

COMMUNICATION & BEYOND

A guide for Interreg Aurora projects

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Aurora



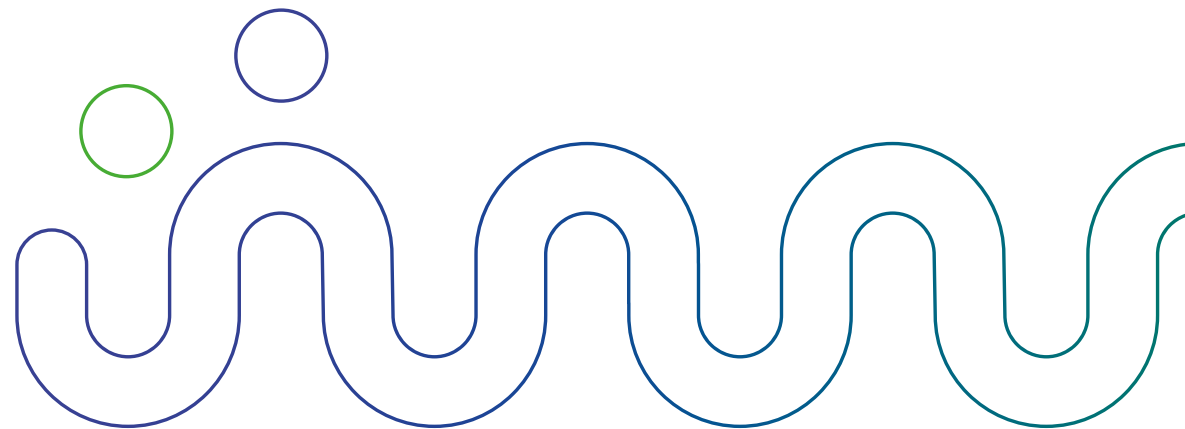
This is a guide for Interreg Aurora projects 2021-2027 to inspire and encourage visibility and communication activities. This guide will also clarify the communication requirements stipulated in the EU regulations and the specific requirements for the Interreg Aurora Programme.

Communication is an important strategic tool at all stages of a project. You can find our communication toolkit, programme manual and more information at interregaurora.eu

“Communication is better when
it’s everyone’s business”

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1.0 WHY IS COMMUNICATION AN ESSENTIAL PART OF YOUR PROJECT?

Communication ensures that people understand the importance of what you do, and it contributes to achieving your project objectives.



You are doing fantastic project activities! As many people as possible need to know about it. You work with activities that are really important to the vast majority people of the Programme area in one way or another. It is important to **highlight the benefits of your project** to the public.



Show how the cross-border cooperation and financial funding from Interreg Aurora is of beneficial use to the **individual citizen**.



Other projects can be inspired of your project and **new collaborations can be started**.



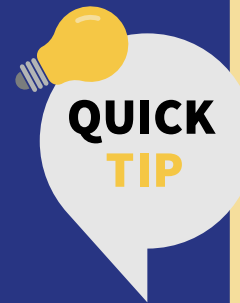
Your project results will have **a better chance of a continuing effect** after the project closure if the community-at-large is aware of your projects accomplishments.

1.1 IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATING RESULTS OF EUROPEAN COHESION POLICY

The Interreg Aurora Programme aims to create an interactive exchange regarding communication with our projects. We strive to achieve a greater awareness among:

- potential project partners and approved beneficiaries that Aurora funding opportunities is known as attractive.
- EU citizens about the results with cross-border cooperation and funding received from the European Union.

The Interreg Aurora Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat supports projects in fulfilling visibility requirements by providing guidance and feedback. The vision of Interreg is to improving life in the EU through cooperation across and beyond borders, one project at time.



The Interreg Aurora Programme shares, publish and disseminates information about your project and your cross-border results.

Always send us material about events, press releases, activities, publications, films etc. The Interreg Communication Officer might contact you for a special article about your project.

Keep an eye on Interreg Aurora's communication channels for campaigns like Europe in My Region, European Cooperation Day, Regiostars Award. Maybe your project will get a chance to be presented in European publications and Interreg events all round Europe? The Interreg Aurora Communication Officer will keep you updated.

1.2 COMMUNICATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

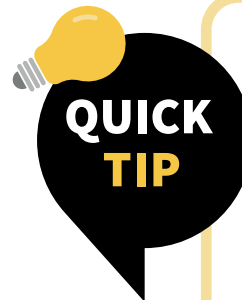
Social, ecological and economic sustainable development is an overarching goal in the Interreg Aurora Programme. All approved Interreg Aurora projects contribute to sustainable development.

