Mobility in Innovative Green Technologies for Climate Change Mitigation and Sustainable Bioeconomy (INTERACT–Africa)

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Deliverable 3.1

COMMUNICATION
AND
DISSEMINATION PLAN

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INTERACT-Africa Consortium

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAU	-	Addis Ababa University
EACEA	-	European Education and Culture Executive Agency
EU	-	European Union
IFA	-	Institut Facultaire Des Sciences Agronomiques (IFA) De Yangambi (IFA-Yangambi)
INTERACT-Africa	-	Mobility in Innovative Green Technologies for Climate Change
MENDEL	-	Mendelova Univerzita V Brne Mitigation and Sustainable Bioeconomy
MU	-	Moi University
MUST	-	Mbarara University of Science and Technology
NDICI	-	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
SUA	-	Sokoine University of Agriculture

Summary

The communication and dissemination plan sets out a strategy to collect and produce accurate, objective and, where relevant, interactive information on the progress and findings of the project as well as the social issues relating to the project scope. It aims to maximize the impact of the project, to increase its visibility, and to ensure that project outputs reach a wide audience of relevant stakeholders. The communication and dissemination strategy included will ensure that information about the project outputs reach all related and interested parties, identifying target audiences, channels of communication and dissemination and time/period. Importantly, the INTERACT-Africa consortium has been formed particularly with partners representing larger groups of organizations, so a significant emphasis will be put on tapping into the networks and communication channels that all project partners already have.

All partners are considered ambassadors of the project and are encouraged and expected to be involved to different degrees in communication and dissemination efforts. The strategy will be implemented using different approaches to diversify and maximize the outreach of the target groups, stakeholders, and general audience. Frequent communication will be maintained between the consortium to inform and gather information of all the material generated in order to ensure project objectives are achieved.

1.0   Brief on INTERACT-Africa project

INTERACT-Africa is an initiative of five public universities from East and Central African region to advance knowledge of green technologies in Africa and increase scholars' capacity in addressing Climate Change mitigation and sustainable bioeconomy. In accordance with the objectives of Intra-Africa program, INTERACT-Africa emphasizes on conversion of organic waste to valuable bioproducts for transitioning into environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive economies to be realized through education and training. These institutions have to tackle this major problem by mainstreaming climate change adaptation and mitigation into the thematic curricula of partner Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), hence produce highly skilled and competent workforce that can implement green adaptation technologies that are systemic, multidimensional and transformative. Through academic training, research, traineeship and cultural exchange, the project is expected to positively impact on students, trainees, staff and institutions involved through enhancement of technical, entrepreneurial and digital skills, competencies and appropriate attitudes for increased employability.

Cooperation among HEIs shall improve quality of academic programmes through curricula complementation, and enhanced harmonization of higher education through alignment of qualifications, assessment criteria, quality assurance mechanisms and recognition of academic achievements. Visibility of partner HEIs resulting from modernization and internationalization of the degree programmes shall increase enrolment of international students.

The activities of the project will be implemented as per the following three work packages.

WP1: Management and implementation of the project
    T1.1   Preparing a consortium agreement amongst the participating HEIs
    T1.2   Website Development
    T1.3   Setting up project management structure and team
    T1.4   Developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and procedure
    T1.5   Developing cooperation agreements (traineeship agreements to be signed in different countries)
    T1.6   Collecting data on the implementation of the project.

WP 2: Selection and supervision of scholarship holders
    T2.1   Developing and advertising for degree, credit seeking and traineeship places
    T2.2   Selection, admission and signing of students agreements for degree, credit seeking and traineeship
    T2.3   Developing quality control mechanisms for mobility and post mobility
    T2.4   Conducting degree, credit seeking and traineeship mobility
    T2.5   Conducting joint innovative green technology research projects
    T2.6   Conducting networking and collaboration

WP 3: Sustainability, dissemination and exploitation of results
    T3.1   Developing a communication and dissemination plan
    T3.2   Developing a resource mobilization guide
    T3.3   Develop implementation of data management plan
    T3.4   Development and execution of a sustainability plan
    T3.5   Dissemination of project's outputs including skills knowledge and technology

1.1. Key terms

Communication: Transfer/exchange of information from one person to another. The sharing of information, knowledge and understanding between the project partners, stakeholder and target audiences through use of effective communication channels. Effective communication builds trust among partners which leads to increased output and smooth running of the project.

