

# **COST Action CA20112**

## **PROFEEDBACK**

**Platform OF policy Evaluation  
community for improvED EU policies and  
Better ACKnowledgement**

### **Communication and Dissemination Plan 2.0**

This document is based upon work from COST Action PROFEEDBACK, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).

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## 1. Introduction

This document presents the updated Communication and Dissemination Plan (hereinafter referred to as the Plan) for the COST Action PROFEEDBACK - Platform OF policy Evaluation community for improved EU policies and Better ACKnowledgement (hereinafter referred to as the Action).

The objective of this Plan is to provide a comprehensive framework for all communication and dissemination activities of the Action, ensuring that information is effectively conveyed to the relevant stakeholders. The Plan outlines the main communication objectives, defines target audiences, selects appropriate channels, and tailors messages to reach different stakeholders.

This document will serve as a strategic and operational guide for the Action, ensuring that results, outcomes, and findings are shared in a timely manner and using the most effective methods. Additionally, it ensures alignment with the broader goals of the European Commission's communication strategies and COST guidelines.

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the Plan lies with the **Scientific Communication Task Force**, in close collaboration with the **Innovation and Exploitation Task Force**. Regular reviews of the Plan will ensure its continuous alignment with the evolving needs of the Action and the requirements of the stakeholders.

Amendments, suggestions, and updates to the Plan should be directed to the **Science Communication Coordinator** via the official contact at [profeedback@hetfa.hu](mailto:profeedback@hetfa.hu).

The first version of the Plan was accepted by the Management Committee on **20 May 2022**. This updated version of the Plan has been revised and approved in **November 2024**, following the second year of the Action, in line with the evolving needs and objectives identified by Month 25.

## 2. Action background

### 2.1. Description of PROFEEDBACK

Policy evaluation is a key tool in understanding, developing and modernising EU policies, thus there is a growing demand for EU-wide and high-quality evaluation services. The aim of the PROFEEDBACK COST Action-funded project that runs between November 2021 and October 2025 is to foster the networking of the policy evaluation community at EU-level, raise awareness on the importance of evaluation policy research and improve its impact on policy-making. The Platform, following a bottom-up and open approach, gathers researchers and professionals from various scientific fields and sectors to present and evaluate theories, topics, tools and methods of policy evaluation. This objective is achieved by the assessment of good practices that provides direct and high-quality inputs for national and EU bodies responsible for policy evaluation.

### 2.2. Implementation of PROFEEDBACK

Smooth project implementation is ensured by the following management structures:

- > Management Committee (MC), responsible for decision-making
- > Core Group (CG), responsible for the coordination and management:
  - Action Chair
  - Vice-Chair and Grant Holder
  - WG Leaders and WG Vice-Leaders
  - STSM Coordinator
  - Training School Manager

- Science Communication Manager
- Innovation and Exploitation Manager
- Peer-to-peer Learning Manager

Underpinned by the work of the:

- > Working Groups (WGs):
  - WG1 - Theoretical concept of policy evaluation
  - WG2 - Quantitative methods and data collection
  - WG3 - Qualitative and participatory methods
- > Task Forces:
  - Training School Task Force
  - Science Communication Task Force
  - Innovation and Exploitation Task Force
  - Peer-to-peer Learning Task Force

## 3. Communication and Dissemination Plan

### 3.1. Internal communication

#### 3.1.1. Principles

Efficient communication within the network is essential for project success. It needs to be:

- > adequate (in the right format and right content),
- > specific (with pre-defined specific goals),
- > sufficient (providing all the necessary information),
- > concise (brief, avoiding repetition and non-important information),
- > timely (at the right time).

#### 3.1.2. Channels and tools

Regular communication takes place via email, phone calls as well as online video calls. The Action makes great use of digital communication tools such as Zoom or Google tools. Minutes will be sent out after each meeting and stored for audit trail.

A shared file storage space (Google Drive) with well organised file structure and permissions will be created, as well as a full list of contact details (who's who in the project and how to reach them).

The e-COST platform (online platform of COST Association) plays an important role as well, through which network members receive notifications about the Action to which they have subscribed.

#### 3.1.3. Meeting frequency

Setting a meeting cadence for the Action is essential to ensure efficient follow-up with network members.

The recommended frequency of meetings is defined as follows:

- > The Management Committee (MC) meets online quarterly and offline at least once a year,
- > The Working Groups (WGs) hold regular online meetings (recommended frequency: once per month but at least once every 3 months),
- > The WGs and Task Forces meet offline at least once every half a year combined with the Action's half-yearly conferences.

The number of meetings can change, depending on workload and tasks.

## 3.2. External communication

### 3.2.1. Objectives

In general, the objectives of the PROFEEDBACK Action’s communication and dissemination strategy are defined as follows:

- > Inform main target groups about the Action’s objectives, evaluation and results,
- > Foster dialogue and knowledge exchange on the topics addressed by the Action,
- > Promote the Action’s deliverables such as the PROFEEDbooks, the PROFEEDcourses and the PROFEEDbase,
- > Ensure the visibility of the Action and COST funding.

### 3.2.2. Key messages

The key messages of the Action are centred around the three keywords of the Action.

| Keyword                     | Message  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Policy evaluation</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Importance of a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach in policy evaluation</li> <li>&gt; Scientific, technological and socioeconomic impacts of policy evaluation</li> <li>&gt; Innovative aspects of PROOFEDBACK in the field of policy evaluations</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Evaluation research</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Proposition of research agenda for policy evaluation</li> <li>&gt; Highlighting of current research questions, possible theories and methodologies</li> <li>&gt; Scientific improvement of policy evaluation research</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Evaluation community</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Importance of cross-border cooperation within the broader scientific community of policy evaluation</li> <li>&gt; Benefits of standardized norms, rules, responsibilities and proper practices of the evaluation community at the EU level</li> <li>&gt; Role of efficient scientific discussion within the evaluation community</li> <li>&gt; Awareness-raising on pressing issues of the research community</li> </ul> |

In addition, PROFEEDBACK puts special focus in their key messages on the engagement opportunities with the civil society and the general public. The Action’s messages seek to provide an “insider” perspective and communicate scientific results in an understandable way to the general public.

