Intelligent Assistants for Flexibility Management (Grant Agreement No 957670)

D9.3 Project website and social media accounts

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1 Executive summary

This document contains a presentation of the project website, the social media platforms and webinar platforms chosen for external communication in iFLEX. Who the platforms target and for what purpose are also touched upon.

Website

The project website was established at the start of the project at the URL www.iflex-project.eu. The site is the main communication and dissemination channel and will contain all aspects and results of the project, being an entry point for all identified stakeholders, covering demand actors, energy actors, technology actors, research & innovation actors and regulatory actors.

Since a central target group is demand actors, including the everyday energy consumer, most of the language used is non-technical and written to be understandable to the average visitor. Parts of the website, however, target a more specialised audience (energy, technology, research and regulatory) containing more technical terms.

Social media

iFLEX uses different social media channels to increase visibility, share knowledge faster, promote results and interact with the public. By using social media, iFLEX meets people where they are, thereby gaining important insight, and the project can take advantage of the networking and viral effect, making it possible to increase awareness.

Facebook and Twitter accounts have been established at the beginning of the project, targeting both the wider public (Facebook) and the professional community (Twitter). The iFLEX Facebook page can be found at: https://www.facebook.com/iFLEXproject/ and the iFLEX Twitter account can be found at: https://twitter.com/iflexproject.

The project plans to launch YouTube and Instagram accounts (targeting demand actors) together with a LinkedIn group (targeting the professional community) to enforce visibility and collaboration.

Webinars

Webinars are useful tools to engage target audiences across geographical borders and have proven its worth in the light of the COVID-19 crisis, making many people experts in online participation.

Three webinars will be organised in iFLEX, focusing primarily on energy, technology and research actors. The webinars can be joined live, allowing remote participants to take part in the debate and later be made available on-demand to expand the audience reach.

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose, context and scope

The purpose of this document is to give a short description of the online platforms launched by the project at project start, being key communication and dissemination channels for iFLEX. They include:

Project website: http://www.iflex-project.eu

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/iFLEXproject

Twitter: https://twitter.com/iflexproject

Additional platforms which are planned for launch at a later stage are also described. They include the social media platforms: Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube as well as webinar platforms.

Context

The deliverable is an output of the work package on impact creation, exploitation and dissemination (WP9) as part of task *T9.1 Dissemination and communication* with the main purpose of defining and agreeing on the project's communication strategy and plan.

The online media platforms presented in this deliverable are thus important elements of the communication and dissemination activities in iFLEX with the overall aim to create a high level of visibility and maximum impact. The strategy for creating impact through communication and dissemination of iFLEX and its results is set out in *D9.1 Initial detailed communication and dissemination plan* which establishes a common ground for sharing and promoting the project and its results in a strategic way to clearly defined target groups and through relevant channels.

Together with other central tools and activities, the online platforms will assure wide awareness of the iFLEX project and help facilitate exploitation following project completion.

Scope

This deliverable functions as a signoff for the project's website and social media channels in its classification as a DEC (Website) and it is submitted in electronic form on the above URL's.

A more detailed description and plan for the platforms are outlined and updated in the deliverables: *D9.1 Initial detailed communication and dissemination plan* (M4), *D9.4 Initial report on dissemination and public communication activities* (M18), *D9.2 Final detailed communication and dissemination plan* (M20) and *D9.5 Final report on dissemination and public communication activities*.

The media platforms are continually updated and new ones considered so this deliverable only describes the initial setup of the platforms, being subject to change as the project evolves and results appear.

This document only covers project platforms. How project partners plan to use their websites and social media channels to create impact are detailed in *D9.1 Initial detailed communication and dissemination plan*.

2.2 Content and structure

This deliverable contains a description of the project website, social media and webinar platforms used in iFLEX.

Chapter 3 is a brief summary of the target groups that are relevant for the website and media platforms.

The content of the website (both existing and planned content) will be described in Chapter 4 and the technical details in Chapter 5.

Chapter 6 describes the use of and integration with social media followed by a presentation of the webinar platforms created for the project in Chapter 7.

