



Communication Strategy

Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A “Greece - Italy 2014-2020” – Communication Strategy

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Table of Contents

1. General.....	3
1.1 “The people’s right to know”	3
1.2 Summary of the CP Interreg V-A "Greece-Italy 2014-2020”.....	4
2. Description of the Communication Strategy	6
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Objectives.....	6
2.3 Communication SWOT.....	8
2.4 Target Groups	9
2.5 Actions per Target Group.....	9
3. Communication strategy.....	14
3.1 Introduction	14
3.2 Indicative strategic choices	14
3.3 Content of the Communication Strategy	15
3.4 Implementation Stages for Communication.....	16
3.5 Means of communication	19
3.5.1 Key documents.....	19
3.5.2 Publications.....	20
3.5.3 Internet homepage	20
3.5.4 Information events.....	21
3.5.5 Coverage by the Media	23
3.5.6 Social Responsibility Activities	23
3.5.7 Social media	23
3.6 Technical characteristics of information and publicity measures	24
3.7 Schedule for the Implementation of Communication Actions	25
4. Responsibilities	26
5. Indicative budget	28
6. Implementation Procedures	29
6.1 Monitoring and Reporting of the Communication Strategy.....	29
6.2 Evaluation of the information and publicity measures	29
7. Equality between men and women and non-discrimination.....	32

1. General

1.1 “The people’s right to know”

This document is the multi-annual Communication Strategy of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A “Greece-Italy 2014-2020”, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The Communication Strategy shall be approved by the Programme’s Monitoring Committee. The Managing Authority, in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat (JS), will be responsible for the implementation of the Communication Strategy.

The drafting of the Communication Strategy, which defines in detail the necessary information and communication measures for the communication of the Operational Programme, is foreseen by Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, which also defines the content and the strategy of the information and communication actions.

Information and publicity is the responsibility of the Management Authority, which is charged with implementing the interventions. This takes place with the contribution of the Monitoring Committee, which is informed about the measures that are being taken for the achievement of these goals. The competent national and regional authorities take all the necessary administrative measures in order to ensure the effective application of the provisions that concern information and publicity with respect to the intervention of the Structural Funds and to cooperate with the European Commission.

For the drafting of the present Communication Strategy, the following have been taken into consideration:

- Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006;
- Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, in particular Articles 115 to 117 and Annex XII;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014 of 28 July 2014 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards detailed arrangements for the transfer and management of programme contributions, the reporting on financial instruments, technical characteristics of information and communication measures for operations and the system to record and store data Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal;
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 481/2014 of 4 March 2014, supplementing the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 with regards to specific rules on eligibility of expenditure for Cooperation Programmes;
- The European Transparency Initiative (ETI) , Communication from the Commission of 21 March 2007;
- The Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A “Greece-Italy 2014-2020” (hereinafter CP), approved by the Commission Decision C(2015) 9347 of 15 December 2015;
- The experience acquired from the information and publicity programmes that were implemented during the application of the previous Programming Periods.

1.2 Summary of the CP Interreg V-A "Greece-Italy 2014-2020"

The CP "Greece-Italy" links eleven (11) NUTS III level prefectures and six (6) provinces from two different EU Member States, Greece and Italy.

The overall objective of the programme is to support strategic cross-border co-operation for a more prosperous and sustainable region across the Ionian Sea. Emphasis will be placed upon developing the foundations for a dynamic economy which fosters smart, sustainable and inclusive growth with the goal to improve the quality of life for those living in the region.

In the above framework, the Specific Objectives are:

- To exploit in a sustainable way the endogenous potential of the cross-border GR-IT Programme Area;
- To promote the cross-border Area's integration and connectivity to fields which are important to its development, in full complementarity with the Adriatic-Ionian Strategy (EUSAIR);
- To act as a policy driver to tackle common challenges and needs in specific policy fields where cross-border cooperation is expected to deliver practical results.

Programme Funding

The CP has a total budget of € 123 176 896, 47 and is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with a total amount of € 104.700 .362 for the 2014-2020 period.

Geographic Coverage

<p>Areas in Greece (EL - ELLADA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Region of Epirus<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Arta➤ Thesprotia➤ Ioannina➤ Preveza• Region of Ionian Islands<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Zakynthos➤ Kerkyra➤ Kefallinia➤ Lefkada• Region of Western Greece<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Aitoloakarnania➤ Achaia➤ Ileia <p>Areas in Italy (IT – ITALIA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Region of Apulia<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Taranto➤ Brindisi➤ Lecce➤ Foggia➤ Bari➤ Barletta-Andria-Trani	<p>The Programme covers the following eligible areas as shown in:</p> 
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The CP interreg "GREECE-ITALY 2014-2020" is structured as follows:

- A core strategy, which includes four (4) Thematic Objectives (TO) no 1, no 3, no 6, and no 7
- Two cross-cutting guiding principles from TO 10 and TO 11, by focusing the programme on inclusive growth and thus incorporating interventions, such as:
 - a) investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure (TO 10)
 - b) enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration by strengthening of institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to implementation of the ERDF, and ESF (TO 11).

