



LIFE AGROWETLANDS II



COMMUNICATION PLAN

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0. AGROWETLANDS II SUMMARY

Background

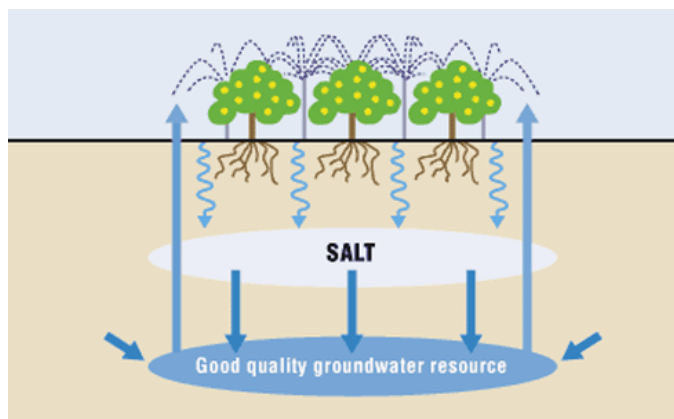
Wetlands are highly productive yet fragile ecosystems.

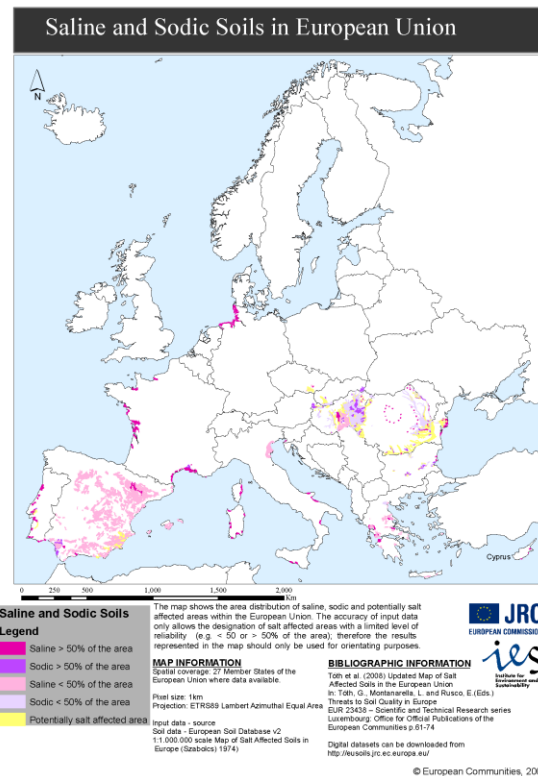
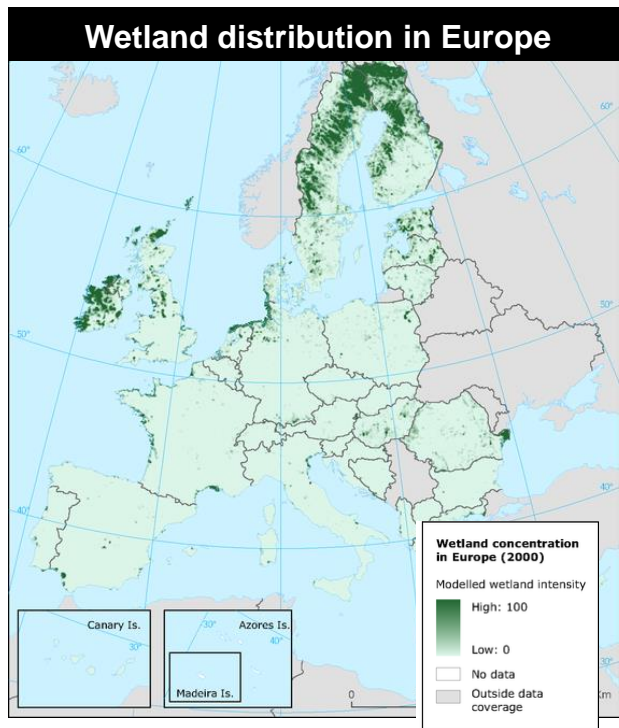
This high productivity has led to the development of irrigated agriculture, with increasing pressure on wetlands.

