



Dissemination and sustainability

Milan Gocić
University of Niš

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What is dissemination?

Dissemination is the process of making the results and deliverables of a project available to the stakeholders and to the wider audience.

Dissemination is crucial for the success of the project and for the sustainability of outputs in the long term.

Purpose of dissemination

Dissemination should have a purpose and support a project development in some way.

- **Raise awareness** – let others know what you are doing
- **Inform** – educate the community
- **Engage** – get input/feedback from the community
- **Promote** – ‘sell’ your outputs and results
- **Make sustainable** – ensure that the effects will be sustained after the project.

Defining the purpose of dissemination is a first step to developing a dissemination and sustainability strategy.

Dissemination strategy

Each project must develop a **dissemination strategy**, as a part of the overall project plan.

The dissemination strategy needs to explain how the visibility of the project outputs and outcomes will be maximized, and how the project outcomes will be shared with stakeholders, relevant institutions, organisations, and individuals.

It should be planned in consultation with the project partners and explain:

- **What you plan to disseminate** – the message
- **To whom** – the audience
- **Why** – the purpose
- **How** – the method
- **When** – the timing

Sustainability strategy

In addition to a dissemination strategy, project must also develop a **sustainability strategy** outlining what should happen to the project outputs at the end of the project, and to explore how they can be sustained.

Like the dissemination strategy, it will consider the processes necessary for embedding, and take-up by the community.

However, where dissemination tends to focus on activities to inform, educate, and engage, sustainability tends to focus on models and scenarios.

Sustainability strategy

- **Access** – Who will host the deliverables after the project ends? Will they be available on the project website? Have other arrangements for hosting been made?
- **Preservation** – Where will the deliverables be preserved?
- **Maintenance** – What supporting documentation will be needed to maintain deliverables, e.g. specifications, user manuals, technical manuals? Will any ongoing maintenance be needed and what will it cost?
- **Intellectual property (IP)** – What IP rights need to be cleared to make sure deliverables can be accessible to the teaching, learning, and community after the project ends

Stakeholder analysis

The dissemination and sustainability strategies should be based on a stakeholder analysis.

A **stakeholder** is anyone who has a vested interest in the project or will be affected by its outcomes.

A **stakeholder analysis** is an exercise in which stakeholders are identified, listed, and assessed in terms of their interest in the project and importance for its success, dissemination and sustainability.

Language

Project often develops deliverables that are technically difficult and complex. This is fine for internal discussions, but not for dissemination.

Dissemination activities should use **language** that is **non-technical** and **understandable for the target audience**.

Stakeholders need to know what has been achieved and why it is important.

The same messages can be used for dissemination to different audiences, but the language should be adapted for each audience.



Dissemination channels

- Publications
- Conferences and workshops
- Collaborative events
- Website
- Social networks



Publications

Publications present the project describing its results i.e. disseminate project results.

When they use a language that is appropriate for the target audience, publications can add to the visibility of the project.

Conferences and workshops

Conferences, workshops, or case studies based on the project can ensure that the project has a high profile, that the community learns from its achievements, and that the outputs are embedded and taken up.

They also offer the advantage that communication can go in both directions: members of the target community can be invited to contribute ideas and brainstorm about ways to make use of the project results.

Thinking early in the project about the use of results will maximise the impact of dissemination and the sustainability of its outputs.

Collaborative events

Activities to disseminate results for clusters of related projects are not only more cost effective, but also often have more impact than those at project level.

Practitioners are more likely to attend a meeting presenting the results of several projects than of one project.

Website

Most projects create a web page or web site to explain the project aims and objectives and to disseminate information about project activities and results.

As a dissemination vehicle, websites can include publicity the project has created, journal articles, publications, and presentations at conferences.

Some project websites also make their deliverables available. It is important to think of what would interest and engage the people who will visit the site and attract visitors, e.g. reports, designs, models, evaluation criteria, guidelines, demos, questionnaires, etc.

Website

Other useful hints are to:

- make the website attractive and easy to use, with intuitive navigation
- keep the website up to date
- submit the website to key search engines so it gets lots of traffic
- ask key websites on similar topics to link to yours
- use a link checker and make sure there are no broken links
- make sure it follows best practice in accessibility for disabled users

Ensuring sustainability of project results

The outcomes may relate to what people will be able to do better, faster, or more efficiently because of what the project has achieved.

The project outputs may include tools, models, guidelines, methods, case studies, or recommendations that can be taken up by the community. What is necessary to encourage the take-up, use, and adoption of these outputs? How can they be made available and accepted?

Ensuring sustainability of project results

A next step is to think if there will be any project deliverables or outputs that will be sustainable in the long term. There may be outputs (e.g., tools, guidelines, protocols, ...) that could be used by other projects or that are useful for the research community. These outputs should be identified, as well as who will want them, and why.

The last step is to think through **sustainability scenarios for the outputs that should live on after the project**. Think about who might carry them forward, how, and the issues that will need to be addressed to make these outputs self-sustaining.



Milan Gocić

University of Nis, Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture
milan.gocic@gaf.ni.ac.rs

<http://rc5.gaf.ni.ac.rs/dec/mgocic/indexen.html>