



Evaluation of the Interreg Italy-Albania-Montenegro IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020



Interreg - IPA CBC
Italy - Albania - Montenegro



EUROPEAN UNION

First report on the Programme communication
strategy

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t33 Srl - www.t33.it
via Calatafimi I, 60121 Ancona (Italy)
Tel.+39 071 9715460 - Fax +39 071 9715461
E-mail: info@t33.it

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I Executive summary

This report assesses the communication strategy of the 2014-2020 Interreg IPA CBC Italy – Albania - Montenegro programme. The main findings of the evaluation are reported below.

The communication activities implemented by the Programme are in line with the general and specific objectives set in the communication strategy document. Among the main objectives set out in the Programme communication strategy are:

C.O.1: MAKE THE IT-AL-ME COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN – Programme communication activities proved to be effective in establishing an efficient and well-functioning communication flow in the programme area. The Programme performed well in rising interest about its financing opportunities. In particular, communication and information activities carried out for potential applicants/beneficiaries can be considered adequate to support applicants in submitting their projects proposals. Programme website, Facebook page and the events/training sessions organised, proved to be effective in reaching the potential applicants and beneficiaries.

C.O.2: TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK – The Programme supports applicants and beneficiaries through a set of tools and initiatives which are perceived by beneficiaries as very useful. The responsiveness of the programme authorities is also well appreciated.

C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES – To support beneficiaries in implementing the communication work package, the programme bodies prepared and made available, on the Programme's website, specific templates ready to be used by beneficiaries. Also, the Programme organised information meetings and workshops to encourage the capitalisation of project results.

C.O.4: TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME – Communication among internal targeted audience (programme staff) is well-structured and the support provided by the JS is appreciated. Some rooms of improvement still exist regarding the support provided to FLCs. Promotional activities were carried out during the European Cooperation Day and other events (e.g. EUSAIR Annual Forum, ADRION workshops, EUSAIR seminars, etc). In this regard, as also stressed by the Programme document, a specific attention has been given to capitalisation activities with other EU territorial cooperation programmes of the area (e.g. ADRION) and with the EUSAIR Strategy.

2 Introduction

The objective of this report is to illustrate the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme communication strategy. The evaluation findings should serve as a tool for improving the quality of the Programme communication activities, in light of the new programming period.

This first report on the communication strategy illustrates the results of the analysis related to the communication flow in the programme area (internal and external), the degree of involvement of the defined target groups, the ability of the projects to communicate results, the level of awareness of the activities and results achieved by the Programme in the cooperation area.

3 Methodological approach

According to the programme evaluation plan, the evaluation of the communication strategy should answer the following evaluation questions:

| Evaluation topic | Evaluation questions from the TOR |
|-------------------------|---|
| Programme communication | 26. Have programme bodies been efficient in ensuring a well-functioning communication flow in the programme area? |
| | 27. Have the programme communication measures reached the relevant target groups efficiently? |
| | 28. Has the programme contributed to increasing the capacity of projects to communicate their own achievements? |
| | 29. Has the programme raised awareness about its activities and achievements? |
| | 30. Does the communication strategy need to be updated for the remaining programme period based on the evaluation findings? |

As illustrated by the table below, and in order to investigate the evaluation of the communication strategy, the evaluators proposed a set of the main methodological tools to use in answering the proposed list of evaluation questions for collecting and analysing information: desk research, interviews with the programme authorities, case studies and web-survey.

Table 1 – Programme communication strategy evaluation questions and methods

| Evaluation questions | As apprehended by the evaluator | Desk research | Interviews | Case studies | Web-survey |
|---|---|---------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Have programme bodies been efficient in ensuring a well-functioning communication flow in the programme area? | This question will investigate the communication activities conducted by the programme authorities and whether (and how) these have led to the achievement of the objectives established in the Communication Strategy. | • | • | • | • |
| Have the programme communication measures reached the relevant target groups efficiently? | This question will evaluate whether (and how) the communication activities have reached the relevant target groups. | • | • | • | • |
| Has the programme contributed to increase the capacity of projects to communicate their own achievements? | The question aims to identify the effectiveness of the programme in supporting project communication activities. | • | • | • | • |
| Has the programme raised awareness about its activities and achievements? | This question will evaluate the extent to which the objectives of visibility of the programme have been achieved. | • | • | • | • |
| Does the communication strategy need to be updated for the remaining programme period based on the evaluation findings? | Based on the findings regarding the awareness of the beneficiaries/potential beneficiaries for what concerns the Programme, its interventions and | • | • | | |

| Evaluation questions | As apprehended by the evaluator | Desk research | Interviews | Case studies | Web-survey |
|----------------------|---|---------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| | impact on the territory, the evaluators will make proposals for improving the visibility of the Programme (if necessary). | | | | |



The main tools used for the preparation of the first report on the communication strategy are the desk analysis of the programme documents relating to communication activities. In particular, the evaluators analysed the documents aimed at disseminating knowledge on programme funding opportunities (Programme events, Info-days, use of social channels etc.), but also relating the support provided to applicants/beneficiaries (workshops, trainings) and the dissemination of information on projects implementation.



