



INTERREG V A Italy – Croatia CBC Programme

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INTRODUCTION ON PROJECT AND PROGRAMME COMMUNICATION

Project communication contributes to the Programme Communication Strategy. In particular, project communication has to aim at making the general public, thematic experts, decision makers and other target groups in the Programme area aware of the project results and achievements, and has become one of the key elements to ensure durability and transferability of outputs and results; in fact, result orientation is the key mantra of the 2014-2020 programming period, however, questions have arisen on how best to achieve the desired results and communicate them. Interreg Programmes have demonstrated that the achievement of good results may go far beyond the indicators established in the Programmes and imply impacts which are meaningful for citizens' life but difficult to measure, such as building trust across borders.

The success of project communication depends on establishing and developing continuous relations with the key target groups and general public throughout and even beyond the project lifetime. The success of Programme communication depends on good project results and good cooperation between the project partners and the Programme Authorities.

Therefore, it is necessary that the projects ensure constant and regular contact with MA/JS. The MA/JS will provide communication training, templates and technical tools to projects as support for project communication. In return, the MA/JS expects the projects to deliver content for communication activities at the Programme level, e.g. content for the Programme website, recommendations for interviews to partners, high quality photos with public copyright license, information about upcoming key events or contributions to events, or online and print publications.

A. APPLICATION STAGE: COMMUNICATION WORK PACKAGE (WP2)

COMMUNICATION IN PROJECTS

Targeted communication will help projects to achieve aims and ensure transparency in the use of the EU funds. Communication activities are an important and integral part of project implementation, and thus require detailed planning as well as adequate allocation of resources.

Communication is a horizontal project task and implies the engagement of all project partners. The quality of project communication results comes from a committed work of all partners and not only the Lead Partner or the partner responsible for communication activities. Furthermore, a good **internal communication management** within the partnership is a key for the successful external communication of the project.

Thus, it is recommended that each project partner appoints one person responsible for communication. The Lead Partner has to appoint a Communication Manager responsible for planning and coordination of communication measures for the whole project.



The responsibilities of the Communication Manager may cover:

- setting communication aims for the work packages and ensuring consistency of the aims, target groups and approach;
- drafting a communication plan;
- support in planning and implementation of the communication between project partners;
- coordination and support of persons responsible for communication in partner organisations;
- cooperation with MA/JS on communication issues

As regards the partnership it is advisable for the projects to ensure a good collaboration system, define punctual workflow and a reporting system among Partners so Partners are aware of the purpose and their fundamental role in increasing the impact and visibility of the project.

PROJECT COMMUNICATION APPROACH

Each project must present its communication approach in the related field of the Application Form (section G of the Application Form, Work Plan, WP2); for this purpose, the communication elements to be defined in the application are the following:

- the **communication aims and objectives**: what do you want to achieve with the communication?
- the **main target groups**: whom do you have to target with communication activities in order to achieve the aims?
- the **tactics** selected to interact with target groups to achieve the aims and objectives
- the **activities** for each of the tactics selected which have to be chosen among the following: start-up activities (mandatory), media relation and publications, digital activities (including projects' feeding web-platform and social media management), events, promotional material production, that are suitable to achieve the aims and objectives

The Lead Partner of every project must define its communication approach strategically, in view of its target groups and involving own projects' partners from the conception of the approach to the actions.

In the Application Form, the applicant has a limited number of characters to describe the project communication approach, therefore we recommend to be as specific as possible. Please find hereinafter some tips and rules to follow in order to better conceive the approach.



Communication Objectives

Communication activities need to be developed having the project results as a primary focus. Indeed, not only Communication is to be considered as one of project results (with specific output indicators), but Communication should contribute to the achievement and to the quality of the results of specific activities or deliverables. As one of the elements of this result-oriented approach, adopted in the 2014-2020 Programming period, all project proposals should, already in the application stage, demonstrate how their outputs and results will be visible, transferable, durable and how they will take into account inputs from and involvement of key target groups. Consequently, as part of the project intervention logic, communication objectives shall clearly contribute to the project's overall and specific objectives: What does a project want to achieve and what does the partnership need to put in place to achieve this?

