

APPENDIX XII – COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY PLAN

1. General considerations

The Organisation shall implement the Communication and Visibility Plan (CVP) as detailed below.

Should there be an up-date to the overarching reference documents, namely “[Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU External Actions](#)” of 2022⁴¹ or the “[Annex I - Joint communication and visibility guidelines to the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement](#) between the European Commission and the Council of Europe” signed on 19 October 2020 implying substantial modifications to the present CVP, such modifications shall be agreed between the Contracting Authority and the Organisation and introduced by means of a contract amendment. The mentioned reference documents, as well as the [Council of Europe Visual Identity and Graphic Charter](#) will be considered for all communication and visibility activities and materials.

This CVP guides the communication efforts of the programme’s actions. It supports the programme’s initiatives in the Western Balkans and Türkiye to address reforms and align with the EU acquis and European standards. Specifically, Horizontal Facility III actions (hereinafter: HFIII actions) are tailor-made activities corresponding to the priorities as set out by the Enlargement strategy and the IPA III Programming Framework, especially within the four themes: strengthening justice; fighting corruption, economic crime and money laundering; promoting anti-discrimination and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, as well as promoting and protecting freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

This CVP outlines communication activities to be undertaken, and channels to be used to reach out to all key stakeholders, ranging from official justice sector representatives to civil society and citizens, as final beneficiaries of the programme. Tailor-made messages and properly defined target audience will contribute to the increased visibility of actions and joint communication efforts of the European Union and the Council of Europe.

The CVP contributes to the comprehensive approach used for the implementation of the programme, that shall involve all key stakeholders, catering to the needs of the duty bearers and the rights holders alike. Both duty bearers and the rights holders will be target groups of communication activities in individual actions’ CVPs, with tailor-made messages and activities.

Through outreach, awareness raising and educational activities, using different channels, the programme will contribute to raising awareness of the citizens, in particular those in marginalised, disadvantaged and vulnerable situations, civil society and media of the importance of protection of fundamental rights and freedoms.

Appropriate visibility will be given to the European Union and Beneficiaries of the programme throughout the whole programmatic cycle of the Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye III. The CVP will be further fine-tuned by the Horizontal Facility team during the inception phase.

⁴¹ [Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions \(europa.eu\)](#)

2. Communication objectives

The CVP builds on the achievements and lessons learnt from the first two phases of the programme. It supports the aims and objectives of the actions and aims to keep citizens, beneficiaries, local stakeholders and other target audiences updated on the outcomes and benefits of the actions.

The programme has two levels of communication: the transversal programme level and the action-specific level. **Each HFIII action will develop its own CVP** with defined communication objectives, target audiences and key messages relevant for specific actions, based on this document.

This section of the document defines programme **communication objectives**.

2.1. Impact (Overall objective)

Promote the added value and contribute to the increased visibility of cooperation of the beneficiary institutions, civil society organisations, European Union and the Council of Europe in bringing the results of the HFIII closer to the rights-holders.

2.2. Specific objectives

Promote the results and achievements of the Programme in an understandable and appealing way, making them visible and useable.

- 1) Outcome: Better engagement with relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries

Output: showcasing and disseminating examples of the positive impact of the programme and therefore contributing to the exchange of good practices.

- 2) Outcome: Increased involvement and empowerment

Output: awareness-raising of citizens, including youth and vulnerable groups, on the protection of fundamental rights.

- 3) Informing and raising awareness about the programme actions and results in a coherent and systematic manner.

Output: In particular, providing regular and up-to-date information on the actions defined in the Quadrennial Plan of Action (QAPA) as well as on the Expertise Co-ordination Mechanism.

The implementation of the CVP will ensure that target audiences are informed about the added value of European Union and Council of Europe joint actions in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, taking into account the Beneficiary commitments under their membership of the Council of Europe when relevant. At the same time, it will demonstrate that Council of Europe assistance contributes to supporting Beneficiaries in their path towards the EU where relevant.

3. Target audiences

Target audiences for the HFIII communication will be defined on both programme and individual actions' levels. Still, all HFIII communication activities aim to engage the broadest relevant audiences, including general public and interested persons, **in particular** (the below lists are not exhaustive):

Target groups

- academia;
- media professionals/journalists;
- legal professionals;
- civil society organisations;
- public institutions.

