



CERN's
Communications
Strategy
2017-2020



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INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the four-year communications strategy for CERN, to cover the mandate of the current Directorate. The 2017-2020 CERN Communications Strategy was approved by the CERN Enlarged Directorate in February 2017.

In any organisation, the role of communications is to plan strategically, in order to enhance the organisation's ability to operate and achieve its strategic goals. Through communications, an organisation manages and sustains relationships with key audiences and takes responsibility for its reputation.

Communications consists of the dissemination of information by a variety of specialists and generalists in an organisation. So it is that many people communicate about CERN, for different reasons, in many different ways and using different media. The strategy described here does not concern itself with all these strands of communication, but rather with the main pillars of strategic communication that CERN should deliver and employ its resources in. It is thus a strategy for the core CERN organisation, rather than its collaborations (experiments), member states or users (individuals and institutes). Nevertheless, these are often both targets for and partners in CERN's communication, and thus are crucial participants in its development.

The strategy **encompasses both internal and external communications** and is underpinned by CERN's scientific and operational goals for 2017-2021, as defined in the CERN Medium-Term Plan and in the European Strategy for Particle Physics. It has also been informed by the results and recommendations of an independent study carried out by an external partner and, crucially, by input from CERN departments, communication and outreach teams of the CERN experiments collaborations, EPPCN (European particle Physics Communication Network) and IPPOG (International Particle Physics Outreach Group).

The Education, Communications and Outreach (ECO) group within the International Relations sector will lead on the development and execution of the strategy, in close collaboration with CERN management, departments and all internal stakeholders.

CERN AND COMMUNICATIONS AT CERN

CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, is an intergovernmental organization with 22 Member States. It is situated on the Franco-Swiss border, with headquarters in Geneva.

CERN is widely recognised as one of the world's leading laboratories for particle physics. At CERN, physicists and engineers probe the fundamental structure of the universe. To do this, they use the world's largest and most complex scientific instruments - particle accelerators and detectors - to study the basic constituents of matter - the fundamental particles - and the forces that shape the universe.

Close to 13 000 scientists from research institutes all over the world use CERN's facilities for their experiments. Research carried out at CERN has made major contributions to the field of particle physics. In 2012 two experiments at CERN - ATLAS and CMS - announced the discovery of the elusive Higgs boson, the until then missing piece in the Standard Model, which encapsulates our best understanding of the behaviour of all fundamental particles in the universe. This discovery underpins the 2013 Nobel Prize for Physics, awarded jointly to François Englert and Peter Higgs, for their theoretical work on the Standard Model.

While the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is the flagship of CERN's accelerator complex, and the results of the LHC experiments are often in the limelight (for example, with the discovery of the Higgs boson), CERN has a very diverse research programme, which covers a wide range of topics in physics, from the Standard Model to supersymmetry, from dark matter to cosmic rays. Thus, experiments at other accelerators and facilities both on-site and off are an equally important part of the laboratory's activities. Supporting all the experiments is a very strong theory programme, which carries out cutting-edge research in theoretical particle physics.

Communicating CERN's mission and achievements has been core to the Organization's strategy for over a decade. The 2017-2020 Communications Strategy thus builds on over well-established and highly successful communication, education and outreach programmes at CERN, which have:

- contributed to CERN being recognised as not only a world-leading research laboratory in particle physics, but also a centre of excellence in science, engineering and computing, and an example of multinational collaboration;
- established CERN as one of the first ports of call for international media;
- confirmed CERN as a source of inspiration and learning for teachers and students;
- set CERN as part of popular culture, inspiring scientific curiosity amongst citizens across the globe;
- confirmed CERN as one of the best global models for scientific collaboration for peace.

GOALS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The period covered by this communications strategy follows a highly eventful and exciting period of technological and scientific achievements, both at CERN and in particle physics. The start-up of the LHC (in 2008) and the discovery of the Higgs boson (in 2012), for example, have had enormous impact not only in the high-energy physics community, but also in raising awareness of CERN and of particle physics amongst the general public.

