# Southern and Eastern
# Regional Operational Programme 2014 - 2020

# Communications Strategy

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# 1. Introduction

This is the Communication Strategy for the co-financed European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Southern and Eastern (S&E) Regional Operational Programme 2014 -2020. The programme which was approved by the European Commission on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014 forms a part of Ireland's Partnership Agreement. It is a strategic document introducing a new SMART approach to European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) investments focusing strongly on visible results and on change at the end of the 2014-2020 programme period. The managing authority (MA) will, in addition annually draft a communications plan detailing the communication activities designed to support the achievement of the communications objectives outlined in this strategy and in the regulations below.

The information and communication rules for the European Union's **cohesion policy** (ERDF) are defined in the EU Regulation No 1303/2013 of 17 December 2013 commonly known as the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR). Provisions relating to information and communication can be found under **Articles 115-117 and Annex XII of** EU Regulation 1303/2013 and in accordance with **Articles 3-5 and Annex II** of Implementing EU Regulation 821/2014. In line with these regulatory requirements this strategy sets out how the Managing Authority will promote the programme to potential beneficiaries and to the wider public through the publication of the funding opportunities, the role, the achievements and outcomes of the programme with 50% co-investment from the ERDF.

The strategy's guiding principle is to contribute to the openness and transparency of the delivery of this publicly funded programme. The managing authority is required to provide regular and complete information about investment opportunities and programmes and to publish information about projects and beneficiaries. An investment programme of some €500 million will be delivered over the programme period 2014-2020 in the S&E region. A core aim of the strategy is to make potential beneficiaries aware of the funding opportunities available to help launch their projects and to communicate to citizens and residents the expected results of these investments in the S&E region.

The cascade structure in place for the delivery of ESIF programmes in Ireland devolves the task to the Intermediate Body (IB) to publicise funding opportunities provided by ERDF to potential applicants. The IB's responsibility in relation to this and related Information and Communication devolved functions are included in the Administrative Agreements signed between the Managing Authority and the IBs and the Member State. The Managing Authority takes responsibility to ensure that these functions are fully discharged and monitors the IB's actions in relation to this responsibility through a rigorous financial management and control regime.

The communication strategy must be submitted to the Monitoring Committee for approval no later than six months after the adoption of the Operational Programme. The Monitoring Committee must also approve any amendment to the communication strategy. In accordance

with the principle of proportionality the scope and budget of the communication strategy is reflective of the value and scope of the Operational Programme

## 2. Aim

The purpose and aim of this strategy and activity plan is to increase the awareness of the ERDF investments across the counties within the S&E region by actively communicating and marketing the S&E Programme's opportunities, achievements, results and impact and by engaging with potential beneficiaries.

The main aim of the strategy is to:
- ensure that all potential beneficiaries are informed of ERDF support;
- raise public awareness of the role played by ERDF and the European Union in supporting innovation, entrepreneurship and quality jobs creation;
- maximize the visibility of the ERDF fund and the S&E programme 2014-2020 and the projects supported through collaborative publicity measures;

## 3. Overall communications goals:

The communications goals for this strategy include:

- Developing and implementing a communications plan for enhanced visibility of the ERDF and national joint investments in the S&E Region, utilising our digital strategy;
- Generating a positive media coverage by cultivating relationships with journalists and media representatives; and sharing local success stories and examples of good practice and what the ERDF can do within the Southern & Eastern region;
- Increasing the awareness and involvement of specific target groups (section 7);
- Showing complementarities and synergies with other relevant EU – funded programmes and instruments and providing hyperlinks to them on the S&E OP 2014-2020 website;
- The Implementing Bodies' websites will provide access to information about the OP;
- Supporting and training staff to enable them to be ambassadors for the Regional programme and the ERDF.