Make the goals visible in your communication and make an impact in the way you implement the project.



Download the checklist!

For more information, download and implement the Interreg Aurora's checklist - [Communicating sustainable development](#)



Think again! It is important to reduce environmental impact. Do you really need promotional material and giveaways such as bags, pens, notebooks and USB sticks?

Giveaways should only be produced if it is necessary for achieving clearly explained and justified communication objectives. Promotional material that is produced are required to have the Interreg Aurora logotype.

2.0 CREATING A COMMUNICATION PLAN

To make the most of your communication, it is always helpful to develop a communication plan to determine and define your objectives, target audiences and key messages. Based on this, you can decide which activities and tools will best help you achieve your objectives.

Checklist for your communication plan:

- ✓ Objectives - determine what you would like to achieve.
- ✓ Target audiences - understand who you want to communicate with.
- ✓ Messages - key elements of the contents of your communication efforts.
- ✓ Timeline, resources and responsibilities.
- ✓ Evaluation - have you achieved your goals?



2.1 SETTING THE COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVE

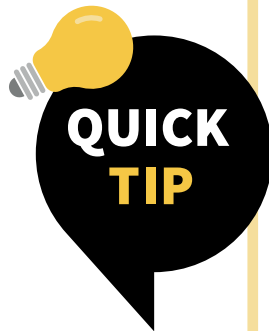
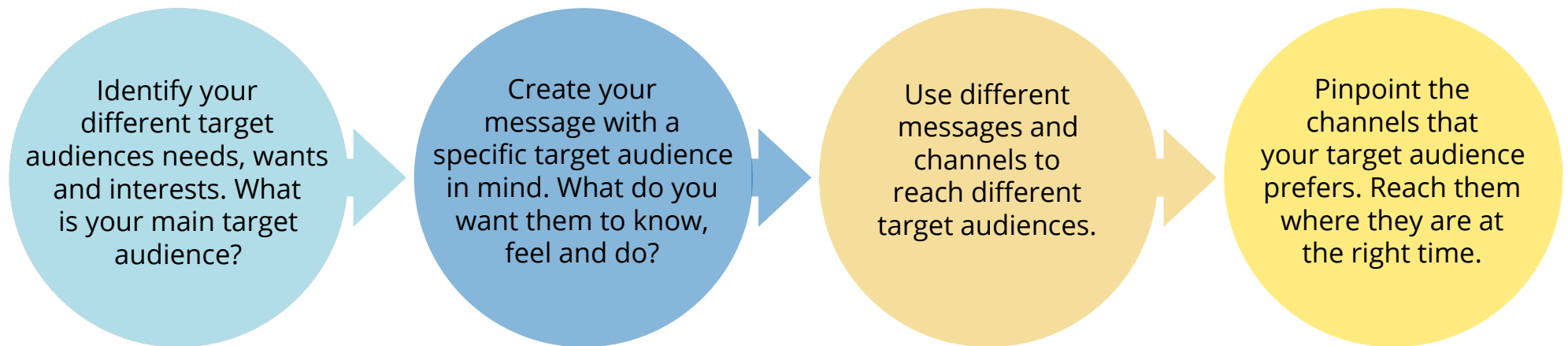
The objective should clearly define the expected outcome and should answer questions such as: who is involved, what will be achieved and where. Describe the challenge or need of your project, how should the challenge be solved? Describe how your project benefit the target groups and the citizens. A specific objective will help define activities.



- To define the **communication objective** - ask yourself the following questions: What should we implement or change? Is the goal to raise awareness of an issue, change behavior or attitudes, or is it to spread knowledge?
- Clear objectives with well-known audiences have the highest success rate.
- The key questions are the following: What do you want the target groups to **know, think** and **do** in order for the communication to be successful?
- An objective should be **SMART**, i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

2.2 TARGETING YOUR AUDIENCE

Understanding who you want to communicate to will help you define how you go about it, and which tools to use. Different audiences respond to different approaches. Communication channels, messages and tools must be adapted and targeted accordingly. Remember to differentiate the public and what benefits you do to the programme area and the individuals.



