

**The complex INTERlink of safeguarding wATER availabilitY and
quality to mitigate and adapt to hydroclimatic extRemes -
INTERLAYER (Water4All-2022-00261)**

JOINT TRANSNATIONAL CALL 2022: “Management of water resources: resilience, adaptation and mitigation to hydroclimatic extreme events and management tools”

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1. INTRODUCTION

In fulfilment of *The complex INTERlink of safeguarding wAtEr availability and quality to mitigate and adapt to hydroclimatic extRemes - INTERLAYER* (Water4All-2022-00261) Grant Agreement on the obligations of the Consortium partners towards the Project Owners (PO) regarding project deliverables, the current document stands as Deliverable D6.1 – Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication Plan (DEC).

Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation is an important part of the European projects, aiming at how research and innovation contribute to an “Innovation Union”, thus, all partners should be involved in these activities.

Aiming at maximising INTERLAYER impact, a set of different Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication (DEC) activities is foreseen throughout the project. Therefore, the Plan for the dissemination, exploitation, and communication activities (PDEC) is developed at the beginning of the project, with the purpose of defining the actions, messages, type of audiences, communication methods and timing over the project execution. This Plan describes these activities, as well as all related documents, procedures and tools used in the framework of their implementation, together with the information on access to these documents and tools.

These activities are classified according to their nature:

- Dissemination activities: targeting the scientific community and the 4Helix members (policymakers, industry, civil society), that might learn/use project results in the advancement of the State of the Art. These actions rely on FAIR and Open Access principles and take place from the moment when the first results are obtained until the conclusion of the project.
- Exploitation activities: targeting the stakeholders who might take part in the exploitation of the project results towards the foreseeable outcomes. These actions might rely on the Protection of Intellectual Property and take place as soon as there are exploitable results.
- Communication activities: targeting a widespread audience and engaging with stakeholders, experts, the market and the public to raise awareness and show the success of European collaboration. These actions rely on public media (social media, web-based communication, TV, radio, newspapers) and take place from the moment the project starts until its end.

The PDEC aims to ensure that as many stakeholders as possible have access to INTERLAYER's results, including the environmental consultancies, policy makers, scientific community, mass media, multipliers, the general public, potential end-users and relevant industrial sectors, financial and market actors, as well as other targeted stakeholders (EC and national R&D initiatives). The most appropriate communication and dissemination tools and channels will be selected for each target audience identified. The plan will assure that the dissemination does not interfere with the IPR management, that Open and FAIR principles are used in INTERLAYER management of data, outputs and outcomes (Repository of data in open access repository will be conducted e.g. ZENODO), and that the exploitation potential is protected, by implementing a confidentiality policy that will underpin our

dissemination activities: all information is treated as confidential unless otherwise agreed. Performance indicators will be established as part of the plan, such as number of citations, number of hits on web, number of downloads, number of industry consultations (from tradeshow/exhibitions), number of policy-maker engagements, etc.

