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Twinning for Excellence in Noninvasive Brain Stimulation



# D7.1

# Dissemination and Exploitation and Communication Strategy

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## DISSEMINATION LEVEL

PU- Public



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## Executive summary

The present document constitutes the D7.1 “Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication Strategy” of the TWINNIBS project, funded by the European Commission’s under its Horizon EUROPE Framework Programme for Research and Innovation under the grant agreement no.101059369. The main objective of this deliverable is to outline the project’s strategy and its implementation in the fields of public communication, results dissemination and further exploitation by target groups. The objective of this document is aligned with the overall project objective, namely to strengthen the scientific profile of the Institute for Medical Research (IMR) (project coordinator) and to raise IMR’s research and management quality to European standards in order to better position the institute as a prospective leader for international consortia that aim to receive competitive EU R&I funding.

More in detail, this plan describes the instruments put into place, the stakeholders to be addressed (drawing on a stakeholder assessment) and the transfer processes (= dissemination) initiated by the project in view of facilitating the uptake and further use (= exploitation) of project outputs and results by intended beneficiaries. Concerning public communication, this plan offers a comprehensive overview of all communication tools available to the project, outlines the project’s corporate identity in accordance with Horizon Europe standards and presents the communication work done by the project aimed at engaging its target groups.

Dissemination and exploitation are indispensable preconditions when it comes to creating and fostering the many different tracks of sustainability that can stem from EU funded R&I projects. Communication, in this respect, isn’t of any less relevance, as communication itself provides for the groundwork of subsequent dissemination and exploitation activities and, in combination with these two steps, forms its own project management life cycle in Horizon Europe<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://rea.ec.europa.eu/horizon-europe-dissemination-and-exploitation\\_en](https://rea.ec.europa.eu/horizon-europe-dissemination-and-exploitation_en)



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## INTRODUCTION

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TWINNIBS aims to strengthen the Institute for Medical Research - IMR's research and innovation (R&I) as well as research management and administration capacities and to develop it into a prospective leading partner in international consortia that can attract strategic investments and R&I funding. TWINNIBS will promote interest in neuroscience research in Serbia and the region, and help to advance it, focusing on the multidisciplinary field of non-invasive brain stimulation (NIBS). NIBS is a set of techniques for transcranial (non-invasive) modulation of the activity in the specific brain areas and the large-scale brain networks to which they contribute. This is an innovative approach to neuroscience research and, ultimately, the clinical treatment of a broad spectrum of neuropsychiatric conditions. TWINNIBS will be a coordination and support tool for IMR to bring NIBS research in Serbia to a new level by partnering with leading European R&I institutions from Denmark, Italy, Germany, and Austria. TWINNIBS project includes a comprehensive set of cooperation and coordination activities to strengthen the scientific and technological capacities of IMR, including short-term mobility, virtual and in-person short-term expert visits, workshops, and bootcamps. A series of collaborative small-scale projects with the personalization of NIBS as an overarching theme are foreseen in the project. TWINNIBS aim to strengthen the IMR research management and administration capacities and foster organizational changes through the establishment of The Centre for NIBS as well as R&I Project Management Unit that will be established within the IMR.

### 1.1 DELIVERABLE SCOPE

The purpose of the Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication Strategy is to guide, control and support the project's activities in the field of DEC (Dissemination, Exploitation, Communication). In fact this strategy is the only reference document available to the consortium when it comes to managing, implementing and steering all DEC activities for the project. The deliverable is part of WP7 focusing on DEC, which further includes deliverables on data management (D7.2), the project repository for storing outputs (D7.3), the market analysis and exploitation pathway for the key exploitable results (KER) (D7.4) and on smart specialization (D7.5). The document collates essential pieces of information relevant to ensure an effective and target-oriented DEC life cycle for Horizon Europe projects: *definitions and explanations on DEC in Horizon Europe, stakeholder and target group assessment for DEC activities, instruments for implementation, impact through exploitation, project*



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corporate identity, EC services to support dissemination and exploitation and monitoring of DEC activities. IPR and data management are dealt with in the related deliverable D7.2.

*What is not the purpose of this strategy?* As sometimes misleadingly thought, DEC strategies do not cover aspects of internal project communication. Contrary to external communication, which is the communication of a project to the public, internal communication means inter-personal and inter-institutional communication between project partners (and their respective staff). As such, internal communication is handled within the project's consortium only and involves a set of different tools, such as project meetings, project emails, general assembly meetings, or specific project management tools to organize the administrative workflow of a funded consortium.

