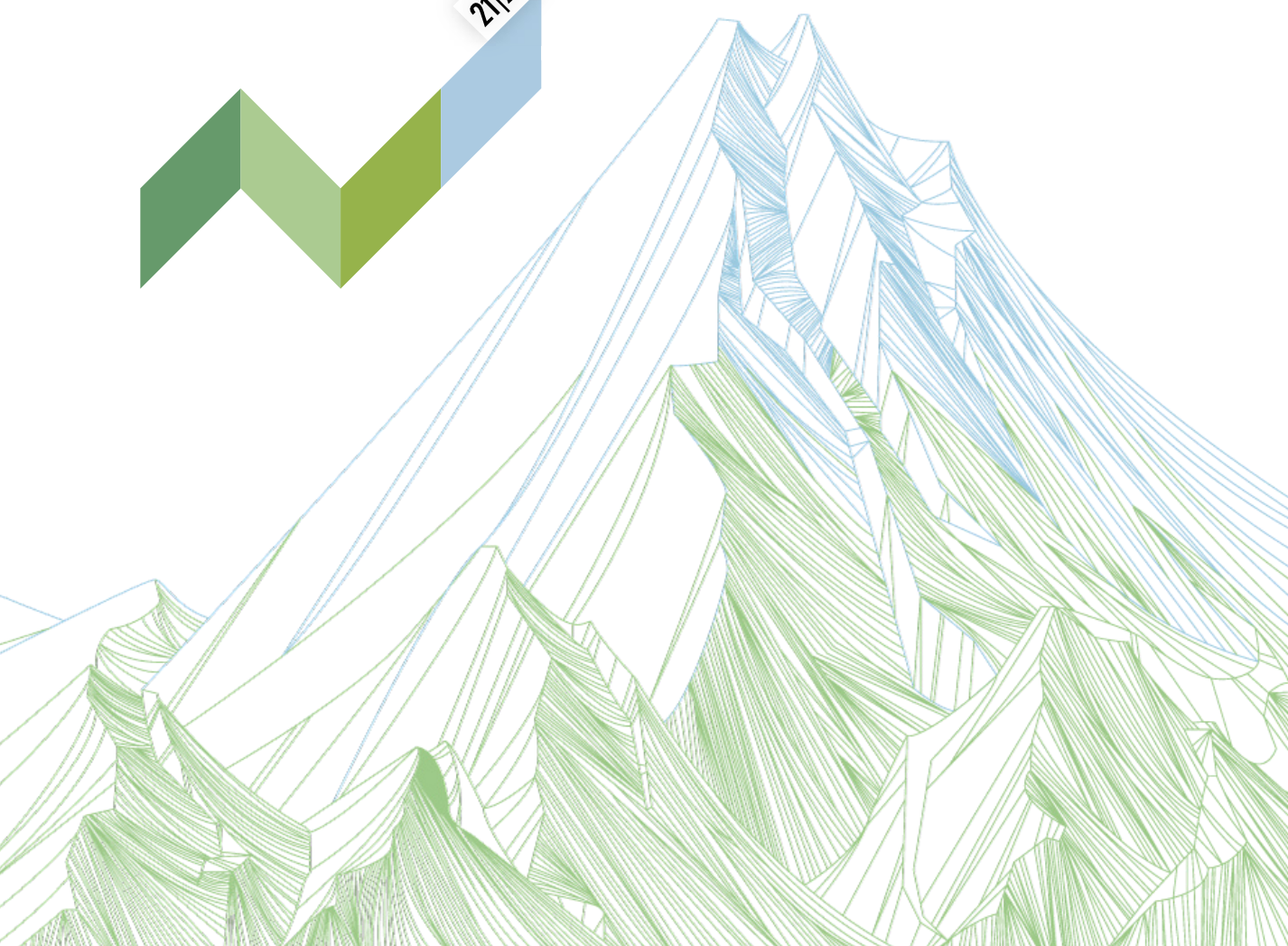


Communication strategy 2021-2027





Introduction

The present communication strategy develops the approach to communication and visibility of the Interreg Alpine Space programme for the period 2021-2027. It details the programme's communication objectives, target groups, activities, budget and envisaged evaluation measures. All communication activities aim at demonstrating the core value and ambition of the Interreg Alpine Space: be an enabler, a long-term partner and a source of inspiration for a better quality of life in the Alpine region through cooperation.

