

COMMUNICATION PLAN

South East Europe

Transnational Cooperation Programme

Jointly for our common future

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I. BACKGROUND

I.1. PROGRAMME OBJECTIVE

The South-East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme (SEE) is part of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective of the Structural Funds policies (2007 - 2013), financed through the ERDF. The general aim of the programme is to develop transnational partnerships on matters of strategic importance, meant to improve the territorial, economic and social integration process and to contribute to cohesion, stability and competitiveness of South -East Europe.

I.2. THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is a management function that is vital for the implementation and the success of the programme. It calls for co -operation and co-ordination within, between and among the actors involved in the management and execution of the programme. The Communication Plan forms an integral part of the programme implementation and aims to ensure that programme communications are well co -ordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public. Strong and targeted communication will stimulate project development, attract quality projects and demonstrate their added value. In the same time, it will ensure that programme and the projects supported by the programme are visible, accessible and accountable to the public.

I.3. TRANSPARENCY

Better accountability and increased transparency are vital to ensure that EU funds, which are public money, are used properly at all levels. Through efficient information and communication the programme will be able to achieve a high degree of transparency. Transparency rules will be complied with at all stages: publication of calls, project selection, contract awarding, financial management, reporting, and project results.

Transparency will be ensured mainly through:

- Providing easy access to relevant documents, as well as information about the programme requirements and administrative proceedings.
- Informing correctly, in due time, the potential beneficiaries upon the rules and procedures in order to ensure sound project implementation.
- Specifying the contribution of EU Funds to the programme and emphasize the community value added.
- Showing where and how the EU money is spent as well as the concrete achievements of the projects; publishing the lists of beneficiaries, the name of the operations and the amount of public funding.

1.4. DOCUMENTS OUTLINING INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY GOALS

- Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 – laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 – setting out rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006
- SEE Operational Programme C (2007) 6590
- SEE Communication Plan (general and annual)

The Information and Publicity provisions of the programme, including the preparation of a Communication Plan, are laid down in Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006: “Experience has shown that citizens of the European Union are insufficiently aware of the role played by the Community in funding programmes aimed at reinforcing economic competitiveness, creating jobs and strengthening internal cohesion. It is therefore appropriate to provide for the preparation of a communication plan which identifies in detail the information and publicity measures necessary to bridge this communication and information gap. For the same purpose, it is also necessary to identify the responsibilities and the roles that should be played by each of the actors involved”.

More specifically, Article 2 deals with the preparation of the communication plan, while Article 3 details the examination of compatibility of the communication plan and Article 4 specifies the Implementation and monitoring aspects of the communication plan. Article 7 states the responsibilities of the Managing Authority (MA) relating to information and publicity measures for the public and Article 8 details the responsibilities of beneficiaries relating to information and publicity measures for the public .

As noted in Commission Regulation EC 1828/2006, the Communication Plan must be sent to the Commission within 4 months of the adoption of the OP, which took place on December 20, 2007. If no observations come from the Commission within 2 months then the plan is considered compatible with the requirements and implemented.

2. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

2.1. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The communication plan aims to promote the SEE Programme in the South East Europe Area as well as at EU level, while reflecting the role of the European Structural Funds and of the European Union, attracting quality projects and ensuring maximum transparency. The communication objectives are in line with the programme's strategy, as follows:

- Raise general awareness towards the SEE programme, its activities and its potential impact in the region.
 - Raise specific attention of stakeholders, policy and decision-makers to the programme as an important instrument for the benefit of the programme area.
 - Make the general public more aware of the results and benefits achieved by transnational projects.

- Attract potential project partners to apply to the programme and generate increased demand in participation in the SEE programme.
 - Ensure that potential partners, applicants and beneficiaries in SEE projects receive clear and timely information about the programme.
 - Make the contents of the programme easier to grasp and applications easier to introduce.

- Demonstrate the role of the EU and ensure transparency about the use of public funding.
 - Specify the contribution of EU Funds to the programme and emphasize the community value added.
 - Show where and how the EU money is spent as well as the concrete achievements of the projects.

2.2 STRATEGIC APPROACH

2.2.1 Evolution of communication throughout the Programme life

As the programme evolves, so do the communication needs and activities. We have defined several phases of communication during the programme's life, which are directly related to the programme's general strategy: preparation, launching, consolidation, review, improvement and adjustment, focus and evaluation. Each of the phases has different priorities, uses specific methods, and different tools.

The annual communication plans will focus on the specific stages mentioned above, while they will maintain a high degree of flexibility and will allow necessary adjustments. During the first year the accent is on planning the communication and launching the programme. There's a need for raising awareness about the programme, promoting it and mobilizing its stakeholders in order to attract high quality projects and get the necessary support. A more general, all inclusive approach is therefore needed. The next years will be characterized by the consolidation of communication, orientation towards the programme priorities, a shift towards enhanced project communication and intensification of communication activities at national level (through the national contact points). In addition, communication will be adapted to the specific of the calls launched throughout the programme.