## 1.2 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- TWINNIBS Grant Agreement no. 101059369
- TWINNIBS Consortium Agreement
- TWINNIBS Project Management Handbook
- Horizon EUROPE Online Manual <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders-opportunities/display/OM/Grant+management>
- European Research Executive Agency - Communicating about your EU funded project [https://rea.ec.europa.eu/communicating-about-your-eu-funded-project\\_en](https://rea.ec.europa.eu/communicating-about-your-eu-funded-project_en)
- European Research Executive Agency - Horizon Europe Dissemination and Exploitation [https://rea.ec.europa.eu/horizon-europe-dissemination-and-exploitation\\_en](https://rea.ec.europa.eu/horizon-europe-dissemination-and-exploitation_en)





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### 1.3 ACRONYM AND ABBREVIATION LIST

DEC	Dissemination, Exploitation, Communication
ESR	Early-stage researcher
EC	European Commission
HE	Horizon Europe
IMR	Institute for Medical Research, University of Belgrade
KER	Key Exploitable Result
NIBS	Non-invasive Brain Stimulation
RRI	Responsible Research and Innovation
SETO	Societal, Economical, Technological, Organisational (levels of impact)
TMS	Transcranial magnetic stimulation



## DEFINITIONS: DEC IN HORIZON EUROPE

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Dissemination, exploitation, and communication are obligatory activities for Horizon Europe funded projects. The programme stipulates that beneficiaries of Horizon Europe funding must carry out activities to increase the impact of their project results; this entails:

- Beneficiaries must communicate about the project and its results to a general audience (art. 17 of the annotated model grant agreement - communication and visibility)<sup>2</sup>
- They must share research results with the scientific community, commercial players, civil society, and policymakers (art. 16. and annex 5 - IPR, background, dissemination, and visibility)<sup>3</sup>
- They must also take action to use their project results for commercial purposes, to tackle societal problems, or in policymaking (art. 16. and annex 5 - IPR, background, dissemination, and visibility)

All partners must be aware that the pro-active communication about and the target-oriented dissemination of project-related outputs and results is essential to facilitate their further exploitation by others.

As a Horizon Europe funded project, TWINNIBS will draw on these definitions for communication, dissemination, and exploitation both in this document and when carrying out the actual work. Thus, the project uses those definitions as published in the EC's glossary for funding and tender opportunities, which includes HE<sup>4</sup>.

Also, if the online glossary terms on DEC still speak about "Horizon 2020" instead of the current Horizon Europe, this does not affect the accuracy of the definitions provided. DEC is defined exactly the same way in Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders-opportunities/pages/viewpage.action?pagelId=1867972>

<sup>3</sup> <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders-opportunities/pages/viewpage.action?pagelId=1867974>

<sup>4</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/glossary>



## **Definition: Communication in Horizon Europe**

*It is a strategically planned process that starts at the outset of the action and continues throughout its entire lifetime, aimed at promoting the action and its results. It requires strategic and targeted measures for communicating about (i) the action and (ii) its results to a multitude of audiences, including the media and the public and possibly engaging in a two-way exchange.*

## **Definition: Dissemination in Horizon Europe**

*To specifically address project related outputs and results to target groups by publicly disclosing them by any appropriate means, including by scientific publications in any medium, in order to support their further exploitation, and to maximise the impact of research related results on the long term.*

## **Definition: Exploitation in Horizon Europe**

*The utilisation of results in further research activities other than those covered in the project concerned, or in developing, creating and marketing a product or process, or in creating and providing a service, or in standardisation activities.*

## **2.1 WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION, EXPLOITATION?**

In its online manual on funding and tender opportunities<sup>5</sup>, the EC gives recommendations about how communication, dissemination, and exploitation should be done in funded projects. The steps to be taken to harness the full potential of a successful DEC strategy as part of one's project are explained with more details. In this section, we are looking at the recommendations made and complement them with the practical experience from past Horizon 2020 and current Horizon Europe projects the main author of this strategy was and is working on.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders-opportunities/display/OM/Online+Manual>



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**For communication, the EC gives the following instructions/makes the following suggestions:**

1. Starts at the outset of the action and continues throughout its entire lifetime → a project should always be able to make more resources available for communication given there is a specific peak of activities, e.g., promotion of an event, promotion of an open call for contribution etc. (from experience)
2. Is strategically planned and not just ad-hoc efforts → the long-term strategy for communication is the groundwork for the implementation of communication, but (intensified) ad-hoc efforts should have definitely their pace too (see point 1)
3. Identifies and sets clear communication objectives (e.g., have final and intermediate communication aims been specified? what impact is intended? what reaction or change is expected from the target audience?) → and relates specifically chosen key performance indicators to each objective in terms of monitoring
4. Is targeted and adapted to audiences that go beyond the project's own community, including the media and the public → the selection of these audiences should be done based on an accompanying assessment that weighs up the relevance of a target group with the efforts to be provided
5. Chooses relevant messages (e.g., how does the action's work relate to our everyday lives? why does the target audience need to know about the action?) → messages should further address the level of impact/change created by a project with concrete examples relevant to the target groups
6. Uses the right medium and means (e.g., working at the right level – local, regional, national, EU-wide; using the right ways to communicate – >one-way exchange (website, press release, brochure, etc.) or two-way exchange (exhibition, school visit, internet debate, etc.); where relevant, include measures for public/societal engagement on issues related to the action) → on these levels, communication partnerships should be built, if possible. For instance, with stakeholders close to the project a mutual workflow on communication support could be helpful in order reach a larger audience (for instance through mentioning each other in specific communication actions)
7. Is proportionate to the scale of the action → the right proportionality is defined through the grant agreement and the resources allocated to communication, but sometimes new circumstances or unforeseen external developments



require an re-assessment (usually the case if projects are very successful in their stakeholder work and new partnership opportunities, that require more communication work, are coming up)

