

# Sustainability Plan including Toolbox

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Author(s)		
Name	Organisation	E-mail
Stephan Kampshoff	EUFIC	<a href="mailto:stephan.kampshoff@eufic.org">stephan.kampshoff@eufic.org</a>
Debora Serra	EUFIC	<a href="mailto:debora.serra@eufic.org">debora.serra@eufic.org</a>
Joël Doré	INRAE	<a href="mailto:joel.dore@inrae.fr">joel.dore@inrae.fr</a>

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## Executive summary

This sustainability plan outlines the commitments to ensuring the lasting adoption of scientific, procedural, legal, regulatory, and other recommendations generated by the Human Microbiome Action project beyond its funding period. Its goal is to engage key stakeholders, both established and new, and to facilitate the uptake of project outcomes.

To achieve this, the Sustainability Report identifies key stakeholder groups to be kept engaged through various elements such as the initiated European Microbiome Centres Consortium (EMCC), a dedicated surveillance network, participation in scientific events, media outreach, and collaboration with other European-funded projects. These channels will help the project reach the target stakeholders effectively.

Additionally, a toolbox with communication materials, including press release templates, project presentations, short-form videos, social media templates, factsheets, an animated video, poster templates, and infographics, is being shared with project partners, all designed to support their long-term communication efforts.

The project's commitment to sustained engagement and effective communication ensures that valuable outcomes continue to make a meaningful impact.

## Introduction

The Human Microbiome Action project recognizes the importance of extending the impact of its findings and recommendations well beyond its funding period. This sustainability plan is designed to facilitate the seamless adoption of project outcomes by key stakeholders, ensuring that the knowledge generated in the areas of human microbiome research, standards, and regulatory aspects continues to shape policies and practices.

To achieve this objective, this Sustainability Plan identifies key stakeholder groups to keep engaged, tailoring the communication strategies to their specific needs. By building and nurturing relationships with these stakeholders, the project creates a network of support that endorses and implements the project's outcomes and recommendations.

This document extends to the creation of a dynamic toolkit and a range of communication materials that will adapt to the evolving needs of the consortium and keep stakeholders engaged long after the project's conclusion.

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to present the implemented and ongoing efforts of the project consortium for effective communication and dissemination of the project results and stakeholder engagement beyond the project's funding period. The objective is to ensure the uptake of scientific, procedural, legal, regulatory, and other recommendations, consensus papers, guidelines, standardisation tools and toolkits. This deliberately includes the engagement with already established, but also new stakeholders. To support these ambitions, a dedicated toolkit with several communication materials is being provided to the project consortium to establish lasting adoption of the project outcomes by the target stakeholders. This toolkit is a living document, enabling the adjustment to the needs of the consortium and adaptation of future communication materials to upcoming project results. Continued dialogue with the target stakeholders after the project finishes ensures a proper integration and uptake of results that are available only late in the project.

## Key Stakeholder Analysis

Key stakeholders play a pivotal role in the project's success and its long-term impact. As stated in the original communication and dissemination plan (see Deliverable 8.1), the project reaches various groups of different audiences like the scientific community, funding authorities, public health experts, reference laboratories, regulatory experts, policymakers and more. To further increase the efficiency of the communication activities and long-term impact beyond the project duration it is important to focus on the most relevant stakeholder groups.

The identification of the key stakeholder groups is based on three approaches:

- The previously identified key target audiences from the communication and dissemination plan
- The previously performed communication workshops
- The shared survey with project partners

Based on this approach, the following groups are considered as key stakeholders for the aims of this sustainability plan:

- **Scientific Audiences** (including researchers, journals etc.) in the area of human microbiome research
- **Regulatory Authorities & Policymakers**
- **Industry/Companies** in the field of the human microbiome and biotechnology
- **Clinicians/Doctors/Patient (Organizations) & Public Health Experts**
- **Funding organisations** and prospective donors

Despite focused approaches to reach these target stakeholders, it should be mentioned that increased overall awareness of the project can further provide benefits to the key stakeholder groups (i.e., as being perceived as a credible source of information).