We see 2010 as a year of a preliminary review, in which the efficiency and adequacy of communication will be assessed and feedback will be sought in order to make the necessary adjustments and to improve communication according to more specific needs of the target groups. In the years following the review, communication will become more focused, more specialized, more "refined", while the last year will be dedicated to disseminating the achievements and the results of the programme and to the preparations for the next generation of funds. The evolution of communication during the programme life is detailed in Annex 2.

2.2.2 Specific communication elements

One major challenge is to define and disseminate the programme's achievements as a transnational programme, differentiated from the other types of cooperation programmes (such as the cross-border and regional programmes). This is particularly necessary as the transnational programmes have been regarded, in some quarters, as being over-complicated and under-performing and therefore have not been receiving much positive attention at the moment. The transnational dimension of the programme will therefore be accentuated throughout the communication activities.

Communication will stimulate the involvement of decision makers and political personalities from the SEE area, to ensure their endorsement of the programme and obtain the necessary political support. The key message to be transmitted is that transnational cooperation in the SEE region means: bridging gaps and uniting forces with

the purpose of sustainable and harmonious development of the region and better integration of candidate and neighbour countries.

The community value added of the programme will be a constant feature of the messages. The role of the Community as well as the EU financial contribution will be highlighted, focusing on the extent of co-financing supplied by the Funds.

2.3. BODIES RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

Although communication is a shared responsibility among all players involved in SEE programme management (Monitoring Committee members (MC), national committees/coordinators, Managing Authority (MA) etc.), the main bodies responsible for carrying out the SEE communication plan are the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) and the network of SEE Contact Points (SCPs). Their related tasks are defined in the Operational Programme (OP).

2.3.1. The role of the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS)

- Coordinates promotion activities related to the programme (such as conferences, info days, distribution of brochures and any other type of information material).
- Supports project generation and development through organisation of events such as the LP seminars etc.
- Manages the project application process: prepares and makes available documents necessary for project application and selection (general information on programme and project, standardised forms for project application and selection); provides information and advice to applicants, receiving, recording and checking the applications.
- Manages the joint projects/partner search database.
- Organises workshops with the view to provide additional information and clarifications regarding the implementation of the projects.
- Contributes to the communication and capitalisation on project results and supports the programme in the dissemination of results in the partner states.
- Supports the contact points in their activities.

In addition, the JTS will put at disposition a range of tools to support and reinforce the communication network, such as:

- Information materials, containing clear, easy to understand data about the programme;
- Programme visual identity with associated guide;
- Website
- Press materials
- Newsletter
- JTS-SCPs meetings (especially when calls are launched)
- Personalised support where necessary, including lead partner briefings

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2.3.2 The role of the SEE Contact Points (SCPs) and communication at national level

The SEE is a heterogeneous area and its varied public requires that communication measures be adapted to its specific needs; a “one size fits all” approach will fail to obtain the best results as far as communication is concerned. The role of the national contact points is therefore an essential one for the programme, as they can build upon the specific communication needs of their country. Contact Points will be set up in the most SEE countries. More specifically, their mission is to:

- Provide easily accessible first level advice to project applicants;
- Act as ambassadors for transnational co-operation and involve authorities responsible for national, regional and local development and other stakeholders;
- Identify target groups and information needs in the member states;
- Support applicants in the partner search in their national countries and help identify synergies between applicants and projects;
- Organise national information activities and support the Joint Technical Secretariat in the organisation and implementation of transnational events, training seminars and meetings taking place in the member states;
- Contribute to the implementation of communication plan, ensure ongoing capitalisation on results at national and regional levels and support the programme in the dissemination of outputs and results in the member states;
- Provide data and information, contribute to newsletters;
- Create and maintain together with the JTS links to related thematic information networks;
- Establish and maintain together with the JTS contacts with regional and national stakeholders; Provide contact details to the Programme;
- Identify information gaps, as well as synergies of project ideas and needs for projects;
- SCPs may also feed information back to the JTS / other SCPs, in order for them to adjust the communication activities in due time;

The communication activities developed by the SCPs at national level will be constantly supported. Publication of information materials, as well as the set up of national web pages about the programme, in the language of the respective country, is strongly recommended. Moreover, SEE partner states are encouraged to organise national information events, to ensure diffusion of programme information at this level. Upon request the JTS will actively participate in these events by giving presentations, being available for individual consultations for potential applicants, providing documentation.

The communication activities carried out by the SCPs in the countries benefiting from IPA / ENPI funds might be financed from the respective financial sources (IPA/ENPI/national funds). Information regarding these activities will be integrated in the yearly communication plans.

2.3.3. Communication between the bodies involved in carrying out the communication plan

Quality communication with as many of the target groups as possible will require a network approach. The network approach aims to include and involve in communication all interested parties, improve coordination and stimulate the exchange of good practices between the programme shareholders.

