



Unification of treatments and interventions for tinnitus patients

Proposal No.: 848261

Deliverable D8.1: Dissemination and Communication Plan

Deliverable No. D23 – WP8

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1 Introduction

The current document aims to present the dissemination and communication strategy that UNITI will employ to achieve promotion, impact and facilitation of exploitation and sustainability prospects. In order to define the most adequate methods to disseminate and communicate UNITI, this plan focuses on the main dissemination and communication objectives, on the key messages to deliver, and the target audiences of the project outcomes.

In this context, the present report

- describes the dissemination approach,
- elaborates on the goals of the plan and the key messages established and disseminated during project,
- explains the tools and channels that will be used,
- identifies stakeholders that constitute the project's target audience,
- sets the ground to ensure the project's sustainability after its completion.

The dissemination and communication plan is intended to be a live document, meaning that it will be regularly assessed and updated based on the forthcoming project's achievements and contributions from partners. It establishes the individual partners' responsibilities and timelines, guidelines and suggestions for dissemination and communication under the continuous monitoring of the "WP8: Dissemination, Communication and Exploitation" leader.

2 Dissemination and Communication Strategy

Dissemination of UNITI aims to raise awareness of the project among the target audiences of specific stakeholder groups that constitute project's community, thus maximising the outreach of the project activities and results. The goal is to ensure that adequate information and key messages are shared with the appropriate audiences on a timely basis, utilising the most effective channels and methods available.

Since all project partners are involved in the dissemination and communication efforts, emphasis is given on managing and engaging the consortium to participate in the dissemination activities fostering awareness, transferring key messages and achieving impact, especially in their own countries and communities.

According to the Grant Agreement, **Dissemination** and **Communication** activities are referred to under different articles. Even though both terms may overlap and fuel each other, they still feature some distinctive characteristics:

Article 29** states that **dissemination consists of disclosing a project's results to third parties by appropriate means, while the protection of data and inner-project confidentiality are respected. Using scientific publications and other similar mediums project partners have to circulate knowledge among stakeholders that can make use of such knowledge, thus enabling the value of project's results to be potentially wider than the original focus. Hence, the dissemination procedures seek to share material mainly with organisations relevant to the project, such as **research institutions, policy makers, NGOs, corporations, associations, etc.** who can exploit the results of the project. Despite dissemination aiming in the same direction as exploitation, the content is more specific and scientific. Dissemination includes various **reports**



created during the project, conference presentations, workshops, newsletters to Stakeholders, synergies with EU-related projects and more.

Article 38.1 states that **communication has to promote both project's actions and its results** by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in strategic and effective methods. Partners have to deploy a communication strategy throughout a project's duration, in order to make the research activities known publicly **in a way that such actions can be understood also by non-specialist audiences**. Also, the communication activities must address the public policy perspective of EU research and innovation funding, by considering aspects such as the transnational cooperation in a European consortium (i.e. how working together has allowed to achieve more than otherwise possible), or the scientific excellence and the contribution to solving societal challenges. Communication includes **media publications about UNITI's aspects, press releases and newsletters, social media promotion, offline and tangible material like posters and brochures**.

Bearing in mind the above, UNITI's dissemination and communication strategy incorporates both actions into its planning and aims at answering the following key questions:

- **Why** to disseminate and communicate?
- **What** to disseminate and communicate?
- **When** to dissemination and communicate?
- To **Whom** to disseminate and communicate?
- **How** to disseminate and communicate?

The following sub-chapters elaborate on the enlisted questions to provide a detailed overview about UNITI's dissemination and communication plan.

2.1 Why to Disseminate and Communicate

This part is set to provide context regarding why UNITI needs to be disseminated and communicated. The rationale for a carefully designed dissemination and communication plan is based on the requirements for **attaining the maximum possible impact for the project** by reaching a variety of audiences and communicating the right message to the right audience. UNITI incorporates a multifaceted plan with overlapping activities which will engage different target groups, because this is essential for the project's development steps in terms of awareness promotion, feedback and collaboration attainment, and cultivation of sustainability and exploitation prospects.

As a result, the objectives of the dissemination strategy are formed to jointly satisfy specific needs. The goals of the present planning can be identified as below:

- **Engagement of stakeholders:** to achieve its ends, UNITI has to seek to engage with a body of third parties which will act as potential contributors to the development, evaluation, uptake and exploitation of its outcomes and encourage their participation to the project's actions on a systematic and regular basis.
- **Awareness building:** to secure a certain level of impact and promote a European collaborative approach to research and innovation, it is crucial for UNITI to work towards the cultivation of its awareness status in the diverse environments of the target audiences.
- **Feedback extraction:** as UNITI is a multidisciplinary project leading research on tinnitus, it is expected to produce a series of reports and tools. It is purposeful to



disseminate such materials towards niche audiences that will grasp such knowledge and provide valuable critical insights about it.

- **Collaboration fostering:** as UNITI is operating in a cross-European and multidisciplinary level, there are multiple entities which would be of high influence on the project in terms of creating a network of organisations that operate on the same level and domain.

The above aspects comprise the main objectives of UNITI's dissemination strategy and dictate the methodology and the targeting of the dissemination and communication actions.

2.2 What to Disseminate and Communicate

This section refers to the key outcomes that should be disseminated and communicated during the various phases of the project. In order to meet the aforementioned goals, the dissemination and communication plan should set the goal on what messages should be promoted.

