



Biomimicry Design for Sustainability Skills in VET

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Training**

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Contents

Contributors.....	3
1. Introduction.....	6
2. Target groups of communication and dissemination activities.....	7
2.1 VET students	8
2.2 VET instructors	9
2.3 VET institutions	9
2.4 Educational administrators.....	10
2.5 Educational and other authorities	10
2.6 Industry and professional associations.....	11
2.7 The lifelong learning sector	12
2.8 The general public.....	12
3. Project outcomes promoted through communication and dissemination	13
3.1 Biomimicry process design for sustainability skills	13
3.2 Training modules	13
3.3 Self-regulated learning kit.....	14
3.4 Biomimicry learning platform	14
3.5 Biomimicry handbook for teachers	14
3.6 Instructors' technical guide.....	14
3.7 Pilot model and use case definition.....	15
3.8 Recommended practices and final public report on pilots	15
4. Dissemination and communication strategy	15

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4.1 Communication and dissemination channels.....	16
4.1.1 Project Portal.....	16
4.1.2 Informational material	18
4.1.3 Periodic newsletter	19
4.1.4 Scientific articles.....	20
4.1.5 Internet presence.....	21
4.1.6 Social media presence	22
4.1.7 Media articles	23
4.1.8 Presentations	24
4.2. Dissemination and communication impact indicators	25
5 Conclusions.....	26



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1. Introduction

Human activities and occupations in the workplace should be conducted sustainably and environmentally friendly. As many past activities have not been environmentally friendly, it's important to adapt personal consumption processes and occupational practices and develop new sectors of activity to replace unfriendly alternatives. This is essential for creating a more sustainable society. For example, developing skills and promoting the study of technologies that reduce the use of irreplaceable raw materials, recycling waste, minimizing energy use, and preventing environmental pollution. Encouraging entrepreneurial learning through vocational education and training could also lead to creating sustainable and social enterprises that benefit society. A large number of VET graduates work throughout the economy. Many employment sectors are regulated by standards covering their operations, and many jobs have defined skills standards. People typically undertake VET to obtain the skills or qualifications needed for regulated occupations or jobs with clearly established competence levels. Many existing regulations and standards don't fully meet the requirements for transitioning to a green economy and may even help maintain unsustainable business practices. VET can equip youth with the skills needed for the world of work, including self-employment, and improve responsiveness to changing skill demands by companies and communities. Implementing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in VET institutions can enhance their vision and capacities, providing the skills needed to transition to green economies and societies. Therefore, ESD in VET is crucial for educating and training individuals on these requirements.

The LET'S MIMIC project aims to make VET systems more sustainable and relevant. It supports young people in acquiring the skills they need to participate and thrive in achieving sustainability goals through their professional activities. Specifically, the project promotes inclusive, sustainable practices in current VET programs and courses across Europe, focusing on environmental management as part of eco-education. The project employs a multi-stakeholder strategy to enhance VET delivery, increase

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community understanding of the value of working in technical and vocational disciplines, and create an environment conducive to lifelong learning.

The project integrates biomimicry in learning to promote environmental skills. Biomimicry is an innovative design and problem-solving approach involving emulating natural forms, processes, and ecosystems to create sustainable solutions. It draws inspiration from the biological strategies found in nature that have evolved over billions of years. The concept is based on the idea that nature, having gone through extensive trial and error, offers models and ideas that are efficient, resilient, and sustainable.

This report constitutes the LET'S MIMIC project communication and dissemination strategy. Communication activities aim to raise awareness of project objectives, activities, and results in the target VET sector and wider lifelong learning community. Dissemination activities aim to make project outcomes widely and openly available to the VET sector and beyond. The strategy analyses the target groups addressed and channels used for the wide and effective reach of project results.

2. Target groups of communication and dissemination activities

The LET'S MIMIC dissemination aims to reach wide audiences through customised activities catering to each group's specific interests. The dissemination groups can be categorised into two main groups:

- **Direct stakeholders**, including individuals who will directly benefit from implementing the LET'S MIMIC learning intervention to develop innovation skills. This group comprises vocational education and training (VET) students, educators, and educational organisations.
- **Indirect stakeholders**, encompassing groups that may not directly experience the LET'S MIMIC outcomes but will benefit indirectly from the project results.

