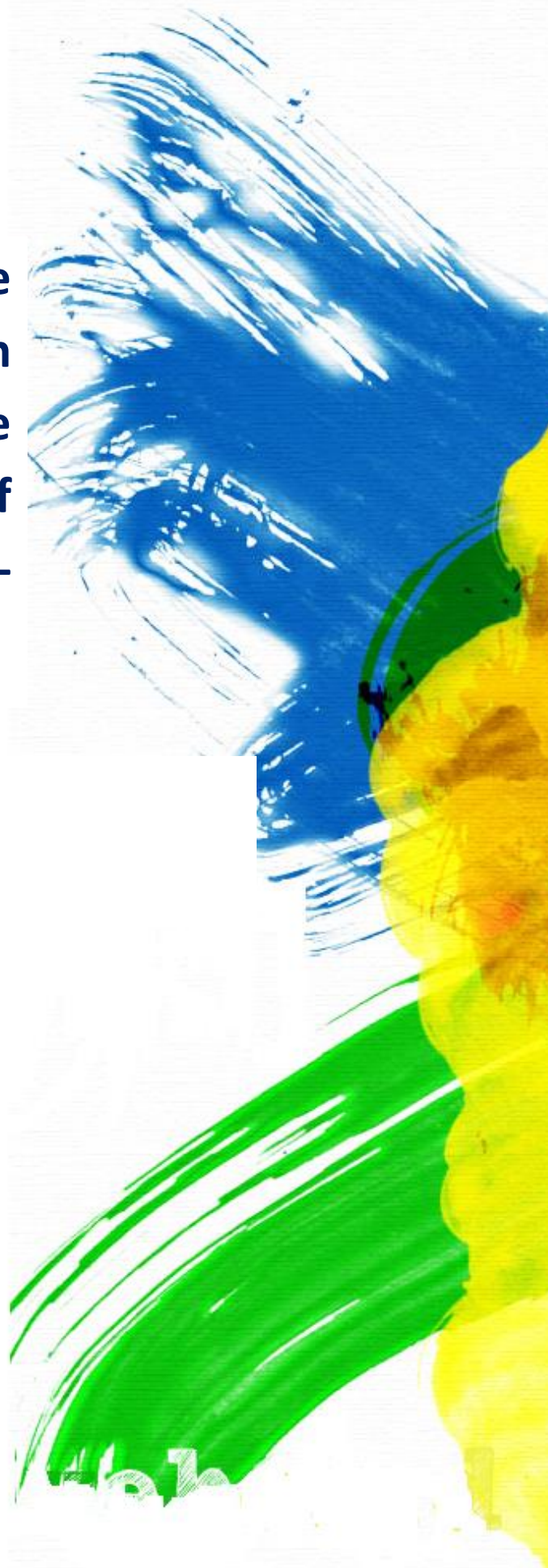


”Evaluation of the communication activity in order to support the potential beneficiaries of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme”

EVALUATION REPORT

October 2017



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Glossary

| | |
|----------------|---|
| BRECO | Regional Office for the Cross-Border Cooperation for the Romanian-Hungarian Border Oradea |
| CA | Contracting Authority |
| CfP | Call for proposal |
| eMS | “Electronic Monitoring System” platform |
| EU | European Union |
| FAQ | Frequent Asked Questions |
| FG | Focus Group |
| Gantt | Calendar of activities |
| IR | Inception Report |
| JS | Joint Secretariat |
| MA | Managing Authority of Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme |
| MC | Monitoring Committee |
| MRDPAFE | Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds |
| NA | National Authority of the Programme from Hungary |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |
| TO | Technical Offer |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| VIM | Visual Identity Manual |

1. Information about the contract

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Title of the contract: | Evaluation of the communication strategy in support of potential project beneficiaries for the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme |
| Number of the contract: | 246/26.06.2017 |
| Beneficiary: | Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds |
| Scope of the contract: | Performing the evaluation of the communication activity in support of the potential beneficiaries of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme |
| Provider: | SC ACZ Consulting SRL |
| Implementation period: | 29.06.2017 – 30.11.2017 |

The contract was concluded for a period of 5 months from the day following the provision of the performance guarantee of the contract and includes:

- 3 months for implementing the contract activities:
- 2 months required only for the approval of final deliverables and for the final payment within the contract

Objectives of the contract

1. analysis of the degree of information regarding the identity of Interreg V-A Romania - Hungary Programme and the funding opportunities provided.
2. assessing the quality of the documents used for information, assessing the degree of satisfaction of the direct potential beneficiaries of the programme regarding the work carried out by the management structures of the programme and comparing the results of the evaluation in the eight counties of the eligible area.
3. developing a set of useful recommendations for the next information sessions, including what is foreseen for the next period.

2. Methodological details

2.1. Methodological aspects for the desk research

The desk research conducted within the contract is referring, on the one hand to the literature review, which represented the basic starting point for the analyzes that were carried out within the contract, as well as to the analysis of the materials related to the communication activities, transmitted by the programme authorities. The purpose of this activity was to develop a set of useful recommendations for the following information sessions, including the recommendations that are foreseen for the next period.

The materials submitted by programme authorities and analyzed by the team of experts are: the informative materials used to promote the programme (infographics, leaflets, newsletters, press releases, Info Days Agendas and Workshops), the Annual Implementation Reports of the programme, the programme Communication Strategy, the approved version of the Interreg V A Romania-Hungary Programme, the Visual Identity Manual of the programme.

We specify that the materials transmitted by the programme authorities and analyzed by the Consultant in the desk research were considered sufficient to formulate the preliminary conclusions that contribute to the achievement of the research objectives as defined in the Terms of Reference:

- Assessing the quality of the documents used for the information activities;
- Developing a set of useful recommendations for the information sessions, including what is foreseen for the activity of the next period.

The preliminary results obtained from the desk research are further validated by the results and findings obtained in the field research, respectively by applying the questionnaires among the potential direct beneficiaries of the programme, by conducting the interviews with potential beneficiaries and by organizing the Focus Group with the authorities involved in the management of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme.

2.2. Methodological aspects related to the survey

Within the contract "Evaluation of the communication activity in order to support the potential beneficiaries of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme", two surveys were conducted (one among the potential beneficiaries of the programme, and the second one among the members of the Monitoring Committee of the programme) between September 5th, 2017 - September 15th, 2017, according to the calendar of activities approved through the Inception Report.

The methodology that was used for the application of the survey among the potential beneficiaries is presented below:

1. Total sample: 600 subjects were contacted, representative for the category of the potential beneficiaries (local and central public authorities, regional public authorities, higher education institutions, chambers of commerce, non-governmental organizations, religious units, etc.) for the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme. The respondents are potential beneficiaries from the 8 eligible counties of the programme, namely: Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad and Timiș (from Romania) and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and Csongrád (from Hungary).

2. Minimum number of completed questionnaires necessary for the analysis: minimum 180 questionnaires at the level of the eligible programme area, covering all the categories of potential beneficiaries in each eligible county

3. Creating a database of potential beneficiaries for sending the questionnaires: The provider has built a database of 773 potential beneficiaries of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme, ensuring that all the categories of potential beneficiaries are included in this database, while ensuring the coverage of the entire eligible territory of the programme.

4. The method to apply the questionnaires: The questionnaires were applied on-line, by sending them to the representatives of the potential beneficiaries of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme.

ACZ Consulting uploaded the questionnaire on its web page, which created the possibility to fill in the questionnaires on-line and to automatically transmit the answers indicated in the questionnaires to an online centralized database managed by the Provider on its server. After uploading the questionnaire on its webpage, the Provider sent e-mails to the potential beneficiaries included in the created database, which shortly presented the role of the survey, as well as the invitation to fill in the questionnaire at the indicated link. The questionnaires were developed in the three languages of the programme (English, Romanian, Hungarian) in order to facilitate its completion by the potential beneficiaries from both countries.

5. Characteristics of the questionnaire: the questionnaires proposed to be used within the survey have the following characteristics:

- The questionnaires aim at collecting both subjective data (opinions and perceptions of potential beneficiaries on different aspects related to the communication activities), as well as collecting objective data or identification data (age, level of education of respondents, etc.), so as to allow the correlations between the variables;
- Considering the form of the questions, the questionnaire contains both closed and open questions. The closed questions are both dichotomic (yes / no) questions and multiple pre-coded questions that provide a progressive scale of responses.
- The questionnaire addresses several topics of interest specific to the communication

activities.

6. Creating the SPSS database: as a result of applying the questionnaires for the minimum sample of respondents established for the quantitative research, the data and information collected through the questionnaires were downloaded into a centralized SPSS database. Based on the data collected through the questionnaires and downloaded in the SPSS database, the results and conclusions obtained from the quantitative research under the contract were drafted.

The methodology that was used for the application of the survey among the members of the Monitoring Committee of the programme is presented below:

1. Total sample: 48 institutions / organizations, members of the Monitoring Committee of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme.

2. Creating a database of potential respondents to whom the questionnaires were transmitted: The Provider built a database of 48 members of the Monitoring Committee, representatives of institutions/organizations from Romania (25), Hungary (22) and the European Commission (1).

3. Distribution of the questionnaires: ACZ Consulting transmitted 48 emails, distributed as follows:

- 25 questionnaires to institutions / organizations in Romania;
- 22 questionnaires to institutions / organizations in Hungary;
- 1 questionnaire to the European Commission.

4. The method to apply the questionnaires: The questionnaires were applied on-line, by sending them to the representatives of the member institutions / organizations within the MC of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme.

ACZ Consulting uploaded the questionnaire on its website, which offered the possibility to complete it online and to automatically transmit the answers indicated in the completed questionnaires to an online centralized database managed by the Provider on its server. After uploading the questionnaire on its webpage, the Provider sent e-mails to the MC members included in the created database, which contained a brief presentation of the role of the survey conducted, as well as the invitation to fill in the questionnaire on the specified link. The questionnaire was developed in English (the official language of the programme) to facilitate its completion by the MC members from both countries of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme and by the representative of the European Commission.

5. Characteristics of the questionnaire: the questionnaire proposed to be used within the survey has the following characteristics:

- Considering the form of the questions, the questionnaire contains both closed and open questions. The closed questions are both dichotomic (yes / no) questions and multiple pre-

coded questions that provide a progressive scale of responses.

- The questionnaire addresses several topics of interest specific to the communication activities.

6. Creating the SPSS database: as a result of applying the questionnaires, the data and information collected through the questionnaires were downloaded into a centralized SPSS database. Based on the data collected through the questionnaires and downloaded in the SPSS database, the results and conclusions obtained from the quantitative research among the MC members were drafted.

2.3 Methodological aspects for conducting the interviews

Within the contract "Evaluation of the communication activity in order to support the potential beneficiaries of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme", there were conducted interviews with the potential beneficiaries, between September 5th, 2017 - September 15th, 2017.

1. **The sample (main list and reserve list):** 48 entities from the categories of potential direct beneficiaries of the programme. As no funding contracts were signed within this programme at the time of this evaluation, the key actors proposed to participate in the interviews were selected from the database of project ideas transmitted by the JS, completed within the project generation sessions organized so far, taking into account the fact that they match with the categories of eligible beneficiaries under the various intervention priorities of the programme.
2. **Distribution of interviews:** all 8 counties in the eligible area of the programme were targeted, and for each county at least one interview was conducted, being covered all the main categories of potential beneficiaries, namely: representatives of public authorities, representatives of NGOs, representatives of other categories of beneficiaries.
3. **Method of selecting the entities included in the sample:** There were selected key organizations who have participated in the sessions for generating project ideas organized within the programme. In the lists where the information was available, the interviewees were selected from the entities which had a budget established and a partner for the project idea, these elements indicating a high degree of maturity and a greater likelihood of materializing the project idea in a grant application.
4. **Justifying the number of interviews and distribution by counties:** it was planned to ensure an equal distribution of the interviews at the level of the eight counties in the eligible area, ensuring the representativeness of each category of potential beneficiaries, in order to collect the most relevant answers.
5. **Method of realizing the interviews:** the interviews were conducted online (via video conference or Skype); for the situations in which the participants in the main list did not have the electronic means to organize the interview, it was agreed to realize the interview by telephone. The Provider transmitted prior to the interview an address signed by the Managing Authority of the programme, explaining the purpose of the research, which was accompanied by the interview grid developed within the contract.

2.4 Methodological aspects for the organization of the Focus Group

Within the contract "Evaluation of the communication activity in order to support the potential beneficiaries of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme", there was held a Focus Group with the authorities managing the programme, established for 27th of September 2017.

1. **Role of the Focus Group:** The provider proposed to organize a focus group that brought together the representatives of the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat in order to present the results of the communication activities evaluation, obtained by applying the questionnaires and conducting the interviews with potential beneficiaries of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary

Programme. Also, the main objectives of this focus group were:

- Identifying the programme managing structures' opinion on ensuring the correct information regarding the identity of the programme and the opportunities offered in the eligible area of the programme;
- Identifying the programme managing structures' opinion on how to transmit information on ensuring the economic and social impact of the projects proposed for funding;
- Assessing the degree of satisfaction towards the press relations activities of the entities with attributions in the implementation of the programme;
- Analyzing the opinion of the programme managing structures on how to identify and use the favorite information channels: online - email, newsletter, site, social media / events, press conference, briefings, training seminars etc.

2. Organization of the Focus group: The focus group was organized on a date previously agreed with the Contracting Authority and it was held on-line (Skype / videoconferencing system).

ACZ Consulting developed a proposal for the Focus Group grid which represented the starting point for the Focus Group discussions.

3. Preliminary results obtained from the research

3.1. The desk research

3.1.1. The analysis of the programme's documents

The programme's documents which had been analyzed within the "Evaluation of the communication activity in order to support the potential beneficiaries of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme" contract are:

- The Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme, the last approved version;
- The Communication Strategy of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme;
- The Annual Communication Plan for 2017;
- The Annual Implementation Report 2015;
- The Citizens' Summary of the Annual Implementation Report 2015;
- The Annual Implementation Report 2016;
- The Citizens' Summary of the Annual Implementation Report 2016.

1. The Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme

The Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme Document was approved on 09.12.2015 and has the objective of financing integrated interventions with a strong cross-border and strategic focus, in order to exploit the common potential and address common challenges.

The programme's specific communication activities are presented in the description of the Priority Axis for Technical Assistance, by listing the indicative actions to be supported under this Priority Axis, such as:

- elaboration of documents for informing the applicants and beneficiaries, in order to support them in the preparation of the applications for funding and the implementation of projects;
- elaborating and implementing the Communication Strategy of the programme;
- organizing information dissemination events such as seminars, training sessions and information events.

Within the programme, the Communication Strategy is mentioned as a specific tool and overall framework for the communication activities to be carried out.

The target groups addressed through the communication activities are the applicants and the beneficiaries of the programme, and the monitoring indicator for the communication activity is "the number of information and promotion events of the program (the output indicator related to the TA PA)".

Relevant aspects related to the communication activities:

- The section devoted to the responsibilities of the Managing Authority states that it should ensure an adequate communication with the applicants / beneficiaries and the transmission of information to them in order to strengthen the capacity to implement and use the funding provided by the programme. To this end, the existence of the Communication Strategy is mentioned.
- Moreover, one of the Monitoring Committee's (MC) tasks is to examine the Communication Strategy and its implementation.
- Last but not least, the Info Points from Hungary implement specific communication activities, such as offering support for the project preparation through the organization of information seminars, ensuring the exchange of information on different project proposals, communication and information activities for partners and potential beneficiaries, as well as offering support to the potential beneficiaries in areas concerning the national legislation.

2. The Communication Strategy of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme

The Communication Strategy of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme was approved on 26.05.2016 and aims to ensure a well coordinated communication activity, effectively managed and responding to the needs of the target group. The communication activity aims at facilitating the successful implementation of the programme by assisting the applicants and beneficiaries and by disseminating the information about the programme, in order to make it well-known in the eligible area.

The bodies responsible for the implementation of the Communication Strategy are the MA / JS, NA, IP, MC.

The specific objectives of the communication activity targeted by the Communication Strategy of the programme are:

1. Facilitating the efficient communication flow at programme level
 - 1.1. *Strengthening internal capacity and facilitating a well-functional internal communication flow in between the programme bodies*
 - 1.2. *Actively collaborating with other Interreg programmes, in order to exchange information and best practices*
2. Ensuring effective support for applicants and beneficiaries
 - 2.1. *Supporting applicants by improving their awareness and increasing their capacity to participate in the programme*
 - 2.2. *Supporting beneficiaries in all phases of project implementation*

3. Increasing the visibility of results

3.1. Raising awareness on programme and project achievements and on the role played by the ERDF and the European Union in regional development

3.2. Increasing the capacity of projects to communicate their own results

The specific communication activities described in the document are:

- launching event of the programme;
- annual information events;
- other programme events;
- organizing internal meetings and training with the bodies involved in the implementation of the programme;
- partner search forums;
- organizing Info-days, workshops and seminars;
- organizing training for beneficiaries;
- organizing communication seminars to improve communication activities within projects (as part of the training for the beneficiaries).

The specific communication tools foreseen in the Communication Strategy of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme are:

- the visual identity;
- the website of the programme;
- online and social media platforms;
- newsletters;
- email;
- publications: posters, brochures, manuals, guides and any other material containing programme information;
- tools for disseminating information through the media channels (advertisements, press releases, etc.).

The target groups addressed through the communication activities:

1. Internal target groups:

- The Monitoring Committee;
- The Managing Authority;
- The National Authority;
- The Audit Authority;
- The Audit Body in Hungary;
- The Joint Secretariat;
- The Info Points from Hungary;
- The Control Bodies (from Romania and Hungary);
- The European Commission and other European institutions.

2. *External target groups:*

- Potential beneficiaries / applicants;
- External evaluators, contracted for the evaluation of project proposals;
- Beneficiaries of the funded projects;
- Final users and the general public (those who benefit from the results of the programme and projects, citizens from the eligible area of the programme, citizens of the two countries, the general public in the EU);
- Influencing factors: the European Union, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, authorities and decision-makers at national, regional and local level, EU information centers, other Interreg programmes, Interact, etc.
- Mass media from the two countries and generally at European level (radio, television, newspapers, online information resources, publications, etc.), which also act as a communication channel.

Monitoring indicators of the communication activity and established targets:

- No. of internal meetings and trainings organized (established target: at least one per year);
- No. of MC meetings (established target: at least one per year);
- No. of participations of the staff to Interact and other inter-programme initiatives, focusing on experience exchange (established target: at least one per year);
- No. of events for information and promotion of the programme targeted events for applicants (established target: at least one joint Partner Search Forum for each Open Call (CfP) and 4 info days sessions, organized for pair counties in connection with each Call for proposals);
- No. of participants in the information events organized for the applicants (established target: variable, depending on the type of event);
- No. of calls for projects launched (established target: variable, depending on the decision of the managing bodies of the programme);
- No. of targeted events for project beneficiaries (established target: at least 4 Lead beneficiary training sessions held for pair counties in connection with each CfP/ series of approved projects, including use of the eMS system);
- No. of communication actions with media impact - press conferences, press releases, interviews, advertisements via different media channels (established target: at least one action per year);
- No. of created websites (established target: 1 website);
- No. of programme annual events (established target: 1 event / year);
- No. of printed publications (established target: 1000 leaflets, brochures and other publications according to the needs);
- No. of users who receive the electronic newsletter (established target: variable, according to email list - at least 500 people /issue);

- No. of communication seminars organized (established target: at least 4 training sessions organized for pair counties in connection with each series of approved project - may be organized together with the Lead beneficiary seminars).

3. **The Annual Communication Plan 2017 of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme**

The Annual Communication Plan 2017 for the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme was approved on 24.11.2016.

The Annual Communication Plan sets out the information and communication strategic priorities for 2017 based on the general and specific objectives identified in the programme Communication Strategy.

The objective of the Annual Communication Plan 2017 is to establish a common framework for the information and communication actions foreseen for 2017 in order to ensure their consistency and efficiency as well as to adequately address the needs of the target group.

The specific objectives of the Annual Communication Plan for 2017 are:

- increasing the awareness and information among potential applicants;
- delivering adequate and on-going information about the active calls for proposals and the requirements for project submission;
- supporting the partnerships and project generation;
- informing beneficiaries about their responsibilities during the project implementation, including the terms of information and communication and assisting them during the implementation of the projects;
- facilitating a well-functioning internal communication flow between the relevant bodies of the programme;
- involving a large number of participants in cross-border activities in order to highlight the role of the European Union in regional development;
- cooperation with other Interreg programmes in order to exchange information and best practices;
- publishing the lists of the contracted projects.

The specific communication activities described in the document are:

➤ *Activities implemented in 2016:*

- drawing up and approval of the Visual Identity Manual of the programme, on 26.05.2016;
- drawing up and approval of the Communication Strategy, on 26.05.2016;
- developing the programme's website (officially launched at the end of May 2016);

- creating the programme's Facebook page, which was launched at 21st of September 2016, during the European Cooperation Day;
 - organizing two Monitoring Committee Meetings, with the aim to approve the Communication Strategy, the Visual Identity Manual, the Annual Communication Plan for 2017 and presentations held regarding the communication activities implemented in 2016;
 - organizing 12 internal meetings and trainings;
 - providing information and organizing support group meetings for potential applicants. Over 300 potential applicants participated in these meetings, discussing themes such as project ideas, funding opportunities and partnerships. Helpdesk activities were also organized to answer questions from potential applicants.
 - using media work (announcements, press releases);
 - organizing the launching conference of the programme (on 10.11.2016), to which 159 people participated;
 - distribution of promotional materials and newsletters.
- *Activities planned for 2017:*
- updating the website of the programme;
 - updating the Facebook page of the programme;
 - publishing of newsflash/e-newsletter;
 - organizing an annual event;
 - organizing infodays;
 - organizing partner search forums;
 - organizing project beneficiary seminars on project implementation process;
 - support activities for providing information/individual help-desk activities;
 - specific activities in mass media: press releases, press conferences, TV and radio interviews, advertisements/written or online campaigns;
 - internal meetings and trainings, based on the needs;
 - publications and promotional products, if the case, in connection with the events for promoting the programme.

The specific communication tools foreseen at the level of the Annual Communication Plan are:

- The programme's website ;
- The programme's Facebook page;
- Newsletters/Newsflashes
- Annual events;
- Information sessions (Info days);
- Partner search Forums;

- Activities to support potential applicants (eg focus groups, personal meetings / help desk, e-mail, telephone);
- Articles / press releases / media advertisements;
- Publications and promotional materials;
- Technical meetings and joint training sessions;
- Organizing seminars for beneficiaries on the project implementation process (it was not the case, as there were no projects in implementation).

Target groups addressed through the communication activities:

- *Target groups addressed through communication activities in 2016:*
 - potential applicants;
 - key stakeholders;
 - representatives of the European Commission;
 - VIP guests from both partner countries (participants in the launching conference);
 - professionals working in the field of territorial cooperation and / or regional development.
- *Target groups for the planned communication activities for 2017:*
 - Internal target groups:*
 - EU institutions;
 - Management structures.
 - External target groups:*
 - Potential applicants/beneficiaries;
 - General public, influencers and the local, national and EU media.