## **Regarding dissemination, the following main characteristics are listed:**

1. Puts into place measures that ensure the transfer of knowledge and results to the ones that can best make use of it → The measures put forward should be devised against an user-centric approach, this means to ask how the targeted beneficiaries can make best use of the outputs/results produced and through which means/in which format those should be made available to them
2. Focuses on specific levels of impact (societal, technological, economical, organisational) of the research carried out, enabling the value of results to be potentially wider than the original focus → The desired level of impact addressed is a key element of the proposal writing process; this allows a granted project to align its dissemination activities to the chosen level(s) of impact from the very beginning
3. Harnesses the principles of good research practices → Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), this is the inclusion of all stakeholders into an innovation process and the balancing of their interests in a co-creative manner, has become a standard concept for the design, set-up and implementation of R&I processes<sup>6</sup>. As such, it plays a vital role in the design and implementation of dissemination and exploitation processes too, most notably in the design and controlling phase (the full circle comprises a) design, b) implementation, c) impact, and d) controlling)
4. Avoids that results are becoming sticky and effectively lost within the project bubble by following a frequent, target-oriented and engaging dissemination approach towards the intended beneficiaries → Even more, through crossing the borders of the project and being further checked by relevant stakeholders, project results benefit from a practical “reality check” that is usually not possible within the project

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.zsi.at/object/publication/4095/attach/Paper\\_Schrammel\\_et\\_al\\_2015\\_1\\_.pdf](https://www.zsi.at/object/publication/4095/attach/Paper_Schrammel_et_al_2015_1_.pdf)



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**Finally, for exploitation the following characteristics are most applicable:**

1. After the dissemination of results to the ones who can best make use of it (target groups, beneficiaries), exploitation describes the pro-active adoption and further use of these results by the target groups for their own purpose → Exploitation is the precondition to achieve sustainability for project outputs; Sustainability in the context of EU funding means to be able to bypass the bottleneck that normally comes when funding is over, and project activities are stopped; Having transferred project outputs to stakeholders during the project lifetime, this may lead to the continuation of some aspects
2. Exploitation concretises the value and impact of the R&I activity for societal challenges → This is why dissemination and exploitation concepts need to be tailored towards meeting one or more of the discussed levels of impact (SETO – societal, economical, technological, organisational level of impact)
3. Exploitation can be commercial, societal, political, or for improving public knowledge and action → This is somewhat different from the levels of impact, as it focuses on the key exploitable results (KER) of a project, which may also be commercially exploited (for instance a technology that is sold to a customer)
4. Project partners can exploit results themselves, or facilitate exploitation by others (e.g., through making results available under open licenses) → Exploitation of results can take various forms, including the launch of a patent, the start of a new service, the formulation of a new policy recommendation, the definition of new standards or the input for giving start to a new project; depending on the format, partners or external users are involved



## STAKEHOLDERS AND TARGET GROUPS

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A priority contributing to the success of the project and its DEC activities is the identification of the most relevant target groups with whom the consortium envisages to establish an enduring and mutually beneficial partnership. Once these target groups have been selected and the communication and dissemination channels opened, the project is ready to start sharing its news, outputs, results, but also draft items for receiving additional input. These “who?” and “how?” questions in stakeholder management must be answered carefully to create a maximum engagement, exploitation, and, eventually, impact.

At the time of writing the project application, the first set of stakeholders and target groups had been identified. In the following overview, this set was further refined, drawing on collected inputs from all TWINNIBS consortium partners, who were asked to provide names of relevant stakeholders and target groups while writing this deliverable.

### **1. Serbian key stakeholders in the neuroscience and medical technology sector, in particular in the field of NIBS**

- a. R&I institutions (focus on the University of Belgrade)
- b. Innovation & business support agencies
- c. Companies, start-ups (e.g., mBrainTrain)
- d. Stakeholders in the new BIO4 Campus in Belgrade (planned), if its realisation falls in the time of project implementation<sup>7</sup>

### **2. European key stakeholders in the neuroscience sector, in particular in the field of NIBS**

- a. European Society for Cognitive Psychology
- b. FESN - Federation of European Societies of Neuropsychology
- c. FENS - Federation of European Neuroscience Societies
- d. Companies, start-ups: NeuroConn (Germany), Neuroelectrics (Spain), SoomaOy (Finland), Magventure<sup>8</sup> (Denmark), BrainProducts<sup>9</sup> (Germany),

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<sup>7</sup> [https://www.bio4.rs/BIO4\\_Campus.pdf](https://www.bio4.rs/BIO4_Campus.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Leading company within the field of Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS)

<sup>9</sup> Leading company regarding EEG technology (in combination with brain stimulation)



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Localite (Germany), Bittium <sup>10</sup> (Finland), SofTaxic Optic <sup>11</sup> (Italy), NeuroCare (Germany)

### **3. Serbian policy stakeholders at the intersection of funding provision, regional development and bio-economy (particularly relevant for T7.4, the development of a new smart specialisation proposal for Belgrade/Serbia)**

