

VAX-Action: Tackling Effectively Vaccine Hesitancy in Europe



DISSEMINATION PLAN

DELIVERABLE FROM WP6/2

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List of Acronyms

ASPHER - Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region

CA - Consortium Agreement

EHFG - European Health Forum Gastein

EPH – European Public Health Conference

EU - European Union

EU4H – EU for Health

EUHPP - European Union Health Policy Platform

FHW – Frontline Health Care Workers

GA - Grant Agreement

IPR – Intellectual Property Rights

MC – Management Committee

WP – Work Package

WPL - Work Package Leader

1. Summary

The Dissemination Plan (D6.2) describes steps for the well-organised internal and external communication to ensure smooth implementation of the project and efficient sharing of the outcomes and dissemination of knowledge gained during the work of VAX-Action. It includes internal as well as external joint and national communication. Intended to be a foundation for the planning and execution of communication activities of project partners, it identifies goals, dissemination locations and events, and evaluates and chooses appropriate dissemination methods. Relevant forums and stakeholders for dissemination and communication will be identified such as the European Union Health Policy Platform (EUHPP) and European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG), and European Union (EU) Coalition for Vaccination.

To grant the efficacy of the communication plan it will also include the range of professionals who encounter vaccine hesitancy or are involved in addressing it in partnership. It will look also to evidence of co-design/feedback to with the populations experiencing vaccine hesitancy/ lack of support from authorities (due to their hesitancy in implementing interventions) for us to be able to better design the communication strategy and grant the success of future implementations.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of communication and dissemination will be to engage in dialog with relevant stakeholders, to raise awareness of the VAX-Action Project and maximise its impact with target-country specific and EU wide stakeholders and relevant audiences, including public health and health care communities, EU and country specific stakeholders, and the broader public. The dissemination's goal will be to raise awareness of issues of vaccine hesitancy and evidence-based solutions identified through VAX-Action.

The specific objective of dissemination is to raise awareness and share and communicate project outcomes among policy makers, health professionals, advocacy groups, and researchers, over the period of the project and at the end, using a variety of methods, including active participation.

Relevance

It will be relevant to be in good communication with stakeholders at all levels in order to identify challenges and assess country specific and EU-wide solutions to ensure that relevant actors are informed and engage them in sustainable implementation of the identified good practice interventions on vaccine hesitancy beyond the project period. Lead dissemination and exploitation (WP6) partner, the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER), offers structured processes of sharing evidence-based public health models of innovation and good practice, linking into the academic public health community as it operates across the political spectrum in relevant health, social, and employment fields to ensure consistent, coherent, and effective action to sustain and improve health for all.

Intended outcomes

The outcome of the dissemination will be to establish a strong and unified identity for the Vax-Action project and to develop an impactful communication campaign to engage the nine beneficiary partners with stakeholders at all levels. and assess solutions based on country-specific factors and further to communicate country specific and EU-wide recommendations to target the success of vaccine hesitancy interventions in Europe to relevant actors in public health, health care and policy arenas based on the implemented pilot activities so that they may be sustained and scaled up across EU country settings after the project period.

2. Introduction

The Dissemination Plan (D6.2) is an internal manual and reference source for successful project communication and dissemination. The Plan's primary objective is to effectively involve all partners to build VAX-Action project identity, build awareness and identify relevant forums and stakeholders for dissemination and communication. It includes internal as well as external joint and national communication. Intended to be a foundation for the planning and execution of communication activities of project partners, it identifies goals, dissemination locations and events, and evaluates and chooses appropriate dissemination methods.

The Plan works to ensure that the communication activities align with established goals and objectives of the project across the project timeline, reaching appropriate stakeholders at different phases of the project. It provides a strong identity for VAX-Action with channels to build awareness and communicate outcomes and results. Regarding disseminating results, it will guide the project findings and results communication by developing strategies for practical future dissemination activities and ensuring that information is communicated transparently and in line with project objectives and European regulations.

Internally, EU grants are managed electronically through the EU Funding & Tenders Portal. According to Article 36 of the GA, all communication must be carried out electronically via the Portal, per the Portal's Terms and Conditions, and using the forms and templates provided. The only exception to this rule is if the granting authority explicitly instructs otherwise.