A few ways of identifying your target audience:

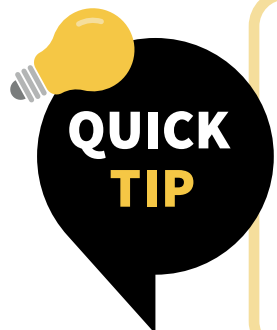
- By geographic, demographic and psychographic segmentation.
- By creating target personas - a persona is a detailed description of someone who represents your target audience. This persona is fictional but based on deep research of your existing or desired audience.
- By determining how your audience does research in order to find you. What are their driving forces and barriers?

2.3 CREATING KEY MESSAGES

Your aim is to create a few and short messages that focus on your users point of view and perspective. Instead of writing a slogan, form a message that hits home.

You must be able to answer the target audience's core question: In what way is this important to me? Also reflect on the most important points you want your audiences to know about your project/programme and what you think may interest them.

The messages can be divided into main messages and supporting arguments.



QUICK TIP

People will remember:

- Visual information
- Short, clear information
- Stories
- Personalised, meaningful content



Three features of great key messages. They should be:

Clear - Remember your audience, and strive to make your message as clear as possible to them.

Concise - Keep it short and to the point.

Consistent - Cohesive and stand the test of repetition and frequency.

2.4 SETTING THE TIMELINE, RESOURCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It could be helpful to create an activity plan with the activities and the information that needs to be produced. The activity plan should specify the target audience, channel, timing/frequency, budget and person in charge. Remember that the activities should be close to each other in time so that they support each other and constantly repeat the message. The list should be updated and supplemented on an ongoing basis.

Example of an activity plan:

ACOMMUNICATION ACTIVITY	TARGET AUDIENCE	CHANNEL	TIMING/FREQUENCY	BUDGET	RESPONSIBILITY
Raise awareness, share knowledge about...	Municipalities	Conference	March 28	30.000 Euro	Lead partner
Share new result	The public/ citizens in the programme area	Social media	Every quarter	200 Euro	Lead partner

2.5 LET'S FOLLOW-UP AND EVALUATE

Communication evaluation can be helpful to use in order to see which communication efforts have been effective. It can be defined as judging your activities, messages and engagements based on their effectiveness at reaching specified goals and principles.

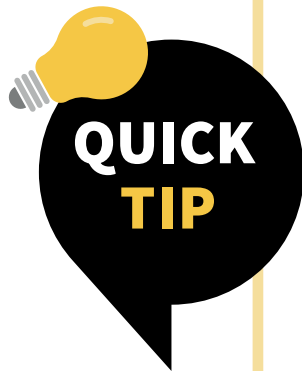
Evaluation is a cornerstone of successful strategic communication. Monitor and track your results in order to understand whether you are any closer to achieving your communication objective.

Questions to ask during evaluation:

- ✓ Did we identify clear communication objectives that support the project or programme objective?
- ✓ Did we identify the target audience?
- ✓ Did we identify audience-focused messages?
- ✓ Did we identify a realistic set of outputs and messages?
- ✓ Did the communication reach the right audience at the right time?
- ✓ Did we stay on budget?
- ✓ What did we learn and what might be done differently next time?

3.0 COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND ACTIVITIES

The channel used to communicate a message affects how the audience will receive the message. Communication channels can refer to the methods we use to communicate as well as the specific tools we use in the communication process.



- Use already established channels where the target groups exist. It is a lot of work to start new channels and to keep them updated continuously. Keep that in mind before starting new channels.
- Add and use different channels more frequently as they become more popular and as necessary to reach specific audiences. Research current stakeholder behaviors on different channels such as social media, and determine which ones they use and which are influential.
- Experiment with new channels and measure their effectiveness before using them frequently.
- Evaluate your channel options and select the channel mix that is the most appropriate for your objective and target audience.

3.1 WEBSITES AND WEB COMMUNICATION

Please note, **a separate project website is not required**. Information can be made available through the partner's official websites and other communication channels. If you choose to have a project specific website - you are required to inform about funding from EU and Interreg Aurora and the Aurora logo must be included.

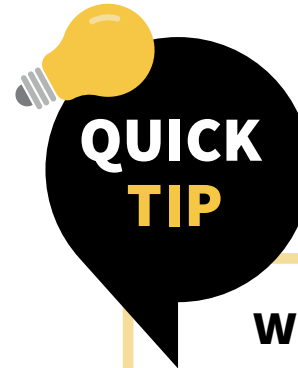
European publicity requirements

MANDATORY!

All project partners with an official website must include information about funding from EU and Interreg Aurora on the partners official website.

You will need a short description of the project, including its aims and result.

The Interreg Aurora logo must be included, [download logotype from the website](#).



