



INSPIRE

Innovative Solutions for Plastic Free European Rivers

Deliverable 7.1 Plan to implement actions for Coordination of INSPIRE Version 2.1

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¹ Dissemination level: **PU**: Public, **SEN**: Sensitive, **CL**: EU Classified, information as referred to in European Commission Decision 2015/844

² Type of deliverable: **R**: Document, Report, **DEM**: Demonstration, pilot, prototype, **DEC**: Website, patent filing videos, **DMP**: Data Management Plan, **Ethics**: Ethics deliverable





Acronyms

Acronym	Description
D	Deliverable
EC	European Commission
EEAB	External Expert Advisory Board
EU	European Union
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
INSPIRE	Innovative Solutions for Plastic Free European Rivers
LP	Leader Partner
M	Month or Milestone
MST	Management Support Team
PC	Project Manager
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
VLIZ	Vlaams Instituut voor de Zee (Flanders Marine Institute), Belgium
WP	Work Package



Executive Summary

The INSPIRE Consortium's organisational structure, comprising the General Assembly, Management Board, and Coordinator, are described, with the goal of establishing an effective framework for project execution and accountability. The Project Coordinator (VLIZ), supported by the Management Support Team, will assume a central role in INSPIRE for overseeing contractual, administrative, and financial management, ensuring compliance, and maintaining communication with the European Commission. To foster trust and build strong relationships, our comprehensive communication plan prioritises stakeholder engagement, timely updates, and responsiveness. VLIZ will continually monitor and adjust the INSPIRE communication efforts to ensure project success and alignment with stakeholder expectations.



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1. Objective

The goal of the current report is to outline the plan of actions for the coordination of the project INSPIRE. In this report we will specify the steps and activities that will be taken to ensure effective coordination and management of INSPIRE, as well as its dissemination and communications baseline activities.

2. Introduction

The INSPIRE project organisation and management will cover the overall structure and hierarchy of the project with various governing bodies and their responsibilities. These aspects have already been deeply and formally described in the Grant Agreement and Consortium Agreement. This report is released as the deliverable D7.1 for reference, but it could be revised during the project as the procedures may change.



Figure 1. The INSPIRE consortium is composed of 26 partner institutions (the Parties), from 16 different countries.



The organisational structure of the INSPIRE Consortium (Figure 1) comprises the following Consortium Bodies:

- The **General Assembly** as the ultimate decision-making body of the consortium [The General Assembly shall consist of one representative of each Party (hereinafter General Assembly Member)]
- The **Management Board** as the supervisory body for the execution of the Project, which shall report to and be accountable to the General Assembly
- The **Coordinator** as the legal entity acting as the intermediary between the Parties and the Granting Authority (The European Commission, EC). The Coordinator shall, in addition to its responsibilities as a Party, perform the tasks assigned to it as described in the Grant Agreement and the Consortium Agreement.

The Project Coordinator (VLIZ) will interact in all respects with the EC, including for financial and technical reporting, organization and conduction of review meetings, and the promotion and organization of participation of INSPIRE in events organized by or relevant for the EC. These activities will be carried out by the Project Manager (PC) supported by the Management Support Team (MST), both in VLIZ. Following their requests and specifications, all partners will provide the required contributions and inputs to the financial and technical reports and participate in events.

The following list concerns the responsibilities and share of work for the PC, supported by its MST:

- (i) Oversight of the day to day contractual, administrative and financial management;
- (ii) Administration and distribution of the EU financial contribution;
- (iii) Tracking of the progress, costs and budget situation of the project, and creating an early-warning system for any deviation of the project plan;
- (iv) Monitoring of compliance by the beneficiaries with their obligations under the Grant Agreement;
- (v) Preparation, organisation and follow up of the meetings of the General Assembly and EC review meetings;
- (vi) Maintenance of the Consortium Agreement and preparing Amendments for the Grant Agreement if/when necessary;
- (vii) Handling of any document connected with the project from the consortium to the EC and conversely;
- (viii) Setting-up and maintaining adequate communication with the EC's project officer(s) on the project's progression and other relevant issues.



3. General operational procedures for all Consortium Bodies

Any Party which is appointed to take part in a Consortium Body shall designate one representative (hereinafter referred to as "Member").

Any Member:

- should be present or represented at any meeting;
- may appoint a substitute or a proxy to attend and vote at any meeting;

and shall participate in a cooperative manner in the meetings (see section 4).

The chairperson of a Consortium Body shall convene meetings of that Consortium Body (Table 1). The chairperson of a Consortium Body shall give written notice of a meeting to each Member of that Consortium Body as soon as possible and no later than the minimum number of days preceding the meeting and shall prepare and send an agenda no later than the minimum number of days preceding the meeting, both as indicated below (Table 1). Any agenda item requiring a decision by the Members of a Consortium Body must be identified as such on the agenda, and any Member of a Consortium Body may add an item to the original agenda by written notice to all the other Members.

