

D4.1 – Communication and Dissemination Strategy and Plan

Work package	WP4
Task	Task 4.1, 4.2, 4.3
Due date	30/04/2024
Submission date	30/04/2024
Deliverable lead	MARTEL
Version	1.0
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Abstract	This document outlines OPENVERSE's strategic approach to communication and dissemination, aiming to enhance visibility, engage stakeholders, and maximise the project's impact.
Keywords	Communication, Dissemination, Strategy, Plan, Socila Media, Website, Stakeholders, Engagement, Synergies,

Document Revision History

Version	Date	Description of change	List of contributor(s)
V0.1	14/03/2024	Table of contents	Valentin Popescu (MARTEL)
V0.2	15/04/2024	Contribution to communication and dissemination strategy	Valentin Popescu (MARTEL)

V0.3	20/04/2024	Contribution to stakeholder engagement	Michael Barngrover (XR4Europe)
V0.4	23/04/2023	Contribution to OPENVERSE Dialogues	Francesco Mureddu (LC)
V0.5	25/04/2024	Internal review	Mattia Trino (BDVA)
V1.0	29/04/2024	Final edit and formatting	Valentin Popescu (MARTEL)

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This work has received funding from the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI).

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Project funded by the European Commission in the Horizon Europe Programme		
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Dissemination Level		
PU	Public, fully open, e.g. web (Deliverables flagged as public will be automatically published in CORDIS project's page)	✓
SEN	Sensitive, limited under the conditions of the Grant Agreement	
Classified R-UE/ EU-R	EU RESTRICTED under the Commission Decision No2015/ 444	
Classified C-UE/ EU-C	EU CONFIDENTIAL under the Commission Decision No2015/ 444	
Classified S-UE/ EU-S	EU SECRET under the Commission Decision No2015/ 444	

* R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)

DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs

DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.

DATA: Data sets, microdata, etc.

DMP: Data management plan

ETHICS: Deliverables related to ethics issues.

SECURITY: Deliverables related to security issues



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OTHER: Software, technical diagram, algorithms, models, etc.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The "Communication and Dissemination Strategy and Plan" (Deliverable D4.1) outlines the strategy for the execution of communication and dissemination activities intended to maximise visibility, engage diverse stakeholders, and ensure the sustained impact of the project outcomes.

The plan is structured around several core components:

1. **Communication and dissemination strategy:** Articulates a multi-faceted approach involving content production, stakeholder engagement, and multi-channel dissemination to effectively communicate the project's vision and achievements. This strategy is pivotal in making complex technological concepts accessible and relatable to a broad audience, fostering a community of active contributors.
2. **Alignment with project objectives and work packages:** Ensures that all communication efforts are tightly aligned with the project's goals and the activities outlined in various work packages—from co-creation of tools (WP1) to policy guidance (WP2), and from addressing governance gaps (WP3) to spearheading the project's communication efforts (WP4).
3. **Target audiences:** Identifies and categorizes the primary, secondary, and tertiary audiences, ranging from policymakers and industry partners to the general public and media. This segmentation facilitates tailored communication strategies that cater to the specific needs and interests of each group, enhancing engagement and impact.
4. **Tools and channels:** Presents the array of tools and channels including a dynamic website, social media platforms, press releases, newsletters, and promotional materials. This diversified approach ensures comprehensive coverage and accessibility, reaching stakeholders across different platforms and geographies.
5. **Events and community engagement:** Details the organization and participation in key events such as the OPENVERSE Summit and various workshops, which serve as platforms for direct interaction with stakeholders, dissemination of project findings, and furthering collaborative initiatives.
6. **Monitoring and evaluation:** Implements a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of communication activities through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

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ABBREVIATIONS

WP	Work Package
BDVA	Big Data Value Association
XR	Extended Reality
EU	European Union
NGI	Next Generation Internet
OETF	OPENVERSE Ecosystem Task Force
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT AND RATIONALE FOR THE OPENVERSE PROJECT

The OPENVERSE project is an initiative under the Horizon Europe framework, designed to pioneer a comprehensive, open, and human-centric virtual worlds. This endeavor is pivotal in shaping a future where digital transformation within the European Union is underpinned by principles of openness, inclusivity, ethical and environmental responsibility. At its core, OPENVERSE seeks to promote the technological sovereignty for the EU, ensuring that it stands at the forefront of the global digital arena.

OPENVERSE emerges in response to the need for European virtual worlds that mirrors the region's values and aspirations. Unlike proprietary virtual worlds, OPENVERSE envisions a digital space that is democratic, where users maintain control over their data and digital identities, and where the barriers to entry are significantly lowered. This vision aligns with the European Union's broader strategies for digital transformation, which emphasise ethical standards, digital rights, and fostering an environment conducive to innovation and creativity.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION STRATEGY AND PLAN

The Communication and Dissemination Strategy and Plan for OPENVERSE is devised to serve as a foundational pillar in achieving the project's ambitious objectives. This plan outlines a comprehensive approach to engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders — from policymakers, researchers, and industry leaders to the general public — ensuring they are informed, involved, and inspired by the project's developments and outcomes.

The primary objectives of this strategy are:

- **Maximising visibility:** Elevating the profile of OPENVERSE across Europe and beyond, ensuring that its vision, progress, and successes are widely recognised and appreciated.
- **Engaging stakeholders:** Cultivating a vibrant community of stakeholders who are not only aware of OPENVERSE but are actively contributing to its evolution and adoption in the realm of virtual worlds. This includes facilitating dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge exchange among diverse groups.
- **Facilitating utilisation of outcomes:** Ensuring that the insights, tools, standards, and innovations developed through OPENVERSE are accessible, understood, and utilized by relevant sectors to drive the European digital agenda forward.
- **Sustaining impact beyond project completion:** Laying the groundwork for the ongoing impact of OPENVERSE, by fostering a robust ecosystem that will continue to evolve and expand, driving the EU's leadership in the global digital landscape through the lens of virtual worlds.

Through targeted, strategic communication and dissemination activities, this plan aims to not only broadcast the achievements of OPENVERSE but also to galvanise action, foster collaboration among stakeholders, and drive forward the agenda for truly inclusive and innovative European virtual worlds.

2 COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC APPROACH TO COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

The strategic approach to communication and dissemination within the OPENVERSE project is crafted to amplify its impact, drive engagement, and ensure the widespread utilisation of its outcomes. This approach is built on three fundamental pillars: storytelling, stakeholder engagement, and multi-channel dissemination. Each pillar plays a crucial role in creating a resonant narrative, fostering meaningful interactions, and ensuring that the project's innovations reach a diverse and broad audience.

