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Project Communications Strategy and Plan

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Abstract

This deliverable describes the communications strategy and plan for Month 1 to Month 12 (January–December 2025) of GN5-2.

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Executive Summary

This deliverable describes the communications strategy and plan for Month 1 to Month 12 (M1–M12) of GN5-2.

Continuing from the progress made during GN5-1, this document provides the context on which the communications strategy and plan for GN5-2 is built, and details the key communication aspects that were considered in devising the communications plan.

Actions identified in the plan will be tracked on an ongoing basis and their success measured against the key performance indicators set for WP2 Task 1 Communications and Design. Progress towards objectives will be monitored and reported on a regular basis.

1 Introduction

Informed by the goals set for GN5-2 in the project's Description of Work (DoW), the marketing and communications strategy and plan continue to address the project's different stakeholders and their requirements with integrated, consistent communications to target audiences through coordinated channels, with consistent messaging and impactful content.

Following the strategic direction set for GN5-2, this document sets out the communications strategy devised by Task 1 Communications and Design of Work Package 2 Marcomms, Events and Policy Engagement (WP2 T1) to progress and enhance the work it started in GN5-1 (Section 2).

The communications plan compiled by the Task is based on the communications strategy, and key communication aspects as well as stakeholder impact were considered when putting the plan together (Section 3).

To track progress against the communications plan, key performance indicators (KPIs) have been agreed, which the Task will monitor on a regular basis (Section 4).

The document concludes by summarising the key approaches required for the Task to succeed in meeting its objectives and how it hopes to further progress its efforts (Section 5).

This deliverable is based on and updates the marketing and communications strategy and plan for Months 13 to 24 of the GN5-1 project [1].

2 Project Communications Strategy

The GN5-2 Description of Work includes the following overarching objective:

GN5-2 aims to provide faster, more resilient, and secure connectivity infrastructure and collaboration services to enable researchers, educators, and students' access to applications that support evidence-based and effective collaboration across virtual research teams, worldwide.

Specific objectives relevant to project communications include:

O2. To understand and serve the communication networking needs and collaboration between the European NRENs, their expanding user community and important European and global stakeholder groups.

O4. To facilitate and enable, through the project, the needs of a wide user base across multiple disciplines for excellent science and research by delivering a broad range of existing and innovative new services. These services incorporate agile incubator development and sustainable operation following thorough business model practices.

Informed by the above, the marketing communications strategy aims to raise awareness of the project, its activities and ambitions, as well as the network and services, and highlight the impact these have on the research and education community along with their contributions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). This should be done through identification of stakeholders, composing clear messaging and positioning statements, the production and publication of engaging content to address key stakeholders, and communication delivery through integrated, measurable and collaborative channels.

WP2's communications, marketing and events service has continued to develop and evolve over the years and has proved itself to be an effective and valuable resource. It is also responsible for building and maintaining the GÉANT name, brand and reputation. In GN5-1, a Task focused on policy engagement (WP2 T4) was added to ensure closer coordination on outreach and messaging relevant to specific stakeholders associated with the activities of that Task. This will continue in GN5-2.

Over successive GÉANT projects, the WP2 team has established and developed effective communication channels which maximise the reach of the messages and content to a wide range of GÉANT stakeholder communities. Examples include the range of GÉANT websites; the CONNECT family of channels (website, newsletter and magazine); participation at events; joint promotional campaigns with National Research and Education Networks (NRENs); and a social media approach that targets all stakeholders and drives traffic to GÉANT websites. Furthermore, the TNC event organised by GÉANT and partner NRENs routinely attracts over 800 attendees, offers an online platform that attracts several hundred further attendees, and reaches an audience of several thousand watching streamed content online.

In GN5-2, WP2 will aim to increase the effectiveness of these channels and determine how well messaging is reaching its intended audience by monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs), liaising with partners, reporting on campaigns, and adjusting activity where needed.

