

First Dissemination Report

31/07/2019

Summary:

This deliverable provides a detailed report on the dissemination and communication activities of the STriTuVaD project in the first 18 months of activity. All planned communication channels are now in place, together with the monitoring framework proposed in D6.1. Early results show a positive trend in all indicators, although some minor deviations in term of content type with respect to the plan detailed in D6.1 required some corrective actions. STriTuVaD has now a solid dissemination infrastructure, well linked to all key players in the field. As the first intermediate results of the project appear, we expect the impact of this dissemination effort to increase.

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| | Recipient | | STriTuVaD Consortium | | |

Introduction

WP6 aims to i) inform all external stakeholders about the project results and the implications that these results might have for the research, clinical, industrial, regulator, and the societal users, and ii) raise awareness on opportunities offered by in silico clinical trials.

The Work Package is articulated in the following tasks:

Task 6.1 Dissemination plan (M1-M6)

Task 6.2 Professional media (M07 -M54)

Task 6.3 Website (M07 –M54)

Task 6.4 Social media (M07 –M54)

Task 6.5 Targeted communication (M07 –M54)

Task 6.6 Monitoring (M13 – M54)

The entire dissemination infrastructure described in the Dissemination plan D6.1 is now up and running, and we can provide a first report on the monitoring of the dissemination activity so far.

Implementation of the dissemination plan

The Dissemination Plan (D6.1) detailed a list of communication outlets that had to be activated, and the relative time frame. The table below summarises all the goals planned in D6.1, the proposed deadline, and the current status.

After some initial delays, all outlets have now been activated, and the monitoring framework is up and running. We decided to postpone the creation of the engagement portal, which required some reflections, and give instead priority to the more traditional but essential communication channels. The activity of relinking our communication channels to those already existing on the topics of interest has already been pursued extensively, but we plan to keep this task open until after the review to adopt eventual recommendation from the programme officer and/or the reviewers.

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| Task | Planned | Delivered | Partner(s) |
|--|---------|-----------|------------|
| Submit dissemination plan D6.1 | 07/2018 | 07/2018 | UNIBO |
| Establish visual identity (logo, banner, fonts, etc.) | 11/2018 | 02/2019 | UNIBO |
| Each partner provides 3 free to use high quality images | 11/2018 | 11/2018 | Consortium |
| Hire Communication Officer | 12/2018 | 02/2019 | UNIBO |
| Register domain | 12/2018 | 12/2018 | ETNA |
| Create project web site | 01/2019 | 03/2019 | UNIBO |
| Create ISCT engagement portal | 03/2019 | 05/2019 | UNIBO |
| Activate social networks | 04/2019 | 03/2019 | UNIBO |
| Establish monitoring framework | 04/2019 | 04/2019 | UNIBO |
| Activate e-newsletter | 05/2019 | 03/2019 | UNIBO |
| Subscribe to Alpha Galileo | 05/2019 | 05/2019 | USFD |
| Activate translation/reposting network | 06/2019 | 06/2019 | Consortium |
| Relink to other TB, EU, ISCT, ISM HPC communication channels | 06/2019 | 06/2019 | UNIBO |
| Synergise with VPH Institute and Avicenna Alliance | 06/2019 | 06/2019 | UNIBO |
| STriTuVaD public presentation | 07/2019 | 07/2019 | UNIBO |
| Dissemination report – D6.3 | 07/2019 | 07/2019 | UNIBO |
| Dissemination report – D6.4 | 01/2021 | | UNIBO |
| Dissemination report – D6.5 | 07/2022 | | UNIBO |

In the following paragraphs, each of the completed tasks in the table above will be explained in detail.

Domain strituvad.eu

As previously reported in D6.2, the domain name originally suggested in the proposal was strituvad-isct.eu where ISCT – acronym originally proposed in the Avicenna Roadmap – stands for In Silico Clinical Trials. This domain name has been discarded later on because 1) no other project in the field

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is using the convention to append ISCT to the domain name; 2) the community is steering away from the original ISCT acronym in favour of a more generic IST (In Silico Trials), which includes both preclinical and clinical testing. The final domain www.strituvad.eu has been registered in name of Etna Biotech srl.

Visual identity

Visual identity is composed by a set of visual elements, means and languages that characterize the communication of the project, that differentiate it from other projects and make it recognizable by the audience. Main elements of the visual identity are the logo, the font or set of fonts used, the colour palette and the general design of all communication tools and materials.



Figure 1: Two versions of the logo: with full title (a) and without (b)

A logo in different versions and formats has been created, along with pre-set templates for presentations and official documents. The combination of fonts (Futura sans serif, Futura light) and colours (shades of blue with yellow accents) used for both logo and website content, along with general design of the website (minimal, white background, in parallax scrolling) have been chosen in order to express the identity and values of the project: a research project in the medical/health sector, with components of innovation, clarity, expertise.