1. Storytelling: crafting the narrative

At the heart of OPENVERSE's communication strategy lies the approach to convey the project's ambitions and achievements in a way that is compelling and relatable. By framing our advancements within the narrative of pioneering a more open, inclusive, and innovative virtual world, we aim to:

- **Humanise technology:** Although OPENVERSE don't develop technology, the project will present complex technologies and their implications through stories that highlight their impact on people's lives, communities, and industries.
- **Emphasise impact:** Focusing on the transformative potential of OPENVERSE's outcomes, from fostering technological sovereignty to enhancing accessibility and interoperability across the European Union.
- **Create relatability:** Tailoring stories to resonate with different stakeholders, ensuring that each narrative speaks to their interests, challenges, and aspirations.

2. Stakeholder engagement: building the community

Stakeholder engagement is central to the OPENVERSE project, ensuring that it is seen as a collaborative effort to shape the future of digital interaction in Europe. This pillar focuses on:

- **Identifying and mapping stakeholders:** From industry partners, policymakers, and academic institutions to end-users and the broader public, understanding the landscape of potential contributors and beneficiaries is crucial.
- **Tailored communication:** Developing and implementing communication strategies that address the specific needs, interests, and communication preferences of different stakeholder groups.
- **Active participation:** Encouraging and facilitating the active participation of stakeholders in dialogues, workshops, and co-creation activities, turning them from passive recipients into active contributors.
- **Multi-channel dissemination:** To maximise the reach and impact of its communication efforts, OPENVERSE employs a multi-channel dissemination strategy. This approach leverages a diverse set of platforms and mediums to ensure that messages are not only widespread but

also accessible to all stakeholders, regardless of their preferred source of information. Key components include:

- **Digital platforms:** Utilising the project's website as a central hub of information, supported by social media channels (Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube) to engage with different audiences in a dynamic and interactive manner.
- **Traditional media:** Engaging with traditional media outlets, including press releases and features in relevant industry, science, and mainstream publications, to ensure broader coverage and reach beyond the digital sphere.
- **Events and presentations:** Participating in and organising a range of events, from academic conferences and policy roundtables, provides opportunities for direct engagement and dissemination.
- **Visual and interactive content:** Developing a range of visual and interactive content, including infographics, videos, and webinars, to make complex information more accessible and engaging to a non-specialist audience.

Through these pillars, the OPENVERSE project's strategic approach to communication and dissemination aims to not only inform but also inspire action and collaboration across Europe and beyond, driving forward the vision of an open, inclusive, and innovative virtual worlds

2.2 ALIGNMENT WITH OPENVERSE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PACKAGES

The communication and dissemination strategy of the OPENVERSE project is intricately designed to align with and support the project's overarching objectives and work packages. This alignment ensures that communication activities not only effectively disseminate the project's results but also foster stakeholder engagement, promote utilisation of outputs, and support the achievement of strategic goals across all phases of the project.

- **WP1 - Co-creation of open-source tools for virtual Worlds:** Communication activities highlight co-creation efforts and achievements, showcasing collaborative innovation and the development of open-source tools. This not only increases visibility but also invites broader participation and feedback from the community. **Communication activities:** These include promoting workshops that bring developers and users together to co-create tools. We will use blogs, social media, and webinars to showcase progress and case studies, inviting community feedback and participation.
- **WP2 - Strategic guidance for an open and human-centric virtual world:** Findings and recommendations from this WP are disseminated through tailored communication efforts to inform and influence stakeholders, including policymakers and industry leaders, driving forward the strategic agenda for an open virtual world. **Communication activities:** This involves preparing whitepapers and policy briefs that are shared with policymakers and industry leaders through targeted newsletters and direct engagements.
- **WP3 - Barriers and policy gaps for governance and business models:** Communication channels are used to share insights into challenges and recommendations for governance and business models, stimulating dialogue and contributing to the development of supportive frameworks and policies. **Communication activities:** WP4 will support the organisation of the

panel discussions at industry conferences and publish findings in industry journals. Insights will also be shared through website articles and social media.

- **WP4 - Communication and dissemination:** This WP is at the heart of the strategy, orchestrating all communication activities. It ensures that the messages are aligned with the project's objectives and that the results from all WPs are effectively disseminated.
- **WP5 - Collaboration and synergies:** Communication efforts facilitate the establishment of synergies with related initiatives and projects, expanding the project's network and fostering collaborative opportunities. **Communication activities:** Specific tasks include the creation of outreach materials for recruiting members to the OPENVERSE Ecosystem Task Force (OETF).
- **WP6 - Impact creation:** The dissemination of project results and success stories through various communication channels supports the creation of lasting impact, encouraging the adoption and integration of OPENVERSE outcomes in relevant sectors. **Communication activities:** Feature stories on successful use cases, testimonial videos and user experience stories will be shared across digital platforms to highlight the tangible impacts of the project.
- **WP7 - Project coordination and management:** Communication activities support project management by ensuring transparent and consistent information flow among consortium partners and stakeholders, facilitating efficient coordination and alignment with project objectives. **Communication activities:** Regular newsletters and intra-project call will facilitate the exchange of information and coordination updates among partners.

By aligning communication activities with the objectives and work packages of OPENVERSE, the strategy ensures that all efforts are synergetic, amplifying the project's impact and contributing to the realization of a truly open, inclusive, and innovative virtual world landscape in Europe. Target Audiences

2.3 IDENTIFICATION OF THE TARGET AUDIENCES

OPENVERSE with its ambitious goal to pioneer an open, inclusive, and innovative virtual world framework, identifies a diverse array of target audiences. These stakeholders play a pivotal role in the development, dissemination, adoption, and governance of virtual worlds. By engaging these groups, OPENVERSE aims to foster a collaborative ecosystem that supports European technological sovereignty and societal well-being. The identification of these audiences is crucial for tailoring communication strategies to meet their specific interests and needs.

1. Primary Audiences

- **Policy makers:** This group includes European Union officials, national government representatives, and regulatory bodies responsible for digital policy, privacy, cybersecurity, and technological innovation. Engaging with policymakers is crucial for OPENVERSE to influence the regulatory landscape, ensuring it supports open innovation and the ethical development of virtual worlds.
- **Industry partners and technology developers:** Comprising technology companies, startups, and SMEs that are active in the digital and virtual worlds' sectors. This audience is critical for the co-creation of open-source tools, adoption of project outputs, and driving forward the commercial and competitive edge of Europe in the global digital market.

