



FETFX

A PRACTICAL GOOD PRACTICES
COMMUNICATION KIT
FOR ONGOING AND FUTURE
FET PROJECTS

PREFACE

This communication kit provides researchers in Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) with advice and examples on how to communicate and disseminate their science.

The kit has been produced by EFFECT, a Horizon 2020 FET-Open project aimed at enhancing the visibility and impact of FET research in society and at stimulating collaboration among FET stakeholders. The project communicates via the FETFX communication hub.

EFFECT is run by youris.com (project coordinator), APRE and Zabala Innovation Consulting.



*«Nothing in the world
is to be feared...
only understood»*

MARIE CURIE





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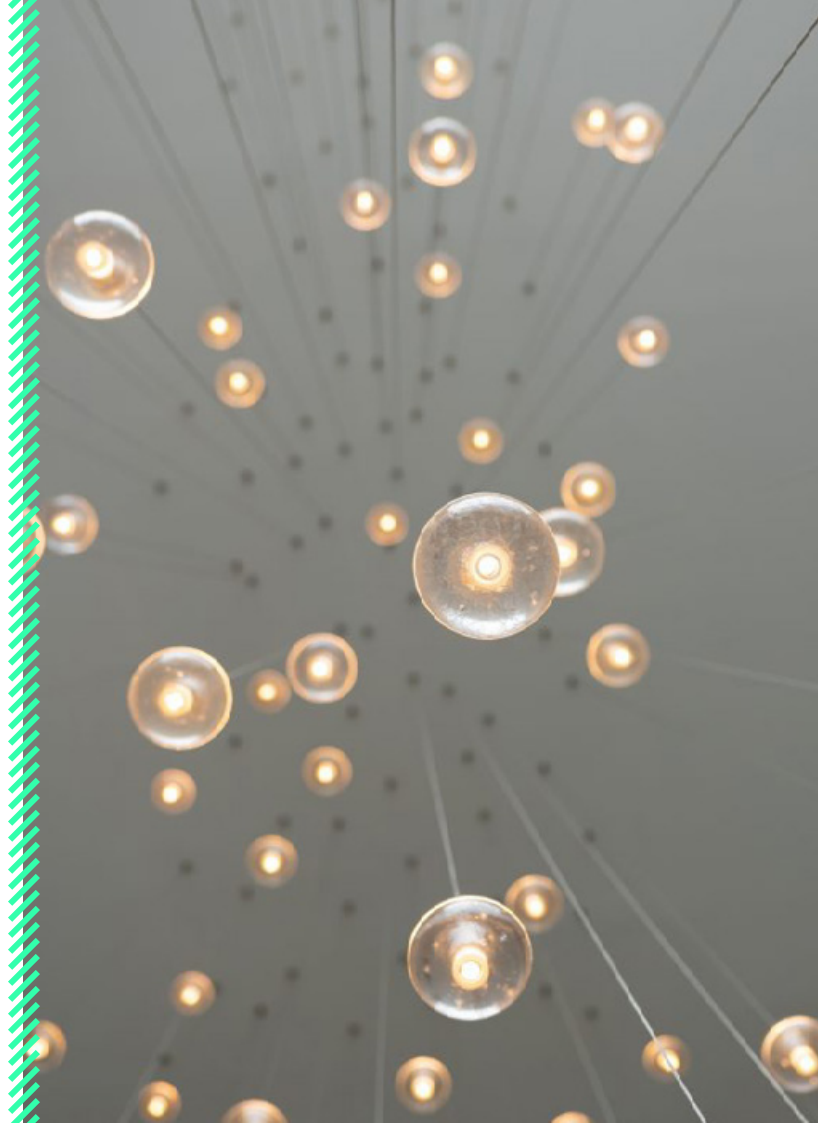
Left: Large Hadron Collider aura silhouette (by [Har Gobind Singh Khalsa](#))

Why science communication?

There are many reasons for researchers to communicate about science. The overall aim of communication is to share knowledge and promote uptake of your research results to create impacts on society.

Breakthrough scientific ideas alone are not enough. If you don't convey these ideas to multiple targets beyond your peers, innovation won't occur. If you want your project to have an impact on society, then science communication will help it reach out. This will lead to improved engagement in and acceptance of more complex topics and challenges.

