1. Introduction - Why do we need a Communication Plan?

The European Commission (EC) attaches increasing importance to good communication of its work and activities. This applies equally to the programs and projects that are subsidized with European Funds. Partners directly involved in a project are expected to communicate about it effectively.

Apart from these requirements of the EC, communication is an important tool, which helps to achieve the project's objectives. If well implemented, communication contributes to creation of the proper environment for the project to be successful. Means of communication are providing information, support, influencing behaviour, etc.

This outline shows how the iWATERMAP project partners plan to shape communication around the project. The project partners will also play an important role in the communication about the project in their countries.

1.1 discretion from the application form

We apply triple helix model as a guiding approach in our communication strategy and this model is reflected in following target audiences:

- Authorities: policy makers at all levels, also government organizations that support and manage investments and ERDF and other funding;
- Industry: water management enterprises, labs, business incubators;
- Academia: universities, especially regional universities playing a key role for innovation generation and stimulation in water management area;

The communication strategy involves making use of traditional mediums (press releases, brochures, and posters, etc.), as well as the internet (website, social media, videos).

Important dissemination activities (from conferences and learning sessions) will be recorded in visual and/or audio format, and will be made available to the public, to raise awareness. These will be available from the website, and will help disseminate knowledge on a global scale. There are 2 main conferences: one in the Semester 6, combined as a policy learning event, and one high level policy conference in Semester 9.

Internal communication besides meetings will be organised via e-mail circulars and skype conferences. The partners will send to the lead partner short quarter up-dates for management purposes and to all partners – short overviews (3-5 conclusions) after regional assessments, partner meetings or any other project related event which they participate in.

P3 will provide input for design of communication material - roadmaps, brochures, assessments - in form of infographics (graphic visual representations of information, data or knowledge) for all project partners. This will be done in order to present the information quickly and clearly.

Objectives	Target Group	Activities
To disseminate knowledge, to form mind-set and to engage most relevant policy makers in the project activities leading to the improved policy instruments supporting innovations in water technology.	Policy makers & government organizations that support innovations, manage investments, and funds, authorities involved in the field of water technology. A special focus is on: 1) the municipal governments who can be involved and help with the innovation implemenation in the municipal water companies, forming an important element in the critical mass of innovation ecosystem. 2) EC policy makers shall be informed about project findings for fostering internationalisation strategies of regions.	Engagement in project events: interviews in regional assessments; regional events. Active engagement in the input preparation for roadmaps, especially the Roadmap for Critical Mass. Project brochures through the partner's internal and external media and networks; Press releases about important milestones in the Project (according to the Detailed Work plan in Phase 1 and 2) Informing about the project in international EU events: EU Interreg Programme events (1) and presentation in at least one international EU-level event - WIRE conference (Week of Innovative Regions) or Smart Regions Conference (organised by EC); Participation in the project conferences (2); Project website and project partners websites and social media will be used to inform organisations what want to learn from the good practices and other outcomes of the project
The aim is to involve and to get feedback about the project activities for effectiveness of the project results and to inform about the action plans.	Industry: water technology enterprises, labs, business incubators, innovative SMEs in the sector	Main activities – engagement in the regional assessments and regional events at regional level. Participation in the project conferences (2). Learning outcomes, good practice cases, roadmaps and other outputs produced by the project, will be made visible by the project website, partner websites and by social media Press releases about important milestones in the Project (according to the Detailed Work plan in Phase 1 and 2)
The aim is to involve in project activities and ensuring the input and feedback for the assessement and for roadmaps, especially on 1) human capital and 2) internationalisation. To inform about action plans where education institutions and academia will be involved as part of innovation ecosystem.	Educational institutions and academia: universities, research institutes, science and centres of excellence, playing a key role for innovation generation in water technology	Main activities – engagement in the regional assessments and regional events. Presentation of project results in at least one international conference. Learning outcomes, good practice cases, roadmaps and other outputs produced by the project, will be made visible by the project website, partner websites and by social media. Participation in the project conferences (2). Press releases about important milestones in the Project (according to the Detailed Work plan in Phase 1 and 2)

1.2 This communicationplan

This communication plan provides a communication and content strategy that will be applied in a communication toolbox. It describes the way the iWATERMAP story can be told and will support beneficiaries to create stories and engage with a variety of target groups. Main goal of iWATERMAP communication is to inform, persuade and engage (internal) stakeholders and (external) target groups with the journey and deliverables of the project.

