



Danube Transnational Programme Communication Strategy



Programme co-funded by the European Union

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1. Background

1.1. Programme objective

European Territorial Cooperation, better known as Interreg, is one of the two goals of the European Union cohesion policy for the programming period 2014-2020. It provides a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from different Member and Non-Member States.

The Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) is one of the Interreg programmes which aims to develop transnational partnerships to:

- Contribute to a higher degree of territorial integration of the very heterogeneous Danube region by the development and implementation of strategic frameworks and shared perspectives in a number of areas where action cannot be taken effectively without transnational frameworks. Where awareness of shared needs, challenges and opportunities exists, pilot actions can enable actors to develop new approaches on a common basis
- Act as a policy driver and pioneer to tackle common challenges and needs in specific policy fields where transnational cooperation is expected to deliver good results
- Develop policy frameworks, tools and services and concrete pilot investments whereby strong complementarities with the broader EUSDR will be sought
- Make targeted selection of the most relevant interventions and further increase the efficiency of administrative procedures and reduce the administrative burden for the beneficiaries in order to ensure the success of programme implementation

Covering an area of 14 countries, the cooperation programme is structured across four priority axes that intend to develop coordinated policies and actions in the programme area reinforcing the commitments of the Europe 2020 strategy towards the three dimensions of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth:

- Priority axis 1: Innovative and socially responsible Danube region
- Priority axis 2: Environment and culture responsible Danube region
- Priority axis 3: Better connected and energy responsible Danube region
- Priority axis 4: Well governed Danube region

1.2. The strategic role of communication

Communication is a management function and a strategic tool that is vital for the implementation and the success of the programme. It calls for cooperation and coordination within, between and among the actors involved in the management and execution of the programme.

The Communication Strategy acts as a strategic framework and a basis for the communication of the Danube Transnational Programme during the whole programme period 2014-2020. It 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.

Moreover, the Communication Strategy will be based on the following aspects:

- **Transversal** approach essential for a successful programme implementation: Communication is integrally connected to all parts and moments of the programme implementation. The Strategy have three main phases and the measures (messages, target groups and tools) will be accordingly adapted to them:
 - Programme and call awareness (attracting applicants and quality projects)
 - Support to projects' communication
 - Making programme and projects' achievements visible (facilitating capitalisation)

- Real **commitment and cooperation of all actors**: Communication must be seen as essential instrument and not just as a simple compulsory add-on by all managing bodies and projects. Only when all actors are embedded by this idea and give importance to communication, the benefits of a good communication are appreciated. The Strategy calls well for cooperation and coordination within, between and among the actors involved in the management and execution of the programme. The DTP projects and NCPs have a vital role in this respect and the Strategy highlights this.

- **Targeted communication** linking the appropriate messages and tools to the relevant target audiences. Strong and targeted communication stimulates project development, attracts quality projects and demonstrates their added value. At the same time, it ensures that programme and projects supported by the programme are visible, accessible and accountable to the public.

- **Transparency** rules are complied with at all stages: publication of calls, project selection, contract awarding, financial management, reporting, and project results. Transparency on communication is 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 emphasise the community added value
 - 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

1.3. Legal basis

The Communication Strategy covers the whole programming period and it is developed in line with Articles 115 to 117 and Annex XII of the EU common provisions regulation (CPR) No 1303 / 2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013.

The Communication Strategy is approved by the Monitoring Committee of the programme and supports the implementation of the Cooperation Programme approved by the European Commission.

The Managing Authority in accordance with Article 100 (1)c shall inform the responsible monitoring committee at least once a year on the progress of the Communication Strategy implementation and on its analysis of the results as well as on the planned information and communication activities to be carried out in the following year (annual communication plan).

Other general provisions:

Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 (ERDF Regulation)

Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 (ETC Regulation)

2. Aim and objectives

The Communication Strategy aims to promote the Danube Transnational Programme in the Danube Region 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.

All communication is aimed to support the DTP objectives and to make the programme well known. This is ensured by setting communication objectives that lead to the best possible outcome of programme implementation. The communication objectives are in line with the programme's strategy, as follows:

- Raise general awareness towards the DTP, 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 DTP
 - Ensure that potential partners, applicants and beneficiaries in the DTP projects receive clear and timely information about the programme
 - Make the contents of the programme easier to grasp and applications easy to submit

- To ensure the generation and quality of the DTP projects
 - Ensure well-functioning internal communication in between the programme bodies to make the programme function effectively
 - Support beneficiaries in all phases of project implementation to guarantee the best possible outcome of the projects
 - Support and encourage beneficiaries in communication activities
- 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 emphasise the community added value
 - Show where and how the EU money is spent as well as the concrete achievements of the projects

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 is a need for raising awareness about the programme, promoting it and mobilising 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 are characterised 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 is adapted to the specific of the calls launched throughout the programme.

We see 2017 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 becomes more focused, more thematically specialised, more "refined", while the last year is 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.

3. Bodies responsible for implementing the Communication Strategy

Although communication is a shared responsibility among all players involved in the DTP management (Monitoring Committee members (MC), Managing Authority (MA) etc.), the main bodies responsible for carrying out the DTP Communication Strategy are the Joint Secretariat (JS) and the network of National Contact Points (NCPs). Their related tasks are defined in the Cooperation Programme (CP).