- a. Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovations
- b. Ministry of Economy
- c. Serbian Center for the Promotion of Science
- d. Serbian Science Fund
- e. Serbian Innovation Fund
- f. Regional Development agencies
- g. Serbia Accelerating Innovation and Growth Entrepreneurship Project

### **4. High-level overarching networks in the field of neurosciences**

- a. International Neuromodulation Society
- b. CNS - Cognitive Neuroscience Society
- c. IBRO
- d. EURON
- e. International Behavioral Neuroscience Society

### **5. Overarching diversity- and open science-promoting networks**

- a. Open Science Framework
- b. Psychological Science Accelerator
- c. Women in Neuroscience, Women in Cognitive Science

### **6. Public and media in Serbia and Europe**

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<sup>10</sup> Company with close loop EEG system in combination with brain stimulation

<sup>11</sup> Company with neuronavigation system for TMS



## The approach for stakeholders and target groups: informing and engaging

The involvement approach towards our stakeholders and target groups comprises two steps: Firstly, TWINNIBS plays at its strengths as a future information hub for developments in the fields of applied research on NIBS, new medical technologies on NIBS, and NIBS research in Serbia. The project, given its specific composition of partners and its distinct focus on the three mentioned fields, attains a special status in information provision and sharing both to Serbian and European stakeholders. The currently developed project website<sup>12</sup> will become the central access point in this regard. *On the involvement process, this step can be labelled as "informing".*

Secondly, as mentioned earlier, TWINNIBS follows a co-creation-inspired (RRI) dissemination logic. This also applies to the involvement process with its particular objective to engage stakeholders and target groups in the sharing of project outputs as often as possible. In the best case, this creates some sort of "snowball effect", as stakeholders who are enthusiastic about a result will, with a certain likelihood, engage in its further diffusion, discussion, and deliberation. This principle ensures that stakeholders are more than recipients of information and results but also engage in their further dissemination and/or adoption. *On the involvement process, this step is called "engaging".*

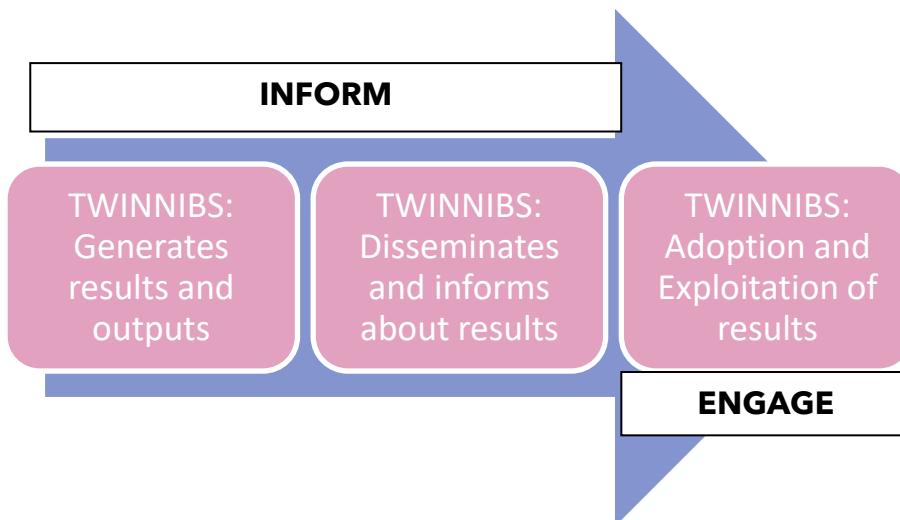


Figure 1 "Informing" and "engaging" in TWINNIBS dissemination

<sup>12</sup> Website URL: [twinnibs.imi.bg.ac.rs](http://twinnibs.imi.bg.ac.rs) (tbc)



### 3.1 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: PUBLIC EVENTS

In addition to engaging stakeholders in the dissemination of information and project outputs, TWINNIBS organises different event formats aimed at gaining contributions. The following events/activities are planned by the project at this current stage and will provide a platform for exchange:

- a. Regional NIBS summer school (Task 3.1): two 1-week events with lecturers from partner institutions as well as leading experts in the field from other institutions
- b. Bootcamps (Task 3.2): mentorship programme for the development of professional skills of early-stage researchers
- c. Project writing camps (Task 6.2): 3-days event for IMR staff and 20 selected ESRs from all scientific consortium partners
- d. Science-industry workshop (Task 7.3): The workshop will bring together the TWINNIBS project team and management/innovation/development/sales team of the targeted companies but will also be open to other interested parties
- e. Scientific writing workshops (Task 5.2): for IMR staff as well as the ESRs from partners institutions

Under 2.2 in the project's grant agreement, the *four categories of stakeholders relevant to TWINNIBS are described: the scientific community, policymakers and funding agencies, technological companies & start-ups, and the general public.* Concrete examples of each of the four categories have been discussed in this chapter (the list above does not follow the same categories, but all of the examples listed can be related to one of the stakeholder categories). The question of which event is designated for which stakeholder group is answered by the following overview:

Stakeholder group	Relevant event formats	Dissemination/Exploitation goal
Scientific community	a), b), c), e)	Introducing NIBS methods to researchers and practitioners in different fields (medicine, rehabilitation, psychology, sport science, engineering, etc.), with a particular emphasis on ESR.  Increasing the quality and rigor of the NIBS research, maximizing dissemination and impact of