The monitoring indicators for the communication activity established at the level of the Annual Communication Plan for 2017 are:

- no. of internal meetings and trainings held (established target: at least one per year; reached target in 2016: 12);
- no. of MC meetings (established target: at least one per year; reached target in 2016: 2);
- no. of participations of the staff to interact and other inter-programme initiatives, focusing of experience exchange (established target: at least one per year; reached target in 2016: 3);
- no. of events for information and promotion of the programme - for applicants (established target: at least one joint partner search forum for each Open CfP and 4 Info days sessions, held for pair counties, in connection with each CfP; reached target in 2016: N.A);
- no. of participants to information events held for project applicants (established target: variable for each type of event; reached target in 2016: N.A);
- no. of calls for proposals launched (established target: variable, based on the decision of the programme management bodies; reached target in 2016: N.A);

- no. of targeted events held for project beneficiaries (established target: at least 4 training sessions held for pair counties in connection with each call for proposals/series of approved projects, including use of the eMS system; reached target in 2016: N.A);
- no. of communication actions with media impact – press conferences, press releases, interviews, advertisements via different media channels (established target: minimum 1 action with media impact/year; reached target in 2016: 2);
- no. of websites created (established target: 1 website; target reached in 2016: 1);
- no. of programme annual events (established target: 1 event/year; reached target in 2016: 1);
- no. of publications printed/to be printed (established target: 1000 leaflets; brochures and other publications based on need; reached target in 2016: 1000);
- no. of users who receive the electronic newsletter (established target: variable, depending on the e-mailing list – at least 500 persons/issue; reached target in 2016: 500);
- no. of communication seminars organized (established target: at least 4 training sessions held for pair counties in connection with each series of approved projects (may be organised together with LB/project beneficiaries seminars); reached target in 2016: N.A)

The data concerning the achievement of indicators from the Annual Communication Plan for 2017/the part mentioning the targets reached in 2016 represent values centralized until November 2016. The document was submitted to the MC and approved in November 2016, therefore these values do not include the activities organized after November 2016 - by the end of the year. The final values of communication indicators achieved in 2016 are those reported in the Annual Implementation Report 2016.

4. The Annual Implementation Report for 2015 and the Citizens' Summary

The Annual Implementation Report for 2015 was approved on 26.05.2016 and has as a **general objective** the presentation of Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme's implementation state in the year 2015.

The specific communication activities described in the document are:

- Elaboration of the Visual Identity Manual;
- Starting the elaboration of the Communication Strategy.

The specific communication tools mentioned in the AIR 2015 are:

- The Visual Identity Manual;
- The Communication Strategy.

The communication activity monitoring indicator presented in the AIR 2015 is "the number of information and promotion events of the programme (target reached in 2015: 0)".

The document has a section dedicated to the presentation of the results of information and publicity measures, but this was not completed due to the delays in approving the programme document (the programme being approved on 09.12.2015).

5. The Annual Implementation Report for 2016 and the Citizens' Summary

The Annual Implementation Report 2016 was approved on 16.06.2017 and has as a **general objective** the presentation of Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme's implementation state in the year 2016.

The specific communication activities described in the document are:

- elaboration and approval of the programme's Visual Identity Manual, during the first meeting of the Monitoring Committee, organized on 26.05.2016;
- elaboration and approval of the Communication Strategy, during the first meeting of the Monitoring Committee, organized on 26.05.2016;
- approval of the Communication Plan for 2017 at the second meeting of the Monitoring Committee, held on 24.11.2016;
- developing the programme's website (officially launched at the end of May 2016);
- creating the programme's Facebook page;
- providing information and organizing support group meetings for potential applicants. During the year 2016, 97 meetings were organized, attended by more than 300 potential applicants.
- using media channels;
- organizing the launching conference of the programme (on 10.11.2016), attended by 159 people;
- distribution of promotional products and newsletters.

The specific communication tools mentioned in the AIR for 2016 are:

- The Visual Identity Manual, together with materials and templates specifically designed for the use by the programme beneficiaries within the project communication and promotion activities;
- The programme Communication Strategy
- Annual Communication Plan for 2017;
- The programme's website ;
- The programme's Facebook page;
- Emails for providing information;
- News/press releases;
- Invitations to the programme launching conference;
- Publications and promotional products used within the programme launching conference: brochures, business cards for the staff of JS, pencils, rubbers, folders, roll-up, infographics, leaflet;

- Newsletters.

The target groups addressed through the communication activities are:

- potential applicants;
- key stakeholders.

The communication activity monitoring indicators presented in AIR 2016 are:

- no. of internal meetings and trainings held (established target: at least one per year; reached target in 2016: 12);
- no. of MC meetings (established target: at least one per year; reached target in 2016: 2);
- no. of participations of the staff to initiatives focusing of experience exchange (established target: at least one per year; reached target in 2016: 4);
- no. of events for information and promotion of the programme - for applicants (established target: at least one joint partner search forum for each Open CFP and 4 Info days sessions, held for pair counties, in connection with each CFP; reached target in 2016: N.A);
- no. of created websites (established target: 1 website; reached target in 2016: 1);
- no. of participants in information events held for project applicants (established target: variable for each type of event; reached target in 2016: N.A);
- no. of calls for proposals launched (established target: variable, based on the decision of the programme management bodies; reached target in 2016: 2);
- no. of targeted events for project beneficiaries (established target: at least 4 Lead beneficiary training sessions held for pair counties in connection with each CFP/ series of approved projects, including use of the eMS system; reached target in 2016: N.A);
- no. of communication actions with media impact – press conferences, press releases, interviews, advertisements via different media channels (established target: minimum 1 action with media impact/year; reached target in 2016: 4 - press releases published on the website of the programme;
- no. of websites created (established target: 1 website; target reached in 2016: 1);
- no. of programme annual events (established target: 1 event/year; reached target in 2016: 1);
- no. of publications printed/to be printed (established target: 1000 leaflets; brochures and other publications based on need; reached target in 2016: 1000);
- no. of users who receive the electronic newsletter (established target: variable, depending on the e-mailing list – at least 500 persons/issue; reached target in 2016: 700);
- no. of communication seminars organized (established target: at least 4 training sessions held for pair counties in connection with each series of approved projects (may be organised together with LB/project beneficiaries seminars); reached target in 2016: N.A)

The document has a section devoted to presenting the results of the information and publicity measures in which the values reached by the communication-specific indicators are presented at the

level of 2016. Besides, additional data on information and communication activities are presented in this section being also mentioned the tool created on the programme's website to identify potential project partners.

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|--|---|---|
| <p>1. The Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme is regulated in what concerns the communication activities, by documents that define the objectives proposed for the information and communication actions.</p> | <p>The existing documents are clear, have well-defined objectives and present concrete measures to be taken in the field of communication.</p> | <p>In general, it is recommended that the programme documents / reports, where possible, to present the results of the communication activities carried out with a greater level of detail.</p> |
| <p>2. The Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme documents present indicators for the communication activities, both in terms of proposed and achieved values.</p> | <p>The objectives established at the level of the programme documents are easy to monitor and are designed to allow the presentation of the implementation stage of the communication activities carried out by the programme's structures.</p> | |
| <p>3. Programme documents provide detailed information on the proposed and implemented communication activities.</p> | <p>From a qualitative point of view, the programme documents create the necessary framework for focusing the communication activities to the areas of interest for all the potential stakeholders.</p> | |
| <p>4. At the level of the programme documents, different target group categories are addressed by the communication activities carried out within the programme are</p> | <p>The differentiated presentation of the communication activities (including proposed and achieved indicators) per stakeholder categories allows the orientation of the information and</p> | |

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|-------------|---|-----------------|
| approached. | communication measures in the directions in which there is a need and interest. | |

3.1.2. The analysis of the events organized within the programme

According to the information from the programme's Communication Strategy, the specific communication activities are:

- the programme's launching event;
- annual information events;
- organizing internal meetings and training with the bodies involved in the implementation of the programme;
- partner search forums;
- organizing info-days, workshops and seminars;
- organizing trainings for beneficiaries;
- organizing communication seminars to improve the communication activity within the projects (as part of the beneficiaries' training).

Until the time of drafting this evaluation report (October 2017), the following types of information and communication events were organized within the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme (analysis based on the attendance lists transmitted by the programme authorities and on the information they transmitted during the implementation of the contract):

- the programme's Launching Conference, held on 10.11.2016;
- eMS training sessions (help desk) –25 sessions were organized, out of which 2 are presented below, based on the attendance lists provided;
- Information sessions (Info days)– 16 events, 4 events for each of the 4 launched calls, on held for pair counties;
- Project generation sessions, organized in 2016 and 2017 – 43 sessions, in Romania and Hungary;
- Partner Search Forum – 2 events, one for each open call for proposal, according to the Communication Strategy.

In addition to these events, the programme managing authorities have continuously carried out information activities for potential beneficiaries through help-desk, e-mail or telephone, as well as ad-hoc meetings with the potential beneficiaries of the programme, at the premises of the Joint Secretariat or at the premises of the Info Points in Hungary, whenever needed.

1. Details regarding the Launching Conference of the programme:

The launching conference of Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme was organized on 10.11.2016 in Oradea with 110 external participants (159 participants, including representatives of the programme's management bodies).

Attending the conference:

The participants to this conference come from the eight eligible counties of the programme (Arad, Bihor, Satu Mare, Timiș, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and Csongrád) and are representatives of the following potentially eligible entities within the programme:

- Local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions
- National Ministries and their specialized institutions, their regional offices
- Administrations of national / natural parks
- Institutions for environmental protection
- Higher education institutions
- Non-governmental organizations
- Microregional associations
- Euroregion management organizations
- Churches
- Chambers of commerce
- European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

The county with the most number of participants to the launching conference is Bihor County (52 representatives), which is also explained by the organization of the conference within this county, and the county with the fewest representatives is Csongrád County (1 representative).

The type of eligible beneficiary with most representatives at the launching conference is the category "local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions" with:

- 42 representatives of local public authorities from Romania;
- 16 representatives of local public authorities from Hungary.

The types of eligible beneficiaries with the lowest number of representatives are:

- Romania: Chambers of commerce – 1 representative, institutions for environmental protection – 1 representative, Euroregion management organizations – 1 representative;
- Hungary: European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) – 1 representative; Non-governmental organizations – 1 representative.

2. Details about eMS training sessions (help-desk)

The eMS training (help-desk) sessions aim to present the information system in detail and to familiarize the potential beneficiaries with its use in the application phase. Below, two such training

sessions, related to the use of the electronic eMS platform, are analyzed, based on the attendance lists provided, as follows:

- 1) Training on eMS platform, event organized on 02.03.2017 in Oradea. The topic of discussion was the training of the 6 participants from Bihor regarding the use of the eMS platform. The event was attended only by representatives of local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions - 6 representatives.
- 2) Training on eMS platform, event organized on 22.03.2017 in Oradea. The topic of discussion was the training of the 6 participants from Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg regarding the use of the eMS platform. All the 6 eligible beneficiaries participating in the event fall under the category of local and county authorities / administrations and their Institutions.

Besides the two trainings on the electronic platform analyzed above, there were also organized, when requested, both in Romania and Hungary, another 23 help desk sessions for eMS. In total, 125 people participated in the eMS training. In addition, in 2017, 2 eMS trainings were organized with the participation of the programme structures.

3. Details about the information events (Info days) and Partner Search Forums

Within the programme, information and communication sessions with potential beneficiaries of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme were organized as follows:

- 1) **2 Information sessions, for the 1st round of Calls for proposals Open and Restricted**, were organized on 06.02.2017 in Oradea, for Bihor and Satu Mare counties. The topic of discussion was the first Open Call for normal projects and the first Restricted Call for strategic projects, and 138 persons (excluding programme authorities) from Bihor and Satu-Mare counties, participated to these 2 events, belonging to the following categories of potential beneficiaries: local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions; national ministries; administrations of natural parks; environmental protection institutions; higher education institutions; non-governmental organizations; micro-regional associations, chambers of commerce, churches.

The county with the highest number of participants to these events is Bihor County (90-95 representatives).

The type of eligible beneficiaries with the highest number of representatives to the events belongs to the category "local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions - 50", and the types of eligible beneficiaries with the lowest number of representatives are: microregional associations - 1; churches - 5.

- 2) **2 Information sessions, for the 1st round of Calls for proposals (Open and Restricted)**, were organized on 07.02.2017 in Debrecen, Hungary, for Hajdú-Bihar and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties. The topic of the discussion was the first Open Call, for normal projects, and the first

Restricted Call, for strategic projects, and 65 persons (excluding programme authorities) from Hajdú-Bihar, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, and Bihor counties, participated to these events, belonging to the following categories of potential beneficiaries: local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions; national ministries; administrations of natural parks; environmental protection institutions; higher education institutions; non-governmental organizations; libraries.

The county with the highest number of participants to these events is Hajdú-Bihar (30 representatives).

The type of eligible beneficiaries with the highest number of representatives to the events belongs to the category local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions – 20, non-governmental organizations - 15, and the types of eligible beneficiaries with the lowest number of representatives are: environmental protection institutions – 1.

- 3) **2 Information sessions, for the 1st round of Calls for proposals (Open and Restricted)**, were organized on 08.02.2017 in Szeged, Hungary, for Csongrád and Békés counties. The topic of the discussion was the first Open Call for normal projects and the first Restricted Call for strategic projects, and 73 persons (excluding programme authorities) from Csongrád, Békés, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Bihor counties, participated to these events, belonging to the following categories of potential beneficiaries : local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions; national ministries; administrations of natural parks; environmental protection institutions; higher education institutions; non-governmental organizations; European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

The county with the highest number of participants to these events is Csongrád County (35-40 representatives) and the county with the lowest number of representatives was Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg (1 representative).

The type of eligible beneficiaries with the highest number of representatives to the events belongs to the category local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions – 20-25 (Hungary), and the types of eligible beneficiaries with the lowest number of representatives are: European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) - 2; administrations of natural parks - 1; environmental protection institutions - 1.

- 4) **2 Information sessions, for the 1st round of Call for proposals (Open and Restricted)**, were organized on 09.02.2017 in Arad, for Arad and Timiș counties. The topic of the discussion was the first Open Call for normal projects and the first Restricted Call for strategic projects, and 94 persons (excluding programme authorities) from Arad, Bihor and Timiș counties, participated to these events, belonging to the following categories of potential beneficiaries : local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions; national ministries and their institutions; higher education institutions; non-governmental organizations; museums, churches, chambers of commerce.

The county with the highest number of participants to these events is Arad County (40 representatives) and the county with the lowest number of representatives is Bihor County.

The type of eligible beneficiaries with the highest number of representatives to the events belongs to the category local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions – 35-40, and the types of eligible beneficiaries with the lowest number of representatives are: churches - 1; museums - 1; chambers of commerce - 4.

- 5) **1 Partner Search Forum was organized on 10.02.2017 in Timișoara**, for the potential beneficiaries from the entire eligible area of the programme. The topic of the discussion was the first Open Call for normal projects, and 85 persons (excluding programme authorities) from Timiș, Arad, Bihor, Békés, Satu-Mare, Csongrád counties, participated to this event, belonging to the following categories of potential beneficiaries: local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions; national ministries, their specialized institutions and their regional offices; environmental protection institutions, higher education institutions; non-governmental organizations; micro regional associations.

The county with the highest number of participants to this event is Timiș County (25 representatives) and the county with the lowest number of representatives is Csongrád County (2 representatives).

The type of eligible beneficiaries with the highest number of representatives to this event belongs to the category local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions – 20, and the types of eligible beneficiaries with the lowest number of representatives are: micro regional associations - 2; higher education institutions - 4, environmental protection institutions - 4.

- 6) **2 Information sessions, for the 2nd round of Calls for proposals (Open and Restricted)**, organized on 19.06.2017 in Timișoara, for Timiș and Arad counties. The topic of the discussion was the second Open Call for normal projects and the second Restricted Call for strategic projects, and 65 persons (excluding programme authorities) from Timiș, Arad, Csongrád counties and Bucharest, participated to these event, belonging to the following categories of potential beneficiaries: local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions; national ministries, their specialized institutions and their regional offices; higher education institutions; non-governmental organizations; chambers of commerce.

The county with the highest number of participants to the events is Timiș County (25-30 representatives) and the county with the lowest number of representatives is Csongrád County.

The types of eligible beneficiaries with the highest number of representatives to the events belong to the categories local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions – 18, educational institutions (pre-university) - 15 and the types of eligible beneficiaries with the lowest number of representatives are: chambers of commerce – 1, higher education institutions – 4.

- 7) **2 Information sessions for the 2nd round of Calls for proposals (Open and Restricted)**, organized on 20.06.2017 in Satu Mare, for Satu Mare and Bihor counties. The topic of the

discussion was the second Open Call for normal projects and the second Restricted Call for strategic projects, and 67 persons (excluding programme authorities) from Satu-Mare, Arad, Bihor, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties, participated to the events, belonging to the following categories of potential beneficiaries: local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions; national ministries, their specialized institutions and their regional offices; education institutions; non-governmental organizations; micro-regional associations, museums.

The county with the highest number of participants to these events is Satu Mare (47 representatives) and the county with the lowest number of representatives is Arad (1 representative)

The types of eligible beneficiaries with the highest number of representatives to the events belong to the categories local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions – 20, educational institutions (high schools, schools) – 16 (Romania) and the types of eligible beneficiaries with the lowest number of representatives are: micro-regional associations - 1 and museums - 1.

- 8) **2 Information sessions, for the 2nd round of Calls for proposals (Open and Restricted)**, organized on 21.06.2017 in Nyíregyháza, Hungary, for Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Hajdú-Bihar counties. The topic of the discussion was the second Open Call for normal projects and the second Restricted Call for strategic projects, and 45 persons (excluding programme authorities) from Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Bihor counties, participated to the events, belonging to the following categories of potential beneficiaries: local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions; national ministries, their specialized institutions and their regional offices; environmental protection institutions, higher education institutions; non-governmental organizations.

The county with the highest number of participants to the events is Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg (30 representatives) and the county with the lowest number of representatives is Hajdú-Bihar (8 representatives).

The types of eligible beneficiaries with the highest number of representatives to these events belong to the categories local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions; non-governmental organizations, and the types of eligible beneficiaries with the lowest number of representatives are: EGTC – 1, higher education institutions - 1, environmental protection institutions - 1.

- 9) **2 Information sessions, for the launched call for proposal for the 2nd round of Calls for proposals (Open and Restricted)**, organized on 22.06.2017 in Békéscsaba, Hungary, for Békés and Csongrád counties. The topic of the discussion was the second Open Call for normal projects and the second Restricted Call for strategic projects and 39 persons (excluding programme authorities) from Csongrád, Békés, Bihor, Arad counties, participated to these events, belonging to the following categories of potential beneficiaries: local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions; national ministries, their

specialized institutions and their regional offices; environmental protection institutions, higher education institutions; non-governmental organizations, chambers of commerce.

The county with the highest number of participants to the events is Békés (13 representatives) and the counties with the lowest number of representatives are Bihor and Arad.

The type of eligible beneficiaries with the highest number of representatives to these events belongs to the category local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions – 12 and the types of eligible beneficiaries with the lowest number of representatives are: institutions for the protection of natural parks - 1, chambers of commerce - 1, higher education institutions - 2.

10) **1 Partner Search Forum** was organized on 23.06.2017 in Szeged, Hungary, for potential beneficiaries from the entire area of the programme, with 58 participants (excluding the programme authorities) in the counties of Csongrád, Békés, Timiș and Arad, belonging to the following categories of potential beneficiaries: local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions; national ministries; education and higher education institutions; Non-governmental organizations.

The county with the most participants in this event is Timiș County (20 representatives), and the least represented are the counties Békés -1 and Arad - 4. The type of eligible beneficiaries with the most representatives in this event is the category higher education institutions - 10, and the types of eligible beneficiaries with the least number of representatives are: chambers of commerce - 2 and NGOs - 5.

Key Findings on the Information Sessions:

The 18 major events organized for the launched calls (16 Info days sessions and 2 Partner Search Forums) can be characterized by the following elements:

- The discussions within these events focused on the following topics:
 - Information on the first Open Call for normal projects and the first Restricted Call for strategic projects;
 - Information on the second Open Call for normal projects and the second Restricted Call for strategic projects;
 - Presentation of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme
- The information sessions were organized on the same topics both in Romania and Hungary.
- The period for organizing these events was mainly focused on two important moments (February 2017 and June 2017), represented by the launch of the two rounds of Calls for proposals.
- 9 events were organised in the eligible counties of Romania and 9 events in Hungary.

- The total number of participants to these information sessions is 729 people (except for programme authorities' representatives): 280 participants to events organized in Hungary and 449 participants in Romania.
- From the point of view of the coverage of the counties in the eligible area of the programme, it is noted that the highest level of participation is recorded in the county where the information events are held (valid for Romania and for Hungary) and it cannot be concluded that certain counties have a higher participation than others.
- An analysis of the categories of potential eligible beneficiaries participating to events shows that the local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions are the most recurrent categories of beneficiaries, with the highest representation in all the information sessions organized within the programme, along with other categories such as non-governmental organizations or pre-university education institutions. On the opposite side, among the categories that did not register a very high number of participants to the events, are: natural park administrations, environmental protection institutions, churches, museums, higher education institutions, chambers of commerce, etc. This aspect is fully justified and natural due to the specificity of the interventions financed through the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme.

4. Details about generation activities/support for the potential beneficiaries:

Within the programme, 43 project generation sessions with potential beneficiaries were organized, both in Romania and in Hungary, as follows:

- 9 sessions organized in 2016 in Hungary, between 24th of October – 28th of October with the participation of 122 persons;
- 26 sessions organized in 2017 in Romania, between 20th of March – 03rd of April, with the participation of 242 persons;
- 4 sessions organized in 2017 in Hungary, between 08th of August – 18th of August, with the participation of 62 persons;
- 4 sessions organized in 2017 in Romania, between 07th of August – 18th of August, attended by 110 persons;
- The categories of potential eligible beneficiaries who attended the project generation sessions analyzed generally covered all the eligible types, with a focus on the following categories:
 - Local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions - participants in 39 project generation sessions;
 - Non-governmental organizations - participants in 19 project generation sessions;
 - Educational institutions - participants in 17 project generation sessions;
 - Chambers of commerce - participants in 5 project generation sessions;
 - Churches - participants in 2 project generation sessions;

- Micro-regional associations - participants in 4 project generation sessions;
- Museums, libraries, theaters - participants in 5 project generation sessions.

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|--|--|---|
| <p>1. The information sessions were organized on the same topics both in Romania and Hungary.</p> | <p>Information and communication events within the programme were organized in a non-discriminatory manner, addressing the same topics of discussion and using the same presentations for potential beneficiaries in the two eligible countries.</p> | <p>The information and communication activities organized under the programme should continue to be held in a permanent way and the programme authorities should continue to provide individual answers to certain requests from the potential beneficiaries.</p> |
| <p>2. The organizing period of these events was mainly focused around two important moments (February 2017 and June 2017), represented by the launch of the two calls for projects.</p> | <p>The information sessions were organized at key moments where the transmission of information to potential beneficiaries of the programme was of high interest and relevance. Thus, it is noted that the programme authorities ensure the process of informing the potential beneficiaries in a targeted way and taking into account the needs of the potential beneficiaries.</p> | |
| <p>3. There were organized both information and communication events with potential beneficiaries of the programme focused around a specific theme (launch of project calls), as well as project generation sessions or eMS trainings.</p> | <p>The information and communication within the programme has been carried out both at specific moments, during the planned events, as well as in ad-hoc or continuously, whenever it was needed or requested by the potential beneficiaries (individual meetings with them, support provided through</p> | |

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|--|---|-----------------|
| | online channels or by phone). | |
| <p>4. The information and communication events were organized in all the counties in the eligible area of the programme, ensuring the participation of all the categories of potential eligible beneficiaries.</p> | <p>From the perspective of the coverage of the counties in the eligible area of the programme, it is observed that there is a tendency for the highest level of participation in the county where the information events are held (valid both for Romania and for Hungary), without being able to conclude that some counties have a higher participation than others.</p> | |
| <p>5. The Info Points in Hungary have been actively involved in the dissemination and communication of the programme information.</p> | <p>The Info Points have an important role in the implementation of the communication activities in the eligible area of the programme in Hungary. The Info Points are established within each county and operate in three counties starting with spring of 2017, and the Info Point in Debrecen is functioning from September 2017. The Info Points were involved, under the coordination of JS, in organizing events on the Hungarian side of the border in the context of 2nd round of Calls for proposal in organizing the annual event dedicated to the European Cooperation Day 2017 and in providing information to the potential beneficiaries in</p> | |

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|---|--|-----------------|
| | Hungary, when requested. | |
| 6. An analysis conducted at the level of potential eligible beneficiaries participating in events shows that the local/county authorities/administrations and their institutions are the most recurrent categories of beneficiaries with the highest representation in all the information sessions organized under the programme. | The potential beneficiaries represented by the public authorities showed the highest level of interest for formal communication represented by the organization of official information and communication events within the programme. | |

3.1.3. The analysis of information and communication materials

In order to disseminate the information to the target groups aimed by the Communication Strategy of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme, three public procurements were carried out by the moment of this evaluation (September 2017), aiming to "provide information and promotion products, services of graphic design, typography and to draft / write promotional materials.