Interviews with programme authorities provided interesting information on how programme authorities supported applicants during project preparation and beneficiaries during project implementation, in particular on the specific communication activities carried out in the IPA territories.

Evaluators also conducted 9 case studies (for a total number of 17 interviews with project lead partners and project partners). Case studies were selected in accordance with the JS and they refer to advanced projects approved during the first call for proposal. The case study selection was done with the aim of ensuring a well-balanced coverage among programme specific objectives and countries. Case studies interviews provided information on the effectiveness of the communication activities performed by the programmes in the territories, on the efficiency of the communication flow between the programme authorities and its beneficiaries, and the capacity of the programme to support projects in communicating their results.



Finally, the web-survey launched in March 2021 and the case studies interviews provided information about the perceptions of applicants and beneficiaries on the communication flow in the programme area and among the programme stakeholders.

4 State of play of the communication strategy



The Programme communication strategy, adopted in July 2016, identifies a list of activities and tools to promote the visibility of the Programme. The strategy stresses the key role of the communication activities, which are considered the basis of cooperation and a prerequisite for the Programme to deliver meaningful and visible results among project partners. The communication strategy is implemented through annual communication plans.

Within the Programme document, the communication strategy is included in Priority Axis 5 - Technical Assistance, that foresees the two following specific objectives.

Table 2 – Programme communication specific objectives

| PROGRAMME PRIORITY AXIS 5: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE | |
|--|---|
| SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES | EXPECTED RESULTS |
| S.O.5.1 To increase in efficiency and effectiveness the management and implementation of the Cooperation Programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring an adequate management and control environment of the Programme. Ensuring that all Programme implementation steps (including the launch of calls, contracting, monitoring of operations and Programme achievements, reimbursement of expenditure, etc.) are timely and properly executed. |
| S.O.5.2 To improve the support to applicants and beneficiaries and to strengthen the involvement of relevant partners in the Programme implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased capacity of applicants and beneficiary to participate in the Programme. Strengthened involvement of relevant partners in Programme implementation. |

Source: Communication Strategy for Interreg IPA II Cross-border Cooperation Programme Italy-Albania-Montenegro

Besides the specific objectives listed above, four are the main objectives set out in the Programme communication strategy:

C.O.1: MAKE THE IT-AL-ME COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN - One of the specific objectives of the communication strategy focuses on the diffusion of the visibility Programme, in order to allow all the potential beneficiaries, stakeholders and EU citizens in general, to know the opportunities provided by the Programme calls and to stay informed on the project's implementation progresses and outcomes.

C.O.2: TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK – Programme management bodies (MA and JS) should support lead and project partners in communicating with their projects' target audiences, in order to ensure a good project development and implementation. Additionally, the programme should organise workshops and seminars with the approved projects (suggestions and guidelines to projects' actors to help them to reach their objectives and achievements), to improve the quality of the Programme's implementation.

C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES – Another fundamental objective of the communication strategy is to make programme results and achievements visible within the cooperation area and beyond. To do so, the MA and the JS should support project communication activities.

C.O.4: TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME – Programme management bodies (MA and JS) should facilitate the cooperation between all the bodies that are directly or indirectly involved in the Programme's administration (auditors, controllers, EUSAIR stakeholders, State organisations involved, etc).

Additionally, each of the communication objectives reported above must align with the following horizontal principles:

- H.P.1: Territorial Awareness
- H.P.2: Funds Clarity
- H.P.3: Equal opportunities
- H.P.4: Projects Visibility

The Communication strategy also indicates the identified targeted audience, that, according to the role played inside the Programme, is distinguished in two main categories: internal target audience (e.g. programme staff) and external target audience (potential applicants, beneficiaries, public opinion, other general stakeholders, etc.)

The Programme communication strategy proposes a multitude of instruments to provide effective communications. These are listed as follows, according to three main categories:

- **Institutional Communication** (Programme Website portal; Branding, Mobile App, Programme Publications, Information materials and videos)
- **Public Relationships** (Press Office, Social media, Events, Training Sessions)
- **Marketing Communication** (Advertising, Printed Materials, Promotional Materials)

The table below summarises: 1) how each tool should contribute to the achievements of the communication objectives; 2) the related target groups addressed.

