

Guidelines for Annotating Gaza-Israel News

Prepared by the University of Tripoli Annotation team UoT1

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1.1 Framing

According to Wikipedia, “Framing involves the social construction of social phenomena by mass media sources, political or social movements, political leaders, and so on. It is an influence over how people organize, perceive, and communicate about reality. It can be positive or negative, depending on the audience and what kind of information is being presented.

For political purposes, framing often presents facts in such a way that implicates a problem that is in need of a solution. Members of political parties attempt to frame issues in a way that makes a solution favoring their own political leaning appear as the most appropriate course of action for the situation at hand. As understood in social theory, framing is a schema of interpretation, a collection of anecdotes and stereotypes, that individuals rely on to understand and respond to events. People use filters to make sense of the world, the choices they then make are influenced by their creation of a frame.”

1.2 Guidelines objectives

The main objective of this document is to create guidelines to annotate news articles about the war in Gaza between the Palestinians and Israel. The task is to develop a proper guidelines to annotate biased news articles. The guidelines aim to guide inexperienced annotators to understand bias in news articles and annotate a dataset of 15000 articles written in five languages.

1.3 The Task:

“Framing the Israel War on Gaza: A Shared Task on News Media Narratives (FIGNEWS 2024)”. It is Part of the Second Arabic Natural Language Processing Conference (ArabicNLP 2024) Co-located with ACL 2024.

The shared task aim is to determine **bias** and **propaganda** within news articles in multiple languages. Participant teams have to develop guidelines to annotate news articles about the 2023-2024 war between Gaza and Israel. A dataset of 15000 news articles was provided by the organizers. It has been divided into 15 batches. Each batch contains 1000 news articles collected from different sources in five languages namely: English, Arabic, Hebrew, French, and Hindi. Each batch has been further divided into a 100-subset called Inter Annotation Agreement (IAA), and a 900-subsets. The IAA subset has to be annotated by all Annotators in the team, while the 900-subset can be annotated jointly by the team members. Each team is required to annotate a minimum of two batches to enter the shared task. All articles are machine translated into English and Arabic, annotators should specify the language they are using to read articles they are annotating.

“Teams must provide well-documented annotation guidelines including examples, and must provide inter-annotator agreement (IAA) numbers for at least 200 posts (40 from each language) from Batch 1 and Batch 2. We expect the IAA to be competitive (e.g. Cohen Kappa of 0.6+) in the target space. The best guidelines will be selected by the organizers.”

Our Team choose to participate in the bias task. This document will present guidelines for annotating bias in the provided subset.

1.4 Bias Labels:

We adopted labels provided by the organizers however, we added two more labels after the first round of training. The labels we used to annotate bias in the news articles are listed below:

- Unbiased
- Biased against Palestine
- Biased against Israel
- Biased against both Palestine and Israel
- Biased against others
- Unclear
- Not Applicable

Categories we added

- Biased in favor of Palestine
- Biased in favor of Israel

The last two labels were added to address the shortage of proposed categories in covering bias in news articles. As we noticed that “Unclear” and “Not Applicable” cannot be used to annotate articles that includes events within the news timeframe but are not against Israel or Palestine. In the next section we provide more details regarding all used labels.

Detailed Labels

The below guidelines are used to annotate Batch 1, 2 and 3.

1.4.1 Unbiased

This label is used to annotate news that are biased against any party. We label an article as “Unbiased” when it:

- Presents a fact that is circulating in the news from more than one source
 - When the article mentions numbers from one side only, make sure that the numbers are not exaggerating and acceptable.
 - When you feel that the numbers are not acceptable, look for the source. If it attributes the facts to reliable sources, then annotate it as a “Unbiased”.

Unbiased Example:” *#SputnikPhotos | Images of the Gaza Strip after the Israeli strikes The recent death toll from the Palestinian Ministry of Health rose to 320 deaths.*” (facts circulating in the news, reliable source)

Biased Example:”*Rapid attacks in 10 hours.. 100 Hamas hideouts destroyed #FikrAapki | #InternationalNews | #IsraelHamasWar | #HamasAttack*” (one side, big number, no reliable source)

- Mentions both sides of the conflict in the same manner and with the same level of description without using terms that usually negatively describe any party. Such terms are usually used one party to describe the other.

