Communication toolkit with a suite of templates for project communication

MATS Deliverable 7.3

Summary

In this deliverable D7.3, the MATS internal communication platform and the MATS materials, channels, and main tools for external communication are presented. D7.3 also serves as the go-to document for all project partners for information on project branding and available materials. The document will be updated regularly when new materials, channels and tools are adopted.

In addition to the dedicated project channels and tools managed by WP7, all project partners are expected to use their own communication channels to communicate and disseminate MATS project news and results. All partners are responsible for participating in project communications, sharing the work they have done and disseminating the results. The WP7 team maintains a supportive and continuous dialogue on communication activities with all consortium partners.

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[1] R = Report, P = Prototype, D = Demonstrator, O = Other

[2] PU = Public, CO = Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)

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1 Introduction

Effective communication and engagement are an integral component of MATS. In this deliverable D7.3, the WP7 'Project Management and Communication' team outlines the 'Communication Toolkit'. The toolkit includes 1) the MATS internal communication platform that facilitates communicating and sharing among MATS project partners, and 2) the MATS materials, channels, and tools for external communication that promote the project, its activities, and results towards a wide range of external audiences and stakeholders.

The 'Communication Toolkit' also serves as the go-to document on project branding and available materials for all project partners.

D7.3 will be updated regularly when new materials, channels and tools are adopted by the project partners. It complements D7.2 'Communication Plan'.

All the materials described in this document are shared with all project partners through the project's intranet, the MS Teams 'MATS' channel.

2 Project internal communication

We use the MS Teams as the intranet for MATS. The MS Teams 'MATS' channel is facilitated by the project management team (PMT; UH). All consortium participants can access it after receiving an invitation from the PMT.

Figure 1 shows the internal communication platform of the project by a web snapshot.
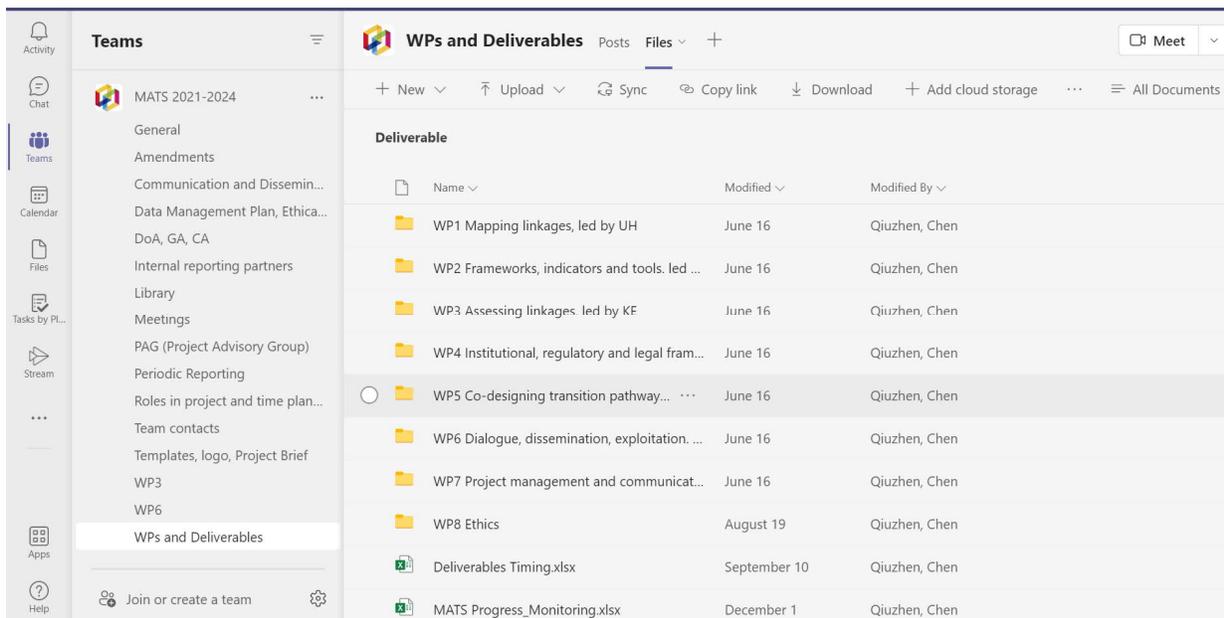
Figure 1
Screen capture of the MATS intranet

Once connected to MATS's MS Teams, project partners can browse, add, store, and modify the project-related files and information. The site is a living space that is updated based on the members' suggestions and the project's needs.

