



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
REGIONAL POLICY

Information and Communication

COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 1828/2006

of 8 December 2006

setting out rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional Development Fund

(Extracts concerning information and publicity requirements)

The recitals:

(...)

(2) Experience has shown that citizens of the European Union are insufficiently aware of the role played by the Community in funding programmes aimed at reinforcing economic competitiveness, creating jobs and strengthening internal cohesion. It is therefore appropriate to provide for the preparation of a communication plan which identifies in detail the information and publicity measures necessary to bridge this communication and information gap. For the same purpose, it is also necessary to identify the responsibilities and the roles that should be played by each of the actors involved.

(3) In order to guarantee that information on possible funding opportunities is disseminated widely to all interested parties and for the sake of transparency, the minimum content of the information measures needed to inform potential beneficiaries about the financing opportunities offered jointly by the Community and the Member States through the Funds should be set out, including an obligation to publicise the steps that a potential beneficiary should take to submit an application for funding and the selection criteria that will be used.

(4) In order to enhance transparency regarding use of the Funds, the list of beneficiaries, the names of the operations and the amount of public funding allocated to operations should be published, electronically or otherwise.

(5) In order to ensure a better implementation of the information measures and to allow a better exchange of information between the Member States and the Commission on the information and publicity strategies and results, contact persons responsible for the information and publicity measures should be designated and should participate in appropriate Community networks.

CHAPTER II
PROVISIONS IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EC) NO 1083/2006

Section 1
Information and publicity

Article 2
Preparation of the communication plan

1. A communication plan, as well as any major amendments to it, shall be drawn up by the managing authority for the operational programme for which it is responsible or by the Member State to cover several or all operational programmes co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) or the Cohesion Fund.
2. The communication plan shall include at least the following:
 - (a) the aims and target groups;
 - (b) the strategy and content of the information and publicity measures to be taken by the Member State or the managing authority, aimed at potential beneficiaries, beneficiaries and the public, having regard to the added value of Community assistance at national, regional and local level;
 - (c) the indicative budget for implementation of the plan;
 - (d) the administrative departments or bodies responsible for implementation of the information and publicity measures;
 - (e) an indication of how the information and publicity measures are to be evaluated in terms of visibility and awareness of operational programmes and of the role played by the Community.

Article 3
Examination of compatibility of the communication plan

The Member State or the managing authority shall submit the communication plan to the Commission within four months of the date of adoption of the operational programme or, where the communication plan covers two or more operational programmes, of the date of adoption of the last of these operational programmes.

In the absence of observations made by the Commission within two months of receipt of the communication plan, the plan shall be deemed to comply with Article 2(2).

If the Commission sends observations within two months of receipt of the communication plan, the Member State or the managing authority shall within two months send a revised communication plan to the Commission.

In the absence of further observations by the Commission within two months of submission of a revised communication plan, it shall be considered that the communication plan may be implemented.

The Member State or the managing authority shall commence the information and publicity activities provided for in Articles 5, 6 and 7, where relevant, even in the absence of the final version of the communication plan.

Article 4

Implementation and monitoring of the communication plan

1. The managing authority shall inform the monitoring committee for each operational programme of the following:
 - (a) the communication plan and progress in its implementation;
 - (b) information and publicity measures carried out;
 - (c) the means of communication used.

The managing authority shall provide the monitoring committee with examples of such measures.

2. The annual reports and the final report on implementation of an operational programme, referred to in Article 67 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, shall include:
 - (a) examples of information and publicity measures for the operational programme carried out when implementing the communication plan;
 - (b) the arrangements for the information and publicity measures referred to in point (d) of Article 7(2) including, where applicable, the electronic address at which such data may be found;
 - (c) the content of any major amendments to the communication plan.

The annual implementation report for the year 2010 and the final implementation report shall contain a chapter assessing the results of the information and publicity measures in terms of visibility and awareness of operational programmes and of the role played by the Community, as provided for in point (e) of Article 2(2).

3. The means used for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the communication plan shall be proportional to the information and publicity measures identified in the communication plan.

Article 5

Information measures for potential beneficiaries

1. The managing authority shall, in accordance with the communication plan, ensure that the operational programme is disseminated widely, with details of the financial

contributions from the Funds concerned, and that it is made available to all interested parties.

It shall in addition ensure that information on the financing opportunities offered by joint assistance from the Community and the Member State through the operational programme is disseminated as widely as possible.