The contracts were awarded in October 2016, June 2017, August 2017, with a maximum implementation period of 12 months. Through the contracts concluded so far, the following information and promotion materials have been or will be provided:

| Nr. crt. | Item | Quantity |
|----------|--|----------|
| 1. | Roll-up banner, Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme | 7 |
| 2. | Flyer | 4000 |
| 3. | Personalized greeting cards + envelopes | 200 |
| 4. | Cardboard folders | 4000 |
| 5. | Infographics | 4000 |
| 6. | A1 posters | 100 |

| Nr. crt. | Item | Quantity |
|----------|--|----------|
| 7. | Agendas | 300 |
| 8. | Business cards | 2400 |
| 9. | Personalized pens | 4000 |
| 10. | Bloc Notes with personalized sheets | 1000 |
| 11. | Memory sticks with special design | 200 |
| 12. | Customized white erasers | 500 |
| 13. | Customized wooden pencils | 500 |
| 14. | Stickers (90 mm x 50 mm) | 750 |
| 15. | Stickers (100 mm x 100 mm) | 750 |
| 16. | Customized trolleys | 120 |
| 17. | Customized map of the programme area | 50 |
| 18. | Suit travel bag (customized) | 120 |
| 19. | External battery (customized) | 110 |
| 20. | Portable External HDD 500 GB (customized) | 110 |
| 21. | Picnic basket (customized) | 110 |
| 22. | Fitness Bracelet / Smart Watch (customized) | 120 |
| 23. | Wireless stereo headset / Bluetooth (customized) | 100 |
| 24. | Portable Bluetooth Speakerphone (customized) | 120 |
| 25. | 4GB memory card in the shape of a key (customized) | 500 |
| 26. | Text marker in 4 colors (customized) | 1000 |
| 27. | Paper bags (customized) | 500 |
| 28. | Cotton textile bags (customized) | 500 |
| 29. | Spiral notebook (customized) | 1000 |
| 30. | Elegant pen set (customized) | 120 |
| 31. | Wall planner 2018 in English (customized) | 100 |
| 32. | Strap for the badge (customized) | 1000 |
| 33. | Horizontal badge with clips (customized) | 1000 |
| 34. | Balloons (customized) | 300 |

In addition to the materials listed in the previous table, produced with the purpose of being disseminated to the target group, the information and promotion was also achieved through online tools such as Newsletters, Newsflashes, email invitations to various organized events, the website of the programme and of the programme authorities, the Facebook page of the programme. Given their importance, as main instruments used to inform and interact with the potential beneficiaries of the programme, the last tools (the website and the Facebook page of the programme), will be further analyzed in a dedicated chapter, namely 3.1.4.

Within this chapter, the following information and promotion materials and tools were analyzed, as they are considered to be essential for ensuring an appropriate level of dissemination of the information among the target group covered by the Communication Strategy:

- Poster
- Flyer
- Infographics
- Stickers
- Newsletter
- Online press releases
- Invitations to the organized events
- Agendas of the organized events

The above mentioned instruments cover all the categories of eligible beneficiaries under the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme, namely:

- Local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions
- National Ministries and their specialized institutions, their regional offices
- Administrations of national / natural parks
- Institutions for environmental protection
- Higher education institutions
- Non-governmental organizations
- Micro-regional associations
- Euroregion management organizations
- Museums, libraries, theaters
- Churches
- Offices of cultural heritage
- Chambers of commerce
- European Groups of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)
- National organizations responsible for the development of transport infrastructure

Each material / tool mentioned above was analyzed on the basis of five criteria, namely:

- 1) Graphics and visual elements: Are the colors of the EU and the colors of the programme logo used? Do the visual elements comply with the compulsory visual identity measures according to the VIM?
- 2) Clarity of information formulation: The expressions used are concise and to the point? Is the language used grammatically correct?
- 3) Layout of the information / structure of the instrument: Is the information presented in a logical order? Is there a continuity of the text on the page (for example, if the text is arranged on columns, can the column where the idea continues be easily identified)?
- 4) Understanding the message transmitted to the reader: Does the language used correlate with the target group category to which the analyzed tool is addressed?

- 5) The usefulness of the presented information from the perspective of the desired results: Are the relevant information presented to the target group? Are the sources indicated where additional information can be obtained by those interested?

Each criterion was rated from 1 to 5 (where 1 = criterion not fulfilled and 5 = totally fulfilled criterion), the final score being calculated as the arithmetic average of the scores obtained at each applicable criterion. The maximum score is 5.

The evaluation results are presented below for each analyzed material / instrument

1) Poster

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|---|---------------|--|
| 1 | Graphics and visual elements | 5 | <p>In elaborating the poster, the colors of the EU and the logo of the Programme (EU - blue and yellow, programme logo - blue, green, red and yellow) have been respected.</p> <p>It also contains the 4 visual elements related to materials / documents according to VIM, respectively:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The programme logo; 2. The Logos of the Government of Romania and Hungary; 3. The slogan "Partnership for a Better Future"; 4. Reference to the programme's Webpage (www.interreg-rohu.eu); <p>The poster does not include the specification that the communication materials do not necessarily reflect the EU's official position: The content of this... does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Union, as required by the VIM. However, this element is not mandatory due to the fact that the poster contains only images and the slogan of the programme and thus does not provide a personal or subjective opinion of the publisher.</p> |
| 2 | Clarity of formulation | - | For this category of communication tools, it is not possible to analyze the clarity of the formulation, as posters are composed only of images and the slogan of the programme. |
| 3 | Layout of the information / structure of the instrument | - | For this category of communication tools, it is not possible to analyze the layout of the information / structure of the instrument, as posters are composed only of images and the slogan of the programme. |

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|---|---------------|--|
| 4 | Understanding the message transmitted to the reader | - | For this category of communication tools, it is not possible to analyze the understanding of the message sent to the reader, as posters are composed only of images and the slogan of the programme. |
| 5 | The usefulness of the presented information from the perspective of the desired results | 5 | The poster indicates the sources where additional information can be obtained by those interested, by having included a link to the programme web page. |

Total score awarded: 5 points - maximum score

2) Flyer

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|------------------------------|---------------|--|
| 1 | Graphics and visual elements | 5 | <p>The material was produced respecting the colors of the EU and the logo of the programme (EU – blue and yellow, the logo of the programme - blue, green, red, yellow on a white background).</p> <p>The flyer complies with the requirements specified in the VIM and it includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The programme logo; 2. The Logos of the Government of Romania and Hungary; 3. The slogan "Partnership for a Better Future"; 4. Reference to the programme's website (www.interreg-rohu.eu); <p>The flyer does not include the fact that the document does not necessarily reflect the official position of the EU: The content of this document does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Union, as required by the VIM. However, this</p> |

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|---|---------------|--|
| | | | <p>element is not mandatory taking into consideration the fact that the flyer has the exclusive role of presenting the information contained in the programme documents without providing a personal or subjective opinion of the publisher.</p> <p>The graphics used for the cover of the flyer are attractive and representative for the programme.</p> <p>The text for the subtitles in the flyer is white on a colored background.</p> |
| 2 | Clarity of formulation | 5 | The information presented is clearly formulated, using short sentences and punctual formulations. The information is available in three languages: English, Romanian, Hungarian and it is structured in this order. |
| 3 | Layout of the information / structure of the instrument | 4 | The information presented within the flyer is structured in three parts according to the used language. Switching to a section in another language is done after all the information that was intended to be included in the flyer is completed (no translation of the different sections of the flyer is performed in parallel). The font size used is relatively small because the amount of information in the flyer is high: the presentation of all programme priorities along with specific objectives, result indicators, output indicators, budget, as well as the presentation of the elements that create a quality project, the selection conditions for financing , etc. |
| 4 | Understanding the message transmitted to the reader | 3 | The language used is a relatively technical one and especially in relation to the result and output indicators defined in the programme (a beneficiary who has not implemented projects so far would not understand the difference between these types of indicators or how these targets are achieved). |
| 5 | The usefulness of the presented information from the | 3 | By its nature, the flyer is intended to provide brief information on a particular theme in order to stimulate the interest of the reader in seeking further information on the subject. The leaflet for presenting the Interreg V-A Programme contains a series of useful information for understanding the funded interventions that do not directly stimulate the interest of readers, given the |

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|------------------------------------|---------------|---|
| | perspective of the desired results | | use of a relatively technical language (results and output indicators). Also, the relatively abstract information presented at the end of the leaflet on the significance of a quality project could rather be a topic of discussion in communication events and not an information of interest to a reader who is informed for the first time about the programme's initiatives. |

Total score awarded: 4 points

3) Infographics

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|------------------------------|---------------|--|
| 1 | Graphics and visual elements | 5 | <p>In elaborating the material, the colors of the EU and the logo of the programme (EU – blue and yellow, the programme logo in blue, green, red yellow on a white background) are respected.</p> <p>The infographics have been elaborated taking into consideration the requirements specified in the VIM, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The programme logo; 2. The slogan „Partnership for a Better Future”; 3. Reference to the programme’s website (www.interreg-rohu.eu); <p>The infographics do not include the fact that the document does not necessarily reflect the official position of the EU: The content of this document does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Union, as required by the VIM. However, this element is not mandatory due to the fact that the infographics have the exclusive role of presenting the information contained in the programme documents without providing a personal or subjective opinion of the publisher. The infographics do not include the logos of the Romanian and Hungarian governments, but these materials are provided on</p> |

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|---|---------------|--|
| | | | files including these logos (ie, the government's logos). |
| 2 | Clarity of formulation | 5 | The material is concise, easy to follow, and the message contains all the information about the various investment priorities analyzed. |
| 3 | Layout of the information / structure of the instrument | 5 | The material is well structured, the information is logically formulated, and there is continuity between the expressed ideas. The link between the components of the infographic is presented in an understandable visual form. |
| 4 | Understanding the message transmitted to the reader | 5 | The language used in elaborating the infographics is correlated with the target group category, including useful and accessible information to all the participants. |
| 5 | The usefulness of the presented information from the perspective of the desired results | 5 | The infographics indicate where sources can be obtained from the one interested by referring to the programme web page. |

Total score awarded: 5 points – maximum score

4) Stickers

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|------------------------------|---------------|---|
| 1 | Graphics and visual elements | 5 | In elaborating the sticker, the colors of the EU and the logo of the programme (blue, yellow, red, and green) were respected. Also, the sticker contains the 4 visual identity elements related to materials / documents according to VIM, respectively: 1. The programme logo; |

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|---|---------------|---|
| | | | <p>2. The logos of the Government of Romania and Hungary; 3. The slogan "Partnership for a Better Future"; 4. Reference to the programme's website (www.interreg-rohu.eu);</p> <p>The stickers do not include the fact that the document does not necessarily reflect the official position of the EU: The content of this document does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Union, as required by the VIM. However, this element is not mandatory, since the stickers are composed only of images and the slogan of the programme.</p> |
| 2 | Clarity of formulation | - | For this communication tool, it is not possible to analyze the clarity of the formulation, as the sticker is composed only of images and the slogan of the programme. |
| 3 | Layout of the information / structure of the instrument | - | For this communication tool, it is not possible to analyze the information / structure of the instrument, since the sticker is composed only of images and the slogan of the programme. |
| 4 | Understanding the message transmitted to the reader | - | For this communication tool, it is not possible to analyze the understanding of the message sent to the reader, since the sticker is composed only of images and the slogan of the programme. |
| 5 | The usefulness of the presented information from the perspective of the desired results | 5 | The sticker indicates the sources where additional information can be obtained, by including a link to the programme web page. |

Total score awarded: 5 points - maximum score

5) Newsletter

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|---|---------------|--|
| 1 | Graphics and visual elements | 5 | <p>The newsletter uses the colors of the logos (EU-blue and yellow, and Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme - blue, yellow, red and green).</p> <p>In what concerns the visual identity measures of the programme, the VIM does not specify requirements for the newsletter. However, the newsletter uses the official logos as visual identity elements for promotional materials.</p> |
| 2 | Clarity of formulation | 5 | The newsletter uses concise, direct and grammatically correct expressions. |
| 3 | Layout of the information / structure of the instrument | 5 | The messages transmitted through the newsletter use a logical set of information and a continuity of the text. As a structure, most announcements consist of a brief presentation of the context in which the announcement is made and it is presented as concise as possible. |
| 4 | Understanding the message transmitted to the reader | 5 | The language used is accessible and appropriate to the target group, with particular reference to the administrative and organizational details of the programme (eg: place/period for the Info, deadline for submission of projects, etc.). |
| 5 | The usefulness of the presented information from the perspective of the desired results | 5 | The messages communicated through the newsletter have a special utility for the target group, so that all the stakeholders in the programme can be made aware of the activities and the current status of the programme. |

Total score awarded: 5 points - maximum score

6) Online press releases

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|---|---------------|--|
| 1 | Graphics and visual elements | 5 | <p>In elaborating the online press release, the colors of the EU and the logo of the Programme have been respected.</p> <p>It complies with the visual identity measures according to the VIM, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The programme logo; 2. The logos of the Government of Romania and Hungary; 3. The slogan "Partnership for a Better Future"; 4. Reference to the programme's website (www.interreg-rohu.eu); <p>The online press releases do not include the fact that the document does not necessarily reflect the EU's official position: The content of this document does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Union, as required by the VIM. This is not a mandatory requirement, given that these press releases have the exclusive role of presenting the information contained in the programme documents without providing a personal or subjective opinion of the publisher.</p> |
| 2 | Clarity of formulation | 5 | The press release summarizes the information using a correct and coherent language. |
| 3 | Layout of the information / structure of the instrument | 5 | The message follows the logical alignment of the information and the layout in the page is correct. |
| 4 | Understanding the message transmitted to the reader | 5 | The language used in elaborating the announcement is common, being accessible to all the categories of public. |

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|---|---------------|---|
| 5 | The usefulness of the presented information from the perspective of the desired results | 5 | The announcement indicates the sources where additional information can be obtained by referring to the programme web page. |

Total score awarded: 5 points - maximum score

7) Invitations to the organized events

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|------------------------------|---------------|---|
| 1 | Graphics and visual elements | 5 | <p>The elaboration of the invitation respects the colors of the EU and those of the programme logo.</p> <p>The invitation also contains the 4 visual identity elements related to materials / documents according to the VIM, respectively:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The programme Logo; 2) The logos of the Government of Romania and Hungary; 3) The slogan "Partnership for a Better Future"; 4) Reference to the programme's website (www.interreg-rohu.eu). |
| 2 | Clarity of formulation | 4 | <p>The invitations briefly present the information about the event, using a coherent and structured language. In some cases (for example, invitations to Info days), it is necessary to revise the text in terms of spelling and expression: mistakes in the use of diacritics for the text in Romanian (eg: "Va aşteptăm cu drag") and the lack of some words ("...vă rugăm să <u>(vă)</u> înregistrați complet<u>ând</u>...")</p> |

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|---|---------------|--|
| 3 | Layout of the information / structure of the instrument | 5 | The text of the invitation is fluent and logical. The information is clearly structured. |
| 4 | Understanding the message transmitted to the reader | 5 | The language used in editing the invitations is a common one and is accessible to all the categories of participants targeted by the invitation. |
| 5 | The usefulness of the presented information from the perspective of the desired results | 5 | <p>The invitation summarizes all the relevant and useful information for the target group, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the context of the event; • the coordinates of the event; • the purpose of the event; • the target group; • how to confirm the participation; <p>In the bottom right corner of the page, the programme web page is presented as a source of additional information.</p> |

Total awarded score: 4.8 points

8) Agendas of the organized events

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|------------------------------|---------------|--|
| 1 | Graphics and visual elements | 5 | <p>For the elaboration of the event agendas, the use of EU-specific colors and the programme logo have been considered. Also, the agendas contain the 4 visual identity elements related to materials / documents according to VIM, respectively:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The programme logo; 2) The logos of the Government of Romania and Hungary; 3) The slogan "Partnership for a Better Future"; |

| Nr. crt. | Criterion | Score awarded | Justification of the score |
|----------|---|---------------|--|
| | | | <p>4) Reference to the programme's Website (www.interreg-rohu.eu);</p> <p>The agendas do not include the fact that the document does not necessarily reflect the official position of the EU: The content of this document does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Union, as required by the VIM. However, this is not a mandatory requirement, given that the agenda has the exclusive role of presenting the topics discussed in an event, without providing a personal or subjective opinion of the publisher.</p> |
| 2 | Clarity of formulation | 5 | Agendas are written using concise, grammatically correct and objective formulations. |
| 3 | Layout of the information / structure of the instrument | 5 | Being created precisely to present the time planning and the organization of the events, the agendas are drafted by following a logical set of information. The agendas present the time and location of the events, aspects related to the organization of the events (spoken language), their successive phases and the related time intervals, being easy to understand. |
| 4 | Understanding the message transmitted to the reader | 5 | The language used in drafting the agendas is a common one and is accessible to all the categories of participants. |
| 5 | The usefulness of the presented information from the perspective of the desired results | 5 | <p>The agendas attached to the event invitations include useful and relevant information for the target group, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time and the location of the events; • Aspects related to the organization of the events (spoken language); • Successive stages of the event and related time intervals; <p>In the bottom right corner of the page, the programme web page is presented as a source of additional information.</p> |

Total score awarded: 5 points - maximum score

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|---|---|--|
| <p>1. Maximum score was given for the following tools used in the communication activities, considering the 5 criteria analyzed (Graphics and visual elements, Clarity of the formulation, Layout of the information / structure of the instrument, Facilitation of the message sent to the reader, Utility of the information presented in terms of the desired results achieved): poster; infographics; stickers; newsletter; online press releases; agendas of the organized events.</p> | <p>The posters, infographics, stickers, newsletters, online press releases, event agendas used within the programme comply with the MIV's visual identity rules and are elaborated and structured in an optimal way, and are relevant and present interest to the target audience.</p> | <p>Not applicable.</p> |
| <p>2. The final score awarded after the evaluation of the leaflet is 4 (the maximum being 5), this tool being underscored at the criteria: Layout of the information / structure of the instrument; The understanding of the message sent to the reader; The usefulness of the information presented in terms of the desired results achieved.</p> | <p>The flyer is a useful tool for promoting the types of investments/ projects supported through the programme, which has as its target group, through its nature, the general public. The information contained in the flyer is relevant but far too detailed, it is necessary to sort it so that it is easier for the reader to understand the message.</p> | <p>It is recommended to simplify the information presented in the leaflet by removing the following types of information that is not widely known / understood by the general public: the result and output indicators specific to each Investment Priority; the section "What does a quality project mean?"</p> <p>Increase the font size used for the rest of the text in the flyer.</p> |
| <p>3. The final score awarded after the evaluation of the invitations to the organized events is 4,8 (the</p> | <p>The invitations to participate in the events are organized in an appropriate manner in terms of the structure and type of</p> | <p>Carrying out an additional verification of the document text before transmitting it to the invited participants, in</p> |

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|--|---|---|
| <p>maximum being 5), this tool being underscored at the criterion: Clarity of the formulation.</p> | <p>information transmitted. Some minor spelling errors have been identified in the text of the documents.</p> | <p>terms of spoken language and spelling.</p> |

3.1.4. The analysis of the online instruments

Within the communication and information activities carried out for the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme, the information was also disseminated online, mainly through the website and the Facebook account of the programme. The spectrum of information was comprehensive (information related to the organized events, launched calls for proposal, programme implementation documents, etc.), the online communication having the advantage of a high level of accessibility for the interested public and a relatively low cost-benefit report considering the size of the target group that can consult that information.

The websites through which the information on the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme was disseminated are:

- the official website of Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme managed by the JS;
- the Managing Authority website, managed by MRDPAEF

The information is also disseminated online through the Facebook account of the programme available at the webpage <https://www.facebook.com/InterregRomaniaHungary>, managed by the JS.

Each online tool has been analyzed from the perspective of the following elements:

- the language used to present the information
- the structure and way of presenting the information
- the information available on the main page
- the information related to the available information and communication activities

The information related to the Programme is also found on a number of other websites¹, but it is important for the public to know and access the official website of the programme in order to guarantee a complete and correct information.

1. The official website of Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme²

The language of the home page is English, the information being also available in Romanian and Hungarian. The main menu consists of 8 sections. The content of the pages is visible by using a drag bar (sidebar to explore the page content). When accessing all the pages (except the home page), the column on the right shows the calendar where the events organized within the programme can be posted. The search for information field on the website using keywords is located in the bottom of

¹ <http://www.brecoradea.ro/index.php/programa/interreg-v-a-romania-ungaria>
<http://2014.huro-cbc.eu/en/>

² The interim page of the programme represents a distinct section of the BRECO website. Also, a first version of the potential partner identification platform functions at the BRECO website level; a new platform for identifying potential partners was created on the official website of the programme.

the page. The programme logo is placed in the top left corner of every open page and contains the default link to the home page. The link to the Facebook account of the programme is made through a link in the bottom of each page.

The website is accessible to people with visual disabilities through a button located on the right side of the page - it is possible to change the size, color and background of the used font to open the information. The information on the programme and communication activities is available directly from the start page.

On the home page, when the website is accessed, a slider with full-screen pictures is installed, containing brief information on the latest news in the programme and the link where more information can be found. Below the slider there are links to programme information, eligible grant types, and the FAQ section. Under these links there is the online tool for identifying potential partners and the link to access the mode. In the footer of the page there are found the following tools / links:

- subscription to the newsletter
- the Facebook page of the programme
- the information search field on the website
- useful links
- the link to eMS

The information on the communication and information activities carried out under the programme is contained in the following sections of the website:

- Documents / Project Documents / Communication and Visual Identity (includes the visual identity elements of the programme, Visual Identity Manual, and the layout of advertising materials developed so far (posters, brochures, stickers, etc.))
- News & Events / News & Events of the programme
- News & Events / Newsletter
- Media
- Gallery

General evaluation

The information on the implementation of the programme is presented in a complete and correct manner. At the moment of performing the current evaluation, the programme's website records approximately 93,000 views.

From the point of view of the graphics used, the website is very attractive.

In some sections of the website, complete information is not available in all the languages:

- Documents - EU legislation: the first document on State aid guidelines in Romanian and Hungarian languages is missing

- Documents - eMS documents: the last document from the PPT presentations in Romanian and Hungarian languages is missing
- Media: In English and Hungarian, fewer consultation documents are available compared to the Romanian version of the page

The FAQ section is very well structured and has a high level of visibility (link directly from the main page of the website).

The visibility of the online recording tool for participation in events is limited, requiring direct reference to the submenu of the main menu.

The partner search module and the project idea module are individualized at the level of the main menu of the page as subsections of the main "Projects" section, thus being visible and easily accessible to the interested public. The calendar for the events does not present in real time the following events / important dates and does not contain information about the events that have taken place so far. The News and Events section is constantly updated, but it does not contain information about the events to be held, the estimated time, the location and the themes of the events.

