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D5.3 Plan for the Exploitation and Dissemination of Results (PEDR) – Update II

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Key takeaway messages

This deliverable presents the second update of SpongeBoost's Plan for the Exploitation and Dissemination of Results (PEDR), reflecting the project's progress during M19–M34 and defining the communication, dissemination, and exploitation priorities for the final project phase (M35–M48). The updated strategy builds on the experience gained during the first two project stages and aligns outreach activities with the availability of the project's emerging results and the evolving needs of its stakeholder communities. The main takeaways from this deliverable are:

- **Updated PEDR strategy:** Communication, dissemination, and exploitation activities have been reviewed and refined to maximise the visibility, uptake, and long-term impact of SpongeBoost's results during the final project phase.
- **Assessment of progress:** Progress against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for M19–M34 has been evaluated, highlighting successful activities, identifying areas for improvement, and informing updated targets for M35–M48.
- **Refined Key Exploitable Results (KERs):** The project's KERs have been presented with detailed information on ownership, target users, exploitation pathways, potential barriers, and measures to support their uptake beyond the project's lifetime.
- **Focus on impact:** Outreach activities increasingly target the dissemination and exploitation of concrete project results, with tailored communication towards researchers, practitioners, industry, policymakers, and other key stakeholder groups.
- **Priorities for the final phase:** The deliverable establishes the communication, dissemination, and exploitation priorities and KPIs that will guide SpongeBoost's final outreach activities and support the sustainability and exploitation of its results after the project concludes.

Executive summary

To maximise the impact of its outcomes, SpongeBoost developed its communication, dissemination, and exploitation strategies in D5.1 Plan for the Exploitation and Dissemination of Results (PEDR), submitted in Month 6 (M6). The initial strategy was reviewed and updated in D5.2 Plan for the Exploitation and Dissemination of Results (PEDR) – Update 1 (M18), reflecting the project's progress during its first 18 months and adapting the planned activities to evolving stakeholder engagement, project needs, and impact priorities. The current deliverable, D5.3 Plan for the Exploitation and Dissemination of Results (PEDR) – Update 2, constitutes the second revision of the PEDR. It presents the communication, dissemination, and exploitation activities planned for the project's third and final outreach phase (M35–M48). In addition, the document provides an updated overview of the project's Key Exploitable Results (KERs) and their most appropriate exploitation pathways, incorporating feedback collected from the project consortium.

Non-technical summary

To maximise the impact of EU-funded research, project results need to reach the people and organisations that can use them, including researchers, industry, policymakers, and the wider public. For this reason, SpongeBoost developed a communication, dissemination, and exploitation strategy at the start of the project to guide how its results would be shared, promoted, and translated into practical impact. As the project progresses and new results emerge, this strategy is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect evolving priorities, stakeholder engagement, and opportunities for uptake. This deliverable (D5.3) presents the second update of SpongeBoost's strategy. It reviews the communication, dissemination, and exploitation activities carried out to date, identifies the actions planned for the project's final phase, and ensures that the most effective channels are used to maximise the visibility and uptake of the project's results. The deliverable also updates the project's Key Exploitable Results (KERs), highlighting those with the greatest potential for scientific, commercial, societal, and policy impact, and outlining the most appropriate pathways to support their exploitation beyond the project's lifetime.

List of abbreviations

EU	European Union
IP	Intellectual Property
PEDR	Plan for the Exploitation and Dissemination of Results
DEC	Dissemination, Exploitation, and Communication
KER	Key Exploitable Result
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
WP	Work Package

1. Introduction

To maximise the short-, medium-, and long-term impact of SpongeBoost's results, a comprehensive communication, dissemination, and exploitation strategy was established in D5.1 Plan for the Exploitation and Dissemination of Results (PEDR), submitted in Month 6 of the project. The plan identified the project's key stakeholder groups, mapped its expected results, defined the tools and channels for communication, dissemination, and exploitation activities, and outlined a roadmap for promoting the project, engaging target audiences, and supporting the uptake of its results. Recognising that the project and its outcomes evolve, the PEDR was designed as a living document, with periodic updates to reflect progress, emerging opportunities, and changes in stakeholder engagement.

Following the first update delivered in D5.2 Plan for the Exploitation and Dissemination of Results (PEDR) – Update 1 (M18), the current deliverable, D5.3 Plan for the Exploitation and Dissemination of Results (PEDR) – Update 2, reviews the implementation and effectiveness of the communication, dissemination, and exploitation activities carried out to date and presents the strategy for the project's third and final outreach phase (M35–M48). It also provides an updated assessment of the project's Key Exploitable Results (KERs) and identifies the most appropriate exploitation pathways to maximise their scientific, commercial, societal, and policy impact beyond the project's lifetime.

2. Key Exploitable Results

As SpongeBoost has progressed, its Key Exploitable Results (KERs) have evolved in terms of maturity, potential users, and exploitation opportunities. Building on the initial assessment presented in D5.1 and refined in D5.2, this section provides an updated overview of the project's KERs and their exploitation potential. For each KER, the analysis identifies the lead result owners, target users, accessibility, intellectual property considerations, expected impact, potential barriers to exploitation, and the measures planned to facilitate uptake and long-term use beyond the project's lifetime. This assessment supports the consortium in maximising the scientific, commercial, societal, and policy impact of SpongeBoost's results.

KER1: State-of-the-art knowledge base on sponge functions and innovative solutions (finished)

- **Lead result owners:** UJEP, UFZ, STROMING
- **Description:** A structured knowledge base derived from the WP1 systematic literature review and integrated into the pan-European S.P.O.N.G.E. portal. It provides searchable information on sponge functions, climate adaptation, multifunctional benefits, best practices and innovative sponge solutions.
- **Main novelty:** Integration of scientific evidence and practical implementation experience in one portal. Users can search the literature-based knowledge database and directly relate findings to mapped restoration projects and measures across Europe, linking evidence, solutions and real-world examples.
- **Scale:** European, pan-European

- **Potential outcomes & impact:** Improved access to interdisciplinary evidence supporting restoration planning, policy development, research and the transfer of suitable sponge solutions across European contexts.
- **Accessible via:** The S.P.O.N.G.E. portal and SpongeBoost website, with links to the underlying literature and project sources.
- **Intellectual Property (IP):** Intended for public access and reuse. Rights to external publications and database content remain with their respective owners. The summations developed in the project follow the open access strategy specified in the Grant Agreement.
- **Potential users:** Policy-makers, researchers, water and land managers, public authorities, restoration practitioners, NGOs, and other interested stakeholders.
- **User exploitation beyond SpongeBoost:** Users can identify relevant sponge measures, assess available evidence and practical examples, and use this information for restoration planning, policy development, research and follow-up projects.
- **Barriers to exploitation and mitigation measures:** Evidence varies in methodology, geographic coverage and detail. Structured filters and transparent links to original sources help users interpret results according to their specific context. The literature database reflects the state of knowledge captured during WP1 and is not continuously updated with newly published papers.
- **Further development by partners beyond SpongeBoost:** STROMING plans to continue hosting S.P.O.N.G.E. beyond the project lifetime. Further expansion with additional projects, measures and knowledge may be pursued if suitable follow-up funding or projects become available.
- **Potential communication activities to support exploitation:** Demonstrations at scientific, policy and practitioner events; integration into the final roadmap; webinars and the final conference; targeted factsheets and social-media communication; promotion through partner networks and the Horizon Results Platform.

