

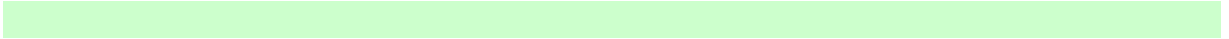
COMMUNICATION PLAN
Black Sea
Joint Operational Programme
2007-2013



November 2007

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the significance of information and communication has become much more widely recognized within the European Commission. There is increased consciousness of the need to stimulate awareness and counteract the EU public's widespread. A clearly understood form of governance bringing together the European Union and its citizens needs to evolve, characterized by an improvement in popular perceptions of the Union and leading to a greater general awareness of the European dimension. In approaching this goal, the European Commission now recognizes that communication is a major instrument. Good communication is crucial for technical assistance and programme implementation. It is vital to work with stakeholders, potential applicants and the general public in order to raise awareness for the programme and its potential results in terms of project outputs.

The Communication Plan for the Black Sea Joint Operational Programme 2007-2013 (from now on called Black Sea JOP) sets out the strategic guidelines for the information and publicity measures that will ensure a good knowledge about the Black Sea JOP and the contribution of the European Union to the development of the border regions and target groups concerned.

A strategic approach for the Communication on the Black Sea JOP represents a necessity due to the strong and obvious connection between the success of CBC policies, a coherent and efficient system of information and publicity measures. These measures have to reflect the content of the activities carried out through the programme and have to guarantee a high degree of transparency regarding the use of funds.

Therefore, the plan contains:

- The aims and the target groups,
- The strategy and content of the information and publicity measures to be taken by the Joint Managing Authority (JMA),
- The indicative budget for implementation of the plan,
- The bodies responsible for the implementation of the above-mentioned measures,
- The indicators for the evaluation

The instruments used for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the communication plan shall be proportional to the information and publicity measures identified in the communication plan. The JMA will, in accordance with the communication plan, ensure that the operational programme is widely disseminated, with details of the financial contributions from the Funds concerned and that it is made available to all interested parties.

The communication plan will provide potential beneficiaries with clear and detailed information on at least the following topics:

(a) conditions of eligibility to be met in order to qualify for financing under an operational programme;

- (b) Description of the procedures for evaluating applications for funding and of the time periods involved;
- (c) criteria for selecting the projects to be financed;
- (d) contacts at national, regional or local level that can provide information on the operational programmes.

The following bodies that can widely disseminate clear and detailed information will be involved in information and publicity measures:

- (a) National, regional and local authorities and development agencies;
- (b) Trade and professional associations;
- (c) Economic and social partners;
- (d) Non-governmental organisations;
- (e) Organisations representing business environment;
- (f) EuroInfo Centers and Commission representations in the Member States and partner countries;
- (g) Educational institutions.

The communication plan will include the following measures:

- (a) A major information activity publicising the launch of an operational programme, even in the absence of the final version of the communication plan;
- (b) At least one major information activity every year, presenting the achievements of the operational programme(s) including, where relevant, major projects;
- (c) Flying the European flag during one week starting 9 May, in front of the premises of each managing authority;
- (d) The publication, electronically or otherwise, of the list of beneficiaries, the names of the operations and the amount of public funding allocated to the operations.

The main elements composing the reference framework for the Communication Plan of Black Sea JOP are listed as follows:

- *Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24.10.2006, laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument, Art. 11(2).*
- *Regulation (EC) No 951/2007 of 9 August 2007 laying down implementing rules for the cross-border cooperation programmes financed in the framework of the Regulation No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument. Article 42 of the Regulation states that the Joint Managing Authority is responsible for the implementation of the information and visibility actions of the joint operational programme. In particular, the Joint Managing Authority shall take all necessary steps to ensure the visibility of the Community financing or co-financing in relation to its own activities and to the activities of*

the projects financed under the programme. Such measures shall comply with the relevant rules on the visibility of external actions laid down and published by the Commission.

