

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Increasing tourism opportunities through utilization of resources
“I-TOUR”



I.GENERAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Communication and information is an essential part of the project implementation strategy for the project “Increasing tourism opportunities through utilization of resources I-TOUR”. Proposed communication strategy is based on close cooperation between project beneficiaries, target groups, project stakeholders, media and general public. I -TOUR addresses joint cross border tourism challenges such as non-existing competitive cross-border tourism product, poor level of sustainable natural and man-made cross border potentials utilization and low rate of employment, particularly among rural areas communities. Project`s Communication Plan will mix traditional and modern tools and channels to properly communicate its expected results, achievements and impacts.

I-TOUR communication strategy entails various means:

- Preparation of Communication Plan
- Creation of project visual identity
- Specially developed project web site/category within the official Programme`s web
- Publications on partners` official web pages
- Publications on other relevant web portals
- Non paid publications in local and national newspapers
- Appearances on TV local and national shows/news
- Electronic newsletters, online articles or blogs
- Information campaigns, events
- Press releases
- Press conferences



II. OBJECTIVES

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Improvement of the attractiveness and promotion of the cross border region Pelagonija/Florina/Thessaloniki and increase of the employment in tourism.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Development of sustainable tourism products in the cross border region

Evaluation of newly developed tourism products

Promotion of tourism products in the cross border area and their international branding

PROJECT PARTNERS

Center for development of Pelagonija region

Faculty for tourism – Ohrid

National Park Pelister

National Park Prespes

Faculty for business administration – University of Macedonia

PROJECT OUTCOMES

1. Three cross border adventure tourism tours developed
2. Three tourism products tested and evaluated by cross-border tourists
3. Three cross-border tourism products nationally and internationally promoted



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Project outcomes comprehend at least 5 capacity building and networking activities, 1 full mapping of the cross border tourism potentials, development, evaluation, improvement and promotion of 3 cross border tourism products, 2 international fairs attendances, 1 familiarization trip for international media and 1 familiarization trip for international buyers.

Short term, project outcomes are linked with the specific objectives of the project as they will directly contribute to their achievement.

During the project implementation project partners, project target group and project stakeholders will closely collaborate and map all the tourism potentials in the target regions, define three cross border tourism products, evaluate them theoretically and practically, improve them and nationally and internationally promote them. On the long term, project outcomes will contribute to the overall objectives of the project by diversifying local economy particularly in rural areas of the cross border regions, utilizing their natural and anthropological heritage in a sustainable manner.

OVERALL AND SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

Overall objective of the I-TOUR` s Communication Plan is correlated with its overall project objective: contribution to improvement of the overall development of the cross-border regions Pelagonija, Florina and Thessaloniki by enhancement and sustainable utilization of their tourism potentials. This objective will be achieved thru the following specific objectives:

1. Effective development of competitive niche tourism products in the cross-border area thru inclusion and communication with the most relevant tourism stakeholders;



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2. Quality evaluation of developed tourism products in the cross border area utilizing sector`s expertise and targeted markets preferences, needs and requirements;
3. Promotion of sustainable cross border tourism products and international branding;

Furthermore, as a horizontal objective, this Communication Plan will contribute to raise the awareness of positive contributions provided by the European Union. This task envisages making the public opinion in the cross border area (general public, media, and tourism providers) aware of the positive contributions by the European Union and their measurable impacts on the cross-border tourism development.



III.TARGET GROUP

I-TOUR will work with private, public, civil and academia sector in a simultaneous and inclusive process aiming at development, piloting, evaluation, improvement and promotion of a concrete tourism products which will be competitive, yet, vital and adaptable at the same time. Communication Plan`s target groups are in correlation with project`s target groups. Communication Plan`s implementation will directly include tourism service providers, tour operators, public decision makers, civil society organizations, media and general public from targeted cross border regions. At least 100 service providers, 10 tour operators, 15 local self-government units, 50 civil organizations, 3 cultural preservation institutions and 5 protected areas will directly communicate, provide input to the project`s implementation or will benefit from its activities implementation. Furthermore, the Communication Plan will make efforts to communicate the most important key points of project`s implementation mission to at least 400.000 citizens in Pelagonija, Florina and Thessaloniki region, out of which, at least 30.000 are living in rural areas. Project activities will also foresee communication with international (EU) target groups: at least 10.000 potential cross border tourism buyers, at least 10 international tour operators and at least 10 international media.