The DTP Communication Strategy aims to include and involve in communication all interested parties, improve coordination and stimulate the exchange of good practices between the programme managing bodies. The key success factor for the Programme communication is the ability of different parts of the system to work together and share information.

In close cooperation with the NCPs, the JS manages a range of communication activities to promote the DTP and its results across the programme area and the EU from 2014-2020. In addition, the JS and NCPs 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 manual, programme statistics, etc) some elements of information of general relevance are developed by the JS and spread both by JS and NCPs. Information of national relevance is added to the programme level information by NCPs.

The MC is informed (at least once per year) of the progress of the activities and the tools used, as well as whenever there are significant revisions of the Communication Strategy.

3.1. The role of the Managing Authority (MA) and the Joint Secretariat (JS)

According to Articles 115 to 117 and Annex XII of the EU common provisions regulation (CPR) No 1303 / 2013 the responsibilities of the **Managing Authority** in relation to information and communication are:

- Information and communication measures are implemented in line with the Communication Strategy
- Activities receive the widest possible media coverage, using various forms of communication
- A programme launch event and an annual major information activity are organised
- The EU flag is displayed at Managing Authority premises
- The list of operations is published in accordance with the legal requirements and is updated at least every 6 months
- Updated information about programme implementation is published, including main achievements
- Information and communication tools, including templates in electronic format are provided to help beneficiaries to meet their obligations

The practical application of the related tasks are carried out by the **Joint Secretariat**, in charge, among others, of the following tasks:

- Coordinates promotion activities and materials related to the programme (such as conferences, info days, distribution of brochures and any other type of information material)
- Organises a major annual event to inform about the state-of-play of the programme and its projects
- Supports project generation and development through organisation of events such as the LP seminars, etc
- Manages the joint projects/partner search database
- Manages the project application process: prepares and makes available documents necessary for project application and selection (general information on programme and projects, standardised forms for project application and selection); provides information and advice to applicants, receiving, recording and checking the applications
- Organises workshops with the view to provide additional information and clarifications regarding the implementation of the projects (communication trainings, thematic events, etc.)
- Contributes to the communication and capitalisation on project results and supports the programme in the dissemination of results in the partner states
- Coordinates the National Contact Points in their activities and plan some activities to be carried out at national level every year

In addition, the MA/JS puts at disposition a range of tools to support and reinforce the communication network, such as:

- Information materials and project catalogues, containing clear, easy to understand data about the programme
- Programme Visual Identity Manual including the rules to be followed
- Communication toolkit specifically addressed to projects
- Website and social media
- Press materials
- Online newsletter
- JS-NCPs annual meetings
- Personalised support where necessary, including lead partner briefings

The implementation of the Communication strategy is a horizontal task of all programme staff members. This is ensured by planning and monitoring of the activities within the programme by the Communication Manager, who is responsible for the coordination and implementation of the Strategy.

Contact in the JS responsible for programme communication:

Eloy Gomez Giron

Communication officer

H-1051 Budapest, József Nádor Tér 2-4

Tel: +36 1 79 51787

Email: eloy.gomez@interreg-danube.eu

3.2 The role of the National Contact Points (NCPs)

Considering the vast geographical extension covered by the Danube Transnational Programme, the role of the NCPs in informing and communicating at national level and reaching the target groups is crucial to achieve the programme objectives. The DTP is a heterogeneous area and its varied public requires communication measures to be adapted to its specific needs. The role of the National Contact Points is therefore essential for the Programme, as they can serve as a vital bridge between the JS and the countries and regions of the Programme. The Contact Points are the key players in communicating the programme to the regions and, at the same time, the regions' needs towards the programme.

The JS and the network of NCPs are the key actors to implement the yearly communication plans. While overall responsibility for communications rests with the MA, participating countries complement transnational activities at national and regional level by setting up and securing the proper functioning of the network of NCPs.

The National Contact Points facilitate contact between potential beneficiaries and administrations, politicians and policy makers at different levels in the regions and play an important role when creating awareness of and interest in the Programme.

More specifically, their mission is to:

- Provide easily accessible first level advice to project applicants, support them in the partner search in their national countries and help identify synergies between applicants and project ideas
- Act as ambassadors for transnational cooperation and involve authorities responsible for national, regional and local development and other stakeholders
- Identify in the member countries institutions to be involved in different ways in the programme and information gaps or needs
- Organise national information activities and support the JS in the organisation and implementation of transnational events, training seminars and meetings taking place in the member states
- Support the communication of projects in coordination with the JS
- Contribute actively to the implementation of the Communication Strategy and the preparation of the annual communication plans at programme level
- Ensure ongoing capitalisation of results at national and regional levels and support the programme in the dissemination of outputs and results in the participating countries, with the use, among other tools, of the national media
- Provide contact details, data and information, contribute to newsletters
- Establish and maintain together with the JS links to related thematic information networks and regional and national stakeholders

- Feed information back to the JS / other NCPs, in order for them to adjust the communication activities in due time

The communication activities developed by the NCPs at national level are constantly supported by the JS. Publication of information materials, as well as the set-up of national websites about the programme, in the language of the respective country, is strongly recommended. Moreover, the DTP partner states are encouraged to organise national information events, to ensure diffusion of programme information at this level, particularly during the launch of the programme and its first call. Upon request and availability, the JS actively participates in some of these events by giving presentations, being available for individual consultations for potential applicants and providing documentation.

