

Dissemination and Communication Strategy Plan (2nd release)

Deliverable D6.3

29.03.2024



STARS 4 Water

STARS4Water Dissemination and Communication Strategy Plan

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| Dissemination Level | | |
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| PU | Public | X |
| SEN | Confidential, only for members of the consortium and the granting authority (including other EU institutions and bodies) | |
| CI | Classified, as referred to EU Decision 2015/444 and its implementing rules | |

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Summary

This document is the second version of the Dissemination and Communication Strategy Plan (DCSP) of the STARS4Water project, aiming to ensure the coherent streamlining of the project outputs into targeted high-quality dissemination products, and their dissemination to specific target audiences.

Section 2 presents the pillars and the objectives of the STARS4Water Dissemination and Communication (D&C) strategy, while Section 3 details the five key target audience categories, namely: the river basin stakeholders, river basin organisation and related networks; the scientific and research community; the high-level policy community (including environmental agencies and non-governmental organisations and networks); the business community (SMEs, consultants, starts-ups) and economic sectors; and the general public.

The research and dissemination products of the STARS4Water expand in five broad directions: (i) the interaction with stakeholders of river basin organisations and/or the river basin organisations themselves for the integration of the project's results (services, tools, methods, guidelines) in their decision support systems; (ii) the communication of the project results and scientific advances to the scientific and research community, the general ERA (European Research Area) and the RTD sector; (iii) the interfacing with policy in order to inform and support the EU policy needs, bridge relevant gaps, and provide tailored-made tools; (iv) market-oriented activities to enhance the commercial potential of the results, and the uptake of the developed products by SMEs that can further capitalize on them; (v) raising awareness of the general public. As such, the different dissemination and communication products and activities target a range of groups and will be tailored to their identified information needs. These are presented in detail in Section 4, along with a detailed time plan in Section 5.

The communication and dissemination processes will be closely monitored, and periodic evaluations will be held to assess the impact of the various activities and timely redesign (if deemed necessary) elements of the implemented approach which needs strengthening. A set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be used for this purpose as presented in Chapter 6. Finally, Chapter 7 discusses the dissemination products' quality control and standards.

Further update of the current 2nd release of the DCSP is scheduled in M36 "D6.5 Dissemination and communication strategy plan (3rd release)".

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1 Introduction

The STARS4Water project aims to improve the understanding of climate change impacts on water resources availability and the vulnerabilities for ecosystems, society and the economy at river basin scale, including two distinctive elements: first, the need for an international stakeholder community to address their specific needs and requirements. Second, the development and application of innovative data services, models, tools. These new data services and data driven models will support better decision-making planning actions for adaptive, resilient and sustainable management of fresh water resources, and will be co-designed with stakeholders to meet their needs, ensuring their relevance and uptake beyond the lifetime of the project. Following a process of co-creation the projects aims to capacitate stakeholders with next generation river basin tools and build a strong Community of Practice.

Dissemination and communication play an important role in the STARS4Water project. For this purpose, a dedicated workpackage (WP6) has been specifically designed to allow the development of adequate mechanisms and tools to ensure the effective and targeted dissemination of all project results. Within its early tasks is the drafting of the current STARS4Water Dissemination and Communication Strategy Plan (DSP), subject to review and update along the course of the project, in order to further strengthen the close cooperation among all the project workpackages (WPs), ensure the coherent streamlining of their findings and results into targeted and high-quality dissemination products, to pave the way from research to services' implementation, to policy and decision-making, and to business creation/market opportunities. The different dissemination and communication products target a range of audiences: (1) River basin stakeholders (including both stakeholders in the hubs and (international) river basin organisations and networks outside the hubs); (2) Policy community (including high-level policy stakeholders, environmental agencies, NGOs and networks); (3) Business and economic sectors and networks (including SMEs and consultants); (4) Scientific and research communities; (5) General public. Special attention will be given to gender and young professionals, which are cross-cutting across these target audiences.

STARS4Water will build the next generation river basin tools and services that support decision-making on water resources management in 7 River Basin Hubs. These river basin hubs serve as living labs for co-creation of data services and tools with stakeholder communities and as accelerators for further up-scaling of these services and tools to other river basins worldwide. The 7 river basin hubs represent a regionally diverse portfolio of climate vulnerabilities and adaptation needs across sectors and include the basins of: Drammen (NO), East Anglia (UK), Rhine (international), Danube (international), Seine (FR), Duero (ES), Messara (GR). Each river basin hub has a direct beneficiary River Basin organisation (RBO) that will be the primary user of the products and services of the project (but not limited to them) and who has strong institutional connections and relationships with other governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations (e.g. water utilities, nature conservation organisations, civil society organisations) and private sector organisations (e.g. farmers associations, food and beverage industry, energy sector), who can also become users of the products and services when interested. Due to this integral role of the river basin organisations as stakeholder partners in co-designing and co-developing the STARS4Water data services and data-driven models and tools, they will also be central to effectively communicating and disseminating the project's results, especially within their regional and local stakeholder communities. The stakeholder partners will therefore contribute the dissemination and communication actions resulting from this plan.

Besides the communication channels from the project they will also use the specific communication channels within their organisations. Consequently, the stakeholder partners will be responsible for the execution and mainstreaming of the communication and dissemination activities within the 7 river basin hubs of the STARS4Water.

This document is the second version of the Dissemination and Communication Strategy Plan (DCSP) of the STARS4Water project. The DCSP will be regularly updated during the course of the project, as feedback from the monitoring and evaluation of the dissemination activities is collected, and should refinement or re-design of specific elements is required to strengthen the impact of dissemination. A final update of the current DSP (2nd release) is scheduled in M36 “D6.5 Dissemination and communication strategy plan (3rd release)”.

2 The Dissemination and Communication Strategy

STARS4Water is contributing to Europe's destiny concerning climate action on land, oceans and water, aiming to attribute to the following overarching impacts: (1) Improve tools and technologies for efficient monitoring, assessment and projections related to climate change impacts; (2) Advanced understanding and science to support adaptation and resilience of natural and managed ecosystems, water and soil systems and economic sectors in the context of the changing climate. To maximise the project impact, the STARS4Water Dissemination and Communication (D&C) strategy is based on four main pillars:

1. **raising awareness** on the future Europe's water resources under a changing climate and socio-economic scenarios,
2. **reaching the right audience** to promote the use and uptake of the STARS4Water results, data services and tools,
3. **providing guidance and capacity building** for climate resilient water resources planning and river basin management, and
4. **advocating and promoting policy recommendations** on strengthening EU water related policies.

The D&C strategy components include:

- Definition of D&C objectives
- Identification of the targeted audiences and the specific objectives for each audience
- Development of the D&C activities, mechanisms and tools
- Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the D&C activities



Figure 1: Components of the STARS4Water dissemination and communication strategy

2.1 Objectives of the dissemination and communication strategy

The STARS4Water C&D strategy objectives have been defined with the goal to maximise the project impact, ensuring that relevant information and key outputs of the project are relayed to the suitable target audience via the most appropriate channels. The objectives of the C&D Strategy are:

1. Produce quality-assured dissemination products and ensure timely distribution to the different target audiences.
2. Exploit the full potentiality of dissemination media (social media, networks, etc.).
3. Develop and use innovative tools which facilitate diffusion of the results and further support stakeholders' interaction and exchange (tailored to the end-users).
4. Build capacity of targeted groups, develop a Community of Practice (CoP), networks and EU-wide alliances, and maximize the involvement of citizens, end-users and stakeholders in water management.
5. Design and implement educational activities.
6. Link research and innovation to the regional and EU policy.
7. Develop an Exploitation Plan (including IPR) addressing the uptake and commercialization of the foreground.

2.2 Specific goals for the River Basin Hubs' stakeholders

The STARS4Water project is built around 7 River Basin Hubs (RBHs) where next generation river basin tools and services that support decision-making on water resources will be built through a co-creation process with their stakeholders, tailored to their needs. These river basin hubs serve as living labs for co-creation of data services and tools with stakeholder communities on one-hand, and as accelerators for further up-scaling of these services and tools to other river basins worldwide on the other hand. The co-creation processes will be designed geared towards long-term commitment to collaboration and information exchange. Depending on the local setting such commitments may be formalised. Thus, the stakeholder communities of the 7 RBHs will be given a special attention when it comes to communication, dissemination and capacity building, with escalating specific goals (depending on the different user interests in the river basin), starting from increasing the awareness (push-communication), to gaining their acceptance (pull-communication), to engagement in co-development and uptake, to commitment and development of a critical mass (Community of Practice), and finally to mainstreaming of the tools in their operational management and further capitalisation. Within the first year of the project we have worked on the first two levels of stakeholders' engagement in the 7 RBHs (i.e. awareness and acceptance), and are currently actively engaging with them in co-developing STARS4Water tools (narratives, scenarios, modeling tools, dashboards).

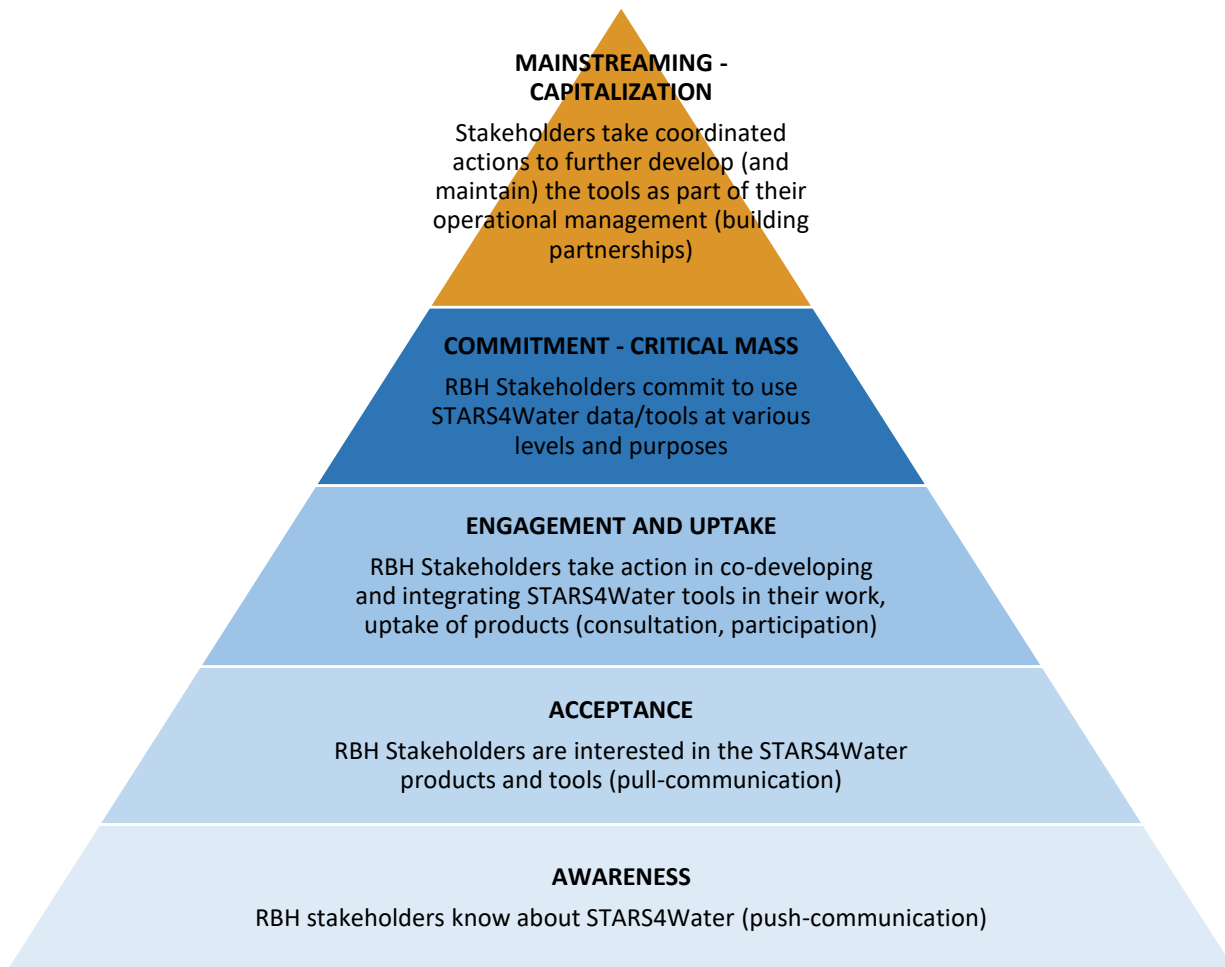


Figure 2: Levels of RBH stakeholders’ engagement in the use of STARS4Water products and tools

3 The Target Audience

Given the nature of the STARS4Water project, cutting across the scientific themes of climate change and water resources management, there is a variety of interesting topics to be communicated. Furthermore, the research and dissemination products to be developed expand in five broad directions: (i) the interaction with stakeholders of river basin organisations for the integration of the project's results (services, tools, methods, guidelines) in their decision support systems; (ii) the communication of the project results and scientific advances to the scientific and research community, the general ERA (European Research Area) and the RTD sector; (iii) the interfacing with policy in order to inform and support the EU policy needs, bridge relevant gaps, and provide tailored-made tools; (iv) market-oriented activities to enhance the commercial potential of the results, and the uptake of the developed products by SMEs that can further capitalize on them; (v) raising awareness of the general public. As such, the different products will be targeted to a range of groups and will be tailored to their identified information needs. Special attention will be given to gender groups and young professionals, which are cross-cutting across these target audiences. A separate plan for their inclusiveness will be drafted and implemented.



