

COMMUNICATION PLAN

GR-ENVIRONMENT “WATER MANAGEMENT”

**European Economic Area (EEA)
Financial Mechanism 2014-2021.**

MARCH 2021

Iceland 
Liechtenstein
Norway grants

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Introduction

For the implementation of the EEA Grants in the 2014–2021 period in Greece within the “Water Management” Programme, communication will play a prominent role in achieving the strategic and operational goals envisaged by the EEA Grants and will contribute towards the successful overall implementation of the available funding.

The Programme Operator is the special service responsible for developing and implementing the Communication Plan with the aim of creating awareness of the existence of the funding opportunities, the objectives, the possibilities for and actual cooperation with entities in Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as measuring the results and overall impact of the EEA Grants, as referred to in paragraph 2(a) of Article 3.2 of the Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014–2021.

In this context, the present Communication Plan is according to:

- the Regulation on the Implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014- 2021,
- Annex 3 of the Regulation (the updated version)
- the Communication, and the Design Manual of EEA Grants 2014-2021.

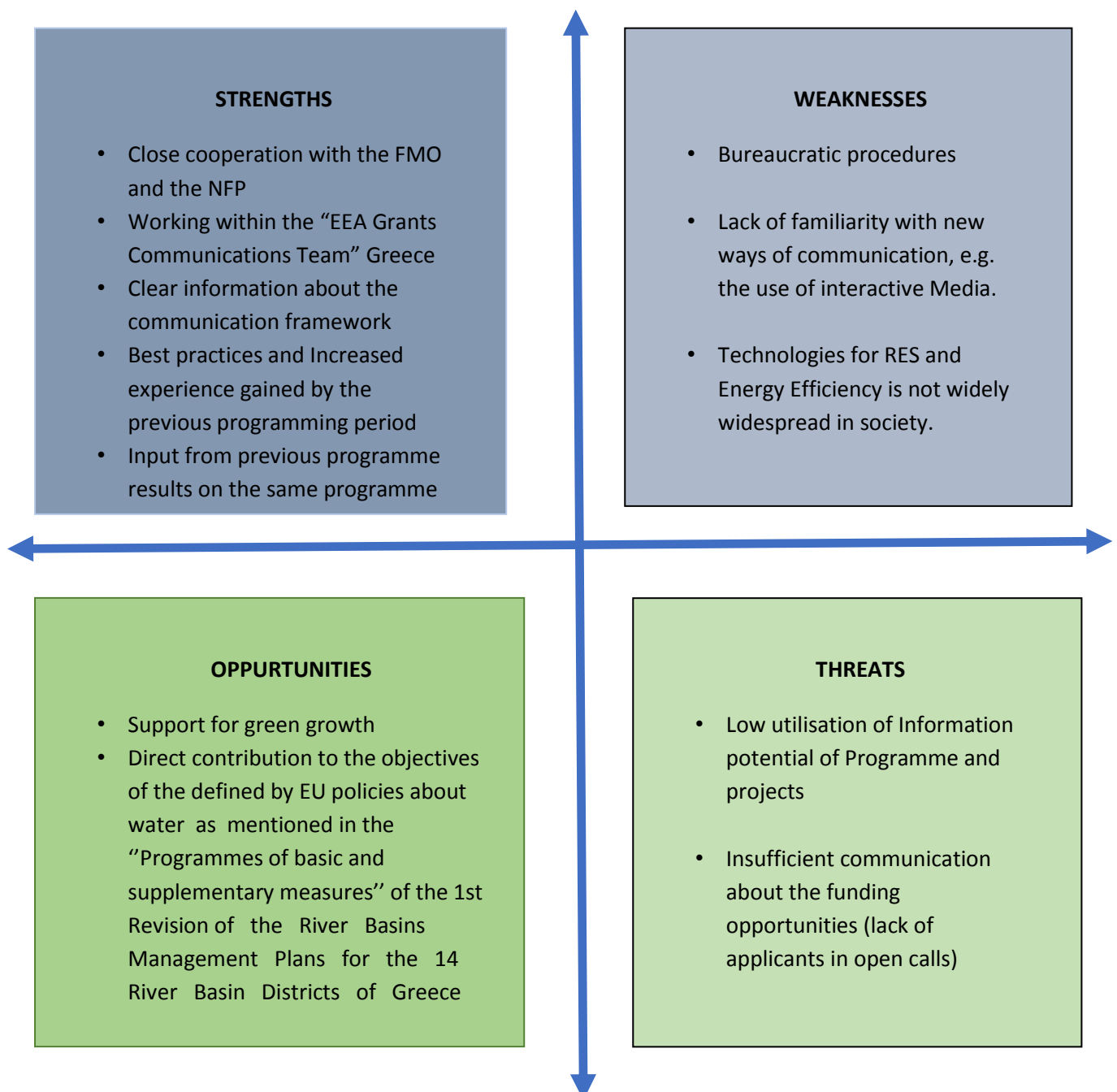
The communication plan is designed to facilitate information, communication and visibility requirements as stated in Art.1.7, Chapter 3 and Annex 3 of the Regulation. The Communication Plan also develops the necessary setting and procedures in accordance with the principle of proportionality, in order information and communication activities to be implemented the widest possible dissemination of information to be ensured, to raise awareness and strengthen transparency of information about objectives, funding opportunities, beneficiaries, implementation, achievements and overall impact.