Externally, as per Article 17 of the GA, the beneficiaries are obligated to promote the project and its results by providing targeted information to various audiences, including the media and the public, in a strategic, coherent, and effective manner. The communication, dissemination, and exploitation plan of VAX-Action are the core actions of WP6. The research outcomes and significant project statements will be disseminated in English and the native language of each partner nation in an easily accessible manner through the means implemented by WP6 (Website, project Logo, periodic newsletters, handouts, etc.).

The Plan is structured as follows: Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 summarise and introduce the VAX-Action Dissemination Plan offering an overview of the project communication; Chapter 3 is an overall Project Summary. Chapter 4 outlines the communication and dissemination strategy with Internal Communication in part 1 and External Communication in Part 2. Chapter 5 covers specific details about results dissemination. This is followed by Conclusions in Chapter 6. Finally, it includes the references.

3. Project summary

VAX-Action is a 30-month project (1.12.2023–30.5.2026) co-funded by the EU4Health programme under the Grant Agreement (GA) 101133273, Call EU4H-2022-PJ-5¹, Topic EU4H-2022-PJ-16². It started in December 2023 (M1) and will end in May 2026 (M30).³ The primary project information is set out in Table 1. The project consortium comprises nine beneficiaries from six countries, Belgium, Czechia, France, Italy, Portugal, and Romania, to study the success of vaccine hesitancy interventions in Europe.

Objectives

The general objective of VAX-Action is to support EU Member States and relevant stakeholders in implementing tailored, evidence-based interventions to reduce vaccine hesitancy through a) specific actions like mapping vaccine hesitancy interventions made so far, b) identifying problems in the implementation of interventions, c) developing, testing, and designing interventions based on previous research findings, d) implementing, testing, and evaluating pilot activities, and e) creating a research-grounded, sustainable strategy for ongoing implementations, toolkits, and suggestions for scaling up in additional EU countries, and beyond.

Justification

Health interventions can create more comprehensive resources for targeted groups in Europe and beyond. VAX-Action aims to train frontline healthcare workers in five EU nations to better deal with vaccine hesitancy. Additionally, the project intends to develop a novel and common framework for vaccine hesitancy interventions. This framework will enhance the success of future intervention implementation and increase the number of specialists who can evaluate interventions. This will improve the capacity for future healthcare intervention development and assessment. The project will generate research-based recommendations for the pan-European context, governmental and local public health authorities, and countries outside Europe.

Impact

VAX-Action is a project that helps healthcare professionals to increase their knowledge and understanding of vaccine hesitancy. This knowledge equips them with the skills to manage related challenges, such as misunderstandings, misdiagnoses by non-experts, population beliefs in false information and conflicting

¹ EU4H-2022-PJ-5 – Call for proposals to support Member States and other relevant actors to implement relevant results of innovative public health research in relation to vaccination against COVID-19.

² EU4H-2022-PJ-16 — Call for proposals to support Member States and other relevant actors to implement relevant results of innovative public health research in relation to vaccination against COVID-19 - CP-g-22-03.01.

³ See the month calendar attached, table 12 annexes.

attitudes towards healthcare workers. Governments and institutions can use this expert knowledge to tackle societal issues like vaccine hesitancy, make related evidence-based recommendations, and design, plan, implement and evaluate complex health interventions.

Scope

Nine beneficiaries from the six European countries form the consortium to ensure the development of the project's six WPs to target the success of vaccine hesitancy interventions in Europe. Each WP has a specific function within the project's structure and methodological framework. UNL in Portugal is responsible for WP1, which is dedicated to management and coordination and goes along with the project's duration. Partners in Italy (UNI-SR and UNIPV) develop WP2, which regards the Literature Review corresponding to the project's research phase. The intervention phase comprises WP3 (UNL, PT), WP4 (FR, CZ, IT, PT, RO), and WP5 (RO, FR, CZ, IT, PT). ASPHER in Belgium coordinates WP6 and is responsible for the project's conclusion phase, including communication and dissemination activities.