### 3.2.3. Main target groups and outreach methods

Each target group has a different outreach method and objective. More specifically, we distinguish several levels of objectives: inform // foster // promote.

| Target group  | Outreach method  | Communication objective |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| <b>Broader scientific community of policy evaluation with</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Inviting academics as keynote speakers or participants at events</li> <li>&gt; Calls for scientific articles and capacity building activities</li> </ul> | FOSTER                  |

|   |   |         |
|---|---|---------|
| <b>multidisciplinary background</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Direct e-mails, newsletter, website, social media</li> <li>&gt; Supporting the publication of conference papers in academic journals</li> </ul>   |         |
| <b>Professionals from the business sphere</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Network of proposers</li> <li>&gt; Calls for capacity building activities</li> <li>&gt; Direct e-mails, newsletter, website, social media</li> </ul>  | PROMOTE |
| <b>Associations dealing with policy evaluation at national and European levels</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Network of proposers</li> <li>&gt; Invitation to conferences</li> <li>&gt; Direct e-mails, newsletter, website, social media</li> </ul>   | FOSTER  |
| <b>University and PhD students from various scientific fields</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Calls for scientific articles and invitation to the conferences to share findings, find partners for co-publication and peers to support their professional development</li> <li>&gt; Calls for capacity building activities</li> <li>&gt; Personal contacts of proposers</li> <li>&gt; Newsletter, website, social media, podcasts</li> </ul>  | PROMOTE |
| <b>Policy-makers responsible for policy evaluation at national and European level</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Direct invitations to PROFEEDBACK conferences</li> <li>&gt; Offering the possibility of peer-to-peer learning</li> <li>&gt; National events back-to-back to half-yearly conferences</li> <li>&gt; Direct e-mails, personal briefings, newsletter, website</li> <li>&gt; Policy briefs</li> </ul>  | FOSTER  |
| <b>General Public interested by science and science policy</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Inviting representatives of civil society to attend conferences</li> <li>&gt; Identify appropriate third-party events to reach their audience as appropriate (e.g. info stand at a festival)</li> <li>&gt; place a number of interviews on the importance of cross-border collaboration with human interest stories in mainstream media (print/TV/radio)</li> <li>&gt; Website, social media, podcasts, one-pagers, videos</li> </ul> | INFORM  |

As for the hierarchy of the target groups, the groups listed below are equally important and targeted, however segmentation will be used as principle to efficiently target resources and messaging at the specific target groups with the right key messages and channels.

### 3.2.5. Channels and tools

During the Action, target audiences are reached through different channels and tools, including online platforms, on-site events and printed materials. KPIs and target figures are listed in section 4. below.

Beside the network's own channels, results and deliverables of the Action are published and promoted on:

- > the COST website
- > platforms of the EC (to be agreed with EC and different DGs)
- > platforms of European and national evaluation associations
- > platforms of line ministries in different European countries.

### Recommendations based on reviews

After 24 months, an external expert conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the PROFEEDBACK project to assess its progress, effectiveness, and areas for improvement. The results of this evaluation were documented in the **CA20112 PR2 Rapporteur Review**, which provided detailed feedback on various aspects of the project, including communication, dissemination, and the use of digital platforms.

The evaluation highlighted key strengths in the project's foundation but also identified areas where improvements were necessary, particularly in **communication** and **website functionality**.

Recommendations were made to enhance the project's external visibility, engagement with stakeholders, and dissemination of research results. The review specifically pointed out the need for:

- Enhancements to the website's content and usability.
- A more robust social media strategy to increase audience reach.
- Improved external engagement, including better promotion of publications and project deliverables.

In response to this evaluation, the following solutions are proposed to address the identified gaps and further strengthen the project's impact:

### **Website and Social Media Effectiveness**

- **Issue:** The website is a good foundation, but specific content is missing, and social media reach is limited, particularly on YouTube.
- **Solution:**
  - **Adding a "Who We Are" Section:** Implement a section on the website that lists participants' names, expertise areas, and contact details. This will enhance visibility and help external stakeholders connect with key team members.
  - **Publications Section Development:** Create a dedicated page for project-related publications (e.g., books, academic papers) with links to online resources, improving academic credibility and access to research outputs.
  - **Twitter Platform Launch:** We have launched a dedicated Twitter account to engage a broader audience, including policymakers, researchers, and the general public. The goal of this platform is to promote evaluation methods and highlight the importance of policy evaluation through concise, engaging tweets and threads, as well as sharing real-time updates on project activities, events, and key outcomes.

- **Wider Promotion of PROFEEDbook, Profeedcourse and Other Materials:** Increase promotion of **PROFEEDbook** and project results through channels such as professional newsletters, webinars, and press releases. Additionally, we will collaborate with external media partners to ensure wider visibility of research outcomes.
- **Encouraging Open Access Publications:** Increase the number of open-access publications and actively promote them on social media and the project website, making research results more accessible to a broader audience. Additionally, we have launched a Virtual Mobility (VM) grant call specifically for publication grants, aimed at supporting Action members in publishing their research in open-access formats. This initiative will further enhance the visibility and accessibility of our project outcomes. In line with this goal, we have conducted ongoing surveys and developed a monitoring tool within the working groups (WGs) to identify shared research interests and publication objectives among members. This tool highlights overlapping interests and potential areas for collaboration, encouraging working group members to establish partnerships based on common research themes. By fostering these collaborative relationships, we are actively supporting joint publication efforts, which are expected to broaden the impact and reach of our research outputs.

