STAIRWAI

Stairway to AI: Ease the Engagement of Low-Tech users to the AI-on-Demand platform through AI

D8.2 Dissemination and Communication Plan

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Table 1. Document Revision History

Executive Summary

This deliverable (8.2) is part of the Work Package 8 "Outreach activities and long-term sustainability". The document sets out the Communication and Dissemination Plan for the project Stairway to AI: Ease the Engagement of Low-Tech users to the AI-on-Demand platform through AI (StairwAI). It describes the strategy for communication and dissemination of StairwAI, which mainly consists of raising awareness and engaging with the project's main target audiences. This plan provides a comprehensive framework for the methods, channels, tools, and stakeholders that will support StairwAI in its efforts to reach its objectives. The target audience for communication and dissemination as well as the stakeholders who will be engaged to reach this audience are clearly defined. Furthermore, this document describes the set of actions necessary for this strategy in a section on Communication and Dissemination Tactics. To this end, it provides a description of the channels that will be used to reach the target audience groups and a draft plan for the actions that will be carried out through these channels. This plan will ensure that all communication and dissemination from the overall project are considered and coordinated. The following sections are included in the document: Target Audience and Core Stakeholders, Communication and Dissemination Strategy, Dissemination and Communication Tactics, Open Calls, and Monitoring and Engagement Impact.

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List of Terms and Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
AAAI	Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence
ACM	Association for Computing Machinery
ACM-SIGKDD	Special Interest Group on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining
BDVA	Big Data Value Association
CIKM	Conference on Information and Knowledge Management
cPPPs	Contractual Public Private partnerships
DIH	Digital Innovation Hub
DSM	Digital Single Market ecosystems
EC	European Commission
ECCP	European Cluster Collaboration Platform
ELRA	European Language Resource Association
EOSC	European Open Science Cloud
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
FSTP	Funding Support for Third Parties
GfA	Guide for Applicants
HPC	High Performance Computing
IA	Innovation Action
ICML	International Conference on Machine Learning
IEEE INFOCOM	International Conference on Computer Communication
IEEE-ICDM	International Conference on Data Mining
IJCAI	International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence
LT	Language Technology
META	Multilingual Europe Technology Alliance
NIPS	Neural Information Processing Systems
OC	Open Call
PKDD	Principles and Practices of Knowledge Discovery in Databases - European Conference on Machine Learning
R&D	Research and Development
SAE	Society of Automotive Engineers
SIGCOMM	Association for Computing's Special Interest Group on Data Communications

Table 2. List of Terms and Abbreviations

1. Introduction

Funded under the Horizon 2020 call H2020-ICT-49-2020 "Artificial Intelligence on demand platform", this Innovation Action seeks to enrich the AI on-demand Platform through the provision of a service layer that enables natural multi-language interaction, and matchmaking of users to both assets and hardware resources. This document sets out the Communication and Dissemination Plan of the project, Stairway to AI: Ease the Engagement of Low-Tech users to the AI on-demand platform through AI (StairwAI).

The project has a very clear focus on the end-users of the output being developed. Specifically, the target audience for the StairwAI services are low-tech SMEs, meaning small and small and medium scale companies whose business is not mainly focused on AI or ICT technologies. AI solutions have the potential to have a transformational impact on organizations in several domains. However, it is these same organizations that typically lack the resources and/or expertise to identify and adopt the innovative solutions that they require. Therefore, a significant part of the focus on end-users will be Open Calls lead by FundingBox where 60 SMEs in low-tech sectors will be funded.

In addition to low-tech SMEs, a second target audience group are AI experts. These individuals are already strongly connected to the on-demand Platform, but for StairwAI to reach its stated objectives, it is vital that a diverse and engaged community of researchers see value in engaging with the services developed as part of the project.

The final core target audience group are resource providers, such as distributed edge, cloud and HPC actors as these will provide assets for the platform and importantly, also act as a source of information and feedback to the project.

The deliverable 8.2 is part of the Work Package 8 "Outreach activities and long-term sustainability". The WP and this deliverable are led by UCC, and it is responsible for the design and preparation of all the necessary channels, tools, and materials, especially those related to communication objectives. Moreover, FundingBox members (Leaders of Work Package 7 "Open Call Management") led by the Innovation Manager, will oversee implementation of activities linked to the uptake and exploitation of results.

The core objective of this document is to present a comprehensive plan to ensure the effective dissemination of the project's outputs to the core target end-users. Additionally, the document aims to present an effective internal and external communication strategy to ensure both strong internal collaboration and effective positioning of the project within the broader European AI landscape.

The document opens in Section 2 with an overview of the main audience that will be targeted for communication and dissemination. It continues with an overview of key stakeholders that the project will engage with to ensure the effective dissemination of its results to different target audiences. Section 3 is concerned with setting out the project's overall communication and dissemination strategy. This is followed by a section on the toolkit that the project will use to engage with external organizations. This includes dedicated subsections on a selection of dissemination and communication tactics and channels and a brief presentation of the project's Brand Positioning. Section 5 presents a dedicated section on the communications campaign that will be rolled out to support the project's Open Calls, while Section 6 is dedicated to the monitoring and impact of the plan and includes a subsection on the project's internal communication plan. Section seven completes the document offering a conclusion and points to the next steps in terms of necessary and forthcoming actions that will be implemented.

2. Target Audience and Core Stakeholders

This deliverable document combines the two associated but separate activities of communications and dissemination. It is important therefore to succinctly present the targets for both set of activities. Within this document, a distinction has been made between audience and stakeholders.

Audience in this context refers to entities that are the focussed end users of the services developed or those interconnected to their design and sustainability. These organizations will be the subject of the dissemination activities described in this document. Actions are set out to ensure that the target end users are both made aware of the project's outputs and are informed of their use.

The second category that are considered of key importance are those defined as **Stakeholders**. These entities are those with the means to reach the target audience groups.

This section opens with a description of the target audience groups including the objectives of reaching each of these audience groups. It continues with an overview of the key stakeholders that are associated with project partners. Project partners will oversee communication activities and ensure that project results are effectively disseminated to different target audiences while stakeholders will provide additional value by contributing to dissemination and communication activities and reaching the target audience through their networks.

2.1. Audience

The main target audience groups of the StairwAI project are low-tech SMEs, AI experts, and resource providers. They will be targeted as end-users of the platform as well as a source of information for building use cases, determining low-tech SMEs' needs as well as a source of feedback. Distributed edge, cloud, and HPC actors will be targeted by StairwAI as providers of assets such as hardware for users of the platform. Similarly, AI experts will also be targeted as assets of the platform as well as a source of information and feedback.

The goal of communication and dissemination is to be able to reach and engage with these three main audience groups. Therefore, while targeting these audience groups directly with communication and dissemination activities, StairwAI also aims to direct communication efforts towards stakeholder groups who may aid in reaching a broader range of low-tech SMEs, AI experts, and resource providers. A detailed description of these stakeholders can be found in the subsequent section.

Audience	Objective
Low Tech SMEs	- Attract end-users to the platform - Source of information to build use cases and determine the needs of low-tech SMEs - Source of feedback
AI experts	- Assets for the platform as well as a source of information and feedback
Resource Providers	- Providers of assets, such as hardware

Table 3. StairwAI Target Audience Groups

2.2. Stakeholders

As described above, stakeholders are those entities that possess the means to aid project partners in reaching the target audience groups. Project partners will be primarily responsible for ensuring that all relevant communication activities for reaching target audience groups are carried out and for ensuring that project results are effectively disseminated to different target audiences. The key stakeholder groups consist of the networks of each WP8 partner, open innovation initiatives, European platforms and agencies, regional and national authorities, the broader scientific community, policymakers, EC directorates, as well as standardisation bodies. The key objectives of engaging with these stakeholders are:

- **Raise awareness** and ensure the visibility of the project
- **Reach** low-tech SMEs, AI experts, and resource providers
- Recruit **new users** for the AI on-demand Platform
- Provide StairwAI with additional **inputs** into the development of its services
- Provide **insights** into challenges faced by target end-users
- Maximise promotion, replication, and uptake of **research results**
- **Linkage** to other platforms and extend AI service to other platforms
- Provide **experts and resources** for the Platform
- Carry out communication and dissemination **activities,** such as engaging in conferences and consultative workshops/seminars, media coverage, open access publications etc.

