Mediterranean Digital Media Observatory

D6.1

Communication Plan and Activities

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Abstract	This deliverable sets out the communication plan and activities for the MedDMO project, and is meant as a reference document for the coordinator and the partners with the goal of communicating and disseminating effectively the project's activities to various stakeholders and audiences.
Keywords	Communication plan, Dissemination, Communication activities, Publicity, Stakeholders, Audiences, Media, KPIs

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Glossary

ABBREVIATION	MEANING
DoA	Description of Action
EDMO	European Digital Media Observatory
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
ML	Media Literacy
MXX	Month XX

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Executive Summary

This deliverable provides detailed information about the Dissemination and Communication Plan of the MedDMO project. The plan analyses the strategy that is focused on engaging stakeholders to maximize knowledge of the hub's main results with the aim to effectively disclose and raise awareness about emerging disinformation campaigns and their impact on the Greek, Cypriot, and Maltese society. The strategy will be adapted to key stakeholder groups.

In addition, the strategy sets up an impact measurement matrix based on Key Performance Indicators, such as the total number of stakeholders reached, social media outreach metrics, website traffic metrics, number of presentations in events, pickups in the media after our communication actions, etc.

The basis of our Dissemination and Communication Plan has been laid down in MedDMO's Description of Action (DoA). This deliverable builds thereupon and revisits assumptions and plans made therein, providing further details and additions, as well as modifications, if necessary.

Overall, MedDMO will adopt a multi-channel, multi-target dissemination approach. It will follow a clearly defined strategy, which is described in greater detail in this deliverable.

Furthermore, the deliverable outlines the respective target audiences we aim to reach and provides the reader with information about the various dissemination phases of the project.

We portray individual dissemination channels, outline why they have been / are being selected, and to what purpose. Furthermore, we provide information about dissemination activities that are foreseen for the duration of the project.

In order to have measurable criteria for dissemination activities, we provide a list of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), allowing for an assessment and evaluation of our performance over time in this way, too.

1 MedDMO's Communication and Dissemination Strategy

This section outlines MedDMO's communication and dissemination strategy. The project's communication objectives and overall strategy, as well as the hub's target audiences are main building blocks of the communication and dissemination strategy and lay the ground for successfully reaching out to several target audiences.

1.1 Objectives

The MedDMO communication objectives focus on the following tactics:

- Communicate MedDMO activities, and especially production of content (fact-checks, investigations, media literacy, events and trainings);
- Become a resource hub for the counter-disinformation community in Greece, Malta and Cyprus.

1.2 Strategy

Part of the success of the MedDMO hub will be based on the outreach and impact of its activities as well as endorsements from a larger community than the consortium. This is why MedDMO's communication activities should be accessible, inclusive, tailored, and community oriented.

The planning for the communication and dissemination of the project has started at a fairly high level and will be continuously refined and updated during the project lifecycle as new opportunities for communication and dissemination arise. For ease of delivery, the activities have been broken down into three phases:

1. Awareness-oriented phase
2. Result-oriented phase
3. Sustainability & wider dissemination phase

The rest of this section outlines the plans for key activities foreseen for the three aforementioned phases. The plan will be regularly updated throughout the project.

Table 1 Phases in which the project will be divided

PHASE	GOALS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED RESULTS & OUTPUTS	DATES
Phase 1: Awareness-oriented phase	• Build the MedDMO brand name • Produce key dissemination material • Disseminate project's vision & objectives • Start engaging stakeholders	• Produce strategic communication messages • Produce key dissemination material • Build the MedDMO website and social media • Set up the call for stakeholders' panel • Start engaging stakeholders from	• Logo Production • Creation of the Website • Establishment of social network presence • Creation of key dissemination material • Project presentations and publications • Stakeholder Mapping and	M1-M12

		the initial phases of the project • Preparation of publications for international conferences, journals, and specialized magazines • Project presentations at international conferences	Communication & Dissemination Plan • Liaising with other projects • Collaboration with related communities focused on co-creation and social innovation	
Phase 2: Result-oriented phase	• Leverage the participation of different stakeholders; • Reaching out to the wider community of non-experts	• Engage stakeholders to assist with the dissemination of the project results • Set-up on-line community • Organize project's panel events • Ensure active stakeholders feedback • Preparation of publications for international conferences, journals and specialized magazines	• Info messages regularly sent • Production of press releases at National & EU level • MedDMO panel events • Project presentations and publications	M12-M24
Phase 3: Sustainability & wider dissemination	Disseminate Final MedDMO results	• Website updated • Production of several Press Releases • Production of 900 fact-checks • Organize project's panel events • Preparation of publications for international conferences, journals, and specialized magazines	• Info messages regularly sent • Production of press releases at National & EU level • MedDMO Panel events • Project Presentations and publications	M24-M30