2. Summary of INTERLAYER project

INTERLAYER main objective is to develop cumulative adaptation strategies in the complex interlink between surface and groundwater management, using water retention measures to reduce water runoff and fill-up groundwater storages, to minimize hydroclimatic extreme events' impacts in water quantity and quality. INTERLAYER will tackle eight (8) Specific Objectives, contributing to address the Call Topics 1, 2 and 3, as follows: Call Topic (CT) 1.1: INTERLAYER will address knowledge gaps in our understanding on how surface water and groundwater interrelate in the advent of extreme precipitation, water scarcity, drought events and seasonal variability in four European watersheds and contribute to the development of innovation adaptation and mitigation measures taking different climate scenarios into account; CT1.2: INTERLAYER will demonstrate improved societally acceptable adaptation and mitigation strategies, as it will focus on the refinement of water retention measures at regional (DK, RO) and watershed scale (AT, PT/SP) to promote both slow hydrology to protect against flooding and guarantee the availability and quality of water (simultaneously at surface and groundwater level); CT1.3: INTERLAYER will contribute to the improvement of adaptation capacity of water infrastructure, particularly related to stormwater management in rural systems; CT2.1: INTERLAYER will develop a decision support tool for the adoption of best practices that have additive results in water quantity and quality retention both at surface and in the aquifers (to be applied in regional or watershed contexts). INTERLAYER results will contribute to the validation of the practices thus contributing to future payments for ecosystem services to be adopted; CT2.2: INTERLAYER will develop a hydrological (near) real time groundwater-surface water model including scarcely monitored areas (Guadiana Watershed PT/SP); CT2.3: INTERLAYER will further develop and make use of (near) real time monitoring and modelling to create a digital twin of the shallow and deep groundwater storage for monitoring recharge capacity of surface storage of discharged streamflow and overall water balance; CT3.1: INTERLAYER will take advantage of DK experience in governance practices involving co-creation and co-design and will ensure that best practices are passed on and adopted in other European contexts (PT/SP); CT3.2: INTERLAYER will develop and kick-off a living lab in one of the driest Transboundary (PT/SP) Watersheds in Europe – the Guadiana - taking advantage of the DK experience and governance models. INTERLAYER will contribute to the water diplomacy as it will integrate technicians, researchers and farmers in the co-creation and co-design for shared transboundary problems. Higher level policy and decision makers will be included in the co-creation and co-design in a later stage in an attempt to “secure contamination from past” management malpractices and litigation. INTERLAYER novelty is related to shared interdisciplinary knowledge on

the complex interlink of generating resilience to hydroclimatic extreme events to minimize flood risk and maximize water availability and quality. INTERLAYER will develop and demonstrate novel water retention technologies that favour slow hydrology entrance in the system for adaptation of European river basins to hydro-climatic extreme events and simultaneously obtain resilience in agricultural productive land, the adjacent ecosystems, and downstream cities. Hydro-climatic water balance models will be demonstrated to describe the spatio-temporal exchange of water within the river basins between highland and lowland and between shallow and deep groundwater, in response to suggested changes in terrain, drainage and land-use practices. It will provide country specific overviews of key actors for implementation of change and suggested guidelines, serving as front runners for the adoption of water retention methods for slow hydrology.

3. Dissemination and Communication Strategy

The INTERLAYER Dissemination and Communication Strategy is oriented to show the project results by combining online and offline tools, in order to maximize its impact towards key stakeholders, including the environmental consultancies, policy makers, scientific community, mass media, multipliers, the general public, potential end-users and relevant industrial sectors, financial and market actors, as well as other targeted stakeholders (EC and national R&D initiatives).

INTERLAYER dissemination aims to maximize the use of project results and outcomes by key stakeholders, namely through scientific publications, communications, datasets, contributing to support the collaboration among key actors on water management and water retention technologies.

INTERLAYER communication aims to mobilize stakeholders' interests and secure their support to the project through the implementation of the Project Website, communication and promotional materials and social/digital media channels.

3.1. Dissemination and Communication Policy and Rules and Support of the European Commission

The support to the INTERLAYER project by the European Commission must be recognised in all the dissemination and communication tools and materials including the following disclaimer:

INTERLAYER project has received funding from the European Commission programme Water4All (Water4All-2022-00261). The content does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission. The European Commission is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.

Dissemination of INTERLAYER activities must be in line with the protection of intellectual property (IP) rights agreed among INTERLAYER project partners.

For grants where the granting authority is the European Commission, an EU regulatory or executive agency, joint undertaking or other EU body, the processing of any personal data under the Grant Agreement will be subject to Regulation 2018/1725, under the responsibility of the data controller of the granting authority in accordance with and for the purposes set out in the Portal Privacy Statement. The beneficiaries must process personal data under the Agreement in compliance with the applicable EU, international and national law on data protection (in particular, Regulation 2016/679).

They must ensure that personal data is:

- processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subjects;
- collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes;
- adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed;
- accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;
- kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the data is processed and;
- processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the data.

