

# An Integrated Communication Guide for Projects

Transnational Cooperation Programme Interreg  
Balkan-Mediterranean 2014-2020

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## Introduction

Co-funded Projects enable the European Union to demonstrate in a practical way how the EU impacts on the everyday lives of citizens. Communication is a crucial process embedded into every stage of a Project's life cycle. From project start up, through implementation, until and even after closure of a project, communication plays a key role in its success. Considering the diversity of contents communicated to varied target groups through diverse channels, the complex process of communication requires careful planning and implementation.

Communication is complementary to a Project's overall management tasks, but it is also a management task in itself. It is not possible to identify a single process that could be applied to every communication activity every time. But it is possible to draw up some general principles for Projects funded by the BalkanMed Programme based on combined experience and good practises

This guidebook was prepared so that the final beneficiaries involved in Projects funded by the **Cooperation Programme Interreg V-B "Balkan-Mediterranean 2014-2020"**, co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance II (IPA II) and national funds of the participating countries, will be in a position to comply with the Regulation (EC) 1303/2013 and Commission implementing regulation (EU) 821/2014.

The guidebook has been designed to ensure that actions funded by the European Union (EU) incorporate information and communication activities designed to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences for the co-funded actions, the EU support for these actions in the country or region concerned and the results and the impact of this support, as well as to inspire communication staff working for BalkanMed Projects in handling their daily communication operations, as well as to

The guidelines establish the conditions and procedure for the notification and disclosure of granting and use of the BalkanMed funds and for marking of the objects financed by them. For the drafting of the present, Regulation (EC) 1303/2013 has been taken into consideration.

The guidebook is prepared taking into account the needs and demands of the BalkanMed Programme and Projects. As the Projects are key messengers about the benefits of EU funding with their concrete activities and local target groups in the regions, their communication activities should aim to:

- To acknowledge the role and support provided by the EU Funds.
- To promote an understanding of the objectives and achievements of interventions co-funded by the EU.

Moreover, the general objectives of any communication actions concerning Interreg co-funded Projects should be the following:

- **Awareness:** Highlighting of the role of the European Union and the Structural Funds of the European Union for the general public and the promotion of the added value of EU participation in the cofunded Projects;
- **Transparency:** Ensuring transparency as far as access to the Funds is concerned.
- **Equal opportunities and non-discrimination:** Ensure accessibility and as far as visibility implementation is concerned.

**This guidebook is can be updated and/ or revised during the Programming Period. Final beneficiaries are strongly advised to be in contact with the Communication Officer of the Programme for all issues that concern Information and Publicity.**

# **Part I: Project Brand Guidelines**

## Visual Identity

### Joint Branding

Every European Territorial Cooperation Programme seeks to develop valuable projects that have a real impact on the life of European citizens. For these Programmes to attract new people and new projects they have to be visible. Programmes exist all over the EU, and beyond, covering every region of Europe. They offer a unique network for Projects directly targeted at improving our lives and economic development in our regions, and at making our environment safer and more sustainable.

But this diversity can turn into a handicap when these Programmes (nearly a hundred of them) communicate separately about their opportunities: then they look like an exploded mosaic of local Programmes that are totally disconnected from each other, when all of them are actually pursuing the same objective: reducing, if not removing, the obstacles created by borders within the EU and between the EU and its neighbours.

Together, European Territorial Cooperation Programmes have decided to put an end to this isolation, and have joined efforts under a harmonised visual brand mark and a common brand name usable in every language: Interreg. Interreg is now the brand name for European Territorial Cooperation and should be used publicly as widely as possible.

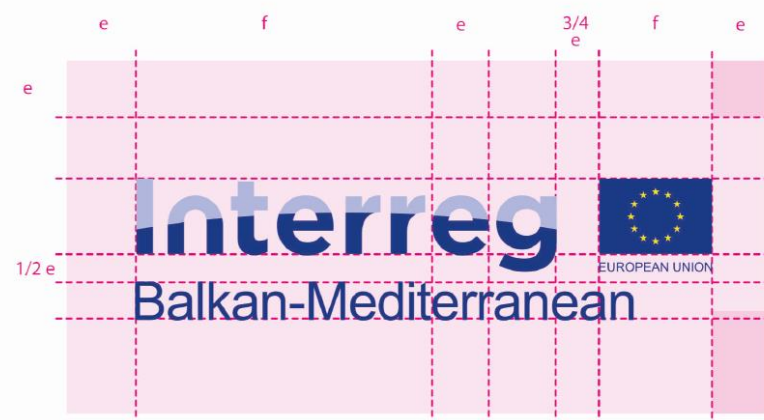
This will allow Interreg stakeholders to benefit from each other in their communication, attract project applicants and make Projects visible.



The harmonised Interreg brand provides greater visibility for Interreg at all levels and towards the widest audience, demonstrating that Interreg makes a difference both locally and at European level, providing large-scale evidence that cooperation in Europe brings people closer, makes economies stronger and helps to better preserve our environment.

To that end, for the 2014-2020 Programming Period, the BalkanMed Programme has adopted a new branding orientation consistent with the new brand mark: “Interreg” developed and used by all European transnational Cooperation Programmes that joined their efforts to create a harmonised visual identity. The BalkanMed logo was created in line with the regulations of the Interreg Brand Design Manual. The visual appearance of the logo makes it clear that BalkanMed is an EU funded Programme and it is part of the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) community.

The following pages outline a few simple rules for using the logo. Please take time to understand how to apply these rules so the logo always appears in a clear and consistent way. However, do not forget that brand design is more than a logo: It consists of characteristic elements such as colours, typefaces and a structure to help layout pages: the grid. Only the combination of all these elements will result in optimum brand recognition.





## Use of logo

Projects that have been funded by the European Union within the framework of the BalkanMed Programme must comply with the visual identity guidelines of the Programme in all their communication materials, as stipulated in the Subsidy Contract and EU Regulations. The Programme and Project logo is probably the most important aspect for communication activities.

The Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 (Annex XII, Article 2.2) - <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0320:0469:EN:PDF> - requires all beneficiaries to follow a number of rules regarding the use of the logo of the European Union and the respective fund. The logo must be always visible in prominent place and with a comparable size to other logos used<sup>1</sup>. The BalkanMed logo already respects all the Programme requirements, and all approved Projects are obliged to use it on all their communication materials (both hard copy and electronic as well as to display it in events).

Within the joint branding initiative, BalkanMed Projects are not allowed to develop their own logos. Developing a logo is costly, it has a limited lifetime and so many logos bring confusion to the audience. For this reason and in order to limit costs, Projects will share the Programme's brand just adding the project acronym below in the colours of the Priority Axis each Project belongs to.

The Project logo must be always included in all communication materials produced both at Programme and Project level. It must be placed in a central and visible position of any produced material and it can never be smaller than any other logo included in the same material.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Article 4 point 5 of the Commission Implementing Regulation No 821/2014: *"If other logos are displayed in addition to the Union emblem, the Union emblem shall have at least the same size, measured in height or width, as the biggest of the other logos"*. All BalkanMed Projects must strictly follow the above-mentioned article. Taking this into consideration, if a Project would like to display in its materials any additional logo (e.g. the beneficiary's), the EU emblem included in the Project logo should be of at least the same size in height or width as other logos displayed. Thus, other logos cannot exceed the EU emblem in height and width. The logo is normally considered to be only the graphic element and not the name of the institution. It should be noted that the BalkanMed Programme does not require the use or display of any additional logo apart from the Project logo and the funding information.

## Project acronym

For the creation of the Project logo and the inclusion of the Project acronym in it, the typeface Montserrat was chosen as it is visually similar to the Interreg logo. The Project name is written below the Programme name in Montserrat Regular, at a cap height that is the same as of the Programme name with a letter spacing of -20. The distance from the baseline of the Programme name to the cap height of the project name is 1/2 of the basic unit. The colour has to match the colour of the Project's main thematic priority.

Montserrat typeface can be downloaded here:  
<https://fonts.google.com/specimen/Montserrat?selection.family=Montserrat>



## Logo types

### *Standard logo/ Full colour version*

The standard logo is the full colour version. This version should be used whenever possible. Ideally the logo should be used on white backgrounds only. Using the logo on a coloured background is possible if there is no alternative, but it has to be a very light background.



Standard logo

### *Greyscale logo/ Black & White logo/ 1-Colour logo*

For single colour reproductions, a greyscale/ Black & White/ 1-Colour (reflex blue) logo version of the logo should be used. These versions should only be used whenever full colour is not available. These versions are recommended when applied through serigraphy and engraving procedures and/ or on restrictive surfaces of certain materials, whenever the full-colour version of the logo cannot be applied.



Greyscale logo



Black & White logo

### *Negative logo*

This version of the logo should be used whenever a reflex blue background is used.



**1-colour logo**



**Negative logo**

## Logo size

The minimum usable size of the logo is 45,5 mm.

In special cases (for the production of small items such as pens and pen-drives etc.), when there is no larger space for placing the logo, an exceptional use is allowed and accepted. For those cases, if the mention 'European Union' under the EU flag is not visible, this text can be omitted, but the EU flag cannot be left out in any circumstances. Otherwise, if it is visible according to the used material and the quality of the printing, it should be included.

Some logo versions are proposed which are exceptionally allowed to be used when small-sized logo for very small items apply.

45,5 mm



Exceptions for small items



## Logo colours

The colours chosen were deemed suitable in order to clearly label the thematic objectives and the Priority Axes of the Programme and to create a harmonic system with colours that match each other and provide good contrast to the general Interreg brand.



BalkanMed Projects are not allowed to develop their own logos. They have to use the Programme logo including the reference to the Project acronym. This reference needs to be written in the colour of the matching Priority Axis the Project belongs to.

**Pantone:** Spot colours that may be used for special printing.

**CMYK:** A subtractive colour system, used in colour printing. CMYK refers to the four inks used in colour printing: cyan, magenta, yellow and key (black). There are 100 colour gradations per reference colour. The CMYK colour system may be used for all printed material.

**RGB:** The RGB colour system is an additive colour model in which red, green and blue light are added together in various ways to reproduce a broad array of colours. The name of the system comes from the initials of the three additive primary colours, red, green and blue. There are 256 gradations per channel. This system is best used in designing websites and online applications.

**Hex:** Colour system, similar to RGB. Colours are specified in hexadecimal format (a hex triplet) with gradations from “00” to “FF” (hexadecimal) per channel. This system is best used in website design.

