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1. Introduction

Communication is essential to ensure the success of EU funded Programme and projects, first of all because it is necessary to demonstrate to the wider public how European funds in general are being spent, but also because public authorities have to demonstrate the added-value of allocating resources to cooperation.

That is why it is important to pay attention to communication, at all the stages of the Programme development, considering it as a useful tool to achieve the Programme's objectives.

This Communication Strategy is a guideline for the communication activities and tools to be implemented within the INTERREG IPA II CBC ITALY – ALBANIA – MONTENEGRO PROGRAMME 2014-2020. It is a key strategic document of the Programme, setting out the information and communication measures to be taken to ensure the visibility and transparency of the Programme.

The implementation of the Communication Strategy is envisaged to play a crucial role in reaching the Programme results and objectives, as communication is a strategically important Programme implementation tool.

2. Programme framework

The aim of this Communication Strategy is to provide a strategic structure for the **Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme Italy-Albania-Montenegro 2014-2020** communication.

The Programme has four priority axes:

- 1) Strengthening the cross-border cooperation and competitiveness of SMEs.
- 2) Smart management of natural and cultural heritage for the exploitation of cross border sustainable tourism and territorial attractiveness.
- 3) Environment protection, risk management and low carbon strategy
- 4) Increasing cross border accessibility, promoting sustainable transport service and facilities and improving public infrastructures.

Below, a synthetic overview of the Priority Axes and the related Specific Objectives (SO) of the Operational Programme (2014-2020) is presented.

Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme Italy-Albania-Montenegro 2014-2020

P.A. 1

Strengthening the cross-border cooperation and competitiveness of SMEs

S.O.1.1

Enhance the framework conditions for the development of SME's cross border market

P.A. 2

Smart management of natural and cultural heritage for the exploitation of cross border sustainable tourism and territorial attractiveness.

S.O.2.1

Boost attractiveness of natural and cultural assets to improve a smart and sustainable economic development

S.O.2.2

Increase the cooperation of the key actors of the area for the delivery of innovative cultural and creative products

P.A. 3

Environment protection, risk management and low carbon strategy

S.O.3.1

Increase cross-border cooperation strategies on water landscapes

S.O.3.2

Promoting innovative practices and tools to reduce carbon emission and to improve energy efficiency in public sector

P.A. 4

Increasing cross border accessibility, promoting sustainable transport service and facilities and improving public infrastructures.

S.O.4.1

Increase coordination among relevant stakeholders to promote sustainable cross border connections in the cooperation area

Inside the Programme, the communication strategy is included into the Priority Axis 5 - TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, that foresees the two following specific objectives.

PROGRAMME PRIORITY AXIS 5: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPECTED RESULTS
<p>S.O.5.1</p> <p><i>To increase in efficiency and effectiveness the management and implementation of the Cooperation Programme</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring an adequate management and control environment of the Programme. • Ensuring that all Programme implementation steps (including the launch of calls, contracting, monitoring of operations and Programme achievements, reimbursement of expenditure, etc.) are timely and properly executed.
<p>S.O.5.2</p> <p><i>To improve the support to applicants and beneficiaries and to strengthen the involvement of relevant partners in the Programme implementation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity of applicants and beneficiary to participate in the Programme. • Strengthened involvement of relevant partners in Programme implementation.

3. Legal contest and Reference Documents

INTERREG IPA II CBC ITALY – ALBANIA – MONTENEGRO PROGRAMME 2014-2020 Communication Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the following documents:

- INTERREG IPA II CBC ITALY – ALBANIA – MONTENEGRO PROGRAMME 2014-2020, adopted by the European Commission with Decision C(2015) 9491 of 15 December 2015.
- 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.
- 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 - 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 231/2014 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 March 2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II).
- COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) No 447/2014 of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession assistance (IPA II).

The content of this Communication Strategy is defined taking into account some basic elements that can help the Programme communicating in a comprehensive and efficient way.

- The approach suggested by the INTERACT 2014-2020 Interreg Programme Management Handbook and Communication Toolkit from A to Z.
- Information and communication needs of the Programme area and the different beneficiaries potentially involved in the Programme, both at management and beneficiary levels.
- Lessons learned and experiences gained within the previous cooperation Programmes, involving the same Programme area (CBC IPA Adriatic 2007 - 2013, Italy Albania 2000/2006, MED and South-Est Europe Transnational Programmes 2007/2013).

