COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

INTERREG V-A ROMANIA-HUNGARY PROGRAMME

"Partnership for a better future"

www.interreg-rohu.eu

Version 1.0

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Communication Strategy (CS) is prepared in connection with the Interreg V-A Romania – Hungary Programme (hereinafter referred to as the Programme) and is a strategic tool and an integrated part of the Programme implementation, aiming to ensure that communication is well coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the needs of the target groups.

The CS describes how the Programme will approach communication during the whole 2014 – 2020 programming period, providing an overall framework and coherent basis for all communication efforts in all of its stages.

This document will assist the Monitoring Committee (MC), the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat (MA/JS) and all the actors involved in the management and execution of the Programme in taking a coherent approach towards communication and supporting the sound implementation of the Programme.

1.1 The role of communication

Communication has gained a vital role in cooperation programmes throughout the past years, and it was found that effective communication is not only the basis for sound programme management, but also for good and lasting cooperation. In addition, it is a prerequisite for the Programme to deliver meaningful results not only to project partners but also to audiences beyond the project communities.

Communication is thus an integral part of the working procedures at all levels throughout the project and programme cycles. Communication takes place, for example, between project partners, between project partners and their audience outside the project community, between projects and the programme, or between the different programme bodies. With this in mind, the implementation of the CS is viewed as a horizontal responsibility of all programme bodies, and it is carried out by the JS with, the planning and supervision of the MA.

As the CS provides a general, strategic framework, it defines, amongst others: the communication objectives, the key communication messages, target audiences, communication tools and channels, as well as concrete measures to be applied during the programme life cycle, including concrete measures for the evaluation of the CS effectiveness. However, taking into account that it is very likely that changes will occur in the communication and ICT trends within the programming period, the CS provides the frame for the elaboration of planning of information and communication activities, on an yearly basis, so as to ensure that the programme communication is more responsive to the ever changing communication needs emerging. While preparing the CS, the best practices and lessons learned from the previous programming period have been also taken into account and incorporated, as appropriate.

The responsibility for carrying out the information and communication measures belongs to the Managing Authority (MA) of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme, whereas the National Authority (NA) supports the MA in its efforts at national level. The overall communication work is carried out by the Communication Manager of the MA and the Communication Officers of the JS, in close cooperation with the JS and Info Point (IP) team.

Moreover, the CS and the entire programme communication will be based on the following **principles of communication**, which are intended to ensure transparency and efficient use of funds:

- **Transversal** approach towards communication, as an integral part of the programme implementation process, and being perceived as such by all programme

actors involved – which requires that this essential principle is embedded in each and every activity carried out by projects and management bodies alike;

- **Flexibility** in executing the programme communication, and addressing the heterogeneous audience through tailor-made messages and tools;

- **Focus on beneficiaries -** projects are the best "ambassadors" of the programme, therefore efficiently supporting them through opened communication channels, trainings and continuous interaction, may enhance the quality of their results, and thus, the programme's positive image;

- Attention to **ensuring horizontal principles** on all levels (promotion of equal opportunities and non-discrimination for men, women, disadvantaged groups, disabled, ethnic or minority groups; sustainable development; ensuring equal access to information, tools and activities; partnership and multi-level governance; simplification);

- **Transparency** and **consistency** in providing information about the programme in all of its stages, from the publication of the Calls, through contract awarding, to reporting and sharing project results;

- **Interaction** and **synergy** with other programmes, between projects and the Programme, and between the projects of the Programme, to improve quality and focus on the capitalisation of results.

1.2 Lessons learned from the past

When developing the CS, experiences from the past offer an important source of improvement. Practices that proved to be successful will continue to be used for communication purposes in the current period.

The field of communication and Public relations is well known for its evolving and fast developing nature. Recent advancement in this field is influencing the communication efforts and processes of European Territorial Cooperation programmes as well, reshaping the way programmes are able to address, target and influence their audiences. For this reason, communication efforts of the current period will be more focused on shifting even more towards modern, widely used technologies, which ensure a higher degree of responsiveness across several platforms (mobile, tablet, laptop) and a more friendly approach for visitors. As the importance of social media has been already recognised, these means of communication will be also used in the current Programme, as they allow a higher degree of interaction and they have a more engaging character. Due to the fact that social media usage and preferences are known for their changing popularity, the Programme will seek to employ tools/networks that have a wider reach and allow for a higher degree of responsiveness in addressing specific audience segments. Taking into account the fact that animating social networks requires regular interaction, the number of tools employed will be carefully chosen to ensure that specific needs of target audiences are met.