Colour	Pantone	CMYK	RGB	HEX	Priority Axis
	Reflex Blue	100/80/0/0	0/51/153	003399	
	2716C	41/30/0/0	159/174/229	FFCC00	
	Yellow	0/0/100/0	255/204/0	9FAEE5	
	2145C	87/32/35/16	60/116/134	3C7486	Entrepreneurship & Innovation
	382C	49/0/99/0	152/194/34	98C222	Environment

## Fund mention

In all communication tools and activities, the reference to the funding by the European Union must be clearly indicated.

EU funding to the Project is granted from two different funds, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II (IPA II), as well as from national funds of the BalkanMed participating countries.

Considering this, the general reference “Project co-funded by the European Union” needs to be included in small size in all communication materials. Whenever possible (i.e. written documents), the specific funding should be mentioned i.e. “Project co-funded by the European Union and national funds of the participating countries”.

This reference to the European EU funding should be written in the typeface Montserrat. In the case of Word and PPT documents, Montserrat font can be substituted by Cambria. The colour of the text can be

- White;
- Black; or
- Reflex blue

As for the position, the fund mention should be placed on the right bottom of the page.

Project co-funded by the European Union

Project co-funded by the European Union and  
National Funds of the participating countries

## Application of the Visual Identity

This chapter provides a series of layouts for different communication materials in line with the visual identity rules already mentioned. The list of examples not being exhaustive, the project visual requirements apply to all communication materials produced at Project level in written, online, electronic or audio/visual formats. The correct implementation of the guidelines will imply a consistent and coherent visual identity for the BalkanMed Programme.

## Posters

Within six months after the approval of the Project, each project partner has to place at least one poster with information about the project (minimum size A3), including the financial support from the EU, at a location visible to the public, such as the entrance area of a building (Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Annex XII Article 2.2 paragraph 2.b). The poster needs to stay visible for the whole duration of the Project.

BalkanMed has developed an online tool for the creation of Project posters. The tool is available through the Programme website to all Project Partners and will help them implement the provisions of the Regulation.



## Stickers

In case of equipment purchasing, stickers must be used in a visible place; the stickers will contain the following mandatory information:

- the Programme's logo and website address;
- the funding reference;
- the budget of the Project;
- the name of the Project.

The sticker should be placed on every piece of equipment.

For rain or sunshine protection, a PVC sticker with UV polishing is recommended.

Recommended dimensions: minimum 1/16 of the most visible surface of the equipment.

	<p><b>&lt;Name of the Project&gt;</b></p> <p><b>&lt;Name of the Project Partner&gt;</b></p>
<p><b>Project Budget: ..... €</b></p> <p><b>ERDF contribution: ..... €</b></p> <p><b>IPA contribution: ..... €</b></p>	
<p><b>Lead Partner:</b></p> <p><b>&lt;name of the Lead Partner, Country&gt;</b></p>	
<p><b>&lt;Project website&gt;</b></p>	

Project co-funded by the European Union

## Billboards

Size: 4000 x 2450 mm

During the implementation of a Project consisting in the financing of infrastructure or construction operations for which the total public support to the operation exceeds 500,000 €, the beneficiary shall put up, at a location readily visible to the public, a temporary billboard of a significant size for each operation. Every billboard must mention at list the Project logo, the Project name, the Project budget, the funding reference and the name of the beneficiary.

[illegible]

## Plaques


No later than three months after completion of a Project, the beneficiary shall put up a permanent plaque or billboard of significant size at a location readily visible to the public for each operation that fulfills the following criteria:

- the total public support to the operation exceeds 500,000 €;
- the Project consists in the purchase of a physical object or in the financing of infrastructure or of construction operations.

The plaque or billboard shall state the name and the main objective of the Project. Every plaque must mention at least the Project name, the Project budget and the name of the beneficiary. It must also include the Project logo and the funding reference.

Interreg

Balkan-Mediterranean  
PROJECT ACRONYM



EUROPEAN UNION

<Name of the Project>

<Name of the Project Partner>

Project Budget: ..... €

*Project co-funded by the European Union and national funds of the participating countries*

## Website

The BalkanMed Programme website will host one website per project. The integrated system of Programme and Project websites will facilitate the monitoring of Project activities and it will save financial and human resources.

The Project webpages will have the same structure for all Projects, and will include:

- Pre-filled information fields with data from the Application Form: partnership, budget, etc.
- Dynamic information to be filled in by Projects: Project summary, Project results, news and events, etc.

BalkanMed Projects must also create their own website with a life reaching beyond the Project and being a Project output itself and not a simple communication tool. The Project will be required to follow the Programme's visual guidelines.



## Newsletter

Newsletters will be issued when specified in the communication plan of the Projects. Newsletters are sent regularly, with always updated content. A regular newsletter is a key tool to inform the relevant target audiences about the evolution of the Project implemented in the framework of the BalkanMed Programme. The newsletter can be mailed in electronic format or be published on the website. The cover page of each newsletter must clearly identify the Project as being part of the BalkanMed Programme and must follow the Programme's visual guidelines.

## **Event materials**

Projects which organise or participate in events such as conferences, fairs and exhibitions, in connection with the implementation of operations in the framework of the BalkanMed Programme, must display the EU flag and the Project logo on all documents, publications, presentations or other materials made available during the event. The beneficiary shall ensure that those taking part in an operation have been informed of the EU funding.

## **Online communication**

The general requirements mentioned are applicable to all online communication (such as the website, newsletters, etc.).

## **Part II: Communication Toolkit for Projects**



This document is a compilation of global recommendations for effective communication tailored to Interreg specific context to help Projects plan and carry out their communications more effectively and in synergy with other Projects. The contents are not binding and Projects should be aware of any Programme-specific requirements.

**This document has been adapted by the BalkanMed Programme based on the  
“Communication Toolkit. Version 2.0” developed by Interact**

## The Communication Toolkit

Communication is a crucial process embedded into every stage of a Project's life cycle. From Project start-up, through implementation, until and even after closure of a Project, communication plays a key role in its success. Considering the diversity of contents communicated to varied target groups through diverse channels, the complex process of communication requires careful planning and implementation.

Communication is complementary to a Project's overall management tasks, but it is also a management task in itself. It is not possible to identify a single process that could be applied to every communication activity every time. But it *is* possible to draw up some general principles for Projects funded by Interreg Programmes based on combined experience and good practises.

This toolkit has been prepared by Interact and adapted by the BalkanMed Programme for inspiring communication staff working for Projects funded by European Territorial Cooperation Programmes (branded as Interreg) in handling their daily communication operations.

In case of questions, do not hesitate to contact the Communication Officer of the BalkanMed Programme Joint Secretariat.

## Plan

### Communication Plan

The Projects will have an approved budget and plan for activities already in place in their application. It is still advisable to plan the Project communication in more detail in the early phase of the Project and to clearly agree on the division of responsibilities.

A Communication Plan or Strategy is the bible of Project communications. It ensures that communication efforts help to achieve the Project's goals, and that they are coordinated and effective. It also helps to clarify what staff, time and resources are needed and how to use them. Therefore a Communication Plan must be developed by the Projects once approved in order to have standardised Project communication practices, and use them effectively throughout the whole Project implementation.

A Communication Plan provides an overall view on communication objectives and how the Project plans to achieve these, whereas annual plans describe how, when and by whom the activities will be implemented for the particular year at hand.

It's a good idea to write down a communication plan, even if it is a small Project. That way the Project will have a document that partners can agree upon. It will serve as a document to refer to periodically. A lot of communication work consists of "putting out fires" – responding to urgent needs. If they do not have a written plan, it can be easy to forget the non-urgent (but perhaps more important) activities. The level of detail in the Project communication plan can be adjusted to the needs of the Project in question.

The Project's Communication Plan needs to be developed in close cooperation with the Project coordinator and PPs. Communication is an essential element of a successful Project, so all partners must be involved and committed in the communication activities. **The Communication Plan shall be submitted to the JS.**

In developing the Project Communication Plan, it is important to decide what communication tools and methods would be appropriate for specific Project and communication objectives and for specific target groups.

#### *Prepare the Communication Plan*

##### **Before taking the first step with drafting the Project Communication Plan:**

- Review your **Project objectives and priorities**. Understanding the overall Project aims is key to identifying how the communication of the Project will be organised;
  - Read the Project approved application;
  - Understand what kind of *change* the Project aims to bring about in the Programme area. This will help you define your communication objectives to help achieve this *change*;

- Prepare an introduction about the Project; include it in the Plan while drafting the document;
- Do a **SWOT analysis** of the Project regarding communication. Identify:
  - Strengths: What have we got that we can use?
  - Weaknesses: What could damage our reputation?
  - Opportunities: What could we capitalise upon?
  - Threats: What might go wrong?
- Involve your colleagues in the Project in setting up the Plan;
  - Hold internal consultations within Project partners, and consult with other Project stakeholders/ experts;
  - Inform them of your SWOT findings, ask for their input. If possible, involve them in SWOT analysis process.

Outlined below are some key steps in developing a Project Communication Plan

### **Step 1: Identify and analyse your target groups**

You are now aware of what your Project aims to achieve, when, where and how. And you have analysed your current situation with communication. You can proceed with the following:

- **Define** the Project's communication **target groups**. For example, these can be:
  - Final beneficiaries of your Project's results
  - Local, regional, national authorities and European institutions
  - Network institutions and organisations
  - General public (citizens)
  - Internal stakeholders
- **Analyse** your **target groups**. This will help you identify what messages you want to deliver, how and through which channels.
  - **Interests and information needs**
  - **Characteristics** (for example: number, location, education, language, background, organisation and position)
  - **Knowledge, attitude and practice** on the Project's objectives
  - **Information sources**
- Identifying **primary and secondary target groups** can help you prioritise audiences and therefore determine the focus of your activities and messages.
  - Primary target groups are more important audiences you primarily want to reach out to.
  - Secondary target groups are less (but still) important target groups you want to target with your communication efforts.

## Step 2: Define your communication objectives and key messages.

- Identify your communication objectives and break it down for **each** target group. These objectives will depend on the **overall Project objectives**. What kind of *change* do you exactly want to bring about in a target group?
  - Following the possible target groups you defined, your objectives could be, for example, increase awareness of the **general public** about the results of your Project.
- Communication activities should support the Project objectives in achieving a change in at least one of the following three characteristics of the target groups:
  - **Knowledge:** what new things do you want them to learn about your subject?
  - **Attitudes:** what changes in opinions do you want to stimulate?
  - **Practice:** what changes do you aim at in what the target group does? What new things would you like them to do, and what things should they stop doing?
- For each of your objectives and each of your audiences, think of the **key messages/** information you want to convey.
  - Basic messages should be kept simple. Details can be added later if necessary.
  - Messages should address the audience's interests and attract their attention.
- It is important to formulate the objectives correctly in order to better focus on, implement and evaluate your communication activities.