Project Phases

Figure 1 - Project Structure



The methodological framework of VAX-Action is intricately woven to ensure a comprehensive approach to the project's goals, tasks, and deliverables and designed according to six WPs and allowing interventions in the target regions of Czechia, France, Italy, Portugal, and Romania. Beginning with a meticulous situation analysis derived from previous collaborative projects, the study progresses to a systematic literature review covering interventions and methodologies related to vaccine hesitancy in Europe, Canada, and the US (WP2). This informs the subsequent phases, with WP3 guiding the design and evaluation of interventions for frontline healthcare workers (WP4) and targeted populations (WP5). The

external evaluation in WP3 ensures the quality, applicability, and transferability of the outcomes. Recommendations for EU, national, and regional public health authorities, as well as healthcare professionals, are drawn from these findings (WP6). The methodological principle involves stakeholder engagement throughout, facilitated by ASPHER’s advisory board, seamlessly integrated into the consortium structure. This collaborative approach ensures a cohesive and relevant methodology aligned with the project’s goals.

Countries and Target Regions

Understanding and addressing vaccine hesitancy is crucial for successful vaccination programmes. However, this depends heavily on people’s attitudes towards health measures and political decisions. To tackle this problem, the VAX-Action project will design, map, and evaluate interventions to help vaccine-hesitant people. The aim is to teach FHWs and encourage vulnerable people, like immigrants who are hesitant about vaccinations, to believe in them.

Among the consortium’s countries, the COVID-19 immunisation rate for the first dose varied between 42.4% in Romania and 86.4% in Portugal (Jan 2023). All had at least 90% coverage rates for one dose of measles and rubella vaccines. However, vaccine confidence levels varied significantly, with some reporting levels above and others below the EU average. These disparities showed the need for a universal framework for vaccine hesitancy interventions that can help identify the significant factors associated with these differences and provide better solutions to address them. Countries’ choice was based on their healthcare systems and vaccination coverage. The five regions within these countries where interventions on vaccine hesitancy are most needed were identified and are listed in Table 3. In Belgium, there is no target region planned for interventions. Partners from Belgium are from ASPHER and are responsible for communication and dissemination, not for interventions corresponding to WP6.

Table 1 - Countries and target regions

Countries	Target regions
Czechia	Prague
France	Paris
Italy	Roma
Portugal	Porto
Romania	Bucharest

4. Communication and Dissemination Strategy

4.1. Internal communication

Internal communications are the communications between the consortium members and between them and the granting authority. The consortium members will frequently interact with each other throughout the project by e-mail and other means, such as the scheduled meetings decided on in the kick-off meeting (and stated in the Consortium Agreement (CA)). A table of the scheduled meetings for the 2024 period is below:

Table 2 - Consortium 2024 meetings

Month, Year	Day	Hour	Theme
December, 2023	1	12:00 WET	Project's Kick-off meeting
January, 2024	9	10:00 WET	Extraordinary meeting (CA and outputs ownership and publication policies discussion)
March, 2024	19	10:00 WET	Semi-annual review meeting
September, 2024	10	10:00 WET	Semi-annual review meeting
December, 2024	17	10:00 WET	Annual wrap-up meeting

According to the stated plan, partners may gather on other occasions, such as specific events for disseminating results (e.g., conferences, webinars, implementation of actions, and evaluation periods). Each WPL arranges their own WP meetings, events, and communication strategies with other members. They also have communication access through the EU Funding & Tenders Portal with the Granting Authority.

A password secured online Partner Zone has been established to allow partners to share internal documents and materials. The Partner Zone is available at: https://vax-action.eu/partner_zone/

Communications with the Granting Authority must be made by persons previously authorised by each beneficiary LEAR according to the Portal Terms and Conditions. They should be completed in writing and identify the grant agreement (project number and acronym). Please see Article 36 of the Grant Agreement (GA) in case of queries. The Portal can be accessed via the EU website after Login at

<https://ecas.ec.europa.eu/cas/logout?url=https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

If the consortium members want to contact other members, email lists of the beneficiaries and contact persons are available through the portal in Excel sheet format. In any case, all consortium members can also contact the WP1 team to access the list if it is not available for them otherwise.

4.2. External communication

External communication involves VAX-Action interacting with external stakeholders, such as the scientific community and the general public. The communication and dissemination plan (WP6) outlines the objectives, key messaging, target audiences, communication channels, social media plan, planned budget, and relevant indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

External communication has a crucial role in shaping VAX-Action's public perception. It will help manage the project's status and image, ensuring transparent and effective communication with the stakeholders. It is an integral part of a comprehensive communication strategy for the project. Besides the granting authority, the project is required to communicate information to the public for regulatory compliance.