2.0 Communication strategy

To prevent that we start the "What" project within the project, it is important to know the "Why" of the project. With every utterance, this "Why" will return and have a connection. In combination with the message that we want to convey, the project can well provoke itself.

THE WHY: **iWATERMAP want to improve innovation policies for enhancing the critical mass development of innovation ecosystems in the water technology sector.**

THE MESSAGE: **Suporting the innovation policies in water technology sector**

2.1 Internal communication strategy

Of course, communication is also required within the project. The internal communication consists of two target groups of which the partners and one of them. Communication through the partners is done multiple times via e-mail. Furthermore, important documents will be shared via the iWATERMAP website. Here is a special folder where, for example, the roadmaps can be found. Partner meetings will be another form of communication with which most internal communication is exchanged.

2.1.1 Audience

The second target group within the internal communication are the stakeholders. Partners within a project will mainly communicate via mail with stakeholders. A number of stakeholder meetings must also take place within the project. During these stakeholder meetings, each partner creates a report / article for the website. This article contains a small interview with one of the stakeholders.

2.2 External communication strategy

The mail goal of the iWATERMAP communication is: inform, convince and engage. We do this through various online and offline channels that work together and always come to a point, the website. The website is the main platform where all information comes from and then to the outside world.

2.2.1   Audience

There are three target groups within the project. It is important that the cooperation of these target groups comes to the fore in all content expressions. This makes us use the Tripel Helix model. The three target groups are:
- **Policy makers & government organizations:** that support innovations, manage investments, and funds, authorities involved in the field of water technology. A special focus is on:
  - the municipal governments who can be involved and help with the innovation implemenation in the municipal water companies, forming an important element in the critical mass of innovation ecosystem.
  - EC policy makers shall be informed about project findings for fostering internationalisation strategies of regions.
- **Industry:** water technology enterprises, labs, business incubators, innovative SMEs in the sector.
- **Educational institutions and academia:** universities, research institutes, science and centres of excellence, playing a key role for innovation generation in water technology.

2.2.2 Roadmap
Storytelling will focus on the roadmaps of partners working towards results and goals.
Showing the path we follow, the challenges we face and the questions we ask ourselves.
Core value is transparency and the will to share the learning curve that beneficiaries are
experiencing, including doubts and mistakes.

2.2.3 Channels and content
All the information that we want to send out as a project goes through the website. By
posting news on the website, a link can be made to the social media accounts of the partner
by means of a link. This means that the target groups come directly to the website where
they can find all the information.

