



Functionalized Soft robotic gripper for delicate produce harvesting
powered by imitation learning-based control

D7.2 Dissemination and Communication Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This deliverable “*D7.2 - Dissemination and Communication Plan*” presents the planned dissemination and communication activities of the SoftGrip project. The main objective of dissemination and communication activities is to raise awareness about the project activities, disseminate information in a consistent and coherent manner about the project results and maximise its impact.

The D&C Plan is a formal planning document laying down the principles for the dissemination and communication strategy to be implemented throughout the project, to ensure high visibility and promotion of the project and its results. As the Plan is prepared at an early stage of the project (in Month 3), it acts mainly as a strategic roadmap for the project partners on how to promote the project. The D&C Plan provides an overview of the objectives to be achieved, the audiences to be targeted, the key messages to be developed, the tools and channels to be used. Additionally, the Plan elaborates on the procedures of monitoring the dissemination impact as well as relevant indicators. Dissemination and communication activities will run in parallel with the technical development and thus will be aligned with the project progress and feedback that the project receives.

The D&C Plan is a living document, it will be refined and updated throughout the project duration in order to reflect the project advancement and accommodate any customisation required. Therefore, the dissemination and communication actions will be continuously monitored and evaluated over the course of the project.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SOFTGRIP PROJECT SUMMARY

The fresh food industry is highly labour-intensive, with labour costs often contributing up to 50% of overall production costs. So far robotic automation for picking of delicate fresh produce has been impossible mainly due to the complex, contact-rich interactions involved in such tasks.

The SoftGrip project aims to take up the challenge and will introduce a self-actuating soft gripper for the autonomous picking of delicate white button mushrooms. The versatility of the proposed solution will enable the adoption of the technology by other fresh-food industries experiencing similar stringent handling requirements.

The project aims for low-cost, intelligent soft robotic grippers with embedded actuation, tactile sensing, recyclable materials and advanced fabrication techniques. It will develop a set of fast-computed modelling algorithms to enhance real-time model-based control schemes and advanced learning capabilities. SoftGrip will develop a learning-by-demonstration framework that will allow the robot to capture human picking skills, extensible to other similar tasks.

