



**Interreg**



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The background features a large, faint graphic of a group of stylized human figures in various colors (orange, blue, green, pink) arranged in a circle, with their arms raised. Below this, there are several thick, wavy lines in shades of green, blue, and pink, resembling a rainbow or stylized waves.

# Interreg NEXT MED Programme

## COMMUNICATING WITH IMPACT

### Tips for communication managers

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#everythingMEDpossible





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## 1. Foreword

Dear Communication Managers,

If you are reading this document, it is because you are responsible for the communication of one of the approved Interreg NEXT MED projects.

Your mission is not only to talk about what the project does and how, but most importantly, to **attract and grab the audience's attention**, meaning readers, viewers, listeners depending on the type of content.

Nowadays, in a world overwhelmed by information, with unlimited access to all types of content, the main challenge is to **spark curiosity and interest first and then communicate with impact**.

How are you going to do that? What is important to communicate, and what is not? Who is your audience? What background knowledge do they have? These and many other questions will be answered in this guide.

It will provide you with information to better convey messages about what the project does, **especially on the project's webpage hosted on the Programme's website**, which is the focus of the tips contained in this guide. However, these tips can also be useful when crafting messages and communication content for other platforms such as social media, press releases, promotional videos, events, podcasts, and printed materials. Regardless of the medium, the goal remains the same: to communicate in a clear, engaging, and impactful way that resonates with your target audience and highlights the real-life value and results of the project.

We, at the Interreg NEXT MED Programme, want to provide you with practical tips and support throughout the entire life of the project to help you communicate in the most effective way - to show how these projects make a real difference in people's lives across the Mediterranean region, and why continued cooperation is more important than ever.

So, let's start the journey and enjoy it together!

## 2. Your mission

You, as a communication manager, are the **mediator** between the partnership of a project (Lead Partner and partners) and the outside world (the public). In other words, you are the mediator between internal communication within the partnership and external communication (audience).



You should see yourself as the official **interpreter** whose main task is to make accessible the knowledge and concepts that are in the hands of experts.

EU-funded projects are usually associated with a type of communication quite packed with jargon and terms which sometimes make little sense to the public. Therefore, as a communication manager, one of your tasks is to “translate” these terms into words that are meaningful to people.

Address your messages by talking about real people (i.e. farmers, fishermen, teachers involved in these projects), and focus on topics that are of high interest in people’s everyday lives: health, education, access to water, energy, quality food, etc.

By doing this, it will be easier to catch the attention of the audience.

### 3. Implementing an impact-based narrative

An impact-based narrative focuses on the tangible changes and real-world benefits a project brings about, rather than simply describing its activities and outputs.

Sometimes, EU-funded projects tend concentrate their communication on internal procedures and “process” - such as kick-off meetings, steering committees, technical guidelines, training sessions, and project management milestones. This is a missed opportunity in terms of communication, as many of these initiatives deliver concrete results on the ground, bringing concrete benefits to entrepreneurs, local authorities, students, farmers, and vulnerable communities, etc. through better services and innovative solutions.

This issue can be solved by applying the impact-based narrative. Rather than focusing on the ‘processes’ - from activities to outputs - the impact-based narrative is a transformative language that aims to answer a simple question - “*So what?*” - to emphasize how people, communities, institutions, or the environment are better off as a result of the project.

Below are some examples that show how to shift from listing activities (e.g. meetings, trainings, pilot actions) to describing the expected/actual change and looking beyond the implementation of the activity, anticipating its effects.

- Instead of “The GREENSTART MED project delivered a series of green entrepreneurship workshops”, say “GREENSTART MED supports 60 youth in launching their eco-businesses”.
- Instead of “A pilot site on composting was launched in three cities by BIOCYCLE MED”, say “BIOCYCLE MED composting pilot to cut organic waste by 30%”.



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- Instead of: “The SHORE MED project developed guidelines to tackle coastal erosion”, say: “SHORE MED supports coastal municipalities in better managing erosion risks”.
- Instead of: “Launch of the MEDENERGY project for improved energy efficiency in public buildings”, say: “MEDENERGY to improve energy efficiency in over 50 public buildings across the Mediterranean”.

