



## O2A3

# FRAMELOG Stakeholders' Engagement Plan

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## 1. Introduction

Organizations need to remain competitive to survive in a challenging business environment and competitiveness requires regular interaction with important stakeholder groups. A robust stakeholder engagement model is vital for universities and research institutions to be able to understand and respond to environmental concerns.

In this regard, the “stakeholder engagement” can be described as the practice of interacting and influencing project stakeholders to the overall benefit of the project and its delegates, in order to maximize their chances of success. The successful completion of a project usually depends on how the stakeholders view it.

The idea of engagement assumes a significant importance at the communicative level if you consider that the meaning of *Engagement* belongs to the interactive communication. It is a substantive which means



*involvement* and simultaneously refers to the idea of taking care of the partners with whom relation has been established.

In many fields, stakeholder engagement is arguably one of the most important ingredients for successful project delivery, and yet is often regarded as a fringe activity or one that can be outsourced to business-as-usual functions. Project managers depend on people to respond to the outputs and benefits that they deliver. People will only respond if they are engaged. In the management environment the truth is that a project manager frequently has no formal power of authority and therefore has to rely on engagement to achieve his/her objectives. Therefore, one of the keys of the stakeholder engagement is the development of relationship: where there is trust, people work together more easily and effectively. Investing effort in identifying and building stakeholder relationships can increase confidence across the project environment; minimize uncertainty, and speed problem solving and decision-making.

Stakeholder Engagement implies a long-term relationship with active involvement and influence among the subjects engaged in the company organization, same organization that needs to be monitored and programmed in detail, to improve its effectiveness and business efficiency.

Precisely, this type of monitoring can be managed with tools from the logistics sector, which is defined as a set of organizational, management and strategic activities that govern information company flows'. Specifically, the company logistics is dedicated to the connection, in terms of optimization, effectiveness and efficiency, of some phases of the production process in which it is important to manage the flows to define the strategies to be adopted in the business activity.

The stakeholder engagement should be implemented by a delivery system, known as Stakeholder Engagement Plan, which should assist the actors involved and interested in the project during the various activities that will be implemented to manage or enhance engagement.

Freeman (1984) defines a stakeholder as '*any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives*'. The definition of a stakeholder, the purpose and the character of the organization and the role of managers are very unclear and contested in literature and have changed over the years. Even the "father of the stakeholder concept" changed his definition over the time. In one of his latest definitions, Freeman (2004) identifies stakeholders as "those groups who are vital to the survival and success of the corporation" adding a new principle, which reflects a new trend in stakeholder theory. In this principle in his opinion the consideration of the perspective of the stakeholders themselves and their activities is also very important to be taken into the management of companies. He states "The principle of stakeholder recourse. Stakeholders may bring an action against the directors for failure to perform the required duty of care" (Freeman, 2004). Therefore, a stakeholder is a party that has an interest in a company and can either affect or be affected by the business. The primary stakeholders in a typical corporation are its



investors, employees and customers. However, the modern theory of the idea goes beyond this original notion to include additional stakeholders such as a community, government or trade association.

After having analysed the definition of the stakeholder engagement concept, it is interesting to understand which are the benefits strictly connected to its use. It's clear from the introduction that being in an active dialogue with stakeholders would help companies to anticipate environmental issues, and consequently being part of the conversation allows companies to be a part of the solution and reduces the risk of conflicts. Whenever stakeholders are involved among them, their engagement will help others to understand their need and expectations towards the company. All this will allow establishing greater and solid relationship between internal and external resources removing cultural and language barriers.

In our specific case, the strength of the engagement plan is to be able to link the main actors who are part of the knowledge triangle: the engagement plan must connect different areas of interest, combining and informing them to such an extent that, once involved, they can understand if they will have positive or negative effects from the cycle.

The purpose of this document is to identify the importance of the stakeholder engagement in general and, specifically, the role covered into the logistic field. We started to define the stakeholder figure and the communication strategy adapted in the organization's environment. Subsequently our study will move to the analysis of the stakeholders, how they have been selected and the identification model used from the experts. Finally, we will focus on the results we expect to achieve, focusing on the key-players and relevant analysis. The aim of the plan is to frame the role of the key players towards the knowledge triangle and its effect on them.

