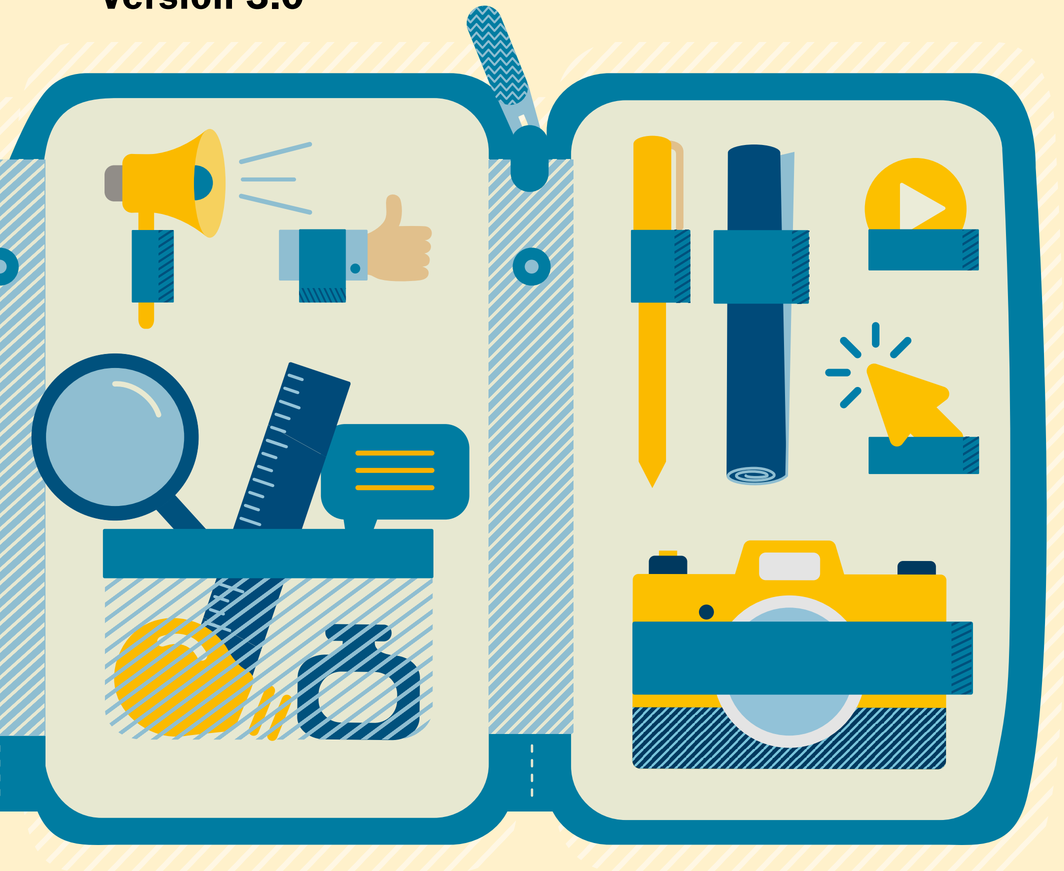
INTERACT

EUROPEAN UNION

Communication toolkit

Version 3.0



European Regional Development Fund

 Publisher Interact Programme, ISBN 978-80-972374-9-3 **Month/Year** November 2018 **Publication Leader** Arkam Ograk **Designer** Rosebud Design GmbH

"The two words information and communication are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through."

Sydney Harris

This toolkit is a compilation of global recommendations for effective communication tailored to Interreg-specific context to help programmes plan and carry out their communications more effectively and in synergy with other programmes.

The contents are not binding and programmes should be aware of their programme-specific requirements.

4 **The Communication Toolkit**

6 Plan

7 **Communication Strategy**
15 **Annual Communication Plans**
20 **Joint Branding**

24 Organise

25 **Events**
34 **European Cooperation Day**

38 Write

39 **Writing for your Readers**
46 **Storytelling**
50 **Newsletters**
55 **Presentations**

64 Publish

65 **Websites**
76 **Social Media**
88 **Media**

92 Visualise

93 **Photography**
Videos

Project Communication

Communication of Capitalisation

The Communication Toolkit

Communication is a crucial process embedded into every stage of a cooperation programme's life cycle. From programme start up, through implementation, until and even after closure of a programme, communication plays a key role in its success. Considering the diversity of contents communicated to varied target groups through diverse channels, the complex process of communication requires careful planning and implementation.

This toolkit is prepared by Interact for inspiring communication staff working for Interreg programmes in handling their daily communication operations.

The toolkit is a compilation of global recommendations tailored to Interreg-specific context to help programmes plan and carry out the communication activities most relevant to their works. It does not claim to provide exhaustive guidance for communication of all Interreg programmes. Therefore, you should always take into account specific rules and needs of your programme while getting inspired by the toolkit.

In case of questions, do not hesitate to contact the Interact Programme!

Also check: The Communication Guide for ENI CBC programmes.

While reading through, you will notice hyperlinks redirecting you to templates in the Interact media library and external links. Try to make use of such sources for more practical guidance as well as further information.

The toolkit also intends to serve as a “hub publication” for Interreg communication with links to various Interact publications and manuals.

The toolkit is prepared taking into account the needs and demands of Interreg programmes. The contents are programme-focused but most of them can be adapted and used for guiding project communications. Communication officers should keep in mind the specific requirements for their programmes while observing recommendations at programme level and while adapting sections as well as templates for guiding the projects.

EU programmes or initiatives are welcome to adapt and use this toolkit.

Plan

Communication Strategy

A communication strategy is the bible of programme communications. It ensures that communication efforts help to achieve the programme's goals, and that they are coordinated and effective. It also helps to clarify what staff, time and resources are needed and how to use them.

A communication strategy provides an overall view on communication objectives and how the programme plans to achieve these, whereas annual plans describe how, when and by whom the activities defined in the strategy will be implemented for the particular year at hand.

Before taking the first step with drafting the programme communication strategy:

Be aware of *the legal basis* of Interreg communication:
Articles 111 (4b) and 115 to 117, and Annex II of the ***EU Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) No 1303 / 2013*** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 are related to information and communication rules within the programming period 2014–2020.

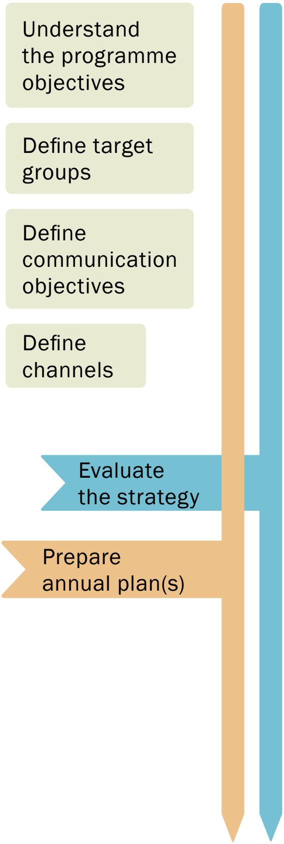
According to IPA Implementing Regulation, the communication rules laid down in CPR are applicable also for Interreg IPA CBC programmes.

Visibility strategy and measures for ENI CBC programmes should be included in the programme document.

Elements of the Communication Strategy prepared by programmes are described in Annex XII of EU Regulation No 1303 / 2013 (CPR).

Also check: Programme Management Handbook – Communication Strategy

Some key steps in developing a communication strategy



Review your programme *objectives and priorities.*
Understanding the overall programme aims is key to identify how communication of the programme will be organised.

- Read the programme document.
- Understand what kind of ***change*** Programme aims to bring about in the Programme area. This will help you define your communication objectives to help achieve this change.
- Prepare an introduction about the Programme; include it in the strategy while drafting the document.

Do a *SWOT analysis* of the programme regarding communication. Identify:

- Strengths: What have we got that we can use?
- Weaknesses: What could damage our reputation?
- Opportunities: What could we capitalise upon?
- Threats: What might go wrong?

Involve your colleagues in the programme in setting up the strategy.

- Hold internal consultations within JS, MA, representatives of programme countries (MC), consult with other programme bodies
- Inform them of your SWOT findings, ask for their input. If possible, involve them in SWOT analysis process.

Remember that Interreg communication has two layers: programme and project.
In addition to programme communication, consider how you will support ***project communications,*** describe how you will do it in practise; plan the tools, activities, channels that you will use to support beneficiaries. ■

Step 1

Identify and analyse your target groups.

You are now aware of what your programme aims to achieve, when, where and how. And you have analysed your current situation with communication. You can proceed with the following:

Define **the programme's communication** ***target groups.***

For example, these can be:

- potential, actual or rejected applicants
- beneficiaries
- local, regional, national authorities and European institutions
- network institutions and organisations
- general public (citizens)
- internal stakeholders (such as JS, MA, NCPs, MC)

Analyse **your** ***target groups.***
This will help you identify what messages you want to deliver, how and through which channels.

- ***interests and information needs.***
- ***characteristics*** (for example: number, location, education, language, background, organisation and employment)
- ***knowledge, attitude and practice*** on the programme's objectives
- ***information sources***

Identifying ***primary and secondary target groups*** **can help you prioritise audiences and therefore determine focus of your activities and messages.**

- Primary target groups are more important audiences you primarily want to reach out to. For example potential applicants / beneficiaries.
- Secondary target groups are less (but still) important target groups you want to target with your communication efforts. For example other financiers or governmental organisations operating in the programme area.

Step 2

Define your communication objectives and key messages.

Identify your communication objectives and break it down for each target group. These objectives will depend on the *overall programme objectives.* What kind of *change* do you exactly want to bring about in a target group?

Following the possible target groups you defined, your objectives could be, for example:

- increase knowledge of ***potential applicants*** for successful application,
- increase knowledge of ***beneficiaries*** for successful implementation of projects,
- increase programme management capacity of ***internal stakeholders,***
- increase awareness of the ***general public*** about the benefits of EU support for the region(s).

Communication activities should support the programme objectives in achieving a change in at least one of the following three characteristics of the target groups:

- ***knowledge:*** what new things do you want them to learn about your subject?
- ***attitudes:*** what changes in opinions do you want to stimulate?
- ***practice:*** what changes do you advocate in what the target group does? What new things would you like them to do, and what things should they stop doing?

For each of your objectives and each of your audiences, think of the *key messages / information* you want to convey.

For example, one communication aim could be raising awareness of programme funding opportunities. The target group for this is potential applicants. The key messages / information to be passed to this target group are the scope of the relevant programme, funding opportunities available, information on completing and submitting applications, criteria for evaluation and selection of projects, project preparation, financial allocation, horizontal dimensions and providing opportunities to get in contact with the programme staff.

► Basic messages should be kept simple. Details can be added later if necessary.

► Messages should address the audience's interests and attract their attention.

It is important to formulate the objectives correctly in order to better focus on, implement and evaluate your communication activities.

Consider how you will support project beneficiaries in *project communications* while setting your objectives.

If applicable, consider planning how results of the programme from previous (2007–2013) period will be promoted and disseminated through your strategy.

Step 3

Define your communication channels.

Define *tools and activities* that you will use in addressing your target groups to achieve your objectives.

► Identify the best channels that will enable you reach out to a specific target group you identified, based on your findings of target group analysis.

For example, prefer mass media activities for target groups with a larger number of people (such as general public) while you can deliver your message to specific target groups via direct communication channels (such as emailing, delivery of well-designed informative materials or organising events).

► The choice of the communication channels should be based on the audience, the message that you want to convey, and the cost-effectiveness of the channel. Repeating your message and using a mix of several communication channels can help your message actually reach your audience. The channel needs to match the message.

For example, if you need to convey detailed technical information, radio is probably not the best channel as it is hard for the audience to remember technical details. Detailed and technical information may need several pages of explanation, so a manual may be the best choice: readers can always go back to the manual later to check on the details.

► Alongside the programme communication, describe channels / tools / activities you will use to support beneficiaries in project communication.

Define the *programme's visual identity.*

► A visual identity will make sure all communication activities and tools are visually aligned. Your tools and activities will be easily recognised if you have a visual identity approach preparing them. This will add brand value to your programme visibility.

► You can define the programme's visual identity (such as a logo, slogan, colours) once you have the strategy in place.

► Consider taking part in Interreg joint / full integration branding while defining your programme visual identity. See ***Joint Branding*** section in following pages.

Also projects benefit from planning their communication!

As the projects are key messengers about the benefits of EU funding with their concrete activities and local target groups in the regions, it is the programmes' responsibility to strongly encourage and support them in their communication activities.

Advise projects to prepare communication plans for the entire project period, which will serve as a communication strategy in project scale. The projects will have an approved budget and plan for activities already in place in their application. It is still advisable to plan the project communication in more detail in the early phase of the project and to clearly agree on the division of responsibilities.

It's a good idea to write down a communication plan, even if it is a small project. That way the project will have a document that partners can agree upon. It will serve as a document to refer to periodically. A lot of communication work consists of "putting out fires" – responding to urgent needs. If they do not have a written plan, it can be easy to forget the non-urgent (but perhaps more important) activities. The level of detail in the project communication plan can be adjusted to the needs of the project in question.

Check here a matrix example of some common communication channels tailored to different target groups.

Define a *budget*.

► Set budget values as rough estimations to enable you to define tools, assign overall resources, but to be flexible at the same time.

Describe *responsible bodies and human resources* that will be made available for implementation of the strategy.