In this sense, the Granting Authority provides visibility guidelines that outline how the EU emblem and project Logo should be displayed on the various communication materials. This includes the website, publications, presentations, and other dissemination channels. The project Logo and EU emblem should be visible on project-related communication materials such as brochures, reports, websites, and social media. Beneficiaries must acknowledge the support received by displaying the EU emblem and project Logo on all relevant materials. This acknowledgement helps build awareness and highlights the EU's commitment to various initiatives. This ensures that stakeholders and the public can quickly identify the project's EU funding source. Adherence to consistent branding and visibility guidelines across all communication channels fosters a unified and professional image. It also facilitates the recognition of EU-funded projects in the broader community. The Granting Authority monitor compliance with visibility requirements. Beneficiaries are expected to regularly report on their communication activities to ensure that visibility guidelines are followed.

Other specific publicity requirements outlined in the GA include the project launching meeting, which has already taken place, and for teams to organise different events, like press conferences and other activities, to transfer and reveal the project's achievements and impact. In Vax-Action, a final meeting will be held in Lisbon at the end of the project.

However, per the GA, article 17, the beneficiaries must inform the granting authority before engaging in a communication or dissemination activity expected to have a significant media impact (p.34). The LOGOS and visibility measures are crucial to promote transparency, acknowledgement, and effective communication. Here are critical aspects related to EU funding acknowledgement, the VAX-Action LOGO, and visibility.

4.2.1. Dissemination and communication timeline

The external communication strategy will follow three phases roughly linked with the project phases (see page 11). This will ensure that the appropriate communications reach specific stakeholders and target audiences at each point along the project progression.

Phase I: Initial awareness phase

A strong VAX-Action visual identity will be established and project awareness will be built over the course of the first six project months through:

Establishment of the VAX-Action project website (D6.3.). The public project web site will be designed and implemented with information on the project itself, partners, work packages, and objectives. Content, activities and results will be added as the project develops with the site acting as a repository for deliverables. The site will be maintained after the project period through ASPHER ensuring the sustained availability of the project information and results.

Development of a VAX-Action logo (D6.3.) with input from partners to be used on the web site and in all publications, to create a distinct project identity and support the recognition and branding of the project.

Cultivation of a social media presence on relevant platforms to reach for example professionals (LinkedIn) and the broader public health community and general public (X, formerly known as Twitter). The partners are encouraged to create (or connect to an existing) social media network in their own language.

Establishment of pages and links on project partner communication channels. The partners will work together to promote the website as much as possible utilising their own channels of communication and dissemination. Project beneficiaries will provide information about VAX-Action on their home institutional website linking to the project website and social media channels and providing basic information about the project with translation to local language(s) when appropriate.

Further identification of communication targets and channels. During the initial project period, partners will work together to identify and refine specific target populations include the range of professionals who encounter vaccine hesitancy or are involved in addressing it in partnership. Relevant networks, communication channels, events and methods for dissemination of results at local, national, EU and International levels will be explored. Specific targets and communication methods and channels will be revisited throughout the project period.

Phase II: Targeted Communication and Dissemination Phase

From M6 and continuing throughout the project duration.

Project newsletter and press releases (D6.4, D6.5, D6.6, D6.7, D6.9): A biannual newsletter will be published starting in M6 to provide punctual updates to inform on project activities and results in an accessible format. Press releases will be released on specific actions and major results as appropriate for use by both domestic and foreign media. Partners will publish activities and results in their own newsletters and official communications.

A strategy for integrating networks of stakeholders and community leaders will be established to distribute results locally, notably through the involvement of the ASPHER's advisory board. Several channels will be used to communicate with the stakeholders (website, newsletters, follow up reports, seminars, etc.,). Communications of major results will be shared with other relevant organisations and projects to inform their networks, such as EU Health Policy Platform, European Health Forum Gastein, and EU Coalition for Vaccination.

Website and social media. The project website and social media channels will be enriched with content reflecting the project activities and to disseminate results throughout the life of the project and sustained after the project end date.

The project website will distribute all project reports and outputs, and work with partners to deliver materials and information to relevant institutions and associations.

