

APPENDIX 6. Communications Action Plan

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1. Operating principles

The communications action plan is based on the common vision of the programme area, reflecting those basic themes and operating principles described in the co-operation programme.

A starting point for the implementation of the programme – as well as of a single project – is the **equal participation** of Southern Finland and Estonia. Information measures cover implementation of the INTERREG IIIA programme on both sides of the border. As a regional cross-border co-operational programme, the INTERREG IIIA Southern Finland – Estonia will be implemented in Finnish, Swedish and Estonian.

The programme supports Estonia in the **EU integration**. The co-financing from the EU is clearly indicated in informing the public about the results of the programme.

There is also a third party on the maritime border of this programme: whether the activities between Southern Finland and Estonia relate to the development of transport links, environmental questions or the risk management of maritime traffic, the easternmost part of the Gulf of Finland also needs to be taken into consideration. Developing potential for co-operation between Southern Finland and Estonia strengthens the foundation for co-operation with the Russian Federation, and, thus, supports the Northern Dimension of the EU. The programme emphasizes that the **co-operation between Southern Finland and Estonia takes place within a wider context**, which also has something to offer with respect to development in the Baltic Sea region. Programme communication need to provide tools for approaching this wider field of co-operation.

In 2001-2003 the joint programme consisted of two elements: on the one hand, the INTERREG IIIA in Finland as a structural funds instrument, and on the other hand, the Phare CBC in Estonia as an instrument supporting the enlargement of the EU. While Estonia joins the EU, the Structural Funds resources open also in Estonia. The challenge of cross-border co-operation evolves from combining the INTERREG and Phare instruments to launching joint activities implemented on both sides of the border – at the same time as also other Structural Funds programmes open in the new EU Member State. This is a challenge for both the management of the programme and the projects. The financial

resources of the programme are relatively small, but there are numerous organisations involved in the implementation of the programme, both in Finland and in Estonia.

From this starting point, the programme communication emphasises:

- **openness and flexibility:** Open, constructive and problem solving communication helps to achieve a common understanding of the foundations for the joint co-operation programme, assisting in creating a network which harnesses expertise from various organisations involved in the implementation of the programme.
- **consistency and lucidity:** clarity in expression enables illustrating the possibilities provided by the programme
- **up-to-date information and equal communication:** both programme management and project applicants require up-to-date information about the programme
- **customer orientation and practicality:** in order to achieve the programme objectives, the solutions of the programme implementation need to be sought from the view point of the practical project work. The programme management should respond to the actual needs of cross-border co-operation, so that the projects that contribute to the programme objectives can be realised.
- **exchange of experiences and know-how:** exchange of experiences is important because the programme and projects need success stories and ‘best practices’, as well as they require information about how problem situations can be avoided and solved.
- **openness and publicity of activities:** showing concrete projects and activities helps to bring the programme with its attendant possibilities closer not only to the target groups, but also closer to the public. This way the programme contributes to an increase in know-how about the programme area, as well as language proficiency and a familiarity with the cultural, social and economic features of the region.

In addition, the overall themes of the programme – internationalisation, the information society and sustainable development – should be comprehensible through the programme communication, as well as through the means of communication.

2. Tasks and resources of programme communication

Communication is a part of programme implementation, *promoting* the possibilities offered by the programme. It provides the national co-financing bodies with a common understanding of the programme objectives, and with information needed in negotiating with potential project applicants. Programme communication aims at encouraging the organisations implementing the programme to *commit* themselves to the programme’s objectives, to the implementation of the programme and to the co-operation necessary for programme implementation. Not only does programme communication *convey information* about the programme and its objectives, but it also *gathers data* from the operational environment and the interest groups of the programme. *Feedback* from programme implementation is essential in order to better target the operations directed towards the programme objectives. Communication also *creates an image* for the programme, an idea of the programme area as one entity, and it promotes the organisations operating in the programme area.

Project communication has similar tasks. Communication know-how is project know-how, too. The planning of communication supports project planning and the actual implementation of cross-border activities. Making the public aware of the projects also contributes to the visibility of the programme. Programme communication should create a framework that integrates a single project into the joint co-operation programme and helps it to contribute towards the common goals and towards the vision of the programme area stated in the co-operation programme.

The project is responsible for the information and publicity measures of project activities and results achieved in cross-border co-operation.

The basis of programme implementation, its levels and various organisations involved in the process.

