

# Interreg - IPA CBC

Greece - Republic of North Macedonia



***Project: ABOVE***

***COMMUNICATION PLAN***

## **1. PROJECT SUMMARY**

“ABOVE” is a project that will film from above the whole eligible area using drones technology. The drones will cover areas not covered by Google Street View such as mountains, forests, lakes, rivers, canyons, waterfalls, river paths, forest tracks, bike trails, and pedestrian routes. “ABOVE” takes to the air over Regional Units of Florina, Pella, Kilkis, Serres and Thessaloniki as well as Regions of Pelagonia, Vardar, Southeast and Southwest. “ABOVE” aims to showcase the CBC area’s finest natural and geographical landmarks in a way never seen before. Stunning aerial hyper-lapse photography will allow visualising the changes of a season in seconds. This spectacular aerial journey across the area will reveal how tradition, engineering and natural wonders have shaped this lovely land and will demonstrate the people who keep their traditions alive. The potential visitor will have the chance to witness the incredible and spectacular breath-taking aerial journey, admire stunning sites and get privileged access to hidden areas. Exploiting Virtual Reality “ABOVE” will give people a preview and understanding of what they would experience if they went to visit physically. VR tours are effective not only in enticing people to visit an area but in helping them plan out what they’re going to do and how they’re going to spend their time once they’re there.

The target group consists of all potential tourists with special interests beyond the CBC area. The foreseen activities provide in the tourism sector direct outcomes to at least 100 professionals from at least 50 different companies, 30 young entrepreneurs, 10 perspective businesses, 200 influencers and bloggers.

“Above” aim to lead to the increased capacity of the 3 organizations engaged in the project and some 10 experts within them. The project’s results’ potential beneficiaries are all the residents of the eligible area as a consequence of the attraction of more tourists, income growth and new jobs creation

The long-lasting legacy of the project consists of: An inventive cooperation approach (as described in the previous paragraph)A pioneering documentary, a lot of promotional video clips and an intensive web-media campaign, Trained professionals and potential entrepreneurs The distinctive added value of “Above” is that the material of the aerial recording, covering all 4 seasons, will grant privileged access to the potential spectators; AND additionally, can trigger other sectors of the economy such as farmers, civil protection experts, environmental preservation specialists, to use the footage in order to deepen their knowledge and monitor the natural environment of the area. As a consequence, the results affect broader life segments, beyond the duration of the project.

## **2. PROJECT OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS**

### **Main project objective**

The overall objective of the project of which this Communication Plan will be a part is as follows:

- To attract tourists with specific interests in rural, adventure and winter tourism from worldwide via the use of drones technology, digital technology, ICT and intense multi-channel broadcasting by creating new jobs opportunities.

### **The sub-objectives of “Above” are:**

- a. joint development of competitive niche tourism product covering the whole eligible CB area

- b. web based and digital marketing promotion addressed to client groups with thematic interests, such as eco-tourism, adventure and nature lovers
- c. engagement of tourism stakeholders (tour operators, hoteliers) in familiarizing with VR technology
- d. capacity building of existing & perspective professionals of the tourism sector;
- e. creation of new self-employed or employed jobs

“ABOVE” is a project that is aligned with the Programme’s Priority Axis 1 -Development and Support of Local Economy and Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities d-Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage. Its objectives are directly connected to the Interreg IPA Cross Border Programme’s Specific Objective 1.3 - Improve the attractiveness and promote tourism in the cross-border area to enhance employment in tourism.

More specifically, on the level of direct results, the project intends to support:

- 1. Establishment of at least 2 start-ups, and
- 2. Creation of at least 6 new jobs

In addition, “Above” will integrate the databases produced by ITOUR – ToCulter and Holy Water projects, as well as any other project that will be implemented under this 2nd call. Combining this with the foreseen Capitalisation Event, “Above” will provide a unique method of delivering outputs under the CBC Programme.