### Exploitation Activities

- **Issue:** Online platforms have been used effectively, but external engagement measurement and improvement are less clear.
- **Solution:**
  - **Tracking Engagement with External Stakeholders:** Implement a **tracking system** that measures engagement with external audiences, such as event attendees, material downloads, and social media reach (e.g., Google Analytics, social media metrics). This will help target communication more effectively and improve the dissemination impact.
  - **Focused Campaigns:** Develop targeted marketing campaigns for specific stakeholder groups to broaden the reach, particularly among policymakers, researchers, and civil society organizations.
  - **Expanding YouTube and Social Media Presence:** Grow the **YouTube** and other platform follower base by creating targeted content, such as video interviews, workshop summaries, testimonials. These videos will be shared regularly across social media platforms to increase reach and interaction.
  - **Social Media Campaigns:** Launch strategic campaigns on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook to highlight the project's significant results, events, and research outputs. Dedicated hashtags, such as #PROFEEDBACKImpact or #PolicyEvaluation, will be created to boost engagement and visibility.

Based on the **Mid-term Evaluation of the Innovation and Exploitation Plan**, here are the key communication and dissemination insights that can be incorporated into the updated Communication and Dissemination Plan (C&D Plan):



## Mid-term Evaluation Insights

- **Involving policymakers:** One of the key recommendations from the mid-term evaluation is to increase the involvement of policymakers in the Action. This includes actively adding them to the PROFEEDBase, which will enhance the real-world applicability and reach of the Action's results. We will prioritize outreach to **government representatives** and policymakers to ensure their participation in future events and contributions to the knowledge base.
- **Expand publications beyond PROFEEDBooks:** In addition to PROFEEDBooks, the evaluation suggests opening up new publication avenues. This can be achieved by partnering with international journals and other platforms, ensuring that Action results are more widely disseminated to a broader scientific community. Publications resulting from ITC, DC, or STSM grants will also be included in the **PROFEEDBase**.
- **Training Materials and Impact Assessment:** Training materials from the Action's training schools should be made available on the website. Additionally, conducting impact assessments among participants of these training schools will help measure how the training has influenced their work and whether it has opened new opportunities. This will not only increase the value of PROFEEDCourses but also inform future course offerings and potential market opportunities.
- **Surveys for Action members:** Organizing regular surveys among Action members can assess whether the Action has helped them secure new projects or publish new papers. This feedback loop is critical for measuring the impact of the Action and identifying opportunities for sustainability and commercial exploitation.

Dijana Strabac, the officer responsible for initially developing the Innovation and Exploitation Strategy, conducted a comprehensive review of the strategy after 24 months. This evaluation includes critical insights relevant to the Communication and Dissemination Plan, offering valuable recommendations to strengthen and refine the project's dissemination efforts going forward. These findings are integral to aligning communication activities with the broader innovation and exploitation objectives, ensuring coherent and effective outreach to our target audiences.

Based on the Mid-term Evaluation of the Innovation and Exploitation Plan, here are the key communication and dissemination insights that can be incorporated into the updated Communication and Dissemination Plan (C&D Plan):

1. **Involving policymakers:** One of the key recommendations from the mid-term evaluation is to increase the involvement of policymakers in the Action. This includes actively adding them to the PROFEEDBase, which will enhance the real-world applicability and reach of the Action's results. We will prioritize outreach to **government representatives** and policymakers to ensure their participation in future events and contributions to the knowledge base.
2. **Expand publications beyond PROFEEDBooks:** In addition to PROFEEDBooks, the evaluation suggests opening up new publication avenues. This can be achieved by partnering with international journals and other platforms, ensuring that Action results are more widely disseminated to a broader scientific community.

3. **Training Materials and Impact Assessment:** Training materials from the Action's training schools should be made available on the website. Additionally, conducting impact assessments among participants of these training schools will help measure how the training has influenced their work and whether it has opened new opportunities. This will not only increase the value of PROFEEDCourses but also inform future course offerings and potential market opportunities.
4. **Surveys for Action members:** Organizing regular surveys among Action members can assess whether the Action has helped them secure new projects or publish new papers. This feedback loop is critical for measuring the impact of the Action and identifying opportunities for sustainability and commercial exploitation.

### Updated Communication and Dissemination Strategies Based on Evaluation

#### 1. Knowledge base Improvements:

- Continue adding policymakers to the PROFEEDBase and enhancing the **knowledge base** with a wider variety of publications. Publications resulting from ITC, DC, or STSM grants will also be included as the Action's output. To support this goal, we are conducting research to identify the most suitable publication options for Profeedback outputs. In the fourth Grant Period (GP), we will guide publication efforts towards these optimal platforms. Additionally, we plan to issue a publication grant for the fourth year, which will cover the costs of peer review, editing, selection processes, and publication fees. Published results will be extensively disseminated, with targeted efforts to connect these publications with decision-makers, maximizing the Action's impact and visibility across relevant sectors.

#### 2. Targeting Policymakers:

- Directly promote **policy briefs** to policymakers at the national and European levels, utilizing channels like **LinkedIn, 'X', newsletters**, and targeted emails to ensure they are informed and engaged with the Action's outcomes.

#### 3. Social Media and Event Promotion:

- Strengthen the Action's visibility on social media platforms by actively promoting events such as the **Brussels event on RRF versus ESIF** and upcoming conferences, workshops. Regular updates on **Facebook, LinkedIn, 'X'** and newsletters will help increase follower engagement and visibility.

