D1.2 COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

WP 01

28/03/2019

smartagrihubs.eu

PROJECT SUMMARY

Digital technologies enable a transformation into data-driven, intelligent, agile and autonomous farm operations, and are generally considered as a key to address the grand challenges for agriculture. Recent initiatives showed the eagerness of the sector to seize the opportunities offered by ICT and in particular data-oriented technologies. However, current available applications are still fragmented and mainly used by a small group of early adopters. Against this background, SmartAgriHubs (SAH) has the potential to be a real game changer in the adoption of digital solutions by the farming sector.

SAH will leverage, strengthen and connect local DIHs and numerous Competence Centres (CCs) throughout Europe. The project already put together a large initial network of 140 DIHs by building on its existing projects and ecosystems such as Internet of Food and Farm (IoF2020). All DIHs are aligned with 9 regional clusters, which are led by organizations that are closely related to national or regional digitization initiatives and funds. DIHs will be empowered and supported in their development, to be able to carry out high-performance Innovation Experiments (IEs). SAH already identified 28 Flagship Innovation Experiments (FIEs), which are examples of outstanding, innovative and successful IEs, where ideas, concepts and prototypes are further developed and introduced into the market.

SAH uses a multi-actor approach based on a vast network of start-ups, SMEs, business and service providers, technology experts and end-users. End-users from the agri-food sector are at the heart of the project and the driving force of the digital transformation.

Led by the Wageningen University and Research (WUR), SAH consists of a pan-European consortium of over 160 Partners representing all EU Member States. SAH is part of Horizon2020 and is supported by the European Commission with a budget of €20 million.

DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SAH communication and dissemination strategy is designed to help the network and its members to communicate effectively both internally and externally and meet the objectives of the SAH project. The current document shows how communication can:

- engage effectively with all stakeholders in the network, demonstrate success of DIHs work and results from all over Europe with its Flagship Innovation Experiments
- ensure all the target audience understand the project
- change behaviour and perceptions in the agritech sector

The communication is divided in three phases, according to the duration of the project (Sowing, Flowering and Harvesting) and the ecosystem levels (Within DIH, Between DIHs and Beyond SmartAgriHubs).

The present document also includes two annexes: the Communication Plan and the Social Media Strategy.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

This section is dedicated to project specific terms and abbreviations that were used throughout the document.

CC – Competence Centre

DG AGRI – European Commission Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development

DG CONNECT – European Commission Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology

DIH – Digital Innovation Hub

EC – European Commission

FIE – Flagship Innovation Experiment

IE – Innovation Experiment

IoT – Internet of Things

KPI – Key Performance Indicator

RC – Regional Cluster

SAH – SmartAgriHubs

WP – Work Package

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Communication and Dissemination Strategy plays an essential role in connecting the existing dots in the agritech network and building the ecosystem of SmartAgriHubs.

The SAH communications strategy is a 'living document', enriched and improved as the project unfolds and progresses. It is necessary to review the strategy periodically (at least once a year) to see what has worked, and what did not, what we should do more of or less of. The strategy should address the communication needs of all the partners and facilitate the flow of information among them.

Figure 1 outlines the main pillars of the SmartAgriHubs communication strategy: a solid internal communication structure; the focus on enhancing the project's visibility; the sustainability of the ecosystem in the longer-term; constant dissemination activities.

Figure 1 The four key aspects of the SmartAgriHubs' communication and dissemination strategy

1.1 GENERAL GOALS

The primary goal of the communication and dissemination strategy is to influence the knowledge, attitude and behaviour of the defined target groups towards the digital transformation of the agri-food sector. To reach this overall objective, the activities implemented within the strategy will aim to:

- **raise awareness** about the project and its activities;
- **inform** the audience about the outcomes and results of the project;
- **promote** the uptake of the outcomes and results to the key stakeholders within and beyond the scope of the project;

- **engage** with partners and stakeholders to (continue to) collaborate with one another and to contribute to the project's goals and activities.

These concepts are visualized in **Error! Reference source not found.** below:
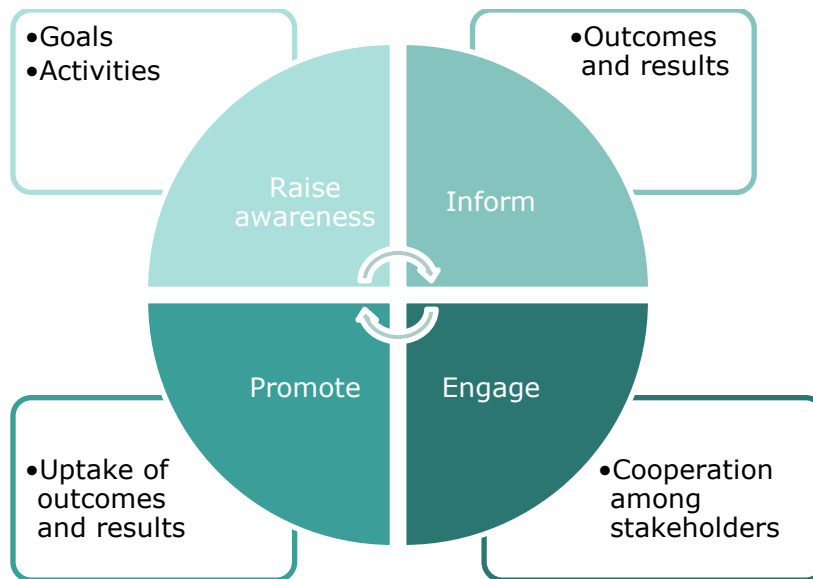
Figure 2 The general goals of the communication and dissemination strategy

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The communication and dissemination strategy report is organized in the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 introduces the main ideas and objectives behind the strategy;
- Chapter 2 digs into the methodology used to structure the report;
- Chapter 3 defines the main stakeholders targeted in the communication strategy along with their respective tailored key messages;
- Chapter 4 illustrates the strategy carried out in phase I;
- Chapter 5 illustrates the strategy carried out in phase II;
- Chapter 6 illustrates the strategy carried out in phase III;
- Chapter 7 encompasses a thorough communication plan, describing the tools used to practically implement the strategy;
- Chapter 8 lays down the social media strategy and implementation.

2. METHODOLOGY

The structure of the SmartAgriHubs communication and dissemination strategy follows the overall multi-level project's approach, based on ecosystem phases and ecosystem levels as visualized in Figure 3. For each level within a phase, the main focus, messages and target audience are identified. The communication plan will feature the communication tools used to implement these three key strategic concepts.

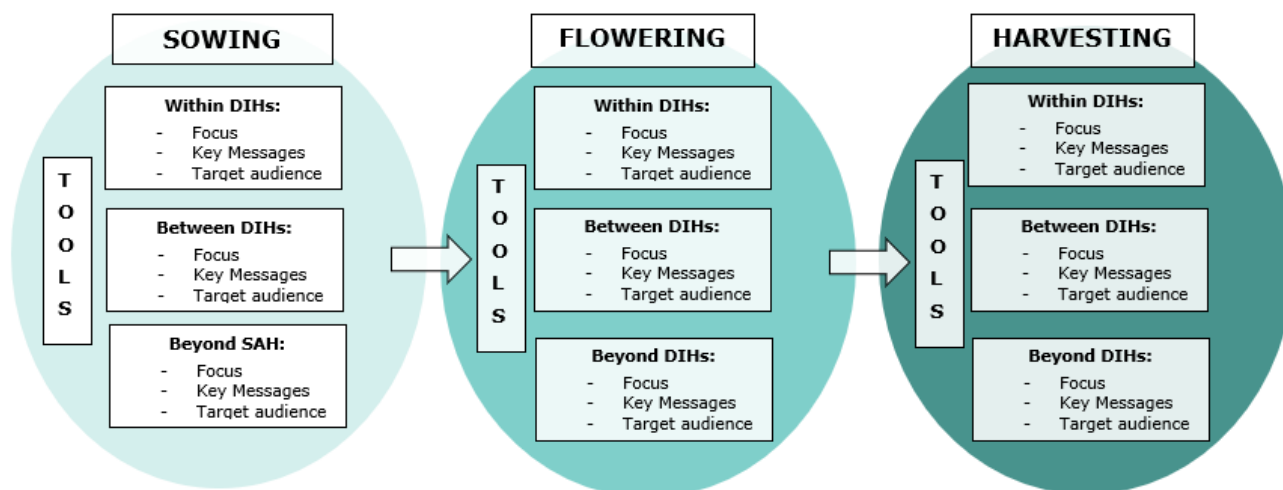*Figure 3 The multi-phases and multi-levels structure of the strategy*

The current communication strategy was prepared based on inputs from the WP1 members as well as consultations with partners of the consortium, especially with the Regional Clusters. In fact, during the regular monthly telco we had with them, we assessed their communication needs and expectations as well as the implications for an efficient implementation on the ground. Due to the complex structure of the project, several factors (previous experiences with multi-stakeholders' communication activities) and their implication for the implementation of the communication were considered.

Moreover, the following communication strategy is also based on the experience accumulated with the IoF2020 project that follows the same communication phases concepts namely sowing, flowering and harvesting.[1]

2.1 ECOSYSTEM PHASES

Along its 4-year timespan, SmartAgriHubs will extend and broaden, providing new, different objectives and challenges for which a diverse strategic approach will be needed. The ecosystem phases respond to this issue by structuring the projects' activities in three subsequent periods:

- Sowing (M01-M09);
- Flowering (M06-M36);
- Harvesting (M24-M48).

Following the natural development of SmartAgriHubs, the end of a period and the beginning of the following one overlaps; hence, there are no rigorous borders between one phase and another. The communication strategy should mirror this approach by foreseeing activities and tools that are progressive as well as smoothly adaptable to an ever-changing context.

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[1] *https://www.iof2020.eu/deliverables/d5.3_iof2020_ecosystem-building-strategy.pdf*

The **sowing phase** represents the initial nine months of the project, and aims to build up a coherent, unique and recognizable structure of SmartAgriHubs. Given the wide and diverse consortium, the activities performed during the sowing phase are critical to make a good start and help to pave the way for the success of the following phases. Communication will focus on setting up the identity of the project, involving all partners under a common language and giving them the appropriate tools to externally promote SmartAgriHubs.

Once the basic foundations have been established, it is time to build up robust walls that can support the DIHs and favour the development of successful results. The **flowering phase** focuses on strengthening the DIH network and ecosystem. In the light of the distinct stakeholders involved within DIHs, communications activities will aim at developing tools – including educational ones – to foster knowledge exchange and collaboration between and within DIHs.

The **harvesting phase** encompasses the last period of the SmartAgriHubs project. The first results coming from IEs and DIHs will provide valuable content for the dissemination activities, which will extend towards a greater audience.

2.2 ECOSYSTEM LEVELS

Alongside the time-related ecosystem phases, SmartAgriHubs' activities also need to be tailored according to their geographical extent. In communication, this requires the elaboration of different strategies, focus, key messages and target groups. The project wants to create impactful results at three different levels, referred to as "ecosystem levels":

- Within DIHs;
- Between DIHs;
- Beyond SmartAgriHubs.

Strengthening expertise and capabilities **within DIHs** constitutes the backbone of a solid ecosystem network. Partners in each DIH, being business providers, technology experts, researchers, financial investors and end-users need to cooperate to make the uptake of digitisation in the agri-food sector possible. The communication and dissemination activities carried out at this level will support the development of strong and mature hubs in which all relevant stakeholders collaborate efficiently. Communication activities at this stage will be focused on helping each and every DIH in the network.

Based on a cluster approach, the relationship **between DIHs** will be enhanced by fostering collaboration among the nine Regional Clusters. Cross-country and interregional cooperation among DIHs will be promoted by SmartAgriHubs' communication and dissemination actions, allowing knowledge exchange to unfold and to support the creation of a self-sustainable network.

Alongside the two more local levels, WP1 will carry out communication activities targeting networks and entities **beyond SmartAgriHubs,** ensuring a widespread connection to other, non-sectorial audiences, giving the project a more robust and global reach.