The long term expected result of the project is: to increase the scope of the touristic product that will be achieved through:

- a revolutionary approach of demonstrating the natural heritage (mainly connected with outputs of sub-objective “a”)
- creation of a diversified touristic all- season product attracting tourists with specific interests of niche tourism segments (outputs of sub-objective “a”)
- use of digital marketing in promoting touristic products directly to target groups with specific interests (outputs of sub-objective “b”)
- 10 events that will involve the major tourism stakeholders, (outputs of sub-objective “c”)
- 8 trainings (5 in GR- 3 in NMK), 2 events and 1 networking conference with all projects under S.O. 1.3 (outputs of sub-objective “d”)

The expected (tangible and visible) outputs of the project by sub-objective are:

- a. joint development of competitive niche tourism product covering the whole eligible CB area
  - 160 hours of drone video footage (with free access to all authorities)
  - 25 Different sites time-lapse videos
  - 5 Short movies targeted to tourism sub-sectors
  - 1 hour documentary
- b. Web-based and digital marketing promotion addressed to client groups with thematic interests, such as eco-tourism, adventure and nature lovers

- Development of a Smartphone App
  - An intense campaign in social media via Google Ads, YouTube Channel, Vimeo, Twitter, Facebook
  - 1 hour drone documentary broadcasting worldwide: 180 spots, 30 seconds each, 2 times per day, prime time sector, 3 months, broadcasting zone “EMEA” (Europe, Middle East, Africa)
- c. engagement of tourism stakeholders (tour operators, hoteliers) in familiarizing with VR technology
- One touristic forum with a strong impact on tourism for the extension of the touristic season
  - Participation in one Specialized International Fair
  - 600 pieces of promo material directly promoted to international tour operators
- d. capacity building of existing & perspective professionals of the tourism sector;
- Seminars conducted in the Chambers of Florina, Pella, Kilkis, Serres and Thessaloniki to 100 professionals from 50 different enterprises: use of ICT tools, Service quality, customer satisfaction and re-visit intentions
  - Innovative attraction events – 10 Pop-Up Resto with 20 influencers and bloggers each
  - 1 Capitalisation Event - Networking with all projects under the S.O. 1.3 exchanging best practices and delivering an overall mutual & shared outcome
- e. creation of new self-employed or employed jobs
- Specialized training courses/ seminars on 30 start-ups establishment, business operations and alternative touristic activities in Bitola, Struga and Strumica
  - Ad-hoc business support to start-ups on a person-to-person basis (10 cases)

The target indicator for this project is the S.O.1.3 Indicator O0104, therefore “Above” will contribute with the participation of 50 existing and 70 perspective enterprises during the length of the project.

### **3. GENERAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

Publicity is the core activity of the “ABOVE” project, in which almost 1/3 of the total budget is assigned. Therefore, the general communication strategy is an essential part of the Project Implementation and Publicity (IP) strategy. The objective of the “Above” IP strategy is to attract tourists with specific interests mainly in rural, adventure and winter tourism from worldwide and shall be done via intense multi-channel broadcasting.

The structure of the IP Strategy includes two axes:

- a) WP2, which covers the requirements of the Programme, and
- b) WP4 with specific actions planned to maximize the effectiveness of the IP strategy

The proposed communication strategy is based on close cooperation between project beneficiaries, target groups, project stakeholders, media and the general public. "ABOVE" aims to present CBC area's finest natural and geographical landmarks in a way never seen before. By using modern video-recording technology, the project will film from above the whole eligible area using drones technology. The aerial hyper-lapse, around the year recording, will visualise the changes of a season in seconds and will reveal the tradition, natural wonders and the people who keep their traditions alive.

Moreover, the "Above" will integrate the information of the databases produced by ITOUR – ToCulter and Holy Water projects, as well as any other project that will be implemented under this 2nd call. Combining this with the foreseen Capitalisation Event, "Above" will introduce a unique method of delivering outputs under the CBC Programme.

Project's Communication Strategy will mix traditional and modern tools and channels to properly communicate its expected results, achievements and impacts.

