



## D7.5 Report on the Overall Dissemination and Communication Strategy

<b>Project</b>	PoliRural	
<b>Project title:</b>	Future Oriented Collaborative Policy Development for Rural Areas and People	
<b>Grant</b>	818496	
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<b>Version:</b>	1.0	
<b>Date:</b>	08 November 2021	
<b>Responsible:</b>	Plan4all	
<b>Contributing:</b>	SPI	
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<b>Dissemination Level:</b>	Public	X
	Confidential - only consortium members and European Commission Services	
<b>Keywords:</b>	dissemination strategy assessment, communication strategy assessment, recommendations, PoliRural	

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 818496

## Revision History

Revision no.	Date	Author	Organization	Description
0.1	13/09/2021	Sarah Velten	P4All	First draft
0.2	29/10/2021	Sofia Cunha	SPI	Communication and dissemination indicators, finalised D7.6
0.3	01/11/2021	Tomas Mildorf	P4All	Analysis of monitoring indicators
0.4	02/11/2021	Tomas Mildorf	P4All	Conclusions
0.5	05/11/2021	Tomas Mildorf	P4All	Incorporation of internal reviewers' comments
1.0	08/11/2021	Tomas Mildorf	P4All	Final document

Responsibility for the information and views set out in this publication lies entirely with the authors.

Every effort has been made to ensure that all statements and information contained herein are accurate, however the PoliRural Project Partners accept no liability for any error or omission.

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## Executive Summary

This document provides an evaluation of the dissemination and communication strategy of the PoliRural project. This includes recommendations to be taken into account in the final year of the PoliRural project. This document is a follow up report of *D7.6 Dissemination and Communication Update 2* aiming to assess the overall dissemination and communication strategy and provide recommendations for the final year of the project execution.

## Keywords

dissemination strategy assessment, communication strategy assessment, recommendations, PoliRural

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## 1 Introduction

This document is developed as part of the PoliRural project, which has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, under the grant agreement number 818496.

This document is a follow up report of *D7.6 Dissemination and Communication Update 2* aiming to assess the overall dissemination and communication strategy. Most of the input data for this report are included in D7.6. This document provides only the assessment and recommendations for the last year of the project execution.

## 1. Monitoring Indicators

In order to evaluate the success of the communication and dissemination strategy, the monitoring indicators and their fulfilment was analysed. In this chapter, the monitoring indicators are described including their status of fulfilment after the first and second year of the project. Individual indicators are analysed and commented.

PoliRural partners keep track of all dissemination and communication activities and these are recorded as metadata in a dedicated spreadsheet. This spreadsheet is organized by consortium partners and is regularly updated throughout the project. The spreadsheet inputs serve as a key monitoring and assessing mechanisms that communication and dissemination is in line with the set targets by the Dissemination and Communication Plan strategy developed at the beginning of the project.

Table 1 shows individual indicators in the first column, followed by the initial target value foreseen by the end of the project. The third and fourth columns show the actual values achieved during the first year (Y1) and the second year (Y2) of the project respectively.

The fifth column shows the progress made in Y2 compared to Y1; followed by the sum of values reached within the first two years of the project and the updated values foreseen by the end of the project. The last column indicates the foreseen values expected in the third year of the project (Y3).

**Red** text indicates a major decline in Y2 compared to Y3, **orange** means significant decline and **green** text shows indicators that are on a good track.

Indicator	Foreseen Y1 + Y2 +Y3 at the beginning of the project	Actual Y1	Actual Y2	Progress in Y2 against Y1	Foreseen Y3	Total Y1 +Y2	Updated values from October 2021 foreseen by the end of the project
Number of total visits to website	5,000	6,465	1,498	23%	2,037	7,963	10,000
Number of Facebook/Twitter followers	1,500	790	551	70%	409	1,341	1,750
Number of mentions/retweets/shares	500	230	253	110%	267	483	750
Number of materials' downloads	500	543	93	17%	364	636	1,000
Number of produced flyers	2	2	0	0%	0	2	2
Number of newsletters produced	12	4	5	125%	5	9	14
Number of newsletters subscribers	300	67	22	33%	211	89	300
Number of views on YouTube	1,000	445	653	147%	402	1,098	1,500

Number of MOOC participants	1,000	0	0		1,000	0	1,000
Number of conferences attended and journal papers published	10	21	-	-	-	-	-
Number of conferences attended	-	19	18	95%	13	37	50
Number of journal papers published	-	2	2	100%	4	4	8
Number of relevant events that partners participated in	40	120	73	61%	57	193	250
Number of synergies with other initiatives	10	7	5	71%	8	12	20

Table 1 Monitoring indicators

### **Number of total visits to website**

The Google Analytics engine provides detailed statistics on the access and use of the PoliRural website available at <https://polirural.eu/>. The key value extracted from the Google analytics report is Page Views defined as the total number of pages viewed considering that repeated views of a single page are counted. Figure 1 shows the statistics including Page Views of the PoliRural website from the beginning of the project until the end of September 2021.