Figure 3: Dissemination and communication target audience

Dissemination and communication will assess the information needs of the target groups (as presented in the following sections (i.e. scientific, policy and business communities, etc.), including

when the information is most needed and is likely to serve as an “agent of change”. For example, policy makers may find certain information from an evaluation particularly useful in making critical policy decisions. When planning for a dissemination activity, the STARS4Water team will be aware when a window of opportunity for decision making arises and make the information available in a manner that is appropriate for the technical and functional needs of the target audience.

The following target audiences A1-A5 have been defined, along with specific D&C objectives per audience, as presented in the Table below. The dissemination of the STARS4Water results will be targeting these groups, using messages linked to their values, interests and motivations to ensure knowledge transfer and uptake of the services and tools developed.

Table 1: Dissemination and communication target audiences and relevant objectives per audience

| Target Audience (A) | D&C Specific Objectives per target audience |
|--|---|
| <p>A1a: River basin hub stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - River basin managers - Local and national governments - Water utilities - Economic water use sectors - Environmental protection agencies and nature protection organisations - Societal organisations <p>A1b: River basin organisations and networks outside the hubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International river commissions (e.g. ICPDR) - River management networks (e.g. INBO, ECRR) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness on climate change impacts and risks related to water resources in their river basin - Promote and uptake of the project’s results: services, tools, methods, guidelines - Enable best practices - Capacity building |
| <p>A2: Science and research community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research communities in water resources and river basin management, and climate research (e.g. World Large Rivers, HIS, CHR) - Researchers in related projects and initiatives - Universities - Young professionals’ networks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustained use and development of open data services and open source tools - Exploitation of results in future scientific projects - Building network among data service and tools developers and researchers - Building curriculum at universities; academic education and training |
| <p>A3a: High-level Policy stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National governments (ministries) - European Commission (e.g. DG Environment, DG Climate, DG Agriculture, CIS WFD, CIS FD, EG WS&D) -Members of European Parliament - UNFCCC - UN Water (and Integrated Monitoring Initiative on SDG6) <p>A3b: Environmental agencies and non-governmental organisations and networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Environment Agency, EIONET, European Drought Observatory, Copernicus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of STARS4Water policy recommendations in EU and at national level; - Awareness raising about climate change impacts on Europe’s fresh water resources and consequences for society, environment and economic sectors - Raising awareness on climate change impacts and risks related to water resources - Promoting project’s results: services, tools, methods, guidelines |

- Water utilities: responsible for the safe and timely distribution of water and other related services, such as wastewater treatment.
- Private sector and Economic water use sectors: economic sectors, such as agriculture and hydropower depend largely on water resources availability and are impacted by water-related extreme events. By engaging economic sectors, strategic water resources planning could benefit by creating a wider solution space, leveraging additional financing and obtaining wider support for decisions. The local private sector can grow and expand developing downstream business and services.
- Environmental protection agencies and nature protection organisations: ecosystems and communities are vulnerable to changes in water resources availability and changes in magnitude and frequency of extreme water-related events. Through the process of integrated water resources management, which also considers the hydrological requirements for ecosystems and society, resilience of ecosystems and society to changes in water resources availability under changing climate will be enhanced. As a result, the social welfare is promoted in an equitable manner and the sustainability of water-dependended ecosystems and the services and good these ecosystems provide for society is supported.
- Civil society organisations: citizens input on one hand, and increased awareness on the other hand, can act as drivers of change towards better adaptive management and increase the resilience of the community.

Each river basin hub has a direct beneficiary River Basin organisation (RBO) that has interest in supporting the co-design and application of the STARS4Water tools and services, will be a primary user of the products and services of the project (but not limited to them) and has strong institutional connections and relationships with other governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations (e.g. water utilities, nature conservation organisations, civil society organisations) and private sector organisations (e.g. farmers associations, food and beverage industry, energy sector), who can also become users of the products and services when interested. To support effective stakeholder engagement and to create co-ownership with the stakeholders, each river basin hub has a dedicated “shareholder” (partner or associated partner) in STARS4Water. Shareholders are “owners” of the project, having a “share” in the tools and services the project develops. Shareholders have a leading role in engaging the stakeholder communities to facilitate the co-design activities (identification of the user needs for data services and modelling tools, information requirements, co-development and validating of the new data services and data-driven tools, etc.). Shareholders also have a leading role in the communication and dissemination towards the river basin hub stakeholder communities or even country-scale.

It is acknowledged that the different above-mentioned stakeholder categories of the RBH communities have different levels of interest and influence related to the STARS4Water products, tools and services. The dissemination and communication efforts will be thus targeted and optimised accordingly, with basic information for awareness and acceptance raising provided in the “low influence, low interest” stakeholders, to detailed information and capacity development provided in the “high influence, high interest” stakeholders in order to boost uptake, mainstreaming and capitalisation of the STARS4Water foreground. Finally, we have also identified in each RBH the “stakeholder champions” (within the Deliverable D1.1 Stakeholder engagement plan¹), who are in a more influential position when it comes to future challenges or conflicts within the RBH, and with

¹ Hegdahl, T.J., ter Maat, J., Kruijshoop, J. & Hisdal, H. (Eds.) (2023): Stakeholder engagement work plan. Horizon Europe project STARS4Water. Deliverable D1.1.

whom will collaborate more closely also regarding the D&C activities. The stakeholder champions are hence in the category with high influence and high interest in the Figure 4.

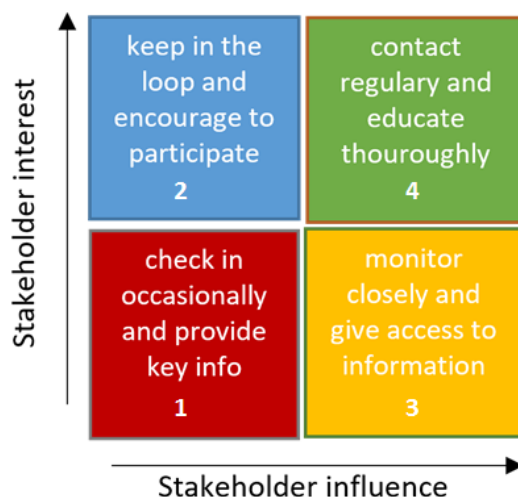


Figure 4: Dissemination and communication efforts based on the RBH stakeholders influence and interest. Source: STARS4Water Deliverable D1.1¹

A detailed identification of all the organisations in the stakeholder communities for each RBH is presented the STARS4Water Deliverable D1.1¹. Here we present the key ones, i.e. the “stakeholder champions” per RBH, with whom we will engage in more extensive communication, dissemination and exploitation activities.

Table 2: Identified “stakeholder champions” in each River Basin Hub for targeted D&C activities

| River Basin Hub | Organization | Theme |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Drammen (Norway) | Regulerings samarbeider for Drammensvassdraget (RSD) | Hydropower |
| | Norwegian water resources and energy directorate (NVE) | Governmental |
| | River basin district board (Vannregion-område ansvarlig) | Governmental |
| | Glitre vann | Water supply |
| East Anglia (United Kingdom) | Water Resources East | Water resources planning |
| | Essex and Suffolk Water | Water supply |
| | Environment Agency | Governmental |
| Rhine (International) | CHR - International Commission for the Hydrology of the Rhine basin | Scientific research related to climate change & hydrology, morphology & sediments, socio-economics and water use |
| | ICPR - International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine | Harmonizing many interests of use and protection of the Rhine area by transboundary cooperation |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| | CCR - Central Commission for the navigation of the Rhine | Rhine river and inland navigation |
| Danube (International) | ICPDR - International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River | Transboundary Commission; River Management |
| | Danube Commission | Transboundary Commission; Navigation |
| | WWF Danube-Carpathian | Ecology |
| | International Association for Danube Research | Water management and environmental issues |
| Seine (France) | Agence de l'Eau Seine Normandie (AESN) | Water resources management |
| | EPTB Seine Grand Lac (EPTB SGL) | Water management, flood protection, low flow support |
| Duero (Spain) | Water supply Junta de Castilla y León | Urban supplies |
| | Waters of Valladolid | Urban supplies |
| | Ferduero | Irrigations |
| Messara (Greece) | Region of Crete – Directorate of Environment and Spatial Planning – Department of Hydroeconomy | Protection and management of water resources |
| | Local Land Reclamation Organizations (TOEB of Zone B of Messara, TOEB of Zone C of Messara, TOEB of Vassilikon-Anogion) | Irrigation management and irrigation water works |

A1b. River Basin organisations and networks outside the Hubs

Besides the stakeholders from the river basin hubs, the dissemination activities will reach out to European River Basin Organisations (RBOs) and River Basin Authorities of the WFD. We are targeting to disseminate the STARS4Water products and tools to 25 European RBOs opting for their use (of the new data services, tools and/or indicators) in their next round of planning for the Water Framework Directive and/or Flood Directive. We also target to involve at least 20 river basins in sharing of information on the STARS4Water Online Impact Reporter related with biophysical and socio-economic impacts, changes in vulnerability and risk, and ex-post evaluations of applied adaptation measures related to climate change. The RBOs to reach out will be selected from the available WFD Implementation Reports and Member State Assessments, also considering existing networks and partnerships of the STARS4Water consortium partners. Additionally, we will disseminate the project results (on a fit-for-purpose basis) to international RBOs and networks, such as the ones listed below:

INBO – International Network of Basin Organizations

MENBO – Mediterranean of Basin Organizations

IDPM-CEE – Integrated Drought Management Program for Central and Eastern Europe

ICPER – International Commission for the Protection of the Elbe River

IMC – International Meuse Commission

ECRR – European Centre for River Restoration

EDO – European Drought Observatory

GWP – SDG6 IWRM Support Programme

WCRP GEWEX – The Global Energy and Water Exchanges (GEWEX)

EUMETSAT H-SAF Network – Support to Operational Hydrology and Water Management

WES – Water and Environment Support in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region

UN-ECE – UN Economic Commission for Europe

3.2 Scientific and research community (A2)

One of the main target groups of the STARS4Water dissemination activities is the European Research Area (ERA) and the wider global research community. The fact that the project itself involves many partners, each one of them having established networks, will secure the selection of the proper scientific audience to address. The research community will be sensitised on the project activities through the transnational dissemination events, the organization of conference sessions dedicated to specific scientific issues of the project (e.g. improved projections of changes in water resources availability, innovative multi-scale model integration, data-driven (machine learning) techniques for enhancing water resources management, etc.), the various targeted publications in journals, and the e-learning platform “STARS4Water Academy” where webinars and e-courses will be available. Below, we provide a list of indicative scientific projects and initiatives of relevance to the STARS4Water that we will be networking with and disseminating the STARS4Water scientific advances.

Table 3: List of indicative scientific projects and initiatives of relevance to the STARS4Water dissemination of the research foreground and scientific networking

| Acronym | Title |
|---|---|
| SOS-Water | Water Resources System Safe Operating Space in a Changing Climate and Society |
| WMO HydroSOS initiative | Global Hydrological Status and Outlook System (HydroSOS) |
| Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) and related Demonstrator Projects | Operational service for the water sector of the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) |
| European hydrology and climate data explorer | The interactive web application “European hydrology and climate data explorer” provides easy access to a range of climate impact indicators for water quantity, water quality and relevant meteorological climate impact indicators |
| European hydrology seasonal forecast explorer | The interactive web application “Hydrological seasonal forecast explorer” presents monthly hydrological seasonal forecasts of river discharge from a hydrological ensemble using the SEAS5 seasonal forecasting system |
| C3S - Sectoral applications of decadal predictions | Sectoral applications of decadal predictions for: agriculture, energy, infrastructure, insurance |
| WISE Freshwater | Water Information System for Europe (information and data on the state of Europe’s rivers, lakes, groundwaters, on the pressures affecting them, on the measures and actions taken to protect and conserve the aquatic environment) |

| | |
|--|--|
| JPI Water | Joint Programming Initiative on “Water challenges for a changing world” |
| JPI Climate | Joint Programming Initiative "Connecting Climate Knowledge for Europe" |
| Water4All | Water Security for the Planet (Co-funded European Partnership) |
| UAWOS | Unmanned Airborne Water Observing System |
| MuSe-BDA | Multi-Sensor Bayesian Data Assimilation for Large-Scale Drought Monitoring System |
| TRANSCEND | Transformational and robust adaptation to water scarcity and climate change under deep uncertainty |
| Climateurope2 | Supporting and standardizing climate services in Europe and beyond |
| TEMBO Africa | Transformative Environmental Monitoring to Boost Observations in Africa |
| MAGDA | Meteorological assimilation for accurate weather forecasting and efficient irrigation |
| DANUBE4All | Restoration of the danube river basin waters for ecosystems and people from mountains to coast |
| DALIA | Danube Region Water Lighthouse Action |
| InnWATER | Promoting social INNOVation to renew multi-level and cross sector WATER governance |
| B-WEX | Balancing clean Water and Energy provision under changing climate and extremes |
| RETOUCH NEXUS | Resilient water governance under climate change within the WEFE NEXUS |
| | |
| ULYSSES | A global and multi-model hydrological prediction system |
| TransformAr | Accelerating and upscaling transformational adaptation in Europe: demonstration of water-related innovation packages |
| ICT4Water Cluster | Community of EU funded projects aiming to boost the digital transformation of the water sector, scoping at a more efficient and sustainable use of water resources |
| FIP | Freshwater Information Platform |
| Danubius-RI | Research Infrastructure to facilitate and contribute excellent science on the continuum from river source to sea |
| Earth2Observe Water Cycle Integrator (E2O WCI) | Global Earth Observation for Integrated Water Resource Assessment Water Cycle Integrator |
| CERTO | Copernicus Evolution: Research for harmonised Transitional water Observation |
| GEOEssentials | GEOEssential Variables workflows for resource efficiency and environmental management |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ClimXtreme | A research network on climate change and extreme events |
| REXUS | Managing Resilient Nexus Systems through Participatory Systems Dynamics Modelling |
| RADAR | Reviewing Approaches for communicating drought status and risk |
| ISIMIP | Inter-Sectoral Impact Model Intercomparison Project |
| REACHOUT | Resilience in Europe through activating city hubs reaching out to users with triple-a climate adaptation tools |
| TACTIC | Tools for Assessment of Climate change Impact on Groundwater and Adaptation Strategies |
| CIPRHES | Integrated chain for Hydrometeorological Prediction of low levels and droughts |
| LIFE LOGOS 4 WATER | Integrated application of innovative water management methods at river basin by coordination of local governments |