3.2. Target audience and Description

The communication and dissemination activities of INTERLAYER's activities, outputs, and services have to be facilitated and coordinated in order to raise general awareness and boost visibility of the project by designing suitable communication instruments for different audiences. Thus, the identification of INTERLAYER target groups is crucial, in order to customise the messages and dissemination and communication activities.

The consortium has identified different target groups that can benefit from the knowledge that will be developed during its execution (Detailed in Table 1). These target groups are: 1) Farmers and Landowners; 2) Government Authorities and public water managers (local, regional, and European bodies); 3) Local communities; 4) Conservation and Environmental organizations and NGOs; 5) Policy Makers; 6) Academia and scientific communities; 7) Citizens and society at large. These target groups apart from being part in the living labs as co-creators and co-designers are also consignees of project outcomes and impacts, at a scientific, social and/or economic level.

Table 1. Target audience, message and Dissemination and Communication Channels

Target Audience	Specific Message(s)	Communication Channels
1. Farmers and Landowners	Effect of cropping systems and selected species in water holding capacity of the soil and resilience, according to the expected future climate	Web and social media; Press releases; Events
2. Government Authorities and public water managers (local, regional, and European bodies)	Governance mechanisms that promote rapid uptake of improved technologies Integration of water retention technologies in current and future River Basin Management Plans to ensure resilience towards flooding, droughts, loss of water quality and ecosystem services	Web and social media; Press releases; Scientific journals; Events
3. Local communities	Identification of the best water retention technologies for different types of European river basins Strategies development for a representative range of cropping systems and urban areas and ecosystem protective measures taking in consideration impacts on water quality and biodiversity	Web and social media; Events
4. Conservation and Environmental organizations and NGOs	Development of strategies for a range of cropping systems and urban areas and ecosystem protective measures taking in consideration impacts on water quality and biodiversity	Web and social media; Press releases; Scientific journals; Events
5. Policy Makers	Overview of LL policy frameworks; identify barriers and facilitate instruments for barrier removal through the publication of recommendations for policy programs (including funding); compilation of legal adjustments together with key findings of policy relevance	Web and social media; Press releases; Scientific journals; Events
6. Academia and scientific communities	Novel water retention technologies Development of models for analysis of interlinks between surface and groundwater and for selection of SH techniques according to different climate scenarios	Web and social media; Press releases; Scientific journals; Events; Newsletter
7. Citizens and society at large	Decision Support System for sustainable NBS for slow hydrology	Web and social media; Press releases; Scientific journals; Events

3.3. Dissemination and Communication Channels, Activities, and Tools

Dissemination and Communication activities will be based on the use of a visually coherent set of channels and tools herein described, having English as reference communication language.

A communication manager will coordinate the Dissemination and Communication activities within the Consortium, coordinating the interaction among the partners, implementing and monitoring the strategy and acting as the main contact of reference for Media and journalists.

3.3.1. INTERLAYER Visual Guidelines

A recognizable brand of INTERLAYER was created to reflect the main goals of the project.

A complete visual identity toolbox consisting of project logo and templates for deliverables, and other printable material was developed and can be applied to create printable project posters, brochures, and other needed Communication Materials.

- **Name**

INTERLAYER is the project acronym, and the full title is “The complex INTERlink of safeguarding wAter availabilitY and quality to mitigate and adapt to hydroclimatic extRemes”

The full title should be included in brackets when it is firstly mentioned in a document, then the acronym can be used in the remain of the document.

- **Logo and Visual Guidelines**

The logo represents INTERLAYER vision on interlink between surface and groundwater with the aim of safeguarding water quality and availability (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Usable versions of INTERLAYER logo

3.3.2. Communication Materials

In order to effectively broadcast INTERLAYER messages in events and promote the project on social media channels, different communication materials have been prepared, following the visual guidelines.

- **Digital and Print Brochure**

A brochure explaining the project is presented in Figure 2.