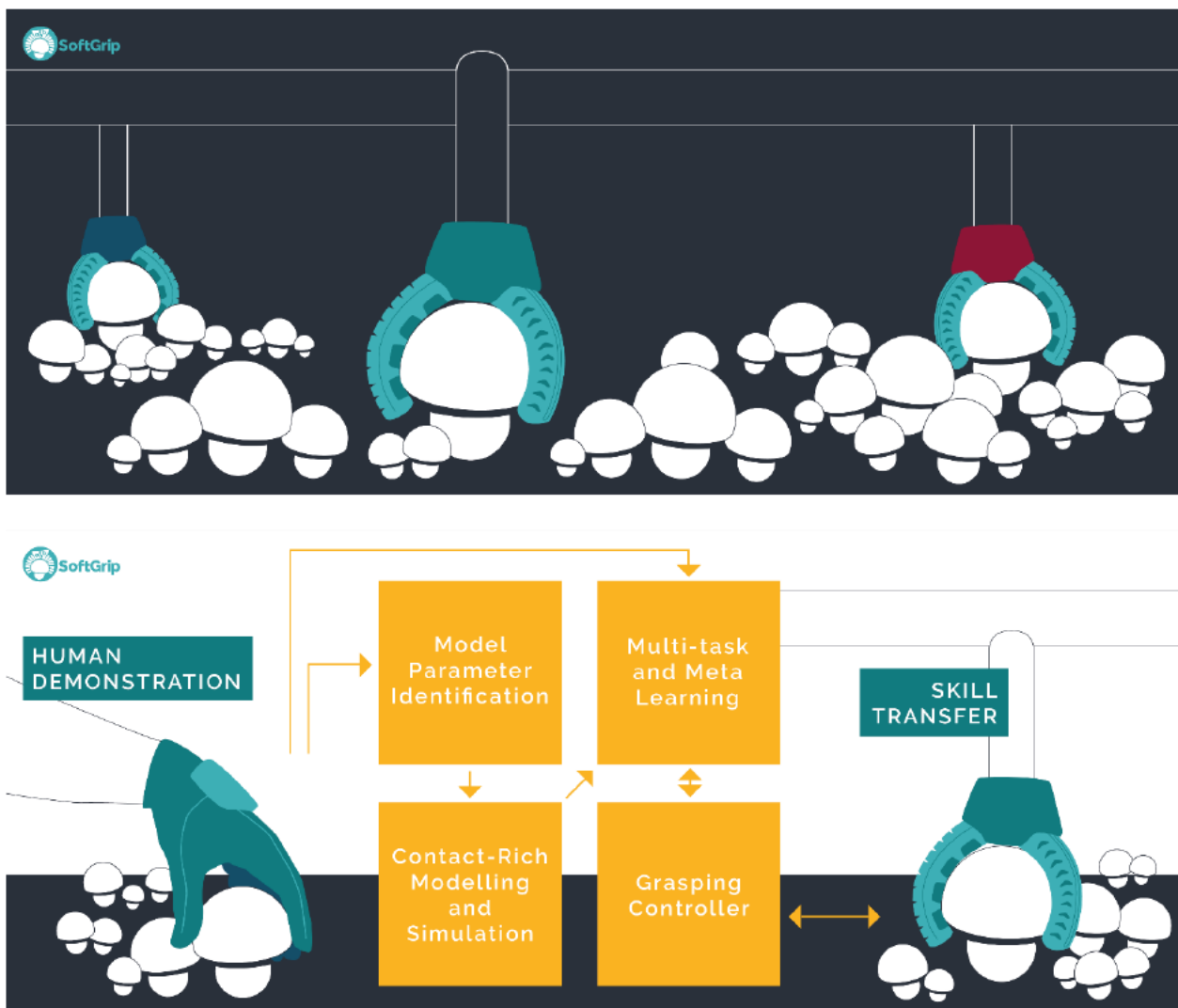


Figure 1 The SoftGrip project

1.2 SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

The present deliverable D7.2 "Dissemination and Communication Plan" was prepared within the framework of Task 7.1 "Dissemination plan and communication tools"; WP7 "Dissemination & Exploitation". The document outlines the SoftGrip dissemination and communication strategy and its implementation plan to be applied by the consortium. The focus of the Plan is to ensure that the project activities and outcomes are made accessible to the appropriate audiences/communities, at the right times, via the most suitable channels.

Dissemination and communication activities are crucial to the project's overall success and serve as the driving force to maximise the impact of the project. These activities will be important from the project start in order to reach the widest possible audience of the project and facilitate the use and take-up of results. The Dissemination and Communication Plan is drafted at an early stage of the project implementation (M3) but will be a living document and will be refined and updated throughout the project. General principles regarding the dissemination activities are set out in the Consortium Agreement.

The objective of the current deliverable is to establish an accurate, well-defined and customized Dissemination and Communication (D&C) Plan that serves as a solid ground to deploy concrete and more targeted promotion actions along the project life cycle. Although dissemination and communication are strongly interrelated, they can be considered as two different types of activities, since they differ in objective, focus and target audiences. Communication has a wider scope: it promotes the project itself as well as its results and addresses all types of audiences including the general public and the media. Communication is also an important means to increase the visibility of EU funded research and demonstrate how EU funding contributes to tackling societal challenges. On the other hand, dissemination is more focused, it targets the audiences that may use the knowledge and results generated in the project and thus paves the way for the successful exploitation of results. It should be noted that the boundary cannot be easily drawn between certain activities described in this plan, e.g. website, social media and can be categorized both as communication and dissemination activities, as they address both the general public and key stakeholders.

The management and overall implementation of D&C Plan is led by the Dissemination & Exploitation Manager, TWI. As the Leader of WP7 "Dissemination & Exploitation", SSSA (Project Coordinator) also plays a strategic role in the D&C activities. Moreover, all partners in SoftGrip will be deeply involved in the dissemination and communication tasks, providing contents, developing scientific publications, participating in events and promoting the project outcomes.

The following reports related to the communication and dissemination of project results will be delivered during the SoftGrip project:

- Deliverable D7.1 Project website and promotional material, in Month 3
- Deliverable D7.2 Dissemination and Communication Plan, in Month 3
- Deliverable D7.4 Interim Report on Dissemination and Communication Activities, in Month 18
- Deliverable D7.5 Final Report on Dissemination and Communication Activities, in Month 36

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

The document is structured into five main sections. The first section includes introductory information about the project and the scope of the dissemination and communication plan. Section 2 describes the objectives, stakeholders and overall methodology of SoftGrip dissemination and communication, Section 3 provides a detailed description of the communication and dissemination strategy, tools and activities that SoftGrip will implement in order to achieve the expected dissemination impact. The fourth Section presents the monitoring and performance assessment of the completed dissemination and communication activities. Finally, the last chapter includes the concluding remarks of the deliverable.

2 GENERAL DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The dissemination and communication strategy and activities of SoftGrip will pursue the best practices and mechanisms successfully implemented by the partners and in accordance with EC guidelines for successful communication. The SoftGrip Dissemination and Communication (D&C) Plan encompasses the answers to the following questions:

1. Why to disseminate and communicate? – For efficient dissemination and communication, the first point to be defined is the objectives and purpose of the D&C strategy.
2. Whom to disseminate and communicate to? – The D&C activities will target different audiences; therefore, a critical aspect of the strategy is the task of identifying and mapping all targeted stakeholders.
3. What information to disseminate and communicate? – As target audiences have different interests and needs, they will have to be approached with different types of messages and customised content.
4. Where and how to disseminate and communicate? – Given that the target groups cover a wide range of sectors, they must be approached through the most appropriate and efficient communication channels and tools.
5. When to disseminate and communicate? – The D&C activities will start at the beginning of the project and run throughout its course; however, the strategy aims to achieve long lasting impacts and support the long-term sustainability of the project.

The D&C Plan also establishes ways to measure the impact of the dissemination activities and defines metrics for evaluation. Continuous monitoring of the activities will enable the project to measure its performance and propose corrective actions to fine-tune the communication and dissemination activities.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

The central goal of the dissemination and communication strategy is to identify and organise the activities to be performed by the SoftGrip partners. The ultimate purpose is to maximise the impact of the project by promoting scientific results and achieving commercial and other exploitation of project results. Dissemination and communication activities in SoftGrip pursue the following main objectives:

- Raise public awareness and ensure maximum visibility of the project, its expected results, benefits and achievements among key stakeholders, the scientific community and the general public.
- Disseminate the knowledge, technologies and tools developed during the project to a number of audiences who can substantially benefit from the SoftGrip agrotechnological innovations.
- Share the technical results with the scientific community interested in the topics addressed by the project to get their support and receive useful input/feedback from other scientists and communities.
- Establish links and synergies with other projects in the fields related to the project.
- Engage with specific target groups to facilitate the acceptance and usage of the SoftGrip system.
- Pave the way for successful commercial and non-commercial exploitation of the project outcomes.
- Ensure that the outputs will be sustained after the end of the project lifetime.