KER2: Prototyped methodology for post-restoration monitoring

- **Lead result owners:** UTARTU
- **Description:** Development and demonstration of Earth Observation-based approaches for post-restoration monitoring in selected restoration sites. The result provides practical guidance on the use of remote sensing for long-term monitoring, while recognising that monitoring solutions need to be adapted to specific ecosystems, restoration measures and assessment objectives. The findings can support wider uptake of post-restoration monitoring and future policy development.
- **Main novelty:** Development of an innovative and transferable monitoring approach that enables assessment of restoration success even where historical baseline data are limited.
- **Scale:** National, European
- **Potential outcomes & impact:** Public authorities, restoration practitioners, researchers and other stakeholders involved in ecosystem restoration and climate adaptation
- **Accessible via:** Project deliverables, technical guidance documents, scientific publications, policy briefs, training materials and project website

- **Intellectual Property (IP):** Open-access methodology and monitoring framework; scientific outputs subject to standard publication and citation practices
- **Potential users:** European and national environmental authorities, public authorities, environmental agencies, restoration agencies, river basin managers, land managers, conservation organisations, research institutions, researchers, monitoring institutions, funding organisations and bodies, NGOs, and practitioners implementing nature-based solutions.
- **User exploitation beyond SpongeBoost:** Application of the monitoring methodology in ecosystem restoration projects across Europe; integration into national monitoring programmes, restoration planning, reporting frameworks and long-term ecological assessment schemes.
- **Barriers to exploitation and mitigation measures:** Limited long-term funding for monitoring, variability in data availability and monitoring capacity across regions. Mitigation measures include development of standardised protocols, use of freely available Earth Observation data, capacity-building activities, and policy recommendations supporting dedicated monitoring funding.
- **Further development by partners beyond SpongeBoost:** Refinement and validation of monitoring indicators across additional ecosystem types and biogeographical regions; integration of emerging remote sensing products and climate datasets; development of decision-support tools for restoration planning and evaluation.
- **Potential communication activities to support exploitation:** Project website, social media, scientific publications, policy briefs, technical guidance documents, webinars, workshops, conference presentations, stakeholder meetings, demonstrations at restoration sites and engagement with EU and national restoration networks

KER3: Innovative approaches to assess the sponge potential under climate change

- **Lead result owners:** CIREF
- **Description:** Innovative approaches to assess the sponge potential of landscapes under climate change by integrating field measurements, remote sensing, hydrological modelling and case study validation to evaluate water retention capacity, hydrological connectivity and climate resilience of restoration measures.
- **Main novelty:** Development of a transferable assessment approach combining different methods and indicators, according to ecosystem characteristics and data availability, to evaluate sponge potential under different environmental and climatic conditions.
- **Scale:** Local, regional and European.
- **Potential outcomes & impact:** Improved assessment of sponge potential and restoration effects, supporting monitoring design, restoration planning, climate adaptation and the transfer of approaches to other sites.
- **Accessible via:** Deliverables D3.1, project reports, scientific publications, project website, workshops, presentations and stakeholder engagement activities.
- **Intellectual Property (IP):** Primarily open access. Assessment methodologies, scientific results and guidance are expected to be publicly available, while underlying datasets may remain subject to ownership agreements and data-sharing policies of project partners and case study sites.

- **Potential users:** Public authorities, researchers and research institutions, environmental agencies, river basin authorities and managers, hydrologists, researchers, environmental consultants, restoration practitioners, spatial planners, policy-makers and NGOs involved in water management, climate adaptation and ecosystem restoration.
- **User exploitation beyond SpongeBoost:** Application of the assessment approaches in other restoration and climate adaptation projects to evaluate sponge potential, select suitable indicators and monitoring methods, and assess restoration effects.
- **Barriers to exploitation and mitigation measures:** Differences in ecosystem characteristics, data availability and monitoring capacity may limit the direct transfer of approaches between sites. Mitigation measures include adaptable assessment methods, harmonised monitoring approaches and guidance on the selection of suitable indicators.
- **Further development by partners beyond SpongeBoost:** Continuation of monitoring and data analysis at selected case study sites to extend the available time series and further strengthen the evidence supporting the assessment of sponge potential.
- **Potential communication activities to support exploitation:** project's website, fact sheets, social media, scientific publications, conference presentations, workshops, webinars, training sessions for practitioners, stakeholder meetings and demonstration events at case study sites.

KER4: Recommendations for policy-makers

- **Lead result owners:** WI-EA
- **Description:** Policy recommendations at EU, national, regional and international levels to support the wider uptake and upscaling of landscape sponge restoration. The recommendations will link the scientific knowledge and evidence base generated in WPs 1 and 2 with practical experience and insights from WP3 to identify policy needs and strengthen the enabling policy environment for implementing and upscaling sponge restoration.
- **Main novelty:** An integrated policy framework that connects measurable evidence of landscape sponge functions with implementation experience and identifies how existing policy, planning and financing instruments can work together at catchment and landscape scale. Rather than treating sponge restoration as a separate policy area, it shows how it can help deliver multiple objectives across water, climate, biodiversity, agriculture and disaster-risk policy.
- **Scale:** European, national, regional and international
- **Potential outcomes & impact:** Greater recognition and uptake of natural sponge restoration within EU and national policy frameworks; improved coherence between climate adaptation, water, biodiversity, agriculture, flood-risk management and spatial-planning policies; stronger integration of natural water-retention measures into implementation programmes and public funding; and increased institutional support for landscape-scale restoration. In the longer term, this should contribute to more widespread implementation of measures that reduce flood and drought risks, improve water availability and quality, restore biodiversity and strengthen climate resilience.