- **Research communities and academic institutions:** Researchers and academics from the field of digital technologies, virtual worlds, cybersecurity, ethics, and related fields are key collaborators. Their involvement is essential for advancing the scientific foundation of OPENVERSE, contributing to technological advancements, and ensuring the project is grounded in rigorous research and innovative practices.

2. Secondary Audiences

- **Civil society organizations and NGOs:** Entities focused on digital rights, privacy, inclusivity, and societal impacts of technology. Their engagement is vital for addressing societal and ethical dimensions of virtual worlds, advocating for user rights, and ensuring the inclusivity and accessibility of OPENVERSE initiatives.
- **General public and end-users:** Including potential users of virtual worlds, such as consumers, educators, students, and professionals across various sectors. Engaging this broad audience is important for raising awareness, fostering societal acceptance, and encouraging active participation in the co-created virtual worlds.
- **European and international organisations/initiatives/project:** Collaborating with European and international initiatives and projects that share similar goals can enhance the global impact of OPENVERSE.

3. Tertiary Audiences

- **Media and influencers:** Journalists, bloggers, and industry influencers play a key role in disseminating information about OPENVERSE to a wider audience, increasing visibility, and driving public discourse around the project's aims and achievements.

By identifying and engaging with these varied target audiences, OPENVERSE ensures a comprehensive approach to the development and dissemination of its virtual worlds framework, fostering a collaborative, inclusive, and innovative digital ecosystem that aligns with European values and ambitions.

2.3.1 Key messages and value proposition

The OPENVERSE project encapsulates a transformative vision for the future of digital interaction within a European framework, characterised by openness, inclusivity, and innovation. The key messages and value proposition of the project are designed to resonate with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, emphasizing the project's pivotal role in advancing technological sovereignty, fostering innovation, and delivering substantial societal benefits. These messages are tailored to address the specific interests and aspirations of different target groups, including policymakers, industry leaders, academic and research institutions, and the wider public.

1. For policymakers:

- **Enhancing technological sovereignty:** OPENVERSE is a cornerstone in Europe's strategy to ensure technological sovereignty in the digital domain, establishing a framework that supports European values of transparency, inclusivity, and ethical responsibility.
- **Setting standards for virtual worlds:** Through the development and promotion of open standards and governance models, OPENVERSE is positioning Europe as a global leader in the ethical and responsible development of virtual worlds.

- **Empowering regulatory frameworks:** Insights into the ethical, legal, and socio-economic dimensions of virtual worlds provided by OPENVERSE will inform and guide the creation of forward-thinking policies and regulations.

2. For industry:

- **Driving innovation and competitiveness:** OPENVERSE facilitates the co-creation of open-source tools and technologies, reducing barriers to entry and fostering a competitive and innovative European tech landscape.
- **Opening market opportunities:** By championing interoperability and the open-source paradigm, OPENVERSE enables new market opportunities, collaborative business models, and a more equitable digital economy.
- **Building a collaborative ecosystem:** Engagement in OPENVERSE offers industry stakeholders a platform for collaboration with peers, researchers, and policymakers, amplifying their influence on the future direction of virtual worlds.

3. For academic and research institutions:

- **Advancing research and development:** OPENVERSE offers access to a collaborative platform and the latest research and policies related to virtual worlds.
- **Contributing to societal well-being:** OPENVERSE contributes to understanding and addressing societal challenges through virtual worlds.

4. For the wider public:

- **Empowering participation in the digital future:** OPENVERSE is committed to support the creation of an inclusive digital space where everyone has the opportunity to participate, learn, and benefit from the advancements in virtual worlds.
- **Safeguarding privacy and data ownership:** The project prioritises the privacy and security of individuals, advocating for models that ensure users retain control over their data and digital identities.

Value Proposition: OPENVERSE embodies an approach to the development of virtual worlds, with a strong emphasis on openness, inclusivity, and innovation. Its value lies in bridging technological advancements with societal needs, creating a digital ecosystem that is equitable, sustainable, and reflective of European values. Through collaboration across sectors, OPENVERSE is shaping a future where digital interaction is not only technologically advanced but also socially responsible and widely accessible, ensuring that Europe remains at the forefront of the digital age.

3 COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND TOOLS

3.1 OPENVERSE VISUAL IDENTITY

The OPENVERSE project has developed a distinctive visual identity to ensure brand consistency across all communications, encapsulating the project's ethos of openness, innovation, and inclusivity. This identity is defined through a cohesive set of visual elements, including logo designs, color schemes, typography, and application guidelines, all detailed in the OPENVERSE Brand Guidelines (Version 1.0, January 2024 can be found in Appendix 1).

- Logo design:** The OPENVERSE logo is central to its visual identity, embodying the project's vision and values. The main version of the logo, designed for broad application, is complemented by an icon version tailored for use on social media and digital platforms. The logo's minimum size (35 mm in width) ensures visibility and recognition across various mediums.



Figure 1: OPENVERSE logo

- Logo variations:** To accommodate different backgrounds and print requirements, the logo is provided in negative and black & white versions. These variations ensure readability and visual integrity in diverse applications.
- Usage guidelines:** The Brand Guidelines provide clear dos and don'ts for logo application, emphasizing the importance of contrast for readability and impact. The logo should always be placed on backgrounds that ensure high contrast and visibility, avoiding environments where contrast is compromised.
- Corporate colors:** A palette of four primary colors, derived from the logo's color scheme, forms the foundation of OPENVERSE's visual identity. This palette is complemented by two grayscale colors, allowing for versatility in design while maintaining brand coherence. These colors are predefined in templates for slide presentations and deliverables, ensuring consistency in all project communications.
- Typography:** OPENVERSE employs a dual-font strategy to balance accessibility and aesthetic appeal:
 - Fredoka** (Medium for headings and Bold for emphasis) and **Hind** (Regular and Bold for body copy) are used for the website and promotional materials, reflecting OPENVERSE's dynamic and innovative spirit.