The Communication Plan constitutes a “dynamic document” following the progress of the “Water Management” Programme, and it will be updated when necessary in order to take into consideration: (a) changes at the digital/technological level e.g. social media platforms updates, various online communication tools, etc.), (b) the communication opportunities (i.e. global days), and (c) the initiatives needed to fulfill communication needs, target-audience’s expectations, and deal with changes in the communication environment (i.e., coronavirus outbreak).

The “Water Management” Programme addresses the water management needs of particularly vulnerable areas and islands, with projects aiming at water saving and desalination. The aim is to implement infrastructure/procurement for water management improvement combined with innovative green technologies. Furthermore, data and solutions to improve the situation of water bodies or/and improve water management will

be developed. Projects that are included in the Measures of River Basins Management Plans; corresponding to Key Type Measure (BTM) 14 "Research, improvement of knowledge with reduction of uncertainty" or/and to the Supplementary Measure "Projects of research, development and promotion" will be implemented. The Programme will also fund awareness campaigns highlighting the water problems and the importance of improving the status of water bodies. Priority is given to bilateral partnerships, offering added value to Programme. Bilateral relations with donor state entities will be strengthened by having donor partners in projects and by funding bilateral activities with the budget of the bilateral fund.

Baseline | Communication SWOT Analysis



The overarching goal of this Communication Plan is to communicate in a clear and effective manner the objectives, possibilities and actual results of the EEA Grants Programme “Water Management” to all potential beneficiaries, relevant stakeholders, or any other associated entities and individuals (defined as “target-audiences”). The implementation and overall impact of the Programme “Water Management” will also highlight the strengthening of the bilateral relations between the Donor states and Greece.

To this aim, cooperation between the Programme Operator and the National Focal Point is established and furthermore through the creation of a “EEA Grants Communications Team”, will contribute to create conversions through engaged interaction and joint activities. Furthermore, a close cooperation will be developed with the Project Promoters, after the sign of the projects’ contracts.

In accordance with the EEA FM 2014–2021 the objectives are:

- to inform Public, Potential Project Promoters and Project Promoters about the contribution of the grants in water sector.
- to disseminate the objectives, the beneficiaries and the implementation of the program «Water Management» funding by EEA Grants
- to ensure visibility of the donor countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway and their contribution in water management sector;
- to strengthen bilateral relations between Greek and donor states’ entities
- to communicate the impact and results of the Donors’ contribution to the achievements of the programme.
- to disseminate the gained knowledge from the programme about the status and the management of water bodies
- raise public awareness about the importance of water bodies with “Good Status”

Target audiences

The Programme “GR-Water Management” affects many areas, leading to a relatively large audience. The Programme aims to improve the environmental status of water ecosystems and to make an essential contribution to the rational use of water, mainly in vulnerable areas and island, which creates opportunities for high added value and prospects in the local economy.

Audience that needs to get informed about the Programme:

1. **Potential Project Promoters** are all the organizations which may be interested in applying for a project grant, as listed in the calls for proposals of the Programme. The Potential Project Promoters will be informed on the objective of the Programme, the terms and conditions for the open calls, the evaluation procedure, including the possibilities for co-operation with the donor state partners. These are:

- a. Research Bodies under article 12, L.4386/2016
 - b. Universities
 - c. Legal Entities of Public Law
 - d. Organizations of Research and Knowledge dissemination
 - e. General Government bodies
 - f. Local Government bodies
 - g. Municipal enterprises for Water Supply and Sewerage
 - h. Management bodies of Protected Areas
 - i. Other competent authorities
 - j. Water Supply-Sewerage Associations
 - k. NGO's
 - l. Entities from the Donor States
2. **Actual Project Promoters** will be nominated according to the selection procedures as described in Article 7.4 of the Regulation. The Actual Project Promoters are all the organizations which have submitted the project application, and which have concluded the Project Contract.