1.3 Target Audiences

MedDMO is a multi-faceted project, which addresses a wide group of stakeholders. Our target audience for communication and dissemination activities can be divided in the following key stakeholder groups:

1. **Fact-checkers, disinformation investigators and media professionals**: This is a particularly important target group, as one of its core activities is to detect, analyse and disclose emerging disinformation campaigns in Greece, Cyprus and Malta. The media sector is particularly affected by disinformation (as attested by the plunging levels of public trust in the media) and is in need of help to develop effective reflexes and strategies to combat this phenomenon.
2. **Academic researchers**: Academic researchers working on digital media, journalism and disinformation play an equally important role in studying the information disorder and thus the MedDMO hub will target this community to disseminate its results, transfer its scientific knowledge, and further scientific developments in the field.
3. **Media literacy practitioners**: The global deficit in digital media literacy has been identified as a critical factor explaining widespread belief in online misinformation. Enhancement of Media Literacy (ML) skills is a critical response to disinformation and ML practitioners (teachers, professors, experts) are key actors in this process. The MedDMO hub will reach out to ML practitioners to provide them with the latest ML practices and involve them in ML activities across Greece, Cyprus and Malta.
4. **Policy makers, including (self-) regulatory authorities**: Especially in the media sector, where disinformation is a growing danger to democracy, policy makers will need to play a bigger role in measuring and tackling the impact of disinformation campaigns. To respond effectively they need to be well informed of the latest developments in the field and the active disinformation campaigns targeting their territory.
5. **Public sector**: Because of the societal importance of the media sector for democracy, a portion of the media industry in Europe is part of the broader public sector (i.e. public service broadcasters). Even beyond the media sector, there is a huge need and potential for introducing tailored responses in the public sector in relation to disinformation targeting important public domains, such as health and politics. The MedDMO hub will provide important information that can be used to inform public sector organisations and help them design effective responses.
6. **Citizens**: Citizens, as recipients of disinformation and often amplifiers of misleading claims, are a key target group for MedDMO. The hub aims to raise awareness among citizens regarding disinformation campaigns through its online presence, media literacy campaigns, fact-checking activities, and other targeted communication activities.
7. **Students**: Students, even though they belong to the citizens target group, are of particular importance to the hub, and thus special attention will be devoted to disseminate the hub's results to students, as "younger" citizens that can play a very important role in curbing disinformation, if they are properly informed and trained to identify disinformation.
8. **Social media platforms**: Social media platforms, being a central disinformation node, are another target group for the dissemination of the hub's findings. Partners intend to promote an open dialogue with social media platforms about the impact of disinformation and how platforms can further contribute to tackling it and share the hub's insights.

2 Project Identity

The section presents MedDMO's project identity, focusing on the logo and branding, and the hub's language strategy,

2.1 Logo

All partners can and shall produce communication material, using standard templates and ensuring the proper logo version of the MedDMO hub is used.

The project logo is available in various forms and file types for different uses (documents, web use etc.) in the shared cloud project repository (Google Drive). The EUI Communication team developed and presented a proposal for a coherent visual identity and branding of the hubs focused on a set of submark logos (i.e., logos tailored to each hub while recalling fundamental elements of the visual identity of EDMO). After integrating comments and consulting with the hubs, eight tailored toolkits have been produced, including the hub's logo in full and inverted colour, two versions of social media icons on blue and white background as well as corresponding vector files and brand identity guidelines to ensure the correct use of the logos.

Below are two indicative versions, a full colour logo and a social media icon in white background.



Figure 1 MedDMO Logo versions

2.2 Languages

The languages used will be two: English, which apart from the EDMO main language is also the official language for Malta; and Greek, which is the official language of Greece and Cyprus.

The MedDMO territory comprises a multitude of languages spoken but mostly for efficiency reasons, it was deemed inappropriate to manage more than two languages in that specific territory. Also, both Greek, Cypriot and Maltese populations are highly accustomed to reading and even speaking English.