Agro-wetland interactions must be precisely managed and precautionary measures must be taken in order to avoid that the soil use can significantly alter the soil functions.

Specifically, soil salinization (irrigation-induced salinity) is a degradation process that can be driven by irrigated agriculture, and especially in wetlands located in EU Mediterranean regions, where under arid and semi-arid conditions, the high evapo-transpiration and low precipitations, increase the evapo-concentration of salts in the soil.

Increased water and soil salinity has direct negative effects on soil structure, qualities and functions, on the agricultural productivity, as well as on the biodiversity of natural and semi-natural habitats.





Irrigation-induced salinity is a growing problem in irrigated areas.

FAO reported that about 20–30 million hectares of irrigated lands were severely affected in crop productivity by salinity and about 80 million hectares were affected moderately. Salts introduced by irrigation water are stored within the root zone because of insufficient leaching. Saline irrigation water, low hydraulic conductivity of soil layers usually found in clayey dispersive (sodic) soils, and high evaporative conditions accelerate salinization of soil layers.



Aims

Optimize the irrigation in order to reduce water use, as well as water and soil salinization in agricultural wetland ecosystems.

Contribute to the objectives of the EU Soil Thematic Strategy and the EU Water Framework Directive, by:

- preventing soil degradation
- increasing the efficiency of water use
- reducing the vulnerability of water resources to climate change
- reducing soil salinity
- preserve natural and semi-natural wetlands and the aquatic ecosystems.

Activities

Design and implementation of a soil water and salinity wireless sensor network (WSN) to control:

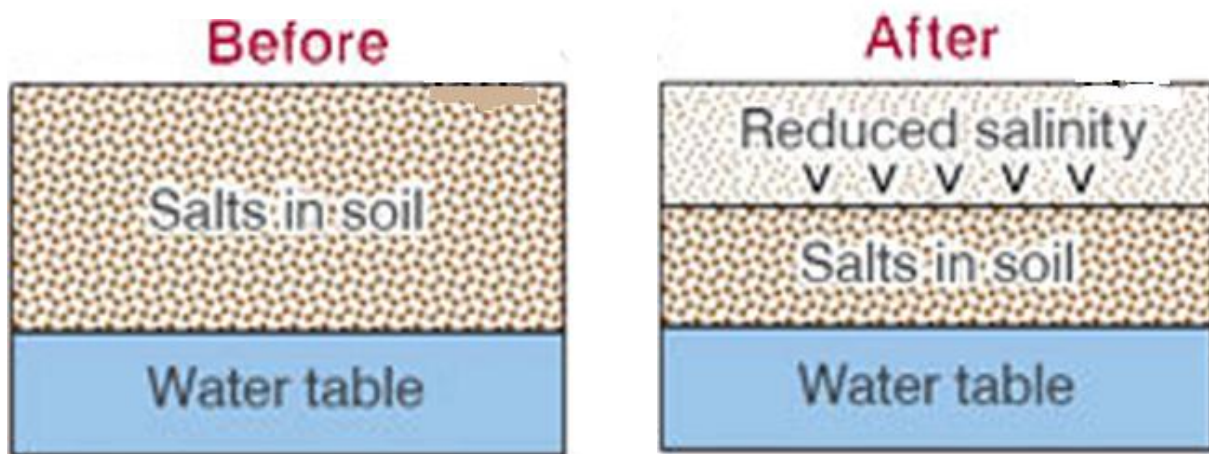
- the amount and salinity of irrigation and drainage water
- the soil salinity and water content
- the water-table depth

Design and implementation of a web-based decision support system (DSS) that automatically processes the inputs from the WSN and provides irrigation recommendations. Demonstration of the transferability of this technology to other irrigated Mediterranean agrowetland areas, threatened by salinization.



Expected Final Results

- The development of a DSS for sustainable water and soil salinity management, allowing farmers and water managers to adopt the most adequate irrigation plans, fulfilling agricultural and ecological requirements.
- A better production for the species with medium or high tolerance to salt and, at the same time, a reduction of the amount of water use for crop production.

