



Sustainable eThics Reviews of digital heAlth Technology dEsiGn In sub saharan afriCa (STRATEGIC)

Deliverable No. 6.1 **Dissemination, Communication, Exploitation and Advocacy Plan**

Submission date
30 June, 2024



This project has received funding from the
European Union's Horizon Europe programme Global Health EDCTP3 Joint Undertaking

Document Control

Deliverable	D6.1: Dissemination, Communication, Exploitation and Advocacy Plan
WP/Task Related	WP6/Task 6.1 (Communication strategy and actions) and Task 6.2 (Dissemination and exploitation strategy and actions)
Delivery Date	28 June 2024 submitted version
Dissemination Level	Public
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Abstract	<p>This deliverable describes the STRATEGIC dissemination, communication and advocacy plans (DCAP) that will help maximise the impact of the project and ensure a legacy for it. The document covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination strategies and measures including channels, tools and target groups (based on stakeholder analysis as developed in WP3 - Task 3.1/Task 3.2); • Communication with key stakeholders throughout the lifetime of the project; and • Exploitation and advocacy strategies and activities
Key Words	Dissemination, communication, exploitation, advocacy

Revision History

Version	Date	Author(s)	Reviewer(s)	Notes
0.1	16.05.2024	Sidat MM	UEM members	First Draft
Final	30.06.2024	Sidat MM	Members as described in the Quality Assurance Plan	Final version

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Executive Summary:

The STRATEGIC dissemination, communication, exploitation and advocacy plan (DCEAP) outlines the strategies and activities which aim to ensure impact and secure a legacy for the project. Furthermore, the plan also outlines how stakeholders will be engaged to ensure the transfer of knowledge and project outcomes enabling its exploitation and adoption in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

Overall, the STRATEGIC DCEAP has several key aims:

- (i) Share STRATEGIC's results, outcomes and recommendations with relevant stakeholders (dissemination)
- (ii) Communicate relevant aspects of the project with key stakeholders (communication)
- (iii) Set out strategies for exploiting key STRATEGIC's results and outcomes
- (v) Advocate for STRATEGIC project results, outcomes and recommendations to key stakeholders to facilitate effective actions to address the ethical and legal challenges of digital health technologies.

The STRATEGIC project will implement activities to reach out to a large number and variety of key stakeholders to find the optimal strategies for dealing with challenges posed by digital health technologies in clinical research and practice. Furthermore, it will keep diverse audiences updated about the latest research and practice in this field of digital health technologies in clinical research and practice. The document covers communication strategies and activities and communication key performance indicators (KPIs) and success criteria; dissemination strategies and activities and dissemination KPIs and success criteria; Exploitation strategies and activities; Community, advocacy and ecosystem building; and Coordination and other challenges. This deliverable's implementation will be documented in the dissemination, communication, exploitation and advocacy reports and other WP6 deliverables.

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List of acronyms/abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description/Explanation
DCEAP	Dissemination, communication, exploitation and advocacy plan
EP	Exploitation plan
KPIs	Key performance indicators
NECs	National Ethics Committees
NRA	National Regulatory Agencies

1. Introduction

The STRATEGIC's Project vision is to co-create a culturally sensitive responsible research and innovation approach and to strengthen existing ethics and regulatory capacities for socially acceptable design and deployment of digital health technologies in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

The STRATEGIC project will seek to generate impact by contributing to ensure a responsible integration of digital health technologies into clinical research and practice and based on adequate international standards in SSA.

The STRATEGIC consortium brings together international subject expertise on ethics reviews, research ethics, technology ethics and law and clinical research and practice. The consortium is made of partners from English, French and Portuguese speaking countries of SSA and from EU which collectively offer diverse experiences and links to already established networks relevant for achieving objectives defined for the STRATEGIC project.

