

sailing
together

Communication strategy for the Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021-2027

Interreg
South Baltic



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Introduction

The goal of this document is to set a framework for communication and information and promotional activities which will be supporting the implementation of the Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021-2027. The document describes the processes and rules for communication and information and promotional activities designed for all relevant target groups.

The communication strategy is a joint effort of the Managing Authority (MA) and the Joint Secretariat (JS), which, along with the network of Contact Points (CPs) in Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden, are responsible for its implementation. The document serves as a framework for annual action plans which will define the information and promotion measures to be undertaken under the Programme on an annual basis.

In recent years, we have widely promoted funding opportunities and built relationships with beneficiaries. The Programme put great emphasis on promoting the effects of its projects and worked on increasing awareness of the role of EU funds in the regions.

Throughout the last two programming perspectives, 2007-2013 and 2014-2020, the Programme featured well-organised and extensive information and promotional activities. The most effective and the most apparent activities were:

- websites of the Programme and of other institutions involved in the implementation of the Programme
- using a well-recognised brand and name;
- projects database section on the Programme website;
- thematic publications;
- promotion of the Programme via social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube);
- use of audiovisual materials, such as promotional videos.

In the 2021-2027 perspective, these activities will be continued, with the addition of the development of a new Programme website, prepared in accordance with the template for programmes co-financed from the European Union funds and harmonised with the specificity of the Programme, as well as a platform for projects networking, with the aim of promoting and capitalising projects results.

Mission, vision and values of the Programme

Mission

Previous editions emphasised the local character of the Programme, which was reflected in its motto: 'Going local. Meeting your needs. Connecting people and ideas'. Since 2007 the networks created by beneficiaries were strengthened to make the potential of the area more visible in the European context and the Programme itself took more strategic and focused approach in order to support the blue and green economy on a very local level.

The mission for the South Baltic Programme 2021-2027 is:

“United by the Sea into action for a blue and green future - Innovative, Sustainable, Attractive and Active South Baltic, our mission is to support common solutions across borders to make people lives better in the South Baltic area”.

Vision

In line with our values, we strive to make the South Baltic area more innovative, sustainable, attractive for tourists and its citizens, as well as being active in cooperation.

We capitalise results of projects from the perspectives 2007-2013 and 2014-2020. This means that the Programme uses the capital of implemented projects, including the results of projects, good practices or gained experience. The Programme will provide support to project partners in order to ensure capitalisation and cooperation between beneficiaries. The information and promotional activities (mentioned in the Introduction) will be planned for different levels of the Programme implementation, e.g. consultations of the project ideas, seminars for lead partners or communication and capitalisation training/meetings.

Values

The values of the Interreg South Baltic Programme rest on the values of the European Union, where it is established that any member of the Interreg community acts in respect to human dignity, human rights, equality and freedom, in accordance with principles of democracy and the rule of law.

The values of the Programme are based also on the ones of the Interreg community and programmes. The values are:

- **cooperation** – which is the foundation of the Interreg community. The Interreg programmes connect professionals, governments, private companies, and public institutions.
- **problem-solving** – we create new, smart, innovative solutions and learn from others. This is our way to solve common problems.
- **inclusion** – makes people feel respected, valued. We appreciate differences as contributions.
- **solidarity** – we face challenges together.
- **sustainability** – our aim is for long-term solutions for common safety and prosperity for future generations.

Taking into consideration the values of the EU, Interreg and characteristic of the Programme we established the values of the Programme:

'Innovative' – describes an approach to the economic growth that utilises the endogenous potential of the SBA (e.g., number of research institutions, universities and modern enterprises) for the most important sectors for the SBA, i.a., energy, food and also highly desirable in tourism or culture.

'Sustainable' – means that the actions, which will be undertaken within the Programme, will bring positive impact on the regions in environmental, social and economic development. A sustainable approach is very much connected with the green and blue economy, related to environmentally friendly solutions promoting the sustainable management of resources (energy efficiency, recycling, safety and health concerns) as well as related to economic activities in fields of oceans, seas and coasts.

'Attractive' – emphasises the natural and cultural values of the area. These regions not only have beautiful landscapes, but also a wealth of vegetation, green areas and deeply rooted cultural heritage.

'Active' – places emphasis on the need of actions aiming at ensuring the economic growth, as well as to improve the quality of life of the South Baltic regions' inhabitants. It also refers to the issue of cooperation between various groups of stakeholders of different types and from different regions. We especially want to encourage local stakeholders to work together to keep the Programme as close as possible to area residents while promoting green and blue growth from the bottom up.