3 Target audiences

The Consortium has initially defined the overall target groups for communication and dissemination, covering a wide range of stakeholders. The target groups will be further analysed and specified in *D9.1 Initial detailed communication and dissemination plan*.

Table 1 Initially defined target groups

Demand actors	Energy actors	Technology actors	Research & Innovation actors	Regulatory actors
Private energy consumers/prosumers and communities	Energy supplier, energy solution and/or energy service company	ICT companies with energy sector focus	ICT and AI research communities	EU policy makers
Consumer organisations	Aggregator/ Demand Response operator	Technical solution provider	Linked research & innovation initiatives	National authorities
Building energy managers	Distribution and Transmission System Operator	Demand Response management solution provider	Economics and business researcher	Energy regulation communities
General public and press	Balancing companies	Home Energy and Building Management Service provider	Human-centred and user-centred design researcher	Standardisation bodies

The online communication channels used by iFLEX have different purposes and target different audiences and are chosen to ensure promotion and dissemination of iFLEX to all the target groups.

The online platforms covered by this document have the following target groups:

- Project website
    - Main entry for all target groups with special attention to the demand actors; consumer and general public, reflected by an approach to ‘making the complex simple’.
- Facebook
    - Demand actors; consumers and general public, using a more informal approach creating awareness of iFLEX and demand response with the possibility of engaging a broader European audience.
- Twitter and LinkedIn
    - Energy, Technology, Research & Innovation and Regulatory actors creating awareness of the project and share results to a wide professional community and utilising the networking and business opportunities.
- YouTube and Instagram
    - General public and other demand actors leveraging the attractiveness of visual and audio-visual content.
- Webinars
    - Primarily energy, technology and research actors, disseminating the results of iFLEX with the ability to reach a wider audience through on-demand functionality.

A detailed overview of all communication and dissemination channels, forms, target audiences and timing is available in *D9.1 Initial detailed communication and dissemination plan*.

4 Website

The project website was established at the start of the project at the URL www.iflex-project.eu. The site is the main online platform for communication and dissemination of iFLEX as it will contain all aspects and results of the project, thereby being an entry point for all identified stakeholders. Since the central target group is demand actors including the everyday energy consumer, most of the language used is non-technical and written to be understandable to the average visitor. Parts of the website, however, target a more specialised audience (energy, technology, research and regulatory), using more technical terms.

The website will evolve throughout the project, as will layout and content so the following description is based on the status at the launch with some of the content being created after the submission of this document.