Figure 1 PoliRural website statistics.

By simply comparing the page views achieved within Y1 and Y2 we can see a significant decline in the website visits. Y2 shows about 23% of Y1. It's important to note that since the end of August 202, the PoliRural Hub (available at <https://hub.polirural.eu/>) has been publicly available and attracting visitors. The total Page Views of the PoliRural Hub since it's been published count 13,798. This demonstrates that the PoliRural Hub outcompeted the PoliRural website and became the most visited site.

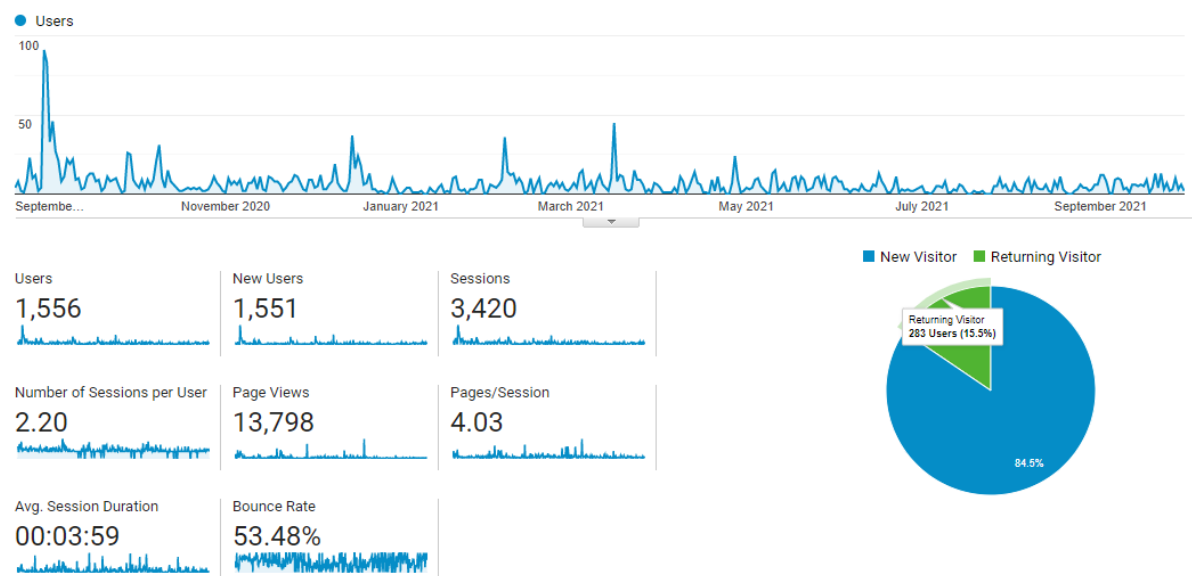


Figure 2 PoliRural Hub statistics.

### **Number of Facebook/Twitter followers**

Facebook registered 400 followers in Y1 and an additional 120 followers in Y2. For Twitter, there were 400 followers in Y2 and an additional 421 followers gained in Y2.

Overall, this indicator is on a good track to reach the target value for the entire project counting 1750 followers for both Twitter and Facebook.

Both accounts are analysed in detail in D7.3 and D7.6 reports. Please refer to these deliverables for more details.