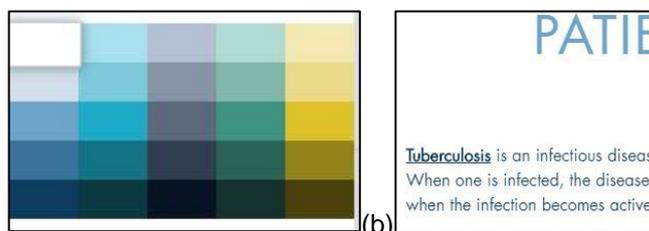


Figure 2: Colour palette (a) and font combination (b)

In order to coherently communicate these values to all audiences and stakeholders, all partners agreed on using the pre-set materials which are shared in the Member Area of the website.

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As part of the visual identity, partners were also asked to provide pictures of their offices, laboratories, personnel etc. to be freely used in public presentations and to improve the graphic of the website.

Project website (D6.2)

The official website for the project has been realized using a Content Management System called Wix which allows to easily create, upload and manage different types of content (text, images, videos, files etc.), to set basic graphical elements that contributes to the aesthetics of the website, and to implement basic features such as the Member Area and the Blog section, all through a simple and intuitive interface. For further details about the website structure, content, graphic and management, please refer to the deliverable D6.2.

Activate social networks

Along with the creation and publication of the website, social channels have been established as well and connected to the website from day one. Indeed, it was crucial that all social channels indicated the website URL to redirect people to detailed content about the project and, vice versa, the website should include all links to social channels where latest news and updates are constantly shared. After a preliminary analysis, it was decided that best social channels for our dissemination purposes are Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Twitter was found to be quite popular among the research community that we are targeting in this project; Facebook is useful to reach the general public, especially in India where is one of the most used social networks. LinkedIn is very popular among professionals, working in industry, governmental and not-for-profit organisations, and also to a lesser extent in academia.

On Twitter we wish to reach the wider community of researchers that are usually more prone to use their personal accounts to tweet about their professional and research achievements and, at the same time, to browse for interesting news from other influent individuals. Organizations and companies working in the Tuberculosis and In Silico field as well have a strong and active presence on Twitter, thus allowing us to expand STRITUVAD network and guarantee that the project achievements are visible in the community of reference. Our Twitter page is available at www.twitter.com/STriTuVaD

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Figure 3: Screenshot of STriTuVaD Twitter page

For STriTuVaD presence on Facebook, we chose to open a public page where to post updates and news but in a slightly extended way (Facebook does not have characters constraints compared to Twitter), to connect with other relevant pages on the topics of Tuberculosis and In Silico, and to reach that share of audience that doesn't use Twitter.



Figure 4: Screenshot of Strituvad Facebook page

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Our Facebook presence is more aimed to reach out general public; when the clinical trials start, we hope to engage with patients and families, as Facebook is one of the most popular social networks in India. Our Facebook page is available at www.facebook.com/strituvad.

A similar strategy applies for LinkedIn, where communities of professionals in the field can be reached. Along with the implementation of all social channels, the visual identity has been extended to them with the creation of a smaller logo to fit in the headers of social profiles, and an editorial strategy and calendar have been set in order to both schedule and keep track of the communicative events published. Our LinkedIn page is available at www.linkedin.com/company/strituvad

So far, social networks have been populated with 3-5 posts or news per week, starting from mid-February.

