

EPOS SP – Grant Agreement n. 871121

D7.4 – Dissemination and Communication Strategy

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1	16/04/2020	Initial version (EPOS ERIC ECO)
2	23/04/2020	Revised version (UiB - WP7 Leader)
3	29/04/2020	Figure 2 "Status of influence/interest of stakeholders in EPOS" has been updated according to stakeholders' categories and target audiences (EPOS ERIC ECO)

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Executive Summary

EPOS recognizes that a clear and strong dissemination and communication strategy is essential to reach EPOS's goal to drive the transformation of the European solid Earth science data landscape into a long-term, standards-based pan European research infrastructure. The purpose of this deliverable (D7.4) is to describe the dissemination and communication strategy of EPOS SP project that has been funded by the European Commission to perform activities aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of the EPOS research infrastructure.

The overarching goal of the EPOS SP dissemination and communication is to support EPOS research infrastructure in the transition phase EPOS is currently facing, moving from the Implementation Phase to the Operational Phase. Thus, keeping the communities already committed to support the building of the EPOS Delivery Framework and attracting new stakeholders for attaining the EPOS long-term sustainability are the main drivers of the Dissemination and Communication strategy.

This deliverable defines:

- the objectives of the EPOS SP dissemination and communication and how they will contribute to achieve the project's objectives,
- what are the stakeholder categories and target groups and the related communication channels that will be used,
- the strategy that will be adopted for ensuring an effective communication with the relevant stakeholders,
- the main activities that will be carried out during the project for ensuring the fully exploitation of the projects results,
- the set of communication material and tools that best support the dissemination and communication objectives identified for the project.

In addition, criteria to measure and monitor the effectiveness of the performed activities will be identified and corrective measures will be taken in order to maximize the impact of dissemination and communication activities. Thus, this deliverable must be considered a dynamic document. It will be updated throughout the project lifetime to actively address the needs of the project based on its interim results.

1. Introduction

EPOS (European Plate Observing System) is the pan-European research infrastructure aimed at ensuring sustainable and universal use and re-use of multidisciplinary solid Earth science data and products fostering state-of-the-art research and innovation. EPOS has evolved from a simple concept to integrate and distribute digital data into a distributed research infrastructure for European solid Earth science, integrating existing research infrastructures to enable innovative multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research. The EPOS Research Infrastructure (EPOS RI) has completed its Implementation Phase (2015-2019) achieving a cornerstone in its lifecycle and it is currently facing the transition from the Implementation to the Operational Phase. Starting from 2020, a particular stage of the lifecycle of the EPOS RI started: the EPOS Pilot Operational Phase” (EPOS POP). It will last three years (2020-2022) and it will be coordinated by the EPOS ERIC. The **EPOS SP project** represents an essential contribution to the EPOS POP because it contributes in keeping the communities committed to support the building of the EPOS Delivery Framework.

This document presents the Dissemination and Communication strategy of the EPOS SP project. The strategy and the activities foreseen in the project are fully embedded in the EPOS Communication Plan that provides the guidelines to envisage, structure and manage communication activities for the EPOS Delivery Framework¹. The EPOS SP projects and its communication and dissemination activities are included in the EPOS communication spaces (Figure 1) and they will be coherent with the EPOS Communication Plan.

¹ The EPOS Delivery Framework can be defined as a truly international, federated framework encompassing the data and service provision integrated within the Thematic Core Services (TCS) and made interoperable with the central hub of the Integrated Core Services (ICS-C), the novel e-infrastructure for promoting FAIR data management. <https://www.epos-ip.org/about/epos-pilot-operational-phase-pop>

