

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Central Baltic Programme

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Central Baltic Programme 2021-2027

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1. Introduction

Communication is the backbone of a successful Central Baltic Programme 2021-2027, hereinafter referred to as “the Programme”. This document acts as a framework to implement the communication activities and facilitate the communication of Programme objectives and results to relevant audiences. It follows the requirements set out by the European Commission¹.

Communication is implemented in every stage of the Programme life cycle: starting with the Programme start-up, through implementation, until and even after the closure of the Programme. Therefore, the communication activities will move from the promotion of funding opportunities to more prominently raising awareness of the results and benefits towards the end of the Programme period. The communication will support maximising the project impact and implementation of the Programme by sharing best practices and results on the Programme level for further use and knowledge creation. This will be done as part of the capitalisation package for the Programme.

This strategy supports everyone in the Programme to function and work cohesively as a collaborative unit and achieve the expected results. As there are different needs throughout the phases of Programme implementation, annual work plans will be drawn up to serve these differing needs.

The document was developed together with the Programme staff. Feedback from the Programme bodies and beneficiaries from the preceding funding period ensured that best practices and recommendations were considered and continued, where relevant.

The document will be revised and updated, when necessary to ensure the successful completion of the 2021-2027 Programme.

¹ Regulation (EU) No [2021/1060](#)

2. Programme Communication Objectives

The overall objective of the Central Baltic Programme is to provide funding for cross-border cooperation in order to support regional development and cohesion in the region.

All communication objectives are designed to support the overall Programme objective and to make the Programme and its achievements well known. This is ensured by setting the Programme Communication Objectives (PCOs) that will ensure the best possible implementation of the Programme (Table 1).

Table 1 The Programme Communication Objectives (PCOs)

Programme Communication Objective 1
To ensure the generation and quality of the cross-border cooperation projects.
PCO 1.1 To ensure efficient internal communication within the Programme bodies in order to guarantee smooth Programme implementation.
PCO 1.2 To make the Programme known and attractive to potential applicants in all regions of the Programme area.
PCO 1.3 To support the beneficiaries in all phases of project implementation to ensure the best possible project outcomes.
Programme Communication Objective 2
To ensure wide awareness of the benefits achieved with the support of the Central Baltic Programme.
PCO 2.1 To widely promote achievements accomplished by projects by highlighting cross-border benefits.

The focus of communication is determined by the stage at which the Programme is being implemented. The communication activities move from primarily promoting the funding opportunity to more prominently engaging the audiences and raising awareness of the results and benefits achieved with the support of the Programme.

2.1 Principles for an effective internal communication

To achieve the communication objectives set out above, the Programme staff jointly developed the principles for effective internal communication. Internal communication refers to the exchange and flow of information between the Programme bodies. Efficient internal communication ensures that the Programme speaks with a unified voice and provides the same information.

Four principles were defined as important for internal communication, see Figure 1. The four principles are defined as relevant, timely, understandable, and accessible.

Relevant	Define a clear reason for sharing targeted information with the relevant audiences.
Timely	Communicate when expected so the audience has it when it is needed, and when receptive to hear and act on it.
Understandable	Be clear and transparent, use plain language.
Accessible	Make information available in well-structured and effective channels.

Figure 1 Principles for an effective internal communication

Adherence to these common principles and their compliance in everyday work is analysed in the annual evaluation.

3. Target groups

Different target groups are addressed by different communication objectives. The target groups can be divided into two main groups:

- The **internal target groups** consist of people working with the implementation of the Programme.
- The **external target groups** consist of all stakeholders that could make use or be affected by the Programme (results).

The needs of the target groups are different, and they come from different sources. Their needs can be identified based on the Programme aims and requirements. Received feedback from the target groups, their questions and inquiries as well as experiences from the previous Programme period serve as the basis for defining the needs.

In the following table, the needs of the different target groups are described.