## 2. Stakeholders analysis

The analysis of the stakeholders at a general level, invites to reflect on the stakeholders' groups who influence or are influenced by the organization activities of the relative area. It's clear that the analysis will underline different categories of stakeholders; each one characterized by different procedures and involvement levels.

A relevant aspect for stakeholder analysis is given by the ability to influence and the interest level the stakeholders express. It can be used to generate knowledge about the relevant actors so as to understand their behaviors, intentions, interrelations, agendas, interests, and the influence or resources they have brought – or could bring – to bear on decision-making processes.



On the other hand, the analysis is strongly linked to the engagement idea: it is a method used to identify the way in which stakeholders can influence the organization or can be influenced by its activities, as well as their attitude towards the organization and its targets.

Individuals or groups can be identified in specific circumstances. Some individuals may be part of multiple stakeholder groups, and then it is important to point out the distinction between two different types of Stakeholders, which can be internal or external. Internal stakeholders are people whose interest in a company comes through a direct relationship, such as through employment, ownership or investment. Investors are a common type of internal stakeholder and are greatly affected by the outcome of a business.

External stakeholders are those people who do not directly work with a company but are affected in some ways by the actions and outcomes of said business. External stakeholders are a little harder to identify, seeing as they do not have a direct relationship with the company. Instead, an external stakeholder is normally a person or organization affected by the operations of the business.

In our case the analysis starts from the identification through brainstorming activity between experts, which is linked to the creative production of ideas, that means doing a free and random list of all the people, the organizations, and subjects that fall into the projects. After that, the analysis will move to the components of the knowledge triangle followed by the analysis of the Logistics context.

## 2.1. Key matrix for stakeholder analysis

We have decided to adapt the “power-interest” grid of Ackermann (Eden & Ackermann, 1998) because we consider it a suitable structure and a relevant one to the needs of the project. Thanks to this framework, you can map the interests of the stakeholder, prioritising them in order of importance, with a common approach which consists in mapping the interest and power or influence of each stakeholder group on a quadrant.

The power-interest grid, as shown below, helps to visualise the positions of individual stakeholders and the relations among them. The two dimensions of the grid – power and interest – show that not all of the players who have an interest in the project and its development also have the power to influence decisions about it.

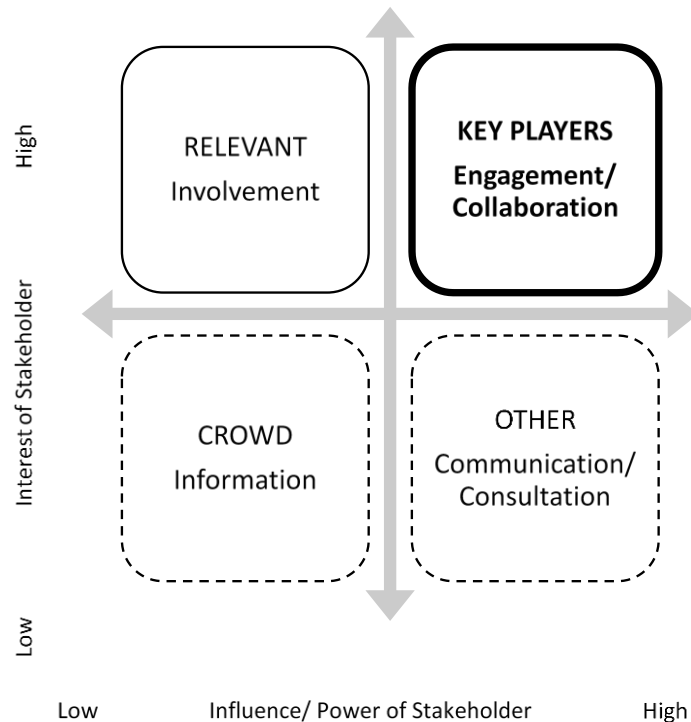
The two-dimensional grid generates four categories of stakeholders:

**Key Players:** have both an interest and significant power

**Relevant:** have an interest but little power

**Other:** have power but little direct interest

**Crowd:** have little interest or power



Following the frame above, different types of stakeholders have been placed into three different classes. It has been decided not to consider for the analysis the fourth category “Crowd”, since their lacking interest and influence on the planning dynamics.

