



# HARMONITOR

**Grant agreement n°:** 101060133

**Project acronym:** HARMONITOR

**Project title:** Harmonisation and monitoring platform for certification of bio-based systems

## D7.7

# Final Dissemination, Communication and Exploitation Plan

**Date of deliverable:** 30/05/2025

**Actual submission date:** 19/05/2025

**Version:** [2.0] | 19/05/2025

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# REPORT

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Deliverable Type	Report
Dissemination Level	Public

## DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Description
0.1	First internal draft
0.2	Second internal draft
0.3	First review draft
0.4	Final draft
1.0	Dissemination, Communication and Exploitation Plan (D7.1)
2.0	Final Dissemination, Communication and Exploitation Plan (D7.7)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary .....	5
1 Introduction .....	6
1.1 Differences Between Dissemination, Communication and Exploitation .....	6
1.2 Barriers and Challenges .....	7
2 Objectives and Scope .....	9
2.1 Objectives.....	9
2.2 Scope .....	10
2.2.1 Dissemination .....	10
2.2.2 Communication.....	11
2.2.3 Exploitation .....	11
3 Responsibilities and Partners Participation .....	13
3.1 Coordination and Work Package Leaders.....	13
3.2 WP7 Team .....	13
3.3 Partners Participation .....	13
4 Target Stakeholder Groups .....	14
4.1 Getting in Touch and Interacting with Stakeholders .....	16
4.2 Stakeholder Engagement and Integration .....	16
4.2.1 Roundtable .....	16
4.2.2 Other Face-to-Face Interactions .....	16
4.2.3 ICT Mediated Interactions .....	17
5 Key Messages .....	18
5.1 Purpose of Messages .....	18
5.2 Formulation Guidelines.....	18
6 Collaboration with Other Projects .....	20
6.1 The BiobasedCert Cluster .....	20
6.2 Other Collaborations.....	21
7 Dissemination and Communication Activities .....	22
7.1 Logo and Brand Identity.....	22
7.1.1 Logo .....	22
7.1.2 Templates.....	22
7.2 In Person Events .....	24
7.3 Roundtable Meetings.....	31
7.4 Online Webinars and Workshops.....	32
7.5 HARMONITOR Website and Social Media .....	34
7.5.1 HARMONITOR Website .....	34



7.5.2	Project Blogs and News.....	35
7.5.3	Social Media .....	41
7.6	Interviews, Surveys and e-Meetings .....	42
7.7	Scientific Publications .....	42
7.8	Presentation of HARMONITOR's Results at International Symposia .....	43
7.9	List of all Activities .....	43
8	Main Exploitable Results.....	47
8.1	Roundtable Platform .....	47
8.2	BiobasedCert Monitoring Tool .....	48
9	Data Management Plan .....	49
10	Monitoring and Reporting .....	50

## Executive Summary

Dissemination, communication and exploitation (DCE) activities play a vital role within the HARMONITOR project. The project aims at an adequate and effective dissemination of its results and fluent communication of its activities at every stage during the project lifetime. Exploitation activities aim at ensuring that project results and methodologies are used by policy makers and by the certification and labels community to keep improving their certification schemes and labels (CSLs).

The Dissemination, Communication and Exploitation Plan was developed at the starting phase of the project and updated throughout the duration of the project by the Work Package 7 (WP7) team. The plan defines objectives, target groups, messages and outlines all implementation activities. The updated version is presented in this report. The main dissemination and communication channels used by the project (website, blogs, social media, participation in renowned conferences, meetings, networking events and workshops, scientific publications, etc.) are listed in detail in this plan. The relationship between channels and the different target groups is explained, alongside suggested indicators for actively monitoring effectiveness.

The DCE plan guided dissemination and communication efforts to target various audiences and convey clear, understandable, coordinated and effective messages; thus, raising awareness and maximising the benefits resulting from HARMONITOR.

The summary of dissemination, communication and exploitation measures applied to HARMONITOR results is:

- Frequent networking and debate with international partners and organisations, such as industry associations, standardisation bodies, certification bodies, and NGOs working on sustainability aspects, including dedicated stakeholder consultations, joint activities with sister projects, and participation in EU-level events and working groups (WP7).
- Extensive dialogue with policymakers, market actors and EU-funded projects through webinars, co-creation workshops, and targeted meetings (e.g., with Dutch ministries) to present and refine the BiobasedCert Monitoring Tool (BMT) and other project results (WP7).
- Four formal Roundtable meetings with CSLs and other stakeholders took place to validate assumptions, collect feedback on project outputs, and foster exchange and cooperation among certification systems (WP2, WP7).
- Additional DCE activities included the organisation of 4 workshops specifically designed for CSLs and further thematic workshops focusing on methodologies developed in WPs 4, 5, and 6; the publication of multiple scientific articles; ongoing updates to the HARMONITOR website and LinkedIn; and a final high-level conference held in Brussels with sister projects to present key outcomes and explore next steps (WP7).
- Two stakeholder surveys were conducted to support the development of an EU policy framework for bioeconomy by capturing perspectives on sustainability certification, its costs, benefits, and barriers (WP6).

# 1 Introduction

The HARMONITOR project aims to improve the effectiveness of sustainability certification schemes and labels (CSLs) in the EU bioeconomy and support their use as co-regulation tools. A key element is the *Roundtable*, a participative review platform designed to foster collaboration among CSLs, promote harmonisation and continuous improvement, and enhance transparency across bio-based value chains. The project brings together nine partners to systematically monitor and strengthen the robustness of CSLs, while providing insights into certification-related trade flows, costs, and benefits. The specific objectives of the HARMONITOR project are:

- To establish a review platform to capture the dynamic development of CSLs and encourage their harmonisation and continuous improvement through the exchange of information and promotion of best practices.
- To provide quantitative, transparent data on bio-based value chains through analysis and dissemination of trade flows (certified and non-certified), and quantification of direct and indirect costs and benefits of certification.
- To review and compare performance requirements and assurance and governance systems of CSLs.
- To develop and apply a monitoring system on the effectiveness and robustness of CSLs.
- To improve the understanding of the opportunities and limitations of using CSLs in co-regulation.

To maximise the impact of project outcomes, Work Package 7 (WP7) focuses on dissemination, communication, and exploitation (DCE). WP7 ensures strategic knowledge transfer through a clear dissemination and exploitation plan, data management, stakeholder engagement, collaboration with related EU projects, and tailored recommendations for target audiences. The goal of this report is to give an overview of all the DCE activities carried out in the context of the HARMONITOR project.

## 1.1 Differences Between Dissemination, Communication and Exploitation

Dissemination, communication, and exploitation serve distinct but complementary purposes within the HARMONITOR project. Together, they ensure that project results reach relevant audiences and generate lasting impact. These activities primarily target CSL owners and promoters, policymakers, industry actors, sustainability-focused institutions, civil society organisations, academia, and the public.

**Communication** activities aim to raise awareness of HARMONITOR and promote its goals and results through clear messaging and appropriate channels. They are designed to engage a broad audience, including the media and the public.

**Dissemination** involves the public sharing of project findings through various channels and formats—such as scientific publications in specialised journals, conferences, and databases—ensuring accessibility to those interested in the ongoing evaluation and development of CSLs.

**Exploitation** focuses on ensuring that HARMONITOR's results and methodologies are practically applied. These efforts aim to support the concrete uptake of outcomes by the CSL community and policymakers to improve certification systems and their role in bioeconomy governance.

## 1.2 Barriers and Challenges

The possible barriers and challenges to DCE, as well as the measures applied to minimise or overcome them, are listed in Table 1, and were presented and discussed in detail in Deliverable [D7.1 – Communication, dissemination and exploitation plan](#)

Table 1. Barriers to dissemination, communication and exploitation.

Type	Barrier	Mitigation Strategy
<b>Stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different types of information are needed / appreciated by different types of stakeholders.</li> <li>• Stakeholders might experience fatigue.</li> <li>• Different target audiences require different ways/levels of complexity.</li> <li>• Different types of dissemination methods preferred.</li> <li>• Limited number of information sources trusted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholders mapping.</li> <li>• Diversified content across multiple formats and channels (e.g., blog posts, scientific articles, presentations, webinars, etc.).</li> </ul>
<b>Information source</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level of authority.</li> <li>• Limited credibility of experience.</li> <li>• Suspicion regarding motive.</li> <li>• Lack of sensitivity to user concerns.</li> <li>• Presence of other sources more trusted by the stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate transparency, responsiveness, and stakeholder involvement throughout the project.</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low confidence in the quality of the information provided.</li> <li>• Restricted comprehensiveness of the information.</li> <li>• Unclear utility and relevance for users.</li> <li>• Non-user-friendly format.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure content is evidence-based, clearly structured, and tailored to user needs.</li> <li>• Use accessible, user-friendly formats with guidance on practical application.</li> </ul>
<b>Methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited capacity to reach intended users.</li> <li>• Long timeframes required to access.</li> <li>• Lack of flexibility.</li> <li>• Limited reliability.</li> <li>• Cost effectiveness.</li> <li>• Project results presented in language not adapted and/or not accessible to the different target groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a multi-channel, open-access dissemination strategy.</li> <li>• Encourage and support partners to contribute to broader outreach by integrating dissemination tasks into project.</li> <li>• Translate key results into accessible, engaging formats (e.g., blog posts and webinars).</li> </ul>



- Limited attractiveness of the information.
- Too slow in picking up cutting edge dissemination methods offered by rapidly developing internet technologies.
- Lack of free access to scientific papers published in authoritative but expensive academic journals.
- Improper use of printed and other materials intended for active dissemination but distributed passively.
- Some resistance in the scientific community to publish data in forms or data papers or supplementary data files.
- Some resistance in the scientific community to provide information necessary for newsletters, fact sheets and possible policy briefs.



## 2 Objectives and Scope

### 2.1 Objectives

The main objective of HARMONITOR's dissemination, communication, and exploitation plan is to reach out to the widest possible range of stakeholders and to promote further exploitation of the project results within key stakeholders and relevant communities. Four specific objectives were established to guide considerations and actions for the implementation of this plan:

- Promoting the adoption of the Roundtable by different CSLs and relevant stakeholders (including the European Commission and policy makers from EU Member States) by developing ownership of processes, methodologies, and results of the HARMONITOR project. HARMONITOR informs policy makers and industries about the benefits of establishing its review platform for the continuous improvement and harmonisation of CSLs.
- Information sharing with the CSLs community and with sister and other relevant EU-funded projects under the ZEROPOLLUTION call. Project methodologies and results are frequently and openly shared. To improve the collaboration with sister projects, a shared SharePoint was created, and all relevant documents are uploaded there.
- Knowledge transfer of best practices. Best practices on existing sustainability principles, criteria, and indicators related to different bio-based value chains, as well as best practices in assurance and governance systems, are identified, collated, and communicated to target audiences.
- Providing more transparency and guidance in the selection of the most suitable CSLs for industry stakeholders of the European bioeconomy by making the assessment results and recommendations of the HARMONITOR platform public, and by engaging with international organisations to increase outreach and impact.

To ensure that these objectives are met professionally, effectively, and in a timely manner, HARMONITOR adopted a cooperative approach by promoting:

- Active participation of CSLs to prove the concept of the HARMONITOR platform for continuous improvement, and in the setting of initial assumptions, and the discussion and validation of project results.
- A collaborative and professional relationship with the Commission and sister projects funded under the Horizon Europe ZEROPOLLUTION call (exchanging information, methodologies, and findings) for the advancement of the project and the elaboration of joint strategies towards achieving the full impact of HARMONITOR and its sister projects.
- Frequent networking and debate with international partners and organisations, such as industry associations, standardisation bodies, certification bodies, NGOs working on sustainability aspects, etc.
- Dialogue with policy makers and market actors to provide guidance in the identification and selection of the most suitable CSLs for relevant bio-based systems of the European bioeconomy.

## 2.2 Scope

The HARMONITOR project aims to contribute to the improvement and uptake of best sustainability CSLs in bio-based systems relevant to the EU bioeconomy; therefore, dissemination, exploitation and communication of outcomes included mostly the business spheres and policy makers, as well as institutions committed to enhancing sustainability performance, civil society organisations representing consumers, academia, and the public in general. HARMONITOR aims to promote actions to be taken and recommendations to be adopted by providing targeted information to several specific relevant audiences. Goals sought by dissemination, communication, and exploitation activities are presented in the next paragraphs.