2. The Website of the Managing Authority

The language of the home page is Romanian, the information being available only in this language. There is no main navigation menu on the programme's website. The content of the page is visible through the combined use of two drag bars (sidebar for exploring page content). Under each of the main chapters, the relevant information is listed. All the information on the programme, available from 2015, is found on the main page (no subsections - for example, to get information on public consultation it is necessary to go through all of the previous sections).

The website is accessible to people with visual disabilities - it is possible to change the font size used for obtaining the information. Starting from the main URL (www.mdrap.ro), the programme information and communication activities are accessible through three additional clicks. The programme page is structured into several main sections:

- News
- Information about the programme
- Information sources
- News and events
- Strategic documents
- Public consultation
- Legislation

The information on the communication and information activities carried out within the programme is contained in the following sections on the main page:

- News
- News and events
- Public consultation

General evaluation

The information related to the programme is comprehensive and the level of detail and transparency is appropriate. However, the information is difficult to read because of the following factors:

- two page exploration bars that work simultaneously but serve different content are used: the main exploration bar serves the content of the MRDPAEF main page, the secondary exploration bar serves the content of the programme page
- the programme page does not have a menu to view all the available sections - all sections are arranged one after the other
- the posts on the page began in 2015, with no archive or summary of the most important information for each section.

3. The Facebook page of the programme

The information is presented on the Facebook page of the programme in English. At the time of this evaluation (September 2017), the page was followed by about 520 followers and had over 500 positive assessments.

The following information can be found on the opening page of the Facebook account:

- the latest posts on the implementation of the programme
- address and the schedule of the Joint Secretariat (BRECO)

In what concerns the information and communication activities, the following types of information disseminated through the Facebook account of the programme were identified:

- Information and communication events organized by JS
- Future information events organized by JS
- News about the implementation of the programme and the organization of calls for proposals
- News about eMS

General evaluation

The announcements posted on the Facebook page of the programme are very attractive because the information is brief and to the point (for additional information it is indicated, if applicable, the link) and always accompanied by an image type element. The Facebook page of the programme was officially launched on 21st of September 2016 on the occasion of the European Cooperation Day, with more than 250 posts published at the moment when the current evaluation is performed.

The posts are made in real time and include the main news found on the official website of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary programme, as well as other news, especially related to the events organized or in progress. There are also posts related to future events of information and communication activities, and there is also information about the events posted on the same day when the event is organized or the next day.

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|---|--|---|
| 1. The findings related to the the evaluation of the official website of the programme can be consulted in the text box "General evaluation" in point 1 of this subchapter. | The official website of the programme presents the information of interest in a complete and correct way using attractive graphics and visual tools that capture the reader's attention. Certain sections of the website can be optimized in terms of the structure of the information presented to facilitate their understanding by the reader. Also, certain features of the website can be improved, such as the timing of information and communication | To optimize how the information is presented on the official website of the programme, the following is recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The programme priorities in the programme section - Priority Axes could be presented using toggle content (the name of all the investment priorities would first appear on the page and the reader would click on the priority interest and would open under the title only the interest for that priority). They might also include a link to the specific infographic; - Under the sections Legislation RO and Legislation HU it would also be helpful to include links to those documents so that they are easily accessible to readers; - The Gallery section - Photos / Video of the events could be structured using toggle content to reduce the loading and scrolling time of the page (in this version of the website it is expected to upload all the photos from the events in order to browse the page); - The News and Events section should be completed with a sub-section (Online |

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| | events. | <p>registration of the participants to the events) to increase the awareness of this tool among website readers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The button and the search field should be positioned in the header of the page to make it more visible for the website readers; - The size of the main page slider should be reduced - when opening the website, it would be advisable for the reader to directly view the three link sections now positioned under the main slider; - The font color for "Details" on the main slider should be changed because the current version of the website is confused with the background color (blue); - The button commands to ensure the accessibility of people with disabilities should be translated into Romanian and Hungarian for the respective versions of the website; <p>It is recommended that the calendar of events is updated, both by indicating the events organized so far, as well as the events planned for the next month, i.e. data of particular significance (example of launching and closing a Call for projects).</p> <p>It is recommended to update the following sections so that information and documents are provided in a unitary way in the three languages in which the sections of the website are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documents - EU legislation: the first document on State aid guidelines is missing in Romanian and Hungarian languages - Documents - eMS documents: the last document from PPT presentations is missing in Romanian and Hungarian languages - Media: In English and Hungarian, fewer consultation documents are available compared to the Romanian version of the page |
| 2. The findings related to | The information presented at the level | In order to facilitate the understanding and access to information contained on the page, the following web |

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|---|---|---|
| the evaluation of the MA website are presented in the text box "General evaluation" in point 2 of this subchapter. | of the MA website is comprehensive and the level of detail and transparency is appropriate. The way information is structured and displayed, however, requires improvements to facilitate the understanding of information and identifying information of interest for the readers. | site updates are recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it should exist a navigation menu or at least a page structure presented in the header that includes links, direct to the page, to various sections of interest for the reader; - it would be useful to create an archive of information in the <i>News</i> and <i>News and Events</i> sections for 2015, 2016; - The information presented in the News sections should be structured on topics to facilitate an easier browsing (eg: Call for Proposals, Programme Implementation, Other); - The information should also be available in English (programme implementation language). |
| 3. The findings related to the evaluation of the Facebook page of the programme can be consulted in the text box "General evaluation" in point 3 of this subchapter | The Facebook page of the programme is constantly updated and provides information of great interest on the programme's activities to the followers, with a focus on the future to the increase in the number of followers. | It is recommended to include a link to the programme's Facebook page in the newsletters, in the header of the page under the programme logo and in the footer before the slogan of the programme, together with a short impact text such as: "Be always informed about Interreg V-A Romania- Hungary!" followed by the Facebook symbol, which is clicked through the Facebook link of the programme. |
| 4. Information on the programme can also be found on the | Due to the construction of the URL: 2014.huro-cbc.eu, the website is easily confused with an official website of | It is recommended to close the 2014.huro-cbc.eu website as it is important for the public to be directed and to access the official website of the programme in order to guarantee full and accurate information about the activities of the programme. If the domain administrator (the person who created the |

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|---|---|---|
| <p>2014.huro-cbc.eu website, which was created by the managing authorities of the previous Hungary-Romania Cooperation Programme.</p> | <p>the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme by the general public.</p> | <p>website) cannot be contacted, it is recommended to contact the domain vendor (web domain management company) to discuss possible solutions for closing this website. Provider and contact person information can be found at https://www.whois.com/whois/huro-cbc.eu - the "Technical" section.</p> |
| <p>5. There are two platforms for identifying potential partners, one available on the official website of the programme and one on the SC (BRECO) website.</p> | <p>Two tools have been created successively to identify potential partners, but they have not been integrated, currently they operating individually.</p> | <p>In order to avoid confusion that may be created among the potential beneficiaries and considering the importance of targeting the public to the official website of the programme, it is recommended to close the existing potential partners' identification platform on the BRECO website, and to migrate the existing information to the new platform on the official website of the programme.</p> |

3.2. The survey conducted among the potential beneficiaries

Through the questionnaire applied among the potential direct beneficiaries of the programme, it was aimed to identify the perception from the territory regarding the efficiency and the adequacy of the communication activities planned and carried out within the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme.

The questionnaire was applied throughout the programme's eligible territory and was submitted to the institutions / entities from the categories of eligible beneficiaries under the programme, namely:

- Local and county authorities / administrations and their institutions;
- National Ministries and their specialized institutions, their regional offices;
- Administrations of national / natural parks;
- Institutions for environmental protection;
- Higher education institutions;
- Non-governmental organizations;
- Microregional associations;
- Euroregion management organizations;
- Museums, libraries, theaters;
- Churches;
- Offices of cultural heritage;
- Chambers of commerce;
- European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC);
- National organizations responsible for the development of transport infrastructure.

In order to apply the questionnaire survey, 600 potential beneficiaries, from the main list, were contacted, aiming for a 30% response rate in order to ensure the representativeness of the research results (minimum 180 completed questionnaires). To reach the response rate, given the relatively low response rate recorded in the early days of the survey, the main list was supplemented by 173 additional contacts to which the questionnaire was also submitted during the field research. The confidence level considered in the evaluation is 95%; based on the number of responses received, the sampling error is +/- 6%.

As a result of the survey, 181 responses from potential beneficiaries were collected, their territorial distribution (percentage) being as it follows:

| County | Percentages |
|------------------|-------------|
| Bihor | 18,8 |
| Satu Mare | 14,4 |
| Arad | 12,7 |

| County | Percentages |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Békés | 12,7 |
| Csongrád | 12,7 |
| Timiș | 11,0 |
| Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg | 9,4 |
| Hajdú-Bihar | 8,3 |
| Total | 100,0 |

The distribution of respondents by category (type of potential beneficiary) is presented in the following table:

Table no. 1 Type of institutions and organizations respondent to the questionnaire

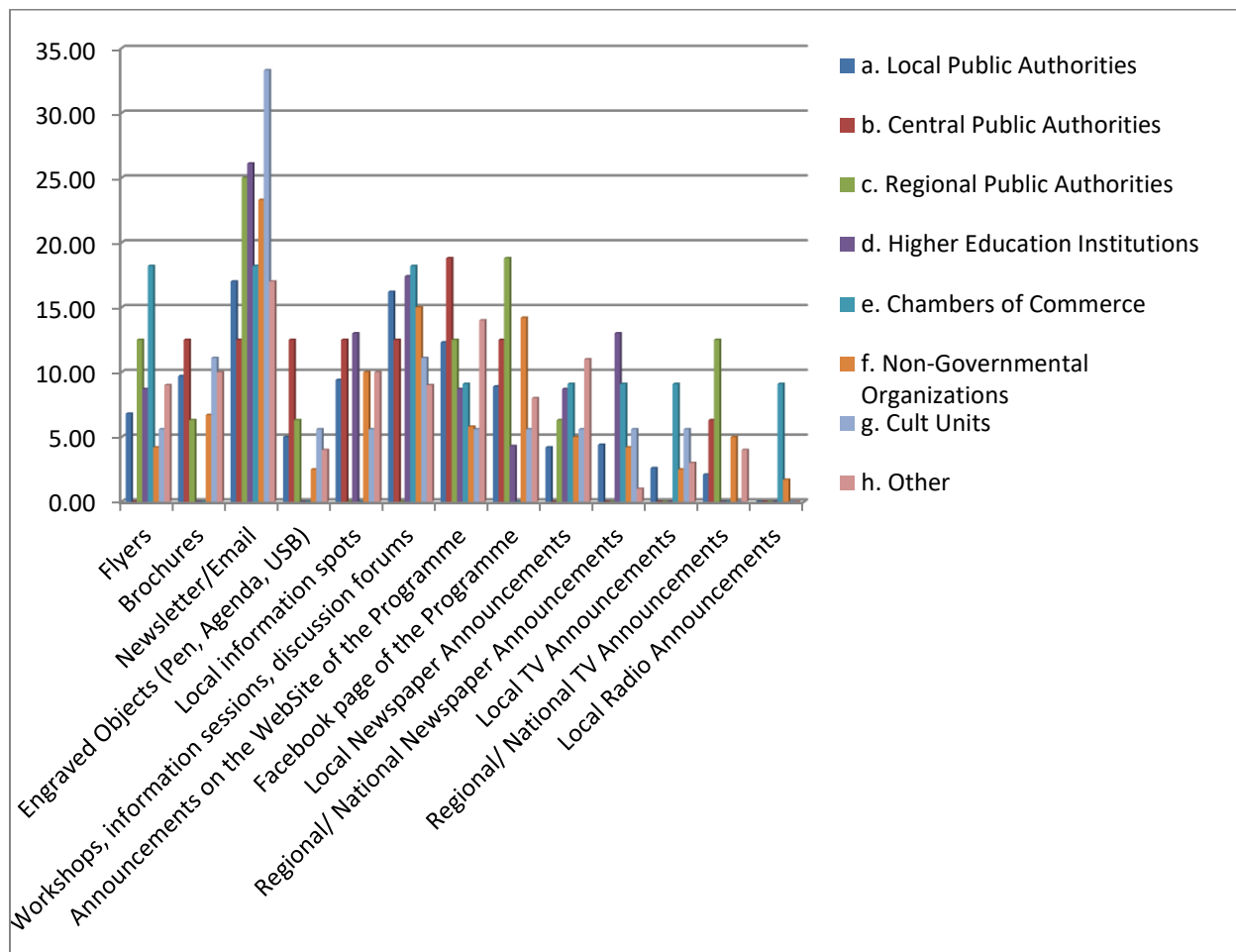
| Type of institution/organization | Percentages |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Local Public Authorities | 47,5 |
| Non-Governmental Organizations | 21,0 |
| Higher Education Institutions | 4,4 |
| Cult Units | 3,3 |
| Central Public Authorities | 2,8 |
| Regional Public Authorities | 2,2 |
| Chamber of Commerce | 1,7 |
| Other | 17,1 |
| Total | 100,0 |

The applied questionnaire was structured in the following sections:

1. General information about the represented institution / entity
2. Degree of knowledge regarding the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme
3. Channels of communication within the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme
4. Information within the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme
5. Information on the questionnaire's respondent

The detailed analysis report of the answers provided by potential beneficiaries can be found in **Annex no. 1 of this Evaluation Report**. The main findings from the analysis of these answers are presented below.

Figure no. 1 Perception of the respondents on the usefulness of the programme's promotion and publicity tools / measures



Source: data processed by the research team

The Newsletter was indicated by most respondents as the most useful tool for promoting the programme, followed by workshops, information sessions and discussion forums. The result of correlation between different type of beneficiaries and their preferences in relation to various instruments and means of communication, is as it follows:

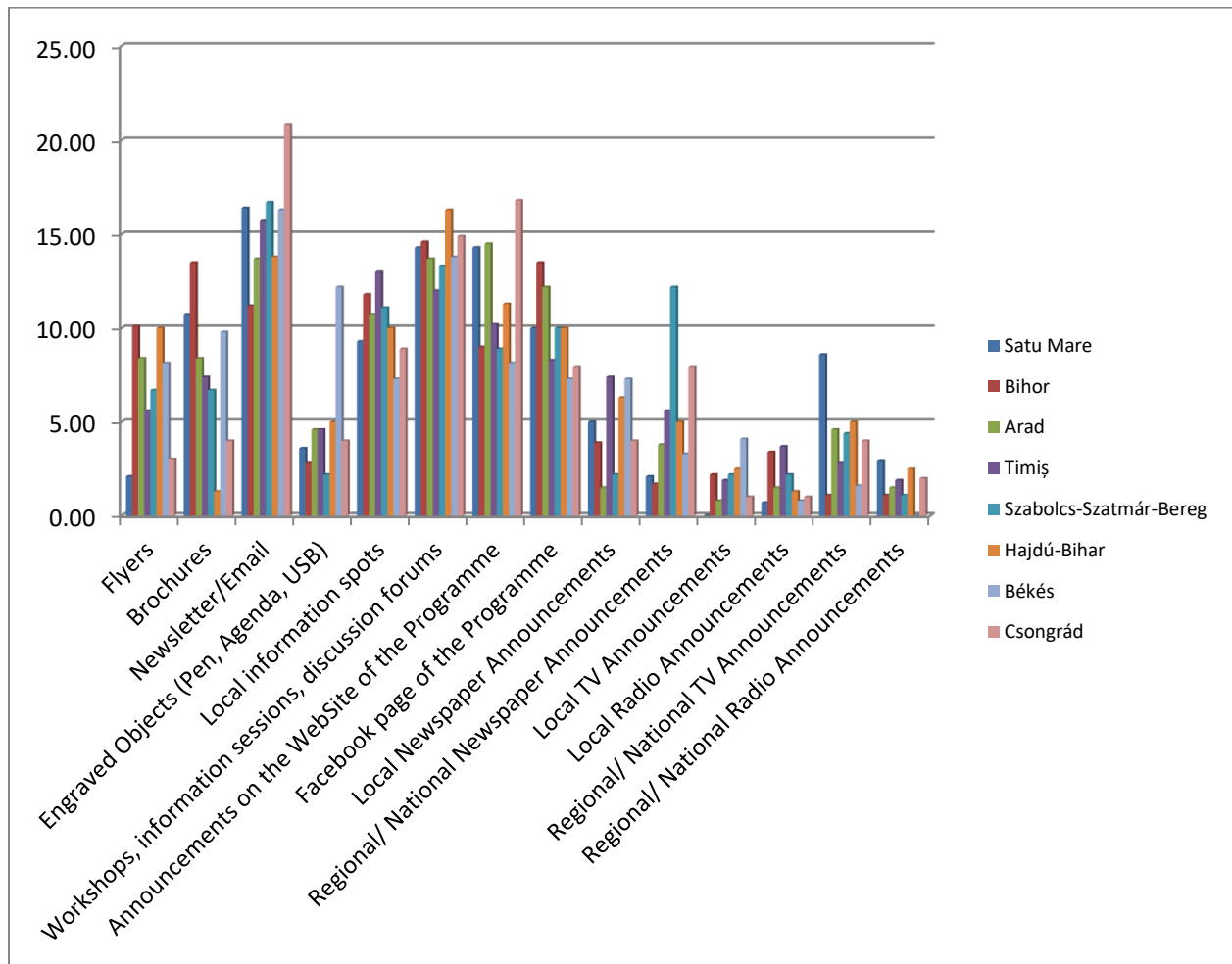
| No. crt. | Type of Potential Beneficiary | The most useful instruments/ means for promotion | The least useful instruments/ means for promotion |
|----------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. | Local Public Authorities | Newsletter workshops, information sessions, discussion forums | Mass-media Announcements (local, regional, national level) |
| 2. | Non-Governmental Organizations | Workshops, information sessions, discussion forums | Engraved objects ; Mass-media Announcements |

| No. crt. | Type of Potential Beneficiary | The most useful instruments/ means for promotion | The least useful instruments/ means for promotion |
|----------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| | | Facebook page of the programme | (local, regional, national level) |
| 3. | Higher Education Institutions | Newsletter | Engraved objects; Brochures; Mass-media Announcements (local, regional, national level) |
| 4. | Cult units | Newsletter | Mass-media Announcements (local, regional, national level) |
| 5. | Central Public Authorities | Website of the programme | Flyers; Mass-media Announcements (local, regional, national level) |
| 6. | Regional Public Authorities | Newsletter | Local information spots; Workshops, information sessions, discussion forums Mass-media Announcements (local, regional, national level) |
| 7. | Chamber of Commerce | Newsletter Workshops, information sessions, discussion forums Flyers | Engraved objects; Facebook page of the programme |

Source: Data processed by the research team

By analyzing the opinions of the respondents, the majority prefers the online communication tools and not printed documents, in physical form.

Figure no. 2 Perception of the respondents on the usefulness of the programme's promotion and publicity tools / measures, at county level



Source: data processed by the research team

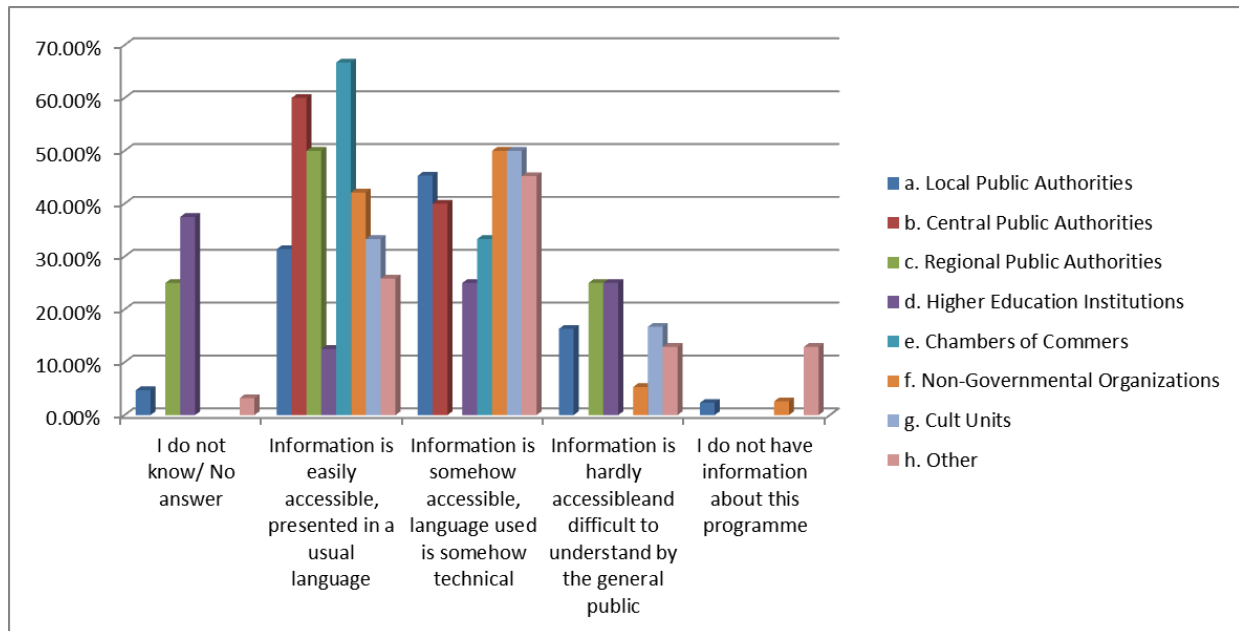
The perception on the utility of the programme promotion tools is not fundamentally different, depending on the respondent's county of origin. Thus, in the counties of Satu Mare and Timiș, the most useful promotional tools are considered the Newsletters received by email, while in Bihor the workshops / information sessions are appreciated, and in Arad the announcements on the website of the programme.

Newsletters are the first option for 3 of the 4 counties in the eligible area of Hungary, only in Hajdú-Bihar County dominating the preference for workshops / information sessions / discussion forums.