3. TARGET AUDIENCE & KEY MESSAGES

The implementation of the communication and dissemination activities of SmartAgriHubs will be tailored according to key target groups identified in each phase and at every ecosystem level. As a result, the audience will be aligned with the focus and key messages. Such groups are broadly divided according to the direct and indirect relationship established by WP1:

Direct stakeholders are represented by the partners of the consortium (especially WP leaders and the Regional Clusters), but also by actors identified at a wider European scale by WP1 like the European Institutions, pan-European NGOs, and European Associations or Organisations. SmartAgriHubs WP members (e.g. Copa-Cogeca, IFOAM-EU) will help the dissemination through their wide network of associates.

Indirect stakeholders are identified at a local level by DIHs through RCs and are subject to a more territory specific communication activity.

The direct and indirect stakeholders represent the backbone of the communication and dissemination strategy (Figure 4) and are explained in more detail below together with their corresponding key message.
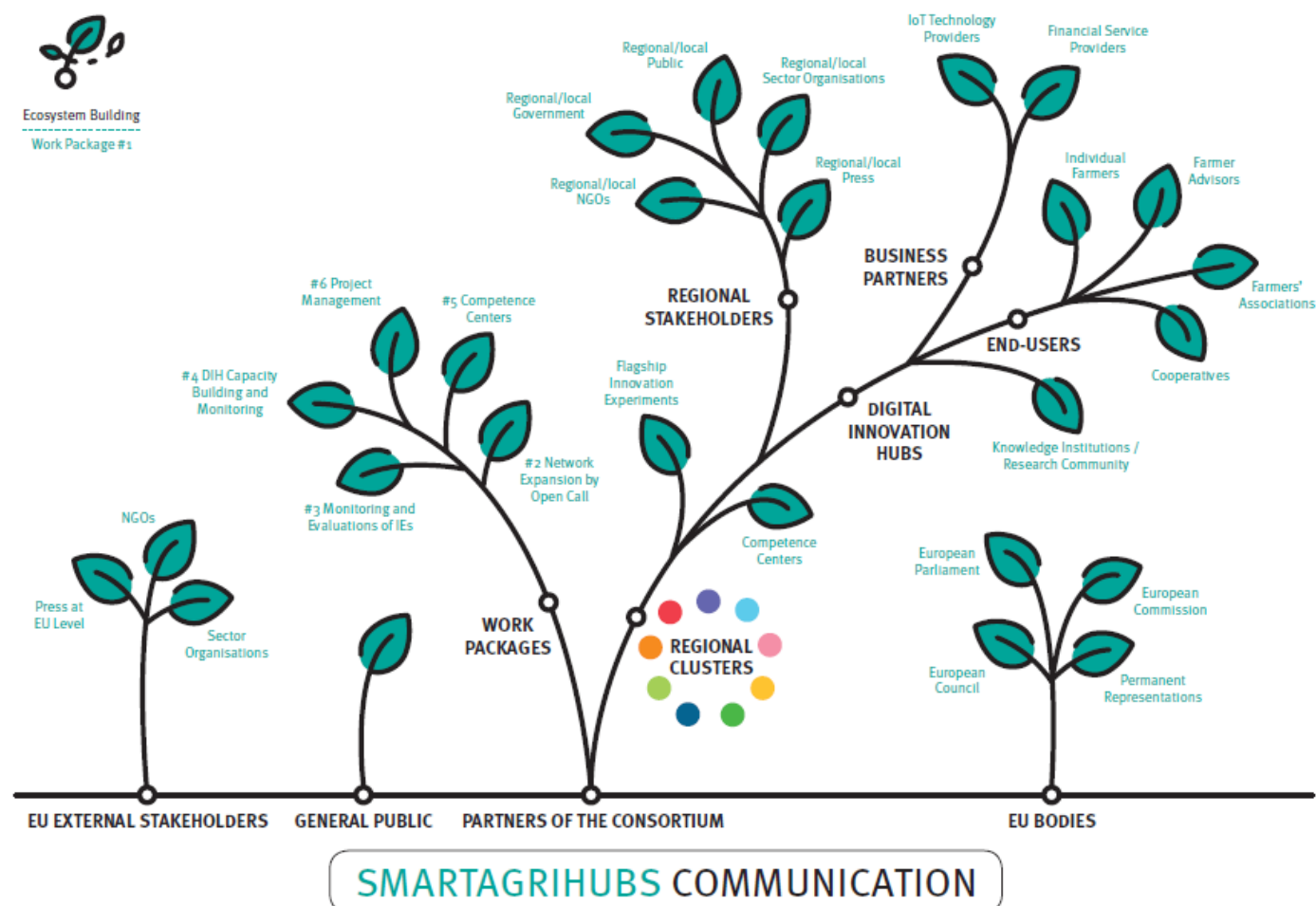

Figure 4 Visual representation of the direct and indirect stakeholders addressed in the strategy

3.1 PARTNERS OF THE CONSORTIUM

Before starting to communicate externally about SmartAgriHubs, it is necessary to strengthen the communication within the consortium. Therefore, the partners are an important target audience since they will be the ones spreading the word about the project in their own area and to their related network. Three points are worth being considered:

- **Internal communication.** SmartAgriHubs has a SharePoint cloud platform dedicated to store internal communication documents. At the beginning, partners of the consortium will be provided with the essential communication tools needed to get to know the project and to identify themselves as part of it. They will use such tools in their own communications on behalf of SAH.

- **WP cooperation**. Cooperation among partners is foreseen when collaborating among WPs. Along the various phases and ecosystem levels, WP1 will cooperate with all WPs. For instance, WP1 and WP2 will collaborate to carry out a regional stakeholder analysis tackling the extent of each DIHs network. WP1 will also work in close collaboration with WP4 to identify the needs for support, organise trainings, and develop communication materials. Furthermore, WP1 will coordinate with WP5 to develop the capacities of CCs.

- **The role of Regional Clusters.** RCs constitute the key communication and dissemination intermediary between WP1 and DIHs. Through the RCs, WP1 will provide the DIHs with the right tools to develop strategies, activities and plans to establish regional collaboration and to reach their target audiences. Regional Clusters are the key link to the territory, connecting local and regional layers and informing the rest of the partners on the situation on the ground. They are pivotal in facilitating the information flow between DIHs, CCs, FIEs and the rest of the targeted audience.

Key messages to promote the partners of the Consortium

- SmartAgriHubs' vast & extensive consortium (varying from research institutions, SMEs, public institutions and private companies) is a unique branding quality;

- Regional Clusters are central nodes to the communication activities in the territory;

- Work packages are the main motors of the flow of information in the consortium.

3.2 DIGITAL INNOVATION HUBS

Digital Innovation Hubs are at the core of SmartAgriHubs' communication and dissemination activities. They have a very important role in establishing and pursuing communication with all local and regional stakeholders, such as IEs, CCs, business partners, technology providers, research institutes, press, general public, farming communities, scientific communities, local and regional governments, and so on. Being at the heart of the innovation chain, they will be able to provide feedback to WP1 through RCs on what is needed or missing within the project and what is successful.

Key messages to promote Agritech Digital Innovation Hubs

- Digital Innovation Hubs are at the heart of SmartAgriHubs and form a local one-stop-shop for digital innovation in a region;

- The project starts off with group of 140 DIHs spread across Europe;

- SmartAgriHubs aspires to set-up another 260 similar entities so that there will be a DIH in the proximity of each farmer and other stakeholders;

DIHs are the driving force behind unleashing the digital potential in each territory. DIHs encompass the following key target groups.

Knowledge institutions/research community

Research Institutes mostly represent the "incubators" of new technologies; hence they constitute the perfect environment around which DIHs can successfully develop. Being the catalyst and the forerunner of change, the research community in the agri-tech sector should already be quite aware of the need to strengthen the web of Agri DIHs around Europe. It will then serve as a solid ally to attract those target groups which are generally more reluctant to innovation. WP1 will show its support by providing DIHs the means through which to spread the information within their network.

Key messages to institutions/research community

- SmartAgriHubs fosters a network of agricultural DIHs that are orchestrators of innovation experiments that will require research as input;
- SmartAgriHubs as a network will form the basis for strategic research agenda's for the digital transformation of the agri-food sector;
- Scientific publications are an influential part of SmartAgriHubs' communication activities and serve as evidence for the future public affairs actions of the project.

Business partners (SMEs, start-ups and mid-caps)

Providing relevant business models is key to scale up the digitisation of agriculture. Addressing business partners in a way that can highlight the multifaceted added value of being part of a DIH in the SmartAgriHubs network will be the strategy used in approaching such stakeholders. We can distinguish two main groups of business partners: technology providers and financial service providers.

Technology providers

Technology and innovation are at the base of the development of DIHs. Technology providers need to be aware of the advantages they would enjoy by joining a DIH, ranging from financial support to practical help in proposal writing, partner matching and so on. WP1 and RCs will work to intercept their interests and guide them towards DIHs.

Key messages to technology providers

- DIHs can help to develop ideas, scale-up and expand your market by setting-up and facilitating innovation experiments;
- Close cooperation between business partners and DIHs, develop tailored made support for technology innovation;
- Sharing of robust experience and knowledge embedded in the services provided by the DIHs across Europe;
- SmartAgriHubs provides useful, practical information and support at local and regional level through the RCs;

Financial service providers

Technologies and Innovation Experiments could never flourish without the appropriate financial support. There is often a misalignment between private and public funding, that hinders brilliant and promising ideas from finding appropriate financial means for their development. Communication activities aim at bridging the existing gap and attracting Financial Service Providers towards DIHs.

Key messages to financial service providers

- The DIHs in SmartAgriHubs are a breeding ground for innovation experiments with technology providers that need financing;
- DIHs and CCs can support in technology and market assessments;
- SmartAgriHubs' ecosystem forms the gateway to agritech innovations in Europe;
- SmartAgriHubs is a solid project with reliable partners and front-runner initiatives;
- Large-scale uptake of digital solutions in the agritech sectors is possible by closing the gap between private investors and public funding.

End-users/farming community

The growth and expansion of the European network of DIHs should be demand-driven by end-users. Therefore, targeting their interests is of primary importance for WP1. Again, RCs will play an essential role in conveying the key messages to the local stakeholders, being individual farmers or local farmers' associations. At a wider scale, WP1 can weave the web through European Agriculture associations (e.g. CEMA, IFOAM-EU, Copa-Cogeca) and keep the attention high among their members. The farming community is represented by:

- individual farmers;
- farmer advisors;
- farmers' associations (EU and regional/local);
- cooperatives.

Key messages to end-users/farming community

- We place the farming community first and value their opinions;
- SmartAgriHubs works with trustworthy and reliable DIHs;
- We will link the farming community with the innovation actors;
- Farmers are the main users of agricultural innovations; therefore, their contribution is vital towards the transformation of the sector into a high-tech industry;
- DIHs will provide the right tools to engage farmers in the co-creation of IEs in their territories.

3.3 COMPETENCES CENTRES

Competences centres (CCs) form the backbone of SmartAgriHubs. They provide technical expertise and infrastructure (e.g. scientific and technical facilities) to realise Innovation Experiments. SmartAgriHubs aims at expanding the network of CCs within and outside the agricultural sector, in order to promote cross-fertilisation and to stimulate even more

knowledge exchange and the development of out-of-the box innovation ideas. Communication and dissemination activities will therefore address the diversity of CCs always through RCs, and in cooperation with WP5.

Key messages to Competences Centres

- Competences Centres are intertwined with DIHs in offering the best solutions for an accelerated development of agritech initiatives;
- The project will increase the number of Competence Centre throughout the project according to the needed technical expertise;
- Through CCs stakeholders will get access to the latest knowledge and information on digital technologies.

3.4 INNOVATION EXPERIMENTS

Innovation Experiments represent a central element to be addressed by WP1 communication and dissemination activities, since they are key to the enlargement of the networks of DIHs. In the first phase, attention will be put on promoting the already identified virtuous examples of IEs, the Flagship Innovation Experiments (FIEs). Later on, WP1 will cooperate with WP2 and focus on the Open Call as the main driver to attract the interest of new IEs.

