



HOW TO ESTABLISH SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION STRATEGIES FOR YOUR EU PROJECT

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Planning and implementing effective communication, dissemination and exploitation activities are key to ensure that valuable insight and innovative results generated by your project are deployed to their full potential.

WHAT'S NEW IN HORIZON EUROPE?

Horizon Europe is the successor of the European research and innovation programme Horizon 2020 for the period 2021-2027. For this programme, the European Commission attaches high importance to achieving impact through effective dissemination and exploitation.

Changes regarding the proposal

- Key Impact Pathways for Dissemination/Exploitation to be detailed
- Business Plan to be included only if explicitly requested in the call
- Compliance with Do no significant harm (DNSH) principle is part of the evaluation (esp. regarding environmental impact)

Changes in terminology

- **Results/outputs:** “What is generated during the project implementation. This may include, for example, know-how, innovative solutions, algorithms, proof of feasibility, new business models, policy recommendations, guidelines, prototypes, demonstrators, databases and datasets, trained researchers, new infrastructures, networks”; contribute to -> outcomes
- **Outcomes:** “expected effects over the medium term”; contribute to -> impacts
- **Impacts:** “wider long-term effects on society (including the environment), the economy and science”

Changes regarding exploitation

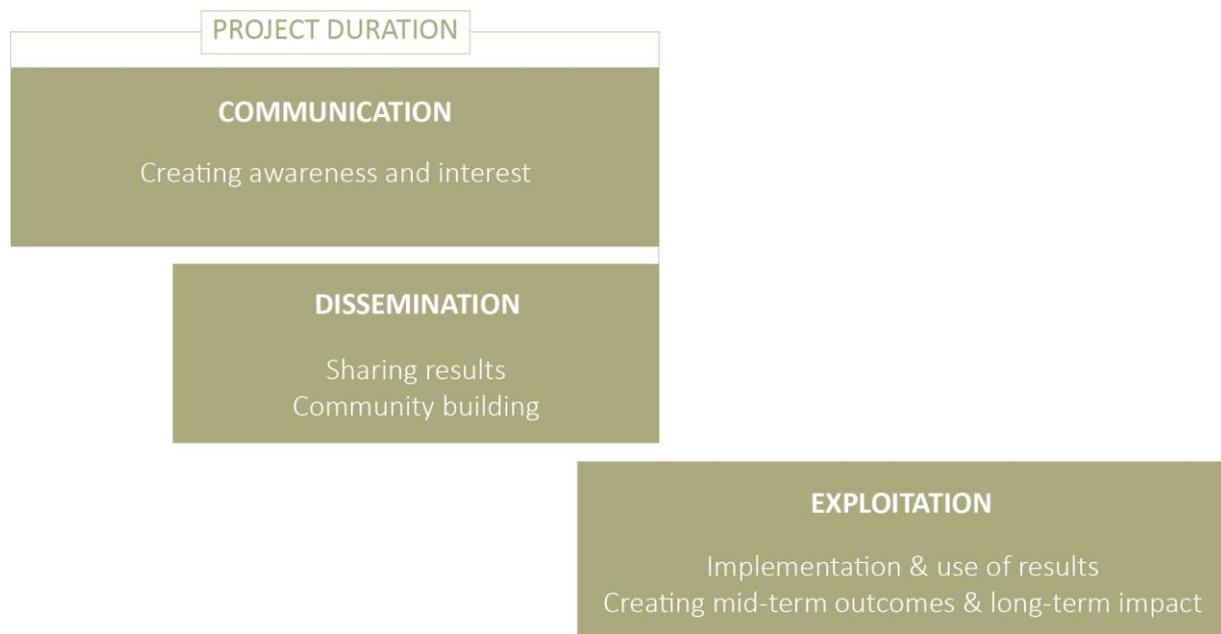
- Monitoring of exploitation through continuous reporting, including after the end of the project
- Mandatory provision of a results ownership list at the end of the project
- Mandatory use of the HRP (see above)