Moreover, your project is publicly funded by the EU and it is in the tax payers' rights to know how their money is spent.



Planning is the key

Communicating is easy, communicating well is hard. If not carefully planned, your communication effort may turn into a frustrating and ineffective activity. Avoid this risk and develop a Communication and Engagement plan at the start of your project. How? Ask yourself who you want to talk to, define the key messages to convey, choose the most appropriate language and style, and identify the best channels and formats to spread your voice. When you put all this together in a structured way, your Communication and Engagement plan will be ready.

You should ask yourselves the following questions:

- ➔ **Who?** Identify your targets
- ➔ **What?** Identify key messages and tailor them to your targets
- ➔ **How?** Choose the appropriate tools and channels according to your targets
- ➔ **When?** Communicate right from the start so that you have an audience when your project results come. Monitor regularly your outreach and engagement and update your strategy
- ➔ **Where?** Work at all geographical levels: local, regional, national, European/global
- ➔ **With whom?** Join forces with your partners to share communication efforts



Identify your targets

Your targets are not homogeneous: they have different interests, needs and values.

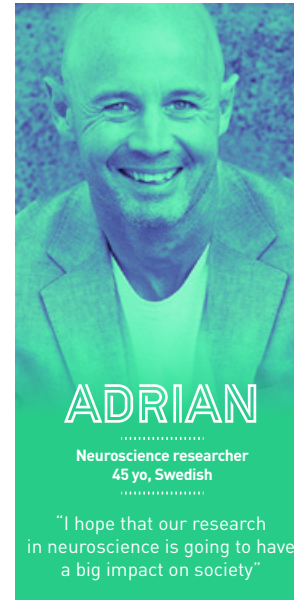
Select them among all relevant audiences (researchers, industries, investors, policy makers, citizens) and the general public. Some will be more affected by the outcomes of your research, others may indirectly benefit in the long term. Each should be approached with different messages, tone of voice, formats, and channels.

The more targets you reach, the greater the awareness and understanding of scientific topics you will generate. This will increase the society's acceptance of your results once they turn into innovation and market applications.

// Our advice

- ⇒ Diversify and specify your targets by type, level of engagement, location
- ⇒ Produce realistic profiles of your main targets - the 'personas'
- ⇒ Take into account timing of project & results to involve your targets
- ⇒ Address the general public: your research is supported by public funding!

FETFX Example



Imagine real persons representing your targets' profiles, the 'personas'. Give them a name, profession, gender and age. Think of their needs and the value of your FET research for them.

Define key messages

In every story to be told, key messages are those that your audience will remember and react to. The goal of these messages is to draw your targets' attention towards your research.

Key messages must be identified within the project and address the public at large. They should be inspired by your research objectives and expectations. But to be effective, key messages also need to be tailored to your targets.

Develop a positioning statement for each target, which explains the value and benefits of your research for them in relation to their expectations, needs and perspectives.

// Our advice

- ⇒ Key messages must be: few in number (two or three), short and concise, written down
- ⇒ Identify the project's keywords and objectives and rework them in simple and clear messages
- ⇒ Produce statements for each target
- ⇒ Simplify without trivialising

FETFX Example



Adrian
45yo, Swedish researcher

FETFX PERSONAS

"I hope that our research in neuroscience is going to have a big impact on society"


Adrian works as postdoctoral researcher in a team studying advanced neuroscience. He is well informed about scientific topics regarding his narrow field: he reads specialist press and attend networking events, but doesn't use much the web or social media for his professional update.

Main needs & Ambitions

- Learn about funding programmes for his research
- Be inspired about research development in other fields
- Broaden his professional network in other fields of study

Doubts and Critical points

- Stories might be too superficial and scientifically inaccurate
- It's hard to understand how funding schemes work and get support



Blanche
33yo, French office worker

FETFX PERSONAS

"I wonder how our world will look like when my child is grown up"

Blanche is a mother and part-time office worker in the tertiary sector. She is quite passionate about futuristic themes and the impact of breakthrough discoveries on the society, even if she is not trained in science or technology. She reads online to stay informed and uses social media to share interesting news and stories.