Table 3 – Communication tools

| Activities/Tools | Communication objectives | Target Audience |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1) Programme Website portal | C.O.1: MAKE THE IT-AL-ME COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN C.O.2: TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES C.O.4: TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme staff • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations |
| 2) Branding | C.O.1: MAKE THE IT-AL-ME COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations |
| 3) Mobile App | C.O.1: MAKE THE IT-AL-ME COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN C.O.2: TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES C.O.4: TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme staff • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations |

| Activities/Tools | Communication objectives | Target Audience |
|--|---|--|
| 4) Programme Publications | C.O.1: MAKE THE IT-AL-ME COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN C.O.2: TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme staff • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations |
| 5) Information materials and videos | C.O.1: MAKE THE IT-AL-ME COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN C.O.2: TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES C.O.4: TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations |
| 6) Press Office | C.O.1: MAKE THE IT-AL-ME COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES C.O.4: TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations |
| 7) Social media | C.O.1: MAKE THE IT-AL-ME COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN C.O.2: TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES C.O.4: TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People employed for bodies involved in the governance of the Programme • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations |
| 8) Events | C.O.1: MAKE THE IT-AL-ME COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN C.O.2: TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES C.O.4: TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People employed for bodies involved in the governance of the Programme • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations |
| 9) Training Sessions | C.O.2: TO SUPPORT APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES' WORK C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES C.O.4: TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People employed for bodies involved in the governance of the Programme • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations |

| Activities/Tools | Communication objectives | Target Audience |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| I0)Advertising | C.O.1: MAKE THE IT-AL-ME COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES C.O.4: TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations |
| I1)Printed Materials | C.O.1: MAKE THE IT-AL-ME COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES C.O.4: TO PROMOTE NETWORKING AROUND THE PROGRAMME | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People employed for bodies involved in the governance of the Programme • Potential applicants • Beneficiaries • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations |
| I2)Promotional Materials | C.O.1: MAKE THE IT-AL-ME COOPERATION PROGRAMME KNOWN C.O.3 TO DISSEMINATE PROJECTS OUTCOMES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential applicants • Influencers • Public Opinion and Other organisations |

Source: Programme Communication strategy

4.1 EFFICIENCY IN ENSURING A WELL-FUNCTIONING COMMUNICATION FLOW



In general, programme communication activities proved to be effective in establishing a well-functioning communication flow in the programme area. No external support has been hired by the Programme to support the management of the communication flow and communication activities have been implemented by a dedicated JS officer.

The analysis reveals that the Programme has implemented almost all the planned activities. The table shows the events/workshops and trainings organised.

Table 4 - Level of implementation of the communication activities of the Italy-Albania-Montenegro programme

| Activities/Tools | Activities implemented by the Programme | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| 1)Programme Website portal | Dissemination of Programme materials and publications | “Tools” and “Official Docs” sections available on the website |
| | Updated information | News published on the website Approximately 330 news&events in programme website |
| | Users data | Approximately 67.738 users Approximately 186.658 page views |
| 2)Branding | Programme logo | Different logos, available on the website |
| | Graphical elements and templates and visual identity | Visual identity manuals with branding instructions and infographics available on the website |

| Activities/Tools | | Activities implemented by the Programme |
|--|--|--|
| | guidelines/project templates | |
| | Visual Identity manual | Published online (October 2018) |
| 3) Mobile App | A mobile app | Mobile app implemented |
| 4) Programme Publications | Project catalogue | Section “Projects” available on the website. For each project, a dedicate official site has been created. Each site reports general information on the project, its activities, deliverables and a news and events section. |
| | Best practices book | Not implemented |
| 5) Information materials and videos | Brochures and information materials, videos and photos | Section “News” and “Multimedia” available on the website |
| | Newsletter | First edition – April 2021 162 subscribers (May 2021) |
| 6) Press Office | Press releases | Section “Press releases” available on the website. Press releases activity has been particularly intense the first year of implementation of the programme (approx. 16 press releases published on the website in 2017). In the subsequent years (2018 – 2019 -2020) approximately 2 press releases published for each year. the number of press releases sent to newspapers / distributed during events is approximately 40. Only a selection of them has been published on the programme website. |
| | Newspaper articles, online articles | > 830 articles / TV reports (total coverage) |
| 7) Social media | Facebook | Created in 2017; 2957 like ; 3163 followers, 2 people registered, Intense publications in English; Direct links from the website to the Facebook page (and conversely), Emails and contact details of the JS well detailed. |
| | LinkedIn | 8 connections |
| 8) Events | Launch events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bari, 6 March 2017 • Tirana, 15 March 2017 • Podgorica, 17 March 2017 |
| | Intermediate events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant Award Ceremony, Podgorica, 4 July 2019 • Evaluation meetings / 1st call projects - 32 webinars, from May – September 2020 • Decommitment meeting / Standard and thematic projects, Bari, 21 January 2020 (105 participants) • Negotiations meetings / Targeted |