Interregeurope.eu/iwatermap
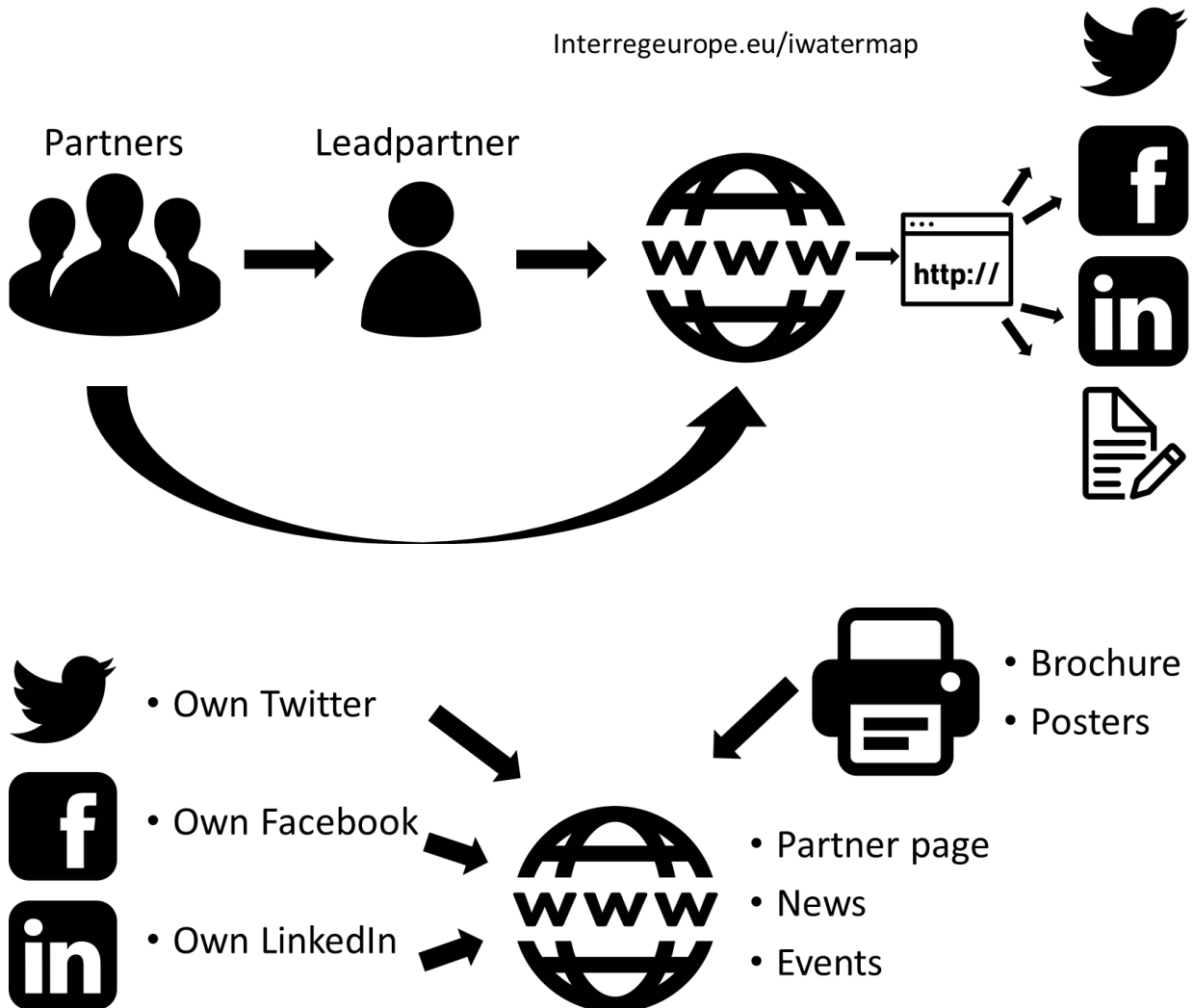
2.2.3.1 Website
The website will consist of three parts: news, events and partner page.
News: every partner will post news on the website through the project. It is important for
every partner to look in the environment for what news has to do with the project and to
share this via the website. Topics that are further on the news page

- News from stakeholders
- Regional news about terotechnology
- Milestones in the projects
- Participation in project conferences
- Good practices

Events: all events related to the project are on the events page. This can be a partner meeting but also a local event about water. As long as it has to do with the problem that plays in the partner's region, it is on the website.

Partner page: this page is intended to show the partner, to outline the problem and to keep (as a sort of diary) what each partner does within the project. A number of things that can be found on this page

- Information about your organisation
- The plan for the roadmap
- People working on the project
- Stakeholder information
- What you want to learn from the good practices

2.2.3.2 Contents, categories, content types and core values

IWATERMAP aims to enhance an innovative digital culture in the public sector by working together with local governments, businesses and universities in transnational pilots. During the project focus and scale will evolve. The planning, design and actual communication with the target groups and/or stakeholders, depends on the goal of the objective and the required involvement or effect.

On an abstract level, we can define core value, contents, content types, and categories.