Looking forward, three major challenges have been identified for CERN communications:

1. Maintaining interest when faced with a potential scarcity of “big breakthroughs” at the scale of the discovery of the Higgs boson and the completion of the Standard Model;
2. Securing understanding and support for the ambitious future accelerator programmes deemed necessary for the search for new physics, and for the long-term future of CERN, of particle physics and of fundamental research;
3. Reacting to the inherent ups and downs of experimental results. Overhyping of new results accompanied or followed by inflated criticism may lead to loss of credibility of the field.

These challenges present important communication opportunities:

1. To communicate on CERN’s diversity of scientific programmes, beyond the LHC and beyond the accelerator complex;
2. To communicate on the process of science (hypotheses and theories, experimental data, critical thinking, peer-review, open discussion), on the “grey areas” of particle physics research and on how scientific breakthroughs are often the cumulative result of small advances;
3. To communicate on the technological advances that are made in the search for new physics;
4. To communicate the impact of CERN on society.

Thus, the overall objective of the CERN communications strategy is:

To help ensure the long-term future of CERN’s mission and share it with society

This overall objective may be broken down into the following goals:

1. Contribute to maintaining and increasing support from current Member States;
2. Contribute to attracting new Member and Associate Member States (based on the current strategy for scientific and geographical enlargement);
3. Maintain high public awareness and engagement with CERN’s activities;
4. Foster community-building within CERN and within the international particle physics community;
5. Raise awareness of and inform on the societal impact of CERN;
6. Enable CERN to serve as an effective voice for fundamental research in relevant multilateral debates and with the public.

COMMUNICATIONS ARCHITECTURE

The foundation of any effective communications strategy is a clear and concise articulation of the organisation’s **vision and mission**. From these the organisation’s positioning, **strategic themes and messages** can be developed to be used in all communications activities.

An organisation’s vision and mission derive from its strategic goals. In CERN’s case, we divide these into scientific and “beyond science” goals.

CERN’s **scientific goals** 2017-2021 (as laid out in the MTP) are:

- Full exploitation of the LHC with the high-luminosity phase;
- Maintaining and updating a complementary diverse scientific programme, serving a broad community, including contribution to long-baseline neutrino projects outside Europe;
- Preparing for a post-LHC high-energy accelerator project through design studies (CLIC and FCC) and a vigorous accelerator R&D programme (AWAKE and others).

CERN’s **“beyond science” goals** are:

- To be a non-politicised voice for science: for investment in fundamental research and for evidence-based policy;
- To build further links with industry in terms of transfer of knowledge from CERN to industry;
- To train a new generation of scientists and engineers;
- To inspire and nurture scientifically aware citizens.

CERN’s Vision

CERN’s vision is articulated as:

To gain understanding of the most fundamental particles and laws of the Universe

This statement underscores the fact that CERN is first and foremost a research laboratory for fundamental physics. This is the “core business” of the Organization, around which all other activities are built.

CERN’s Mission

The following statement articulates how CERN intends to achieve the above-mentioned vision.

CERN’s mission is:

- **To provide a unique range of particle accelerator facilities that enable research at the forefront of human knowledge**
- **To perform world-class research in fundamental physics**
- **To unite people from all over the world to push the frontiers of science and technology, for the benefit of all.**

This mission statement draws on the following keywords that encapsulate CERN’s raison d’être: **Research. Innovation. Collaboration. Inspiration.**

Themes

In the communications architecture, themes carry the platform for CERN to pass its messages and tell its stories.

Four themes capture CERN's essence:

- 1. Discovery through science**
 - Expressed in the three strands to CERN's scientific strategy
- 2. Technological innovation**
 - CERN innovates new technologies for high-energy accelerators, detectors and computing
 - CERN-based innovation is applied in other domains
- 3. Diversity in people**
 - More than 100 nationalities, from across the globe, work at CERN
 - There is great diversity in academic and professional background (science, engineering, computing and others)
- 4. Inspiration and Education**
 - CERN trains the future scientists, engineers and technicians
 - CERN motivates school students for science
 - CERN inspires scientifically aware citizens

Target audiences

Target audiences derive from an organisation's "core business" and operational objectives.