This document is organised in a way that intends to guide project partners on strategies, activities and measures related to communication, dissemination, exploitation and advocacy to achieve the defined goals of the STRATEGIC project. Thus, the document covers:

- Dissemination strategies and measures including channels, tools and target groups (based on stakeholder analysis as developed in WP3 - Task 3.1/Task 3.2);
- Communication with key stakeholders throughout the lifetime of the project; and
- Exploitation and advocacy strategies and activities

2. Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Strategy

The strategies and activities outlined within the communication, dissemination, exploitation and advocacy plan are intended to build awareness on ethical and legal issues related to design and use of digital health technologies, engaging diverse relevant stakeholders, promoting the project and its related results, achievements and knowledge generated and contribute to build capacity of National Ethics Committees (NECs) and National Regulatory Agencies (NRAs).

2.1. Communication strategies and activities

The communication strategies and activities of the STRATEGIC project are aimed to:

Raise awareness: make the project known by informing about its objectives, activities and results; this goal will be considered achieved at the end of the project if key stakeholders of the project have received information on the project; the sharing of information is to affect levels of knowledge, understanding, and/or attitude towards the ethical and legal issues of design and use of digital health technologies;

Generate understanding: convey key messages by using simple and clear language to targeted stakeholders of the project; this goal will be considered achieved if stakeholders demonstrate acquisition of knowledge and implications of the project outputs for policy and practice; this will be assessed from results achieved from specifically tailored discussions sessions on different subjects/topics carried out through social media platforms and webinars or other channels during the duration of the project;

Generate visibility of the STRATEGIC project: showcase activities and outputs of the STRATEGIC project to key stakeholders and beyond; this goal will be considered achieved if stakeholders and other wider groups are aware of the STRATEGIC project activities and outputs; this will be assessed through surveying stakeholders and other wider groups on awareness on activities and outputs of the STRATEGIC project; and

Ensure long-term impact: produce long-term impact of the project on key stakeholders, in particular National Ethics Committees (NECs) and National Regulatory Agencies (NRAs) who oversee and regulate design and use of digital health technologies in research and clinical practice in SSA; this will be assessed by qualitative and quantitative data that will be collected during the implementation of the project, including by documenting the number of NECs and NRAs that consider in their agendas, practice, norms and regulations the ethical aspects related to digital health technologies.

The key stakeholders or target groups for the communication activities are:

- policy makers/legal authorities (e.g. NRAs), ethical review bodies (e.g. NECs) and other public authorities (e.g. regulators of use of digital technologies for social and economic purposes);
- researchers, implementors and innovators of digital health technologies; and
- health professionals, civil society and the general public.

Based on the goals of the communication and targeted stakeholders, several channels will be used for the communication activities, namely:

- **Project website:** this channel will be used to convey relevant information related to STRATEGIC project, including ongoing activities, consortium partner contacts and other relevant details, newsworthy items. Announcement of workshops/webinars and conferences or other events, sharing of project related videos, quarterly newsletters and whitepapers, case studies, results, and a FAQ section;
- **Social media networking through LinkedIn:** project description and updates on project activities and achievements, photographs of project events, news & announcement of workshops/webinars and conferences, sharing of quarterly newsletters;
- **Quarterly newsletters:** updates on project activities and achievements (including project outputs), photographs of project events, news & announcement of workshops/webinars and conferences;
- **Project Blogs:** posting and leading discussions on relevant ethical issues related to digital health technologies to raise awareness and improve understanding;
- **Webinars (virtual):** targeting wider audience among project stakeholders to discuss on topics and issues related to ethics in digital health technologies aiming to raise knowledge and awareness, improve understanding and produce mid-long-term impact;
- **Workshops (face-to-face):** targeting selected audience among project stakeholders on topics and issues related to ethics in digital health technologies aiming to raise knowledge and awareness, improve understanding and produce mid-long-term impact; and
- **Trainings (virtual and face-to-face):** targeting selected audience among project stakeholders on topics and issues related to ethics in digital health technologies aiming to raise knowledge and awareness, improve understanding and produce mid-long-term impact.

Communication channels and materials will convey general information related to the project activities and objectives and may also include references to other events/actions/projects, similar in scope to STRATEGIC. However, communication is also key for the successful hosting of virtual and face-to-face webinars, workshops and training sessions by attracting relevant stakeholders and high-quality participants and producing desired impact.