WP2 will continue to establish, maintain, and develop relationships and collaborate with other groups to support outreach efforts, making joint use of channels and opportunities to reach audiences. This may include the Special Interest Group on Marketing Communications (SIG-Marcomms), collaboration with WP3 to ensure regular

representation of partner efforts, the *In the Field* blog [2], the Science|Business weekly newsletter [3], stakeholder joint collaborations, featured opportunities and social media, and, of course, the partners' own dissemination of information across all their channels. WP2 will continue to use the most appropriate tools to monitor/measure the impact of the communications to ensure they are relevant, targeted, and cost effective.

WP2 will continue to support other WPs as follows:

- WP1 Project Management and its Tasks with internal communications efforts and to support recruitment, retention and ongoing training of project staff.
- WP3 User and Stakeholder Engagement on strategic topics to develop and implement communications plans that will enable dissemination and promotion, as well as allow dialogue with and feedback from the stakeholder groups.
- WP4 Above-the-Net Services to support and promote the new OCRE 2024 Framework as well as to support communications around Above-the-Net services development, including eduMEET and the Above-the-Net services Incubator.
- WP5 Trust and Identity to support and promote the T&I service portfolio including the new Core AAI Service and Platform developments.
- WP6 Network Development, in collaboration with WP2 T2 Services Marketing, to manage the promotion and outreach for all the new initiatives developed by the WP6 team.
- WP7 Network Infrastructure and Service Evolution and Operations and WP9 Operations Support also in collaboration with WP2 T2 and with WP3 to ensure all services delivered and supported by GÉANT are effectively and accurately communicated to the core NREN users.
- WP8 Security to contribute and manage the promotion and outreach for all the new initiatives developed by the WP8 T2 team (Human Factor), such as the Cybersecurity Month campaign, the GÉANT Security Days conference, and the Security Awareness Resources Hub.

To continue the progress achieved in previous phases of the project, Task 1 has identified a number of objectives and actions for M1–M12 of GN5-2. These will be accomplished by building on the 'twin-track' approach employed to date, an approach that separates *features* (functional) and *benefits* (impactful) to address different stakeholders with the most appropriate and compelling content and deliver this through targeted channels.

As an integral part of its work, each work package of GN5-2 will disseminate its results to relevant audiences in coordination with the support WPs (WP1, WP2, WP3). This will include:

- Presentations.
- Training and knowledge-sharing at meetings and conferences.
- Issuing news stories, use case studies and service documentation.
- e-Infrastructure integration projects and suppliers through operational collaborations with, for example, international networking organisations.

A core role of WP2 Marcomms, Events and Policy Engagement is to disseminate and promote the results and outputs of the project across the stakeholder communities through external and internal communications strategies and actions, helping to increase the success and adoption of services. To ensure partner involvement, this work is carried out in collaboration with WP3 User and Stakeholder Engagement.

The project communications strategy informs the communications plan, which is detailed in the next section.

3 Project Communications Plan

The communications plan outlines a set of objectives (see Section 3.2) informed by the strategy developed in Section 2. The information dissemination required to meet these objectives is defined by answering the following questions:

- What type of information needs to be disseminated?
- In which format is the information delivered?
- Which communication channels should be used?
- To whom does it need to be delivered and what are their characteristics?
- When should it be delivered?
- How can it best be measured?

The success of actions is measured against key performance indicators (KPIs).

This section discusses the key communication aspects that have been taken into account to produce the communications plan, as well as presenting the plan itself.

3.1 Strategic Considerations

In putting together the marketing communications plan, Task 1 has followed the devised strategy by considering key communication aspects. These are the audiences that need to be addressed, which channels are appropriate for addressing each audience, what messaging approach will deliver the best results, how content is conveyed most effectively, and how stakeholder engagement can be ensured. Each of these is discussed below.

3.1.1 Audiences

The GÉANT project has a diverse range of audiences (many of whom are stakeholders; see Section 3.1.5.1), including:

- a. Work Package Leaders (WPLs), Task Leaders (TLs), Coordinators and project participants.
- b. Project partners (European NRENs) and the research and education institutions and students they serve.
- c. e-Infrastructure partners and other organisations in the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) ecosystem.
- d. Research communities.
- e. The European Commission.
- f. National governments and funding agencies.
- g. Global partners – non-European NRENs, Regional Research and Education Networks (RRENs).
- h. Industry – potential and existing suppliers (i.e., telecom and equipment providers), commercial partners, etc.
- i. The public.