4. Approach

The Programme implementation strategy aims to improve the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the area and - at the same time - contributes to achieve the Europe 2020 Strategy and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) objectives.

The Programme main goal is to enhance the coordination in the Programme area to tackle common challenges, in order to boost and integrate territorial development. It aims to enable regional and local stakeholders from eligible areas to exchange knowledge and experiences, develop and implement pilot actions, test the new policies, products and services feasibility, and support investments in the Programme chosen sectors.

All the communication objectives, therefore, should be focused on relaying this vision to an audience as wide as possible, maintaining a clear focus and tailoring the message to match the information needs of the most relevant target groups. The Communication strategy has been drafted focusing on the objectives set out in the Cooperation Programme, pointing out the distinctiveness and comparative advantages of the area involved and the possibilities that the Programme offers for those goals to be achieved within the programming period and beyond. The achievements of the Programme as a whole, as well as those of its individual projects, should be widely promoted and, if possible, put into a wider perspective of their contribution to the EU Cohesion Policy.

The Programme does not have previous editions to refer to, but the involved territory (regions from Italy, Albania and Montenegro) is included in the wider European Union Macroregional Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR). For this reason, the Programme embraces the four EUSAIR Pillars: Blue Growth, Connecting the Regions, Environment and Sustainable Tourism.

As stated by the Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu (EUSAIR Forum 12/13-05-2016, Dubrovnik), the EUSAIR strategy plays a key role for a real integration and the promotion of the competitiveness in the territory, not only to increase competitiveness and connectivity in the Region, but also in terms of its integration. EUSAIR promotes cooperation between the EU and non-EU countries in order to ensure that no one is left behind on the path to prosperity.

In this context, a fundamental role is played by communication, considered the basis of cooperation and a prerequisite for the Programme to deliver meaningful and visible results among project partners and audiences outside the project communities.

In order to ensure continuity to the EU policy, the communication activities and tools performed during the previous Programming Period (2007/2013) among different Programmes in the area will be considered as basic input to the actions envisaged, through their capitalisation, the statement of new, more effective and pervasive actions and their spreading to the eligible Programme areas (local communities).

The Programme intends to assume an active role in direct communication with the (potential) beneficiaries, using all the communication technologies available, to reach an audience as wide as possible, and focusing on a more interactive approach in order to engage the target audiences and increase the attractiveness of the Programme. Thus, one of the objectives of this communication strategy within the Programme will be to raise awareness of the citizens and to show the benefits that cross-border cooperation brings to the Programme area.

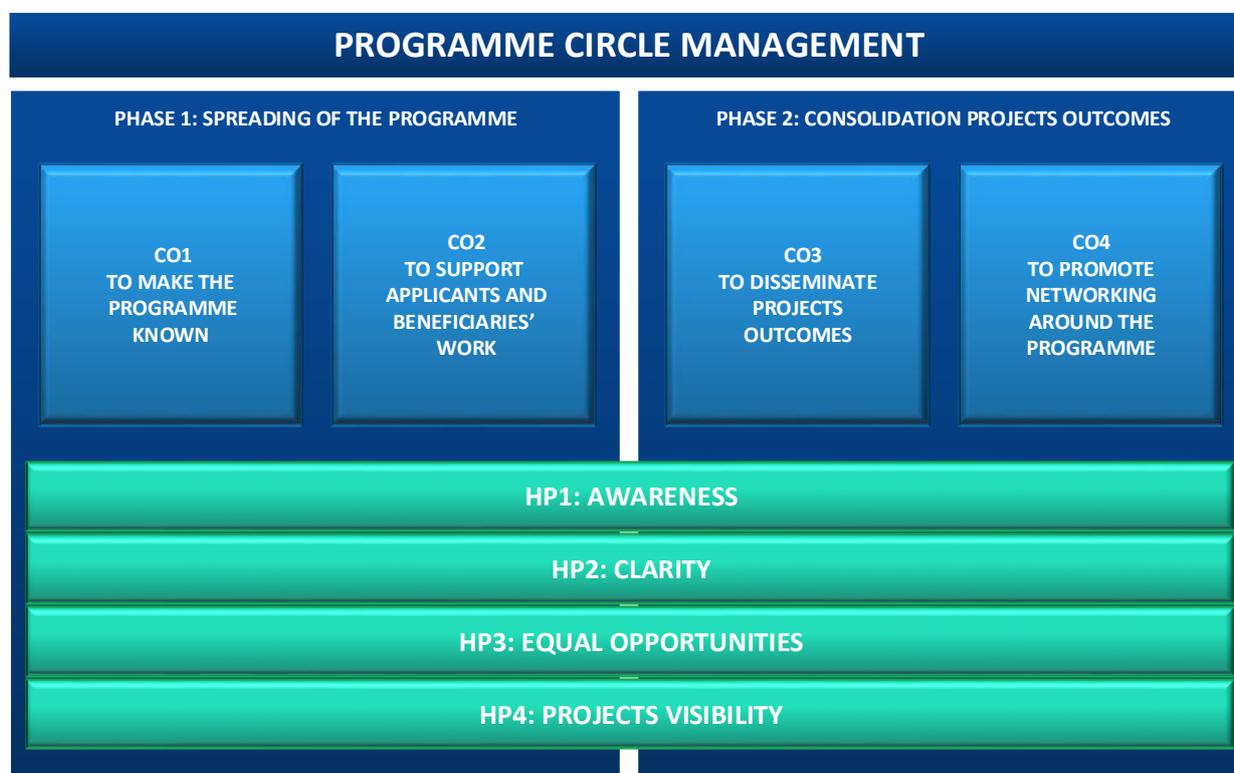
All the communication, both internal and external, will be guided by the principles of transparency and clarity of expression, with keeping the proclaimed EU values in the highest regard.