An English and a Greek version of the website will be available. However, in terms of our social media accounts, we believe English should be the main language, only to be replaced by Greek in special circumstances (mostly due to community management issues).

Based on this and in order to respect language diversity and weight, we suggest a content distribution that should reflect the following figures:

- English 90%
- Greek 10%

This is to make sure MedDMO will attract enough users and will keep a common space for interaction. All partners of the consortium will be helping to maintain a good diversity in language used, and sometimes offer translations for certain material (tweets, etc.).

3 Communication and Dissemination Channels and Activities

The section provides information about the main project communication and dissemination channels and activities.

3.1 Website

MedDMO's website is the main communication and dissemination channel and is considered as very important for reaching out and spreading MedDMO's activities and work to a wide range of stakeholders. The Figures below provide examples of the look and feel of the website.

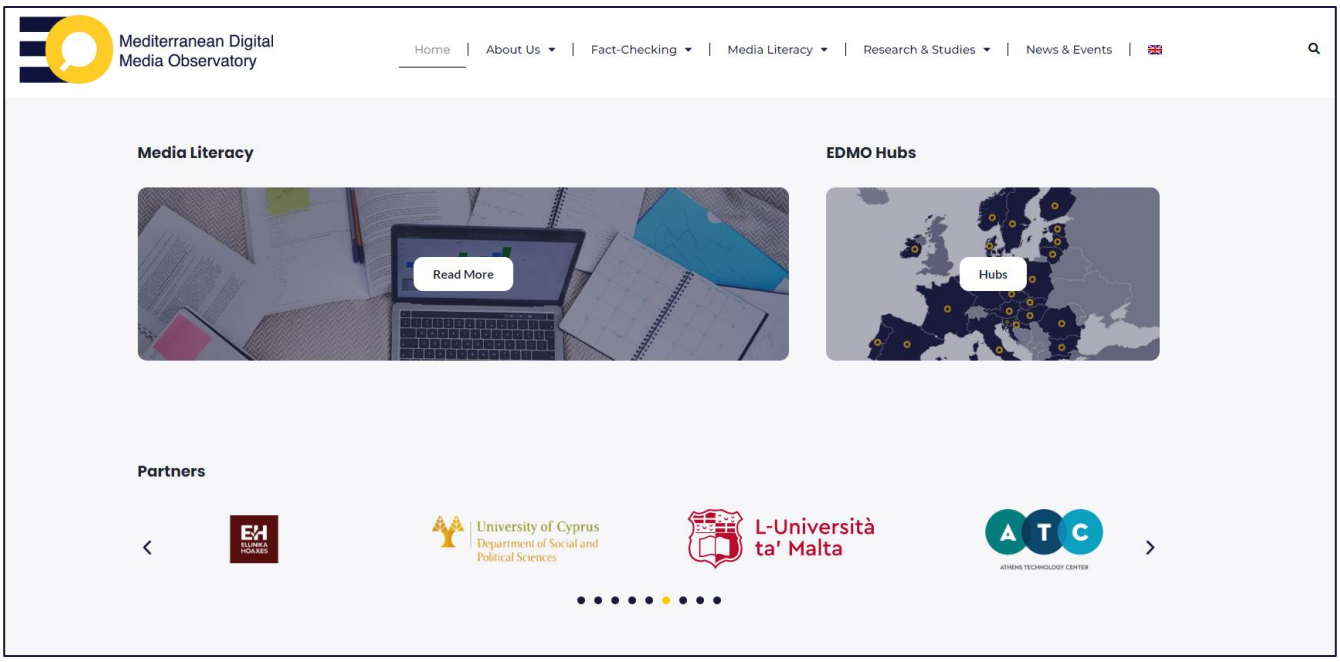

Figure 2 Screenshot from the Homepage

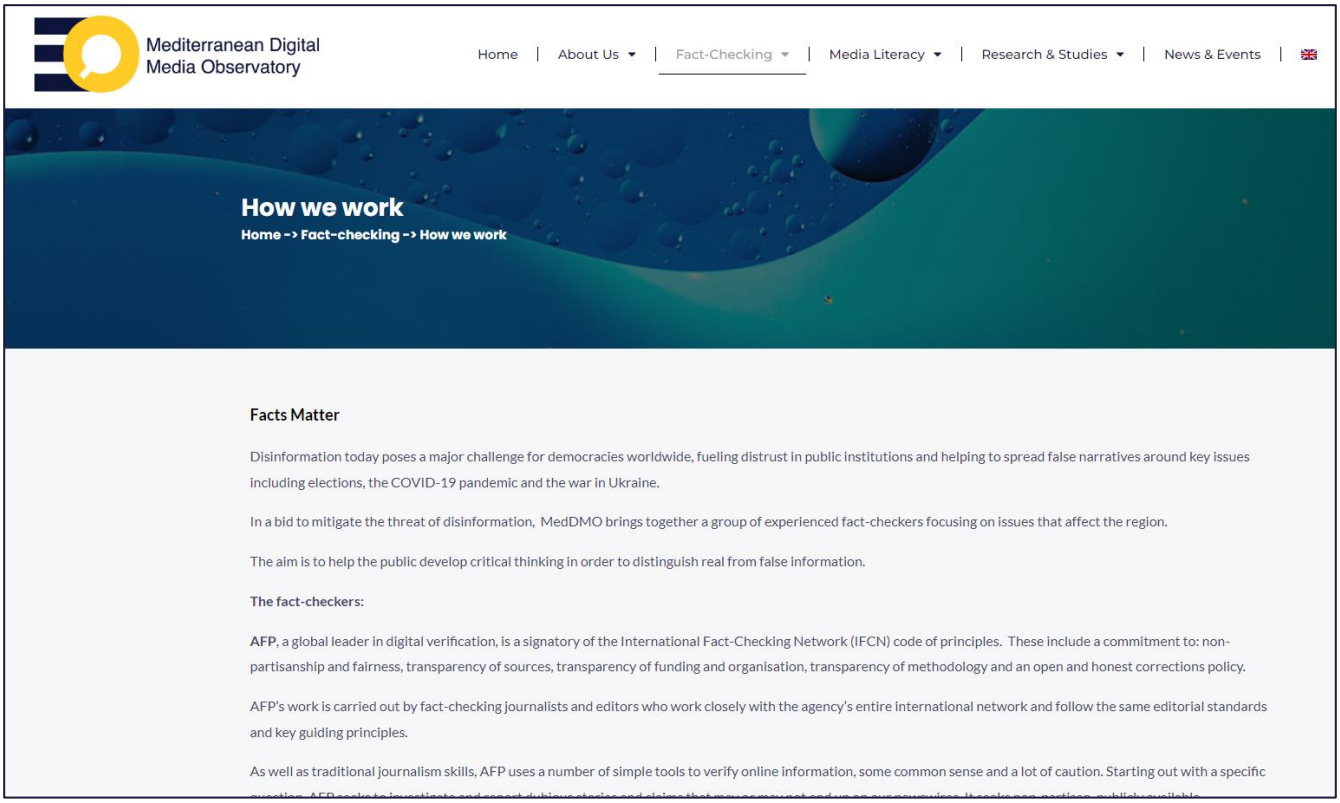

Figure 3 Screenshot from the "Fact-checking" webpage

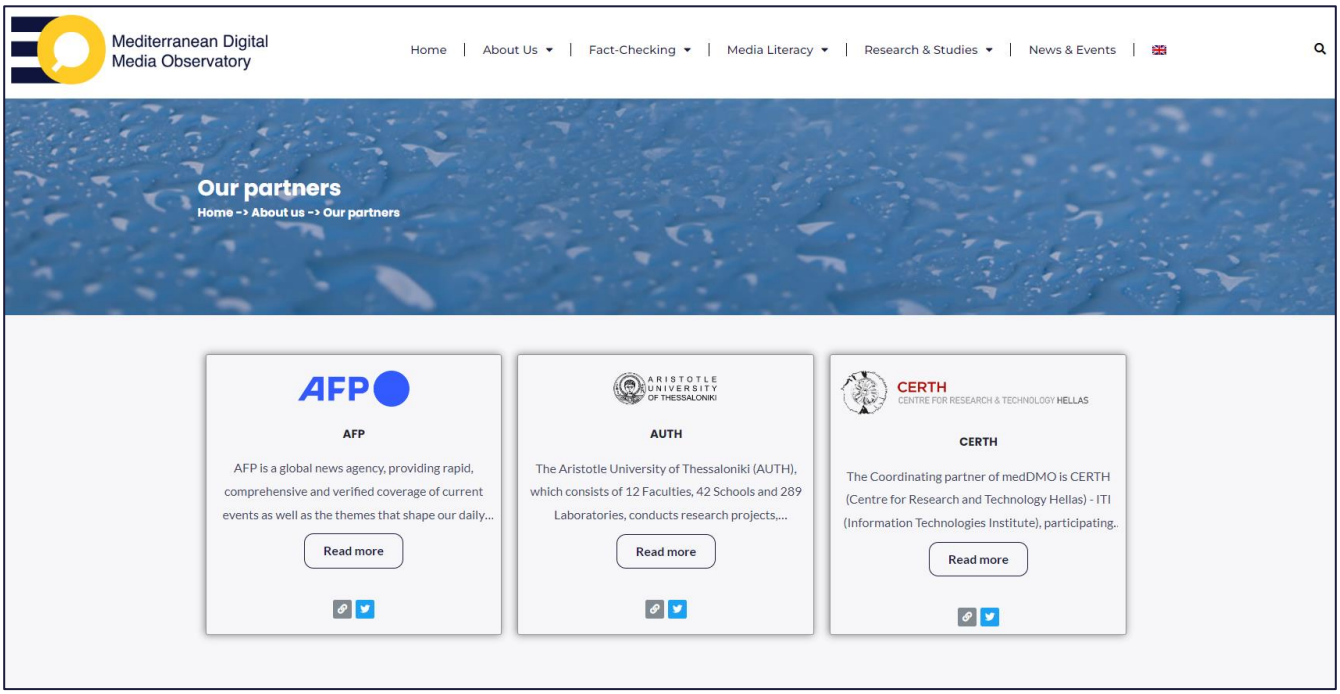

Figure 4 Screenshot from the "About us" webpage

3.1.1 Objective