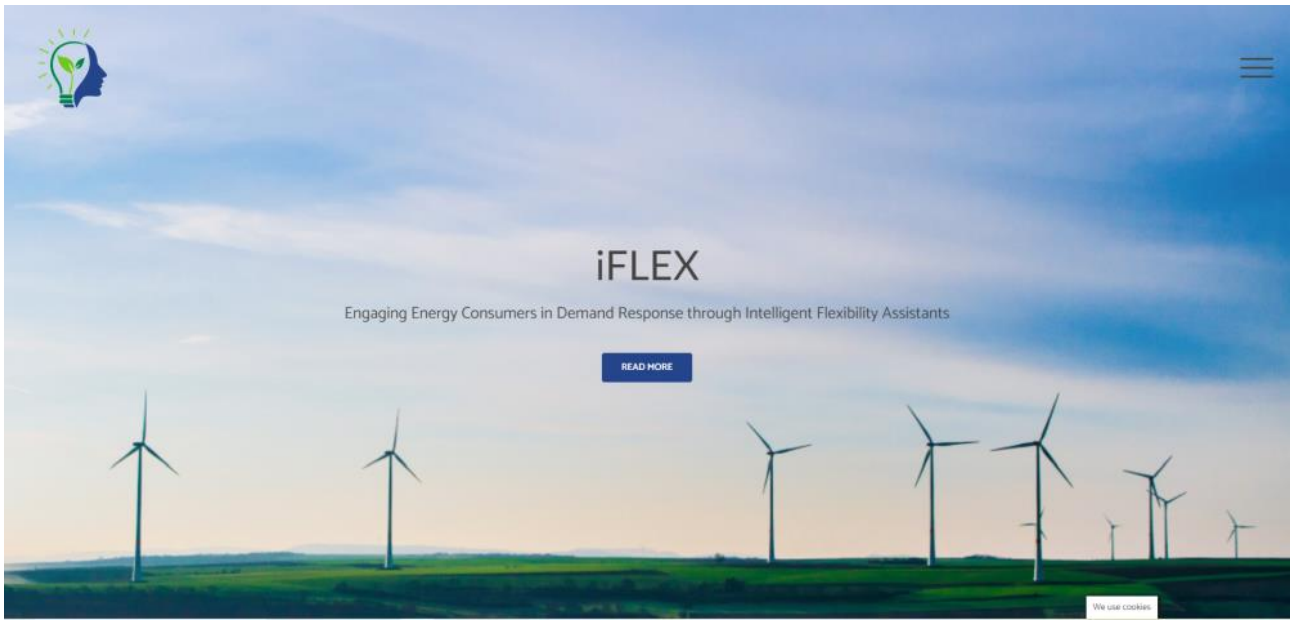
4.1 Website layout

The layout chosen gives the visitor an overview of the project on one page, with the aim of 'making the complex simple'. As a result, the header is keeping a clean aesthetics without too much text, with only a menu icon in the top right corner but still enabling an easy reach of more information through a sticky header. The pages use images to attract the visitor, with the front page highlighting the relationship between nature and humanity through technology.

To get more information, the visitor can choose to activate the menu icon or click on the images or buttons on the front page to read more.

The individual pages and posts are designed with a slightly different layout. For pilot pages, a slider with images will be placed on top to give an immediate sense of place. For other static pages, such as 'About' the layout is simpler to reflect a more neutral stance. For general posts, such as ‘News & Events’, the most recent posts are listed together with illustrations to attract the reader. If clicked on, the post image is reproduced in the individual post, introducing the post. This generates recognition for the reader, being ensured that the post clicked on correlates with the post shown.

Figure 1: The front page of the iFLEX website



4.2 Website content

The following is a description of the website menus and their purpose. Not all menus have been created and/or populated at the time of writing, existing menus and submenus are subject to change and additional menus are likely to be added.

Home

The menu goes to the home page of the website with an overall presentation of the project and links to sections: 'About iFLEX', 'Meet our pilots', Subscribe to our newsletter', 'News & Events', 'Publications', 'Media & Press'. As the project evolves and results appear, the top image might become a slider to present more key aspects of the project such as the iFLEX Assistant. When the website has more content, the project will activate a search icon for easier navigation.

It is possible that the news section will have a more prominent place on the front page, once results appear, thereby illustrating an active and engaging project.

About

This menu introduces the reader to information about the project vision, objective, approach, consortium and project structure. It might be divided into further menus. Cooperation with other projects and initiatives will also be included to highlight the cross-cutting issues, knowledge transfer and unified strategic approach.

Pilots

The three pilots are introduced, highlighting the main aims and plans and the main contact point from the project. A section on the handling of personal data in the pilots in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will be added in the respective languages. Management of ethical issues will also be included with mention of the Ethical Board. It is possible for the reader to go directly to the individual pilots which will also be possible from the front page.

News & Events

A list of all news items will be presented to the reader in an overview. It is also possible for the reader to access the most recent posts on the front page. News can take the form of articles, videos, events, invitations etc. All partners are encouraged to contribute with and share content and the 'good stories' so that they can be captured and brought to the project website for maximum reach.

The project will consider a separate section and calendar for events, covering both events organised and attended by the project as well as other webinars and co-joint activities with collaboration projects.

An invitation to subscribe to the project newsletter will be added.

Publications

This is the main entry point for scientific and non-scientific publications produced by project partners as well as public deliverables. Open Access will be indicated for conference and journal publications and all public deliverables will be published on the website and thus be available for download at time of submission.

Media & Press

In this section, relevant communication material can be accessed together with videos and webinars. The page will also feature presentations, press releases and published newsletters and an invitation to subscribe.

Contact

Contact info is added so the reader can see who is behind the website and who to contact on any matters related to the project and the website.