Another lesson learned is that there is a need to shift communication efforts towards storytelling enhanced by visual content, as it has been proved to be a very effective tool in conveying short, but compelling messages (e.g. stories from end beneficiaries, tutorials, and infographics with simple, but interesting statistics). To this end, it has been recognised that in order to complement the measures set up in the CS, communication efforts empowering beneficiaries to be able to act as the "ambassadors" of the programme need to be strengthened, by enhancing their knowledge and capacity to implement their own communication activities. To this end, communication toolkits and other specific trainings may be developed with the involvement of external experts.

The main information source regarding the Programme will continue to be its website, which will be continuously updated with information and further developed.

Taking into account that traditional media has underwent significant changes in the past decade or so with the growing proliferation of digital media – making it one of the most important communication channels – the CS will focus on increasing the proportion of online media in its activities, while continuing to address local and regional, well established traditional media outlets as well, especially in terms of advertising the financing opportunities across the entire border area, or promoting project stories through ads and (paid) advertorials, or PR articles. Overall, the Programme will concentrate on obtaining a higher degree of media attention and coverage, by taking full advantage of media opportunities, such as articles, reportages, interviews with VIPs, and events.

1.3 Legal background

The Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme's CS is prepared in accordance with the programming document, approved by the European Commission on December 9, 2015. However, as a European initiative, the legal framework provided by the European Union has to be observed as well.

The information and communication rules for the European Union's Cohesion Policy (ERDF) are defined in the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of 17 December 2013 commonly known as the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR). Provisions relating to information and communication can be found under Articles 115-117 and Annex XII of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, as well as Articles 3-5 and Annex II of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014.

In line with these regulatory requirements, this CS sets out how the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat will promote the programme to potential beneficiaries and to the wider public through the publication of the funding opportunities, the role, the achievements and outcomes of the programme.

2. PROGRAMME AND COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

2.1 Programme objectives

The Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary is a European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) Programme, and, therefore an integral part of the European Union's Cohesion Policy. It promotes cross-border cooperation between the two neighbouring countries, Romania and Hungary.

The overall objective of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme is to further strengthen cross-border partnerships, in order to facilitate the harmonious, cooperation-based integrated development of the border area.

Covering an area of 8 counties, the Programme is structured on six priority axes, and is intended to make a meaningful contribution towards the three dimensions of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The **priority axes** of the Programme are the following:

Priority axis 1: Joint protection and efficient use of common values and resources

Objectives:

1.1 Improved quality management of cross-border rivers and ground water bodies

1.2 Sustainable use of historic, cultural and natural heritage within the eligible area

Priority axis 2: Improve sustainable cross-border mobility and remove bottlenecks

Objectives:

2.1 Improved cross-border accessibility through connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure

2.2 Increased proportion of passengers using sustainable – low carbon, low noise – forms of cross-border transport

Priority axis 3: Improve employment and promote cross-border labour mobility

Objective:

3.1 Increased employment within the eligible area

Priority axis 4: Improving health care services

Objective:

4.1 Improved preventive and curative health-care services across the eligible area

Priority axis 5: Improve risk prevention and disaster management

Objective:

5.1 Improved cross-border disasters and risk management

Priority axis 6: Promoting cross-border cooperation between institutions and citizens

Objective:

6.1 Intensify sustainable cross-border cooperation of institutions and communities

2.2 Communication objectives

The operational objective of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme is to foster cross-border cooperation by attracting and allocating funding to high-quality projects, which are fully in line with the Programme strategy, and which contribute to the accomplishment of the change the Programme foresees, by delivering their own results in a sustainable way. Communication is to support this objective, facilitating the success of the programme implementation and its efficiency, assisting applicants and beneficiaries, making the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme well known and raising awareness of the role played by the ERDF and the European Union in regional development.