Table 1. Consortium Bodies meetings (ordinary and extraordinary), frequency, notice schedule, and agenda timeline.

	Ordinary meetings	Extraordinary meetings
General Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * At least once a year (twice is recommended) [in the first year of the project there will be an interim virtual only general assembly, c.a. M6] * 45 calendar days notice * Sending the agenda: 21 calendar days * Adding agenda items: 14 calendar days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * At any time upon request of the Management Board or 1/3 of the Members of the General Assembly * 15 calendar days notice * Sending the agenda: 10 calendar days * Adding agenda items: 7 calendar days
Management Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * At least quarterly * 14 calendar days notice * Sending the agenda: 7 calendar days * Adding agenda items: 2 calendar days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * At any time upon request of any Member of the Management Board * 7 calendar days notice * Sending the agenda: 7 calendar days * Adding agenda items: 2 calendar days



Any decision may also be taken without a meeting if:

- a) the Coordinator circulates to all Members of the General Assembly a suggested decision with a deadline for responses of at least 10 calendar days after receipt by a Party and
- b) the decision is agreed by 51 % of all Parties.

The Coordinator shall inform all the Parties of the outcome of the vote (a veto may be submitted up to 15 calendar days after receipt of this information). The decision will be binding after the Coordinator sends a notification to all Members. The Coordinator will keep records of the votes and make them available to the Parties on request. Each Consortium Body shall not deliberate and decide validly in meetings unless two-thirds (2/3) of its Members are present or represented (quorum).

If the quorum is not reached, the chairperson of the Consortium Body shall convene another ordinary meeting within 15 calendar days. If in this meeting the quorum is not reached once more, the chairperson shall convene an extraordinary meeting which shall be entitled to decide even if less than the quorum of Members is present or represented. Each Member of a Consortium Body present or represented in the meeting shall have one vote (for detailed voting rules and quorum, and veto rights, please consult the Consortium Agreement).

The chairperson of a Consortium Body shall produce minutes of each meeting which shall be the formal record of all decisions taken. She/he/they shall send the draft minutes to all Members within 10 calendar days of the meeting. The minutes shall be considered as accepted if, within 15 calendar days from receipt, no Member has sent an objection by written notice to the chairperson with respect to the accuracy of the draft of the minutes by written notice.

4. Specific operational procedures for all Consortium Bodies

The **General Assembly** shall consist of one representative of each Party (hereinafter General Assembly Member). Each General Assembly Member shall be deemed to be duly authorised to deliberate, negotiate and decide on all matters mentioned in the Consortium Agreement. The General Assembly, as the ultimate decision-making body of the consortium is chaired by the Coordinator.

The Parties agree to abide by all decisions of the General Assembly. The General Assembly shall be free to act on its own initiative to formulate proposals and take decisions in accordance with the procedures set out herein. In addition, all proposals made by the Management Board shall also be considered and decided upon by the General Assembly.



The following decisions shall be taken by the General Assembly (see Consortium Agreement for detailed information):

- Content, finances and intellectual property rights
- Evolution of the consortium, including of TRLs of actions and technologies
- Appointments

On the basis of the Grant Agreement, the appointment, if necessary, of:

- Management Board Members
- External Expert Advisory Board Members

The General Assembly physically meets at the start of the project (kick-off meeting) and further on a yearly basis (twice a year, with one physical/hybrid meeting and a recommended online meeting). In the first year of the project there will be an interim virtual only General Assembly, c.a. M6. The final meeting will comprise a INSPIRE debriefing and legacy discussion, with emphasis on maximizing the uptake of the project outcomes within the EU MISSION on “Restore our Oceans and Waters by 2030”.

The **Management Board**, which is responsible for the proper execution and implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly, shall consist of the Coordinator and the Work Package (WP, Figure 2) Leaders. The Coordinator shall chair all meetings of the Management Board, unless decided otherwise by a majority of two-thirds, and the minutes of Management Board meetings, once accepted, shall be sent by the Coordinator to the General Assembly Members for information

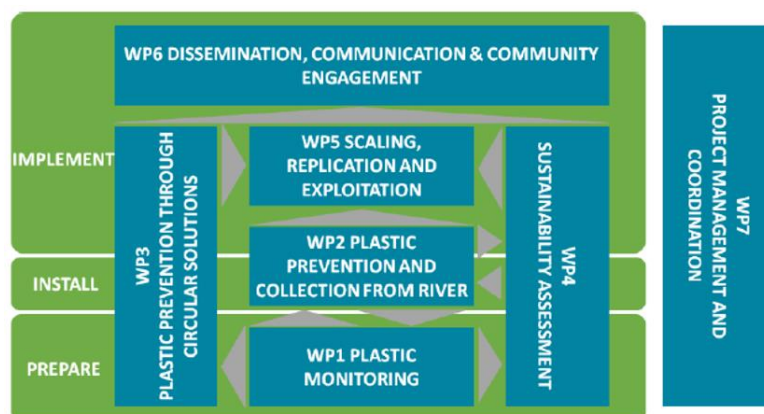


Figure 2. Work Packages (WPs) structure of the INSPIRE project.