- **Calibri** (Regular and Bold), as a system font, is designated for deliverables and presentations to ensure compatibility and prevent font issues.
- **Funding acknowledgements:** To comply with funding requirements, OPENVERSE materials must include acknowledgments to the European Union and the Swiss State Secretariat for Education Research and Innovation (SERI). The guidelines detail the presentation and arrangement of these acknowledgments across different materials, ensuring recognition of support while maintaining visual consistency.
- **Access to assets:** All graphic assets, including logos, color palettes, fonts, and templates, are available in the OPENVERSE project repository. This centralized access ensures that project partners and stakeholders can easily adhere to brand guidelines, promoting a unified and professional appearance in all communications.

3.2 SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

The OPENVERSE project's social media strategy is designed to engage, inform, and interact with diverse audiences across multiple platforms. With a focus on X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, and an upcoming YouTube channel, this strategy aims to leverage each platform's unique strengths and audience demographics to maximise outreach and impact.

X (Formerly Twitter):

: [@OpenVerse EU](https://twitter.com/OpenVerse_EU)

The objective of using this channel is to foster real-time engagement and promote the visibility of OPENVERSE's developments, achievements, and events. **Content Types:** Brief updates, news, infographics, short video clips, and links to blog posts or articles. Use of hashtags to increase discoverability and participation in relevant conversations.

At the time of writing this deliverable, the X account of OPENVERSE had 63 followers.



Figure 2: OPENVERSE X account

LinkedIn:

: [@open-verse](https://www.linkedin.com/company/open-verse)

The objective of using this channel is to establish OPENVERSE as a thought leader in the virtual worlds space and to foster professional networking and collaboration opportunities. **Content Types:** In-depth articles, project updates, professional achievements, partnership announcements, and detailed insights into research findings.

At the time of writing this deliverable, the LinkedIn account of OPENVERSE had 63 followers.

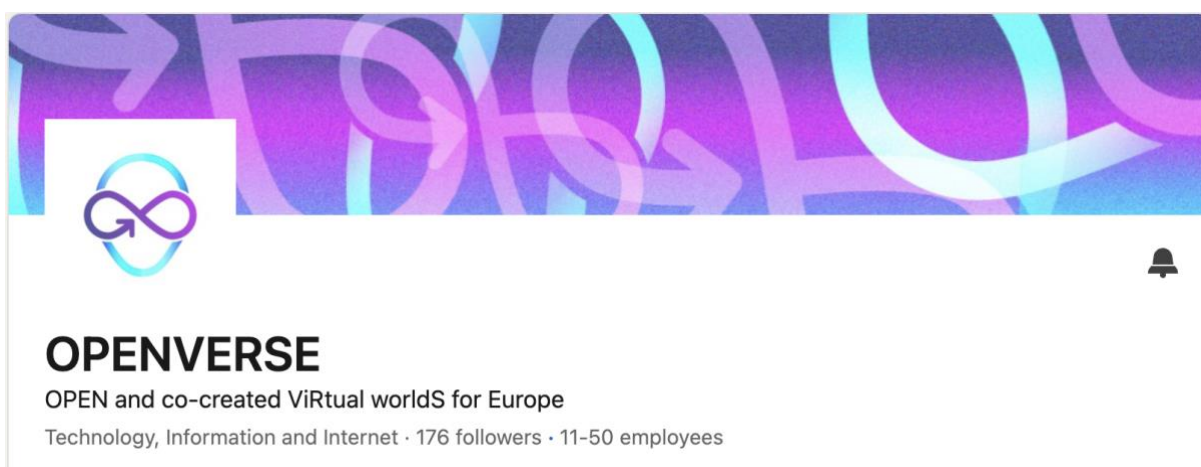


Figure 3: OPENVERSE LinkedIn account

YouTube

The objective of using this channel will be to provide an informative platform showcasing the impact and applications of OPENVERSE's work through visual storytelling. **Content Types:** Tutorials, interviews with project members and stakeholders, and recorded webinars or workshops.

WP4 leader will maintain a consistent tone and visual identity across platforms, tailored to each platform's audience and content format. It will Leverage content across platforms, adapting the format and messaging for each audience. For example, a detailed LinkedIn article can be summarized in a Twitter thread and supplemented by a YouTube video.

Mastodon

As OPENVERSE seeks to pioneer an open, inclusive, and innovative approach to virtual worlds, establishing a presence on emerging social media platforms like Mastodon aligns well with its mission and strategic communication objectives. Expanding to Mastodon allows OPENVERSE to diversify its social media strategy, reaching a broader and often more technologically savvy audience. This platform attracts users who are particularly interested in tech innovation, digital rights, and open-source projects, aligning closely with the stakeholder groups OPENVERSE aims to engage.

OPENVERSE will leverage the know-how of the NGI initiative and open an account on the server owned by NGI outreach office.

3.3 WEBSITE

The OPENVERSE project's website, accessible at <https://www.open-verse.eu>, is designed to be the central hub for all information and engagement related to the project. It is crafted to cater to the needs of all stakeholders, including policymakers, industry partners, research communities, and the general public, providing a comprehensive overview of the project, its objectives, achievements, and ongoing activities.

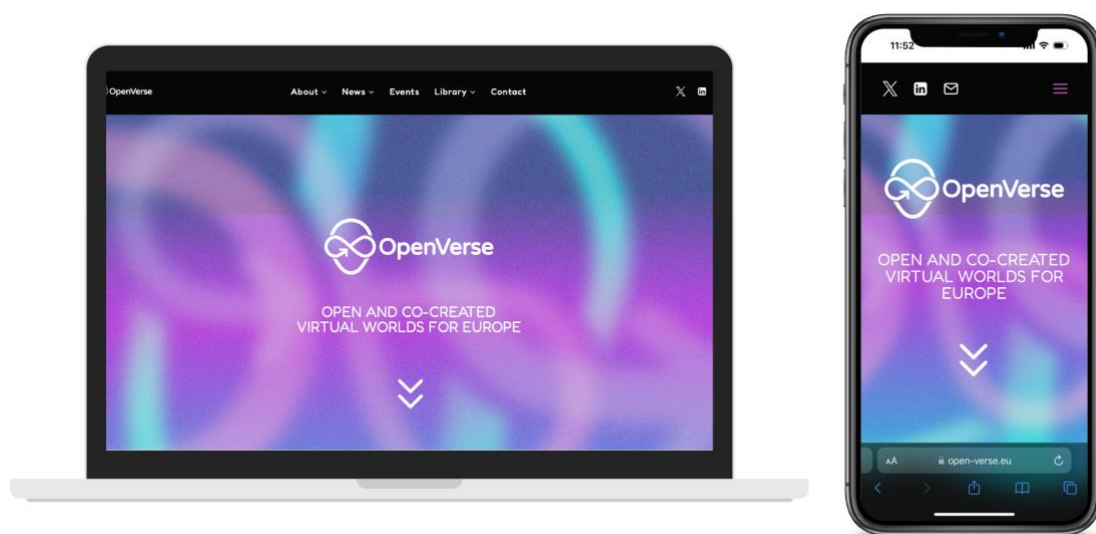


Figure 4: OPENVERSE website

Website Structure

The website is organized into several key sections, each serving a specific purpose in communicating the project's scope, impact, and opportunities for engagement:

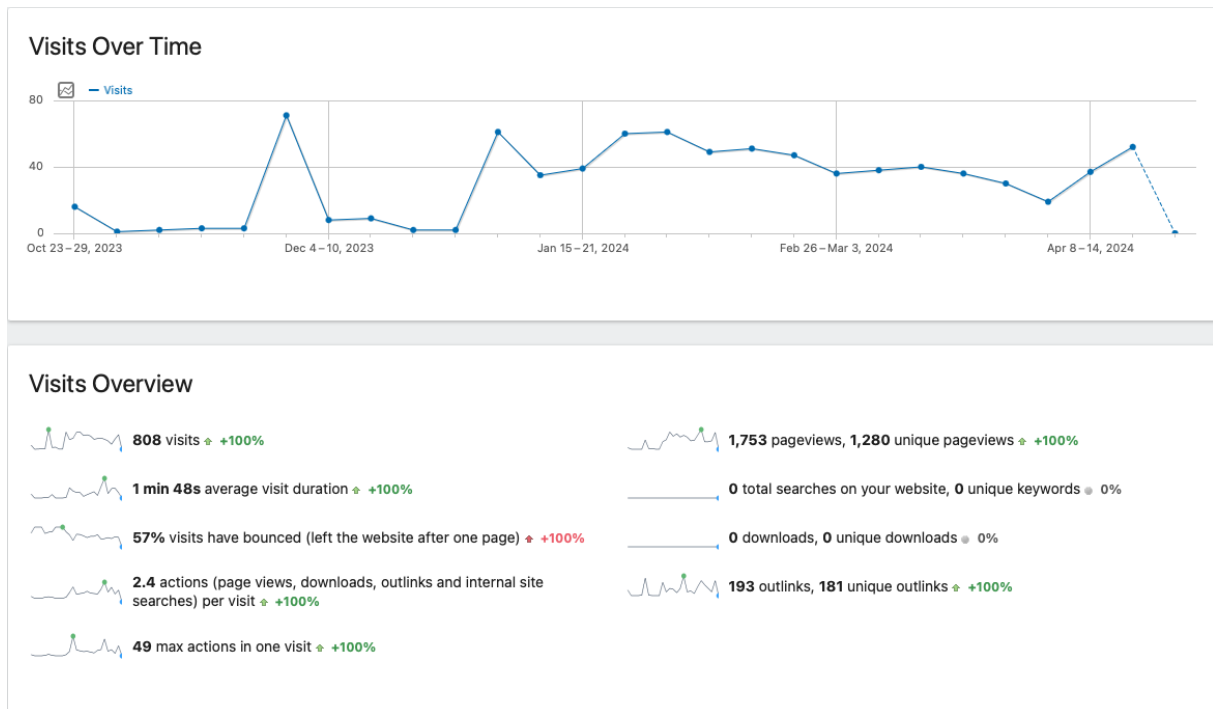
- **Homepage:** The landing page introduces the OPENVERSE project, highlighting its mission, key objectives, and the latest news or updates. It serves as a gateway to more detailed content within the website.
- **About:** This section provides an in-depth overview of the project, including its background, vision and strategy and consortium members, and the value it aims to bring to the European digital landscape.
- **News:** A section featuring the latest news, newsletters, press releases, blog plit serves as a central point for updates and engagement opportunities with the OPENVERSE community.
- **Events:** This section presents the events the consortium is organising, the events where partners are participating, or relevant events related to the objectives of OPENVERSE.
- **Library:** This section includes, the project deliverables, scientific publications, presentations, promo materials, and videos. The resources are downloadable, which supports transparency and facilitates knowledge sharing.
- **Contact:** A straightforward interface for visitors to reach out directly to the project team, facilitating communication and engagement.

In the next period, the website will be expanded to include information about the OPENVERSE Ecosystem Task Force (OETF) and will also have dedicated pages for the OPENVERSE observatory.

The website’s content strategy is centered around clarity, accessibility, and engagement, aiming to communicate complex information in an understandable and engaging manner. Key elements of the content strategy include:

- **Simplified language:** Ensuring that all website content, especially technical and research-focused information, is presented in language accessible to non-experts.
- **Regular updates:** Keeping the website content fresh with regular updates on project progress, news, upcoming events, and new resources or publications.
- **Engagement opportunities:** Highlighting ways for visitors to engage with the project, whether through events, social media, newsletters, or direct inquiries.
- **SEO Optimization:** Employing search engine optimization techniques to improve the visibility of the website and its content, making it easier for interested parties to find information on OPENVERSE and virtual worlds.
- **Responsive Design:** Ensuring the website is accessible and provides an optimal viewing experience across a range of devices, including desktops, tablets, and smartphones.

At the time of writing this deliverable, the analytics show that since it’s launch, the website had 808 visits, with 1,753 pageviews and 1,280 unique page views. The average visit duration is 1 min 48s. The most visited pages are the Homepage, About, Consortium and Vision and Strategy.



PAGE URL	PAGEVIEWS	UNIQUE PAGEVIEWS	BOUNCE RATE	AVG. TIME ON PAGE	EXIT RATE	AVG. PAGE LOAD TIME
/index	945	707	59%	00:00:42	82%	3.48s
about-openverse	134	89	47%	00:01:11	44%	2.58s
consortium	92	70	56%	00:01:16	61%	1.99s
vision-and-strategy	61	49	50%	00:01:21	29%	1.88s



Figure 5: OPENVERSE website analytics

Website and content strategy

The website reflects a consistent brand voice and tone across all content, ensuring that the messaging aligns with the brand's identity. Proper use of keywords and tags will improve SEO and content discoverability. Content is updated and maintained efficiently, keeping the website fresh and relevant. The website leverages various channels to distribute content to its target audience, including email marketing, social media, and other digital platforms. This ensures that content reaches the audience in a timely and efficient manner, enhancing engagement and visibility. WP4 has imagined an editorial calendar where partners will be able to engage with our audiences and provide their expertise.

