



**Conserving plant diversity
for future generations**

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Project Number: [774271]

Project Acronym: [Farmer's Pride]

Project title: [Networking, partnerships and tools to enhance *in situ* conservation of European plant genetic resources]

COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA STRATEGY



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1. Introduction

This strategy aims to ensure consistent, coordinated and timely communication and effective use of media throughout the Farmer's Pride project to engage our identified stakeholder groups and disseminate the project outputs effectively. Our approaches to communications and media are combined in this document as they are so closely inter-related. The strategy is a specific element of Work Package 5 (WP5) 'Dissemination', led by Plantlife International, and this fulfils Deliverables 5.3 and 5.4. Delivery of the strategy relies on the active participation of all collaborators in the project—the partner organisations, the External Advisory Board (EAB) and the Farmer's Pride Ambassadors (FPAs).^[1]

Using the outputs from WPs 1–4, the overarching WP5 objectives are to:

- i. Raise awareness of the importance of *in situ* conservation of plant genetic resources (PGR) with key stakeholders;
- ii. Disseminate the project outputs and outcomes effectively to stakeholders;
- iii. Build a strong coalition of support to better facilitate the *in situ* conservation, management and use of crop wild relatives (CWR) and landraces (LR) in Europe.

2. Farmer's Pride project aims

The EU Horizon 2020 Farmer's Pride project is establishing a European-wide network for *in situ* conservation of agricultural plant diversity (alongside the Natura 2000 protected areas network). This is critical to ensuring that the genetic foundation of our future food supply is adequately diverse to adapt to climate change impacts, i.e. to be capable of supplying the genetic traits required to fight crop pests and diseases and to cope with uncertain and extreme weather events. Maintaining agricultural plant diversity is essential for food, nutrition and economic security in the region. The project has brought together a range of actors representing the full suite of stakeholder groups with an interest in conserving and using plant genetic resources *in situ* (on-farm, in-garden and in the wild).

3. Communications and media objectives

The purpose of our communications and media activities is to support the delivery of the project's overall objectives by engaging key stakeholder groups and improving communication between existing stakeholders and networks.

As a part of the broader aims of WP5, the objectives of this strategy are to:

- Ensure that project communications and media activities by all partners, the EAB and FPAs are consistent, coordinated and timely;

^[1] The EAB and Farmer's Pride Ambassadors are independent experts who support the project in a voluntary capacity by participating in project workshops and engaging their own networks in project activities and outputs. The EAB will also advise on the project's efficiency and effectiveness and lead the technical reviews.

- Maximise the project’s reach to our target stakeholders with accessible and engaging communications;
- Encourage greater collaboration and knowledge-sharing between the stakeholder groups and project collaborators;
- Achieve a measurable impact on levels of awareness and engagement among all relevant stakeholder groups.

These activities are closely linked to the project’s policy and advocacy activities which aim to create an enabling environment within national governments, the EU, UN FAO and Environment and Development Programmes for policy in support of *in situ* conservation and sustainable use of PGR. These include policy dialogues and the publication of policy briefs (both under WP3 ‘Enabling conservation and use’), and the delivery of targeted advocacy plans.

4. Communications role of project partners and ambassadors

The project is a collaboration of 19 partner organizations representing the diverse PGR stakeholder community – farmer, agrobiodiversity, conservation and civil society NGOs; plant breeding/seed sector; public research institutes; protected area networks. Each partner builds on their existing network structures to multiply the effects of our communications activities through each network’s own newsletter, social media or other channels. These include national, regional and pan-European networks.

We have recruited 17 Farmer’s Pride Ambassadors (FPAs) from different sectors and countries, in particular those not represented by the project partners. They were nominated by members of the project consortium due to their particular knowledge and expertise, and wide-ranging experience in the field of PGR conservation and sustainable use. They are an important element in our communication and media strategy. Within the framework of their existing work in the PGR field, they engage with stakeholders and help promote and disseminate the project activities and outputs—for example, at relevant meetings, workshops and conferences, or via email to your contacts and networks. They also make special visits to stakeholders (e.g., farmers) to engage them in the project and possibly in the European network.