► Which programme bodies are responsible for implementation of the strategy?

► How many core person(s) are made available for its implementation?

► How the involvement of other programme bodies will be coordinated in implementation?

Tip: Involve your colleagues in programme countries (such as national contact points) in addition to the managing authority in preparation and implementation of the communication strategy.

► Later, make sure the responsible person for the programme's communication strategy implementation is communicated to the European Commission via the SFC communication platform as well as to the Interact communication network (via e-mail).

Include a description of materials that will be made available in formats *accessible for people with disabilities.*

Do not overload yourself, be realistic.

Annual Communication Plans

Once the communication strategy is in place, it functions as a framework for the communication work during the whole programme life cycle.

Planning of the day-to-day communication activities should be done as an integral part of the overall planning and budgeting of the programme implementation annually for each year to come. The programme work plan and budget are in most cases approved by the Monitoring Committee of the programme and communication should be presented to them as an essential part of the overall implementation. The communication plan itself can be a separate document or it can be integrated into the overall work plan of the programme depending on what is most feasible for the programme.

Tips for drafting annual communi-cation plans

Include an *overview* of the implementation of plan for the previous year.

► Break it down to specific activities. Evaluate the available outputs you have. For example, the number of visitors to the website, description and number of events organised, etc.

Identify *communication goals and objectives for the year ahead.* These should take into account:

► ***communication objectives*** described in the strategy (which also derived from overall objectives of the programme)

► ***current stage of programme implementation,*** such as attracting potential beneficiaries,- supporting current beneficiaries, making achievements visible.

► ***external factors*** to be taken into account. For example, political factors, national, regional or EU-level initiatives: European Year of ... etc.

Define a *key target group* focus for the year ahead.

► 2–3 target groups and the associated tools to be concentrated on (which does not mean that other target groups are neglected). These key target groups for the year at hand can then be broken down into more specific groups especially concerning the wider public. For example: children, students, families, professionals, the elderly etc.

“The *communication plan* itself can be a separate document or it can be integrated into the overall work plan of the programme depending on *what is most feasible for the programme.”*

Describe your *channels*

► Describe channels that will be used to address the target groups in that year. For example: Press releases for mass media, newsletters for potential applicants / beneficiaries, social media for general public.

► You can always use multiple channels to reach a target group, a channel to reach multiple target groups and multiple channels to reach multiple target groups.

Include an *annual communication calendar.*

► When should each output be ready? Prepare a timetable for producing each item. Planning can be specific (e. g. mentioning months, weeks) or flexible (mentioning quarters in the year). For example the annual conference during the 4th quarter of the year. Newsletters quarterly. Website continuous / constant.

► Define frequency of periodical publications / tools.

► Calendar in annual plan shall be more specific than strategy, yet still flexible enough to allow room for changes.

Download Interact Handbook on Promotion of calls

Check out this Interact presentation on promotion of calls and how to attract new beneficiaries.

Check here an annual plan table. Modify it with the elements in your own annual plan deriving from your own communication strategy.

Include an *annual communication budget.*

- How much money is available for each item? It is necessary to be sure there is enough scope in the plan to allow for the delays, crises and extra work that always occur. It is a good idea to keep 10 % of the budget and time in reserve for such items.

- Identify "external" costs (venues and catering for events, materials, visibility items, external expertise etc.) including the needed flexibility.

Set the *annual target values* for the indicators of the communication strategy.

- Describe the number of outputs planned for the year: How many media articles to be published, how many videos produced, how many events organised, etc.

- Plan and keep sources of verification for these output indicators archived. For example: Keep event participant lists, evaluation forms, survey results, statistics of the website (dated), etc.

- Draw up a general list of lessons learned, use as a reference while drafting the plan for the following year.

Organise the *work share* for implementation of the annual plan:

- Which body is responsible for each item? JS, MA, NCP, other?

- Who is responsible for producing each item: Existing staff, part-timers, or external service providers?

- Make sure your colleagues in the programme are aware of their tasks and responsibilities in the communication plan.

Describe how you will make communication activities available for the *disadvantaged groups* during the year.

You can use a work plan table with columns breaking down the annual communication such as: tool / activity, description, target groups, responsible bodies, estimated budget, estimated time, etc. following the logic of communication strategy.

Evaluation of Communication Strategy
Include in your communication strategy a description on how the implementation of the strategy will be monitored and evaluated. Each communication objective should have indicators for following up the success in reaching the objective in order to be able to evaluate and show how well the communication was done. Plan and describe the data you will collect and how the evaluation process is done.

Consider evaluation also a tool for improving your communication work during the programme lifetime. For instance, in case there would be shortcomings in reaching certain goals during one year, an analysis of why this happened and what could be done to overcome the challenges could help to improve the respective activities in the upcoming years.

The benefit of efficient monitoring and evaluation of communication activities is twofold: it feeds into both the annual reporting of the programme as well as into the larger process of programme evaluation, where evaluation of the communication strategy implementation is a compulsory element.

Please visit the ***Interact website*** for further information on programme evaluation (evaluation plan, terms of reference for evaluation, Q & a ...).

Check here a toolkit for evaluation of communication activities prepared by the European Commission

Joint Branding

Interreg is now the accepted brand name, used to refer to the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC). One word, used across all Europe in every language aiming at increasing visibility of the results as well as the opportunities of this EU Cohesion Policy initiative.

European Territorial Cooperation is present all over the EU and beyond with 72 programmes, implemented locally which ensure an adapted approach to the local and specific needs. As much as this decentralized approach helps focusing on local needs, it raises challenges in terms of visibility of Interreg. Without any coordination, ETC appeared as an abstract mosaic of local initiatives while it aspires to be a leading force and a promoter of European integration on the basis of the results it delivers on the ground and on the demonstration of the added value of cooperation in Europe. Therefore Interreg programmes decided to join under one single brand name and one single logo.

The benefits of a joint brand are multiple and tangible at all levels from a political / management level to potential beneficiaries.

The common Interreg logo is the main element of the branding initative.

A joint logo / brand mark is first based on a common simple name that can be used across languages. It allows actors to speak about the same initiative across Europe and also to benefit from the promotion of the new “Interreg brand”, including on the Internet.

Already 75 % of Interreg programmes have chosen to have their logo based on the joint harmonised logo and all accepted the general logo for representing Interreg in general.

The European Commission strongly supports the process and adapted the name Interreg in all public communication alongside the joint Interreg logo.

What are the benefits of a joint brand for European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)?

For potential beneficiaries

► Programmes can easily be recognised as part of Interreg.

► Easier search for regionally available Interreg funding.

► Easier identification of potential partners from already implemented projects.

For beneficiaries

► Cost savings because project design development is reduced.

► Time savings because design implementation becomes easier.

► Positive spill-over effects of communication activities of other projects.

► Easier cross fertilisation among projects.

► Reaching out to policy and decision makers becomes easier as the new brand becomes more familiar across Europe as a clear part of Interreg.

For programmes (including Member States)

► Higher programme profile as the relation to a specific EU initiative is clearer.

► Better reach to potential new beneficiaries as well as policy makers.

► Easier justification of the importance of Interreg. Higher sustainability of results as part of a bigger setup.

► Cost savings because programme design development is reduced.

► Positive spill-over effects of communication activities of other programmes.

► Easier cross-fertilisation between different programmes.

For policy and decision makers (including DG Regio)

► Better understanding of Interreg on all governance levels.

► Increased recognition and relevance of Interreg.

► Clearer visibility of Interreg results, per thematic objectives.

► The joint brand allows Interreg stakeholders to benefit from each other in their communication, both to attract project applicants and to make projects visible and at a lesser cost.

In case of doubts or questions, do not hesitate to contact Interact directly.

Click here to watch the video and feel free to use and provide links to the video.

Click here to download the Interreg logo.

Click here for the manual for full integration of the programme logo, and the further integration of project logos is available on the Interact website.

Click here for the manual for harmonised co-branding integration

Click here to download the Icons for the thematic objective in high and low resolution …

… and here for IPA-specific thematic icons.

What does the joint brand consist of?

1. Harmonised logo

- ***a) Interreg logo*** (for joint / general Interreg activities)
- ***b) Full Brand Integration (recommended)***

Developed individually for programmes. A programme can choose the language(s) of the logo. Programmes are still able to insert a small specific graphic element (respecting the publicity rules laid in the implementing act). Programmes can also choose if they want the reference to the fund within the logo.

- ***c) Co-branding option***

This option still shows a link between the programme and Interreg but it allows programmes to continue using their own specific logo. Interact can provide guidance to the programme if they adopt this option.

2. Harmonised icons for Thematic Objectives

Bringing further the level of recognition for potential beneficiaries across Europe, specific icons associated with a specific colour code have been developed with the European Commission for all 11 Thematic Objectives.

3. The promotional video

INTERACT has also developed a promotional video for the launch of the harmonised logo which illustrates the process and the benefits of this initiative for every programme.

A version in high resolution is also available upon request. ***Click here for contacts.*** ■

Organise

Events

The content of programme events depends on the stage of the programme.

In the initial stage, usually before or immediately after launching a call for proposals, information seminars are organised to provide information about the programme to potential applicants. These seminars are organised in the eligible regions of the programmes, quite often in national languages to ensure the widest possible coverage. These events can also be combined with partner search activities. After a call has been launched and the potential applicants have had sufficient time to get acquainted with the applicant's materials, specific seminars on the requirements of the call, completing the application form, etc., are usually organised. In addition, trainings are organised for beneficiaries of on-going projects on project implementation issues (e.g., reporting, procurement, financial issues, etc.).

Apart from events targeting potential applicants and beneficiaries, programmes also regularly organise events for programme management purposes such as Monitoring Committee, Steering / Selection Committee meetings.

Most programmes organise their programme conferences on an annual basis (in most cases it is the largest annual event). These events are often intended to inform stakeholders, policy makers, beneficiaries and other interested parties about programme achievements but also other functions can be included (e.g. partner search activities, project visits, competitions).

This section of the Toolkit focuses on a range of ideas and practical knowledge that will facilitate the organisation and management of effective events.

For projects, it is important to organise events that are interesting for the target audiences and for media to attend. Typical project events include conferences, seminars, exhibitions, field trips, kick off and closing events. It can also be interesting to join forces with other thematically relevant projects to organise joint events. This can save human and financial resources and even broaden the audience significantly.

Additionally, participation in external events is a good way to promote the project as well as of the institution or region involved. Participation in external events can be useful as it gives projects an opportunity to come face-to-face with their target audiences.

Two of the major promotional events organised in the European arena where programmes and projects can take part in are:

- ***European Cooperation Day*** – a Europe-wide campaign called European Cooperation Day (EC Day) with the aim of high-lighting results of European cooperation across borders to the general public. More information can be found on the ***EC Day campaign website*** and on the next pages.

- ***Open Days – European Week of Regions and Cities*** who deal with implementing the European Cohesion policy. More information can be found on the ***campaign website***

How to organise a successful event

Preparation of the event

No matter what type of event you are organising, it needs to be planned and prepared with a clear purpose in mind. Remember to ask yourself (and your event planning team) the following three questions:

1. **Objective: What do we want to achieve with the event?**
2. **Audience: Who do we want to reach?**
3. **Method: What is the most effective way of reaching them?**

The success of an event depends on a clear understanding of the purpose of the event, its target audience and how to reach them, matched with an appropriate event plan. All parts of the event need to support the main goal of the event. A good event is a sum of different elements making up integrity. The participants of a good event shall be able to remember the main message that was intended to be delivered via that event.

The biggest events are usually planned already in the annual work plan or project application, making it a good starting point for the event to be planned ahead of time. Procurement processes are often time consuming but can luckily be done well in advance.

In case you have a similar target group with any other programme or project, you could consider joining forces by organising one event together. This will save you both human as well as financial resources.

Organisers

Build a team responsible for the event and put together a detailed plan. Identify local contact persons and allocate roles to team members. If the direct decision-makers

Click here for a script for your event

are not part of the organising team, make sure to brief them regularly, i.e., by holding meetings.

Set up a script or a roadmap with all information related to the event (agenda, detailed timeline of the day, contact person venue, data speakers, etc.) so that everyone in the organising team has the overview at hand whenever necessary.

Audiences

To identify your target group, you could ask yourself the following questions:

Which groups of people should be interested in attending? Which groups of people have the potential to help you to achieve your objectives? Who is already involved, but could become more committed or useful to your programme or project if you engaged them more closely? How can you make your event appealing to them?

Budget

Also the event budget should be planned with the objectives of the event in mind. E.g., if you need to train 30 people to use your monitoring system, the budget is naturally planned smaller than if you aim at taking a bus full of journalists to see 3 different projects in a border region. Consequently, your budget will determine where you can hold the event, the number of people you can invite, and the quality of the support material (such as presentation handouts, press packs, brochures, etc.).

Start a budgeting spreadsheet as soon as an event is planned and make a team member responsible for tracking costs. Allocate all fees and costs and keep some contingency budget for emergencies. Be aware of public procurement procedures and the time needed to contract services.

Name and description of the event

The name of an event should let the reader grasp what the event is about at first sight. Good names are short rather than long. Together with the name, a clear description of the aim of the event and whom the event targets should be available.