The Project Promoters and Project Partners will be informed on reporting activities, financial management including eligible costs, procurement information, and obligatory information activities by the Programme Operator. They will be actively involved in the communication activities in order to maximize the communication effect of their projects. Programme Operator will provide guidance and visibility of the Project Promoters' projects and communication activities.

3. **Public:** It is important for the general public to receive the message of the contribution of Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein, to the improvement of the environmental status of water ecosystems, to view the results and benefits from the implementation of the Programme. The term "general public" is an umbrella-term, which also comprises the sub audiences, (a) Information multipliers (b) the beneficiaries and users of the results and (c) the experts.
- I. Information multipliers are:
 - a. Economic and Social Partners
 - b. Professional Associations
 - c. Press-media journalists/Users of Social Media
 - d. Environmental NGOS
 - e. Donor States Entities (Embassies, Research Centers and Scientific Institutions)
 - f. Development Agencies
 - g. Trade, Professional and Business Associations;
 - II. Beneficiaries and users of the results are:
 - a. Island and Costal Population
 - b. Tourist industry

- c. The Business Sector of the Vulnerable Areas and Islands
- d. Institutional Bodies Supervised by The Ministry of Environment And Energy
- e. Scientific Community
- f. National, Regional and Local Authorities

III. The experts

Those who wish the effective knowledge dissemination about water ecosystems' good environmental status.

Message- Slogan

To bring the Programme closer to the public and show what it is done by EEA Grants 2014-2021 the key-message of the Programme is "Working together for a **green** Europe."

Channels and Activities

According to Article 3.3 the Programme Operator shall comply with the Information and Communication Requirements as described in Annex 3.

The Programme Operator will organize at least three major information events.

In the beginning of the Programme a launch conference with the participation of Donor States' Entities and potential Greek Project Promoters and Potential Partners from the Donor States will be held. The conference's purpose is to create awareness of the existence of the Programme to the public, and to mobilize potential Project Promoters to participate. Especially The Programme Operator shall provide potential beneficiaries with clear and detailed information on the following:

- ✚ the calls for proposals;
- ✚ the conditions of eligibility to be met in order to qualify for financing under the Programme and each open call;
- ✚ a description of the procedures for examining applications for funding and of the time periods involved;
- ✚ the criteria for selecting the projects to be financed;
- ✚ the selection procedures and decision-making structure;
- ✚ the objective of and possibilities for networking and bilateral cooperation with entities from Iceland, Liechtenstein and/or Norway;
- ✚ the contacts at national, regional or local level who can provide information on the Programme and available funding; and

- ✚ That acceptance of funding is also an acceptance of disclosure of summary project information and contact details.

Furthermore, this conference will be followed by a match making event, in order to strengthen more, the relations between Greek and donor states entities.

When the projects will be in a position to share first results a second conference will take place to give a picture of the achievements, and good practices will be presented. Project Partners will have the opportunity to exchange experiences, to solve problems, to accelerate the ongoing projects. People who can benefit from or use the results of the projects will be informed about their first deliverables and their progress.

Finally, a last conference will be held at the end of the Programme presenting good practices, lessons learned and the results/impacts. Project Promoters, with national, regional and local authorities, embassy and other representatives of Iceland, Liechtenstein and/or Norway, development agencies trade, professional and business associations, economic and social partners, universities and research centers will have the best knowledge about the results and achievements, highlighting the added value of the Donor States' intervention.

The Programme Operator has already established a dedicated webpage in the "Water Management" Programme, in Greek and English. This webpage will content and updated with:

- ✚ Information on the Programme "Water Management" and the EEA Grants
- ✚ Overview of open calls, including documents pertaining to the open calls
- ✚ information on selection criteria, procedures and deadlines;
- ✚ information on all funded projects, including contact information, a description of the projects and their duration, the amount of funding allocated to the projects and information on cooperation with entities in Iceland, Liechtenstein and/or Norway;
- ✚ information on impact, achievements and results from the Programme and support from the EEA Grants;
- ✚ relevant documents, including the annual programme reports and the final programme report;
- ✚ a link to the website of the EEA Grants;
- ✚ a link to the website of the EEA Grants in the Beneficiary State;
- ✚ contact information;

The webpage provide links to results and impacts from previous assistance from the EEA.