CERN is mandated by the CERN Convention to provide information for and keep the high energy physics community (Articles II.1, II.3(c)) and Member States (Article V.2(f)) regularly updated.

Although not officially mandated to communicate with other groups, it is undoubtedly in CERN's interest to communicate and engage with a range of different audiences, which are vitally important for CERN to achieve its mission.

Several of these audiences are also stakeholders in CERN's activities, that is, they directly contribute to CERN's present and future (Member States and the CERN community are two examples of stakeholders).

The following **target audiences** have been identified for CERN:

- Governments and policy makers
 - of Member States
 - of potential new Member States and in Associate Member States
 - of Host States
 - of international organisations
- International particle physics community
 - Institutes and Universities
 - Physicists
- International scientific community
- Media and influencers
- Teachers and students (from pre-University to graduate)
- Local community
- General public (citizens)
- CERN community (including CERN employees, students, users and associates, contractors)

- Potential candidates (students, graduates, professionals)
- Alumni
- Industry
- Donors (from individual citizens to corporations and foundations)

Key messages

In this section, we outline the overarching key messages (targeting all audience groups) and the more granular key messages for each target audience.

Primary key messages

1. CERN is a **world leader in particle physics**. (Encompassing theoretical and experimental research, engineering and computing)
2. The discovery of the Higgs boson opens the door into new physics, on a **journey of discovery that will extend for decades**.
3. To continue this journey of discovery **we need new accelerators, detectors and computing capacity**. (To build them we need to push the technology)
4. CERN **brings benefits to society**. (CERN contributes to the human endeavour of acquiring knowledge, it has a strong positive impact on training future scientists and engineers, on driving innovation, on transferring knowledge and technology to society and industry, and on engaging citizens in the achievements of fundamental research)
5. CERN **is an open institution**. (CERN's scientific results are available in open access and CERN is committed to open innovation. CERN is open to citizens, open to the arts, humanities and other expressions of culture)
6. **Peaceful collaboration and diversity** are intrinsic to CERN. (People from different nationalities, cultures, backgrounds and with different expertise collaborate peacefully, on an equal footing)

