

Communication Plan 2014-2020

PEACE IV Programme

(Northern Ireland and Border Region of Ireland)

INTERREG VA Programme

(Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and

Western Scotland)

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Chapter One – Introduction

1.1 – European Commission Regulations

The Communication Strategy outlines how the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) as the Managing Authority for the European Territorial Co-operation Programmes PEACE IV and INTERREG VA shall fulfil its obligations in reference to Articles 115-117, Annex XII of the Common Provisions Regulation and Articles 3-5 and Annex II of Implementing Regulation EU 821/2014.

The SEUPB is a North South implementation body that was established on 2 December 1999, by agreement between the British and Irish Governments. The SEUPB is sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. It is the managing authority for both the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes for 2014-2020.

1.2 – The SEUPB’s Communications Commitment

The SEUPB is fully committed to maximising awareness of EU funding across the eligible areas of both the new PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes. It recognises the strong emphasis that the European Commission places upon information and communication activities across all Member States. This communications strategy outlines, in detail, the various measures that will be used to highlight the added value of European Regional Development funding (ERDF) at a

local, regional and national level. It will also help to ensure transparency in the use of funds within the eligible area.

As managing authority for both programmes the SEUPB has overall responsibility for the implementation, management and evaluation of all information and publicity activities as set out within the communications strategy. A dedicated communications team will be responsible for the delivery and co-ordination of all communication activities.

Some of the most significant communication regulations, from the Common Provisions Regulation (EU 1303/2013), Articles 115-117 and Annex XII along with Annex II of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014 have been summarised as below:

- The communications strategy shall be submitted to the monitoring committee for approval no later than six months after the adoption of the programme.
- All revisions to the communications strategy shall be submitted by the managing authority to the monitoring committee for approval.
- The managing authority shall inform the monitoring committee at least once a year on its analysis of the results of the communications strategy as well as on the planned information and communication activities to be carried out in the following year.
- The managing authority shall maintain a list of operations by operational programme on a spreadsheet, updated at least every six months, with the data field headings provided in at least one other official language of the European Union.
- The Managing Authority shall display the emblem of the European Union at the premises of each managing authority all year round.
- The managing authority shall give examples of operations/projects, by operational programme in a widely spoken official language of the European Union, other than the official language of the Member State concerned.
- The managing authority shall ensure that all beneficiary projects/operations create and display at least one poster with information about the project/operation, at a location readily visible to the public.

- Beneficiaries shall put up a permanent plaque or billboard of significant size at a location readily visible to the public no later than three months after completion of an operation.
- The SEUPB's website will also provide a hyper-link into 'a single website or a single website portal providing information on, and access to, all operational programmes in that Member State', as detailed in Article 115 of Common Provisions Regulation (EU 1303/2013). This will enable direct access from this site to the SEUPB's corporate website www.seupb.eu

The Annual Implementation Report shall include examples of the information and communication measures undertaken.

A major information activity shall be held to launch the Cooperation Programmes and at least one major information activity shall be held each year to highlight the achievements of the Cooperation Programmes and/or major projects. Pro-active information and publicity activity about projects which is likely to generate significant media attention will also be disseminated on a regular basis.

The managing authority shall maintain a web-based archive of examples of good practice to showcase the impact that Cooperation Programme funded projects are having upon the lives of citizens living within the eligible area.

The managing authority shall also ensure that all funded projects comply with Commission Regulations and shall require each award for funds from the Programmes to include a comprehensive communications plan, complete with an estimated budget.

1.3 Two Cooperation Programmes

This communications strategy has been created for both of the Cooperation Programmes managed by the SEUPB for the 2014-2020 programming period. These are the PEACE IV and the INTERREG VA Programmes. The SEUPB is the managing authority for these two programmes, which have many linkages, and a common focus in promoting greater levels of cross-border cooperation, stability and prosperity.

It was therefore deemed appropriate to submit one single strategy which highlights the aims, objectives, messages, tactics and evaluation procedures that will be used for both programmes. (At the time of submission of this strategy to the INTERREG Monitoring Committee for approval, the PEACE IV Programme is still awaiting adoption).

1.3.1 PEACE IV Overview

(To be confirmed after final approval and adoption of the Programme).

1.3.2 INTERREG VA Overview

The Cross Border Territorial Co-operation Programme for Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland 2014-2020 (the INTERREG VA Programme), is a European Territorial Cooperation programme that aims to promote greater economic, social and territorial cohesion.

As part of the preparation of the Programme, an extensive public consultation process was carried out across the eligible region in 2012 and in 2014. Based on the results of this public consultation exercise and informed by the lessons of the INTERREG IVA Programme¹, along with additional research of the needs of the region², the following strategic areas of investment have been prioritised for the 2014-2020 period:

- Thematic Objective 1 – Strengthening Research, Technological Development and Innovation
- Thematic Objective 6 – Preserving and Protecting the Environment and Promoting Resource Efficiency

¹ Mid-Term Evaluation of the INTERREG IVA Programme, SEUPB, 2013.

² The development of a new EU Programme for Cross-Border Co-Operation (INTERREG V) and a new EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE IV) 2014 -2020 - Socio-Economic Profile

- Thematic Objective 7 – Promoting Sustainable Transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures
- Thematic Objective 9 – Promoting Social Inclusion, Combating Poverty and any discrimination.

It is proposed that the new INTERREG Programme will therefore have four key areas of investment as detailed below:

- Research & Innovation
- Environment
- Health
- Sustainable Transport

All communications activity will be focused on promoting the overall economic, social and territorial cohesion objectives of the Programme through its prioritised areas of investment. A sub-set of core messages will be developed for projects funded under each area of investment, to dovetail into the overarching messages of the Programme.

1.4 The Communications Continuum

As part of the ongoing evaluation activity into the effectiveness of the previous communications strategy, the SEUPB commissioned a series of annual perception and awareness surveys, for both the PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Programmes. These survey's were limited to a general public sample of 750 telephone interviews with the general public and approximately 50 more in-depth interviews with a random sample of the programmes' key stakeholders.

The general public sample was split between 450 interviews with citizens based in Northern Ireland, 150 interviews with citizens based in the Border Region of Ireland and 150 interviews with citizens based in Western Scotland. (The Northern Ireland sample size was reflective of its higher population density in comparison to the other regions). All types of social strata were included in the general public surveys from

ABC1 to C2DE³, aged 16 to 55+ within a broad district/county based spread. The 50 key stakeholder sample groups included projects involved in both programmes, Monitoring Committee and Steering Committee members as well as local councillors and other elected representatives.

The surveys were used to gather information on general public awareness and perception of the effectiveness of the operational programmes. This was monitored over a number of years, via the surveys, to help track changes in public opinion. It must be noted that whilst being a useful barometer of public opinion the surveys themselves do not constitute the sole evaluation tool used to assess the effectiveness of the previous communications strategy and have a number of unavoidable limitations such as a marginal sample error rate; limitations on the sample size (due to budget availability); and limitations on the amount of information that could be extracted from the interviews, etc.

A baseline survey was commissioned in 2007 to help determine the visibility and awareness of the operational programmes, amongst the general public within the eligible area. From 2007 onwards six additional surveys were commissioned for the years 2009-2014. These surveys focused on a number of areas including:

- **general awareness levels** of the Programmes amongst the general public within the relevant eligible areas;
- the **perceived impact** of the Programmes;
- **awareness** that the Programmes were **funded via the European Union**; and
- **the extent** that the respondents felt that **EU funding was investing in their future**.

(A survey was deliberately not commissioned in 2008 to give time for the new programmes to become established and for the first applicant projects to go through the assessment process and become operational).

³ A demographic classification system which refers to a social grade and income/earnings level. The ABC1 definition encompasses those at higher managerial level, intermediate managerial level, and junior managerial level. The C2DE definition encompasses skilled manual workers, semi and unskilled manual workers and casual or lower grade workers.

From 2009 to 2014 awareness levels in Northern Ireland for the PEACE III Programme ranged from 38% in 2009 to 42% in 2014. Within the Border Region of Ireland, awareness ranged from 58% in 2009 to a peak of 59% in 2013. (These peak figures exceeded the target value set of 33% citizens' awareness of PEACE in the 2007-2013 Communications Strategy).