Level of programme implementation	Basis of programme implementation	Organisations involved	Tasks/responsibilities
STRATEGIC LEVEL:	PROGRAMME DOCUMENT		
Long-term objectives of the programme		Monitoring Committee	monitoring of the programme implementation and necessary corrective / redirecting actions
TACTICAL LEVEL:	PROGRAMME COMPLEMENT		
Programme implementation		Steering Committee Managing Authority	programme implementation; co-ordination of programme implementation
Programme execution		Managing Authority / Paying Authority Regional Council of Southwest Finland National co-financing (at central administration co-ordination by the Ministry of Interior Finland and Ministry of Internal Affairs in Estonia)	EU funding (and reporting to the Commission) National co-financing (cross- sectoral co-operation)
OPERATIVE LEVEL:	FORMS, INSTRUCTIONS AND METHODS OF OPERATION		
Preparations for programme implementation		Joint Technical Secretariat of the programme (Turku and Tallinn)	Co-ordination of implementation in Southern Finland and Estonia and preparations for joint activities
		Joint Technical Secretariat in Turku and Tallinn together with regions and national co- financing authorities	- circulating information - advising and negotiating - project preparations

Programme communication can be roughly divided into three stages:

- 1) first, the **image of the programme and the consistency in creating the image**. In the beginning of the programme period the programme launches its symbol (logo) and graphic guidelines. This image is consistently represented in all programme communication.
- 2) Second, the **basis of programme implementation**: the programme document, programme complement, as well as application forms and instructions. The principles, objectives and guidance written in this documentation guide the implementation of the programme, and thus, also the implementation of programme communication.
- 3) Third, **programme promotion**: this refers to e.g. brochures, and other information materials of various kinds as well as programme information events. Communication is directed to specific target groups.

Not all communication can be co-ordinated by the programme management; also **indirect communication** is important. The visibility of funded projects from the programme and their results also convey information about the programme. This in turn, depends on how successful the project information and communication measures are.

3. Target groups for programme information and publicity measures

3.1 Beneficiaries: those planning and implementing project activities

This target group refers both to the potential project applicants and to those actually realising the projects funded by the programme in Southern Finland and Estonia.

Objectives of programme communication:

- to introduce cross-border activities and projects as effectively as possible to implement the programme; to start projects that fulfil the principles stated in the co-operation programme and the strategic aims set for the programme area
- to involve large number of participants in cross-border activities, including new participants and especially those target groups indicated in the co-operation programme (such as, NGOs, private enterprises and R&D units)
- to support equal partnerships in planning and implementation on joint project in Southern Finland and Estonia

→ means of introducing the possibilities provided by the programme:

- programme promotion events; brochures and other information material, internet pages with necessary language versions (in Finnish, Swedish and Estonian)
- presentations of successful projects and their results; activities promoting an exchange of information and experiences between projects/participants in cross-border activities
- visibility in the media

Responsible organisations and their tasks:

Programme secretariat, national co-financing bodies in both countries, those implementing the projects

The Joint Technical Secretariat of the programme in Turku and Tallinn is responsible for preparations and activities covering the whole programme area. E.g. it prepares information and other programme material distributed to the programme area, arranging training sessions and opportunities for an exchange of experiences, and circulating up-to-date programme information.

The Technical Secretariat is responsible for the operational implementation of the programme. It prepares actions covering the whole programme area in the Southern Finland and Estonia, and negotiates on common methods of operation. In addition, the regional councils and the organisations granting national co-financing in Finland and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Estonia organise project promotion, consultation and information services related to the programme in their own fields of activity.

Those implementing the projects are responsible for the information and communication measures in the project. In order to support the project communication, each project funded by the INTERREG programme receives guidelines for communication measures.

Criteria for evaluating communication:

- no. of participants in the information activities and events; no. of visitors on the programme internet pages; language versions and dissemination/coverage of the material produced
- evaluation forms (feedback) from the promotion events; feedback for the materials
- no. of enquiries about the programme; no. of funding applications
- visibility in the media (newspapers, radio, TV)

3.2 National co-financing authorities

This target group refers to the authorities implementing the programme in co-operation with the technical secretariat. The national public co-financing in Finland is channelled via the following organisations: Regional Councils (Ministry of Internal Affairs), State Provincial Offices / Department of Education and Training (Ministry of Education), Employment and Economic Development Centres

(Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Labour, and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry), Finnish Maritime Administration / Finnish Road Administration (Ministry of Transport and Communications), Regional Environment Centres (Ministry of Environment) and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. State co-financing in Estonia is allocated via the Ministry of Internal Affairs which is responsible for implementation of INTERREG programmes (incl. cross-sectoral co-operation) in Estonia.

