

Deliverable D5.1

Plan for the Dissemination and Exploitation, including Project Communications Plan

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		(ELIXIR Hub)	
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Table of contents

1. Executive Summary	2
2. Contribution toward project objectives	2
3. Introduction	4
4. Description of work accomplished	4
4.1 Stakeholders and key messages	4
4.1.1 ELIXIR-STEERS stakeholders	4
4.1.2 ELIXIR-STEERS key messages	5
4.1.2 Communication goal	5
4.2 Communication channels	6
4.2.1 Website	6
4.2.1.1 Website content	6
4.2.1.2 Spelling conventions	6
4.2.2 ELIXIR-STEERS newsletter	6
4.2.2.1 Targeted audience	7
4.2.3 Social media	7
4.2.3.1 Hashtag	7
4.2.3.2 Tagging	7
4.3 Branding	7
4.3.1 Logo	7
4.3.2 Templates	8
4.4 Communication assets	8
4.4.1 Boilerplate text	8
4.5 Communication evaluation	8
4.5.1 Communication metrics	8
4.6 Dissemination	8
4.6.1 External events	9
4.6.2 Publication	9
4.6.3 Zenodo	9
4.6.4 F1000 ELIXIR Gateway	9
4.6.5 Tracking and monitoring	10
4.7 Exploitation	10
5. Conclusion and next steps	10
6. Deviation from Description of Action	10

1. Executive Summary

The ELIXIR-STEERS Plan for Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation provides the strategy, guidance, support and resources to maximise the impact of the ELIXIR-STEERS project. This document aims to act as a reference point for all aspects of ELIXIR-STEERS communications, dissemination and exploitation activities by providing guidelines to project partners and harmonising communications and messages to interested external parties.

In this document we present and discuss:

- Stakeholders and key messages
- Communication channels
- Branding and assets
- Communication evaluation
- Dissemination
- Exploitation

The document is live and will be updated continuously as the project progresses.

2. Contribution toward project objectives

With this deliverable, the project has reached or the deliverable has contributed to the following objectives/key results:

Objective no. / Key Result no. Description	Contributed to:
Objective 1: Partner with user communities to create a toolkit for robust, reproducible, and green software and workflows that allow life-scientists to benefit from open science practices in the emerging European federated data landscape. (WP2, WP3, WP4, WP5)	
Key Result 1.1: Established partnerships with user communities that capture experiences and embed these in good practices for robust, reproducible, and green software and workflows (WP2)	No
Key Result 1.2: A toolkit developed consisting of guidelines, best practices and services that supports software development and recognition of individuals involved in software development (WP2, WP3)	No
Key Result 1.3: Community-wide agreement on key indicators for technical, scientific, and environmental benchmarking (WP2) embedded into established software and workflow benchmarking systems (WP3)	No
Key Result 1.4: Practices for robust, reproducible, and green software and workflows (WP2, WP3) are adopted and embedded in ELIXIR Nodes (WP4),	No

supporting the European federated data landscape and Horizon Europe projects	
Key Result 1.5: Demonstration of the greening potential and reduced carbon footprint of software best practice by applying toolkit and indicators in community-driven activities (WP2)	No
Key Result 1.6: Stimulate engagement and uptake by users via European and national communication and outreach programmes (WP5)	Yes
Objective 2: Enable the landscape for cross-border data analysis in the life sciences by embedding common practice across the whole European Research Area via effective national ELIXIR Nodes. (WP4, WP5)	
Key Result 2.1: Build a common toolkit to enhance the operational and managerial capacity of ELIXIR Nodes that comprise all aspects of sustainability (operational excellence, business planning, interactions with industry and impact assessment) (WP4, WP5)	Yes
Key Result 2.2: Expand the ELIXIR's Membership by transitioning candidate countries into fully operational national Nodes using capacity building actions (WP4, WP5)	No
Key Result 2.3: Strengthen excellence in RI management with an ELIXIR training programme that complements established Europe-wide offerings with the infrastructure specific needs (WP4)	No
Key Result 2.4: Strengthen the capacity of national training programmes (WP4) to scale the dissemination, training, and uptake of the ELIXIR software development toolkit for robust, reproducible, and green software and workflows (WP5)	No
Key Result 2.5: Work with funders to embed the practice in data and software management plans in guidelines to grantees (WP5)	No
Objective 3: Partner in Europe and internationally for global competitiveness and sustainability. (WP5)	
Key Result 3.1: Development of national SME and industry partnerships to support the European innovation ecosystem (WP5)	No
Key Result 3.2: Partnerships with other ESFRI RIs to strengthen the wider RI landscape (WP5) and support adoption of robust, reproducible, and green workflows across RI facilities.	No
Key Result 3.3: Foster global knowledge-exchange to drive good international practices and embed international partnerships in Node activities (WP5)	No
Key Result 3.4: Deliver a Node dissemination and communications toolkit that enables ELIXIR Nodes to amplify engagement with scientists and other	Yes

stakeholders (WP5)	
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3. Introduction