To spread information about the project's activities and results, a dedicated project website has been created (http://www.meddmo.eu/ and http://www.medmo.eu/) with links to the social networking sites that the project

is utilizing. The project website is also a repository to store the project-produced content, as well as public deliverables of the project, i.e. fact-checks published by the project partners, research reports, and media literacy material.

3.1.2 Content and Messages

The website will contain and present general information about the MedDMO hub, the project's objectives, the project partners, the fact-checks produced by the hub's fact-checking partners, resources (research reports, fact-checking toolbox, publications, media literacy material, etc.), as well as a blog section with news and events. The content will be available in English and in Greek.

3.1.3 Activities

Website related activities include:

- Publishing fact-checks produced by AFP and partners Ellinika Hoaxes from Greece and Times of Malta from Malta on a regular (daily) basis.
- Providing resources regarding fact-checks, research and media literacy activities.
- Updating news and events on an ad-hoc basis.
- General maintenance and improvements.

3.1.4 Monitoring

ATC is responsible for monitoring volume of traffic on the site and providing statistics via Google Analytics. The analytics will be used to further refine the hub's communication and dissemination activities and make any necessary improvements. Website analytics reports will be produces every 6 months and will be circulated internally to the consortium partners.

3.1.5 Partner responsibilities

ATC and all partners are responsible for updating content. ATC is responsible for building, hosting and maintaining the project website. Each partner is responsible for sending relevant to its activities content to ATC to be published on the website.

3.2 Social Media

Social media will be the most visible face of our communications strategy. MedDMO should perceive social media not only as a space where it can communicate its position, but also as the place where it can assemble a community of relevant stakeholders, including the general public, towards a common goal: that of tackling disinformation in Greece, Cyprus, and Malta, as well as the wider Eastern Mediterranean region.

Therefore, our strategy, based on efforts available in the consortium and on the added value we can get out of these efforts, is based on the following principles:

- Be relevant and factual;
- Be responsive and inclusive;
- Be adaptable to latest developments.

During the set-up phase of MedDMO's social media channels, we focus our efforts to the two main social media platforms, Facebook (mainly targeting the public/citizens) and Twitter (mainly targeting the academic/research communities). After these channels have been set=up and are fully operational, we aim to examine whether to

expand MedDMO's social media presence to other platforms like Instagram, in order to appeal to younger age groups.