In order to be more effective, project`s communication with its target groups is foreseen to be in two directions: project – target and target – project. It will secure better impact, share of knowledge, share of experience and eventually development, testing, evaluation, improvement and promotion of more competitive cross border tourism products.

Communication Plan`s target group preferences, requirements, specifications and expectations have already been taken into consideration while project preparation process. Using different methods, project beneficiaries`



but more important, tourism stakeholders` s experiences, visions and expertise were secured. Common tourism sector`s problems on both sides of the border were discussed and stated. Having quality project background and proper activities` maturity, it is expected project beneficiaries to have smooth cooperation with the target group while Communication Plan`s and project implementation. During both processes, target groups will be directly involved thru inclusion in all foreseen project activities: networking, capacity building, products development, products evaluation, products improvement and promotion.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR EACH TARGET GROUP

Target group	Specific objective
Tourism service providers	Securing relevant input from the sector while designing competitive tourism products Inclusion of all existing tourism potentials into newly developed cross border tourism products
Tour operators	Development of more competitive tourism products based on actual needs of targeted market segments
Local self-governments	Enabling more favorable environment for tourism sector development
Tourism related civil society	Strengthening and reassuring the role of the civil sector in public tourism related policies development
Cultural preservation units	Proper and more effective touristic valorization of the cultural heritage. Inclusion of the cultural legacy into newly developed cross border tourism products



Protected areas management bodies	Proper protection of the existing natural heritage. Inclusion of the natural legacy into newly developed cross border tourism products
International media	More effective promotion of newly developed tourism products
International tour operators	Increased quality of newly developed tourism products and greater market reach
General public in the cross border area	Awareness raised on the importance of natural and man-made legacy sustainable management Awareness raised on the EU provided external aid



LIST OF PROJECT'S PRIMARY TARGET GROUPS

Institution	Contact
Municipality of Bitola	gradonacalnik@bitola.gov.mk
Municipality of Florina	press@cityoflorina.gr
Municipality of Edessa	digi@edessa.gr
Municipality of Ohrid	info@ohridler.gov.mk
Municipality of Thessaloniki	00302310375200
Municipality of Prespa	prespa@otenet.gr
Municipality of Kastoria	dimarhos@kastoria.gov.gr
Regional Unit of Florina	info@florina.pdm.gov.gr
Regional Unit of Kastoria	info@kastoria.pdm.gov.gr
Kaskamanidis Tours	kaskamanidis@flw.forthnet.gr
Velle Travel	velletravelling@gmail.com
Society for the Protection of Prespa	spp@line.gr
Hotel Epinal	reservation@hotelepinal.com
Hotel Milenium	ohrid@milleniumpalace.com.mk
Municipality of Resen	daniela@resen.gov.mk
Hotel Montana- Krushevo	info@montanapalace.com
Travel agent TURIST- Bitola	goran@turist.com.mk
NGO "Biosfera" Bitola	biosferamkd@yahoo.com
Association Global Bitola	Global_bt@yahoo.com
NI Institute and Museum -Bitola	info@muzejbitol.mk



TV Tera - Bitola	urednik@tera.mk
Association for environment Molika NGO	molika@t.mk
Mountain sports club "Pelister"	dimcepopov@yahoo.com
Local community Village Braychino - Resen	gagovski@yahoo.com
Mountaineering Club "Dimitar Ilievski Murato" - NGO	jonceilievski@gmail.com
Balojani DMC, travel agency	gorki.bajolani@bajolani.com.mk
MTV-National "Macedonian" TV	stevce_mitrevski@gmail.com
Centre for Sustainability and Advanced Education	info@csae.mk

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

Communication activities foreseen are combination of modern, traditional, electronic and online channels. Majority of them are included in the I-TOUR`s application form while some of them will be implemented, ad hoc, as the project implementation progresses. Their main purpose will be to secure proper communication between the project and its target groups, taking into consideration the specifics of the message to be send/received and the specifics of the particular context/target. Communication activities delivery, budget required and their effects measurement will be sole responsibility of the project beneficiaries and the nominated project team.