These audiences have different interests, requirements for information, and levels of engagement, and often get their information from different communication channels.

3.1.2 Channels

Reaching the project audiences requires a range of communication channels that cater for different types of content and consumption. As a result, the project strategically uses different channels for specific purposes. To enhance the effectiveness of these channels, throughout M1–M12 of GN5-2 there will be an ongoing review process aimed at improving consistency, accessibility, and overall impact.

- Web presences include but are not limited to: GEANT.org, CONNECT.geant.org, NETWORK.geant.org, COMMUNITY.geant.org, ABOUT.geant.org and RESOURCES.geant.org.
- Newsletters: GÉANT Project Office news from the Project Management Office (PMO) for project participants; *CONNECT* weekly newsletter subscribed to by a wide range of audiences; and a newsletter distributed to key EC personnel with selected content from *CONNECT* magazine (published in March, June and October).
- *CONNECT* magazine.
- Social media: LinkedIn, Facebook, Mastodon, YouTube and Instagram. GÉANT social media channels are aimed at raising awareness, engaging with audiences, and driving traffic to web presences. During M1–M12, efforts will be focused on increasing strategic and positioning posts to reinforce the project's identity, highlight key messages, and strengthen its overall presence in the digital space.
- Meetings: Internal (e.g. Project Management Convention and Symposium; certain SIGs – SIG-Marcomms and SIG-MSP) and external (e.g. TNC).

Throughout GN5-1 significant progress was made in improving the project's communication channels, particularly ensuring they were fully accessible, optimised for mobile devices, designed to provide a consistent brand identity and user experience, and worked well together. During GN5-2, Task 1 will dedicate continuous efforts to refining and optimising content on the various communications channels with the aim of enhancing audience engagement. This will involve tailoring the content to different audiences, simplifying complex messages, incorporating visually appealing formats, ensuring relevance through timely updates, leveraging feedback mechanisms to adapt content in real time, and making cross-promotion of material more efficient.

3.1.3 Formats

In GN5-1, Task 1 explored innovative approaches to content delivery, such as podcasts and videos for several different campaigns. Leveraging a mix of formats enabled the Task to engage varied audiences and sustain their interest over time while accommodating diverse consumption habits. Examples of new formats used include:

- Podcasts: Ideal for navigating complex topics such as event programmes. Podcasts, in the form of short audio interviews, were first used to promote and dive deep into the TNC24 programme. The campaign received positive feedback for making complex topics more accessible.
- Videos: Ideal for social media to engage with an audience that seeks dynamic and short-form content. The Task has been producing videos for event highlights (TNC events) and campaigns (testimonials for Women in STEM), which were widely shared on social media, amplifying the reach.

In GN5-2, the Task plans to continue to leverage podcasts and videos while also staying attuned to emerging communication trends to adapt to audience needs and increase engagement.

The following Table 3.1 summarises the audiences and approach for each channel.

#	Channel	Audiences	Approach
1.	GEANT.org	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i	As the default entry point for all GÉANT audiences, this site aims to provide a brief overview of all activities with high-level messaging for a potentially diverse group of audiences. From here, visitors are directed to the subject-specific sites for further information.
2.	CONNECT.geant.org	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h	As the home of all timely content – news and articles about all topics and event notifications – for use by the project and its partners, this channel caters for a diverse audience.
4.	NETWORK.geant.org	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i	This site is for a potentially diverse group of audiences and aims to showcase the pan-European network and to provide a platform on which to disseminate and promote the GN5-2 project activities and achievements.
5.	COMMUNITY.geant.org	a, b, c, d, e, g, h, i	This site is to showcase the GÉANT Community Programme, promote involvement with Task Forces (TFs), Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and workshops, and promote the Community Award and the Innovation Programme. It also provides an overview of the Learning and Development opportunities.
6.	ABOUT.geant.org	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i	This site provides background information about GÉANT – the Association primarily – and therefore includes information on the membership and project partners, GÉANT Board, Executive Team, and offices.
7.	RESOURCES.geant.org	a, b, e, g	This site provides a home for project output (deliverables, highlights), white papers, position papers, strategy documents, and more generic items such as logos, branding guidelines, etc.
9.	PMO newsletter	a, e	This is targeted at all project participants and the EC Project Officer.
10.	CONNECT newsletter	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i	By incorporating content from the CONNECT.geant.org site, it can be assumed that the newsletter audience is the same as that of the website. However, the audience can be analysed closely by the subscriber details.
11.	EC newsletter	e	The EC newsletter was created in GN5-1 and will continue in GN5-2 in collaboration with WP2 T4. It is targeted directly at EC staff and aims to raise awareness of those activities that are relevant to policy engagement.
12.	CONNECT magazine	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i	The magazine is compiled and written so as to appeal to all audiences, with a tone and language that addresses different groups individually.

