

**INTERREG V-A
ITALY - SLOVENIA
2014-2020**

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COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Approved by the MC - 20.05.2016

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CO	Communication Objective
CP	Cooperation Programme
EC	European Commission
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESCO	Energy Service Company
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
FVG	Friuli Venezia Giulia Region
IB	Intermediate Body
ITA	Italy
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investment
JS	Joint Secretariat
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
NGO	Non-governmental Institution
PA	Priority Axis
Programme	Interreg V-A Italy - Slovenia 2014-2020
Programme 07-13	Cross-border Cooperation Programme Italy - Slovenia 2007-2013
RTOs	Research and Technology Organizations
SLO	Slovenia
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SO	Specific Objective
TA	Technical Assistance
TF	Task Force
VEN	Veneto Region
VI	Visual Identity

CHAPTER 1 - CONTEXT

1.1. Introduction

The Interreg V-A Italy-Slovenia programme (hereinafter “Programme”) is designed to contribute to the achievement of the strategic goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The overall objective of the Programme is to “promote innovation, sustainability and cross-border governance to create a more competitive, cohesive and livable area”

The actions planned within this Communication Strategy will aim to fulfil the Programme 5 Priorities Axes to answer to the existent needs and challenges, as illustrated below.



Table 1: Programme overall objective and Priority Axes.

In this framework, this Communication Strategy aims at describing how the Programme will approach communication during the EU funding period 2014-2020. This document will assist the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat, the Monitoring Committee, and, specifically, the project partners/ beneficiaries in taking a coherent approach towards communication.

Communication has gained a vital role in cross-border cooperation programmes throughout the past years. Effective and good communication is the basis of cooperation and it is crucial for programme implementation. In addition, it is a prerequisite for any EU Programme to deliver meaningful results not only to project partners but also to audiences outside the project communities. Communication is thus an integral part of the working procedures at all levels throughout the project and Programme cycles. Communication takes place, for example,

between project partners, between project partners and their audiences outside the project community, between projects and the Programme, between the different Programme authorities and structures.

The present Communication Strategy will focus on increasing the awareness about the Programme, its Priority Axes and financing opportunities, on creating communication tools to assist the beneficiaries, as well as promoting its results and achievements.

This Strategy will outline the global aims and specific objectives of the communication measures, the key target groups and the strategic approach, together with the roles and responsibilities for the information and communication activities, the evaluation criteria, indicators and measures, the financial overview, the timeframe and the necessary administrative support.

1.2 Legal framework

The Cooperation Programme is the defining document to which this Communication Strategy relates. However, as a European initiative, the legal framework provided by the European Union has to be respected as well. When communicating the European Regional Development Fund (hereinafter 'ERDF') and its programmes and projects, the Regulations below lay down specific rules for developing and implementing strategies.

In addition to these, the European Commission and the INTERACT Programme have issued guidance documents, which were also considered when drafting this document.

Unless otherwise provided for in the following legislative acts, the laws and regulations in force shall apply.

1.2.a Common provisions regulation (CPR) No 1303/2013¹

The common provisions regulation defines in Articles 115 to 117 and in Annex XII the general framework for the communication of cohesion policy programmes. With regard to timing, it demands that the Communication Strategy has to be submitted to the MC and ultimately adopted by it no later than six months after the approval of the Programme. The European Commission no longer approves the Strategy. In the following years of Programme implementation, communication work plans and progress reports on implementing the Strategy have to be presented to the MC once a year.

In compliance with Annex XII of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, this Strategy includes:

- Description of the communication approach taken;
- Description of materials that will be made available for people with disabilities;
- Description of how beneficiaries will be supported in their activities;

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013, retrieved from Eur-Lex in April 2015: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013R1303>

- Indicative budget for implementing the Communication Strategy;
- Description of responsibilities for implementing the Communication Strategy;
- Specific information and communication activities, including a website;
- Indication of how the Communication Strategy will be evaluated;
- Description of how results of the previous programme will be used;
- Annual work plans describing planned activities.

1.2.b Implementing regulation (EU) No 821/2014²

The implementing Regulation defines in Chapter 2 and in Annex II the binding technical characteristics of communication activities. Instructions are especially given for creating the EU emblem, how to display the emblem and how to create permanent plaques or temporary billboards.

1.2.c Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014³

The aim of this Regulation is to provide for a European code of conduct in order to support and facilitate Member States in the organisation of partnerships for Partnership Agreements and Programmes supported by the ERDF, the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). These funds now operate under a common framework and are referred to as the ‘European Structural and Investment Funds’ (hereinafter ‘the ESI Funds’).

² Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014 of 28 July 2014, retrieved from Eur-Lex in April 2015: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32014R0821&from=EN>

³ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the ESI Funds: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32014R0240&from=EN>

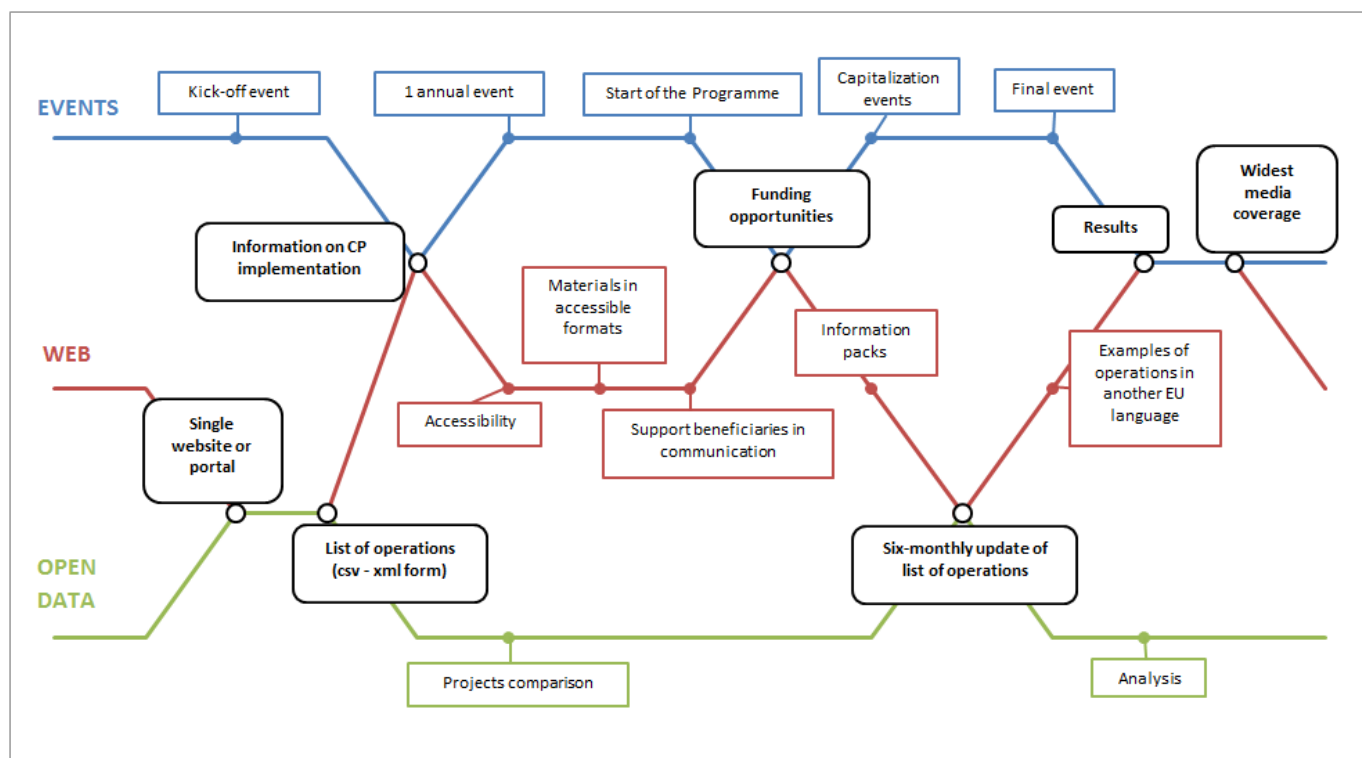


Table 2: Communication map according to Common Provisions Regulation No 1303/2013 and Implementing regulations

1.3 Lessons learnt

When developing the Communication Strategy, experiences made in the previous programming period offer an important source for improvement.

The Cross-border Cooperation Programme Italy - Slovenia 2007-2013, by funding 87 projects with a total value of 128.083.791,59 EUR (TA excluded), has contributed positively to enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of the Programme Area in accordance to the general objective of the Programme.