The impact-based narrative can be applied at any stage of a project, including at its beginning, to highlight how a new initiative will have a positive impact for people and places. Before preparing any communication on the project, always ask yourself: what will change or what changed because of what we will do/we did? That’s the story worth telling.

### 4. Who is your audience?

Who is going to read the article you publish on the Interreg NEXT MED website? It can be anyone who has heard of this project, a citizen, a mother, a neighbour, a representative from an institution. **Whenever you write something think about who is going to read it.**

Remember your family and friends who may ask you about your job and then it will be easier to draft a post. As shown in figure 1, try to adopt the language of the person wearing the blue hat and not the one wearing the pink one.



**Figure 1:** Person with pink hat using jargon not understandable to the general public vs person with the blue hat making the information accessible to everyone.



Before communicating your project, create a “**communication persona**”, a realistic profile of your target audience. You can have more than one, depending on who you’re trying to reach. Ask yourself: **Who is the story for?** Then shape your message and write the story for them.

### **Example 1 – Persona: Mayor of a small coastal town**

*Name:* Mayor Elena Rossi

*Profile:* 52, concerned with local economic growth, environmental sustainability, and tourism development. Limited time, policy-driven mindset.

*Message style:* Clear, concise, impact-focused. Emphasize funding, results, and how the project supports local priorities.

*Adapted message:* "Thanks to the EU-funded COASTLINE project, your town could reduce coastal erosion by 30% in just two years while boosting eco-tourism through new nature trails and sustainable infrastructure."

### **Example 2 – Persona: General public interested in EU affairs**

*Name:* Layla 28, urban resident, active on social media, curious about sustainability and innovation.

*Profile:* Wants to see how EU projects help real people and places. Prefers simple, relatable stories rather than technical reports. *Message style:* Engaging, storytelling, emotionally engaging.

*Adapted message:* " Did you know some EU projects help protect the beaches you love? In the COASTLINE project, people in Mediterranean towns are planting trees, fixing paths, and stopping erosion - so beaches stay safe and beautiful for locals and tourists alike."

### **Example 3 – Persona: Beach resort owner**

*Name:* Karim, 45, owns a small beach resort in Tunisia.

*Profile:* Focused on keeping his business running year-round. Worried about beach erosion, rising costs, and attracting more visitors. Values practical support and clear benefits.

*Message style:* Straightforward, benefit-driven, solution-focused.

*Adapted message:* "The COASTLINE project helps protect the beaches your resort depends on. With EU support, your town can fight erosion, improve access, and attract more eco-conscious tourists - making your business stronger and more sustainable on the long-run."



## 5. What do you want to communicate?

Let's say you are not an expert in energy efficiency or water management. Make sure you write something that non-expert people like you would enjoy reading.

Keep in mind that most readers do not spend much time reading long articles, so be sure to find the right words to **grab attention from the very first line**.

### Write an engaging headline!

To do that, start with a headline that contains the most important information, the conclusion of all the work.

Then, in the lead paragraph, answer the 5 Ws: what, who, why, where, when, and how.

After that, you can expand on the topic and include quotes from the people involved.

Leave the less important details for the end, such as references to funding or the composition of the partnership, information that may not be relevant to the general reader.

### Don't write with only the people directly involved in your project in mind.

Remember: the information considered most important by the internal communication team (the partnership) is often the least important for the general public, and vice versa.

## Prioritizing information



Figure 2: how to prioritize the information in an article



This approach can be used in conjunction with the common framework for impactful **storytelling** – based on the following pattern:

- **Context:** this sets the stage, providing background information and establishing the scene for the story. It helps the audience understand the situation and why the problem is important.
- **Problem:** clearly define the challenge or issue that needs to be addressed. Explain why it's a problem and who is affected.
- **Idea:** present the initial thought or concept that could potentially solve the problem. This is where you start to explore possible solutions.
- **Solution:** develop and explain a specific plan or approach that addresses the problem. Show how your idea will work and what the benefits are.
- **Impact:** describe the positive outcomes or changes that the solution will bring. Showcase the benefits and demonstrate how the problem has been solved or mitigated.