Timing

Together with the name and description, the time and place (at least the city) of the event should be set ahead of time to allow for effective marketing. Check that the chosen date does not conflict with other events that your target audiences might also be interested in. At the same time, you can also consider organising your event prior or after another event that is thematically relevant to your target audience. Check that the most important participants (e.g. desired speakers) would be able to attend. Also check for clashes with other more newsworthy events: political events, holidays, etc. When working in an international setting and with participants travelling from longer distances, it is a good practise not to organise events starting on Monday morning or ending on Friday afternoon, allowing for travel on working days.

Agenda

Build the agenda in a way to make up a well-planned schedule where the different parts follow each other in a logical sequence. Make sure the aim of the different parts is clear already in the agenda given out before the event in order for the participants to know what to expect.

Keep the event interactive by introducing panel discussions, workshops and break-out sessions. Always allow plenty of time for questions and discussion. Also, make sure to build in regular breaks to keep people's attention and to encourage networking possibilities.

Build some flexibility in the programme, for example if some presentations do not finish on time. Make sure the moderation role is given to someone who can keep the schedule.

Plan enough time for coffee breaks (30–45 min) and lunch (1–1.5 hours).

Speakers

Interesting, knowledgeable and skilled speakers are one of the make-or-break factors of any event. What kind of speakers to invite depends largely on the nature of your event. Sometimes high profile names or people from well-known organisations can help to make your event appealing to certain target audiences, but sometimes it can be most interesting and effective for the message delivery when the speaker is e.g., a young entrepreneur as an end-user of a project on stage. Individuals who are naturally good at presenting to groups transform the atmosphere and impact of the event itself.

When inviting speakers you will need to provide them with clear information on the event and its objectives, normally in the form of a draft programme, a briefing on the types of people attending the event (including other speakers) and detailed instructions on what they are expected to do and how their contribution links to the other parts of the event. A good practise is to provide the speaker with a set of 2–4 questions that you would need him / her to answer in the presentation. These questions and answers are to support the messages you want to give to your audiences.

Always make sure to follow up with your invited speakers pro-

Click here for an event organisation checklist

actively in person: do not assume that people received, read, or registered your invitation or that they will respond to you.

Ask for the presentations and possible hand-outs well in advance of the event and make sure the contents you wanted are in place. Often the speakers appreciate honest feedback and guidance on how to make the presentation better as this will ensure their presentation to meet the expectations of the audience. Ask for permission to publish the presentation online after the event if you plan to do so. Discuss and confirm fees, travel expenses etc., in advance and for prompt payment.

Before the event, collect all presentations and pre-load them in one large presentation file on the presentation laptop.

Moderator(s)

A good event can become great with the addition of an excellent moderator. Make sure that you have someone who is able to manage the event, lead discussions and debates, keep schedules and make the event interesting and relevant to participants. Many journalists also make good moderators; ask some of your media contacts if they know of someone suitable. Keep in mind that while a moderator from "outside" can be a fresh element to your event and provide an interesting viewing angle to your issues, he / she needs to understand the nature of your event, know who is the audience and what the main aim of your event is. Discussing the event and all related expectations well before the event with the moderator is very important.

Venue: rooms and technical equipment

Characteristics of a good venue include good accessibility for the participants (the chosen city and the location in the city), right sized rooms for the sessions, easy transfer between the rooms during the event (if applicable) and a suitable place for potential catering services where people can enjoy refreshments without having to spend excessive amounts of time in lines. Check out the connections to e.g., airports and train / bus terminals. Preference for public transport instead of all participants having to take a taxi to reach the venue is recommended.

Define the number of expected participants and the need for different auditoriums, break-out rooms, lobby spaces, room for coffee breaks and lunch etc., ahead of time and include them in the term of reference when procuring the venue. If the venue offers catering services they can often be included in the same procurement.

Think also of the technical equipment you will need for holding the event – laptops, projectors, screens, etc. Check what the venue provider has to offer; some equipment can be included in the price and some not. Arrange a site visit in advance and also check the equipment to be used.

Consider hiring a professional photographer for bigger events.

Catering

If you are going to provide food, a buffet is a good idea as it allows people to mix and talk. However, allow for enough tables and some places for people to sit down. Remember to include the dietary requirements into the registration form and check from the catering service provider how long prior to the event they will need to know these requirements.

Accommodation

Especially with bigger events, recommend the delegates to book accommodation well in advance. You can make a block reservation in a nearby hotel, if possible, especially during other major events or in cities with limited hotel capacity. This is particularly important when participants are arriving from further away and don't know the location – they would appreciate an easy way to book accommodation close to the event venue.

Invitations to participants

Develop the invitation in good time to notify target audiences well before the event. A "save the date" message can be the first announcement, followed by more details of the event later on. Keep everything simple and easy to understand (what, for whom, when and where?). The basic information should be published on a programme/project website and updated when the plans proceed. For bigger events even an event page can be created.

For the marketing of the event, newsletters reach a large number of people at once. However, be sure that the formulation of the invitation in a newsletter is clear to the people on the list (i.e. does the event address all of them or perhaps only a certain part). Dedicated e-mails are the most efficient way to ensure people's attention. Indicate a reply-by-date and a contact mail/phone number. If necessary, send a reminder later on.

Registration

Online registration saves you time. People submit their information online into a database that you can access through a private site where you can add, delete and edit participant and event information. Usually there is a "download to Excel" function available in the tools.

Upon sending confirmations to participants after registration, include some further practical information about the place where the event is taking place. This can be an info sheet about the location of the venue (address and map), main transport options to get there (information on main airports and how to reach the venue from there), accommodation possibilities and other necessary information. Depending on the nature of the event, a list of participants can be sent to the registered participants beforehand. This can help e. g., in partner search or in finding interesting people for other networking purposes.

Rehearsal meeting

Hold a rehearsal meeting with the organising team a day before the event. Go through the main presentations, anticipate frequently asked questions (locations of rooms and toilets, internet access, etc.) and make sure everybody in the team can answer them. Check that the technicalities (e. g. laptops, projectors and sound) work and that you know whom to contact at the venue if something stops functioning during your event. Make sure you know how to adjust air conditioning and the lights.

Make sure you have name badges, place labels for speakers, registration sheets, pens and paper, needed contact lists etc., in place already the day before.

During the event

Registration

Make people feel invited. Have someone greet the participants and show them to the cloakroom and the registration desk. Have plenty of people at the registration desks to avoid long lines and to answer possible questions the participants might have. Prepare materials beforehand so that people do not have to compile their event package while others are waiting. In case you are using feedback questionnaires that are filled in on the spot, consider whether you want to give them as part of the material kit or later during the day. Reserve a box or other place where the filled-in questionnaires can be returned.

Technical equipment

Arrange and check the necessary technical equipment and set-up, e. g., video projector, laptop, etc. Check you have all connection cables, power sockets, transformers, and adapter plugs.

If possible, collect all presentations before the event and pre-load them in one large presentation file on the presentation laptop.

Media

If media attend your event, make sure they are well taken care of. Make sure that your appoint someone responsible for introducing the journalist(s) to people to interview, explain the project, and act as a contact point if they require any information.

Shortly before the event, sending out a press package including brief background information regarding the event and other useful materials can help journalists correctly comprehend and reflect your event. This should be complemented by additional information and event visuals delivered to the journalists after the event.

Photos

Depending on the nature of your event and the need for photos afterwards, do some planning of the needed photos before the event. Would you like to have action shots, close-ups, general pictures of crowd, a picture of a specific keynote presenter or perhaps of the interesting building you are at? To get the right shots, think of the intended use of the photos – will they be published in publications, press articles / releases, thank you letters, social media and / or on your website and what message do you want to send thorugh the photos.

After the event

Follow-up

Upload all relevant documents online (presentations, photos etc.) and send a thank you note to all participants and guests together with the link to the online materials. In case you are using an online tool for collecting feedback the link to the questionnaire can be included in the same mail. In that case the mail would need to go out as soon as possible after the event, preferably even the next day, for the people to still feel motivated to provide their feedback.

If you approached or were approached by media about your event, remember to later check and document media coverage. Online coverage can be further spread via any social media channels you might be using. You can also make news on your own website and publish something about the successful event in a post-event newsletter.

Evaluation

Hold a debriefing session with the organising team-discuss what went well and what can be improved in the future. Thank the team members for a job well done. Once the participant feedback has been collected, go through the findings with the whole team.

European Cooperation Day

Since 2012, Interact has been coordinating a Europe-wide campaign called European Cooperation Day (EC Day) with the aim of highlighting results of European cooperation across borders to the general public. Under the motto "Sharing borders, growing closer", hundreds of local events are held across Europe in the week around 21 September every year, reaching out to thousands of people.

The campaign is coordinated by the Interact Programme with the support of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions. The local events showcase how cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation projects are reducing obstacles and disparities, while at the same time increasing cultural understanding and efficiency between European regions. All Interreg programmes are invited and encouraged to participate actively in the campaign:

Be part of European Cooperation Day!

- ***Organise a local event*** celebrating the achievements and results of cooperation in Europe;
- ***Become a partner*** of one of the local events to be organised by programmes in your area;
- ***Disseminate information*** on the events through your social media, website or other communication tools;
- ***Engage in the campaign*** through the mobile application and receive information on when and where events will be taking place;
- ***Attend one of the local events*** in your area.

Check out the Interact publication with highlighted events from previous years

More information can be found on the campaign website: www.ecday.eu

EUROPEAN COOPERATION DAY

How to organise a local event

Interreg programmes are very dynamic when it comes to organising of local events. Every year, in the framework of the European Cooperation Day, cooperation programmes strive to reach the citizens in order to celebrate this campaign. Their devotion is high and the results are remarkable. However, some lessons learnt can be taken into consideration:

Plan the event well in advance. Draft in advance the steps to be taken in the preparation of the local event. Write a roadmap with the topics to be covered and set a date for each of them.

For example:

- March: concept note on the event / initiative. Who does what? And when?
- May: first press release (more general)
- June / July: logistical details (venue, actors involved)
- August: social media campaign
- End of August: press release explaining the local event in a more detailed way

Download EC Day Guide for participating programmes

Interact is here to help you!
If you find any obstacle along the way, do not hesitate to contact us. We will be glad to assist you and help you make your event a major success!

Focus on objective

Focus on the ultimate objective, which is to ***highlight the results and benefits of cooperation in Europe.*** The local event should mostly target the society in general. How can it be done?

► Human and social stories are interesting. People like everyday stories reflecting concrete examples of how cooperation has improved citizens' lives. An Interreg project (or a range of different ones) would be interesting (e. g., a European Market, a Festival showing flagship stories)

► Events focused on different cultures attract people's attention. They could relate to gastronomy, music and regional dances; i. e., a Food Market or a concert with local singers / players.

► Environment and sports are a success. Hiking, biking, trekking, recycling, all these elements are likely to draw people's interest!

► Involve society and ordinary people. You can organise a photo contest, a poster contest, a cooperation success story competition. This initiative is usually warmly welcomed by social media users and it registers high participation.

► Try to have a relevant actor (commissioner, local politician, public authority) participate in your event. This will reach media's attention and your event will be more likely to be published in newspapers and digital websites, among others.

Use social media

As most programmes have limited resources, relying on social media becomes crucial. Don't underestimate the power of Facebook or Twitter. They can make your event go viral! Also, they constitute a useful and free platform to disseminate information about your initiative / event. Don't forget that an active contribution on social media is key to the success of the communication activities. Use the hashtag #ECDay in your posts.

Website

Post and upload all the information onto the website of your programme. Don't forget that INTERACT will also include your event on the EC Day website ***(www.ecday.eu)*** and social media to give it more publicity.

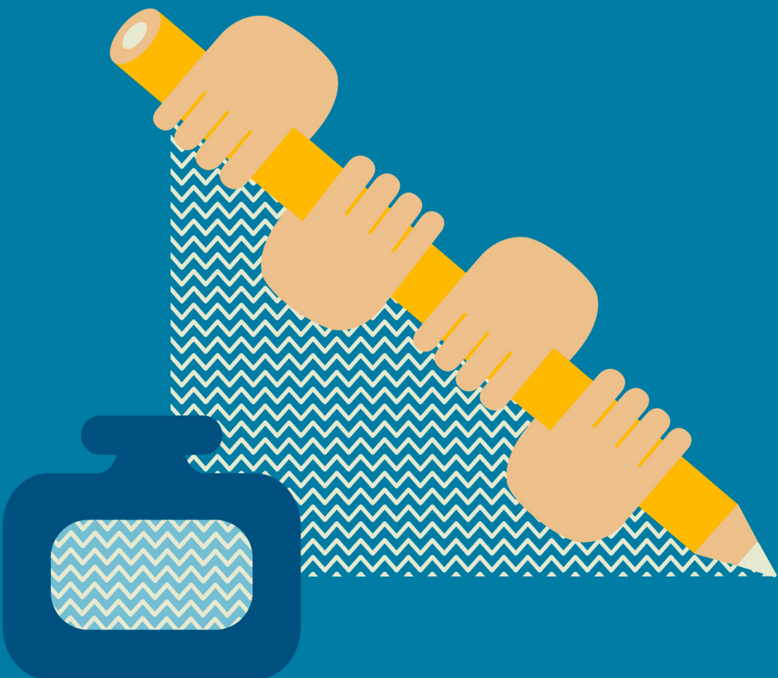
Photographs and images

Select the best pictures of the event and disseminate them. Beautiful pictures are powerful. Remember that the EC Day mobile app and the photo gallery on the EC Day website (both developed by Interact) are at your disposal to promote your activities.