The purpose of ELIXIR-STEERS is to build capacity for large-scale, cross-border data analysis, and for this capacity to be embedded across member states. ELIXIR-STEERS ensures that ELIXIR continues to operate as a world-class research infrastructure, and continues to enable wider participation in computational life science research. It will focus on a new and critical area of scientific need: the provision of software and workflows to life scientists, maximising productivity in research, and minimising consequent energy usage.

ELIXIR-STEERS supports ELIXIR's long-term operations by addressing the recommendations of the European Commission and ESFRI on the long-term suitability of research infrastructures. Running for three years, the project will help ELIXIR develop community-based software development best practices, support the development of effective and sustainable ELIXIR Nodes, and build collaborations with international partners and other ESFRI research infrastructures..

This document describes the strategy to communicate, disseminate and exploit outputs from the ELIXIR-STEERS project. The strategy aims to capitalise on the collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of the project by promoting clear, inclusive and targeted communication, dissemination and exploitation efforts.

This deliverable is part of ELIXIR-STEERS Work Package 5. The Work Package aims to develop and implement the project-wide communications and outreach strategy, ensuring key stakeholders including scientists, industry and SMEs, policymakers and the public have awareness of the project and opportunities to engage, use project outputs and provide feedback to partners.

In this communication, dissemination and exploitation plan, we draw upon:

- the experience and skills of the External Relations team at the ELIXIR Hub
- lessons learned from the delivery of the a large portfolio of coordinated EU projects
- the specific project needs defined by the interaction with different WPs, the coordination team, and project partners

4. Description of work accomplished

4.1 Stakeholders and key messages

4.1.1 ELIXIR-STEERS stakeholders

The main ELIXIR-STEERS stakeholders are:

- The bioinformatics community, active in software and workflow development.



- Other EU-funded software/workflow projects, such as EVERSE, especially those linked to the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC).
- The wider scientific community, including industry, that uses publicly-funded software and workflows
- National and EU including national funders and policymakers responsible for open science policies
- National ELIXIR Nodes and prospective member states,
- Other research infrastructures on the ESFRI roadmap, for instance, Euro-BioImaging, Instruct and BBMRI
- Global collaboration partners, such as Research Data Alliance (RDA), Australian BioCommons and the National Institutes of Health's Office of Data Science Strategy (NIH ODSS).

4.1.2 ELIXIR-STEERS key messages

The ELIXIR-STEERS project's key objectives are:

- To build capacity for large-scale, cross-border data analysis and for this capacity to be embedded across ELIXIR member states
- To develop credit and recognition systems for software, supporting improvements to research assessment frameworks to ensure that scientists have access to high-quality, energy-efficient analysis tools
- To support ELIXIR's long-term operations by addressing the recommendations of the European Commission and ESFRI on the long-term sustainability of research infrastructures
- To strengthen the operational excellence of ELIXIR Nodes and support the training and development of professional and scientific staff in ELIXIR Nodes
- To expand the membership of ELIXIR to new countries in Europe, and to enable international collaborations in particular with Latin America and Africa and stimulate innovation and industry engagement.

4.1.2 Communication goal

The main purpose of the ELIXIR-STEERS communication activities is to build trust and awareness with project stakeholders. The communication activities cover the project's results and outcomes and target audiences from the project consortium to key stakeholders, such as bioinformaticians, national funders and policymakers, Research Infrastructure on the ESFRI roadmap and international research organisations.

The key communication goal is to communicate the impact of the ELIXIR-STEERS project. The following are impact categories indicated in the ELIXIR website¹, which are relevant to the ELIXIR-STEERS project and can be applied to ensure the impact of the ELIXIR-STEERS communication activities:

- **Benefits of working together (relationship capital):** facilitate knowledge-sharing and cooperation.
- **Bioinformatics resource uptake:** work to increase their usage and appreciation by users.
- **Equal opportunity:** raise awareness of diversity and inclusiveness.
- **Policy influence:** ensure that policymakers are aware of the benefits of open science.