3.2.1 Platforms

To sustain efforts and gain traction, MedDMO decided to split its social media presence between three main phases:

Phase 1: Launch and awareness building (M1 --> M4)

In this phase, our role is to build MedDMO's social media presence on very popular social platforms, easily accessible to millions of users. MedDMO will be initially present on:

- **Twitter**

  The account **@MEDDMOhub**[1] was created on the day of the kick off meeting in Thessaloniki, on December 1st 2022. It is accompanied by the following short description: The Mediterranean hub of European Digital Media Observatory covering Greece, Cyprus and Malta | Fact-checkers, media and academics take on online disinformation. The partner who leads the task (ATC) has the obligation to regularly update the feed with content, as well as examine which content is fit to be retweeted. Every tweet is automatically being published on Facebook as well, even though the two pages are not automatically linked together. That doesn't mean that there cannot be content solely for Twitter. The only real change is that the accounts that are linked within each tweet (for instance @EDMO_EU) aren't the same on Facebook, so accordingly, changes are applied each time manually.

- **Facebook**

  Our Facebook page[2] is named after the official name of the hub (**Mediterranean Digital Media Observatory**) and was launched also on the day of the kick off meeting in Thessaloniki (01/12/2022). The partner who leads the task (ATC) has the obligation to regularly update the feed with content, as well as examine which content from other relevant sources is fit to be shared. Every post has previously been published on Twitter, following the parameters that are asked from each social platform. This doesn't necessarily mean that all Facebook posts will be posted as a result of having been posted on Twitter. Separate and unique content that can only appear on Facebook can be picked.

The key element of this phase lies in making sure our mission, as well as the role of each partner, are adequately understood by the general public and by professionals whose attention we believe we need to attract. Each account's feed will be updated regularly, presenting our collaborative spirit and the areas that each partner is going to lead in the project.

Phase 2 (After M4): Fact checks as the main vehicle

In the second phase of the project, our goal is to gain more essential reach by posting our fact-checks, original content that will have been published on our website. By doing so, we are going to ensure the website's traffic will be increased. Parallel to this, we are aiming to introduce videos that will be answering simple questions around fact-checking. And we will also be promoting events that we will be organizing in order to further boost our activities around both fact-checking and media literacy.

[1] https://twitter.com/MEDDMOhub
[2] https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100087863577710

Phase 3 (from M15 onwards): Research and collaborations

In this third phase, which runs parallel to Phase 2, we aim to highlight MedDMO's research outcomes and disseminate the project's research to several interested target audience groups, such as other academics, researchers, public authorities, the EDMO community, etc. Interesting results from a wide range of collaborations either internally in the hub or externally (with EDMO, other EDMO hubs, national authorities, etc.) will be featured in our social media channels to promote the hub's research activities and collaborations.

3.2.2 Content and distribution

The content published on social media should include relevant consortium partner accounts, if applicable. Tone of voice – especially in the case of fact-checking posts – should always be factual and neutral to avoid click baiting or sensationalism. It will be divided approximately in the following way:

- 30% promoting our internal processes, events, roles in the consortium and views on why fact-checking is important in the region
- 60% letting people know about our fact-checks or research in simple words
- 10% sharing or retweeting content published by relevant stakeholders or other EDMO hubs

The MedDMO Twitter and Facebook pages will be primarily fed with content of interest to the cause's target audiences. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Information about fact-checking articles and verification activities in general, namely research, results, findings, topics and approaches of interest and relevance, etc.
- MedDMO project news (project work, outcomes, etc.);
- Information about events we attend and activities we engage in.

3.2.3 Social Media management

The management of all social media activity will be regularly communicated in the meetings and thoroughly discussed. Input by all partners are welcomed for this highly dynamic task that will be run by ATC. The process will include the following tools:

- Publication calendar in the form of an Excel file: this document will serve as a reference for publication being scheduled on social platforms. It will also help identify in advance activity and inactivity peaks and therefore to make adjustments accordingly.
- Internal channel on Google Drive for input and ideas: parallel to the publication calendar, an internal channel on Google Drive will be available, where all relevant partners will provide input for communications and material.
- Reporting on analytics and performance: a regular analysis of performance, both quantitative and qualitative, including website performance, where the Google Analytics tool is installed. This should help the consortium to regularly evaluate KPIs and objectives.

