Plain Language

- The Guidelines
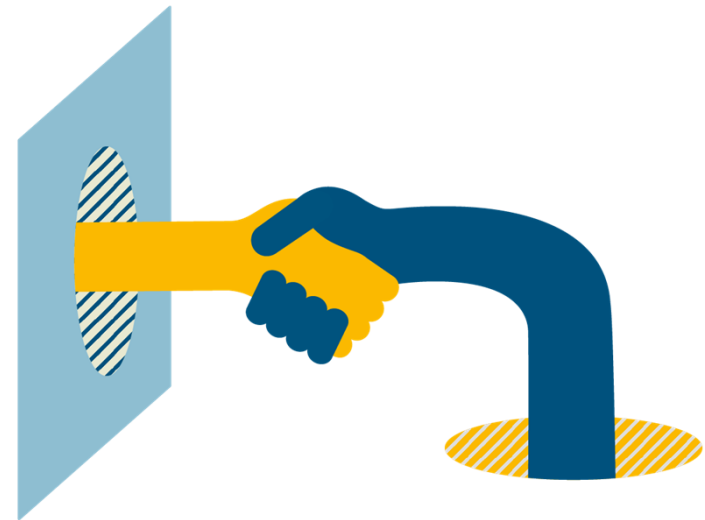
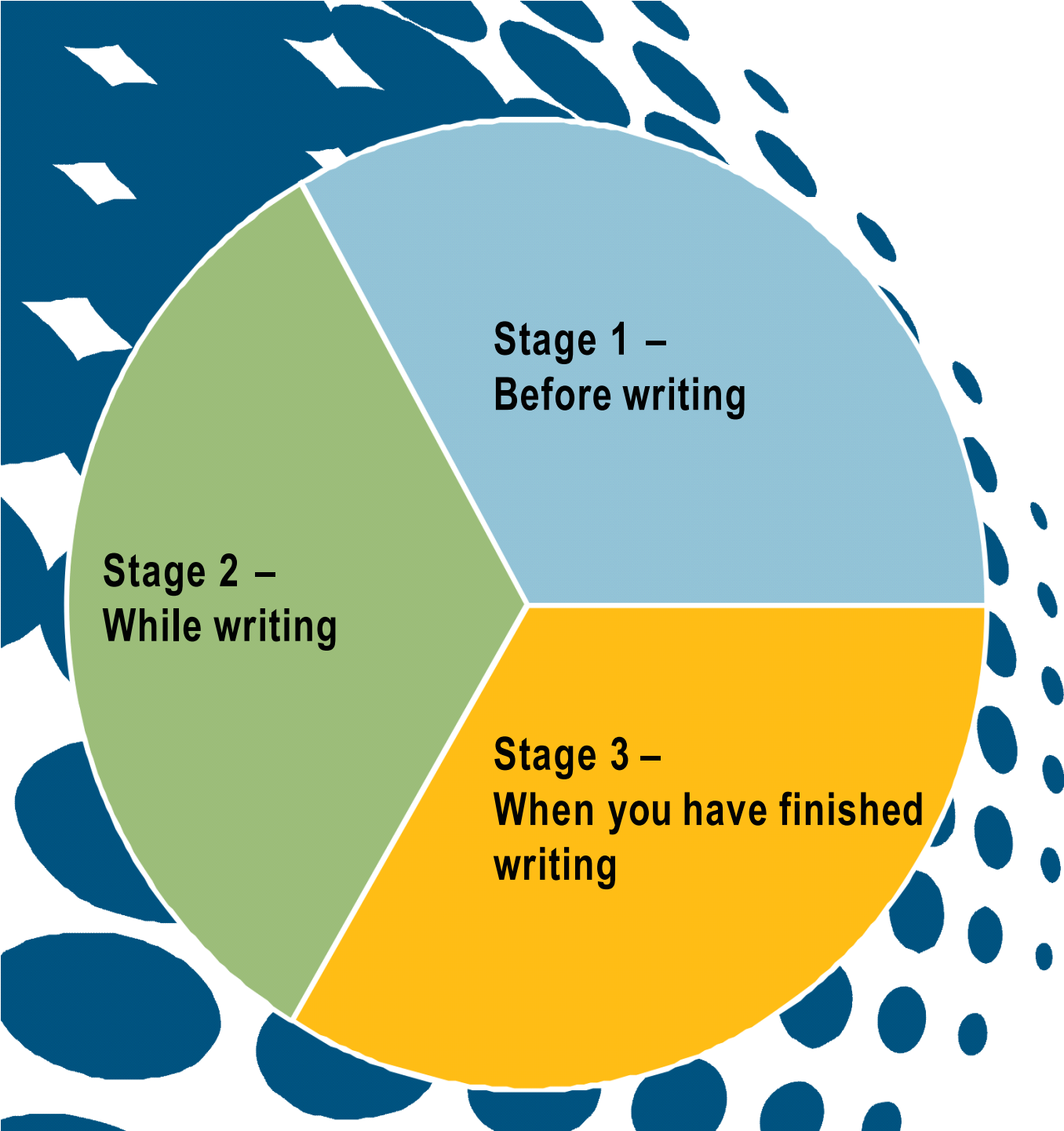Financial Management Camp