These values are included in the four Priorities of the South Baltic Programme.

| PRIORITY | PROGRAMME MEASURE |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| PRIORITY 1 – Innovative South Baltic | 1.1 Digitalising the region |
| | 1.2 Building connectivity of the region through internationalisation |
| PRIORITY 2 – Sustainable South Baltic | 2.1 Supporting transition towards green energy |
| | 2.2 Promoting sustainable use of water |
| | 2.3 Supporting a circular and more resource efficient development |
| PRIORITY 3 – Attractive South Baltic | 3.1 Developing sustainable, resilient and innovative tourism |
| PRIORITY 4 – Active South Baltic | 4.1 Strengthen the cooperation capacity of actors based within the South Baltic Area (including civil society) |

Communication objectives

Strategic objectives

We support the implementation of the Programme objectives through information and promotional activities, as well as indicating the impact of European Funds in the South Baltic area. The Programme institutions will strive to create a positive image of the Interreg South Baltic brand and to popularise the

Programme and the results of its projects. The involvement of partners from all over the Programme area and the formation of partnerships is planned to demonstrate real cross-border cooperation.

Detailed objectives

- informing about the possibilities of co-financing cross-border projects and activating potential beneficiaries to apply for funds;
- supporting beneficiaries in the implementation of projects, including information and promotional activities;
- informing the general public about activities and results of the Programme, showing the positive impact of projects on people's lives and the added value of European Funds.

Target groups

As target groups were defined i.a. as small, local authorities, municipalities, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Programme learnt that EU support brought new project proposals, not only for the South Baltic area. The focus will be continued in this Programme period.

The core target groups of the Programme and thus its communication are:

- potential beneficiaries,
- beneficiaries: i.a. municipalities, NGOs, universities and research institutions, training centres, business support organisations, SMEs, public authorities at local, regional, and national levels,
- general public, including inhabitants of the region and tourists,
- local media reached by the JS, regional Contact Points and beneficiaries,
- policy and decision makers with their networks.

Key message

“United by the Sea into action for a blue and green future – Innovative, Sustainable, Attractive and Active South Baltic” is the motto which will guide us throughout the 2021-2027 programming perspective.

Thanks to European Funds, the Programme finances activities that improve the lives of the EU citizens and their neighbours and solve common problems of the EU and its Member States. In the words of [the European Commission](#): “the overarching objective of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) is to promote a

harmonious economic, social and territorial development of the Union as a whole”

The Programme aims to make the South Baltic area more innovative, sustainable, attractive for tourists and its citizens, as well as active in cooperation. That is why we use the capital of implemented projects and support new common solutions across borders, especially in blue and green sectors.

The language of communication will be plain, simplified and adjusted to a specific target group, its needs, age range and interest, and to communication channels.

We respect the horizontal principles of the European Union – we ensure equal opportunities for women and men, access to information and projects results for persons with disabilities, and prevent any form of discrimination.

Communication channels

The Interreg South Baltic Programme, considering all target groups, will use the following communication channels:

- website of the Programme and websites of the relevant institutions involved in the implementation of the Programme and EU funds in each Member State participating in the Programme;
- social media, (YouTube, Facebook and LinkedIn, as most of the projects use these channels);
- information and promotional events, including communication training sessions and seminars (on-line and physical), the Programme annual event, celebrations on specific occasions, such as European Maritime Day, European Cooperation Day etc.
- publications (including on-line publications);
- Contact Points, Information Points on European Funds, EuropeDirect network;
- activities organised jointly with other Interreg programmes.

Traditional media (local and regional) are an option to communicate projects activities and results if they prove to be effective locally.

As on-line communication tools develop dynamically, the Programme Communication Officer will monitor, follow, and introduce the on-line communication trends accordingly.

In communication addressed to beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries, the activities will include:

- training sessions and workshops;
- face-to-face and on-line consultations;
- Internet applications (ICT system for preparing and submitting applications, project settlement, on-line communication platform).

The communication potential and abilities of the beneficiaries will be used in the information and promotion activities of the Programme through:

- building and maintaining relationships with beneficiaries, supported by the networking group on Facebook;
- involving beneficiaries in the roles of ambassadors of the Programme and of the Interreg brand, as well as in various initiatives organised and supported by the institutions implementing the Programme.

Assessment of the strategy communication objectives and indicators

The level of implementation of the assumed specific objectives and the effectiveness of the information and promotional activities will be assessed as part of the Programme evaluation. Indicators will measure if specific communication objectives of the Programme were achieved (see table 1). Also, an on-going monitoring of the implementation of communication activities and their impact will be conducted by the JS, in cooperation with Contact Points. The planned communication activities will be delivered to the JS each year in the form of Annual Work Plans by each of the Contact Points. The JS will send to the Managing Authority a combined version of the Annual Communication Action Plan (ACAP). The approved by the MA ACAP and annual indicators will be presented to the Monitoring Committee once a year in the form of a joint presentation. The presented model of JS-CPs cooperation will be formally assigned (e.g. in the Partnership Agreement).