All these are translated into the following communication objectives, linked to the Programme objectives:

Communication objective 1: Facilitating the efficient communication flow at programme level
CO 1.1 Strengthening internal capacity and facilitating a well-functioning internal communication flow in between the programme bodies
CO 1.2 Actively cooperating with other Interreg programmes, in order to share information and best practices

Communication objective 2: Ensuring effective support for applicants and beneficiaries

CO 2.1 Supporting applicants by improving their awareness and increasing their capacity to participate in the Programme
CO 2.2 Supporting beneficiaries in all phases of project implementation
Communication objective 3: Increasing the visibility of results
CO 3.1 Raising awareness on Programme and projects achievements and on the role played by the ERDF and the European Union in regional development
CO 3.2 Increasing projects' capacity to communicate their own results

2.3 Communication messages

2.3.1 Key communication messages

The CS defines key communication messages to highlight and promote the goals and added value of the Programme through all its communication efforts. With repeated use, such statements are the foundation of any branding efforts and, as such, they should be reflected in all communications. This way, understanding related to the Programme is expected to increase, leading to the establishment of a positive programme image.

Related to the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme, the following messages will be disseminated:

- √ Is an effective financial tool further strengthening cooperation and making it an integral and natural part of the daily life in the Romanian-Hungarian border region
- √ Institutions and organisations from the border region work together to find solutions resulting in higher mobility, more jobs, safer environment and increased knowledge
- √ Nurtures the unique heritage (natural, cultural) and the common values of the border region
- √ Helps increase prosperity and the overall quality of life in the border region

2.3.2 Slogan

The slogan of the Programme is „**Partnership for a better future**". This will be used together or separately from the logo of the Programme, according to the space available, as described in the Visual Identity Manual (VIM).

Language versions:

English:
Partnership for a better future
Romanian:
Parteneriat pentru un viitor mai bun
Hungarian:
Partnerség egy jobb jövőért

2.3.3 Boilerplate

As it has proved to be useful, it is highly advised that the Programme uses a general statement summarising the Programme aims and role in a brief, yet powerful way. The use of the boilerplate is recommended in external communication, more specifically, it is intended to offer external audiences, such as the media representatives a general overview of the Programme. Traditionally, it is used in press releases, articles or interviews.

The Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme aims at financing joint Romanian - Hungarian projects, which address needs that lie on both sides of the border, and that require a common approach and innovative solutions, aiming at facilitating the integrated, sustainable development of the eligible area. The Programme comes as a continuation of cross-border

cooperation programmes implemented previously in the region and disposes of a total budget of approx. 232 million EUR, out of which 189 million EUR represent non-refundable support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The eligible programme area comprises the counties of Bihor, Satu Mare, Arad and Timiş, on the Romanian side of the border and the counties of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and Csongrád on the Hungarian side.

Programul Interreg V-A România-Ungaria este destinat finanţării unor proiecte comune româno-ungare, care abordează nevoi identificate pe ambele laturi ale graniţei şi care necesită o abordare comună, precum şi soluţii inovative, contribuind astfel la dezvoltarea sustenabilă a zonei eligibile. Programul este o continuare a programelor de cooperare transfrontalieră implementate în regiune şi dispune de un buget total de aproximativ 232 milioane euro, din care, 189 milioane de euro, reprezintă finanţarea nerambursabilă din Fondul European de Dezvoltare Regională. Zona eligibilă a programului cuprinde judeţele Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad şi Timiş pe partea română a graniței şi, respectiv, judeţele Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés şi Csongrád pe partea ungară a acesteia.

Az Interreg V-A Románia-Magyarország Program célja közös, román-magyar projektek finanszírozása, amelyek közös megközelítést, valamint innovatív megoldásokat követelnek, a határ mindkét oldalán felmerülő igények kiszolgálására, hozzájárulva ezáltal a jogosult terület fenntartható fejlődéséhez. A Program folytatja a régióban megvalósított határmenti együttműködéseket, összköltségvetése hozzávetőleg 232 millió euró, amelyből 189 millió euró az Európai Regionális Fejlesztési Alapból származó vissza nem térintendő támogatás. A támogatható határmenti terület a következő megyéket foglalja magában: Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad és Timiș a román oldalon, illetve Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés és Csongrád a magyar oldalon.

2.4 Communication phases through the programme life

When planning communication activities throughout the programme life cycle, several aspects have to be taken into account, such as the fact that there will be different communication needs emerging through the programme implementation, due to its natural evolution.