In close cooperation with the SCPs the JTS will manage a range of communication activities to promote SEE and its results across the programme area and the EU from 2007-2013. In addition, the JTS and SCPs will cooperate with national, regional and EU bodies to multiply the impact of information and publicity efforts.

For the sake of harmonised and proper programme level information (applicant package, programme statistics etc) some elements of information (i.e. information which is of general relevance) will be developed by the JTS and spread both by JTS and SCPs. Information of national relevance will be added to the programme level information by SCPs.

To ensure coherence and facilitate internal communication, regular meetings will be organised between the JTS and the SCPs. These will take place at least once a year or upon the request of the JTS, the SCPs, or the MC. The MC will be informed of the progress of the activities and the tools used, as well as whenever there are significant revisions of the CP.

2.3.4. Communication at project level - Involving the projects

In order to complement and strengthen the measures set up in the communication plan, an important role will be played by the projects themselves. The lead partners will be encouraged and supported by the JTS in setting up their own communication plans and delivering their own publicity activities, in order to be able to act as true ambassadors of the programme throughout the region.

Lead partners will be required to follow the Information and Publicity measures for the beneficiaries of ERDF funds mentioned in Art.7, 8 and 9 of the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006. Training in the field of communication will be provided during the seminars organised for the lead partners, and backed up by information available on the SEE website.

Other communication measures envisaged at project level will take into account the nature, the size and the capacity of each project. Project teams will be advised to appoint a member to be in charge of communication and information activities. In order to give more impetus to their communication measures and obtain as well economies of scale, the projects will be recommended to unite their forces and collaborate whenever it is possible in organising their communication activities.

Lead partners will be urged to provide attractive and interesting project descriptions that would be meaningful to people totally unaware of INTERREG / Territorial cooperation issues. The aim must be not just to communicate results and the benefits for participating regions but also to allow other projects to develop on them, and investigate and illustrate longer-term benefits for Europe's regions.

A comprehensive guide for project communications will be developed and made available on the programme website. Its main purpose will be to provide projects with further support and guidance on how they can set up their communication strategies, which provide the backbone for effective and efficient publicity and dissemination of information about the projects. This will also enable the promotion of important results and outcomes, which will facilitate further the sharing of knowledge and experience and future collaboration between projects.

2.3.5. Maximizing communication impact: participation in joint transnational communication initiatives

We believe strongly in the value of producing joint messages about the value of territorial cooperation (eventually including the inter-regional and cross-border programmes), therefore we will be supporting joint communication initiatives when they will bring added value to the programme communications. These initiatives would not be a replacement for programme activities but a supplement. There are many different stakeholder groups that programmes need to target and many will still be reached most effectively through individual programme information.

2.4 TARGET GROUPS

Target audiences of the programme's communication activities have been broken down to different groups. The main target groups (which include the programme stakeholders, beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries and the wider public) are the following.

Partners (beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries):

- Potential applicants of SEE projects, according to the specifications in the Operational Programme;
- Partners and lead partners of approved SEE projects;

Stakeholders:

- Decision-makers of SEE countries dealing with national policies in the fields of the programme priorities and regional development;
- Representatives of national, regional and local authorities from participating countries;
- Managing Authorities of convergence, and competitiveness programmes;
- Institutions dealing with project generation in the field of regional development.

General public (for transparency reasons and for ensuring that the added value of community assistance reaches the wider public):

- Citizens from the SEE area
- EU general public

Media

Media is a channel, but also a target in itself and should be a major partner for promoting the programme. The planned communication activities aim to achieve the widest media coverage for the programme and both audio -visual and print media will be included.

More specifically, the following media will be targeted:

- Media from the SEE countries at regional and national level (both written and audio - visual media).
- European media in general – in particular those media covering EU Affairs.

EU institutions

Officials from different EU bodies need to be informed on a constant basis about the progress of the programme and its results, therefore they are considered as a target group. The EU institutions particularly involved are:

- European Commission
- European Parliament
- Committee of the Regions

2.5 KEY MESSAGES

Information for the different target groups will be adjusted to their specific needs:

| Target group | Information | Foreseen Impact |
|---|---|--|
| Stakeholders: - Decision-makers of SEE countries dealing with national policies in the | - Clear information on the programme: its background, objectives, procedures, benefits and results; | - Transnational cooperation feeding into national and regional policies and mainstream |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>fields of the programme priorities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representatives of all local, regional and city authorities in participating countries; - Managing Authorities of Convergence and Competitiveness and Employment programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to benefit from the opportunity provided by the programme - Possibility to raise relevant transnational issues to be dealt with in the projects (input to targeted calls); how to use project outputs, how to harmonise national, regional policies in cases where the transnational approach provides added value. | <p>programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased support for SEE and transnational cooperation increased visibility of the programme at national level |
| <p>Potential beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National, regional, local authorities - Institutions dealing with project generation in the field of regional development; - Relevant authorities, ministries acting in the fields of the programme priorities; - Universities, research institutes; - NGOs, actors of the civil society; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding is available: how much, when, how, what for, and who can apply? - Clear information on the programme: its background, objectives, procedures, benefits and results - JTS and SCPs provide support in application procedure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applications from a wide range of regions across the programming area - High quality of applications, with operation proposals in line with the programme objectives SEE funds distributed efficiently to suitable operations |
| <p>Partners and lead partners (Same details as above)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear information on the programme: background, objectives, procedures, benefits, results - How to run a SEE project - How to publicise results - Make the most of results by coordinating with other projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear understanding of programme and efficient realisation of projects. - Multiplied dissemination of programme information and results to other stakeholders. - Capitalisation on the results of SEE |
| <p>General public and media;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local, regional, national, EU-level and specialised media (print, broadcast and online) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SEE exists: how much, when, how, why, and who? - What are projects doing, who, and where? (once available) - Results/impacts of SEE cooperation - Benefits of transnational cooperation: results, achievements - The role played by the EU | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raised general public awareness and support for the initiative; - Raised awareness further among various audiences across the programme area; - Transparency on EU spending, awareness of the added value of Community assistance |
| <p>EU officials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Commission - European Parliament - Committee of the Regions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information on the programme: objectives, procedures, benefits, results. - Progress of programme implementation: calls launched, funds allocated, projects implemented, etc Benefits of SEE cooperation Project results/impacts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raised awareness and support for the initiative - Multiplied dissemination of programme information - Support for the future of transnational cooperation |

3. COMMUNICATION TOOLS

The tools for the implementation of the communication plan have been divided into three groups, according to their specific objective: information and awareness raising tools, tools for creating and maintaining visual identity, and tools for establishing and sustaining media relations (media tools).

The information tools: have as main purpose disseminating information and raising awareness about the opportunities of the programme by means of:

- Events
- Promotional and information materials (publications in paper and electronic format)
- Programme website (online communication)

The information tools will boast an interactive character and will assure accessibility of information to various target groups. As stipulated in the regulation No 1828/2006, during the programme life there will be at least one major information activity per year that will present the achievements of the SEE programme during the respective period, as it is specified in the Commission Regulation (EC) 1828/2006. The activity may have the format of one of the events mentioned below and / or may comprise the launch of information and publicity materials, such as the annual projects book.

The visual identity tools aim at creating and maintaining the programme's visual identity ("the SEE brand") and supporting the visibility of the programme:

- Visual identity elements to be inserted in all in all information materials
- Visual identity manual
- SEE promotional materials bearing the SEE and EU logo

The media tools focus on providing the means for building a strong relation with the media from across the programme area, as well as with the European media when necessary, and include:

- Online "press room" area in the website;
- Press materials: concentrated information targeted to the needs of the journalists, (press releases, press kits);
- Press conferences around important events in the programme life;
- Advertorials;
- Advertisements.

3.1 INFORMATION TOOLS

3.1.1 Events

Events are an extremely important communication tool, due to their interactive character and the networking as well as the media opportunities they can provide. The events to be organised will be diverse and will serve the needs of specific target groups.

The JTS will ensure that events are held throughout the Programme area, respecting the transnational character of the programme.

Communication through events will be carried out in several ways: direct organisation by JTS and SCPs, encouragement and support in organisation to other bodies and participation in events organised by others. All events involving TA funds are subject to preliminary MC approval either in form of the yearly SEE Communication plan or in form of TA project initiated by SCPs or the JTS.

Types of events:

Kick off event

The event brought together more than 500 participants from 18 countries. The one and a half days event took place in Budapest, on 27 -28 March 2008, and marked the official launch of the programme. During the event, programme stakeholders and potential partners, representing national, regional and local authorities, regional development agencies, and other actors, had the opportunity to meet, share their visions for the programme area and develop project ideas. The kick off event had an official, symbolic dimension as well as a more practical, technical one. The first day was dedicated to the presentations of the main stakeholders and to the presentation of the programme itself (history, evolution, current status, expectations), while the second day was composed of workshops dedicated to more specific, technical aspects related to the implementation of the programme and its four priorities.

Annual information activity

One major information activity is foreseen to take place every year, in order to present the evolution and the achievements of the programme as well as to stimulate debate on issues of interest for the development of the programme. Emphasising the transnational and result oriented character of the programme as well as the need for projects of strategic relevance for the SEE countries, stakeholders meet annually to:

- define topics of common interest (potentially with the purpose of orientating future applicants – targeted calls);
- be informed about the results of projects and discuss possibilities of joint capitalisation of those results and outputs.

Database of stakeholder contacts around the four SEE priorities across the programme area will be brought together by MC members with the assistance of SCPs and will be used by the JTS and other programme bodies.