## Step 3: Define your communication channels.

- Define **tools and activities** that you will use in addressing your target groups to achieve your objectives.
  - Identify the best channels that will enable you reach out to a specific target group you identified, based on your findings of target group analysis.

*For example, prefer mass media activities for target groups with a larger number of people (such as general public) while you can deliver your message to specific target groups via direct communication channels (such as emailing, delivery of well-designed informative materials or organising events).*

- The choice of the communication channels should be based on the audience, the message that you want to convey, and the cost-effectiveness of the channel. Repeating your message and using a mix of several communication channels can help your message actually reach your audience. The channel needs to match the message.

*For example, if you need to convey detailed technical information, radio is probably not the best channel as it is hard for the audience to remember technical details. Detailed and technical information may need several pages of explanation, so a manual may be the best choice: readers can always go back to the manual later to check on the details.*

- Define the **Project's visual identity**.

- A visual identity will make sure all communication activities and tools are visually aligned. Your tools and activities will be easily recognised if you have a visual identity approach preparing them. This will add brand value to your Project visibility.
  - Consider the rules of the BalkanMed Programme, namely the Visual Identity Guidelines for Projects, while defining your Project visual identity.
  - Define a **budget**.
    - Set budget values as rough estimations to enable you to define tools, assign overall resources, but to be flexible at the same time.
  - Describe **responsible partners and human resources** that will be made available for implementation of the Plan.
    - Which Project institutions are responsible for implementation of the Plan?
    - How many core person(s) are made available for its implementation?
    - How the involvement of other Project partners will be coordinated in implementation?
- Tip: Involve your colleagues in other partner countries in preparation and implementation of the Communication Plan.*
- Later, make sure the responsible person for the Project's Communication Plan implementation, and any change of this person during the Project implementation, is communicated to the BALKANMED Joint Secretariat.
  - Do not overload yourself, be realistic.

### *Write the Communication Plan*

Considering all three steps, the Project Communication Plan must include at least the following sections:

- **Project communication main goal and objectives:** What to achieve with the communication activities?
- **Target group(s):** The success of Project communication depends on establishing and developing continuous relations with the key audience (target groups previously selected) during the whole Project duration, engaging some of them to contribute to the Project implementation and reaching all of them when informing about the Project achievements
- **Main messages** of the Project to be communicated through the communication activities and to be tailored for different target groups.
- **Tools and methods** to achieve the objectives: explanation of the foreseen communication activities, the **time plan** and which activities will be tailored to different target groups' needs
- **Evaluation measures:** Regularly checking whether – and to what extent - the activities are reaching the communication objectives, allowing revision and readjustment if necessary
- **Budget:** reasonable financial resources to be committed for the Project communication activities

### *Annual follow-up of the Communication Plan*

Once the Communication Plan is in place, it functions as a framework for the communication work during the whole Project life cycle. Planning of the day-to-day communication activities should be done as an integral part of the overall planning and budgeting of the Project implementation annually for each year to come.

Tips for making a follow-up of the Communication Plan per year (it is advisable to put it in written every year):

- **Overview** the implementation of plan for the previous year.
  - Break it down to specific activities. Evaluate the available outputs you have. For example, the number of visitors to the website, description and number of events organised, etc.
- Identify **communication goals and objectives for the year ahead**. These should take into account:
  - **Communication objectives** described in the Communication Plan (which also derived from overall objectives of the Programme)
  - **Current stage of Project implementation**
  - **External factors** to be taken into account. For example, political factors, national, regional or EU-level initiatives: European Year of... etc.
- Define a **key target group** focus for the year ahead.
  - 2-3 target groups and the associated tools to be concentrated on (which does not mean that other target groups are neglected). These key target groups for the year at hand can then be broken down into more specific groups especially concerning the wider public. For example: students, professionals, etc.
- Describe your **channels**
  - Describe channels that will be used to address the target groups in that year.  
*For example: Press releases for mass media, newsletters for beneficiaries of the Project results, social media for general public.*
  - You can always use multiple channels to reach a target group, a channel to reach multiple target groups and multiple channels to reach multiple target groups.
- Think of an **annual communication calendar**.
  - When should each output be ready? Prepare a timetable for producing each item. Planning can be specific (e.g. mentioning months, weeks) or flexible (mentioning quarters in the year). For example newsletters quarterly and website continuous/constant.
  - Define frequency of periodical publications/ tools.
  - Calendar shall be specific yet still flexible enough to allow room for changes.
- Think of the **annual communication budget**.

- How much money is available for each item? It is necessary to be sure there is enough scope to allow for the delays, crises and extra work that always occur. It is a good idea to keep 10% of the budget and time in reserve for such items.
- Identify “external” costs (venues and catering for events, materials, visibility items, external expertise etc.) including the needed flexibility within the already planned budget framework.
- Set the **annual target values** for the indicators of the Communication Plan.
  - Describe the number of communication activities outputs planned for the year: How many media articles to be published, how many videos produced, how many events organised, etc.
  - Plan and keep sources of verification for these output indicators archived. For example: Keep event participant lists, evaluation forms, survey results, statistics of the website (dated), etc.
  - Draw up a general list of lessons learned, use as a reference for future years.
- Organise the **work share** for implementation of the annual activities:
  - Which body is responsible for each item?
  - Who is responsible for producing each item: Existing staff, part-timers, or external service providers?
  - Make sure your colleagues in the Project are aware of their tasks and responsibilities in the Communication Plan.
- You can use a work plan table with columns breaking down the annual communication such as: tool/ activity, description, target groups, responsible bodies, estimated budget, estimated time, etc. following the logic of Communication Plan.

### *Evaluation of the Communication Plan*

Include in your Communication Plan a description on how the implementation will be monitored and evaluated. Each communication objective should have indicators for following up the success in reaching the objective in order to be able to evaluate and show how well the communication was done. Plan and describe the data you will collect and how the evaluation process is done.

Consider evaluation also a tool for improving your communication work during the Project lifetime. For instance, in case there would be shortcomings in reaching certain goals during one year, an analysis of why this happened and what could be done to overcome the challenges could help to improve the respective activities in the upcoming years.

The benefit of efficient monitoring and evaluation of communication activities is twofold: it feeds into both the periodic reporting of the Project as well as into the larger process of Project evaluation.



## Organise

### Events

At least two major events must be organised by the Project to create awareness and disseminate the Project results. A kick-off event should be organised, whenever possible, within two months after the beginning of the Project implementation and a final dissemination event should be organised at the end of the implementation period.

To these events, not only Project partners but key stakeholders/ final beneficiaries/ decision-makers should attend and the audience should be as wide as possible. During the events, Projects are encouraged to place the EU flag and ensure visibility of the Project logo.

Other activities/ events can be organised by the Project (i.e. targeted small events) or the partners can decide to participate in an activity organised by others if relevant for the Project implementation. Participation in external events is a good way to promote the Project as well as of the institution or region involved and it can be useful as it gives Projects an opportunity to come face-to-face with their target audiences.

Projects are invited to participate, whenever requested, in other events organised by the Programme with the purpose of presenting/ discussing/ developing/ sharing Project results and creating synergies with other Projects and relevant organisations. BalkanMed may organise thematic events intended to inform stakeholders, policy makers, beneficiaries and other interested parties about Programme and Project achievements and to foster capitalisation opportunities among the approved Projects. BalkanMed organises as well trainings for beneficiaries of ongoing Projects on Project implementation issues (e.g., reporting, procurement, financial issues, communication, etc.).

The content of the events organised by the Projects depends on the stage of the Project. For Projects, it is important to organise events that are interesting for the target audiences and for media to attend. Typical Project events include conferences, seminars, exhibitions, field trips, kick off and closing events. It can also be interesting to join forces with other thematically relevant Projects to organise joint events. This can save human and financial resources and even broaden the audience significantly and it is in line with BalkanMed Capitalisation Strategy.

One of the major promotional events organised in the European arena where Programmes and Projects can take part in is a Europe-wide campaign called **European Cooperation Day (EC Day)** with the aim of highlighting results of European cooperation across borders to the general public. More information can be found on the EC Day campaign website. BalkanMed Projects may think of organising some of their events in line with the EC Day that takes place normally in September each year.

## How to organise a successful event

### *Preparation of the event*

No matter what type of event you are organising, it needs to be planned and prepared with a clear purpose in mind. Remember to ask yourself (and your event planning team) the following three questions:

1. **Objective:** What do we want to achieve with the event?
2. **Audience:** Who do we want to reach?
3. **Method:** What is the most effective way of reaching them?

The success of an event depends on a clear understanding of the purpose of the event, its target audience and how to reach them, matched with an appropriate event plan. All parts of the event need to support the main goal of the event. A good event is a sum of different elements making up integrity. The participants of a good event shall be able to remember the main message that was intended to be delivered via that event.

The biggest events are usually planned already in the annual work plan or Project application, making it a good starting point for the event to be planned ahead of time. Procurement processes are often time consuming but can luckily be done well in advance.

In case you have a similar target group with any other Project (from the BalkanMed or other Programme), you could consider joining forces by organising one event together. This will save you both human as well as financial resources.

### *Organisers*

Build a team responsible for the event and put together a detailed plan. Identify local contact persons and allocate roles to team members. If the direct decision-makers are not part of the organising team, make sure to brief them regularly, i.e., by holding meetings.

Set up a script or a roadmap (see images below) with all information related to the event (agenda, detailed timeline of the day, contact person venue, data speakers, etc.) so that everyone in the organising team has the overview at hand whenever necessary.

### *Audiences*

To identify your target group, you could ask yourself the following questions:

Which groups of people should be interested in attending? Which groups of people have the potential to help you to achieve your objectives? Who is already involved, but could become more committed or useful to your Project if you engaged them more closely? How can you make your event appealing to them?

Please, do not confuse internal meetings for Project management attended only by Project partners with public event addressed to general public or external audience which requires good dissemination in advance and good invitation policy in order to have broader participation than just Project partners.

