Factsheet N°14

Project communication

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Introduction

This factsheet is dedicated to the specific role of **communication as a key pillar in the successful implementation and delivery of your project**. Project communication in the framework of Interreg Programmes has significantly gained importance over the last decades. It has become one of the key elements to contribute to sustainable and transferable project results and therefore to support the value for money of European funding. Communication thus is not limited to a standalone communication work package, but is strongly tied in with **ensuring durability and transferability of outputs and results establishing the link with target groups** and **ensuring co-creation and the coverage of the quadruple helix** (sections C.4.2-C4.5 of the AF, C3.2-C3.4 of the CN).

The first section of this factsheet provides tips for applicants to develop a strong communication work package. Section II lists the formal requirements that all projects have to follow when implementing communication activities, as stated in regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and article 12 of the subsidy contract (SC).

I. Tips for project communication

A. Result oriented approach and objectives

Communication activities need to be developed with the project results as a primary focus. Communication on specific activities or deliverables should contribute not only to the achievement, but also the quality of those results. As one of the elements of this result-oriented approach, adopted in the Interreg 2 Seas 2014-2020 Programming period, all applications should, already in the application stage, demonstrate how their outputs and results will be visible, transferable, durable and how they will take into account input and involvement of key target groups.

Consequently, as part of the project intervention logic, all communication objectives will be heavily informed by the project's overall and specific objectives: **What does a project want to achieve and what does the partnership need to put in place to achieve this?**

The communication objectives therefore describe how specific communication activities/deliverables support the delivery of the project outputs and results.

Communication objectives are thus very much linked to the type of output they are supporting. For example, policy improvement is often linked to raising awareness, changing behaviour or disseminating knowledge. Pilot testing on the other hand implicates a much more active involvement of the end users and private sector which means stakeholder groups, user testing and therefore communication objectives that cover very different stages of project implementation.

For a communication objective to be approved, it should therefore be:

Specific: it contributes to the relevant change at the specific objective level
Measurable: it is possible to measure the baseline, the target and, if necessary, the milestones
Achievable: it is possible to achieve the target
Relevant: it contributes to the change at a priority axis and programme level
Time-bound: it is available and updated at different points in time

Note: There is a difference between internal and external communication objectives. This factsheet will only focus on external communication. Internal communication for 2 Seas projects is incorporated in the management work package which should detail how the partners will communicate, when and who will be in charge of the internal management of the project.

B. Target groups

A target group is a clearly identified audience that has an interest in the project, either directly or indirectly. They either should know about the project's activities, they might benefit from the project outputs and results or their involvement might even be necessary to ensure the durability of the project outputs and results. A project can target multiple target groups that will each require a different approach, tools and frequency of communication activities. Target groups need to be clearly defined per project output and specific communication activities need to be proposed according to the different target groups.

In a result-oriented programme like Interreg 2 Seas their involvement from the beginning of and even beyond the project is crucial. Feedback from and active involvement of target groups **ensures the societal-industrial-political demand** of your project, **keeps its focus** and better **enables the transferability and durability of its outputs and results**.

Depending on the project's objectives, target groups can take different forms. They can be local/national politicians or decision-makers that need to implement policies, end users using a new product, patients enjoying new forms of treatment, manufacturers, the general public, SMEs etc. In order to help you identify the right target groups, the level of involvement required, as well as how and when to reach them the table below can offer some guidance:

Identification	– Who needs to use my outputs? – Who from my organisation needs to be involved? – Who can provide useful input throughout the development of my outputs? – Who needs to be involved to ensure the continuity of the project results that goes beyond my partnership? – Are there any actors that might have a negative perception or be negatively affected by my project? – Who will have a direct or indirect benefit from the project outputs produced? – Is there any behaviour change needed to reach the project results? Whose behaviour should change and who do I need to involve to reach this?
Objectives	– What level of involvement does the project require from each of the target groups? – Is my objective to inform, to receive feedback or to actually work together with the target groups?
Methodology	– How can I reach my target groups? – Do I need a different method per target group in order to be effective? – Are these actors my regular 'clients' or do I need a different approach to reach them?
Timing	Given the demand-driven nature of the programme target groups and stakeholders should be involved from the very beginning and for the entire duration of the project. But: – When do I need which specific target group precisely? – Do I need them at the development of my outputs, at their actual delivery or only at the end to ensure the durability?