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		research outputs.
Policy/Funding community	c), d)	Awareness raising among policy and funding actors regarding the relevance of NIBS as a prospective driver for regional development in Serbia; Increasing investment in NIBS research at the EU level
Companies/start-ups	d)	Building connections between the research partners and industry actors on applied NIBS research and market technologies
General Public	d)	Raising awareness about the societal impact of EU funded research

*Figure 2 Stakeholders, event formats and DE goal*



## COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION: INSTRUMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

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### 4.1 PROJECT CORPORATE IDENTITY

For the TWINNIBS project, the project corporate identity has been developed to be consistently used for all project-related outputs and communication tools

#### **TWINNIBS logo**

The project logo (Figure 3) has been produced and is to be used across all printed and digital communication tools as well as project outputs. The project uses the brain-shaped logo with the embedded QR code emulating key aspects of the TWINNIBS research focus: targeted precision brain stimulation. To enhance its usefulness, the QR code embedded in the logo leads to the TWINNIBS website as the main communication tool, which makes the logo interactive and engaging.



*Figure 3 TWINNIBS project logo*

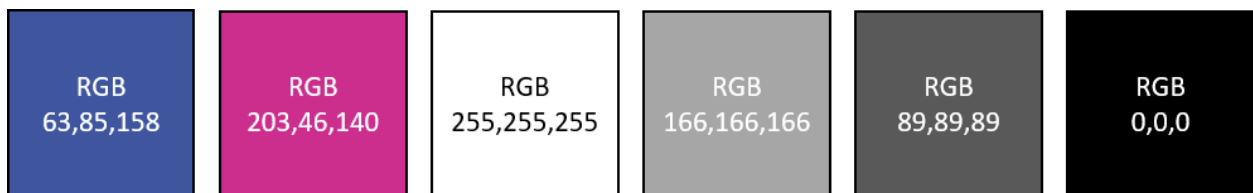
Aside from the main logo, several colour and achromatic varieties (Figure 4) have been developed to be used against different backgrounds and contexts.



Figure 4 TWINNIBS project logo varieties

### TWINNIBS colours

To establish a clear visual identity, the TWINNIBS project uses a consistent colour scheme with blue as the main colour (#3F559E) and pink as the accent colour (#CB2E8C) in combination with an achromatic palette.



### TWINNIBS fonts

All TWINNIBS materials use non-serif fonts (e.g., Calibri) for an easier read, with Avenir Next LT Pro as the preferred option.



## 4.2 TWINNIBS DOCUMENT TEMPLATES

To achieve consistency when preparing project documents, a number of corporate templates have been produced reflecting the project visual identity and in accordance with HE guidelines, including:

- Word deliverable template
- Word milestone report template
- PowerPoint presentation template
- Word meeting agenda/ minutes template

## 4.3 TWINNIBS COMMUNICATION & DISSEMINATION TOOLS

### Project website

The official website of the TWINNIBS project is the main communication and dissemination tool and serves as the source of information for any stakeholder that may be interested in TWINNIBS work progress, public deliverables, reports, publications, and other activities. It also hosts open calls for participating in partner-organized workshops and summer schools.

The website is hosted at the coordinating partner's institutional domain <http://twinnibs.imi.bg.ac.rs>, and the content is presented in English. All public information will be timely available on the project website and include information relevant to the project work, including the details of partners, work packages, objectives, results, and the researchers involved in the project. The website is managed by the IMR WP7 team, while all partners will provide content and information upon the managing team's request.

### Social media accounts

To increase visibility and reach to relevant stakeholders, TWINNIBS has established and actively manages social media accounts on Twitter and Facebook. The Twitter account (@twinnibs) mainly engages with the international research community, connects with similar projects and initiatives, and promotes EU funding and support schemes. The Facebook account (<https://www.facebook.com/twinnibsHO2022>) is directed more towards local and regional stakeholders, including the general public. Therefore, posts on Facebook are published bilingually (Serbian and English).



### **Project pages**

To further promote project outputs and disseminate results, dedicated project pages have been created on Open Science Framework (OSF, <https://osf.io/rxca2/>) and ResearchGate (<https://www.researchgate.net/project/Twinning-for-excellence-in-Non-invasive-Brain-Stimulation-in-Western-Balkans>). These pages serve the purpose of open science repositories allowing early and easy access to TWINNIBS scientific products. The researchers will be free to make use of any other exiting repositories for the Open Science purposes.

### **4.4 COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES**

In addition to the aforementioned communication and dissemination tools, the TWINNIBS consortium has envisioned additional activities to directly engage relevant stakeholders and to further increase the project's impact. Namely, as a part of work package 5. new affiliations to relevant societies and special interest groups are planned with a particular emphasis on engaging female researchers and ESRs. Furthermore, scientific partners will engage in a joint presentation of project activities (focused on NIBS research) at international scientific conferences such as the International Brain Stimulation Conference, European Congress of Clinical Neurophysiology, Conference of the European Society for Cognitive Psychology, FENS Forum, IBRO World Congress of Neuroscience, International Congress of Clinical Neurophysiology, etc.

