D7.6 Comprehensive handbook, guidelines and materials for communication and dissemination, final edition

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Brief abstract	This deliverable presents the final edition of the PoliRuralPlus Dissemination, Exploitation, Communication and Scaling-up (DECS) framework. Building on Deliverable D7.1, it documents how communication, dissemination, stakeholder engagement, exploitation-readiness support and scaling-up activities contributed to the visibility, accessibility, transferability and uptake potential of project results. The report reviews the DECS framework, communication infrastructure, stakeholder-engagement mechanisms, digital services, synergy activities and implementation results, and assesses their contribution to Horizon Europe Key Impact Pathways and PoliRuralPlus objectives. The findings demonstrate that the integrated DECS approach supported stakeholder participation, territorial learning, policy interaction, knowledge transfer and long-term sustainability of project outcomes.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	**Term**
DECS	Dissemination, Exploitation, Communication and Scaling-up
GA	Grant Agreement
AI	Artificial Intelligence
RAP	Regional Action Plan
KIP	Key Impact Pathway
KER	Key Exploitable Result
WP	Work Package
NEB	New European Bauhaus
KPI	Key Performance Indicator

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Executive Summary

This deliverable presents the final edition of the PoliRuralPlus Dissemination, Exploitation, Communication and Scaling-up (DECS) framework. Building on Deliverable D7.1, it documents how communication, dissemination, stakeholder engagement, exploitation-support and scaling-up activities strengthened the visibility, accessibility, transferability and uptake potential of project results. As D7.6 is submitted by the end of Month 34, its implementation assessment is based on verified evidence available up to the end of Month 33.

The DECS framework was developed as an integrated, impact-oriented approach connecting communication, dissemination, exploitation, stakeholder engagement, policy dialogue, digital services and cross-project cooperation. Rather than operating as separate functions, these elements were combined to support knowledge transfer, stakeholder interaction, territorial learning and long-term sustainability of project outcomes.

Implementation was supported through a coordinated communication infrastructure, partner-capacity-building activities, dissemination monitoring systems and digital services. Hub4Everybody served as the central communication and knowledge-sharing environment, providing access to project information, deliverables, pilot resources, the PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices and AI-supported services such as Adviser, JackDaw and MAATool.

Communication and dissemination activities exceeded several Grant Agreement targets. The project delivered an extensive portfolio of webinars, workshops, dialogues, publications, press, newsletters, website content and social-media activities. Additional outreach actions, conferences, stakeholder meetings and cooperation initiatives further expanded stakeholder reach, knowledge exchange and policy visibility.

Stakeholder engagement formed a central implementation mechanism of the DECS framework. Through informing, consulting, involving and collaborating, policymakers, researchers, businesses, civil-society organisations, local communities and innovation actors participated in foresight activities, Regional Action Plan (RAP) processes, Open Calls, pilot experimentation, policy dialogue and cross-project cooperation. The project demonstrated that stakeholder engagement is adaptive and context-dependent, evolving according to local needs, governance structures and stakeholder readiness.

The project also strengthened cooperation with Horizon Europe, Horizon 2020, Interreg and New European Bauhaus initiatives through a broad portfolio of synergy and cooperation activities, contributing to knowledge exchange, transferability and wider visibility of project approaches and tools.

The report highlights emerging signals of exploitation readiness, transferability and scaling-up. Regional Action Plans, AI-supported services, the PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices, Open Call activities and stakeholder ecosystems demonstrated potential for continued use and further development beyond the project lifetime. While detailed exploitation planning is addressed in deliverables D7.4 and forthcoming D7.8, the DECS framework provides the link between dissemination, stakeholder engagement and long-term uptake considerations.

A further indication of exploitation and uptake potential was provided by the recognition of six PoliRuralPlus innovations by the European Commission Innovation Radar, covering AI-supported policy advice, dashboards, spatial attractiveness mapping, multi-actor engagement, circular economy business models and AI-based support for public servants.

Overall, the implementation of the DECS framework demonstrates that communication, dissemination, stakeholder engagement, exploitation-support and scaling-up activities can function as strategic mechanisms supporting stakeholder participation, territorial learning, policy interaction, transferability and long-term sustainability. The framework established important foundations for continued visibility, accessibility and uptake of PoliRuralPlus results beyond the Horizon Europe funding period.

1. Introduction

Communication, dissemination, exploitation and scaling-up are increasingly recognised as critical success factors for achieving impact in Horizon Europe projects. Beyond the generation of knowledge and innovation, projects are expected to ensure that their results are communicated effectively, disseminated to relevant stakeholders, translated into practical use and supported through pathways that enable long-term sustainability, transferability and uptake.

Within PoliRuralPlus, these functions were integrated through the DECS framework (Dissemination, Exploitation, Communication and Scaling-up), originally introduced in Deliverable D7.1. The framework was designed to connect project activities, stakeholder engagement, policy dialogue, digital services, exploitation planning and cross-project cooperation into a coherent impact-oriented approach supporting the overall objectives of the project.

This deliverable, D7.6 “Comprehensive Handbook, Guidelines and Materials for Communication and Dissemination – Final Edition”, presents the final implementation assessment of the DECS framework during the project lifecycle. Building on the foundations established in D7.1, it documents how communication, dissemination, stakeholder engagement, exploitation-support and scaling-up activities were implemented across pilots, work packages and stakeholder ecosystems, and how these activities contributed to the visibility, accessibility, transferability and uptake potential of PoliRuralPlus results.

The deliverable adopts a dual perspective. First, it describes the conceptual and methodological foundations of the DECS framework, including its relationship to Horizon Europe Key Impact Pathways (KIPs), stakeholder engagement, exploitation planning, digital services and cross-project cooperation. Second, it assesses implementation evidence generated through communication, dissemination, stakeholder interaction, synergy actions and digital knowledge infrastructure developed during the project.

While many substantive project outputs were generated within WP2–WP6, WP7 played an enabling role by strengthening stakeholder awareness, knowledge transfer, cooperation, visibility and long-term uptake potential.

The final edition therefore focuses on how the DECS framework supported the amplification, accessibility and sustainability of project results rather than on the technical achievements of individual work packages.

The deliverable concludes with an assessment of results and contributions (Chapter 6), followed by lessons learned, limitations and future outlook (Chapter 7). Together, these observations provide a consolidated overview of how the DECS framework contributed to stakeholder engagement, territorial learning, policy interaction, transferability and the long-term sustainability ambitions of PoliRuralPlus.

2. DECS Framework, Objectives and Methodological Foundations

2.1 Objectives for Communication, Dissemination, Exploitation and Scaling Up

The primary objective of WP7 is to ensure strategic and effective communication, dissemination, exploitation, and scaling up (DECS) of the PoliRuralPlus project results. The communication strategy aims to:

- Promote project visibility and awareness among diverse stakeholders.
- Support interregional and cross-sectoral cooperation, especially rural-urban collaboration.
- Ensure stakeholder engagement throughout all stages of the project.
- Enable exploitation and replication of project innovations after project time frame.
- Facilitate scaling-up by providing stakeholders with replicable models and tools.
- Contribute to EU-wide strategies, such as the European Green Deal, Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas (LTVRA), and the New European Bauhaus (NEB).

In PoliRuralPlus, DECS activities are closely connected to participatory foresight, Regional Action Plans (RAPs), AI-supported advisory services and multi-actor rural experimentation implemented across nine pilot regions.

Assessment of objective achievement

The evidence presented in Chapters 4–6 indicates that WP7 largely achieved its core objectives related to visibility, dissemination, stakeholder engagement, cooperation and transferability of project results. Clear evidence exists for communication performance, stakeholder participation, cross-project cooperation and knowledge transfer. Exploitation and scaling-up objectives were addressed through DECS-supported planning, sustainability activities, transferability mechanisms and stakeholder cooperation, although their full realisation depends on post-project uptake and continuation. Contribution to European policy priorities was evident through Green Deal and LTVRA-related activities, while engagement with the New European Bauhaus remained more limited.

2.2 DECS as an Integrated Impact-Oriented Framework

PoliRuralPlus applies DECS — Dissemination, Exploitation, Communication and Scaling-up — not as isolated outreach activities, but as an integrated impact-oriented framework supporting the transformation of project

outputs into long-term societal, policy, scientific and economic value. This approach builds on D7.1, where DECS is defined as a framework of drivers, principles, guidelines, methods, tools and monitoring measures designed to maximise project value and impact.

The DECS framework functions as a transversal coordination and amplification mechanism connecting participatory foresight, Regional Action Plans, digital tools, stakeholder engagement, policy dialogue, exploitation planning and cross-project cooperation. This is aligned with the Grant Agreement requirement that beneficiaries promote the action and its results through targeted information to multiple audiences in a strategic, coherent and effective manner (GA).

Rather than operating as a linear communication pipeline, DECS establishes continuous feedback loops between pilots, stakeholders, thematic work packages, digital services and policy processes. Its operational logic follows the principles already introduced in D7.1: impactful, controlled, distributed, multifaceted and transparent implementation.

The framework combines communication for visibility and legitimacy, dissemination for knowledge transfer, exploitation for practical uptake and sustainability, and scaling-up for long-term transferability and replication. This supports the Horizon Europe Key Impact Pathways (KIP) by strengthening stakeholder ownership, territorial learning, policy relevance, innovation diffusion and post-project continuity.

In D7.6, DECS connects local pilot experimentation, European policy objectives and sustainable long-term implementation. It also provides the organising logic for monitoring achievements, collecting evidence, assessing uptake and demonstrating how WP7 contributes to the overall impact of PoliRuralPlus.

The final edition of D7.6 reflects lessons learned from implementing DECS activities across pilots, work packages and stakeholder networks during the project lifecycle.

Table 1: Operational Logic of the DECS Framework

Component	**Main objective**	**Main mechanisms**	**Expected long-term effect**
Dissemination	knowledge sharing	RAP workshops, hackathons, briefs, Open Calls, PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices, webinars	increased stakeholder capacity and cross-regional knowledge transfer
Communication	visibility, legitimacy and stakeholder engagement	Hub4Everybody, videos, social media (LI, FB), PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices, storytelling, policy communication, webinars	stakeholder trust, project visibility and policy engagement

Exploitation	operational continuation and sustainability	RAPs, digital tools (JackDaw, AI-Adviser etc.), governance models, exploitation plans	long-term sustainability and post-project uptake
Scaling-up	transferability and long-term uptake	peer learning, policy integration, replication, cross-project cooperation	broader uptake and long-term territorial impact

The following subsections operationalise the DECS components presented in Table 1.

2.2.1 Key Impact Pathways

In the context of Horizon Europe, Key Impact Pathways (KIPs) are a structured approach to describing how the results of a research project will lead to specific, measurable impacts in terms of topic destinations. The approach informs the strategic planning of dissemination and uptake activities.

The following Table 2 translates the Horizon Europe Key Impact Pathways into the PoliRuralPlus context. It provides an indicative evidence assessment based on project deliverables, pilot activities, open call actions, dissemination outputs and stakeholder engagement. The evidence maturity categories distinguish between clear-, emerging- and limited evidence; they do not represent a final ex-post impact evaluation.