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This group involves industry representatives, policymakers, and the general public who benefit from a skilled young generation capable of addressing 21st-century challenges.

The following analysis outlines the target groups and their interests, forming the basis for organising specific dissemination activities.

2.1 VET students

VET students are essential for driving innovation and solving problems in the future. They play a crucial role in promoting environmental sustainability across various industries. It's important for VET students to acquire practical sustainability skills and knowledge. This involves drawing inspiration from nature to develop innovative solutions to technical challenges. By understanding biomimicry, VET students can integrate sustainable practices into their work, becoming more environmentally conscious and responsible professionals.

A biomimicry approach can also help VET students enhance their problem-solving skills by enabling them to think across different disciplines, such as chemistry, physics, engineering, and biology, when designing solutions. Moreover, it enables students to develop a systems thinking approach, understanding the interactions among various components within an ecosystem, which is essential for creating comprehensive and effective solutions. Environmental awareness and ethics are also crucial for VET students, and biomimicry can lead to a deeper appreciation for the natural world and encourage environmentally friendly practices.

Biomimicry knowledge can be applied across diverse sectors, such as architecture, construction, manufacturing, product design, agriculture, food production, and energy. The environmental skills gained through biomimicry are highly relevant to industry, especially as more sectors move towards sustainable practices. This knowledge prepares students for future job markets.

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2.2 VET instructors

To modernize environmental education instruction, VET instructors need to develop skills to integrate emerging pedagogical designs into their teaching practices. The proposed innovative biomimicry approach can help educators enhance their teaching effectiveness by engaging students in ways that make learning complex concepts more dynamic and interesting. This approach encourages practical, hands-on learning experiences, which can improve student understanding and retention of material. It fosters increased student interest, captures student imagination, and promotes student problem-solving capacity. Furthermore, biomimicry learning design can promote educator professional development by deepening their understanding of both biological and technical concepts, enhancing their expertise and teaching capabilities. It can also lead to curriculum enrichment by introducing a sustainability focus, preparing students for careers that increasingly demand environmentally friendly practices. Additionally, project activities will create diverse, open resources and collaboration opportunities for educators, fostering collective knowledge and capacity development.

2.3 VET institutions

VET institutions must update their practices to adapt to a changing world. The VET sector plays a key role in driving industry growth and societal well-being by equipping young adults with the knowledge and skills required to tackle emerging challenges. VET institutions also focus on developing knowledge and skills aligned with industry needs, thereby helping to reduce unemployment. This can be achieved by embracing new teaching approaches tied to sustainability practices that are in demand by industry. Incorporating biomimicry into learning can give VET providers a competitive edge through a unique curriculum, attracting students interested in innovative and sustainable education. Biomimicry training can help produce graduates ready for employment, especially in industries prioritising green technologies, while also leading to increased student engagement and knowledge retention. Additionally, biomimicry

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design can assist VET providers in forming stronger industry partnerships, thereby boosting students' job prospects. By integrating various fields of study, biomimicry provides a more comprehensive education that prepares students to solve complex, real-world problems and fosters critical thinking skills.

2.4 Educational administrators

Educational administrators, while not directly involved in the educational process, play a crucial role in supporting learning. It's important for them to understand the advantages of new learning designs like biomimicry-enriched environmental education. Additionally, they should familiarise themselves with digital tools to enhance the learning process, as they may need to assist students and teachers in delivering educational content. Therefore, educational administrators can benefit from implementing best practices associated with emerging learning designs based on biomimicry. This would help in enriching current curricula, improving educational outcomes, ensuring the success of educational institutions, promoting skills sought by industry to enhance graduate employability, and becoming leaders in environmental ethics by setting an example and demonstrating a commitment to sustainable practices.