The following **key UNITI outcomes/messages** have been identified for dissemination and communication:

- **UNITI clinical trials:** UNITI will conduct a multicentre Randomised Clinical Trial (RCT) with a combination of interventions, including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Sound therapy, Structured Counselling and Hearing Aid fitting. Each clinical centre will have a target of recruiting 100 patients over a period of 9 months. During the recruitment period, dissemination will focus on engaging the appropriate number of patients.
- **Unified database schema** containing demographical, epidemiological, audiological, electrophysiological and medical history data, validated questionnaires, real-time data collected from e/m-health applications and treatment progression features: All UNITI clinical partners have large tinnitus patients' databases. The main outcome here will be a **fully functional and GDPR compliant database containing more than 600 parameters per patient**, available in pan-European level for research purposes.
- **Tinnitus mobile application** on the basis of apps that have already been developed by researchers from UHREG and UKW, with more than 3,500 registered users and more than 39,000 questions answered. The main outcome here in UNITI will be an integrated application, which will both monitor progress of each patient and provide tips for structured counselling, as well as tailored sound therapy, based on the individual tinnitus frequency range for each participant and tailor-made use of modified (filtered) music. It will be used by at least 100 RCT patients and 5,000 overall, through dissemination channels.
- **Genetic and blood biomarkers related to tinnitus:** two existing biobanks, one in Sweden (KI) and one in Spain (GRA), are currently being analysed for common and rare variants respectively, in order to identify tinnitus-related genetic biomarkers. UNITI will capitalise on these biobanks and perform high throughput Whole Exome Sequencing (WES) in well-characterised chronic tinnitus cases to identify pathogenic allelic variants. Additionally, the UNITI consortium will - for the first time - use Proximity Extension Assay (PEA) in tinnitus samples for the identification of blood biomarkers for tinnitus.
- **UNITI Decision Support System:** UNITI will be integrating all available parameters (epidemiological, clinical, laboratory, genetics and socioeconomic), in a user-friendly Decision Support System (DSS) as a front-end, able to suggest specific examinations according to individual patient's profile and optimal treatment strategy based on the sum of collected data.



- UNITI will conduct an analysis on the **socio-economic impact of tinnitus** in Europe and on the resulting **economic benefits of UNITI**.

2.3 To Whom to Disseminate and Communicate

In order to be effective, the project's dissemination and communication strategy will be selective about the choice of audience and will be strategic about its approach to that audience. A scattergun approach (using all possible avenues throughout the life of the project) may hit the right desk at the right time, but a targeted and strategic approach is likely to be more fruitful (and less costly in terms of time and financial resources).

UNITI will involve various stakeholders from different organisational, economic and social contexts. The core group of stakeholders is comprised by:

- **EU Health Care System**
 - Tinnitus patients and patient organisations
 - Clinical centres
 - Medical practitioners
- **Health insurance companies**
- **Regulatory Bodies / Policy Makers / the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (AHA) and Personalized Healthcare**
- **Scientific community**
 - Genetic research
 - Epidemiological research
- **SMEs** (Including data scientists)

2.4 When to Disseminate and Communicate

In order to ensure that the timing of activities is appropriate, we identify three dissemination and communication stages:

- **Early in the project**, dissemination and communication aims to ensure that the project is addressing the needs of the different target groups, and that is creating awareness and understanding of its activities both within the consortium and among peer groups. A dialogue mechanism with the target groups through interviews, and social media will be initiated, enabling them to provide constant feedback during the full course of the project. During this period dissemination and communication activities will also focus on the recruitment of tinnitus patients.
- **During the project**, dissemination and communication is about identifying lessons, particularly in receiving feedback from target groups and stakeholders, and adjusting the project's strategy and developed components in order to maximize effectiveness and efficiency. At this stage it is also important to inform the research community about the research results of the project and ensure appropriate peer review. Project research results will be published in high-quality journals and presented in workshops, seminars, and conferences. Online activities will ensure wide participation of the target audience in the project's activities.
- **At the end of the project**, dissemination and communication will publicise more generally the project's outputs, the lessons learnt, and the benefits gained. Such dissemination and communication will also aim to build up a constituency of support for the project's follow-up activities. Dissemination activities will focus on providing evidence to support the long-term sustainability of the UNITI solution.



2.5 How to Disseminate

The dissemination and communication plan is based on two levels of strategies for the dissemination of the project's intermediate / final as well as partial / global results and of its progress:

- The **consortium's overall strategy**, that is the dissemination and communication strategy in which the consortium plans and acts as a whole.
- The **individual strategy of each consortium member**, according to their specific type of organisation, infrastructure, role and resources in the project, etc.

The dissemination and communication strategy includes activities that can be divided into internal and external dissemination and communication according to the target audiences they are addressed to.

The **internal** dissemination and communication includes the instruments and activities that intend to give awareness of the results destined for the consortium members and the Advisory Board and that are not available to the public in general. This kind of dissemination includes:

- Project meetings and their resulting reports (physical, virtual)
- Information exchange e.g. through mailing lists
- A collaborative workspace document repository
- Video and phone conferencing
- Reports, publications, deliverables, etc.
- On-line collaboration through different means e.g. dissemination report form submission, regular WP and Task related meetings, online documents collaboration, blog posts and comments from partners, doodle polls etc.

The **external** dissemination and communication is referred to activities and means which create awareness of the project's partial and overall results and document the project's progress. The target of those dissemination activities is specific users and interest groups that have been identified above as well as the general public.

UNITI proposes a mixed approach for the effective dissemination of its aims and results, facilitated by a variety of activities, both external and internal and that is to be based on:

- achieving reputation or a "name in the field" by using the media (including social media), speaking at conferences and writing for journals;
- networking – making and sustaining personal contacts and sustainably and responsibly "selling" the project to other people who could prove to be useful contacts, for their benefit and that of all Stakeholders;
- capturing the interest of existing initiatives (e.g. TinnitusTalk, TinnitusHub, Tinnitus Research Initiative (TRI) etc.);
- establishing contacts and visiting decision-making units and attending EC workshops and info days; communicating with other project consortia; and
- being contactable, accessible and creative.

The general dissemination and communication activities that will be carried out in the project are listed in Table 1 below. A more detailed analysis is provided in Section 3.