- *Cross-Border Cooperation within the European Neighborhood and partnership Instrument (ENPI). Black Sea Joint Operational Programme.* The Programme includes a section referring to Information, publicity and visibility, where the role of information within the Programme is recalled, as well as the tasks of the JMA and of the others actors involved in the implementation of information activities.
- *European Union Visibility Guidelines for External Actions (2005)* providing the formats to ensure a correct use of the EU logos and emblems.
- *Regional Capacity Building Initiative II” project (RCBI II).* The European Commission will implement the project for a period of 36 months starting from January 2007. The overall objective of this project is to assist Black Sea partner countries in the finalization of all the cross-border cooperation programmes within ENPI, and to strengthen their capacity for preparing and implementing projects within the framework of these programmes.

In order to respond to the necessity of information and publicity that may have dynamic characteristics, the Plan could be subject to amendments during the implementation of the Programme so to receive possible and needed integration. A mid term review could be proposed, on the basis of the results achieved by the Programme, to re-define some aspects of the Plan could be taken into consideration.

2. STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

Communications in the field of EU-supported territorial cooperation is a specialist area reflecting the complexity of the subject matter itself. In broad lines, the need for sustained communication activities through information and publicity campaigns mainly arises from the need for immediate, accurate and correct information.

In the case of communication on EU-funds, apart from raising awareness on the funds available through the CBC Operational Programmes, the communication activities also aim at increasing the level of transparency and of public trust in the bodies managing these funds.

In order to address the challenges emerging in the area and in terms of relations with other southern and eastern EU neighbors, EU decided during 2003 to promote **a new approach** in cooperation with neighbor countries, which resulted in the release of a comprehensive new strategy in May 2004, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)¹. In order to implement this Strategy, financial means are being made available through the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

The Black Sea Basin JOP is one of three maritime basin programmes established in the framework of the ENPI CBC strategy, one of the most complex, even if it has a limited financial allocation. The Black Sea Basin eligible area sums up a territory of 834,719 sq. km. and includes a population of 74.2 million people.

The large number of partners, the extent of the eligible territory, the participation of three type of partners –(EU Members States, one negotiating candidate country and partner countries), and the fresh start of the European Neighborhood Partnership Instrument makes programme implementation especially demanding in terms of human technical resources logistics and extremely expensive in relation to the total financial allocation for the programme.

At the same time there are a lot of expectations related to this programme dedicated to an active area where regional initiatives of cooperation are promoted and supported by Governments of the partner countries and different international donors.

The JMA will take advantage of the existing cooperation networks in order to promote and communicate the aims and content of the Black Sea JOP, and will look to foster synergies and complementarities with the regional initiatives active in the area.

The above points set the context of the information and communication measures foreseen by the current Communication plan.

Furthermore, the specificity of the Black Sea JOP involving ten countries sets the objectives for communication activities/tools that are easily accessible (internet), easily reproduced (leaflets, posters, simple press ads), and targeting multicultural and multilingual target groups.

2.1 Global Objective

To ensure transparency and consistency for correct information of the target groups about the financing opportunities offered through the Black Sea JOP 2007-2013.

¹ European Neighbourhood Policy STRATEGY PAPER COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION COM (2004) 373 final Brussels, 12.5.2004

2.2 Specific objectives.

- To achieve the successful implementation of the programme by ensuring effective communication system and channels at all levels and by providing targeted and qualified information to all identified targets
- To encourage an efficient partnership between potential beneficiaries and public administration in the countries involved
- To contribute to establishing an efficient system for internal communication between interested parties involved in the implementation of the Black Sea JOP;
- To make available all relevant information in what concerns the requests, eligibility conditions, procedures and good practices that a potential applicant must know;
- To ensure visibility and multiplication of results obtained by implementing the Black Sea JOP;
- To foster synergies and complementarities with the regional initiatives active in the area;
- To disseminate information in relation to different projects that have received assistance from the programme;
- To develop an information and cooperation network incorporating entities from the public and the private sector in view of further generating a positive awareness on the use of European funds.
- To inform the general public on the added value of EU assistance and its role for the regions of the countries participating in the Black Sea JOP;
- To obtain the support of public opinion on the necessity for such a programme, and also about the objectives and benefits of each measure included in the Programme;
- To promote information, awareness and conformity with the cross cutting themes of the Programme i.e. equal opportunities and sustainable development