The selected Thematic Objectives (TO) of the Programme correspond to the smart and sustainable growth pillars of Europe 2020 strategy and are translated into the three programme priority axes:

PRIORITY AXIS 1: Innovation & Competitiveness

PRIORITY AXIS 2: Integrated Environmental Management

PRIORITY AXIS 3: Multimodal Sustainable Transport System

PRIORITY AXIS 4: Technical Assistance

An overview of the Thematic Objectives (TO) and Investment Priorities (IP) proposed for the Operational Programme (2014-2020) is presented in the figure below:



2. Description of the Communication Strategy

2.1 Introduction

The overall objective of Programme communications is to support the development of a cross-border community that recognises common challenges and is willing to jointly capitalise on supraregional assets for the benefit of citizens, businesses and the environment through cross-border cooperation and competence networks, supply chains and interorganisational alliances. In order to respond to the Communication Strategy and objectives, communication of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A "Greece-Italy 2014-2020" has to take up several challenges:

- Capitalising the lessons learnt from the past

As cross-border cooperation between Greece and Italy spans over multiple Programming Periods, it is extremely important to give continuity to the communication activities and tools performed during the previous Programming Period among different Programmes in the area, by:

- capitalising these experiences and tools, avoiding all possible mistakes made in the past;
 - carrying out new, more effective and pervasive actions;
 - spreading them to the eligible Programme areas (local communities).
- The cross-border character of the CP "implies that it is addressed to a wide variety of audiences in two different countries, with consequences in terms of language and culture differences.
 - Having targets with very different levels of awareness the CP has to address a wide variety of audiences (potential beneficiaries, actual beneficiaries, Programme partners, other public and private organisations, public opinion, media) whose familiarity with European funding varies widely. The terms of European funding may sometimes appear complicated to some non-specific audiences. This aspect may create an obstacle to some audiences for understanding the objectives and contributions of the Programme.
 - The role of the CPs actual beneficiaries (Project Partners) in the communication.

Project partners play a key role in the communication, as they have to ensure:

- The respect of information and publicity requirements foreseen in Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 in promoting the projects' activities and disseminating their results (Communication at the Project level)
- The provision of all relevant data to the Managing Authority, in order to support the communication effort of the Programme on concrete progress and results (Communication at the Programme level).

2.2 Objectives

The general objectives of the Communication Strategy are the following:

- **Awareness:** Highlighting the role of the European Union and the Structural Funds of the EU for the general public and promotion of the added value of EU participation in the jointly funded projects of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A "Greece-Italy 2014-2020";
- **Transparency:** Ensuring transparency as far as access to the Funds is concerned. This means that the mechanisms for provision of resources of the Programme have to be transparent to the potential beneficiaries.

Nevertheless, there are certain specific communications goals, which reflect the more general goal of the Programme. They have the objective of identifying the necessary measures in order to deal with the communication gap between the citizens in the eligible areas and the role of the European Union, in particular in the framework of the CP.

The specific objectives of the Communication Strategy are the following:

In terms of Awareness

- To promote the Programme itself (strategy, objectives etc.)
- To promote the role played by the European Union and the participating Partner States in good cross-border cooperation in the area
- To promote the significance of European Territorial Cooperation on the "way" to European integration
- To promote the visibility of the Projects funded by the Programme

In terms of Transparency

- To ensure targeted dissemination of information on specific benefits from Programme participation for different groups of potential applicants, as well as the general public (in order to help them identify how they can benefit from the cross-border cooperation)
- To provide clear, specific and adequate information on Programme rules and procedures to potential project applicants (in order to facilitate participation and quality projects)
- To empower potential project applicants to participate in the Programme (in order to help them acknowledge their role in successful Programme implementation and cross-border cooperation)

Therefore, the communication strategy must do the following:

- Promote the Programme and its results to the general public and all the potential interested parties, taking into account the promotion of equal opportunities and non-discrimination;
- Deliver adequate information about the Programme, its role, impact and aims to the identified target groups;
 - Inform the institutions involved in the implementation of the Programme about their role in information and publicity;
 - Ensure that the potential Final Beneficiaries have complete, valid, and timely information;
 - Inform target groups about the conditions and criteria to be met to access the Programme’s funding:
 - eligibility criteria, either at geographical, juridical and financial level,
 - projects’ planning criteria,
 - project proposals’ assessment criteria,
 - project implementation criteria (either at partnership and financial level),
 - bodies and persons to contact to receive technical info about the CP and projects’ implementation procedures;
- Demonstrate the role of the European Union and the way in which EU resources are spent with transparency;
- Highlight the transversal priorities (sustainability of the development; equal opportunities and non-discrimination; respect of competition rules) set up at EU Level

2.3 Communication SWOT

The communication strategy builds on the CP document, as well as on the analysis of communication performance in the period 2007-2013. The conceptual design of the strategy takes into account also other relevant sources such as the EUSAIR communication strategy etc. These findings translate into the following communication SWOT matrix:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The overall Programme concept breaks down into Specific Objectives which offer concrete communication action fields; ● Recognisable Programme brand; ● Available portfolio of good practices from projects implemented between 2007 and 2013 which can be aligned with the Specific Objectives of the period 2014-2020; ● Support and services of the Joint Secretariat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complex Interreg language: this may prevent newcomers to apply; ● The Programme rationale may still occur too abstract to some potential applicants but also to the broader public and media; ● Difficulties to attract mainstream media; ● Difficulties to massively educate the general public about the merits of cross-border projects;