The elements for effective dissemination, communication and exploitation followed by HARMONITOR are:

- Goals: Goals of each activity are defined and documented.
- Objectives: Each goal is associated with one or more project objectives.
- Target groups: The scope and characteristics of the different target recipient groups of disseminated information are described.
- Content: Basic elements of the content relevant to each target audience are identified before it is disseminated.
- Source(s): The primary source or sources that each potential target group is already connected to or most respects as an information source are identified.
- Tools: The tools that best suit the delivery of messages to target groups are selected.
- Success: A results/success monitoring method is described for each dissemination activity.
- Access: The mechanism to promote access to HARMONITOR information is described.
- Availability: Strategies for promoting awareness of project outputs are identified.
- Barriers: Potential barriers that may interfere with the targeted users' access or utilization of information are identified and actions to reduce these barriers are developed.

### 2.2.1 Dissemination

The goal of HARMONITOR's implemented and future dissemination activities is to make research results known to various stakeholder groups (like research peers, industry and other commercial actors, professional organisations, policymakers) in a targeted way, to enable them to use the results in their own work. Those results are related to the identification of relevant bio-based value chains for the EU, reviews and comparison of CSLs, systems to monitor the effectiveness and performance of CSLs, and benefits and costs of most relevant CSLs.

The project results are disseminated to a professional and scientific audience through publications in high profile international journals, lectures at international meetings and conferences. Dissemination activities within HARMONITOR follow the principles of 'Open Science', which is to make knowledge and results available free of charge for others to use.

HARMONITOR is committed, as much as possible, to make its data available as “open source” on the website. Dissemination activities are not meant only for the benefit of CSLs, sustainability scientists and academia, but also to all the different groups that can learn from the results, in particular policy makers, authorities, bio-based industry and civil society groups interested in sustainability of the bio-based materials and products.

Dissemination activities within HARMONITOR should contribute to maximise the impact of project results, allow other researchers to continue with the work initiated by HARMONITOR, contribute to the advancement of the state-of-the-art of CSLs, and make scientific results a common good. Dissemination activities within HARMONITOR started as soon as project (intermediate) results are available.

### 2.2.2 Communication

The goal of HARMONITOR’s communication activities is to raise awareness of the overall project and issues surrounding the improvement of sustainability certification processes of bio-based materials and products. Communication activities are designed in a strategic and effective manner to engage stakeholders in a two-way exchange with project partners within the frame of project activities.

The communication activities for HARMONITOR are centred around three main intertwined themes: (i) raising awareness of the overall project and issues surrounding bio-based products certification from a social, environmental and economic perspective; (ii) supporting processes for more transparent, effective and robust CSLs, with a view of promoting best-in-class CSLs, and (iii) boosting the uptake of higher quality CSLs.

The project website is one of the primary starting points to engage with the public, and it is updated and maintained regularly throughout the project to make it engaging and dynamic. The project website was organised, designed and managed as user-friendly as possible, providing information suitable for non-experts as well as academics and practitioners.

The creation of a project logo and a common communication template ensured that all resources, including the website, documents, databases, presentation slides, and promotional banners look professional and uniform. The strong visual project identity increased its potential to attract interest from among the target audience and generate future collaborations in wider academic and industrial circles. This was further strengthened by taking advantage of the various networks and collaborations the consortium partners are already involved in.

Communication activities within HARMONITOR should contribute to engaging with stakeholders, attract the best experts and generate market demand. Communication activities within HARMONITOR have started at the beginning of the project and will last until the end of the project (May 2025).

### 2.2.3 Exploitation

The goal of HARMONITOR’s exploitation activities is to make sure that interested parties make a concrete use of the project results and proposed methodologies. In particular, the BiobasedCert Monitoring Tool (BMT) methodology and the participative Roundtable that allows CSLs to find commonalities and cooperation to improve. Exploitation activities within HARMONITOR also support the processes for more transparent, effective and robust CSLs and promote the uptake of higher quality CSLs. Exploitation activities started as soon as the project had exploitable results and concrete policy recommendations.

Exploitation activities are based on the data generated and the analyses conducted. Given the trans-disciplinarity of HARMONITOR across several WPs, most of the data generated are



fed directly back into the project to ensure an effective cross-fertilisation among WPs. The HARMONITOR website archives and provides links to all the project publications to support easy access to information for site visitors. Selected additional project data and tools, such as the [Trade Flows Map Tool](#) and the [Tool to calculate direct costs of certification](#) are also published on our project website and updated regularly.

A DMP for data generated and/or collected during the project was formulated and continually revised during the project lifetime to ensure it remains appropriate. The dissemination of this data is foreseen to be required beyond the lifespan of the project. As such, the website will remain available for at least 5 years beyond the completion date.

## 3 Responsibilities and Partners Participation

### 3.1 Coordination and Work Package Leaders

The HARMONITOR Coordinator and Work Package leaders are jointly responsible for the formulation of all key messages of the project and for the approval of those major dissemination, communication and exploitation activities that involve work done in more than one work package. Major activities that involve work done in only one work package are approved by the respective work package leader. Major activities are those considered as such by the WP7 team, and in all cases include scientific publications, symposia presentations, university lectures and posters presentations. Work Package leaders are also responsible for the correct implementation of all dissemination, communication and exploitation activities planned and implemented within their work package.

### 3.2 WP7 Team

The WP7 team supervises the formulation, revision and implementation of the dissemination, communication and exploitation plan, as well as the creation of a brand identity including the HARMONITOR logo and templates for website, dissemination and training documents and presentations. This will ensure that all resources, including the website, flyers, posters, presentation slides and promotional banners have a professional and uniform look. The activities of the WP7 team are coordinated by SQ Consult and cover the following:

- Coordinate, organise and monitor all dissemination activities.
- Organise meetings and events of HARMONITOR, including the final conference.
- Reach out and establish working contacts with relevant stakeholders.
- Encourage partners to initiate and to participate.
- Ensure regular quality content for the various dissemination channels within this strategy.

### 3.3 Partners Participation

To ensure the broadest impact and highest level of dissemination, all partners will be actively engaged in the process by:

- Using their own institutional networks and websites to promote the project.
- Taking advantage of relevant conferences to present the project results and distribute dissemination materials. For this purpose, person months were allocated to all partners according to the dissemination effort to be done.
- Providing content to the dissemination team.

## 4 Target Stakeholder Groups

A key to successful dissemination, communication and exploitation is identifying the right target groups and tailoring messages according to their specific needs and characteristics. Prior to choosing the right message to be delivered, identifying the relevant target audiences is crucial. Communication, dissemination, and exploitation of outcomes will include the academic and the business spheres as well as institutions, policy makers and the public, covering both scientific and non- scientific knowledge. It is important that HARMONITOR has a sound interface and positive relationships with the stakeholders who would be the first to implement and benefit from its outputs. It is therefore essential that findings are translated into recommendations for actions and conveyed to the relevant stakeholders. For this purpose, HARMONITOR adopts a cooperative approach, promoting active exchange with standardization bodies and other stakeholders, including certification bodies. Addressing legislators and policy makers will be pursued through targeted communication channels and project events, and by participating in committees involved in shaping the European bioeconomy.

Each target audience will have a specific interest in the project, which broadly relates to their key area of expertise. The identified HARMONITOR target audiences are provisionally divided in five main groups as follows:

- CSLs owners and related organisations committed to enhancing sustainability performance.
- EU and national policy makers.
- Bio-based industries and market actors.
- Academia, institutions, NGOs, and practitioners.
- Public procurers, business- and end- consumers of biological resources and bio-based materials and products, and organisations representing them.

**CSLs owners** will be impacted by the HARMONITOR project – CSLs with high performance results will benefit from a best-in-class evaluation, while the monitoring system will also allow less adequately performed systems to pinpoint weaknesses and explore viable solutions for improvement through the platform.

**Policy makers** could develop policies and instruments to reduce these gaps in sustainability certification and labelling. Currently, many EU countries have dedicated bioeconomy strategies, but only a few of these pay attention to the sustainability of supply chain of biological resources and industrial value chains. As such the HARMONITOR project will also provide valuable information to inform and shape sustainability frameworks for national bioeconomy strategies.

**Market actors**, such as bio-based industries and producers of biological resources, bio-based materials and products will also benefit from the project, as the review and monitoring activities will reveal strengths and weaknesses of individual CSLs, as well as the potential benefits and the cost difference between certified and uncertified production. Producers will be able to make a better-informed choice if they decide to have their product certified. Similarly, consumers (including business consumers and B2B trading and retailers) of bio-based materials and bio-based products will have transparent information on the sustainability performance of bio-based products and the effectiveness of various CSL claims.



**The scientific community** will also benefit from the HARMONITOR project primarily in two aspects: i) by assessing the volumes of certified and uncertified biological resources and bio-based materials and products in global trade with the highest data quality possible, HARMONITOR will provide insights into the level of certification of resources and products (WP3), which could be used to assess the usage level of the different CSLs (WP4), and its associated environmental and socio-economic impacts (WP5); and ii) the analysis to investigate the monetary value of internalizing positive and negative, environmental, and social externalities (WP6). It is expected that the resulting trade data will form useful inputs for the JRC's effort to quantify the size of the European bioeconomy and therein the bio-based economy.

Finally, HARMONITOR provides all above stakeholders and procurers, traders, retailers, and end consumers insight into the size and level of certification of biobased materials/products and their biological resources and help them to select the most suitable certification solution. It points to biological resources and bio-based materials and products with a relatively weak degree of sustainability certification and labelling, which could be seen as an opportunity for certification scheme owners.

HARMONITOR's dissemination, communication and exploitation activities have used the channels shown in Table 2.

*Table 2. Target groups and channels used to reach them.*

Target Group	Channels Used
CSLs and related organisations	Dedicated events for sharing knowledge, discussing results, and dissemination of recommendations. Engagement of CSLs is an essential and pervasive activity throughout the project's life and integrated within all its work packages for effective exploitation.
Policymakers	Dedicated events and meetings for sharing knowledge and dissemination of recommendations. Results of the project are expected to be communicated to the relevant DGs (i.e., AGRI, ENVI and GROW) in these meetings.
Bio-based industries and market actors	Involvement in the Advisory Board (e.g., European Bioplastics and CEFIC); stakeholder workshops, participation at conferences and networking events, website, and blogs.
Academia, institutions, NGOs and practitioners	Involvement in the Advisory Board (e.g., BIC, University of Natural Resources and Life Science Vienna, IUCN, etc.); stakeholder workshops, participation at bio-based conferences and scientific publications.
Public procurers, business- and end-consumers	Open events and publications, direct contacts through open consultations and participation in events.

## 4.1 Getting in Touch and Interacting with Stakeholders

The HARMONITOR consortium has both scientific and applied partners, who represent parts of the targeted stakeholder communities, reaching out to a wide and relevant network across Europe and beyond. Five European countries are represented by the nine HARMONITOR partners: Austria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, and The Netherlands.

HARMONITOR paid specific attention to interaction with stakeholders. The following main vehicles used to achieve this were:

- Dedicated events for sharing knowledge, discussing results, and dissemination of recommendations.
- Stakeholder workshops, participation at conferences and networking events, website, and blogs.
- Involvement of stakeholders in the Advisory Board.
- Interaction with other on-going initiatives with established relevant stakeholder networks.

Prior to participation in surveys, attendance to focus groups or engagement in interviews, the participants received a project information sheet providing details of the purpose of collecting the data, and confirmation of what the data will be used for.

## 4.2 Stakeholder Engagement and Integration

HARMONITOR engaged stakeholders and integrated their perspectives from multiple governance scales throughout the project lifetime. Stakeholders' engagement involves (among others) in-depth interviews, workshops, webinars, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires and will follow several routes. Three types of interactions with stakeholders were envisaged and pursued:

- Roundtable
- Other face-to-face interactions
- ICT mediated interactions

### 4.2.1 Roundtable

The Roundtable is a multi-stakeholder initiative initiated by HARMONITOR that involves representatives from CSLs, certification bodies, and project partners (including partners from the sister projects). Additional information on the Roundtable is available in [section 7.3](#).