#### 4. Training and Impact Measurement:

- Host training materials from **training schools** on the Action's website to make them accessible to a broader audience. The website's accessibility will be technically enhanced to improve ease of access to these materials. Additionally, we will produce further course videos to expand the range of available training resources. These efforts will ensure a more comprehensive, user-friendly platform, allowing a wider audience to benefit from the Action's educational content.
- Implement **impact assessments** for training school participants to evaluate how the training has influenced their professional work and opened new opportunities, thus identifying market and sustainability options.

#### 5. Sustainability and Market Opportunities:

- Explore market opportunities for conducting commercial evaluation projects based on the network built through PROFEEDBACK, allowing Action members to leverage their expertise in future paid projects.
- Develop Targeted Marketing Materials: Create brochures, case studies, and success stories that showcase PROFEEDBACK's evaluation expertise and past successes. These materials can be used in outreach to potential commercial clients.
- Establish a Professional Online Presence: Enhance the Action's website and social media profiles with dedicated sections for commercial evaluation services, making it clear that PROFEEDBACK's network is available for future paid projects.
- Network Engagement Campaigns: Use email newsletters and targeted campaigns to engage with contacts within the existing network, informing them of potential collaboration opportunities in commercial evaluation projects.
- Direct Outreach to Industry: Identify and reach out to specific industry partners or stakeholders who may benefit from PROFEEDBACK's evaluation services, focusing on sectors aligned with the network's expertise.

## Introduction to the Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for the Profeedback COST Action was established in alignment with COST's Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy, which prioritizes gender balance and equal opportunities across its projects. Recognizing the importance of inclusivity and equity, this plan outlines objectives to foster a balanced and representative research environment. Key areas include promoting gender-sensitive practices, monitoring gender balance, and engaging the broader scientific community in gender equality matters. This GEP reflects COST's commitment to supporting gender diversity, particularly through leadership roles, and aims to reinforce this commitment through communication and outreach.

### Communication-Related Tasks in the GEP

#### 1. Visibility of the GEP:

- Ensure the Profeedback GEP is prominently displayed on the communication channels, making it easily accessible to all stakeholders.

#### 2. Regular Updates on GEP Activities:

- Disseminate updates regarding GEP-related activities, including relevant developments at the European level on gender-related topics, through newsletters and social media channels (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, X).
- Share news and insights on gender equality via COST Action's communication channels to keep partners and the community informed of ongoing initiatives.

#### 3. Promoting Gender-Inclusive Language:

- Encourage the use of gender-inclusive language in all internal and external network communications to support gender equality and eliminate gender bias.

#### 4. Awareness-Raising Campaigns:

- Develop an online awareness campaign featuring weekly posts about female researchers and perspectives from male colleagues on the importance of gender equality, promoting a balanced view across the network.

### 3.2.5. 1. Online platforms

As the recent COVID-19 pandemic has pointed out, special emphasis has to be placed on strengthening the online involvement opportunities. Thus, online dissemination strategy is a key element of the present Plan and consists of multiple online tools and channels. Justification and evidence of the target groups' online behaviour needs to be researched.

| Channel, tools          | Details  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Website</b>          | <p>The website is a powerful public tool for reaching the target audience and promoting the project.</p> <p>The Action's website features at least the followings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; COST logo, EU emblem and accompanying text</li> <li>&gt; Link to the Action's web page on the COST website and a link to the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) as it appears on the COST website</li> <li>&gt; Link to the relevant COST website pages featuring the COST rules and guidelines: see <a href="http://www.cost.eu/participate">http://www.cost.eu/participate</a></li> <li>&gt; Names and contact information of the leading persons of the Action (Action Chair, Vice-Chair, Work package leaders, Science Communication Manager, Grant Holder, etc.)</li> <li>&gt; Short description of COST and a link to the COST website</li> <li>&gt; Information and rules for joining the Action and taking part in its activities</li> <li>&gt; A homepage clearly communicating the followings:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Aim of the Action</li> <li>2) Information on how other researchers can join the Action or its activities</li> <li>3) Upcoming events (training schools, conferences etc.)</li> <li>4) Action's results and outcomes (be those publications, guidelines, white papers etc.).</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p>In addition, the PROFEEDBACK deliverables are made available on the website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; PROFEEDbook, summarizing the main presentations and results of the conferences</li> <li>&gt; PROFEEDcourses, training materials focusing on applying evaluation methods to bring theory and practice closer to each other</li> <li>&gt; PROFEEDbase, consisting of an online knowledge base and an online database of policy evaluation community</li> <li>&gt; Policy briefs</li> <li>&gt; Materials of the Action's activities (e.g. conference booklet)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Website revision</b> | <p>As a result of the website revision, the following enhancements will be implemented:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Improved User Experience and Functionality:</b></li> </ol>  |