Dissemination: Dissemination refers to sharing project output, results and outcomes with a wider audience. Dissemination aims at reaching out the key stakeholders and audiences that includes the researchers, educators, policy makers, industry professionals and public by raising awareness of its outcomes and promoting the uptake of the project outputs.

Exploitation: Exploitation refers to maximizing the value and impact of project results to ensure sustainability even after its closure. The mechanisms would include: Commercialization of research products, Accreditation of new courses or programmes, Creation of networks and using the project results in the different partner institutions.

Stakeholders: This refers to any individuals, groups or organizations that are directory involved in the project(project team), affected by the project (other stakeholders), and those who affect the project (other stakeholders). The stakeholders may be individuals or organizations who are directly or indirectly involved in the project activities.

1.2 WP 3: Sustainability, dissemination and exploitation of results

WP3 is a subset of the INTERACT-Africa project and the successful implementation of WP3 objectives and tasks is highly dependent of the coherent, effective and fruitful collaboration of all project partners, as well as on their active role.

This work package aims to ensure INTERACT-Africa project will achieve the widest impact and effective exploitation of the project results through: (i) An effective internal and external communication strategy while coordinating and assisting other work packages to meet their objectives regarding communication and dissemination, (ii) Raising visibility and awareness of the project's objectives, achievements and expected results, and (iii) Stakeholders' engagement, motivation and interaction. The WP3 also aims to promote the project's exploitable results to all potential users and interested stakeholders after the completion of its project activities.

Strategy for exploitation of project results during and after the project will be developed towards the end of the project, with the main objectives being: i) to define and implement a set of tools and activities to exploit the project results and outcomes; ii) to ensure the sustainable use of the project results after the project life cycle; iii) to encourage the target stakeholders to provide inputs regarding the project outcomes and results; and iv) to guarantee that the project developments are regularly communicated to the target stakeholders through project dissemination activities.

Therefore, this strategy will detail how the tangible and intangible outcomes of the project can be exploited and further used after the end of the project, both for the industrial and for the scientific project results. The exploitation strategy will include concrete tools, such as guidelines for use of sustainable green technologies and activities, to reach the target stakeholders. The actual exploitation will start at the beginning of the project together with dissemination activities, and will be carried on throughout the project's duration, while guaranteeing the sustainability of the project results.

2.0.   Communication Plan

The specific role of communication for the INTERACT-Africa project is to inform, promote and communicate the project activities and results. This action starts from the beginning of the project and runs until the end. The Communication Plan details how the objectives of the project will be communicated to the target audiences. The plan defines the key messages, communication channels, tools and activities, to be used for each target audience and potential timing of activities. Measures of evaluation are covered in **Section 5.0: Evaluation.**

2.1.   Objectives of Communication Plan

The main objectives of the communication plan are to:
  i.   Ensure that the project outputs and results reach the relevant target groups, especially service-users, in and beyond the participating countries;
  ii. Guarantee transparency and maximum visibility of the project activities and to acquire the needed support from crucial stakeholders;
  iii. Promote stakeholder participation and engagement throughout the project period through effective exchange of knowledge, experience and skills

The Dissemination Plan objectives, channels and activities are discussed in **Section 3**.

2.2.   Target Audience and communication content and methods

The project has identified the target internal and external audiences (stakeholders) with the purpose of ensuring that communication activity is tailored to:
  •   deliver the project's communication objectives and
  •   meet the needs of each specific group, making project information meaningful and usable.

A summary of communication measures and responsibilities is summarized in **Table 1** and expands on the main communications objectives. **Table 1** also highlights the target audiences (internal and external), content, communication methods and frequency of activity required. The process outlined will be implemented by close communication between partners and stakeholders, via the most appropriate channels available. Communications will be used to create awareness, provide progress updates and milestones, via multiple channels including reports, news stories and website and social media updates, as well as one-to-one, group and conference opportunities.

