



## D3.5: Communication plan update

### WP3 – Communication for ecosystem building

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## List of Abbreviations

CC	Competence Centre
CEN	European Committee for Standardisation
CEPS	Centre for European Policy Studies
DIH	Digital Innovation Hub
EARTO	European Association of Research and Technology Organisations
ETSI	European Telecommunications Standards Institute
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GOFAR	Global Organization for Agricultural Robotics
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IEEE	Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
KPI	Key performance indicator
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
R&D	Research and Development
RC	Regional Cluster
SIIA	Software and Information Industry Association
WAITRO	World Association of Industrial and Technological Research Organizations



## Executive summary

The document provides an update of the agROBOfood communication strategy by taking into consideration the experience of the **2 years implementation**, as well as the **project reviewers' recommendations**. Also utilises useful feedback collected through an **online survey** to the agROBOfood community that took place during March-April 2021, to satisfy the requirement of including a robust assessment of activities.

On the one hand the overall picture is **positive** and on the other, **useful and up-to-date information** has been collected to improve and fine tune the tactics, tools and activities in the next 24 months.

The communication performance assessment revamped the **communication strategy, goals and objectives**. The **target groups** were extensively specified and named to facilitate from now on the dissemination phase, while communication and dissemination **tools and activities**, as well as **performance monitoring** were updated.

# 1 Introduction

Given the 48 months duration of the project, in the project proposal it was envisaged to update the communication plan in the middle of its lifespan. So currently the purpose is to **sustain effectiveness** and ensure **satisfaction of all KPIs** with an updated strategy, tactics and set of activities, as well as reinforce performance in qualitative terms. At the same time, all **reviewers' recommendations** after examining the progress report, should be satisfied.

In any case though, the initial communication plan is an **indispensable** and **successfully applied** baseline tool, and core part of the current planning and future execution. Hence, the aim at this point is basically to **revamp the strategy** and activities' options and fine tune performance to maximise results and impact.

To assess the first 2 years of project's communication, a **desk analysis** was deemed necessary together with a **field research** to reinforce the assessment of activities. In other words, to compile and study both primary and secondary data and various sources, synthesising all accessible information.

As an **interim evaluation**, the Communication Plan update is intended to improve the decisions and actions of the ongoing communication activities. Therefore, there is a need to examine the design, the roll out of activities, as well as their effectiveness, and use the results of monitoring to make judgements on the success of activities and to adjust them where necessary.

## 2 Communication performance assessment

To effectively elaborate the present deliverable, it was necessary, in compliance with the Grant Agreement, to **review performance**. Briefly, the current picture that it is illustrated by the communication KPIs performance shows the following facts: The range of indicators' satisfaction varies justifiably between 16% and 200%. Two KPIs have exceeded their target values, and another two are above 50%. Also, two indicators that show the worst performance, are both of them relevant to the consequences of the Covid-19 crisis. Lastly, further effort will be needed for increasing the followers and posts on social networks.

Indicator	Target values	Performance on 26/4/2021	%
No of visitors to the Innovation Portal/Website	30,000	22,704	76%
Followers on social networks	6,000	2,282	38%
Posts on social networks relevant to project	1,200	447	37%
No of third-party project events where agROBOfood is presented	30	23	77%
Seminars/Workshops organized	8	16	200%
Number of event visitors	10,000	1,912	19%
Recipients of project e-newsletters	4,000	6,832	171%
Leaflets and brochures distributed	5,000	781	16%
Project views of demonstration success stories on YouTube	3,000	Not yet uploaded	

Between March and April 2021, a **survey** in regard to the project's communication took place. The questionnaire was circulated to **832 members** of the agROBOfood community.

In total **103 responses** were received, but after "cleaning" the responses, 100 of them were left as a final sample by removing 3 responders that provided feedback twice after the global reminders to participate to the survey. Their first reply was kept in the sample as being the spontaneous one.

The profile of the 100 respondents was as follows (multiple answers were possible):

Digital Innovation Hubs	42	Large enterprises	5	Business members	4
Competence Centres	20	Consortium members	23	Newsletter subscribers	37
SMEs	40	Associated members	5	Other	6

The respondents' countries are basically described by **14 partners' countries, 20 in total EU countries and 8 non-EU countries**. Most of replies came from Greece, the Netherlands, Spain and Italy.