### 4.2.2 Other Face-to-Face Interactions

Stakeholders were also engaged through other interactions, such as:

- **In-depth interviews** were conducted across several work packages to gather insights not available in the literature. Interviews were carried out in person, by phone, or via email. All participants provided informed consent, allowing the research team to use anonymised responses for analysis.
- **Workshops, webinars, and conferences** were organised to disseminate findings, gather feedback, and validate results. These events engaged a wide range of experts and stakeholders and were held at partner institutions. Three annual plenary





conferences—including the final one—successfully brought together 50–100 participants each.

For a detailed description of the dissemination and communication activities, please see [section 7](#).

### 4.2.3 ICT Mediated Interactions

ICT mediated interactions were also planned to facilitate the engagement of stakeholders:

- **Webinars** were conducted in a short and focused format to accommodate stakeholders' limited availability. When appropriate, sessions were livestreamed via the project's online platform, allowing broader access for those unable to attend in person.
- **Surveys and questionnaires** were distributed using online tools such as Qualtrics and SurveyMonkey to gather input from a wide and diverse group of stakeholders efficiently.

For a detailed description of the dissemination and communication activities, please see [section 7](#).

## 5 Key Messages

An important principle of the communication and dissemination strategy is the production of materials using coherent messages. These messages are defined depending on the target group and the communication/dissemination channel chosen.

### 5.1 Purpose of Messages

Messages formulated by the Coordinator and Work Package leaders inform about and/or contribute to:

- Raise awareness of trade flows of biological resources, bio-based materials and products and issues surrounding bio-based products certification from a social, environmental and economic perspective.
- Enhance the transparency and traceability of environmental impacts along the value chains and in business-to-business (B2B) trade and communications.
- Better understanding of the transversal applicability of CSLs through improved capacity of CSLs to mutually recognise each other in those sustainability areas where they share scope, and better understanding of the gaps, strengths and weaknesses they have in comparison to each other.
- Achieve higher levels of effectiveness and robustness of CSLs through knowledge transfer of best practices and systematic monitoring of their performance and economic viability including positive and negative externalities (benefits and costs).
- Support the adoption of the proposed HARMONITOR platform by different CSLs and relevant stakeholders, including the European Commission and policy makers, with a view of promoting the uptake of best-in-class CSLs.
- Explore the possibility of using CSLs as a co-regulation instrument as part of the EU Bioeconomy policy framework.
- Highlight the project contributions to EU policy priorities, in particular the zero-pollution vision (improving soil quality within the EU by reducing nutrient losses and chemical pesticides' use by 50%, and to other objectives such as air pollution reduction by 25% and reduction of waste generation), the 2030 Climate Target Plan (reduction of land use emissions), and the "Do No Significant Harm" principle laid down in the EU Taxonomy.

### 5.2 Formulation Guidelines

HARMONITOR messages were always adapted to the target group they are addressed to. Communication messages aim at stimulating recipient's interest and/or interaction with HARMONITOR. Key messages will follow these guidelines:

- The messages addressed to the scientific audience were concise and straight-to-the-point, using appropriate scientific terminology and language.
- Training and dissemination material were designed to be of practical use. They were prepared with a user-friendly and easy-to-read style, in particular when the target group is the industrial sector.



- Appreciation of contributions from stakeholders to HARMONITOR helped their engagement with the project. Feedback and contributions were duly acknowledged in all communication and dissemination material.
- Wording of the dissemination messages aiming to raise awareness of the public were adjusted to be suitable for lay persons. Messages will be organized at three different semantic levels.
  - Awareness – Primarily for dissemination towards those who do not need detailed knowledge but for whom it is useful to be aware about the project activities.
  - Understanding – For both communication and dissemination messages mostly promoting project results and mainly directed to those who need a deeper understanding of the project because they are interested, work in the same field and/or can benefit from the project outcomes.
  - Action – Mostly promoting two-way active involvement and communication with those having the power to influence the achievement of a real change (e.g., policy makers, producers, industrial sector), and to those who are expected to contribute with dialogue to HARMONITOR activities.

HARMONITOR paid particular attention to enhancing effectiveness of communication and dissemination of scientific information to non-scientific stakeholders, using a non-technical language. Messages will be adapted to the requirements of the main target groups identified, and consistency of these messages will be checked.

## 6 Collaboration with Other Projects

An important way to increase the effectiveness of DCE activities was to collaborate with other projects working on related topics. Such collaboration allowed for the sharing of audiences, resources, and platforms, thereby extending the reach and impact of project results. It also supported alignment of key messages, enhances efficiency by avoiding redundant efforts, and facilitates knowledge exchange across initiatives, enhancing the visibility and practical use of project outcomes by relevant stakeholders.

### 6.1 The BiobasedCert Cluster

HARMONITOR and its sister projects [SUSTCERT4BIOBASED](#) and [STAR4BBS](#) have been collaborating closely throughout the duration of the projects. The collaboration has aimed to maximise synergies, avoid duplication of efforts, and enhance the collective impact of project outcomes related to sustainability certification schemes and labels (CSLs) in the bio-based sector. With support from the Horizon Results Booster services, the three projects formed the BiobasedCert Cluster, which allowed to strengthen collaboration even more, create joint dissemination materials, and further streamline dissemination efforts. A detailed explanation of the cluster and its activities is available in two joint deliverables:

- Mid-term Clustering Report for HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-07 – Submitted on 30 November 2023.
- Final Clustering Report for HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-07 - To be submitted 31 May 2025.

The cluster collaboration is structured around three joint strategic areas—the **Joint Advisory Board**, the **BiobasedCert Monitoring System (BMT)**, and **Joint Dissemination**—and was guided by the following shared objectives:

- Gain a precise picture of existing **sustainability certification schemes and labels**.
- Gather specific **global trade data** and information on **volumes** of biological feedstock and bio-based materials and products, differentiating between certified and uncertified flows.
- **Develop and test a monitoring system** to assess the effectiveness and robustness of existing sustainability certifications schemes and labels (CSLs).
- Explore the impact on the adoption of sustainability CSLs on market access and trade within bio-based systems, performing a **feasibility study** on B2B labels.
- **Develop and disseminate** findings and recommendations to promote the adoption of effective and robust sustainability CSLs by different categories of stakeholders.

As mentioned above, the cluster participated in the **Horizon Results Booster (HRB) services**, which, among other activities, supported the projects in creating a joint visual identity and dissemination materials. These include a logo (Figure 1), an introduction video, and various templates.



*Figure 1. BiobasedCert cluster logo.*

Additionally, the cluster decided to organise most dissemination, communication, and exploitation activities jointly. The decision to unify them was based on their shared focus on similar topics and stakeholder groups. Coordinating the events as a cluster helped maximise impact, reach a broader audience, and avoid asking stakeholders to attend multiple similar events. The activities and events are described in [section 7](#) of this report.

## 6.2 Other Collaborations

In addition to the BiobasedCert cluster, HARMONITOR also engaged in collaborations with other EU-funded initiatives to enhance knowledge and ensure complementarity of efforts. Notable activities included joint activities and knowledge sharing with projects such as [3CO](#), [SUSTRACK](#), [BioReCer](#), and [CHAMPION](#). The list of related project is available on the [HARMONITOR website](#), and the full list of activities is available in [Section 7.9](#).

## 7 Dissemination and Communication Activities

The sections below provide an overview of the dissemination, communication and exploitation activities that were carried out during the project.

### 7.1 Logo and Brand Identity

As also presented in D7.1 – Communication, dissemination and exploitation plan, a brand identity authenticates and strengthens the communication and dissemination of HARMONITOR' messages. A brand identity ensures that all communication and dissemination products, including reports, the website, flyers, posters, presentation slides and promotional banners have a professional and uniform look.

#### 7.1.1 Logo

Four logo designs for HARMONITOR were presented in an internal consultation process to all project partners. The logo finally selected by the partners is designed to help the external audience to easily identify HARMONITOR and its field of activities. The final logo is shown in different versions in Figure 2.



*Figure 2. Logo versions adapted to different backgrounds.*

#### 7.1.2 Templates

Templates for reports and PowerPoint presentations have been created. Additionally, some style guides for Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint, to ensure a similar look of the material produced (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Covers of the HARMONITOR templates for presentations and reports.

All communication and dissemination material include the HARMONITOR logo, and the acknowledgement of EU funding with the following text with the EU flag logo (Figure 4):

“HARMONITOR has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon Europe Program research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 101060133. Re-use of information contained in this document for commercial and/or non-commercial purposes is authorised and free of charge, on the conditions of acknowledgement by the re-user of the source of the document, not distortion of the original meaning or message of the document and the non-liability of the HARMONITOR consortium and/or partners for any consequence stemming from the re-use. The HARMONITOR consortium does not accept responsibility for the consequences, errors or omissions herein enclosed. This document is subject to updates, revisions and extensions by the HARMONITOR consortium. Questions and comments should be addressed to: <http://www.harmonitor.eu/contact-us/>.”



Figure 4. EU logo to be included in all reports and dissemination and communication materials.

## 7.2 In Person Events

The three sister projects committed to organising three in-person events—one per year—aimed at engaging a broad range of stakeholders to present and discuss intermediate and final project results. Each project is responsible for hosting one of the joint events, with support and input from the other two. The first event, organised by HARMONITOR, took place on 7 June 2023 in Bologna, Italy, as a side-event of the EUBCE 2023 conference (Figure 5). The event was titled “**Sustainability Certification of Bio-based Products**”, and the agenda is shown in Table 3.



Figure 5. EUBCE 23 side event.

Table 3. Agenda of EUBCE 23 side event.

Time	Topic
15.00 – 15:05	Welcome Moderator – Costanza Rossi (SQ Consult)
15:05 –15:20	Short introduction of the three sister projects.



	<i>SUSTCERT4BIOBASED – Iris Vural Gursel (Wageningen Research)</i> <i>STAR4BBS – Luana Ladu (TU Berlin)</i> <i>HARMONITOR – Sergio Ugarte (SQ Consult)</i>
<b>15:20 – 15:40</b>	Policy priorities and mapping sustainability requirements <i>Luana Ladu (STAR4BBS, Technische Universität Berlin)</i>
<b>15:40 – 16:00</b>	Credibility of CSLs for bio-based feedstocks and products – Outcomes of consultation <i>Birka Wicke (HARMONITOR, Radboud University)</i>
<b>16:00 – 16:15</b>	Questions and Answers
<b>16:15 – 16:35</b>	Biobased value chains and trade flows <i>Iris Vural Gursel (SUSTCERT4BIOBASED, Wageningen Research)</i>
<b>16:35 – 16:55</b>	Joint Monitoring System <i>Martin Junginger (Utrecht University)</i>
<b>16:55 – 17:10</b>	Questions and Answers
<b>17:10 – 18:10</b>	Roundtable: Role of CSLs as Co-Regulation Instrument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ISCC Plus representative</li> <li>• Blanca de Ulibarri, RSB</li> <li>• ISEAL representative (tbc)</li> <li>• Silvia Maltagliati, European Commission - DG RTD</li> <li>• Representative DG (tbc)</li> <li>• CEFIC Representative (tbc)</li> <li>• Mathilde Crêpy, ECOS</li> <li>• Loek Verwijst, Control Union</li> </ul> Chair: Sergio Ugarte, SQ Consult
<b>18:15 – 18:30</b>	Closing Remarks tbc

The second, organised by SUSTCERT4BIOBASED and titled “**Monitoring sustainability certification schemes and labels for bio-based products**”, was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2024 in Marseille, France, alongside EUBCE 2024 (Figure 6). The agenda is shown in Table 4.



Figure 6. Side event organised at EUBCE 24.

Table 4. Agenda of side event organised at EUBCE 24.