28 February – 03 March 2017 | Athens, Greece

@InteractEU

Linda Ring, Interact Programme

European Regional Development Fund

Stage 1 – before writing

The reader
Who is my reader?
What does he/she need to know?
Does my reader need a glossary?

You
What do I want my reader to do?
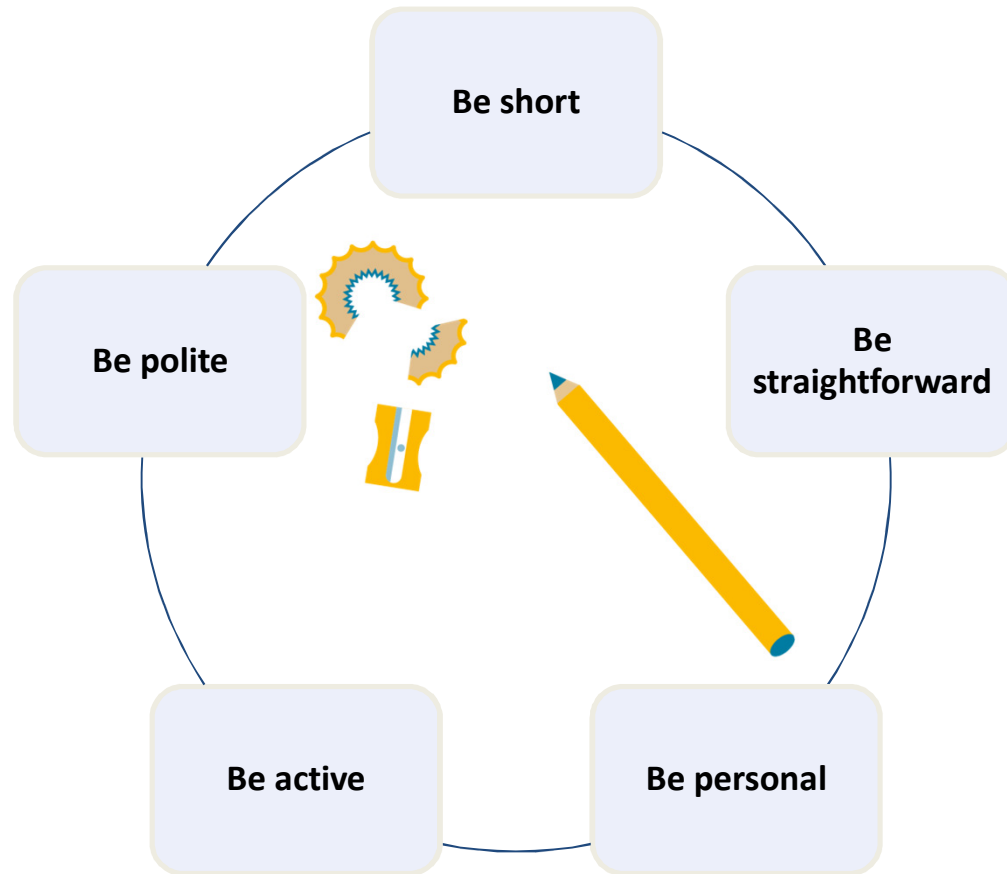What do I want to do – inform? influence? persuade?
How can I make my information obvious to my reader?
How can I best lead my reader though the information (logical flow)?
How can I avoid losing him/her mid-text?

