

# 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.

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### Factsheet | Communication

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

The regulations set out several requirements for programme and project staff in order to ensure basic visibility and transparency. The chapters in this factsheet provide an overview of the communication rules.

The rules provide a good starting point and must be fulfilled but they alone do not ensure good communication. Services by Interact and the European Commission aim to complement the rules by providing platforms, networks, learning opportunities, practical guidance and more.

#### 2. Why are we discussing it?

Communication is a crucial process embedded into every step of programme life cycle. Without good communication, it can be hard for an Interreg programme to realise its full potential.

The Managing Authority has to increase awareness of different target audiences on European projects, European programmes and European cooperation as a whole. The Managing Authority also has to guarantee the transparency of how European funds are used.

This fact sheet is first of all aimed at communication officers and managers in each Interreg programme. But it should also be shared with the whole staff, especially the managing staff of Managing Authorities and Joint Secretariats. They are not always aware of how important it is to have a strategic approach towards communication and to link communication objectives with programme and management goals.

#### 3. What are the Legal references and basis for this topic?

##### EU Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) 2021/1060

- Article 22: Programming
- Articles 40 to 42: Monitoring
- Article 46: Visibility
- Article 47: Emblem of the Union
- Article 48: Communication officers and networks
- Article 49: Responsibilities of the managing authority
- Article 50: Responsibilities of beneficiaries

Communication implementing rules, such as EU flag specifications (Annex IX), are included in the annexes to the CPR.

## Interreg Regulation (IR) 2021/1059

- Article 17: Programming
- Articles 29 to 32: Monitoring
- Article 35: Evaluation
- Article 36 together with articles 47 to 49 of CPR: Transparency
- Article 36 together with articles 49 and 50 of CPR: Responsibilities of managing authorities and partners
- Article 36 together with Annex IX of CPR: Technical specifications

External cooperation programmes (both IPA – CBC, Next and Outermost regions) are now part of Interreg, and rules set out in the regulations are also applicable to these programmes.

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

These can be listed as follows:

- What are the communication rules that programmes and projects must follow? Where can I find them?
- Where can I find information about specific networks envisaged in the regulations and be a part of them?
- How can I learn more about how the rules are applied in practice?
- How does the EU brand work in practice?
- How can I improve the quality of my programme communication?
- How can I support beneficiaries in their project communication activities?

### 5. How are they addressed?

#### Programming and monitoring

The programme's approach to communication must be included in the Interreg Programme in the **communication chapter**. This chapter serves as an outline for a communication strategy that can be developed for the programme lifetime.

Interreg Regulation set out **monitoring** requirements that are related to communication. Your programme, with its JS and MA, monitors projects' progress. In turn, your programme is monitored by your monitoring committee and the European Commission.

The **role of the monitoring committee** in supervising the performance of the programme, including on communication, is strengthened in the 21-27 period. Its role is expanded from examining the communication strategy after it was prepared, to examining the implementation of communication activities. You will need to regularly update the MC of your progress with the implementation of your communication activities (e.g., your communication strategy).

**Data about implementation** of the programme, such as number of projects selected and funded by your programme, their total cost, amount of funds, output and result values, etc. must be published on the programme website.

**New reviews mechanisms** replace the Annual Implementation Reports in the form of (optional) review meetings. Programme monitoring committees provide updates on the implementation of the programme with the meetings set up with the European Commission, instead of reports. These meetings also cover the progress made with the implementation of communication and visibility actions.

## Common visibility of EU funding

The Emblem of the Union, or the EU flag, is at the heart of most of our communication activities, as it is a uniform and visual way of highlighting EU support. The emblem of the European Union must be prominently featured on all communication materials alongside the statement “(Co)funded by the European Union” spelled out in full. Interreg programmes and projects must use of the term 'Interreg' next to the emblem of the Union:



## Communication officers & coordination mechanisms,

Each managing authority shall identify a communication officer for each Interreg programme. A communication officer may be responsible for more than one programme.

A new role of 'national communication coordinator' is defined, and this coordinator is expected to coordinate communication efforts at the national level, including those of Interreg.

The Commission will continue to run a network of communication officers (INFORM EU).

## Requirements for managing authorities

- Launch the programme website six months from the approval of the new programme.
- Publish the planned and launched programme calls for proposals on the website.
- Publish a list of approved projects. (be careful to use the updated parameters and reporting intervals, as stipulated by the new regulation)
- Publish them in editable format; for example, not pdf/jpeg but spreadsheet.
- Make communication materials available for the Commission.