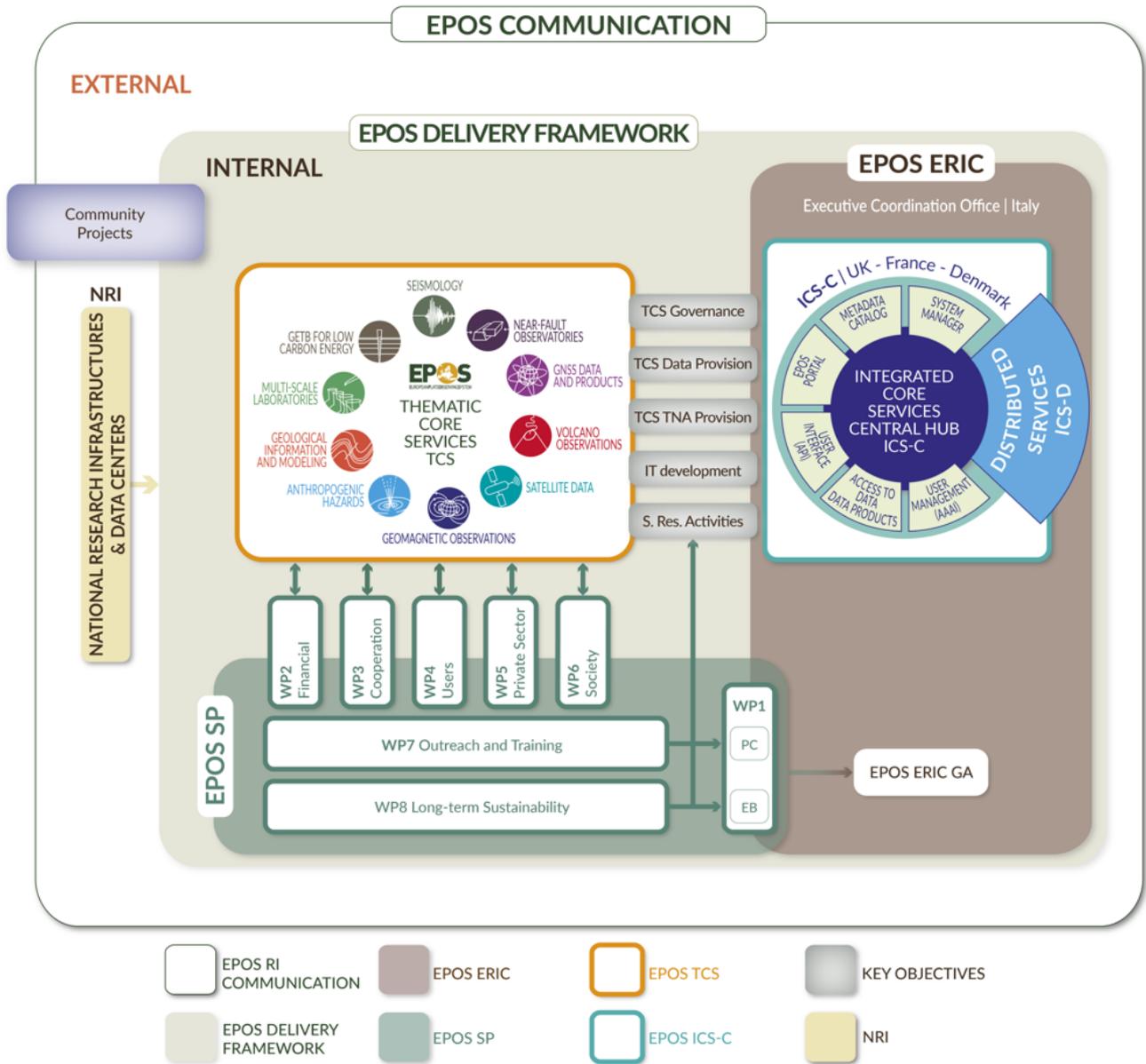


Figure 1: The EPOS communication spaces

While the EPOS Communication Plan describes and gives guidance on the definition of the EPOS corporate identity, messages and tools, the EPOS SP project will benefit from it using the same framework as main references and in some cases will use the corporate tools for implementing the project dissemination and communication activities.

The strategy presented in this document is built upon the achievements of the EPOS IP project. The EPOS SP dissemination and exploitation of results is designed as a supporting action whose outcomes will be integrated into the EPOS Communication Plan. At the end of EPOS SP, EPOS ERIC will ingest and use all the achievements, which will represent the first act of exploiting results. EPOS SP is designed to keep the EPOS community engaged supporting the EPOS ERIC construction and strengthening its coordination role of the EPOS Delivery Framework. For this reason, dissemination, outreach and training are key activities included in the project in Work Package 7.

The main objectives of this work package (WP) are therefore:

- contributing to outreach and dissemination of the EPOS contents and usage to diverse stakeholders, including training for users, early career researchers and students.
- coordinating the dissemination and communication activities that will be carried out by the project in the different WPs to ensure that a coordinated strategy will be followed.

All partners are engaged in communication and dissemination activities as part of their work package activities. Outcomes from individual communication and dissemination activities and their impact will be summarized in the D7.5 Report on the dissemination activities, due at month 32.

The following chapters will describe objectives, target audiences as well as activities and tools that will be undertaken for maximizing the project's visibility, spread its results to the relevant target groups, and ensure the use and uptake of the project's outputs by the intended end-users. Since there is significant overlap between communication and dissemination in terms of target groups, messages, channels and plans, the terms are coined at places and a single plan covering both terms is presented.