Within Northern Ireland awareness levels for the INTERREG IVA Programme ranged from a peak rate of 22% in 2011 to 15% in 2014. In the Border Region of Ireland awareness levels ranged from 39% in 2011 to 21% in 2014. In the Border Region of Ireland the Programme's awareness levels peaked at 42% in 2010. In Western Scotland awareness has remained generally low ranging from between 1% and 3% of the sample size. (The target value set of 20% citizens' awareness of INTERREG in the 2007-2013 Communications Strategy can therefore be seen as achieved within the Border Region but not so for Northern Ireland or Western Scotland).

It must also be noted that general awareness levels will peak during the middle or towards the second half of the programming period, as they are connected to periods of high project activity. As the projects start to close and activity levels drop this will impact upon general awareness of both Programmes.

Most of the communications activity that took place in the last programming period concentrated on the co-ordination of events, including project launches and closures, high profile conferences and associated media relations activity. At the start of the programming period the SEUPB co-ordinated a series of roadshow events across the eligible area to inform citizens about the aims and objectives of the Programmes and encourage viable project applications. These were well attended by a broad spectrum of key stakeholders and were used to leverage positive PR coverage within the local print and broadcast media.

A number of high profile project launches created real PR benefits for PEACE III. Occurring regularly throughout the lifetime of the Programme these events attracted a significant degree of media attention, facilitated by the SEUPB's Communications Team. Examples include the launch of a series of capital build projects including the Peace Bridge in Derry in 2011, which was officially opened by Commissioner

Johannes Hahn; the launch of the PEACE III funded Castle Saunderson project by the President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins in 2012 and the Peace Link multi-use cross-community sports complex in Cavan in 2014.

A sample of media coverage generated between January 2013 and mid-April 2013 shows that the PEACE III Programme generated 788 separate pieces of media coverage with a total Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE) of £493,862.

INTERREG IVA project launches were also used to help maximise PR for the programme and included the €30 million telecommunications initiative, Project Kelvin; the €28 million cross-border health initiative 'Putting Patients and People First'; and a large range of environmental and enterprise development focused projects.

All Programme funded projects were specifically tasked with generating their own PR, with support from the SEUPB's Communications Team. Training on different communication techniques was provided on an annual basis, with additional PR support and guidance offered throughout the lifetime of the programmes. This support was deliberately designed to encourage projects to establish relationships with local media, thereby creating a multiplier effect as the projects became programme champions and were able to generate higher levels of media coverage.

This was an effective communications strategy as both Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland have retained a large network of local newspapers which enjoy relatively high readership figures. However the SEUPB recognises the difficulties that many of the projects faced in securing coverage within the larger national media networks. In response to this the SEUPB provided additional support in this area, including media relations and press release writing support during the annual Communication Network Lead Partner seminars.

As part of its regulatory requirement to co-ordinate a major information activity, on an annual basis, the SEUPB delivered a number of large conferences from 2009 to 2014 aimed at a wide range of stakeholders including the general public. Key amongst these events was the 'Bridging Divided Communities Together' conference

co-ordinated by the European Commission alongside the SEUPB in Brussels on the 31 January 2013.

The conference was attended by over 250 delegates from across Europe and streamed live via the Commission's website. Interventions were supplied by Commissioner Johannes Hahn, the First Peter Robinson MP and deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness of Northern Ireland and the Irish Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin TD. High levels of international media coverage were generated by the event which featured testimonials from three PEACE III funded projects.

The SEUPB's media relations and event management activity was supported with a number of other communication tools throughout the 2007-2013 programming period. Foremost amongst these was a newly revised website www.seupb.eu to act as the main information source on all aspects of the Programmes. The site attracted over 3,000 unique page impressions, on average, per month and was regularly updated with news and events pertaining to the delivery of the Programmes.

As the Programmes matured the website needed to take on more of a promotional aspect to help to articulate the positive impact that the projects were making. The inflexible nature of the website's content management system (CMS), made this difficult, despite some presentational changes made in the second half of the programme's life-cycle. A new end-user focused website is currently under development for the new programming period 2014-2020.

A comprehensive range of marketing collateral was developed to help promote the benefits and impact of the Programmes to key stakeholders. These included quarterly editions of 'Your EU', the SEUPB's corporate magazine which included project case studies, testimonials and Programme delivery updates. The magazine was distributed to over 1,000 recipients, including project beneficiaries, Programme Monitoring and Steering Committee members and other interested parties.

The SEUPB created a public affairs e-zine called 'euroPA' as part of an e-marketing strategy targeted specifically at political stakeholders based in Northern Ireland, the

Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland. The e-zine contained 'bite-sized' project testimonials for both the PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Programmes.

Towards the end of the last programming period the SEUPB implemented a comprehensive social media strategy. Following extensive research the SEUPB established an official Facebook page, Twitter, LinkedIn and You Tube account. Project related information in the form of progress updates, outputs, launches/closures and other activities was used as a basis for content for these channels throughout the remainder of the programming activity.

The Communications Team invited all projects to send them in suggested content to publish on its social media platforms. Twitter was also used effectively to help raise awareness of the various public consultation events for the new 2014-2020 Programmes, held in the summer of 2014.

Of all the social media channels adopted by the SEUPB during 2014, Twitter proved to be the most popular in terms of followers and audience engagement. More emphasis will however be placed upon the Body's other social media channels to help increase their impact and reach during the new programming period.

1.5 Reputational Challenges of the Previous Programmes

The previous programming period presented a number of reputational challenges for both Programmes. Many of these challenges related to concerns over the length of time involved in the project assessment process, difficulties with project administration and issues relating to project procurement.

To address these concerns the SEUPB introduced a two stage assessment process during the second half of the INTERREG Programme to ensure that unsuccessful applications were notified earlier. The Body also embarked upon a structured annual training programme for successful applicants covering all elements of project management and administration. The SEUPB also increased the procurement thresholds for projects to help alleviate some of their procurement issues.

1.6 Situational Analysis – New Programming Period

The SWOT diagram below outlines the main communication challenges and opportunities that the SEUPB will be subject to during the new programming period for 2014-2020.

It is based on an assessment of the communications activity undertaken during the previous programming period and the larger environmental context within which the Programmes will operate from 2015 onwards.

	Helpful	Harmful
Internal Origin	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced Communications Team. • High levels of institutional knowledge of EU funding issues within SEUPB staff. • Strong internal buy-in for communications activity. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current public expenditure environment regarding resources and expenditure. • Low levels of media awareness within Western Scotland.

External Origin	Opportunities	Threats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of brand awareness of the PEACE Programme. • Increased demand for funding within the community/voluntary sector. • High profile within political stakeholders. • Positive track record of achievements under previous Programmes. • Simplification of Programme Rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand confusion. • Programmes perceived as being administratively difficult i.e. EU eligibility of expenditure. • Large Programme eligible area. • Increased demand for funding within the community/voluntary sector due to economic austerity. • Referendum on UK exit from the European Union.

Figure 1.0 SEUPB SWOT Analysis

Communication Strengths

- **Experienced Communications Team** – the Communications Team has amassed a wealth of experience in relation to Programme specific communications over the previous Programming period. It has created detailed contact databases of and established positive working relationships with most of the key stakeholders associated with the PEACE and INTERREG Programmes.

The team has a detailed working knowledge of all the communication regulations created by the Commission and practical experience of the implementation of these regulations for newly supported and live projects.

- **High Level of Institutional Knowledge of EU funding Issues** – the SEUPB has established a number of effective communication implementation and reporting protocols. These include a communications plan template for new project applications; a detailed information and publicity guide for use by all funded projects and an online communications reporting system for projects. These tools will be adapted for use during the new programming period.
- **Strong internal senior management buy-in for all communications activity** – the Communications Team enjoys high level of internal support for all communications activity at a senior level. Communications is integrated within most aspects of the SEUPB's work and is a focus of discussion and review at monthly senior management team meetings.

Communication Weaknesses

- **Current public expenditure environment regarding resources and expenditure** – the downsizing of public sector staff and available resources will have a negative impact on the SEUPB's communication outputs. It will also increase difficulties in securing approval for communication activity expenditure.

- **Low levels of media awareness within Western Scotland.** The INTERREG IVA Programme experienced lower levels of awareness within Western Scotland. For the new programming period the outsourcing of additional external communications support will be needed to ensure greater levels of awareness within this eligible area.