All 11 partners of StairwAI will contribute to the communication and dissemination of the project. All partners will use their associated stakeholders, such as AI4EU and similar projects under the H2020 programme ICT-49-2020, communities, SME incubators or accelerators, the DIH ecosystem, clusters, and industrial associations as additional stakeholders to aid in approaching low-tech SMEs, AI experts, and resource providers. Additionally, partners who are members of platforms, such as European platforms and agencies' platforms will be able to introduce these platforms' communities as additional stakeholders to help reach the targeted audience. The following table provides an overview of the key stakeholders who will aid in reaching the target audience.

Partner	Associated Stakeholders
FBA	- DSM ecosystem (cPPPs) - European Network of DIH (338 DIHs fully operational, 300 DIHs: potentially active at industry - ECCP (networking and information support for clusters & members) - 'I4MS Going-To-Market Alliance', I4MS initiative - TETRAMAX, an IA in the SAE ecosystem (Coordinator of LEDGER) - Robotics PPP, the Pan- European Network of Robotics DIHs for Agile Production, RIMA, the DIH Network for Robotics for Infrastructure Inspection and Maintenance
TIL	- European language technology community - European LT associations, META and ELRA network - Language tech industry association LT Innovate - Big Data community - SMEs and start-ups - BDVA, EC - BRANCHES Platform - Connections with Baltic/Nordic region

UNIBO, UPC, TUE, INFN	- AI4EU community - AI and machine learning community (e.g., via AAAI, IJCAI, NIPS, ICML) - Language processing and text mining: (E)ACL, COLING, CONLL, EMNLP, CIKM - Online social networks: SocialCom, ACM SIGCOMM, IEEE INFOCOM, Twitter networks - Data mining and pattern discovery: CIKM, IEEE-ICDM, ACM-SIGKDD, PKDD - Ph.D. students and post docs - Networks of excellence (e.g., CLAIRE, ELLIS, TAILOR)
THA, BCA	- AI4EU and Bonseyes projects - Ecosystem of stakeholders interested in AI solutions
HUA	- ECLIPSE Foundation [https://www.eclipse.org/org/] - BDVA/DAIRO PPP (https://www.bdva.eu/PPP) - Open-Source community - Neural Network enablement, AMOS Project, Friedrich-Alexander Universitaet Erlangen-Nuernberg - Open Edge and HPC Initiative (https://www.open-edge-hpc-initiative.org/) - PhD students in AI topics - Learning platform KI Campus—The learning platform for artificial intelligence
EGI	- EGI Federation (250+ research centres across 50 countries, 2000+ researchers in the EGI community) - EOSC stakeholders: policy makers, researchers, infrastructure providers, EOSC DIH - I4MS community (DigitBrain Project) - EUHubs4Data and BDVA (Federation of Data Hubs in Europe) - EGI DIH labelled as Golden i-Space

Table 4. Key stakeholders within consortium

In addition to the stakeholders within the network of the project partners (Table 4), an additional set of stakeholder groups have been identified. These include open innovation initiatives, regional/national authorities, European platforms and agencies, standardisation bodies, policymakers and EC directorates, and the broader scientific community.

Open innovation initiatives attract a range of different participants, addressing a diversity of topics and focus on meeting user's needs and problem-solving. As stakeholders open innovation initiatives will benefit StairwAI in the way that they will aid in reaching low-tech SMEs, AI experts, and resource providers that may participate in such initiatives. Additionally, this stakeholder group may provide StairwAI with input into the development of the platform as well as discovery of new possibilities for the platform. As open innovation initiatives provide an insight into challenges end-users may face, engaging with this stakeholder may enable StairwAI to take such challenges into consideration when developing the platform and thus provide better service offerings for the on-demand platform.

Attempting to reach a broad range of low-tech SMEs, AI experts, and resource providers in different regions can be challenging. StairwAI therefore aims to facilitate reaching the three main audience groups in different European regions with the assistance of stakeholders such as **regional and national authorities** and **European platforms and agencies**. Such stakeholder groups may aid in communication of the StairwAI project and in disseminating project results to the target audience on a more local level. Additionally, **European platforms** provide opportunities to link platforms or extend the AI service to other platforms. Similarly, **standardisation bodies** such as CEN and CENELEC and **policy makers and EC directorates**, i.e.,

relevant departments of the European Commission, such as DG ENER, DG DIGIT, DG RTD, DG MOVE, DG CLIMA, DG EN could aid in reaching a larger audience and maximising replication and uptake of StairwAI's results. In turn, the **broader scientific community** including universities, R&D centres, R&D teams, PhD candidates and post-doc candidates ensure the project's visibility and maximize replication and uptake of research results. Moreover, the broader scientific community, involved in research and other projects in this community, may additionally aid in providing experts for the platform as well as reaching and engaging with low-tech SMEs, and resource providers.

3. Communication and Dissemination Strategy

The StairwAI project is positioned within a very rich landscape of AI projects and related initiatives. In particular, and somewhat unusually, the project, along with five others funded under the call ICT49, is directly connected to an already established project, namely the AI on-demand Platform. As discussed in the introduction to this document, it is envisioned that the outputs of StairwAI will feed directly into the service portfolio of the Platform. In terms of developing a holistic and actionable communication and dissemination plan, the positioning of the ICT49 projects presents both challenges and opportunities.

An immediate and evident challenge is that the project's outputs are to be integrated into the technical platform of another project that sits outside of the control of StairwAI partners. There are several implications of this interaction. One challenge is associated with tracking the effectiveness of the strategy described in this document. Others include the upcoming completion of the AI4EU project that complicates the necessary alignment of communication and dissemination activities.

Conversely, there are several opportunities with being connected to another high-profile project and an associated portfolio of H2020 projects. A clear example is the fact that StairwAI is not creating awareness of something new but is instead building on a project that already has strong visibility and very strong support from the European Commission. This means that resources that might otherwise be required to introduce the project can instead be redirected to other actions, specifically ensuring StairwAI's target audience is made aware of its outputs. Additionally, given the alignment with five associated ICT49 projects, there is enormous potential to enter deep collaboration in terms of ensuring a multiplying effect for communication and dissemination activities. With all projects pointing in the same direction, the need to develop synergies with other projects is something that was closely considered during the development of this document.

Presented in the following section is an overview of StairwAI's overall strategy. Reflecting the project's positioning, the strategy seeks to plot a set paths that will facilitate strong engagement with key stakeholders that will ultimately lead to the effective dissemination of the project's results to the core target audience groups. The following section begins with a sketch of the core objectives of the strategy before more details of the key features of the strategy is presented.

3.1. Objectives

StairwAI aims to **facilitate interactions with the AI on-demand platform** through multi-lingual interaction, and to guide low-tech users in the discovery of the relevant tools, datasets, experts and employees through horizontal matchmaking, hardware dimensioning, AI asset discovery, and job offer-demand search. Overall, the facilitated interaction with the AI on-demand Platform as well as the dissemination of the benefits of the platform for low-tech users should **boost adoption of the AI on-demand platform**.

Considering the project's general objectives, the central goals of StairwAI's Communication and Dissemination Strategy is:

- to establish the basis for sustainable interest in and commitment to the on-demand Platform.
- to engage with stakeholders as well as build and reinforce links with stakeholders to be able to reach the target audience groups.
- to ensure the project's visibility and maximise promotion replication and uptake of research results.

With regards to multilingual interaction, communication and dissemination will play an important role in ensuring that a **multilingual audience** is made aware of the platform as well easing access and interaction. This in turn should aid in boosting adoption of the on-demand Platform across different European countries.

Furthermore, to ensure that the horizontal matchmaking and vertical matchmaking as well as the structured information system, with its tools and use cases, is built efficiently and to sufficiently meet end-user's needs, it is crucial to engage with stakeholders and the target audience groups to **receive input into the development of the platform as well as feedback on how to improve it.**

3.2. Strategy

StairwAI's overall strategy for communication and dissemination is to reach the target audience groups through the assistance of stakeholders by using distinctive channels and tools for communication and dissemination activities. More specifically, there will be two approaches that will be taken by StairwAI. The first approach is what is termed **awareness raising**, where the goal is to make both audience groups and stakeholders aware of the StairwAI project and what it plans to offer the community. The second approach is termed **engagement** where the goal is to engage directly with both stakeholders and the target audience groups to both enrich the services being developed, and to ensure the outputs reach their intended end-users.

