D6.1: Communication & Dissemination Plan

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Partners

- University of Twente (UT)
- Aalborg University (AAU)
- Dublin City University (DCU)
- Kaunas University of Technology (KTU)
- Linköping University (LiU)
- Tampere University (TAU)
- Hamburg University of Technology (TUHH)
- Universidade de Aveiro (UAVR)
- Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona (UAB)
- University of Stavanger (UiS)
- Università degli Studi di Trento (UNITN)
- Institut National des Sciences Appliquées (INSA)
Abstract

This report “D6.1 Communication Plan”, establishes the basis for the development of a common communication & dissemination plan of the SMART-ER project, which is funded by European Commission Horizon 2020 Programme (hereinafter – H2020) under Grant Agreement No. 101016888. The plan is based on the objectives and target audiences of communication and dissemination as described in the Description of Action. This deliverable introduces the comprehensive guidelines for the communication activities along with their objectives, target audience, key messages, content and communication means, channels and material, jointly with a monitoring framework to be performed during the project lifetime. This is a living document and will be updated and adjusted as the project progresses.
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<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Acronym/Abbreviation</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>AAU</td>
<td>Aalborg University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C&amp;D</td>
<td>Communication and Dissemination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Dublin City University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECIU</td>
<td>European Consortium of Innovative Universities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSA</td>
<td>Institut National des Sciences Appliquées</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Month</td>
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<td>R&amp;I</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART-ER</td>
<td>Research Institute for Smart European Regions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>Target audience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>UT</td>
<td>University of Twente</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VRI</td>
<td>Virtual Research institute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP</td>
<td>Work Package</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

The strategic communication and dissemination plan (D6.1) provides the comprehensive guidelines for online and offline communication means and activities for the SMART-ER project awareness raising, community building, and the communication and dissemination (C&D) of project results. It identifies in detail the objectives, target audiences (TA), key messages, communication channels, tools, materials and evaluation means.

Since this project is part of the ECIU University, the SMART-ER brand and communication activities are an integral part of the ECIU University communication and its visual identity platform: logotypes, fonts, colours, templates, etc. Whenever possible and meaningful, it will seek to create synergies and coordinate actions with relevant complementary projects and initiatives, leveraging the already established collaborations and extensive networks of partners. Building the community for SMART-ER, including the ECIU University Master’s degree and PhD students, research and management staff, business partners and society; moreover, it is intended to facilitate and foster the dialogue between researchers and citizens by means of internal and external communication.

The implementation of this plan is intended to be used by the consortium to ensure that the project results are made accessible, reaching the target audience, at appropriate times, via appropriate channels, and that those who can contribute to the development and exploitation of the SMART-ER project outcomes can be identified and encouraged to interact with the project on a regular basis. The strategic C&D plan will develop and periodically update the content of the project website, coordinate and implement dissemination actions to make available information to the defined TAs.

The logical structure of “D6.1 Dissemination and Communication Plan” follows these parts (see Figure1):

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 1:** SMART-ER communication, dissemination and exploitation logical schema.
2 Objectives

2.1 Objectives of SMART-ER project

SMART-ER is a new model of research and innovation, based on a virtual collaborative environment, which will align and bring together researchers and sharing a common vision, creating a virtual research institute as an example of how to overcome the capacity limits of each single institution. The SMART-ER Virtual Research Institute, together with diverse stakeholder groups at a local, national and international level, will work according to a shared Research and Innovation Agenda.

SMART-ER is a strong alliance in research, innovation and education, enabling all member universities to jointly address complex societal challenges under the framework of the UN SDG11, and with the following general objectives:

- To develop a common Research & Innovation Agenda and a convergence action plan, in synergy with education strategies and regional engagement, sharing infrastructures and resources;
- To develop and implement strategies for strengthening human capital and collaborations in research and innovation;
- To promote and integrate dialogue with society in R&I activities of SMART-ER.

As so, the purpose of the SMART-ER project is to support the R&I dimension of the ECIU University, in line with their shared, integrated, long-term strategy and in synergy with their education dimension.

