

#Tool 15



How to design and implement an LGBTIQ Anti-rumours Strategy step by step

- * The Anti-rumours Approach has demonstrated its adaptability in tackling discrimination across a wide range of contexts and countries. ARSs specifically focused on tackling the negative impact of stereotypes, disinformation, discriminatory/harmful narratives or hate speech linked to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics. They draw on the lessons learnt from ARSs with other focusses, whilst incorporating the specific characteristics of the discriminatory narratives and hate speech directed at LGBTIQ people.
- * Several factors have proven to be particularly relevant in ensuring the sustainability of ARSs:
 - The Anti-rumours Approach has forged links with a wide range of institutions, stakeholders, individuals and organisations who regard it as an innovative and useful approach capable of delivering positive results.
 - The creation of Anti-rumours networks and an international Anti-rumours community, which facilitates the exchange of good practices and lessons learnt, has strengthened the links between many strategies.
 - The sustained participation of LGBTIQ individuals and organisations in the ARS's governance structures is one of the factors that will most likely contribute to its legitimacy, relevance and sustainability.
 - The ARS has been rolled out in cities with different political leanings, and this has also helped ensure its long-term sustainability by avoiding the promotion of polarisation.

- The role of the Council of Europe has also been instrumental in raising awareness of and lending legitimacy to a strategy that has gradually expanded to multiple countries.
- A wide range of European initiatives that have adopted the Anti-rumours Approach have also contributed not only resources but also new methodologies, proposals and collaborations between cities in a range of countries.

Objective

This tool aims to facilitate the step-by-step design of an LGBTIQ Anti-rumours Strategy (ARS), particularly at local level, to counteract and prevent the effects of prejudice, misinformation, disinformation and hate speech, whilst promoting recognition, equality, participation, a sense of belonging and respect for diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), and to help create safer, more inclusive and discrimination-free environments, thereby strengthening the effective exercise of human rights and the full participation of LGBTIQ people in society.

How to use the tool

- The tool outlines the various steps to be followed to successfully design and implement an LGBTIQ ARS with a focus on, providing basic guidelines for each phase and action.
- This tool is a practical guide that should be consulted when a local, regional or even national public authority decides to launch an LGBTIQ ARS, which combines public policy with the creation of a collaborative ecosystem amongst various civil society actors.
- The methodology should be adapted to the institutional and social characteristics of each territory, ensuring at all times the meaningful participation of LGBTIQ individuals and organisations.

Recommendations

- ✦ Before deciding to implement an ARS, a thorough understanding of the conceptual Anti-rumours Approach, as it applies to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics, is needed.
- ✦ This tool should be complemented by the other tools in this toolkit, which provide more detailed information on different aspects of the strategy, such as conducting an assessment or designing anti-rumours actions.

1. Designing an LGBTIQ Anti-rumours Strategy step by step

Step 0 The decision to create an LGBTIQ Anti-rumours Strategy

- * The success of an LGBTIQ ARS depends largely on who makes the decision to implement this strategy in a city and how that decision is reached. As this is a public policy, it is essential that there is a clear and explicit political commitment, and that there is a technical team with the necessary resources and capabilities to implement it.
- * Civil society actors should be involved from the outset, as the ARS is grounded in participation and cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders. The active engagement of those directly affected by the discrimination and hate speech the strategy seeks to address is equally essential.

Important: An **activation group** should be set up, comprising a relatively small number of technical experts who will be responsible for coordinating the design process.

Step 1 Setting up the Anti-Rumours Strategy Core Team

- * The ARS **core team** is broader and more diverse than the activation group, and is the group responsible for monitoring the process, putting forward proposals and agreeing on strategic decisions regarding priorities and lines of action.
- * The Core Team is the seed of the ecosystem of cooperation between the administration and various civil society actors, which will later become the Anti-rumours network (See Tool 16).
- * It is paramount to ensure that LGBTIQ people participate in the co-creation of the ARS, promoting their meaningful involvement in decision-making.

Important: The core team should seek to include organisations with expertise in SOGIESC-related areas of work, as well as a range of civil society actors from a wide variety of fields (for example social, educational, cultural, health and youth) with particular emphasis on the diversity of profiles and experiences within the LGBTIQ communities themselves, including trans, non-binary and intersex people, young people, older people, migrants and people with disabilities, among others.

Step 2 Strategic training

- * Before beginning, future members of the activation group and the core team should undertake strategic training on the Anti-rumours Approach to gain a thorough understanding of the approach and the methodology for designing an ARS.
- * This training should last at least 4 hours, and ideally 8 hours (a full day or two mornings/afternoons).

Proposed content:

1. Understanding SOGIESC diversity

- Basic concepts relating to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics.
- The presence and role of LGBTIQ people throughout history, including discrimination, resistance and progress towards equality and rights.
- Social, cultural and scientific role models and contributions made by LGBTIQ people.
- The legal and human rights framework relating to equality and non-discrimination.

2. Understanding prejudice, discrimination and discriminatory narratives

- Analysis of key concepts: stereotypes, prejudices, rumours, misinformation, disinformation, discrimination and hate speech relating to diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics.
- Structural causes, causes specific to the local context, and the consequences and impacts on the lives of LGBTIQ people.
- Main impacts of discrimination and exclusion on well-being, participation and access to rights.
- Inclusive language and respectful communication.

3. Introducing the Anti-rumours Approach

- What is the Anti-rumours Approach.
- The most effective approaches and strategies for minimising the impact of prejudice, misinformation, disinformation, and discriminatory narratives relating to LGBTIQ people.
- Differences between counter narratives and alternative narratives.
- Applying an intersectional perspective to the Anti-rumours Approach.

4. From approach to practice

- The process of designing, implementing and evaluating an Anti-rumours Strategy (ARS).
- Examples of good and bad practices.