Communication Opportunities

- **High levels of brand awareness of the PEACE Programme** - the PEACE Programme has achieved a relatively high level of brand awareness within the eligible region, as highlighted within the Perception and Awareness surveys commissioned by the SEUPB. This represents a strong communications foundation upon which the Body can enhance in the new programming period.
- **Increased demand for funding within the community/voluntary sector** - the funding landscape for the Programmes' eligible area will become increasingly more competitive as other funds close, thereby increasing demand within the community and voluntary sector for EU support. This will lead to the submission of an increased number of funding applications to the SEUPB.
- **High profile with political stakeholders** - the Programmes receive a high level of interest from local political leaders within the NI Assembly and the Irish Government. The SEUPB also provides structured and ad hoc briefings with politicians on a regular basis. This position represents a significant communications opportunity to highlight the positive impact of projects funded under the Programmes.
- **Positive track record of achievements under previous Programmes** – projects supported under the previous Programmes have delivered consistently high results and outputs. This track record of success offers many communication opportunities in terms of interesting media worthy case studies before new projects get underway under the new programming period.

It also offers a strong reputational legacy which can be capitalised on, but must also be protected.

- **Simplification of Programme Rules** – a number of beneficiaries have commented formally and informally about the complex and bureaucratic nature of the Programme rules; particularly when it comes to project management. The new simplification measures, to be introduced under the new Programmes, represent both a communications opportunity and a challenge. It represents an opportunity for beneficiaries to more positively view the funding experience; and also a challenge, as the new rules must be communicated in an easily accessible manner in order to be used effectively.

Communication Threats

- **Brand confusion** – the SEUPB has four distinct defined brands to communicate. These include the overall European Union intervention via the ERDF; the PEACE and INTERREG Programmes (each with their own unique brand values and heritage); Accountable Department match-funding, as well as the corporate brand persona of the SEUPB itself. Add to this mix the project brand, and in many instances that of the Lead Partner and associated project partners, and the result is a very complicated picture of what is being funded, by whom and for what purpose. In many instances these brands compete with each other to gain attention, particularly within the media. The end result is that the project itself or the Lead Partner often secures the greatest level of media interest. Whilst this is not, in itself, a negative outcome it does create a serious communications challenge when it comes to the promotion of the programmes and EU funding.

To date this has been managed by ensuring that the communications emphasis is placed on the EU first, the Programmes second and then the SEUPB last. Projects are informed that both the EU and the Programme must be referenced within all communications activity through the use of the ERDF

logo and specific textual/verbal references to either the PEACE or INTERREG Programme. This has helped to ensure appropriate levels of EU funding acknowledgement within media reporting on project activity. Whilst this has helped to ensure a strong connection between the project and the funder (the EU), it has ensured that awareness of the role of the SEUPB itself remains low within the general public in the Programme area.

The SEUPB will continue to place EU and programme specific brand recognition foremost in its communications activity. However it will identify opportunities to raise the corporate profile of the SEUPB through increased engagement with the media, enhanced public speaking opportunities and the co-ordination of more large-scale, general public focused conferences and other events.

- **Programmes perceived as being administratively difficult** – indirect and direct feedback from projects indicates that a number of Lead Partners find the administrative requirements of PEACE and INTERREG funding to be challenging. This view has the potential to dissuade future viable funding applications for the new programming period.

During the last programming period the SEUPB carried out a number of proactive measures to assist projects with the administrative demands placed upon them. These measures included the provision of regular and well-structured Lead Partner training on all aspects of effective project management as well as the provision of detailed guidance notes to be followed.

Going forward into the new programming period the SEUPB will undertake a number of different communication activities to challenge perceptions that the projects are administratively difficult including:

- The creation of easy-to-understand Programme Rules document.
- Co-ordination of an annual calendar of training events/seminars for projects on all aspects of effective project management etc.

- A comprehensive FAQ and Lead Partner Support section on the SEUPB website.
- **Large programme eligible area** – this represents a potential threat as well as an opportunity for all communications activity for the new programming period. The most cost effective communication tools must be selected to ensure that awareness and understanding of the Programmes is generated within as large a grouping of target audiences as possible.
- **Increased demand for funding within the community/voluntary sector** - the funding landscape for the Programmes' eligible area will become increasingly more competitive as other funds close, thereby increasing demand within the community and voluntary sector for EU support.

This development may lead to a proliferation of ineligible applications for funding to the SEUPB which could place an additional burden on staff. It may also raise significant expectations of the Programmes, which cannot be delivered upon.

- **Referendum on UK exit from the European Union** – the planned referendum is likely to raise significant public debate on EU funding within the region; specifically how its outcome will impact upon existing and future funding Programmes.

1.7 **Setting an Awareness Baseline for the New Programming Period**

The Awareness and Perception Survey commissioned by the SEUPB will act as a baseline to assist the Body in monitoring the effectiveness of its communications activity. To ensure consistency in the analysis the general public stakeholder survey will cover the same geographical area and participant demographics. The questions used will ascertain awareness, understanding and perceived impact of the Programmes.

However the more in-depth questions used for the qualitative based questionnaires for the smaller group of key stakeholders (including beneficiaries, elected representatives, Monitoring and Steering Committee members) will be subject to more intense revision in line with the new aims and objectives of the programmes.

A survey was undertaken in 2014 and the results will be used as a 'perception baseline' for the new programming period. (Given that most projects funded under the new programmes will not be eligible for funding until 2015 or early 2016 it is proposed that the next survey be undertaken at the end of 2016 when the new programmes are more established).

In order to track progress against the delivery of the strategy it is proposed that further surveys are undertaken on an annual, or bi-annual, basis until the end of the next programming period in 2020.

To note awareness levels of the Programmes are subject to a high degree of fluctuation and will generally peak during the middle stages of the programming activity when collective project activity levels are at their highest. This correlates to the higher levels of stakeholder contact projects will implement during the key output stages of their delivery. As the projects move towards closure this contact may lessen, which will have a corresponding knock-on effect on levels of awareness.

The following survey results were recorded for the 2014 calendar year, as detailed below:

General Public

Taken from a sample size of 750 respondents with 400 from Northern Ireland, 150 from the Border Region of Ireland and 150 from Western Scotland.

- Awareness of PEACE III Programme

Area	Awareness Level
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Communication and Information Strategy Approval

Northern Ireland	42%
Border Region of Ireland	54%

- Awareness of INTERREG IVA Programme

Area	Awareness Level
Northern Ireland	15%
Border Region of Ireland	21%
Western Scotland	2%

- Awareness of Programmes being funded by EU (for respondents aware of either PEACE III or INTERREG IVA)

Area	Awareness Level
Northern Ireland	62%
Border Region of Ireland	71%
Western Scotland	33%

- Awareness of the SEUPB

Area	Awareness Level
Northern Ireland	12%
Border Region of Ireland	11%

Communication and Information Strategy Approval

Western Scotland	15%
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- Perceived impact of PEACE III Programme

Area	Positive impact
Northern Ireland	55%
Border Region of Ireland	67%

- Perceived impact of INTERREG IVA Programme

Area	Positive impact
Northern Ireland	34%
Border Region of Ireland	47%
Western Scotland (small response size i.e. 3 individuals)	0%

Key Stakeholders

Sample of 50 including 12 project representatives involved in the PEACE III Programme; 10 involved in the INTERREG IVA Programme; 10 Monitoring and Steering Committee Members; 8 MPs/MLAs/MEPs and 10 Councillors.

Question	Response	Percentage
PEACE III is achieving its objectives	Agree	68%

INTERREG IVA is achieving its objectives	Agree	64%
Satisfaction with level of information received from SEUPB	Satisfied	74%
Assessment of support and guidance received	Good	72%
Impact of PEACE III	Positive	100%
Impact of INTERREG IVA	Positive	93%

Chapter Two – Why Communicate?

2.2 – Objective Setting Approach

The ultimate aim of any communications strategy is to influence attitudes and change behaviour amongst a pre-agreed set of stakeholders. Before this can be accomplished however the strategy must generate awareness; that is the SEUPB's target stakeholders must be made aware of what the Programmes have been created to do, what types of projects they fund and where the funding originates from (i.e. the European Union, via the European Regional Development Fund). This 'cognitive' objective will form the basis of all communications activity and will be reflected in all communication tools used.

Any increase in awareness should be deliberately designed to create a positive attitude or opinion about the Programmes, the projects they fund, the EU as the funder as well as the SEUPB as the managing authority of the Programmes. This 'affective' objective therefore has a number of different layers which must be addressed within the communications strategy.