During the 2007-2013 programming period the MA ensured compliance with Council Regulation (EU) No 1083/2006 (art. 60), Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 (art.15) and Regulation No 1828/2006 (art. 2-10) in terms of information and publicity.

The communication measures carried out during the previous Programme aimed to:

- Promote the visibility of the Programme and increase the awareness of its role by Visual Identity;
- Place more emphasis on the added value of EU involvement;
- Publish the list of beneficiaries showing the amount of public funding allocated to the operations and the name of the project;
- Provide appropriate information on compliance obligations and responsibilities of the beneficiaries concerning the information and publicity measures for the public.

In the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Italy Slovenia 2007-2013 the promotion of the Programme was included in Axis 4. In particular the intervention 4.3 focused on the following:

Promoting the Cooperation Programme and the financed projects by means of activities of dissemination: communication and information activities in line with the Communication Plan.

As described for the previous Interreg, also for the CBC Programme Italy - Slovenia 2007-2013 the Annual Implementation Report (AIR) related to 2007-2013 presented the activities led during the reference year.

The following activities were repeated every year:

- Publication (electronically or in any other way) of the list of the beneficiaries and correlated details;
- Flying of the flag of the EU (for one week, starting from the 9th of May):

In addition to the above mentioned annual activities, the following are the main activities executed during the 2007-2013 programming period:

2008-2010

On 1st October 2008 the kick-off meeting of the Programme 07-13 was held in Gorizia. In the same year the major annual events of the Programme were the participation in two very popular events of the area: Friuli Doc (Udine, Italy) and Barcolana (Trieste, Italy).

In 2009 the MA/JTS organized several info days in both countries: for strategic projects (first phase + second phase), for standard projects and thematic workshops (including those organized for groups of cross-border experts). The major annual events were the participation to well-known events in the area such as Mittelfest (Cividale, Italy - jointly with the Italy-Austria Programme), Friuli Doc, Gusti di Frontiera (Gorizia, Italy) and Barcolana.

Also in 2010 the major annual events were the participation to Friuli Doc and Barcolana. 2010 was also the first year in which the Programme staff became involved in meetings, networks and exchange of experience. Furthermore in 2010 the MA/JTS and the Slovene Info Point organized several thematic workshops in particular regarding public procurement.

2011-2013

Due to the timing concerning the approval of the projects, no major events on the Programme were held in 2011. Nevertheless, several information activities and trainings for beneficiaries, and some info days regarding the land-border call (no. 3/2011) were organized.

In 2012 the JTS activated a Twitter profile @CBCITASLO0713 and an online Calendar of the Programme. The major annual event was the participation to the Barcolana and it was also the year in which INTERACT launched the idea of celebrating a European Cooperation Day (ECDAY). The Programme took part in the campaign with a Twitter debate. The Slovene Info Point, in collaboration with INTERACT, organized a training and exchange seminar regarding the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (GECT) in Nova Gorica.

In 2013 considerable effort was put in the organization - in the framework of the ECDAY - of a joint hiking to M.te Forno/Tromeja (Peč/Ofen) together with Italy-Austria Programme and Slovenia-Austria Programme. The Programme participated also in the Barcolana. 2013 was the year in which the Programme recorded the reduction of informative events and the increase of events regarding dissemination of achievements and capitalisation of project results.

From November 2013 to April 2015 the Programme organized seven different capitalization events in the following fields: tourism; cross-border healthcare; research, development and Innovation; green economy; Isonzo-Soča river basin; transport; promotion and protection of natural and cultural resources.

At the same time, the Slovene Info Point organized specific round tables among Slovene beneficiaries regarding the exchange of experiences and good practices in the field of tourism, spatial development of the Karst and alongside the river Soča/Isonzo. Relevant meetings were dedicated also to water resources management of the river basin Soča/Isonzo.

2014-2015

In 2014 and 2015 the MA/JTS participated in all the final events of the projects. The major annual events in 2014 were the participation to the Giro d'Italia events on the M.te Zoncolan and in Trieste and the participation in the ECDAY campaign with the event Educate for diversity, discover the biodiversity (final events of the projects SIIT and EDUKA).

At the beginning of 2015 the Slovene Info Point organized in Nova Gorica the Water Days of Primorska 2015 (Primorski vodni dnevi 2015), an international seminar regarding the water resources management and absorption of EU funds 2014-2020.

In 2015 the Programme was honoured to organize one of the DG REGIO Road Show events promoting the 25th Interreg Anniversary and the launch of the online consultation regarding the overcoming obstacles in border regions. The event highlighted the results and prospects of cooperation between Italy and Slovenia, presenting some good cross-borders practices. The Programme was promoted also at the Barcolana and its projects were presented during the Interreg Annual Meeting - Celebrating 25 years Interreg and the Open days in Brussels.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The total spent for information activities in the programming period 2007-2013 is € 458.957,19, divided in the following years:

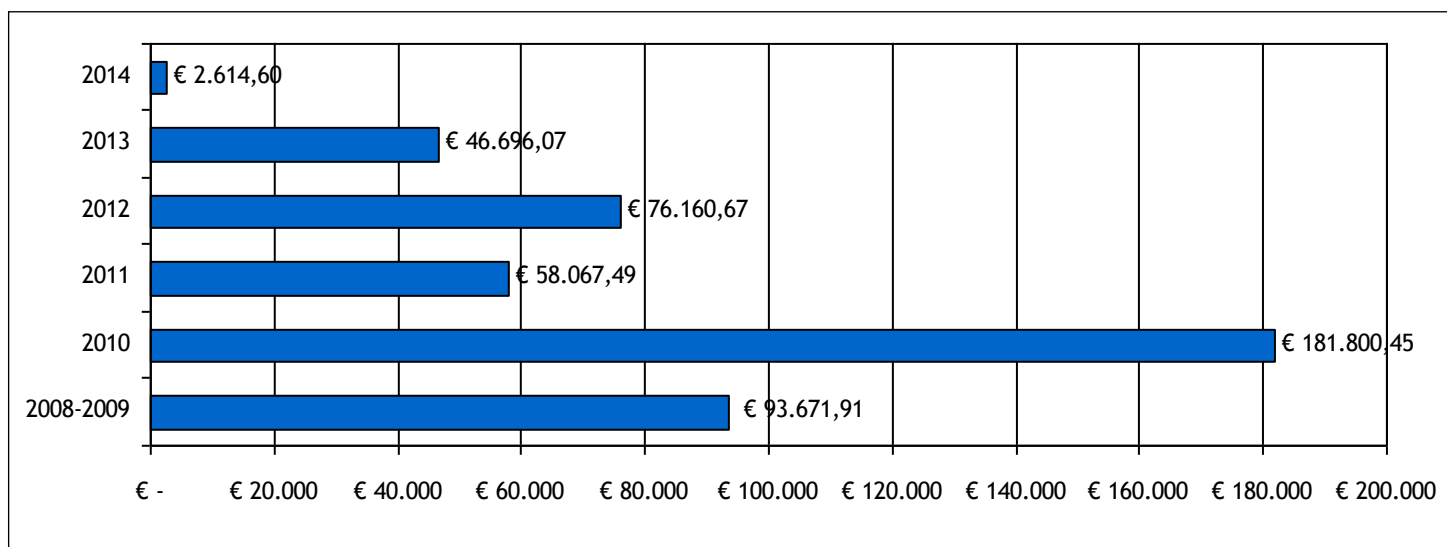


Table 3: Communication costs, 2008-2014

In particular, the types of information activities that required greater expenditures were promotional gadgets and the creation of Visual Identity, as indicated in the graphic below:

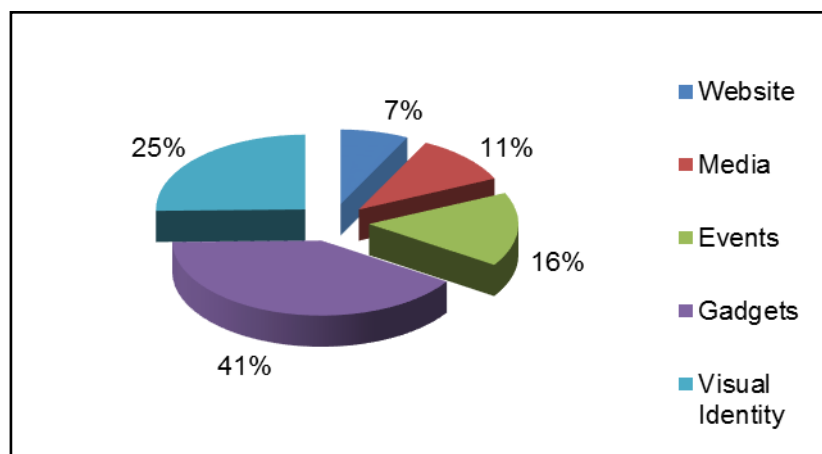


Table 4: Communication tools, 2008-2013

1.3.a 2007-2013 evaluation

According to the results of the survey carried out among the Lead Partners of the 87 projects financed during the 2007-2013 programming period the following data in the field of information and publicity are set out:

- The regular information and the provisions set up by the Programme Visual Identity (VI) in accordance with EU legislations and Programme provisions are among the most satisfactory activities (4,5/5)

88. Has JTS regularly provided indications to ensure respect for the Visual Identity in accordance with EU legislations and the Programme guidelines giving useful information to the creation of promotional material and events for the dissemination of projects?