The "ABOVE" communication strategy requires various means:

- Preparation of Communication Plan
- Creation of project visual identity
- Specially developed trilingual project website/development and 2 years of hosting
- Information campaign in social media/ Intense promotion of the tourism potential of the area (Google Ads, YouTube Channel, Vimeo, Twitter and Facebook)
- Publications on partners` official web pages
- Publications on other relevant web portals
- Printed publications/ One brochure with project results, shall be published in the Programme's language (200 Booklets)
- Non paid publications in local and national newspapers
- Appearances on TV local and national shows/news
- Electronic newsletters, online articles or blogs
- Final Dissemination Event
- Press releases
- Press conferences

#### **4. COMMUNICATION PLAN**

The Project Communication Plan is a strategic tool and is developed to raise awareness about the ABOVE project and to disseminate its results both in Greece and the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as to ensure efficient communication among the project beneficiaries. It describes in detail the dissemination and communication activities of the ABOVE project, which will ensure the dissemination and communication of the project results to all relevant entities and stakeholders in the field of tourism. In addition, this Communication Plan will contribute to raising the awareness of positive contributions provided by the European Union within the two countries. This envisages making the public opinion in the cross-border area (general public, media, and tourism providers) aware of the positive contributions of the European Union and their measurable impacts on the cross-border tourism development. Ongoing information, communication and presentation will be used in the implementation of all activities.

#### **Purpose**

The purposes of this Communication Plan are as follows:

- a. to ensure efficient internal communications between the Agency for promotion and support of tourism Skopje and the project partners
- b. to raise the visibility of the project at the international level and secure competent communication and dissemination of information with the target groups and the general public while organizing and executing the project "ABOVE" project events.

This includes the development of communication methodology, identification of stakeholders and publicity strategy, meetings with media, presentation of project results, etc.

### **Overall communication objective**

The overall objective of ABOVE's Communication Plan is correlated with its overall project objective: to attract tourists with specific interests, mainly in rural and winter tourism from worldwide via the use of drones technology, ICT and intense multi-channel broadcasting by creating new jobs opportunities.

The overall aim of the ABOVE Communication Plan is to raise the visibility of the project at the international and regional level by synchronising and aligning the information of the project partners while communicating and sharing information about the project activities and their results.

### **Specific communication objectives**

The overall communication objective will be achieved thru the following specific objectives:

- a. to establish efficient internal communications among project partners
- b. to raise awareness and understanding about the project and its specific area of work
- c. to secure competent communication and dissemination of the project activities among the target groups
- d. to promote the project results to the different target groups
- e. to raise the visibility of the project at the international and regional level

In order to achieve the specific objectives and to communicate the project results to a wider audience, beyond the project collaborative scheme, it is important to develop clear, concise, understandable and persuasive messages. These messages must promote positive achievements, innovation and the benefits they introduce and communicate with the different targeted groups. The provision of general guidelines about the project identity to be used by all beneficiaries, as well as common dissemination material (website, information campaign at social media, brochures, presentation templates, etc.) need to ensure consistency of messages and style.

A Communication Officer will be appointed by the LB Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism Skopje, to coordinate the communication and PR activities related to all aspects of the ABOVE project and act as a focal point. For the dissemination and the communication of the ABOVE project at the Greek National level, the Thessaloniki Tourism Organisation will be assisted by the Greek Italian Chamber of Commerce of Thessaloniki.

Besides the planned dissemination actions, additional promotion actions will be executed by the project beneficiaries at the national level. Finally, market-oriented promotion actions are foreseen as well as scientific dissemination of the expected results to related conferences.

## Target groups

The project's information and publicity strategy in correspondence to the target groups attempts to:

- create interest and raise awareness of the target groups
- prompt change of attitudes towards the promotion of tourism and mobilize the general public to actively participate in relevant activities
- promote the common cultural and environmental assets of the cross-border area
- promote cross-border cooperation
- create and improve the project's visibility and highlight project actions
- ensure visibility of the IPA CBC Programme "Greece - Republic of North Macedonia" and other E.U. Programmes

The Communication Plan will make efforts to communicate the most important key points of project's implementation mission to the citizens and the stakeholders in the tourism sector (tourism service providers, tour operators, media, etc.) from the cross-border region. The project activities will also foresee communication with international (EU) target groups such as tour operators and international media.

The **main target group** of the Information and Publicity strategy is **the potential tourist** as such.

The targeted stakeholders are:

- tourism service providers from the cross-border region,
- tour operators,
- local, regional and global media
- influencers and bloggers
- Relevant European Union Institutions

The goal is to address at least 50.000 potential tourism buyers, 10 tour operators and 2 international media.