- **Accessible via:** Zenodo, project website, policy briefs, workshops, policy roundtables, conference presentations, stakeholder platforms and dissemination activities
- **Intellectual Property (IP):** Open access
- **Potential users:** EU institutions, including European Commission services (e.g. DG Environment, DG CLIMA, DG AGRI, DG REGIO and CINEA), the European Environment Agency and the European Parliament; national, regional and local authorities and ministries; river basin and flood-risk management authorities; environmental and agricultural agencies; municipalities and spatial-planning authorities; policy networks; NGOs; restoration practitioners; researchers; funding institutions and financing bodies; international organisations; and relevant European and international policy and assessment processes working on climate adaptation, water management and ecosystem restoration.
- **User exploitation beyond SpongeBoost:** Policy-makers and authorities can use the recommendations when developing or revising climate-adaptation strategies, River Basin Management Plans, Flood Risk Management Plans, Nature Restoration Plans, CAP Strategic Plans, spatial plans and public-funding programmes. NGOs and practitioner networks can use them to support policy advocacy, capacity building and the preparation of restoration programmes. Research and innovation projects can apply the recommendations when translating evidence into policy and designing follow-up demonstration or implementation activities.
- **Barriers to exploitation and mitigation measures:** Potential barriers include fragmented responsibilities across policy sectors and administrative levels; limited awareness of sponge restoration and its multiple benefits; differing national and regional contexts; insufficient evidence at decision-relevant scales; short planning and funding cycles; and limited incentives for landowners and land managers. These barriers will be addressed by involving policy-makers and practitioners in developing and validating the recommendations; grounding recommendations in scientific evidence and practical cases; tailoring messages to relevant policy processes; identifying concrete policy and financing entry points; and communicating the recommendations through established European and national policy platforms.
- **Further development by partners beyond SpongeBoost:** WI-EA and project partners will continue to promote and apply the recommendations through their policy engagement, restoration programmes, partnerships and participation in European and national policy processes. The recommendations can be updated as new evidence emerges and adapted to specific countries, catchments and policy frameworks. They can also inform follow-up projects, funding proposals, implementation guidance and collaboration with public authorities, NGOs, researchers and financial actors.
- **Potential communication activities to support exploitation:** Targeted policy briefs; stakeholder workshops and policy roundtables; presentations at European and international conferences; engagement with EU institutions and national authorities; contributions to relevant Common Implementation Strategy groups and other EU stakeholder platforms; engagement through the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change, NetworkNature, Water Europe, Society for Ecological Restoration Europe; project and partner websites; newsletters; social media; and scientific and practitioner publications.

KER5: Prototype roadmap

- **Lead result owners:** UFZ
- **Description:** An integrated roadmap supporting the planning, implementation and upscaling of sponge solutions for enhancing landscape sponge functions. It synthesises SpongeBoost results into a practical pathway for policy-makers, land and water managers, restoration planners and practitioners.
- **Main novelty:** The roadmap goes beyond conventional restoration guidance by linking the different dimensions needed for implementation: hydrological effectiveness, multifunctional benefits, economic assessment, policy and governance instruments, success monitoring, and implementation barriers. This integrated approach should help to bridge the gap between scientific findings and policy demands.
- **Scale:** Regional, national, EU
- **Potential outcomes & impact:** Improved access to integrated, evidence-based guidance for selecting, adapting and upscaling sponge solutions. The roadmap can support restoration, water-management, land-use and climate-adaptation planning and contribute to relevant national and EU policy objectives.
- **Accessible via:** Publicly accessible by SpongeBoost's website, Horizon Results Platform, SpongeBoost's Zenodo community
- **Intellectual Property (IP):** open access
- **Potential users:** Policy-makers and regulators at regional, national and EU levels; public authorities; regional and local administrations; water and land managers; restoration planners and practitioners; conservation organisations; NGOs; researchers; landowners; farmers; professional networks; funding bodies; and other stakeholders involved in landscape restoration and climate adaptation.
- **User exploitation beyond SpongeBoost:** Users will be able to apply the roadmap as a reference and decision-support framework when designing restoration measures, adaptation strategies, land- and water-management plans and related funding or implementation programmes. Regions, projects and practitioner organisations may adapt relevant elements of the roadmap to their own environmental, socio-economic and governance contexts and combine them with locally available evidence.
- **Barriers to exploitation and mitigation measures:** Potential barriers include differences in environmental and socio-economic conditions across Europe, heterogeneous evidence and data availability, limited transferability of individual case-study results, fragmented responsibilities across policy sectors and administrative levels, and differences in technical capacity among potential users.
- **Further development by partners beyond SpongeBoost:** Individual roadmap components can be updated or adapted as new evidence, policies and implementation experience become available and reused in follow-up projects, regional applications and guidance activities.
- **Potential communication activities to support exploitation:** workshops, webinars, surveys, living labs

KER6: Topical collection on sponge functioning of landscapes

- **Lead result owners:** PENSOFT
- **Description:** SpongeBoost's topical collection serves to bring together the very wide experience from science, policy and hands-on restoration of wetland and coastal marine systems and to facilitate exchange among different disciplines. Established under the REST-COAST project, with SpongeBoost contributing publications and promoting the collection as a shared knowledge resource.
- **Main novelty:** Open-access knowledge hub integrating research, policy, and practice.
- **Scale:** Global
- **Potential outcomes & impact:** Increased visibility, knowledge exchange, uptake of research, and support for evidence-based restoration and policymaking.
- **Accessible via:** Nature Conservation Journal
- **Intellectual Property (IP):** Open-access publications; copyright retained by authors under the journal's licence.
- **Potential users:** Researchers, practitioners, policy-makers, public authorities and the wider public.
- **User exploitation beyond SpongeBoost:** Research, policy development, education, and restoration planning.
- **Barriers to exploitation and mitigation measures:** Targeted promotion
- **Further development by partners beyond SpongeBoost:** Long-term accessibility and promotion of the published collection by PENSOFT.
- **Potential communication activities to support exploitation:** News items, social media posts, newsletters, conferences.

3. Progress M19-M34

The initial strategy defined in D5.1 Plan for the Exploitation and Dissemination of Results (PEDR) structured SpongeBoost's outreach activities across three maturity stages: Introduction (M1–M18), Unfolding (M19–M34), and Maturity (M35–M48). During the second stage, the project transitioned from building awareness and establishing stakeholder networks towards actively promoting project outcomes, engaging target audiences, and supporting the uptake of emerging results.

3.1. Summary of DEC activities

Throughout the Unfolding stage, communication and dissemination activities increasingly focused on presenting SpongeBoost's progress, highlighting intermediate results, and translating technical developments into accessible materials tailored to different stakeholder groups. As key project outputs became available, dissemination efforts evolved from general project visibility activities towards more targeted actions aimed at researchers, industry actors, policymakers, and other relevant stakeholders. Continuous engagement with the stakeholder network helped maintain the relationships established during the Introduction stage, while feedback collected through these interactions supported the refinement of communication approaches and the identification of opportunities to maximise impact.

3.1.1 Website

To maximise visibility and accessibility, the project website was continuously updated throughout the reporting period. A key development was the restructuring of the **Case Studies section**, which was moved from About to Outputs and expanded with a dedicated overview and individual pages for each case study. This makes the selected research areas and the progress achieved so far more visible to stakeholders, while also providing information on the next phase of activities. Transparency and accessibility were further enhanced through a dedicated **factsheet** for each case study area, summarising the key information, challenges addressed and project activities in a concise, easy-to-understand format, supported by visual material. The factsheets are directly linked to the respective case study pages.

