Communication in the Common Provisions Regulation 2021-2027
Take two

Gianluca COMUNIELLO, Slaven KLICEK
Communication with Member States

29 April 2021

Housekeeping to start with..

How we planned today's training?

- Walkthrough of relevant chapters of the CPR.

- Focus: practical examples and questions received beforehand.

What about new questions?

- Q&A session to answer other questions is planned for the last 20 min of the training.

- Please no questions in the chat. People on the webstream will not be able to see them.

- Please note that questions concerning interpretation of the regulation include a formal procedure and cannot be answered straight away.

European Commission

Previously, on INFORM EU Training…

https://webcast.ec.europa.eu/training-on-cpr-2021-2027-communication-provisions-explained-article-by-article

European Commission

Common Provisions Regulation

- Common rule book for EU funds under shared management:

  - Regional policy - ERDF, CF, JTF

  - Social affairs and employment - ESF+

  - Home affairs - AMIF, ISF, BMVI

  - Fisheries & maritime policy - EMFAF

  - (Opt-ins for some parts of the rural development policy – EARDF)

- One single approach for communication

European Commission

Communication in the CPR

Programming

Art. 17(3) defines approach to communication for each programme

Monitoring

Art. 35-37 sets out monitoring requirements

Visibility, transparency & communication

CHAPTER III of CPR - Art. 41-45 sets the frame for

- Common visibility of EU funding

- Communication officers & coordination mechanisms

- Requirements for managing authorities and for beneficiaries, i.e. for transparency and visibility

Technical specifications

EU emblem

European Commission

Content of programmes

Article 17

Article 17 - Content of programmes

3. Each programme shall set out: (…)

(i) the envisaged approach to communication and visibility for the programme through defining its objectives, target audiences, communication channels, **including** social media outreach, **where appropriate,** planned budget and relevant indicators for monitoring and evaluation;

In practice

- Minor change in the list of mandatory elements

- DG REGIO & EMPL to assess informal and formal documents

  - Process on-going

- Support tools

  - Communicating Cohesion Policy Booklet (2019)

    - Updated version out soon in EN, FR, DE, IT, ES, PL and RO

  - Monitoring & Evaluation Booklet (2019)

Communication chapter

Level of detail in the chapter?

- The main approach to communication shall be outlined in the communication chapter of the programme, focusing on the long-term aims and vision.

- The chapter shall sufficiently address elements listed in art. 17 and provide an understanding of the strategic dimension of communicating Cohesion policy.

European Commission

Communication chapter

What about additional communication strategies?

- Additional documents, such as a communication strategy, should focus on elements that are not covered by art. 17. (e.g. coordination of communication between OPs in a same MS) and should not duplicate or diverge from information included in the chapter.

European Commission

Communication chapter

To what extent is a description of the (non-) use of social media required, if not applicable?

- Social media are recognized as important platforms that raise awareness of Cohesion policy, offer opportunities to open two-way channels with audiences and allow precise targeting of audiences according to age, geography, interests, etc.
- Communication chapters should describe the approach and choice of appropriate social media platforms according to objectives and state of play regarding communication.

European Commission

Communication chapter

To what extent should information be provided on communication regarding operations of strategic importance?

- Operations of strategic importance are considered as flagship projects that communicate the programme objectives, and the EU support provided to the MS.

- OSI require:
  - dedicated communication activities,
  - close cooperation between beneficiaries and MAs,
  - synergies with other CPR communication requirements and
  - strong media coverage.

- Communication chapters should recognize and provide descriptions of operations of strategic importance in regards to their contribution to communicating programme's achievements.

European Commission

Monitoring

Article 35 - Functions of the monitoring committee
Article 36 - Annual performance review
Article 37 - Transmission of data

In practice

- Monitoring mechanisms to replace previous reporting requirements

- Communication activities to be covered in ARMs and MCs

- Publication of data on national portal or programme website

In addition to preparing information on the implementation of communication and visibility actions of programmes, should the programmes report on the communication indicators achievements via transmissions of data (art. 37)?