3.3 High-level Policy community (A3)

Among the STARS4Waters objectives is to improve Member States' preparedness for climate change impacts with respect to floods and droughts and support more accurate decision making and policy for flood and drought risk reduction and response, as well as to provide improved knowledge on ecological flows in the context of the Water Framework Directive. It is thus clear that the policy community can benefit from the project findings and experience and is in this sense a valuable end-user and target audience. The fact that the projects itself involves stakeholders and partners involved in the science-policy interfacing processes, each one of them having established networks, will secure the selection of the proper policy audience to address. The following entities and actors have been identified:

A3a: High-level Policy stakeholders

- National governments (ministries)
- European Commission (e.g. DG Environment, DG Climate, DG Agriculture)
- Common Implementation Strategy Working Groups (CIS WFD, CIS Floods, CIS Groundwater, EG Water Scarcity & Drought, etc.)
- Members of European Parliament
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- UN Water (and IMI on SDG6)
- ICPDR (International Commission for Protection of the Danube River)
- ICPR (International Commission for Protection of the Rhine river)

A3b: Environmental agencies and non-governmental organisations and networks

- European Environment Agency (EEA)
- European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET)
- Copernicus, Group on Earth Observation (GEO)
- WMO Water and Climate Coalition

- UNESCO-IHP
- World's Large Rivers Initiative
- High Level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP)
- Water and Climate Coalition
- Global Adaptation Centre
- UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP)
- Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA)
- International environmental organisations (e.g. WWF, IUCN, Wetlands International)

The policy community will be sensitized on the project activities through the transnational dissemination events, the organization of a one-day policy seminar dedicated to specific policy and decision making related issues and the usability of the STARS4Water services and products at different scales (local, regional, pan-European), etc., but also through the various targeted publications, the story maps on impact of climate change on the future of Europe's freshwater resources, the project documentary, and the policy briefs with direct relevance for the implementation of the EU Adaptation Strategy (as one of the pillars of the EU Green Deal) and EU water related policies.

3.4 Business community and economic sectors (A4)

STARS4Water will produce exploitable results at multiple levels, including for the wider business community. Open source data, services and tools for efficient monitoring, assessment and projections related to climate change impact, new modeling tools for water resources management benchmarked against comparative evaluation criteria, and new data-driven modeling techniques, will be delivered and accompanied by publications, guidelines and training material. These data services and tools can be capitalized by SMEs, Consultants, start-ups and the various economic sectors in water resources planning projects and/or in the development of downstream applications, services and tools. The following entities have been identified:

A4a: Consultants, SMEs, Practitioners, Start-ups

- Involved with water resources modelling applications
- Involved with climate change assessments
- Involved with floods and droughts prediction and forecasting
- Involved with water resources management
- Involved with Earth Observation data applications, data assimilation, monitoring
- Involved in science-policy interfacing and applications for operational decision making/decision support systems' development

A4b: Economic sector stakeholders

- Agriculture
- Food and beverage sector
- Energy sector
- Water utility sector
- Tourism sector
- Industry sector
- Inland navigation

Among the project's goals is to evaluate opportunities arising for new business and job creation matching the STARS4Water products with innovative ideas for capitalization through a dedicated Future Exploitation Plan (ExP). This will help local consultants (who are typically SMEs) to improve and develop services and products in the domain of water-and-climate change assessment and monitoring using new data and tools and enhance their competitiveness. The fact that the project itself involves SMEs as partners, each one of them having established networks, will secure the selection of the proper business audience to address. The business community will be sensitized on the project activities through the transnational dissemination events, the social media, but also through the various targeted publications/communication material, the webinars (STARS4Water Academy) and the Final Conference.

3.5 General public (A5)

Reaching out to general public will be pursued within the project. STARS4Water communications will follow unified central messaging, but with respect to also adapting to the general public communication channels and styles. Essential messages will be thus tailored to the general public and the civil society organisations to allow for easy understanding and awareness raising. The messages will be disseminated through the STARS4Water website, social media, and citizens-oriented informational material.

4 Dissemination and Communication Activities, Mechanisms & Tools

The different dissemination and communication activities, mechanisms tools to be deployed are analytically described in the following sections and summarized in Table 4. Targeted mechanisms will be mobilized and the activities will be implemented in a stepwise process in order to achieve the objectives of the dissemination strategy, subject to review and updating along the course of the project to maintain a dynamic process, and maximize the intended impact. Three main channels will be used to deliver the various products: “web-based”, “print-based”, “person-based”. All dissemination products will acknowledge the funding received by the EU Commission will follow the publicity rules set by H2020, and will be compliant with the relevant dissemination rules and guidelines.

Table 4: Overview of the D&C activities, mechanisms and tools, and their relevance per target audience

| D&C Activities, Mechanisms and Tools | Target Audience (see Table 1) | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----|----|----|----|----|
| | A1a | A1b | A2 | A3 | A4 | A5 |
| Portfolio of dissemination products addressed to all audiences/communities | | | | | | |
| STARS4Water website | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Social media pages | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| General promotional/informational material (leaflets, brochures, presentations, posters, articles) | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| E-Newsletters | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| STARS4Water Final Conference | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Outreach, interaction and capacity building of the river basin practitioner communities | | | | | | |
| Participatory Workshops in the 7 river basin hubs with the river basin communities | √ | | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Training & capacity building activities (through the STARS4Water Academy) - curricula for river basin managers | √ | √ | | | | |
| Interactive Stakeholders’ Forum and Online Impact Reporter | √ | √ | | √ | √ | √ |
| Webinars targeting stakeholders across and outside the 7 hubs | √ | √ | | | | |
| Dissemination to the Scientific and Research Community | | | | | | |
| Scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals | √ | | √ | | √ | |
| Presentations/posters in international conferences | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | |
| Training of researchers and students (through the STARS4Water Academy) - curricula for the scientific community | | | √ | | √ | |
| Linking Science and Innovation to the Decision and Policy-Making function | | | | | | |
| One-day seminar for policy-makers | √ | √ | | √ | | |
| Policy Briefs | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Layman’s Report | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| STARS4Water Documentary | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Networking with relevant initiatives (EU Green Deal, the CIS WGs, International agencies and organisations, etc.) including face-to-face briefings when deemed effective | | √ | | √ | | |

| Future exploitation and sustainability | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Customized communication material for SMEs, NGOs, CSOs, the general public | | | | | √ | √ |
| STARS4Water Future Exploitation Plan (ExP) | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |

4.1 D&C-4-all: Portfolio of dissemination products and tools addressed to all audiences/communities

A wide range on web-based and printed dissemination products and tools are planned for development to support the timely and up-to-date diffusion of information and improved communication addressed to all target audiences/ communities, as presented below:

- STARS4Water website (www.stars4water.eu): to be maintained for 5 more years after the project ends, and used to disseminate updates on activities, deliverables, interesting news/posts, events, etc. A search engine optimisation (SEO) strategy will be implemented in order to increase the outreach.
- Social media pages (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, RSS feeds, blogs). The STARS4Water LinkedIn Group (launched in October 2022, <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9243555/>) has currently 63 members. There is a plan to develop “hub runbooks” and “dedicated weeks” for each hub, where information, short movies, mini-interviews with stakeholders, etc. will be posted on LinkedIn.
- General promotional/informational material (leaflets, brochures, presentations, posters, articles). The main presentations and brochures will be translated into several languages (including all the languages of the case studies) to reach a wider audience. Relevant existing online dissemination platforms will also be reached (e.g. the Freshwater Information Platform).
- E-Newsletters (every 6 months) updating on the progress and disseminating news. The [1st Newsletter](#) has been distributed in 2023, and the 2nd Newsletter is planned to be released in March-April 2024. There is plan to also to promote out Newsletter via the newsletters of other initiatives (e.g. EMWIS, IMBO, JPI-Water)
- The STARS4Water Final Conference, attached to a main regional event to maximise impact.
- Customised communication material for the general public, in an easy and understandable language to raise awareness.
- Joint dissemination activities with the sister project SOS-Water: to maximise the impact of the STARS4Water dissemination and outreach, we will develop, jointly with SOS-Water, a portfolio of results that are relevant for joint dissemination, and a comprehensive mapping of the relevant stakeholders/target audience for each particular portfolio. For this purpose we will take advantage of the Horizon Results Booster services, and we plan to submit a joint proposal with SOS-Water to the [Horizon Results Booster](#)/ Module A for Identifying and creating the portfolio of R&I project results in July 2024.

The STARS4Water Project Website (www.starts4water.eu) will play an important role in a two-way communication with interested stakeholders. It will be used for presenting the project description and deliverables, informing on the activities and outputs. All the public results will be posted and available on this site. A dedicated section for the media will be visible and easily accessible containing brief articles, newsletters, alerts on upcoming events and regular news posts on water resources, water scarcity, drought management, climate change impacts on water resources, etc. In more detail, the STARS4Water website is envisioned to be active and dynamic and contains the following sections:

- HOME: This page is the homepage/landing of the project, containing direct links to all the other tabs, displaying some general info on the project, and selected news and events. The home page follows the STARS4Water corporate design.
- PROJECT: This section provides detailed information on the project, its objectives, the state-of-the-art and policy context, as well as an overview of the workplan and workpackages and their interconnection.
- 7 HUBS: This section provides the basic information for each hub, along with the identified challenges. Each hub has, for that purpose, a dedicated webpage, which will evolve as new information and products are available through the project (webinar outputs, story maps, etc.). The hub's pages are planned to be updated in mid-2024 with the new information obtained from the stakeholders' workshops on narrative and scenarios.
- PARTNERS: This section introduces the project partners, and provides some basic info/facts on each partner.
- STAKEHOLDERS FORUM: A forum is foreseen to allow exchange of ideas and discussions. A users' login is required. The Forum will also be linked to the Online Impact Reporter.
- ACADEMY: This section will be built up as an open source Learning Management System and will host training courses, which include live webinars (online training workshops) or recorded e-learning sessions (webinars) accessible for users at any time.
- OUTPUT: This section is dedicated to downloaded material made available by the project, under 3 main categories: public deliverables, project presentation, publication
- NEWS & EVENTS: This section is dedicated to brief articles, newsletters, posts on related topics, etc. This information is screened and selected by the partners with the goal to being up-to-date and serving as an important trigger to the readers. This section is also used to inform the public on interesting upcoming events. The events are listed in chronological order, while the past events are kept in archive.
- CONTACT: This section is the entry point to allow for contacting the project team. Emails are possible using a predefined format with "subject" options to allow the quick allocation of the enquiries among the partners. The General Data Protection Regulation is taken into consideration.

4.2 D&C-4-RBOs: Outreach, interaction and capacity building of the river basin practitioners communities

The outreach and capacity building of the river basin communities is a central goal of the STARS4Water dissemination, closely related to the STARS4Water WP1 and WP5, and is dedicated to pursuing end-users engagement, consultation and participation. The objective is three-fold: (a) interact with the river basins community and collect input and feedback for various STARS4Water products-to-be-developed through a participatory process in synergy with WP1, (b) disseminate the relevant outputs in customized ways so that they are well-perceived, and (c) build capacity of the river basin communities end-users by providing tailored training and building a Community of Practice (CoP) that can uptake and further exploit the STARS4Water product and services. Women are also targeted here as an end-user group having a significant role in participatory water management. Activities foreseen:

- Participatory Workshops in the 7 river basin hubs with the river basin communities (4 per hub) to fortify the co-development/co-creation process on one-hand (linked to WP1, WP2, WP3, WP4) and the update and usability of the STARS4Water products and services at the local/national scale (in synergy with WP5).

