

EURL-PH-LEGI

EU Reference Laboratory for public health in the field of Legionella

Project number: 101194818

Deliverable number: D2.1
Deliverable name: Communication and dissemination
plan



Funded by the
European Union

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Document overview

Deliverable number	D2.1
Deliverable name	Communication and dissemination plan
Work package number / name	WP2: Dissemination and communication
Task number / name	T2.2: Communication plan, dissemination strategy and infographics
Due date	30 April 2025
Dissemination level	PU- Public
Revision	Version 1.1, 16.09.2025
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Project website	www.eurl-legi.eu

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DECA – Dissemination, Communication, Exploitation, and Awareness
DNCC – Disease Network Coordination Committee
ECDC – European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
ELDSNet – European Legionnaires' Disease Surveillance Network
ESGLI – European Study Group for Legionella Infections
EURL-PH-LEGI – European Reference Laboratory for Public Health on Legionella
HaDEA – Health and Digital Executive Agency
KPI – Key Performance Indicator
LD – Legionnaires' disease
MVP – Minimum Viable Product
MS – Member state
SEO – Search Engine Optimization
WHO – World Health Organization
WP – Work Package
WHO CC – World Health Organization Collaborating Centre

1. Executive summary

The European Reference laboratory for public health on Legionella (EURL-PH-LEGI) will be pivotal in promoting best practices and supporting EU/EEA Member States in developing and implementing reliable and comparable diagnostic, testing, and typing methods for *Legionella*. This will ensure the quality and reliability of surveillance data, as well as facilitate data comparison across countries. The EURL-PH-LEGI will play a critical role in protecting public health, particularly in the event of multi-country Legionnaires' disease (LD) outbreaks. By providing a platform for coordinated investigation, mitigation, and prevention, the EURL-PH-LEGI will help to strengthen public health protection and improve the responsiveness of Member States to LD outbreaks. This document presents the plan for Dissemination, Communication and Exploitation Activities (DECA) to be pursued throughout EURL-PH-LEGI project life cycle. The plan includes the development of a communication and dissemination strategy considering different audiences such as the ELDSNet network laboratory members, the ECDC, the ESGI, the WHO, scientific/academic community and the general public.

2. Introduction

This communication and dissemination plan details the strategy to meet the project's expectations and needs. It describes the procedures and key actions ensuring they are implemented and followed.

2.1. Definitions

D - Dissemination: The process of making information, results, or outcomes widely available to the public, stakeholders, or the scientific community.

E - Exploitation: The process of using or applying the results, outcomes, or knowledge gained from a project or research to create value, such as economic benefits, social impact, or innovation.

C - Communication: The exchange of information, ideas, or messages between individuals, groups, or organizations to facilitate understanding, collaboration, or decision-making.

A - Awareness: The process of increasing knowledge about the project, its results, or its outcomes among the target audience, stakeholders, or the public.

Using the DECA framework, the EURL-PH-LEGI can plan and implement activities to:

- Disseminate information and results to a wide audience
- Communicate effectively with stakeholders and partners
- Exploit the results and outcomes to create value
- Raise awareness about the project and its impact

3. Aims & Objectives

Overall, the objectives of the EURL-PH-LEGI are as follows:

- Promote good practices and provide support to EU/EEA Member States on diagnostic, testing, and typing methods of *Legionella*
- Ensure the quality and reliability of LD surveillance data

- Facilitate LD data comparison across countries
- Improve surveillance capacities to increase responsiveness to LD outbreaks
- Provide an additional support mechanism for EU-coordinated investigation, mitigation, and prevention of LD
- Develop and implement a training program on prevention and response to legionellosis

The WP2 “Communication and Dissemination” pursues specific objectives:

- i) achieving efficient and effective visibility, awareness, and acceptance from internal and external stakeholders;
- ii) increasing communications and dissemination capability and capacity across the work packages;
- iii) promoting the EURL and its results and
- iv) providing targeted information to multiple audiences, in a strategic and effective manner.