In any case, to keep high the attention of the readers from the very beginning, it is suggested that the storytelling approach is also based on the impact-based narrative, meaning highlighting the positive outcome and change generated by the project from the headline and lead paragraph.

Finally, to make your project message convincing and engaging, in addition to implementing an impact-based narrative, it is recommended as follows:

- **Use the power of visuals:** humans are biologically wired to process the world visually, which is why visual content is so powerful. Adding photos, infographics, or short videos can help make your message clearer, more memorable, and impactful: the more visual your content is, the more likely people are to engage with it and understand your story quickly. Whenever possible, use real images and footage, as they add authenticity and credibility to your communication. If using AI-generated visuals, do so with care - ensure they are clearly labeled, contextually appropriate, and do not mislead or distort reality.
- **Create emotions:** facts and figures are important, but emotions are what people remember. As American memoirist and poet Maya Angelou said, *"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."* Use personal stories, real-life experiences, and human-centered language to connect emotionally with your audience. When people feel something, they're more likely to care, remember, and take action.



## 6. Drafting a convincing news article

### 6.1 Be curious

Imagine you are the communication manager of an approved Interreg NEXT MED project, and at first, you don't know the details of this project, which focuses on adaptation to climate change.

Start by reading the entire project proposal. Then, meet with the coordinator and the partners. **Engage with them and ask questions.** Make them explain to you what the main challenge is that the project aims to tackle, what solutions they propose, how they plan to implement them, and what they hope to achieve.

If necessary, do some additional research online. **Curiosity is a great asset in this initial phase of the work.**

Make sure you have fully understood and captured the essence of the project, and that you are able to explain it to your grandmother for instance, before you start drafting an article.

### 6.2 Be clear

Below are the main visibility requirements applying to websites and social media.

- **Explain the concept**

Here are some examples of concepts that are not clear at all to the general public. Make sure you explain and clarify the concept before going further in your article:

Examples:

- The project will implement the **Quadruple-Helix approach** (*What is a quadruple helix? Explain the concept*)
- The project is developing the concept of **Public Procurement of Innovation** (*What is it?*)
- The project will create **6 living labs** (*What is a living lab?*)

**Remember:** what is obvious to the Lead Partner and the partners might not be the case for the outside world.

- **Avoid acronyms**

What do MoU, SRM, BGCE, NCWR mean to you? Most likely, nothing.

You should put yourself in the reader's place. Explain the acronyms if you are going to use them in an article. You should not use acronyms in titles. It is counterproductive if you want to attract the reader's attention.

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding  
SRM: Secondary Raw Materials  
BGCE: Blue, Green and Circular Economy  
NCWR: Non-Conventional Water Resources

- **Indicate the location**

Interreg NEXT MED works with regions from 15 countries. Do not assume that the reader is familiar with the geography of all the territories covered by our Programme.

Examples:

Pilot Area 6: Area of Batroun

Where is Batroun?

✓ The pilot plant for wastewater treatment will be implemented in Batroun, Lebanon

GREAT MED project launched from Kilkis

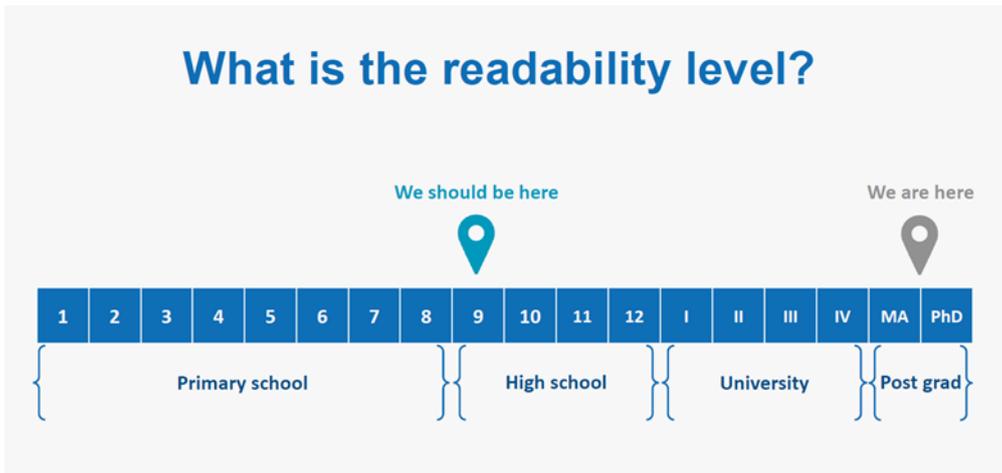
Where is Kilkis?

