Deliverable 8.4. POLARIN Communication, dissemination, and engagement plan

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Lead author	E Horovcakova
Contributors	AU, AWI, IGOTL-UL, INACH, NASC, ULUND
Contributing authors	R Badhe, M Tempel, V Willmott
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SUMMARY

This document is a deliverable of Work Package 8 "Outreach, Engagement and Impact "within the POLARIN project financed by the European Commission through the Horizon Europe funding programme.

It is a comprehensive document defining target audiences, type of topics and results for sharing and further dissemination as well as types of actions, activities and tools for joint dissemination activities of the POLARIN project. These activities are based on the cooperation of all partners and are strongly linked not only to the POLARIN project objectives but also to the activities of particular work packages.

The aim is to support and multiply synergies in communicating the activities and results and to be instrumental for their visibility towards a variety of different audiences.

As the Communication, dissemination, and engagement plan is a living document, regular updates are foreseen.

1. Introduction to Communication, dissemination and engagement plan

Measures to maximise the impact of POLARIN rely on an effective communication of the services offered by the project, such as transnational access and virtual access to research infrastructures, data services data tools and data products generated by the project, and training to infrastructure users. Effective communication will ensure that the targeted audiences are reached.

To maximise the impact, the project results will be disseminated through different channels.

The communication, dissemination and engagement plan describes in detail the main objectives of the communication activities, specific target groups and relevant communication channels and tools, communication activities including KPIs (key performance indicators) to measure the objectives' impacts, as well as risks that might influence the course of the plan. Implementation and evaluation of the plan & Strategy for the management of intellectual property are also included below.

2. Main Objectives

The communication activities have started at the onset of the project and will continue throughout the project's entire lifetime. The overall Communication objectives (CO) of the activities are:

CO1: To promote the project throughout the full lifespan of the project,

CO2: To actively advertise POLARIN's services: TA to RIs, VA to data, data tools, data services and data products, and training opportunities.

CO3: To inform and reach out to society and show the activities performed, and the use and benefits the project will have for citizens.

CO4: To contribute to evidence-based policy-making.

CO5: To support internal communication.

POLARIN's communication activities are being directed to relevant target audiences, with the aim of informing and engaging them in the project activities. These activities rely on the corporate design and branding of POLARIN, supporting the consortium members to communicate the project in a consistent and uniform manner. Communication channels and tools include a logo, website, social media platforms, templates for presenting and reporting, a project presentation video, and a project description. Internal communication tools are being developed to ensure a smooth flow of information among the project members, including mailing lists for internal communication purposes, a document sharing platform (intranet/document storage and communication platforms) and in-person and online meetings. The communication activities are strategically planned to ensure a comprehensive communication plan with clear objectives and for different target audiences.

Acknowledgment of EU funding will be provided in all communication activities of the beneficiaries related to POLARIN (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), any dissemination activities and major results and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement.

2.1. Target audiences

POLARINs communication activities will be directed to following target audiences:

End users of POLARIN's services	
Specific target group	**Description of target group in relation to POLARIN**
Scientific community	POLARIN will provide the scientific community with access to polar RIs and further opportunities/services opened by the project.
Early career researchers	POLARIN will actively inform the ECR community of the specific opportunities to access the POLARIN RIs and of training activities dedicated to this community. By actively reaching out, POLARIN can engage ECR's with their services. Examples: APECS, national APECS divisions, universities (see higher education institutions)
National polar programmes and research institutions	POLARIN will provide research institutions with an overview of the opportunities/services offered by the project.
Funded (polar) projects or projects that need polar data	POLARIN will provide other Horizon Europe projects with an overview of its services. Utilising entities such as the EU Polar Cluster can help POLARIN to effectively address a large part of the polar science community. Examples: EU Polar Cluster, ESA Polar Science Cluster
Technicians and engineers	Training for use of state-of-the-art technical equipment and data stewardship will be organised by POLARIN. In addition, technicians and engineers will benefit from better capacities for research in the polar regions and TA to RIs when they are part of user groups.
Multilateral and international organisations	International and multilateral organisations which either represent polar research institutes or are involved in/engaged with polar science will benefit from the services offered through POLARIN. Examples: European Polar Board (EPB), Asian Forum of Polar Sciences (AFoPS), Managers of the Latin American Antarctic Programs (RAPAL), Arctic Research Consortium of the United States (ARCUS)

Other target groups	
Specific target group	**Description of target group in relation to POLARIN**
POLARIN consortium members	POLARIN consortium members will receive internal communication for an efficient coordination of the project and to be made aware of project related news.

