

Communication Strategy

18/2/2016

Version 1

**INTERREG V-A**

**Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme**

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## Introduction

This document is the multi-annual Communication Strategy of the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme which is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the national funds of the participating countries, Greece and Bulgaria.

The main principals of the Communication Strategy were presented, discussed and adopted during the 1st meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme that took place in Sandanski on the 4th of November 2015.

The drafting of the Communication Strategy, which defines in detail the necessary measures for the communication of the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme, foreseen by Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013[[1]](#footnote-1) of the European Parliament and of the Council, also defines the content of the information and publicity actions taking into account the size of the Programme (€ 129.695.572, 00 million total funding).

It must be noted that the Managing Authority in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat of the Programme may amend the Communication Strategy of the Programme. In this case, the amended Communication Strategy shall be submitted to the Monitoring Committee for approval[[2]](#footnote-2).

In addition, the Managing Authority, in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat of the Programme, shall inform the Monitoring Committee at least once a year on the progress in the implementation of the Communication Strategy and on its results as well as on the planned information and communication activities to be carried out in the following year. The Monitoring Committee shall, if it considers it to be appropriate, give an opinion on the planned activities for the following year[[3]](#footnote-3).

The Managing Authority of the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat of the Programme and under the supervision of the Monitoring Committee will be responsible for the implementation of the Communication Strategy that is described in this document.

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

* 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.
* Regulation (EU) No 821/2014 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
* The INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme (hereinafter Cooperation Programme), approved by the European Commission Decision: EC Decision Number C (2015)6283, EC Decision Date 09-Sep-2015.
* The experience acquired from the Communication Plan of the European Territorial Cooperation Programme “Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013”.
* The experience acquired from the implementation of the Media Campaign of the European Territorial Cooperation Programme “Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013”.
* The findings of the [Eurobarometer survey on Cross–border Cooperation in the EU](http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/FLASH/surveyKy/1565) on the perceptions of citizens living in our border regions.
* Year: 2015
* Reference: 423
* Title: Citizens’ awareness and perceptions of EU regional policy
* Fieldwork: June 2015 - June 2015
* Publication Date: September 2015
* The Brand Design Manual document (Full Brand Integration, Final Version, 18.12.2014) that was developed by INTERACT and approved by DG Regional and Urban Policy.

## Summary of the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme[[4]](#footnote-4)

The European Commission adopted on September 9th 2015 the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme which first priority is to boost the competitiveness of SMEs and help them expand beyond local markets. It is worth €129 million, with a contribution from the European Union of more than €110 million from the [European Regional Development Fund.](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/erdf/)

Corina Crețu, Commissioner for Regional Policy, said: "This Programme will help the border regions of Bulgaria and Greece to work together and address common challenges. This new Programme is clearly result-oriented and will make a real difference on the ground, from improved transport infrastructure to opportunities for new jobs."

The Programme focuses on the following **four priorities**:

1. A Competitive and Innovative Cross Border Area.
2. A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross Border Area.
3. A Better interconnected Cross Border Area.
4. A Socially Inclusive Cross Border Area.

The INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme also aims to:

* improve cross border cooperation to better protect the local population from the risk of flooding;
* develop and promote the border area's cultural and natural heritage;
* improve the management of water resources and cross border connectivity (this means reduced travel times as well as improved traffic safety);
* expand social entrepreneurship in the border area, leading to increased employment in social enterprises and enhanced delivery of social services to vulnerable communities.

The 11 Regions involved in the Programme are:

* Greece: Regions (NUTS III) of Evros, Xanthi, Rodopi, Drama, Kavala, Thessaloniki and Serres.
* Bulgaria: Regions (NUTS III) of Blagoevgrad, Haskovo, Smolyan and Kardzhali.

Total Budget: EUR 129.695.572,00
Total EU contribution:
EUR 110.241.234,00 from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

**For more information:** [**www.greece-bulgaria.eu**](http://www.greece-bulgaria.eu)

## Description of the Communication Strategy

### From the European Territorial Cooperation Programme “Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013” to the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme

Communication is a vital toolin achieving the strategic and operational goals of the Programme. It reaches every activity of the Programme:

* promotes the Programme itself;
* promotes the Projects that run under the Programme;
* highlights the significance of the European Territorial Cooperation /INTERREG Programmes in general;
* stresses the added value of the investments through regional and urban policy as one of the most visible and tangible areas of EU action for citizens.

The Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme can be build on the good reputation of its predecessor the European Territorial Cooperation Programme “Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013”. Thus, the Communication Strategy of the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme keeps both the general and the specific objectives of its predecessor.

### General Objectives of the Communication Strategy

The general objectives of the Communication Strategy are the following:

**Awareness:** Highlighting of the role of the European Union and the Structural Funds of the European Union for the general public and the promotion of the added value of EU participation in the jointly funded Projects of the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme. According to Article 101 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 it is important to bring the achievements of the Funds to the attention of the general public and to raise awareness of the objectives of cohesion policy. Citizens should have the right to know how the Union's financial resources are invested.

**Transparency:** Ensuring transparency as far as access to the Funds is concerned.

* + dissemination of information on specific benefits from the Programme’s contribution to different groups as well as the general public;
	+ provide clear, specific and adequate information regarding the Programme’s rules and procedures;

 **Equal Opportunities and non-discrimination:** The Member States have to ensure -in line with article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013- that equality between men and women and the integration of the gender perspective is promoted during the various stages of implementation of the Funds and any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation must be avoided. Special attention must be given to providing women as well as people with disabilities and all ethnic minorities living in the eligible border region with equal opportunity to access to information.

### Specific Objectives of the Communication Strategy

Experiences from the period 2007-2013 help to better focus on the communication activities and methods that benefit the Programme implementation the most. Thus, the Communication Strategy of the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme keeps the main specific objectives of the 2007-2013 Communication Plan:

* Promote the Programme and its results to the general public and to all the interested parties.
* Deliver adequate information about the Programme, its role, impact and aims to the identified target groups.
* Inform the institutions involved in the implementation of the Programme about their role in information and publicity.
* Ensure that the potential Final Beneficiaries have complete, valid, and timely information.
* Inform target groups about the conditions and criteria to be met to access the Programme’s funds.
* Demonstrate the role of the European Union and the way, in which Community/EU resources are spent with transparency.

and set additional specific priorities for the Programming Period 2014-2020:

* Promote the Programme’s contribution in the eligible area during the 2007-2013 period.
* Provide evidence of impact and results in the eligible area during the 2007-2013 period.
* Highlight good practice examples from the 2007-2013 period.
* Stress the added value of Cohesion Policy and Regional and Urban Policy.
* Undertake communication initiatives in order to:
	+ raise the visibility and the outcomes of the cross-border cooperation;
	+ increase the percentage of people who are aware of EU-funded Projects.
* Achieve tangible results and measurable changes both and Programme and Project level.
* Further support and encourage beneficiaries in communication activities.

### Social Responsibility Activities as part of the Communication Strategy

The INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme long-term communication goals may be also achieved through intense, targeted social responsibility activities helping to address environmental and social issues. In that sense, social responsibility in communication includes new responses (products, services and models) to social needs that are developed in order to deliver better social outcomes, creating new social relations or cooperations. Actions may be targeted in the fields of public services, culture and leisure, health etc. The INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme, through its socially responsible communication activities, strives to inspire and create opportunities for advancement by making improvements to daily life in its eligible area.

### Target Groups

The main targeted audiences for the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme are the following

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Internal**  | **External**  |
| * European Commission/DG REGIO
* Hellenic Ministry of Economy, Development & Tourism
* Bulgarian Ministry of Regional Development & Public Works
* Managing Authority (MA)
* Bulgarian National Authority (NA)
* Joint Secretariat of the Programme (JS)
* Monitoring Committee of the Programme (MC)
* Steering Committee of the Programme (SC)
 | * Potential Beneficiaries
* Final Beneficiaries/Project Partners
* Other entities
* End users and the general public: local, regional, national and European level
* Media: local, regional, national and European level

In addition, different stakeholder groups, not necessarily directly involved in the Project implementation but still thematically of interest to the Programme or its Projects will be approached according to the needs and possibilities.  |

### Examples of different communication approaches

Different target groups need different communication approaches.Information that will be provided and the publicity that will be directed towards the various partners will be differentiated based on their separate needs. More specifically, the audiences under the category “External” mentioned above:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Targeted audience** | **Information/ Message** | **Goals/ Expected result** |
| **Potential Beneficiaries**  | **Benefits from cross-border cooperation** **Available financing:** how much, when, how, for what purpose **Information about the Programme**: nature, goals, procedures, benefits, and expected results  | * Clear and sufficient information related to:

(a) the funding opportunities and the launching of Calls; (b) the eligibility of expenditure conditions to be met in order to qualify for support under the Programme; (c) a description of the procedures for examining applications for funding and of the time periods involved; (d) the criteria for selecting the operations to be supported; * Submission of proposals from all the eligible area of the Programme
* Information about the publicity rules after financing is ensured
 |
| **Final Beneficiaries/Project Partners**  | **How an action is managed in the framework of the Programme*** **How results are publicized and better promoted**
* **Reinforcement of the expected results through the recognized good practices of the previous period**

**Benefits from cross-border cooperation and expected results** | * Clear, detailed, and continuous information and support concerning the obligations and rights of the Project Partners
* Motivation and creation of a climate of healthy competition
* Information about and commitment to adhere to the publicity rules and regulations
* Dissemination of information about the results of the Programme and the Project to other Partners as well
* Capitalizing on the results of the Programme and the Project
* Transparency concerning the management of resources of the European Union
 |
| **Other entities** Economic and Social Partners, Universities, Research institutions, Chambers, Federations and Associations, Non-Governmental Organizations  | **Information about the Programme**: nature, goals, procedures, benefits, and the expected results**Information about the available financing**: how much, when, how, for what purpose and who can apply/submit an application* **Benefits from cross-border cooperation and expected results**
 | * Promotion of the role and the achievements of cohesion policy and of the Funds through information and communication actions on the results and impact of partnership agreements, operations, joint initiatives etc.
* Dissemination of information about the results of the Programme and its Projects
* Capitalizing on the results of the Programme and its Projects
* Transparency concerning the management of resources of the European Union
 |
| **The end users & the general public**Local, regional, national and European level | **Benefits from cross-border cooperation and expected results both in Programme and Project level*** **Highlighting of the role of the European Union**
 | * Entrenchment of the message of joint contribution by the European Union and the Partner States
* Promotion of the Programme, its axes, its vision, and its goals
* Promotion of the results and benefits of the implementation of the Programme and its Projects through highlighting the good practices
* Promotion of the role and the achievements of cohesion policy and of the Funds through information and communication actions on the results and impact of partnership agreements, operations, joint initiatives etc.
* Promotion of the social and economic impact of the Programme and its Projects
* Increase of the public’s knowledge of the Programme and its Projects
* Capitalizing on the results of the Programme and its Projects
* Transparency concerning the management of resources of the European Union
 |
| **Media**Local, regional, national and European levelTelevision, Radio, Printed Press, Digital Press, Social Media | **Information about the Programme**: its nature, goals, procedures, the resources available, how they are managed, etc.* **Which are the approved Projects, who is implementing them and where**
* **The benefits and expected results of the Projects**
* **The benefits and expected results of the Programme**
 | * Media Campaign
* Regular provision to the Media of interesting news about the Programme and its Projects
* Participation of the Media in events and actions related to the Programme and its Projects
* Ensuring precision, clarity, and reliability concerning the information related to the Programme and its Projects
* Promotion of the results from the implementation of the Programme and its Projects
* Categorization of news items and promotion with the appropriate Media
* Transparency concerning the management of resources of the European Union
 |

### Indicative strategic choices

In order to fulfill the goals of the communication strategy five (5) different indicative strategic choices are available.

1. Activation of the Beneficiaries.

The role of the Final Beneficiaries and the Project Partners is important for the implementation of the Programme, because they can operate as multipliers of information.

1. Ensuring the continuity, uniformity and simplicity of communication at all the stages of the Programme and for each targeted audience.

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

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

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

* 1. -social or economic partners in order to inform the target audience about the Calls, announcements, eligibility criteria, etc.;
	2. -existing networks in the public administration, Universities and professional associations, utilizing the communication and information structures that are already functioning;
	3. -those who are in charge of the publicity among the Beneficiaries;
	4. - journalists at local and regional Media in order to ensure the diffusion of information to the shapers of public opinion.

The networks of cooperating entities can ensure the widespread dissemination of information, the avoiding of overlaps and the maximization of the results in terms of communication.