2.5 Educational and other authorities

Educational and development policymakers want to understand the benefits of new teaching methods and their impact on achieving educational goals, possibly aligned with growth targets. They can benefit from analysing research results and evaluation reports from pilot programs that use new teaching methods, such as biomimicry. Educational administrators may not be interested in the research aspects of teaching methods but rather in practical recommendations for applying these methods. They may also want to know how the proposed teaching methods can be adapted for secondary, vocational, or professional education. Educational and other authorities can benefit from research and development activities that promote innovative educational policies focusing on sustainability and innovation, setting a standard for modern education systems.

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Integrating biomimicry into curricula can help establish comprehensive education standards that promote interdisciplinary learning and real-world problem-solving skills. Promoting biomimicry in education can have a positive impact on society by raising awareness and fostering environmental responsibility. Educator training and community engagement in biomimicry can further help authorities encourage collaboration between educational institutions, industries, and research organisations to advance sustainable technologies and practices.

2.6 Industry and professional associations

Incorporating biomimicry into environmental education practices provides numerous advantages to industries in various sectors. These benefits include improvements in innovation and efficiency, as well as enhanced sustainability and market competitiveness. Specifically, integrating biomimicry into learning can lead to breakthrough innovation and product development by drawing inspiration from nature's designs and processes. This integration can also improve operational efficiency by optimising resources and reducing waste. Biomimicry education can aid industries in reducing their environmental impact, meeting sustainability goals, and complying with regulatory requirements. Furthermore, it can result in a competitive advantage through differentiation in the market and increased customer appeal due to environmentally friendly practices, potentially leading to a greater market share. On the other hand, biomimicry education can assist industries in managing environmental risks by developing adaptive and resilient solutions, enabling them to navigate better changes and uncertainties, such as those associated with climate change. By prioritizing sustainability and resilience, companies can ensure long-term viability and decrease the risks linked with environmental degradation. Additionally, they can achieve cost savings through enhanced efficiency, reduced waste, and lower energy consumption. Lastly, biomimicry fosters collaboration across different sectors and disciplines, encouraging innovation and knowledge sharing. Industries can collaborate with educational

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institutions to conduct research and develop biomimicry-inspired solutions, benefiting from academic expertise and resources.

2.7 The lifelong learning sector

The LET'S MIMIC project focuses on creating a learning intervention to enhance environmental awareness and skills for VET students. The project's proposed learning methodology, which is based on biomimicry, can be adapted for broader educational sectors, including secondary, higher, and professional education. The project's activities and outcomes are expected to benefit the lifelong learning sector by providing valuable insights into enriching curricula to develop green skills for industry and society.

2.8 The general public

The general public can benefit from a younger generation equipped with the knowledge and skills to innovate and tackle modern environmental challenges, such as those arising from climate change. Developing competencies in line with industry demands can also reduce unemployment, fostering greater social cohesion. The public can also benefit from a proposed learning approach based on biomimicry, which can enhance environmental awareness and deepen understanding of nature and its processes. This approach can potentially create a healthier living environment, decrease pollution, and improve overall quality of life. Furthermore, it can lead to sustainable consumer choices, reducing ecological footprints, and contribute to the growth of green industries, consequently creating new job opportunities and generating cost savings for households and communities. Moreover, biomimicry projects often involve community participation, promoting a sense of community and collaboration, thus enhancing social cohesion and resilience. By drawing lessons from nature's resilience, communities can develop better disaster preparedness and response strategies, improving their ability to cope with natural disasters. Understanding the principles of biomimicry fosters a deeper respect for nature and its intrinsic value, thereby promoting ethical and responsible behaviour towards the environment. Including biomimicry in environmental education

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encourages active participation in civic activities and environmental advocacy, empowering individuals to contribute to positive change. Educated individuals are more likely to adopt and promote sustainable practices in their daily lives, contributing to broader environmental sustainability goals.

3. Project outcomes promoted through communication and dissemination

Following is an analysis of the LET'S MIMIC project outcomes that will be promoted in communication and dissemination activities.

3.1 Biomimicry process design for sustainability skills

The comprehensive design process that integrates biomimicry principles to foster sustainability skills will be documented and analysed in project reports. These reports will be disseminated to interested target groups, including academics, educational organisations, industry stakeholders, policymakers, educational authorities, and more. The dissemination will also extend to additional educational sectors that can benefit from adopting biomimicry-based methodologies for sustainability education.