### Specific objectives for each target group, related to the action's objectives and the phases of the project cycle

Target Group	Specific Objective
Tourists	Tourists with specific interests in rural, adventure and winter tourism from worldwide are informed and attracted.
Tourism service providers	Securing relevant input from the sector while designing project outputs and competitive tourism products Inclusion of all existing tourism potentials into newly developed cross border visual products Inclusion of all existing tourism potentials into newly developed cross border tourism products (video)
Tour operators	Development of more competitive tourism products based on the produced promotional materials and the actual needs of targeted market segments
Local, regional and global media	More effective promotion by using the newly

	developed video materials
Influencers and bloggers	More effective promotion by using the newly developed video materials A wider audience via social media platforms is reached.
Relevant European Union Institutions	The results and achievements of the projects are clearly communicated. Project visibility is ensured.
General Public	Awareness and understanding of the project and its specific area of work is raised. Awareness of the EU provided external aid is raised.

## 5. THE GLOBAL COMMUNICATION PLAN OF THE PROJECT

The global communication plan of the project includes the following points:

1. Internal Communication
2. External Communication
3. Publicity

At a strategic level, the LB Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism Skopje will be responsible for the management of the integral communication of the project. To do so, the communication tools will be designed and will be structured around the following elements:

- a. Aims of the Global Communication Plan of the ABOVE project
  - Increase transparency and awareness of EU funds and let the public know that EU money is being well spent
  - Help others to benefit from the activities, good practices and results achieved
  - Ensure maximum benefit by multiplying the effects of EU funding
  - Create awareness of project activities and results
- b. Deliverables of the Global Communication Plan

The initial planning of the project ABOVE foresees specific communication actions that will be realized by each beneficiary as follows:

### LB Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism Skopje

1. **Project Communication Plan and The Visual identity of the Project** will be developed during the first three months of the implementation of the project. The Plan will be submitted to the JS with the 1st Progress Report.
2. **The official website of the project** will be developed during the first three months of the implementation of the project. The trilingual website should provide information about the project, its progress, deliverables, news, events and results and Social Media Pages  
The official website of the project will contain, among other aspects, the following communication levels:
  - Summary of the Project's general framework
  - Overview of the Project's objectives
  - Information about the project's beneficiaries and their actions
  - Information and news about the project's actions implemented so far

- Contact information

The website will be structured by using a modern approach and technology that will permit its dynamic updating with information material (texts, documents, video, photos) and news

regarding the common actions of the beneficiaries, as well as information regarding the individual progress of each beneficiary as well as to facilitate its future enrichment with new topics, links and others, reliant on the progress of the project's realisation and its results.

3. **Promo material and gifts** will be designed and produced during months 4 and 5 of the implementation. 200 digital photo frames that will contain footage of the deliverables D3.1.3 and D3.3.3 will be distributed during the events and the exhibition. These materials will be distributed during the events and demonstration tours to certain professionals and opinion-makers of the sector.

#### 4. **Web-based and digital marketing promotion**

- **Development of a Smartphone App** - providing direct outcomes to at least 100 professionals, 30 young entrepreneurs, 10 perspective businesses, 200 influencers & bloggers; This application will be developed during months 10-16 and will be promoted by using the social media campaign and project website.
- **Intense campaign in social media** - Social Media pages will be created on Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter and continuously updated during months 6-18. The creation of Social Media accounts aims to reinforce the visibility of the project and the dissemination of its results in dynamic audiences that are constantly using these means of communication. The accounts will be systematically updated with information about the project's development, partners' and joint action, newsletters, press releases etc.
- **E-campaign** during months 6-18 aiming to inform and mobilise large numbers of people. Stakeholders will receive information via e-mail and social networks; they will relay it throughout their social networks generating a cascade of communication.
  - **16 E-newsletters** will be produced during months 3-18. The newsletters will contain news regarding project progress provided by the partners. Both web page and social media accounts will be linked with partners' sites, as well as visitgreece.gr, lonely planet and TripAdvisor. Google Analytics will be used to monitor the IP results.

5. **Project's results publication- a booklet with project results (200 pieces)** will be designed during month 17. The booklet will be distributed at the [Final Event. The publication shall be in English; a similar e-booklet will be available on the project's website.

6. **The final event** will be organized before the completion of the project, during the month 18. The event aims to inform the target groups specified in the communication plan about the results achieved. The event will be broadcast online via YouTube or another similar web channel. The final event will be held in English in the eligible area.

