



HERIFORGE D5.1

Dissemination, Communication, and Exploitation (DCE) Plan

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Executive summary

The HERIFORGE Communication, Dissemination, and Exploitation Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to maximize the visibility, impact, and long-term use of results from the HERIFORGE project. HERIFORGE (“Cultural Heritage and Immersive Technologies Forge”) is a 36-month Horizon Europe, Excellence Hubs initiative focused on the innovative and responsible reuse of cultural heritage through extended reality (XR) technologies by creating a network of three interconnected, place-based innovation ecosystems in Poland, Cyprus, and Türkiye. In support of the project’s ambitious goals, this plan defines how the consortium will communicate its activities and achievements to broad audiences, cross-pollinate EU level best practices and disseminate project findings to stakeholders, and ensure that project outcomes are exploited for lasting benefit beyond the project’s lifetime. The plan is structured into dedicated Communication, Dissemination, and Exploitation sections, each with clear objectives, target groups, key messages, tools, timelines, and monitoring measures. A formal visual identity and acknowledgment of EU funding are established to ensure consistent and compliant messaging. The strategy emphasizes engaging a wide



spectrum of stakeholders in line with the Quadruple Helix model (academia, industry, government, and civil society). Communication activities will build general awareness and public engagement from project outset, while dissemination efforts will target cultural heritage professionals, the research community, policymakers, and creative industries to foster adoption of HERIFORGE's outputs. Underpinning these efforts is a commitment to Open Science – making publications and data openly accessible – and compliance with GDPR and LPPD for all personal data outreach. To translate awareness into impact, the exploitation plan identifies key innovation pathways (KIPs) and exploitable results such as XR prototypes, strategic policy packages, an open data platform, and a network of innovation hubs. It details how each result will be further developed, transferred to end-users, or commercialized, including integration into partner operations, support for startup initiatives, and influencing policy and standards. Potential barriers to uptake (technical, market, regulatory) are anticipated with mitigation strategies, and robust intellectual property management is in place to balance open dissemination with protection of innovations where appropriate. The plan will be continuously monitored through defined KPIs (e.g. website traffic, publications, event participation, etc.) and adjusted as needed to ensure that HERIFORGE achieves a broad and sustainable impact on cultural heritage innovation. Overall, this document provides a ready-to-implement roadmap for strategic communication, targeted dissemination, and effective exploitation of HERIFORGE outcomes, aligning with Horizon Europe's expectations for excellence and societal value.

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List of acronyms

Acronym	Description
CCIs	Creative and Cultural Industries
CH	Cultural Heritage
DOP	Data Orchestration Platform
EU	European Union
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GLAM	Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums
HHNR	HERIFORGE Hub's Network Registry
IP	Intellectual Property
JPRPs	Joint Pilot Research Projects
KERs	Key Exploitable Results
KIPs	Key Innovation Pathways
LPPD	Law on Protection of Personal Data
PI	Pathway to Impact
R&I	Research and Innovation
REA	European Research Executive Agency
RPOs	Research Performing Organizations
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
XR	Extended Reality



1. Project Introduction

This project is an innovation project funded by the European Union under the Horizon Europe programme. The project unites partners to develop new ways of preserving and engaging with Cultural Heritage (CH) through Extended Reality (XR) technologies. Over a three-year duration, HERIFORGE will pilot cutting-edge XR applications, establish local excellence hubs, and create guidelines and policy recommendations to foster human-centric innovation ecosystems in the cultural heritage sector. By promoting the innovative and responsible reuse of digital cultural resources, the project aims to demonstrate how immersive technologies can enrich cultural experiences, spur creativity in the cultural and creative industries, and bridge communities with their heritage in interactive ways.

Communication, dissemination, and exploitation are integral to HERIFORGE's mission and are tightly aligned with its objectives. The project has embraced a Quadruple Helix approach, actively involving academic institutions, businesses, public authorities, and societal actors. This approach ensures that a broad range of perspectives contributes to the project and that stakeholders representing research, industry, government, and the public are co-creators and beneficiaries of HERIFORGE's results. In practical terms, communication will facilitate a dialogue with society at large – raising awareness of the project's purpose and progress – while dissemination will target specific stakeholder groups capable of implementing or influencing the uptake of project outcomes. Exploitation efforts will then ensure that the innovations (such as XR prototypes, data platforms, and strategic guides) are adopted, replicated, or commercialized so that the impact of HERIFORGE extends well beyond the project's life.

By distinguishing communication (general outreach) from dissemination (targeted result sharing) and exploitation (actual use of results), the project can tailor its strategy to achieve maximum effect in each area. Communication is conceived as an ongoing process throughout the project's life to build public support and visibility. Dissemination activities intensify as tangible results emerge, ensuring those results reach the right audiences (museums, developers, policymakers, researchers, etc.) in a usable form. Exploitation planning runs in parallel – identifying early on which results have high potential and preparing the ground (through stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and IP management) for those results to be sustainably deployed or commercialized.

In summary, this plan is a blueprint for how HERIFORGE will engage stakeholders, share knowledge, and create lasting value. It reflects strategic communication and policy language appropriate for a Horizon Europe project, incorporating EU best practices such as clear funding acknowledgment, adherence to GDPR, and commitment to open science. The following sections detail the communication strategy (objectives, audiences, messages, channels, timeline, monitoring, visual identity, and compliance considerations), the dissemination strategy (target groups, channels including open science and current progress), and the exploitation strategy (impact pathways, innovation hotspots, key results, exploitation actions, and IP management).

2. Communication Strategy and Plan

Communication in the HERIFORGE project is the strategic process of engaging a broad audience to ensure awareness and understanding of the project's goals, activities, and achievements. It involves conveying the project's key messages in accessible and compelling ways from the very beginning of the project, establishing a public presence and fostering interest and support. This section outlines why we communicate (our objectives), to whom we communicate (target groups), what we communicate (key messages), through which channels, and when (the timeline and frequency of actions). It also covers how we will monitor the effectiveness of our communication and the standards we uphold, such as visual identity consistency, funding acknowledgments, and GDPR and LPPD compliance.

2.1 Why Do We Communicate? – Objectives

The communication strategy is driven by several core objectives that align with HERIFORGE's mission and values. These objectives articulate why communicating about the project is essential and what we aim to achieve through our outreach efforts:

To Promote Innovation in the intersection of Cultural Heritage and XR: HERIFORGE leverages cutting-edge methodologies and tools developed through initiatives like Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP), emphasizing our commitment to engaging with industry within the quadruple helix ecosystem. By incorporating



FSTP, we not only enhance our technological solutions but also foster new business opportunities, positioning HERIFORGE at the forefront of innovation in the cultural heritage and XR domains. This approach showcases our dedication to transforming cultural heritage practices through XR technologies, contributing to a broader understanding and appreciation of their transformative potential.

To Foster Inclusive Collaboration and Networking: Establish meaningful communication channels among academia, industry, government, and civil society – the full spectrum of the Quadruple Helix. By engaging these groups through inclusive dialogue and co-creation opportunities, we build a community around (outcome from FGDs) HERIFORGE that enhances collective impact and ensures diverse input from stakeholders listed below (See 2.2 - Who Are We Communicating With? – Target Groups).

To Enhance Visibility and Societal Impact: Implement clear and effective communication tactics to increase the project's visibility at local, national, and European levels. Raising public awareness about HERIFORGE and its themes will deepen societal understanding of the importance of cultural heritage and the benefits of digital innovation, thereby fostering cultural sensitivity and public support.

To Support Exploitation, Accessibility, and Sustainability: Facilitate the effective communication of results in ways that encourage inclusive uptake and long-term use of project outcomes. By explaining results in understandable language and showcasing their value, we prepare the ground for exploitation – whether by communities adopting a new application or policymakers using HERIFORGE recommendations. This also means highlighting how results will remain available (open access resources, etc.) after the project, contributing to sustainability.

To Influence Policy and Practice through Advocacy: Clearly communicate the project's value propositions and recommendations to advocate for positive changes in policy and professional practice. By providing evidence-based messages on the need for supporting CH digitization and XR applications, HERIFORGE's communication aims to inspire policymakers and practitioners to act (e.g., allocate resources, update guidelines) in favor of innovation in cultural heritage.

To Develop Digital Literacy and Skills: Use communication channels (like social media, webinars, podcasts, tutorials) to promote digital literacy and competencies related to cultural heritage and XR among target audiences. By sharing accessible how-to information and educational content developed in the project, we help stakeholders (from museum staff to students) build the skills needed to engage with our innovations. XR-based experiences can also be communicated to tour operators and Destination Management Organizations (DMO), supporting the long-term sustainability of HERIFORGE outputs as tourism products or services.

To Ensure Transparency and Accountability: Keep stakeholders and the general public informed about the project's objectives, progress, and outcomes to build trust and credibility. Regular updates and open communication demonstrate accountability for the EU funding received and invite continued support. This transparency helps maintain stakeholder confidence and interest throughout the project's life and beyond.

