



# SHARING YOUR STORY



FEDERATION  
OF CANADIAN  
MUNICIPALITIES

FÉDÉRATION  
CANADIENNE DES  
MUNICIPALITÉS

**TOOLS AND TIPS FOR MUNICIPAL EXPERTS  
PARTICIPATING IN FCM INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS**

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# YOUR STORY MATTERS

By participating in FCM international projects, you gain experience that your municipality and others can benefit from—but only if you share your story. You'll help raise the profile of your municipality and potentially direct attention to ongoing needs in the overseas municipality you visited.

This guide gives you practical tips on how to tell your story at every stage and engage others in the work you're doing. It gives you advice and detailed models on how to communicate using compelling social media posts, clear direct emails and presentations, print-ready news releases, and crowd-pleasing events. Use all the formats at your disposal to get the word out.

## IT TAKES A COMMUNITY

Your municipality's communications department has expertise in communicating to a wide range of audiences, and can support you in sharing your story. You can also draw on the expertise of your Program Manager and other FCM staff. We'd be happy to help you share your photos, videos and other communications through our website, Twitter feed and Facebook page.



# TALKING ABOUT THE FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES

When you describe your international experience, you'll need to let your audience know about FCM, who we are and what we do. Here are some key messages you can use:

## **FCM makes a difference.**

Local governments matter. Through its international programs, FCM connects municipal governments around the world. Our initiatives help local elected officials and municipal employees improve lives and enrich communities.

## **FCM brings partners together.**

When Canadian and overseas municipalities come together, both learn, grow and build their communities.

## **FCM is about sharing expertise**

FCM international initiatives help communities in Canada and around the world connect with better ways to pool skills and develop knowledge and strategies.

## **FCM is committed to respect, diversity and inclusion.**

Diversity is a key strength of Canada's municipalities, and FCM is committed to promoting inclusion and respect in everything it does, at home and overseas.

## **FCM is transparent and accountable.**

Democracy and openness are core values in all FCM International projects and initiatives.

## **FCM makes a lasting mark.**

Sustainability in every sense guides how FCM approaches development.

# SHARING YOUR STORY

## WHEN TO SHARE YOUR STORY

At different stages of your project, you'll share your story in different ways. Early on, you may need to provide information to your department or municipal council — and giving a presentation is a great way to help others understand why you're going abroad (or participating in other ways) and why it matters. When you're overseas, social media updates can keep your followers informed and engaged. And after you return, there are many ways to share your experience and the results of your contribution.

The chart on the next page shows when you're most likely to use different formats.

### WHAT WILL PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW?

When you're back from your travels and sharing your story, be sure to include the kinds of details people are most likely to find interesting and relatable, such as:

- Results achieved, with numbers (for example: the municipality has increased its tax revenues by 40 per cent; 60 women have created small home-based businesses so 87 children can stay in school, etc.).
- A human interest story (how the project has improved life for a person, family or group).
- How your municipality contributed and what it gained in areas such as professional development, municipal visibility and trade opportunities.
- How the community can connect with your new contacts overseas.
- How you got involved with an overseas project—many small communities are under resourced and don't realize they can work with FCM on an international project.
- What you did on your mission, including a few photos if you have them.
- How your participation in the program touched or inspired you.

## Before you go

Present to Council on your contribution to the project



Announce the project in a municipal news release



Send a direct email to community groups



Update project info on your municipal website

## While you're there

Post on Facebook



Tweet



Instagram



LinkedIn



Post news on your municipal website or blog

## When you get back

Present results to Council



Send out news release announcing return, results, or visit of partner municipality (if applicable)



Update municipal website



Tweet



Post on Facebook



Host events

## RESPECTFUL REPORTING

Encountering another culture can be stimulating and exciting. It can also challenge our assumptions. As you document your experience, be sensitive to how your hosts may feel about how you tell your story. Always ask yourself: would communicating this help or harm? Ideally, you'll get feedback on your stories from your partners in the host community or from FCMI staff.



For photographs, always ask permission to take or post them. Even if you've been given permission, don't post photos showing people in distress or in difficult living conditions. And keep it professional, avoiding photos that might create the wrong impression about your project.

