

Interreg



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IPA Romania - Serbia

Communication Plan for 2025 Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme



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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 2025. Information and visibility activities are performed in line with relevant European and national legislation.

Due to delays in evaluating project proposals from the first call for projects, all events scheduled to take place in 2024, except for the workshop for rejected applicants held in December 2024, have been rescheduled for the first part of 2025.

In 2025, the Communication Plan for the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme (2021-2027) holds paramount significance and relevance in fostering collaboration, transparency and the effective dissemination of information.

During the year 2025, information and publicity activities under the Programme will be focused on setting a coherent communication policy, on promoting the programme and its specific objectives, ensuring that stakeholders, project partners and the general public are well informed about the role of the European Union in the Programme. Moreover, our goal is to make sure that the potential beneficiaries are informed and well assisted regarding the financing opportunities and requirements for submitting the projects proposals for the programme's second call for proposals.

In 2025, a special focus is put on informing all relevant parties in the Programme - beneficiaries/partners, as well as potential beneficiaries regarding specific rules for communication activities. Also, educating potential beneficiaries with no experience with the projects, about the Programme and the way it works, especially in the current programming period, while promoting the project's results from the previous period, will be one of the main objectives.

The Communication Plan for 2025 serves as a roadmap, providing key messages, channels and timelines, facilitating the seamless exchange of information to enhance project visibility and impact.

The programme's annual Communication Plan for 2025, 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 bodies.

Several communication measures and actions will be undertaken by the Programme bodies during 2025, especially at regional and local level, in the 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 second call for proposals and the general public from the Programme area.

2. Purpose of the Annual Communication Plan for 2025

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 second call for proposals, including on communicating about large infrastructure and strategic importance projects (OSIs and LIPs).

In an era marked by digital interconnectedness, the plan not only embraces traditional communication methods but also integrates innovative approaches, leveraging social media, online platforms to reach diverse audiences.

All such actions are financed under the Technical Assistance budget. Its purpose is to ensure the visibility and awareness of the RO-RS Programme (2021-2027) and it is meant to ensure awareness regarding the previous results achieved through the projects which were 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 (2021-2027).

Moreover, as Programme bodies have already started thinking about the future (post-2027) and based on the European Commission toolkit - *Guide for consultations to shape the future Interreg (post 2027)*, the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme conducted consultations with stakeholders and citizens, between February - October 2024. The results can be viewed on the Programme website (www.romania-serbia.net).

In this context of consultations regarding the future of Interreg Programmes, the Managing Authority of the Interreg IPA Romania - Serbia Programme and the Managing Authority of the Interreg VI-A Romania - Hungary Programme organised, on 11 October 2024, in Timișoara, a public debate with the academic community.

This public debate, conducted at the level of each Interreg programme within the European Union and due to be completed by the end of 2024, will form the basis for the post-2027 regulation proposals, which will be presented by the European Commission in mid-2025.

On the Programme website, under section entitled **HELP US SHAPE THE FUTURE INTERREG (POST-2027)**, stakeholders and citizens filled in the two specific questionnaires, which served as useful instruments for the Harvesting Report elaborated by the Managing Authority, at the end of 2024, for the European Commission. The report was posted on the programme website.

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) - posted and upgraded, if necessary, on the Programme`s website - www.romania-serbia.net;
- Organising physical, online or hybrid meetings:
- Awareness-raising events and conferences for promoting the new projects which received financing under the first call for proposals and large infrastructure and strategic importance projects (OSIs and LIPs).
- Workshops 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 in JeMS, applying specific rules on procurement procedures, specific rules for communication activities.
- Partner Search Forum will be organized in order to promote cross-border cooperation between Romania and Serbia and strengthen the bonds between participating entities, fostering a sense of shared purpose and commitment towards the goals of the Programme;
- Conference to promote the Programme and project results from the previous period (2014-2020) will be organized for current and potential beneficiaries and partners under the Interreg Cooperation Day 2025. The event will be organized by the Romanian authorities and celebrated by all Programme bodies, beneficiaries, as well as the general public.
- 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 concept notes and application forms, 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 after launching the second call for proposals.

3. Specific Objectives of the Annual Communication Plan for 2025

In accordance with the general and specific objectives established by CS, during 2025, the following specific objectives will be considered:

General Objective	Specific Objective	Target Groups
GO1-To support the successful implementation of the programme by ensuring an effective communication system (result indicators,	SO2-To create a cooperation community with the beneficiaries to deliver encouraging support during project implementation ensuring efficient implementation,	Beneficiaries; Programme bodies Stakeholders; EU institutions and bodies

channels, targeted messages to all identified target groups), especially addressing the specific need for cross border projects;	including communication and capitalisation of results;	
GO2 - 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;	SO1 - To make the programme known, attractive and easily approachable to potential applicants of all Priorities/specific 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;
GO4 - To increase public awareness regarding the specific need for cross-border projects, the programme priorities and specific objectives and the positive impact of EU financial support for the citizens from the Programme area;	SO3-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 and activities for 2025