## **PB2 - Thessaloniki Tourism Organisation**

1. **Promo material and gifts** will be designed and produced during months 4 and 5 of the implementation:
  - a. 200 memory kits, boxes or baskets, containing emblematic products of the eligible area
  - b. Printing of 200 photo albums for gifts in the selected target group, during the events;
  - c. High quality photo album with photos based on D.3.3.3 printed in 3 languages

The PB2 will recruit a person to implement the project activities: 2.3.3, 2.4.3, 3.3.3, 3.3.4, 4.3.2 and 5.3.3; The task of this person will be to draft upload texts and promo material, to provide the external contractor of the LB with information as well as to monitor, assess and evaluate the efficiency of each social media channel. This person will be recruited during month 3 of the implementation of the project.

## **PB2 - Greek Italian Chamber of Commerce of Thessaloniki**

PB2 has no direct role in the promotion activities but will support the LB and the PB3. The Deliverable 3.2.1 (160 hours of drone video footage in 4 seasons / around the year), Deliverable 3.2.2 (Field Study defining the places to be promoted) and the rest of the deliverables under each work package will be shared with the LB and PB3 and will be adjusted in order to be promoted by the social media channels and other communication tools.

### **The Internal Communication Plan**

The internal communication plan should provide regular and efficient sharing of information and views. Good internal communication will encourage the team to carry out the project objectives and will help to avoid the unnecessary duplication of efforts.

The internal communication plan aims:

- to organize information flow between “the LB, the LB and the project beneficiaries, as well as and between PB themselves.
- to facilitate and improve the implementation of the project objectives
- to guarantee that PB coordinate to the main objectives of the project
- to make the transnational cooperation of the project easier

Consequently, the target groups of the internal Communication Plan are:

- Project beneficiaries
- PB organizations
- Subcontractors and consultants
- Financial and administrative staff

**The communication tools** that will be employed for the comprehensive implementation of the plan and the achievement of the abovementioned aims are:

- E-mail communication (main tool of communication): the LB will play a key role to guarantee a good communication strategy. The project’s communication will be used, as well as individual e-mail accounts that will be provided to the project’s beneficiaries.
- Internet website and Intranet: PBs will be able to upload certain issues of general interest on the user area.
- Telephone: In the event of an urgent question or decision, the telephone will be the

communication tool used.

- Letters: LB should address a letter to the PBs in case of an official procedure.
- Meetings: The term refers to those meetings foreseen in the Partnership Agreement, as well as the informal meetings related to the development and implementation of the different actions of the project, organized by the LB and promoted by each PB.
- Virtual meetings: The term refers to meetings held through electronic platforms of communication (MS Teams, Zoom, Skype, etc.).
- Printed materials: (brochures etc.). Each beneficiary will be responsible for translating and printing these communication materials and communicating to the LB the dissemination strategy and the impact of the same.
- Face to face contact
- Other communication tools shall be implemented according to the needs of beneficiaries and the development of the project's actions.

### The internal communication structure

The internal communication structure is divided into two levels of communication:

- The project management level
- The project implementation level

#### The project management level

Concerning publicity, communication and dissemination issues each PB will communicate directly with the LB through a one to one communication.

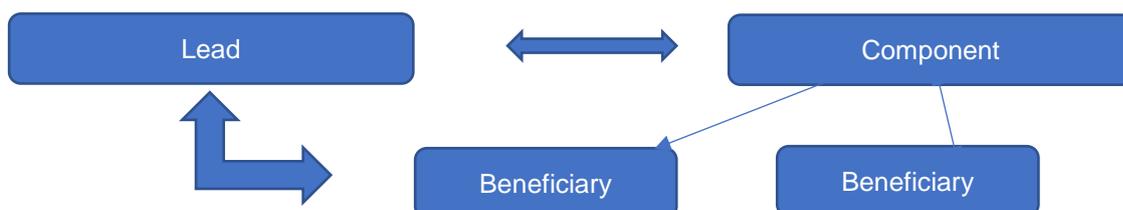


The LB will be the contact organization with the Joint Technical Secretariat on behalf of the whole partnership.

#### The project implementation level

Every beneficiary will be in direct contact with the responsible beneficiary of each component. The Component Leader will coordinate the work and will be responsible for delivering the information to the LB on time.