**A) Project’s Users/ Beneficiaries:**

- **HEIs**
- **Companies**
- **Research Institutions**
- **Professional Associations in Logistics**
- **Universities**
- **Corporate Universities**
- **R&D Departments**

These categories can play a key role into the project with a high influence on its development and growth. They will implement several strategies for increasing it and they will collaborate towards the decision they have to take. They mainly focus on the relationship management, trying to maintain a continuous level of engagement between the organization and its audience, achieving relevant advantages for their purposes.

- **Workers in Logistics**
- **Students/ Graduates in Logistics**



These users are considered “relevant” for the project itself. They reveal a high interest with a less influence on it due to the lack of useful instrument and relative knowledge that means suitable tools to create forms of development within the project.

#### **B) Influencers on the project development:**

- **Scientific associations: both at European** (e.g. European Academy of Management) **and national level** (e.g. in Italy: AIDEA, ASSIOA..)
- **Logistics organizations**
- **Trade unions**
- **Economic ministries** (Labour, production, economic development etc.)

They are players with high influence, able to effect on the growth of the project but with a lower interested to collaborate towards its development.

#### **C) Other:**

- **Local community** – involved at a local level
- **National and European communities** – involved at international level

They are still considered as stakeholders because they will be involved in the project’s outcome, but will not be analysed in details.

## **3. Stakeholder Planning and Communication**

### **3.1. Analysis of High-impact methods and instruments**

Starting from the results of the analysis proposed in the previous section (O2A2), in this one we focus on the selection of those methods and instruments that can create the major impact on the development of the Knowledge Triangle, related to the most relevant stakeholders analysed: Key Players and Relevant.

In the analysis of those methods and instruments selected for the evaluation of the Knowledge Triangle, the impact measurement method used is the three-level scale: *High, Medium, Low*. The *High* level is assigned to methods and instruments that are supposed to have the highest impact in the development of the Knowledge Triangle and to its continuous improvement. The *Medium* level is related to those which can potentially create a relevant impact but are dependent to the specific status of the organization at the moment of the assessment; the *Low* level, instead, is assigned to those methods and instruments which are preparatory to the other ones. With this *ratio*, the most influential methods and instruments selected (*High*) are the following:

- Development of specific courses (Bachelor, Master, Professional) focused on Logistics, based on the needs and potentialities of the entity;
- Selection of educational contents, programmes, methods and lecturers based on Good practices with external partners;



- Preparation for courses' Accreditation process;
- Development of conjoint activities with business and research entities;
- Organization of events to disseminate results on Logistics, from both internal and external project;
- Development of coordination, offer of internships on Logistics;
- Development of temporary and/or permanent partnerships on Logistics;
- Development of PhDs, bourses, fellowships, professorial chairs on Logistics topics;
- Development of production of intellectual outputs: papers, patents, software etc. on Logistics.

For this group of methods and instruments, in the following paragraphs we present the list of actions, strategies, channels and objects of communication to be developed for the Key and Relevant Stakeholders.

### 3.2. Action and Strategy

Each method and instrument presented in the previous document, in this section has been related to an initial action, which is considered to be essential for a correct implementation of the Knowledge Triangle: the assessment of the current status of the organization. This assessment represents a moment of self-acknowledgment of the strengths and weaknesses in terms of collaboration and continuous-improvement systems and it will enable the organization to develop the most appropriate actions and strategies to enhance them. For this preparatory action, the strategy for the stakeholders' engagement is the dissemination of the FRAMELOG Assessment Tool, which has been developed within this project and presented in the O2A1, both via direct and via indirect communication, as presented in the Attachment II.

The other Actions and Strategies are related to the single method and instrument and have been summarized in the Attachment II and III of this document.

### 3.3. Channel of Communication

Analysing the channels of communication, we need to differentiate between the channels selected for Key Players and Relevant Stakeholders. To communicate with the Key Players in order to engage them, a series of channels of communication has been selected. Starting from the most effective ones, there is the need of face-to-face meetings and events with the most influential persons of the organizations composing the Knowledge Triangle, to emphasise the relevance of this pattern of continuous communication for the improvement of every organization. Also focus groups can be a valid way to engage with the Key players, so that they will be more effective in the proposal of new theories and solutions.