2.1 Contents of MATS intranet

The MS Teams 'MATS' channel enables partners to find all important project documents (for example, Description of Action/DoA, Grant Agreement/GA, and Consortium Agreement/CA) and to store and share information on their work in a secure manner.

At the current stage, the intranet site includes the following contents (it is kept up to date):

- DoA, GA, CA: this channel contains the folders of GA, CA, and the files of DoA Annex 1 part A and part B.

- Team contacts: A list of all partners team members is uploaded to this channel and can be updated by each partner's leader.

- Templates, logo, Project Brief: this channel includes folders of Logo and templates, and the file of MATS project brief. The logo folder contains MATS logo in eps, jpg, pdf, and png formats, as well as colour manual. The EU emblem is also included. The templates folder contains MATS's ppt template and respective Word templates for deliverables of reporting and discussing paper.

- Meetings: in this channel, we store and update the meeting records of MATS. All materials in each time meeting are stored in a separate folder. At this stage, we have the kick-off for the administrative team in June, the kick-off for the partners leaders in July, and the project meeting in September 2021. the agendas, presentations, video, and chat recordings are included in each meeting.

- WPs and Deliverables: this channel contains deliverables of each WP that have been uploaded to the EC Portal SyGMa. In addition, the excel file 'Deliverable timing' and the excel file 'MATS progress monitoring' are included.

- Work plan amendments: this channel contains all documents related to proposed amendments to the Grant Agreement.

- Project Advisory Group (PAG): this channel contains all six PAG members information, and all relevant materials (agendas, minutes and presentations) of the PAG meetings.

- Roles in project and time planning: this channel includes the files 'roles of partners in MATS' and 'Timing of WPs, tasks, milestones and deliverables (Gantt chart) in MATS'.

- Work packages (WP1-WP6): these channels are created by the partners who lead the WPs. By doing so, they can use the channels to store,

share, and discuss their WP drafts and any other information that is important for their WP work but does not fit to put in other channels.

- Library: this channel contains all external literature relevant to the project.

- Communication and Dissemination: this channel contains communication plan, communication toolkits, and a living document for recording MATS publication lists, dissemination, and communication activities. We will regularly evaluate our communication activities and encourage partner to share their experiences in organising different activities. As required by the European Commission, all communication activities are collected in this joint online database, and the document update is available to all partners. In addition, data from MATS' social media accounts and analytics from the MATS website are used to analyse the effectiveness and reach of information posted. The quantitative metrics used include number and reach of communication activities by all MATS partners; media coverage; number of followers on Twitter; Tweet visibility on Twitter; website analytics on page views; number of submitted research abstracts and articles.

- Internal reporting: this channel contains internal reporting forms for WPs, Partners, and financial statements.

- Periodic reporting: this channel is reserved for use starting in M18

- Data Management Plans (DMP) and ethics: in the DMP folder, the DMP will be updated regularly with input from partners, the latest version is stored in this folder. The folder 'Ethical issues' contains all project documentation related to ethics such as materials from the project ethic issues including the deliverable of ethic requirements.

2.2 Access to the MATS intranet

All participants in the project can access the intranet after being invited to Team members or guests by the project management team. It was recommended that project partners experiencing issues accessing the MATS intranet MS Teams get in touch with the coordination team as soon as possible. The partner leaders are expected to update the list of their team members in the Channel 'Team contacts'.

2.3 Online meetings tool

Due to the Covid 19 situation of the past year and the fact that it continues, the meetings of the MATS project have been organized online since the beginning of the project. The main tool used for online conferencing is Zoom. In addition to Zoom meetings, the MATS partners also use MS Teams meetings for online conversations.