4. Key messaging

The key messages should be clear, concise and tailored to different audiences while aligning with the objectives of the EURL-PH-LEGI.

4.1. Public health interest

The EURL-PH-LEGI focuses on ensuring high-quality, reliable and comparable surveillance data for Legionnaires’ disease across Europe. It aims to strengthen Member States’ capacity to detect, monitor and respond to LD outbreaks, providing trainings and external quality assessments to improve diagnostics and surveillance.

4.2. Scientific excellence and standardization

The consortium identifies and promotes best practices and standardized methods for Legionella testing, typing, and diagnostics. Harmonizing laboratory methods ensures data consistency and comparability across EU/EEA countries, facilitating high-quality research and innovation in Legionella surveillance and outbreak management.

4.3. Collaboration and Capacity building

The EURL-PH-LEGI aims to foster a strong laboratory network, enhancing cooperation and knowledge exchange through expert training, guidance, and resources. It seeks to strengthen international partnerships with public health authorities, research institutions, and policymakers.

4.4. Knowledge dissemination and awareness

Raising awareness about Legionella prevention, risks, and control measures is crucial. The EURL-PH-LEGI will deliver transparent, science-based information to stakeholders and the public.

5. Target audiences

5.1. Stakeholders

By strengthening technical capacities, the project enhances LD diagnosis, *Legionella* typing and outbreak investigation at both national and international levels. The EURL-PH-LEGI supports ELDSNet network members in ensuring high-quality, reliable and comparable surveillance for LD. In addition to the main audience, all stakeholders will benefit from the EURL-PH-LEGI activities (Table 1).

Table 1: Target audience EURL-PH-LEGI

Who?	Why?
ELDSNet laboratory network members	Generate knowledge and capacity across the network. Improve the capacity and quality of <i>Legionella</i> testing, typing and reporting ensuring curated standard of methods for surveillance.
Network of EURLs-PH	Share best practices in the management and coordination of the EURL-PH. Build a strong network to foster collaboration and benefit from shared expertise and experience.
ELDSNet DNCC, ECDC and the European Commission (DG SANTE)	Enhanced laboratory capacity to improve surveillance, data acquisition and data quality/integrity. In the event of serious outbreaks, particularly those involving multiple EU/EEA countries or designated as EU public health emergencies, the EURL may be asked to assist the ECDC and the European Commission in risk communication.
HaDEA	EURL-PH-LEGI is the beneficiary of a grant managed by HaDEA. The Agency is mandated to disseminate the results of the EU-funded actions they are responsible for.
WHO	Improve surveillance (quality and quantity) in EU/EEA and non-EU/EEA countries by promoting recommendations to Member States
Supra-national organizations (ESGLI, EURLs for food safety, EURL for <i>in vitro</i> diagnostics, Legionella International Typing group, WHO CC)	Foster dialogue on laboratory methods for LD surveillance and promote best practices in the European region.
Policy makers and regulatory bodies	Insure sustainability of the EURL-PH-LEGI outcomes.
Scientific community	Enhance output and strategy by critically reviewing publications and providing input from specialists
European citizen	Added value to build trustful dialogues; citizens engagement is important to raise awareness of <i>Legionella</i> in the environment and subsequent disease risk

5.2. Exploitation of results by granting authority

The granting authority has the right to use non-sensitive information relating to the action and materials and documents received from the beneficiaries (notably summaries for publication, deliverables, as well as any other material, such as pictures or audio-visual material, in paper or electronic form) for policy, information, communication, dissemination and publicity purposes — during the action or afterwards. Where applicable, the granting authority will insert the following information:

More details on rights of use can be found in the grant agreement Article 16.

6. Communication Channels and Activities

To maximize the impact of the EURL-PH-LEGI, a multi-channel dissemination strategy will be implemented, ensuring effective communication with key stakeholders. The selected channels are tailored to different target groups, enhancing visibility, engagement, and knowledge transfer (Table 2).