User groups	Once their proposals for TA have been approved, successful call participants will receive support from POLARIN to follow their own outreach and engagement plan.
Research infrastructure operators	Research infrastructure operators are key partners in discussing, planning, and implementing a better scientific and logistic coordination of RI access. They will benefit from a coherent and more efficient process of granting access to RIs and an optimised and cost-effective use of these.
International agreements and international partnerships	An integrated and harmonised access to polar RIs will increase the understanding of the polar regions and thus ease the task of developing evidence-based policy recommendations for a sustainable usage of the polar regions that are subjected to international agreements or partnerships. Examples: Arctic Council (Enhancement of International Cooperation of Arctic Science), Antarctic Treaty System
Policy and decision makers	An integrated and harmonised access to the polar RIs will increase the understanding of the polar regions and thus ease the task of developing evidence-based policy recommendations for a sustainable usage of the polar regions and their resources. This will be beneficial to support the EU Arctic Policy, the European Green Deal and other policy-based climate initiatives. Providing TA to international infrastructures moreover supports science diplomacy efforts by building bridges between countries and promoting scientific cooperation as an essential element of foreign policy. Examples: EC, local, regional, national decision makers
Maritime industry	Maritime industry partners have a critical need for better polar information in support of safe, responsible, and effective industry operations and of the European policy for cleaner and better oceans. Furthermore, commercial vessels and structures could serve to host or deploy instruments for environmental data collection and provide possibilities to increase monitoring capabilities. Logistics, suppliers, IAATO, AECO
News outlets	Media can contribute to underlining the importance of polar science, by reflecting on TA User Groups' operations and their results, data tools and products. Example: National newspapers, dedicated journals for science news.
Civil society, public at large	POLARIN will regularly inform the public about the project to show the activities performed and the use and benefits the project has for citizens.
Educators	The recordings of online seminars, and other training materials will be available for education and training. Examples: Universities, schools, Polar Educators International (PEI).

2.2.   Communication channels and tools

POLARIN will develop and use various communication channels and tools to effectively communicate both internally and externally and to effectively engage the defined target groups. It is important to note that many of the following channels and tools will be used for both outreach and engagement activities.

Channel/tool	Purpose/objective	Target group(s)	Indicative KPIs*	Responsibility (WP/due on)
Corporate identity (logo, templates)	To identify the project and project activities through branding.	All	Not applicable	WP8/M1
Website	A regularly updated website will serve as a reference platform for all target groups to find relevant information about the project – including the opportunities offered by POLARIN (call for proposals, data tools and services), its objectives, achievements, the consortium, news, events, how to get involved, etc.	All	Continuous evaluation of global visitors (list top 10 visiting countries)	WP9, WP8/ set up in M1, ongoing
Project members' portal	An internal website will enable project members to download current working materials, such as reports, deliverables, and presentations.	POLARIN consortium members	Not applicable	WP9, WP8 / Set up in M1, ongoing
Social Media**	Regularly used social media accounts will raise awareness for the project and engage the defined target groups. Accounts will be set up for: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube or Vimeo, LinkedIn, Twitter/Mastodon. EC guidelines will be followed for any social media posting.	All target groups	Continuous evaluation of engagement (clicked links/comments/reposts)	WP8/Set up in M1, ongoing
Newsletter	Quarterly newsletters will be sent to newsletter subscribers providing project updates, highlights, achievements, upcoming events, etc.	All	Number of subscribers	WP8/Subscription set up in M1 (on website), ongoing
Flyers, brochures, posters, roll-ups	POLARIN will create a diverse set of brochures and project material developed for training, data products and project results will be made available as e-files and QR-codes.	Target groups depend on outreach material	Number of downloads / printed material	WP8/ On demand