<p>well-perceived by applicants and project partnerships.;</p>	
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pan-European efforts to increase the visibility and recognisability of Interreg (e.g. Interreg brand harmonisation, European Cooperation Day); • The CP’s result oriented approach offers prospects for more tangible achievements, thus more comprehensible communication; • Active networks in the Greece-Italy area, which can serve as multipliers; • Harmonising internal Programme information flows will help to build the foundation of a good external communication; 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing project communication activities to the Programme and EU requirements due to lack of capacities; • Failure to exploit synergies with communication channels of other Programmes; • On regional level, the role of interreg may be perceived as minor (in comparison with the perceived added value of other available funding instruments)

2.4 Target Groups

The main targeted audiences for the CP’s Communication Strategy in the Programming Period 2014-2020 are the following:

- Potential partners in the framework of the Programme’s actions
- Final Beneficiaries and Lead Partners of approved actions
- Representatives of all the local, regional, and municipal authorities in the eligible areas
- Local, regional, national, European, but also specialized mass-media, which contribute to the promotion of the Programme in the eligible areas
- The general public

2.5 Actions per Target Group

The information that will be provided and the publicity that will be directed towards the various partners will be differentiated based on their separate needs. For example:

Targeted audience	Information/ Message	Action/	Expected result
Potential beneficiaries/ partners in the	Available financing: how much, when, how, for what	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widespread dissemination of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation and submission of proposals from all

<p>framework of the Programme <i>National, regional and local authorities</i></p>	<p>purpose, and who can submit an application</p> <p>Information about the Programme: its nature, goals, procedures, benefits, and the expected results</p>	<p>Programme with timely and valid information for the immediate utilization of the financing opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and detailed information about the financing opportunities, the procedures, and the conditions of eligibility • The criteria for selecting the operations to be supported • Timely and complete information about the accreditation procedures • Information about the future observation of publicity rules after financing is ensured • 	<p>the eligible areas for the Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high level of quality proposals that are compatible with the priorities of the Programme • Effective dissemination of the resources of the Programme to the appropriate actions
<p>Final Beneficiaries, Lead Partners and Partners of approved actions. (The Final Beneficiaries may vary according to the nature of the action on each</p>	<p>Information about the Programme: its nature, goals, procedures, benefits, and the expected results</p> <p>How an action is managed in the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on the compliance with the requirement of publicity rules and regulations and their obligation for informing the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation and creation of a climate of healthy competition for the highlighting of good practices • Complete understanding of

<p>occasion) <i>Regional and local authorities</i> <i>Development authorities at the regional and the local level, which are able to manage public funds</i></p>	<p>framework of the Programme How results are publicized Reinforcement of the expected results through coordination with similar actions Reinforcement of the expected results through the recognized good practices of the previous period</p>	<p>public on the aim of the operations and ERDF support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, detailed, and continuous information and support concerning the obligations and rights that result from the securing of financing • 	<p>the Programme and effective implementation of the actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of information about the results of the Programme to other partners as well • Capitalizing on the results of the Programme
<p>Other entities (Non-governmental Organizations, institutes, universities, professional associations, chambers, economic and social partners, etc.)</p>	<p>Available financing: how much, when, how, for what purpose, and who can submit an application Information about the Programme: its nature, goals, procedures, benefits, and the expected results Benefits from cross-border cooperation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring information and sensitization of the entities, local society, and the responsible entities according to the occasion • Ensuring complementarity and synergy for information • Utilization of the range and subject matter for which the entities and the partners are responsible for the creation of networks and strategic cooperation • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of proposals from all the eligible areas for the Programme • A high level of proposals that are compatible with the priorities of the Programme • Complete understanding of the Programme and effective implementation of the actions • Dissemination of information about the results of the Programme to other partners as well
<p>The general public</p>	<p>Benefits from cross-border cooperation and expected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrenchment of the message of joint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of the public's knowledge of the Programme

	<p>results</p> <p>Highlighting of the role of the European Union</p>	<p>contribution by the European Union and the Partner States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of the Programme, its axes, its vision, and its goals • Promotion of the results and benefits of the implementation of the Programme through the highlighting of good practices • Promotion of the social and economic impact of the Programme • 	<p>and support for the initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency concerning the management of resources of the European Union
<p>Mass-media</p> <p><i>Local, regional, national, pan-European, and specialized</i></p> <p><i>Press, radio, television, and electronic media</i></p>	<p>Information about the Programme: its nature, goals, procedures, the resources available, how they are managed, the actions taken for informing the target groups, etc.</p> <p>Which are the approved projects, who is implementing them, and where</p> <p>The benefits and expected results of the Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision to the mass-media of interesting news about the Programme • Participation of the mass-media in events and actions related to the Programme • Ensuring precision, clarity, and reliability concerning the information related to the Programme • Categorization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of the results from the implementation of the Programme. • Support for the initiative • Transparency concerning the management of resources of the European Union

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• of news items and promotion with the appropriate media (at the local or national level)	
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3. Communication strategy

3.1 Introduction

The overall communication strategy will privilege an integrated, multimedia and transversal approach, capable of ensuring high visibility to the Programme, strengthening consensus on EU policies and becoming a development tool in the involved territories.