Changes regarding Open Science

- Publications must be in a trusted repository with immediate Open Access CC BY licence, a Creative Commons license; recommended to keep copyright (more details in [the Annotated Model Grant Agreement](#))
- A Data Management Plan must be produced by project month 6

COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION & EXPLOITATION: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Communication and dissemination activities cover different aspects of the project, target different audiences, and send different messages. Both are linked and influence each other, but their goals are fundamentally different: whereas communication activities encompass all aspects of the project, dissemination concerns only results and paves the way for exploitation, which refers to the uptake of project results for further research, the commercialisation of products or services, the adoption of new standards or the adoption or revision of policies.



Legal reference for communication and dissemination in Horizon Europe projects is the Grant Agreement, art 16 (IPR), art. 17 and, if applicable, Annex 5.

Communication

Horizon Europe definition of communication: *“Taking strategic and targeted measures for promoting the action itself and its results to a multitude of audiences, including the media and the public, and possibly engaging in a two-way exchange”.*

Communication aims to inform, raise awareness, and increase public visibility of the project. It targets multiple and non-specialist audiences, including media and the general public. Communication should therefore avoid jargon and uses visuals as much as possible. The focus should be on the societal challenge being addressed by the project and the general scientific or technical approach. Communication activities start at the project outset and are adapted to each stage of the project.

3 basic principles

1. **Communication strategically and with purpose.** Start by defining your project's target audiences and unique value proposition.
2. **Communicate simply.** An appropriate register could be that of general interest media, i.e., precise and formal but easy to understand. Avoid jargon and abbreviations!
3. **Communicate visually.** Don't underestimate the importance of presenting your information in an attractive manner. Define a visual identity and use relevant, expressive imagery.

Typical communication tools

- **Visual identity:** logo, fonts and colours
- **Online communication:** project website, social media accounts and newsletters
- **Promotional material:** posters, flyers, factsheets, presentations, podcasts or online demonstrators
- **Material for the press:** press releases, press kit
- **Other communication tools:** infographics, videos

Dissemination

EC definition of dissemination: *“The public disclosure of the results by appropriate means, other than resulting from protecting or exploiting the results, including by scientific publications in any medium”.*

Dissemination is all about sharing project results. It thus covers all activities allowing the transfer of knowledge and results to specific, previously identified target audiences who may use the results, e.g., industry, academia or policymakers. Dissemination uses accurate scientific or technical language. Dissemination only starts once project results are available.

By sharing results, dissemination not only supports the progress of science, but also establishes a community and enables the further exploitation in the future.

Typical dissemination activities

- Scientific publications, respecting Horizon Europe open access requirements
- Events: exhibitions, workshops, end-user trainings, demo days, cluster events, guided visits
- Participation to third-party events: industry fairs, scientific conferences, policy roundtables
- Other dissemination support: policy briefs, white papers, online tools and trainings for specific target groups

Legal reference for communication and dissemination in Horizon Europe projects is the Grant Agreement, art. 17 and, if applicable, Annex 5.

Defining a communication & dissemination strategy

A dissemination strategy should contain at least the following considerations:

- **Target groups:** A list of stakeholders concerned by or potentially interested in these outputs, based on a previously conducted stakeholder mapping
- **Key messages:** Define your project's unique value proposition and the key messages for each target group
- **Key results:** List the planned key outputs of your project and where/how they will be made available
- **Strategy:** An overview of objectives, messages, and tools/channels and activities planned at each stage of the project to reach the target groups
- **Action plan:** A planning of activities through the project lifetime
- **Performance monitoring:** Table of evaluation criteria and KPIs to be attained by a certain date, e.g., M12 or project end

Exploitation

Horizon Europe definition of exploitation: *“The use of results in further research and innovation activities, including among other things, commercial exploitation such as developing, creating, manufacturing and marketing a product or process, creating and providing a service, or in standardisation and policy making activities”.*

Exploitation means making the most of your project results by ensuring their uptake by a maximum of concerned stakeholders (e.g., potential end users) after the end of the project. This may mean using them for commercial purposes or to influence policymaking. Exploitation happens at the very end and mostly after the end of the project. Exploitation is strongly connected to another important notion in EU projects: sustainability.