The instruments that will be used to communicate are all the main media, the social media as Facebook and Twitter, some specialized magazines and the official Programme website and mobile app, constantly updated with all the useful information and tools for beneficiaries. At the same time, the beneficiaries will contribute to the contents of the web and mobile platforms in a synergic approach.

English is the working language of the Programme and consequently English will be mainly used for the communication activities.

5. Communication Objectives and Horizontal Principles

Communication activities will be linked to the Programme cycle management phases. To the two phases correspond the communication objectives and the horizontal principles.



5.1. Communication objectives

C.O.1: MAKE THE IT-AL-ME COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN

As stated inside the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013, Annex XII “The managing authority shall ensure, in accordance with the communication strategy, that the operational Programme's strategy and objectives, and the funding opportunities offered through joint support from the Union and the Member State, are widely disseminated to potential beneficiaries and all interested parties, with details of the financial support from the Funds concerned”.

For this reason, one of the specific objects of the communication strategy will focus on the diffusion of the Programme, in order to allow all the potential beneficiaries, stakeholders and EU citizens in general, to know the opportunities provided by the Programme calls and to stay informed on the projects implementation progress and outcomes.

C.O.2: TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK

The support given to the applicants and, then, to the beneficiaries during the project implementation represents the basis of the good project management and communication.

The Managing Authority (MA) and the Joint Secretariat (JS) have to make sure that the lead and the project partners have the capacity to communicate with their projects' target audiences, in order to guarantee a good project development and implementation; that is why the MA and JS will establish a close relationship with projects communication managers.

The Programme has to provide information enabling partners to easily understand and readily pass it on to the project partners.

The MA and JS should make the lead and all the project partners aware of their own role, specifically about the services provided not provided to the project applicants and partners, and the functions they do and do not carry out within the Programme structure.

The Programme shall give to the approved projects the possibility to participate to workshops in order to improve the quality of the Programme's implementation. These workshops are useful tools that give suggestions and guidelines to projects' actors to help them to reach their objectives and achievements. The workshops are also focusing on the communication strategy, in order to give practical tips and advice on how to make their communication a successful and effective tool for reaching the projects overall objectives.

The Programme may ask the projects to present their results and achievements at any of the events organized by the Programme and also to participate to one of the several events organised by the European institutions which may help the project to achieve greater visibility and dissemination of their communication material and information about their results. The Programme participates in these events with input from the projects. When possible, the projects are encouraged to take part in these initiatives, which can also bring them more visibility and increase the contact with the local media.

C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES

Programme results and impacts have to be effective and visible within the cooperation area and beyond.

It is address to the regional, national, Adriatic and EU decision makers, in order to raise their awareness about Programme results and achievements. When carrying out communication activities in this field, cooperation with designated stakeholders of EUSAIR will have a high relevance.

