# Italy - Croatia
# Cross-border Cooperation
# Programme 2014-2020

# Communication Strategy

# Summary

# List of acronyms abbreviations

AA: Audit Authority

CA: Certifying authority

CBC: Cross-border cooperation

CP: Cooperation Programme

CPR: Common Provision Regulation

CSF: Common Strategic Framework

ERDF: European Regional Development Fund

ETC: European Territorial Cooperation

EUSAIR: European Union Strategy for Adriatic Ionian Region

ICT: Information and Communication technology

IP: Investment Priority

IPA: Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance

JS: Joint Secretariat

MA: Managing Authority

MC: Monitoring Committee

MED: Mediterranean Transnational Cooperation Programme 2007 - 2013

MS: Member States

PA: Priority Axis

SEE: South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme 2007 - 2013

SME: Small and Medium enterprise

SO: Specific Objective

SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

TA: Technical Assistance

TF: Task Force

TO: Thematic Objective

# 1. Introduction

This Communication Strategy sets the framework and serves as the guidelines for the communication activities to be implemented within the INTERREG V-A ITALY – CROATIA COOPERATION PROGRAMME 2014-2020 (hereinafter: Programme). It is an overarching, 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 strategy has been elaborated by the Joint Secretariat (JS) of the Programme, with the co-ordination of the Managing Authority (MA) and the Monitoring Committee (MC).

## 1.1. *Past cooperation*

Notwithstanding with the fact this programming period is the first one financing a specific CBC instrument between, Italy and Croatia have a long history of cooperation not only at national but also at regional and local level.

Throughout the years several initiatives have been taken place in terms of signature of Memoranda of Understanding or setting up of platform for cooperation (the Adriatic Ionian Initiative, the Adriatic Euroregion, etc.).

It is however in the framework of the EU financial instruments that the CBC between Italy and Croatia has developed its full potentials. The **Adriatic New Neighborhood Programme INTERREG/CARDS-PHARE 2000 – 2006** and its successor **Adriatic CBC 2007 - 2013** supported by IPA have represented a training field for different public and private actors of the regions involved to enforce mutual understanding and develop common practices that shall be boosted in the framework of the next programming period.

At the same time, several projects involving Italian and Croatian beneficiaries have been developed and implemented also in the framework of the transnational cooperation, first under the CADSES programme, later under MED and SEE.

Additionally, the deployed outcomes of the TWINNING exercise involving as partners, among others, the Italian Ministry of Economic Development, the Croatian Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds and the Agency for Regional Development of the Republic of Croatia - welcomed by all the involved actors as a real "success story" - have strengthened and furthered the mutual understanding and cooperation spirit also at institutional level paving the way for a programme that is ready to deliver its development benefits to the whole eligible area in an efficient and sustainable way.

Finally, it is worth to highlight that during the programming process a wide consultation exercise has been carried out. The aim of the process was to validate Task Force strategic choices (thematic concentration) for the Italy Croatia CBC Programme and to collect additional inputs and suggestions as well as ideas on potential cross-border issues to be supported. Stakeholders and relevant partners were involved through events and a parallel on-line consultation aimed at:

- learning the stakeholders preferences about the TOs and the IPs preselected by the TF;

- collecting actions suggested by the stakeholders that could be introduced into the CP;

• getting the stakeholders opinion about particular issues (marine dimension, strategic project and targeted calls, etc.).

The invitation was sent to 2119 stakeholders. The survey recorded 262 answers (around 80% from Italy and around 20% from Croatia, regularly shared between different stakeholders typologies).

## 1.2. *Focus for the 2014 – 2020 programming period*

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

For the 2014 – 2020 period, the Programme will work hard for  establishing a strong connection and feeling of ownership in the beneficiaries of the Programme, focusing on presenting the visible results of the previous programmes and the possibilities for their further development within the present one.

The Programme intends to assume an active role in direct communication with the (potential) beneficiaries, using all the most recent developments in the field of communication technology available, to reach as wide an audience as possible, and focusing on a more interactive approach in order to engage the target audiences and increase the attractiveness of the Programme and promote its comparative advantages and distinctive features.

While both EU funded projects in general and cross-border cooperation in particular are still struggling to come to attention of the citizens of the EU, the recent Eurobarometer surveys (Flash Barometers 422 "Cross-border cooperation in the EU" and 423 "Citizens' awareness and perceptions of EU regional policy") have shown that the situation in the two Member States involved in this Programme is equal to the European average. 31% of respondents have heard about EU-funded CBC activities. Awareness is slightly higher on the Croatian side (33%) than on the Italian side of the border (30%).
However, overall public awareness is still comparatively low, especially among younger population that tend to be less aware of EU-funded CBC activities (i.e. age in range 15-24 only 23%, age in range 25-39 only 26%). Thus, one of the objectives of this document and communication activities within the Programme will be to raise awareness of the citizens and to show the benefits that Italian-Croatian cross-border cooperation brings to the Programme area.

## 1.3. *Legal Framework*

The Communication Strategy of Interreg V-A Italy-Croatia Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 was prepared in accordance with the following documents:

• INTERREG V-A ITALY-CROATIA COOPERATION PROGRAMME 2014-2020, adopted by the European Commission with Decision No. C(2015)9342 on 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;

• 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.

## 1.4. *Methodology*

In order to define the content of this Communication Strategy in a comprehensive and efficient way, the document was prepared reflecting and taking into account:

• 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 as expressed by the Flash Barometers 422 and 423 results[1];

• The special needs of the different groups potentially involved in the Programme, both at management and beneficiary levels;

• Lessons learned and experiences gained within the previous cooperation programmes through an analysis of the evaluation exercises.

The assessment and analysis of the above provided enough elements for framing the scope of the strategy into a selected number of communication fields to be considered as broad objectives:

• **Facilitating and enhancing cooperation in public administration and strengthening internal communication capacity**

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[1] http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/search/cross-border/surveyKy/1565

**• Involving stakeholders and attracting relevant beneficiaries for ensuring programme impacts**

**• Supporting projects during their implementation**

**• Raising awareness of the programme goals and making the achievements visible**

In order to target programme communication, and to frame the communication strategy, a systematic approach was followed per each of the selected communication fields.

In total, a number of communication <u>aims</u> were identified („What does the Programme want to achieve with communication?").

For each aim, those <u>target audiences</u> that are relevant for achieving the respective aim were derived („Whom does the Programme have to communicate with in order to achieve the aim?").

For each target audience, <u>tactics</u> for communication were selected („How does the Programme want to interact with the different target audiences in order to achieve the aim?"). Tactics refer to different types of interaction between those active in Programme communication and the target audiences. They are an important element of communication strategy planning, as they allow the planner to verify if certain activities are likely to achieve the aim or not.

And finally, a number of indicative <u>activities</u> for each tactics were listed. The activities are deliberately indicative, because recent periods have taught us to be flexible in developing new communication activities. Flexibility may be needed in order to achieve the aims, e.g. as a result of an intermediary evaluation, in response to changing political objectives outside the Programme's scope, or due to technical advances (e.g. social media, mobile devices etc.).

# 2. Communication fields

## 2.1. *The message*

The strategic orientation of the Programme is briefly described in the CP.

The central location of the Adriatic basin (affecting the transportation patterns and socioeconomic processes in the cooperation area), the maritime character of historical trade relations, the joint asset of natural areas and cultural heritage, offering a unique competitive advantage, the shared importance of economy branches exploiting the rich natural sea based resources are illustrative fields that point to an essential role of the blue and green economy for the sustainable regional growth in the cooperation area. These issues are at the core of the strategic intervention by the Italy – Croatia Programme, driven by the overall objective: *"To increase the prosperity and the blue growth potential of the area by stimulating cross-border partnerships able to achieve tangible changes".*

The above is to be reflected also in the communication activities during the Programme's life cycle.