2.2 Who Are We Communicating With? – Target Groups

HERIFORGE's communication efforts are tailored to **diverse stakeholders**, reflecting the project's multi-disciplinary nature. Key target groups include:

General Public and Civil Society: Citizens, local communities, cultural enthusiasts, educators, and students represent the broad public audience. Communicating with the general public raises awareness and appreciation of cultural heritage and the ways technology can bring it to life. For example, showcasing a HERIFORGE VR demo to the public can inspire interest in cultural heritage among young people or provide novel educational experiences. Engaging civil society organizations (e.g., local heritage clubs, NGOs) also helps disseminate project ideas at the grassroots level and can lead to community-driven support and feedback.

Business & Industry: This group comprises SMEs, startups, and established companies in the XR technology sector and the broader cultural and creative industries (CCI). Engaging industry stakeholders opens opportunities for innovation and market expansion. Through communication, we inform them of HERIFORGE's technological developments and demonstrate how these innovations can be leveraged for new products, services, or business models in cultural heritage tourism, education, or entertainment.

Cultural Heritage Sector: This includes Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums often referred as GLAM institutions, other cultural heritage institutions (CHIs), and public/private arts and culture organizations. They are primary beneficiaries of HERIFORGE's outcomes – for example, new XR tools and methodologies can enhance their preservation, exhibition, and education work. Communication with this group highlights practical



benefits and use cases of the project's innovations, encouraging these institutions to participate in pilots and eventually adopt the solutions.

Policymakers: Regional and national government bodies, ministries, cultural heritage agencies, and EU-level policymakers fall into this group. By targeting policymakers, HERIFORGE aims to inform and influence those who can create a supportive environment for cultural heritage digitization and XR innovation. Communications to this audience emphasize how the project's findings can guide policy enhancements, investment strategies, and standards. These messages will be delivered through policy briefs, strategic documents, and direct dialogues.

Research and Academic Community: This group covers research performing organizations (universities, research institutes, etc.), individual researchers, and scholars in fields such as digital heritage, computer science (XR, HCI, Spatial Computing, etc.), and social sciences (Cultural Heritage, Archeology, History of Arts, User Experience Design, Game Design, etc). We communicate scientific progress (methods, data, results) to foster knowledge exchange and collaboration. By engaging academics – through conference presentations, publications, and networking – we also ensure HERIFORGE's research contributions are recognized and built upon, strengthening the scientific impact of the project.

Tourism Stakeholders: This including destination managers, hotel and hospitality associations, tour operators, tourism boards, and cultural route networks – form an essential target group. Their involvement ensures the practical integration of HERIFORGE innovations into visitor experiences, helping to boost cultural tourism, local development, and experiential travel offers.

Creative Industry: This group includes professionals and enterprises in fields such as game development, animation, immersive media, design, performing arts, and storytelling. These creatives play a key role in transforming HERIFORGE's technological outputs into compelling, culturally enriched experiences. By engaging with the creative sector, we tap into a wellspring of narrative innovation and aesthetic expertise, essential for crafting emotionally resonant and widely engaging XR applications. Communication with this audience focuses on co-creation opportunities, showcasing how HERIFORGE tools can serve as a foundation for artistic experimentation, transmedia projects, and audience-centered cultural productions. Their participation enriches both the cultural value and market relevance of HERIFORGE outcomes.

2.3 What Do We Communicate? – Key Messages

These messages will be consistently conveyed across all platforms and tailored in tone or detail for specific audiences. In all project communications, below messages will be delivered in a *clear, concise, and compelling manner*. The core messages include:

Innovation at the Intersection of Heritage and Technology: HERIFORGE shows how emerging extended reality technologies—augmented, virtual, and mixed reality—can unlock new forms of cultural engagement. Imagine exploring ancient Rome through a VR headset, hearing local voices and witnessing reconstructed ruins rise around you. HERIFORGE is making that kind of experience a reality, blending historical accuracy with digital immersion. In doing so, it redefines our connection with Europe's rich cultural heritage.

Collaborative and Cross-Border Approach: As a cross-border initiative, HERIFORGE thrives on co-creation. A virtual workshop, for example, might bring together curators in Athens, digital artists in Dublin, and educators in Kraków to design an interactive exhibition. This synergy across disciplines and regions ensures the outcomes are richer, more inclusive, and more innovative.

Inclusivity and Societal Benefits: The project emphasizes inclusive participation, ensuring that digital innovation in cultural heritage *is accessible and beneficial to all segments of society*. From a practical standpoint, this also directly supports tourism objectives related to accessibility, as the digital tools developed by HERIFORGE will make cultural heritage more inclusive and easier to experience for individuals with mobility, cognitive, or sensory impairments.

Responsible and Ethical Use of Heritage Data: A crucial message is that HERIFORGE promotes the *responsible reuse of cultural heritage assets*. This means respecting cultural values, provenance, and privacy while innovating. We highlight how the project sets best practices – for instance, adhering to data protection (GDPR and LPPD) when using personal narratives or images, or ensuring that digital reconstructions of heritage are done in consultation with experts to avoid misrepresentation. By doing so, HERIFORGE positions itself as a model for ethical digital transformation in the heritage field.

Open Access and Shared Knowledge: HERIFORGE is committed to *openness – from open science to open innovation*. Key communications will stress that the project's research findings, publications, and even certain



software/tools will be made openly available for others to learn from or reuse. This reinforces the message that HERIFORGE is creating public goods (knowledge, platforms, methods) that extend beyond the consortium.

Impact and Legacy: We consistently communicate the *anticipated impact and long-term legacy* of HERIFORGE. This includes messages about how the project's results will influence future practices: for example, "HERIFORGE is paving the way for more immersive museum experiences", "HERIFORGE is paving the way for more augmented heritage experiences or "HERIFORGE's policy recommendations will help shape supportive funding and enabling regulations for innovation in digital heritage". By articulating a vision of what changes or improvements the project will lead to, we aim to inspire stakeholders to support and adopt the outcomes. We also underscore that HERIFORGE is funded by the EU Horizon Europe program, linking our activities to broader European goals in research, innovation, and cultural preservation by linking and using proper mentions to EU and REA social media channels as explained in the below Section 2.4.

Digital empowerment and community resilience: HERIFORGE contributes to *digital capacity-building in local communities*. Showcasing how these communities' benefit from digital heritage can position HERIFORGE as a driver of long-term resilience and economic revitalization.

Economic impact and innovation ecosystems: HERIFORGE plays a role in fostering innovation ecosystems, *supporting local creative industries, tourism, and digital entrepreneurship*. These messages help communicate the project's relevance to economic development and cross-sector innovation.

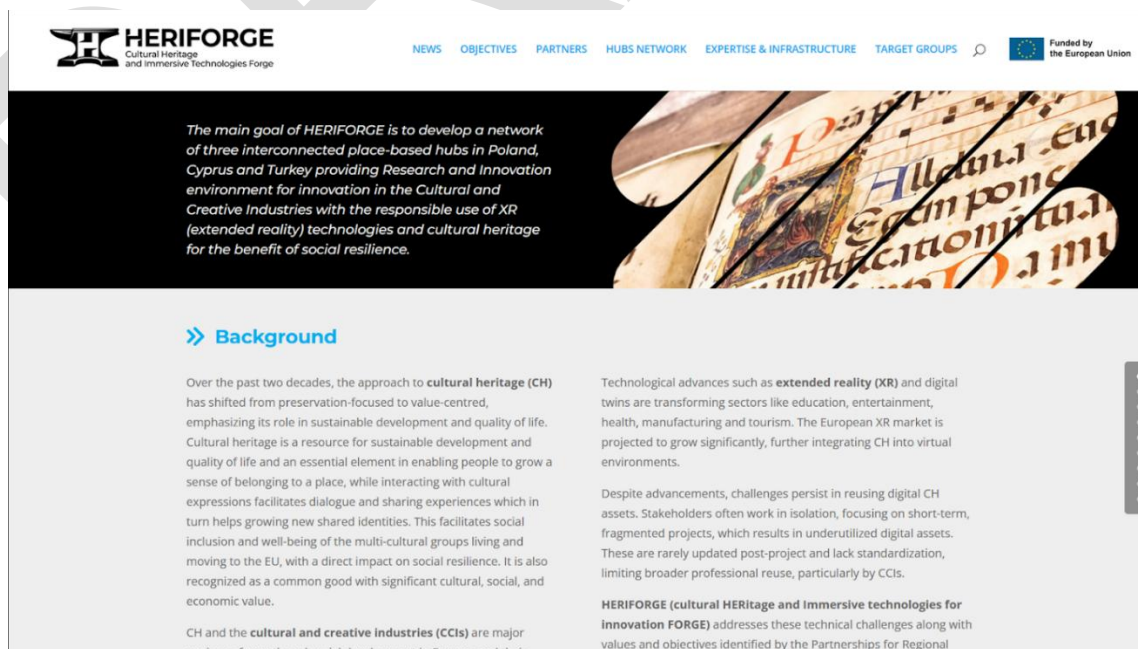
2.4 Where and How Do We Communicate? – Tools and Channels

A *multi-channel approach* will be adopted to maximize reach and engagement in HERIFORGE's communication. We will leverage both online and offline tools, selecting each channel based on where our target audiences are most active and how they prefer to receive information. Major communication channels include the project's website, social media platforms, and a periodic newsletter. Each of these channels will serve specific purposes and content types, described below. In addition, we will use partners' existing networks and European Commission platforms to further amplify our messages.