Other useful channels of communication can be identified with online material, that remains always available to be consulted and downloaded for further thinking from the consultants. For example, the project official website can be considered as the first point of dissemination of project's contents and suggestions, in all its parts: in the section "Results", all the drafted documents and the proposed Assessment tool can be accessed. In the section "Event", all the data proposed and projected during official events related to the project can be easily viewed: podcasts, videoconferencing can be analysed as high-impact audio/visual channels of communication, enabling all those who could not be able to participate to the event to be aligned on the last achievement in terms of communication.

Dissemination events are the most important channel of communication in the first stage of Stakeholder Engagement: the presence of representative of Key Players at those events has the important role to make them focus and network on the project's innovative results and start thinking about a possible improvement of their activities. The projected and printed material should have the same format all over the European countries in which those events will take place, to maintain a substantial and formal uniformity.



The printed material, during the dissemination events, can be considered as the first guideline to follow the contents of the event, to stimulate participants' interest and to leave all the references to find the complete material. As printed material, a brief questionnaire on the quality of the event should be inserted to guide the responsible persons to adjust the event format to be more effective.

A channel of communication already used is the direct emailing to relevant reference persons in Logistics institutions, moving from HEIs, to Research institutions and Companies. For the dissemination of the Assessment tool, in fact, all the project's Partners proposed a medium of 50 direct contacts of their own Partners and collaborators to first assess the quality of the tool and provide with the first relevant results. For the same list of contacts, a plan of scheduled newsletter about the project has been considered as a valid channel to spread further project's achievements. All the updates about new documents and research activities are not only inserted in the FRAMELOG website but simultaneously uploaded on the social media's platforms developed for the project: the Facebook Official Project's page and the Twitter ones. Such channel of communication has been used to shorten distances between Key Players and to ease the updating of information and events' organization.

For the Relevant Stakeholders, the most significant channels of communication to be used move from the same online material and social networks presented in the previous part of the section, to face-to-face presentations in the workplaces/ educational institutions. The relevance of online communities and groups (e.g. LinkedIn, Google Groups) has been highlighted in the last years to spread informative documents and improve networking chances among all the members. The importance of Relevant Stakeholders' communication is to be related to the main focus of the project, which is to create a continuously-improving Knowledge Triangle on Logistics: without the incorporation of the major beneficiaries in the communication activities, the potentiality of such achievement will be lower.

After the description of the selected channels, in the next sections we will present the different objects of communication and the related timing selected for the different communication strategies.

### 3.4.Object of Communication

For the Key Players, as introduced in the previous section, the first object of communication has been the FRAMELOG Assessment tool, to evaluate the initial situation of collaboration inside the organization. This Tool will always remain available and approachable from the FRAMELOG website for all the potential beneficiaries. The final aim of FRAMELOG is to maintain the Tool consultable in the following year to let the organization to self-assess themselves in different times, to appreciate the effective improvements made thanks to the FRAMELOG Knowledge Triangle.

Concerning the other objects of Communication, the most relevant ones are the already defined papers, in order to spread the information collected at this stage of the project, susceptible to be increased with the following documents. The objects we are referring to are related to actions and strategies developed also for Key Players and for Relevant Stakeholders:

- Compendium of Good practices;
- Definition of Knowledge Triangle;
- LogiComp (competence tracking tool);
- EQF and ELA certification processes (European level);
- Guidelines for national accreditation system;
- Guidelines for the development of conjoint activities;
- Guidelines for the development of dissemination activities;
- Guidelines for Coordination and Guidelines for Offer of Internships;





- Guidelines for development and management of Partnerships.

Except from the Compendium of Good practices, the Definition of Knowledge Triangle and the LogiComp (competence tracking tool), all the other objects of communication will be presented in the following document, “Guidelines for implementing the framework for efficient 'knowledge framework'”.

The direct relation between methods, actions, strategies and object of communication is presented in the Attachment I and II, differentiated between Key Players and Relevant Stakeholders.

### 3.5. Timing and use of resources

To better define the effort in the presented Engagement Plan, we propose a reasonable timing and use of resources that match the other elements of the Plan.