Conduct events and attend other related events. Partners will take opportunities to conduct and attend events to disseminate preliminary project results to target audiences at national and EU levels. This may include formal presentations at conferences and academic gatherings as well as press releases, informational pamphlets. Specific upcoming event opportunities include European Public Health Week organised by the European Public Health Association in project M6 and annually, and the ASPHER Deans' & Directors' Conference in project M7 and annually. Partners are encouraged to seek opportunities to attend and disseminate results at country events both in English and local languages.

Publications. To grant effective communication and transfer of knowledge to society, the project's publication strategy will begin with a thorough examination of pertinent, high-quality academic publication venues (ideally gold open access), which will include journals from a variety of disciplines, such as public health, medicine, philosophy, and sociology of health.

To strengthen the visibility and dissemination of its deliverables, VAX-ACTION will use the open research data repository Zenodo. Data will be stored and processed according to the FAIR Data Management principles, making it: findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable, as open data. Each dataset will be given a persistent identifier (Digital Object Identifier, DOI), supplied with relevant metadata and linked to the project name and grant agreement number.

Interventions' results and important project statements will be disseminated in an accessible manner in both English and each partner nation's native language when possible.

Phase III: Deliverable phase

Representing the final project period when consortium partners will deliver the majority of project outputs. This phase will be focused on informing the target audience of the exploitable results and distribution of final results and deliverable reports.

4.2.2. Target audience/stakeholders

Communication and dissemination activities are directed towards a wide range of audiences (stakeholders), including project participants. Two-way communication is sought, with valued inputs coming from stakeholders. The main target group for VAX-Action interventions are FHW including general practitioners, nurses, midwives, pharmacists and others with a role in vaccination. Stakeholders include health care provider organisations, policy makers, public health professionals, local health authorities, EU Member States and other European projects concerned with vaccine hesitancy. Further stakeholders may be identified and the target audiences updated throughout the project period and most specifically through the activities of WP4 (*targeting FHW for vaccine promotion towards hesitant users* and WP5 (*Interventions targeting vulnerable populations' misconceptions and knowledge*).

Table 3 – Communication Requirements for Target Audience and Stakeholders

Audience/Stakeholder	Communication Requirements
Public Health Professionals	Periodic updates on progress through publications, conference presentations, public webinars and website updates
Researchers	Periodic updates on progress through publications, conference presentations, public webinars and website updates
ASPHER Member Network	Periodic updates on progress through publications, conference presentations, public webinars and website updates

4.2.3. Key performance indicators

Key Performance indicators will be tracked over time to gauge progress and evaluate the success of the communication strategies. Table 4 provides a list of specific measurable indicators related to dissemination activities.

Table 4 – Key Performance Indicators



Activities	Key Performance Indicators
Social Media	Number of likes, shares, followers
Website	Number of unique visits
Newsletter	Number of recipients from mailing lists, number of downloads, number of contacts with news media
Conferences and Webinars	Number of audience participants
Publications	Number of reports and publications produced

4.2.4. Acknowledgement of EU funding and visibility

The GA requires the beneficiaries to participate in other communication and dissemination activities. These include presenting the project details (including the project summary, coordinator contact details, list of participants, European flag and funding statement, and project results) on the beneficiaries' websites or social media accounts. If publications are involved, the action, the European flag, and the funding statement must be mentioned on the cover or the first pages following the editor's mention; for activities involving public events, beneficiaries must display signs and posters saying the action and the European flag and funding statement. Also, the general project results must be uploaded to the EU4Health Project Results platform, accessible through the Funding & Tenders Portal.

Specifically, when engaged in any dissemination activity, all consortium members and beneficiaries must "acknowledge EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement (translated into local languages, where appropriate)." This includes media relations, conferences, seminars, and information material such as brochures, leaflets, posters, and presentations, whether in electronic form, via traditional or social media, or other means. Yet according to GA (p.34), article 17.2, "other communication and dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, supplies, or primary result funded by the grant must include the acknowledgement and the flag." Partners may use the following emblem and statement (but other hypotheses for visual display are available from the EU website indicated below):

Table 5 - EU funding acknowledgement

 Co-funded by the European Union	This project has received funding from the European Union's EU4H programme under Grant Agreement No 10113327
 Co-funded by the European Union	This [infrastructure][equipment] [insert type of result] is part of a project that has received funding from the European Union's EU4H programme under Grant Agreement No 101133273

As expressed in Article 17.3, “Any communication or dissemination activity related to the action must use accurate information. Moreover, it must indicate the following disclaimer (translated into local languages where appropriate)”:

“Funded by the European Union. However, views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or [name of the granting authority]. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.”

