



Cross border cooperation Programme 2007-2013

Communication Guidance to Projects INTERREG IV A 2 Seas Programme

Managing Authority: Nord-Pas de Calais Regional Council



VERSION 2 – NOVEMBER 2009



Part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)



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1. Context

This guidance is aimed at helping Communication Managers in INTERREG IV A 2Seas project to draft a communication strategy and undertake effective communication activities which respect the EU mandatory requirements.

Project communication should make the involvement of the European Union known to the general public, reach stakeholders who could have an interest in following a project's development and disseminate the results for the benefit of the whole cross-border area and of the European Union.

2. Basis: Regulatory requirements

Communication actions designed in the framework of a project part-financed by the INTERREG IV A 2Seas Programme must follow a set of rules that are defined in the:

- Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 (Articles 8 and 9) + Annex I
- Interreg IV A 2 Seas Programme Guidance on eligibility, Article 8
- Interreg IV A 2 Seas Subsidy Contract, Article 8
- Interreg IV A 2 Seas Partnership Agreement, Article 15

These texts make the following elements mandatory for all communication in projects for example through websites, documents - reports, presentations, invitations etc.- , publications, promotion materials - T-shirts, bags, cups, umbrellas etc.- , press releases, newsletters, billboards, signs, commemorative plaques, panel, events of any kind...:

A. Reference to the European Union

Reference should be made to the European Union involvement by using the three following items **TOGETHER**:

1. Emblem of the EU (the flag)
2. Reference to the European Union
3. Reference to the contribution of the European Regional Development Fund

These elements should be clearly visible and not smaller than the project's own identification items.

For small items (e.g. usb key), the European flag could be used alone.

Be careful to use it for events organised by the partnership (invitation, programme, name tags, displays...).

B. Programme Logo

The Programme Logo (see annex 5) must also be systematically used.

Be careful to use it for events organised by the partnership (invitation, programme, name tags, displays...).



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C. Slogan

The Programme's slogan "Investing in your future" has been chosen by the Managing Authority to highlight the added value of the intervention by European funds.

It should be used on all communication products.

D. Promoting European involvement

When applying for funding from the INTERREG IV A 2 Seas Programme, partners undertake to promote European Union involvement. All communication activities must mention that the project is part-funded by the ERDF. Press releases, newsletter or similarly developed promotional documents must detail the benefits of this involvement for the concerned area and the project.

E. Website and hyperlinks

Project-related websites must contain, in addition to the above mentioned measures, hyperlinks to other related Commission websites and websites of the Programme and related projects.

F. Disclaimer

Any notice or publication by the project, in whatever form and on or by whatever means including the Internet, must specify that it reflects the author's views and that the Programme Authorities are not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

G. Investments and equipment

Every part-financed piece of equipment and/ or investment shall be marked with a special label including the European emblem, the Programme's official denomination (see Annex 7) and the Programme logo as well as reference to ERDF (see Annex 5). This labelling must be clearly visible and must not be removed even after the closure of the project.

Projects that receive more than €500.000 of ERDF funding for infrastructure or construction activities shall put up a billboard during the project implementation and, not later than six months after completion of the project, a permanent explanatory plaque. Both items should be visible and of significant size and include the Programme logo, European emblem, as well as reference the ERDF.



3. Other requirements

A. Communication Strategy

The partners are committed to play an active role in any actions organised to disseminate the results of the project to the general public and potentially interested stakeholders.

The Lead Partner has a special role in public relations coordination and is in charge of drafting and implementing a Communication Strategy.

The document will be sent to the JTS together with the 2nd Progress Report.

B. Reporting

The project undertakes to send a copy of any publicity and information material produced to the JTS.

Any information, media appearance, or other publicity of the operation will equally be communicated to the JTS for potential website updates or showcases.

The JTS should be invited to attend the public events organised by the project. The JTS should also receive pictures of the events which took place or of billboards or any communication tool for which sending a sample is impossible.

4. How to communicate effectively: Some advice and tips

Respecting the mandatory requirements for publicity of INTERREG IV A 2 Seas projects means that your project should not face the threat of a budgetary sanction (see section 6). It does not mean however that your communication will be effective. Here are some points you should think of in order to maximise the impact of the resources you put on communicating your project.

A. Internal organisation

The project has to nominate a Communication Manager in the Application Form. It's the Communication Manager who will have overall responsibility for communication of the project and should decide on the actions to undertake, the planning, as well as estimate the required effect. This does not mean however that other partner can take on communication responsibilities within a project.

Furthermore, it could be a good idea to additionally have specific contact points in the other partner organisations regarding communication to check if the translations are well done or if the communication supports are adapted to the specificities of each national/regional audience.

The partnership will also have to determine how decisions on communication will be taken within the partnership: Who should have a say? When a decision is made final? How long should it take?