Unbiased Example: “? Urgent - More than 200 dead and a thousand wounded in Israel as a result of the Hamas attack, and about 230 dead on the Palestinian side.”

- Is short and general without mentioning any of the conflict parties alone.

Unbiased Example: “LIVE: Israel-Hamas war will take a terrible turn in the next 24 hours!”

1.4.2 Biased against Palestine

Consider using this label when the news article

- uses misleading terms to describe the event or the Palestinian side that serve the Israeli side.
- uses popular media terms used in the media within the western world that arouse the reader’s emotions, such as “terrorists,” “Islamists,” “killing children,” and women, when it talks about the Palestinian side.
- exaggerates the number of victims on the Palestinian side without attributing the veracity of the news to a reliable source
- uses emotional stories from the Israeli side and how the war started by Hamas negatively affected those stories
- wording clearly shows that the writer took the decision against the Palestinian side

1.4.3 Biased Against Israel

Consider using this label when the news article

- uses misleading terms to describe the event or the Israeli side that serve the Palestinian side.
- uses strong language about the barbarism of the Israeli army without citing a reliable source or attributing the news to any conflict parties.
- uses popular media terms used in the media within the eastern world that arouse the reader’s emotions, such as “barbarians”, “Zionist aggression”, “infidels”, and “genocide” when it talks about the Israeli side.
- exaggerates the number of victims on the Israeli side without attributing the veracity of the news to a reliable source

- uses emotional stories from the Palestinian side and how the Israeli attacks negatively affected those stories
- wording clearly shows that the writer took the decision against the Palestinian side

1.4.4 Biased Against Palestine and Israel

- All articles that criticize both sides regarding the damage caused by the war to both sides

Example: *“In the latest chapter of their endless and futile conflict, Israeli and Palestinian forces have once again engaged in senseless violence. Both sides continue to commit atrocities, showing a complete disregard for peace or human life.”*

1.4.5 Biased in favor of Palestine

- Articles that are not biased against Palestine or Israel which use terms to make the reader sympathize with the Palestinian side.

Example: *“Erdogan: Hamas is not a terrorist organization. Rather, they struggle to defend their people and their land. They are a group of mujahideen and a liberation organization.”*

- Articles contain a description of tournaments, achievements, or victories, or praise the Palestinian side without mentioning the Israeli side.

Example: *“ “The #Israeli_Army is amazed every day by how strong Hamas is. It is a real army that was established 50 minutes from #Tel_Aviv over the past years ” Yoav Zaitoun, Israeli military analyst <http://v.aa.com.tr/3078599> :=: <https://www.aa.com.tr/ar...>”*

1.4.6 Biased in favor of Israel

Use this label to annotate articles that are not biased against Palestine or Israel and

- use terms to make the reader sympathize with the Israeli side.

Example: *” Armored fighter Oriya of the 14th Infantry Division from the settlement of Neria in Binyamin, was killed in the heroic battles in the north of the Gaza Strip. Oriya, 42 years old, married to Avital and the father of 6 children: Nadav, 14 years old, Shira, 12 years old, Rani, 10 years old, Noam, 7 years old, and Zur, 4 years old , Nitai, one year old. A reservist who, despite being exempt from service, enlisted in this great and important war for the future of the nation. He would not have done it without the support of his wife Avital and the children. We lost a dear family man. He went into battle to defend the people and fell as a hero for the upliftment and defense of the people of Israel and the State of Israel We will be with the beloved family and accompany them. I give a big hug to the residents of Neria in the name of Binyamin as a whole” His funeral will be held this morning (Friday) at 11:00 on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. This is the third casualty that the settlement of Neria loses in the war,*

after the fall of the soldiers Neria Aharon Negari 14 and Boaz Yogev 14 in the battles of Simchat Torah. We, the Binyamin Council and all residents of Binyamin send a brave hug to our brother residents of the settlement of Neria and strengthen your hand. You have a large and precious part in the resurrection and defense of the people of Israel. "And he will avenge his captivity and redeem his land with him"
”

- contain a description of tournaments, achievements, or victories, or praise the Israeli side without mentioning the Palestinian side

Example: *“Golani Ba: The fighters in the Hamas parliament building in Gaza. May God protect them!”*

Example: *“Today with our fighters in the field. We have very impressive successes, we are already more than the outskirts of Gaza City. We are making progress. Nothing will stop us. We will move forward. We will advance and win, and we will do it with God's help and with the help of our heroic warriors. I trust you, I believe in you. The entire nation of Israel stands behind you - until victory.”*

1.4.7 Biased Against Others

Use this label to annotate articles that are not biased against Palestine or Israel and

- criticizes external parties behind the existing conflict without criticizing conflicting parties.
- attributes harm to another party in any of the conflict events.