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
|                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The website will be optimized for mobile, tablet and other devices</li> <li>○ The homepage will be redesigned in a continuous scrolling format</li> </ul> <p><b>2. New Subpages and Expertise Categorization:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Each key deliverable, like the PROFEEDbook and PROFEEDcourse, will have its own dedicated subpage. Each PROFEEDbook will display a preview with a “pop-up” information box, allowing visitors to gain a quick insight into the content</li> <li>○ The PROFEEDbase subpage will provide direct access to the knowledge base, with an added drop-down menu for browsing expertise categories. This page will also offer a direct messaging option, enhancing user engagement and facilitating connections.</li> <li>○ Event subpages will provide detailed information on each event and display participant information, supporting community engagement and the sharing of participation details.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Additional Content Enhancements and Community Reach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The "Who We Are" section will be expanded to include a list of participants with contact details and a description that links visitors to the Profeedbase database page, supporting professional networking and fostering collaborations within the network.</li> <li>○ Improvements will be made to incorporating the YouTube channel, and its content will be more widely promoted to attract additional subscribers.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Enhanced Communication Tools and Connectivity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A Mailchimp embedded text box and subscription form will be added for newsletters, allowing visitors to quickly sign up for project updates.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Social media</b>          | <p>The Action’s social media channels provide platform for vivid dialogue, share of knowledge, latest news, theories, practices, Action calls, etc. Cross-promotion will play an important role in the social media strategy. The following social media channels are set up for the Action:</p> <p>EXTERNAL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Facebook</li> <li>&gt; YouTube</li> <li>&gt; LinkedIn group</li> </ul> <p>INTERNAL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Google Drive (for file sharing)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Social media revision</b> | <p>X (formerly Twitter) social media channel was set up for the Action: The Action’s X account will serve as a dynamic platform for real-time updates, sharing event highlights, engaging with stakeholders, and promoting key project results. This channel will be used to announce Action calls, highlight ongoing research, link to new publications, and foster connections with both the scientific community and policy stakeholders through tagged mentions and relevant hashtags.</p>  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Interactive infographics, one-pagers</b>                | To highlight the main activities and findings of the Action, interactive infographics and expressive one-pagers are prepared on the different topics addressed by the Action, published both on the website and on social media.   |
| <b>Podcasts</b>  | Podcasts are produced focusing on the engagement of university and PhD students. Podcasts will be posted on the website and disseminated on social media.  |
| <b>Streaming, thematic short videos on the conferences</b> | The PROFEEDBACK dissemination events and various sections of the half-yearly conferences are streamed online, and the recordings are made available. To make it more user-friendly and appealing, thematic short videos on the conferences and WG meetings are created.  |
| <b>Mailing list, half-yearly newsletter</b>                | A mailing list is set up consisting of interested stakeholders, keeping them up-to-date on the Action progress and opportunities. Newsletters are issued every half year and sent out to the mailing list subscribers.   |
| <b>Mailing list revision</b>                               | Newsletters are now issued monthly, increasing the frequency to provide more regular updates, and are sent out to all mailing list subscribers. This adjustment allows for timely dissemination of news, upcoming events, and recent achievements, keeping stakeholders consistently informed and engaged with the project's developments.   |
| <b>Press releases</b>                                      | Press releases are linked to the Action's deliverables. The Core Group prepares a press release in English upon launch of a deliverable. Network members can translate the press release to their own language and share it with local/national media. The press releases should be promoted mainly via the Action's websites as well as social media channels.<br>Media lists will be collated and press clippings will be collected to measure uptake. |

### 3.2.5.2. Printed materials

| Channel, tool              | Details   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Flyers</b>              | With the aim to inform all relevant target groups about the Action and its results, flyers are produced and disseminated. Possible channels for the distribution of the flyers are relevant international conferences, as well as online platforms in digital format. As the production of flyers is less environmentally friendly, flyers will be used only for a few special occasions (e.g. relevant large-scale conferences). |
| <b>Conference booklets</b> | Conference booklets are produced for each half-yearly conference. It is sent out to conference participants and contains at least the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Basic info on practicalities</li> <li>&gt; Detailed programme of the conference</li> <li>&gt; Speaker list</li> <li>&gt; Contact details of organizers</li> </ul>  |

### 3.2.5.3. On-site events

| Channel, tools   | Details   |
|--|---|
| <b>Half-yearly conferences and its side-events</b>               | With the aim to maximise the outreach of the audience and reinforce the dialogue with general public, PROFEEDBACK organizes the following events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Half-yearly conferences with the aim to gather stakeholders</li><li>&gt; Peer-to-peer learning session</li><li>&gt; Dissemination events (planned month: M27 and M46)</li></ul>  |
| <b>Capacity-building opportunities (Training Schools, STSMs)</b> | With the aim to foster knowledge exchange and build the capacity of professionals in the field of policy evaluation, PROFEEDBACK organizes the following events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Training Schools</li><li>&gt; STSMs</li></ul>   |
| <b>Other events</b>  | With the aim to maximize impact, the Management Committee in addition seeks opportunity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; organize national events as side events of the half-yearly conferences (hosted by relevant public authorities)</li><li>&gt; organize the half-yearly PROFEEDBACK conferences back-to-back to related highly ranked conferences (e.g. the European R&amp;I Policy Evaluation Conference)</li><li>&gt; present PROFEEDBACK at international conferences dealing with policy evaluation</li></ul> |

KPIs and target figures are listed in section 4. below.

### 3.3. Visual identity

To ensure the visibility of the Action, a logo and additional elements of visual appearance are designed at the beginning of the Action. They will be used for standard letterheads to be used by all partners in all external communications for the project, as well as standard document cover sheets for all printed outputs (booklets, reports etc).

### 3.4. Visibility of COST and EU Funding

It is important to reinforce the presence of the COST brand throughout the Actions' different communication channels and tools, acknowledging COST as the funding source and taking into account the following elements:

- > COST logotype used as a co-branded signature with the EU emblem and text "Funded by the European Union".
- > The acknowledgment text needs to include the title and the number (CAxxxx) of the Action: „This article/publication is based upon work from COST Action < insert name of Action or acronym>, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).”
- > The boilerplate featuring a description of COST: „COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a funding agency for research and innovation networks. Our Actions help connect research initiatives across Europe and enable scientists to grow their ideas by sharing them with their peers. This boosts their research, career and innovation.”
- > A reference to the COST website: [www.cost.eu](http://www.cost.eu)

For more details, please visit: <https://www.cost.eu/about/visual-identity>

## 4. Monitoring

### 4.1. Key Performance Indicators

PROFEEDBACK has defined a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure and evaluate dissemination and communication achievements of the Action. Indicators are constantly monitored throughout the Action's lifespan. Identified KPIs and target figures for the Action's period are listed below.