- Training & capacity building activities: this will be offered through the STARS4Water Academy as a customised curriculum. The capacity building needs of the hubs’ stakeholders will be communicated to the project through the hub leaders in order to formulate relevant topics.
- Building a CoP through an Interactive Stakeholders’ Forum: Networking with relevant local initiatives and stakeholders through an Interactive Stakeholders’ Forum in support of participatory exchanges among the river basin organisations (as primary users, but not limited to them) in order to facilitate their exchanges (in close collaboration with WP1 and WP5). The Forum’s goal is to be a key reference point when searching for support in challenges related to the implementation of RBMPs. RBAs can share on the Forum their experiences from the 2 first cycles of the WFD implementation, address common challenges, and seek useful experience from other peers. A dynamic part of the data Forum will be the Online Impact Reporter. This application will support the reporting of real experienced biophysical and socio-economic impacts, changes in vulnerability and risk, and ex-post evaluations of applied adaptation measures by different categories of stakeholders (upon registration and granted permission) related to climate change (links to Tasks 2.5, 4.2). This information is crucial and currently lacking at a harmonised and easily accessible format. The reporting will be based on predefined fields and options, for specified indicators and parameters, and it will be well publicized with the vision of remaining a functional and operational infrastructure after the end of the project (this will be addressed within the exploitation plan). There is currently an ongoing discussion regarding the scope and content of the Online Impact Reporter, and two options have been identified so far, as presented in the Table below. A decision will be made jointly with stakeholders in order to develop an application that is more relevant/useful to them.
- Webinars targeting stakeholders across and outside the 7 hubs (local, national and international) to interpret the STARS4Water outputs (data services, improved data-driven modelling suites, projections and forecasts, etc.), discuss scenario planning, risk management and definitions of safe operating spaces under climate change, etc. (linked to WPs 4, 5). A potential webinar on “how to build narratives and scenarios relevant for assessing future vulnerabilities” is currently under discussion, where the hubs’ stakeholders could exchange experience and promote mutual learning, and invited scientists can also provide their insights. Another potential webinar topic that has been preliminary identified is e-flows.

| Online Impact Reporter (OIR) | Option 1: Event-based historical information | Option2: Information at the River Basin scale |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Scope | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dissemination of information on the observed impacts (biophysical, socio-economic) of important events • exchange of practices and information on the performance (ex-post) of mitigation and adaptation measures to cope with the event, strengthen CoP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dissemination of information on the main water challenges exacerbated by climate change in your River Basin • exchange of practices and information on the performance (ex-post) of different climate adaptation measure at the River Basin scale, strengthen CoP |
| Input provided by | RBAs and/or other WFD RBMP key stakeholders using specific online templates | RBAs and/or other WFD RBMP key stakeholders using specific online templates |

| | | |
|------------------|--|--|
| End-users | RBAs, policy makers, general public, researchers | RBAs, policy makers, general public, researchers |
| Reporting fields | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Event (title, location, date, characterisation) - Impacted sector(s) - Impacts (environmental, societal and cultural, economic, health) – predefined list provided - Impacts’ metrics and significance - Additional info | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My River Basin (name, main features, water users, key stakeholders) - Main challenges exacerbated by climate change in your RB (Link to the STARS4Water identified challenges in the 7 hubs) - Adaptation measures (measures, ex-post performance evaluation, key implementation issues) - Modeling Tools (for assessment, management, planning) - Additional info |
| Search mechanism | <p>Map-based or text-based search</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by event category (WR availability - drought, flood) - by sector impacted (agriculture, energy, tourism, etc.) - by scale and location (city, region, country) - by date (specific date, year, season...) | <p>Map-based or text-based search</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by location (RB, region, country) - by challenge category (WR availability, water quality, drought risk, flood risk, water demand/allocation, etc.) - by sector/ water use affected (agriculture, energy, tourism, etc.) - by adaptation practice/measure |

4.3 D&C-4-science: Dissemination to the Scientific and Research Community

As an R&I project STARS4Water will produce important outputs marking its contributions to science in the ERA and beyond. Dissemination products and activities foreseen:

- Scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals: Open access (gold and green) papers, complying with the strategy of the EC. Also a Special STARS4Water Issue in a scientific journal
- Presentations/posters in international conferences. Sessions in Conferences (e.g. EGU, FAO, WMO, WaterNet) will be organized, and the STARS4Water Final Conference.
- Training of researchers and students: The STARS4Water Academy will be built up as an open source Learning Management System and will address different user communities with different courses. We will develop three different curricula: for river basin managers, for water resources users and for the scientific community with a focus on students and young professionals. Training courses of the Academy will include live webinars (online training workshops) or recorded e-learning sessions (webinars) accessible for users at any time. The developed courses and curricula will remain accessible after the project’s end through adopting selected contents of the Academy by the project partners. A workshop on Machine Learning is planned to take place at INRAE premises in April 2024 (24th-25th of April). A training course on the RIBASIM software is planned to take place at DELTARES premises in May 2024, where users from the hubs will be trained hands-on on the latest version of RIBASIM. Additional discussion are held regarding the development of an e-flows seminar and a webinar on “how to build narratives and scenarios relevant for assessing future vulnerabilities”

4.4 D&C-4-policy: Linking Science and Innovation to the Decision and Policy-Making function

Science-policy interfacing activities aim at facilitating the “transfer of improved data and information from the observation and modelling systems into the decision-making function”. The target audience includes high-level policy-makers and decision-makers within the key affiliated economic sectors. As these actors support different elements of the policy cycles and economic development decisions, and at different levels of the value chain, a prioritization will be made as to the most relevant for STARS4Water. The foreseen dissemination products and activities include:

- For policy-makers: One day seminar at the STARS4Water final conference in Brussels on the usability of the STARS4Water services and products at different scales.
- Policy Briefs and a Layman’s Report (~50 pp., precise, addressed to a non-technical audience). The following topics have been defined for the policy briefs: unlocking global data for EU water policies, climate change impacts on water resources in EU basins, STARS4Water Guiding principles for EU Policy Development
- STARS4Water Documentary: production of a short documentary (also available on YouTube) on STARS4Water policy-relevant findings (e.g. from Tasks 4.4, 5.4) and new services, including interviews with key stakeholders, information on the future climate risks and impacts on water resources, and attractive visual material.
- Networking with relevant initiatives of the EU Green Deal, the CIS WGs, International agencies and organisations (e.g. EEA, EDO, WMO, UNESCO IHP, WWAP, HELP, Water and Climate Leaders Panel), Copernicus, etc., including face-to-face briefings when deemed effective.

4.5 D&C-4-business: Future exploitation and sustainability

A set of exploitation activities are foreseen in order to identify and pursue opportunities for the exploitation of the project foreground, opting the uptake of the project results by the business community (SMEs, consultants, Associations, start-ups, young professionals, NGOs, etc.), the matching with innovative ideas that can help SMEs to develop services and products, and the increased involvement of the citizens/general public. Special emphasis will be placed on empowering women. The planned activities include:

- Communication material for SMEs, NGOs, CSOs, the general public (i.e. CitizensLink on the website).
- STARS4Water Future Exploitation Plan (ExP): the ExP will draft a strategy for the follow-up of the project, will identify potential exploitation and commercialization activities, as well as further products, applications and services that can be built on the basis of the STARS4Water outputs.

5 Detailed Plan: timing and responsibilities

5.1 Timeplan of the dissemination and communication activities

The timeplan of the dissemination and communication activities is presented in Table 5.

5.2 Database of end-users and recipients

To organize the data concerning the recipients of the STARS4Water communication and dissemination products a Database of dissemination recipients/groups will be developed, including the relevant networks to link to, taking into consideration the General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation EU 2016/679²) and the our privacy policy. This database includes people who have contacted us via the social media, or who have directly subscribed in our newsletter/communication list via the STARS4Water website. This will secure the easy communication as information will be properly classified, as well as the establishment of selected groups upon request (based on specific context). Relevant electronic mailing lists will be also created to facilitate the communication, e.g.: Stakeholders' list (all stakeholders, grouped by categories if necessary); SMEs' list (all SMEs contacts); Forum's participants lists (all registered users in our forum), etc.

² Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation)

D6.3 DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY PLAN (2ND RELEASE)

Table 5: Detailed timeplan of the STARS4Water dissemination and communication activities

| D&C Activities | 2022 Q4 | 2023 Q1 | 2023 Q2 | 2023 Q3 | 2023 Q4 | 2024 Q1 | 2024 Q2 | 2024 Q3 | 2024 Q4 | 2025 Q1 | 2025 Q2 | 2025 Q3 | 2025 Q4 | 2026 Q1 | 2026 Q2 | 2026 Q3 |
|--|------------|-------------|---------|----------|---------|----------|--------------------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|---------------|----------|
| STARS4Water website | | Launch D6.2 | | | | | Update HUBs' pages | | | | | | | | | |
| Social media pages | Launch | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| General promotional/informational material (leaflets, brochures, presentations, posters, articles) | Leaflet #1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| E-Newsletters | | | | NewsL #1 | | NewsL #2 | NewsL #3 | | NewsL #4 | | NewsL #5 | | NewsL #6 | | NewsL #7 | NewsL #8 |
| STARS4Water Final Conference | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | MS12 |
| Participatory Workshops in the 7 river basin hubs with the river basin communities | | W#1 | W#1 | | | W#2 | W#2 | W#3 | | | | W#4 | W#5 | | | |
| Training & capacity building activities (through the STARS4Water Academy) - curricula for river basin managers | | | | | | | | | | | Launch | | | | | |
| Interactive Stakeholders' Forum and Online Impact Reporter | | | | | | | | Launch | | | | | | | | |
| Webinars targeting stakeholders across and outside the 7 hubs | | | | | | | | | | | Launch | | | | | |
| Scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Special Issue | |

D6.3 DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY PLAN (2ND RELEASE)

| D&C Activities | 2022 Q4 | 2023 Q1 | 2023 Q2 | 2023 Q3 | 2023 Q4 | 2024 Q1 | 2024 Q2 | 2024 Q3 | 2024 Q4 | 2025 Q1 | 2025 Q2 | 2025 Q3 | 2025 Q4 | 2026 Q1 | 2026 Q2 | 2026 Q3 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Presentations/posters in international conferences | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Training of researchers and students (through the STARS4Water Academy) - curricula for the scientific community | | | | | | | | | | | Launch | | | | | |
| One-day seminar for policy-makers | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | D6.8 |
| Policy Briefs | | | | | | | | D6.4 | | | | D6.6 | | | | |
| Layman's Report | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | D6.11 |
| STARS4Water Documentary | | | | | | | | | | | | | Launch D6.7 | | | |
| Networking with relevant initiatives (EU Green Deal, the CIS WGs, International agencies and organisations, etc.) including face-to-face briefings when deemed effective | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Customised communication material for SMEs, NGOs, CSOs, the general public | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| STARS4Water Future Exploitation Plan (ExP) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | D6.12 |

D6.3 DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY PLAN (2ND RELEASE)

| D&C Activities | 2022 Q4 | 2023 Q1 | 2023 Q2 | 2023 Q3 | 2023 Q4 | 2024 Q1 | 2024 Q2 | 2024 Q3 | 2024 Q4 | 2025 Q1 | 2025 Q2 | 2025 Q3 | 2025 Q4 | 2026 Q1 | 2026 Q2 | 2026 Q3 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <p>*D: denoted a project deliverable **MS: denotes a project milestone</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Updates of the DCSP are scheduled in M18 (2024 Q1) “D6.3 Dissemination and Communication Strategy Plan (2nd release) and in M36 (2025 Q3) “D6.3 Dissemination and Communication Strategy Plan (3rd release)”.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

6 Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1 Monitoring and feedback on the activities

The communication and dissemination processes will be closely monitored, and annual evaluations will be held to assess the impact of the various activities and timely redesign (if deemed necessary) elements of the implemented approach which needs strengthening.

A feedback and learning mechanism for the effectiveness of the dissemination strategy and quality of the particular knowledge product(s) will be established. These surveys will be made available to the target audience and will be collected upon specific occasions (e.g. during conferences and events, after the distributions of e-newsletters, via the website-forums, etc.). In analysing the feedback, different questions will be asked, such as: To what extent has the STARS4Water dissemination information been useful (in the broader sense and/or for guiding a specific process)? Has the information been made available in a timely manner to effectively influence decision-making processes? Have the products reached both direct and indirect audiences in an efficient manner and were they easily accessible? Did the audience find the knowledge products useful? If not, why not? What could be done better next time? Was the communication clear and well structured? etc. Lessons from this feedback loop will be reflected and used to strengthen the antecedent dissemination efforts so that the information distributed to the various audiences is relevant and contributes to the learning and the enhancement of the global knowledge.

Within the consortium, and for keeping good track of all the activities (and thus identifying geographical spread on content related gaps), a high level of internal information exchange will be established, where partners will report on their communication and publicity activities to the appointed Dissemination Officer, based on a pre-defined template, who will gather, merge and transfer these reports to the Project Coordinator. An online form has been developed for this purpose.



SUPPORTING STAKEHOLDERS FOR ADAPTIVE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

Template for reporting the dissemination and communication activities

| | | |
|--|------------------------|---|
| Type of activities <i>(please select from the drop-down list)</i> | Choose an item. | Choose an item. Webpage Social media page Leaflet / brochure / flyer Scientific Publication General publication Organisation of Workshop/ Event Organisation of Webinar Organisation of Conference/ side session Presentation in a scientific event / conference Presentation in Workshop / Event Poster Exhibition Articles published in the popular press Oral presentation to a wider public Media briefing Press release Video Interview Thesis Documentary/ Film TV clip |
| Name of Partner leading the activity | | |
| Other partners involved in this activity | | |
| Title of the activity (or title of the publication) | | |
| Title of the event (if applicable) e.g. title of Conference | | |
| Location of the event (if applicable) e.g. Conference venue | | |
| Date (dd/mm/yyyy) | | |
| Type of target audience <i>(please mark with X)</i> <i>For a detailed description of the Target Audience please see Table 1 below</i> | | A1a: River basin hub stakeholders |
| | | A1b: River basin organisations and networks outside the hubs |
| | | A2: Science and research community |
| | | A3a: High-level Policy stakeholders |
| | | A3b: Environmental agencies and non-governmental organisations and networks |
| | | A4a: Consultants, SMEs |
| | | A4b: Economic sector stakeholders |
| | | - Agriculture |
| | | - Food and beverage sector |
| | | - Energy sector |
| | - Water utility sector | |
| | - Tourism sector | |
| | - Industry sector | |
| | | A5: General public |
| Size of audience | | |
| Countries addressed | | |
| Brief Description of the activity | | |

Figure 5: Template for reporting the dissemination and communication activities

6.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

For the evaluation of the dissemination and communication activities a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be used as presented in the Table below. Besides the monitoring and evaluation of dissemination and communication activities a special effort will be put into evaluation of the overall project impact. Within the last quarter of the project, the selected STARS4Water target audiences will be questioned about:

- Rating the accessibility to knowledge around (and related to the findings and results of) the STARS4Water project (based on various dissemination activities)
- Rating the transparency of the dissemination activities
- Rating the opportunity provided by the project to be involved in the STARS4Water community, the interaction with them as stakeholders during the implementation phase, the feedback loops.
- Rating the opportunity provided by the STARS4Water project for interaction with other end-users and exchange of knowledge.