## 4. Objectives

The main objectives of the strategy and communication activities are to:

- Provide accurate and clear information for potential bidders and beneficiaries of the funding opportunities provided by the Programme and give access to information for obtaining funding while ensuring transparency at all levels;
- Raise awareness of the role played by the EU and European Structural and Investment Funds and how they contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the S&E region;
- Provide clear descriptions and consistent messages to all partners on the impact of the Programme;

- ■ Continually improve information and communication measures on the basis of feedback received; and
- ■ Take the appropriate measures to ensure that the information and communication requirements of the European Union regulations are met.

## 5. Key Messages

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) will help strengthen the Southern & Eastern region's research and entrepreneurial base to become more diversified and competitive and to assist in sustainable growth and new quality jobs in the local economy.

Underpinning this the headline priorities of the ERDF are:

Innovation and research and development: to increase both the commercialisation of research by the higher education institutions and company engagement in applied research. This will strengthen the research base of the region through collaboration between research centres and companies in potentially high growth and innovative sectors;

Information and communications technologies: extension and increased take-up of high-speed next generation broadband throughout the region to the benefit of all companies and households;

Support for small and medium-sized businesses; support innovative and growth oriented micro-enterprise business start-ups and expansions, with a particular emphasis on high-growth and potentially high-growth sectors thus leading to increased employment in micro-enterprises in the Region

Supporting a shift to a low carbon economy: to improve energy efficiency in the housing stock for urban areas thus contributing to the achievement of a low-carbon economy by 2020;

Sustainable integrated urban development: integrated urban development to revitalize selected urban growth centres and support for low carbon sustainable, multimodal urban mobility;

Supporting the EU 2020 Strategy;

Transforming the lives of people and firms across the Southern & Eastern region by helping to create new and sustainable employment,

These priorities and key messages are largely delivered by Government Departments, State Agencies and Local Authorities. Specific messages will be developed by the Managing Authority of the ERDF OP and others at specific points in the programme cycle. These will include key messages for major information activities, progress towards targeted results and feedback from the programme events and activities.

# 6. Roles and Responsibilities

The specific responsibilities for Managing Authority, Intermediate Bodies and beneficiaries can be viewed in **Information and Communication Guidelines for European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020.** The guidelines were prepared and issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform as Member State. Through demonstration of good practice and in their financial management and control checks, the Managing Authority will ensure compliance with the information and communication requirements of the regulations. The MA will be responsible for the dissemination of the guidelines to the Intermediate Bodies in the first instance and will also make it available as a download on their website. It will be included in all training/guidance packs delivered to beneficiaries to assist in regulatory compliance.

The Managing Authority responsibilities in the field of information and communication can be summarized as follows**:**

- information and publicity measures to promote the new Programme, including a launch event;

- disseminating the Operational Programme and its financing opportunities;

- developing, implementing, reviewing and updating of the Communication Strategy and supporting information and communication plans, in consultation with partner organisations;

- ensuring that the IBs provide the beneficiaries with clear and comprehensive information on publicity requirements where relevant through contractual arrangements and supporting guidance, e-templates and publicity resources;

- informing the Monitoring Committee of the Communication Strategy and progress in its implementation, in line with Article 116(2) of Commission Regulation 1303/2013, including details of the information and communications measures carried out, the means of communication used and examples of such measures;

- ensuring that Annual and Final Implementation Reports of the Operational Programme include:

  ➢ examples of information and communication measures,

  ➢ arrangements for publishing the list of beneficiaries, names of operations and the amount of public funding allocated to operations, and

  ➢ details of any major amendments to the Communication Strategy;

- ensuring that the Annual Reports and the Final Implementation Report assess the results of the information and communication measures in terms of the visibility and awareness of the Operational Programme and of the EU contribution therein;

- ensuring that the IBs provide potential beneficiaries with clear and detailed information on:

  ➢ the conditions of eligibility to be met in order to qualify for financing under the Operational Programme and easy access to further information on the Operational Programme, and

  ➢ a description of the procedures for examining funding applications, the criteria for selecting the operations to be financed and the time periods involved;

  ➢ the MA will host this information on its own website or create links to the IBs website;

- the MA will involve other bodies in the dissemination of information on funding opportunities to potential applicants where required;

- organising the following information and communication measures in line with Article 115 of Commission Regulation 1303/2013:

  ➢ a major information activity publicising the launch of the Operational Programme,

  ➢ at least one information activity per year, promoting the funding opportunities,

  ➢ displaying the Union emblem in all media and all related websites used and at the premises of the Managing Authority, and

  ➢ the publication, electronically or otherwise, of the list of beneficiaries, the names of the operations and the amount of funding allocated to the operations;

  ➢ designating a person to act as the information and communication officer to coordinate information and communications actions in relation to the Programme, in line with Article 117 of Commission Regulation (EU) no 1303/2013.