Example: *"In the shadow of the Israel-Palestine conflict, external actors, particularly Iran, are exacerbating tensions. Iran's covert support for extremist groups shows its intent to destabilize the region, disregarding the catastrophic impact on both Israeli and Palestinian civilians."*

1.4.8 Unclear

Use this label when the content of the news article is related to current conflict events, but it is not possible to determine its bias.

Example: *"Recent developments in the Middle East have seen an increase in hostilities. The situation in the region is complex, with various factors contributing to the current state of affairs. The international community remains divided on the issue."*

1.4.9 Not Applicable

Use this label when the content of the news article is far from the current events of the existing conflict. It may sometimes contain names or places where disputes take place. Events mentioned might have been reported before the beginning of the existing conflict or at times outside the time of the conflict.

Example: *"In other news, the annual technology conference in Tel Aviv has unveiled groundbreaking advancements in cybersecurity. Industry leaders from around the globe gathered to showcase innovations that promise to shape the future of digital security."*

Example: *"Look | Great enthusiasm in the Jordanian march to support the starving people in Souq Waqif #Come_Asia | #AsiaCup2023 #Qatar2023 | #AsianCup2023 #Asian_Cup_Cup_Channels #See_the_Cup."*

1.5 Annotation process

In order to annotate news articles, an annotator has to get familiar with the nature of the news articles in use and the way they annotate them. For this reason, we initiated the following process:

1.5.1 Step 1:

Make a kickoff meeting with annotators explaining:

- the task objectives,
- annotation procedure
- explain labels and give examples
- explain what is bias and why it is being used in media
- explain how a reader should judge the content of an article far from his/her origin, religion, ethnicity
- explain quality measures
- explain ethical considerations

1.5.2 Step 2:

- Make a trial round in which you ask annotators to read 10 articles and annotate them using labels determined in the guidelines
- Assess team agreement based on guidelines explained in the kickoff meeting
- Answer team members questions and discuss their opinion about the articles content, ask them to correct their annotation if they change their mind after discussion
- Make a meeting with the team when annotation is complete. Discuss their opinions regarding annotation disagreement if any.

1.5.3 Step 3:

- Make a meeting to annotate 10 more articles together, reading the articles and asking for the team members judgement label. Discuss differences and try to reach an agreement.

1.5.4 Step 4:

- Ask the team to start annotating the first batch's Inter Annotation Agreement IAA
- Once they finish, compute annotation agreement using kappa's coefficient.
- Listen to their experience once they finish, update annotation guidelines if required.

1.5.5 Step 5:

- Divide the rest of batch 01 articles (MAIN articles) between annotators to avoid annotating the same article with more than one annotator.
- Ask annotators to finish the first batch of articles
- Monitor the team progress and upgrade annotation guidelines if required

1.5.6 Step 6

- The team should be ready to annotate the rest of the batches.

Team leader should monitor the team annotation progress and continue to make comments on their annotations while the annotation process.

1.6 Annotation Tools

Two tools are available to annotate articles

1.6.1 The google sheet

provided by the organizers, the google sheet, (Figure 1), contains all articles distributed across several data sheets. The main sheet lists all articles in the “MAIN” batch. It has 15 900-articles batches numbered through “B01” through “B15”. Articles are presented in their original language in one column and their MT Arabic, and English in another columns. Next to each article, the annotator would be able to select the annotation label in his/her annotation task. And should be able to add any comments.