Evaluation

Remember to ask for feedback. This will be useful to know what could be improved next year and people will appreciate your interest in registering their opinion. Also, use the evaluation to gather new ideas for future events by asking what citizens would like to be part of. Don't forget that the main question to evaluate the success of your EC Day event is what and how much the participants learned about European cooperation.

Write



Writing for your Readers

Have you ever read a text that confused you more than it helped you – not because of the facts it contained, but because of how it was written? Did it feel like "Death by Complicated Text"? Most of us might nod in agreement with this.

Here's a more important question. Have ***you*** have ever ***written*** a text with the aim of informing your readers, but later realized it confused them more than helped them because of how you had written it? Many of us might recognize this situation.

So how can you start to change your writing style and make the texts you write from now on more reader-friendly? How can you give yourself a better chance of achieving the aim you have with writing a text?

Here are some points to consider and tips to help you produce clearer, plainer, reader-friendly text. ■

.

Why write in a clear way?

Everyone writes with a purpose - to inform, influence, persuade – maybe even to get their readers to behave in a particular way. We should write for our readers, not for ourselves. So your readers should be at the core of what you do at all times. It's fine to be proud of what you have written, but a "victory strut" around the office doesn't help much if you have written for yourself and forgotten your readers!

Basis/Background

Before writing, you should think about who your readers are, what they need to know and what they are likely to know already about your topic.

Structure

All readers have limited time to read and process your information. Consider your own situation at work, and how difficult it can be for you to squeeze in some quiet time during a hectic day to read, understand and process a new text on a topic that is important to you. Wouldn't it be nice if the writer of that text had thought about making the information as easily-accessible and reader-friendly as possible?

See the next pages for examples of how using these techniques can help to simplify a complex text.

When you write, think about how you can make your main points obvious in your text, how you can lead the readers logically through your text and how you can avoid losing them during your text. Long sentences and illogical order of facts turn your readers off. Try to help readers feel comfortable with your text – this will make it easier for them to understand, process, remember and act upon your message.

Introduce your main points in the first paragraph, to "hook" your readers into staying with you for the rest of your text. This can be done by answering the "who, what, where, when and how" questions on the content of your text. Then deal with each point in logical order. Finally, close by summing up/repeating those points.

The 5Bs of writing

When it comes to how you put your information down on paper for others, there are 5 basic points to follow for reader-friendly writing – the 5 Bs.

Be Short

Avoid long sentences - split them into 2 or more short ones.
Make only one main point per sentence. Make sure you bridge well between sentences, to give logical flow of information – but avoid meaningless filler text. It gets in the way of what you really want your readers to know..

Example

Instead of:
During project development, some projects or some partners hide weaknesses and risks such as competence, lack of human resources, need for time-consuming process of obtaining permits, missing background analysis, etc. on purpose, which causes problems and potentially lowers the quality during the implementation.
Write this:
During project development, some projects or partners hide weaknesses and risks. Examples of this are competence, lack of human resources, need for time-consuming process of obtaining permits, missing background analysis, etc. Some projects and partners do this on purpose. This causes problems and potentially lowers the quality during the implementation.

Be Straight-forward

Don't make your readers rush for a dictionary. If you feel the need, add a glossary of the professional terms you have included in your text. Use everyday words wherever possible. Complicated language pushes your readers away from your text – straightforward language makes them feel comfortable with the text and invites them to stay with it until the end. Avoid buzzwords and other tired phrases. Explain an acronym (NATO) or an abbreviation (KPI) the first time you use it, and then stick to the short form the rest of your text. Don't use too many acronyms and abbreviations.

Example

Instead of:
It is a matter of necessity that the citizens of Europe be aware of the division of competences among European Institutions and Member States. It is also vital that citizens be informed of the tangible contribution of The European Union to improving their daily lives.
Write this:
People need to know who does what in Europe. They also need to know what The European Union is actually doing to improve their daily lives.

Be Personal

Focus on people doing things as often as you can when the situation allows you to. Even though in most professional texts what is being done is far more the focus of the text than who is doing it, increasing the human element of your text makes the readers warm to it and helps them understand the information you are presenting.

Example

Instead of:
The objective of this guide is to assist Interreg programme staff to better engage their readers through embarking on a gradual, lasting change of their writing style.
Write this:
Our aim with this guide is to help you gradually change your writing style so you can better connect with your readers.

Be Active

This is linked to the previous B – Be Personal. Limit use of passive forms in your text as much as you can. Active text is easier for your readers to understand. They catch on to your message faster and are likely to process the informationbetter if it is presented in active form. Passive text appears cold and official to readers. It creates a distance between text and readers. This distance makes the information more challenging for readers to process

Example

Instead of:
The setting up of the new advisory service by Communication Officers and the use of the service by programme staff will be supported by measures taken within the past year.
Write this:
Communication Officers will get support from measures taken within the past year when they set up the new advisory service. Programme staff using this new service will also get support from the same measures..

Be Polite

Add words such as “please” and “kindly” to your text, and keep a polite, friendly tone towards your readers. Especially if the information you are giving your readers is not positive, being polite in your tone can make the information easier for them to read, process and accept or act upon.

Example

Instead of:
In the event of you requiring further information regarding the organization of your programme’s EC-Day celebration, you are requested to contact Interact staff.
Write this:
Please contact Interact staff if you need more information about organizing your EC-Day celebration.

More help to be had

Check out Interact's online translation glossary

The Plain English Campaign's website provides various guides.

Click here for free guides

As well as the tips above, you can find help at these sources:

Interact's online translation glossary at
► ***www.interact-eu.net***

The glossary is a living tool that is regularly updated with new content in different languages, thanks to all the wonderful contributors from the Interreg world. It not only translates many Interreg terms - it also provides a definition of these terms, which can help you simplify your writing.

► ***The Plain English Campaign's website.***
The campaign has existed since the 1970s, to help people write clear, plain, reader-friendly text. As well as many useful tips for writing different kinds of text, it provides various guides such as "The A to Z of Alternative Words" and "Punctuating Sentences".

Finally, some points to remember

- Your readers should always be at the core of your writing – when you are planning your text, while you are writing your text, and when you are reviewing your text before sending or publishing.
- The 5Bs are a good place to start changing your writing style.
- Help is at hand – both from Interact and from The Plain English Campaign.
- Change takes time and is a gradual process. Try to concentrate on one of the 5 Bs at a time and move on to the next when you feel you are ready.

Storytelling

Storytelling is a technique which people have used to pass on information since prehistoric times. So while it may be a hot trend in communication today, it is far from a new concept!

Conveying information through stories not only makes our content more interesting to our audience, it makes it much more likely that they will remember it. Use storytelling to give your programme or project a human face. If you are trying to get attention from the media, storytelling techniques are essential. While you need to have facts and figures too, a compelling story is a must.

Many of the storytelling techniques shared here were developed by MSLGroup, a global communications network specialising in PR who presented a workshop. You can find their entire presentation, including suggested reading, online resources and more on the Interact website: ***presentation, hack-pack and resources pack.***

Check out this presentation: Storytelling – Techniques and tips for more effective communication

Check out this Storytelling Hackpack

Check out this Storytelling resources pack

Planning your story

Why does your story need to be told? What is the purpose of your story?

Who is the audience for your story?

- What do they care about?
- What's their / the problem?
- How much do they know? Where do they get information?
- What do they need (from you) to act?
- Remember: Write for them, not for you (or your colleagues)

Which of the following outcomes would you like to achieve with your communication?

- Who I am: Awareness ***announce, state, introduce*** You want the local community to know that your programme exists!

- Why I'm here: Relevance ***explain, comprehend, relate*** you want people to understand what cross-border / transnational cooperation is about: how it works, what benefits it has already brought to the area, etc.

- I have a dream: Vision ***inspire, excite, galvanise*** You want to inspire people to start a project.

- I'll show you how: Education ***demonstrate, teach, describe*** You want to show people how to apply for funding.

- I do therefore I am: Principles in action ***participate, join, compete*** You are holding and event or contest and you want people to take part

- I know what you're thinking: Dealing with the elephant in the room ***provoke, challenge, surprise*** You come from an area that is very Eurosceptic and you want to assure them that their EU taxes are bringing their region positive results.

- The format – where will the story land? Newspaper, website, social media platforms, press release to the media?

- What is the story context? What is going on outside of our direct work environment? What is happening in the news? Could these things affect the way our audience hears your message?

- Why is now a good time to tell your story? Is there an event or situation which makes the story more relevant today than it would be next week or next month?

Writing your story

Starting to write your story is often the most difficult part. For that reason, we are giving you a short exercise you can use to get your creativity flowing, and template to use as a starting point.

Six-word stories

Try to condense your story into just six words. Ernest Hemingway said that the most powerful story he ever wrote was “Baby shoes. For sale. Never worn.”

Here are a few more that might inspire you:

- “Found true love. Married someone else”
- “Coyote howls, dark night, flat tire.”
- “Wax wings. High hopes. Long fall.”
- “Loved a broad. She moved abroad”
- “Old neighbours, once enemies, now friends”

Template

This “narrative template” can be used to get you past that blank sheet of paper. It can be a useful starting point for developing your story.

We believe in a world where …

- (This is the focus of the story expressed as a belief about the world, e. g., we believe in a world where regions work together to solve problems.)

We know in that world that …

- (This is what you know about the world that brings tension, e. g. we know that cooperation isn’t always easy. There are complex rules to follow, cultural barriers to overcome, and compromises to make.)

So we make sure …

► (This is what you do to resolve the tension, e. g. so we make sure to help cross-border projects to develop their activities, navigate the project process and work better together with their partners.)

Which is why we …

► (This is what you do in terms of product, services and overall behaviour, e. g., which is why we support territorial cooperation and believe that Interreg projects bring regions closer and help Europe solve common problems.)

You can choose to highlight a character (someone who benefited from a project) and add facts and figures that support your story. Just make sure you don't overload your audience with information.

Sample story:

When Ana was a child, she was not allowed to swim in the Danube, which runs behind her family's home in Bulgaria. Her mother told her that the river was polluted – that meant no drinking, no swimming, no playing.

That was 25 years ago.

Today, thanks to regions joining forces in an Interreg project and establishing environmental standards, the Danube's waters are clean and safe. Interreg is the European Union's tool for funding cooperation projects. Interreg made this possible. And environmental protection is just the tip of the iceberg – other Interreg projects are reducing unemployment, increasing renewable energy and improving transportation.

Now, Ana has children of her own, and she is happy to let them swim in the clean waters of the Danube. This is just one example of the thousands of Interreg project results that are improving lives across Europe.

To find out how Interreg projects are benefitting your area, please visit (website link).

Newsletters

A newsletter either in electronic or in paper format can be an effective communication tool for the programme or projects. It can also be a good way to draw attention to the news published on your website.

As paper newsletters are costly to print and mail delivery is both costly and less effective than delivery via electronic channels, organisations, including Interreg programmes increasingly prefer e-newsletters.

As for any communication tool it is important to remember who the readers of your newsletter are. The content, frequency and format are to match the target group. Sometimes it can be beneficial for the message delivery to have separate mailing lists for different groups instead of trying to reach all groups with a general newsletter. Electronic tools make these types of arrangements easier to handle.

Some common practises

► Programme newsletters are produced two to four times a year and provide an update on programme progress, project examples and programme news.

► Shorter electronic e-mail newsflashes and bulletins (e. g. pdf) are produced more often. Brief, up-to-date information on e. g., upcoming programme events and latest project news are provided. ■

Check out some useful tips on e-mail newsletters.

How to write a good newsletter

Preparation and planning

► Decide whether you are going to publish newsletter in file formats such pdf or distribute it as an e-mail newsflash. An e-mail newsflash works well with short titles, many visuals, short texts relying on links embedded to them.

► Make a schedule for when newsletters are planned to be sent out for the upcoming year. Think of the bigger events, occasions and news that should be covered by each one and leave room for news that come up between the initial planning and publishing of the newsletter.

► Appoint a person responsible for the newsletters and forward the worthwhile information to that person during the period the newsletter will cover.

► Create a newsletter template and use it consistently for programme newsletters. You can outsource the creating of the template and later insert the content to the newsletter without every time having to use external expertise in creating the newsletter.

► Original materials are preferable. If previously published materials are used, get the permission of the author or owner beforehand, and then give them credit in the publication. Know the source of the materials (texts, pictures, illustrations) you are using, obtain prior permission, and give credit, or don't use the material.

Drafting

- If your newsletter is more than one or two pages, include a very brief list of contents at the top. For example “In this issue …”

- When drafting the list of contents, keep in mind who will read the newsletter. Are they mostly potential beneficiaries, project implementers or policy makers? Plan the contents accordingly.

- Contents can include: Important developments regarding your programme, past and upcoming programme events, updates on the funds allocated in the programme, number of projects approved / implemented, important project news, events and results.

- Consider including non-programme content that is related to programme from the area. It can help your programme create synergies with organisations active in the region.

- Make sure the EU flag and programme logo are prominently included and the reference to the ERDF is in place.

- Enrich the contents with visuals, such as photographs and icons.

- Include programme contact details for any potential questions / comments.

- Proofread the whole issue once you are done with contents. Check that the links work and that they take the reader directly to the desired content (instead of e. g. a front page where further navigation is still needed to find the actual content).

Promote your projects

- If one or several projects have already generated results that need to be highlighted, newsletters can provide this opportunity. Give a brief overview of the project output / result and links to more detailed story / product. These can be inventories, researches, online platforms, maps, publications andmany more things.