#	Channel	Audiences	Approach
13.	Social media	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i	By its very nature, social media potentially covers all audiences. However, it offers the ability to target particular audiences where appropriate.
14.	Internal meetings	a, b, e	Project-internal meetings include the Project Management Convention and Symposium, but also certain SIG meetings, such as SIG-Marcomms and SIG-MSP. Whilst SIG meetings can include commercial partners, the delivery format for these meetings is aimed at project partners, who form the majority of attendees.
15.	External events	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i	External events vary in their audience focus and need to be addressed individually. For example, TNC is focused on European and non-European NRENs, RRENs, the EC, and industry. However, given our community's focus on ICT, the most common event audiences will be research communities, the EC, national governments, industry and, to a smaller extent, the public.

Table 3.1: Communication channels – audiences and approach

3.1.4 Design

The design element of the Task is integral to all WP2 work, providing graphic design, video and animation creation/editing, website building, etc. to establish, maintain and ensure the consistency of brand identity. In Year 1 of GN5-2, this work will include dedicated support for events, such as TNC25 and TNC26, Security Days and CLAW, including branding guidelines, website design, promotional materials such as animations and graphics, and campaign support.

In addition, the team will continue to support campaigns such as the annual Cyber Security Month and Women in STEM, for which a special focus on video editing is required. Other activities will include: the development of service materials as driven by WP2 Task 2 plans; the ongoing refresh of websites; support to OCRE 2024, the GÉANT Community Programme and the GÉANT Learning and Development team (GLAD).

3.1.5 Messaging

A consistent and integrated approach to messaging helps to ensure the project and its activities are positioned correctly and seen as supporting wider initiatives, as well as building trust with stakeholders. The Task will continue to work with the Project Management Office (PMO) and with Work Package Leaders and Task Leaders (specifically WP2 Task 4 Policy Engagement) to develop project-wide messaging.

From a communications perspective, throughout previous phases of the GÉANT project, the project's wide range of activities were grouped into a number of key areas (networking, trust and identity, cloud services, community, and research engagement) to simplify project messaging, provide context to individual activities and highlight the positioning of the GÉANT project in specific landscapes.

Each key area has its own website (e.g. network, community, etc.) under a common navigation, supported by outreach efforts via social media and the newsletters, which both drive traffic to these websites and function as communication channels in their own right.

This will continue in Year 1 of GN5-2, and Task 1 will work to evolve the overall communications messaging to better illustrate and mirror the priorities of the European Commission.

3.1.5.1 Twin-Track Approach

Since GN4-3, Task 1 has been using a 'twin-track' approach for messaging, which addresses communications through two main streams, 'impactful' and 'functional'. All the project's audiences, channels and content are included in these two groups. This will continue in Year 1 of GN5-2.

- **Impactful:** a storytelling approach that addresses the 'WHY?' with engaging content highlighting the benefits. This may take the form of success stories, articles, videos, graphics, animations, social media campaigns such as Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Cyber Security Month, posters and others, delivered through channels such as *CONNECT* magazine or the *CONNECT* website. For example, governments and funding bodies can read interviews or success stories in *CONNECT* magazine, which show the importance of the GÉANT community working with a particular research community, or how eduroam is supporting students across the world.
- **Functional:** an informational approach that addresses the 'WHAT?', highlighting the facts, features and necessary information. For example, service implementers in NRENs receive information on a particular service through internal meetings or via the WP3 Partner Relations Task or as published on the GEANT.org website in the appropriate sections. This information focuses on the features and technology of the service.