Objectives of programme communication:

- effective information flows across different levels and different sectors of the administration; efficient programme implementation
- adequate information from the authorities to the potential project applicants; information and consultation measures supporting the successful implementation of the programme

→ means of supporting successful programme implementation:

- efficient and well-functioning communication between various organisations: Steering Committee meetings, meetings of the Secretariat and the national co-financiers, information sheets and circulars, internet pages (incl. FIMOS2000 and extranet application for authorities)
- training events, the programme document and its complement, brochures, programme internet pages

Responsible organisations and their tasks:

The Programme Secretariat, the Steering Committee, and national co-financing bodies. The Ministries of Interior co-ordinate the co-operation at the level of the central administration in both countries.

The Joint Technical Secretariat of the programme in Turku and Tallinn is responsible for preparations and activities covering the whole programme area, preparing information and other programme material disseminated to the programme area, arranging training and opportunities for exchanging experiences, as well distributing up-to-date information to the organisations involved in programme implementation.

The secretariat also seeks practical solutions to programme implementation and relevant questions raised in co-operating between various national co-financing bodies in both countries. Regional authorities in Finland and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Estonia consult project applicants about the national co-financing, and thus, assist in project preparation. The regional authorities convey information about the programme implementation to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee and its experts are informed about the state of the art of the programme, and seek for joint solutions in programme implementation. Co-operation between sectors of the central administration in both countries is co-ordinated by the Ministries of Internal Affairs.

Criteria for evaluating the communication:

- no. of participants in training sessions and information days; disseminating programme information materials in language versions; no. of visits to the programme internet pages
- evaluation forms (feedback) from the information and promotion events; feedback for the materials
- no. of enquiries about the programme; quality of the funding applications and their relevance to the programme objectives

3.3 Decision-makers and social actors

This target group refers to social actors in a broad sense, i.e. decision-makers, political power and social partners (e.g., labour market parties, NGOs etc.) as well as the media in Finland and Estonia.

Objectives of programme communication:

- to relate the ideas and know-how gained in the programme to decision making
- to inform about the impact of the programme

→ means of making the impact of the programme visible

- presentations, discussion forums and other information activities
- presenting the results from the programme, for example, in theme seminars or in events arranged for handling questions of wider interest
- events and presentations targeted for the media

Responsible organisations and their tasks:

Programme Secretariat, Steering Committee and national co-financing bodies, Monitoring Committee

The Monitoring Committee has the task of ensuring the efficacy and quality of programme implementation. Furthermore, the social partners are represented in the monitoring committee, where they not only obtain information about the programme and its results, but where they can also have an effect on directing the programme on current questions of interest. The monitoring committee informs the media of the progress of the programme. The steering committee may also raise questions that can be handled in a wider audience. The Programme Secretariat prepares the arrangements for the events and information measures cover both Finland and Estonia.

Criteria for evaluating the communication:

- no. of participants in the events arranged;
- evaluation forms (feed back) from the events arranged, as well as enquiries about the topics of these events
- visibility in the media and the opening of public discussion on the topics raised by the programme

3.4 The public

This target group refers not only to the citizens in the programme area in Southern Finland and Estonia, but also the general public in the programme countries.

Objectives of the programme communication:

- to indicate the co-financing sources (EU and national) and their participation in the programme and the realisation of the results from the programme
- to demonstrate the impact of cross-border co-operation activities funded by the programme, and to demonstrate the role of those involved in the activities (legitimacy of action)
- to encourage new potential project applicants and co-operation partners in the region to join in the activities

→ means of making the public aware of the programme

- visibility in media: press releases, demonstration of successful projects and results from cross-border activities
- successful information and communication measures at the project level

Responsible organisations and their tasks:

Programme secretariat, steering committee and its members, national co-financing bodies, those implementing the projects funded by the programme

Informing the public about the results and impact of the activities financed by the programme brings the assistance package closer to the citizens in the programme area. The successful information and communication measures of the project support programme communication as such: demonstrating practical results from cross-border co-operation directly serves the aims of the programme.

The overall information and publicity measures prepared by the Ministry of Internal Affairs on community initiatives and INTERREG programmes in general contributes to the programme communication, too.

Criteria for evaluating the communication:

- visibility in the media (newspapers, radio, TV)
- no. of enquiries about the programme; no. of visits to the programme internet pages

3.5 EU Commission

Objectives of programme communication:

- demonstration of the efficient and adequate implementation of the programme

→ means of demonstrating efficiency in programme implementation

- official reports, evaluation and monitoring reports and dissemination of this information

Responsible organisation and its tasks:

Regional Council of Southwest Finland together with the responsible programme authority (Ministry of Internal Affairs) in Estonia

Communication to the Commission is stipulated in the rules and regulations of programme implementation.