2.2.3.2.1 Core Values

All publications about iWATERMAP should be recognisable, understandable, shareable and consistent in tone of voice, appearance and content.

Recognisable
IWATERMAP is funded by Interreg Europe. Therefore, the branding guidelines of Interreg Europe should be followed in logo, colour and fonts.

Understandable
The receiver of the message should be able to understand what the content of the message is all about. The reading and understanding level of the target group should be taken into account. Remember to keep it short and simple (KISS).

Shareable
When creating content, the intention should be to have as many people possible sharing that content to reach a broader audience and gain more followers on social media platforms. Every post should contain a call-to-action so people understand what the purpose of a post is. When using pictures or video make sure your material is free of copyrights and of good (audio) quality. When content is shared online it also means interaction is part of the communication. Online support or webcare is part of the job too.

Consistent
To grow brand awareness consistency is crucial. By using the same tone of voice, appearance and types of content (for instance a selection of recurring categories) the audience can easily recognise the sender. Consistency is important because iWATERMAP is competing for attention with other projects and initiatives that aim for similar causes.

2.2.3.2.2 Contents

To create content about a project means we have to raise awareness on the moments and subjects that are best fit for communication purposes. For example:
- Information about the progress made
- Questions that were leading
- Answers that were given

- Stakeholders that were involved
- Results that are achieved
- Effects that we have noticed
- Experiences that we have gained
- Testimonials that show personal commitment of beneficiaries
- Statistics about the progress made

2.2.3.2.3 Content types
To improve the recognisability of contents it is recommended that every content type is based upon a set of rules. For example:
- Text: 300
- 500 words
- Image: 1-3 photos
- Format: press release
- Website post outline
- Social media post outline
- Videoscript
- Live video script
- Infographic specifications

After creating a new content type for the first time, it is useful to describe the set of rules that was applied so next time a beneficiary wants to create similar content the same set of rules will be used to maintain consistency.

2.2.3.2.4 Categories
To improve consistency the best way to publish content is by using categories. For example:
- Lessons learned
- Highlights
- Testimonials
- Articles

2.2.4 Deliverables website (per semester, per partner)
- Min. 5 news articles about water technology in the region
- Article about the stakeholders meeting
  - Per stakeholders meeting an interview (video) with a stakeholder
- A update about your roadmap

3.0 Communication toolkit
On the website of iWATERMAP is a folder where all printable resources can be found for communication. Furthermore, there are some specific elements to clarify what they can and cannot do within the project.

3.1 Technical aspects of communication
About all technical aspects of communication we have to make reference to Interreg Europe Programme Manual and Interreg Europe Graphic Book that details the use of Interreg Europe logo and EU emblem in all our communication tools and events. These documents can be downloaded from:

Interreg Europe Programme Manual: http://www.interregeurope.eu/help/programme-manual/
Interreg Europe Graphic Book: http://www.interregeurope.eu/about-us/logo/

3.2 Monitoring and Evaluation
The objective of monitoring and evaluation phase is to be aware of the state and effects of the communication activities, during the whole project implementation. In order to monitor the

state of activities each partner will be asked to report about the implemented communication actions.

3.4 Visual elements

3.4.1 Interreg Europe logo and EU emblem.
The official logo and all formats can be downloaded from the Interreg Europe website: http://www.interregeurope.eu/about-us/logo/

A statement such as 'co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund' shall accompany the emblem of the EU

3.4.2 iWATERMAP logo.
The logos of each project are edited centrally by the Interreg Europe Joint Secretariat and has been sent to the communication leaders. All formats can be downloaded from the following link:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_UVUZWZO__CN8SBFsteQNTvxvxJB3rDu

3.4.3 Websites, Electronic information and audio-visual material
The link of the official project website is: http://www.interregeurope.eu/iwatermap/ The website was edited centrally by the Interreg Europe Joint Secretariat and LP updates it regularly.

Each project partner has to publish information about the project with the project logo on their own websites and have a hyperlink to the iWATERMAP official website.