Key messages to promote FIEs:

- The Flagship Innovation Experiments represent an excellent example of a diverse, innovative and successful application of cutting-edge technologies in agriculture, with the involvement of many stakeholders, including end-users;
- SmartAgriHubs aims at advancing IEs to reach the same maturity stage as the FIEs.

Key messages to (external) IEs:

- SmartAgriHubs has the inclusive vision of enlarging the Pan-European Network of DIH. IEs will be at the forefront of this expansion.
- The project will allocate €6 million and attract up to €30 million to launch Open Calls mainly targeting SMEs, with the goal of involving 70 new Innovation Experiments.

3.5 POLITICAL DECISION-MAKERS

Legislation needs to support innovation and facilitate its development. Although the contact with relevant decision-makers will get tighter at a later stage of the project, it is important to already highlight their relevance as a target audience. In fact, the success of SmartAgriHubs also relies on the outreach it gets by engaging with different levels of governance.

National governments

Involving regional and local governments will be a principal task of RCs and DIHs in their specific areas.

Key messages to National Governments:

- National legislation in EU members is crucial for the easy adoption of IoT solutions;

- SmartAgriHubs is an important player in the field with a strong and well-respected network at the EU level;
- Accomplishments of Flagship Innovation Experiments and DIHs take place in a national member state and enhance its reputation across borders.

Relevant EU decision-makers

Thanks to its wide European network built on the success of previous projects such as IoF2020, SmartAgriHubs already starts with a very good contact base. This web will be kept alive and enlarged along the course of the project, especially in the light of the upcoming European elections which might reshuffle the high-level political scenario.

- European Commission, mainly DG Agri and DG Connect;
- European Parliament (Agri Committee and Digital Committee);
- Council of the European Union;
- Permanent Representations of the EU Member States;
- Other relevant EU bodies.

Key messages to EU decision-makers

- The EU institutions work together to boost and facilitate the uptake of innovative solutions in Europe;
- SmartAgriHubs is a Flagship project for the adoption of ICT solutions in agriculture in Europe;
- The project inspires a true EU spirit fostering cooperation and digital synergies among multi-level stakeholders across 28 Member states and 5 non-EU countries;
- SmartAgriHubs is the network of renowned and mixed experts from all fields and sectors that can shape the future agricultural policy and drive the uptake of digital innovation in Europe.

3.6 INTEREST ORGANISATIONS AND NGOS

SmartAgriHubs carries on commitments and claims strictly related to the environment, economy and society. In fact, the ultimate goal of the project is to enlarge the European network of agritech innovators to respond to agricultural challenges, including energy efficiency, productivity, climate change, the role of farmers in the supply chain, and so on. Such claims can perfectly match those of targeted NGOs and interest organisations. Their support would help SmartAgriHubs to widen its outreach beyond sector-specific stakeholders, thereby giving the project a global voice and stand.

Key messages to Interest organisations and NGOs

- Sustainability is one of the key drivers of the project;
- SmartAgriHubs is a multifaceted project supporting digital transformation, and amongst other goals facilitates adequate food for future generations, while also fostering both sustainable production and fair prices for the farmers' community;

- Any climate related disturbance is a factor to be considered in the development of new technologies in the livestock, arable, aquaculture, vegetables and fruits sectors to provide solutions to any food shortages.

Press

Public relations are pivotal for dissemination purposes, and the press represents a privileged stakeholder to target. The "press" means every source of news which is not directly related to the project and its members, and which broadcasts news through all different channels. For outreach reasons, online press will be prioritised over other mediums like TV, radio or paper. The press does not necessarily have to come from a recognised newspaper website, but it can be sourced from any website of relevance for the agritech sector, being associations, cooperatives, companies, and so on. WP1 will be in charge of the widespread, overall press relations, while local and regional press contacts will be kept by RCs.

- Press at EU level;
- Press at local level.

Key messages to EU press

- SAH has an extensive network and significant impact on the EU market;
- EU funded project with €20 million to foster the uptake of digital solutions in the agritech sector
- The project will provide results and achievements to revolutionise the agricultural sector;
- SmartAgriHubs will connect the existing dots in the digital innovation related to the agricultural sector in Europe.

3.7 GENERAL PUBLIC

In the light of its inclusive and engaging vision, the last, big part of SmartAgriHubs' target audience is represented by the general public, meaning the audience that is not necessarily related to the previous stakeholder groups and whose interest is not necessarily agritech. An example could be, for instance, consumers, who are affected by agritech innovations but do not experience it in the first place. Reaching this type of target will require the translation of the complex, technical language into a more simple and usable language, suitable for a broader range of people. This can be achieved by using different and interactive communication tools (social media, videos, slogans) as well as by leaning on specific organisations that are used to convey messages to that audience (in this case, for instance, consumer organizations).

Key messages to general public

- SAH will explain technological innovation to the larger audience;
- Vast network with numerous partners anchored at the local level through DIHs and RCs;
- People are more and more engaged and actively participating in shaping policies and co-deciding in matters of common interest for them;

- SmartAgriHubs is accessible at different layers for different stakeholders;
- Results provided in accessible language and without a need for prior savvy technology background;
- Innovation Experiments will happen all over Europe and are an easy entrance point for regular people.

4. PHASE I: SOWING

4.1 WITHIN DIHS

Focus

The aim is to support RCs in building up their communication strategies together with the ones of the DIHs, provide personalised support to those RCs and DIHs that already have a communication strategy in place and help align it to the SAH project.

Key messages

- RCs: Build a coherent communication strategy in tone with the visual identity of SAH and follow the guideline of the project's overall communication strategy;
- DIHs: Use the communication strategy to attract new partners in their hub, and present the advantages of being part of such a pan-European network;
- Partners of the DIHs: Shape their own identity in the SAH community.

Target audience

The RCs and DIHs (and their partners).

4.2 BETWEEN DIHS

Focus

The sowing phase sets the stones for a solid collaboration among the RCs, DIHs and FIEs by making use of online as well as offline communication means. This stage represents the foundation to enlarge the network and generate a flow of exchanges on good practices and innovative results.

Key messages

- Regional Clusters: Provide the environment and framework for such cooperation to take place (e.g. organisation of local events, thematic workshops and joint conferences with other RCs). Building trust among the DIHs in the territory and across regions is a first step to a prosperous web of connections;
- DIHs: Share experiences with other DIHs about the advantages of the SAH community, disseminate the benefits of a multi-level stakeholder network - this connection could take place in the digital market of the Innovation Portal;
- FIEs: Share their experiences and endorse them as a benchmark suitable for widespread adoption, increase exchanges and access to success stories through the Innovation Portal, and act like role-models for newcomer Innovation Experiments;
- Partners in the consortium: Facilitate cooperation at WP level as well as in the territory

Target audience

RCs, Digital Innovation Hubs, FIEs and the Partners in the consortium

4.3 BEYOND SMARTAGRIHUBS

Focus

The visual identity is at the heart of establishing a coherent and consistent image for the whole project.

Key messages

- Towards the European Commission: Position SmartAgriHubs as the new agritech network;
- Towards other relevant networks: Publicise the scope and goal of SAH, find synergies and a common aim for future joint collaborations.

Target audience

- European Commission and other relevant networks, e.g.: IoF2020.

5. PHASE II: FLOWERING

5.1 WITHIN DIHS

Focus

SmartAgriHubs will provide tailor-made training and capacity building for DIHs and FIEs in communication and dissemination activities. At this stage the focus is on improving the capabilities of the different actors in the DIHs and RCs to allow them to communicate effectively about their work and results. Subject to their needs and requirements different packages of training will be designed to ensure all communication skills are covered. This period will coincide with the period of the open calls of the project, and special communication activities will be put in place to highlight access to the financial aid.

Key messages

- Digital Innovation Hubs: Improve flow of information within the hub, providing access to latest knowledge and developments;

- Flagship Innovation Experiments: Activate promotional campaigns to bring communication to the next level;

- Regional Clusters: Develop the trainers program communication wise, ensure RCs receive adequate training to transform them into the messengers in their respective territory. Specific trainings could consist of branding your product/activity, how to write a stakeholder engagement, start a good communication campaign on social media etc.

Target audience

RCs, DIH and their partners and Flagship Innovation Experiments.

5.2 BETWEEN DIHS

Focus

Foster cooperation and encourage a fruitful collaboration among the partners. A special focus should be given to IEs able to share results and exchange lessons. At the same time, continued interaction among DIHs should be cultivated in order to connect and promote good practices around Europe. This phase corresponds to the boom of the Innovation Portal. Seen as a digital market place it will allow for immediate interaction among the users. In this portal, DIHs and their partners will benefit from extensive search tools tailor-made to key words and concepts. The innovation portal will also function as an educative platform where further support will be offered to DIHs and RCs for their communications and dissemination activities.

Key messages

- Innovation Experiments: Storytelling on their results, their challenges, achievements and performances;

- Digital Innovation Hubs: Share success stories and transferable good practices with other Agri DIHs in Europe;
- Partners in the Consortium: Identify best practices and innovative actions.

Target audience

Digital Innovation Hubs and the Partners in the consortium (especially RCs and FIEs).

5.3 BEYOND SMARTAGRIHUBS

Focus

Strengthen the image and perception of SmartAgriHubs among other relevant networks. Attain an easily recognisable image outside the partners of the network and position the project as a reference in the agri-digital sector.

Key messages

- European Commission: Promotion of the ecosystem built with the project;
- Other relevant networks: Foster collaboration activities, and the continuous enlargement of the network and its ecosystem.

Target audience

- European Commission and other relevant networks identified at EU scale, e.g.: IoF2020

6. PHASE III: HARVESTING

6.1 WITHIN DIHS

Focus

Promote and disseminate best practices and successful results of the DIHs, FIEs and IEs at national and regional level.

Key messages

- National/Regional Government: Raising awareness of these innovative actions taking place in their territory and the impact achieved locally;
- General Public: Promotion towards a larger audience on the overall results of the project and main achievements like improved productivity in the agricultural sector, environmental and societal benefits from the digitisation of agriculture and its food chain in Europe.

Target audience

National/Regional Government, and the general public.

6.2 BETWEEN DIHS

Focus

Showcase the synergies created and the collaboration reached among the DIHs. SmartAgriHubs is defined by the ongoing activity of its DIHs and the interconnectivity of its members.

Key messages

- Digital Innovation Hubs: Progress is achieved through the cooperation and sharing of knowledge and experiences. Cross country and interregional cooperation are flourishing and will be maximised to promote the diverse identity of the project;
- Partners in the Consortium: Fortify the brand and the image of SAH network based on concrete accomplishments of the DIHs and FIEs.

Target audience

Digital Innovation Hubs and the Partners in the consortium.

6.3 BEYOND SMARTAGRIHUBS

Activate a and consolidate a network of Agri DIHs is a continuous task. Keeping the branding in line with its purpose and meaningful in the context of future movements in the European market is the main objective. Acknowledged recognition should be achieved at all levels of communication in this phase.

- General public: Endorse the main achievements and the positive impact of agri innovation in the daily lives of the citizens across Europe;
- Decision makers and other relevant stakeholders: Consider SmartAgriHubs as a legitimate interlocutor for agricultural innovations at EU level. Involve the network in the making of the next Agri policy in Europe. Replicate the success of such a network in other non-EU countries with similar conditions.

General public, decision makers and other relevant stakeholders.