The **communication objectives** therefore describe how specific communication activities/deliverables support the delivery of the project outputs and results.

Communication objectives are thus very much linked to the types of output projects plans to deliver. For example: policy improvement is often linked to raising awareness, changing behaviour or disseminating knowledge. Pilot actions, on the other hand, implicate higher active involvement of the end-users and private sector which means stakeholder groups, user testing and therefore communication objectives that cover very different stages of project implementation.

Furthermore, it is necessary that projects (and consequently Programmes) are able to give visibility of the results achieved in order demonstrate how Interreg delivers a positive change in Europe and imply meaningful impact for citizens.

An effective communication objective should therefore be:

Specific: it contributes to the relevant change at the specific objective level

Measurable: it is possible to measure the baseline, the target and, if necessary, the milestones

Achievable: it is possible to achieve the target

Relevant: it contributes to the change at a priority axis and Programme level

Time-bound: it is available and updated at different points in time

Definition of the Target Groups

A target group is a clearly identified audience that has an interest in the project, either directly or indirectly. They either should know about the project's activities, they might benefit from the project outputs and results or their involvement might even be necessary to ensure the durability of the project outputs and results. A project can target multiple target groups that will each require a different approach, tools and frequency of communication activities. Target



groups need to be clearly defined per project output and specific communication activities need to be proposed according to the different target groups.

Projects must have a concrete knowledge of their target groups, to tailor the activities, news and messages to coincide with what interests them. To do this, it's advisable to list and map all the groups or segments of public, and analyse their attitude and interest towards the information the project wishes to communicate.

Then to sustain an effective communication strategy, projects should be concerned with stimulating a lifelong relationship with the target groups. These relationship should be:

- Directed to the real target that benefit from the communication;
- Committed, regular, true and transparent;
- Realistic and coherent with the purposes and promises of the project;
- Based on common knowledge, mutual feed-back and evaluation.

Depending on the project's objectives, target groups can take different forms. They can be local/national politicians or decision-makers that need to implement policies, end-users using a new product, manufacturers, the general public, SMEs etc. In order to help you identify the right target groups, the level of involvement required, as well as how and when to reach them, the table below can offer some guidance:

Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who needs to use my outputs? - Who from my organisation needs to be involved? - Who can provide useful input throughout the development of my outputs? - Who needs to be involved to ensure the continuity of the project results that goes beyond my partnership? - Are there any actors that might have a negative perception or be negatively affected by my project? - Who will have a direct or indirect benefit from the project outputs produced? - Is there any behaviour change needed to reach the project results? Whose behaviour should change and who do I need to involve to reach this?
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What level of involvement does the project require from each of the target groups? - Is my objective to inform, to receive feedback or to actually work together with the target groups?
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can I reach my target groups?



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do I need a different method per target group in order to be effective? - Are these actors my regular 'clients' or do I need a different approach to reach them?
Timing	<p>Given the demand-driven nature of the programme target groups and stakeholders should be involved from the very beginning and for the entire duration of the project. But:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When do I need which specific target group precisely? - Do I need them at the development of my outputs, at their actual delivery or only at the end to ensure the durability?

In the Application Form (Section G – Communication Approach), information needs to be added on how precisely the project plans to involve each of these target groups.

Tactics

Coherent set of tactical actions aimed at achieving a specific objective should be put in place. Communication tactics determine which activities are most promising for getting specific messages across to clearly defined audiences (thus ultimately reaching a specific objective). Approaches describe how the project wants to bring across messages to its audiences to reach its objectives. They all have specific persuasive impacts: dissemination and media relations for example will reach and inform many people but convince few to change their attitude, while personal networking and cooperation will reach only few but might be more persuasive.

A non-exhaustive list of communication approaches that are commonly used includes:

- Advertising;
- Campaigning;
- Community relations;
- Cooperation and harmonisation;
- Dissemination (incl. storytelling);
- Edutainment (incl. gamification);
- Media relations;
- Personal dialogue (incl. networking and exchange);
- Social/viral marketing;
- Stakeholder involvement;
- Training;
- Visibility and publicity (incl. corporate design).