Austria	1	Ireland	1	Switzerland	2
Bangladesh	1	Israel	1	Turkey	3
Belgium	2	Italy	9	Ukraine	2

Bulgaria	4	Latvia	1	United Kingdom	3
Croatia	1	Lithuania	1		
Cyprus	1	Netherlands	14		
Czech Republic	3	Pakistan	1		
Denmark	3	Portugal	3		
France	6	Romania	2		
Germany	2	Serbia	5		
Greece	14	Slovenia	2		
Hungary	2	Spain	10		

Regarding the outcomes of the survey, approximately 36% of the respondents visit the project's **website** at least once a week and 93% rated its quality at least adequate.

 *How often do you visit the agROBOfood webpage?*

Daily	4%
At least once a week	32%
Infrequently	47%
Rarely	16%
Never	1%

 *How do you rate the quality of the agROBOfood webpage?*

very good	25%
good	43%
adequate	25%
poor	4%
very poor	0%
no opinion	3%

The rating given to the webpage in relevance to certain criteria revealed as **areas that need improvement** the “**easiness in finding the desired information**”, the “**sufficiency of information**” and the “**ease of navigation**”. The **visual appeal** is considered as its strongest point as it got the highest positive rating.

 *How do you rate the agROBOfood webpage in terms of the following criteria? (0=lowest, 5 highest)*

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Structure	0%	0%	6%	26%	36%	27%	5%
Up-to-date information	0%	0%	5%	18%	35%	37%	5%
Useful information	0%	2%	2%	16%	40%	37%	3%

Sufficient information	2%	2%	5%	28%	34%	26%	3%
Visual appeal	0%	0%	8%	16%	20%	53%	3%
Ease of navigation	0%	1%	8%	26%	27%	35%	3%
Easiness to find information I am looking for	2%	4%	9%	25%	33%	25%	2%

Most of the **social media followers** are followers in LinkedIn while in regard to the frequency of accessing the project's accounts, there is a dominance of infrequent followers.

 *Do you follow the agROBOfood social media accounts?*

Facebook	22%
Twitter	23%
LinkedIn	55%

 *How often do you access the agROBOfood social media accounts?*

Daily	6%
At least once a week	25%
Infrequently	34%
Rarely	19%
Never	16%

The vast majority of the survey respondents are **satisfied** by the quality of the content being posted on the project's social media. Nevertheless, they do not have an attitude of sharing the content.

 *How do you rate the quality of the content shared through the agROBOfood social media?*

very good	29%
good	35%
adequate	32%
poor	4%
very poor	0%

 *How often do you share information posted on the agROBOfood social media?*

Frequently	10%
Sometimes	35%
Rarely	26%
Never	29%

Again, the vast majority of respondents (90%) are **satisfied** by the quality of the project's **newsletters**. The most popular columns are the "Project news", the "On our radar" and the "Forthcoming events".

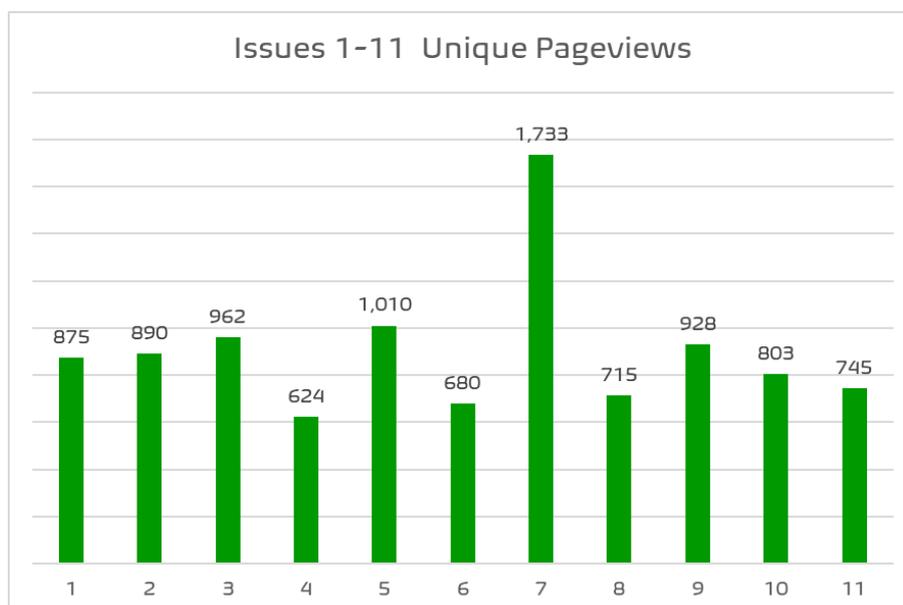
 How do you rate the quality of the agROBOfood newsletters?