Footer

The footer includes all the central information about the project, including contact information, legal note (impressum), website privacy policy, cookies and integration to the project's social media channels. It will be expanded to also include 'Recent news'.

Cookie bar

A cookie bar for choice and consent of cookies is also present, enabling deselection of unnecessary cookies and providing a link to the website's Privacy Policy covering: Which information the project collects, how this data is stored and processed, personal rights and how to contact the project in case of questions.

5 Technical implementation of website

5.1 Wordpress

The website is built with WordPress version 5.5.3 with Avada website builder version 7.1.1.

WordPress is web software used to create websites, blogs, or apps. The core software is built by hundreds of community volunteers, and there are thousands of plugins and themes available to transform a site into a dedicated and targeted website for almost any user. Over 60 million people have chosen WordPress to power their place on the web.

WordPress is a free and open-source content management system based on PHP and MySQL. It is hosted on In-JeT's Azure Cloud server.

WordPress's plugin architecture allows users to extend the features and functionality of a website or blog. WordPress has over 40,500 plugins available, each of which offers custom functions and features enabling users to tailor their sites to their specific needs. The customisations range from search engine optimisation, to client portals used to display private information to logged-in users, to content management systems, to content displaying features, such as the addition of widgets and navigation bars.

5.2 Accessibility

The site works with three basic role-definitions for users: Guests, members and administrators of which only the first and the last roles are used in iFLEX.

The iFLEX website is accessible by the general public who as guests can sign up for project events and newsletters. They are invited to further engage using the contact options, the project social media sites or other tools made available for collaboration (open data repositories etc.).

The member function allows registered users e.g. members of the Consortium or Ethical Advisory Board, to access certain sections such as internal project documents, however, since this is covered well by other collaborative tools in iFLEX, this functionality is not used on the website.

The role as administrator of the site is carried out by the webmasters as the only ones with administrator rights.

5.3 Security

WordPress has had many security issues that have been uncovered in the software, particularly in 2007, 2008, and 2015.

Secunia maintains an up-to-date list of WordPress vulnerabilities and there are always several unpatched security advisories, but in recent years, the maximum rating has often been of "Less Critical".

Also, WordPress maintains a list of security issues and the large community around WordPress provides both advice and plugins that enhance the security of the site. The iFLEX website has thus been designed with a large number of the suggested security measures to overcome the most common vulnerabilities.

6 Social media

iFLEX uses different social media channels to increase visibility, share knowledge faster, disseminate results and interact with the public. According to a Eurostat[1] survey, 54% of people aged 16-74 participated in social networks in 2019 in the EU, with the younger generation being the predominant users (9 out of 10 in the age group 16-24). By using social media, iFLEX meets people where they are, thereby gaining important insight, and the project can take advantage of the networking and viral effect, making it possible to increase awareness.

Facebook and Twitter have been established at the beginning of the project, targeting both the wider public (Facebook) and the professional community (Twitter). At a later stage, when pilot activities start and results begin to appear, the project plans to launch YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts to enforce visibility and collaboration.

Social media will also be actively used by project partners to communicate about the project and to the pilot participants. These plans are detailed in *D9.1 Initial detailed communication and dissemination plan*.

