# HARMONITOR

**Grant agreement nº:** 101060133

**Project acronym**: HARMONITOR

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

# Deliverable 7.1 (D7.1)

# Dissemination, communication and exploitation plan

**Date of deliverable: 31/10/2022**

**Actual submission date: 31/10/2022**

**Version: [1.0] |  31/10/2022**

Funded by
the European Union

**www.harmonitor.eu**

# REPORT

| Lead Beneficiary | SQ Consult B.V. |
|---|---|
| Authors (Organisation) | Costanza Rossi, Monique Voogt, Sergio Ugarte (SQ Consult B.V.) |
| Responsible Author | Sergio Ugarte, s.ugarte@sqconsult.com |
| 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 | Final |

# CONTENTS

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dissemination, communication and exploitation (DEC) 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 has been developed during the starting phase of the project by the Work Package 7 (WP7) team to define objectives, target groups, messages and outline implementation. The main dissemination and communication tools (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 tools and the different target groups is explained, alongside suggested indicators for actively monitoring effectiveness. The main exploitation activities are linked to the Data Management Plan (DMP) that will be developed during the first six months of the project to ensure that all data generated withing HARMONITOR are available and reliable.

The plan will guide the 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's results is:

- Frequent networking and debate with international partners and organisations, such as industrial associations, standardization bodies, certification bodies, NGOs working on sustainability aspects, etc., including an open, public stakeholder consultation during year 1 on critical issues affecting the effectiveness and robustness of CSLs. Website with a knowledge library, blog section, and contact form (WP2, WP7).
- Two surveys addressed to all relevant stakeholders to measure understanding of different policy options in the development of an EU policy framework for bioeconomy will be conducted in Months 12 and 35 (WP6).
- Dialogue through a series of e-meetings 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).
- Regular biannual meetings in years 2 and 3 with CSLs participating in the platform to validate assumptions and discuss intermediate results of the project (WP2).
- Further DEC activities include 4 workshops addressed exclusively to CSLs and 2 topic specific workshops stemming from WPs 4, 5 and 6 to seek for their feedback, 4 open access publications and a final conference (WP7).

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The HARMONITOR project will improve the effectiveness of sustainability certification schemes and labels (CSLs) in various sectors of the EU bioeconomy and strengthen their possible use as a co-regulation instrument within the EU Bioeconomy policy framework. The project will also establish and test a participative review platform concept to help CSLs to find commonalities and cooperation when operating in bio-based value chains within and across EU borders. The goal of this platform is to promote continuous improvement of CSLs and continuous knowledge of these dynamic developments by market actors.

The project integrates the knowledge of nine consortium partners to increase the levels of effectiveness and robustness of CSLs though systematic monitoring. This will enhance the transparency and traceability of environmental impacts along value chains and improve the awareness of trade flows and their impacts.

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 ensure that results gained during the course of the HARMONITOR project exert their full impact, effective activities for the dissemination, communication and exploitation of results will be pursued throughout the project duration. The preparation of the dissemination, communication and exploitation plan is one of the first activities of Work Package 7 (WP7).

The overarching objective of WP7 is to optimally organise the dissemination of HARMONITOR results, and the related knowledge transfer and exploitation activities in a consolidated, resource efficient way. The specific objectives of WP7 include:

- Formulate and update the project's Data Management Plan (DMP).
- Build and maintain a collaborative relationship with other EU funded projects.
- Communication, dissemination and stakeholder engagement.
- Project recommendations addressed to different stakeholders' groups for the further exploitation of project results.

This document defines the overarching dissemination, communication and exploitation objectives of HARMONITOR. It describes concrete measures, timeframes and responsibilities of the partners during the course of the project and facilitates the monitoring and reporting of the project's goals.

## 1.1 The importance and differences of dissemination, communication and exploitation

Dissemination, communication and exploitation activities have different purposes, and they all play a role within HARMONITOR. These activities will be mostly addressed to the owners and promoters of CSLs, policy makers and business spheres, as well as institutions committed to enhancing sustainability performance, civil society organisations, academia, and the general public.

Communication activities aim at informing and promoting the HARMONITOR project and its results by conveying clear messages through the right communication channels. HARMONITOR's communication activities are addressed to multiple stakeholders' groups, the media, and the general public.