As Timing, we have assumed to align the Engagement Plan activities to the length of the project, hoping that in this period the participants would propose a spontaneous series of actions and events. In fact, for all the actions we predict the frequency of two dissemination events per year of project until its conclusion and the constant presence of informative material on online platforms.

As use of resources, we used the *High-Medium-Low* scale again, to give an indication of the resources needed to carry out the engagement activities: in particular, for the disseminating events the use of resources will be higher (*High*) than the pure publication of informative material on online platforms, which have been associated with the label *Medium*. That is, for the first group, actions are composed of different steps, from the event management, the rent of a suitable location, the preparation of printed material and all the marketing activities to be developed.

Following the PDCA cycle, in the Table inserted in the Attachment II, we present the communication plan to engage the Key Players in relation to the selected highest-impact methods and instruments. In particular, we present a summary of actions, strategies, channels and objects of communication, frequencies and uses of resources. In Attachment III, a presentation of the communication plan to involve the Relevant Stakeholders is reported.

## 4. Expected Results

With the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, our aim is to communicate the potentialities related to the correct implementation of the Knowledge Triangle, which has been analysed as a fruitful pattern to enhance collaboration between Higher Educational Institution, Research organizations and Companies. The systematic and explicit knowledge package about collaboration in the field of Logistics that has been created in this project needs to be disseminated to reach the widest panorama all over the European countries, in particular to be communicated to the most influential reference persons in Logistics.

The strategies, actions and channels of communication selected are structured as to reach this scope in a fast, efficient and effective way. The main objective that we expect to achieve is to make every responsible person inside the educational, research and business organizations aware of the Knowledge Triangle on Logistics’ advantages and potentialities, in order to consider a potential evolution of the standard flow of activities with the increase of external collaborations. In parallel, we hope that the diffusion of the selected “Compendium of Good practices” and the “Guidelines for implementing the Framework” will help in guiding this evolution in the most effective way, to ensure the reduction of potential implementation



problems and the lowest switching costs. The developed FRAMELOG Assessment Tool is an essential preparatory instrument to orient further actions, helping the organizations face their lacks and potential areas for improvement in terms of collaboration.

The highest scope of FRAMELOG is activating a Knowledge Triangle that will successively self-sustain and grow in an independent way, in a virtuous cycle, through the dissemination of practices, methods, instruments and guidelines. For the moment, the results are encouraging: in fact, the first dissemination activities realized by the project's Partners for the FRAMELOG Assessment tool have highlighted the willingness of organizations to question themselves and hopefully to consider the suggestions and instruments developed within this project.

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## Sitography

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## Attachment I: Systemic summary of communication plan for the Engagement of the **Key Players**

| Stakeholder                        | Phase – Sub Topic                                 | High-Impact Methods and instruments  | Action   | Communication Strategy  | Object of Communication  | Timing/ Frequency  | Use of resources |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|--|--|------------------|
| All Key Players                    | 0 Preliminary Check                               | All  | Current situation assessment   | Creation and dissemination of a tool to self-assess the actual status of collaboration with external organization in terms of Logistics                     | FRAMELOG Assessment tool   |  | High             |
| HEIs and Professional Associations | 1 PLAN - 1.1 Offer                                | Development of specific courses at several levels (Bachelor, Master, professional) focused on Logistics, based on the needs and potentialities of the entity | Engagement of the stakeholder for the creation of a consultative Strategic Committee comprised of key players on Logistics to fund and develop courses | Highlight the potentiality of the development of specific courses on Logistics connected to the local/ regional territory                                   | Compendium of Good practices – Guidelines  | Twice per year until the end of the project - Always available for the online material | High             |
| All key players                    | 1 – PLAN - 1.3 Collaboration in Designing Courses | Selection of educational contents, programmes, methods and lecturers based on Good practices with external partners  | Involvement of all key players for the development of coordinated meetings for the selection   | Dissemination of project's results and specific tools to guide the selection of educational contents, programmes, methods and lecturers on Logistics topics | Compendium of Good practices, LogiComp (competence tracking tool) to guide the selection of contents |  | High             |