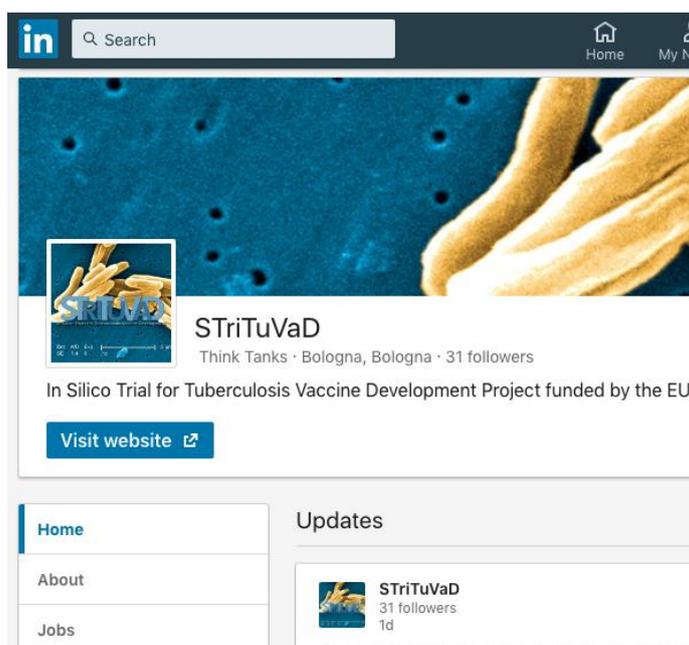


Figure 5: Screenshot of Strituvad LinkedIn page

Activate e-Newsletter

The STriTuVaD newsletter has been imagined as a quarterly report that is sent by email and that contains all most relevant news of the reference period. It has an standard structure: short editorial/introduction (5-6 lines), bullet list summary, a full length article about the most relevant news or event of the period, one or two snippets that introduce other relevant news, a bullet list of

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other news' titles with their links, and one or two snippets of upcoming events. The footer closes the newsletter with links to social networks and to the website, along with the privacy policy and unsubscribe clause. The newsletter is created, managed and sent through *Mailchimp*, a marketing automation platform and email marketing service.

The first issue was circulated in March 2019 ([read it here](#)), and the second in July 2019 ([read it here](#)). To date the e-newsletter has 40 subscribers, including all consortium members, plus other experts who subscribed through the pop-up banner on our website.

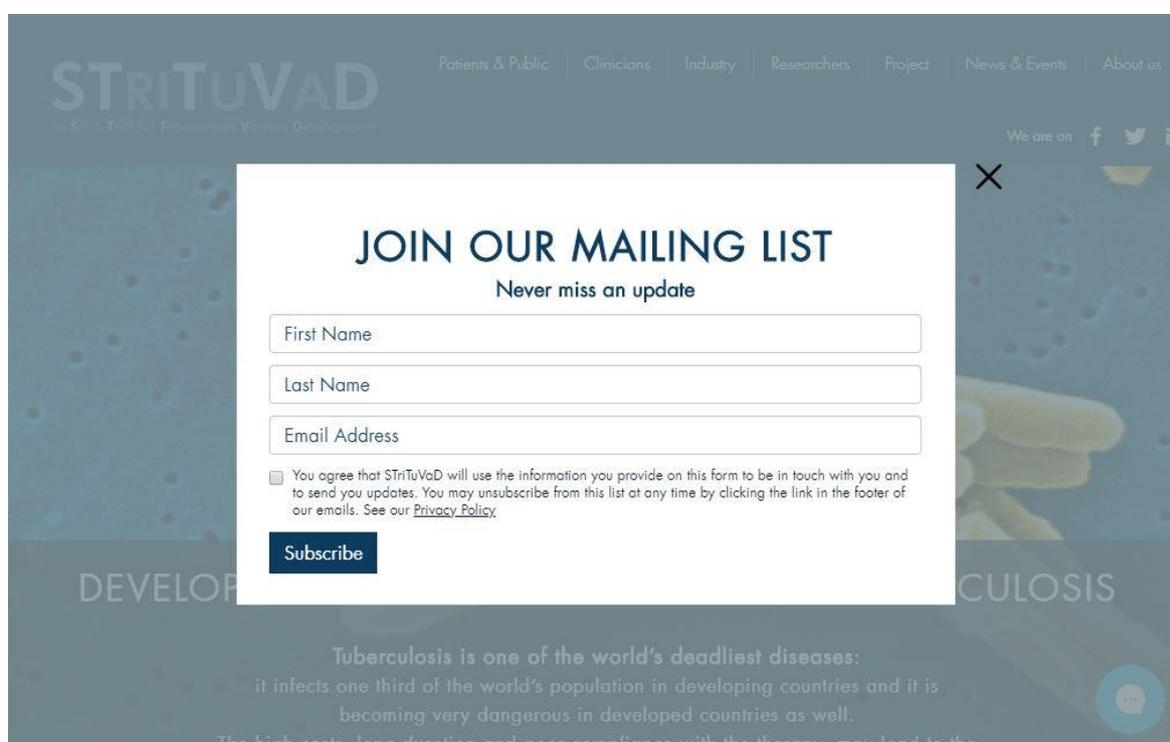


Figure 6: Pop-up window for newsletter subscription on the website

The first issue counts a percentage of open rate (people that opened the email upon reception) of around 75% and a percentage of clicks on links of around 20%. Similar results are obtained with July Newsletter.



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Figure 7: Results of March (above) and July newsletter (below) from Mailchimp dashboard

Subscribe to Alpha Galileo

Alpha Galileo is a news broker specialised in Science. Their business model contemplates free access for accredited science journalist of any kind (print, web, TV) and annual paid membership for those wanting to communicate and disseminate science news that will be then sent to thousands of science journalist around the world.

Since USFD already had a subscription to the service, the consortium agreed on the process of news and press releases submission to Alpha Galileo via USFD account and communication office.