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Social media</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of Facebook posts – target: at least 50</li><li>• Number of followers on Facebook – target: at least 600</li><li>• Number of Facebook reach – target: at least 2000</li><li>• Number of Facebook engage – target: at least 1500</li><li>• Number of LinkedIn group members – target: at least 60</li><li>• Number of documents shared on Google Drive – target: at least 30</li><li>• <i>Number of Tweets posted – target: at least 50</i></li><li>• <i>Number of followers on Twitter (X) – target: at least 400</i></li><li>• <i>Total reach (impressions) of Tweets – target: at least 3000</i></li><li>• <i>Total engagement (likes, retweets, comments) – target: at least 1200</i></li><li>• <i>Number of mentions and hashtag uses – target: at least 100</i></li><li>• <i>Number of links to publications or resources shared – target: at least 20</i></li></ul> |
| <b>Website</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of website visitors – target: at least 1200</li><li>• Bounce rate – target: under 50%</li></ul>   |
| <b>Newsletter</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of newsletters – target: at least 8</li><li>• Number of subscribers to the newsletter – target: at least 150</li></ul>  |
| <b>Press releases</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of press releases (linked to deliverables) – target: at least 5</li><li>• Number of original media content (interviews/articles/reports) produced – target: at least 20 pieces</li></ul>  |
| <b>PROFEEDbooks</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of PROFEEDbooks produced – target: at least 7</li></ul>   |

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

This section defines the roles and responsibilities related to the communication and dissemination activities of the Action.

While all network members are encouraged to communicate and disseminate the Action's results in their local and national context, the coordination and proper implementation of these activities is the responsibility of specific Task Forces set up by the network. The main responsibility for the communication and dissemination of the Action belongs to the Scientific Communication Task Force.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Scientific Communication Task Force</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; led by Science Communication Coordinator</li><li>&gt; responsible for coordinating the communication and dissemination activities</li><li>&gt; responsible for the development of the Communication and Dissemination Plan and its execution</li></ul> |
|--|---|



## 6. Additional guidelines

### 6.1. Open Access

Open Access (OA) refers to making research outcomes available in a digital format, free of charge, and increasingly free of most copyright, licensing restrictions and technical or other barriers to access. These barriers include digital rights management or requirements to register to access research outcomes.

COST encourages Open Access to promote the availability of results published thanks to COST funding. Open Access is a means to boost the worldwide visibility and accessibility of publicly funded European science and technology research. To achieve this goal, COST facilitates Open Access publishing strategies for COST Actions and contributes to their costs, according to COST rules and principles for dissemination activities.

In regard of the above, the PROFEEDBACK Action's Management Committee addresses Open Access in the context of the Action's communication and dissemination strategy. All results and deliverables of PROFEEDBACK are freely available online, without any barriers to access, for the benefit of the research community and society at large. In addition, the Management Committee chooses a repository for archiving the results with the aim to keep them available for long-term.

### 6.2. Intellectual Property Rights

COST Actions seek to generate breakthrough ideas, concepts and products, involving Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), helping inventors create value from their ideas, turning inspiration into sustainable business success.

The PROFEEDBACK network, in accordance with the principles set out in the Code of Practice annexed to the Commission's Recommendation on IP management, is fully aware of the COST framework ensuring appropriate IPR management.

During the PROFEEDBACK Action, participants can seek advice from the Action Chair and the Vice Chair, in addition to seeking support at national and EU levels. They can discuss any issue with the Management Committee, which shall ensure the appropriate coordination of IPRs management.

## 7. References and related documents

The following documents have been used to set up the present Plan:

- > PROFEEDBACK description: <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA20112/>
- > Guidelines for communication, dissemination and exploitation of COST Action results and outcomes: [https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2020/08/Guidelines-for-the-communication-dissemination-and-exploitation-of-COST-Actions\\_final-draft.pdf](https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2020/08/Guidelines-for-the-communication-dissemination-and-exploitation-of-COST-Actions_final-draft.pdf)
- > COST Vademecum: <http://www.cost.eu/Vademecum>

## 8. Annexes

### I. Mid-term evaluation of the PROFEEDBACK Innovation and Exploitation Plan

The mid-term evaluation of the Plan is executed by assessing the progress with key exploitable results (KERs) in the period October 2021-October 2023. The evaluation is conducted taking into account actions presented in Table 2 of the Innovation and exploitation plan. The table is presented below.

| Action item description   | Target delivery date |
|---|----------------------|
| <b>Actions on the level of key exploitable results</b>  |                      |
| Mapping of key exploitable results (KERs) of the Action   | M25-M48              |
| Exploration of the innovative and commercial potential of each KER  | M25-M48              |
| Identification of potential users of each KER   | M25-M48              |
| Direct promotion of KERs to potential users   | M25-M48              |
| <b>General Actions</b>  |                      |
| Identification of PROFEEDBACK stakeholders (individuals, organisations, networks, projects) on the national and international level                     | M25                  |
| Establish permanent, regular links with other projects and initiatives to ensure stakeholders' engagement, including European and national stakeholders | M25-M48              |
| Identify sustainability opportunities of the Action   | M25-M48              |
| Activate synergies both at the national and European level with already existing initiatives that address one or more of its aspects.                   | M25-M48              |
| Identify market opportunities   | M25-M48              |
| Promotion of Action results through identified exploitation routes (social media, relevant events, newsletters, etc.)                                   | M3-M48               |

### [Mapping of key exploitable results \(KERs\) of the Action and Exploration of the innovative and commercial potential of each KER](#)

In the first two years of PROFEEDBACK implementation, the following key exploitable results are identified:

- PROFEEDBase
- PROFEEDBooks
- PROFEEDCourses
- Policy briefs

**PROFEEDBase** is an online knowledge base available on the Action's website. It has open access and consists of two parts:

1) The expert pool – a collection of organisations and individuals involved in policy evaluation. Each stakeholder is identified by their name, main field of expertise, country of origin, contact person and

participation in the Action’s working groups. On September 30, 2023, the total number of entries in the expert pool database was 166. However, most of the experts are from academia (faculties and research institutes), while there are no government institutions (policymakers) representatives.