Batch	Source Language	ID	Type	Text	English MT	Arabic MT	Annotator ID	Bias	Propaganda	Confirmed
B01	English	1	MAIN	Yemen's Houthis have waded into the Israel - Hamas Conflict Face to Face	Yemen's Houthis have waded into the Israel - Hamas Conflict Face to Face	خاض الحوثيون في اليمن الحرب بين إسرائيل وحماة الصراع مع حماس وجهها لوجه	2	Biased against Israel		
B01	English	2	MAIN	Videos show how armed men from CNN's Dana Bash pressed Israeli PM	Videos show how armed men from CNN's Dana Bash pressed Israeli PM	أظهرت مقاطع فيديو كيف أقدم مسلحون من قناة ميرجداة CNN's دانا باش على رئيس الوزراء الإسرائيلي	2	Unclear		
B01	English	4	MAIN	Protest in Aligarh Muslim University	Protest in Aligarh Muslim University	وقفة احتجاجية في جامعة عليكرة الإسلامية دعماً لحركة	2	Biased against Pales...		
B01	English	7	MAIN	IDF releases audio recording about	IDF releases audio recording about	الجيش الإسرائيلي ينشر تسجيلاً صوتياً حول صراخ غير	2	Unclear		
B01	English	10	MAIN	CNN's Dana Bash pressed Israeli PM	CNN's Dana Bash pressed Israeli PM	حتى دانا باش، مراسل سي إن إن، رئيس الوزراء الإسرائيلي	2	Biased against Israel		
B01	English	14	MAIN	FREE AT LAST: Israel confirms nam	FREE AT LAST: Israel confirms nam	أخيراً: تؤكد إسرائيل أسماء وأعضاء الإسرائيليين الثلاثة عنان	2	Biased against Pales...		
B01	English	17	MAIN	Hamas was founded over 30 years	Hamas was founded over 30 years	تأسست حماس قبل أكثر من 30 عاماً، ولكن ماذا تريد الحركة	2	Not Applicable		
B01	English	18	MAIN	Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Net	Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Net	ويصحب ما ورد أبلغ رئيس الوزراء الإسرائيلي بنيامين نتانياهو	2	Unbiased		
B01	English	20	MAIN	Israel is expected to launch a grou	Israel is expected to launch a grou	ومن المتوقع أن تشن إسرائيل غزواً برياً على قطاع غزة، إسرائيل	2	Biased against Pales...		
B01	English	21	MAIN	SENDING A CLEAR MESSAGE: An	SENDING A CLEAR MESSAGE: An	إرسال رسالة واضحة: المجتمع الأمريكيون معاً في العاصمة	2	Biased against Pales...		
B01	English	23	MAIN	US President Joe Biden says both	US President Joe Biden says both	ويقول الرئيس الأمريكي جو بايدن إن كلا من حماس والرئيس	2	Biased against Pales...		
B01	English	25	MAIN	Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Neta	Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Neta	أعلن مكتب رئيس الوزراء الإسرائيلي بنيامين نتانياهو	2	Unbiased		
B01	English	27	MAIN	Syrian President Bashar al-Assad h	Syrian President Bashar al-Assad h	واق الرئيس السوري بشار الأسد على إرسال نظام دافع	2	Biased against Pales...		
B01	English	28	MAIN	WARNING: GRAPHIC CONTENT is	WARNING: GRAPHIC CONTENT is	تحذير: محتوى رسومي خاضعت القوات الإسرائيلية مدينة	2	Biased against Pales...		
B01	English	29	MAIN	Israel-Palestine War LIVE: US to se	Israel-Palestine War LIVE: US to se	الحرب بين إسرائيل وفلسطين مباشرة: الولايات المتحدة ستبث	2	Biased against Pales...		
B01	English	31	MAIN	Saudi Arabia's military is in a state	Saudi Arabia's military is in a state	الجيش السعودي في حالة تأهب قصوى بعد اشتباكات دامية	2	Unclear		
B01	English	34	MAIN	LIVE: President Joe Biden Respond	LIVE: President Joe Biden Respond	بث مباشر: الرئيس جو بايدن يرد على هجوم حماس الإسرائيلي	2	Biased against Pales...		
B01	English	36	MAIN	Supporters of Israel gather for demo	Supporters of Israel gather for demo	أصداء إسرائيلي يتجمعون في مظاهرات في العاصمة البلاد	2	Unbiased		
B01	English	41	MAIN	They Said We Were Hamas They si	They Said We Were Hamas They si	قلوا نحن حماس قلوا: سنقتلك، أنت حماس. اعتقلت القوات	2	Biased against Israel		
B01	English	42	MAIN	LIVE: President Biden Addressing tr	LIVE: President Biden Addressing tr	بث مباشر: الرئيس بايدن يخاطب الأمة بشأن رد الولايات	2	Unbiased		
B01	English	44	MAIN	"And I crumpled to the ground and	"And I crumpled to the ground and	"وسقطت على الأرض وقتلت: إنهم في حضم قلل أبناء".	2	Not Applicable		
B01	Enolish	45	MAIN	"They beat and assaulted all the dir	"They beat and assaulted all the dir	"قد ضربوا واعتدوا على جميع الفتيات". حكم على المراهق	2	Biased against Israel		