### *Budget*

Also the event budget should be planned with the objectives of the event in mind. E.g., if you need to train 30 people, the budget is naturally planned smaller than if you aim at taking a bus full of journalists to see 3 different Project's results. Consequently, your budget will determine where you can hold the event, the number of people you can invite, and the quality of the support material (such as presentation hand-outs, press packs, brochures, etc.).

Start a budgeting spreadsheet as soon as an event is planned and make a team member responsible for tracking costs. Allocate all fees and costs and keep some contingency budget for emergencies. Be aware of public procurement procedures and the time needed to contract services.

### *Name and description of the event*

The name of an event should let the reader grasp what the event is about at first sight. Good names are short rather than long. Together with the name, a clear description of the aim of the event and whom the event targets should be available.

### *Timing*

Together with the name and description, the time and place (at least the city) of the event should be set ahead of time to allow for effective marketing. Check that the chosen date does not conflict with other events that your target audiences might also be interested in. At the same time, you can also consider organising your event prior or after another event that is thematically relevant to your target audience. Check that the most important participants (e.g. desired speakers) would be able to attend. Also check for clashes with other more newsworthy events: political events, holidays, etc. When working in an international setting and with participants travelling from longer distances, it is a good practise not to organise events starting on Monday morning or ending on Friday afternoon, allowing for travel on working days.

### *Agenda*

Build the agenda in a way to make up a well-planned schedule where the different parts follow each other in a logical sequence. Make sure the aim of the different parts is clear already in the agenda given out before the event in order for the participants to know what to expect.

Keep the event interactive by introducing panel discussions, workshops and break-out sessions (different formats to avoid boring events). Always allow plenty of time for questions and

discussion. Also, make sure to build in regular breaks to keep people's attention and to encourage networking possibilities.

Build some flexibility in the Programme, for example if some presentations do not finish on time. Make sure the moderation role is given to someone who can keep the schedule.

Plan enough time for coffee breaks (around 30 min) and lunch (at least 1 hour). Content-wise, remember to always introduce what the Project is about (for those who don't know about it), explain the Project results and mention the EU and BALKANMED funding (both with the display of the Project logo and orally).

### *Speakers*

Interesting, knowledgeable and skilled speakers are one of the make-or-break factors of any event. What kind of speakers to invite depends largely on the nature of your event. Sometimes high profile names or people from well-known organisations can help to make your event appealing to certain target audiences, but sometimes it can be most interesting and effective for the message delivery when the speaker is e.g. ,a young entrepreneur as an end-user of a Project result on stage. Individuals who are naturally good at presenting to groups transform the atmosphere and impact of the event itself.

When inviting speakers you will need to provide them with clear information on the event and its objectives, normally in the form of a draft Programme, a briefing on the types of people attending the event (including other speakers) and detailed instructions on what they are expected to do and how their contribution links to the other parts of the event. A good practise is to provide the speaker with a set of 2-4 questions that you would need him/ her to answer in the presentation. These questions and answers are to support the messages you want to give to your audiences.

Always make sure to follow up with your invited speakers proactively in person: do not assume that people received, read, or registered your invitation or that they will respond to you.

Ask for the presentations and possible hand-outs well in advance of the event and make sure the contents you wanted are in place. Often the speakers appreciate honest feedback and guidance on how to make the presentation better as this will ensure their presentation to meet the expectations of the audience. Ask for permission to publish the presentation online after the event if you plan to do so. Discuss and confirm fees, travel expenses etc., in advance and for prompt payment.

Before the event, collect all presentations and pre-load them in one large presentation file on the presentation laptop.

### *Moderator(s)*

A good event can become great with the addition of an excellent moderator. Make sure that you have someone who is able to manage the event, lead discussions and debates, keep schedules and make the event interesting and relevant to participants. Many journalists also make good moderators; ask some of your media contacts if they know of someone suitable. Keep in mind that while a moderator from "outside" can be a fresh element to your event and

provide an interesting viewing angle to your issues, he/she needs to understand the nature of your event, know who is the audience and what the main aim of your event is. Discussing the event and all related expectations well before the event with the moderator is very important.

#### *Venue: rooms and technical equipment*

Characteristics of a good venue include good accessibility for the participants (the chosen city and the location in the city), right sized rooms for the sessions, easy transfer between the rooms during the event (if applicable) and a suitable place for potential catering services where people can enjoy refreshments without having to spend excessive amounts of time in lines. Check out the connections to e.g., airports and train/ bus terminals. Preference for public transport instead of all participants having to take a taxi to reach the venue is recommended.

Try to use the meeting rooms located in the premises of some Project partner institutions, if the venue capacity for the foreseen number of participants is enough, as a way to save costs.

Define the number of expected participants and the need for different auditoriums, break-out rooms, lobby spaces, room for coffee breaks and lunch etc., ahead of time and include them in the term of reference when procuring the venue. If the venue offers catering services they can often be included in the same procurement.

Think also of the technical equipment you will need for holding the event – laptops, Projectors, screens, etc. Check what the venue provider has to offer; some equipment can be included in the price and some not. Arrange a site visit in advance and also check the equipment to be used.

Consider hiring a professional photographer for bigger events.

#### *Catering*

If you are going to provide food, a buffet is a good idea as it allows people to mix and talk. However, allow for enough tables and some places for people to sit down. Remember to include the dietary requirements into the registration form and check from the catering service provider how long prior to the event they will need to know these requirements.

Agree with the provider the deadline to confirm the final number of participants regarding the catering, Bear in mind that the catering is the most expensive part of an event, so an accurate number of participants can save costs.

#### *Accommodation*

Especially with bigger events, recommend the delegates to book accommodation well in advance. You can make a block reservation in the venue if it is a hotel or in a nearby hotel, if possible, especially during other major events or in cities with limited hotel capacity. This is particularly important when participants are arriving from further away and don't know the location - they would appreciate an easy way to book accommodation in or close to the event venue.

Try to get special rates for participants in the proposed hotels.

### *Invitations to participants*

Develop the invitation in good time to notify target audiences well before the event. A “save the date” message can be the first announcement, followed by more details of the event later on. Keep everything simple and easy to understand (what, for whom, when and where?). The basic information should be published on the Project website at least two months before the event and updated when the plans proceed.

For the marketing of the event, newsletters reach a large number of people at once. However, be sure that the formulation of the invitation in a newsletter is clear to the people on the list (i.e. does the event address all of them or perhaps only a certain part). Dedicated e-mails are the most efficient way to ensure people’s attention. Indicate a reply-by-date and a contact mail/ phone number. If necessary, send a reminder later on and ask them to inform about any potential cancellation.

### *Registration*

If the foreseen number of participants is more than 70, online registration saves you time. People submit their information online into a database that you can access through a private site where you can add, delete and edit participant and event information. Usually there is a “download to Excel” function available in the tools. Use some free platforms online to create your online forms for the registration to the event (and maybe for the evaluation form to be sent to the participants afterwards) such as <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/home/about> or [www.jotform.com](http://www.jotform.com).

Upon sending confirmations to participants after registration, include some further practical information about the place where the event is taking place. This can be an info sheet about the location of the venue (address and map), main transport options to get there (information on main airports and how to reach the venue from there), accommodation possibilities and other necessary information. Depending on the nature of the event, a list of participants can be sent to the registered participants beforehand or to be hand over during the event. This can help e.g., in partner search or in finding interesting people for other networking purposes.

### *Rehearsal meeting*

Hold a rehearsal meeting with the organising team a day before the event. Go through the main presentations, anticipate frequently asked questions (locations of rooms and toilets, internet access, etc.) and make sure everybody in the team can answer them. Check that the technicalities (e.g. laptops, Projectors and sound) work and that you know whom to contact at the venue if something stops functioning during your event. Make sure you know how to adjust air conditioning and the lights.

Make sure you have name badges, place labels for speakers, registration sheets, pens and paper, needed contact lists etc., in place already the day before.

### *During the event*

#### *Registration*

Make people feel invited. Have someone greet the participants and show them to the cloakroom and the registration desk. Have plenty of people at the registration desks to avoid long lines and to answer possible questions the participants might have. Think of making different lines according to the alphabetic order of the surnames (A-D, F-M, etc.) to get a faster registration process.

Prepare materials beforehand so that people do not have to compile their event package while others are waiting. In case you are using feedback questionnaires that are filled in on the spot, consider whether you want to give them as part of the material kit or later during the day. Reserve a box or other place where the filled-in questionnaires and the badges to be recycled can be returned.

#### *Technical equipment*

Arrange and check the necessary technical equipment and set-up, e.g., video Projector, laptop, etc. Check you have all connection cables, power sockets, transformers, and adapter plugs.

If possible, collect all presentations before the event and pre-load them in one large presentation file on the presentation laptop.

#### *Media*

If media attend your event, make sure they are well taken care of. Make sure that your appoint someone responsible for introducing the journalist(s) to people to interview, explain the Project, and act as a contact point if they require any information.

Shortly before the event, sending out a press package including brief background information regarding the event and other useful materials can help journalists correctly comprehend and reflect your event. This should be complemented by additional information and event visuals delivered to the journalists after the event.

Always try to involve media in your events addressed to external audience. Try to sell the Project through a personal story behind as a way to attract media. Try to have a relevant actor (local politician, public authority) participate in your event. This will reach media's attention and your event will be more likely to be published in newspapers and digital websites, among others.

#### *Photos*

Depending on the nature of your event and the need for photos afterwards, do some planning of the needed photos before the event. Would you like to have action shots, close-ups, general pictures of crowd, a picture of a specific keynote presenter or perhaps of the interesting building you are at? To get the right shots, think of the intended use of the photos – will they be published

in publications, press articles/ releases, thank you letters, social media and/ or on the Project website and what message do you want to send through the photos.

### *c) After the event*

#### *Follow-up*

Upload all relevant documents online (presentations, photos etc.) and send a thank you note to all participants and guests together with the link to the online materials. In case you are using an online tool for collecting feedback (e.g. <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/home/about> or [www.jotform.com](http://www.jotform.com)), the link to the questionnaire can be included in the same mail. In that case the mail would need to go out as soon as possible after the event, preferably even the next day, for the people to still feel motivated to provide their feedback. This feedback would be very useful for the organisation of future events,

If you approached or were approached by media about your event, remember to later check and document media coverage. Online coverage can be further spread via any social media channels you might be using. You can also make news on your Project website and publish something about the successful event in a post-event newsletter. Include several photos to make more attractive the news/ newsletter.

#### *Evaluation*

Hold a debriefing session with the organising team - discuss what went well and what can be improved in the future. Thank the team members for a job well done. Once the participant feedback has been collected, go through the findings with the whole team.



