

# Sustainable Mystery Tour 2012 Media-Making Manual (short version)

## Synthesis of the document elaborated by Patrick Chalmers

### 0. Introduction

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This document is a synthesis of the Media-Making Manual elaborated by Patrick Chalmers ; **it does not replace it but just highlight the main steps to follow if you are planning to record video success stories** and messages for Forum Synergies' Sustainable Mystery Tour 2012 (SMT 2012).

SMT 2012's purpose is to **inspire the Forum Synergies network and bring real rural voices to national and EU policy makers** as they deliberate over reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy through into 2013. It also aims at revitalising our network, encouraging members and friends to work together for sustainable rural development.

For SMT 2012, Forum Synergies has opted for all the benefits of cheap video making - thanks to new smartphone technologies - and distribution in order to bring rural people's stories to life. This approach does not imply that there's no place for success stories illustrated with text, photos, audio or a mix of different media but this manual, however, is to guide people through tips and tricks that help **to plan, execute and publish short video reports** that make for compelling, convincing communications tools.

### 1. Preparing the work previous to the interview

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#### 1.1. Forum Synergies messages for SMT 2012

The two main goals of SMT 2012 are **to revitalise FS** (re-connecting FS members and friends, sharing success stories and collect new ones, re-gaining enthusiasm to work together for sustainable rural development) and **to promote Sustainable Rural Development**.

- By empowering civil society, regional and local actors through the sharing of success stories
- By showing the value/benefits of pillar II of the CAP to specific target audiences including EU level but also local to national level decision-makers.

To provide some structure to the SMT 2012, it was agreed that FS should highlight success stories from a range of thematic topics creating a **"mosaic" of inspiring SRD examples**. These are selected to show what is unique and typical of rural development successes. They are politically relevant **in arguing for the maintenance and strengthening of pillar II (the rural development element of the CAP)** and because FS felt they would **be of interest to members**. Success stories are needed from **as many EU countries as possible**.

#### 1.2 SMT 2012 audiences

There are two main audiences for Forum Synergies SMT 2012 success stories :

- rural people themselves
- national and European policymakers.

This dual audience means media makers might **produce two or more video reports from the same case study** or individual.

- One might look at **best-practice elements**, so as to share them with people in other rural communities.
- The other could tackle **more policy-focused issues**, perhaps with an interview making clear what works or doesn't for interviewees under current rules and how they hope the new CAP might help them.

### 1.3 Material : make smartphone videos

Our recommendation is to do short video reports following the visionOntv model of using **smartphones video cameras (ideally with resolution of 640 x 480)**. You can use **the speakerphone kit** to record or a microphone adapted to your phone for a better sound quality. The reason for using this approach is that it **greatly increases the chances that a video gets made and gets published**, something that is very often not the case with other sorts of video-making approaches.

It requires a **two-person team, one putting the questions and another working the camera**. You can turn this apparent constraint into a positive by **engaging in a bit of media-making capacity building when you do your report**. Use the people around you to operate the smartphone camera while you do the interviews.

### 1.4 When / where to do an interview – suitable interview targets

Starting with FS mosaic, media makers should consider **what rural development success stories they could illustrate** as part of SMT 2012, starting with **the place in which they live**.

FS foresee three main sources of material :

- **own-initiative visits** by media makers to selected people and projects that demonstrate SRD success stories that fit the SMT 2012 mosaic
- **FS / members own events**,
- **external ones that feature people**

From our own experience, **visits are the best option** as they ensure that you (and the interviewee) will dedicate special to prepare and do the interview (with a nice background related to the topic). Besides, being on the place will help you to understand better the experience – if you did not know it before – and to compile interesting complementary information for SMT 2012 and FS such as elements, to produce a 2 pages presentation document of the success stories, photos etc.

If you plan an interview during an **own or external event**:

- contact the interviewee before and explain what you are planning ; ask for information if needed in order to prepare the interview in advance, understand the project etc..
- ensure **you will have time** (minimum 30 minutes out of the programme) to prepare and shot the interview.

Having identified those people and projects, **check in with FS staff** to signal your intentions.