  ➢ ensuring beneficiaries receive clear and comprehensive information on publicity requirements in order for them to fulfil their regulatory obligations;

  ➢ monitoring and reviewing beneficiaries compliance with information and communication requirements through formal programme checks;

  ➢ Facilitating IBs to work with partners/beneficiaries on communication measures, such as events, websites, newsletters, the provision of case studies, contributing to annual reports, the evaluation of information and publicity measures and general networking and exchange of good practice.

## 7. Target Groups

The target audience will differ depending on the nature of the message to be communicated, and appropriate media will be used to reach and engage each audience. The target audience for each measure will comprise one or more of the following groups:

1. Beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries (businesses, business representatives groups, professional groups, NGOs, individuals);
2. The Social Partners incorporating Trade Unions, Employers and Business Groups, Farming Organisations and the Community and Voluntary sector;
3. Local, Regional and National opinion formers and influencers including Journalists and the Media;
4. All of the partners listed in Article 5 of the Common Provision Regulation including the environmental pillar.
5. Government Departments, Regional Assemblies, Local Authorities, Intermediate Bodies, Public bodies and State Agencies;
6. General public;
7. Managing Authority staff;
8. EC representation in Ireland and Permanent Representation of Ireland to the EU;
9. NUTS III Strategic Planning Areas committees;
10. MEPs, TDs, Senators and Councillors (local representatives); and
11. International Groups (visiting groups, parliamentary delegations and other Member State Managing Authorities) relevant to the OP.

## 8. Information and Communication Activities

The managing authority has a primary role in the dissemination of publicity for the programme and will act as a central point for information and communication activities. Reflecting the Irish cascade structure for the delivery of the ESIF programme the MA will monitor the delegated information and communication tasks devolved to the IBs to ensure that regulation is complied with by all actors in the cascade as set out in the Administrative Agreements.

The managing authority will ensure that the programme's strategy, objectives and funding opportunities are disseminated widely to potential beneficiaries by the IBs. They will present the achievements of the programme to the target groups identified in this strategy. Communications activities used to promote the programme will be tailored according to the message or the target audience.

### 8.1 EU Emblem

In accordance with **Articles 3-5** of Implementing EU Regulation 821/2014 the EU emblem will be incorporated into all media and web sites used to promote the programme and by the beneficiaries in accordance with the contract of grant aid for the approved operation. The EU emblem will also be displayed at the managing authority's premises.

### 8.2 OP Launch

The managing authority will host a major event to launch the operational programme

### 8.3 Annual Event

Annually, the managing authority will host a major information event/activity to promote the strategies pursued and the funding opportunities. The event will present the concrete

communication activities for the next twelve month period as well as also present the achievements of the operational programme.

## 8.4 Digital Strategy

A digital strategy is a critical component of this communications strategy and our digital media actions will be integrated into the annual communications plan

### *8.4.1Website*

#### 8.4.1.1. Potential Beneficiaries

The Managing Authority website will describe programme implementation and the intended impacts for the region. The web site will also inform potential beneficiaries how funding can be accessed. Links to the programme section of the websites of the Intermediate Bodies will be maintained.

The MA website will aim to have an interactive S&E map: by clicking the map a user can see the location of ERDF 2014-2020 co-financed projects in the S&E Region.

#### 8.4.1.2 Beneficiaries

*A* list of the beneficiaries of funding and their projects in a searchable format will be published on the Managing Authority's website and will be updated at least every six months.

Examples of projects will be presented bilingually in Irish and English.