The first **awareness raising** approach will be to communicate the objectives and expected results of the StairwAI project to key external organizations. In this approach, actions will be concerned with describing how StairwAI will facilitate interaction with the on-demand Platform as well as the possibilities of exploitation it offers end-users. Interaction with stakeholders will ensure the reach of StairwAI's messaging. Furthermore, broad communication activities will help to reach some members of the target audience groups and subsequently encourage interest and adoption of the on-demand Platform.

The second approach will be to ensure *engagement*. In this approach, stakeholders and the target audience groups will be encouraged to actively engage with the StairwAI project by participating in the development of the project, contributing to discussions, providing expertise and feedback, and further disseminating StairwAI's results and activities. Additionally, part of the target audience groups will engage with StairwAI by becoming end-users and getting involved with the project on a deeper level through exchanges, co-creation, further developing resources, organizing events, as well as offering community support, tools, and resources.

Reflecting on the positioning of the project described in the opening of Section 3, the two-pronged approach of StairwAI's Communication and Dissemination Strategy needs to be embedded within the broader AI landscape. For this reason, the overall strategy (and associated actions) has been designed to respond to key factors that will help the project to capitalise on its interconnected positioning with other initiatives. Below, four features of the broader AI community and the ICT49 call are mentioned that have informed the design of this strategy and that will be exploited to ensure its implementation.

1. Direct engagement with Target Audience Groups

Each of the ICT49 projects has a dedicated budget for Open Calls. For StairwAI, these resources provide the project with a mechanism to engage directly with one of the key target audience groups, namely low-tech SMEs. The bespoke Open Calls strategy is outlined in full detail in Section 5. Further direct engagement with other target audiences (AI experts and resource providers) will be facilitated through development of dedicated workshops or participation in externally organized actions with a direct involvement of target audience groups. The abovementioned strategy relies heavily on the Open Calls strategy but there will be an

ongoing evaluation of the need for actions (events, workshops, surveys etc.) where the project will directly connect and engage target end users.

2. Engagement through stakeholder groups

Given the breadth of organizations within the target audience groups, direct engagement of the project with all these potential end-users will not be possible. To ensure strong visibility and uptake of the project's results, StairwAI will rely heavily on the use of stakeholder organizations to reach end users. As described above, each of the organizations within the StairwAI consortium have strong national and pan-European networks. In many instances, project partners hold leadership roles in these organizations, and therefore are well positioned to connect the activities of StairwAI with the priorities and interests of these stakeholder groups. StairwAI has already mapped a list of primary stakeholders to different target audience groups and as the project advances, different channels and mechanisms will be used to share the outputs of the project with selected organizations. These stakeholder groups will act as communication multipliers for the project. However, this will only be possible through the creation of value from within the project for these groups. Therefore, engagement with key stakeholders will need to be strategically managed, with the strong consideration of the mutual benefit that any collaboration can offer.

3. AI on-demand Platform

A fundamental objective of StairwAI is to build upon the on-demand Platform. The two projects are intrinsically connected and therefore it is not possible to develop a comprehensive and implementable Communications and Dissemination Plan without considering the status and outlook of the Platform. An advantage for StairwAI is the potential to use the existing channels, tools, and activities to reach target audiences. Decisions of the strategy around its selection of communications channels and associated targets reflect the reality that the outputs of StairwAI are building on the work of another EU funded project. Ultimately, the success of the communications strategy will be the strong profile and visibility of the on-demand Platform and dissemination success will be reflected in the number of users of the new services embedded with the same Platform. Reflecting on this noted interconnection, it is also necessary for the strategy described in this document to be adaptable to changes that are outside of the control of StairwAI partners. At the time of writing, the on-demand Platform is ongoing significant reform and there is a degree of uncertainty about its sustainability model. This strategy is designed to maximise the interlinkages with the current platform and envisions the strongest possible interconnection both in terms of the integration of results but also synergies in communication and dissemination activities. However, should there be unforeseen changes in the relationship between the on-demand Platform and the ICT49 projects, the strategy as described is suitably flexible to adapt and achieve its stated objectives.

4. ICT 49 Working Group

Another asset that StairwAI will use in the implementation of this strategy is the newly formed ICT 49 Communications Working Group. This group was established at the behest of the coordinators of the ICT49 projects and is currently chaired by UCC, leader of WP8 in StairwAI. The aim of this group is to identify synergies between the different projects and ultimately to make best use of the resources of each of the project to maximise the impact of the communications and dissemination activities of each of the six projects. The Working Group is already developing useful outputs including identification of key personal in each project, mapping of key communications and dissemination activities and collaboration of activities including future co-organized events. It is envisioned that the value of this Working Group will continue to grow as each project completes their respective communication and dissemination strategy, opening the potential

to work closer together on shared actions and to align efforts in terms of engagement with the on-demand Platform.

It is envisioned that the value of this Working Group will continue to grow as each project completes their respective communication and dissemination strategy, opening the potential to work closer together on shared actions and to align efforts in terms of engagement with the on-demand Platform.

This Section described the objectives and strategy of StairwAI's communication and dissemination plan and pointed to four key factors or feature of the AI landscape that have informed the strategy. The following Section presents the Dissemination and Communication Tactics and includes Brand positioning, Content and Consistency, Channels, Tools and Activities.

4. Dissemination and Communication Tactics

Communicating with the target audience groups and disseminating project results requires a strong brand identity, a plan to ensure that the content that is being disseminated or communicated is consistent, a list of channels through which the target audience groups can be reached and finally, a plan for activities that will enable StairwAI to reach end users and achieve the stated objectives of the Plan. This section opens with StairwAI's brand positioning where the visual identity, the project website and templates of StairwAI are presented. This is followed by a subsection describing the content that will be communicated and disseminated and how consistency will be ensured. The last two subsections of Section 4 describe the channels that will enable StairwAI to reach its target audience groups and the tools and activities that will be used on those channels to raise awareness of StairwAI and engage the target audience and stakeholder groups.

4.1. Brand Positioning

Project coordinator UNIBO contracted local creative design company to create a visual identity for the project to enable clear and easy recognition of StairwAI. Visual identity refers to a cohesive and robust frame built around visual communication to deliver contents to specific target audiences. It comprises diverse elements of visual communication, which are the logo, fonts, a colour palette, images, and icons, that come together under one united aesthetic. StairwAI's visual identity will be utilized in all communication and dissemination efforts of the project and communication and dissemination materials produced within the project will be designed in line with the visual identity. Logos, typography, graphic elements, branding guidelines, and templates are available for partners to access and download from the collaborative area on SharePoint.

Visual identity

A specific project logo has been developed for project identity. The StairwAI logo reflects the core content of the project. The choice was to keep a simple graphic but in which the connection with the project and specifically the "stair" that leads to the use of Artificial Intelligence was evident.

Figure 1. StairwAI Logo

In addition to the original logo displayed, a black & white version and several formats of the logo have been provided to be used in certain circumstances where the original version is not adequate. Furthermore, a brand manual is available for download to all project partners. The document includes information on the different project logos but also information on the colour palette used for the logo and the font that is to be used. Figure 2 displays the colours selected for designing purposes. These can be complemented with any other colour by partners in charge of designing materials of any kind.
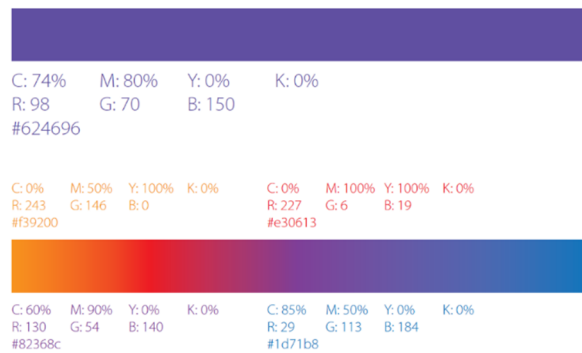
Logo | Colors

Figure 2. Logo Colours

Finally, the visual identity of the project brand is completed with a specific font. The use of the Arial Rounded MT Bold, in its bold and italic variants, in addition to the normal one, is recommended for the preparation of any type of document or support.

Project website

The StairwAI website will not be used as a main source of information, communication, and dissemination of the project as the on-demand platform, i.e., the AI4EU website, will be used for this purpose instead to ensure that the European AI ecosystem and resources are easily accessible from one compact location. StairwAI's website (https://stairwai.nws.cs.unibo.it/) will therefore provide a direct link to the StairwAI section on the on-demand Platform, thus acting as a window to the Platform where all the services and information will be available. The StairwAI section on the Platform will display all the pages required by EU H2020 projects including a description of the project mission, partners, and results.