3.2 Training modules

The developed training modules focused on the biomimicry design process for VET learners will be widely promoted. Dissemination efforts will include presentations, press releases, and internet articles targeting educational institutions, VET providers, industry partners, and policymakers. These modules aim to enhance the skill sets of VET learners, preparing them for sustainable practices in their future careers.



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3.3 Self-regulated learning kit

The Self-Regulated Learning Kit designed to support VET students in managing their own learning processes will be disseminated through various channels. The kit will be promoted via workshops, educational conferences, online webinars, and through partnerships with educational authorities and VET institutions. The goal is to encourage the adoption of self-regulated learning techniques to improve student outcomes.

3.4 Biomimicry learning platform

The online Biomimicry Platform, consisting of various modules such as microlearning, self-regulated learning, teamwork, gamification, and assessment, will be promoted to a wide audience. Dissemination strategies will include digital marketing campaigns, webinars, and collaborations with educational technology platforms. The platform's innovative approach to learning will be showcased to attract students, educators, and institutions aiming to integrate biomimicry into their curricula.

3.5 Biomimicry handbook for teachers

The Biomimicry Handbook for Teachers will be disseminated through targeted campaigns for VET educators and institutions. The handbook will be shared via educational networks, professional development courses, and teacher training workshops. The handbook will support teachers in implementing biomimicry-based education in their classrooms by providing practical guidance.

3.6 Instructors' technical guide

The Instructors' Technical Guide, designed to aid the practical implementation of biomimicry-based education, will be promoted through technical training sessions, online courses, and industry conferences. This guide will be valuable for instructors looking to incorporate innovative teaching methodologies into their VET programs.



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3.7 Pilot model and use case definition

The pilot models and detailed use cases will be documented and shared through academic publications, conference presentations, and industry seminars. The dissemination will demonstrate the effectiveness and scalability of the biomimicry-based educational approaches, encouraging broader adoption across VET institutions.

3.8 Recommended practices and final public report on pilots

Compiling recommended practices and the final public report summarising the outcomes and lessons learned from the pilot implementations will be widely disseminated. This will include press releases, policy briefs, and presentations at educational and industry events. The goal is to influence policy and practice by showcasing the benefits and impact of biomimicry-based education on sustainability skills development.

4. Dissemination and communication strategy

The LET'S MIMIC dissemination and communication strategy is designed to effectively reach groups that will benefit directly or indirectly from the project's objectives, activities, and results in promoting environmental education through biomimicry approaches in the VET sector for building student problem-solving capacity. Dissemination and communication aims to raise awareness and interest on project activities.

To achieve this, LET'S MIMIC targets diverse groups in a focused manner, each with different interests and potential gains from the project results. For example, VET students stand to benefit directly from the biomimicry learning activities developed by their educators, while policymakers and educational authorities are directly interested in the evaluation results of emerging pedagogical designs.

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The LET'S MIMIC dissemination and communication strategy is developed on four main fronts:

- **Tailoring activities and content to the needs and interests of various target groups**, including VET students, educators, educational organisations, policymakers, educational authorities, industry, the lifelong learning sector, and the general public. This involves analysing the anticipated benefits of project activities for each group to determine the best channels for reaching them and creating dissemination information tailored to their familiarity with project methodologies and outcomes.
- **A traditional media strategy** that leverages popular news channels such as the press, radio, and TV, in addition to the Internet, to reach broad audiences at regional and national levels.
- **An internet strategy** to establish a strong online presence, leveraging social media and other tools like newsletters, articles, and posts to generate interest in project activities and outcomes.
- **A face-to-face strategy** involving presentations to stakeholders such as educators, industry representatives, policymakers and authorities, allowing for more personal communication, hands-on use of project outcomes, and direct feedback generation that will be integrated into project outcomes.

4.1 Communication and dissemination channels

4.1.1 Project Portal

4.1.1.1 Description

A project portal will be developed early in the implementation period, accessible at the address provided in project documentation at <https://letsmimic.eu/>.



