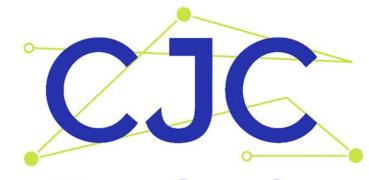
How to develop your crossborder story work plan

A Crossborder Journalism Campus Lecture



Crossborder Journalism Campus



This lecture



- This lecture uses an example case of journalists covering forthcoming legisation.
- It includes tools, dilemmas and decisions to adress in the planning process.

Example: New legislation to control side effects of medicine



The story - what we knew:

- New legislation under preparation by European Commission concerning the side effects of medicines
- Criticism from doctors, patients of the existing legislation
- There is FOI precedent, so in one country we can get access to documents about the current practice of reporting side-effects down to substance level

What we needed to find out:

- What is going to be in the draft new law by the Commission
- Who are the interested parties (patients, doctors, health insurances, pharmacies, pharmaceutical industry), and how are they involved in lawmaking (if at all)?
- What is the line of the European Commission, what is the line among politicians (European and national level), what is the line of the member states
- If we get hold of the draft: What do specialists (doctors, scientists) say to the draft new law, will it solve the old problems or make them worse

Example: Side effect story work hypothesis



Mini

- We can document the problems with the existing legislation
- We can document which interests are represented in the law making proces, how they are funded, which interest groups lawmakers listen to / do not listen to

Maxi (the above plus)

- We get an insight into the forthcoming legislation and can ask experts for estimations whether this will solve/worsen the problems
- We can document direct influence by interest organisations on proposed legislation

Example: Consider the timeline



- Classic law making & lobby story
- · Law making process gives timeline
- Publication plan connected to lawmaking timeline
 - Preparation of draft law
 - Publication of draft law
 - Decision making in EU parliament and on national level

When is the most relevant moment for your story to be published when your purpose is to allow public discussion about the draft law?

Timeline planning



Use a gantt chart or similar planning tools
Vertical column is your to-do list, your timeline is horizontal
Insert start and end date
Insert your to-do list

TASK / MONTH	October	Novembe	December.	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Septembe	October	
FOI requests														
Document analysis														
Documents to experts														
Publication (fact check etc)														
Writing														
Reading / interviewing on the hearing pro	cess													
Mapping the interest organisations														
Cultivating political contacts COM, EP														
Cultivating interest organisation contacts														
Cultivating medical experts														

Gantt chart exercise 15 minutes in groups



- Set up a spreadsheet where you pencil in the weeks from now to delivering your final project.
- Week starting (xx adapt to your university schedule)
- Then you make a list of tasks, depending on how far you are, you start with selection of topic, selection of team, or you go more detailed already.
- For each task estimate how many days or weeks you'll need. Be mindful of not being able to work full speed in weeks with lectures, study visits etc.
- Be mindful of FOI or document requests or other work to obtain basic material this may include waiting time
- You can use the template timeline and budget planner

Example case continued: The team



- For EU legislation coverage ideally journalists in all EU plus all EEA countries
- For practical and trust reasons we probably need to reduce the number (or develop a different set-up). We definitely want colleagues from:
- Countries where expert journalists live and work
- Countries where large pharmaceutical companies have their seat
- Not only small countries but at least one of the large countries

Budget and funding



- Imagine we plan a team with 8 journalists
- Four employed how much time can they allocate, have they other major researches planned, if yes, when, do they have support from their editors to allocate time
- Three freelancers how are they funded for this research, how much time can they allocate, ideas for funding
- One student finalising studies in month 2 of the investigation
- Do we need money for travelling
- Do we need money for tech, communication
- Should we invest in an animated video explainer
- Should we invest in a shared web presentation

Talking about the budget



The team fundraises for the freelancers and for the student to be paid like the freelancers the moment the MA is finished. This needs to be part of your fundraising and budget.

- Dilemma: Should all freelance team members get the same amount, or should it be adjusted to the cost of living in their respective countries? How do we define cost of living (housing, food, health insurance, pension savings, other?)
 Purpose: All team members must feel comfortable with the decision, otherwise it might create a sense of inequality and thus a potential conflict.
- Discuss: Same income for all or adjusted to context?
- When agreement reached, revisit the spreadsheet

Planning publication



 We want to publish just about the time when the Commission presents the draft law. Ideally a day or two before.

BUT:

- We need to check which week precisely the Commission will publish and this may be adjusted week by week, often at the last moment
- Commission usually publishes on Wednesdays, so ideally we should publish on Sunday, Monday or Tuesday that week
- Confirmed publication partners are three daily newspapers, one weekly tv-broadcast on Sunday evenings, and one weekly print news magazine on the street on Thursdays – who decides?
- ...would consecutive publication be a problem? Or a chance?
- Do we want, do we have a shared website to display findings?

Checklist first planning meeting – agree on:



- Date of publication day and hour
- Budget including levels of honoraries
- Communication channels & tech set-up
 - First to be discussed: Digital security threat level
 - Which channels do we use: Adapt to size of team
- Who will coordinate and how
 - The role of the coordinator, the role of the initiator
- Communication rhythm and frequency
- Project management tools, fx Gantt chart combined with KanBan, dedicated software, other
- Preparations before publication
 - fact checking
 - legal checking
 - when to confront adversaries

Summing up on project planning



- Agreement for signature
- Timeline and date of publication
- Work division including coordination
- Document sharing and communication tools
- Regular meetings

Learn from others



- In principle, the early planning is a structured discussion trying to anticipate as much as possible of the editorial process from idea to publication.
- Imagine a check-list you go through and adapt to your needs and context.
- Learning from others is a good idea as they may have experienced situations you are not able to anticipate yourself.
- On the <u>CJC website</u>, a variety of such check-lists is gathered to enrich your discussion.

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CJC 2022-2024, published spring 2025

For more material and teaching instructions on cross-border collaborative journalism, please visit:

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