Main needs & Ambitions

- Discover inspiring stories about futuristic scenarios
- Understand the main topics of research and their impact
- Build an opinion on controversial scientific themes

Doubts and Critical points

- FET research topics are too technical and abstract to understand
- Stories might be boring and not inspiring

Map targets, messages, methods and channels

Each target can be approached through a mix of methods. Each tool and channel can be more effective for an audience and less for another. For example, researchers can be reached via papers in scientific journals, citizens via news and videos on the media (press, radio, TV, social networks).

This kit provides examples of communication tools and channels. Pick the most effective ones for your targets, develop a story relevant to them and spread the word!

// Our advice

- Plan to use a variety of methods for communicating and engaging with multiple stakeholders and the public at large
- Start with the methods that are more familiar to your targets, before testing new ones
- Distribute content to external channels addressing your audiences: information multipliers, platforms, online media
- Leverage on your partners' communication assets and communities



Choose the right communication formats

There is a variety of formats you can choose from to communicate your project. They can be written, such as press releases and journalistic articles, or audiovisual, such as videos and video interviews. Audiovisual and multimedia storytelling formats typically use more resources than written ones, but can also be extremely effective and engaging. Regardless of the formats you choose, remember to distribute your content to relevant stakeholders, promote it on social media and to make it easily accessible through your website!

// Our advice

- ➔ Explore multiple formats for your communication campaigns
- ➔ Consider audiovisual formats when visually appealing content is available
- ➔ Select the formats according to the distribution channels and the targets you are addressing
- ➔ In every communication material remember to mention the EU funding and FET Programme: your research is funded with public money and this is a way to inform EU citizens



Share your news via a press release

A press release is a text about a specific newsworthy matter, addressed to the media and project's stakeholders. It is direct and relatively short (generally, around 500 words). For a FET project, a press release should ideally be produced when a project is launched, a new scientific result is achieved or an important event is to take place.

Use your own communication channels (website and social media) to distribute press releases, but don't forget your media contacts, information multipliers, online portals tackling the same topic. This will help increase outreach and interest in your research.

// Our advice

- ⇒ When writing, think you address people who do not know
- ⇒ Choose a catchy title to attract the readers' attention
- ⇒ Accompany the press release with a nice image
- ⇒ Keep it short and simple
- ⇒ Be precise and share newsworthy details
- ⇒ Avoid technical jargon
- ⇒ Put the main "take-home" message in the first paragraph
- ⇒ Add your contacts at the bottom for journalists to follow up
- ⇒ Always mention the EU funding and FET Programme

FETFX Example



WOULD YOU LIKE TO DRAW BY JUST USING WORDS?

The MUSE project seeks to turn the spoken word into computer generated visual narratives

Everybody loves stories. The challenge is to make them compelling, memorable and easy to understand for everyone. Virtual 3D environments have great potential for exceptional immersive storytelling, as exemplified by the latest video games. However, creating complex 3D environments is a technical and time-consuming process that is out of reach for most would-be storytellers.

[Read more on FETFX.EU](https://FETFX.EU)

Get acknowledged through a journalistic article

Articles explore broad topics starting from one specific matter or news item. They are longer than a press release. As a FET researcher, you may start by focusing on your research topic and then insert your project into the bigger picture. Your project should not be the core of the article, but rather a component of it. Journalistic articles aim at being more independent than press releases; this is what the media are looking for. Include pros and cons of your research, opinions from external experts and how your results might impact our society one day. Stimulate your readers' imagination even if the results may not even come in the end. As counter-productive as it may sound, this approach will get you acknowledged as a trustworthy source of information and boost your future communication.

// Our advice

- ⇒ Stimulate your readers' curiosity with title and lead
- ⇒ Use a brilliant and engaging style
- ⇒ Focus on the topic first and mention your project-related information later in the text
- ⇒ Be objective and transparent
- ⇒ Always mention the EU funding and FET Programme

FETFX Example



HOW MACHINES CAN LEARN FROM HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

Designing intelligent machines that can resemble and model human behaviour is closer than we think. And you can join in

Could a human behaviour simulator be embedded into a robot or online avatar to the point that it's hard to distinguish between a real person or artificial intelligence? Scientists have been upping the stakes in this "Turing test" for years, to the point that human-mimicking programmes are ready to answer tricky questions, assist people with online shopping or be companions.

[Read more on FETFX.EU](https://www.fetfx.eu)

Exploit the strengths of video communication

Videos are very effective for catching people's attention and supporting key messages with images.