This should be decided from the very beginning as communication cannot be effective outside an organised framework and must be planned in advance.



B. Communication through project life-cycle / planning of activities

Communication must rely on the project life-cycle. The Communication Manager has to check that communication activities are coordinated with the launch of the project, major milestones and closure, but also that they take into account external events that could have an influence on or maximise the communication strategy.

Tip: List the significant days for your project: Europe Day on 9th May; local, regional or national events related to the partnership's objectives or the project's theme. Make sure that your communication actions are regularly planned with mid and long-term objectives.

Start as soon as possible to think about communicating on the project's results.

C. Maximising communication and resources

Your project has been supported and is being implemented by existing organisations. In many cases all of these organisations will already have their own Communication Officers. It is in your interest to get to know them to help you:

- Benefit from their experience and specific knowledge of their respective area and audience.
- Ask them to relay your information. It is particularly interesting to reach local media or stakeholders.
- Coordinate your actions to benefit from their organised events to communicate your project (e.g. using a banner display or leaflets...), or, on the one hand, to avoid reducing your impact by having major communication actions taking place at the same time.

D. Multilingual/multicultural aspect of the project

The particularity of your project is that it is cross-border. This implies that it has at least two partners with two different languages and cultures. Communication will be fruitless and ineffective if these elements are not carefully taken into account.

Think more precisely about:

- Translation.
Translation costs should be budgeted or alternative solutions (in-house translation) planned. Translation planning must be taken into account in all actions to get your material on time (press release, leaflets, website...). Similarly interpretation should be planned for events.



Tip: When you are writing in your mother tongue, avoid 'play-on-words' or cultural references that could be difficult to translate.

- Adaptation of the messages to national specificities.
The success of the Communication Strategy for a project, assembling partners from different countries, depends on the adequacy of the messages to the target audiences. This is particularly important for messages to the general public and the media.

Tip: Think of special link your project might have with the targeted country/region. Be careful on messages that could be ill-perceived on the other side of the border.

E. Being recognisable

All the actions you might undertake or the documents you will produce will have more impact if their author i.e. the project, can easily be recognised. You can think of creating a logo to that end, which will be placed on all your communication supports, and used in all the events you organise.

Tip: If you have no project logo as such you could at least decide on a colour and a specific font you will use to design your documents, website and promotional material.

F. Communication at the end of the project and beyond

The closure of your project does not mean that communication is over. Think of what will last: a website, billboards, permanent equipment, and of how information will be updated when the project has finished. Communication after the end of the project is a way of ensuring the sustainability of the activities undertaken and results obtained and should be planned at the beginning of the project (objectives, timeframe and available resources).

5. Sanctions: flat-rate cut

Would any of the conditions mentioned under section 2 not be met by any of the project partners, this could imply a **recovery** of the funds unduly paid. The recovery would be applied in percentage to the aid given.



6. JTS communication support

For more information you can contact the JTS :

contact@interreg4a-2mers.eu

+33(0)320 21 84 85

www.interreg4a-2mers.eu

7. Supporting material: ANNEXES

In the annexes you will find:

- how to draft a Communication Strategy (annex1)
- How to draft a press release (annex 2)
- Organising a successful event (annex 3)
- List of communication tools and events and related audiences (annex 4)
- Logos (annex 5)
- Glossary (annex 6)
- Programme denomination in the Programme's languages (annex 7)

If you think that other communication tools could be introduced as annexes please don't hesitate to contact the JTS for suggestion.



ANNEX 1: How to draft a Communication Strategy

A Communication Strategy is a document in which all the elements are indicated that are part of the successful communication for your project. These elements are: the context, the objectives, the messages, the target groups (audience), the tools/activities to be used, the resources you have (and the related limits and constraints), feedback/evaluation and adjustment of the Communication Strategy. They all have to be carefully defined in order to plan the effects of your communication.

1. Context

This part of the document should expose the reasons and needs for communication. It should set beginning and end dates.

Tip: Think of detailing the specificities that will shape your communication actions: INTERREG context, countries concerned, type of project, duration.

2. Objectives

To be able to determine the actions to take, you must be first able to set the objectives you want to reach.

Do you want to make the general public aware of a specific issue?

Do you want to ensure the sustainability of the project's results?

Do you want to establish the ground to further steps after the project is over?

One of these objectives will have to be the promotion of the European Union investment.

3. Messages

Define a few messages that you will use in all your communication activities.

Messages can be about the project objectives, the partners involved, the reasons for the project to be launched.

One of these messages will have to be the part-funding of the project through the INTERREG IV A 2 Seas Programme.

4. Audience

In the same way that your project defined target groups to its activities, you will have to define who you want to reach.

