

Interreg



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IPA Romania - Serbia

Communication Plan for 2023 Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme



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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

List of acronyms 3

1. Rationale 4

2. Purpose of the Annual Communication Plan for 2023..... 5

3. Specific Objectives of the Annual Communication Plan for 2023 5

4. Indicative communication actions for 2023 6

5. Monitoring and evaluation 8

6. Budget for 2023..... 10

List of acronyms

MA	Managing Authority
JSA	Antenna of the Joint Secretariat, Zrenjanin
CS	Communication Strategy
EU	European Union
JS	Joint Secretariat
ACoP	Annual Communication plan
MDPWA	Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration
NA-MEI	National Authority - Ministry of European Integration, Government of the Republic of Serbia
RO-RS	Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme
ROCBC-TM	Regional Office for Cross-border Cooperation-Timisoara

1. Rationale

The Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme is funded by the European Union under the framework of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) - Cross-border Component and co-financed by the Partner States in the Programme: Romania and Serbia. The Programme focuses on increasing the overall competitiveness of the economy in the Romania-Serbia border area and on the improvement of the quality of life for the border communities in both countries.

The Annual Communication plan (ACoP) of the RO-RS Programme is implemented under the framework of the Communication Strategy (CS). The implementation of the ACoP will be ensured by the Managing Authority (Romanian Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration), the Serbian National Authority, the Joint Secretariat within the ROCBC-TM and the Antenna of the Joint Secretariat. The purpose of the ACoP is to ensure the visibility of the RO-RS Programme and to facilitate the sharing of ideas and assets, under the framework of the European Union, for the year 2023. Information and visibility activities are performed in line with relevant European and national legislation.

During the year 2023, information and publicity activities under the programme will be focused on setting a coherent communication policy, on promoting the programme and its specific objectives, informing the general public about the role of the European Union in the programme and - informing and assisting the potential beneficiaries regarding the financing opportunities and requirements for submitting the projects proposals for the programme's calls for proposals. The programme's annual Communication Plan for 2023, as well as the framework of the information and visibility activities, will be adopted by the Monitoring Committee and are the result of an extensive consultation process which involved all the programme management bodies.

Several communication measures and actions will be undertaken by the Programme implementing bodies during 2023, especially at regional and local level in the Romanian and Serbian programme area. In general, in this implementation phase great emphasis will be put on communication activities, geared towards potential beneficiaries of the Programme (including newcomers) for the first call for proposals and the general public from the Programme area.

Taking into consideration the possible unforeseen events (e.g.: declared state of emergency, health crisis, force majeure, any other cases that impede the events to be organised), and strong commitment of programme bodies to promote the principles of green communication and to decrease the carbon footprint at the level of the programme implementation, **the main communication tools to be used during 2023 will be mainly online/ hybrid and other digital communication instruments, such as: publications newsletters, press releases, promotional materials published on programme website and social media platforms.**

As a condition for a coherent and integrated publicity, the programme will develop its Visual Identity Manual under the framework of a Common Branding Manual of EU and Interreg programmes.

2. Purpose of the Annual Communication Plan for 2023

The overall objective of this annual Communication Plan is to create the premises for better informed target groups of the programme, to communicate and assure greater transparency and information regarding the first call for proposals, including on information on large infrastructure and strategic importance projects.

All such actions are financed under the Technical Assistance budget. Its purpose is to ensure the visibility and awareness of the RO-RS Programme and it is meant to ensure the awareness regarding the results achieved through the projects financed by the Programme and of the added value provided under the framework of the RO-RS Programme.

The ACoP is also meant to provide support in highlighting the role of the European Union regarding the establishment and perspectives derived from the RO-RS Programme and to ensure the transparent and unbiased communication regarding the implementation of the RO-RS Programme.