Table 2 The target groups and their information needs

Target group	What do they need to know?
Internal target groups	
Programme staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managing Authority - Joint Secretariat - national Contact Points (nCPs) 	Their role and tasks in Programme implementation Regular information relevant to the staff’s tasks How Programme implementation is going
Monitoring Committee	How Programme implementation is going Achieved benefits and success stories
Control bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audit Authority - National Controllers 	How Programme implementation is going
National and regional authorities	How Programme implementation is going Achieved benefits and success stories
European Commission’s DG Regio Desk Officer	How Programme implementation is going Achieved benefits and success stories

Target group	What do they need to know?
External target groups	
European Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How Programme implementation is going Achieved benefits and success stories Achievements in the thematic fields
Potential applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What the Programme has to offer Information about eligibility Good examples of cross-border cooperation How to prepare a good project application Where and how to find partners When and how to apply Contact details of relevant support personnel
Project partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to implement the project well Examples of best practices How to succeed in project communication Requirements for project communication Experiences of other funded projects Contact person's contact details
Stakeholder organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How Programme funding and actions undertaken by the funded projects benefit the relevant themes/organisations/issues
Relevant segments of the general public (Groups of people interested in the Programme or its Objectives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is done with EU money The benefits of Interreg and how Interreg funding impacts their lives

4. Communication approaches for achieving the objectives

The Programme plans to achieve its communication objectives by implementing various communication approaches. The chosen communication approaches are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Overview of the communication approaches for achieving the Programme’s Communication Objectives

Programme Communication Objectives	Target groups	Communication approach
PCO 1: To ensure the generation and quality of cross-border cooperation projects.		
1.1 To ensure efficient internal communication within the Programme bodies in order to guarantee smooth Programme implementation.	Programme staff (Joint Secretariat and national Contact Points) Monitoring Committee members Managing Authority National responsible authority representatives European Commission/DG Regio (Desk officer)	Communicating relevant and easily understandable information to relevant target groups. Making well-structured information available in the right channels. Being clear on the division of tasks and responsibilities. Establishing a good working atmosphere by having efficient meetings and creating opportunities for cooperation.
1.2 To make the Programme known and attractive to potential applicants in all regions of the Programme area.	Potential applicant organisations (NGOs, SMEs and public organisations implementing projects) National and regional authorities	Proactively providing relevant information about the Programme logic and result orientation through networks, events, and channels. Providing clear and good-quality guidance (materials, events, consultations) for planning and developing the project idea for applying for a call. Supporting cross-border partnership development.
1.3 To support the beneficiaries in all phases of project implementation to ensure the best possible project outcome.	Project partners of the approved projects	Providing clear and good-quality guidance (materials, events, consultations). Supporting and encouraging beneficiaries in communicating their activities and results. Providing possibilities for project partners to network and share experiences. Collecting feedback on Programme support.
PCO 2: To ensure wide awareness of the benefits achieved with the support of the Central Baltic Programme.		
2.1 To widely promote achievements accomplished by projects by highlighting cross-border benefits.	Stakeholder organisations Influencers Relevant segments of the general public (groups related to the Programme objectives) European Commission Potential applicants	Widely disseminating the project results in relevant channels, networks, and events. Arranging or promoting and participating in relevant events for the general public (e.g., European Cooperation Day). To support the efficient and cost-effective use of Programme resources and transitions between Programme periods by promoting the further use of good practices and results achieved by projects.