- Keep in mind the readers' existing knowledge on the issue and make it easy reading for also those who are not familiar with the specific field.

- If available, feature one or several projects in each issue and publish e.g., an interview withproject partner(s), an article by a beneficiary or other type of content by projects. These can focus on their project management experience or promotion of their project's actual content and results. Remember to whom you are writing while formulating the messages (e.g. encouragement for streamlined project managment would be relevant for potential applicants but for policy makers showing actual results is more interesting).

- Sometimes you don't need a whole article to promote a project. A sentence with most crucial details from a project can help you achieve that promotion.

Examples

- "Did you know? Thanks to X project funded by our Programme people in X region can now get X service faster, cheaper and more efficiently."

- "By the time X project is finalised, X emissions in X region will be reduced by XX"

- "Thanks to the X project, border regions in X and Y countries now have ... and ... benefits"

- "With the observation system established as a part of X project funded by our Programme, X and Y countries can now jointly monitor ship wastes illegally disposed to X river"

- Support project related contents with visuals and links to further details and contact details as much as possible.

Dissemination

► Keep your e-mail list up to date.

► An e-mail list can include programme bodies, project beneficiaries and local, regional, national and European stakeholders as well as subscribers from the general public. Consider whether they should all be in the same group or if you should provide different contents for the different groups.

► Acquire more e-mail addresses via subscribe options and promote existence of such mailing list at your relevant events. Provide an unsubscribe option in every newsletter you send out (most of the current newsletter tools have this functionality built in)

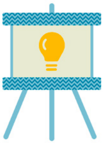
► Publish the newsletters on your website; store all issues under a specific section.

► Send the newsletters also to your programme bodies (internal stakeholders).

Click here for a newsletter checklist

Check out this article on newsletters for further useful tips.

Presentations



A good presentation can be a very powerful tool to communicate your message to a group but if not used well it can also affect the audience in a negative way. Success depends on the ability to connect with the public (be it a big group in a conference or a small group in a meeting), to offer them a meaningful message and to make it attractive.

Most presentations still show crowded slides with unclear messages. Some speakers nowadays stand out as powerful presenters thanks to simplicity (See references: TED Talks, Garr Reynolds, Nancy Duarte etc.).

Their rule is ***"don't tell, show"*** and make it relevant for the audience. ■

An "example" is worth a thousand words

Audiences does not want

Long
Boring
Bad slices
Unclear message

Audience wants

Short & Simple
Legible
Inspirational
Straightforward

You want your audience to

Keep attention
Understand
Get engaged
Remember the messages

Create engaging Presentations

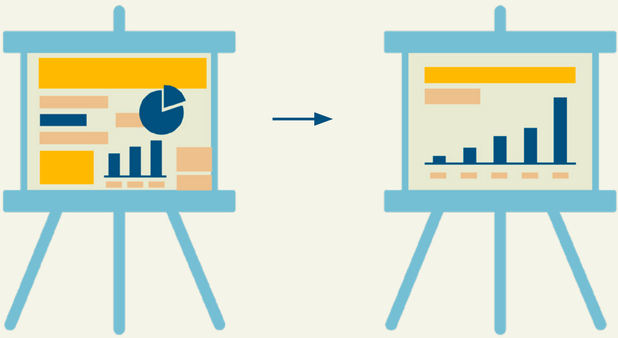
Make it simple
Make it visual
Make it meaningful
Be inspiring

How to make a good presentation

Don’t tell, show

“Make it visual, you will explain it in person”

You will engage your audience if you manage to visualize your message. Long texts, complex or disorganized slides will not help. Slides are not to be used as the speaker’s “cheat sheet”. It is YOU who tells the “story”, you only need the slides to make it visual and help the audience focus on your speech and help them understand and remember your message. *We want to go…*



Create Memory

"Make it simple"

You will only engage your public when your *message* creates *meaning* for each specific *audience.* So start by understanding the audience and the way they process information. *It's all about the audience.*

How people process information

- We have short periods of attention

- We pay attention only to a few pieces of simultaneous information

What helps people learn faster and more meaningfully?

- Visuals + narration

- Visuals are processed 60,000 times faster than text

How far do people remember?

- Our working memory is short-term (we forget 90 % in 30 seconds)

- Working memory processes limited information

- Working memory relies mostly on acoustic and visual info

- Only meaningful information (relevant to the audience) will be remembered long-term

- People retain:
  80 % of what they see
  20 % of what they read
  10 % of what they listen

Take advantage of how people process information to create meaning and be more effective:

People will forget

Long text
Unclear messages
Long series of data
Most of what you say

People will remember

Visual information
Short, clear information
Stories
Personalised, meaningful content

Design the slides to connect

"Make it ZEN for them."
Garr Reynolds

Translate your ideas into visual images. Design an effective and appealing layout and style for your presentation. Apply the golden rule: *keep it simple.*

Single key message per slide
- Understood in 3 seconds
- Only relevant information
- Few key points
- Be specific
- Add descriptive title
- Do not put subheadings

Reduce text
- Easy to read
- Only keywords or phrases
- No long text
- No bullet points

Inspirational, high-quality visuals
- Simple graphs, easy to understand
- Choose images that speak for themselves
- Use high quality photographs
- No clipart
- No 3D effects

Clear layout
- Leave blank space, let it breathe
- No overcrowded slides
- No clutter: eliminate superfluous information (copyright, date ...)

Clean design
- Few matching colours
- Very few fonts
- Plain or simple backgrounds
- Group related objects together so that relation is understood immediately
- Align objects: connect them through their edges. It creates sense of order
- Create contrast to add visual interest
- Repeat some aspects of the design throughout the entire presentation to give visual coherence

Convey your message

"Make it meaningful"

Before you go to PowerPoint, plan your presentation. Think about the purpose. Define the appropriate message for each specific audience, because it's all about the audience in a presentation. Define the structure to tell the "story".

Tailor your message

You create meaning when your message is relevant for the people so you need to give your content a different approach for each audience. Before you begin, ask yourself:

What is the purpose of this event or meeting? What is my own purpose in this context?

Your message can be different in each presentation depending on the purpose of the meeting or the event. Are you trying to persuade authorities to support your strategy? Establishing collaboration with another organisation? Motivating new partners to present proposals? Each purpose calls for a different style and meaning.

Make sure your presentation:

- Conveys memorable messages
- A limited number of messages will make it more effective: do not overwhelm the audience
- Illustrate complex ideas with stories: it makes it easier to understand

What type of audience? What do they want?

Different target groups have different expertise and interests. Do not recite the same presentation event after event. Tailor your presentation in a way that the audience can relate to it.

E. g. future project partners will probably want to know more about the call conditions while authorities will want to know more about results. Tailor your messages to each audience.

For example:

- SMEs can participate in this call for proposal
- We are making great progress in supporting jobs and growth in the regions
- Regional authorities can contribute to spread results

You can save time by having a basic general presentation available. However, to make it really powerful, you need to make an individual presentation for each audience. You can make use of the relevant parts of the general presentation but for the new presentation you need to:

- Adapt your messages & content
- Leave out slides that have no or little meaning for the audience in question
- Choose the stories, anecdotes or examples that make a point to the specific audience
- Add new slides to address the specific purpose and message for that event or meeting

Structure the content

"Look at the big picture"

Outline your ideas and define a structure that organizes all the content. Look at the big picture. Arrange your ideas in a smooth, logical sequence:

Opening
You need a strong beginning as audience's attention fades away quickly: introduce the issue, how it links to the theme of the event, state your purpose and main message.

Development
Break each section making a key point and present your ideas incrementally in a logical order.

Summary and closure
Briefly summarize your main points. Reinforce your main message and prompt your audience to action if your purpose requires it.

To organise your ideas, define the whole sequence of slides:

- Create an outline for all the presentation,
- Plan the order, group into sections if needed,
- Sketch each slide,
- Write down key points,
- Draw quick ideas for visuals, charts or photos,
- Define which stories or anecdotes better exemplify or address your messages.

Deliver and connect

"Be inspiring, talk to engage"

The best presentation is when you listen to the speaker and you can imagine the story he or she is telling you.

You are engaged. You want more. PowerPoint, or whichever means you use, is only a tool to make your message visual. You are the one who delivers. It is you who can connect with the audience and engage them into action. You are the one who can make them imagine, who generates trust and conviction that you have the right message. You are the presentation.

Bring out your acting skills to connect with your audience and engage them. Here are some tips:

► Start with an ice breaker to capture the audience's attention

► Don't read your slides, the audience will disconnect.

► Deliver the message in your-words and at your own pace. Syn-chronise the slides to your speech. Show the next slide at the same time you begin talking about it.

► Pause from one key point or section to the other. Allow your-self and the audience to process the information.

► Project your voice. You want the back row to hear you.

► Maintain eye contact with a number of specific people in different parts of the room

► Add humour when appropriate. Your audience interest will rise.

► Show enthusiasm and energy

► Act naturally

► Use a conversational approach: create the feeling of an en-larged conversation

Use your body language to persuade

70 % of your language comes out of your body so it is important that your body language shows enthusiasm and confidence. It needs to be coherent with your speech.

- Preferably don't be seated.
- Move away from the podium and, occasionally, move towards the audience.
- Take care of your posture: don't lean backwards, droop your shoulders or keep your head down.
- Don't stand rigid or with arms crossed. It shows lack of confidence. Keep them open in front.
- Emphasize your words with hand gestures. It helps your audience follow your speech.
- Avoid hands in pockets, clasping or other repetitive movements that portray nervousness.
- Show attentiveness while other speakers talk.
- Don't move in excess, it distracts the audience.
- Don't turn your back to your audience, it disconnects them from you.

Make good use of time and tools

Do not use your slides as the lecture notes for your audience. If you want your audience to have further information, prepare a separate handout that summarises your messages and their meaning: the key points you want your audience to remember. You can use a printed version of your slides with notes at the bottom, infographics or an executive summary, for example.

Hand them at the end of your presentation to make sure the audience focuses on your speech instead of disconnecting to read the hand out. In other cases as in training events or working meetings, for example, you can choose to give the handouts some days before so that your audience can read them in advance. It will support long term learning as well as quicker progress of work and decision taking.

Stick to the given time, even if it is reduced from original schedule. A long presentation that delays the next will annoy your audience. However, if you contribute to the agility of the whole event, the audience will have a positive impression.

If a previous speaker has already conveyed part of your messages, do not repeat all of them again. Simply make a brief reference to the common messages or specify new perspectives, then dedicate more time to the messages that have not been mentioned.
In general, interlinking of the given presentations and underlining how the big picture comes together makes it easier for the audience to understand the joint message (where applicable).

Resources and tools

For information and examples on simple and powerful presentations, visit:

- **TED Talks**
  See examples of really powerful presentations.
  www.ted.com

- **Garr Reynolds site,**
  author of the book "Presentation Zen"
  www.garrreynolds.com

- **The Kawasaki method**
  Create meaningful and visual presentations in 10 slides.
  www.ethos3.com/design-tips/the-kawasaki-method

- **Nancy Duarte,**
  author of Slide:ology
  www.duarte.com/book/slideology

Use of illustrations and photos:

- **Witt Communications**
  A website for public speaking with tips and links.
  www.wittcom.com

- **iStockphoto**
  You can download quality images for free.
  www.istockphoto.com

The techniques shared here are based on the presentation with PowerPoint, the most commonly used tool. Most of them can also be applied to other interesting tools available. Here are some:

- **Prezi**
  An alternative to PowerPoint with animation and visual templates that has become quite popular.
  www.prezi.com

- **eMaze**
  Similar to Prezi, with this tool you can create your presentations online
  www.emaze.com

- **VideoScribe**
  It allows you to create a video based on animation. Design or technical know-how is not needed.
  www.videoscribe.co

- **Audacity**
  A free multi-track audio editor.
  www.sourceforge.net/projects/audacity

- **Venngage**
  Free infographic maker.
  www.venngage.com

Publish

Websites

Websites are primary information and communication channels for both programmes and projects. Websites are the first place for many target groups to find information from. In order to assist programmes with their own programme websites as well as in providing support to projects with their project websites this section will provide recommendations under two subheadings: programme website and project websites.

Tips for website design

Make your website easy to use. Do not overload it (especially the start page) with information.

Include a clear mission statement of your programme on the homepage.

Use the "3 click principle" – users should not have to click more than 3 times in order to find the information that they are looking for. 2 clicks and even 1 click are increasingly becoming the trend.

Ensure your website is responsive to different kind of devices. Remember that search engines now give priority to responsive websites in their search results.

Use an "open source" website content management system (CMS) as this will allow for flexibility with service providers.

Track what your audience is looking at by installing Google analytics: ***www.google.com/analytics***

Archive old information in the content management system and make sure important and relevant information from your old website is available and accessible from the new website.

Basic legal requirements for both programme and project websites

Check out these 10 useful tips for website design

The fund by which programme / project is financed must be mentioned on the homepage (e. g. European Regional Development Fund). If the website is for a programme or several programmes co-financed by more than one fund, the individual references can be replaced by a joint reference to the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds). (Annex XII of CPR No 1303 / 2013)

EU flag and the text "European Union" must be visible on the homepage in full colour without the visitor having to scroll down.

How do I ensure search engine optimisation (SEO) for my programme website?