Within the ACoP the following indicative activities could be supported (the list is not exhaustive):

- Development of an online information framework regarding the RO-RS Programme for all relevant actors (current official Programme documents, applicant guide, frequently asked questions (FAQ), Visual Identity Manual and communication templates, useful tools and guidelines developed for helping potential applicants) - posting on the Programme`s website;
- Organising physical, online or hybrid meetings:
- Awareness-raising events and conferences for promoting the new projects financed under the first call for proposals and large infrastructure and strategic importance projects;
- Workshops will be organized after the finalizing the evaluation of the submitted applications for helping beneficiaries from the first call for proposals to implement the projects. Thematic training sessions will be organized in particular for financial management and control but, also, for reporting on JeMS, applying specific rules on public procurement procedures, specific rules for communication activities.
- Workshops for rejected applications will be organized after the finalizing the evaluation of the submitted applications.
- The programme bodies will organise a series of events dedicated to potential applicants with the purpose of offering support to potential beneficiaries in preparing their project idea and application, including whenever possible, workshops with the aim of informing and educating potential beneficiaries with no experience with the projects, about the Programme and the way it works before launching the second call for proposals.

3. Specific Objectives of the Annual Communication Plan for 2023

In accordance with the general and specific objectives established by CS, during 2023, the following specific objectives will be considered:

General Objective	Specific Objective	Target Groups
G01 - To support the successful implementation of the programme by ensuring an effective communication system (result indicators, channels, targeted messages to all identified targets groups);	S02 - To create a cooperation community with the beneficiaries to deliver encouraging support during project implementation ensuring efficient implementation, including communication and capitalisation of results;	Beneficiaries; Implementing bodies Stakeholders; EU institutions and bodies
G02 - 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;	S01 - To make the programme known, attractive and easily approachable to potential applicants of all Policy Objectives of the programme and in all regions of the programme area;	Potential beneficiaries of the programme: local and regional public authorities, NGOs, universities, research institutes, etc.; Stakeholders;
G03 -To increase public awareness concerning the programme axes and specific objectives, EU financial support positive impact on the citizens from programme area;	S03-To promote the benefits of cross border cooperation and positive impact of EU funds widely in the programme area and beyond.	General Public Stakeholders;

4. Indicative communication actions for 2023

No	Measure	Action	Responsible Body	Term of delivery
1.	Information	1. Website -Weekly maintenance and update of the dedicated website and e-mail address of the cross-border programme (www.romania-serbia.net and romania-serbia@mdlpa.ro).	MA, JS	Permanent
		2. Online Newsletter Under the framework of the MDPWA newsletter Inforegional in English and RO Inforegional in Romanian, the programme will disseminate relevant information to target audiences.	MA, JS	Periodically

	<p>JS could publish electronic newsletters for the applicants and stakeholders from programme area with relevant information</p>		
	<p>3. Events - physical, online or hybrid (depending on the specificity of the event and on the possible travel restrictions) Specifically targeted events shall be organized as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 Workshops for potential Beneficiaries/Partners (including newcomers) Pozarevac, Serbia and Timisoara, Romania (January-February 2023); - Online training for members of the MC (Rules of procedures and attributions) (trimester 3, 2023) - European Cooperation Day (September 2023) -Timisoara, Romania; - Online training sessions on public procurement procedures for beneficiaries/Partners; - Online thematic training sessions (in particular for financial management and control but, also, for reporting on JeMS, applying specific rules for communication activities) for Beneficiaries/Partners; - 2 online workshops for rejected applications; <p><i>These online events will be organised depending on the finalisation of the evaluation process of the application forms.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online events dedicated to potential applicants with the purpose of offering support to potential beneficiaries in preparing their project idea and application, including whenever possible, workshops with the aim of informing and educating 	MA, JS, NA, LIP and SIP beneficiari es	2023

		<p>potential beneficiaries with no experience with the projects, about the Programme and the way it works before launching the second call for proposals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information events for promoting the programme and the projects' results from previous period; - communication events promoting European Year of Skills 2023: - Support for LIP and SIP beneficiaries on organising the communication events. 		
2	Promotion and awareness	<p>1. Online information materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementing bodies will develop and provide useful information regarding the new programme: programme fiche, presentation of specific objectives, specific criteria and rules for submitting the projects proposals for the first call for proposals, estimated calendar for launching the call, applicant guide and communication templates on programme website and social media platforms for potential applicants and general public. 	MA, JS, NA	Periodically
3	Monitoring and evaluation of the ACoP	<p>1. Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information & publicity proceedings of the programme shall undergo monitoring processes in order to foster a sound implementation of the programme 	MA, JS, NA, MC, EC	<p>Annual MC examination;</p> <p>EC review meeting or writing procedure.</p>

5. Monitoring and evaluation

In line with EC regulations, the MC will examine the progress in implementing the information and publicity measures carried out by the programme bodies and the means of communication used.