They can be made with real footage, animations and infographics. Different kinds of video can be produced at different stages of your FET project. Examples include the project presentation video at the beginning and the end of project video. The former is produced to raise awareness around the project and its goals. The latter is produced at the end of the project to inform your audience and community about the main results achieved.

// Our advice

- Keep the video short (indicatively, 1:30 min)
- Don't overload it with too much information, just select few key details to focus on
- Produce a shorter version (indicatively, 30 sec) for social media
- Write a short accompanying press release for distribution
- Add subtitles to enable accessibility to any viewer
- Always mention the EU funding and FET Programme

FETFX Example



FETFX
@FETFX_EU

1:23 PM - 18 Oct 2018

So far, we only see, hear & touch devices. Will we be able to feel the objects shown on them at the tip of our fingers?

Watch our video on [@LevitateProj](#) as they use [#ultrasound](#) & [#levitation](#) to revolutionise human-computer interface. <https://bit.ly/2yIH9Ro> [#FET](#) [#H2020](#)



This tweet was posted by FETFX to promote its video news release on the Levitate FET project. To make the post more effective and increase the visibility of the product, a short teaser summarising the video news release was created and linked. Click above and check it out!

Show your “human side” with video interviews

Video interviews are very effective at establishing a link with the viewers as they show the faces behind the project.

They consist of one or more questions being either from an interviewer or displayed in written form. Video interviews can integrate the content of your research with the less technical and more personal and holistic aspects of the interviewee. The image of the interviewee can be alternated with real footage and animations to help convey message and keep the viewer's attention high.

// Our advice

- ⇒ Keep the interview short (indicatively, 1:30 min)
- ⇒ The interviewee should be engaging and enthusiastic about your project
- ⇒ Organise the interview in advance, prepare questions and answers
- ⇒ Report the interviewee's name and affiliation

FETFX Example



FET People: Michela Chiappalone & Stefano Buccelli



FET People: Erich Prem

Communicate both on- and offline

Different communication channels can be used to convey your research content to your audience. Choose those which are more suitable to reach your targets. Channels can be either online or offline. The former include your project's website, social media, blogs, webinars you organise, but also external channels such as independent news portals and websites of the European Commission itself. By exploiting the internet, they can reach an impressive audience worldwide.

Offline channels include events (organised by your projects or external events) or print media. In particular, events offer the possibility to establish stronger connections and engagement with your targets as you have the possibility to meet and discuss with them in person.

// Our advice

- ➔ Establish a strong presence both online and offline
- ➔ Diversify your channels to reach different stakeholders
- ➔ Exploit external channels to increase your audience