From this feedback it will be possible to draw conclusions on the direct effects of the dissemination activities, although the real impact can only be evaluated in the longer term.

Table 6: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the dissemination and communication activities plan

| D&C Activities | KPIs |
|---|--|
| STARS4Water website | <i>Based on google analytics:</i> > 5,000 visitors > 20,000 pageviews > 50% new sessions > 40% bounce rate |
| Social media pages | > 60 followers > 40 post > 200 likes |
| General promotional/informational material (leaflets, brochures, presentations, posters, articles) | > 200 recipients > 1,000 leaflets/brochures > 3 articles in press |
| E-Newsletters | > 7 E-newsletters > 200 recipients |
| STARS4Water Final Conference | ~ 25 European RBOs at the Final Conference > 150 participants |
| Participatory Workshops in the 7 river basin hubs with the river basin communities | > 21 workshops > 200 participants |
| Training & capacity building activities (through the STARS4Water Academy) - curricula for river basin managers Webinars targeting stakeholders across and outside the 7 hubs | > 100 participants in the STARS4Water Academy webinars > 100 active users of the dashboards > 7 river basins are trained and are using co-designed dashboards to support their planning processes in next planning cycle, and 14 in the following planning cycle |

| D&C Activities | KPIs |
|--|---|
| | > 20 RBOs use the new data services, tools and/or indicators in their next round of planning for the WFD and/or Flood Directive |
| Interactive Stakeholders' Forum and Online Impact Reporter | > 100 participants in the Interactive Stakeholders' Forum > 25 RBOs besides the river basin hubs participating in the forum > 20 river basins report information on the Online Impact Reporter |
| Scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals | > 10 publications in peer-reviewed journals 1 special issue in a high-quality journal |
| Presentations/posters in international conferences | > 15 presentations in conferences |
| Training of researchers and students (through the STARS4Water Academy) - curricula for the scientific community | > 1,000 users/downloads of the data services, indicators > 100 users of the modelling tools ~ 250 participants in the STARS4Water Academy webinars |
| One-day seminar for policy-makers | > 50 stakeholders from national and EU policy level |
| Policy Briefs | Minimum 3 policy briefs > 100 recipients for each policy brief 1 dedicated policy brief on the ecological flow indicators to be send to the relevant CIS WG 1 presentation of STARS4Water results on the ecological flow indicators at one of the CIS meetings > 3 EU communications referencing STARS4Water key messages, tools and services |
| Layman's Report | 1 Layman's Report > 500 recipients |
| STARS4Water Documentary | 1 Documentary > 500 views |
| Networking with relevant initiatives (EU Green Deal, the CIS WGs, International agencies and organisations, etc.) including face-to-face briefings when deemed effective | > 10 initiatives |
| Customised communication material for SMEs, NGOs, CSOs, the general public | > 200 recipients |
| STARS4Water Future Exploitation Plan (ExP) | 1 ExP > 100 recipients |

6.3 Annual evaluation of the activities and KPIs (after year 1)

After the 1st year of implementation the following dissemination and communication activities have been completed:

Table 7: Overview of the D&C activities (up to date)

| D&C Activities, Mechanisms and Tools | Progress / Status |
|--|--|
| D&C-4-all: Portfolio of dissemination products addressed to all audiences/communities | |
| STARS4Water website | Website launched: www.stars4water.eu |
| Social media pages | LinkedIn STARS4Water group launched: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9243555/ |
| General promotional/informational material (leaflets, brochures, presentations, posters, articles) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflet No.1 distributed • Project presentation developed and presented in different events • Plan to submit a joint proposal with SOS-Water to the Horizon Results Booster/ Module A in July 2024 |
| E-Newsletters | Newsletter No.1 distributed |
| D&C-4-RBOs: Outreach, interaction and capacity building of the river basin practitioners communities | |
| Participatory Workshops in the 7 river basin hubs with the river basin communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Workshops on needs' assessment (one in each hub) • 5 Workshops on future scenarios and indicators • Concept and design for the Workshops on narratives, scenarios, and dashboards developed |
| Training & capacity building activities (through the STARS4Water Academy) - curricula for river basin managers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIBASIM training at Deltares (mid-2024) • Scoping for a webinar on "how to build narratives and scenarios relevant for assessing future vulnerabilities" • Video on Duero River Basin (content design: main characteristics, status of water bodies, basin issues and challenges related to water management today and in the near future) • Survey on the Duero River Basin regarding the main water management challenges in the future (101 respondents) |
| Interactive Stakeholders' Forum and Online Impact Reporter (OIR) | Discussion on potential concepts/versions of the OIR held |
| D&C-4-science: Dissemination to the Scientific and Research Community | |
| Scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing discussion with the Nature Sustainability Journal about publishing a Special Issue |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 publication³ |
| Presentations/posters in international conferences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EGU Vienna, April 2023⁴ • EurAqua Annual Meeting, Oslo, June 2023 • STARS4Water Special Session on “Stakeholder-driven unlocking of data for river basin management” at the 40th IAHR World Congress, Vienna, August 2023 • IAH 50th Worldwide Groundwater Congress, Cape Town, South Africa, September 2023⁵ • UNECE Global Workshop on Droughts in Transboundary Basins, Geneva, February 2024 • EGU Vienna, April 2024^{6,7} • Planned (accepted): Stockholm World Water Week, August 2024 • INBO Conference, October 2024 |
| Training of researchers and students (through the STARS4Water Academy) - curricula for the scientific community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop on Machine Learning at INRAE (24-25th April 2024) • RIBASIM training at Deltares (mid-2024) |
| D&C-4-policy: Linking Science and Innovation to the Decision and Policy-Making function | |
| Networking with relevant initiatives (EU Green Deal, the CIS WGs, International agencies and organisations, etc.) including face-to-face briefings when deemed effective | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synergies with SOS-Water established • Collaboration with JRC |
| D&C-4-business: Future exploitation and sustainability | |
| STARS4Water Future Exploitation Plan (Exp) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to submit a joint proposal with SOS-Water to the Horizon Results Booster/ Module A in July 2024 • Plan for inclusiveness: gender dimension and young professionals under development |

³ Gómez-Escalonilla V, Heredia J, Martínez-Santos P, López-Gutiérrez J, De la Hera-Portillo A (2024). [Modelling regional effects of artificial groundwater recharge in a multilayer aquifer characterized by perched water tables](#). Hydrological Processes, DOI: 10.1002/hyp.15085

⁴ Purnamasari, D., ter Maat, J., J. Teuling, A., and Weerts, A. (2023). [Modelling current and future water resources availability of the river Rhine](#). EGU General Assembly 2023, Vienna, Austria, 24–28 Apr 2023, EGU23-14518, <https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu23-14518>, 2023.

⁵ Pacios D, Coletto I, Verzier P, Gómez-Escalonilla V, Martínez-Santos P (2023). Machine learning as a tool to improve groundwater monitoring networks. 50th IAH Congress. Cape Town, South Africa. 18-22 September 2023

⁶ Hsu, S.-C., de Lavenne, A., Andréassian, V., Rabah, A., and Ramos, M.-H.: [Better mapping of groundwater-surface water exchanges over the Seine River catchment in a surface hydrological model](#). EGU General Assembly 2024, Vienna, Austria, 14–19 Apr 2024, EGU24-15833, <https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu24-15833>, 2024.

⁷ Gómez-Escalonilla, V., Martínez-Santos, P., Pacios, D., Ruíz-Álvarez, L., Díaz-Alcaide, S., Montero-González, E., Martín-Loeches, M., and De la Hera-Portillo, Á.: [Nitrate spatial predictions by means of machine learning to improve groundwater monitoring networks](#), EGU General Assembly 2024, Vienna, Austria, 14–19 Apr 2024, EGU24-10066, <https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu24-10066>, 2024.

The dissemination and communication activities' Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that have been reached up to date are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the dissemination and communication activities (values reached up to date)

| D&C Activities | KPIs |
|--|--|
| STARS4Water website | <i>Based on google analytics⁸:</i> 1,076 users 4,602 views 58.05% new sessions 47.14% bounce rate |
| Social media pages | 63 members on the LinkedIn STARS4Water Group 8 posts 151 Reactions 939 Views 4,756 Impressions |
| General promotional/informational material (leaflets, brochures, presentations, posters, articles) | 1 Leaflet (wide distribution through website, LinkedIn, emails) |
| E-Newsletters | 1 e-Newsletter > 200 recipients |
| Participatory Workshops in the 7 river basin hubs with the river basin communities | 12 workshops > 100 participants |
| Scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals | 1 publication in peer-reviewed journals |
| Presentations/posters in international conferences | 9 presentations in conferences |
| Networking with relevant initiatives (EU Green Deal, the CIS WGs, International agencies and organisations, etc.) including face-to-face briefings when deemed effective | 7 Initiatives: 1. SOS-Water 2. International Commission for the Hydrology of the Rhine basin (CHR) 3. International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine (ICPR) Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) 4. European Network of Freshwater Research Organisations (EurAqua) 5. BIOEAST Initiative - Thematic Working Group on Freshwater-based bioeconomy / Fresh Water Net |

The specific performance metrics for the STARS4Water website and LinkedIn Groups reached up to date are presented in the following tables (Tables 9 – 14).

⁸ For definitions see Table 9 below

Table 9: STARS4Water website metrics (up to date) (Source: Google Analytics)

Benchmark values are provided in the footnotes. A colour coding has been used to mark performance status (where feasible): green denotes a high performance, yellow is satisfactory, and orange denotes a low performance.

| Website Metrics | Definition | Value |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Users | The number of distinct active users who visited the STARS4Water website. An active user is any user who has an engaged session or when Analytics collects the first visit event or engagement time msec parameter from a website | 1,076 ⁹ |
| New users | The number of users who interacted with your site or launched your app for the first time (event triggered: first_open) | 1,074 |
| Returning users | The number of unique users who initiated at least one previous session, regardless of whether or not the previous session was an engaged session, in the specified date range. | 203 |
| Average engagement time | Average engagement time per active user for the time period selected. | 1m 21sec |
| Sessions | The number of sessions that began on the website | 1,850 |
| New sessions rate | Percentage of sessions that are generated by new users who have not previously visited the website (% new sessions: new users / total sessions) | 58.05% ¹⁰ |
| Average session duration | The average duration (in seconds) of users' sessions | 3m 50sec ¹¹ |
| Engaged sessions | The number of sessions that lasted longer than 10 seconds, or had a conversion event, or had 2 or more screen or page views | 978 |
| Engagement rate | The percentage of engaged sessions (Engaged sessions divided by Sessions) | 52.86% ¹² |
| Bounce rate | The percentage of sessions that were not engaged sessions | 47.14% ¹³ |
| Sessions per user | The average number of sessions per user | 1.72 |
| Engaged sessions per user | The average number of engaged sessions per user | 0.91 |
| Average engagement time per session | The average engagement time (i.e. time that the STARS4Water website was in focus in a user's browser) per session for active users | 0m 45sec |
| Views | The number of webpages the users saw. Repeated views of a single page are counted | 4,602 ¹⁴ |
| Views per session | The number of webpages the users viewed per session. Repeated views of a single page are counted | 2.49 ¹⁵ |

⁹ 21.5% of the target set at the end of the project is already reached

¹⁰ A good site will have a healthy mix of new and returning site visitors, and this mix will vary depending on the site goals, business and industry. A range of 45% - 75% is often encountered (Source: <https://www.spinutech.com/digital-marketing/analytics/analysis/7-website-analytics-that-matter-most/>). Our target was set at 50% and so far it has been reached

¹¹ For a good average session duration, the industry standard is 2-3 minutes (Source: <https://www.spinutech.com/digital-marketing/analytics/analysis/7-website-analytics-that-matter-most/>). Average session duration benchmark values by industry type: engineering 3 mins, environmental services 2 mins 41 sec, software development 2 mins 38sec (Source: <https://firstpagesage.com/reports/average-session-duration-by-industry/>). Based on [Databox's Benchmark Groups - Google Analytics 4 Industry Benchmarks for 2023](#), the median average session duration was 2min 38sec

¹² Based on [Databox's Benchmark Groups - Google Analytics 4 Industry Benchmarks for 2023](#), the median engagement rate across different industries was 56.23%

¹³ The average bounce rate ranges between 26% and 70% regardless of the industry (Source: <https://www.webfx.com/analytics/glossary/what-is-bounce-rate/>). According to [BusinessDIT](#), the average bounce rate regardless of industry is 55.43%. According to a study by Statista, the average bounce rate for websites is 47% (Source: <https://www.businessdit.com/bounce-rate-benchmarks/#source>). A bounce rate between 26% and 40% is considered very good (Source: <https://capturly.com/blog/average-bounce-rate-by-industry-2023-benchmark/>). Based on [Databox's Benchmark Groups - Google Analytics 4 Industry Benchmarks for 2023](#), the median bounce rate across different industries was 44.82%.