Transmission of data

- Yes, if such programme-specific indicators are proposed and approved, the managing authority has to report on them as well, in accordance with Article 37(2)(b) of the CPR proposal.

European Commission

Visibility of support from the Funds

Article 41 - Visibility
Article 42 - Emblem of the Union
Article 43 - Communication officers and networks

European Commission

How to best structure the single national website?

The homepage of the single national website should prominently feature the following, either directly or by providing links to internal pages:

- A short, clear description of scope and aim of cohesion policy and structural funds

- Achievements illustrated both with examples of funded projects and with data

- List of programmes and direct link to their homepages, or internal pages or subsection if these programmes are integrated in the single national website

- Updates on the implementation of programme(s)

European Commission

How to best structure the single national website?

Article 41 - Visibility
Article 42 – Emblem of the Union

Each Member State shall ensure:

(a) the visibility of support in all activities relating to operations supported by the Funds with particular attention to operations of strategic importance;

(b) communication to Union citizens of the role and achievements of the Funds through a single website portal providing access to all programmes involving that Member State.

Member States, managing authorities and beneficiaries shall use the emblem of the European Union in accordance with Annex VIII when carrying out visibility, transparency and communication activities.

European Commission

The single website portal

When to set up the single website portal?

- The single website portal shall be set up well before the programme websites, in order to include links to programme websites when they are up and running (…*within six months of the programme's approval*).

European Commission

Art. 43 Communication officers and networks

1. Each Member State shall identify a communication coordinator (…). The communication coordinator **may be appointed at the level of the body defined under Article 65(6) (**_coordination body set up at the initiative of the MS_**) and** shall coordinate communication and visibility measures across programmes. The communication coordinator shall involve (…) the following bodies:

   (a) European Commission Representations and European Parliament Liaison Offices in the Member States**,** as well as Europe Direct Information Centres and other **_relevant_** networks**,** educational and research institutions;

   (b) other relevant partners and bodies **as referred to in Article 6 (**_regional, local, economic actors, social partners, universities…_**)**.

European Commission

In practice

- Communication coordinator

  - To cover all programmes of all CPR funds of the Member State

  - To coordinate communication activities across the funds (better impact)

  - To organise and steer the national communication network with defined stakeholders for all CPR funds (meetings at least twice a year)

  - To represent the MS in the INFORM EU expert group (steering committee)

Art. 43 Communication officers and networks

2. Each managing authority shall identify a communication officer for each programme ('programme communication officer'). **). A communication officer may be responsible for more than one programme.**

3. The Commission shall ~~run a~~ **maintain the** network comprising communication coordinators, programme communication officers and Commission representatives to exchange information on visibility, transparency and communication activities.

European Commission

In practice

- EU Network - INFORM EU

  - To replace INFORM and INIO from 1 January 2021

  - To cover all CPR funds and RRF

- Virtual network started in January 2021

  - Members: Programme communication officers, Communication coordinators, Commission

  - Overlap between 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 periods for some years

National coordinator

Can the same person be National Coordinator and Communication Officer for a programme?

- In line with the strengthened coordination role of the national coordinator in 2021-2027, this position should be a central one in steering and coordinating communication activities across all Funds in a MS.

- In addition, the regulation defines that the coordinator involves a range of stakeholders and maintains a national network.

- On the other hand, the programme communication officer role entails a different level of managing and coordinating communication. We believe the two roles can be covered by the same person only in specifically simple situation.

European Commission

National network

How often should the national network meet?

- In order to allow effective coordination of actors relevant for communicating Cohesion policy in MS, the network should meet at least twice per year.

- Suggested criteria to help in the frequency of meetings:

  - Communication activities planned and taking place;
  - Number of projects and beneficiaries involved;
  - Other stakeholders' activities;
  - Ongoing CPR communication requirements-related activities…

European Commission

National network

If a country has only two managing authorities, does it still have to create a national network?