Table 1: INTERACT-Africa communication matrix of objective, audience, content, measure and frequency

Target audience	Participants	Objective	Material / content (and responsibility)	Method / communication measures	Frequency
Primary target groups (*Directly affected by the project and its results*)	• INTERACT-Africa consortium • Bachelor, Master, PhD students (current and future) • Higher Education Institutions • Research and academic staff • Technical and administrative staff • Universities' governing body	• Ensure an effective and integrated project	• Progress and future plans of the project, and project results and applications (WP2, WP3) • Risks/benefits/issues (WP1) • Queries/questions (WP1)	• Virtual and physical consortium meetings	Continuous updates
				• Partners' Forums	Annual
				• Email, Web and teleconference	Frequent
				• Project social media • Project website	Continuous updates
				• Conferences, workshops, seminars and symposia presentations • Training sessions • Webinars	As per reporting periods
				• Partners network channels • Students networks	Continuous updates
				• Scientific publications and reports	As per reporting periods
Secondary target groups (*Indirectly affected by the project and do not have direct interest in the outcome*).	• EU Project Officer / EACEA Agency	• Ensure the EACEA is fully informed of project progress	• Overall project progress (WP1) • Issues (WP1) • Deliverable progress (WP1) • Best practices and lessons learned (WP3)	• Progress reports	Continuous updates
				• Deliverable and periodic reports	As per deliverable dates
				• INTERACT-Africa website	As per reporting periods
	• Private institutions/ industries	• Awareness of capabilities and discussion of needs and possible impact of project results on research industry	• Presentations (WP2) • Workshop discussions (WP3) • Opportunities for interaction with project leaders and participation in the project (WP3)	• Conferences, workshops, seminars and symposia presentations • Webinars • Publications • Word of mouth and personal contact • Online and personal surveys • Social media • Project website • Posters, banners and roll-ups	As they occur and as required
	• Wider scientific and technical community / institutions	• Advertise progress and obtain expert advice	• Presentations at conferences (WP3) • Papers (WP3) • Best practices and lessons learned (WP3)	• Project website	As per timetable
				• Project & task team meetings • Conferences, workshops, seminars and symposia • Posters,	As per timetable As opportunities arise

				banners and roll-ups	
			Publication in open literature	When ready
NGO bodies	Mutual awareness	Discussion of needs (WP3) Plans and results (WP3)	Project website Project meetings Publications Posters, banners and roll-ups Word of mouth and personal contact Online and personal surveys Social media	As required
Government organizations Policy and decision makers	Exploitation of new capabilities Promotion of project results as potential guidance to policy making	Presentations and side events at conferences (WP3)	Meetings organized by other relevant institutions / organizations	As they occur
		Summary information of the project and opportunities for interaction with project leaders and participation in the project (WP3) Best practices and lessons learned (WP3)	Project website Publications word of mouth and personal contact Online and personal surveys Social media Posters, banners and roll-ups	Quarterly
General society	Project visibility and raise public awareness	Relevant results and their implications (WP3) Communication campaigns (WP3) Content creation (infographics, factsheets, posts, success stories, testimonials, etc) (WP3)	Project website Social media Posters, banners and roll-ups	Monthly
Media	Mutual awareness about the project and its goals	Information on upcoming activities which the media may wish to report about them and results of the project (WP3)	Conferences and events, workshops Project website Social media E-newsletter Posters, banners and roll-ups	As they occur

2.3. Internal Communications

Alongside the project meeting schedule, sharing documents within the INTERACT-Africa Consortium group will be done via a secure Google Drive link that will be shared through an email invitation. Messaging and ad-hoc non-confidential information sharing will be facilitated via email and Whatsapp platforms.

3.0. Dissemination Plan

This Dissemination Plan will be a working document outlining and guiding activities to be carried out, but it will be flexible and open to changes as the INTERACT-Africa project progresses. Dissemination of the INTERACT-Africa project is based on the following principles:

a) The INTERACT-Africa project needs to have a high level of visibility at all of the partner institutions in order to ensure interest and engagement from students and staff.
b) The promotion and dissemination of the project needs support from the university authorities and services at each partner institution.
c) Dissemination activities will aim to achieve a high level of awareness of INTERACT-Africa project from policy makers, the labor market, and also from the general public in each of the partner countries.
d) The results generated, lessons learned and the experience gained by the project should be sustainable and should continue to be used/updated after the end of the project funding period.

The project dissemination strategy will define suitable tools to support the implementation of the project activities and communicate its results to target stakeholders. The dissemination strategy will adopt a multi-channel approach to reach and engage these stakeholders, and will detail specific activities focused on reaching each stakeholder group, taking into account the project objectives.