Content Ideas: future articles to be published on the website

1. OPENVERSE: Pioneering the future of virtual worlds (series of 5 articles) :
 - Introduction to virtual worlds
 - Technical features of a virtual world
 - Policy vs VReality
 - Relationships between virtual worlds and other technologies
2. Meet the consortium: the people behind OPENVERSE
3. How OPENVERSE aligns with European digital sovereignty goals

4. The role of open source in shaping the virtual worlds
5. OPENVERSE Ecosystem Task Force (OETF): fostering synergies across projects
6. Ethical considerations in the development of virtual worlds
7. Navigating the challenges of interoperability in virtual worlds
8. OPENVERSE Observatory: cultivating innovation and collaboration in the virtual worlds

3.4 PRESS RELEASES

The strategic dissemination of press releases is a critical component of the OPENVERSE project's communication plan. Aimed at highlighting significant project milestones, achievements, and results, this approach ensures timely and widespread dissemination of information to a broad audience, including media outlets, industry stakeholders, academic communities, and the general public. The plan for issuing press releases is structured to maximize impact, engage stakeholders, and enhance the project's visibility and influence.

Press releases will be issued to mark significant project milestones, such as the project kickoff, organisation of events, workshops to highlight the tangible outcomes of the OPENVERSE initiative. Ahead of major industry events, conferences, or workshops where OPENVERSE has a significant presence, press releases will be distributed to generate interest, invite participation, and provide a preview of the project's contributions and activities at these events. Furthermore, announcements of major collaborations, partnerships, or endorsements from key stakeholders or industry leaders will be communicated through press releases to underline the project's growing influence and the collaborative effort driving its success.

Each press release will be crafted to ensure clarity and accessibility, making complex information understandable to a broad audience, including those not familiar with the technical aspects of virtual worlds. Aligning with the overall communication strategy, press releases will emphasise the project's contribution to technological sovereignty, innovation, and societal benefits, reinforcing the value proposition of OPENVERSE. Where appropriate, press releases will include a call to action, encouraging the audience to engage further with the project—whether by visiting the website, attending an event, or participating in a public consultation.

Leveraging the professional networks of consortium members, press releases will be disseminated through organizational channels and industry associations to reach a broader and more diverse audience.

Each press release will be promoted across the project's social media platforms to enhance visibility and encourage sharing within professional and personal networks.

The consortium issued the first press release in December 2023, to announce the launch of the project.



PRESS RELEASE - 18 December 2023

Europe steps into the OPENVERSE: a bold initiative for a human-centric metaverse

2023-12-18

The metaverse promises to revolutionise the way we engage with digital environments, whether for work, learning, or leisure and is expected to be the next big technology platform, worth 8 to 13 trillion € by 2030. In this global landscape, Europe needs to be at the forefront with the creation of virtual worlds that serve its users effectively but also strengthen its industry's technological leadership.

In this context, a consortium of leading European institutions announces the launch of OPENVERSE, a new Horizon Europe Coordination and Support Action (CSA) positioned to lead the creation of a human-centered European Metaverse, based on open collaboration and transparent standards.

Virtual worlds, known as metaverse, are persistent, 3D, real-time, immersive environments, blurring the line between real and virtual, for socialising, working, learning, making transactions, playing and creating. But these virtual worlds should be open, transparent, inclusive, ethically and environmentally responsible, but also capable of restoring the technological sovereignty of EU industry in the global scenario of competition.

The overarching aim of OPENVERSE is to contribute to laying the foundations of this European Metaverse by cultivating an expansive EU-wide ecosystem, featuring co-creation sessions that engage real end-users, enabling them to design, experiment and develop new technologies for the virtual worlds that meet their needs and preferences. This approach is expected to lead to a more equitable and inclusive digital realm.

OPENVERSE is also set to provide concrete knowledge backed by thorough technology assessments and foresight exercises. A comprehensive roadmap will chart Europe's course in the global metaverse scenario, presenting unparalleled opportunities for European industries to invest and innovate.

Key highlights of the OpenVerse CSA:

- Human-centric approach: Putting users at the heart of the digital experience, emphasising real end-user engagement and co-creation.

- Collaborative ecosystem: An expansive EU-wide network, fostering collaboration, innovation, and technological evolution.
- Roadmap for an open and co-created metaverse: Detailed assessments and foresight exercises to shape Europe's trajectory in the global metaverse landscape.

Francesco Mureddu, OPENVERSE project coordinator, stated: "In a world where technological advancements are rapidly reshaping our realities, Europe stands at the forefront, championing the emergence of virtual worlds that embody openness, transparency, and inclusivity. Our vision for a European metaverse is not just about technology, but about fostering greater accessibility, ensuring user-centric experiences, and paving the way for innovative collaborations."

The OPENVERSE partners represent a blend of research institutions, technological enterprises, and innovative organizations from across Europe. Each brings their distinct expertise to this collaborative venture, ensuring its success and influence in shaping the future of the Metaverse. Consortium partners are The Lisbon Council for Economic Competitiveness and Social Renewal (Belgium) – project coordinator, IDC (Italy), Martel Innovate (Switzerland), Trust-IT (Italy), COMMpla (Italy), Inspiring Futures (Switzerland), Politecnico di Milano – Department of Design (Italy), University of Galway (Ireland), Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium), XR4Europe (Belgium), International Data Spaces Association (Germany), Data AI and Robotics (BDVA) (Belgium).



Figure 6: OPENVERSE Press Release

3.5 NEWSLETTERS AND NEWSFLASHES

The OPENVERSE project will use newsletters and newsflashes as integral components of its communication strategy, designed to keep stakeholders informed, engaged, and connected with the project's progress, milestones, and opportunities for collaboration.

The project plans to issue at least eight newsflashes throughout its lifespan. The design of each newsflash will be aligned with the OPENVERSE brand identity. The newsflashes will be fully responsive to ensure its full readability on any device. The technology behind the newsflash will provide enough flexibility to be adapted to the communication needs of the project. All issued newsflashes will be uploaded on the project website.

A mailing list based on subscription has been created, giving the possibility to share the newsflashes via mass mailing. A registration functionality allowing interested visitors to subscribe is already available on the project website. Martel will ensure that the above mentioned actions comply with the requirements of the GDPR.