Communication will improve the visibility of the project objectives, activities and results by breaking down the science and explaining it in simple terms without complex terminologies. Dissemination, on the other hand, will ensure that the project results will be available to the scientific community, industry and key stakeholders, by using the appropriate scientific language with priority to accuracy.

2.2 TARGET AUDIENCES

A successful dissemination and communication action plan greatly depends on distinguishing and assembling the groups to be targeted.

SoftGrip has identified several target groups that it will engage during the course of the project. These groups are the most relevant in terms of being able to benefit directly or indirectly from the project results and being able to contribute to the project's impact by supporting its visibility. The dissemination activities of SoftGrip must be customized in order to reach the target audiences more effectively and to employ the designated channels and tools as efficiently as possible.

The stakeholder groups that will be targeted as part of the project can be classified in two main categories: the primary target audience and the secondary target audience. The primary target audience consists of all the stakeholders who can have direct involvement in the project. Dissemination activities are mainly targeted to this audience, since they may eventually become early adopters or exploiters of the SoftGrip technologies developed.

The secondary target audience consists of those stakeholders who may have a particular interest in the project activities and results or be affected by the project's success. For these groups more general communication actions will be planned, sharing easy-to-understand messages on the project, as the project scientific results may be too sophisticated for them.

Primary target audience:

- Key stakeholders & communities, Industrial sector: This group includes the potential end-users and exploiters of the SoftGrip platform, i.e., robotic manufacturers, agriculture automation companies; mushroom and soft-fruit producers; mechanical, electrical & computer engineers; 3D printing companies; AI/ML community; farm equipment and machinery manufacturers and vendors.
- Academic and research community: All research communities with an interest in the project since the SoftGrip project innovations, developments and outcomes can prospectively be beneficial to their own research activities. Scientific contributions of SoftGrip are particularly interesting for researchers working in the field of soft robotics, robotics, automation systems, robotics grippers, ROS community, robotic vision, visual servoing, AI/ Machine Learning, functionalised materials and sensor technology.
- Relevant research projects and initiatives: This includes projects or initiatives in similar domains, with which SoftGrip can create and exploit synergies.

Secondary target audience:

- Policy-making initiatives: This is a group encompassing decision/policymakers from the EU and national/regional authorities.
- Investors
- The general public, citizens
- The media

The target audiences and their incentive to learn about the project and the reasons to get them involved in the project are summarised in the table below.

Table 1: Targeted audiences of the SoftGrip project

Target group / audience	Project goals
Key stakeholders & communities, Industrial sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become aware of the solutions and innovations generated by SoftGrip • Engage with SoftGrip activities • Create connections with industrial players that can play a concrete role in the exploitation of the results of the project • Receive valuable feedback on the project and integrate their approaches to the development and design of the SoftGrip system • Facilitate access to new markets and users
Academic and research community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become aware of the results and innovation generated by SoftGrip that can benefit their own research • Stay up to date with state-of-the-art research in the fields of the project • Exploit and further develop the knowledge developed in SoftGrip
Relevant research projects and initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid overlaps in scientific research • Identify joint activities that will increase the impact of the projects • Develop strong cooperation links to mutually benefit from the acquired knowledge • Collaborate in mutual dissemination in order to reach a wider spectrum of stakeholders • Exploit and further develop the knowledge developed in SoftGrip
Policy-making initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the use of robotics applications and place them at the top of their agendas • Increase awareness of the project results, along with other projects under the ICT-47 topic of the H2020-ICT-2020-2 call
General public, citizens Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve better visibility of the project activities • Become aware of the SoftGrip system, its benefits and the intended technical and social impact • Discover how project results could affect the daily lives of people

Key messages are intended to deliver relevant and meaningful content to communicate the SoftGrip value proposition to each target audience.

Since the project is still in its initial phase, only preliminary messages are defined. Messages will be revised, refined and further messages will be developed in line with the project progress and developments. Messages will be tailored to the different audiences to better reflect what the audience should remember of the project.

The updated list of key messages will be included in D7.4, in the interim report on D&C activities. A series of suggested messages are available below, focusing on the major assets of the project and will be used when describing or informing on the project:

For the scientific community & relevant projects:

- SoftGrip will open up AI and automation possibilities for delicate produce harvesting in various industries ranging from fresh mushroom cultivation to the fresh fruit industry in general.
- SoftGrip will be sustainable due to its recyclable and self-healing materials that are maintenance-free and leave a low carbon footprint on the environment.
- SoftGrip will have increased control capacity and observability due to its algorithmic intelligence.
- SoftGrip will be able to properly handle the blemisheable mushroom harvesting by having embedded tactile sensing and proprioception.
- SoftGrip will enhance production efficiency since its manufacturing will be undemanding, cost-effective and scalable.

