

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
of the
Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation
programme Croatia – Serbia 2014-2020

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1. Introduction

The aim of this Communication Strategy is to provide strategic structure for the communication of the Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia – Serbia 2014-2020.

The Communication Strategy is designed by the Managing Authority in line with relevant legislative framework set out by the European Commission¹.

Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia – Serbia 2014-2020 is a cross border cooperation programme under the European Territorial Cooperation objective and has four priority axes:

- Improving the quality of public social and health services in the programme area
- Protecting the environment and biodiversity, improving risk prevention and promoting sustainable energy and energy efficiency
- Contributing to the development of tourism and preserving cultural and natural heritage
- Enhancing competitiveness and developing business environment in the programme area

It is important to indicate that the programme was implemented in the period 2007-2013 in different management mode; however, this Programme will make use of the existing cross border cooperation established within 2007-2013 Programme in order to further strengthen and extend the scope of existing cooperation within the framework of this Programme.

Implementation of the Communication Strategy is envisaged to play a crucial role in reaching programme results and objectives as communication is programme implementation tool of a strategic importance. Therefore, the programme communication activities will aim to engage all programme bodies to foster interactive dialogue between themselves and with the potential beneficiaries, beneficiaries and relevant stakeholders in order to involve them in cross-border cooperation thus leading to successful programme implementation. In that respect, one of the objectives of the Communication Strategy is to raise awareness about the programme and its objectives by involving general public, relevant stakeholders and (potential) beneficiaries thus contributing to achievement of the changes envisaged by the Programme.

Taking into account that this Communication Strategy sets the strategic framework for the programme communication during the programming period 2014-2020, the implementation of the Communication Strategy will make use of all relevant communication measures, tools, forms and methods in order to implement it successfully. In that sense, Communication

¹ Regulation (EU) no. 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Fund for Regional Development, the European Social Fund, Cohesion Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Fund for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries and the laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Fund for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

Strategy is envisaged to help not only to programme bodies and beneficiaries in implementing their communication activities but also to facilitate dissemination of the message on Programme objectives and results to the general public and other relevant audiences.

The Communication Strategy will be implemented through Annual Communication Plans that elaborate communication activities in a more detailed way on annual basis.

The document is envisaged to be approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee and regularly revised and updated, if and when necessary. The update of the document may be the result of regular annual evaluation of programme Communication Strategy or may be proposed by relevant programme bodies to the Managing Authority, programme body in charge of initiating the of procedure for the update the Strategy.

2. Programme objectives and communication objectives

The overall objective of the Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia – Serbia 2014-2020 is to strengthen the social, economic and territorial development of the programme area through implementation of joint interventions in the areas of health and social care, environment protection and sustainable energy, development of sustainable tourism and strengthening of competitiveness and business environment.

The operative communication goal of the Communication Strategy is to support the overall objective of the programme by setting and achieving the related communication objectives and outputs. An effective communication strategy is expected to contribute to the development of high quality operation applications and active coordination within the programme bodies, with relevant stakeholders and with other programmes. This is ensured by setting overall communication objectives (CO) that will be achieved by contributing to related specific communication objectives through using communication tools and measures and implementing communication activities.

Overall communication objective 1 (CO1):

To contribute to the generation and quality of the cross-border cooperation operations

- 1.1 To ensure successful communication between the programme bodies in order to implement the Programme and related Communication Strategy successfully
- 1.2 To raise awareness about Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia – Serbia 2014-2020 and its funding opportunities
- 1.3 To support the beneficiaries during operation implementation in order to ensure successful implementation of operations

Overall communication objective 2 (CO2):

To raise awareness and disseminate the information about the Programme and benefits of cross-border cooperation and to ensure coordination with other relevant programmes

- 2.1 To raise awareness about the Programme and benefits of cross-border cooperation by disseminating the results to different stakeholder groups in the programme area and to the general public
- 2.2 To ensure successful external communication towards other relevant programmes (Interreg, mainstream, macro-regional strategies) and share of good practice with them in order to contribute to effective functioning of the Programme

3. Programme communication activities and budget

Programme communication objectives will be achieved by implementing programme communication activities. Programme communication activities will be elaborated within Annual Communication Plan and implemented on annual basis by relevant programme bodies. This will allow for the coordinated and well planned implementation of Communication Strategy where adjustment and improvement of communication activities throughout the programme implementation period will be possible.

The scope of Programme communication activities will vary depending on the programme implementation phase. Therefore, at the beginning of Programme implementation, the communication activities will be focused mainly on strong promotion of the funding opportunities whereas at later phases of programme implementation, the focus will be on awareness raising and dissemination of programme results and outputs.