All communication fields, therefore, should be focused on relaying this vision to as wide an audience as possible, maintaining a clear focus and tailoring the message to match the needs of the most relevant target groups. All communication should focus on the goals and objectives set out in the CP, pointing out the distinctiveness and comparative advantages of the region 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, when possible, put into a wider perspective of their contribution to the EU Cohesion Policy.

Based on the vision of the Programme, the region's strong points and the programme objectives described in the CP, some key expressions to have in mind when considering communication about the Programme are: blue growth; active and motivated communities; sustainable development of rich natural and cultural assets; enhanced innovation capacity of SMEs; enhanced institutional capacity; green transport patterns; education and shared knowledge etc.

All communication, internal, as well as external, is to be guided by the principles of transparency and clarity of expression, with keeping the proclaimed values of the EU and of the two Member States in highest regard at all times. As agreed by both Member States and consequently as approved in the Cooperation Programme document, the working language of the Programme will be English, with the principle of equal opportunities observed.

The communication strategy was framed for each of the four fields in which communication plays a major role (see chapter 1.4). The strategy comprises aims, target audiences relevant to achieving these aims and tactics, specifying the types of interaction between the MA/JS and the target audiences.

## 2.2. *Communication fields*

### 2.2.1  Facilitating and enhancing cooperation in public administration and strengthening internal communication capacity

As a number of bodies are directly or indirectly involved in the Programme's administration, the MA/JS have set six specific aims to facilitate efficient cooperation among them. One aim is to make auditors and controllers aware of the Programme scope and rules as well as their roles (a). The MA/JS will target auditors and controllers both through providing key information in writing, and through creating opportunities for dialogue. As EUSAIR stakeholders will play an important role, the MA/JS aim (b) at making them aware of the scope of the programme, their roles as projects generators. Furthermore, organisations/authorities hosting the Programme's managing bodies in both Member States are to be made aware of the Programme and the usefulness of its achievements (c). This will be pursued by providing face to face information and by frequent dialogue on the management level of the organisations involved.

The implementation of the Communication Strategy is a horizontal management task of all Programme staff members, affecting in particular Joint Secretariat including BOs, but also MA, NA and Control System. Implementation is ensured by planning and monitoring of the activities within the Programme by the Senior Communication Manager, who is responsible for the co-ordination and implementation of the Strategy with the continuous support of the Communication Officer and the staff of JS BOs, especially regarding the communication actions targeted at beneficiaries in the Programme area. Ensuring that an internal communication system is set up internally in JS and MA as well as between JS and MA and the other bodies such as MC and NAs (d)

Ensuring consistent quality across all programme bodies is key to successful communication and ultimately will lead to increase satisfaction of stakeholders. This requires the strengthening of professional communication capacity among the key programme bodies, which are regularly in contact with potential applicants, beneficiaries and other audiences (e).

The expected result of the internal capacity-building will be an increasingly positive feedback of stakeholders on assistance and communication of key programme bodies with applicants, and generation of two-way channel between beneficiaries and stakeholders and programme management bodies as envisaged by aim (f).

| Aims | Target groups | Tactics | Activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. Auditors and Controllers are aware of the Programme scope and understand their role and the programme rules<br><br>b. EUSAIR stakeholders are aware of the Programme scope and understand their role and the programme rules<br><br>c. Organisations   authorities | First   Level Controllers, FLC designation bodies,   AA, GoA EUSAIR stakeholders Organisation Authorities hosting MA and | Provide key information in written<br>Create opportunities for dialogue<br>Network and engage in joint activities<br>Provide face to face information & continuous strategic dialogue<br>Feed targeted information into communication channels | Financial seminars Meetings: GoA<br><br>Webinar and information pills on administrative issues and update of programme management Programme web-site dedicated section |

| hosting managing bodies (MA, AA, CA, JS) are aware of the Programme and usefulness of its achievements<br><br>d. Smooth and efficient flows of information are ensured between MC-NAs-MA-JS and between the staff members of MA and JS<br><br>e. Programme bodies, especially those regularly in contact with potential applicants, beneficiaries and other audiences, able to communicate efficiently<br><br>f. Increase the internal capacity building of the Programme bodies staff | JS<br>MC<br>NAs<br>MA and JS | Participation of the staff to the relevant and external thematic events and trainings. | Infographics and smart learning objects on main project results to disseminate on social networks and EUSAIR stakeholders platform<br><br>Support to national/ regional seminars<br><br>Individual consultations<br><br>Participate in INTERACT events and other European platforms meetings and acitivities<br><br>Face-to-face meetings Contributions: newsletters, reports, events<br><br>Regular meetings between the management bodies<br><br>Regular internal meetings<br><br>Digital activities including national websites, social media advertising, etc.<br><br>Trainings and workshops organized for the staff on particular communication topics and digital tools<br><br>Knowledge and web learning centre and collaborative space for all members of programme governing structure<br><br>Organize and facilitate (proactively and upon demand) thematic networking, and meetings with Monitor Committee members and other institutions |

## 2.2.2 Involving stakeholders and attracting relevant beneficiaries for ensuring programme impacts

Five specific aims were set towards potential applicants. MA/JS strive to raise awareness among potential applicants about the Programme as a funding source

a) To engage them into project development

b) To make them aware of rules and requirements for projects

c) MA/JS will target potential applicants on the one hand through one-way information in easy language

d) To improve the quality of the programme's content: for instance by advising the programme's monitoring committee on the thematic orientation of the programme (e.g. by performing gap analyses and proposing key areas for thematic calls) or by advising projects on content-related issues as distinct from assistance offered by the joint secretariat to applicants

e) To exploit the results of cross-border cooperation projects and make them available to a wider audience of regional policy stakeholders across Europe, making peer reviews between all stakeholders in support of policy improvement and monitor the developments of  Structural Funds in cooperation area.

| Aims | Target groups | Tactics | Activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. Raise awareness: potential partners know the Programme as funding source; <br><br> b. Increase knowledge and engagement: potential applicants know how, where, when and with whom to apply for what <br><br> c. Applicants are aware of the rules and requirements and where to collect details and gather all relevant information <br><br> d. Improve the quality of the programme's content <br><br> e. Exploit the results of cross-border cooperation projects and make them available to a wider audience of regional policy stakeholders across Europe | • Potential applicants/ beneficiaries as defined in each PA of the CP; <br> • National officers; <br> • EU relevant bodies; <br> • Key bodies of overlapping Interreg programmes and macro-regional strategies; <br> • Media and multipliers | Provide one-way information about the scope of the Programme and technicalities in simplified language <br><br> Provide contact opportunities with JS <br><br> Provide contact opportunities with regional offices/ contact points <br><br> Provide contact opportunities for applicants among each other <br><br> Classical media relations will then be used to raise awareness and to increase traffic to the programme website as the first point of entry to information <br><br> Aligning the corporate design of the programme with the harmonised Interreg brand to increase visibility in the programme area and to facilitate cooperation with overlapping Interreg | Start up activities <br><br> Corporate design/ Interreg branding guide and rules for projects <br><br> Public events and contribution to the public events (presentations, exhibitions, networking cafè, leaflets) <br><br> Digital relations and contributions to online & print publications <br><br> Branded newsletter and constant social media activities <br><br> Media relations including news and press releases with also local newspaper in all territories <br><br> Capacity building and policy learning events, Workshops and meetings for specific cluster of beneficiaries and stakeholders; |

| | | programmes and the involvement of external stakeholders | Classification of project results in web database in order to ensure synergies within the projects by circulating relevant information that could benefit and cross-fertilize their work. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Programme Manual |
| | | | Webinar/ Online meeting of JS with regional offices |
| | | | Webinar/ Online meeting of JS with beneficiaries |
| | | | Projects generation workshops and territorial networking sessions |
| | | | Programme website |

### 2.2.3 Supporting projects during their implementation

This Communication field prepares the grounds for good project management and communication, taking into account the lead partner principle and the projects' management structures. The MA/JS's aim is to make sure that lead partners and project partners have the capacity to communicate with their projects' target audiences (a). Capacities cover human resources as well as know-how. Next to proactive contributions to project development and implementation, the MA/JS will establish close relations with communication managers of projects. Making lead partners understand and apply the rules and requirements of the Programme (b) shall be pursued by providing information to lead partners which is easy to understand and by providing opportunities for dialogue. Such easy to understand information shall be prepared in a way so that it can be readily passed on to project partners. Furthermore, the MA/JS aims at making not only lead partners but also project partners aware of the role of the MA/JS (c), i.e. aware of the services the MA/JS do and do not provide to project applicants and partners and the functions they do and do not carry out within the Programme structure. To this end, the MA/JS will enable and encourage lead partners to inform their project partners about the MA/JS role. Furthermore, existing opportunities shall be used when possible to get into direct contact with project partners.

The Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 (Annex XII, Article 2.2) requires all beneficiaries to follow a number of rules regarding the use of the logo of the European Union and the respective fund – ERDF. The EU logo must always be visible in a prominent place (on the first/ landing page, visible, without scrolling, on all electronic and mobile devices) and of a comparable size to other logos used. The programme will set the logo respecting all the programme requirements, and all approved projects are obliged to use it on all their communication material (both hard copy and electronic). Projects will receive their own

logo set once they have been formally approved and will be able to download from the Programme website.

The projects will be requested not to develop their own project logo, because they have such a limited shelf life. Developing a logo is costly compared to the benefit such special branding can bring to the project during its lifetime and consolidating results becomes more difficult. A specific logo might however be considered for an output/ result with a lifetime going beyond the project. Prior approval of the joint secretariat would then be required

| Aims | Target groups | Tactics | Activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. Lead Partners and Project Partners have capacity (resources & know-how) to communicate with target audience<br><br>b. Lead Partners and Project Partners understand and apply the rules and requirements<br><br>c. Lead Partners and Project Partners are aware of the role of MC, MA, JS and national/ regional structures | Lead Partners and Project Partners (Project Managers, Financial Managers, Communication Managers) | Pro-actively support the projects implementation<br><br>Establish relations with Communication Managers<br><br>Provide easy to understand information (even in national language) ready to be passed on<br><br>Create opportunities for dialogue (Programme <-> Projects)<br><br>Enable and encourage Lead Partners to inform Project Partners<br><br>Use soft communication activities to talk to Project Partners directly | Individual consultations<br><br>Seminars<br><br>Project Implementation toolbox<br><br>Digital and social activity on programme platform and channels of project's events and news/ FAQs<br><br>Online surveys as to catch future perspectives form project implementations and beneficiaries<br><br>Written feedback (written form using specific template)<br><br>Individual consultations with stakeholders, video interviews with local stakeholders and experts.<br><br>Roster and accreditation system for external experts (if relevant)<br><br>Kit of project communication to uniform and support communication project materials |

## 2.2.4 Raising awareness of the Programme goals and making the achievements visible

This Communication field was drawn up to assure that the Programme's results and impact will efficiently be taken up within the cooperation area and beyond. One aim is

directed towards regional, national, Adriatic and EU decision makers. It is the Programme's aim to make these target groups aware of Programme results and achievements (a). When carrying out communication activities in this field, cooperation with designated stakeholders of EUSAIR will be important. Another aim is to make thematic experts in the region aware of the Programme results and achievements (b). This can primarily be achieved by projects communicating with their respective thematic target audiences. To this end, the MA/JS will support to project communication including technical infrastructure and corporate branding items. Third aim (c) is to tackle the lack of information and awareness of the benefit of the programme's implementation for the population. In this communication field, creating project stories will play a crucial role to highlight the achievements of the Programme as part of the EU cohesion policy.

| Aims | Target groups | Tactics | Activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. Relevant decision makers are aware of and know Programme results and achievements<br><br>b. Thematic experts of the area are aware of the Programme results and achievements<br><br>c. General population is aware of the benefits brought by the Programme and EU | National, regional and local authorities<br>Thematic experts in the fields of projects' expertise at national, regional and local level<br>General public | Assure good project communication<br><br>Assure use of corporate design and promotion of INTERREG brand<br><br>Provide communication tools to projects<br><br>Disseminate easy to understand project stories and information through targeted channels<br><br>Inform EUSAIR governance and INTERACT about achievements and cooperate in communication measures with overlapping Programmes (i.e. Adrion, Med, other CBCs)<br><br>Provide opportunities to projects to contribute to programme communications<br><br>Maintain thematically diversified lists of target groups | Communications seminars<br><br>Corporate design/ Interreg branding guide and rules<br><br>Publically accessible repository of projects outputs via Programme website in open data format<br><br>Update of library of projects in open data set of project results (linked with KEEP)<br><br>Information pills and infographics - Sharing information and ensuring complementarity of activities with relevant EU programmes, platforms and networks dealing with similar policy areas.<br><br>Video story telling on project stories through social media, newsletter and other channels<br><br>Meeting with EUSAIR TSGs<br><br>Content archive at JS for project stories<br><br>Programme fact-sheet<br><br>Organise and facilitate peer reviews between stakeholders of the cooperation area and other |

| | | | European regions, in support of policy improvement and capacity building; |
| | | | Monitor, as far as possible, the developments of Structural Funds programmes and other relevant sources in Italy and Croatia and also around Europe on topics related to the four axis as to identify possible interesting experiences, synergies and links; |
| | | | Update the https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/ with data on programme results and projects. |
| | | | Totem and visibility action's tools - Materials as banner or territorial maps, showcase totems to support local communication of branch office and projects events |

# 3.Implementation

One of the guiding principles of this Communication Strategy is its smooth and efficient implementation. In order to achieve this goal several phases have been identified, wherein the focus will shift among the various target audiences, applied tools and planned activities.

The implementation of the Strategy will be supported by the Programme's resources, allocated within Priority Axis 5 (Technical Assistance), to be used in the most efficient manner possible, according to the specific needs of the individual implementation phases, target audiences, planned activities and tools used.

The communication strategy will be implemented through annual communication plans.

The Strategy also identifies the programme structures in charge of its development, approval, implementation and monitoring, in accordance with the relevant Regulation.

## 3.1. *Implementing bodies*

In order to ensure smooth implementation of the information and communication measures on programme level, it is crucial that all programme implementing bodies are actively involved in the smooth internal flow of information, timely and efficient external communication with the relevant target groups, as well as keeping the communication channel with the beneficiaries of the Programme continuously open.

The Cooperation Programme defines the responsibilities related to the information and communication measures and the bodies in charge of their implementation as follows:

**Managing Authority (MA)**

In line with the Interreg V-A Italy-Croatia Co-operation Programme 2014-2020, the responsibility of carrying out information and publicity measures lies with the Managing Authority.

The Communication Strategy is prepared and implemented by the Joint Secretariat (JS) and approved as well as monitored by the Monitoring Committee.

The MA will be aided in these tasks by other programme implementing bodies, according to their roles and responsibilities listed in the Cooperation Programme.

**Joint Secretariat (JS) and Joint Secretariat Branch Offices (JS BOs)**

JS and its JS Branch Offices, will manage the following tasks:

- drawing up the Programme Communication Strategy;

- coordinating the content preparation for the development of the visual identity of the Programme;

- ensuring the contents preparation and coordination for the development of the single website (www.italy-croatia.eu);

- providing information on the timing of implementation of the Programme;

- informing potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under the Programme;

• assisting the beneficiaries (mainly the Lead 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 Union citizens the role and achievements of the Cohesion Policy and of the Funds through information and communication actions about the results and impact of the Interreg V-A Italy-Croatia Co-operation Programme and its operations/projects.