The CS will adapt to each stage of the programme cycle, in the short, medium, and long term. It is planned that most of the Programme funds are to be allocated during the first years of the programming period. Programme routines and systems will be developed and fine-tuned during this period. For this reason, the CS will mostly focus on attracting high quality applications and ensuring effective programme implementation during the first years. At the same time, it is important to actively cooperate with other programmes, to share information and best practices. When the Programme reaches the peak of its implementation, the CS will support good project management, project communication skills and dissemination of the first results. In the final years of the programme implementation, the CS will shift its focus on communicating the project and programme results and on optimising the use of the remaining funds.

3. TARGET AUDIENCES

The target groups of programme communication are closely linked to the communication objectives set. Different target groups are addressed by different specific communication objectives. In general, the audience for programme communication can be split into two main categories i.e. internal and external target groups.

The **internal target groups** consist of programme bodies, organisations and groups involved in the governance of the Programme such as:

- Monitoring Committee (MC)

- Managing Authority with certification function (MA)
- National Authority (NA)
- Audit Authority (AA)
- Audit Body in Hungary (AB)
- Joint Secretariat (JS)
- Info Points in Hungary (one in each of the 4 counties)
- Control Bodies (RO and HU FLC)
- European Commission and other EU institutions

The **external target groups** consist of all other stakeholders, mainly organisations that could or do implement projects as well as the general public and the media:

- **Potential beneficiaries/applicants**: eligible organisations that have an interest or have the capacity to participate in ROHU projects. This group consists of applicants known to the programme bodies as having the intention to submit an application, including new organisations.

- **Assessors**: external experts are to be contracted for assessing the received applications, based on need.

- **Beneficiaries/funded projects**: organisations receiving funding from the Programme.

- **End users and the wider public**: those making use of or potentially being impacted by project outputs and programme results, citizens from the programme area, citizens from Romania and Hungary, EU general public.

- **Influencers/multipliers**: European Commission, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions, national, regional and local authorities and policy makers, EU info centres, other Interreg programmes and their projects, institutions dealing with project generation, Interact etc.

- **Media**: the media from both countries and EU media in general (radio, television, newspapers, online news resources, publications etc.), acting at the same time as a communication channel.

3.1 Target groups, their communication needs and how to address them

The Programme has to customise its communication efforts for each target audience identified. Since the success of programme implementation depends on the above-mentioned groups, communication towards these specific groups will be continuously fine-tuned to their specific needs, reflecting the programme implementation phases.

The communication of the programme has to take into consideration the fact that the working language of the Programme is English. Programme communication, in general, is done in English. In certain cases, also national languages can be used.

A brand identity will be created in order to provide a coherent image of the Programme, to be used in all communication activities. A Programme Visual Identity Manual (VIM) will be drawn up, to support the management structures and the beneficiaries of funded projects in fulfilling the requirements regarding information and communication. The Commission requirements for displaying the emblem and other references to the European Union will be followed in all communication activities.

Internal communication

The objective of this communication level is to make the information flow within the management structure as smooth and effective as possible and to facilitate the establishment

of a clear organizational structure, supporting clear division of tasks, a well-structured process of handling information and involvement of the responsible bodies in the programme work, as a whole. Further on, the aim is to strengthen the commitment of the programme implementation bodies to the Programme's objectives and to achieve the necessary and effective cooperation for the sake of a successful programme implementation. This includes the shared responsibility of taking initiative in discussing and developing processes when and where needed. Clear, coherent communication about the progress of the Programme and its results will be provided towards the EC on a constant basis as well.

External communication is equally of key importance from the point of view of programme implementation. It involves the following four domains:

- communication towards potential beneficiaries/applicants;

- communication towards beneficiaries/funded projects;

- communication towards end users/the general public;

- communication towards the influencers/multipliers/media.

The Programme cannot be successful without quality applications, well performing project partners and smooth implementation. Communication towards potential beneficiaries and funded projects has to promote these purposes through carefully designed Calls for proposals, project generation events (e.g. partner search forums, information events). Rapid, up-to-date and transparent information has to be provided on conditions of eligibility, selection, evaluation and project implementation. Continuous information and data gathering from the concerned target groups is also essential.

Programme achievements, on the other hand, have to be promoted towards the end users, the general public, as well as towards influencers and multipliers, including the media. At the beginning, general information has to be provided about the overall framework of the Programme, including programme strategies and objectives, as well as desired achievements for the border regions. As the implementation progresses, more emphasis has to be given to the results achieved by the Programme. At this phase, an important share in communication has to be granted to the presentation of the European Union's role in regional development and how the EU contributes to the development of the Romanian-Hungarian cross-border region.