It will meet the following criteria:

- personalized communication for each target group, obtained through tailor-made tools and activities;
- coherent, integrated and synergic actions with concrete and positive fall-out on the territory;
- easy, effective, transparent language aimed to inform and at the same time "bridge the gap" among EU Institutions and citizens;
- key-messages that take into account differences in language, culture, religion, society, etc, as well as the principle of non-discrimination.
- active confrontation with the stakeholders through methods of participated planning;
- widespread and capillary diffusion through traditional and innovative channels;
- transversal approach (public relations, press office) aimed to inform public opinion of the positive contributions of the European Union.

3.2 Indicative strategic choices

In order to fulfil the goals of the communication strategy five different indicative strategic choices are available.

a) Activation of the beneficiaries for the acceleration of the implementation of the CP

The role of the beneficiary is important for the implementation of the Programme, because it also operates as a multiplier of information. By entrenching the beneficiary at the heart of the system, the greatest possible diffusion of information to the general public is ensured, as well as the greater effectiveness of the Programme's implementation.

b) Ensuring the continuity, uniformity, and simplicity of communication at all the stages of the Programme and for every targeted audience

Previous experience has proven that for effective communication, the use of simple messages free of excessive information about the jointly financed projects is necessary in order for them to be understandable and to encourage participation by citizens. Information will be continuous and stable for all the stages of every project, from its announcement to its evolution and completion.

c) The operation of networks of cooperating entities in order to maximize results in terms of communication.

Staff members of the Managing Authority, the Joint Secretariat, and the Partner States are cooperating with the following:

- social or economic partners in order to inform the target audience about the calls, announcements, eligibility criteria, etc.
- existing networks in the public administration, Universities, and Professional Associations, utilizing the communication and information structures that are already functioning,
- those in charge of publicity among the beneficiaries, with the goal of optimal coordination of the beneficiaries' publicity obligations and the uniformity of messages,
- journalists at local and regional mass-media in order to ensure the diffusion of information to the shapers of public opinion.

The networks of cooperating entities can ensure the widespread dissemination of information, the avoiding of overlaps, and the maximization of the result in terms of communication, as well as economies of scale.

d) The promotion of existing examples of participation in the CP

By presenting specific examples, either from the previous Programming Period, or from the current one, both transparency and the encouragement of participation are achieved. The targeted audience, knowing that there are members of local society or some entrepreneurial sectors or the world of education who have already benefited from such Programmes, will express an interest in learning more or participating in the jointly financed Programmes.

All the actions that are included in the communication plan are interlinked and follow a single visual identity.

e) Pursuing the use of alternative and innovative ideas as measures for an approach, information, and publicity

The use of alternative approaches and innovative ideas in the selection of measures, on a case by case basis and wherever it is feasible, may strengthen the public's interest and consequently reinforce the effectiveness of the Strategy.

3.3 Content of the Communication Strategy

The information and communication measures of the Communication Strategy are expected to cover the entire duration of the CP and to be differentiated for each targeted audience.

The combination of different means of and tools for communication is also necessary in order to ensure the most effective communication possible.

The Communication Strategy shall include all the obligatory measures that the Managing Authority must take in accordance with Regulation (EC) no. 1303/2013.

The official language of the Communication Strategy is English. However, the communication toll/ events/ materials must be developed also in the languages of the Partner States, in order to facilitate the recipient of the information in the population of Programme Area.

3.4 Implementation Stages for Communication

A sequence of communication stages is foreseen concerning the implementation of the Communication Strategy of the Programme. Each stage constitutes a continuation, complement, and specialized definition of the previous stage. There are three main stages of communication:

First Stage: General information about the Cooperation Programme and its actions, inaugural event

The first stage concerns the development "vision" for the eligible areas of the Programme, the overall intervention within the boundaries of the eligible area. Its goal is the creation of recognition, dignity, and reliability concerning the intervention, the participation of the European Union in this intervention, as well as informing potential beneficiaries about the financing opportunities of the CP. At this level, the main message that will be followed by all communication and will constitute its identity is being formed.

During the first stage of communication, the objective is to inform the target audiences about the CP and the basic content (general objectives, axes, strategic projects, expected results). During this stage, which begins after the approval of the Programme by the European Commission, the Managing Authority takes care to spread the information in a simple and understandable way about the following:

- Implementation of the Launching Event
- Hoisting of the flag of the European Union at the premises of the Managing Authority
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- Publication of the approved Cooperation Programme
- Drafting, publication and distribution (in events, Info-Days, via email and regular mail etc.) of a synopsis of the CP, which will constitute the informational guide with basic knowledge about both the Programme and the contribution of the funds of the European Union

- Intensive informing of potential beneficiaries, through the internet, social media and Info Days (after the publication of the Calls for Project Proposals)
- Informational correspondence, e-mails, wide use of the internet to spread information
- Informational meetings, single day conferences, and working meetings, press conferences, etc.
- Publication of the list of beneficiaries and operations (upon the approval of Projects). The list will be presented in spreadsheet data format, so that it will be easily downloaded click.

Second Stage: Creation of an opinion about the Programme and its actions among the various target audiences, easy access to particular actions and to the opportunities that it offers, creation of a disposition to participate in the financing opportunities

The second stage of communication concerns the general goals of the CP, the specific goals, and the thematic units that contribute to these goals, as well as the contribution of the European Union to the implementation of these actions. The goal is to inform the public about how the development "vision" for the eligible areas is translated into goals and actions, and therefore, to reinforce the reliability that was created in the first stage of communication and to document the main message of communication. In addition, the second stage of communication concerns the provision of specialized information and the creation of "user" publicity for the potential beneficiaries in order to reinforce the pace of implementation of the CP.