Web videos will be used to promote the programme by featuring a sample range of co-funded smart projects and to highlight the positive impacts for the region.

### 8.4.2   Social Media

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Linked-in, Yammer forms part of the social media platforms mix to be used on an on-going dynamic basis to highlight the ERDF, the programme and the opportunities it offers and the positive impacts for the region. This will be done through posts and where possible in collaboration with programme partners.

### 8.4.3.   Collaboration with partners

The managing authority will agree an annual activity plan with programme partners to maximise the channels through which to promote the operational programme and to present the opportunities available, the achievements and results of the joint EU – national funding.

### 8.5   Supporting the beneficiaries in their communication activities

- The managing authority will provide guidance and training to Intermediate Bodies in relation to information and communication requirements to ensure that beneficiaries put into practice these requirements;
- The managing authority will disseminate the information and communication guidelines electronically to all Intermediate Bodies for circulation to beneficiaries. The information and communication guidelines will be available for download on the

managing authority's website and the MA will ensure that the IBs have the relevant downloadable electronic templates to facilitate compliance with EU visibility requirements (see Article 3.2.2. of Annex XII). As stated earlier the MA will maintain links to the programme webpage of all IBs;

- The managing authority's access officer will review the communications material to ensure that formats are accessible for people with disabilities where practicable;
- The Intermediate Bodies will promote the individual priorities/themes/operations for which they are responsible using the various channels at their disposal, i.e. websites, web-based sectorial publications, newsletters etc.; business/community groups, advertisements, and selected launches and seminars.

## 9. Budget (Indicative) and Staff Resources

The Operational Programme's technical assistance budget will provide the funding for information and communication activities. The focus is on IT-based regularly updated activities, tools and marketing items.

The budget for this Communication Strategy is approximately €500,000 and includes items listed below:

- Operational Programme Launch with media and web coverage;
- Publication of a short, simple explanatory document on the OP and a hyperlink to the Operational Programme document on the MA and IB websites;
- A dynamic Social Media presence;
- Annual Report publication with key smart projects on the MA website;
- Costs associated with Annual Events;
- Preparing and issuing press releases, all the MA press releases will be posted to the MA websites and relevant IB press releases will also be posted when available;
- Collaboration on promotional activities with other ESIF programmes where practicable and maintenance of hyperlinks to all of Ireland's ESIF programme websites, to those of the Commission Representation in Ireland, and to those of the other EU investment instruments that complement or have synergy with the ERDF OPs;
- Participating in local radio interviews;
- Photography;
- Advertisements and advertorial costs;
- Merchandising, to include conventional and I.T. based approaches, including USB sticks containing all pertinent programme information;
- Attendance at EU events relating to Communications;
- Hosting of visiting delegations relevant to the OP;
- Addressing seminars and conferences relevant to the OP;
- Responding to specific requests for information from the general public, media queries, political representatives, parliamentary questions, researchers and academics and international queries (e.g. from other MAs);
- Collating data on information and communication actions for monitoring and progress report purposes;
- Preparation of the list of operations as per Article 115(2) and Annex XII of the CPR.
- Apportionment of staff time relating to the above;
- Awareness survey on the benefits of the OP (to be conducted during the 7th year of the

OP).

## 10. Evaluation and best practise from previous programme

Evaluation plays an important part in all publicity activities to ensure that the communication mix is effective an achieving the objectives set. Evaluating the communications plan provides the opportunity to monitor and adjust the communications strategy and goals.

The communications evaluation plan needs to be established at the outset and the approach favoured by this strategy is to address how the various elements of the annual communication activities will be monitored and evaluated and this in turn will inform any future amendments to the communications strategy.

Best practice and lessons learnt from the delivery of previous European funding programmes will be used to inform the evaluation techniques chosen.

### 10.1 Key Lessons learnt from the previous periods
- There was an increased move towards the use of social media channels to disseminate messages and communicate with target audiences;
- There was a sharp reduction in the use of printed materials for many target audiences;
- There was an increase in the number of users seeking information on the website. A number of users made email or phone contact when they had difficulty locating the information they sought.