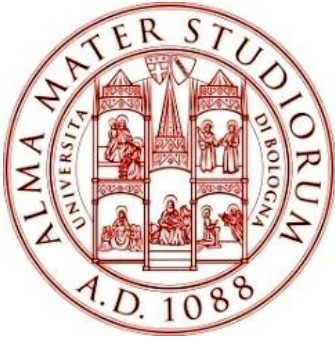


Other Intermediate Results

- An optimization of the number and allocation of soil sensors for monitoring soil salinity within a large agricultural area, by means of geostatistics techniques and numerical modeling of water flow and salt mobilization.
- A cost reduction of at least 30% in sensor acquisition and implementation.
- An up-scaling of water management from plots to irrigation sectors, considering the water quality and the impact on the surrounding environment.
- A reduction in water footprint by 20%.

1. PARTNERS

LEAD PARTNER



UNIBO (www.unibo.it) is one of the most important institution of higher education across Europe and one of the most active Italian universities in research and technology transfer. At the European level UNIBO successfully participated in FP6 and FP7 programs, managing more than 300 European projects under FP7 and other European projects (LIFE, Central Europe, South-East Europe, Interreg IV C, etc.)

PROJECT PARTNERS



Agrisfera (www.agrisfera.it) is the biggest cooperative farm in the province of Ravenna (Italy); it counts nearly 400 members, from which 150 are active and 237 are subsidizer members. Agrisfera manages and cultivates an area of more than 4,000 ha and also operates in various agricultural sectors, such as the production of high quality milk (4,900 t/year for the brand Granarolo), the production and marketing of ornamental woody plants under the brand "ServicePlant," the production of biogas, through two units of 1MW each.



IRIS (www.iris.cat) was established in Spain in 2007 as an advanced engineering and R&D solutions provider, specialising in the area of process engineering. IRIS has knowledge, capacity and infrastructure in 3 key enabling technologies– Production Processes (with a strong specialisation in novel technologies), Smart Systems, Optical Systems, and in 3 fields of science–food science, materials science and Environmental science.



OSV (www.osv.it) is a highly qualified agricultural manufacturing engineering company. It was founded more than 40 years ago as a commercial department for a group of agricultural machinery manufacturing companies. Since its origins, its activity has been focused in the agriculture sector, and they now have built up extensive commercial networks and contacts across the EC embracing dealers, farmers, wholesalers, etc.

2. GOALS OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN



Increase awareness of stakeholders concerning management and development strategies created through the project.



Transfer information and right messages to involved parties and encourage them to produce feedback.



Attract the largest possible number of persons and bodies that are interested and involved in SMART AGROWETLANDS management.



Engage bodies that materialize the communication strategy to implement a compelling and continuous communicative plan.



Contribute to the change of behavior and situations created by persuading farmers and agricultural cooperatives to take action in line with AGROWETLANDS.

3. TARGET GROUPS

Target groups of the projects will be mostly farmers and their associations, and, more comprehensively, the farmers, conservationists and irrigation managers of Mediterranean areas in which the agriculture is developed in the surroundings of wetland ecosystems.

Although the project is specifically designed for agro-wetland areas, since the soil salinization is a process tightly associated to irrigation at large, the AGROWETLANDS technology may be fully extrapolated to whatever irrigation area in Mediterranean Europe.

Therefore, the target group is extended to whatever irrigation association, farmer association, and large agricultural exploitation located in the arid to semiarid Mediterranean Europe.

-  **Regional wetland growers (> 100 regional growers will be targeted)**
-  **Non wetland cultivators (> 500 will be targeted from wetland regions across Europe)**
-  **Other industry stakeholders (> 500 will be targeted from relevant sectors from the food supply chain and water management and environmental sectors at European level)**
-  **Technology companies focused on agricultural activities**
-  **Policy makers (> 100 at European level)**
-  **Scientific and academic community (> 500 at European level)**
-  **Consumers and general public (> 3000 through press releases and other actions)**
-  **Managers of similar Natural Parks to the pilot areas in both Italy and Spain**

