

MODULE 2 COMMUNICATING WITH BENEFICIARIES AND COMMUNITIES

PART 4 Communication Tools

This chapter will explore communications tools.

When thinking about what communications tools you should use, you must first consider the following:

1. **Whom are you communicating with?** This could be a person, an organization, a local authority, etc.
2. **How urgently do you need to communicate with this party or person?** Do you need to contact them immediately, within a day, within a week, or within a month perhaps?
3. **What is your goal for communication?** For example, you might be trying to promote awareness of COVID-19 public health information; you might be raising a warning that there is an imminent crisis; or you might be consulting with beneficiaries regarding an upcoming assistance project.
4. **What communications tools do you and those you wish to contact have available?** There are plenty to choose from: radios, telephones, social media, emails, WhatsApp, written letters, Skype, and more.
5. **What is their preferred style of communication?** Due to timeliness, appropriateness, and capacity, parties who you wish to communicate with may have preferred methods of communication such as email, social media, radio, etc. To enable easy mutual communication, it is best standard practice, therefore, to use one of these preferred means.
6. **Is the location of the party or person with whom you wish to communicate accessible for all communications tools?** For example, in rural areas, remote communication via email, WhatsApp or Skype may be more difficult due to a lack of internet or Wi-Fi connectivity.
7. **What challenges or obstacles do you face in communicating?** For example, electrical networks might not be immediately operational after natural disasters and so online communication is rendered redundant.

8. **Do you have backup communications tools?** Remember, after a natural disaster, a lot of communication tools are often not available, so it's good to have a plan B about how you are going to communicate if the normal lines of communication are not available. It is also good to ensure that these are understood by those whom you wish to contact.

So, to summarise, **the 8 factors that you should think about when planning your communication tools are:**

1. Communication party: Whom you are communicating with?
2. Communication timing: How urgently do you need to communicate?
3. Your goal for communication
4. Available communications tools
5. Preferred styles of communication
6. Accessible communication locations
7. Communication challenges
8. Backup communication tools