Once a favourable attitude or opinion has successfully been created the strategy should also encourage a specific behaviour, or 'conative' objective, depending upon

the stakeholder group targeted. For instance the SEUPB would want to encourage the media, as an opinion former, to positively report on the Programmes, the individual projects they support as well as the SEUPB and the funding role of the EU.

For other stakeholder groups, such as the general public, the SEUPB would want them to positively endorse the Programmes to friends, family and colleagues or even to become active participants in some of the funded projects and/or events.

2.3 Strategic vs. Tactical Communication Objectives

As outlined in the Cooperation Programme, one of the overriding goals of the SEUPB's communications strategy will be to maximise understanding and awareness of the positive contribution that the European Union is making, via the Programmes, to improving the lives of all citizens within the eligible area.

However, beneath this core objective there will be a series of more specific tactical communication objectives which need to be successfully achieved in order for the SEUPB to maximise awareness of the positive impact of the new Programmes PEACE IV and INTERREG VA. These objectives will also encompass the corporate communication objectives of the SEUPB as the managing authority of the new Programmes and will be structured to address some of the communication issues identified under the previous programming period.

	Strategic Objective	Tactical Objective
European Union Communication Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote awareness and understanding of the contribution of the EU through the European Regional Development Fund for 2014-2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all funded projects acknowledge and promote the funding role of the EU within all communications activity. Ensure that the role of the EU is promoted within all SEUPB generated communications activity.
Programme Specific Communication Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote awareness of the outputs and results of the Programmes amongst the general public and ensure that potential beneficiaries are aware of the opportunities they present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all projects create and deliver upon a comprehensive communications plan in order to raise awareness amongst the general public of the outputs and results of the Programmes. Ensure high quality eligible applications are received.
SEUPB Corporate Communication Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase understanding and support for the role of the SEUPB as the managing authority for the new programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the role of the SEUPB as managing authority of the Programmes is clearly articulated in all communications activity.

Figure 2.0 Communications Objectives Overview (Tactical vs Strategic)

At the start of the new programming period most of the communications activity will be geared towards promoting the new priorities and themes for each programme and encouraging viable applications for funding across the eligible area.

Realistically the impact of the new Programmes will not be felt until the projects are operational which may not occur until late 2016 or early 2017. At this point the communications activity will shift more towards the promotion of the work of the projects, the positive impact they are having and the funding role of the European Union.

Communications support around funding calls and the eligibility conditions for funding for both Programmes will continue, however at this point the SEUPB will have a growing repository of project testimonies, launches and other associated events upon which to showcase the positive impact of EU funding within the eligible area.

Chapter Three – What do we want to say?

3.1 – Communicating the Brand(s)

As mentioned previously the SEUPB is responsible for the communication of a number of different and distinct brands in its role as managing authority. The EU can be considered a brand with its own unique identity and set of values, as can the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes. Both programmes have a distinct set of aims and objectives and as such evoke a different set of 'brand associations' within their key stakeholder groups.

The SEUPB has its own brand presence and corporate identity which is fundamentally linked with that of the Programmes, but this is normally superseded by that of the EU and/or the Programmes.

There are a number of other additional competing brands which vie for recognition alongside that of the EU, the Programmes and the SEUPB in all project related communications. These include that of the project itself, which may have created its own brand identity; other project partners working alongside the Lead Partner; as well as other funding sources, such as the Accountable Departments in Northern Ireland, Ireland and Western Scotland.

Given the funding structure for all ERDF projects within the region the relevant match-funding Government Departments in Ireland and Northern Ireland will also be seeking due recognition within any external communications.

This crowded funding landscape, with its potential multitude of competing brands, raises difficulties when it comes to promoting the EU and the programmes and the SEUPB. To ensure that the EU and PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes retain a leading brand position within all communications the SEUPB instructs projects that they must be acknowledged within the opening paragraphs of any press release or media statement issued.

This tactic has met with success in helping to promote awareness of the EU and the programmes, but requires continuous monitoring by the SEUPB’s Communications Team to ensure ‘share of voice’ and due recognition in all EU funded project activity.

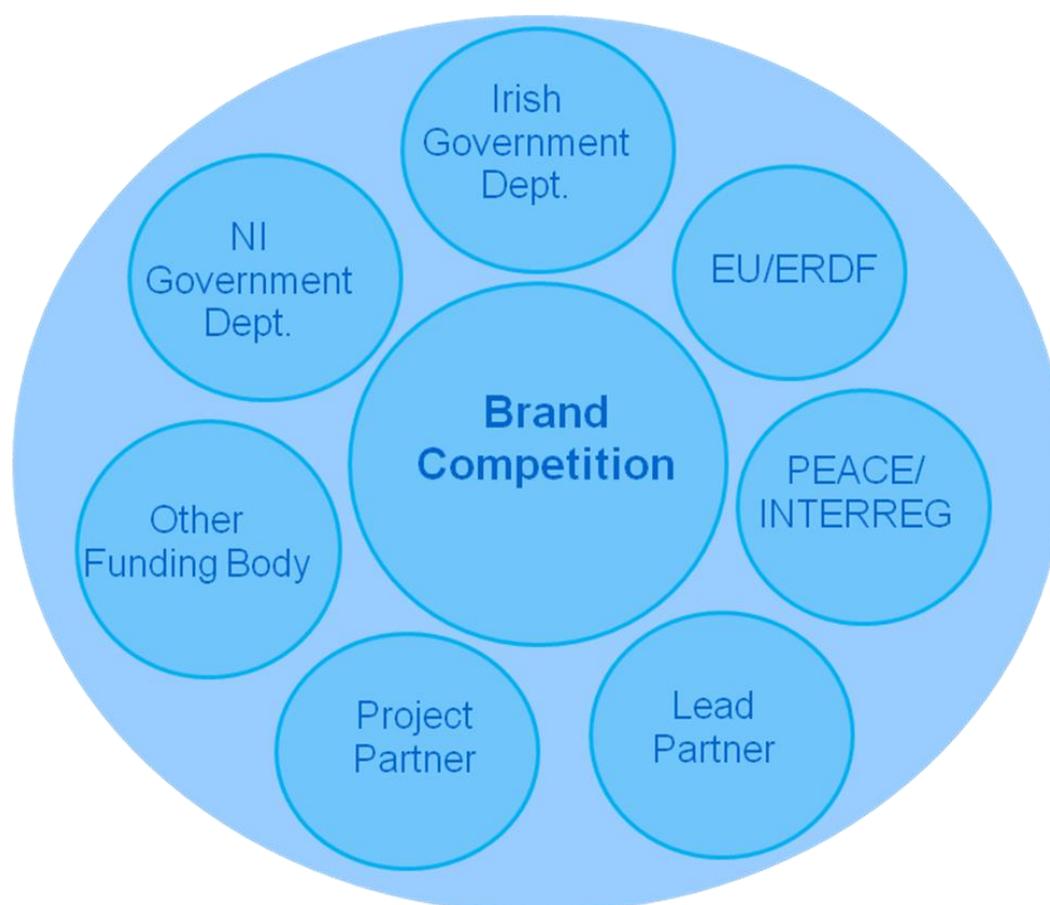


Figure 3.0 Brand Competition Diagram

Going forward it is recommended that the same tactics will be used for the new programming period.

In line with the result orientation of the new Programmes all external communication will focus primarily on the results and positive impact that the funding is having on the lives of citizens. Case studies which effectively articulate the transformative effect that projects are having on the individual and wider society will be used throughout the new programming period. This communication will use plain, easy-to-understand language to ensure that the wider general public are aware and appreciative of the EU’s investment across the region.

3.2– Core Programme Messaging PEACE IV

(To be confirmed after final approval and adoption of the Programme).

3.3.1 – Priority Specific Messages

(To be confirmed after final approval and adoption of the Programme).

3.3 – Core Programme Messaging INTERREG VA

The central aim of the INTERREG VA Programme is to build upon opportunities for enhanced economic and social development on a cross-border basis. This will form the basis of the overarching key message for the programme and will be used in all external publicity and general marketing collaterals developed.

INTERREG VA Programme (Core Messaging)

- *“The EU’s INTERREG VA Programme promotes cross-border cooperation in order to support the local economy, protect the environment and enhance health and social care.”*

3.4.1 – Priority Specific Messages

A suite of subsidiary supporting messages will be used however to help promote the different priorities and themes of the programmes as detailed below. These priority specific messages will be used in press releases and other publicity measures for projects supported under each individual INTERREG VA theme.