5. Target groups for communication

Our target groups for communication are the following broad stakeholder groups (and hence audiences), which have been identified by the project partnership:

- Farmers and gardeners
- Breeding/seed sector
- Plant genetic resources (PGR) conservation sector
- Environment conservation sector
- Policymakers
- Consumers / general public

In May 2018, the project launched an online survey of stakeholders and this has informed our communications strategy. The survey was available in nine European languages. All countries in the target area (geographic Europe, the EU member states, Turkey, the Russian Federation, and the Caucasus) were responded to the survey as did representatives of all the anticipated main broadly defined stakeholder groups, including independent farmers, protected area managers, seed companies and policymakers. Respondents have interests in all aspects of in situ conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources—from national policy development, through capacity building, improving access to material, direct utilization for own consumption or commerce, to research into stress resistance traits, new markets for neglected crops, diversification of grain-based products, and general resilience of humans and the environment. They also work with all types of plant genetic resources, including landraces, crop wild relatives and other wild species, conservation, amateur and obsolete varieties, forage and cereal mixtures, and a range of other types of heterogeneous populations.

The majority of respondents wished to receive further information about the Farmer’s Pride project and the establishment of the European Network.

We have identified key stakeholders for each output from Work Packages 1–4 so communications can be planned accordingly—see **Annex 1** for details. Priority subgroups and individuals within each of the stakeholder groups are being further identified (e.g. PGR conservation farmers within the broader farmer group) as the project progresses. We are also building on the momentum of communications and media work from previous projects and partners’ ongoing activities.

Communications are tailored to each stakeholder group based on their needs, recognising that they have varying levels of awareness of PGR conservation and use. In particular, our challenge is to engage those outside the PGR sector by relating the issue to their interests, using accessible language and communicating through appropriate formats and channels. See **Annex 2** for the Stakeholder Communications Matrix.

6. Action plan and timeline of activities

The central ‘Action Plan’ of the strategy—a rolling plan that is updated as the project evolves—brings together the key messages, activities, outputs, lead partner/individual roles, and timings. This is a non-public document to enable forward planning and discussion of ideas within the project.

A broad timeline of the project’s communications activities is given below.

Year	Date	Activity or event	Lead partner(s)
2018	April	Website live	University of Birmingham (UoB)
	May	Launch of stakeholder survey	University of Perugia (UNIPG), Plantlife, UoB
	June	National seed networks workshops (Denmark, Hungary)	Pro Specie Rara, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (OMKI), Danish Seed Savers
	October	Project factsheet Policy brief no.1 Workshop 1 in Denmark	Plantlife, UoB Bioversity, Plantlife, UoB Plantlife, UoB
	November	Annual CWR and LR newsletters published	UoB, UNIPG
2019	April	Twitter account established	Plantlife

	May	Review of options for integrated network structure Analyses of <i>in situ</i> support mechanisms and 'public will to fund' <i>in situ</i> conservation	UoB Bioversity
	Autumn	Workshop 2	Plantlife, UoB
2020	January – Oct	Annual CWR and LR newsletters published E-newsletters to subscribed stakeholders to promote project outputs Promotion of the network proposal and site nomination process Publication and dissemination of a range of project outputs	UoB, UNIPG Various
	Autumn	Annual CWR and LR newsletters published Workshop 3, policy dialogue workshop and final dissemination conference	UoB, UNIPG Bioversity, Plantlife, UoB, INIAV

7. Key messages

Key messages for the project are developing as activities and the associated outputs are published. The primary focus for the final year of the project is to promote the final conference and engage stakeholders in the development of the network. Key messages are tailored to the target stakeholder groups to have maximum effect and include:

- **Farming sector**
 - importance of landraces for agrobiodiversity, sustainable farming & food security
 - opportunity for greater access to landrace seeds
 - strengthen local food culture & heritage
 - benefits of links with PGR sector
 - improved market access for landrace seeds and produce
- **Nature Conservation sector**
 - identifying CWR on the site and their importance for food security
 - CWR conservation provides opportunities for public awareness, community engagement, tourism and funding
 - Including CWR in site management plan
- **PGR *ex situ* & research sector**
 - access to wider range of PGR/wider range of varieties
 - greater opportunities for *in situ* research & reintroduction of PGR to the field
 - access to knowledge of cultivation methods/benefits
 - support for their wider role of gene pool conservation, enhancing & evolving biodiversity
- **Policy Makers**
 - importance of *in situ* conservation for biodiversity and food security
 - meeting their obligations under CBD and ITPGRFA

8. Media and other channels of communication

The project collaborators are using a number of channels for Farmer's Pride communications and media activities:

- **Project website** www.farmerspride.eu – this provides a focal point for our communications, and presents information about the project context, actions, publications, collaborators, conference details, Twitter feed and contact details. Further content is being added to the

site as the project progresses. Project collaborators will provide regular updates on their activities (with photos where possible) to be published on the site.

- **Partners' websites** – information about the project and links to the Farmer's Pride website are included on a number of the websites of project partners for example: <https://www.arche-noah.at/wissen/projekte/h2020-farmers-pride>; <http://adaptalab.com/objetivos/>; <https://www.unipg.it/ricerca/progettazione-internazionale/risultati-della-ricerca/vetrina-dei-progetti-finanziati>; <https://www.eurosite.org>
- **Existing networks** – the project collaborators are building on existing network structures to multiply the effects of our communications activities through each network's own newsletter, social media or other channels. These include national and regional networks that are represented in the project consortium (Arche Noah, Austria; Danish Seed Savers; Ökológiai Mezőgazdasági Kutatóintézet Közhasznú, Hungary; Pro Specie Rara, Switzerland; the Nordic Genetic Resource Centre; European Seed Association; Eurosite; and the European Association for Research on Plant Breeding via the Universitat Politècnica de València and UoB), as well as the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR), and other regional and national networks that the project collaborators are connected with.
- **Print media** – project collaborators will liaise with national newspapers and magazines in their country of operation and their stakeholder networks. They will seek publication of articles, news items and letters to the editor.
- **Social media** – is one tool to help achieve the wider objectives of the Farmer's Pride communications strategy. We have set up a Farmer's Pride Twitter handle and our approach will be to focus our activity exclusively on Twitter, as this is the best channel for sharing news and promoting policy issues.

This SM strategy is designed to make the most of the opportunities offered by SM to help achieve our communication objectives, within the capacity of the project partners and other collaborators. The accounts of partner organisations and individuals will be important channels for this and we will use the hashtag #EUfarmerspride and other existing # to share content e.g. #cropwildrelative. We expect to reach millions of individual stakeholders and members of the public via the Twitter accounts of the project and its partners. Our SM activity will also help us to measure the impact of our communications and dissemination work overall.

- **Project newsletter** – a [project newsletter](#) is being established using the Mailchimp platform, managed by Plantlife International, and will be widely promoted via the project website, publications and via project partners' own media channels. We are building a mailing list of stakeholders, identifying their countries and areas of interest which will enable the project to email subscribers about project activities, events and publications; plans to establish the European network for *in situ* conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources, and the final project conference.

- **Presentations and distribution of project publications at conferences and workshops** attended by the project collaborators. These will include presentations about the project at national and European conferences and events such as:
 - National farmer’s conferences and gatherings
 - National agriculture and food events and exhibitions
 - National biodiversity and conservation events
 - Community seedbank events and activities
 - European conferences and workshops such as those of GENRES and Dynaversity.
 - Annual general meetings such as those of Euroseeds and Eurosite

- **Newsletters, journals, blogs** and other specialist publications aimed at our target stakeholders. Project collaborators will make use of their own and other specialist publications to communicate project outcomes and encourage engagement from stakeholders and the public.