| Stakeholder     | Phase – Sub Topic                           | High-Impact Methods and instruments   | Action  | Communication Strategy   | Object of Communication  | Timing/ Frequency | Use of resources |
|-----------------|---|---|---|--|--|-------------------|------------------|
| HEIs            |   | Preparation for courses' Accreditation process  | Communication of potentiality of Accreditation in terms of enhancement of Knowledge Triangle  | Spread of informative material about the accreditation process on Logistics and communication of the advantages                    | EQF and ELA certification processes (European level), Guidelines for national accreditation system |                   | Medium           |
| All key players | 2 - DO<br>2.1 -<br>Conjoint Activities      | Develop of conjoint activities with business and research entities                                  | Communication and Engagement for the opportunity of the development of conjoint actions to enhance communication in the Knowledge Triangle              | Spread of project's results; Dissemination of Guidelines to help the creation, development, management of conjoint actions         | Compendium of Good Practices; Guidelines for the development of conjoint activities                |                   | Medium           |
| All key players | 2 – DO<br>2.2 -<br>Dissemination Activities | Organization of events to disseminate results on Logistics, from both internal and external project | Communication and Engagement for the opportunity of the dissemination of internal and external results for the implementation of the Knowledge Triangle | Spread of project's results; Dissemination of Guidelines to help the creation, development, management of dissemination activities | Compendium of Good Practices; Guidelines for the development of dissemination activities           |                   | High             |
| All key players | 2 - DO<br>2.3 -<br>Internship               | Coordination and/or offer of internships on Logistics   | Communication to stakeholders for the opportunity of implementing internships   | Dissemination of Compendium of Good Practices and Guidelines for implementation  | Compendium of Good Practices; Guidelines for Coordination and Guidelines for Offer of Internships  |                   | High             |



| Stakeholder     | Phase – Sub Topic             | High-Impact Methods and instruments  | Action  | Communication Strategy   | Object of Communication   | Timing/ Frequency | Use of resources |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|--|---|--|---|-------------------|------------------|
| All key players | 2 - DO<br>2.6 – Partnership   | Development of temporary and/or permanent partnerships on Logistics                            | Communication and Engagement for the development of partnerships focused on Logistics activities                              | Dissemination of project's results in terms of current Good Practices and of specific Guidelines to orient partnerships                    | Compendium of Good Practices; Guidelines for development and management of Partnerships |                   | High             |
| All key players | 2 - DO<br>2.7 – Funding       | Development of PhDs, bourses, fellowships, professorial chairs on Logistics topics             | Communication and Engagement of stakeholders for the provision of specific funds on Logistics activities                      | Dissemination of project's results in terms of current Good Practices  | Compendium of Good Practices  |                   | High             |
| All key players | 3 – CHECK<br>3.3 – Production | Development of production of intellectual outputs: papers, patents, software etc. on Logistics | Communication and Engagement for activities and funds for the intellectual production in collaboration with external Partners | Highlight the opportunity of networking and development of coordinated actions as basis for the creation of shared intellectual production | Compendium of Good Practices  |                   | Medium           |

Table 1\_Systemic summary of communication plan for the Engagement of the Key Players



## Attachment II: Systemic summary of communication plan for the Engagement of **Relevant Stakeholders**

| Stakeholder                      | Action   | Strategies   | Channel of Communication   | Object of Communication  | Timing/ Frequency   | Use of resources |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|------------------|
| Workers in Logistics             | Communication and consultation<br>Communication and consultation | Dissemination of list of organizations that offer accredited professional courses and specific certifications on Logistics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Face to face: events, presentations during work fairs</li> <li>- Online: blogs, forums, communities, online groups, groups social media</li> </ul>                      | Compendium of Good Practices, ELA competence/ abilities qualification system | Always available online – Several times per year in Partners’ countries until the end of the project                              | Medium           |
| Students/ Graduates in Logistics |  |  |  |  |   |                  |
| Logistics sector                 | Communication and involvement                                    | Dissemination of project’s results and involvement in further communication  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Face to face: events, presentations during sector fairs</li> <li>- Mailing</li> <li>- Online: blogs, forums, communities, online groups, groups social media</li> </ul> | Compendium of Good Practices, Definition of Knowledge Triangle, Guidelines   | Always available online – Several times per year in Partners’ countries until the end of the project, during dissemination events | High             |

Table 2\_Systemic summary of communication plan for the Engagement of Relevant Stakeholders

