



Gratitude Communication Strategy

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Task: 7.1 Dissemination of a communication, dissemination and training strategy

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this communications strategy is to contribute to the successful implementation of the Gratitude FP7 project and to maximise the potential impact on policy that this project might have. It will facilitate effective internal communication of the project consortium and ensure we reach our external audiences by delivering the right communication at the right time.

Guidelines will be provided on best practice for training, workshops, media and scientific content. Key dates of planned events, dissemination and training activities will be gathered and shared.

Communications is the main bulk of Work package (WP) 7 of the Gratitude project, 'Dissemination and Support to Replication'. This document constitutes the communication, disseminations and training strategy, which is Task 7.1 and deliverable 7.3, 7.4 and 7.6. NRI is the lead organisation in the Gratitude project, and of WP 7.

BACKGROUND

Aim and objectives of the project

Gratitude (Gains from Losses of Root and Tuber Crops) will help find solutions that will reduce waste from postharvest losses of root and tuber crops and turn unavoidable waste into something of value, enhancing the role these crops play in food and income security.

The overall objective of the project is to improve the postharvest management of cassava and yams leading to reduced physical losses, reduced economic losses through value-added processing and valorisation of waste products.

Through WP 7, we want to communicate the 3 main outputs that address the postharvest losses for this project:

1. Reduction of physical losses – focusing on fresh yam storage
2. Value-addition and reduction of physical and economic losses in yam and cassava processing
3. Improved utilisation of wastes (peels, liquid waste, spent brewery waste) producing products for consumption including snack foods, mushrooms and animal feed.

BOX 1**Key communication issues being addressed**

- Increase awareness of how to reduce and utilise waste from root and tuber crops among farmers, processors and policy makers on a country, regional and global scale.
- Improve and maintain communication between project consortium members, and the flow and sharing of information.
- Production and circulation of dissemination material.
- Planning dissemination events, any other project events, and training activities.

OBJECTIVES

What we want to achieve

Through this communications strategy we aim to maximise the potential impact that this project will have at the national level in each partner country, as well as at regional and international level.

Overall communications goal

To disseminate knowledge gained and lessons learned from the validation of technologies of the Gratitude project, to enable replication elsewhere and hence wider scale impact. The specific objectives are:

Objective 1: To develop a strategic approach to information dissemination which will inform major stakeholders about the project objectives, approaches, partnerships and outcomes.

Objective 2: To package and share information on options and techniques for reducing post-harvest losses of yam, for monitoring losses in the fresh product value chain, and for adding value through processing higher value products and new products from waste.

Objective 3: To consolidate experience and develop training packages on the reduction of postharvest losses of yam, on adding value through processing and on new products which utilise cassava processing wastes, such as mushrooms, animal feeds, snack foods, starch and sugars.

Objective 4: To support training in business skill development, marketing of new products, food safety and quality assurance.

Objective 5: To promote lesson learning and information exchange among all partners and with a wider group of international stakeholders involved in food research, product marketing and policy making in developing countries and Europe.

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

It is important to understand who the stakeholders of the project are (see Figure 1) and their information needs in relation to the project, so we can understand how best to communicate with them. Stakeholders from academia, industry, institutions and the media, for example, will each require tailored messages. Details of what messages will be conveyed to each stakeholder group, and through what channels, are displayed in Table 1.