### PHOTO TIPS 101

Nothing conveys a place and its people more vividly than a good photograph. Here are some tips for making your project photos count.

- Ask permission before taking and publishing a subject's photo, name and workplace.
- Focus on one or a few people.
- Ensure at least one face is showing.
- Use a plain background.
- Move in close.
- Take advantage of natural lighting — you'll get better brightness, colour and resolution.
- Take some vertical pictures.
- If possible, keep track of names and locations.
- Send your Program Manager your best photos for the FCM photo library.
- Take photos that illustrate the mandate of your assignment, including you and your partners at work. This will give you great photos for storytelling in presentations later.

## BRING THE COMMUNITY INTO YOUR STORY

Projects often work best when citizens and community groups are involved – adding their expertise, improving results and helping sustain project outcomes. Community involvement also demonstrates the democratic and participatory practices of Canadian municipalities, which FCM is committed to promoting internationally. So all through your international project, reach out to the members of your community who could benefit from getting involved and contributing.

### WHY ENGAGE THE PUBLIC?

#### **It's good for your community.**

Community members gain experience they wouldn't get elsewhere.

#### **It strengthens connections.**

Chances are that your community already has ethnic, cultural, religious or institutional links with your partner municipality. You can leverage and build on these connections.

#### **It fosters ownership.**

Involving citizens and groups in your project can help give them a sense of ownership in their municipal government. It can also help council gain a sense of what the community values most.

#### **It's cost-effective.**

Collaborating can make your financial resources go further.



## WAYS TO ENGAGE

### **1. Host a group of overseas partners in your community**

A visit from your overseas partners can inspire local groups to collaborate with them on new initiatives.

#### ***When to do it***

The first study tour or visit to Canada is the best time to introduce your community group to similar groups in your partner municipality.

#### ***How to do it***

You'll want to match a priority need in your partner municipality to an organization that could help meet that need.

### **2. Promote community building and cultural exchange**

Establishing links between community-based organizations in your municipality and those in your partner municipality has benefits for both.

#### ***When to do it***

These exchanges can occur throughout the life of the program.

#### ***How to do it***

You can help establish links between community-based organizations in Canada and those in your partner municipality; this helps strengthen community building in the overseas municipality and fosters global citizenship at home.

Churches, schools and universities are often the best community-based organizations for creating lasting ties between partner municipalities through projects such as joint research and exchanges.

### 3. Partner with ethnic groups

Enlisting the help of community ethnic groups with ties to the country you're visiting can make cross-cultural interpretation and translation much easier.

#### *When to do it*

Before your first mission, contact community groups that represent the populations you'll be working with overseas. Tell them about your project and invite experts who may be able to help with interpretation, translation and the like.

#### *How to do it*

Reach out to business leaders, places of worship, universities and colleges or your municipality's local diversity and immigration partnership council.

#### Bring benefits home

##### **MOROGORO AND KITCHENER: GOING THE EXTRA MILE**

Choma Bridge in the Uluguru Mountains above Morogoro, Tanzania is an impressive and heartfelt contribution from the City of Kitchener.

The project began when Rod Regier and Chris Farrell of the Waterloo Region Small Business Centre came to Morogoro to run an Local Economic Development training program. The two men began helping the community raise funds for a local orphanage and to buy school supplies for children. Their contribution quickly grew to a community-wide project back home as City of Kitchener staff, family and friends raised enough money to buy concrete and rebar and rent equipment to build a bridge in Choma, a small village in the mountains above Morogoro. The people of Choma provided labour and other materials.

"Shoeless men carried 50 kilogram bags of cement on their backs and aggregate stones on their heads," wrote Rod Regier in a project update. "Tomorrow 250 people will come down from the mountain to take apart the old bridge, build a temporary crossing and begin assembling, in 30 degree heat, the frame for the new bridge."

Over five days, the people of Choma invested 4,800 hours of labour in this project. Other than shovels, picks, and stone hammers, the only technology on site was a generator and welder to build the iron frame for the bridge, which now helps bring goods to market and ensures a safe crossing for all.

## 4. Continue the conversation by raising awareness

### *When to do it*

Tell your story and raise awareness about your work, the work of your municipality, and your partner's challenges at community events, etc.