Dissemination activities within HARMONITOR are basically the public disclosure of project results using different channels and formats, such as scientific or specialised journals and conferences, or databases for the continuous assessment of CSLs.

Exploitation activities within HARMONITOR are project efforts towards making that the CSLs community and policy makers make a concrete use of the project results and proposed methodologies.

## 1.2 Barriers and challenges to be considered

The potential barriers to dissemination, communication and exploitation related to stakeholders, information sources, contents and methods are identified in Table 1.

These barriers could be overcome or even removed by means of a series of suitable actions. For example, the first action to remove barriers is to clearly identify the target audience– individuals, groups and organizations that HARMONITOR wants to reach and engage. The next action is the definition of key messages. In this regard, it is essential to "translate" the scientific terms into understandable language when addressing non-scientific stakeholders. Usually, research projects regard long-lasting and complex activities; however, the messages to transmit should be simplified as much as possible, depending on their purpose and target group.

*Table 1. Barriers to dissemination, communication and exploitation*

| Type | Barrier |
|---|---|
|  |  |

| Stakeholders | • Different types of information are needed / appreciated by different types of stakeholders<br>• Stakeholders might experience fatigue<br>• Different target audiences require different ways/levels of complexity<br>• Different types of dissemination methods preferred<br>• Limited number of information sources trusted |
|---|---|
| Information source | • Low level of authority<br>• Limited credibility of experience<br>• Suspicion regarding motive<br>• Lack of sensitivity to user concerns<br>• Presence of other sources more trusted by the stakeholders |
| Content | • Low confidence in the quality of the information provided<br>• Restricted comprehensiveness of the information<br>• Unclear utility and relevance for users<br>• Non-user-friendly format |
| Methods | • Limited capacity to reach intended users<br>• Long timeframes required to access<br>• Lack of flexibility<br>• Limited reliability<br>• Cost effectiveness<br>• Project results presented in language not adapted and/or not accessible to the different target groups<br>• Limited attractiveness of the information<br>• Too slow in picking up cutting edge dissemination methods offered by rapidly developing internet technologies<br>• Lack of free access to scientific papers published in authoritative but expensive academic journals<br>• Improper use of printed and other materials intended for active dissemination but distributed passively<br>• Some resistance in the scientific community to publish data in forms or data papers or supplementary data files<br>• Some resistance in the scientific community to provide information necessary for newsletters, fact sheets and possible policy briefs |

## 1.3 Document maintenance

The dissemination, communication and exploitation plan will be reviewed and updated as needed, as the project proceeds. This plan will be on the agenda of each General Assembly meeting.

This document contains a revision history log. When changes occur, the document's revision history log will reflect an updated version number, the date of the new version, the author making the change, and a summary of the changes.

# 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 are established to guide considerations and proposals for the implementation of this plan:

- **Promoting the adoption of the proposed platform** 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 will inform policy makers and industries about the benefits of establishing its review platform for the continuous improvement and harmonisation of CSLs.
- **Information sharing with the CSL community, and with sister and other relevant EU funded projects** under the ZEROPOLLUTION call. Project methodologies and results will be frequently and openly shared. For example, the comparative analysis methodology or the methodology used in the design of the monitoring system will be explained to sister projects to facilitate their methodology improvement and vice-versa.
- **Knowledge transfer of best practices.** Best practices on existing sustainability principles, criteria, indicators related to different bio-based value-chains, as well as best practices in assurance and governance systems will be 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 through making the assessment results and recommendations of the HARMONITOR platform public, and through engaging with international organisations to increase outreach and impacts.

To ensure that these objectives are met professionally, effectively and in a timely manner, HARMONITOR adopts 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 first assumptions, and discussion and validation of project results.
- A collaborative and professional relationship with the Commission and sister projects funded under the Horizon Europe ZERO POLLUTION call (exchanging information, methodologies, and findings) for the further

advancing of the project, and for 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, standardization bodies, certification bodies, NGOs working on sustainability aspects, etc.
- Dialogue with policy makers and market actors for providing guidance in the identification and selection of the most suitable CSLs for relevant bio-based systems of the European bioeconomy.