The means through which Programme Operator will communicate its strategy in order to facilitate interaction and to ensure transparency, accountability, openness, accessibility and dissemination of the results, not only of the procedures, are presented in the following table:

Channels	Target Audience			
	Potential Project Promoters	Project Promoters	Information multipliers	Beneficiaries and users of the results
Website	✓	✓	✓	✓
Printed Material	✓	✓	✓	✓
E-mail campaigns	✓	✓	✓	✓
Workshops		✓	✓	✓
Technical meetings		✓	✓	✓
Major events	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meetings with stakeholders	✓	✓	✓	✓
Donor Embassies	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 1: Channels and audience in communication plan

Challenges

- **Development of clear communication plan by project promoters’.** Without correct context and organization, the objectives will be missed – or worse – misinterpreted. It needs strong co-operation with Project Promoters in order to clarify the objectives, target audiences, key messages, channels, and obstacles.
- **Poor audience engagement:** effective use of communication tools will help to ensure that public and stakeholders recognize the objectives of the Programme. Informational meetings and workshops with Project Promoters, coordinated activities with donor embassies and invitations to journalists and media representatives will be implemented.
- **Failure to evaluate communication effectiveness to gather lessons learned:** effectively communicating up is a life-long journey. It’s important to take time after key interactions to step back and evaluate how well you did, and document lessons learned. It presupposes good cooperation with Project promoters and stakeholders

The coronavirus outbreak has transformed the way we communicate dramatically. People have been connecting in new social ways, hosting virtual events, replacing physical presence

and activities with online and virtual ones. Since we cut off from normal social interaction, we are opting for voice and video meetings and sessions as the next best thing.

The following figure according to Communication Strategy of the NFP shows the shift from the offline communication tools to their online counterparts.

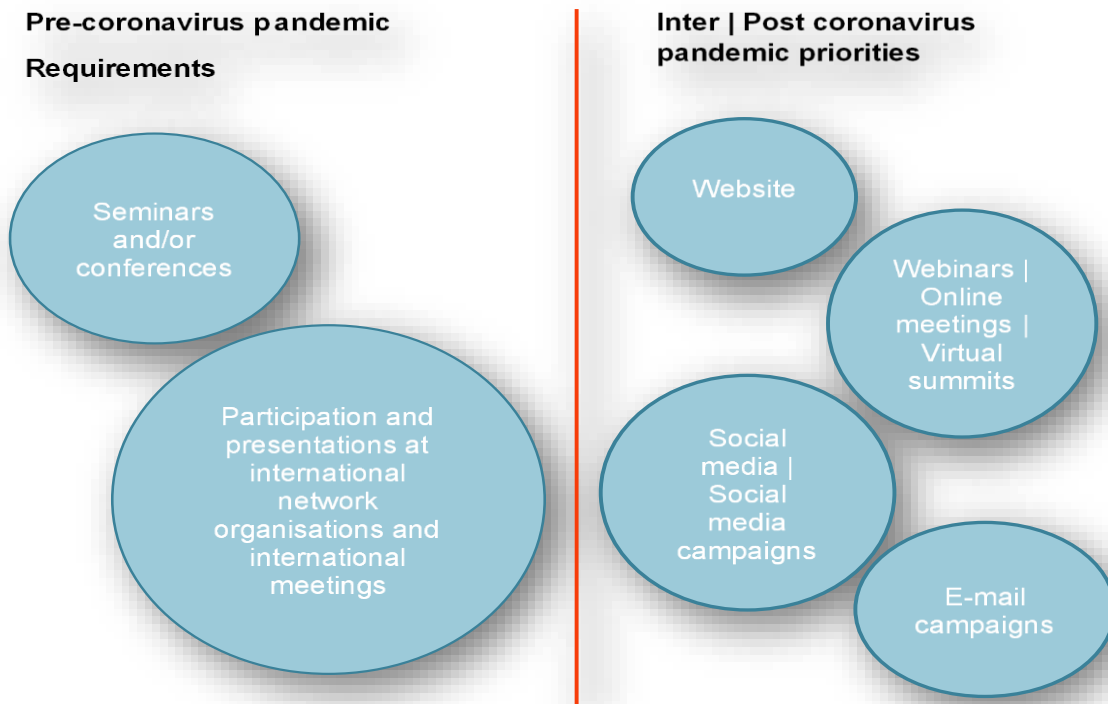


Figure 1: The emergent communication priorities (Source: NFP- The communication strategy revised 2021, p.14)

To ensure that the Programme “Water Management” remains functional in its defined thematic area, the communication plan in the midst of this unprecedented, and challenging situation – takes care for the publicity and attractiveness of the Programme, the Programme Operator developed an online Communication Plan.