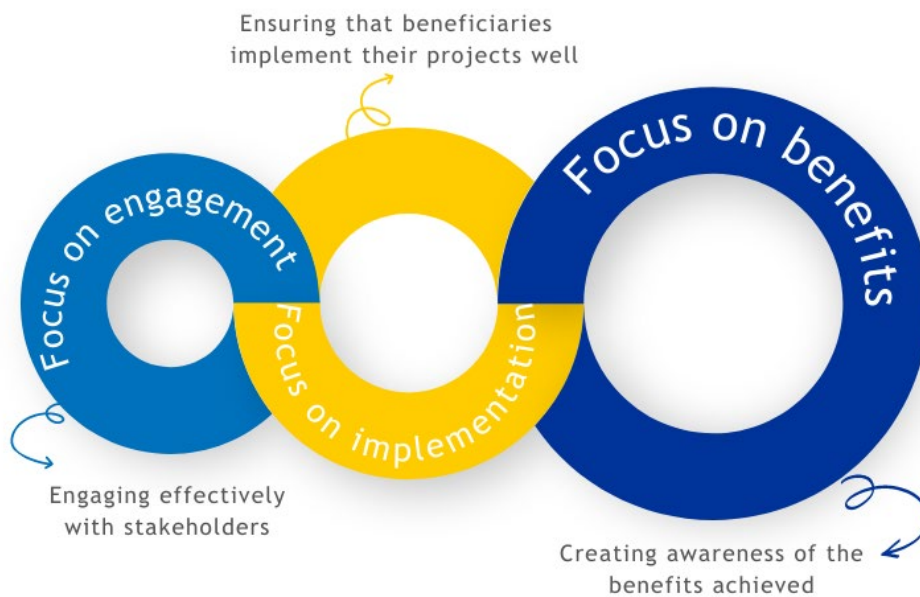
From engaging and implementing to making use of the results

In the first years of Programme implementation, communication activities will focus both on targeting groups already familiar with the Programme landscape, as well as on attracting potential new applicants. Potential applicants will be actively supported and guided in the application process, thereby supporting the development of high-quality applications.

Experiences and success stories from the previous Programme period will be widely used as examples of successful cooperation for different target groups through various channels. Success stories from the current Programme period will later gain ground in Programme communication. Based on previous experience, funded projects are great at disseminating Project information and at attracting the attention of relevant segments of the general public as they are creating positive change in their regions, and within their own fields of expertise.

Additionally, the Programme will develop a capitalisation package, which will allow the spreading of knowledge and best practices to different interest groups.

Figure 2 Overview of the communication approaches within the Programme's life cycle



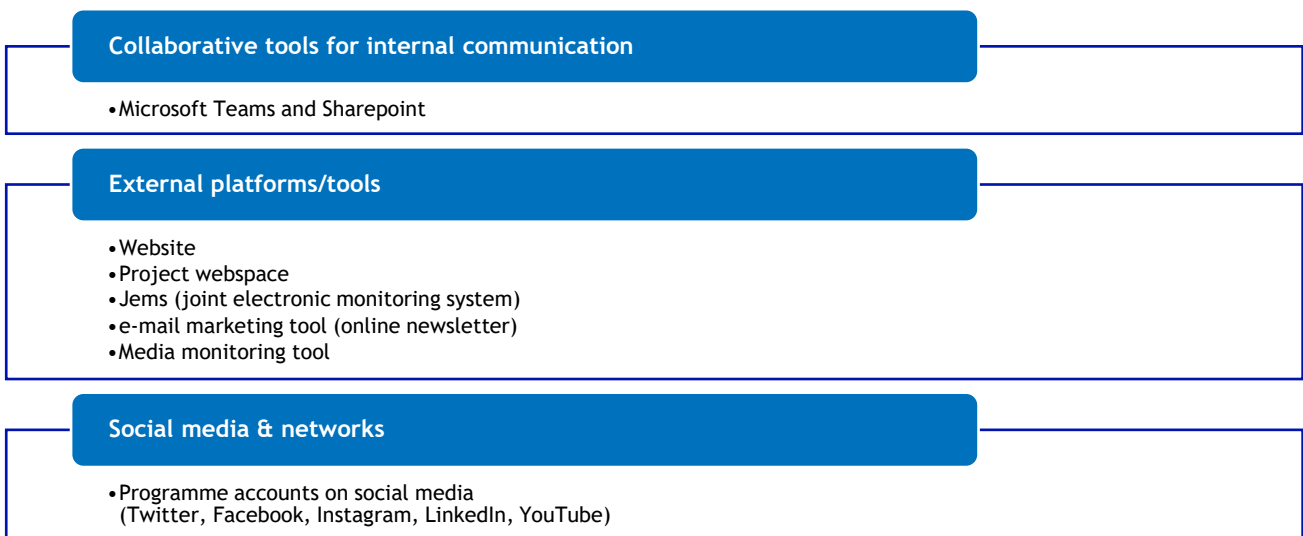
5. Communication tools and materials

English is used as the main language in Programme communication.