Writing for the web:

- Most important information first
- Keep your language simple
- Be direct and keep it short
- Use active language
- Use headings
- Leave out jargon (or explain if you have to use it)

3.2 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media channels allows you to have a conversation with your audience, gain feedback and elevate your brand and project. It is important to know the difference between different social media sites, their audiences, usage and how they could fit into your communication strategy. Not all social media sites will be conducive to reaching your objectives or target audiences.

How to create a social media strategy:

- ✓ Choose social media marketing goals that align to communication objectives
- ✓ Learn everything you can about your audience
- ✓ Get to know your competition
- ✓ Set up accounts and improve profiles
- ✓ Find inspiration
- ✓ Create a social media content calendar
- ✓ Create compelling content
- ✓ Track performance and adjust your social media strategy accordingly

Influencers

Influencers can be considered an eligible cost under the cost category “External expertise and service costs” as long as the use of influencers is well justified for promotional purposes by a project. The procurement shall be made according to policies in the project partner organization that makes the purchase. The influencers should use the Interreg Aurora logotype if it is possible.

Texts in social media and films can include a predetermined sentence that is agreed upon by the project and the influencer. For example: “This post is a collaboration with the project X that aims to... The project is funded by the EU programme Interreg Aurora”. Use of hashtags is appropriate: #InterregAurora.

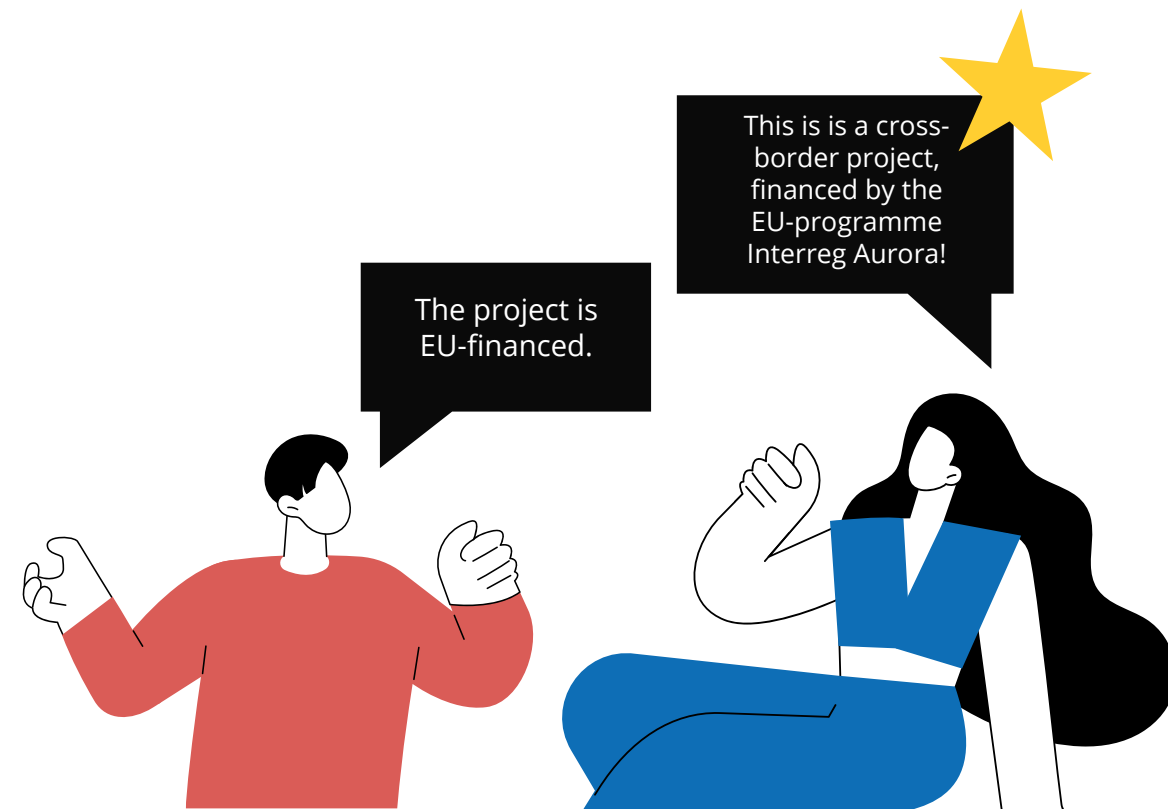
The Interreg Aurora logo must be included on websites and social media accounts. The Interreg Aurora programme wants to share your social media posts, don't forget the #InterregAurora or to tag Interreg Aurora in your post!