• participating in communication initiatives of the EC, INTERACT and/or national organisations of Italy and Croatia (e.g. taking part in European Cooperation Day or similar programmes);

The **Monitoring Committee (MC)** is responsible for approving the Communication Strategy as well as monitoring the programme level communication via the approval of yearly reports and yearly communication plans.

## 3.2. *Communication Activities*

This paragraph gives the overview on indicative communication activities and tools for the implementation period 2014 – 2023 and provide a basis for more detailed planning in annual communication work plans.
During the Programme life cycle tentatively **four calls for proposals** are planned to be launched and those will provide the funding for up to around 120 - 130 projects.
The activities that will be put in place can be clustered in the following way:

➢**Start-up activities** (incl. Programme branding and Kick-off Event):

The start-up activities are all about the organization of the launching event and corporate image setting up that will later lead to the definition of the brand book and project brand manual. Also, the MA will ensure that the Union emblem is permanently displayed at own premises from the beginning of operation and in accordance to the Regulation, as well as the EU emblem and Programme logo are used for the official documents and communication materials. Furthermore, the communication strategy and related annual work plans are internal documents that will ensure efficient and effective programme communication. In drafting the strategy, legal obligations and minimum requirements listed in chapter 2.8 of this document are respected.
The launching event of the Programme is scheduled to be held on 7th and 8th November 2016 and will be occasion to introduce the Programme as a new financial instrument for CB cooperation and to give an overview on how the Programme is going to be implemented during the round-table discussion. During the event, interactive thematic workshops are scheduled in order to raise awareness of the potential beneficiaries that will be given the opportunity to present their project ideas and establish potential partners' contacts in networking session. Other workshops and meetings for specific cluster of beneficiaries and stakeholders will be organized by the Programme during its implementation.

Following to the event the Programme will launch an online survey on the event evaluation in order to appraise the satisfaction of the potential applicants and stakeholders that attended the event.

The Programme brand book will be an internal document laying down the Programme's corporate design including a general description of the branding strategy and related branding rules. It will also define specific designs and provide templates for the office and promotional materials, publications, events etc.

The project brand manual will be realized and addressed to Programme bodies and future projects in order to provide the information about branding strategy and related branding rules and binding logos.

In accordance with the Common Provisions Regulation, the European Union emblem is permanently displayed at the premises of the Managing Authority, the joint secretariat including Branch Offices (BOs).

> ➢**ICT activities** (including website and the projects' web-platform and social media management);

Digital tools comprise first of all the programme website, social media interaction multimedia tools and other ICT tools.

**Programme website**

The existing Programme website was developed by internal regional resources and  made available from January 2016 to promptly fulfil the requirements of the start-up phase of the programme. It is hosted on the Veneto Region server on the following domain www.italy-croatia.eu, and it is carrying all important information, content and the state of the art of the Programme that will be updated constantly.

The website is organized through the following sections whose functionalities are hereby described:

More about the Programme: this section provides in narrative way the main information as defined in the CP  gives an overview on cooperation area and main information related to the 4 thematic Priority Axes.

News and Events: the section puts at disposal of users the Programme news and events, as well as other relevant news and events for the stakeholders and beneficiaries in the area covered by the Programme and not only. The event calendar of the Programme will be updated regularly in accordance with the events schedule. Within the section an event management system will be set up in order to enable the users to register for the Programme events, to gather useful logistical information and to download the event agenda. Even though for the events a separated registration platform is foreseen, the main information and link to the platform are made available through the Programme website and  documents, slides and video concerning the event will be available after the event in the Programme website.  In the meantime, the event management system will contribute to enrich the Programme stakeholders database

Documents: MA has put on disposal the EU Regulatory Framework and the Programme official documents. Programme implementation manuals, relevant Strategies, Application

package for the call for proposals containing the partners' declaration form templates, guideline for call announcement, factsheets and guideline for use of SIU will be uploaded and put at disposal of users before the call opening. During the Programme life cycle all the official documents will be downloadable from this section.

Programme bodies: this section contains a brief and clear description of the main bodies in charge of the Programme implementation and governance. The names of their representatives and contact details have been provided to the general public and the Monitoring Committee composition and adopted Rules of Procedure were published too. The section related to the activities provides the information related to the MC meetings and on most important decisions that were adopted during those meetings. During the Programme implementation for each MC meeting will be announced the agenda, participants list and synthetic report of the meeting minutes.

Jobs and Tenders: coherently with the transparency rules, this section contains the information about all vacancies announced and published by the Programme JS including its Branch Offices. Even if the MA is Regional public Authority and the acquisition of services or expertize is done generally by the MEPA system, while the decrees/public acts are published on BUR of the Veneto Region, these information will be also published in the Tenders section and made available for all the Programme users in Programme official language - English and for the open tenders on EU level.

Call for proposals: in this section the funding opportunities will be announced and the main characteristics of the launching the call for proposals will be offered, as well as the complete application package containing the official version of the call documents and all the related annexes. MA, in line with the Annex XII art.3 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament, shall ensure this way the accessibility of the potential beneficiaries to the relevant information, including updated information where necessary, and taking into account the accessibility of electronic or other communication services for certain potential beneficiaries, on at least the following:

(a) the funding opportunities and the launching of application calls;

(b) the eligibility of expenditure conditions to be met in order to qualify for support under an operational 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;

(e) the contacts at national, regional or local level that are able to provide information on the operational programmes;

(f) the responsibility of potential beneficiaries to inform the public about the aim of the operation and the support from the Funds to the operation in accordance with point 2.2.

In this section the link for direct access to SIU web platform for the drafting and submission of the applications will be envisaged, as well the manual for the use of SIU during the Application procedure and courtesy "off line" version of the Application form.

Projects: in this section it is given the possibility to access information about the projects financed in 2007 – 2013 programming period directly through KEEP database, through a web tool provided by INTERACT for searching project ideas and partners already

supported by INTERREG, IPA and ENPI financial instruments. In addition, the Project Idea and Expertise availability tools are being set up with aim to favour the exchange of ideas and partnership building.

The *Project Ideas* section was designed and is dedicated to the users in search of the project idea and potential project partners. The users can comment the proposed ideas and take the opportunity for the exchange of opinion and contacts, whether interested to deepen the topic proposed. The section is open to any kind of user, but only those registered can post an announcement or reply to a topic. The registered users will be able to benefit from all the advantages the section offers – such as creating a user profile with a photo and entering the contact details. Further on an additional functionality can be added in order to enable receiving email notifications upon reply to a topic, being informed of new topics related to a thematic objectives, etc.

The *Expertise availability* section is different from the one previously described since it was conceived as a tool for users who would propose and provide some specific expertise and/or technical skill that can be used in a potential project. This section is also opened to any kind of user and under the condition that the users are being registered.

Evaluation: this section gives the information related to the Result, Output and Financial Indicators of the Programme. Furthermore, for each SO, expected results are synthetically described in the CP and collected at the link available and indicated in this section. Mid-term and ex-post external evaluation and the implementation reports will be regularly published and put on disposal of general public. The evaluation plan (or its parts), due to their strategic dimension and to ease exchange between managing authorities, will be published on programme website according to the Commission recommendations (Article 115 (1)(b) CPR), and together with the Annual Implementation Report.

In order to better support  the launch of calls for proposals and the other foreseen communication activities, the web site will be completely revised and updated, while keeping contents and tools already present: it will be  improved and completed with new sections and tools below described.

In consideration to the fact that the Programme will comprise future projects' cross-border activities, and in order to be able to communicate efficiently the projects' activities, extract them and gain impact on EU level, it will be necessary that the news and initiatives related to the future project activities are clustered per specific topics. Therefore the Programme website platform should be adapted for this purpose. Furthermore, at the later stage of the Programme achievements the Programme will elaborate information pills and info-graphics and share information and ensuring the complementarity of the activities with relevant EU programmes, platforms and networks dealing with similar policy areas.