3. TARGET GROUPS/2

The following **national and European bodies** (> 50 at European level) will be targeted as potential multipliers, widening the project's target group:

- European Vegetation Survey – a working group of the International Association of Vegetation Science (IAVS)
- WetVegEurope
- European Environmental Agency (EEA)
- Vegetation Science Group of Masaryk University, Brno
- European Crop Protection Association
- Wetlands International
- Association of Friends of the Southern Alicante Wetlands
- Constructed Wetland Association
- Centro Etnografico della Civiltà Palustre (Villanova, Ravenna, Italy)
- Global Wetland Technology
- European Society for Agronomy
- European Society for Soil Conservation
- European Rice Federation
- European Agriculture Association
- IRIDRA (Italy)
- Joint Research Centre – Institute for Environment and Sustainability
- Sociedad Espanola de la Ciencia del Suelo
- Società Italiana della Scienza del Suolo (SISS)
- Società Italiana di Agronomia
- Water Management Institute of Lithuanian University of Agriculture (Kedainiai, Lithuania).

4. KEY MESSAGES



How the companies can become more efficient or competitive through introducing the innovative technology



How increase yield of productions → irrigation recommendations and decision support system aimed at automatic irrigation (integrated water management)



How promote rural development and safeguard the countryside

5. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Several tools are used in order to reach the objectives and perform the activities of the Communication Plan.

- traditional ways (poster, brochure, notice boards),
- use of new technologies (web site),
- proper differentiation that takes into account the targets to whom the communication is oriented (target),
- specific reference to the information effected through media (press release and press conference),
- communication targeted to the stakeholders (newsletter).

It would be care of the direct contacts, but it will be very important also to activate the word of mouth communication channel.

Doing these activities, the most appropriate tools to assure message dissemination in connection to the importance and to the features of its content, will be employed, also through the use of information technology and computer tools.

In order to reduce the carbon footprint, the use of paper has been reduced and the priority has been given to digital tools.

To ensure effective communication, the project has a designated press office, responsible for managing promotion activities and for communicating with target groups like the media.

The responsible person for the communication is the full time manager (raffaella.bagnano@unibo.it) who has internal procedures for responding to media/stakeholder enquiries and requests.

The following channels are common for communicating to the target groups:

Media:

- National quality newspapers
- Local and regional newspapers
- Online–newspapers and platforms

Non media:

- Website
- Training sessions
- Conferences
- Personal contacts



Dissemination Pack



Logos

Communication materials must clearly reference LIFE financial support and include the LIFE logo.

For audio-visual material, the credits at the beginning or at the end shall include an explicit and readable mention of the LIFE support (e.g. “With the contribution of the LIFE financial instrument of the European Community”).

This logo may not be referred to as a certified quality label or eco-label. The use of the LIFE logo shall be restricted to dissemination activities. The LIFE Programme logo can be found at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/toolkit/comtools/resources/logos.htm>

Finally, during information events European flag must be displayed in meeting rooms.

Project Website

The website is the pulsating heart of information on AGROWETLANDS.

The official website for disseminating the project activities, results and outcomes will be launched within the end of November 2016. The website is tailored to the requirements of different target groups and observe the EU regulation for accessibility. The website is available in Italian and English language under <http://www.lifeagrowetlands2.eu> address.

It consists in a public area where all project information will be available for the public and a partners' area structured as an archive where project documents will be available only for partners.

The project's Website will run for at least 5 years after the project's end.

The website is structured in the following way:

Home

Milestones

the Project

About

Phases

Networking

Documents & Downloads

Media, News and Events

Partners

Photo Gallery

Info/Contacts



Dicembre 2016



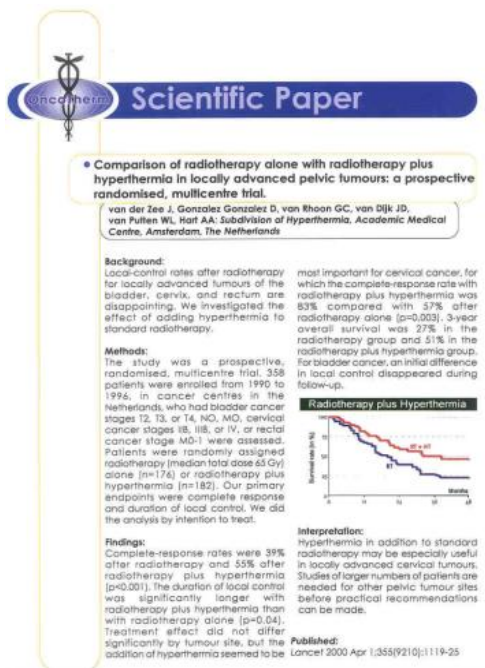
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Con un'irrigazione poco attenta, i sali presenti nell'acqua si depositano sulla superficie dei terreni e ostacolano la crescita delle piante: un grave problema di degradazione del suolo che può portare anche alla desertificazione. Per combattere

Scientific papers

Engineering and agronomic aspects will be published in order to inform the scientific community about project methodology and results.



Layman report

The project will produce the Layman's Report in the last quarter of the project implementation.

The Layman's Report of 5–10 pages will outline the main results of the project, targeting at a non specialized audience. It will include comprehensive results from the environmental impact of the soil monitoring system installed in the Agrisfera pilot area.

It will be available on paper (500 copies) and on electronic version, available for download at the project website.

Press releases/Press Review

A minimum of three press releases (kick-off meeting, action results, and project's end) shall keep the target groups and, if possible, the general public informed.

Depending on the progress of the project, the press releases will disseminate milestones of the project. According to the circumstances the target groups and the type of media channel must be individually chosen.

A list with media portals and journals/newspapers will be developed. The press releases will be distributed to these media sources and additional information provided in order to reach publications in such mass media sources.

A press review collection will contain all articles and news about the project published on magazines, journals or internet. The review will be uploaded on the project web site one time per year.



Press conference

A press conference will be organized at the beginning and at the end of the project (together with kick-off and final conference) to illustrate the project results and the importance of the project issues in relation with their social and economic impacts.

There will be representatives of all target groups involved, key stakeholders, media representatives, politics, agricultural operators, environmental associations etc.

Newsletter

E-newsletter will be issued every six months, published on the website and delivered to the stakeholders. The documents will update the readers with the project activities, events and results.



Three **Notice Boards** describing the project activities and one providing an overview on the project, will be realized.

The last one will be issued at the end of the project and it will contain the project results.

Each Notice Board will be displayed at partner's premises in strategic places accessible and visible to the public, both in Agrisfera's area and in Spain during implementation action.

The LIFE logo appear on them at all times.

Standard presentation, in english language, containing basic information on the project, has been prepared and is available on the website. The presentation has been developed further and kept up-to-date according to the needs of the project and the knowledge of the target groups.

Promotional material

Three concept brochures will be elaborated in English/Italian/Spanish language as promotion material to be used during workshops.

The first one has been issued within the first project year and includes project information and concept. The second issue is more technical and includes the first results. The third issue will contain the results and will be published toward the end of the project.

This material will be available as printed copy as well as download on the website.

Posters

Technical and dissemination posters with LIFE logo will be issued during the project lifetime (final conferences, workshops and during networking activity events with other projects).



Training booklet

A final publication will consist in about 50 pages containing the activities, main achievements and actions to undertake to sustain project results. A chapter will be dedicated to the comparison of results with projects dealing with the same topic.

The aim of the training booklet (and its related training sessions) is educating participants on the technical use and operations of the SMART AGROWETLAND environmental instrument at various stages of the field validation process, as well as to explain the competitive and environmental benefits of the uptake and use of the different results of the project.

Together with the dissemination, the training activities represent the essential tool to transfer the knowledge on the SMART AGROWETLAND system and its benefits to the end-users. More important from a dissemination point of view, additional farmers outside the Agrisfera community will be invited to learn about the benefits of the SMART AGROWETLAND system in order to widen the impact of the project. The farmers involved will learn about the functioning and advantages of using such a system allowing them to adopt the new tool for irrigation management. The project activities will actively be disseminated to target groups at national and European level and they will also be included in the training activities (both classroom and on-line training, and the filmed training session that will be made available on-line) → an on-line training tool will be embedded in the project website.