Activate translation/reposting network

All partner agreed to collaborate on the translation of important news or press releases about crucial events or milestones that need to be disseminated also to the local level. It is the case of the press release about the Kick-off meeting that has been translated by AIIMS (Hindi), TBVI (Dutch), ARCHIVEL FARMA (Spanish) and ETNA BIOTECH (Italian).

Relink to other communication channels

On STRiTuVaD website it is possible to reach its social channels by clicking on the links in the home page, both in the header, in the footer and with the dedicated widget. Also, all partners' web resources are listed - along with their logos – in the lower part of the home page and in the Consortium page.



Figure 8 Website header and footer with social links on the right

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Figure 9 Social widget section

On all social profiles, the link to the website www.strituvad.eu is present as well.

We also agreed on exchanging newsbits and press releases with the VPH Institute, the Avicenna Alliance, TB Alert, TB Alliance, and the Stop TB Partnership.

Synergise with VPH-Institute and Avicenna Alliance

A connection has been established between STRiTuVaD, the VPH Institute and Avicenna Alliance communication offices to expand respective networks, circulate news into the wider community of people interested in In Silico technologies and work together on joint press releases.

For example, STRiTuVaD, as other In Silico Trials research projects sustained the communication effort promoted by partner UNIBO, the VPH Institute, the Avicenna Alliance and the Insigneo Institute around a petition to Dr Guido Rasi, Director of the European Medicine Agency, to consider a broader scope for In silico methods in the new EMA Strategic plan.

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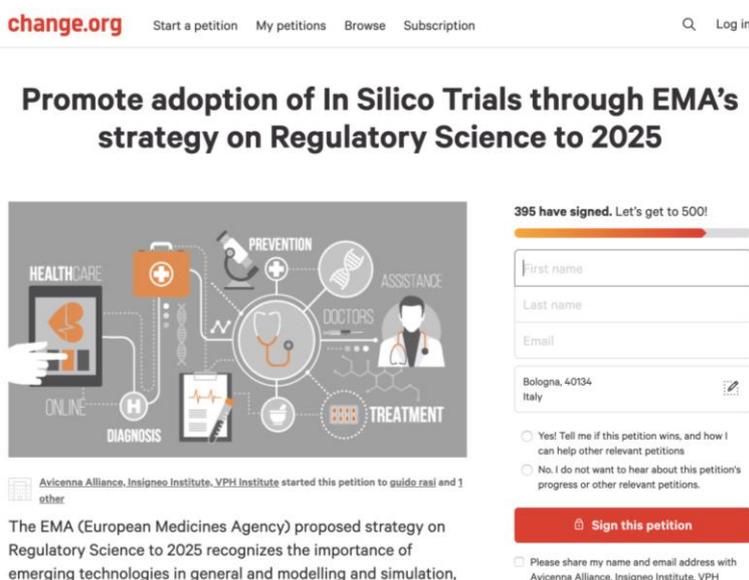


Figure 10: Petition page to EMA Director with nearly 400 signatures (as per 5-7-2019)

The petition is still open and available [here](#).

STriTuVaD public presentation

According to D6.1 a public presentation of the STriTuVaD project should be produced by M19, to be widely available to all consortium members but also to any other interested stakeholder and the press. The draft presentation is already available and is being reviewed by the rest of the consortium.

Establish monitoring framework

All communication and dissemination activities are being tracked and monitored periodically in order to assess the performance of the chosen tools, and to check if all activities are going as planned.

Our monitoring framework follows two main roads that correspond to two different levels of detail. The first monitoring framework is built on the Shannon-Weaver model that takes into account four main elements of communication, which are the source, the channel, the target and the content. Further details about this model and how it is declined in STriTuVaD communication strategy can be found in D6.1.

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The second monitoring framework includes insights provided by social networks platforms, for a closer look on how our communication performs on those channels. Main metrics taken into account at this stage are:

- the total reach of posts (i.e., the number of people who had any content from the social page enter their screen in terms of unique users);
- age-gender-geolocation of reached people;
- impressions (number of times the users saw the content on the social pages);
- engagement rate (the sum of clicks, retweets, replies, follows and likes divided by the total number of impressions);
- percentage of topics coverage (% of news about the project, about in silico, about tuberculosis).

As further part of the second level of detailed monitoring, we also connected our web domain to a Google analytics account that allows to check the performance of STriTuVaD website.

Engagement portal

Insights derived from the review of the literature on communities of practice (CoP) led to the creation of a conceptual and design framework that guided to the definition of community audience, domain and purpose. Based on the structure underlined in the framework, we were able to identify which online platform – from those already available on the market – could be the best one for our purposes.