Table 2. PoliRuralPlus Key Impact Pathways and Indicative Evidence and Impact Signals

KIP	Description	PoliRuralPlus evidence examples	Evidence maturity
KIP1	High-quality knowledge creation	RAP methodology, rural–urban data analysis, cross-pilot synthesis, analytical frameworks	Emerging evidence
KIP2	Human capital in R&I	RAP workshops in 9 pilots, hackathons, conferences, stakeholder engagement, digital skills development	Clear evidence
KIP3	Diffusion of knowledge / Open Science	Hub4Everybody, policy briefs, webinars, open calls, communication outputs	Emerging evidence
KIP4	Addressing EU policy priorities	Alignment with Green Deal, CAP, LTVRA; RAP integration into regional planning; KPI frameworks	Clear evidence
KIP5	Contribution to EU Missions	General alignment with climate, sustainability, rural resilience themes	Limited evidence

KIP6	Uptake of R&I in society	9 rural pilots, RAP co-creation, multi-actor approach, stakeholder ecosystems, open calls (25+ projects), hackathons, real-world experimentation	Clear evidence
KIP7	Innovation-based growth	Digital tools (e.g. MAATool, JackDaw, Adviser), Hub4Everybody platform development, prototypes, innovation portfolio from open calls	Clear evidence
KIP8	Jobs and economic growth	Entrepreneurial potential, local economy initiatives, rural business concepts	Limited evidence
KIP9	Investment leverage	Open call funding (~€900k), PPP concepts, financing models, exploitation plans	Emerging evidence

2.2.2 DECS roadmap

The DECS roadmap translates the integrated framework into an operational management cycle. It coordinates Dissemination, Exploitation, Communication and Scaling-up actions across work packages, pilots and governance levels. The roadmap follows a Plan–Do–Check–Act logic: partners plan DECS activities, implement them through project and pilot channels, report evidence through shared monitoring tools, and use feedback to adjust actions.

In the final edition of D7.6, the roadmap is used not only as a planning tool but also as an evidence-collection and learning mechanism. It connects WP7 coordination, partner reporting, KPI monitoring, website and social media activity, stakeholder engagement, exploitation planning and final impact assessment.

Table 3: DECS Evidence-Collection and Learning Mechanism

DECS component	**Evidence generation**	**Learning & analysis**	**Adaptation & uptake**
Dissemination	Workshops, publications, webinars, policy briefs, open-access outputs	stakeholder participation patterns and dissemination reach, stakeholder feedback, dissemination reach analysis	Improved targeting, updated dissemination formats, cross-pilot knowledge transfer
Exploitation	KER identification, pilot business cases, exploitation clinics, open calls	Readiness assessment, stakeholder interest analysis, sustainability review	Refined business models, preconditions for partnerships, exploration of investment pathways, exploitation planning
Communication	Website activity, news, videos, social media (FB,LI), stakeholder engagement	Website/social media analytics, visibility monitoring	Tailored communication and stronger stakeholder engagement, stronger

		and stakeholder feedback, lessons learned	stakeholder relations, improved legitimacy
Scaling up	RAPs, partnerships, policy dialogues, replication initiatives	KPI monitoring, impact signals, maturity assessment	Replication actions, policy integration, long-term sustainability and legacy planning

The DECS roadmap therefore functions as both a coordination framework and a continuous learning mechanism supporting evidence collection, stakeholder feedback, adaptation and long-term uptake.

2.2.3 Structured Multi-Actor Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

PoliRuralPlus applies a structured multi-actor stakeholder engagement approach supporting dissemination, participatory governance, knowledge co-creation and long-term uptake of project results. The approach is closely connected to Regional Action Plans (RAPs), pilot implementation, foresight activities, Open Calls and AI-supported digital services.

The stakeholder engagement framework builds on D2.1, D2.2 and D2.3, which analysed rural–urban interactions, territorial ecosystems, participatory foresight and cross-pilot learning across the pilot regions. At implementation level, D5.1 and D5.2 operationalised these principles through multi-actor governance structures, RAP co-creation, stakeholder dialogues, KPI harmonisation and pilot experimentation activities. The Mid-Term Report further demonstrated how stakeholder interaction evolved from pilot-level engagement towards broader cross-regional learning, policy dialogue and sustainability planning.

Table 4: Main Stakeholder Categories and Roles within the DECS Framework

Stakeholder category	**Main actors**	**Main role within DECS**
Public sector (PUB/POL)	municipalities, regional authorities, policymakers, development agencies	RAP integration, governance uptake, policy alignment and Green Deal implementation
Business sector (BUS)	SMEs, startups, entrepreneurs, innovation ecosystems	innovation uptake, experimentation, exploitation and scaling-up
Scientific sector (SCI)	universities, research institutes, experts	foresight methodologies, knowledge generation, monitoring and evaluation
Civil society (CIV)	NGOs, citizens, local associations, volunteers, community groups	local knowledge, participatory validation, inclusion and territorial ownership
Cross-sector ecosystems	Open Call projects, clusters, Living Labs, pilot ecosystems	peer learning, collaboration, transferability and replication

The stakeholder interaction model combined several complementary engagement channels supporting dissemination, learning, experimentation and policy interaction throughout the project lifecycle.

Table 5. Stakeholder Engagement Channels and Mechanisms

Mechanism	**Main purpose**	**PoliRuralPlus examples**
RAP workshops and foresight activities	participatory planning and policy dialogue	co-creation of Regional Action Plans and future scenarios
Pilot activities and local experimentation	testing and validation of solutions	pilot workshops, stakeholder meetings and local innovation actions
Open Calls	ecosystem expansion and innovation sourcing	third-party innovation projects and SME participation
Policy briefs and thematic publications	policy-oriented dissemination	Green Deal, rural resilience and governance recommendations
Digital platforms and AI-supported services	continuous interaction and knowledge access	Hub4Everybody, Adviser, JackDaw and Knowledge Base
Webinars, conferences and public events	dissemination and networking	thematic sessions, Rural Pact interactions and project events
Cross-pilot collaboration	peer learning and transferability	pilot exchanges, KPI harmonisation and thematic cooperation

Within the DECS framework, different stakeholder groups are engaged through tailored messages, channels and interaction mechanisms supporting dissemination, exploitation and long-term uptake. Table 6 summarises this audience-oriented DECS logic across the PoliRuralPlus ecosystem.

Table 6: PoliRuralPlus Target Audience–Message–Channel–Expected Action Logic

Target audience	**Core message**	**Main channels and mechanisms**	**Expected action / DECS contribution**
Public authorities and policymakers	PoliRuralPlus provides evidence, foresight methods and Regional Action Plans supporting sustainable rural–urban development and policy implementation.	RAP workshops, foresight activities, policy briefs, stakeholder dialogues, Interactive Dialogues, Hub4Everybody, conferences	Integrate results into policies, planning processes and governance practices; support long-term uptake and scaling-up

Regional development agencies and pilot ecosystems	Participatory governance and multi-actor collaboration strengthen territorial resilience and innovation capacity.	Pilot activities, stakeholder meetings, RAP co-creation, webinars, Knowledge Base, cross-pilot exchanges	Apply methodologies, continue stakeholder cooperation and support implementation of RAP actions
SMEs, startups and innovation actors	PoliRuralPlus offers opportunities for experimentation, innovation uptake, Open Call participation and future exploitation pathways.	Open Calls, hackathons, pilot experimentation, Hub4Everybody, Adviser, networking events	Test solutions, develop innovations, explore business opportunities and contribute to ecosystem development
Researchers, universities and experts	PoliRuralPlus generates knowledge on rural–urban interactions, participatory foresight, AI-supported decision support and territorial innovation.	Scientific publications, conferences, webinars, deliverables, Knowledge Base, digital services	Generate new knowledge, validate methods, support evidence-based policymaking and transfer results
Civil society organisations, citizens and community groups	Local knowledge and stakeholder participation are essential for sustainable territorial transitions.	Stakeholder workshops, dialogues, pilot activities, public events, social media, Hub4Everybody	Contribute local knowledge, validate solutions, support implementation and strengthen territorial ownership
Open Call projects, Living Labs and external innovation ecosystems	PoliRuralPlus provides a platform for collaboration, experimentation, knowledge exchange and transferability.	Open Call activities, Interactive Dialogues, thematic workshops, Hub4Everybody, cross-project cooperation	Contribute innovations, share lessons learned and support replication and scaling-up
EU-funded projects, networks and initiatives	Cooperation enhances dissemination, mutual learning, transferability and impact beyond individual projects.	Interactive Dialogues, joint webinars, conferences, LinkedIn, policy events, cross-project workshops	Develop synergies, exchange practices, align methodologies and increase reuse of project results
Wider public and media	Rural–urban innovation, foresight and stakeholder collaboration contribute to sustainable and inclusive development.	Website, Hub4Everybody, videos, news articles, social media, press, newsletters	Increase awareness, follow project activities and support wider visibility of project results

Within the DECS framework, stakeholder engagement supported:

- identification of local needs,
- validation of pilot approaches,
- dissemination and knowledge exchange,
- policy interaction,
- and assessment of transferability and sustainability.

AI-supported tools and digital services such as Adviser, JackDaw, Knowledge Base and Hub4Everybody additionally supported stakeholder interaction, knowledge access and cross-pilot learning across different territorial contexts.

In several pilots, stakeholder cooperation evolved towards longer-term governance discussions, continuation of RAP activities and exploration of future exploitation and partnership pathways. The combination of place-based experimentation, multi-actor collaboration and AI-supported services supported dissemination, stakeholder interaction and cross-pilot learning.

2.2.4 Synergies & Interactive Dialogues

Purpose of Synergies

Task 7.3 was established to identify, generate, foster and coordinate project-based synergies with other EU-funded initiatives, projects, networks and New European Bauhaus actions. Within the DECS framework, synergies were conceived as mechanisms for knowledge exchange, mutual learning, validation of approaches and transferability of project results. By connecting PoliRuralPlus with external initiatives, the project aimed to strengthen dissemination activities, support exploitation opportunities and facilitate the scaling-up of successful practices beyond the consortium and pilot regions.

Interactive Dialogues as the Operational Mechanism

The operational implementation of this synergy framework was realised through the PoliRuralPlus Interactive Dialogues under Task 7.3. The dialogues provided a structured mechanism for cross-project cooperation, supporting knowledge transfer, dissemination, policy learning and the identification of future exploitation and scaling-up opportunities. The identified synergies, cooperation activities, dialogue outcomes and lessons learned are documented in Deliverable D7.7 *A Compendium of PoliRuralPlus Interactive Dialogues*[1].

[1] D7.7 *A Compendium of PoliRuralPlus Interactive Dialogues* is scheduled for submission in Month 35 and was therefore forthcoming at the time of preparing D7.6. D7.6 refers to it only to clarify complementarity and does not claim to review its final version.

Table 7: Contribution of Interactive Dialogues to the DECS Framework

DECS component	Contribution of Interactive Dialogues
Communication	Increased visibility of PoliRuralPlus among European projects, networks and stakeholder communities.
Dissemination	Facilitated exchange of knowledge, methods, tools and experiences across projects and regions.
Exploitation	Supported validation, adaptation and potential reuse of project approaches, methodologies and digital solutions.
Scaling-Up	Created pathways for transferability, future cooperation and wider uptake of project results beyond pilot regions.

Concluding Perspective

Through the Interactive Dialogues, synergies became an integral component of the DECS framework rather than a standalone networking activity. The approach connected communication and dissemination activities with longer-term exploitation, transferability and scaling-up objectives, contributing to the wider impact and sustainability of PoliRuralPlus results.

2.2.5 Exploitation and innovation management within the DECS Framework

Within the DECS framework, exploitation and innovation management provide the link between project outputs, stakeholder uptake and long-term sustainability. While communication and dissemination increase visibility and transfer knowledge, exploitation focuses on how PoliRuralPlus results can be used, adapted, continued and further developed after the project lifetime.

Task 7.4 addresses this function through the identification of Key Exploitable Results (KERs), exploitation pathways, business and governance models, intellectual property considerations and partner-level sustainability planning. The first dedicated output of this task, D7.4 “Exploitation Plans and Business Models – Edition 1”, provides the initial exploitation roadmaps, KER analysis and business model foundations. The final version, D7.8 “Exploitation Plans and Business Models – Final Edition”, will consolidate the final exploitation plans and business models towards the end of the project[2].