¹ <https://elixir-europe.org/about-us/impact/more-examples>

- **Public awareness:** raise the public's awareness of bioinformatics and open science, including their socio-economic benefits.
- **Research dissemination:** ensure increased awareness of developments related to research infrastructure and their resources.
- **Research efficiency:** make infrastructure, resources and processes faster, easier to use, and more integrated.
- **Research infrastructure sustainability:** work to increase its visibility and appreciation by funders.
- **Skills development (human capital):** foster better skills for users and service providers.

4.2 Communication channels

4.2.1 Website

The primary communication channel for the ELIXIR-STEERS project is the [ELIXIR website](https://elixir-europe.org/)². A dedicated [ELIXIR-STEERS project webpage](https://elixir-europe.org/about-us/how-funded/eu-projects/steers)³ was created to provide comprehensive information about the project. The ELIXIR website will be the host for any events or activities held by the project. The goals for the website are:

- To let people know what the project is, why it was created and why it is important
- To disseminate the project deliverables
- To advertise the progress and impact of the project, including news stories
- To explain how the project is organised: duration, leadership, governance, who is involved, who is how the project is run and contact information.

4.2.1.1 Website content

The ELIXIR Hub External Relations team is part of the ELIXIR-STEERS Work Package 5 - communication, outreach, industry and international and has full editorial control over the website content. However, in developing new content, ELIXIR Hub will regularly consult project partners and other relevant groups within the project as well as external stakeholders. All materials to be published on the website should be sent to webmaster@elixir-europe.org.

4.2.1.2 Spelling conventions

The following conventions have been applied to the ELIXIR-STEERS webpage as well as to other communication outputs:

- ELIXIR-STEERS: always capitalised with a hyphen between ELIXIR and STEERS
- Use the English [EC style guide](https://ec.europa.eu/styleguide/)⁴.

4.2.2 ELIXIR-STEERS newsletter

The ELIXIR-STEERS project does not have a dedicated newsletter. The project updates and activities promotion will be announced in existing ELIXIR newsletters, including:

- ELIXIR Weekly Brief, the internal newsletter that is sent to over 830 recipients from ELIXIR Hub and Nodes every Monday morning.

² <https://elixir-europe.org/>

³ <https://elixir-europe.org/about-us/how-funded/eu-projects/steers>

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/c45f5b70-2d0e-4da7-b181-b5fe3a16c4bb_en

- ELIXIR Industry newsletter, the external quarterly newsletter that is sent to over 1200 subscribers.

ELIXIR Hub is responsible for creating and managing the Weekly Brief and the ELIXIR Industry newsletter with consultation with Work Package leaders. In this context, ELIXIR Hub offers:

- Communications coverage to gather new subscribers for the Industry Newsletter on social media, mailing lists and the ELIXIR website.
- Provide [ELIXIR Weekly Brief](#)⁵ (internal only) and [Industry newsletter](#)⁶ archives on the ELIXIR website.

4.2.2.1 Targeted audience

ELIXIR Weekly Brief is an internal newsletter focusing on disseminating updates from ELIXIR Hub, ELIXIR Nodes, ELIXIR Platforms, ELIXIR Communities, ELIXIR coordinated EU projects and related news from other initiatives.

The target audience of the ELIXIR Industry newsletter is industry, which includes individuals in large companies through to SMEs, pharma through to agro-chemical as well as IT companies. The contents are related to industry engagement activities across the whole of ELIXIR.

4.2.3 Social media

ELIXIR-STEERS will use social media as a platform for the project's community building and networking. Instead of setting up an individual social media account, ELIXIR-STEERS will use ELIXIR Europe's social media accounts on LinkedIn and Twitter/X as the key stakeholders and audience groups of the project align with the research infrastructure.

4.2.3.1 Hashtag

To distinguish the ELIXIR-STEERS project contents from the ELIXIR Europe contents, posts related to the ELIXIR-STEERS project must include #ELIXIR_STEERS.

4.2.3.2 Tagging

Where appropriate, social media posts should tag partners and/or project groups whose work is being communicated. A publicly available [Twitter/X list](#)⁷ of ELIXIR Nodes that are involved in the project has been created.

