ENRD social media training for stakeholders

I.   What is social media? Why should we use it?

Social media is the set of online technologies and practices which people use to share opinions, insights, experiences and expectations on common topics. In the field of policy networking, the use of social media can facilitate exchange among stakeholders and support the animation and extension of policy networks.

Its use also supports:

- Better access to knowledge and easier information sharing
- The expansion of the network by using diverse dissemination channels/enabling new kinds of communication
- Improved collaboration and sense of ownership across the rural development community

There is a wide range of social media tools for organisations in all sectors.

Screenshot from the ENRD Magazine on Social Media

II.   The structure of the ENRD social media training

Purpose: to focus on how to effectively create tailored content for **Facebook** and **Twitter**
Learning objective: to enhance networking among rural development stakeholders
Expected outcomes: overall strengthening of social media communication skills
Target learners: rural development communication practitioners (e.g. social media community managers of NRNs and LAGs, farmers' associations, etc.) with average knowledge on social media. Please note that numerous web sources are provided for the users who are getting it started.
Training length and format – it can be envisaged as interactive (webinar or "social media corner") or as stand-alone product (available for f-download on the ENRD website).

The training is composed of **descriptive** and **practical** elements**.**

Descriptive component

a). Overview of the diversity of social media tools

Facebook provides its users with useful functionalities to engage communities:

- It is a very visual social media; audio-visual sources are an important type of information on Facebook.
- It can be used to disseminate short policy related messages with immediate or future relevance > the real time engagement on subjects that matter makes a difference
- The tool allows to organise online campaigns, event registrations and competitions
- It opens room for exchange on topics of interest and collective posting of relevant material

More information on the basics of Facebook (for beginners):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvcK1SanZrY
https://www.facebook.com/help/345121355559712

Twitter can be also used in complementarity:
- It is an open social platform; therefore it is very simple for information to break out across large audience through re-tweets of key messages, photos, etc.
- Data can be exported and reused easily
- The search function is facilitated by the use of hash tags, mentions

More information on the basics of Twitter (for beginners):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Txc9lmmSHPM
http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Twitter-Account

LinkedIn :
- Allows professionals around the world to connect
- Audio-visual material can be integrated
- Professional discussion groups can be joined
- ENRD team is on LinkedIn and the page is used mainly for promoting the main ENRD products and connecting with professionals/organisations in the sector of agriculture and rural development

More information on the basics of LinkedIn (for beginners):
http://www.wikihow.com/Create-an-Account-on-LinkedIn
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0szWlfStSjY

Youtube :
- Allows subscribers to upload, view and share videos
- ENRD has more than 100 videos on its channel EURural, linked to the ENRD media gallery section on the website
- It is an evaluation tool for your videos as statistics can be obtained easily

More information on the basics of YouTube (for beginners):
http://www.slideshare.net/plasterdog/youtube-basics
http://www.wikihow.com/Start-a-YouTube-Channel

Pinterest:
- Allows subscribers to pin photos
- ENRD piloted a Pinterest account but the overlap with the Facebook page and the website determined the re-allocation of ressources to the most popular channels

More information on the basics of Pinterest (for beginners):
http://sproutsocial.com/insights/2012/01/how-to-create-pinterest-account/
http://about.pinterest.com/basics/

b). Planning the content effectiveness at the social media strategy design phase

(i) Assessment phase

Make sure you link your social media needs with the overall communication plan and see how it can support your activities.

(ii) Identify the main goals

Increasing brand presence across social channels, facilitating the knowledge sharing within the network, increasing traffic to your website are just a few goals you can achieve. Make sure your goals are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely.

(iii) Identify your target audience

Social media is all about connecting with others. First think about your target audience and study/learn about them. This will allow you to plan what you have to communicate, how often, through what channels, etc.

(iv) Decide what and how you want to communicate

Analyse the potential of your organisation and decide upon what your community wants to be informed about (latest news, events, etc) events and in what format (text, images, videos, reports, website, etc). Capitalise on previous statistics and feedback analysis in order to meet their expectations. In order to monitor and get constant feedback, allocate resources to daily animation of your social media and keep an eye on the level of engagement.

A few social media management dashboards will help you in this process:
- Hootsuite: https://hootsuite.com/
- SproutSocial: http://home.sproutsocial.com
- Engagor: http://engagor.com

Other: http://www.socialbrite.org/2010/11/09/top-10-social-media-dashboard-tools/

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Twitter   2-4 hours/week

Action Type	Priority Level	Action Details	Frequency	Metric/Tracking	Time/Wk	Means
Create Account	1	Add company details, ensure consistency across platforms	Ongoing	% profile completion	1 hr	Twitter platform
Increase Follower Count	1	Utilize 3ʳᵈ party Twitter applications to increase # of relevant followers	Ongoing	# Followers # Relevant Followers # Increase	30 mins	Twitter platform Twiends platform TweetAdder 3.0
Follow Users Follow Backs	1	Search for and follow relevant users according to profile	Ongoing	# Following Follower:Following Ratio	20 mins	Twitter platform TweetAdder 3.0
Tweet	1	Tweet content types	1 tweet/day	# Clicks # Retweets & Replies	20 mins	Twitter platform Hootsuite

Example of activity plan for Twitter account

Tips for effective time management in social media:
http://www.socialmediaexplorer.com/social-media-marketing/4-time-management-tips-for-the-on-the-go-social-media-manager/
http://www.futuresimple.com/blog/time-management-and-social-media-campaigns-do-you-use-your-time-efficiently/
http://www.forbes.com/sites/aileron/2013/04/01/10-social-media-time-management-tips-for-small-business/

(v)   Put your plan into action

With the completion of the planning and assessment phase, you should be ready to implement your social media strategy. The key to doing so effectively is by using a content calendar.