Table 2: Dissemination channels

No.	Channel	ELDSNet laboratory network members	EURL-PH Network	ELDSNet DNCC, ECDC and the European Commission	HaDEA	WHO	Supra-national organizations	Policy makers and regulatory bodies	Scientific community	Wider public
1	Website acting as central platform and a cornerstone of the dissemination strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	ECDC Sharepoints	✓	✓	✓						
3	Direct mailings (update/feedback/strategy)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
4	Newsletter as an important tool for acquisition and reliable information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Epipulse			✓		✓				
6	Meetings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	(✓)	
7	Wet lab trainings	✓								
8	Country visits	✓								
9	Webinars	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)
10	Laboratory Handbook	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)
11	LinkedIn	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Press release	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Communication & dissemination report	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Scientific publications	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Funding & Tenders Portal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

6.1. EURL-PH-LEGI Website

The website serves as the central communication hub, providing:

- General information on the project, objectives, and key activities.

- A news section with updates, research findings, and event announcements.
- A calendar with upcoming meetings, trainings and webinars.
- Links to other websites (e.g. EU Reference Networks, ESGLI, ECDC-ELDSNet, ...)

The website, provided by the University of Technology Dresden as the lead of WP2, is initially launched as a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) by [31.07.2025]. The website is accessible at the following address: www.eurl-legi.eu. This MVP will include essential functionalities and additional features will be implemented iteratively in subsequent development phases to ensure continuous improvement and adaption to user needs:

- Landing page (essential) – Outlining the project, list of participants, partners, major objectives and News from the EURL-PH-LEGI
- EURL-PH-LEGI activities page (additional) – Outlining activities and results
- Calendar (additional)– Including ongoing/upcoming tasks, trainings, meetings etc.
- Members only area (additional) – for internal documents of ECDC and members of the laboratory network
- Link to relevant News, documents, publications (essential)
- Coordinator contact details (essential) – Providing an opportunity for interested individuals to reach out to the EURL directly (only form) – this address should be used: HCL.eurlphlegi@chu-lyon.fr
- Link to the EU commission EURL landing page (additional)
- Link to ECDC documents regarding Legionella including ELDSNet sites such as *the outbreak investigation toolbox* (additional)

The general guideline and components to set up websites based on the EU colour scheme are accessible here (<https://ec.europa.eu/component-library/ec>). The option of using a catchy address with an **.eu** extension was selected to ensure representativity and visibility for the EURL-PH-LEGI. After the end of the EURL-PH-LEGI mandate the cost of the domain will be covered by the national reference laboratories. The European flag and the following **disclaimer** will be added on the website: “Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Health and Digital Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.”

6.2. ECDC Sharepoints

Two sharepoints sites will be created by ECDC and made available to the EURL-PH-LEGI:

- A dedicated **EURL-PH-LEGI sharepoint** which will contain:
 - **EURL-ECDC Internal Space:** A secured area to exchange documents between the Consortium and with ECDC contact points
 - **Network space:** A ELSDNET members-only area for restricted content (e.g., protocols, internal reports, handbook).
- A EURLs-PH network sharepoint to facilitate document sharing between EURLs and with ECDC.

6.3. Direct Mailings (email)

Direct mailings will be used selectively for targeted communication with ELDSNet network members and stakeholders upon specific requests. These will not replace newsletters, which serve as the primary tool for general updates. For communication with ECDC, we will use following addresses: [EURL-](#)

PH@ecdc.europa.eu and eldsnet@ecdc.europa.eu.

6.4. Newsletter

A quarterly newsletter will provide the ELDSNet network members and other interested parties with updates. A newsletter tool (including bounce- and click-to-open management) from cleverelement.com (supported by TU Dresden) will be used. A registration for the newsletter will be available on the website and ECDC will promote subscription by communicating the registration link to the whole network.