3. TARGET AUDIENCE

Communication activities primarily should be directed to potential applicants to ensure that they are properly and in time informed about the opportunities of funding, about calls for proposals and simultaneously to make sure that they understand the administrative process and implementation mechanism.

The secondary target group is the general public as indirect beneficiary who should be aware of the existence of the programme, its goals and expected results as a whole, as well as of the results and benefits achieved by the projects implemented.

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

The counties/regions that are eligible under the programme are:

Bulgaria: NUTS II regions of Severoiztochen, Yugoiztochen

Greece: NUTS II regions of Kentriki Makedonia, Anatoliki Makedonia Thraki

Romania: NUTS II region of South-East

Russia: Rostov Oblast, Krasnodar Krai, Adygea republic

Turkey: Nuts II equivalent regions of Istanbul, Tekirdağ, Kocaeli, Zonguldak, Kastamonu, Samsun, and Trabzon

Ukraine: Odessa, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Zaporosh'ye and Donetsk Oblasts, Crimea Republic and Sevastopol

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova- with the whole country

The following description of the target audience refers to the above-mentioned eligible regions only.

The target audience consists of:

- Potential beneficiaries
- Potential applicants and applicants for funding
- Grant holders and their partners
- The general public
- Decision makers
- Mass-media

In order to better clarify the target audience, it is divided into two main target groups: primary and secondary targets

Primary target audience:

The primary target group is the potential applicants/ beneficiaries for all priorities of the programme. The summary list of all potential applicants/beneficiaries is:

- Local governments and their associations
- Non-governmental non-profit organisations (NGOs)
- Regional development agencies and other development organizations
- Chambers of Commerce and other professional organizations
- Social partners
- Other public or non-profit organisations, including local branches of universities, schools and colleges

Secondary target audience:

- General public of the countries/regions eligible
- Stakeholders as following:

Programme management bodies:

- Joint Monitoring Committee
- National Authorities
- Audit Authority
- European Commission

Governmental bodies:

- Decentralized bodies in Black Sea Basin and Romania relevant to the bordering regions
- National, Regional and Local authorities and administrations
- Joint bodies of partner countries and the Local Community

Non-state actors:

- Mass-media
- NGOs active at local bordering level
- Trade associations of the bordering regions
- Women and youth organizations
- Cross-border associations
- Cultural, research and scientific organizations
- Organizations representing economic and social interests

International organizations/institutions/networks active in the area like:

- Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)
- Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership
- Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)
- Commission for the Protection of the Black Sea against pollution
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

4. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY MEASURES

The Communication Plan for the Black Sea JOP, is aimed, on one side, at disseminating information about the programme and thus increasing the participation into the programme by the potential beneficiaries, resulting into increased absorption and transparency; and on the other side at increasing awareness about the initiative to the general public and the citizens of the regions involved.

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

1. The use of key messages
2. The expression of messages in an attention-holding way so that target audience will remember them
3. The use of various communication channels, proportional with its impact
4. The constant repetition of messages over a sustained period of time, maintaining the interest of the target group
5. The development of messages with a view not only to inform but also to motivate people/potential beneficiaries to take action
6. The permanent and systematic monitoring and evaluation of the information and publicity measures

Steps shall be taken, at the time of the original launch of assistance and of the main phases of implementation, to alert the regional media as appropriate; such steps may include press releases, placing of articles, supplements in the most suitable newspapers and site visits. Other means of information and communication will also be used such as a website, publications describing successful projects and competitions to identify best practice. These media channels and the ways in which they are to be used in order to achieve the strategic goals will be described in the following part of the Strategy².