Step 3 The diagnosis

- * Carrying out a diagnosis is a fundamental aspect of designing an ARS that responds to and adapts to the specific characteristics, challenges and needs of each local area with regard to rumours, discriminatory narratives and hate speech affecting LGBTIQ people.
- * The diagnosis should also include an analysis of existing SOGIESC policies, projects and initiatives in the local context, as well as identifying key stakeholders and potential allies to involve in the ARS.
- * The diagnosis should also explore the current level of awareness regarding diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics, as well as the presence or absence of positive role models, supportive settings and opportunities for participation for LGBTIQ people.
- * Identify protective factors already present in the area, good practices, and existing safe environments and opportunities for participation.

Important: Section 1 of this Toolkit contains various resources on how to carry out a thorough Anti-rumours diagnosis.

Step 4 The action plan to promote an LGBTIQ ARS

- * The results of the assessment will help identify priorities and define short-, medium- and long-term lines of action. An ARS should begin with a limited number of actions that help consolidate the process and strengthen its position within the political and social agenda.
- * An action plan is an operational tool that translates the priorities and objectives of an Anti-rumours Strategy into concrete actions. It specifies what will be done, who will be responsible, when it will be carried out and, where relevant, the resources and expected results. Unlike the Strategy, which sets the overall direction and priorities, the action plan focuses on implementation.
- * The Anti-rumours action plan should include the following:
 - Identification of the priorities to be addressed within the defined period.
 - A clear definition of objectives and the changes expected as a result.
 - A set of actions to be implemented during this initial phase.
 - The role of the core team and the identification of the key stakeholders to be involved and the target audiences for the actions.
 - The promotion and creation of safe, inclusive and non-discriminatory spaces that encourage the meaningful participation of LGBTIQ people.
 - Timetable, responsible parties and necessary resources.
 - Monitoring and evaluation.

Step 5 Anti-rumours training

- * Anti-rumours training for key stakeholders is a fundamental component of an ARS, as it strengthens the quality and impact of the actions implemented while providing the knowledge needed to address discrimination related to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics.
- * This training will differ slightly from the initial training provided to members of the Activation Group and the core team, which focused more on the actual design and implementation of an ARS.
- * These training sessions may be aimed at a wide range of groups, such as LGBTIQ organisations, social organisations wishing to be part of the process and promote certain Anti-rumours initiatives, teachers, young people, local authorities and staff, the police, and businesses, among others.
- * Depending on their role and capacity, stakeholders involved in the Anti-rumours Strategy may contribute in different ways: LGBTIQ organisations can provide expertise, lived experience and support in designing and validating initiatives; social organisations can implement activities and engage with communities; teachers and youth organisations can promote critical thinking and inclusive narratives among young people; local authorities and public services can provide institutional support, coordinate actions and integrate the approach into policies and services; the police can contribute to prevention, safety and awareness; political representatives can provide leadership and public commitment; and businesses and other community actors can help disseminate messages, reach wider audiences and support initiatives.
- * Before organising a training session, consider the following questions:
 - Who is the training intended for, and what is its purpose?
 - How can the content be adapted to different audiences?
 - How does the training contribute to the objectives of the action plan?
 - What role will participants play in the LGBTIQ Anti-rumours Strategy (ARS)?

Important: Tool 13 in this Toolkit details the content of a basic Anti-rumours training course.

Step 6 Monitoring and evaluation

There are many evaluation systems and processes, depending on what needs to be evaluated.

Some focus on processes, others on specific outcomes or longer-term impacts. Assessment may examine changes in perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours among the target audiences. It may also consider changes to the policy and institutional framework affecting LGBTIQ people, the quality of support services and environments, perceptions of safety, reduced anxiety, and the creation of opportunities for positive interaction. The following aspects may also be considered:

- LGBTIQ people's sense of belonging.
- The perception of social recognition and legitimacy.
- Perceptions of safety.
- The visibility of diverse role models.
- Knowledge about diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics.

The participation of LGBTIQ people in the community and decision-making spaces. One option is to evaluate the initiative through the "theory of change", following the approach developed in the [joint EU-Council of Europe's C4i project](#). This approach links activities and outputs to expected changes in knowledge, perceptions, attitudes and behaviours, using baseline data and specific indicators to assess progress and impact. The C4i experience provides a useful reference for designing an evaluation framework that not only measures results, but also helps understand how and why change occurs and how the initiative can be improved.

Important: The evaluation of an LGBTIQ Anti-rumours Strategy should begin as soon as the objectives of the Anti-rumours action plan have been defined. This requires identifying the specific changes the initiative seeks to achieve and determining how these can be monitored and assessed through appropriate indicators.

Step 7 Sustainability and the Anti-rumours community

- * The first Anti-rumours initiatives launched focused particularly on misinformation and discriminatory narratives regarding migration and cultural diversity; they demonstrated a high level of sustainability over time and gradually broadened their scope to tackle discrimination, stereotypes, prejudices and hate speech from a broader perspective and an intersectional approach.

Important: When a city decides to launch an Anti-rumours Strategy, it is highly recommended that it contacts other cities implementing their own strategies and joins a community to find inspiration, support and share experiences.

Example: Barcelona Anti-Rumours Strategy

The Barcelona Anti-rumours Strategy provides an example of a long-term, city-wide approach combining a network of stakeholders, training, community-based activities, communication and alternative narratives. Its experience also illustrates how an Anti-rumours Strategy can evolve over time, moving beyond individual rumours towards addressing the structural causes of discrimination and promoting longer-term social change. The city has also published an evaluation of the strategy, providing useful insights into its implementation, results and areas for improvement: <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/bcnacciointercultural/es/estrategia-bcn-antirumores/participacion/red-bcn-antirumores>

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