2.4.1 Website

The *HERIFORGE project website* <https://www.heriforge.eu/> was created within the first month of the project, and it was designed to serve as the central hub of information, resources, and updates about HERIFORGE. The website will be the primary reference point for anyone seeking to learn about the project. The main page of the website is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Main page of the HERIFORGE project website





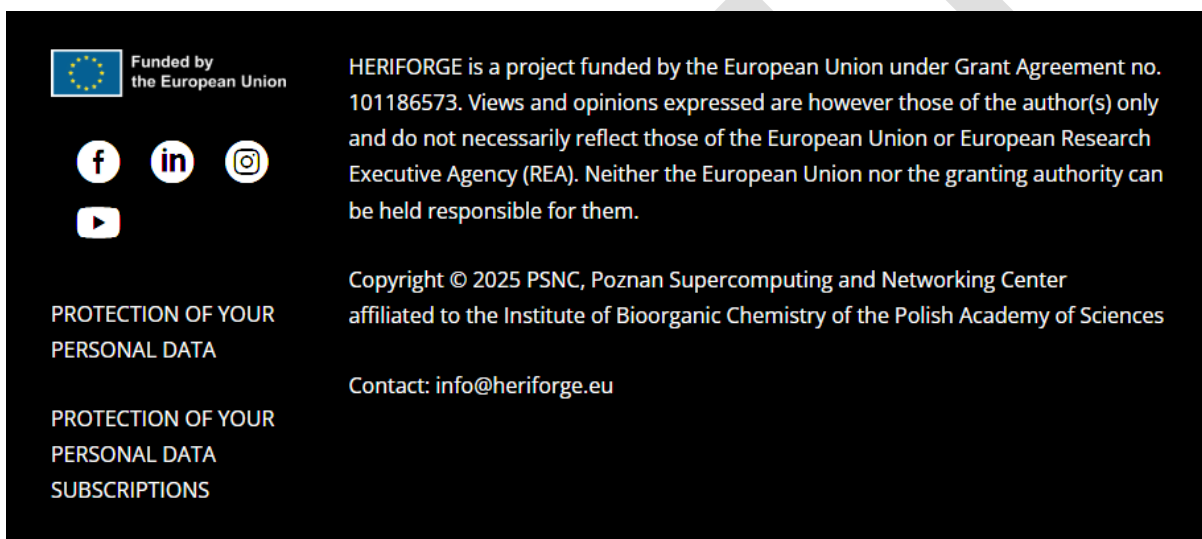
Key characteristics and functions of the website include:

Comprehensive Content: The site will host an overview of the project (objectives, consortium, funding details), news updates (project progress, press releases, event announcements), public deliverables and outputs (reports, policy briefs, guides), and contact information. As results materialize, case studies, demonstration videos, and an events calendar will be added.

Dynamic and Interactive Features: The website will be regularly updated (at least monthly) with fresh content such as blog posts or news. If needed, it may include interactive elements—for example, a gallery of images from project events—to make the experience engaging. A subscription form will allow visitors to sign up for the newsletter.

Branding and Compliance: The site visibly displays the HERIFORGE logo and adheres to the project's visual identity with proper acknowledgement of EU Funding, as demonstrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Acknowledgement section of the HERIFORGE website.



2.4.2 Social Media Channels

HERIFORGE messages, learning, and news will be shared consistently through social media channels throughout the project timeline and beyond. The channels and approach are:

LinkedIn: (<https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/heriforge-cultural-heritage...>) Used for professional outreach and networking. We will share project news, publication announcements, event invitations, and insights targeting professionals in cultural heritage, technology, and policy. LinkedIn will help connect with other projects, reach stakeholders like museum professionals or cultural heritage managers, and facilitate discussions in relevant groups.

Instagram: (<https://www.instagram.com/heriforge/>) Used to reach a broader and younger audience through visual and auditory storytelling. We will post project news, messages, learnings, in addition to images and short videos (e.g., from pilot sites, prototypes, behind-the-scenes development of XR experiences, team activities) with concise captions. Instagram is ideal for showcasing the *immersive and visual aspects* of HERIFORGE, such as sneak peeks of AR content or cultural heritage sites involved. *Hashtags like #culturalheritage #XR #HERIFORGE will be used to increase visibility.*

YouTube: (<https://www.youtube.com/@heriforge>) Used as a repository for longer video content. We plan to produce brief documentary-style videos or interviews explaining project goals, demonstrations of XR prototypes in use, recordings of webinar sessions, and tutorials.

Podcast channels: <https://heriforge.podbean.com/> Podcasts will be used to disseminate the project goals and learnings via interviews with experts from HERIFORGE partners and external stakeholders. Heriforge is using one podcast dissemination platform to centralise the links but will be sharing podcast recordings on multiple



platforms. We have already published two podcast episodes:

1. What is HeriForge with Michał Kosiedowski
2. Driving Resilience in Historic Cities Through Immersive Technologies with Dr. Georgios Artopoulos
3. Stakeholder Engagement with Dr. Mustafa Gul (Planned - Title to be revised)
4. Policymaking for Cultural Heritage with Maria Drabczyk (Planned - Title to be revised)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Heriforge/> Used for timely updates and interaction with the research and policy community. On this platform, we will post news bites (e.g., “HERIFORGE at Conference X today – come see our demo!”), and share relevant content from others (retweeting EU initiatives, partner news, etc.).

Partners’ Communication Channels: To ensure wide visibility and sustained engagement, HERIFORGE will actively leverage the communication channels of all project partners alongside the core project platforms. Each partner will share HERIFORGE content through their institutional websites, newsletters, academic repositories, and—critically—their social media accounts. Partners will regularly reshare posts from the official HERIFORGE LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and podcast platforms, using coordinated hashtags such as #HERIFORGE, #CulturalHeritage. They will also tag the official HERIFORGE accounts (e.g., @HERIFORGE on Instagram and YouTube, @Heriforge on Facebook, and the LinkedIn showcase page) to increase reach and strengthen brand recognition. Posts will be localized when appropriate and tailored to specific audiences, ensuring relevance and accessibility. In addition, partners will amplify project messages during conferences, public events, and stakeholder engagements by sharing photos, video clips, or news via their own networks. This collaborative, multi-channel strategy not only multiplies the project’s digital footprint but also strengthens its presence across academic, policy, cultural, and public sectors.

Across all these channels, the content will be **tailored to fit the medium** – e.g., more formal and detailed language on LinkedIn, more visual and narrative-driven posts on Instagram. We initially planned to use Twitter/X, after starting the project we realised that due to the transformation the platform recently underwent, it gives less opportunities for HERIFORGE, therefore we consulted our project officer and decided to continue with Instagram.

For all those platforms we will use relevant hashtags such as #HorizonEU, #ResearchImpactEU, #EUinnovation to plug into broader conversations and tag key EU accounts (e.g., @REA_research, @eu_science etc.) to increase our reach.

2.4.3 Newsletter

A *project e-newsletter* will be established to provide periodic, curated updates to interested stakeholders directly in their inbox. The newsletter strategy is as follows:

Frequency and Audience: Starting from the middle of the first year of the project, the newsletter will be issued on a regular basis every six months (August and February), to maintain engagement without overwhelming recipients. The first newsletter will be sent together with the announcement of the Open Calls in August 2025. The mailing list will address stakeholders that have registered to the HERIFORGE Hub’s Network Registry (HHNR) during the stakeholder mapping activity carried out through Task 4.2 - Stakeholder Analysis, and stakeholders that subscribed to the HERIFORGE Website following dissemination of HERIFORGE in social media and policy experts that were identified by Task 2.1. In the future we will consider tailoring mailing lists according to audience interests (activities, deliverables & publications, financial support and languages etc.).

Content: Each newsletter will highlight key *milestones and achievements* of the recent period; progress updates on prototypes, summaries of events or workshops conducted, links to any new publications or blog posts, and an introduction to upcoming activities (such as an announcement of the next hackathon or an open call launch).

Distribution and Growth: The newsletter can be managed via a reliable email marketing service (ensuring compliance with GDPR for managing subscriptions and opt-outs). We will promote the newsletter sign-up on the website and via social media (“Subscribe to stay updated on HERIFORGE”).

Integration with Other Channels: The content of the newsletter will often repurpose or aggregate what has been shared on the website and social media, but in a summarized form. Newsletter will also share the social media accounts (Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook), videos published on YouTube, and podcasts published during that time period.



2.5 When Do We Communicate? – Action Plan and Timeline

Communication activities in HERIFORGE are carefully scheduled to align with the project's timeline, key milestones, and the evolving nature of content as the project progresses. Below, there is an overview of the communication action plan broken down by project phases:

Months 1–12 (Project Initiation and Build-Up): Focus on *establishing project identity and initial outreach*. In this first year, the priority is to set up all communication foundations. Developing and launching related channels will help to disseminate information after month seven.