Table 1 gives an overview of the three phases and their focus, key messages, target audiences and the instruments used to achieve their aims:

Ecosystem phases	Ecosystem levels	Focus	Key messages	Target audience	Instruments (communication plan)
Phase I - Sowing	*Within DIHs*	Support DIHs in developing or enhancing their own communication strategies	RCs: Build a coherent communication strategy in tone with the visual identity of SAH; DIHs: Use the communication strategy to attract new partners in their hub; Partners of the DIHs: Shape their own identity in the SAH community.	Partners in DIHs	Visual identity; Comm toolbox
	Between DIH	Build a basis for collaboration between the DIHs, both online (innovation portal) and offline (kick-off event)	RCs: Provide the environment and framework for a fruitful cooperation. Build trust among the DIHs in the territory and across regions; DIHs: Share experiences with other DIHs about the advantages of the SAH community and the benefits of a multi-level stakeholder network; FIEs: Share their experiences and endorse them as a benchmark suitable for widespread adoption for newcomer Innovation Experiments; Partners in the consortium: Facilitate cooperation at WP level as well as in the territory	DIHs; Partners of the consortium	Kick-off event; Newsletter; Innovation Portal; Comm toolbox
	Beyond SmartAgriHubs	Develop a coherent visual identity for the project as a whole	Towards the EC: Position SmartAgriHubs as the new agritech network; Towards other relevant networks: Publicise the scope and goal of SAH, find synergies and a common aim for future joint collaborations.	EC; relevant networks	Visual Identity; Kick-off event; Newsletter; Social media
Phase II - Flowering	*Within DIHs*	Support capacity building of DIHs (WP4) with trainings and how-to documents.	DIHs: Improve flow of information within the hub, providing access to latest knowledge and developments; FIEs: Activate promotional campaigns to bring	Partners in DIHs	Feedback and guidance; Publications

			communication to the next level; RCs: Ensure RCs receive adequate training to transform them into the messengers in their respective territory.		
	Between DIH	Actively share IE results and best practices between DIHs. Stimulate collaboration	IEs: Storytelling on their results, challenges, achievements and performances; DIHs: Share success stories and transferable good practices with other Agri DIHs in Europe; Partners in the Consortium: Identify best practices and innovative actions.	DIHs; Partners of the consortium	Trainings (webinars, online courses); Newsletter; Best practices via innovation portal; Site visits; Publications; Press kit
	Beyond SmartAgriHubs	Expand the reach of the project by connecting to relevant networks.	EC: Promotion of the ecosystem built with the project; Other relevant networks: Foster collaboration activities, and the continuous enlargement of the network and its ecosystem.	EC; relevant networks	Regular event attendance; Newsletter; Website; Social media; Publications; Press kit
Phase III - Harvesting	*Within DIHs*	Support DIHs in disseminating their success stories and best practices at a regional level	National/Regional Government: Raising awareness of innovative actions taking place in the territory and the impact achieved locally; General Public: Promotion towards a larger audience on the overall results of the project and main achievements.	Regional government; General public	Template for final report
	Between DIH	Confirm collaboration between DIHs with a final report and closing event.	DIHs: Cross country and interregional cooperation are flourishing and will be maximised to promote the diverse identity of the project; Partners in the Consortium: Fortify the brand and the image of SAH network based on	DIHs; Partners of the consortium	Newsletter; Best practices via innovation portal; Final report

		concrete accomplishments of the DIHs and FIEs.		
Beyond SmartAgriHubs	Disseminate success stories to a wider audience with a targeted public affairs and media outreach	General public: Endorse the main achievements and the positive impact of agri innovation in the daily lives of the citizens across Europe; Decision makers and other relevant stakeholders: Consider SmartAgriHubs as a legitimate interlocutor for agricultural innovations at EU level.	General public; external stakeholders; decision-makers	Public affairs; Media packages; Scientific publications; Targeted media outreach; Final report; Closing event

Table 1 Overview of the communication and dissemination strategy

7. COMMUNICATION PLAN

7.1 INTRODUCTION

SmartAgriHubs will make use of diverse communication tools that will serve the specific goals, key messages and target groups at each phase and at every ecosystem level. The goal of the communication plan is therefore to provide an exhaustive document to successfully implement the SmartAgriHubs communication and dissemination strategy.

The plan will first briefly present the instruments and then detail their role along the specific phases. An overall table with a recap of the tools, the timeline and the division of responsibilities will follow right after.

Given its flexible and adaptable nature, the communication plan is conceived as a living document, subject to revisions and changes during the entire duration of the project.

7.2 INSTRUMENTS

Communication basics

Every project needs to have a common and recognisable "communication language" that Partners can use to interact among each other as well as to externally communicate about the project. WP1 produced a communication toolbox to that purpose with the key instruments that build up the SmartAgriHubs' identity. These elements are the foundation of all the following online and offline communication tools developed within SmartAgriHubs.

Online communication tools

The communication of a multi-layered and geographically spread project such as SmartAgriHubs relies heavily on the use of online communication tools. Web-based channels and other instruments favour a faster and a more efficient dissemination of information while allowing the creation of a stronger, more interconnected network.

Offline communication tools

Alongside online communication, SmartAgriHubs needs a series of basic offline communication material to be shown during events or every time the project needs to be presented in a face-to-face meeting.

Events

The creation of networks and fruitful relationships also encompasses face-to-face encounters, which allow a direct exchange of knowledge and expertise. In this regard, the organisation of and participation in events represent a great opportunity to enhance SmartAgriHubs' visibility. Events will initially serve as moments to forge and strengthen the partnership within the consortium and then they will progressively turn into key opportunities to reach out to external stakeholders, to showcase results and to expand the network, both at the EU and regional level.

Press

External communication will be favoured also by press relations. The press is the vehicle through which to reach key targeted stakeholders as well as the general public. A rich and diverse press database will be created to store relevant contacts that can be useful for dissemination activities, event organisation, and so on. In addition to the EU database of contacts held by WP1, every Regional Cluster will create its own directory of local/regional media and press network.

Public affairs activities

The ecosystem building relies on an intertwined web of contacts, network and exchange with the targeted audience. To pursue this goal, public affairs becomes essential to establish a strong and long-lasting relationship with relevant interest groups while working to intensify the position of agri-tech in Europe.

WP1 will focus its lobby activity in the final phase of the project, using results as tangible evidences to align with significant decision-makers. However, softer activities can also be foreseen at the beginning of the project, to initially promote SmartAgriHubs among relevant EU personalities.

Reporting

Reporting is important to keep track of the progress of the project. WP1 will produce two periodic reports and one final report. The content of the reports will tackle, among others, the development of communication and dissemination activities.

Scientific Publications

As results will start to arrive, it will be necessary to give them the right outreach in all ways possible, including through scientific publications. WP1 will of course not be primarily in charge of the content, but it will make sure to provide a good dissemination through different channels.

Site visits

Site visits for end-users will constitute an important part of the implementation plan at a later stage in the project. It will be the opportunity for our main target audience to experience innovation and for DIHs to test and have an idea of the perception end-users have of such technologies.

7.3 PHASE I: SOWING

The instruments and channels used in the sowing phase will fulfil the primary goal of building up the basis for a solid communication structure of the project. The tools produced will constitute the skeleton through which future communication activities will unfold.

Visual Identity

WP1's first communication action and deliverable has been the development of the SmartAgriHubs visual identity. The visual identity package consists of:

Logo:

The logo is the symbol of the project, the image that should unite all Partners of SmartAgriHubs. It visually describes the growth of smart and innovative ideas in agriculture, facilitated and promoted by the connection among DIHs.

Regional Cluster Logo:
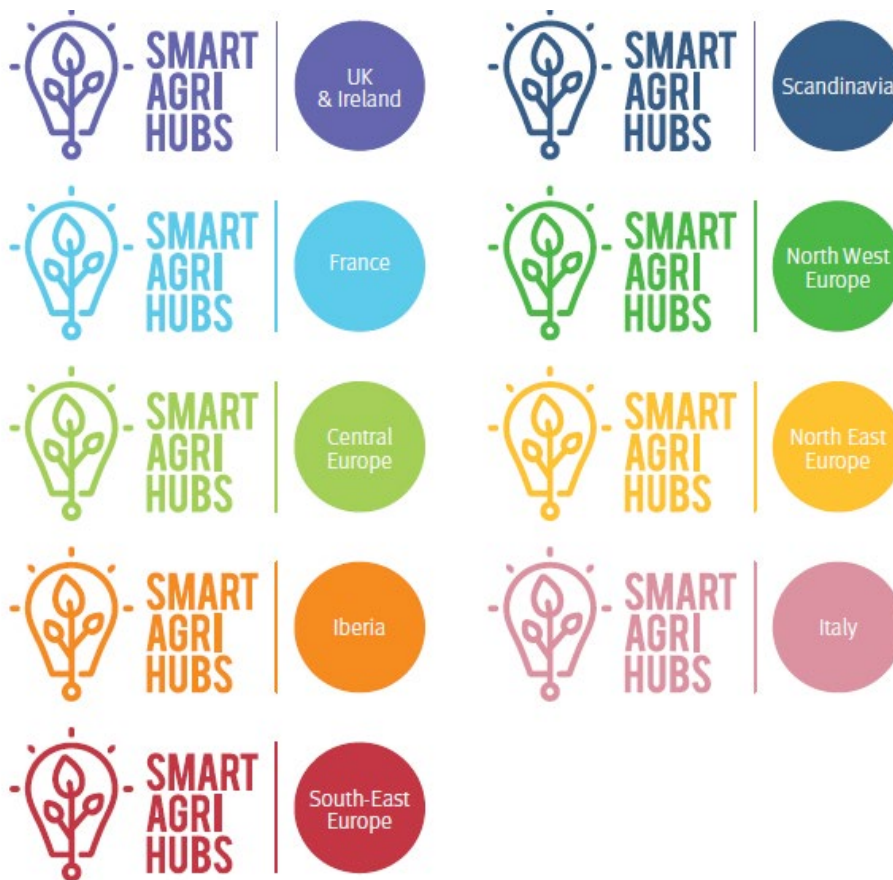
On the same line as the main logo, RCs logos have been designed along a series of colour schemes, to distinguish them from one another. RCs are required to use their corresponding logo in every online and offline communication activity performed within and on behalf of SmartAgriHubs.

Social media banners

SmartAgriHubs' social media banners will be inserted in all the project's online platforms.
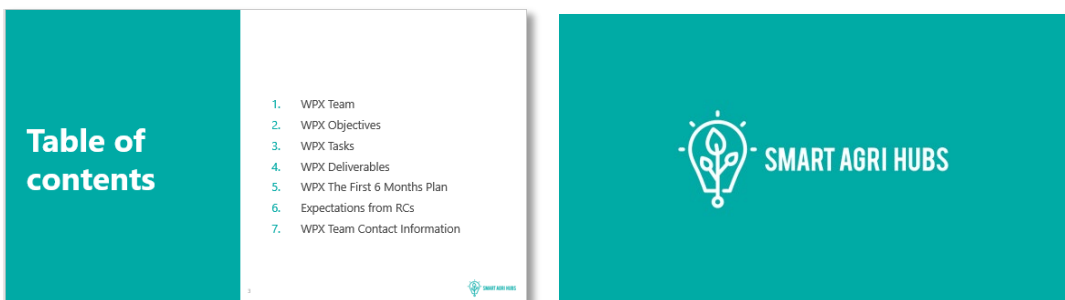
Templates

Templates for PowerPoint presentations, minutes, reports and deliverables were designed and submitted within the Visual Identity Package. The templates allow all Partners to have a uniform way of reporting and presenting written documents on behalf of SmartAgriHubs.
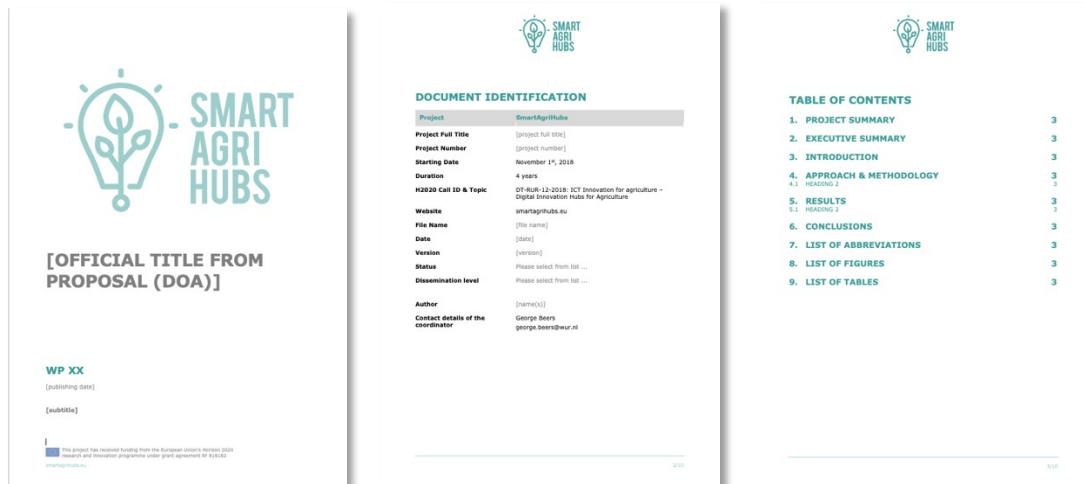
Templates for Minutes and Report:

Templates for PowerPoints presentations:
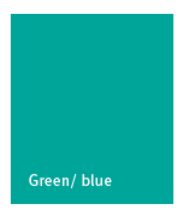
Template WP Deliverables:

Visual Style Guide

The indications on the use of infographics and templates have been merged in the Visual Style Guide document, provided to all Partners and accessible on the internal cloud platform.