Figure 1: Google sheet annotation tool

Four more sheets structured the same way as the main, however, they include the 100-IAA batches. Each annotator should annotate these articles starting form batch B01.

The sheet has another three sheets, the first sheet contains the annotation teams, their id, names, roles and some optional data, the second sheet shows the status of the annotations for every annotator and the total annotated articles divided over batches. The last sheet contains guidelines should annotators use to label articles.

1.6.1.1 Instruction to use the google sheet:

- Team leader makes a copy for his/her team,
- Adds team members to the sheet
- Share the sheet with them as well as with the organizers granting them full access to the sheet.
- Annotators should be able to start annotation following team leader's instructions and using annotation guidelines.

1.7 In-house tool

We have developed an in-house tool to accomplish annotations easily. The tool lists all articles and their machine translations in Arabic and English. Articles can be filtered by the IAA or the MAIN group along with the batch. Articles are presented based on the language used by teams for annotation, Arabic in our case. Annotators can read the Arabic version of the article and annotate it using the specified task choosing the best label for the article.

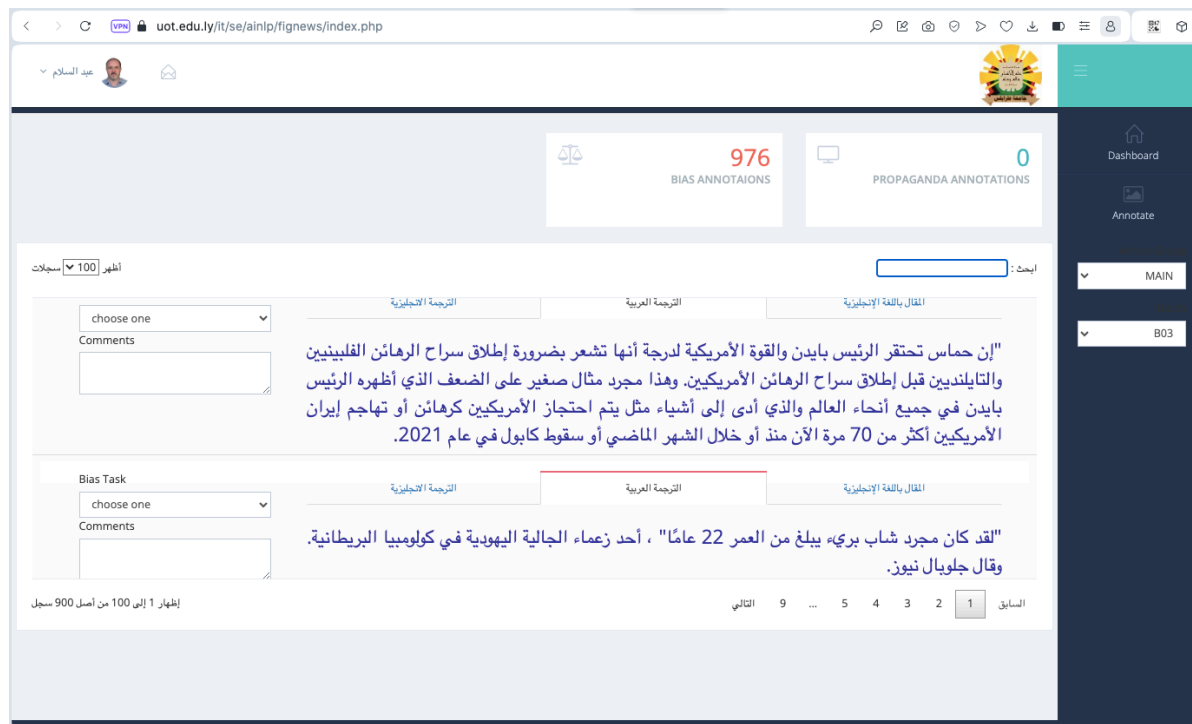


Figure 2: In-house annotation tool (main annotation screen)

Team leader and annotators can view their other team's progress in the dashboard (Figure 3). They can view their agreement in the IAA section for any batch. Annotation can be visually viewed using different colors for each label. The dashboard presents the total annotations made by every annotator and the whole team.