End beneficiaries

- youth;
- women victims of gender-based violence or domestic violence;
- victims of trafficking in human beings including labour exploitation;
- LGBTI and other vulnerable groups;
- law students.

Certain audiences serve also as multipliers of the messages, and HFIII programme will put an additional effort into reaching out to those. As **youth** represent a group to benefit the most from the reform process long-term, a concerted effort will be made to reach youth in the Beneficiaries, mainly through social media and online platforms that youth are present on and using as the source of information. Similarly, **media professionals/journalists** but also **legal professionals** represent important target audiences. Special emphasis will be put in strengthening relations with these groups. Each of the HFIII actions will define target audiences and communication multipliers in their respective communication plans, including groups which will benefit directly/indirectly from the action, partner institutions and other relevant groups.

At transversal level, the Horizontal Facility III target audiences include:

- governmental bodies at all levels in all Beneficiaries (notably ministries of justice, interior, ministries responsible for public administration; parliaments; public structures with specific responsibilities in the relevant areas, such as anti-corruption and anti-money laundering bodies, etc);
- the judiciary, judicial professions and judicial supervisory bodies in the Beneficiaries;
- independent institutions of the Beneficiaries;
- local authorities;
- permanent representations of respective Beneficiaries (as relevant).

The main stakeholders of the programme are the European Union at the DG NEAR HQ as well as all Delegations / EU Office at Beneficiary level, the Council of Europe and the Beneficiaries' authorities as well as civil society. Building on the experience of the previous phases of the Horizontal Facility programme, the role of beneficiary institutions in communication is crucial, thus they will be encouraged to share results of the actions they are participating in through their communication channels, followed by many citizens.

Another important lesson from the implementation is that timely communication on planned communication events is an absolute requirement so that all involved stakeholders can ensure appropriate participation and visibility. Accordingly, information for all visibility events must be communicated already during the planning stage and the latest two weeks ahead of the event a short concept, draft agenda and draft list of participants must be shared with the DG NEAR project manager as well as the focal point of the Beneficiary concerned in which the event takes place. In the case of a regional event this information will be sent to all HF Focal Points in all Beneficiaries concerned. For all visibility events DG NEAR is kept in copy.

4. Key messages

The Horizontal Facility transversal communication message is based on the partnership between the European Union and the Council of Europe and its importance for the Beneficiaries in the Western Balkans region and for Türkiye and is in line with the slogan of the programme “**For your rights: towards European standards**”.

Key messages per main target audiences on transversal level are aimed at:

A. Horizontal Facility Beneficiaries’ authorities

The European Union and the Council of Europe are supporting the Beneficiaries of the programme to meet their commitments as Council of Europe member states where relevant and to strengthen institutional capacities and related resources of the beneficiary institutions within the momentum of the European Union enlargement process.

Through tailor-made actions and the Expertise Co-ordination Mechanism, this partnership provides important assistance to strengthen the rule of law, counter terrorism, violent extremism and economic crime, support education, fight against discrimination and enhances the protection of vulnerable groups.

Through adoption and implementation of the ‘acquis’ and by supporting reconciliation through regional co-operation and good neighbourly relations, the Horizontal Facility contributes to the credible enlargement perspective, where relevant.

B. Civil society organisations

The European Union and the Council of Europe are working in partnership with Horizontal Facility beneficiaries and civil society organisations to improve the lives of citizens through better protection of human rights.

They are working hand in hand to support reform processes in the fields of strengthening justice; fighting corruption, economic crime and organised crime; promoting anti-discrimination and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups and promoting freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

Expertise and field work of the regional and local civil society organisations are valuable assets in this partnership, contributing directly to the main aim of the programme – to strengthen the reform processes and improve the lives of citizens.

C. People of the Western Balkans and Türkiye

The quality of life of people in the Western Balkans and Türkiye is improved and their rights better protected in line with the European standards thanks to the partnership between the European Union and the Council of Europe, working together with the Western Balkans Beneficiaries and Türkiye.