In D7.6, exploitation is therefore presented at framework level, as one of the core DECS mechanisms supporting

[2] D7.8 *Exploitation Plans and Business Models – Final Edition* is scheduled for submission in Month 35 and was therefore forthcoming at the time of preparing D7.6. D7.6 refers to it only to clarify complementarity and does not claim to review its final version.

uptake, replication and long-term impact. Detailed exploitation roadmaps, market analysis, business model canvases, IPR arrangements and partner-specific plans are addressed in D7.4 and will be further refined in D7.8.

PoliRuralPlus applies a five-sphere exploitation logic covering societal and social value, research and innovation, capacity building and training, business and financial uptake, and policy-making. This broad approach reflects the nature of the project results: some outputs may lead to commercial or service-based opportunities, while others are primarily relevant for policy learning, institutional uptake, stakeholder capacity or further research.

Within the overall DECS logic, exploitation and innovation management contribute to:

- identifying results and Key Exploitable Results (KERs) with potential for continued use and uptake;
- supporting partners and pilots in defining post-project pathways aligned with stakeholder needs and territorial priorities;
- strengthening the sustainability, transferability and practical uptake of project tools, methods and services beyond dissemination and visibility activities.

2.2.6 Integrated DECS Architecture, AI Ecosystem and Platform Services

The PoliRuralPlus DECS framework operates as an integrated structure connecting communication, dissemination, exploitation, stakeholder engagement and digital support services across pilots and work packages. Its operational foundation is provided through the PoliRuralPlus Beta Platform developed in WP4 and documented in D4.1 and D4.2.

As illustrated in Figure 1 below, the DECS architecture combines:

- Key Impact Pathways (KIPs),
- exploitation and innovation management,
- structured stakeholder cooperation,
- and AI-supported digital services implemented across WP3, WP4, WP5 and WP7.

"The PoliRuralPlus Beta Platform integrates services and knowledge resources such as Hub4Everybody, the PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices, Knowledge Space, Adviser/RAG, MAATool and JackDaw supporting stakeholder coordination, territorial analysis, dissemination and participatory planning (D4.1, D4.2).

Within the DECS framework, the platform functions as:

- a dissemination and knowledge-sharing environment,
- an access point to AI-supported territorial tools and services,
- and a coordination mechanism supporting stakeholder interaction and cross-pilot learning.

The integrated architecture additionally supports cooperation between pilots, stakeholder ecosystems, dissemination activities and exploitation planning, strengthening transferability and long-term uptake of project results.

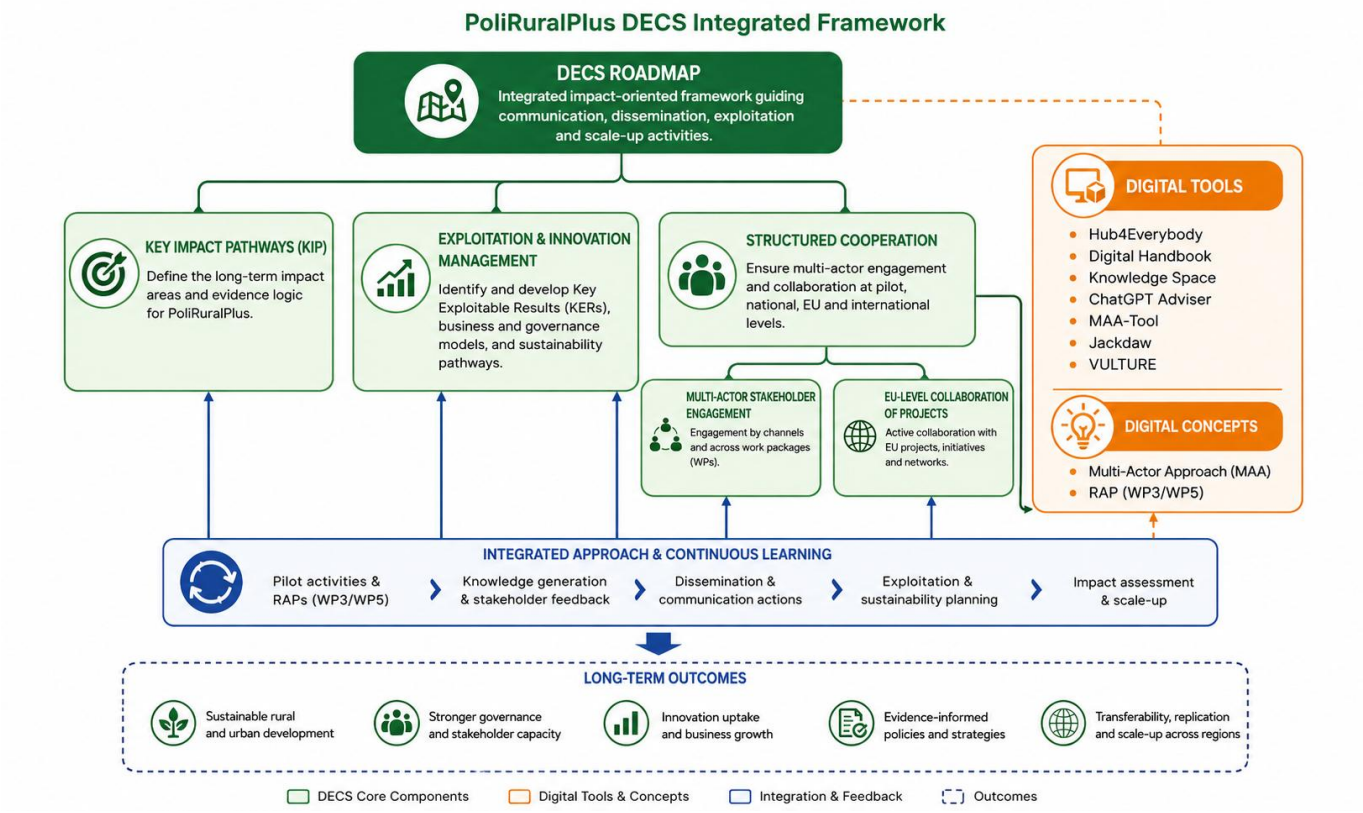


Figure 1: DECS Integrated Framework

2.3 Transition from DECS Framework to Implementation

The preceding sections define the methodological and operational foundations of the PoliRuralPlus DECS framework. They explain how Dissemination, Exploitation, Communication and Scaling-up are connected through Key Impact Pathways, the DECS roadmap, structured stakeholder engagement, EU-level cooperation, exploitation planning and the PoliRuralPlus Beta Platform.

The following chapters move from framework definition to implementation evidence. Chapter 3 presents the communication infrastructure and partner support mechanisms, Chapter 4 reports DECS implementation and results, Chapter 5 summarises structured stakeholder and EU-level cooperation, and Chapter 6 presents the results and impact assessment, while Chapter 7 synthesises lessons learned, limitations, future outlook and the overall DECS assessment.

3. Operational Communication Infrastructure and Consortium Support

This chapter describes the operational infrastructure, coordination mechanisms and partner-support activities that enabled implementation of the PoliRuralPlus DECS framework across pilots, work packages and stakeholder ecosystems. While Chapter 2 introduced the DECS framework conceptually, this chapter focuses on the operational environment that supported communication, dissemination, stakeholder engagement, exploitation and impact-generation activities throughout the project lifecycle. Particular attention is given to the digital infrastructure, capacity-building activities, monitoring systems and coordination practices that facilitated the implementation of DECS across the consortium.

3.1 DECS Operational Infrastructure

The operational infrastructure of PoliRuralPlus provided the practical foundation for implementing the DECS framework across work packages, pilots and stakeholder ecosystems. It combined digital communication channels, knowledge-management resources, monitoring systems and partner-support mechanisms that enabled coordinated communication, dissemination, exploitation and stakeholder-engagement activities.

Hub4Everybody served as the central operational hub connecting project communication, dissemination resources, pilot information, knowledge assets and AI-supported services. By providing a common access point for partners and stakeholders, the platform supported visibility, knowledge sharing and access to project results across the project ecosystem.

The infrastructure also provided access to AI-supported services such as Adviser, JackDaw and MAATool, which complemented traditional communication channels by supporting stakeholder interaction, knowledge exploration and territorial analysis.

The operational infrastructure further included:

- shared repositories and cloud-based collaboration resources such as Google Drive;
- social media channels (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn) and communication workflows such as WhatsApp;
- PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices to support knowledge transfer
- Open Call communication and stakeholder-engagement mechanisms;
- dissemination monitoring and KPI reporting practices; and
- partner guidance related to communication, dissemination and reporting activities.

D7.1 and related WP7 guidance materials provided practical support for communication, dissemination and reporting activities across the consortium.

Structured monitoring and reporting systems enabled partners to document dissemination activities, stakeholder engagement, communication outputs and KPI achievements in a consistent manner. These mechanisms supported evidence collection for project reporting, facilitated adaptive management of DECS activities and provided the basis for the communication, dissemination and impact assessment presented in later chapters of this handbook.

3.2 Consolidated handbook, guidelines and materials

In PoliRuralPlus, the **DECS Handbook** should be understood as comprising both the written **deliverable D7.1** and the complementary digital collection of folders, documents, tools, templates, plans, materials and monitoring resources maintained in cloud storage. The Handbook is a **living operational resource** used by the consortium to plan, implement, monitor and evidence communication, dissemination, exploitation support and scaling-up activities.

D7.1 established the initial DECS Handbook and provided the methodological and operational basis for WP7 implementation. It introduced the DECS framework, communication and dissemination guidelines, visual identity and promotional materials, website and social media arrangements, WP7 task action plans, KPI framework, and procedures for continuous partner reporting. In parallel, D7.1 defined the digital cloud-based component of the Handbook as the practical working environment for partners.

The cloud-based DECS Handbook was organised into four main folders:

- A. DECS base information and templates
- B. DECS orientation and planning
- C. DECS implementation and monitoring
- D. DECS management and coordination

These folders contain the working materials used by partners, including the project logo, EU flag, acknowledgement and disclaimer materials, partner descriptions and logos, promotional templates and infographics, PowerPoint and Word templates, website content materials, communication and dissemination planning files, blog and news planning calendars, implementation and monitoring sheets, WP7 reporting materials, meeting notes, link lists, slide decks and coordination briefs.

At the time of preparing D7.6, the working version of the digital DECS Handbook is maintained in the internal PoliRuralPlus Google Drive under the WP7 folder. Access is restricted to consortium partners. The repository will remain available to partners until the end of the project and for a transitional period thereafter, the duration of which will be confirmed by the Coordinator. For longer-term preservation, the final curated Handbook materials will be transferred to the Coordinator's OneDrive-based PoliRuralPlus repository, consistent with the repository arrangements described in D1.2, Section 3.6. By the end of the project, the Coordinator and Project Manager will inform the consortium of the final repository location, migration timetable, retention period, eligible users and procedure for requesting access. Continued internal access and reuse will remain subject to the Grant Agreement

and Consortium Agreement provisions concerning confidentiality, data protection, ownership, dissemination and access rights.

After the project, the main value of the DECS Handbook will lie in the reuse of its good practices by consortium partners in future projects and related rural–urban innovation initiatives. The archived materials will provide a transferable working model for communication planning, partner guidance, dissemination monitoring, WP-level reporting, stakeholder engagement and exploitation support. Public-facing outputs will remain available through the project website, EU repositories and other public project channels where applicable and for as long as those channels are technically maintained.

3.3 Partner Capacity Building and Strategic Support

WP7 supported consortium partners and pilots through continuous capacity building, strategic communication guidance and operational dissemination support. The objective was to strengthen the ability of all partners to communicate project activities consistently, disseminate pilot results effectively and contribute to stakeholder engagement, exploitation and impact-generation activities.

Support activities included:

- consortium-level DECS workshops and briefing sessions;
- website and social-media training;
- bilateral partner guidance and mentoring;
- support for dissemination planning, monitoring and reporting;
- preparation of communication materials and templates; and
- guidance related to stakeholder engagement, storytelling and visibility activities.