Months 13–24 (Development and Engagement): Focus on *regular updates and stakeholder engagement*. In the second year, as the project yields interim results, we will *organize and publicize workshops or webinars*. Each event will be promoted in advance via the website and social media, and outcomes will be reported (pictures, summaries, participant testimonials) to show activity. Additionally, Year 2 is when we expect to participate in external *conferences or cultural heritage events*; we will leverage those opportunities for live communication and follow-up stories (e.g., "HERIFORGE presented at XYZ Conference to an audience of ...").

Months 25–36 (Final Results and Wrap-up): Focus on *culminating dissemination and impact demonstration*. In the final year, the communication will highlight the *summation of project outcomes*. We will likely organize a high-profile final conference or showcase event (Month 30–36) to present the HERIFORGE results to a wide audience, including media – this will be a centerpiece of our communications, with dedicated efforts to attract attendees and coverage.

This timeline serves as a general framework. A more detailed month-by-month plan (maintained internally) will map specific activities. Below is the planned frequency for each communication channel and the planned post numbers throughout the project;

LinkedIn: At least 1 post every month. Goal is to reach 40-50 posts at the end of the project.

Instagram: At least 2 posts every week. Project news, updates, and learnings will be shared consistently. Goal is to reach 100 posts at the end of the project.

YouTube: At least 1 video every 2 months. Video interviews, infographic videos summarizing project learnings, tutorials will be published over the course of the project based on project activities. Goal is to reach 15-20 videos at the end of the project.

Podcasts: One podcast every 1 episode every three weeks. The podcasts contents and interviewees will be scheduled based on this frequency and the project process. Goal is to reach 30-40 podcasts at the end of the project.

Facebook: At least 1 post every month. Goal is to reach 40-50 posts at the end of the project.

Newsletter: Every 6 months starting on the 9th of the project and one at the end of the project summarizing project reflections. Goal is to reach 6 newsletters at the end of the project.

2.6 Monitoring

To ensure the communication strategy is effective and to allow for course corrections, HERIFORGE will implement a robust monitoring and evaluation approach for all communication activities. Monitoring involves the continuous collection of data on communication outputs and outcomes, measuring them against predefined indicators (KPIs), and reporting these findings to the consortium and stakeholders. This feedback loop allows the project to understand what is working well and what may need improvement in its outreach efforts.

2.6.1 Performance Measurement

HERIFORGE will measure performance of its communication activities using both **quantitative metrics and qualitative feedback**. Concretely:

Each communication channel will be tracked with appropriate analytics tools. For the website, we will use Google Analytics to monitor metrics such as number of visitors, page views, geographic reach, and user behavior on the site. For social media, platform insights will provide data on followers, impressions, likes, shares, comments, and click-through rates. For newsletters, we will track subscription count, open rates, and click rates on links within the emails.



We will maintain a **Communication Log** where all outputs are recorded. This log will include items like: dates and content of social media posts (and their engagement statistics), newsletter release dates and key stats, website content updates, and media mentions or external communications.

Qualitative feedback loops will also be utilized. During events or workshops, we can solicit feedback on our communication materials (like asking participants if they had seen our website or social media, and what their impression was). Partners, especially those who interface often with stakeholders, will report anecdotal feedback, such as stakeholders referencing a blog post or asking questions that indicate what message they received.

Regular review meetings: WP leaders will review performance data every six months at internal meetings. In these, we will compare metrics against our targets (KPIs) and discuss qualitative observations.

2.6.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

To support the project's overall goals, a list of activities and indicators has been created. We have defined several **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** to quantify the success of the communication activities. These KPIs serve as concrete targets or benchmarks to achieve by specific milestones (e.g., annually or by project end). Throughout the project, these KPIs will be tracked and reported on. Below, there are some of the main KPIs for HERIFORGE communication:

Website Traffic: Achieve at least *200 unique visits per month* to the project website by the end of the first project year (Month 12), growing to a higher steady rate in subsequent years as content and awareness increase. This will indicate that our online presence is being discovered and used regularly.

Website Content Production: Publish at least *36 blog/news posts* on the website over the project duration (averaging about one post per month after setup) to keep content fresh and engaging

Social Media Reach and Engagement: Build a social media following of *at least 500 combined followers* across all platforms ((LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube and Facebook) by the project's mid-term, and *1000+* by the end. More importantly, track engagement per post – aiming for an average engagement rate (likes/comments/shares per impression) that meets or exceeds industry benchmarks.

Newsletter Subscribers and Readership: Grow the newsletter mailing list to *over 200 subscribers* by the end of the project.

Media Mentions and Press Releases: Issue at least *2 major press releases* (one at project launch, one at project conclusion, possibly others around key events) and target at least *5 media mentions or articles* in external outlets (could be industry magazines, cultural heritage newsletters, local news websites, etc., that report on HERIFORGE).

- **Event Participation (Public-facing):** Although more tied to dissemination, from a communication perspective we set a goal to *engage audiences via events*: for example, have *100+ total attendees across all public webinars/workshops* we host, and achieve a satisfaction/awareness gain as measured by post-event feedback (e.g., >80% of participants say they learned something new about CH and XR through our event).

Brand Consistency: Ensure that 100% of project presentations, publications, and other dissemination materials include the HERIFORGE logo and the EU funding statement. This will be checked as part of the internal review of outputs.

- **External Recognition:** Another indicator is the growing reference of "HERIFORGE" in external communications. For example, if another project mentions us, or if stakeholders reference HERIFORGE results on social media, it reflects increasing recognition. As we are now in the middle of the first year of the project (M5), we will track the progress of these KPIs and provide an update on their status. By the end of M5, we will report on the percentage of targets achieved compared to the planned milestones for communication and dissemination. This will give us a clear view of whether we are on track or need to adjust our efforts in the coming months to meet the targets by the mid-term report.

2.6.3 Reporting

The project will maintain transparency and rigor in reporting communication activities and outcomes, both for internal management purposes and for accountability to the funding body (the European Commission). Reporting will occur on multiple levels:

Internal Reporting: Work package leader will prepare brief *semiannual internal reports* summarizing the recent activities (what was done) and the analytics (results achieved).

Periodic Reports to EC: As a Horizon Europe project, HERIFORGE is required to submit periodic technical



reports (usually at mid-term and end). The communication and dissemination section of these reports will detail what has been done in line with this plan. To ensure accurate and up-to-date reporting, information is collected systematically through Task 5.1 activities, including regular coordination meetings, internal progress updates, and documentation shared by partners. During these meetings, partners report on their communication and dissemination efforts, which are then consolidated and included in the periodic report.

Consortium Meetings and Deliverables: Communication is a standing item on consortium meeting agendas. To be in proper communication, the communication coordinator will follow-up with the stakeholders.

Documentation and Archive: We will keep a well-organized archive of all communication outputs (newsletters PDFs, social media post logs, event flyers, press release copies, etc.) along with the quantitative data (analytics exports).

Adaptive Reporting: Based on the monitoring data, reports will not just be dry accounts of numbers, but will include analysis and recommendations if it is needed.

To enable monitoring project dissemination activities in relation to the plan drawn in the current document and in results enable reporting as outlined above, the project consortium collects relevant information using a detailed excel sheet. This sheet is consortium's internal document and constitutes Appendix A to this report.

2.7 Project Identity

A strong and consistent visual identity is crucial for effectively communicating the HERIFORGE project. It creates a recognizable "brand" for the project, ensuring that all materials – from the website to presentation slides and brochures – are immediately identifiable as part of HERIFORGE.

Project Identity: HERIFORGE has developed a distinct *project logo* that embodies the project's theme and values. The logo design is presented in Figure 3. The project identity involves different uses of the logo, the typefaces to be used in project reports, presentations, and visuals, color scheme to be used in project materials, visual patterns as a graphical element. The link to the Brand guide is available at the following link: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1DJOPOJCVITGSIHZSO97Bcie8DPvJnV1l>
That guide constitutes Appendix B to the current report.