During the 2023, information and publicity activities will focus on establishing a coherent communication and promotion of the programme policy and axes/specific objectives, informing the target audience regarding the role of the European Union under this type of assistance and provision of support for beneficiaries under the first call for proposals and beneficiaries of large infrastructure and strategic importance projects. Specific activities will target mainly the regional and local level from the Romanian and Serbian, programme areas. The main information and publicity tools will be physical, online or hybrid events (workshops for beneficiaries, online publications (general informative materials for capitalisation of projects' results from previous period and specific information regarding new RO-RS programme) and press releases.

It is important to mention the fact that the number of events, number of participants to the events and the budget for the information and promotion activities, targeted for 2023, were proposed having in mind the **support of the first call for proposals beneficiaries, promotion of results from projects financed within previous RO-RS Programme (2014-2020), in the form of information activities.**

Evaluation criteria for 2023:

<i>Communication activity</i>	<i>Type of indicator</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Finding method</i>	<i>Baseline 2020</i>	<i>Realised Target values 2022</i>	<i>Estimated target values 2023</i>
Events	Output	No. of events (<i>cumulative values</i>)	sum of own data	66	12/year 78 total	3/year 81 total
		No. of participants in the events	sum of own data	1980	1072/12= 89 persons/event 20/event*	20/event
	Result	Overall usefulness of the event for the participants	survey	75%	82% positive feedback from the surveys received	82% positive feedback from the surveys received
Website	Output	Number of sessions (<i>cumulative values</i>)	web analytics	180,771	181,771	183,000
		Average time per session	web analytics	3 min. 16 sec	3 min. 18 sec.	3 min. 18 sec.
		Number of page views per session	web analytics	2.88	2.5	2.5
	Result	Number of page views (<i>cumulative values</i>)	web analytics	520,465	523,255	529,000
Social media	Output	No. of reach Facebook	social media metrics	350,000	158,221 reach social-media Facebook Total:508,221 Page reach: 74005 in 2022	550,000
						5%

		Engagement rate Twitter		3,7%	4%	
		No. of followers/subscribers Facebook		1,035	1499	1550
		No. of followers/Twitter		50	65	80
		No. of followers/Instagram		86	117	130
		<i>(cumulative values)</i>				
	Result	No. of engagements: shares, likes, click-through, comments Facebook	social media metrics	953	2,900/year 3,853 cumulative	1,500/year 5,353 cumulative
		Impressions Twitter		2,300	3,043	4,000
		No. of likes/Instagram		100	200	300
		<i>(cumulative values)</i>				
	Youtube	Output	No. of subscribers YouTube	YouTube Analytics	40	42 subscribers
Result		No. of views	YouTube Analytics	5,000	5,286	5,300
Publications	Output	No. of publications issued (including online versions) <i>(cumulative values)</i>	sum of own data	19	21	22
	Result	No. of readers <i>(cumulative values)</i>	survey social media metrics web analytics	1,000	1,140	1,200
Media relations	Output	No. of press releases, adds, interviews in all media, including on line <i>(cumulative values)</i>	sum of own data media monitoring	54	62	65
	Result	No. of media items mentioning the programme in the analysed sample of EU funds related articles <i>(cumulative values)</i>	media monitoring	1,400	1,528	1,600

*given the fact that in the case of 1 event (EC Day) the number of participants could be very large and would have increased artificially the total number of participants, this event was not taken into account when setting the target value of participants/ event.

6. Budget for 2023

The activities financed under the annual communication plan will be related to the use of TA budget for RO-RS Programme 2014-2020 and 2021-2027.