Table 1. Under these indicators the specific communication objectives of the Programme are measured.

| OBJECTIVE | OUTPUT INDICATOR (Unit of measurement) | OUTPUT INDICATOR TARGET VALUE (calculation for years 2023-2028) | SOURCE OF DATA FOR OUTPUTS | EXPECTED RESULTS | RESULT INDICATOR (Unit of measurement) | RESULT INDICATOR TARGET VALUE (calculation for years 2023-2028) | SOURCE OF DATA |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Informing about possibilities of co-financing cross-border projects and activating potential beneficiaries to obtain funds | Number of training sessions for potential beneficiaries | 40 | Data collected by JS | Effective usage of funds available in the Programme according to the specified Programme Measures for the prosperity of the region | Interest of potential applicants in implementation of cross-border projects Number of participants declaring that they gained useful knowledge about co-financing possibilities | 720 (90% of total participants) | Evaluation survey after the training session |

| OBJECTIVE | OUTPUT INDICATOR (Unit of measurement) | OUTPUT INDICATOR TARGET VALUE (calculation for years 2023-2028) | SOURCE OF DATA FOR OUTPUTS | EXPECTED RESULTS | RESULT INDICATOR (Unit of measurement) | RESULT INDICATOR TARGET VALUE (calculation for years 2023-2028) | SOURCE OF DATA |
|-----------|--|--|----------------------------------|------------------|---|--|---|
| | Number of consultations provided to potential beneficiaries | 300 | Data collected by JS | | Number of potential beneficiaries satisfied with the consultation | 270 (90% of total participants) | Anonymous survey after the consultation |
| | Number of users who saw information on calls for proposal on the Programme website | 3000 (150 users per news) | Website article traffic analysis | | Number of application forms submitted | 200 | Data collected by JS |
| | Number of users who saw the call for | 2000 (400 per call) | Facebook and LinkedIn | | | | |

| OBJECTIVE | OUTPUT INDICATOR (Unit of measurement) | OUTPUT INDICATOR TARGET VALUE (calculation for years 2023-2028) | SOURCE OF DATA FOR OUTPUTS | EXPECTED RESULTS | RESULT INDICATOR (Unit of measurement) | RESULT INDICATOR TARGET VALUE (calculation for years 2023-2028) | SOURCE OF DATA |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| | proposal posts in social media | | posts traffic analysis | | | | |
| Supporting beneficiaries in the implementation of projects, including information and promotional activities | Number of communication training sessions for beneficiaries | 10 | Data collected by JS | Achievement of good quality projects results, as well as ensuring proper promotion activities of those results and Programme in general | Increased effectiveness in the promotion of the Programme thanks to beneficiaries Number of participants reaching at least 80% in a quiz at the end of the training | 200 (80% of total participants) | The quiz documents (paper or online) |
| | Number of participants in communication training sessions for beneficiaries | 250 | Attendance lists | | | | |

| OBJECTIVE | OUTPUT INDICATOR (Unit of measurement) | OUTPUT INDICATOR TARGET VALUE (calculation for years 2023-2028) | SOURCE OF DATA FOR OUTPUTS | EXPECTED RESULTS | RESULT INDICATOR (Unit of measurement) | RESULT INDICATOR TARGET VALUE (calculation for years 2023-2028) | SOURCE OF DATA |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| | Number of events organised by beneficiaries supporting the promotion of the Programme | 110 | Data from progress reports | | Increase of visitors to Programme website | 10% by each website traffic analysis | 6 website traffic analysis at the end of each calendar year |
| | Number of participants of events organised by beneficiaries | 300 | Surveys of beneficiaries / data from progress reports | | | | |
| Informing the general public about activities and results of the Programme, | Number of visits to Programme website | 1 million | 6 website traffic analysis at the end of | Better, general public understanding of idea of | Increased public awareness of benefits of the | 36000 | Website traffic analysis |

| OBJECTIVE | OUTPUT INDICATOR (Unit of measurement) | OUTPUT INDICATOR TARGET VALUE (calculation for years 2023-2028) | SOURCE OF DATA FOR OUTPUTS | EXPECTED RESULTS | RESULT INDICATOR (Unit of measurement) | RESULT INDICATOR TARGET VALUE (calculation for years 2023-2028) | SOURCE OF DATA |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------|--|--|--|----------------|
| showing the positive impact of projects on people's lives and the added value of European Funds | | | each calendar year | European Funds and Interreg Programmes, as well as recognition of Programme visual brand | Programme Number of visitors in the projects database | | |
| | Number of participants in events | 2000 | Attendance lists of JS and CPs | | Number of participants declaring that they gained useful knowledge about the Programme | 1467 (90% of total participants) | Surveys |