Figure 2. INTERLAYER Brochure

- **INTERLAYER Card**

An INTERLAYER business card is presented in Figure 3, with the information adapted to the different partners.

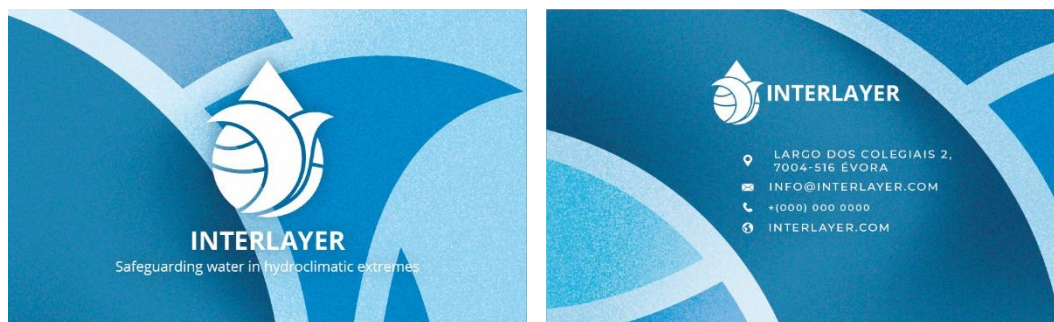


Figure 3. INTERLAYER Business card

- **Roll-up**

Not yet available. For participation in events, a roll-up will be developed for the project.

3.3.3. Website

The INTERLAYER website is available in the following address: <https://www.interlayer.uevora.pt/> and thoroughly described in D6.2.

3.3.4. Social Media

LinkedIn will be used to announce events, and present INTERLAYER outcomes from completed activities. It was selected since it is the main business network and it is expected that it contributes to the creation of a “INTERLAYER community” that will increase the visibility and impact of the results attained in the project, as well as being used as a tool to interact and listen to the comments of the stakeholders of the project.

The Social Media account is already set (Figure 4) and will be updated regularly. Recommendations and requirements of the Social media guide for EU funded R&I projects of the Horizon Europe Programme will be followed.