## Communication Sustainability Plan

Until the end of the project and beyond the project's duration the following measures and activities will be implemented to sustain communication about the project outcomes and maximise their impact towards the previously defined key stakeholder groups.

### Project Channels

#### European Microbiome Centres Consortium (EMCC)

The European Microbiome Centres Consortium (EMCC) is a pioneering initiative that serves as a cornerstone for ensuring the sustainability of the Human Microbiome Action outputs and overall microbiome research in Europe. By bringing together leading microbiome centres from across the European Union, the EMCC facilitates the exchange of best practices, based on the outlines of the Human Microbiome Action project. Beyond its regional scope, the EMCC aspires to establish synergistic collaborations and agreements with analogous networks worldwide, such as the Microbiome Centers Consortium (MCC) in the USA. The overarching goal is to foster collaboration and consensus on research and innovation programs about the human microbiome, both within Europe and on a global scale. The EMCC thus serves as a critical stepping stone towards the realization of a European Microbiome Institute (EMI), further advancing microbiome research and its applications.

#### World Microbiome Partnership (WMP)

The CSA Human Microbiome Action, via its EMCC initiative, via several members of its boards (SAB and SSC) and via its coordinator Joel Dore, is linked to the planned inception of the World Microbiome Partnership (WMP).

As we now understand that all living things and ecosystems depend on microbial communities (i.e., microbiomes), the WMP is conceived as a global alliance of leaders from academia, industry, governments and foundations, working together under the One Health framework to leverage advances in microbiome science for the benefit of humankind and the Planet.

The One Health concept recognizes the intimate linkages between human, animal and environmental health and provides the rationale for WMP to bring together professionals from across the larger microbiome field. In the face of present and future growing threats, we have no alternative but to join forces with the sole aim of helping our World to survive and thrive.

The WMP will undertake three initiatives to fulfil its mission:

- 1) establish a forum for world leaders and organizations in the larger microbiome field from academia, industry, governments and foundations;
- 2) address key obstacles for translation of microbiome-based science to the clinic, the marketplace, and for environmental issues;
- 3) advance this field through long-term joint programs between academia, industry and governments.

A founding congress for the WMP will be held on December 12-14, 2024.

### **European Microbiome-Dedicated Surveillance Network**

The initiation of a European Microbiome Dedicated Surveillance Network aims for a proactive and essential endeavour responsible for monitoring the ongoing evolution of microbiome-based standards and overseeing the surveillance of microbiome-based products. Inspired by the successful model of EUCAST for Antimicrobial Resistance, Human Microbiome Action is dedicated to establishing a roadmap for its creation. This roadmap outlines a strategic plan for the development of a specialized European Microbiome-Dedicated Surveillance Network. Its primary mission is to meticulously track the dynamic landscape of microbiome-related standards and products, ensuring their compliance and effectiveness. By doing so, it plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the integrity and reliability of microbiome research and applications within the European context.

### **Events**

Project partners will present the project outcomes at relevant scientific conferences, congresses & meetings worldwide. This includes abstracts, poster sessions, presentations or other opportunities. For example, it is planned that the project coordinator Joël Doré chairs a full session on microbiome standardisation at the 10th International Human Microbiome Consortium (IHMC) Congress, June 22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> 2024, in Rome, providing an opportunity to offer presentations on the proposals stemming from Human Microbiome Action.

## Media

Until the end of the project, EUFIC, as the leader of WP8 – Communication & Dissemination, will continue to disseminate relevant project outcomes through press releases and support project partners to disseminate their results by providing a press release template & guideline.

Project partners will further publish their work within academic outlets, including high-impact journals such as Nature Microbiology, Cell Host & Microbe, Microbiome etc.

## Project partner platforms & networks

Throughout the project consortium, a wide range of platforms and networks will be used to disseminate the outcomes of the project. Examples of these include institutional websites, annual reports or internal committees. A specific emphasis belongs to the extensive Stakeholder Advisory Board and the Strategic Steering Committee. Both boards are actively involved in the activities of the project and consist of over 70 members (50: Stakeholder Advisory Board; 20: Scientific Steering Committee). Thanks to the involvement of members of the Stakeholder Advisory Board and the Strategic Steering Committee, the project's outcomes will be shared beyond the boundaries of the project's consortium network and create further impact in key sectors such as research, industry or policy.