The communication activities carried out by the NCPs in the countries benefiting from IPA / ENI funds might be financed from the respective financial sources (IPA/ENI/national funds). Information regarding these activities will be integrated in the yearly communication plans. Two pre-conditions for an effective implementation of the activities are:

- Allocation of enough human and monetary resources to fulfill all communication tasks
- A continuity of staff in charge of the Programme is advised when possible

In order to achieve successful results in the communication at national level carried out by the NCPs, the following specific objectives and implementation measures have been set:

- Foster the capacity-building and transfer of knowledge among the NCPs through:
 - Permanent contact and petition of requests/advice with the JS
 - Permanent exchange of information among NCPs and envisage the possibility of having joint activities between countries according to their budget
 - Organisation of annual meetings involving all NCPs and the JS addressing useful topics for the implementation of communication at national level. These meetings aim to ensure coherence and facilitate internal communication, and take place at least once a year or upon the request of the JS, the NCPs, or the MA
- Better planning and coordination with the JS in order to achieve successful communication activities:
 - Active involvement in the preparation of the annual communication plans at Programme level and implementation of the minimum activities foreseen each year by the MA/JS for each of the member countries
 - Preparation of a list of the communication activities planned at national level every year and the support requested to the JS, taking into consideration those activities which can be more effectively organised by NCPs and including the minimum activities proposed by the MA/JS each year for each member country
 - Keep the JS constantly updated about all the communications activities at national level. It brings benefits to both parts (more dissemination, better organisation, better allocation of resources, finding synergies, etc.).

- Avoid improvisation or avoid giving priority to spending forecasts more than to the quality of the communication activities.
- Channel the project results to relevant stakeholders at national/regional level, linking project communication to specific regional agendas and policies, creating a better understanding of the importance and potential of transnational cooperation. In this objective, the media can play an essential role.

3.3. The role of the projects

In order to complement and strengthen the measures set up in the Communication Strategy, an important role is played by the projects supported by the DTP themselves. They play as well an essential role in communicating their achievements at all levels.

Communication activities have to be described already at the project application stage. Once the project is approved, the lead partners are encouraged and supported by the JS in setting up their own communication plans and delivering their own information activities, in order to be able to act as true ambassadors of the programme throughout the region.

Lead partners are required to follow the Information and Communication responsibilities of the beneficiaries included in the Articles 115 to 117 and Annex XII of the EU common provisions regulation (CPR) No 1303 / 2013. Information and training in the field of communication are provided during the seminars organised for the lead partners and the workshops specifically addressed to the representatives in charge of the project communication. The workshops aim to train the projects on how fulfil their responsibilities according to regulations, how better communicate about their activities and how facilitate knowledge transfer and good practice between projects on communicating results to stakeholders successfully. These events are backed up by information available on the DTP website including a Communication Toolkit and a specific chapter for projects in the DTP Visual Identity Manual.

The Communication Toolkit is a comprehensive guide for project communications available on the programme website. Its main purpose is to provide projects with further support and guidance on how they can set up their communication plans and implement their communication activities, which provide the backbone for effective and efficient publicity and dissemination of information about the projects. This also enables the promotion of important results, which facilitates further the sharing of knowledge and experience and future collaboration between projects (capitalisation).

Project teams will be advised to appoint a member to be in charge of communication and information activities. Moreover, in order to give more impetus to their communication measures and obtain as well economies of scale and capitalisation opportunities, the projects are recommended to unite their forces and collaborate whenever it is possible in organising their communication activities.

Each DTP project has a specific webpage included in the Programme website. The main information about the project has to be provided on the project webpage, including a short description of the aims and results, and highlighting the support received from the EU. The technical requirements and the steps to include the information into the projects' webpages are included in the Communication Toolkit.

Lead partners are urged to provide attractive and interesting project descriptions meaningful to people totally unaware of Interreg issues and to integrate them into their webpages and the programme publications. 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.

The DTP Visual Identity Manual includes a specific section addressed to the projects in which all the rules to be followed by them on corporate identity are explained in detail based on the premise "any communication activity has to acknowledge support from the Funds by displaying the EU emblem with a reference to the EU". The JS helps the projects in fulfilling these rules and supports them constantly in all their communication activities. Moreover, the JS supervises the appropriate implementation of the communication activities specified in the projects' communication plans, including minimum quality standards and the efficient use of the funds committed for communication purposes.

4. Target groups

Target audiences of the programme's communication activities have been broken down to different groups. Different target groups are addressed by different specific communication objectives and through different activities. The target groups can be divided into two main groups according to their nature within the programme implementation.