## IMPACT THROUGH EXPLOITATION

Impact through EU-funded R&I projects can only be generated if earlier exploitation activities have had been a success. Moreover, and as was discussed in this document already, the success of exploitation is directly related to the efforts invested into dissemination, and to a smaller degree communication. Given these specific factors, which, depending on how efficient project managers in a project context deal with them, may appear as conducive or non-conducive, the creation of impact is usually one of the largest bottlenecks.

The following graphic should help to illustrate this process and shows why impact, as the desired final output of this process, starts with communication as the very first input to it.

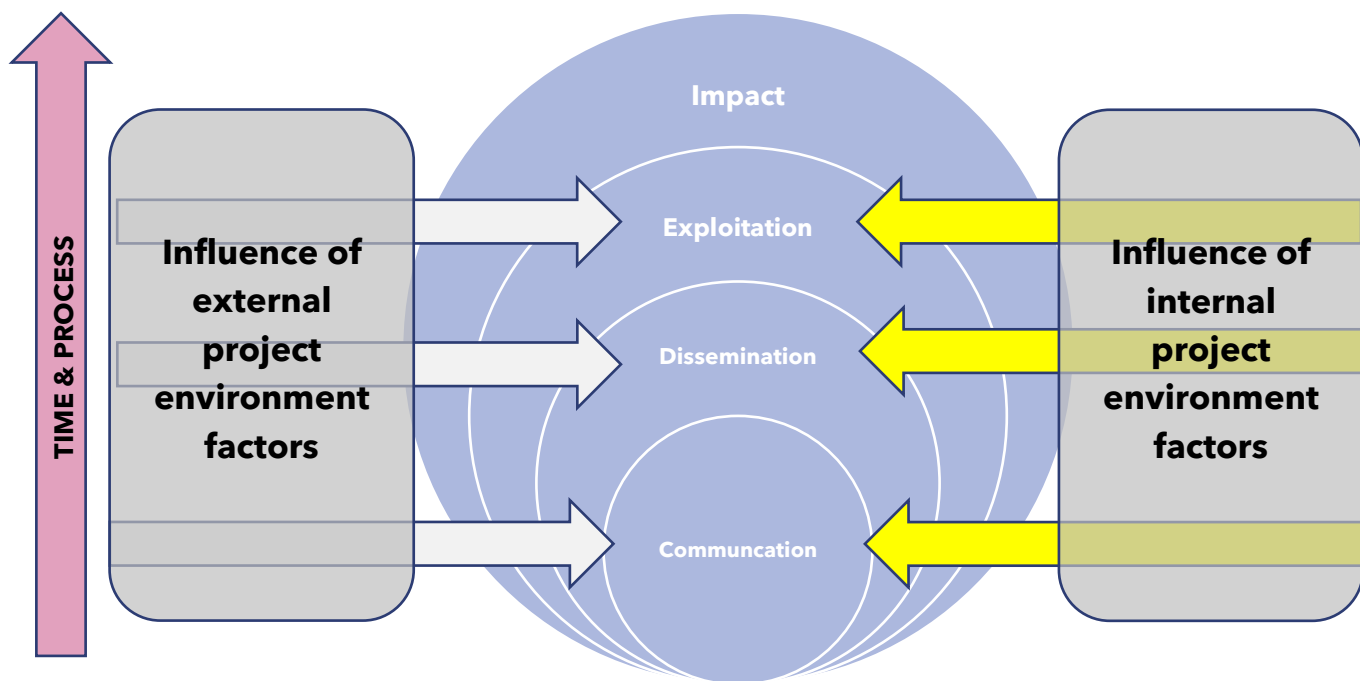


Figure 5 The time and process character of impact

From a project management perspective, communication, dissemination, exploitation, and impact are not stand-alone objects in the greater project environment. In addition to their process quality in a chronological perspective, they are also subject to a list of other internal and external factors. Internal project factors comprise all dynamics from within the project consortium. Those that typically influence most on the implementation of DEC are a) level of DEC expertise of the





project team, b) the level of awareness regarding DEC and c) the resources and times devoted to DEC. External project factors comprise all those dynamics that happen beyond the project's scope of power, this means everything that is not under full or partial control of one of the project team members. The typically most affecting factors for DEC are a) level of interest of stakeholders and target groups into the project and b) the broader societal, economical, technological, or political relevance of the project. Also if this is not made explicit in the graphic, impact, to some degree, is also influenced by these internal and external factors. Nevertheless, the emphasis of this chapter was to explain the connection between communication and impact on a time scale and in a process logic. In this context of time and process, internal and external factors are coming into play and exert power, either conducive or non-conductive to the realisation of DEC goals. A complex set of factors affect the "impact making process" from its start to its end.