### *How to do it*

- Organise your own event for people in your network
- Hold “Lunch and Learn” sessions with your colleagues or other departments in your municipality
- Present to Council
- Participate in events hosted by clubs or organisations that support global development
- Present your work at a municipal or professional conference

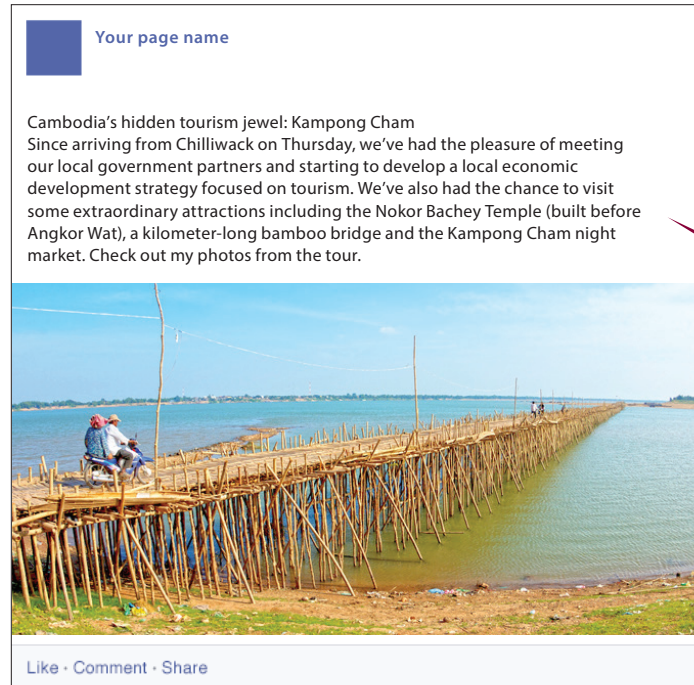
# THE TOOLS AT YOUR DISPOSAL

Tools like news releases and Facebook posts can get your story out to a wide audience. But if you haven't done it before, promotional writing can be intimidating. This section offers help. We show you how to tell the same story in several different formats, with tips on how to make a big impact with each. After most examples, there's a link to a template you can use to make the writing process even easier.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook and Twitter are great for building a community of interest — attracting people who want to know more about your project. Here are sample posts.

### FACEBOOK POST ON YOUR MUNICIPAL PAGE



In your post, try to answer all or most of these basic questions: *who, what, where, when* and *why*. And remember, an evocative photograph pulls readers in. Consider telling your story as a slide show with a one sentence caption for each photo.

### TWEET FROM YOUR MUNICIPAL OR PERSONAL TWITTER ACCOUNT



Twitter's limit of 140 characters including spaces — requires a very concise message. Make it appealing and people will click through to where you can tell them more.



## NEWS RELEASES

News releases are usually sent out to promote an event: the launch of something, a conference, a milestone. You can use them to announce your participation, introduce your project to your community and share results when it's done. If a delegation from your partner municipality visits your community, announce that with a news release.

Access a news release template at [FCMI/templates](http://FCMI/templates).

### **Chilliwack and Cambodian municipality partner to develop tourism in historic region (16/12/2015)**

(Chilliwack) – In an initiative implemented by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and funded by the Government of Canada, the city of Chilliwack is helping Cambodia's Kampong Cham municipality develop a local economic development strategy focused on tourism — addressing challenges related to funding, infrastructure and technical expertise.

"FCM asked us to apply for an opportunity to provide our economic development expertise to several countries," said Chilliwack Economic Partners Corporation (CEPCO) President John Jansen. "We're honoured to have been selected from a number of FCM International municipal applicants across Canada to participate in the Municipal Partners for Economic Development initiative."

With a rich culture and history and beautiful landscapes, Kampong Cham has already developed a tourist sector. Key attractions include the Banteay Srei temple (built before world-famous Angkor Wat in neighbouring province Siem Reap), Kat Kat Beach; the bamboo bridge to Koh Paen island; the airport, the night market, and visits to rubber plantations. Creating the local economic development strategy will bring together the public and private sectors and build on the municipality's strengths by improving tourism marketing and infrastructure.

"This project is an excellent opportunity to stimulate sustainable economic growth both in Kampong Cham and Chilliwack," said Roger Anderson, Chair of FCM's Standing Committee on International Relations. "The participants are excited to expand their expertise and make a real difference in the community."