Key messages are delivered in combination with the slogan of the programme - **“For your rights: towards European standards”**. Each HFIII action will further define its own key messages aimed at their specific target audiences. Those messages will be clear, coherent and focus on the benefits of HFIII actions for the people of the Beneficiaries.

5. Visual branding

The HFIII Co-ordination team will make sure that all communication about HFIII interventions will feature the joint logo.

The joint logo-set originates from the EC-CoE Joint Communication and Visibility Guidelines (Annex I to the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement between the European Commission and the Council of Europe signed on 19 October 2020 that applies in conjunction with the “Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions (europa.eu)” of 2020). It pays particular attention to the visual balance of the EU and the Council of Europe. The HF team will make sure that this logo-set appears with the slogan on all visibility documents, publications, websites and promotional material that is produced for the HFIII.



The logo will also be translated to regional languages:

ENGLISH	Co-funded by the European Union	Co-funded and implemented by the Council of Europe
ALBANIAN	Përkthimi është bashkëfinancuar nga Bashkimi Evropian	Bashkëfinancuar dhe zbatuar nga Këshilli i Evropës
BOSNIAN (Cyrillic)	Суфинансира Европска унија	Суфинансира и имплементира Вијеће Европе
BOSNIAN (Latin)	Sufinansira Evropska unija	Sufinansira i implementira Vijeće Evrope
CROATIAN	Sufinancira Europska unija	Sufinancira i implementira Vijeće Europe
MACEDONIAN	Кофинансиран од Европската Унија	Кофинансиран и имплементиран од Советот на Европа

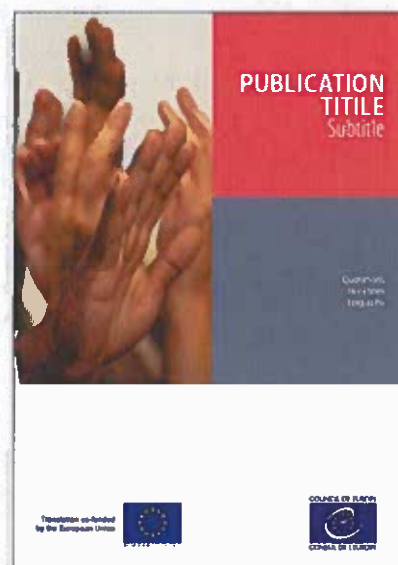
MONTENEGRIN	Sufinansira Evropska unija	Sufinansira i sprovodi Savjet Evrope
SERBIAN (Cyrillic)	Суфинансира Европска унија	Суфинансира и спроводи Савет Европе
SERBIAN (Latin)	Sufinansira Evropska unija	Sufinansira i sprovodi Savet Evrope
TURKISH	Bu çeviri Avrupa Birliği ile birlikte ortak finanse edilmektedir	Avrupa Konseyi ile birlikte ortak finanse edilmekte ve uygulanmaktadır

New materials prepared under the HFIII (print publications, on-line publications, films, e-courses and similar materials) will carry the disclaimer:

This [product] was produced with the financial support of the European Union and the Council of Europe. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of either party.

Publications which are **translations of Council of Europe texts** will have the Council of Europe logo on the right and a separate EU logo on the left side of the front cover page (this is to preserve the Council of Europe's intellectual copyright of the original publication). These publications should also carry the disclaimer.

Translation co-funded
by the European Union



The logo will also be translated to regional languages:

ENGLISH	Translation co-funded by the European Union
ALBANIAN	Përkthimi është bashkë-financuar nga Bashkimi Evropian
BOSNIAN (Cyrillic)	Пријевод суфинансира Европска унија
BOSNIAN (Latin)	Prijevod sufinansira Evropska unija
CROATIAN	Prijevod sufinancira Europska unija
MACEDONIAN	Превод кофинансиран од Европската Унија
MONTENEGRIN	Prevod sufinansirala Evropska unija
SERBIAN (Cyrillic)	Превод суфинансирала Европска унија

SERBIAN (Latin)	Prevod sufinansirala Evropska unija
TURKISH	Çeviri, Avrupa Birliği ile birlikte finanse edilmektedir.

For Venice Commission Opinions requested under the ECM, an individual EU logo will be placed on the bottom of the front page of the Opinion, in the footer, centred and accompanied by the following textual mention, **without a disclaimer**.