The JMA will prepare a visibility manual for the programme in line with the rules on visibility for external actions drawn up by the EC.

² NOTE: All the materials will bear the logo and tagline/slogan of the European Territorial Cooperation Romania – Black Sea Basin, developed under the Phare 2004 financed project “Awareness Campaign for ROP”

No	Measure	Tools	Responsible Body	Target audience
1	Information			
		<p>1.1 Website The Programme's dedicated internet website will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide general information on the European Territorial Cooperation Programme: regulations, institutional framework, official documents, etc • Provide complete information on the financing opportunities³, format and content of the applications, selection criteria, procedures to follow (incl. publicity guidelines) • Contacts, in the Joint Managing Authority, Joint Technical Secretariat and National Info Points • Partner search facility • Publish the list of beneficiaries, the title of the projects and the amount of public funding allocated to the projects • Provide information on the activity of the Joint Monitoring Committee, Selection Committees and other relevant committees: minutes, decisions, reports etc., as soon as they become available to public. • Provide documentary archives and best-practice advice and information on how to access and utilize the financial assistance 	JMA, JTS	Primary, secondary
		<p>1.2 Publications One leaflet containing general information could be developed at the beginning of the implementation. The leaflet will be made in a simple language presenting the objectives, priorities and measures of the programme, the eligible potential applicants and the expected results. The recommended format of this multi-lingual leaflet is: maximum 4 A4 folded in two, 4-color print, 110 gr. paper.</p> <p>Additionally in every call for proposals a leaflet could be elaborated, to promote the specific call, providing useful information for the potential applicant in a summarised form. The leaflets will include the objective of the call, the eligible applicants, the type of actions that can be financed, the deadlines and where additional information can be gained. The recommended format of these leaflets is: maximum 2 A4 folded in two, 4-color print, 110 gr. paper.</p> <p>Special attention will be paid in the dissemination of these leaflets. The general programme leaflet that will mainly work as a programme's presentation will be widely distributed through all local stakeholders, i.e. local authorities, RDAs, county councils, Banks, local Chambers, and as an insert into local newspapers. The specific leaflets will be distributed by the JTS through the National Info Points in the participating countries to the targeted potential beneficiaries, as well as local information relayers (media, etc). The distribution will be done electronically and/or by post depending on the financial resources available. The leaflets will be made available also on the website.</p> <p>An e-newsletter could be part of the site, regularly informing potential beneficiaries and social and economic partnership about the main news on implementation of the programme. The newsletter, which will be drafted with the contribution of the participating countries, will also give relevance to the territories and will ensure a regional dissemination.</p> <p>Some actions of the Programme could be promoted through posters or banners, posted in public areas in the interested territories. They could be used to promote the Programme and its objectives, as well as to inform about the launch of a specific call for proposal or about the</p>	JMA	Primary, secondary

³ The "Call for proposals" section of the site is intended to be the most visible one.