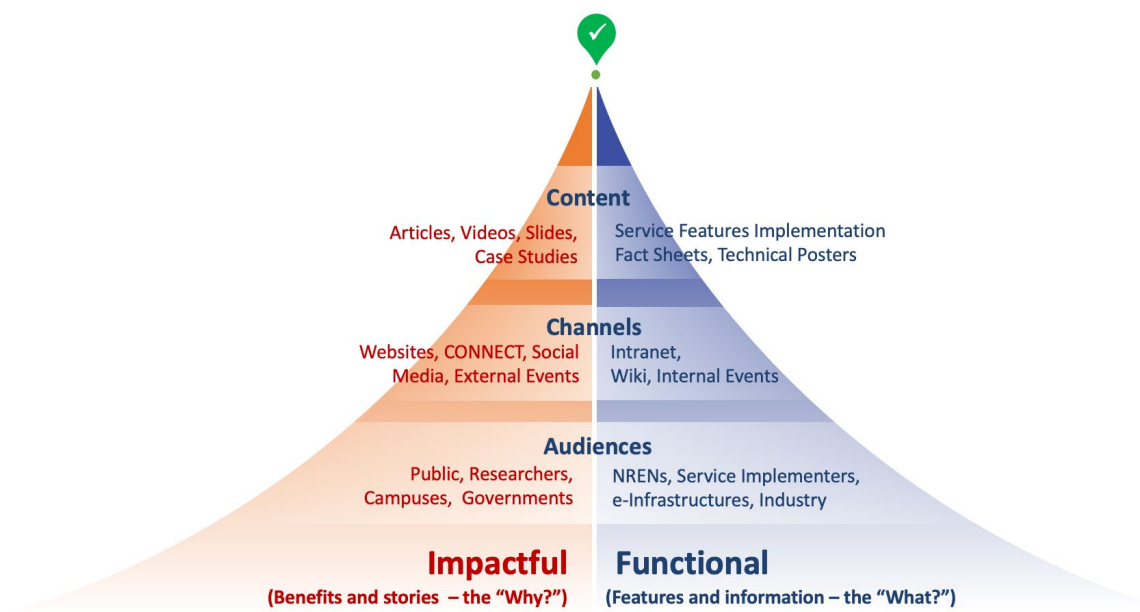


Figure 3.1: Twin-track approach to messaging

3.1.6 Stakeholder Engagement

The Task will engage with all stakeholders, including Work Package Leaders and their Task Leaders, project partners and participants, the European Commission, and other partners.

Ongoing engagement with stakeholders, through both established and new channels, will be essential to the achievement of objectives. The level of detail will also be modified in accordance with the given audience’s requirements.

3.1.6.1 Stakeholder Analysis

Table 3.2 lists the stakeholders of the GÉANT project and their interests, with the aim of determining the extent of the influence of their respective requirements on marketing communications. This integrated approach to understanding the stakeholders and their needs is useful to ensure effective communications.

Stakeholders	Interests	Estimated Influence	Estimated Priority
WPLs/TLs	WPLs and TLs have a responsibility to disseminate their work and to engage with their audiences. The Task will work closely with them to ensure their communications needs are fully met and support the project's overall objectives.	Medium	2
Project participants (partners)	The way in which this stakeholder group consumes content is notable, as participants are often not involved in the project in a full-time capacity, and so the Task needs to compete for their attention and ensure the content is easy for them to consume.	Medium	2
EC	The EC requires the project to communicate its work and benefits to a wide range of audiences and needs to be kept up to date with developments and success stories. Therefore, the Task will work with the Project Officer to support their outreach efforts.	High	1
Other collaborators	The project needs to collaborate with a range of partners and to support their outreach efforts, e.g., e-infrastructure partners and global partners. The Task will work with the relevant WPL/TL to ensure these collaborations continue to progress.	Medium	2

Table 3.2: Stakeholder analysis

3.2 Communications Plan

Taking into consideration all the factors discussed in Section 3.1, the communications plan (Table 3.3) details each objective, the actions to be taken to achieve it, the audiences targeted by the actions, the channels used to reach the audiences and how often the actions are to be executed.