Opinion co-funded by
the European Union



A graphic line as used in the previous phases, will be adjusted jointly by the European Union and the Council of Europe during the inception phase and all the details will be defined by the **Horizontal Facility III communication and visibility guidelines**.

6. Communication channels and tools

The following section identifies channels and tools, which will be used in a co-ordinated manner to reach the highest percentage possible of target groups.

Human rights approach will be used in all communication and visibility initiatives within the programme, ensuring that all voices are heard and represented as much as possible in all films, photos and other communication about the actions.

Communication will be gender-sensitive.

Production of the visibility materials will be approved only when necessary and all materials produced within the programme should be eco-friendly.

6.1. Websites

A dedicated programme website will be available at the same URL that was used for the first two phases of the programme, with a special section dedicated to phase I and phase II on the Home page and main menu.

It will be the main hub for all information on the programme and be updated with news, documents and materials. Whenever appropriate, the presentation of news will be combined with videos, photos and links to other web pages dedicated to the Horizontal Facility run by Council of Europe major administrative entities. It will allow for social media sharing of information and use of relevant audio-visual and multimedia materials produced in the framework of the programme.

The HFIII website will be translated to all local languages of the Beneficiaries, making it easier to reach a wider audience and enabling local media outlets to search for information about the programme.

The HFIII team will explore link-sharing opportunities with other EU funded initiatives: e.g. other EU/Council of Europe joint programmes in the region, other regional and bilateral programmes and projects focusing on similar or complementary subject areas. The website will

also contain links to relevant websites of the EU (DG NEAR, EEAS, EU Delegations/Office), to websites of Council of Europe Field Offices and to relevant websites of HF Beneficiaries. It will be promoted through search-engine optimisation (SEO) as well as links on Council of Europe websites and HFIII visibility materials. EU Delegations/EU Office and Beneficiaries will be asked to feature a link to the HF website on their respective websites. Websites of respective Council of Europe Field Offices, available in English and local languages, will be used as the additional channel of communication about the programme, as they have wide reach in terms of local audiences looking for information in local languages.

6.2.Social media

Social media will be used as a priority tool as an effective way of delivering messages to target audiences.

The HF Facebook page (@jp.horizontal.facility) and Twitter account (@CoE_EU_HF) will be updated regularly. The titles of the pages would be amended in order to make them more appealing to external audiences, thus the social media handles will be changed into @Horizontal.Facility for both platforms.

It will continue to feature all news, documents, video material related to the HFIII interventions, and the issues being tackled, as well as the initiatives by other stakeholders.

Social media channels of respective Council of Europe Field Offices will be used as an additional channel of communication about the programme. The Offices are mainly using Facebook and Twitter as online platforms, targeting wide local audiences and are offering information mainly in local languages.

Social media will be used to enhance direct communication with citizens, especially young people in the region, therefore local languages of respective Beneficiaries will be used for posting on each of the platforms.

With the aim of reaching the youth, the use of social media will be enhanced, while other social media platforms can be considered in due course in order to reach out to some specific audiences. Young people are the largest user group of this platform and tailor-made posts will be showing results and important issues for this specific audience, including infographics, interactive quizzes, polls and calls for action.

The hashtag #ForYourRights will be used whenever possible, in order to unify communication about the programme.

Paid promotion of social media posts will be used as needed to reach out to specific target audience or promote specific content.

6.3.Media relations

Whenever possible and relevant, the activities within HF interventions will be promoted through local media in the Beneficiaries, in co-ordination with the respective EUD/EUO communication officer.

In all interviews, statements and press releases, the EU will be acknowledged as a partner and source of funding, while results and benefits brought to the people by the programme will be highlighted in every media material.