Final decision fell on Slack platform, an American cloud-based set of proprietary team collaboration software tools and online services whose name is the acronym of *Searchable Log of All Conversation and Knowledge*. Slack offers many IRC-like features, including persistent chat rooms (channels) organized by topic, private groups, and direct messaging. Content, including files, conversations and people, is all searchable within the platform.

The Slack Community of Practice, named *In Silico World*, has received the support of various EU-funded projects, including STriTuVaD, MOBILISE-D, PRIMAGE, and COMPBIOMED. We have now a progressive plan of engagement which should bring on the platform most key consortia, companies, and organisations active in In Silico Medicine before the end of the year.

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Monitoring results

Starting from April 2019 we monitored the dissemination activity (retrospectively from the project starting date).

Monitoring general communicative events

The dissemination strategy will be formulated in term of number of dissemination events per year, for each Content type. The initial strategy is represented graphically in the figure below.

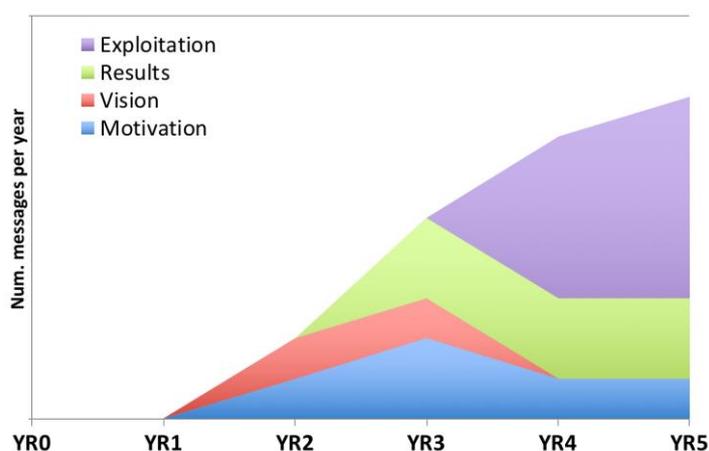


Figure 11. Planned dissemination strategy

The Communication Officer (CO) periodically updates the events database to see how the consortium is performing with respect to these targets, and eventually implements corrective actions to adjust deviations from the plan.

Table 1 Planned vs achieved content.

| Type of content | Year 1 | | Year 2 (1st sem) | |
|----------------------------|---------|----------|------------------|----------|
| | Planned | Achieved | Planned | Achieved |
| Exploitation | 0% | 0% | 0% | 6% |
| Motivation | 50% | 85% | 40% | 33% |
| Results | 0% | 0% | 40% | 8% |
| Vision | 50% | 15% | 20% | 53% |
| Communication units | 13 | | 92 | |

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As showed in Table 1, the volume of communication units (defined as any dissemination output, including press releases, talks, papers, posts on socials, newsletters, web pages, etc.) has increased considerably: in the first year we produced only 13 communication units, while in the first semester of the second year we already generated 92 units.

In term of composition of the content, in the first year we were reasonably close to the original dissemination plan: we had a bit more motivational communications and a bit less communication on the project vision, but overall things were according to plan.

In the first semester of the second year however, we noticed some deviation from the plan. While the motivational communication is decreasing as expected, we do a lot of communication on the project vision, and very little on the project's results. An analysis suggested that the problem was two-fold: on one hand, most results were being produced after June; on the other, some results had been produced but not captured by the communication officer. A new procedure is now in place, which should ensure that all results achieved by the consortium are properly disseminated; we are also covering retrospectively the few things that were missed.

With respect to the selection of communication channel, the target audience, and the level of outreach, the dissemination plan did not set specific targets.

For the channel, the predominance of web pages is due to the fact that the web site acts as our communication archive so everything we disseminate ends up also on the web site. Being the first year of the project it is reasonable that the only targets for the communication are the public at large for all generic communications on motivation and vision of the project, and the research community interested in In Silico Trials for the more technical details. Compared to other research projects, in this year STRITUVAD communication had a significant worldwide outreach (as In Silico Medicine is being driven in Europe but also in USA, and tuberculosis is a worldwide issue). There is also a significant national outreach, which we consider positively as it is important to inform also the local authorities and the public on the potentials of In Silico Trials. The analysis for the second year is in progress, but it shows similar trends in first semester.