At **Concept Note** stage, applicants should provide a description for each of the target groups per output.

At **Application Form** stage, information needs to be added on how precisely they plan to involve each of these target groups.

C. Activities and deliverables

All of the above comes together in the Communication Work Package in the Application Form. Here you have to show how, through dedicated communication activities and deliverables, you will reach and involve all of your target groups and as such not only achieve the project results, but also strengthen them and ensure their durability and transferability beyond project duration. As is the case for other work packages, each such communication activity consists of one or more communication deliverables.

To be the most effective, a distinction should be made between dissemination, communication and exploitation activities, which each have their own finality:

- **Dissemination activities** (one way) ensure project visibility and make sure that the activities and outputs delivered by the project are spread as widely as possible and will remain available also after the project has been finished. Where will data be stored, made public and remain stored? How will these activities reach as large an audience as possible? Should some data better be protected?
  - Examples: publishing an article about the findings of the project in an open access journal, disclosing project outputs on a website or an online database/platform that remains available after the project closure, sending out regular newsletters with updates on project progress, printing leaflets and brochures, handing out gadgets, …
  - Note: This free of charge dissemination is a general Interreg principle and a requirement by ERDF regulation, but the participant owning those deliverables and outputs may examine the possibility of protecting them (whereas results of the project shall be openly disseminated). See Factsheet 13 on IPR for more information.

- **Communication activities** (two-way), by taking target group feedback into account, ensure your project outputs and results are transferable, answer a real demand (societal, industrial, political) at all times and thus have broad support. These activities turn the project findings into a clear message in line with the envisaged objectives and results. The triple/quadruple helix and co-creation ideas are central.
  - Examples: focus group sessions with target groups, Delphi method, guest lectures, info evenings in local communities…

- **Exploitation/valorisation activities** make sure the project outputs and results will be used beyond project duration and thus ensure durability of outputs and results. How will I use the project outputs and results to really enforce the results or how do I make sure that other people use them, that SMEs take them up etc?
  - Examples: creation of a spin-off company, development of model business plans, lobbying to integrate outputs into school curricula, lobbying for the adoption of policies by authorities, patenting, developing routes to market…

Apart from these very project-specific activities, there are a number of **mandatory communication activities** that apply to all Interreg 2 Seas projects and that are linked to the project identity and branding. These communication requirements are explained under section II of this factsheet.

D. Time plan

All proposed communication deliverables need to be represented in the project time plan and should be coherent with the project deliverables, outputs and results.

E. Budget

An important section to be developed in the Communication Work Package is the budget. Each of the partners will have to provide a detailed estimation of the resources that will be necessary to fulfil the communication requirements and produce the different deliverables as listed in the WP.

All partners need to foresee the necessary human resources internally (Budget line 1) or externally (Budget line 4) to develop and deliver the communication activities, as well as costs for printing promotional material (Budget line 4). Necessary travel expenditure for communication working groups or events needs to be included in Budget line 3.

When developing the budget for communication, partners should respect the value for money principle. This means that all activities proposed need to be in direct link with one of the communication objectives and the specific target groups. There is no specific percentage of the total project budget that should be dedicated to the Communication Work Package, all costs should be reasonable and fully in line with the objectives and deliverables.

Note: certain mandatory activities such as the creation of a **project poster need to be realised by a professional designer**. The costs related to this activity can be foreseen in the budget, either via Budget line 1 (when internal resources can be addressed), either in Budget line 4, when external services are needed.

II. Project communication requirements

Correct application of these requirements will ensure that the project communication activities can be co-financed by the Programme.

A. Project logo (mandatory)

All communication activities developed by Interreg 2 Seas projects need to display logos referring to the project, the Interreg 2 Seas Programme, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Union.