| Activities/Tools | | Activities implemented by the Programme |
|------------------|-----------------|---|
| | | <p>call projects, Bari, 21 February 2020 + individual meeting (120 participants)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First year review meetings / Thematic projects, 8 online meetings, February 2021 • Partnership meetings, Task Force 2021-27, 5 online meetings, June-September 2020 |
| | Closing events | 1 st call for proposal projects final events, online, September – December 2020 |
| | Info-days | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecce, 4 April 2017 • Campobasso, 11 April 2017 • Podgorica, 17th March 2017 • Bari, 14 January 2019 (Targeted call) • Campobasso, 16 January 2019 (Targeted call) • Podgorica, 02 January 2019 (Targeted call) • Tirana, 16 January 2019 (Targeted call) |
| | Workshops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nikšić (ME), 18 February 2019 • Sutomore (ME), 19 February 2019 |
| | External events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiera del Levante, Bari, 12 September 2017 • EU Cooperation day: Rome, 21 September 2017, Bari 22 September 2017, Podgorica, 21 September 2017 Lecce, 28 October 2018 • Round table Regione Molise, Campobasso, 12 September 2018 • Ministry of EU and Foreign Affairs, Tirana, 17 January 2018 • Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome 12 March 2018 • EUSAIR Annual Forum, Catania, 24-25 May 2018 • EUSAIR Annual Forum, Budva, 7-8 May 2019 • Workshop ADRION. Bari, 18 September 2019 • EU Cooperation day, Podgorica, 30 September 2019 • EUSAIR seminar, Bari, 21 November 2019 • EU Cooperation day, Bari, 9 October 2020 |

| Activities/Tools | | Activities implemented by the Programme |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| 9) Training Sessions | Seminars for Lead Partners and beneficiaries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bari, 5 June 2018 (150 participants) • Tirana, 19 June 2018 (100 participants) • Podgorica, 20 June 2018 (50 participants) • Podgorica, 1 October 2019 (40 participants) • Online webinars, 23,24,27,28,30 April 2020 (120 participants) • Online webinars, 21 January 2021 |
| | Seminars for FLCs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bari, 8 November 2018 • Bari, 16 April 2019 • Bari, 3 December 2019 • Online Webinars, 16 April – 15 May 2020 |
| 10) Advertising | Media coverage | > 830 articles / TV reports (total coverage) |
| 11) Printed Materials | Informative materials for target groups | Leaflet and other materials already available on the website |
| 12) Promotional Materials | Informative materials | Leaflet and other materials already available on the website |

Source: t33 elaboration

Besides the activities listed above, Programme National Info Points in Albania and Montenegro organised additional events/meeting to support beneficiaries and communicate the Programme to potential applicants.

The tables below summarise the most relevant field activities conducted by the NIPs in their respective territories.

Table 5 – Activities organised by the NIP in Albania

| Activity | Place | Date |
|--|--|----------------|
| Consultation/Information meeting with Albanian beneficiaries of the projects from 1 st Call | Tirana | 28.09.2018 |
| Workshop/Info day with Albanian beneficiaries of the projects from 2 nd Call | Tirana | 23.01.2019 |
| Consultation/Information meeting with Albanian beneficiaries of the projects from 1 st and 2 nd Call | Tirana | 15.11.2019 |
| Consultation/Information meeting with Albanian beneficiaries of the projects from 1 st and 2 nd Call | Tirana | 29.01.2020 |
| Monitoring visits to Albanian beneficiaries (1 st Call) | At the Albanian beneficiaries premises | June-July 2020 |

Source: t33 elaboration

Table 6 – Activities organised by the NIP in Montenegro

| Activity | Place | Date |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Ceremony for First Call closure | Podgorica | 17.04.2018 |
| Coordinative meeting with beneficiaries | Podgorica | 15.11.2018 |
| Coordinative meeting with beneficiaries | Podgorica | 22.01.2019 |

| | | |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Coordinative meetings with beneficiaries on decommitment | Podgorica | 28.01.2020 |
| Workshop for potential applicants (2 nd call) | Podgorica | 22.01.2019 |
| Ceremony for Thematic call closure | Podgorica | 04.07.2019 |
| Workshop for Thematic projects beneficiaries | Podgorica | 01.10.2019 |