Table 1: List of UNITI dissemination and communication activities

| Activities | | Main Means | |
|--|-----------------|---|--|
| Dissemination and Communication | Internal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Meetings (physical, virtual) ▪ Project Reports ▪ Publications, Deliverables (common templates) ▪ Internal Newsletter ▪ Online tools | |
| | External | Online dissemination and communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Website ▪ Social media channels (Twitter / Facebook / LinkedIn / Instagram / Research Gate / SlideShare channel) |
| | | Distribution of Promotion Materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Logo ▪ Publications in scientific/specialised magazines ▪ Press Releases ▪ Brochures, Posters ▪ Reports |
| | | Organisation/ Participation of/ in Events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participation and presentation of the UNITI project in conferences, workshops, exhibitions, symposia, etc. |
| | | Establishing Contacts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personal Contacts with Key Stakeholders ▪ Participation in Workshops/ Conferences ▪ Project Meetings (formal & informal) ▪ Targeting of Scientific Community, Authorities, Policy Makers ▪ Continuation activities |

3 Dissemination Tools

To effectively promote the aforementioned messages and address how they will reach the target audiences, the strategy must embed them into proper formats. That is, UNITI has to select what kind of tools and channels are going to be utilised to realise the dissemination and communication actions. Various online and offline means, direct and indirect, are necessary to make the project activities and results available to the target groups. Such methods are manifold, including online options (website, emails, social media), mass media and networks (media presence, social networks, partners' networks etc.), or offline tangible actions, like events, posters, brochures etc. Depending on the project's audiences the adequate set of methods is going to be jointly and comprehensively employed.

Below, there is a detailed description of the tools and channels that UNITI will utilise during its lifecycle.



3.1 Project's Visual Identity

The project's visual identity comprises several features and elements that are necessary for project's promotion and representation, including visual and textual key points:

UNITI logo: The project logo plays an important role in creating a project identity. It is included in all documents, dissemination materials, presentations in events and conferences and online channels.

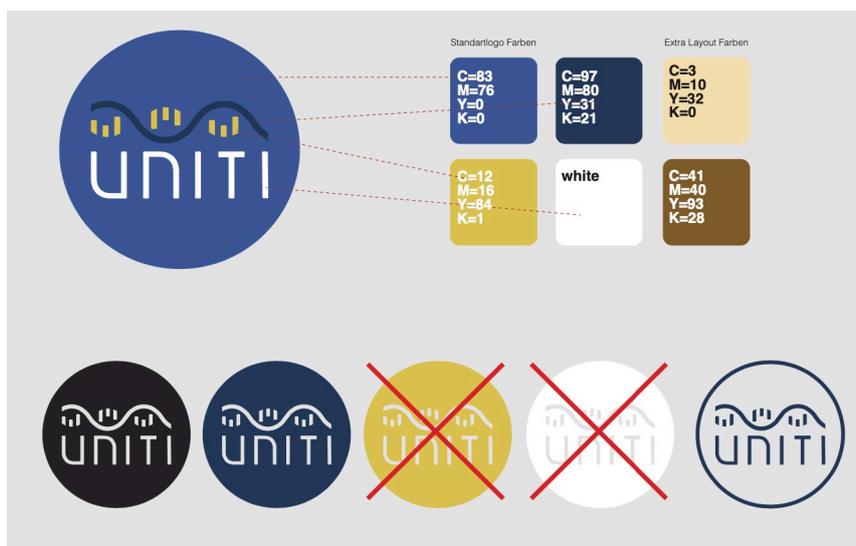


Figure 1: UNITI project logo

In any communication material, deliverable, presentation, etc. produced in the frame of the UNITI project, apart from the project logo, the flag of European Union will be illustrated.



Figure 2: EU flag

The EU flag will be always accompanied by the following statement: "This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, Grant Agreement Number 848261".

UNITI document templates: aligned with the logo's role, a specified set of format characteristics is fundamental. A great volume of deliverables, reports and presentations produced by project partners is going to be disseminated, so a defined template is prepared, in order to ensure professional diligence and compliance with EU's guidelines to all the project's documents, presentations and communications.

UNITI posters and flyers: The UNITI posters will be developed in English for all countries and in partners' local languages whenever needed. Hard copies will be made available in order to distribute them to events, which partners prepare or where participate in. Posters will be updated when new information is available.

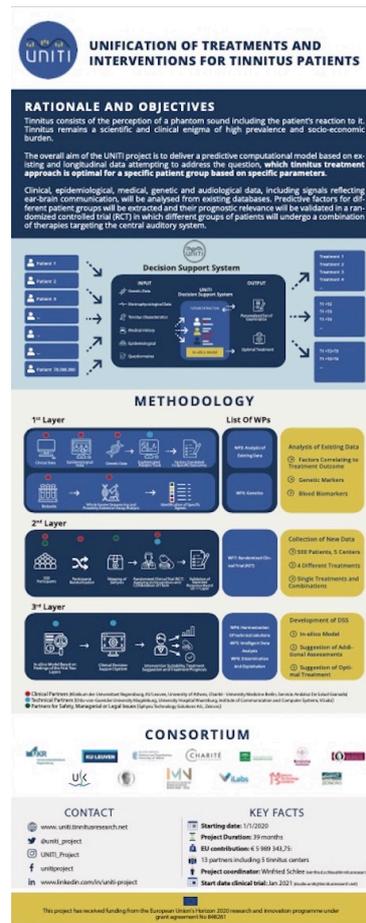


Figure 3: UNITI poster (1st version)

3.2 UNITI Website

The project's website (<https://uniti.tinnitusresearch.net>) operates as the major source about the project's identity, goals and actions, from which every stakeholder category can be informed. In other words, the UNITI website is a central dissemination and communication tool of the project providing the main results of the UNITI research and outcomes. In particular, the UNITI website aims at:

- Providing information about the project, its main objective, description of the produced outputs and knowledge, publications, latest news and upcoming events in which UNITI will participate, information about project partners and related projects introduction with a link to their websites, subscription to project's newsletter, social networks and contact info.
- Presenting information to stakeholders so that they will understand the reasons to get involved and how they can participate in the project's activities.