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Priority	Key Messages
Research & Innovation - Enhancing R&I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance the local economy by investing in cross-border Research & Innovation.
Research & Innovation - Business Investment in R&I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support local businesses by investing in cross-border Research & Innovation.
Environment - Habitats & Priority Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the recovery of protected habits and priority species, on a cross-border basis.
Environment – Manage marine protected areas & species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the conservation status of marine protected areas and species on a cross-border basis.
Environment – Improve water quality in transitional waters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve water quality through cross-border cooperation.
Environment – Improve freshwater quality in cross-border river basins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve freshwater quality in cross-border river basins.

Sustainable Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance cross-border mobility through increased use of public transport, electric vehicles and cycling.
Health & Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance the delivery of health and social care through cross-border cooperation.

3.4- New Programme Logo – INTERREG VA

In-line with the brand harmonisation exercise undertaken by INTERACT for Programmes financed via the European Regional Development Fund the SEUPB has created the below emblem. The harmonisation exercise was designed to create higher levels of brand recognition of the ERDF and reduce the proliferation of other logos used by Managing Authorities across the European Union.



This emblem will replace the one from the previous programming period and must be used by all projects in receipt of funding under the EU's INTERREG VA Programme. Detailed instructions as to its usage will be provided on the SEUPB's website as will access to the emblem in a variety of electronic formats.

3.5- New Programme Logo – PEACE IV

As the PEACE Programme has developed a high degree of brand awareness since its creation in 1995 it is recommended that the new logo for the 2014-2020 contain the programme name as below.



Detailed instructions as to its usage will be provided on the SEUPB's website as will access to the emblem in a variety of electronic formats.

Chapter Four – Who do we want to talk to?

4.1 – Key Stakeholder Identification

Identifying all of the SEUPB's target audiences or stakeholders is one of the most important aspects of the communications strategy. In doing so the SEUPB must be realistic in terms of who they will be able to reach, given the resources available. The Body must also have a sense as to the current general awareness levels and the perceptual disposition (negative or positive) of each group to the Programmes.

The stakeholder groups below have been identified as the primary audiences that the SEUPB must target through its communications activity for both the PEACE and INTERREG Programmes. They can be divided into 'active' and 'passive' groups depending upon their current or historic involvement in the programmes. 'Active' groups would be those who have an active or associative role in the implementation and/or monitoring of either the PEACE or INTERREG Programmes. These groups would be considered to have a medium to high level of awareness of the Programmes.

'Passive' groups would be those who are not directly associated with or are not involved in the implementation of the Programmes. They would be considered to have a low to medium level awareness of the Programmes. In some instances there is an overlap within these two distinctions. For example, members of the media, whilst not active in the delivery of the programmes, could have a high level of awareness of what the Programmes aim to achieve.

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Stakeholder Classification	Membership	Status	Awareness Level
Citizens/General Public	Adults, Young People, Students, Elderly, Unemployed, Disabled, Ethnic Minorities, Cultural Minorities, Students, Rural Dwellers, Urban Dwellers	Passive	Low/Medium
Potential Beneficiaries	SMEs, Council Clusters, NGOs, Academic & Research Institutions, Other Regional Partnerships, Voluntary & Community Sector, Previous Programme beneficiaries	Active/Passive (depending upon involvement in previous Programmes).	Low to High (depending upon involvement in previous Programmes).
Political	Ministerial Level, MPs, MLAs, TDs, Senators, MSPs, MEPs, local councillors and other elected representatives (across the programmes eligible area)	Active	Medium/High

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Regional Government	Government Department Officials within the Northern Ireland Executive, the Government of Ireland and the Scottish Executive	Active	Low/Medium
Local Government & Associated Bodies	Local Councils throughout eligible area of both Programmes, Chief Executives Forum (NI), NI Local Government Association (NILGA) etc	Active	Medium/High
European Union	Commission Brussels, Commission Office (Belfast), Commission Office (Dublin), Commission Office (UK), Commission Office (Scotland)	Active	High
SEUPB (Internal)	Managing Authority, JTS, Corporate Services, Monitoring Committees, Steering Committees, Certifying Authority	Active	High

Media	Print, broadcast (radio and TV), online, based in Northern Ireland, Ireland, Western Scotland and Europe	Passive/Active	Medium
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4.2 – Relationship Building

As both Programmes have been in operation for over two decades they have managed to build up a number of positive relationships with a wide range of stakeholders. Future communications activity will focus on enhancing these relationships and leveraging additional support for the Programmes.

However whilst resources will be used to build upon these relationships the main objective of the communications strategy will be aimed at reaching audiences with little or no knowledge of the Programmes, such as the general public.

4.3 – Prioritising Audience Reach

The communications strategy will place increased emphasis on reaching certain stakeholder groups at different stages of the Programme lifecycle. At the start of the programming period communications activity will proactively target potential beneficiaries in order to attract high quality and eligible applications. This activity will be repeated during individual funding call periods, as required.

When the projects are established, communications activity will focus on communicating the tangible benefits that EU funding is bringing to the eligible region. This will be communicated through major information activities occurring on an annual basis, the dissemination of project case studies and enhanced print, broadcast and on-line media engagement.

The most cost-effective communication tools, which allow for maximum audience reach, will be selected as part of the delivery of the strategy. These tools, where appropriate, will be specifically tailored to each identified stakeholder group. Feedback on the effectiveness of the communication tools used will also be sought, wherever appropriate, with key stakeholders.

Chapter Five – How will we do it?

5.1 – Main Communication Tools & Tactics

The following section outlines the different communication tactics to be deployed by the SEUPB. These will be delivered by the Communications Team comprising of a Communications Manager and a Communications Assistant.

The SEUPB will employ a number of different communication tools and tactics throughout the new programming period. These will be tailored to the communication needs of each defined stakeholder group. The strategy must also be flexible enough to react to changing circumstances or capitalise on potential communication opportunities as they become apparent. It will also be as customer focused as possible and place strong emphasis on maximising accessibility of information about the Programmes.

All communication materials created by the SEUPB will be made available in alternate formats, as required, to ensure they are accessible for people with disabilities. The following section provides an outline of the main communication tools that will be used.

5.1.1 – Media Relations Activity

This will be one of the core communication tools used by the SEUPB to help promote awareness and understanding amongst all key stakeholders and primarily the general public. Throughout the lifetime of the Programmes the SEUPB will proactively seek out opportunities to highlight the positive benefits that the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes are making throughout the eligible area. All media relations activity will be reflective of the results and outputs focus of the new Programmes.

5.1.2 – Event Management

The SEUPB is committed to undertaking a major information activity for each Programme, on an annual basis. This will take the form of an exhibition, project open day or other externally focused event, designed to attract the general public. The

SEUPB will also regularly participate in exhibitions, conferences, seminars and other events co-ordinated by projects or third parties in order to raise the profile of the Programmes.

5.1.3 – Website & Video Production

The SEUPB's website will act as the main repository of information pertaining to the Programmes. It will include:

- Details of all future funding calls, (including timing, value, programme priority, etc);
- New Programmes application process, (including project eligibility requirements);
- New Programmes application status/progress information;
- New Programmes assessment process, (including expected timeframes);
- A spreadsheet (data format) list of all project beneficiaries;
- Project management guidance notes;
- Project evaluation procedures;
- Access to Project Monitoring System;
- SEUPB co-ordinated training events;
- Project case studies.

It will also act as a source of essential Programme information, such as:

- Monitoring & Steering Committee Minutes;
- Evaluation & Research Documents (programme related);
- Your EU (corporate magazine);
- euroPA (public affairs bulletin);
- SEUPB co-ordinated events;

The website will provide a wide-range of benefits and will form a central pillar in the delivery of its communications strategy. It will be used to:

- Increase information to potential beneficiaries.
- Increase awareness of the results and outputs of the Programmet;
- Ensure compliance with EU Information and Communication Regulations and E-Cohesion Policy;
- Increase awareness of the corporate profile of the SEUPB as manager of the Programmes;
- Increase traffic to the SEUPB's social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, You Tube, and LinkedIn etc).

The Communications Team also intends to use the services of a video production company to produce various project testimonial films for display on the SEUPB's website and You Tube Channel. These will be commissioned throughout various stages of the programming period in order to create a bank of project focussed video footage that will be used to promote the impact that the Programmes are having.

