



## 1.0 Aim and Objectives

### Define aim and objectives

This section looks in detail at defining your communications aim and setting your overall objectives. It considers the different nature of aims and objectives and how to set targets which are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).

#### 1.1 Define your aim

Identify the main aim for your communications plan. An aim is a general statement of what you intend to achieve and generally, you should only have one aim. Your aim can include vague and undefined terms, for example:

- Meet 2010 government waste strategy target
- Increase the amount of material recycled
- Encourage low or non recyclers to recycle

**For more information about setting aims - see Becoming an Expert No6.**

#### 1.2 Setting objectives

Once your aim is defined you can set the overall objectives for your plan:

- An objective is a specific statement of what you intend to achieve
- Any terms need to be defined and the concepts understood
- You may have several objectives that together add up to meet your overall aim
- Your objectives must relate to the impact of your communications

### CASE STUDY: Setting aims and objectives

**The London Borough of Barnet ran a campaign to encourage residents in flats to recycle more.**

The campaign aims were to:

- Maximise participation and tonnage collected from flats using communal recycling facilities through a comprehensive door-to-door canvassing campaign
- Reinforce participation in the flats recycling service using a variety of marketing techniques

The specific objectives set were to increase the following by the end of the campaign:

- Claimed usage rate by at least 10%
- Quantity of recyclables by at least 10%
- Number of committed recyclers by at least 10%
- Level of awareness by at least 10%
- Level of usage of specific material containers by at least 10%

A wide variety of communication channels were used, spearheaded by canvassing and the campaign activities were monitored by collecting:

- Tonnage data collected from the site of each set of flats and were based on estimates of the volume of material in the recycling bins at the time of collection
- Usage data taken from a representative sample of people living in flats who were asked a series of questions about their recycling behaviour
- 'Committed Recycler' data determined through a series of linked questions in a face-to-face survey

WRAP Local Authority Communications Case Study: London Borough of Barnet

Your objectives should give your plan clarity of purpose and will help you prioritise activities, for example: does activity "X" help you meet the overall aim and objectives? If it doesn't, or has marginal benefit you should question whether to go ahead with that activity. They must also be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound – and should be stretching (even challenging) *but* achievable. A target that looks unattainable can be counter-productive.

Remember to make sure that your objectives can be measured and decide how to measure them now. Objectives that a) can't be measured or b) are too difficult, expensive or time consuming to measure will not be effective. Example objectives might include:

- Increase the recycling rate across the district from 30% to 35% by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2010
- Increase participation to 50% in identified Low Performing Areas by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2010
- Reduce contamination of recycling collection containers to under 5% by March 2010
- Achieve a borough-wide recycling and composting rate of 40% by 2015

Later, when you are looking at individual communication activities, you need to set specific objectives (targets) for each activity. These should also be SMART, should link back to and support your overall aim and objectives and should relate to the inputs, outcomes and impacts of each activity. This is covered in more detail in Section 7.

**For more information about setting objectives - see Becoming an Expert No6.**

**For more information about how to make objectives SMART - see Becoming an Expert No7.**



For detailed information about target setting and monitoring and evaluating your communications see **Improving the Performance of Waste Diversion Schemes – A Good Practice Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation**. This comprehensive guidance document gives detailed step-by-step guidance on a range of monitoring techniques for waste operations and communications campaigns and can be accessed here:

[www.wrap.org.uk/monitoringandevaluation](http://www.wrap.org.uk/monitoringandevaluation)

## 1.3 Planning your Communications

The following section shows an extract from a typical communication plan to show how the aims and objectives could be developed and written.

### 3.0 Communications Aims and Objectives

#### 3.1 Aim

- To ensure residents are aware of the recycling services available, understand how to participate and recycle as much as possible by providing clear instructions.

#### 3.2 Objective

The key objectives for the communications are to:

- Inform all householders within the district what items can be recycled using the blue and brown bin collection services by the end of September 2013;
- Inform all householders within this district what items can be recycled using the HWRC and recycling bring

sites by the end of September 2013;

- Achieve an average participation rate of 85% in both the kerbside dry recycling and garden/food waste collections by March 2014; and
- Achieve a recycling and recovery rate exceeding 70% for 2013/2014.



## Becoming an Expert No6: Setting aims and objectives

All communications must have aims and objectives so it is clear what you are trying to achieve. Your objectives will also give you a clear direction and purpose which will help you select your communication methods and activities and how you will measure them.

<b>An aim is:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A general statement of purpose or intention</li> <li>■ It can include vague and undefined terms</li> <li>■ Generally you will have only one aim</li> </ul>
<b>An objective is:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A clear or specific statement of what you plan to achieve</li> <li>■ Terms will be defined and the concepts understood</li> <li>■ Quantified and given a specific timescale</li> <li>■ Several objectives might work together to meet an overall aim</li> </ul>

The main difference between aims and objectives is that you can demonstrate that you have achieved an objective but without objectives you can only argue whether you have achieved an aim. It is always better to know when you have succeeded.