Objective	Additional Information	Action	Target Audiences	Channels	Frequency
Position and promote the GÉANT network and services to European and global (i.e. from world regions other than Europe) stakeholders.	Whilst it is necessary to promote the network and services to stakeholders, it is also important to support GÉANT's wider positioning within strategically important areas that support digital transformation worldwide.	Articulate and illustrate GÉANT's role and value in supporting various initiatives and the project's contributions to UN SDGs via feature articles, success stories, web content, and graphics.	b, c, d, e, f, g, i	Feature articles and interviews with GÉANT Exec, Board members, and key members of the community, published in <i>CONNECT</i> magazine, on relevant websites, and promoted on social media.	Quarterly
		Showcase both existing and emerging synergies with global partners in key areas such as EuroHPC, EOSC, Quantum, and international connectivity. This will be achieved through joint communication efforts, including success stories, use cases, and strategic visibility at international events.			
		Promote the achievements of each project period using content from the 'Highlights'	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GÉANT website. Social media. EC newsletter. 	Annual

Objective	Additional Information	Action	Target Audiences	Channels	Frequency
		two-page PDF created for EC reviewers.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>CONNECT</i> magazine and newsletter. 	
<p>Showcase the capabilities, value, and impact of GÉANT, R&E networks, NREN partners and their portfolio of services.</p>	<p>It is essential to articulate and illustrate the GÉANT community’s socio-economic impact, not only supporting the ongoing funding efforts of project partners but highlighting the benefits of GÉANT to user communities.</p>	<p>Populate CONNECT.geant.org with community and user success stories, previously destined for IMPACT.geant.org, and promote these across GÉANT’s web presences and social media channels, and via NREN partners.</p> <p>Task 1 will work to evolve the content currently present on IMPACT.geant.org and integrate it into CONNECT.geant.org, in an effort to drive traffic to one site only.</p> <p>The stories should reflect areas of importance for R&E and support the EC’s initiatives, including but not limited to societal topics such as diversity, promoting future talent, and sustainability. These stories may take the form of case studies or use cases as appropriate.</p> <p>Furthermore, Task 1, in collaboration with Task 2, will</p>	<p>a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media. • EC newsletter. • <i>CONNECT</i> (all). 	<p>Quarterly</p>

Objective	Additional Information	Action	Target Audiences	Channels	Frequency
		develop targeted content showcasing trust, identity and security services to support the positioning of GN5-2 and its strategically important role in areas of digital transformation.			
		Support outreach for the GÉANT Innovation Programme, helping to attract submissions for the funding process and showcasing successful awardees and their work.	a, b, c, d, e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COMMUNITY website. CONNECT (all). 	Quarterly
Foster inclusion and participation among participants, partners, and the wider community.	Many project participants spend only a proportion of their time on the project; therefore, there is a need to engage, inform, and motivate participants through coordinated outreach and communications efforts, together with other Work Packages.	Support WP1 with the PMO weekly newsletter to project participants; promote the CONNECT weekly newsletter to grow participant subscribers. Highlight the connections between NRENS, Tasks, and activities and the GN5-2 strategy and impact to reinforce a sense of purpose and re-iterate the broader strategic vision.	a, b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PMO weekly newsletter. 	Weekly
		Promoting GÉANT Learning and Development (GLAD) material and courses; etc. available to all project participants.	a, b, c, d, g, h, i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media. CONNECT (all). 	Monthly