2. Dissemination and communication objectives

Main objectives of the EPOS SP dissemination and communication are: i. to consolidate existing contacts with stakeholders already engaged in EPOS; ii. to engage new stakeholders (users, new scientific communities, private sector, society) to tackle the sustainability challenge; iii. to foster an effective collaboration framework with solid Earth science community projects and initiatives in Europe and at global level. All these objectives are included in one or more dedicated EPOS SP project work packages; these WPs are in turn, targeted toward a specific stakeholder category. Table 1 reports the objectives of EPOS SP showing how dissemination and communication can contribute to achieve them.

Table 1: Link between EPOS SP objectives and dissemination and communication objectives.

EPOS SP Objectives	Dissemination and Communication Objectives
Strengthening financial viability by enlarging the EPOS ERIC membership	Engagement of National Authorities not already involved in EPOS (Task 2.1)
Strengthening financial viability through the harmonization of in-kind contributions from national projects and funding	Promoting EPOS sustainability models to stakeholders and policy makers in order to build trust in EPOS providing viable services (Task 2.2)
Enhancing technical sustainability and innovation for TCS-ICS service provision	Increasing end-user trust (Task 4.1)
Engaging new communities for service provision in the EPOS Delivery Framework	Encouraging new communities to join EPOS (Task 4.2)
Fostering EPOS readiness with EOSC and FAIR Data	Promoting interaction with relevant initiatives at regional and global level (Task 6.3)
Establishing cooperation with the private sector	Improving visibility of value and innovative potential of EPOS to industry (Task 5.2)
Promoting international cooperation and data science innovation	Strengthening existing connections and building new partnerships with other relevant solid Earth RIs and related international initiatives (Task 3.1)
Developing the global dimension of EPOS Delivery Framework	Promoting a partnership with national and international research infrastructures from Africa and Latin America on solid Earth science (Task 3.3)
Identifying the ethical implications of the EPOS service provision	Raising awareness among EPOS stakeholders of the ethical implications of EPOS service provision to society (Task 6.1)
Strengthening the economic and societal value of the EPOS research infrastructure	Enhancing the awareness of the economic and societal value of EPOS data and service provision (Task 6.2; Task 8.1)
Performing training and outreach initiatives on the EPOS contents and usage	Providing online and face to face training sessions to end-users of EPOS services, including data scientists and other stakeholder groups (Task 7.1; Task 7.2)

3. Stakeholders categories and target audiences

The range of communities participating in EPOS is a direct measure of its multidisciplinary breadth and potential far-reaching impact on the Earth Science community. The EPOS aim is to enable multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research for a better understanding of the Earth's system. EPOS will help making a step change in developing new concepts and tools for key answers to scientific and socio-economic questions concerning geo-hazards and geo-resources, as well as Earth science applications to the environment and to human welfare.

To reach this goal, EPOS has to communicate with very diverse audiences including not only solid Earth scientists but scientists belonging to disciplines outside the solid Earth domain as well as government representatives, the private sector and society.

Taking into account the EPOS POP framework, the stakeholder categories and target audiences identified during the Implementation Phase are now updated as follows:

- 1. Researchers (Scientists)** i.e. data providers, data users within the solid Earth science community and outside it, IT experts. These are the most natural audience as they are already part of the EPOS framework, or — if not — they can easily appreciate EPOS' proposition. This includes **Master and PhD students** in the field of Earth science who will have a unique opportunity to access a huge and reliable amount of data and services freely available for the first time.
- 2. Governments and Policy Makers** include Government and European Commission representatives, Environmental and Civil Protection Agencies, EOSC and ESFRI.
- 3. Private Sector** can be both suppliers and data users and they will be targeted when EPOS' service proposition will be ready to use.
- 4. Society:** EPOS has a big value for society as it helps facing the ongoing global challenges. Society includes the general public and schools.
- 5. Media** including network of journalists interested in EPOS.

Except from Media, the stakeholder categories listed above mirror those EPOS successfully reached in the previous EPOS phases (EPOS PP and EPOS IP). Nevertheless, the strategy and activities that will be performed in the EPOS SP project in particular, and in the EPOS POP in general, will be focused to improve the current status of influence/interest of stakeholders in EPOS (Figure 2).