Include SEO in your term of references while procuring for the website development.

Build website content around programme keywords

Use language your readers would use

Place keywords high on the page

Update content frequently

Link your website to your social media accounts, use follow buttons.

Programme website

The programme website is the main communication tool for all programmes as it is efficient (in terms of time and human resources), effective, easily updated with the latest information and accessible to those interested.

Key points

Click here for tips on publishing list of approved projects, adapted from article 115 of CPR No 1303 | 2013

Key points to keep in mind when developing a programme website:

► Programme visual identity should be prominent; the website should "look like the programme".

► Publish and regularly update list of funded projects. Ensure that the list of approved projects can be easily found. Separately announce on the main page the updated list with link to "approved projects" or a corresponding section.

► To fulfil the regulation requirements (Art. 50 of CPR No 1303 / 2013), publish programme annual and final implementation reports, as well as their summaries for wider public.

The programme website is a *source of information* not only for programme stakeholders (including potential applicants and actual beneficiaries) but also for the wider public.

► Keep the site up to date and make it active. Regularly update your website with news (both programme and project), information on projects and the benefits they bring.

► Make sure your programme website is in synergy with national funds websites in each member state and the link to your programme website is present on relevant national websites in programme countries. Inform the national communication officers on important updates regarding the programme, with links to contents from your website.

► Place contact information in a visible place and organise it clearly so that the visitor can easily find the contacts he / she is looking for.

► You can also have internal net-works (intranets) for programme management purposes.

For applicants and beneficiaries:

► Consider including a partner search tool function for potential applicants and partners.

► Consider including a project ideas database harmonised with a partner search tool to facilitate potential partnerships.

► Make application documents, including those for guidance easily accessible for interested applicants.

► Make key documents, guides, templates necessary for project management easily accessible for beneficiaries.

► Consider having an FAQ section and update it regularly. Group the questions according to programme management stage and / or topics. (For example, into general programme information, calls, project implementation, reporting, financial issues, communication, etc.)

► Separately, announce when you update FAQ, main documents or other important content of the website.

► If you have an e-mail list, make the subscription option to the list visible on your website.

► If you have a registration option (e. g. for project ideas, partner search), prepare an e-mail list from e-mails provided during sign up. Additionally add a subscription option for those not registered to have an up to date e-mail list to communicate important information regarding the programme (e. g. via news-letters). Make sure you have the consent of registrators in doing so.

Make use of the Interact Translation Glossary

For media

► Media corner on programme websites can be useful for media organisations looking to find information and photos regarding the programme, its projects and upcoming activities. Fact sheets / visuals for best project practises and prominent media coverage can be included under the media corner. Make sure and indicate clearly that the photos and texts in the press corner are free of copyrights and available for use by the journalists.

Projects on programme website

► See above the requirement about the List of Operations to be published on the website but do not stop there.

► Highlight good project examples with a separate design involving project visuals. Make projects well visible explaining their objectives, concrete activities and results with photos and links to materials they have produced. Give links also to project websites and social media accounts of the projects. (Also check section "project webspaces")

► Consider how the programme and project information in the KEEP database ***(www.keep.eu)*** can be made visible on your website.

Working with languages

► It is useful if your website
is available in all programme languages defined in your programme document but consider carefully whether you will have the needed resources of providing all information and keeping it up to date in several languages.

► Consider publishing best project examples funded by your programme in one or several widely spoken EU languages, to enable your success reach out to beyond local or national public and inspire others EU-wide.

► For the projects, include a glossary of terms related to project management. Make use of the Interact Translation Glossary. ■

Project websites

As for any communication tool, the planning of a website will need to start with a needs analysis.

A well designed project website can be a key management tool, capable of raising the profile of the project and improve dissemination of its results to a wide range of stakeholders.

However, the target groups and needs vary greatly from project to project, and a separate website is not a requirement for projects.

Information can be made available also using other channels like via social media accounts, programme website and / or project partner organisations' websites. Using the different available online solutions for communication should always be considered thinking of whom the project aims to reach and what the best tools to get through to them are. Websites are not by any means a solution that fits all projects. Also, while considering setting up a project website, consider the needed resources for keeping it up to date. Having an outdated and passive website does not serve any purpose.

What could be the potential reasons to have an individual website for a single project? It can be that the project produces a vast amount of documents or other materials that they would need to publish online in an easily accessible place, instead of being buried under the hosting organisation's large website. It is recommended to publish a separate website also when it is essential for achieving project objectives, for example, when a project envisages creating an online platform (e-commerce, on-line training modules, interactive maps etc.).

In the case the major need for online communication is more on spreading simple information on project progress, announcements for events, sharing photos etc., it can be enough to create a strong and active presence in social media instead of having a project website.

Key points

Key points to keep in mind when developing a project website:

► A website must be continuously updated and maintained. Launching websites and abandoning them is unfortunately a common practise by projects and should be avoided.

► When a website is planned, the upkeep of the site after project closure should be included in the plan.

► The main updates on a website should be clearly dated.

► At the end of the project the website should be archived onto a CD-ROM, USB disk (or other drive) or online (permanent) storage.

► Publish on your website, but also publicise your website! Put the address on all print items, press releases, paper and electronic correspondence, etc. Include a link to the project's website on the websites of project partners and other relevant stakeholders.

Project webspaces

A webspace is a page provided for a project under a programme website. Interreg programmes' combined experience in the previous programming period has shown that although websites were very useful channels for many projects, many beneficiaries also published project websites solely for publishing simple descriptions of their projects, their partners, project news and basic materials. Things that would not necessarily have required a separate website. In order to save funds and assist beneficiaries with their online communications, some programmes have in the new period gone for the webspace option. A webspace is an alternative online communication channel, but not necessarily an alternative to project websites. A project may have both, a webspace and a project website depending on the need.

Development of webspaces may be time consuming and it generates hosting and maintenance costs for programmes. But considering combined benefits and saved resources unnecessarily spent for some project websites, it can bring benefits for your programme in the long run.

Considering combined benefits and saved resources unnecessarily spent for some project websites, webspaces can bring *benefits for your programme in the long run.*

Benefits of webspaces include

► Provides an alternative online communication possibility for projects.

► Helps projects save funds.

► Allows the target groups to access detailed and up to date information and materials from projects under one single website.

► Provides an outline for the projects that have no or little idea on what kind of information they should be publishing about their projects.

► Lets projects exploit website traffic the programme website already gets. Boosts traffic on the programme website.

► Reduces workload of project partners.

Tips for project webspaces

► Host the webspace under the programme website.

► Make sure project beneficiaries are aware of the webspace option. Encourage them to use the facility.

► Try to design the webspace for all projects including those with a separate website. Their website can then be linked from their webspace. Encourage the project partners to make sure the information on the two are consistent and up to date.

► As updating contents by programmes may raise time and human resources constraints, give projects access rights limited to their webspace to update the information and upload materials themselves.

► Provide projects with flexibility to rename or add certain categories / menus on their webspaces. (For example, an academic project may want to publish materials under “Studies” section

Check out some webspace examples by Interreg programmes:

North Sea Region

Interreg Europe

North West Europe

Central Europe

Mediterranean

Danube

2 Seas

while a tourism project may prefer a category named "Routes", etc.)

► Basic project information in the beginning can be acquired from your monitoring system (for example, eMS)

► Provide projects with the option to insert their events into the event calendar of the programme. This will allow public to see events of both, the programme as well as its projects under one single calendar.

► Organise the news section on your homepage to reflect news by projects inserted in their webspaces. Establish a CMS approval system to keep the project news flow to the homepage under control.

► Allow projects to create galleries / albums to upload photographs. Consider the copyrights and how to make them clearly visible for each photo.

► As a pattern to help viewers, assign the acronym of projects as the URL extension of each webspace. For example www.yourpogramme.eu/xyz

► Consider giving each project one user account to edit the project contents. It would be up to the project to see which partner is the one responsible for the upkeep of the website (not necessarily always the Lead Partner).

► Make sure your CMS allows you track changes made by projects.

Suggested webspaces menus (to be modified according to your own specific needs)

About: Description of the project. Do not forget to mention the partner organisations, type of Fund and amount of EU contribution received per partner.

News: Update on the progress, project activities, kick-off and closure events, relevant news in the sector. Provide with possibility to insert project events into event calendar.

Library (or other title): Documents, project outputs, photo / video gallery.

Links: To partner organisations' websites, possible project website and social media channels, other useful external links.

Contacts: Of persons directly involved in project management rather than administration.

Date of the last update

Interreg.eu

The Interreg website is launched as a common initiative of programmes in order to facilitate access to Interreg throughout Europe by providing a simplified overview of the active programmes and highlighting the most important information from them.

On interreg.eu, you can easily access all Interreg programmes and find them on an interactive map:

- what programme is active in a region or country and what are their main characteristics,
- what is the potential area of cooperation for project partnerships,
- which programme has an o pen call or job vacancy,
- what are the benefits of Interreg cooperation and its accomplishments,
- what are the latest Interreg news that are of Europe-wide interest.

Programmes are able to update call or job openings and update the simplified programme information on the pages dedicated to them. To do that, every programme is assigned an editor account. You can also use the joint website as a platform to promote news or information that are of Europe-wide interest. For these enquiries and in case of difficulties accessing your editor account, contact Interact staff responsible for interreg.eu.

Help promote the joint Interreg platform, give a link to interreg.eu from your website.

Social media

Social media has fundamentally altered the communication landscape in the past few years. It is impossible to leave it out of any communication strategy today. Social networking, photo and video sharing applications, blogs and wikis represent the power of social media in our time.

Many organisations prioritise social media as communication tool since it maximises cost-efficiency. The distribution of online information usually helps reach a wider audience, quickly and effectively, and interaction with good posts helps reach larger and larger audiences.

As much as opportunities, social media has its challenges. Fast traveling news allow fast manipulation and fast shaping of public opinion on particular matters. In the age of ‘fake news’, media literacy and effective social media use is not an advantage, but a necessity for organisations. Organisations that do not keep up with modern media trends lag behind in getting their facts and own narrative through and risk their voices being suppressed and being misjudged.

Many Interreg programmes in Europe and neighbouring countries have joined the trend by starting to make use of some of the more popular social media tools and in this chapter we will explore this experience in Interreg programmes and provide with some useful tips. ■

"Social media is the ultimate equalizer. It gives a voice and a platform to anyone willing to engage."
Amy Jo Martin

Added value of social media

- Low-cost
- Interactive
- Fast, real time information and interaction
- Can increase of traffic to your website
- Added value in branding
- Added visibility of posts shared by other accounts
- Good possibility of linking and networking with relevant actors
- Knowledge increase in your field(s) of expertise
- Reach more people

Which channels to use?

When starting their journey on social media, many organisations try to be part of every channel. As with all communication tools, the use is more effective if it is well planned. A strong and relevant presence on social media will not be achieved if you cannot sustain it over a longer period of time. Careful evaluation of whether a social media channel will really provide added value to your overall communication strategy, namely reaching target groups and delivering key messages to them, will help you make sure you do not waste time and energy. Does the social media tool help you reach your target audience? Are there better tools to reach them? Which one of the many possible options is most effective? Do you have the resources to manage the account(s)?

Being active in social media is a serious task of which the needed inputs should not be underestimated.

The most commonly used social media platforms in Interreg are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIN and Instagram. Being active on social media does not mean launching an account for every platform, but to take into account your programme audience, needs and resources. Identify which platforms reach your target audience.

The resources you have, especially the human resources, will determine the success of your social media activity. You need a real human touch on the accounts to make them engaging. You should ask yourself, who will monitor the programme developments, investigate and filter the information to post, generate posts, publish them and follow up on interactions with them.

If your energy is limited, focusing on being active on one or two channels is more effective than merely having a presence on four. In general, you should start with Facebook and Twitter, if you can effectively manage those, look into the added value of other channels. Remember, only use channels that you will keep up to date and active.

Each social media platform is different, and they each offer different advantages:

- ***Facebook*** is still the social media channel with the most users around the globe, including in Europe. Facebook is often used for private purposes such as connecting with family and friends, but many people follow corporate pages. It provides an opportunity to reach out to private individuals in that capacity. Compared to other social media channels, such as Twitter, Instagram and especially SnapChat, the average of users' age on Facebook is higher. This is not necessarily bad as you can consider this data in your posting policy. Interreg audiences have been more reachable via Facebook.

- ***Twitter*** is primarily used for following news updates. It has half a billion users including a massive amount of journalists, both from mainstream media outlets and freelancers. The

Some more tips on how to use Twitter effectively

Click here to check our guide "Interreg in motion" for Interreg specific tips on Youtube

average user age on Twitter is younger than Facebook, but older than SnapChat. Interreg programmes make use of Twitter mainly by posting real-time news, programme announcements such as calls and jobs, highlighting successful projects and carrying out awareness campaigns.

- ***LinkedIN*** allows you connect with professionals and is mostly used in a professional capacity. On LinkedIN you will find people interested in job opportunities and technical knowledge. Posting very specific information on your programme or technical guidance is probably ideal post content for LinkedIN. Of course, that depends on who is in your network. The network grouping features of LinkedIN also allows you to cluster your target audiences.

- ***Instagram*** is a photography-oriented platform, which also introduced trendy video features. This would be an ideal fit if your programme and projects generate a lot of visual contents that you want to promote.

- ***YouTube*** is sometimes referred as a social media channel. However as it is specifically focused on videos please check our video guide ***"Interreg in motion"*** for Interreg specific tips on Youtube.