### 10.2 Monitoring

Monitoring provides key quantitative and qualitative data to inform how the communications message works in practice to strengthen the visibility of the programme. This will also feed the subsequent evaluation process.

- Intermediate Bodies will report regularly to the MA and the OP Monitoring Committee on planned and completed information actions relating to their priorities/themes/operations.
- The managing authority will report on a similar basis to the Partnership Agreement Monitoring Committee annually.
- In addition to the full Annual Implementation Report a summary of the annual monitoring committee report will be made available for download from the Managing Authority's website.

### 10.3 Evaluation activities for the 2014 - 2020 programme:
- The managing authority and the Monitoring Committee will review annually the effectiveness of the communication strategy and annual plan using the feedback received and the indicators set out in the strategy;

- ▪ It is planned to build on the findings of public attitudes and awareness surveys conducted at Member State level in 2001, 2002, 2004 and 2009. This series of surveys sought to undertake research with the general public on their awareness and understanding of Ireland's EU co-funded programmes. It is intended to conduct an update of this survey for publication in 2016 to coincide with the final implementation report of the 2007-2013 programme;

- ▪ Website traffic and news coverage will be monitored using analytics and media monitoring services to assess if a number of the indicators identified in Annex 1 are being achieved.

- ■ In addition, an on-line stakeholder survey will be conducted seeking quantitative and qualitative information on the effectiveness of publicity activities and to gain goodwill and buy- in from stakeholders. This will help inform future communication activities

- ■ Social media usage will be assessed to determine the effectiveness of communication and if it is reaching the target audiences identified in this strategy.

Further details on the specific evaluation activities for each measure are detailed in the separate activity plan at **Annex 2.**

**ANNEX 1 – Performance Indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Communication Strategy for S&E ROP 2014-2020**

| Indicator Type | Indicator | Baseline 2014 | Mid-term 2017 | Final Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Output (Key management indicator) | Number of people dealt with/accessing information (website and social media) | 1,000 per month | 1,200 per month | 1,500 per month |
| Output S&E | Number of annual events | 0 | 3 | 7 |
| Output | Number of seminars/webinars/presentations | 0 | 45 | 105 |
| Output | Number of public launches/events/press and media releases/interviews of interventions by Operational Programme | This is a monitoring indicator designed to monitor transparency of the individual measures. Targets have not been set. | | |
| Result | Level of satisfaction with seminars and related documentation | | | |
| Impact | Level of overall public awareness of the EU Structural Funds Programmes*. | 53% (prompted) 16% (unprompted) | 55% (prompted) 18% (unprompted) | 60% prompted 20% (unprompted) |
| Impact | Level of awareness of the S&E OP*. | 12% | 18% | 26% |
| Impact | Level of awareness of individual Funds (ERDF)* | 43% | 45% | 50% |

| Impact | Local press and media coverage by operational programme/priority. | This is a monitoring indicator designed to monitor transparency of the individual measures. Targets have not been set. |
| --- | --- | --- |

\* A public awareness survey was commissioned in 2009, and published in 2010. This was an update on surveys conducted at Member State level in 2001, 2002, 2004.

**ANNEX 2: Communications Annual Activity Plan for 2015**

| Activity | Activity Details | Target Audience | Purpose | Timescale | Cost | Funding Stream | Evaluation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Programme Launch | A launch of the OP by a government Minister scheduled for H1 2015. It will be attended by a representative of the European Commission and invited guests.<br><br>A variety of tools including social media, press releases to local and national media, web video highlighting co-funded projects from | All external, national, regional and local partners; public, private and voluntary sector organisations; national and local media; political representatives.<br><br>Wider public; internal MA staff; potential beneficiaries | To formally launch the programme and inform the various relevant target audiences of the availability of funding.<br><br>The launch will also be used as a vehicle to highlight the achievements of the 2007-2013 ERDF co-funded Regional Programme. | H1 2015 | Venue costs/event costs including catering and merchandising (USB sticks containing pertinent information on the OP opportunities including how to apply for funding )/ Staff time/ video production | Technical Assistance Budget | All invitees will be asked to complete a survey monkey to gauge their level of engagement with the launch event and to assess their level of awareness of the programme objectives. |