The Home Page of the UNITI website is presented below:

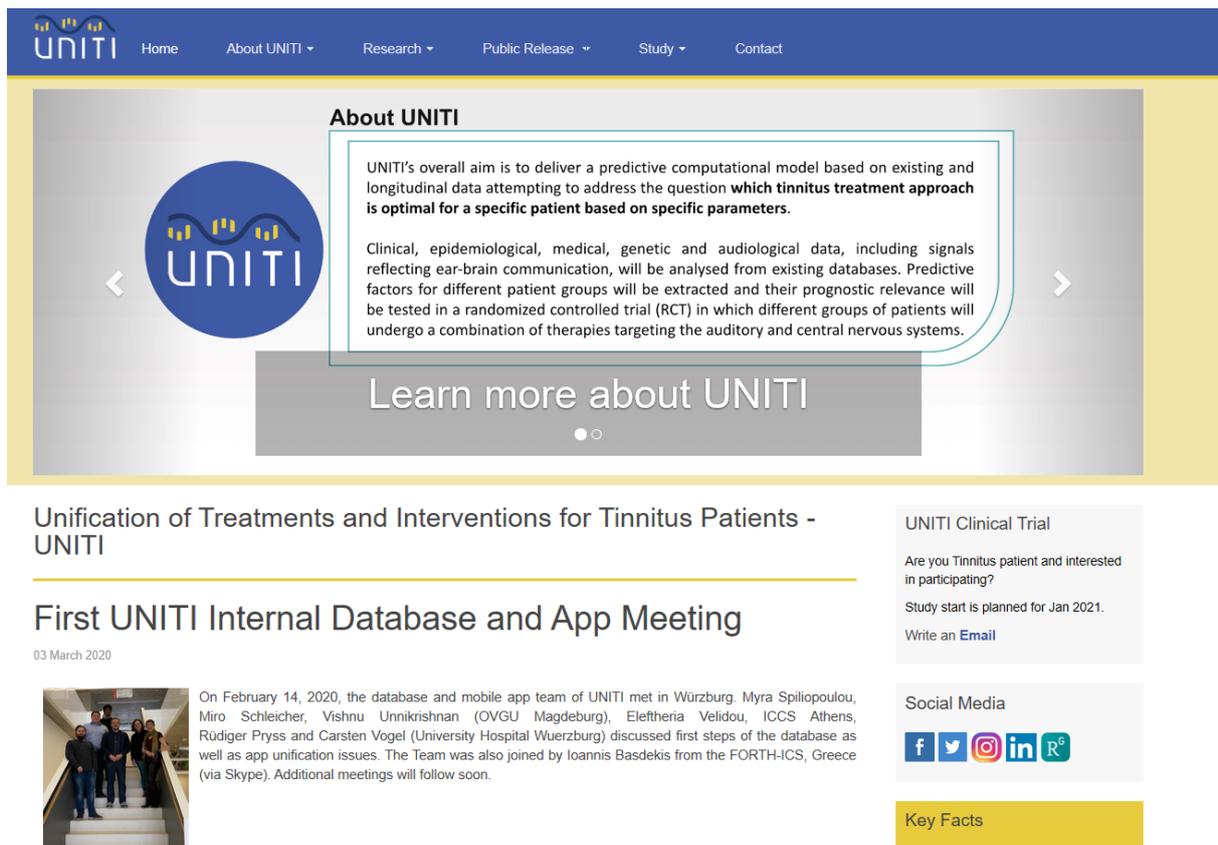


Figure 4: Home page of the UNITI website

3.3 UNITI Social Media Accounts

Social media platforms are a much-needed part of UNITI dissemination and communication strategy, as they allow engaging interested audiences with the project and representing its actions via an interactive and direct platform of communication. Through the use of social media, UNITI can manage a steady flow of information towards diverse audiences throughout its development and communicate continuously the outcomes of partners' work. This way, UNITI can sustain a well-informed group of target audiences, which will enhance the project's overall impact.

The UNITI dissemination and communication team has chosen to utilise social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Research Gate. Using content that matches the structural affordances of each platform and features SEO characteristics (e.g. relevant hashtags) combined with the partners' already existing accounts, UNITI accounts are going to be used to increase project's visibility in social networking sites.

The elaboration of social media as means to dissemination and communication of UNITI is based on a specific approach. The opted strategy reckons that social media constitute a modern tool that is constantly updated with news options and features. Hence, such platforms can promote the project and its activities by adapting its communication messages to any given new feature offering new possibilities for reaching relevant audiences.

The URLs of UNITI's social media accounts can be found below:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/unitiproject/>
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/uniti_project



- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/UNITI_Project/
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/uniti-project>
- Research Gate: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Uniti_Project

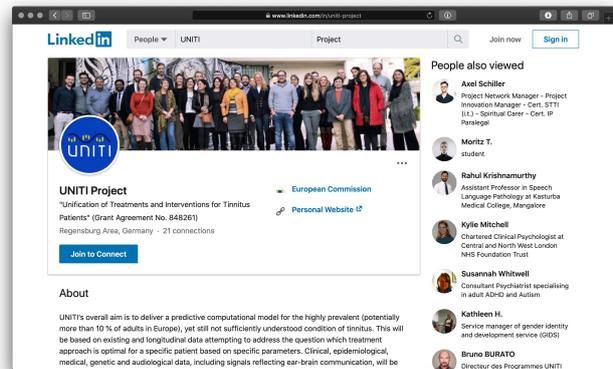
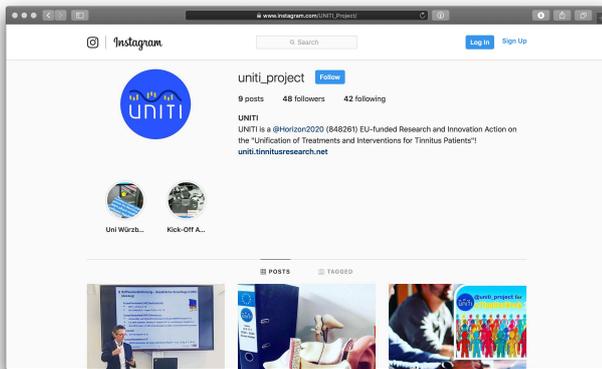
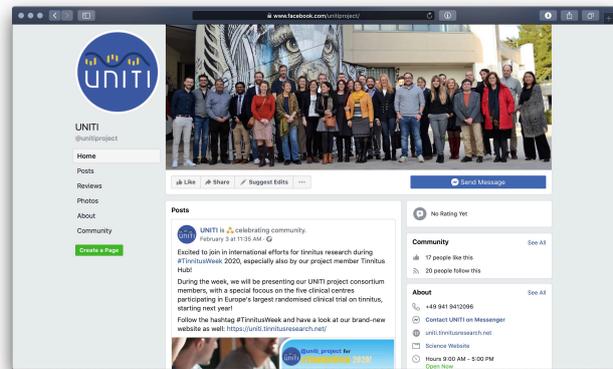