Audience	Drivers	Messages
Governments and Policymakers in Member States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific excellence Economic and social impact Return on investment (Re)election Job creation Inspiration for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Influence on global scientific agenda 	<p>CERN is one of the world's leading centres for particle physics – it produces cutting-edge science and technology.</p> <p>For a Member State, CERN is an integral part of national research efforts; it is your national laboratory at the international level.</p> <p>CERN continues to train generations of scientists, technicians and engineers worldwide.</p> <p>Upgrade of the LHC to the High Luminosity LHC is a priority for CERN. It will significantly enhance the accelerator, potentially allowing a new chapter of particle physics to be explored.</p> <p>The particle physics community is developing an ambitious vision for next-generation facilities following the huge success of the LHC.</p> <p>CERN is a key actor in delivering transparent and responsible research.</p> <p>CERN operates with a comparable budget to a medium-sized European University.</p> <p>CERN is an ideal showcase of knowledge transfer: it gave us the World Wide Web and has been a pioneer in other technologies, such as touch screens and PET scanners.</p> <p>The unique know-how and expertise of CERN scientists and engineers is the key to efficiently bridging the gap between fundamental research and its applications.</p> <p>CERN engages and promotes SMEs and start-ups, and supports their growth through its network of Business Incubation Centres.</p> <p>Half of CERN's annual budget returns to industry through procurement.</p> <p>CERN consistently strives to deliver environmentally responsible research, both through how it operates, and the results it creates.</p> <p>CERN adheres to the highest standards of health, safety and security.</p> <p>Teachers and students in your country have greater access to inspiring and cutting-edge education resources and training.</p>
Governments and policymakers in potential new Member States / Associate Member States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific excellence Economic and social impact Return on investment (Re)election Inspiration for STEM Influence on global scientific agenda 	<p>Becoming a member of CERN enables far greater involvement for your scientists, engineers and technicians.</p> <p>Becoming a member of CERN provides your industries with access to large engineering projects.</p> <p>CERN enables participation in world-changing scientific projects that would simply not be possible on a national basis.</p> <p>Teachers and students in your country will have greater access to inspiring and cutting-edge education resources and training.</p> <p>Being associated to CERN contributes to creating critical mass in particle physics in your country, building and nurturing the community.</p> <p>CERN is an ideal showcase of knowledge transfer: it gave us the World Wide Web and has been a pioneer in other technologies, such as touch screens and PET scanners.</p>
International particle physics community (individual physicists and institutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific excellence Peer recognition Funding Inspiration for STEM 	<p>CERN is at the forefront of particle physics and technology.</p> <p>CERN is the heart of an international network. It is a melting pot of collaborations and partnerships.</p> <p>CERN actively develops the tools for the future of particle physics research.</p> <p>CERN is a laboratory dedicated to the particle physics community and will always strive to better serve the community. It is your lab and we will build our future together.</p> <p>Each one of you plays an important role in maintaining support for CERN and for particle physics.</p> <p>CERN inspires and trains generations of scientists, technicians and engineers worldwide.</p>
International scientific community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific excellence Inspiration for STEM Funding for fundamental research Influence on global scientific agenda 	<p>CERN has made major contributions to our understanding of fundamental questions of humankind.</p> <p>CERN is a centre of excellence for particle physics and technology, including computing.</p> <p>CERN hosts 70% of the world's particle physicists. It is a melting pot of collaborations and partnerships.</p> <p>CERN collaborations are models for grassroots, distributed, large-scale approaches to big science.</p> <p>CERN is at the forefront of developing technologies that could benefit other areas of research.</p> <p>CERN trains generations of scientists, technicians and engineers worldwide.</p> <p>CERN is a powerful standard bearer for fundamental research and for its role in society.</p>
Media and influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frontier science Cutting edge technology Public interest Authoritative source 	<p>CERN is the world's leading centre for particle physics – it produces cutting-edge science and technology.</p> <p>CERN is a unique place that contributes to our understanding of fundamental questions of humankind.</p> <p>CERN is a hub of expertise in particle physics, engineering and computing.</p> <p>CERN has built and runs some of the largest scientific instruments in the world.</p> <p>The results of the work carried out at CERN are available to everyone.</p> <p>Fundamental science is a key driver for innovation and applied research.</p> <p>The work at CERN across all three pillars – physics, engineering and computing – has a deep impact on society.</p> <p>CERN is the heart of an international network. It is a melting pot of collaborations and partnerships.</p> <p>CERN inspires and trains new generations of scientists, technicians and engineers worldwide.</p> <p>CERN adheres to the highest standards of health, safety and security.</p> <p>CERN consistently strives to deliver environmentally responsible research, both through how it operates, and the results it creates.</p>