For the potential end users, media and general public:

- SoftGrip will create gripping devices that can accurately learn how to treat delicate vegetables and fruits, preserve the product's quality and protect the environment.
- The project's arrays of gripping devices will help mushroom and soft fruit farmers by cutting down on production costs, boosting harvesting and increasing total yield.
- SoftGrip will decrease the existing labour production costs to help EU growers remain competitive in the mushroom market.
- The soft gripping devices will lighten the heavy workload of picking mushrooms while reducing the physical exhaustion and health problems that the harvesters experience.
- SoftGrip aims to relieve farmers from the burden of constantly looking for new harvesters, the full dependence on them and the stress of production limitations.
- SoftGrip will help prevent industrial accidents and health-related problems by improving the present-day challenging working conditions for mushrooms pickers.
- SoftGrip will be a food-safe option for mushroom growers following the FDA's material synthesis standards and the EU food-safe directives.

2.3 STRATEGIC APPROACH

To achieve the overall vision and goals of the project for maximum impact, the dissemination and communication strategy will be implemented in two main phases, which are aligned with the project progress and available results. We will progressively increase communication and dissemination activities as results progress over the lifetime of SoftGrip, starting from the creation of the project identity, through the formation of constructive conditions for wider engagement of stakeholders and to establishing of long-term sustainability mechanisms towards the end of the project. Although a number of dissemination activities will take place during the first 24 months of the project, the most significant dissemination activities will take place as final research results will become available.

Phase 1 – Awareness-oriented phase:

This phase covers the early stage (M1-M12) of the project when no solid results are available yet. Therefore, the dissemination efforts will mainly be geared towards maximising the project's visibility and creating general awareness about project objectives, technologies, scope and benefits as to encourage interested parties to discover more about the daily operations of the project. Providing information to the identified stakeholder groups will ensure that the relevant stakeholders, end-users, scientific community and policymakers are familiar with SoftGrip. This phase will also strengthen collaboration links while helping the formation and reinforcement of multiple networking activities. The SoftGrip partners represent a large geographical coverage

(six countries across northern and southern Europe), thus ensuring that the project will be disseminated widely. The following means will be used to promote the project in its early stage.

The actions of this initial awareness phase start with building the visual identity and corporate image for the SoftGrip project through designing the SoftGrip logo, visual features and clear messages on the SoftGrip value proposition. Following the visual identity guidelines, the project brochure, poster and banner are developed as well as a general project presentation, containing integral information to the project. These will be distributed to a wide audience at national, European and international conferences and workshops related to robotics, the agriculture industry and the Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning community. An initial list of relevant events has been created and will be presented later in section 3.2 (see Table 3).

The project website was finalised in Month 3, to facilitate information-sharing among the consortium members and between the consortium and the public, i.e. to disseminate information of the project, such as the public deliverables of the project and upcoming events that are of SoftGrip interest. Social media accounts on Twitter and LinkedIn were also created in Month 3, through which the project can both communicate and disseminate the work being implemented within the project.

Phase 2 – Results-oriented phase:

During this phase, the focus will be on the real outcomes of SoftGrip, the adoption and uptake of its research results.

In the period starting from M13 and ending in M24, dissemination efforts will be intensified to promote scientific and technological findings, as well as first project results. At this stage, SoftGrip partners will participate in relevant conferences, workshops and exhibitions where videos of the activity tracking algorithms will be showcased. Posters and brochures will also be dispersed for enhanced visibility. Based on the existing results, updated promotional material will be released. The outcomes and results achieved until this stage will be published in scientific journals, complemented by presentations at relevant conferences.

Dissemination in this phase will be more focused on specific communities, in particular on the target groups mentioned in Table 1. In this phase, stakeholders will be more engaged. It will be of utmost importance to gather their feedback and insights that might help to validate partial & overall project results with the intention of improving the work done in the project.

During the last period of the project (M25-M36), the main focus will be to disseminate the more advanced project results to selected target groups and to support the exploitation efforts, the uptake and use of SoftGrip results. The dissemination activities will aim at attracting potential users & early adopters for the SoftGrip platform. Accordingly, results of the project will be published in related scientific journals, conferences, workshops, trade press, trade fairs, exhibitions and videos. SoftGrip will also organize workshops and demonstrations, where project results will be presented to end users, early adopters and other stakeholders.

The SoftGrip dissemination & communication strategy is summarised in Table 2:

Table 2: Dissemination and communication phases of SoftGrip

Phase	Dissemination objective & content	Target Audience	Key channels
Phase 1 M1-M12	Awareness-oriented content project visibility; objectives; expected results; benefits	Research, Scientific & Academic Community, Commercial & Industry, Policy makers, Standardisation bodies, General public	Project website, Leaflet, Brochure, Social media, Publications & presentations at conferences and workshops

Phase	Dissemination objective & content	Target Audience	Key channels
Phase 2a M13-M24	Results-oriented content scientific and technological findings; intermediate project results	Commercial & Industry, Research, Scientific & Academic Community, Policy makers, Standardisation bodies, General public	Project website, Social media, Workshops, Focused publications, Conferences and workshops, Press releases
Phase 2b M25-M36	Results-oriented content final project results; proven SoftGrip platform; use case demos; lessons learnt	Commercial & Industry, Research, Scientific & Academic Community, Policy makers, Standardisation bodies, Investors, General public, Media	Project website; social media; conferences; targeted workshops; trade fairs & exhibitions; training; focused publications; partners leaflets; press releases; promotional videos; personal communication

3 DETAILED DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION PLAN

The SoftGrip project will employ a combination of traditional and online communication tools in order to reach a broad audience. The project website and social media channels are part of the online tools, whereas the traditional channels cover events, paper presentations, press as well as visits, workshops and meetings. Specific tools are suitable for information sharing while others are meant to create a reciprocal relation with the respective visitors.