	VEN	FVG	E-R	ITA	SLO	Average Programme
Average	4,8	4,2	4,5	4,4	4,6	4,5

96 - Have you ensured, through JTS, respect for the information and publicity legislation promoting the adoption by the beneficiaries of informative and communication actions in line with the Visual Identity specially designed?

	VEN	FVG	E-R	ITA	SLO	Average Programme
Average	4,3	4,1	4,0	4,2	4,1	4,2

- Also the Slovenian Info Point had a remarkably good response as regards the support to beneficiaries in the events of information, communication and dissemination, with a score of 4,1/5, considering the Slovenian beneficiaries.

93. Has the Slovenian Info Point given support to the beneficiaries in events of information, communication and dissemination?

	VEN	FVG	E-R	ITA	SLO	Average Programme
Average	3,3	2,9	4,0	3,1	4,1	3,4

According to a survey held among citizens during the event of Barcolana, 1/3 of the interviewees claims to be aware of the Programme. This data is in line with what was stated in the conference “25 years of Interreg” held in Luxembourg on 15 and 16 September 2015. It is noted that among those who are aware of the Programme, the vast majority (60%) knows also its contents, namely what the Programme is about. Among those who are aware of the Programme, the majority has received information in the workplace. Large numbers of people came to know about it through the traditional media (television, radio, newspapers).

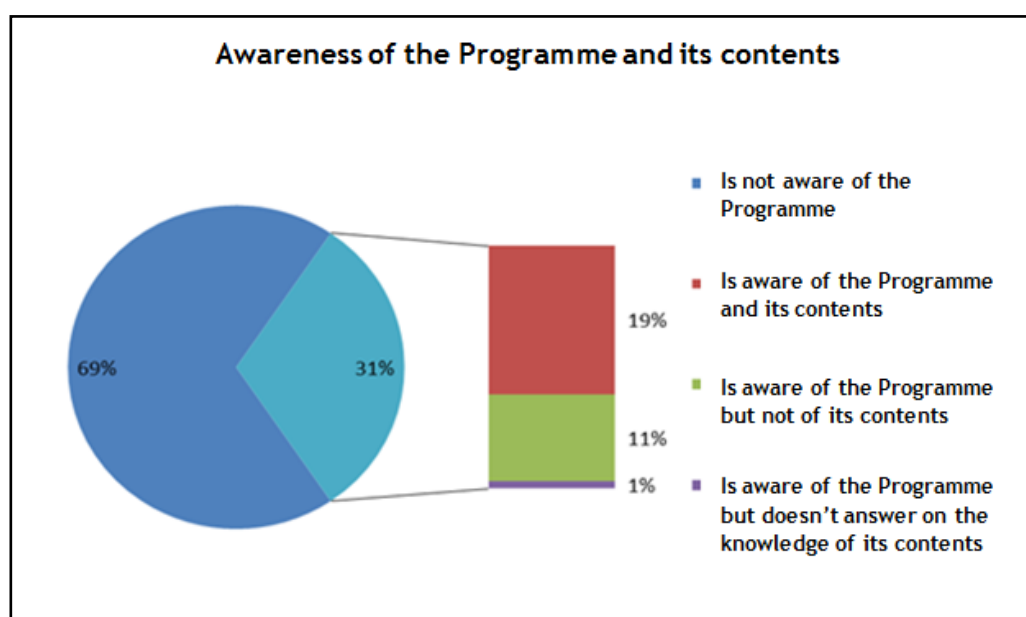
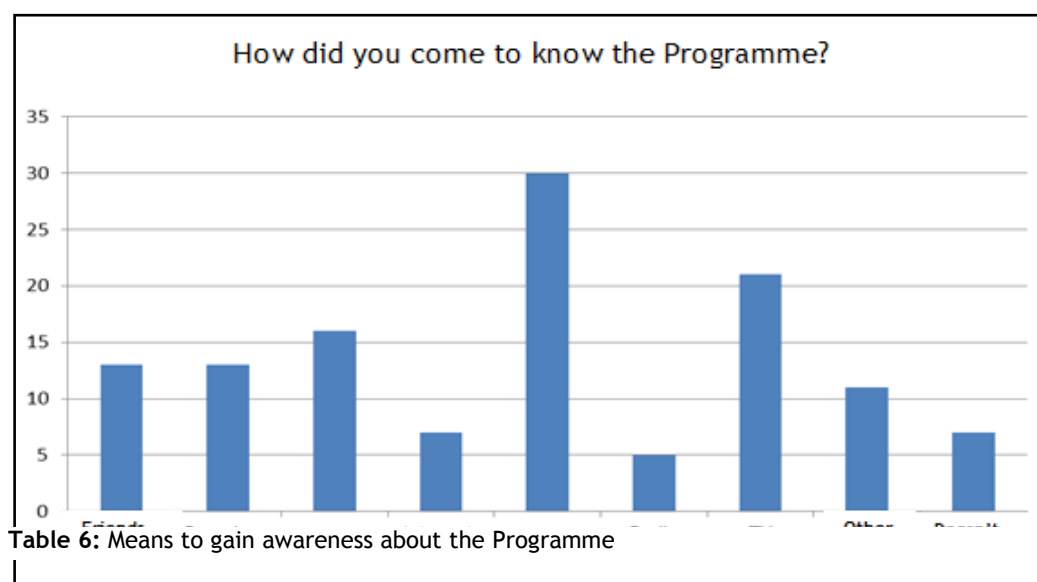


Table 5: Awareness of the Programme and its contents



For the first time in 2015 a specific **Eurobarometer**⁴ survey on border regions has been run. The goal was to measure attitudes of population in the EU border regions about EU funding, neighbouring population and all many other information useful to design more targeted EU interventions in the future. It is important to take into account the “Eurobarometer Italy-Slovenia Programme” results in order to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the previous Communication Plan.

A positive result is given by the first topic of the survey, **“Awareness of EU-funded cross-border cooperation”**. In cross-border region Italy-Slovenia, 43% of respondents have heard about EU-funded CBC activities. This level of awareness is higher than the EU average of 31%. Awareness of CBC is similar on both the Italian and the Slovenian sides of the border.

The results of the survey about **“Obstacles”** require closer consideration and represent a starting point on which the Programme shall work.

Living near the border is seen by 45% of respondents as an opportunity, and for 46% it is considered to have no impact. Only 3% of people responded that living near the border is an obstacle.

85% of respondents identified at least one problem making CBC difficult in their region.

Respondents could select several obstacles. The first obstacle is language, mentioned by 68% of people, which is higher than the EU average of 57%.

With similar frequencies, the next 3 most cited obstacles are:

- legal and administrative differences (50%, whereas EU average is 45%)
- social and economic differences (46%, equal to EU average)
- cultural differences (44%, one of the highest rates, while EU average is 32%).

The least relevant obstacle is accessibility (29%, very close to EU average 30%).

The abovementioned Eurobarometer provided interesting data in order to analyse the strengths, and weaknesses emerged from the 2007-2013 programming period. Therefore the present Communication Strategy aims to enhance the strengths and to overcome the weaknesses set out below.

The following table is a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis which takes into consideration the 2007-2013 experience and relevant documents, such as Annual Implementation Reports and considers the main factors that may influence the Communication Strategy of the Programme.