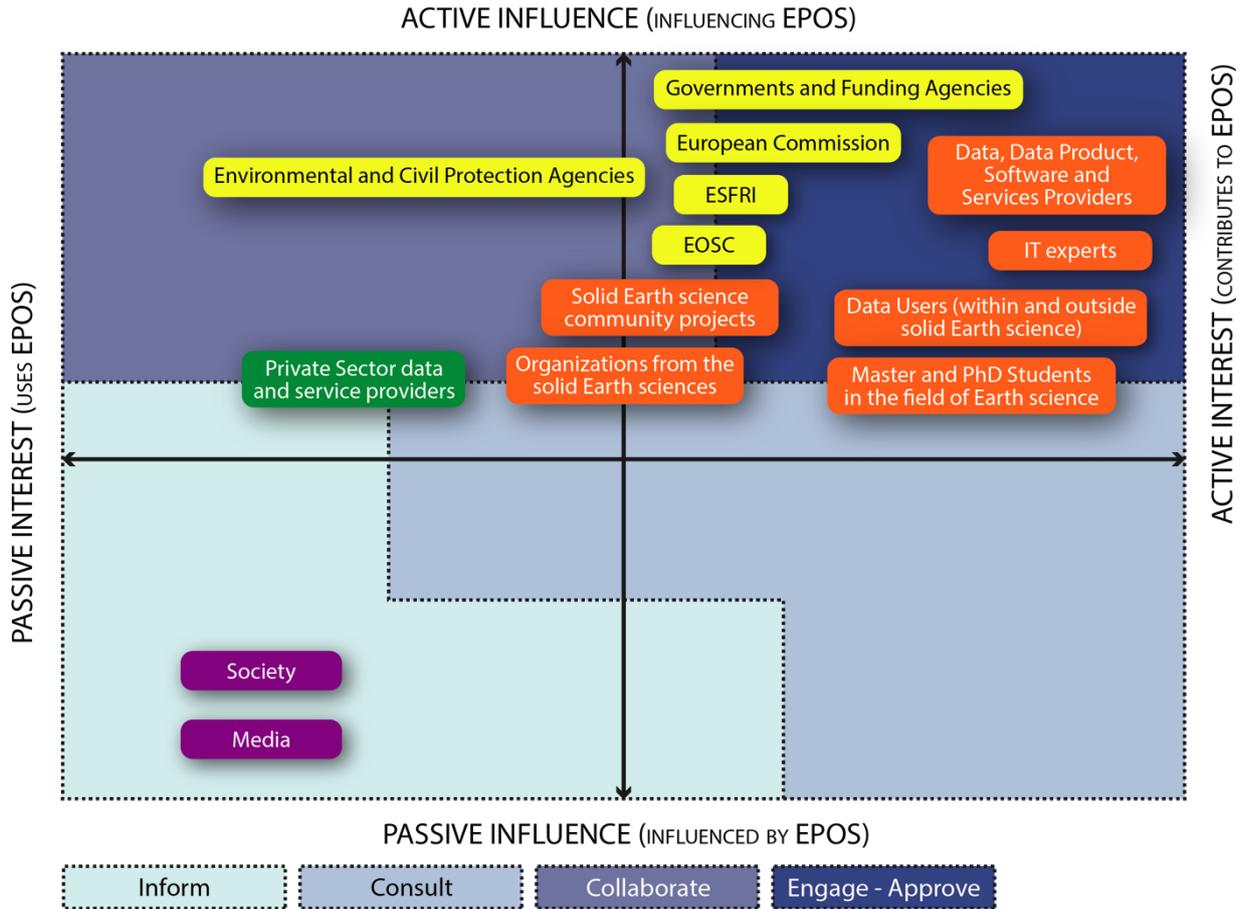


Figure 2: The axes show the passive/active influence versus passive/active interest for each target audience. Colours identify the different stakeholders' categories: orange identifies the researchers (scientists), yellow the government and policy makers, green the private sector, purple society and media.

4. Strategy

For each of the identified stakeholder categories, a dedicated dissemination and communication strategy is adopted for ensuring the progress towards long-term sustainability and for ensuring an effective communication. The engagement and interaction with stakeholders is considered a continuous process characterized by three phases in the EPOS SP project (Figure 3).



Figure 3: EPOS SP Timeline characterizing the three phases of the work plan: engage, collaborate and deliver to EPOS ERIC. The key stakeholders (in white colour), relevant for the whole project lifetime, and the key activities (in black colour) are listed in each phase.

The EPOS SP timeline is characterized by three distinct overlapping phases: engage, collaborate and deliver.

The “**Engage Phase**” starts at month 1 and continues until the end of the project because engagement and interactions with stakeholders must be considered a continuous process in EPOS SP. This phase is characterized by activities performed in all work packages and is aimed at consolidating existing contacts with the stakeholders already engaged in EPOS as well as at engaging new stakeholders (users, new scientific communities, private sector, society) to tackle the sustainability challenge.