Objective	Additional Information	Action	Target Audiences	Channels	Frequency
		Where needed, update branding guidelines and presentation templates for use by all partners and participants to ensure consistent branding and practice by project participants.	a, b, g	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RESOURCES website. 	Quarterly
Collaborate with other e-infrastructure providers, users, NRENs in Europe and worldwide, commercial partners and other stakeholders to maximise dissemination reach.	<p>GÉANT has a comprehensive range of channels. However, leveraging the reach of other stakeholders is important to maximise dissemination. Equally important is to support the outreach efforts of others within the community.</p> <p>In particular, campaigns such as Women in STEM and Cyber Security Month actively involve project partners who submit articles and promote</p>	<p>Engage with NRENs and other stakeholders to collaborate on dissemination efforts, joint campaigns, and other initiatives, such as the Women in STEM and Cyber Security Month campaigns.</p> <p>Utilise SIG-Marcomms meetings and mailing lists to identify potential collaborative campaigns; and contribute to best practice sessions at SIG-Marcomms meetings.</p>	b, c, d, e, g, h	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SIG-Marcomms. CONNECT. Social media. 	Ongoing
		Collaborate with EC channels and publications such as Science Business to maximise reach of dissemination efforts.	b, c, d, e, f, g, h	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science Business, EC website, etc. – as needed. 	Ongoing
		Liaise with <i>In the Field stories</i> to contribute to this initiative and promote it throughout GÉANT channels.	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In the Field</i> site. 	Monthly

Objective	Additional Information	Action	Target Audiences	Channels	Frequency
	content through their own channels as part of a coordinated approach.	Invite contributed articles from NRENs and other partners for publishing in CONNECT channels.	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CONNECT (all) 	Ongoing
		Undertake joint press releases with suppliers where appropriate. Collaborate on joint announcements with user communities, NRENs and RRENs as required.	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GÉANT website CONNECT (all) Other as needed 	As needed
Manage external communications channels and deliver promotional materials to maximise outreach.	GÉANT communications channels must work together in an integrated way to ensure optimal user experience and to maximise effectiveness.	Continue to curate all websites and make ongoing improvements for user experience and impact. The Task will continue to explore the use of innovative formats, such as podcasts and video, to adapt to audience needs and foster engagement.	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i		Ongoing
		Collaborate regularly with other WPs to evolve <i>CONNECT</i> magazine to highlight GÉANT's role in and impact on strategically important topics; grow CONNECT weekly newsletter subscriber base;	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CONNECT (all) 	Ongoing

Objective	Additional Information	Action	Target Audiences	Channels	Frequency
		evolve the CONNECT website for improved user experience.			
		Review use of social media and identify the most appropriate platforms to use for particular content.	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media 	Ongoing
		Produce project achievements sheets, slides with key highlights, ongoing web pages and banners for the GÉANT website.	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As needed. RESOURCES website. 	Ongoing

Table 3.3: Communications plan

The identified actions will be tracked on an ongoing basis and their success measured against the KPIs set for the Task (see Section 4). Progress will be reported in quarterly management reports and any issues identified in monthly red, amber, green (RAG) status reports.

4 Key Performance Indicators

The success of the communications plan is measured against key performance indicators (KPIs). It is important to note that the ever-evolving marketing and social media landscape demands that the Task takes a fluid approach, embracing digital transformation and leveraging advancements, such as the increasing use of AI tools, to stay ahead and drive impactful engagement. For example, in Year 2 of GN5-1, this approach led to ceasing our activities on X.

The following KPIs have been set to support the monitoring of the communication plan's effectiveness (figures for M13–M24 of GN5-1 are included to provide a baseline for GN5-2):

- Social media: increase impressions (as an average across primary platforms – Facebook, LinkedIn)¹ by 5% per year.
 - 2024:
 - Facebook: 127,009 impressions, which equals a 15.1% decrease.
 - LinkedIn: 464,932 impressions, a 59.7% increase.
 - X: 40,200².

On average, the impressions across the platforms increased by 22.3%, therefore the KPI was achieved for M13–M24 of GN5-1.

- Social media: increase total followers (as an average across primary platforms) by 8% per year.
 - End of 2024:
 - Facebook: 1,925, which equals a 10% increase.
 - LinkedIn: 11,011, a 30.2% increase.
 - X: 5,345.

On average, the total followers across the platforms have increased by 20.1%, therefore the KPI was achieved for M13–M24 of GN5-1.

- Social media: achieve an engagement rate (as an average across primary platforms) of 2% per year.
 - 2024:
 - Facebook: 4.3%.
 - LinkedIn: 7.3%.
 - X: 5.3%.