3.3 PRESS AND MEDIA RELATIONS

Interreg Aurora encourages you to work with media relations or public relations (PR). PR **involves working with media** for the purpose of informing the public of your project's mission, practices and news in a positive, consistent and credible manner. Don't forget to include your Interreg Aurora logo in press releases and press contacts.

PR CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Identify media** that reach your audience and which are likely to give you coverage (e.g. local press, trade journals, niche websites).
- ✓ **Identify contacts** and build relationships: for example, by inviting them to events or offering to provide useful introductions or industry information.
- ✓ **Identify any natural opportunities for PR:** for example, product launches, new premises, new employees or business milestones.
- ✓ **Plan a sustained flow of press releases** and other PR initiatives over a period of months or even years; do not expect immediate results.



3.4 MAKE AN IMPACT

Increase your chances of reaching through the media noise by packaging your communication in the right way. Here are some tips and tools to help you along the way.

Photos

Good photos that are relevant for your project helps to elevate your message.

Videos

Shorter videos and stories are often favored by the social media platforms. Increase your chances of visibility and engagement by mixing up the feed with video content.

Storytelling

Don't just list facts - share and tell your story. Write about the people behind the project and those affected by it.

Infographics

Easy to share, and easy to understand.

Hashtags

Use #interregaurora in your social media communication and create your own project hashtag.

Press and media

Contact media and tell them about your project. Are there any news or results? Invite them to visit your project if possible.

Ambassadors

Ask others to spread the word about your project (politicians, public officials, experts, stakeholders, influencers and so on).

Interreg Aurora programme

We share, publish and disseminate your activities and results - let us know what you are up to!



4.0 EUROPEAN PUBLICITY REQUIREMENTS

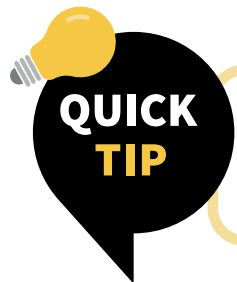
According to the European publicity requirements, it is mandatory for Interreg projects to follow the guidelines for logotypes and project A3 poster display.

The logotype

The Interreg Aurora logo must appear in a prominent place in all printed and digital materials and on products. That includes publications, articles, websites, social media, exhibitions, seminars, roll-ups, posters, newsletters, use of influencers and presentation material.

Read more about the requirements and download the logotypes here:

[Mandatory Interreg Aurora logotype - Interreg Aurora](#)



Don't forget to use your project specific logotype!

The project A3 poster

All project partners are required to display a project poster at their location/office for the whole duration of the project. The printed poster must be at least A3 size or equivalent on an electronic display.

The Interreg Aurora programme Communication Officer will provide a specific poster for each approved project. The Lead partner must provide following information:

- A project relevant photo. It is important that the photo illustrates the work/activities in your project. Remember to secure image rights.
- A short and impactful headline in English about your project objective. What challenge will your project solve?



4.1 INTERREG AURORA REQUIREMENTS

According to Interreg Aurora requirements, it is mandatory for projects to have a project specific page on [Interreg Auroras website](#). The results of the projects are published and saved here.

The project specific page

The Interreg Aurora Programme Communication Officer will publish and update the information on the website on an ongoing basis.

The Lead partner must provide following information to the project webpage:

- A short description in English about your project.
- Your project objective.
- Target groups.
- Relevant images.
- Contact information.