To support Programme implementation in the best possible way, a mix of tools are used in a coherent, coordinated and need-based way. External communication across platforms will adhere to rules and regulations on accessibility.

The main communication tools fall into three categories, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 3 The main communication tools used in the Central Baltic Programme



The use of communication tools may change over time. The most relevant tools and channels will be considered in accordance with the annual work plans.

Table 4 provides an overview of the main communication tools and their purposes.

Table 4 Overview of the main communication tools and their purposes

Tools	Purpose
Collaborative tools for internal communication	
Teams and Sharepoint	To create a good internal flow of information and collaboration between colleagues. This includes meetings and storing of joint files.
External platforms and tools	
Programme website	<p>A one-stop-shop for all Programme information targeting potential applicants, stakeholders, and beneficiaries.</p> <p>It is the central tool for publishing Programme materials as well as updated information on the Programme (incl. news, events, and data) that will be further distributed to relevant audiences through for example social media and events.</p> <p>The website will publish information about beneficiaries as requested by and in accordance with EU legislation². The list of operations funded by the Programme will be published on the website and updated regularly (at least every four months).</p>
Project webspace	To ensure the long-lasting online presence of all funded projects and their results, information about them will be distributed and stored on the Programme’s website. All funded projects will be presented in compliance with the Programme branding.
Jems	For submitting the project applications and monitoring their activities as well as for facilitating data exchange and formal communication with applicants, beneficiaries and the JS.
Online newsletter/ e-mail marketing tool	<p>To regularly inform the subscribers of the latest updates regarding Programme news, which shall increase traffic on the Programme website.</p> <p>The subscriber lists are regularly updated.</p>
Media monitoring tool	To stay up to date on the latest news and to evaluate the media coverage on topics relevant to the Programme. This tool is also used for analysing media coverage of the Programme within the Programme area as well as for planning regional communication activities.
Social media and networks	
Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn	Raising awareness of the Programme and promoting achieved benefits. To engage and inform EU authorities on the Programme’s progress and achievements.

² [EUR-Lex - 32021R1060 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1060/oj)

5.1 Programme communication on social media

Programme communications reach a wide audience through social media. Social media platforms are seen as tools for raising awareness toward the Programme and as effective platforms on which to promote the benefits reached with Programme funding.

To aid in reaching the Programme’s communication objectives and to maximise its reach and impact, a complimentary Social Media strategy is developed and updated when necessary. The strategy details both ways in which to maintain current stakeholders informed as well as ways in which to reach possible new stakeholders using relevant social media platforms. The strategy reflects the distribution of internal resources in content creation. It also instructs on branding, language, accessibility, and visuals.

In addition, a collective content planning tool has been created to ensure timely and uniform communication across platforms.

Platforms and audiences

To attract the widest and most versatile demographic possible, Programme information will be communicated through an array of platforms. Those platforms are Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube at the time of developing the Communication Strategy.

The Programme staff members are encouraged to be active users of social media in their personal capacity. If they mention in the profile where they work, they act as social media ambassadors, thus supporting the Programme in reaching wider audiences.

The following table provides an overview of the social media channels through which the Programme communicates to different audiences.

Table 5 Overview of social media platforms and their foci

Platform	Primary audience	Foci
Twitter	Current and future professional stakeholders	Raising awareness of Programme activities, sharing Programme related news, and promoting the beneficiaries and their project results.
Facebook	Relevant segments of the public (with interest toward the Programme and/or its themes) as well as beneficiaries	Sharing snippets of news about the Programme’s activities and concrete results with photos, infographics, videos, and other visualisations.
LinkedIn	Professional audiences and businesses: applicants, beneficiaries, and the media	Connecting with other Programmes and experts, promoting project achievements, and sharing news posted on the Programme website.
Instagram	A younger audience with an interest in visual entertainment	Posting visually appealing, topical, and trendy content. Spreading information, news, and stories in the form of pictures, statistics, and videos.
YouTube	Defined according to need.	The focus is on storing and sharing video content, such as event recordings, guidance videos and information campaigns.