The Visual Style Guide contains a special section on the tone of voice, describing the rules that apply in any written communication performed on behalf of SmartAgriHubs. Employing a common, appropriate language contributes to further consolidate the image of the project.

Colour palette:

Illustrative elements:

Infographics:

SmartAgriHubs revolves around several concepts that can be difficult to grasp. Infographics provide a more visual and direct way of describing and illustrating those concepts. They also help to simplify the understanding of their meaning and to clarify the important role such concepts play in the project.

The icons of the five sectors:

| Aquaculture | Arable Farming | Livestock | Fruits | Vegetables |

The icons representing the Work Packages:

| Ecosystem Building | Network Expansion by Open Call | Monitoring and Evaluation of IEs | DIH Capacity Building and Monitoring | Competence Centers | Project Management |
| Work Package #1 | Work Package #2 | Work Package #3 | Work Package #4 | Work Package #5 | Work Package #6 |

Events

Kick-off event banner:

WP1 is in charge of organising the SmartAgriHubs kick-off event, which will take place in Prague on March 4-5-6, 2019. The goal of the event is to provide the first physical meeting of the whole consortium, and to let attendees discover all the different aspects of this varied project, focusing on the main actors and sectors.

RCs and FIEs will have the chance to showcase their innovations during an exhibition which will be carried out throughout the conference. They will also have dedicated sessions within the conference program. Moreover, participants will have the chance to do a "tour" of a DIH, to find out the importance it plays for the disclosure of innovation and why it is a core element of SAH. In addition, CCs will be tackled during parallel sessions in which attendees will actively participate.

The last day of the SAH event coincides with a Synergy day in cooperation with IoF2020. The day encompasses joint sessions and a site visit to a demo farm nearby Prague. It is essential to establish and highlight the strict link existing between the two projects, as SAH will be the natural continuation of IoF2020. The IoF2020 Partner event will then take over on the 7th and 8th March.

Event monitoring

Participation in events is essential to spread out the SmartAgriHubs' word and gain more visibility. However, given the big extension of the project, monitoring and tracking events becomes a preliminary action that will be set up during the Sowing phase and regularly carried out along the whole project. Following the double level of implementation of SAH, it is important to distinguish between a direct monitoring carried out by WP1 at a European level, and an indirect monitoring carried out by RCs in their own regional area. There are indeed events of wider appeal, such as the IoT Week, where SmartAgriHubs will be represented. WP1 will provide RCs with a clear format on how to report back on events.

RCs events and meetings

Regional Clusters will focus on building up trust and cooperation with DIHs, CCs and FIEs in their area by, amongst other actions, arranging meetings where they will initially introduce the project and involve the hubs and experiments. RCs will keep this constant relationship alive throughout the lifespan of the whole project.

Offline communication tools

Posters

Posters are quick and visual tools to give a first impression of the project as well as of the RCs, DIHs and FIEs. Posters can vary in size and they are generally placed where a maximum degree of visibility/exposure is expected.

The exhibition of the kick-off event is conceived around the visual image of the Regional Clusters and their components. For this purpose, a collection of 54 posters were designed (6 per each cluster) to explain the structure of the RCs, how many affiliated FIEs, CCs and DIHs correspond to those territories, as well as their motivation and goals in the project.

Example poster of a Regional Cluster:

Example poster of FIEs:
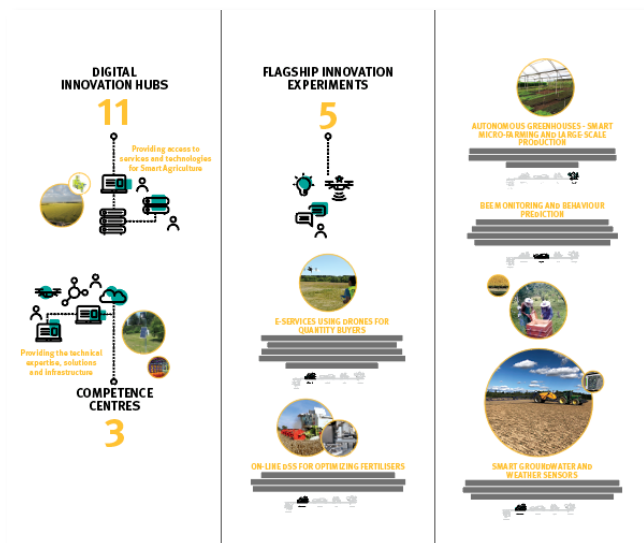
Business cards

Business cards serve as the first impression of our brand or project. SmartAgriHubs is relies heavily on enlarging the network and capitalising on possible encounters that can lead to a potential partner or a future collaboration. Therefore, business cards act as effective networking tools for partners and will serve as a first tangible information medium in the exchange with others. This option will be opened to all partners of the consortium.

Example Business cards:

Roll-ups

Roll-ups are an important visual tool for display at seminars, conferences, workshops or similar events. The design and content of the roll-ups will be aligned to the focus of every phase (sowing, flowering and harvesting). Roll-ups will showcase general information on the project, members and specialised themes and sectors. These will fit with the visual identity style and will also reflect the style of the website.

An initial set of 4 roll-ups have been developed for the kick-off event to reveal the image of the project at its launch. Two of these roll-ups will focus on the SAH logo and the RCs logo and the two others are dedicated to pictures related to the digitisation of the agricultural sector. Other information like website and social media channels of the project will also be displayed.

Example SAH Roll-ups:
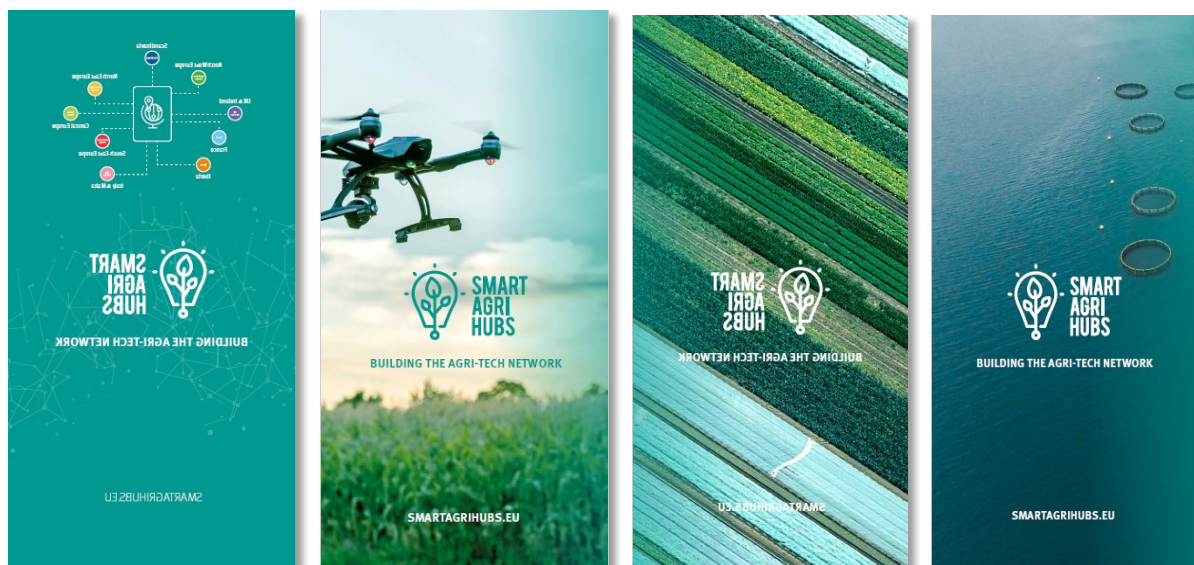
Brochure

The brochures represent the main source of information on paper about SmartAgriHubs, hence they will be of great importance during events or presentations. During the sowing phase, the brochure will mainly have an informative and explanatory purpose - as a written support to explain the project. Upon request, these brochures could be translated in the languages of the RCs. RCs are in charge of assessing this need in their territories and ensure they are promoted in the local language.

Example brochure:
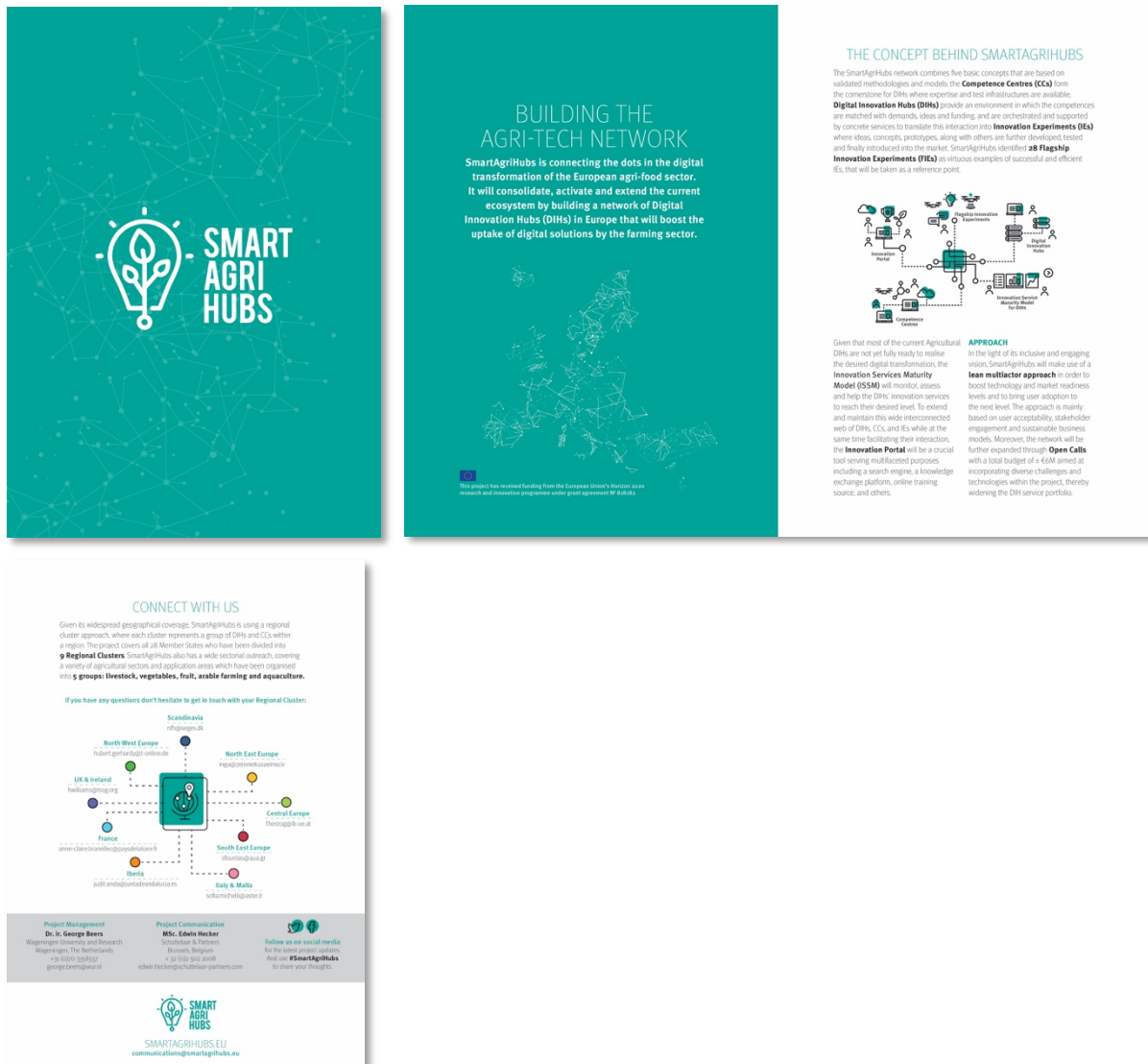
Flyers

Flyers condense the project's goals, messages and actions into a few, impactful words and infographics. They are meant for a quick and superficial read through, therefore they need to be able to trigger the reader's curiosity in a few instants. For this reason, flyers are designed in an eye-catching manner. Flyers will be produced for RCs, FIEs and the five thematic sectors.

