



Strategy Document for Stakeholder Engagement, Communication, and Transparency

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Authors	Armin Spök, Macarena Sanz, Karin Metzloff, Christian Dayé
Contributor	
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1 THIS DOCUMENT

This document describes the objectives, overall approach and activities for stakeholder engagement, communication and transparency in the EU funded research and innovation project CHIC (Chicory as a multipurpose crop for dietary fibre and medicinal terpenes).

Due to its biosynthetic capacity, high yields, and low agronomic requirements, chicory is a very promising but so far underutilised crop plant. It also has a significant potential as a versatile production host in molecular farming, e.g. for the production of additional health-related products with benefits for consumers. Against this backdrop, CHIC aims to develop two different types of improved chicory varieties: varieties for producing dietary fibre with enhanced prebiotic properties and varieties for producing terpenes, other types of health-related compounds, which are potential lead molecules for drug development.

Chicory breeding, however, is exceptionally time-consuming. In order to overcome these breeding challenges several new plant breeding techniques (NPBTs) will be used in parallel.

The CHIC consortium brings together 17 partners from 11 European countries and from New Zealand including research institutes, SMEs, an industrial partner, and a non-profit organization. More information on CHIC can be found at <http://chicproject.eu>.

2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

MOTIVATION

Stakeholder engagement in research has already been promoted under various EU Framework Programmes and defined in more detail in the FP7 Programme (Jolibert & Wesselink, 2012). In Horizon 2020 stakeholder engagement was given more prominence with public engagement being designated as one of six key elements in “Responsible research and innovation” (RRI). RRI is a concept which anticipates and assesses potential implications and societal expectations with regard to research and innovation, with the aim to foster the design of inclusive and sustainable research and innovation. RRI is a crosscutting characteristic of Horizon 2020 projects (<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/responsible-research-innovation>). In this context stakeholder engagement is conceptualised as a “*transparent, interactive process by which societal actors and innovators become mutually responsive to each other with a view on the (ethical) acceptability, sustainability and societal desirability of the innovation process and its marketable products (in order to allow a proper embedding of scientific and technological advances in our society)*” (von Schomberg 2013: 19).



OBJECTIVES OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The overall objective of CHIC stakeholder engagement is to achieve a more responsible innovation process. To this purpose, several activities are proposed:

- Analysis of stakeholder views on different NPBT chicory varieties developed by CHIC and of possible alternative production scenarios
- Identification of possibly facilitating and hindering factors for NPBT chicory varieties
- Identification of management options to better harness the benefits and mitigate possible negative impacts
- Advice which scenarios are more in line with societal needs and how to better address possible concerns

In order to accomplish these activities stakeholder engagement activities are planned throughout the entire project duration of CHIC.

WHO CAN / SHOULD PARTICIPATE?

CHIC aims at involving key stakeholder groups including representatives of industry (e.g. plant breeding companies), agriculture, academia (research organisations), end user groups (e.g. consumer organisations), and civil society organisation (e.g. environmental protection organisations).

Given that the main growing areas for field cultivation of chicory in Europe are located in Belgium, France, and the Netherlands, CHIC is targeting in particular stakeholders from these regions, with additions of interested stakeholders at the European level.

As CHIC can be considered a model case of inclusive plant breeding innovation using NPBTs the project will also be of interest to stakeholders from other regions and other type of organisations.

Stakeholders interested to participate in one or more steps of the project are invited to contact Armin Spök (WP leader for stakeholder engagement) at consultations-sts@tugraz.at.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND INPUT

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP

The Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) is a small group active during the entire project period. It will provide advice (i) on the research progress, (ii) on fine-tuning of research tasks—particularly as changes in legal context and national policies on novel breeding techniques can be expected for the next years, and (iii) on planning steps and draft results before and in between stakeholder consultations, and (iv) it will be involved in the Multi-Criteria Assessment described below. The SAG will support the liaising with other stakeholders, the dissemination, and the uptake of project results

The SAG will be composed of 2-4 representatives of each of the four subgroups: industry, (including plant breeders, food and non-food businesses), agriculture (e.g. growers, farmer organisations), academia (research organisations), end user groups (e.g. consumer organisations), and civil society organisations (e.g. environmental organisations). The SAG will meet in the context of consortium meetings and participate in the EU level stakeholder consultations.

SAG members are invited by the project consortium.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

Two large stakeholder consultations are likely to be held in or near Brussels. Both consultations will include two subsequent steps: a workshop and a period for written comments. Stakeholder comments received in writing will be responded to in writing by project partners. The role of these consultations are described in the section “Stakeholder Engagement Steps”.

FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

Focus groups and interviews with national and regional stakeholders will be held in the main chicory producing Member States, Belgium, France, and The Netherlands, and at the European level. The aim of the focus group is to support the analysis of prospective facilitating and hindering factors for the cultivation and commercial use of NBPT chicory developed by CHIC (e.g. legal, political, other societal). This analysis will inform the development of scenarios (see next section) and identify differences and similarities in the three national contexts.



ENGAGEMENT STEPS

The engagement process comprises six subsequent steps:

- Step 1** Draft alternative scenarios for commercial production of NPBT chicory will be developed by the CHIC team, based on the different technical and production options investigated. These options include: different product chains - food purpose and medicinal purpose; different breeding techniques; commercial production in the open field (inulin, terpenes) or greenhouse (terpenes). Another relevant factor for the scenarios is which parts of the EU legislation apply to the various novel breeding techniques used in CHIC.
- Step 2:** The draft scenarios will be discussed in a first stakeholder consultation. The main aims of this first consultation will be to (i) familiarise a broader range of stakeholders with the CHIC project and related issues, (ii) discuss and further develop the draft scenarios, (iii) discuss overarching as well as scenario specific issues, and (iv) identify additional issues brought up by stakeholders to consider. Issues brought up by stakeholders will inform, upon proper consideration, the multi-criteria assessment in a later step.
- Step 3:** The scenarios will be further developed based on the discussions in the first European-level stakeholder consultations. Possible management options to better harness the benefits, to mitigate negative impacts and to overcome any obstacles will be jointly identified by the CHIC partners and the SAG and added to the scenarios.
- Step 4** Multi-criteria assessment (MCA) of the acceptability of different scenarios for commercial production. A first round MCA of the acceptability of the scenarios developed in previous steps will be conducted. Assessment criteria will be jointly developed by the SAG and CHIC partners.
- Step 5** The second consultation will aim at (i) presenting the completed scenarios, (ii) discussing and collecting stakeholder views on the results of first round MCA, (iii) discussing management options to better harness benefits and mitigate anticipated negative impacts.
- Step 6** A second round of the MCA on preferences for the different scenarios will be conducted. SAG members will discuss the issues that came up in the second stakeholder consultation and reconsider their assessments of the first round.

The results of each step will be summarised in a report.



3 TRANSPARENCY

In order to allow for a high level of transparency and accountability, as recommended by the European Commission (EC 2006), CHIC developed some procedural rules for its stakeholder engagement activities:

CHIC will ensure that all stakeholders potentially relevant to the specific tasks will be invited for participation and/or written comments. In order to facilitate open discussions journalists will not have access to stakeholder workshops.

Some data generated by CHIC industrial partners cannot be shared with stakeholders as they are considered confidential business information. This limitation only applies to certain details on the production scenarios and business plans and does not interfere with the overall stakeholder engagement and transparency aims.

CHIC will produce outlines for planned involvement activities that include the following information:

- Motivation and aim(s) of the specific involvement activity; description of stakeholders' roles and tasks in the activity (e.g. information/expertise provider, representation of different perspectives, critical reviewers, identification of concerns, making values/worldviews explicit, support decision making etc.).
- Description of the procedure planned to involve stakeholders, including a timeline.
- Stakeholders to be engaged, including a list of potentially relevant groups to be invited.
- Envisaged utilization and further processing of the inputs gained from stakeholders

4 COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

The CHIC strategy and actions to disseminate, exploit and protect the foreground generated by the project is summarised in a separate document (Plan for Exploitation and Dissemination of Results, PEDR). The PEDR aims at providing transparency to stakeholders and guidance consortium partners in terms of dissemination and exploitation activities to be carried out in the context of the CHIC project.

Upon request, the project team will distribute the PEDR to the SAG members.



5 DATA PROTECTION

In order to comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) stakeholder representatives participating in the CHIC project will be asked for explicit consent to the storage and processing of their contact data for the purpose and duration of the CHIC project. Stakeholders will be informed about the mechanisms to withdraw their consent at any time.

Stakeholder views documented as audio recordings, transcripts or written notes will be stored on password-protected servers and not be shared outside the teams conducting these research tasks. In project reports stakeholder views will be presented in anonymized ways. No reference will be made to individual stakeholder representatives or individual stakeholder organisations.

More details are included in the CHIC Data Management Plan (D7.2), which upon request, will be made accessible to the SAG members.

6 REFERENCES

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