4. Means of communication

4.1 Publications and written materials

- **printed and/or published material presenting the programme:** e.g., programme documents, application forms and instructions, brochures with necessary language versions, slide shows, posters, audio-visual material, as well as official announcements for calls for proposals
Communication is informative and interesting
- **circulars, information sheets, FAQ pages, guides and instructions** (target groups are, for example, project applicants / project co-ordinators, national co-financing bodies and authorities, co-operation partners and interest groups, other INTERREG IIIA programmes, etc.)
Communication is practical and offers guidance
- **opinions and decisions:** official documents
Communication is clear and unambiguous (binding)
- **up-to-date information actions and communication to media** (press releases, etc.)
Communication is up-to-date and attracts attention
- **surveys, enquiries and other publications** (including programme mid-term and final reports)
Communication is interesting and yields results permitting a wider application

4.2 Internet-based means of communication

- **internet, extranet and intranet:** programme internet pages, extranet pages (for authorised use); FIMOS2000 (programme monitoring, includes both public and user pages)
Communication is up-to-date and user-friendly

The electronic means of communication are also utilised for the distribution of publicised material.

4.3 Interactive communication

- **meetings:** part of programme implementation (meetings of the monitoring committee, steering committee, programme secretariat and the national co-financing bodies), also includes a wider co-operation context (e.g., INTERREG co-operation network, South Finland Regional

Alliance ELLI and its environmental group ELLY in Finland, as well as national and regional co-operation groups, and various project preparation networks, as well as communication within those organisations involved in the programme in both countries, etc.)

Communication is problem solving oriented and interactive

- **information events:** events related to calls for proposals (project applicants); events related to administrative co-operation; project information days (projects accepted for funding, new co-operation projects, events for exchange ideas and experiences, etc.); partner forums (contact events and other similar activities); media information and communication about developments in the programme, seminars tailored to specified target groups, etc.

Communication is practice-oriented and interactive

- **discussions, get-togethers, project advice and negotiations**

Communication is customer-oriented and interactive

4.4 Indirect communication

- **results from the projects:** successful project information and communication measures
Communication gives living examples of cross-border co-operation and creates a narrative

5. Indicative budget

The costs of programme communication is included in the technical assistance budget of the INTERREG IIIA Southern Finland – Estonia programme (field of assistance 415).

Annual cost of communication (EURO), 2001-06

	2001*	2002*	2003*	2004	2005	2006	2007-08	Total
Information/publicity	21 065	43 984	67 017	156 934	92 000	109 000	40 000	530 000

*Years 2001-03 basing on eventual figures.

Cost specification (EURO), 2001-06

	Total
Official announcements of the programme	100 000
Information and training events (regional information events related to the calls for proposals; information events for the national co-financing authorities and; project days/partner forum and other events for those implementing projects)	113 000
Seminars for interest groups (decision makers, social partners, etc.)	30 000
Materials/publications: incl. web pages, brochures and information leaflets, programme documents, visiting cards, slide shows, application forms, instructions, guidelines, and other tools and materials	222 000
Interpretation, translation and linguistic checking	60 000
Follow-up of programme communication	5 000
Total	530 000

6. Timetable

The Southern Finland Coastal Zone (SFCZ) INTERREG IIIA programme was fully launched in the latter part of the year 2001. The programme information and communication measures in 2001-02 aimed at supporting the launch of the assistance package and making the target groups and the public aware of the programme. Another phase when communication played an important role was during the mid-term of the programme period (2003): the programme and results achieved so far were collated, and, the assistance was decided for the rest of the programme period – especially bearing in mind Estonia coming aboard to the INTERREG programme. In the beginning of the programme period information measures were targeted to enable combining the INTERREG IIIA and Phare CBC activities and projects. In 2004 the INTERREG programme is launched in Estonia. But at the same time, the “joint project” is a new concept also for the partners in Southern Finland. Thus, planning and preparation of joint projects require information and advice on both sides of the border. The latter part of the programme period 2004-2006 is a transition period where both ongoing SFCZ INTERREG IIIA projects are supported with parallel activities in Estonia and the first actual Finnish-Estonian joint projects are to be started. Towards the end of the programme period, communication also becomes a part of concluding the programme: not only do the activities funded by programme require long-term effects, but the programme itself needs to aim at achieving a long-lasting impact, too. After the year 2006 the programme is closed. The results and the impact of cross-border activities are evaluated and the conclusions are made visible for the wide audience.

amending and launching of the INTERREG IIIA Southern Finland – Estonia:

- 2003/2004: Task Force consisting of representatives of both countries and the programme (amendment of programme, application packages and other materials)
- 2002/2004: joint meetings of authorities involved in programme implementation (e.g. negotiations between Finnish and Estonian sector/regional authorities; INTERREG IIIA and Phare CBC joint Steering Committee meetings; INTERREG Monitoring Committee meetings with Estonian representation as experts)
- 2003/2004: information materials: SFCZ INTERREG IIIA / INTERREG IIIA FIN EST Information sheets (1-2/2003 in Finnish, 3/2003 in English and 1/2004 in Estonian) and internet pages www.INTERREG-finest.net (1.5.2004 –)

- 2003/2004: information for project applicants 1) information and advice targeted for ongoing activities in both countries (*ongoing SFCZ INTERREG IIIA projects and their Estonian partners at the turn of 2003/2004*); 2) information and advice for potential applicants and new joint projects (*from latter part of 2004 onwards*). Information and advice for joint projects utilises the experiences from SFCZ INTERREG IIIA programme in 2001-2003.

Regular activities:

- annual information events related to calls for proposals / decision rounds (potential project applicants, specified target groups, authorities). When necessary, these activities can be directed to specified target groups important for the programme's objectives.
- annual meetings for the projects, partner meetings and other similar events

Programme communication utilises internet pages, publications, as well as other means of communication (including audio-visual materials, multimedia, etc.). INTERREG IIIA programme documentation is prepared for the whole programme period (e.g., programme complement, application forms and instructions, forms for reporting, and payment forms and related instructions as well as programme brochures). These materials are provided in all the three programme languages – in Finnish, Swedish and Estonian – and to a necessary extent in English).

Upon closing the programme a high-profile seminar will be targeted for the decision makers and interest groups in the programme area. The experiences and results of the INTERREG IIIA Southern Finland – Estonia will be distributed also in the Interact co-operation (especially through the Interact Point Managing Transition) beginning in the 2004.

7. Monitoring

Responsibility for monitoring an individual information event rests with the organisation arranging the event. The Programme Secretariat draws the monitoring information together. When considered necessary, separate follow-up surveys can also be ordered concerning specific information measures and their visibility in the media (e.g., information campaigns and similar).

Communication is part of programme implementation and successful communication contributes not only to the success of a particular information measure, but also to the success of the programme implementation as a whole.

The Monitoring Committee receives an overview on the quality and efficacy of the information and communication measures as included in the annual reports from the managing authority.

8. Rules and regulations for information and publicity measures

The information and publicity measures in the INTERREG IIIA Southern Finland – Estonia programme will be conducted in accordance with EU rules concerning assistance from the Structural Funds¹. The aim of the programme information and publicity measures is to ensure transparency for the various potential recipients and partners of the support, in addition to informing the public. The managing authority – Regional Council of Southwest Finland – is responsible for guaranteeing the efficacy of the information measures in the INTERREG III Southern Finland and Estonia programme, as well as the publicity supporting the successful implementation of the programme. The national co-financing bodies play an active part in disseminating information about the possibilities provided by the programme, as well as informing their own sectors of activity about the results of the programme. A well-functioning flow of information between the various organisations involved in the programme is a precondition for the optimal utilisation of the potential provided by the programme for the Southern Finland and Estonia.

¹ Council Regulation (EC) 1260/1999, Commission Regulation (EC) 1159/2000

In accordance with the regulation on information and publicity actions to be taken by the Member States with regard to Structural Fund assistance (Commission Regulation (EC) 1159/2000²), the aim of the information and publicity measures in the INTERREG IIIA Southern Finland – Estonia programme is to:

- a) inform potential and final beneficiaries, as well as
 - regional and local authorities and other competent public authorities,
 - trade organisations and business groups,
 - economic and social partners,
 - non-governmental organisations, especially organizations promoting equality between men and women and organizations working to protect and improve the environment,
 - project operators and promoters,about the opportunities offered by joint assistance from the European Union and the Member States in order to ensure the transparency of such assistance;
- b) inform the general public about the role played by the European Union in cooperation with the Member States in the assistance concerned and its results.

In a project the project co-ordinator is responsible for information measures and publicity of results. Efficient project communication is also an integral part of the objectives set for the programme. Examples of results gained in cross-border co-operation projects convey information about the type of activities that are supported in the programme, encouraging new participants to join the activities. The INTERREG funding decision granting the ERDF funds is appended with a guide for information and publicity measures, including instructions for displaying the European emblem.

² OJ 31.5.2000 L 130/30-36 – Implementing rules for information and publicity about assistance from the Structural Funds