Partner search events

The first SEE call for proposals is scheduled for early 2008. On the basis of one call per year, 4 calls in total are expected. The JTS will organise one large -scale partner search event per year (while funding still available). This will gather around 500 people per event with the objective of giving new information on the programme and encouraging partnerships for potential projects.

National and regional events (Info Days)

SEE partner states are encouraged to organise national (and when the case regional) information events, to ensure diffusion of programme information at this level and to enhance the visibility of the Programme in the participating countries. Upon request the JTS will actively participate in these events by giving presentations, being available for individual consultations for potential applicants, providing documentation.

Lead partner seminars

The JTS shall organise, once the first round of projects have been approved, LP seminars providing the necessary information to project leaders. These seminars will be organised annually by the JTS or in cooperation with the SCPs. In order to enforce the transnational character of the programme, the location of the events will be diverse.

General information events about the programme with the purpose of and providing information to the general public and the potential beneficiaries (e.g. Open Doors Day that can be organised at the JTS / MA premises or at different project locations).

Communication training seminars

Following the approval of projects, communications trainings will be organised for Lead Partners and Project Partners in order to improve dissemination of project results done by the projects. The training seminars will be coordinated by the JTS, and will take place in different locations across the programme area. For the sake of cost -efficiency communication trainings can be organised as part of the Lead Partner seminars.

Participation in third party events

The JTS will also participate and contribute in events organised by other bodies, where the target audience is similar e.g. Open Days in Brussels, by providing stands, programme materials, giving presentations etc.

European Flag event

The event consists of flying the flag of the European Union for one week starting 9 May, in front of the premises of the Managing Authority.

Table: Events

As for all communications activities, the timing and content of events will be carried out in close coordination to ensure coherency in information given out across the programme. The table below gives an overview of events planned over the programme period. This is subject to revision depending on timing of the calls for proposals.

| Type of event | Objectives | Frequency | Organised by |
|--|---|--|---|
| Kick off event | Launching of the programme Rising awareness among shareholders | Unique event in the beginning of the programme | JTS in cooperation with a selected contractor |
| Annual information event / stakeholder meeting | Present the evolution and the results of the programme during the respective year | Annual | JTS |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---|--|--------------|
| | Defining strategic issues Capitalisation of results | | |
| Partner Search forums | Information on the programme Encouraging partnerships | Annual (2008-2011) | JTS |
| Programme Info Days | Provide general information about the programme Attract potential beneficiaries | Annual (2008-2012) | SCPs |
| National and regional events | Provide specific information Attract potential beneficiaries and encourage more applications in the respective countries / regions | Upon partner state initiatives | SCPs (+ JTS) |
| Thematic seminars | Provide specialised information according to the programme's priorities Seminars dedicated to IPA/ENPI project partners | 2009, 2011 | JTS |
| Lead Partner seminar | Provide programme information Deliver useful project management info Sharing best practices | Annual (2008-2013) | JTS |
| Communication training | Communication training for Lead Partners, journalists, other categories. | Annual (2008-2013) | JTS |
| European flag event | Celebrate EU Enhance EU visibility at the local level | Annual event – for one week starting 9 may | JTS |

3.1.2. Publications and promotional materials

Printed information on programme remains important means of sharing information not only to potential/approved projects, but also at national and EU level providing statistics on number and type of projects implemented, and also on their results.

The planned publications include both specialised publications (targeted to the stakeholders and the project partners) and general publications (targeted to media and the general public) which are simple, concise, illustrated and show the practical implications of the programme for the citizens in the SEE region and the EU, such as examples of success stories, illustrated with photos and graphics, Q&A sheets, comparative analyses on specific issues, testimonials of beneficiaries etc.

The following table is a summary of proposed publicity and information material, with targets and language. The working language of the programme being English, the majority of publications will be produced in this language. However to ensure information is accessible to all potential partners and to a larger public, it can be envisaged by the SCPs to produce the SEE information leaflet and other publications in their national languages.

All materials will be produced following consistent visual design and language style. Most of the printed materials will also be available for download in electronic format. Priority will be given to online materials whenever possible, as they can be more easily updated and they can be easily accessible via website. A “print on demand” strategy will contribute to maximizing the results while reducing expenses.

New media technologies will be used whenever possible, for documenting the work and results of the SEE Programme. Web videos, for example, will be used to depict strong projects in the programme, as visual testimonies of the programme results.