To make thematic experts and opinion makers in the region aware of the Programme results and achievements is also basic. This can primarily be achieved by projects communicating with their respective

thematic target audiences. To this end, the MA and JS will support project communication, including technical infrastructure and corporate branding items.

Moreover, it will be necessary to tackle the lack of information and awareness of the benefit of the Programme's implementation for the population.

C.O.4: TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME

As a number of bodies are directly or indirectly involved in the Programme's administration, the MA and JS have set specific aims to facilitate a more efficient cooperation among them:

- To make auditors and controllers aware of the Programme scope roles. The MA and JS will target auditors and controllers both through providing key information in writing, and through creating opportunities for dialogue;
- To make EUSAIR stakeholders aware of the scope, the activities and the results of the Programme;
- To make organisations/authorities hosting the Programme's managing bodies in all the involved States aware of the Programme and the usefulness of its achievements. This will be pursued by providing information and constant dialogue on the management level of the organizations involved.

5.2. Horizontal principles

The Communication Strategy methodology will match the following horizontal principles.

H.P.1: Territorial Awareness

Highlighting the role of the European Union and the Structural Funds of the EU for the raising of awareness about the full potential of the area involved in the Cooperation Programme. Raising awareness about the Programme areas involved means primarily revealing them the opportunities to grow and contributing in their widespread promotion. In this context, the active role of the European Union should be more clear and comprehensible also to the citizens.

H.P.2: Funds Clarity

Ensuring transparency and access to the Funds is concerned. The mechanisms for the Programme resources provision have to be transparent to the potential beneficiaries. By making clear the criteria guiding the EU funds it will be possible to ensure a targeted dissemination of information on specific benefits from the Programme participation for different potential applicants, and the general public (with the purpose of helping them to identify how they can benefit from the cross-border cooperation). Moreover, it will be necessary to provide a clear, specific and adequate information on the Programme rules and procedures to potential project applicants (in order to facilitate participation and quality projects) and empower them to participate in the Programme (in order to help them acknowledge their role in successful Programme implementation and cross-border cooperation).

H.P.3: Equal opportunities

Ensuring -in line with article 7 of the Regulation (EC) No 1303/2013- the equality between men and women and the integration of the gender perspective. The Programme web site and mobile app 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 advertising events –information session, seminars, workshops, 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. Assistance to disabled people during information events will be organised and such support services will be financed under the TA budget.

Equal opportunities will be ensured in terms of accessibility of the Programme information to potential beneficiaries and project partners from remote areas; in this case, in fact, info will be available via Internet and Programme events will be accessible in streaming, too.

H.P.4: Projects Visibility

Ensuring the widest visibility possible to the projects and the outcomes, in order to involve stakeholders and attract relevant beneficiaries for enhancing the Programme impacts. By using mass media, social platforms and institutional platforms, the Press Office will be able to spread throughout the areas involved, and the European countries in general, the projects development steps and outcomes, enabling all the target audiences to know the projects potentials, participate to their implementation and interact with them.

6 Target audience

Specific communication activities and tools should reach each target group identified. According to the role played inside the Programme, it is possible to distinguish to main categories of targets:

1) Internal target audience

The internal communication needs to be clear and well structured, in order to sustain the division of tasks and the information flow. An effective communication inside the bodies involved is the key asset to the success of the Programme.

2) External target audience

Communication to the external audience has to be clear, complete and effective, in order to aware about the Programme as a funding source, to engage into project development and to make key stakeholders aware of projects outcomes and potentials.

6.1 Internal Target Audience

INTERNAL TARGET AUDIENCE		
Groups	Potential activities to be addressed	Expected Results
Programme staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Periodic work meetings – Briefing activities – Training and seminars – Dedicated section inside the web portal and the mobile app 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Effective functioning of the Programme – Clear role definition and concertation among the bodies involved – Success of the Programme from the logistic and organizational point of view

6.2 External Target Audience

EXTERNAL TARGET AUDIENCE		
Groups	Potential activities to be addressed	Expected Results