Table 1: Summary of communication goals and channels based on key stakeholders for STRATEGIC project

Key Stakeholders	Communication Goals	Channels
Policy makers/legal authorities (e.g. NRAs), ethical review bodies (e.g. NECs) and other public authorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To raise awareness, generate understanding and ensure long term impact of STRATEGIC project activities and outputs. - To ensure adequate ethical approaches related to digital health technologies. 	Project website, quarterly newsletters, periodic webinars, blog posts, networking through <i>LinkedIn</i> , communications through email, workshops, STRATEGIC e-community
Researchers, implementors and innovators of digital health technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To ensure long term impact by promoting safety, transparency and fairness of digital health technologies by adopting STRATEGIC project well-defined solutions. 	Project website, quarterly newsletters, periodic webinars, blog posts, networking through <i>LinkedIn</i> , workshops
Health professionals, civil society and general public.		Project website, quarterly newsletters, blog posts, networking through <i>LinkedIn</i>

The STRATEGIC logo gives identity to the project, and it is paramount in communication activities and grants desired visibility. It was developed to give uniformity to the project communication and to support awareness on the project. The logo was developed to capture the vision and objectives of the STRATEGIC project; capturing the geographical locations (Africa and Europe represented with green and blue respectively) of the partners for the co-creation of the framework.

Figure 1: STRATEGIC Project Logo



2.2. Communication key performance indicators (KPIs) and success criteria

Several indicators have been identified to keep track of the progress of communication activities. Based on the periodic assessment of the success on these criteria, the project will update the Communication, dissemination, exploitation and advocacy plan (CDEAP), including also a refined list of concrete actions to communicate the project results and the assessment of the impact of these results on the target users and STRATEGIC project consortium partners.

Important to note that activities such as webinars (virtual), workshops (face-to-face) and training sessions (virtual and face-to-face) will be also opportunities for communication. However, the KPIs will not be defined specifically for communication but these will be included when presenting dissemination strategies and activities.

Table 2: Summary of communication KPI and targets for STRATEGIC project

Communication Activities/Action	Key performance indicators (KPIs)	KPIs Targets
Website	# of visitors to the website	>=1000
	# of posts on the website (news and announcements)	>1 post/month
	# of countries' visitors	>50 registers
	# of visitors from Sub-Saharan countries	> 5 visitors/quarterly
Social media (LinkedIn/ResearchGate)	# of posts on LinkedIn (per month)	>10 posts/month
	# of Followers on LinkedIn	>1000 followers
	# of interactions on LinkedIn	>1000 interactions
Quarterly Newsletter	% of newsletters produced annually (based on planned)	>90%
	# of individuals/organizations (from target groups or stakeholders) who received newsletter (by email listing)	>100 individual > 20 organizations
Project Blogs	# of Blog posts (# of topics discussed in blog posts)	>1 post quarterly

2.3. Dissemination strategies and activities

The main aim of the dissemination strategies and activities are to make public the STRATEGIC project results and outputs. The dissemination activities will be implemented as the project develops. However, the following aspects will be considered when implementing dissemination activities:

- Interests of different stakeholders and expected results to be achieved through the project dissemination at each different stage. This will help the Consortium tailor the

information to the stakeholders' characteristics and expectations, particularly considering the audience might have diverse interests, coming from different countries and cultures. It is also necessary to prepare dissemination materials appropriate to each stakeholder.

- The dissemination of more scientific or technical results related to the STRATEGIC project will be done through scientific articles, presentation at conferences and other academic or scientific events.

Once the dissemination goals and the target audience (involving the identified stakeholders) have been clearly identified, the strategy to disseminate the content will consist in an accurate matching between:

- the target audience characteristics and needs;
- the selection of the information to be communicated (tailored on the target needs); and
- the identification of the proper content, means, formats, and language style to get the desired outcomes from the target audiences.

Many listed dissemination activities will be carried out during implementation of different communication activities taking advantage of the opportunities offered during interaction with different groups of stakeholders and vice-versa.