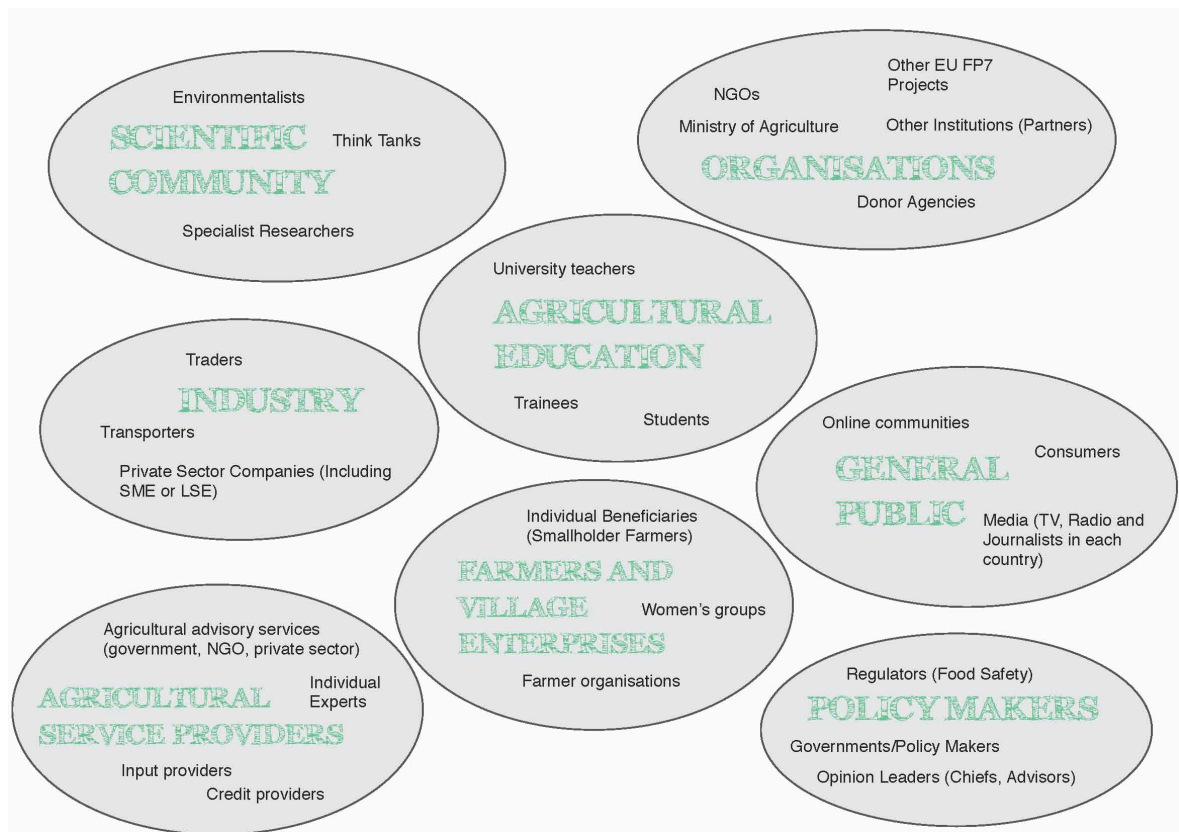


Figure 1: Stakeholder map for the Gratitude project

PROMOTING PROJECT IDENTITY

Managing the visibility of the project is key to its success, so it is important to ensure the project has a strong identity. It is also important that the visibility of the project as an EU funded programme is consistently maintained. Giving the project an identity aids clarity and recognition, donors will be suitably acknowledged and consistent communications will reinforce the key messages of the project.

Accuracy and consistency

It is important that our messages are used consistently and that any facts presented in our communications are correct. Partners will make sure there is appropriate recognition of the EU, and all other partners involved in a specific output. Every publication should be duly proofread and checked for correct spelling.

Branding



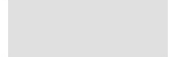
Consistency helps to reinforce the message of a project and enables it to be easily recognised. Adhering to the branding guidelines of the project is one way to achieve this.

The Gratitude project has an approved logo, which can be accessed in the private section of the website (hosted by 'Dgroups', see Box 2). To ensure that materials are presented in a consistent structure and format, partners should make sure the project logo, the NRI logo, and the EU and FP7 logo are visible on any printed publications in addition to logos of other partner institutions contributing to that output. Partners are free to also include their own institutional logo.

EU logo and FP7 logo guidelines may be found here:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/index_en.cfm?pg=logos.

Consistent use of the project colours in published materials is central to successful branding of the project, they are the following:

	#52c483 R:82 G:196 B:131
	#69786f R:105 G:120 B:111
	#dfdfdf R:223 G:223 B:223

PARTNER COMMUNICATION TOOLS

A number of tips directed to project members are outlined below to encourage good communications between partners and to increase the impact of communication.

Internal communication between partners

- **Email** – Each partner should set up a mailing list of all Gratitude partners and keep it updated, to be used when agreement of the whole consortium is required. Direct mailing to be used for specific queries.
- **Video conferencing and Skype** – Where possible, partners should be prepared to communicate via video when necessary.
- **Private section on website** – Using Dgroups (see Box 2), this will serve as an important communication channel to enable partners to share their experiences and documents, find guidelines and resources, and replicate successful actions. Dgroups will also host a repository for internal and private documents and files.
- **Project meetings** – These are important activities among the consortium to monitor project progress, agree on any adjustments and elicit prompt reaction by partners.
- **Work package team meetings** – These are important to the project's core objectives. News and information from the WP meetings are of interest to other members of the project and should be shared. Partners should make sure to email the WP 7 leaders to inform them of the outcomes of these meetings for wider sharing.