Annual Communication Plan shall be prepared by the MA and presented to the JMC at the end of each year for the following year, with the exception for Annual Communication Plan for 2015. The communication activities shall be prepared in line with the provisions of Priority Axis 5 of the Cooperation Programme and budgeted annually from Technical Assistance budget.

The timing for preparation and implementation of Annual Communication Plan:

Activities	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Preparation of Annual Communication Plan (MA)										X		
Presentation of Annual Communication Plan to JMC												X
Evaluation of Annual Communication Plan through preparation of Annual Report (MA)	X	X										

An indicative plan for the annual division of communication costs in the Technical Assistance budget is presented in table below:

Communication costs (indicative)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Programme visual identity, website and social media	10,000	5,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Programme publications and information materials	10,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	10,000	10,000
Programme events	10,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Total:	30,000	45,000	43,000	43,000	43,000	43,000	43,000	33,000	33,000

4. The roles in implementing Communication Strategy

The implementation of Communication Strategy is a horizontal responsibility of all programme bodies and their staff members. This is ensured by planning and monitoring communication activities by Communication Manager. The Communication Manager is responsible for the coordination and implementation of the Communication Strategy.

The Communication Manager coordinates programme communication activities in close collaboration with Programme Manager and Joint Secretariat whereas the Strategy is envisaged to be implemented jointly by all main communication actors:

- Managing Authority – the main body responsible for the development and implementation of the Communication Strategy as well as for official communication to the European Commission, other programme bodies, national authorities and operations/beneficiaries.
 - Part of the tasks of Communication Manager is to prepare and implement Programme Communication Strategy, to design and coordinate preparation of promotional materials and publications, to manage programme website and social media, to organise and implement programme events (info days, trainings, annual conferences, programme events, etc) and to prepare and implement communication trainings and materials
 - Managing Authority provides European Commission and other programme bodies information relevant for the governance of the programme
 - Managing Authority has a role to disseminate operation outputs and results as well as for communication with other programmes
- Joint Secretariat – together with Managing Authority, responsible for the implementation of the Communication Strategy as well as for the communication with

the programme bodies, national authorities and operations/beneficiaries at operational level.

- The tasks of Joint Secretariat include participation in implementing Programme Communication Strategy, in preparing of promotional materials and publications, in preparing input information for the update of programme website and social media, participation in organisation and implementation of programme events (info days, trainings, annual conferences, programme events, etc)
- Together with Managing Authority, Joint Secretariat has a role to disseminate operation outputs and results
- Joint Monitoring Committee – national and regional members of Joint Monitoring Committee have a role of promoting the added value of cooperation programmes as well as for dissemination of the results and outputs of the Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia – Serbia 2014-2020 at regional and national level
- Operations/beneficiaries – Operation beneficiaries create an important link between programme and different target groups and communities within the programme area. This primarily refers to operations being obligated to promote operation outputs and results and acknowledging the support received from IPA Fund. Beneficiaries are also encouraged to disseminate operation promotional materials and examples of good practice to relevant stakeholders and to the general public. Operations/beneficiaries should implement communication activities in line with measures and tools defined in Section 5 – Communication measures and tool and Programme Visibility Guidelines.
- INTERACT and other programmes - INTERTACT has developed a strategy for harmonised branding of Interreg programmes, including IPA Interreg programmes with the purpose of increasing the visibility of Interreg cooperation. The programme decided to use IPA Interreg joint branding whereas the operations/beneficiaries are encouraged to use it too by combining Programme logo with operation title/acronym or, optionally, to use both Programme logo and operation logo together. More instructions for beneficiaries on visibility will be given in Programme Visibility Guidelines.

5. Communication measures and tools

The Managing Authority shall ensure that the information and communication measures aim for the widest possible media coverage using various forms and methods of communication at the appropriate level as well as for dissemination of the information on the funding opportunities widely to potential beneficiaries and all interested parties. The Managing Authority shall also ensure that potential beneficiaries have access to the relevant information, including updated information where necessary, and taking into account the accessibility of electronic or other communication services for certain potential beneficiaries.

Taking into account that communication is vital for any programme or operation involving more than one organisation or person, and the need to collaboration increases with the complexity of the Programme/operation, this Programme envisages to develop various

information and communication measures and tools in order to encourage/foster clear and open communication channels that lead to successful streamlining of Programme messages.