Target groups can be:

- General public,
- Media,
- Stakeholders,
- Universities and research institutions
- Associations
- Local, regional and national authorities
- Partners to the project

Tip: Try to be as precise as possible, and if needed to sub-divide the target groups according to their languages, area, knowledge of the subject.

The objectives and the messages you define will help you in choosing your target groups.



5. Products and activities.

At this stage, recap all the elements you've defined so far: context, objectives, messages and target groups. They are your guide to choose the right products and activities to communicate effectively about your project.

Products can be:

- Website,
- Documents (reports, presentations, invitations etc.),
- Publications (leaflets...)
- Promotion materials (T-shirts, bags, cups, umbrellas etc.),
- Press releases,
- Newsletters
- Billboards,
- Signs,
- Commemorative plaques, etc.

Activities can be:

- Seminars,
- conferences,
- Exhibitions...

You will find in annex 6 an indicative list of appropriate tools and activities for certain target groups.

6. Resources

To define your resources here is a list of questions to be answered:

- Who is working on communication? Full-time? Part-time?
- How is the communication decision-process organised?
- What are the time constraints?
- What budget is allocated to communication activities?
- What other resources could be additionally used (existing material, venues)...
- What contacts do you have?

7. Evaluation

Evaluating your communication activities is the best way of being sure that the messages are adapted to your audience and that you've reached your goal. If this is not the case, evaluation allows you to adapt and find alternatives.

Evaluation can be made through:

- Post-event or online surveys,
- Inscriptions to the newsletter,
- Website statistics,
- Inscriptions to events organised,
- Requests for further information,
- Articles published on the project...



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THINGS TO REMEMBER

During the drafting of the Communication Strategy, think of:

- ✓ Carefully defining audiences and messages
- ✓ Promoting the European Union involvement
- ✓ Maximising communication and resources
- ✓ Being realistic about your capacities and resources, and constraints
- ✓ Organising communication activities (What? When? How? Who?)
- ✓ Integrating the multilingual and multicultural aspects of the project
- ✓ Planning activities
- ✓ Communicating through project life-cycle
- ✓ Disseminating the results
- ✓ Communicating after the project



ANNEX 2: How to draft a press release

A press release is a short text you send to journalists to inform them about a specific element of the project. The press release obeys a specific model, and there are some rules to follow to make your communication towards journalists more effective, and their job easier.

Rule 1: Plan!

Depending on the media contacts you may have you will have to adapt your planning. Be sure for instance that your press release is sent out early enough to meet monthly newspaper or magazine deadlines, but not too early so that you catch journalists' interest at the right time. If you're late in your planning but feel that it would be good to inform the media about certain information, it is recommended to check whether this piece of information can be supported by external events or other information of importance. If this is the case, try to send out your press release accordingly.

Rule 2: Be sure you have something to say!

Journalists are overloaded by press releases received every day. If they know that you send out press releases only when really necessary they will be more inclined to read it.

Meaningful information can be:

- Launch of the project with planning, objectives, elements that make this a project of importance, problems that will be solved thanks to it, quote of political supports...
- Major mid-term events or meaningful milestone reports
- Closure of the project with results, statistics, testimonies of beneficiaries...
-

It is not recommended to publish a press release to announce an event. If you wish journalists to attend this event it is better to send out an invitation via e-mail with clear information on the date, time and venue and with a contact person.

Rule 3: Focus!

To make the press release effective you have to be sure that it is targeted at the right journalists. Most journalists, even when working for a general newspaper, are specialised on a specific matter; make sure that the subject you're dealing with is of interest to them.

Be careful to focus as well on the message you're giving. Don't try to give too much information at once. Choose a catchy piece of information and make it your core message. If a journalist is interested he/she will contact you to get further details if needed.

If you feel like more information is needed, you can plan a press briefing: a portfolio with all necessary documents to give the overview of the subject, including the press release. This kind of tool is usually designed for press conferences.

Rule 4: Follow the rules!

As previously stated a press release should follow a pattern:

- a) The document should be labelled "press release" centred at the top, together with your logo/name of the project on one side and the European flag/ERDF mention/2Seas logo on the other side.
- b) A press release should never be more than one page, excluding annexes.
- c) It should have a short, precise and catchy title



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- d) There should be a short paragraph (2/3 short sentences) exposing the main elements. It should ideally answer the following questions: Who? When? Where? What? Why? How?
- e) The core message should be organised in short paragraphs. Paragraphs should go from major information to details.
- f) A quote from a well-known representative if possible/needed is recommended
- g) Include contact details. Check them carefully and don't forget to include your website address. Interested journalists must be able to reach you easily and quickly if they need more details or wish to check some facts. If a journalist contacts you and you need to look for the information wanted, think of asking what the deadline for answering is.
- h) Annexes. They can be statistics, graphs, maps, technical specifications. Annexes are the right place to give details about INTERREG part-funding your project. Don't hesitate to ask the JTS if needed.