⁴ Eurobarometer results, Programme Italy-Slovenia, 14/12/2015

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/cross-border/eb_results/italy-slovenia.pdf

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effectiveness of events and information activities (e.g. Info Days); 2. Well-structured Visual Identity Manual and its easy applicability; 3. High engagement of Programme authorities and structures; 4. Full coverage of the Programme-area 5. Active participation of Programme partners and project beneficiaries in communication activities; 6. Clear and accessible language, including bilingualism; 7. Information tools developed in a simple and immediate clear style; 8. Complete, clear and transparent information for project applicants and beneficiaries; 9. Effective budget allocation according to the Programme implementation needs (start-up); 10. High number of project' proposals submitted; 11. Use of Social media (twitter) as a viable visibility tool. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not effective determination of responsibilities and tasks, lack of coordination among Programme authorities and structures; 2. Poor visibility and recognisability of projects; 3. Lack of coordination among MA and institutional bodies; 4. Lack of awareness about the impact of the Programme; 5. Lack of differentiation of information tools according to the target groups; 6. Lack of sharing and synergies with other Interreg programmes; 7. Controversial image of the Programme on the media also due to the difficulties in Programme implementation;
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Already achieved recognisability of the Programme by potential applicants and beneficiaries; 2. Capitalization of 2013-2017 results as incentive for the current programming period; 3. Publication of call for proposals in the early phase of Programme implementation; 4. Shared framework on communication approach among Programme partners; 5. Widespread awareness and use of social media as communication channel. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication gaps among programme authorities and structures negative footprint on the media; 2. Late selection of some Programme structures (JS); 3. Underbudgeting of the Communication Plan; 4. Unclear and limited human resources dedicated to communication activities; 5. Inexperience of potential applicants with EU projects; 6. Message lost; 7. Inappropriate promo materials.

Table 7: SWOT analysis 07-13

The main tangible output of the SWOT analysis above is a matrix presenting the most important Strengths and Weaknesses related to the previous programme, its Opportunities for improvement, and the Threats emerged from its implementation. As preliminary decision-making tool, the SWOT analysis aimed at giving a reasonable overview of major issues that are taken into account when subsequently drawing this Communication Strategy. An effort has been made to exploit Opportunities and overcome Weaknesses and at the same time for the Programme to be more effective in developing its Communication Strategy.

CHAPTER 2 - STRATEGY

This part of the document will describe the overall Programme Communication Strategy, from communication objectives to results expected as well as audiences, approaches, and indicative activities.

As mentioned before, the Programme understands communication as intrinsically linked to Programme management as defined in the Cooperation Programme. The intervention logic below indicates how the communication is integrated in the Programme. Based on specific communication objectives that are in line with the CP content, approaches and activities are defined. These will then trigger changes in key audiences, which directly contribute to reach management results.

2.1 Acceptance of the Brand Harmonisation Initiative

As first step of the Programme Communication Strategy, on April 28, 2014⁵ the Programme Task Force decided to join the INTERACT initiative related to the joint branding.

The Brand Harmonisation Initiative was first discussed in October 2012 by a group of Programme Communication Managers coordinated by INTERACT. Such initiative has been developed by INTERACT in order to create a higher visibility for the Cooperation Programmes in the programming period 2014-2020 and to raise awareness among EU citizens.

Based on INTERACT suggestions, in accordance with the position of the DG REGIO Communication unit and in line with the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014 related to communication, the Programme TF approved on May 5, 2014⁶ the Programme logo (basic version), as set out below:



Figure 1: Basic Programme Logo

Visible reference to ERDF is compulsory but not necessarily as part of the logo. The logo also exists in a version with the text “Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale - Evropski sklad za regionalni razvoj” written below it. This version of the logo has to be chosen if there is no reference to ERDF written anywhere else on the page where the logo is shown.

⁵ 2nd Written Procedure concerning the adhesion to the Brand Harmonisation Initiative promoted by INTERACT, launched on 17th April 2014 and positively concluded on April 28th

⁶ 6th Written Procedure concerning the name of the Programme and the approval of the logo, launched on 24th April 2014 and positively concluded on May 5th



Figure 2: Programme Logo with ERDF

In order to ensure greater visibility and recognisability of the Programme, it is deemed to be indispensable a uniform appearance in all communication activities, both in internal communication among Programme authorities and structures, and in external communication with main target audiences. For this purpose, the JS will draw up the Visual Identity Manual laying down the formal requirements for different layouts. The Programme logo and INTERACT Brand Design Manual shall serve as a basis for the drawing up of the Visual Identity Manual.

The Programme is currently active in the joint branding process and is present on Basecamp, a virtual exchange platform developed by INTERACT in order to facilitate dialogue among communication officers of different programmes.

2.2 Approach

The present communication approach has the following features:

- a) Integrated, as it envisages integration in several respects:
 - Institutional partnership (Programme partners);
 - Social and economic partnership, to increase the diagnosis capacity of the implicit or explicit informative needs of specific groups, to foster a more targeted dissemination of information in order to multiply its extent;
 - Communication activities of other Interreg programmes to ensure an overview of the EU role within the ETC development strategy, but also a complementarity among communication activities;
 - Institutional bodies and their communication activities on the Programme-area;
- b) Accessible, as it will communicate with a clear language, friendly tones and always ensuring transparency regarding information;
- c) Personalised as its activities will be adapted to the different interests of the related target groups;
- d) Engaging, as it is based on the active involvement of the beneficiaries and their associations and networks.

2.3 Communication objectives

The Communication Strategy aims to promote the Programme across the Programme area as well as at EU level, reflecting the role of EU and the added value of Cohesion Policy, attracting projects and ensuring maximum transparency. All communication activities, actions and tools are aimed at supporting the Programme Objectives and to make the Programme well known. This is ensured by setting Communication Objectives that lead to the best possible outcome of Programme implementation.

The Communication Objectives, general (CO) and specific (SO), planned for the 2014-2020 programming period are the following:

Table 8: General (CO) and Specific (SO) objectives of the 14-20 Communication Strategy

CO	SO	Target groups
1. Raise the awareness about the Programme and its funding opportunities to attract high-quality projects	a. Raise the knowledge among potential beneficiaries to attract applicants; b. Involve partners in communication activities to attract potential beneficiaries among their audiences; c. Properly inform potential beneficiaries and help them gain access to funding opportunities.	Potential applicants/beneficiaries
2. Increase the public awareness and the reputation of the Programme	a. Support projects in communication activities to sustain the Programme reputation and its attractiveness; b. Encourage a wide involvement of the relevant partners and contribute to upgrade their capacity building in projects presentation and implementation; c. Disseminate the results of the Programme and its projects; d. Ensure complete transparency and access to Programme information, above all about beneficiaries and projects achievements; e. Promote in the media the knowledge and positive reputation of the added value of the Programme for the Programme-area. f. Promote the best practices and sustainable solutions.	Beneficiaries General Public/citizens Stakeholders Media EU's institution and bodies
3. Support the efficient Programme management and the implementation of the Programme	a. Support the simplification, harmonization and smoothening of administrative procedures to ensure and effectively implement the CP through multiple efforts; b. Support the coordination and collaboration among different institution and partner involved in the Programme; c. Support integrated communication with other programmes.	Internal Institutions Internal public

Table 9: Communication Approach

Programme Objective

Promote innovation, sustainability and cross-border governance to create a more competitive, cohesive and livable area

Communication approaches

Integrated approach, it envisages integration in several respects

Accessible, ensuring transparency

Personalised according to different interests of the related target groups.

Engaging, it is based on the active involvement of the beneficiaries and their associations and networks.

Communication Objectives

C01

Raise the awareness about the Programme and its funding opportunities to attract high-quality projects

C02

Increase the public awareness and the reputation of the Programme

C03

Support the efficient Programme management and the implementation of the Programme

2.4 Main target audiences and key message

With reference to the external audience and according to the Cooperation Programme the main target audiences, from the biggest to the smallest ones, shall be the following:

- **External audience:**
 - General public and end users: those making use of or potentially being impacted by project outputs and Programme results;
 - Influencers/multipliers: national, regional and local authorities, policy makers, external experts, politicians, third sector organizations, trade and industry, educational and research institutions, EU info centres, national network of Fund communicators⁷ in Italy and Slovenia, the press and media, etc.;
 - Others: this may include organizations acting as observers on the Monitoring Committee, other national and international organizations and their projects.
- **Media:** Media are a channel, but also a target in itself and therefore should be a major partner for promoting the Programme and its achievements.
- **Potential target groups / beneficiaries:** organizations that have an interest or have the capacity to participate in the projects financed by the Programme; organizations that participated in previous Programme periods, as well as new organizations.
The underlying scheme defines the potential target groups and possible beneficiaries divided by Priority Axis in accordance with the CP.