2.2 Objectives of communication, dissemination and exploitation

SMART-ER Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation planning seeks to accomplish three main objectives:

1 Objective: Building the awareness of the SMART-ER project.

Building awareness of the SMART-ER VRI, through communicating the current situation, issues and explaining the solutions – that is, the objectives that SMART-ER activities are set to accomplish. The main aim is to raise awareness of the SMART-ER project activities and highlight the values and aims.

2 Objective: Building the community for the SMART-ER VRI.

Building awareness of SMART-ER as a Virtual Research Institute for challenge-based research and an innovation network where researchers and innovators at universities co-work with citizens, policy makers, business and third-sector organizations to contribute to regional-oriented development and innovation (internal and external communication). Attracting to and engaging with the research community (internal communication) and industry/public stakeholders and society (external communication) as to participate in the SMART-ER Institute activities. Engaging with external and internal target audience and informing about the most important VRI milestones, implemented activities and events.

3 Objective: Building awareness of the SMART-ER VRI outcomes.

Spreading the knowledge and the methodologies developed during the SMART-ER project. Paving the way for a successful commercial and non-commercial exploitation of the project results. Sharing success stories with personal or team examples. Exchanging experience with projects and groups working in the field of entrepreneurship in order to join efforts,
minimize overlapping actions and maximize potential. Making concrete use of the project results for commercial, societal and political purposes.

3 Target audience

The mapping of the TAs will help to assess the appropriate type of participation of different stakeholders at successive stages of the C&D plan. Each group of stakeholders has different points of interest and demands regarding the project, which means different audiences, may require different messages. Due to this fact, we address each audience with appropriate communication messages and channels to guarantee the effectiveness of this C&D plan. The TAs of SMART-ER will be grouped into four categories (see Table 1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Target audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Community</td>
<td>Early stage researchers (PhD students, PostDoc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior researchers (experienced, independent researchers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management &amp; administration staff (research centers, institutes etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students (master degree students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Bodies</td>
<td>Policy-makers (European, National, Regional and Local policy-makers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public authorities (governmental institutions, municipalities etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public institutions (associations, organizations etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>Citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civil society (NVO, Non-formal groups, communities etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential end users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Industry partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SME (small- and medium-sized enterprise, Start-ups etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investors (venture capital, fundraisers etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main steps of target audience engagement and involvement will be:

**Connection:** attracting the attention of the target audiences, providing information as well as building awareness and mainstreaming the SMART-ER ideas and activities.

**Communication:** explaining and disseminating the values and benefits of participation for each of the target audiences.

**Engagement:** providing opportunities for the target audience to start the conversation, sign in, participate, and try-out the SMART-ER activities.

**Sharing:** providing the materials for the target audience to share and use the results and benefits among their network.

Communication with the local, regional and national media will be carried out in the local language, which means an active use of 14 European languages (Catalan, French, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, German, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish). Each Partner is responsible for the preparation and translation of the content to their native language.
4 Key messages