3.1. Objectives of Dissemination Plan

The specific role of dissemination is to make the INTERACT-Africa project results public. Various deliverables will be produced and the results shared in different ways, such as social media, on the project website, scientific papers, presentations at conferences and in the stakeholderworkshops.

The objectives of the Dissemination Plan are:
  i. Ensure that the project outputs and results reach the relevant target groups, especially end-users, in and beyond the participating countries;
  ii. Ensure transparency and visibility of the project activities and to acquire the neededsupport from crucial stakeholders.

3.2. Dissemination Channels and tools

Dissemination channels discussed within the plan are the tools that will be used to spread the keymessages and results of the project to the target audience. They define how the INTERACT-Africa projectis communicated and are designed to ensure a two-way communication approach. Dissemination of the project will be carried out throughout the project's lifetime through three main channels: (i) The project website, (ii) Scientific and other publications resulting from the project activities, and (iii) Events in the partner institutions.

These are described in more detail below.

(i) Project Website: www.interactafrica.mu.ac.ke

The project website will be a vital tool for promoting the project's activities and dissemination information about its structure and content, its excellence and innovative character. It will include publications, new validated products inventory and samples, and main technical and workshop reports that are relevant for the stakeholders. The official website will provide a high-level description of the project and its objectives, aimed at the project's stakeholders and the general public. In the long term, the website will also contain more detailed outputs, such as links to scientific publications, public reports, general information, news and dissemination material. The website will be built and run by Moi University and will be regularly updated with the support and contributions of the project partners.

(ii) Scientific publications and other media interactions

Publications resulting from research carried out by students, trainees and staff involved in the INTERACT-Africa mobility must acknowledge the support of the INTERACT-Africa project and the European Union. Unless the European Union Commission request or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible , any scientific or other communication activity (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), related to INTERACT-Africa must indicate the following disclaimer (translated into local languages where appropriate):

> "Funded by the European Union's Intra-Africa Mobility Scheme under the grant agreement number 101144299 — INTERACT-Africa — NDICI-2023-MOBAF. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or [name of the granting authority]. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them."

Social media accounts have been created on "X" (Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn to grow a communityaround the project.
- o "X" (Twitter) will be used to promote project actions and messages among stakeholders, media and public and to foster networking.
- o Facebook will be used to communicate project actions and messages helping to social awareness.
- o LinkedIn will be used to promote project actions and messages among policymakers and stakeholders and to foster networking.
- o Instagram will be used to reach the Youth mainly by means of pictures and stories

Partners will be encouraged to use specific hashtags in group activities, events and partner communications. Updates about the projects will be regularly shared on those channels to speak about the project

(iii)   Events in Partner Institutions

All project partners will be encouraged to promote awareness of the INTERACT-Africa project at events in their university, such as open days, public engagement events, and local academic conferences and seminars where the research has received funding and or/benefited from involvement in INTERACT-Africa. During the lifetime of the INTERACT-Africa project, each main partner university will be encouraged to organize at least a one-day local workshop designed to disseminate the results from research carried out in INTERACT-Africa at their institution. The workshop event should involve talks from INTERACT-Africa researchers. Other academicians, relevant industry partners, and members of the public should also be invited to participate. An introductory PowerPoint presentation will be created to support partners presenting about the project and to make sure all partners speak about the project in a consistent manner, mentioning the same objectives and activities, and using the same terminology. Partners can then easily add slides setting out their own activities and contributions to the project.

Other dissemination channels that will be used include:

- **Visual materials:** These will be created to present the project's activities and results in a visual and easy-to-understand manner. They will be made mainly available online (although some printed material will be disseminated at key events) but some will also be printed for workshops and events. Visual materials that will used include:
  - Infographics: projects publications, new validated products infographics detailing the objective in a visual way and aiming for a wider public
  - Poster/roll-up: A project poster and roll-up, giving an overview of the projects' objectives, activities, and partners
- **Videos**: They will be available on the INTERACT-Africa website and will be used to share project updates and insights, including overview of the project's objectives
- **Blog posts, success stories, testimonials** and other forms of articles that set the scene and present the climate services challenges, and potential for implementing green adaptation technologies that are based on conversion of organic waste to valuable bioproducts
- **Communication campaigns:** campaigns using social media channels and other channels of dissemination will be rolled out. Specific messages targeting the project's audiences will be developed based on the objectives and milestones achieved. These campaigns will be based on the various content that will be generated and maximized by using the partners' channels and identified multipliers (NGO's, partner networks) to relay the campaign and messages. Appealing content will be created in the form of infographics, visuals and/or videos.
- **Project reports:** The project deliverables that are in report format and defined as public will be made openly accessible on the INTERACT-Africa website to widely share useful results and conclusions. The most relevant deliverables for the audiences will be turned into a more appealing format to maximize their reach
- **Papers for peer-reviewed literature:** Scientific papers created within INTERACT-Africa will be published in open access peer-reviewed literature to reach the scientific community and advertised through the website.