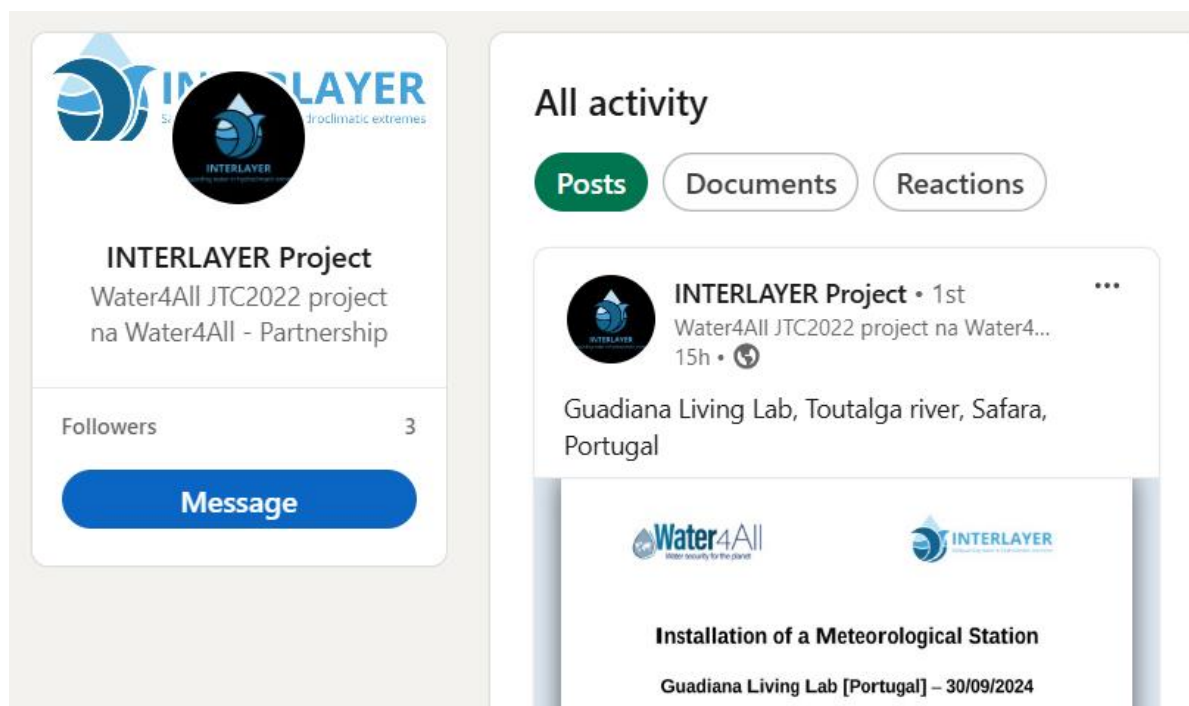


Figure 4. INTERLAYER LinkedIn page

3.3.5. Mailings

A database of contacts will be created, taking advantage of the previous contact list of partners and nourished through the participation /involvement of the consortium with other EU initiatives, events, fairs, workshops, etc. This database can serve as a source to send invitations to relevant events or to share INTERLAYER information with specific contacts.

3.3.6. Events

Participation and organization of events is one of the most important aspects of the dissemination and communication strategy, because it improves the connections with stakeholders, encourage networking and showcase INTERLAYER results and impacts, whilst providing content for the communication channels and tools (website, social media, press releases), impacting different audiences.

The strategy of participation of events will be set up at two different levels:

- Participation in events organized by other institutions. International events are mainly targeted, since these are one of the most effective dissemination and communication actions to reach different stakeholders, generating more visibility for INTERLAYER project and boosting the contact with stakeholders and other European projects. Further allowing synergies with similar projects, in order to establish collaboration areas and foster the organisation of joint initiatives.

• INTERLAYER events organized and promoted by the consortium, alone or in collaboration with other initiatives and organizations to generate synergies. Namely the organization of special sessions and scientific workshops as part of large conferences with high impact, as the World Water forum, and of dedicated workshops (e.g. at the DANUBIUS network); and a final workshop/conference developed jointly with Water4All sister projects, organized to showcase results and impacts.

To organize these events, an INTERLAYER Agenda of Events for the 36-month of the project has been created (Figure 5) and is stored at the project sharepoint (WP6 folder, Task 6.2), and should be fed by team members. This excel database allows the compilation of events that: i) the consortium is planning to attend (e.g., trade fairs, exhibitions, workshops, seminars, conferences, UN days (Water Day), round tables, etc.); ii) or that the consortium is organizing as part of ongoing activities (e.g. Final workshop/conference developed jointly with Water4All sister projects). It is organized in two spreadsheets: i) scientific events; ii) events with stakeholders. It includes the following information: Event name; Date; Location; Link; Relevance; Attending; Team member suggesting, as depicted in Figure 5. This Agenda allows also the INTERLAYER communication manager to make visible these activities through communication channels. After the events, the partners must report about the dissemination activity: sum-up, number of attendees, pictures, publications, presentations, press clipping, etc.

 The INTERLAYER Agenda of Events						
Task 6.2: INTERLAYER Dissemination activities Organization of the "INTERLAYER Agenda" of events for the 36-month of the project (D6.2): trade fairs, exhibitions, workshops, seminars, conferences, UN days (Water Day), round tables, etc., that the consortium is already planning to attend or organizing as part of ongoing activities						
Please provide event suggestions in the following table for the INTERLAYER AGENDA						
Event Name	Date	Location	Link	Relevance	Attending	Team member suggesting
Alternet Conference 2025	13-16 May 2025	Aveiro, Portugal	https://networknature.eu/alternet-conference-2025-achieving-transformative-change-biodiversity	Relevant, we can organize a special session dedicated to INTERLAYER		Miguel and Helena

Figure 5. INTERLAYER Agenda of Events template

3.3.7. Media Relations

Journalists and the media are key agents to communicate INTERLAYER information to other stakeholders and the general public, due to their influence and possibility to impact positively the project by increasing outreach results, raise awareness and offer information to civil society. The relationship with the media will be established through the INTERLAYER communication manager and the involvement of all partners. To accomplish this task, at European, national and regional levels, press releases regarding INTERLAYER milestones and other detected opportunities to communicate will be prepared in English and will be spread by the partners to their contacts, namely by involving their Communication Departments. Afterwards, the press release will be included on the project website and shared in the social media channels.