Online communication tools

Website

An initial version of the SmartAgriHubs website is foreseen by the end of M03

In order to have a first landing page for those users who might be already interested in the project, WP1 elaborated a basic webpage that shows a clock counting down the days until the official launch of the website. Relevant contact details of Regional Clusters are included in the page, together with links to the project's main social media outlets.

Example website:
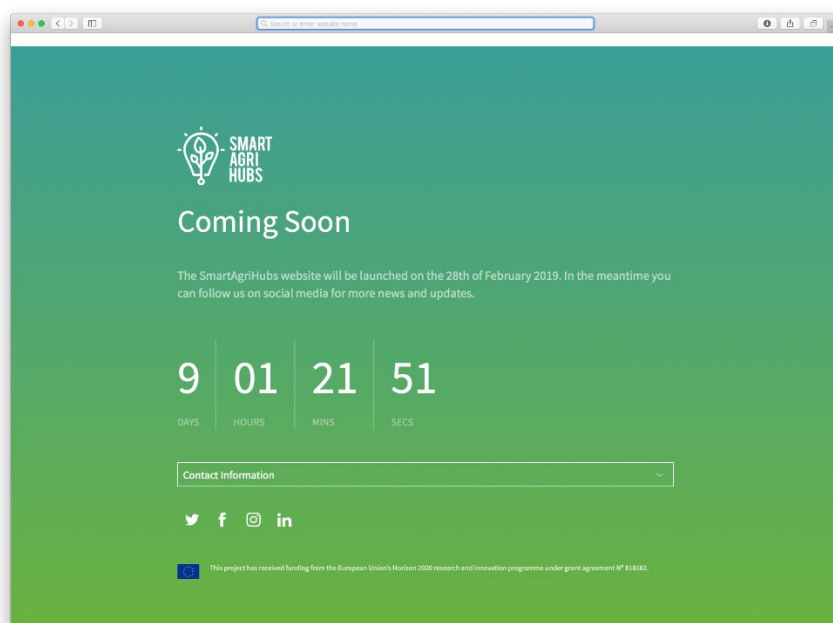
The above-mentioned webpage will then be replaced by a temporary website, which will be officially launched during the kick-off event in Prague. The website will feature:

- An overall description of the project, titled "About us";
- A section dedicated to the 5 sectors;
- A section dedicated to Regional Clusters –including the description of all nine RCs;
- A section dedicated to Innovation Experiments – including the description of all 28 FIEs;
- A section dedicated to Digital Innovation Hubs in the form of catalogues, which will be enlarged as the network keeps on growing;
- A section dedicated to news and events;
- A section dedicated to how to get in touch with the project (including the possibility of joining the newsletter mailing list);
- A section dedicated to the deliverables.

Innovation Portal

The Innovation Portal is at the core of WP1's Ecosystem Building activities, since it is the online means that will allow the creation of the European network of DIHs. This web-based interactive platform will be used for partner search, matchmaking, communication, etc. It will give visibility to the Innovation Experiments across Europe, provide trainings and share best practices, tools and guidelines. It will also serve as a digital market place to foster interactions and knowledge sharing between the hubs. It is up to all WPs to encourage DIHs, CCs and IEs to actively join the Portal to find and exchange services, innovative approaches, tools, experiences and activities.

WP1 will deliver the Innovation Portal by the end of the Sowing phase (M09). The SmartAgriHubs temporary website previously mentioned will naturally become a part of it.

Social media platforms

SmartAgriHubs' social media platforms are the following: Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook. Each platform appeals to a different type of target audience and conveys different messages. WP1 elaborated a social media strategy that focuses on the use of these tools (see Annex II).

Newsletter

The quarterly newsletter will be a useful tool to inform the target audience about the status and the achievements of the project in a tailored manner. It will be issued in the form of a highly interactive, engaging and user-friendly digital magazine. It is an essential instrument for dissemination along the different phases and ecosystem levels. Contributions for the content will rely on the partners of the consortium and especially the RCs, who are "the ears and eyes of the project on the ground". The newsletter will be available on the website and also distributed via mail chimp to the complete SAH database. The SAH newsletter could be translated into a local language if desired by a Regional Cluster, although that would be at the partner's own cost.

A special edition will be dedicated to the kick-off event and will contain insights, interviews, lessons and the conclusion from the launch event.

Promotional videos

Online animation content is extremely important to convey SmartAgriHubs' key messages in a more dynamic and attractive way. WP1 will be responsible for the production of promotional pictures and videos whose content and aim will change along the different phases and ecosystem levels. During the first months, the online content will be mainly aimed at creating a sense of belonging among the Partners – e.g. the welcome cards for Partners that WP1 produced for New Years. Such online material will be spread through the main SAH online channels (social media platforms, the newsletter, etc). Face-to-face encounters will be the occasion to produce some more promotional content, since all the Partners will be present. At the kick-off event in Prague, WP1 plans to produce a total amount of 12 videos, entailing the following:

- 9 video-interviews with Regional Clusters. One representative of each RC will present the main features of the cluster in a 1-minute video. The spoken language

of the video will be English, but subtitles in the languages of the area will be foreseen to better promote the RC at a local level;

- One general video about the SAH event, which will take some bits and pieces of the activities carried out during the plenaries, parallel sessions and the exhibition;

- One video on the Synergy day, which will focus on the knowledge exchange between SmartAgriHubs and IoF2020, highlighting the close connection existing between the two projects;

- One video dedicated to the #IAmPartOfSAH campaign. The idea is to produce a video in which several Partners will say in their native language "I am part of SmartAgriHubs". The video will then be disseminated through our social media networks. The goal is to show the diversity of the consortium but at the same time gathering everybody within the one big "family" of SmartAgriHubs.

All the videos will be uploaded on the SmartAgriHubs Vimeo account.

Press

Media database and monitoring

Prior to any activity concerning the press, a thorough media database will be built. It will allow for the regular monitoring of news items concerning the project and the agri-tech sector in general in Europe. WP1 will take care of the EU media monitoring, while RCs will create a region-specific list of relevant media contacts that they will monitor. Relevant news will be subsequently posted on the SAH website.

A media database was initiated in the first month of the project. This will be regularly updated and improved during the whole duration of the project. The media database consists of: general newspapers, agri-food focused magazines, specialised agritech online news outlets, EU based television and radio. The current list includes 683 contacts.

Regional Clusters are also starting to build their local media contacts. These will be aligned at a later stage with the database held by WP1, and will be in compliance with the new GDPR policy.

Press releases

Press releases will be produced in case a significant news item needs to reach the media. A first press release has been sent to relevant media contacts at the very beginning of the project to inform the audience of the start of SmartAgriHubs; a second one is foreseen right before the kick-off event in Prague. If necessary, RCs will be in charge of the translation and dissemination within their geographical area.

Media package or press kit

A press kit is a set of communication and promotional materials that aims to explain SAH in a nutshell and which is disseminated to members of the EU media for promotional use. If necessary, the press kit could be translated by the RCs for the local media contacts. This package includes the following:

- Project background information including partners of the consortium and biographies of the WP leaders;

- SAH general ppt;
- SAH Brochure;
- Past press coverage including past press releases.

Example PowerPoint:
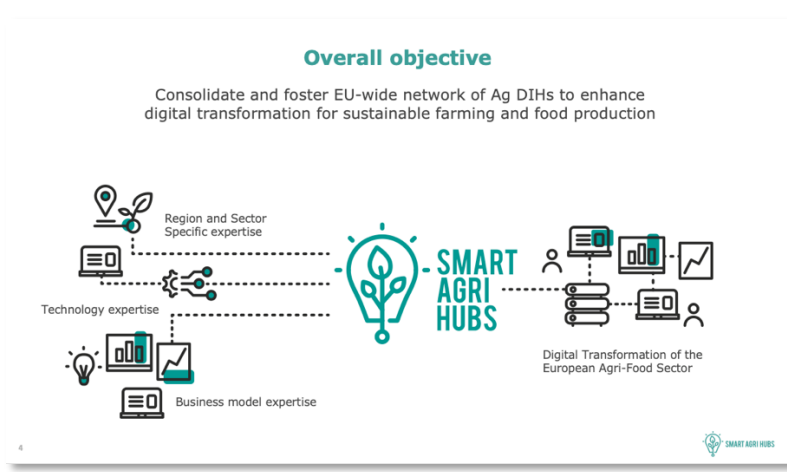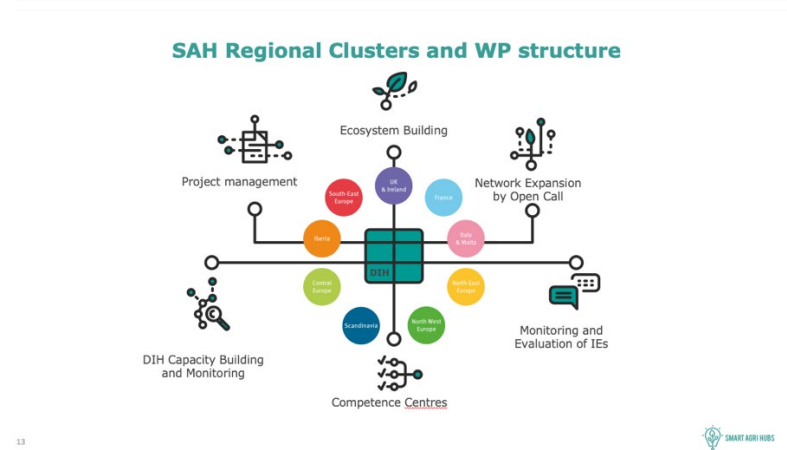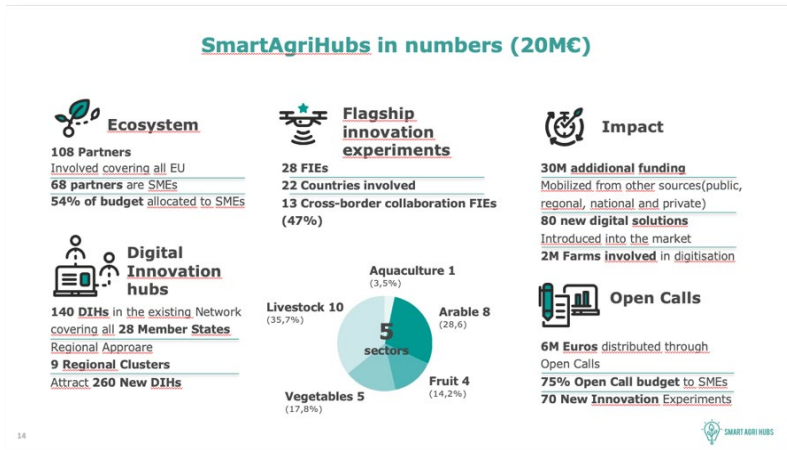
- Photos or images of the visual identity of project as well as photo galleries from past SAH events
- Media contact information of the project

7.4 PHASE II: FLOWERING

Scientific publications

SmartAgriHubs' results will also find their space in scientific publications. WP1 will be in charge of the dissemination of such knowledge to mainstream channels, which will also be subject to a reformulation of the main concepts into a widely understandable and suitable language.