No	Measure	Tools	Responsible Body	Target audience
		implementation of a project considered particularly relevant for a specific area.		
		<p>1.3 Help desk A help desk at the local level will act as main information point for all interested parties, operating at the JTS office and at the National Info Points offices in the partner countries. The helpdesk could be activate on determined</p>	JTS	Primary
		<p>1.4 Establishment of an Information network Collaboration partnerships with organizations in the public sector (acting locally in the Black Sea region) and local NGOs are essential for the communication activities of the programme. The network will be build locally and it will operate as information relayers for all activities of the Programme. Memorandum of Understanding could be signed with the members of the network and the JMA/JTS, where the network members will act as intermediaries for getting messages into the local communities they operate and thus acting as information multipliers.</p>	JMA, JTS	Primary, secondary
2	Promotion			
		<p>2.1 Publicity campaign The media campaign will concentrate on the promotion of the Programme, dissemination of information and news concerning the financing opportunities, availability of the financial assistance and ways to access it, with the purpose of attracting potential beneficiaries towards the more in-depth information sources available. The JMA will initiate and maintain close relations with the press, especially in terms of news feeding. The website at 1.1 will contain a section dedicated to journalists, in which facts and events in an already synthesized publishable form will be available. This "Press Room" will have available a <i>news database</i>, a <i>last period synopsis</i>, a <i>calendar of events</i> for the upcoming period, the <i>public agenda of the Joint Monitoring Committee</i> and of the Joint Managing Authority and <i>contact information</i> for the journalists who need to address a "human-source". Press releases will be regularly sent to National and Local media, when newsworthy information exists. On the approval of the Programme and in on the occasion of any milestone press conferences could be organized both by the JMA and the participating countries. Information on the local/national press could be considered as well to launch call for proposals and to inform the large audience about any relevant news of the Programme.</p>	JMA	Primary, secondary
		<p>2.2. Launching event/ Press conference One launching event shall be organised with (two) representatives of each country (JTS) and relevant media from Romania, where the leaflet shall be distributed.</p>	JMA/JTS	Primary, secondary
3	Training			
		<p>3.1 Meetings/Seminars/ workshops There will be different kinds of events aimed at information, training and partnership. They could be very different in terms of target involved and of subject dealt. The seminars will concentrate on addressing the information needs of the potential beneficiaries of the financial assistance provided within the programme. For every launch an Information seminar will be organised in the partner countries, where the call for proposals will be presented analytically.</p>	JMA, JTS	Primary

5. INDICATIVE BUDGET

	Constant Prices	Current Prices	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Information events											
Conferences for the launching and closing of the Programme, for the search of new partners, for the diffusion of the results, etc.	324,000	355,525.67	32,800.00	42,025.00	75,382.37	88,305.04	79,198.56	23,193.86		14,620.84	
<i>sub total</i>	324,000	355,525.67	32,800.00	42,025.00	75,382.37	88,305.04	79,198.56	23,193.86		14,620.84	
Documents and information material											
Production and diffusion of leaflets, gadgets, publications, cd-rom, etc.	605,000	665,779.52	41,000.00	63,037.50	161,533.65	165,571.95	135,768.96	92,775.44		6,092.02	
<i>sub total</i>	605,000	665,779.52	41,000.00	63,037.50	161,533.65	165,571.95	135,768.96	92,775.44		6,092.02	
Web-site development, management, maintenance and updating											
Maintenance and update of the Programme's website (from 2008 to 2016)	70,500	78,438.72	3,075.00	12,607.50	12,922.69	13,245.76	13,576.90	13,916.32	3,566.06	3,655.21	1,873.29
<i>sub total</i>	70,500	78,438.72	3,075.00	12,607.50	12,922.69	13,245.76	13,576.90	13,916.32	3,566.06	3,655.21	1,873.29
Capacity building seminars for JMA, JTS, NIP's and LP											
Training seminars organized in the countries participating to the Programme	32,500	36,555.00	2,562.50	5,253.13	5,384.46	2,759.53	5,657.04	5,798.47	2,971.72	3,046.01	3,122.16
<i>sub total</i>	32,500	36,555.00	2,562.50	5,253.13	5,384.46	2,759.53	5,657.04	5,798.47	2,971.72	3,046.01	3,122.16
TOTAL COMMUNICATION PLAN	1,032,000	1,136,298.90	79,437.50	122,923.13	255,223.17	269,882.28	234,201.46	135,684.08	6,537.77	27,414.07	4,995.45
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Index for calculation the current price by increasing the originally value with 2.5% in each year (constant variation rate 2.5% for the entire period of the Programme)		1.00	1.025	1.050625	1.076891	1.103813	1.131408	1.159693	1.188686	1.218403	1.248863

For the implementation of the Communication Plan the necessary resources will be allocated under the Technical assistance component. The possibility to modify this amount will be assessed during the implementation period.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

Institutional framework

The Black Sea JOP is managed by the Joint Management Authority (JMA), role fulfilled by the Romanian Ministry for Development, Public Works and Housing (MDPWH). The JMA holds the overall management and responsibility for the information and publicity activities comprised in the current Communication Plan.