Mission statement of the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027

Why are we here?

- We are at the forefront of the transition to a unique, carbon neutral and climate resilient European territory: the Alpine region.

What do we do?

- Through innovative and pioneering ideas, we foster the integration of sustainable economic development, societal wellbeing and the preservation of its outstanding nature.
- We support cooperation projects across borders and facilitate joint trans-national solutions.

How do we do it?

- We bring together stakeholders from different areas, sectors and levels and create benefit for the citizens in the Alpine region.

Communication objectives

The following communication objectives are based on the programme's mission statement. They shall serve as orientation for the communication activities of the programme, which are carried out at the transnational / programme level, at national level and at level of projects.

N° 1: Build capacities for an effective implementation and communication of the projects and the programme

- ✓ Enhance the communication capacities of programme bodies
- ✓ Support applicants and beneficiaries in an effective project implementation, from project generation to closure
- ✓ Increase the capacity of projects partners to communicate their project achievements

N° 2: Bring the programme and its achievements closer to citizens

- ✓ Increase awareness of potential applicants about the programme's funding opportunities
- ✓ Promote the projects' achievements and foster their capitalisation by policy-makers and potential applicants.
- ✓ Raise the awareness of citizens of the benefits of European territorial cooperation for the Alpine Space

N° 3: Position the programme at the forefront of the transition towards an innovative, climate-neutral Alpine region

- ✓ Support applicants and beneficiaries to reduce the carbon footprint of their project activities (internal communication)
- ✓ Profile the Interreg Alpine Space to citizens as an environmentally friendly and responsible programme (external communication)

Target groups

We make a differentiated use of a range of communication channels, depending on the target groups addressed and on the messages to spread. The target audiences of the programme communication include:

Target group	Dedicated communication channels and activities
(Potential) beneficiaries	Direct mailing, newsletter, information on the programme website or social media, organisation of (public) information events or trainings in national languages or in English, contribution to external events.
(Potential) end-users	Website, social media channels, programme or external public events, external collaboration e.g. participation to a joint communication campaign with the Interreg transnational programmes, Interact or the Commission. Projects are best placed to reach end-users or citizens.
Multipliers of project results including Alpine organisations and EUSALP	Direct mailing, website and social media, common activities e.g. joint events or publications.
EU institutions	Direct mailing, participation to communication campaigns e.g. with other Interreg programmes, specific channels such as the website Interreg.eu.
European and national networks	Direct mailing, participation to communication campaigns e.g. with other Interreg programmes, specific channels such as the website Interreg.eu.
Other Interreg programmes	Direct mailing, communication platforms e.g. Interact IBM communities, website Interreg.eu
Programme bodies	Direct mailing, the intranet, a punctual internal email newsletter, meetings or trainings.

Communication activities

Basic communication activities

Visual identity

The programme uses a visual identity based on the Interreg brand developed by Interact and the European Commission. In addition to the common Interreg logo and corporate design elements, we have our own corporate design and several templates (e.g. for the website, newsletter, programme documents or presentations, letterheads, business cards, publications, online campaign or promotional material).

The visual identity of the Interreg Alpine Space for 2021-2027 is in line with its core values and mission statement. In particular, it represents its identity as funding programme of the European Union and part of the EU cohesion policy. It also conveys its commitment for an innovative and climate-neutral Alpine region. The visual identity captures the image of the programme and makes its messages recognizable, be it on the website, newsletter, social media or programme documents. It is an evolution of the 2014-2020 visual identity, including a more contemporary colour mood board, a more flexible use of the programme mountain-shaped key visual, background design ideas, a modernised and more frequent use of maps and infographics as well as of quality illustrations, including realistic people illustrations.

Contact management system

Contact management is important for raising visibility and maintaining regular contact between programme bodies and with stakeholders, the media, decision makers, or other multipliers. An application capable of facilitating and coordinating contact database management is necessary for this programming period, and will be regularly used and updated to manage changes in contact details. The latter should also provide solutions for a number of additional services such as mass mailing, newsletter registration, feedback questionnaires and event management.