3 MATS materials for external communication

The WP7 team supports the MATS partners in communication activities, and provides a project logo, templates, and other materials for partners, following the project's visual identity and branding. The project logo was agreed through all partners at the beginning of the project. All material is internally available in the project's MS Teams internal communication platform.

The project partners can decide which kind of dissemination and communication materials they need, and how they adapt these or produce own materials as long as they comply with the basic requirements and visual identity of the project. Therefore, templates and materials can, if necessary, be adapted to partner-specific applications for different types of communication, e.g., technical reports about methods, case study reports, policy briefs, and discussion papers, which are designed to suit the needs and interests of different types of audiences.

3.1 Project logo, colours and fonts

A key element of the visual identity of the MATS project is the project logo. At the beginning of the project, the partners voted their favourite from several options. A logo that reflects the creation of new insights, connections, gateways, and impact, with colourfulness as a symbol of achieving diversified SDGs in agricultural trade was chosen.

The project logo is presented below:

The second key element are the project's brand colours used in MATS as follow:
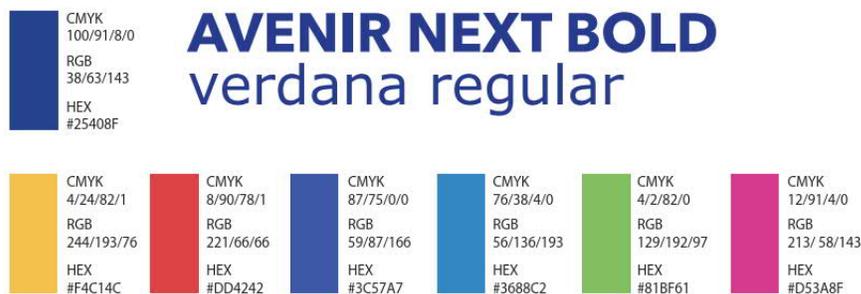
The font family used for the PowerPoint and Word templates is Verdana. However, a more common font, Calibri, can also be used.

3.2 Acknowledgement of EU funding

MATS partners are committed to acknowledging the EU funding in all dissemination and communication activities, as stated in the Grant Agreement:

"Unless the Research Executive Agency (REA) requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, any dissemination of results (in any form, including electronic) must:

(a) display the EU emblem and

(b) include the following text: "This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101000751. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the MATS consortium partners and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Union".

When displayed together with another logo, the EU emblem must have appropriate prominence. For the purposes of their obligations under this Article, the beneficiaries may use the EU emblem without first obtaining approval from the Agency. This does not however give them the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the EU emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

The EU emblem and all needed material is provided in MS Teams of MATS for the project partners. The snapshots are as follows:

Acknowledging the EU funding

- Grant Agreement: "Any dissemination of results (in any form, including electronic) must:
- (a) display the EU emblem and
- (b) include the following text:

"This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101000751"

- When displayed together with another logo, the EU emblem must have appropriate prominence.

MATS
making agricultural trade sustainable

Funded by the European Union

This project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No 101000751.

3.3 Office templates

MS Word and PowerPoint templates of the MATS project have been provided by WP7 for all project partners. The templates should be used for all documentation and presentations about MATS.

Word templates are designed for all project deliverables and for discussion papers and made available in MS Teams. A PowerPoint template with the

visual identity of the MATS project as a background is also provided and is available in MS Teams. A few snapshots of the templates are attached:

The WP7 team will ensure that all publications and deliverables published online comply with the EU Web Accessibility Directive.

3.4 Press release templates

Templates for press releases are provided, and the press release template can be modified for use in the partner's own channels. Partners are encouraged to regularly inform the press about project progress and results. Information can be also published as a news piece or blog post at https://sustainable-agri-trade.eu/news-blog/, and all relevant press releases will be featured and stored in the Sustainable Agricultural Trade Hub (see Section 4.1).