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4.1.1.4 Purpose

The project portal disseminates information on project objectives, activities, and outcomes. Specifically, the portal promotes:

The what: Project goals on fostering sustainability and innovation skills through biomimicry principles and methodologies.

The who: Target groups, including VET students, educators, and industry stakeholders.

The how: Publishing interim and final versions of project outcomes, including:

- Training modules and materials.
- Self-Regulated Learning Kit.
- The Biomimicry Platform.
- Teacher Handbook and technical guides.
- Pilot activities and results.
- Community building events.
- Project reports and scientific articles.
- Dissemination materials like media articles, internet articles, social media articles, newsletters, and informational materials.

4.1.1.3 Target groups and focus of communication

The project portal addresses all stakeholder groups and aims to reach wide audiences, including:

- VET institutions.
- Academia.
- Industry.
- Educational authorities.
- The lifelong learning sector.
- The general public.



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- Information is presented in an easily understandable manner for broad audiences.

4.1.1.4 Language

The project portal is available in English.

4.1.1.5 Lifecycle

The project portal will be maintained by the project coordinator with input from all partners throughout the project period and post-completion indefinitely.

4.1.2 Informational material

4.1.2.1 Description

A leaflet will be developed to present project objectives, target groups, innovative character, and key activities and outcomes. Early and updated versions will be designed at the beginning and towards the end of the project implementation period.

4.1.2.2 Purpose

The informational leaflet will provide a concise overview of the project's objectives and contributions, allowing readers to understand the project's scope and impact quickly.

4.1.2.3 Target groups and focus of communication

The leaflet addresses all stakeholder groups and aims to reach:

- VET institutions.
- Academia.
- Industry.
- Educational authorities.
- The lifelong learning sector.
- The general public.



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4.1.2.4 Lifecycle

The leaflet will be available indefinitely throughout the implementation period and post-project completion via the project portal.

4.1.2.5 Language

The leaflet will be available in English and the national languages of the project partners.

4.1.3 Periodic newsletter

4.1.3.1 Description

A periodic newsletter will be produced to provide updates on project activities, including methodological design, technical implementation, piloting, and community building. Six issues will be produced bi-annually.

4.1.3.2 Purpose

The newsletter will offer insights into project objectives, activities, and outcomes, both interim and final. It will cover various aspects such as project goals, partner information, state-of-the-art analyses, and updates on pilot activities and results.

4.1.3.3 Target groups and focus of communication

The newsletter targets all stakeholder groups and aims to reach:

- VET institutions.
- Academia.
- Industry.
- Educational authorities.
- The lifelong learning sector.
- The general public.

4.1.3.4 Language

The newsletter will be available in English.



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4.1.3.5 Lifecycle

The newsletter will be available indefinitely throughout the implementation period and post-project completion via the project portal.

4.1.4 Scientific articles

4.1.4.1 Description

Scientific articles will be submitted for publication at academic conferences and journals. At least two publications will be pursued, although more are expected.

4.1.4.2 Purpose

Scientific articles will provide insights into the methodological and technical aspects of the proposed innovative learning intervention, highlighting the use of biomimicry principles for sustainability education.

4.1.4.3 Target groups and focus of communication

Scientific articles will target experts in digital learning design and delivery, including:

- The VET sector.
- Academia.
- Industry.
- The lifelong learning sector.
- Educational authorities.
- Policymakers.

4.1.4.4 Language

Scientific publications will primarily be in English, with potential articles in the national languages of project partners.

4.1.4.5 Lifecycle

Scientific publications will occur indefinitely throughout the implementation period and post-project completion via the project portal.

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4.1.5 Internet presence

4.1.5.1 Description

Consortium members will ensure project activities are promoted online. This includes publications on university partner portals and external thematic internet portals related to project activities.

4.1.5.2 Purpose

As a popular medium for accessing news, the internet will be used to reach broad audiences effectively.

4.1.5.3 Target groups and focus of communication

Internet articles aim to reach:

- VET institutions.
- Academia.
- Industry.
- Educational authorities.
- The lifelong learning sector.
- The general public.

4.1.5.4 Language

Internet articles will be developed in English or the national languages of the project partners.