More specifically, media relations will entail several layers of activities, including but not limited to:

- organisation of press conferences (launch and closure events, visibility events planned within actions, etc.) in co-ordination with the EUD/EUO;
- media advisories and press releases to be disseminated, in co-ordination with respective EUD/EUO, through the Council of Europe mailing lists (which

- include media outlets and individual journalists) or through an external provider hired to enhance media visibility of highly important events;
- preparation of press packs and background press materials ready for distribution;
- dedicating a section of the website to media inquiries, that will include FAQs, contact details, success stories, galleries of photos, etc.;
- organising press briefings for media representatives in respective Beneficiaries whenever deemed necessary and done in co-operation with the local EUD/EUO;
- organising interviews of high-level European Union and Council of Europe representatives, Horizontal Facility experts and beneficiaries whenever possible;
- establishing a pool of journalists dedicated to each of the themes and subthemes covered by the programme in each Beneficiary, with the aim of direct co-operation with them and raising the profile of the programme in local media, whenever appropriate and especially in the case of success stories identified within the programme.

6.4. Newsletter

A quarterly e-newsletter will be sent to interested beneficiaries and stakeholders summarising the communication highlights of the activities in the last quarter. The newsletter will be disseminated through social media and will be made available on the HF website. A sign-up button will also be placed on the programme website home page.

6.5. Publications

A general **information leaflet** about the HFIII underlining the added value of European Union and Council of Europe joint actions in the Western Balkans and Türkiye and the future benefits for the people in the region will be prepared in English and the local languages in view of its dissemination as widely as possible.

A **leaflet about the Expertise Co-ordination Mechanism** will be prepared in English and the local languages with the aim to be disseminated to the programme beneficiary institutions, especially those that can submit ECM requests.

Publications reflecting the results of the programme will be prepared to raise awareness of what has been achieved so far.

Beneficiary factsheets will be prepared to clearly summarise results and achievements per Beneficiary, to be used particularly in communication with the press and general public.

Where suitable, **infographics** will be used to show results in an easily understandable manner. All publications resulting from the HF actions will be also available in electronic format and will follow the visual branding and will be disseminated and promoted through the website, social media, e-newsletter as well as events and conferences.

6.6. Stories with “human face”

HFIII actions will capture/identify stories of end beneficiaries - people of the Western Balkans and Türkiye - who benefited from the programme. These stories about successes of the programme and about how actions have made an impact on/improved peoples' lives, will be prepared in an appealing way, easily understandable by large audiences. Putting “human face” to the actions' results will ensure easier and enhanced outreach to larger audiences of the Western Balkans and Türkiye. They will be promoted on the website, social media channels,

through visibility events and e-newsletter. Whenever possible, the HFIII Co-ordination Team will seek opportunities to showcase these stories through traditional media.

6.7. Videos and photos

Filmed testimonials will be gathered throughout the HFIII implementation to show the impact of interventions on end-beneficiaries. Short films will be made to highlight key results. The films will be shared on the website, social media and through the e-newsletter. Where opportune the films will be aired at conferences and visibility events or in the local media. Photo documentation of events will also be done by the actions' implementation teams.

6.8. Visibility events

Information on HFIII's objectives and interventions will be disseminated at all events organised during the whole programmatic cycle of the HFIII actions' specialised conferences where appropriate, events organised to mark important dates or milestones of the programme, etc.). Promotional material and visibility items will be produced and distributed during visibility events.

7. Main communication activities

To ensure a thorough and complete flow of information in the framework of the programme, communication activities co-ordinated at transversal level would mainly include the activities organised by individual HFIII actions on occasions of marking important dates (Human Rights Day, European Anti-trafficking Day, Press Freedom Day, etc) or those communication activities or awareness raising initiatives implemented within specific actions of the programme, which cover a regional dimension.

Communication activities will be defined once individual CVPs of all HFIII actions are finalised, based on the resulting inputs. HFIII communication officers will closely follow individual actions' communication activities, providing support in all stages of the planning and implementation process of communication activities, as necessary.

8. Communication indicators

The indicators will help monitor the impact of the Communication and Visibility Plan. They are based on the above specific objectives and contribute to assess to what degree communication actions have achieved the CVP 's overall objective.

The overall objective will be assessed through the level of outreach to right holders on the programme's results as well as the visibility of the European Union and Council of Europe partnership with all stakeholders.

As these objectives will be generally tackled through multiple activities, the indicators are presented below by activity.

The baseline and targets indicated are determined using the previous phases of the programme as reference.

Table 1. below presents the list of generic and common indicators.