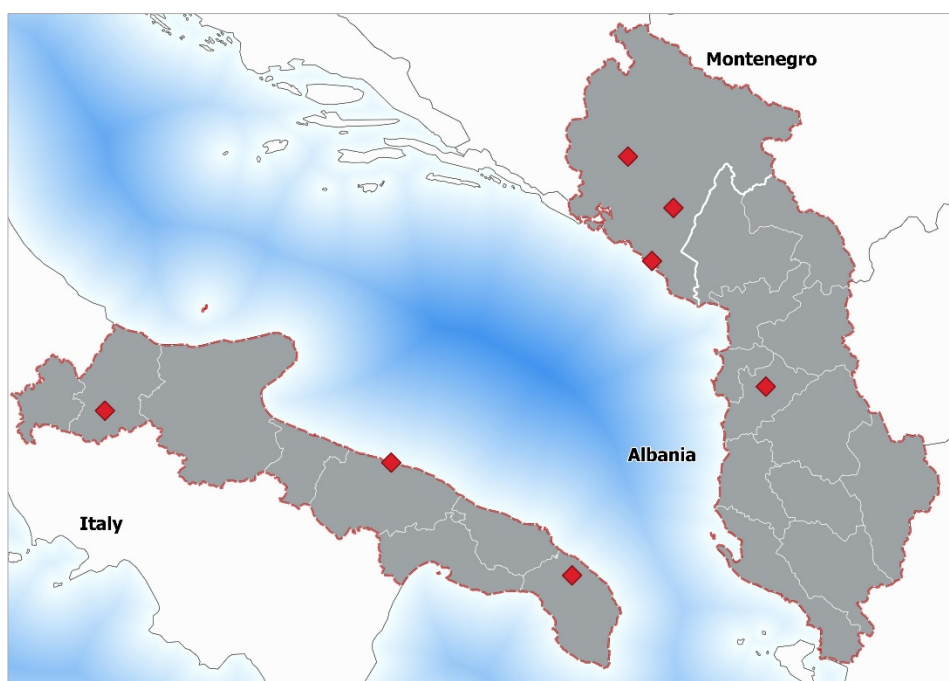
Source: t33 elaboration

Relevant stakeholders have been involved from the very beginning of the programme implementation. Seven info-days have been organised after the three Programme launch events. Communication activities targeting potential applicants were implemented from the first call for proposal. The JS organised weekly face to face or small group open days to discuss specific problems with applicants. During the first call for proposal, only 26 out of 185 applications were rejected due to major errors after the first eligibility check. This proves the general good quality of the support provided to the applicants.

The JS and NIPs were also responsible of organizing seminars for training the beneficiaries on specific technical topics related to the implementation of the projects. The case study analysis shows that beneficiaries are generally satisfied by the support provided by the JS and the NIPs during project implementation.

The localisation of Programme events in the cooperation area shows a well-balanced distribution: all countries have hosted Programme events and trainings, although in Albania, these have been concentrated only in the capital city (see map below).

Figure 1 – Localisation of Programme events and trainings organized by the IT-AL-ME Programme



Source: t33 elaboration

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the programme continued organising events and training sessions. In the last year, more than 60 online events and trainings have been organised.

Besides Programme events and trainings, the Facebook page of the Programme has played an important role in promoting Programme's opportunities and in disseminating the results of the projects considered as most performing. The high number of likes and followers, the intense interactions on the page and posts clearly demonstrate the good performance of the page. It is worth mentioning that, despite reported in the communication strategy, the Programme decided to focus only on the Facebook page and to not develop additional social media pages (e.g. Twitter). This represents a precise choice of the Programme, born from the need to build a community through fully articulated stories (while on Twitter, the effectiveness of the communication is achieved with quick interactions, links to trending topics, etc).

From October 2020 until February 2021, the website reached more than 186,000 page views and almost 68,000 users. The website appears 1st on search engines with keyword Italy-Albania-Montenegro. Promotional materials are available on the website. Moreover, newsletters are sent regularly every 3 months.

4.2 CAPACITY TO REACH RELEVANT TARGET GROUPS

The communication strategy details the list of relevant target groups with reference to two main categories:

- Internal target audience, intended as the Programme bodies (meaning the stakeholders involved in the governance of the programme).
- External target audience:
 - o Potential applicants.
 - o Beneficiaries.
 - o Organisations positively affected by the activities and results of an operation, though not necessarily being directly involved in the operation.
 - o Wider public.

Different tools and activities are foreseen to reach all different categories.

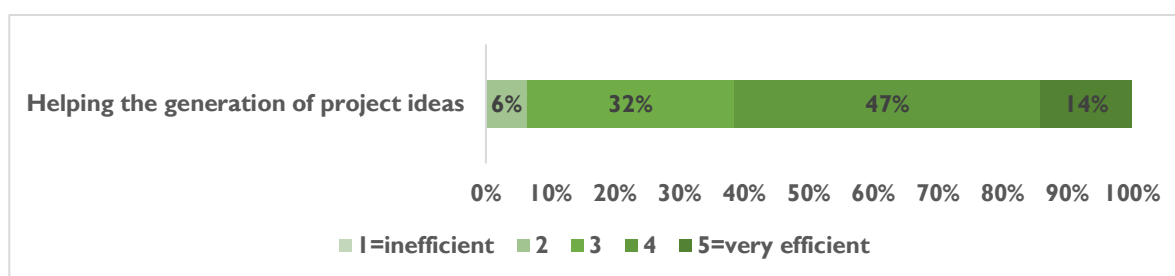


As regards the communication activities addressed to the internal target audience (e.g. the stakeholders involved in the governance of the programme), the analysis shows a good level of satisfaction of the stakeholders involved in the governance of the Programme. Some room for improvement still exists regarding the training addressed to FLCs. In this regard, especially in the Italian context, a more targeted and practical support is envisaged (e.g. taking into consideration the most relevant errors reported by the AA, trainings to FLCs could be more targeted on these errors).