Online communication tools

E-learning tools and best practices

In the Flowering phase, the Innovation Portal will further expand, enlarging the DIH database and starting to include **e-learning tools** such as trainings, webinars and online courses, tailored to the needs of DIHs to support them in their development. WP1 will oversee the creation and the smooth functioning of such tools, while the content will be provided by the other WPs.

Innovation Portal

The Innovation Portal serve as a tool to update our stakeholders but also any other users accessing it, on a general level about the project and specifically the DIHs, FIEs and their momentum in the space.

Newsletter

Regional Clusters, together with their DIHs and FIEs are at the core of the project. During this phase, they will be focusing on evolving, enlarging and fertilising the network with activities and experiments. In essence, they will produce an enormous volume of information that would need to be translated to the different target audiences. The newsletter will help with the categorisation of this information and present it separately to the different readers. This will include RCs featured editions, best practices around DIHs, updates relevant to each of the 5 sectors,and accomplishments as well as updates and journalistic reportages on the FIEs.

Press

All-important achievements and project's milestones will also be announced through press releases during the lifetime of the project. In this period, press releases will include information on specific deliverable accomplishments, SAH events, key results of the RCs, FIEs and DIHs important announcements.

Events

Event monitoring will be conducted at the EU level by WP1 as well as at the Regional Cluster level and will cover events in the 28 EU member states and the other five non-EU member states partners in the consortium (Switzerland, Israel, Serbia, Norway and Turkey). The monthly monitoring is intended for the partners of the consortium and can be shared with other relevant stakeholders in the SAH database like DIHs, CCs and IEs.

Participation in events

During the Flowering phase, the whole SAH consortium will gather in two yearly stakeholders' events, thereby also opening the door to external and potentially interested actors.

Apart from the yearly events, participation in relevant conferences will be guaranteed by both RCs and WP1. These events will be publicised on the website and the monthly monitoring.

Site visits

Site visits will be organized in every RCs, to give the opportunity to FIEs to showcase their technologies to end-users. Regional Clusters will be responsible to identify possible participants and connect them to their respective FIEs.

7.5 PHASE III: HARVESTING

Final report

At M18 and M36 WP1 will produce two progress reports. A final outreach report is foreseen by M48, and will tackle the evolution of the collaboration within and between the Hubs, the results and achievements of the Innovation Experiments and will also give recommendation on how to further expand the network of DIHs, and advice for European and national policy-makers.

Public Affairs

Public Affairs will become one of the central tools of the Harvesting Phase, since the main goal will be to promote SmartAgriHubs' achievements. WP1 will organise stakeholder events at the EU level and the RC level), and with other relevant actors, decision-makers and end-users.

Targeted media outreach

By virtue of its vast and diverse network SmartAgriHubs has a great potential to make the news on a regular basis, and to be frequently covered by the EU press or at a national/local level. In this phase, however, press coverage will evolve around key reporters, and the long-established relationships since the beginning of the project. Selected reporters and journalists will be engaged in online campaigns and handed priority for on-site reportages and interviews. At the same time, SAH will ensure coverage in certain identified magazines at the EU level: Politico, AGRI Facts, EIP-AGRI, with opinion articles, position papers and lengthy interviews with relevant partners of the consortium, etc.

Media packages

Simultaneously, the communication tools must facilitate a real cooperation among the existing DIHs for them to live on and thrive in the longer term, even after the project has ended. To this end a selection of media packages will be available for download on the Innovation Portal.

Closing event

The closing event will mark the final chapter of the SmartAgriHubs adventure. By then, DIHs will be deeply developed across Europe, and the original network will be wider and hopefully in good cooperation. WP1 will take care of the organisation and management of the event, just like the initial kick-off event.

Online communication tools

Newsletter

In this phase the content of the newsletter will focus on outstanding results and project achievements that could be translated into specific policy recommendations to ensure a successful uptake of the IoT in agriculture. It will feature remarkable DIHs and the added value of the SAH network.

Innovation Portal (best practices)

The Innovation Portal is a living mechanism and will be constantly updated with latest developments. At this stage it will provide comprehensive results from the DIHs across Europe with a considerable number of good practices easy to transfer to other territories. In addition, the innovation portal will contain a wide variety of video testimonial from FIEs and DIHs and their partners covering all the 5 sectors of SmartAgriHubs.

7.6 TIMELINE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Phase	Tool	Delivery date	Responsible	Contribution from RCs	Contribution from other WPs
Sowing M01-M09	*Visual Identity*	M02	S&P		
	Kick-off event	M02	S&P WUR	Yes	Yes (all WPs)
	Posters Brochure Leaflet		S&P		Yes
	-Website -Innovation Portal	M03 M09	S&P	Yes	Yes
	Social Media Platforms	ongoing	S&P	Yes	
	Newsletter	Quarterly			
	Promotional videos	ongoing	S&P	Yes	
	-Media Database -Press releases -Press monitoring	ongoing 2 monthly	S&P and RCs S&P	Yes	
Flowering M06-M36	*Scientific publications*		Other WP for content, S&P for dissemination in regular channels		Yes (all WPs)
	e-learning tools and best practices		S&P for creation and running, other WPs for content	Yes	Yes (for content)
	Newsletter	Quarterly	S&P	Yes	
	Social media Platforms	ongoing	S&P	Yes	

	-Media Database *-Press releases* *-Press monitoring*	ongoing monthly	S&P and RCs S&P	Yes	
	Site visits		RCs	Yes	
	-Event monitoring *-Participation in events*	Ongoing	S&P RCs	Yes	
Harvesting M24-M48	*Reports*	#1 : M18 #2: M36 #3 (Final): M48	S&P		
	Public Affairs				
	Closing event				
	Newsletter				
	Social media platforms	ongoing	S&P	Yes	
	Media packages				
	Innovation Portal				

Table 2 Overview of the communication plan

7.7 MONITORING

To make sure that the communication plan matches the goals and objectives of the strategy, a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were established. The indicators could be divided in qualitative and quantitative criteria.

QUANTITATIVE

These indicators will reflect the amount/number/percentage of reached target. For example, analytics will be provided for every newsletter, specific products and sections of the Innovation Portal, social media platforms engagement, number of participants to online e-learning tools, number of participants to organised events and so on. Cooperation between RCs and FIEs will be assessed by the number of events, workshops and telcos jointly organised.

QUALITATIVE

These indicators will evaluate the level of satisfaction of the target audience reached through the communication activities. For instance, evaluation sheets after organised events, workshops, trainings, but also feedback from the consortium partners on developed communication products (offline and online).

8. SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms are an essential communication tool to maximise the project's dissemination outreach. In fact, the diverse types of platforms represent a prolific space to attain a widespread yet targeted audience. Therefore, the social media strategy represents an essential complementary element of the communication plan, as well as an additional tool to implement the communication strategy.

The following chapters will illustrate and operationalise:

- The *goal*: what do we want to ultimately achieve through social media?
- The *objectives*: what are the short-, medium- and long-term KPIs of SmartAgriHubs' social media activities?
- The *key messages*: what are the general and audience-specific messages that SmartAgriHubs wants to convey through its social media activities?
- The *instruments*: what channels will be used to convey such messages?
- The *target audience*: what types of stakeholders will be targeted in each of the selected channels?
- The *strategy per channel*: what are the key steps to take to realise the above-mentioned aspects?

8.2 GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND KEY MESSAGES

Goal

The overall goal of the social media strategy mirrors that of the communication strategy. It will present the communication and dissemination activities that will be carried out through social networks in a clear and structured way, in order to attract, influence and engage relevant target groups, so as to promote the project and to raise awareness about the topic of the digitisation of the European agri-food sector. Social media platforms are a powerful vehicle to build up the ecosystem network, and they will therefore be at the core of SmartAgriHubs' communication activities throughout the whole duration of the project.

Objectives

The objectives of the SmartAgriHubs' social media strategy focus on:

- Build, increase and maintain an average stakeholders' engagement rate on all active social media channels of 1% throughout the execution of the social media activities as from M4.
- Target a weekly number of new followers on all active social media channels from November 2018 till the project ends.
- Monthly evaluation of the social media engagement in order to monitor if the used social media channels are adequate enough to meet the needs of the RCs, DIHs and FIEs.
- Support RCs and DIHs to engage local target group through their respective social media platforms, using the main SmartAgriHubs channels as point of reference.

Key messages

Having a clear idea of the messages to convey is fundamental for a successful and optimised use of social media.

Overall key message

The essential key concept on which to base the key message is the *inclusiveness*. SmartAgriHubs is an inclusive project in several ways:

- By goal and definition (enlarging the network);
- Geographically (all 28 MS are already represented in the consortium);
- Background-wise (partners represent the main relevant stakeholders connected to the agri-tech sector, and SAH aims at enlarging the consortium);
- Sector-wise (all relevant agricultural sectors are represented in SAH).

SmartAgriHubs as a whole will brand itself through the following overall key message:

SmartAgriHubs aims to digitally transform the European agri-food sector in order to improve its future efficiency and sustainability. By building a strong network of Digital Innovation Hubs throughout Europe, the business sector, research community, and end-users are brought together to generate a wave of bottom up digital innovations.

This sentence encompasses relevant concepts for the project:

- The connection between the digitisation of agriculture and global challenges such as climate change, resource efficiency, social and economic inequalities. The main message that needs to pass is that the digitisation of agriculture and the fruitful use of IoT tools are key to make the sector more sustainable. Therefore, *a more sustainable European agri-food sector inevitably passes through an increase in the application of IoT technologies.*
- The reference to the network as the means to realise the digitisation of European agriculture. The ecosystem is a key concept in SmartAgriHubs, and it needs to be stressed in its communication activities, including on social media. The message here is that

SmartAgriHubs has an inclusive vision, since it strives to create a strong and productive European web of Agri Digital Innovation Hubs. Cross-country cooperation and exchange between relevant stakeholders are the gateway to the establishment of a solid, long-lasting and self-sustainable network.

- The central role played by end-users by stressing the "bottom-up" uptake of innovation. End-users are the most reluctant target group, since they are the ones effectively implementing technologies in their business, while often not having a deep understanding of them. *In SmartAgriHubs, the farming community is not just a passive receiver of innovation, but it is rather an active participant in the uptake of technologies. The Digital Innovation Hub represents an environment in which end-users have a substantial importance in setting the demand for and testing new tools.*

Key messages to target groups

Alongside the main overall message, SmartAgriHubs social media activities will also specifically focus on the target groups identified in the communication strategy.

Each target group requires tailored key messages elaborated according to their role within the project. These stakeholders and their key messages are detailed beneath:

Partners of the consortium: given the widespread geographical extension of SmartAgriHubs, and the big and diverse consortium it entails, the key message to the partners should aim to unify them within the project. This is very important to make a good start in the first period of the project, but also afterwards, to keep the engagement within the consortium high. Focusing on this wide geographical scope and making a connection with the partners can help to forge that sense of belonging which is essential for the successful implementation of such a large project. Again, the inclusive vision should show through the message.

One of the main strengths of SmartAgriHubs is its widespread coverage of all 28 Member States, represented by over 168 Partners. Therefore, Partners personify one of the USP's of the project. Such a heterogeneous yet complementary consortium allowed SmartAgriHubs to start from a very good basis in terms of in-house expertise and outreach potential. As a result, the project strives to achieve ambitious results, relying on the cooperation and engagement of all the Partners.