The **internal target groups** consist of people working with the implementation of the actual programme:

- Managing Authority (MA), Joint Secretariat (JS)
- National Contact Points in the Member States
- Monitoring Committee (MC)
- National bodies responsible for coordinating the Interreg programmes
- European Commission / DG Regio Desk Officer of the programme

The **external target groups** consist of all other stakeholders that are of interest to the programme in reaching its main goals, mainly organisations that could or do implement projects:

Partners (beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries):

- Potential applicants of DTP projects, according to the specifications in the Cooperation Programme
- Partners and lead partners of approved DTP projects

Stakeholders:

- Decision-makers of DTP 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
- The Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) and the Steering Group of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)
- Other Interreg 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 DTP 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:

- Media from the DTP countries at regional and national level (both written and audio-visual media to be more easily reached by the DTP projects)
- European media in general – in particular those media covering EU Affairs

EU institutions

The EU bodies, apart from the officials in charge of the DTP, need to be informed on a constant basis about the progress of the programme and its results. The EU institutions particularly involved are:

- European Commission
- European Parliament
- Committee of the Regions

5. Key messages

The community added value of the programme will be a constant feature of the messages. The role of the European Territorial Cooperation as well as the EU financial contribution will be highlighted, focusing on the extent of co-financing supplied by the Funds. The key message to be transmitted is that transnational cooperation in the Danube region means bridging gaps and uniting forces with the purpose of sustainable and harmonious development of the region and better cohesion of all countries in the area, including candidate and neighbour ones.

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

Target group	Information	Foreseen Impact
Stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decision-makers of DTP countries dealing with national policies in the fields of the programme priorities - Representatives of all local, regional and city authorities in participating countries - Managing Authorities of EU funded programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear information on the programme: its background, objectives, procedures, benefits and results - 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transnational cooperation feeding into national and regional policies and mainstream programmes - Increased support for the DTP and transnational cooperation - Increased visibility of the programme at national level
Potential beneficiaries <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 	<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 - JS and NCPs 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 - DTP funds distributed efficiently to suitable operations

<p>institutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGOs, actors of the civil society - SMEs 		
<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 DTP project - How to disseminate results - Make the most of results by coordinating with other projects (capitalisation) 	<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 the DTP
<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"> - DTP exists: how much, when, how, why, and who? - What are projects doing, who, and where? (once available) - Results/impacts of DTP 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 DTP 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

6. Communication tools

The tools for the implementation of the Communication Strategy are means to achieve the aimed objectives during the different phases of the programme life. The information tools boast an interactive character and assure accessibility of information to various target groups.

6.1. 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 are diverse and serve the needs of specific target groups and the different phases of the programme implementation. The JS ensures that events are held throughout the Programme area, respecting the transnational character of the Programme.

Communication through events is carried out in several ways: direct organisation by JS and NCPs, 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 DTP Communication plan or in form of TA project initiated by NCPs or the MA/JS.

As stipulated in the regulation No 1303/2013, during the programme life there is at least one major information activity per year that presents the achievements of the Danube Transnational Programme during the respective period.

Types of events:

Kick off event

The event brought together around 500 participants from all Danube area. The one and a half days event took place in Budapest on 23-24 September 2015, and marked the official launch of the programme. During the event, programme stakeholders and potential partners, representing national, regional and local authorities, 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, the programme itself and its first call (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 events

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 DTP 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.

Partner search/Lead applicants' events

The first DTP call for proposals is launched in autumn 2015 while the rest of calls are launched in the successive years. The JS supports potential applicants organising partner-search side-events both during the kick-off and annual events or specific lead applicants' seminars when possible. These events have the objective of encouraging partnerships for potential projects and supporting the applicants when preparing their proposals.

National and regional events (Info Days)

The DTP partner states are encouraged to organise national (and when the case regional) information events when calls for proposals are open, to ensure diffusion of programme and call information at this level and to enhance the visibility of the Programme in the participating countries. Upon request and availability, the JS will actively participate in these events by giving presentations, being available for individual consultations for potential applicants and providing documentation. These events will be included in the annual communication plans of the DTP.

Lead partner seminars

The JS organises, after the approval of projects in each call for proposal, a LP seminar providing the necessary information to project leaders. When needed at national level, the NCPs may organise a seminar for the lead partners in their countries in cooperation with the JS. In order to enforce the transnational character of the programme, the location of the events is diverse.

Communication training seminars

Following the approval of projects, communications trainings are organised for the project representatives in charge of communication in order to improve the information about the project and the dissemination of project results done by the themselves. The training seminars are coordinated by the JS along with other transnational programmes when possible, and 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.

Other events

Apart from the above-mentioned events, other types of events are organised according to the programme implementation needs. Thematic events related to the Danube Capitalisation Strategy (see chapter 8) are organised both at transnational and national level to foster the capitalisation activities among the projects. At national level, events for the dissemination and capitalisation of project results are organised frequently by the NCPs with the support of the JS.

General information events about the programme are organised at different moments of the programming period with the purpose of providing information to the general public and potential beneficiaries (e.g. European Cooperation Day activities).

Participation in third party events

The MA/JS participates and contributes in events organised by other bodies in relation to Interreg or transnational cooperation (e.g. Open Days in Brussels, EUSDR forums, etc.) by providing programme materials, giving presentations, etc. It also actively takes part in the meetings organised by Interact related to different aspects of the programme implementation (communication, finances, project managements, etc.) as well as in the meetings of the network of Interreg Communication Officers (Inform) organised two times a year by DG Regio.

