



**Interreg - IPA CBC**  
**Bulgaria - Serbia**



# COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

INTERREG-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Programme  
2014–2020

Version 2.0

Prepared by the Joint Secretariat

Approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee on 17 August 2017

Sofia, Bulgaria, 2017

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER I – CONTEXT .....	4
Section 1 – Introduction .....	4
Section 2 – Lessons learned from programming period 2007-2013.....	4
Section 3 – Priority axes of the Programme.....	7
CHAPTER II – STRATEGY .....	9
Section 1 – Purpose and objectives.....	9
Section 2 – Target audience .....	10
Section 3 – Communication themes and Key messages .....	12
CHAPTER III – OPERATIONAL PLAN .....	14
Section 1 – General principles.....	14
Section 3 – Indicative Budget .....	22
Section 4 – Monitoring and evaluation .....	22

## List of abbreviations

<b>BG</b>	Republic of Bulgaria
<b>CoS</b>	Communication Strategy
<b>CBC</b>	Cross-border Cooperation
<b>DG REGIO</b>	General Directorate for Regional Policy (EC)
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>ETC</b>	European Territorial Cooperation
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>INTERREG</b>	Joint name used for European Territorial Cooperation Programmes
<b>IPA</b>	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
<b>JMC</b>	Joint Monitoring Committee
<b>JS</b>	Joint Secretariat (including branch office in Nis, Serbia)
<b>JTS</b>	Joint Technical Secretariat (relevant for the period 2007-2013)
<b>MA</b>	Managing Authority
<b>MRDPW</b>	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MA)
<b>NA</b>	National Authority (Serbian European Integration Office)
<b>RS</b>	Republic of Serbia
<b>SEIO</b>	Serbian European Integration Office

## **CHAPTER I—CONTEXT**

### **Section 1 - Introduction**

### **Section 2 - Lessons learned from programming period 2007-2013**

### **Section 3 - Priority axes of the Programme**

#### **Section 1 - Introduction**

The actors managing European funded programmes have maintained a high level of awareness regarding the importance of the information and communication tools in the past programming period. The need to further improve the existing level of public awareness regarding the ETC programmes led to the introduction of new communication and visibility notions, such as the initiative for harmonization of branding of ETC programmes. The objective of the initiative, adopted by the INTERREG-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Programme, is to achieve a higher visibility of European territorial cooperation 2014-2020, to reach new partners and to communicate achievements by using one brand, one name and one logo.

One of the most recent and promising communication tendencies is the use of the social media for information and visibility purposes, even by the more conservative actors such as governmental institutions. The social media have proven to be a very cost-effective tool for reaching a variety of target audiences, especially young people. The use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter is one of the most important new tools intended for promotion of the Programme among the general population. In addition, the Strategy envisions optimization of the more traditional communication and publicity practices such as the organization of the information seminars, production of promotional materials, and mass media campaigns.

The communication strategy outlines the key measures needed for increasing the awareness about the Programme while recognizing the need to develop communication tools to assist the beneficiaries as well as promoting the programme results. The strategy will outline the overall aim/s and specific objectives of the communication measures, the key target groups, the key messages to be conveyed and the strategic approach, together with the roles and responsibilities for the information and publicity activities, the evaluation criteria, indicators and measures, the financial overview, the timeframe and the necessary administrative support. In order to better understand the reasoning behind the new Communication strategy, one should first look at the communication results achieved during the previous programming period.

#### **Section 2 - Lessons learned from programming period 2007-2013**

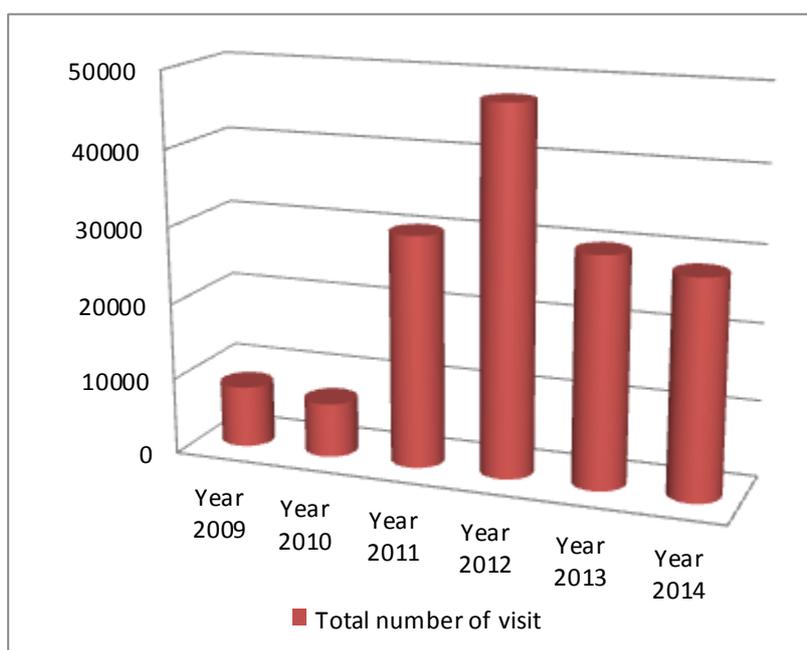
During the period 2007-2013 a variety of communication and publicity activities have been organized and performed accordingly: various types of promotional materials have been produced and disseminated to the target audience, the Programme web site has been redesigned and maintained, and trainings for beneficiaries have been successfully organized. The mass media campaign and the participation of different events greatly contributed to the successful promotion of Programme and the Calls for proposals. The Programme visual identity and graphics standards have been maintained and widely disseminated to all the Programme's stakeholders.