The programme communication activities will be performed using the following tools:

1. Visual identity: the purpose of the unique and distinctive visual identity is to provide visibility and recognisability of the programme throughout all communication activities implemented by programme bodies and beneficiaries.
 - A programme logo has been developed based on the IPA Interreg logo by adding programme distinctive visual element. Programme logo and other joint branding features should be used on all communication materials by programme bodies and beneficiaries.
 - Graphical elements and templates for branding the programme/operations will be developed and available at programme website and Programme Visibility Guidelines/Project Implementation Manual (e.g. MS Office templates, posters, giveaways).
 - Programme Visibility Guidelines will be made available for use by beneficiaries to ensure compliance with the Programme publicity requirements.
2. Website - the website is seen as main source of information for potential beneficiaries, relevant stakeholders and the general public.
 - Website will be used as a platform for dissemination of programme materials and publications as well as updated information on the Programme
3. Media visibility (social media) - it offers the opportunity to reach the widest audience and it is seen as a tool for raising awareness. In order to attract the widest audiences possible, this Programme envisages channelling Programme messages through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
 - Social media provide a platform for generating interaction with present and potential beneficiaries as well as with relevant stakeholders
4. Electronic Monitoring System - eMS is the platform for simplifying procedures and communication between beneficiaries
 - The monitoring system will facilitate data exchange and formal communication with (potential) beneficiaries and authorities.
 - The monitoring system will allow internal communication and coordination between programme bodies.
5. Programme events – Programme will organise the following events:
 - Programme launch – major information activity publicising the launch of the Programme
 - Programme annual event – the Programme will organise major information event once a year in order to promote programme funding opportunities and achievements.
 - Operation development events - the Programme will organise various events for potential beneficiaries (training events for applicants, project managers, partner search seminars)
 - Trainings and seminars for programme bodies
 - Trainings and seminars for beneficiaries

- Programme closure – major information activity publicising the closure of the Programme
6. Mailing list – tool for sharing information in a quick, simple and straightforward way
 - This programme will use existing mailing list that contains 2007-2013 beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries and relevant stakeholders in order to inform them on the most important programme activities (launch of programme website, launch of call for Proposals)
 7. Mail – regular mail is used for official communication between programme bodies and beneficiaries
 - This programme will use regular post in order to officially communicate between programme bodies and beneficiaries
 8. Printed materials – print can be used effectively in order to share information with a wide range of interested parties
 - Materials shall be planned and created according to the needs, with the utmost aim of being informative, clear and attractive to the addressed target group(s).

6. General communication approach to target groups

All programme official communication shall be in English language. In cases when the communication takes place from person to person or is directed toward the national media or national target groups, national language may be used. As regards to written materials, Interreg joint branding features available at programme website shall be applied.

Target groups for Programme communication depend on the scope of the communication objectives. Different target groups are addressed by different specific communication objectives.

According to the general role and nature within the programme implementation, the target groups can be divided into two main groups:

- a) The internal groups consist of people employed for programme bodies involved in implementation of the Programme.
- b) The external target groups consist of all other stakeholders that could make use or be affected by Programme outputs and results

The implementation of the Communication Strategy by the internal groups aims at engaging the external target groups in becoming aware of and implementing the Programme.

Internal target groups:

Internal communication within and between the programme bodies is to consist of a clear organizational structure supporting clear division of tasks and a well-structured process of

handling information. Successful internal communication leads to effective functioning of the Programme. Internal target groups consist of:

- Programme bodies: organisations and groups involved in the governance of the programme. They include the Managing Authority, Joint Secretariat, Audit Authority, Certifying Authority and Joint Monitoring Committee.

Internal communication will be facilitated through the following general activities:

- Preparing promotional materials
- Preparing programme publications
- Preparing and disseminating newsletters
- Managing programme website and social media
- Organising and conducting trainings and seminars for programme bodies

External target groups:

The focus of external communication will be the engagement of the potential beneficiary organizations to participate in the Programme, especially at the beginning of Programme implementation. Raising interest towards the Programme as a funding source is to be done through a multi-channel approach where all the needed information will be made clearly understandable, widely available and known. In that respect, communication activities will be implemented in order to actively engage target organizations and key stakeholder to prepare applications for the Programme. External target groups are the following:

- Potential beneficiaries: organisations that have an interest or have the capacity to participate in our Programme; organisations that participated in previous programme period, as well as new organisations. This group includes applicants known to the programme bodies as having the intention to submit an application. The potential beneficiaries will be actively supported and guided in using the materials, aiming at high number and high quality of applications.
- Beneficiaries: organisations receiving funding from the Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia – Serbia 2014-2020
- Target groups: those organisations positively affected by the activities and results of an operation, though not necessarily being directly involved in the operation
- Wider public: those potentially being affected by operation outputs and programme results
- Influencers/multipliers: authorities and policy makers, match funding providers, politicians, trade and industry, educational and research institutions, EU info centres, the press, etc.
- Others: this may include organisations acting as observers on the Joint Monitoring Committee, other programmes, relevant macro-regional strategies and their operations and other national and international organisations.