E-newsletters and social tools: the functionalities for the e-newsletter sending to the stakeholders and icons dedicated to the social media opening in new tab will be integrated in the website.

The programme website will be acting as **hub for information** on all projects and Branch Offices, therefore users will be able to gather all the relevant information from one access point. Several sections, such as project description, partnership, information about the financing, and other information as requested in the EU Regulations No 1303/2013 Annex XII, Article 2 will be automatically filled-in from the application form and later from progress reports.

The website should be adapted for the correct visualization on the mobile devices. All manuals will be Word-based PDF documents with the intention to gradually complement these with HTML-coded online manuals suitable also for mobile devices.

Knowledge and web learning space and collaborative space for all members of the Programme governing structure can be foreseen. This collaborative space will comprise the tools that will support the Programme governing structure in their day-to-day activities. This section will be internal reserved area of the website and can comprise the following useful tools:
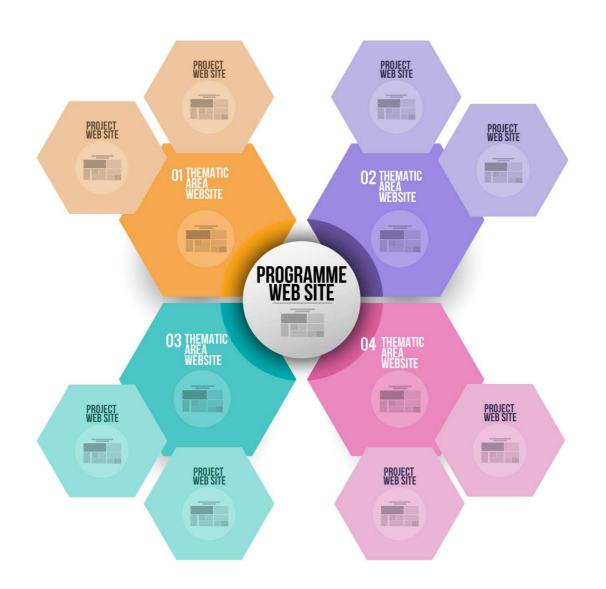
- ✓Access to virtual space for internal documents storage/repository and exchange by the Programme Managing Authority with other National Authorities in charge of the Programme implementation

- ✓Access to e-learning space for the Programme Management structures that will include e-learning modules and videos on "how to.." related strictly to the Programme management;

- ✓In consideration to the fact that according to Eurobarometer results for the Italy - Croatia Programme, 59% respondents identified the language as highest obstacle and making CBC difficult in their region, the e-learning sections for Croatian/Italian language for the management structures can be set up.

The knowledge and web learning space available through the website shall therefore facilitate internal procedures and information exchange, as well as avoid physical meetings among the Programme Management structures when not necessary and will contribute to the reducing of the $CO_2$ emission.

The website will have to comprise also the section related to the roaster and accreditation system for the external experts (First Level Controllers).

The Programme will provide a complete web-platform (calendar, document library, directory, tools etc.) to each selected project. Hosting project websites will avoid the fragmentation of the information and enable the partnerships to dedicate more resources to the quality content production and addressing tailor-made information related to the project achievements to the right target groups, being able at the same time to save financial resources related to the creation of temporary project websites with already known sustainability problems and time-consuming technical questions. In addition, this will allow the coherent image appearance that should be in line with the Programme branding, will strength the two-way dialogic communication between the Programme and the project, and facilitate information sharing between Programme stakeholders.

The specific web database could be foreseen for the classification of the project results could be foreseen in order to ensure synergies within the projects by circulating relevant information that could benefit and cross-fertilize their work. This web database is meant to collect in more dynamic way, rather than only per each axis, and would permit to create a tags and other classification words that are transversal of all axis. For instance, projects that have done the trainings or pilot actions could be better classified and this is also in consideration to the fact that the Programme will have high number of projects that have to be managed and related information clustered.

**Potential architecture of the multi-sites web-platform**

In order to achieve the visibility related to the **groups of results**, the Programme will set the publically accessible repository of projects outputs via Programme website in open data format.

Regular monitoring and continuous web development will ensure that the user experience will be maintained and/or improved over the programme lifetime. To get maximum exposure on search engines such as Google, search engine optimisation (SEO) will help to get the website to the top of natural searches, as well as the Programme results and some particular activities of the projects.

**Social media management**

In order to ensure the stakeholders and beneficiaries engagement the strategy design for the overall Programme duration will be developed and development and planed (identification of social channels etc.). Social campaign will be designed and implemented and should foresee day-to-day identification of content, front end service with all relevant functionalities such as i.e. whatsup number, facebook and other applications

In order to ensure that latest developments in programme implementation reach all programme bodies and stakeholders in time and that they are in a position to get involved, key information will be disseminated via web advertising and direct marketing. Therefore, here we can foresee the acquisition of spaces to publish and promote certain actions of the Programme (call for proposals, communications for the roster for the external experts etc.) towards the enterprises or some specific professional categories.

**Multimedia and videos**

The Programme will prepare short animated video presentations aimed at informing the potential users about Programme opportunities at the initially stage of the implementation, while later the informative videos about main Programme achievements will be prepared and will be published on the Programme website. This activity will contribute also to increase the website visits and to raise awareness about the Programme.

Furthermore, the Programme presentations and videos from the public events /workshops will be put at disposal on the Programme website with aim to inform users and increase their knowledge about the Programme topics.

All video content realised will be used for other digital channels including the website and social media.

Video interviews can be organized in the Programme area on the local level (with the support of the BOs) in order to consult the territorial actors directly and to check the state of the art of the approved projects and give further emphasis of the operations to the local stakeholders.

**Other ICT tools (newsletters, e-surveys...)**

The relevant news will be spread towards the EU platforms and social networks of the relevant DG and/or National Authorities.

Infographics and smart learning objects on main Programme results should be disseminate on social networks, EUSAIR stakeholders platforms of the Adrion strategic project and MED Programme Axis 4 - Governance.

Branded newsletters - custom designed and built around the Programme identity, able to track results and reports in real time - will be electronically distributed and will be the key publication to regularly push information about the Programme and project developments to registered subscribers and selected media. In addition it will carry the information about relevant  news and events on EU level.
The branded newsletter will thus keep key audiences abreast of recent developments and are expected to direct more user traffic to the Programme website including project websites. Social media integration will be ensured. The branded newsletters published by

the joint secretariat may be complemented by national newsletters sent by the JS Branch offices.

In addition to the above, the Programme will inform other programme bodies as well as applicants and beneficiaries more directly about latest developments related to programme management, calls and implementation through direct mailings.

Also the Programme could prepare periodical surveys and submit them among the potential beneficiaries in order to test future trends on some specific Programme topic and to help orient the Programme for the next call for proposals (in i.e drafting the Terms of References).

In addition to the above, the Programme will inform other programme bodies as well as applicants and beneficiaries more directly about latest developments related to programme management, calls and implementation through direct mailings.

> **Publications** (including leaflets, brochures, application packages that will include manuals, factsheets and guidelines for the use of SIU, implementation and communication manuals..);

Publications will include various printed material, such as manuals, documents, leaflets, brochures, handbooks and guidelines which carry information about the Programme.

In order to provide detailed information and useful indications to potential applicants and beneficiaries about rules and procedures for applying and implementing successfully the projects under this Programme, exhaustive manuals will be elaborated in a coordinated effort by the joint secretariat and managing authority and be published following approval by the monitoring committee.