In this part, the key activities and messages are tailored to the target audiences interests in order to engage all stakeholders in joining the SMART-ER activities, while building a community and a brand that can facilitate post-project adoption.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C&amp;D Objectives</th>
<th>Research Community</th>
<th>Public Bodies</th>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Business</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building awareness</td>
<td>Partner University events</td>
<td>Public events</td>
<td>Information / awareness campaigns</td>
<td>Business / Industry partners events</td>
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<td>Messages in Social media/websites</td>
<td>Messages in Social media/websites</td>
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<td>Messages in Social media/websites</td>
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<td>Building the community for the VRI</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>Policy briefings</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>Joint events &amp; networking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inspirational seminars</td>
<td>Joint events &amp; networking</td>
<td>Inspirational Seminars</td>
<td>Business / Industry partners events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SEED programme information campaign</td>
<td>External events</td>
<td>Citizen-driven initiatives</td>
<td>Discussions / debates</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Periodical discussions</td>
<td>Co-creation sessions</td>
<td>Citizen Science information campaign</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional events</td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>External events</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building awareness of the VRI outcomes</td>
<td>Press realises</td>
<td>Press realises</td>
<td>Press realises</td>
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<td>Open access publishing</td>
<td>Public discussions</td>
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<td>Round table discussions</td>
<td>External events</td>
<td>External events</td>
<td>External events</td>
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<td>Final conference</td>
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<td>External events</td>
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<td>Final conference</td>
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<td>Final conference</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A more detailed planning describing the activities, channels, performance indicators and timeline is provided in Annex 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of TA</th>
<th>Key messages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Research Community     | • Possibility to expand research networks and research collaborations  
                          • Possibility to boost research and innovation capabilities and capacities among the partner researchers  
                          • Trampoline to other Universities and their research infrastructure  
                          • Opportunity for new research project proposals  
                          • Real time challenge-based research  
                          • Maximize the capacity to attract talented students from partner institutions                                                                                                                                 |
| Public Bodies          | • Use the shared research data and results  
                          • Possibility to become mediators and accelerate real changes in society life with the support of research and innovation solutions  
                          • Develop a better understanding of the relation to the society, addressing the UN sustainable development goals and national priorities.  
                          • Potential possibilities to increase the EU innovation scoreboard of the project partner countries                                                                                                                                 |
| Society                | • Participate in real life problem solutions in present  
                          • Possibility to make a real positive change in society working in qualified team  
                          • Opportunity to make the best use of the solutions offered in Citizen Science.                                                                                                                                 |
| Business               | • Europe scale experts and talent pool  
                          • Access to knowledge and innovative ideas  
                          • Find opportunities through the new business models, create synergies  
                          • To invest and become a part of Citizen Science  
                          • Possibility to get the solutions for business development from the challenge-based research and innovation |
5 Communication & dissemination materials and tools

Below all the materials and tools are listed, that will be developed by WP6 “Communication & Dissemination” and will be utilized by the project partners not only to communicate project activities, but also to support dissemination actions. By communication tools we mean all material used to present the content of the project to an external audience.

5.1 Visual identity of SMART-ER

A corporate SMART-ER project image which includes a logotype, a project-associated colour scheme, and the guidelines of proper use are summarised in an ECIU University brand book, which is available to all partners and target audiences. Since the SMART-ER project is part of the ECIU University, SMART-ER builds brand and communication activities are an integral part of the ECIU University communication and its visual identity platform such as logotypes, fonts, colours, templates, etc.

5.2 Logotype

The SMART-ER logotype is a third level extension of the main ECIU logo. The SMART-ER logotype structure was organically integrated in the ECIU typography. The name is horizontally aligned to the X height. The typography is differentiated by font weight (see Figure 2):

Figure 2: SMART-ER logotype structure

Further detailed guidelines of the SMART-ER logotype application using different formats, colour combinations and graphic elements are summarised in the separate part of the ECIU BRANDBOOK (see Annex 3).

A full variant of the SMART-ER logotype includes the slogan, the full title the research institute for smart European regions (see Figure 3):

Figure 3: SMART-ER logotype with full title
The slogan can be “detached” from the original logotype and composed horizontally aligned to the X height (see Figure 2) of the logo typography. Alternative compositions ensure a flexible logotype and slogan usage scenarios as well as it does allow to use a bigger slogan, compared to the main composition (see Annex 3).

5.3 Hashtags use on Social media

In order to communicate the SMART-ER messages as broad as possible #Hashtags will be used, such as:

#SMART-ER
#VRI
#ECIUuniversity
#SDG11
#CitizenScience

It will be taken into consideration that it is essential to acknowledge the funding entity and to highlight it in all social media communication with the hashtag: #ResearchImpactEU, @EUScienceInnov, @EU_H2020.

5.4 Templates

Templates are essential items for all projects, to ensure uniformity, ease of use, quality and structure. WP6 “Communication & Dissemination” has provided the consortium with project standardized templates for consistent presentation styles to be used by all project participants. These are the following items:

- One-page Word document (e.g. agenda etc.);
- Word document (e.g. deliverable reports);
- PowerPoint presentation;
- On-line meeting cover.

