EU Aid Volunteers communication plan for participating organisations and volunteers

Introduction:

Volunteering is a concrete and visible expression of solidarity allowing individuals to dedicate their knowledge, skills and time to the service of fellow human beings. The EU Aid Volunteers programme enables Europeans to support and contribute to humanitarian projects in the countries where assistance is most needed. This programme gives young Europeans and established humanitarian experts the opportunity to express solidarity with people in need and strengthen their sense of European citizenship.

This communication plan outlines the communication objectives, key messages, target audience and communication activities under the framework of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative, as required by Regulation 375/2014 Art 17.

Communication objectives:

1. Raise awareness on the EU Aid Volunteers initiative both inside EU and in countries where volunteers will be deployed and local actions are supported.

2. Inform interested communities about the opportunity to engage in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative.

3. Promote the value of EU solidarity in action and the EU’s humanitarian aid principles.

4. Create a shared identity of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative on the part of volunteers and participating organisations.

5. Engage with the public to generate support for volunteerism in Europe and worldwide.

6. Demonstrate the value added and impact of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative and its different actions, and the professional contribution of EU Aid Volunteers, notably to EU citizens, Member States, potential participating organisations and host communities.

Key Communication Messages:
(1) We Care, We Act: The EU Aid Volunteers initiative is a tangible expression of European solidarity with people in need. It boosts the capacity of the EU in providing humanitarian aid.

(2) You Can Make a Difference: The EU Aid Volunteers initiative is open to a variety of profiles, from young people to experts, with the skills to help meet the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable people.

3) Power Through Local Action: The EU Aid Volunteers initiative aims at strengthening the capacities of local communities and organisations to deal with disasters.

Target Audience:

- European citizens (especially those interested in humanitarian aid, in volunteering, humanitarian/professional audiences).
- Potential participating organisations.
- The media.
- Interested communities and the general public in the countries where EU Aid Volunteers come from and in the countries in which they are deployed.
- EU institutions, MEPs, governments, other key donors and stakeholders.

Communication Actions and Tools:

The following communication actions are provided to guide the dissemination and communication of the above EUAV key communication messages and communication objectives. The first part concerns the communication actions to be implemented by ECHO. The second part concerns communication actions to be implemented by beneficiaries, particularly sending and hosting organisations, as well as EU Aid Volunteers. All participants are required to undertake communication activities as part of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative.
Part 1

Communication deliverables throughout the duration of the initiative by ECHO:

- **Brand Development:** To achieve and strengthen a common shared identity of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative throughout Europe and beyond, a dedicated visual has been created as a powerful way to succinctly communicate the purpose of the initiative while reminding the EU values and the strength that lies in volunteering together. This visual will be then used for all related materials. Guidelines have been published for its use.

- **ECHO’s RIOs (Regional Information Officers) to be informed about EU Aid Volunteers projects in their regions so as to foster regional communication around the initiative where possible and appropriate.**

- **Development and use of the EU Aid Volunteers platform** https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/echo/eu-aid-volunteers_en/.

- **Website:** Dedicated EU Aid Volunteers pages on ECHO’s website to be maintained and updated regularly (http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en/what/humanitarian-aid/eu-aid-volunteers) with main developments of the initiative and stories from the field.

- **Social media:** In addition to ECHO’s website, targeting external audiences will also be done via ECHO’s social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Google+, YouTube, and Flickr).

Part 2

Guidelines for participating organisations and volunteers (Sending, Hosting, Training organisations, Capacity building and Technical assistance organisations and EU Aid Volunteers)

The responsibilities of these different organisations and people in the implementation of the communication plan will be specified in the calls for proposals/tenders that will be launched by the Commission or the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) to find applicants for participation in the different EU Aid Volunteer actions and in the requirements set out in the contracts subsequently signed with the Commission or EACEA.
2.1 Communication actions of Sending Organisations may include but are not restricted to the following:

- Project titles must include the phrase 'EU Aid Volunteers'.