1. The promotion of already existing examples of participation in the previous Programming Period.

By presenting specific examples from the previous Programming Period both transparency and the encouragement of participation are achieved. The targeted audience, knowing that there are members of local society or some entrepreneurial sectors or the academic society who have already benefited from the Programme, will express an interest in learning more or participating in the jointly financed Programmes. Moreover, actions that are included in the Communication Plan of the Projects are interlinked and follow a single visual identity.

1. Pursuing the use of alternative and innovative ideas.

The use of alternative approaches and innovative ideas, on a case by case basis and wherever it is feasible, may strengthen the public’s interest and consequently reinforce the effectiveness of the information dissemination.

### Content of the Communication Strategy

The information and publicity measures of the Communication Strategy are expected to cover the entire duration of the Operational Programme and to be differentiated for each targeted audience. The combination of different means of and tools for communication is also necessary in order to ensure the most effective communication possible. The Communication Strategy includes all the obligatory measures that the Managing Authorities must take in accordance with Regulation (EC) no. 1303/2013. The official language of the Communication Strategy is English. However, the communication tools/ events/ materials have to be developed also in the languages of the Partner States, Greece and Bulgaria, in order to facilitate the recipient of the information in the population of Programme Area.

## Implementation Stages for Communication

There are three main implementation stages:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1st Stage****2015-2016****General information about the Programme**  | **2nd Stage2016-2020****Creation of a specific opinion about the Programme and its actions among the various target audiences, ensuring easy access to particular actions and to the opportunities that it offers**  | **3rd Stage****2020-2023****Dissemination of the results and benefits achieved, highlighting of good practices**  |
| **Indicative actions*** Launching event.
* Publication and dissemination of approved Programme documents.
* Deliver adequate information to the Potential Beneficiaries.
* Informational meetings.
* Info Day events
* Single day conferences.
* Working meetings.
 | **Indicative actions*** Implementation of annual activities.
* Publication and distribution of special informational guides/catalogues.
* Systematic organization of thematic meetings and seminars with the Beneficiaries.
* Special informational bulletins and periodic informational printed material.
* Press Conference (s).
* Media Campaign (television, radio, internet, printed press, digital press, social media, outdoor advertising, polls).
 | **Indicative actions*** Promotion of good examples and good practices in the eligible area.
* Utilization of Media in order to promote the expected results.
 |

### First Stage: General information about the Programme

During the first stage, the objective is to inform the target audiences about the Programme and its content: general objectives, axes, financing opportunities, Calls, Strategic Projects, expected results. During this stage, which begins after the approval of the Programme by the European Commission, the Managing Authority in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat are responsible to disseminate the aforementioned information. Thus, apart from the Launching Event of the Programme, a series of other events will take place in the eligible area.

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

During the second stage, the general objectives, the specific objectives and the specific priorities described in detail above are translated into goals/actions and reinforce the reliability that was created in the first stage of communication. The second stage of communication concerns the provision of specialized information in order to reinforce the pace of implementation of the Programme. During this stage, the aim is to motivate the target audiences, either to participate in the Programme’s events or to function as multipliers of information. This stage is characterized by the provision of more specialized knowledge about the content and the evolution of the Programme, the criteria and the procedures for the integration of actions, the management and monitoring of the actions of the Programme. In addition, among the other goals of the present stage is to inform the general public in a simple and understandable way about the evolution of the Programme's and Project’s interventions as well. During this stage, the Managing Authority in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat takes care of the following:

* Media Campaign.
* Implementation of annual activities.
* Publication of a list of beneficiaries.
* Hoisting of the flag of the European Union on May 9-16.
* Widespread use of the Internet.
* Publication and distribution of special informational guides.
* Systematic organization of thematic meetings and seminars with the potential beneficiaries and the beneficiaries.
* Presentation of good examples and good practices.
* Organization of special informational bulletins.
* Press conference(s).