Draft Agenda		
Time (CET)	Topic	SPEAKER
15:00 – 15:20	<b>Introduction Session</b>	
	Welcome and introduction to the BIOBASEDCERT cluster	Iris Vural Gursel (Wageningen Research)
15:20 – 16:00	<b>Policy priorities and initial policy recommendations</b>	
	Guiding policy priorities and initial policy recommendations for sustainable biobased systems and their certification Q&A	Luana Ladu (TU Berlin, BAM)
16:00 – 16:15	<b>Coffee Break (15 min)</b>	
16:15 – 17:15	<b>BIOBASEDCERT Monitoring System</b>	
	<p>The BIOBASEDCERT cluster is collaboratively developing a Monitoring System (BMS) to assess sustainability Certification Schemes and Labels (CSLs) for industrial biobased systems. The BMS aims to provide the European Commission and CSL owners with a framework to evaluate CSLs' potential contribution to EU policies and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while also facilitating potential harmonization of existing CSLs.</p> <p><b>System level – STAR4BBS</b> Duration: 15 min Delve into the foundational aspects of the System level, focusing on key indicators centered around governance and operational requirements.</p>	<p>Luana Ladu (TU Berlin, BAM)</p> <p>Laura Vayrynen</p>



	<p><b>Content level – SUSTCERT4BIOBASED</b>  <i>Duration: 15 min</i>  Explore the core criteria at the Content level, covering indicators on environmental sustainability, circularity, social responsibility, and economic viability.</p> <p><b>Outcome level – HARMONITOR</b>  <i>Duration: 15 min</i>  Learn about the indicators designed to assess the impact of Certification Schemes and Labels</p> <p>Q&amp;A</p>	<p>(ECOS), Heleen Ballemans (Wageningen Research)</p> <p>Maulidia Khairani (Utrecht University)</p>
17:15 – 18:15	<b>Monitoring certification schemes and labels: A roundtable dialogue for sustainable solutions</b>	
	<p><b>Roundtable with panellists and Q&amp;A with participants</b>  Discussion on the potential role(s) of CSLs for the future of European Circular Bioeconomy and their use as a co-regulation instrument, as well as on the design of a monitoring tool for CSLs</p>	<p>Moderator: Iris Vural Gursel (Wageningen Research)</p>
18:15 – 18:20	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	<p>Antonia Kalimeri (WHITE)</p>

The third and final event, “**How can voluntary certification systems support the transition to a sustainable circular bioeconomy**”, organised by STAR4BBS, took place on 13–14 May 2025 in Brussels (Figure 7). The full agenda is shown in Table 5. These events not only served to disseminate results but also to gather stakeholder feedback and explore how project outcomes can inform future research, policy development, and the design of more effective sustainability certification frameworks for the bio-based sector.



Figure 7. Final event organised in Brussels on 13 of May 2025.

Table 5. Agenda of the final event organised in Brussels on 13 May 2025.

<b>BIOBASEDCERT FINAL CONFERENCE</b>	
<b>Title</b>	<b>How can voluntary certification systems support the transition to a sustainable circular bioeconomy</b>
<b>Date and location</b>	May 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2025 - 21 Rue Du Champ De Mars, 1050 Ixelles, Brussels
<b>Participants</b>	Polymakers, Advisory Board members, schemes and label owners, industry actors, NGOs, academia, EU projects related to bio-based systems
<b>Organizers</b>	STAR4BBS, SUSTCERT4BIOBASED, HARMONITOR
<b>Related projects</b>	BIORECER; 3-CO; SUSTRACK; ALIGNED; CALIMERO; ViSS; REBIOLUTION; BIOTRANSFORM; SYMBIO: SYMBA; ESCIB; LCA4BIO; ACTPAC; ARGONAUT; BIORADAR.
<b>Approach</b>	<p>The event will share key results from the BIOBASEDCERT cluster, linking them to the broader European bioeconomy policy framework. The day will feature: i) Interactive thematic sessions, including presentations by the cluster, panel discussions and co-creation activities involving key stakeholders; ii) Integrative sessions to reflect on and synthesize the insights gained during the day.</p> <p>Discussions will cover the BIOBASEDCERT Monitoring Tool (BMT), assessment of certification schemes and labels, trade flow analysis, and cost-benefit evaluations. The main focus will be on exploring how voluntary sustainability certification systems can function as effective policy tools for a sustainable circular bioeconomy. Key takeaways and policy recommendations will be documented, with the day concluding in an integrative session to synthesize findings. A highlight of the event will be a European Commission DG RTD.B1-led workshop on: "Bio-based products in the frame of the Ecodesign for sustainable products Regulation and the Consumer empowerment Directive".</p> <p>Throughout the event, insights on how voluntary sustainability certification systems can serve as effective policy tools for a sustainable circular bioeconomy will be explored. Key takeaways and policy recommendations</p>



	will be documented, with the day concluding in an integrative session to synthesize findings.
<b>Morning session: 09:00-12:30</b>	
<b>9:00- 9:15</b> <b>Opening</b>	<p>Opening Agenda and Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Luana Ladu (TU Berlin)</li> </ul> <p>Welcome and introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unit Green Transitions, DG Research &amp; Innovation at European Commission - Astrid Ladefoged</li> <li>Stefania Rocca (Project Officer, European Research Executive Agency, REA)</li> </ul>
<b>9:15 – 10:45</b> <b>Session I</b> <b>“Exploring the applicability of the BIOBASEDCERT Monitoring Tool (BMT) as a co-regulation instrument”</b> <b>Moderator:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Iris Vural Gursel (Wageningen Research)</li> </ul>	<p>This session will provide a short overview of the BMT, including its structure, core functionalities, and key findings from its two-phase testing process. The discussion will focus on the potential of the BMT to support EU policy objectives, particularly in fostering the uptake of sustainable bio-based materials. Special attention will be given to the tool's use as a voluntary or co-regulatory instrument within current or forthcoming EU legislative frameworks on bio-based products.</p> <p>The panel will explore the BMT's relevance to sustainability certification schemes and labels (CSLs), its potential alignment with regulatory instruments (such as REDIII), and its long-term integration in the broader EU sustainability governance landscape.</p> <p><b>9:15 – 10:00</b> BIOBASEDCERT Monitoring Tool - BMT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BMT: Introduction and applicability (Luana Ladu, TUB)</li> <li>System Level (Nikola Matović, TUB)</li> <li>Content Level (Heleen Ballemans, WR)</li> <li>Outcome Level (Maulidia Khairani, UU)</li> </ul> <p><b>10:00</b> –Q&amp;A from all participants</p> <p><b>10:10</b> –Panel discussion with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jiannis Kougoulis (DG GROW)</li> <li>Blanca de Ulibarri (RSB)</li> <li>Audrun Utskarpen (Nordic Swan)</li> <li>Martin Junginger (3-CO + BIOBASEDCERT Cluster)</li> <li>Rodrigo Rupérez (UNCTAD)</li> </ul> <p><b>10:40</b> –Summary – recommendations</p> <p><b>10:45</b></p>
<b>10:45– 11:00</b>	<i>Coffee break</i>
<b>11:00- 12:30</b> <b>Workshop: “Bio-based products and certification in the frame of the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) and the Consumer Empowerment Directive”</b> <b>Moderator:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Silvia Maltagliati (DG RTD at European Commission)</li> </ul>	<p>The policy framework that designs and steers the pathway of the EU industry towards the green transition includes the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation and the Consumer empowerment Directive. This workshop will explore the progress the bio-based industrial value chains along such pathway, bringing together experts from the projects' consortia. Panellists will examine how the Empowering Consumers Directive and the ESPR influence bio-based products (in scope of the legislation), particularly in areas such as sustainability claims, certification schemes, and labelling—including the introduction of digital product passports. Additionally, discussions will focus on the necessary developments, including research and innovation efforts, to align both traditional bio-based products—such as textiles, wood-based and bio-based construction materials, paper packaging, detergents, and lubricants—and innovative bio-based solutions with the requirements set by these regulations.</p> <p>Panel discussion with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lara Dammer (nova-Institut)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Luca Boniolo (ECOS)</li> <li>• Maira Devisscher (ISEAL)</li> <li>• René Bethmann (VAUDE)</li> <li>• Ivana Krkljus (BASF)</li> <li>• Floris Akkerman (BAM)</li> </ul>																
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch																
Afternoon session: 13:30 – 17:30																	
<b>13:30 - 14:30</b> <b>Session II: “Impact of certification on global bio-based value chains”</b> <b>Moderator:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lara Dammer (nova-Institut)</b></li> </ul>	<p>This session will explore the critical role of certification schemes in shaping global bio-based value chains, highlighting their influence on sustainability, market access, and regulatory compliance. Key insights from sister projects will be presented, showcasing the main results achieved and the lessons learned. The session will also address the challenges, barriers, and opportunities faced by certification schemes across bio-based value chains. An interactive segment will invite participants to share their perspectives and collaboratively identify potential solutions to overcome existing barriers, fostering resilient and sustainable bio-based value chains.</p> <table> <tr> <td><b>13:30</b></td><td>–Presentations from the cluster (key results &amp; recommendations)</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>13:45</b></td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Myrna van Leeuwen (WR)</li> <li>• Gabriela Lopez Camey (Preferred by Nature)</li> <li>• Luciano Proto Cassina (nova-Institut)</li> </ul> </td></tr> <tr> <td><b>13:45</b></td><td>–Interactive session</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>14:10</b></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td><b>14:10</b></td><td>–Discussion of the project results, interactive session and conclusion</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>14:25</b></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td><b>14:25</b></td><td>–Key takeaways</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>14:30</b></td><td></td></tr> </table>	<b>13:30</b>	–Presentations from the cluster (key results & recommendations)	<b>13:45</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Myrna van Leeuwen (WR)</li> <li>• Gabriela Lopez Camey (Preferred by Nature)</li> <li>• Luciano Proto Cassina (nova-Institut)</li> </ul>	<b>13:45</b>	–Interactive session	<b>14:10</b>		<b>14:10</b>	–Discussion of the project results, interactive session and conclusion	<b>14:25</b>		<b>14:25</b>	–Key takeaways	<b>14:30</b>	
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<b>14:25</b>																	
<b>14:25</b>	–Key takeaways																
<b>14:30</b>																	
<b>14:30 – 15:30</b> <b>Session III: “Assessing the feasibility of voluntary sustainability certification: costs, benefits, challenges and ways forward”</b> <b>Moderator:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Birka Wicke (Radboud University)</b></li> </ul>	<p>This session will address the overall feasibility of voluntary sustainability schemes, presenting key results from the cluster's research on (economic) feasibility: key challenges of certification, important cost items and benefits, as well as enabling factors to address challenges. Remaining knowledge gaps will also be identified. With panellists representing the diversity of stakeholders, we will discuss strategies to address challenges and to increase feasibility.</p> <table> <tr> <td><b>14:30</b></td><td>–Presentations from the cluster (key results &amp; recommendations)</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>14:50</b></td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costanza Rossi (SQ-Consult)</li> <li>• Lusine Aramyan (WR)</li> <li>• Sofia Maria Ioannidou (AUA)</li> </ul> </td></tr> <tr> <td><b>14:50</b></td><td>–Panel discussion with:</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>15:15</b></td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yuki Hamilton Onda Kabe (Braskem)</li> <li>• Laura Väyrynen (ECOS)</li> <li>• Harmen Willemse (Better Biomass)</li> <li>• Joyce de Wit (RVO)</li> </ul> </td></tr> <tr> <td><b>15:15</b></td><td>–Q&amp;A from all participants</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>15:25</b></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td><b>15:25</b></td><td>–Key takeaways</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>15:30</b></td><td></td></tr> </table>	<b>14:30</b>	–Presentations from the cluster (key results & recommendations)	<b>14:50</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costanza Rossi (SQ-Consult)</li> <li>• Lusine Aramyan (WR)</li> <li>• Sofia Maria Ioannidou (AUA)</li> </ul>	<b>14:50</b>	–Panel discussion with:	<b>15:15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yuki Hamilton Onda Kabe (Braskem)</li> <li>• Laura Väyrynen (ECOS)</li> <li>• Harmen Willemse (Better Biomass)</li> <li>• Joyce de Wit (RVO)</li> </ul>	<b>15:15</b>	–Q&A from all participants	<b>15:25</b>		<b>15:25</b>	–Key takeaways	<b>15:30</b>	
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<b>15:25</b>	–Key takeaways																
<b>15:30</b>																	
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee Break																
<b>16:00 – 17:20</b> <b>Session IV: “How can voluntary sustainability certification schemes</b>	<p>This dynamic and interactive session will summarize the most valuable insights derived from the different sessions of the day and the meetings of the Roundtable of Certification Schemes promoted by the BIOBASEDCERT cluster, focussing on key strategic recommendations. Participants will engage in translating project results into actionable future steps, identifying</p>																



<b>drive the transition to a sustainable bioeconomy”</b>  <b>Moderators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sergio Ugarte (SQ Consult)</li> <li>• Stefan Majer (DBFZ)</li> </ul>	critical gaps, and providing inputs for shaping policies directions to drive the establishment of a sustainable circular bioeconomy.
	<b>16:00 – 16:05</b> Welcome
	<b>16:05 – 16:15</b> Projects4Future Workshop Insights: Tools and Recommendations on Standards, Certifications, Labelling and Monitoring for the Bioeconomy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susanna Albertini (FVA New media Research)</li> </ul>
	<b>16:15 – 16:30</b> Introduction and summary of key messages from previous sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iris Vural Gursel (Wageningen Research)</li> <li>• Silvia Maltagliati (DG RTD)</li> <li>• Birka Wicke (Radboud University)</li> <li>• Lara Dammer (nova-Institut)</li> </ul>
	<b>16:30 – 16:45</b> Policy and platform recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stefan Majer (DBFZ)</li> </ul>
	<b>16:40 – 17:05</b> Discussion on recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piergiuseppe Morone (Unitelma la Sapienza)</li> </ul>
	<b>17:05 – 17:20</b> Q&A with all participants and key take aways
<b>17:20 – 17:30</b>	Closing remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Luana Ladu (TU Berlin)</li> </ul>
<b>17:30 – 19:00</b>	Networking event

In addition to these joint events, the Trade Flows teams from the three projects collaborated to organise a dedicated workshop during the Renewable Materials Conference, held from 11 to 13 June 2024 in Siegburg/Cologne. Finally, the HARMONITOR team, with support from its sister projects organised a Roundtable meeting in Brussels, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2024. While the morning session was dedicated to the Roundtable members, the afternoon session was organised by the BMT team and aimed at presenting and discussing possible developments of the tool to EU policymakers. Additional information on this is available in [section 7.4](#).