4.0 Communication planning (semesters)

1	One communication officer per region (7 in total) is appointed for the project. In regions which are represented by 2 partners. In partners in NL and LV the public policy partner (Fryslan Province, Ministry of Science and Education) is responsible for communication and appoints the communication officer on behalf of the region. In the Kick of meeting Lead partner represents and explains to the partners the project communication strategy. The partners prepare information for the website and the Lead partner launches the project website under the Interreg Europe directory. Each partner posts information about the beginning of the project on the webpage of its organisation, 9 websites in total. Each partner produces and places at least one poster according to the Interreg Programe template at a location readily visible to the public. Each communication officer per region prepares a press release about the start of the project and sends to regional media. All partners provide their input and Lead partner compiles one newsleetter at the end of Semester. Announcements in local/regional media and information channels about project and stakeholder meeting following quadruple helix model – Each region uses at least 4 different channels for each sphere: government, industry, academia and end-users
2	The project website is updated; news also posted on 9 websites of the project partners. All partners provide their input and Lead partner compiles one newsleetter at the end of Semester. Announcements in local/regional media and information channels about project and stakeholder meeting following quadruple helix model – Each region uses at least 4 different channels for each sphere: government, industry, academia and civil participants.

	P3 provides visual representations/suggestions for communicating the project outputs in the infographics form.	
3	The project website is updated; news also posted on 9 websites of the project partners. All partners provide their input and Lead partner compiles one newsleetter at the end of Semester. Announcements in local/regional media and information channels about project and stakeholder meeting following quadruple helix model – Each region uses at least 4 different channels for each sphere: government, industry, academia and civil participants. Press release is sent out about Assessment results, disseminated to at least 4 different channels per region. Assessments published on project website, linked from partners` websites. P3 ensures that assessments use visual representations in infographics format.	
4	The project website is updated; news also posted on 9 websites of the project partners. All partners provide their input and Lead partner compiles one newsleetter at the end of Semester. Announcements in local/regional media and information channels about project and stakeholder meeting following quadruple helix model – Each region uses at least 4 different channels for each sphere: government, industry, academia and end-users.	
5	The project website is updated; news also posted on 9 websites of the project partners. All partners provide their input and Lead partner compiles one newsleetter at the end of Semester. Announcements in local/regional media and information channels about project and stakeholder meeting following quadruple helix model – Each region uses at least 4 different channels for each sphere: government, industry, academia and civil participants. Press release about Road maps is sent out, disseminated to at least 4 different channels per region. Road maps published on project website, linked from partners` websites. Roadmaps translated into regional languages. P3 helps project partnership with visualisation of the roadmaps, using infographics format.	
6	The project website is updated; news also posted on 9 websites of the project partners. All partners provide their input and Lead partner compiles one newsletter at the end of Semester. Announcements in local/regional media and information channels about project and stakeholder meeting following quadruple helix model – Each region uses at least 4 different channels for each sphere: government, industry, academia and civil participants. Press release about finalisation of the project Stage 1 (results) and informing about /inviting to conference in Brussels, disseminated to at least 4 different channels per region and in international channels selected to reach the audience for the Conference.. Action plan summary published on project website, linked from partners` websites. Roadmaps translated into regional languages. Press release about action plans, disseminated to at least 4 different channels per region. Brochure about project results in EN and local languages produced (200 per region, 200 EN), disseminated to policy authorities and implementing bodies. Good practices have been collected, described and put on the Good Practice Directory on project website.	

	We have in mind to have already a mid-term high level communication event, to share best practices from iWATERMAP project and experience in implementing CMDM in participating regions. We expect that CMDM is a very useful instrument which other regions and member states could also use for their benefit.
7, 8	The partners ensure regular updates of the project website with information on the action plan implementation.
9	The partners organise a final dissemination event gathering executives and policy makers from the regions and from other relevant institutions. The aim is to promote the project achievements and to disseminate the results of the action plan implementation to a large audience. The project website is updated accordingly.
10	The partners ensure regular updates of the project website with information on the action plan implementation.