The result of the correlation between beneficiaries' counties of origin and their preferences in relation to various instruments and means of communication, is as it follows:

| No. crt. | County of the eligible area | The most useful instrument/mean for promotion and communication | The least useful instrument/mean for promotion and communication |
|----------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 1. | Satu Mare | Newsletter Workshops, information sessions, discussion forums Facebook page of the programme | Local Mass-media Announcements (TV, radio); Flyers. |
| 2. | Bihor | Workshops, information sessions, discussion forums; Facebook page of the programme; Brochures. | Local, regional, national Mass-media Announcements (TV, radio); Engraved objects. |
| 3. | Arad | Newsletter Workshops, information sessions, discussion forums; Facebook page of the programme; | Local, regional, national Mass-media Announcements (TV, radio); |
| 4. | Timiș | Newsletter Local Information Spots | Local, regional, national Mass-media Announcements (TV, radio); |
| 5. | Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg | Newsletter | Engraved objects; Local, regional, national Mass-media Announcements (TV, radio); |
| 6. | Hajdú-Bihar | Newsletter Workshops, information sessions, discussion forums; | Brochures; Local Mass-media Announcements (TV, radio); |
| 7. | Békés | Newsletter Workshops, information sessions, discussion forums; | Local, regional, national Mass-media Announcements (TV, radio); |
| 8. | Csongrád | Newsletter Facebook page of the programme | Local Mass-media Announcements (TV, radio); |

Figure no. 3 Assessing the degree of accessibility to information



**I do not know/No answer*

Source: data processed by the research team

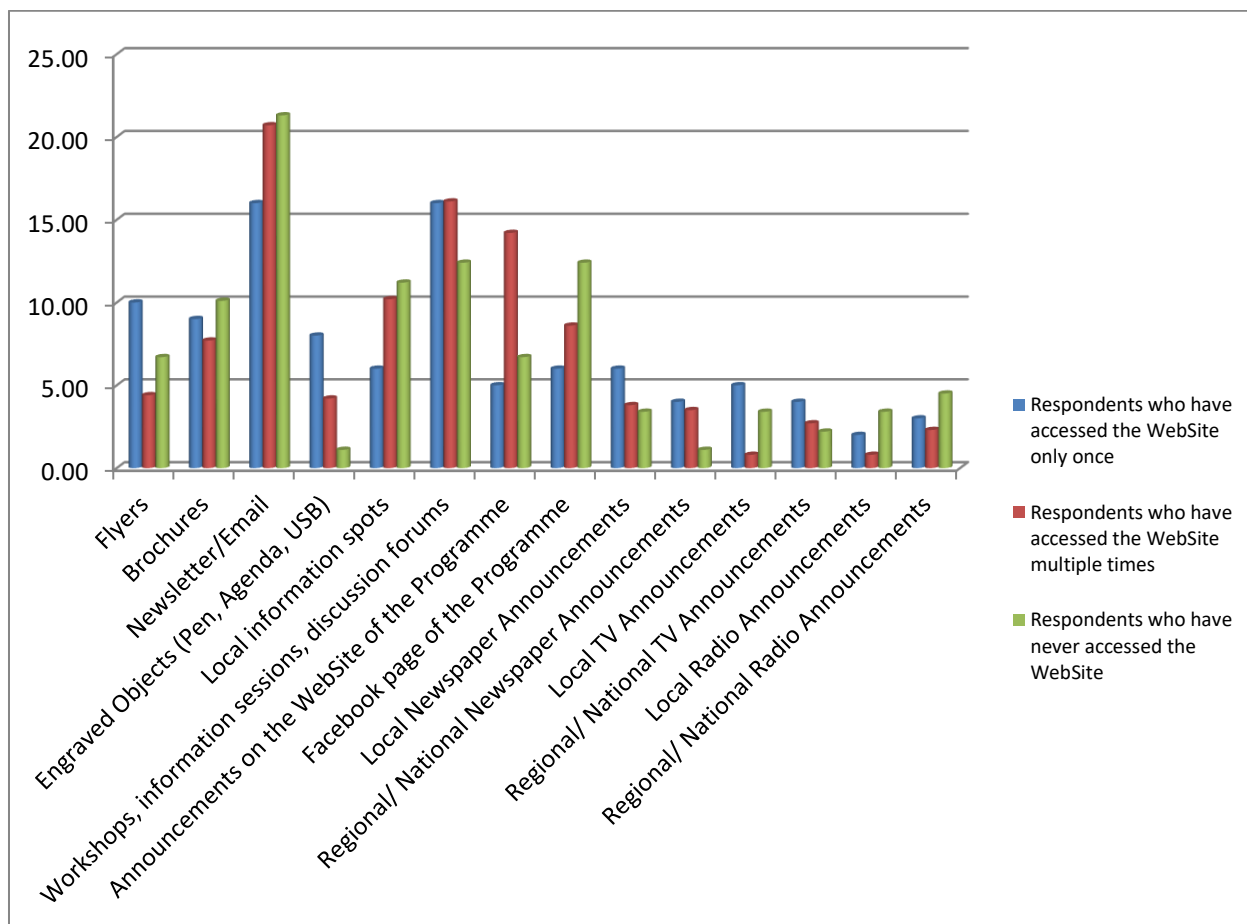
Most of the respondents (44,2%) consider that the information on the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme is somewhat accessible, the language used being more or less technical, while 33,7% of them consider that the information is presented in a usual language, being very accessible.

Thus, the information is considered very accessible by the Chambers of commerce (66,7%) and the Central Public Authorities (60%).

The majority of the respondents who consider that the information is hardly accessible and difficult to understand by the general public are part of the regional public authorities and higher education institutions (25%). The difficulty in understanding the information appears as a result of the usage of specific, technical language which is not easily recognizable among the respondents of the questionnaire, having interacted with those terms only during the information and communication sessions of the programme.

The only categories of institutions that indicated the fact that they do not have information about the Interreg V- A Romania-Hungary Programme are the local public authorities, non-governmental organizations and others, but in a fairly low proportion of 2,3%, 2,6% and 12,9%.

Figure no. 4 Perception of the respondents on the usefulness of the programme's promotion and publicity tools / measures, depending on the frequency of accessing the website

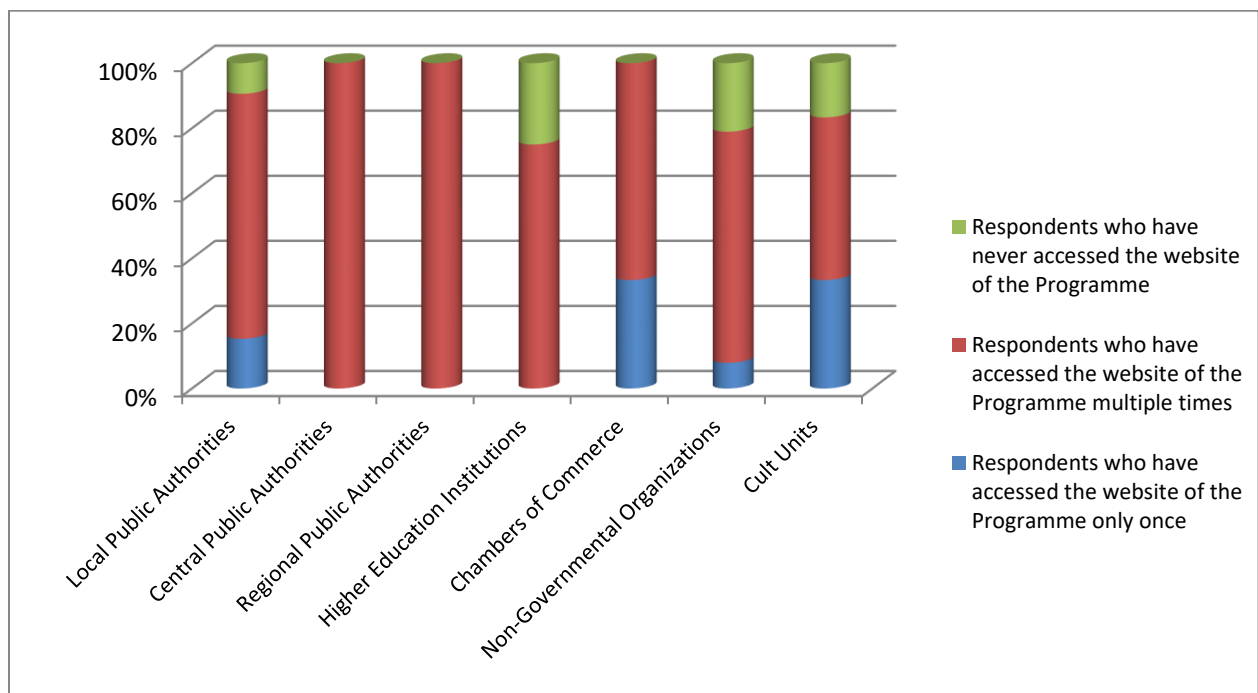


Source: data processed by the research team

According to the responses collected, the potential beneficiaries who have accessed the programme's website at least once consider it useful to receive the information through the newsletter or during the workshops and information sessions organized by the programme authorities, these communication tools being appreciated as having a higher degree of utility in comparison to the programme's website. This choice can be justified by the practical advantages of the newsletter and of the topics discussed during the organized events, providing the latest information of high interest regarding the implementation of the programme directly to the potential beneficiaries; the website of the programme contains a multitude of relevant information, distributed in its various sections, and it is probably easier for potential beneficiaries to access essential information directly through the newsletter or organized information events.

The respondents who have not accessed the programme’s website rate with a high degree of usefulness the newsletter, the Facebook page of the programme and the information and communication events organized by programme authorities.

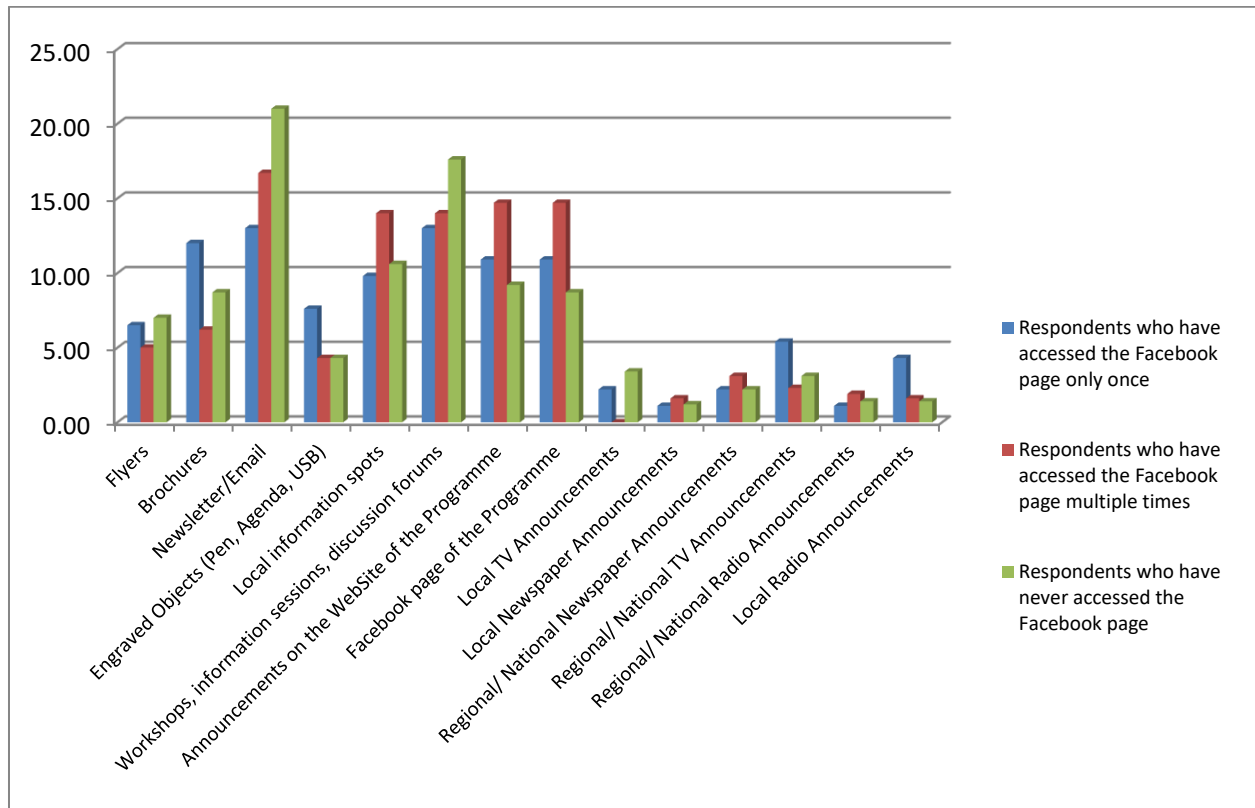
Figure no. 5 Frequency of accessing the programme website, by category of potential beneficiary



Source: Data processed by the research team

The programme website was accessed at least once by more than 85% of respondents to the questionnaire. Most beneficiaries who have visited the programme's website at least once fall into the category of public authorities, chambers of commerce and NGOs.

Figure no. 6 Perception of the respondents on the usefulness of the programme's promotion and publicity tools / measures, depending on the frequency of accessing the Facebook page

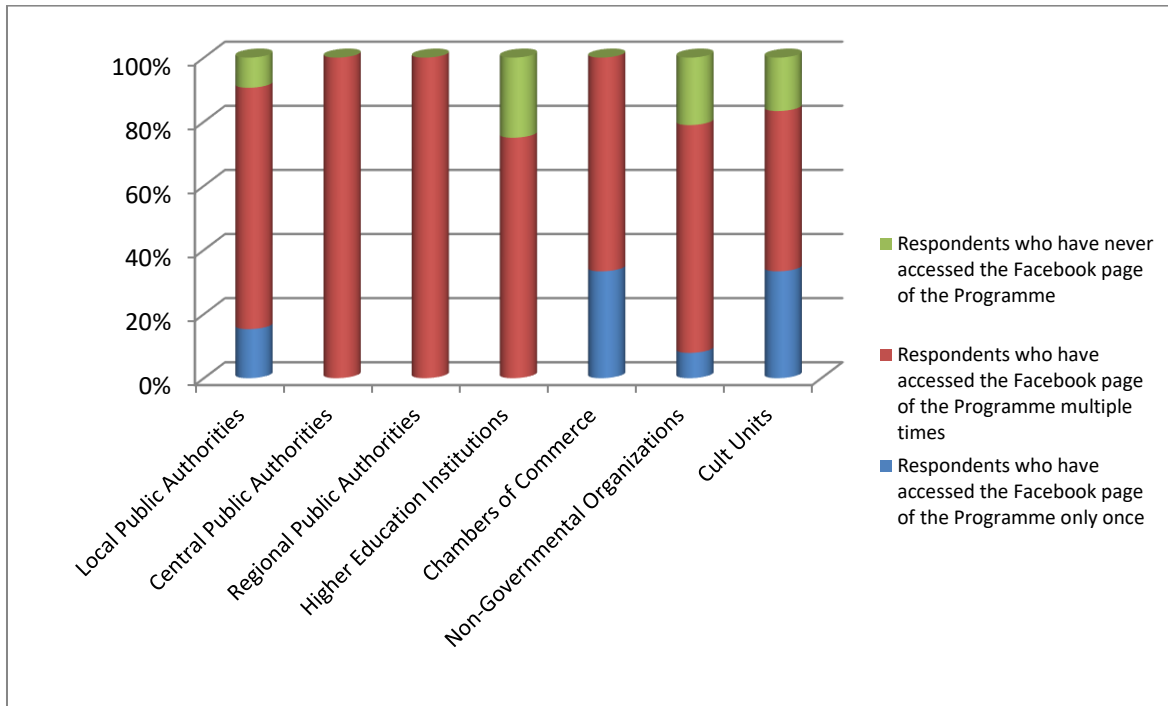


Source: data processed by the research team

According to the collected responses, the potential beneficiaries who have accessed the Facebook page of the programme at least once also find it useful to receive the information through the newsletter, the programme's website or during the workshops and information sessions organized by the programme authorities, these communication means being appreciated as having a similar or higher degree of utility compared to the Facebook page of the programme. This choice is normal and justifiable with regards to the level of detail of the information presented to potential beneficiaries through these tools, the Facebook page of the programme having the role of transmitting some key concepts or ideas that can then be further deepened by potential beneficiaries who are interested in accessing other sources of information (e.g. the programme website).

Respondents who did not access the Facebook page of the programme give a high degree of usefulness to the newsletter and to the information and communication events organized by the programme authorities.

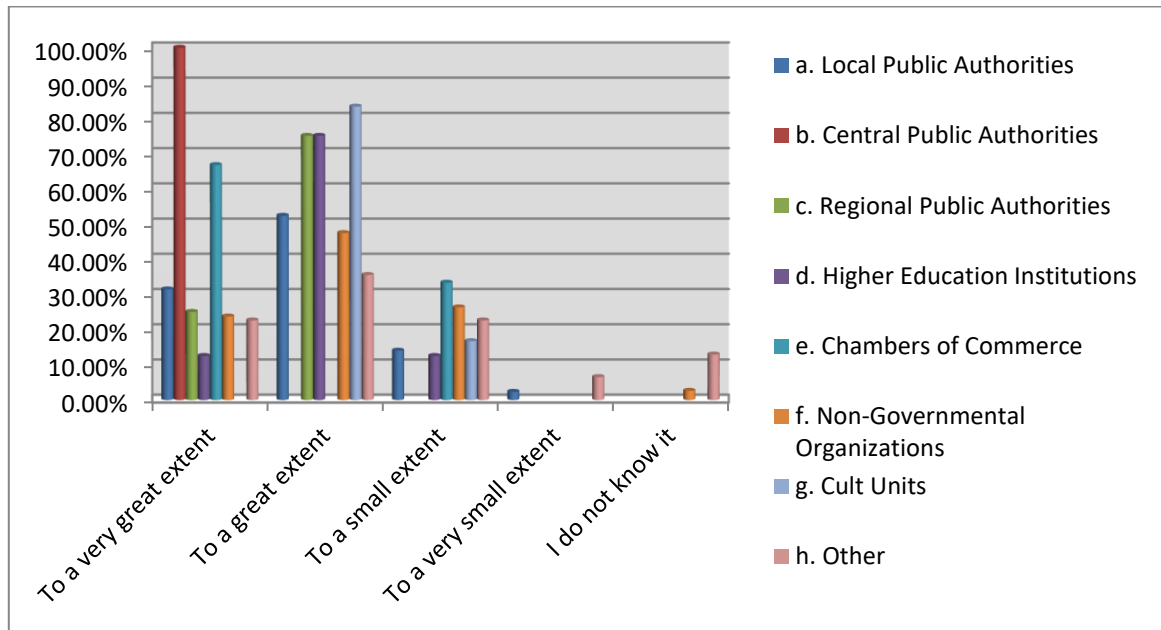
Figure no. 7 Frequency of accessing the Facebook page of the programme, by category of potential beneficiary



Source: data processed by the research team

The Facebook page of the programme was accessed several times by approximately 75% of respondents to the questionnaire. Most beneficiaries who have repeatedly accessed the Facebook page of the programme fall under the category of public authorities.

Figure no. 8 Level of knowledge on the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme logo, by category of potential beneficiary



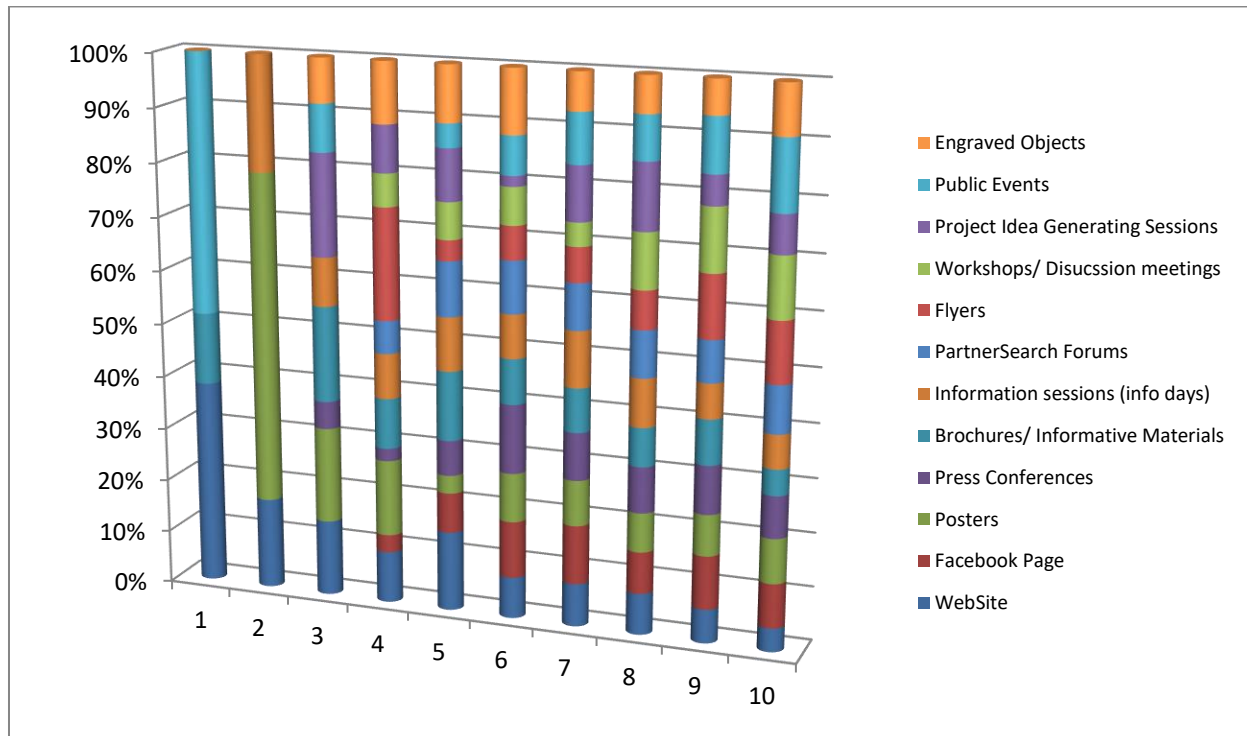
Source: data processed by the research team

The Logo of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme is known to a very great extent by all the central public authorities that have responded and by 66,7% of the Chambers of commerce, and to a large extent by the cult units (83,3%), the regional public authorities (75%) and higher education institutions (75%). Also, more than half of the local public authorities suggested that they are familiar with the image logo of the programme to a great extent (52.3%).

The only cases where the respondents stated that they did not know the programme logo were registered for the respondents that fall under the category of "non-governmental organizations", but in a low proportion of 2,6%.

Figure no. 9 Level of awareness of respondents regarding the activities of the programme, based on the instrument/ material they had access to

-%-

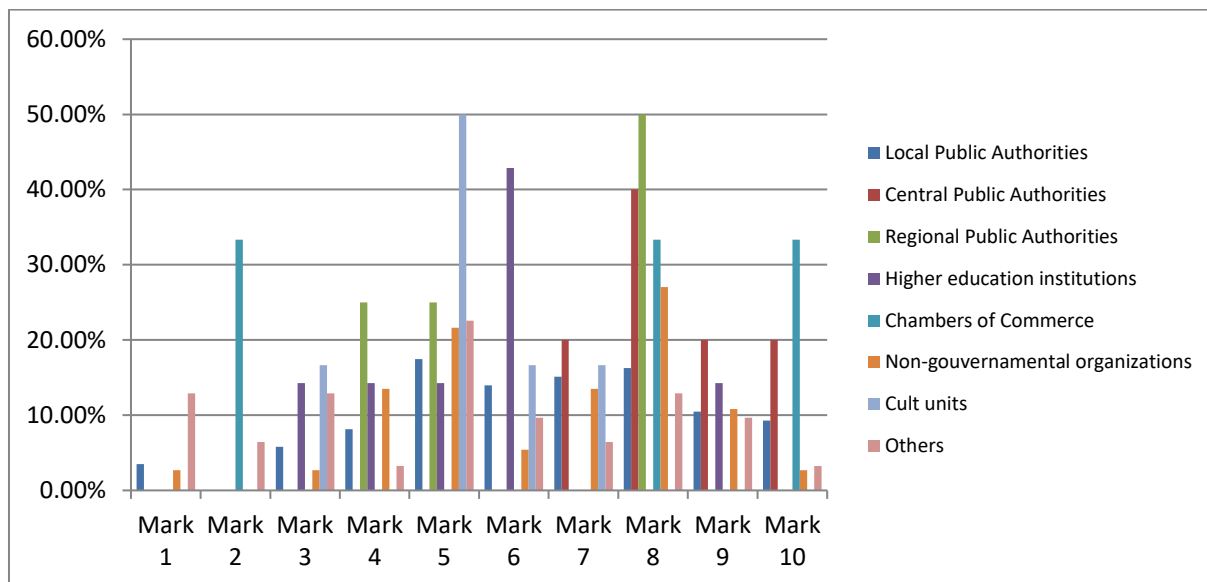


*1 = low level of information ; 10 = very well informed

Source: Data processed by the research team

The potential beneficiaries, respondents to the questionnaire, who have declared that they were well or very well informed about the activities carried out by the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme had access to information, in particular through the information events and workshops organized within the programme.