	Minimal print versions will be available as necessary.			
Press releases	Timely press releases will be issued for specific project activities and events to create credibility and impact.	Media	Number of news items stemming from press release	All partners' press offices / On demand
Videos	Short videos will be produced to introduce the POLARIN project, its aims, and objectives. Videos will be published online on POLARIN's YouTube or Vimeo channel.	All	Number of visitors on YouTube /Vimeo channels	WP8/ M6
Email	Formal email communication channels to target specific target groups for e.g., policy briefings etc.	Depends on content	Not applicable	WP8/ On demand
Guidelines for content creation of RI users	Create a set of broad guidelines to ensure usable content being developed by access users of POLARIN RIs.	RI users, Scientific community	Not applicable	WP8/ M8
Publications resulting from service users	POLARIN will gather the scientific achievements/ publications from RI users that were granted access through POLARIN	Scientific community, policy and decision makers, POLARIN Consortium Members, Media	Number of publications	WP8/ Ongoing

*Indicative KPIs - KPIs will be inspected regularly and evaluated over the time (future deliverables D8.6, D8.9, D8.13)

**Social media – Up to date, following social media accounts were created:

LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/102485175/admin/feed/posts/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61558168247071

X: https://x.com/EuPolarin

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/eu.polarin/

2.3 Communication activities and events

POLARIN's communication activities and events will actively advertise its services to and effectively inform and engage the defined target groups, specifically the scientific community. The table below is a starting point of the planned communication activities and events and will be updated during the project.

Activity/event	Purpose/objective	Target group(s)	Indicative KPIs*	WP/Month
Consortium meetings	Consortium meetings, i.e., general assemblies, will be organised during the project. These include a kick-off meeting at the beginning of the project, annual meetings, and a closing meeting at the end of project.	Project Members, (invited external representatives if necessary)	Number of meetings	WP9/ M1, then annually
Clustering with other initiatives	The project will connect and work with other active initiatives such as the EU Polar Cluster and ESA Polar Science Cluster to maximise knowledge sharing and better distribution and communication among the target audience.	Scientific Community, POLARIN Consortium Partners	Number of activities	WP8, WP9/ Ongoing
Scientific and non-scientific events	Partners will attend scientific and non-scientific events to disseminate project results	All	Number of visited events	All WPs/ On demand
International fora	Promotion of established cooperation efforts of POLARIN	Depends on forum	Number of fora participated in	All WPs/ On demand
Promotion of project results	Promotion of TA User Groups funded through the project, data access, tools and data products, training, and materials generated by the project.	All	Number of engagements /participants	All WPs/ On demand
Outreach beyond Europe	Translations of outreach activities (e.g., social media posts) into native languages of consortium partners to ensure that many researchers are made aware of relevant opportunities and services.	Scientific community	Number of translated posts/ # non-European followers	WP8/ Ongoing

Dedicated outreach to Ukraine	Outreach in national language(s) to Ukrainian researchers and scientists.	Scientific community in Ukraine	Number of activities (e.g., posts, press releases)	WP8,NASC (Ukraine)/ Ongoing

 *Indicative KPIs - KPIs will be inspected regularly and evaluated over the time (future deliverables D8.6, D8.9, D8.13)

Monitoring and Evaluation
KPIs measurement matrix for monitoring, updating, and evaluation of the communication and dissemination actions has been proposed in the following structure:

* Categories:
Events: Organisation of a Workshop, Conference, Lecture, Training, Visit, Trade Fair, Brokerage Event, Open Day, Exhibition, GP Outreach…
Participation in a Conference, Participation in a Workshop, Participation in other types of event
Output:
Press Release, Non-scientific publication or article (popularised publication), Website, Social media posts, Interview, Podcast, Video, Flyer, Banner, Communication campaign, Promotional materials…
** Outreach: No. of participants, Social media reach/impressions
Means of verification:
Attendance lists, Meeting minutes, Photos, Statistics (website analytics and social media metrics/ reach), Report, Links

2.4 Risks

Over the past few years, the research community has experienced several low probability events that have had very high impacts on the research community in general and the polar research community in particular. To ensure that risks noted below are mitigated, they will be inspected regularly and evaluated on a rolling basis.