Certain partners have concrete plans to either continue the existing collaboration with key stakeholder groups or proactively create fresh networking opportunities through events or meetings with stakeholders. Notable instances include the ongoing partnership between project participant PRI and the committee responsible for the new regulation of Substances of Human Origins (SoHO), as well as the interaction between individual partners and national authorities, regulators, or other pivotal stakeholder groups. Moreover, partner KPL's extensive network engagement, conducted as part of the preparation for the Delphi surveys, resulted in over 330 responses from a pool of more than 850 individual stakeholders who were reached out to. These stakeholders will be kept updated on the Delphi results and guided towards other project communication channels, such as the website, newsletter, and social media accounts, to maintain this ongoing interaction.

## Project Website

The project website acts as the main hub of information about the project's activities and outcomes. It contains information on the project's aims and objectives, project partners, news and events as well as publications and contact details. This website will be maintained and managed by EUFIC for three more years after the project ends, until 30.04.2027.

## Zenodo Open Repository

To ensure long-term accessibility of the project outcomes and publications, a dedicated Human Microbiome Action community group has been established on the Zenodo platform and is accessible under: [zenodo.org/communities/humanmicrobiomeaction](https://zenodo.org/communities/humanmicrobiomeaction). Under this community, project partners upload their journal publications funded under this project grant and relevant project-related documents (such as reports, deliverables and milestones) at the public dissemination level. By making these documents freely accessible, Human Microbiome Action emphasizes the OPEN Science under FAIR data principles, making this information findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable. Further information on the Zenodo Open Repository can be found in the Data Management Plan (Deliverable 2.3).

## Social Media

Human Microbiome Action uses different social media channels to communicate and disseminate the project outcomes to its target audiences. The main channels for the project communication include the SciFoodHealth channels on Twitter/X (>26.000 followers), LinkedIn (>1.100 followers) and YouTube (>700 subscribers). EUFIC, as the managing partner of these channels, will continue to use them and maintain the possibility of sharing outcomes or developments beyond the project duration. More specifically, the SciFoodHealth YouTube channel will be used to store the recordings of the final conference, divided into separate sessions, as well as short videos from the project partners, explaining the project, its findings, outcomes and expected impact.

By joining the #MicrobiomeAmbassador campaign, initiated by the MicrobiomeSupport project (Grant Nr.: 818116), and continuing the dissemination of relevant project information, Human Microbiome Action aims to give visibility and connect relevant stakeholders in the field even beyond the project duration.

Additionally, the EUFIC-managed Sustainable Food System Network (SFSN), a platform originally initiated by the Fit4Food2030 project with various stakeholders from public health, food production, education, research and others, will be used to share project news amongst its over 2000 members in the main group and more than 250 members in its microbiome community to facilitate fruitful discussions amongst the members. Project outcomes will either be linked from the project website or the Zenodo platform, or, where appropriate, stored directly in the resources section of the SFSN.

Separately, project partners will use their organisational social media channels to communicate about key outcomes from the project.



## Engagement with other European-funded projects and initiatives

Thanks to the involvement of many key partners of other European-funded projects in Human Microbiome Action, the results of Human Microbiome Action will directly influence other projects around the human microbiome, public health and food production. Concrete examples of links to other relevant projects include the following: ML4Microbiome (Grant-Nr.: CA18131), MICROB-PREDICT (Grant Nr.: 825694), DOMINO (Grant Nr.: 101060218), CIRCLES (Grant Nr.: 818290), GEMMA (Grant-Nr.: 825033), ONCOBIOME (Grant-Nr.: 825410). Additionally, Human Microbiome Action partners have the opportunity to collaborate with World Microbiome Day, a global event dedicated to celebrating the significance of microbiomes on a worldwide scale. World Microbiome Day was initially conceived during the 7th International Human Microbiome Congress (IHMC) symposium in 2018, thanks to the efforts of the IHMC and APC. It has received support from MicrobiomeSupport (Grant Nr.: 818116) and has been jointly organized by APC and EUFIC ever since. This involvement encompasses various activities, ranging from creating website content, such as articles and quizzes, to participating in webinars, all with the aim of explaining microbiome research in easily understandable terms to the general public. Through the aforementioned Sustainable Food System Network, members will have the possibility for further collaboration between expiring and newly established projects.