## Event planning checklist

### Before the event

- Tasks are allocated to all organisers
  - Invitations and registration
  - Budgeting
  - Welcoming participants
  - Venue, coffee breaks and catering
  - Agenda (Speakers? Moderator?)
  - Photographer
- Set up script or roadmap of all details of the event
- Invitations sent out in time (speakers, media and participants)
- Make a block reservation at a recommended accommodation, that are included in practical information for participants
- Upon registration, participants receive a confirmation email with the final version of the agenda + practical information
- All organisers are briefed to answer frequently asked questions
- Speakers (and the moderator) are briefed
- All presentations are compiled and checked
- Check technical equipment

### During the event

- A reception desk is available for registration
  - Registration sheets
  - Name badges arranged in alphabetical order
  - Conference packs (if applicable) and promotional materials
- Place labels and water are available for speakers
- Conference room equipment is checked
  - Laptops with presentations
  - Multimedia Projectors and screens
  - Cables and electricity sockets
  - Microphones, sound system; persons available for handing out microphones
  - Air conditioning and lights
- Enough toilet facilities are available
- There are recycle bins in the conference room
- Acces for people with disabilities is ensured
- All activities comply with the publicity requirements (e.g. EU flag on display)

### After the event

- Event documents and photos are uploaded to your website
- Thank you notes sent to all participants and guests
- Conclusions made based on feedback forms and debriefing
- All costs and fees are taken care of

## European Cooperation Day

Since 2012, Interact has been coordinating a Europe-wide campaign called European Cooperation Day (EC Day) with the aim of highlighting results of European cooperation across borders to the general public. Under the motto “Sharing borders, growing closer”, hundreds of local events are held across Europe in the week around 21 September every year, reaching out to thousands of people. The campaign is coordinated by the Interact Programme with the support of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions. The local events showcase how cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation Projects are reducing obstacles and disparities, while at the same time increasing cultural understanding and efficiency between European regions. All Interreg Programmes and Projects are invited and encouraged to participate actively in the campaign.

If you would like to contribute to the European Cooperation Day as a Project, contact the BalkanMed Programme and propose your idea of event.

- Organise a local event celebrating the achievements and results of cooperation in Europe and, specifically your Projects’ results;
- Become a partner of one of the local events to be organised by Programmes in your area;
- Disseminate information on the events through your social media, website or other communication tools;
- Attend one of the local events in your area

More information can be found on the campaign website: [www.ecday.eu](http://www.ecday.eu)

## Write

### Clear and Effective Writing

In order to reach your audience, the way you communicate the results achieved by your Project is essential. Apart from the channel, the clear and effective writing or speaking becomes of primary importance to pass the message you like to transmit. If you address general public, try to avoid the ‘technical’ aspects of your Project and make it clear for them to understand what you achieved thanks to the EU support.

Anything you write, from a short status update in social media to a multipage document, write using clear, plain language. Use the tips below to help you write in a way that is easy for your audience to understand and remember.

The clear writing tips shared here are based on a presentation by the Plain English Campaign. You can find more information and resources on the website [www.plainenglish.co.uk](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk).

#### *Sentence length*

- Use an average sentence length of 15 – 20 words (never go longer than 30).
- Mix sentence length – short sentences can be very effective.
- Say only one thing per sentence. When in doubt, use a full-stop.

#### *Vocabulary*

- Use everyday words that you would use at home – vocabulary that your grandparents, neighbours, and friends would understand.
- **Avoid jargon and acronyms** whenever possible! If you can’t, include a glossary at the beginning of your document.

#### *Tone*

- Use a conversational tone rather than an academic or overly formal one.
- This does not mean you should use slang or dialect – your writing should still be professional and correct – but your tone should engage your reader and not put them to sleep.
- Use first and second personal pronouns to refer to your organisation and reader (we, us, and you).

### *Structure*

- Put the most important fact at the beginning of your text so that readers can find it easily – don't bury it in the middle.
- Use bullet points rather than long paragraphs.

### *Content*

- Think like a journalist. Make sure you answer the 5Ws: Who? What? When? Where? Why?

### *Use active sentences, not passive ones*

- **Active:** The European Commission published the document in January.
- **Passive:** The document was published in January by the European Commission.

## Example on clear writing

### Before editing

#### **The Study Findings**

1. A key finding of the study is that contrary to the perceived view of many that the high profile closures mark the end of large scale marine employment on the north bank, market demand analysis has demonstrated that there are substantial opportunities for attracting marine related employment. However, it is evident that the marine market is also changing, with one pattern of employment being replaced with another and the challenge for the public sector is therefore to manage the process of change, ensure that the continued supply of adequate sites is provided for and guide the growth of the new marine technologies.
2. The review of existing businesses located in the study area and nearby found that eleven world class companies within the subsea technology and renewable energy sectors are operating from this area. A number of these, including Wellstream and Duco in Newcastle, are looking to expand. ONE North East has also received a number of inward investment enquiries from companies, seeking sites and looking to make significant investments, who have expressed interest in the study area. The activities of the Port of Tyne are also increasingly requiring additional land and waterfront access. This includes the growth in cruise ships visiting the Tyne.
3. The study therefore confirms the continued strategic regional importance of the existing marine infrastructure located on the River Tyne North Bank, in particular sites with appropriate infrastructure including large sheds, hardstandings and quayside areas capable of accepting heavy loads and with deepwater access. It sees a real opportunity to promote a 'Marine Industries Cluster/ Centre' on the River Tyne North Bank to build on the European pre-eminence in subsea, fabrication, marine design and naval architecture. It is considered that this could become a leading European integrated marine industrial estate with deepwater facilities, multi-user load out and fabrication facilities and high-wide load access.
4. The complex would aim eventually to establish Global credentials for subsea manufacturing, fabrication, conversion and assembly of offshore oil and gas modules and infrastructure.
5. It is concluded that the significant marine infrastructure along the River Tyne North Bank should be dedicated to these growth sectors and inappropriate riverfront uses encouraged to locate elsewhere.
6. The consultants propose a number of immediate next steps including commissioning detailed technical reports to identify the condition and extent of riverfront infrastructure (berths, water depth, hardstanding, cranes, dry docks etc), utility capacities, ground condition and contamination, site load capacities, movement strategy etc. They also propose the preparation of a global marketing strategy in consultation with key stakeholders. How these are progressed will be part of further discussions with North Tyneside and ONE

## **After editing**

### **The Study Findings**

#### **Conclusion**

*The Tyne North Bank could become an international centre for the marine industry, including subsea manufacturing, fabrication, marine design and naval architecture. This would mean building on the area's existing industry and reputation, and concentrating on marine development rather than other sectors.*

#### **Existing advantages**

*The area already has:*

- *Eleven major subsea technology and renewable energy companies; and*
- *Sites with large sheds, hardstandings and deepwater quays.*

#### **New development**

- *Existing companies, including Wellstream and Duco, want to expand.*

- *ONE North East has received outside development enquiries.*
- *The Port of Tyne needs more land and water access, partly to meet increasing demand from cruise shipping.*

#### **Next steps**

*The consultants propose that we:*

- *Commission technical reports on the area such as:*
  - *Riverfront infrastructure*
  - *Utilities*
  - *Ground condition and contamination*
  - *Load capacities*
  - *Access; and*
- *Produce a global marketing plan, with North Tyneside and ONE North East.*

## Storytelling

Storytelling is a technique which people have used to pass on information since prehistoric times. So while it may be a hot trend in communication today, it is far from a new concept!

Conveying information through stories not only makes our content more interesting to our audience, it makes it much more likely that they will remember it. Use storytelling to give your Project a human face, avoiding complicated/ boring information to get your message through more easily. If you are trying to get attention from the media, storytelling techniques are essential. While you need to have facts and figures too, a compelling story is a must.

Many of the storytelling techniques shared here were developed by MSLGroup, a global communications network specialising in PR.

### Why story-telling

Because it's memorable

Because its authenticity and emotional appeal

Because of its sense of togetherness (engaging your audience)

### *Planning your story*

When planning your story you need to know very well your Project, the audience you would like to address (to adapt the language and to select the communication channel to be used accordingly) and identify the take-away message that you would like to transmit thanks to the story.

*Why does your story need to be told? What is the purpose of your story?*

*Who is the audience for your story?*

- What do they care about?
- What's their/ the problem?
- How much do they know? Where do they get information?
- What do they need (from you) to act?
- Remember: Write for them, not for you (or your colleagues)

*Which of the following outcomes would you like to achieve with your communication?*

- Who I am: **Awareness**  
*Announce, state, introduce*

You want the local community to know that your Project exists!

- Why I'm here: **Relevance**

*Explain, comprehend, relate*

You want people to understand what transnational cooperation and your Project is about: how it works, what benefits it has already brought to the area, etc.

- I have a dream: **Vision**

*Inspire, excite, galvanise*

You want to inspire people on how your Project's idea appeared.

- I'll show you how: **Education**

*Demonstrate, teach, describe*

You want to show people what partners do in your Project

- I do therefore I am: **Principles in action**

*Participate, join, compete*

You are holding an event or contest and you want people to take part

- I know what you're thinking: **Dealing with the elephant in the room**

*Provoke, challenge, surprise*

You come from an area that is very Eurosceptic and you want to assure them that their EU taxes are bringing their region positive results

- **The format** - where will the story land?

*Newspaper, website, social media platforms, press release to the media?*

- What is the story **context**?

What is going on outside of our direct work environment? What is happening in the news? Could these things affect the way our audience hears your message?

- Why is now a **good time** to tell your story?

Is there an event or situation which makes the story more relevant today than it would be next week or next month?

### *Writing your story*

Starting to write your story is often the most difficult part. For that reason, we are giving you a short exercise you can use to get your creativity flowing, and template to use as a starting point. Just remember to find a main character/ hero the story could be based on; a scene/ setting where the story is set; and a conflict/ resolution to make your story more interesting (problem/ solution given by the Project).

### *Six word stories*



Try to condense your story into just six words, similar to how Ernest Hemingway crafted his famous six word story: “Baby shoes. For sale. Never worn.”

Here are a few more that might inspire you:

- “Found true love. Married someone else”
- “Coyote howls, dark night, flat tire”
- “Wax wings. High hopes. Long fall”
- “Loved abroad. She moved abroad”
- “Old neighbours, once enemies, now friends”

## Template

This “narrative template” can be used to get you past that blank sheet of paper. It can be a useful starting point for developing your story.