Rule 5: Make it appealing!

Try to write in a catchy way. Don't forget that you're addressing journalists and that they don't know about your project specificities even if they are specialised in the project area. They will be your channel to reach the general public so try to be catchy, precise and easily understandable. If necessary ask someone not part of the project to read your draft to be sure about it. Be careful not to use abbreviations without explaining their meaning.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

During the drafting of the press release, think of:

- ✓ Catchy title
- ✓ One message
- ✓ Main information, then details
- ✓ One page max
- ✓ No approximation. No abbreviations
- ✓ Define the journalists to be targeted
- ✓ Check, check and check your contact details!



ANNEX 3: Organising a successful event

These are the main questions to answer to organise a successful event

1. Who

Who is concerned by the event?

Who will organise it and how organisation will be coordinated?

Who will be the speaker(s) for the event?

Who should be invited to attend the event?

2. What

What is the subject to deal with?

What do you want to achieve?

What are the resources available? (Budget, equipment, human resources)

What will be the Programme of the day?

What kind of event should it be? (Launch event, conference, seminar, exhibition, press conference, workshop...)

3. When

When is this event taking place?

Have you checked that there were no conflicting events on this day?

When are the speakers available? (Date AND time)

When are you taking actions: Plan ahead and define precise steps and checklists.

4. Where

Where is the ideal venue for the event?

Is the capacity of this place in line with the type of event you've defined?

Is access to the place easy?

5. How

Set a working programme with deadlines

Invite people and precise a deadline for reply

Determine who will be in charge of what on that day

List the equipment and documents needed

THINGS TO REMEMBER

During the event preparation, think of:

- ✓ Process for booking
- ✓ Invitation and reply slips
- ✓ VIPs and attendant registration
- ✓ What if cancellation
- ✓ Rehearsal and equipment test
- ✓ Speakers and alternative speakers
- ✓ Catering and cloakroom
- ✓ Itinerary to reach the event
- ✓ Access by public transports and access for people with disabilities
- ✓ Security
- ✓ Evaluation and follow-up



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ANNEX 4: Communication tools and audiences

	Communication products	Target groups
Electronic & AV support	Website	All target groups, depending on subjects
	Audio-visual support (documentary, registration)	All target groups, mainly journalists and general public.
Publications	Report	Partners Stakeholders JTS Local, regional, national authorities Journalists Universities and research institutes
	Fact sheets	Partners Journalists Stakeholders Universities and research institutes
	Newsletter	All target groups, depending on subjects
	Leaflet	All target groups
Promotional material	Press release	Journalists
	Press briefing	Journalists
	Billboards, Signs Commemorative plaques	General public
	Posters	All target groups
	Conference display material (banners, displays, stands)	Partners Stakeholders JTS Local, regional, national authorities Journalists Universities and research institutes
	Promotion material	General public, Partners
Events	Conference	Partners Stakeholders JTS Local, regional, national authorities Journalists Universities and research institutes
	Working group	Partners Stakeholders Associations
	Seminar	Partners Stakeholders Associations University and research institutes
	Exhibition	General public



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ANNEX 5: Official Programme Logos

1. European symbol



The European flag can be downloaded from

http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/emblem/download_fr.htm in JPG and EPS format.

The graphical manual is available at

http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/emblem/graphics1_en.htm

2. Programme logo



The Programme logos are available upon request to the JTS in JPG format.

They will be made available online once the final website of the Programme is developed.

3. Use of the logos

As explained in section 2 on mandatory requirements, both logos must be used on each communication support your project will use.

Some rules should be followed while doing so

- Logos should be as big as any other emblem appearing on the support (i.e. partners or project logo)
- Logos should be on a neutral background without details making it difficult to see them clearly.
- Both logos are designed in blue shades. They should not be applied on a blue background to be sure that they are clearly distinct from this background.
- Size and proportions of the logo must be respected.



4. Emblem to be used on billboards for important equipment or investment

Emblems as described in the eligibility guidance (see below) will be developed in a professional format and made available to projects.





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ANNEX 6: Glossary English/French/Dutch

A glossary of all the specific vocabulary for the INTERREG IV A 2 Seas Programme is currently being elaborated.

This glossary can be conveyed to translators, interpreters, meeting participants, speakers... to be sure that the right wording is used.

The JTS will put it online on its website www.interreg4a-2mers.eu as soon as possible.



ANNEX 7: Programme's official denomination

French

INTERREG IV A 2 Mers Seas Zeeën
Programme de coopération transfrontalière 2007-2013
« Investir dans votre futur »

English

INTERREG IV A 2 Mers Seas Zeeën
Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013
"Investing in your future"

Dutch

INTERREG IV A 2 Mers Seas Zeeën
Grensoverschrijdend samenwerkingsprogramma 2007-2013
"Investeren in je toekomst"