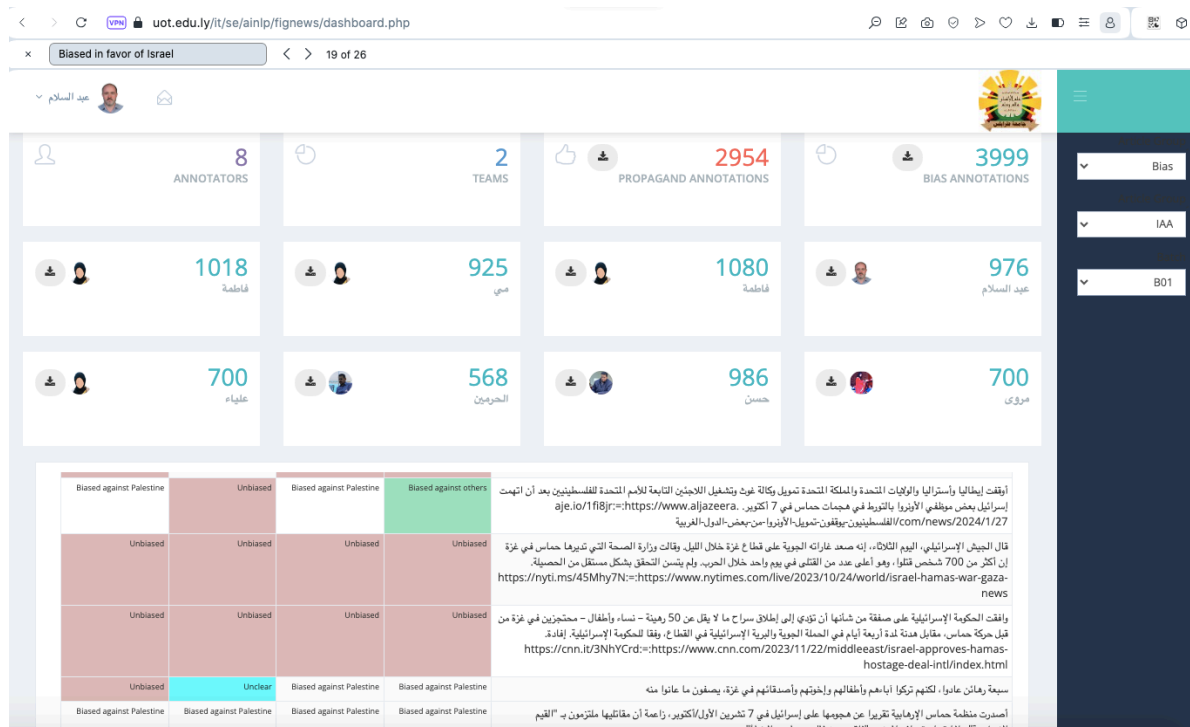


Figure 3: In-house annotation tool (dashboard section)

Team leader will be able to export annotations and directly copy them into their relevant google sheet. He/she can export annotations made by each annotator by clicking on the download icon on the annotator widget. Annotations will be copied to clipboard and should be pasted on its position in the google sheet.

The “MAIN” annotations can be exported using the team’s widget and pasted in the google sheet.

1.7.1.1 Instruction to use the in-house tool

- You need to have an account within the university of Tripoli website
- Team leader will add your name, id, and role to the teams table
- Once added, team leader will send you the annotation tool link
- Login to your account and follow the link
- You will find articles showed in the main screen and you can annotate articles based on the task your team is participating in.
- Follow your team leader to annotate articles.

1.8 Quality measures

- Monitor the agreement of your team annotators and measure their agreement
- Discuss differences with your annotators trying to reach an agreement and resolve them
- Update guidelines regularly and circulate them to the team.