The EPOS SP workflow is organized to ensure progress while moving from the engage phase to the “**Collaborate Phase**”, to be launched in the second year (**month 13**). This second phase will continue for two years (month 13-36) and is aimed at maintaining the collaborative frameworks active and effective for the EPOS SP objectives.

This phase is also dedicated to produce the necessary outcomes to launch the “**Delivery Phase**” in the third, and last, year (**month 25**). This last phase is necessary to ensure the assessment of the impact of EPOS SP for the sustainability of the EPOS Delivery Framework and for elaborating the EPOS Long-term Sustainability Plan to be delivered for discussion and adoption to the EPOS ERIC.

An effective strategy aims to maintain stakeholder interest and engagement and inspire and engage others.

In doing this, the dissemination and communication strategy must:

- engage effectively with stakeholders
- ensure that people understand what EPOS does
- enhance the awareness of the societal value of EPOS data and service provision
- change behaviour and perceptions where necessary
- help achieve the overall EPOS objectives.

The EPOS SP dissemination and communication strategy builds on the lessons learned and the relationships established during the previous EPOS Phases. It will be designed taking into account different available communication tools and it will be customized to each target audience, moving through information, consultation, and collaboration to efficiently engage them. Moreover, it will take into account the available resources – financial, human and technical – as to ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Throughout the duration of the project, the effectiveness of our dissemination and communication activities and tools must be measured and monitored to ensure that the most effective means are utilised and ultimately maximise their impact.

4.1 Dissemination

Dissemination concerns all the activities related to establish and run the wider visibility of the project, so that all activities that will be carried out during the project lifetime will be widely known with the highest possible visibility, within and outside the EU. In order to guarantee an effective promotion and exploitation of the project results, special attention is given to make dissemination messages attractive for preserving the EPOS stakeholder's involvement and improve the engagement and collaboration. Different tools will be used to sustain dissemination initiatives: the website, the newsletter and social media.

4.2 Communication

Communication concerns the management of the information flow from and toward EPOS dedicated to deliver and/or receive specific messages of a selected target audience to be involved in EPOS. This strategic action is therefore dedicated to promote initiatives for providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective way. Communication is an essential strategic action to strengthen the community (capacity building) and maximise both cooperation and synergies. Communication is dedicated to creating capabilities of using EPOS results, in terms of awareness and preparedness to use the new research platform and its services. It will focus on supporting new stakeholder engagement and involvement by opening the products and outputs of the project to potential new stakeholders, such as new user communities, new resource infrastructure providers or the private sector. The tools that will be used to sustain communication initiatives are the same as those highlighted in the dissemination (the website, newsletter, social media), but different messages will be defined to reach the communication goals.

4.3 Policy and Rules

Obligation to disseminate results

As indicated in article 29.1 of the Grant Agreement, unless it goes against their legitimate interests, each beneficiary must disseminate its results by disclosing them to the public by appropriate means.

Obligation to promote the actions and its results

As indicated in article 38.1.1 of the Grant Agreement, the Beneficiaries must promote the action and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner.

Any dissemination of results and communication activities must indicate that it reflects only the author's view and that the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains. In addition, the project beneficiaries should keep track of all their dissemination and communication activities, all of which should be reported by each beneficiary reporting stages. Beneficiaries are required to report any publication and dissemination activities on the template provided in the EPOS SP Intranet.

Acknowledgement of EU funding

Acknowledgment of the EU funding is an obligation (Article 29.4 of the Grant Agreement) in all dissemination and communication activities. Any dissemination of results must display the EU emblem and include the text reported below:



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N. 871121.

Data Protection Rules

The beneficiaries are the data controllers and thus, the responsible for the collection and use of personal data during the project life cycle and even after. The beneficiaries have the obligation to comply with the Regulation (EU) No 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (OJL119, 4.5.2016, p. 1). Thus, detailed information on the informed consent procedures in regard to data processing must be kept on file. Templates of the informed consent forms and information sheets must be kept on file.

5. Activities and Tools

Based on the strategies highlighted in chapter 4, practical measures tailored for each stakeholder’s category will be taken to maximise the impact of EPOS SP through the outline plan illustrated below.