During the second stage of communication, the objective is to motivate the target audiences, either in order for them to participate in the Programme or in order to function as multipliers of information. This stage is characterized by the provision of more specialized knowledge about the content and the evolution of the Programme, the criteria and the procedures for the integration of actions, the management and monitoring of the actions of the Programme, with the goal of preparing and activating the potential beneficiaries, in order for them to have access to the financing opportunities of the Programme. In addition, a goal of the present stage is to inform the general public in a simple and understandable way about the evolution of the Programme's interventions as well. During this stage, the Managing Authority takes care of the following:

- The implementation of annual events (i.e. participation in the European Cooperation Day, publication of catalogues of approved Projects, participation in pan-European information campaigns etc.)
- The publication of a list of beneficiaries and operations. The list will be presented in spreadsheet data format, so that it will be easily downloaded click.
- The hoisting of the flag of the European Union at the MA premises
- Widespread use of the Internet for the information of stakeholders and the general public

- The publication and distribution of special informational guides (e.g. information and publicity guide for project partners about their responsibilities)
- The organization of thematic meetings and seminars with the potential beneficiaries and the beneficiaries
- The utilization of the available information networks in order to approach potential beneficiaries i.e. chambers, umbrella organisations, KEEP, other Interreg Programmes etc.
- The presentation of good examples and good practices
- Special informational bulletins and periodic informational printed matter
- Periodic press conferences

Third Stage: Dissemination of the results and benefits achieved, highlighting of Good Practices

At the third stage of communication, the results of the implementation of the Programme's actions and the role that the European Union played in the achievement of its goals are promoted. At this stage, communication focuses on the reinforcement and completion of the image that was created in the two previous stages, connecting the development "vision" and the general goals with the "positive" results from implementation. In addition, one goal is to motivate the beneficiaries to highlight their Good Practices, as well as to support them in order to increase the pace of implementation.

During the third stage of communication, the objective is to demonstrate to the general public that the goals of intervention in the eligible areas have been implemented and that the development "vision" is a reality. The actions that the Managing Authority undertakes during the present stage have as their goal to promote the results and benefits that result from the completion of the actions and the strategic projects of the Programme, with emphasis on the highlighting of good practices. Some of the means that are used are the following:

- The implementation of annual events (i.e. participation in the European Cooperation Day, publication of catalogues of approved Projects, participation in pan-European information campaigns etc.)
- The publication of a list of beneficiaries and operations. The list will be presented in spreadsheet data format, so that it will be easily downloaded click.
- The hoisting of the flag of the European Union at the MA premises
- Widespread use of the Internet for the information of stakeholders and the general public
- The promotion of good examples and good practices
- The utilization of the mass media (result campaigns)

The annual information on communication activities to the MC, envisaged in the Regulations (Art. 116, Regulation EC 1303/2013), shall propose additional measures such as:

- Programme consultations/ interactive consultation tools/ regional info days;
- Lead Partner or other training seminars;
- cooperation activities with stakeholders;
- contribution to external events;
- gamification concepts (e.g. competitions) and other public campaigns (In marketing, the term gamification refers to a concept which applies game principles in non-game contexts);
- social media and viral activities;
- editorial contributions and media relations;
- promotional/ exhibition materials;
- info materials,

which will support the efforts to reach newcomers and to stimulate exploitation of project results, thus increasing the prospects of impact and recognition of the EU's cohesion policy. The measures defined in the annual action plans shall take into account the targeting phases relevant for the respective year.

3.5 Means of communication

Each target group determines the message to be communicated and the measure to be used to reach it. In most cases a combination of measures is used to communicate with a given target group.

All means of communication will have a common corporate identity that needs to be elaborated in the framework of the European Commission's and INTERACT's joint branding initiative. The main means of communication are the following:

- Key documents
- Publications
- Internet homepage
- Events
- Press and electronic media coverage
- Programme templates

All the above-mentioned means of communication should be fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

3.5.1 Key documents

The CP document forms the basis for cross border cooperation in Greece and Italy from 2014 to 2020. It describes the eligible area, outlines priorities and areas of interventions, designates competent authorities and provides information on Programme and project implementation as well as financial implementation and control. In order to facilitate the communication of the main text of the Programme, summaries may be provided to

reinforce the understanding around this key document and the communication action foreseen around the key documents.

Other official documents

Other official documents complement the CP, by giving additional, more detailed information on areas of interventions, objectives, expected outputs and results as well as on implementing provisions to be applied by competent authorities and final beneficiaries.

3.5.2 Publications

Leaflets

Leaflets contain general brief information about the Programme. The target groups of leaflets are the potential applicants, the general public, national, regional and local public authorities and development agencies, trade and professional bodies, economic and social partners, non-governmental organisations (NGO's), organisations representing business, information centres on Europe as well as Commission representations in the participating Partner States and educational institutions. They are aimed at encouraging a wide participation in the Programme as well as helping to spread information about the Programme. The content of flyers will be developed by the Joint Secretariat in cooperation with partners, assisted by an external PR company selected through an open call.