6.5. EpiPulse

EURLs will be granted access to the ECDC EpiPulse platform. On EpiPulse, the EURLs may provide input on existing events provided however, they should not report events. Any communications on EpiPulse using stakeholder data should only be done with written permission from data providers/MSs. EURLs must also strictly follow the EpiPulse data use regulations.

6.6. Meetings

- Quarterly virtual meetings of the ESGLI Steering Committee will be put in place to ensure continuous knowledge exchange and engagement. These virtual meetings will provide updates on project progress, facilitate technical discussions, and address emerging issues in real time. These virtual meetings are restricted to the consortium and invited guests. Meetings can be organized with other super-national organization on a needs-based manner.
- Three face-to-face meetings with the ELDSNet network members will be organized over the 7-year period. Invited participants for face-to-face meetings must include one representative from 30 countries that participate in the network, as well as invited speakers and relevant ECDC contact points. Additional participants may be invited as observers, but at their own expenses. The meeting will be held alongside the ELDSNet meeting if possible. On that occasion, the EURL- PH-LEGI will report on activities carried out, with evaluations of the work carried out and suggestions for increasing or improving the activities. The first meeting will possibly be organized in Rome at the ISS in 2026. Signs and posters mentioning the action and the European flag and funding statement will be displayed.
- On a needs-based manner, HCL/consortium manager and ECDC will meet on demand by email or videoconference. ECDC will receive all the minutes of the trimestral meetings of the members of the consortium. Specific interactions between the ECDC Disease Network Coordination Committee (DNCC) and some or all consortium members (depending on their specific expertise) may be planned after invitation by ECDC to assist the DNCC meeting.

6.7. Country visits

The EURL will conduct country visits, upon requests agreed with ECDC, to support the network member countries to review, evaluate, and improve laboratory surveillance for cases and outbreak detection. Fourteen country visits (2 visits per year) by two consortium members will be conducted to support the network member countries. The visits can last up to five days.

6.8. Wet-lab trainings

Annual wet-lab training will be provided to cover different needs from ELDSNet network members, hosted by any laboratory of the consortium that has the structure to cover the topic. They will be delivered in person to a maximum of 8 participants.

6.9. Webinars

Annual webinars of 2 hours each will be organized, if possible, on the ECDC Learning Portal as a training environment. The recordings will be made accessible via the website and the ECDC Learning Portal.

6.10. Laboratory Handbook

A comprehensive laboratory handbook will be published by the end of the first year to standardize and harmonize detection and characterization methods by compiling well-established and approved methods from peer-reviewed and publications. The handbook will be updated at least in year 4 and year 7 and/or after internal agreement. The Laboratory Handbook will be made available to ECDC for publication under a Creative Commons (CC BY) license.

6.11. LinkedIn

LinkedIn will serve as a key platform for engaging stakeholders, sharing project updates, and promoting discussion on *Legionella* surveillance. Selected articles, news pieces and others communications content will also be shared on this platform. Via LinkedIn, EURL-PH-LEGI will seek to create a community to share experiences, events, studies, news and relevant information with peers.

6.12. Press release

Press release will focus on scientific credibility, public health importance and regulatory impact. After review by ECDC and HaDEA, the initial press released will be published on the EURL-PH-LEGI website and shared through institutional websites of each consortium members and through social media.

6.13. Communication & Dissemination report

A final communication and dissemination report will be published online, summarizing the activities and results of the WP2 actions during the entire 7-year period. It will include a compendium of all documents and communications support tools (newsletters, infographics, leaflets, etc.) that will be produced in the scope of the project.

6.14. Scientific publications

The project aims to publish data obtained during this project and reviewed by experts in the field. Potential pieces to be published are the laboratory handbook, the results of the Pan-European performance of PCR methods and the EQA reports published in collaboration with ECDC. Each publication will mention the action and the European flag or reference the funding source. They will include the funding statement on the cover or the first pages following the editor's mention.