3.3 Participation in Conferences and Events

MedDMO will use events to communicate with stakeholder groups, build relationships, highlight its results and build its network. The following event types will be taken into account:

- Conferences, workshops, policy events: Part of the offline communication activities of MedDMO include attendance to related events.

- Webinars: Regular webinars with relevant communities will be used to present deliverables of the hub (investigations, impact studies, etc.). These webinars will also include a Q&A session in order to provide deeper knowledge and insights on the MedDMO hub.
- Roundtables and customized training sessions: Such events will be used to disseminate results in a more targeted fashion to interested stakeholder groups. Such events and any feedback gathered will also be used to inform the hub's sustainability plan.

Attending and being present at events of relevance is a central component of the MedDMO dissemination and outreach strategy. MedDMO plans to attend relevant events, either individually or as collaborative undertakings, in order to:

- Stay informed about areas that are relevant for MedDMO project work;
- Present to others what we are doing and achieving;
- Meet relevant stakeholders;
- Open up avenues for cooperation and collaboration;
- Prepare for subsequent collaboration.

Events need to be classified into two broad categories:

- Professional events (which are more business and community-centric);
- Academic events (attracting primarily researchers / academics from universities and research institutes).

The table below summarizes the main international events and conferences dealing with topics that are relevant to the MedDMO project. The events list will be continuously updated by the partners and each event will be analysed for its potential impact before deciding whether MedDMO should be represented.

Table 2 Specific events in which MedDMO partners will participate

NAME OF EVENT, WORKSHOP	DATE	PLACE	PARTNER RESPONSIBLE
Media Literacy event organised by MLA	24/02/2023	online	UCY
Media Literacy event organised by MLA	23/03/2023	online	UCY
International Journalism Festival	Annual	Perugia	CERTH
Truth and Trust online	Annual	Hybrid	CERTH
Global Fact	Annual	Various Places	CERTH
EDMO conference	Annual (25/5/2023)	Brussels	CERTH
EDMO Hubs Meetings	Bi-Annual	Various Places	CERTH
Dataharvest – The European Investigative Journalism Conference 2023	01-04/06/2023	Mechelen, Belgium	TBD
Global Investigative Journalism Conference 2023 (GIJC23)	19-22/09/2023	Gothenburg, Sweden	TBD

iMEdD's International Journalism Forum 2023	September 2023	Athens, Greece	TBD

3.4 Organisation of Events and Workshops

As part of its dissemination activity, MedDMO will hold training events for media literacy practitioners (teachers, professors, experts) led by partners.

MedDMO will aim to raise public awareness about misinformation/disinformation by organising workshops and providing training material and educational tools targeting Greek, Cypriot and Maltese citizens. Based on the findings of the relevant research activities, MedDMO will identify the specific media literacy needs and gaps of each country and it will design custom material as well as organize media literacy events and activities that meet their specific needs. The activities will target different categories of audiences such as students, journalists and media professionals and the general public.

Moreover, MedDMO will support local initiatives to tackle disinformation and strengthen fact-checkers at national and regional level providing access to advanced tools, operational methodologies, and training material. The project will allow Malta to establish its first fact-checking operation via the training of Times of Malta and will expand the fact-checking coverage over Cyprus, which is currently extremely limited. Specific material will be prepared to train journalists in the specificity of the disinformation found in the region, particularly Malta and Cyprus. The Times intends to train 3 journalists. This will leave space for 3 other journalists from Cyprus (and/or Greece) for instance to participate in the whole session.

Finally, MedDMO will organize general press events to disseminate the project and its results to the media communities in Greece, Cyprus, and Malta, as well as to the general public. MedDMO has already organized a press conference during its kick-off meeting in Thessaloniki, Greece. Consortium partners are also organizing a second press event to be hosted during MedDMO's first plenary meeting in Cyprus.

3.5 Mentions

MedDMO is expected to receive mentions by third parties in audio-visual material, social media, publications etc.

Starting from the kick off meeting in Thessaloniki, our partners reported 13 article mentions in various prominent Greek and Cypriot media outlets such as Naftemporiki.gr, CNN Greece, Kathimerini.gr, Capital.gr, ertnews.gr, euro2day.gr, philenews.com and politis.com.cy.

The story of the launch was also broadcasted on National Greek Television.

Also, following MedDMO's kick-off and press event, INCOGNITO project posted information in their online social media accounts (Twitter and Facebook) announcing the launch.