The table below summarizes the communication needs of the Programme target groups, provides information on where and how to identify them, as well as the impact foreseen after the implementation of the relevant communication tools to be used in order to address them (Table 1).

Table 1. Target groups, their communication needs and the foreseen impact

Target groups	What are their communication needs?	Where / how to identify these needs?	Foreseen impact
Internal target groups (programme bodies)	- Role and responsibilities regarding programme implementation; - The status of programme implementation; - On-going information on current issues and tasks relevant for their work; - Procedures, handbooks, guidelines, EC's requirements, national legislation.	- Regular direct contact among programme bodies; - Monitoring Committee meetings; - Day-to-day communication; - Experiences from the previous programming period.	- Clear, up-to-date, coherent and harmonised communication between the different programme bodies; - Better informed management bodies, clear procedures for tasks to be fulfilled; - Greater programme efficiency; - Transparency; - Result-focus.
European Commission	- Progress of programme implementation; - Benefits of ROHU cooperation; - Project results/impacts.	- Feedback from the EC on annual reporting; - INFORM Network cooperation.	- Clear, coherent communication towards the EC; - Transparency; - Result-focus.
Potential beneficiaries/ applicants	- Clear information about the ROHU Programme - priorities, area, opened calls, funding available, eligibility requirements, contact details; - Preparation and submission of quality projects; - Support in finding partners; - Success stories as examples of cooperation.	- Feedback received after the public consultation of guidelines and manuals; - Questions and inquiries addressed to the JS and Info Points; - Events, meetings; - Experiences from the previous programming period.	- Orientation towards potential beneficiaries, clear rules for applying; - Better project proposals; - Transparency; - Equal opportunities; - Result focus.

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Target groups	What are their communication needs?	Where / how to identify these needs?	Foreseen impact
Beneficiaries/ funded Projects	- Clear contracting and implementation procedures; - Support in the implementation of ROHU projects and preparation of progress reports; - Reporting into the e-MS system; - Dissemination of project results and successful project communication.	- Questions addressed to the JS; - Project reporting; - Day-to-day contact with the projects; - Events, meetings; - Experiences from the previous programming period.	- Orientation towards beneficiaries, clear rules for project implementation; - Transparency; - Equal opportunities; - Better project reports; - Result focus; - Result capitalisation.
End users/the general public	- Benefits of ROHU cross border cooperation for those making use of or potentially being impacted by project outputs and programme results; - The role played by the ERDF and the EU in regional development.	- Media, social media; - Different networks; - Online news resources.	- Transparency in the use of funds; - Result focus.
Influencers/mu ltipliers/ media	- Benefits of ROHU Programme and project achievements; - The role played by the ERDF and the EU in regional development.	- Media, social media; - Different networks; - Online news resources.	- Transparency in the use of funds; - Result focus.

4. COMMUNICATION TOOLS

4.1 Visual identity

➢ Relevant communication objectives: All
➢ Relevant communication target groups: All

The Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme represents specific answers to specific regional challenges through specific actors. Consequently, it has to be identifiable as such for its (potential) beneficiaries and for the general public. Therefore, a unique visual programme identity is created, which characterizes the Programme.

The Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme assumed Interreg branding, aiming at a higher visibility, in order to reach new partners, to communicate achievements, and to foster capitalisation of results. The ROHU logo illustrates the Programme as part of the Interreg "family", but still original as its particular specificities. The logo and slogan reflect the connection, the cooperation between the two countries participating in the Programme, Romania and Hungary, and constitute the central points of reference created to promote its image and identity. The elements of the visual programme identity (logo, certain colours, etc.) are to be used on every single document, paper-based or electronic, produced in frame and for the purposes of the Programme. The programme logo is based on the Interreg logo. Graphical elements and templates for branding the Programme/projects are developed (e.g. MS Office templates, posters, giveaways etc.). Visual guidelines and templates are made available for the use of beneficiaries and programme management bodies, in order to ensure compliance with communication and information requirements.

The harmonised branding offers direct benefits to the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme. The initiative is expected to reduce spending, to help with the capitalisation of thematic results, as well as to increase simplification and recognition.

4.2 Online and social media platforms

➢ Relevant communication objectives: All
➢ Relevant communication target groups: All

Online communication is a very important channel for communicating with target audiences. It offers the opportunity to reach the widest audience.