### Programme web site

The Programme web site was one of the main publicity tools used to promote the Programme and disseminate the relevant information. The web site includes comprehensive information on the Programme and its Priority axes, accompanied by all documents concerning Programme implementation. The web site has been regularly updated with relevant information on the Programme (events, news, documentation etc.). The web site also includes a tool for partners search with project partner database, thereby facilitating the integration among actors and promoting joint activities and ideas.

Cummulative data regarding the number of visits to the Programme web site suggests that in the periods when there are no new Calls for proposals and popular events such as the information days and contract awarding ceremonies, the public events such as regional consultations and the EC day celebrations can help improve the Programme visibility and maintain the relatively high number of visits to the Programme web site. The number of visits to the web site could also be increased by creating Programme profiles on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Programme social media pages can direct the visitors to the Programme web site for full information on particular posts.

*Number of visits to the Programme web site*



### Programme events

A variety of public events have been organized within the previous programming period including: Information days, training seminars, press conferences, contract awarding ceremonies, Open days for consultation, European Cooperation Day celebrations, and regional consultations/forums for preparation of the new programming period. All of the programme events were attended by numerous participants, at times even obliging the JTS experts to request obligatory registration by the interested parties and to limit the number of representatives to 1 person per institution.

During several training sessions and information days for beneficiaries the JTS experts conducted anonymous surveys among the participants in order to evaluate the quality of the events. The overall results have been primarily positive, and led to the conclusion that the Programme beneficiaries greatly appreciate detailed presentations in local languages regarding the Guidelines for Applicants, thematic presentations regarding the Project Implementation Manual, and practical workshops regarding the PRAG rules. Thus, it is highly recommendable that the same practice of organizing numerous training events in local languages is preserved in the programming period 2014-2020.

An improvement can be made regarding the organization of information days. In the previous programming period the information days were organized separately from the training seminar. The practice shows that the participants are much more interested in the subsequent training seminars for preparation of the project proposals. Thus, in the programming period 2014-2020 the information day events should be merged with the training seminars, with the first part of the events being formal, containing a general information about the Programme and the specific Call, and the second part tailored to the needs of the potential beneficiaries, containing detailed presentations about the Call rules and tips on how to prepare and implement a successful project.

### **Promotional materials**

The variety and quality of the promotional materials produced under the Programme has greatly improved over the previous years. The quality of the Programme brochures in particular has improved significantly because the JTS experts have managed to accumulate a significant collection of photos illustrating project results. Practice shows that the public appreciates promotional materials containing less text, written in concise and straightforward manner, and as many photos and illustrations as possible. Therefore, the promotional materials such as the compendiums with information about all the projects implemented under the two Calls, contain hundreds of photos collected from the projects.

One of the most effective types of promotional materials are the ones illustrating the project's issue/s from before and after its implementation. Thus, the JS experts should make as many photos as possible during the monitoring visits, in particular to the sites of investment projects. The project experts should also be encouraged to create and maintain a database containing photos from all the project activities and events, the best of which will be used for creation of the new project and Programme promotional materials.

The practice of distributing promotional gifts during Programme events has proven to be greatly appreciated by the participants. Items such as pens, calendars, bookmarks, coffee mugs and conference bags are used years and, if branded properly, can help promote the Programme as a whole. One of the most popular promotional gifts are the USB memory sticks. Since the price of the USBs has dropped significantly in the past years, the same can be produced and branded in quantities sufficient for distribution at the larger Programme events such as the Information days. In order to guarantee the durability of visual marking on promotional materials, items such as USBs, pens, and metal bookmarks should be branded using laser engraving method whenever possible.

The promotional props such as "quick" banners, table "skirt" banners, vinyl backdrop banners, and flags should be produced at the beginning of the programming period in order to be available for use at the very first public events. The promotional props should be made of sturdy materials and of sufficiently good quality as to be useful for long periods of time

(for the entire programming period, if possible). The promotional props produced in the previous programming period have been of very good quality and have been used for years at a variety of Programme events.