Particular emphasis was placed on supporting pilot partners in translating technical, territorial and policy-oriented activities into accessible communication and dissemination content tailored to different stakeholder groups.

These activities contributed to more consistent communication practices across the consortium, improved visibility of pilot achievements and strengthened the integration of communication, dissemination, stakeholder engagement and exploitation activities. Capacity-building efforts also supported more systematic monitoring of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Horizon Europe Key Impact Pathways (KIPs), thereby improving the quality of reporting and evidence collection throughout the project lifecycle.

3.4 Operational Learning and Coordination

Implementation of the DECS framework highlighted the importance of continuous coordination, adaptive support mechanisms and flexible communication practices in a complex multi-pilot Horizon Europe environment. The pilots

and work packages operated within diverse stakeholder ecosystems, thematic priorities and communication capacities, requiring tailored support and close interaction between WP7 and consortium partners.

Operational learning emerged through recurring WP7 coordination meetings, KPI reviews, dissemination monitoring and iterative refinement of communication, dissemination and exploitation activities throughout the project lifecycle. Structured monitoring systems were used to track dissemination outputs, stakeholder engagement, communication channels and outreach indicators across pilots and work packages.

The implementation experience demonstrated that effective communication and dissemination in participatory rural innovation projects depend on:

- stakeholder-oriented communication approaches;
- strong integration between pilot activities and dissemination efforts;
- operational flexibility and adaptive support mechanisms;
- continuous monitoring of KPIs and stakeholder engagement; and
- coordination between technical, governance, stakeholder-engagement and communication work packages.

Overall, the combination of digital infrastructure, partner support, monitoring systems and shared dissemination resources enabled the DECS framework to be implemented consistently across diverse territorial contexts while maintaining a coherent project-level communication and dissemination approach.

4. DECS implementation and Operational Results

Chapter 4 presents the implementation of the PoliRuralPlus DECS framework and summarises the main operational results achieved during the project lifecycle. Building on the communication infrastructure, stakeholder-support mechanisms and coordination processes described in Chapter 3, this chapter examines how dissemination, communication, exploitation and scaling-up activities were implemented across pilots, work packages and stakeholder ecosystems.

The chapter combines quantitative evidence, including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), participation figures and communication analytics, with qualitative observations related to stakeholder engagement, knowledge transfer, uptake and continuation potential. Together, these results provide an overview of how the DECS framework contributed to visibility, dissemination of knowledge, stakeholder interaction, exploitation planning and the longer-term sustainability of PoliRuralPlus outcomes.

4.1 Dissemination Activities and Reach

Dissemination formed a central component of the PoliRuralPlus DECS framework by supporting the transfer of knowledge, methodologies, pilot experiences and project results to relevant stakeholder groups. Dissemination

activities were implemented through a combination of webinars, workshops, dialogues, publications, multimedia resources and stakeholder-oriented events across pilots and work packages. The objective was not only to increase awareness of project results but also to facilitate knowledge exchange, stakeholder learning and uptake of innovative approaches related to participatory foresight, Regional Action Plans (RAPs), AI-supported services and rural–urban development.

4.1.1 Dissemination Performance against Grant Agreement KPIs

Table 8 provides an overview of the main dissemination measures implemented during the project, together with their target audiences, planned Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and achievements by Month 36. The results demonstrate both the breadth of dissemination activities and the extent to which PoliRuralPlus exceeded several of its original dissemination targets.

Table 8: Dissemination Performance against Grant Agreement KPIs

Dissemination measure	**Target**	**Achieved by M33**
D1 Webinars	5+	19 webinars, avg. 20 participants and 50+ post-webinar views per webinar.
D2 Workshops	20+	34 workshops organised by 10 project partners, with an average of 29 participants per workshop.
D3 Dialogues	20+	35 dialogues organised by 13 partners with an average of 15 participants per dialogue.
D4 Videos	10+	9 rural pilot videos and 39 other types of videos in Youtube and PoliRuralPlus website library.
D5 Open access reports and publications	4+	3 scientific publications, 1 conference proceedings, 2 thematic reports, and totally 11 PoliRuralPlus records on Zenodo.

Overall, the dissemination measures reported in Table 8 reached more than 2300 participants and users across webinars, workshops, dialogues, videos and open-access outputs.

4.1.2 Additional Dissemination Activities beyond Grant Agreement KPIs

In addition to the dissemination measures reported against the Grant Agreement KPIs, partners documented 44 additional dissemination and outreach activities that extended beyond the formal KPI framework. These activities included stakeholder and policy meetings, conference participation, Open Call promotion, cooperation with other EU-funded projects, pilot-related information activities and targeted engagement with local, regional, national and European stakeholders. Examples included participation in scientific and professional conferences, meetings with

policymakers and regional-development actors, dissemination activities supporting Open Calls, stakeholder engagement events linked to Regional Action Plans (RAPs), and cooperation activities with Horizon Europe and other EU-funded initiatives. Together, these additional activities reached an estimated 3,700 people, including participants, attendees, followers and stakeholders, through conferences, meetings, outreach and cooperation activities.

Most activities focused on informing and widening awareness, while a smaller but important share supported consultation, involvement and collaboration. The additional dissemination effort demonstrates that dissemination in PoliRuralPlus was not limited to formal KPI delivery, but also included adaptive, partner-led actions responding to emerging opportunities for stakeholder engagement, knowledge exchange, policy dialogue and cross-project visibility.

Table 9: Additional Dissemination and Outreach Activities beyond Grant Agreement KPIs

Beyond-KPI dissemination activity type	**Number of Event**	**Estimated number of participants**
Meetings	17	1700
Other dissemination and outreach actions	13	1100
Conferences	11	900
Collaboration with EU-funded projects	3	20
Total beyond-KPI activities	**44**	**3700**[3]

These additional activities complemented the structured dissemination programme by extending stakeholder reach, strengthening policy interaction, increasing scientific visibility and supporting cooperation with external initiatives and EU-funded projects.

Together, the KPI-targeted dissemination measures and the additional outreach activities demonstrate that PoliRuralPlus combined structured delivery against contractual objectives with adaptive stakeholder-oriented dissemination responding to emerging opportunities throughout the project lifecycle.

4.2 Exploitation Interface within DECS

Within the PoliRuralPlus DECS framework, exploitation activities supported the transition from dissemination and stakeholder engagement towards longer-term uptake, sustainability and potential reuse of project results. Exploitation was implemented as an integrated process connected to pilot activities, Regional Action Plans (RAPs),

[3] The total of approximately 3,700 represents cumulative reported participation across 44 beyond-KPI dissemination and outreach activities. It does not represent unique individuals, as some participants may have taken part in more than one activity.

stakeholder interaction and cross-project cooperation, rather than as a separate business-oriented activity alone (D7.1; D7.4).

Detailed exploitation planning falls within the scope of the forthcoming D7.8, in line with the Grant Agreement/Description of Action (DoA). It covers the identification and prioritisation of exploitable results, IPR considerations, exploitation pathways, partner responsibilities and post-project sustainability planning. D7.6 therefore does not duplicate the exploitation plan but documents the DECS contribution to exploitation readiness: communication of results, stakeholder awareness, dissemination of tools and outputs, support for pilot visibility, cross-project synergies, and evidence of user interest and uptake potential.

The exploitation interface focused on supporting the visibility, validation and transferability of Key Exploitable Results (KERs), sustainability discussions, governance and business pathways, and the long-term usability of project outputs and services. Activities included partner-level exploitation planning, KER discussions, sustainability dialogues, Open Call interactions and preliminary assessment of transferability and replication potential (D7.4).

Within the broader DECS logic, exploitation activities were closely linked with dissemination and scaling-up actions. Dissemination increased visibility and stakeholder awareness, while exploitation planning explored how selected tools, governance approaches and digital services could continue beyond the project period through institutional uptake, partnerships, policy integration or future development pathways (D7.1; D7.4).

Particular attention was given to AI-supported services, territorial-intelligence tools and participatory governance approaches developed across WP3, WP4 and WP5. These included services and concepts such as Hub4Everybody, Adviser/RAG, JackDaw, MAATool and Regional Action Plan methodologies, which demonstrated varying levels of continuation and transferability potential across pilots and stakeholder ecosystems (D4.1; D4.2; D5.2).

Six PoliRuralPlus innovations were approved for listing on the European Commission Innovation Radar. This provides external validation of the exploitation potential of selected project outputs and confirms their relevance for rural–urban development, including AI-supported policy advice, rural–urban dashboards, spatial attractiveness mapping, stakeholder engagement, circular economy funding models and AI-supported assistance for public servants. The recognition strengthens the DECS exploitation interface by demonstrating that selected project results have visibility beyond the consortium and can be positioned for further uptake, testing, replication and development by regions, policymakers, practitioners, businesses and innovation ecosystems.

Detailed exploitation roadmaps, business models, IPR considerations and partner-specific sustainability planning are presented in D7.4 “Exploitation Plans and Business Models – Edition 1” and will be further consolidated in the **final exploitation deliverable D7.8.**

4.3 Communication Activities and Visibility

Communication within the PoliRuralPlus DECS framework focused on increasing the visibility of project activities,

pilot achievements, digital services and policy-relevant results among a broad range of stakeholders. While dissemination concentrated on knowledge transfer and stakeholder learning, communication aimed to raise awareness, strengthen stakeholder trust and support public visibility of project outcomes.

Communication activities were implemented through press, newsletters, website content, social media channels, videos, stakeholder-oriented storytelling and cooperation with related European initiatives. Particular attention was given to communicating pilot experiences, Regional Action Plans (RAPs), AI-supported services and rural–urban innovation activities to policymakers, practitioners, researchers, businesses and citizens.

Table 10 summarises the main communication measures implemented during the project lifecycle together with the corresponding Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and achievements by Month 36.

Table 10: Communication Performance against Grant Agreement KPIs

Communication measure	**Target KPI**	**Achieved by M33**
C1 Communication and media outreach activities such as press, newsletters	3+ media channels/outlets	55 media channels/outlets, reaching 56,000+ people.
C2 Social media channels (ref. T7.2)	10,000+ stakeholders reached	Reach: 50 000+ unique visitors at website and 30 000+ impressions at social media accounts Followers: FB:280, LI: 1208
C3 PoliRuralPlus website blogs and news[4]	200+ news, events, blogs, articles into PoliRuralPlus website	Around 240 blogs and news published at the project website.
C4 Synergies - identified projects (ref. T7.3)	20 projects identified	37 projects identified, and the basis for cooperation established
C5 Synergies - cooperation (ref. T7.3)	10 established co-operations	39 cooperation activities were realised, reaching more than 400 participants and stakeholders.
C6 Synergies - NEB[5] events (ref. T7.3)	Participation in 3 NEB events	PoliRuralPlus participated in *"City Soils, City Souls: Urban Agriculture Contribution"*, organised by FOODCITYBOOST on 11 June 2026. GAIA initiated contact, AUA presented PoliRuralPlus and contributed to discussions, and NP joined the discussions. This represents partial achievement of the target of three NEB events; however, consortium members have

[4] Communicated and agreed within the consortium in the kick-off meeting in Prague 1/2024.

[5] New European Bauhaus, https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en

Communication measure	Target KPI	Achieved by M33
		also signalled the integration of NEB principles across broader synergies reported in D7.7.
C7 Synergies - joint workshops (ref. T7.3)	3 joint workshops	33 joint workshops were organised which have reached 790+ participants/stakeholders.

The NEB-specific KPI was only partially achieved in numerical terms; however, the FOODCITYBOOST satellite event provided a relevant and targeted opportunity to connect PoliRuralPlus with NEB-aligned urban agriculture, sustainability and place-based innovation discussions.