- No matter the number of MAs in MS, the national network should be set up and maintained as a platform to engage stakeholders, bodies and other partners relevant for communicating Cohesion policy.

Communication chapter

Is a description of the link between the programme-specific website and the Member State website necessary?

- Describing the links between programme websites and the single website portal within the communication chapter is not necessary – it only needs to be implemented. In the Communication chapter, you simply must confirm that there will be a link between the programme website and the national portal.

European Commission

Communication chapter

Is the naming of the communication officer required at this point?

- Naming persons who will be appointed as communication officers in the communication chapter is not mandatory.

- Please note that it is strongly advised to appoint communication officers as soon as possible, as they will be included in the INFORM EU network to address communication.

European Commission

Communication chapter

How is the description of the planned budget in the programme to be understood?

Should the annual budget per activity/medium be presented?

What about the 0.3% and reporting?

- The communication chapter should describe how the communication activities will be implemented, including a budgetary overview per year and per activity / channel.

- Suggestion: the communication activities' budget should amount to 0.3% or higher of the programme's total amount.

- Progress in carrying out communication measures should be presented at Monitoring Committee meetings.

European Commission

Communication chapter

How are monitoring and evaluation indicators relevant for communication activities to be assessed?

What about reporting - is reporting to the monitoring committee sufficient?

- The chapter should explain the general approach to monitoring and evaluation, including realistic targets and main indicators.

- Tips & tricks provided in the Evaluation toolbox.

- Please note that communication may be covered in the evaluation of the programme, referring to art. 39. of the future CPR.

European Commission

Communication chapter

Positive notes:

- Different communication approaches for different moment in the life-cycle of the programme

- References to the use of different communication networks present in the country (ex. EDICs)

- On our to-do list: collecting good practices to build a "sample of good examples" to be published on Teams as inspiration

Communication chapter

Main issues reported so far:

- Length of the chapters (too long chapters)

- Vague information on social media use

- Vague information on target audiences ("potential beneficiaries" as preferred formula)

- Lack of monitoring and evaluation info

- Objectives rather vague

- No references to useful knowledge sources to steer the communication of EU support (eg. surveys, research or any other basis)

Transparency & programme communication

Article 44 - Responsibilities of the managing authority
Article 45 - Responsibilities of beneficiaries

European Commission

Art. 44 Responsibilities of the managing authority

1. The managing authority shall ensure that, within six months of the programme's approval, there is a website where information on programmes under its responsibility is available, covering the programme's objectives, activities, available funding opportunities and achievements (…).

2. The managing authority shall ~~publish~~**ensure the publishing** on the website referred to in paragraph 1, ~~at the~~ ~~latest one month before~~**or** **on** the ~~opening~~**single website portal referred to in point (b)** of **Article 41,** a ~~call for proposal, a short summary~~**timetable** of **the** planned ~~and published~~ calls for proposals **that should be updated at least three times a year** with the following **indicative** data: *(…)*

   (a) geographical area covered by the call for proposal;
   (b) policy objective or specific objective concerned;
   (c) type of eligible applicants;
   (d) total amount of support for the call;
   (e) start and end date of the call.

Art. 44 Responsibilities of the managing authority

3. The managing authority shall make the list of operations (…) and shall update that list at least every ~~three~~ **four** months. Each operation shall have a unique code. The list shall contain the following data:

   (a) in the case of legal entities, the beneficiary's **and, in the case of public procurement, the contractor's** name*; (…)*
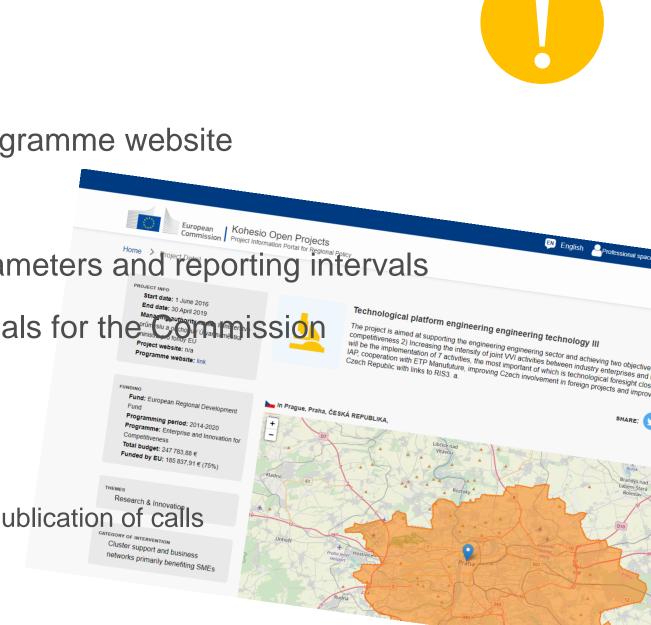   (e) the purpose of the operation and its **expected or actual** achievements; (…)

4. The data referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 shall be published on the website in open, machine-readable formats, as set out in Article 5(1) of the Directive (EU) **2019/1024** ~~2003/98/EC~~ of the European Parliament and of the Council, which allows data to be sorted, searched, extracted, compared and reused.

6. The managing authority shall ensure that ~~all~~ communication and visibility material (…) **This shall not require significant additional costs or a significant administrative burden for the beneficiaries or for the managing authority.**

European Commission

In practice – Art. 44

- Six-months-deadline to set up a programme website

- Publication of calls as a novelty

- List of operations with adjusted parameters and reporting intervals

- Availability of communication materials for the Commission

- Support tools

  - Kohesio as central project data portal

  - Template for list of operations and for publication of calls

What if the programme website is not set in time?

Setting up the programme website

- The website has to be set up within the deadline established in the regulation.

- Failure of setting up the programme website on time constitutes an irregularity.

European Commission

Planned calls for proposals

Will REGIO provide templates for CfPs and will there be a common database?

- REGIO is working on options to standardize publishing of calls for proposals and the possibility to have a calls for proposals database. More information will follow after the publication of regulation.

- Until then, we remind that MAs should publish planned CfPs in an open and machine-readable format and include CfPs in their (single/programme) website layout.

European Commission

List of operations

Is there a definition of Total cost of the operation within the LoO data fields?

Is it sufficient to include this info in the contract with the beneficiary ?

How should this work in practice?

- „*Total cost of the operation*" refers to overall expenditure of an operation, including support from the Funds and other (national or private) sources.

* More info needed to answer other questions.

European Commission

List of operations

How many contractors should be listed in the list of operations?

"The purpose of the operation and its expected or actual achievements" stand for values of the output and result indicators?

- The name of a contractor should be specified for each operation. In case inside of one operation the contracts are allocated by lots, the names of all the contractors should be listed.

- Output and result indicators may not always be appropriate, neither correctly capture the type of operations at stake. Instead, a tailored description of the operation and its achievement should be preferred.

European Commission

List of operations

- Article 44 (3) mentions the <u>programme website</u> as the place to publish LoO of a given programme.

- In line with the aim of raising visibility and transparency via <u>single website portals</u>, it is preferable to publish LoO data on national portals as well to offer a joint overview of all projects funded in a MS.

European Commission

Art. 45 Responsibilities of the beneficiaries

1. Beneficiaries and bodies implementing financial instruments shall acknowledge support from the Funds (…) to the operation by:

   (a) providing on the beneficiary's ~~professional~~ **official** website, **where such site exists, and** social media sites, ~~where such sites exist~~, a short description of the operation, proportionate to the level of support, including its aims and results, and highlighting the financial support from the Union*;*

   (b) providing a statement highlighting the support from the Funds in a visible manner on documents and communication material relating to the implementation of the operation, ~~used~~ **intended** for the public or for participants;

