

GUIDELINES FOR PROJECTS' COMMUNICATION

(Updated in July 2018)

Communication is a strategic tool for the Atlantic Area projects and their communication activities shall raise awareness about the investments made by the Interreg Atlantic Area programme through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). It is also part of the obligations of an approved project to ensure transparency and visibility of their activities and results, and demonstrate their impact on the citizens and regions of the Atlantic Area.

Projects are therefore ambassadors of the Interreg Atlantic Area programme and are able to influence policies and instigate changes in behaviours to have a positive impact on the programme area.

This factsheet provides guidance on how this should be done and how to comply with the Commission regulations and the programme requirements on this matter.

1. Implementation of the communication process

Projects are required to outline the communication activities to be implemented at each step of the project cycle.

In the application process

The application form foresees a work package dedicated to Project Communication. In this section projects must demonstrate how they will communicate the project activities and results, identifying the main communication actions, target audiences, deliverables, calendar and budget.

In the implementation phase

After the approval, projects have to abide by the regulatory obligations relating to the EU communication and information requirements (see point 3. Legal requirements).

2. Communication plan

A communication plan will be useful for the partnership to **achieve the project main goals, disseminate results and inform audiences** about their achievements, success and benefits through the project lifetime.



Planning, implementing, evaluating are the three main phases of a communication plan, always focusing on the project benefits and tailoring communication to different target groups. The main aim is always **to acknowledge the value of the project**.

The activities outlined in the plan must run alongside project activities and reflect the input and activities of all partners. The structure of a communication plan gives an overview of at least the following main elements:

Communication objectives: they are a mechanism to deliver the project aim and they need to be clearly defined, detailed, achievable and measurable. It is the outcome of an activity, as for example:

- ✓ Raise awareness about the project mission or the partnership involved;
- ✓ Raise awareness about the project benefits to citizens or a specific population;
- ✓ Dissemination of the projects outputs;
- ✓ Change the perception about a solution for a common problem;
- ✓ Change the behaviour of a specific population.

Target groups: the plan should clearly identify whom it wants to address the communication activities - it should consider the external audience but also the internal audience, i.e., the project partnership. The lead partner in particular has an essential role to play in promoting a good communication flow within the partnership, crucial for the project success. This will contribute to a better involvement of the team and promote the delivery of a common message.

Messages: what does the target group needs to know/ learn? Deliver 2 or 3 main messages about the project; a message sums up the main aims of the project with focus on specific aspects.

Tactics: which concrete activities will be implemented to reach the audience and then communicate the project achievements? For example: websites, social media, events, publications, videos, documentaries, communication with the media.

Time plan: it can be based on the project's overall milestones and defines when activities will be carried out.

Budget: indicative budget with breakdown of activities, for implementation of the plan/work package.

Evaluation: how the communication plan will be evaluated in order to monitor and review the achievements of the project and if necessary readjust the communication tactics during the project lifecycle.

3. Legal requirements

- ✓ Section 2.2 of Annex XII of the [Common Provision Regulation \(EU\) N°. 1303/2013](#), establishes the responsibilities of the beneficiaries with regards to information and communication measures for the public.



- ✓ Articles 4, 5 and Annex II of the [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) N°. 821/2014](#) establishes the rules to comply with EU visibility and ERDF support.
- ✓ The Subsidy Contract establishes the beneficiaries' responsibilities and obligations in terms of publicity, communication and branding of projects.

If projects do not comply with the legal responsibilities regarding the implementation of visibility and publicity requirements in communication materials, any related expenses may be considered as ineligible and it could lead to the recovery of the funds unduly paid.

4. Project responsibilities

Each project should appoint a **communication manager** who will develop and implement a communication plan and also set up processes to involve all partners in communication activities. He/she will liaise with the JS for communication purposes.

The following list of the main project responsibilities in terms of communication do not replace the careful reading of the mentioned documents and regulations.