The means and channels prioritized specifically for dissemination are:

- **Scientific publications:** These are aimed to inform, raise awareness, engage, and ensure impact. Papers and presentations for scientific journals and conferences will be prepared and submitted as the project results and outcomes arise and will be a collaborative effort between different Consortium Partners. Importantly, to boost dissemination among the scientific community, the Consortium is committed to making every effort to fully adhere to the Grant Agreement which is aimed to ensure that the results of research funded by the EU are made widely available for free to the largest possible audience.
- **Presentations at third-party events (Scientific Conferences and other similar events):** These included national and international conferences and other similar events and they represent unique opportunity to inform, raise awareness, engage, and ensure

impact of the STRATEGIC project. Additionally, apart to divulge project results and outcomes, these events are an important opportunity for the partners to also refine the project work: they will not only share information with experts in the field, collecting feedback from qualified audience, but also have the occasion to internally coordinating their work. Consortium partners will be invited to submit papers to selected conferences and journals to promote the project and to be active in creating occasions for academic dissemination through publications and other relevant opportunities. Conference attendance is a means to promote the project and its goals, and possibly to network with other researchers who could be interested in topics of the STRATEGIC project. Partners of the STRATEGIC Project will be selected to represent the Consortium to present either oral or poster at the conference once their abstract is approved by the Scientific Committee of the Conference. Although this is not the only means for disseminating project results, it represents an excellent opportunity for getting immediate feedback from the research community thus providing two-way communication. Participation in any type of public event (at local, national or international level) will be promoted on social media, on the project website and on partner websites with news items.

- **Networking with other similar initiatives/projects:** These activities are aimed to inform, raise awareness, engage, and ensure impact. Additionally, the networking is aimed to ensure opportunities for collaboration with other similar initiatives/research projects and to create real synergies, exploring the possibility of sharing experiences and to leverage on the communication and dissemination activities implemented by different initiatives/networks. Furthermore, STRATEGIC will use these opportunities also to divulge the project results to the researchers and other stakeholders with interests in digital health technologies.
- **Workshops/Webinars:** These will be opportunities to inform, raise awareness, engage, and ensure impact. During the duration of the STRATEGIC project, several workshops/webinars will be organised to share the project results and outcomes achieved in the project with a diverse audience of stakeholders and document expert feedback from the participants. The workshop will involve all the target audiences of the project with the purpose of disseminating results produced at different stages of the project.

- **Final STRATEGIC project dissemination event:** This event will be organised at the end of the project to present its results and outcomes. The final dissemination event will target all the partners, the Consortium partners, external experts and the lay public. The aim of this event will be the maximisation of the external dissemination of project results and outcomes. If possible or opportunities arise, this final dissemination event could be organized in collaboration with other related projects/initiatives, or other large scientific events where participation could be maximized.

2.4. Dissemination key performance indicators (KPIs) and success criteria

Table 3 (below) summarizes the key performance indicators (KPIs) for the different channels used in the dissemination activities of the STRATEGIC project results and outcomes.

Table 3: Summary of dissemination KPI and targets for STRATEGIC project

Dissemination Activities/Action	Key performance indicators (KPIs)	KPIs Targets
Peer-review papers	# of papers published	>=6
Presentations at conferences and similar events	# of conference presentations	>=6
	# of members of Consortium participating in events	>=6
Networking with similar initiatives/projects	# of networking events	>=12
	# of individuals (Consortium members) who participated in networking events	>=12
Workshops/Webinars	# of attendees in webinars/workshops	>=180
	# of workshops/webinars organized	>=6
Final STRATEGIC Project Dissemination event	# of participants taking part in the dissemination event	>=60
	# of countries represented in the dissemination event	>=15

2.5. Exploitation strategies and activities

Exploitation activities will focus on making concrete use of STRATEGIC project results for NECs, NRAs, digital health technology designers, developers and researchers, and society in general. These activities are aimed at ensuring that noteworthy results are used for different stakeholders during the project's duration and after its closure. Based on the variety of activities foreseen within the STRATEGIC project, there will be a wide spectrum of results and outcomes that may be considered as exploitable, including policy and implementation recommendations, standardization or harmonisation, innovative approaches among others.

The nature of exploitation activities will be highly dependent on the type of result and outcomes obtained, the target users, the partner promoting exploitation, the timeline and the resources available.