¹⁴ 23% of the target set at the end of the project is already reached

¹⁵ The unofficial industry standard is 2 pages per session (Source: <https://www.spinutech.com/digital-marketing/analytics/analysis/7-website-analytics-that-matter-most/>)

| Website Metrics | Definition | Value |
|----------------------------|--|--------|
| Views per user | The average number of webpages viewed per user | 4.28 |
| Event count | The number of times users triggered an event | 12,153 |
| Events per session | The average number of events per session | 6.57 |
| Events per user | The average number of events per user | 11.9 |
| First visits | The number of times your users opened your website for the first time | 1,074 |
| Event count: file_download | The number of times users triggered the specific event "file_download" (public deliverable, project presentations, publications) | 197 |

Table 10: STARS4Water website traffic: up to date country demographics from the 15 countries with the most users (Source: Google Analytics)

| # | Country name | Users | Returning users | Sessions | Engaged sessions | Engagement rate | Bounce rate | Engaged sessions per user | Average engagement time | Views | Views per user |
|----|--------------|-------|-----------------|----------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | Netherlands | 177 | 49 | 420 | 249 | 59.29% | 40.71% | 1.41 | 1m 41s | 920 | 5.2 |
| 2 | Ireland | 107 | 0 | 106 | 9 | 8.49% | 91.51% | 0.08 | 0s | 116 | 1.08 |
| 3 | Greece | 102 | 23 | 281 | 193 | 68.68% | 31.32% | 1.89 | 3m 34s | 1,393 | 13.66 |
| 4 | France | 101 | 23 | 173 | 82 | 47.40% | 52.60% | 0.81 | 1m 13s | 319 | 3.16 |
| 5 | US | 89 | 4 | 94 | 14 | 14.89% | 85.11% | 0.16 | 5s | 102 | 1.15 |
| 6 | Austria | 70 | 11 | 103 | 55 | 53.40% | 46.60% | 0.79 | 1m 12s | 246 | 3.51 |
| 7 | UK | 70 | 18 | 105 | 59 | 56.19% | 43.81% | 0.84 | 1m 01s | 222 | 3.17 |
| 8 | Spain | 60 | 16 | 115 | 73 | 63.48% | 36.52% | 1.22 | 1m 49s | 279 | 4.65 |
| 9 | Finland | 55 | 0 | 55 | 11 | 20% | 80% | 0.2 | 6s | 59 | 1.07 |
| 10 | Germany | 49 | 16 | 87 | 57 | 65.52% | 34.48% | 1.16 | 1m 10s | 244 | 4.98 |
| 11 | Norway | 43 | 14 | 84 | 55 | 65.48% | 34.52% | 1.28 | 1m 50s | 205 | 4.77 |
| 12 | Italy | 22 | 1 | 23 | 19 | 82.61% | 17.39% | 0.86 | 1m 37s | 73 | 3.32 |
| 13 | Romania | 19 | 9 | 38 | 18 | 47.37% | 52.63% | 0.95 | 42s | 71 | 3.74 |
| 14 | China | 18 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 0% | 100% | 0 | 0s | 18 | 1 |
| 15 | Poland | 17 | 8 | 36 | 19 | 52.78% | 47.22% | 1.12 | 2m 30s | 75 | 4.41 |

Table 11: STARS4Water website traffic: the 20 most visited pages at the end of year 1 (Source: Google Analytics)

| # | STARS4Water Webpage | Views | Users |
|----|-------------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1 | /home | 1,911 | 796 |
| 2 | /about/ | 371 | 244 |
| 3 | /our-7-hubs/ | 361 | 204 |
| 4 | /partners/ | 328 | 230 |
| 5 | /output/public-deliverables/ | 162 | 91 |
| 6 | /news-and-events/ | 147 | 64 |
| 7 | /stars4water-metadata-portal/ | 102 | 56 |
| 8 | /contact/ | 91 | 69 |
| 9 | /stakeholder-forum/ | 78 | 63 |
| 10 | /news/ | 74 | 38 |
| 11 | /output/ | 72 | 57 |

| # | STARS4Water Webpage | Views | Users |
|----|--|-------|-------|
| 12 | /our-7-hubs/drammen-river-basin-hub/ | 68 | 40 |
| 13 | /our-7-hubs/lower-danube-river-basin-hub/ | 66 | 40 |
| 14 | /our-7-hubs/rhine-river-basin-hub/ | 65 | 37 |
| 15 | /stars4water-newsletter-1/ | 65 | 45 |
| 16 | /academy/ | 64 | 56 |
| 17 | /our-7-hubs/duero-river-basin-hub/ | 64 | 37 |
| 18 | /output/project-presentations/ | 52 | 39 |
| 19 | /our-7-hubs/messara-river-basin-hub/ | 46 | 18 |
| 20 | /our-7-hubs/anglian-water-river-basin-hub/ | 44 | 28 |

To evaluate the success of our website timeseries of metrics that provide insights into user acquisition, engagement, and behavior trends have been used. These metrics include monthly growth metrics and engagement metrics.

Growth Metrics

Cumulative New Users: The total number of new users acquired. up to each month. Tracking this on a month-to-month basis shows the growth trend of our user base. The current growth trend is 83 new users per month on average, which is considered a good growth rate. The monthly growth is presented in Figure 6 below.

Monthly New Users Growth Rate: Measures the month-over-month percentage increase in new users. This metric helps assess how quickly we're attracting new users. [Formula: $(NewUsersCurrentMonth - NewUsersPreviousMonth) / NewUsersPreviousMonth \times 100$]. As with many metrics, website traffic growth will vary widely based on website stage and audience and industry. However, a monthly growth rate of 10-20% is generally considered a good benchmark (Source: [Geckoboard KPI examples](#)). Month-over-month (MoM) growth rates of 5% to 10% can be considered healthy for early-stage websites. Established sites might aim for 2% to 5% growth. During its 1st year of operation, the STARS4Water website average monthly growth rate is 25%, ranging from 9% (i.e. in December 2023) up to 59% (i.e. in April 2023).

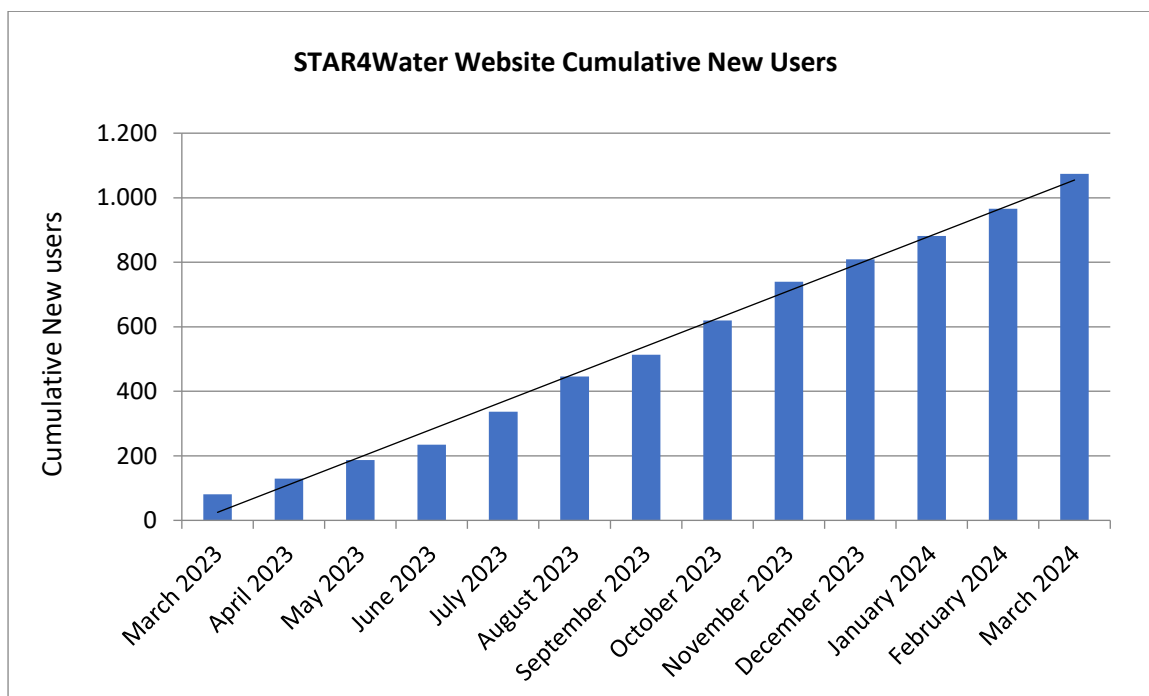


Figure 7: Cumulative new users of the STARS4Water website, for the period March 2023 to March 2024

Engagement Metrics

User Retention Rate: The percentage of new users who return to the website after their first visit. [Formula: (Users_who returned in the following month / NewUsers_in the base month)×100]. This is crucial for understanding long-term engagement. During its 1st year of operation, the STARS4Water website average user return rate is 31.4%, ranging from 18.6% (i.e. in August 2023) up to 43.5% (i.e. in January 2024) (see Figure 8).

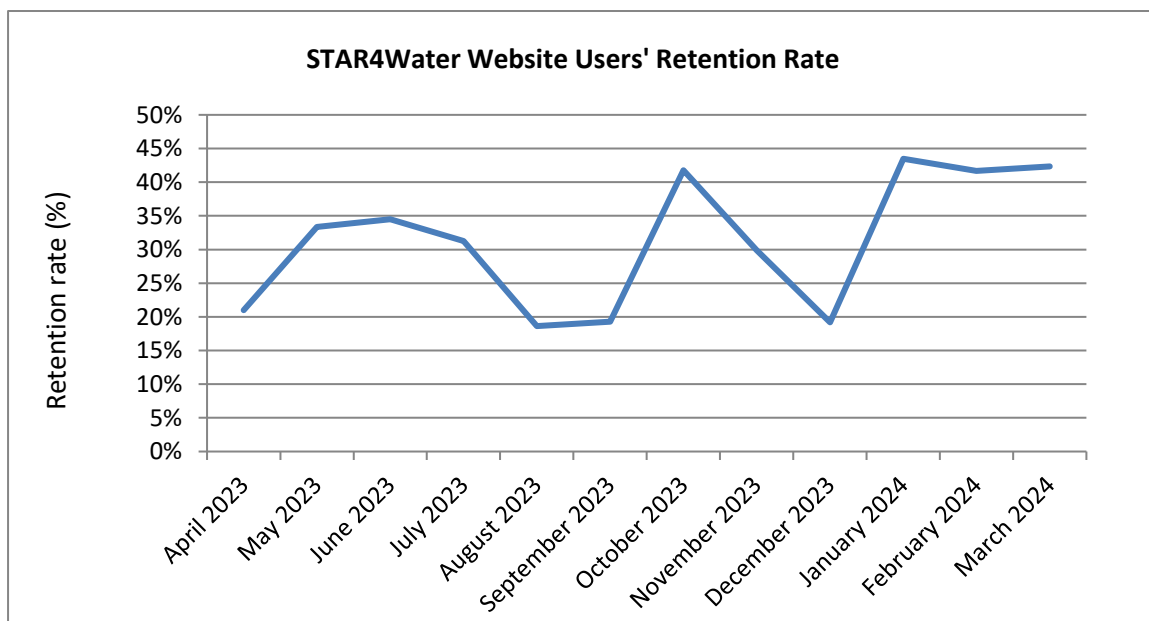


Figure 8: STARS4Water website users' retention rate (per month), for the period March 2023 to March

Engagement rate: The percentage of engaged session. An engaged session is defined as a session that lasted longer than 10 seconds, or had a conversion event, or had 2 or more screen or page views. Higher the engagement rates mean that the users found interesting content on the website that triggered them to stay longer and/or navigate through more than 2 pages. "Good" engagement rate varies based on the nature of the product or service, the ultimate business goals, the industry type, and the target audience. Based on [Databox's Benchmark Groups - Google Analytics 4 Industry Benchmarks for 2023](#), the median engagement rate across different industries was 56.23%. Specific industries: Consulting & Professional Services 52.43%, Information Technology & Services 52.64%, Technology 54.71%. During its 1st year of operation, the STARS4Water website average engagement rate is 52.86%. The website homepage had an exceptionally good engagement rate of 62.9%, as well as the /stars4water-newsletter-1 page (74.24% engagement rate).

Bounce rate: A bounce is a single-page session on the website. In Google Analytics, a bounce is calculated specifically as a session that triggers only a single request to the Analytics server, such as when a user opens a single page on the site and then exits without triggering any other requests to the Analytics server during that session. The average bounce rate ranges between 26% and 70% regardless of the industry (Source: <https://www.webfx.com/analytics/glossary/what-is-bounce-rate/>). According to [BusinessDIT](#), the average bounce rate regardless of industry is 55.43%. According to a study by Statista, the average bounce rate for websites is 47% (Source: <https://www.businessdit.com/bounce-rate-benchmarks/#source>). A bounce rate between 26% and 40% is considered very good (Source: <https://capturly.com/blog/average-bounce-rate-by-industry-2023-benchmark/>). Based on [Databox's Benchmark Groups - Google Analytics 4 Industry Benchmarks for 2023](#), the median bounce rate across different industries was 44.82%. Specific industries: Consulting & Professional Services 49.47%, Information Technology & Services 48.22%, Technology 48.02%. During its 1st year of operation, the STARS4Water website average engagement rate is 47.14%. Some specific STARS4Water pages had exceptionally good bounce rates: /news 15%, /stars4water-metadata-portal 25.7%, /event 26%, /stars4water-metadata-portal 36.6%, /homepage 37%.