General partner participation

To increase communication impact, we suggest that partners:

- Post a short description of the Gratitude project, with the logo and link to the project website on their own institutional website
- Produce news, case studies, insights and relevant information on a regular basis to be published on the project website. These should be sent to WP 7 leader NRI.
- Disseminate information about the project to their own contacts, stakeholders and universities, who can then disseminate the Gratitude website

BOX 2

Dgroups

The private section of the Gratitude project is hosted by Dgroups.
www.dgroups.org/groups/gratitude

Dgroups is an online platform offering tools and services that bring individuals and organisations together in the international development community. It is designed and developed with low-bandwidth users in mind.

All partners of the Gratitude project have been invited to sign up to Dgroups. Once they have accepted, and signed up, they have access to the library of project documents, guidelines and resources, calendar of events, and a list of all project members.

Any problems that the partners may have accessing Dgroups should be addressed to Ruth Leavett of NRI:
r.p.leavett@gre.ac.uk

link further through their own webpages and networks.

- Disseminate the project research when participating at events. They could take the project brochure, submit a paper or deliver a presentation, depending on opportunities.
- Spread the Gratitude project objectives and benefits through 'word of mouth' on any relevant occasion; informal meetings or networking opportunities, also during wide partner organisation activities.

Each partner will keep a record of their communication activities and will communicate these to the leaders of WP 7, NRI by email as and when necessary. NRI will ensure that communication is in line with the agreed project objectives and will collect all communication activities for reporting purposes.

Materials and tools at project consortium disposal

Brochure

A brochure outlining all key information about the project (Brief description, key facts, objectives, contact details, description of work packages, and partner countries) has been produced. It is currently in the English language, however if there is demand for it in another language, this can be arranged. The brochure is intended for distribution during meetings with stakeholders, in events where Gratitude participates, when meeting people from the media and networking opportunities etc.

Poster

An A0 poster outlining all key information included in the brochure has been produced. The poster is available on Dgroups for partners to print for themselves. It is intended for use at conferences where a poster presentation is appropriate.

Document templates and guidelines

To ensure consistent communications, templates for designing and writing dissemination products, and guidelines on best practices have been generated, and are made available on Dgroups, on the public website, and issued to each partner on a USB memory stick for ease of access. These are general guidelines on good practice in communications, and do not deal with technical content.

The guidelines are not intended as mandatory procedures, but as helpful guides to save time and to ensure a consistent standard across the project.

- Template and guidelines for Gratitude presentations
- Template and guidelines for press releases
- Template and guidelines for deliverable reports
- Guidelines for workshops, and template for workshop feedback forms
- Guidelines for training courses, and templates for handouts and factsheets.
- Template for feedback/evaluation forms for meetings, group discussions etc.

Website

The main project website is www.fp7-gratitude.eu. This website represents the main source of information on all project activities across all participating countries to which all interested parties can be directed. It will be linked to and publicised on other websites. It is dynamic, and a key tool for project consortium members to share files, experiences, and information etc.

- HOME – Contact and glossary
- PROJECT OVERVIEW – Management Structure and Objectives
- ABOUT THE PROJECT – Description of work packages and Partners
- INFORMATION – Media (Latest news, Photo gallery, Printed materials, Media coverage), Reports and Publications, and Related Projects.
- PARTNER LOG-IN – Platform (using Dgroups) for forum discussion, sharing files and calendar of events.
- SOUTH-SOUTH INTERACTION – Blog managed by WP6 leader to facilitate interaction between countries in the ‘south’ on new technologies for adding value to cassava.

The lead partner in Ghana, the Food Research Institute, has created a website presenting the activities in Ghana: <http://www.foodresearchgh.org/project-overview.html>. This website will also provide a platform for the partners in Ghana to interact with each other. The main project website will link to this country specific site, and vice versa.

We are planning to create country pages on the main Gratitude website to showcase country experiences.

NewslettersProject newsletter

Compiled and edited by WP 7 leader NRI, each issue will present the activities and results that are being performed and achieved over the course of the project in all partner countries. The newsletter will draw on information the partners share with NRI about their activities and will be published each quarter for international audiences. It will present:

- Key developments of the project
- Major achievements and next actions
- Announcements of any reports and key documents
- Events and news
- Interviews with key stakeholders

Each issue will be uploaded in the public ‘Printed Materials’ section of the project website, hand delivered and distributed via post or electronically to various relevant institutions and stakeholder groups, and posted to social media platforms.

Country newsletters

Each country is encouraged to develop their own project newsletter to reach their specific country stakeholders. They are requested to keep within the branding guidelines stated in this document. WP 7 leader NRI are available to backstop and give advice on design and layout. Partners will share their newsletter content before it goes to print with WP7 leaders NRI, for NRI to incorporate in the overall project newsletter.