Besides, we will assess the opportunity to make use of a matchmaking platform to support (potential) beneficiaries in their partner search. It could be based on an existing market tool to support the identification of peers and build an updated database of contacts.

Website and other digital communication channels

For 2021-2027, the Interreg Alpine Space programme's online visibility is based on a coherent concept for digital communication via the use of the website, newsletter and related social media channels. It facilitates internal and external communication and ensure a high quality promotion of the programme and its activities. The objective is to tailor and optimise the use of different communication channels to the nature and needs of the target audiences of the programme, as well as to its resources. Different communication formats such as videos, visual productions, electronic publications etc. are used. The digital communication concept includes an editorial plan for the communication via social media, as well as the definition of a programme slogan or hashtag standing for the programme's mission statement.

The website is the main entry point for any target group to find information about the activities of the programme, its functioning or the results of its projects. It will therefore be responsive, optimised for search engine, easily accessible, attractive and up-to-date. It includes:

- General information about the programme (funding priorities, calls for proposals, guidance for project applicants and managers, news, events, contact details etc.)
- National information in all Alpine languages (on sub-websites or pages hosted on the main website)
- Information about projects, their implementation status and results; project websites (hosted on the main website)

In addition, the website could host or redirect to an online collaboration or document-sharing tool(s) (intranet or external software such as MS Teams, for instance). This would allow sharing and collaborating on (internal) documents, sending information or fostering a dialogue in specific groups (e.g. the ACP-MA-JS group, the programme committee or the project communication managers). The intranet is one of the means used to inform the programme bodies on the programme activities, projects news and achievements for a good implementation, strategy- and decision-making on the programme. Building the capacities of programme body members will serve different communication objectives such as the support to beneficiaries or the promotion and capitalisation of programme's achievements.

Besides the website, a targeted use of social media and of the newsletter (e.g. a reinforced segmentation by themes or country) complements the digital communication of the programme. The JS and ACP will ensure a coordination of their communication measures at transnational and the national levels. The intensified use of communication activities in national languages (e.g. national websites, newsletters or



social media) helps to address the Alpine and European citizens as (potential) end users of the projects results. This way, the programme promotes the benefits of cooperation and of EU funding for the quality of life in the Alpine Space.

Furthermore, digital communication promotes both the achievements of the programme and that of its projects in the field of sustainable transition. Internal and external stakeholders should recognise the programme as environmentally friendly and as an actor committed to environmental protection. We aim at stepping up our communication on the environmental achievements of projects. We will highlight green management practices raise awareness on environmental aspects, including for projects not having a main environmental focus.

Publications and online campaigns

We will realise all publications in an electronic format to comply with the sustainability principles of the programme. Some will be printed upon need, such as the flyer presenting the programme and its funding priorities, and possibly a brochure on the results of the projects. Online publications (in English) include, among others: a bimonthly newsletter, informative material on project management from generation to closure, proceedings of programme or major events, thematic whitepapers on project results, cooperation between Alpine Space projects and EUSALP action groups. The need for other electronic or printed publications may arise at any point during this programming period.

Besides flyers and brochures, we also develop and lead online promotion campaigns to promote for instance the launch of a call or the results of projects. To this end, specific texts, e-brochures, infographics, illustrations, animated images or videos are produced and cross-posted on the digital communication channels of the programme (i.e. main website, national websites, newsletter and social media). We will assess the opportunity of paid media partnerships or social media campaigns (e.g. “pay with a tweet”) as a means to increase the visibility of the programme beyond its usual stakeholders and towards European citizens.

Programme bodies, EU, Interreg and Alpine networks and organisations will play a key role to help promote the programme’s achievements and funding opportunities. Project achievements will be made widely known to any interested organisations, potential end users, thematic multipliers (e.g. chambers of commerce, public authorities, umbrella organisations), policy-makers or citizens beyond the target groups of the projects themselves. This ensures the durability and transferability of projects results to other organisations or regions as well as their uptake in public policies. To this end, we will gather and organise the project results to promote them in a targeted way to European, national and regional stakeholders.



