European Commission

Disseminating and Exploiting results

A starter kit for EU-funded research and innovation projects

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What's the purpose of a starter kit on Dissemination & Exploitation (D&E)?

This starter kit is a practical guide to support research and innovation (R&I) projects maximise the **economic and societal impact** of their results through **D&E activities**.
The starter kit serves as a resource to explore key tools to help projects fulfil **D&E expectations** under Horizon Europe[1].

What is D&E?

- **Dissemination refers to the targeted transfer of knowledge and results to relevant stakeholders** who can potentially make use of this e.g. scientists, industry/commercial players, civil society end-users and policymakers. The targeted transfer for use makes it different from communication, which raises general awareness and visibility of a project.

- **Exploitation means using results in developing, creating, marketing or improving a product, process or service**. It also encompasses the commercialisation of research results, ensuring that promising innovations reach the market and generate tangible economic and societal impact. This may include the creation of spin-offs, licensing agreements, or forming partnerships with industry to transform research into marketable solutions.

Key steps

Identify your key results
Highlight your main findings, technologies, or datasets especially those with potential beyond the project.

Choose your D&E tools
Pick the most suitable tools and channels to reach your audience.

Map your stakeholders
Think about who could benefit: industry, policymakers, researchers, the public. Use a stakeholder map to guide your outreach.

While D&E is sharing and using results to generate impact, this effort can be supported by **managing the knowledge** generated by the project and **strengthening the skills and capacities** of researchers and research managers to apply this knowledge outside the peer community and beyond the project's lifetime.

[1] Under Horizon Europe, beneficiaries are legally obliged to disseminate and exploit project results (see Article 39, Horizon Europe Regulation).

How can results be disseminated and exploited?

A good practice for achieving strong impact is to **consider the potential use of your project results from the very beginning,** ideally while writing your proposal and whenever identifying commercial or innovation prospects. Thinking early about who could benefit from your results, their needs and how to reach them, helps shape your outreach strategy and ultimately increases the likelihood of results being taken up, exploited and sustained beyond the project's lifetime.

DISSEMINATION

1. **Identify** key users (e.g. scientists, companies, policymakers, citizens, etc).
   e.g. develop an early adopter map to identify key targets or institutions that could be the first users of your results.

2. **Develop key messages** customised to different users: highlight the value, substantiating with facts on the impact of findings.
   e.g. create targeted newsletters highlighting the unique value proposition for each specific user identified.

3. **Promote** open access: make digital assets FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable) and research outputs openly accessible where possible, considering commercial, intellectual property and security constraints, especially at higher technology readiness levels.
   e.g. publish articles in open-access journals and deposit datasets in publicly accessible repositories, while retaining certain rights for commercial exploitation. Patent applications and trade secrets need to be prioritised and agreed within the consortium.

- Key tool at EU level: Register your results on the Horizon Results Platform, a matchmaking platform to showcase results of EU-funded projects and facilitate their chances of being picked up by interested stakeholders.

EXPLOITATION

1. **Prioritise results:** focus on the most impactful results, identify key exploitable results (KERs[2]).
   Determine how the KERs will solve the addressed challenges better than the current state of the art, who are the challenge/problem owners, their intended use and business model to ensure their availability beyond the project's lifetime.
   e.g. conduct a workshop with problem owners (e.g. waste water management company tasked to ensure water quality) to validate the proposed solution and work with results owners (e.g. consortium developing rapid diagnostic tool) on the exploitation intentions.

2. **Enable uptake:** Check whether each KER is ready and suitable for the market or other uses. Explore how the results could be used directly or indirectly by considering partner expectations, alternative solutions, value propositions and market potential, while consulting early adopters and end users.
   Managing intellectual assets (such as patents, data, know-how and other intangible assets) from the start helps identify which results have real market value. Go beyond simply identifying results and explore concrete paths to market, such as creating spin-offs, licensing, forming joint ventures or partnering with investors and companies.

[2] A Key Exploitable Result (KER) is a result selected and prioritised due to its high potential to be 'exploited' i.e. to make use and derive benefits, downstream the value chain of a product, process or solution or, an important input to policy, further research or education. In order to identify suitable KERs, consider the following criteria: degree of innovation, exploitability and impact.

- Key tool at EU level: Use the Booster service for free personalised support in converting research results into valuable outcomes. The European IP Helpdesk offers free support on intellectual property (IP) management and valorisation for EU-funded projects.

What activities can help maximise the outcomes of D&E?

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge management helps capture, organise and share research outputs in ways that make them accessible and usable by diverse stakeholders beyond the project consortium. It is a key enabler for turning results into an innovation, ensuring continuity, visibility and uptake across sectors and regions.

There are three steps intrinsic to sound knowledge management:

1. **Gather:** capture project results by setting up a sound monitoring system allowing timely identification of expected and unexpected results.

2. **Organise:** categorise and store data in a structured manner for example by using common metadata standards, controlled vocabularies and interoperable repositories. This ensures that outputs are easy to find, open science–compliant, as well as usable and reproducible across disciplines.

3. **Apply:** use (and re-use) and share the knowledge previously gathered and organised.

- Key tool at EU level: Use the Knowledge Valorisation Platform to exchange best practices and connect with stakeholders to maximise the value and uptake of your project results.