The **SpongeBooster of the Year** page was also regularly updated to ensure timely and transparent access to application deadlines, selection criteria and information on previous winners and their activities. This supports participation in the annual award while also providing visibility to recognised initiatives and demonstrating the principles underpinning the selection process.

The **S.P.O.N.G.E. platform** page was added as dedicated Output of WP1 and WP2, with a prominent homepage banner providing direct access to the platform. As more stakeholder-oriented materials became available, a new **Policy Briefs section** was also introduced in the Library, providing a clear and accessible entry point to the project's policy-related outputs.

3.1.2 Social media accounts

The intensified and more targeted social media activity has significantly strengthened the project's communication and dissemination capacity. Since the previous reporting period, the project's follower base on LinkedIn and Instagram has significantly grown (see Table 1), reflecting the sustained effort to provide regular, relevant and varied content through dedicated campaigns such as #SpongeBoostResearch, #SpongeBoostSites and #SpongeBoostSheets, alongside the promotion of scientific publications, project outputs and communication materials.

This growth is important not only in terms of increased visibility, but because it demonstrates the project's ability to build and retain an audience around its work. By consistently providing content that offers information and insights from the project, the communication activity has encouraged stakeholders and wider audiences to actively follow the project and remain connected to its progress. This creates an established and growing audience that can be reached directly as new research findings, case study results and other project outputs become available.

The campaigns also helped diversify the ways in which project knowledge is communicated, from scientific publications and case study developments to visual factsheets and multilingual communication materials. This allows the project to reach audiences with different levels of familiarity with the subject and to make project knowledge more accessible beyond the immediate research community. The continued use of the channels for project updates and dissemination materials therefore supports not only

visibility, but the longer-term dissemination and uptake of the project's results. Although the project's social media channels will no longer be actively maintained after the project's completion, they will remain available and may still be used to share any relevant results finalised after the project ends, as well as important announcements related to the project. Together with the project website, which will remain active for five years after the project's completion, these channels will continue to provide access to project information.

3.1.3 Promotional materials

Communication materials were further developed to strengthen the project's visibility and ensure that its results are presented consistently across different dissemination contexts. All promotional materials were reviewed and updated to ensure that they contain accurate and up-to-date project information. A joint **SpongeBoost–FERRO banner** was prepared for the SERE 2026 Conference, where the two projects co-hosted a stand. New A6 **promotional cards**, "Discover our results", were also developed to provide a concise and accessible introduction to key project results that can be easily shared with stakeholders during face-to-face interactions.

A project **poster template** was developed for partners to use at conferences, workshops and other dissemination events, providing a ready-to-use format for presenting SpongeBoost and ensuring a coherent visual identity across the consortium. As a result, dedicated **posters** were developed for key project outputs, including the S.P.O.N.G.E. platform and the project's comic books, providing a concise visual introduction to their purpose, content and relevance. Displayed at conferences and other dissemination events, they helped attract attention to these outputs and direct interested audiences towards the full resources. To maximise their reuse and reach, the output-specific posters were also made available through the project website in print-ready formats, enabling partners to re-use them across different dissemination opportunities.

3.1.4 Innovative Communications

Task 5.4, Innovative Communications, focuses on developing creative communication formats that increase awareness of sponge landscapes, make project knowledge accessible to non-specialist audiences and highlight inspiring examples of sponge landscape restoration.

A central activity under this task is the "SpongeBooster of the Year" award, developed by DUH in collaboration with PENSOFT. The award was established to recognise and give visibility to small initiatives demonstrating a strong commitment to the restoration of sponge landscapes, while also highlighting approaches that can inspire replication and wider uptake. The award considers not only restoration activities, but also aspects such as environmental education, public engagement and regional cooperation.

The first SpongeBooster of the Year award (2025) was awarded to Planar e.V. for its work restoring a degraded section of the Diemel River in Germany. The award was presented on-site on 20 June 2025, during a field visit to the restoration area near Marsberg. The event brought together project partners and local stakeholders, like local politicians and representatives from local industries. The field visit provided an

opportunity to showcase the restoration measures and their contribution to restoring natural sponge functions to important regional actors and helped to lay the foundations for further discussions on cooperation. Planar e.V. revitalised approximately 1.1 km of the Diemel River and reconnected around 20 hectares of floodplain, demonstrating how locally driven and comparatively low-cost measures can contribute to restoring river and floodplain functions.

The second award cycle was launched in October 2025, with applications accepted until the end of November. Following evaluation by the project consortium jury, the 2026 SpongeBooster of the Year was awarded to the Spanish Spongy Slopes initiative, led by Asociación Amigos de la Cornisa Este, for its community-driven restoration work in Camas, near Seville. The initiative demonstrates how nature-based measures, including infiltration trenches, terraces and erosion-control structures, can improve water retention and reduce erosion while also supporting biodiversity and community engagement. Around 250 volunteers, local organisations and the municipal administration have contributed to the initiative. The award was presented to the volunteers in Camas at the beginning of October 2026. A discussion took place with local politicians and the mayor of Camas, as well as with representatives of other local restoration projects, and a visit to the project site was organised. The winners benefited from the visibility and recognition the award brought and planned to work more closely with the local authorities. Among other things, the visit led to financial support being secured for the project to provide technical assistance for the work on the slopes, which had previously been carried out manually.

The 2026 award cycle also provided an opportunity to further develop and optimise the award mechanism. Based on experience from the first two cycles, the consortium decided to broaden the nomination process so that initiatives do not need to apply themselves and can instead be nominated by third parties. This change is intended to make the award more inclusive and facilitate the identification of relevant restoration initiatives across Europe.

The development of the SpongeBoost comic book series has been a key innovative communication activity under Task 5.4. The comic uses visual storytelling and the SpongeBoost character “Spongy” to visually communicate complex concepts related to sponge landscapes, climate adaptation, natural water retention and restoration in an accessible and engaging format.

The first issue, ‘Floods, Facts and Wetlands’, was completed in early 2025 and introduced Spongy while presenting key SpongeBoost concepts and messages to a broader, non-specialist audience. The second issue, ‘New Directions: Guided by Nature’, was completed and published in 2026, building on the first issue and further illustrating practical aspects of sponge landscape restoration along the source to sea approach and the multiple benefits of nature-based approaches.

Both comic issues are available through the project website and Zenodo in nine languages: English, German, French, Spanish, Bulgarian, Czech, Estonian, Dutch and Portuguese. This multilingual approach significantly broadens the accessibility and potential reach of the communication material across the project's target audiences and geographical areas.