Communication activities like workshops and events will give the opportunity for target groups to meet and to get in contact with each other.

This will increase the possibility of cooperation on innovative approaches and techniques.

Within the working process, the project partners will need the support of the target groups to achieve best possible results e.g. in identifying or in providing solutions for developing appropriate strategies for AGROWETLANDS management.

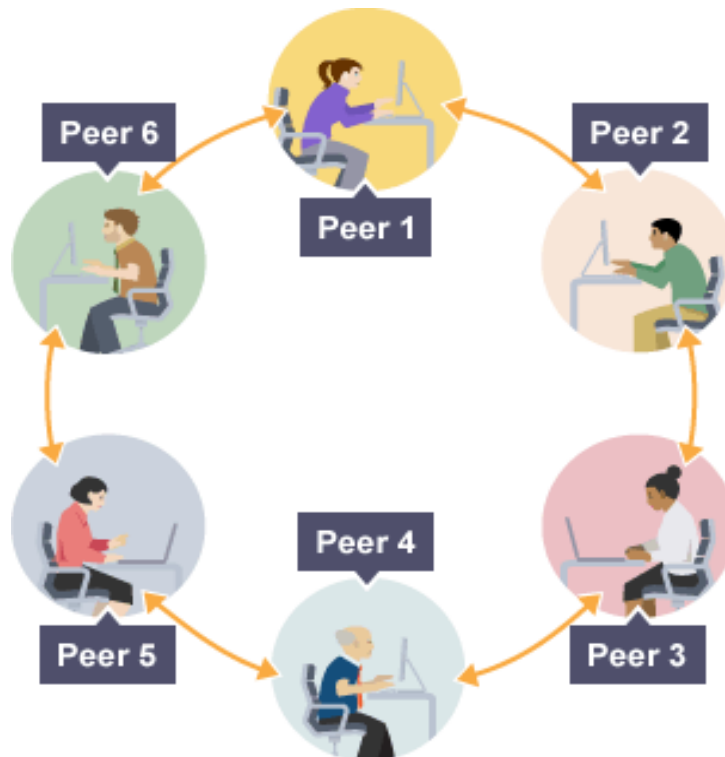
Therefore, a specific objective of communication is to build up a climate of trust between the target groups of stakeholders, economic operators and project partners. This goal can be achieved by a highly transparent and active, but also sensible transfer of opinions and facts.

Internal communication

To ensure a sound project management, as well as to achieve AGROWETLANDS strategic goals, an efficient internal communication is very important. It ensures a good sharing of information and enables all partners to contribute to the realization of the project.

This internal communication within the partnership, meaning working and discussing together and keeping the whole project environment updated on the progress of the project, is implemented foremost by using modern communication technologies (ICT). Just to name a few, the partners will use, but is not limited to, e-mails, skype contacts, phone calls, video conferences, etc.

Of course, the personal contact among the partners is the most important form of communication and takes place at common workshops and project meetings as well as at stakeholder meetings.



Final Conference

A Final Conference will be organized by the Coordinating Beneficiary, in cooperation with the Agriculture General Division of the Emilia-Romagna Region, which will host the event. All partners, aimed at spreading project results at regional and national level, will participate in this Final Conference.

The participation in the conference will be connected with the training activities on the utilization of the AGROWETLANDS System, foreseen in Agrisfera, leaving the possibility for the attendants to subscribe for the training.

After – Life Communication Plan

An after-Life Communication Plan will be produced in paper and electronic format at the end of the project, presented in Italian and English languages. The Plan will set out how the beneficiaries plan to continue disseminating and communicating results after the end of the project, indicating what external support could be helpful.



6. DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES ASSESSMENT

The efficacy of the communication activities described in this Communication Plan will be evaluated using simple performance indicators and evaluation measures, such as:

- participation of local communities and contribution in the feedback of information;
- amplitude of means and ways to disseminate information;
- compilation of the evaluation questionnaires distributed at the end of the events;
- web page visited, number of downloads;
- collection of comments and suggestions, arisen from organized meetings;
- number of publications and articles.