## 2.2 Scope

HARMONITOR 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 will include 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 will be defined and documented.
- **Objectives:** Each goal will be associated with one or more project objectives.
- **Target groups:** The scope and characteristics of the different target recipient groups of disseminated information will be described.
- **Content:** Basic elements of the content relevant to each target audience will be 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 will be identified.
- **Tools:** The tools that best suit the delivery of messages to target groups will be selected.
- **Success:** A results/success monitoring method will be described for each dissemination activity.
- **Access:** The mechanism to promote access to HARMONITOR information will be described.
- **Availability:** Strategies for promoting awareness of project outputs will be identified.
- **Barriers:** Potential barriers that may interfere with the targeted users' access or utilization of information will be identified and actions to reduce these barriers will be developed.

## Dissemination

The goal of HARMONITOR's 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 will be disseminated to a professional and scientific audience through publications in high profile international journals, lectures at international meetings and conferences. The project teams will aim to publish a minimum of 4 scientific papers in peer-reviewed, open-source journals and attend at least 4 international meetings during the project to present the latest results to a wide and diverse audience. Dissemination will also occur via the project website, web-based and print articles aimed at non-researcher audiences. A dedicated project website will be created in WP7 in Month 3, to ensure stakeholders are reached in an early stage. The website will be designed to provide: (i) high-level information on project aims, activities and targeted results for the main public; and (ii) dissemination targeted at policy makers, professionals, and sectoral practitioners in need of data and information in a suitable format.

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 will start as soon as project (intermediate) results are available.

## 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 will be 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 will be the primary starting point to engage with the general public, and it will be updated and maintained regularly throughout the project to make it engaging and dynamic. The project website will be 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 will ensure that all resources, including the website, documents, databases, presentation slides, and promotional banners look professional and uniform. The strong visual project identity will increase its potential to attract interest from among the target audience and generate future collaborations in wider academic and industrial circles. This will be 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.

## Exploitation

The goal of HARMONITOR's exploitation activities is to make that interested parties make a concrete use of the project results and proposed methodologies. In particular, the monitoring system methodology and the participative review platform that allows CSLs to find commonalities and cooperation to improve.

Exploitation activities within HARMONITOR will also support the processes for more transparent, effective and robust CSLs and promote the uptake of higher quality CSLs. Exploitation activities will start towards the end of the project, as soon as the project has exploitable results and concrete policy recommendations.

Exploitation activities will be based on the data generated and the analyses conducted. Given the trans-disciplinarity of HARMONITOR 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 will archive and provide links to all the project publications to support easy access to information for site visitors. Selected additional project data will also be published on our project website and updated regularly.

A DMP for data generated and/or collected during the project will be formulated and continually revised at annual Project Management Committee meetings 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 Coordinator and Work Package leaders

The HARMONITOR Coordinator and the 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, book chapters 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. These activities will be informed to the WP7 team.

All requests for the joint approval of the coordinator and work package leaders must be accompanied by the Forms presented in Annex 1. The maximum time for approval of major activities is 14 days.

## 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 will be 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 CREATION OF A BRAND IDENTITY

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.

## 4.1 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 winning logo is shown in different versions in Figure 1.
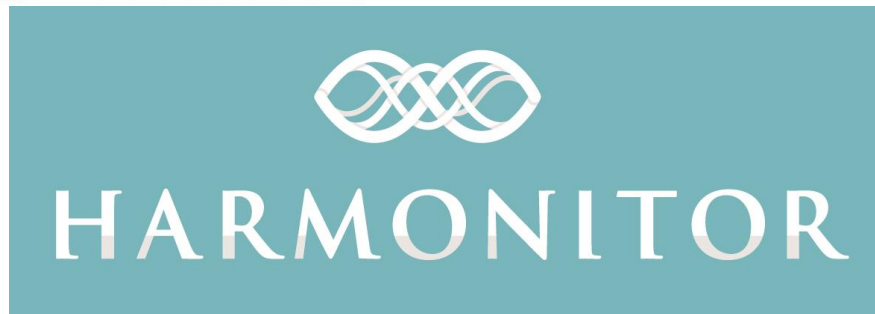
Figure 1. Logo versions adapted to different backgrounds.

## 4.2 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 2).



*Figure 2. Covers of the HARMONITOR templates for presentations and reports.*

All communication and dissemination material will include the HARMONITOR logo, and the acknowledgement of EU funding with the following text with the EU flag logo:

# 5 TARGET 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 general 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, such as CEN 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.