Table: Publications & promotional materials

| Type | Materials | Target | Language |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|
| Printed | Programme information flyer | All target groups | EN SEE languages (if SCPs consider it necessary to translate it in the national language) |
| | SEE Programme general presentation brochure | Stakeholders; potential applicants and project partners; general public and media | EN |
| | Project book of all approved projects (annual) | Stakeholders, project partners, media, EU officials | EN |
| | Thematic brochures | Content focused on the programme priorities, targeted to specialists in the respective fields, potential applicants, project partners, stakeholders, specialised media | EN |
| | Programme documents (programme manual, applicant's guide, communication guide, best practices, etc. | Applicants, project partners | EN |
| | SEE final results brochure | All target groups | |
| Electronic format /online | Website information | All target groups | EN |
| | SEE newsletter | Stakeholders, potential applicants and project partners, media, authorities involved in territorial cooperation programmes, media. | EN Possibility to integrate in the contents local news or announcements in SEE languages. |
| | Direct e-mailing (e-mail alerts on key items) | Project partners; stakeholders | EN |
| | Other materials in electronic format | All target groups | EN |
| Audio-video | Web videos, Video News Releases | Project partners; stakeholders media | EN |
| Outdoor / Indoor | Banners, posters, roll-ups, plaques, etc. | General public | EN / national language of the SEE countries involved in the respective project, whenever the case (national event, project location) |
| Promotional objects | USB pen drive CD's / DVDs /Pen drives Conference bags Pens etc | Stakeholders; potential applicants and project partners, media. | NA |

3.1.3. The SEE Website

The rapid growth of internet access for individuals, businesses and other organisations has confirmed the importance of the website as a tool for promoting an organisation's key messages and as a source of up to date information. This is why the SEE portal will be the main information source of the programme, the "meeting point" for all target groups.

The aim of the future South-East Europe portal is to constantly provide the target groups with adequate, up to date, high-quality information about the programme. The target groups of the website are the interested general public, potential beneficiaries, partners working with the programme, stakeholders and programme actors, media. The domains acquired for the portal are: www.southeast-europe.net, respectively www.se-eu.net.

In order to achieve its objectives, the portal will be constantly updated with relevant information. Moreover, the portal will be highly transparent, well-structured and user friendly, making it as easy as possible for the visitors to find the information they need. It will be readable by older as well as the newest Internet browsers. The SEE website will as well provide links to the national information pages about the SEE (when these will be available) and will advertise the SCPs announcements whenever the case. Also, it will include a section dedicated to specific information and contact details from the participant countries.

Particular attention will be given to publishing the list of beneficiaries, the name of the projects and the amount of public funding. They will be updated on a regular basis, in order to achieve increased transparency and comply with requirements of the regulation (EC) No 1828/2006.

3.1.4. Involving the new technologies

The Internet seems set to become more and more important as a cost-effective means of communicating. Web2.0 is 'opening up' opinion-forming processes in all areas of politics and society. For the actors working on European Union regional policy, such as those involved in transnational cooperation, this offers both opportunities and challenges. Now is the time to integrate the elements of Web2.0 into the transnational communication activities and start to make use of the new, promising interactive channels to engage in a dialogue with our interlocutors (potential and current project partners, EU and national policy makers, media or even public at large) on issues relating transnational cooperation, regional development, and project management.

Building and interacting with the online audience can be achieved for example by setting up blogs in order to stimulate the debate on issues of interest for the programme, especially those relating to the four priorities: environment, innovation, sustainable urban development, accessibility.

3.2 VISUAL IDENTITY TOOLS I

There is a need to differentiate the SEE transnational programme from other territorial cooperation programmes. Creating a strong identity of the programme is therefore of utmost importance for obtaining the best results and attracting quality projects.

The visual identity tools have as main purpose creating the programme's visual identity and thus enhancing the visibility and recognition of the programme, while supporting the SEE "brand". They include creation of the programme logo and the design of layouts for use on the online and print materials, as well as a set of clear rules for using the identity elements, contained in a visual identity manual.

It is very important that the new visual identity reflects the programme's unique elements. The brand identity of the Programme has to convey the message that transnational cooperation represents a valid and valuable mean of enhancing regional development. The brand identity of the Programme will "reintegrate" the EU and non - EU states, by emphasizing their common cultural and historical values and by pointing out the urgent co-operation areas (innovation, urban development, environment etc.). It should incorporate the regional dynamic, as well as (re)integration of the non -EU member countries of South-East Europe to the economic and political European community. A clear visual reference to the EU will be maintained on all materials due to the presence of the EU flag and the specific statement: "Programme co-funded by the EU". The visual identity should be friendly and professional, communicating a fresh start with a new competent management team.

The promotional materials / objects will as well serve towards the reinforcement of the programme's visual identity – the SEE brand – which is an important element in the context of a multitude of programmes which are competing to attract projects. The slogan of the SEE programme, chosen and approved by the Monitoring committee members, is "Jointly for our common future".

3.3 MEDIA TOOLS

The main themes of the programme (Innovation, Environment, Accessibility, and Sustainable urban development) are high on the European agenda and have a big potential as far as communication is concerned. The EurActiv Media Survey 2007 conducted among Brussels-based journalists found that:

- Journalists see energy (43%), the environment (39%), and climate change (34%) as some of their priority policy areas in EU reporting.
- 57% of journalists said that in order to improve reporting on EU affairs, further training on specific policy knowledge was necessary.