5.2 Communication materials

All communication materials are planned and created in a reader friendly and clear way in accordance with each target groups' needs.

Where communication campaigns include printed materials, activities need to be carefully planned to ensure that all sustainability aspects are considered.

The following figure illustrates the important aspects that the Programme takes into account when creating or retrieving any communication material.

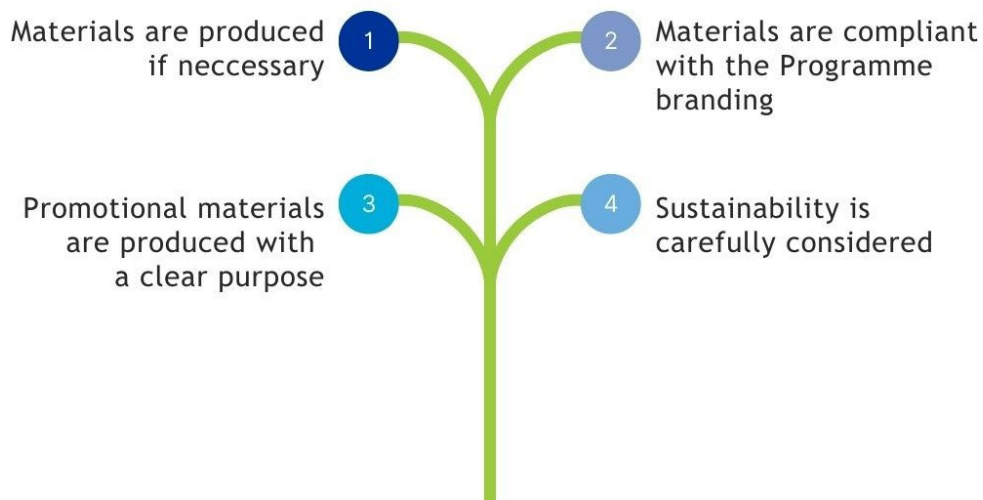


Figure 4 Sustainable communication principle

6. Implementation of the strategy

The Managing Authority is responsible for the implementation of the Programme as well as for all reporting to and communication with the European Commission.

Programme communication is executed horizontally. Besides the Programme’s Communication Manager, the head of the Managing Authority as well as colleagues from all fields of expertise within the Joint Secretariat are actively involved in communication. In addition, the Programme has six national Contact Points (nCPs) in the Member States with communication as their main task. Each national Contact Point takes responsibility for their own activities, which support the Programme objectives. The main role of the nCPs is to promote the Programme’s funding opportunities as well as to promote Programme achievements by highlighting cross-border benefits and best practices.

Concrete activities of all Programme bodies are defined in the annual work plans.

6.1 Budget

Communication activities are budgeted annually in the budget for Technical Assistance. An indicative plan for the annual division of communication costs in the Technical Assistance budget is presented in Table 6.

Table 6 The Joint Secretariat’s budget directly related to communication activities

Activity	Year								Total
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	
Annual Communication Event	0	20 000	20 000	20 000	20 000	20 000	20 000	0	120 000
Website development & upkeep	20 000	20 000	20 000	20 000	20 000	20 000	20 000	10 000	150 000
Materials	3 000	8 000	8 000	8 000	8 000	8 000	8 000	0	51 000
Media monitoring	6 000	6 000	6 000	6 000	6 000	6 000	6 000	6 000	48 000
Support for projects (e.g., seminars, videos)	15 000	30 000	30 000	30 000	30 000	30 000	30 000	10 000	205 000
TOTAL	44 000	84 000	84 000	84 000	84 000	84 000	84 000	26 000	574 000

The operations of the national Contact Points are financed from the 2021-2027 Technical Assistance budget. The agreed lump sum covers their salaries, office and administrative costs, travel costs, external services, and equipment.