The comic series has also been used as a physical communication and engagement tool, with printed copies disseminated at relevant scientific, stakeholder and public-facing events, including the World Biodiversity Forum 2026, SERE 2026 and Science Fair 2026. This combination of digital and printed dissemination has enabled the project to communicate its messages beyond specialist scientific audiences and directly engage practitioners, stakeholders, students and members of the wider public.

Together with the SpongeBooster of the Year award, the comic series represents an important component of SpongeBoost's innovative communication approach. While the award gives visibility and recognition to inspiring real-world restoration initiatives, the comic translates project concepts and knowledge into an accessible and engaging format, supporting wider awareness and understanding of sponge landscape restoration.

The third and final issue of the SpongeBoost comic book is currently in development and is expected to be published in spring 2027. It will build on the first two issues and bring the story of Spongy to a conclusion. Part three will further communicate the project's key knowledge, results and messages in an accessible and engaging format.

The SpongeBooster of the Month campaign was initially designed to introduce the project's partner institutions and present their roles within the SpongeBoost project. However, it was recognised that this partner-focused approach did not engage the audience as effectively as intended, prompting a rebranding of the campaign and a shift towards more audience-oriented content. The new approach focuses on showcasing interesting species, practical tools, innovative concepts and other inspiring examples related to nature-based solutions. By sharing fascinating facts, useful insights and practical examples, the campaign aims to make complex topics more accessible, engaging and relevant to a wider audience, while raising awareness of how nature-based solutions can address environmental challenges such as flooding, drought and biodiversity loss. Each month, a different project partner institution presents a new topic, combining the partners' expertise with content that offers greater informational value and appeals to the audience's interests. Following this change, the campaign achieved better results on social media compared with its previous format. Based on these positive outcomes, the rebranded approach will be maintained until the end of the project.

3.1.5 Electronic media

During this stage of the project, **four newsletters** were produced and disseminated through MailerLite. To further extend the project's reach, three of the four issues were additionally adapted and published on LinkedIn, providing an opportunity to engage audiences beyond the project's direct mailing list. The newsletters reached 242 LinkedIn subscribers and 91 MailerLite subscribers, demonstrating the value of using complementary communication channels to broaden the dissemination of project updates and results.

At the same time, the project continued to maintain the MailerLite newsletter as a dedicated dissemination channel in order to ensure that project information remained accessible to audiences who do not use social media, including LinkedIn. To further maximise accessibility and ensure long-term availability, all newsletter editions were

also published on the project website, allowing project updates to be accessed freely regardless of subscription status or social media use.

In addition, **six press releases** were produced and disseminated during this stage of the project, covering key project outputs and activities. These included the publication of the SpongeBoost comic book, the “Turning Evidence into Action for Sponge Landscapes” webinar, and the publication of a joint policy brief by SpongeBoost and the sister projects SpongeWorks and SpongeScapes. The press releases were disseminated through EurekAlert!, AlphaGalileo and the project website, supporting the wider visibility and uptake of key project outputs, activities and policy messages among relevant stakeholders and broader audiences.

3.1.6 Open science

The project has published **8 scientific papers** as part of the Special Issue Wetlands in a Changing Climate in Pensoft Publishers’ open-access journal Nature Conservation. The Special Issue was launched during an online event on 26 February 2026, attracting more than 300 participants and demonstrating strong international interest in wetland restoration and climate resilience. The event featured contributions from the SpongeBoost Coordinator, Mathias Scholz, and project partner Ute Susanne Kaden (UFZ), both lead authors within the collection.

In addition, particular attention was given to ensuring that SpongeBoost results remain easy to find, access, and cite through the project’s Zenodo community. This provides a durable entry point to the project’s knowledge and allows individual results to be accessed independently of the project website, supporting their further citation, sharing and reuse by researchers, practitioners and other stakeholders. The value of this approach is already reflected in the use of the materials published there. For example, the second SpongeBoost comic book, New directions: Guided by nature, available in nine languages since March 2026, has reached over 480 views and has been downloaded more than 300 times. The first joint policy brief, Advancing the Water Resilience Strategy through Sponge Landscapes and Nature-Based Solutions for a Climate Resilient Europe, developed together with the EU-funded projects MERLIN, SpongeScapes, SpongeWorks and FutureLakes, has reached more than 570 views and been downloaded over 290 times since its publication in March 2026. This is particularly relevant for the policy outputs, as making them openly available and easy to cite creates opportunities for their findings and recommendations to be further shared, referenced and considered in related research, practice and policy discussions.

3.1.7 Events

During the Unfolding stage, SpongeBoost partners disseminated project results and engaged with research, policy and practitioner communities through more than 30 conferences, workshops, webinars and stakeholder events across Europe. These activities provided opportunities to present the project’s approach and emerging results, exchange knowledge with relevant stakeholders, and establish links with related initiatives.

Project activities and results were presented through a range of formats, including conference presentations and posters, dedicated workshops and webinars. Key events included the 15th European Conference on Ecological Restoration (SERE

2026), the 8th European Congress of Conservation Biology, the 6th ESP Europe Conference and the SWS Europe Annual Meeting. Dedicated SpongeBoost activities included the Re-Sponging Iberia Workshop, the SpongeBoost webinar, the SPONGE TALK on Sponge Coalitions, and the launch of the Wetlands in a Changing Climate publication.

The project also supported dissemination and networking through collaboration with related EU-funded initiatives. For example, SpongeBoost promotional materials were shared through the FERRO 2nd General Assembly and the GENESIS clustering workshop, providing additional channels for the project and its activities to reach relevant audiences. These activities complemented the project's direct participation in conferences, workshops and other stakeholder events.

3.1.8 Living labs

Within SpongeBoost, Living Labs are understood as site-based, participatory processes in which project partners and local stakeholders jointly explore, discuss, test and evaluate approaches for improving sponge functions and implementing restoration under real-world conditions. They therefore represent an ongoing process of exchange and co-development rather than only individual events.
Living Lab activities within the case study sites focus on continuous dialogue, feedback, joint learning and co-development between local project partners and involved stakeholders affected by restoration planning and implementation. Depending on the site, this also includes local authorities, land and water managers, practitioners, steering groups and relevant regional or national authorities. These interactions provide space to discuss practical approaches and challenges, reflect on lessons learned, and use stakeholder feedback to refine ongoing implementation activities where appropriate. Representatives from other restoration projects and initiatives, as well as public authorities and specialist government agencies that are not directly involved in the site implementation, are also given opportunities to learn about the project, visit case study sites and discuss measures and local conditions directly with project partners. Where these interactions involve dialogue, feedback, joint learning or co-development related to restoration planning and implementation, they form part of the project's ongoing Living Lab approach.