1. All information, communication and branding measures provided by the project, including presentations at conferences or seminars, shall acknowledge the financial assistance from ERDF funds of the Interreg Atlantic Area programme (see point 6. Communication requirements).
2. These measure shall be carried out in accordance with the aforementioned legal regulations, the latest version of the Project Approved Form (PAF), the Programme Manual and any other guidelines that could be issued by the programme on this matter.
3. Any notice or publication relating to the project made in any form and by any means, including the Internet, must state that it only reflects the author's view and that the programme authorities are not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.
4. Each partner also takes the full responsibility for the content of any notice, publication and marketing product provided to the managing authority (MA) and is liable in case a third party claims compensation for damages. The partner will indemnify the MA in case the MA suffers any damage because of the content of the publicity and information material.
5. The lead partner shall ensure that the project partners comply with all publicity, communication and branding obligations (e.g. on the use of the programme logo, information requirements, organization of events etc.).
6. The programme authorities shall be authorized to publish in any and by any means, the following information about the project: projects contacts (lead partner and partners), name of the project, activities and objectives, geographic location of undertaken activities, project dates, ERDF funding and total eligible cost, abstracts of the progress and final reports..
7. The lead partner shall inform the JS about any communication campaign, media appearance or other publicity of the project for potential website updates or showcases.
8. The lead partner shall provide the JS with project statistical information, promotional items,



publications, newsletters, content for digital or print material, photographs and videos necessary to carry out the programme communication activities.

9. The MA on behalf of the monitoring committee and of other programme promoters at national level are entitled to use the outputs of the project in order to guarantee a wide spreading of the project deliverables and outputs and to make them available to the public.

5. Support to projects

Once the project is approved, the JS will provide guidance and training to help projects undertake effective communication activities.

The JS will also provide a communication toolkit with templates and practical advice on how to deal with communication through the whole project lifecycle, as for example:

- ✓ Guidelines for projects' communication;
- ✓ Visual identity guidelines;
- ✓ Editable logotypes;
- ✓ Template for poster A3;
- ✓ Tips for the use of social media, event organisation, digital and print publications, relations with the press.

This early and regular engagement will help ensure EU funds are not put at risk of being returned to the Commission through penalties and publicity coverage reaches wider audiences, including the general public.

6. Communication requirements

The Interreg Atlantic Area programme has a logo in line with the Interreg common brand to promote European Territorial Cooperation. This logo combines the Atlantic Area brand (symbol and colours), the European Union emblem and the reference to the ERDF.

This programme logo was updated in July 2018 increasing the size of the EU flag, allowing therefore projects and partners to have higher visibility when displaying their logos in the communication supports developed, while acknowledging the EU support (see section 6.2 Combination of the EU emblem with other logos). The updated version of the programme logo is the following:





Please note: the previous programme logo (with smaller EU emblem) is still valid and the communication materials already produced are still eligible, provided they are in compliance with the relevant Regulation.

The Brand Design Manual for the application of the programme logo and symbols of thematic priorities is [available on the website for download](#).

6.1 Project branding

Project logos can be based on the programme logo by adding the project acronym in the colour of the matching thematic priority (**integrated project logo**) – this option is strongly recommended by the Joint Secretariat. The editable of integrated project logo for each thematic priority is [available on the website](#) for download. This measure strengthens the identity and support of the programme and of the European Union.



Projects can also develop their own brand identity and logo. In those cases, **the Interreg Atlantic Area logo must always be displayed** in all communication supports materials (printed or digital, e.g. publications, newsletters, flyers, manuals, presentations, promotional material, videos, small materials...). It must be placed in a visible position and it can never be smaller than any other logo included in the same material. The Atlantic Area programme logo already assures the acknowledging of the EU support and ERDF co-financing.