Templates and project presentation

A StairwAI PowerPoint template has been developed to use at internal and external events when presenting the project and its outcomes. The template includes one cover slide for the title of the presentation and a body slide. A deliverable template has also been developed to submit the documents in a uniform and appropriate way. Both, the PowerPoint template, and the Deliverable template, are available for download from the collaborative platform.

4.2. Content and Consistency

Before publishing any messages or materials it is crucial to clearly define the objective of the message, which main messages should be conveyed, to which audience this message is relevant, and which channels are most appropriate for targeting the specific audience. To ensure that there is consistency in the dissemination of StairwAI, partners will be provided with a checklist attached in the annex of this document. This checklist will guide partners to ensure that the right messages are conveyed and the output from StairwAI is consistent. The content that will be used for communication and dissemination will focus on achievements and methodologies in the AI field, StairwAI's results and development, critical information, and other relevant topics. Messages on social media for example will focus on sharing activities that are relevant to the specific audience groups as well as a general overview of the main results achieved and general information about the project. The language will be adapted for different target audiences and supported by graphic material

such as videos, infographics, or images. Information at events will be more detailed according to the topic of the specific event, with technical descriptions of the project if applicable, and stressing the potential benefits of the project results for the target audience groups. Events will be supported by slides, video demos or recordings of webinars. The following main results of StairwAI will be an additional focus for message contents:

- Service layer in the on-demand Platform
- Multi-lingual chatbot
- Horizontal matchmaking and AI asset organization and discovery
- Application benchmarking and hardware dimensioning
- StairwAI low-tech sector showcases

To ensure that when reaching its target audience StairwAI provokes memorable interest, partners will use certain tools, such as the project logo, banners, flyers, consistent presentation templates, success story templates, and other multimedia materials. It is crucial that these templates are used and not significantly altered to ensure a consistent image of StairwAI and its brand.

4.3. Channels

Reaching the target audience requires different channels which in this document are considered a medium for communication and dissemination. In other words, a channel is regarded as the medium used for applying communication tools and performing activities to reach the target audience. For example, a social media platform may be a channel through which an audience can be reached through an activity, such as posting results of the project on the social media platform. Overall, the channels of communication and dissemination used to target the audience for StairwAI can be categorized into three main channels, i.e., media, events, and stakeholders. While the media and events enable StairwAI to engage directly with the audience, stakeholders can be considered an indirect channel to engage with the target audience. Furthermore, to reach a wider range of audiences, StairwAI will ensure that the chosen channels will be a combination of local, national, and international.

Media

There are different types of media that StairwAI will use as channels for communication and dissemination. The main differentiation is between online and print media, social media, and broadcast media. The main channels StairwAI will use in online and print media will be newspapers or periodicals and scientific and peer-reviewed journals. While the channel of scientific and peer reviewed journals aims to reach AI experts and the broader scientific community, newspapers and periodicals will enable StairwAI to reach stakeholders groups, such as open innovation initiatives and national and regional authorities. Regarding the channel of social media, StairwAI will focus on Twitter and LinkedIn, however, other platforms may also be considered. As a professional networking platform LinkedIn will mainly enable StairwAI to reach low-tech SMEs, AI experts, and resource providers but also stakeholder groups such as open innovation initiatives, policymakers, and European agencies. In addition, Twitter and LinkedIn will facilitate reaching the target audience by using hashtags associated with specific entities or joining relevant groups. For social media, StairwAI aims to link its social media accounts to those of AI4EU as these accounts will reach a wider range of the target audience as they are already well established and connected to the same platform that StairwAI will be using for its services. Finally, broadcast media includes channels, such as StairwAI's website, the on-demand Platform, stakeholder's platforms, and EC specific platforms, such as I4MS. While broadcast media

will focus on reaching low-tech SMEs, policymakers, European agencies, and standardisation bodies it will also provide opportunities to reach other audience groups.

Events

Events, such as conferences, meetings, topic discussions, R&D seminars, and workshops will enable StairwAI to directly engage with its target audience groups on a deeper level. Building connections with low-tech SMEs, AI experts, and resource providers at such events will additionally increase the contribution of these three main audience groups to the development of the on-demand Platform and its assets. Furthermore, events will facilitate engaging with potential stakeholders who will aid in reaching additional target audience groups. To ensure a strong reach within each of the target audience groups, consortium partners will contribute to a variety of strategic events at national and EU-level ranging from events on ICT, AI and its applications, industrial sector associations' events, scientific congresses, events related to standardization bodies, events of regional and national authorities, and major European events aligned to the Networks of Excellence. Events that could reach European Platforms and agencies for example may be events related to AI, Data and Robotics PPP or European Open Science Cloud projects (EGI annual conferences, EOSC weeks). Events that will reach AI experts for example include industry summits sponsored by Huawei, such as ECAI2020, AI World Congress, and World Summit AI. While attending events will play a major role in reaching StairwAI's target audience, hosting events will also be important to engage target audience groups. StairwAI consortium partners will therefore host events, such as workshops and seminars or webinars where target audiences can provide inputs and contribution very tangibly to the project.

Stakeholder channels

Stakeholders may also be considered channels that aid in reaching the target audience groups as stakeholders provide indirect access to additional channels such as related EU projects' channels, stakeholders' newsletters, social media channels and websites, the European AI community's channels, DIH channels, local and national government channels as well as funding bodies' channels.

4.4. Tools and Activities

Raising awareness of StairwAI and the on-demand Platform, communicating and disseminating the project results to the target audience groups, and engaging the three main audience groups in the development of the platform and its assets will happen through a set of activities carried out by consortium partners. These are presented below.

Channels	Activities
Scientific and peer reviewed journals	Open access publications: - Publish papers on project results - Publish papers on achievements and methodologies in the AI field
Newspapers and periodicals	- Create press releases - Publish articles on project results, project development and on achievements and methodologies in the AI field
Social media	- Create social media accounts (Twitter, LinkedIn) for StairwAI - Create posts and tweets, encourage likes and retweets - Organize topic discussions - Encourage knowledge sharing - Establish contact with policymakers and EC directorates - Create user manuals and tutorials, such as webinars and YouTube videos - Prepare multimedia materials - Disseminate progress reports

	- Recruit new users for the on-demand Platform and candidates for open calls
Broadcast media	- Marketing to raise awareness (consider paid advertising) - Organize topic discussions - Detail project objectives, highlight results, provide a public repository of information on the StairwAI website and other websites - Disseminate progress reports
Events	- Organize meetings with stakeholders - Organize R&D seminars - Raise awareness of StairwAI and the on-demand Platform at external events, e.g., by presenting project results - Approach and engage with low-tech SMEs, AI experts, and resource providers at external events - Organize workshops with industries, public institutions, or other target audiences to engage with audience - Ensure events organized are thematic and aligned with the main interests of the target audience groups - Participate in scientific and AI-related conferences introducing the new services and the on-demand Platform - Establish contact with policymakers, EC directorates and other stakeholder and audience groups - Present slides and other multimedia materials
Stakeholders	- Present project results and developments in stakeholders' newsletters - Build on existing connections to reach target audience groups - Encourage knowledge sharing - Communicate with target audiences through stakeholder's platforms - Use stakeholders' channels and communities to provide news and updates on the project's achievements (e.g., by disseminating articles)

Table 5. Channels and Activities

5. Open Calls

The aim of Open Calls in the StairwAI project will be to reach the target audience group low-tech SMEs and to attract end-users for the platform. 60 SMEs in low-tech sectors will be funded by launching three Open Calls during the project. Specifically, there will be two types of Open Calls, namely Pilot Calls in which 28 low tech sector SMEs will be selected in two different Open Calls, and one Call for Adopters in which 32 low tech sectors SMEs will be selected.

In parallel to these Open Calls, a call to validate External Providers and AI experts will be launched to select the HW resources providers and the AI experts to work with the Low-Tech Sectors SMEs. With this call, StairwAI will validate the providers and have a pool of providers to do the matchmaking between them and the Low-Tech Sectors SMEs at the beginning of the program.

The Open Calls will be led and organized by WP8 partner FundingBox, that have developed a specific strategy for communication and dissemination of Open Calls and introduced specific channels, tools, and activities for Open Calls. While Open Calls will mainly use these specific channels, tools, and activities, they will also avail of StairwAI's general assets and methods for communication and dissemination. To reach a critical mass of potential applicants, FundingBox will deploy a 360 degrees communication strategy combining online and offline channels, as detailed below.