### **We believe in a world where...**

This is the focus of the story expressed as a belief about the world, e.g., we believe in a world where regions work together to solve problems.

### **We know in that world that....**

This is what you know about the world that brings tension, e.g. we know that cooperation in a transnational Project isn't always easy. There are complex rules to follow, cultural barriers to overcome, and compromises to make.)

### **So we make sure...**

This is what you do to resolve the tension, e.g. so we make sure to help Project partners to develop jointly their activities and work better together.)

### **Which is why we...**

This is what you do in terms of outputs, deliverables and overall behaviour, e.g., which is why we have created XXX and believe that this BalkanMed Project brings useful solutions for the involved regions, solving common problems.)

It is a very good idea to make your story more interesting and to attract media (if it's the case), to highlight a character (someone who benefited from a Project) and add facts and figures that support your story (just make sure you don't overload your audience with information).

## Sample story

*When Ana was a child, she was not allowed to swim in the Danube, which runs behind her family's home in Bulgaria. Her mother told her that the river was polluted – that meant no drinking, no swimming, no playing.*

*That was 25 years ago.*

*Today, thanks to regions joining forces in an Interreg Project and establishing environmental standards, the Danube's waters are clean and safe. Interreg is the European Union's tool for funding cooperation Projects. The Project (Acronym) made this possible. And*

*environmental protection is just the tip of the iceberg – other Interreg Projects are reducing unemployment, increasing renewable energy and improving transportation.*

*Now, Ana has children of her own, and she is happy to let them swim in the clean waters of the Danube. This is just one example of the activities carried out by the Project XXX that has been funded by the European Union through the Balkan-Mediterranean Programme.*

*To find out how more about XXX Project, please visit (website link).*

## Newsletters

A newsletter either in electronic or in paper format can be an effective communication tool for the Projects. It can also be a good way to draw attention to the news published on your website.

As paper newsletters are costly to print and mail delivery is both costly and less effective than delivery via electronic channels, the BalkanMed Programme prefers e-newsletters in line with its environmental-friendly policy.

As for any communication tool it is important to remember who the readers of your newsletter are. The content, frequency and format are to match the target group. The Project's websites of the BalkanMed Programme include the possibility to send online newsletters (read specific section in Project's website – User Manual).

### *Some common practises*

- Project newsletters, like in the case of Programme newsletters, are produced two to four times a year and provide an update on Project progress, activities and produced outputs/deliverables. More than 4 newsletters sent by email per year can discourage your audience to read it.
- Shorter electronic e-mail newsflashes (an online newsletter of just 1 piece of news) can be also produced additionally. Brief, up-to-date information on e.g. upcoming Project events is provided.

### *Preparation and planning*

- Prepare the email newsletter or newsflash with short titles, many visuals and short texts relying on links embedded to them if necessary. Decide the format of the different news according to the 'blocks' provided by the Project website-newsletter module.
- Make a schedule for when newsletters are planned to be sent out for the upcoming year. Think of the bigger events, occasions and news that should be covered by each one and leave room for news that come up between the initial planning and publishing of the newsletter.
- Appoint a person responsible for the newsletters and ask all partners to forward the worthwhile information to that person during the period the newsletter will cover.
- Original materials are preferable. If previously published materials are used, get the permission of the author or owner beforehand, and then give them credit in the publication. Know the source of the materials (texts, pictures, illustrations) you are using, obtain prior permission, and give credit, or don't use the material.

### *Drafting*

- Highlight a maximum of 3 important news with a specific 'block+image' each of them and include a list of other brief news if needed.

- If your newsletter is more than one or two pages, include a very brief list of contents at the top. For example “In this issue ...”
- When drafting the contents, keep in mind who will read the newsletter. Are they mostly potential beneficiaries of the Project results, general public or stakeholders? Plan the contents accordingly.
- Contents can include: Important developments regarding your Project, past and upcoming Project events, important Project news and results.
- Consider including information of other similar Projects, in particular those involved in the capitalisation activities of your Project or the activities already generated together.
- Respect the provided template to make sure the EU flag and Programme logo are prominently included and the reference to the ERDF is in place. Do not forget to include the Project logo at the end of the newsletter to give more visibility to your Project acronym.
- Enrich the contents with visuals, such as photographs and icons.
- Include a link to the Project contact details in the website for any potential questions/ comments.
- Proofread the whole issue once you are done with contents. Send you a ‘test email’ and check that the links work and they take the reader directly to the desired content (instead of e.g. a front page where further navigation is still needed to find the actual content).

#### *Promote your Project*

- Give a brief overview of one or several Project output/ result/ s and links to more detailed story/ product. These can be inventories, researches, online platforms, maps, publications and many more things.
- Keep in mind the readers’ existing knowledge on the issue and make it easy reading for also those who are not familiar with the specific field. Remember to whom you are writing while formulating the messages.
- Sometimes you don’t need a whole article to promote a Project result. A sentence with most crucial details from a Project can help you achieve that promotion.

#### **Examples**

“Did you know? Thanks to X Project, people in X region can now get X service faster, cheaper and more efficiently”

“By the time X Project is finalised, X emissions in X region will be reduced by XX%”

“Thanks to the X Project, Balkan regions in X and Y countries now have .... and ..... benefits”

“With the observation system established as a part of X Project funded by the BalkanMed Programme, X and Y countries can now jointly monitor ship wastes illegally disposed to X river”

*Support Project related contents with visuals and links to further details and contact details as much as possible.*

### **Dissemination**

- Invite all Project partner contacts, institutions, local/ regional/ national/ European stakeholders, experts, etc. to subscribe to your Project newsletter through the online form available in the Project website. Like this, they will always receive from that moment on the online newsletter with updated information about the Project. Promote existence of such mailing list at your relevant events.
- If you have got already a list of contacts to whom you would like to send the newsletter, you can manually insert the contacts one by one in the “Subscribe to Project newsletter” form of your Project website. If the list of potential recipients is long, please contact the Joint Secretariat to be able to upload the whole list at once.
- All sent newsletters will be automatically published on your Project website and all issues stored under the specific section ‘Newsletters’.
- Send the newsletters also to the BalkanMed Programme Joint Secretariat and to all your partner institutions.

## Presentations

A good presentation can be a very powerful tool to communicate your message to a group but if not used well it can also affect the audience in a negative way. Success depends on the ability to connect with the public (be it a big group in a conference or a small group in a meeting), to offer them a meaningful message and to make it attractive.

Most presentations still show crowded slides with unclear messages. Some speakers nowadays stand out as powerful presenters thanks to simplicity (See references: TED Talks, Garr Reynolds, Nancy Duarte etc.).

Their rule is **“don’t tell, show”** and make it relevant for the audience.

An **“example”** is worth a thousand words

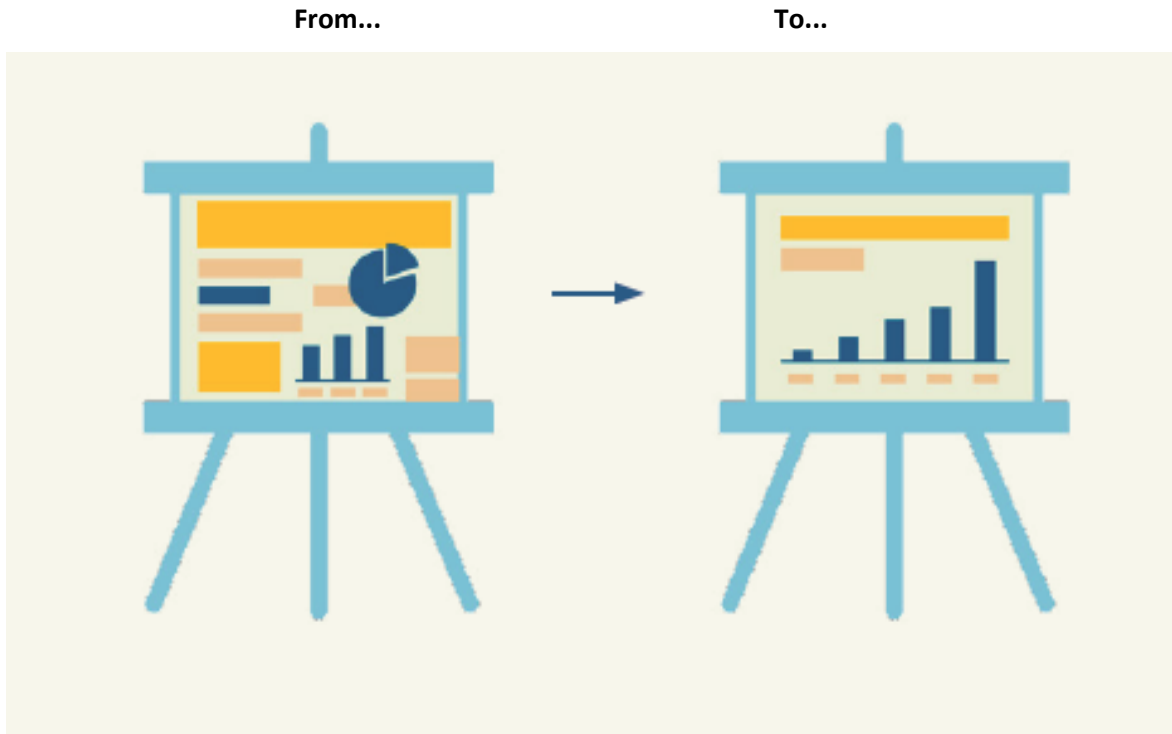
<b>Audiences does not want</b> Long Boring Bad slides Unclear message	<b>Audience wants</b> Short & Simple Legible Inspirational Straightforward
<b>You want your audience to</b> Keep attention Understand Get engaged Remember the messages	<b>Create engaging presentations</b> Make it simple Make it visual Make it meaningful Be inspiring

### *How to make a good presentation*

*Don’t tell, show*

**“Make it visual, you will explain it in person”**

You will engage your audience if you manage to visualize your message. Long texts, complex or disorganized slides will not help. Slides are not to be used as the speaker’s “cheat sheet”. It is YOU who tells the “story”, you only need the slides to make it visual and help the audience focus on your speech and help them understand and remember your message. **We want to go...**



### *Create Memory*

#### **“Make it simple”**

You will only engage your public when your *message* creates *meaning* for each specific *audience*. So start by understanding the audience and the way they process information. *It's all about the audience.*

#### **How people process information**

- We have short periods of attention
- We pay attention only to a few pieces of simultaneous information

#### **What helps people learn faster and more meaningfully?**

- Visuals + narration
- Visuals are processed 60,000 times faster than text

#### **How far do people remember?**

- Our working memory is short-term (we forget 90% in 30 seconds)
- Working memory processes limited information

- Working memory relies mostly on acoustic and visual info
- Only meaningful information (relevant to the audience) will be remembered long-term
- People retain:
  - 80% of what they see
  - 20% of what they read
  - 10% of what they listen

### Take advantage of how people process information to create meaning and be more effective

#### People will forget

Long text  
Unclear messages  
Long series of data  
Most of what you say

#### People will remember

Visual information  
Short, clear information  
Personalised, meaningful content  
Stories

### *Before the presentation*

#### *Design the slides to connect*

Translate your ideas into visual images. Design an effective and appealing layout and style for your presentation. Apply the golden rule: **Keep it simple.**

As Garr Reynolds says, “*make it ZEN for them*”.