The nCPs' communication activities and production of materials will be planned according to the needs of the regions and reflected in the annual work plans.

Table 7 The national Contact Points' budget (lump sum)

Member state/Åland	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	TOTAL
Latvia	34 760	35 110	35 460	35 810	36 170	36 530	213 840
Finland	73 270	74 010	74 750	75 490	76 250	77 010	450 780
Estonia	56 530	57 870	59 260	60 690	62 180	63 720	360 250
Åland	82 790	83 620	84 450	85 300	86 150	87 010	509 320
Sweden	99 410	100 410	101 410	102 430	103 450	104 480	611 590
TOTAL	346 760	351 020	355 330	359 720	364 200	368 750	2 145 780

7. Evaluation framework for communication

Evaluation is a key component in the Programme's communication strategy as it helps to check whether the communication objectives are being met and decide whether the communication approach needs to be adjusted. This chapter is dedicated to the relevant indicators for monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation is done on a yearly basis, drawing on data collection and different tools of analysis.

Each communication objective has result indicators for following up the success in reaching the objective. Depending on the communication objective the indicators measure, a target value or a baseline is set.

The evaluation framework for communication, see Table 8, provides an overview of the indicators set on an annual basis.

Communication is evaluated as part of the overall Programme evaluation

Interreg Programmes are required to make an evaluation plan for the whole Programme period of 7 years. As part of the evaluation of the Programme, done by external experts, the overall performance of the Programme communication will be analysed according to the evaluation plan. The guiding questions defined in the Programme evaluation plan are the following:

- Whether the communication activities and tools have served the objectives of the Programme and whether different communication activities have been implemented in an effective and efficient way ensuring the visibility of the Programme?

The evaluation of the Programme is planned for the years 2025-2026, thus ensuring the necessary transfer of experience and knowledge from the 2021-2027 Programme to the next programming period.

Table 8 Evaluation framework for communication

Communication objective	Result indicator	Source of data	Responsibility for collecting the data	Target value or evaluation metric
PCO 1: To ensure the generation and quality of the cross-border cooperation projects.				
1.1 To ensure efficient internal communication within the Programme bodies in order to guarantee smooth Programme implementation.	Feedback on internal communication (scale 1-5)	Feedback is collected from the internal bodies annually at the end of the year, including the guiding principles for effective communication (from Annex 1).	Joint Secretariat (Communication Manager)	4
1.2 To make the Programme known and attractive to potential applicants in all regions of the Programme area.	The number of events organised with a sufficient number of participants (defined on a case-to-case basis)	The data is collected on an ongoing basis. The average is calculated annually.	Joint Secretariat (Project Managers and Communication Manager) National Contact Points	Qualitative and quantitative analysis
	The percentage of eligible project applications with a qualifying threshold (defined in the Programme Manual)	Data is calculated after each call.	Joint Secretariat (project managers)	Range from 30% to 50%
1.3 To support the beneficiaries in all phases of project implementation to ensure the best possible project outcomes.	Routine feedback from events (scale 1-5)	Post-event feedback regarding the technical and content part, with the possibility to comment, is collected on an ongoing basis. The average is calculated annually.	Joint Secretariat (Communication Manager, Project Managers)	4
PCO 2: To ensure wide awareness of the benefits achieved with the support of the Central Baltic Programme.				
2.1 To widely promote achievements accomplished by projects by highlighting cross-border benefits.	The number of website page views	Data is collected from Google Analytics at the end of the year.	Joint Secretariat (Communication Manager)	Quantitative and qualitative analysis.
	Twitter impressions (the number of times users saw a tweet on Twitter)	Data is collected from Twitter's Analytics page at the end of the year.	Joint Secretariat (Communication Manager)	The baseline will be defined after the first year.
	Facebook page reach (the number of people who saw any content from the page or about the page).	Data is collected from Meta Business Suite Insights at the end of the year.	Joint Secretariat (Communication Manager)	The baseline will be defined after the first year.
	Number of Instagram users following the account	Data is collected from the platform at the end of the year.	Joint Secretariat (Communication Manager)	The baseline will be defined after the first year.
	The number of followers on the LinkedIn account	Data is collected from the platform at the end of the year.	Joint Secretariat (Communication Manager)	The baseline will be defined after the first year.
	Online newsletter engagement: the percentage of subscribers who often open and click on the newsletters	Data is collected from the service provider's audience dashboard.	Joint Secretariat (Communication Manager) National Contact Points	The baseline will be defined after the first year.

