

Practice Abstract #12

Which social media channels are most effective for helping research and innovation projects to reach their target audiences?

Social media is an increasingly important tool for EU-funded research and innovation projects to communicate and interact with their target audiences. But which social media channels are most effective for project partners to use?

The simple answer is – it depends upon your needs!

‘Tips & tricks’ from 19 Horizon 2020 multi-actor projects (MAPs) analysed by the EUREKA project (www.h2020eureka.eu) are:

- focus on the one or two main channels used in your national context and post in your own language;
- make a social media strategy, include an editorial calendar and plan how often you should post. Sponsored posts and contents are good practice to get more successful results;
- the most effective social media channel used by the MAPs analysed is Facebook. It was commonly reported as very useful for reaching farmers. Facebook is widely used for non-professional communication, and posted information can also reach a wider public;
- Twitter is not generally popular among most farmers, but a lot of policy-makers are regular users;
- Instagram was seldom mentioned as a useful channel for MAPs, although it is widely used by the younger generation. But it has potential for projects. It is a self-standing repository of all the project-related images that you want to promote;
- YouTube is the perfect repository for audio-visual content of a project;
- LinkedIn is a networking site for professionals, it can be used for groups and has established networks on specific topics.

The best results in terms of engaging people on social media are those who choose to focus their effort on one or two main channels and on creating specific types of content. This is a more effective and realistic strategy than attempting to be active on all of the popular social media channels at once.