4.1.5.5 Lifecycle

Internet articles are dynamic and will be managed by external bodies. The consortium cannot control its continued presence but will ensure significant reach during the project period.



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4.1.6 Social media presence

4.1.6.1 Description

Consortium members will promote project activities on social media, including organisational social media pages, a dedicated project social media page, and external organisations' pages when beneficial.

4.1.6.2 Purpose

Social media, being popular among broad audiences, will serve as an effective channel for dissemination through short, targeted posts about project objectives, activities, events, and more.

4.1.6.3 Target groups and focus of communication

Social media posts will aim to reach:

- VET institutions.
- Academia.
- Industry.
- Educational authorities.
- The lifelong learning sector.
- The general public.

4.1.6.4 Language

Social media posts will be developed in English or the national languages of the project partners.

4.1.6.5 Lifecycle

Social media accounts will be maintained post-project completion, with partners continuing to post about related future activities and events.



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4.1.7 Media articles

4.1.7.1 Description

Consortium members will publish articles in traditional media, such as newspapers, TV, radio, and internet outlets, to promote project objectives, activities, and outcomes.

4.1.7.2 Purpose

Traditional media articles will reach the general public, highlighting significant project activities and outcomes.

4.1.7.3 Target groups and focus of communication

Traditional media articles will target:

- VET institutions.
- Academia.
- Industry.
- Educational authorities.
- The lifelong learning sector.
- The general public.

4.1.7.4 Language

Press releases will be developed in English or the national languages of the project partners.

4.1.7.5 Lifecycle

Press releases will continue until the end of the project implementation period, with online availability post-project completion.



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4.1.8 Presentations

4.1.8.1 Description

Project partners will deliver presentations on project activities as opportunities arise, highlighting objectives, methodology, software services, physical labs, deployment in courses, evaluation results, and more.

4.1.8.2 Purpose

Presentations will promote project results through face-to-face communication, targeting VET students, educators, other universities, policymakers, industry, and more.

4.1.8.3 Target groups and focus of communication

Presentations will mainly target:

- VET institutions.
- Academia.
- Industry.
- Educational authorities.
- Policymakers.
- Other educational sectors.
- The lifelong learning community.
- The general public.

4.1.8.4 Language

Presentations will be delivered in English or the national languages of the project partners.

4.1.8.5 Lifecycle

Presentations will continue throughout the implementation period. Summaries, including descriptions and pictures, will be posted in the news section of the project portal and available after the project is completed.



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4.2. Dissemination and communication impact indicators

The success of the LET'S MIMIC dissemination and communication strategy will be measured through a number of indicators that demonstrate how effectively activities reach target audiences. These indicators are presented below.

Indicator	Achievement
Project newsletter issues	6, bi-annually
Informational material	1 leaflet, available in English and the national languages of project partners
Scientific articles	At least 2
Publications on partner organisational portals	At least 1 article to appear on the organisational portal of each project partner
Publications to traditional media	At least 1 article published in traditional media by each project partner
Contacts with policymakers, professional organisations, and external bodies	Contacts with at least 2 external bodies by each partner
Posts on the LET'S MIMIC social media page	At least 75

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“People reached” through posts on the LET’S MIMIC social media page	At least 5.000
Individuals reached through all activities	At least 10.000

Table 1. Indicators of achievement of LET’S MIMIC communication and dissemination strategy.

5 Conclusions

The report detailed the communication and dissemination strategy for the LET’S MIMIC project, which is designed to raise awareness about the project's activities and outcomes beyond the consortium during the project's implementation and to promote the uptake of project results by the target VET sector and lifelong learning community. The communication strategy leverages various media channels such as the Internet, press releases, media presentations, informational materials, social media platforms, scientific articles, and presentations to reach a wide and diverse audience effectively, including the VET sector, academic institutions, industry stakeholders, policymakers, the broader lifelong learning community, and the general public. The communication and dissemination strategy will be complemented by the project exploitation plan, which aims at the wide adoption of project results after the completion of the implementation period. The presented approach maximises the project's added value, allowing educational and other organisations beyond the consortium to use project outcomes benefitting students and educators effectively.

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