2) The knowledge base – a collection of publications produced by the activities of the Action. All publications are classified by their topic and subtopic. On September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the total number of entries was 72.

**PROFEEDBooks** consist of thematic proceedings of the conferences organised within the Action. Until September 30, 2023, the three PROFEEDBooks are available:

- 1) Evaluation of public policy responses to black swans
- 2) Evaluation of Policies on Social Inclusion, Migration, in particular interventions related to integration
- 3) Evaluation on Rural and Territorial Development, Urban Development

**PROFEEDCourses** are focused on training activities of the Action with the aim to collect interactive training materials from the Training Schools. Until September 30, 2023, one training course is available on the website of the Action: Digitalization in evaluations & evaluations of digitalization.

**Policy briefs** are planned with the aim of offering policy recommendations, conceptual and methodological frames to decision-makers in the field of policy evaluation. In 2023 PROFEEDBACK members started collaboration in drafting a policy brief that analyses the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) from a policy evaluation standpoint.

#### Identification of potential users of each KER and Direct promotion of KERs to potential users

Potential users of each key exploitable result are presented in the table below.

| Target group   | Key exploitable results  |
|--|--|
| Scientific community of policy evaluation with multidisciplinary background    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– PROFEEDBooks</li> <li>– PROFEEDCourses</li> <li>– PROFEEDBase</li> <li>– Policy briefs</li> </ul> |
| Professionals from the business sphere   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– PROFEEDCourses</li> <li>– PROFEEDBase</li> </ul>  |
| Associations dealing with policy evaluation at national and European levels    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– PROFEEDBooks</li> <li>– PROFEEDCourses</li> <li>– PROFEEDBase</li> </ul>                          |
| University and PhD students from various scientific fields                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– PROFEEDCourses</li> </ul>   |
| Policy-makers responsible for policy evaluation at national and European level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Policy briefs</li> </ul>  |
| General Public interested in science and science policy                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– PROFEEDBase</li> </ul>  |

Action results are directly promoted to potential users by the Action website, Facebook page and LinkedInPage. According to the data on September 30, 2023, the Facebook page has 40 likes and 57 followers, while the LinkedIn page has 399 followers.

### Identification of PROFEEDBACK stakeholders (individuals, organisations, networks, projects) on the national and international level

The Action is actively promoted and presented at relevant events. Interested stakeholders are invited to join the working groups, conferences and other events.

### Establish permanent, regular links with other projects and initiatives to ensure stakeholders' engagement, including European and national stakeholders and Activate synergies both at the national and European level with already existing initiatives that address one or more of its aspects.

The Action activities and events are regularly presented at the Western Balkan Info hub – website, and the newsletter, with over 13,000 subscribers.

### Identify market and sustainability opportunities of the Action

Sustainability options are identified in developed networks, transfer of knowledge and follow-up projects. Market opportunities can be found in opening new avenues for conducting commercial evaluation projects. The Action members could offer information if the networking activities helped them unlock new paths in the field of policy evaluation.

### Promotion of Action results through identified exploitation routes (social media, relevant events, newsletters, etc.)

On September 19, 2023, PROFEEDBACK Action an event in Brussels - "RRF versus ESIF - Differences and similarities: an evaluation perspective". It was a Side Event of the European Week of Regions and Cities 2023.

#### **Recommendations for future activities of the PROFEEDBACK Action:**

- Involving policymakers in the work of the Action and including them in the PROFEEDBase.
- Including publications that emerged from ITC, DC or STSM grants in the PROFEEDBase – Knowledge Base.
- Opening new publication opportunities besides the PROFEEDBooks and including them in the Knowledge base.
- Placing training materials from the training schools on the Action website.
- Conducting impact assessment among the participants of the training schools to see if the training helped them in their work or has opened up new opportunities. This would be helpful for the identification of market opportunities and sustainability options.
- Organising surveys for the Action members to assess if the Action helped them get new projects or publish new papers.

#### II. Dissemination and exploitation of Action results (other than co-authored Action publications listed previously) - COST Action Progress Review at 24 months (18/10/2021 to 18/10/2023)

## Summaries

### **The main aim and objective of the Action is to**

The main aim and objective of the Action is to foster networking and knowledge-exchange of the policy evaluation community at European level; raise awareness on the importance of policy evaluation research improving its impact on policy-making; reinforce state-of-the-art research in the policy evaluation field and contribute to evaluation standards.

### **During its first two years the Action progressed the achievement of this as described below**

Our efforts have significantly advanced the objectives of our Action, promoting networking and knowledge exchange, increasing awareness of the impact of policy evaluation research on policy-making, enhancing the quality of research in this field, and promoting evaluation standards within the European policy evaluation community.

Currently, we have 191 Working Group members from 37 different countries and 42 Management Committee members from 27 countries. We maintain a strong balance in terms of ITC participation, gender diversity, and the inclusion of Young Researcher and Investigator (YRIs).

In the initial two years of our Action, significant strides have been made toward achieving our goals. We look forward to building upon these achievements in the coming two years and further reinforcing our commitment to the Action's overarching aim and objectives.

Within our Action, we place a particular focus on achieving gender balance, accommodating researchers at various career stages (with a focus on Young Researchers), and embracing geographical diversity (with a focus on ITC). The composition of our network is exemplary in terms of addressing these considerations.

We have successfully organized four high-level conferences in Budapest, Maribor, Bratislava and Belgrade, providing a platform for the exchange of ideas and knowledge among experts in the field. Furthermore, our Action has facilitated multiple Management Committee (MC) and Working Group (WG) meetings, fostering collaborative efforts and information sharing among our members.