6.1 Facebook

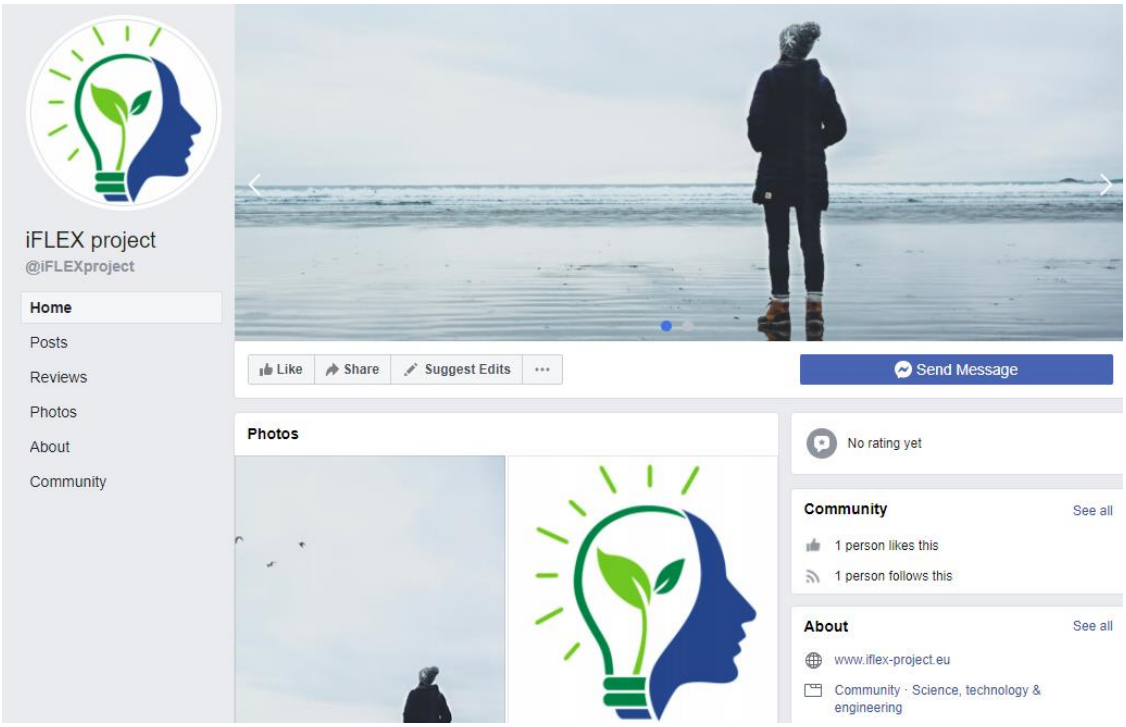
The iFLEX Facebook page can be found at: https://www.facebook.com/iFLEXproject

Facebook is the number one social network with 2,7 billion monthly active users (source: http://www.statista.com/). It connects people to share messages, photos and videos and enables common-interest groups which are ideal to target for evaluation of the iFLEX offerings.

Facebook is particularly suited to reach the general public in an informal way and the messages on Facebook are therefore targeted particularly to this group of stakeholders using a lay and more personal language.

The project's Facebook page targets the broader European crowd, collecting and linking stories about the project with the aim to create awareness of the importance of demand response in the renewable energy transition, how it benefits the consumer and society and what iFLEX does to make consumer participation as easy as possible. It is also an ideal platform for involvement of the general public, getting insight into their perception of such services.

Figure 2: The iFLEX Facebook page



[1] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20200630-2

6.2 Twitter

The iFLEX Twitter account can be found at: https://twitter.com/iflexproject

Twitter is a micro-blogging tool for the exchange of short messages and announcements (tweets). It has 330 million users (source: http://www.statista.com/). The aim is to enable people to create and share ideas and information instantly. Twitter favours short messages with a limit up to 280 characters which can easily be retweeted.

Twitter is most suited to reach the professional community and iFLEX is using Twitter to connect to linked projects, networks, initiatives and stakeholders, including cities and communities with an interest in demand response, user research and design as well as energy providers, energy market actors and technology providers.

One of Twitters' advantages is the short, to the point tweets, which can be used to direct the audience's attention to more substantial and detailed information, e.g. the project website, pilot insight and specific results.

iFLEX will also use Twitter to promote the webinars, applying a hashtag which others can use in their tweets. All tweets during the webinar will feature in the integrated Twitter feed on the webinar player site.

Figure 3: The iFLEX Twitter account

6.3 Other platforms

Accounts on the following social media platforms are planned as the project evolves. iFLEX will utilise additional social media tools if considered relevant for reaching the target groups.

6.3.1 YouTube

YouTube is a video-sharing platform with user-generated and corporate media content, offering also live streaming tools where people can interact and comment directly.

An iFLEX channel will be created once videos become available. What type of videos iFLEX will create is defined in *D9.1 Initial detailed communication and dissemination plan*.

YouTube is owned by Google and has 1,6 billion world-wide users (source: http://www.statista.com/).