## 2. The interview preparation

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The VOTV 1.5 template is for a **two-person production team, comprising the smartphone camera operator and an interviewer**. You can choose to be either the camera operator or interviewer; you will have to “recruit” the second person if you haven’t brought them along with you.

### 2.1 Preparing as the interviewer

The advantage of being the interviewer is that you know about the SMT 2012 objectives, target audiences and the areas of coverage we hope to communicate with our media making. These determine the interview questions and focus. A document (called interview guide), presents some questions you might ask to the interviewee. It is available on our website.

You might **shoot a couple of interviews with the same person**, one for rural audiences and one for policy makers. It helps to picture your intended an audience that is local, national, EU or even global. That has implications for both the language used and the technical policy terms employed.

#### Tips for the interviewer

1. This is not a strictly journalistic exercise - **we have clear objectives about the messages that we want to communicate from the countryside** and how they relate to sustainable rural development (SRD). That means interviewers should plan the ideas and questions for what will be a fairly short interview.
  - what is the interview focus?
  - what do you need to get across in this self-contained package (where are you, who are you taking to, what do they do, why is it interesting, where can the viewer go for more information)
  - what level of knowledge are you assuming among your audience
2. **Keep the questions simple** - remember that even technically minded audience members, policy makers and so on, are human.
3. **Help interviewees develop their answers** - your objective is to communicate the essence of their example. Are there useful or relevant facts and figures that nail the story they are telling? What choices did they make to arrive at this stage? Have a picture of your target audience in your mind and encourage your interviewee to do the same. Create the idea that you are a communications team.
4. **Buoy up the interviewee** - put them at their ease, make them forget the camera and remind them that they know tonnes about this subject. Do as many takes as you need - don’t be embarrassed and don’t make the interviewee embarrassed.
5. **Plan a visual backdrop to the interview that helps to communicate** what you’re talking about.
6. **Switch any mobile phones to flight mode.**
7. Keep in mind the **interview length - the shorter the better** for audience attention span and for file size. Keep the target time in mind during the interview (3 to 5 min), limit yourself to three questions.

**Shoot a second interview if there is another subject** that you want to tackle with the same person rather than shooting one long interview.
8. If you get an OK take - **don’t delete from the phone even if you plan to shoot another.**
9. **Ask the interviewee to keep silent for a couple of seconds** at the end of the sign off to allow the piece to conclude.

## 2.2 Preparing the interviewee

Putting interviewees at their ease and explaining to them the aim and scope of an interview will do wonders for chances of success.

1. Once you've identified who you want to interview, **sit them down to prepare.**
2. **Scope the topic:** ask the interviewee some simple questions about who they are and what they do. If you already know them well, go straight to the more specific, interview-related topics.
3. **Lay out the basic questions you will ask** during the interview to clarify the topic and to be more specific. This will help the interviewee structure their thinking and identify more clearly their key messages.
4. **Seek to better understand:** paraphrase of their answers to get a better understanding of what they are saying. This helps ensure messages are clear.
5. **Bottom-line their message:** this means you summarise back to the interviewee what you understand as their key message.
6. **Champion the interviewee:** this is just a big term to help the interviewee feel more enthusiastic and relaxed about the interview. It involves telling them what you think is great about what they are about to tell you.
7. **Explain what comes next:** outline the interview format, how you will introduce the interview, put your questions and then conclude with a short summary to the camera (see below for the specifics).

## 2.3 Tips for the camera operator

1. **Check sound levels for the interviewer and interviewee** and remind the interviewer to direct the microphone at the speaker.
2. **Check smartphone battery** - is it charged?
3. **Check the visual backdrop** for the interview for visual content. Does the backdrop help illustrate the subject?
4. **Don't shoot straight into the light** but also be careful to avoid the interviewer or interviewee being blinded by strong light.
5. **Choose a video resolution setting of around 640 x 480.**
6. **Switch all mobile phones to flight mode.**
7. Think about interviewer/interviewee clothing - no checked shirts/strong stripes if you can avoid them.
8. **Check the smartphone memory capacity** available for shooting by deleting old files before interviews.