5.1. Specific channels for Communication and Dissemination of Open Calls

Open Call Microsite on FundingBox Platform

The proposals submission will take place on the FundingBox platform, a web-based system that will allow managing the whole Open Call cycle according to European Commission standards. To do so, a specific microsite will be created for two purposes:

- To host the online application form.
- To give information regarding the application process of Open Calls and help applicants apply to participate in StairwAI Open Calls.

The microsite will be hosted at https://stairwai.fundingbox.com. On the home page of the microsite, users will find:

- Key information about the Open Call:
    o Who can apply
    o How to apply
    o The deadline
    o Access to the Open Call key documents, such as the Guide for Applicants (GfA) and the FAQs
    o An "Apply Now" call-to-action button that will redirect to the online application form.

Open Call Helpdesk

A helpdesk for Open Calls will also be accessible through the micro-site. This public StairwAI helpdesk on the FundingBox platform will be led by FundingBox and will act as a 'live forum' platform where applicants can see old questions posted and ask their own questions. This will also allow applicants to connect with each other, and with partners of the StairwAI project.

Open Call Events

Events will be crucial in the communication of the StairwAI Open Calls. In addition to StairwAI's partners, attending and organizing events to raise awareness of StairwAI and its Open Calls, FundingBox will organise six webinars and six Info Days to promote the Open Calls. There will be two webinars and two Info Days per Open Call. Table 6 below details the events to be organised or attended.

Events	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023
	Pilot Call 1	Pilot Call 2	Adopters' Call
Info Days	Dec 2021	Dec 2022	Mar 2023
	Feb 2022	Feb 2023	May 2023
Webinars	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	Apr 2023
	Feb 2022	Feb 2023	May 2023

Table 6. Event execution plan

Connections with DIHs for Open Calls

The connections with DIHs will be an important part of the communication and dissemination of Open Calls since these stakeholders have extensive connections with SMEs and will therefore help reach the target audience of low-tech SMEs. FundingBox has therefore already started involving some DIHs with a focus on AI as "Supportive Partners". This was done through the organisation of a webinar in cooperation with DIHNET.EU to present this opportunity and the following DIHs/candidate EDIHs have already joined:

Name of DIH	Website of DIH	Country
Flemish AI EDIH	http://www.imec-int.com/	Belgium
IS4PROD	www.acornresearch.ie	Ireland
Transylvania Digital Innovation Hub	https://transilvaniadih.ro/	Romania
National Documentation Centre	https://www.ekt.gr/en/index	Greece
Eskisehir Osmangazi University Intelligent Factory and Robotics Laboratory	https://ifarlab.ogu.edu.tr	Turkey
Digital Innovation Zone	https://digital-innovation.zone/	Romania
ITI DCH (The Data Cycle Hub)	https://thedatacyclehub.com/en/	Spain
Czech Institute of Informatics, Robotics, and Cybernetics	https://www.ciirc.cvut.cz/	Czech Republic
IP4FVG - Industry Platform 4 Friuli Venezia Giulia	www.ip4fvg.it	Italia
MinaSmart	https://www.minasmart-auvergnerhonealpes.com/en/	France
hub4industry Digital Innovation Hub	https://hub4industry.pl/en/	Poland
Digital Innovation Hub on Livestock, Environment, Agriculture & Forest (DIH-LEAF)	https://www.dih-leaf.eu/	Spain
EOSC Digital Innovation Hub	https://eosc-dih.eu/	Netherlands

Table 7. Connections with DIHs

The benefits for DIHs to join as Supportive Partners are the following:

- **Visibility**
  - On the AI4EU platform and networks.
  - On the DIHNET platform
  - Within Industry Networks and European networks associated to the AI4EU community
- **Exclusivity**
  - Engagement with the projects below the AI4EU umbrella: ICT48 & ICT49
  - Support to prepare their proposal as EDIH
  - Participate in events in a preferential role

Figure 3: Screenshot of the post about the webinar organised for DIHs on the DIHNET Community

Moreover, two DIH Roadshows will be organised by FundingBox, visiting the DIHs and organizing joint events to target low-tech SMEs interested in implementing AI solutions.

Social Media and Website in Open Calls

The project website and the on-demand Platform will provide a link to the micro-site for Open Calls and the key information about Open Calls as described in "Open Call Microsite on FundingBox Platform". As described in Section 4.3 of this document, StairwAI's social media will aid in attracting low-tech SMEs to apply to the Open Calls by linking to the on-demand Platform's social media.

5.2. Open Calls Communication Toolkit

To communicate the StairwAI Open Calls with the main objective of attracting applicants, a media and communication toolkit with several materials and instructions about how to use them will be created and distributed to project partners to reach a wider network. One communication toolkit per Open Call will be created, that will include the materials described in the Table 8 below:

TOOL	INTENDED USE
Social media banners and suggested posts	Social media posts (Twitter, LinkedIn) on a regular basis. At least one tweet a week and two posts a month during the Open Call period.
StairwAI flyer	Flyer to distribute at events and info sessions.
Press Release (PR) in English and local languages	PR to be spread by PR Agency.
Email template	Template for partners to send to their network about the Open Calls. Partners will include information about the Open Call running at least once in their newsletter.
Presentation to use in events and info sessions	Open Calls PPT to be used in presentations in events and info sessions when needed.
Calendar and KPIs	Open Calls calendar with KPIs for partners to be informed about the timing and the objectives to achieve.
Reporting spreadsheet	Reporting file to be filled by partners to measure the impact of all the communication and dissemination actions to identify good practices. (See section 6)

Table 8. Open Calls Communication Toolkit

The Open Calls communication and dissemination strategy will follow a Growth Hacking Strategy. This well-defined approach will ensure strong engagement and successful implementation. Full details of the Growth Hacking definition and implementation are provided in Annex 3 of this document.

5.3. Open Calls Key Performance Indicators

Measuring the performance of StairwAI's Open Calls Communication strategy is a critical part of the Plan. This will enable the project to identify the best ways to deliver its message to the different stakeholders. Table 9 below describes the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that we will use:

KPI	Number
Number of SMEs reached	2500
Number of SMEs participating in the Open Calls	300
Number of DIHs reached	100

Table 9. Open Calls Key Performance Indicators

6. Monitoring and Engagement Impact

This section comprises of an evaluation plan for the dissemination and communication of StairwAI, a time plan with an overview of planned activities and a third subsection on the internal communication plan. Subsection 6.1 provides a plan for evaluation in a table of dissemination and communication actions along with mechanisms to evaluate them, i.e., KPIs. StairwAI aims to reach the number of targets included in the table through these activities and will use these targets to monitor the impact of StairwAI's dissemination and communication efforts. Section 6.2 provides a brief overview of the timeline for communication and dissemination activities and section 6.3 demonstrates how internal communication actions will be carried out to ensure efficient management of WP8 and efficient communication between WP8 partners.

6.1. Evaluation

To ensure that Communication and Dissemination is continuously monitored, an Excel document, attached in Annex 2, has been created to tracks activities. This document has been shared with the consortium and will enable all partners to directly input and update on activities. The document is based on the KPIs in Table 10 below that list the targets StairwAI aims to reach in its communication and dissemination activities by means of channels and activities described in section 4. This will enable the project to track its progress in reaching its communication and dissemination targets.

As a result of strategy explained in this document, and other developments within the on-demand Platform, the list of KPIs has been slightly modified compared to those listed in the Description of Work. These revised KPIs will ensure that the focus of communication and dissemination targets will be on reaching the project's overall objectives, i.e., ensuring sustainable interest in and commitment to the on-demand Platform, engaging with stakeholders to be able to reach the target audience groups, ensuring the project's visibility, and maximising promotion replication and uptake of research results.

The original set of KPI targets are listed in Table 11 of Annex 4. Listed below are the updated list of KPIs with a brief description of modifications.