Art. 45 Responsibilities of the beneficiaries

(c) ~~publicly~~ displaying **durable** plaques or billboards **clearly visible to the public, presenting the emblem of the Union in accordance with the technical characteristics laid down in Annex [VIII],** as soon as the physical implementation of operations involving physical investment **starts** or ~~the~~ purchas**ed** equipment **is installed** ~~starts~~, with regard to the following:

(i) operations supported by the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund the total cost of which exceeds EUR 500 000;

(ii) operations supported by the ESF+, the EMFF, the ISF, the AMIF and the BMVI the total cost of which exceeds EUR 100 000.

Art. 45 Responsibilities of the beneficiaries

(d) for operations not falling under point (c), ~~publicly~~ displaying **at a location clearly visible to the public** at least one ~~printed~~ **poster of a minimum size A3** or **equivalent** electronic display ~~of a minimum size A3~~ with information about the operation highlighting the support from the Funds;

Where the beneficiary is a natural person, the beneficiary shall ensure, to the extent possible, that appropriate information is available, highlighting the support from the funds, at a location visible to the public or through an electronic display;

Where an ESF+ beneficiary is a natural person, the obligation in paragraph (d) shall not apply.

Art. 45 Responsibilities of the beneficiaries

(e) for operations of strategic importance and operations whose total cost exceed EUR 10 000 000 organising a communication event **or activity, as appropriate,** and involving the Commission and the responsible managing authority in a timely manner.

European Commission

Art. 45 Responsibilities of the beneficiaries

For operations supported under the specific objective set out in Article 4(1)~~(c)(vii~~))(xi) of the ESF+ Regulation, ~~this~~ **the** requirement **set out in point (d)** shall not apply.

By derogation from points (c) and (d) of the first subparagraph, for operations supported by the AMF, the ISF and the BMVI, the document setting out the conditions for support may establish specific requirements for the public display of information on the support from the Funds where this is justified by reasons of security and public order in accordance with Article 63(4a).

European Commission

Art. 45 Responsibilities of the beneficiaries

2. For small project funds, the beneficiary shall **comply with the obligations under Article 35(5) of Regulation (Interreg Regulation).** For financial instruments, the beneficiary shall ensure **by means of the contractual terms** that final recipients comply with the requirements set out in point (c) of paragraph 1.

3. Where the beneficiary does not comply with its obligations under Article 42 or paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article, **and where remedial actions have not been put into place,** the ~~Member State~~ **managing authority** shall apply ~~a financial correction~~**measures, taking into account the principle of proportionality,** by cancelling up to ~~5~~ **3**% of the support from the Funds to the operation concerned.

In practice – Art. 45

- Acknowledgement of European Union Funding by beneficiaries

- Unified reference to EU emblem and EUROPEAN UNION across all EU funds – no more Funds or programmes (e.g. logos)!

- Operations of strategic importance and financial corrections as novelties

- Interreg specificities - Article 36(5) of Interreg Regulation

- Support tools

  - Download Centre, Online-Generator, Brand manual

CO-FUNDED BY THE
EUROPEAN UNION

European Commission

Beneficiaries' social media sites

Has the amendment about Social Media to be seen as an obligation for the beneficiary to inform about the project also via Social Media?

- The article is stating that beneficiaries shall acknowledge support from Funds.

- This does not mean that the beneficiaries must, for the project purposes, set-up a social media profile/account if they do not have one, but that existing accounts of the beneficiary should be used to provide information on the project.

European Commission

The (co-)funding statement

The beneficiary does not have to mention (in my case) ERDF in „a statement highlighting the support from the Funds"?

The reference „co-funded by the Europea Union" is sufficient?

- The statement referred to in Annex VIII - **"Funded by the European Union"** or **"Co-funded by the European Union"** - shall be used as a general reference to the support provided by the EU, together with the emblem.

European Commission

Displaying plaques and billboards

„As soon as the physical implementation starts": what about projects with investment in a building?