The communication results demonstrate that PoliRuralPlus achieved substantially broader visibility than originally anticipated in the Grant Agreement. Strong performance was observed in press, newsletters and media outreach, website communication, social media engagement and cooperation with related European initiatives.

Communication activities increased awareness of project objectives, pilots and results while supporting stakeholder engagement, cross-project collaboration and the visibility of AI-supported services, participatory foresight methodologies and Regional Action Plans (RAPs). The high number of cooperation activities and joint workshops further indicates a shift from one-way information sharing towards more interactive and network-oriented engagement.

Communication activities also highlighted external recognition of project results, including the news item on six PoliRuralPlus innovations recognised by the European Commission Innovation Radar. This communication item helped translate a technical exploitation milestone into an accessible public narrative for policymakers, practitioners, businesses and regional stakeholders.

4.4 Hub4Everybody and Digital Communication Infrastructure



Hub4Everybody served as the central digital communication, dissemination and knowledge-sharing environment of PoliRuralPlus. The platform integrated project information, pilot content, knowledge resources, AI-supported services, territorial intelligence tools and project results within a single access point. By combining communication, dissemination, stakeholder support and digital services, Hub4Everybody strengthened the visibility, accessibility and long-term usability of PoliRuralPlus outputs. Table 11 summarises the scope and main functions of the digital assets provided through the platform.

Table 11: Inventory of the PoliRuralPlus Digital Communication and Knowledge Environment on M33

Digital asset category	**Identified scope (M33)**	**Main function within DECS**	**Contribution to communication, dissemination and uptake**
Multilingual website environment	10 language versions	Accessible project communication	Increased accessibility and stakeholder reach across Europe
Rural pilot pages	9 pilot pages	Territorial communication and knowledge sharing	Supported visibility of pilot activities, RAPs and local innovation actions
Technical pilot pages	9 pilot pages	Communication of digital innovations	Disseminated AI-supported tools, services and technical developments
News articles	~150	Continuous project communication	Provided regular updates on pilots, events, Open Calls, project achievements and stakeholder activities
Blog articles	~90 articles	Knowledge transfer and storytelling	Supported deeper reflection, pilot learning, case studies and dissemination of practical experiences
Deliverables and reports	33 deliverables	Open access dissemination	Enabled transparent access to project outputs and methodological results
Open Call information pages	4 Open Calls	Ecosystem expansion and innovation sourcing	Supported participation of third-party innovators, SMEs and community actors
AI-supported services and tools	8 core services	Interactive stakeholder support and exploitation	Adviser, JackDaw, MAATool, Magpie, Vulture, Reference database, Raven and Agent Builder.
Knowledge-transfer resources	6 main sections visible	Learning and reuse of results	Blog, PoliRuralPlus Journal, Videos, Library, Workshops & Webinars, Reference Database.
Social media integration	5 channels	Communication amplification	Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.
External service and resource links	~32 unique services	Ecosystem integration	Connected users to relevant policy, funding, innovation and territorial-development resources

PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices	1 curated collection of good practices	Knowledge transfer and replication support	Facilitated stakeholder learning, transferability and scaling-up of successful approaches

The inventory demonstrates the breadth of the Hub4Everybody platform and its role in supporting communication, dissemination, stakeholder engagement and knowledge transfer. The platform provided multilingual access to project information, approximately 240 news and blog articles, 33 public deliverables, AI-supported services and a wide range of stakeholder resources. In addition to information sharing, services such as Adviser, JackDaw and MAATool enabled interactive knowledge exploration and territorial analysis.

Website analytics further indicate sustained stakeholder interest throughout the project lifecycle. Figure 2 presents an overview of website visits and user activity.

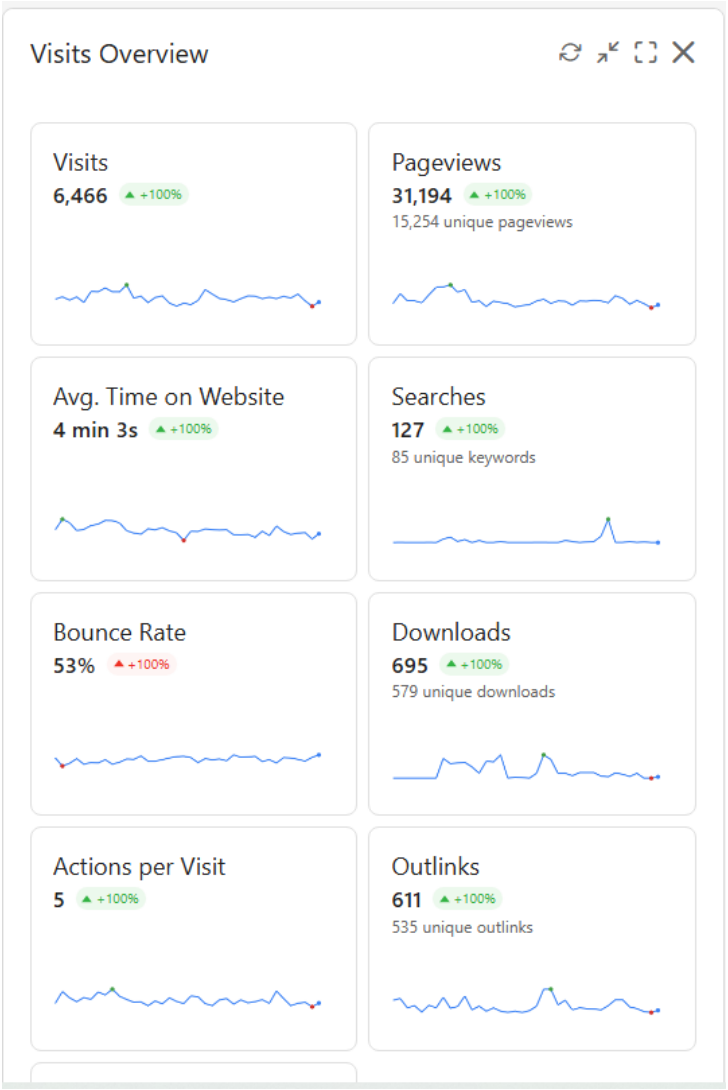


Figure 2: Overview of PoliRuralPlus website visits and user activity measured through the Matomo analytics platform (April 2024–September 2026).

The analytics indicate continuous use of the platform throughout the project lifecycle. Combined with social-media communication activities, Hub4Everybody contributed to the visibility, accessibility and dissemination of PoliRuralPlus outputs, services and stakeholder resources.

Together, the platform's multilingual content, knowledge resources, AI-supported services and stakeholder-oriented communication established Hub4Everybody as a key infrastructure supporting dissemination, stakeholder engagement, exploitation and long-term accessibility of PoliRuralPlus results.

A particularly important knowledge-transfer resource within the Hub4Everybody ecosystem is the PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices. The Atlas was developed to support dissemination, stakeholder learning, transferability and scaling-up by providing structured access to good practices, emerging practices, methodologies, pilot experiences and innovation approaches generated throughout the project. As of the D7.6 reporting cut-off, the **Atlas contains more than 100 documented practices originating from rural pilots, technical pilots, participatory processes, digital services and project methodologies.** Through searchable and geographically referenced content, the Atlas enables stakeholders to explore, compare and reuse experiences across different territorial contexts, thereby strengthening the long-term accessibility and uptake potential of PoliRuralPlus results.



Figure 3: The PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices provides access to more than 100 good and emerging practices, methodologies and pilot experiences supporting knowledge transfer, transferability and scaling-up.

4.5 Emerging Scaling-up Signals and Legacy Potential

During the implementation of PoliRuralPlus, several early scaling-up and transferability signals emerged across pilots, stakeholder ecosystems and cross-project cooperation activities. These signals indicate growing interest in adapting, continuing and reusing project approaches, tools and governance models beyond the original project scope (D7.1; Mid-Term Report).

Observed scaling-up signals included:

- continued stakeholder engagement around Regional Action Plans (RAPs);
- interest in reusing pilot methodologies and participatory approaches;
- growing visibility of AI-supported services such as MAATool, JackDaw and Advisor/RAG;

- and increasing cooperation between pilots, policymakers, research organisations and external initiatives (D4.1; D4.2; D5.1; D5.2).

Several pilots reported intentions to continue stakeholder collaboration, territorial planning activities and ecosystem-level cooperation after the project period. In multiple cases, RAP-related discussions evolved towards longer-term governance, sustainability and funding considerations connected to regional development priorities and EU policy frameworks (D5.2; Mid-Term Report).

Cross-project cooperation and structured interaction with Horizon Europe, Horizon 2020, Interreg and New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiatives further strengthened transferability and policy relevance of project outcomes. Cooperation with projects such as FOCAL, FAIR2Adapt, BioClima, INTERESH and KijaniSpace supported knowledge exchange, interoperability discussions and broader visibility of PoliRuralPlus approaches and tools (D4.2).

Additional scaling-up potential emerged through:

- Open Call activities and third-party innovation projects;
- dissemination of pilot practices via PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices and policy-oriented outputs;
- participation in conferences, workshops and policy dialogues;
- and growing interest in AI-supported territorial planning and participatory governance approaches (D7.1; D7.3; D7.4).

The Innovation Radar recognition provides an additional scaling-up signal. It indicates that selected PoliRuralPlus outputs are not only internal project results but have been assessed as innovations with wider relevance in the EU research and innovation ecosystem. This supports the interpretation that the project has generated exploitable and transferable outputs with potential for continued development, uptake and replication.

The PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices (ch. 4.4) further strengthened transferability by providing stakeholders with structured access to pilot experiences, methodologies and good practices that can be adapted and reused in different territorial contexts.

These observations do not yet represent confirmed long-term impacts, but they provide early evidence of transferability, ecosystem uptake and continuation potential extending beyond the immediate project implementation phase.

5. Multi-Actor Stakeholder Engagement

PoliRuralPlus applied a structured multi-actor stakeholder engagement approach supporting communication, dissemination, participatory governance, co-creation and long-term uptake of project results across pilots and stakeholder ecosystems. Within the DECS framework, stakeholder engagement functioned as the participation mechanism through which communication, dissemination, exploitation and scaling-up activities were connected to

stakeholders, pilots and territorial ecosystems. The stakeholder engagement pathways presented in this chapter operationalise the audience-oriented DECS logic introduced in Section 2.2.3, where stakeholder groups, core messages, communication channels and expected uptake pathways were defined.

The stakeholder engagement strategy combined four complementary participation levels:

- **Inform** – increasing awareness and visibility through websites, social media, newsletters, policy briefs, events and communication materials;
- **Consult** – gathering stakeholder perspectives, needs and feedback through surveys, interviews, dialogues, foresight activities and RAP consultations;
- **Involve** – engaging stakeholders in workshops, pilot activities, Open Calls, experimentation and validation processes;
- **Collaborate** – supporting co-creation, joint decision-making, governance development, innovation partnerships and long-term ecosystem cooperation.

These participation levels represent progressively deeper forms of engagement ranging from awareness-building and information sharing towards co-creation and long-term collaboration. However, stakeholder engagement within PoliRuralPlus was not strictly linear. Stakeholders participated through different pathways and at different intensities depending on pilot context, institutional role, thematic relevance and operational readiness.

Broad communication-oriented activities supported visibility, awareness and accessibility of project results, while consultation, involvement and collaboration enabled contextual learning, participatory experimentation and stakeholder ownership. In several pilots, engagement evolved towards longer-term governance discussions, RAP continuation activities, policy interaction and exploration of future cooperation, sustainability and exploitation pathways.

Figure 4 illustrates the relationship between stakeholder reach, participation depth and interaction intensity within the PoliRuralPlus multi-actor engagement strategies.