very good	27%
good	46%
adequate	17%
poor	1%
very poor	1%
no opinion	8%

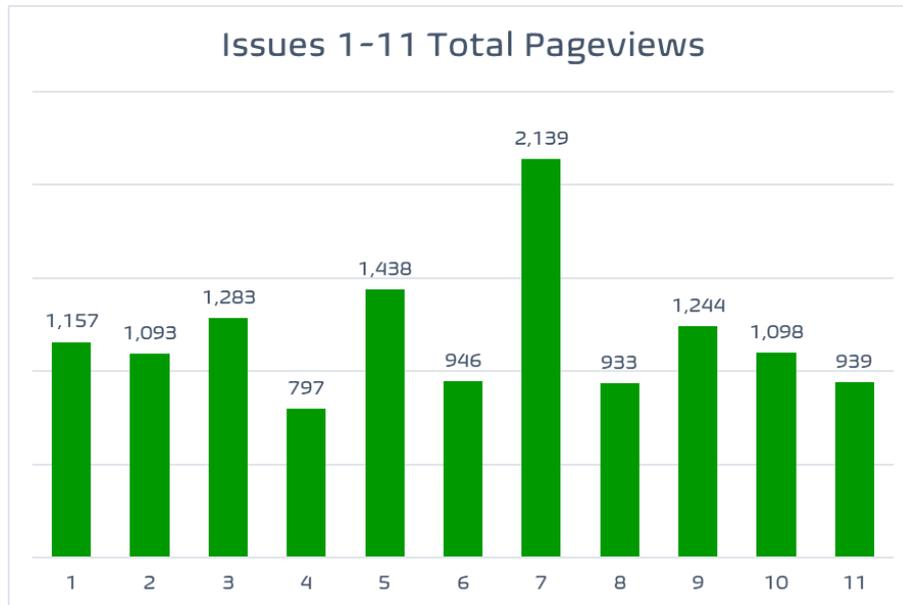
 Rate the newsletters' standard columns according to your interests (0=not interesting 5=very interesting)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Editorial	0%	1%	6%	20%	41%	22%	10%
Interviews	0%	0%	5%	25%	30%	21%	19%
Project news	1%	0%	4%	17%	27%	44%	7%
On our radar	0%	0%	4%	15%	34%	34%	13%
agROBOfood TV	1%	3%	5%	23%	20%	20%	28%
Forthcoming events	0%	2%	3%	16%	28%	40%	11%
Quiz	5%	6%	8%	17%	17%	16%	31%

At this point it is worth mentioning that according to the figures taken by the Google analytics, the average **unique page views** of every monthly newsletter are **906**. The most attention was triggered in the issues concerning the agROBOfood Open Calls.



SOURCE: Google analytics



SOURCE: Google analytics

Out of 10 respondents, 8 are very much satisfied with the agROBOfood **webinars** (e.g. “Ethical issues of robotics”, “Dutch Soft Robotics”, “joint webinar with SmartAgriHubs”, “FIRA event webinar”).

 *How do you rate the quality and topics of the agROBOfood webinars?*

very good	30	44,12%
good	25	36,76%
adequate	13	19,12%
poor	0	0%
very poor	0	0%
no opinion	32	

**Basecamp** is mostly used infrequently and 1 out of 4 respondents considers its usefulness poor, and almost 1 out of 2 believes that it does not fully contain sufficient and relevant information to their needs.

 *How often do you use Basecamp?*

Daily	4	7%
Weekly	17	28%
Monthly	18	30%
Infrequently	21	35%
I do not have access	40	

 *How do you rate the usefulness of Basecamp?*

very good	14	25%
good	14	25%
adequate	15	26%
poor	14	25%
very poor	0	0%
no opinion	43	

 *Do you think it contains sufficient and relevant information to your needs?*

Yes	29	49%
Partly	28	47%
No	2	3%
No opinion	41	

Regarding the means to overcome the consequences of the **Covid-19 crisis**, webinars are deemed as best fitted to the needs of the respondents.