Average Session Duration: The average duration (in seconds) of users' sessions. Higher durations usually denote an engaging content and/or user interest. For a good average session duration, the industry standard is 2-3 minutes (Source: <https://www.spinutech.com/digital-marketing/analytics/analysis/7-website-analytics-that-matter-most/>). Average session duration benchmark values range by industry type: engineering 3 mins, environmental services 2 mins 41 sec, software development 2 mins 38sec (Source: <https://firstpagesage.com/reports/average-session-duration-by-industry/>). Based on [Databox's Benchmark Groups - Google Analytics 4 Industry Benchmarks for 2023](#), the median average session duration was 2min 38sec. Specific industries: Consulting & Professional Services 2min 35sec, Information Technology & Services 2min 42sec Technology 2min 46sec. During its 1st year of operation, the STARS4Water website average session duration is 3mins 50sec.

The LinkedIn STARS4Water Group has currently 71 members, which has already exceeded our project target of 60 members (i.e. 118% achieved so far). To evaluate the relevance of our LinkedIn STARS4Water Group audience, the members' demographics have been analysed as presented below (per affiliation category, work field, gender). The members' affiliations are deemed very relevant to the STARS4Water project verifying that the correct target audience has been reached (i.e. 60.6% work on water resources and hydrology). A fair gender balance is also achieved, yet needs to be further

improved (currently 32.4% females, 67.6% males). The present female representation in the most dominant affiliation of “Scientist / Researcher / Modeler” is very satisfactory (i.e. 42.3%).

Table 12: LinkedIn STARS4Water Group members’ demographics: per title/ affiliation category

| Title/ Affiliation category | % |
|--|-------|
| Scientist / Researcher / Modeler | 36.6% |
| Director/ Research Manager / Project Manager | 32.4% |
| Expert / Advisor | 12.7% |
| Professor/ Lecturer | 8.5% |
| Engineer | 5.6% |
| Economist | 2.8% |
| Consultant | 1.4% |

Table 13: LinkedIn STARS4Water Group members’ demographics: per industry/ work field

| Industry / Work Field | % ¹⁶ |
|---|-----------------|
| Water Resources/ Hygrology | 60.6% |
| Environment/ Ecology | 12.7% |
| Computer science/ Data science / AI | 8.5% |
| Climate / Meteorology | 7.0% |
| Geology | 4.2% |
| Stakeholders Engagement / Facilitation | 4.2% |
| Natural Resources | 2.8% |
| Natural Sciences | 2.8% |
| Information and Technology/ Information Systems/ Monitoring Systems | 2.8% |
| Remote Sensing | 1.4% |
| Water Policy / Policy | 1.4% |
| Marine and Coastal Engineer | 1.4% |
| Agriculture | 1.4% |
| Energy | 1.4% |
| Social Sciences | 1.4% |

Table 14: LinkedIn STARS4Water Group members’ demographics: per gender

| Gender group | % |
|--------------|-------|
| Female | 32.4% |
| Male | 67.6% |

¹⁶ Note: the sum of all categories may be more than 100% as some members are working in more than one relevant fields

7 Dissemination products' Quality and Standards

7.1 Corporate design, Identity

STARS4Water has adopted a corporate identity which to the appearance and visibility of a project towards the outside. The benefit is a clear visibility, identification and association of the project with certain (positive) properties, transparency of its objectives, etc. Corporate behaviour in the framework of our project facilitates the development of the STARS4Water into a quality label and makes it visible to the outside.

The following corporate elements have been developed (or are underway):

- Logo applications (in different colours and formats) for newsletters, brochures, reports, presentations, and other dissemination materials (Figure 9)
- A ppt-template (Figure 10)
- A Report template (Figure 11)

All communication tools and materials (e.g. website, brochures, folders, reports, briefs etc.) are and will be developed according to the STARS4Water Corporate Design. All partners will adhere to the given design and will use it for all applied dissemination activities. This corporate design creates a strong and clear image. As a consequence, target groups as well as the general public are less likely to forget the project.



Figure 9: The STARS4Water logo

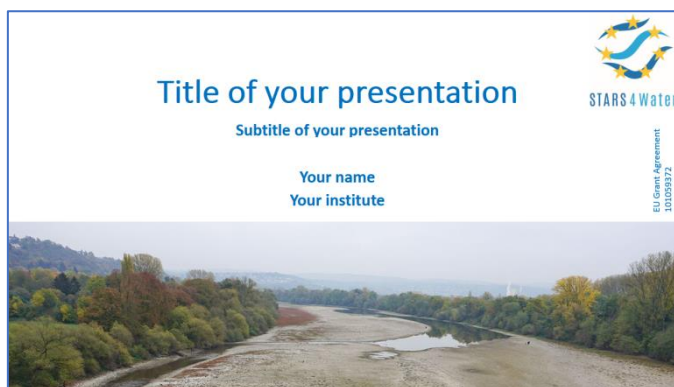


Figure 10: The STARS4Water ppt template

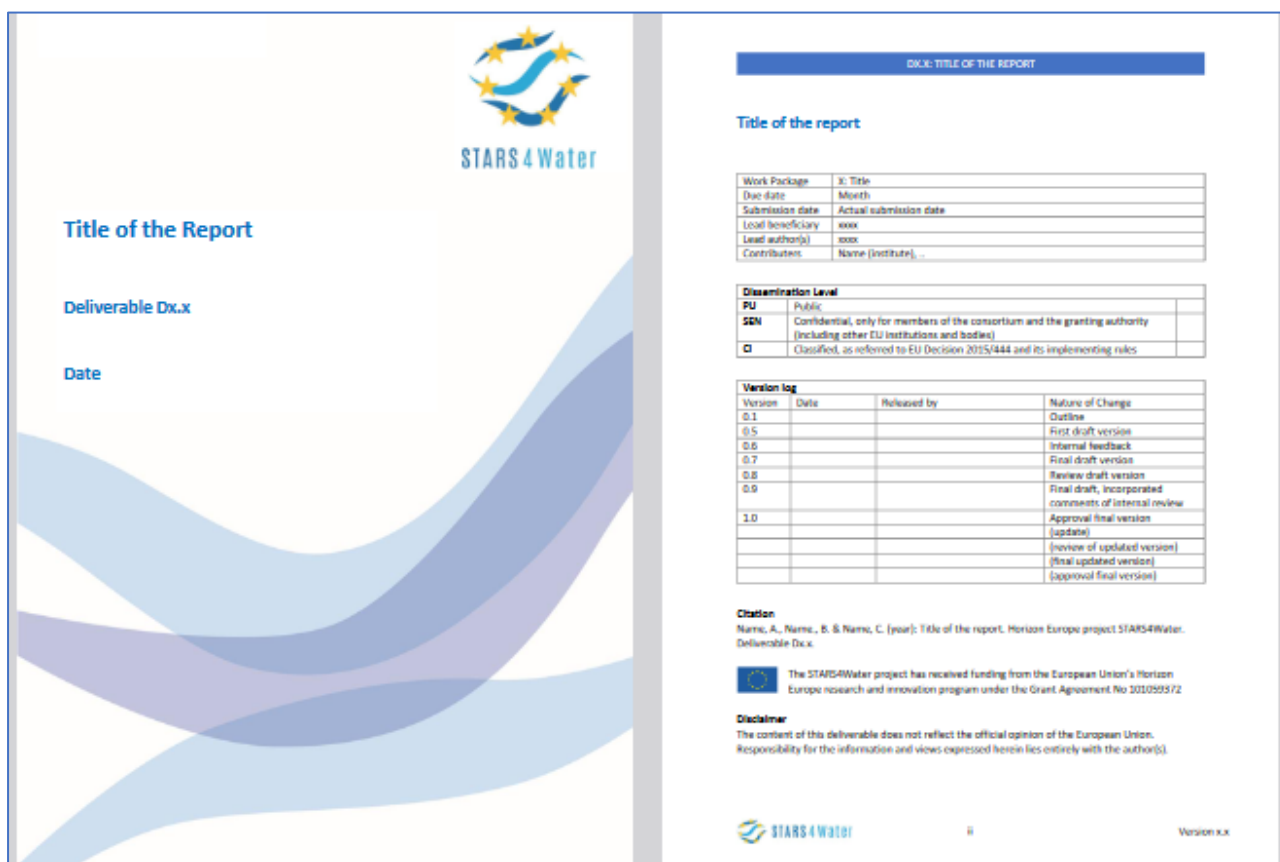


Figure 11: The STARS4Water report template

7.2 Quality control

To ensure that all dissemination products are of high quality some minimum standards have been set. The basic standard is to ensure and maximize the Quality, Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity of the information disseminated by the STARS4Water. Objectivity involves both the presentation and substance. Objective presentation entails that the information is presented within a proper context to ensure an accurate, clear, complete, and unbiased presentation. Objective substance means that the data, the analytical process, and the resulting reports are accurate, reliable, and unbiased. The utility of information refers to its usefulness for the intended users. Integrity refers to the security of

information, i.e. the protection of information from unauthorized access or revision. Integrity helps ensure that the information is not compromised through unauthorized revision, falsification, corruption, and intentional or inadvertent destruction.

The following guidelines have been set:

- Adopt the basic standard of quality (including objectivity, utility, and integrity) as a performance goal for all information that is disseminated.
- Review the quality of information before dissemination, with appropriate oversight by the Dissemination Officer. Internal peer will be used for that purpose, with at least 1 additional person been involved as reviewer.
- Proper citation and referencing is always required. Since dissemination products may integrate news, posts, etc., originating for various sources, referencing rules are strict.
- Always seek up-to-date information that will trigger the target audience, as a general principle.
- Appearance should comply with the STARS4Water corporate design.
- Allow and facilitate audiences' review: recipients may seek and obtain, where appropriate, timely correction of information maintained and disseminated. Their enquiry should be sent in via email.

7.3 Acknowledgements

All dissemination products will acknowledge the funding received by EU Commission will follow the publicity rules set by H2020, and will be compliant with the relevant dissemination rules and guidelines. Additional acknowledgements, where applicable, should be clear and visible.

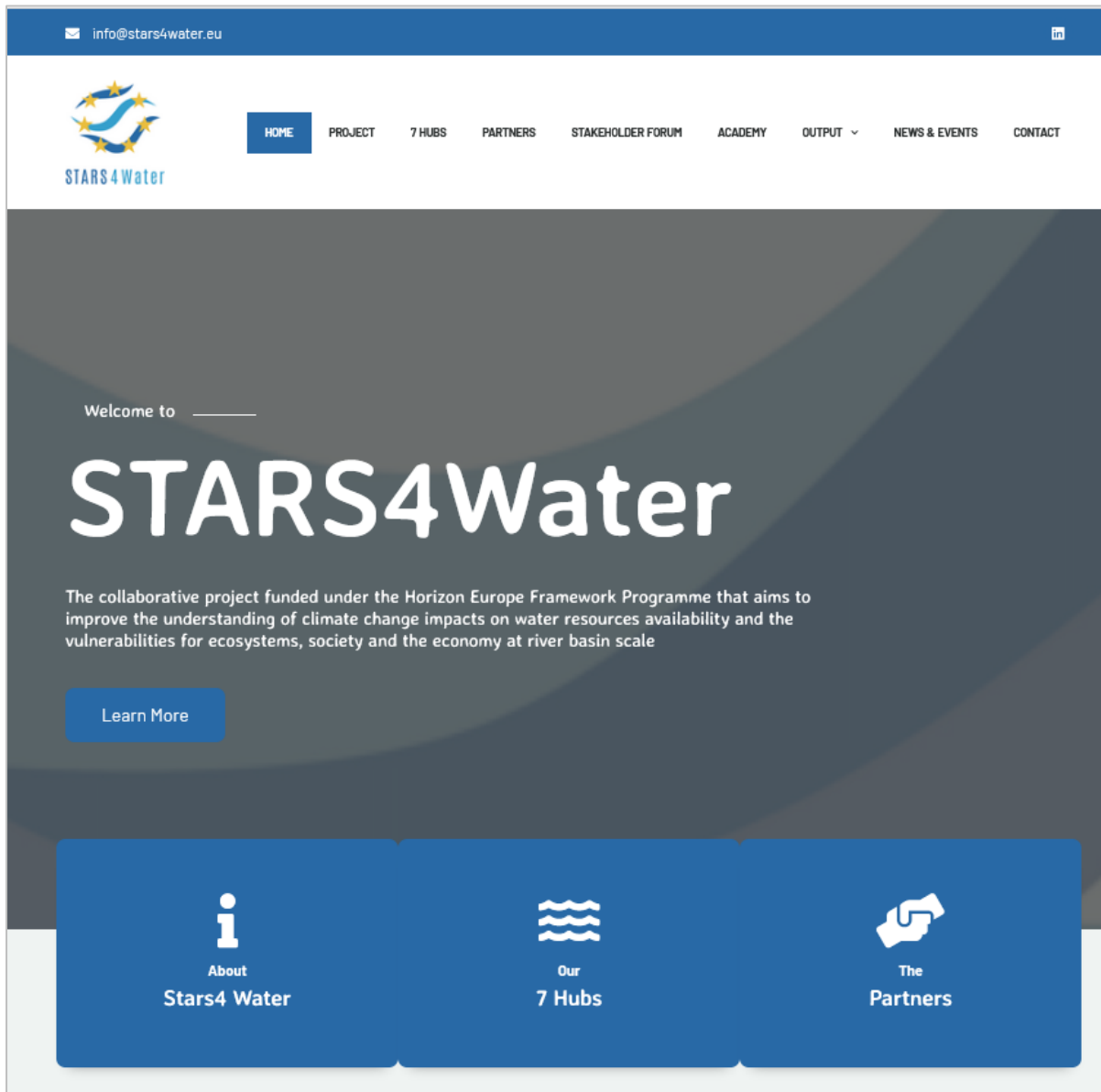
8 References

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- Capturly: <https://capturly.com/blog/average-bounce-rate-by-industry-2023-benchmark/>

ANNEX 1: Snapshots of the STARS4Water website



Latest News


News and Articles



Reducing micropollutants in the Rhine catchment area

The programme "Rhine 2047", which was adopted by the Conference of Rhine Ministers on 15.02.2020, states that the "To Do of..."