### **Number of mentions/retweets/ shares**

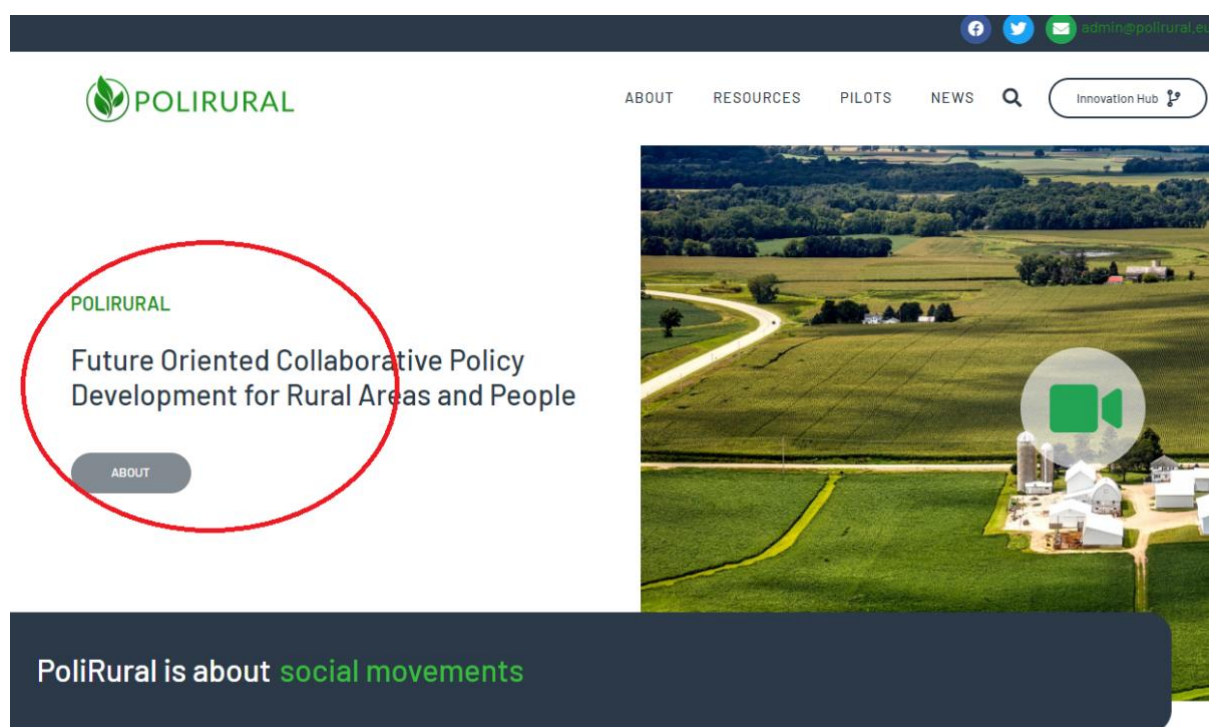
This indicator refers to the Facebook and Twitter account and their specific features including mentioning PoliRural on other accounts, retweeting tweets and sharing content. This indicator more than doubled in Y2 compared to Y1 and is fully on track to reach its target in Y3.

### **Number of materials' downloads**

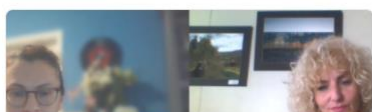
This refers to the number of file downloads from the PoliRural website. There was a significant decline in this parameter - 93 downloads in Y2 compared to 543 downloads in Y1. Considering that more results became available for download in Y2, this is definitely an indicator PoliRural should focus on in the final year of the project.

One recommendation would be to make the results for download more visible on the PoliRural website. Currently, it is aggregated under the RESOURCES tab of the main menu. An option could be to add a direct link to the download section on the title page as indicated in Figure 3.





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Figure 3 Indication on making direct link to the download section from the title page of the Polirural website.

Since the Polirural Hub gains more visibility compared to the Polirural website, the project results should become a part of the knowledge base of the Polirural Hub.

### **Number of produced flyers**

This became an obsolete indicator as the flyers were provided in Y2 and the indicator was fulfilled.

### **Number of newsletters produced**

This indicator exceeds the foreseen target values and no remediation action is required.

### **Number of newsletters subscribers**

The project website includes a subscription form where interested users can subscribe their email address to receive news of the project development. The foreseen value of 300 email addresses is far not reached and actual count is 67 in Y1 and only 22 in Y2. The decline in Y2 most probably correlates with the number of visitors to the Polirural website in Y2 compared to Y1.

D7.6 provides the following recommendation to remedy this indicator: “This indicator needs specific measures to be increased over the following months (partners will be asked to share

with personal contacts, and specific posts will be done on PoliRural social media to promote the Newsletter subscription).”

In addition to that, it’s recommended for all events organised by PoliRural in Y3 where registration is in place to include an option to choose to receive PoliRural newsletters.

#### **Number of views on YouTube**

This indicator exceeds the foreseen target values and no remediation action is required.

#### **Number of MOOC participants**

This indicator will become valid only in Y3 from M30 onwards. Regular monitoring of this indicator on a monthly basis is recommended.

#### **Number of conferences attended and journal papers published**

This indicator was split into the two following indicators.

##### **Number of conferences attended**

This seems to be in line with the foreseen values and no remediation action is required.

##### **Number of journal papers published**

There were two papers published in Y1 and two papers in Y2. The plan is to publish another 4 in the final year of the project.