6.3.2 Instagram

To connect a wider public to the pilot sites and the daily iFLEX work, Instagram is considered for sharing pictures and input from deployment and meetings since this content can also feed directly into the Facebook page(s).

Instagram is a social photo sharing network channel, sharing photos by using different filters, creating an artistic look. 1-minute videos can also be shared as well as live videos.

Instagram is owned by Facebook and has over 1 billion monthly active users (source: http://www.statista.com/).

6.3.3 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional networking platform which like Twitter is oriented towards a professional business community but with more focus on the networking aspect.

iFLEX plans to use LinkedIn to connect to linked projects and relevant established groups to share content and results with the possibility of fostering new business opportunities. A such, the platform is a relevant tool for the dissemination and exploitation of project results, building relationships beyond project completion.

LinkedIn is owned by the Microsoft and has 645 million users (source: http://www.statista.com/).

7 Webinar platforms

Webinars are useful tools to engage target audiences across geographical borders and have proven its worth in the light of the COVID-19 crisis, making many people experts in online participation.

Three webinars will be organised in iFLEX, focusing primarily on energy, technology and research actors. One webinar will focus on demand control from an energy provider's point of view with participation of a broad selection of actors; one webinar will focus on user engagement, and one webinar will focus on technology with participation of ICT professionals.

The webinars can be joined live, allowing remote participants to take part in the debate and later be made available on-demand.

Two platforms are available for the iFLEX webinars, depending on the chosen approach; a webcasting platform suitable for a conference-like, one-to-many approach and a webinar platform for a more dialogue-based collaboration.

7.1 Webcasting platform

The webcasting platform is provided by In-JeT and can be found at https://in-jet.public-i.tv. The platform uses the citizen engagement platform, Connect, developed by Public-i Group in Brighton, U.K. In-JeT is representative of Public-i in Denmark and provides the services to municipalities across the country.

The core of the Public-i webcasting system is a cloud-based Content Management System that wraps functionality around streaming media technologies which match closely to the needs of the market for citizen engagement tools. By wrapping contextual information - both textual and graphical - around the encoded live or on-demand video stream, Public-i offers a rich user experience and one which is deeply rooted in the context of the citizens. The platform has also been used by large organisations, like the UK health system NHS and the London Olympic Committee, to engage their users and citizens at large in democratic debates about the services they offer.

The events can be webcast live and followingly, be made available on-demand. Online participation is possible via a chat function.

The core functionality of the webcasting system is provided by a browser-based player where the webcasting is presented together with all contextual information.

The player is developed in responsive HTML-5 design that allows it to be used on a variety of hardware platforms such as PC, tablet and phones.

The content can be shared directly on social media like Facebook and Twitter. Further, the platform allows remote participants to participate in the debate via chats and tweets.

The contextual information consists of:

- Agenda for the webinar
- Profiles of the speakers
- Live slides synchronised with the presentation
- Supporting documents (text, images, etc.)
- Links to external sources
- Interaction tools such as polls and surveys.

7.2 Webinar platform

If a more interactive dialogue is desired, and in the light of the COVID-19 situation, a simple platform will be used to host the webinars. The webinars will be using Citrix GoToWebinar provided by In-JeT. The GoToWebinar is one of the most used platforms for holding virtual meetings with a large audience. It offers a quick and easy virtual event management and post-event, data on attendees and performance can be analysed for stakeholder engagement and impact. Webinars can be recorded and subsequently offered for

on demand viewing e.g. on the Public-i webcasting platform. GoToWebinar is white-listed by the EC in terms of security and privacy.

7.3 Promotion

The webinars will be promoted both before, during and after the webinar. The overall promotion of the webinar will focus on the key benefits of attending the webinar, going beyond merely informing about the project.

Webinars will be advertised through the project website, Twitter, LinkedIn and through partner websites and through invitations to the relevant stakeholders.

They can also be shown in an embedded player on third-party websites e.g. partners, organisations and other relevant places. They are stored in a repository from where they will be available on-demand during the course of the project. A more detailed plan is available in *D9.1 Initial detailed communication and dissemination plan*.

8 List of figures and tables

8.1 Figures

8.2 Tables