Remember, all social media channels can be exploited, but are you able to keep all of them up and running?

Setup your channel

Make the channel look like your programme. Choose easily recognisable and attractive profile picture and header (cover) photo, your programme title.

► Make sure your profile image is visible enough (focus on the image, and be aware that small letters will not be readable, nor be likely to be read).

► Upload attractive cover images for your profile.

► Carefully word your account description (“Bio”) in order to urge the people visiting your profile to stay with you as a follower.

► Pin the most important posts to your profile, which will be the first thing a visitor sees. Change the pinned post whenever you have a key announcement – a pinned post that never changes can make a page look dated.

For example:

“I’m eating a donut”

“I like donuts”

Foursquare

“This is where I eat donuts”

YouTube

“Here’s a video of me eating a donut”

“Here’s a vintage photo of my donut”

Pinterest

“Here’s a pretty donut recipe”

imgur

“Here’s a viral picture of my donut”

Spotify

“Now listening to ‘Donuts’”

LinkedIn

“My skills include donut eating”

Grow your audience

A social media account without an audience (e.g. followers, network, friends, etc) is not of any actual use. You need an audience who will pick up your messages, use them or multiply and disseminate them. Promote your account wherever possible to gain followers.

► Start by following people and organisations within your network. The more you follow, the more you are followed.

► Add social media icons with follow buttons to your website.

► Add share buttons under specific items, such as news, projects, calls etc. on your website.

► Add your social media channels to the first and last slides of your presentation templates

► Inform your programme community of the existence of your accounts, ask for a follow. Start with the people working at your programme bodies.

► Tag in your posts the accounts that are relevant to your posts. Otherwise it will depend on luck they find those posts useful to them.

► Keep accounts active. Among other benefits, it will grow your audience over time.

Manage your community

Build your community: follow and get followed by your projects' accounts, partner organisations, people that work(ed) with programme, programme bodies.

Create lists and groups: to follow what's going on e.g. with your project, also to coordinate your community in specific cases (e.g. campaigns) or events (e.g. partnership matchmaking).

Know your content policy

Prepare a brief social media strategy which outlines:

- what messages are put out on which channels
- who are the target groups on the different platforms
- who in the programme is responsible for which channels
- how often you publish – what is the ideal activity level based on your accounts' experience
- use of programme visuals
- how you cooperate with Interreg community
- what steps you take and which resources you mobilise for communication campaigns

Try to avoid posting the same information to all your social media platforms. Play to the strengths of each channel. After all, you would be very unlikely to post a picture of you enjoying time with your friends on LinkedIn in addition to Facebook. Remember to consider the capacity a user is on the platform, in order to appear 'native'.

Define what types of posts are published on what platform. This is especially important if there are several people using and publishing content on your channels. This can ideally be a short list of written principles on what your posts' focus will be on your social media channels. These can be:

- Updating the followers on programme news
- Highlighting best project stories: Only the best ones. Individually publishing all projects regardless of their relevance and success may not necessarily

interest your followers. Keep in mind that publishing the list of all funded projects on your website is required by regulation for information and transparency purposes.

“Play to the strengths of each channel”

► Live events: make use of live video features of Facebook, Twitter (Periscope) and Instagram

► Live posting from events

► Social media campaigns
► Contests

► Make quizzes, polls, fun tests

► ‘Non-programme info’ from programme area that is related to your programme – your follower list probably includes organisations active in your programme area and this may interest them

► Content from other Interreg programmes

Consider when posting

Make use of visuals. Posts with visuals are more attractive and get a higher engagement rates. They also compress more information into one post and are more prominently featured in the timelines. Use videos, photos, gifs, vines, emojis, etc.

Make your post interesting; spark your followers' curiosity. Use the story telling techniques and give the heart of your information instead of writing down every detail. Make sure important information is conveyed, but avoid overloading the post. If you have a lot to tell, write an engaging short post and give a link to the longer story.

- Use a clear writing style whatever language you are using.
- Use call to action e.g. Check out our new video on ... ,
- Use questions e.g. Are you looking for funding in cross-border health services?
- Use personal and friendly language on a platform your followers use to engage with friends. Avoid complex terminology unless you have to use them. Avoid the bureaucratic 'ministry language'.

Multiple language use from the programme area can be more engaging for your audience. However, you should make sure the very important information is available in one of the wider-used languages, such as English, to promote and let others promote your message. Rather than translating every post in all languages, you may want to be selective and consider the posts' relevancy to the target groups whose language you are translating it into.

Tag relevant accounts to your posts. They may be following you but it is a high chance that your post related to them will go missing in an overloaded timeline. In photos, tag them to the visual instead of mentioning in text, this will further help you write shorter, snappier messages.

"If you have too much data to show, use infographics"

Make use of facts to sell a project. E.g: A 7% reduction in air pollution from farming chemicals in our region! Find out more about our project...

Post real time info but "new story" is not an essential. You can always highlight a good, still relevant story.

Posting relevant interesting topics from other projects can keep your audience engaged in quiet times. You can also use '#ICYMI' on Twitter (In Case You Missed It) to share important news from earlier in the week.

Social media is interactive:
Interact with followers – do not avoid it, you are exposed publicly. Respond to the comments and messages even if they are negative. Engage with accounts who engage with you.

Make the connection of the content of your posts and your own activities clear to the followers (e.g. when sharing someone else's post, quote it with your own comment making it clear how this is relevant to your followers).

Keep your audience engaged, post regularly but do not overload them with unrelated information. There is fine line in post frequency: between 'spamming' followers' and leaving the impression that the account is abandoned.

While connecting multiple accounts, make sure the posts do not look like they are linked – pay attention for broken links, or links displaying on other platform. Tweeting "I have just uploaded a photo on Facebook www.facebook.com/..." is not the best way to keep your Twitter audience engaged.

Create photo albums to have a better organised photo archive. Include a caption to clarify what is on the photos.

"Always show the tip of iceberg in the post, lure people in (e.g. to your programme website), then hit them with details"

Make use of 'Moments' on Twitter, which allows you visually cluster tweets on particular topics, not only from your account but any public account.

Use innovative hashtags in order to stand out from the crowd. For example, encourage the use of event specific hashtags (such as #EURegionsWeek) to enable followers to click on the hashtag and see all related tweets. You can also use trending hashtags to be more discoverable. Use #Interreg if your content is of high interest for the Interreg community and #ECDay for European Cooperation Day related posts. Observe the guidance from EC day coordination team for the social media during the particular year.

Closely cooperate with Twitter accounts managed by Interact and DG Regio:

- ***@Interreg_eu***
- ***@RegioInterreg***
- ***@EUinmyRegion***

Tag them to your important posts to multiply the information that is of interest to the wider audiences.

Check out the presentation "Social media trends in Interreg"

Check out Interact's online translation glossary

Analyse your performance

Statistics in the insights and analytics features on your social media accounts are good reference data and will give you an idea of how your posts and your account has performed. Numbers will help you evaluate your performance, and also help with evaluation of your communication strategy.

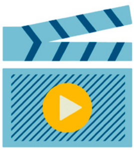
Check which posts performed better and try replicating effective styles in your future posts. Pay attention to timing as well, understand when your followers are likely to be active.

There are many free analytical and management tools:

- Most social platforms have their own analytical tools
- Hootsuite helps you manage multiple social media accounts.
- TweetDeck can manage different Twitter accounts and enable you to schedule tweets for key times.
- Buffer for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+ to analyse your followers profile and increase your posts' exposure

For advanced analytical tools and tips, check out this article.

Media



How to deal with the media?

There are no written rules on how to deal with journalists. Every organisation and programme has its own strategy and social skills. However, experience shows that some factors are helpful when contacting the media and "selling" our information.

Journalists have little time

They strive to gather all the key elements of a story (picture, testimonials, confirmed source) and jump from one topic to another depending on the daily issues they have to cover. This bustling and stressful professional routine requires an extra effort from the organisation / person that sends out information to them. How to catch the attention of a journalist?

Keep it simple. Journalists appreciate clear and understandable information. Don't overload an article with complex jargon and acronyms that only EU actors understand.

In line with the aforementioned rule, try to use plain English. Words such as “eligibility”, “ETC”, “decommitment” and “thematic objective 11” are unlikely to be known by people outside the EU project world. Concentrate on the everyday related content, practical benefits, and leave out the technicalities about a programme and / or project.

Present a story that the media and society can identify with Abstract profound concepts are good for background articles, features and other formats. However, if you’d like to attract the attention of local media, present a local story, e. g. a project that helps the city be more environmentally friendly.

Professional courtesy

Both sides (information sender and recipient) have to demonstrate mutual respect. This is only possible if each party truly takes into account the routines associated with the other’s role.

Build a win-win partnership with the journalist

The institution is not the only party seeking the accomplishment of an objective (to have the information published) but also the journalist gets benefits from this partnership: an interesting story, attractive or powerful images and the possibility to include sources that are valuable for their media.

Say you are available, be truly available and remain available!

This means you will be available not only until the publication of your article but also if the journalist contacts you again for further information (maybe about other topics). ■

Before you start writing …A couple of things you should know!

The Inverted Pyramid

The “inverted pyramid” is the model for newswriting. It simply means that the most important information should be at the top – the beginning – of your story, and the least important information should go at the bottom. That way, even if a person doesn’t read the whole article, he / she gets the main idea, the message you are trying to highlight overall. Consequently, as the reader moves from top to bottom, the information presented should gradually become less important.

The lead / introduction

The lead (or opening paragraph) is the first paragraph of any article. It’s also the most important. The lead must accomplish several things:

- give readers the main points of the story
- get readers interested in reading the story
- summarise the entire article

Typically, leads should not be longer than 50–60 words since readers want to know in a glimpse what the piece of news is all about. What should you include in the lead? Journalists use the five “W’s and the H”: who, what, where, when, why and how.

Who
Who is the story about?

What
What is the story about?

Where
Where did the event you’re writing bout occur?

When
When did it occur?

Why
Why did this happen?

How
How did this happen?

OK, now how can I make my press release interesting?

Choose a clear, short headline in which you clearly state what the reader is going to learn if he / she dives into the article.

Identify your audience and choose the right style accordingly (serious or funny, specific or general) If the press release has to be sent to different targets, change your style / angle (and even the content) to make it useful.

One catchy tip is to include a question in the opening line to get the reader's interest. For example: “Have you ever wondered how to recycle fiberglass? The European project So and So does it for you!”

Remember that the programme / project technicalities are often the least interesting thing for a journalist and he / she will not be impressed by explanations of budgets, ERDFs, long organisation names etc. They want to see where the local story is, what is the concrete benefit to people. The main message to get in is that this was brought to the people by the European Union funding in cooperation with other European countries.

Use correct grammar and proofread for errors and typos before sending out the information.

Add powerful high resolution photographs or drawings that depict your press release.

Click here for a recommended press release template

Visualise

Photography

"A picture is worth ten thousand words."
Fred R. Barnard (1927)

Photography in Interreg

Photography is one of the most common activities of communication staff in Interreg.

Photographs are solid evidence of programme activities and achievements. The better a photograph is, the more these achievements are explained through imagery.In this chapter, rather than technical guidance on photography, the experiences and challenges facing Interreg programmes will be discussed. ■

Check out this article "Corporate Photography Tips"

Event photographs

"Good photos demand creativity"

Event photos can be visually repetitive in nature. Most events organised by programmes involve indoor presentations and interactions. Capturing good photographs at these events therefore requires creativity. Of course, more interactive events, outdoor events, and colourful events will naturally produce more appealing photographs.

Here are some useful tips from a few programmes:

► ***Photograph each session***, try to catch the interactive moments.

► Even the time of the day affects the end result. Shoot a number of images, from different angles. Photograph the speakers and the environment around them.

► ***Plan your time*** if you want to take a group photo.

► ***Store a selection of photos*** limited to e.g. 5-10 photos from events, with a special format of name, description, date, keywords for your later use.

► ***Do not miss the EU context.*** This can be done by highlighting the EU flag, your Interreg logo, map or other visual clues in your photographs.

► Programme/project rollup or other ***visual material***, with at least logo in the background, will give your photos a programme context.

► ***Move around a little*** – without disrupting the event! – before taking the picture, sometimes a slight change of angle will enable you to capture a much better image.

► ***Make sure the countries are emphasized*** (especially in Cross Border Cooperation)

Check this Event Photography Survival Guide.

Picturing projects

"Do not miss to document your work in progress"

Photographs from projects are extremely effective at showing your achievements. As well as being helpful in justifying your expenditure, a good photograph will tell the story of your project. To achieve this, the focus should be on real project activities and visible changes, not on internal meetings and speakers in front of an audience – or even worse, a speaker on a stage with no sign that anyone else is in the room!

Ensure that direct project outputs are visible on the photos; e.g. if it is an energy project the building with solar energy panels etc.

Some project outcomes are more photogenic during their development than when they are finished and that are actually a project result. For a project involving a school renovation activity, for example, photographs of renovation work in progress will be more interesting than the finished, renovated building. Which is a more interesting – a picture of a painted wall, or an action shot of a person painting an old wall, with the old colour and the new colour side by side? For such projects, timing of the photographs is important.

When organising contests on social media...