## 7.3 Roundtable Meetings

The Roundtable platform for CSLs organised five meetings throughout the duration of the HARMONITOR project (Figure 8). The meetings have been used to disseminate different HARMONITOR results and to collect feedback from the roundtable participants. The following Figure provides an overview on the dates and topics of the different roundtable meetings.

## Roundtable meetings

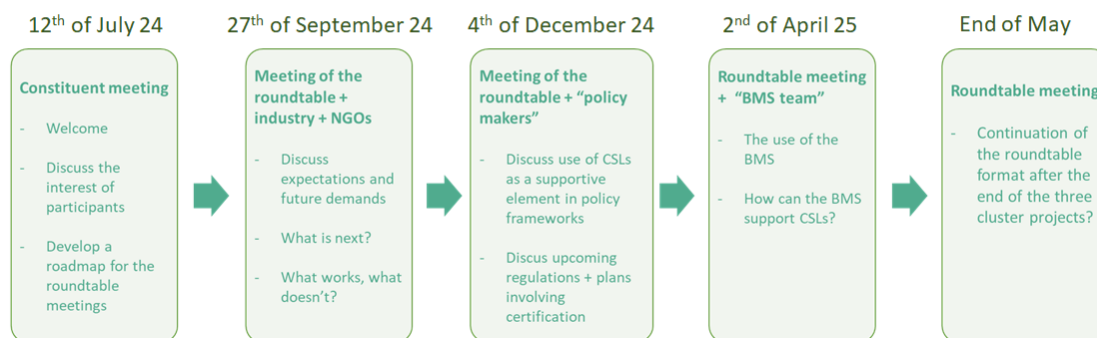


Figure 8. Online and in-person Roundtable meetings planned as of 15-05-2025.

To satisfy the demand from the different institutions involved in the roundtable, the program of the roundtable meetings covered a wide range of topics. These included amongst others:

- The identification of relevant and pressing topics regarding standard development, mutual recognition, cooperation with certification bodies and policy makers from the perspective of the participating CSLs
- The presentation and discussion of results from the trade flow analysis conducted in HARMONITOR.
- Future trends and market demand from the industry (with invited external guest from different industries).
- Future policy instruments on the EU level, relevant for certification schemes (as an in-person meeting with representatives from DG Growth, DG Climate, DG R&I, DG Environment and RVO (an executive body from the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs).
- The development, design and results of the Monitoring Tool developed by the BIOBASEDCERT cluster.

The topics discussed allowed an intense interaction with CSLs to discuss, test and improve selected HARMONITOR results and to improve their dissemination and uptake.

## 7.4 Online Webinars and Workshops

To complement its in-person events and broaden stakeholder engagement, the BiobasedCert Cluster also organised a series of online workshops and webinars throughout the projects' duration. These events aimed to disseminate results, foster dialogue with key stakeholders, and co-create insights that could inform ongoing work on sustainability certification in the bio-based sector and the bioeconomy.

The work of the cluster has attracted significant interest from Dutch policymakers involved in designing a national mandatory sustainability framework for bio-based chemicals and building materials. Elements such as the review of certification schemes, the outcomes-based monitoring system, and the concept of the Roundtable are directly informing this framework. Discussions with the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RvO) have been ongoing since June 2023 and continued through dedicated workshops and meetings. During these sessions, which included representatives from the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management,



focused on key project components such as the stakeholder consultation, the cost-benefit analysis of certification, and the development of the joint monitoring system.

In December 2023, the cluster convened a co-creation webinar titled *"Robust and Effective Sustainability Certification for Bio-based Systems."* This session was used to present the draft version of the BioBasedCert Monitoring Tool (BMT) and gather input from stakeholders (Figure 9). A second workshop dedicated to the BMT and its preliminary results was held on 29 May 2024, further contributing to the tool's iterative development.

**Proposed solution: two-layers of monitoring system**

Data source	Level of details
<b>Data provided by CSL</b> (e.g. audit data, data from CBs, producers data, etc.)	<b>General</b> Focus on <b>aggregated</b> data to show the <b>overall</b> progress of CSL on a specific impact area. <b>For example:</b> Impacts of ISCC on labour conditions throughout their certificate holders
<b>Evidences from literature</b> (e.g. research articles, reports by third parties)	<b>Context-specific</b> Provide context-specific insights. <b>For example:</b> - Impact of Fairtrade on flower workers and market access of flower farms in East Africa - The household income of Bonsucro sugarcane farmers in Brazil

**BIOBASEDCERT**

Khairani, M. (Maulidia) (External)

Figure 9. Presentation of the outcome level of the BMT during the co-creation webinar titled *"Robust and Effective Sustainability Certification for Bio-based Systems."*

On 11 November 2024, the cluster held a co-creation event titled *"Driving Sustainability through Certification: Unveiling the Costs and Benefits of Certification Schemes in Bio-based Industries and Products."* This joint webinar brought together representatives from the three sister projects and a range of external stakeholders to present emerging findings and co-develop perspectives on certification costs, benefits, and barriers.

In addition, on 24 April 2025, an online webinar entitled *"How Can Certification Help You Comply with the EU Deforestation Regulation?"* was hosted by Preferred by Nature, one of the cluster partners, focusing on the role of certification schemes in supporting industry compliance with EUDR. This webinar attracted over 150 participants and provided a platform to present benchmarking results from the HARMONITOR project. Based on the webinar, an interactive online training was developed by PbN and will be available soon.

Beyond these organised events, representatives of the BioBasedCert Cluster also actively participated in external webinars and workshops hosted by other EU-funded initiatives and international organisations, ensuring cross-project learning and wider dissemination of key findings.

## 7.5 HARMONITOR Website and Social Media

### 7.5.1 HARMONITOR Website

The project website [HARMONITOR | Monitoring of Certification Schemes and Labels](#) was launched in August 2022 (Month 3). SQ Consult administers the website, and the WP7 team takes care of regularly updating it with new content. The website was designed to meet the communication and dissemination needs of a variety of users (Figure 10).

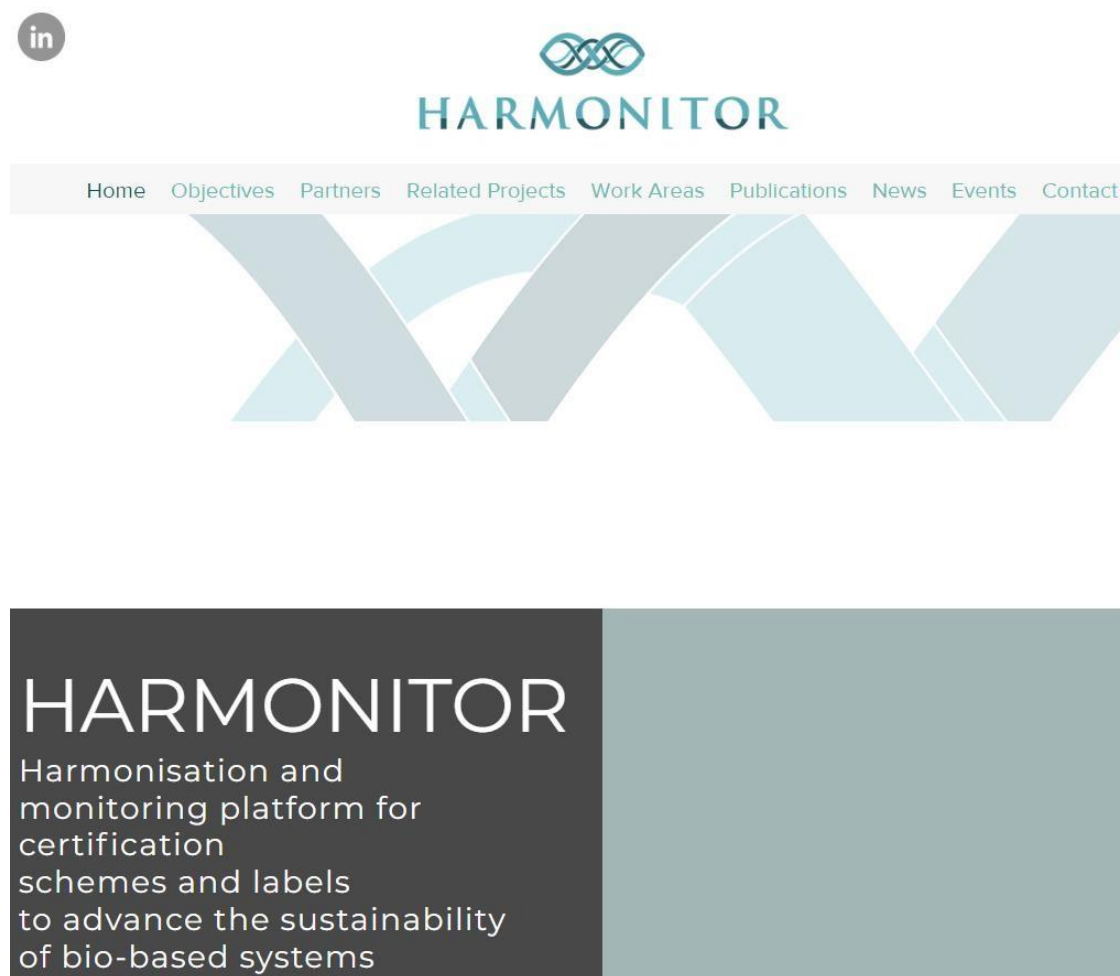


Figure 10. Homepage of the HARMONITOR website

The website is divided into various sections and provides visitors with relevant information on the project's objectives and news, such as blog posts, results and deliverables, and upcoming events. It was designed with the following characteristics:

- Attractive to different target groups
- User-friendly
- Interactive

The website includes general information about the project and guidance on how to use project outcomes. Specific functions of the website which pertain to dissemination include:

- Online HARMONITOR news and blog.
- Cross-links to other key related projects, e.g. SUSTCERT4BIOBASED, STAR4BBS.
- Information on the HARMONITOR case studies.
- Information on HARMONITOR workshops and conferences.
- Online background and training material.
- Online access to all deliverables and reports developed in the project, explaining their background and how to use them, including link to the web based interactive tools.

The WP7 team, led by SQ Consult administers the website and takes care of its technical set up and maintenance, analysing periodically the accesses through Google Analytics in order to measure how users interact with the website content. A dedicated staff member is updating the website regularly, sharing news, information on events, presentations and relevant studies. Content management is the responsibility of SQ Consult, the WP7 team and the WP leaders.

The WP7 team makes sure that all information and knowledge generated in the project are widely circulated among the participants. In the internal area of the website, the posting of documents is made possible to encourage knowledge exchange. The website is regularly updated by placing interesting items on the home page not only to keep the audience informed but also to raise continued interest of already attracted visitors. In order for the website to make the target audience aware of it, it is publicized in all communication and dissemination events (e.g., link included in all presentations, etc.). In addition, it was submitted to key search engines to get more traffic to the site. Websites on similar topics were asked to link to the HARMONITOR website.