After approval, all projects, alongside the communication strategy, must foresee communication coordination roles and tasks:

- At their own project level, they must ensure that they involve all their partners in every communication action to share or merge activities, including the development of an evaluation of communication activities, discussing common methods, sharing tools, exploring complementarities and economies of scale;
- At programme level, projects are also requested to provide regular information to the Programme in format and deadlines to be defined (for thematic publications, events etc.), mainly through the web platform that the Programme will be providing to the projects and other tools and forms of participation.

Minimum required activities/deliverables to be included in projects' planning

The following activities/ deliverables are compulsory for all types of projects in all Specific Objectives (unless differently specified):

- Projects should place a **poster** (of minimum A3 size) at a location readily visible to the public, such as an entrance area of a building, stating the financial support from the Union. Programme shall provide design while projects shall edit, print and display posters;
- Start-up activities: organization of the project kick-off meeting;
- Regular project **website** (available on the Programme webplatform) set up and updates;
- At least one high level **event** (involving relevant policy makers, presence of Programme MA/JS, eventually presence of other ESI funds MA and Macro-regional strategies governing board, etc.);
- At least one printed or digital **publication** on relevant paper magazines;
- **Social media** communication of/for project and active participation in Programme social media communication;
- Publication of at least one short **portrait** of the project – adapted to main target group(s) (printed publication such as flyer or audio-visual such as video);
- **Communication Strategy** (for “Standard+” projects only a capitalisation strategy is required).

All these activities should be implemented in the respect of the rules on information and publicity for all beneficiaries, according to the EU regulation No 1303/2013.

What the Programme expects from projects?

In addition to the regular reporting on communication activities, the projects are invited to contribute to the other activities organised by the Programme in their forward planning and to foresee some budget for the participation to the events that may include:

- Annual Programme events;



- Events organised by European institutions (RegioStar/ The European Week of Regions and Cities);
- European Cooperation Day;
- Relevant (thematic) events organized by other ETC Programmes and projects overlapping the same cooperation area;
- Participation in information and training seminars:
 - ✓ Web platform trainings;
 - ✓ Communication/implementation trainings for projects (at least LP and partner responsible for communication).

The Programme may ask the projects to present their results and achievements at any of the annual events. In addition, there are several events organised by the European institutions which may help the project achieve greater visibility and dissemination of their communication material and information about their results.

The Programme participates in these events with input from the projects. The European cooperation day (EC Day –21 September) is a relatively new initiative presenting projects’ work and local level results to the general public. The projects are encouraged to take part in this initiative, which can also bring them more visibility and increase contact with the local media.

Projects are advised to include costs for such events in their budget.

The costs for the events out of the eligible area can be incurred only if described in the AF at the moment of the submission of the project or if previously authorised by the JS.

Timeline

It is advisable to create a timeline that identifies when each activity will take place. This will help to ensure that deadlines do not slip, opportunities are not missed, and that activities are fully prepared. All proposed communication deliverables need to be represented in the project work plan and should be coherent with the project deliverables, outputs and results.

The acronym of projects

The acronym chosen to identify the project mustn’t be longer than 12 characters. The choice of project acronym should respect few guidelines:

- Be short and easy to remember;
- The acronyms of previous projects shouldn't be repeated in order to prevent any confusion or mistakes with past projects;
- Be intuitive, meaning that it must correctly identify the project mission and vision;



- Be easy to pronounce and likely to attract the attention. For this reason, technical information should be avoided, including Programme specific terminology, or reference at Italy-Croatia Programme (already included in the logo), for example.

RESOURCES TO BE FORESEEN

An important section to be developed in the Communication Work Package is the budget. Each of the partners will have to provide a detailed estimation of the resources that will be necessary to fulfill the communication requirements and produce the different deliverables as listed in the WP.

