

Website

Website is perhaps the most commonly used and useful platform of dissemination. Web portal is one of the first things to build up when starting a new project or RI as it is often the first and main source of information and central access point to RIs activities. Well planned website provides relevant information for several target audiences: environmental research communities, data users, data providers, general public, policy/decision makers, and industry and private sector. Websites can include material on the background, objectives and efforts of the RI, introduction and access to RI's products, services and supporting elements (like stations or data centers), shear recent news and advertisements of upcoming events, links to relevant projects, RIs, research institutions and companies. Website often contain access to newsletters, documents, publications, PR material, information to join newsletter and e-mailing-lists, and includes interface to access internal pages. On the other hand, the website can be promoted in other dissemination materials and methods (roll-ups, flyers, presentations, posters, newsletters, social media etc.). Providing links to websites to existing participating institutes/RIs/project websites might be a good way to further improve the collaboration and provide further information. As website is often the first source for target groups to search for information on RI, it is essential that RI's contact information is easily findable.

Depending on the platform, its design and the content of the website, the updating and maintaining of it can be carefree or take some hours per week. However, the website needs to be renewed once in a while and that is time consuming and may require coding skills. Cost of the website depends on the service provider and if the technical support is bought from outside. In some RIs it is the one and same person making the content and technical solutions to the website and in other cases it can be science communicator providing the content and IT person implementing it and/or providing the technical support.

Analyzing the website statistics (which pages are most visited, how much time spend in each page, what information is searched, how people found their way to the pages, where from the visitors are etc.) is important part of the RI's dissemination follow up. It helps RI to deepen its understanding of the website users, their needs and interests and to follow up the advertisement/marketing of contents and products. Based on the analysis, actions can be done and the visits on the website can be made more pleasant and engaging. Going through the statistics can be time consuming, but most RIs found it necessary and helpful, especially when planning updating the website. [Google analytics](#) is one tool to get a complete view the website and it is free.

Advantages: Relatively cheap, in many cases already funded activity (hosted by institute or university). Can contain large amounts of information to different target audiences and have synergies with other dissemination methods (twitter, newsletter etc.).

Challenges: May require constant maintaining (updating news feeds) or at least check on the timelines and validity of the provided information. Passive and very hard to create engagement. Renewing the website requires working hours, several skills and often external work as well.

Resources: Costs of depend on the service provider (often yearly feed) and if technical solutions are done in-house or bought. Renewing website increases the in-kind contribution of communication officer and scientist and may include paying from external services. Several skills needed: visual, technical and scientific. Often scientist provides or at least checks the main content of the website, but daily/weekly content may be updated by a communicator officer with only little scientific knowledge (basics news, conference/job advertisements).

Recommendation: Special attention needs to be made on the timeliness of the information provided and proper advertisement of the websites in other dissemination activities. Recent activities and news can be provided for example by social media interface. Thought carefully whether the provider of the content and technical support are the same or different persons. Analyzing the page statistics is a good tool for following up website user and improve pages and its content based on them. Evaluate the need of English proofreading. Consider having sections targeted to education teacher/students) and decision makers.

RI/project	website
COOP+	http://www.coop-plus.eu
ICOS	https://www.icos-ri.eu
EISCAT	https://www.eiscat.se
LifeWatch	www.lifewatch.eu
EMSO	emso.eu
ACTRIS	www.actris.eu
Euro-Argo	www.euro-argo.eu
ENVRplus	www.envriplus.eu
TERN	www.tern.org.au

Two examples of just launched new websites of RI are ACTRIS and LifeWatch websites.

LifeWatch: The whole process took around two-three months, from which the last 3 to 4 weeks were implementation. Communicator officer planned the page structure and visual layout together with a graphical designer after which all work was done in-house. The key of the successful website updating in a short period was motivated, participative and well together working team including only in-house expertise. - Sara Montinaro (LifeWatch)

www.lifewatch.eu