## 5.1 Target stakeholder groups

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:

- CSL system 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.

**CSL system owners** will be impacted by the HARMONITOR project – CSL systems 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 be 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 certification schemes and labels (WP4), and its associated environmental impacts (WP5); and ii) the novel application of existing multiregional input-output 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 will provide all above stakeholders and **procurers, traders, retailers, and end consumers** insight into the size and level of certification of bio-based 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 will use the channels shown in Table 2.

*Table 2. Channels for dissemination, communication and exploitation activities*

| Target group | Channels to be 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. |
| Policy makers | • 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. |

# 5.2 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.

It is expected that communication and dissemination at the national and regional levels where partners are based will be more intensive than in other countries not represented in the HARMONITOR consortium. In any case, efforts will be made to disseminate outputs through additional existing networks.

HARMONITOR will pay specific attention to interaction with stakeholders. The following main vehicles proposed to achieve this are:

- 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.

A set of criteria for recruits will be defined early on in the process of planning focus groups, interviews and other interactions aimed at receiving inputs. This set of criteria will be customized to the type of activity and target group, and where relevant it can be split in essential and preferred criteria, by amending the following list:

Recruits must:

- Have at least five years-experience in the area of bio-based materials and/or bio-based products.

- Have a good understanding of sustainability issues related to bio-based materials and/or bio-based products.

- Have a good understanding of what drives the costs of production of bio-based materials and/or bio-based products.

- Have a view on the market strategies and drivers that producers of bio-based materials or bio-based products may have.

Prior to the completion of surveys, attendance to focus groups or engagement in interviews, the participants will receive a project information sheet providing details of the purpose of collecting the data, and confirmation of what the data will be used for. If participants wish to proceed, an informed consent form will be completed (template to be developed and presented in Deliverable D7.2 "Initial Data Management Plan"). Copies of the signed consent forms will be kept on file with the information sheet provided to the participants.

The information sheet will provide details of how participants can withdraw consent, how the information will be stored and contact details for further information about the project or questions regarding data protection processes.

# 5.3 Stakeholder engagement and integration

HARMONITOR will engage stakeholders and will integrate their perspectives from multiple governance scales throughout the project lifetime and with direct support from WP7.

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 are envisaged at this stage:

- HARMONITOR platform.
- Other face-to-face interactions.
- ICT mediated interactions.

## HARMONITOR platform

Representatives from certification schemes and labels will be invited to participate in the inception activities directed at creating a multi-stakeholder platform (WP2) that will aim to outlive HARMONITOR. This platform will be an opportunity for discussing the blueprint of the proposed assessment tools, criteria and indicators as well as the final sustainability scheme and indicators.

The HARMONITOR platform is a vehicle for open consultation with relevant stakeholders. It will offer the possibility of discussing together in a less formal setting all aspects of design, market implementation and market uptake of new sustainability schemes. This platform will be chaired by project partners.

## Other face-to-face interactions

Stakeholders will also be engaged through other interaction such as:

- In-depth interviews: Much of the essential input for HARMONITOR research cannot be obtained from literature; a large part of this information will be gathered through stakeholder interviews, which are part of several WPs and tasks. Interviews will be conducted in person, by e-mail or by phone as appropriate. Every respondent will be asked to sign a consent form informing them of the objectives of HARMONITOR, the specific issues being researched and giving permission to the research team to use the interviewee's anonymised responses.
- Workshops, webinars and conferences: to be organized in order to disseminate, get feedback and validate the knowledge created in HARMONITOR and to reach out to a wider expert audience to build a consensus on the direction of the use of sustainability standards and EU policies. The events will be held preferably at the premises of consortium partners. At least three annual plenary conferences (including a final conference) will be organised, each targeting between 50-100 participants. As a rule, they will involve a broad range of stakeholders, but may also be organised for stakeholders of a specific sector or of a specific type.
- Focus groups: to identify and discuss relevant factors for the acceptance of bio-based products, present selected indicators to stakeholders and promote the suggested sustainability scheme.

## ICT mediated interactions

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

- Webinars: the format of webinars will be short and concrete to respond to the needs of participating audience to acknowledge the restricted time available to stakeholders. Whenever possible and advisable, webinars will be web-streamed over the project online platform. This option will be offered to help those who have difficulties attending conferences.
- Surveys and questionnaires: these will be conducted using free online survey software tools such as Qualtrics, SurveyMonkey, etc.