Applying the results of the study to the SEE communication activities, we conclude that focusing on the environment presents therefore an opportunity for EU -wide communication in general and for SEE Programme communication in particular, as this

¹ The visual identity has been already established during the development of the communication plan . The Programme logo is inserted on the document cover.).

issue became a mainstream issue to be communicated “in simple terms”. Consequently, to stimulate the interest of the media towards this theme as well as towards the themes reflected in the other programme priorities, special interest will be given to specialised media, such as environmental journalists or those specialising in innovation. General training in the transnational cooperation field will be also provided in the form of media seminars (which can be organized in cooperation with other transnational projects) and the concrete project works will be shown during the media project tours. To sum up, in order to attract media interest towards the programme the JTS will:

- work closely with media representatives
- supply the media with high-quality news and current affairs material
- establish links with regional and local media
- provide general and specialized training

The envisaged media tools include:

- Organisation of press conferences around major events during the programme;
- The set up of an online press room on the website, where all information targeted to the journalists can be found as well as the latest news of the programme;
- The use of “classic” press materials such as press releases, press kits ;
- Public advertisements in the media on the occasion of calls for projects.
- Briefing breakfasts / briefing seminars for journalists – these meetings could provide the opportunity of establishing informal contacts between the MA and the journalists.
- Organisation of media tours for visiting successful projects.
- Production of publications targeted to media as well as the general public which are simple, concise, illustrated and show the practical implications of the programme for the citizens in the SEE region and the EU, such as examples of success stories, illustrated with photos and graphics, Q&A sheets, comparative analyses on specific issues, testimonials of beneficiaries.
- The set up of a database of journalists which will be constantly updated.

IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The main purpose of the evaluation is to indicate how effective the information and publicity measures are in terms of visibility and awareness of the SEE transnational cooperation programme and of the role played by the Community. Consequently, it serves for improving the communication tools and activities used.

In the process of monitoring and evaluating the communication activities set in the communication plan both quantitative and qualitative indicators will be used. The evaluation will be carried on a continuous basis, in order to allow possible corrections of the plan in due time. In the evaluation of the communication actions will be involved the Managing Authority as well as the National Contact Points and the lead partners.

EVALUATION TOOLS

- Evaluation questionnaires designed to determine the level of satisfaction of specific target groups (e.g.: project managers)
- Online surveys to determine the level of user satisfaction as far as the web content and structure is concerned.
- Focus groups / interviews with project partners / others.

RESULTS AND IMPACT INDICATORS

The following are some of the indicators that will be used for the evaluation of the communication activities at both programme and project level:

Media impact

Evaluating the impact of SEE, and especially the impact of the projects it funds, in national and regional press, is an important tool. Press monitoring will ensure that no reference to the programme in the media will go unnoticed. The monitoring will be organised in cooperation with the SCPs and, when relevant, with other transnational programmes. A press book, including the main articles published, will be developed on a yearly basis.

Indicators:

- Number of journalists participant in the SEE annual events (kick off, annual conference)
- Number of journalists participating in the training seminars
- Number of articles about SEE /SEE projects published in the media
- Number of projects advertised in the media

Events impact

Events are a good occasion to measure and analyse the efficiency of communication.

Indicators:

- Number of events organised (at both programme and project level)
- Number of participants in the events.
- Website impact

The impact of the website, as the main information instrument of the programme, must be assessed in order to be able to provide a user-friendly, comprehensive tool.

Indicators:

- Number of visitors of the website.
- Number of downloads of the materials available online.

Publications impact

Indicators:

- Number of publications produced
- Numbers of copies requested and distributed

Transparency efficiency

Indicators:

- Number of approved projects that fulfilled the information and publicity requirements
- Number of communication plans at project level

4.1 -Table: monitoring and evaluation

The evaluation will measure to what extent the objectives of visibility and awareness of operational programmes and the role played by the Community have been achieved.

TOOLS

| EVALUATION TOOL | FREQUENCY | TARGET | OBJECTIVE |
|-----------------|--|---|---|
| Questionnaires | Variable (in function of the events) | Various: participants in the Programme events (LP seminars, annual events) lead partners potential beneficiaries | Determine the degree of satisfaction regarding the events organised and the tools made available. |
| Online surveys | Variable (in function of the issues which need assessment, such as the calls for proposals) | Website visitors | Determine the user-friendliness of the website and / or get the users opinion on specific topics |
| Focus groups | Every two years | Project partners, SCPs, others | determine the efficiency of communication tools and methods used |

