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COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION PLAN

Second Round of Profeedback

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Action Details

MoU - 052/21

CSO Approval date - 25/05/2021

Start date - 18/10/2021

End date - 17/10/2025

Reference number - CA20112

Full title - PROFEEDBACK PlatfoRm OF policy Evaluation community for improved EU policies and Better ACKnowledgement

Grant holder institution - HÉTFA Research Institute, Hungary

Description

The Action PROFEEDBACK aims 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, will gather researchers and professionals from various scientific fields and sectors to present and evaluate theories, topics, tools and methods of policy evaluation. Results of the Europe-wide assessment of good practices will provide direct and high-quality inputs for national and EU bodies responsible for policy evaluation.

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 main challenge is that currently there is no bottom-up platform for European researchers and professionals working in policy evaluation. They have limited possibilities to discuss common problems, assess country specific practices and share their knowledge in a mutually beneficial and effective way.

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

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1. Introduction

This document describes the Dissemination and Communication Plan (hereinafter called the Plan) for the Cost Action PROFEEDBACK - PlatfoRm OF policy Evaluation community for improvED EU policies and Better ACKnowledgement (hereinafter called the Action). The Plan defines the objectives, the main target audiences, their needs, the best channels to reach them and the possible messages of the Action. It contains the main strategic and operative guide that shall govern the overall project dissemination and communication activities, ensuring that relevant information is shared with appropriate audiences on a timely basis by the most effective means.

The development of the Plan is under the responsibility of the Scientific Communication Task Force set up by the network, in strong cooperation with the Innovation and Exploitation Task Force responsible for maximising the impact of communication and optimizing the use of the Action results.

Amendments, comments, and/or suggestions should be sent to the Science Communication Coordinator at profeedback@hetfa.hu.

The current version of the Plan was accepted by the Management Committee on 05 July 2024. The Plan will be carried out until the end of the project.

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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
 - Grant Awarding Coordinator
 - Training School Manager
 - Science Communication Manager
 - Innovation and Exploitation 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



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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.

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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
Policy evaluation	• Importance of a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach in policy evaluation • Scientific, technological and socioeconomic impacts of policy evaluation • Innovative aspects of PROOFEDBACK in the field of policy evaluations
Evaluation research	• Proposition of research agenda for policy evaluation • Highlighting of current research questions, possible theories and methodologies • Scientific improvement of policy evaluation research
Evaluation community	• Importance of cross-border cooperation within the broader scientific community of policy evaluation • Benefits of standardized norms, rules, responsibilities and proper practices of the evaluation community at the EU level • Role of efficient scientific discussion within the evaluation community • Awareness-raising on pressing issues of the research community
The role of the general public in policy evaluation	• Regular engagement with the public enhances communication channels between policymakers and citizens, leading to better-informed policy decisions and more effective dissemination of policy outcomes. • Involving the public in policy evaluation fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, encouraging communities to support and uphold effective policies. • Public participation can lead to advocacy for policy changes, exerting pressure on policymakers to adapt or reform policies based on the public's needs and feedback.

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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	Objective
Broader scientific community of policy evaluation with multidisciplinary background	• Inviting academics as keynote speakers or participants at events • Calls for scientific articles and capacity building activities • Direct e-mails, newsletter, website, social media • Supporting the publication of conference papers in academic journals	FOSTER
Professionals from the business sphere	• Network of proposers • Calls for capacity building activities • Direct e-mails, newsletter, website, social media	PROMOTE
Associations dealing with policy evaluation at national and European levels	• Network of proposers • Invitation to conferences • Direct e-mails, newsletter, website, social media	FOSTER
University and PhD students from various scientific fields	• Calls for scientific articles and invitation to the conferences to share findings, find partners for co-publication and peers to support their professional development • Calls for capacity building activities • Personal contacts of proposers • Newsletter, website, social media, podcasts	PROMOTE
Policy-makers responsible for policy evaluation at national and European level	• Direct invitations to PROFEEDBACK conferences • Offering the possibility of peer-to-peer learning • National events back-to-back to half-yearly conferences • Direct e-mails, personal briefings, newsletter, website • Policy briefs	FOSTER
General Public interested by science and science policy	• Inviting representatives of civil society to attend conferences • Identify appropriate third-party events to reach their audience as appropriate (e.g. info stand at a festival) • ☒ place a number of interviews on the importance of cross-border collaboration with human interest stories in mainstream media (print/TV/radio) • Website, social media, podcasts, one-pagers, videos	INFORM

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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.

3.2.4. 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.

3.2.4. 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.

3.2.4.2 Social media strategy

To enhance our outreach and engagement with various stakeholders, Profeedback will establish a robust presence on social media and create a dedicated video platform. These initiatives are aimed at facilitating knowledge sharing, networking, and increasing the visibility of our project's outcomes.

- 1. Video Platform Development:** We plan to update the dedicated video platform of Profeedback. This includes improving our recording setup to produce high-quality videos that will be posted on our YouTube channel and other video platforms. These videos will cover key topics, including project updates, webinars, and interviews with stakeholders.
- 2. Targeted Social Media Posts:** We will craft social media posts tailored to specific target groups, such as researchers, policymakers, media actors, educators, and the general public. This targeted approach will help us reach and engage with a diverse audience effectively.
- 3. New Social Media Community:** We aim to foster a new social media community where professionals and enthusiasts can connect, share ideas, and form new collaborations. This community will serve as a platform for ongoing dialogue and knowledge exchange.
- 4. Social Media Success Indicators:** To measure the effectiveness of our social media efforts, we will implement an indicator system. This system will track engagement metrics such as reach, interactions, and follower growth to assess whether we are successfully reaching our target audience.