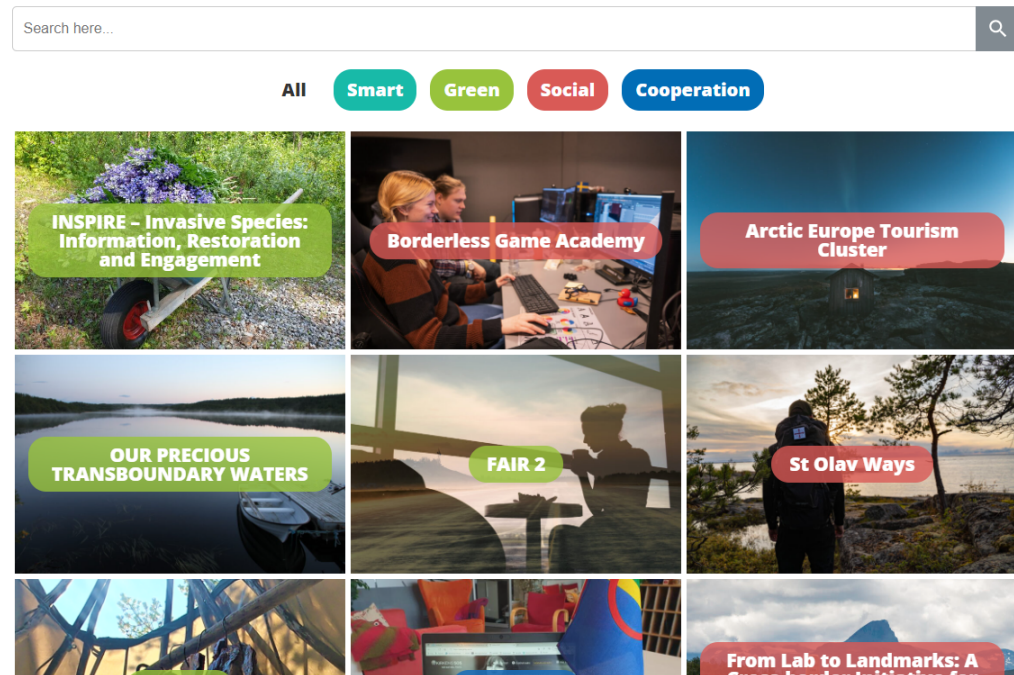


In addition, Norwegian partners must fill in a project information form for www.interreg.no.

[Interreg Aurora project bank and Interreg.no - Interreg Aurora](#)

Interreg Aurora projects

Get to know our funded projects.



5.0 IMPORTANT LAWS & REGULATIONS

There are a number of laws and regulations that every Interreg project must comply with.

General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR

GDPR is a legal framework that sets guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information from individuals who live in the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA). The primary aim is to enhance individuals control and rights over their personal data.

Check how your organization handles personal data.

Read more about the rules and the measures that each Interreg Aurora project needs to take to comply with current GDPR legislation.

<https://gdpr.eu/>

Accessibility

The law on accessibility to digital public service states that services and information provided by a public actor through a website or mobile application must be accessible.

Read about the rules that apply to your organization regarding accessibility.

More information:

www.digg.se

www.saavutettavuusvaatimukset.fi

www.digdir.no

Retention of documentation

The public availability of results must be guaranteed also after project closure.

Project documentation like reports, publications, evidence of websites and social media channels, should be kept available for a period of seven years following the end of the calendar year when the project was formally closed by the Managing Authority. Or even longer if it is stipulated in other rules applicable to the project partners. The strictest rule should be applied.



5.1 IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND

Throughout the project period, it is important to keep this in mind.

Reporting

You must describe your visibility and communication activities, communication channels and dissemination in the progress reports to the Interreg Aurora Programme.

In the final report you must write a short and clear dissemination of the results and how the cross-border project has impacted the life of the target groups and citizens. Tell us which result you are proud of and want to share to others!

Open results

Results of all Interreg Aurora funded projects must be free of charge and available to anyone, published with open access.

All projects are responsible for informing about having support received from the EU and Interreg Aurora on all digital and printed articles and publications.

Immaterial rights

All communication and visibility material produced in a project financed by the Interreg Aurora Programme shall be made available for use by the Managing Authority and the European Union institutions, bodies, offices or agencies upon their request.



5.2 OPERATIONS OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

New feature! If your project has been appointed as an Operation of Strategic Importance by the Interreg Aurora Programme, this is stated in your decision for EU-support.

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page. It features a circular callout bubble with a gradient from orange to yellow, containing the text 'New feature!'. Below the bubble are several wavy, rounded lines in shades of orange and yellow, creating a stylized, abstract shape.

New feature!

The Regulations for the 2021-2027 programming period includes a new feature, the so-called “Operations of Strategic Importance”.

This means a project which provides a significant contribution to the achievement of the objectives of a Programme. With thousands of Cohesion policy projects funded each year across Europe, the aim is to highlight key and emblematic operations, and tell the Programme’s story and Cohesion policy’s contribution.

The appointed Operations of Strategic Importance will receive specific communication support from the Interreg Aurora Managing Authority and the EU Commission will be informed and invited to project activities.

6.0 RESOURCES & CONTACT INFORMATION

➔ [The Interreg Aurora Programme Manual - Project communication - implementation phase](#)

➔ [Communicating sustainable development](#)

➔ [Communication Toolkit](#)

For more information
www.interregaurora.eu
#interregaurora

Questions, ideas?
Let's share communication tips!

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