The application manual will be developed in Factsheets and will cover the entire application process including the preparation, assessment and contracting phase (adapted to each of the four calls planned) while the implementation manual – also in form of Factsheets – will inform about reporting procedures, rules and deadlines and provide indications on content, financial and communication management of funded projects. Already, and before the final list of the projects approved for financing by the MC is published, the Programme will also put at disposal of the partnerships the Subsidy contract and Partnership agreement models (downloadable from the Programme website) in order to support lead partners and their partnerships in setting up their internal procedures, thus guaranteeing an efficient project implementation already in the start-up phase.
Furthermore a communication handbook will be elaborated in order to provide the orientation and tips for projects in developing own communication strategies, branding and to assist beneficiaries to better implement the related planned activities.
The Programme leaflets will provide immediate key information of the programme to the general public, with main aim of providing a brief overview and to attract a wider audience to the website in search for access to more detailed information.
In the start-up phase of the Programme, leaflets will be produced to provide key data of the programme and to inform potential applicants about funding opportunities. In later of Programme implementation, leaflets will be used to give an overview about Programmes achievements.

<u>Leaflets</u> will be printed and distributed at events organized by the Programme and/or other relevant events where the Programme presence will be envisaged. The leaflets may be translated and published in national languages if relevant.

Programme <u>brochures</u> will be developed at early stage and will provide to the potential beneficiaries simplified and user-friendly presentation of overall Cooperation Programme divided per each of 4 axis, giving the summarized information about key beneficiaries, typology of actions, fields of intervention and amount of ERDF allocated.

Project brochures will be developed also in the later implementation phase in close cooperation with all funded projects to present short portraits. The brochures will display thematic project results, pilot actions and provide basic information on how the partnership brought benefit to the Programme regions.

The brochures are expected to be available in a printed-on-demand and an online version. The print versions will be distributed at both programme and multiplier events.

Programme will report annually about progress achieved through implementation reports, and will publish regularly Annual executive summary to ensure transparency about programme implementation not only towards the European Commission but also towards wider audiences

➢ **Public events** (including Programme annual conferences that will present the achievements of the operational programme, including, where relevant, major projects, joint action plans and other project examples etc…);

Public events are referred to conferences, exhibitions, road shows or other events at large scale addressed to a wider audience.

Programme annual conferences will be events to raise the awareness and provide relevant information on achievements across the entire cross-border programme area. They will also aim to encourage cooperation and stand in for the major annual information activity required by regulation.

Programme conferences will be structured in a series of thematic sessions, panel discussions involving relevant experts and Authorities, and will foresee the pitch events among participants in order to encourage sharing and exchange of ideas among the participants and potential partners. The Programme annual conferences will also be the perfect occasion for the projects to organize their exhibition areas or to combine, in coordination with the Programme, their side events. In later stage of the Programme implementation, the projects achievements will be exhibited and exchanged in capitalisation events.

National public events can be organized by the Branch offices and the NA with dedicated TA budget and aimed at raising the awareness of wider national audiences on the programme.

Furthermore, the Programme will participate in events with other Interreg Prgrammes overlapping the Area or Macroregional Strategies, Interact and other thematic EU funding programmes in order to increase visibility in the programme area and stretch it on other contacts.

The Programme is interested to participate in other Programme events and initiatives in order to contribute and advertise thematic achievements. It is expected that Interreg MED Programme and its Horizontal projects - working through largest and most important

Mediterranean networks - organize large-scale thematic conferences. Monitoring and synergies with other CB and transnational Programmes that are overlapping the area is advisable and through the organization of the joint events (where relevant) and / or active participation of the Programme Italy-Croatia to the other Programmes' public events.

Other opportunity for achieving greater visibility of the programme is represented by the annual European Week of Regions and Cities in Brussels organised by the European Commission as well as the annual European Cooperation Day organised by Interact. Events of EUSAIR also offer interesting opportunities to present the programme.
Furthermore, the Programme will be present in and contribute with its inputs to Interreg internal events and networks, such as the DG Regio Inform Network for regional development communication experts, who meet twice a year over two days.

> **Targeted events** (including thematic workshops for applicants, local seminars and networking sessions);

Targeted events will include seminars, workshop, focus group, individual meeting, or other smaller-scale event activity, which is addressed at a narrow, rather specific audience.

JS and its Branch offices will have the important role in raising awareness and providing information to applicants, beneficiaries and stakeholders. Dedicated trainings on implementation and communication issues can be organized twice per year on adapted and in line with the Programme annual forecast for calls launching.
The branch offices are expected to collaborate with joint secretariat and will have to provide the JS with their draft work plans well in advance of the meeting for a thorough analysis. Whether training will be provided on specific issues will be decided case-by-case.

Branch offices and NA will organize national information days and address wider national audiences with targeted but basic information about calls, project implementation and achievements. Depending on the topic, national information days can take various shapes from seminars and partner search meetings to cross-fertilisation workshops. The organisation of these targeted events will be supported by the joint secretariat in order to ensure a harmonised approach of providing information across the programme area.
In addition to information events organised on the national level, national controllers might also organise trainings for beneficiaries. These will be supported by the BO and the joint secretariat.

In order to receive relevant and good quality project proposals, each application step will be accompanied by training measures for lead applicants. The lead applicant trainings will focus on presentations of rules and procedures, open question rounds and thematic sessions.
The recommended place for holding lead applicant trainings is Venice as most staff of the joint secretariat will have to be involved in the organisation of the events. Exceptions will be trainings that will be combined with public programme events. To reach a wider audience than those attending, trainings will be web-streamed if possible. The lead applicant trainings will further be supplemented by national information days for project

applicants organised by the national level in both Programme countries and individual consultations by the JS.

Following the funding decision, dedicated training including individual briefings will be offered to upcoming lead partners. They will be informed through presentations, practical exercises and direct exchanges on contracting issues as well as on the project start-up phase to enable them to smoothly kick-off new projects.

As most of the joint secretariat will be involved in these capacity-building workshops, it is recommended to organise these in Venice, or at the premises of the BOs in Croatia (Zadar and Dubrovnik). The lead partner workshops will be followed upupon in later stages of project implementation by further trainings, available not only to the lead partners but also other key project partners.

In addition to the lead partner seminar, consultations with the Joint secretariat and its Branch Offices will be available to all beneficiaries at any point of project implementation. In such consultations, BOs will mainly provide guidance on national rules and procedures.

The aim of project implementation trainings is to provide technical support and advice to beneficiaries, enabling them to reach a higher implementation quality of their funded projects. The project management teams (project, finance and communication managers) will be informed by the joint secretariat, BOs and experts from other institutions (e.g. from the European Commission, European Investment Bank, Interact, experienced project lead partners) on and directly practice how to: communicate the projects, prepare good progress reports; measure project progress; prepare controls and keep audit trails; close projects; spread results; follow-up on results etc. The trainings will thus involve all staff of the joint secretariat.

The aim will be to reach active participation in the trainings as this is expected to significantly increase the learning experience. The events will thus be split into short plenary sessions providing an overview and parallel thematic workshop sessions with a smaller number of participants in each.

Result-oriented workshops will stimulate knowledge exchange among funded projects of the programme and beyond. The small-scale events will build on interactive and innovative ways of working together and sharing collective knowledge, making use of experiences made in the partner consultations and feedback workshops in the preparation phase of the programme.

Such capitalisation and cross-fertilisation workshops will be held for each thematic priority to help beneficiaries to directly transfer knowledge on project level. Projects from other programmes will be invited to participate and stakeholders from macro-regional strategies and other EU-funded initiatives will be asked to actively contribute

The Programme can decide to organize and facilitate (proactively and upon demand) thematic networking groups for the project evaluators. Those sections are meant to be internal to the Programme and aimed to support and increase the quality of the project assessment.

Other, for example brokerage events can be organized on territorial level in all the Programme area or in each of the Regions/Zupanija participating in the Programme,

clusterizing all the projects from one specific territory and per specific topic. This activity might be decided by the Programme in collaboration with MC members.