INDICATORS

| CATEGORY | INDICATOR | TARGET |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Programme communication impact | | |
| Events impact | Number of participants in the events. | Min. 300 at the annual events , variable for other events (in function of the event) |
| | Number of events | Kick off: 1 Annual conference: 1 / year Lead Partner seminars: 2 / year Thematic events: min 4 European flag: 1/year Others, to be determined according to demand |
| Publications impact | Number of publications printed / to be printed - Flyer - Poster - Brochures and programme documents Number of publications distributed - Newsletter-(online) - Flyer - Poster - Brochures and programme documents | 5000 (for the first two years) 1500 (for the first two years) To be determined Function of the e-mailing list: at least 500 persons per issue Min 2000 /year Min 500 / year To be determined – according to demand |
| Promotional materials impact | Number of materials printed/produced | Variable, in function of materials |

| | | |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| | Number of materials distributed | |
| Promotional materials impact | Number of materials (notebooks, pens etc.) | Variable, to cover the number of participants in the events |
| Website impact | Number of visits Number of downloads of the online materials | Variable |
| Transparency | Number of approved projects that fulfilled the information and publicity requirements | 100% |
| Project communication impact | Nr of websites set-up Nr of information and promotional materials produced and distributed (brochures, flyers etc.) Nr of events organised Nr of projects advertised in the media | At least 2 communication tools used per project, according to project needs and capabilities. |
| Media impact | Number of journalists participant in SEE events (annual conferences, kick off) | 5-10 journalists participating in the annual events |
| | Number of journalists participating in the training seminars | 5-10 journalists participating in the training |
| | Number of articles about the SEE programme/ SEE projects published in the media | Min. 2 articles/ year per country |

V. BUDGET

The communication activities of the programme which are carried out by the JTS are financed by the programme Technical Assistance budget (TA) given that the activity is in line with the overall SEE Communication Plan, part of the respective yearly Communication Plan, and the costs of the activity are planned in the respective yearly TA budget (which is subject of preliminary approval by the SEE Monitoring Committee).

The budget for the communication activities will be in line with the specific needs of various periods in the life of the programme. For example, it is important to note that during the first period of the programme (especially in the first twelve months); the communication will be at its peak, as it will have to cover the needs for launching the programme and attract its first partners. This is also valid for the mid-term period (2010) and the end of the programme.

The cost efficiency of the communication activities will be evaluated whenever it is possible in order to promote those which deliver maximum results with minimum costs.

SCPs as a general rule will be financed by the hosting SEE partner -states. In case of information activities of transnational character – partner-search events, info-days, stakeholder meetings and other events going beyond national level – costs can be also claimed from the programme TA budget. The SCPs have to follow the “TA project” approach described under point 7.7.2. Of the OP: “Activities covered by Technical

Assistance will be financed using the project management approach. All programme management activities to be reimbursed by Technical Assistance (including all JTS activities and transnational communication activities of the SCPs) shall be prepared in form of Technical Assistance projects". All Technical Assistance project plans shall include the following elements: Objectives, Activities, Target groups, Expected expenditures etc.

Technical Assistance project proposals have to be previously approved by the Monitoring Committee. Costs occurred while implementing the project will be reimbursed by the programme. Reimbursement will take place on the basis of occurred expenditures to be a subject of regular control. Programme management bodies implementing Technical Assistance projects have to respect and follow the programme level eligibility rules and procedures.

ANNEX – INDICATIVE EVOLUTION OF COMMUNICATION DURING THE PROGRAMME LIFE

| YEAR | PHASE | FOCUS ON | GENERAL DESCRIPTION | SPECIFIC TOOLS |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| 2007 | Preparation | Communication needs | Elaboration of programme documents Set up of a communication structure | Programme documents |
| | | Development of information | Assessment of communication needs Development of the communication plan Tender calls for the SEE website and visual identity | |
| 2008 | Launching | Raising awareness | Communication structure in place Communication activities begin | Kick off event Website development Development of information materials (Brochures, communication guidelines, visual identity manual, etc) |
| | | Promotion | Major information and promotional materials and communication tools developed | |
| | | Mobilizing stakeholders | Launch of the programme (kick off event) Communication has a more general, informative, character | |
| 2009 | | Distribution and accessibility of information | Developing the communication network | |
| 2010 | Consolidation | Project communication | All communication tools are available and fully functional Increased interactivity between management and target groups Communication becomes more specialized | Events: lead partner seminars, thematic events, communication training Project communication events Networking |
| | | Presenting the priorities | | |
| 2011 | Review Improvement | Feedback | Assessing the efficiency and relevance of communication activities and tools Establishing best practices | Focus groups Evaluation questionnaires Reports |
| | | Improving information Adequacy of information | | |
| 2012 - 2015 | Adjustment | Fine tuning | Improvement of communication tools, following received feedback Adjustment and specialization of communication according to specific needs | Best practices |
| | | Quality of information | | |
| | Focus | Specialization Tailored information | More targeted, specific communication | Projects expo Projects media tours |
| | Evaluation | Dissemination of results | Define and disseminate the achievements of the Programme (projects, results). | Flyer Evaluation questionnaires |
| | | Evaluation of communication Transparency | Contribute to the communication and capitalisation on project results and support the programme in the dissemination of outputs and results in the partner states. | Info-comm. Report Best practices |
| | | Lessons learned | Evaluate the communication Prepare for the next programming period | Results brochure |