Publications with ECDC involvement or on the ECDC website will include ECDC clearance of the output and aim to follow any other the requirements laid out in the coming "Guide for EURL communications and stakeholder engagement". The EURL will ensure that data provided by and belonging to Member States and other stakeholders is recognised as such and only be presented and used with the direct written consent of the relevant stakeholders. When relevant manuscripts include MSs data, those MS will be given the opportunity to review the output prior to submission and/or publication.

6.15. Funding & Tenders Portal

The public project results will be uploaded to the EU4Health Project Results platform, available through the Funding & Tenders Portal.

7. Social media plan

The objectives of the social media plan are to raise awareness about *Legionella* risks and prevention, share scientific insights, research, and regulatory updates, engage with professionals in public health, microbiology, and water safety and establish authority as European reference laboratory. LinkedIn will be the primary platform for communication. The EURL will respect GDPR requirements and not publish data that may allow identification of individuals. Data generated and owned by Member States or other stakeholders will not be shared on social media without prior written consent from the data provider, however the EURL will use social media to promote e.g. published scientific articles or published MS reports if relevant.

7.1. Content pillars

Four pillars will be considered for our social media communication:

- **Education and Scientific insights:** this could be summaries of recent studies on Legionella surveillance and diagnostics, infographics on detection methods, summary of webinars and training sessions.
- **Success stories:** Real-world examples of outbreak investigations, innovation in Legionella diagnostics and prevention.
- **Community and engagement:** Event participations (conference, trainings, webinars ...)
- **Behind the Scenes and team highlights:** introduction of consortium members, laboratory processes and technological advancements.

7.2. Posting frequency

We aim to post once a month or ad hoc to maintain visibility without overwhelming the audience. LinkedIn's peak engagement times are Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays from 8 to 10 am and from 12 to 2 pm.

7.3. Engagement strategy

Our strategy will consist in responding to comments to encourage discussion, connect with professionals in microbiology, water safety and public health, share and comment relevant posts. The Hashtags that will be used are #HealthUnion #EU4Health #EUfunded #Legionella #Surveillance and links will be added to ECDC, HaDEA and European Commission when relevant. The EURL may contact the respective EC services ahead of time to allow them to react and amplify the messaging. If a post is to imply an official partnership or endorsement prior written consent of the respective European Commission service/s will be obtained.

7.4. Performance tracking

We will monitor engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments) and adjust content strategy based on what resonates best with the audience.

8. Visual identity

A strong visual identity ensures recognition, consistency, and credibility across all communication channels. The EURL-PH-LEGI follows the European Commission's branding guidelines to align its visual representation with other EU-funded initiatives.

8.1. Project logo and Style guide

- The EURL-PH-LEGI logo is based on the standardized logo for EU Reference Laboratories (EURLs) and reflects the project's mission in Legionella surveillance and diagnostic (Figure 1 & 2).
- A style guide will be implemented, ensuring uniform design across the website, newsletter, presentations, and report.
- The website and digital materials will adhere to the EU Commission's component library (<https://ec.europa.eu/component-library/ec>), ensuring compliance with official colour schemes and typography.



Figure 1: General EURL-PH



Figure 2: EURL-PH-LEGI (specific for Legionella)



Figure 3: EU flag

8.2. EU Acknowledgment and Disclaimer

All dissemination materials must include:

- The EU flag (figure 3) and funding acknowledgment, in accordance with grant requirements.
- A standard disclaimer clarifying that views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the European Commission or its agencies.

For any scientific publication, a reference to EU funding, the name and number of the grand agreement will be included.

By maintaining a consistent and professional visual identity, the EURL-PH-LEGI enhances its visibility and credibility among stakeholders.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure the effectiveness of the EURL-PH-LEGI dissemination strategy, a structured monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed. This framework enables continuous assessment of communication efforts, identification of optimization potentials, and alignment with project objectives.

