European Platform Undeclared Work

Taking Learning Forward and Employing Results

A report from the Dissemination Seminar of the
European Platform Undeclared Work

Brussels, 13th September 2017

INTRODUCTION

Members and observers of the European Platform tackling undeclared work have a two-fold role: they need to disseminate information from the Platform within their country, and also get feedback from stakeholders to help inform the work of the Platform. This means that it is important to have structures in place at a Member State level able to feed ideas up and into the Platform as well as to support the national dissemination work.

To help members and observers to fulfil this role, a Dissemination Seminar was held on 13 September 2017, to discuss strategies for the dissemination of the Platform's outputs. A total of 31 Platform participants, representing 21 countries, seven social partner organisations, as well as three international organisations, attended. They took part in workshops to discuss how to disseminate outputs relating to a number of key topics from the Platform's first year[1].

This report builds on the background paper distributed before the seminar and provides a resource on how to disseminate learning. The first section provides an introduction to communication strategies. This is followed by an overview of findings from the seminar on communication relating specifically to the UDW Platform.

Key findings:

- Participants agreed that there is a strong need to communicate the results of the Platform in their organisations and in their countries.
- Good dissemination starts with developing a communication strategy. By planning and directing efforts it makes sure you are heading in the right direction.
- It is important to distinguish between policy objectives and communication objectives.

- When you have decided on your communication objectives you need to ensure they are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound).
- It is important to answer a number of key questions (see Box 1) before deciding on the communication methods and starting your communication activities.
- Platform members and observers need to reach out to stakeholders from different organisations and at different levels. The messages to each of these audiences, and the channels used, will differ.
- Communication is an integral part of a holistic approach to tackling UDW, since without it, a coordinated and integrated approach towards tackling UDW cannot be achieved.
- When communicating, the first step is to show the target audience the benefits for them. For example, rather than presenting the idea of developing a bilateral agreement, the potential impact of concluding such an agreement should be promoted first.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

"What's the use of running if you are not on the right road?

(Proverb)

Dissemination is understood in this report to refer to spreading awareness amongst key actors of the results of the Platform's activities. Various communication methods can be used to share the Platform's work to its many different target groups. The focus of this seminar was therefore on developing a communication strategy, bringing together a range of communication methods and tools, suitable for the messages and audiences in question.

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[1] The Platform Seminars on 'developing a holistic approach to tackling UDW' and 'tackling UDW in the construction sector'; the Thematic Reviews on

'Bilateral Agreements and MoUs' and 'Data Mining'; the National Seminars and the small-scale study on under-declared work.

Disseminating learning requires good communication, in order for people to access and act on the learning. First and foremost, it is therefore critical to have a good understanding of the message you are trying to communicate.

Before deciding on the communication methods to use and starting any activities, it is important to develop a communication strategy. This ensures that any communication activities are planned, directed, and efficient.

When developing a communication strategy, a number of key questions need to be answered, as shown in Box 1, below.

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Box 1

A step-by-step approach to developing a strategic roadmap for a communication campaign

1. Why do we need to communicate?
2. What do we want to achieve?
3. Who do we need to talk to?
4. What do they think or believe?
5. What shall we tell them?
6. How do we reach them?
7. How will we manage the campaign?
8. How will we measure the impact?

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Once these questions have been answered, the appropriate communication tools can be selected.

A communication strategy does not have to be long, indeed a short (even 1-page) document can work better, as this means that the strategy is focused on the essential.

COMMUNICATION LINKED TO THE PLATFORM TACKLING UNDECLARED WORK

The following sections are structured according to the questions which participants discussed during the seminar workshops. These sessions focused on how to disseminate learning and outputs from the different Platform activities.

Goals and objectives

Any communication efforts involve resources. Therefore, it is important to ensure that these are used efficiently. The first step is to identify the 'problem' in question and what perception, attitude or behaviour you want to create amongst the target audiences. Once you have a goal, for example 'to increase political commitment to promoting the transformation of undeclared work into declared work from the informal economy to the formal economy', you can translate this into a clear and driving communication objective. For example to bring together all key partners to develop a national strategy to be implemented within x months.