Typical exploitation activities during the project

- **Exploitation roadmap** to facilitate the commercial and non-commercial exploitation in the short, medium and longer-term, including ensuring support, or even commitment, from key stakeholders and networks
- **Market analysis**, e.g., through PESTEL and SWOT analyses
- **Business modelling:** identification of exploitable outcomes, development of suitable business models and planning of path-to-market
- **Scientific dissemination and data management**, in line with your open access strategy and EU requirements
- **IP management and standardisation strategy**
- **Strategic grant planning**, to identify suitable funding schemes for further technology development and estimate the resources required to launch follow-up R&D projects

Typical outcomes of a successful exploitation strategy

- Further development of a prototype or market launch of an output (e.g. a robot, a new therapy)
- Uptake of policy recommendations in political decision-making

- Further research grants to follow up on the project results
- Set-up of initiatives (a civil society projects, master programmes...) using insights from the project

Defining an exploitation strategy

An exploitation strategy should contain at least the following considerations:

- What are the key exploitable outputs?
- Who are the key targeted stakeholders?
- How will each partner exploit and benefit from the results?
- How can the future exploitation of results be prepared during the lifetime of the project (e.g., through business plan trainings, strategy IP management...)?
- Is joint exploitation of results by different partners an option, and how can this be encouraged and facilitated (especially considering IPR)?

How dissemination and exploitation are linked

Dissemination allows to maximise the impact of project results among academia, policy makers and industry. It is a key enabler for successful exploitation.

Exploitation involves launching the commercialisation of results by contacting potential end-users and multipliers. Through successful dissemination, engagement and optimal project visibility, networks are already established, and it is easier to reach those stakeholders.

Rigorous implementation of the dissemination strategy also means that key exploitable outputs have already been identified.

SOME TIPS!