Output Indicators				Outcome Indicators			
	Baseline	Target	Source of data	.	Baseline	Target	Source of data
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audience• Relevance and frequency of information disseminated	See Table 2	See Table 2	See Table 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness• (re)Use of the content• Engagement• Perception	See Table 2	See Table 2	See Table 2

Table 2. below presents the indicators by Activity

Activities ⁴²		Output Indicators		Outcome Indicators				
		Baseline ⁴³	Target	Source of data	Baseline	Target	Source of data	
Social Media platforms (visual content, videos, info graphs etc.)	• Number of followers	HF Facebook 6,200 followers, 3,300,000 reach of posts HF Twitter: 1,200 followers, 900,000 impressions	Stable number of followers	Social media analytics Online surveys	• Engagement Comments, Likes (Re)post • Sentiment	Medium level of repost and use of content by beneficiaries	High level of repost and use of content by beneficiaries	Social media analytics Online surveys
	• Reach of posts							
Websites	• Timely and relevant Information • Number of visitors on the website	Website regularly published news and articles 80000 visitors on HF website	Website contains timely and comprehensive information on all communication initiatives More than 100 000 visitors on HF website	Website analytics	• Bounce-rate • Number of downloads from the websites • Number of videos views	High level of bounce-rate	Medium level of bounce rate	Website analytics Online pop-up questionnaires

⁴² Activities are based on the above objectives

Information packages (including brochures, publications)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of materials distributed 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of downloads from the websites Use of materials 			Website analytics Surveys
E-newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular flow of information regarding the programme Number of recipients on the mailing list 	Around 2000 recipients	2500 recipients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of openings of the e-newsletter 	30% opening rate	40% opening rate	Newsletter analytics Online survey
Events / Press relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of media representatives Number of participants in visibility events Number of information materials distributed (media advisories, press releases, media kits, etc.) 	500 media representatives attending HF events 150 press releases	Media representatives systematically attend visibility events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of articles in media 	Medium level of coverage in mainstream media	High level of Coverage in mainstream media	Press reviews On-spot questionnaires
HF Branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of European Union-Council of Europe partnership branding 	All materials and correspondence refer to the partnership All visibility materials bear the joint logo	All materials and correspondence refer to the partnership All visibility materials bear the joint logo				photos visibility items and events

HFIII actions that have envisaged implementation of awareness raising initiatives will define monitoring mechanisms of the initiatives in their respective CVPs, including monitoring on the level of impact wherever measurable.

9. Internal flow of information on communication and visibility matters

Information flow with local partners and EUDs/EUO on communication and visibility matters will be ensured in the day-to-day work of the staff in the field. The role of the Council of Europe Field Offices will be of particular importance in ensuring co-ordination and consultation on communication and visibility activities, as well as in identifying possible multipliers of the key messages.

Institutionalised communication channels between the EUDs/EUO and the Council of Europe Field Offices will be established, and enhanced communication will be sought so that appropriate and necessary feedback is received from those involved at the Beneficiary level. Communication on regional interventions will be emphasised. Guidelines to organise regional activities and communication as part of HF will ensure the involvement of all relevant partners and an adequate level of communication and visibility.

Internal HF information (contacts, reports, plans of actions, minutes, etc.) will be shared between Strasbourg, Brussels, the EUDs/EUO, and the Council of Europe Field Offices through a restricted web page. A list of European Union and Council of Europe focal points, including for regional actions, will continue to be updated on a regular basis.

Regular co-ordination and planning meetings between HF and EUD/EUO communication officers will be organised.

10. Human resources

A Senior Project Officer for communication (50%) based in Strasbourg and two Senior Project Officers for communication based in the Field Offices in Belgrade (100%) and Tirana (100%) will further develop the CVP internally and will also co-ordinate the implementation of it by the Horizontal Facility team, provide written guidelines on its implementation and supervise the implementation of these guidelines.

The communication team will also support development of individual communication plans for each of the HFIII actions in the inception phase and make sure that all the publications and visual identity products meet the contractual obligations.

HFIII action teams will contribute to the implementation of their respective CVPs, thus contributing to the implementation of this document by providing information on interventions.

A pool of external service providers experienced in communication and visibility services (public relations, design, media buying, marketing, multimedia production, creative industries, etc.) will be established in the inception phase and will be used throughout the duration of the programme by all HFIII actions.