Travel, accommodation and meal costs for participants will be covered by FCM though funding from Global Affairs Canada. Chilliwack is contributing staff time for technical missions to Kampong Cham and for two technical missions bringing the Kampong Cham team to Chilliwack.

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### **About FCM International**

*In leading the municipal movement, FCM works to align federal and local priorities, recognizing that strong hometowns make for a strong Canada. Through its international program, FCM brings together Canadian and international municipalities to strengthen local leadership, stimulate economic development, respond effectively to disasters and conflicts and foster environmental leadership and innovation.*

*[Program Name] is undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada. Learn more at [www.fcm.ca/international](http://www.fcm.ca/international).*

Pack your first paragraph with all the most important facts — so that if someone only reads that much, they get the point at the highest level. Plant the seeds for what the rest of the release will explain in more detail.

Use quotes. They increase the impact of information. Ideally, you'll have quotes from both partner municipalities and, at the end of the project, from a representative of FCM International who will comment on project results and tie these into the mission of FCM International.

Operational details like these will matter to some audiences but are less crucial to the story, so they should come at the end.

## DIRECT EMAILS

A direct email, branded from your municipality or FCM International, is a simple way to connect with community groups and other potential stakeholders.

**Subject line: Opportunity to partner with a Cambodian community group**

Dear [name of contact at community organization],

I'm contacting you about an exciting international opportunity for your organization to partner with a similar organization in the municipality of Kampong Cham, Cambodia.

I was fortunate to travel to Kampong Cham recently to help officials there develop a local economic development strategy focused on tourism. The peer-to-peer exchange was sponsored by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, with funding from Global Affairs Canada, and will help Kampong Cham overcome challenges to tourism development including limited funding, physical infrastructure and technical expertise.

I would be very happy if you could join us in July when representatives from Kampong Cham come to visit Chilliwack to learn more about our development strategies, approaches and principles — and to meet with community groups like yours. They're very keen to discuss partnership opportunities.

To help you better understand what those opportunities are, and to share a little of what I learned during the project, I'd like to invite you to attend a short presentation and Q&A session in the coming weeks. If this interests you, or if you'd like more information, please let me know by email or phone.

Sincerely,

Write a subject line that engages your audience by focusing on what is most important or distinctive about your topic. In the rest of the email, present evidence as directly as possible for why a reader would want to take up your offer.

## SHORT PRESENTATION

A presentation that can evolve over time is a great tool for sharing your story – at the start to inform your municipality about why the project matters, and when you’re back to share the results and what you’ve learned. Here are some sample slides to show how you can structure a lean, simple presentation that’s easy to update:

Access a PowerPoint presentation template at [FCMI/templates](https://www.fcmi.org/FCMI/templates).







A presentation should tell a story through the slide headings and subheads. Flesh that story out with short, memorable bullet points. PowerPoint isn't a medium for extensive detail: think in terms of key messages as you're writing.

Ideally, try not to go beyond 4 bullet points on a slide.