Communication activities addressed to external target audience are well-structured. In particular, communication towards projects applicants and beneficiaries appear to be very successful, especially in terms of support provided during projects preparation and implementation.

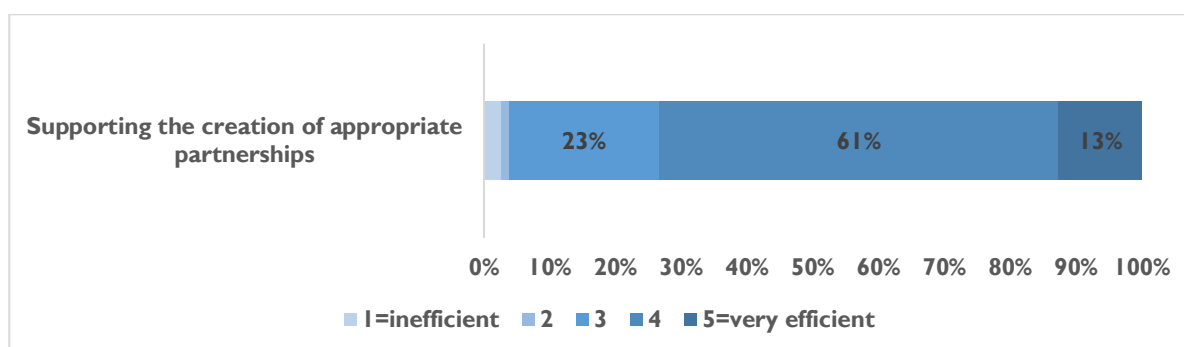
As shown in the figures below, data collected from the survey reveal that beneficiaries are almost satisfied about the support provided by the Programme in the generation of project ideas and in the creation of appropriate partnerships.

Figure 2 - Efficiency of the activities to help project ideas generation



Source: web survey to beneficiaries (2021)

Figure 3 - Efficiency of the activities to support the creation of appropriate partnership



Source: web survey to beneficiaries (2021)

4.3 CONTRIBUTION TO INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF PROJECTS TO COMMUNICATE

Beneficiaries are required to define the specific activities aimed at raising awareness about project and programme outputs and results in the Communication work package (WP). This WP shall include the strategic planning of activities and a clear indication of the target group(s) to address and of the available budget to carry out the planned activities.

To support beneficiaries in implementing the communication work package, the programme bodies prepared and made available, on the programme website, specific templates ready to be used by beneficiaries – in relation to all communication activities, especially advertising materials produced at project level. Those templates include:

- Visual Identity Manual, elaborated with detailed information for each category of communication materials and visual identity elements (logos, recommended colours, graphic symbols, etc.);
- Dissemination materials models, such as: posters; roll-ups, temporary billboard; publication templates, etc.
- Project website guidelines, including tips to better manage the project website and editors handbook.

Additionally, in order to increase the capacity of projects to communicate their own achievements, the Programme organised information meetings and workshops to encourage the capitalisation of project results.

Specific capitalisation events have been organised by the projects of the first call for proposal, that completed their activities in the autumn 2020. According to the information collected from the interviews

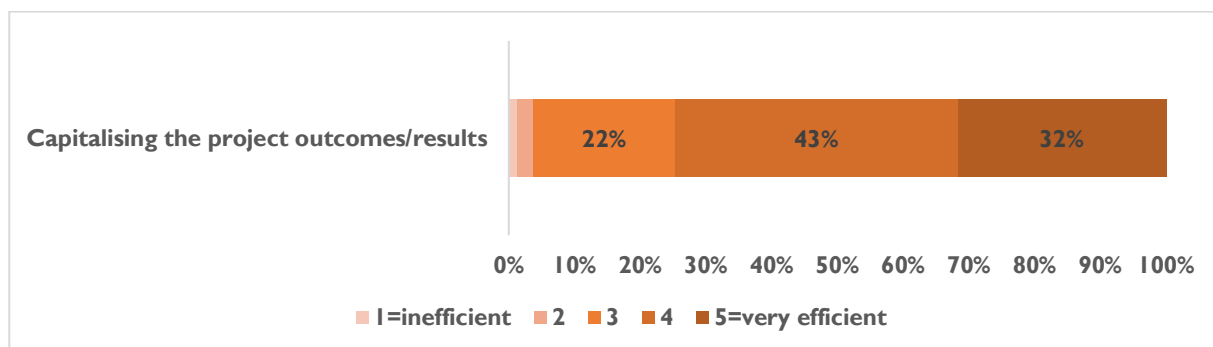
and the information provided by the Programme authorities, from September 2020 until December 2020, 7 online project final events have been organised in order to communicate project outcomes and results.