In order to apply this mandatory requirement, projects need to choose one of the following options:

- a standardised project logo
- a combination of a specific project logo and the Programme logo, including ERDF reference

1. Standardised project logo

Projects that choose to work with a standardised project logo, do not have to worry about the design of the logo. These projects should inform the Joint Secretariat which will then provide the logo to the project. Projects need to apply rules related to size, proportion and protected area when using the standardised project logo.

a) Size

Respect a minimal width of 38.1mm. No maximal size is set.

b) Proportion

Maintain the exact spatial relationship shown above when scaling the logo electronically. Do not stretch or squish the logo.

c) Protected area

Keep a protected area, equivalent to the width of the letter "e" in the Programme logo, around all versions of the logo. No text or other visuals should appear within this area.

The protected area also precludes the addition of any additional type, graphics, or images in such a way that the effect is to create a distinct combined logo.

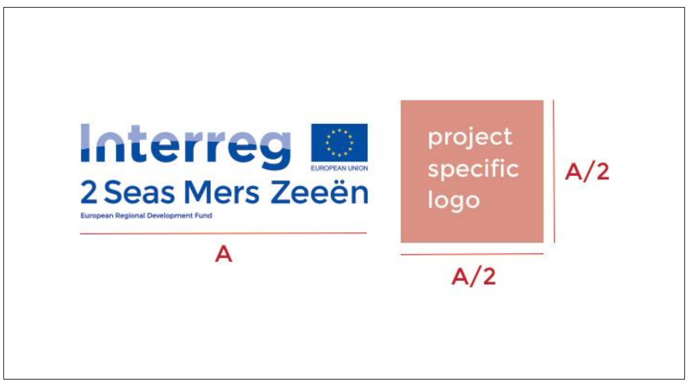
2. Specific project logo (developed by the project) and the Programme logo

Projects that choose to work with a specific project logo need to ensure that this specific project logo is always used together with the Programme logo.

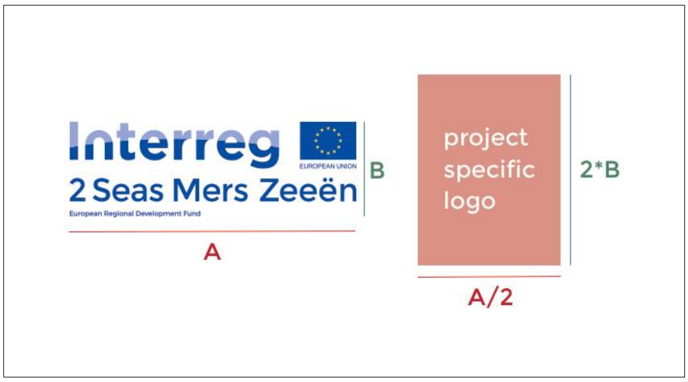
The rules related to size, proportion and protected area that apply to the use of the standardised project logo (see under A.1) also apply to the use of the Programme logo.

Projects need to ensure that the Programme logo has at least the same size, measured in height or width, as the specific project logo. Projects are recommended to select one of the following scenarios and apply the corresponding rule in terms of size:

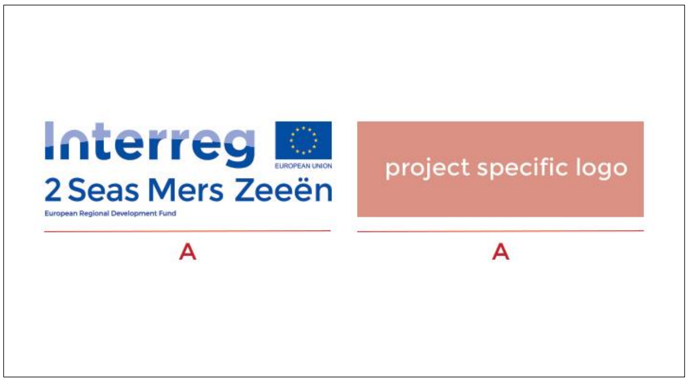
a) If the specific project logo is **square**, its width must not exceed 1/2 of the Programme logo width.



b) If the specific project logo has a **portrait** shape, its width must not exceed 1/2 of the Programme logo width and its height must not exceed 2/1 of the Programme logo height.



c) If the specific project logo has a **landscape** shape, its maximum width must not exceed the width of the Programme logo.