➤**Media relations** (including media releases and conferences);

Media relations include all kind of activities leading to the publication of information about the programme in printed or digital news media, such as media releases and conferences, media reportings, etc.
Decision makers in Brussels and the programme Member States rely widely on national media of their home countries to be informed about political developments. This is the reason to intensify relations with the national media through BOs and the projects.
Therefore, media press release can be foreseen in collaboration with Veneto Region press office and with Croatian national press with support of the BOs.

However, with European Voice, the Parliament and online news sites like Euractiv and EUobserver there are also European level media consulted by many policy and decision makers that can be addressed by the joint secretariat.
These European media will be targeted with relevant news such as funding opportunities and Programme achievements.

In addition to the above news releases, media could be addressed more directly in news conferences linked to milestones of the programme. Such news conferences could be linked to bigger programme conferences, linked to European-level events, organised by the joint secretariat in concomitance of  e.g. a monitoring committee meeting in the Committee of Regions, mainly for media correspondents in Brussels.

➤**Promotional materials** (including event materials such as gadgets, pens, folders, notes, USB pens containing the information on Programme).

Promotional products will be prepared using the coordinated image of the Programme or adapting tailored image for specific event purposes. These materials will be mainly limited to office and event material and clearly linked to awareness-raising purpose. Promotional materials will include roll-ups, posters as well as office products such as business cards, pens, notebooks and USB. In addition, other items can be produced later and decided for events purposes.

Therefore, other promotion solutions and visibility action's tools can be foreseen in order to improve Programme visibility:
➤Materials as banner or territorial maps,
➤Showcase totems  to support local communication of branch office and projects events
Promotion materials carrying the Programme information and logo can include also motion Advertising and urban communication (sharing bike, bus in Bruxelles..)

In order to uniform and support communication project materials the Programme may elaborate the Communication Kit for projects - guidelines for the projects in order to support them in the implementation of the communication activities by providing the

general framework (for the events and for promotional material such as i.e. posters to be placed the Programme can elaborate the graphic design).

## 3.3. *Budget and resources*

By achieving the aims and implementing the communication activities elaborated within Annual Communication Plan, the Programme communication objectives will be reached. This will allow for the coordinated and well planned implementation of Communication Strategy where adjustment and improvement of communication activities throughout the programme implementation period will be possible.

The scope of Programme communication activities will vary depending on the programme implementation phase. At the beginning of Programme implementation phase focussing on calls for proposals, there is the need to transparently advertise opportunities and to attract potential applicants by making them aware of the available funding. Therefore the communication activities will be focused mainly on strong promotion of the funding opportunities whereas at later phases of programme implementation, the focus will be given to awareness raising and dissemination of programme results and outputs.

In the programme Annual Communication Plan shall be prepared by JS and presented to the Monitoring Committee at the end of each year for the following year, with the exception for Annual Communication Plan for 2016.

The communication activities shall be prepared in line with the provisions of Priority Axis 5 of the Cooperation Programme and budgeted annually from Technical Assistance budget.

| Activities to be externalised | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Programme visual identity, elaboration of graphic materials:<br>➢Promotional and information materials,<br>➢Graphic guidelines and kits<br>➢Institutional publications for Programme results and Institutional communication | | 39.000,00 | 9.000,00 | | 6.000,00 | | 7.000,00 | 7.000,00 | 68.000,00 |
| Promotion solutions to improve Programme visibility | | 20.000,00 | 20.000,00 | 10.000,00 | | | | | 50.000,00 |
| Website technical development, management and its maintenance, hosting, project web-platform development and maintenance, cloud service and web communication tools | | 35.000,00 | 10.000,00 | 12.000,00 | 8.000,00 | 8.000,00 | 10.000,00 | 4.000,00 | 87.000,00 |
| Web content elaboration and Social media management, stakeholders and beneficiaries engagement, social campaign, viral and emotional promos, web-docs. | | 45.000,00 | 35.000,00 | 40.000,00 | 35.000,00 | 25.000,00 | 25.000,00 | 17.000,00 | 222.000,00 |
| Web advertizing and direct marketing for Programme and project results and all activities to promote Programme's activities in search engine | | 20.000,00 | 10.000,00 | 10.000,00 | 20.000,00 | 10.000,00 | 10.000,00 | 20.000,00 | 100.000,00 |
| Programme launching event and annual conferences: preparation and events results dissemination: including all logistic preparation | 45.000,00 | 60.000,00 | 60.000,00 | 50.000,00 | 60.000,00 | 60.000,00 | 60.000,00 | 20.000,00 | 415.000,00 |
| Online tutoring and training and services as survey, webinars, videoconference, e-learning courses and smart learning objects, open dataset | | 44.000,00 | 12.000,00 | 15.000,00 | 17.000,00 | 10.000,00 | 10.000,00 | | 108.000,00 |
| Thematic workshops and trainings for applicants, beneficiaries, FLCs and Programme bodies | | 35.000,00 | 30.000,00 | 30.000,00 | 20.000,00 | 25.000,00 | | | 140.000,00 |
| Local events and networking sessions (to be held in Italy and in Croatia) | | 30.000,00 | 18.000,00 | 35.000,00 | 8.000,00 | 25.000,00 | 12.000,00 | 9.000,00 | 137.000,00 |
| Audiovisual production during programme events and for programme results with professional services | | 15.000,00 | 24.000,00 | 16.000,00 | 14.000,00 | 10.000,00 | 14.000,00 | 10.000,00 | 103.000,00 |
| Media press office and press release | | 10.000,00 | 30.000,00 | 30.000,00 | 30.000,00 | 30.000,00 | 30.000,00 | 10.000,00 | 170.000,00 |
| **TOTAL** | 45.000,00 | 353.000,00 | 258.000,00 | 248.000,00 | 218.000,00 | 203.000,00 | 178.000,00 | 97.000,00 | **1.600.000,00** |

## 3.4. *Evaluation*

The MA/JS will evaluate the communication measures in terms of visibility and awareness of policy, Programme and operations on different levels. The procedures for the evaluations of the success of communication measures will be elaborated in detail in the evaluation plan.

Communication measures will be assessed annually. Key elements of communication will be evaluated as part of the Annual Implementation Report, in accordance with the Common Provisions Regulation, Articles 111 (4). Results of this evaluation will be presented to the Monitoring Committee, according to the art. 116 (3)[2]. Furthermore, selected communication aspects will be evaluated as part of the external Programme evaluations to be carried out. Feedback surveys and needs assessments among target audiences are part of the day-to-day implementation of the communication strategy.

To reliably measure changes in (internal) communication capacity as well as (external) awareness and knowledge, this communication strategy will set indicators and targets for communication and define baselines reflecting the status quo at the beginning of the programming period. Progress towards the set targets will be measured on a regular basis.

The expected result of the internal capacity-building will be an increasingly positive feedback of stakeholders on assistance and communication of key programme bodies with applicants, beneficiaries and stakeholders.

The expected result of increased awareness will be a higher number of the audiences reached and made aware of the programme, and increased access the programme website as well as single website sections.