- Identification of a communication focal point as main contact on communication issues.

- Use of EU Aid Volunteers templates and materials in all communication/visibility products relating to the EUAV initiative, strengthening a united identity and creating buy-in amongst participating organisations and volunteers. This includes the use of the name "EU Aid Volunteers", the slogan "We Care, We Act" and adherence to visual identity requirements.

- Engage ECHO field offices by updating them on the presence of volunteers\(^1\) and, where appropriate, carrying out joint communication activities.

- Communication strategy developed promoting the identity and positive contribution of EU Aid Volunteers, with a target audience of European citizens and the general public in countries where EUAVs are to be deployed.

- Informing EU Aid Volunteers of the communication and visibility activities envisaged in the project and communication tasks expected of them.\(^2\)

- Publicity event (examples of these events could include former volunteers acting as "EUAV ambassadors"; Parliamentary visit; university talk; "International Volunteers Day" celebratory event; photo exhibition; local media engagement upon return of EUAVs from deployment) organised annually, at a minimum.

- Local media outreach (potential interviews, provision of EU Aid Volunteers/human interest stories) to targeted local media in European countries at a minimum once during deployment cycle.

\(^1\) In addition to requirements of Article 12.2 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1244/2014

\(^2\) Including requirements under Articles 12 and 16 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1244/2014
EU Aid Volunteers Platform: Promotion and usage of the platform as the principle forum of engagement with the EUAV community (post deployment support/discussions relating to future career opportunities/how volunteers can remain engaged in humanitarian aid and active EU citizenship). Use of the platform for regular updates on their project and sharing of communication products. Monthly "Keep in touch" emails sent to EU Aid Volunteers promoting the network. Nota bene: Activity costs setting up other platforms or websites will not be eligible under these projects to avoid multiplication of websites for different projects. Each project will establish a group / blog / forum on the EUAV Platform instead.

Social media used throughout deployment cycle to reinforce identity of EU Aid Volunteers and share EUAV human interest stories.

Engagement with EU Aid Volunteers to encourage and support them in their communication activities.

2.2 Communication actions of Hosting Organisations may include but are not restricted to the following:

- Identification of a communication focal point as main contact on communication issues.

- Correct use of project title and EU visual identity.

- Publicity event (e.g. welcome event with new EUAV; “International Volunteers Day” celebratory event; farewell ceremony) organised once per project cycle, at a minimum.

- Use of the EU Aid Volunteers platform for regular updates on their project.

- Local media outreach (potential interviews, provision of EUAV/human interest stories) to targeted local media in third countries, at a minimum once during project cycle.

- Engagement with EU Aid Volunteers to encourage and support them in their communication activities.
2.3 Communication actions of the Training Organisation(s) may include but are not restricted to the following:

- Provide introduction to the EU Aid Volunteers Platform and its different features in the context of the training modules. Training on communication elements as per the training curriculum\(^3\).

- Dissemination of EU Aid Volunteers welcome packs for each deployment cycle and explanation of contents and how to use communication products provided.

2.4 Communication actions of EU Aid Volunteers:

Foreseen communication activities for EU Aid Volunteers can include:

- Pro-actively contribute to and use the EU Aid Volunteers Platform, for example through "Stories from the field" (an anecdotal story about their experience/work/impact) produced during their assignment. To be uploaded into the network for use by sending/hosting organisation and the European Union for communication purposes.

- Conference/workshop participation: Where appropriate, contribute to sharing experiences of life as an EU Aid Volunteer at conference/workshops organised by sending or hosting organisations and the European Commission.

- Participation in EU Aid Volunteers training programme as trainer or mentor providing direct insights through experience, where appropriate.

- "EU Aid Volunteers as Ambassadors": following deployment, outreach activities to champion the initiative through sharing their own experiences in the field, for example "Back to the beginning" events in conjunction with their sending organisations.

\(^3\) Annex II of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1244/2014