# 6  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.

## 6.1 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.

## 6.2 Formulation guidelines

HARMONITOR messages will always be 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 will be concise and straight-to-the-point, using appropriate scientific terminology and language.
- Training and dissemination material will be designed to be of practical use. They will be 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 will help their engagement with the project. Feedback and contributions should be duly acknowledged in all communication and dissemination material.
- Wording of the dissemination messages aiming to raise awareness of the general public will be 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 will pay 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.

# 7 TOOLS AND EXPECTED ACTIVITIES

## 7.1 Website

As the web acts as a principal means of dissemination of information, one of the first priorities of HARMONITOR was to set up and launch a publicly accessible website. The website (www.harmonitor.eu) was launched on the 31st of August and is designed in such a way that it meets the communication and dissemination needs of wide range of users. The website was built with the following characteristics:

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

The website serves as a knowledge platform for the target audiences and as a place to provide access to reports and freely available publications, case studies, HARMONITOR news and networks. The HARMONITOR website has following sub-pages: "Home", "Objectives", "Partners", "Work areas", "Publications", "News", "Events", and "Contact" (Figure 3).
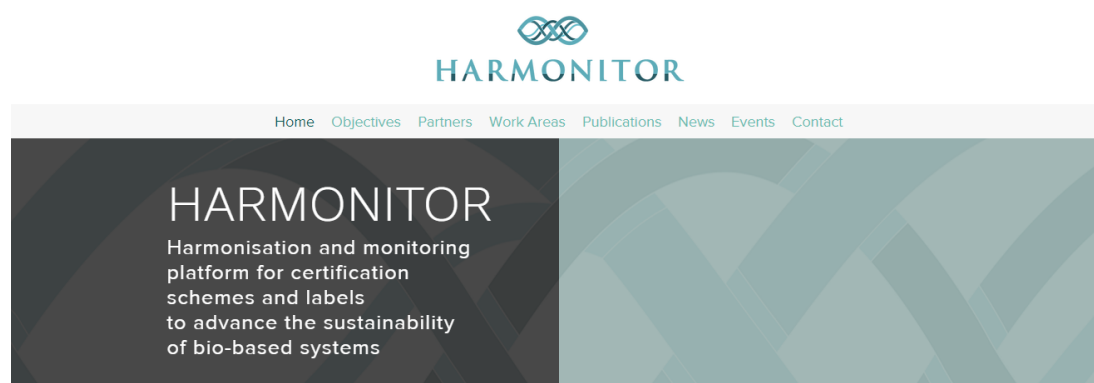
*Figure 3. Home page of the HARMONITOR project website.*

The website will include 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, with online subscription.
- Cross-links to other key related projects, e.g. SUSTCERT4BIOBASED, STAR4BBS.
- Information on the HARMONITOR case studies.
- Information on HARMONITOR workshops and conferences. For these events, an internal area to collect comments and feedback from stakeholders will be set up.
- 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 tool.

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 will be the responsibility of SQ Consult, the WP7 team and the WP leaders.

The WP7 team will make 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 will be made possible to encourage knowledge exchange.

The website will be 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 will be publicized via newsletters and brochures. In addition, it will be submitted to key search engines to get more traffic to the site. Websites on similar topics will be asked to link to the HARMONITOR website. A usage logs counter is foreseen in order to verify that users are actively searching and using the 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 and will subsequently remain active for up to five years after the end of the project.

## 7.2 Project blogs and news

Frequent blogs and news communicating and disseminating intermediate findings will be prepared by Work Packages and published in the website. The first blog is expected after M6 of the project after the first deliverable of the project (selection of bio-based value chains). The WP7 team will send respective inquiries to the WP leaders in good time right after each deliverable is due.

All HARMONITOR partners are expected to 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.

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.

## 7.3 Social media

HARMONITOR news and announcements will be disseminated through LinkedIn to address a broader range of readers and users. The functionalities and features of the HARMONITOR Project | LinkedIn are presented in Table 3.