1. ***Organisation of topic discussions (in all types of events and on the AI-on-demand Platform)*** has been removed and instead been integrated into a new KPI on ***Broadcast Media****.* This change is a result of the decision with the on-demand Platform to discontinue the functionality of Groups and Discussions. As a result, there is no longer a place on the platform for these planned topic discussions. As discussions will take place at events, and through feedback, this will still enable the project to reach its objectives including engaging with stakeholders and the target audience groups. Measuring the number of events and documenting a summary of these events is considered a more effective way to measure StairwAI's impact. The KPI for website has been moved to broadcast media as the website will contribute to efforts without being a primary area of focus.
2. ***Organisation of meetings with stakeholders. Meeting*** has been added to the ***Events Organized by StairwAI*** section with the meetings KPI target reduced by five. The change is accounted for by the development of the ICT49 Working Groups, leading to a consolidation of the number of meetings. These regular meetings will ensure that project results and developments are disseminated and communicated through the channels of different stakeholders.
3. ***Participation to events: conferences (including those connected to distributed infrastructures in Europe), fairs, info sessions*** has been renamed to ***Events Attended,*** and ***Presentations*** *(in all types of events)* has been added here as a KPI along with ***New Stakeholders*** instead of ***Contacts Made.*** The

plan foresees a greater number of presentations in events organized by StairwAI, but a smaller number of presentations in external events. Hosting events will enable StairwAI to directly engage with its target audience, while attending and presenting events will help raise awareness and build connections to stakeholders and target audience groups.

4. ***Workshop/s organisation: with industries and public institutions*** has been integrated into ***Events Organized by StairwAI*** along with attendees and feedback for all events, as having all events in a common KPI section is a more effective way of measuring the project's impact.

5. ***R&D seminars*** has been integrated into ***Events Organized by StairwAI.*** In the current environment, the focus will be on the delivery of more online webinars, aiming to attract a higher audience. A smaller number of quality events will be more effective in engaging stakeholders for collaboration, and ultimately reaching a greater number of target end users.

6. ***Media Coverage Online*** has decreased the number of entries and retweets as the new strategy for communication and dissemination will link StairwAI's social media with that of AI4EU thus moving the focus away from StairwAI's own social media activities. ***Likes*** has been replaced by ***Reach*** as this is considered a more effective KPI target for measuring impact.

7. ***Open access publication*** has replaced ***References*** with papers published as this is an Innovation Action and publications will therefore be more effective in reaching project objectives, such as maximising promotion replication and uptake of research results.

8. ***Project Logo*** has been removed as this has already been created and included as a tool in the brand image section and does not additionally aid in measuring the project's impact.

9. ***Articles*** and General ***Press Releases*** has been integrated into ***Newspapers and Periodicals*** this will enable StairwAI to measure a broader range of non-scientific publications and thereby the project's impact.

10. ***Social network memberships*** have been removed due to, as previously mentioned, the reduced focus on StairwAI's own social media and the importance given to the AI4EU social media accounts.

11. ***Digital and printed materials*** have been reduced reflecting fact that many events and activities currently take place virtually due to the pandemic and thus require less printed materials.

Table 10 provides the new KPI targets in detail.

Description	Related KPI(s)	Target(s)
Open Access Publications	Papers published	3-5
Newspapers and Periodicals	Press Releases/Articles	6-10
Online Media Coverage	Entries Retweets Reach	400 350 3500
Broadcast Media (e.g., website)	Releases/discussions	30
Events Organized by StairwAI	Meetings (external) Seminars/Webinars Workshops Attendees (per event) Feedback (total from all events)	20-25 10-15 2 10-20 15-20
Events Attended	Events Presentations New Stakeholders	10-15 3-5 15-20
Progress Reports	Reports	2-3

User Manuals/Tutorials	Trainings Trainees/views Feedback	3-5 20-50 10-20
Digital/Printed Materials	Materials	30

Table 10. Dissemination and Communication actions, and mechanism to evaluate them / KPIs

6.2. Time Plan

The figures below illustrate a preliminary Time Plan for StairwAI's key communication and dissemination activities from M6 to the beginning of M19. The aim is to hold monthly meetings with the ICT 49 Workgroup to provide updates and ensure communication and dissemination activities are aligned. StairwAI will also ensure that the target audience groups are regularly informed of the project's progress, news, and results through weekly media entries. Additionally, three progress reports will be produced throughout the project to provide content for communication and dissemination as well as for discussions and publications. Some of the activities described in section 4.4 and 6.1 have not been included in this time plan as they will not take place until after the timeline or have not yet established set timeline. In addition to one-way activities, the time plan includes details of provisional Workshops focused on engagement with strategic stakeholders and target audience groups.
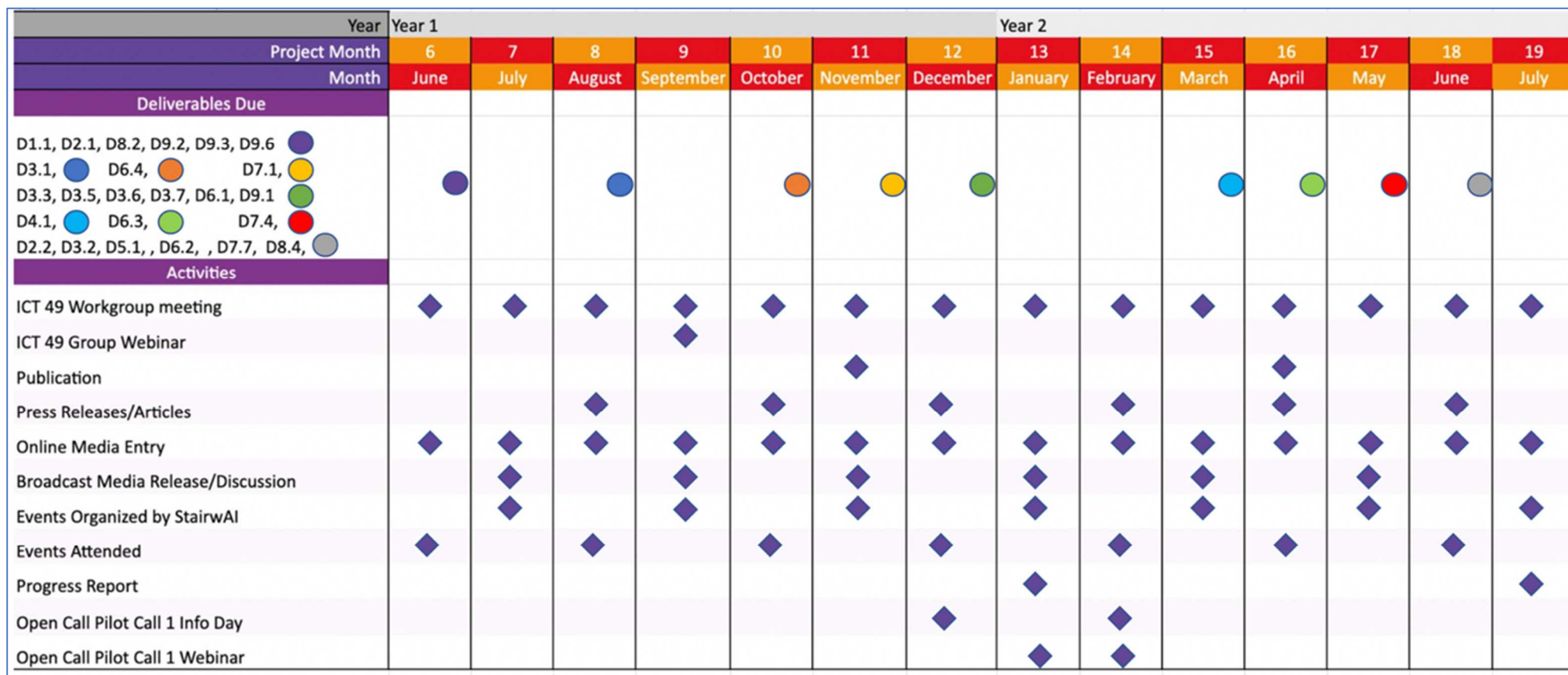
Year	Year 1	Year 2												
Project Month	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Month	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Deliverables Due														
D1.1, D2.1, D8.2, D9.2, D9.3, D9.6 ● / D3.1 ● D6.4 ● D7.1 ● / D3.3, D3.5, D3.6, D3.7, D6.1, D9.1 ● / D4.1 ● D6.3 ● D7.4 ● / D2.2, D3.2, D5.1, , D6.2, , D7.7, D8.4, ●	● (purple)		● (blue)		● (orange)	● (yellow)	● (green)			● (cyan)	● (light green)	● (red)	● (grey)	
Activities														
ICT 49 Workgroup meeting	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
ICT 49 Group Webinar				◆										
Publication						◆					◆			
Press Releases/Articles			◆		◆		◆		◆		◆		◆	
Online Media Entry	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Broadcast Media Release/Discussion		◆		◆		◆		◆		◆		◆		
Events Organized by StairwAI		◆		◆		◆		◆		◆		◆		◆
Events Attended	◆		◆		◆		◆		◆		◆		◆	
Progress Report								◆						◆
Open Call Pilot Call 1 Info Day								◆	◆					
Open Call Pilot Call 1 Webinar								◆	◆					

Figure 4. Time Plan for Deliverables and Communication and Dissemination Activities

6.3. Internal Communication Plan

The StairwAI Coordinator has selected the platforms Microsoft Teams and SharePoint as its standard software for remote work and content management, to carry out the internal communication actions of the project. It will serve as an internal document repository, where partners and actors involved in the project will have their own credentials to access the online Platform and share with all others their relevant information, such as technical information, confidential deliverables, raw project results, etc. Project online meetings scheduled will take place primarily via Microsoft Teams. Material sharing via e-mail will complete the ways used by StairwAI partners for internal communication.