The Programme website is an essential instrument of information and communication addressed to all target groups and a main platform to communicate about the funding opportunities and requirements to access these funds. It also provides up to date information on projects funded, beneficiaries, project results as well as all the other data requested by relevant EU legislation. The list of operations funded by the Programme will be made available on the website and will be updated regularly and at least every six months.

The Programme website provides an *easy-to-use* layout. Regarding its structure, visitors are intuitively guided through the available content, making as easy as possible for them to find the information they need. The ROHU website provides links to the national information pages about the Programme and includes a section dedicated to contact details from the two participant countries in the Programme, as well. Interactive, barrier-free accessibility and responsiveness is fully integrated into the website, to enable also disabled users to access information.

Over the programme lifetime, regular monitoring and continuous web development will ensure that the user experience will be maintained and/or improved. To get maximum

exposure on search engines such as Google, search engine optimisation will help to get the website to the top of natural searches.

Finally, the internal intranet is hosted on the Programme's website and will be used for sharing internal documents.

Social media provides news on demand, building an ROHU community. These platforms also permit the Programme's stakeholders to network with each other. Social media may be used for event and information marketing as well.

Newsflashes/newsletters periodically provide up-to-date information about the Programme to the relevant ROHU target audiences. The electronic newsletter will be downloadable from the Programme's website, but also sent through direct mail to everyone interested or requesting it. The webpage provides a subscription option. Furthermore, the newsletter will be sent to all organizations and institutions that became or were the beneficiaries of the Programme.

Direct mails are one of the most used communication tools that offer the possibility to get specific information to the target source in the most easiest and direct way. E-mail will be mostly used as direct mail, but in certain cases – for example invitation letters to major programme events – also regular mail might be applied.

4.3 Public Events

Public events include any kind of conference, campaign or other larger-scale event activity, which is targeted at a wider audience.

- ➢ Relevant communication objectives: All
- ➢ Relevant communication target groups: All

A Kick-off event: is to be organised at the beginning of the implementation period of the Programme, with the aim to mark its official launching and to acquaint the public with the funding opportunities available in the Programme framework. Thus, the event will have an official, symbolic dimension as well as a more practical, technical one. This event stands for the Annual event in the first year of programme implementation.

Annual events: the Programme organises one major information event per year, in order to raise awareness and provide basic information either on new Calls or on achievements, across the entire programme area. They also aim to encourage cooperation, networking and exchange among participants and stand for the major annual information activity required by Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

Side events could in addition be organised by projects.

Other events: apart from the above-mentioned, other types of events might be organised, according to the programme implementation needs, which will be further detailed in the annual plans. This may include also participation in multiplier events and cooperation with other Interreg programmes and Interact, in order to advertise joint thematic achievements and join common initiatives. Other opportunity for achieving greater visibility of the Programme can be, for instance, the European Cooperation Day campaign organised by Interact.

4.4 Targeted Events

Targeted events include any kind of seminar, workshop, interpersonal meeting, or other smaller-scale event activity, which is directed at a narrow, rather specific audience.

- ➢ Relevant communication objectives: All

➢ Relevant communication target groups: internal target groups, potential beneficiaries, funded projects

Internal meetings and trainings: contacts between the bodies involved in the programme implementation, as well as proper information flow between them is to be ensured in the frame of joint meetings and trainings for the staff. By means of communication, clear organizational structure, supporting well-structured process of handling information will be set, with the purpose to obtain greater programme efficiency and provide coherence and transparency in information. In case training is to be provided on specific issues, this will be decided on case-by-case basis.

Information events - Info days: Information events (workshops/seminars and info days) – are organized in connection with the launched Calls for project proposals, having the aim to spread information regarding the Programme funding at the level of the target area, but also having the role to help applicants in developing their projects. These occasions give way to discuss project ideas, Call for proposal requirements, application issues, as well as to meet potential applicants and receive feedback from them regarding their communication needs. These events are to cover areas that participate in the Programme, being organized by the JS and Info Points under the guidance of JS.

Partner search forums: are organised in connection with the opened Calls for proposals, having the main aim to encourage new partnerships. These forums are coordinated by the JS with input from the Info Points, and are held jointly for the relevant stakeholders in the two parts of the border region.

Lead beneficiary (LB) trainings: in order to provide support to beneficiaries in the implementation phase of their projects, after the approval of each Call, the JS and Info Points organise LB seminars. In the framework of these events, LB will be informed on contracting and implementation issues, on the project start-up phase as well as on how to use and report into the eMS system. The aim of these events is to enable them to reach a higher implementation quality of their funded projects.