 Given that the Covid-19 crisis is ongoing and disrupts our lives, which one of the following better fit your needs? (Choose only one option)

Webinars	42%
Online workshops	24%
Videos	20%
Podcasts	6%
Virtual exhibitions	5%
Other (1. Online presentation. It helps with fast overview., 2. webinars and online workshops. 3. I don't understand the question)	3%

Lastly, as a collection of some of the responses in the open questions, the following points are listed:

-  Smart search box on the website suggesting results while typing.
-  News immediately visible on the website landing page.
-  A section on the website illustrating progress/outcomes and further information regarding the experiments.
-  Visible contents of the newsletters.
-  Showing of correspondence of regions and countries.
-  Follow and tag partners when posting on social media.
-  Regular and visual updates of the projects supported.
-  Showcase tech applications for small scale farmers.
-  More interviews with project members.
-  Presenting in depth case studies.
-  Webinars during night-time hours.
-  agROBOfood work presented in webinars.
-  Showcase results from experiments.
-  Send recordings of webinars.
-  Experiments' accomplishments webinar.
-  Training webinars.
-  Searchable information on services, documents etc.
-  Basecamp improvement.

## 3 Communication strategy, goals and objectives

### 3.1 Strategy

The communication strategy sets the principles and rules governing the design and implementation of the communication plan. The consortium remains committed to plan and implement communication and dissemination in an **integrated** manner, schedule, and act **strategically** with continuous and regular efforts in order to satisfy the main objective of agROBOfood, to establish and expand a network of mature DIHs.

Even though the reviewers' recommendations basically addressed improvement of tools and activities (e.g. website improvement, enhancing collaborations, developing interactions among WPs), essentially their suggestions are now conceived as **principles** and **strategic choices** for the following period.

Furthermore, in this deliverable emphasis is placed on defining **measurable communication objectives**, identifying **segments of the target audiences** in detail to facilitate the dissemination phase, **engaging** with the target groups, and **performance monitoring**.

In addition, what is needed is to **act on local, regional, national, European and global level**, to stay in close touch with the partners and exploit all possibilities of **synergies**. Moreover, to act continuously and/or at a proper timing when that is particularly necessary, to attract and **maintain media attention**, to connect with **relevant EU-funded research projects**, to take advantage of the **European Union's media channels** and maintain a **vivid project profile**.

### 3.2 Goals

At this stage, the project goals are still focusing on raising awareness and ensuring maximum visibility, but furthermore on disseminating knowledge and project's results. Particularly the goals are to sustain throughout the project's lifespan a **robust** and **results oriented** communication and dissemination set of activities, reach out to the target audiences and show the activities performed by an emblematic Horizon 2020 project that succeeded to stimulate growth of the eco-system and expand the DIHs' network.

### 3.3 Objectives

The still valid communication objectives emphasise on:

-  Presenting to future **agROBOfood end users** the importance of **obtaining access** to **cutting-edge infrastructure** and experimentation facilities, **tailored business training services**, and **funding** support;
-  **Strengthening the innovation ecosystem** within each regional Digital Innovation Hub: attract industry-leading innovators (SME, mid-cap, competence centers, universities, R&D institutes, etc.) from across Europe to **join the agROBOfood DIHs**;
-  **Showcasing benefits of robotics technologies** through demonstration of highly innovative experiments
-  Developing **networks** and liaison with other **projects**, networks and initiatives.

At this interim stage, for technical reasons and for updating the foreseen quantitative performance, the project's objectives are defined with **SMART** characteristics in three folds of **communication, engagement** and **impact** perspectives indicating their respective importance.

Communication perspective	Engagement perspective	Impact perspective
Objective #1	Objective#2	Objective #3
<p>To achieve at least <b>30,000</b> unique visits to the project website and <b>6,000</b> followers on social media networks by the end of the project.</p>	<p>To engage with at least <b>15</b> emblematic authorities and/or organisations by the end of the project.</p>	<p>To achieve an aggregate audience reach of <b>200,000</b> people by the end of the project</p>



## 4 Target groups

The target groups' identification was updated with the following details and namings structured under 12 categories. These categories could be further distinguished but at the moment the grouping is deemed satisfactory, and any further segmentation will take place "on the job" while preparing the exercise of the next activities.