3.5 Visualisation

A visual identity of the MATS project structure has been created to facilitate a clearly recognisable presentation of the joint project. The visualisation has been integrated as part of the project website 'our work'. It has also been made available for all partners via MS Teams 'the project brief'. Figure 2 shows the workflow logic of the MATS.
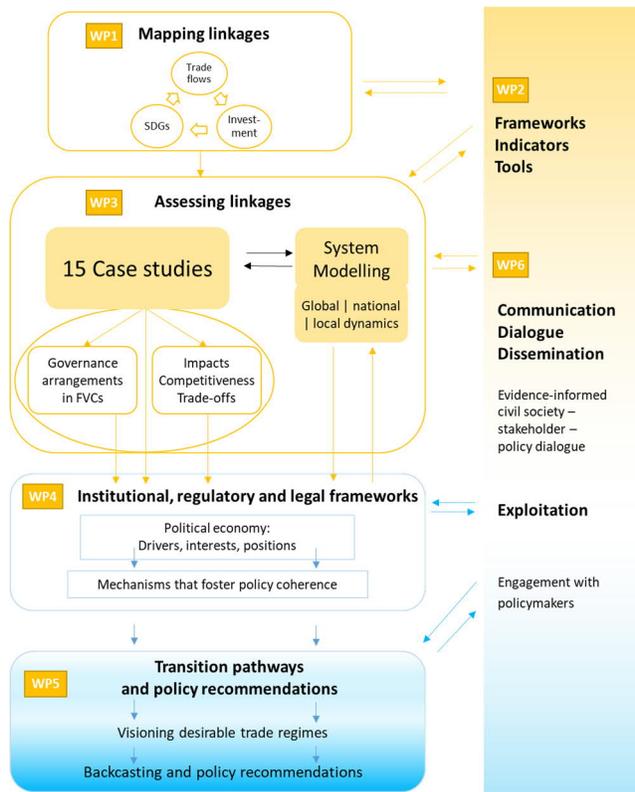

Figure 2

Overview of the research elements and the key information flows in MATS

4 MATS channels and tools for external communication

In the following we present the communication channels we use in MATS. The basic ideas have already been briefly introduced in Deliverable 7.2' Communication Plan' in M4.

The dedicated channels and tools for MATS external communications are

- Project website which will evolve into an interactive hub on 'Sustainable Agricultural Trade'
- Social media channels
- Blog posts
- Partners' own communication channels and means

The project website, social media, and blog posts are managed and updated by WP6 and WP7 teams with the contributions from the project partners as well as external actors. Key items will be updates related to research reports, discussion papers, live events, meeting, workshops and seminars.

Additionally, all partner's own communication channels and means play an important role in spreading the project's messages to a wider audience. All partners are expected to also make use of their own communication channels in communicating and disseminating project news and results. Generally, it is important that the project is visible and known among relevant food system actors and stakeholder groups.

The Sustainable Agricultural Trade Hub and a suite of engagement activities and materials on agricultural markets, trade, and sustainability will play a central role in achieving an enhanced civil society dialogue by providing improved data, analysis, and methods.

Project website and social media performance metrics will be included in the project progress reports.

4.1 Project website

The Sustainable Agricultural Trade Hub – https://sustainable-agri-trade.eu/ – is central in all external communications for MATS. The top menu contains 'About', 'Case studies', 'Outputs', 'Knowledge hub', 'Community'. Direct links to the project's social media channels are also included on the homepage. The project website is constantly updated.

The 'About' section provides information on the project's vision, goals and partnership. 'Case Studies' will be a continuously updated section with all major developments and insights produced by the 15 MATS studies.

Users will be able to access and download public deliverables and publications related to the project through the 'Outputs' section. The 'Community' section will be a space for news from the broader agri-trade community, including links to relevant initiatives, organisations and data sources. The same section will also include a forum for discussions with external actors.

The Sustainable Agricultural Trade Hub will also provide deeper insights from the project's 15 case studies as well as the systems modelling and institutional analysis, presenting findings, related discussion papers and infographics. Some of the data will facilitate further research by interested actors.

The hub structure follows an easy to use and intuitive path that allows users to easily explore the site. The hub is used to promote the project and disseminate its objectives, work plan, etc., and as a space for discussing project results with a wide audience, including stakeholders and potential users.

The hub will remain active after the end of the project and serve as a valuable public resource for this research topic and disseminating the results of publicly funded research after the project ends. It complies with the EU Web Accessibility Directive. In the following, we present some screenshots from the hub for illustration.