### Third Stage: Dissemination of the results and benefits achieved, highlighting of good practices

At the third stage of communication, the results of the implementation of the Programme’s actions and the role that the European Union played in the achievement of its goals are further promoted. At this stage, communication focuses on the reinforcement and completion of the image that was created in the two previous stages. In addition, one goal is to motivate the Beneficiaries to highlight good practices, as well as to support them in order to increase the pace of implementation. During the third stage of communication, the objective is to demonstrate to the general public that the goals of intervention in the eligible area have been implemented. The actions that the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat undertake during this stage have as their goal to promote the results and benefits that result from the completion of the actions and the Projects of the Programme. Some of the means that used will be the following:

* Implementation of annual activities.
* Publication of a list of beneficiaries.
* Hoisting of the flag of the European Union on May 9-16.
* Widespread use of the Internet.
* Promotion of good examples and good practices.
* Utilization of the Media (result campaigns).

## Means of communication

Each target group determines the message to be communicated and the tools to reach it. In most cases a combination of tools is used to communicate with a given target group. All means of communication will have a common corporate identity that needs to be elaborated by the Joint Secretariat in cooperation with an external an external Communication/PR company. The main means of communication are the following:

* Webpage
* Key documents
* Publications: leaflets, brochures, special publications/catalogues
* Events: Info Day events, Conferences and Seminars
* European Cooperation Day
* Media Campaign

### Webpage

The homepage is the key source of up-to-date information. The Programme’s official webpage describes the Programme itself, outlines priorities and areas of interventions and it indicates necessary contact details. All relevant documentation such as the Application Package or the Programme documents will be available as downloads. The homepage provides also all the necessary information about the Calls, the approved and running Projects and it will collect questions and answers. The list of beneficiaries, the names of the operations and the amount of public funding allocated to the operations will as well be published through the home page. The webpage will have a news section (newsletter, events forecast, and press releases). The homepage will contain a list of links to other useful websites as well. An external company selected according to the rules and procedures defined by the national regulatory framework will be responsible for the construction and it will develop an editing system allowing the staff of the JS to enter information and to update the website rapidly with the latest information and documentation.

### Key documents

The INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme document forms the basis for the territorial co-operation between Greece and Bulgaria from 2014 to 2020. It describes the eligible area, outlines priorities and areas of interventions, designates competent authorities and provides information on Programme and Project implementation as well as financial implementation and control. Other official documents, such as the Programme Implementation Manual or the Information and Publicity-Project Partners Guidebook, complement INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme document, by giving additional, more detailed information on areas of interventions, objectives, expected outputs and results.

### Publications

* *Leaflets*

Leaflets are symbolic business cards of the Programme. They contain general information about the Programme. The target groups of leaflets are the potential applicants, the general public, national, regional and local public authorities and development agencies, trade and professional bodies, economic and social partners, non-governmental organisations (NGO’s), organisations representing business, information centres on Europe as well as Commission representations of the participating countries and educational institutions. They are aimed at encouraging a wide participation in the Programme as well as helping to spread information about the Programme. The content of leaflets will be developed by the Joint Secretariat, assisted by an external PR company PR/Communication company selected according to the rules and procedures defined by the national regulatory framework.

* *Brochures*

If leaflets are the business cards, brochures are the product catalogues of the Programme, which give comprehensive view of a given Programme Period. They are targeted at applicants and at institutions involved in the implementation as well as national, regional and local public authorities and development agencies, trade and professional bodies, economic and social partners, non-governmental organisations (NGO’s), organisations representing business, information centres on Europe as well as Commission representations of the participating countries and educational institutions. The brochures will also be developed by the JS assisted by an external PR/Communication company selected according to the rules and procedures defined by the national regulatory framework.

* *Special publications*

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

### Events

In order to strengthen the Programme’s visibility events will be organised to market the Programme to potential applicants/beneficiaries and to the wider public. Proper information and partner search facilities are provided to potential applicants by these opportunities. Events will be organised by the JS with the help of external experts if necessary.

* *Info Day events*

At the launching of the Programme a major information activity will be organised by the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat in co-operation with the National Authority to publicise the Programme and highlight the role of the European Union. The event will also provide general information on the Programme objectives, priorities and possible areas of intervention. At later stage Info Day events will be organised to help potential applicants to develop their Projects and to search for Partners. Info Day events and partner search forums will be organised by the JS in co-operation with the Managing Authority and the Bulgarian National Authority. Theseoccasions will give way to discuss Project ideas, management and implementation issues, to meet potential applicants and to facilitate partner search. These events must cover the eligible area of the Programme.