The Living Lab approach therefore mainly builds on smaller, site-specific and recurring interactions with stakeholders who are directly connected to the respective restoration context. Larger international formats are treated as complementary activities and are mainly used to discuss broader questions around sponge approaches and to connect experiences across projects, including through cooperation with SpongeScapes and SpongeWorks. At European level, the main relevance lies in translating and upscaling lessons from the case study sites into policy recommendations and broader guidance for the implementation of sponge approaches across different regional and institutional contexts.

In this period, Living Lab activities within SpongeBoost began through a combination of larger exchange formats and smaller, site-specific stakeholder interactions. For example, SpongeBoost was involved in the workshop *"Co-creating pathways for wetland restoration"*, organised by CIREF in collaboration with the University of Santiago de Compostela and the WaterLANDS project in the Terras do Miño–Xistral landscape,

Spain, on 14–15 October 2026. The workshop brought together researchers, practitioners, government organisations and local stakeholders to exchange experiences on co-creation in wetland restoration. Through its focus on stakeholder engagement, shared learning and the practical application of co-creation approaches, the event provided an opportunity to connect experiences across projects and discuss their relevance for future restoration efforts. Further details on SpongeBoost's participation and contributions will be added based on information from the event organisers.

Alongside this exchange, Living Lab activities also began through smaller, site-specific outreach and stakeholder engagement activities at the case study areas, particularly in Weiße Elster, Schneifel, Serra do Xistral, Sotos de Alfaro and the Graminhais Plateau. These interactions provide opportunities to establish dialogue with stakeholders directly connected to the respective restoration contexts, exchange knowledge, discuss local conditions and challenges, and build relationships to support restoration planning and implementation. At the Weiße Elster case study, for example, stakeholder exchange involves several departments of the City of Leipzig, as well as authorities at Saxon state and federal levels. This illustrates the potential of the Living Lab approach to connect local restoration activities with wider administrative and governance structures from the outset. These activities represent initial steps in developing the Living Lab approach, with a few further opportunities anticipated in the next phase of the project.

3.1.9 Videos

Fifteen new videos were produced and published on the SpongeBoost project's YouTube channel, exceeding the planned output of 10 videos. The videos supported the project's communication and dissemination objectives by showcasing the people behind SpongeBoost, project activities and case studies, as well as key results and achievements.

The videos included:

- 11 videos produced as part of the "SpongeBoost Faces" campaign, introducing the people behind the project, their expertise and roles, and their contribution to the project's overall objectives.
- 1 field visit video, documenting a visit to the Serra do Xistral Peatlands case study site and highlighting the progress observed on the ground.
- 1 project highlights video, presenting key SpongeBoost activities, milestones and results achieved during 2025.
- 1 "Discover our results" video, showcasing the project's results and achievements presented at SERE 2026.
- 1 webinar recording, featuring the "Turning Evidence into Action for Sponge Landscapes" webinar. The recording was edited and made publicly available on YouTube and the project website, and further disseminated through the project's communication channels. This ensured that stakeholders and other interested audiences who were unable to attend the live event could access the content afterwards at their convenience.

Overall, the videos generated more than 700 views on YouTube, demonstrating continued audience engagement with the project's video content and providing an additional channel for disseminating SpongeBoost activities, results and knowledge beyond the project's direct events and activities.

3.2. Evaluation

In line with the approach established in D5.1, Table 1 provides an overview of the progress achieved against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) defined for SpongeBoost's communication, dissemination, and exploitation activities during the Unfolding stage (M19–M34). This overview enables the consortium to assess the effectiveness of implemented actions, identify areas for improvement, and determine which successful approaches should be further strengthened during the final project phase.

Detailed information on the individual communication and dissemination activities conducted by SpongeBoost partners is available through the Continuous Reporting module of the Funding & Tenders Portal under the dedicated sections for Publications, Dissemination Activities, Communication Activities, and Datasets.

Table 1. Progress of SpongeBoost's communication, dissemination and exploitation tools with KPIs for the second project stage (M19-M34)

**Abbreviations for stakeholder groups: A=Academia (researchers & research institutes), P=Policy makers and regulators (at local, regional, national and EU levels) R=Restoration community) WL=Water and Land managers, L=Local stakeholders (civil society, administration and government), S=Society (citizens, media)*

Tool	Type of DEC activity	Target groups	Target KPIs M19-M34	Outreach KPIs Progress
Website	C & D	All	News items: ≥50 Total visits ≥12000; Actions/visit ≥3	News items: 50 Total visits: 8,521 Actions/visit: 2.1
Social media networks	C & D	All	Total Posts: ≥200; Total Reposts: ≥150; New followers: ≥150; Interactions/post: ≥5; Website traffic: ≥700	Total Posts: 497 Total Reposts: 121 New followers: 505 Interactions/post: 7.5 Website traffic: 242

Tool	Type of DEC activity	Target groups	Target KPIs M19-M34	Outreach KPIs Progress
Promotional materials	C	All	10 materials produced; ≥ 300 materials distributed; disseminated at ≥ 20 events	18 materials produced; >360 materials distributed; disseminated at ≥ 43 events
Video	C & D	S	10 videos produced; ≥ 100 views/video	15 videos produced; 701 views (YouTube); ~47 views/video
Coordinated press releases	C & D	S	≥ 2 press releases issued; no. of downloads/visits >1500/press release	6 press releases issued; Visits 9,668 in total; >1611.3/press release
Newsletters	C & D	All	4 newsletters; no. of subscribers + 50/year, no. of opens >50%	4 newsletters subscribers +14/year (MailerLite); +306 (LinkedIn); no. of opens >47.29% (MailerLite); *In this period, a LinkedIn newsletter was launched as an alternative channel to expand our reach and connect with a wider audience.*
Scientific publications	D	A	Number of peer-reviewed publications ≥ 2	peer-reviewed publications ≥ 8; 1 preprint

Tool	Type of DEC activity	Target groups	Target KPIs M19-M34	Outreach KPIs Progress
Presentations at events and conferences	D	A	>30 international & national events where the project was presented	>40 international & national events where the project was presented
Guidelines for practitioners	D & E	R, WL, L	3 guidelines for practitioners published on the project website	*The publication and dissemination of the planned guidelines for practitioners are rescheduled for the next period. Preparatory work was initiated during the current period, with two guidelines currently under development and a third planned.*
Joint activities with sister project/s	C & D	R, WL, L, P	≥ 5 activities completed	1 joint workshop was organised with the Horizon 2020 WaterLANDS project by CIREF, in collaboration with Wetlands International and WI-EA. *Further joint activities with sister projects and other relevant EU-funded projects are planned for the next reporting stage, with the aim of strengthening collaboration and expanding joint efforts.*