It is important to define a clear goal and support this with 'SMART' objectives so that progress can be measured.

Target audiences

Undeclared work is a cross-cutting issue, of relevance to a range of different authorities and stakeholders. Platform activities generate different messages which are relevant to a range of target groups. These include both different types of organisation and also different levels, as shown in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1.   Target audiences

Organisation types	Level of audience
•Labour inspectorates •Tax authorities •Social security authorities •Social partners •Police •Customs •Other relevant authorities, e.g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (re. bilateral agreements), other authorities involved in procurement (e.g. construction) •Businesses - large and small	•Policy level: ministers, policy makers •Operational level: e.g. labour inspectors •On-the-ground: employers (large companies and also small and medium-sized enterprises) and workers •Broader awareness: media, general public, including young people (universities and schools)

Source: Authors, on the basis of discussions at the Dissemination Seminar

It is therefore the role of all Platform members and observers to ensure that the outputs and messages are disseminated to all relevant parties within their organisation and in their country. It is essential to tailor the messages to be communicated, according to the target audience. It is also important to make information accessible to the target audience in question. For policy makers, the communication needs to be at a policy level, whereas for the general public, it need to be a straightforward, simple message. Similarly, a different message may be required for large companies than for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Some delegates suggested that it is important to gain political support, if the communication efforts are to have any effect. Communication with policy makers and ministers is therefore critical.

One suggestion on how to increase the accessibility of UDW Platform outputs was to prepare a summary of the outputs in national languages.

The Platform representative for Norway gave an overview of how knowledge from the Platform is shared on a national level (and vice versa). This is summarised in Box 2.

Box 2: Norway – The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority

The UDW Platform representative for Norway attends most Platform events but on occasion a representative of another relevant organisation will take part.

Information and knowledge gained at the UDW Platform meetings is disseminated internally to colleagues working on Platform-related issues, mostly by circulating a report containing key findings which are relevant to the Norwegian context and attending internal meetings.

Within the Labour Inspectorate, the Platform representative shares information on a daily basis and in monthly meetings with the Director of the Unit and relevant staff members. Furthermore, informal exchanges are held between the Director of the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, regional managers and at specialised trainings and seminars for inspectors working on UDW.

Another dissemination route is via the joint operation groups which are in place in seven of Norway's cities. These bring together the Labour Inspectorate, Tax, Social

Welfare, Police and Revenue authorities to work together. Their common meetings are a good place to communicate ideas and learning from the Platform.

Formalised areas for the exchange of information and knowledge

The Platform representative meets with two different national stakeholder groups several times a year to exchange the information and knowledge gained from the Platform. These groups are:

- The *Authority Group*, consisting of senior representatives from the Tax, Revenue, Police and Social Welfare Services, which meets every three months with the UDW Platform representative. The group has also been granted access to the UDW Platform collaborative workspace. It is the responsibility of the members of the Authority Group to carry out further dissemination within their organisations. What they disseminate, to what extent and how they act on it, depends on how relevant the topics are for them.

- A group of representatives from eight social partners and a Ministry representative. This group has been set up specifically for disseminating learning from the Platform. The group meets with the Platform representative three times a year to discuss share information about Platform-related issues and other topics related to international work concerning UDW. How the information shared with the national stakeholder group is shared within their organisations, depends on them.

Success factors and challenges

Norway's participation in the Platform is supported at the political level, which helps to promote ideas from involvement in Platform activities. Information is shared within and between different authorities on a formal and informal basis. A dissemination guide was developed to help with their internal communication.

However, while meetings have proved to be a useful tool to disseminate information internally and externally, there is still room for improvement. With only one organisation (the Labour Inspectorate) represented on the Platform, it has been difficult to raise interest among the other authorities involved in tackling undeclared work. In addition, given the complexity of the topic, it often remains difficult to explain the technicalities of individual issues on UDW to non-specialists.

What do they think or believe?