All partners need to foresee the necessary human resources internally or externally to develop and deliver the communication activities, as well as costs for printing promotional material. Financial and human resources must be allocated to ensure the project participation in external events (other than the Programme events and seminars/trainings) when justified and useful for the project scope. Each project should allocate resources for its own communication activities and in order to establish a regular work relationship with the Programme. The partnership should assign communication responsibilities to a single Partner, whereas a contact person should be designated to act as liaison with the Programme.

When developing the budget for communication, partners should respect the value for money principle. This means that all activities proposed need to be in direct link with one of the communication objectives and the specific target groups. There is no specific percentage of the total project budget that should be dedicated to the Communication Work Package, all costs should be reasonable and fully in line with the objectives and deliverables.

B. PROJECT BRANDING AND VISIBILITY RULES

PROJECT LOGO

In line with wider EU cohesion policy goals for the current programming period, an aligned branding will also contribute to better spending and simplification. Programme will provide **projects with their logo and design templates** for publications (event invitations, project leaflets, etc.) and promotional materials, which can be easily adapted and implemented. However: specific branding and / or communication /training tools could still be foreseen as an output of the communication work package for event campaigns, activities, products or services that are expected to sustain beyond the project duration, if well motivated in the Application Form.



PROJECT WEBSITE

Similar to the approach in project branding, **project websites will be integrated and hosted on the Programme webplatform** and will have its own domain. Thus, for creating and maintaining the standard project website there will be no fixed costs since these services will be provided by the Programme for free while the projects will have to foresee only some internal/external human resources for updating regularly the project website. This activity does not require any specific technical skills and the Programme will develop tutorials to help project partners in using the different features of the website.

The Programme will provide a complete website section (calendar, document library, directory, tools etc.) to each selected project, as well as will provide to the projects all the elements to manage and configure their website section (visuals, features, content, social networking, etc.). Project partners will be able to devote more resources to the production of quality content avoiding the time consuming with technical issues. However, as with logos above, specific websites can still be introduced by projects as an output of the communication work package for specific activities and products that are expected to sustain beyond the project duration or that deserve a more specific platform than the Programme web-platform (e.g. awareness campaigns, online IT tools, etc.). Social media platforms can also be handled in a flexible way by the projects.

OTHER RELEVANT COMMUNICATION OBLIGATIONS FOR ALL PROJECTS

Poster

According to the Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, all approved projects should place a poster (of minimum A3 size) with information about the project including the financial support from the Union and the project logo, at partner's premises, at a location readily visible to the public, such as an entrance area of a building.

In order to help project partners to comply with this obligation, the Programme will provide a Poster template available for download on the Programme web platform.

Partner institutional website

All project partners should publish on their institutional websites ("where such website exists") a short description of the operation, in English or in the local language as set forth in the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 (Annex XII, Article 2.2 paragraph 2.a).

This description should be proportionate to the level of support, including its aims and results, and highlighting the financial support from the Union. Partners should also include the project logo and the reference to the EU co-financing and, both set in a visible place and complying with the publicity rules. A link to the project website in the Italy-Croatia CBC Programme platform should also be added.



Events

The project logo, as well as a clear reference to the EU co-financing has to be used on agendas, list of participants, related publications, promotion materials and presentations. (Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013). During the events, projects are encouraged to place the project poster or a project banner in a readily visible place (e.g. the front of the meeting room).

Publications

All project publications, including brochures, newsletters, studies, articles and others must include the project logo and the reference to the EU co-financing. When this is not possible, for example, in articles, conference proceedings or other publications, projects should explicitly mention the contribution from the EU co-financing and the Interreg Italy-Croatia CBC Programme.

In addition, projects are strongly recommended to publish in the appropriate section of the Programme website the most essential results (or a summary of them) in the official language of the Programme – English - in addition to the other languages.

Audio / Video information

Any radio/audio spots should be marked and indicate that they are co-financed by the European Union. Please consider the following formats: 8'' brief announcement (so called radio billboard just to indicate an institution financing a given Programme, right before or after a given program, and 15', 30'' up to 60'' radio spots. Radio spots can be treated as short forms (small promotional objects accordingly to art. 4 point 2 of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014 of 28 July 2014). Thus the message would be "Programme co-financed by the European Union". In case of longer forms, like radio programs, the message would be "Programme co-financed by the European Union from the European Regional Development Fund". Ideally, any spot should mention a website where more info is available. However, above a length of 30 seconds, both the reference to the European Union and the ERDF shall be mentioned.