Stage 2 – while writing

Be short

Be straightforward

Be personal

Be active

Be polite

Be short

- Write shorter sentences than you usually do

- Make only one main point per sentence

- Get to the point of your text early on – to "hook" your reader

- Make your introduction text summarize what is to come – the "who, what, why, where, when and how?"

Be short

Based on a number of requests from Interreg Programmes and their Monitoring Committee members, Interact is organizing a workshop to explore the possibilities for improving the quality of Interreg Projects.

Be straightforward

- Use everyday words

- Avoid jargon ....

- .....but keep your professional terms

- Don't use buzzwords and phrases

- Abbreviations and acronyms - use sparingly

Be straightforward

It is a matter of necessity that the citizens of Europe be aware of the division of competences among European institutions and Member States. It is also vital that citizens be informed of the tangible contribution of the European Union to improving their daily lives.

Be personal

- Use "I, me, we, you, us, our, your" and so on to bring the reader closer to the information

- For example, change "Applications should be submitted by the end of November" into ???

- Avoid group nouns – again, to create better connection between you and your reader

- For example, instead of writing "The finance officers can offer the applicants 2 options" write ???

Be personal

The objective of this session is to assist Interreg Programme staff to better engage their readers through embarking on a gradual, lasting change of their writing style.

Be active

- Swap out passive forms (based on <u>what</u> is being done) with active forms (based on <u>who/what</u> is doing it)

- So, instead of writing "Simplified Cost Options have been found to be a great advantage" write ???

Be active

The setting up of the new advisory service by Finance Officers and the use of the service by project staff will be supported by these measures.

Be polite

- If you feel your text is too direct now that you have used fewer and simpler words, increase the "polite rating" by adding words such as "please" and "kindly".

- "Please deliver your report by Monday" sounds better than "You must deliver your report by Monday".

Be polite

In the event of you requiring further information regarding the application procedure, you are requested to contact the Joint Secretariat.

Be Short, Straightforward, Personal, Active & Polite

We believe in a world where borders are no longer obstacles for Europeans.

In that world we know that cities and regions face similar challenges. They often waste resources solving problems separately because of different cultures, languages and mindsets.

It makes sense to pool resources and share knowledge to build upon these differences. So we make sure that European cities and regions, universities and businesses have the best possible opportunities for jointly rising to their challenges. Like building bridges, training young people, powering homes with green energy, or transforming a wasteland into a children's playground.

Which is why we are committed to Territorial Cooperation throughout Europe.

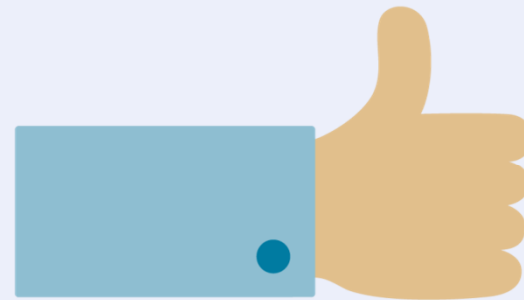It works.

Stage 3 – When you have finished writing

Read your text aloud for yourself

Check for the 5 Bs from stage 2, for logic, for jargon, for buzz words

Make your changes then read it for someone else

Make more changes (if needed)

Cooperation works

All materials will be available on:

www.interact-eu.net

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