M3.10 Delivery of a promotional strategy for ViBRANT services

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1. SCOPE

The objective of the ViBRANT promotional strategy is to set the process which will ensure that the following outreach objectives are clearly met and convey to existing and potential stakeholders who may benefit from ViBRANT results and information:

- diffuse information and raise awareness about the ViBRANT project to specialised constituencies and general public;
- define a set of instruments for effective promotion of the ViBRANT services and tools to stakeholders;
- disseminate information and achievements of the project in a way that citizen scientists can understand;
- encourage researchers and citizen scientists participation in using tools and services;
- educate stakeholders in order to make use of tools and services;
- enhance synergies and collaboration opportunities among the biodiversity community;
- interact with existing projects (GBIF, Lifewatch, EoL etc.) utilising their already developed networking and knowledge management;
- become an integrated and effective framework for those managing biodiversity on the Web.

2. APPROACH

A promotional strategy encompasses different kinds of activities that will effectively send the intended messages about the operational objectives to the existing and potential stakeholders. A structured approach to achieving this is set out in this document. The approach proposed will enable the project to obtain maximum visibility and coverage.

Key principles for the ViBRANT promotional strategy are:

- plan activities adequately resourced devoted to dissemination for specialised constituencies and general public, in particular for awareness and educational purposes;
- actively participate in concertation activities and meetings related with biodiversity and the e-Infrastructures area;
- follow best practices on communication issues as provided in http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/participating/communication-best-practices_en.html.

All project partners will contribute continuously to the dissemination activities. The promotional strategy and dissemination plan for ViBRANT is an essential document for promoting the initiatives and output of the project towards stakeholders in Europe and outside of Europe.

This document focuses mainly on setting the grounds for a ViBRANT promotional strategy and plan, mapping foreseen outreach activities for the duration of the project.

The tools to achieve the outreach objectives are:
- ViBRANT logo;
- ViBRANT website;
- ViBRANT flyer;
- Scrartchpads flyer;
- active participation in conferences, meetings and other relevant events;
- scientific papers and other publications;
- organisation and provision of dedicated training workshops;
- establishment of the Ambassadors network;
- support services for using the tools and services;
- sociology of the user-base and nascent user communities.

3. TARGET GROUPS

The main target audiences to disseminate the ViBRANT project results, tools and services have been identified. Different groups of stakeholders that monitor and manage information about biodiversity, ecosystems and natural resources are connected to the project including the project partners. Also part of the audiences are the citizen scientists as well as the general public. In addition, the strategy will also address the European Commission that needs to be informed on project progress and results. Considering the needs of the target audiences, the promotional strategy will ensure that the appropriate and most effective methods of communication and dissemination will be used.

4. DISSEMINATION TOOLS AND CHANNELS

4.1 The ViBRANT Logo

Communication and branding is essential to enhance visibility of a project. Therefore a project logo has been designed and is used in all documents and publications of ViBRANT. The design of the logo reflects ViBRANT's concept and vision (http://vbrant.eu/content/logo).

A letterhead template is available for the consortium partners on the ViBRANT website (http://vbrant.eu/content/stationary).

4.2 The ViBRANT website

The ViBRANT website is the primary dynamic information source and communication channel where partners, scientific audience and public can find all project information (http://vbrant.eu).

The ViBRANT website includes information about project objectives, activities, project outputs, a forum to discuss internal business, links to relevant sites with synergetic objectives, promotion material, events etc. It will support the dissemination and sharing of results and project progress and will also be a tool to communicate with the stakeholders involved. The Web site also contains archives of various mailing lists and correspondence allowing retrieval of information on topics and discussions addressed earlier in the ViBRANT project.

The website contains public and restricted data. Certain areas of the website are used for internal communication and are accessible with a username and password. Partners have the possibility to insert data in diverse areas such as work activities, news, events, publications etc.

The website is maintained by WP1 during the entire project lifetime. The web site is based on Drupal (Open Source Web Content Management System) and is regularly updated.

4.3 ViBRANT flyers

ViBRANT developed a printed and electronic flyer offering basic information about the project. The flyer has been distributed to all project partners in order to diffuse it on occasion of attended events like workshops, meetings and conferences. ViBRANT will also develop electronic individual work package flyers illustrating the specific work package activities.

4.4 Scratchpads flyer

In addition to the ViBRANT flyer, a Scratchpads flyer is available for distribution providing specific info on this tool which is the platform for integrating consortium members' products and services. The flyer can be downloaded from the Scratchpads website (http://scratchpads.eu).

4.5 Events

Workshops, conferences, concertation meetings may be organised by the ViBRANT project itself or by other projects, organisations, networks. The ViBRANT project has established a preliminary schedule of upcoming events and will seek to participate as a speaker or/and with a poster presentation, an exhibition stand or by a dedicated training workshop. Publicity material (flyers) will be available at the events and distributed to the audience. Promotion of ViBRANT at conferences, seminars, concertation meetings and other relevant events involve all consortium partners. Depending on the generic or the specific character of an event, partners working in that area will contribute.