Annex 1:

The process of developing the Communication Strategy

The Communication Strategy was developed in five phases **together with the Programme staff**.

Internal focus groups and workshops were held with the Programme staff (MA, Joint Secretariat, national Contact Points) from both the 2014-2020 and the 2021-2027 programming periods.

The previous Programme period was approaching its end at the time of drafting this communication strategy. Valuable experiences were gathered from the staff, focusing on best practices and needs for changes in the approach to communication. The lessons learned from the previous programme period have been considered in this communication strategy. The past experiences help focus the communication activities and methods in a way that benefits Programme implementation the most.

The outcomes from the stakeholder focus group and the feedback received from the beneficiaries were additionally taken into account.

The communication strategy was developed from February to June 2022.



Figure The 5 Phases of developing the Communication Strategy

The phases focused on different aspects, such as reflecting on past approaches and feedback, the legislative framework, mapping the target groups, prioritising communication needs and activities, definition of workload and resources, choosing channels and tools, agreeing on the division of work and evaluation methods as well as considering the budget. With staff resources more stretched, it was essential to carefully analyse and plan where to put effort to best help the Programme reach its overall objectives.

Annex 2:

Programme's Brand Design

In line with wider EU cohesion policy goals, the Programme uses the Interreg harmonised visual brand mark and a common brand name usable in every language: Interreg.

Guidance on using the Interreg brand in the Programme or project communication is presented in the [Interreg Brand Manual](#), developed by Interact.

2.1 The Interreg Central Baltic Programme logo

The Interreg logo of the Central Baltic Programme is based on the harmonised Interreg brand developed by Interact. The brand consists of the following elements: the logotype (1) with the coloured arch inside, the EU emblem (2) and the statement 'CO-funded by the European Union' (3). The brand is surrounded by a clear space area that defines the minimum distance to other elements, such as other logos, pictures, texts, and other design elements.



Figure 6 Interreg Central Baltic Programme logo

The brand colours are derived from the EU's main corporate colours and must not be changed. The Reflex Blue and Light Blue define the Interreg brand's visual identity and should be used as the main colours in all communication materials. Yellow can be used sparsely as an accent colour.

The logo colours

Dark blue	Yellow	Light blue
CMYK 100/89/0/0	CMYK 0/0/100/0	CMYK 41/30/0/0
RGB 0/51/153	RGB 255/204/0	RGB 159/174/229
Hex #003399	Hex #FFCC00	Hex #9FAEE5
Pantone Reflex Blue C	Pantone Yellow	Pantone 2716

Additional colour (for use in our documents for accessibility reasons)

Lighter blue
CMYK 100/40/0/26
RGB 0/113/188
Hex #0071BC

2.2 The Interreg policy objectives: Programme Objective colours

The European Union has defined 7 policy objectives for the 2021-2027 period. These are represented by an invariable system of colours and icons to be used across all Programmes and projects whenever these objectives are communicated.

The following table indicates the colour models for the Central Baltic Programme 2021-2027.

Table 9 Overview of the Interreg policy objective colour models

Programme Objectives	Colour models
1. More exports by SMEs 2. More new scaled-up companies	CMYK 72/0/43/0 HEX #18BAA8 RGB 24/186/168
3. Joint circular economy solutions 4. Improved coastal and marine environment 5. Decreased CO2 emissions	CMYK 48/0/89/0 HEX #9ACA3C RGB 154/202/60
6. Improved employment opportunities on labour market	CMYK 10/75/60/1 HEX #DA5C57 RGB 218/92/87
7. Improved public services and solutions for the citizens	CMYK 73/9/6/0 HEX #00ADDC RGB 0/173/220