Additionally, the participation to EU Cooperation Day and other events (e.g. EUSAIR Annual Forum, ADRION workshops, EUSAIR seminars, etc) are some of the specific capitalisation activities that supported the projects in capitalising their results. In this regard, as also stressed by the Programme document, a specific attention was given to capitalisation activities with other EU territorial cooperation programmes of the area (e.g. ADRION) and with the EUSAIR Strategy.



Data collected from the survey reveal that beneficiaries are generally satisfied about the opportunities offered by the Programme to capitalise the projects results. More specifically, as illustrated by the figure below, most beneficiaries consider that the Programmes is efficient in the approach to capitalise projects results.

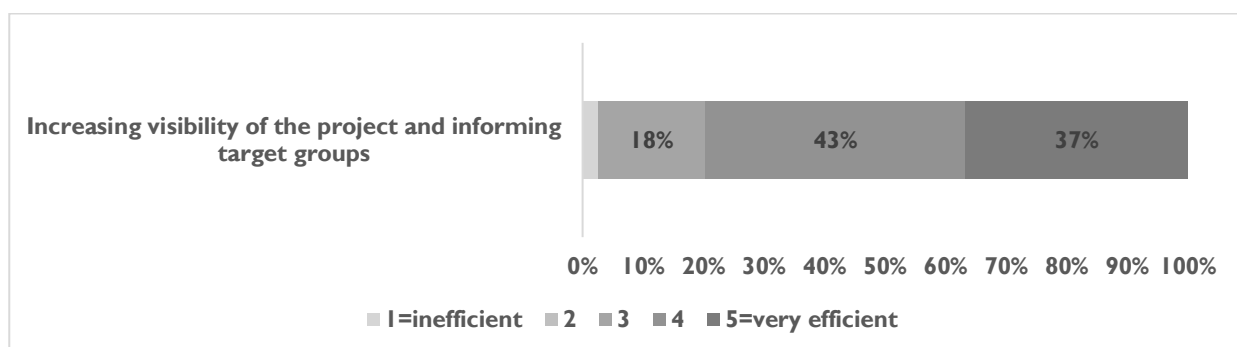
Figure 4 - Efficiency of the activities to ensure the capitalisation of the outcomes/results



Source: web survey to beneficiaries (2021)

Additionally, data collected from the survey reveal that beneficiaries have a positive feedback about the effectiveness of the Programme communication activities in increasing the visibility of the projects and informing target groups.

Figure 5 - Efficiency of the activities to increase the visibility of the projects and informing target groups.



Source: web survey to beneficiaries (2021)

4.4 CAPACITY TO RAISE AWARENESS

Key evidence about the capacity of the programme to raise awareness about the opportunities offered are provided by the analysis of the number of applicants.

As illustrated by the table below, the Programme attracted a significant number of project proposals (approximately 6 times more than the projects approved in the first call and 3.5 times more in the second call). The thematic call for projects has not been considered since the selection has been organised with

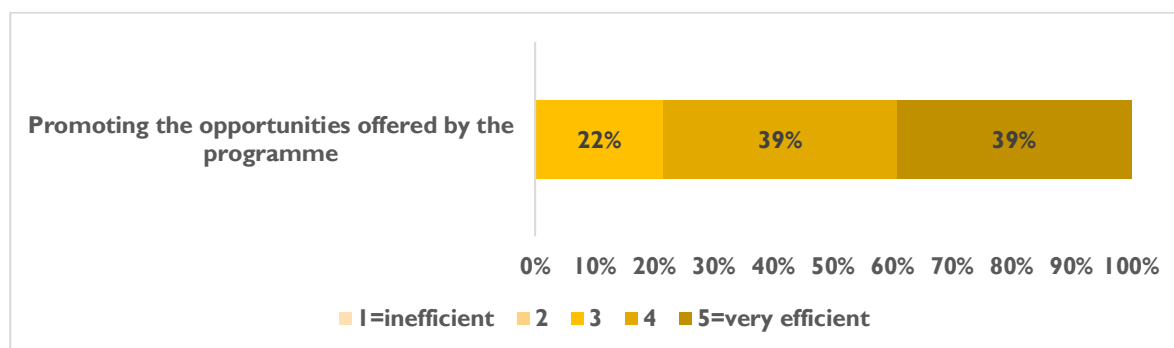
a different methodology. This shows a good capacity of the programme to mobilise potential beneficiaries as well as to inform the general public about the opportunities offered by the Programme.