Figure 5: UNITI social media accounts

3.4 Media Content

In order to effectively disseminate and communicate UNITI towards the diverse set of stakeholders, the project's strategy has to leverage the promotion possibilities of mass media channels by formulating media materials that will be disseminated through the following channels:

Newsletters: to inform multiple target stakeholders about the project's progress, news and upcoming events and activities and to raise further awareness. This option is suitable for dissemination and communication purposes, due to its direct and periodic fashion. Also, media organisations can receive UNITI's newsletters, which will enable the project to be mediated to stakeholders via credible platforms of high prominence.

The circulation of UNITI newsletters will take place approximately every six months through mailing lists and contact databases accumulated by the project's partners. The content of such media is going to consist of information pieces about project's key completed actions, events where UNITI has been presented, international conferences and/or exhibitions and news about relevant projects and planned activities and events. All versions of the newsletters will be prepared in English and distributed digitally.



Press Releases: in addition to newsletters, press releases provide a more formal manner that is channelled towards national or European media organisations. UNITI will prepare press releases so as to raise awareness and disseminate information about the project. Press releases will refer to pivotal project events or relevant milestones. Such media material will be published on project's website, on UNITI's social media platforms and through press contacts of the partner organisations; translation of the content to more languages than English will be conducted where necessary.

Blog Entries: the periodic circulation of the above media content has to be complemented with a frequent and specific form of publication about UNITI's progression. Thus, the project will elaborate blogging as a dissemination and communication method that will provide updates in a sustainable frequency about the actions of Consortium members. In their majority, blog entries will refer to either UNITI's presence in networking events or UNITI's progress of work.

3.5 Publications

Publications are a significant element for UNITI dissemination strategy; they constitute a dissemination tool that informs and engages the UNITI community about and with the projects' procedures, methodologies and outcomes. The projected body of reports conducted by project partners, not only is going to fuel UNITI's development but also will facilitate its dissemination planning. This category consists of two overlapping elements:

Deliverable Reports: a considerable volume of partners' work efforts is focused on conducting research and producing reports. This material is valuable in terms of effective dissemination of the project's contribution to its particular field of tinnitus research. The public deliverable reports will be uploaded on an open access repository supported by European Commission, Zenodo¹.

Scientific Publications: drawing from the above report material, project partners will be devoted to the creation of scientific articles published in the international scientific literature, wherever possible. All partners acknowledge their common interest in publishing the knowledge to obtain recognition and to advance the state of knowledge in the field. In this respect, any partner who is considering preparing a publication for a scientific magazine, is strongly encouraged to contact other partners in order to work together in this publication. Especially when the content of the publication is a product of the collective work of the consortium (or of a sub-group of partners), the names of the respective people and partners should appear on the publication. The consortium will respect Article 29.2 of the Grant Agreement with regards to "Open access to scientific publications". Each beneficiary will ensure open access (free of charge online access for any user) to all peer-reviewed scientific publications relating to its results.

3.6 Participation in Events

An important part of the methods of UNITI's dissemination and communication is sourced on the real-life, interactive actions that will engage target audiences of UNITI with the project. In conjunction with the above tools and channels, UNITI is going to be promoted to the community of its Stakeholders in ways consisting of the following types of events.

Conferences, workshops and other events organised by 3rd parties: a plethora of activities regarding the developments on tinnitus and relative topics is taking place around the world.

¹ <https://zenodo.org>



Such events offer a significant opportunity for UNITI to be disseminated in environments where key stakeholders are gathered. Hence, it is valuable for UNITI's development and possible impact to participate in events organised by international agencies, fora and institutions which present an expertise around the domain that UNITI covers. Apart from conferences and workshops, which constitute the main types of events by third parties, project partners can also take part in varying events, like networking events, symposia and/or even webinars.

This part of dissemination and communication strategy depends on the good practices between project partners in terms of inner-project communication. That is, partners can share information they receive about upcoming events that present a subject closeness to UNITI's activities, thus updating the consortium about new dissemination and networking possibilities. Communicating such information can result in partners assisting other partners and collaboratively boost UNITI's impact on the projected areas of stakeholders.

An indicative list of events that have been already identified is presented below:

| A/A | Event title | Type of Event | Location | Date |
|-----|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 1 | Tinnitus Research Initiative (TRI 2020) | Conference | Vancouver, Canada | May 2020 Postponed due to COVID-19 health crisis |
| 2 | Society of Applied Neurosciences (SAN2020) | Conference | Thessaloniki, Greece | May 2020 Postponed to September 2020 due to COVID-19 health crisis |
| 3 | IEEE 33rd International Symposium on Computer Based Medical Systems | Conference | Minnesota – Rochester, US | June 2020 |
| 4 | IEEE Engineering in Medicine and Biological Conference | Conference | Montréal, Québec, Canada | June 2020 |
| 5 | 5 th International Conference on Hyperacusis | Conference | London, United Kingdom | June 2020 |
| 6 | XXXI Bárány Society Meeting | Conference | Madrid, Spain | September 2020 |
| 7 | Tinnitus Awareness Week | Event dedicated to tinnitus | Online | February 2021 |
| 8 | 44 th Association for Research in Otorhinolaryngology (ARO) Annual Midwinter Meeting | Conference | Florida, USA | February 2021 |
| 9 | Tinnitus Research Initiative (TRI 2021) | Conference | Dublin, Ireland | June 2021 |
| 10 | Tinnitus Research Initiative (TRI 2022) | Conference | not announced yet | not announced yet |



During the project lifetime we will identify more conferences that will be reported on the UNITI website.