All partners should promote the HARMONITOR website on their own individual websites and link to the HARMONITOR website. The content of the HARMONITOR webpage has been regularly uploaded; maintenance will be continuous until the end of project (May 2025) and will subsequently remain active for up to five years after the end of the project.

## 7.5.2 Project Blogs and News

Blogs, news and results communicating and disseminating intermediate findings were prepared by Work Packages and published on the website (Figure 11). All HARMONITOR partners actively contribute to the news section of the website by providing relevant information that they are working on results and facts, news, details on upcoming events, publications and any other activities, which could be of interest to the project stakeholders and the general public and can aid in increasing the project visibility.



Home Objectives Partners Related Projects Work Areas Publications News & Events Contact



## take-aways

The BIOBASEDCERT Research Cluster organized two back-to back events on the 4th of December 2024 in Brussels. The morning event was the...

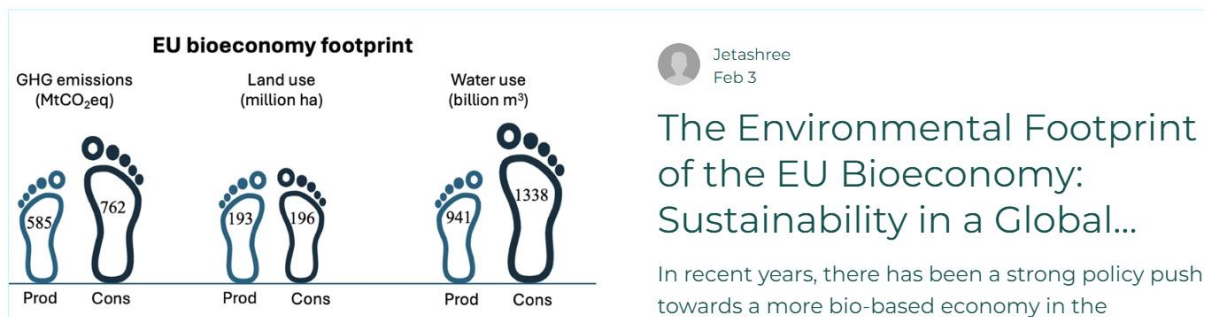


Figure 11. Webpage showing updates on news and events of HARMONITOR, including blogposts on project results.

SQ Consult has the overall responsibility for the blogs and news. WP leaders are responsible for providing content material and for proposing articles related to the work and findings of their respective Work Packages. The blogs published on the website are available at [this link](#), and the titles are:

- Launch of new Horizon Europe project HARMONITOR – 08 June 2022 (Figure 12).

The blog post announces the start of the HARMONITOR project and provides a short description of the project's goals and objectives.

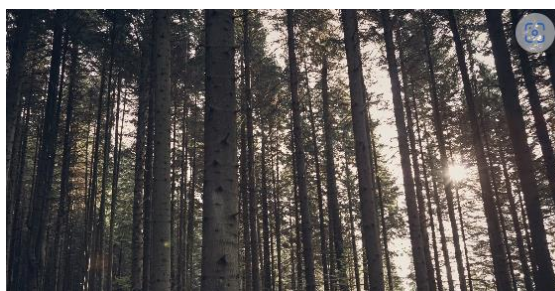


Figure 12. HARMONITOR blog post 'Launch of new Horizon Europe project HARMONITOR'.

- The craftsmanship of biobased value chains selections – 24 January 2023 (Figure 13).



The blog post explains how HARMONITOR selected 35 biobased value chains that were used as the basis to explore certification and biobased trade-flows in different work packages.



Martijn Vis & Jurjen Spekrijse  
Jan 24, 2023

## The Craftsmanship of Bio-Based Value Chains Selection

As one of the first tasks of the HARMONITOR project, from a long list of 538 (!) bio-based products, we needed to select the 35 most...

Figure 13. HARMONITOR blog post 'The craftsmanship of biobased value chains selections'.

- New survey on perceived effectiveness of CSLs launched – 28 February 2023 (Figure 14).

The blog post announces the launch of a public consultation to gather information on the perceived effectiveness of CSLs.



Harmonitor Project  
Feb 28, 2023

## New survey on perceived effectiveness of CSLs launched!

Certification schemes and labels (CSLs) are often used to safeguard and communicate the sustainability performance of (biobased) products...

Figure 14. HARMONITOR post 'New survey on perceived effectiveness of CSLs launched'.

- The quest for EU trade data – 06 September 2023 (Figure 15).

The blog post explains the difficulties related to collecting data on EU trades for biobased value chains and the approach used in HARMONITOR to overcome these limitations.



Marisa Groenestege  
Sep 6, 2023

## The Quest for EU Trade Data

As can be read in an earlier news article, 35 of the most relevant value chains for bio-based products were selected for within the...

Figure 15. HARMONITOR post 'The quest for EU trade data'.

- The selection of certification schemes and labels in HARMONITOR – 01 November 2023 (Figure 16).

This blog post describes how the HARMONITOR project identified and selected around 50 CSLs relevant to the EU Bioeconomy by reviewing literature, consulting databases, and involving project partners to ensure alignment with value chains and project needs.



Stefan Majer  
Nov 1, 2023

## The selection of certification schemes and labels in HARMONITOR

The growing interest in the EU Bioeconomy has also led to the development of a vast number of certification schemes for different...

Figure 16. HARMONITOR post 'The selection of certification schemes and labels in HARMONITOR'.

- Is certification delivering what it promises to feedstock producers? A look at what literature tells us – 14 April 2024 (Figure 17).

This blog post explores whether CSLs truly improve the economic and social well-being of feedstock producers by reviewing 37 scientific studies, revealing that while certification often increases both costs and benefits—especially for larger farms—research gaps remain, particularly on social impacts, market access, and the equity of outcomes.



H Harmonitor Project  
Apr 14, 2024

## Is certification delivering what it promises to feedstock producers? A look at what...

As HARMONITOR aims at increasing the effectiveness and robustness of sustainability certification schemes and labels (CSLs), one of the...

Figure 17. HARMONITOR post 'Is certification delivering what it promises to feedstock producers? A look at what literature tells us'.

- Join our workshop on driving sustainability through certification! – 17 October 2024 (Figure 18).

This blog post announces an online workshop on 11th November 2024, where HARMONITOR, STAR4BBS, and SUSTCERT4BIOBASED will explore the economic challenges and benefits of certification schemes in bio-based industries, aiming to shed light on barriers to certification and promote more effective sustainability practices.





Figure 18. HARMONITOR post 'Join our workshop on driving sustainability through certification!'.

- BiobasedCert Workshop – 27 November 2024 (Figure 19).

This blog post announces two back-to-back events hosted by the BIOBASEDCERT Research Cluster on 4th December 2024 in Brussels, bringing together policymakers, certification bodies, and researchers to discuss the role of certification in EU bioeconomy governance and to introduce a new Monitoring System (BMT) designed to assess the effectiveness of sustainability schemes and labels.



Figure 19. HARMONITOR post 'BiobasedCert Workshop'.

- The environmental footprint of the EU bioeconomy – Sustainability in a global context – 03 February 2025 (Figure 20).

The blog post highlights findings from a HARMONITOR study showing that the EU's growing consumption of bio-based products is driving significant global environmental impacts, underscoring the need for more sustainable sourcing and stronger certification schemes.

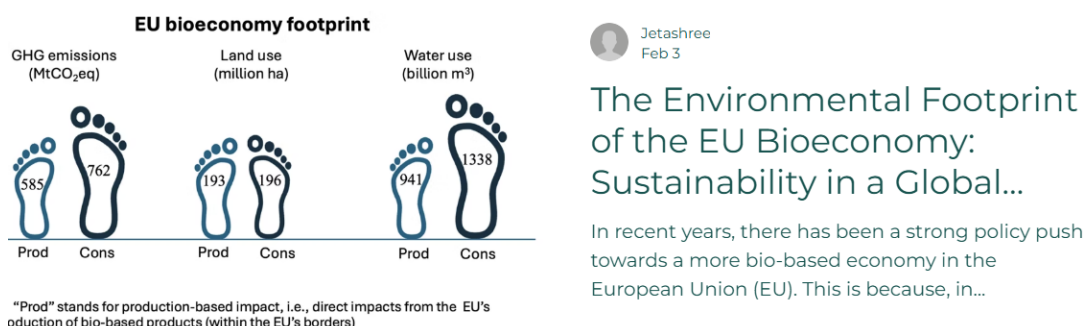


Figure 20. HARMONITOR blog post 'The environmental footprint of the EU bioeconomy – Sustainability in a global context'.

- BiobasedCert workshop take-aways – 03 February 2025 (Figure 21).

The blog post summarizes the main take-ways from the two events organized by the BIOBASEDCERT Research Cluster on December 4, 2024, in Brussels, highlighting discussions on the role of certification in the EU bioeconomy and the potential of the BIOBASEDCERT Monitoring Tool to support policy development.



H Harmonitor Project  
Feb 3

## BiobasedCert workshop take-aways

The BIOBASEDCERT Research Cluster organized two back-to-back events on the 4th of December 2024 in Brussels. The morning event was the...

Figure 21. HARMONITOR post 'BiobasedCert workshop take-aways'.

- Insights from benchmarking CSLs against sustainability, robustness and EUDR requirements using the Comparative Benchmarking Tool – 14 April 2025 (Figure 22).

This post explains how certification schemes can help companies comply with the EU Deforestation Regulation by supporting sustainability and traceability, while emphasizing that certification alone does not replace the need for company due diligence.



Gabriela López  
Apr 14

## Insights from benchmarking CSLs against sustainability, robustness and EUDR...

As the European Union's Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) implementation deadline approaches, companies across global supply chains face...

Figure 22. HARMONITOR post 'Insights from benchmarking CSLs against sustainability, robustness and EUDR requirements using the Comparative Benchmarking Tool'.

- Join us for the BiobasedCert final conference! – 09 May 2025 (Figure 23).

This post invites stakeholders to the final conference of the BiobasedCert Cluster held in Brussels on 13 May 2025.



H Harmonitor Project  
May 9

## Join Us for the BIOBASEDCERT Final Conference!

We are excited to invite you to the Final Conference of the Horizon Europe projects HARMONITOR, STAR4BBS and SUSTCERT4BIOBASED. These...

Figure 23. HARMONITOR post 'Join us for the BiobasedCert final conference!'.

- Final BiobasedCert event – before 31 May 2025.

This post will summarise the main takeaways from the final event of the BiobasedCert cluster.

### 7.5.3 Social Media

LinkedIn was used as a tool to further engage with stakeholders by sharing the main updates related to HARMONITOR and the BiobasedCert Cluster. A [HARMONITOR LinkedIn](#) account was created shortly after the beginning of the project and regularly updated with news, events, results, and activities carried out throughout the project (Figure 24).

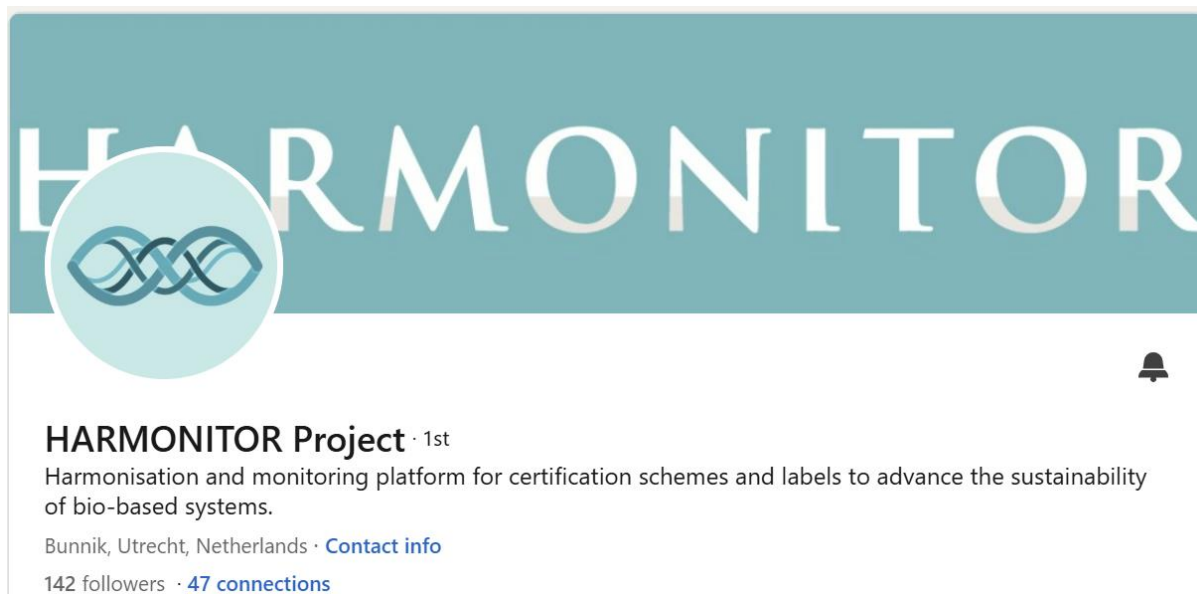


Figure 24. Screenshot of the HARMONITOR LinkedIn home page.