External communication will be facilitated through the following general activities:

- Preparing promotional materials
- Preparing programme publications
- Preparing and disseminating newsletters

- Managing programme website and social media
- Organising and conducting trainings and seminars for beneficiaries
- Organising and conducting thematic workshops beneficiaries and relevant stakeholders
- Representing Programme at INTERACT and European Commission trainings and thematic workshops

Based on the intervention logic of the Communication Strategy consisting of overall communication objectives, specific communication objectives, communication measures and tool, target groups and output indicators, Managing Authority will prepare Annual Communication Plans.

Communication Strategy intervention logic:

Overall communication Objective	Specific communication objectives	Communication measures and tools	Target groups	Output indicators
1. o increase the capacity of (potential) beneficiaries in preparation of high quality applications and implementation of successful operations	1.1. To ensure successful communication between the programme bodies in order to implement the Programme and Communication Strategy successfully	1.1: eMS regular meetings specialised trainings programme events programme website website mails	1.1: Managing Authority Joint Secretariat Joint Monitoring Committee Audit Authority Certifying Authority European Commission	1.1: • Satisfaction of the programme bodies indicated within feedback data collected at events/trainings/meetings above 4 (scoring system 1-5)
	1.2 To raise awareness about Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia – Serbia 2014-2020 and its funding opportunities	1.2: programme events programme website publications newsletter mailing list social media	1.2: Potential beneficiary organisations Regional and national authorities EUSAIR/EUSD R contact points	1.2: • Number of promotional events conducted • Number of applications received
	1.3 To support the beneficiaries during operation implementation in order to ensure successful implementation of operations	1.3: eMS regular meetings specialised trainings programme events programme website website mails	1.3: Beneficiary organisations	1.3: • Number of trainings conducted • Satisfaction of the beneficiaries indicated within feedback data collected at events/trainings/meetings above 4 (scoring system 1-5)
2. To raise awareness and	2.1. To raise awareness about the Programme	2.1: programme events programme	2.1: Joint Monitoring Committee	2.1: • Number of promotional events conducted

Overall communication Objective	Specific communication objectives	Communication measures and tools	Target groups	Output indicators
<p>disseminate the information about the Programme and benefits of cross-border cooperation and to ensure coordination with other relevant programmes</p>	<p>and benefits of cross-border cooperation by disseminating the results for different stakeholder groups in the programme area and to the general public</p> <p>2.2.To ensure successful external communication towards other relevant programmes (Interreg, mainstream, macro-regional strategies) and share of good practice with them in order to contribute to effective functioning of the Programme</p>	<p>website publications newsletter mailing list social media annual reports eMS</p> <p>2.2: programme events INTERACT networking events programme website publications newsletter mailing list social media regular meetings</p>	<p>Potential beneficiaries Stakeholders organisations Regional and national authorities EUSAIR/EUSD R contact points European Commission</p> <p>2.2: Other Interreg programmes Relevant mainstream programmes EUSAIR/EUSD R contact points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of applications received <p>2.2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of networking events programme bodies participated in

2. Monitoring and evaluation of Communication Strategy

The Managing Authority will monitor the progress of Communication Strategy implementation through measuring and evaluating achievement of Strategy output indicators. Evaluation of the Communication Strategy implementation is envisaged to be performed annually within the process of compiling the Annual Implementation Report of the Programme. The evaluation is based on the output indicators set for each specific communication objective.

Specific communication objectives	Output indicator	Source of data
<p>1.1. To ensure successful communication between the programme bodies in order to implement the Programme and Communication Strategy successfully</p> <p>1.2. To raise awareness about Interreg IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Croatia – Serbia 2014-2020 and its funding opportunities</p> <p>1.3. To support the beneficiaries during operation implementation in order to ensure successful implementation of operations</p>	<p>1.1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction of the programme bodies indicated within feedback data collected at events/trainings/meetings above 4 (scoring system 1-5) <p>1.2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of promotional events conducted Number of applications received <p>1.3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of trainings conducted Satisfaction of the beneficiaries indicated within feedback data collected at events/trainings/meetings above 4 (scoring system 1-5) 	<p>1.1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback data collected at events/trainings/meetings above 4 (scoring system 1-5) <p>1.2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected by MA eMS <p>1.3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected by MA Feedback data collected at events/trainings/meetings above 4 (scoring system 1-5)
<p>2.1. To raise awareness about the Programme and benefits of cross-border cooperation by disseminating the results for different stakeholder groups in the programme area and to the general public</p> <p>2.2. To ensure successful external communication towards other relevant programmes (Interreg, mainstream, macro-regional strategies) and share of good practice with them in order to contribute to effective functioning of the Programme</p>	<p>2.1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of promotional events conducted Number of applications received <p>2.2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of networking events programme bodies participated in 	<p>2.1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected by MA eMS <p>2.2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected by MA