### **Mass-media campaign**

During the previous programming period most of the media campaigning was focused on the promotion of the two Calls for proposals and the relevant Programme events. The main media outlet for Programme promotion was the internet, while the individual projects also used the local press, radio and television stations for promotion of the project results. Programme beneficiaries, in close cooperation with the JTS Communication officer, have managed to successfully promote their projects, reaching the intended target groups with cost-effective promotional strategies.

The JTS representatives have given special attention to providing the local and regional media with up-to-date and most relevant Programme news, including the dates, purpose and location for all public Programme events. For each public event the JTS prepared a specific press-kit, containing the agenda of the event, Programme brochures and leaflets, an event press-release in local language, small promotional gifts (usually a pen and a notepad) and a Programme factsheet. The Programme factsheet contains up-to date Programme information such as number of projects completed and the amount of allocated funds, in a single-page format in order to facilitate the process of news creation and to prevent the technical mistakes in the media press releases. The same practice should be continuously applied in the 2014-2020 programming period, as well.

JTS communication officer and most of the projects have also relied on the local radio and television stations in the region for promotion of the programme/project events and results. Most of the local and regional radio and TV stations in the cross-border region provide inexpensive, but valuable advertising opportunities. In addition to airing advertisements, news and interviews related to the Programme/projects, many of the radio and TV stations also have web sites where they publish some of the content from the regular broadcasts. The web sites also contain open archives which allow for searching and reading the relevant news reports from preceding months, allowing for easier monitoring of the Programme relevant news.

### **Section 3 - Priority axes of the Programme**

All information and visibility actions planned within the Communication Strategy for the INTERREG-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Programme will aim to fulfil the programme priorities, as presented below:

- ◆ **Priority Axis 1: Sustainable Tourism**

#### Specific Objectives:

- **Tourist Attractiveness:** Supporting the development of competitive tourist attractions achieved through cooperation, thus contributing to the diversification of tourist product(s) in the cross-border region;

- **Cross-border Touristic Product:** Capturing economic benefits from development of natural and cultural heritage in the border area through creating common cross-border touristic destination(s);
- **People-To-People Networking:** Capitalizing the effect of cultural, historical and natural heritage tourism on border communities through common actions.

- ◆ **Priority Axis 2: Youth**

Specific Objectives:

- **Skills & Entrepreneurship:** Supporting the development of attractive environment for advancement of young people in the border region achieved through cooperation;
- **People-to-People Networking:** Promoting cooperation initiatives for and with young people, thus enhancing mobility of young people across borders.

- ◆ **Priority Axis 3: Environment**

Specific Objectives:

- **Joint Risk Management:** Preventing and mitigating the consequences of natural and man-made cross-border disasters;
- **Nature Protection:** Promoting and enhancing the utilization of common natural resources, as well as stimulating nature protection in the Programme area, through joint initiatives across the border.

- ◆ **Priority Axis 4: Technical Assistance**

## CHAPTER II—STRATEGY

### Section 1 - Purpose and objectives

### Section 2 - Target audience

### Section 3 - Communication themes and Key messages

### Section 1 - Purpose and objectives

#### *Purpose*

The Communication Strategy is focused on two main directions: awareness-raising and absorption capacity. Therefore, the purpose of the Communication Strategy can be defined as follows:

- To highlight the role of the EU and to ensure that assistance from the IPA Funds is transparent by proactively disseminating information and providing platforms that stimulate exchanges of experience in order to raise the awareness with the general public;
- To create the premises for high absorption of EU funds in the eligible area of the Programme by ensuring that all relevant information reaches the beneficiaries.

In this respect, all the information and communication materials will be coordinated as appropriate between the relevant Programme institutions, especially MA, NA and JS. The key Programme messages will be disseminated through all the available communication channels of the involved institutions and partnering organizations.

#### *Objectives*

In order to achieve its purpose, the strategy sets out the following specific objectives:

#### **General objectives**

- **To support the successful implementation** of the Programme by ensuring an effective communication system (measures, channels, targeted messages to all identified targets);
- **To increase public awareness** concerning the Programme aims, priorities, financial support provided, estimated economic and social impact on regional development;
- **To increase the knowledge** of the potential beneficiaries on the financing opportunities offered by the Programme, eligibility criteria and selection mechanism for the applications submitted;
- **To ensure transparency** in the use of the EU funds and thus increase the level of trust of the general public in the institutions managing the INTERREG-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Programme.
- **To increase the visibility** of the INTERREG-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Programme and of the MA, NA and JS, at national and regional level;