Figure no. 10 Level of awareness regarding the activities of the programme per category of potential beneficiaries



* 1 = very little informed; 10 = very well informed

Source: Data processed by the research team

The level of awareness regarding the programme is assessed as positive by the majority of respondents by awarding the rating 8. The types of potential beneficiaries who have awarded 9 or 10 points in relation to their level of awareness, subscribe to the categories of central public authorities, higher education and non-governmental organizations, respectively chambers of commerce. The latter (NGOs and chambers of commerce) also reported lower levels of information. The average score given by respondents to the questionnaire related to the level of awareness on the activities carried out within the programme is 6,20. By type of potential beneficiaries, the average rating was:

Table no. 2 The average score given in relation to the respondents' level of awareness regarding the activities developed within the programme, by categories of potential beneficiary

| No. crt. | Type of potential beneficiary | The average score given in relation to the respondents' level of information, on the activities developed within the programme |
|----------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Local public authorities | 6,48 |
| 2. | Central public authorities | 8,40 |
| 3. | Regional public authorities | 6,25 |

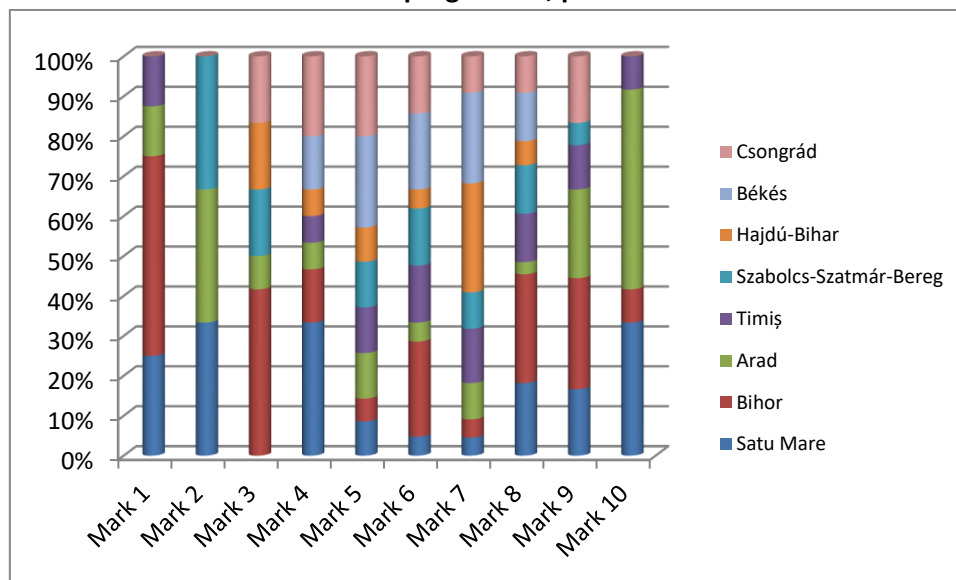
| No. crt. | Type of potential beneficiary | The average score given in relation to the respondents' level of information, on the activities developed within the programme |
|----------|--------------------------------|--|
| 4. | Higher education institutions | 5,57 |
| 5. | Chambers of commerce | 6,67 |
| 6. | Non-governmental organizations | 6,41 |
| 7. | Cult units | 5,17 |
| 8. | Others | 5,16 |

Source: Data processed by the research team

It is noticed that the central public authorities reported the highest degree of information regarding the activities developed within the programme, the cult units being situated opposite. This can be justified by the long-standing experience of central public authorities in the field of European Funds, which is much more familiar with the specific concepts of the programme and the relevant sources of information.

The correlation of the reported information with the counties of origin of the respondents is presented below:

Figure no. 11 The level of awareness of the respondents regarding the activities developed within the programme, per counties



Source: Data processed by the research team

It is noted that only the respondents from the eligible counties in Romania rated the maximum score (10), in relation to their degree of awareness on the activities carried out under the programme, most of the respondents located in the counties of Hungary rating a score of 5 to 8, related to the subject analyzed. The average rate awarded at county level was:

Table no. 3 The average rate awarded in relation to the degree of awareness of the respondents on the activities developed within the programme, by counties

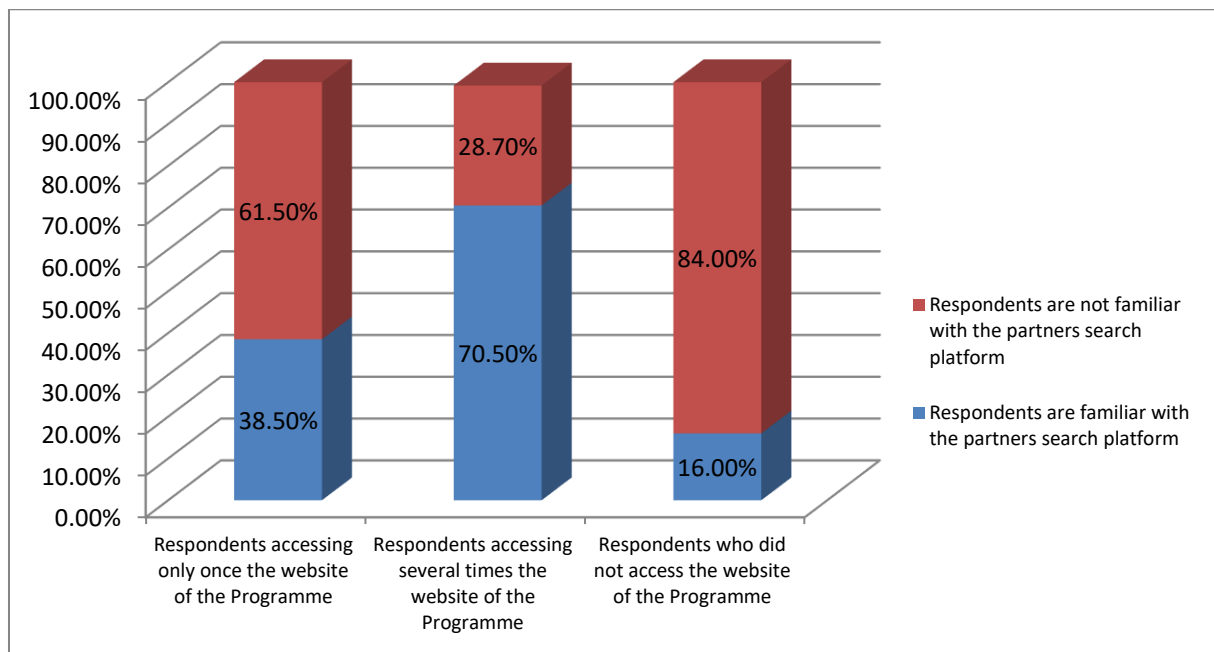
| No. crt. | County | The average rate awarded in relation to the degree of awareness on the activities developed within the programme |
|----------|------------------------|--|
| 1. | Satu Mare | 6,42 |
| 2. | Bihor | 5,91 |
| 3. | Arad | 7,00 |
| 4. | Timiș | 6,53 |
| 5. | Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg | 5,94 |
| 6. | Hajdú-Bihar | 5,93 |
| 7. | Békés | 6,04 |

| No. crt. | County | The average rate awarded in relation to the degree of awareness on the activities developed within the programme |
|----------|----------|--|
| 8. | Csongrád | 5,91 |

Source: Data processing by the research team

The highest average level of awareness was reported by the respondents in Arad County (7), and the lowest, by the respondents in Bihor and Csongrád counties (5,91). In what concerns the situation of Bihor County, this can be solved considering the location of the Joint Secretariat in Oradea (Bihor County), the potential beneficiaries in Bihor County being able to move physically more easily to the JS's office for requesting information or bilateral discussion of specific aspects related to the activities of the programme. For potential beneficiaries located in other counties, interaction and direct meetings with JS representatives are mainly carried out on specific days, when communication events are organized on the territory of that county or through visiting the county offices of the JS in Romania, respectively the Info Points in Hungary.

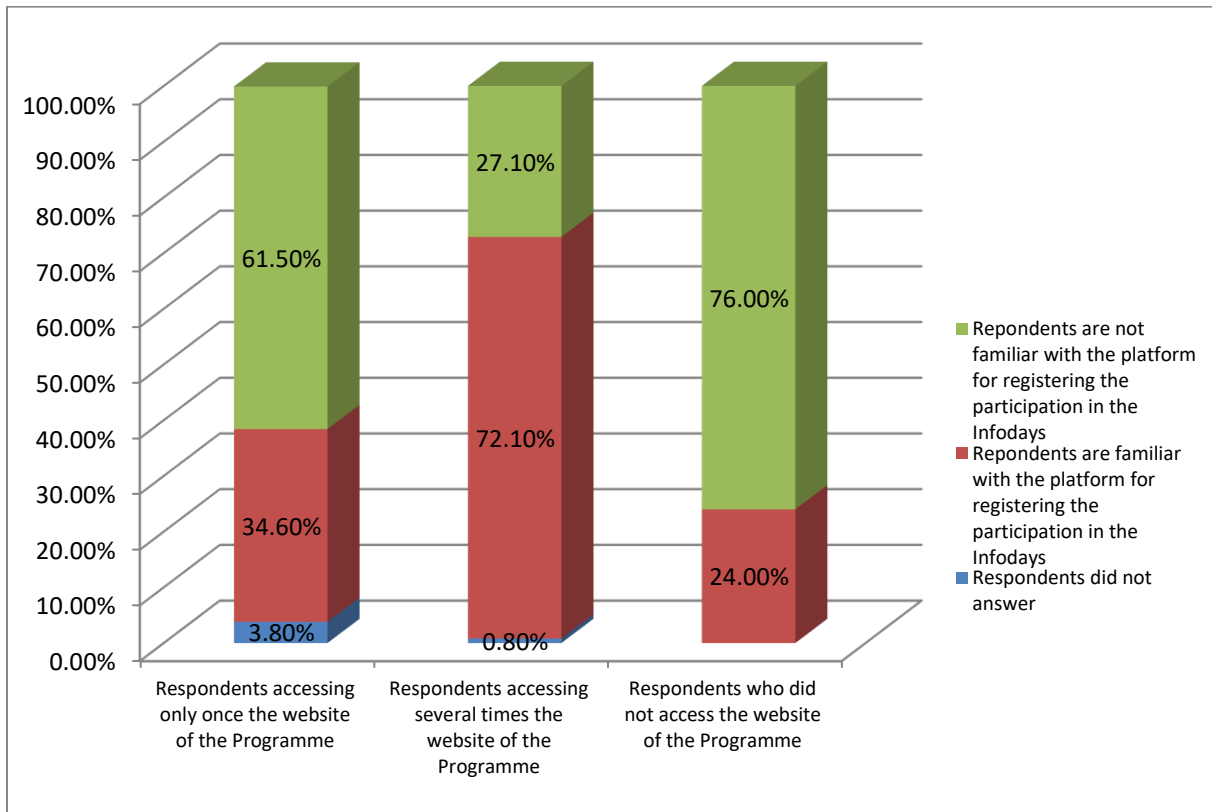
Figure no. 12 The degree of awareness regarding the Partner Search Module, in relation with the frequency of accessing the programme's website



Source: Data processed by the research team

The potential beneficiaries, respondents to the questionnaire, who have visited the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary website / Facebook page, are much more aware (70.5%) of the Partner Search Module, compared to the potential beneficiaries, respondents to the questionnaire, who only once visited it (38.5%).

Figure no. 13 The level of awareness regarding the existence of the online registration form in Info Days, in relation with the frequency of accessing the programme's website

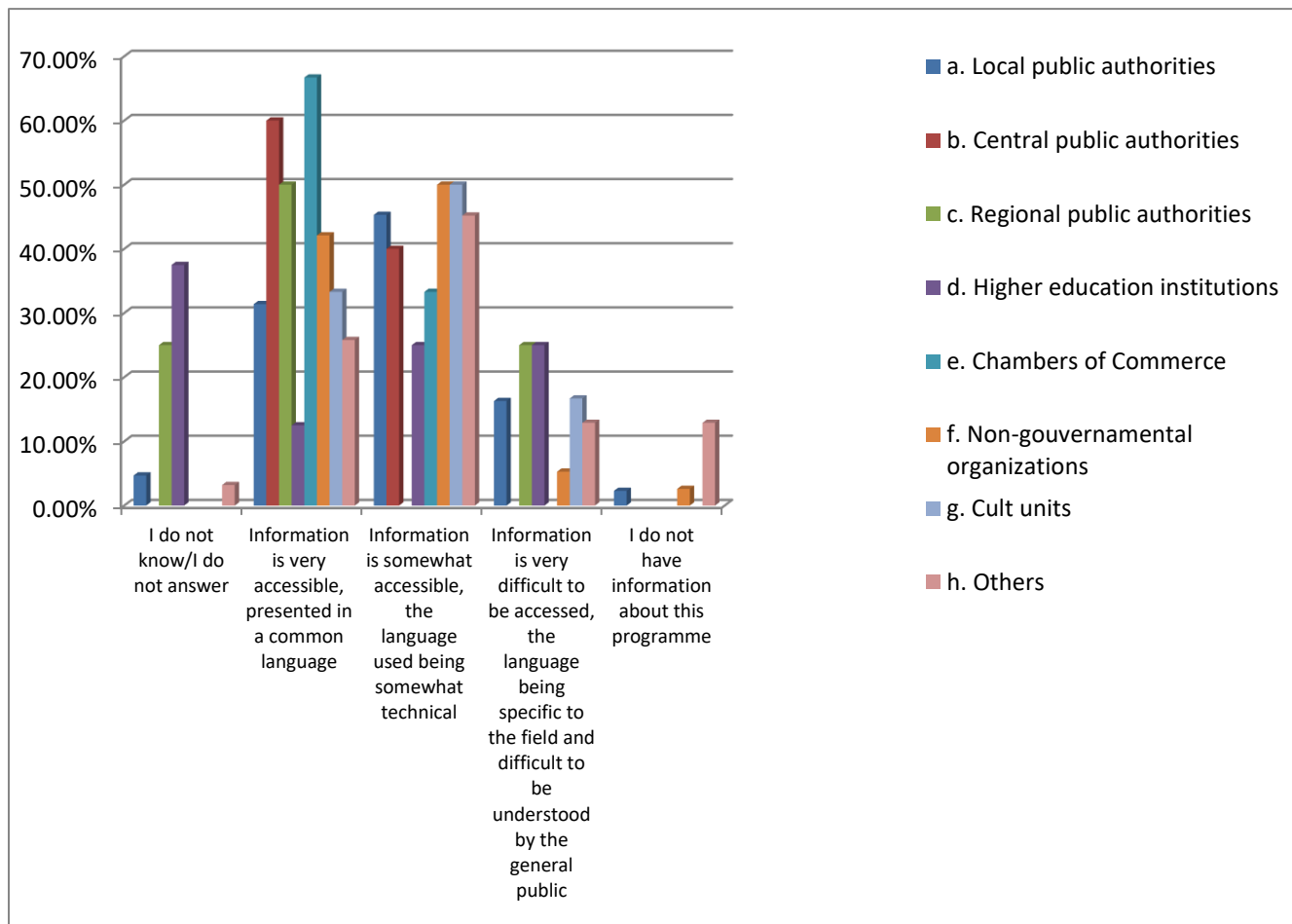


Source: Data processed by the research team

Similarly to the situation presented above, the potential beneficiaries respondents to the questionnaire, who have visited the website of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme / Facebook page, know in a considerably higher proportion (72.1%) about the existence of the online registration form in Info Days, compared to those who only once visited it (34.6%)

Most of the respondents to the questionnaire believe that there were no weak points in the communication activities carried out by programme authorities for potential beneficiaries (over 40%). The presence of weaknesses in the communication activity was signaled by about 29% of the respondents, while 31% of respondents did not provide an answer on this issue. The majority of respondents who reported the existence of weaknesses (over 85% of them) attended at least one information event organized under the programme.

Figure no. 14 The respondents' perception about the existence of weaknesses in communication activities



Source: Data processes by the research team

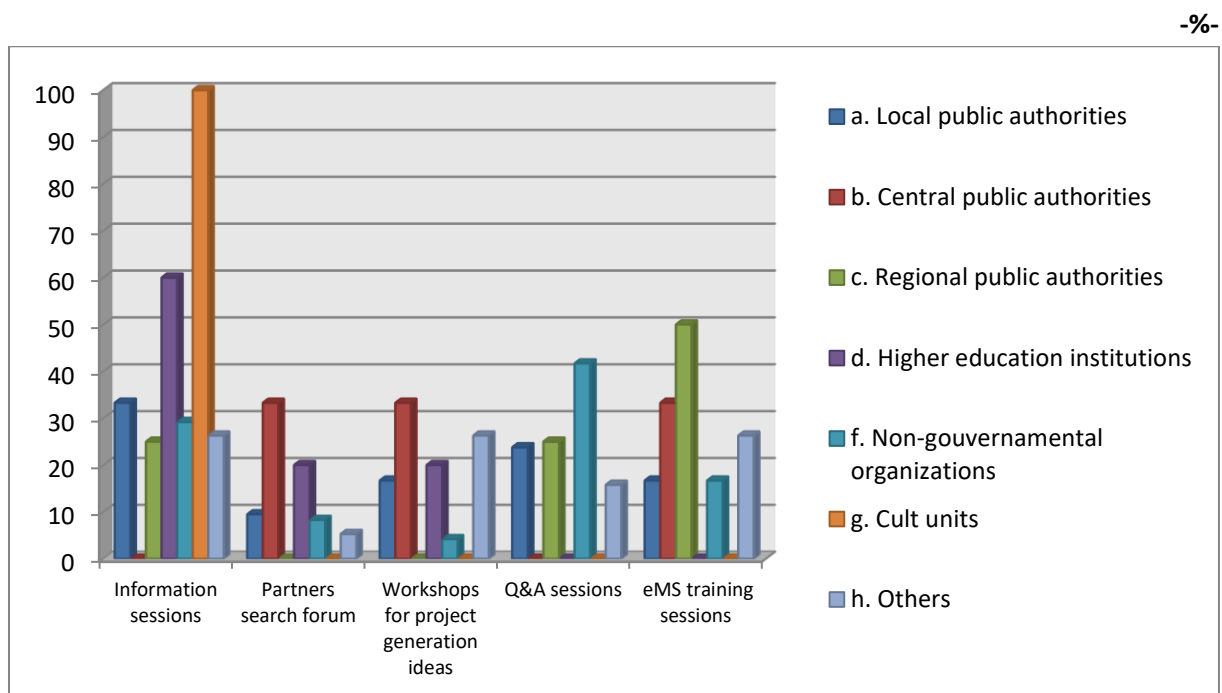
The existence of weaknesses in the communication activity between the programme authorities and potential beneficiaries was reported to a greater extent by regional public authorities (50%).

On the opposite side, 60% of the central public authorities consider that there are no weak points in the communication between the programme authorities and the potential beneficiaries. There was no respondent in the category of Chambers of commerce to signal the existence of deficiencies in the communication activity.

Most of the local respondents consider that there are no weaknesses in the communication activity (45%), while 28% of them reported weaknesses in the communication activity and 27% did not answer this question.

50% of the educational institutions and cult units did not answer this question, but most of the respondents in these categories believe that there are weaknesses in the communication activity. Regarding non-governmental organizations, it is worth mentioning that 42.1% of them do not consider that the communication activity between the programme authorities and the potential beneficiaries is weak.

Figure no. 15 The respondents' perception about information events that can be intensified/improved



Source: Data processed by the research team

All the cult units consider that the information events that should be improved/intensified are information sessions. It is also the first option of higher education institutions (60%) and local public authorities (33.3%).

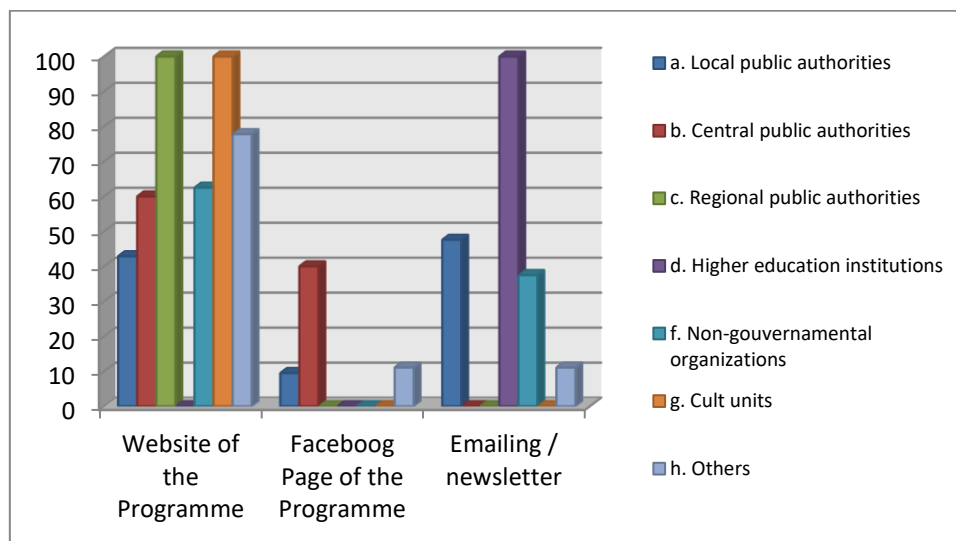
The opinion of the central public authorities is divided over, considering in equal proportions that the information events that should be intensified / improved are the Partner Search Forum, the project generation workshops and the eMS training sessions.

Regional public authorities give a greater importance to eMS training sessions (50%), followed by information sessions (25%) and question and answer sessions (25%).

However, most respondents did not specifically indicate what they would like to be achieved in this respect, only 8 respondents indicating how they would like to improve / intensify information events; the responses given mainly relate to the increase of the number of events (especially Partner Search Forum and Q & A sessions).

Respondents in the category of the Chambers of commerce believe that there is no need for additional actions to improve / intensify the information events, considering that the initiatives developed by the programme authorities are sufficient.

Figure no. 16 The respondents' perception about the online communication tools that can be intensified/improved



Source: Data processed by the research team

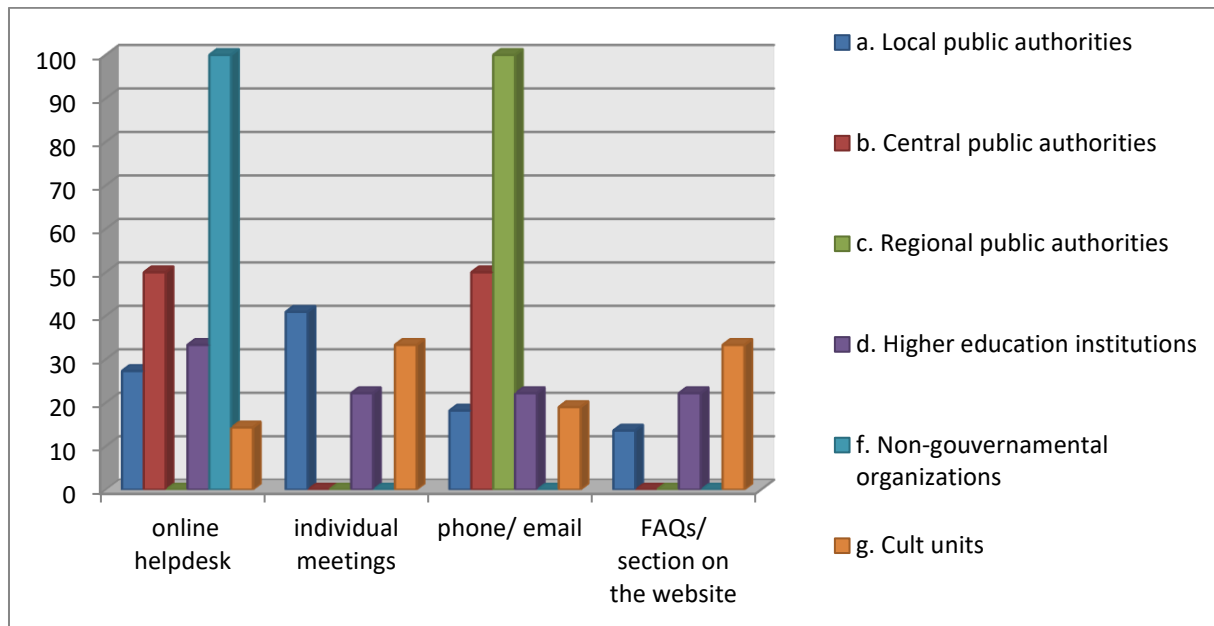
Regional public authorities and cult units consider that the online communication activity should be intensified on the programme's website, while the option of higher education institutions is for emailing / newsletter. As regards the other categories of respondents, it can be highlighted the following points:

- local public authorities consider it appropriate to intensify / improve online communication through email (47.6%) and the programme's website (42.9%) and in a reduced proportion through Facebook (9.5%).
- the only category of respondents who consider to a large extent that the communication through the Facebook page of the programme should be intensified, are represented by the category of central public authorities (40% of respondents in this category providing this answer).
- Non-governmental organizations' option is for improving the programme's website (62.5%) and communicating through email / newsletters (37.5%).