European Researchers' Night 2016

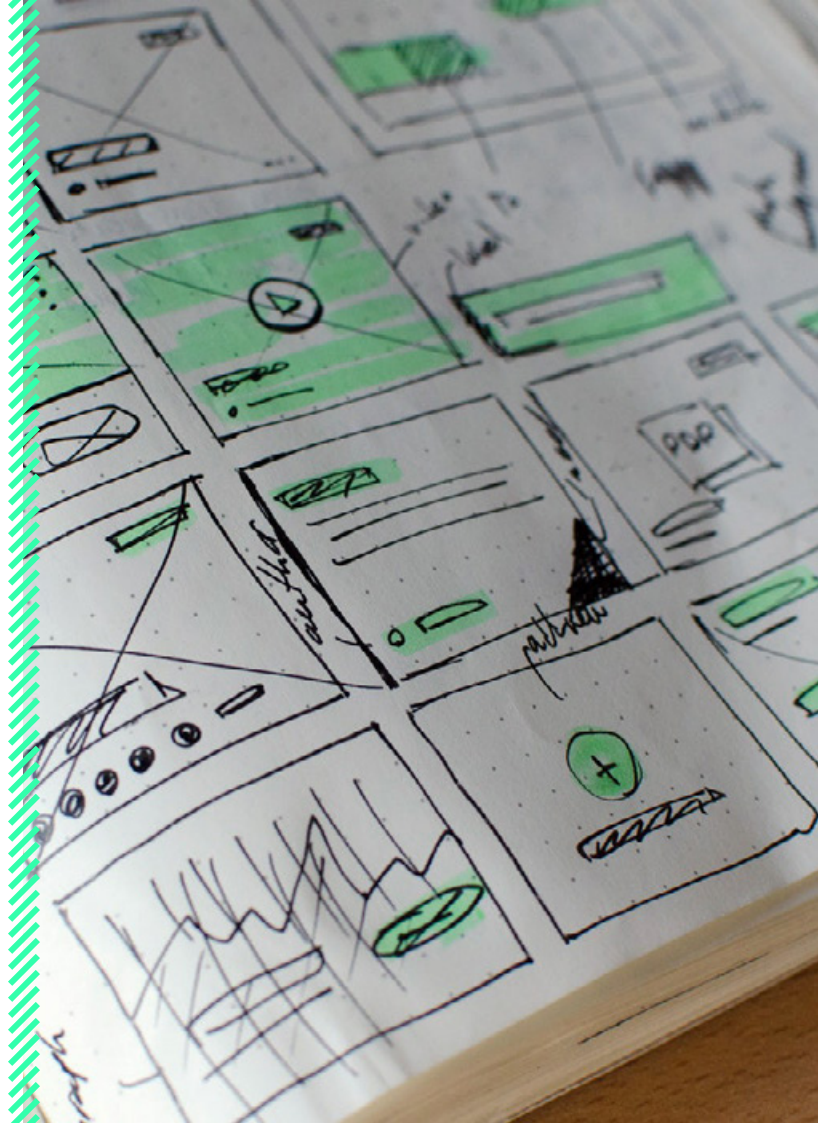
Spend effort on your project website

The project website is the main online gateway to your project. It is what peers, investors and other stakeholders will see and read worldwide to know more about you. Hence, make sure you allocate resources to design an easy-to-access and functional website.

In particular, put clear and concise information about your FET research, focusing on what is revolutionary about it and how your findings might impact people's lives one day. Develop your website based on your project visual identity (fonts, colours etc.) aligned with the key messages for your targets. Do not forget to use your website as an accessible outlet of your key findings and public deliverables, here including the links to your project's scientific publications!

// Our advice

- ➔ Launch it at the beginning of your project
- ➔ Make your results easily accessible
- ➔ Keep it dynamic by often adding updates and news
- ➔ Make contacts and links to social media clearly visible
- ➔ Keep it open for at least 1 year after the project's end
- ➔ Acknowledge EU funding and branding



Be social, but with caution

Your project's social media channels will help you boost your visibility, expand your network, engage with an on-line community and stay up to date. To increase your community and interest, content on social media must be updated frequently and this requires effort. As for any communication channel, social media must be carefully chosen according to your targets. Therefore, you should ask yourself who you want to reach, what to share on which networks and your tone of voice (formal/informal). Useful information is available in the European Commission's [Social media guide for EU funded R&I projects](#).

// Our advice

- ⇒ Develop a social media strategy beforehand
- ⇒ Facebook is very popular, but more used for leisure time and in a personal way
- ⇒ Twitter is now widely used to communicate science, but high and regular posting rate is needed
- ⇒ LinkedIn is ideal for professional content: engage with discussion groups interested in your research topics, even if outreach might be limited, and/or open a LinkedIn page
- ⇒ Instagram is very influential and popular, but strongly dependent on images, pictures and videos



Engage your social media community

The main challenge on social media is to keep your community engaged. How can you do it?

Keep your channels alive by posting frequent news about your project, results and events. In particular, use your channels for live storytelling when you are attending an event. Interact with your community by sharing, liking and taking up their content, so that others will do the same with yours. Especially on Twitter, use hashtags to increase the attention on your posts. Consider creating dedicated visual formats, such as “cards”, to promote events or a project result. Join European and world social media campaigns on similar topics to your research area.

// Our advice

- ⇒ Vary the format of your posts (text, link, photo, video...)
- ⇒ Highlight your participation in external events
- ⇒ Tag and mention relevant stakeholders (e.g. @FET_EU)
- ⇒ If your strategy is aimed at high outreach, invest in social media advertising to boost your community