### Specific objectives

- **To ensure the efficient use of the Programme funds**, by conveying information on the domains financed and the financing conditions to all target groups;
- **To clearly explain all the requirements, eligibility conditions and procedures** that potential beneficiaries need to follow in order to obtain financing;
- **To encourage all potential beneficiaries to get to know and include the horizontal dimensions** in the projects submitted for financing: partnership and multi-level governance, sustainable development, promoting equality between men and women and non-discrimination, accessibility, addressing demographic changes, climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- **To inform and train the implementing bodies;**
- **To ensure the visibility of the Programme**, at local and national level:
  - **create the visual identity of the Programme** and make sure all information and publicity activities of the direct beneficiaries comply to the Communication and Visibility guidelines;
  - **identify and disseminate success projects and good practices** examples;
- **To develop and maintain effective press relations**, in order to ensure the dissemination of the programme requirements, estimated impact and transparency;
- **To develop cooperation and partnership relations** with the implementing authorities and all relevant institutions, at national and European level;
- **To ensure the visibility of the MA** as the managing body of the Programme;
- **To ensure the visibility of the NA** as the counterpart for the Managing Authority with the coordination role on the territory of Republic of Serbia;
- **To report to the general public, and annually to the Joint Monitoring Committee and to the European Commission;**
- **To ensure exchange of knowledge and good practices in communication**, by actively participating in the network of the national communicators team and the colleagues from the other ETC programmes, through participation in the INTERACT communication seminars and other networking and training events.

### Section 2 Target audience

Communication activities should be primarily directed to:

- a) Potential applicants — to ensure that they are properly and timely informed about the Programme, Calls for project proposals and simultaneously to make sure that they understand the administrative process and implementation mechanism;
- b) Beneficiaries — to ensure that all the relevant and necessary information in the implementation process are known and respected;
- c) General public — of both countries, and especially within the cross-border region, to learn about the Programme and project results.

Information about the programme and the projects results will also be provided to institutions involved in policy-making in fields related to priorities of the Programme, stakeholders.

### **Primary target region — Cross-border area**

The eligible cross-border co-operation area is determined in accordance with the IPA II rules set out in Regulation 231/2014 where only NUTS III regions (or respective equivalents) are eligible for cross-border co-operation programmes. In Bulgaria the corresponding NUTS III administrative-territorial units are the districts established by the Law on the Administrative Territorial System in Republic of Bulgaria.

The counties/districts that are eligible under the Programme are:

**In Bulgaria:** Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Sofia District (not including Sofia city), Pernik, and Kyustendil;

**In Serbia:** Bor, Zajecar, Toplica, Nisava, Pirot, Jablanica, and Pcinja.

Special attention should be given to promotion of the Programme in the two regions newly introduced to the Programme cross-border area: Vratsa in Bulgaria and Toplica in Serbia. People from the Vratsa region have had an opportunity to participate in the CBC Programme Romania-Bulgaria in the previous programming period. However, population of the Toplica region does not have any previous experience with cross-border programmes. Thus, the promotional campaigns should, whenever possible, include promotional events in the two new regions and ensure that the regional media are notified about the relevant Programme events and the Calls for project proposals.

- **The target groups** of the Communication Strategy are as follows:
- **Beneficiaries, potential and direct:** public authorities and institutions, NGOs, public sector and community institutions and organizations, etc. throughout the Programme area;
- **Stakeholders - governmental/ non-governmental actors:** decentralized bodies in Bulgaria and Serbia relevant to the bordering regions, national, regional and local authorities and administrations, municipalities, county councils, district administrations, NGOs, trade associations of the border regions, women and youth organizations, cross-border associations, cultural, research and scientific organizations, organizations representing economic and social interests, stakeholders of mainstream programmes;
- **Internal public:** the staff of the management bodies of the Programme (Managing Authority, Joint Secretariat, National Authority, Audit Authority, First Level Control Unit), the members and observers of the Joint Monitoring Committee;
- **Media - National/ regional/ local media from both countries;**
- **European Union's institutions and bodies:** European Commission (DG REGIO), European Economic and Social Committee, Committee of the Regions, European Court of Auditors, Representation of the European Commission in Bulgaria and Serbia, European Parliament;
- **General public;**
- **Support groups (communication partners – according to Regulation 1303/2013)**

- The Information Centers EUROPE DIRECT and the Districts Information Points managed by the Council of Ministers in Bulgaria;
- The network of communicators on European funds in both countries.
- The information bureaus of the European Parliament in both countries.