In the context of this document and the related activities, we distinguished between dissemination and communication, although they often overlap, depending on the target group and content. Communication is about promoting the project itself and its result to a multitude of audiences, including the media and the general public, through strategic and targeted measures. Dissemination is the public disclosure of the results by any appropriate means to various stakeholder groups to enable them to use and take-up the project results.

3.1 PROJECT COMMUNICATION

3.1.1 VISUAL IDENTITY

The visual identity of the SoftGrip project was created in the very early stage of the project, in order to secure a unique image and brand from a very early stage of the project.

The logo is a central element of the SoftGrip brand. The SoftGrip logo has been designed (Figure 2) in the first month of the project. The logo includes the name of the project and represents the project concept and vision. The logo will be incorporated in all project dissemination material and used in all project-related communication activities.



Figure 2 SoftGrip project logo

In addition to the logo, a colour palette, a typeface, templates for presentations and documents as well as a series of graphic images with the SoftGrip value proposition have been designed. They are described thoroughly in Deliverable D7.1 “Project website and promotional material”. These elements were used for the development of all the promotional material, the project website and social media pages.

3.1.2 WEBSITE

The website of the SoftGrip project (Figure 3) was launched in March 2021 and is accessible at www.softgrip-project.eu. The website is hosted and maintained by the project coordinator, SSSA. The SoftGrip website will serve as the project’s main dissemination tool providing information on project objectives, progress, key results, new items and event alerts amongst others. It will also be the platform where stakeholders can visit and get informed on all multimedia and other dissemination content as well as interact with the project partners through sending messages via the dedicated contact form. The website will be regularly updated during the project lifetime and it will be maintained for at least two years after the project end.

More details regarding the website design and structure can be found in D7.1 “Project website and promotional material”.



Figure 3: Home page of the SoftGrip Website

3.1.3 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media networks pose as the ideal opportunity to increase the visibility of SoftGrip, facilitate the dissemination of the project progress and results. At the same time, exposure on social media can drive traffic to the project website, the main hub for all dissemination activities. The active social media presence will support SoftGrip to reach a broader range of audience while it will also help to establish two-way communication with a large number of stakeholders and get feedback from them.

SoftGrip accounts were created on [LinkedIn](#) (Figure 4) and [Twitter](#) (Figure 5), which will be used to communicate with stakeholders by posting short news and announcements related to SoftGrip activities and achievements. The SoftGrip social media accounts are linked to the project website.

The social media channels are presented in more detail in D7.1 “Project website and promotional material”.