### 3. Doing the interview

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#### 31. For the interviewer

A. Start the interview with a **short introduction** about the place, the person and the subject matter.

So in summary say:

- where you are (geography and nature of the place)
- who you are talking to (name, what they do)
- about what

B. You then turn to **the interview for your questions**:

- Q1 / Answer
- Q2 /Answer
- Q3 /Answer

You have to be flexible and prepared to take things as they come. That might mean **having to adapt your questions as the interview proceeds, interrupting the interviewee or adding another question**, even repeating one already asked.

C. Once the interviewee has answered the last question, the interviewer **concludes with a second piece to camera, this one a short summary and sign off**. The exact format is up to the interviewer but try to incorporate the following elements:

- so that was who and about what
- they were speaking as part of the Forum Synergies Sustainable Mystery Tour 2012
- if you want to learn more, you can go to (FS website, [forum-synergies.eu](http://forum-synergies.eu))
- keep a couple of seconds silence at the end of the signoff

**Once it's done:**

- did the interview work?
- do you need to reshoot it? if yes, do it straight away if you can.

#### 32. For the camera operator

**Get comfortable!** Remember to tuck in your elbows to stop your arms getting tired, keep your fingers away from the smartphone camera aperture and always shoot in "landscape".

You need to get in **closer to interview subjects than a normal camera** would be. You also need to get the interviewer and interviewee to stand **CLOSE TOGETHER**.

There are **five basic shot types** to use during the course of an interview using the VOTV1.5 template. They are interspersed with switching between shots using "rapid pans" - moving the camera from one shot to another in a single and quick transition.

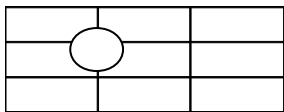
**Shot 1** – Piece to Camera central shot of the interviewee addressing the camera.



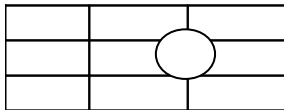
**Shot 2** - Shoot over the interviewer's shoulder to the interviewee, this joins the two people together. The interviewer puts the first question and the interviewee responds



**Shot 3** - Close up of the interviewee. This is a full-face shot so that you can see both eyes in the shot. Think of framing the subject so as to split the screen 2/3rds to 1/3rd (horizontally and vertically) putting the interviewee at the intersection of the lines and looking into the frame.



Interviewee/r needs to look this way →

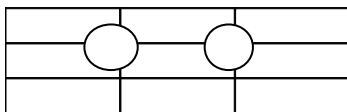


Interviewee/r needs to look this way ←



**Shot 4** - Close up of the interviewer. As for Shot 3

**Shot 5** - Two-shot of the interviewer and the interviewee - both in picture.



Interviewer/interviewee looking at one another  
→ ←



**Final shot = shot 1** - Remember to **pause for two seconds or so at the end of the interviewer's sign-off** piece to camera - hold steady then hit the stop button.



Before moving on - you need to check if the picture OK, is the sound OK and did the camera record the interview.

#### 4. INTERVIEW PUBLICATION – CODE AND UPLOAD

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1. After the interview, **transfer the video files to a laptop or desktop computer.**
2. **Give a title** to your interview reports (50 characters), **write short descriptive text** (250-300 characters max.) The challenge is to get across the essence of the interview in a way that will draw a potential viewer to click on the video and watch it.
3. **Propose 10 “tags” or keywords** used by internet search engines to locate material. They should include the place the interview highlights, the names of the interviewee, the interviewer, the camera operator and the mosaic keyword or words. Others should include: CAP, Common Agricultural Policy, CAP reform, European Union, SMT 2012, Forum Synergies. Don't forget to include your own name and organisation too, if you wish.
4. **Send us your file through Dropbox** (if you have problem or questions, contact us)

We will then upload them to FS Dailymotion video account on the internet and link it to our FS website...

You too can promote the works you have done...For more information, have a look to the SMT 2012 tool kit which will give you some options. We will give more details on SMT 2012 promotion in our following messages.

**IMPORTANT :** read carefully the FULL VERSION of SMT 2012 Media-Making Manual which can be download from our website ; it deepens some aspects of the interviews preparation and realisation and gives technical information on Smartphones as well as references about vision on TV model.

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