### Section 3 – Communication themes and Key messages

The **communication themes** have been established following each target group:

- **Potential beneficiaries:** funding opportunities available through the Programme in both countries, information on completing and submitting the applications, criteria for evaluation and selection of projects, project preparation, transparent allocation, horizontal dimensions;
- **Direct beneficiaries:** the next steps in the implementation of a project, the rights and obligations of the beneficiaries, compliance to information and publicity requirements in accordance with the Communication and Visibility Manual of the Programme, horizontal dimensions;
- **Other stakeholders - governmental/non-governmental actors:** funding opportunities available through the Programme in both countries, information on

completing and submitting the applications, criteria for evaluation and selection of projects, project preparation, transparent allocation, horizontal dimensions;

- **European Union's institutions and bodies:** the evolution of the Programme implementation: launching, contracting, payments, modifications needs, evaluation, impact on the social and economic development of the eligible areas;
- **National/ regional/local media from both countries:** the potential and real impact of the funding allocated to the eligible areas of the Programme - economic and social development, reducing disparities in development compared to other regions, the transparency of the allocation of funds, evaluation and selection criteria, the results of projects implementation, success stories, the horizontal dimensions, people are the final beneficiaries of investments financed from the Programme;
- **General public:** territorial and cross border cooperation in the context of regional development policy, the role of the European Union and the impact of the financial support offered through the programme, the eligible area and priorities, transparency in the allocation of the funds, the economic impact of the projects and the role of the programme in job creation, the horizontal dimensions of the programme;
- **Internal public:** see European Union's institutions and bodies + changes in the programme (budget, procedures etc.) + changes in the MA and the European institutions (personnel, configuration etc.);

**Key messages:**

I. European Union and the governments of Bulgaria and Serbia support the development of the cross-border area in order to reduce disparities and to promote the good relations between both neighbouring countries. The areas eligible for the Programme will benefit from real opportunities for rapid development.

II. The Programme is an important factor for economic and social development of both countries.

III. The Programme is managed in an efficient and transparent way.

## CHAPTER III OPERATIONAL PLAN

### Section 1 - General principles

#### *Flexibility*

The Programme potential applicants/beneficiaries and addressees belong to different typologies and are quite heterogeneous; therefore, a wide variety of means of communication and communication channels will be used in order to inform a public as large as possible.

#### *Synergy with other Programmes*

The information and communication activities will be carried out, whenever possible, in synergy and collaboration with other Programmes and initiatives concerning the same area, in order to amplify their effects and foster a united image of interventions. For example, celebration of the European Cooperation Day can be made in cooperation with the *Bulgaria - the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA Cross-Border Programme*, and/or *INTERREG V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme*. Both of these programmes share joint districts with the IPA II Cross-border cooperation Programme Bulgaria-Serbia, where joint celebrations can be organized for maximizing the visibility effect and demonstrating in practice the principle of cooperation. Another joint initiative for cooperation with the other programmes is the planned CBC conference to be organized in Sofia on annual basis, which will gather all the CBC programmes in which Republic of Bulgaria participates. Similar conference is organized in Belgrade on a bi-annual basis, at which the Bulgaria-Serbia Programme has been represented in the previous programming period, and should continue to be a part of in the future as well.

#### *Important elements*

The elements of the highest importance, which have been taken into consideration for the programming and implementation of the strategic communication measures, are:

1. The use of the key messages tailored to draw attention so that target audience will remember them;
2. The use of various communication channels, adapted to the needs of each target group – see below;
3. The use of the communication tools developed by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works: web site, newsletter, social media channels, publications, etc. - in synergy with the communication measures included in this Strategy, to convey information to a larger audience beside the target groups of the Programme;
4. Continuous and consistent dissemination of information over a sustained period of time, maintaining the interest of the target group;
5. The development of key messages, in order to inform and motivate potential beneficiaries to take action;
6. The permanent monitoring and the periodic evaluation of the information and publicity measures;

7. The administration of the effort by a team of dedicated experts, working together in close coordination with the JS Communication Officer.

Steps shall be taken, at the time of the launch of the Programme and of the main phases of implementation, to alert the regional and local media as appropriate; this will include press conferences, press releases, articles, supplements in the most suitable newspapers and site visits. Other means of information and communication will also be used such as the Programme web site, publications describing successful projects and project exhibitions to highlight the best practice, workshops, launching/closing event.

#### *The horizontal themes*

The horizontal themes (equal opportunities – for women and disadvantaged, disabled, ethnic or minority groups, sustainable development, accessibility, etc.) have a defining role in developing and implementing the CoS. In all communication and information activities, the following principles must be taken into consideration:

1. Promoting equality between men and women and non-discrimination: prevent any discrimination during the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the communication strategy;
2. Sustainable development: ensuring that the chosen information and communication measures are the most resource-efficient and sustainable options; avoiding measures and tools that may have a significant negative environmental or climate impact; increasing the use of green public procurement. Thus, the communication strategy will encourage the use of electronic services for the delivery of the information and promotional materials to increase access to information and reduce printing costs.
3. Accessibility: ensuring equal access to the information and communication measures and tools to all citizens, including persons with special needs and aging persons. The web site shall be developed as to be accessible to people with disabilities.