Tool	Type of DEC activity	Target groups	Target KPIs M19-M34	Outreach KPIs Progress
Joint workshops & webinars with sister and other projects	D & E	R, WL, L, P	≥ 2 joint webinars or workshops with relevant projects	*SpongeBoost, in collaboration with its sister projects SpongeScapes and SpongeWorks,* ***developed two joint policy briefs****, one of which was presented at a SpongeBoost webinar. The projects maintain regular communication and coordinate promotional activities, with further joint activities planned for the next stage.*
Policy briefs	D & E	P	≥ 2 policy briefs developed	2 policy briefs developed
Training activities & tutorial materials	D & E	R, WL, L, A	≥ 5 training activities conducted; and/or tutorial materials prepared	1 workshop organised by CIREF together with WIEA during the RestauraRios Conference. *Training activities and the development of tutorial materials will be a focus during the final stage of the project.*
Living Labs	D & E	R, WL, L	≥ 2 Living Labs organised	*Living Lab activities initiated at selected case study sites, alongside the cross-project workshop "Co-creating pathways for wetland restoration" in Terras do Miño–Xistral, Spain, and will be continued in the next project phase.*

Tool	Type of DEC activity	Target groups	Target KPIs M19-M34	Outreach KPIs Progress
Mid-term conference	C, D & E	R, WL, L, S	Preparations for the Mid-term Science Café will begin during this stage, with the session taking place at M24 of the project.	The Mid-term conference KPI was fulfilled through M26 Mid-term Science Café, held during the SpongeBoost Annual Meeting in March 2026.

4. Implementation Plan for M35-48

As SpongeBoost enters its maturity phase (M37–M48), its Communication, Dissemination, and Exploitation (CDE) strategy will focus on consolidating project results and supporting their continued use beyond the project's lifetime. This phase will place particular emphasis on showcasing the results and outputs developed throughout the project, continuing to develop and refine them, and creating communication and dissemination materials that will remain available after the project ends.

The implementation plan will also support the use of the Horizon Results Platform and other relevant EU platforms to promote project outputs and facilitate their visibility among potential users and interested stakeholders. Where appropriate, public deliverables will be made visible there as exploitable project results. It is planned to publish at least the field results of WP3 (e.g. D3.1, 3.2) and the final SpongeBoost Roadmap (D4.4), which represents the key final project result.

Open science and the long-term accessibility of research outputs will remain important priorities, including the continued use of Zenodo and other appropriate open-access repositories, as well as the publication of scientific papers and other relevant research outputs.

4.1.1 Deepen stakeholder engagement

During the Unfolding stage of the project, stakeholder engagement included field visits and case study activities. In the final stage, these activities will continue, with further visits providing opportunities to exchange knowledge, follow progress and strengthen relationships with local stakeholders. The case study factsheets developed during the previous stage will now be actively disseminated, providing stakeholders with an accessible overview of the challenges, activities and results in each area and supporting further discussion and exchange. Further case study activities, including a workshop planned for 2027, as well as local stakeholder meetings and Living Lab activities, will create opportunities to discuss emerging findings, share practical experience and gather feedback. Together, these activities will strengthen the link between project

results and the stakeholders who can apply, adapt and further disseminate the knowledge generated by SpongeBoost.

4.1.2 Targeted dissemination of project results

Dissemination activities will focus on ensuring that SpongeBoost results reach the audiences best placed to use and build on them. Individual outputs will therefore be communicated through targeted approaches aligned with the relevant audiences and the dissemination pathways identified for the project's Key Exploitable Results (KERs). During RP3, this will include the continued dissemination of scientific and practitioner results through publications, conferences and professional networks, alongside more accessible formats such as factsheets, policy briefs, news items, social media and the project website. Particular attention will be given to emerging research and practitioner outputs on topics including interviews, remote sensing, peatland and floodplain restoration, sponge-function assessment and hydrological monitoring. Targeted workshops, stakeholder meetings, policy events, webinars and Living Lab activities will complement these channels where direct exchange is needed. This approach will help move results beyond publication by connecting them with researchers, practitioners, policymakers and other stakeholders who can further apply, adapt or disseminate the knowledge generated by SpongeBoost.

4.1.3 Facilitate knowledge exchange

SpongeBoost will continue to facilitate knowledge exchange through conferences, workshops, co-design activities and webinars, providing opportunities to share project findings, exchange practical experience and learn from related initiatives. Participation in international and national events focused on wetlands, water management, Nature-based Solutions, restoration and climate adaptation will help connect SpongeBoost results with wider research and practitioner communities. Collaboration with sister and related projects will remain an important part of this effort. During RP2, this included joint policy briefs, conference activities and other collaborative initiatives. In RP3, further joint activities with SpongeWorks, SpongeScapes, MERLIN and other relevant projects will support the exchange of approaches and lessons learned, while connecting complementary results and strengthening the wider knowledge base on sponge landscapes and restoration.

4.1.4 Advance policy and practice uptake

SpongeBoost will continue to translate its findings into accessible policy-oriented materials, including policy briefs, recommendations, factsheets and synthesis reports summarising key findings, lessons learned and good practices. These materials will present evidence and practical recommendations on the implementation, monitoring and upscaling of nature-based solutions, helping policymakers and other relevant actors identify opportunities to integrate the project's results into policy development, planning and implementation.

Two joint policy briefs have already been published: Achieving Better Implementation of EU Policies by Restoring the Sponge Function, developed with SpongeScapes and

SpongeWorks, and Advancing the Water Resilience Strategy through Sponge Landscapes and Nature-Based Solutions for a Climate Resilient Europe, developed jointly with MERLIN, SpongeWorks, SpongeScapes and FutureLakes.

Further policy outputs will focus on how agricultural policy, public funding and other policy instruments can support landscape-scale restoration and natural water-retention measures. These recommendations will be developed through the M4.3 CAP-focused report and feed into the project's wider policy recommendations and final roadmap. A further policy brief on the use of remote sensing for assessing wetland restoration may also be developed, where the results provide a sufficiently relevant basis for a dedicated policy-oriented output.

4.1.5 Synergies

A scientific poster presenting the SpongeBoost comic book is planned for the Nature Networks conference in Paris in November 2026, with potential use at other events. This will provide an opportunity to present the project's results in a concise and accessible format and increase their visibility among relevant professional audiences. In the next reporting period, SpongeBoost will also continue its Living Lab activities, maintaining engagement with local stakeholders and supporting the exchange of knowledge and experience on nature-based solutions. In addition, at least one SpongeBoost webinar will be organised to present project findings, share practical insights and engage relevant stakeholders and interested audiences. Synergies with sister and related projects will remain an important part of the dissemination activities. Collaboration with the sister projects SpongeScapes and SpongeWorks has developed into a strong and continuous exchange, extending well beyond mutual communication and cross-promotion. In 2026, the projects jointly contributed to several policy briefs, accompanied by dissemination activities including a policy event in Brussels and a webinar. Scientific exchange was further strengthened through joint conference activities, including the IALE-D conference in Hildesheim. Further cooperation is planned through the NetworkNature Science-Policy Dialogue in Paris in November 2026. Looking ahead to 2027, joint scientific sessions and symposia have been proposed for the SWS Europe Annual Meeting and IALE conferences, alongside plans for a joint final symposium. These activities will support the exchange and synthesis of complementary project findings, strengthen science-policy dialogue and promote the wider uptake of landscape sponge restoration approaches across Europe.
Building on the existing collaboration with SpongeScapes and SpongeWorks, including the joint development of policy briefs and participation in shared events, further opportunities for cooperation will be explored with MERLIN, FutureLakes and other relevant EU-funded projects. These activities will help connect complementary results, facilitate knowledge exchange and extend the reach of SpongeBoost's findings across wider professional and stakeholder networks.