*In terms of managing impact as a process that is part of your project, we devise a 6-steps logic that is easy to understand, follow and control.*

1. Understand (the differences): TWINNIBS team members need to understand the differences between DEC in order to be able to deal with each activity separately and to avoid doubling efforts on one and the same task
2. Connect (the activities with each other): Owing to the process character of impact creation as described earlier, C needs to be connected with D and further with E. This relation needs to be considered when starting the process.
3. Reach out, build partnerships (with all your target groups): This is particularly true for D and E, as the involvement and engagement of target groups are crucial for successfully realising these two steps
4. Get support (from the EC, if you want): This step will be discussed in the following chapter. It deals with the EC's support instruments available for DEC
5. Monitor (what has been done): This step will be discussed in chapter 9. Monitoring means finding the best means to observe, keep track and quantify/qualify the DEC activities implemented
6. Take stock (of achievements): It is usually easier to speak than to write about any impact that has been achieved. The written documentation of impact is nevertheless of great importance as the impact achieved often needs to be explained and made available to others too.



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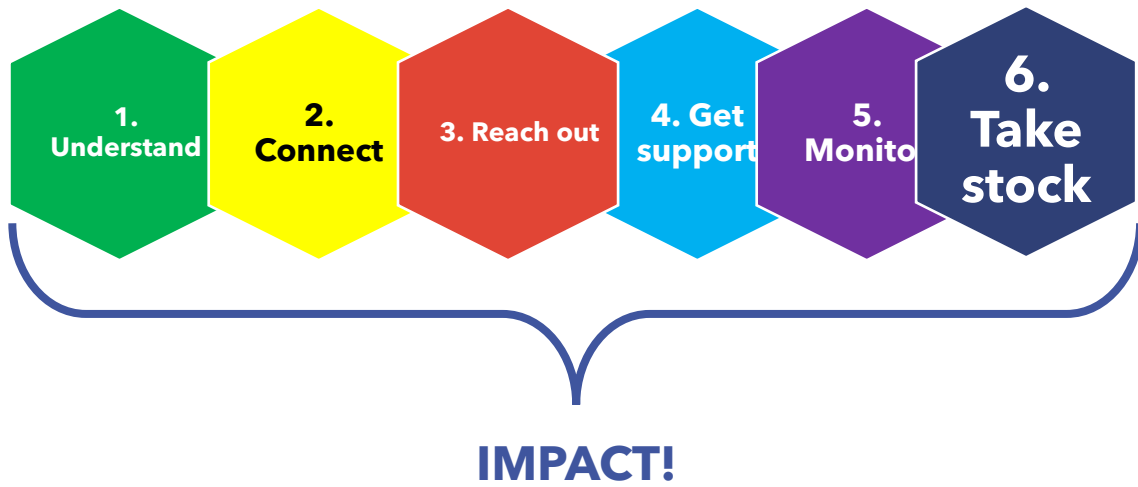


Figure 6 The 6-steps logic of impact management in EU-funded R&I projects

## EC SERVICES

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If possible and decided necessary by the consortium, TWINNIBS will try to make active use of the most common facility services supporting dissemination and exploitation in EU-funded R&I projects. These services are free of any charge and available just upon demand. In the following, the three most relevant services identified for TWINNIBS are presented. Usually, these services are offered by the EC itself or, in some instances, have been taken over by independent third parties which implement the service on behalf of the EC.

### Horizon dashboard<sup>13</sup>



The Horizon dashboard was designed during the Horizon 2020 programme period and continues to run now in Horizon Europe.

TWINNIBS could use the dashboard for the following actions:

- Looking up previously funded H2020/Horizon Europe projects in the field of neuroscience and brain research → get-in-touch for the creation of synergies, knowledge transfer, fostering European networks
- Looking up already publicly available research results in the mentioned scientific fields stemming from H2020&/HE projects → to get an overview of the results generated within H2020/HE projects, gain an understanding in which direction H2020/HE funded research in the respective fields is going
- Comparing Serbia's performance in H2020/HE with other countries, looking up other Serbian institutions in the respective research fields → valuable information for a self-assessment of IMR, fostering national networks, etc.

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<sup>13</sup><https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/horizon-dashboard>



## **CORDIS**

“Our mission is to bring research results to professionals in the field to foster open science, create innovative products and services and stimulate growth across Europe.”<sup>14</sup>



TWINNIBS could use CORDIS for the following actions:

- Access and take up of results packs from H2020/HE projects → to get an overview of the results generated within H2020/HE projects, gain an understanding in which direction H2020/HE funded research in the respective fields is going
- Access and taking up of all publicly available H2020/HE deliverables and publications → overview on the most recent research results provided through H2020/HE projects (=taking stock of what is available on the European level, in particular from leading institutions in the field)
- Publication and promotion of TWINNIBS own activities, such as news articles and events → Increasing the visibility of TWINNIBS and IMR towards an European audience

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<sup>14</sup> <https://cordis.europa.eu/about/en>



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## Horizon Results Booster

“Receive expert free of charge support services to boost the exploitation potential of your research results, disseminate effectively, and go to market.”<sup>15</sup>



TWINNIBS could use the Results Booster for the following actions:

- Receiving general support for dissemination and exploitation, and in particular on the creation of a portfolio of results, as well as on the execution of a portfolio dissemination plan
- Receiving support in the preparation of a business plan (only if applicable)
- Assistance when it comes to go-to-market activities (only if applicable)

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.horizonresultsbooster.eu/>



## MONITORING OF DEC ACTIVITIES

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The principal purpose of monitoring in the field of exploitation is to assess the impact of the transfer of results from the project to targeted stakeholders in order to determine the effectiveness and future sustainability related to their exploitation.