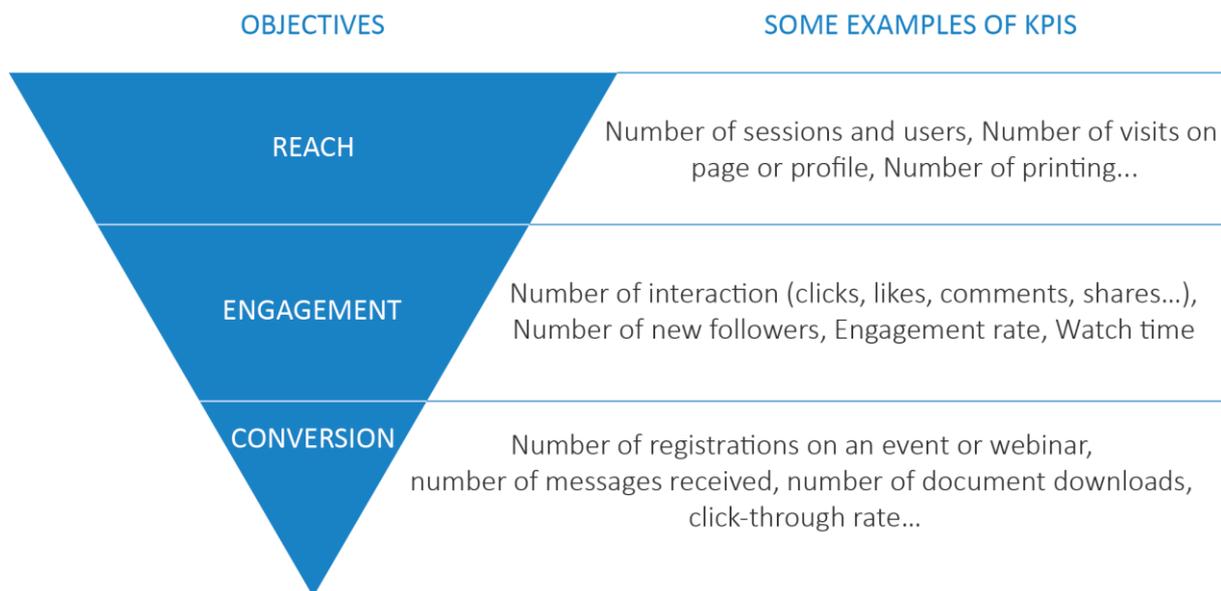
Communication & dissemination

Monitor performance

To measure the success of your communication and dissemination strategies, defining and monitoring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is key. This will also help measure the success of your dissemination strategy and adapt it if necessary. KPIs must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound).

How to define KPIs in 5 steps

1. Define your objectives and targets
2. Set-up dissemination & communication actions in accordance
3. Define relevant and realistic KPIs
4. Monitor and report them in a table regularly
5. Adapt your dissemination & communication actions based on how well you are reaching KPIs



Don't forget the general public

For a European project communication, a general public strategy must not be neglected. Whereas dissemination targets a specific and specialist audience, communication also targets the general public and non-specialist media. Your project should also raise general awareness on the societal and technological challenges it tackles as well as illustrate the benefits of publicly funded R&D. This is best done via social media.

Don't be afraid to use influence marketing

Using communication usually dedicated for B2C targets can be relevant. Influence marketing can be part of a popularising strategy for the project. Using influencers on the sectors linked to the allows to reach end users and contributes to a successful general public strategy.

Influencers, such as scientist channels on Youtube, can be major actor in the sector. Communication action based on influence marketing is usually launched towards the end of the project, when project results are available, and requires a project with high technological maturity (e.g., a flagship project) and a go-to-market strategy.

Be creative

You are allowed to be creative in the context of a European project! Thinking out of the box increases the visibility of your project and is likely to raise interest. So have fun! For example, with [the FARMŸNG project](#), coordinated by Ÿnsect, an original flyer in form of beetle has been developed.



Work on EU project partnerships

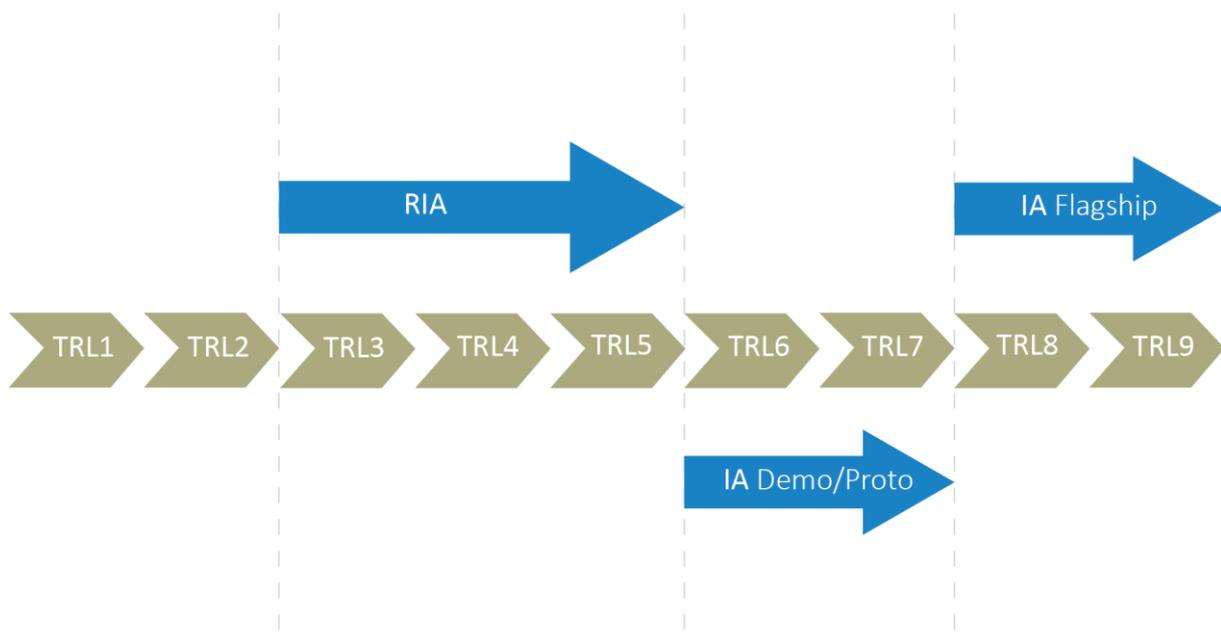
All European projects have the same goal: to share their results with other interested stakeholders. Therefore, developing partnerships with other European projects is the best way to spread and increase the reach of your dissemination strategy. This will also support exploitation.