On average, the engagement rate has increased by 5.8%, therefore the KPI was achieved for M13–M24 of GN5-1.

- Websites ³ : increase total visitors to all GÉANT websites (GEANT.org; NETWORK.geant.org; CONNECT.geant.org) by 5% per year.
 - In 2024, this KPI was calculated separately for each website. On average, these websites registered a 33.8% increase in followers and therefore, the KPI was achieved for M13–M24 of GN5-1.

¹ Mastodon currently does not collect/track data; gathering reliable consistent data from Instagram remains a challenge; for YouTube, the most comparable data is used for tracking, which is impressions click-through (increase of 18% in 2024).

² Due to GÉANT's decision to discontinue its accounts on X in April 2024, statistics related to X are listed in this report only for informative purposes but not considered as part of the KPIs.

³ SECURITY.geant.org does not allow tracking.

5 Conclusions

WP2 Task 1 Communications and Design has a broad remit, and it is anticipated that the objectives and associated actions identified in this deliverable will bring clarity and purpose to this, thus providing the best possible support to the project's objectives.

Certain approaches are required to ensure success:

- Close collaboration with Task 2 Services Marketing, Task 3 Events and Task 4 Policy Engagement within WP2, and with all Work Packages, particularly with WP3 User and Stakeholder Engagement.
- Ongoing and timely creation of engaging and appropriate content for diverse stakeholders that can also easily be shared with and by project partners. The established 'twin-track' approach that has proved effective will continue to be followed, as will the approach of recognising the need for a diverse range of content to suit the digital landscape and the subsequent evolving behaviours of audiences.

Having established and evolved the project's communications channels during previous project years, including the CONNECT family (magazine, website and newsletter) and the new web presences, it is envisaged that ongoing development will see an improvement in the effective use of the channels and more targeted dissemination.

Content creation that underpins GÉANT's strategic role is considered essential to the successful positioning of the project for future activities.

Campaigns to raise awareness of important topics, such as Women in STEM (both technical and non-technical support roles) and Cyber Security Month, will continue to be prominent in the communications mix. These campaigns engage project partners and other entities and can lead to significantly increased website traffic and social media engagement.

Progress will be reported in quarterly management reports and any issues identified in monthly red, amber, green (RAG) status reports.

Glossary

DoW	Description of Work
EC	European Commission
EOSC	European Open Science Cloud
GCP	GÉANT Community Programme
GLAD	GÉANT Learning and Development
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
M	Project month
NREN	National Research and Education Network
O	Objective
PMO	Project Management Office
RAG	Red, Amber, Green – traffic-light colours used in project management to indicate status
RREN	Regional Research and Education Network
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIG	Special Interest Group
SIG-Marcomms	Special Interest Group on Marketing Communications
SIG-MSP	Special Interest Group on Management of Service Portfolios
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
T	Task
TF	Task Force
TL	Task Leader
TNC	The Networking Conference (formerly TERENA Networking Conference)
WP	Work Package
WP1	GN5-2 Work Package 1 Project Management
WP2	GN5-2 Work Package 2 Marcomms, Events and Policy Engagement
WP2 T1	WP2 Task 1 Communications and Design
WP2 T2	WP2 Task 2 Services Marketing
WP2 T3	WP2 Task 3 Events
WP2 T4	WP2 Task 4 Policy Engagement
WP3	GN5-2 Work Package 3 User and Stakeholder Engagement
WP4	GN5-2 Work Package 4 Above-the-Net Services
WP5	GN5-2 Work Package 5 Trust and Identity
WP6	GN5-2 Work Package 6 Network Development
WP7	GN5-2 Work Package 7 Network Infrastructure and Service Evolution and Operations
WP8	GN5-2 Work Package 8 Security
WP8 T2	WP8 Task 2 Human Factor
WP9	GN5-2 Work Package 9 Operations Support
WPL	Work Package Leader

References

- [1] https://resources.geant.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/GN5-1_D2-2_Project-Communications-Strategy-and-Plan-2.pdf
- [2] <https://www.inthefieldstories.net/>
- [3] <https://sciencebusiness.net/funding-newswire-signup%2520d>