Table 2: Outline of dissemination and communication plan

Stakeholder Category	What	How
Researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing and improving TCS-ICS interactions. • Integrating new scientific communities in EPOS. • Engaging new data providers and technological providers. • Strengthening connection with other relevant solid Earth RIs. 	Training/workshops/meetings/ interviews/newsletter/participation to events/social media.
Governments and Policy Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthening connections with countries involved in EPOS but not yet EPOS ERIC members. • engaging new countries in EPOS. 	Involvement in NACB/ workshops/ brokerage events/training.
Private Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing legal, organizational, financial and technical framework. 	Workshops/training/newsletter/social media.
Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate ethical implications of EPOS service provision. • Investigate the EPOS readiness for Open Science. 	Surveys/training/newsletter/website/ video/brochures/ flyers/social media.

5.1 EPOS SP events

5.1.1 Events organised by EPOS SP

EPOS recognizes the importance of brokerage activities and workshops to promote interaction with national research organizations, funding agencies, private sector, society and other stakeholders inside and outside the EPOS community. The EPOS SP project is an essential component of the EPOS ERIC Strategic Plan 2020 – 2022 and all the events that will be organised in the frame of the project will be held under the auspices of EPOS ERIC. The main objective of the brokerage activities and workshops that EPOS SP will organise during the project lifetime, is to meet and interact with these different stakeholders, belonging to heterogeneous communities that speak diverse technical and scientific languages, in order to engage them. Successful engagement will enable maximum exploitation of EPOS in terms of both a large volume of used services and a large number of users. Engagement requires dissemination, communication, involvement, active participation and direct contributions to the EPOS enterprise.

The following table (Table 3) gives an overview of the events that EPOS SP will organise, highlighting: i. the target audience; ii. objectives for each event; iii. timing of the different activities. Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) health emergency, the timeline could be subject to revision. For instance, the first EPOS SP/AdriaArray international workshop event planned to be held in Sopron, Hungary, on the 20-22 May 2020, has to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be rescheduled for 2021.

Table 3: Overview of events organised by EPOS SP

Responsible	EPOS SP events	EPOS SP stakeholders	Objectives	When
WP2	2 brokerage events/workshops	National Authorities Researchers	to promote EPOS and the benefits of participating in its integration plan in countries not yet involved or weakly involved in EPOS	2021
WP3	2 international conferences	Researchers RI managers	1. bring together relevant stakeholders from Africa and Latin America with those in Europe, relying on existing cooperative frameworks, in an effort to identify and understand the particular challenges for sharing principles and exchanging practices on operation of research infrastructures for sustainable data and service provision in solid Earth science. 2. to compare visions and missions and share practices on providing services to society concerning geo-hazards and risks.	2021- 2022
WP4	2 workshops	regional hazard experts, researchers and practitioners	to discuss plate deformation and geohazards in the area as well as the next steps for the preparation of the AdriaArray initiative	2020-2021
WP5	1 workshop	Researchers Private sectors (including SMEs) (VAAC community)	to share methodology, objectives and results of volcanic plume model application to design services for the aviation community (VAACs).	2021
WP5	2 workshops - EPOS meets private sector	Private sectors (including SMEs)	To help interaction mechanisms with industry and partnership rules, which will maximise mutual benefits while respecting the specific conditionalities of both sides in this partnership	2021-2022
WP7	4 workshops webinars videoconferences	Researchers Government representatives	to increase awareness and participation on the operation of EPOS services in: 1. Adriatic-Balkans-Dinarides; 2. Baltic regions; 3. Tsunami Research Community and 4. Earthquake Engineering Community.	2020-2022

5.1.2 EPOS SP participation to events

External Events refers to the events attended by EPOS.

Participation in conferences and workshops represents an opportunity to:

- promote the project,
- to strengthen existing connections and build new partnerships with other relevant solid Earth RIs and related international initiatives,
- to create capabilities of using EPOS results, in terms of awareness and
- preparedness to use the new research platform and its services.

The following table (Table 4) gives an overview of the events where EPOS SP will participate.

Table 4: Overview of events where EPOS SP will participate

Responsible	EPOS SP activities	EPOS SP stakeholders	Objectives
WP3	Participation to 4 international events (EGU, AGU, RDA, ESIP)	All	to strengthen existing connections and build new partnerships with other relevant solid Earth RIs and related international initiatives. Initially, this approach will focus on similar initiatives in Australia (AuScope) and the USA (EarthCube/IRIS/UNAVCO, ESIP etc.).
WP5	Participation to EAGE workshops	Private sectors (including SMEs)	to demonstrate and discuss with industry interlocutors the pilots developed in Task 5.1.
WP7	Participation to European and international events (EGU, AGU, IUGG, IASPEI, IAVCEI, ESC)	All	to create capabilities of using EPOS results, in terms of awareness and preparedness to use the new research platform and its services.