Audience	Drivers	Messages
Teachers and students (from pre-University to graduate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being updated on current research in particle physics Continuous professional development Inspiration Wonder Belonging to a network of shared interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CERN is a unique place that contributes to our understanding of fundamental questions of humankind. Fundamental research is a driver for science education. CERN is one of the world's leading centres for particle physics. CERN has built and runs some of the largest scientific instruments in the world. At CERN, people from all over the world collaborate, transcending barriers of age, religion, gender and nationality. The results of the work carried out at CERN are available to everyone. You (student) could participate in CERN's research, now or in the future. Our science has the power to inspire your students. CERN lays the groundwork for collaborations between students and teachers from many different countries.
Local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic benefit Tourism Impact on environment, on individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CERN is one of the drivers of economic and cultural development in our local area. CERN is world famous and brings a positive spotlight to our region. CERN adheres to the highest standards of health, safety and security. CERN consistently strives to deliver environmentally responsible research, both through how it operates, and the results it creates. We take our place in the community seriously. We work closely with local institutions and authorities for the CERN of today and tomorrow. CERN has dedicated events and channels to engage with the local community. We are preparing a bright future for CERN.
Citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curiosity Impact Wonder Knowledge for empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CERN is a unique place that contributes to our understanding of fundamental questions of humankind. CERN has built and runs some of the largest scientific instruments in the world. Fundamental scientific research is a driving force for technological innovations that impact on our lives, such as the World Wide Web. At CERN, people from all over the world collaborate, transcending barriers of age, religion, gender and nationality. The results of the work carried out at CERN are available to everyone. We take our place in society seriously. We want to engage citizens with our work. CERN adheres to the highest standards of health, safety and security. CERN consistently strives to deliver environmentally responsible research, both through how it operates, and the results it creates.
CERN community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pride Curiosity Community spirit Career development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CERN attracts the brightest minds and some of the most talented people in the world. We are part of a bustling, dynamic, international and diverse community, united by shared values. All of us play a role in CERN's amazing discoveries and share in their success. CERN encourages and supports training in transferable skills for effective career development. CERN adheres to the highest standards of health, safety and security. CERN consistently strives to deliver environmentally responsible research, both through how it operates, and the results it creates.
Potential candidates (students, graduates, professionals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join an employer of choice Be part of unique talent pool for work and acquiring knowledge Diversity of career opportunities Career advancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CERN is a unique place to work, a place like nowhere else on earth. Take part! CERN is a hub of expertise in particle physics, engineering and computing. We require skilled professionals in these fields to deliver the science of tomorrow. CERN is the heart of an international network. It is a melting pot of collaborations and partnerships. Every kind of thinking is welcome and needed. CERN needs more than physicists and engineers. Whatever your field of expertise, at whatever stage in your career, CERN could be your next opportunity. A job at CERN is an excellent stepping-stone to a successful career in a range of fields. CERN combines attractive working and training conditions with excellent remunerations and benefits, and the freedom to work flexibly. CERN is a key actor in delivering transparent and responsible research. People working at CERN enjoy living a truly cosmopolitan life, in the heart of Europe.
Alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desire to "give something back" Wanting to keep in touch Networking Career development Mentoring Lifelong learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By keeping in touch with CERN you remain a part of the CERN story (successes, growth). You are a valuable ambassador for CERN and can contribute to increase our impact on society. We are part of a bustling, dynamic, international and diverse community, united by shared values.

Audience	Drivers	Messages
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovation Knowledge transfer Recruitment Job creation Return on investment Collaboration 	<p>CERN is a large multidisciplinary organisation that requires a wide range of goods and services.</p> <p>Half of CERN's annual budget returns to industry through procurement.</p> <p>Contracts with CERN help industry drive their innovation.</p> <p>CERN develops cutting-edge technology related to accelerators, detectors and computing, which includes diverse technology domains (e.g.: superconductivity, microelectronics, cryogenics, big data, ultra-high vacuum).</p> <p>CERN technologies have applications in many fields beyond high energy physics that could benefit your area of business (e.g.: in medical technology, energy, aerospace, safety).</p> <p>CERN inspires and trains the future workforce.</p> <p>The unique know-how and expertise of CERN's scientists and engineers is the key to efficiently bridge the gap between fundamental research and its applications.</p> <p>CERN is an ideal showcase of knowledge transfer: it gave the world the World Wide Web and has been a pioneer in other technologies, such as touch screens and PET scanners.</p>
Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate social responsibility Philanthropy Positive publicity Impact 	<p>CERN is a global and highly respected brand.</p> <p>Giving to CERN makes you a partner in spreading CERN's spirit of scientific curiosity.</p> <p>By giving to CERN you can contribute to enabling more talented young people to take up science, engineering and computing careers.</p> <p>The work at CERN has a deep and positive impact on society, and by giving to CERN you help reinforce this impact.</p>

PARTNERS

In developing activities and projects within the framework of this strategy, CERN will work closely with a range of internal and external partners, to ensure a coherent coordination of communication channels and activities, aligned with the CERN communications strategy and with those of our partners.