To ensure smooth management and constant control over project activities, a bi-weekly meeting between all Work Package Leaders has been set up. In addition, several meetings to discuss specific Work Packages are organized when needed by the WP Leaders. Furthermore, apart from the Kick-off meeting organized during the first month of the project, plenary meetings will be organized twice a year in which the progress of the project will be discussed and presented, and the General Assembly will be convened.

Regarding the tracking of communication and dissemination activities, as described in section 6.1 of this document, all project partners have been provided with a template in which they will collect all the activities relating to project communication and dissemination. The Excel template, presented in Annex 2 is organized in different sheets in which each partner will add information relating to both the communication and dissemination activities and the list of scientific publications of the project. All information will subsequently be included in the technical report and on the participant portal at the end of each reporting period. Each partner will be asked to update the document at least every six months to keep track of all activities and the achievement of the expected KPIs.

Furthermore, since there is no updated version of this Deliverable in the workplan, all updates on communication and dissemination activities will be added to the technical reports scheduled for month 18 and month 36 of the project. Moreover, during the plenary meetings and during the WP Leaders meetings, any deviations and updates to the plan presented in this deliverable will be discussed. Dedicated WP8 meetings are also scheduled over the duration of the project to highlight upcoming priorities track the performance.

7. Conclusion

StairwAI aims to reach its target audience groups with the help of stakeholders, channels, tools, and a range of activities as outlined in the previous sections of this document. Separating the end users into the three main target audience groups will facilitate a clearer understanding of how communication and dissemination efforts will aid in reaching the main objectives of the StairwAI project, which are to ease the engagement of low-tech users to the AI on-demand Platform through AI. This includes attracting end-users and gaining assets for the on-demand Platform.

The clear definition of stakeholders, mainly consistent of organizations within the extensive network of project partners, but also additional stakeholder groups, facilitates a better understanding of how connections can be exploited to benefit the communication and dissemination of StairwAI. Furthermore, the key objectives of stakeholders which are, amongst others, raising awareness, ensuring the visibility of the project, recruiting new users for the AI on-demand Platform, and carrying out communication and dissemination activities clarifies the responsibilities of WP8 partners and other stakeholders.

This document describes a strategy that has been informed by the specific positioning of the project. Intrinsically connected to the AI on-demand Platform and closely linked with five associated projects, this Communication and Dissemination Plan seeks to capitalise on the opportunities for synergies and collaboration, while mitigating against potential risks associated with these close connections.

With the project's overall objectives in mind, the main objectives of the Communication and Dissemination Plan is to establish the basis for sustainable interest in and commitment to the on-demand Platform, to engage with stakeholders as well as build and reinforce links with stakeholders to be able to reach the target audience and to ensure the project's visibility and maximise promotion replication and uptake of research results. The Communication and Dissemination Plan is specifically designed to ensure that these objectives are reached. The differentiation between awareness raising and engagement provides a clear strategy for not only making the target audience groups aware of the StairwAI project but also to ensure that multiple parties are actively engaged in the project either as end-users, providers of assets and feedback, or stakeholders that aid in reaching end users.

Brand positioning, selected channels, tools, and content that will be used have been outlined as well as a comprehensive list of activities through which this plan will be implemented. The distinct section on Open Calls provides a bespoke plan that seeks to ensure Open Calls are effective in recruiting end-users for services developed in the project. Lastly, this plan has outlined specific targets and provided a means for measuring to what extent these targets will be reached and therefore understand if the objectives of the overall Communication and Dissemination Plan is effective.

This document will be available to all consortium partners in the shared Microsoft Teams folder and will be refined over time to ensure that it is up to date and accurate regarding the methods necessary for reaching the project's objectives. Additionally, once the sustainability goals are more clearly defined, the Communication and Dissemination Plan can be linked to the exploitation defined in WP7. The next steps will be to collect materials and results from the StairwAI project for dissemination, to build sustainable relationships with the target audience groups and stakeholder groups, and to outline more detailed plans for events, media content, and other communication and dissemination activities.

Annex 1: Dissemination and Exploitation checklist for partners

UCC members will constitute the core communications team. Supported by UNIBO, UCC will carry out the design and preparation of all the necessary channels, tools, and materials related to communication and dissemination objectives. FBA will lead the Open Call related activities. Nevertheless, success in the accomplishment of the objectives depends on all partners. An active implication of partners will be crucial for an effective diffusion of the project and the result achieved. This annex compiles the necessary information and guidance for partners, to help them acquire a clear understanding of what they must do when carrying out communication, dissemination, and exploitation activities. The communication and dissemination team will periodically ask partners for documentation of the communication and dissemination activities they carried out.

Checklist for Partners' involvement in communication and dissemination activities

- ❑ As a general recommendation, it is suggested to always write the project acronym in any dissemination activity like this: StairwAI
- ❑ The language of the project is English. However, communication with local and national stakeholders might require partners to use their national language. In this case, each partner will be responsible for the translation of any communication material into their own national language.
- ❑ Present StairwAI project on your institutional website and link to project website
- ❑ Follow project's social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) with your organization's accounts
- ❑ When possible and appropriate share and interact when messages are posted on StairwAI accounts, and if any use hashtags.
- ❑ Always label StairwAI (@StairwAI) when you post a message so that the communication team will detect it.
- ❑ Once added on the project website, review the information on your institution in the "Partners" section.
- ❑ Inform the StairwAI communication team about your communication activities
- ❑ Inform the StairwAI communication team about your publications in peer-reviewed journals, and share the link to be published on the website and on social media channels
- ❑ Any dissemination material must indicate that the project received funding from the European Union's H2020 programme. Specifically, any dissemination of results (in any form, including electronic) must display the EU emblem logo and include the following sentence *"This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101017142".*

Checklist for publishing information and engaging with stakeholders and target audience
- ❑ Clearly define the objective of the message.
- ❑ Consider which main messages should be conveyed.
- ❑ Consider to which audience this message is relevant and which channels are most appropriate for targeting the specific audience.

Annex 2: Tracking Communication and Dissemination Deliverables and KPI

Please insert your communication activities in this table. Some sections require you to choose from a list. Scientific Publications must be entered in the separate sheet for Scientific											
	Date	StairwAI participant	Location	Dissemination and Communication activity (measures for commission)	KPI	Description of activities	Type of audience	Description of audience/participants	Number of attendees/viewers reached	Costs	Likes
		select from list		select from list	select from list		select from list		!		

Publications.										
	Number of retweets/shares	Number of feedback	Content of feedback	Title of Publication	Place of Publication	Authors	Link to Publication	Is this dataset Openly Accessible? YES/NO	Is this dataset Reusable? YES/NO	Additional comments

Figure 5. Excel Sheet for Tracking Communication and Dissemination Deliverables and KPIs

										Public/private participation	Peer Review	Is/will open access provided to this publication?
Please insert details of scientific publications in the table below.												
DOI	ISSN or eSSN	Authors	Journal Name or Equivalent	Number, Date	Publisher	Place of Publication	Year of Publication	Page Numbers		YES or NO	YES or NO	*Yes Green OA/ specify length of embargo if any *Yes Gold/specify the ampunt of processing charges in €

Figure 6.Excel Sheet for Tracking Publications in scientific journals

Annex 3: Open Calls Growth Hacking Definition and Implementation Strategy

Open Calls Growth Hacking Strategy

Growth Hacking definition

"Growth hacking is a process of rapid experimentation across marketing channels and product development to identify the most efficient ways to grow a business." According to Wikipedia, growth hacking refers to a set of both conventional and unconventional marketing experiments to expand a business. For that, marketers, engineers, and product managers can work as growth hackers to build and engage the user base of a business using low-cost alternatives such as social media, viral marketing, or targeted advertising, instead of traditional 'promotional' marketing, like buying advertising through more traditional media such as radio, newspaper, or television. The methodology has four steps to convert strangers into promoters, as shown in figure 10 below. With regards to Open Calls, only the first three of these steps apply.