FETFX Example



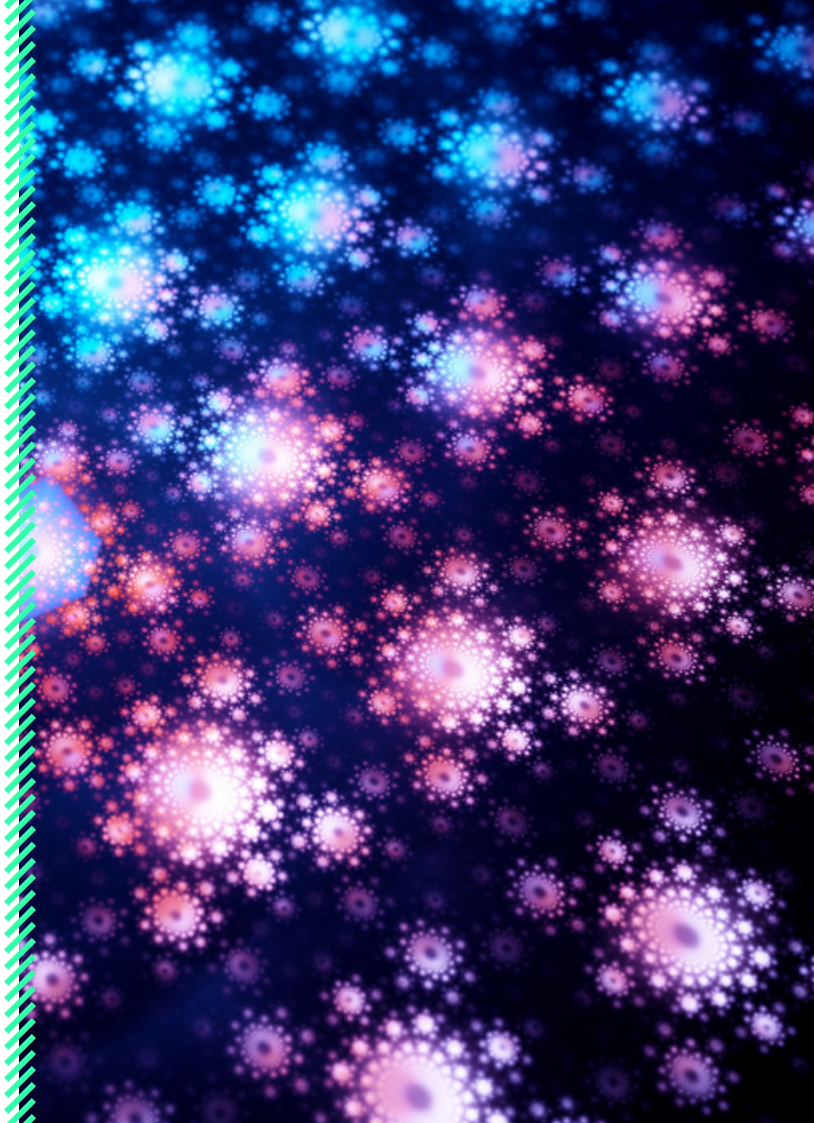
Examples of cards produced by FETFX for tweets on the GHOST and PLEASED FET projects.

Go beyond your channels

External channels are ideal for distributing your content and spreading it beyond your own community. Moreover, having your news published by other communication outlets independent from yours will present you as a trustworthy source. For FET projects, effective channels are those offered by the European Commission, scientific magazines or news portals accessed by journalists worldwide. And remember you can always ask FETFX for support!

// Our advice

- ➔ Get in touch with journalists and media to raise interest. They will come back to you to produce their own editorials
- ➔ If you can rely on a communication office, ask for their support in distributing your news



Spread your voice through the EU

The European Commission manages directly a number of communication channels that you can consider for your FET project:

- ⇒ [Digital Agenda-Future & Emerging Technologies](#)
- ⇒ [FET Newsletter](#)
- ⇒ [Facebook Digital Single Market](#)
- ⇒ [LinkedIn Europe's Digital Agenda Initiatives](#)
- ⇒ [Twitter Digital Single Market](#)
- ⇒ [Twitter FET Programme](#)
- ⇒ [Twitter FET Flagship](#)
- ⇒ [Futurium online discussion platform](#)

// Our advice

- ⇒ Provide your news items to your Project Officer, who will facilitate their distribution to the above channels
- ⇒ Stimulate the debate among your community by exploiting the Futurium online discussion platform
- ⇒ Mention the above EU social media channels and use their hashtags # in your social media activities to increase interaction and engage broader communities and networks



Increase dialogue with your stakeholders

Direct engagement with your targets is necessary for fostering innovative thinking, new practices and collaborations.