<p>[TITLE SLIDE]</p> <p><b>Chilliwack-Kampong Cham, Cambodia: Case Study</b></p> <p><b>Unveiling the jewel of Cambodia</b></p>		<p>[TITLE SLIDE]</p> <p><b>Chilliwack-Kampong Cham, Cambodia: Case Study</b></p> <p><b>Unveiling the jewel of Cambodia</b></p>
<p>[SLIDE 2]</p> <p><b>Why we went</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a local economic development strategy for Kampong Cham, Cambodia with a focus on tourism</li><li>• Help create winning conditions for sustainable local economic development</li><li>• Increase opportunities in tourism, agriculture, and business</li></ul>	<p>[SLIDE 3]</p> <p><b>Phase 1</b></p> <p><b>Chilliwack team – 3 missions to Kampong Cham</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Met with local business owners and hotel owners</li><li>• Visited major tourism sites, including a rubber plantation</li><li>• Conducted local economic development (LED) workshops</li></ul>	<p>[SLIDE 4]</p> <p><b>Photograph</b></p> <p>Detailed Caption</p>
<p>[SLIDE 5]</p> <p><b>Phase 2</b></p> <p><b>Cambodia team – 1 mission to Chilliwack</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shared Chilliwack development strategies</li><li>• Visited local businesses and Canada Education Park in Chilliwack</li><li>• Increased visitors' knowledge of LED approaches and principles</li></ul>	<p>[SLIDE 6]</p> <p><b>Photograph</b></p> <p>Detailed Caption</p>	<p>[SLIDE 7]</p> <p><b>Strategic and marketing successes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implemented a strategic plan</li><li>• Increased the capacity of city officials, citizens and businesses to build tourism</li><li>• Developed a brand for Kampong Cham</li><li>• Created a tourism website, brochure, guidebook and map</li></ul>
<p>Remember that a slide is a jumping off point for a presenter and a map for the audience; if you just read your slides when you're presenting, your audience will lose interest. Instead, provide interesting context and detail in your speaking notes.</p>	<p>[SLIDE 8]</p> <p><b>Phase 1 successes – Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moved the tourist information centre to the Mekong River with private-sector help; new location makes tourist information more accessible and higher profile</li><li>• Improved key tourist attractions such as cultural sites and bicycle trails</li><li>• Explored options to develop a port</li></ul>	<p>[SLIDE 9]</p> <p><b>Next steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ongoing support from the municipality and province</li><li>• Secure resources necessary to achieve local economic development plan</li><li>• Identify opportunities for the municipalities to promote their local economic development</li><li>• Build relationships with stakeholders</li></ul>

## PROMOTING AN EVENT: A COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

When your overseas partners visit, you'll want to host events to introduce them to your community. Here's how to make sure the events tell your story.

	<p>Announce the event with a brief news release sent to local media by your municipality</p>
	<p>Develop an agenda and get help from your municipality's communications team if any speakers (the mayor, for example) need help preparing speaking notes</p>
	<p>Issue a longer news release on the day of the event about your municipality's role in the project and key results achieved (be as specific as possible)</p>
	<p>Post event information on social media and tweet before and after</p>
	<p>Take photographs at the event and use these to produce a Facebook album; post on your municipal website as well; ask people attending to leave their email address or social media coordinates so you can grow your audience</p>
	<p>Share news releases, photos, videos and other communications with your Program Manager for posting to the FCM website, Youtube channel, Twitter feed and Facebook page</p>

# FAQs

Here are some questions you may be asked by the media or your municipal council, along with short, factual answers you can have at the ready:

## **What is a municipal partnership or demonstration project?**

These are when Canadian municipalities and overseas municipalities commit to one or more partnership projects — initiatives designed by the partner municipalities to address local government challenges. Projects involve short-term technical exchange missions from municipal representatives or municipal staff in Canada and abroad. These missions provide training, technical assistance and coaching. Canadian experience is used strategically to complement local expertise.

## **What does program participation cost the Canadian municipality?**

Direct costs are minimal because Global Affairs Canada (GAC) funds FCM's international programs. Global Affairs Canada covers direct program costs, including travel and accommodation for technical exchanges. Participating municipalities, both in Canada and abroad, donate staff time and make other in-kind contributions.

## **Do citizens participate in programs?**

Involving the community from the start is key to success. Many municipalities hold public information sessions when they return from missions abroad to present results and show photographs. Community members may have expertise that can benefit future missions. Private businesses, civil society organizations and educational institutions can all contribute.

## **Why should Canadian municipalities work with emerging and developing countries?**

Canadian municipal elected representatives and staff can provide technical experience and advice that overseas municipal governments need. There is no better local development partner. At the same time, investing in the global municipal sector supports effective local government, improving the quality of life for people everywhere. By offering their time and expertise, municipalities commit to the role that Canada plays in helping developing countries and emerging economies.

## **How do Canadian municipalities benefit?**

Canadian municipalities learn about the issues that overseas municipalities face. Ties with other localities help municipalities find suitable solutions to issues that transcend borders, such as stimulating local economic development, emergency planning, or recovering from natural disasters. The personal enrichment from international experience helps municipal staff see their work from another perspective.



# LOOKING FOR HELP TELLING YOUR STORY?



FCM staff are always willing to help showcase the exceptional work of municipal experts. Don't hesitate to contact us.

## **Federation of Canadian Municipalities**

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