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Channel, tool	Details
Website	The website is a powerful public tool for reaching the target audience and promoting the project. The Action's website features at least the followings: ☒ COST logo, EU emblem and accompanying text ☒ 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 ☒ Link to the relevant COST website pages featuring the COST rules and guidelines: see http://www.cost.eu/participate ☒ Names and contact information of the leading persons of the Action (Action Chair, Vice-Chair, Work package leaders, Science Communication Manager, Grant Holder, etc.) ☒ Short description of COST and a link to the COST website ☒ Information and rules for joining the Action and taking part in its activities ☒ A homepage clearly communicating the followings: 1) Aim of the Action 2) Information on how other researchers can join the Action or its activities 3) Upcoming events (training schools, conferences etc.) 4) Action's results and outcomes (publications, guidelines, white papers etc.). In addition, the PROFEEDBACK deliverables are made available on the website: ☒ PROFEEDbook, summarizing the main presentations and results of the conferences ☒ PROFEEDcourses, training materials focusing on applying evaluation methods to bring theory and practice closer to each other ☒ PROFEEDbase, consisting of an online knowledge base and an online database of policy evaluation community ☒ Policy briefs ☒ Materials of the Action's activities (e.g. conference booklet) To elevate the presence of the Profeedback project online, we will undertake a comprehensive improvement of our website. This effort will focus on creating a more accessible and user-friendly interface that serves to: • Increase Project Visibility ◦ By enhancing the site's navigation and content, we aim to attract more visitors and inform them about our project's scope, achievements, and future directions. This does not just accelerate the number of visitors on the website, but it also enhances the inner communication of Profeedback. • Expand Cooperative Opportunities ◦ A more intuitive website will facilitate the formation of new collaborations by providing clear and accessible information about ongoing projects, available resources, and partnership opportunities. Specific enhancements to the website will be guided by the recommendations outlined in our "evaluation to do" document. These include the integration of drop-down menus for better content categorization and the addition of new features to address the evolving needs of our users.

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Channel, tool	Details
Social media	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: EXTERNAL: Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn group, X (Twitter) INTERNAL: Google Drive (for file sharing)
Interactive infographics, one-pagers	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.
Podcasts	Podcasts are produced focusing on the engagement of university and PhD students. Podcasts will be posted on the website and disseminated on social media.
Streaming, thematic short videos on the conferences	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.
Mailing list, newsletter	A mailing list is set up consisting of interested stakeholders, keeping them up-to-date on the Action progress and opportunities. The newsletters will be sent out before every upcoming event, and will be used more often to inform the subscribers about Profeedback's latest news and achievements.
Press releases	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. Media lists will be collated and press clippings will be collected to measure uptake.

3.2.4.2. Printed materials

Channel, tool	Details
Flyers	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).
Conference booklets	Conference booklets are produced for each half-yearly conference. It is sent out to conference participants and contains at least the following: >Basic info on practicalities >Detailed programme of the conference >Speaker list >Contact details of organizers

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3.2.4.3. On-site and Online events

Channel, tool	Details
Half-yearly conferences and its side-events	With the aim to maximise the outreach of the audience and reinforce the dialogue with general public, PROFEEDBACK organizes the following events: ☒ Half-yearly conferences with the aim to gather stakeholders ☒ Peer-to-peer learning session ☒ Dissemination events (planned month: M27 and M46)
Capacity-building opportunities (Training Schools, STSMs)	With the aim to foster knowledge exchange and build the capacity of professionals in the field of policy evaluation, PROFEEDBACK organizes the following events: ☒ Training Schools ☒ STSMs
Other on-site events	With the aim to maximize impact, the Management Committee in addition seeks opportunity to: ☒ organize national events as side events of the half-yearly conferences (hosted by relevant public authorities) ☒ organize the half-yearly PROFEEDBACK conferences back-to-back to related highly ranked conferences (e.g. the European R&I Policy Evaluation Conference) ☒ present PROFEEDBACK at international conferences dealing with policy evaluation
Enhancing the ProfeedCourses	As part of our efforts to expand educational outreach, we will upgrade our ProfeedCourses to offer a more engaging and structured learning experience. These improvements include: 1. General Improvement of Recordings: We will enhance the quality of course recordings to ensure clear and impactful delivery of content. This involves upgrading our recording equipment and editing processes. 2. Certification System Introduction: To add value to our courses, we will introduce a certification system. Participants who complete the courses and pass a corresponding exam will receive a digital certificate as proof of their achievement. This certificate will serve as a testament to their acquired knowledge and skills.

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:



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- 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

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.

Social media

- Number of Facebook posts – target: at least 50
- Number of followers on Facebook – target: at least 600
- Number of Facebook reach – target: at least 2000
- Number of Facebook engage – target: at least 1500
- Number of LinkedIn group members – target: at least 60
- Number of documents shared on Google Drive – target: at least 30

Website

- Number of website visitors – target: at least 1200
- Bounce rate – target: under 50%

Newsletter

- Number of newsletters – target: at least 8
- Number of subscribers to the newsletter – target: at least 150

Press releases

- Number of press releases (linked to deliverables) – target: at least 5
- Number of original media content (interviews/articles/reports) produced – target: at least 20 pieces



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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.

Scientific Communication Task Force

- □ led by Science Communication Coordinator
- □ responsible for coordinating the communication and dissemination activities
- □ responsible for the development of the Communication and Dissemination Plan and its execution

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.



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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
- □ COST Vademecum: <http://www.cost.eu/Vademecum>

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