Table 10: Potential target groups / Potential beneficiaries for Priority Axes

PA	Potential target groups	Potential beneficiaries
Priority Axis 1	Beside those defined as beneficiaries: - public and private organizations dealing with social and economic innovation enterprises (specially SMEs) - their employees, researchers, students, start-ups/spin-offs - all individuals and/or population groups which are affected by the issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universities, Research and Development Institutions - National, regional and local authorities - Public and private bodies dealing with sustainable growth and social innovation; - Business support organization (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, Regional Development agencies, BICs) - Clusters, intermediaries (agencies, innovation networks, incubators, etc.) - EGTC - Companies, intermediaries (e.g. innovation agencies, innovation networks, technology and innovation parks), RTOs, polytechnics - Private and public institutions - Enterprises, including SMEs - Non-profit actors

⁷ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 Art. 117, point 2:
<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0320:0469:EN:PDF>

Priority Axis 2	<p>Beside those defined as beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - End users of public transport - Tourists - Citizens involved in low-carbon mobility or energy saving actions - People with reduced mobility - People living in less accessible/rural areas - SMEs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National, regional and local authorities - Energy operators, Energy management institutions, ESCO - Public transport operators; Mobility agencies and institutions - Public and private bodies dealing with energy and climate change, environment, natural resources - Regional and Local Development Agencies - Associations and Institutions specialized in people awareness and communication - Non-Profit-Organizations and other professional and civil society associations dealing with energy, climate change, environmental, natural resources - Chambers of Commerce, business collective organizations and associations, private enterprises and clusters - Enterprises, SMEs - Universities, Scientific and Technology Parks, Innovation Incubators
Priority Axis 3	<p>Beside those defined as beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - potential visitors (citizens, tourists, students) - structures providing touristic hospitality or services - SMEs and creative industries - Decision makers, environment department, economic development departments of local, regional and national authorities - Environment agencies - Protected areas management organizations - Land owners and land users - Economic operators - Citizens/ end consumers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National, regional and local authorities - Public and private bodies dealing with environment, natural and cultural heritage - Public and private bodies dealing with environment, biodiversity, waste and water management, natural resources - Developing, territorial marketing and touristic Agencies - Protected areas, natural and cultural sites management organizations - NGOs, Non-Profit-Organizations and other professional and civil society associations dealing with environmental, natural resources, social and cultural issues - Chambers of Commerce, business collective organizations and associations, private enterprises and clusters - Enterprises, SMEs - Universities and Institutions specialized in research, education, training and capacity building - Associations and Institutions specialized in people awareness and communication
Priority Axis 4	<p>Beside those defined as beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Citizens and companies as producers of waste - Local community residents in areas prone to disruption of water and hydro-geological risk - Local communities concentrated in areas presenting high urbanization level - Companies, enterprises/SMEs, operating in the waste and water cycle and energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy Makers and Public Managers, Public Training providers - National, regional and local authorities - Regional and Local Development Agencies - Protected areas, natural and cultural sites management organizations - NGOs, Non-Profit-Organizations and other professional and civil society associations - Universities, Research centres, Scientific and Technology Parks Institutions specialized in research, education, training and capacity building - Enterprises, SMEs - Public bodies dealing with environment, natural risks, energy, health, social inclusion

- **Stakeholders:** A person, group or organization that has interest or concern in the Programme. Stakeholders can affect or be affected by the Programme's actions, objectives and policies. Examples of stakeholders are national, regional and local authorities, Chambers of Commerce, Trade and Business Organizations, SMEs, Economic operators, Networks and clusters, Universities/ Research Centres/ Technological Centres/ Scientific Parks/ Training Centres, NGOs.
- **Final beneficiaries:** organizations receiving funds from the Programme.
- **EU:** the European Commission, INTERACT and other EU institutions and programmes fall in this category.

With reference to the internal audience and according to the Cooperation Programme the main target audiences shall be the following:

- **Programme authorities and structures:** organizations and groups involved in the governance of the Programme. They include the Managing Authority, the Joint Secretariat, the Monitoring Committee, the Audit Authority, the Slovenian Info Point, the Intermediate Body (GECT GO/EZTS GO), national and regional representatives on different Programme committees for both countries.

The main message of the Programme communication derives from the overall concept of the Cooperation Programme, namely *"the Programme supports the strengthening of cohesion level of Programme area"*.

This message translates into targeted messages as illustrated below.

Table 11: Target audiences and key messages

Target audience	Key messages	What do they need to know?
External audience & Media	Messages addressed to external audience & Media will refer to the result of the cooperation and to the implementation of the Programme.	Data and figures related to the Programme: how much, where, when, who, how? Benefits of the Programme close to them and thematically relevant to their interest; Results and impact of the Programme and its projects; Information that they can spread in their country to different target groups, prepared by the MA/JS; Information on the impacts of the programme in their country; Sharing of knowledge on the evaluation methodology and outcomes (Other Interreg programmes); Cooperation in sharing the outcomes (Other Interreg programmes); Information on the impact of Programme/Interreg cooperation, stories of individuals (General public)

Target audience	Key messages	What do they need to know?
Potential applicants/ Potential beneficiaries	The Programme supports joint efforts to increase the cooperation capacity of Potential applicants/ Potential beneficiaries of the Programme area in order to promote innovation, sustainability and cross-border governance to create a more competitive, cohesive and livable area.	Clear information on the Programme: objectives, procedures, benefits and results; Availability of funding: how much, when, who and how to apply? Success stories as examples of cooperation; How to prepare a good project application; Where and how to find partners; Thematically relevant information on how the ETC has changed things close to them Motivation for future cooperation
Stakeholders	Messages addressed to stakeholders will refer to the objectives, procedures, benefits and results of the Programme.	Clear information on the Programme: objectives, procedures, benefits and results; The benefits of the Programme close to them and thematically relevant to their interests: possibility to raise relevant cross-border issues to be dealt within the projects, how to use project outputs, how to disseminate the results.
Final beneficiaries	Messages addressed to beneficiaries will refer to the obligations of beneficiary (including the promotion of the project, Programme and EU support), dissemination of results, result orientation.	Clear information on the Programme: objectives, procedures, benefits and results; How to implement a project in the best way; How to succeed in project communication; How to disseminate the results; Experiences of other projects in different project implementation and thematic issues; Information on their impact on the whole programme outcomes Motivation for future and thank you for the done work.
Programme authorities and structures	The Programme is managed in a cooperative, efficient and transparent way.	Their role and responsibility in Programme implementation; Ongoing information and issues relevant to the employees' tasks; Progress of Programme implementation; Information on what could be still improved during Programme implementation (MA, JS, Audit Authority); Information on how the Programme works (MC) Information that could affect any potential future calls for applications (MA, MC)
EU	Messages addressed to stakeholders will refer to the EU regulations provisions.	Clear information on the Programme: objectives, procedures, benefits and results; Progress of Programme implementation; Projects results and impact; Good practices and challenges of the projects; Complete information of the evaluation outcomes, not limited to the final evaluation report.

2.5 Intervention logic

The communication to different target groups derives from the need to engage the group in question. Therefore the activities and approaches vary between the target groups.

Table 12 shows an overview of the intervention logic of the Communication Strategy, by communication objectives, target groups, communication approach, main communication actions according to the CP and communication tools.

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES:		
CO 1 Raise awareness about the Programme and its funding opportunities to attract high-quality projects	CO 2 Increase the public awareness and the reputation of the Programme	CO 3 Support the efficient Programme management and the implementation of the Programme
TARGET GROUPS:		
Potential applicants/ beneficiaries (i.a. public and private bodies, associations and institutions, enterprises), stakeholders and influencers/multipliers (i.a. national, regional and local authorities), EU, general public	Final beneficiaries, influencers/ multipliers (i.a. external experts), EU, general public	Programme authorities and structures, EU programmes and EC
MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS:		
Drafting of information documents for applicants and beneficiaries to guide them in the preparation of applications and the implementation, evaluation, control and communication		Drafting and implementing the Programme communication strategy, including the setting up and implementation of information and communication measures and tools in line with Article 115 of the EU Regulation No. 1303/2013
Organizing trainings on specific implementation issues such as project and financial management, reporting, control, audit, communication and networking to strengthen the capacity of beneficiaries to implement approved operations, new EU legislation on public procurement		Setting up a network of national/regional authorities/Info point/ financial controllers, coordinated by the JS, with the purpose of exchanging information and best practices at cross-border level
Organizing consultation, information, training and exchange events to strengthen the capacity of applicants to develop applications directly contributing to the Programme-specific objectives and expected results	Developing information and exchange tools (e.g. analytical documents, bilateral meetings, targeted events, etc.) and organization of cross-border and national events to strengthen the involvement of relevant partners in the implementation of the Programme	
COMMUNICATION TOOLS:		
Digital and printed publications, events (conferences, meetings, seminars, Infodays, major publicity events), promotional materials	Digital and printed publications, public and targeted events (Infodays and workshops), communication toolkit	Meetings, internal training activities, intranet, mailing lists, feedback collection

Table 12: Intervention logic

CHAPTER 3 - COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS AND TOOLS

According to the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Annex XII, point 4 a), b), c), the indicative communication activities arranged by the Programme shall adhere to the following development guidelines:

- General, cross-cutting and bilingual informative actions towards **public opinion** on the general contents of the Programme and its implementation;
- Targeted informative actions towards **potential beneficiaries** in order to inform them on the Programme intervention and selection criteria;
- Information activities for **beneficiaries**.