Before trying to communicate with the target groups, it is important to understand their starting point. What are the needs of these target groups? What is needed to ensure buy-in? What obstacles do you expect?

For example, a communication campaign could aim to change the belief that "the Platform is not relevant to me because I do not work on cross-border issues". The communication of a specific learning resource therefore needs to show how the learning produced from an event is relevant in the Member State to help it more efficiently and effectively tackle the various aspect of undeclared work considered. Specific key messages could be identified, such as the good practices from other Member States that are relevant to the Platform Member's country. This might include providing information on any evaluations conducted and the impacts of this good practice on tackling undeclared work so as to stimulate interest in the Member State on evaluating its transferability.

What shall we tell them?

Participants were asked to think about the headline findings of UDW Platform activities that took place in 2016-2017, which can be used to capture the attention of the relevant target groups and audiences.

For each of the different workshops, a key message is given in the box below.

Box 3: Key messages from UDW Platform activities

Platform Seminar: Developing a holistic approach to tackling UDW

UDW is a complex issue and penalties alone do not work. The most effective way to tackle UDW is through a 'holistic approach'. This is '*using a strategic and coordinated approach to tackle undeclared work by bringing social partners and ministries together and using the full range of policy measures so as to increase power and trust in authorities'*. Prior to the seminar, there was not a common definition of this concept, hence this is a key message to disseminate more widely, along with examples of how other Member States have successfully moved towards achieving such an approach.

Platform Seminar: Tackling undeclared work in construction

Effective policies and measures have to be tailored according to the nature, drivers and types of undeclared work they intend to address, and this often involves administrative cooperation between competent authorities. The toolkit from this activity provides examples of approaches and initiatives from the construction sector and gives a brief assessment of their potential for transferability. It therefore helps to increase awareness and understanding of tools and approaches to tackle UDW in the construction sector.

Thematic Review Workshop: Bilateral agreements and MoUs

The key message from this Thematic Review is that there are benefits to developing bilateral agreements and MoUs, through which cross-border collaboration can be formalised. The toolkit from this activity can be used as a guide to setting up a new agreement and provides examples of good practice.

Thematic Review Workshop: Data mining

The message to communicate is that *"data sharing is key to tackle UDW and data mining is highly effective and supports a more efficient use of resources"*. Respondents reported barriers to sharing information and data, therefore this message about the benefits of data sharing and data mining could help break down these barriers.

National Seminars: Working in partnership to disseminate results

Sweden's experience of delivering a national seminar showed that working together can help to develop a common understanding of the challenges and needs associated with tackling undeclared work. The message to be communicated is the importance of working collaboratively.

Small-scale study: Under-declared work / falsely-declared salaries

A key message to disseminate is that it is a difficult issue to detect and work place inspections are ineffective. Effective action relies on cross-agency collaboration and the use of specific types of data mining, sharing and analysis. There is a need for examples of good practice and to develop campaigns to raise awareness among employees (and employers) of the benefits of fully declared work in terms of working conditions, pensions, etc.

Source: Authors, on the basis of discussions at the Seminar and the discussion paper prepared in advance of the event

It was agreed that the message should include a key benefit to the audience, or show them what the added value is for them. For example, with regard to the Platform's work on bilateral agreements, the message should focus less on promoting bilateral agreements as such, and more on communicating the benefits of having such agreements, including through examples that are working well in other countries.

Specific examples of success may be a good way of getting the message across. For example, with regard to data mining, a country-specific case study can exemplify the time that can be saved through data mining and that it is worth investing resources in this technique.

The messages to communicate need to be limited to 2-3 key points, which may be adapted to different target audiences. The communication efforts then need to keep reinforcing these same messages over again.

How do we reach them?

The communication channels to be used will depend on the target audience in question. It is important to choose one that will work well for the target audience and the message to be communicated.

Writing – and sharing - a report with findings from participating in Platform activities is a good start. But to have an impact, more communication efforts are needed. This might be for example by taking part in meetings or working groups, running workshops or training on the aspect of undeclared work covered.