Potential applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Social media – Conferences and seminars – Continuous updating of the Programme website and mobile app – Widespread dissemination of the calls with detailed information for the proposals submission – Spreading of Programme background information, objectives, expected results on the medium and long term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Proposals submission from all the eligible Programme areas – A high level of quality proposals, satisfying the Programme requirements and meeting its objectives (low error rate at the projects submission level) – Effective dissemination of the resources of the Programme across all the eligible area
Beneficiaries, receiving funding from the Cooperation Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Clear Information and constant support to project management, promotion of the results, coordination with other relevant interventions (or partnership / relevant institutions), in order to maximize results – Information and constant support on the compliance with the Programme requirement and regulations and their obligation for informing the public on the aim of the operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complete understanding of the Programme requirements and effective implementation of the actions (low error rate in project management) – Dissemination of information about the results of the Programme – Capitalizing on the results of the Programme
Influencers, as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • authorities • policy makers • politicians • industry • match funding providers • trade • educational and research institutions • the press • EU info centers • Think tanks • Specialised media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Information on the existence of the Programme, on its background, on the objectives, expected benefits, the medium and long-term expected and obtained results – Provision to the mass-media of interesting and always updated news about the Programme – Participation of the institutions and mass-media in events and actions related to the Programme – Categorization of news items and promotion with the appropriate media (at the local or national level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promotion of the results of Programme projects implementation. – Support from Institutions – Programme spreading via main mass media – Network between public and private bodies to enhance and develop projects outcomes
Public Opinion and Other organisations.	<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 – Promotion of the EU role in the economic growth of the Programme involved area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Submission of proposals from all the eligible areas for the Programme – Increase of the public's knowledge of the Programme and support for the initiative – Complete understanding of the Programme and effective implementation of the actions

7 Communication activities and Tools

The communication intervention lines can be grouped into three categories:

Institutional Communication

- Programme Website portal
- Branding
- Mobile App
- Programme Publications
- Information materials and videos

Public Relationships

- Press Office
- Social media
- Events
- Training Sessions

Marketing Communication

- Advertising
- Printed Materials
- Promotional Materials

The table below can help to clarify the crucial role of each Tool within the Communication Strategy:

Activities/Tools	Communication Objectives	Target Audience	Timing
1) Programme Website portal	<p>C.O.1 MAKE THE IT-AL-ME-COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN</p> <p>C.O.2 TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK</p> <p>C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES</p> <p>C.O.4 TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme staff • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations 	<p>To be set up in the starting phase and constantly used and updated during the whole implementation of the Programme</p>
2) Branding	<p>C.O.1 MAKE THE IT-AL-ME-COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN</p> <p>C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations 	<p>To be set up in the starting phase and used during the whole implementation of the Programme</p>

<p>3) Mobile App</p>	<p>C.O.1 MAKE THE IT-AL-ME-COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN</p> <p>C.O.2 TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK</p> <p>C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES</p> <p>C.O.4 TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme staff • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations 	<p>To be set up in the starting phase and constantly used and updated during the whole implementation of the Programme</p>
<p>4) Programme Publications</p>	<p>C.O.1 MAKE THE IT-AL-ME-COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN</p> <p>C.O.2 TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK</p> <p>C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme staff • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations 	<p>To be set up in the starting phase (Manuals and Guidelines) and during the whole implementation of the Programme (Best Practice Book, Projects catalogue, etc)</p>
<p>5) Information materials and videos</p>	<p>C.O.1 MAKE THE IT-AL-ME-COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN</p> <p>C.O.2 TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK</p> <p>C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES</p> <p>C.O.4 TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations 	<p>To be set up in the starting phase and constantly updated according to the Programme implementation stages</p>
<p>6) Press Office</p>	<p>C.O.1 MAKE THE IT-AL-ME-COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN</p> <p>C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES</p> <p>C.O.4 TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations 	<p>To be set up in the starting phase and active during the whole implementation of the Programme</p>
<p>7) Social media</p>	<p>C.O.1 MAKE THE IT-AL-ME-COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN</p> <p>C.O.2 TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK</p> <p>C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES</p> <p>C.O.4 TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People employed for bodies involved in the governance of the Programme • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations 	<p>To be used and updated during the whole implementation of the Programme</p>