Figure 3: HERIFORGE logo design

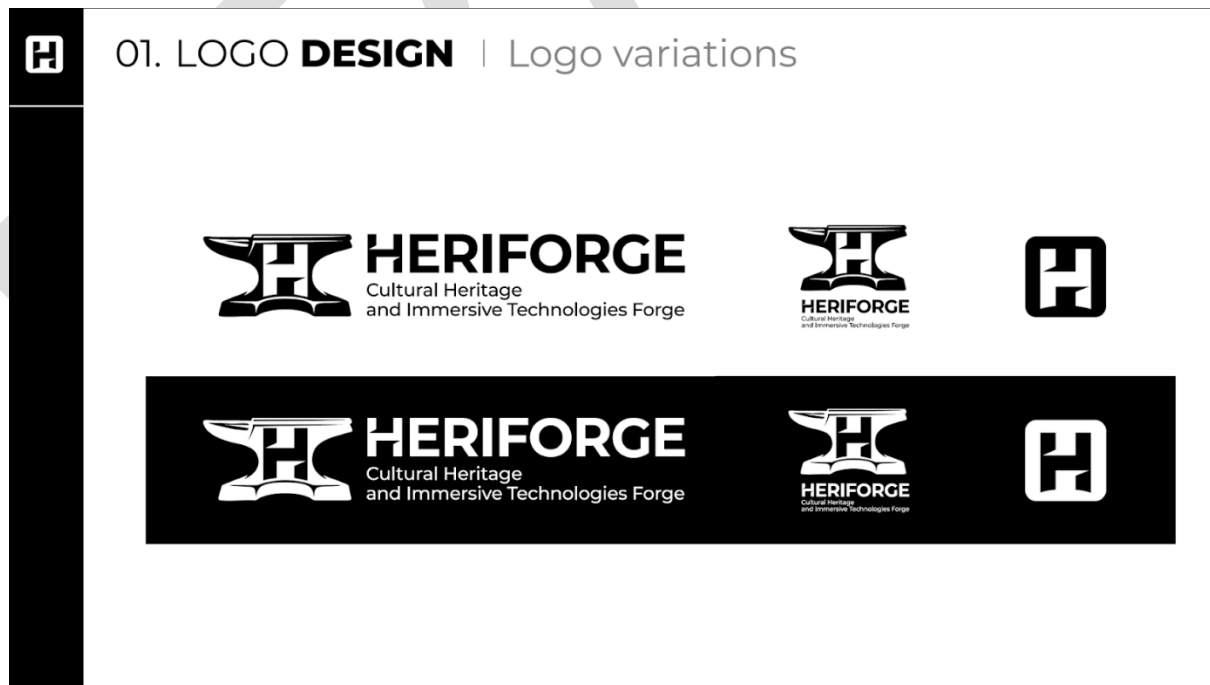




Figure 4: Example background graphics of the presentation template



Visual Materials: HERIFORGE project will produce an image repository including photographs from project activities and outcomes, illustrations and infographics summarizing project activities and outcomes, AI generated images. These will form a visual repository for the project.

Documentation Template: To further ensure consistency, HERIFORGE has developed *standardized templates* for project documents and presentations. These templates incorporate the visual identity elements mentioned above and include preformatted styles to ease use. Having these templates *streamlines the creation of new material* – partners are not starting from scratch each time – and minimizes design errors (such as incorrect use of logo or colors). It also projects an image of cohesion: all partners speak visually with one voice as HERIFORGE. Key templates include:

- **Report and Deliverable Template**
- **Presentation Template** (Figure 4 presents an example background graphics from the presentation template),
- **Other Templates:** Additionally, templates for things like meeting agendas, minutes, or a poster template for scientific conferences have been prepared. Even if these are simpler, they carry the same header/footer styling and colors. If the project produces brochures or one-page fact sheets for general audiences, those to follow a set design.

2.8 Funding Statement

As an EU-funded project, HERIFORGE must clearly acknowledge its funding source in all its public communications. Ensuring the correct **funding statement** is included is not only a contractual obligation under the Horizon Europe grant but also a critical practice to inform audiences of the support enabling this research and innovation. All communication and dissemination materials will thus carry a standard acknowledgment of the EU funding and the EU flag (emblem) where feasible.

2.9 European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)



HERIFORGE is committed to conducting all communication and dissemination activities in compliance with the **European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and relevant personal data protection laws of Türkiye (the Law on Protection of Personal Data No: 6698 (LPPD))**. HERIFORGE's GDPR policy is defined in length in its Data Management Plan (DMP), delivered in Month 6 as D.1.1 (Section 7).

The DMP categorizes HERIFORGE's activities resulting in personal data collection and processing according to who collects the data and therefore who acts as the data processor. As part of Communication and Dissemination activities HERIFORGE will be collecting contact information for newsletter subscribers, photographs or video of individuals at events, quotes or testimonials from participants, etc. In all these cases personal data is collected directly from data subjects and data is hosted on PSNC's infrastructure, PSNC serves as the Data Processor under Article 28 GDPR, with responsibility for implementing appropriate technical and organizational measures for secure processing. The DMP also provides guidance for collecting data in compliance with LPPD for exceptional cases where researchers from Türkiye engage with data subjects from Türkiye at first contact. In the latter case data is processed according to the principles laid out by the LPPD and personal data is kept by Koç University's local servers who acts as the Data Controller.

The following key practices govern our approach to GDPR compliance in communications:

Informed Consent: We will only collect personal data from individuals for communication purposes when it is strictly necessary and with their explicit consent. The relevant GDPR documents are available on the HERIFORGE website via the following links:

- Protection of your personal data: https://www.heriforge.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/PROTECTION_OF_YOUR_PERSONAL_DATA.pdf
- Protection of your personal data (subscriptions): https://www.heriforge.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/PROTECTION_OF_YOUR_PERSONAL_DATA_SUBSCRIPTIONS.pdf

These documents constitute Appendix C and Appendix D to the current report, respectively.

Data Protection Notices: Whenever personal data is collected, we will provide a clear *privacy notice* explaining what data is collected, for what purpose, how long it will be kept, and how individuals can exercise their rights.

Data Minimization and Purpose Limitation: We commit to collecting only the minimum personal data needed and using it only for the stated purposes. For example, our mailing list will only store names and emails (and perhaps affiliation if provided) for sending newsletters; we will not collect additional demographic data unless necessary for specific impact analysis (and even then, likely aggregated anonymously). We will not use personal data collected for one purpose (like event registration) for a different purpose (like unrelated research) without obtaining new consent.

Data Security and Storage: All personal data collected in the context of HERIFORGE communications will be stored securely. Electronic data (e.g., mailing lists, consent scans) will be kept in protected files or databases with access restricted to authorized project members (such as the communication leader). We will use secure services (for instance, a reputable email marketing service compliant with EU regulations for the newsletter, secure cloud storage for any documents containing personal data). Any physical documents (like signed consent forms) will be stored in a locked cabinet or as digitized copies in a secure folder. We also instruct team members to avoid storing project personal data on personal unsecured devices or emailing files with personal data without precautions.

Data Retention and Deletion: We will retain personal data *only for the necessary duration*. For example, if someone unsubscribes from the newsletter, their data will be promptly removed from the mailing list.

Individual Rights and Requests: The project will uphold individuals' rights granted by GDPR. If someone contacts us to inquire about their data, or to request a correction or deletion of their personal information, we have procedures to respond in a timely manner (within the GDPR guideline of one month).

An alias dataprotection@heriforge.eu was created as a single point of contact for data subject requests. dataprotection@heriforge.eu is ruled to forward all requests to the Data Privacy Officers and PIs of each Hub's coordinating academic partner. Each Hub representative academic partner is responsible to manage requests coming from their territories for the purposes of managing the HHNR and the newsletter subscribers. (more detail in D.1.1 Data Management Plan DMP)

Avoiding External Data Pitfalls: We will be cautious when using any third-party content in our communications. No personal data or images taken from external sources will be used unless we have verified they are either in the public domain, under an open license, or we have obtained permission.



3. Dissemination Strategy and Plan

While communication addresses broad awareness, dissemination in HERIFORGE is focused on the targeted, proactive sharing of the project's research outputs, results, and knowledge with specific audiences who can directly utilize or amplify those results. According to EU definitions, dissemination is about transferring knowledge & results to parties that can make use of it – in other words, ensuring our work reaches the people who can turn it into action, be it new products, standards, or further research. This section details the dissemination strategy, including who those target groups are, through what channels we reach them (including our commitment to Open Science), an overview of activities already underway by Month 2, and how we will monitor and report on dissemination success.

HERIFORGE's dissemination plan is built on the recognition that our project's outcomes (such as XR prototypes, guidelines, data platforms, and research findings) have the greatest impact when adopted by key stakeholders in the cultural heritage and technology ecosystem. Therefore, we plan dissemination activities from early on the project, not waiting until all results are final, to start seeding interest and enabling stakeholders to prepare for uptake. The plan also aligns with Horizon Europe's open science and innovation ethos, ensuring that as many results as possible are open for use.

2.1. Dissemination Target Groups

The target groups for dissemination overlap with the communication audiences but are more specifically defined as those who have the capability and interest to use, implement, or build upon the project's results. In other words, these are the stakeholders who can turn HERIFORGE's outputs into concrete follow-on innovations, applications, or policy improvements. Identifying these groups allows us to tailor dissemination content and channels to each. Key dissemination target groups include:

Cultural Heritage Institutions and Professionals: Museums, galleries, libraries, archives (the GLAM sector), and broader cultural heritage institutions form a primary target. Curators, exhibition designers, digital heritage specialists, and cultural managers fall in this group. They can implement HERIFORGE's XR solutions and methodologies in their practices – for example, using an AR app developed by the project to enrich museum tours, or adopting guidelines on how to engage communities in digital co-creation. By targeting them, we aim to transfer our practical outputs (software, toolkits, best practices) so that these become embedded in heritage preservation and presentation activities.

Creative and Cultural Industries (CCI) & Technology Developers: This group covers companies and entrepreneurs in the creative tech space – XR developers, game designers, educational technology firms, multimedia studios, and startups at the intersection of culture and tech. It also includes SMEs within the consortium or network who might exploit the results.

Research and Academic Community: Scholars and researchers in fields such as cultural heritage studies, computer science (VR/AR), human-computer interaction, digital humanities, and innovation policy form another group. They can build upon HERIFORGE's scientific findings – citing our research, using our data for secondary analysis, or extending our methodologies.