Communication training seminars: following the approval of projects, communication trainings are organised for projects, in order to improve their knowledge on how to properly implement their communication activities and on how to promote their projects and disseminate their results. For the sake of cost-efficiency, communication trainings may be organised as part of the Lead beneficiary trainings.

4.5 Promotional materials

➢ Relevant communication objectives: All
➢ Relevant communication target groups: All

Publications: publications include any kind of printed (or printable digital) product, such as leaflets, brochures, handbooks etc. which carry information about the Programme and its projects.
The Programme has an eco-friendly publications policy, thus a preference will be given to eco-friendly materials and printing solutions such as recycled paper. Printed materials on paper will be produced with sustainability in mind.
All printed materials, manuals and other guidance material and background documents containing information related to all stages of the project life will be made available for download in electronic format from the programme website.

Leaflets with basic programme information is produced in the early implementation phase, and used for wide dissemination. These materials represent symbolic business cards of the Programme; they are "appetisers" as they contain general information about the Programme. Leaflets are aimed at encouraging a wide participation in the Programme, as well as helping

to spread information about the Programme. They will be used during the whole programme implementation period containing targeted information in a short form, with the purpose to raise attention.

Project brochures will be developed in the later implementation phase in close cooperation with funded projects, to present thematic project results.

Other publications might be developed, based on need, such as, info graphics, factsheets, thematic capitalisation reports, etc.
All materials will be produced following the rules regarding the Programme's visual identity.

Promotional products are to be produced with the purpose to ensure consistent branding of programme events, including roll-ups as well as office products such as business cards, pens, notebooks, memory sticks, calendars, giveaways, conference materials etc. based on need.

4.6 Media

➤ Relevant communication objectives: C3
➤ Relevant communication target groups: All

The CS focuses on increasing the proportion of online media in its activities, while continuing to address local and regional, well established traditional media outlets as well. Media visibility is seen as a tool for raising awareness and interest towards the benefits of cross border cooperation in general and the Programme in particular.

Advertisements: Calls for proposals might be advertised in regional/local newspapers, in order to make the Programme and its financial opportunities more transparent in the area, to the general public. In case of certain major events, advertisements in the mentioned media channels might also be used.

At programme level, the envisaged media tools include press releases to be translated and disseminated at national level by the JS and IPs, organisation of press conferences around major events and the setup of a media corner on the website, where all information targeted to the media can be found, as well as the latest news related to the Programme.

5. RESPONSIBLE BODIES

The implementation of the Communication strategy is a shared horizontal responsibility of the MA/JS, NA, IPs, the MC, and the projects.

The Managing Authority (AM) / Joint Secretariat (JS) - coordinates, respectively, the JS implements the Communication strategy making sure that requirements for information and communication activities, as defined by the EU legal framework are met. Nevertheless, in Hungary the National Authority is also involved, together with the Info Points, in the concrete implementation of these activities, carrying out certain tasks connected to the national level information regarding the Programme.

In particular, according to Articles 115 to 117 and Annex XII of the EU common provisions regulation (CPR) No 1303/2013, the Managing Authority is responsible for:

➤ Ensuring that information and communication measures are implemented in line with the Communication strategy;
➤ Ensuring that those measures aim for the widest possible media coverage, using various forms of communication;
➤ Ensuring that the list of operations is published in accordance with the legal requirements and is updated at least every 6 months;

- ➢ Displaying the European Union's emblem at its premises;
- ➢ Implementing information and communication measures for the public, potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries;
- ➢ Providing beneficiaries with information and communication tools, including templates in electronic format in order to help them meet their obligations;
- ➢ Making sure that an annual major information activity is organised in the framework of the Programme;
- ➢ Ensuring that information about programme implementation is published, including main achievements.

The practical implementation of the above-mentioned tasks of the MA is carried out by the JS. Moreover, the JS coordinates the Info Points (IPs) in their activities, especially on information and communication matters.

The Info Points established in each of the four Hungarian counties provide information and advice to potential applicants and beneficiaries, especially from a national perspective, but they also assist the activities of the JS, on request.