- **Research networks:** These will be specifically addressed through the release of scientific publications in climate- and green-technology-related journals.
- **Official EU Communication Channels:** Whenever an important milestone in the project is reached, the subsequent report will be forwarded to the relevant EU dissemination portals.

4.0. Visual identity

To ensure consistency, a suite of branded communications, providing an overview of the **INTERACT-Africa** project will be created for use by partners including a logo, letterhead, report template, meeting template, and power point templates. The content and design of documents will remain the responsibility of the task leader. Responses and enquiries generated by the campaigns will be managed predominantly by MU, who manage the project social media platforms and project email account, in conjunction with the partner institutions.

4.1. Project logo

A logo has been designed to be used for all project communications. This will allow a greater consistency in the information generated amongst partner organizations. INTERACT-Africa project logo competition was launched in February 2024 among students aimed at raising awareness on the project and challenges that its aims to address as well as reward creativity and talents. A total of 12 submissions were received and were subjected to technical evaluation within the consortium. The following winning logo will be used for project communication.

4.2. European Union Emblem

The European Union (EU) Emblem that will be used is derived from the official communication document of the EU (grant agreement document Article 17, sub section 17.2 on visibility).

4.3. Project Website

The following project website will be used to ensure visibility and also leverage on the partners social networks when linked to the consortium websites.
http://interactafrica.mu.ac.ke/

5.0. Evaluation

The Communication and Dissemination Plan will continue to be monitored and reviewed on a continuous basis to ensure an effective impact assessment and update of the communication and dissemination activities, as well as the quality of the communication and dissemination carried out. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been identified for a number of key activities during the project lifetime, see **Table 2**. Successful delivery of the Communication Plan will be evaluated by a number of measures, including number of attendees, participants/sectors we attract and gender balance at events/workshops, sign ups to the mailing list, social media followers/interaction, Google Analytics for website traffic, media coverage, workshops/seminars and general enquiries received by email. Online mentions of INTERACT-Africa will be monitored to evaluate how widely the projects' key messages are being disseminated, what key stakeholder relationships have been created and how the project's audiences have grown as a result of this coverage. The consortium will also regularly assess whether our key messages are getting through e.g. is our content being understood and engaged with? Is it being delivered in the format most useful to our audiences?, and is it easy for them to have conversations with us?

Table 2: Key Performance Indicators

KPI Title	Target	Frequency	Due date
Stakeholder workshop/seminar attendance	25-30 participants	Every 6 months	
Social Media followers/engagements	500 social media followers	Constantly updated	
Number of e-newsletters issued during the project	4 main newsletters plus workshop invitations	Annual	
Official website analytics(e.g. page views)	20,000 visitors from 10 countries	Constantly updated	
Partners and researchers project blogs	2	Every 6 months	
Articles in scientific journals	10	Every 24 months	
Conference / seminar presentations	12	Throughout project	

6.0.   Monitoring and Reporting

Dissemination will be an agenda of the Supervisory Committee meetings, and the overall strategy will be reviewed regularly, and if necessary corrective action will be taken in close cooperation and in agreement with the Agency. This review will examine whether goals of the promotion and dissemination strategy as outlined above are being achieved, and the improvements that can be made. Questionnaires, interviews, and assessments will be used to measure the impact. Templates will be available for all partners, to facilitate the task of filling in the activities.

Results of the monitoring process will be integrated in the reports on communication and dissemination activities. Reports on dissemination and communication activities will include conclusions and recommendations emerging from the analysis of monitoring process. Analysis of dissemination and communication channels, tools and activities will facilitate the updating of communication strategy to reach the communication and dissemination objectives foreseen. Furthermore, these reports will facilitate the process of mainstreaming and exploitation of the project results.