Brochures

Brochures contain more detailed information on the Programme. They may have the form of a catalogue, which give a comprehensive survey of a given programme period with a handful of projects summarising the activities, the results and the outcomes. They are targeted at applicants and at institutions involved in programming and implementation as well as national, regional and local public authorities and development agencies, trade and professional bodies, economic and social partners, non-governmental organisations (NGO's), organisations representing business, information centres on Europe as well as Commission representations in the participating Member States, educational institutions and project promoters.

Specific publications

Specific publications include materials for seminars and conferences like presentations and hand-outs. These are prepared by the JS, the MA or the National Authorities taking into account to meet the needs of information at each occasion.

3.5.3 Internet homepage

A Programme level homepage (www.greece-italy.eu) part of a single website or portal will be created, which will be linked to national and regional level homepages, thus creating a network. The homepage is the key source of up-to-date information: it describes the legislative/ regulatory framework, refers to the CP and any related public consultation processes, outlines priorities and areas of interventions, underlines information and communication measures and indicates necessary contact details.

The home page will provide information to potential beneficiaries regarding the role of ERDF, the EU funding opportunities (e.g. calls for project proposals and relevant documentation), important documentation available as downloads regarding all aspect of project implementation (including electronic templates to help beneficiaries respect the EU visibility requirements), questions and answers, information on the approved Projects in a specifically designed pages per Project, etc. An updated list with operations will be published, containing their title, name of beneficiary, operation summary, start and end date, total eligible expenditure, etc. It will also contain sections of news, events, a partner forum and a list of links to useful websites, creating a network.

Puglia Region shall dedicate a special section of its www.europuglia.it website to the "Greece-Italy 2014-2020" Cooperation Programme, providing additional practical information and concrete assistance to potential beneficiaries, Project partners and first level controllers for the verification of the incurred expenditures. It may also ensure dissemination and capitalisation of results and outputs at project and Programme level.

Dedicated sections or links to the Programme website may be developed in the existing websites of the participating Regions in the Programme.

It should be underlined that the www.greece-italy.eu website is the only official source of information.

The homepage shall be conformed to the "WCAG, 2.0, Level AA" standards, in order to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities

3.5.4 Information events

In order to develop public relations, strengthen personal relations and provide valuable information, events will be organised to market the Programme to potential applicants and to the wider public. Proper information and partner search facilities are provided to potential applicants by these opportunities. Events will be organised by the JS in co-operation with partner institutions with the help of external experts if necessary.

Information days and partner search forums

At the launching of the Cooperation Programme a major information activity has been organised by the Managing Authority in co-operation with the National Authorities to publicise the Programme and to highlight the role of the EU. The event was organised in Thessaloniki on 22-23 June 2015 with the participation of more than 1,000 participants, representing more than 700 stakeholder entities. General information on the CP's objectives, priorities and areas of intervention was provided. Additionally, a preliminary workshop, in order to identify the stakeholders' requirements in terms of the anticipated 1st Call for Project Proposals was also held. Similar events will also be organised in all the eligible areas upon the approval of the Programme and the publication of the 1st Call.

In addition a launching event was also held in Bari on 16th December 2015, highlighting the results of the "Greece-Italy 2007-2013" Programme and presenting the challenges

of the new Cooperation Programme in the 2014-2020 Period. More than 500 people had the opportunity to be informed on the developmental opportunities offered by the CP.

Upon the publication of the Calls for Project Proposals Info Days and partner search forums will be organised to help potential applicants to develop their projects and to search for partners. Information days and partner search forums will be organised by the JS in co-operation with the Managing Authority and the National Authorities. These occasions will give way to discuss project ideas, management and implementation issues, to meet potential applicants and to facilitate partner search. These events are organized to cover areas that participate in the Programme. All events shall be live-streamed and promoted on Twitter through thematic hashtags.

Conferences, seminars, webinars and other activities

Meetings of actors involved in the Programme as well as proper information flow to potential applicants/ final beneficiaries and to the general public are ensured by means of conferences and seminars held in the framework of the Programme. Potential applicants/final beneficiaries, national, regional and local public authorities, development agencies, trade and professional bodies, economic and social partners, non-governmental organisations (NGO's), organisations representing business, information centres on Europe as well as Commission representations in the participating Partner States, educational institutions and project promoters, institutions involved in programming and implementation, politicians and representatives of the media will form the target audience of these events.

Thematic Web-based seminars (webinars) may also be organized. Webinar are presentations, lectures, workshops or seminars that are transmitted over the Web using video conferencing software. A key feature of a Webinar is its interactive elements: the ability to give, receive and discuss information in real-time. Using Webinar software participants can share audio, documents and applications with webinar attendees, allowing interaction between the presenter and the audience.

Conferences and other activities can be organised on a yearly basis to present and assess the achievements of the Programme. All events shall be live-streamed and promoted on Twitter through thematic hashtags.

Europe Day

One week starting 9 May, the flag of the European Union will be flying in front of the premises of the Managing Authority in order to highlight the role of the Community in the funding of the Programme.

European Cooperation Day

European Cooperation Day (EC Day) is a European campaign, organized each year in mid-September, under the auspices of the European Commission, which highlights the role of cooperation across borders in the European Union and with its neighbours –a

celebration of all the benefits European Territorial Cooperation brings to people across Europe. It is an opportunity to discover all the improvements local cooperation initiatives brings to various aspects of daily life; from creating jobs, to improving health care services, transport, energy and environmental protection.