Activity	Responsible for activity delivery
Preparation of project Communication Plan	LB/P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
Preparation of project visual identity	P4
Project web page/section within the Programmes official web page	P5
Development and launching of tourism promotion web page	P4
Development and dissemination of printed materials	LB, P3, P4
Development and print of promo packages	P5
Opening conference	LB
Closing conference	LB
Promotional photos	LB
Implementation of social media campaign	P5
Implementation of internet campaign	LB
Filming, editing and distribution of promo video	LB
Development of promotional mobile application	LB
Info signs preparation and installment	P4
Organization and implementation of Familiarization tours for international media (EU)	P5
Organization and implementation of Familiarization tours for international tour operators (EU)	LB
Fair attendance (EU)	LB
Fair attendance (EU)	P3
Drafting and publishing texts on beneficiaries web pages	LB, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5



Drafting and publishing media releases	LB/P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
Press conferences	LB/P1, P2, P3, P4, P5

IV. COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Different communication tools will be used to effectively execute the Communication Plan and to directly address all the target groups. These include: printed materials, local and national newspapers, webpages, internet, social media, local and national electronic media, visual identity (soft tools) and large scale events (conferences, familiarization tours, fair attendances). Communication tools selected are diversified in order to meet the specific needs of particular target group but also to transmit specific message in certain phase of project's implementation. All communication tools will be developed using a common branding and strategic layout. Consistent branding helps to reinforce the message of a project and enable it to be easily recognized. In order to achieve the promotional (communication) objectives of the project, the following will be produced during project implementation:

- Promo packages for international tour operators
- Bookmark to be disseminated during fair days
- Printed Manual for tourism service providers
- Promotional brochure
- Printed materials for participants during networking workshop (notebook, USB, pen, agenda)
- Promo gadgets to be disseminated during fair days
- Feather banner to be used during fair days
- Map to be disseminated during fair days



- Notebook to be disseminated during fair days
- Promo packages for participants on the opening event (pen, notebook, agenda and promo gadget)
- Promo packages for participants on the closing event (pen, notebook, agenda and promo gadget)
- Promo materials for 25 capacity building participants (pen, bag, notebook, agenda, handouts and promo gift)
- Logo and slogan
- Banner to be used during press conferences and public events
- Press releases
- Press conferences
- Project website (or special section dedicated for the project as part of the official Program's webpage)
- Promotional website
- News articles
- Web page articles

V. INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENTS

In order to measure the completion of the communication objectives, the Plan encompasses the following indicators:

- Awareness of positive contributions by the European Union towards enhancement of the tourism in the cross border region of Pelagonija /Florina/Thessaloniki is raised (at least 400.000 citizens)
- Project objectives, results and activities are promoted/communicated with the general public in the cross border area (at least 400.000 citizens)
- One Communication Plan developed
- Visual identity of the project is developed and used while project implementation according to the Programme's Information & Publicity Guide



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- 1 project web site/special section on the program`s webpage is developed and operational, providing updated project implementation data and info to the general public and interested parties
- 1 promotional web site is designed, launched and operational
- At least 30 web page articles related to project implementation are prepared and published on beneficiaries web sites
- At least 15 publications on relevant web portals related to project implementation are published
- Newly developed tourism products are directly promoted to 10 international media
- Newly developed tourism products are directly promoted to 10 international tour operators
- 2 different banners printed and used during project events and fairs. Secured visibility of the project among the target groups of the project and general public
- Direct feedback from at least 100 target group participants is received (opening and closing events, capacity building activities)
- At least 15 press releases published during project implementation
- At least 4 press conferences are organized during project implementation

Listed indicators will be used in at least three different (interim) phases of the project implementation as milestones/checkpoints to actively measure the achievement of the expected objectives foreseen in the Communication Plan and the project implementation in general. Once a deviance is noticed, the project team will undertake coordinated corrective actions.