### Setting your communications aim

You may need to discuss your aims and priorities with senior managers, other departments and possibly members to agree the most effective way forward. Your initial research and analysis should have helped to identify the main focus of your communications, which could be:

- Increase recycling and composting
- Launch a new recycling service
- Target specific areas to increase participation and reduce contamination levels

Your aim should link with and support your council's wider waste strategy targets or indicators under the Performance Framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships, for example:

Waste strategy and statutory targets	
EU Waste Framework Directive	Requires local authorities in the UK to recycle 50% of household or similar waste by 2020
National Waste Strategy for England	Requires local authorities (in England) to recycling and compost at least 40% by 2010, 45% by 2015 and 50% by 2020
Performance Framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships	
NI 191	Residual household waste per household
NI 192	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting
NI 193	Percentage of municipal waste landfilled

Your overall communications aim and strategy could look ahead (up to 2-3 years) and have distinct (but linked) campaigns with related aims for each year to fit with annual budget cycles. These campaigns and their aims should build on each other year after year, for example:

Year 1	Increase recycling by launching a new recycling service and increasing participation and reducing contamination
Year 2	Introduce near-entry recycling systems for all flats and high-rise dwellings and increase participation in low participation areas.

Year 3	Further increase overall recycling rate to meet and exceed 40% recycling target set by English Waste Strategy
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### Setting objectives

An objective, as distinct from an aim, is a clear statement of what you are planning to achieve, quantified and given a specific timescale. There are three types of objectives:

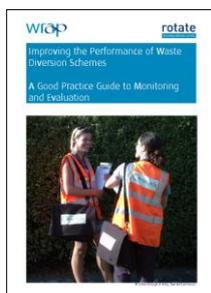
- Input objectives
- Output objectives
- Impact objectives

You must always include at least one impact objective as they are the only way you can measure the result of your activity i.e. behaviour change.

Inputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Input Objectives	Outcome Objectives	Impact Objectives
<p><b>This means an activity carried out on the way to delivering an outcome</b></p> <p><b>It is easy to measure</b></p> <p><b>It measures your effort (but not your achievement)</b></p>	<p><b>These relate to changes that happen as a result of your efforts</b></p> <p><b>It is a step on the way to achieving an impact</b></p>	<p><b>These are the ultimate result of your activities</b></p> <p><b>For example, the change in behaviour of households results in more people participating and as a result, increased recycling</b></p> <p><b>At least one objective should relate to an impact</b></p>
<p><b>Example:</b></p> <p>12,000 leaflets distributed to households across the LA</p>	<p><b>Example:</b></p> <p>6,500 more households aware of the kerbside scheme</p>	<p><b>Example:</b></p> <p>2,500 more households participating in the scheme</p> <p>Increase tonnages of recyclate collected by 100 tonnes</p>

### Setting overall communications objectives

Your overall communications objectives should include one or more impact objectives. You will also need to set objectives for all the communication methods and activities you use in your communications plan so you can monitor and evaluate them. This is discussed in more detail in Section 7.



For further information about setting aims and objectives for waste operations and communications campaigns, refer to "Improving the Performance of Waste Diversion Schemes". This good practice guide, produced by WRAP gives detailed step-by-step guidance on a range of monitoring techniques.

[www.wrap.org.uk/monitoringandevaluation](http://www.wrap.org.uk/monitoringandevaluation)



## Becoming an Expert No7: Setting SMART objectives

The essence of objective setting is the knowledge of what success looks like and that relies on having:

- A clear idea of what you want to achieve at the outset
- A monitoring and evaluation system in place that will allow you to measure the effect of your communications and identify when you have reached your goal

Your council will have robust operational monitoring systems to report to government on its performance with respect to statutory waste strategy targets and national performance indicators. Use these as a framework, together with other information, for setting your communications objectives and your monitoring and evaluation system. The usual method of setting targets is to make them SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound. Remember to link them to Inputs, Outcomes and Impacts. SMART targets are:

### **Specific**

- Participation will rise by 10%
- The recycling rate will rise by 5%
- Contamination will be below 2%
- Don't assume everyone will understand what your objective means – always clarify the terms

### **Measurable**

- You must think how you will measure success before setting out to achieve it
- You will know how to monitor your objectives and how to set up on-going monitoring or an end-of-campaign evaluation
- Participation will be evaluated by pre- and post campaign participation monitoring
- Tonnes of materials collected for recycling and residual will be collected as part of routine operational performance management
- Contamination levels will be monitored

### **Achievable**

- Experience and talking to neighbouring local authorities will give you an idea of what is achievable.
- Use your baseline evaluation or historical information so you know where you are and can set achievable targets
- Don't set objectives you cannot meet. Expecting a communications campaign with a £10,000 budget to raise your recycling rate by 25% in six months without any changes in service is neither realistic nor achievable

### **Relevant**

- Your targets must relate to what you are trying to achieve or the activity you are undertaking
- Check that your objectives are relevant to achieving your aims

### **Time bound**

- Always set a deadline to aim for by which your objective will be met. This marks the point against which you can evaluate it, for example: participation to rise by 10% by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Remember to budget for any extra costs associated with monitoring and evaluating your communications. Do not set objectives that you do not know how you will monitor or evaluate – you may find out later it is too difficult or too expensive. Sections 8 and 9 contain more information about planning and monitoring and evaluation.



For further information about target setting for waste operations and communications campaigns WRAP has produced a comprehensive guidance document – “Improving the Performance of Waste Diversion Schemes”. This good practice guide gives detailed step-by-step guidance on a range of monitoring techniques.

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