As shown in Figure 24, the LinkedIn page of HARMONITOR counts 142 followers and 47 connections. According to LinkedIn analytics, in the past year the profile received 7,942 impressions and reached 2,587 members. The top performing posts got up to 1,104 impressions. The functionalities and features of the LinkedIn project page are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Functionalities and features of LinkedIn in the context of HARMONITOR.

Functionalities and features	In the context of HARMONITOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A predominantly professional network.</li> <li>• Creates potential for professional networking across members.</li> <li>• Participation in group discussions.</li> <li>• More popular in business than in academia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forming a more professional and meaningful discussion, disseminating news and developments around the project in an engaging discussion form.</li> <li>• Facilitates networking among the members.</li> <li>• Job advertising.</li> </ul>

## 7.6 Interviews, Surveys and e-Meetings

Interviews, surveys and e-meetings were organised by the WPs to engage in a two-way communication with different stakeholders. These tools communicate to stakeholders the knowledge and products developed by HARMONITOR, and inform HARMONITOR of consumers' and businesses' awareness, behaviours and preferences related to sustainability of bio-based products.

These communication tools are particularly important for WPs conducting ex-ante perspective analysis aiming at the identification of sustainability criteria easy to be understood by the consumer and relevant to their needs. Surveys, together with interviews, regular e-meetings, and workshops took place for WPs 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 to better understand market drivers, behaviours and preferences. Two surveys addressed to all relevant stakeholders to measure understanding of different policy options in the development of an EU policy framework for bioeconomy were conducted in Months 12 and 35 (WP6).

Additionally, numerous e-meetings were organized to foster with policy makers, relevant EU funded projects, and market actors for providing guidance in the identification and selection of most suitable CSLs for relevant bio-based systems of the European bioeconomy (WP7).

## 7.7 Scientific Publications

Scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals based on the work done in HARMONITOR were foreseen during and after the project:

- Paper on costs and benefits of certification was published on the Journal of Cleaner Production: Rossi et al., 2024 (Figure 25). [Sustainability certification of bio-based products: Systematic literature review of socio-economic impacts along the supply chain - ScienceDirect.](#)
- Paper titled "Credible Certification Schemes and Labels for a Sustainable EU Bioeconomy: Perspectives of Stakeholders" was submitted to a peer-reviewed scientific journal in April 2025.
- Paper on the quantification of environmental externalities will be submitted to a journal before summer 2025.
- Paper titled "Monitoring Outcomes of Certification Schemes and Labels: A Methodological Approach" will be submitted to a scientific journal in autumn 2025.
- 2 master's thesis were based on the work conducted in HARMONITOR: 1) Quantification of environmental externalities in the EU Bioeconomy, 2) Insights from the Evaluation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Industrial Wood Pellet Supply Chains: Using Real-World Data from a Certification Company.
- Paper on the challenges of certification for different stakeholders will be submitted to a journal in autumn 2025.
- Paper on governance options to increase the feasibility and effectiveness of certification will be submitted to a journal in spring 2026.





Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Cleaner Production

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jclepro](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jclepro)



Review

## Sustainability certification of bio-based products: Systematic literature review of socio-economic impacts along the supply chain

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<sup>b</sup> SQ Consult, Prins Bernhardstraat 27, 3981, BL, Bunnik, the Netherlands

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### ARTICLE INFO

Handling Editor: Jian Zuo

#### Keywords:

Sustainability certification  
Biobased supply chain  
Socioeconomic impacts certification  
Smallholder certification  
Low-income countries certification  
Biobased ecolabels

### ABSTRACT

Voluntary certification schemes and labels are used as a means to improve the sustainability of biomass feedstock production and biobased products. To ensure the viability of certification, it is important to understand its socioeconomic implications for certificate holders. Existing literature focuses on the economic impacts of certification within specific contexts (e.g., specific feedstock, regions, supply chain elements), and rarely addresses the social impacts. The present systematic literature review analyses the findings of 75 scientific articles covering the socioeconomic impacts of certification on producers of biobased feedstock (i.e. palm oil, maize, natural rubber, soybean, sugar cane, wood, and raw cotton) and related supply chains. The socioeconomic impacts are aggregated into 7 economic outcome categories (direct costs, indirect costs, revenues, income, productivity, price premiums, market access) and 5 social ones (health, education, poverty reduction, labour conditions, well-being). The results show that the economic impacts of certification are generally positive, with economic benefits compensating for the increased costs faced by companies after certification. Smallholders and companies located in low-income countries are more likely to experience negative economic impacts after certification because they have less access to resources for financing high upfront costs or legal documents on certification requirements, and face proportionally higher certification costs. The social impacts have been less investigated than the economic ones, and the results showed more mixed findings, although still mostly positive. Looking across the supply chain, both economic and social impacts were found to be investigated more for feedstock producers compared to other actors in the supply chains. New policy should focus on mitigating the negative impacts on vulnerable groups to improve their participation in certification programmes.

Figure 25. Scientific paper published on Journal of Cleaner Production.

## 7.8 Presentation of HARMONITOR's Results at International Symposia

Presentations at scientific symposia are another type of appropriate means to disseminate the results of HARMONITOR. HARMONITOR ensured regular attendance at leading international conferences across Europe. HARMONITOR's partners are encouraged to participate and present the project and disseminate its results at relevant national and international meetings, workshops, conferences and congresses. Many project partners took part in such activities. A full list of all the organized communication and dissemination activities can be found in [section 7.9](#).

## 7.9 List of all Activities

Table 7 below provides a comprehensive list of the communication, dissemination and exploitation activities conducted throughout the project.

Table 7. List of communication, dissemination and exploitation activities carried out by project partners.



Event	Event type	Date, location	Audience	Brief description
Projects2Projects	Workshop	05-10-22, Brussels	Bioeconomy community, industry	Presentation on the HARMONITOR project
Mobilisation and Mutual Learning Workshop	Webinar	14-02-23, online	Other EU-funded projects	Presentation on the HARMONITOR project
EUBCE 23 side event	Conference	07-06-23, Bologna (IT)	Scientific community, industry	Organisation of joint event with sister projects to present projects results and roundtable with relevant stakeholders
EUBCE 23 side event	Conference	07-06-23, Bologna (IT)	Scientific community, industry	Presentation on credibility of sustainability certification
EUBCE 23 side event	Conference	07-06-23, Bologna (IT)	Scientific community, industry	Presentation of the HARMONITOR platform
EUBCE 23 side event	Conference	07-06-23, Bologna (IT)	Scientific community, industry	Presentation on Development of a Joint Monitoring System for Bio-Based Certification Schemes and Labels
EUBCE	Conference	07-06-23, Bologna (IT)	Scientific community, industry	Presentation on preliminary results of cost/benefits of certification
EUBCE	Conference	07-06-23, Bologna (IT)	Scientific community, industry	Presentation of the HARMONITOR project
EUBCE	Conference	07-06-23, Bologna (IT)	Scientific community, industry	Presentation on the stakeholder Opinion on the Credibility of Certification Schemes and Labels (CSLs) for Bio-based Feedstocks and Products
Meeting with CSLs	Workshop	30-06-23, Online	Civil society, industry	Presentation of the Roundtable with CSLs
Meeting with CSLs	Workshop	08-09-23	Civil society, industry	Presentation of the Roundtable with CSLs
BiobasedCert Cluster online co-creation event: "Robust and Effective Sustainability Certification for Bio-based Systems"	Workshop	11-12-2023 online	Industry	Presentation on the draft monitoring system





Meeting with Dutch policy makers	Workshop	14-12-2023, Utrecht (NL)	Polymakers	Workshop with Dutch policy maker to inform them about the ongoing developments in HARMONITOR, especially with regard to WP2 (stakeholder consultation), Wp5 (JMS) and WP6 (cost of certification)
Meeting with Dutch policy makers	Workshop	10-01-2023, Utrecht (NL)	Polymakers	Follow-up meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment about HARMONITOR in general and specifically the results of the literature review on cost & benefits of sustainability certification of biobased products
Presentation at final event CHAMPION project	Stakeholder event	24-4-2024, Brussels	Scientific community, industry	Presentation on the trade and sustainability certification of bio-based value chains of the HARMONITOR project
BiobasedCert Cluster closed workshop	Workshop	29-5-2024, online	Industry	Presentation on the preliminary results of the methodology of BMT testing
EUBCE 2024 side event	Presentation	26-6-2024, Marseille	Scientific community, industry, policy makers	Presentation on the monitoring system and preliminary results of the methodology testing
EUBCE 24 conference	Poster presentation and award winning	26-6-2024, Marseille	Scientific community, industry, policy makers	Presentation on costs and benefits of certification
EUBCE 24 conference	Presentation	26-6-2024, Marseille	Scientific community, industry, policy makers	Presentation on the monitoring system and preliminary results of the methodology testing
1 <sup>st</sup> Roundtable meeting	Online event	12-07-2024	CSLs, scientific community, industry	1 <sup>st</sup> Roundtable meeting
2 <sup>nd</sup> Roundtable meeting	Online event	27-09-2024	CSLs, scientific community, industry	2 <sup>nd</sup> Roundtable meeting
Joint workshop	Workshop	11-11-2024	Industry, researchers, policymakers	Presentations during the online workshop: <i>"Driving Sustainability through Certification: Unveiling the Costs and Benefits of Certification Schemes in Bio-based Industries and Products"</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Roundtable meeting	Event	04-12-2024, Brussels	CSLs, scientific community, industry	3 <sup>rd</sup> Roundtable meeting
Workshop on BMT with policymakers	Workshop	04-12-2024, Brussels	CSLs, scientific community, industry, policymakers	Workshop to present BMT and discuss its applicability with policymakers
4 <sup>th</sup> Roundtable meeting	Online event	02-04-2025, Brussels	CSLs, scientific community, industry	4 <sup>th</sup> Roundtable meeting
Final event BiobasedCert Cluster	Presentation/organisation	13-05-2025, Brussels	Scientific community, industry, policy	Joint session with sister projects "Assessing the feasibility of voluntary sustainability certification:



			makers	costs, benefits, challenges and ways forward"
Final event BiobasedCert Cluster	Presentation	13-05-2025, Brussels	Scientific community, industry, policy makers	Joint session with sister projects "Impact of certification on global bio-based value chains"
Final event BiobasedCert Cluster	Presentation/ organisation	13-05-2025, Brussels	Scientific community, industry, policy makers	Joint session with sister projects ""How can voluntary sustainability certification schemes drive the transition to a sustainable bioeconomy"
Final event BiobasedCert Cluster	Presentation	13-05-2025, Brussels	Scientific community, industry, policy makers	Joint session with sister projects "Exploring the applicability of the BIOBASEDCERT Monitoring Tool (BMT) as a co-regulation instrument"

## 8 Main Exploitable Results

The main exploitable results of HARMONITOR are the BMT and the Roundtable for CSLs. Both tools aim to support the continuous improvement of CSLs. The BMT helps underperforming CSLs identify weaknesses and explore viable solutions for improvement through the collaborative platform. While the platform was initially a specific objective of the HARMONITOR project, the sister projects also joined this effort to maximise the impact of their collective results.