4.1.6 Long-term impact

SpongeBoost will ensure that project results remain accessible, discoverable and usable beyond the project's lifetime through their continued availability in established dissemination platforms and open-access repositories. The Horizon Results Platform and other relevant EU platforms will support the visibility and further promotion of project results, facilitating their discovery by relevant stakeholders and their potential up-

take. In particular, KER4, Policy recommendations for enabling and upscaling landscape sponge restoration, has been identified as a suitable result for the Horizon Results Platform and is expected to be finalised by M42 (June 2027), as well as SpongeBoost's comic book and the S.P.O.N.G.E platform. The project will also use the Horizon Results Booster and continue collaboration with SpongeScapes and SpongeWorks to strengthen opportunities for the further use and uptake of relevant results. The permanent SpongeBoost community on Zenodo will ensure the continued availability and citability of deposited project outputs beyond the project's lifetime. Similarly, scientific papers published in Pensoft journals will remain accessible through the journals' platforms and will continue to be promoted through relevant dissemination channels, supporting their long-term visibility and reach.

Table 2. Overview of SpongeBoost's communication, dissemination and exploitation tools with KPIs for the third project stage (M35-M48)

**Abbreviations for stakeholder groups: A=Academia (researchers & research institutes), P=Policy makers and regulators (at local, regional, national and EU levels) R=Restoration community) WL=Water and Land managers, L=Local stakeholders (civil society, administration and government), S=Society (citizens, media)*

Tool	Type of DEC activity	Target groups	Output KPIs	Outreach KPIs
Website	C & D	All	News items: ≥40; Uploaded documents:10	Number of visits: ≥ 10 000; Number of returning visitors: 40%; Average session duration: 180s Actions/visit: ≥2.5
Social media networks	C & D	All	Number of posts:170 Number of reposts: 100	Number of new followers: 300 Interactions/post: ≥4 Traffic to SpongeBoost's website: 400 users

Tool	Type of DEC activity	Target groups	Output KPIs	Outreach KPIs
Promotional materials	C	All	Awareness-raising promotional materials were created in the previous stages, and the focus is now shifting to results-focused materials (e.g., policy briefs).	
Video	C & D	All	10 videos produced;	≥100 views/video
Coordinated press releases	C & D	S	≥ 2 press releases issued;	Views/press release: >1500
Newsletters	C & D	All	Number of newsletters: 2	Number of new subscribers: 50 Open rate: 60% Link-click rate: 20% Unsubscribe rate: <5%
Scientific publications	D	A, R, WL, L	Number of peer-reviewed publications: ≥ 10	** SpongeBoost would like to not focus on the impact factors of target journals, but rather on qualitative evaluation based on each paper's statistics such as citations. These, however, are cumulative and require more than one project stage to be accurately determined.*

Tool	Type of DEC activity	Target groups	Output KPIs	Outreach KPIs
Presentations at events and conferences	D	A, R, WL, L	>20 international & national events where the project was presented	>100 materials disseminated
Guidelines for practitioners	D & E	R, WL, L	3 guidelines for practitioners published on the project website	≥100 downloads
Joint activities with sister project/s and other EU-funded projects	C & D	R, WL, L, P	≥ 2 activities completed	>20 participants
Joint workshops & webinars with sister and other projects	D & E	R, WL, L, P	≥ 1 joint webinar or workshop with relevant projects	>50 participants
Policy briefs	D & E	P	Number of policy briefs: 1 Published on platforms: ≥2	Downloads/Opens: 150/item Distributed to: ≈5 relevant networks
Training activities & tutorial materials	D & E	R, WL, L	≥ 2 training activities conducted; and/or tutorial materials prepared	≈30 participants/ activity Downloads/Opens: 50/material

Tool	Type of DEC activity	Target groups	Output KPIs	Outreach KPIs
Living Labs	D & E	R, WL, L	1-2 Living Labs organised	>15 participants
Final Conference	D & E	S, A, R, WL, L, P	This KPI is related to the M17 Final conference organized and will be achieved by 31 October 2027.	≈50 participants
EU Platforms	D & E	S, P, A, R, WL, L	≥3 results on the Horizon Results Platform ≥1 CORDIS news item Use of Horizon Result Booster	

5. Outlook

As SpongeBoost enters its maturity stage (M35–M48), the focus of communication, dissemination and exploitation activities will shift towards communicating and supporting the uptake of the project's final results. The remaining scientific and case study results will contribute to the synthesis in WP4, which will include recommendations for policymakers and practitioners, guidance on transformative processes and, ultimately, the final SpongeBoost Roadmap (D4.4), representing the project's main integrative output. These results will provide a basis for sharing practical lessons and informing future approaches to landscape sponge restoration.

During the final project phase, SpongeBoost will continue to strengthen its strategic collaboration with its sister projects, SpongeScapes and SpongeWorks. Building on the existing practice of mutual visibility and cross-promotion, opportunities will be sought to present complementary project results jointly, particularly through shared appearances and sessions at relevant European conferences and other stakeholder events. Where appropriate, communication activities will continue to present the three projects together, strengthening their collective visibility and facilitating exchange across the wider European sponge landscape community. SpongeBoost will also continue its Living Lab activities and organise at least one project webinar during the next reporting period, providing further opportunities to share project findings, exchange experiences and engage relevant stakeholders.

The final phase will culminate in several key outputs and milestones, including the Final Conference (M5.1), the Open Science Collection (D5.5), the Collection of Innovative Communication Material (D5.6), and the Final Roadmap (D4.4). These outputs will support the communication of the project's findings to scientific, policy and practitioner audiences. Where appropriate, public deliverables will be made visible through the Horizon Results Platform and SpongeBoost's Zenodo community, supporting the continued accessibility, discoverability and potential use of project results beyond the project lifetime.

The final PEDR (D5.4) in M48 will provide a concluding assessment of the achievement of KPIs, as well as the communication, dissemination and exploitation activities. Together with the Final Research Data Management Plan (D6.5), it will further assess the project's dissemination achievements and the arrangements supporting the continued accessibility and potential uptake of SpongeBoost results.