Policy Makers and Public Authorities: Government bodies at local, regional, national, and EU levels responsible for cultural heritage, digital innovation, education, or regional development are crucial dissemination targets for our policy-oriented results. These include ministries of culture or digital affairs, cultural heritage boards, city councils with smart city/culture initiatives, and the European Commission and related agencies (like the European Heritage Label, etc.).

Educators and Training Institutes: (As a subset of society and research) Professors, schoolteachers, and vocational trainers in relevant fields can also use HERIFORGE outputs.

Engaged Public / Heritage Communities: While the general public is more of a communication audience, a subset of highly engaged public, such as volunteer groups in heritage, citizen scientists, or local history associations can also directly benefit from certain results (like the digital platform or open access content).

Sibling projects and communities to engage within HERIFORGE:

ECHOES: <https://www.echoes-eccch.eu/>

ATRIUM: <https://atrium-research.eu/>

XR4Europe: <https://xr4europe.eu/> ,

NEM: <https://nem-initiative.org/>

EMIL: <https://emil-xr.eu/>

STARTS: <https://starts.eu/>



METACITIES: <https://metacities-hub.com/>
IMPULSE: <https://euimpulse.eu/>
HERITALISE: <https://heritalise-eccch.eu/>
3D BIG DATA SPACE: <https://www.timemachine.eu/3dbigdataspace/>
Relevant infrastructures to Engage within HERIFORGE:
DARIAH: <https://www.dariah.eu/>,
GEANT: <https://geant.org/>
OPERAS: <https://lab.operas-eu.org/>
CLARIN: <https://www.clarin.eu/>
E-RHIS: <https://www.e-rihs.eu/>
Cyprus Digital Innovation Hub: https://www.cyric.eu/cydi_hub/
HPC4Poland: <https://hpc4poland.pl/>
Ars Electronica: <https://ars.electronica.art/news/en/>

3.2 Dissemination Channels

To effectively reach the target groups above, HERIFORGE will use a variety of dissemination channels and activities. Each channel is chosen for its suitability to connect with certain stakeholders and to convey particular types of content (academic, practical, strategic, etc.). Our dissemination approach is multi-pronged, combining traditional scholarly dissemination with creative, interactive methods to engage non-academic stakeholders. Key dissemination channels include:

Conferences, Seminars, and Workshops: The project team will actively participate in relevant conferences (academic and industry) and organize dedicated workshops or special sessions. For example, in countries where access to cultural sites is limited due to conflict or degradation, the team can present XR as a solution to preserve and showcase heritage virtually. In contrast, countries with strong tourism sectors may explore XR to enhance visitor experiences at heritage sites. These sessions will address both technical and cultural challenges and highlight success stories, fostering dialogue on local needs and global best practices.

Webinars and Online Events: To reach a broader audience without geographic constraints, we will host webinars or virtual demo days.

Publications (Scientific and Professional): Publishing the project's results in written form is a cornerstone of dissemination. We aim to produce scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings (covering technical innovations, user studies, and findings). All publications, where possible, will be made Open Access (See 3.3 - Implementing Joint Pilot Research Projects) so they can be freely read and used by our stakeholders. We have already submitted two abstracts to [Europeana PRO 2025](#) and [DARIAH AE 2025](#).

Open Calls and Competitions: A distinctive part of HERIFORGE's dissemination (and co-creation strategy) involves running *open calls* to engage third parties. We will advertise these calls widely (innovation networks, universities, start ups) to attract talented teams or individuals to contribute solutions in our domain. These open calls serve as a dissemination channel in that they broadcast our project's objectives and tools to a new audience of innovators. Through the process, participants become familiar with HERIFORGE's approach and outputs (since they likely will use our data or prototype in their work). Financial and technical support (sub-grants) and prizes will stimulate participation.

Hackathons and Design Sprints: Related to open calls, but also as independent events, we will employ hackathons or design sprints as *active dissemination and engagement exercises*.

Partner and Network Channels: Each partner will use their professional networks to disseminate results. Through *partner websites and social media*, we ensure dissemination is not confined to project-owned channels.

The variety of dissemination channels ensures that all key stakeholders have a way to access HERIFORGE results in a form that suits them – whether they prefer reading, listening, discussing, or trying out tools themselves.

3.3 Open Science

Open Science is a core principle guiding the HERIFORGE dissemination strategy. Embracing open science means we strive to make our research process and outputs as accessible and reusable as possible, in order to accelerate innovation, allow peer verification, and maximize impact. In line with Horizon Europe requirements, we commit to open



access publishing of our scientific work and open access to data with appropriate FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) practices. Our approach to open science includes:

Open Access Publications: All peer-reviewed scientific publications arising from HERIFORGE will be made openly accessible immediately upon publication. It will be communicated via newsletters.

3.4 Overview of Dissemination Activities

The consortium has already initiated several dissemination activities and put in place foundations for future efforts. Although the project is in its early stages, these actions ensure that momentum is built from the start and that initial awareness in key circles is achieved.

Stakeholder Mapping and Initial Outreach: The consortium compiled a list of key stakeholders and multipliers in each country, including major museum networks, cultural heritage agencies, XR professional associations, tourism professionals (such as destination managers, cultural tour operators, heritage interpreters), and other relevant NGOs. Initial outreach took place during focus group discussions and one-on-one meetings, helping to establish connections and gather early feedback. The stakeholders mapping will be described in details in Deliverable 4.2 Mapping excellence hub ecosystem, profiles and inclusivity strategies.

Website and Social Media Channels Creation and Curation: The HERIFORGE website and social media channels serve as the main dissemination channels for the project. These platforms will be actively curated to share updates, activities, and news with all relevant stakeholders and the broader public.

Publications: Scientific and popular science publications, along with blog posts and policy briefs, will be produced throughout the project. These will target the scientific community, industry professionals, government bodies, and the general public.

Open Calls Dissemination: For each open call, **FBA** will produce visual materials and a Communication Toolkit to ensure alignment in dissemination efforts among all project partners. The toolkit includes:

- Banners promoting the open call.
- Draft social media posts in various lengths and formats.
- Banners and links to informative webinars.
- Email templates for outreach.

Participation in Fairs and Conferences: The project will attend several relevant EU fairs and conferences, particularly those focused on business innovation, immersive technologies, and cultural heritage.

- **Target:** Attend 3 fairs or conferences, such as VR Days, Immersive Tech Week, Stereopsia, or World XR Forum. We have already applied [Europeana PRO 2025](#) and [DARIAH AE 2025](#).

Project's Research Activities: The HERIFORGE project involves multiple activities that engage project stakeholders. The first six months included 1:1 interviews, focus groups, and surveys, which also served as the starting point for the project's dissemination activities.

3.5 Monitoring

Just as with communication activities, dissemination efforts will be systematically monitored in HERIFORGE to evaluate their reach and effectiveness and ensure we meet our targets and obligations. Monitoring dissemination is particularly important for understanding how well our project's knowledge is transferring to the intended audiences and what impact it's having. The monitoring will cover quantitative metrics (KPIs specific to dissemination) and qualitative assessment of outcomes, and results will be reported to the consortium and the EC.

3.5.1. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

We have established a set of **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** to measure the success of dissemination. These KPIs align with the project's goals and the channels described, and they provide concrete targets to strive for. Some key dissemination KPIs include:

Events and Workshops Organized with External Stakeholders: Target: *At least 6 events* (workshops, seminars, hackathons, etc.) organized by HERIFORGE in cooperation with external networks or initiatives over the project duration. This could include, for example, a joint workshop with a European heritage network or a



hackathon co-organized with a tech hub. Achieving this number indicates active engagement and collaboration beyond the consortium.

Participation in Major Conferences/Events: Target: Presence in *at least 3 major XR or cultural heritage events*. This could mean speaking or demonstrating at marquee industry conferences such as DARIAH Annual Event, Ars Electronica Festival, VR Days, Immersive Tech Week, Stereopsia or World XR Forum, TNC) or cultural forums. It's a measure of visibility in key circles.

Scientific Publications: Target: *6 peer-reviewed publications* (in journals or conference proceedings) by the end of the project. This includes papers published or accepted for publication. We will also track citations or downloads as secondary KPIs, though those may accumulate beyond the project period.

Open Call applicants: 60. This KPI is directly connected to the open calls dissemination efforts.

Policy briefs: 3. Policy briefs will be published to share the ZENODO and outcomes of its strategic activities with the government bodies.

Open Calls Monitoring: the success of dissemination activities will be measured during their duration and communicated to the project partners via weekly application monitoring reports. In these documents, we will track the number of started applications (those who clicked 'apply' and created an application form) and submitted proposals. In case of low interest, additional actions to promote the open calls will be taken.

These KPIs will be regularly reviewed by the task leader monthly and discussed during the internal meeting. We will log progress (e.g., publication count, events done) every six months to see if we are on track.

3.5.2 Reporting

Reporting on dissemination activities and outcomes will be an integral part of the project's management and accountability processes. It ensures not only that the consortium keeps track of progress, but also that we can communicate our dissemination successes to the European Commission and learn from our experiences. Key aspects of dissemination reporting include:

Continuous Logging: The project maintains a Dissemination Tracker (a shared Excel) where each partner records dissemination actions.