For POLARIN, the possible risks that might influence the course of the Communication, dissemination, and engagement plan:

Risk	Probability	Response	Responsibility
Lack of RI users' interest	Medium	This risk will be addressed by encouraging modern, attractive and interactive user engagement mechanisms and communication approaches such as social media, guidelines for TA user blogs and videos (POLARIN Ambassadors programme), organisation of online seminar series and other relevant events. Utilising multiple sources of communication (emails, social media, newsletter, website) to encourage positive	WP8

		response from the target stakeholder. Coordinating joint user engagement activities with other projects with similar objectives will in addition lessen stakeholder fatigue.	
Low project visibility	Low	The partners and POLARIN RI users will take part in relevant events presenting the project and getting in touch with different users. These efforts will be organised in strong coordination with other initiatives and projects, such as the EU Polar Cluster, ESA Polar Science Cluster, European Polar Board and EPCO, IASC, SCAR and SOOS, increasing the projects' visibility.	All project partners, RI users
Lack of information for communication purposes	Medium	This risk will be addressed by regular communication to all WP leads / project partners and by tracking information about their activities in a structured way, as well as by collecting information for website, social media and quarterly newsletters.	WP leads, all project partners
Cultural & background differences	Low	The project partners have a long-term and well-established collaboration. The project will additionally improve this collaboration and through interchange with different stakeholder categories better understand cultural differences, while integrating local knowledge in the project development.	All project partners
Disruptive global or regional crises	Medium	The partners plan for alternative dissemination and communication activities where physical meetings may not be possible due to travel restrictions or cancellation of conferences. Planned activities can be adapted to be held online or hybrid as an alternative format.	All project partners
Cyberattacks	Medium	Partners pay close attention to online security according to their institutional requirements. Project documents and other materials are stored securely online with backups made.	All project partners

2.5 Implementation and evaluation of the plan

The implementation of the Communication, dissemination and engagement plan will rely on the following critical pro-active approaches:

- Integration of communication and dissemination efforts throughout the project;
- Effectiveness of communication flow within POLARIN and with research infrastructures' users;
- Diversity of dissemination and two-way communication tools according to different audiences;
- Accessibility of disseminated results and project legacy;

The implementation of the plan will be overseen by WP8 and the Steering Board The activities included in this plan will be evaluated and updated in order to support the execution of project objectives and POLARIN communication and dissemination activities. Any changes needed to the plan or activities will be discussed within WP8 and brought to the project Steering Board if necessary. Mandatory assessments of communications, outreach and engagement activities to date, and updates of the Communication, dissemination, and engagement plan are scheduled in time for M24, M49 and M60.

2.6 Strategy for the management of intellectual property

The access to RIs has, in most of the cases, the objective of collecting environmental data to better understand the processes, the status, and the evolution of the natural environment. However, in some cases, there might be a need to manage intellectual property if the outcomes of the access can be valorised, for example if the recovery of data or samples leads to the discovery of natural resources, or chemical compounds that can be commercialised by e.g. pharmaceutical companies. Depending on the context, IP rights results might belong to the researcher or to her/his employing organisation or is shared by both. This must be checked carefully by the researcher before applying for specific protection rights and before deploying any exploitation initiative.

In most cases, the end user institutions have their own "technology transfer/exploitation" units that manage intellectual property cases. If needed, POLARIN will refer to the European IP Helpdesk (http://www.iprhelpdesk.eu/), a service funded by the EC and managed by EASME47. It provides free-of-charge, first-line advice and information on Intellectual Property (IP).

3. Conclusions

The overall objective of the Communication, dissemination and engagement plan is to actively advertise POLARIN's services, i.e.,: TA to RIs, VA to data, data tools, data services and data products, training opportunities and project results to relevant target audiences, as well as to engage different target audiences in project activities. The communication activities have started at the onset of the project and will continue throughout the full project's lifetime. They will involve various communication channels, tools, and activities to effectively communicate both internally and externally and to effectively engage the defined target groups.

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