MATS

HOME   ABOUT ⌄   CASE STUDIES   OUTPUTS ⌄   KNOWLEDGE HUB   COMMUNITY ⌄

Making Agricultural Trade Sustainable

OUR CASE STUDIES

About Us

Our Vision

Our Work

Be part of our mailing list and
frequently receive e-mails with training events and latest news.

Subscribe
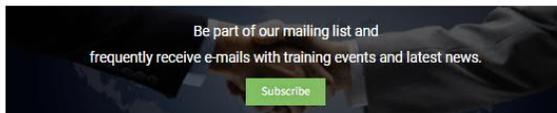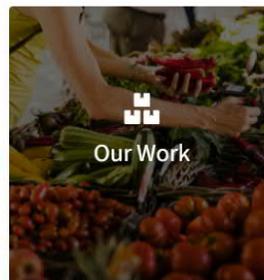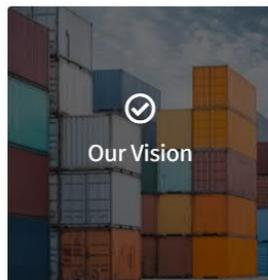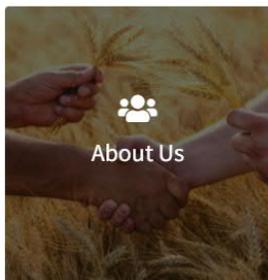
Survey Of Key Actors' Interest And Expectations Regarding MATS Project

Your feedback is essential to help us design a communication platform that support an enhanced civil-society-stakeholder-policy dialogue, fostering effective collaboration between researchers, policymakers, civil society and the wider stakeholder community to move towards a sustainable agricultural trade

Take the Survey

RECENT NEWS

European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) reviews the EC's 15-point action plan on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) chapters   October 20, 2021

MATS Kick-off Meeting   July 8, 2021

More News →

Tweets by @MATS_H2020

Making Agricultural Trade Sustainable Retweeted

Susanna Pak 🎏
@susannapak
Replying to @susannapak
Next steps on @wto trade x environment...

We need creativity.

Go beyond the traditional give-and-take approach to policymaking.

Find new ways to create win-win situations, so trade can make a positive contribution to the environment.

-Deputy Director-General
@Paugam_Commerce

Dec 15, 2021

Making Agricultural Trade Sustainable Retweeted

EU Trade 🔵⚪
@Trade_EU
Together with like-minded partners, we are launching three initiatives to step up common action at the WTO on pressing climate and environment issues. @Trade_EU has been leading the efforts on climate and environment policy change at @wto. Here's what's been agreed