If any of the beneficiaries or members of the consortium breaches any of its obligations under this Article, the grant may be reduced. For more information, see Article 17, pp.34-35, and Annex 5, p.3. of the GA.

Information on the visual elements that beneficiaries must use, tips for effective communication, and a toolkit with info supporting visibility (2021-2027) can be found through the following link. Also, EU emblems may be downloaded from:

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/logo-download-center_en

Please be aware that there may also be other situations where the EU funding must be acknowledged, for example, issues related to the protection of results, translations, publication, and all Vax-Action’s promotional activities. Nonetheless, intellectual property rights have specific rules, also stated in the GA, which will also be summarised in the next point.

4.2.5. Project LOGO

All beneficiaries must use Project LOGO in all communication, promotion, and dissemination activities. Two versions of the LOGO were created. They will be made available for download on the project website. Below is the first version created that was presented to all beneficiaries in the project’s MC meeting.

Figure 2 and Figure 3 - Project Logo



4.2.6. Project WEBSITE

The project website can be found at <https://vax-action.eu/>

The website has been developed and constructed by ASPHER in WP6. Its development has been communicated and discussed with project partners in meetings, ensuring transparency and a collaborative decision-making process. Partner involvement is crucial for a comprehensive and inclusive representation of the project's work packages and each WPL perspective for the project's practical actions.

The site is in English, given Vax-Action's commitment to accessibility for a broader audience. ASPHER will do the maintenance of the website. Beneficiaries should provide information to share on the website with ASPHER partners. This implies a collaborative effort of all partners to create a platform that aligns with the goals and requirements of the VAX-Action and the Granting Authority in terms of communication and visibility. Regularly communicating updates, achievements, and relevant information through the website can contribute significantly to the visibility and success of Vax-Action. A partner reserved zone will be installed on the website for beneficiaries to share data and queries.

4.2.7. Social media

Social media can be a valuable tool in the various stages of the VAX-Action program, offering partners opportunities for communication and collaboration in real-time, besides dissemination. WP6 will create and update Vax-Action social media accounts to increase the project's visibility. Engaging with social media may foster a two-way communication process. The public and the Granting authority can receive feedback and comments and participate in a dialogue with the project partners to address vaccine hesitancy issues or provide additional context to news stories and posts. Besides, the project can communicate its results, receive feedback, present challenges, and inform the public about online deliverables, actions, and other relevant issues. Also, discuss the upcoming project course changes, following milestones and achievements.

The initial plan is to create a joint social media account on each chosen platform for the entire task to share general information about the project. Additionally, each partner organisation may use their social media accounts to communicate nationally and in their local languages. The social media platforms used for English dissemination are X, under [@Vax_Action](https://twitter.com/Vax_Action), and LinkedIn, under <https://www.linkedin.com/in/vax-action-project-40997b2b7/>. All partners can find the accounts on their respective social media platforms.

4.2.8. Newsletters and other dissemination formats

Newsletters are semestral and will be compiled and distributed by WP6. A biannual newsletter will be published starting in M6 to provide punctual updates in an accessible format to inform on project activities and results. Press releases will be released on specific actions as needed.

A full-day pre-conference workshop at the European Public Health (EPH) Conference at the latter stages of the project is foreseen to allow partners to disseminate results and experiences from the project to relevant communities and identify pathways for future action, sustainability and upscaling of project results and recommendations. The EPH Conference is an annual scientific conference on public health issues in Europe organised by the European Public Health Association that will engage all participants and ensure presentation to significant stakeholders who will be onsite.

The project will produce policy briefs and reports on vaccine hesitancy interventions. These briefs will provide recommendations tailored to specific countries and will be based on the outcomes of interventions in the project. They will also include best practices and lessons learned as identified by the learning systematised in WP3. A policy report will also be produced with recommendations on the best strategies to tackle vaccine hesitancy at the European level. The information will extrapolate the results of country-specific pilot actions and policy briefs to the broader European level and provide recommendations on how they can be implemented in various settings.