3.6 PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

OPENVERSE will produce a variety of dedicated promotional materials presenting the project and its achievements, e.g., slide-based presentations, multimedia content, videos, flyers/brochures, posters, roll-ups, and giveaways. All materials will be developed in alignment with the planning for presentations and events and adapted in relation to specific target groups and types of events.



Figure 7: OPENVERSE flyer

3.7 OTHER TOOLS

To support the achievement of OPENVERSE’s impact creation goals, the consortium put in place several tools including **Prowly** (media database), **Meltwater** (for media monitoring), **Hootsuite** (for social media management), **Tito** (GDPR compliant, EU-based event management platform), and **MailerLite** (GDPR compliant, EU-based newsletter tool), and a premium quality hosting infrastructure for the project website.

4 LIAISONS WITH OTHER INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS

The OPENVERSE project is committed to establishing meaningful liaisons with other initiatives and projects to create synergies, enhance its impact, and contribute to the cohesive development of the virtual worlds ecosystem. Recognizing the interconnected nature of technological innovation, OPENVERSE seeks to foster collaboration and alignment with national, European, and international efforts in related fields. This section outlines the strategic plans for collaboration and synergy with related initiatives, facilitating a comprehensive approach to advancing the virtual worlds landscape.

4.1 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR COLLABORATION

Identifying Synergies: OPENVERSE will systematically identify and evaluate other initiatives and projects with overlapping goals, technological domains, or stakeholder communities. This includes initiatives within the AR/VR spectrum, data spaces, blockchain technologies, AI, digital ethics, and interoperability standards. The aim is to pinpoint opportunities for collaboration that can mutually enhance technological development, standardization efforts, and ethical guidelines.

OPENVERSE Ecosystem Task Force (OETF): A central element of our liaison strategy is the establishment of the OETF. Even though the OETF is part of the WP5, WP4 will be involved, as this task force will serve as a platform for coordinating activities, aligning roadmaps, and harmonizing communication outcomes with Horizon Europe projects, and other significant initiatives within the virtual world's domain.

Engagement Activities

OPENVERSE plans to engage with related initiatives through a variety of activities:

- **Joint workshops and webinars:** Organizing events that bring together representatives from different initiatives to share knowledge, discuss challenges, and explore collaborative solutions.
- **Networking events:** Facilitating informal networking opportunities that allow for the exchange of ideas and the establishment of professional relationships among stakeholders from various initiatives.
- **Joint publications:** Collaborating on publications that highlight shared achievements, challenges, and visions for the future of virtual worlds, contributing to the body of knowledge in the field.

Goals of collaboration

- **Enhance impact:** By aligning with other initiatives, OPENVERSE aims to amplify its impact, reaching a broader audience and contributing to a unified approach to the development of virtual worlds.
- **Foster innovation:** Collaborative efforts with other initiatives are expected to spur innovation, enabling cross-pollination of ideas and the integration of diverse technological solutions.

To support establishment of OETF, WP4 created a custom logo based on the brand guidelines of the project and a dedicated page on the website. Before and after the launch of the OETF, the

communication and dissemination work package also created press releases and social media content to promote this milestone in the project and attract new members.



Figure 8: OPENVERSE Ecosystem Task Force logo

5 EVENTS

5.1 EVENTS ORGANISATION AND PARTICIPATION (T4.2)

OPENVERSE anticipates frequent and active participation in events, which will serve several critical purposes, all aiming to enhance the project's impact, visibility, and collaborative potential. Each event participation will serve as a strategic step in achieving the project's overall objectives:

- **Promotion and visibility:** Event attendance will allow the project to showcase its work, progress, and results, leading to an increased recognition and interest of its target audiences.
- **Networking and collaboration:** Events bring together diverse groups of individuals and organisations. For OPENVERSE, these will provide excellent networking opportunities, potentially leading to collaborations that can enrich the project and extend its impact.
- **Engagement and dialogue:** By participating in events, OPENVERSE will foster a dialogue with target stakeholders, beneficiaries, and the public. This interaction will deepen the understanding of the project's relevance and potential impact, encouraging broader stakeholder engagement and support.
- **Dissemination of findings:** Through presentations and discussions, OPENVERSE will be able to disseminate its findings to a broader audience, populating the knowledge base of the field and promoting sustainability of its outcomes.
- **Knowledge exchange:** events serve as a great platform for knowledge and insights exchange with experts, peers, and other project stakeholders. These exchanges can benefit the project, enriching its work and results. Feedback received during events can provide invaluable insights for improving the project. Whether it comes from peer discussions or formal reviews, feedback can lead to beneficial adaptations and enhancements during the project's subsequent stages.

The project consortium has already identified key events (Table 1) in 2024 and 2025, where OPENVERSE could consider participating to enhance its visibility, foster collaborations, and engage with the broader community in the fields of virtual reality, technology, and innovation:

Table 1: List of targeted events

Event	Location	Date	Description
Mobile World Congress (MWC)	Barcelona, Spain	Typically, in February	MWC is one of the world’s largest exhibitions for the mobile industry, featuring prominent executives representing global mobile operators, device manufacturers, technology providers, and content owners.
VR Days Europe	Amsterdam, Netherlands	Usually in November	This event focuses on virtual and augmented reality content creation, applications, and technology advancements, bringing together experts from across the globe to explore the latest in VR and AR.
Web Summit	Lisbon, Portugal	Usually in November	One of the largest tech conferences globally, Web Summit attracts a vast

			range of participants from various sectors, including AI, blockchain, and virtual reality.
CEBIT Europe	Hannover, Germany	Dates vary, typically in June	Renowned as a major international festival of innovation and digitization, CEBIT covers the digitisation of business, government, and society from every angle.
The Next Web (TNW) Conference	Amsterdam, Netherlands	Usually in June	TNW Conference is a leading tech festival that provides a platform for digital business to meet, inspire, and interact within the areas of technology, media, and innovation.
European Big Data Value Forum (EBDVF)	Rotates across major European cities	Typically in October or November	This forum deals with the challenges and opportunities of the European data economy, emphasizing data-driven innovation and AI.
Stereopsia – The World Immersion Forum	Brussels, Belgium	Usually in December	Focused on immersive technologies and content, Stereopsia features conferences, exhibitions, and networking opportunities centered around XR technologies.
Ars Electronica Festival	Linz, Austria	Typically, in September	This festival blends art, technology, and society, showcasing cutting-edge innovations in AR, VR, and more, making it a unique meeting spot for those at the intersection of arts and technology.
NGI Forum	Brussels, Belgium	Typically, in November	

With a strong focus on open source software and hardware, OPENVERSE will consider participation in external events of relevance, such as EU Open Source Policy Summit; FOSDEM; The State of the Open Conference; Open Source Community Annual Conference; PublicSpaces Conference; Linux Foundation Open Source Summit Europe; European Digital Summit.