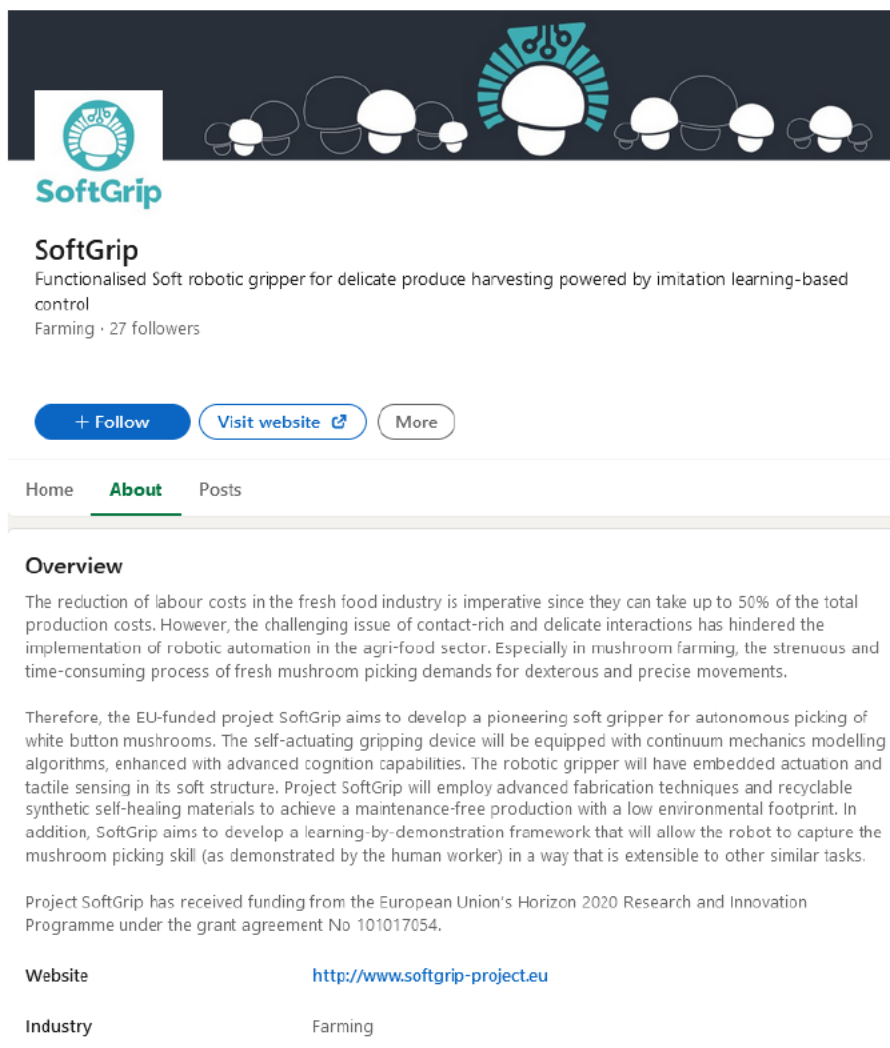


Figure 4: SoftGrip LinkedIn account



Figure 5: SoftGrip Twitter account

3.1.4 PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

In the framework of Task 7.1 Dissemination plan and communication tools, a range of promotional materials was prepared in line with the SoftGrip visual identity, including a brochure/flyer, a banner, a poster and a standard project presentation in power-point format. The flyer will be distributed to targeted stakeholders during events and meetings; while the roll-up and the power point will help the consortium partners present the project at own project events as well as in external conferences and workshops.

The materials are available both in printed and electronic format and will be revisited based on the project developments and needs. More details about the various promotional material of the project can be found in D7.1 “Project website and promotional material”.

3.1.5 AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIAL

The creation of audio-visual content is an effective and attractive way to publicise the SoftGrip project. Therefore, short promotional videos will be produced throughout the project, with the aim to inform a broad audience about the innovative solutions developed by the project partners and to present the project in a simplified way to make it understandable for the general public. The content of videos will include:

- general project information (objectives, expected impacts)
- presentation of the SoftGrip platform and its advantages
- interviews with the project coordinator and other partners

Towards the project completion phase, a longer video will be created, demonstrating the benefits of the SoftGrip platform and featuring SoftGrip use cases.

The SoftGrip YouTube channel will be set up as soon as the project has videos available. All videos will be stored on the YouTube channel, embedded into LinkedIn posts and tweets, as well as shared on the project website.

3.2 PROJECT DISSEMINATION

3.2.1 EVENTS

SoftGrip partners will participate in a variety of conferences, trade fairs and exhibitions in the field of soft robotics, robotics, AI / machine-learning, multi-material 3d printing, agricultural automation, agri-food, in order to increase the project visibility and reach further audiences with a wide range of backgrounds. International and national conferences provide the opportunity to share the experiences and results with relevant experts, therefore, to achieve effective dissemination of the project. Workshops, meetings and other large events (exhibitions, trade fairs, showcases) are also excellent platforms for disseminating our findings and starting direct conversations with target audiences. SoftGrip partners will attend events and conferences with the view to:

- present the SoftGrip concept;
- promote the SoftGrip actions and results;
- increase the project visibility and raise awareness of project objectives, benefits, results, use and applicability;
- share knowledge;
- establish contacts and interactions with stakeholders;
- attract early adopters and potential users of the SoftGrip results;
- keep in touch with the latest developments, technologies, market trends in the fields relevant to the project.

The representation of the SoftGrip project in the events can take place in different ways, including project, poster or paper presentation, or simple participation for liaising or networking purposes. Project promotional material such as brochures, a poster or a roll-up (where relevant) will be also used for dissemination purposes.

The SoftGrip consortium aims to target a carefully selected set of prominent events related to the fields of the project. The table below (Table 3) provides a non-exhaustive indicative list of targeted events; the list will be continuously updated and extended. Before deciding on participation, the partners will assess the events in terms of target groups that can be reached, potential impact on dissemination and cost efficiency.

Table 3: Relevant events considered for dissemination

Name of event	Link
European Robotics Forum	https://www.eu-robotics.net/robotics_forum/
European Robotics Week	https://www.eu-robotics.net/robotics_week/
RoboSoft (EEE International Conference on Soft Robotics)	https://softroboticsconference.org/
FIRA International Forum of Agricultural Robotics	https://www.fira-agtech.com/en/
ICRA IEEE (International Conference on Robotics and Automation)	http://www.icra2021.org/index.aspx#acc

Name of event	Link
IROS IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems	https://www.iros2021.org/
GR-EX Global Robot Expo World Congress & Exhibition	https://www.globalrobotexpo.com/
International Conference on Agricultural Robotics, Automation and Control	https://waset.org/agricultural-robotics-automation-and-control-conference-in-october-2021-in-athens
Automatica Exhibition and trade fair for Smart Automation and Robotics	https://automatica-munich.com/en/
Conference on Robot Learning (CoRL)	https://www.robot-learning.org/
ICIP IEEE (International Conference on Image Processing)	https://2021.ieeeicip.org/
CVPR (Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition)	http://cvpr2021.thecvf.com/
ECCV (European Conference on Computer Vision)	https://link.springer.com/conference/eccv
Dutch Mushroom Days	https://www.champignondagen.nl/
CFIA (Carrefour des Fournisseurs de l'Industrie Agroalimentaire)	https://www.cfiaexpo.com/en/?lq=en
TUTTOFOOD world food exhibition	https://www.tuttofood.it/en/
Polagra Food fair	https://polagra.pl/en
EIMA International Exhibition	https://www.eima.it/en/

Understanding the importance of face-to-face communication and physical demos, SoftGrip will organise its own workshops and conference sections, where the SoftGrip platform will be presented to representatives of the industry and other relevant / interested stakeholders. Public demonstration of the SoftGrip technology will be organised towards the end of the project when the prototype is available.