Periodic Internal Review: Dissemination is a standing item in project meetings. Internally, every 6 months, the consortium reviews dissemination achievements against the plan.

Deliverables and Periodic Reports: At the required reporting periods, after first reporting period on Apr 2026 (M17) and at the end of the project, Nov 2027 (M36), we will compile a Dissemination & Communication Report section that includes detailed KPIs and detailed DCE activities.

Final Reporting and Impact Assessment: The final project report will include a comprehensive overview of dissemination and exploitation activities. We will not only list activities but also try to evaluate impact: for example, through any feedback or evidence of uptake. We'll gather testimonials or short statements from key stakeholders.

Metrics and Analytics in Reporting: We will incorporate data from monitoring into reporting.

Lessons Learned: In reports (especially final), we will reflect on what dissemination approaches worked best and any lessons for future projects.

3. Exploitation Strategy and Plan

This section outlines the HERIFORGE project's exploitation plan, to be further elaborated and elaborated during the project, as the key tasks related to the exploitation and sustainability of will yield its results (namely Tasks 5.3 Sustainability, impact and exploitation and 2.3 Action and investment plans for effective and responsible public policies in XR – see below). HERIFORGE projects' exploitation plan is aimed at ensuring that the project's valuable results are fully utilized, transforming into innovations, products, services, standards, or contributions to further research and policy—especially after the project's conclusion. This strategy defines how Key Exploitable Results (KERs) will be identified and developed, what impact pathways are anticipated for these results, and what actions will be undertaken to facilitate their adoption by the consortium and/or third parties. The overarching goal of the exploitation strategy is to make sure that the Excellence Hubs operating in the field of responsible use of XR in cultural heritage are operating in an international context and are able to yield impactful results.



4.1 Planned Pathways to Impact (PIs)

HERIFORGE aims to achieve significant impact through several key pathways:

Reuse of Cultural Heritage (CH) resources and application of digital technologies in CH (PI1): This will be achieved through synergy within existing innovation ecosystems based on the quadruple helix model, joint research and innovation (R&I) activities, and engagement with cultural and creative industries (CCIs), research-performing organizations (RPOs), cultural heritage institutions (CHIs), policy makers, and SMEs. These actions will enhance the dissemination of project results, deepen cultural experiences in society, increase the potential of quadruple helix organizations, accelerate innovation, and create a sustainable, interest-driven ecosystem.

Strengthening cross-border, research-based connectivity among “Widening” countries (PI2): HERIFORGE will develop innovative research connectivity between three innovation regions (Poland, Cyprus, and Türkiye), reinforcing synergy in the use of investment resources and enabling actors from “Widening” countries to participate in fully operational innovation ecosystems.

Better-tailored strategies for CH reuse using digital technologies (PI3): The project will deliver a cross-border, joint R&I strategy aligned with national and EU policies and tailored to local ecosystem strengths. Developed iteratively through collaboration and experience in Joint Pilot Research Projects (JPRPs), this strategy will be the foundation for future exploitation.

Strengthening academia-business links (PI4): By consolidating existing innovation ecosystems into a fully operational HERIFORGE Hub Network, the project will provide key services to accelerate investment in CH reuse through XR technologies.

Facilitating responsible deployment of Virtual Worlds (PI5): Through digitization of CH and promotion of endangered and intangible CH, as well as immersive and interactive services, HERIFORGE will contribute to the EU's strategic objective of fostering ethically and responsibly developed Virtual Worlds.

4.2 Identified Key Exploitable Results (KERs)

HERIFORGE has identified the following Key Exploitable Results with significant impact potential:

KER1: Strategic Impact Package: Includes strategic documents (D2.1 Landscape analysis of local and European strategic policy documents relevant to innovative and responsible reuse of CH through XR technologies; D2.2 Strategy for innovative and responsible reuse of CH through XR technologies. First draft in M9; D2.3 R&I action and investment plan including strategic priorities, funding mechanisms, and collaboration strategies; and D4.1 Hubs profiles and inclusivity strategies (incl. needs of the CHI, CCI, and GLAM communities related to each Hub) to shape policies and investment plans within the HERIFORGE Hub Network and the broader ecosystem after the project ends.

KER2: XR-driven Prototypes and Services: Covers digital tool and service prototypes (e.g., software, games, data repositories) based on semantically enriched and digitally customized representations of objects, monuments, sites, and intangible CH, using XR technologies.

KER3: HERIFORGE Hubs Network: A tangible organizational structure of three local hubs designed to facilitate engagement of RPOs, businesses, cultural sectors, and policymakers in a joint cross-border innovation ecosystem.

KER4: Guidelines for Human-centric and Trustworthy Innovation Ecosystems: Guidelines and tools for hub ecosystems to ensure that any resulting services or products are trustworthy and human-centered, aligned with EC recommendations and initiatives on Virtual Worlds and Web 4.0.

KER5: Data Orchestration Platform (DOP): Enables reuse of digital CH resources via XR by addressing interoperability challenges between systems and data formats.



4.3 Impact and exploitation indicators

Table 1 lists indicators that allow for the measurement of **HERIFORGE's long-term exploitation** in key areas related to **cultural heritage and XR technologies**. They are directly linked to the identified **Key Exploitable Results (KERs)** and are designed to assess the extent to which the project contributes to the intended transformations.

Table 1: HERIFORGE impact and exploitations indicators

Impact Pathway (Project Impact – PI)	Impact Indicators (5-year period after project completion)	Related Key Exploitable Results (KERs)
PI1: Broader reuse of cultural heritage (CH) assets and application of digital technologies in cultural heritage	- Number of developed or improved prototypes and services within hub ecosystems: 30 - Number of workshops and training sessions: 10 - Number of clients (e.g. companies) of the Data Orchestration Platform (DOP): 30	KER2, KER3, KER4, KER5
PI2: Strengthened cross-border, research-based excellence connectivity among Widening countries	- Number of non-beneficiary entities joining the Hubs: 12	KER1, KER3
PI3: Better tailored strategies for the reuse of cultural heritage through digital technologies	- Number of policymakers (outside of project beneficiaries) engaged in HERIFORGE ecosystem activities: 15	KER1, KER3, KER4
PI4: Strengthening links between academia and business	- Number of researchers trained in the innovation ecosystem: 600	KER1, KER2, KER3, KER4
PI5: Enabling responsible deployment of Virtual Worlds	- Number of publications resulting from R&I activities of the HERIFORGE hub network: 9 - Number of services/products prepared for IP initiation and enrolled in the "IP booster" scheme: 3	KER2, KER3, KER4

4.4. Key Stakeholder Groups in the HERIFORGE Project:

The **HERIFORGE project engages a wide spectrum of stakeholders** in line with the **quadruple helix model**, which includes academia, business, the public sector, and civil society. This approach ensures that the project incorporates diverse perspectives and that its outcomes are beneficial to a broad range of beneficiaries. These are the main stakeholder groups in the HERIFORGE Project:

Academic and Research Community (Research): This group includes Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) and universities such as the Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PSNC), the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IBL PAN), The Cyprus Institute (CYI), and Koç University (KU). These stakeholders are involved in research and innovation (R&I) activities, strategy development, and knowledge transfer. Their needs and capabilities are analysed in Task 4.2 – "Mapping excellence hub ecosystem, profiles and inclusivity strategies". They also actively participate in Joint Pilot Research Projects (JPRPs) implemented under WP3.

Business and Industry: This group includes small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), startups, technology companies (including those specialising in XR), the cultural and creative industries (CCIs), as well as innovation support organisations such as Fundingbox Accelerator Sp. z o.o. (FBA) and A2 Softworks Sp. z



o.o. (A2S). The project creates new business opportunities in the area of cultural heritage and XR technologies through Open Calls implemented under WP4 and managed in Task 4.4 Open Calls & FSTP Management. Their needs are also considered in Task 2.3 – "Action and investment plans for effective and responsible public policies in XR", which aims to develop investment plans that include SMEs and startups.

Public Sector (Government/Public Authorities/Polymakers): This group consists of governmental bodies at the local, regional, and national levels, ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in Poland), development agencies (e.g. Nicosia Development Agency – NDA, İpek Yolu Belediyeler Birliği – İBB), and cultural heritage institutions (CHIs), such as the National Institute of Museums (NIM). The project aims to provide them with better-tailored strategies for the reuse of cultural heritage using digital technologies, which is the objective of Task 2.3 Action and investment plans for effective and responsible public policies in XR and will also result in policy recommendations. Their involvement is crucial for shaping policy and investment plans, contributing to **KER1: Package of Strategic Impacts**, which will inform policymaking.

Civil Society (Society/Civil Society): This includes social organisations (e.g. Centrum Cyfrowe Foundation – FCC, Association of Cyprus Tourist Enterprises – ACTE, Museum Professionals Association – MUZEDER), cultural enthusiasts, educators, and local communities. The project aims to deepen their cultural experiences, enhance access to heritage, and promote social inclusion. Their perspectives are reflected in Task 4.2 Mapping excellence hub ecosystem, profiles and inclusivity strategies as part of the inclusivity strategy and through the involvement of social organisations as project partners.