#### Single key message per slide

- Understood in 3 seconds
- Only relevant information
- Few key points
- Be specific
- Add descriptive title
- Do not put subheadings

#### Reduce text

- Easy to read
- Only keywords or phrases
- No long text



### **Inspirational, high-quality visuals**

- Simple graphs, easy to understand
- Choose images that speak for themselves
- Use high quality photographs (be careful with copyrights)
- No 3D effects

### **Clear layout**

- Leave blank space, let it breathe
- No overcrowded slides
- No clutter: eliminate superfluous information (copyright, date...)

### **Clean design**

- Few matching colours
- Very few fonts
- Plain or simple backgrounds
- Group related objects together so that relation is understood immediately
- Align objects: connect them through their edges. It creates sense of order
- Create contrast to add visual interest
- Repeat some aspects of the design throughout the entire presentation to give visual coherence

### *Convey your message, “Make it meaningful”*

Before you go to PowerPoint, plan your presentation. Think about the purpose. Define the appropriate message for each specific audience, because it’s all about the audience in a presentation. Define the structure to tell the “story”.

### **Tailor your message**

You create meaning when your message is relevant for the people, so you need to give your content a different approach for each audience. Before you begin, ask yourself:

**What is the purpose of this event or meeting? What is my own purpose in this context?**

Your message can be different in each presentation depending on the purpose of the meeting or the event. Are you trying to persuade authorities to support your strategy? Establishing collaboration with another organisation? Each purpose calls for a different style and meaning.

**Make sure your presentation:**

- Conveys memorable messages
- A limited number of messages will make it more effective: do not overwhelm the audience
- Illustrate complex ideas with stories: it makes it easier to understand

**What type of audience? What do they want?**

Different target groups have different expertise and interests. Do not recite the same presentation event after event. Tailor your presentation in a way that the audience can relate to it.

E.g. authorities will probably want to know more about Project results in general while final beneficiaries will want to know how to exactly implement the Project results. Tailor your messages to each audience.

You can save time by having a basic general presentation available. However, to make it really powerful, you need to make an individual presentation for each audience. You can make use of the relevant parts of the general presentation but for the new presentation you need to:

- Adapt your messages and content
- Leave out slides that have no or little meaning for the audience in question
- Choose the stories, anecdotes or examples that make a point to the specific audience
- Add new slides to address the specific purpose and message for that event or meeting

*During the presentation*

*Structure the content*

Outline your ideas and define a structure that organizes all the content. Look at the big picture. Arrange your ideas in a smooth, logical sequence.

**Opening**

You have a few seconds to attract the audience's attention so you need a strong beginning: introduce the issue to be addressed, how it links to the theme of the event/ meeting, state your purpose and main message.

**Development**

Break each section making a key point and present your ideas incrementally in a logical order.

### **Summary and closure**

Briefly summarize your main points. Reinforce your main message within the big picture and prompt your audience to action if your purpose requires it.

### **To organise your ideas, define the whole sequence of slides:**

- Create an outline for all the presentation
- Plan the order, group into sections if needed
- Sketch each slide
- Write down key points
- Draw quick ideas for visuals, charts or photos
- Define which stories or anecdotes better exemplify or address your messages.

### *Deliver and connect*

#### **“Be inspiring, talk to engage”**

The best presentation is when you listen to the speaker and you can imagine the story he or she is telling you. You are engaged. You want more. PowerPoint or whichever means you use, is only a tool to make your message visual. You are the one who delivers. It is you who can connect with the audience and engage them into action. You are the one who can make them imagine, who generates trust and conviction that you have the right message. You are the presentation.

### **Bring out your acting skills to connect with your audience and engage them. Here are some tips:**

- Start with an ice breaker to capture the audience’s attention
- Don’t read your slides, the audience will disconnect
- Deliver the message in your words and at your own pace. Synchronise the slides to your speech. Show the next slide at the same time you begin talking about it.
- Pause from one key point or section to the other. Allow yourself and the audience to process the information
- Project your voice. You want the back row to hear you
- Maintain eye contact with a number of specific people in different parts of the room
- Add humour when appropriate. Your audience interest will rise
- Show enthusiasm and energy
- Act naturally
- Use a conversational approach: create the feeling of an enlarged conversation

### **Use your body language to persuade**

70% of your language comes out of your body so it is important that your body language shows enthusiasm and confidence. It needs to be coherent with your speech.

- Preferably don't be seated.
- Move away from the podium and, occasionally, move towards the audience.
- Take care of your posture: don't lean backwards, droop your shoulders or keep your head down.
- Don't stand rigid or with arms crossed. It shows lack of confidence. Keep them open in front.
- Emphasize your words with hand gestures. It helps your audience follow your speech.
- Avoid hands in pockets, clapping or other repetitive movements that portray nervousness.
- Show attentiveness while other speakers talk.
- Don't move in excess, it distracts the audience.
- Don't turn your back to your audience, it disconnects them from you.

### *Make good use of time and tools*

#### **Do not use your slides as the lecture notes for your audience.**

If you want your audience to have further information, prepare a separate hand-out that summarises your messages and their meaning: the key points you want your audience to remember. You can use a printed version of your slides with notes at the bottom, infographics or an executive summary, for example. However, please consider the environmentally-friendly approach of the BalkanMed Programme: only print the very necessary documents!

Hand them at the end of your presentation to make sure the audience focuses on your speech instead of disconnecting to read the hand out. In other cases as in training events or working meetings, for example, you can choose to give the handouts some days before so that your audience can read them in advance. It will support long term learning as well as quicker progress of work and decision taking.

#### **Stick to the given time, even if it is reduced from original schedule.**

A long presentation that delays the next will annoy your audience. However, if you contribute to the agility of the whole event, the audience will have a positive impression.

**If a previous speaker has already conveyed part of your messages, do not repeat all of them again.** Simply make a brief reference to the common messages or specify new perspectives, then dedicate more time to the messages that have not been mentioned. In general, interlinking

of the given presentations and underlining how the big picture comes together makes it easier for the audience to understand the joint message (where applicable).

### *Resources and tools*

For information and examples on simple and powerful presentations, visit:

- TED Talks ([www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)). See examples of really powerful presentations.
- Garr Reynolds site, author of the book “Presentation Zen” (<http://www.garreynolds.com>)
- Nancy Duarte, author of Slide:ology (<http://www.duarte.com/book/slideology>)
- Witt Communications ([www.wittcom.com](http://www.wittcom.com)). A website for public speaking with tips and links.

### **Use of illustrations and photos:**

- iStockphoto ([www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com) ). You can download quality images for free (type “Free images”).

The techniques shared here are based on the presentation with PowerPoint, the most commonly used tool. Most of them can also be applied to other interesting tools available. Here are some:

- Prezi ([www.prezi.com](http://www.prezi.com))  
An alternative to PowerPoint with animation and visual templates that has become quite popular.
- eMaze ([www.emaze.com](http://www.emaze.com))  
Similar to Prezi, with this tool you can create your presentations online.
- VideoScribe ([www.videoscribe.co](http://www.videoscribe.co))  
It allows you to create a video based on animation. Design or technical know-how is not needed.
- Audacity (<https://sourceforge.net/Projects/audacity>)  
A free multi-track audio editor.
- Venngage (<https://venngage.com>); Canva ([www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com)); and Piktochart ([www.piktochart.com](http://www.piktochart.com))  
Free infographic makers.

## Publish

### Websites and Webspaces

Websites are primary information and communication channels for Projects. The Project website is the main communication tool for all BalkanMed Projects as it is efficient (in terms of time and human resources), effective, easily updated with the latest information and accessible to those interested. Websites are the first place for many target groups to find information from. The website is a source of information not only for Project stakeholders but also for the wider public.

A webspace or webpage is a page with different sections provided for a Project under a Programme website. Interreg Programmes' combined experience in the previous Programming Period has shown that although websites were very useful channels for many Projects, many beneficiaries also published Project websites solely for publishing simple descriptions of their Projects, their partners, Project news and basic materials. Things that would not necessarily have required a separate website. In order to save funds and assist beneficiaries with their online communications, the BalkanMed Programme is in this period going for the webspace option.

Benefits of webspaces include:

- Helps Projects save funds.
- Allows the target groups to access detailed and up to date information and materials from Projects under one single website.
- Provides an outline for the Projects that have no or little idea on what kind of information they should be publishing about their Projects.
- Let Projects exploit website traffic the Programme website already gets. Boosts traffic on the Programme website.
- Reduces workload of Project partners.

The BalkanMed website (<http://www.interreg-balkanmed.eu>) includes and hosts one webpage per Project in the Programme website. The integrated system of Programme and Project websites facilitates the monitoring of Project activities and it saves financial and human resources. No costs are needed for creating and maintaining the Project website since these services are offered by the Programme free of charge and the website is responsive to different kind of devices.

The Project webpages will have the same structure for all Projects, and will include:

- Pre-filled information fields with data from the Application Form: partnership, budget, etc.
- Dynamic information to be filled in by Projects: Project summary, Project results, news and events, etc.

BalkanMed Projects must also create their own website with a life reaching beyond the Project and being a Project output itself and not a simple communication tool. The Project will be required to follow the Programme's visual guidelines.

### *Project websites*

A well designed Project website can be a key management tool, capable of raising the profile of the Project and improve dissemination of its results to a wide range of stakeholders. However, the target groups and needs vary greatly from Project to Project.

Information can be made available also using other channels like via social media accounts or Project partner organisations' websites. Using the different available online solutions for communication should always be considered thinking of whom the Project aims to reach and what the best tools to get through to them are. Also, consider the needed resources for keeping the website up to date. Having an outdated and passive website does not serve any purpose.