Events

Major programme events

Only a few large transnational events are organised during the period, such as a kick-off conference in 2021 to launch the 2021-2027 period (and close the period 2014-2020), an event on the programme's strategic development or a closure event. In order to make the most out of these large events, they will fulfil several purposes, such as informing stakeholders about the programme's functioning or progress, fostering networking or exchanges among peers on a specific theme or promoting the projects results.

Major events bring together various target groups such as potential partners, project participants, policy and decision makers, programme body members etc. Whenever possible, the events are web streamed, recorded or organised as online events, and their proceedings made available online to as many interested parties as possible.

Thematic and networking events

We organise thematic events in order to foster cross-sectoral and transnational dialogues on specific topics and foster the development of project partnerships. Furthermore, such events shall offer the opportunity to capitalise on the experience and results of past projects, or to identify future challenges. Thematic workshops bring together EUSALP stakeholders, Alpine Convention representatives, programme bodies, project partners and interested stakeholders (including newcomers) in dedicated events. Some workshops are also organised at national level, allowing partners and stakeholders to share knowledge with their national counterparts. Whenever possible, the events are web streamed, recorded or organised as online events and their proceedings made available online to as many interested people as possible.

In order to support applicants and especially newcomers in their project partner search, a transnational matchmaking event could be organised ahead of each call. Partners of high quality projects could share their experience to help newcomers to a better understanding of the programme and its expectations.

More generally, we offer opportunities for networking and peer learning in each programme event, in dedicated sessions or as part of the informal programme (e.g. breaks or meals).

Training events and seminars

We aim at empowering applicants and project participants by providing them with the tools necessary to produce high quality projects and results. For this reason, we focus on seminars, since they are effective in training project participants on how to address the right political level, and produce high quality and

targeted results. Such seminars include applicant seminars, lead partner seminars, project participant seminars, national “info days” and communication seminars.

Besides, the first promoters and multipliers of the project results should be the project partners themselves. We should therefore empower the beneficiaries to promote efficiently their projects achievements and results to the relevant target groups.

Project partners will be supported in:

- building a sound communication strategy by identifying the relevant objectives, target groups, tactics and communication activities,
- applying the communication requirements (e.g. logo, poster, project website, final event),
- developing efficient measures to ensure the durability and transferability of the project results,
- efficiently using digital communication tools e.g. website and social media,
- using new or different formats such as videos or podcasts,
- getting access to the local, national or European media (press, radio, television etc.),
- efficiently advocating to influence public policies,
- reducing the environmental impact of their communication and project activities or
- using plain language and storytelling to better communicate their project.

We will systematically assess the opportunity to organise seminars in person or as virtual events. Online formats may also favour the organisation of shorter sessions, on more specific topics (e.g. training on storytelling, video making, project leadership or sustainable management). External experts could complement the internal JS expertise to deliver such trainings.

External events

Whenever possible, we will represent the programme in thematically relevant external events, in order to reach new potential participants, reinforce our connections with external networks and institutions, and reach a wider audience and number of multipliers. In many of these events, the programme acts as an Interreg representative. We will also use these events to promote the programme and its projects’ results. Through representation at EUSALP annual forums and participation in EUSALP executive board meetings and action group meetings as an observer, we ensure a close cooperation and alignment with the EUSALP objectives.

Budget overview

Communication activities will be spread along the overall programme duration. The JS is the main responsible body, with MA support when needed. The ACP will carry out specific activities of national relevance such as the animation of a national website page or the organisation of national events.

Based on the European Commission recommendations, the communication budget (excluding staff costs) shall be of at least 0.3 percent of the total programme budget. For the Interreg Alpine Space 2021-2027, the communication budget amounts to € 650.000. The indicative financial plan is the following:

	Estimated budget
Basic communication activities	€ 20.000
Corporate design	€ 10.000
Contact management	€ 10.000
Website and other digital communication channels	€ 130.000
Programming and development	€ 60.000
Maintenance and further developments, graphics	€ 70.000
Publications and online campaigns	€ 100.000
Print, digital and online promotion products and campaigns	€ 100.000
Events	€ 350.000
Major programme events	€ 180.000
Thematic and networking events	€ 70.000
Training events and seminars	€ 70.000
External events	€ 30.000
Reserve	€ 50.000
Total	€ 650.000