One of our notable achievements includes the implementation of a dissemination event “RRF versus ESIF: Differences and similarities from an evaluation perspective” in Brussels, aimed at sharing the outcomes of our work with a broader audience, notably EU decision-makers and policy professionals. This initiative has been instrumental in raising awareness of the importance of policy evaluation research.

To support and incentivize our members, we have distributed mobility grants, enabling them to travel, learn and exchange beyond national borders. We also organised our first Training School in Istanbul, enabling young researchers to learn about theory-based evaluation.

Additionally, we produced deliverables such as the PROFEEDbooks, PROFEEDcourses and PROFEEDbase. These results enable us to reach stakeholders and transfer knowledge outside our Action.

### **The Rapporteur summarised the Action's major outcomes, impacts and successes as follows**

The Action set several ambitious goals, which are comprehensibly difficult to achieve.

Nevertheless, the Action appears effective within the network, for peripheral communities and for junior scholars.

In the remaining years, the network should be able to publish book/articles of high quality level to claim an impact also on the scholarly debate and high level policy impact.

The website and social media tools are of good quality, but they can and should become more effective to improve the outreach of the Action.

Evidence on impact and some deliverables should be documented in a much better way. Currently, an

### **The Action Chair has described their plans for addressing issues identified in their**

## report as follows

We have identified a set of measures that our Action will undertake over the next two years:

1. Enhancing engagement with the demand side: Currently, our Action primarily comprises policy evaluation experts (the supply side), with limited representation from those who procure policy evaluation services (the demand side). To bridge this gap, we are committed to expanding our engagement with the demand side. Our aim is to establish robust cooperation, fostering regular dialogues to better align policy evaluation as a profession with the needs and demands of those seeking evaluation services. This strategic shift will enable us to adapt and improve our policy evaluation practices.
2. Strengthening interaction with EU Institutions: While we successfully organized an event in Brussels involving various EU policymakers (DG REGIO, EMPLOY, etc.), we recognize the need for greater engagement with EU institutions. We are dedicated to enhancing our visibility and outreach efforts, ensuring more robust connections.
3. Double funding issue: We encountered a situation where the COST Association identified instances of double funding involving two participants. Preventing such cases has proven to be a challenging task for us.

## The Rapporteur summarised the Actions's plans for addressing issues identified in the report

These initiative are reasonable.

National and professional communities can also be involved (not only EU).

## Dissemination

Dissemination meetings funded by the Action (possible only until 31st October 2021)

### Action website

<https://profeedback.eu/>

The:

- openness and user-friendliness of the Action website are excellent
- content of the Action website (programmes and minutes of all events present, all outputs/ deliverables accessible from website) is very good

The Action website was an effective means of disseminating the Action.

#### Rapporteur's comment on the website

Some content should be added, especially: - network composition, people involved - publications - improving knowledge base tool usability

## Other dissemination activities

The following other dissemination activities reported by the Action were effective and added value

#### Item/activity

"RRF versus ESIF - Differences and similarities: an evaluation perspective", a Side Event of the European Week of Regions and Cities 2023

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Target Audience</b>         | EU institutions representatives, policy-makers, decision-makers, profeedback members and other relevant stakeholders in Brussels   |
| <b>Outcome of the activity</b> | We organised an event in Brussels, which was part of both PROFEEDBACK and the European Week of Regions and Cities 2023. We applied to become an official event of the European Week of Regions and Cities and successfully obtained that status. This achievement significantly boosted the visibility of our event in Brussels and beyond. Our event is now featured on the official EURegionsWeek website, and we maintain regular communication with their team regarding the event's details. Notably, we had distinguished speakers from prominent organizations such as the Committee of the Regions, the European Court of Auditors, and the European Social and Economic Committee. In total, our event had 26 participants. |
| <b>Hyperlink</b>               | <a href="https://regions-and-cities.europa.eu/programme/2023/side-events/7839">https://regions-and-cities.europa.eu/programme/2023/side-events/7839</a>  |

## Exploitation activities

The following activities to ensure exploitation (use, in particular in a commercial context) of the Action's achievements reported by the Action were effective and added value

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Item/activity</b> | Online presence - maximising our Action's impact through online communication via multiple-channel approach |
|----------------------|---|

# PROFEEDBACK

Platform OF policy Evaluation community for improvED EU policies and Better ACKnowledgement

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Target Audience</b>         | General public, professionals in policy and policy evaluation, EU institutions representatives, NGOs, business, other relevant stakeholders.  |
| <b>Outcome of the activity</b> | We have a YouTube channel, LinkedIn page (401 followers), Facebook page (59 followers), Mailchimp newsletter. We promote our activities and deliverables on these platforms.  |
| <b>Item/activity</b>           | PROFEEDbase - online knowledge base and expert pool available on Action website   |
| <b>Target Audience</b>         | Profeedback members, third-party stakeholders, policy evaluation experts, policy-making experts, other relevant stakeholders  |
| <b>Outcome of the activity</b> | Our website hosts the PROFEEDbase, a centralized repository of project-related information and resources, enhancing our visibility. <a href="https://profeedback.eu/profeedbase/">https://profeedback.eu/profeedbase/</a> |

## Assessment of Action dissemination and exploitation activities

The effectiveness of the Action's dissemination and exploitation approach (other than co-authored publications) is assessed as follows

The communication is effective regarding the activities developed and the output, but the external outreach is not clear and the quality of the output (i.e., scientific standing of the publications) should improve by the end of the Action.

### Assessment of Action dissemination and exploitation activities

A few Action activities focusing on dissemination of Action results were effective [Fair] Most Action activities focusing on exploitation of Action results were effective [Good]