4.2.4 Corporate video

ELIXIR-STEERS Work Package 5 will create a series of promotional videos showcasing the impact of ELIXIR. These videos will be launched on ELIXIR YouTube channel with a dedicated playlist, embedded in ELIXIR website and disseminated on social media and newsletters.

⁵ <https://elixir-europe.org/news/weekly-briefs>

⁶ <https://elixir-europe.org/industry/updates>

⁷ <https://x.com/i/lists/210784047>

4.3 Branding

The ELIXIR-STEERS project must follow the ELIXIR branding and communication guidelines. The ELIXIR branding guidelines, font and project logo are all available on the project's [Google Drive](#)⁸.

4.3.1 Logo

The logo aligns with the ELIXIR Europe logo to reflect the links between the project and the research infrastructure.



4.3.2 Templates

The ELIXIR Hub provides templates for a range of communication activities and reports in keeping with the branding guidelines. All presentations, internal or external should use the template and branding provided. Templates include:

- presentation slides
- documents
- deliverables and milestones

All templates are available on the project's [Google Drive](#).

4.4 Communication assets

4.4.1 Boilerplate text

The boilerplate text can be reused in new contexts or applications without any significant changes. Examples of use include websites of the project partners, news and press releases and publications.

Boilerplate text:

ELIXIR-STEERS aims to help life science researchers conduct large-scale, cross-border analysis of data from across Europe. The project will promote good software management practices and support life scientists with their software management needs. These practices will be collected into a toolkit for green and reproducible software and workflows.

⁸ https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1-fmvAV4sqavcKtweThb_wRu9M0L5UQHv

4.5 Communication evaluation

All communications activities are logged in the [ELIXIR-STEERS Reporting Tracker](#)⁹ which records metrics such as audience type and communication channels along with details of the activity performed and the outcomes achieved.

Evaluation of the ELIXIR-STEERS communications activities will be carried out continuously to analyse the impact of communication through each channel. Monitoring the impact of the communications regularly will enable adjustment of the strategy and individual communications activities to ensure they are fit for purpose. Outputs of the analysis will be shared where appropriate with the ELIXIR-STEERS project partners.

4.5.1 Communication metrics

The communication metrics will measure the engagement rate, the quality of communications and the reach outside the ELIXIR-STEERS project. Data collected include:

- Web traffic metrics
- Twitter/X analytics (of posts with #ELIXIR_STEERS)
- LinkedIn analytics (of posts with #ELIXIR_STEERS)
- Quantitative data on the number of events/conferences that ELIXIR-STEERS has been presented at

4.6 Dissemination

Dissemination is the process of ensuring all scientific outputs are openly available, as early as possible and in forms that are easily accessible, understandable and reusable. Dissemination fosters the use and uptake of results and outcomes, in contrast, communications covers the sharing and promotion of wider project efforts.

Dissemination activities target audiences that are likely to use the results in their work, for instance, peers and experts in and outside of the project, including policymakers. Communications activities target multiple audiences beyond the project consortium, including the media and the public.

4.6.1 External events and scientific conferences

To raise awareness and disseminate the main outputs of the ELIXIR-STEERS project, project partners are encouraged to attend key events and conferences.

The ELIXIR Hub organises annual events, such as ELIXIR All Hands Meeting and BioHackathon Europe, which enable project partners to collaborate and exchange ideas. The All Hands Meeting event report is uploaded to F1000Research for a wider dissemination of the material presented.

9

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UjKvk6CyzyvusDw9Z0HTlkvp9g9pADHydwHC3xNdo84/edit?gid=1819726455#gid=1819726455>

BioHackathon participants are encouraged to upload their project report on BioRxiv, a preprint server for biology, to share outcomes with other researchers and bioinformaticians.

ELIXIR also sponsors high-level scientific conferences, such as European Conference on Computational Biology (ECCB), where ELIXIR has a dedicated booth and a track programme to showcase ELIXIR activities and services. During the ELIXIR-STEERS project period, ELIXIR and the ELIXIR-STEERS project partners will continue to collaborate with and contribute to key scientific conferences.