9. Communication and dissemination of project outputs

All outputs from WPs 1–4 are being designed from the outset to be as compelling and useful as possible (e.g. including case studies to represent different situations and scenarios, backed up by audio-visual materials where possible). These include:

- Policy briefings and advocacy documents;
- Technical reports;
- Newsletters;
- Conference abstracts, presentations and posters;
- Peer-reviewed research papers;
- Best practice guidelines, case studies and toolkits;
- Reports from workshops and other events (e.g. open days);
- Network launch and conference.

Each collaborator is promoting the key project outputs through their own networks and communications channels:

- **By email to:** staff, volunteers and members of their own organization; networks that they belong to already; networks that they know of in other sectors (e.g., wildlife conservation, farming, food policy) whether local, national, sub-regional or European; any other individual contacts among the target audience.
- **By sending a short article or news item** to be used wherever possible, in local and national print media, newsletters, websites, blogs.
- On **Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn** and any other social media using the JPG provided with the project logo, strapline, Twitter and website links; including the hashtag **#EUFarmerspride** (in English) and link to **@PGRInSitu**; using other hashtags or keywords that are used in their sector or other relevant sectors; and posting regular reminders or re-Tweet and share posts from other project partners.

Other resources have been produced specifically to support communications and media work:

- **Communications and branding guidelines** for project outputs and communications (published May 2018);
- **Project factsheet** as a generic tool to introduce stakeholders to the project;
- **Stories and case studies** – these are being gathered from the project collaborators based on existing resources, and used for communications throughout the project;
- **Audio-visual elements** – videos, photographs, infographics – many partners have existing resources which can be used by the Farmer's Pride project.

Languages

Our project communications are provided in English and, where possible, other European languages. For example, the online stakeholder survey is available in English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish and Turkish, and is being translated into Finnish. The availability of different language versions of communications does however depend either on the partners being able to translate text or the project securing new funding to pay for professional translation.

Our translation needs will depend on the target stakeholders for each product and the best means of communicating with them. For example, the FP stakeholder survey was available in nine languages to enable a wide range of stakeholders to participate: www.farmerspride.eu/survey. The project factsheet and policy brief have been published on the project website in eight European languages.

Open Access

Research papers and other outputs will be published with open access – including the publication of pre-print versions of journal papers online.

10. Communications protocol

A communications protocol has been disseminated to all partners to ensure that our communications and media work is effectively coordinated, reflects the consortium's shared objectives, and maintains high standards. This includes guidance on the use of the Farmer's Pride logo and the EU emblem. Partners are working in close consultation with Plantlife in producing publications and other materials on behalf of the project.

11. Coordination with Dynaversity communications and social media strategies

Farmer's Pride partners are working in collaboration with partners in the Dynaversity project (www.dynaversity.eu) which was funded under the same call. As part of this, Plantlife is working in liaison with the Communications WP5 leader for the Dynaversity project, FormicaBlu, to coordinate activities and share information between the two projects. This coordination will be ongoing as part of the wider collaboration between Farmer's Pride and Dynaversity.

12. Monitoring and evaluation

The action plan will be discussed and reviewed at each consortium meeting to ensure that it is a flexible 'living' document that reflects the project's objectives and the changing external context. A

number of metrics will be identified to measure the impact of our communications and media activities, such as the number of responses to our stakeholder surveys.

Annex 1: Results of Farmer's Pride partner survey to identify relevant stakeholder groups for each project deliverable