A few programmes have organised photography contests on Facebook. They asked the submissions on programme's Facebook page. This, combined with the competition for the most 'likes', creates a win-win situation in which you get good photographs and a lot of traffic to your programme website. However, the most 'liked' photograph is usually the one supported by the best networking campaign, rather than due to its artistic merit. Combining the popular vote with an independent selection board's opinion can help you make a more balanced decision. A competition will also provide you with a larger photo library for your programme communication activities, given you have taken the consent of the contesters for storage and use of the photographs.

In your project manual, stress that the programme needs good photographs from projects. Guidance on what kind of photographs programmes want from projects will serve as reference for the partners. At your training events, show good examples of photos to partners.

When receiving project photos, make sure you also receive a description of what is on the photo.

► ***Check below "photo information essentials"***

Do you have a system in place to collect photographs from your projects? Instead of asking for them by e-mail, consider using the CMS of your website, including the photos by which they announce their events.

Photo information essentials

"Give your photo a story"

Apart from ensuring your photo is of sufficient quality, it is important to consider some other elements before sending pictures out.

You may want to use the below format when sending your photos for publishing and also ask your projects to follow it. By meticulously filling in the description fields, the photographer will de facto make sure that the picture is a complete, identifiable and protected product.

Photos should be accompanied by:

► A caption explaining what the picture is meant to illustrate; the caption should be well written, give the story (who, what, when, where, why). If people appear, you should consider giving their complete names and titles. Remember, once a little time has elapsed you may not be able to gather this information again – so consider collecting it, even if you are not sure you will use it immediately.

- The name of the project/programme to which the picture relates, and the location in which it was taken.

- Avoid using long names. Simplify this information by using established abbreviations.

- An indication of the date it was taken, at least month and year.

- The name of the person/organisation that owns the copyright and the type of licence:

all rights reserved? Some rights reserved? Is it a Creative commons (CC) licence? Which type?

- Make sure you have a written authorisation to reproduce the picture without payment of royalties.

Working with professional photographers

"Larger events need higher quality photos"

You most likely have an in-house camera in your office for capturing photographs from your events. Modern phones also have cameras suitable for digital communications, if not always for printed communication.

For large events it is simply not good enough to do this in-house. You need higher quality photos, more professional shots and are likely to have limited availability from your programme staff on the day. You may also want to make use of a professional photographer to create your own image bank.

When hiring professionals photographers for events, value for money is a point to consider. It is usually more plausible to hire professional photographers for larger events, which can be a part of the overall contract for the event. As photographs are the most effective representation of what you did, think about the appropriate resource to dedicate to this in the context of the resources you have already dedicated to the event.

When working with professionals an effective briefing is key. If you cannot explain to the photographer what type of photographs you want, what you need to be captured in the photograph, and how you think you will use the images, they will not be able to capture what you want. Briefing the photographer on the type of photographs you want will help them create a composition with your key features in mind.

Make sure you explain the following:

► Who you are and what is your programme doing.

► What is your key message as a programme? What is the main message you want to capture in the photographs?

► In case of events, which sessions are important for you? Who is the keynote speaker and how will they recognise them? Who are your other VIPs to be photographed? Do you want candid (action) shots, or posed images?

► How many photos do you want the photographer specifically select for you? Do you want all the photos delivered?

► What will you do with the photos? A general idea of your purpose will make photographer's job easier.

► What is the file format you need? Photographers will use formats that you might be able to access immediately.

► What is your deadline for the selected photos? You may need some of them within hours to publish your news. Make sure you have a plan to access the best images in time, including agreeing a file format for specific images.

► Have you planned special poses? Like family photo or other, with the participants? When is it? Make sure to also inform your participants of group photos during events.

► In case of project photos (organised by programme), what part/story/detail from the projects you want to be visualised?

► What are the rights you are buying for the photos? In the Terms of Reference make sure you have all the rights you need, including the right to edit of the picture. Explicitly agree on it with the photographer and make sure to have this agreement in writing.

GDPR and photography

"An image of a person is considered data"

Photographers, and especially event photographers, are affected by GDPR. Every recognizable image of a person is considered data, even if they are in the background of the image. If you are photographing an event, or doing some street photography, you are collecting people's personal data without knowing it. The bottom-line is: "If you can identify a person from the data you hold, GDPR applies".

Changes in the law like this do not make for an easy transition and many communication professionals are still trying to find the best way to apply GDPR in their professional life. The steps below, however, may help you and your programme to make you more compliant to the new regulation in working with photographs.

1. Get explicit consent from participants before filling, sharing or storing their data.

With GDPR in effect, a disclaimer is no longer enough. You need to make sure the participants read and agree to the fact that they can be photographed during an event. For that, they need to take an action, such as ticking a checkbox while registering or explicitly declaring their consent.

When receiving project photos, make sure the permission/consent has a written basis. A disclaimer on the website or CMS will not be enough to consider that the consent is given. Add a consent/permission clause to the terms in the tool through which you receive these materials.

2. Have a privacy policy on your website

You must have a place on your website where you list consent, storage duration, usage etc. of the photos. Be transparent, tell people what you are doing with their photos. Observe the principle of 'fair use' which means you can have people in groups but you cannot highlight a person specifically because that may give an unintended message unless it is agreed otherwise with the person.

Check the EU GDPR website for more information.

3. GDPR rightly takes data of children very seriously.

If you are taking photographs of children, you should obtain parental consent.

4. Data storage duration

You need to inform your stakeholders how long you will be storing their personal data – and that includes photos. If you reach the end of the agreed time period, you can't contact them to ask permission to renew. You have to do that before the time ends.

5. Sharing

If you are asked not to share a participant's image or details, you have no choice but to agree. This affects any way of sharing, such as email, social media, printing, exhibiting, photography contests and so on.

6. Right to delete

If an individual asks you to delete all of their information and the photos you took of them – you must comply. You must delete everything, including the raw files.

7. Storage and access

You need to make sure your computer and hard drives are encrypted, and that external hard drives are stored in a locked space.

Information needs to be stored in a format that can be shared with individuals if they ask. Your files need to be encrypted or password protected, and stored securely.

'https' data storage tools, such as Google Drive, are considered safe because when https sends data, it does so over an encrypted source. You can store sensitive information in your Google Drive because it's cloud based and encrypted. Similarly, Dropbox is also compliant with GDPR.

8. Who has access to the data?

Do you have an assistant or other employee, and if so, do they need access to sensitive data? It must only be available to those who need it in order to do their work, and no one else should have access.

In addition to above measures, make sure to check the national legislation where your programme operates, to ensure you are compliant with the national law.

Copyrights

Whether you are hiring a photographer or receiving photos from projects, make sure you have written agreement regarding the copyrights. There should be no restrictions in terms of duration, geographical scope, use (purpose) or editing rights.

When you buy external service for other purposes but involving the use of photographs, make sure the outsourced company takes care of these copyrights and your written agreement should be clear on that. Photos with editing rights are more expensive. But this will save you from even more expensive legal troubles.

When downloading photos from online platforms, be it royalty-free or paid, make sure to read the platform's terms carefully. Limitations on the photos can range from overall use to public use or to no-distortion. They may, for example, require you to give credit when you use the photo, or limit your use to specific purposes.

► ***License types are important.***

The license bought for a photo may be limited:

► To a country: e.g. to a member state but not Europe-wide
► To a specific duration: e.g. for X years
► In purpose of use: e.g. on social media, website but not printed
► Without permitting modifications: e.g. use of the original image without cropping, applying filters etc.

In your guidelines for projects, ensure that project photographs' publishing and editing rights are owned by the programme. Make sure project partners are responsible for the consent of the people they picture, especially children. Double check with them in case these photos are used on programme products. Place a disclaimer on the section where you use such photos on your website.

Usually in projects' subsidy contract you will have a clause stating that materials produced with ERDF funds shall be made available for public use. Make sure projects are aware of this fact and still ask for explicit editing permissions in your guidance.

Free photo stocks

Photos on most free stocks are licensed under the Creative Commons Zero (CC0) license. This means the pictures are free to be used for legal purposes, including:

- For personal and even for commercial use.
- With permission to modify, copy and distribute the photos.
- Without needing to ask for permission or providing a link to the source or attribution.

The only restriction is that if you are modifying the images, identifiable people may not appear in a bad light or in a way that they may find offensive, unless they give their consent. You should also make sure the depicted content (people, logos, private property, etc.) is suitable for your application and doesn't infringe any rights.

You can find information about Creative Commons images and the license on the official license page.

The CC0 license was released by the non-profit organization Creative Commons (CC).

If you use a stock photo as your generic programme or project branding element, therefore repeatedly make use of it online and on printed materials, double check and make sure the photo is ***really*** royalty free. You can verify whether a photo you downloaded is already licenced by another stock by doing a reverse image search. Many online platforms provide you this service, most popular one being ***Google images***.

The Commission's photo libraries

There are a few libraries that Interreg programmes can make use of free of charge, provided by the European Commission. These libraries are available for the educational and informative purposes on EU-related issues. You can do a keyword search or search by country or theme.

► The ***Audiovisual Services of European Commission*** has a useful collection of images. Hover over the 'Photo' button on the upper menu for a more detailed breakdown of available photos. Please also check the ***copyright rules*** for this library.

► ***DG Regio Photo Library***

► ***DG Regio Flickr Account:*** Mainly event photos

Light editing on the photos such as cropping is allowed, as long as you do not manipulate the actual content of the image.

Useful links

Example of free photo stock platforms

- ***Pexels***
- ***Unsplash***
- ***Pixabay***

Online photo editor

- ***Pixlr***

Collage maker

- ***BeFunky***

Gif makers

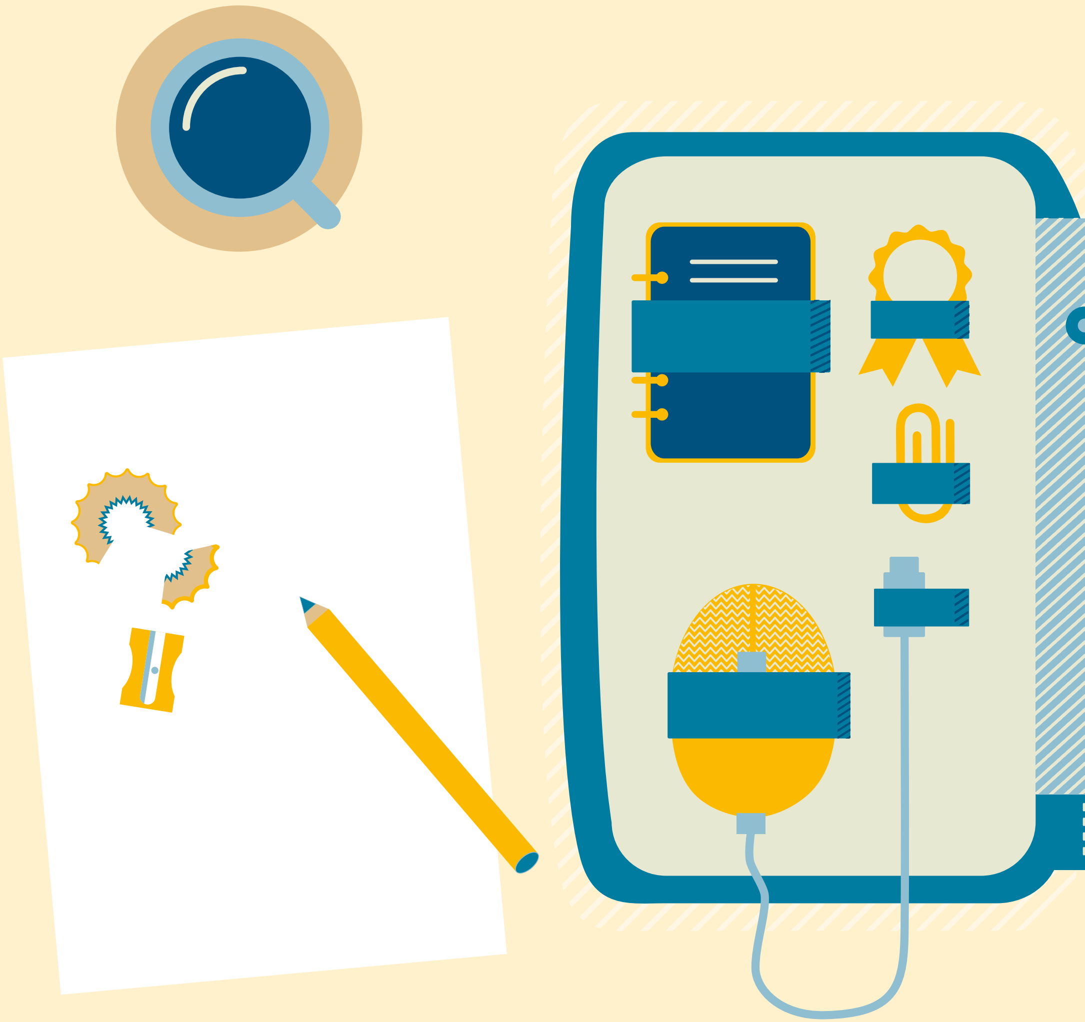
- ***Ezgif***
- ***gifmaker.me***
- ***gifcreator.me***

Meme generator

- ***If you like memes – a funny way to communicate***

Further reading:

- ***10 Pitfalls to Avoid When Using Stock Photography***
- ***Should you use unsplash or pixabay photos on your wordpress?***
- ***Say No to Stock Photography and Create Authentic Images***



www.interact-eu.net