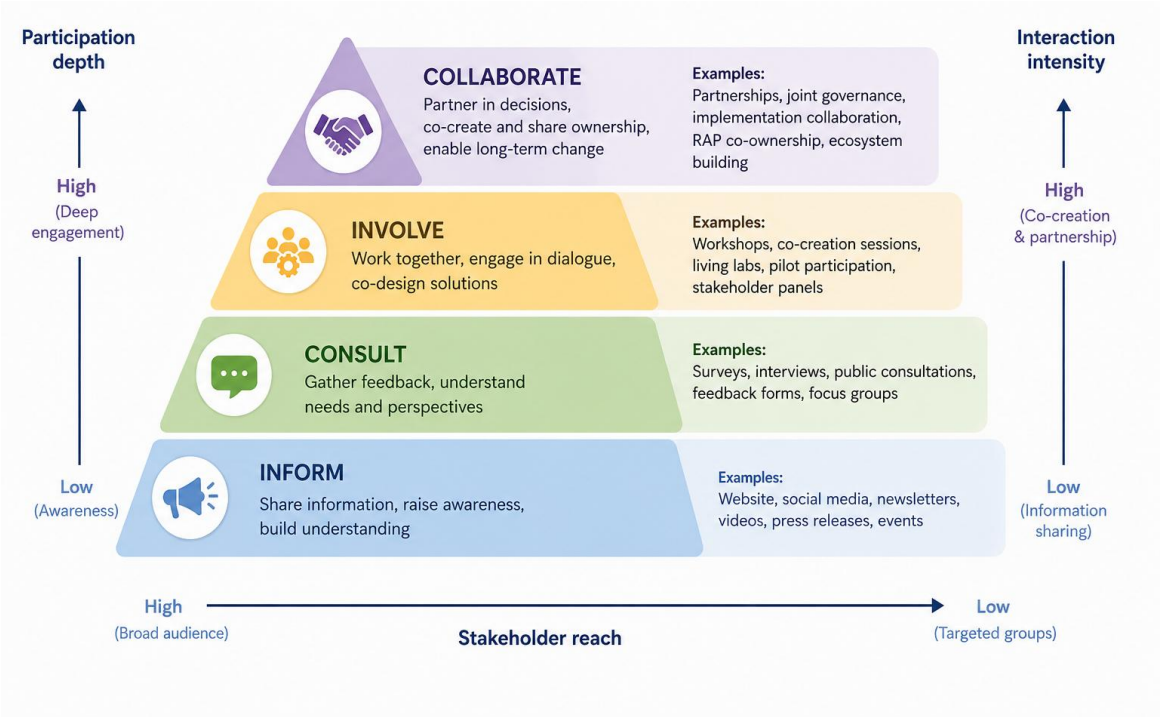


Figure 4: Multi-actor stakeholder engagement strategies

Table 12: Main Stakeholder Groups and Engagement Pathways in PoliRuralPlus

Stakeholder group	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
Public authorities and policymakers	Website, newsletters, policy briefs, dissemination events	RAP consultations, governance discussions, foresight activities	Participation in RAP development and validation	Co-creation of regional strategies, governance models and policy actions
Businesses and innovation actors	Open Call communication, project communication materials, webinars	Business dialogues, innovation-needs discussions	Pilot experimentation, Open Call participation, innovation workshops	Joint development of solutions, ecosystem cooperation and exploitation pathways
Scientific and research communities	Publications, conferences, webinars, deliverables	Methodological reviews, expert consultations	Participation in pilot analysis, foresight and evaluation activities	Co-development of methods, analytical frameworks and scientific outputs

Civil society and local communities	Public communication, community outreach, awareness activities	Surveys, consultations, stakeholder meetings	Participation in workshops, foresight exercises and pilot activities	Co-creation of solutions, local experimentation and community-led initiatives
Cross-project and EU-level ecosystems	Dissemination activities, project communication and networking	Exchange of experiences and lessons learned	Joint workshops, thematic dialogues and peer learning activities	Synergy actions, project-family cooperation and transferability initiatives

Table 12 demonstrates that stakeholder engagement in PoliRuralPlus was implemented through different participation pathways depending on stakeholder roles and objectives. Public authorities were primarily engaged through governance and RAP processes, businesses through innovation and Open Call activities, researchers through foresight and evaluation, and civil-society organisations and local communities through consultation and co-creation. This diversity of participation reflects the adaptive and place-based character of the PoliRuralPlus multi-actor approach.

Annex A illustrates how the Inform–Consult–Involve–Collaborate pathways were implemented through pilot activities, RAP processes, Open Calls, policy dialogue and cross-project cooperation. The examples show that stakeholder engagement was adaptive rather than linear, with participation evolving according to local needs, stakeholder readiness and territorial context.

Based on WP2 stakeholder-identification and pilot-monitoring inputs, consolidated in Annex A, 378 unique stakeholders were directly engaged through activities in the nine pilots. In addition, communication, dissemination, dialogue and cooperation activities reached more than 2,000 participants and followers across the broader PoliRuralPlus ecosystem.

Detailed evidence on target groups, stakeholder categories, KPI verification and achieved M33 results is provided in Annex A.

6. Results and Impact Assessment

6.1 Overview of Results

Implementation of the DECS framework generated a diverse portfolio of communication, dissemination, stakeholder-engagement, synergy, exploitation-support and scaling-up activities throughout the PoliRuralPlus project lifecycle. While many of the substantive project outputs were developed within WP2–WP6, WP7 contributed by increasing their visibility, accessibility, transferability and uptake potential through coordinated communication, dissemination, stakeholder engagement, synergy-building and exploitation-support activities.

Table 13 summarises the principal result categories and contributions generated through WP7.

Table 13: Overview of results

Result category	**Main outputs and achievements**
Communication outputs	Website content, social media communication, press, newsletters, news articles, blogs, videos and multimedia resources
Dissemination outputs	19 webinars, 34 workshops, 35 dialogues, 3 scientific publications, 1 conference proceeding and 2 thematic reports and other papers shared through Zenodo PoliRuralPlus community.
Stakeholder engagement support	Communication and dissemination support for multi-actor engagement, RAP-related stakeholder interaction, policy dialogue and cross-pilot learning
Digital knowledge ecosystem	Utilisation of Hub4Everybody, the PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices and AI-supported services, and social media channels to support communication, dissemination, stakeholder learning and knowledge transfer
Exploitation support	KER identification support, exploitation planning, sustainability discussions and partner-support activities
Synergy and cooperation activities (Task 7.3)	Identification of 37 synergy projects, establishment of 39 cooperation activities, organisation of 33 joint workshops and support for European networking and knowledge exchange. Participation in 1 NEB event by 3 partners.
Scaling-up and transferability support	Transferability activities, continuation signals, policy interaction and wider uptake of project results

WP7 generated impact primarily by enabling visibility, accessibility, stakeholder interaction, knowledge transfer, cooperation and uptake of project outputs produced across the consortium. Together, these activities transformed communication and dissemination from supporting functions into strategic mechanisms facilitating stakeholder participation, territorial learning, transferability and long-term sustainability of project results.

6.2 WP7 Contribution to PoliRuralPlus Objectives (O1–O7)

Although the achievement of PoliRuralPlus objectives depended on the combined efforts of all work packages and pilots, WP7 contributed by increasing the visibility, accessibility, transferability and uptake potential of project results through the DECS framework. Communication, dissemination, stakeholder engagement, exploitation support and scaling-up activities helped connect pilot achievements, Regional Action Plans (RAPs), AI-supported services and policy-relevant outcomes with broader stakeholder communities.

The audience-oriented DECS logic presented in Section 2.2.3 provides the operational mechanism through which WP7 contributes to the achievement of PoliRuralPlus objectives.

Table 14 summarises the main contributions of WP7 to the seven PoliRuralPlus objectives using evidence presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

Table 14: WP7 Contribution to PoliRuralPlus Objectives

Objective	**WP7 contribution**	**Main supporting activities**	**Evidence examples**
O1 Foresight-based interregional cooperation	Dissemination of foresight results, RAP experiences and territorial-learning outcomes across pilots and regions	Dissemination activities, stakeholder dialogues, cross-pilot cooperation, policy-oriented communication	34 workshops, 35 dialogues, webinars, policy-oriented dissemination, PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices (Ch. 4.1, 4.3, 5)
O2 Integrated strategies and rural revitalisation	Visibility and transferability of pilot solutions, governance approaches and regional innovation ecosystems	Dissemination of RAPs, pilot communication, scaling-up activities	Pilot visibility activities, Hub4Everybody resources, PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices, scaling-up signals (Ch. 4.4–4.5, 5)
O3 Social connectivity and mutual service access	Stakeholder engagement, awareness raising and promotion of digital participation and knowledge-sharing platforms	Multi-actor engagement, digital communication channels, stakeholder cooperation	2,000+ stakeholders engaged, Hub4Everybody, webinars, workshops and dialogues (Ch. 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 5)
O4 Alignment with the European Green Deal	Communication of sustainability-related pilot outcomes and policy-oriented dissemination	Policy-oriented communication, dissemination and stakeholder interaction	Policy briefs, RAP communication, governance dialogue and Green Deal-related pilot activities (Ch. 4.1, 5)
O5 Cross-disciplinary data and infrastructure integration	Increased visibility, accessibility and stakeholder uptake of AI-supported services, territorial-intelligence tools and digital knowledge resources.	Digital communication infrastructure and AI-supported services	Hub4Everybody, Adviser, JackDaw, MAATool, Knowledge Base (Ch. 4.4)
O6 Mission-oriented and data-driven innovation	Communication, dissemination and exploitation support for innovative tools, methodologies and pilot solutions	Dissemination, exploitation interface and innovation visibility	AI-supported services, pilot innovations, exploitation discussions and transferability activities (Ch. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5)

O7 Synergies with the New European Bauhaus and EU projects	Promotion of cross-project cooperation, European networking, knowledge exchange and transferability of project approaches and tools.	Cooperation and synergy activities, and scaling-up actions	29 identified projects, 28 cooperation activities, 31 joint workshops, EU-project cooperation (Ch. 4.3, 4.5)

The evidence presented in Chapters 4 and 5 indicates that WP7 supported all PoliRuralPlus objectives through the implementation of the DECS framework. Communication, dissemination, stakeholder engagement, exploitation support and scaling-up activities increased the visibility, accessibility and transferability of project results across pilots, stakeholder ecosystems and European networks. While the achievement of project objectives depended on the combined efforts of the entire consortium, WP7 provided an important enabling function by supporting knowledge diffusion, stakeholder interaction, cross-project cooperation and the long-term uptake potential of PoliRuralPlus outputs.

6.3 Contribution to Horizon Europe Key Impact Pathways

Horizon Europe Key Impact Pathways (KIPs) provide a framework for understanding how project activities and results contribute to **scientific, societal, policy and economic impact**s. Since many impacts emerge only after project completion, the assessment presented in this deliverable focuses on evidence of contribution and impact signals observed during the implementation period rather than on a formal ex-post impact evaluation.

The assessment was conducted using a contribution-analysis approach that combines quantitative and qualitative **evidence generated across the PoliRuralPlus project**. Evidence was collected from project deliverables, pilot reports, Regional Action Plan (RAP) processes, Open Call activities, digital-platform analytics, dissemination and communication monitoring, stakeholder-engagement activities, synergy actions, exploitation planning and project-level reporting.

The assessment process consisted of four steps:

1. **Identification of relevant Horizon Europe Key Impact Pathways** and their expected contribution mechanisms within the PoliRuralPlus intervention logic.
2. **Compilation of evidence** from project outputs, stakeholder activities, dissemination records, digital services, Open Call projects, pilot implementation and policy-oriented actions.
3. **Assessment of contribution signals** by examining whether the available evidence demonstrated observable outputs, stakeholder uptake, policy relevance, innovation activity or scaling-up potential related to each KIP.
4. **Identification of evidence gaps and limitations** where impacts remain emerging, indirect or require post-project observation.