The Management Board shall monitor the effective and efficient implementation of the Project. In addition, the Management Board shall collect information at least every 6 months on the progress of the Project, examine that information to assess the compliance of the Project with the Consortium Plan and, if necessary, propose modifications of the Consortium Plan to the General Assembly.

The Management Board shall:

- support the Coordinator in preparing for meetings with the Granting Authority and in preparing related data and deliverables for such meetings.
- coordinate the content and timing of press releases and coordinate joint publications by the consortium or proposed by the Granting Authority in respect of the procedures of the Grant Agreement Article 17 and Annex 5 Section “Communication, Dissemination, Open Science and Visibility” and of Section 8 of the Consortium Agreement (see Consortium Agreement for detailed information).

The **Coordinator** shall be the intermediary between the Parties and the Granting Authority and shall perform all tasks assigned to it as described in the Grant Agreement and in this Consortium Agreement. VLIZ will act as the Coordinator for the project (WP7)

In particular, the Coordinator shall be responsible for:

- monitoring compliance by the Parties with their obligations under this Consortium Agreement and the Grant Agreement;
- keeping the address list of Members and other contact persons updated and available, in compliance with EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) [see deliverable 7.3, concerning the Data Management Plan, for further information on GDPR compliance,];
- collecting, reviewing to verify consistency and submitting reports, other deliverables (including financial statements and related certifications) and specific requested documents to the Granting Authority;
- transmitting documents and information connected with the Project to any other Parties concerned;
- administering the financial contribution of the Granting Authority and fulfilling financial tasks;
- providing, upon request, the Parties with official copies or originals of documents that are in the sole possession of the Coordinator when such copies or originals are necessary for the Parties to present claims.

If one or more of the Parties is late in submission of any Project deliverable, the Coordinator may nevertheless submit the other ‘Parties’ Project deliverables and all other documents required by the Grant Agreement to the Granting Authority in time (for further detail, please consult the Consortium Agreement).



An **External Expert Advisory Board (EEAB)** will be appointed during the kick-off phase and steered by the Management Board. The EEAB shall assist and facilitate the decisions made by the General Assembly. The EEAB will build upon the existing knowledge in INSPIRE and wider expertise, involving representatives from organizations with a direct link to the project. Where strategic connections with key projects are not possible via partners, these will be made through the INSPIRE EEAB. The EEAB will be continuously engaged to validate the applicability of the project actions and outcomes to achieving the EU MISSION on “Restore our Oceans and Waters by 2030”. The EEAB and the LP will discuss project issues of joint interest, identify new products (e.g. tools, models, data) and services that bring added value and can be further taken up by the relevant public and private decision makers.

5. Financial Management Coordination

The Coordinator (VLIZ) will oversee the financial plan and will be responsible for distributing the funds allocated according to the provisions of the Grant Agreement. The Coordinator will also communicate efficiently and timely concerning financial matters with project partners. The coordinator will oversee the use of the resources and measure up the progress and timing of responsibilities of each partner in the project, to ensure that resources are being used by the timing of the work plan and allocation of effort. The VLIZ Central Supporting Services, with ample experience in financial management, concerning both participation and coordination of national and international multi-partner projects will be responsible for the lead in this, and maximum cooperation with all partners will be sought. The organisation of the administrative and financial follow-up will be based on the applicable legal and administrative guidelines and considering good practice guidelines.

A network for administrative and financial leads from each partner institution will be established:

- By bringing together the responsible Parties involved from the start of the project, we will ensure short communication lines and quick follow-up of questions, both formal and informal.
- Within this network, a joint close follow-up of the budget will take place and matters that affect the project can be signalled in time (e.g., potential overspending or underspending) and escalated where necessary. In addition to the interim reporting (see below), this ensures close monitoring of the project and makes timely intervention possible.

The Coordinator will make available (via SharePoint) a central dashboard with quick access to all the Parties to the applicable guidelines, the most recent templates and the feedback to be observed, to



enable a transparent follow-up. For the financial reporting, VLIZ (Coordinator) highly recommends a higher frequency of financial reporting (intermediate, 9 months) than what is imposed (official, 18 months) to assist each Partner in compiling all required information, and verifying internally if all procedures are in place, and to enable the detection and solutions of potential issues. Regular and timely pre-checking of all documents (timesheets/invoices) must be done by each partner internally, to facilitate further administrative processing. In case of additional questions: the Coordinator will facilitate contact with the EU representative. An administrative VLIZ representative will be present at the INSPIRE first General Assembly (project kick-off meeting, M1) and provide a summary of key information partners should consider for their financial management and reporting.