The JMA will ensure that the programme is widely disseminated widely and made available to all interested parties.

The JTS will support the JMA in the implementation of information, communication and promotion activities addressed to the Programme's eligible actors at local level, in order to inform them regarding the opportunities offered, and to the general public, to illustrate the results and impact of the Programme itself.

An effective and efficient model of institutional framework for the implementation of the present Communication Plan would, however, have to extend beyond the above-mentioned management bodies, especially in such an Operational Programme where 10 countries are involved.

For this purpose, National Info points (NIP) may be established in each partner-country.

The NIP will provide information to potential beneficiaries in their own countries on the planned activities under the programme. As a result of establishing NIP, there will be at least one person per country available for informing potential beneficiaries in their own language and taking into account their own national context.

The salaries of the NIP staff will not be supported by the TA budget and should be covered by the partner-countries.

The indicative activities of the NIP are:

- Organise the flow of information to potential beneficiaries from their own country (organising small-scale seminars, providing translated material from the programme web-site in their own national language, informing about the launch of calls for proposals, explaining among others rules and procedures);
- Liaise with NIP from other countries (directly or via the JTS) in order to facilitate partner search.
- Keep a small-scale database at measure level of (potentially) interested parties.
- Contribute to the organisation of the initiatives planned by the Programme's central structures, in order to favour the establishment and development of partnerships among actors from the eligible territories, and the training of potential beneficiaries on procedures to be observed in drafting and implementing projects.

Protocols of collaboration will be concluded between the JTS and each NIP for the implementation of the communication plan, for ensuring coordination and consistency of the messages/ operational programme's activities all over the eligible area.

The activity of providing information by the NIPs will be coordinated with the Regional Capacity Building Initiative II" project (RCBI II) regarding information addressed to Black Sea partner countries.

In addition, a dedicated measure was included in the Communication Plan, namely “Measure 1.5 Creation of an Information Network” (see Section 5 “Measures and Actions”). The aim of this measure is to create a network of multipliers of information comprising public organizations (international, national, regional and local) from the eligible area that interact with the local/regional actors on a regular basis and have connections relevant to the area.

The responsibilities of beneficiaries relating to information and publicity measures for the public are laid down in the relevant rules on the visibility of external actions laid down by the external actions laid down and published by the Commission.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The JMA with the JTS support, will inform the Joint Monitoring Committee about the progress in implementing the communication plan, the information and publicity measures carried out and about the means of communication used.

The annual reports and the final report on implementation of the programme will contain information on the progress reached implementing the Plan, the information and publicity measures carried out, the means of communication used.

The information and publicity actions will be subjects to ongoing evaluations, based on the indicators and evaluation criteria defined in advance.

Evaluation of results of information and publicity activities will be done through quantitative data (participation, involvement, and access to information) as well as through qualitative data (questionnaires will be used to register the satisfaction of the users after each contact).

a) Efficiency indicators

The “exposure” indicates to what extent the target audience receives the key message of the campaign, how many times the message has been exposed, and whether the target audience paid attention to the campaign, by remembering or recognizing messages sent during the implementation of the communication plan. This indicator reveals whether the message / campaign “penetrates” the minds of the target audience. For this purpose, the means of communication (newspapers, television, radio) will be the subject of a constant monitoring.

b) Quantity indicators

- Number of participants in the events
- Number of visits in the web site
- Number of participants in the Projects Completion
- Number of publications distributed
- Number of newsletter subscribers
- Number of articles send by the beneficiaries in the bulletin
- Number of trainees in the seminars, etc.

c) Quality indicators

The technical method for collecting data for quality evaluation is interviewing the target audience using public opinion polls.

- A constant increase in the number of applications received and in the diversity of the applicants
- A constant increase in the number of the administrative compliant applications received