However, the majority of respondents did not specifically indicate what they would like to do in this respect, only 4 respondents indicating how they would like to improve / intensify online communication tools; the suggestions received from the respondents mainly refer to the provision of online information in English, Romanian and Hungarian.

Respondents in the category of the Chambers of commerce consider that there is no need for further actions to improve / intensify the online communication tools, as the initiatives of the programme authorities are sufficient.

Figure no. 17 The respondents' perception about the helpdesk activities that can be intensified/improved



Source: Data processing by the research team

Regional public authorities believe that helpdesk activities should be intensified / improved by managing them through telephone / email, while cult units prefer the online helpdesk activities. The central public authorities give an equal importance to these two types of activities.

Most local public authorities believe that individual meetings should be intensified / improved, while non-governmental organizations consider that the online helpdesk activity should be intensified (33.3%).

Frequently asked questions on the programme's website (FAQ) are of less importance, the only categories of respondents who think they should be developed being the local public authorities (13.6%) and non-governmental organizations (22,2%).

However, the majority of respondents did not specifically indicate what they would like to be done in this respect, only 5 respondents indicating how they would like to be improved / intensified their helpdesk activities; the suggestions received from the respondents mainly refer to communicating with applicants through the eMS.

The respondents in the category of Chambers of commerce and higher education institutions consider that there are not necessary further actions to improve / intensify the helpdesk activities, considering as being sufficient the initiatives currently carried out by the programme authorities.

Last but not least, the entities that have been informed about the organization of the promotional events of the programme and who have attended a single event of this kind, have an average degree of awareness on programme activities, while the entities in the same category, who have attended several events, have a greater degree of awareness on the topic.

It is worth noting that the respondents informed about the organization of the promotional events who have not attended any of them, have an average degree of awareness about the programme. On the other hand, the persons who were neither informed about the organization of events, nor attended them, are very little informed about the activities of the programme.

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|---|---|---|
| 1. All the categories of potential beneficiaries who responded to the questionnaire considered one of the following online communication tools to be useful: Newsletter, programme's website, Facebook programme's page. This finding is also applicable from a territorial perspective for all counties in the eligible area of the programme. | The online communication tools are preferred by most types of potential beneficiaries, from each county. | Increasing the number of newsletters and newsflashes sent to the contacts of the JS database. |
| 2. Apart from respondents in the Chambers of commerce category, all categories of potential beneficiaries indicated promotion in written and television media as the least useful means of information and communication on the activities of the programme. | Promoting by written mass-media and local, regional and national television is not a relevant means of communication and information for the potential applicants within the programme. | Limiting or eliminating measures and actions to promote the programme through written mass-media and television media at local, regional or national level. |
| 3. Most respondents | The way of presenting the | Simplifying the way of presenting |

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|---|--|---|
| <p>appreciate that information on the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary programme is accessible to an average extent, from the perspective of the language and terminology used to present them.</p> | <p>information on the programme is relatively optimal, being identified a need to simplify the terminology used to improve its understanding among all potential beneficiaries.</p> | <p>the information and the terminology used in communication and information activities (a general presentation of the interest topics in a less technical language and indication of the sources where can be consulted more detailed information by those interested).</p> |
| <p>4. The potential beneficiaries who repeatedly access the programme's website and the Facebook page of the programme consider that the newsletter and information events organized in the territory are very useful.</p> | <p>It is necessary to consolidate and summarize the information provided to the potential beneficiaries through the Website and the Facebook page of the programme, through the newsletter and information events organized in the territory, in order to increase the information of the potential beneficiaries.</p> | <p>Continuous updating of the Website and the Facebook page of the programme, with information of interest and also the transmission of newsflashes to the JS contact database at the key moments of the programme implementation (launching a Call for proposals, publishing a corrigendum, publishing list of selected projects).</p> |
| <p>5. The average level of information on the activities developed through the programme is 6.2 (considering a scale from 1 to 10, 1 = very little informed, 10 = very well informed). The counties which recorded the lowest average level of information were Bihor and Csongrád.</p> | | |
| <p>6. The programme's logo is recognized to a high or very high extent by most of the potential beneficiaries.</p> | <p>The measures to ensure visual identity within the programme have been effective and correctly applied.</p> | <p>It's not necessary.</p> |
| <p>7. The degree of knowledge of the various tools /</p> | <p>The tools / modules existing on the programme's website</p> | <p>The tools could be personalized or positioned differently at the</p> |

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|--|---|---|
| <p>modules available on the programme's website (the Partner Search Module; the online registration form for attending events) is higher among visitors who have visited the website multiple times, compared to visitors who have visited the website once.</p> | <p>(Partner Search Module, the online registration form for attending events) are not always identified by visitors at first access to the website, being necessary the increase of their visibility.</p> | <p>level of the website, in order to increase their visibility (for example, the module for the Partner Search could be included as a button with the text "Search partners" - similar to the one for people with disabilities, placed under the latter, visible on the right side of the website at the opening of any page;</p> <p>At the level of the online registration platform for attending the events it may be included a pop-up window to appear when the visitor accesses the "News and Events" section, in which to be presented the events in the next 1-2 months and where the visitor to have the option to register for participation)</p> |
| <p>8. The respondents to the questionnaire indicated that it would be beneficial to increase the number of field information events (information sessions, Partner Search Forums, eMS training sessions, Q&A sessions)</p> | <p>There is a need for continuous information shown by potential beneficiaries within the programme. Dissemination of information through communication events is considered to be very important, the potential beneficiaries being interested in attending as many of these events.</p> | <p>Increase the number of field information events (information sessions, Partner Search Forums, eMS training sessions, Q&A sessions).</p> |
| <p>9. Regarding online communication tools, the respondents to the questionnaires indicated the need to increase the access to information in</p> | <p>A significant part of the potential beneficiaries of the programme do not have the ability to write and speak English (the official language of the programme). However, given the character of</p> | <p>Considering that some information is already available in Romanian and Hungarian languages (e.g. all the information on the official website of the programme, the</p> |

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|---|---|--|
| <p>national languages (Romanian and Hungarian).</p> | <p>all ETC programmes, the notion of cooperation is initiated, first and foremost, from a common understanding of information and the ability to interact in a language known to all parties involved. Thus, English has not to be associated with an obstacle that should be overcome, but with a means of guaranteeing cooperation and communication between the partners involved in the implementation of the project in both countries. Increasing the knowledge of English language at the level of potential beneficiaries is a topic that is assimilated to the development of administrative capacity and can be addressed through other programmes funded through European funds.</p> | <p>flyers), this source of information should be promoted among the potential beneficiaries who request the access to the information in the national languages.</p> <p>As far as possible, it is recommended to translate into national languages the key information for each Call for proposals (eligible types of beneficiaries, eligible activities, and eligible costs).</p> |

3.3. Survey conducted among the MC members

The questionnaire applied among the members of the Monitoring Committee of the programme aimed at identifying a strategic perception regarding the adequacy of the communication activities planned at the level of the Communication Strategy and carried out within the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme.

The questionnaire was sent to all the members of the MC (48 representatives - members and substitutes). During the research process, there were collected 13 responses from the MC members. The applied questionnaire was structured in the following sections:

1. General information about the institution / entity represented;
2. Communication and the related activities implemented within the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme;
3. The information within the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme;
4. Information about the respondent to the questionnaire.

The detailed report on the analysis of the answers provided by MC members can be found in **Annex no. 2 to this Evaluation Report**. The main findings from the analysis of these answers are presented below.

In terms of providing effective support for applicants, the majority of respondents (92%) consider that the communication actions implemented at the level of the programme so far have contributed to a sufficient extent to ensure it, in the context in which it would be necessary to increase the degree of the attractiveness of the materials used to promote the programme (over 50% of respondents believe that the materials currently used are only attractive to a certain extent).

In the opinion of the members of MC, as respondent to the questionnaire, it is very important to train the potential beneficiaries to use the eMS and on the types of expenditures eligible under the programme, through the information sessions / workshops organized under the programme. In order to promote the programme, information should be disseminated about the Calls for proposals and especially about the types of activities / investments financed, the eligibility conditions, the timetable for the submission of projects.

Regarding the Communication Strategy of the programme, in the respondents' view, the communication actions implemented so far have contributed at least to a sufficient extent to facilitate effective communication at programme's level. Regarding the usefulness of the evaluation exercise, 46% of the respondents believe that the evaluation is very useful and that it will generate conclusions and recommendations that will be later integrated into the Communication Strategy of the programme, the main added value of the Evaluation Report consisting of the proposals to improve the communication activities.

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|--|---|--|
| <p>It is important to train the potential beneficiaries about the use of eMS, types of eligible expenditure within the programme, and lessons learned from project implementation.</p> | <p>It is necessary to support the potential beneficiaries by organizing repeated trainings on the use of the eMS platform and to clearly distinguish the eligible types of expenditure.</p> | <p>Increase the number of training sessions on using eMS and set up a dedicated module in the online helpdesk (possibly a different address from Skype) to provide answers to potential eMS users.</p> |

3.4. Interviews with the potential direct beneficiaries of the programme

Within the contract, there were conducted 20 interviews with the direct potential beneficiaries of the programme, as follows:

- 12 interviews in Romania, 3 in each of the 4 eligible counties. It was organized an interview in each county with all the categories of potential beneficiaries – local public authority, NGOs, other categories of beneficiaries.
- 8 interviews in Hungary, in each of the 4 eligible counties, with the representatives of local public authorities (4 interviews), representatives of NGOs (2 interviews), representatives of other category of eligible beneficiaries (2 interviews).

The interviews were held on Skype or phone, each having a duration of 30-45 minutes. The selection of respondents was based on criteria such as the type of potential eligible beneficiary, the county, investment priority, etc.

The contract implementation team interviewed directly the representatives of the potential beneficiaries of the programme, in order to obtain relevant qualitative information on the information and communication activities organized within the programme, useful for this evaluation, as well as recommendations for improving such activities which will be developed within the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme.

The interview grid was structured in the following sections:

- a. Information resulted from the assessment of the satisfaction degree with the way the programme operates
- b. Information regarding the identification of ways to optimize the process of contracting and implementing the programme
- c. Information on the preferred channels of information
- d. The type of information that the direct potential beneficiaries want to receive in the future information and communication activities carried out by the structures involved in the management of the programme
- e. Recommendations for review the Communication Strategy of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme
- f. The category of information needed for an impact project

The detailed report on the analysis of the answers provided by the potential beneficiaries of the programme, participants in the interviews within the contract, can be found in Annex no. 4 to this Evaluation Report. The main findings from the analysis of these answers are presented below.

a. Information resulted from the assessment of the satisfaction degree with the way the programme operates

i. specific issues raised by potential beneficiaries about the implementation of projects during the information sessions

Considering the current state of implementation of the programme (implementation of the projects has not started yet), the information sessions organized by the programme authorities discussed mainly issues related to the preparation and submission process of the applications. Through the interviews, the respondents were very pleased and appreciated the information sessions organized as being very useful in supporting the development of project ideas, taking into account the topics addressed within them, namely the Calls for proposals launched and the sources of financing available for projects.

In general, there were not identified any differences in the organization of communication activities in 2017, compared to 2016. The main potential problem identified by the respondents in relation to the project implementation stage is related to the project budget, especially the way of completing it at the level of eMS. According to the results of the interviews, most types of eligible beneficiaries (except NGOs) have no experience of using the eMS platform, either because they have not yet submitted projects within the programme or because the funding applications have been developed by specialized consultants or consider using the platform as complicated. The potential beneficiaries reported some difficulties in identifying partners, but this is only applicable to those who did not implement projects in the previous programming period. In general, partnerships with a common experience in the successful implementation of various projects in the previous programming period are also being reconstituted in the current period for the development and implementation of new projects.

ii. positive situations and support measures provided by the structures responsible for implementing the programme (MA, JS), in relation to the implementation of the projects

Considering the current state of implementation of the programme (implementation of projects has not started yet), the support measures implemented by the programme authorities perceived by the potential beneficiaries of the programme mainly concern the provision of information and clarifications necessary for the preparation of the projects. There were not encountered major difficulties in accessing information about the programme, taking into account the continuous effort of programme authorities, notably the Joint Secretariat, to answer all the questions from potential beneficiaries in writing via e-mail or telephone, in due time.

Regarding the positive situations identified, the project generation sessions and the individual discussions held within this sessions, between JS representatives and potential beneficiaries are particularly appreciated. Another positive element is represented by the system of indicators, the way

they are calculated and the established targets being clear and showing significant improvements, compared to the previous program.

As a support measure provided by the authorities responsible for the implementation of the programme in relation to the implementation of the projects and in order to simplify the administrative tasks of the beneficiaries, during the current programming period, the submission, implementation and monitoring of the projects financed is done through the eMS electronic platform. An additional measure implemented by JS in order to facilitate the establishment of partnerships for the submission of projects is the creation of the online partner search available on the programme's website, as well as the organization of partner search forums, as part of the field communication activities.

iii. the type and degree of detail of the information provided

The type and the degree of detail of the information provided by programme authorities was appreciated by the respondents to interviews, considering the communication activities implemented prior to the closure of Calls for proposals (events and information sessions and helpdesk activities).

The questions addressed to the JS by the respondents to interviews were mainly related to unclear aspects in the Applicant's Guideline, these being the types of information requested from the programme authorities. The online helpdesk is operated by the JS via Skype, but the potential beneficiaries generally do not use this option to ask questions. In general, the Skype program and the Facebook account of the programme are not accessible to local public authorities due to the existence of some restrictions for public institution in relation to the installation of certain programs or access to certain websites on the office computers. Thus, in order to facilitate the public access to online communication with JS in real time, it was suggested to install a live chat application (a plug-in that can be installed by the website administrator) that works directly on the official website of the programme. Most respondents received relevant information about the programme online, not through printed information and promotion materials.

Regarding the degree of detail of the information provided by the programme authorities, the content of the answers provided by JS to the questions raised by the potential beneficiaries was generally considered appropriate and formulated in a short time, but there were also cases in which JS's responses had a more general character of the information transmitted. Within the information events organized by JS and MA, there were addressed both general topics regarding the nature of interventions funded by the programme, as well as specific subjects regarding the launched Calls for proposals. In addition, project generation sessions were organized, where potential beneficiaries had bilateral detailed discussions with JS representatives on specific project ideas, and also had the chance to raised clarification questions and received answers in order to solve the unclear aspects.

From the perspective of the degree of detail of the information provided, the Applicant's Guideline has been generally regarded as a relatively complex document since it may refer to several different

investment priorities in terms of the subject of the funding (eg the Applicant's Guideline for the second Call for proposals related to IP 6 / b, IP 7 / c, IP 11 / b). Also, a series of essential information for the project development is found in the Annexes of the Applicant's Guideline, the importance assigned to them indicating the need to include that information in the main content of the Guideline, so that they can be identified and analyzed more easily by the potential beneficiaries in the phase of preparation of their applications (for example, the information in the Factsheets). Difficulties in understanding the Applicant's Guideline may also arise from language differences (all of the Programme's documents are in English, while the native language of the potential beneficiaries is Romanian or Hungarian). Thus, the potential beneficiaries would appreciate that some essential information (eg those included in the Factsheet of each investment priority) should also be available in Romanian and Hungarian.

In general, it is considered that the information made available to potential beneficiaries through the published documents and the promotional tools used is sufficient to understand the overall concepts of the project implementation mechanism.

iv. the degree of transparency of the structures involved, with regard to the implementation

Taking into account the current stage of implementation of the programme (the implementation of the projects has not started yet), the degree of transparency of MA and JS was appreciated by the potential beneficiaries only in relation to the preparation stage of the application, as well as the period after the submission of the project proposals. At the stage of preparation of the applications, the degree of transparency of the structures responsible with the implementation of the programme is appreciated as being adequate, the information being made available to all potential beneficiaries interested through the programme's website as a means of information, universally used by all participants in the interviews. Following the stage of the submission of the applications and the closure of the Call for proposals, it was pointed out that the applicants no longer have access to information regarding the respective Call for proposals, from which point it is useful to provide data regarding the number of submitted projects, by counties, by types of beneficiaries; the value of the budget of the submitted projects, etc.

b. Information regarding the identification of ways to optimize the process of contracting and implementing the programme

The main element highlighted in the interviews on how to optimize the submission and contracting processes is related to the planned timetable of the Calls for proposals. As the potential beneficiaries addressed through the programme fall mainly within the category of public administrations and institutions, it is recommended that the deadlines for Calls for proposals to be planned in periods that do not overlap with the public-sector holiday periods (example: August, December, around the legal holidays); also, in order to provide sufficient time for the preparation of a project (identifying the partners, collecting the necessary documents, writing the application for funding), it is

recommended that the information on a Call for proposals and the related guideline, to be made available with about 2 months before its launch.

At the same time, in the opinion of the respondents to the interviews, the optimization of the submitting and contracting processes could be also achieved by individualizing the Applicants' Guidelines on each Investment Priority. Regarding the optimization of the project implementation process, taking into account that a part of the beneficiaries encounter difficulties in ensuring the cash flow within the project, the respondents to the interviews considered useful to introduce the payment request mechanism or to increase the pre-financing percentage granted.

Last but not least, in the discussions with the evaluation team, the representatives of NGOs participating in the interviews signaled the importance of publishing corrigenda of the programme documents in due time, so that the modifications or updates made could be consulted and assumed by to the entities over which that change produces a certain impact / change. Considering in particular the Applicant's Guideline, it is recommended that the changes / updates made in relation to a particular Call for proposals to be made no later than two weeks before the deadline for submitting the applications.

c. Information on the preferred channels of information

As a result of the interviews performed, there has been collected qualitative information regarding the information channels preferred by the respondents (direct potential beneficiaries of the programme), all of them having a high level of knowledge of all types of information channels used by the programme authorities in their information and communication activities (information events, publications, online communication, help desk activities, etc.). The respondents also indicated that they were actively involved in the communication activities carried out by the programme structures, positively appreciating the support and involvement of the Joint Secretariat in activities of this type. Moreover, all the interviewed potential beneficiaries stated that the information regarding the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme is continuously and regularly provided by the representatives of the JS, via online channels (using the website, the newsletter, information through e-mails, etc.) or are transmitted during the events organized for potential beneficiaries (information sessions, project generation sessions, etc.).

With regard to the most impacting information and communication tools used in the period 2015-2017, the general opinion is that the most effective are the online tools (newsletters, the programme's website, e-mails), which have a high degree of accessibility, attractiveness and promptness. This type of tool is preferred by all participants in interviews, being considered a means by which information can be disseminated massively, much faster and in real time. In what concerns the printed and information materials (flyers, infographics), they are considered appropriate, but their utility and efficiency is lower compared to online tools.

At the same time, the interviews identified the areas in which the communication activity can be improved, and recommendations gathered from the potential beneficiaries of the programme are presented as follows:

- *Information events:*
 - Because the most useful part of these events is considered to be the final session of questions and answers, it is recommended to continue to allocate significant time for such interactions between potential beneficiaries and the structures involved in managing the programme.
 - In order to increase the degree of interactivity of information and communication sessions, it is recommended that in the future (after the implementation and completion of the first projects) to directly involve the beneficiaries in the information events, by inviting them to present successful projects and good practice cases, in order to disseminate positive results of the projects and of the programme.
- *Publications:*
 - The publications produced within the programme are considered promotion tools with a limited degree of efficiency, compared to the online publications. This kind of publications should not be used and distributed only at meetings, but they could also be transmitted online to all entities existing in the database with potential applicants.
 - It is also recommended to transmit the publications mainly by electronic means, so as to increase the efficiency and to cover a target group as wide as possible.
- *Online communication:*
 - The programme's website is a very useful information tool, but it is believed that it could be more dynamic (the presentation of succinct and interactive infographics, indicating all the funding opportunities, presentation of materials with key-elements in order to attract more visitors). It is also recommended to publish information on the website that is of high interest to the potential beneficiaries: publication of the list of projects that have been funded, as well as those submitted which have not been evaluated (should be made public a hierarchy of projects that have received funding, as well as their score); the existence on the programme's website of a section in which all the public procurement procedures launched by the beneficiaries of the programme are published, etc.
 - Referring to the Partner Search Tool, it is considered useful to have a profile / CV of each institution that allows a link to other projects developed by each partner, considering that these reference elements are necessary in selecting partners.
 - Regarding the Facebook page of the programme, it is considered useful the way in which information is displayed, its attractiveness is high, the pictures are captivating, but this tool is not necessarily intended for the interactivity with the potential

beneficiaries, that is why it is recommended not to have a very technical content. This recommendation comes as a result of the fact that some of the respondents interviewed (eg representatives of the public authorities) said they did not use the Facebook page to identify the information about the programme.

- The eMS platform is in itself an improvement to the programme and its management. However, instruction for the use of eMS would be useful in more interactive ways (such as tutorial movies). Also, considering the complexity and novelty of using this electronic platform, it is considered necessary to increase the frequency of training sessions in this respect.
- *Helpdesk activity:*
 - It is considered as useful to carry out the helpdesk activity online, and it is recommended that this can take place in the form of live sessions, by creating an application on the programme's webpage.

d. The type of information that the direct potential beneficiaries want to receive in the future information and communication activities carried out by the structures involved in the management of the programme

In general, the participants of the interviews performed within the contract have shown a high level of satisfaction with the information disseminated by the structures involved in the management of the programme and consider that they are sufficient and appropriate for those interested in submitting and implementing projects within the programme.

However, the potential beneficiaries interviewed formulated a set of recommendations on the types of information they consider necessary to be transmitted in the future information and communication activities, indicating at the same time when this information is needed for project applicants. Thus, at the moment of identifying partners, it is very useful the support of the authorities of the programme in the process of constantly informing about the project ideas developed by the potential beneficiaries, which will facilitate the interaction between the entities pursuing the same objectives and having common purposes.

The information considered necessary by the potential beneficiaries in the stage of drafting and preparing the projects is related to: timetable of launching the Calls, deadlines for submission of projects, information on eligibility of expenditure, possible changes to the Applicant's Guidelines and their documents, and so on. It is therefore extremely relevant that these changes to be transmitted by the programme structures through all channels of communication (especially through emails sent by JS and through newsletter), so as to ensure that applicants are properly informed.

It is also recommended to provide information for the potential beneficiaries between the submission and contracting of the projects, by providing detailed situation with the status of projects

submitted by counties and by types of beneficiaries (possibly in the form of graphics), as well as providing information with the status and results of the completed evaluations and the obtained scores, aspects that will contribute to the increase of the transparency in the implementation of the programme.