5.1.4 – Marketing Collateral

A suite of Programme specific marketing collateral will be developed for both the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes. These will include generic information leaflets and branded merchandise to be distributed at all external events. All materials created will also be used to drive traffic to the SEUPB's website www.seupb.eu

5.1.5 – Social Media

The SEUPB will continue to build upon its existing social media profiles (to include You Tube, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) throughout the new programming period. These platforms will be used to showcase the work of the Programmes and disseminate important corporate focused information. They will also allow for a two-way dialogue between the SEUPB and many of its key stakeholders by encouraging feedback and interaction on various aspects of Programme activity.

Social media will represent a core part of the SEUPB's communications activity over the new programming period. Twitter has been used effectively towards the end of the 2007-2013 Programming period in disseminating information to the SEUPB's key stakeholders. It will therefore be a strong focus of the Body's social media activity for 2014-2020.

5.1.6 – Advertising and Advertorials

Throughout the previous programming period the SEUPB purchased advertising space mainly to help promote different funding calls and for staff recruitment purposes, with positive results. Limited advertising is an important part of any marketing mix and if used effectively has the potential create a real behavioural shift in large sections of the general public.

The SEUPB may embark upon small scale and cost effective advertising campaigns, (including the insertion of print supplements within daily print media outlets, on-line advertising or targeted radio campaigns) across the eligible region to help promote the Programmes. This activity may be replicated at the end of the programming cycle to illustrate the positive impact that the Programmes have had.

During the new programming period the SEUPB will periodically place advertorials within various specialist trade/interest magazines or online channels (such as LinkedIn or Facebook etc) to help promote specific events or Programme highlights.

5.1.7 – Corporate Magazine (Your EU)

In order to help promote the effectiveness of the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes the SEUPB produces a regular corporate magazine, (Your EU!). This newsletter contains detailed case studies of Programme funded projects, real life testimonies from project beneficiaries, project update news, information on upcoming SEUPB events and other corporate news items.

Available in both electronic and hard copy format the newsletter will be distributed to over 1,000 key stakeholders and disseminated at all SEUPB or partner organised events.

5.1.8 – Digital Marketing

As part of the SEUPB's digital marketing strategy it has created an electronic magazine or e-zine (euroPA) which is emailed directly to a number of the Body's key stakeholders, specifically political representatives across the eligible areas of both Programmes. This e-zine contains short project case studies, Programme performance information as well as corporate news and updates on the SEUPB.

5.1.9 – Project Specific Communications

Under the previous programming period the SEUPB provided detailed guidance to all Programme funded projects on the specific EU Information and Communication Regulations to be observed.

For the new programming period the SEUPB will create revised guidance, including templates in electronic format, available online, outlining the amended Lead Partner communication responsibilities.

The SEUPB will also coordinate a series of communication seminars on an annual basis, to be attended by a dedicated communications lead for each project. Additional communications training and support will be provided at these events and attendees encouraged to network with each other and share best practice.

5.2 – Internal Communications

The SEUPB has a responsibility to ensure that its staff are kept fully informed as to all major developments within the Programmes and in relation to significant corporate news. This information will be disseminated through a number of different channels, as detailed below:

- Staff Newsletter – an electronic staff newsletter will be drafted and circulated to all staff electronically on a quarterly basis.
- Cascade Briefings – following every Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting the Managers in attendance will be responsible for briefing their individual team members as to what was discussed.
- Attendance at Programme Beneficiary Events – SEUPB staff will be encouraged to attend project co-ordinated launches and events, throughout the programming period.
- Corporate Magazine (Your EU!) – The Communications Team will circulate an electronic version of the SEUPB's Corporate Magazine to all staff. Feedback on the magazine as well as content suggestions for future editions will be sought from staff.

5.3 – Crisis Communications

Whilst it cannot be considered to be a proactive communications tool, an effective crisis communications plan is essential when it comes to protecting the reputation of both the Programmes and the SEUPB as a corporate entity. As such, during the previous programming period the Communications Team devised a crisis communications protocol, which was agreed by and circulated to the SEUPB's senior management team.

The strategy covers all aspects of crisis communications activity, including details of:

- The SEUPB's appointed crisis communications team;
- Identified SEUPB spokespeople (for media interviews);
- The internal crisis communications notification system;
- Media enquiry tracker system and media monitoring system;

- Identified key external stakeholder contacts;
- Potential crisis communication scenarios (graded for severity, using a traffic light system);
- Potential media holding statements;
- Key message development approach for media interviews;
- Appropriate contact for legal advice.

5.4 – Annual Communications Plan

In accordance with the Information and Communication Regulations the SEUPB will create and implement an annual communications plan to be approved by the relevant Programme Monitoring Committee.

This plan must be able to react to changing circumstances and take advantage of all potential opportunities as they arise.

(Refer to Appendix One for a copy of the annual communications plan template).

5.5. – Communications Tools for individual Stakeholder Group

The table below outlines the different communication tools that will be used to target the SEUPB's identified stakeholder groups.

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Target Stakeholder Group	Membership	Communication Tools	Frequency
Citizens/General Public	Adults, Young People, Students, Elderly, Unemployed, Disabled, Ethnic Minorities, Cultural Minorities, Students, Rural Dwellers, Urban Dwellers	Media Relations & Advertising Social Media Events Website	Ongoing Ongoing Annual Ongoing
Potential Beneficiaries	SMEs, Council Clusters, NGOs, Academic & Research Institutions, Other Regional Partnerships, Voluntary & Community Sector, Previous Programme beneficiaries	Media Relations & Advertising Briefings Website Events Social Media	

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Political	Ministerial Level, MPs, MLAs, TDs, MSPs, Senators, MEPs, local councillors and other elected representatives (across the programmes eligible area)	euroPA Media Relations & Advertising Briefings Website Events Social Media	Bi-annual to Quarterly Ongoing As requested Ongoing Annual Ongoing
Regional Government	Government Department Officials within the Northern Ireland Executive, the Government of Ireland and the Scottish Executive	Media Relations & Advertising Website Events Social Media	Ongoing Ongoing Annual Ongoing

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<p>Local Government & Associated Bodies</p>	<p>Local Councils throughout eligible area of both Programmes, Chief Executives Forum (NI), NI Local Government Association (NILGA)</p>	<p>euroPA Your EU! Media Relations & Advertising Briefings Website</p>	<p>Bi-annual to quarterly 3-4 times per year Ongoing As requested Ongoing</p>
<p>European Union</p>	<p>Commission Brussels, Commission Office (Belfast), Commission Office (Dublin), Commission Office (UK), Commission Office (Scotland)</p>	<p>euroPA Your EU! Website Briefings Events</p>	<p>Bi-annual to quarterly 3-4 times per year Ongoing As requested Annual</p>

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SEUPB (Internal)	Managing Authority, JTS, Corporate Services, Monitoring Committees, Steering Committees, Certifying Authority	Internal Communications Your EU! euroPA	Ongoing 3-4 times per year Bi-annual to quarterly
Media	Print, broadcast (radio and TV), online based in Northern Ireland, Ireland, Western Scotland and Europe	Media Relations & Advertising Social Media Website Briefings	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing

Chapter Six – How will we measure success?

6.1 The Challenges of Evaluation

In order to be truly effective the communications strategy must be monitored on a continuous basis so that it can be amended or restructured in response to any potential micro or macro environmental changes that the SEUPB and the Programmes may be subject to over the next funding period.

Each communication tool used by the SEUPB must be subject to some form of analysis or evaluation, in order to ascertain its effectiveness. In doing so the SEUPB will be able to prioritise resources (both in terms of budgetary spend and staff time) for the deployment of the most effective communication tools.

The tools referenced in the previous chapter are considered to be the most effective for each target audience. However they may be amended or replaced through the lifetime of the communications strategy in response to an analysis of their performance. The SEUPB also welcomes any feedback from its key stakeholders on the Body's communication activities.

6.2 Evaluation Techniques

The following evaluation methods will form the basis upon which the delivery of the SEUPB's communications strategy will be assessed. Whilst not exhaustive, they represent the main evaluation techniques that will be used throughout the new programming period. A specific focus on assessing behavioural change, as opposed to general communications output, will be used, wherever possible.

6.2.1. Social Media

The SEUPB will maintain a presence within four main social media platforms to include Facebook, Twitter, You Tube and LinkedIn. Different evaluation techniques will be used for each platform. This evaluation will be focused on measuring audience engagement.

