

Interreg Programme Management Handbook

Guide to the 2021-2027 period

The Interreg Programme Management Handbook comprises a series of factsheets. They can be read individually, or collectively, to understand the relevance of certain aspects of Interreg management. They cover the relevance, legal basis, key challenges and approaches to the given subject.

Factsheet | Internal communication in Interreg programmes

1. What is it? What is the definition of this work?

Internal communication refers to how programme bodies within an Interreg programme coordinate, collaborate, and share information with one another. This includes how decisions are made, how shared understanding is built, and how teams work together across institutions, countries, and languages. Effective internal communication ensures that everyone is informed, aligned, and motivated. It covers what is communicated, who is involved, when and how communication takes place, and which tools are used to support cooperation.

2. Why are we discussing it?

Interreg programmes operate across national borders with multiple institutions involved. This complexity makes strong internal communication essential—and particularly challenging. Without clear communication, misunderstandings, conflicts, and inefficiencies are inevitable. Too little information leads to confusion; too much, or poorly targeted communication, causes overload and disinterest.

Good internal communication:

- Builds mutual trust and team cohesion.
- Supports programme delivery by ensuring clarity and alignment.
- Reduces the risk of isolated working or conflicting interpretations.
- Helps teams navigate the programme lifecycle together.

3. What are the challenges, key considerations and frequently asked questions?

Key challenges:

- **Multi-actor complexity:** Interreg involves diverse organisations with different cultures, working methods, and languages.
- **Remote cooperation:** Much of the work happens across distance and relies on digital communication tools.
- **Conflicts and misunderstandings:** These are common due to differing expectations, unclear processes, or cultural norms.
- **Language barriers:** Not all partners are fluent in the working language. Translation and interpretation take time and resources.
- **Team-building over time:** Simply assigning roles isn't enough—trust, shared values, and understanding must be built gradually.

Key considerations:

- What needs to be communicated and why?
- Who needs the information?

- When and how often should communication happen?
- What medium is most effective for the message and context?

Frequently asked questions:

- How can we build a common understanding despite different backgrounds?
- What's the best way to maintain motivation in a remote, multilingual team?
- How do we manage disagreements or misunderstandings constructively?

4. How are they addressed?

Start with shared planning:

At the programme design stage, involve all relevant bodies in discussions about vision, roles, and expectations. Agree on common processes and document decisions clearly.

Define internal communication agreements:

Establish what, when, how, and by whom information will be shared. Use tools (like shared calendars, task boards, or mailing lists) to support transparency and regularity.

Meet in person whenever possible:

While digital tools are essential, face-to-face contact remains the most effective way to build trust, resolve tensions, and form shared understanding.

Write it down:

Document all key decisions and agreements. People forget or interpret things differently—written records keep everyone aligned.

Understand team dynamics:

Use the *team development model* (Forming – Storming – Performing – Adjourning) to anticipate and support the natural evolution of programme teams:

- *Forming*: Initial contact, role definition.
- *Storming*: Tensions emerge; shared rules are negotiated.
- *Performing*: Teams work effectively, relying on trust and shared vision.
- *Adjourning*: Final reporting and closure—celebrate successes and prepare for future collaboration.

Address language needs:

Ensure interpretation and translation are budgeted and planned for. Allow extra time for multilingual communication, and encourage patience and clarity in team interactions.

5. Good practice examples, innovative approaches

- **Communication charters**: Some programmes develop an internal communication charter at start-up, outlining expectations, tools, and escalation paths for conflicts.
- **Regular informal check-ins**: Beyond formal meetings, regular short team calls or informal coffee breaks online help maintain connection.
- **Shared project management tools**: Programmes using tools like Trello, Miro, or MS Teams report improved visibility and coordination.
- **Joint onboarding sessions**: Introducing new staff through shared induction meetings promotes early integration and common understanding.
- **Celebration and closure events**: At programme end, some teams organise closure workshops or informal gatherings to reflect and celebrate, strengthening long-term professional networks.

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Furthermore, understanding and knowledge evolves throughout the programming period. If you spot something out of date or inconsistent, please contact us at communication@interact.eu

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