3.5.5 Coverage by the Media

Press releases/ Publicity

The goal of the Managing Authority / JS is to co-operate with selected Media that are thematically closed to the Programme and sends press releases in order to inform them about different issues of the Programme (e.g. events) and create positive publicity. Moreover, they collect the relevant published articles (collection of press clippings and data from print media publications and online information sources).

Press review shall be conducted in both countries by the JS.

Advertisements

Calls and other publications, concerning mainly Programme's implementation, will be made in nationwide and regional newspapers / selected magazines, creating transparency requirements for the CP to the potential beneficiaries and the general public.

3.5.6 Social Responsibility Activities

The Cooperation Programme's long-term communication goals may be also achieved through intense, targeted social responsibility activities helping to address environmental and social issues. In that sense, social responsibility in communication includes new responses (products, services and models) to social needs that are developed in order to deliver better social outcomes, creating new social relations or cooperation. Actions may be targeted in the fields of public services, culture and leisure, health etc. The CP, recognizing the importance of being socially and environmentally conscious, through different communication activities, strives to inspire and create opportunities for advancement by making improvements to daily life in its eligible area.

3.5.7 Social media

Social media represents low-cost tools that are used to combine technology and social interaction with the use of words. These tools are typically internet or mobile based. Social media shall give the Programme a voice and a way to communicate with peers, potential beneficiaries and the general public. It personalizes the "brand" and helps to spread the Programme's message in a relaxed and conversational way. It should be noted that the MA already manages a Twitter account (https://twitter.com/etc_interreg) and a Youtube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/GrINTERREG>), regularly spreading information about the Greece-Italy programme. The Programme's presence in other social platforms (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram etc.) may also be decided, if it helps achieve the communication goals.

Note: It must be noted that, in any case, the communication tools described are indicative and not obligatory. The communication tools that will be selected are connected with the corresponding indicators, described in point 6 of this “Communication Strategy” and their use depends on the budget available.

Material and target audiences

The table below displays indicative/ suggested material. It is noted that the official language of the Programme is English; however, the production of the material in the official languages of all Partner States is possible in order to facilitate the recipient of the information.

Printed material	Audience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data reports (fact sheets) • Informational leaflets about the Programme, as well as for each Measure • Annual list of all the approved projects • Annual action report leaflet • Banners 	Local and regional authorities, potential beneficiaries, mass media, general public
Audio-visual material	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion film • Advertising spots for radio and television and internet (e.g. banners) 	Local and regional authorities, potential beneficiaries, mass media, general public
Electronic material	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logos 	Potential beneficiaries
Marketing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pens and pencils • Ecological bags • USB sticks • Shirts • Cards • Notebooks • Calendars 	Potential beneficiaries, European and national bodies, mass media, general public

3.6 Technical characteristics of information and communication measures

All information and communication measures aimed at beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries and the public shall include at least the following:

- the emblem of the European Union, in accordance with the graphic standards set out by the European Commission, and reference to the European Union;
- reference to the ERDF: 'European Regional Development Fund';
- reference to the CP's logo, already developed through the European Commission's and INTERACT's joint branding initiative.

The Managing Authority in cooperation with JS will issue detailed manuals aimed at disseminating information on the proper usage of the communication means by the final beneficiaries.

3.7 Schedule for the Implementation of Communication Actions

The communication timing covers the period 2015-2023, thus representing the actual implementation period of the CP.

Taking into consideration that the communication tools are indicative, the breakdown of tools to be used per "Implementation Stage" shall be described in the annual information on communication activities, which will be prepared by the MA, with the assistance of the JS, and submitted to the Monitoring Committee. The selected tools and action may vary, depending on the actual Programme's implementation and the communication implementation stage.

4. Responsibilities

The Communication Strategy will be implemented under the responsibility of the Managing Authority/ Joint Secretariat. The implementation of the measures at Programme level will be carried out by the Managing Authority and the JS, especially the Communication Officer, assisted by the Antenna Office, Info Points and the regional authorities at project level, providing necessary information to potential applicants.

The contact persons responsible for information and publicity designated by the Managing Authority is:

Name: Themistoklis Chatzikonstantinou

Organisation: Managing Authority of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes, Hellenic Ministry of Economy, Development & Tourism

Postal address: Leof. Georgikis Scholis 65, 570 01, Thessaloniki, Greece

Telephone: +30 2310 469630 (Th. Chatzikonstantinou)

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The Programme has to have a designated communication officer (Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013), responsible for the information and publicity at Programme level (part of the JS staff), following the appropriate procedure in accordance with the legislative / regulatory framework. The Joint Secretariat has the following indicative tasks in co-operation with the Managing Authority and the National Authorities:

- to develop, update, implement and evaluate a strategy for information and publicity and to develop an overall system for public relations connected to the Programme, in cooperation with the Communication Managers of the MA and Puglia region, the Antenna and the Info Contact Points;
- to make sure that a common corporate identity for the Programme will be used in all means of communication and ensure the visibility of the Programme towards various groups in a targeted and thematic approach, in the media and with relevant institutions across the cooperation area;
- to develop informational material for dissemination;
- to assist the preparation of presentations, other specific publications and relevant material to be used in public events;
- to maintain and update the Programme's internet home page and social media;
- to organise information events with partners from the Programme area;
- to maintain necessary public relations with the media;
- to be responsive to any request of information;
- to disseminate the best practices in terms of information and publicity;
- to maintain constant information on committed funds, for further dissemination and project development;

- to ensure that all interested stakeholders have access to the Programme documents, news and announcements;
- to ensure both internal and external accessibility of information related to the development and results of the Programme and its projects;
- to support final beneficiaries in the dissemination of information about their projects (strategic support during the development and implementation of project communications plans, as well as technical support for the use of Programme communication tools, social networks etc.);
- to contribute in drafting of annual and final implementation reports
- to make sure that the actions of the Communication Strategy are accessible for persons with disabilities.