As for all communications activities, the timing and content of events are 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 programming period. This is subject to revision depending on timing of the calls for proposals.

Type of event	Objectives	Frequency	Organised by
Kick off event	<p>Launching of the programme</p> <p>Raising awareness among stakeholders</p>	<p>Unique event at the beginning of the programme</p> <p>(2015)</p>	<p>MA/JS in cooperation with a selected contractor</p>
Annual events	<p>Present the evolution and the results of the programme/projects during the respective year</p> <p>Defining strategic issues</p> <p>Capitalisation of results</p>	<p>Annual</p> <p>(2016-2021)</p>	<p>MA/JS in cooperation with a selected contractor</p>
Partner Search forums / Lead applicants' seminar	<p>Launching calls for proposals</p> <p>Encouraging partnerships</p> <p>Supporting project preparation</p>	<p>When each call is open (together or separated from the Annual events)</p> <p>(2015-2021)</p>	<p>JS</p>
Programme Info Days	<p>Provide general information about the programme and the calls</p>	<p>Annual</p> <p>(2015-2021)</p>	<p>NCPs</p>

	Attract potential beneficiaries		
National and regional events	Provide specific information Attract potential beneficiaries and encourage more applications in the respective countries / regions Disseminate and capitalise project results	Upon partner state initiatives (2015-2021)	NCPs (+ JS)
Thematic seminars	Provide specialised information according to the programme's priorities Promote capitalisation opportunities	2017-2021	JS
Lead Partner seminar	Provide programme information Deliver useful project management info Sharing best practices	After each call (2016-2021)	JS/NCPs
Communication training	Communication training for project partners	At least biyearly (2016-2021)	JS

6.2. Website

The DTP portal (www.interreg-danube.eu) is the main information source of the programme addressed to all target groups. The aim of the DTP website is to constantly provide the target groups with adequate, up-to-date, high-quality information about the programme achievements and its projects. The target groups of the website are the interested general public, potential beneficiaries, partners working with the programme, stakeholders and programme actors and media.

In order to achieve its objectives, the portal is constantly updated with relevant information. Moreover, the portal is highly transparent, clear, well-structured and user friendly, making it as easy as possible for the visitors to find the information they need. From the simple main page, it is up to the user to decide the level of detailed information to get from the different sections by clicking in different links. The website is visually appealing but still permitting full access by users with various software and technologies (including portable devices). The DTP website

provides as well links to the national information pages about the programme (when these are available) and includes a section dedicated to contact details from the participant countries. It advertises the projects announcements whenever the case.

Particular attention is given to publishing the list of the projects and the amount of public funding with clear, informative and comparable data. The list is updated on a regular basis, in order to achieve increased transparency and comply with requirements of the regulation (EC) No 1303 / 2013.

Project webpages within the DTP website

The DTP projects have individual websites managed by them but hosted by the programme. The programme has designated server space and capacity, and a shell website through a sub section of the programme website, and created a direct link between the Programme website and the project websites.

All Danube Lead partners are given a username and a password to access partially to the website intranet (Approved projects section). Each project is then responsible for the design of the specific website (containing at least the main sections: About the project; Project partners; Achievements; News and events; Contact us) and for the uploading of news, information, etc. related to the project. They commit to updating it constantly with events, outputs and any relevant news related to the project implementation. This section has got the same structure for all projects allowing some flexibility to create new sub-sections according to the projects' requests.

This allows the projects to have their own individual websites while the Programme maintains a level of control of the storage and archiving of the content, to minimise the risk of data and information loss, and to avoid duplication of work.

This is a novelty compared to the previous programming period 2007-2013 in which each project created its own website. The integration of the project webpages within the programme website will not only save money and time but bring other advantages such as:

- Better interoperability and monitoring the projects' websites with real-time updates
- Domains not disappearing after the projects' closure
- Avoiding confusion in the audience (projects more easily identified as parts of the DTP)
- Increasing synergy and capitalisation opportunities among projects

Only in very specific cases when the project website is considered an output more than a communication tool (namely the cases of platforms), the Danube projects will be allowed to create their own website.

Automatic transfer of data and outputs from IMIS to website/KEEP

The website is integrated with the programme management tools. A system that has a better integration between structures allows for automatic updates and data transfer and provides a higher level of transparency and accuracy. In this sense, some project data of the website are generated automatically from the programme monitoring and information system: selected data

from application forms and reports (e.g. data of project partners, summary of progress reports, etc.).

The automatic transfer brings these main advantages:

- Saving time of filling the same data several times in different platforms
- Projects should not have to enter or upload data to more than one channel as it compromises accuracy and transparency and may lead to loss of data after project closure
- Having constantly updated information about the projects' changes in the website (budget and project changes for instance) and better monitoring of this information by the JS

Adaptation of the contents to portable devices

It has become essential nowadays to adapt the websites to the user-friendly format of portable devices in order to facilitate navigation in those tools. Most DTP website contents will remain the same and only the buttons and navigation will be adapted.