The SoftGrip consortium will organise 'Public Days', where a live demonstration of the developed system will be presented to mushroom and soft-fruit producers, representatives of the agro-industry and other interested stakeholders.

Additionally, a SoftGrip dissemination event will be organised ideally as a satellite to a larger event, e.g. the Dutch Mushroom Days. This event will create the opportunity to showcase and demonstrate the final prototypes to end users and early adopters. This event is centred upon demonstrating the use of the developed system, the feedback from potential future users will be valuable to feed into the reflections on the exploitation & business plan.

A specific template has been created for keeping track of partners' participation in events (Table 4). The table will be used to list potential events relevant to SoftGrip and in which partners may participate to promote or

present the project. The table will be updated regularly in order to monitor the progress of the dissemination activities and measure their impact.

Table 4: Template listing the events planned/attended

Name of event	Date	Location (Country/City)	Type of event	Status (Planned / Attended)	Participating Partner(s)	Contribution (organise / participate)	Type of audience	Size of audience	Website

3.2.2 PUBLICATIONS

Publications in journals and conferences are a valuable and effective way to disseminate the scientific and technological outcomes of the project and attract the interest of the scientific community and other stakeholders. The SoftGrip partners will prepare and submit at least 5 scientific publications in high-impact journals and respected conferences. Scientific dissemination will be performed mainly by the research partners. Scientific journals that provide open access to all their publications will be preferred.

The results and technology solutions of SoftGrip will also be exhibited in trade journals and magazines specialised in sectors related to the project objectives. Additionally, the consortium will produce press and media releases and articles in mass media. Project partners already have an excellent track record of scientific publications in top-rated peer-reviewed journals, therefore, preference for publication will be given to the most prominent journals and magazines. Publications will also be featured on the SoftGrip website. Table 5 lists some scientific and trade journals/magazines where the SoftGrip partners will submit their papers and articles. This list is indicative and will be continuously updated throughout the duration of the project to better reflect the full spectrum of diverse and multidisciplinary scientific audience targeted by different project partners for the dissemination of project achievements and results.

Table 5: Targeted journals and magazines

Journals & Magazines	
Mushroom business	International Journal of Food Science + Technology (Wiley)
Mushroom People	TResearch magazine
Trends in Food Science & Technology (Elsevier)	Journal of Food Science and Technology (Springer)
Food Science and Technology International (SAGE)	Journal of Food Technology and Food Chemistry (Scolarena)
IEEE Transactions on Robotics (T-RO)	The International Journal of Robotics Research (SAGE)
IEEE Robotics and Automation Letters (RA-L)	IEEE Robotics & Automation Magazine (RAM)

Journals & Magazines	
Journal of Field Robotics (Wiley)	Robotics – Open Access Journal
Soft Robotics journal (Mary Ann Liebert)	Journal on Computers and Electronics in Agriculture (Elsevier)

In order to keep the project participants’ submissions and publications tracked, a respective template has been created (Table 6). Project partners will update the table, whenever they submit publications to scientific journals/magazines.

Table 6: Template for monitoring publications

Main author	Contributors	Title	Type of publication (journal, magazine, conference proceedings, press release, other)	Name of publication	Date of publication	Relevant page	DOI	Open access?	Link	Website

3.2.3 NETWORKING

As part of the project dissemination strategy, the SoftGrip consortium will also disseminate project results through participating in networking and informal personal meetings. Whenever possible, official presentations will be used to present the project results and achievements at different stages of project development.

The SoftGrip partners will also establish strong connections with associated European projects and initiatives that address similar challenges. The objective is to extend the reach of the project to interested user groups and stakeholders, ensure the exchange of knowledge, better implementation of the project and to widely disseminate and showcase SoftGrip’s benefits.

SoftGrip will link in particular with the Horizon 2020 project agROBOfood (www.agrobofood.eu). The agROBOfood project, a consortium of 39 partners, aims to build a European ecosystem for the effective adoption of robotic technologies in the agri-food sector. To boost the uptake of robotic solutions, it will establish a sustainable network of digital innovation hubs (DIHs). The network already counts 49 Digital Innovation Hubs and 12 Competence Centers, covering 19 member states. To cover the whole of Europe, 7 regional clusters have been defined. SoftGrip has selected 3 regional clusters that will closely cooperate with, namely [North West Europe](#), [France & Italy](#) and [East Mediterranean Europe](#).

4 MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATION

To achieve the successful implementation of dissemination and communication activities and the objectives defined in the D&C Plan, a systematic monitoring will be carried out throughout the course of the project. The frequent evaluation of dissemination & communication actions will allow us to monitor and measure their impact. Through regular monitoring, any risks, deviations from the D&C Plan and performance indicators can be identified, and if necessary, correction actions can be taken. The monitoring will be performed on a three-month basis and will be officially reported in the relevant deliverables in Month 18 (D7.4) and Month 36 (D7.5). The tools and activities outlined in the D&C strategy will be monitored, measured, evaluated and realigned on an ongoing basis. The diagram in Figure 6 displays the process of monitoring of dissemination and communication activities:



Figure 6: The SoftGrip Dissemination & Communication (D&C) framework

Reporting is essential to ensure that we keep track of all dissemination and communication activities that were performed. Project partners are expected to continuously report all their actions and to contribute to the continuous monitoring of SoftGrip D&C activities. In order to facilitate the reporting activities, various templates have been designed, namely an events template (Table 4), a publications template (Table 6) and an event's reporting template. For each event attended (conferences, workshops, meetings, etc.) partners will be required to fill in the event's reporting template that will gather details of the event, such as goals and relevance with the project, dissemination activities carried out, outcomes of the event and comments/feedback received from the audience.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and analytical measures will be used in order to monitor and assess the impact of communication and dissemination activities. In Table 7, the KPIs are presented we plan to employ for monitoring and evaluation, together with the target values. These targets may be revisited later, based on the experience gathered.