Partners within CERN:

- CERN Council
- Collaborations of the experiments at CERN
- CERN departments
- Ideasquare and OpenLab
- The CERN & Society Foundation
- The Foundation for the Globe of Science and Innovation

Partners in the Member States and Associate Member States:

- National Laboratories and Institutions
- Universities
- Funding bodies
- Business Incubation Centres

Partners in host states:

- National, Federal and Local Authorities
- Permanent Missions
- International Geneva

Partners in Europe:

- European Commission
- EIROforum

Partners in the particle physics community:

- EPPCN – European Particle Physics Communication Network
- InterActions Collaboration
- IPPOG – International Particle Physics Outreach Group
- European Society of Particle Physics (EPS)
- National physics societies

CHANNELS AND ACTIVITIES

Communication at CERN can be divided into a range of activities, which pass through one or more channels to the target audience(s). All activities aim to be aligned with the goals, objectives and messages set out in the strategy. Thus, in developing activities, the aim will be to create stories and content that will “materialise” the communication strategy across tailored channels (ex: websites, publications, exhibitions, visits).

The table below concerns the channels and activities for which the ECO group is responsible. It is not an exhaustive list, and does not include communication activities carried out by other CERN departments, groups and by the collaborations, although these are often linked to ECO-lead activities and/or rely on core CERN communications channels (e.g. CERN website and social media or video and photography).

Channel	Activities	Target audience group(s)
Digital portfolio (online)	CERN websites: home.cern, press.cern and those of other CERN sectors, departments, groups, units and sections* Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn	All
Visits to CERN	On-site visits (including schools) Guided Virtual Tours CERN Virtual Reality** Special guest visits Passport Big Bang CERN shop	All
Exhibitions	Permanent exhibitions (Universe of Particles and Microcosm) Travelling exhibitions (Accelerating science, LHC Interactive tunnel, CERN in images) Visit points: 8 existing (SM18, Data Centre, CCC, SC, AMS, CLIC, AVC, ATLAS) and 3 in the making (LEIR, AD/ELENA, ALICE)** Online resources for exhibitions	All
Public events	Researchers' Night TEDxCERN CERN Outreach Event 2017** CERN Open Days 2019 Public and private events at the Globe	All (with special focus on local community)
Audio-visual: photography, video and animations	CDS with content curation Photography Stock footage, edited videos 360° photos and videos Co-productions Live broadcasts 2D and 3D Animations and Illustrations	All

Channel	Activities	Target audience group(s)
Residencies	Within the Arts AT CERN programme: Collide, Accelerate and Guest Artists	All
Visual identity & Print	Logos Branding for CERN departments, projects, etc Corporate material (business cards, email signatures, etc) CERN presentation for VIP visits Annual Report Brochures Christmas card Posters	All
Media relations	Press Office website Media Management system (clippings, media database) On-site visits for journalists Backgrounders/media packs Media training	Media CERN scientists, staff and management
CERN Courier	Website (to be restructured in 2017) Digital pdf magazine Printed Magazine	International particle physics community
Internal communications	CERN Community webpages Bulletin for the CERN community email Printed Bulletin Screens and electronic text displays E-mails to members of personnel	CERN community
Teacher programmes	International Teacher Programme (HST) National Teacher Programmes International teachers' weeks (ITW) ** Development of teaching resources and modules Physics education research	Teachers
Student programmes	S'Cool LAB Beamline for Schools High School Students Internship Programme (HSSIP)* Participation in International Particle Physics Masterclasses Development of teaching resources and modules Physics education research	High school students

* In 2017, an ambitious programme to improve user experience across CERN websites is being carried out, which includes: creating a new website for the Organization (in Drupal 8); creating a design language and processes for use in all CERN websites; creating a personal experience online for CERN people and exploiting opportunities under the dotCERN top-level domain.

** New for 2017 / From 2017 onwards