September 2013	
Week 1	- 5 posts on Facebook - 10 tweets - 2 posts LinkedIn - Promote the 17ᵗʰ NRN meeting - Change Facebook cover photo - Identify topics to communicate during September
Week 2	- Align visual identity of platforms - Upload 3 videos on YouTube - 5 posts on Twitter/Facebook
Week 3	- Promote the "youth event" on Facebook and Twitter - Consult the team on topics to disseminate - 5 posts on Twitter/Facebook
Week 4	- Promote the "networking event" - Promote new videos and communication products - Collect statistics

Excerpt of a social media calendar model

This is crucial for keeping you focused and your efforts on track. This calendar will specify the theme of the content that you will use in your campaign, when and where it is shared, who creates it and the mode of

delivery. To enhance your social media strategy, you should plan on using a variety of different tools. Use a social media management tool which allows automatic posts on multiple social platforms (e.g. Hootsuite).

Social media icons and plugins should be added to your website and on content pages. Make it as easy as possible for someone to share and like your stuff. Promote your social media networks on company emails, letterheads, invoices, business cards and other places. Use promotions and contests/gadgets to engage your target audience and get them involved. You need to continually demonstrate what you have to offer.

(vi)   Monitor and evaluate your performance

You should give your social media strategy a little time to gain momentum; after about two or three months, you should perform an in-depth evaluation to determine whether your strategy is producing results or not. Specific metrics such as shares, likes, subscribers, click rates originated in social media channels and conversion rates should be analysed with care. For instance, Google Alerts is a free tool that can help you monitor your brand keywords to listen to what people are saying about you.

To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of your social media strategy, you need to always re-think it. Lay out a new plan with new objectives based on fresh assessments. Implement a revised plan with updated goals. Evaluate its success by analysing specific metrics or by trying to estimate its impact on the "real world": how was the reality influenced by your social media activity. In practical terms, were people inspired by the projects in the RDP database, did they find project partners in the TNC offers database, did they organise any event/training linked to any of our activities, did they make the ENRD news available to their stakeholders, etc. Keeping an eye on the difference between "virtual" and "real" success on social media helps improve your performance.

(vii)   Refine your initial goals

After going through the whole planning cycle, you get to learn if the priorities you set were achievable or if you need to change something in your approach. Based on what you change, you determine the resources you need to allocate further to maintaining and animating the social media platforms.

c). Tips on developing effective content for Facebook and Twitter

Facebook
- **Share quality content daily**
- **Be eclectic**: share good photos with tags, mix up statements with questions, refer to website sources, promote stakeholders' valuable material, reply to questions and correct content when users point out inconsistencies
- **Change your cover**
- Post information to **share something**
- **Create a sense of community:** be open, inviting, warm, friendly and personable
- The Facebook Page of **LAG Marghine, Italy** : visual, interactive and engaging
- https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gal-Marghine-Fondazione-di-partecipazione/366751920980
- The Facebook Page of the **Walloon NRN:** www.facebook.com/pages/R%C3%A9seau-rural-wallon/266680454766: time saver – it is connected to the website, Twitter, newsletter

Twitter
- **3 key elements to a tweet**
- **Headline** – tempt the reader to click the link
- **Links** – "don't waste a tweet without a link" (use the original url)

- **Hashtags** – drive tweets into Twitter searches and lists that are relevant. It is becoming the glue for social (to find target audience, to take part in chats on shared interests)
- The Twitter account managed by the **Rural Development Programme for England** @RDPENetwork: https://twitter.com/RDPENetwork
- Dissemination of really practical information
- **@Drecklyfish** – the fish auction on Twitter! https://twitter.com/drecklyfish
- Launched by the fishermen in Newlyn, Cornwall (UK)

Practical component

At this stage the **practical component** includes 2 formative methods applied with the help from a facilitator. Additional methods can be proposed based on feedback from stakeholders.

- **The group work** involves the building of effective messages to be disseminated through existing social media tools at their choice (example can be also provided by facilitator if needed); the approximate time for this task is **10 min work and 5 min reporting**
- **Think out-of-the-box**: in groups of 3 people, you have to choose a communication product (event, publication, etc.) to promote and briefly plan its social media strategy by applying what you learned about the importance of the SM content impact : the approximate time for this task is **10 min work and 5 min reporting**