To discuss technical issues, PBs can also communicate directly with each other, both virtually and face to face, in a meeting, a visit, etc, but this must be coordinated with the Component Leaders and the LB must be informed.



### **Common Communication Rules**

To optimize the management communication, the internal communication plan of the project includes the following rules:

- Every PB should answer the emails as soon as possible.
- The emails of common interest can be sent to the whole partnership for specific and singular communications to allow the communication flow.
- All the information related to the project implementation must be sent directly to the contact indicated by the Component Leader and with a copy to the Lead Beneficiary (email).
- All the information related to the financial aspects must be sent directly to the Financial Manager (email) and with a copy to the Lead Beneficiary (email).

### **Internal communication tasks**

- Approval of reports
- Approval of the meeting minutes (between PB for a specific component and for the Steering Committees)
- Communication of the agendas and the dates of the meetings
- Organization of the internal events organized by each PB and related to the project
- All the issues about the implementation of the project
- All the issues about the management of the project (questions on financial issues, etc)

## **6. APPLICATION OF VISUAL IDENTITY ELEMENTS FOR ALL COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION ACTIONS AS WELL AS PUBLICITY AND PUBLICATIONS**

The Visual Identity shall follow the Regulation (EC) n. 1828/2006, Article 7 (Publicity). According to these regulations, all communications or publications regarding the project, including a conference or a seminar, shall state that it has received an ERDF funding through the INTERREG IPA CBC Programme.

### **EC Regulation 1828/2006**

§ 8, 9: Emblem of EU, reference to the fund

**"The beneficiary shall be responsible for informing the public... about the assistance obtained from the Funds"**

According to the INTERREG IPA CBC Greece – Republic of North Macedonia **INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY GUIDE FOR FINAL BENEFICIARIES**, and more specifically in **§ 7: Application of Visual Identity Elements in Projects** specific regulations should be followed regarding the publicity of the project and the use of the logos.

### **EU emblem**

The usage of the EU emblem (the flag of the European Union with the text "European Union") only (as shown below) is recommended in the case of small promotional objects, where space is limited.



EUROPEAN UNION

The abovementioned format should be downloaded by all PB from the following official source: [http://www.ipa-cbc-programme.eu/com/17\\_Documents-for-Project-implementation](http://www.ipa-cbc-programme.eu/com/17_Documents-for-Project-implementation)

### **Programme INTERREG IPA CBC Logo**

The logos shall be located in the first page and shall not be smaller than other logos displayed.



There are various official formats of the INTERREG IPA CBC logo available at the official INTERREG IPA CBC site. These logos can be downloaded for various uses such as web, electronic, color, black and white printing, etc. from the following link:

[http://www.ipa-cbc-programme.eu/com/17\\_Documents-for-Project-implementation](http://www.ipa-cbc-programme.eu/com/17_Documents-for-Project-implementation)

### **Inacceptable modifications of the Programme's logo**

- Proportional changes between different elements
- Disproportionate resizing
- Color changes
- Reduced clear area proportions

### **Publications**

The requirements for the application of visual identity elements in the Project in case of publications (e.g. brochures, leaflets, press releases, best practice guides etc) are the following:

- The Interreg project logo
- Textual reference to the sources of financing
- Disclaimer that "The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union, the participating countries and the Managing Authority".

### **Event materials**

The public promotion open events that are planned in the framework of the project's realization and the corresponding materials that will be produced (posters, banners, roll-up, pop-up stands etc.), should contain at least the following:

- The Interreg project logo
- Textual reference to the sources of financing

## 7. TIMETABLE

The following timetable refers to the implementation of the communication plan in the framework of the project's schedule. In case of prolongation, the timetable will be adapted accordingly.

No.	Activity	Month 1-3	Month 3-6	Month 6-9	Month 9-12	Month 12-15	Month 15-18
	Lead Beneficiary						
1.	Project Communication Plan and The Visual identity						
2.	Project official website						
3.	Promo material and gifts (M4-5)						
4	<b>Web-based and digital marketing promotion</b>						
4.1	Development/Promotion of a Smartphone App (M 10-16)						
4.2	Intense campaign in social media (M 6-18)						
4.3	E-campaign (M 6-18)						
5.	Publication- a booklet (M 17)						
6.	The final Event (M 18)						
	PB 3						
7.	Promo material and gifts (M4-5)						