Actions aimed at **public opinion**:

- Organize:
 - a kick-off meeting to present the contents of the CP;
 - at least one event a year to present the results and achievements of the Programme.
- Provide on the website:
 - a list of operations, according to Art. 115 CPR, to be updated at least every six months, in order to foster dissemination of information on successful achievements and good practices;
 - examples of operations in the two official EU languages of the Programme: Italian and Slovenian;
 - relevant information and documents regarding the implementation of the Programme;
 - the list of the members of the MC.
- Publish the Programme documents and the content of operations in online and printed publications, e.g. leaflets and brochures.
- Display the EU emblem at the premises of the main authorities and structures of the Programme.
- Establish a network of libraries containing all digital and printed publications implemented during the Cross-border cooperation activities, according to the library standards (archives), in order to provide *in situ* cultural and study materials to citizens, students, tourists and all citizens concerned.

Actions aimed at the **potential beneficiaries**:

- Organize conferences, meetings, seminars, Infodays and other activities in order to raise awareness about the specific objectives of the CP and the funding opportunities;
- Make available on the website the supporting documentation to the implementation of the Programme which will provide clear and comprehensive information on: eligibility criteria in line with the CP, description of the assessment procedures of applications and deadlines, projects eligibility criteria; list of the main authorities and structures' contact persons.

Actions aimed at the beneficiaries:

Information on administrative procedures required for the implementation of interventions:

- Creation of manuals/guidelines for project management;
- Include in the acts for the granting of finance:
 - a) Explicit reference to the inclusion of the name of the beneficiary, the description of the projects and the amount of funding in the list published on the website;
 - b) Precise reference to the rules regarding the compulsory implementation of logos, concept and formats for the creation of information material and other communication tools used by beneficiaries for their information and advertising activities;

Support the implementation of information and communication activities:

- Define a brand/visibility manual, a graphic format for all the communication measures to be given to beneficiaries who have to use it so as to ensure a coherent and recognizable image.
- Publish on the website the brand/visibility manual and Programme logo versions;
- Organize conferences/meetings and other events to raise awareness among beneficiaries about the information requirements and to disseminate information and good practice learned during national and EU Communication Networks;
- Involve projects in joint events;
- Ensure the beneficiaries respect the communication/visibility rules;
- Help beneficiaries achieve maximum project visibility;
- Promote the best practices and sustainable solutions.

Downloadable documentation (guidelines, templates, etc...) will be available for beneficiaries and include electronic templates to help them to respect the EU visibility requirements, according to point 3.2.2 Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

One of the guiding principles for all communication activities is user-friendliness: it is essential to develop user-friendly and easy-to-understand communication activities, in order to communicate a complex topic such as cross-border cooperation to non-experts, to the general public in a bilingual way in order to reduce the administrative burden for beneficiaries, and to increase the capacity for high quality applications.

3.1 Communication tools

This part introduces indicative communication activities and tools for the 2014-2020 programming period. The outlined activities and tools aren't meant to be mutually exclusive, on the contrary they lead to better results when used in an integrated way.

All tools shall be used sensibly, in a well-planned way, and according to the best possible engagement of the target audience in question.

3.1.a Digital activities

Digital tools include first of all the Programme website, but also direct mailings, social media, video conference and multimedia in a wide meaning.

Whenever possible the Programme will employ new advanced technologies in order to enable people with disabilities to access more easily to digital media.

- 1) **Programme website** - The Programme website becomes an important, effective and transparent source of information not only about the Programme, its implementation and activities but also about funded projects and their outcomes.

Various audiences, ranging from potential applicants to stakeholders, will be able to find all information needed on the website at www.ita-slo.eu.

As requested by relevant EU legislations, the following contents will be made available on the website:

- The list of operations funded by the Programme, published in accordance with Art. 115 of the CPR, will be updated regularly (at least every six months⁸).
- Examples of operations in the two official languages of the Programme: Italian and Slovenian⁹.
- Updated information about the CP's implementation, including its main achievements¹⁰.

Users will be intuitively guided through available content via a clear layout and straightforward navigation. Interactive and barrier-free accessibility and usability will be fully integrated into the website to enable also people with disabilities to access all information.

The responsive, simple, portable device-friendly design will reflect the Programme's brand identity and allow a smooth integration of social media (Twitter).

The website will further focus on community building among applicants and beneficiaries via Intranet and make available all relevant outputs of the projects.

It will also incorporate statistics that enable the JS to see which pages are popular and which are under-performing.

The official Programme website shall be simple, but also original, user-friendly, transparent and focus on results.

The website will host pages dedicated to the single projects in order to avoid fragmentation of information, ensure lasting availability of results, maintain coherent appearance in line with the Programme branding, and strengthen the link between the Programme and its projects.

However the Slovenian Info Point might also opt for websites integrated in its hosting institution's website while respecting all branding requirements. In this case the Programme website will link to this website.

⁸ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 Art. 115, point 2

⁹ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 Annex XII point 2.1

¹⁰ Ibid.

- 2) **Direct emails** - The Programme will inform the Programme Authorities and structures as well as applicants and beneficiaries more directly about developments related to the Programme management and implementation through direct mailings.
- 3) **Social media** - Social media is defined as online technologies and practices that people use to share opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives with each other. Free and easy to use, Twitter social media will be used also in the current programming period to access to wide audience strengthen links and interactions with applicants, beneficiaries and stakeholders. The language used will be as easy-to-understand and non-technical as possible. Social media activities are aimed at increase of the awareness on the Programme generating traffic to the website. The Programme recognizes the use of Social media as a viable visibility tool. Indeed the Programme will strongly encourage the beneficiaries to make use of the Social media, because of these advantages: free and easy to use, incredibly popular, no hassle with design, great monitoring option, cost-effective advertising, target audiences, cross-Programme/project synergy, networking.
- 4) **Media** - Media visibility is seen as a proper tool for raising awareness and interest towards the benefits of the Programme and European funds in general. This group refers especially to media from the whole Programme area at regional and national level, both written and audio-visual media in order to be more easily reached by the projects. Such activity will not will not affect the TA budget.
- 5) **Other multimedia** - The Programme reserves the right to use several forms of information content e.g. text, audio, graphics, video conference, animation, video and infographics, which beside the Programme website and publications will be used as a content for social media channels.

3.1.b Publications

Publications include any kind of printed (or printable digital) product, such as

- briefing documents,
- Programme manuals and handbooks,
- Programme and project brand/visibility manual,
- leaflets, brochures, studies and reports which carry information about the Programme and its projects.

With a view to an eco-friendly approach, the Programme will strive to keep the quantity of printed materials as low as possible.

The brand/visibility manual will be inspired by the Harmonized branding promoted by INTERACT. It will explain the basic visibility rules and it will be concise and include examples of how apply the logo.

3.1.c Events

Events include any kind of conference, exhibition, campaign, road show or other larger-scale event-activity, which is directed at a wider audience. The aim will be to host widely barrier-free events and integrate multimedia event contents to improve participants' experience and networking.

- 1) Kick-off meeting: in June 2016 the MA shall organize a major information activity publicizing the launch of the CP.
- 2) Major annual event: from 2017 the MA shall organize one major information event per year to present the visions and achievements of the Programme;
- 3) Info days and workshops for project applicants and beneficiaries will be spread across the whole Programme area in order to deal with specific issues of the CP;
- 4) Internal training activities, e.g. meetings among Programme authorities and structures;
- 5) External training activities organized in the Programme area to facilitate beneficiaries to understand Programme rules and manuals. For this reason the simultaneous translation

service, if needed, will be provided. The Programme will organize special sessions on communication at project level in order to give beneficiaries the opportunity to ask questions and find sustainable solutions;

- 6) Participation in European and other Programme events, e.g. EC day/INTERACT;
- 7) Participation in project events. The Programme shall support project communication not only using specific tools such as brand/visibility manual, project progress reports, personal consultations, Programme website, but also participating in project communication activities or involving projects in possible joint events, e.g. EC day.