* *Conferences and seminars*

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

### European Cooperation Day

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

### Media Campaign

The Media Campaign of the 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme can be build on the good reputation of its predecessor, the Media Campaign of the ETC “Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013” Programme. The Communication Strategy of the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme must include the drafting of a communication plan, costed and phased over time, with documented effectiveness of proposals in relation to the objectives and target groups of the Communication Strategy of the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme. The design and the implementation of the Media Campaign must be done by an external /Communication PR company selected according to the rules and procedures defined by the national regulatory framework, in cooperation and according to the instructions of the Managing Authority, the Bulgarian National Authority and the Joint Secretariat.

**In any case, it should be noted that the communication tools described are indicative and not obligatory. The use of these tools depends on the budget available.**

The table below displays indicative/ suggested material. It is noted that the official language of the Programme is English; however, the production of the material in the official languages of the two countries, Greece and Bulgaria is possible in order to facilitate the recipient of the information.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Printed material** | **Audience** |
| * Informational leaflets and Brochures about the Programme and its Projects.
* Catalogue(s) of the approved Projects.
* Infographics, Manuals, Studies, Thematic Reports
* Banners
 | Local and regional authorities, potential beneficiaries, Media, general public |
| **Audio-visual material** |  |
| * Promotion film/Mood Video.
* Advertising spots for radio and television.
 | Local and regional authorities, potential beneficiaries, Media, general public |
| **Marketing** |  |
| * Brand/Corporate Identity Tools (e.g. letter templates, cards, folders, envelopes, budges, stickers, commemorative plaques )
* Pens and pencils
* Ecological bags
* USB sticks
* Shirts
* Notebooks
* Calendars
* Other memorabilia
 | Potential beneficiaries, European and national bodies, Media, general public |

## Technical characteristics of information and publicity measures

All information and publicity measures aimed at potential Beneficiaries and the general public shall include at least the following:

* the emblem of the European Union, in accordance with the graphic standards set out by the European Commission, and reference to the European Union;
* reference to the ERDF: ‘European Regional Development Fund’;
* reference to the selected logo chosen by the Managing Authority, highlighting the added value of the intervention of the Community/European Union.

The Managing Authority, in cooperation with the JS, will publish details manuals for the proper usage of the communication means by the final beneficiaries.

## Schedule for the Implementation of Communication Actions

The communication timing covers the period 2015-2023, thus representing the actual implementation period of the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme. A scheduling table of the selected actions that are foreseen and that will be implemented is set out in terms of content, evolution, and the communication needs of the Programme.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Actions** | **Stages of Communication** |
| **First Stage (2015-2016)** | **Second Stage (2016-2020)** | **Third Stage (2020-2023)** |
| **Launching Event** | ● |  |  |
| **Info Day Events** | ● |  |  |
| **Annual Events (e.g. ECDay)** | ● | ● | ● |
| **Hoisting of the E.U. Flag, May 9-16** | ● | ● | ● |
| **Publication of the Catalogue of the Approved Projects and the Beneficiaries** |  | ● | ● |
| **Internet (Webpage)** | ● | ● | ● |
| **Single-Day Conferences/ Conferences/ Fairs** | ● | ● | ● |
| **Training Seminars/Workshops** | ● | ● | ● |
| **Direct Mail (postal)** | ● | ● | ● |
| **Newsletters** | ● | ● | ● |
| **Working Meetings** | ● | ● | ● |
| **Informational Guide** | ● | ● | ● |
| **Media Campaign**  |  | ● | ● |
| **Television (requested appearances)** | ● | ● | ● |
| **Radio (requested appearances)** | ● | ● | ● |
| **Press (requested appearances)** | ● | ● | ● |
| **Internet (requested appearances)** | ● | ● | ● |
| **Press Conference(s)** |  | ● | ● |
| **Outdoor Advertising** | ● | ● | ● |
| **Social Media (e.g. twitter)** | ● | ● | ● |

## Responsibilities

The Communication Strategy will be implemented under the responsibility of the Managing Authority in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat. The implementation of the measures at Programme level will be carried out by the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat, while at Project level the Managing Authority, the Joint Secretariat and the National Authority will provide necessary information to potential applicants/beneficiaries.

