

# BIODIVERSITY

Communications Toolkit

## Evaluating your communications

Before you start your communications campaign, remember to set yourself objectives that are SMART.

- **Specific** – do the objectives specify what you want communications to achieve?
- **Measurable** – will you be able to evaluate whether you are meeting the objectives?
- **Achievable** – are the objectives you set attainable?
- **Realistic** – can you achieve the objectives with the resources you have?
- **Time-based** – when do you want to achieve the objectives?

Public relations activity addresses many audiences in many different ways and different types of evaluation techniques are required. Success can be evaluated based upon a combination of factors, such as assessing the strength of media contacts established and the media coverage generated.

One of the most basic forms of evaluation is the measurement of media coverage. To evaluate your campaign it is necessary to monitor media coverage and locate cuttings and broadcast coverage generated by your campaign to enable you to analyse the content. You can do this yourself and it should be relatively easy to do if you are targeting local media. However, you may require some assistance from a media monitoring agency if you are targeting media Scotland-wide.

You can assess the quality of a newspaper article using the positioning of the article (is it near the front or back of the newspaper?), how many readers will see the item and how many of your key messages have come through. The same indicators can be used for broadcast coverage – how many listeners / viewers will hear / see the item, is it near the start or end of the news bulletin or programme?

You can also highlight whether coverage is positive or negative and provide an advertising value equivalent (AVE) / average cost for coverage (see AVE calculation guide below). This will allow you to assess your return on investment.

### How to calculate AVE

Once you have obtained copies of your newspaper cuttings and recordings or transcripts of broadcast coverage, you will need to contact the advertising sales team at the media outlet to obtain their rates. This will either be their Scc (single column centimetre) rate for publications or standard rates for broadcast advert durations.

To calculate the AVE of cuttings - measure the length of the article, multiply this with the number of columns and then multiply this with the Scc rate obtained earlier.

To calculate the AVE of broadcast coverage – determine the duration of the item and multiply with the rates obtained for how much this space would have cost in advertising terms.

As editorial coverage is considered to carry more credibility than an advert, it is industry practice to multiply the AVE figure by three for national coverage and by five for local coverage.

Depending on the nature of your campaign, its effectiveness can also be measured by:

- hits to your website
- responses to your call to action
- how many people turn up at your event
- how many people get involved with your new project/initiative
- the increase of visitors to parks, woodlands, forest walks, etc in your area