**OVERVIEW: TARGET GROUPS/ COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY MEASURES**

Communication and Publicity Measures / Tools	TARGET GROUPS						
	Beneficiaries	Stakeholders	Internal	Media	EU	General public	Support groups
1. Programme web site	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. MIS System	✓		✓		✓		
3. Social Media	✓		✓	✓		✓	
4. Mainstream Media	✓					✓	✓
5. Info days and seminars	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
6. Press conferences	✓			✓		✓	
7. EC Day celebrations	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
8. Project Compendiums		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
9. Manuals and guidelines	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
10. Promotional props	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
11. Promotional gifts	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
12. E-mails / mailing lists	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13. Phone calls / fax messages	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14. Official letters	✓	✓			✓		✓
15. Meetings	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
16. Exhibitions / Fairs	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

ACTION PLAN: COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY MEASURES / TOOLS		
No	Action related to each measure / tool	Responsible body
1.	<p><b>Programme web site: <a href="http://www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu">www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu</a></b></p> <p>The new web site should retain the basic main structure as the one from the previous programming period in order to help the numerous present and past beneficiaries to find the required information. Thus, the most important sections such as “Calls for proposals”, “project implementation documents” and “project partner database” will be located on the same place as on the previous Programme web site;</p> <p>The Programme web site will include (but not be limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General information about the Programme: regulations, institutional framework, official documents, Programme management institutions, implementation system and procedures;</li> <li>• Timely information about the Calls for project proposals and all the relevant documents: Guidelines for applicants, Application form, Supporting documents, etc.;</li> <li>• Partner search database with filters for Calls, regions, and Priority axes;</li> <li>• A projects database with at least: project title, partners, project budget;</li> <li>• Information on the activity of the Joint Monitoring Committee and other relevant committees as soon as they become available to public;</li> <li>• Information for mass media – press releases, announcements, news, events, awareness campaigns, photo and video gallery, contact person;</li> <li>• Information about the relevant Programme/projects tender procedures;</li> <li>• Links to other relevant institutional and partnering organizations’ web sites, and Programme social media pages;</li> <li>• An section/button for Irregularity signals;</li> <li>• A secured section for JMC members, containing all relevant documents related to the written procedures;</li> <li>• Contacts of the MA, NA, and JS representatives.</li> <li>• Beneficiaries’ portal, which will allow the beneficiaries to upload the documents such as the Project Progress Report</li> </ul>	MA, NA, JS

ACTION PLAN: COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY MEASURES / TOOLS		
No	Action related to each measure / tool	Responsible body
	in electronic format for the Joint Secretariat project management experts to review, comment on, and, when appropriate, approve. Other communication and reporting processes might also be included in the beneficiaries' portal, in order to maximise the efficiency of Programme/project implementation, and, at the same time minimize the use of paper and the environmental footprint of the Programme.	
2.	<p><b>MIS System</b></p> <p>Will actively be used by the MA, NA, JS, and the other relevant institutions and bodies. The system will include detailed information about all the projects, including: application form information, supporting documents, project procurements plans, project progress reports, etc. The MIS system should be linked with and share relevant information with other databases and web sites such as the Programme web site and the KEEP database (<a href="http://www.keep.eu">http://www.keep.eu</a>).</p>	MA, NA, JS
3.	<p><b>Social Media pages</b></p> <p>Official <b>Facebook and Twitter pages</b> of the Programme shall be maintained and updated on a regular basis. The pages shall ensure connection with the general public and will be actively used for promotion of the Programme events.</p>	JS
4	<p><b>Mainstream media</b></p> <p>The media campaign will concentrate on the promotion of the Programme, dissemination of information and news concerning the financing opportunities, availability of the financial assistance and ways to access it, with the purpose of attracting potential beneficiaries towards the more in-depth information sources available.</p> <p><b>Print media campaign:</b> The MA, NA and JS will initiate and maintain close relations with the press, especially in terms of news feeding. Every Call for proposals will be advertised in the press.</p> <p><b>TV and radio Campaign:</b> It is advisable that at least one promotional video is developed for promotion of the Programme during the programming period. The promotional video should aim to advertise concrete Programme/project results but it can also be used for promotion of specific Calls for proposals. The Radio advertisements can be used for promotion of Calls for proposals and the European Cooperation day. Both TV and Radio advertisements should be aired during the primetime airing segments whenever possible.</p>	MA, NA, JS