*Table 3 Functionalities and features of LinkedIn in the context of HARMONITOR*

| Functionalities and features | In the context of HARMONITOR |
|---|---|
| <ul><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><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> |

## 7.4 Interviews, surveys, and e-meetings

Interviews, surveys and e-meetings will be organised by WPs to engage in a two-way communication with different stakeholders. These tools will communicate to stakeholders the knowledge and products developed by HARMONITOR, and will 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 are planned 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 will be conducted in Months 12 and 35 (WP6).

Dialogue through a series of e-meetings 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).

## 7.5 Workshops and networking events

Workshops addressed to CSLs will be a key tool to disseminate and validate the knowledge created in HARMONITOR. The events will be held preferably at the premises of consortium partners. Biannual meetings in years 2 and 3, in the format of a workshop, will be organised with CSLs participating in the platform to validate assumptions and discuss intermediate results of the project (WP2). In addition, 2 topic specific workshops stemming from WPs 4, 5 and 6 to seek feedback from CSLs will be organised.

The format of workshops will be short and concrete. Concise minutes of the workshops will be drafted within 15 working days after the event. The minutes, together with the presentations (when authorisation is granted by speakers), and other proceedings of the events will be made available on the website in order to increase the dissemination potential.

Frequent networking and debate with international partners and organisations, such as industrial associations, standardization bodies, certification bodies, NGOs working on sustainability aspects, etc., including an open, public stakeholder consultation during year 1 on critical issues affecting the effectiveness and robustness of CSLs (WP2, WP7).

## 7.6 Presentation of HARMONITOR's results at international symposia

Presentations at scientific symposia are deemed another type of appropriate means to disseminate the results of HARMONITOR. HARMONITOR will ensure 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.

SQ Consult (Coordinator, leader WP7) will regularly update a calendar of upcoming events to raise interest among partners for participation and ensure representation of HARMONITOR. The presentations at international symposia will aim to have good geographical and discipline coverage in scientific and non-scientific events.

## 7.7 Publications

The scientific community is one of the main target groups to be addressed. We will focus not only on the specialists in bioeconomy and bioproducts, but also on

scientists in any other disciplines that could in one- or another-way benefit from HARMONITOR outcomes.

One of the most effective ways to target our scientific stakeholders and the scientific community in general is by publishing results in open scientific journals. The scientific articles are deemed to be an excellent and one of the most preferred dissemination channels to reach the wider scientific community and to make them aware of the project results.

The results of HARMONITOR will be disseminated to a professional scientific audience and to society in general through open access publications, dedicated blogs and high-profile international journals. During the project lifetime, the research teams will aim to publish a minimum of 4 scientific papers in journals with a high impact factor. At least three PhD theses are expected to be on their way to completion at the end of this project.

Partners will be required to provide information on any scientific paper by reporting its status (submitted, accepted, in press, published) in the corresponding dissemination report form. The majority of the publications are expected to be prepared during the last year of the project based on new scientific results.

## 7.8 Final conference

A final conference will present the outputs of HARMONITOR to a target audience of 50-100 attendants (scientists, industry representatives and policymakers). The target audience will be further specified in due course. The aim of the conference is to present and discuss the project outputs and to foster their uptake. The conference will also provide the opportunity to support the science policy integration and will be organised in full coordination with the sister projects SUSTCERT4BIOBASED and STAR4BBS.

SQ Consult will be responsible for organising the final conference.

# 8 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 will archive and provide links to all the project publications to support easy access to information for site visitors. Selected additional project data will also be published on our project website and updated regularly.

A DMP for data generated and/or collected during the project will be formulated within the first 6 months of the project, based on the respective Horizon Europe DMP template. HARMONITORS's DMP follows FAIR data management principles, namely: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable. HARMONITOR's DMP will identify 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 will be 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 will be 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 will be 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 HARMOMITOR webpage will be established in all the partners' webpages and also in other relevant websites. All data will be archived and preserved by SQ Consult, where it will remain available for public access in hard and electronic form.

As a living document, the DMP will be updated in Months 18 and 36. The DMP will be continually revised at the General Assemblies to ensure it remains appropriate keeping in mind the development of the project.

# 9 MONITORING AND REPORTING

Several ways to monitor the impact of HARMONITOR's dissemination, communication and exploitation plan will be used. Proposed indicators for measuring impacts of the communication and dissemination activities are shown in Table 4. The analysis of actions and tools will further allow us to realign and maximize efforts where most effective, and to revise or abandon paths that consistently do not meet expectations.