These templates are available in a shared WP6 folder on Microsoft Teams, where all participants have access to and can use and adapt the material to their needs, languages and local specificities. All templates comply with EU regulations.

5.5 Videos & other multimedia

A series of short videos will be created and used to visually present the SMART-ER project. These videos will have a common visual appearance and will inform the target audiences about the main objectives and values of SMART-ER as well as the benefits of getting involved in the project activities. The purpose of these videos is to show the perspective of implementation of the new model of doing research and innovation by creating a VRI. The videos will be uploaded on the SMART-ER website (see Section 6.1), shared through social media channels and made available to partners as mpg files to download for institutional and external usage.

In addition, the SMART-ER project presentation will be prepared in a PowerPoint format for the promotion of the project in institutional and external events. The presentation highlights the main goals and objectives of the project including the work plan. It outlines an overview of the deliverables and the expected outcomes, and presents the consortium. The PowerPoint presentations will be periodically updated to represent the current status of the project activities.
6 Communication & dissemination channels

The Communication & Dissemination plan of the SMART-ER project combines on-line and off-line channels and tools, and reinforces different highlights focused on the target audience. In this way, the combination of different actions will strengthen the message and allow to reach defined audiences. Communication channels describe all mediums through which the project results are transmitted and relayed to the TAs. Figure 4 provides an overview about the different communication, dissemination and exploitation channels.

![Communication & dissemination channels diagram]

Figure 4: List of SMART-ER project communication, dissemination and exploitation channels.

Below we list and describe all the communication channels that will be used for implementation.

6.1 SMART-ER Communication channels

Website

The SMART-ER separate section of ECIU University website (https://www.eciu.org), will be created and updated based on the project progress, including the project’s news, events, public deliverables, academic publications, material used for the events in which the project is presented, and videos deriving from the project’s work. It will work as a so-called one-shop window with the following principal functions:

- To find the most relevant SMART-ER related information for different TAs through which to connect and engage with;
- To share detailed information with the community;
- To access, via links, the different platforms for further engagement: The infrastructure platform for R&I activities (WP1), the Seed programmes (WP3), and the Virtual Citizen-Science Hub (WP5).
Social media

As part of its outreach, the SMART-ER project will make use of the ECIU social media channels, such as Twitter (@ECIUniversities), Facebook (@ecluexchange), LinkedIn (https://www.linkedin.com/company/eciu), in order to raise awareness about the project and its results, to collect additional opinions and feedback, and to engage with additional stakeholders in discussions about the different topic areas covered by the SMART-ER project, especially with citizens and general society.

Newsletters

Within the SMART-ER, a newsletter will be published half-yearly aimed at keeping the research community and stakeholders informed about the progress of the project and its various achievements. It will also include articles and a description of the partners involved in the project. Stakeholders may subscribe to receive the newsletter automatically by email. In addition, the newsletter will be available on the website for download.

SMART-ER events

- Kick-off meeting. An official Kick-Off of the SMART-ER project did already take place in an online format. It was good opportunity to get everyone acquainted before the project work commences. Due to Kick-off meeting a great opportunity to define the common goals and build consensus within the project was given.
- Workshops / Seminars. The project will organise small- to medium-sized multi-actor, multi-purpose workshops during the project’s lifetime, aiming at bringing all relevant R&I actors together in the process of a continuous dialogue in a proposal co-creation consultation (organised by the Innovation Hubs and local partnership arenas). These will be designed as a continuing process in a way that can provide meaningful contribution to stakeholders to motivate them to participate and discuss.
- SMART-ER Academy trainings. The training pilots (online PhD Training programme; Open Science & Leadership Blended Training Programme) will be organised for upskilling activities of researchers to be implemented in the SMART-ER Academy. The training pilots will be validated based on the direct or on-line interaction of the participants.
- Joint events & networking with other projects. Joint events will be organised / co-organised by the project inviting experts, researchers, clients and further industry audiences to present its outcomes and intelligence resulting (e.g. Forum of European Universities (FOREU)). All events will be advertised on the website as well as communicated via all social media channels.
- Policy briefings. A task force formed by selected partners will engage with policy-makers and authorities at regional, national and European level for their briefing on the project outcomes, and on the benefits of applying.
- Final conference. A full-day event will be organised at the end of the project for presenting to the broad spectrum of stakeholders concerned with the process followed in the creation of SMART-ER and the activities implemented, the barriers found, the commonalities found, the guidelines developed, next steps, and the best practices for implementing SMART-ER across European higher Institutions.