6. Project Internal Communications

VLIZ, as project coordinator, will set up different collaboration tools for internal communications and project coordination (project repositories, email distribution lists (in compliancy with EU GDPR), and online meeting systems). Electronic mail will be the preferred communication channel for day-to-day communications and INSPIRE will encourage online meetings, when possible, to minimise travel costs (although annual face-to-face and/or hybrid meetings are however recommended). Therefore, the frequent Coordination project meetings (chaired by VLIZ) and Work Package meetings (chaired by each WP leader) will be organised online. All meetings will be documented by minutes, listing major decisions and action items. Meeting agendas, individual to-do lists, and other important project information will be accessible via the collaboration platform (SharePoint), to enable and promote remote teamwork. It is recommended that there are two General Assembly meetings per year (see above). VLIZ will oversee all organisational issues in the General Assembly meetings, supported by the local partner hosting the meeting. To equally share travel costs among partners, physical meetings will be located by rotation at partners' geographical regions.

7. Dissemination

The EC recognises the importance and promotes the dissemination of knowledge and results from research projects, making this one of its priorities. Under the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme, the dissemination of results is a contractual obligation of the participation in research initiatives. It is important to define not only where and when information should be disseminated, but also what should be communicated and presented. The beneficiaries must promote the action and its results by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public), in accordance with the Grant Agreement and in a strategic, coherent and



effective manner. The project WP6 task leaders will compile and frequently update a list of dissemination activities and their impact (e.g. reached targeted audience), such as social media posts referring to the project, news pieces and newsletters, press coverage, presence and presentations in national and international meetings, among others (for further information please see D6.1, concerning the community engagement, and the communications and dissemination strategy).

The communication activities of the beneficiaries related to the action, dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, supplies or major result funded by the grant must acknowledge the EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement (translated into local languages, where appropriate) [see Grant Agreement for further and detailed compliance information]. The branding of “Mission Ocean and Clean Waters” should be used and promoted as much as possible, following the terms and conditions for the EU missions visual representations. Any communication or dissemination activity related to the action must use factually accurate information. Before engaging in a communication or dissemination activity expected to have a major media impact, the beneficiaries must inform the granting authority.

Project Branding (Logo and INSPIRE Identity):

To create an identity for the project INSPIRE, there has been developed a logo and branding/project identity guidelines. The logo will be used in all projects promotional and internal communications materials, including social media posts, PowerPoint templates, and deliverable reports. The logos are available to partners via the project SharePoint or by contacting WP6.

Website:

The project’s website (www.inspire-europe.org) will be concluded within the first 5 months of the project (landing page is currently available online), and will be developed as a central place for the dissemination to the public and key stakeholders. The partner EXIT Foundation will manage the INSPIRE project’s website and will be updating it on a regular basis (WP6).



Social Media:

All newsworthy outcomes of the project will be actively disseminated through the partners' LinkedIn and X accounts, to reach out to a broad well established audience of key stakeholders and other related initiatives. Internal and external stakeholders are encouraged to follow INSPIRE via the hashtag #INSPIRE_eu for the latest press releases and news pieces. The project already set-up dedicated social media channels/accounts, namely on Instagram [inspire_eu] and Facebook [Inspire Europe], LinkedIn [Inspire Europe] and X, previously known as Twitter (@INSPIRE_EUROPE). For more information and guidance on social media posting, please see the European Commission's Social Media Guide for EU-Funded projects. A community engagement, communication and dissemination strategy will be defined in D6.1 (M6).

Presentations and Documentation Templates:

Microsoft PowerPoint and Word templates have been developed based on the project INSPIRE logo and identity, to be used for internal and external communications. All templates are available for downloading on the project dedicated SharePoint.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the INSPIRE Consortium's organisational structure, consisting of the General Assembly, Management Board, and Coordinator, provides a framework for effective project execution and accountability. The Project Coordinator, supported by the Management Support Team, plays a central role in overseeing contractual, administrative, and financial management, ensuring compliance, and maintaining communication with the European Commission. By implementing a comprehensive communication plan, we will prioritise stakeholder engagement, timely updates, and responsiveness to foster trust and strong relationships. Continuous monitoring and adjustment of our communication efforts will ensure the project's success and alignment with stakeholder expectations (see Deliverable 7.2 for further information on project Milestones and Deliverables). With these measures in place, we are confident in delivering a successful project that exceeds all objectives.







INSPIRE

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