CHAPTER 4 - RESPONSIBILITIES

Programme communication is a shared responsibility of the MA/JS, the MC, the ITI, the Info Point and the projects.

The Programme provides the administrative structures support measures for successful projects and establishes favourable conditions for good project communication. In particular, the Programme supports communication activities of the projects at cross-border level. The MC serves as the steering and decision making body, not only for the decision on project approval, but also for the Communication Strategy. The projects - dealing with specific thematic issues and target audiences - carry out communication activities within thematic expert communities.

4.1. Monitoring Committee (MC)

The Monitoring Committee will oversee communication activities. Its responsibility is to assess and approve the Communication Strategy within the first six months after approval of the Programme. Annually, the MC will assess and approve the annual activity work plan including communication activities. Additionally, the MC will contribute to achieving the communication aims.

4.2 Managing Authority (MA)

The Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat will coordinate the implementation of the Communication Strategy. MA/JS will make sure that requirements for information and communication activities, as defined by the EU legal framework will be met. The MA/JS will report annually to the Monitoring Committee on the status of implementation.

The Managing Authority of the Cooperation Programme is the following:

Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia

Central Directorate for Finance, Property, Coordination and Programming of Economic and EU Policies, European Territorial Cooperation, State Aid and General Affairs Office in Trieste (Italy).

In accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, the MA is responsible for:

- Drawing up a Communication strategy for the CP;
- Establishing a single website or portal providing information on the CP;
- Informing potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities;
- Publicising the achievements of cohesion policy to citizens;
- Organising a major information activity publicizing the launch of the CP;
- Organising one major information activity a year which promotes the funding opportunities and the strategies pursued and presents the achievements of the CP;
- Publishing electronically the list of operations (projects & beneficiaries), to be updated every six months;
- Giving examples of operations on the website in a widely spoken official language of the Union other than the official language or languages of the Member State;
- Updating information on the website about the CP implementation;
- Displaying the Union emblem at its premises.

It is the responsibility of the MA to ensure that beneficiaries are made aware of their responsibilities. The MA must also monitor their compliance with the rules.

4.3 Joint Secretariat (JS)

The Joint Secretariat is located at the MA's premises in Trieste, as determined by the CP. With regard to communication, the JS supports the MA in the implementation of communication activities.

In particular it shall be responsible for the following tasks:

- act as a first “contact point” for potential beneficiaries and provide them with further information, in collaboration with the Info Point located in Slovenia (which will provide information on the Slovenian territory);
- support the MA in the implementation of communication activities (including events, Info days, Communication Strategy);
- draw up and make available the documents needed to implement the projects (project fiches, guidelines for submission of proposals, eligibility guidelines, terms of reference/calls, templates for financing contract and partnership agreement) which have to be approved by the MC;
- inform the Lead Partners on the results of the projects selection procedures.

The implementation of the Communication Strategy is a horizontal task of all Programme staff members. This is ensured by planning and monitoring of the activities within the Programme by the Communication Manager, who is responsible for the coordination and implementation of the Communication Strategy.

The MA shall designate a person to be responsible for information and communication at Programme level and shall inform the Commission of such designation (Art. 117, CPR). For this purpose contact MA/JS persons responsible for Programme communication will be available on the Programme official website www.ita-slo.eu.

4.4 Info Point

In line with the 2007-2013 experience, the Slovenian Info Point located in Stanjel (Slovenia) and established by National Authority - GODCP, shall support the MA in spreading the information on the implementation stages of the Programme across the Slovenian territory.

The staff of the Info Point shall work in close coordination with the JS in the implementation of the following tasks:

- act as a first “contact point” for potential beneficiaries to provide information and advice to the project partners on the Slovenian territory;
- support the MA in the implementation of communication activities (including events, Info days, Communication Strategy);
- advise and assist beneficiaries participating in approved operations,
- inform stakeholders on achievements of the Programme;
- support Programme management.

4.5 Representatives of Member States: National/ Regional Authorities

The Member States shall support the MA to ensure effective application of the information and communication requirements by taking appropriate steps to disseminate information and provide publicity within their territory. In this regard, the Slovenian Info Point as well as the two Italian Regions will provide support in fulfilling the communication tasks and provisions.

In Italy, the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region and the Veneto Region shall support the MA in spreading the information on the implementation stages of the Programme across their territories by:

- acting as a first “contact point” for potential beneficiaries to provide information and advising to the project partners on their territories;

- supporting the MA in the implementation of communication activities on their territories (including events, Info days, Communication Strategy);
- advising and assist beneficiaries from their territories participating in approved operations;
- informing stakeholders from their territories on achievements of the Programme;
- supporting Programme management.

Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region and the Veneto Region will indicate to the MA a reference person for communication activities in their region.

4.6 Intermediate body (IB)

In line with the Cooperation Programme the Intermediate Body for carrying out the management and implementation of an Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) shall be the EGTC named “GECT GO/EZTS GO”. Its activities and functions will be ruled in a specific governance agreement signed by the MA and GECT GO/EZTS GO.

The Intermediate Body will provide information on the availability of funding, the selection process, deadlines, eligibility criteria and associated regulations concerning EU funding through all appropriate channels.

The IB will promote the priorities/themes for which it is responsible using the various channels at its disposal including website, sectorial publications, business/community groups, advertisements, information leaflets and selected seminars and conferences.

4.7 INTERACT and other programmes

Together with other transnational and cross-border programmes, INTERACT has developed a strategy for harmonised branding of Interreg Programmes. The purpose is to join efforts and increase the visibility of Interreg, in particular towards policy makers and multipliers at EU level.

The exchange within communication knowledge sharing networks allows the Programme to share good practices on communication management, increase the visibility of Interreg and better reach relevant target groups through joint activities.

4.8 Projects

Projects form a link between the Programme and the communities within the Programme Area. Projects are primarily responsible for communicating with their main target groups about the projects outputs under development and their results, always acknowledging the support received by the Programme. Secondly, projects are expected to share examples of promotional material, success stories and descriptions of outcomes.

In line with Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013¹¹, project beneficiaries are responsible for:

- Setting up billboards and permanent plaques on infrastructure project sites with a public contribution amounting to more than € 500 000;
- These shall include the EU flag, as well as references to the EU and the relevant fund(s);
- Beneficiaries with an existing website must acknowledge the EU support received on this website.

The Programme authorities and structures in charge of communication are to introduce measures for supporting beneficiaries in their project dissemination efforts and helping them to ensure compliance with the Programme communication requirements. For this purpose, a

¹¹ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 Annex XII, point 2.2

communication guidebook with practical advice for project communication actions shall be made available. The JS shall encourage and facilitate synergies between Programme and projects during their implementation, also by organizing special training session on communication focused on rules but also on examples. The official Programme website shall have a new user-friendly interface with a responsive design and include all the relevant information on communication.

4.9 Coordination with Programme partners and project communication officers

As set out in the CP, the MA and JS will work in coordination with the Slovenian Info Point, Programme partners and project communication officers in their task of optimizing the implementation of communication activities.

In case of special requests or specific needs it shall be possible to arrange meetings with representatives of Programme partners, project communication officers, Intermediate Body, INTERACT and external experts in order to exchange experience in implementing the information and communication measures, exchange information on the results of the implementation of the Communication Strategy, and good practices.

The mutual exchange of data, information and advices shall be ensured via written correspondence and emails.

CHAPTER 5 - IMPLEMENTATION

As the Programme evolves, so do the communication needs and activities.

In this chapter are defined several phases of communication during the programming period: preparation, launching, consolidation, review, improvement and adjustment, focus and evaluation. Each phase has different priorities, uses specific methods and tools.

During the first year the accent is on planning the communication and launching the Programme. The aim is to raise awareness about the Programme, promoting it and mobilizing its stakeholders in order to attract high-quality projects and get the necessary support.

The next years are characterized by the consolidation of communication, orientation towards the Programme priorities, a shift towards enhanced project communication and intensification of communication activities at national level.

