



# Strategy Document for Stakeholder Engagement, Communication, and Transparency

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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 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 and Christian Dayé (Work Package for stakeholder engagement) at [consultations-sts@tugraz.at](mailto: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 provides 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 supports the liaising with other stakeholders, the dissemination, and the uptake of project results

The SAG is 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 meets in the context of consortium meetings and participates in the EU level stakeholder consultations.

SAG members are invited by the project consortium.

### INTERVIEWS

A second opportunity for stakeholder engagement exists in the social scientific research into the factors that might have an impact—positive or negative—on the acceptability of the chicory plants and products developed within CHIC. Activities in this regard apply a variety of research methods, including in-depth interviews with selected experts and stakeholders across the chicory value chain, a historical case study on the first attempts in the 1990s to carry out field tests of GM chicory in Europe, and various other steps. This analysis will inform the development of scenarios (see next section) and identify differences and similarities in the three national contexts.

### STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

Based on this knowledge, a third important measure of stakeholder engagement in CHIC project are stakeholder consultations (SHCs). SHCs will take place at three different levels, each involving different groups of stakeholders. National SHCs will take place in each of the important chicory growing countries, i.e. in Belgium, France, and the Netherlands. Focusing on business perspectives, they will bring together actors from across the value chain. The National SHCs will be followed by a Regional SHC. This regional consultation will focus on risks. It will therefore invite stakeholders from various interest groups and NGOs (including environmental and consumer organizations) as well as national Competent Authorities for GE plants. Finally,



two consecutive EU-level SHCs will bring together participants of the previous consultation rounds, and also involve other perspectives as well as EU-level stakeholder representatives.

For each SHC discussion materials will be circulated beforehand. The consultation itself will be held in a workshop setting. A draft Consultation report documenting the SHC results will be circulated to participants. Stakeholder comments received in writing will be responded to in writing by project partners. The role of these consultations is described in the section “Stakeholder Engagement Steps”.

## ENGAGEMENT STEPS

The engagement process comprises eight subsequent steps:

- Step 1**      **Interviews:** A series of interviews is carried out with stakeholders. The interviews are part of a historical case study on the field tests with GM chicory plants that have been planned in the early 1990s. The objective of this study is to identify the expectations of those promoting these tests and the obstacles that they encountered in this process. This step will inform the ensuing research on the social acceptability of genetically engineered chicory as well as the further process of stakeholder engagement. Interview will also be used to complement the consultations in Step3 and 4.
- Step 2**      **Scenarios:** 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 health purpose; different breeding techniques; commercial production in the open field (inulin, terpenes) or greenhouse (terpenes). Another relevant factor is the EU regulatory regime for novel breeding techniques used in CHIC. When the project was designed it was expected by most observers that some of the novel breeding techniques will be exempted from EU harmonised GMO legislation. Since July 2018 it is clear that all of them have to be legally considered GMO. However, since there is strong pressure from many sides towards regulatory reform in order to exempt certain novel breeding techniques from the EU GMO regulation we will also consider such a hypothetical future regulatory status.
- Step 3:**      **National Stakeholder Consultations:** The draft scenarios will be discussed in a series of three national Stakeholder Consultations (SHCs) to be held as small workshops in Belgium, France, and the Netherlands. The main aims of these National SHCs will be to (i) familiarise a broader range of stakeholders with the CHIC project and the novel breeding techniques for chicory, (ii) discuss



and further develop scenarios for commercial production and use, and (iii) identify potential facilitating and hindering factors for commercial use of GE chicory. The National SHCs will focus on the perspectives of the chicory value chain. Issues brought up by stakeholders will inform, upon proper consideration, the later use of the scenarios in the Multi-Criteria Assessment.

- Step 4: Regional Stakeholder Consultation:** This SHC will take place in one of the three above mentioned countries and focus on the issues of risk and regulation. The scenarios will be further developed based on the results of a regional SHC. The views and information gathered will be considered when setting up a Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) that combines the scenarios developed over the previous steps with mock events to assess their potential impact on the social acceptability of the chicory products which are expected to be available at the final stage of the CHIC project.
- Step 5: 1<sup>st</sup> Round of Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA):** A first round of data collection is carried out on the social acceptability of different scenarios for commercial production. The MCA will be programmed as an online-questionnaire, and stakeholders will be invited to assess the impact of a variety of mock events on the social acceptability of the CHIC products.
- Step 6: 1<sup>st</sup> EU-level Stakeholder Consultation:** At this first EU-level SHC, the results of the first round of MCA data collection are presented and discussed. Since we aim at inviting stakeholders that participated in the first round of MCA data collection, the discussion will allow for clarifying the rationales behind the quantitative answers and for identifying open questions.
- Step 7: 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA):** Based on the insights generated in the previous step, the MCA questionnaire will be revised. Then, a second round of data collection will be conducted. 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 8: 2<sup>nd</sup> EU-level Stakeholder Consultations:** As with the first, the second EU-level SHC is also used to discuss the results of the precedent wave of MCA data collection. In addition, the SHC participants (including project partners and SAG members) will discuss 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.

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.



## 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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