In cases where it is not possible to display a logotype, projects shall use the sentence:

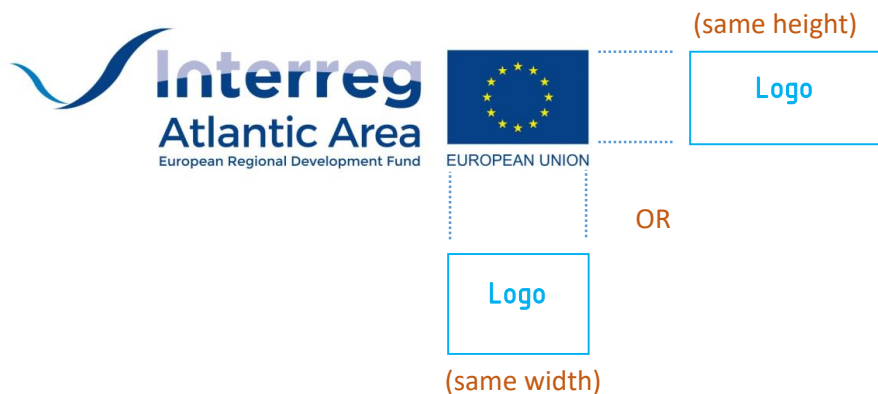
“This project is co-financed by the Interreg Atlantic Area Programme through the European Regional Development Fund”.

6.2 Combination of the EU emblem with other logos

Article 4, point 5 of the EU Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) N° 821/2014 states that “If other logos are displayed in addition to the Union emblem, the Union emblem shall have at least the same size, measured in height or width, as the biggest of the other logos.” i.e. the project logo or other institutional logos cannot be bigger (higher or wider) than the UE flag.



Below an example on how to apply this rule.



Exception: A logo with no clear institutional, political or economic link, which is merely a design element as part of a communication action, may be bigger than the EU emblem

For more information, see the [Brand Design Manual](#), section '2.5 Combination with other logos'.

6.3 Projects on the web

Projects are strongly advised to **develop a website** or use the website of the lead partner organisation to promote their activities, results, tools or products. This website has to provide an **evolutionary description** of the project, including its aims and results and must also highlight the European financial support by displaying the **Interreg Atlantic Area logo**, which assures the information of the ERDF funding and the European Union support and also a link to the programme website.

Please note: Article 4, point 3 of Regulation 821/2014 states that when the Union emblem is displayed on a website, it shall be visible when landing on the website, inside the viewing area of a digital device, without requiring a user to scroll down the page.

The Interreg Atlantic Area website (www.atlanticarea.eu) provides one page per approved project, displaying the following information:

- ✓ Project overview (acronym, name, priority/objective, budget, partnership, contacts);
- ✓ Project description, aims and results.

Projects are also advised to disseminate information about their activities and results on social networks as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram or others related. The Atlantic Area programme has a [Facebook page](#) and a [Twitter account](#). You can follow us to learn more about the thematic and activities related with the programme and the projects implementation.



6.4 Project events

A launch event should be organised at the beginning of the project and a final event at the end of the project implementation. The audience of both events should not be limited to the project target groups, but should be as wide as possible.

To ensure the visibility of the programme, the **integrated project logo** or the **Interreg Atlantic Area logo** shall be used in all documents addressed to the events participants (e.g. agendas, list of participants, presentations, exhibition stands, etc.). Projects are encouraged to place the EU flag in the meeting rooms of all events.

6.5 Poster A3

Each project beneficiary must display a poster (minimum size A3) at a location readily visible to the public, such as the entrance area of a building. It should contain information about the project and the Interreg Atlantic Area logo. The poster must remain visible for the whole duration of the project.

The programme provides a template of a poster for each thematic priority, available for download on our website.

Contact us!

If you need for further guidance on EU regulations or programme requirements in terms of communication, please contact:

Carla GUIMARÃES

Joint Secretariat, Communication Officer

Tel: +351 226 080 114 | Email: carla.guimaraes@atlanticarea.eu