## Responsibilities of beneficiaries

- Acknowledgement of European Union funding must be ensured by beneficiaries on their printed material and online pages.
- Unified reference to the EU emblem and the EU across all funds – no more reference to specific funds. (except for using the word Interreg)
- Financial corrections to be applied should beneficiaries not comply with these responsibilities. (2% for Interreg, 3% for other CPR funds)
- Interreg projects involving physical investment or the purchase of equipment, and whose total cost exceeds EUR 100.000, must publicly display plaques or billboards. (this amount is EUR 500.000 for other CPR funds.)
- All other projects must display posters (at least A3 size) with information about the project, highlighting the support from an Interreg fund.
- Where several projects are taking place at the same location, only one plaque or billboard must be displayed.
- Special measures should be taken for projects of strategic importance and projects whose total cost exceeds EUR 5 million, such as organising a visibility event for the project and inviting the Commission and programme (MA, JS) representatives.
- If your programme has set up a small project fund (SPF, according to Article 25 of the Interreg Regulation), please note that the SPF beneficiary has to publish a list of SPF final recipients, and has to both comply and ensure compliance by the final recipients with the provisions of Article 36.

## 6. How does it work in practice?

### Acknowledgement of EU (Interreg) support

This obligation refers to both visual and textual reference to EU (Interreg support).

Programmes and projects must:

- Provide a statement highlighting the support from an Interreg fund in a visible manner on documents and communication material relating to the implementation of the Interreg operation, intended for the general public or for participants.
- Include on the partner's official website or social media sites, where such sites exist, a short description of the project, **proportionate to the level of support** provided by an Interreg fund, including its aims and results, and highlighting the financial support from the Interreg fund

The **visual brand** consists of the word Interreg + EU emblem + co-funding statement. Detailed guidance on the 2021 - 2027 visual brand elements, including technical instructions, are included in the new Interreg brandbook, which you can [download here](#).

### Networks

The INFORM EU is large network comprising communication staff of all funds ruled by the CPR. If you are working on information and publicity issues in a managing authority or joint secretariat of an Interreg programme, you fulfil the criteria to be part of the INFORM EU network. Send an email to [informeu@ec.europa.eu](mailto:informeu@ec.europa.eu) with your request to become a member of the network.

Interact runs a networks exclusively for Interreg communication officers. You can find up to date information on Interact website [Networks page](#) at all times.

Both networks organise regular meetings and provide online spaces for exchanges on specific topics in programme communication.

### Interact Academy communication courses

Interact offers various courses on different aspects of programme communication throughout the year. Available courses are listed on the [Interact Academy page](#).

### Programme websites in practice

- Have a website up and running within 6 months from the approval of your programme
- Publish list of funded operations (projects) – in editable format. E.g., not jpeg but excel  
The managing authority shall make the list of operations (...) and shall update that list at least every four months. Each operation shall have a unique code. The list shall contain the following data:
  - (a) in the case of legal entities, the beneficiary's and, in the case of public procurement, the contractor's name;
  - (b) the purpose of the operation and its expected or actual achievements;
  - (...) where the beneficiary is a natural person the first name and the surname;
  - (...) specific objective concerned;
  - (...) location indicator or geolocation for the operation and country concerned;
  - (...) for mobile operations or operations covering several locations the location of the beneficiary where the beneficiary is a legal entity; or the region on NUTS 2 level where the beneficiary is a natural person.
- Publish a timetable of the planned calls for proposals that should be updated at least three times a year with the following indicative data: (...)

- geographical area covered by the call for proposal;
- policy objective or specific objective concerned;
- type of eligible applicants;
- total amount of support for the call;
- start and end date of the call.
- Include general information about the programme
- Make sure EU is visibly highlighted (via flag and textual reference)
- Have a section showcasing your highlighted projects
- Include contact details for your MA and JS
- The managing authority shall publish or provide a link to all the data transmitted to the Commission on the programme website

## **Communicating Operations of Strategic Importance (OSIs)**

Interreg projects and other operations defined as 'strategic' in the Programme (Appendix 3), and projects whose total cost exceed 5 million euros must take additional communication measures in order to ensure high and impactful visibility, of both the project's achievements as well as that of the European Union support.

A [toolbox](#) by the European Commission is available in order to inspire for improved OSI communications.

## **7. Good practice examples, innovative approaches**

### **Make use of Interact and EC visibility opportunities**

#### **interreg.eu**

The Interreg portal is the hub for all Interreg programmes. It simplifies Interreg and makes it more accessible to wider audiences. Check out the website and collaborate with Interact to make your programme and projects more visible.

#### **Interreg Cooperation Day**

Celebrated every year on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September, Interreg Day highlights the benefits of Interreg cooperation through colourful local events centered around projects funded by Interreg and how they improve the lives of citizens.

#### **Interreg Project Slam**

Annual European communication competition to show the impact of Interreg programmes and projects on social media and on stage.

#### **EU Regions Week**

An annual four-day event during which cities and regions showcase their capacity to create growth and jobs, implement EU cohesion policy, and prove the importance of the local and regional level for good European governance.

#### **REGIOSTARS Awards**

An award given to EU-funded projects which demonstrate excellence and new approaches in regional development.

#### **EU in My Region**

An EU-wide campaign encouraging citizens to discover EU-funded projects near them.

**Disclaimer:** Cooperation can be complex, and while Interact's job is to make it easier, Interact cannot offer assurances on the accuracy of our pan-European information in any specific context.

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](mailto:communication@interact.eu)

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