Evidence was interpreted using three indicative maturity categories:

- **Clear evidence** – substantial implementation evidence demonstrating a direct contribution to the KIP;
- **Emerging evidence** – observable outputs and impact signals suggesting future contribution but with limited evidence of uptake or long-term effects;
- **Weak evidence** – limited or indirect evidence of contribution during the project period.

The resulting assessment should therefore be interpreted as an evidence-based review of PoliRuralPlus contributions to Horizon Europe Key Impact Pathways at project completion rather than as proof of long-term impacts. The approach provides a transparent overview of where contributions are already visible, where impact signals are emerging, and where additional post-project monitoring would be required.

The table below therefore combines observed results, indicative evidence and identified limitations to provide an overview of PoliRuralPlus contributions to the Horizon Europe Key Impact Pathways at the end of the project implementation period.

Table 15: Project's Contribution to KIPs

KIP	Description	Key Evidence & Signals	Indicative Evidence Sources	Strength of Evidence	Key Gap / Limitation
KIP 1	High-quality knowledge creation	RAP methodology, rural–urban data analysis, cross-pilot synthesis, analytical frameworks, Zenodo research	Deliverables D2.3, D3.1, D5.1, D5.2; Zenodo research outputs, open-access publications, datasets and code	Clear evidence	Scientific evidence base is improving, but citation, reuse and broader academic uptake remain to be monitored
KIP 2	Human capital in research and innovation	Workshops, hackathons, conferences, stakeholder engagement, digital skills development, exposure to AI/GIS and data-driven rural innovation methods	D2.1, D5.1, D7.7, pilot reports, events, hackathons, training activities	Clear evidence	Limited before–after measurement of skills, capacity development or learning outcomes
KIP 3	Diffusion of knowledge / Open Science	Knowledge Hub, PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices, policy briefs, webinars, communication outputs, Open Calls, Zenodo open-access research, reusable datasets, open code and DOI-based research records	Hub4Everybody, dissemination outputs, PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices, policy briefs, Zenodo, open-access publications, communication outputs	Emerging evidence	Evidence of availability is strong, but reuse, uptake, citations and downstream application are still only partly visible

KIP 4	Addressing EU policy priorities	Alignment with Green Deal, CAP, LTVRA; RAP integration into regional planning; spatial data for territorial assessment, climate-informed agriculture evidence	Deliverables, policy briefs, RAP methodology, OSM/spatial assessment research, AI/satellite agriculture research	Clear evidence	Limited evidence of formal policy adoption, institutionalisation or binding policy decisions
KIP 5	Contribution to EU Missions	Indirect contribution to climate resilience, sustainability, rural attractiveness, food systems, biodiversity and territorial innovation themes	Project documentation, policy alignment analysis, climate/agriculture research outputs	Limited evidence	No explicit mission linkage or mission indicators or formal mission-level reporting framework
KIP 6	Uptake of R&I in society	9 pilots, multi-actor approach, Open Calls (25+ projects), hackathons, real-world experimentation, stakeholder participation, practical AI/GIS/agriculture use cases.	D5.1, Open Call portfolio, pilot activities, D7.7, Zenodo agriculture and AI-related outputs	Clear evidence	Long-term adoption, behavioural change and sustained use after the project remain to be verified
KIP 7	Innovation-based growth	Digital tools, AI, GIS, platform development, prototypes, Hub4Everybody, innovation portfolio from Open Calls, explainable AI and AI/satellite agriculture outputs. Six innovations recognised by the European Commission Innovation Radar[6].	D4.1, D4.2, D6.1, D7.7, D7.4, D7.8 Develop/Enhance Calls, Zenodo research and software/data outputs, Innovation Radar	Clear evidence	Most solutions are still at pilot, prototype or early validation stage; scaling up remains limited. Recognition indicates innovation potential, but market uptake, replication and economic effects require post-project monitoring
KIP 8	Jobs and economic growth	rural business concepts, local economy initiatives, SME engagement and innovation-oriented Open Call activities	Pilot reports, outreach activities, Open Call portfolio, exploitation discussions	Limited evidence	No systematic post-project job or income data, firm creation, regional economic growth

[6] Innovation Radar: https://innovation-radar.ec.europa.eu/

KIP 9	Investment leverage	Open Call funding (~€900k), PPP concepts, financing models, exploitation plans	D6.1, D3.2, D7.4, D7.8, Open Call documentation,	Emerging evidence	Limited evidence of realised follow-on investments

6.3.1 Alignment with Proposal Impact Ambitions

The KIP assessment is broadly consistent with the impact ambitions defined in the **PoliRuralPlus Grant Agreement and Part B proposal**.

The strongest evidence relates to stakeholder capacity building, multi-actor engagement, policy interaction, dissemination of knowledge, digital innovation support and the uptake of research and innovation within real-world territorial contexts. These contributions are reflected in the implementation of Regional Action Plans, pilot activities, Open Calls, Interactive Dialogues, digital services and extensive stakeholder engagement across the nine pilot regions.

The assessment also indicates that PoliRuralPlus generated substantial foundations for long-term policy, governance and innovation impacts. Evidence is particularly strong regarding improved stakeholder understanding of rural–urban interactions, strengthened participatory governance processes, support for digital and green transitions, and the dissemination of methodologies, tools and good practices through the Hub4Everybody ecosystem and the PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices. These outcomes are closely aligned with the impact pathways envisaged in the project proposal.

At the same time, several impacts promised in the proposal—including broader economic effects, tourism-related benefits, investment mobilisation, job creation and long-term policy uptake—require post-project observation before their full significance can be assessed. Consequently, the present assessment should be interpreted as evidence of contribution and impact potential rather than confirmation of all long-term impacts envisaged at proposal stage.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Key Lessons Learned on DECS Framework implementation

DECS works best as an integrated impact framework. Dissemination, Exploitation, Communication and Scaling-up were most effective when connected to pilot activities, RAPs, stakeholder engagement, digital services and policy dialogue, rather than treated as separate tasks.

Stakeholder engagement is adaptive and non-linear. Stakeholders did not move mechanically from “inform” to “collaborate”. Participation depended on local context, readiness, institutional role and perceived relevance. This supports the need for flexible, place-based engagement models.

RAPs became key anchors for territorial learning and continuity. Regional Action Plans provided a practical structure for stakeholder dialogue, policy alignment, cross-pilot learning and continuation discussions. They helped connect local experimentation with longer-term governance and sustainability planning.

Cross-pilot learning strengthened transferability and collective learning. Exchanges between pilots, stakeholder ecosystems and external projects enabled the sharing of practices via PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices, governance approaches and implementation experiences beyond individual territorial contexts.

Digital services increased accessibility and uptake potential. Hub4Everybody, Knowledge Base, Adviser, JackDaw, MAATool and the PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices strengthened visibility, knowledge access, stakeholder learning and transferability. Their value lies not only in technology, but in making project results easier to find, understand and reuse.

Continuous monitoring and adaptive support are important for effective communication and dissemination. Implementation of the DECS framework demonstrated the value of KPI monitoring, partner support and recurring coordination activities. While communication and dissemination activities were systematically monitored, future initiatives could further strengthen the use of structured feedback loops and evidence-based adaptation mechanisms to support continuous learning and impact generation across pilots and stakeholder ecosystems.

Five DECS principles

The implementation experience confirms the relevance of the five DECS principles introduced in D7.1 and Section 2.2.

- **Impactful implementation** was supported by the close integration of communication, dissemination, stakeholder engagement, exploitation-support and scaling-up activities with pilots, Regional Action Plans (RAPs), Open Calls and policy dialogue processes.
- **Controlled implementation** was enabled through KPI monitoring, dissemination reporting, website analytics, recurring coordination meetings and structured evidence collection mechanisms supporting adaptive management throughout the project lifecycle.
- **Distributed implementation** emerged as one of the key strengths of the framework. DECS activities were implemented across pilots, work packages and partner organisations, while WP7 provided coordination, guidance and monitoring. This increased stakeholder reach, local relevance and partner ownership.
- **Multifaceted implementation** combined communication, dissemination, stakeholder engagement, digital services, exploitation-support, policy interaction and cross-project cooperation through complementary channels and mechanisms adapted to different stakeholder groups.
- **Transparent implementation** was supported through open-access deliverables, public communication channels, Hub4Everybody, policy resources, webinars and stakeholder-oriented knowledge-sharing practices that increased the accessibility and visibility of project results.

- Together, these principles contributed to the effectiveness of the DECS framework and provide a transferable reference model for future multi-actor innovation and territorial-development initiatives.

Key Success Factors of the DECS Framework

- Integration of DECS into project implementation (Section 2.2)
- Distributed implementation across the consortium (Sections 3.3–3.4)
- Structured multi-actor stakeholder engagement (Sections 2.2.3 and 5)
- Integrated digital knowledge and communication infrastructure (Sections 2.2.6 and 4.4)
- Extensive cooperation and ecosystem networking (Sections 2.2.4 and 4.5)

7.2 Evidence of impact

The KIP assessment presented in Section 6.3 indicates that the strongest evidence of contribution emerged in stakeholder capacity building, policy interaction, multi-actor collaboration, uptake of research and innovation, and innovation-support activities. These contributions were enabled through Regional Action Plans, Open Calls, pilot experimentation, Interactive Dialogues, digital services and stakeholder ecosystems.

The recognition of six PoliRuralPlus innovations by the European Commission Innovation Radar further supports the conclusion that the project generated tangible innovation outputs with exploitation and uptake potential, although long-term adoption, economic impact and policy integration will still require post-project monitoring.

The assessment further suggests that PoliRuralPlus successfully established foundations for longer-term governance, policy and innovation impacts. However, several expected impacts identified in the proposal, including wider economic effects, investment mobilisation, employment impacts and long-term policy uptake, remain dependent on post-project continuation and therefore require future monitoring.

7.3 Future Outlook and Long-Term Uptake Potential

The implementation of the DECS framework established communication, dissemination, stakeholder-engagement and knowledge-transfer mechanisms that can continue supporting the visibility, accessibility and reuse of PoliRuralPlus results beyond the project lifetime.

Long-term sustainability is supported by established ownership and maintenance arrangements. **Hub4Everybody** is an open-source, map-based digital platform developed and operated jointly by **LESPROJEKT-služby s.r.o.** and **Plan4all**. Project services are owned by the PoliRuralPlus consortium, which will also continue maintaining the **PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices**, ensuring ongoing access to and sharing of project results.

Future uptake will depend on continued engagement by project partners, stakeholders and external organisations. The DECS framework offers a transferable model for future Horizon Europe and territorial-development projects,

integrating communication, dissemination, stakeholder engagement, exploitation and scaling-up activities to support lasting impact.

7.4 Overall DECS Assessment

✓Visibility and communication objectives achieved
✓ Dissemination targets exceeded
✓ Strong multi-actor stakeholder engagement across pilots
✓ Extensive cross-project cooperation established
✓ Exploitation pathways addressed and supported at DECS framework level
✓ Transferability and early scaling-up signals identified
◐ Long-term uptake, policy integration, replication and economic impacts remain to be verified after project completion

Overall, the implementation evidence suggests that the DECS framework achieved its primary objective of supporting the visibility, dissemination, stakeholder engagement, transferability and uptake potential of PoliRuralPlus results throughout the project lifecycle.

REFERENCES

Core project documents

- Grant Agreement No. 101136910, Annex 1 – Description of the Action.
- PoliRuralPlus Mid-Term Report

WP1

- D1.2 Project road map, handbook and action plan for project management and Ethics appraisal framework and handbook for the management of ethics

WP2

- D2.1 Pilot Profiles and Rural–Urban Interaction Contexts.
- D2.2 Rural–Urban Analysis and Pilot Ecosystem Assessment.
- D2.3 Participatory AI-Supported Foresight and Cross-Pilot Learning.