The expected result of communication measures that aim to increase knowledge and raise awareness of the Programme goals will be that the target audiences feel better informed about and are more satisfied with the programme. A relevant indicator for this could be feedback provided by participants to national and transnational programme events and the increasing number of quality applications.

| Nr. | Result (indicator) | Unit | Baseline value (2015-2016) | Target (Ø 2013-2023) | Source of data | Reporting |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.4.1 | Increasing the awareness about **EU funded cross-border cooperation activities** in the area | Percentage | Croatia 33% Italy 30% | < 2% in both Countries | Eurobarometer[3] | 2020 2023 |

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

[3] Flash Barometer 422 "Cross-border cooperation in the EU" and Eurobarometer Results – Programme Italy-Croatia - EU Commission Regional and Urban Policy Date: 14/12/2015

## 3.5. *Output indicators*

| | Output Indicators | Unit | Target Value (2023) | Reporting dates |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| TA3 | Programme communication strategy developed, approved by the Monitoring Committee and implemented by the Programme bodies | number | 1 | 2016 |
| TA6 | Workshop and events held | number | 8 | |
| ICT ACTIVITIES | | | | |
| CS1 | Definitive Programme website (containing described sections and webtools) developed and implemented | number | 1 | 2017 |
| CS2 | Increased number of users on Programme Website | % | 11.290 (November 2017) 50.000 in 2023 | Monitoring of web statistics on unique sessions - Each year from 2017 - 2023 |
| PUBLICATIONS | | | | |
| CS3 | Leaflets produced | number | 5000 | 2016 2018 |
| CS4 | Programme brochures | number | 5000 | 2016 2018 |
| CS5 | Institutional publications for programme results (intermediate and final) | number | 4 (thematic) | 2019 2023 |
| PUBLIC EVENTS | | | | |
| CS6 | Annual Programme Conferences | number | 6 | Each year from 2017 - 2022 |
| CS7 | Local public events | number | 6 | Each year from 2017 - 2022 |
| TARGETED EVENTS | | | | |
| CS8 | Workshops and meetings for specific cluster of beneficiaries and stakeholders | number | 8 | 2016 (al KoM) 2017 2018 |
| MEDIA RELATIONS | | | | |
| CS9 | News releases published online | number | 30 | Every year |

### 3.6. *Communication and publicity rules*

The Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and the Annex I of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014 include specific requirements concerning the information and publicity activities.

The common provisions regulation No 1303/2013[4] defines in Articles 115 to 117 and in Annex XII the general framework for the communication of cohesion policy programmes. Communication strategy has to be submitted to the monitoring committee and adopted by it within six months after the approval of the Programme. Annual communication plans on implementing the strategy have to be presented to the programme monitoring committee each year.

The regulation requires programmes to include following elements into their strategies:

· Description of the communication approach taken;

· Description of materials that will be made available for people with disabilities;

· Description of how beneficiaries will be supported in their activities;

· Indicative budget for implementing the strategy;

· Description of responsibilities for implementing the strategy;

· Specific communication activities, including a website;

· Indication of how the strategy will be evaluated;

· Description of how results of the previous programme will be used;

· Annual work plans describing planned activities.

The implementing regulation No 821/2014[5] defines in Chapter 2 and in Annex II the binding technical characteristics of communication activities. Instructions are especially provided for creating and displaying the EU emblem, and on how to create permanent plaques or (temporary) billboards.
Project beneficiaries are required to inform the general public about the financing obtained from the European Union and ensure that the operation beneficiaries have been informed of that funding. These rules are ought to be observed strictly and are for the co-financing of the communication/promotional materials related expenditures,

Mandatory elements to be used:

EU branding illustrative elements have to be employed in all published materials and/or activities addressed to the public in general. The aforementioned obligations do not

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

[5] Cf. Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014 of 28 July 2014, retrieved from Eur-Lex in April 2015: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2014.223.01.0007.01.ENG

only relate to printed publications, but also to audiovisual, digital or electronic material (websites, web tools, videos, radio-spots, etc.). These elements are also supposed to be used in the framework of events (e.g. on folders, power-point presentations, agendas, bags, pens and other conference material and gadget).

The Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme has adopted a single project branding approach that includes the European Territorial Cooperation logo ("Interreg"), the Programme logo and the related project's logo, that allows to comply with a part of the EU eligibility rules as to the use of EU emblem and logos. The other part is about the reference to the European fund that co-finances the communication and information materials.

**The Programme Interreg Italy - Croatia focuses on four topics, each having its own icon and color**:



**RULES FOR APPLICATION**

The brand manual will be prepared and provided on the Programme website for the projects financed by the Programme in relation to the rules to follow concerning graphic applications and references. Nevertheless, please take notice of some unacceptable modifications of the original logo versions:

The following is not allowed:

- Disproportionate resizing;
- Colour changes;
- Rotation of the logo combination;
- Modifications in typeface or applying effects on font;
- Changes between the different elements included;
- Positioning, size, background and transparency of the logo

The logo shall be placed in a harmonious and usually top central or other visible position (examples: on the outside, front or back cover for brochures, on the top page of the project website, on the cover of a DVD etc.)

The logo shall most preferably be placed on a white or suitable, one coloured background. In case the logo combination is placed on coloured background, a contrast between the color of the background and the logo combination must be foreseen by putting a white border around the rectangle, the width of the border being 1/25th of the height of the rectangle. In case the logo combination is placed on a photo, a suitable, not overloaded background shall be chosen.

Also, the logo must be placed in its non-transparent version (this means that inside the frame the background remains white). The use in its transparent version can only be accepted on a suitable, one colored and light background. When necessary, for reduced size materials (PEN Drives, for example) a minimum size must be applied so as the textual elements remains readable (any overlapping has to be excluded):
Minimum size: 1,55 cm x 2,55cm
A vertical version of the logos is not foreseen.

For further information as to the usage of EU emblem, please check the graphic guide on:
- http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/emblem/graphics1_en.htm
- http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/logos/


**OTHER RELEVANT COMMUNICATION OBLIGATIONS FOR ALL PROJECTS**

There are other mandatory obligations for projects to observe, according to the Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.
As set forth in the regulation, beneficiaries shall give a short description of the operation on their websites, including its aims and results, and highlighting the financial support from the Union.
In the case of the Interreg Italy - Croatia Programme, projects shall provide this description on their institutional and/or official website (where such a website exists). Project partners should provide a short description of the project, its aims and results, partnership, and highlight the financial support from the European Union (ERDF).

A second condition for all projects to follow is to place a poster (of minimum A3 size) at a location readily visible to the public, such as an entrance area of a building, stating the financial support from the Union.

Special obligations
In case of infrastructure investments with a public contribution of more than € 500.000,00 specific illustrative requirements, set out in Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, have to be adopted. More specifically, this relates to the production and the setting up of plaques and billboards at the relevant sites which shall contain the logo and references as set out above.

Billboard, during the project

Projects under these conditions shall follow the obligations of putting a billboard at the site of each operation during the implementation of the operation if it consists in the financing infrastructure or physical constructions and when the total public contribution to the operation exceeds € 500.000.00 Information that shall be stated on the plaque is listed in the Commission's Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

| COMMUNICATION STRATEGY EXTERNALISED ACTIVITIES | 2016 | | | | 2017 | | | | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | | | | | |
| Programme visual identity, elaboration of graphic materials: <br> - Promotional and information materials, <br> - Graphic guidelines and kits <br> - Institutional publications for Programme results and Institutional communication | | | | | ▓ | | | | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | |
| Promotion solutions to improve Programme visibility | | | | | ▓ | | | | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | |
| Website technical development, management and its maintenance, hosting, project web-platform development and maintenance, cloud service and web communication tools | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | |
| Web content elaboration and Social media management, stakeholders and beneficiaries engagement, social campaign, viral and emotional promos, web-docs. | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | |
| Web advertizing and direct marketing for Programme and project results and all activities to promote Programme's activities in search engine | | | | | ▓ | | | | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | |
| Programme launching event and annual conferences: preparation and events results dissemination: including all logistic preparation | | | | ▓ | ▓ | | | | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | |
| Online tutoring and training and services as survey, webinars, videoconference, e-learning courses and smart learning objects, open dataset | | | | | ▓ | | | | ▓ | | ▓ | | | |
| Thematic workshops and trainings for applicants, beneficiaries, FLCs and Programme bodies | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | | | |
| Local events and networking sessions (to be held in Italy and in Croatia) | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | |
| Audiovisual production during programme events and for programme results with professional services | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | |
| Media press office and press release | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | | ▓ | |