In order to transmit information of interest to each category of beneficiaries, it is recommended to orientate the information and communication on the specificity of each type of potential beneficiaries, including by organizing information sessions addressed to a homogeneous target group.

e. Recommendations for review the Communication Strategy of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary programme

The Communication Strategy of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme is known to a sufficient extent by the participants in the interviews, and it is considered to be an appropriate strategic tool for the information and communication needs of the programme. This result is fully justified by the fact that the Communication Strategy is a document drafted for the authorities of the programme, and potential beneficiaries cannot offer pertinent opinions on this strategic document.

f. The category of information needed for an impact project

The interviewed respondents believe that for the implementation of a project with territorial impact it is necessary for the beneficiaries to be clearly presented elements such as the common nature of the activities and the importance of ensuring sustainability, both for the results of the project and for the partnership created. Other information considered necessary to ensure an impact on implemented projects concerns:

- Specific needs identified through studies or analyzes across different areas and localities in the eligible area of the programme as the impact only occurs if the project addresses the needs of more than one beneficiary and if these needs are properly identified and real
- Presentation of some project types or ideas that could bring improvements at local / regional / national level.
- Template for financing request, containing the key points that are scored in the technical and financial evaluation stage.
- Information about changes made at the level of the Applicant's Guideline or any other changes made after launching a Call for proposals, well in advance of the submission deadlines;
- Information regarding the extended deadlines for the submission of projects if such situations arise.

- Information on the types of eligible activities, eligible expenditure, and the reimbursement of expenditures within projects, etc.
- Code of good practice in project implementation.
- Information on successful project ideas and / or failure.

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|--|---|---|
| 1. The potential beneficiaries encounter difficulties in using the eMS platform, especially in relation to the specific module for filling in the budget of the project. | Particular attention has to be paid during training sessions on the use of eMS and the preparation of the budget. | Supplementing the time spent on explaining the project budget module during training sessions on the use of eMS. |
| 2. The online helpdesk sessions via Skype are not accessible to all the categories of potential beneficiaries, especially for public authorities who cannot install / use this programme at their workplace because of the system administrator restrictions. | Considering the importance of the online communication tools, it is necessary to identify a solution that allows potential beneficiaries to access online helpdesk without the need to install applications / programmes on the computers. | Install a "livechat" application (a plug-in that can be installed by the administrator of the Website), that works directly on the official website of the programme. |
| 3. From the point of view of the detail of the information communicated, the Applicant's Guideline was generally regarded as a relatively complex document, as it may refer to several different investment priorities in terms of the subject matter of the funding. Also, a series of essential information for the project is only found in the | In order to facilitate the understanding of the information contained in the Applicant's Guideline by the potential beneficiaries, it is necessary to restructure the document, in order to make clearer connections between it and the types of investments covered by the Call for proposals. | Include the information from the Factsheets in the Guideline for applicants, under the specific subchapters of the related Investment Priorities, individually positioned after Chapter 1. General Information to ensure an increased visibility level. |

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|---|--|--|
| annexes of the Applicant's Guideline. | | |
| 4. From the point of view of the degree of transparency, following the submission of the applications for funding and the closure of the Call for proposals, it was pointed out that the applicants no longer have access to information on the respective Call for proposals. | In order to increase the degree of transparency in relation to the Calls for proposals launched, it is important to inform the potential beneficiaries after the deadline for the submission of projects, about the number of submitted applications that will enter the administrative evaluation stage and their total budget. | Publishing statistics on the programme's website about the number of submitted projects and their total budget within a maximum of 1 month from the deadline, for submission of projects in the framework of a certain Call for proposals. |
| 5. The calendar of the Calls for proposals launched so far has partly overlapped with the holidays period at the level of the public authorities and institutions (August), limiting the administrative capacity of potential beneficiaries to prepare the applications and identify partners. Also, in relation to the timing of the Calls for proposals, the publication of any corrections must be made in good time before the deadline for submission. | The calendar of the various Calls for proposals should be done considering the most favorable periods, from the perspective of the time available to potential beneficiaries for project preparation. | The calendar of the Calls for proposals, should be prepared so that the deadline for submission of the application not to be in the proximity of legal holidays for public authorities and institutions (the deadline should be preferably set at least 1 week before / after such a period and not in August). The publication of the corrigenda should be made no later than 2 weeks before the deadline set or, if later, to extend the deadline for submission. |
| 6. The participants in the interviews declared that they are interested in the Q&A sessions organized during information events. | The direct interaction sessions with the programme's authorities (Q&A sessions) are considered very relevant in order to obtain information of interest and clarifying specific situations. | It is recommended to continue to allocate significant time for interactions between potential beneficiaries and structures involved in the management of the programme, by continuing to organize Q&A sessions in the context of information events. |

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|---|---|--|
| <p>7. The potential beneficiaries consider that they can get relevant information from other entities that have already implemented projects and who have faced the same rules and the same implementation context.</p> | <p>It is noted a need to disseminate information on the implementation of successful projects (at a later stage of implementation of the programme, taking into account that there are no selected and implemented projects at the time of the current evaluation).</p> | <p>In order to increase the degree of interactivity of the information and communication sessions, it is recommended that in the future (after the implementation and completion of the first projects) to directly involve beneficiaries in the information events by inviting them to present successful stories, in order to disseminate positive results of the projects and of the programme.</p> |
| <p>8. As a result of the interviews, it was found that the publications (posters, flyers, etc.) are not used very often by the potential beneficiaries in printed format.</p> | <p>Printed publications present a high degree of attractiveness and efficiency among the potential beneficiaries.</p> | <p>It is recommended to transmit the publications electronically, so as to increase efficiency and cover a broader target group.</p> |
| <p>9. The potential beneficiaries know about the Partner Search Tool, but they are interested in detailed information about the entities included in the database.</p> | <p>The Partner Search Tool is considered effective, but should contain more information about each individual entity.</p> | <p>Regarding the Partner Search Tool, it would be useful to have a profile / CV of each institution that would allow a link to other projects developed by each partner, considering these reference elements to be necessary in selecting partners</p> |

3.5. Focus group with the Programme's managing bodies

The contractor has organized a focus group on the 27th of September 2017, which brought together the representatives of the Managing Authority and those of the Joint Secretariat, with the aim of presenting the results of the evaluation of the communication activities, obtained by applying questionnaires and conducting interviews with potential beneficiaries of the Interreg V-A Romania–Hungary Programme.

Also, the main objectives of this focus group were:

- identifying the opinion of the Managing Authority on ensuring the correct information about the identity of the programme and the opportunities it offers in the eligible area of the programme;
- identifying their views on how to transmit the information on ensuring the economic and social impact of project proposals;
- assessing the degree of satisfaction towards the press relations activities of the entities with attributions in the implementation of the programme;
- analyzing the opinion of the bodies involved in the implementation of the programme on how to identify and use the preferred channels of information: online - email, newsletter, site, social media / events, press conference, briefings, training seminars, etc.

The Focus Group was conducted on-line (via Skype), using the Focus Group grid proposed in the Inception Report, which was the basis for discussions..

Also, the results of the evaluation were discussed and presented to the Hungarian National Authority during a Skype discussion / interview, organized on 06.10.2017, in order to ensure the representativeness of the opinions of the programme authorities in both countries involved in the implementation of the programme.

The main findings and conclusions of the Focus Group are summarized below, in correspondence to each main objective identified above:

- a. Ensure the correct information regarding the programme identity and funding opportunities**
 - The feedback from potential beneficiaries was gathered via the questionnaires distributed to the participants of the information events organized by JS - Info Days and Partner Search Forum. Through the collected questionnaires, was highlighted the fact that the potential beneficiaries prefer direct information (information events) and online information sources (official programme page, e-mail, newsletter).
 - Recently, the authorities managing the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme have extended the direct communication network by transmitting information to applicant also through the eMS platform, by publishing an alert message when Corrigenda appear on active calls.

- It has also been pointed out that the JS has already started implementing measures and actions based on the findings and conclusions of this research, such as increasing the number of newflashes transmitted online to the database with contacts of potential beneficiaries.
- From the perspective of the JS, the information actions with the greatest impact among the potential beneficiaries were the organized information events as well as the continuous communication actions, such as helpdesk, through which the JS representatives ensured and maintained a permanent communication with the potential applicants.

Identifying the opinion on how to submit information on ensuring the economic and social impact of project proposals

- In order to increase the awareness of the potential beneficiaries about the financing opportunities offered by the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme and their economic and social impact, the structures involved in the programme management intend to carry out in the future, actions to present examples of good practice. Examples of good practice will be illustrated through dedicated photos, articles, reports or brochures. Thus, for the future information and communication activities, the programme's authorities are looking for the presentation of examples of good practice also through the newsletter and brochures to be published, capturing the impact of the successfully closed projects on the financed fields.

Assessing the degree of satisfaction towards the information and communication activities

- The JS's opinion on the level of satisfaction with the information and communication activities is that the organized events, the programme's web page, the newsletter and the e-mail were the most appreciated means of communication and information among potential beneficiaries, aspect highlighted also from the analysis of satisfaction questionnaires applied to potential beneficiaries participating in various events organized. One of the areas where communication could be intensified / improved, as resulting also from the quantitative research, is represented by the publications regarding the Programme. In this respect, the representatives of the programme's managing bodies stated that the elaboration of publications drafted after the implementation period of the projects will be pursued in order to include information on the results achieved within the completed projects. In the same context, it was also mentioned that the communication actions were mainly directed towards the transmission of electronic messages, since the population show a lower interest for the printed information.
- Regarding the Facebook page of the programme, the JS emphasized that this tool aims to briefly present the news that appeared within the programme. In order to access more details on the topics presented, in the Facebook posts there are references to the integral advertisements published on the programme's website.

- By the time of the current evaluation, as mentioned by the representatives of the JS the participation of the media in the information events, occurred during the launching conference of the programme and at the annual event organized with the occasion of the European Cooperation Day in 2017.
- The impact of organized information events has also been demonstrated by the number of programme applicants, which increased considerably in the second Call for proposals.
- Regarding the Info Points in Hungary and their role in the communication activities, the authorities of the programme pointed out that they are coordinated by the Joint Secretariat and they undertake helpdesk activities, participate in project ideas generation sessions, and the hired staff within them is involved in project evaluation activities. The Info Points in Hungary have at the moment a representative in each county.

The analysis of the programme authorities' opinion on how to identify and use the preferred information channels

- According to the feedback sent to the Managing Authority and to the Joint Secretariat by the potential beneficiaries of the programme, the preferred information channels are the information and communication events and online communication channels (newsletter, programme's website and e-mail communication).

| Findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|--|--|---|
| At the level of the JS, a series of actions have already been implemented to enhance the communication activities with potential beneficiaries such as increasing the online issues of newsflash and implementing direct communication with applicants through the eMS platform. | The authorities involved in the management of the programme have started implementing the recommendations contained in this evaluation report, thus confirming the usefulness and applicability of the evaluation. | Not the case. |
| Online communication and information are the preferred means of information for potential beneficiaries, compared to the printed materials. | High importance is to be given to optimize online tools and means of communication. | Increasing the number of newsflash issues and newsletters transmitted to the database with potential beneficiaries existing at the level of the JS. |


4. Ensuring the communication with respect to gender equality, non-discrimination and sustainable development

Gender equality, non-discrimination and sustainable development are a set of horizontal principles that have been integrated into all the communication activities undertaken so far under the programme.

From the perspective of gender equality and non-discrimination, were found the following:

- participation to information and communication events and training sessions was free for all interested persons irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity, etc.
- the information published on the programme's website and Facebook account is public and accessible to all the interested parties
- the official websites of the programme and of the MA are accessible to people with visual disabilities, with specific website applications for changing the font size, text color, etc.
- Within the presentations of the launched Calls for proposals, the structure of the funding applications was presented, including a section on horizontal principles (equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women), which is scored in the qualitative assessment of the projects.

From the perspective of sustainable development, were found the following:

- information on the activities of the programme is disseminated and made available to the public concerned, mainly by online means;
- Within the presentations of the launched Calls for proposals, the structure of the funding applications was presented, including a section dedicated to horizontal principles (sustainable development, use of green procurement, use of green infrastructure, consideration of long-term cost opportunities), which is scored within the qualitative assessment of the projects;
- the emails sent by the JS include in the electronic signature the text: :  Before printing, think about environmental responsibility, thus encouraging a friendly environment approach by reducing the amount of paper used.

5. Conclusions and recommendations regarding the communication and information activities to support potential beneficiaries at programme level

The conclusions and recommendations presented in this chapter were formulated on the basis of the assessment findings as presented in chapter 3 of the report, considering their correlation and transversal processing in order to formulate some aggregated and verifiable conclusions and recommendations from several sources of information, according to the applied research methodology. At the end of the different sections of chapter 3, the correspondence between the findings of the research and the conclusions, respectively the recommendations formulated, is presented. The conclusions and general recommendations resulting from the correlation of all research results are presented below.

5.1. CONCLUSIONS resulting from the analysis performed

- The existing documents within the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme are clear, have well-defined objectives and present concrete measures to be taken in the field of communication.
- The objectives established at the level of the programme documents are quantifiable and easy to monitor and are designed to allow the presentation of the implementation stage of the communication activities carried out by the programme's structures.
- From qualitative point of view, the programme documents create the necessary framework for directing the communication activities towards the areas of interest for all the potential applicants
- The differentiated presentation of the communication activities from the Communication Strategy of the programme (including proposed and achieved indicators) by target groups categories, allows the orientation of the information and communication measures in the directions in which there are needs and interest.
- The Info Points in Hungary have an important role in implementing the communication activities in the eligible area of the programme in Hungary. The IPs are established within each county and operate in three counties starting from the spring of 2017, and the Info Point in Debrecen is functioning since September 2017. The Info Points were involved, under the coordination of JS, in organizing events on the Hungarian side of the border in the

context of the second round of Calls for proposal, in organizing the annual event dedicated to the European Cooperation Day 2017 and in providing information to potential beneficiaries in Hungary, upon request.

- The posters, infographics, stickers, newsletters, online press releases, agendas of the organized events, used within the programme, comply with the visual identity rules according to the VIM and are elaborated and structured in an optimal way, i.e. are relevant and of interest for the target groups.
- The Leaflet is a useful tool for promoting the type of investments / projects supported through the programme, having as target group, by its nature, the general public. The information contained in the leaflet is relevant but far too detailed, being necessary to sort the information so as to be easier for the reader to understand the message.
- The official website of the programme presents the information of interest in a complete and correct way using attractive graphics and visual tools that capture the reader's attention. Certain sections of the website can be optimized in terms of the structure of the information presented to facilitate their reading. Also, certain features of the website can be improved, such as the calendar of information and communication events.
- The information presented at the level of the MA website is comprehensive and the level of detail and transparency is appropriate. The way information is disposed and displayed, however, requires improvements, in order to facilitate the understanding and the identification of information of interest by the readers.
- The Facebook page of the programme is constantly updated and provides information of great interest on the programme's activities to followers, in the future, the increase of the number of followers, being important.
- Two tools have been created successively to identify the potential partners, but they have not been integrated, currently operating individually.
- The tools / modules existing on the programme website (Partner Search platform, online event registration platform) are not always identified by the visitors at the first access of the website, thus requiring the increase of visibility of these tools.
- The Partner Search tool is considered effective but should contain more information about each registered entity.
- Given the importance of the online communication tools, it is necessary to identify a solution that allows potential beneficiaries to access the online helpdesk without the need to install applications / programs on their computers.
- In order to increase the degree of transparency in relation to the launched Calls for proposals, it is important that the potential beneficiaries are informed, after the deadline for the submission of projects, on the number of submitted projects that will enter the administrative evaluation stage and their total budget.
- Planning the timing of the various Calls for proposals should be done considering the most favorable conditions in terms of the time available to potential beneficiaries for project preparation.

- It is necessary to support the potential beneficiaries through repeated trainings on the use of the eMS platform and to clearly distinguish the eligible types of expenditure.
- The manner in which the information on the programme is presented is relatively optimal, but a need to simplify the terminology used in order to improve its understanding among all potential beneficiaries is identified.
- The promotion in written and television media at local, regional and national level is not a relevant mean of communication and information for the potential applicants within the programme.
- The potential beneficiaries prefer direct information (information events) and online information sources (official programme's page, e-mail, newsletter). The online communication tools are preferred by most typologies of potential beneficiaries, regardless of the county of origin.
- There is a need for continuous information shown by potential beneficiaries within the programme. Dissemination of information through communication events is considered to be very important, the potential beneficiaries being interested in attending as many events as possible.
- The projects generation sessions, that encourage the interaction with the programme authorities are considered very relevant for obtaining information of interest and clarifying specific situations.
- It is considered to be very useful for the promotion of the programme the dissemination of information on the implementation of successful projects (at a later stage of programme implementation, taking into account that there are no selected and implemented projects at the time of conducting this evaluation).
- The programme authorities' opinion is that the organized events, the programme's web page, the newsletter and the e-mail were the most appreciated means of communication and information among potential beneficiaries, aspect highlighted also by the analysis of satisfaction questionnaires applied to potential beneficiaries participating in various events organized. In the same context, it was also mentioned that the communication actions were mainly directed towards the transmission of electronic messages, since the population show a lower interest in the printed information.

5.2. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS on future communication activities

- In general, it is recommended that the programme documents / reports, where possible, present the results of the implemented communication activities with a higher level of detail.
- It is recommended to simplify the information presented in the leaflet by removing the following types of information that is not widely known / understood by the general public: the result and output indicators specific to each Investment Priority; the section "What does a quality project mean?".
- To optimize how the information is presented on the official website of the programme, the following is recommended:
 - o Programme priorities presented within the section *Programme - Priority Axes* could be presented using toggle content (the name of all investment priorities would first appear on the page and the reader would click on the priority of interest and would open under the title only the information of interest for that priority). To their presentation it might also be included a link to the specific infographic;
 - o Within the sections *RO Legislation* and *HU Legislation* it would also be helpful to include links to those documents so that they can be easily accessible to readers;
 - o Section *Gallery - Photos /Programme's Video Events* could be structured using toggle content to reduce the loading and scrolling time on the page (in this version of the website it is necessary to wait in order to upload all the photos from the events and to browse the entire page)
 - o Section *News and Events* should be completed with a sub-section (Online Registration of Participants to Events) in order to increase awareness of this tool among website readers;
 - o The button and search field should be positioned in the header of the page to make it more visible to website readers;
 - o The size of the main page slider should be reduced - when opening the website, it would be advisable for the reader to directly view the three link sections now positioned under the main slider;
 - o The font color for "Details" on the main slider must be changed because the current version of the website is confused with the background color (blue);
 - o Button commands should be translated into Romanian and Hungarian, for the respective versions of the website, in order to ensure the accessibility of persons with disabilities
- It is recommended to update the calendar of events with an indication of the events organized and carried out so far, as well as with the events planned for the next month, respectively the dates of particular significance (e.g. the launching and closing date of a Call for proposals).

- It is recommended to update the following sections so that information and documents are provided in a unitary way in the three languages in which the sections of the website are available:
 - Documents - EU Legislation: The first document on the State aid guidelines is missing in Romanian and Hungarian
 - Documents - eMS documents: the last document from PPT presentations is missing in Romanian and Hungarian
 - Media: In English and Hungarian, fewer consultation documents are available compared to the Romanian version of the page
- Regarding the webpage of the programme, in order to facilitate the understanding and access to the information contained on the page, the following website updates are recommended:
 - there should be a navigation menu or at least a structure of the page presented in the header that contains direct links to the page, to various sections of interest to the reader; it would be useful to create an archive of information presented in sections News and Events for years 2015, 2016;
 - The information presented in section News and Events should be structured on topics in order to facilitate an easier browsing (e.g.: Call for Proposals, Programme implementation; Others);
 - The information should also be available in English (programme implementation language).
- It is recommended to include a link to the programme's Facebook page in the newsletters, in the header of the page under the programme's logo and in the footer of the page previous to the slogan associated with the programme, along with a short impact text such as: "Always be informed about Interreg V-A Romania- Hungary!" followed by the Facebook symbol, which through selection (click) is connected to the Facebook account of the programme.
- It is recommended to close the 2014.huro-cbc.eu website as it is important for the public to be directed and to access the official website of the programme in order to guarantee a full and accurate information about the activities of the programme.
- In order to avoid the confusion that may be created among potential beneficiaries and considering the importance to direct the public to the official website of the programme, it is recommended to close the existing Partner Search platform on the BRECO website, i.e. to migrate the existing information to the new platform on the official website of the programme.
- The tools could be individualized or positioned differently on the website, in order to increase their visibility (for example, the Partner Search module could be included as a button with the "Search Partners" text - similar to the one for people with disabilities, placed under the latter, visible on the right side of the website at the opening of any page; for the online registration to participate to events, a pop-up window may be included when the visitor go to the "News and Events" section where events in the next 1-2 months are listed and where the visitor has the option to register for participation).

- The continuous update of the programme's website and Facebook account, with information of interest for the beneficiaries and the transmission of newsflashes to the JS contact database, in the key moments of the programme implementation (launching a Call for proposals, publishing a corrigendum, publishing the list of selected projects).
- Publishing statistics on the programme's website on the number of submitted projects and their total budget within maximum 1 month from the deadline for submission of projects within a certain Call.
- Planning the calendar for the Calls for proposals so that the deadline is not in the vicinity of free legal days for public authorities and institutions (preferably the deadline will be set with at least 1 week before / after such a period and not in August).
- The publication of the corrigendum shall be made no later than 2 weeks before the deadline or, if later, the deadline for submission should be extended accordingly.
- Regarding the Partners Search Tool, it is considered useful to have a profile / CV of each institution, so as to allow the creation of a link with other projects developed by each partner, considering these reference elements to be necessary in selecting partners.
- Installing a "livechat" application (a plug-in that can be installed by the administrator of the website) that works directly on the official website of the programme.
- It is recommended to increase the number of newsletters and newsflash issues sent to the contacts contained in the JS database.
- Increase the number of training sessions on using eMS and set up a dedicated module within the online helpdesk (possibly a different Skype address) to provide answers to potential beneficiaries regarding the eMS use.
- Supplementing the time spent explaining the project budget module during training sessions on the use of eMS.
- Increasing the number of on-site information events (information sessions, partner search forums, eMS training sessions, Q&A sessions).
- Given that a number of information is already available in Romanian and Hungarian languages (e.g. all the information on the official website of the programme, the programme leaflet), this source of information should be promoted among the potential beneficiaries requesting access to the information in the national languages.
- In order to increase the degree of interactivity of information and communication sessions, it is recommended that in the future (after the implementation and completion of the first projects) the beneficiaries are directly involved in the information events, possibly by being invited to present those successful projects, in order to disseminate positive results of the projects and of the programme. The programme management bodies are considering the presentation of examples of good practices also through the newsletter and brochures to be published, capturing the impact of projects on the financed domains (e.g. the health sector).
- Including the information in the factsheets in the Applicant's Guide, in subchapters dedicated to the related Investment Priorities, individually positioned after Chapter 1. General information to ensure a high visibility.

- It is recommended that the publications to be transmitted electronically, in particular, so as to increase efficiency and cover a broader target group.

It is worth mentioning that the implementation of some of the recommendations was already started by the programme authorities, based on the preliminary discussions with the evaluation team.

The opportunity to implement the recommendations provided at the level of this Evaluation Report will be analyzed within the Monitoring Committee of the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme. After the consultations, there will be defined the optimal approach to implement the recommendation and the responsibilities of each authority involved in the management of the programme (Managing Authority, National Authority, Joint Secretariat), as well as the timetable for implementation and monitoring.

Annexes

Annex 1. Survey report among potential beneficiaries

Annex 2. Survey report among MC members

Annex 3. Interview reports

Annex 4. Focus Group report

Annex 5. Template of questionnaire designed to investigate the degree of satisfaction among participants in future information events