3.3.8. Scientific Publications

INTERLAYER LL (Living Labs) and scientific advances will be published in peer-reviewed specialized journals (e.g. Ecological Engineering, Nature-Based Solutions, Science of the total Environment and Open Research Europe) and international conferences (after preliminary IP protection check); (ii) publications in relevant platforms such the Innovation Radar, and other EC publications will also be targeted, aiming at reaching a wide spectrum of scientific, public administration and technical community.

In accordance with the Open and FAIR principles (“as open as possible, as closed as necessary”), data and scientific publications will be available online, in open access repositories e.g. ZENODO or in Open Research Europe platform.

Further, Open Access should be provided to all peer-reviewed scientific publications related to INTERLAYER results, in accordance with the Horizon Europe Guidelines on Open Access to Scientific Publications.

Information about the scientific publications will also be made available in the INTERLAYER website (<https://www.interlayer.uevora.pt/>) and social media.

3.4. Overview

An overview with INTERLAYER Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication tools, delivery time, preferred channels and target audience is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Overview of INTERLAYER DEC Tools

Tool	Timing	Channels	Target group
Visual identity Kit	M6 (online), M12 (paper)	Paper and online	All
INTERLAYER website	Online until M6	Online	All
Social Media	Online until M6	Online - LinkedIn	All
Mailings	N/A	email	All
Participation in Scientific Conferences	N/A	In person	Academia
Organization of events:	M6-M36	In-person, online, and recorded	a) Academia, stakeholders

Tool	Timing	Channels	Target group
a) special sessions and scientific workshops as part of large conferences with high impact b) dedicated workshops c) final workshop/conference developed jointly with Water4All sister projects			b) Policy makers, stakeholders c) All
Media Relations	M6-M36	Paper and online (social media, website)	All
Scientific Publications	M6-M36	Online (repositories)	Scientific community and stakeholders

4. KPI's and Monitoring

Dissemination and Communication activities implementation will be monitored and its assessment will be made upon Key Performance Indicators, whose targets are presented in table 3, and will be reported in M36, on the final version of the deliverable 6.1 Report on DEC.

Table 3. Level of success indicators for Dissemination and Communication activities

Tool/Action	Indicator: Level of success		
	Good	Very good	Excellent
Poster/brochure	Available online	Available online and distributed in INTERLAYER events	Available online and distributed in INTERLAYER events
Special sessions and/or Workshops	15 registrations	20 registrations	>25 registrations
INTERLAYER stakeholder events	15-25 registrations	26-40 registrations	>40 registrations
INTERLAYER website	500 - 1.000 visitors	1.000 - 2.000 visitors	>2.000 visitors
Social Media	100 - 200 followers after 24 months	200 - 400 followers after 24 months	>400 followers after 24 months

Tool/Action	Indicator: Level of success		
	Good	Very good	Excellent
Press releases and mentions in mass-media	1 - 2	2 - 4	>4
Publication of articles in peer-reviewed journals	4	6	8
Zenodo Repository	10 downloads	20 downloads	30 downloads

5. DEC Roles and Responsibilities

Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication activities will be coordinated by the project manager in cooperation with all consortium members, thus allowing the development of a meaningful strategy. All information will be written in English, however, whenever necessary it can be translated to local languages.

UEvora is responsible for the management of the project website and LinkedIn channels and partners collaboration is expected, by sharing publications on LinkedIn providing content to feed the website.