Industry events and global biotech congresses, such as BioTechX and Bio-IT Europe, are also potential platforms for the outreach of the project. The following table shows a list of events and conferences that project partners could attend to disseminate project outputs:

Name of event/conference	Organiser	Frequency	Topics	Related WP
ELIXIR All Hands Meeting	ELIXIR	Annual	Bioinformatics	All WPs
International Conference on Research Infrastructures (ICRI)	CSIRO (for 2024 edition)	Biennial	Research Infrastructure	WP5
European Conference on Computational Biology (ECCB)	University of Turku & CSC-IT (for 2024 edition)	Biennial	Data and algorithms for health and science (for 2024 edition)	WP2, 3&5
BioHackathon Europe	ELIXIR	Annual	Bioinformatics services, resources and trainings	WP2, 3, 4&5
BioTechX Europe	BioTechX (Industry)	Annual	Data, AI, healthcare and industry	WP2, 3&5
Bio-IT World Europe	Cambridge Healthtech Institute (CHI)	Annual	Precision medicine and industry	WP2, 3&5

4.6.2 Publication

Project partners add manuscripts, preprints and peer-reviewed publications to the [ELIXIR-STEERS Reporting Tracker](#)¹⁰, which is complemented by text-mining of relevant publishing repositories. The following sentence is used by project partners to acknowledge project support in research publications:

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 101131096 (ELIXIR-STEERS).

4.6.3 Zenodo

A [Zenodo community](#)¹¹ has been created as a home for project outputs such as deliverables, posters and other related documents. Efforts will be made to ensure outputs are published in a timely manner, ensuring good visibility and impact.

Dissemination will be facilitated by the use of appropriate metadata when uploading to Zenodo (e.g. grant agreement number 101131096, Horizon Europe and ORCID IDs of the co-authors), which will improve FAIR metadata for discoverability, as well as project-wide aggregation by EC's OpenAIRE. The combined number of views and downloads of project outputs on Zenodo will be used to evaluate project progress.

4.6.4 F1000 ELIXIR Gateway

The [ELIXIR Gateway on F1000Research](#)¹² publishes a range of different outputs of ELIXIR Europe, some of which will overlap with the outputs of the ELIXIR-STEERS project. There are two main gateway areas, ELIXIR All Hands and ELIXIR Community White Papers. The [ELIXIR Community White Paper Gateway Area](#)¹³ contains white papers published by ELIXIR Communities that outlines the aims of the Community and provides a roadmap for Community activities.

The combined number of views and downloads of ELIXIR-STEERS related outputs on F1000 will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of dissemination.

4.6.5 Tracking and monitoring

Dissemination efforts are the responsibility of all work packages, in contrast to communications and exploitation efforts which fall primarily under WP5. ELIXIR-STEERS dissemination efforts are tracked in the [ELIXIR-STEERS Reporting Tracker](#)¹⁴. The spreadsheet will be accessible to all ELIXIR-STEERS partners to fulfil the obligation of informing project partners and allowing them to comment and contribute.

¹⁰

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UjKvk6CyzyvusDw9Z0HTlkvp9g9pADHydwHC3xNdo84/edit?gid=1121423544#gid=1121423544>

¹¹ <https://zenodo.org/communities/elixir-steers/records?q=&l=list&p=1&s=10&sort=newest>

¹² <https://f1000research.com/gateways/elixir/about-this-gateway>

¹³ <https://f1000research.com/gateways/elixir/communitywhitepapers>

¹⁴

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UjKvk6CyzyvusDw9Z0HTlkvp9g9pADHydwHC3xNdo84/edit?gid=2128340078#gid=2128340078>

4.7 Exploitation

Exploitation activities enable the concrete use of research results, either directly by project participants, or indirectly by others outside of the project, including industry. Exploitation of results can be through scientific, economic, political or societal exploitation routes, turning results into value for society. Where dissemination describes and makes results visible to audiences that may use the results, exploitation is the actual use of the results, during and after the project.

As with communications and dissemination efforts, exploitation efforts are tracked in the [ELIXIR-STEERS Reporting Tracker](#) and regularly analysed, reviewed and reported. Examples of exploitation efforts include industry engagement through events and newsletters.

5. Conclusion and next steps

The communication, dissemination and exploitation plan defines the communication channels, the ELIXIR-STEERS branding, the communication assets, the evaluation criteria and the communication guidance that together provides the means for effective internal and external communication. The evaluation criteria will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the communication strategy providing the means to act and ensure that the communication strategy remains fit for the purpose along the project lifetime.

At the moment of writing this communication strategy (M06 of the ELIXIR-STEERS project), communications channels and branding are already in place and being used across all WPs, such as WP meetings and the ELIXIR-STEERS kick-off meeting. In the coming months, we will evaluate the effectiveness of the communication channels, and use this information to improve the current strategy.