Promotional gadgets

Promotional gadgets can be a good way to raise awareness about a project. However, they should be produced only if they meet strategic objectives and are linked to a promotion strategy. Please take notice of some parameters to take into account when producing goodies:

- is it relevant for the promotion of my project?
- is it useful, creative and memorable enough?
- is it green? It is strongly recommended to adopt a "green approach" for the promotional gadgets

Again the golden rule: all promotional gadgets should be branded with the project logo and the



reference to the EU co-financing.

Social media

Social media are becoming more and more important to reach a wide range of target audiences. This communication medium is however very diverse and needs regular feeds which can also be time consuming.

The Programme encourages its projects to develop an online presence through some of the social media channels whenever this fits with their communication objectives and is in line with the specificities of their target audiences. Social media has the advantage of being a two way communication channel, meaning that projects can also get useful feedback from their target groups. The messages posted should therefore reflect the needs of the project and the timing of project delivery.

Although social media is in theory free of cost, projects that aim to reach their target groups via these channels should foresee the necessary time and resources to feed their social media channels.

SPECIAL OBLIGATIONS IN CASE OF SMALL SCALE INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONSTRUCTION WORKS

In case of small scale infrastructure and construction works with a public contribution of more than EUR 500.000,00 specific illustrative requirements, set out in Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, have to be adopted. More specifically, this relates to the production and the setting up of plaques and billboards at the relevant sites which shall contain the logo and references as set out above. In particular:

Billboard, during the project

Projects under these conditions shall follow the obligations of putting a billboard at the site of each operation during the implementation of the operation if it consists in the financing infrastructure or physical constructions and when the total public contribution to the operation exceeds EUR 500.000,00. Information that shall be stated on the plaque is listed in the Commission's Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

Permanent plaque, after project completion

Once the operation is complete, the billboard shall be replaced by the permanent explanatory plaque that must be in a very visible site and of significant size, no later than three months after completion of the operation that consists in the purchase of a physical object or in the financing of infrastructure or of construction operations and if the total public contribution to the operation exceeds EUR 500.000,00. Information that shall be stated on the plaque is listed in the Commission Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

Please get in contact with the JS Communication Unit to adopt relevant solutions.



Remind: electronic displays can only be an addition to the poster or billboard. It would appear that billboard cluttering can be avoided by closer coordination and better planning: it is allowed to group information about multiple projects on one billboard. Similarly, one poster could contain information about several operations carried out in the same location.

Evaluation of communication activities

The communication system should be tested periodically to ensure that messages are received and understood and the receivers are satisfied with the method deployed. Thus it is important to evaluate the success of communication activities, in order to learn which ones are a success and which need adjustments. Evaluation also creates useful feedback to share with others in the Programme and provides valuable lessons for future projects, so that they can learn from the project experience.

Evaluation of communication activities should be included in the global project evaluation.

Here is a set of possible qualitative indicators:

- Satisfaction level of activities implemented (questionnaires for conferences, publications etc.);
- Identification and communication with target groups (distribution lists developed, number of direct mailings to number of persons, how is the feedback within interactive web tools developed , how many 'likes' on FB, how many comments in discussion forum etc.);
- Further analyses of web statistics: where are most of the hits (after a press article, conference, newsletter);
- Hits on different sections.

Quantitative indicators:

- Number of downloaded publications, number of printed and actually distributed publications;
- Number of participants to events;
- Number of press articles.

C. WHERE TO FIND ASSISTANCE?

Your main contact with the Italy – Croatia Programme is the Joint Secretariat (JS). The JS is based in Venice, with two branch offices in Zadar and Dubrovnik and can be contacted at any time by Lead Applicants and Lead Partners for any queries related to project development, implementation, finance, communication, management, etc.



Contact details of the JS are:

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