Figure 7. Inbound Marketing Methodology according to HubSpot

These three phases (Attract, Convert and Close) turn strangers into visitors and lead customers and promoters to become even more powerful when implemented with sales and customer success strategies.

- Attract. This phase focuses on attracting strangers to make them visitors through digital and content marketing techniques for a targeted and relevant audience (low-tech SMEs). It consists of spreading the right message or content to the right audience at the right time and platform. For that, social media, blogging, sponsored articles, and influencer marketing are very important.
- Convert. Once you have attracted website visitors, the next step is to convert those visitors into leads by opening a conversation in whatever way works best for them – with messages and emails, webinars or even meetings. Once they are leads, the focus of this phase is to interact with them and provide them relevant content to retain them, as well as to organize their contacts in a database.
- Close. It is the moment to transform those leads into customers, or in our case, applicants

Growth Hacking implementation in StairwAI

Phase 1 – Attract

This step is about acquiring visitors. It is the first contact a stranger is going to have with the product, so it is important to develop some actions to create some brand awareness and trust to make that stranger become a visitor:

- Website of the Project

The website will contain all relevant information of the project – framework and partners, opportunities within the project's calls, success stories, updates on milestones and findings and other relevant information. Also, it will contain call to action buttons to all social media channels, community and to Open Calls. The website will be created and coordinated by UCC.

StairwAI-owned social media profiles (LinkedIn and Twitter) will serve as less formal channels of communication to build and boost community, ensure constant visibility of the project, and deliver fast updates. It will be based on combining the organic content (and potentially paid ads) to reach the identified target audiences. Social media presence of the StairwAI project will be supported by partners' social media channels.

Social media will allow us to disseminate the valuable content and put a human face to the brand to give it more visibility. More than that, it helps to interact with a community where our main target will spend their time. On a regular basis, we will share content on our social media about success stories, Open Calls, interesting events, funding opportunities, useful tips etc. Some of these publications will be already published in the community so in this case we will use a link to it and will publish it in our social media channels. Results will be measured as per KPIs.

- Activation of DIHs

A first email will be sent to all our Supportive Partners, so that they can inform their networks of SMEs. Email campaigns is an effective tool to promote the following activities: Open Call information, webinars, Info Days, participation of StairwAI in world-class events.

- Newsletters

Newsletters will be one of the main regular communication tools to inform SMEs and stakeholders about the project updates. Information for the newsletters will be submitted by all the partners and then summarized by UCC. Moreover, the information about StairwAI Open Calls will also be included in the partners' own newsletters.

- SEM (Search Engine Marketing) and paid campaigns

Our target is online, as potential end-users will carry out research on their questions online. It is therefore of great importance to ensure that our website and other media channels are visible in searches. AdWords campaigns for example, can give visibility and attract future users. The project will have 3 Open Calls, as a result we will have three paid campaigns.

- Offline and online events

As mentioned above, FundingBox will organise six Info Days and six Webinars to promote the Open Calls, and partners will attend two World-class events to position StairwAI and promote the Open Call opportunities.

Phase 2 and 3 – Convert and Close

Once a new user has discovered our website and has become familiar with the StairwAI platform, the main goal will be to convert them to applicants. For this, it is necessary to do the following actions to convert them into leads:

- Landing pages – Forms: To convert strangers into leads it is very important to create attractive landing pages with regards to both design and content. There should be appealing information about the StairwAI Open Calls and its benefits, and it should be easy to read, understand and navigate. A clear and appealing layout and design, attractive buttons with calls to action and a clear concept message are also crucial. The microsite will ensure that these aspects are taken into consideration for its design.

- Call to action: To convert the visitors and increase possibilities for them to apply it is very important to have attractive and very visible call to action buttons in the microsite.

- Mailing – Contacts: All the contact emails will be gathered to organize them in lists to adapt the messages spread depending on the target. Having all the data in one place will help to make sense of every interaction with contacts and optimizing future interactions to attract, convert, close, and delight ideal members more effectively. According to GDPR rules the community will be sending emails and newsletters to all users regarding Open Calls and upcoming events. Additionally, for promoting Q&As and webinars an Eventbrite website will be used to create events. Once the event has gained some attendees, emails can be sent to them following the GDPR. An additional question will also be added to the order form 'Would you like us to inform you about similar events or funding opportunities?', so after receiving an approval from the attendee they may be added to our database.

- Analytics: It is a key point in any growth hacking strategy to study where the traffic comes from to understand the performance of the actions and campaigns to improve the results. For this purpose, analytics tools, such as Google Analytics (UCC) and FundingBox Enterprise (this last one to track the data regarding number of applicants) will be considered.
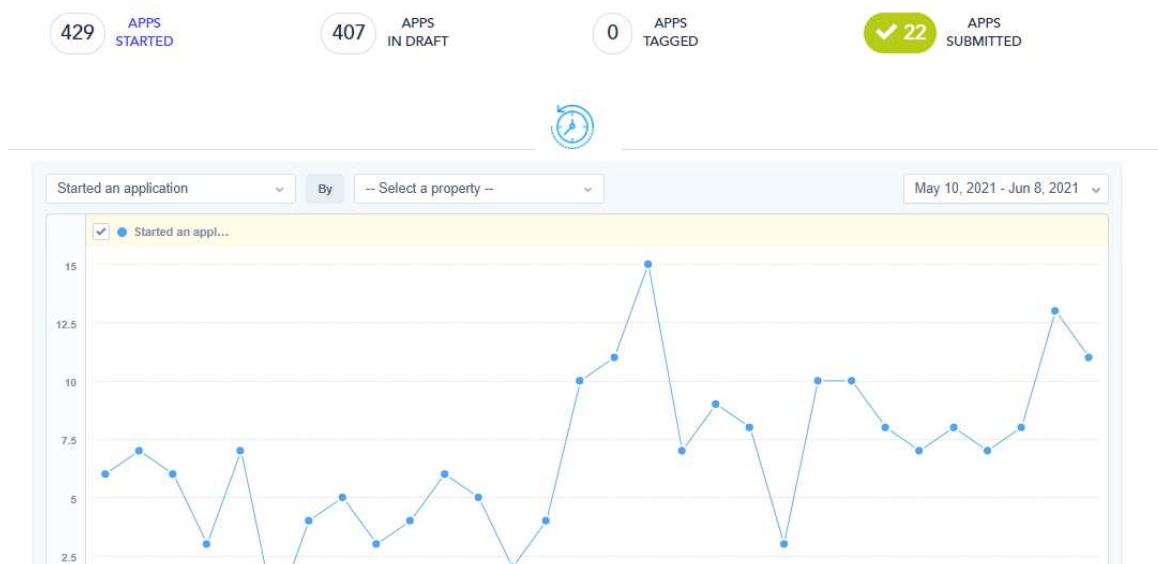

Figure 8. Example of FBOX tool to track the number of applicants

Annex 4: Original Dissemination and Communication KPIs

Description	Related KPI(s)	Target(s)
Organisation of topic discussions (in all types of events and on the AI-on-demand platform)	discussions	500
Organisation of meetings with stakeholders	meetings	25-30
Participation to events: conferences (including those connected to distributed infrastructures in Europe), fairs, info sessions	events contacts made	10-15 100-200
Media coverage online	entries likes retweets	1000 10000 1000
Open access publication	references	500
R&D seminars	seminars attendees /seminar feedback/seminar	30-40 10-20 5-10
User manuals and tutorials: webinars' organisation and YouTube videos	trainings trainees/views feedback	3-5 20-50 10-20
Workshop/s organisation: with industries and public institutions	Workshops Participants feedback/workshop	2 20 5-10
Project logo	(logo)	1
Articles	articles	6-10
progress reports	reports	2-3
Presentations (in all types of events)	Presentations attendees	10-20 20-50
Website	website statistics	1
General press releases	publications	10
Social networks memberships	followers	10k
Digital and printed materials	produced	100

Table 11. KPIs for Dissemination and Communication in original GA before amendment