY?

A project story is a narrative that grasps the essence, objectives, challenges, achievements, and impacts of an Interreg project. The project story serves as a powerful tool for communicating the project's outcomes, inspiring others, and showcasing tangible evidence for the added value of Interreg. The project story can assume various formats and be created by different partners within the project.

What is the difference between a project summary and a project story?

A project summary comprehensively explains your project and closely follows the storytelling structure elements: the *challenge*, the *context*, the *solution(s)*, the explanation of *how the solution works*, the *proof it works*, and the *vision* behind the project. All the elements are explained briefly, and balanced in terms of their volume. The aim of the project summary is to provide a quick understanding of the project; it is your extended business card.

A project story is based on the same storytelling structure, however, the storytelling elements can be composed more dynamically. They do not necessarily have to be of equal volume; the writer can freely decide about the main focus of the story. Consequently, a project story can well illustrate major milestones of the project implementation, or present selected aspects of the project or all of it. A real game changer though is a human perspective (by showing your heroes; adding quotes of people etc.), which turns a project summary or description into a real story. Adding a human touch increases your credibility and adds power to your story.

Is a news article or a report a project story?

It depends. If you simply e.g. write about a project meeting, inform about a new publication, or present an analysis of some sort, it merely resembles a true story. However, if you build your project story about the latest development or news in your project, provide why, what, and how, and add a human perspective to it – this could already be a story to tell.

● PROJECT STORY FORMATS

A good project story is compelling and engaging. A good project story is not easily forgotten. But does it always have to be a written article? No, it doesn't. If you are ready to experiment with various formats, please do so. However, always consider what's best for the audience you want to reach. So, what formats can a story have?

- **A written article** – the classic yet never over-exploited way of telling a project story.
- **A written interview** – it is a suitable format for core projects around the mid-term report when the results are not yet solid enough. Reflections by a project partner or a representative of target groups about the project 'in the making' and expectations regarding the project outcomes sound convincing in this format.



- **A video** – a tailor-made video showing the project story visually; creative options seem to be endless here. Attractive visuals, animations, unconventional perspectives or even a bit of sense of humour is highly recommended. Think about what you would want to watch yourself.
- **A video interview** – an alternative format for a written interview for core projects around the mid-term report.
- **A podcast** – an audio format that can be available on platforms reaching beyond project regular networks or circles; it can easily evolve into a longer story.
- **A storymap** – an interactive digital experience working as stand-alone source of information, combining maps, legends, text, photos, and video. It works well towards the end of the project implementation.

● HOW TO WRITE A GOOD PROJECT STORY?

A good structure is a starting point for a good project story. This is why we provide you with a universal and easy-to-follow storytelling structure to follow. Use these elements as your guiding stars but you can compose them more freely.

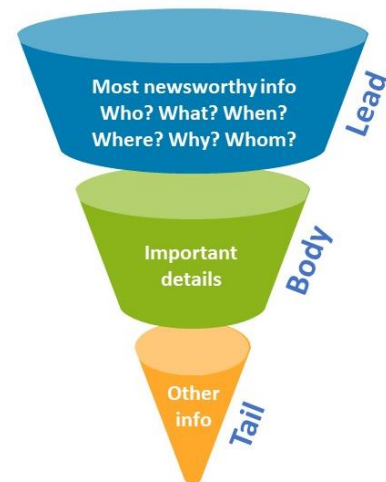


The moment you take all the storytelling elements onboard, you need to do one more thing to truly revive your story: add **a human ingredient** to it. If you centre your story around the people for whom you are doing your project, your target groups, end beneficiaries, and people around you within your partnership, you are on a good path to success.



You can build your story by strictly following the storytelling steps or you can use them freely. A useful inspiration may be the journalistic concept of an **inverted pyramid**. It means that you arrange key information first within the story and complement it with other pieces of information.

Regardless of the way how you structure your project story, do not forget to highlight the **transnational aspect** of your project. It is one of your selling points to prove the added value of your project.



● TIPS FOR A GOOD STORY

- Relevance: always keep the audience for whom you are writing in your mind. This will help you set the style properly.
- Write a clear, concise, and catchy headline for your story. This is how you can catch people's attention more easily.
- Make your story for the people and about the people: testimonials make your story more emotional and interesting. Think about what affects people's life, family, and work.
- Play with the challenge your project addresses, and follow up in your story on how your project has resolved it (that's *the conflict* around which every good story is built!)
- Integrate the transnational aspect into your story to highlight the unique character of your work
- Include fewer descriptions, and show more impact instead.
- Do not forget about powerful visuals to illustrate your story.

● LANGUAGE TIPS

- Less is more: short sentences will make your story easy and more pleasant to read.
- Be careful about jargon and abbreviations: make sure that you are understandable for people who are less into your topic, yet very interested in your project.
- Write in active voice: your solution is not being developed; YOU develop it!
- Avoid extensive texts, somewhere between 2,000 – 3,500 characters is just fine.
- Structure your story into paragraphs for a better read.



● REPORTING: HOW MANY PROJECT STORIES AND WHEN?

Core projects

You are expected to provide us with a grand project story **twice within your project lifetime**. Select the best and most impactful stories you have produced that you are proud of. We want to be proud, too!

- Once by the **mid-term report** (in practice: prepare and publish your project story on your project page whenever it fits you before the mid-term reporting is due)
- Once by the **final report** (in practice: prepare and publish your project story on your project page whenever it fits you after the mid-term report and before the final reporting is due)

Core projects: project story by mid-term report

It is your first official opportunity to share a project story with the MA/JS that shows the to-date achievements of your project. Ideally, prepare your project story in the format of a written or recorded interview (minimum 2 min) with a selected project partner(s).

Core projects: project story by final report

Your project comes to an end. Share a project story that presents the project solutions and/or achievements and their impact. Be bold and show what has been possible thanks to the Interreg funding. Do not miss to highlight the transnational aspect of your project!

Small projects

You are expected to revise **once within your project lifetime**:

- By the **final report** (in practice: prepare and publish your project story on your project page whenever it fits you before the final reporting is due)

Small projects: project story by final report

Your project comes to an end. Share a project story that presents the project solutions and/or achievements and their impact. Be bold and show what has been possible thanks to the Interreg funding. Do not miss to highlight the transnational aspect of your project!

● HOW TO REPORT ABOUT YOUR PROJECT STORY?

While preparing your mid-term and/or final reports in BAMOS+, there will be a special Annex available for you. This Annex covers, among other things, the communication products that we expect you to deliver, including project stories. Paste a link to your project story in the dedicated space and use the comment field for any relevant information that you would like to share with us.



● ANYTHING ELSE?

If you are unsure about the process or have any other questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

Reference materials:

Programme Manual

<https://interreg-baltic.eu/toolkit/online-programme-manual/i-communication-in-projects/i-4project-contribution-to-programme-communication/>

Communication and visibility on the Programme portal:

<https://interreg-baltic.eu/toolkit/comms-visibility/>

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