6.3. Social media

In nowadays communication, the information given by a programme such as DTP cannot come only from the website. Given media platform changes and the strong progression of social media platforms in professional working environments, it is clear that programme communications need a more community oriented approach. Social media is part of the media mix in our society and would be expected to be part of any current communication strategy.

The presence of the DTP in the main social media must be thus ensured considering their relevance and adequacy to the different target groups. Some key social media platforms should be closely linked to the DTP website and be an integral part of the set-up of the website. Relevant social media platforms should be used to complement and reinforce programme news and messaging, to have relevant conversations with Programme stakeholders and to make project and programme results more accessible.

Platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Youtube are an important complementary tool in the DTP for certain communication activities (events, publications of photos and videos, instant communication, etc.) and to address some target groups in a more dynamic and closer way, allowing them to join the conversation, share experiences or interact with counterparts.

6.4. Publications and promotional materials

In order to support programme implementation in the best possible way, all tools are used in a coherent, coordinated and need-based way. Materials are planned and created according to

needs, with the utmost aim of being informative, clear and attractive to the addressed target group(s).

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

The planned publications are targeted to media and the general public but some specialised publications (targeted to the stakeholders and the project partners) may be envisaged according to the programme needs. The publications should be simple, concise, illustrated with photos and graphics and show the practical implications of the programme for the citizens in the Danube region.

The working language of the programme being English, the majority of publications is 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 NCPs to produce some DTP publications in their national languages.

All materials are produced following the rules included in the DTP Visual Identity Manual. All printed materials will be also available for download in electronic format through the programme website. Priority is given to online materials whenever possible, as they can be more easily updated and they can be easily accessible via website.

The DTP has an eco-friendly publications policy, thus a preference is given to eco-friendly materials and printing solutions such as recycled paper.

A promotional video about the programme and some of its projects is envisaged to be produced. This video will be disseminated to the participants in programme events and shown in every possible occasion (annual, national, thematic events, etc.).

Type	Materials	Target	Language
Printed	Programme information flyer	All target groups	EN DTP languages (if NCPs consider it necessary to translate it in the national language)
	Project book of all approved projects (after each call)	Stakeholders, project partners, media, EU officials	EN DTP languages (if NCPs consider it necessary)
	Thematic brochures	Content focused on the programme priorities, targeted to specialists in	EN

		the respective fields, potential applicants, project partners, stakeholders, specialised media	
	Programme documents (programme manual, applicant's guide, communication toolkit, etc.)	Applicants, project partners	EN
Electronic format /online	Website information	All target groups	EN
	DTP newsletter	Stakeholders, potential applicants and project partners, media, authorities involved in territorial cooperation programmes.	EN
	Direct e-mailing (e-mail alerts on key items)	Project partners; stakeholders	EN
	All printed materials in electronic format	All target groups	EN
Video	General information about the programme and some of its projects	Project partners, media, stakeholders, general public	EN
Outdoor / Indoor	Banners, posters, roll-ups, plaques, etc.	General public	EN / national language of the DTP countries involved in the respective project or NCPs, whenever the case (national events, project location)
Promotional objects	Pen drives, notepads, DVDs, conference bags pens, etc	Stakeholders; potential applicants and project partners, media.	NA

6.5. Media

Media visibility is seen as a tool for raising awareness and also interest towards the benefits of transnational cooperation in general and the DTP in particular. The previous experience has showed that the best way to attract media attention is through the specific project achievements.

Considering the transnational dimension of the programme, it is very difficult to attract the media attention at programme level in English language. On the contrary, both the NCPs and the DTP projects can more easily attract their regional/local media in their local languages whenever they organise a public event or some project result can be communicated.

In this sense, all NCPs and DTP projects are encouraged to consider the media as a main target group in all their communication activities, namely organising press conferences during their public events and producing and sending press releases to promote their results. The existing communication units of the different partner institutions should be involved in this task.

In order to attract media interest towards the programme, the NCPs and projects can establish links with regional and local media and supply them with high-quality news and updated material. One important technique to attract media attention is story-telling. Focusing the project results in one particular story of a beneficiary makes the achievements much more interesting and it increases the chances to have more media coverage. The DTP project representatives are trained in story-telling during the communication trainings planned throughout the programme implementation.

At programme level the envisaged media tools include:

- Organisation of press conferences around major events during the programme
- The setup 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 production of press releases to be translated and disseminated at national level by the NCPs
- Encouraging the NCPs to organise press conferences and media tours for visiting successful projects during their Info Days/national events related to the programme
- Production of publications and other materials 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 DTP region, such as examples of success stories, illustrated with photos and graphics, comparative analyses on specific issues and testimonials of beneficiaries

7. Visual identity and Joint branding

In order to ensure that publications and other printed and online material of the Danube Transnational Programme keep a consistent format that serves to communicate the link with the programme and the contribution of the EU, a corporate visual identity has been developed. The

corporate identity and the visual presence are very important to transmit a professional and quality image of the Programme from the very beginning of its implementation.

Moreover, there is a need to differentiate the DTP from other territorial cooperation programmes and from the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. Creating a strong identity of the programme is therefore of utmost importance for obtaining the best results and attracting quality projects.