Therefore, the Programme Operator re-engineers Communication Plan to remain relevant to and in tune with its audience . Digital tools are added, and more effective digital practices are adapted in order to offer to the Programme Operator the opportunity to react in real time and to respond quickly to these harsh times. For all the above reasons, the following channels of communication activities as presented in the following table.

Social Media Toolbox	Create, operate, and update accounts on social media: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube
Social Networking	e-mail campaigns (both online and offline communication) on-line/virtual events website (both online and offline communication)
Deliverables	Accounts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The accounts will be regularly updated by the end of the Programme, December 2024, with information on progress and results of the projects.
Audience	Connecting social networks with policy makers; professionals, and the general public.
Programme Operator's actions	Regular updating of the Programme's social networks, in accordance with as set out in the Communication and Design Manual, in order to raise public awareness of the role of EEA-GRANTS 2014-2021.

Table 2: Digital communication activities

The launch conference with the participation of Donor States' Entities and potential Greek Project Promoters and Potential Partners from the Donor States is held online, accompanied by the match making event, in order to strengthen more, the relations between Greek and donor states entities. The events could be reached on YouTube channel of Programme Operator. Zoom's communications platform is chosen to host the events as it is one of the most popular meeting platforms.

The Programme Operator adapts the use of social media to promote awareness and multiply the effect of the Programme to stakeholders and the general public. By using social media and on-line social media campaigns cost-efficient and improved communication can be achieved along with real time interactions with our target audiences. Bureaucratic hindrances may arise in the use of social media.

According to recent studies on digital marketing, Facebook dominates in the B2C space, and grabs the most important slot in the B2B market. On the other hand, the use of LinkedIn increases as a more powerful tool for bringing together companies and people who work in a common industry, and a more professional network, in general. LinkedIn is built on mutual connections (psychologically more meaningful). The responsible officer for the communication uses a LinkedIn account and will manage it alongside the Facebook account in order to achieve a solid content integration.

Evaluation

The following table includes the indicators that will assist the P.O. to evaluate the effects of the information and communication work

Channels/ activities	Output Indicator	Outcomes Indicator	Outtakes Indicator
Major events	Number of conferences	Number of participants (in person/online)	Awareness, information, visibility, strengthening of bilateral relations, raise public awareness about the importance of water bodies with "Good Status" Communication of the impact and results of the Donors' contribution to the achievements of the programme Dissemination of the gained knowledge from the implementation of the projects and of the Programme overall
Publicity of calls	Number of calls	Number of submitted proposals	Awareness Information Visibility
Printed Material	Number of editions	Circulation	Awareness, information, visibility, dissemination of

			knowledge, strengthen bilateral relations,
Workshops/ meetings	Number of meetings	Number of participants	dissemination of the gained knowledge from the implementation of the projects and of the programme overall communication of the impact and results of the Donors' contribution to the achievements of the programme
Questions and answers session on web	Number of questions	Number of answers	Information of Potential Project Promoters and Project Promoters about the Programme Strengthen bilateral relations between Greek and donor states entities
e-mails campaigns	Number of e- mails	Number of receivers	Awareness, information, visibility, dissemination of knowledge, strengthening bilateral relations
Social media platform	Number of platforms	Number of link clinks Number of reactions to the post Number of followers on social media	awareness information visibility dissemination of knowledge strengthening bilateral relations
Webinars, online meetings, virtual summits	Number of events	Number of attendees Number of unique visitors to the website Number of followers on social media	Awareness Information visibility dissemination of knowledge strengthening bilateral relations

Table 3: Evaluation Criteria of Communication Activities

Budget

The Programme Operator will determine in which way the amount of the 40,000 € budget for communication purposes will be distributed more effectively (either switching between the online and the offline communication tools or using both interchangeably) under pandemic

emergency. As a consequence, the Programme Operator corresponds to the communication needs appropriating both online and offline communication activities.

Contact Point

The implementation of the Communication Plan is supported by the staff of the Unit A and C. The specific responsibilities for each Unit will be determined by the management and control system.

The persons responsible for the Programme's Publicity Issues are Dr Dimitra Koumparou, and Mr. George Parnassas, staff of the Executive Authority of the Partnership Agreement, Environmental Sector.

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