3.7 Synergies with Other Projects and Initiatives

Consortium members will try to get in touch with other relevant projects and initiatives in order to gain knowledge, create awareness and investigate any potential availability for common activities and cooperation among them, from a “win-win” perspective. Similar projects in which UNITI partners already participate or are going to, may comprise a first pool of projects for possible synergies, since there will be an already established contact/ bond.

UNITI partners will take part in seminars and conferences organised by the European Commission or other EC funded projects (participation in Horizon 2020 and other EC events) and will try to exploit corresponding synergies.

The following is a preliminary list of initiatives and projects that will be contacted during the project:

- TinnitusTalk support forum <https://www.tinnitustalk.com>
- Tinnitus Research Initiative <https://www.tinnitusresearch.net>
- American Tinnitus Association (<https://www.ata.org>)
- British Tinnitus Association (<https://www.tinnitus.org.uk>)
- France Acouphène (<https://www.france-acouphenes.org/>)
- Relevant H2020 projects
 - ESIT project <https://esit.tinnitusresearch.net>
 - TIN-ACT (1 Nov 2017 – 31 Oct 2021) <https://tinact.eu>

3.8 UNITI Advisory Board

UNITI’s advisory board has been established to support the project in various phases and is composed by experts in the field that have been selected according to their specialisation.

Among the tasks of the members of the Advisory Board, which are related to the dissemination and communication of UNITI project, will be to:

- participate in consortium meetings/wider public events organised by the consortium partners, and in these events to link UNITI to other European and international research initiatives;
- act on opportunities to communicate the results of the project.

The advisory board consists of internationally known scientists in relevant fields (Prof. Koller: clinical trials, Prof. Elgoyhen: tinnitus, Prof. Shekhawat: audiology) two patient organizations (Hazel Goedhart from the international tinnitus patient forum TinnitusHub and Holger Crump from the local German self-group "Hast Du Töne"), a successful spin-off company for smartphone coaching apps (Timon Oberholzer, WIA GmbH), a hearing aid company that also sponsors 400 hearing aids for the RCT (Ronny Hannemann, Sivantos GmbH), and an expert for medical software licensing (Marc Holfelder, LA2).



The following table presents the names of UNITI Advisory Board.

Table 2: UNITI Advisory Board

| No | Name | Institution | Country |
|----|--------------------------------|--|-------------|
| 1 | Prof. Dr. Ana Belén Elgoyhen | Instituto de Investigaciones en Ingeniería Genética y Biología Molecular, University of Buenos Aires , Argentina | Argentina |
| 2 | Hazel Goedhart | TinnitusHub , United Kingdom | UK |
| 3 | Prof. Dr. phil. Michael Koller | Center of Clinical Trials, University Hospital Regensburg , Germany | Germany |
| 4 | Prof. Dr. Raj Shekhawat | UCL Ear Institute London , UK | UK |
| 5 | Holger Crump | Patient Organisation "Hast Du Töne" , Bergisch Gladbach, Germany | Germany |
| 6 | Dr. Ronny Hannemann | WS Audiology Erlangen , Germany | Germany |
| 7 | Marc Holfelder | LA2 GmbH Erlangen, Germany | Germany |
| 8 | Timon Oberholzer | WIA Ventures GmbH Gränichen, Switzerland | Switzerland |

3.9 Utilising Partner's Experience and Existing Networks

The UNITI consortium has been carefully constructed to ensure balance and complementarities between partners and provision of the most efficient and effective response to the call's demands.

The UNITI consortium is composed of outstanding European researchers from a large variety of disciplines such as audiology, biomedical engineering, cognitive neuroscience, data mining, epidemiology, genetics, otolaryngology, software engineering, psychology, psychiatry. The researchers of UNITI hold strong publication records (PNAS, Lancet Neurology, Nature Neuroscience Reviews). The partners have already published over 50 papers together and serve/have served as editors/reviewers of leading scientific journals (Nature Reviews, Lancet, Cerebral Cortex, PLoS, Brain, JAMA, BMJ, BMC, IEEE) and regular advisors to national or international agencies (German Research Foundation (DFG), Swiss National Foundation (SNF), EU-FP7, European Science Foundation). This team of researchers is complemented by strong SME partners, which bring specialized know-how into the team to ensure the high-quality conduction of the RCT (ZEI), safeguard data protection of the patient data (SPX) and guarantee the international dissemination of the results and commercial exploitation of the developed services (VIL). This team will be consulted by a group of selected advisors, which includes relevant stakeholders and experts that want to help UNITI to become a successful and sustainable project. As this multinational multidisciplinary consortium, the UNITI partners bring all skills and knowledge needed to create the maximum possible impact from UNITI outcomes based also on specific guidelines (Appendix 2: UNITI Guide on Dissemination and Communication) communicated to the consortium.

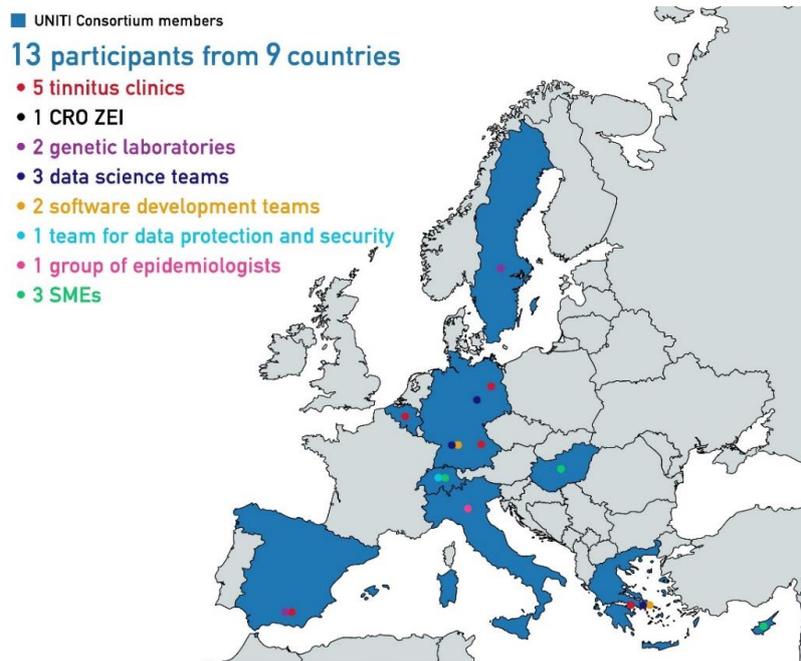


Figure 6: UNITI Consortium

Consortium Strongholds:

- More than 50 publications by authors from at least two consortium members
- 3 authors of multidisciplinary European guidelines for tinnitus (KUL, CHA, UOA)
- Coordinator of Tinnitus Research Initiative which is the major reference point of tinnitus research and clinical community (UHREG)
- 2 members (UHREG, OVGU) are in the organizational boards of influential conferences in the field (Tinnitus Research Initiative, Computer-based medical systems)
- UHREG is in the editorial board of the Textbook for Tinnitus (>300.000 downloads), which will be updated in the next two years
- Well-balanced gender distribution among the PIs (6 female, 7 male)
- Owner of the biggest tinnitus database, <https://www.tinnitus-database.de/> (UHREG)
- Owners of the biggest tinnitus biobank, <https://stop.ki.se/> (KI)
- Many partners have already collaborated together in the TINNET COST Action, which was a major initiative for the standardization of tinnitus research (UHREG, KUL, UOA, CHA, GRA, KI, OVGU, UKW (formerly ULM), MIL). The coordinator of the TINNET Action (Schlee) will also be the coordinator of UNITI. TINNET was presented as a COST success story (https://issuu.com/costprogramme/docs/cost_ar2018).
- All clinical centres have ample access to tinnitus patients (e.g. CHA > 6,000, UHREG > 400).
- The partner from KUL is a leading specialist for single case methodology (Vlaeyen)
- The geneticists (KI, GRA) are the leading experts on genetics in tinnitus.
- The technical science partners have won multiple awards for their implementations of mHealth solutions (e.g. IEEEAI&MS2017, ICBHI2017).
- The medical and technical partners have demonstrated successful inter-disciplinary cooperation.



4 Monitoring and Evaluation

UNITI elaborates a specific evaluation strategy to monitor its dissemination and communication efforts. The goal of such option is to provide concrete evidence about the effectiveness of UNITI's dissemination and exploitation efforts, as well as insights on how to amplify its reach and impact. The periodic review and update of the project's Dissemination Plan will depend on the data sourced in the dissemination and communication reports based on the discussed set of assessments.

To this end, VIL as the leader of WP8 is responsible overseeing the progress of overall UNITI's dissemination and communication activities. The monitoring and evaluation tools of such responsibility are going to assess UNITI's efforts in qualitative and quantitative ways. The procedures to be implemented are the following:

- **Action plan creation and communication inside the consortium.** A specific list of activities will concentrate all the projected dissemination and communication actions which partners have to undertake. This list will comprise pre-defined and scheduled tasks, but it will also include partners' individual plans for dissemination and communication activities which due to their nature cannot be precisely pre-organised, like the participation to upcoming conferences and networking events. This database will organise the activities on their whole in order for each partner to know what they are supposed to do and when. In addition, based on this inclusive schedule partners will receive bimonthly updates by VIL about their dissemination and communication tasks.
- **Dissemination and communication activities reporting by all partners.** When an opportunity for a dissemination activity emerges, partners should notify WP8 leader (VIL) and the coordinator (UHREG) about it. The Dissemination team (VIL and UHREG) will document such action accordingly and provide any necessary assistance (e.g. guidelines, tips for better communication etc.). What is more, upon the completion of any form of their assigned dissemination activity, partners have to inform UHREG and VIL to fill in the specific dissemination reporting form (Appendix 1: UNITI Dissemination Reporting) so that a robust book-keeping of dissemination and communication efforts is implemented. UNITI is using an appropriate template where all specific information on the type of the activity and a series of simple, yet necessary, details of it is included.
- **Monitoring of participation in events.** As mentioned above, activities within the dissemination and communication framework will be carefully evaluated in order to ensure the best possible dissemination of the project. Examples of such monitoring include guidelines to participating partners to inform them on how to communicate UNITI (tips for photos taken from events, UNITI's banners etc.) and/or assistance with presentations preparation.
- **Statistics of visibility, traffic, reach and engagement rates of UNITI's website and social media platforms.** This will allow partners to better understand the most appropriate timing, communication style and target audience of each message. Furthermore, such metrics are essential for planning re-adjustments.

Drawing from the content of the Grant Agreement of UNITI, the dissemination and communication plan is also formulated according to the initial indications included to GA's section about dissemination and communication of results. That is, the organisation of activities, along with their subsequent distribution between project partners is compliant with what has been already been set between the consortium and the European Commission.



As a result, the planning follows the Grant Agreement’s information and elaborates on how the predefined outline is going to be specifically scheduled and updated according to the afore-discussed strategy. To this end, the presented tools and channels of UNITI’s dissemination and communication are matched with the objectives found on the Grant Agreement of project. Below, the table from the Grant Agreement comprises the general course of dissemination and communication actions throughout the UNITI lifecycle.