The Monitoring Committee oversees communication activities. Its responsibility is to analyse and approve the Communication strategy within the first six months after approval of the Programme and to monitor the progress made in its implementation. Additionally, the Monitoring Committee members might contribute to achieving the communication aims serving as multipliers for the Programme.

Projects are responsible for communicating their aims and results and contributing to communicating overall programme results**.** They are expected to contribute in particular to communication objectives C3 "Increasing the visibility of results". To this end, the MA/JS expect projects to follow the Information and Communication responsibilities of the beneficiaries included in the Articles 115 to 117 and Annex XII of the EU common provisions regulation (CPR) No 1303/2013, the rules and regulations related to communication as explained in the Visual Identity Manual, to make use of guidance and support measures offered by the MA/JS, as well as to provide content to the MA/JS in a pro-active manner.

6. BUDGET

Expenses for implementing activities planned in the present CS are covered from the Programme's technical assistance budget.

The overall technical assistance **budget** for the entire programming period, allocated for information and communication at Programme level, totals **4,000,000.00 EUR (ERDF + RO and HU state co-financing)**. Specific budgets for communication are prepared as part of the Technical Assistance contracts. The budgets can be revised on a yearly basis or whenever necessary.

7. EVALUATION

The Monitoring Committee approves the Communication Strategy and monitors the progress made in its implementation.

A communication plan will be presented to the Monitoring Committee every year, together with the progress made on the indicators, according to Art. 116 (3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

Relevant indicators mentioned in the Technical Assistance contracts as well as other indicators specific for communication, which shall measure the achievement of the communication objectives, have been set and will be assessed annually when, presenting the progress of the CS implementation to the Monitoring Committee. The assessment will also be

a part of the Annual Implementation Report in the years 2017 and 2019, according to art. 14 (4) of Regulation 1299/2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European Territorial Cooperation goal.

In addition, communication will be subject to external Programme evaluations, based on a set of indicators and evaluation criteria defined in advance. To carry out the evaluation stage, the MA will establish a plan containing the provisions necessary for collecting and interpreting information regarding the level of Programme's awareness/knowledge.

At the level of the JS, the Programme communication efforts will be evaluated annually against a series of indicators, set in connection with each of the specific communication objectives (Table 2).

Table 2: Indicators table

Specific communication objective	Indicators	Source of data	Target value
CO 1.1. **Strengthening internal capacity and facilitate a well-functioning internal communication flow between the programme bodies**	No of internal meetings and trainings held	List of participants	At least 1/year
	No of MC meetings*	Minutes of MC meetings	At least 1/year
CO 1.2. **Actively cooperating with other Interreg programmes in order to share information and best practices**	No of participations of the staff to Interact and other inter - programme initiatives, focusing on experience exchange	List of participants	At least 1/ year
CO 2.1. **Supporting applicants by improving their awareness and increasing their capacity to participate in the programme**	*No of events for information and promotion of the Programme (targeted events for applicants)**	Sum of own data collected by JS	At least 1 joint Partner Search Forum for each open CfP and 4 Info days sessions held for pair counties in connection with each CfP
	No of participants in information events held for project applicants	List of participants	Variable for each type of event
	No of calls for proposals launched*	Sum of own data collected by JS	Variable, based on the decision of the Programme management bodies

Specific communication objective	Indicators	Source of data	Target value
CO 2.2. **Supporting beneficiaries in all phases of project implementation**	No of targeted events for project beneficiaries held	Sum of own data collected by JS	At least 4 Lead Beneficiary training sessions held for pair counties in connection with each CfP /series of approved projects (including use of the eMS system)
CO 3.1. **Raising awareness on programme and projects achievements and on the role played by the ERDF and the European Union in regional development**	No of communication actions with media impact (press conferences, press releases, interviews, advertisements via different media channels)	Sum of own data collected by JS	Min. 1 actions with media impact/ year
	No of websites created	NA	1 website
	No of Programme annual events	Data collected by JS	1 event/ year
	No of publications printed/ to be printed	Data collected by JS	Leaflets 1000 Project brochures and other publications, based on need
	No of users who receive the electronic newsletter	Data collected by JS	Variable, function of e-mailing list: at least 500 persons/issue
CO 3.2. **Increasing project's capacity to communicate their own results**	No of communication seminars organised	Data collected by JS	At least 4 training sessions held for pair counties in connection with each series of approved projects (may be organised together with LB seminars)

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* Indicators listed in the Cooperation Programme Document, under the priority axis for Technical Assistance.