4.5. Stakeholder Engagement:

HERIFORGE actively engages its stakeholders through various actions, which are an integral part of the implementation plan:

Consultations and Workshops: Involving stakeholders in the co-creation of strategies and investment plans, particularly in Task 2.1 – "Landscape analysis" through interviews with decision-makers and stakeholders, and in Task 2.3 for the development of investment plans. Workshops also play a key role in Task 3.1 – "Design of Joint Pilot Research Projects" to co-create JPRPs, and in Task 4.3 – "Sharing technology and best practices between the excellence hubs ecosystems".

Joint Research and Innovation Activities: Implementation of Joint Pilot Research Projects (JPRPs) under WP3 with partners from different stakeholder groups. Each JPRP involves cross-hub and cross-sector collaboration to strengthen cooperation.

Open Calls: Providing financial support to third parties (SMEs, startups) for the development of innovative products and prototypes in the field of cultural heritage and XR, under WP4 and Task 4.4 Open Calls & FSTP Management.

Knowledge and Best Practice Sharing: Facilitating exchange between hubs and their ecosystems, as the main goal of Task 4.3: Sharing technology and best practices between the excellence hubs ecosystems.

Information and Dissemination Events: Organising webinars, conferences, and sharing updates via the project website and social media. These activities are part of WP5 – Dissemination, Engagement and Exploitation, specifically Task 5.1 – "Dissemination, communication and outreach".

HERIFORGE Hub Network: Establishing a cross-border organisational structure comprising three local hubs (KER3, developed under WP4, specifically in Task 4.1 – "Establishing HERIFORGE Hubs Network"), to support multi-stakeholder engagement in a shared innovation ecosystem.

4.6. Benefits for Stakeholders

By engaging in the HERIFORGE project, each stakeholder group can benefit in different ways:

For Business and Industry: New business opportunities via Open Calls (**WP4**), access to cutting-edge technologies and expertise generated in **WP3**, support for product and service development, and connection to broader networks and markets.

For the Public Sector: Improved strategies for the reuse of cultural heritage, evidence-based policy support, and strengthened innovation ecosystems at regional and national levels. **KER1** will deliver strategic documents to support these goals.



For Academia and Research: Opportunities to conduct innovative research through **JPRPs (WP3)**, transfer of academic knowledge into practice, enhanced cross-sector collaboration, and development of new competencies.

For Civil Society: Greater access to cultural heritage, enriched cultural experiences, increased cultural awareness, support for social inclusion and identity building.

HERIFORGE places strong emphasis on the **active engagement of all stakeholder groups** to ensure that its outcomes are relevant, useful, and contribute to **sustainable development in the area of cultural heritage and XR technologies**. The risk of strategies not aligning with stakeholder needs is addressed by proactively involving them through project activities, including consultations and workshops, as outlined in section 5.4 "HERIFORGE: Project Exploitation Strategy and Plan".

4.7. Managing Exploitation Activities

Exploitation activities in HERIFORGE will be managed mainly through two key tasks:

Task 5.3: *"Sustainability, Impact, and Exploitation"* will start in month 12 (M12). The goal is to assess project impact and develop a comprehensive sustainability and exploitation strategy and action plan. Activities will include: impact analysis (also in relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals), exploitation strategy development (including identification of exploitable assets and impact areas, and business model design), intellectual property and rights-sharing considerations, and the creation and publication of relevant reports and strategies.

Task 2.3 : *"Action and investment plans for effective and responsible XR public policies"* will start in month 18 (M18). This task aims to develop joint investment plans in R&I, entrepreneurship, and commercialization in CH and XR, covering R&I strategies, SMEs, university spin-offs, startups, and commercial businesses. These plans will also include funding mechanisms and policy recommendations to support hub ecosystem growth and responsible XR technology deployment.

HERIFORGE acts with the principles of constant engagement of key stakeholders. Other key activities contributing to successful exploitation of HERIFORGE project's results are

Joint Pilot Research Projects (JPRPs) in WP3: Testing and validating innovative CH and XR approaches to generate exploitable outcomes.

Open Calls in WP4: Financial support to third parties to develop innovative CH/XR products and prototypes, creating new business opportunities and fostering exploitation of project-developed knowledge and technologies.

Knowledge and best practice exchange between hubs in WP4 to identify and leverage potential exploitation pathways.

4.8. Potential Barriers to Exploitation and Mitigation Strategies

Table 2 lists identified risks of the exploitation plan and strategies assumed to mitigate their potential negative impact.

Table 2: Risks of the exploitation plans and their mitigation strategies

Exploitation Risk	Most Relevant KER(s)	Risk Mitigation Strategy
Operational challenges in managing a large consortium/network of partners. (Likelihood: Medium; Impact Level: Medium)	KER3: HERIFORGE Hubs Network. The risk pertains to the network of partners, and mitigation relies on coordination within this network.	Strengthen collaboration and knowledge exchange among hub leaders; Ongoing monitoring and corrective actions if needed. HERIFORGE Hubs Network will be led by 3 active hub leaders with management capacity who will be responsible for adequate engagement of local partners in each hub.



Mismatch of strategy/investment plans with diverse needs and perspectives of key stakeholders. (Likelihood: Medium; Impact Level: Medium)	KER1: Strategic Impact Package. The risk and mitigation directly relate to the creation and alignment of this package of strategic documents and its uptake by hubs network and beyond	Implement proactive stakeholder engagement and communication strategies throughout the project, including regular meetings, workshops, and consultations to ensure their input and perspectives are considered. Foster a collaborative and inclusive approach. Flexible, iterative development of strategy and plans based on research outcomes and stakeholder feedback.
Hub Network not fully integrated into the European innovation ecosystem. (Likelihood: Low; Impact Level: Medium)	KER3: HERIFORGE Hubs Network. The risk and mitigation directly concern the network's ability to function and integrate within a broader context.	Early engagement activities with other initiatives (T5.2) and the Open Call mechanism (T4.4) aligned with JPRP (WP3) will ensure HERIFORGE Hubs Network links to relevant EU-level initiatives and stakeholders.
Low quality of projects funded under Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP). (Likelihood: Medium; Impact Level: Medium)	KER2: XR-driven prototypes and services. Open Call is the mechanism for generating these results, and the risk concerns their quality. Mitigation focuses on supporting to improve the quality of KER2 created by third parties.	Mentoring activities foreseen in T3.4 ensure continuous monitoring of third-party projects' progress to detect deviations early. The Selection Committee will assess deviations and propose corrective measures during Milestone Reviews.
Insufficient number or quality of applications submitted for Open Calls. (Likelihood: Medium; Impact Level: Medium)	KER2: XR-driven prototypes and services. Open Calls are a key mechanism for sourcing projects (KER2) from third parties.	In case of low interest e.g. extension of the Open Calls deadline can be considered while analysing the impact of dissemination actions and proposed challenges to identify constraints. Only applications reaching the desired quality level will be selected. Monitoring the number of started and submitted applications is planned. In the context of IPR as a factor impacting number or quality of services produced, risk mitigation involves implementing appropriate and targeted approaches to IPR management.
Excellence Hub network building guidelines are not sufficiently taken up by a larger community (Likelihood: Medium; Impact Level: Medium)	KER4: Guidelines for building human-centric and trustworthy innovation ecosystems Strategies or investment plans may not sufficiently incorporate the diverse needs and perspectives of key stakeholders/ Since KER4 is a set of guidelines for innovation ecosystems, there is a risk that their content may not fully address the needs of all stakeholder groups involved in the ecosystem.	To address this, the project will implement proactive stakeholder engagement and communication strategies. This includes regular meetings, workshops, and consultations with all relevant stakeholders to ensure their input and opinions are considered in developing strategies and guidelines.



Shortcomings in data and technology interoperability thwarting services and product delivery (Likelihood: High; Impact Level: Medium)	KER5: Data Orchestration Platform. The main risk associated with KER5 is challenges related to data quality and integration which are due to low and diverse quality of CH datasets that can result in impediments for the integration of digital representations into Virtual Worlds products and services, lack of interoperability for exchange and reuse. Addressing interoperability issues and ensuring "fit-for-purpose" data is crucial.	The strategy for mitigating this risk is directly linked to the functionality of KER5. It involves building upon and implementing already proven digitalisation processes for high-quality data and data curation processes through applying data orchestration workflows that respect FAIR principles. It also includes the utilising FAIR data management standards and other needs and standards recognised by the community
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4.9. Intellectual Property (IP) Management within the Project

IP management in HERIFORGE will be governed by the **Consortium Agreement (CA)**. The CA will define rules on result ownership, access to background knowledge, and IP protection and exploitation procedures. As a general rule, IP rights will belong to the party that generated the result. For projects funded via open calls (FSTP), third parties will own the IP of their results, appropriate agreements will be established in cases of background information and substantial contributions by project partners. Further detail on IP strategy is provided in the DMP, section 4, p.13. The project will promote **Open Science** and **Open Access** to research results where appropriate and justified, while also protecting IP with commercial potential. Detailed IP management provisions will be included in the CA and third-party agreements.



PARTNERS



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