Target groups	Target groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Academic and Research community</b> Universities, Research Institutes-Laboratories and Scientific societies in the field of agricultural engineering, robotics, precision and data-driven agriculture, artificial intelligence etc, as well as Technology transfer and innovation organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>International organizations</b> Global Organization For Agricultural Robotics (GOFAR), FAO, OECD, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), European Association of Research and Technology Organisations (EARTO), Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), World Association of Industrial and Technological Research Organizations (WAITRO), DIGITALEUROPE, European Committee for Standardisation (CEN), European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (CENELEC), ECSEL JU Joint Undertaking on Electronic Components and Systems for European Leadership, European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI), Software and Information Industry Association (SIIA), EU-Robotics</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agricultural advisors</b> Public or semi-public farm advisory services, as well as private advisors (companies and consultants) and relevant associations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Media and media professionals</b> News agencies, mass printed and electronic media, agriculture-oriented media and journalists, science bloggers and science journalists.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Relevant bodies, industries, and services</b> Digital Innovation Hubs, Competence Centers, Robotics companies (SMEs, start-ups, mid-caps), Agribusinesses Agri-food and Food processing companies, Agricultural machinery providers, Agronomists, Business support organizations, Associations, Accelerators, Precision agriculture and Sensors industry, Farm related ICT developers, Computers and Electronics in Agriculture Entrepreneurs, Communities of start-ups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Public authorities</b> Agricultural, Industry and Technology Ministries at the partners' and rest EU countries, National Rural Networks, Managing Authorities, Regional authorities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>EU bodies</b> European Commission DGs (AGRI, RTD, GROW, CONNECT) and Agencies (REA, ERCEA, JRC, EASME), European Parliament's research bodies (Research4Committees, European Parliamentary Research Service), European Network of Rural Development, EIP-AGRI (and focus groups)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Peer projects</b> Relevant EU and international research projects (e.g. RODIN, DIHNET, ATLAS, DEMETER, OPEN-DEI, SmartAgriHubs, Robs4Crops, SCORPION, FlexiGroBots, BACCHUS, Soft Milli-robots, CANOPIES, GALIRUMI, Robotics4EU, ROBOHARVEST).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Think tanks</b> Farm Europe, Rural Investment Support for Europe Foundation, CEPS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Investors</b> Venture Capital firms, Corporate Venture Capital, Business Angels, intermediaries of Funds and Banks</li> </ul>

Target groups	Target groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Farmers' representative bodies</b></li> </ul> <p>Farmers' unions, Associations and Federations, Agricultural cooperatives, Chambers of agriculture, Young farmers' associations, Producers' organizations and groups, and organisations relevant to the project's innovation experiments (e.g. organizations of viticulturists, olive growers, pome fruits, cucumber and vegetable producers, apiculture, poultry, organic agriculture).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wide public</b></li> </ul> <p>Local, Regional, European and global public.</p>



# 5 Communication and dissemination

## 5.1 Communication tools

The basic communication tools such as the **visual identity, logo, regional clusters logos and colour palette, templates, social media cards, and infographics**, have been **positively** welcomed by the project’s community.

Furthermore, the so far application of **messages** has been proved effective, while the project has succeeded to establish appropriate visibility.

Regarding the reviewers’ recommendations on the project’s tools, all of them are underway and with a time plan of full completion by the end of the year.

Reviewers’ recommendations	Stage of measures
<i>...improve the agrobofood.eu website... to facilitate access to the information and services offered. For instance, it is not straightforward to find who can deliver a certain service; it is necessary to access each regional DIH or CC to find out who can provide the required service.</i>	Already underway in collaboration with WP 2 and WP6 teams.
<i>...Update the website with all stated services and information mentioned (not visible), upgrade with a DIHs map (taking on account the DIH catalogue from the JRC), improve the descriptions and information provided from the experiments, make them easily accessible, upgrade with the new information from the new experiments from the open calls.</i>	Already underway in collaboration with WP 2 and WP6 teams.
<i>...More specifically, for the DIH catalogue: improve web catalogue quality, filtering, information and navigation need to be increased, mainly with respect to a more fine classification of the specializations of the single node of the network (a new classification way is strongly suggested); the AI trends in the Precision Agriculture field in relation to the catalogue categorization is a crucial aspect also to join the project with other relevant DIHs in EU.</i>	Already underway in collaboration with WP6 team.
<i>...Moreover, the website does not include links to all the recorded webinars held during this first period. It is also recommended to include links to all the material available on YouTube on the website.</i>	Already underway by the WP3 team.
<i>...The DIHs map as well as other services offered by the innovation portal stated in the review are not visible in the website which makes dissemination very limited. The information provided from the different experiments on the website is limited and should be improved.</i>	Already underway in collaboration with WP 4 and WP6 teams.
<i>Innovation Portal... The information provided from the different experiments is limited and should be improved.</i>	Already underway in collaboration with WP 4 team.
<i>...The need, benefits and usage of the basecamp are not clear in many ways, make this visible and provide clear statements on the outputs achieved by its use in relation to the different tasks.</i>	Already underway in collaboration with WP 6 team.