5.1.2 Trainings

The long-term sustainability of the EPOS services relies on the attractiveness of their use in scientific research, as well as in their applications for society. The main objective of training activities in EPOS SP is to contribute to outreach and dissemination of the EPOS contents and usage to diverse stakeholders, including training for users such as early career researchers and students. In order to achieve this goal, three dedicated training workshops will be organised to increase the awareness of the capacity and capabilities of the EPOS services and their use. Target groups (stakeholders) for these workshops are researchers, early career scientists and students, as well as government officials and industrial users.

The **first workshop** is planned to take place at the end of 2020 and will be specifically for researchers, early career scientists and students. **The second workshop** is planned to take place during 2021. This workshop will target stakeholders addressing the societal aspects of geo-hazards, such as government officials, decision makers, public disaster risk mitigation units, emergency response units, urban planners etc. **The third workshop** is planned in 2022 and will focus on industrial stakeholders related to geo-resources exploration, exploitation and management.

The training materials developed for workshops will be preserved and provided for further virtual training activities such as webinars, videoconferences and self-study materials (pre-recorded videos, tutorial/guidelines, etc.). Due to the COVID-19 situation, more emphasis will be given to the virtual training activities in 2020. For this purpose, a three-level training course will be developed:

- Level-I (Introduction of EPOS and the basic functionalities of the ICS-C Data Portal)
- Level-II (Thematic Use Cases)
- Level-III (Workflows and Processing)

5.2 Dissemination and communication tools

The EPOS SP project benefits from dissemination and communication tools: i) adopted during the EPOS IP project, ii) to be implemented during the EPOS SP project lifetime and iii) to be implemented following the EPOS ERIC Communication Plan guidelines.

Website

The website is the main EPOS communication and dissemination tool to promote the EPOS vision and mission and to increase the user's confidence in the EPOS infrastructure. Visibility of the EPOS Integrated Core Services (ICS) for the various stakeholders will have a special focus within the dissemination activities.

The EPOS Web-pages that have been developed during the EPOS implementation phase are currently maintained by the EPOS ERIC (www.epos-eu.org). The website was published in 2010 and restyled in the framework of the EPOS IP project in 2015.

At the present stage of EPOS life cycle, following the guidelines of the new EPOS communication plan, the EPOS website will be soon re-designed in a new, more performing and effective website. It will be ready at the end of 2020. In particular, it will give visibility to three different aspects (i) the EPOS SP project, (ii) the EPOS ERIC and (iii) the solid Earth science community.

The EPOS SP project will have a special space on the EPOS website and visitors can find relevant and appealing information about the project both in the home page and in the inside pages. The structure and layout of the SP web pages take into consideration the needs of the SP project stakeholders' categories.

In the Homepage, a short description of the project is included. It is highlighted that the EPOS SP project is part of the EPOS Pilot Operational Phase. In particular, a specific page dedicated to the project provides the following information: EPOS SP Work Plan, Beneficiaries information, Boards composition and any other relevant information.

The website is regularly updated on the EPOS community's activities (e.g. meetings, events) and news. Also, its usability is an important aspect that will be constantly monitored to guarantee a user-friendly approach. Through google analytics, the efficiency and satisfaction of the users is monitored and measured, the EPOS SP parameters in particular will monitor the percentage of new users per month to the EPOS SP pages.

Social media

The long-term sustainability of the EPOS services relies on the attractiveness of their use in scientific research, as well as in their applications for society. For this last reason in particular, the EPOS presence in social media and networks has an important role.

The prioritized social media platforms created since the beginning of the EPOS infrastructure are: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn. The EPOS communication plan supports the creation of social media campaigns tailored to the public, a coherent structured social media communication strategy with a policy; specific audiences have to be addressed through specific channels.

EPOS SP project will use the EPOS accounts promoting its goals, with messages tailored to its target audience. Social media is a valuable tool for building personal relationships with the EPOS audience, generating new traffic to the website, increasing lead generation, and expanding the EPOS brand.