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The **Joint Secretariat** has the following indicative tasks in co-operation with the Managing Authority and the National Authority:

* to develop a strategy for information and publicity and to develop an overall system for public relations connected to the Programme;
* to make sure that a common corporate identity of the Programme will be used in all means of communication;
* to develop informational material for dissemination;
* to assist the preparation of presentations, other specific publications and relevant material to be used in public events;
* to maintain and update the Programme’s webpage;
* to organise information events with partners from the Programme area;
* to maintain necessary public relations with the media;
* to be responsive to any request of information;
* to disseminate the best practices in terms of information and publicity;
* to maintain constant information on committed funds, for further dissemination and Project development.

## Indicative budget

The Communication Strategy includes a basic estimation of the budget allocated to information and publicity. For the exact estimation of the budget, the experience during the previous Programming Period, as well as the specific needs of the 2014-2020 Programme are going to be taken into account. These joint information and publicity measures will be financed through the technical assistance budget in the amount of 1.008.706, 00 €, which equals approximately to 0,8 % of the total allocation. The following table presents and indicative budget break-down by group of communication actions.

|  |
| --- |
| **Indicative Budget Break-down** |
| **Communication action** | **Indicative budget** |
| Events (Launching event, Info Day Events, Conferences, Seminars, Workshops, Press conferences etc.) | 390.000 € |
| Media Campaign (TV, radio, newspapers etc) | 500.000 € |
| ICT (Internet, webpage, etc.) | 30.000 € |
| Other (marketing material, publications etc) | 88.706. € |
| **Total:** | **1.008.706 €** |

## Implementation Procedures

The implementation of the Communication Strategy will be effectively managed by drawing up annual action plans of Communication. These annual action plans for Communication will identify the main activities and tools according to the phases and related communication needs and strategy. The annual action plans of Communication will have the necessary level of detail for ensuring the optimised management of the present Communication Strategy and allowing monitoring and evaluation activities. According to specific and practical needs, the implementation of some communication activities and tools might be outsourced, in the respect of the European principles transparency and respect of the free competition market rules. The Managing Authority in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat will implement the administrative procedures needed for outsourcing both activities and tools (e.g. Media Campaign).

### Monitoring and Reporting of the Communication Strategy[[5]](#footnote-5)

According to the EC Regulation no. 1303/2013, the Managing Authority in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat shall inform the Monitoring Committee of the Programme of the following:

* progress and implementation of the Communication Strategy;
* information and publicity measures carried out;
* means of communication used.

The Managing Authority in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat shall provide the Monitoring Committee with examples of such measures. Moreover, the Annual Reports and the Final Report on implementation of the Communication Strategy of the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme shall include:

* examples of information and publicity measures for the Programme carried out when implementing the Communication Strategy;
* the content of any major amendments to the Communication Strategy.

## Evaluation of the information and publicity measures

The Managing Authority in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat evaluates the information and publicity actions that are expected to be organized in the framework of the Programme. The evaluation of these actions based on the Communication Strategy and in accordance to qualitative and quantitative objectives depending on the nature of the actions. In particular, indicative indicators for evaluation are broken down into the following:

**Output Indicators**,which record publicity actions such as:

* Number of events (Info Day events, single-day conferences, seminars, workshops).
* Number of appearances in the Media (television, radio, press, internet).
* Cooperation with journalists and the Media (press conferences).
* Updating the Website.
* Types and number of printed matter.

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

* Number of participants per single-day conference.
* Number of appearances in the press and the mass media.
* Amount of printed matter in circulation.
* Number of press releases published, etc.

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

* + via questionnaires on the opinion of the participants at events and/ or
	+ via specifically designed field research on the opinion and knowledge of specific target groups before and after specific communication actions.

## non discrimination measures

The INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme’s website will include some special features to support people with disabilities (e.g. people whose eyesight is damaged). In addition, in case of organising events –information sessions, seminars, workshops, conferences etc– the venue of the event will be chosen in a way that direct access to people in wheelchairs will be possible, in order to enable their participation. In some cases special services may be needed to enable people with disabilities to access to information. For example deaf people may require interpretation, while blind or physically handicapped people may require personal assistance during events. Assistance to disabled people during information events will be organised and such support services will be financed under the TA budget.

1. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Article 116 (2), Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Article 116 (3), Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/cretu/announcements/connecting-greece-and-bulgarias-border-regions-adoption-new-interreg-programme-worth-eu129-million_en> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Article 116, Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)