Exploitation will be promoted through the publication of newsletters, peer-reviewed publications and presentations at international conferences and other similar events. In addition, cases studies will be developed where it will provide information on exploitation activities that have led to the uptake STRATEGIC project results for policy or regulations change, uptake by researchers and digital health technology users and developers, among other key stakeholders. In fact, it is desired that the results and outcomes of the project promote encouragements for change by strengthening ethics review processes and regulatory capacities for the responsible integration of digital technologies for clinical health research and practice.

The STRATEGIC project will provide a single-entry point for involved public organisations and policy makers to access all available solutions and training, facilitating the development of robust processes and promoting citizens' trust in digital health technologies. To this end, the already created assets of the partners in different partnerships across the African continent, will be leveraged for the project's exploitation. The STRATEGIC project aims at creating value from the transposition of its results into already existing ethics review infrastructure, bringing together NECs, NRAs researchers, ethicists, public authorities, policy makers and citizens in general. Five complementary distinct exploitation paths will support the core exploitation strategy which promotes the holistic platform developed in the project, as outlined in the table 4.

Furthermore, the STRATEGIC project will also provide insights that SSA countries can use to establish robust capacities for national health research policies and regulations to address ethical and legal issues of digital health technologies. The co-creation activities by stakeholders in AU and EU will promote mutual learning and cooperation regarding ethics and regulatory activities. It will also promote the transfer of innovative systems and or technologies for clinical research in Africa while considering culturally sensitive needs and contexts.

Table 4: Summary of path, strategic goals and measures for exploitation activities of the STRATEGIC project

Path	Strategic Goals	Measures to be taken
Joint exploitation of responsible digital health technology framework	Establishing a viable route to adoption for STRATEGIC's framework.	Added-value plan elaboration & Joint Exploitation Agreements; e-community online for joint exploitation activities.
Joint exploitation of STRATEGIC's capacity development plan and resources	Promoting the adoption of the capacity development plan, training, centres and materials.	Added-value plan elaboration & Joint Exploitation Agreements; Foundation of at least a new legal entity (common among paths) for joint exploitation activities
Joint exploitation of Virtual Open Educational Resources Hub (VOER)	Wider adoption of the Virtual Open Educational Resources Hub among partners and interested parties.	Added-value plan elaboration & Joint Exploitation Agreements; Foundation of at least a new legal entity (common among paths) for joint exploitation activities or legacy partner taking forward the Hub.
Use cases (UCs) for Exploitation	Expanding and exploiting the use cases; Use of STRATEGIC's outcomes by other digital health innovators	Business case elaboration for each use case; added-value plan establishment, including cost-benefit analysis.

This will be done through scientific publications and conference presentations to disseminate results among research communities, achieving adoption of results by key organisations (public health institutions, NECs, NRAs, etc..) that can help to shape scientific progress of digital health technologies in a responsible manner. The STRATEGIC's e-community also provides sustainable scientific impact through continuous education and awareness programmes on the key results of the project. The central message for the scientific community is that responsibility in the design and deployment of digital health technologies in clinical research and practice is a key dimension of research excellence. A key capacity building measure will be a sustainable training programme for key stakeholders based on the experiences and expertise from the EU (e.g., the iRECS project and the TRREE programme) and the identified and prioritised approaches/frameworks that align well with African contexts, needs, expectations, principles and values so as to improve excellence and increase societal trust in the research and innovation of health technologies.

2.6. Community, Advocacy and Ecosystem Building

STRATEGIC will create an e-Community for stakeholders from policy, digital health technology industry and academia to increase the pool of young research ethics experts and facilitate

exchange and mentoring, as well as developing a technology research ethics trainer community to stimulate discourse on technology research ethics and facilitate good practice. This task will also develop and implement a targeted advocacy strategy to promote the STRATEGIC solutions and co-creation of training modules. This will involve engaging with African Union, regional and national policy makers as well as stakeholders in academia and industry. The community-building efforts here will build on and extend the work started by EU projects ENERI and currently expanded by iRECs. Virtual Open Educational Resources Hub (VOER) will also be exploited to disseminate STRATEGIC's outcomes. The e-community will lead to the formation of a new legal entity that will become a legacy partner taking forward the Hub.