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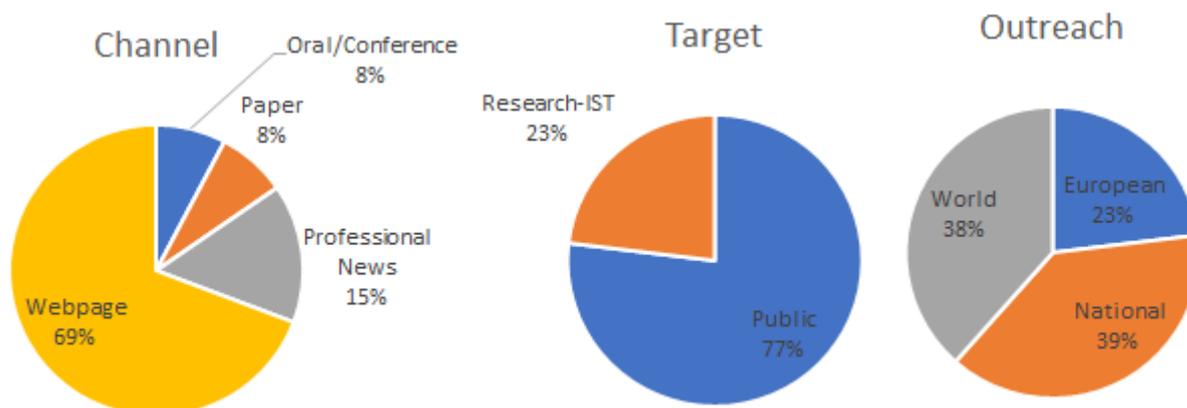


Figure 12 Monitoring results for Year 1 (Feb 2018-Feb 2019)

Social Networks analytics

Where available, monitoring metrics are calculated from the social channels' creation date; otherwise, a 90 days period is taken into account.

Our largest fan base is on Twitter, where at the end of M18 we had 73 followers. During the last 90 days, our posts earned 24.200 impressions with peak in May, in correspondence with events where our partners were involved. Another peak (not visible here) was in March, in correspondence of World TB Day.

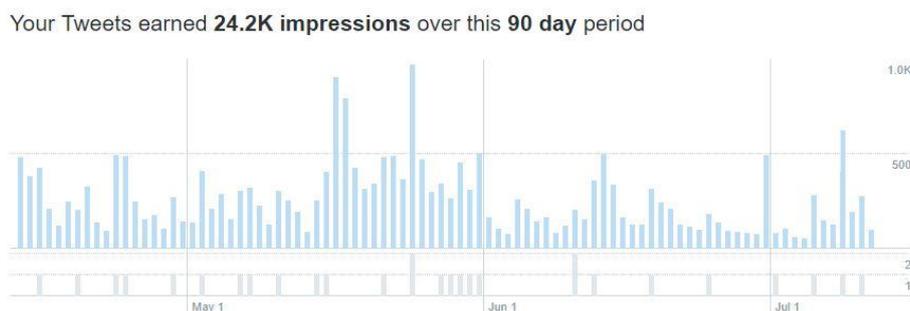


Figure 14 Tweets impressions from mid April to mid July

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| MAY 2019 SUMMARY | | JUN 2019 SUMMARY | | JUL 2019 SUMMARY | |
|------------------|----|-------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| Tweets | 14 | Tweet impressions | 11.4K | Tweets | 5 |
| Profile visits | 27 | Mentions | 4 | Tweet impressions | 5,592 |
| New followers | 6 | Profile visits | 25 | Tweets | 3 |
| | | Mentions | 3 | Profile visits | 6 |
| | | New followers | 0 | Mentions | 1 |
| | | | | New followers | 0 |

Figure 15 Overview comparison between May, June and July

On LinkedIn our fan base at the end of M18 was of 35 followers, most of them from Italy and just a few from other countries (Spain, UK, France, India), the majority of them working in the research field, but some also coming from health industries. Given the nature of this social network, we expect these number to grow a little only when we will start to post results about the project.



Figure 16 New followers' acquisition over time, with significant peak in March

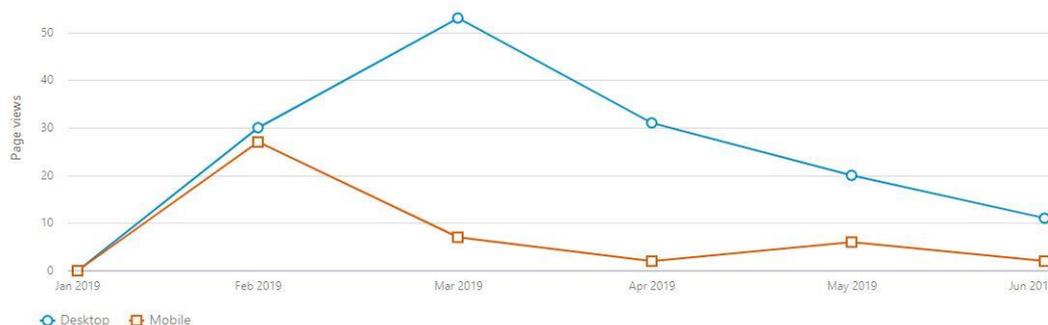


Figure 17 Number of page views over time, from mobile and desktop devices

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The page views are mostly from desktop, suggesting a professional audience.