| Activity | Activity Details | Target Audience | Purpose | Timescale | Cost | Funding Stream | Evaluation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | previous programme |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | periods will be used to promote the launch of the new OP. Highlighting 1) The creation of smart jobs and new firms from assisted research; and 2) Key co-funded smart projects from previous programme period which align with themes of new OP will be used to promote the |  |  |  |  |  |  |

| Activity | Activity Details | Target Audience | Purpose | Timescale | Cost | Funding Stream | Evaluation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | launch of the new OP. | | | | | | |
| Website | A new website will be commissioned and maintained throughout the lifetime of the operational programme<br><br>Hyperlinks will be maintained to all programme partners and to the websites of the various EU instruments. | All European, national, regional and local audiences including potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries of the programme. | To inform audiences about the<br>1. offers, providing the implementation plans which set out the details of each scheme, including selection criteria, intermediate body, etc<br>2. benefits<br>3. achievements and<br>4. impacts of the programme<br>Publish the List of Beneficaries and press releases and latest news. | Commissioning and operating a new website in 2015<br><br>Content updates and maintenance is on-going | Budget provision for commissioning of new website. External webmaster charges for on-going maintenance as agreed in service agreement<br><br>Staff time costs for content | Technical Assistance Budget | Google Analytics<br><br>Inclusion in Annual Stakeholder Survey |

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| Activity | Activity Details | Target Audience | Purpose | Timescale | Cost | Funding Stream | Evaluation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Media | Updates and news shares through: Twitter; Facebook; Linked-in; YouTube; Yammer | All European, National, Regional and Local audiences | To reach and engage with new audiences by raising awareness of the impacts and achievements of the programme and to share EU and national news of interest to our target audiences. Highlight the linkages with other EU funded programmes. | Daily/weekly platform dependant | Staff time costs for content | Technical Assistance Budget | Assessed through analytics; number of followers/likes/retweets and comments |
| Major Annual Information Event | Specific details to be confirmed as to type of activity delivered for the annual information activity – potentially in the latter part of 2015. | EC, National, regional and local audiences, public and private sector organisations, voluntary sectors. Internal MA staff | To provide a forum to further disseminate the purpose of the programme to review the progress attained and where relevant provide information to potential beneficiaries. Information packs | A date /activity to be confirmed. | Venue costs/event costs including catering and merchandising (including electronic)/literature/ Cost of staff time. | Technical Assistance Budget | Online survey of attendees |

| Activity | Activity Details | Target Audience | Purpose | Timescale | Cost | Funding Stream | Evaluation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | (USBs) will be made available at | | | | |
| | | | the event to disseminate programme information. As stated previously, hyperlinks to the IBs websites will be maintained to facilitate open sharing of programme information to all potential beneficiaries. | | | | |
| Media activities | Press releases associated with stories about the OP, its opportunities, successful projects, etc | National, regional and local media | To raise awareness of the purpose and priorities of 2014-2020 S&E OP, including who is involved and how the 14-20 strategies build on 2007-2013 programmes; informing the relevant potential | On an ad-hoc basis as required | Costs for staff time | Technical Assistance Budget | Media monitoring service |