WP4

- D4.1 PoliRuralPlus Platform Design.
- D4.2 PoliRuralPlus Platform Beta.

WP5

- D5.1 Prepared Pilots by Stakeholder Multi-Actor Approach.
- D5.2 Regional Action Plans, Governance and KPI Harmonisation.
- PoliRuralPlus Atlas of Best Practices: https://atlasbestpractices.com/poliruralplus/

WP7

- D7.1 Comprehensive Handbook, Guidelines and Materials for Communication and Dissemination – Edition 1.
- D7.2 Policy Briefs and Recommendations.
- D7.4 Exploitation Plans and Business Models – Edition 1.
- D7.7 A Compendium of PoliRuralPlus Interactive Dialogues - M35 (forthcoming)
- D7.8 *Exploitation Plans and Business Models – Final Edition - M35 (forthcoming).*

External references

- European Commission. *Monitoring Horizon Europe: Key Impact Pathways and a Modernised Monitoring Approach.*
- European Commission, CORDIS. *PoliRuralPlus (Project No. 101136910).*
- *Zenodo PoliRuralPlus Community, https://zenodo.org/search?q=poliruralplus&l=list&p=1&s=10&sort=bestmatch*
- *Innovation Radar - EU-funded innovations; https://innovation-radar.ec.europa.eu/ (enter PoliRuralPlus)*
- PoliRuralPlus Website / Hub4Everybody.
    - Scientific publications; https://www.poliruralplus.eu/library/?type=pub
    - Webinars & workshops: https://www.poliruralplus.eu/results/workshops-webinars/; https://www.poliruralplus.eu/pilots/rural-pilots/
    - Policy briefs; https://www.poliruralplus.eu/library/?topic=&type=pol&language=; https://www.poliruralplus.eu/pilots/rural-pilots/
    - Deliverables: https://www.poliruralplus.eu/results/project-deliverables/

Annex A: Multi-Actor Approach Implementation from C&D perspective

This annex summarises the implementation of the PoliRuralPlus Multi-Actor Approach only from the communication and dissemination point of view. The stakeholder-engagement figures are based on WP2 stakeholder-identification and pilot-monitoring inputs, complemented by WP7 monitoring records for communication and dissemination activities. It complements Chapter 5 of D7.6 by showing how the project reached, consulted, involved and collaborated with key rural–urban stakeholder groups.

Table A.1 compares the target groups and KPI/verification expectations with achievements reported by the nine pilots and WP7 monitoring. The annex therefore provides supporting evidence for stakeholder engagement, dissemination, communication and uptake activities reported in Chapters 4–6.

Table A.1: Multi-Actor Approach implementation by target group and achieved results based on WP2 and WP7 monitoring inputs

Target group	Message	Main benefit(s)	KPI/Verification	Achieved
CIV: the civil society such as associations and foundations, clubs, etc.	Increased opportunities for studies, research, employment and careers	Increased awareness of EU-rural development policies, programs and strategies	50+ evidence-based encounters with civil society representatives	49 stakeholders that represent NGO and civil society groups.
POL: policymakers local, regional, national and EU	Best practices for governance and governance structures. Data.	Increased awareness to improve urban-rural synergies	20+ policymakers	75 policy makers and authorities from governments.
BUS: businesses, social partners, financial and markets bodies, EU projects	Opportunities for business	Triggers, Ideation, business models	50+ business ideation and development actors[7]	105 stakeholders representing SMEs, entrepreneurs, industry associations, digital technology companies and the tourism sector.

[7]The Grant Agreement refers to “business ideation and development acts”; for monitoring purposes, Annex A reports the number of stakeholder actors engaged in business ideation and development activities; added by T.Loytty

Target group	Message	Main benefit(s)	KPI/Verification	Achieved
SCI: academia, scientific community, high-schools, univ., media, EU projects	Open data availability, and collaborative intelligence to accelerate uptake	Substantial increase in effectiveness, accuracy and harmonisation of data	100+ involved researchers in local, regional programmes in diverse disciplines	63 stakeholders from research and education institutions.
PUB: the general public (households, communities, elderly, schools, etc.)	The project impact on inhabitants' awareness and quality of life	Substantial increase understanding of urban-rural development	50% increase of awareness of EU rural development policies and data	86 local communities and farmers were engaged[8]. Awareness-raising actions were implemented through localised partner websites, social media, events and pilot communication channels; quantitative reach is reflected in the communication and dissemination figures reported in D7.6 Chapters 4 and 6.
Summarising all engaged urban-rural development bodies', mechanisms and people, and individuals who participate and/or follow the project.			300+ bodies and agents engaged 1,000+ participants and followers	378 unique stakeholders engaged by 9 pilots. Around 2000 participants (ref. KPIs: D2, D3, C5, C7)

Source: WP2 stakeholder-identification and pilot-monitoring inputs from the nine pilots, complemented by WP7 monitoring records for communication and dissemination activities. The 378 figure refers to unique stakeholders directly engaged through pilot activities; the approximately 2,000+ figure refers to broader participants and

[8] Due to the absence of consistent baseline/follow-up awareness measurements across pilots, achievement of the awareness-increase target could not be directly quantified. Stakeholder engagement and communication indicators provide indirect evidence of increased awareness.

followers reached through communication, dissemination, dialogue and cooperation activities under KPIs D2, D3, C5 and C7.

While the civil-society and scientific-community sub-targets were not fully reached in numerical terms, the overall stakeholder-engagement target was exceeded, with 378 stakeholders engaged across the nine pilots and approximately 2,000+ participants and followers reached. Engagement was adapted to pilot needs and stakeholder availability, with stronger-than-expected participation from policymakers, business actors, local communities and farmers.

In the implementation of the DECS roadmap, the project has carried out a substantial number (i.e. more than 250 actions) of **one-way communication** from partners to stakeholders, for example via social media, conferences and websites (see Figure 1). This strategy enables us to reach the largest possible number of stakeholders with the least possible effort per person.

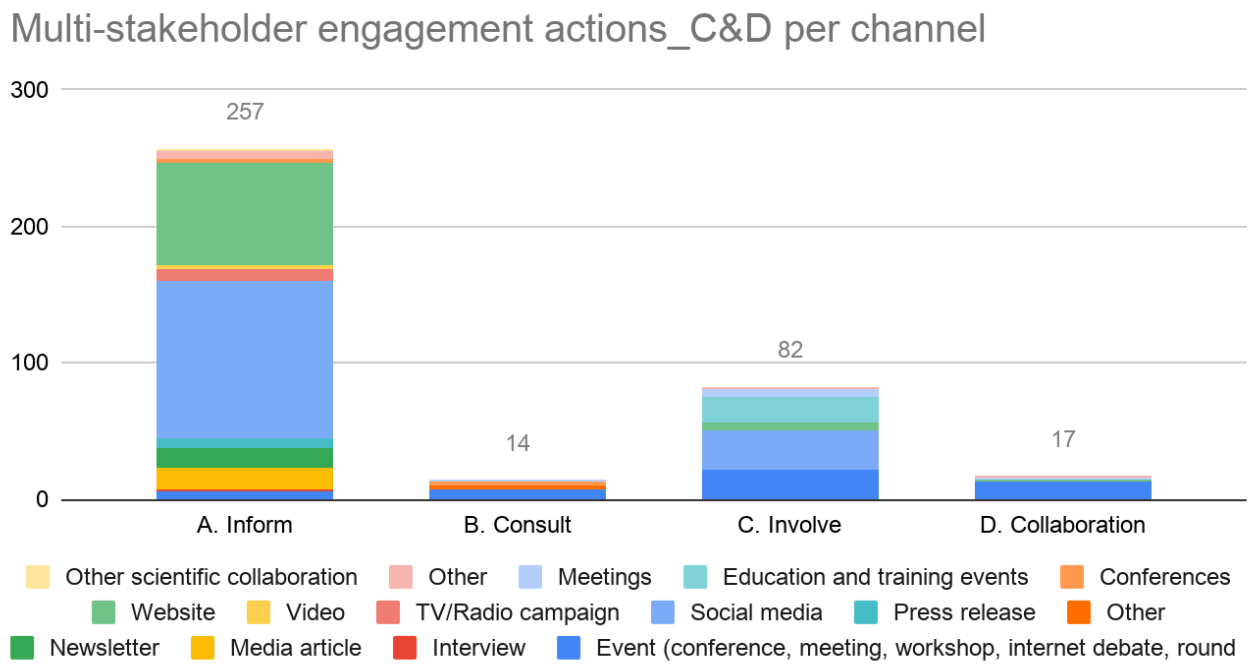


Figure 1: Multi-stakeholder engagement actions by engagement level and communication channel

PoliRuralPlus engages stakeholders through three main strategies of increasing depth: **consultation, involvement, and collaboration** (see Figure 2)**.** Consultation, which is mainly carried out at WP5 and WP6, uses tools like questionnaires, interviews, and bilateral dialogues to gather stakeholder needs and insights, reaching a medium to small audience with moderate effort. Involvement, similarly at WP5 and WP6 focuses on interactive methods such as workshops, group discussions, and co-creation activities, requiring more engagement per person but fostering deeper participation. Collaboration builds long-term partnerships among stakeholders and project partners to

support the use and sustainability of results beyond the project's duration, involving fewer stakeholders but demanding the highest level of commitment and effort.

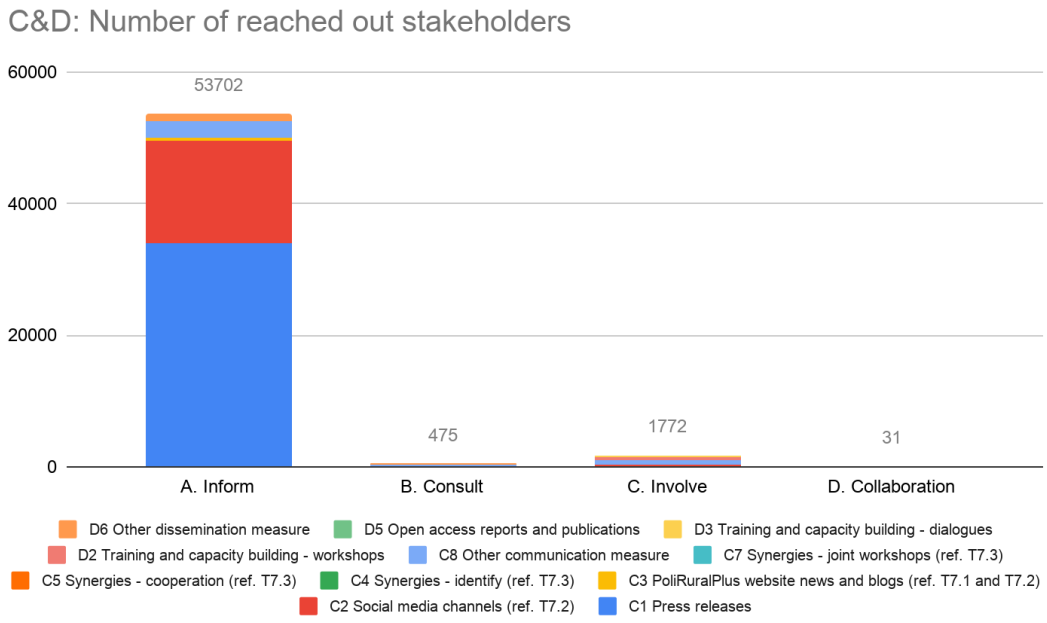


Figure 2: Number of stakeholders reached by engagement level

The distribution of actions shows that the widest reach was achieved through informing activities, while deeper engagement was achieved through consultation, involvement and collaboration. This reflects the expected engagement pyramid: broad communication reaches large audiences, whereas co-creation and collaboration involve fewer participants but require higher effort and generate stronger ownership of project results.