What is the beneficiary supposed to put – he will not be able to use one plaque/billboard during the construction and when the building is finished?

- The requirements applies to all cases that fit the criteria, in terms of specific Fund support and total costs, including operations taking place in buildings.

- In case of construction or any other works, the requirements seeks to have a lasting and clearly visible display of the support provided to the operation.

European Commission

Plaques, billboards and posters' contents

The content of the plaque/billboard is up to the MA to define?

In one of the presentations there was a preview of the „online-generator" for posters,… - one field in the template was „EU-Funding"?

- The content of plaques / billboards are to be defined by MAs.
- Suggestions will be provided via the online generator.
- The plaque / billboard and poster requirements seek to achieve greater visibility and transparency of Cohesion policy. In this light, the EU support should be highlighted on these materials.

European Commission

Plaques and billboards for operations implemented in several phases

- In line with the requirement aim, plaques / billboards and posters should display relevant and actual data – this includes operations funded as part of different phases.

- In these cases, at least one plaque / billboard shall be displayed, but the information displayed has to be correct and updated.

European Commission

Minimum size and materials for the billboard and plaque

Does this billboard or plaque have to be of a minimum size (A3 as in letter C)?

What about the materials used for billboards or plaques?

- MAs can provide certain flexibility regarding sizes and materials to be used.

- A simple, adaptable template with no restriction on materials and a minimal restriction on sizing will aid beneficiaries, notably in the context where historical reconstruction rules apply.

- Please note that materials should be resistant and suited for long-lasting display.

European Commission

Minimum size and materials for the billboard and plaque

Does this billboard or plaque have to be of a minimum size (A3 as in letter C)?

What about the materials used for billboards or plaques?

- The online generator templates:
  - Bilboards:
    - 3000mm*4000mm
    - 2000mm*2000mm
    - 4000mm*5300mm
    - 4000mm*2000mm
  - Plaques:
    - 279mm*420mm
    - 300mm*400mm
    - 400mm*300mm

European Commission

Languages for the billboard and plaque

In a specific location we have operations funded both by Interreg and mainstream programmes.

- *Mainstream programme: national language.*

- *Interreg: often several languages*

Would it be feasible to foresee several plaques/billboards?

- One of the objectives of the 2021-2027 regulatory package is to simplify the communication vis à vis the citizens.

- The requirements seeks to display one plaque / billboard per operation.

- It is not recommended to display several plaques or billboards in different languages.

European Commission

Links with the EAFRD

Does Article 45 cover also Rural Development?

- Article 45 of the CPR does not apply to the EAFRD, as it is not referred to in the CAP Strategic Plan Regulation proposal (SPR).

- For the EAFRD, according to Article 110 of the SPR proposal, detailed rules regarding information, publicity and visibility will be laid down in an implementing act.

European Commission

Financial measures

How do financial measures look in practice?

- The MA may set up remedial actions for beneficiaries not following visibility and communication requirements.

- If the beneficiary continues not complying with the CPR, the MA shall impose appropriate measures.

European Commission

Small project fund

- The small project fund refers to an operation in an Interreg programme aimed at the selection and implementation of projects, including people-to-people actions, of limited financial volume as explained in article 2 of the future CPR.

European Commission

Miscellaneous

Reference to art. 42 in CPR's annex V, chapter 7

In the template, reference is made to Article 17 III (i) CPR (main elements) and Article 42 II CPR (emblem of the European Union) – is this correct?

- The reference should be understood as to article 42.

European Commission

Q&A

Take aways

- [Support package](#) available in Teams.

- [List of operations templates](#) available in Teams too.

- [Download centre](#): currently linguistic versions are being revised.

- [Operational guidelines on using the EU emblem](#) are published.

- Upcoming trainings and presentations:

  - Kohesio - visualisation of project data, 6 May, 10am CET.

  - List of operations templates – *to be confirmed.*

  - Operations of strategic importance – *to be confirmed.*

European Commission