A strategic performance monitoring helps to understand whether the project achieves the goals defined in this communication, dissemination, and exploitation plan. This chapter gives a brief overview about the indicators which will be used to monitor the progress of impact creation during the lifespan of the TWINNIBS project.

*Performance measures and key performance indicators (KPIs) are tools for project learning, communication, strategic change, and improvement.* The deployment of these tools must be regarded as an investment that can yield a significant return in the future. First, the development of measures and indicators at the start of the planning process will increase the likelihood of having baseline data, which identifies a starting point and makes the measurement of progress toward a goal easier. Second, having data-based goals will provide information on how much progress toward a goal has been made and will make it possible to clearly define when a goal has been accomplished. When trying to monitor the activities and the results they are yielding it is crucial that a *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time based (SMART) approach* to measuring such performance is taken into consideration. For either indicator (quantitative and qualitative), the SMART approach applies very well. The indicators chosen follow the logic of being specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and they can be collected in a time-based manner.

Next we address some indicators of performance for the respective TWINNIBS dissemination tool that will act as a pointer to understand whether the exploitation goals are met or not. Measuring the performance is important for analysing the influence of the project during and after its lifetime as a result of exploitation activities.

Chosen tools and indicators track the project's success by visibility, outreach, the intensity of the use of information and services provided by TWINNIBS. The table below should be used as a guideline for future assessment.



Way of disseminating an output	Quantitative Indicators
TWINNIBS website (traffic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of website visits</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Website unique visits</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of deliverable(s)/document(s) downloads</li> </ul>
Peer-reviewed articles and resumes (abstracts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of peer-reviewed articles</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Altmetric scores to articles and resumes</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of conference presentations/ published abstracts</li> </ul>
References and appearances in media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of press releases circulated</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of media coverages (mentions about the project in national or European media)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographical scope and range of publication</li> </ul>
Social Networks (Facebook, Twitter)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of posts/ tweets published</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of followers</li> </ul>
Participation in roundtables, symposia, and international conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of appearances by TWINNIBS project partners in external scientific events</li> <li>• Number of scientific events with the participation of TWINNIBS project partners</li> </ul>
Joint writing workshops, proposal writing trainings, industry workshops, and hands-on trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of external participants (as potential target groups for dissemination) in TWINNIBS-organised event formats</li> </ul>
Quality/Accuracy of dissemination	Qualitative Indicators
Content published on the TWINNIBS website	Qualitative aspects of the elements published on the TWINNIBS web portal. Classification can be done in topics, targeted region, targeted communities, and type of element (news, event, document, result)
Content published on social networks	Issues & agenda setting / "trending" (on Twitter). Also, here qualitative aspects of published posts on social media accounts are considered.
Quality of the relevant outputs/results available to the target groups	At the time of sharing outputs or results from the project with target groups, they should be of quality, relevance and appropriateness to the target groups.
Final dissemination report	Qualitative aspects of the dissemination activities reported by partners and included in the final project dissemination report. Classification can be done in



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	topics, targeted region, targeted communities, and type of activity reported (news, event, document, result).
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*Table 1 Quantitative and qualitative dissemination indicators*





## CONCLUSIONS

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This DEC plan presented the most important considerations on communication, dissemination, and exploitation in the TWINNIBS project. The aim was to introduce readers (which will be both the consortium partners and the general public) to the three topics, to emphasise their role in preparatory steps for creating impact, and to describe how TWINNIBS will approach DEC as a strategic set of tools for realising its project objectives. Instead of quickly recapitulating all chapters and adding to this summary the headline “conclusions”, we decided to conclude this document with three further recommendations about how to maximise the dissemination and exploitation potential of this project.

It should be added that these recommendations go beyond what is typically requested in the grant agreement. As such, they would require “some extra miles” of project partners and a strong individual and institutional commitment to the topic of DEC. On the other hand, once a team has decided to invest these additional efforts, it is also likely that at some point later they can reap the full benefits of an even more impact-driven and goal-oriented DEC approach for the project.

- *Individual partner exploitation activities & formation of an exploitation team* - Each partner could be asked to identify its own role in the exploitation framework of TWINNIBS, whether on the regional, national, or international level. This would potentially allow a structured process of exploitation to be aimed at the target group predefined at the beginning of the project.
- *Concrete strategy with specific and numerical outcomes of the exploitation performance* - The indicators to measure performance have already been considered. However, having a specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based goal is essential. An additional sub-chapter to this strategy could address this numerical aspect of the exploitation goals after consultations with the consortium and could come up with newly defined goals based on a realistic assessment of the current DEC performance at a certain project stage.
- *Further analyses* - Each partner could be asked to develop a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) matrix and a PEST (Political, Economic, Social, Technological) analysis in regard to identified opportunities and barriers for dissemination and exploitation in their very own stakeholder environments. This should be done against the objective to better understand



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the internal and external factors favourable and unfavourable to achieve the objectives as presented in this DEC strategy.