Effective public engagement is more than just meeting an audience and communicating research. It is a two-way communication, with the researchers listening to and learning from participants and vice-versa. There are various ways to do this: whether face-to-face, or via participatory workshops with policy-makers and match-making events to reach innovators, or via online webinars to reach remote audiences, or by joining public initiatives such as the European Researchers' Night, opening your lab's doors to the broader public.

// Our advice

- Begin with the methods people are more comfortable with
- Be enthusiastic. This helps maintain momentum and achieve long-term involvement, even if outcomes are delayed
- Consult FETFX's [Practical Guide for Stakeholder Engagement in FET](#)

FETFX Example



BRINGING EU REGIONS TO THE FORE OF INNOVATION

EFFECT project's second event explored how local ecosystems can support interdisciplinary, high-risk Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) research

Brussels, 25 October – over 30 participants including researchers, industry representatives and policy makers took part in a policy workshop designed to highlight the impact of the Future and Emerging Technologies on the European Society of tomorrow.

[Read more on FETFX.EU](#)

Organise a successful event

When it comes to organising your project event, select the most appropriate method and allocate the necessary resources and time.

State the scope of the event clearly and what the participants will gain. A pre-event press release will increase interest in the event and in your research. During the event, track, catalogue and share any feedback. Catch the participants' attention focusing on those values that are more interesting for them. Build personal relationships by taking the time to socialize.

After the event do not forget to thank your participants and share the main outcomes. Distribute a post-event press release and keep the discussion alive.

// Our advice

- Distribute a short summary of the event's main outcomes to the participants and to other key players who could not attend
- Collect pictures, outcomes and presentations in an easy-to-access session of your website
- Use social media to promote your event (before, during and after) and share results with your online community

FETFX Example



DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES CAN DRIVE EUROPE'S ECONOMIC FUTURE

Emerging trends from pioneering research meet policy in Brussels event

[Read more on FETFX.EU](https://www.fetfx.eu)

This is the post-event press release published by FETFX after the Policy Workshop "[European Leadership through Disruptive Technologies: Future and Emerging Technologies Towards 2030](#)", organised by the EFFECT project at the European Parliament in Brussels on the 7th of March 2018 in cooperation with the European Parliament's ITRE Committee and European Commission's DG CONNECT.

Pick the best time to communicate

An effective communication and engagement strategy must reach and involve all parties as early as possible and not just at the end of a project, when the main results are expected.

The intensity of your communication as well as your messages may change over time according to progress:

- **at the beginning of the project:** explain what the project is about and the main purpose, highlighting the most unique idea;
- **in the course of the project:** communicate the progress and possible research results on a regular basis;
- **after the project:** explain what the project's overall contribution is to society and its potential future applications (e.g. how it could improve people's lives).

// Our advice

- Include your communication calendar into the Communication and Engagement Plan
- Keep the calendar regularly updated
- Take advantage of international events and campaigns to exploit social media streams for your communication

FETFX Example



Robotic spies among bees

This FETFX video news release on the ASSISibf FET project was published on the 14th of May 2018. Why that date? ASSISibf studies animal societies such as honeybees via an innovative approach which could help protect them. The 20th of May is the World Bee Day and publishing some days beforehand gave time to distribute the news. This way the relation with this international celebration gave a hook to the media interested in stories related to bees.

Measure your impacts

Measuring and analysing the effects of your communication and engagement activities allows you to identify patterns, set targets, measure progress, optimize your strategy and look for corrective measures if needed. Indicators allow you to quantify results and your targets' level of engagement.

For channels you manage, quantitative outreach indicators are offered by Google and social media analytics. For face-to-face activities outreach is represented by the number of participants attending the events.

Qualitative indicators are provided by the users' interactions on social media (mentions, likes, shares, comments, also from social media analytics), and by feedback from participants at events, through dedicated feedback forms and interviews.

// Our advice

- ➔ Set your KPIs beforehand
- ➔ Perform periodic checks, especially before and after a dedicated communication campaign
- ➔ Consider users' interactions (click-through rate, outreach and spread, engagement rate, sentiment) when measuring the online engagement level
- ➔ Use indicators as an integral part of your project's impacts assessment





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OUR FUTURE, TODAY

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