At the same time, the DTP is part of the Interreg Joint Branding initiative aimed to give, through a more harmonised branding of European Territorial Cooperation 2014-2020, higher visibility to reach new partners, to communicate achievements and to foster capitalisation opportunities among stakeholders. The DTP logo shows the programme as part of the Interreg 'family' but still different with particular specificities, conveying the message that transnational cooperation represents a valid and valuable mean of enhancing regional development. A clear visual reference to the EU will be maintained on all materials due to the presence of the EU flag.

The Visual Identity Manual has as main purpose creating the programme's visual guidelines and thus enhancing the visibility and recognition of the programme, while supporting the DTP "brand". The Manual includes the programme logo and the layouts for use on the online and print materials, as well as a set of clear rules for using the identity elements, addressed to both the programme management bodies and the project.

Concerning the projects, and according to a DTP Programming Committee decision, they are invited to insert each project's acronym in the DTP-Interreg logo with no need to create their own logo. Just in the specific cases when a partnership would like to create a brand or a long-term image of the project, a specific project logo is allowed.

The common visual approach is not the only purpose of the Joint Branding initiative but just the beginning of a process of closer cooperation among the Interreg programmes, including the organisation of joint activities such as joint communication trainings. The DTP Communication Strategy supports the involvement of the Programme in those joint activities.

The slogan of the DTP programme, chosen and approved by the Programming Committee members, is "A stream of cooperation". The slogan is recommended to be used in all communication activities at both programme and project level along with the DTP logo.

8. Support to the Capitalisation Strategy and EUSDR

The DTP strongly believes in the advantage of producing joint messages about the added value of transnational cooperation (eventually including other Interreg programmes), therefore it supports joint communication initiatives when they bring added value to the programme communications and allow capitalisation opportunities to the projects. These initiatives are not a replacement for programme activities but a supplement.

These joint initiatives foster the Danube Capitalisation Strategy allowing projects from different programmes to meet or making them aware about similar projects of other programmes. The Danube Capitalisation Strategy aims at offering possibilities to find synergies to projects covering similar topics (within the DTP and beyond) and increasing the visibility and impact of the project results.

The Capitalisation Strategy is put in practice through several communication activities building on the experience of the South East Europe Capitalisation Strategy. The creation of clusters of projects and the joint activities are supported and promoted by the Programme in different ways, including the use of the general communication tools and the design of specific ones such as thematic events, an output library or specific publications. The tools will be adapted according to the needs of the groups of projects and the evolution of the Capitalisation Strategy.

The Joint Branding initiative in general, as well as the cooperation with the EUSDR, favours the capitalisation opportunities with other programmes. In this regards, the use in the DTP of some of the thematic icons and colours proposed by the Interreg Joint Branding manual foster the process, differentiating the groups of projects and linking them to other topic-related projects in other programmes.

Considering the complementarities DTP-EUSDR, the double source of communication may bring both confusion but also synergies. In this respect, a harmonised, clear and consistent communication is necessary to avoid the risks of confusion and to obtain the benefits of the synergies. The DTP will try to manage and coordinate the communication activities with the EUSDR and it will push for progress in implementing the EUSDR. Moreover, some information and communication measures included in the DTP Communication Strategy are used, among other objectives, to show the links as well as the differences between the programme and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

With EUSDR stakeholders playing important roles in the Programme's funding priority 4, the DTP Communication Strategy aim at making them aware of the priorities, their roles and relevant Programme rules. It will target them by providing easy-to-understand information, engaging closely with them as well as informing them about Programme activities. Concerning the phases of programme/call awareness and making the programme/projects' achievements visible, cooperation with other actors at macro-regional level is important when planning and implementing specific measures on those phases.

9. Monitoring and evaluation

The Communication Strategy is the framework for the programme communication for the whole programme period. The Strategy is streamlined to implementation through the annual work plan drawing detailed plans for how the Strategy objectives are to be fulfilled during the year in question. The annual planning allows for the implementation of the Strategy through coordinated milestones where evaluation of the communication offers possibilities for

adjustment and improving where needed. A list of communication activities at national level planned in each country is provided as well on annual basis by the NCPs.

Monitoring and evaluation of implementation and results are an important aspect of this Strategy. They are aimed at measuring implementation success and efficiency against the defined objectives, at ensuring better management of budgetary resources. Consequently, it serves for improving the communication tools and activities used.

Evaluation means assessing quality and quantity of activities, as well as harmonisation of activities with the annual communication plans. In the process of monitoring and evaluating the communication activities set in the Communication Strategy both quantitative and qualitative indicators are used. The evaluation is carried on a continuous basis, in order to allow possible corrections of the Strategy in due time. The Managing Authority as well as the National Contact Points and the lead partners are all involved in the evaluation of the communication actions.