## Project Results and Outcomes

Specific project results and outcomes will be disseminated by the project partners according to the impact pathway outlined in the communication and dissemination plan (see Deliverable 8.1, Annex 1). These communication activities will be crucial for the sustainability of the project outcomes as the strong link with the partner's networks can leverage the impact of the project in the respective fields. An overview of the separate outcomes to be shared with the direct partner networks can be seen in Table 1.

*Table 1 - Project outcomes and sustainability actions*

<b>Deliverable/Outcome</b>	<b>Project Partner(s)</b>	<b>Key Stakeholder Groups</b>	<b>Sustainability Actions</b>
Report on clinical endpoints metadata (D1.2)	EF CLIF, All Partners	Scientific Audiences; Industry/Companies	Scientific publications, Presentations at conferences, Recognition through EMCC

Report on human microbiome data (D2.1)	UCPH, All Partners	Scientific Audiences; Clinicians/Doctors/Patient (Organizations) & Public Health Experts	Scientific publications, Presentations at conferences, Recognition through EMCC
Report on interoperability (D2.2)	INRAE, All Partners	Scientific Audiences; Industry/Companies	Scientific publications, Presentations at conferences, Recognition through EMCC
Report on recommendations for microbiome analysis standards (D3.1)	UCPH, UNITN, All Partners	Scientific Audiences; Industry/Companies	Scientific publications, Presentations at conferences, Recognition through EMCC
Report proposing initiatives for unified repositories for processed data (D3.2)	UNITN, All Partners	Scientific Audiences; Regulatory Authorities	Scientific publications, Presentations at conferences, Recognition through EMCC
White paper & recommendations on the human microbiome addressing gaps, emerging fields, and political priorities (D4.3)	UCC, INRAE, All Partners	Scientific Audiences; Regulatory Authorities & Policymakers; Funding organisations; Public Health Experts	Scientific publications, Presentations at conferences, Recognition through EMCC, Future EU-funded projects
Report on Delphi consultation: Questionnaire & analysis of the consultation answers (D5.1)	PRI, INRAE, All Partners	Scientific Audiences; Clinicians/Doctors/Patient (Organizations) & Public Health Experts; Regulatory Authorities & Policymakers	Scientific publications, Presentations at conferences, Recognition through EMCC
Consensus opinion paper (submission) on preclinical models for microbiome research with focus on causality (D5.2)	PRI, INRAE, TUM, All Partners	Scientific Audiences; Clinicians/Doctors/Patient (Organizations) & Public Health Experts; Regulatory Authorities & Policymakers	Scientific publications, Presentations at conferences & private meetings, Recognition through EMCC

Consensus opinion paper (submission) on new approaches for intervention studies (D5.3)	UP, TUM, INRAE, All Partners	Scientific Audiences; Regulatory Authorities & Policymakers; Clinicians/Doctors/Patient (Organizations) & Public Health Experts	Scientific publications, Presentations at conferences, Recognition through EMCC
Position paper (submission) on biomarker identification, preanalytical & analytical validation (D6.2)	PRI, INRAE, All Partners	Scientific Audiences; Regulatory Authorities & Policymakers; Clinicians/Doctors/Patient (Organizations) & Public Health Experts; Funding organisations; Industry/Companies	Scientific publications, Presentations at conferences, Future EU-funded projects
Ethical and policy issues in microbiome research and symbiosis monitoring (D7.1)	EUR, All Partners	Scientific Audiences; Regulatory Authorities & Policymakers; Clinicians/Doctors/Patient (Organizations) & Public Health Experts	Scientific publications, Presentations at conferences, Recognition through EMCC
Policies and regulations for self-management tools (D7.2)	PRI, All Partners	Scientific Audiences; Regulatory Authorities & Policymakers; Clinicians/Doctors/Patient (Organizations) & Public Health Experts; Industry/Companies	Presentations at conferences & private meetings
Recommendations for responsible research and innovation rules in the field of microbiome (D7.3)	EUR, All Partners	Scientific Audiences; Industry/Companies; Clinicians/Doctors/Patient (Organizations) & Public Health Experts	Scientific publications, Presentations at conferences, Recognition through EMCC
Roadmap proposal for a European Microbiome-Dedicated Surveillance Network (D7.4)	PRI, All Partners	Scientific Audiences; Industry/Companies; Regulatory Authorities & Policymakers; Clinicians/Doctors/Patient	Scientific publication, Presentations at conferences, Recognition through EMCC, Preparation of creation of the