MATS

MATS

HOME   ABOUT ⌄   CASE STUDIES   OUTPUTS ⌄   KNOWLEDGE HUB   COMMUNITY ⌄

Case Studies

Number	Topic	Key aspects	Main focus	Leading partner(s)
1.	Effects of trade on commercialisation and processing of food products	Improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers through trade and food value chains; localisation of food systems, strengthening of territorial markets	Uganda, Tanzania	University Helsinki with Moshi Co-operative University and Makerere University
2.	Trade, resilience and social sustainability: oats value chains in the Nordics	Resilience of trade-dependent food value chains in the context of intra-EU agri-food trade and social sustainability; sustainability and equity	Finland, Sweden, EU	University Helsinki
3.	Trade, sustainability and environmental linkages in Finnish dairy production	Mapping the linkages of dairy production and dairy trade with environmental externalities and production of ecosystem services	Finland, EU, trade partners	University Helsinki
4.	Accessing export markets with high quality/social/ environmental standards	Standards and market access; challenges related to WTO Rules and Regulations and/or EU requirements; strengthening of territorial markets	Sub-Saharan Africa	Economic and Social Research Foundation
5.	Role of agricultural inputs and policy regulation in sustainable value chains	Emerging markets; poultry chains; role of policy regulation regarding animal welfare, inputs and trade; competitiveness, sustainability, livelihoods	Ghana	Technical University of Madrid
6.	Farm gate prices and sustainable business models: towards living income	Experiences, obstacles, impact and lessons learned from a multistakeholder initiative on sustainability standards in the cacao sector	EU, Côte d'Ivoire	Oxfam Wereldwinkels
7.	Impacts of EU policies on local dairy value chains in Africa	EU agricultural, trade, investment and development policies; impact on the development of local, fair and sustainable dairy chains	EU, Africa	Oxfam Solidarité - Oxfam Solidariteit
8.	EU climate and energy policies and their influence on trade and land use	EU biofuel policies and mandates; sustainability criteria biofuels; EU climate funding, carbon markets, offset mechanism; palm oil; land use change	EU, America, Africa, Asia	Oxfam Solidarité - Oxfam Solidariteit
9.	Human rights and environmental due diligence in the coffee value chain	Integrating human rights and environmental due diligence in coffee chains; impact on production practices and smallholder farmers	Tanzania, Burundi, Uganda, Ethiopia	Oxfam Wereldwinkels
10.	Beef and policy coherence for sustainable development	EU agricultural, trade, investment and development policies; impact on local, fair, sustainable beef chains, including consumers and retailers	EU, Africa, South America	Research Centre on Animal Production, with Agribenchmark Beef
11.	Private standards and sustainable trade	Impact of processors/retailers' standards on development of local, fair, sustainable food chains; GLOBAL G.A.P.	Africa, Asia	Research Centre on Animal Production, with Global G.A.P
12.	Ethical trade initiatives in the South African wine industry	Assessment of local and global ethical trade programmes in South Africa (e.g. Fair Trade, Ethical Trading Initiative, Ethical Trade Association)	South Africa, trade partners	North-West University
13.	Dairy production, standards and competitiveness in global markets	Labour costs; additional costs resulting from environmental regulation; total production costs; processing and retail	EU, Africa, America	Research Centre on Animal Production, with International Farm Comparison Network
14.	Changing land-use trajectories due to the EU-Mercosur trade agreement	The case of pork exports from Brazil to the EU: trade agreements, EU-Mercosur; pork value chains, soya and palm oil production; deforestation	EU, Brazil	Technical University of Madrid with Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
15.	The new generation of EU Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and their impacts	Impact of EU-Tunisia FTA on incomes and market opportunities for farmers, fishers, breeders; ecological resilience, especially water scarcity	EU, N Africa (Tunisia)	Transnational Institute

MATS

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no 101000751

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4.2 Social media channels

Given that external networking is one of the key success parameters in our progress reporting, MATS is active on Twitter and LinkedIn, with channels dedicated to the project in both platforms.

Our Twitter channel @MATS_H2020 is primarily for external communication and raising awareness about the project work. It provides succinct information on project work, conferences, workshops and discussions, and the work of others. Of particular importance in this regard are connections with others engaged in research and advocacy around agri-food markets, trade, investments, sustainable development, trade regimes, governance, and policy. Tweets are also used for event announcements and invitations. The MATS Twitter channel is planned to be a lively forum for discussion, and it has already in the first months reached more than 100 followers:

A LinkedIn channel is planned for deeper discussions on agri-food trade, investment and sustainability issues with professionals interested and working in these areas.

4.3 Blog posts

Regular blog posts are to provide interested actors with the latest news and results of MATS. Interested parties can register for regular updates.

The registration form complies with EU GDPR rules, informs users of data use, and obtains their explicit consent.

4.4 Partners' own communication channels and means

All project partners use their own communication channels to communicate and disseminate project news and results to a wider audience. For key project moments, issues of general interest or importance, partners' communication sectors often take proactive communication steps to share information on social media. For project meetings, workshops, and webinars, it is recommended that they be displayed on the partner's external and intranet calendars and that informational news be shared.

5 Conclusions

Deliverable D7.3 elaborates the MATS internal communication platform and the MATS materials, channels, and tools for external communication. It also serves as the go-to document for all project partners for information on project branding and available materials.

The deliverable will be regularly updated when new materials, channels and tools are adopted by the project partners.

In addition to the dedicated project channels and tools managed by WP7, all project partners are expected to use their own communication channels to communicate and disseminate project news and results.

All partners are responsible for participating in project communications, sharing the work they have done and disseminating the results.

The WP7 team maintains a supportive and continuous dialogue on communication with all consortium partners.