8)Events	<p>C.O.1 MAKE THE IT-AL-ME-COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN</p> <p>C.O.2 TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK</p> <p>C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES</p> <p>C.O.4 TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People employed for bodies involved in the governance of the Programme • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations 	<p>To be planned according to the Programme needs (and related annual Plans)</p>
9)Training Sessions	<p>C.O.2 TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK</p> <p>C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES</p> <p>C.O.4 TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People employed for bodies involved in the governance of the Programme • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations 	<p>To be planned according to the Programme needs (and related annual Plans)</p>
10)Advertising	<p>C.O.1 MAKE THE IT-AL-ME-COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN</p> <p>C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES</p> <p>C.O.4 TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations 	<p>To be realized during the whole implementation of the Programme</p>
11)Printed Materials	<p>C.O.1 MAKE THE IT-AL-ME-COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN</p> <p>C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES</p> <p>C.O.4 TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People employed for bodies involved in the governance of the Programme • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations 	<p>To be realized during the whole implementation of the Programme</p>
12)Promotional Materials	<p>C.O.1 MAKE THE IT-AL-ME-COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN</p> <p>C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential applicants • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations 	<p>To realized during the whole implementation of the Programme</p>

1) PROGRAMME WEBSITE PORTAL

The Programme web platform is the reference point for potential beneficiaries, relevant stakeholders and the public to find Programme updated information, materials and publications.

Therefore, it will be regularly updated, providing information on activities performed at Programme level. It will be developed suitable with other institutional website portals.

Below, some of the most important information spread via web platform:

- Operational Programme
- Application package and relevant information to the execution of their tasks and the implementation of activities.
- Legal framework.
- Funding opportunities and the launching of application calls.
- All the other relevant information for potential beneficiaries (Programme news, events, new materials available, etc).
- Eligibility of expenditure and the other conditions to be met to qualify for support under the Programme.
- Templates, guidelines, manuals and other institutional documents.
- List of beneficiaries
- The National Contact Points to provide information on the Programmes;
- FAQs.

In addition, the Programme website will host a specific section dedicated to the financed projects, their objectives, partnership, activities, events, results. Not only technical information and tools, but also a communicative approach to describe the stories underlying the projects, the main activities and the results obtained, with the purpose of spreading the Programme to the public. To this aim, the Puglia Region Cooperation website named Europuglia may host the Programme website, given the opportunity to count on a familiar tool, known at territorial and cross border level and already integrated with the most relevant search engine.

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

2) BRANDING

The creation of a visual identity, a uniform and a coordinated image is basic to promote visibility and recognisability of the Programme throughout all the communication activities implemented by Programme bodies and beneficiaries.

The branding harmonisation with the overall EUSAIR strategy, in compliance with EU publicity rules, a more effective communication, better results and spending will be ensured.

An effective brand strategy provides a central idea, which all communications are unified around.

A strong branding strategy will increase visibility, facilitate recognition and engage “customers” and the community to identify with them. For this purpose, the logo will be declined in various forms and accompanied by a pay-off that summarizes the Programme key messages. It will be marked on all the internal and external communication materials and on the coordinated line (letterhead, envelopes, cards, folders, notebooks, etc.).

3) MOBILE APP

The Programme mobile app will enable the target audience to find all the information at their fingertips. It will be basic that the app will work on multiple mobile application platforms.

Below, some of the biggest benefits of the mobile app for the Programme:

- Building loyalty
- Reinforcing brand

- Increasing visibility
- Increasing accessibility
- Increasing exposure across mobile devices
- Ensuring equal opportunities to access Programme info

Below, some of the benefits of mobile apps for Programme audience:

- Easy access to the Programme
- Notifications of special events, like conferences, training sessions etc.
- One-touch access to contact information
- Fast, seamless appointment scheduling

The mobile app will reinforce the traditional “mailing list” strategy: currently, promotional email messages receive about a 4% read rate. Push notifications 97%.

Having a web presence alone is no longer sufficient, as online activity continues to shift to mobile.

The thematic mobile app will foster the creation of a community around the event, promoting the interaction among the different target group and also inside each of them, so that people can help each other and build a “bottom-up” network. In the same time, the target audience will interact with info points and communication bodies in an easier and faster way.

4) PROGRAMME PUBLICATIONS

Projects Catalogue and Best Practices Book publications are some of the institutional publications envisaged. They aim at strengthening the credibility of the Programme, by informing on the procedures and disseminating the results and good practices among the real and potential beneficiaries, the EU and National Media representatives and the Government Bodies.