Social media platforms can help strengthening the relationship within the consortium by supporting "consortium-building" campaigns like the #IAmPartOfSAH ("I am part of SmartAgriHubs") campaign.

Regional Clusters: Regional Clusters differentiate from the rest of the Partners, since the collaboration between WP1 and RCs in the communication and dissemination activities is pivotal to ensure the smooth interaction and exchange of information at the project and local levels.

Following the cluster approach applied by SmartAgriHubs, Regional Clusters are the privileged intermediary between the local stakeholders and the project. They hold a strategic position within the consortium, being the ears and the eyes of the project on the ground. Their social media activity should show this key role.

All RCs are advised to open a separate social media platform to promote their region, using the logo and banner provided by WP1. Posts can be both in English and the language/languages of the region. When communications are done in English on behalf of SmartAgriHubs, they should always incorporate a reference to the main social media channel of the project.

Digital Innovation Hubs: DIHs are a challenging target group since SmartAgriHubs aims at expanding the network also through the creation of new DIHs around Europe. Mentioning the prominent role of DIHs within SAH, also by providing targets and figures, can be a more visual and appealing incentive for them.

> *SmartAgriHubs bases the expansion of the agritech network on the inclusion and development of Digital Innovation Hubs. The project already counts on 140 DIHs, and it aims at attracting 260 more, in order to get to a final number of 400 DIHs spread throughout Europe.*
>
> *At the same time, the wide range of stakeholders within the consortium and the overall outreach that the project can attain at European and Regional level provide a solid and fruitful incentive for DIHs to join and be part of this cutting-edge project.*

Knowledge Institute/Research Community: the main message that should be conveyed is that

> *SmartAgriHubs is a research-oriented project by definition. The innovations developed and tested are generated from research, and DIHs are often started also by research institutes. Research is the first important piece of the puzzle, it is the environment where cutting-edge ideas start, therefore involving other members of the community is of paramount importance.*

Business providers:

IoT technology providers:

> *Technological innovation is the essence of SmartAgriHubs. The ecosystem fostered by the project will provide room for experimenting disrupting ideas and cooperating with other stakeholders. The project will also financially incentivise start-ups through open calls whose funding will be mainly directed to SMEs.*

Financial service providers:

> *The future is digital. Investing in new technologies means investing on a winning asset, which will set the path and the structure of tomorrow's agricultural systems. Aligning public and private funding in an effective and efficient way is one of SmartAgriHubs' main propositions.*

End-users: as previously said, end-users are the main target group to attract given their general reluctance to accept new technologies. In line with the overall main message of SmartAgriHubs, social media can target this audience by focusing on the fact that

> *in SmartAgriHubs, the farming community is not just a passive receiver of innovation, but it is rather an active participant in the uptake of technologies. The Digital Innovation Hub represents an environment in which end-users have a substantial importance in setting the demand for and testing new tools.*

Competences Centres: Cross-sector fertilisation and knowledge exchange should be the main message to send to CCs.

> *In order to stimulate disruptive ideas, diverse perspectives and "contaminations" are needed. SmartAgriHubs sees in Competences Centres the key stakeholder to allow such cross-sector exchange to happen.*

Innovation Experiments: The main message for Innovation Experiments is the opportunity to expand and develop. Initially, the main focus lies on promoting the fact that

> *Flagship Innovation Experiments represent an example of the successful application of agricultural innovation with a high stakeholder engagement.* The FIEs will therefore be set as *points of reference for future Innovation Experiments.*

Later on, the focus will gradually shift towards attracting new IEs, advocating the fact that

> *SmartAgriHubs actively seeks to involve 70 more Innovation Experiments through open calls, providing them with funding and network opportunities.*

NGOs/Interest organisations: Enlarging the scope of the project beyond the mere application of IoT technology in agriculture is important to reach out to specific target groups like NGOs or other interest groups. On social media, SmartAgriHubs could align in topics like sustainability in the agri-food sector, promoting the argumentation that

> A *more sustainable European agri-food sector inevitably passes through an increase in the application of IoT technologies.*

Press:

Social media is extremely beneficial for any PR relations, and this has changed the traditional way of relating with the press. Any piece of information shared can basically be transformed into an article and can be taken by any specialised press right from the social media channels.

Political decision-makers:

- EU decision-makers:

> *The digitalisation of the EU market is on the top of the EU agenda; at the same time, agriculture constitutes an unavoidable part of Europe's economy. SmartAgriHubs aspires to connect the two mutually inclusive fields to generate a wave of technological agricultural innovations that can scale up the European agri-food sector. The EU needs to support those who commit to realising one of the most game-changing transitions in agriculture, for the well-being of all European citizens.*

General public: the key to reach a wider audience for such a specific topic is to find a link or highlight the (indirect) impact that topic has on people's lives, even if it is not straightforward. For agriculture, the connection is easily made through food and eating, which is a universally shared activity (we are all consumers and eaters after all). Therefore,

> *By improving the productivity and management of agricultural commodities*, *innovation in the agri-food sector will bring beneficial side-effects to consumers through high quality yet cost-effective food, enhancing the overall level of food quality in Europe.*

8.3 SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Nowadays, there are diverse social media platforms with various styles, addressing specific target groups. Depending on the platform chosen, the message needs to be formulated in a different way, as to fit the pattern of the social network:
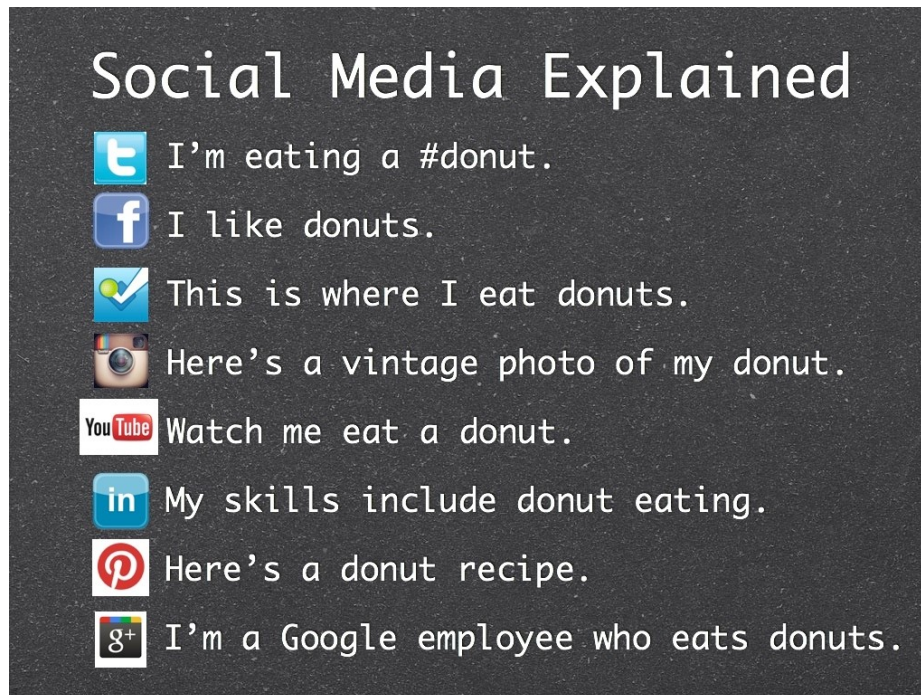

Figure 5 Short explanation of the different social platforms' styles (source: ioF2020)

Taking into consideration SmartAgriHubs' goal, audience and messages, the following social media platforms have been chosen: Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. All accounts have been created, but as for now, only Twitter is active.

Twitter

Due to its dynamic and concise nature, Twitter has been chosen as the first SmartAgriHubs platform. Until the launch of the SAH website, the Twitter account stands as the only direct online point of reference for the project. It will be progressively be joined by the SAH website and the other social media accounts.

All the target groups identified can be found on Twitter, providing a big pool of potential followers. WP1 relies on the active participation of the Partners in promoting and disseminating the SAH Twitter profile.

The key to realise successful engagement activities in Twitter is to:

- Build a targeted range of followers that could be interested or attracted by SmartAgriHubs' topics (Innovation in Agriculture, Digital, Agriculture). As of now, the SmartAgriHubs Twitter account counts on 254 followers;
- Tailor the posts into short yet catchy messages, and making active use of key hashtags #;
- Stimulate the interaction with followers by explicitly referring to them using the @ and by creating content related to their activity (given the wide number of partners in SAH);

- Retweet relevant posts and posts where the SmartAgriHubs profile has been mentioned;
- Align with initiatives that are alike, such as IoF2020, and make sure to keep active involvement with them, by liking and retweeting their content;
- When possible, include pictures to visually support the written texts in the posts;
- Create hashtags that can be unique to the project and its participants, such as the #IAmPartOfSAH campaign.
- Be consistent with all the implementation activities (publishing posts, liking, retweeting or commenting other account's posts).

Figure 6 First Twit of the SmartAgriHubs' account during the kick-off meeting in the Hague (November 2018)

LinkedIn

Alongside a more concise and right-to-the-point network like Twitter, LinkedIn has a sharper professional feel. The target audience found on this network will therefore be quite sector-specific, which on the one side could facilitate the creation of precise posts, but on the other side it might also exclude important target groups such as the general public.

Given its more formal approach, LinkedIn allows a deeper understanding of certain information. LinkedIn posts can be longer, and involve the use of a more accurate and polished language. In this social network, SmartAgriHubs can really show the added value it can bring to the European agri-food industry both in terms of innovation and in expansion of the network.

Strategically, engagement on LinkedIn can be reached through:

- Building up a network of sector-specific followers;
- Engaging by joining relevant hashtags, e.g. #agritech, #digitalagriculture;
- Align with initiatives that are alike, such as IoF2020, and make sure to keep active involvement with them, by liking and sharing their content;

- Adapting the content of the posts to the development stage of the project. For example, for a post that focuses on a brand new FIE, content will not be initially focused on the results, but rather on the technology used, its potential for success, and the stakeholders involved in the experiments, and trying to attract new business partners. As the FIE develops and starts to give remarkable outcomes, the perspective can progressively shift towards end-users by showcasing them the advantage of using such technologies in their business and to be actively part of the innovation process.

Facebook & Instagram

Facebook and Instagram are social media platforms similar in scope but different in style. Facebook is a familiar/informal platform where you can connect with your friends and/or followers in a friendly, more personal way. On the same line, Instagram makes use of visual elements like pictures and videos (Instagram stories) to make a direct and immediate connection with the audience.

The two channels are also connected, meaning that two accounts can be synchronised (especially Instagram towards Facebook) allowing posts to be disseminated at the same time in both platforms.

Moreover, Facebook and Instagram are useful platforms to use in dynamic occasions such as events, presentations, site visits, showcases.

For an optimal use of these platforms, it is necessary to:

- Create a pool of followers not only sector-related, trying to reach out to other audiences as well. Target both companies' and individual profiles;
- Choose a more relaxed, storytelling language (Facebook) using captivating messages to attract a wide range of public (Instagram);
- Convert the more technical aspects of the project into entertaining and appealing topics. For instance, during a site visit, both Instagram and Facebook can be used to visually (photos, Instagram stories with short captions) and verbally (a photo with a longer text on Facebook) explain the technologies adopted, yet it would be necessary to find a more widely accessible perspective on how to explain such innovations to reach a bigger public. The scientific language does not work on such platforms.

8.4 TARGET GROUPS PER CHANNEL

	Twitter	LinkedIn	Facebook	Instagram
Partners of the consortium	X	X	X	X
Digital Innovation Hubs	X	X		
Knowledge institutions/ research community	X	X		
Business partners – IoT technology providers	X	X		
Business partners –	X	X		

Financial service providers				
End-users/ farming community	X	X		
Competences Centres				
Innovation Experiments				
NGOs/ Interest organizations	X	X	X	
Press	X	X		
Political decision-makers	X			
General Public	X		X	X

Table 3 Overview of target groups per social media channel