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With our own words

What Our People Say

Jan Kruiswijk
Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management - @kwaterraad


The STARS4Water Consortium

Maggie Konzide
EVEN


Share information

Our Forum & Deliverables

Join our **Stakeholder Forum** to exchange views with other stakeholders in the 7 river basin hubs and beyond on challenges related to the implementation of River Basin Management Plans under climate change. Learn more about the STARS4Water next generation tools and data service for better supporting decision making and planning on actions for adaptive, resilient and sustainable management of freshwater resources at the basin scale. Share your reports and



Stakeholders Forum





STARS 4 Water

- HOME
- PROJECT
- 7 HUBS
- PARTNERS
- STAKEHOLDER FORUM
- ACADEMY
- OUTPUT ▾
- NEWS & EVENTS
- CONTACT


Our 7 hubs

STARS4Water will build the next generation river basin tools and services that support decision-making on water resources management in 7 River Basin Hubs. These river basin hubs serve as living labs for co-creation of data services and tools with stakeholder communities and as accelerators for further up-scaling of these services and tools to other river basins worldwide.


Each river basin hub has a direct beneficiary River Basin organisation (RBO) that will be the primary user of the products and services of the project (but not limited to them) and who has strong institutional connections and relationships with other governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations (e.g. water utilities, nature conservation organisations, civil society organisations) and private sector organisations (e.g. farmers associations, food and beverage industry, energy sector), who can also become users of the products and services when interested.

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Drammen (NO) | East Anglia (UK) | Duero (ES) |
| Rhine (International) | | Seine (FR) |
| Messara (GR) | Danube (International) | |











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Messara river basin hub

At a glance


-  650 mm
annual rainfall
-  45,000
inhabitants
-  29,108
cultivated hectares
-  1,400
groundwater wells
-  63 million m³ / year
groundwater abstraction




Water users:




Domestic



Agriculture




Industry






Tourism




Water demand in Messara = 78 million m³/year




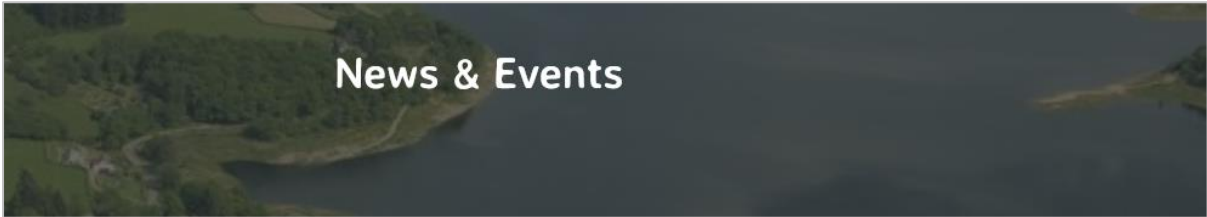
Main challenges exacerbated by climate change:

- Natural water resources availability, both groundwater and surface water, is decreasing
- Groundwater resources are mostly threatened by over-abstraction, with some groundwater bodies being already in poor chemical and quantitative states and with up to 40% drop-downs in the groundwater levels
- Changing precipitation and evapotranspiration patterns drive changes in the springs' outflow, environmental flows, and in the crop water needs, leading to increased water demands which cannot be met by the current water supply and infrastructure
- Drought and water scarcity risk are increasing, and thus water user conflicts may be exacerbated, posing the need for robust water allocation schemes
- Seawater intrusion at the southern end, soil degradation and salinization





News & Events

Upcoming Events

April 2023

APR
19

19 April 2023

STARS4Water Stakeholders Workshop on the Danube hub

STARS4Water will hold its 1st Workshop with the stakeholders of the Danube River Basin in Vienna (AT) on the 19th of April 2023. The aim of the STARS4Water Workshop is [...]

[Find out more](#)



Past Events

February 2023

FEB
15

15 February 2023

STARS4Water Stakeholders Workshop on the Seine hub

STARS4Water held its 1st Workshop with the EPTB Seine Grands Lacs, stakeholders in the Seine River Basin, in Paris (FR) on the 15th of February 2023. The aim of the [...]

[Find out more](#)



March 2023

MAR
23

23 March 2023

STARS4Water Stakeholders Workshop on the East Anglia hub

STARS4Water will hold its 1st Workshop with the stakeholders of the East Anglia region in Huntingdon (UK) on the 23rd of March 2023. The Workshop will be held back-to-back with [...]

[Find out more](#)



ANNEX 2: STARS4Water Leaflet



SUPPORTING STAKEHOLDERS FOR ADAPTIVE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

THE PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Title: SUPPORTING STAKEHOLDERS FOR ADAPTIVE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT (STARS4WATER)
Instrument: HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01 , EUROPEAN RESEARCH EXECUTIVE AGENCY
Total Cost: 4,584,730 €
EC Contribution: 4,580,979 €
Duration: 48 MONTHS
Start Date: October 1st, 2022
Consortium: 21 partners from 10 countries
Project Coordinator: Stichting Deltares
Project Web Site: www.stars4water.eu (under construction); <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101059372>
Key Words: Water resources, Catchment scale water management, Climate change adaptation, Water-climate interactions, Risk and vulnerabilities assessment, Data-driven models, Decision making tools, Information systems, Stakeholders engagement, River Basin Organisation. Living-lab approach

THE CHALLENGE

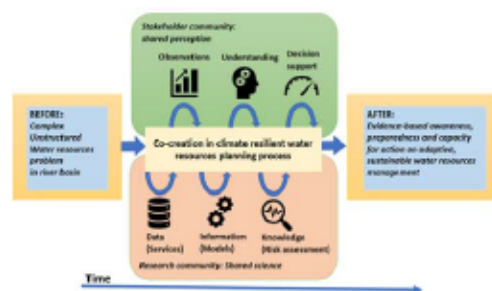
Worldwide freshwater resources are under increasing pressures of rapidly intensifying climate change effects, putting the availability and quality of water resources and socio-economic developments at risk. Better quantitative assessments and projections of the impacts and water-related risks for society, ecology and economic sectors are needed. River basin organisations need to be prepared!

New datasets and models offer possibilities for improved understanding and projections on water resources availability and vulnerabilities, while the new insights on the links between water, nature, and society call for a broader set of tools to be used for decision-making on water management. Recent advancements have opened new approaches in modelling, combining process-based or empirical modelling with new data techniques, like machine learning discovery techniques, resulting in hybrid approaches. Recent global observation studies and data collections, in cooperation with relevant EU earth observation initiatives, have created new climate data services and provide significant potential for improving the accuracy and spatial resolution of models. Yet, it is noted that these advancements are mainly still in the scientific domain. These novel tools (data-driven models, advanced data services, digital dashboards, etc.) are not yet fully matured and integrated in the current river basin management tools and decision-making processes. Their uptake and use by water resources planners and the stakeholders at the basin level are underexploited, even in frontrunner basins like the Rhine or Danube.

THE STARS4WATER CONTRIBUTION

STARS4Water aims to improve the understanding of climate change impacts on water resources availability and the vulnerabilities for ecosystems, society and the economy at river basin scale, including two distinctive elements: first, the need for an international stakeholder community to address their specific needs and requirements. Second, the development and application of innovative data services, models, tools.

STARS4Water will develop and deliver new data services and data driven models for better decision-making support on planning actions for adaptive, resilient and sustainable management of fresh water resources, which will be co-designed with stakeholders to meet their needs, ensuring their relevance and uptake beyond the lifetime of the project. Following a process of co-creation we aim to capacitate stakeholders with next generation river basin tools and build a strong Community of Practice.



STARS4WATER SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

STARS4Water will build the next generation river basin tools and services that support decision-making on water resources management in **7 River Basin Hubs**. These river basin hubs serve as living labs for co-creation of data services and tools with stakeholder communities and as accelerators for further up-scaling of these services and tools to other river basins worldwide.

The 7 river basin hubs represent a regionally diverse portfolio of climate vulnerabilities and adaptation needs across sectors and include the basins of: Drammen (NO), East Anglia (UK), Rhine (international), Danube (international), Seine (FR), Duero (ES), Messara (GR). Each river basin hub has a direct beneficiary River Basin organisation (RBO) that will be the primary user of the products and services of the project (but not limited to them) and who has strong institutional connections and relationships with other governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations (e.g. water utilities, nature conservation organisations, civil society organisations) and private sector organisations (e.g. farmers associations, food and beverage industry, energy sector), who can also become users of the products and services when interested.



The STARS4Water has 5 Specific Objectives:

1. Provide stakeholders with new generation data services and data-driven models tailored to their needs and requirements

- New data services and data-driven models will be developed in the 7 river Basin hubs, advanced to TRL 5-6. Each of the new data services and modeling tools will be validated in at least one of the River Basin hubs

2. Improve accuracy and resolution of regional-scale projections of water resources availability, from 10 to 1 km² grids

- Application of data science techniques, using the full potential of data from existing monitoring and observation frameworks. The improved future projections will be made available through a portal of a metadata platform

3. Enhance the knowledge base and the scientific underpinning of climate risks and impacts, in various scenarios and time horizons

- The new data services and tools will be applied in projections of climate and socio-economic changes under 3 scenarios (2030-2050). The projections will be used to define the safe operating space for water availability and ecological requirements, enabling the stakeholders to define actions for sustainable management and climate resilience

4. Improve stakeholders' decision-making through the development of dashboards: co-designed & co-developed information systems

- The dashboards will present climate impacts on water resources and hydrological extremes at river basin scale, to support stakeholders in better assessments of strategies by incorporating decision-support indicators on safe operating space, extreme events, water-energy-food nexus, water supply impacts

5. Promote uptake and transferability of the data services & tools through guidance documents and capacity building activities

- Uptake will be achieved through establishing a network of water planners and practitioners (Community of Practice) and data service platforms, starting from the 7 river hubs. Complemented by the STARS4Water Academy and Stakeholders Forum

EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND PROJECT IMPACT

The project will have substantial impact on the following expected outcomes:

- i) Enhancement of the knowledge base regarding water related climate change impacts, vulnerability, risk and adaptation assessments in Europe and abroad;
- ii) Improved understanding of future water vulnerabilities, including both water quantity and quality aspects, by better considering the interactions among climate change and variability, land surface and groundwater hydrology, water engineering, and human systems, including societal adaptations to water scarcity;
- iii) Supporting decision makers defining the safe operating space in terms of water quantity and availability, i.e., defining sustainable water management and climate change adaptation measures, meeting growing water supply, food, and energy needs, and controlling the high inter-annual variability in water availability;
- iv) Improving Member States' preparedness for climate change impacts with respect to floods and droughts and support more accurate decision making for flood and drought risk reduction and response;
- v) Improved knowledge of ecological flows in the context of the Water Framework Directive and especially of the impacts of management, infrastructure and climate on ecological flows; improve prediction of drought events and water scarcity and enhance the assessment of the impacts of drought on water quality and biodiversity;
- vi) Foster commitments between climate change and water scientists, monitoring services, industry, water utilities and other socioeconomic communities to collect, standardize, and widely disseminate information on water use in different sectors;
- vii) Minimise the disparities associated with data collection and reporting between researchers and data agencies, enhance the interoperability, in particular through the mainstreaming of community-accepted standards, metadata schemas, and data management best practices in line with the FAIR principles, between data providers and data users and strengthen coordination among various monitoring services.

❖ **THE CONSORTIUM:** The project consortium consists of 21 partners representing 10 EU countries from 4 continents.

| | |
|---|--|
| Stichting Deltares (Deltares) – Coordinator | |
| SEVEN Engineering Consultants G.P. | Norges Vassdrags- og Energidirektorat (NVE) |
| Institut National de Recherche pour l' Agriculture, l' Alimentation et l' Environnement (INRAE) | Szkola Główna Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego (SGGW) |
| VANDERSAT BV | Region of Kriti |
| Universitaet fuer Bodenkultur Wien (BOKU) | Anglian Water Services Ltd (AWS) |
| Agencia Estatal Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas (CSIC-IGME) | Bundesanstalt fuer Gewaesserkunde (BfG) |
| Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM) | Directorate for Protection and Management of Aquatic Environment of the Hellenic Ministry of Environment & Energy (HMEE) |
| Institutul National de Cercetaredezvoltare Pentru Geologie si Geoecologie Marina (GEOECOMAR) | Syndicat mixte de l' Etablissement Public territorial de Bassin Seine Grands Lacs (EPTB) |
| Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Waterstaat (RWS) | Regia Autonoma Administratia Fluviala a Dunarii de Jos Galati (LDRA) |
| Forschungszentrum Julich GmbH (FZJ) | Confederation Hidrografica del Duero (CHD) |
| Universitat Linz (JKU) | UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UK-CEH) |

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