Projects are encouraged to choose “Montserrat” as the **typography** for their specific project logo. In this way, consistency is maintained with the common Interreg branding. This font can be downloaded for free via http://www.fontsquirrel.com/fonts/montserrat.

Projects are encouraged to use the **colour** of the Programme Specific Objective related to their project as the principal colour of their logo. Below is an overview of the respective colour codes.

	CMYK	RGB	Pantone
Framework Conditions for Innovation	C 0 M 50 Y 100 K 0	R 220 G 145 B 24	Pantone+ Solid Coated 144C
Technological Innovation	C 0 M 95 Y 100 K 0	R 196 G 35 B 27	Pantone+ Solid Coated 485C
Social Innovation	C 0 M 95 Y 22 K 0	R 196 G 20 B 107	Pantone+ Solid Coated 214C
Low-Carbon Technologies	C 45 M 0 Y 100 K 0	R 171 G 195 B 43	Pantone+ Solid Coated 583C
Adaptation to Climate Change	C 100 M 50 Y 0 K 0	R 0 G 105 B 175	Pantone+ Solid Coated 307C
Efficient use of resources and materials	C 63 M 100 Y 0 K 0	R 104 G 34 B 123	Pantone+ Solid Coated 2603C
Circular Economy	C 100 M 16 Y 100 K 0	R 24 G 131 B 60	Pantone+ Solid Coated 7726C

B. Project poster (mandatory)

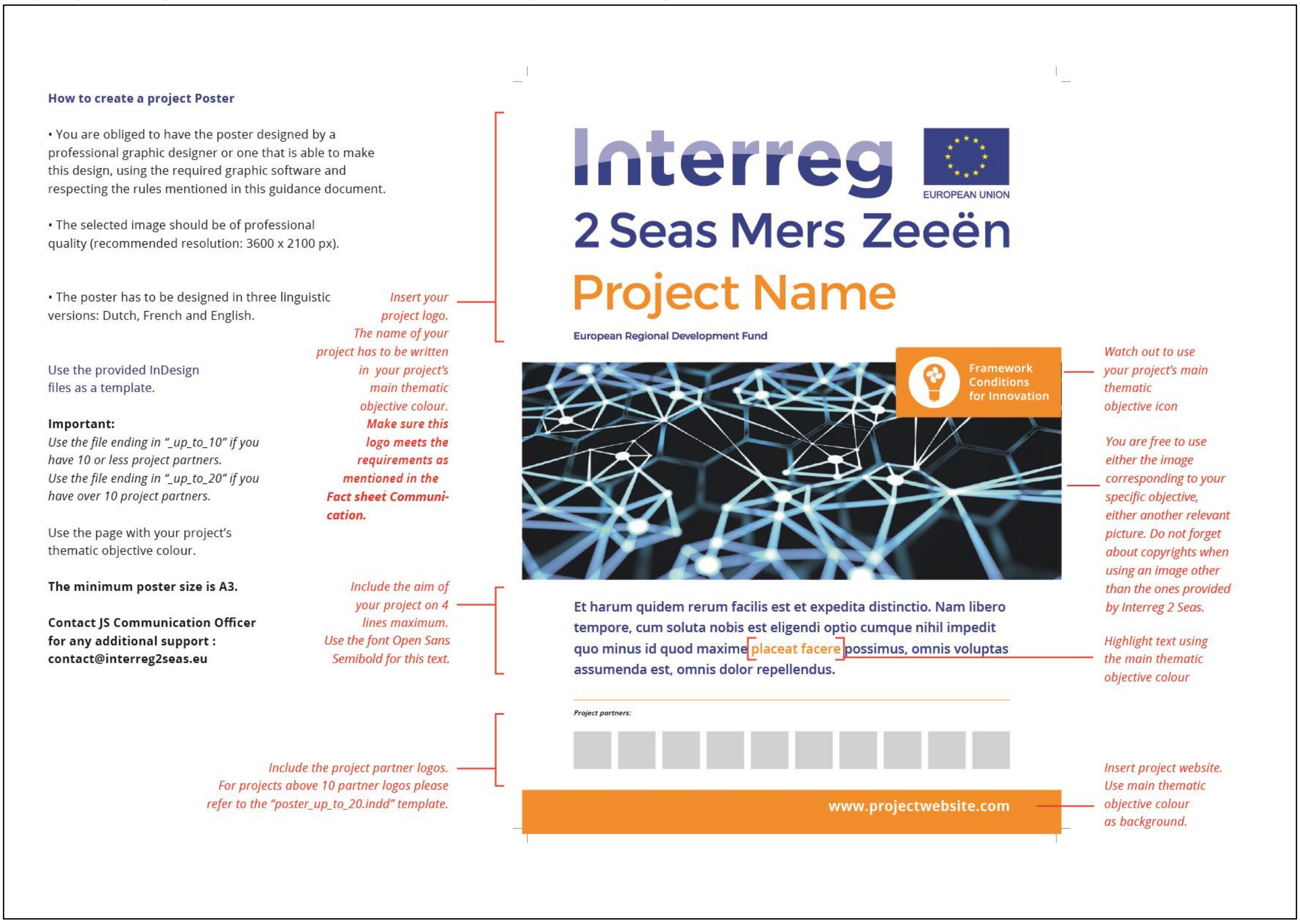
According to EU regulation all approved project partners should place a poster at a central location of their premises, accessible to the public. The poster needs to display information on the project, as well as a reference to the European Regional Development Fund.