2.7. Coordination and other challenges

The coordination challenge that STRATEGIC addresses is that building research ethics and regulatory capacity in sub-Saharan Africa not only presupposes the identification and development of an appropriate approach and defined framework, but also sustainable cooperation with main actors (e.g., NECs and NRAs) and key stakeholders (e.g., healthcare workers, patients, industry, civil society groups) to ensure approaches are actually implemented and further refined in line with ongoing technological progress. To ensure this, the consortium brings together a large and unique combination of expertise in Research Ethics, Technology Research Ethics and appropriate engagement strategies and approaches. This enables STRATEGIC to not only co-create culturally sensitive human-centred research ethics approaches that will facilitate and promote responsible research and innovation, (to improve/strengthen the ethics review ecosystem in Africa) but that also can strengthen and sustain established capacity development models as well as work towards improving policy and regulations.

The STRATEGIC project partners bring also a combination of knowledge and networking experience which can help to connect to relevant projects such as iRECS, i-Consent, PREPARED, TechEthos, SHERPA, SIENNA, PANELFIT and ENERI. These connections will allow for mutual learning and reflections and synergies.

The STRATEGIC project will also strengthen capacities by developing and implementing training plans and materials for NECs and NRAs in ways that align with socio-cultural contexts, interests, needs, values and principles of people in SSA

3. IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS AND MEANS OF VERIFICATION

Table 5 aims to delineate the lead partners who will be responsible for implementing and supervising different activities of communication, dissemination and exploitation described in this document (above). Additionally, it also describes the expected periodicity of activities and action implementation. The annual reports produced for the STRATEGIC project will describe achievements and challenges in the implementation of these activities and actions.

Table 5: Summary of communication, dissemination and exploitation activities/actions periodicity within STRATEGIC project and lead partners responsible for their implementation and supervision

Communication & Dissemination Activities/Action	Lead Partner Institution Supervising Implementation (name of person from the partner Institutions responsible for implementation)	Periodicity of Activities/Action
Website	UoN (Bernd Stahl)	Periodic update of the webpage depending on emerging newsworthy topics from different project activities and actions or from other related projects
Social media / LinkedIn	UEM (Mohsin Sidat)	Weekly update of the LinkedIn platform to share emerging newsworthy topics from different project activities and actions or from other related projects
Quarterly Newsletter	UEM (Mohsin Sidat)	Quarterly produced and disseminated with different project related issues and newsworthy topics
Project Blogs	All	Monthly blogs will be scheduled with all partners making contributions
Peer-review papers	UoN (Damian Eke, Bernd Stahl)	Lead and monitor partners' interest in peer reviewed papers and guide their publication (choice of journal, relevance of topics, etc.)
Presentations at third-party events (conferences and similar events)	UoN (Damian Eke, Bernd Stahl)	Lead and monitor partners' interest in presenting at third party events (choice of events, relevance of topics, etc.)
Networking with similar initiatives/projects	UEM (Mohsin Sidat/Celso Give)	Identify opportunities for networking and guide partners' to take advantage of it and share STRATEGIC project activities & outputs
Workshops/Webinars	UEM (Mohsin Sidat/Celso Give)	Take advantage of workshops and webinars to share the STRATEGIC project outputs

4. FINAL REMARKS

By combining the co-creation of a responsible research and innovation approach, testing this approach with active use cases and development and implementation of capacity development plans and materials with stakeholders, the STRATEGIC project will improve the functionality and performance of NECs and NRAs for responsible integration of digital health technologies into clinical research and practice. It will improve the efficiency of established systems to adhere to international standards in assessing digital health technologies; promote ethical data practices. STRATEGIC's e-community will become a sustainable avenue of contributing to policy advancements; providing guidance and guidelines for the responsible design and deployment of digital health technologies in SSA.



**This project has received funding from the
European Union's Horizon Europe program Global Health EDCTP3 Joint Undertaking
Under Grant Agreement no. 101145644**