5. Indicative budget

The Communication Strategy includes a basic estimation of the budget allocated to information and publicity. For the exact estimation of the budget, the previous experience in conducting communication campaigns during the previous programming period, as well as the specific needs of the Cooperation Programme are going to be taken into account.

These joint information and publicity measures will be financed through the technical assistance budget in the indicative amount of 1,000,000 € (to be decided).

The following table presents and indicative budget break-down by group of communication actions.

Indicative Budget Break-down	
Communication action	Indicative budget
Events (Launching Event, Info Days, seminars, press conferences etc.)	(30%)
Mass media (TV, radio, newspapers etc)	(40%)
ICT (Internet, web page, etc.)	(8%)
Other (marketing material, publications etc)	(22%) €
Total: To be decided

6. Implementation Procedures

The implementation of the Communication Strategy will be effectively managed by drawing up annual Action Plans for Communication, yearly detailing activities, tools and their schedules.

The annual Action Plans for Communication will identify the main activities and tools according to the ETCP "Interreg V-A Greece-Italy" Programming phases, and related communication needs and strategy.

The annual Action Plans for Communication will have the necessary level of detail for ensuring the optimised management of the present Communication Strategy and allowing monitoring and evaluation activities.

According to specific and practical needs, the implementation of some communication activities and tools might be outsourced, in the respect of the European principles transparency and respect of the free competition market rules.

The Managing Authority will implement the administrative procedures needed for outsourcing both activities and tools.

6.1 Monitoring and Reporting of the Communication Strategy

According to the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, the Managing Authority shall inform the Monitoring Committee for each operational Programme of the following:

- the Communication Strategy and progress in its implementation;
- information and publicity measures to be carried out;
- the means of communication used.

The Managing Authority shall provide the Monitoring Committee with examples of such measures, as well with information on the accessible means for the information of persons with disabilities, when required.

Moreover, the Annual Reports and the Final Report on implementation of an Operational Programme shall include:

- examples of information and publicity measures for the Operational Programme carried out when implementing the Communication Strategy;
- the specific arrangements for the information and publicity measures, including, where applicable, the electronic address at which such data may be found;
- the content of any major amendments to the Communication Strategy.

6.2 Evaluation of the information and publicity measures

The Managing Authority evaluates the information and publicity actions that are expected to be organized in the framework of the Programme. The evaluation of these actions takes place based on the contribution of the actions to the achievement of the

goals of the Communication Strategy and in accordance with qualitative and quantitative objectives according to the nature of the actions.

In particular, indicative indicators for evaluation are broken down into the following:

Output Indicators, which record publicity actions such as:

Indicator	Indicative target value
Type and number of different productions/ printed material	At least 1 per Call for Proposals in 1,500 copies each
Number of Programme annual events	9
Number of events (info-days, conferences, seminars, etc.) for potential beneficiaries and Project Partners	15
Number of participants per event for for potential beneficiaries and Project Partners	150
Number of articles, events, etc., published on the internet	>500
Website statistics	25,000 hits

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Result/ outcome Indicators, which record the result of the actions for each target audience, such as:

- Level of awareness about the Programme and its funding opportunities
- Level of satisfaction for spreading information on the Programme
- Level of positive perception of the Programme's benefits
- Level of awareness of the projects outputs and results
- Level of perception of the transparency of processes

In order to better assess the results from the implementation of the Communication Strategy, qualitative field research may be conducted. Indicatively:

- Evaluation sheets / questionnaires can be given to participants in order to evaluate the success of an event

- Specifically designed field research can be organised on the opinion and knowledge of specific target groups before and after specific communication actions.

Measurement methodology

In order to better assess the results from the implementation of the Communication Strategy, qualitative field research (surveys with applicants, projects, website surveys) may be conducted. For instance:

Via questionnaires on the opinion of the participants at events and/ or

Via specifically designed field research on the opinion and knowledge of specific target groups before and after specific communication actions.

7. Equality between men and women and non-discrimination

The Member States will ensure -in line with article 7 of the Regulation (EC) No 1303/2013- that equality between men and women and the integration of the gender perspective is promoted during the various stages of implementation of the Funds and any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation will be avoided.

The Programme's web site to be established will conform to the "WCAG, 2.0, Level AA" standard, in order to ensure that it will not be impossible for some people to access its content.

In case of organising publicity events –information session, seminars, workshops, and conferences– the venue of the event will be chosen in a way that direct access to people in wheelchairs will be possible, in order to enable their participation. In some cases special services may be needed to enable people with disabilities to access to information. For example deaf people may require interpretation, while blind or physically handicapped people may require personal assistance during events. The invitation for these events will include a question whether the participant needs any assistance and if yes, what kind of. Assistance to disabled people during information events will be organised and such support services will be financed under the TA budget.