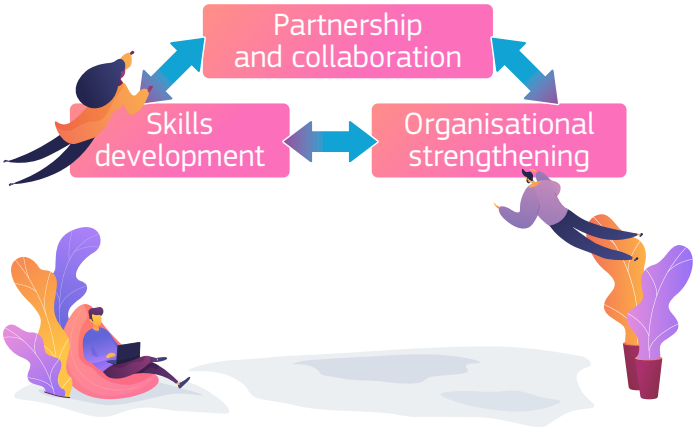
CAPACITY BUILDING (INTERNAL / EXTERNAL)

Capacity building is essential for ensuring that researchers have the skills, tools and networks to use results beyond the project's lifetime.

1. **Collaborate:** foster interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral and transnational partnerships to share knowledge and drive innovation.

2. **Train and develop skills:** enhance skills through targeted training for target groups within the consortium and stakeholders. For further information, visit research careers in the EU.

3. **Strengthen organisations:** Reinforce institutional capacity, management practices and internal processes to ensure long-term sustainability and impact. Stronger organisations, in turn, enable more effective partnerships and continuous skills development, completing the cycle.



- Key tool at EU level: The four codes of practice for R&I actors can help build capacity and turn your knowledge into practical benefits. They can also serve as tools to facilitate networking and collaboration across R&I ecosystems, enhance knowledge management, support standardisation and inform policy development.

How can I gain further insights and get help?

There are several resources apart from this starter kit that can guide you on how best to share results and their take-up. Here are some steps you can take:

1. FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH D&E BASICS

- Introduction to D&E from the European Research Executive Agency;

- More information on Dissemination and Exploitation
  Check out the Commission's dedicated page on D&E;

- Exploitation and Dissemination Strategy for Horizon Europe
  This factsheet gives an overview of the background, vision, mission, objectives, and activities of the Strategy;

- Check out the starter kit on sharing scientific evidence with policymakers for practical tips on bringing your project's results to the attention of policymakers.

2. TAKE INSPIRATION FROM OTHERS

- ALUVIA PHOTONICS, advanced cutting-edge research in integrated photonics. It **established a startup** with backing from the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, the European Research Council and the European Innovation Council and demonstrated how projects can effectively exploit results, foster entrepreneurship, and reinforce Europe's leadership in next-generation photonics technologies.

- RECOPHARMA developed innovative water treatment technologies to remove pharmaceutical pollutants and combined this with a strong awareness campaign targeting hospitals and regulators. It **built capacity** through hands-on training for researchers and established a pilot plant to demonstrate its application. It featured in Science is wonderful 2020 and European Open Science Forum conference 2022.

- EITHOS built a centralised observatory system for identity theft, enabling real-time data sharing and intelligence dissemination among stakeholders. It focused on **capacity building** through specialised training and created a network for public and private actors.

3. FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THE EU FRAMEWORK

EU Valorisation Policy addresses all R&I actors, aiming to maximise the societal value of R&I results. The Commission developed guiding principles and four codes of practice to help projects exploit research results effectively:

1. Code of Practice on the Management of Intellectual Assets for Knowledge Valorisation to turn research outputs into practical innovations faster.
2. Code of Practice on Standardisation in the European Research Area to widen the take up of your results by embedding standards early on.
3. Code of Practice on Industry-Academia Co-Creation for Knowledge Valorisation to help build effective industry-academic partnerships that accelerate impact.
4. Code of Practice on Citizen Engagement for Knowledge Valorisation to involve citizens meaningfully, boosting uptake and relevance of your work.

4. EXPLORE EU TOOLS

Discover a range of tools designed to enhance the impact of your project results:

- The Booster: services offered to ongoing and completed EU projects to boost results impact;
- Horizon Results Platform: a platform for projects to valorise key exploitable results;
- Innovation Radar: identifies high-potential innovations and key innovators in EU-funded projects;
- Advice for EU projects: European Research Executive Agency tips on how to manage your project;
- European IP Helpdesk: offers free support on IP management and valorisation for EU-funded projects. Consult anytime, as early as possible!
- The Standardisation Booster: supports beneficiaries in linking their research results to standardisation activities;
- ResearchComp: supports the development of researchers' transversal skills, including in relation to aspects related to D&E;
- CORDIS: comprehensive information about EU R&I projects;
- Horizon Dashboard: provides interactive reporting and visualisation tool of EU R&I project data;
- The WiderAdvanceFacility: free, tailored support for organisations in Widening countries and Outermost Regions to enhance participation and impact in the European Research Area;
- Open Research Europe | Open Access: an open-access publishing platform for Horizon-funded research, ensuring rapid and transparent dissemination;
- OpenDOAR: quality-assured global directory of academic open access repositories compliant to Horizon Europe open access rules;
- COST | European Cooperation in Science and Technology: a platform which focuses on building networks that move results to a higher level;

- Academy - EUIPO (European Union intellectual property office): provides all Intellectual Property Rights learning and educational activities for the EUIPO's users, academia, and the public;
- Knowledge Valorisation Platform: a platform for research and innovation actors across Europe to share best practices and lessons learnt to make the most of research results;
- Competence Centre on Technology Transfer offers expertise and services in technology transfer in the areas of capacity building, financing and innovation ecosystems.

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