On Facebook, Strituvad had at the end of M18 35 followers, with a similar composition as highlighted by LinkedIn insights (location and industry). The figures below show some examples of the analytics that Facebook provides over the followers' demographics, occupation, their gender, and their age. When the numbers of followers increase these analytics might be of great interest.

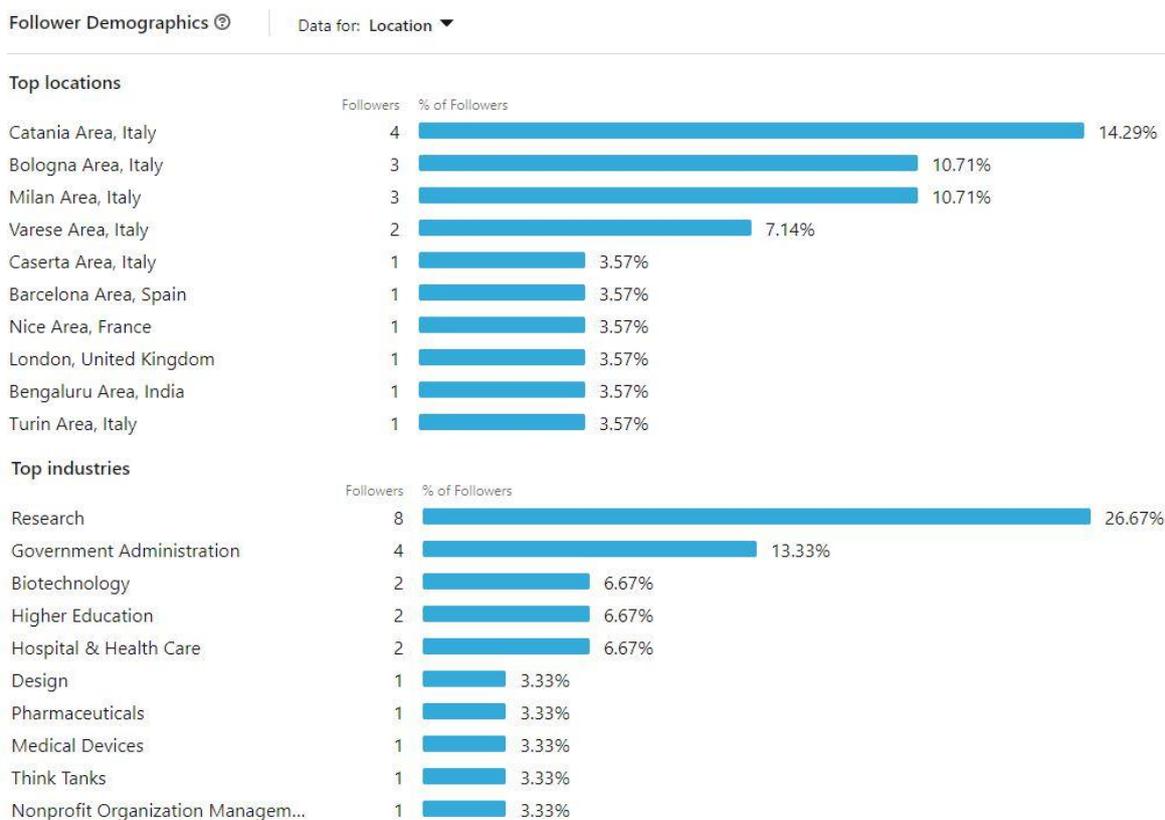


Figure 18 Followers demographics; top locations and industries

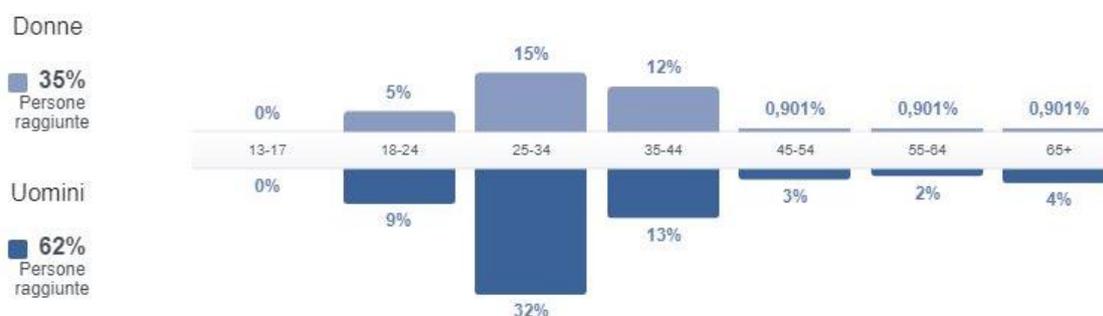


Figure 19 Age-gender composition of reached people. Around 35% are women (light blue) and around 62% are men (dark blue)

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Best performing posts are usually those containing links that point to external resources, and those that have a preview image. Regarding topics, the page shares news about Tuberculosis, In Silico Medicine and the project itself; the figure below shows some of the best performing posts with their titles, the amount of reached users and the amount of clicks/reactions on them.