##### **Number of relevant events that partners participated in**

This indicator includes the following activities: organization/participation in a Conference, organization/ participation in a Workshop, Participation to an Event other than a Conference or a Workshop, Participation in activities organized jointly with other EU projects.

The original foreseen value for this indicator (40) was highly underestimated as there were 120 events attended already in Y1. There is a decline in Y2 values compared to Y1 (Y2 was 61% of Y1). A logical explanation is the global pandemic as many events were cancelled in Y2. This should however improve in the final year of the project as most events are now running online.

It should be noted that although the performance of participation in events hasn't been as significant as in year 1, the performance of this indicator has been very high. The initial number foreseen for this indicator for the project was 40 events, and this indicator has been uploaded to 250 events.

It’s important to highlight, with reference to the next indicator, that part of this indicator is 36 events organised jointly with other EU projects in Y1 and Y2. This includes for example the INSPIRE Hackathons which are co-organised by multiple EU projects.

##### **Number of synergies with other initiatives**

Currently, there is an ongoing cooperation with the following projects: Ruralization, Desira, Rubizmo, Sherpa, Liverur, SmartAgriHubs, StarGate, SIEUSOIL, Ruritage, FOODIE SmartAfriHub and AFarCloud. With many of them, the cooperation is on the level of organisation of events, common webinars on sharing knowledge or finding other funding opportunities for their sustainability.

The fulfilment of the original set indicator (10 projects) is exceeded, an updated foreseen value was set to 20 by the end of the project.

It's important to highlight particularly for this indicator that there are two sides - one is quantitative and one is qualitative. The quantification is given. It's recommended to focus efforts in the last year of the project execution in describing the qualitative part of this indicator and have a better overview of what sort of cooperation is actually happening.

## 2. Conclusions and Recommendations

The PoliRural dissemination and communication strategy is in its targeted dissemination and post-project exploitation phases (refer to Chapter 2 of D7.6 for more details on the dissemination and communication phases). PoliRural is entering its final year of project execution. Targeted dissemination activities and making project results sustainable are the key objectives of this final period.

In order to reach the target audiences and secure the exploitation of the project results, it is crucial to engage stakeholders at pilot levels via local events, media and other channels of pilot partners. There are many dissemination activities happening at pilot levels (see Table 2 in D7.6) and this pace should continue in the final stage of the PoliRural project. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, many meetings are happening virtually and this might hamper the effectiveness of the targeted dissemination. However, the situation is better than in Y2 when most of the events were eventually cancelled without being even virtual.

The pilots and project partners are supplied with plenty of attractive promotional materials (see Section 4.2 of D7.6) supported by online and regularly updated media such as the project website and social media.

The statistics on access and views of the various media channels presented in D7.6 and also as part of Table 1 show a steady pace of dissemination and communication activities with a very few major declines. In many cases, the statistics show a significant increase, such as the number of Twitter followers.

The collaboration with other EU projects seems to be intensive and effective despite the lower numbers of synergies with other initiatives. This is demonstrated by the success of the online Summer School and virtual INSPIRE Hackathons. The qualitative part of the cooperation is far more important.

Overall, based on the monitoring indicators and the D7.6 report, the communication and dissemination strategy is effective and there are no major changes required.

**Recommendations** for the final year of the project execution in terms of communication and dissemination:

- Include a monitoring indicator on the PoliRural Hub visits and set a target value to be reached by the end of the project.
- Monitor all indicators on a 3 month basis and make a short interim evaluation of the progress within the final year of the project. This will enable the PoliRural consortium to make further justifications to the communication and dissemination strategy in time.
- There are 4 scientific publications planned in the final year of the project. Since the paper writing process takes time as well as negotiations with journals, it is

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recommended to identify early in Y3 who will lead the papers as authors, what the content should be focused on and what journal should be targeted.

- For the lower number of newsletter subscriptions, it is recommended to make the subscription form available also on the PoliRural Hub. In addition to that, it's recommended for all events organised by PoliRural in Y3 where participants' registration is in place to include an option to choose to receive PoliRural newsletters. In this way more subscribers could be added mainly on the pilot level.
- More visibility should be given to the download section on the project website containing all the results. Since the PoliRural Hub gains more visibility compared to the PoliRural website, the project results should become a part of the knowledge base of the PoliRural Hub.
- Get more information on the qualitative part of synergies with other EU projects.
- According to the Description of the Action, there is no deliverable planned similar to D7.3 and D7.6 on updates on communication and dissemination actions at the end of the project. It is recommended for the PoliRural consortium to consider introducing such deliverable to provide a full picture of the project achievements in this area.