All partners continuously contribute to the outreach activities and add their contribution (presentation, poster, etc.) to the ViBRANT website. Events of interest for the project and partner participation to events are tracked on the ViBRANT website:

Event list and calendar: http://vbrant.eu/content/events.
Participation and type of outreach activity: http://vbrant.eu/talks.

4.6 E-mailing
For internal communication mailing lists have been established. E-mailing is the communication tool for the daily business between project leader and project partners, between project partners and for external communication. E-mail is an excellent opportunity to include a link to the project website.

For quick announcing what partners are doing and having short communications, Twitter is used (http://vbrant.eu/twitter). However many ViBRANT partners are Twitter newbies and Twitter is not their preferred communication tool.

4.7 Scientific papers and other publications
Scientific papers, conference papers, deliverables are posted on the bibliography section of the website (http://vbrant.eu/biblio). The access to confidential documents is restricted to registered users. Partners are asked to update their outputs (publications, deliverables, milestones, etc.).

4.8 Training
Training is part of the outreach activities and the major objective is to enhance the use of ViBRANT tools and to support and extend the user communities working with those tools. Training will include basic and advanced courses organised back-to-back to conferences and courses will also be delivered on demand. Training tutorials are available online http://scratchpads.eu/scratchpad-training-files.
A full strategy for training with training course announcements will be outlined in D3.1 'Training strategy' which is due for M12.

4.9 Ambassadors network
ViBRANT is recruiting a group of enthusiastic and experienced Scratchpad users to be the official local representative of the Scratchpad community, linking the Scratchpad team with Scratchpads' growing user base. Ambassadors spread the word about Scratchpads, promote the use of Scratchpads and arrange or give training in their local Scratchpad community. The Ambassadors network and programme can be viewed at: http://scratchpads.eu/ambassadors-programme.

4.10 Support services
In order to support the users of VIBRANT tools, the Scratchpad platform offers a number of support systems (help pages, FAQ, issues tracker, 'contact-us' e-mail, personal e-mailing). An assessment of user support services will be outlined in M3.12 which is due for M12.

4.11 Sociology

ViBRANT includes a sociological study of ViBRANT's user-base in order to identify the benefits and barriers perceived by users of ViBRANT tools. Output from this study will directly feed back into service and networking activities of the software developers and into training activities. Recommendations to modify products to maximise user uptake will be outlined in M3.11 which is due for M12.

5. Timeframe planned outreach activities

Outreach activities	Timing	Responsible partner Contributors
Visual identity		
ViBRANT logo	M1	WP1 (RP)
ViBRANT templates (letterhead, slide presentation)	M1	WP1 (RP)
Project websites (ViBRANT & Scratchpads)	M1	WP1 (RP), content contribution from ALL
Publicity materials		
ViBRANT general flyer	M1 and updated version M9	WP1 & WP3 (RP)
ViBRANT individual work package flyer	M12	WP1 & WP3 (RP) and ALL
Scratchpads flyer	M5	WP1 (RP)
Events (participation/organisation of meetings, conferences, etc.)		
Presentations	continuous	ALL
Posters	continuous	ALL
Exhibition stand	on occasion of certain events	WP1 (RP) and ALL
E-mailing	continuous	ALL
Publications	continuous	ALL
Training		
Training sessions by Scratchpad team	on occasion of events/on demand	WP1 & WP3 (RP)
Ambassadors network	M4	WP1 & WP3 (RP)
Support services (helpdesk, e-mailing, etc.)	continuous	WP1 & WP3 (RP)
Sociology	from M4 on	WP3 (RP)

6. MEASURES OF PROGRESS

Overall progress is judged by the usage of ViBRANT tools and services. To evaluate the success of the promotional strategy the following data are collected and analysed:

- using the ViBRANT tools and services: this is measured as the number of registered users on a site and expressed as % change per time period;
- website: analytics are collected;
- publicity material (flyers): data on number produced is collected and distribution at events is catalogued;
- events: data on participation/organisation are tracked together with data on given presentations, posters etc.;
- publications: number of papers submitted to journals is collected;
- training courses: number of training courses is collected;
- the Ambassadors support infrastructure: the number of training courses/demos given by non Scratchpad team members will be tracked;
- providing site development expertise, delivery of software documentation and service desk user support: frequency with which help resources are accessed, the number and kind of requests/bug reports posted to the different support systems and request processing time are recorded;
- undertaking sociological studies of the user-base and nascent user communities to feed into ViBRANT development priorities: overall a rise of Scratchpads user numbers is the best guide to success for this objective.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The promotional strategy describes ViBRANT's overall outreach efforts aiming to optimise the results and output of the project as well as the dissemination of these results to all relevant stakeholders in order to encourage use of ViBRANT tools and services. It encompasses a structured set of dissemination tools and planned outreach activities, that will effectively send the intended messages about the operational objectives to the existing and potential stakeholders. The approach proposed will enable the project to obtain maximum visibility and coverage.

The outlined promotional strategy is not a static but a dynamic document that will be updated when the project results are moving forward and feedback is received from the stakeholders.