Note that the project logo used on this poster is a standardised project logo. This applies to all Interreg 2 Seas projects, also to those with a specific project logo. It is highly recommended for projects to produce and put up the poster within 6 months after project approval.

The creation of this poster must be completed by a professional designer. Projects can rely on internal resources as well as on external services to do so.

Projects must use the templates that are available on the Programme website under “Projects > Communicate your project”. Note that there is one template per Programme Specific Objective. Projects should select the corresponding template and follow the rules as indicated in the guidance document, which is available for download on the same page of the Programme website

Project poster - guidance document (downloadable from the Programme website)



C. Temporary billboards and permanent plaques (mandatory)

Infrastructure and construction sites financed by Interreg 2 Seas must be branded during and after the completion of works. This obligation applies to projects with a total public contribution (including the ERDF funds received from Interreg) of more than €500,000. To ensure transparency, the Interreg 2 Seas Programme strongly encourages projects with a public contribution of less than €500,000 to apply the same rules.

While works are ongoing, the beneficiaries must put up a temporary billboard for each project consisting in the financing of infrastructure or construction works for which the total public support to the operation exceeds €500,000. This temporary billboard must be replaced by a permanent plaque no later than 3 months after completion of the works.

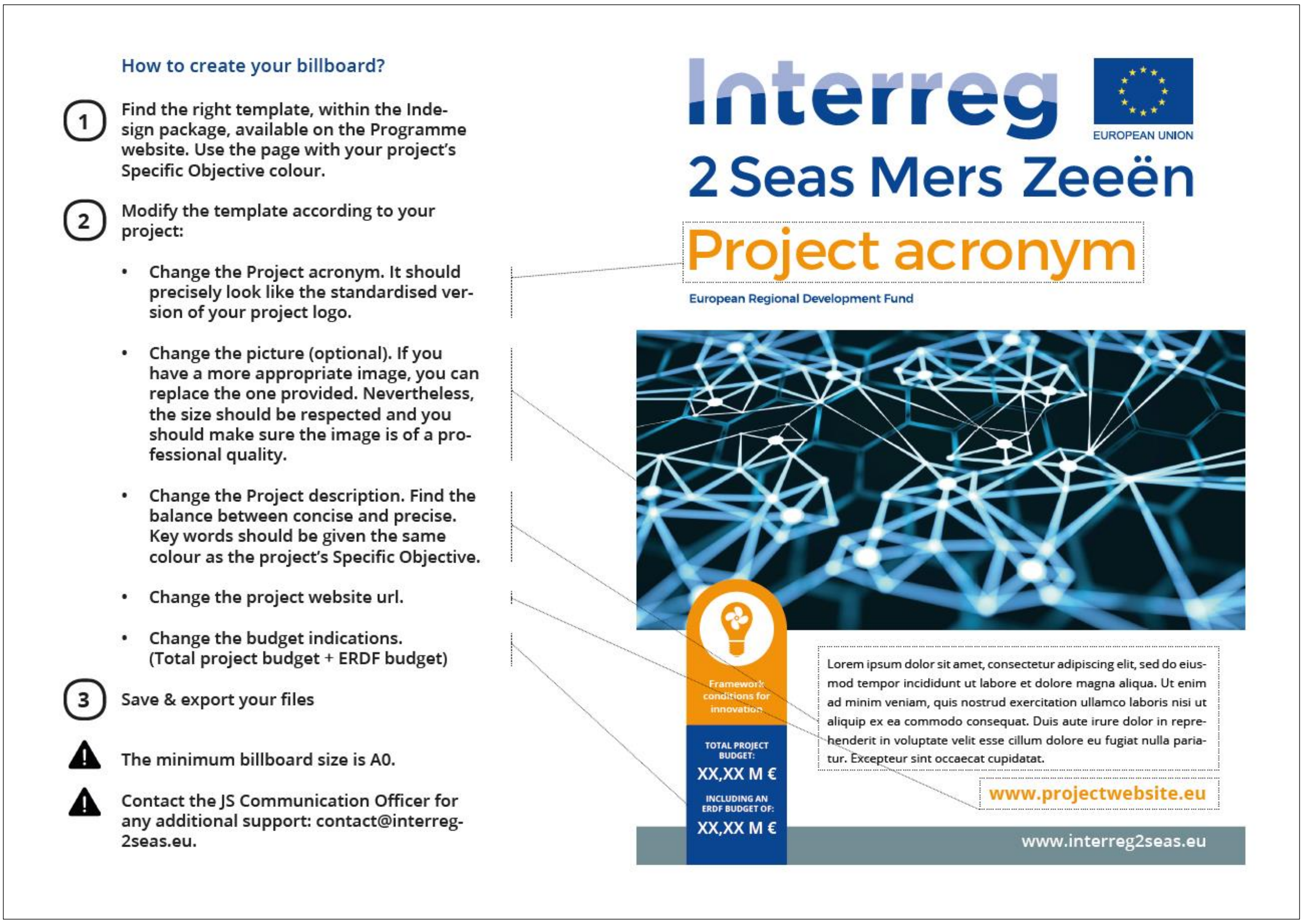
The billboards and plaques must contain the Interreg 2 Seas Programme logo, the name of the project, its main objective, the Union emblem together with the reference to the Union and the reference to the European Regional Development Fund. These elements must take up at least 25% of that billboard.

The billboards and plaques must be of significant size (minimum of 1m² or A0 format) and displayed at a location readily visible to the public.