Examples were also given at the seminar of using new forms of media to communicate messages associated with undeclared work, such as YouTube and Facebook. This way, it is possible to give short and to-the-point messages.

One key suggestion was to create ambassadors for the Platform – taking responsibility for sharing the outputs within their own country. Each

ambassador might want to differentiate the tools according to the local situation/experience. Discussion took place at the seminar of whether this is a key role of the Platform members and social partner representatives on the Platform.

Box 4: Social partner involvement

A key issue raised at the seminar was the role of social partners. They bring a different perspective and a wide range of alternative networks and channels to new audiences. Social partners have a key role to play in cascading learning from the Platform activities to their members and provide an important channel to feed views from workers and employers back up and into the Platform.

Some delegates suggested that there is a need to work more and better with social partners.

During the workshop on holistic approaches to tackling undeclared work, it was agreed that a tripartite approach, integrating social partners, is important.

In Greece for example, a roadmap has been developed to tackle UDW, which led to a tripartite workshop and the creation of a tripartite body in charge of implementation of the roadmap. The creation of such a body is seen as a key success factor, because it creates ownership.

With regard to the Platform, one way the social partners represented on the Platform could get involved is to bring the issue of UDW to the social dialogue committees at the European level.

There was some discussion at the seminar around the role of the media. There are complexities around working with the media which are country-specific. A positive example of involving

the media was given by Lithuania, where information regarding an inspection day was shared with journalists and so it was given media attention. Similarly in Denmark, the press are always very interested in

results of inspections and help to spread the word. However, other countries reported less positive experiences of working with the media on what can be a highly sensitive issue.

> **Box 2: Sweden – A National Seminar bringing together key stakeholders**
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> A series of five National Seminars have been delivered as part of the work programme of the European Platform over the course of 2017. The aim of these seminars is to bring together national authorities / bodies involved in tackling UDW to discuss how UDW can be tackled more effectively and efficiently.
>
> The first of these Seminars was held in Sweden and looked at the benefits of – and conditions for – a more target-oriented cooperation between the national authorities in tackling UDW. A total of 50 people, from 12 different authorities, took part. Feedback from the participants was that seminars of this kind are very important to provide information, new useful knowledge and also opportunities for networking[2].
>
> The Platform Senior Representative for Sweden, explained that the National Seminar had been a very useful opportunity to develop a better common understanding of the challenges and needs associated with tackling undeclared work. He said that the Seminar had supported networking and enabled participants to find new ways of cooperating.
>
> He also outlined some important lessons from the experience, as follows:
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> • It is also important to evaluate joint activities and show their results – this makes the cooperation visible and recognised;
>
> • Increasing awareness and changing attitudes, particularly amongst young people, is also important;
>
> • It is important to clearly define mandates and roles, particularly in relation to joint inspection activities.

How can the Platform help?

The Platform has a number of communication tools in place at European level. These are briefly presented in the box below.

> **Box 5: Platform communication tools**
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> • **A newsletter:** this is distributed twice a year and is available from the Platform website. It features news about the latest and upcoming Platform activities, and could also include stories from Platform members about relevant national developments. Platform members and observers can

> invite relevant national stakeholders to subscribe to the newsletter, using this link[3]
>
> • **Web pages on the European Commission's website:** these web pages include information about the Platform and what it does, as well as hosting a 'virtual library' where many of the Platform's written outputs can be found. In addition, there is a page for each EU country, presenting a factsheet with an overview of undeclared work in that country, and good practice

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[2] Information taken from the report of the national seminar (unpublished)
[3] http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1299&intPageId=4874&langId=en

examples. The web pages can be found here[4]

- **A collaborative workspace:** The collaborative workspace is an online space for sharing information within a limited community; Platform members and observers, as well as other nominated community members. The collaborative workspace contains all Platform documentation, including those that are not made public (e.g. presentations from the events).

- **A video:** on the benefits of the Platform has been filmed and Platform members and observers can share this video, or the shorter social media clips, with relevant stakeholders, in order to increase awareness of the Platform's mission and work.