Farmer's Pride deliverable	Stakeholder group / sector					
	Farmer / gardener	Breeding / seed sector	PGR conservation	Nature conservation	Policy-maker	Consumer / public
D1.1 Identify in situ stakeholders	70%	40%	90%	90%	60%	30%
D1.2 Knowledge of in situ resources/sites	56%	67%	89%	89%	67%	33%
D1.3 LR network showcases	88%	50%	100%	38%	63%	63%
D1.4 LR hotspots identification	75%	50%	100%	50%	50%	50%
D1.5 CWR Network showcases	56%	44%	89%	89%	67%	33%
D2.1 CWR Population management guidelines	14%	0%	71%	86%	71%	0%
D2.2 In situ conservation informatics management tools	71%	29%	86%	71%	43%	14%
D2.3 Community Seedbank Management Guidelines	78%	56%	89%	33%	67%	22%
D2.4 LR Population Management & Access Guidelines	86%	71%	100%	14%	71%	14%
D2.5 Concept for in situ inclusion in EURISCO	63%	63%	100%	63%	63%	0%
D2.6 Integrated In situ & ex situ conservation guidelines	56%	56%	100%	78%	67%	11%
D3.1 Analysis of effectiveness of in situ support mechanisms	29%	29%	100%	86%	71%	14%
D3.2 Analysis of public will to fund in situ conservation	33%	0%	56%	56%	78%	67%
D3.3 Identify in situ areas with useful adaptive traits	100%	71%	86%	71%	71%	43%
D3.4 Showcase showing improved in situ resource access	75%	100%	100%	88%	63%	25%
D3.5 Strategic Action Plan for PGR in situ maintenance	71%	29%	100%	86%	86%	29%
D3.6 Policy dialogue workshop to enhance in situ maintenance	71%	43%	100%	71%	100%	29%
D4.1 Integrated national/European network structure	56%	67%	89%	100%	89%	44%
D4.2 LR network design	75%	38%	100%	0%	50%	13%
D4.3 CWR network design	25%	25%	88%	88%	50%	0%
D4.4 European in situ conservation network of sites / stakeholders	63%	50%	88%	100%	88%	50%
D5.5 Annual newsletters - CWR and LR	100%	88%	100%	100%	88%	63%
D5.6 Publication of case studies best practice and toolkits	88%	63%	88%	75%	75%	50%
D5.8 Dissemination conference	63%	88%	88%	100%	100%	50%
D5.9 Practice abstracts	86%	71%	71%	86%	71%	57%

****Note: darker shading indicates the deliverable is considered more relevant to the stakeholder group**

Annex 2: Farmer's Pride Stakeholder Communication Matrix

Stakeholders	Objectives	Key Messages	Medium	Schedule
Farming sector				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farming NGOs Community seed banks Organic growers associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attend final Conference sign up to email list to find out about joining Network nomination of LR sites for inclusion in Network improve awareness of landraces & interest in conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> importance of landraces for agrobiodiversity, sustainable farming & food security opportunity for greater access to landrace seeds strengthen local food culture & heritage benefits of links with PGR sector improved market access for landrace seeds and produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twitter FP newsletter Landraces newsletter Webpages Farming conferences and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly Monthly 3 issues
Nature conservation sector				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eurosite National conservation networks National/regional conservation NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attend final Conference sign up to email list to find out about joining Network nomination of CWR sites for inclusion in Network greater awareness of crop wild relatives & interest in improving their management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying CWR on the site and their importance for food security CWR conservation provides opportunities for public awareness, community engagement, tourism & funding Including CWR in site management plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twitter FP newsletter CWR newsletter Webpage Nature conservation conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weekly monthly 2 issues
PGR <i>ex-situ</i> & research sector				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECPGR Gene banks Genetic resource centres Universities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participation in final Conference sign up to email list to find out about joining Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> access to wider range of PGR/wider range of varieties greater opportunities for <i>in situ</i> research & reintroduction of PGR to the field access to knowledge of cultivation methods/benefits support for their wider role of gene pool conservation, enhancing & evolving biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twitter face to face with national PGR coordinators Webpage 	

Breeder and seed sector				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International associations of breeders ECOPB Euroseeds EUCARPIA animal breeders (feed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participation in final Conference sign up to email list to find out about joining Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> greater access to <i>in situ</i> PGR increased resilience to climate change, pests and disease 	Twitter Webpage	
Policy makers				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DG Agriculture DG Environment DG Santé National governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> greater awareness of <i>in situ</i> conservation of PGR participation in final project conference interest in supporting the Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> importance of <i>in situ</i> conservation for biodiversity and food security meeting obligations under CBD & Treaty 	Policy Brief Network Proposal EC DG meetings Policy Roundtable at the final project conference	