To support projects in respecting this mandatory requirement, a template and a guiding document are available on the Programme website under "Projects > Communicate your project". Note that this template complies with the technical characteristics laid down in Art. 5 of the Commission Implementing Regulation

(EU) No 821/2014. Projects should only replace the project acronym, the project description, the project website address and the budget indications. If desired, projects can also change the picture, ensuring the same size is used and the new picture is of a professional quality. Projects that prefer not to use this template, must make sure their billboard and plaque are fully in line with the technical requirements as described above.

Project billboard - guidance document (downloadable from the Programme's website)



D. Partners institutional website (mandatory)

In case project partners have a website for their organisation, they should provide, according to EU regulation, a short description of the project, including its aims and results, and highlighting the financial support from the Union. They should as such include the EU emblem, together with reference to the European Union and the Interreg 2 Seas Programme. This can be done on a dedicated page within the website. If no such page exists, the reference should be made on the homepage. In both cases, the reference should be visible without scrolling down the page.

E. Project website (not mandatory)

Projects are allowed to develop a separate website to valorise their tools or products in order to involve their stakeholders during the project and specially to leave a long-term legacy that goes beyond the project. The development of such a separate website should be included in the communication work package of the Application Form and the corresponding budget should be foreseen by the partners. Please keep in mind that it is not mandatory to create a project website. In case a separate website is developed, the project will be required to include the Programme logo and the Union emblem with a reference to the European Union and the European Regional Development Fund. The Union emblem with the reference to the Union and to the 2 Seas Programme must be visible when accessing the homepage of the website, without requiring the visitor to scroll down the page.