To the insiders will be addressed the Communication Manual, a document that will contain operational guidelines and image to make it consistent with each other and homogeneous all the interventions of animation, awareness and training in the measure of the Programme. The delivery of instructions will ensure a harmonized communication strategy, with the purpose of providing guidelines for the coordinated and coherent implementation of the awareness and training interventions provided by the Programme.

5) INFORMATION MATERIALS AND VIDEOS

Brochures and information materials of various kinds will disseminate concise and easy-to-understand information about the Programme, and will be distributed to the different target groups.

The brochure, produced in both digital and printed format, will comprehensively inform on objectives and strategies of the Programme, highlighting the role of the EU in fostering the growth of the Programme in the intervention areas, the defined cross-cutting priorities at EU level (equal opportunities and non-discrimination, sustainable development). The newsletter, sent at regular intervals (like 6 months), will inform on ongoing projects and initiatives. Programme dedicated videos might be produced, too, to promote Programme objectives and related results.

6) PRESS OFFICE

The press office, through the preparation of press releases and press kits, will spread to the reporters, and then to the Public Opinion, updated, proper and transparent information.

The press office will ensure the timely widespread and transparent dissemination of information about the Programme, enhancing the credibility of national and EU institutions and increasing dialogue with European citizens.

Press conferences, foreseen in the launch phase and throughout the period of implementation of the Programme, are specific moments of meeting with the media, useful to the amplification and deepening of messages and the dissemination of results. They are also an opportunity to engage in a constructive dialogue the same media (and through them the citizens), involve them in raising awareness on Programme axes, highlight the EU institutions role and policies and provide the widest possible dissemination of objectives, strategies and results of the Programme at medium and long-term.

The press releases, both general and thematic, processed during the whole of the activities, will gather articles published, both paper and web ones, acting at the same time as outcome indicators.

7) SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media represent an effective and free way to reach and communicate directly with the widest target audiences in a more interactive way. Programme messages spreading through the main social platforms is envisaged, in order to generate real time interaction with current and potential relevant stakeholders. Therefore, the effectiveness of the social media strategy chosen, related to the Programme needs, will be monitored. The most appropriate social media platform. At a previous analysis, Facebook remains the most appropriate social medium, while others will be possibly selected for each Programme goal, type of news to be spread, services to be offered, synergies with the users.

8) EVENTS

Events are important opportunities to meet the different target audiences and enable a direct dialogue with them. Throughout the Programme, different types of events are envisaged, for example:

- **Launch event** will start the communication actions and focus on all the target audiences. The aim is to point the attention on the Programme, generate consensus on EU policies and inform on objectives and strategies.
- **Intermediate event** will be useful to communicate to the target audiences results and benefits reached since there, and point the Media attention on the Programme. It will also give news about the best practices and impacts on the area.
- **Closing event** will have the task of promoting and disseminating the Programme long-term results, highlighting the best practices, the benefits obtained and the environmental and socio-economic impacts on the area.
- **Info-days** are meetings aimed at improving the information flow to potential and real beneficiaries; they will be organised in the Programme areas to be defined, in order to inform about procedures and criteria for access to Programme funding.

9) TRAINING SESSIONS

Targeted training sessions will be organized, mainly addressed to beneficiaries. Training sessions will also be spread through e-learning tools, available on the Programme web portal and mobile app, to ensure wider audience, equal opportunities of access to Programme info and optimize costs; the relevant outcomes (ppt presentations, summary notes etc.) will be published on the Programme web portal and will be also available through the mobile app. Below, some examples of activities to be implemented:

- **Trainings and seminars**, for Programme bodies and beneficiates, will be targeted events planned to provide a concrete support and assistance during the implementation of the Programme.
- **Participatory planning workshops**, planned in occasion of the calls publication, are significant events, given their highly interactive nature: potential and real beneficiaries will have the opportunity to receive technical assistance and information about the elaboration of project proposals and activities implementation. The Workshop will also have the task of collecting project proposals, strengthening partnership opportunities among the beneficiaries and supporting the

creation of new partnership networks, gaining the maximum consensus in their strategies and the Programme objectives.

10) ADVERTISING

The Media (European, national, regional, specialized, on-line, TV, satellite channels press) are one of the privileged means for the dissemination of the Programme advertising to the targeted Groups, in particular the stakeholders operating at different levels and the EU citizens.