EVALUATION 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 Social media platform users	Determine the user-friendliness of the website/social media platforms and / or get the users opinion on specific topics
Focus groups	Every two years	Project partners NCPs Others	Determine the efficiency of communication tools and methods used
Communication sections of evaluation	Every year (Annual Implementation Reports)Tbd	DTP Managing bodies	Determine the efficiency of communication tools and methods used and

reports	(external evaluations)		fulfilment of indicators
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RESULT AND IMPACT 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 Applicant event: when a call is launched Lead Partner seminars: after each call Thematic events: min 4 Communication trainings: at least biyearly Others, to be determined according to demand
	Number of events when the programme was presented	Min. 3/year
Publications impact	Number of publications printed / to be printed - Flyer - Poster - Brochures and programme catalogues	1800 400 To be determined
	Number of publications distributed - Newsletter (online)	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flyer - Poster - Brochures and programme catalogues 	<p>Function of the e-mailing list: at least 500 persons per issue</p> <p>Min 600 /year</p> <p>Min 25 / year</p> <p>To be determined – according to demand</p>
Promotional materials impact	<p>Number of materials printed/produced</p> <p>Number of materials distributed</p>	Variable, in function of materials and to cover the number of participants in the events
Website and social media impact	Number of unique visitors/users	Variable
Transparency	<p>Number of approved projects that fulfilled the information and communication requirements</p> <p>Number of communication plans at project level</p>	100%
Project communication impact	<p>Nr of information and promotional materials produced and distributed (brochures, flyers etc.)</p> <p>Nr of events organised</p> <p>Nr of projects advertised in the media</p>	At least 2 communication tools used per project, according to project needs and capabilities.
Media impact	<p>Number of articles about the DTP / DTP projects published in the media</p> <p>Reference to the programme in the published articles</p>	<p>Min. 2 articles/ year per country</p> <p>100%</p>

10. Budget

The communication activities of the programme which are carried out by the JS are financed by the programme Technical Assistance budget (TA) given that the activity is in line with the overall DTP Communication Strategy, part of the respective yearly Communication Plan, and the costs of the activity are planned in the respective yearly TA budget.

The budget for the communication activities are 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 is at its peak as it has to cover the needs for launching the programme and attract its first partners. This is also valid for the mid-term period (2017) and the end of the programme.

The budget structure is further detailed in Annex 1. 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. The communication activities are budgeted annually as a part of the programme budget for technical assistance. The Strategy will be defined in more detail through annual action plans including an estimate of budget resources.

NCPs as a general rule are financed by the hosting DTP 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.

ANNEX 1 - COMMUNICATION BUDGET

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
Communication	60,000	141,000	114,500	159,500	159,500	149,500	174,500	99,500	3,000	3,000	1,064,000
<i>Public events and seminars</i>	0	95,000	95,000	115,000	115,000	105,000	115,000	85,000	0	0	725,000
Annual conference	0	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	0	0	525,000
Info days for lead applicants, LP seminars, other trainings, etc	0	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	100,000
Thematic seminars, capitalisation workshops	0	0	0	20,000	20,000	20,000	30,000	10,000	0	0	100,000
<i>Communication tools</i>	60,000	46,000	19,500	44,500	44,500	44,500	59,500	14,500	3,000	3,000	339,000
Website development and maintenance	50,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	77,000
Publications (brochures, leaflets, project books, etc)	0	20,000	5,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	15,000	0	0	0	70,000
Visual identity and corporate design	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,000
Promotional materials (giveaways)		20,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	0	0	80,000
Audio-visual tools (programme video, etc)	0	0	0	20,000	20,000	20,000	30,000	0	0	0	90,000
Media relations (advertorials), other costs for communication		3,000	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	0	0	12,000

ANNEX 2 – INDICATIVE EVOLUTION OF COMMUNICATION DURING THE PROGRAMME LIFE

YEAR	PHASE	FOCUS ON	GENERAL DESCRIPTION	SPECIFIC TOOLS
2015	Preparation	Communication needs Development of information	Elaboration of programme documents Set up of a communication structure Assessment of communication needs Development of the Communication Strategy Tender calls for the DTP website, visual identity and kick-off event	Programme documents
	Launching	Raising awareness Promotion Mobilising stakeholders Distribution and accessibility of information	Communication structure in place Communication activities begin Major information and promotional materials and communication tools developed Launch of the programme (kick-off event and lead applicant seminar) Communication has a more general, informative, character Developing the communication network	Kick-off event and Lead applicant seminar Website and social media development Development of information materials (flyer, communication toolkit, visual identity manual, etc) NCP meeting
2016	Consolidation	Project communication Presenting the priorities	All communication tools are available and fully functional Increased interactivity between management and target groups Communication becomes more specialized	Events: lead partner seminars, communication training Project communication events Networking
2017				
2018	Review	Feedback Improving information	Assessing the efficiency and relevance of communication activities and tools	Focus groups Evaluation questionnaires
	Improvement	Adequacy of information	Establishing best practices	Reports

2019 - 2022	Adjustment	Fine tuning Quality of information	Improvement of communication tools, following received feedback Adjustment and specialisation of communication according to specific needs	Best practices Project catalogues
	Focus	Specialisation Tailored information	More targeted, specific communication	Thematic and capitalisation events
	Evaluation and dissemination	Dissemination of results Evaluation of communication Transparency Lessons learned	Define and disseminate the achievements of the Programme (projects, results). Contribute to the communication and capitalisation on project results and support the programme in the dissemination of outputs and results in the partner states. Evaluate the communication Prepare for the next programming period	Evaluation questionnaires Info-comm. Report Best practices Project catalogue/Results brochure Thematic and capitalisation events