		(Organizations) & Public Health Experts; Funding organisations;	European Microbiome-Dedicated Surveillance Network
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An additional emphasis on the long-term communication by the project partners, besides the respective deliverables, will be done on the following project outcomes through the aforementioned channels:

- European Microbiome Centers Consortium (EMCC)
- European Microbiome-Dedicated Surveillance Network
- White papers and scientific papers
- Delphi Results
- Consensus statements related to clinical standards for microbiome research
- Recommendations on the standardization of clinical metadata, sample manipulation, techniques for microbiome sequencing, minimal metadata sets etc.
- Philosophical aspects
- Public views on the field of the human microbiome

## Communication Materials & Toolbox

This deliverable is accompanied by a series of tools accessible to project partners on the internally shared platform. The toolbox is being updated with new tools according to the needs of the consortium and contains the following materials, aimed to support partners' efforts in the long-term sustainability and impact creation for the project outcomes.

### - **Press Release Template**

To ease the process of writing a press release and increase the number of media articles, a press release template has been shared with project partners. This template uses the brand identity of the project and guides the user through all the necessary steps to create a press release.

### - **General Project Presentation**

A template for a general project presentation has been prepared to ease the communication of project partners about the project activities during relevant events such as scientific conferences.

### - **Short-form videos**

A series of short-form videos have been recorded with the partners and uploaded to the [SciFoodHealth YouTube channel](#). The videos explain key concepts of the project and will be further used for other social

media platforms such as Twitter and LinkedIn. Partners are encouraged to share the videos from the SciFoodHealth channels or use the video files on their platforms.

- **Social Media Templates**

A series of ready-to-use social media templates have been shared with the project partners and their communication departments to simplify the content creation process.

- **Factsheets for industry, policymakers and public health experts**

Together with the support of all partners, a series of three factsheets is being developed. The factsheets target different stakeholders from the areas of industry, policy and public health. The release of these factsheets is foreseen for November 2023 and will be shared on the website, Zenodo Repository and all social media channels.

- **Animated Video**

Towards the end of the project, an animated video will be released. The video will explain the importance of the human microbiome for public health and include some of the key outcomes such as the results from the Delphi surveys, recommendations or white papers.

- **Poster Template**

A poster template is being created for the final conference in February 2024. This template is based on the #BetterPoster approach taking into consideration findings and learnings from behavioural sciences and user experience design to increase the communication of insights and outcomes.

- **Infographic**

An infographic highlighting the main key elements of the project outcomes will be developed towards the end of the project. The aim is to communicate the findings from the Delphi surveys and the main pieces of information from the project outcomes.

## Conclusion

The Human Microbiome Action project is not merely a research initiative; it is a commitment to fostering long-term change in the fields of human microbiome research, standards, and regulations. The sustainability plan serves as a roadmap for ensuring that the project's recommendations and findings continue to impact the scientific community, regulatory bodies, industries, clinicians, and public health experts.

By actively engaging with key stakeholder groups, participating in global initiatives, and leveraging various communication channels, the knowledge generated by the Human Microbiome Action project will have a lasting and transformative effect.

The toolbox of communication materials, together with our strategic use of our channels will play a pivotal role in sustaining the project's outcomes. All project partners are committed to keeping the conversation alive, even beyond the project's funding period, ensuring the enduring influence of the Human Microbiome Action project.