2. The managing authority shall provide potential beneficiaries with clear and detailed information on at least the following:
 - (a) the conditions of eligibility to be met in order to qualify for financing under an operational programme;
 - (b) a description of the procedures for examining applications for funding and of the time periods involved;
 - (c) the criteria for selecting the operations to be financed;
 - (d) the contacts at national, regional or local level who can provide information on the operational programmes.

In addition, the managing authority shall inform potential beneficiaries of the publication provided for in point (d) of Article 7(2).

3. The managing authority shall involve in information and publicity measures, in accordance with national laws and practices, at least one of the following bodies that can widely disseminate the information listed in paragraph 2:
 - (a) national, regional and local authorities and development agencies;
 - (b) trade and professional associations;
 - (c) economic and social partners;
 - (d) non-governmental organisations;
 - (e) organisations representing business;
 - (f) information centres on Europe as well as Commission representations in the Member States;
 - (g) educational institutions.

Article 6 *Information measures for beneficiaries*

The managing authority shall inform beneficiaries that acceptance of funding is also an acceptance of their inclusion in the list of beneficiaries published in accordance with point (d) of Article 7(2).

Article 7

Responsibilities of the managing authority relating to information and publicity measures for the public

1. The managing authority shall ensure that the information and publicity measures are implemented in accordance with the communication plan and that they aim at the widest possible media coverage using various forms and methods of communication at the appropriate territorial level.
2. The managing authority shall be responsible for organising at least the following information and publicity measures:
 - (a) a major information activity publicising the launch of an operational programme, even in the absence of the final version of the communication plan;
 - (b) at least one major information activity a year, as set out in the communication plan, presenting the achievements of the operational programme(s) including, where relevant, major projects;
 - (c) flying the flag of the European Union for one week starting 9 May, in front of the premises of each managing authority;
 - (d) the publication, electronically or otherwise, of the list of beneficiaries, the names of the operations and the amount of public funding allocated to the operations.

Participants in an operation of the ESF shall not be named.

Article 8

Responsibilities of beneficiaries relating to information and publicity measures for the public

1. The beneficiary shall be responsible for informing the public, by means of the measures laid down in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4, about the assistance obtained from the Funds.
2. The beneficiary shall put up a permanent explanatory plaque that is visible and of significant size no later than six months after completion of an operation that fulfils the following conditions:
 - (a) the total public contribution to the operation exceeds EUR 500 000;
 - (b) the operation consists in the purchase of a physical object or in the financing of infrastructure or of construction operations.

The plaque shall state the type and name of the operation, in addition to the information referred to in Article 9. That information shall take up at least 25% of the plaque.

3. The beneficiary shall, during the implementation of the operation, put up a billboard at the site of each operation which fulfils the following conditions:

- (a) the total public contribution to the operation exceeds EUR 500 000;
- (b) the operation consists in the financing of infrastructure or of construction operations.

The information referred to in Article 9 shall take up at least 25% of the billboard.

When the operation is completed, the billboard shall be replaced by the permanent explanatory plaque referred to in paragraph 2.

4. Where an operation receives funding under an operational programme co-financed by the ESF and, in appropriate cases, where an operation receives funding under the ERDF or the Cohesion Fund, the beneficiary shall ensure that those taking part in the operation have been informed of that funding.

The beneficiary shall provide clear notice to the effect that the operation being implemented has been selected under an operational programme co-financed by the ESF, the ERDF or the Cohesion Fund.

Any document, including any attendance or other certificate, concerning such an operation shall include a statement to the effect that the operational programme was co-financed by the ESF or, where appropriate, the ERDF or the Cohesion Fund.

Article 9

Technical characteristics of information and publicity measures for the operation

All information and publicity measures aimed at beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries and the public shall include the following:

- (1) the emblem of the European Union, in accordance with the graphic standards set out in Annex I, and reference to the European Union;
- (2) reference to the Fund concerned:
 - (a) for the ERDF: “European Regional Development Fund”;
 - (b) for the Cohesion Fund: “Cohesion Fund”;
 - (c) for the ESF: “European Social Fund”;
- (3) a statement chosen by the managing authority, highlighting the added value of the intervention of the Community, and preferably “Investing in your future”.

For small promotional objects, points (2) and (3) shall not apply.

Article 10
Network and exchange of experience

1. Each managing authority shall designate the contact persons to be responsible for information and publicity and shall inform the Commission accordingly. In addition, Member States may designate a single contact person for all operational programmes.
2. Community networks comprising the persons designated under paragraph 1 may be set up to ensure exchanges of good practice, including the results of implementation of the communication plan, and exchanges of experience in implementing the information and publicity measures under this Section.
3. Exchanges of experience in the field of information and publicity may be supported through technical assistance under Article 45 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.