Many others followed suit on social media, like the Multimedia Knowledge and Social Media Analytics Laboratory of MedDMO's coordinator, CERTH, as well as the Athens and Macedonian News Agency (Twitter accounts).

As of 09/02/2023, MedDMO has received 12 mentions on Twitter by relevant professionals and entities, while the number of interactions with our Facebook posts reached 1.361.

4 Collaboration and Cooperation with related Initiatives and Projects

Collaboration and cooperation are core values to the MedDMO project. For this purpose, MedDMO will create and expand a multinational and multilingual network on digital media and disinformation research in Greece, Cyprus and Malta. An official invitation from MedDMO has been drafted in order to be utilized for the recruitment of new MedDMO community members.

Ellinika Hoaxes will be in charge of the Greek liaisons of the network/hub, while University of Cyprus with the Cypriot ones and Times of Malta with the Maltese. The MedDMO network is expected to continuously expand during the duration of the project and also sustained after the completion of the project.

In the first months of the project, outreach was re-initiated, with further contacts to be pursued once the multilingual website is operational. It goes without saying that all partners are going to ensure that the whole consortium will try to do as much as possible to make third parties aware of the project outcomes.

It is worth mentioning that many of the partners of MedDMO are participating in other research project related to disinformation and thus future collaboration with related research project are expected in the coming months. Through ATC, which is an EDMO partner and a partner in other EDMO Hubs, staying-up-to-date with important developments in the EDMO community will be ensured, while an always open communication channel will be established from the beginning of the project.

Aside from this, in the context of this report, three types of support and cooperation need to be highlighted: with (1) EDMO EU and other EDMO national/multinational hubs, (2) national & community authorities and (3) disinformation experts within the hub.

Related to the previous mentioned types of support, the collaboration with other EDMO hubs is a priority for MedDMO and already preliminary talks have been initiated in order to draw from the experience of the regional hubs that have been operating for the past two years.

5 Reporting and Performance Measurement

This section presents information about the project's KPIs that need to be monitored in order to assess the project's performance in terms of communication, dissemination, and production of fact-checks.

5.1 Fact-checks production

A continuous flow of fact-checks will be ensured as follows:

Table 3 Number of fact-checks to be produced in both Greek and English

	M6	M12	M18	M24	M30
No. of fact-checks produced	180	360	540	720	900

5.2 KPIs

Communication and dissemination activities are carried out against a set of target values, or key performance indicators (KPIs). In the table below, these measurable targets are defined and the figures presented are expected minimum thresholds. Although we aim higher than that, we prefer to be realistic with our estimations; also bearing in mind that sometimes, quality is more important than quantity.

Table 4 Key performance indicators throughout the project (cumulative figures)

	M6	M15	M30
No. of visits to the website	6000	24000	54000
No. of Twitter followers	250	600	1250
No. of tweet mentions	90	225	450
No. of publications in scientific journals	0	0	5
No. of Facebook followers	150	375	750
No. of presentations to be submitted to Slideshare	2	6	10
No. of presentations in events, conferences etc.	2	6	10
No. of Facebook posts	120	300	600
No. of workshops co-organized by MedDMO	0	0	2
No. of tweets	120	300	600
No. of Page Views	6000	15000	30000
No. of reads for fact-checks	3000	7500	15000

6 Summary and Conclusion

Dissemination activities in MedDMO have been planned and are well under way. The project consortium feels it is well equipped to deliver high quality dissemination work, have a significant impact with it, and prepare for subsequent exploitation accordingly.

The target audiences for the MedDMO dissemination activities have been defined, respective channels have been set up, and dissemination opportunities have been identified (and will be continuously updated). All of this includes a mix of means and activities which have been described in more detail in this deliverable.

Furthermore, a set of performance indicators has been decided upon. They allow the consortium as well as reviewers to measure success against a set of previously outlined criteria in a quantitative way.

In sum, the consortium is very confident that it will deliver high quality dissemination work with considerable impact. Activities carried out already point exactly in this direction: as the issue of countering misinformation is high on the political as well as societal agenda, MedDMO will occupy a space that will allows us to use this to our advantage with regards to our dissemination work. All partners are committed to contributing and do their bit to make dissemination and communication work and activities a success.



Mediterranean Digital Media Observatory

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