Invite experts from other projects as panellists to your conferences or as experts to your workshops. Be supportive of other projects' events, publications and achievements by sharing them through your communication channels. Social media (mentions, hashtags, groups) are a particularly useful tool to network with other projects.

Dissemination & exploitation

Adapt your strategy to the technological maturity of your project

Exploitation won't be the same depending on the technological maturity of the project, because engagement and impact won't be the same for a demonstration or a prototype, aiming for proof-of-concept, or for a flagship project, aiming for a go-to-market strategy.



Conduct a stakeholder analysis to support your dissemination activities

A thorough stakeholder analysis at the beginning of the project allows to identify and target specific stakeholders which can be interested by the impact expected of the project.

A stakeholder analysis defines the targets and objectives for your dissemination strategy. A successful dissemination strategy then feeds and supports the exploitation plan. This synergy is often underestimated.



Show you are aware of potential barriers to the exploitation of your results

These barriers could include lack of funding, lack of production capacities, shortage of skills, regulations, IP issues, lack of user acceptability, unease with innovation, lack of adequate standards etc. Anticipate these obstacles by making sure you get the right people on board (e.g., in your Advisory Board) to tackle them from early on.

Make use of free-of-charge EU dissemination & exploitation tools

Among the support tools the EU has set up are:

Horizon Results Platform: a repository of your project's Key Exploitable Results (KER), selected by the project partners. Hosted under the Funding & Tenders Portal, it can be used for outreach, matchmaking, pitching, finding calls for proposals and many more. Use of the HRP is mandatory for HEU projects if 1 year after project end no uptake has happened yet.

Horizon Results Booster: common support services for projects funded under FP7 or H2020 for the dissemination, exploitation and valorisation of their results (upon application)

Open Research Europe Platform: a portal for immediate and free open access publication and open peer review for research stemming from EU funding across all subject areas

European IPR helpdesk: managed by the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA), with policy guidance provided by DG Grow, this service provides free-of-charge first-line support on IP-related issues aiming to help current and potential beneficiaries of EU-funded projects, as well as EU SMEs, manage their Intellectual Property assets.

Horizon Impact Award (next round in 2022): an award to recognise and celebrate outstanding projects that have used their results to provide value for society.

Our experts have accumulated significant experience in managing communication, dissemination and exploitation activities in dozens of European projects. [Contact us to find out more!](#)

PNO Consultants France and ARTTIC have joined forces to deliver services covering the complete innovation cycle, from strategy to implementation, while maximising technical and sectoral complementarities. An unrivalled expertise, attested by over 120 successful Horizon 2020 proposals in the transport, health, security, defence, energy, food and bioeconomy fields; three decades of experience serving a portfolio of 400 clients; and a strong European presence through our offices in Paris, Toulouse, Derby (UK) and Brussels make PNO Consultants France and ARTTIC sound partners to advise your organisation in the financing, set-up and management of research and innovation projects.