Ghana has a newsletter already up and running, which is published bi-annually. Drawing mostly on reports, the newsletter will be disseminated by hand to their target audiences across the country.

Press releases

A template and guideline document have been produced for project press releases to guarantee a format that will fit journalists' requirements.

Any partner can draft a press release when it is deemed necessary to highlight a particular activity/development/result achieved by the project or to highlight an important event/initiative. WP 7 leader, NRI should be kept informed and sent a copy of the press release in order to keep track of all dissemination actions.

Each partner will disseminate their press release to their own networks of journalists and media professionals, and will follow up after it has been launched to check it has been published. They will then provide NRI with any linked webpages or scanned printed pages. The press release will be uploaded to the website, disseminated through the EU Community Research and Development Information Service (CORDIS) and sent to the EU Commission.

Workshops

A guideline document has been produced to assist project partners with tips on best practice in conducting workshops.

The workshops are intended to promote dialogue on technology issues with key sector stakeholders. They will be organised under the responsibility of the respective Gratitude partners in country.

Gratitude Events

Gratitude partners may find it necessary within their work package activities to host a private or public event such as a focus group meeting among certain stakeholder groups, a local training event for farmers, a press conference, a public lecture or an exhibition fair of new products. The project brochure and poster will be available for the partners to display and distribute at these events, and partners are encouraged to organise other printed materials they might need in-country, keeping within project branding guidelines stated in this document. NRI are available for advice on design and layout.

Networking

Consortium members are encouraged to participate in conferences, seminars and other events that are suitable for communication actions. It would be helpful if the following would be communicated to the leader of WP 7, NRI:

- Information about the activity prior to that activity taking place
- Any request for advice
- If there are any updated materials to disseminate

Final project dissemination workshop

The purpose of this workshop is to both enhance cross-country learning among project partners and provide an important vehicle for sharing the project outputs more widely among major national and international stakeholders.

Taking place in month 36 the workshop will be organised by NRI, with assistance from the project partners. All partners are invited to participate in the event.

EVALUATION

The success of the Gratitude dissemination strategy will be measured by the following:

- Feedback and comments (on the website or by word of mouth to project partners) categorised by stakeholder group
- Coverage and publication of main project press releases
- Reports from partners on effective dissemination through in-country coverage
- Responses to emailed questionnaires directed to various stakeholders
- Queries posed by stakeholders regarding the Gratitude project
- Participation in workshops and events, and comments and views given by attendees
- Evaluation forms for partner meetings
- Detailed website visitor statistics
- Number of references in scientific publications
- Evidence of new funders for this area of research
- Number of presentations given at conferences not organised by the project

WP7 leaders will compile this feedback each quarter, and will request each partner to provide their information for inclusion in the report.

This dissemination strategy will also be reviewed periodically to support the emerging and evolving needs of the project.

GOVERNANCE

This strategy will span across the whole project.

As leader of WP 7, NRI will be responsible for the development and management of the communication arrangements, under the overall responsibility of the Project co-ordinator and in accordance with the Gratitude Consortium Agreement which can be found on the website.

Workpackage 7 support – Ruth Leavett, Communications Specialist NRI

- Manage/assist development and delivery of communications strategy
- Manage development of project-wide communication material as per the communication plan
- Evaluation of communications within the project
- Provide updates on progress to project co-ordinator
- Assist with communications support to project consortium

Workpackage 7 leader – Adrienne Martin, Director of Programme Development NRI

- Final approval on all communication materials
- Approval of key messages
- Approval of all published materials, including format and presentation of reports

Project co-ordinator – Keith Tomlins, Professor of Food Safety and Quality NRI

- Final approval of scientific reports
- Final approval of communication strategy/plan

Work package leaders/Country leads

- Provide and collect material on activities and achievements in-country for the newsletter and the website, and share with WP7 leaders NRI.
- Provide quarterly list on dissemination activities
- Maintain branding guidelines

Other partners and WP leaders will be asked to provide input and support to the dissemination activities. Approval processes for all output from the project are outlined in guideline documents.

COMMUNICATIONS BRIEFING

To ensure the project consortium are all familiar with the communications strategy detailed here, the following will be done:

- A PDF version of this document will be emailed to all project consortium members with accompanying guidelines and templates.

- A PDF version of this document will be uploaded to the public information section of the website.
- The PDF, guidelines and templates will be uploaded to the private section of the website for continuous easy access of partners.
- The PDF, guidelines and templates will be given to each member on a USB memory stick to bypass any issues with unreliable internet.
- The strategy will be presented by the WP 7 leader NRI, at the next all-partner meeting in April 2013.