| Activity | Activity Details | Target Audience | Purpose | Timescale | Cost | Funding Stream | Evaluation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | beneficiaries about the availability of funding and how to access it: | | | | |
| | | | and also raise awareness of the role played by the ERDF fund.<br><br>Highlight the linkages with other EU funded programmes and Commission Rep in Ireland. | | | | |
| Publications (Electronic and hard copy) | Developed for various uses including supporting the organisation's annual report and to annually report progress and | European, National and local audiences, public and private sector organisations, voluntary sectors. | To promote the programme, its achievements and the impact of the ESIF investment and the change and results in the Region. Also to set out the focus for the forthcoming year. Highlight the linkages with | Annual | Costs for staff time<br><br>External production costs when required | Technical Assistance Budget | Inclusion in Annual Stakeholder Survey |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| celebrate achievement. | | | other EU funded programmes. | | | | |
| **Activity** | **Activity Details** | **Target Audience** | **Purpose** | **Timescale** | **Cost** | **Funding Stream** | **Evaluation Measures** |
| List of Beneficiaries | Development of database to improve the level of project detail presented which will be hyperlinked on the MA website | European, National, Regional and local audiences, public and private sector organisations, media organisations, voluntary sectors. | To record and publicise the projects awarded funding through the Programme | Twice yearly at a minimum following certification of the expenditure to the EC Commission | Costs for staff time | Technical Assistance Budget | Google analytics – number of page visits |
| Staff training | To maintain and improve staff communication skill sets | MA and IB staff | To ensure staff are gaining in skill sets which enhance the content and distribution of the ESIF 14-20 message and to ensure an ongoing | Annual | External training costs when deemed necessary and internal training comprises of cost of staff time and any | Technical Assistance Budget | Staff training assessment (to include feedback) |

| Activity | Activity Details | Target Audience | Purpose | Timescale | Cost | Funding Stream | Evaluation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | degree of professionalism in the delivery of the strategy. Training all relevant managing authority and IB  staff to give them the skills and knowledge to be ambassadors for the ERDF co-funded programme. | | associated learning aids. | | |
| All forms of paid advertisement | Public sector journals/main local newspapers/outdoor broadcasts/sponsorship of local radio business news | National, Regional and local audiences, public and private sector organisations , media organisations , voluntary sectors. | Public sector journals/ local newspapers/ outdoor broadcasts/sponsorship of local radio business news all provide targeted vehicles to reach specific audiences and to highlight the achievements and results of the programme and the impact of the ERDF in the region | Ad hoc basis | Advertisement costs and costs of staff time for copy | Technical Assistance Budget | Media monitoring  Annual stakeholders survey |

| Activity | Activity Details | Target Audience | Purpose | Timescale | Cost | Funding Stream | Evaluation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Project visits | Selection of Ministerial and Assembly members visits to Programme projects to inform them of the results | Specifically national and local media and project beneficiaries, other relevant external partners including national and local | To raise awareness of the purpose, priorities and role of the 14-20 ERDF co-funded programme, the change expected by 2020 and the range of investment through political | In line with award of funding and availability of the representatives | Costs of staff time and associated T&S | Technical Assistance Budget | Feedback from participants<br><br>Media coverage achieved |
| | | audiences, public and private sector organisations, voluntary sectors, EC, among others. | endorsement and connecting the story of the programme back to the citizen/resident via their elected representatives. | | | | |
| Internal Communications | Various methods including regular staff briefings, meetings and updates | Internal MA staff | To ensure staff are informed and kept up to date on Programme and ESIF policy developments and news | In line with programme developments | Costs of staff time | Technical Assistance Budget | Structured feedback from staff |




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| Activity | Activity Details | Target Audience | Purpose | Timescale | Cost | Funding Stream | Evaluation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reports and Papers/ Seminars/Presentations | Progress reports on performance of the communication activities, Committee updates, Annual Implementation Report with smart project examples, Publicity content. | Programme Monitoring Committee members

European Commission | To inform members of the developments and implementation of the Communication Strategy and annual Activity Plan
To meet EU reporting requirements on deliver of publicity activities
To inform a wider audience of | In line with Committee meeting dates Annual progress report to PMC Annual summary of activities for Annual Implementation; External conferences as invited to address, and | Costs of staff time | Technical Assistance Budget | Feedback from EC and committee members Targets: 1 AIR update annually 1 PMC update annually

Seminars/presentations 10-12 p.a. (all programme staff) |
| | Presentations to external conferences/bodies on the progress of the programme | | practitioners of the programmes purpose and strategy and the achievements | additional reporting where deemed necessary. | | | |

## ANNEX 3: Contact names and addresses at National and ERDF OP level

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