Monitoring and evaluation

External or internal evaluators monitor and evaluate all communication activities on a regular basis. We will collect data through surveys, internal statistics or website analytics. We use a detailed set of indicators to follow and evaluate all communication activities and improve their performance on an ongoing basis. Each objective of the communication strategy will be monitored using key performance indicators based on the European Commission's typology. This variety of indicators enables us not only to measure what the programme does (activities) and what has been reached (outputs), but rather what consequences (outtakes) and impacts (outcomes) these activities concretely have.

Background information about the indicators

Indicators initially endorsed during the PC meeting (18.10.2022). Set of 15 KPI reduced to 11 KPI in September 2024 (reviewed in February 2025). The PC will be informed at PC17 meeting, which will take place on 8-9 April 2025.

Description of the type of indicators



Communication main objectives

1. Build capacities for an effective implementation and communication of the projects and the programme
2. Bring the programme and its achievements closer to citizens
3. Position the programme at the forefront of the transition towards an innovative, climate-neutral Alpine region

Specific objectives in the table below are as stated in the communication strategy approved in October 2022 by the Programme Committee.

Comm. specific objective	Indicator	Type of indicator	Baseline value	Target value	Source of data	Frequency of monitoring
1.1 Enhance the communication capacities of programme bodies						
	Survey on the available communication tools / programme content (do you know about it/do you use it)	outcome	Baseline 0 as indicator is new	75% awareness and use of the existing tools	Survey to programme bodies (PC, JS, MA, ACP,)	2025 & 2028
1.2 Support applicants and beneficiaries in an effective project implementation	Satisfaction survey of applicants and beneficiaries on the support by programme bodies (JS, MA, ACP) for project implementation	outtake	100% satisfaction for the JS, 84% for the MA, 81% for the ACP; 15% dissatisfaction for the ACP (2018)	80% satisfaction and Easy-to-find comprehensive information	Event feedback questionnaire, surveys	Yearly
	Number of visits on the website page of the programme manual	output	320 visits per month (Jan. 2022)	500 visits per month on average over a year	Website analytics	Yearly from 2025
1.3 1. Increase the capacity of projects partners to communicate their project	Average number of visits per month of project websites	outcome	500 visits per month on average over a year (2021 - 63 project websites)	1000 visits on average per project page per year	Website analytics	Yearly from 2025

achievements						
2.1 Increase awareness of potential applicants about the programme's funding opportunities	Average number of visits on the website page dedicated to calls and funding ("How to apply")	outcome	2.800 visits per month (Jan. 2022)	2.500 visits per month on average when a call is open	Website analytics	Yearly
	Cumulated number of participants in national and transnational information events about calls per year	outcome	2.300 participants (2021)	2.000 participants per year on average	Number of participants attending transnational and national events, in-person and online	Yearly
2.2 Promote the projects' achievements and foster their capitalisation by policy-makers and potential applicants.	Number of projects declaring an influence on public policies	outcome	Baseline 0 as activity is new	20% of projects	Survey to lead partners of classic projects at project closure	2025 & 2028
	Percentage of local, regional or national public authorities in the audience of major programme events	outcome	26% of registered participants (kick-off conference in Nov. 2021)	35% of registered participants	Attendance lists	Yearly

2.3 Raise the awareness of citizens of the benefits of European territorial cooperation for the Alpine Space	Average number of visits per month on the website's project and output library	outcome	300 visits per month (Jan. 2022)	1.000 visits per month on average over a year	Website analytics	Yearly
3.1 Support applicants and beneficiaries to reduce the carbon footprint of their project activities (internal communication)	Percentage of co-funded projects adopting a sustainable practices charter	outtake	Baseline 0 as activity is new	60% of projects	Survey to lead partners	2025, 2028
3.2 Profile the Interreg Alpine Space to	Percentage of respondents considering the programme as sustainable	outtake	Baseline 0 as activity is new	70% of respondents	Survey at major programme events and on social media	2025, 2028

citizens as an environmentally friendly and responsible programme (external communication)						
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