ACTION PLAN: COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY MEASURES / TOOLS		
No	Action related to each measure / tool	Responsible body
5.	<p><b>Info days and seminars</b></p> <p><b>Info-days:</b> JS/ communication officer will organise the promotion activities. The purpose of such events is dissemination of information concerning the Programme content, priorities and requirements, as well as for explanation of the procedures for submission of proposals, evaluation of proposals and any other useful information for the general public and potential applicants.</p> <p><b>Thematic seminars/ workshops</b> for the potential beneficiaries will concentrate on addressing the information needs of the potential applicants/beneficiaries regarding the financial assistance provided within the Programme. They will be taught how to generate projects, how to find partners and how to develop eligible projects by taking into consideration the specific IPA rules.</p>	MA, NA, JS
6.	<p><b>Press conferences</b></p> <p>Press conferences could be organized both by the MA and the NA on the approval of the Programme and on the occasion of any milestone. The purpose of the press conferences is to spread the Programme news, make announcements, and bring to public attention major events like Programme launch or closing.</p>	MA, NA, JS
7	<p><b>EC Day celebrations</b></p> <p>The European Cooperation Day initiative was started by the INTERACT II Programme in 2011. The goal of the campaign was to highlight the role of cooperation across borders in the European Union and with its neighbours. INTERREG-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Programme shall participate with a specific Programme EC Day events for as long as the initiative is ongoing. Beneficiaries should be also be encouraged to take part in the EC Day celebrations.</p>	MA, NA, JS

ACTION PLAN: COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY MEASURES / TOOLS		
No	Action related to each measure / tool	Responsible body
8.	<p><b>Project Compendiums</b></p> <p>All projects financed under a Call for proposals shall be featured in a single printed Compendium. The compendium will contain the basic project information about all the financed projects and as many illustration as possible, depicting project activities and results. An electronic version of the Compendium can be published on the Programme web site.</p>	MA, NA, JS
9.	<p><b>Manuals and guidelines</b></p> <p>Specific Programme manuals will be developed in order to assist the beneficiaries during the application and the implementation processes. The manuals and guidelines will be created and distributed primarily in electronic format, due to the fast evolving nature of the information presented. All relevant manuals should be made available on the Programme web site, but can also be distributed through e-mail.</p>	MA, NA, JS
10.	<p><b>Promotional props</b></p> <p>Promotional banners and flags should be developed at the beginning of the programming period and be used for visibility purposes during the Programme public events. The outdoor events may limit the possibility for using of traditional props. In such cases, alternative visibility tactics can be applied, such as multimedia projections of the visibility symbols, the use of special vinyl banners, etc.</p>	JS
11.	<p><b>Promotional gifts</b></p> <p>A wide range of promotional gifts / gadgets will be produced and distributed, primarily during public events. The promotional gifts may include (but not limited to): pens, bags, folders, notebooks, calendars, bookmarks, USBs, T-shirts, backpacks, post-it, stickers, etc.</p>	MA, NA, JS
12.	<p><b>E-mails / mailing lists</b></p> <p>Contact data will be collected at the Programme events such as Information days and Partner Search Forums to be used for creation of specific mailing lists, as deemed appropriate by the JS. Additional mailing lists will be made by the JS with the contacts of the Programme beneficiaries. The beneficiaries will be notified by e-mail about the most important information</p>	JS

ACTION PLAN: COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY MEASURES / TOOLS		
No	Action related to each measure / tool	Responsible body
	regarding the Programme issues. Frequent group e-mailing should be avoided in order to avoid the issue of spamming.	
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>Phone calls / fax messages</b></p> <p>Telephone calls and fax messages will be used as complementary form of communication with the beneficiaries and other target groups, when and if deemed appropriate by the MA, NA and JS. JS will make a contacts database including all the basic contact information for each project partners, under each Call for proposals. The contact database will be distributed internally between the managing bodies and will be updated on a regular basis.</p>	MA, NA, JS
<b>14.</b>	<p><b>Official letters</b></p> <p>Official letters will be used for a complementary formal type of communication, as deemed appropriate by the MA, NA and JS. Official letters can be sent using regular mail services as well as through fax and, if necessary, by e-mail (scanned).</p>	MA, NA, JS
<b>15.</b>	<p><b>Meetings</b></p> <p>Official meeting between the Programme management structures should be held on a regular basis. MA, NA and JS can organize meetings to familiarize with other colleagues involved in implementation of the Programme and activities they perform or with representatives of other relevant European Territorial Cooperation Programmes.</p> <p>The meetings with beneficiaries will focus on addressing specific information needs and project implementation issues. The JS should keep a record of all the meetings with beneficiaries held and, if necessary prepare Minutes of the meeting.</p>	MA, NA, JS
<b>16.</b>	<p><b>Exhibitions / Fairs</b></p> <p>Programme should be represented at the relevant exhibitions and fairs, displaying Programme/project results. Programme visibility props should be displayed and information materials/gifts distributed as deemed appropriate.</p>	MA, NA, JS