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.gov.ro).	MA, JS	Permanent
		2. Online Newsletter JS and in consultation with the MA will elaborate and publish electronically monthly newsletters for the applicants and	MA, JS	Monthly

	stakeholders from the Programme area with relevant information.		
	<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"> - Monitoring Committee meetings; - 1 Major communication event for official launching the Strategic Importance Project (SIPHEALTH) - RORS00008 - Harmonization of cardiovascular diseases management from prevention to heart transplantation in the cross-border area. - 3 <i>In person training sessions on procurement procedures</i> for beneficiaries/Partners (1 event in Romania and 2 events in Serbia); - 2 <i>In person thematic training sessions</i> (in particular for financial management and control for reporting on JeMS, applying specific rules for communication activities) for Beneficiaries/Partners - 1 event in Romania and 1 event in Serbia; - 6 <i>Info days/ Workshops</i> (3 events in Romania and 3 in Serbia) for potential applicants with the aim of informing and educating potential beneficiaries about the second call for proposals; - 1 <i>Partner Search Forum</i>-1 event in Serbia; - <i>Interreg Cooperation Day - In person 1 day event</i> (location - Romania) - conference to promote the Programme and project results 		<p>2025</p> <p>2025</p> <p>January 2025</p> <p>January-February 2025</p> <p>September 2025</p>

		<p>from the previous period (2014-2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for LIP and SIP beneficiaries on organising the communication events. 		permanent
2	Promotion and awareness	<p>1. Online information materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme bodies will develop and provide useful information regarding the 2021-2027 Programme: Programme fiche, presentation of specific objectives, specific criteria and rules for submitting the projects proposals for the second call for proposals, estimated calendar for launching the call, Applicant Guide and communication templates on Programme website and social media platforms for partners, potential applicants and general public. 	MA, JS, NA	Periodically
		<p>2. Online video materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uploading short movies developed by projects on YouTube 	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 written 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 2025, information and publicity activities will focus on establishing a coherent communication and promotion of the Programme priorities/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 potential beneficiaries under second call for proposals and also the

beneficiaries of large infrastructure and strategic importance projects. Specific activities will target mainly the regional and local level from the Programme area.

The main information and publicity tools will be physical, online or hybrid events (workshops for current beneficiaries, new potential applicants and general public), online publications (general informative materials for capitalisation of projects' results from the previous programming period, online campaigns with specific information regarding RO-RS programme) and press releases.

Evaluation criteria for 2025:

<i>Communication activity</i>	<i>Type of indicator</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Finding method</i>	<i>Baseline 2020</i>	<i>Realised Target values 2024</i>	<i>Estimated target values 2025</i>
Events	Output	No. of events (<i>cumulative values</i>)	sum of own data	66	5/year 87	11/year 98
		No. of participants in the events	sum of own data	1980	20/event 3,571	20/event 3,791
	Result	Overall usefulness of the event for the participants	survey	75%	NA	85% positive feedback from the surveys received
Website	Output	Number of sessions (<i>cumulative values</i>)	web analytics	180,771	215,028	220,028
		Average time per session	web analytics	3 min.16 sec	1 min. 33 sec.	1 min. 33 sec.
		Number of page views per session	web analytics	2.88	1.85	1.6
	Result	Number of page views	web analytics	520,465	588,344	598,344

		(cumulative values)				
Social media	Output	No. of reach Facebook	social media metrics	350,000	52,960 Total: 621,332 (99.74% from the estimated target value) Page reach: 48,043 in 2024	650,000
		Engagement rate X		3,7%	12,4%	12,5%
		No. of followers/ subscribers Facebook		1,035	1,685 (1.87% above the estimated target value)	1,700
		No. of followers/ X		50	72	100
		No. of followers/Instagram		86	217	220
		(cumulative values)				
	Result	No. of engagements: shares, likes,	social media metrics	953	1,660/year (80.86% from the estimated target value) Cumulative: 10,828	11,500

		click-through, comments Facebook				
		Impressions X		2,300	839 Cumulative: 8,371	9,000
		No. of likes/ Instagram		100	294 Cumulative: 1,020	1,200
		<i>(cumulative values)</i>				
YouTube	Output	No. of subscribers YouTube	YouTube Analytics	40	46	50
	Result	No. of views	YouTube Analytics	5,000	425/year Cumulative: 6,022 <i>(0.37% above the estimated target value)</i>	6,050
	Output	No. of publications issued (only online versions) <i>(cumulative values)</i>	sum of own data	19	10 - published newsletters 1 Applicant's Guideline package 5 - project fiches	12 55 (cumulative value)

Publications					4 - instructions to beneficiaries 1 - evaluation plan Cumulative: 43	
	Result	No. of readers <i>(cumulative values)</i>	survey social media metrics web analytics	1,000	2,915/year ⁱ 4,806 cumulative	11,195 6,000 (cumulative value)
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	3 -Facebook adds (IC Day promotion) 8 press releases Total: 11 Cumulative: 81	85 (cumulative value)

	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	129/year <i>(38.04% above the estimated target value)</i> Cumulative: 1,737	163 1,900 (cumulative value)
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*given the fact that in the case of 1 event (IC 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 2025

The activities financed under the annual communication plan will be related to the use of TA budget for the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme (2021-2027).

ⁱ The following data has been aggregated for 2024:

<https://romania-serbia.net/implementation/instructions/> - 242

<https://romania-serbia.net/second-call-for-proposals/> - 556

<https://romania-serbia.net/programme/programme-evaluation/> - 205

<https://romania-serbia.net/projects/> - 1691

<https://romania-serbia.net/newsletter-2/> - 221