F. Project events (mandatory)

The Programme logo, as well as a clear reference to ERDF and the European Union has to be used on any agendas, list of participants, related hand-outs and presentations. (Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).
During the events, projects are encouraged to place the EU flag and the project poster or a project banner in a readily visible place (e.g. the front of the meeting room) ensuring visibility of the EU and the programme.

G. Project publications (mandatory)

All project publications, including brochures, newsletters, studies, articles and other, must include the Programme logo. Projects should also mention the contribution from the European Regional Development Fund.

There are no specific templates to be used so the main requirements regarding the Programme logo (see section B1) apply for project publications.

For scientific articles, conference proceedings or other publications where usage of the programme logo is impossible, projects should explicitly mention the contribution from the European Regional Development Fund. The following sentence (or any similar sentence with the same content) may be used:

> *"This project has received funding from the Interreg 2 Seas programme 2014-2020 co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund under subsidy contract No [Number]."*

H. Social media (not mandatory)

Social media are becoming more and more important to reach a wide range of target audiences. This communication medium is however very diverse and needs regular feeds which can also be time consuming. The Programme encourages their projects to develop and online presence through some of the social media channels whenever this fits with their communication objectives and is in line with the specificities of their target audiences. Social media has the advantage of being a two-way communication channel, meaning that projects can also get useful feedback from their target groups. The messages posted should therefore reflect the needs of the project and the timing of project delivery.

Although social media is in theory free of cost, projects that aim to reach their target groups via these channels should foresee the necessary time and resources to feed their social media channels.

III. Points for attention

A. Grant cuts

Non-compliance with publicity obligations puts the eligibility of the related expenses at risk and would imply a recovery of the funds unduly paid.

B. Internal versus external communication

External project communication is not to be confused with internal communication. The latter means the communication between the partners regarding the progress of the project, the delivery of the outputs and the planning/reporting and should be included under the management work package.

C. Translation of communication and information measures

In regard to **translations of information and communication measures**, projects should always take into account the principle of proportionality: measures should only be translated if the translations add value and help the project to meet its communication objectives. The added value is highly related to the target groups addressed with the information and communication measures. So, projects should question who is going to be addressed. Some examples of possible questions could be: Who/what are the brochures meant for? Who is going to visit your website?

Translation costs need to be foreseen in the project budget. External translation services should be budgeted under BL "External expertise and services".

IV. Programme support

A. Programme website

The main source of information is the Programme website. This platform features all relevant documents that could be of interest to projects in term of communication activities. Not only information on the Programme itself, but also useful and concrete guidance is provided for beneficiaries. Furthermore, the page "**Communicate your project**" lists specific templates and tools for projects to use.

All approved projects have a **dedicated project page** where the project identity is explained. There is also the possibility to add documents and links to highlight the project's activities and results. Approved projects are highly encouraged to regularly get in contact with the communication officer of the Joint Secretariat in order to update or add any information on this project page.

The programme website also has a **media section** where both applicants as well as beneficiaries from approved projects can find documents and tools they require to develop or implement projects. This section also features a series of videos including webinars (instruction videos from the Technical Assistance) and project result videos. Approved projects are highly encouraged to send video material featuring project results to the communication officer of the Joint Secretariat.

B. Programme social media

Organisations are encouraged to follow the Interreg 2 Seas **LinkedIn** page and join the LinkedIn group. This allows practitioners to discuss different topics, share knowledge and practises and as such help each other in finding solutions to any problems.

Approved project partners are also encouraged to follow the 2 Seas Programme on **Twitter** and **Facebook**. This allows the Joint Secretariat to help promoting the project's activities and results shared through these social media.

C. Technical Assistance

During the project development stage, applicants are advised to carefully read the programme guidance on communication in the form of the current Factsheet communication. The team of **Territorial Facilitators** is available to assist with the development of your Communication Work Package and to answer any specific questions applicants may have regarding project communication.
You can find the contact details for the Territorial Facilitator in your area in the contact section of the Programme website.

During the implementation stage, projects can contact the Communication officer at the Programme's Joint Secretariat. Contact details can also be found on the Programme website.