- **Support/advice on delivering awareness-raising campaigns:** The Platform can also provide support with awareness-raising campaigns. This refers to campaigns targeting the public and also campaigns targeting stakeholders.

These tools can be circulated by the Platform members to stakeholders within their own countries to help raise awareness of the Platform and its outputs. However, more targeted communication efforts may be needed at national level to disseminate the Platform outputs more widely, including for example face-to-face meetings, workshops as well as targeted and translated written communications.

For example, a number of different types of written outputs are generated from the Platform activities on a specific theme (from brief executive summary reports to detailed, step-by-step toolkits). These different types of written outputs can be used to communicate the messages of the Platform, according to the needs of the target audience in question. It is therefore up to the Platform members and observers to decide which output to share with which stakeholder in their country / amongst their membership.

How will we manage the campaign?

The aim of this question was to explore the organisational structures in place at national level that can be used for communication and dissemination. A holistic approach - tackling undeclared work through a coordinated, integrated approach - is based upon communication between ministries and the active involvement of social partners at the national level.

Developing communication plans to disseminate learning that involve all stakeholders is therefore a first key step in encouraging a more holistic approach towards tackling undeclared work in those Member States where a more fragmented approach currently exists.

There was also recognition that Platform Members and Platform social partners needed to cooperate in order to ensure that the same key messages are being conveyed in Member States.

Participants also discussed how to manage a communication campaign. It was suggested that a regular flow of information could be aligned to the annual work programme of the Platform.

In 2017, the European Commission launched a call for proposals for activities relating to UDW. Co-financing was offered for joint activities and cross-border projects, including the possibility to carry out joint awareness-raising campaigns. Two projects have now been granted funding: one focusing on the agriculture sector in Italy and a second project supporting

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[4]

http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1299&langId=en

cooperation between the Nordic countries.

How will we measure the impact?

"However beautiful the strategy you should occasionally look at the results"

(Winston Churchill)

It is important to measure the outcomes of communication campaigns. This should be carried out on a continuous basis rather than waiting until the end, so that if a particular tool does not seem to be working, it can be changed.

This is a key question for the UDW Platform - how to measure if stakeholders understand the relevance of the outputs to them? Yet it also seemed to be a challenging aspect to find answers. This may be an area to re-visit in the future.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

- There is work to do to ensure that the outputs of the Platform can be fully exploited. The Platform members and observers need to reach out to a range of key stakeholders in their countries / amongst their own members, each with differing interests and needs. As such, the communication methods, as well as the message to be communicated, need to be carefully tailored to the intended audience.
- A number of different types of written outputs are generated from the Platform activities (from brief executive summary reports to detailed, step-by-step toolkits). These different types of written outputs can be used to communicate the messages of the Platform, according to the needs of the target audience in question.
- Participants identified a need to improve collaboration between authorities and social partners. This will be taken into account when planning and designing future Platform activities.

NEXT STEPS

Another Dissemination Seminar will be held next year. Based on the discussions at this event, it is likely that this next seminar may give greater attention to the role of social partners in disseminating learning, and improving how state authorities and social partners cooperate to disseminate learning at all levels.

Another follow-up activity may be to discuss if a communication strategy is needed for the Platform. As it matures and more knowledge is created, there may be a greater need for a more coordinated communication strategy. This could be discussed at a future seminar or meeting.

Finally, it is worth remembering that communicating messages from the Platform activities is only the first step; this needs to be followed by further action to apply and implement the learning from the Platform. This important shift from communication and dissemination, to individual and organisational action, is essential for Platform activities to have a wider impact.

SOURCES

European Platform Undeclared Work, Dissemination Seminar – Taking Learning Forward and Employing Results, Discussion Paper (unpublished).

European Platform Undeclared Work, Dissemination Seminar – Taking Learning Forward and Employing Results, Various Presentations (unpublished).

SALTO-YOUTH resource centres, Making Waves, Creating more impact with your youth projects. Internet: https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-1408/MakingWaves.pdf