Figure 20 Example of the best performing posts in terms of reached users (orange bar) and clicks/reactions (violet bar)

Website analytics

For the STRITUVAD website we use Google Analytics services to monitor its performance. From its creation in February until now, visitors arrived on the website mostly from four channels, especially from direct (visitors who already know the URL) and from social channels.

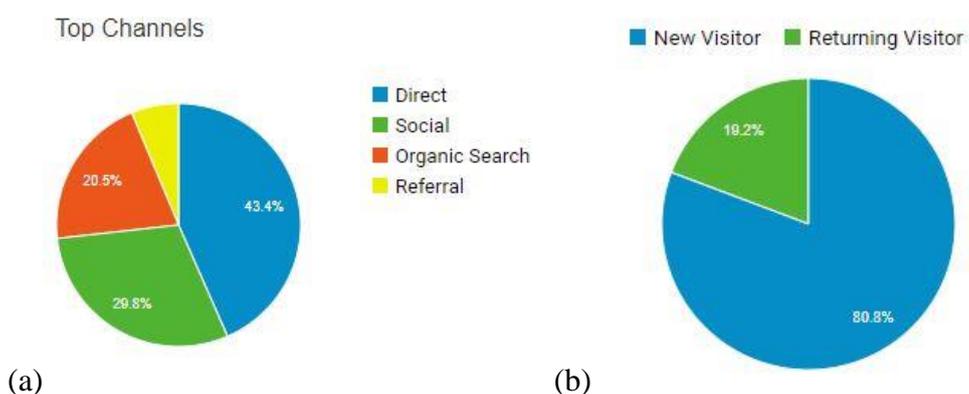


Figure 21 Top channels redirecting users to the website (a) and returning VS new visitors' percentage (b)

In the considered period, the website gained 336 users (see figure 22), 20% of them being returning visitors.

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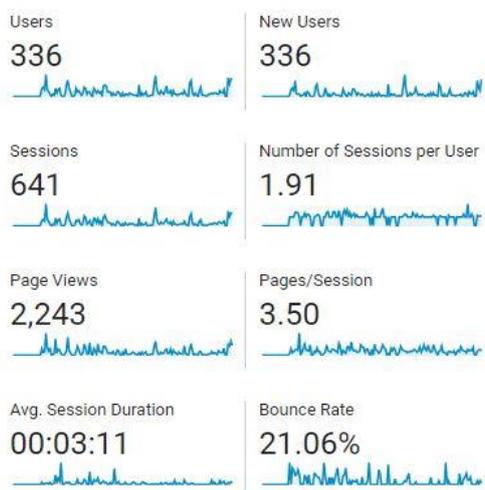


Figure 22 Overview metrics of website users and sessions

On average, each user visited 3 pages in each session, which duration is around 3 minutes so nearly one minute of reading time per page, with a bounce rate of 21%. This overview highlights that the website is overall performing quite good, but it still has wide growth margins.

Other partnerships and mentions

STriTuVaD has been mentioned in the *EU-India partnership on research and innovation brochure*, issued by the delegation of European Union to India.



Figure 23 Extract from the EU-India partnership brochure

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Marlies Halder, JRC scientific officer, has mentioned STRiTuVaD project in an EMA event in the framework of the Working Group on the Application of the 3Rs in Regulatory Testing of Medicinal Products in which JRC-EURL ECVAM' scientists were invited as observer.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the communication and dissemination activity are up and running, and the delay experienced in the first months has been successfully and rapidly recuperated. Some tasks such as the implementation of the community of practice have been re-scheduled to give priority to the more traditional but essential communication channels, but we are now working on it and it should be ready for the launch in September 2019. The monitoring framework proposed in D6.1 has shown to be an effective assessment strategy, as it already detected a deviation from the plan which required some corrections on the handling of the internal communication. It has been integrated with further specific metrics for social media monitoring; when our social channels will have more followers, these statistics might become quite useful. While there are ample margins for improvement, these early indications (considering that most communication channels have been active for only 2-4 months) show positive trends, which we need to nurture as the project's results start to emerge.

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