

Project fact sheet 10

Public communication on nanotechnologies

- NanoDiode organised 56 NanoTube videoclips, 3 NanoBazaars, 2 NanoSlams, the NanoGallery and a student contest.
- Activities sought to integrate the lessons learned from several decades of science communication.

The NanoDiode project has organised a range of public communication activities throughout Europe. As a multi-stakeholder initiative, NanoDiode sought to ground its activities more firmly in reflection on the purpose of public engagement, integrating the lessons learned from several decades of science communication by applying the following principles:

- 1 Acknowledging diversity.** The engagement activities aimed to express an 'all-partial' perspective, enabling a dialogue on the different ways that nanotechnologies may shape our societies rather than single-mindedly promoting or opposing nanotechnologies. This perspective encompasses both the hopes and fears, the promises and concerns, the opportunities and risks of nanotechnologies.
- 2 Embracing complexity.** Nanotechnology is a complex topic as it combines cutting-edge science with high political stakes and emerging visions of the future. But it is precisely this complexity that makes nanotechnologies such a fascinating topic for debate. The engagement activities built on this complexity, rather than trying to dumb down the science or ignore broader social and political questions.
- 3 Inciting curiosity.** The activities grabbed the attention of the audience through interest, curiosity, and entertainment value: they were visually appealing and told an interesting story.
- 4 Enabling dialogue.** The activities sought to avoid one-way information transfer, enabling a conversation instead.

Building on these principles, the NanoDiode project organised a range of communication activities, including:

- the **NanoTube**, a collection of short videoclips, interviewing specialists around Europe. Physicists, chemists, toxicologists, philosophers, artists, sociologists, industrialists and policy makers shed light on how they think nanotechnologies will impact society (see also fact sheet 11).
- the **NanoBazaar**, a pop-up initiative located in the centre of European cities, where visitors engage in dialogue with nanotechnology researchers on the pros and cons of nano-enabled products (see also fact sheet 12).
- the **NanoGallery**, a picture exhibition displaying large double-sided posters with high-resolution images of nanoscale objects on one side, and their corresponding real-world applications on the other, along with a brief description of the underlying research. The NanoGallery is presented



NanoGallery, Lower Silesian Science Festival Wroclaw, Poland, 20-21 September 2014



NanoSlam, organised by microTEC in Bad Dürkheim, Germany, April 18th 2015



Students video contest, Florinano, Ammochori Primary School & Variko Primary School, Florina, Greece

in public locations. A moderator is present to discuss the images, techniques and the underlying research with visitors.

- **NanoSlams**, a series of interactive events based on an existing format known as science slams, where researchers gave 10 minute presentations on nanotechnologies to a lay audience. The emphasis is on presenting the topic in an entertaining and engaging way, rather than just trying to educate the audience. Science slams are open competitions: the best presentation wins a prize.
- **The Students as Science Journalists Competition**, a video contest for school students around Europe. The students were invited to produce a short video on the question: "What sort of nanotechnologies do we want?" Students played the role of journalists and were free to pick their angle. (see also fact sheet 6)

With these activities, NanoDiode has aimed to involve citizens and stakeholders in a dialogue on the potential impacts of nanotechnologies. Our experience suggests that science communication and innovation governance are intimately linked: the public image of nanotechnologies will ultimately be shaped by the capacity of the nanotechnology research and innovation system to respond to soci-

etal needs and values. Nanotechnologies will inspire public confidence if they integrate public concerns and demonstrably address urgent societal challenges.

MORE INFORMATION



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NanoDiode is a project for outreach and dialogue on nanotechnologies, funded by the European Commission.

From July 2013 to June 2016, NanoDiode has organised a range of engagement activities across Europe, involving stakeholders in a dialogue on the funding, performance and outcomes of nanotechnologies research.

The NanoDiode fact sheets present the different activities carried out as part of the project and discuss the main findings and recommendations. This is nr 10 of a series of 14 fact sheets, see: www.nanodiode.eu/factsheets.



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