VAX-Action engages in dissemination activities to effectively share new knowledge, findings, and advancements with relevant audiences. This includes sharing research results, project outcomes, best practices, and educational materials. By disseminating information, we aim to bridge the gap between knowledge developers, researchers, stakeholders, and those who can benefit from it. These initiatives allow us to address specific challenges and contribute to progress. Dissemination activities help maximise the impact of VAX-Action's efforts by ensuring that the solutions, knowledge, and information reach the intended audience and have the potential to influence positive change.

4.2.9. Interventions

Interventions must include LOGO and other EU funding acknowledgements in their materials, like brochures and further dissemination, exploitation, and intervention resources. Namely the protocol design of tailored interventions (FHW and targeted populations), intervention implementation reports (FHW and targeted populations) from WP4 and WP5, and final reports on intervention effectiveness (WP6). As well as deliverables from WP3, namely the synthesis report on the design of Interventions, the External evaluator's training manual, and the implementation analysis report in target regions. Regularly using the means of dissemination in the manuals and materials produced by all partners can contribute significantly to the visibility and success of the VAX-Action project.

5. Results dissemination

5.1. Intellectual property rights (IPR), access rights and rights of use: ownership

Article 16 of the GA establishes Intellectual Property Rights about background, ownership of results, access rights, and use rights. The term "background" refers to any data, expertise, or information held by

the beneficiaries before they acceded to the Agreement, needed to implement the action, or exploit the results, including any rights such as intellectual property rights. All beneficiaries must provide access to the background, even if it is subject to the rights of a third party, to ensure compliance with their obligations under the GA.

The term “results” refers to any tangible or intangible effect of the action, such as data, expertise, or information, including any rights attached to it, such as intellectual property rights. Regarding the “ownership of results,” the Granting Authority does not obtain ownership of the results produced under the action. However, it has the right to use non-sensitive information relating to the activity and materials and documents received from the beneficiaries for policy, information, communication, dissemination, and publicity during or after the action.

The right to use beneficiaries’ materials, documents, and information is granted as a royalty-free, non-exclusive, and irrevocable license. This includes the right to use for its purposes, distribution to the public, editing or redrafting, translation, storing, archiving, and the right to authorise third parties to act on its behalf or sub-license to third parties those modes of use if needed for the information, communication, and publicity activity of the Granting Authority. Additionally, it has the right to process, analyse, and aggregate the materials, documents, and information received and produce derivative works (to confirm this information, please see article 16, points 1, 2, and 3, pp. 32-33 of the GA).⁴

In sum, ownership refers to the rights to use and access results, including background information, while authorship is about receiving credit for creating the results or outputs. It refers to a person’s direct academic contribution to a particular outcome, such as a paper, article, report, or patent.

Intellectual property rights give exclusive ownership and control over VAX-Action products, such as deliverables, reports, and publications. These rights encourage partners and stakeholders and support research and development. Protecting intellectual property ensures that the materials produced are used only for their intended purpose, promoting innovation and creativity. These rights also prevent others from copying and exploiting the results of our project in undesirable ways. Protecting intellectual property rights is crucial for the project’s success and the team’s growth. It fosters a culture of cooperation and communication and ensures fair recognition and rewards for the team’s intellectual endeavours.

Therefore, the consortium approved the principles regulating VAX-Action’s ownership policy on January 9th, 2024. Main points are: a) results are owned by the part that generates them; b) in case two or more parties generate the results, they are owned in conjoint ownership by those parties who shall agree on the terms and conditions of said co-ownership in a separate agreement; c) the joint owners, are entitled to use the jointly owned results only for non-commercial research and teaching activities on a royalty-free basis only; d) each of the joint owners may not exploit the jointly owned results, by itself or through the grant of an exploitation license, without requiring the prior consent of the other joint owner(s). None of the Consortium members can use the results and publish them alone.