All the groups/participants that will be engaged in project implementation will be engaged upon their free will. Project partners will strongly support equal possibilities and inclusion of all genders and marginalized groups.

All the information related to project implementation will be made available to the target groups, cross border stakeholders and general public through a web portal. Its layout will be with clear icons, colors, information and instructions for realizing the project as well as its progress. The promotion material and all other outcomes of the project will be produced understandable and readable for all citizens.

Project implementation and sustainability will emphasize environmental and social responsibility. Project activities will be transparently implemented including local, regional and national media at all stages in project implementation.



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Existing communication channels (media)	Poor past cross border cooperation
Technical expertise and solid resource base	Change in administrative and institutional regulations
Availability of information	Poor administrative culture
Good reputation of project partners	
OPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Enabling environment for cross border tourism products development and marketing	Low participation interest by the local communities
Variety of new age media and channels of communication	Unstable political environment
	Insufficient institutional capacities



VI. HUMAN RESOURCES

Implementation of the Communication Plan will be sole responsibility of the nominated project team including at least 5 project manager/coordinators. Additionally, as the implementation progresses, each beneficiary will include one or more employees to assist the communication objectives achievement, mainly thru expertise provision.

Name of beneficiary	Human resources needed	Time needed(total)
Lead beneficiary Aleksandra Sivevska	Project manager Expert in public procurement Expert in content writing Expert in ToRs preparation	At least 800 working hours
P2 Pece Cvetanovski	Project coordinator Expert in public procurement Expert in environmental protection	At least 500 working hours
P3 Ivanka Nestorovska	Project coordinator Expert in public procurement Expert in tourism	At least 500 working hours
P4 Lito Papadopolu	Project coordinator (with knowledge on public procurement procedures) Expert on environmental interpretation	At least 500 working hours
P5 Ioannis Tampakoudis	Project coordinator Expert in tourism	At least 500 working hours



Additionally, as part of the overall project implementation, at least 15 different external companies, experts and providers will be engaged to secure Communication Plan`s objectives foreseen.

VII. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Activity	Cost (EUR)
Preparation of project Communication Plan	1.000
Visual identity	9.476
Design and launching project web site	5.000
Design and launching of promotional webpage	9.200
Design and print of banners	600
Preparation and print of promo packages	1.500
Preparation and print of working and promo materials for 25 capacity building participants	500
Print and dissemination of Manual	2.200
Provision of professional photos	10.000
Project opening conference	1.600
Project closing conference	3.700
International fair attendance	37.775
International fair attendance	41.600
Fam tour for international tour operators	42.000
Fam tour for international media	46.700
Production of promo video	13.000



Social media campaign to promote cross border tourism products	9.000
Internet campaign to promote cross border tourism products	9.000
Mobile app development	8.000
Printed materials for 35 participants during cross border networking workshop	350
Development and installation of Info signs	2.500
Press releases	/
Press conferences	/
Web articles	/
Total	254.701
Percentage of the total project budget	34%



VIII. TIMELINE

Activity	month 1-3	month 3-6	month 6-9	month 9-12	month 12-15	month 15-18
Preparation of Communication Plan						
Preparation of project visual identity						
Project web page/section within the Programmes official web page						
Development and launching of tourism promotion web page						
Development and dissemination of printed materials						
Development and print of promo packages						
Opening conference						
Closing conference						
Promotional photos						
Implementation of social media campaign						



Implementation of internet campaign						
Activity	month 1-3	month 3-6	month 6-9	month 9-12	month 12-15	month 15-18
Development of promotional mobile application						
Info signs preparation and installment						
Organization and implementation of Familiarization tours for international media (EU)						
Organization and implementation of Familiarization tours for international buyers (EU)						
Fair attendance (EU)						
Fair attendance (EU)						
Drafting and publishing texts on beneficiaries web pages						
Drafting and publishing media releases						
Press conference						