For example within Twitter, the number of SEUPB tweets that are clicked, replied to, favoured, retweeted or result in new followers will be used as an indicator of the impact of that particular social media posting. These active engagement indicators will be used to help evaluate the effectiveness of the SEUPB's Twitter account.

Facebook analysis will be based on the same principles with a record of the number of likes, shares and/or comments on specific posts, the number of 'People talking about this' post and the percentage split between 'individuals' and 'organisations' liking the page. Facebook has created its own 'Insights' function, which will be used to gather this information.

6.2.2. Media Relations

As one of the most cost effective and potentially influential communications tools used by the SEUPB, all media relations activity will be subject to rigorous analysis. This will include the number of articles generated per Programme (on a monthly basis); and the Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE)⁴ achieved; the number of people viewing the articles, recorded as opportunities to see (OTS); as well as the tone of the article, recorded as (positive, negative or neutral).

Another analytical tool would be the number of people who may have read the article, referred to as Opportunity to See (or OTS)⁵. These tools will provide a quantitative assessment of media interest in the Programmes. However the SEUPB will also undertake a qualitative assessment of the coverage generated in terms of media tone i.e. is the coverage 'positive', 'negative' or 'neutral'. This will be undertaken by an independent media monitoring company to ensure transparency.

The SEUPB will also use the media monitoring company to provide daily digests of all relevant newspaper and broadcast media stories relating to the European Union's

⁴ AVE places a financial value on media coverage. It is calculated by measuring the column inches or seconds of media coverage generated and multiplying these figures by the respective medium's advertising rates. The resulting figure is what it would have cost to place an advertisement of that size or duration in the respective media outlet. The use of this measurement does have its disadvantages and cannot, by itself, serve as a wholly accurate indicator of the success of any PR campaign.

⁵ This figures is based on the readership, listening or viewing figures of an individual media outlet, with a multiplier used based on the assumption that a newspaper or TV piece is viewed or shared by a number of people.

PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes and the SEUPB, as well as a compilation of the original articles.

6.2.3 Events

The SEUPB will be involved in the delivery of a number of different types of events to include seminars, open days, workshops and conferences. A number of different techniques will be used to assess the effectiveness of each event to include: a record of the number of attendees, any media coverage generated and feedback from participants. Online surveys will be used to obtain this feedback with questions designed to assess all aspects of the event to include format, content, speakers and delivery, etc.

6.2.4 Perception and Awareness Surveys

The SEUPB will continue to commission large-scale surveys in order to assess general awareness levels and perception of the Programmes performance. These surveys will be used to capture opinion from citizens, across the eligible area of the Programmes, as well as that of a select number of key stakeholders more closely associated with the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes.

6.2.5 Website

The SEUPB's website will act as the main repository of information relating to the new programmes as well as to the Body itself. As such it will be subject to high levels of monitoring and evaluation to assess its performance. This evaluation will help to ensure that the website's content is relevant for the Body's main stakeholders and that it is also easily accessible, in terms of site navigation.

Google Analytics will be used as the main evaluation tool for the website and will be used to capture information relating to the number of people accessing the site; where they are from; which sections they are visiting; and how long they spend on the site, etc. This information will be useful but will not, in itself, give a comprehensive picture of user perception of the website. To obtain this information

the SEUPB will devise and issue annual online surveys asking key stakeholders to give their views on the website's structure, content and navigation. Users will also be asked what improvements could be made to make the website a more effective communications tool.

6.2.6 Corporate Magazine (Your EU!)

The SEUPB's corporate magazine (Your EU!) will be used to showcase the wide-variety of projects supported under the programmes. It will be distributed electronically to a large number of stakeholder recipients with a limited print run distributed at various conferences, exhibitions and seminars etc. To assess the impact of the magazine the SEUPB will conduct an email survey with its recipients, on an annual basis. The survey will gather feedback on style, content and structure of the magazine. All feedback obtained will be used in the production of future editions to ensure that the magazine is as responsive to the needs of the SEUPB's key stakeholders as possible.

6.2.7 Advertising & Advertorials

Any advertising activity implemented by the SEUPB during the course of the new programming period will have well defined and pre-agreed evaluation activity built in. This will include, but not be limited to, the combined Opportunities to See (OTS) of all mediums used as well as the conversion rate towards the desired action of the campaign (i.e. number of people accessing the funding information section of the SEUPB's website or attending an SEUPB co-ordinated event etc).

For online advertising a review of 'click' or 'view-through' conversion rates would be used to assess the effectiveness of the ad within each website used. 'Click-through' conversion rates provide statistical information on the number of users who clicked on an ad to access its associated conversion page (in this case the prospective page on the SEUPB website containing advertising campaign related information). 'View-through' conversion rates provide statistical information on users who view the

advert and neglect to click on it, but within a certain time period go to the advert's associated conversion page and perform the desired action.

6.2.8 Digital Marketing

The SEUPB's main digital marketing activity will focus on its e-zine 'euroPA'. Issued via email to over 1,000 recipients the e-zine format can provide a wealth of interpretative data on its usage and reader impact. For example readers can rate and provide direct comment on all articles included within the digital publication. They can also share these articles with friends and colleagues via social media platforms, thereby creating a viral effect. Statistical information on the e-zine's performance is easily accessible and the medium is very low cost.

6.3 – Outputs & Target Setting

6.3.1 Overarching Communications Targets (Strategic and Tactical)

The Communications Strategy will have a number of overarching communications targets which correlate to its strategic and tactical objectives. These will be monitored throughout the 2014-2020 programming period, mainly via the annual Perception and Awareness surveys with a baseline established for each objective when the new programmes are launched.

Strategic Objective Targets

Objective Focus	Strategic Objective	Initial Value	Target Value
European Union	Promote awareness and understanding of the EU contribution to the region.	Citizen’s awareness that the Programmes are funded via the EU as of 2014 survey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Ireland (62%); Border Region of Ireland (71%); and Western Scotland 	Citizens’ awareness that the Programmes are funded via the EU as of 2020 in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Ireland – 77% (+15% increase); Border Region of Ireland – 86% (+15% increase) and Western Scotland – 48%

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		(33%).	(+15% increase).
Programme Specific	Promote awareness of outputs and results of the PEACE IV Programme.	<p>Awareness of outputs and results of the Programme as of 2014 survey in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Ireland (42%); • Border Region of Ireland (54%). 	<p>Awareness of Programme in Northern Ireland, as of 2020 in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Ireland - 57% (+15% increase). • Border Region of Ireland – 69% (+15 increase).
Programme Specific	Promote awareness of outputs and results of the INTERREG VA Programme.	<p>Awareness of outputs and results of the Programme in as of 2014 survey in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Ireland (15%); • Border Region of 	<p>Awareness of outputs and results of the Programme as of 2020 in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Ireland – 30% (+15% increase); • Border Region of Ireland –

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		Ireland (21%); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Western Scotland (2%). 	36% (+15% increase); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Western Scotland – 12% (+10% increase).
Corporate (SEUPB)	Increase understanding and support for the role of the SEUPB as the managing authority for the new programmes.	Assessment of support and guidance received from the SEUPB. Baseline of 72% at 2014.	Assessment of support and guidance received from the SEUPB. Target value of 87% by 2020 (+15% increase).

Underpinning the main strategic targets the SEUPB will also have a series of more specific tactical based targets to achieve. These will also be monitored on a continual basis and used in the evaluation of the communication strategy’s success.

Tactical Objective Targets

Objective Focus	Tactical Objective	Initial Value	Target Value
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European Union	Ensure that all funded projects acknowledge and promote the funding role of the EU within all communications activity.	N/A	Ensure that 100% of all funded projects use the appropriate acknowledgments for EU funding.
European Union	Promote the role of the EU within all SEUPB generated communications activity.	Nil at start of the programming period.	Ensure that 100% of all SEUPB communications activity acknowledges EU funding.
Programme Specific	Ensure that all projects create and deliver upon a comprehensive communications plan.	Nil at start of the programming period.	Ensure that 100% of projects submit a comprehensive communications plan.
SEUPB Communication Objectives	Ensure that the role of the SEUPB as managing authority of the Programmes is clearly articulated	Awareness of SEUPB in as of 2014 survey in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Ireland (12%); 	Awareness of SEUPB in Northern as of 2020 in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Ireland – 22%

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	<p>in all communications activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Border Region of Ireland (11%) and • Western Scotland (15%). 	<p>(+10% increase);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Border Region of Ireland – 21% (+10% increase) and; • Western Scotland – 25% (+10% increase).
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6.3.2 Communications Outputs

As part of the assessment process a number of defined targets or outputs will be assigned to each communications tool. These targets will be used as part of an annual review of the performance of the SEUPB’s overarching communications strategy, with the results reported to the relevant Programme Monitoring Committee.