**Section 3 Indicative Budget**

ACTIVITY	EURO
<b>1. Information</b>	<b>€ 23 000,00</b>
1.1. Web site, social media 1.2. Publications (hard copy, online publications, CDs, DVDs)	
<b>2. Promotion</b>	<b>€ 161 800,00</b>
2.1. Publicity campaign: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Online campaign: paid advertisements, banners;</i></li> <li>• <i>Press campaign: advertisements, inserts, paid news reports;</i></li> <li>• <i>Radio campaign: spots producing + buying broadcast time.</i></li> </ul> 2.2 Organizing promotional events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Information days, conferences, seminars;</i></li> <li>• <i>European Cooperation Day;</i></li> <li>• <i>Other events: events for the press.</i></li> </ul> 2.3 Promotional materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>• <i>Promotional props: banners, flags;</i></li> <li>• <i>Promotional gifts: pens, notebooks, USBs, calendars, bags.</i></li> </ul>	
<b>3. Training</b>	<b>€ 24 200,00</b>
3.1. Thematic meetings for the applicants and beneficiaries 3.2. Seminars and trainings organised for the TA beneficiaries	
<b>4. Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	
4.1 Polls, focus groups, studies, interviews based on questionnaires 4.2 Press monitoring	<b>€ 10 000,00</b>
<b>5. Incidentals</b>	
5.1 Participation in the external promotional events, fairs and exhibitions 5.2. Others	<b>€ 10 000,00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€ 229 000,00</b>

**Section 4 – Implementation, Monitoring and evaluation**

The Managing Authority (MA) is responsible for the implementation of the communication strategy at central level in coordination with NA. In line with Article 38 of the Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 and Article 49 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, MA must inform, on an annual basis, the European Commission on the interventions implemented. In tasks referring to the information and publicity activities the Managing Authority is assisted by the JS (particularly by the Communication officer).

The Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) will consider the Annual Implementation Report which must contain a section on information and publicity. DG “Territorial Cooperation Management” as Managing Authority will provide the JMC with information on the quality and effectiveness of the publicity and information measures, supported by suitable evidence. The strategy will be revised if necessary and the revised version will be approved by the JMC.

INDICATORS				
IN RELATION TO	MEASURE/ACTIVITY	TIMING	OUTPUT, RESULT and IMPACT INDICATORS	QUANTITY
Programme web site	Web site functionality	Continuously	<u>Number</u> of web site visits	min. 5000 per year, on average
			<u>Increase</u> in the number of web site visits – to be counted on annual basis, only in years with a new Call for proposals (please see lessons learned)	min 10 % more than compared to the number of visits from the last year without new Call
	Partners' search facility	Permanently on the web site and updated when necessary	<u>Number</u> of new potential PPs in the database	min 20 per Call
Promotional materials				
	Compendiums	For each Call	<u>Number</u> of compendiums produced	min. 1 per Call
			<u>Number</u> of brochures, published on the Programme website	min 1 per Call
	Other promotional materials(gadgets)	Continuously	<u>Number</u> of materials prepared for Promotion of the Programme	min. 1000
<u>Number</u> of materials distributed			Min 80% of the materials produced	

<b>Information seminars</b>	Info-days	For every Call	<u>Number</u> of organizations/bodies attending	min. 40 per event
	Thematic seminars/ workshops	For every Call	<u>Number</u> of organizations/bodies attending	min. 20 per event
<b>Mass media campaign</b>	Print media campaign	Continuously	<u>Number</u> of newspapers publishing issue(s) concerning the Programme	min. 2 per year
	Press conferences	After official events	<u>Number</u> of press conferences held	min. 2 for the duration of the Programme
	Press releases	After official events	<u>Number</u> of press releases published	min. 1 per Call
	Press Advertisements	For every Call	<u>Number</u> of press advertisements published	min. 2 per Call
	Internet media advertisements	Continuously	Number of advertisements/eBanners	min. 1 per year
	Number of subscribers to the e-Newsletter section	Continuously	Number of new e-Newsletters subscribers	min. 100
	Participation in regional initiatives and fora	Continuously	Number of events	min. 1 per year
	Radio Campaign	For every Call	<u>Number</u> of radio advertisements aired	min. 1 for the duration of the Programme
<b>Active training</b>	Increasing the competence of the potential beneficiaries	For every Call	<u>Percentage</u> of submitted projects that pass the minimum threshold of 65 points	min 50% of all project proposals received

	Strengthening the capacity of the MA/NA/JTS through training/seminars	Depending on INTERACT events and other initiatives	Number of participants	min 50% out of the total staff
	Increasing the availability and quality of the information disseminated to the public	Continuously	Increase in the number of project proposals submitted for the last Call for Proposals in comparison to the number of projects submitted for the preceding Call for Proposals, but having in mind the available funding.	min. 2%
			Percentage of submitted projects whose final assessment score that pass the minimum threshold of 65 points	min 50% out of the total number of projects submitted for the Call in question
	Training of Beneficiaries	After completion of grant awarding procedures	Number of participants	min. 20
	Training session for beneficiaries	Per Call	Number of trainings	min. 1
	External assessors trained	Per Call	Number of participants	min 10
	Training sessions for External assessors	Per Call	Number of trainings	min 1

\* The baseline at start of the Programme for all indicators is 0 (zero) and will be monitored on an annual basis