| Purpose | Action | Audience size estimated | Indicators of success |
|--|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Promote UNITI to the general public | Webpages: UNITI will have its own webpage and will also be promoted on the webpages of all beneficiaries. | 5,000 – 10,000 unique visitors | UNITI mentioned on > 14 webpages |
| | Internet forum on tinnitus: The TinnitusTalk forum is run by TinnitusHub; their director, Hazel Goedhart, is part of the UNITI advisory board. TinnitusTalk has over 2.5 Million new visitors per year. | >2,5 Mio | UNITI at least 4 times per year on TinnitusTalk |
| | Radio interviews: at national radio stations. | 500,000 | 3 radio interviews |
| | Press releases to international science journalists: UHREG, together with the Tinnitus Research Initiative maintains an email list of international science journalists interested in tinnitus. | 100,000 | 3 UNITI press releases |
| | Researcher’s Night: The UNITI consortium participates regularly in the European Researcher’s night and will present UNITI there. In addition, there is also a national Greek researcher’s night. | 5,000 – 10,000 | 3 international and 3 national researchers’ nights |
| Raise awareness for the chronic tinnitus disorder | The Tinnitus Awareness Week is organized on an annual basis, always in February. Three large patient organizations (TinnitusHub, British Tinnitus Association, and the American Tinnitus Association) are working together with TRI and UHREG (Schlee) to raise the awareness for the chronic disorder of tinnitus among the general public. | > 200,000 | 3 Tinnitus Awareness Weeks, 2020- 2022 |
| Promote UNITI for the international research community | Communication with written material to the members of the institutions participating in UNITI in the seven languages of the consortium plus English. | >1,000 | 3 Flyers, 2 Brochures and 4 Posters |
| | International Events and Conferences: Participation in European and international conferences in the health and technical sciences, e.g. the annual meeting of the Tinnitus Research Initiative (TRI, organized by UHREG), Computer-based Medical Systems (CBMS, MAG is PC chair of this conference), IEEE Engineering in Medicine and Biological | >1,000 | > 25 oral and poster presentations and 2 keynote lectures |



| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------|--|
| | Conference (EMBC). | | |
| | Open access scientific publications: UNITI results will be published in peer-reviewed scientific open access journals. In addition, a special topic on tinnitus will organized by the UNITI members. With an earlier research topic on tinnitus, members of the consortium attracted over 2 million readers (http://journal.frontiersin.org/researchtopic/4725/towards-an-understanding-of-tinnitus-heterogeneity). | >2,000,000 | 15 open access journal publication, 1 special issue on tinnitus |
| Disseminate findings of UNITI | Wikipedia articles: The Wikipedia articles on tinnitus and its treatments will be updated in the seven languages of the consortium plus English | 100,000 – 200,000 | 3 Wikipedia articles |
| | Social Media and Social Research Networks: Participation and contribution to the public health policy community, audiological communities, biomedical communities and Social Research Networks (i.e. LinkedIn, ResearchGate, Mendeley). Twitter will be used to publish news, UNITI achievements, etc. and stay connected to the worldwide scientific community. An account and a project group will be created to Twitter, LinkedIn, ResearchGate, Facebook and Mendeley. These will be done by tools for launching social campaigns and collecting feedback on policies. | >100,000 | 5 accounts on social networks, over 40 connections on other networks |
| | Traditional communication channels: The consortium will further make use of traditional channels including non-specialized magazines and interviews to newspapers. | >10,000 | 10 articles to national non-specialised magazines |
| | Educational video: Educational videos will be developed, published on YouTube and promoted via the social media channels of the consortium and the participating institutions. The videos will be produced in the seven languages of the consortium plus English. | >1,000 | 2 educational videos |
| Collaboration with other EU projects | The UNITI project will also plan and account for concentration activities with other H2020, Erasmus+, MCSA, and COST- funded projects on tinnitus, chronic disorders and genetics to exploit synergies with other projects. | 100 | Establish synergies with at least more than 3 EU projects |



Appendix 1: UNITI Dissemination Reporting



Dissemination report

Name(s) and/or Affiliation(s)

Type of activity

Title of activity / slogan

Title of the event (if applicable)

Venue (if applicable)

Date

Title of the presentation (if applicable)

url of the activity (if applicable)

url of the publication (if applicable)

Type of audience reached below. Please select more than one type ONLY if applicable, up to a maximum of 3. Please indicate ESTIMATED no of persons reached per type of audience (EC request)

| Industry | Medical Organisations | Research Community | Policy Makers | Society (Customers, Civil groups, general public) | Media | Other |
|----------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------|---|--------|--------|
| Number | Number | Number | Number | Number | Number | Number |

Please copy below any photos or copy relevant links (e.g. to videos, presentation files, announcement screenshots, etc.)

Comments

Would you like to report any information about the outcome of the activity in relation to UNITI benefit?



Appendix 2: UNITI Guide on Dissemination and Communication

This informal guide acts as a reminder checklist for partners to contribute to the project's dissemination and communication plan during the whole project duration. It will be crosschecked by the coordinator (UHREG) and the dissemination leader (VIL) during every partners meeting where a relevant presentation of dissemination activities will take place. The UNITI dissemination and communication guide is the following:

1. Inform UHREG and VIL (briefly via email) about any dissemination or communication activity related to UNITI, i.e.: Presentation, Publication, Participation in events. etc.
2. Inform UHREG and VIL about relevant events, where UNITI partners could participate (e.g. Conferences, Seminars etc.), so that events database can be updated respectively.
If necessary, arrangements could be made so that UNITI will be represented.
3. Collect photos, videos, from all UNITI activities (full documentation): meetings, workshops, seminars, press conferences, etc. Send them to UHREG and VIL to be used in publicity material (e.g. project newsletters, videos, etc.). Take care that there are no third party-intellectual property rights.
4. Use in all of your communications (deliverables, presentations, newsletters, etc.) the UNITI logo, the EU flag and the statement "This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, Grant Agreement Number 848261".
5. To avoid conflicts, co-ordinate with other partners and inform UHREG on intention to publish from UNITI. Always mention the financing body (EU / Horizon 2020).
6. Invite local policy makers in appropriate projects stages and inform them on project's progress. Record events (videos - photos). Send them to UHREG and VIL.
7. Forward Press releases, Newsletters and other materials to your contacts that might be interested to UNITI's objectives and thematic interests.
8. Feel free to contribute to UNITI Blog with an article about your work in the project, the progress, etc.
9. Feel free to provide material for regularly updating the UNITI website.
10. Follow UNITI's social media pages (Facebook, twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Research Gate), as follower. Monitor the announcements and posts, "like" them, comment on them. Make your own posts on UNITI's social media accounts. Connect with people. Initiate the dialogue or take part in it.