Communications Tool	Audience	Targets	Evaluation Measures
Website	Citizens; Programme Beneficiaries (Potential and existing); EU; SEUPB; Political; Regional Government; Local Government: Academic & Research Institutions; Media; Businesses & Business Institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 400 unique page impressions per month. - Average length of stay per visit (3-4 mins). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Google Analytics. - Stakeholder survey.
Case Studies	Citizens; Programme Beneficiaries (Potential and existing); EU; SEUPB; Political; Regional Government; Local Government:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 120 case studies generated over the lifetime of the INTERREG IVA Programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Google Analytics.

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	Academic & Research Institutions; Media; Businesses & Business Institutions.		
Events	Citizens; Programme Beneficiaries (Potential and existing); EU; SEUPB; Political; Regional Government; Academic & Research Institutions; Media; Businesses & Business Institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2-3 pieces of media coverage obtained for all major information activities. - 70% overall satisfaction rating from feedback surveys (post-event). - 30%-40% attendance rate from total number of invitees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media monitoring. - Emailed survey. - Registration and attendance figures.
Social Media	Citizens; Programme Beneficiaries (Potential and existing); EU; SEUPB; Political; Regional Government; Local Government; Academic & Research Institutions;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Twitter (+15% new followers per annum; engagement rate increase by 0.2% per annum). - Facebook (+10% new likes per 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Twitter Analytics - Facebook Insights - You Tube Analytics

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	Media; Businesses & Business Institutions.	<p>annum; Likes, Comments & Shares +2% increase per annum).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You Tube (+10% on views; +5 % increase on subscribers per annum). 	
Media Relations	Local, Regional, National, International, Trade & Specialist (print, broadcast and on-line) media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Average 70% positive tone of articles generated per annum; - +5% on annual AVE; - +5% on number of media articles generated per annum. - 85 Press Releases issued over the lifetime of the INTERREG IVA Programme. 	- Independent evaluation of all media coverage generated.

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Internal Communications Activity	Staff	- 80% satisfaction rates for SEUPB's annual Corporate Day.	- Staff survey
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Chapter Seven – How much will it cost and who will do it?

The costs associated with the delivery of the SEUPB's Communications Strategy will be drawn from the technical assistance budget of the PEACE IV and INTERREG V Programmes.

7.1 – The need for flexibility

The overall communications budget must have a degree of flexibility in order to react to changing circumstances and in order to take into account cost variations between different eligible suppliers. Throughout the new programming period the SEUPB may be able to negotiate different rates or take advantage of special offers from certain suppliers, specifically in relation to advertising and advertorial costs.

The number of events that the Communications Team will co-ordinate and associated costs will vary from year to year. The costs associated with the annual information event are based on those from the previous programming period and will also be subject to change depending on the format of the event and/or activity.

7.2 – Indicative Budget & Suppliers

The below table represents an 'indicative' budget only at the launch of the new Programmes and may be subject to change throughout the programming period. The SEUPB may bring in additional suppliers to undertake certain activities in response to changes in the strategy and in reaction to internal resources available within the Communications Team.

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Indicative communications budget

PEACE IV

Year	TOTAL
Activity	€
Design	144,000
Media Monitoring	57,600
Photography	57,600
AV	144,000
Major Events - PEACE IV	153,600
Launch of Programmes	20,000
Promotional Items	7,500
Translation services	13,500
Adverts - Funding calls	45,000
Media Training	4,500
Stakeholder Awareness Survey	57,600
Total	704,900

INTERREG VA

Year	TOTAL
Activity	€
Design	128,000
Media Monitoring	51,200
Photography	51,200
AV	128,000

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Major Event - INTERREG VA	153,600
Launch of Programmes	10,000
Promotional Items	6,000
Translation services	12,000
Adverts - Funding calls	32,500
Media Training	3,000
Stakeholder Awareness Survey	51,200
PR Company (Scotland)	75,000
Total	701,700

7.3 – Budgetary Review & Approval Process

The PMC will also be notified in advance of any significant budget reallocations, throughout the course of the year.

The Monitoring Committee is requested to:

- **Approve** the Communications and Information Strategy

Appendix Three - SEUPB Annual Communications Plan Template

The below information will be developed and circulated for PMC approval before the start of every calendar year. The template has been designed so that the main communications activities to take place during the year can be read and understood 'at a glance'.

Programme: INTERREG VA

Year: 2015

Activity	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Programme Launch Event			X	
Your EU Magazine	X	X	X	X
euroPA (e-mail marketing)		X		X
Media Relations	X	X	X	X
Communication Workshops				X
Pre-Application Development Workshops	X			
Development of new Website		X	X	X
Media Briefing		X		X
Development of new Marketing collateral		X	X	

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Social Media Activity	X	X	X	X
Staff newsletter	X	X	X	X
Create Citizens' Summary documents for INTERREG VA (2014-2020)		X		
Create Information and Publicity Guidance for New Programming Period		X		
Create New Programme logos		X		

Programme	INTERREG VA
Year	2015
Specific Communication Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate an official launch event of the new INTERREG Programme which attracts attendance from each of the SEUPB's target audience groups and generates positive coverage within print and broadcast media outlets across eligible area. • Inform over 500 potential beneficiaries of the eligibility criteria, new programme rules and guidance through the co-ordination of information seminars across the programmes' eligible area. • Create a new corporate website for the SEUPB which attracts over 3,000 page impressions within its first full month of operation.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the SEUPB’s combined social media presence in terms of engagement on all of its existing channels (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and You Tube). 	
Target Audiences	<p>Priority 1</p> <p>Regional Government; Local Government and Associated Bodies; the EU; Beneficiaries of previous programmes; Citizens; Academic and Research Institutions; Potential Beneficiaries and the Media.</p>	<p>Priority 2</p> <p>Political (Northern Ireland / Ireland); Business and Business Institutions.</p>
Proposed calendar of activity	<p>Quarter 1 (Jan-Mar)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinate a series of information seminars across the eligible area of the new programmes 2014-2020. Re-structure existing website in advance of adoption of the new programmes for 2014-2020. Start procurement process for new corporate website for the SEUPB. Create new marketing collateral to include information leaflets, nomadic stands and branded merchandise etc for the new programming period. Review all programme rules and guidance for the new 	<p>Quarter 2 (Apr-Jun)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue procurement process for the new corporate website for the SEUPB. Co-ordinate official launch of the new programmes. Co-ordinate funding call adverts/public notifications. Co-ordinate a series of sector specific new programme application development workshops across eligible area. Media relations activity in relation to projects closing under the previous programming period 2007-2013. Continue social media activity to raise profile of new programmes.

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	<p>programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media relations activity in relation to projects closing under the previous programming period 2007-2013. • Continue social media activity to raise profile of new programmes. • Produce Winter edition of Your EU! Magazine • Produce internal staff e-zine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce bi-annual communications activity report. • Draft Annual Report for 2014. • Produce Spring edition of Your EU! Magazine. • Create first 2015 edition of euroPA e-zine. • Media Briefing • Produce internal staff e-zine.
	<p>Quarter 3 (Jul-Sep)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new corporate website for the SEUPB. . • Co-ordinate funding call adverts/public notifications. • Co-ordinate a series of sector specific new programme application development workshops. • Media relations activity in relation to projects closing under the previous programming period 2007-2013. • Continue social media activity to raise profile of new programmes. 	<p>Quarter 4 (Oct-Dec)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch new corporate website for the SEUPB • Co-ordinate funding call adverts/public notifications. • Co-ordinate a series of sector specific new programme application development workshops. • Media relations activity in relation to projects closing under the previous programming period 2007-2013. • Continue social media activity to raise profile of new programmes.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce Summer edition of Your EU! Magazine. • Produce internal staff e-zine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce bi-annual communications activity report. • Produce Spring edition of Your EU! Magazine. • Create second 2015 edition of euroPA e-zine. • Produce internal staff e-zine. • Media briefing.
Budget Estimate	TBC	