*Table 4 Indicators for measuring impacts from communication and dissemination activities*

| Communication/ dissemination activity | Indicators to measure impact |
|---|---|
| LinkedIn | Number of connections/followers |
| | Number of posts |
| | Number of impressions |
| | Number of "likes" and "shared" |
| Website | Statistics about traffic and visits from Google Analytics |
| Publications | Number of peer-reviewed scientific publications |
| Workshops | Number of attendees |
| | Feedback received |
| Participation in external conferences | Number of conferences and presentations |

Dissemination report forms will be used to report on dissemination activities on a partner's level and help monitoring. The forms will allow three types of reporting specifically designed for the needs of HARMONITOR (see Annex 1):

- Symposia and meetings form – designed to allow partners to easily report activities from meetings, workshops, conferences etc., including information on type and number of stakeholders reached and on activities undertaken.
- General dissemination form – designed to allow partners to report on all types of media participation and promotion of the project such as in newspapers, magazines and web publications; policy briefs, press releases, training sessions, etc.
- Scientific publications form – designed to allow partners to report on HARMONITOR derived research and publications.

# ANNEX 1: REPORT FORMS

- Symposia and meetings form
- General dissemination form
- Scientific publications form

**HARMONITOR**

**Symposia and meetings form**

*Required information

**Name** *

**E-mail Address** *

**Affiliation** *

**Presentation at scientific symposia**

__      Conference

__      Meeting

__      Workshop

__      Other:

**Organisation of scientific symposia**

__      Conference

__      Meeting

__      Workshop

__      Other:

**Other type of activity**

__      Organisation of training course

__      Direct interactions with stakeholders

__      Other:

**Partner(s) involved:**

**Title of event:**

**Type of presentation** (talk, poster, abstract, PR materials distributed...)**:**

**Title of presentation:**

**Authors of presentation:**

**Have all authors and their organisations agreed on the proposed presentation?** __Yes   __No

**Date** (dd/mm(yyyy):

**Place** (country/city):

**Type of audience** (scientists, researchers, directors, editors, policy makers, students, conservationists, ecologists, general public, etc.):

**Size of audience** (estimated no.):

**Geographical coverage** (World, Europe, etc.):

**Countries:**

**Are EU acknowledgement and HARMONITOR logo properly included in the presentations?** __Yes   __No

**Remarks** (e.g. authors, channel, media, URL, etc.):

**General Dissemination Form**

*Required information

**Name** *

**E-mail Address** *

**Affiliation** *

**Type of activity:**

\_\_  Publication in newspaper

\_\_  Publication in magazine

\_\_  Web publication

\_\_  TV broadcast

\_\_  Radio broadcast

\_\_  Press release

\_\_  Policy brief

\_\_  Teaching

\_\_  PhD thesis

\_\_  Master thesis

\_\_  Website article

\_\_  Other:

**Partner(s) involved:**

**Have all partners involved and their organisations agreed on the proposed activity?** \_\_Yes  \_\_No

**Title of dissemination activity:**

**Date** (dd/mm/yyyy):

**Place** (country/city):

**Type of audience** (e.g. scientists, researchers, directors, editors, policy makers, students, conservationists, ecologists, general public, etc.):

**Size of audience** (estimated no.):

**Geographical coverage** (World, Europe, etc.):

**Countries addressed:**

**Are EU acknowledgement and logo properly included in the presentations?** \_\_Yes  \_\_No

**Remarks** (e.g. authors, channel, media, URL…):

**Scientific Publication Form**

*Required

**Name *:**

**E-mail Address *:**

**Affiliation *:**

**Partner/s involved:**

**Have all partners involved and their organisations agreed on the proposed scientific publication?** __Yes  __No

**Publication Title:**

**Author(s):**

**Date of publication (online)** (dd/mm/yyyy):

**Date of publication (on paper)** (dd/mm/yyyy):

**Status**

__     In press

__     Published

__     Other:

**Journal:**

**Volume (issue):**

**Pages:**

**DOI:**

**URL:**

**Access**

__     Restricted

__     Open

**WP relevance**
__     WP 1
__     WP 2
__     WP 3
__     WP 4
__     WP 5
__     WP 6
__     WP 7
__     All

**Are EU acknowledgement and HARMONITOR logo properly included in the presentations?** __Yes  __No