The most relevant Agrowelands II project events

	RESPONSIBLE PARTNER	ACTION	PERIOD
Kick off meeting	UNIBO	E.1	22/09/2016
5 special session open training	UNIBO	D.2	2020
Progress meetings	UNIBO	E.1	2017-2020
Replication activity in Spain	IRIS	D.2	2019-2020
Final conference	UNIBO	D.1	07/02/2020
Final meeting	UNIBO	E.1	21/02/2020

7. COMMUNICATION DELIVERABLES TO BE PRODUCED

DELIVERABLE	N.OF COPIES	ACTION	PERIOD
Communication Plan	1	D.1	30/11/2016
Project website	1	D.1	30/11/2016
Project's brochure in Italian/English /Spanish	1000	D.1	15/09/2017
Project's Poster	1	D.1	15/09/2017
Life notice boards	5	D.1	30/09/2017
Scientific paper (project implementation)	2	D.2	21/12/2018
Scientific paper (project results)	2	D.2	27/12/2019
Final publication (Training booklet)	200	D.2	2020
Layman's Report	1	D.1	31/03/2020
After Life Communication Plan	1	E.1	31/03/2020

8. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The After-LIFE Plan will be realized before the end of the project by means of the collected communication and dissemination best contributions.

The Plan will put together all parts of the activities concerning Communication and Dissemination, aiming to the replication of the actions, and includes management of the realized plan in Agrisfera area and the replication activity in Spain.

The work to develop the After-Life Plan will begin after the first 3-4 months from the start of the project, collecting (by all partners) all the useful materials, tools, pictures and media. The Communication manager has to coordinate the activities.

The guidelines of this Plan concern :

- the choice of the communication and dissemination channels, such as web sites, conferences and media
- the choice of the main results and tools that need to be disseminated
- the preparation of the material that will be disseminated by means of each channel
- the implementation of each part of the After-LIFE Plan for each prospective channel.

The After-LIFE Plan will be available on the project web site. In particular the Plan will remain on each Partners website for 5 years after the end of the project.

All the results and the tools of the project will have to be disseminated.

The future communication

Given the dissemination importance, in the next 3–5 years after the completion of the project activities, a certain number of dissemination actions have been planned, both at national and international level.

Such as it was happened in the occasion of the initial predisposition of the communication strategy, the approach has tried to individualize:

- The principal results which have to be achieved after the dissemination effort and as regard the expressed and/or unexpressed informative needs.
- The correspondent connection to objectives which made unequivocal the idea subtended to each dissemination activity.
- The principal stakeholders and their characteristics.
- The content and the essential elements which are intended to disseminate.
- The principal sources which every stakeholder group considers remarkable and believable as regard its own affairs.
- The medium/average through which to spread the messages, in order to reach in the best way the potential recipients.
- The success/failure thresholds which are able to testify the activities impact (how, who, when the data are collected).
- The access, or rather the necessity to allow the potential stakeholders to track the information of which they need in the moment in which they warn the necessity (storage of data, etc.).
- The availability, or rather the strategies to promote the availability of information in different formats.
- The barriers, or rather the identification of all that can interfere with the access and the use of the information and the modalities that can reduce these barriers.

The future communication/2

The main diffusion activities planned during and after the project development will be:

- design of a website to show the main results and activities developed in the framework of the project;
- organization of online and classroom workshops aimed at training irrigation advisors on the handling of the system;
- publication of notes through the project website, and also brochures, and informative articles in agricultural and irrigation professional newsletters and journals;
- communication to national and international congresses of professionals about the results obtained during the development of the project;
- organization of meetings in local forums to inform farmers, irrigation managers and agricultural engineers, and other extension staff of the benefits of using this technology;
- organization of guided field trips in the pilot areas under an expert guidance;
- promotion of the web-system in technological and agricultural fairs.

PROJECT DATA

Project starting date: 01/09/2016

End of project date: 30/06/2020

Web site: www.lifeagrowetlands2.eu

Contacts: info@lifeagrowetlands2.eu