Division of responsibilities between institutions involved in the Programme communication

The Programme's communication activities will be supervised and coordinated by the Managing Authority. The MA is responsible for the preparation and implementation of the communication strategy of the Programme, participates in planning and approving Annual Communication Action Plans and monitors their realisation. It also supports the process of developing a new website and disseminates information about the Programme.

From the Programme level, communication activities, including the preparation of the communication strategy and Annual Communication Action Plans and their implementation, the maintenance of the website (e.g. publishing information related to calls for proposals, updating projects database) and providing the MA with required audiovisual documentation on project implementation, will be led by the Information and Communication Officer based in the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021-2027.

The communication activities will be supported by Contact Points. The actions of each Contact Point are specified in separate working plans created every year and dedicated to each region separately (Annual Work Plans).

Responsibilities of Contact Points include:

- conducting information and promotional activities in accordance with the communication strategy and Annual Work Plans;
- activation of newcomers / potential beneficiaries;
- conducting consultations for newcomers and beneficiaries (for beneficiaries - in the scope of information and promotional activities);
- organising training sessions for newcomers and beneficiaries in their regions;
- supporting the JS in the substantive preparation of training sessions for newcomers and beneficiaries in the scope of information and promotional activities;
- participating in external events and organising events in the regions that support and increase the visibility of the Programme;
- supporting the JS in the organisation of annual events;
- implementation of other activities, such as publications, promotional materials, films, cooperation with the media.

Support system for potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries

The Programme organises training sessions, consultations, seminars, and networking meetings to support beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries (including new comers). The aim of all the meetings is to connect, educate and provide advice on their communication activities. The Programme offers beneficiaries a package of documents related to project communication: the Programme Brand Book, the Communication Guidelines for Beneficiaries (available on the Programme website), advice on a daily basis via phone, email and the networking group on Facebook. Also, the Programme website consists of up-to-date information.

Operations of Strategic Importance

The projects selected as Operations of Strategic Importance (OSIs) will receive a strategic project label which will serve visibility and promotional purposes. The strategic projects will implement joint capitalisation, communication and dissemination actions. The Programme bodies will provide assistance in information and promotional activities (e.g. communication event involving the European Commission and the Managing Authority, media coverage, social media campaigns, dissemination of information on a projects through the Programme website).

Visual identification

The Programme logo consists of the term Interreg, the emblem of the European Union, a statement informing about EU co-funding and the name of the programme.

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The Programme Manual, the Brand Book and the Communication Guidelines for Beneficiaries (good practices how to communicate projects) consist of rules supporting visual identification of the Programme, such as correct usage of the Programme logo, project logo, colours for each priority, and others.

Budget

The estimated budget for information and promotional activities planned in the communication strategy will amount to approx. 4% of Technical Assistance (TA) budget. The amounts allocated to individual communication activities will be provided in the Annual Communication Action Plans. The plans will be prepared by the Joint Secretariat in cooperation with Contact Points and approved by the Managing Authority. The plan shall be sent each year to the Monitoring Committee of the Programme for information.

Indicative financial plan

Communication activities (Value in percentage):

- Events, meetings: 55%
- Development and maintenance of the Programme website: 25%
- Promotional materials: 15%
- Publications (paper or online): 3%
- Social Media: 2%

Attachment

- Annual Communication Action Plan template

The Annual Communication Action Plan for the Interreg South Baltic Programme in ... (year), includes the Introduction (short brief on information and promotional activities planned each year) and detailed information about what the Programme will focus on in the scope of communication.

TEMPLATE

The Annual Communication Action Plan for the Interreg South Baltic Programme in ... (year).

Introduction (short brief on information and promotional activities planned each year) and detailed information about what the Programme will focus on in the scope of communication.

| OBJECTIV E | TARGET GROUP | TOOL | NAME OF ACTION WITH A BRIEF DESCRIP TION | OUTPUT INDICAT OR | RESULT INDICAT OR | START DATE | END DAY | INSTITUTI ON RESPONSI BLE | COUNT RY | BUDG ET |
|--|-------------------------|-------------|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|--|---------------------|--------------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL (BUDGET FOR THE WHOLE YEAR) | | | | | | | | | | |