2017 is considered as a year of preliminary review, in which the efficiency and adequacy of communication will be assessed and feedback will be sought in order to make the necessary adjustments and to improve communication according to more specific needs of the target groups.

In the years following the review, communication becomes more focused, more thematically specialized. While the last year is dedicated to disseminating the achievements and the results of the Programme and to the preparations for the next generation of funds.

The indicative evolution of communication during the 2014-2020 programming period is outlined in Annex 1.

CHAPTER 6 - REPORTING AND EVALUATION

In line with Article 116 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, the MA shall inform the MC at least once a year on the progress in the implementation of the Communication Strategy and on its analysis of the results as well as on the planned information and communication activities to be carried out in the following year.

The budget and activities of the Communication Strategy could be revised periodically and revised versions will be approved by the MC.

According to the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013¹², the aim of the evaluation is to analyse the effectiveness of communication activities and to understand the communication potential of the Programme.

Regarding the timing, the information and communication measures of the Programme, carried out under the Communication Strategy, will be assessed in the Annual Reports to be submitted in 2017 and 2019 and in the Final Report.

The evaluation is based on tools and indicators of achievement and result. To enable proper implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the information and communication related activities, a system of result and achievement indicators has been developed (Annex 2, Communication Strategy Evaluation), following the SMART principle of identifying the Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-related indicators. The evaluation system is centred on quantitative indicators for the programming period, where the achievement indicator is to measure the activity taken to establish the respective measure and the result indicator shows what the direct result of the action is.

The evaluation is carried on a continuous basis, in order to allow possible corrections of the Strategy in due time.

The results of evaluations will be useful to bring forward any changes to the initial Communication Strategy.

The evaluation process is outlined in Annex 2.

¹² Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Annex XII point g), the communication strategy shall include “an Indication of how the information and communication measures shall be assessed in terms of visibility and awareness of policy, operational programme and operations, and of the role played by the Funds and the Union”.

CHAPTER 7 - BUDGET

Taking into account the crucial role of communication activities and in order to support and facilitate their implementation on an annual basis, the programme will reserve an adequate budget under Priority Axis 5 (Technical Assistance, TA).

The indicative costs for implementing communication activities amount to 220 000 Euro.

The communication budget is approved by the MC as a part of the overall budget.

The indicative percentage budget breakdown (subject to possible modifications) during the Programme's lifecycle for information and communication measures per year and funding sources are presented below, according to the TA budget plan.

In line with the CP the expenses for implementing communication activities planned in the present Communication Strategy will be covered by the Programme's Technical Assistance budget.

Tables 13 and 14 describe the TA budget "core activities of the MA" as approved by the first MC meeting held in Nova Gorica (Slovenia) on March 8th, 2016 with regards to information and communication activities.

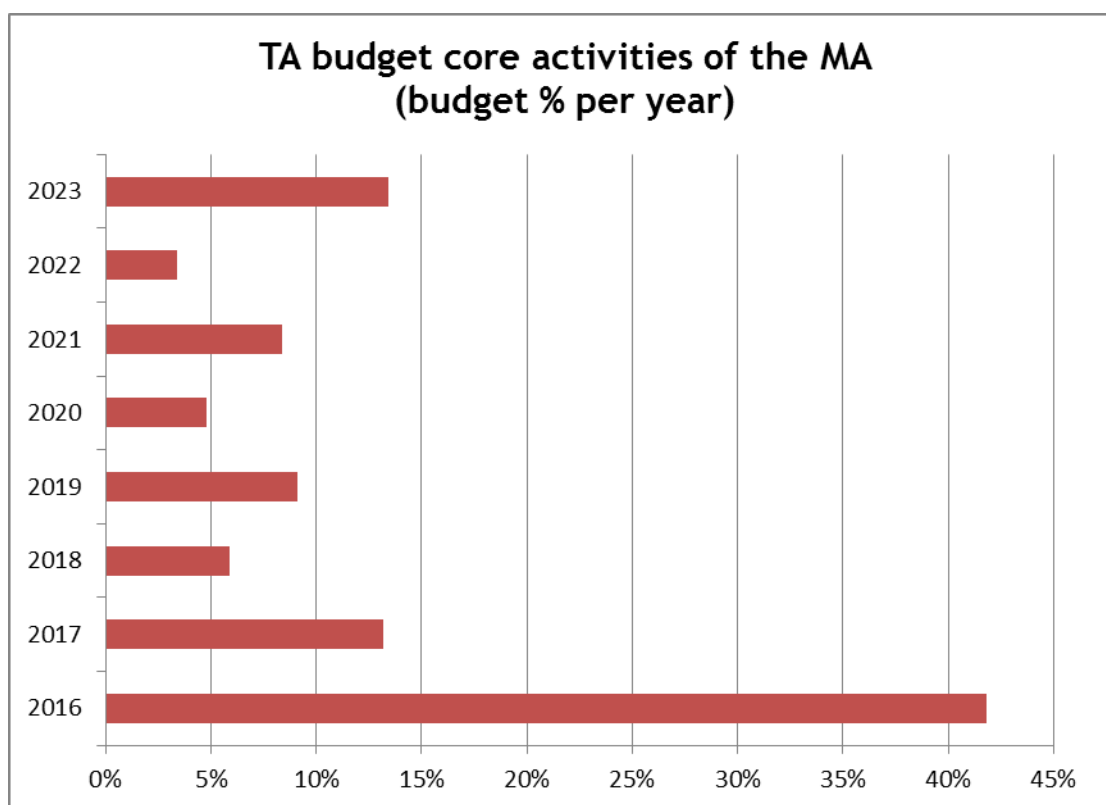


Table 13: indicative percentage TA budget "core activities of the MA" breakdown per each year for implementing information and communication activities

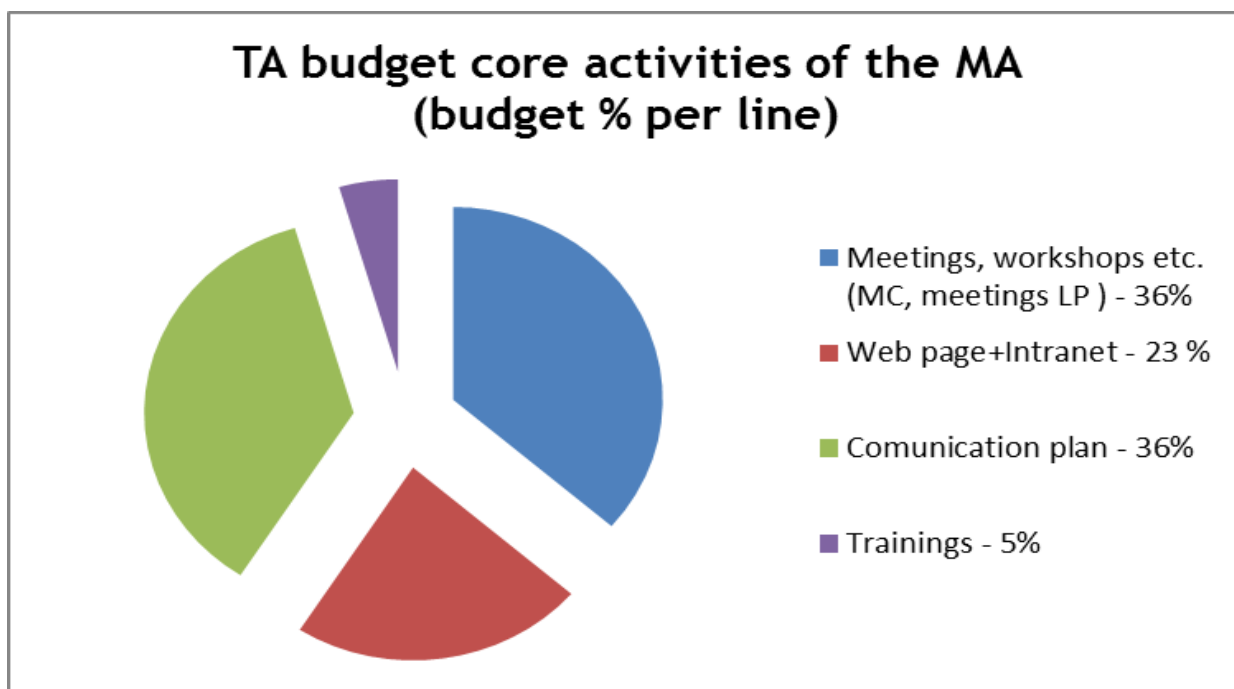


Table 14: Indicative percentage TA budget “core activities of the MA” breakdown of expenditure per communication activity