### 8.1 Roundtable Platform

The Roundtable provides CSLs and other stakeholders a platform to engage in continuous dialogue. It enables regular cross-comparisons using methodologies developed by the three sister projects, allowing CSLs to harmonise practices and adopt best approaches. Furthermore, the roundtable has continuously initiated interaction between CSLs, certification bodies, science, industry and policymakers to identify upcoming trends, options for standard improvement and to discuss future policy objectives. Figure 26 shows the organisations currently involved in the Roundtable. A steering committee with members of the BiobasedCert Cluster is currently responsible for the organisation of meetings and events.



Figure 26. Organisations that participate in the Roundtable.

The Roundtable platform, established as a central outcome of the HARMONITOR project, has successfully fostered ongoing dialogue among certification scheme owners (CSLs), certification bodies, policymakers, and other key stakeholders. Regular Roundtable meetings have been held online in the past year, and one was organised in person in Brussels. More meetings are planned for the upcoming months, also after the end of HARMONITOR (May 2025). See [section 7.3](#) for additional information on the meetings and events.

Regular meetings throughout the project have demonstrated strong engagement and value for participants, with members expressing clear interest in continuing the Roundtable platform beyond the project's official end. To support this, ongoing discussions are being held with current members to define the Roundtable's future structure, activities, and potential for institutionalisation. For this purpose, the roundtable members are currently developing a new organisational structure, including a secretariat which will take over the task of the current steering committee to allow the continuation of the Roundtable after the project ends.

In the short term, the DBFZ has committed to continuing the coordination of the Roundtable platform, managing logistical aspects such as meeting organisation, agendas, and facilitation for the next year. Plans are also underway to host a follow-up in-person event in December 2025, building on the success of the previous gathering held in Brussels in December 2024, which brought together CSLs and EU policymakers. This event would serve both to maintain momentum and to explore opportunities for further collaboration and policy alignment. By providing a neutral and structured space for exchange, the Roundtable remains a promising

vehicle for advancing mutual recognition, harmonisation, and continuous improvement of sustainability certification in the bioeconomy.

## 8.2 BiobasedCert Monitoring Tool

The BMT, developed collaboratively within the BiobasedCert Cluster, represents a key innovation aimed at evaluating the robustness and effectiveness of certification schemes and labels (CSLs) across the EU bioeconomy. STAR4BBS is developing a web-based tool (to be launched in August 2025), expected to include indicators of the system and content level and is expected to integrate outcome-level assessment in the future. This outcome-level dimension will be further refined and tested through a dedicated PhD project over the next two years, ensuring scientific rigor and ongoing development beyond the project's lifetime.

Throughout the HARMONITOR project, the BMT has been shaped by a series of targeted discussions with its main intended users—EU policymakers and CSLs representatives. These exchanges, which are still ongoing, have provided critical insights into user needs and expectations. One recurring theme has been the importance of simplifying the tool's structure and interface to ensure accessibility and usability across different user groups. As exploitation efforts continue, these dialogues will guide the final design and implementation strategy of the BMT, supporting its potential uptake as a voluntary benchmarking and self-assessment instrument to inform policy design and promote continuous improvement among CSLs.

The BMT is a key outcome of the collaboration, designed to assess how CSLs and their standards contribute to EU sustainability goals. Aimed primarily at policymakers and CSL owners, the BMT improves transparency by evaluating the robustness, comprehensiveness, and effectiveness of CSLs. Accompanied by guidelines and recommendations, it serves as a reference for both improving CSL systems and informing policy decisions, ultimately supporting continuous improvement and more effective implementation.

The routes for exploitation explored by HARMONITOR (and its sister projects) follows a cooperative approach to:

- Promote active participation by CSLs to continue developing the BMT and the Roundtable platform with a clear objective of continuous improvement of CSLs.
- Promote a collaborative and professional relationship with participating CSLs, the Commission, sister projects and the joint advisory board for promoting the continuation and further advancement of the BMT and platform.
- Promote frequent networking and debate with international partners and organisations, such as industry associations, standardisation bodies, certification bodies, NGOs working on sustainability aspects, etc.
- Develop the platform further into a multi-stakeholder organisation, including CSLs, supported by the European Commission, and use the BMT as a voluntary tool for self-evaluation.
- Integration of the review platform within standards, CSLs or standardisation organisations or associations, for example ISEAL Alliance.
- Seek to identify possible bodies within (or affiliated with) the European Commission to contribute to the continuation of the platform.

## 9 Data Management Plan

Data generated and their further analysis are the basis for any exploitation activity of the project results. With HARMONITOR being a trans-disciplinary project across several WPs, most of the data generated will be fed directly back into the project to ensure an effective cross-fertilisation among WPs. The HARMONITOR website archives and provide links to all the project publications to support easy access to information for site visitors. Selected additional project data have been published on our project website and updated regularly.

A Data Management Plan (DMP) for data generated and/or collected during the project was formulated within the first 6 months of the project, based on the respective Horizon Europe DMP template and updated in April/May 2025 (end of project). The DMP was also continually revised at the General Assemblies to ensure it remained appropriate keeping in mind the development of the project.

HARMONITOR's DMP follows FAIR data management principles, namely: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable. HARMONITOR's DMP identifies which types of project data are foreseen, ensuring that it is possible to locate the data and suitability of the format for further use. The latter aspect is relevant for standardised cross-comparison of CSLs using allocated audit check-list control-points. Developed data sets have been identified, tracked, and carefully analysed on if/what can be made public during or after the project. Uploading and curation of a project specific Zenodo repository is coordinated, ensuring the continued availability of all HARMONITOR public output (datasets and results) beyond the lifetime of the project. Procedures for handling sensitive information and an intra- consortium platform to store and co-edit digital files were also established.

The dissemination of this data is foreseen to be required beyond the lifespan of the project. As such, the website will remain available for at least 5 years beyond the completion date. A link to the HARMONITOR webpage will be established in all the partners' webpages and in other relevant websites. All data has been archived and preserved by SQ Consult, where it will remain available for public access in hard and electronic form.

## 10 Monitoring and Reporting

HARMONITOR used several ways to monitor the dissemination, communication and exploitation plan. All activities carried out were registered by the partners in a shared file. The file is stored in the project Teams channel and includes information on the type of events, dates, format, participants, etc. (Figure 27).

Partner	Organisation	WP	Dissemination	Event	Event type (if a	Location	Date	Audience Type	Brief description	Notes (organiser, website of the event, number of audience)
Martijn Vis, Jurjen Spekreijse	BTG	WP3	Blog			Harmonitor web	24-1-2023	scientific community, industry	Blog post on value chain selection	
Costanza Rossi	SQ Consult	WP1	Presentation	Mobilisation and Mutual Learning Workshop	Webinar	online	14-2-2023	Other EU funded projects	presentation on HARMONITOR	
Martin Junginger	UU	WP2	Presentation	EUBCE 23	Conference	Bologna (IT)	7-6-2023	Scientific community	Presentation on the stakeholder Opinion on the Credibil	
Costanza Rossi	SQ Consult	WP6	Presentation	EUBCE 23	Conference	Bologna (IT)	7-6-2023	scientific community, industry	presentation on preliminar	<a href="https://www.eubce.com/hoste">https://www.eubce.com/hoste</a>
Stefan Majer	DBFZ	WP2	Presentation	EUBCE 23	Conference	Bologna (IT)	7-6-2023	scientific community, industry	presentation of the HARMONITOR project	
Costanza Rossi, Sergio Ugarte	SQ Consult	WP7	Organisation	EUBCE 23 side event	Conference	Bologna (IT)	7-6-2023	scientific community, industry	joint event with sister pr	<a href="https://www.eubce.com/hoste">https://www.eubce.com/hoste</a>
Birka Wicke	SRU	WP2	Presentation	EUBCE side event	Conference	Bologna (IT)	7-6-2023	scientific community, industry	presentation on credibility certification	
Stefan Majer	DBFZ	WP2	Presentation	EUBCE side event	Conference	Bologna (IT)	7-6-2023	scientific community, industry	presentation of the HARMONITOR platform	
Martin Junginger	UU	WP5	Presentation	EUBCE side event	Conference	Bologna (IT)	7-6-2023	scientific community, industry	Presentation on Develop	<a href="https://www.eubce.com">www.eubce.com</a>
Marisa Groenestege	BTG	WP3	Post			Harmonitor web	20-6-2023	scientific community, industry	Overview results trade fi	<a href="https://www.eubce.com/hoste">https://www.eubce.com/hoste</a>
Stefan Majer	DBFZ	WP2	Presentation	Meeting with certification schemes	Workshop	online	30-6-2023	Civil society, industry	presentation of the platform with CSLS	
Marisa Groenestege	BTG	WP3	Blog			Harmonitor web	6-9-2023	scientific community, industry	blog post on collecting data for trade flows	
	DBFZ	WP2	Presentation	Meeting with certification schemes	Workshop	online	8-9-2023	Civil society, industry	presentation of the platform with CSLS	
Maulidia Khairani	UU	WP5	Presentation	BiobasedCert Cluster online co-creation even	Workshop	Online	11-12-2023	Industry	Presentation on the draft monitoring system	
Martin Junginger	UU	WP5	Organisation	Meeting with Dutch policy makers	Workshop	Utrecht(NL)	14-12-2023	Dutch policy makers	Workshop with Dutch pi	<a href="https://www.harmonitor.eu/post/">https://www.harmonitor.eu/post/</a>
Martin Junginger	UU	WP5	Organisation	Meeting with Dutch policy makers	Workshop	Utrecht(NL)	10-1-2024	Dutch policy makers	Follow-up meeting with re	<a href="https://www.harmonitor.eu/copy/">https://www.harmonitor.eu/copy/</a>
Marisa Groenestege	BTG	WP3	Post			LinkedIn	15-1-2024	scientific community, industry	LinkedIn post on blog pi	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/feed/u">https://www.linkedin.com/feed/u</a>
Jetashree	SRU	WP6	Blog			Harmonitor web	3-2-2024	General public	Blog post on externalitie	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/feed/u">https://www.linkedin.com/feed/u</a>
Marisa Groenestege	BTG	WP3	Presentation	Final event CHAMPION project	Stakeholder even	Brussels	24-4-2024	scientific community, industry	Presentation on the trac	<a href="https://www.champion-project">https://www.champion-project</a>
Maulidia Khairani	UU	WP5	Presentation	BiobasedCert Cluster closed workshop	Workshop	Online	29-5-2024	Industry	Presentation on the prel	<a href="https://www.harmonitor.eu/post/">https://www.harmonitor.eu/post/</a>
Maulidia Khairani	UU	WP5	Presentation	EUBCE 2024 side event	Conference	Marseille	26-6-2024	Scientific community, industry	Presentation on the moi	<a href="https://www.sciferredbynature.or">https://www.sciferredbynature.or</a>
Maulidia Khairani	UU	WP5	Presentation	EUBCE 2024 oral presentation	Conference	Marseille	26-6-2024	Scientific community	Presentation on the moi	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/feed/u">https://www.linkedin.com/feed/u</a>
Costanza Rossi, Birka Wicke	SQ Consult	WP6	Presentation	BiobasedCert cluster co-creation event: Driv	Workshop	online	11-11-2024	Scientific community, industry	joint event with sister pr	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/prefer">https://www.facebook.com/prefer</a>
Costanza Rossi	SQ Consult	WP6	Presentation	Meeting with Dutch policy makers	Workshop	Utrecht(NL)	14-12-2024	Dutch policy makers	Presentation on the cos	<a href="https://s.com/PreferbyNature/stat">https://s.com/PreferbyNature/stat</a>
Costanza Rossi	SQ Consult	WP6	Presentation	Meeting with Dutch policy makers	Workshop	online	14-12-2024	Dutch policy makers	Presentation on the cos	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/posts/j">https://www.linkedin.com/posts/j</a>
Gabriela López	PbN	WP4	Post	How can certification help you comply with EUDR webinar	Social media	LinkedIn	19-3-2025	Industry	Post on webinar how certification help you comply with EUDR	<a href="https://www.harmonitor.eu/post/">https://www.harmonitor.eu/post/</a>
Gabriela López	PbN	WP4	Post	How can certification help you comply with EUDR webinar	Social media	Facebook	19-3-2025	Industry	Post on webinar how certification help you comply with EUDR	
									Post on webinar how	

Figure 27. Templated created by WP7 to monitor the dissemination, communication and exploitation activities carried out throughout the projects. A second tab also keeps tracks of scientific publications, including the ones still in progress and the anticipated ones.