6.2 Partners Universities Communication channels

The C&D activities rely on the effort and the possibility of each partner in exploiting opportunities to present the project and its results via their institutional communication channels:
- University websites, available social media channels (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and/or Youtube).
- The project will be highlighted at partner University events (e.g. PhD summers schools, Research and Innovation days, workshop sessions for researchers, R&I info-sessions for researchers, conferences, meetings, round tables, debates, discussions etc.)
- The Universities media (newsletters, magazines, posters etc.)

Each partner will have access to the promotional materials and tools to be able to represent the SMART-ER project.

### 6.3 External Communication channels

**External media**

Press campaigns will target the local and regional media in order to inform the local communities of the objectives and activities linked to the project. Press releases will follow an “easy to understand” form of structured press releases or fact boxes and will avoid academic jargon. A press kit with all relevant information and promotional material will be available on the website for download.

**Open access journals**

Preference will be given to the generation of publications related to both the project results and the processes used in their development. These will mainly be submitted for publication in international journals for challenge-based education and will include peer-reviewed academic publications on lessons learned, good practices, achieved results and outcomes. This will ensure unrestricted access to the knowledge generated by the project. Therefore all publications should be published through Open Access publishing. As defined in D7.1 Project Handbook, SMART-ER researchers can choose between the two main open access publishing: Gold OA or Green OA.

**External events**

Presentations of the SMART-ER project outcomes at relevant events (e.g. congresses, conferences, meetings, round tables, debates, public discussions etc.). Key events will be identified for the presentation of the project and its advancements of results, including oral and poster presentations. The identification of such events will be guided by the Executive Team.
7 Communication measures and performance indicators

The WP6 will be in charge of monitoring and evaluating all communications done during the life of the project. This includes monitoring the communication for which WP6 is responsible but also keeping track of the communications done by the partners at a local level. Through this monitoring, we will assess the impact of the communication, how well it serves the project objectives and if it reaches correctly the target audiences.

Considering the objectives, activities and tools that have been defined above, performance indicators will be also defined in the C&D plan in order to measure progress toward those objectives. A template for recording C&D activities is provided in Annex 1.

Several Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be established and analysed on a regular basis, such as:

- **Stakeholder engagement in the workshops / seminars**, especially those falling into the category of high-influence high interest. This will include an evaluation of the outcomes of the various sessions at the different locations, including the number of attendees and the amount (and quality) of the inputs.
- **Website visits and other metrics from Google Analytics** will provide accurate information about how much success the project communication is achieving on the internet, including the number of downloads of the published project outcomes.
- **Statistics of engagement with stakeholders in social media** as a way to track the transition from communication to interactive dialogue (e.g. number of followers, growth, interactions, engagement, ROI time vs interaction etc.)
- **Media appearances**: measurement of traditional media mentions of SMART-ER will assess in part the performance of the project’s communication actions.
- **Internal and external events attendance**: the project outcomes will probably be disseminated through several academic conferences or congresses. Measuring the audiences of such presentations and the attention created will be another way of assessing the performance of the communication dissemination and exploitation activities.
- **Subscriptions to the database of the newsletter** circulated every six months, including the fluctuation over time.
- **Attendance at the final conference.** Indicators related to the final conference will include the number of registered attendees, the representation of the various actors of the quadruple helix in the attendees, the abstracts submitted to the poster session, and the number of recognised experts joining as speakers.
- **Number of papers published in high-impact journals**.

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