The consortium also approved the principles regulating the VAX-Action’s publication and authorship policy on January 9th, 2024. The generality established that any publication must be preceded by prior

⁴ Where applicable, the granting authority will insert the following information regarding the use of the beneficiaries’ materials: “© – [year] – [name of the copyright owner]. All rights reserved. Licensed to the [name of granting authority] under conditions” (GA, p.33).

notification from the other parties so that they can analyse and, if necessary, raise an objection. If there is an objection, it must be made within 30 days of the notice. Regarding authorship, the consortium agreed to follow and use the British Sociological Association (BSA) authorship guidelines available at <https://www.britsoc.co.uk/publications/guidelines-reports/authorship-guidelines/> to lead the publication process.

5.2. Authorship and Publications

According to what was established, all authors, including hired human resources and early career researchers, listed in a consortium scientific paper should have contributed significantly to at least two of the four critical parts of the scientific process as established in the BSA guidelines (a) Concept or design, (b) Gathering and analysing data, (c) Data analysis and interpretation, and (d) Composing significant portions of the article, such as synthesising findings in the findings/results section or the literature review. If someone did not contribute to the final product, they should not be considered for authorship rights and credits. All partners must follow these principles, and in case of disagreements or issues, partners must hold a meeting with the coordinator and the management committee to make an informed decision.

VAX-Action **Publication policy** approved by the management committee:

- a) To have *at least one* member per team/WP.
- b) Having more than one person per team/WP is possible.
- c) The question of who and how many persons should be decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on the work developed by those involved in the actions.
- d) However, everyone involved in a publication must have contributed to at least two of the four components of a paper named in the BSA authorship guidelines: design/concept, data collection/data organisation, data interpretation/analysis, and composing significant portions of the article (e.g., findings/results section).
- e) Independent work by WP2 must involve others, and the same goes for the other way around. Other WPs should include the WP2 team as contributors to publications—the same as WP6, whose outputs result from other partners' involvement.
- f) Partners must keep the process fluid and fair by appointing someone who has been actually involved in the work and not always the same person.
- g) Every intended publication must be discussed with others before going forward.
- h) All partners must do peer review (documents must be shared with other teams within 45 days before submission; others have one to two weeks to review).
- i) Peer review (not final review) will count as a criterion for authorship only if there is a significant contribution from that person to the written document, which is one of the four criteria to be included as an author.
- j) Publications open access budgeting will be decided on a case-by-case scenario by the committee.
- k) Every publication must be preceded by prior notice to the other parties.
- l) Objections to a publication by other partners must be made within 30 days of the notice.

However, if there are any inconsistencies between different critical documentation of the project, the following order of precedence is applied: 1. Grant Agreement, 2. Consortium Agreement, 3. Project Handbook.

5.3. Open access

It is good practice for peer-reviewed publications related to project outcomes to be freely accessible online. The consortium recognises that open-access GA requirements may impact the number of publications and the ability of each institution to fund publication budgets. Nonetheless, several organisations, including many universities, already have accounts with some open-access publishers. Therefore, partners may use those accounts or free open-access platforms as an alternative (e.g., <https://open-research-europe.ec.europa.eu/an-introduction-to-open-research/>). In cases where these options are not available for any scheduled publication, the consortium must consider each case separately and find solutions together, as agreed upon between the members. Still, beneficiaries must grant open access to additional categories of scientific papers, such as reports, conference proceedings, unreviewed articles, and literature that are typically informally published or have yet to undergo the usual publishing process. These may not always be directly accessible through open access but can be made available through other means between partners (through the website) and the Granting Authority (through the EU platform).

6. Conclusions

The Dissemination Plan outlined above will be regularly monitored, reviewed and updated to maximize the impact among all target groups and stakeholders, in this way setting the stage for successful uptake and implementation of VAX-Action outcomes. The results of this monitoring will be shared in project partner and evaluation meetings and in final project reporting.

7. References

1. Consortium Agreement - Project: 101133273 — VAX-Action — EU4H-2022-PJ-5
2. **EU4Health Programme** (EU4H), “Call for proposals to support Member States and other relevant actors to implement relevant results of innovative public health research about vaccination against COVID-19 (EU4H-2022-PJ-5)”, Version 1.0, November 2022.
3. EU Funding & Tenders Portal [2021-2017], available at <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/reference-documents?selectedProgrammePeriod=2021-2027>
4. Grant Agreement - Project: 101133273 — VAX-Action — EU4H-2022-PJ-5