✓ The GREAT MED project launched its first training on green skills for youth in Kilkis, Greece

### 6.3 Be accessible

When drafting the title of your post or article, avoid too technical terms, jargon and acronyms. Title should be self-explanatory, meaning Google-search free.

To ensure accessible content by the widest possible audiences, it is suggested that you check your readability level before publishing. It refers to how easy or difficult a text is to understand. Interreg projects often communicate as if they are addressing experts with a Master's or PhD degree, using technical language and complex structures. However, since your project is meant to benefit the general public, you should instead use clear, simple, and accessible language - like how you would explain something to a first-year high school student, as recommended by [Interact](#).



Source: *Fundamentals of Interreg programme communication training*, Interact.

### Examples

Original option	Enhanced option
<p><i>Original title</i></p> <p>MEDCOAST: MERIT organizes a second data handling / database management workshop in Aqaba – Jordan*</p> <p><i>*too technical with acronyms and jargon.</i></p>	<p><i>Possible title</i></p> <p>Jordan: MEDCOAST project collects relevant environmental data on biodiversity status of the Red Sea coast</p> <p><i>Excerpt (short summary of the post below the headline on the Programme website to further elaborate on the headline)</i></p> <p>Recent workshop enabled experts to share data on sea water quality and discuss possible conservation measures.</p>
<p><i>Original title</i></p> <p>SUNMED pilot project in a Jordanian public school nears completion</p>	<p><i>Possible title</i></p> <p>Students of Madaba, to enjoy an energy upgraded school thanks to SUNMED project</p> <p><i>Excerpt</i></p> <p>While Jordan witnesses a snowstorm, insulating the public school will guarantee thermal comfort to the students of Iskan Faiha school in Madaba.</p>

## 6.4 Be specific

When you draft an article, you should be as concrete and detailed as possible. **Avoid general statements and self-referential announcements.**

### Examples

Original option	Enhanced option
Local info day for INNOVMED <i>(generic statement, what is the key objective of this meeting?)</i>	Local info day of INNOVMED to promote opportunities for innovators in the Mediterranean <i>(focus on the content of the project meeting and the project opportunities for stakeholders)</i>
All the cities of the Murcia Region meet for the scope of the MEDSMARTCITIES project <i>(what is scope of the MEDSMARTCITIES project and why partners are meeting?)</i>	Spain: MEDSMARTCITIES project to discuss/implement smart parking for people with disability <i>(focus on the content of the project meeting and its possible outcome)</i>
MEDSKILLS newsletter: the fourth edition is now available! <i>(what is the newsletter about, what is the most important content?)</i>	MEDSKILLS actions to increase youth employment in the Blue and Circular Economy highlighted in 4 <sup>th</sup> project newsletter <i>(focus on the content of the newsletter its most important information)</i>
CITYMED in Jordan: TV interview with Mrs. Lina Mansour <i>(not all readers may know who Mrs. Lina Mansour is and reference to project remains generic)</i>	CITYMED showcases ways to tackle urban issues in Al Balqa Governorate on Jordanian TV <i>(focus on what the project delivers maintaining the reference the media appearances)</i>

## 6.5 Be authentic and realistic

Interreg NEXT MED is a cooperation programme that fosters people-to-people cooperation and focuses on the human aspects of this type of collaborative work. Therefore, it is better



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to have a text that is not perfect but goes straight to the heart of the reader, rather than an artificial, impeccable text that does not transmit any emotion.

Finally, be realistic. It is not about pretending that the project solves all Mediterranean challenges related to employment, water, energy, climate change, health, or governance. It is about showing that when people work together, they can contribute to making this region a better place to live.