9.1. Reporting Framework

- A standardized dissemination reporting template has been developed and is made available to all project partners
- Project partners are required to document their dissemination and communication activities, ensuring consistency and traceability.
- Reports will be collected and analysed at regular intervals to assess progress and effectiveness.

9.2. KPIs and success criteria

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been defined to ensure the effectiveness of the dissemination and communication strategies. These KPIs will be reviewed annually, with corrective measures implemented if targets are not met.

KPIs for dissemination and communication	Interval	Measurement & Evaluation
ELSDNet network meetings organized	3 during 7 years	Number of attendees, participant feedback
EpiPulse	Commenting minimum 1 event per year	Number of comments on EpiPulse events
Laboratory handbook	1 with publication of minimum 1 update	Number of updates
Communication report	1 during 7 years	Number of communication report
Press release	Minimum 1 during 7 years	Engagement rate, click-through rate, citation score
ESGLI meetings organized	4 per year	Number of meetings organized
Country visits conducted	2 per year	Number of country visits organized
Wet lab training sessions conducted	1 per year	Number of wet lab trainings organized
Webinar conducted	1 per year	Number of participants, engagement rate, Q&A activity
EU Funding & Tenders Portal	Continuous reporting	Periodic evaluation from HaDEA

Figure 4: General Communication KPIs

KPI	Potential Outreach	Measurement & Evaluation
Website launch & updates	MVP launch until 31.05.2025; ongoing feature expansion	Website analytics (visits, time spent per page)
Website traffic	1,000+ annual visits	Website Analytics (unique visitors, bounce rate <50%)
Direct mailing	100 + recipients	Answer rate

ECDC sharepoint	10 downloads	Sharepoint Analytics (downloads and posts)
Newsletter distribution	4 per year	Open rate ($\geq 30\%$), Click-through rate (≥ 5)
Scientific publications & mentions	3 peer-reviewed papers	Citation impact, conference presentations
LinkedIn engagement	Minimum of 12 post per year, 500+ total followers and followers growth of 2 % per quarter	Number of followers, post engagement (likes, comments, shares)

Figure 5: Digital Outreach and Engagement KPIs

9.3. Corrective Measures

If KPIs are not met within the designated timeframe, the following measures will be considered:

- **Low newsletter engagement:** Optimized newsletter title and length, optimized sending times
- **Low LinkedIn engagement:** Increased interaction with relevant stakeholders, posting frequency adjustments
- **Low website traffic:** SEO improvements, backlink strategy, integration with external platforms (e.g., ECDC, WHO)
- **Low wet-lab training/webinar participation:** Adjusted scheduling, improved content relevance

By implementing these KPIs and corrective strategies, the dissemination plan will maintain flexibility while ensuring impact and effectiveness over the project's duration.

10. Planned budget

Over the 7-year period, the EURL-PH-LEGI budget for WP2 is as follow:

Category	Estimated costs (€)
Staff (consortium members and project manager)	47,164
Organisation of face-to-face laboratory network meeting	24,005
Website set up and curation	5,500
Infographic design including newsletters	5,500
TOTAL	82,170

11. Action Plan

To ensure the effective dissemination and communication of the EURL-PH-LEGI project, a structured action plan has been developed. The timeline below outlines key activities and their implementation periods over the project lifecycle.

The following Gantt chart visualizes the planned dissemination activities, their start and end dates, and their duration.

D2.1 – Communication and dissemination plan

		2025				2026				2027				2028				2029				2030				2031			
Activity		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Public Communication	Website MVP launch and update																												
	Newsletter																												
	Laboratory Handbook																												
	Scientific communications																												
	LinkedIn																												
	Press release																												
Communication with HaDEA	Communication and dissemination report																												
	Funding and Tenders Portal																												
Communication with ELDSNet	Direct mailing																												
	Network meetings																												
	Training																												
	Country visits																												
	Webinars																												
Consortium Communication	Direct mailing																												
	SCo Meetings																												

Figure 6: Action plan