Table 7 - Capacity to attract projects applicants

| | 1 st and 2 nd call for project | | |
|--|--|-------------------|------------|
| | AF | Approved Projects | % |
| 1st call standard project | 185 | 32 | 17% |
| 2nd call targeted projects | 113 | 32 | 28% |
| Total | 298 | 64 | 21% |

As the figure below shows, respondents to the survey appreciate the overall efficiency of the programme in promoting the opportunities offered.

Figure 6- Efficiency in promoting the opportunities offered by the programme



Source: web survey to beneficiaries (2021)

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CURRENT AND FUTURE PROGRAMMING PERIOD

As reported in the answers to the evaluation questions above, the programme performed well in increasing the awareness on the opportunities offered in the cooperation area, thus resulting consequently in a greater visibility of its activities and results.

The main key findings from the evaluation are positive. The programme communication strategy has ensured a well-functioning communication flow in the programme area and improved the visibility of the Programme. According to the evaluation, no updated is needed for the remaining part of the current programming period.

However, in light of the new programming period, the evaluators suggest to:

- Improve the trainings addressed to FLCs, providing a more targeted and practical support.
- For IPA countries, organise Programme events and info-days not only in the capital cities, but also in the other major cities of the two countries, so as to enlarge the geographical localisation of beneficiaries (e.g. in Albania, almost 80% of beneficiaries come from Tirana).

5 Annexes

5.1 INTERVIEWS TO PROGRAMME AUTHORITIES

Table 8 – Programme authorities involved in the interviews

| PROGRAMME BODIES | COUNTRY | NAME OF THE INTERVIEWEE |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------------------------|
| Managing Authority | IT | Mr. Francesco Carabellese |
| | | Ms. Stefania De Pascalis |
| Joint Technical Secretariat | IT | Mr. Mauro Novello |
| | | Ms. Dora Losacco |
| Joint Monitoring Committee | IT | Ms. Milena Rosa |
| | ALB | Ms. Xherina Haxhillari |
| | ALB | Ms. Brunilda Tushaj |
| | MT | Mr. Srdjan Ćetković |
| National Info Point | MT | Mrs. Dunja Nelevic |
| | ALB | Mr. Ergi Curri |
| | ALB | Mrs. Valbona Kosova |
| | IT | Dott. Gaspare Tocci |
| First Level Controllers | MT | Ms. Kana Tomasevic |
| | ALB | Mr. Lek Hakani |
| | IT | Mr. Giuseppe Prencipe |
| EC Rapporteur | - | Mr. Gilles Kittel |

5.2 CASE STUDY SELECTION

Table 9 – Case study selection

| SO | Project name | Organisation | LP/PP | Country |
|---|--------------|---|-------|------------|
| 1.1 Enhance the framework conditions for the development of SME's cross-border market. | BRE | Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Tirana | LP | Albania |
| | | Inovaciono preduzetnički centar Tehnopolis | PP | Montenegro |
| | FILA | International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies - Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari | LP | Italy |
| | | Regional Development Agency 3 (Korçë-Elbasan-Berat) | PP | Albania |
| | HISTEK | Ministry of Education of Montenegro | LP | Montenegro |
| | | Foundation ITS "Antonio Cuccovillo" | PP | Italy |
| 2.1 Boost attractiveness of natural and cultural assets to improve a smart and sustainable economic development. | WISHUI | Municipality of Maglie | LP | Italy |
| | | Albanian Local Capacity Development Foundation | PP | Albania |
| 2.2 Increase the cooperation of the relevant key actors of the area for the delivery of innovative cultural and creative products | CIRCE | Apulia Film Commission Foundation / | LP | Italy |
| | | Film Centre of Montenegro | PP | Montenegro |
| | ADNICH | Royal Theatre Zetski dom | LP | Montenegro |
| | | University of Salento | PP | Italy |
| 3.1 Increase cross-border cooperation strategies on water landscapes | WELCOME | Univerzitet Crne Gore, Institut za biologiju mora | LP | Montenegro |
| | | National Interuniversity Consortium for Marine Sciences | PP | Italy |
| 3.2 Promoting innovative practices and tools to reduce carbon emission and to improve energy efficiency in public sector | REEHUB | Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy | LP | Albania |
| | | National Energy Technological Cluster Scarl | PP | Italy |
| 4.1 Increase coordination among relevant stakeholders to promote sustainable cross border connections in the Cooperation area | SAGOV | Cooperation and Development Institute | LP | Albania |
| | | Apulia Region – Directory for International Policy | PP | Italy |