In order to inform a wider audience of the Programme initiatives and potentials, the purchase of advertising space in the major paper or web newspapers and magazines, for the publication of notices and advertorials texts, is envisaged.

By using the communication media, advertising campaigns will be implemented, in order to:

- Give Programme background information on the objectives, expected and obtained medium and long-term results.
- Spread information about the Programme, like the participation criteria, the planned and implemented Programme actions and underline the role played by the EU in enhancing the economic competitiveness, highlighting the respect of Community horizontal principles, disseminating the best practices and promoting the use of interregional co-operation actions.

In each of the advertising measures, it will be basic to enhance the role played by the EU, national and local authorities and the Programme in promoting competitiveness, creating new job opportunities, strengthening economic cohesion in the intervention areas through the dissemination of good practices and the use of inter-regional schemes.

11) PRINTED MATERIALS

To share information with a wide range of interested parties, printed materials will be planned and created according to the needs, with the purpose of being informative, clear and attractive to the targeted audiences.

Business cards, brochures and, in general, every printed material, where possible will contain QR CODE for the mobile app download, in order to spread this innovative service.

12) PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

To spread the Programme image, increase visibility among the different stakeholders and raise awareness about the Programme priority axes and the EUSAIR overall objectives the promotional material will be envisaged (e.g. branded gadgets).

8 Communication Responsibility

In order to ensure a smooth implementation of the Programme information and communication measures, it is crucial that all the Programme implementing bodies will be actively involved in the smooth internal information flow, timely and efficient external communication with the relevant target groups, and keep the communication channel with the beneficiaries of the Programme constantly open.

The main responsibility related to the information and communication measures are in charge to the Managing Authority (MA).

The Communication Strategy is implemented by the Joint Secretariat (JS) and approved as well as monitored by the Joint Monitoring Committee. Besides the tasks managed on behalf of the Programme and with the support of the MA's Communication referent, the JS will manage the following tasks:

- drawing up the Programme Communication Plans;
- ensuring the preparation and the management of the visual identity of the Programme;
- ensuring the establishment, development and maintenance of the Programme web portal;
- providing information on the timing of implementation of communication activities and tools;

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- informing potential beneficiaries about the Programme funding opportunities;
- assisting the beneficiaries in the proper use of the Programme’s visual designs;
- representing the Programme at national and international events, competitions, data collections etc.
- publicising to EU citizens the role and achievements of the Cohesion Policy and Funds, through information and communication actions about the results and impact of the Programme and its operations/projects.
- participating in communication initiatives of the EC, INTERACT and/or national organisations of Italy, Albania and Montenegro.

The Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) is responsible for approving the Communication Strategy and monitoring the Programme communication annual plans.

The Responsible for the Communication Strategy of the Programme is:

Ms Isabella Tisci
 Responsible for Information and Communication of EU Programmes
 Puglia Region
 Mediterranean Department
 Tel. 0039/080/5406577
 E-mail: i.tisci@regione.puglia.it;

9 Annual Communication Plans and Budget

The communication strategy will be implemented through the annual communication plans. The Strategy also identifies the Programme structures in charge of its development, approval, implementation and monitoring, in accordance with the relevant EU Regulations.

According to art. 116.3 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 the Managing Authority is in charge for providing the Joint Monitoring Committee with an annual communication plan including the activities and tools to be implemented in detail, and with a report on the activities implemented in the previous one.

The annual plan will include output and result indicators, budget and the addressed target groups.

National Contact Points will contribute to the implementation of the Programme communication work plans.

Communication Strategy Overall Budget	865.000,00 € (figure to be confirmed after the final approval of the global Programme TA Financial Plan)
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10 Assessment procedures of the Communication Strategy

The MA will put tools in place to measure the impact of the different communication outputs and results, and to potentially improve the effectiveness of the communication strategy, through measures that will be elaborated in detail in the future annual communication plans.

The key elements of communication will be evaluated as part of the Annual Implementation Report and the results will be presented to the Joint Monitoring Committee. Feedback surveys and needs assessments

among target audiences are part of the commitments deriving by the implementation of the communication strategy.

The assessment procedures of the communication strategy will be defined taking into the account indicators, unit and target value, and two overall evaluation moments will be considered: intermediate and final.