Social media strategy takes into consideration the following steps:

1. **Setting S.M.A.R.T. social media goals** that align to the EPOS SP objectives, which ensure to lead EPOS SP results. Each goal should be:

- **Specific**; Making the social media goals specific helps to track progress and measure the success.
 - **Measurable**; Every goal needs some kind of metric.
 - **Attainable**
 - **Relevant**
 - **Time-bound**
2. **Creating audience personas**; identifying the profiles of SP audiences for each social media channel; this can help to create contents that followers can like, comment on and share. Social media analytics can also provide a ton of valuable information about who followers are, where they live, which languages they speak on social media. These insights allow the EPOS SP team to refine the communication strategy and better target the social needs.
 3. **Researching the competitors** to learn information from other projects, what they are doing.
 4. **Conducting a social media audit**, to examine the efforts already done and accomplished. Asking every defined period what's working, and what's not, who is connecting with EPOS on social, which networks our target audience use?
All this information gathered can help for planning how to improve the results; and determine which networks to use more.
 5. **Creating a social media content calendar**, planning the contents in advance to get the maximum impact. Creating a posting schedule helps to list the dates and times at which EPOS communication office will publish types of contents on each channel, for example before and during a workshop, training or a regional event.
 6. **Testing, evaluating, and adjust the strategy used**. The activity is monitored identifying the most successful contents by Analytics.

Newsletter

Newsletter, published on a regular basis, is the EPOS tool aimed at disseminating news, events and research developments relevant to the EPOS community.

The EPOS SP project activities and results will have a dedicated space in the EPOS newsletter. Publishing articles about EPOS SP project can generate regular website traffic on the EPOS SP pages, contributing to increase awareness about EPOS SP goals and activities.

6. Evaluating dissemination and communication

Dissemination and communication activities can contribute to the EPOS SP objectives (see Table 1) and even more importantly, dissemination and communication activities can heavily contribute to the exploitation of the EPOS SP achievements. Therefore, we not only need effective communication but also to be able to evaluate and monitor those activities and tools so that we can assess their effectiveness and tailor our tools and activities over the life of the project. Indeed, evaluation is the systematic process of collecting and analysing data to determine if and to what extent communication goals have been achieved, and to help make decisions about programme improvement and adjustment. If well planned, professionally managed and continuously used throughout the process, evaluation is a powerful tool of improvement which increases credibility and visibility, and helps to engage the target audiences, cope with changes, and to wisely allocate resources.

In the EPOS SP project, the following criteria will be used for evaluating dissemination and communication:

- **relevance:** to what extent are communication messages relevant to the diverse stakeholder groups identified?
- **effectiveness:** to what extent is communication effective in contributing to the EPOS IP stated objectives?
- **efficiency:** were the costs associated with communication justified given the changes achieved? What factors influenced the achievements observed?
- **coherence:** to what extent were the communication activities and messages coherent?

The main evaluation questions outlined above will be complemented with a set of sub-questions and corresponding judgement criteria in order to then shape and inform the evaluation process. To further aid the assessment of the judgement criteria, those will also be paired with a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) and qualitative impact indicators. KPIs have been defined by the WP7 Leader in coordination with the EPOS ERIC ECO and WP7 task Leaders and they have been approved by the Executive Board (EB) in April 2020. The definition of KPIs has been focused and tailor-made to measure the performance, effectiveness and relevance of the activities executed in the WP7. A monitoring process at M9 and M27 is foreseen to periodically evaluate and update KPIs to meet the project's goals. A detailed classification and evaluation will be provided within the following Deliverables: D1.4 "First report on KPIs and risks monitoring to internal boards" at M12 and D1.5 "Final report on KPIs and risks monitoring to internal boards" at M30.

7. Conclusion

The EPOS Dissemination and Communication strategy describes the communication strategies and activities to be undertaken to ensure effective dissemination and communication with stakeholders. The overarching goal of present and future EPOS communication activities is to promote understanding for a full and effective exploitation of the EPOS achievements.

This deliverable identifies:

- the way in which communication can contribute in achieving the EPOS SP objectives;
- target audiences within broad stakeholder categories for defining appropriate messages and tools to engage and interact with them;
- a timeline for reaching the defined target audiences as their contributions to the various EPOS development phases may change within the lifetime of the initiative;
- the most appropriate strategic activities and communication tools for making the communication plan operational;

Therefore, the dissemination and communication strategy has been designed in order to strictly respect coherence among all the above-mentioned points. Undeniably, only respecting such a coherency will address the challenge of transforming this document into an effective dissemination and communication plan. Finally, it is important to stress that all performed activities need to be continuously monitored in order to evaluate their effectiveness. Dissemination and communication activities serve to the achievement of the EPOS SP objectives and can heavily contribute to the exploitation of the EPOS SP achievements and is designed as a supporting action whose outcomes will be integrated into the EPOS Communication Plan. At the end of EPOS SP, EPOS ERIC will ingest and use all of the achievements, which will represent the first act of exploiting results. Therefore, we do not only need effective communication, but also to be able to evaluate communication so that we can assess its effectiveness and tailor our tools and activities over the life of the project.