- A website must be continuously updated and maintained. Launching websites and abandoning them is unfortunately a common practise by Projects and should be avoided. Keep the site up to date and make it active. Regularly update your website with news, information on Project's developments/ results and the benefits they bring.
- The main updates on a website should be clearly dated.
- Make sure the link to your Project website is present on each partner institution website, including a short description of the Project (aim, results, financial support from the EU) as stated in the regulations.
- Use the internal Library of documents in the Project website for exchanging documents among partners and for Project management purposes.
- Publish on your website, but also publicise your website! Put the address on all print items, press releases, paper and electronic correspondence, etc. Include a link to the Project's website, apart from on the websites of Project partners, on other relevant stakeholders' websites.
- At the end of the project the website should be archived onto a CD-ROM, USB disk (or other drive) or online (permanent) storage.

#### **Tips**

Make your website easy to use;

Do not overload it (especially the start page) with information;

Use the "3 click principle" – users should not have to click more than 3 times in order to find the information that they are looking for. 2 clicks and even 1 click are increasingly becoming the trend;

Use language your readers would use;

Place keywords high on the page;

Update content frequently;

Link your website to your social media accounts, use follow buttons;  
Include SEO in your term of references while procuring for the website development;  
Build website content around programme keywords;  
Use language your readers would use;



## Social media

Social media has strongly shaped the communication landscape in the past few years and it seems impossible to leave it out of any communication strategy today. Social networking, photo and video sharing applications, blogs and wikis represent the power of social media in our time.

The main reason why social media has emerged as an efficient communication tool lies on its interactivity. Users are able to generate content as they have become active online members. Now users not only read information but create their own by expressing their views and sharing information with a potentially large audience.

Many organisations have resorted to social media as communication tool since it maximises cost-efficiency. The distribution of online information usually helps reach a wider audience, as posts may deepen on many levels and go viral.

Interreg Programmes in Europe and their Projects have joined the trend by starting to make use of some of the more popular social media tools. Information is disseminated on Facebook and Twitter, pictures are displayed on Instagram and Flickr, community groups created on LinkedIn and Yammer, videos uploaded to Vimeo and YouTube.

### *Added value of social media*

- Low-cost
- Interactive
- Fast, real time information and interaction
- An increase of traffic to your website
- Added value in branding
- Virality of messages (but also of negative messages)
- Good possibility of linking and networking with relevant actors
- Knowledge increase in your field(s) of expertise

### *Which one(s) to use?*

When starting the trip in social media, many organisations want to be part of many of them. But again, as with all communication tools, the use needs to be well planned and need-based. Presence in social media will not be successful if you cannot sustain it over a longer period of time. It is to be carefully evaluated whether a social media tool will really provide added value to your overall communication strategy, mainly the target groups and messages to deliver to them – is social media a good tool to reach them and if so, which one of the many possible alternatives.

Do you have the resources to use the channels? Being active in social media is a serious task of which the needed inputs should not be under estimated. Without these considerations the use of social media can turn out to be a waste of time and energy.

#### *Tips for Facebook and Twitter*

- Make an accurate social media strategy, especially for communication campaigns. What messages are put out on what channels, who are the target groups in the different platforms, how often to publish, who to do it etc.
- Start by following people and organisations within your network. The more you follow, the more you are followed.
- Keep your audience engaged, post regularly but do not overload (“spam”) them with unrelated information. Make the connection of the content of your posts and your own activities clear to the followers (e.g. when sharing someone else’s post, include an intro to it making it clear how this is relevant to your followers).
- Include links to your posts for more info.
- Include pictures to your posts. It will make your information more attractive. Posts with images get more interaction.
- Do not post the same info to all your social media platforms. Play to the strengths of each social channel. Define what types of posts are published on what platform. This is especially important if there are several people using and publishing content on your channels.
- Try to post real-time info.
- Make sure your profile image is visible enough (focus on the image, small letters will never be read by your followers). It’s compulsory to include the BalkanMed Project’s logo in a prominent visible place.
- Upload attractive cover images for your profile.
- Avoid complex terminology. Be informal in your posts.
- Respond to the messages even if they are negative.

#### *Tips for Facebook*

- Remove the link from the post after inserting it (the thumbnail will be generated and will remain visible anyway).
- Create photo albums to have a better organised photo archive.
- Make the texts short and catchy.

#### *Tips for Twitter*

- Use innovative hashtags in order to be distinguished from others.
- Use the reference @BalkanMed if your content is of interest for the BalkanMed community.

- When replying to a tweet, make sure it appears on the tweet feed, so that it can be seen by more followers and on your timeline when viewed from desktop (this –currently– can be done by including punctuation before the mentioned handle)

#### *Free social media management tools*

- *Hootsuite* to manage multiple social media accounts.
- *TweetDeck* to manage different Twitter accounts.
- *Buffer* for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+ to analyse your followers profile and increase your posts' exposure.

#### *Free analytical tools*

Tracking your posts' performance on social media will enable you grasp your followers' interests, behaviour and help you organise your future posts, their style, contents and timing. The default analytical services provided by mainstream social media channels usually provide the basic data that Programmes can make use of.

## Media

BalkanMed Projects have more possibilities to attract media than the BalkanMed Programme as a whole, because of their concrete results with impact at local/ regional level which can catch the attention of local/ regional media. BalkanMed Projects should try to attract media as much as possible during their implementation activities as a good way to disseminate their results.

### *How to deal with the media?*

There are no written rules on how to deal with journalists. Every organisation has its own strategy and social skills. However, experience shows that some factors are helpful when contacting the media and “selling” our information.

- Journalists have little time. They strive to gather all the key elements of a story (picture, testimonials, confirmed source) and jump from one topic to another depending on the daily issues they have to cover. This bustling and stressful professional routine requires an extra effort from the organisation/ person that sends out information to them. How to catch the attention of a journalist?
- Keep it simple. Journalists appreciate clear and understandable information. Don't overload an article with complex jargon and acronyms that only EU actors understand.
- In line with the aforementioned rule, try to use plain English. Words such as “eligibility”, “ETC”, “decommitment”, “work package” and “thematic objective 11” are unlikely to be known by people outside the EU Project world. Concentrate on the everyday related content, practical benefits, and leave out the technicalities about the Project.
- Present a story that the media and society can identify with. Abstract profound concepts are good for background articles, features and other formats. However, if you'd like to attract the attention of local media, present a local story, e.g. a Project that helps the city be more environmentally friendly.
- Professional courtesy: both sides (information sender and recipient) have to demonstrate mutual respect. This is only possible if each party truly takes into account the routines associated with the other's role.
- Build a win-win partnership with the journalist. The institution is not the only party seeking the accomplishment of an objective (to have the information published) but also the journalist gets benefits from this partnership: an interesting story, attractive or powerful images and the possibility to include sources that are valuable for their media.
- Say you are available, be truly available and remain available! This means you will be available not only until the publication of your article but also if the journalist contacts you again for further information (maybe about other topics).

## Before you start writing... A couple of things you should know!

### *The Inverted Pyramid*

The “inverted pyramid” is the model for newswriting. It simply means that **the most important information should be at the top** – the beginning– **of your story**, and the least important information should go at the bottom. That way, even if a person doesn’t read the whole article, he/ she gets the main idea, the message you are trying to highlight overall. Consequently, as the reader moves from top to

bottom, the information presented should gradually become less important.

### *The lead/ introduction*

The lead (or opening paragraph) is the first paragraph of any article. It’s also the most important. The lead must accomplish several things:

- Give readers the main points of the story;
- Get readers interested in reading the story;
- Summarise the entire article.

Typically, leads should not be longer than 50-60 words since readers want to know in a glimpse what the piece of news is all about. What should you include in the lead? Journalists **use the five “W’s and the H”**: who, what, where, when, why and how.

Who Who is the story about?	What What is the story about?	Where Where did the event you’re writing about occur?	When When did it occur?	Why Why did this happen?	How How did this happen?
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### *OK, now how can I make my press release interesting?*

- Choose a clear, short headline in which you clearly state what the reader is going to learn if he/ she dives into the article;
- Identify your audience and choose the right style accordingly (serious or funny, specific or general). If the press release has to be sent to different targets, change your style/ angle (and even the content) to make it useful;
- One catchy tip is to include a question in the opening line to get the reader's interest. For example: "Have you ever wondered how to recycle fiberglass? The European Project XX does it for you!";
- Remember that the Project technicalities are often the least interesting thing for a journalist and he/ she will not be impressed by explanations of budgets, ERDFs, long organisation names etc. They want to see where the local story is, what is the concrete benefit to people. The main message to get in is that this was brought to the people by the European Union funding in cooperation with other European countries;
- Use correct grammar and proofread for errors and typos before sending out the information;
- Add powerful high resolution photographs or drawings that depict your press release;
- Use the communication unit(s) of your institution and your partner’s institutions to disseminate the press release through their media databases. Involve the Project’s partners on it;
- Try to link the press release to a special moment of the Project: e.g. invitation to a Project event, production of one output;
- Inform the BalkanMed JS about all the Project appearances in media
- Make sure that the EU funding is mentioned in the article/ news.

## **Part III: Communication Plan template**

## *General communication strategy*

### *Objectives*

1. Overall communication objectives
2. Target groups
  - Within the country(ies) of the Programme where the action is implemented
  - Within the EU (as applicable)
3. Specific objectives for each target group, related to the action's objectives and the phases of the Project cycle

Examples of communication objectives:

- ensure that the beneficiary population is aware of the roles of the partner and of the EU in the activity
- raise awareness among the host country population or in Europe of the roles of the partner and of
- the EU in delivering aid in a particular context
- raise awareness of how the EU and the partner work together to support education, health, environment, etc

### *Communication activities*

1. Main activities that will take place during the period covered by the communication and visibility plan

Include details of:

- the nature of the activities
- the responsibilities for delivering the activities

2. Communication tools chosen

Include details of advantages of particular tools (media, advertising, events, etc.) in the local context

### *Indicators of achievements*

1. Completion of the communication objectives

Include indicators of achievement for the different tools proposed

2. Provisions for feedback (when applicable)

Give details of assessment forms or other means used to get feedback on the activity from participants

### *Resources*

1. Human Resources

- Person/ days required to implement the communication activities
  - Members of the management team responsible for communication activities
2. Financial resources
- Budget required to implement the communication activities (in absolute figures and as a percentage of the overall budget for the action)





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