Table 7: Key Performance Indicators for Dissemination & Communication Activities

Dissemination & Communication activity	Key Performance Indicators	Target value
Project Website	Number of visits to project website	>7,000
Social media & online presence	Footprint in different social networks: Number of followers	>1,000
	Number of comments	>300
Video presentation	Number of promotional videos and video tutorials	>2
Video presentation	Number of viewers of project audio-visual material in YouTube	>1,000
Publications, Scientific papers	Number of research publications in high impact scientific journals and esteemed conferences	>5
Press releases	Number of press releases	>3
	Number of articles in local-regional-national press	>5
Participation to events	Number of events attended: Conferences	>10
	Workshops	>3
	Industry related events	>3
	Presentation in conferences	>5
Organisation of events	Number of workshops organised	>2
	Number of conferences organised	>1
Promotional material	Number of project promotional material: Flyer	>1
	Banner	>2
	Poster	>2
	Brochure	>1
Direct contact with stakeholders	Number of direct contacts with target customers	>30
Networking	Number of project liaisons	>3
	Number of meetings with liaised projects & initiatives	>2

5 DISSEMINATION POLICY AND RULES

All dissemination material (scientific publications, articles, presentations, multimedia etc.) will be assessed by the consortium to ensure that no confidential information is disclosed, and the potential intellectual property is not endangered.

Dissemination activities will be implemented in line with the procedure described in “Section 8.4 Dissemination” of the Consortium Agreement.

Prior notice of any dissemination activity will be given to the other partners of at least 30 calendar days. Any partners may object within 15 days, in case the planned dissemination activity could harm the legitimate interests of the partner in relation to its results/background or if the protection of results would be unfavourably affected. In such cases, the dissemination activity can only take place once appropriate steps are taken to safeguard these legitimate interests.

No partner shall include in any dissemination activities another partner’s results, background or confidential information without obtaining the owning partner’s prior written approval, unless such information is already published. In case publications relate to jointly developed results, each partner involved must be asked for its consent to publish. All draft dissemination material will be reviewed by the Project Coordinator and Dissemination & Exploitation Manager before publication to ensure that they fulfil the dissemination requirements.

For dissemination activities, a common graphic identity has been defined (see Section 3.1.1 Visual identity). All material used for communication and dissemination purposes and content produced in the frame of the project (e.g. reports and deliverables) must include:

- the acronym of the project “SoftGrip”
- the SoftGrip project logo
- the EU emblem along with acknowledgment of EU funding, as required per Article 29.4 and 38.1.2 of the Grant Agreement:

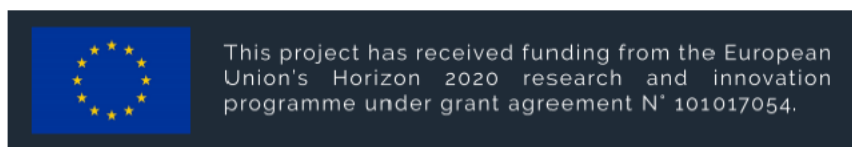


Figure 7 EU emblem and acknowledgement of EU funding

The EU provides a graphics guide on how to reproduce the European emblem correctly and how to use the emblem in the context of EU programmes. Instructions, as well as various formats and resolutions of the EU emblem are accessible and downloadable at the following link: <http://publications.europa.eu/code/en/en-5000100.htm>

In line with the EC’s policy on corporate visual identity, Horizon 2020 shall be used as a “verbal brand”, meaning reference to Horizon 2020 will be made without a regulated visual mark or logo. When Horizon 2020 is promoted by beneficiaries, the name of the programme “Horizon 2020” should appear in conjunction with the EU emblem.

CONCLUSION

Dissemination and communication activities are crucial to the project's overall success and serve as the driving force to maximise the impact of the project. These activities will be important from the project start in order to reach the widest possible audience of the project and facilitate the use and take-up of results.

The SoftGrip dissemination and communication plan provides the project partners with a solid framework, a roadmap and a toolkit that will help to promote project activities as well as the knowledge and results developed within the project. The project partners will use this document as a guide, as it outlines the planned dissemination and communication activities. Additionally, it lists the key messages, tools and channels while matching them with the appropriate target stakeholder groups.

The SoftGrip partners will promote the project through a number of tools and channels. They range from project website, social media, promotional material (flyer, poster), videos, presentation & participation in conferences to other events, organisation of workshops, publications in journals and magazines. It also includes possible collaboration with similar projects & initiatives. This deliverable is a living document and will be updated throughout the project duration in order to reflect the project advancement and accommodate any customisation required. The implementation of the D&C Plan will be continuously monitored and assessed through KPIs. The progress on dissemination & communication activities will be reported in the next version of this deliverable, namely in D7.4 Interim Report on Dissemination and Communication Activities.