## 5.2 Communication and dissemination activities

Concerning the communication and dissemination activities, the following **recommendations** of the reviewers will be primarily satisfied:

Reviewers' recommendations	Stage of measures
Interact and organize workshops with other EU DIHs	To be developed
Boost collaboration with other related projects / associations	Already underway
Reaching out to policymakers in the EU level	To be developed
Interaction among WPs needs to be improved	To be developed

Moreover, from now on the following principles are prioritised and activities are planned:

-  More frequent feed of news on the project's website to trigger interest and increase traffic.
-  Reinforce the project's own events (e.g. webinars), as well as clustering events.
-  Intensify, post Covid-19 crisis, participation in non-project events.
-  Take advantage of popular groups on FACEBOOK and LINKEDIN to raise awareness on the project.
-  Regularly refresh the visuals, columns and content of the newsletter.
-  Increase the number of press releases.
-  Frequent communication on Cordis and Horizon Results platform.
-  Reinforce audiovisual production (e.g. videos, podcasts, infographics).
-  Participate in world celebrations (e.g. World Telecommunication and Information Society Day) to enhance the project's footprint globally by engaging to the respective campaigns.
-  Disseminate the project's results with journal publications.
-  Initiate sending letters of engagement to relevant entities worldwide.
-  Enhance collaboration with the partners, sending of information to the WP3 team, and mutual support to the project's social media to exploit all possibilities of synergies.
-  Develop multilingual content, with partners' contributions, to facilitate reaching out to different countries' audiences.
-  Balance communication in the different geographical territories.
-  Benchmark with relevant projects.
-  Stay focused on digitization of activities (webinars, live streaming, podcasts, video abstracts).

## 6 Performance monitoring

The agROBOfood KPIs monitoring is an on-going task including justified arithmetic calculations. By applying a holistic and intensive management of the indicators, it is possible to minimize the risks related to the satisfaction of the target values. The focus will be on the indicators that problems may arise and work in certain fields more intensively. In parallel the partners will be asked to enhance their engagement and horizontal and “personalized” recommendations will be provided.

Since measurement should take a holistic approach, auxiliary and qualitative indicators will also be deployed. Specifically, it will be ensured that further evidence of success will be generated through the monitoring of auxiliary indicators such as trend indicators, rate and balance type indicators, awareness and recall indicators, conversion, and events’ indicators etc.

Indicator	Overall	Source and methodology
No of visitors to the Innovation Portal	30.000	Website registered in Google analytics
Followers on social networks	6.000	Social media analytics
Posts on social networks relevant to project	1.200	Social media analytics
No of third party project events where agROBOfood is presented	30	Regular reporting
Seminars/Workshops organized	8	Regular reporting
Number of event visitors	10.000	Participants lists
Recipients of project e-newsletters	4.000	Email record
Leaflets and brochures distributed	5.000	Regular reporting
Project views of demonstration success stories on YouTube	3.000	YouTube analytics

Table 1 - Project’s KPIs

Project recall	Number of press releases
Engagement rates	Number of respondents in polls/quizzes
Country balance of website unique visitors	Balance of popularity of social media accounts

Table 2 - Indicative list of auxiliary indicators to provide evidence of success

## 7 Conclusions

Communication and dissemination necessitate the consistent use of the frequent routines “plan, test, implement, measure and adapt”. For agROBOfood it is essential to work systematically towards sustaining its leading voice in the relevant “ecosystem” and prepare the ground for the exploitation of the project outcomes. To follow up and satisfy the recommendations of the project reviewers is an obligation. Moreover, the two years lessons learnt are many and came up from a multitude of sources providing a complete picture of the middle time of the project. Partners have to be constantly engaged and all possibilities of synergies in the partnership have to be exploited. Lastly, engaging with stakeholders should become a continuous activity, as well as dissemination activities and focus on the innovation experiments should come in the foreground.

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