At the time of writing (M6), the consortium members have already participated in several relevant events, namely at the Industrial Coalition meeting in Brussels at the Research to Reality event, in February 2024. Project Coordinator Francesco Mureddu (The Lisbon Council), presented OPENVERSE objectives and the challenges.



Figure 9: OPENVERSE participation in events

5.2 OPENVERSE SUMMIT

The OPENVERSE Summit will be a flagship event designed to convene the broad spectrum of stakeholders involved in or affected by the OPENVERSE project. This chapter outlines the objectives, planning, execution, and outcomes of the OPENVERSE Summit, highlighting its role in enhancing collaboration, showcasing innovations, and fostering a deeper understanding and engagement with the virtual world's ecosystem.

The primary goals of the OPENVERSE Summit are to:

- **Showcase project achievements:** Present the progress, results, and future directions of the OPENVERSE project to a diverse audience, including industry leaders, policymakers, researchers, and the general public.
- **Facilitate stakeholder engagement:** Create opportunities for stakeholders to engage directly with the project team, ask questions, provide feedback, and explore potential collaborations.
- **Foster community and partnership:** Strengthen existing partnerships and forge new ones by bringing together diverse participants under a common interest in the advancement of open and inclusive virtual worlds.
- **Promote knowledge exchange:** Serve as a platform for the exchange of ideas, best practices, and innovations not only among project members but also with external experts and practitioners in the field.

Detailed planning is crucial for the success of the OPENVERSE Summit. Key considerations include:

- **Venue and logistics:** Selecting a venue that can accommodate the expected number of participants and is accessible for international attendees.
- **Program development:** Crafting a comprehensive program that includes keynote speeches, panel discussions, interactive workshops, and demonstration sessions. The program should cater to both expert-level participants and those new to the field of virtual worlds.
- **Marketing and communication:** Developing a targeted marketing strategy to promote the summit and ensure wide participation. Utilizing various channels such as social media, newsletters, and partner networks to reach potential attendees.

The execution of the OPENVERSE Summit involves:

- **Stakeholder involvement:** Ensuring that all relevant stakeholders, including project partners and key community members, are actively involved and have roles in the summit, such as speaking opportunities, panel moderation, or workshop leadership.
- **Sustainability practices:** Implementing sustainable event practices to minimize environmental impact, such as digital conference materials, sustainable catering options, and encouraging public transport use.

Evaluating the outcomes and impact of the OPENVERSE Summit includes:

- **Feedback collection:** Gathering feedback through post-event surveys to assess participant satisfaction, relevance of content presented, and organizational aspects of the event.
- **Impact assessment:** Analysing the extent to which the summit met its objectives in terms of stakeholder engagement, knowledge dissemination, and community building.
- **Follow-up actions:** Planning post-summit activities based on the outcomes, such as detailed reports, continuation of discussions in online forums, or setting up working groups for specific initiatives discussed during the summit.

Documentation and dissemination:

- **Event reporting:** Creating a comprehensive report that summarises the discussions, outcomes, and attendee feedback, which can be shared with all participants and made available on the project website.
- **Content sharing:** Distributing recordings of keynotes and panels, along with presentation slides and other materials, to ensure that the insights generated at the summit are accessible to a broader audience.
- **Public relations:** Utilising the summit's success stories and highlights in public relations efforts to enhance the visibility and impact of the OPENVERSE project.

The OPENVERSE consortium is considering several strategic options for organizing the OPENVERSE Summit to maximise its impact and reach:

- The first option is to host the summit as a standalone event, which would allow for complete control over the agenda, activities, and branding, ensuring a focused delivery of the project's key messages and achievements.

- Alternatively, the consortium could co-locate the summit with other major events in Europe, such as the European Big Data Value Forum (EBDVF) or Stereopsia, which is known as the premier avant-garde XR event in Europe. Co-locating with these established events could significantly enhance networking opportunities, draw a larger and more diverse audience, and leverage the existing platforms’ resources and visibility, potentially leading to greater collaborative prospects and impact within the wider digital and virtual reality communities.

5.3 OPENVERSE DIALOGUES (LC)

The OPENVERSE Dialogues are a series of engaging discussions designed to facilitate open communication and collaborative exchange among stakeholders involved in the OPENVERSE project and the broader virtual worlds ecosystem. These dialogues serve as a platform for participants to explore diverse perspectives, share insights, and address challenges in the development and implementation of virtual worlds. Each session focuses on key topics relevant to the project’s objectives, such as technological innovations, ethical considerations, policy implications, and societal impacts. The OPENVERSE Dialogues aim to foster a deeper understanding and collective problem-solving approach, ensuring that the advancements in virtual worlds are inclusive, sustainable, and aligned with the needs of all stakeholders. This initiative not only enriches the project’s development but also strengthens the community’s capacity to drive forward the future of digital interaction in a thoughtful and impactful manner.

Table 2: A scheme of coordinated, structured dialogue on the co-creation of the future virtual worlds

Typology	Principles	Expected output	Related deliverables	Schedule for preparation
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills for exploiting to the highest extent virtual worlds Skills for defending themselves from fraud & misinformation 	Set of policy recommendations on skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D2.4 Roadmap for an Open and co-created metaverse (V1) D7.4 First policy brief 	M8
Interoperability and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchange of digital assets Rules and conventions for encoding and decoding information, establishing a common language between disparate systems 	Set of policy recommendations on interoperability and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D2.3 Report on technological foresight D2.4 Roadmap for an Open and co-created metaverse (V1) D7.4 First policy brief 	M12

Legal aspects of virtual worlds	Legal aspects: individual rights managements, economic transactions, and identity management	Set of policy recommendations on governance legal gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D2.5 Roadmap for an Open and co-created metaverse (V2) <p>D7.5 Second policy brief</p>	M18
Governance models	Possible governance models: state centric, private sector lead, multi-stakeholder	Set of policy recommendations on governance models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D2.5 Roadmap for an Open and co-created metaverse (V2) D3.2 Report on challenges and governance <p>D7.5 Second policy brief</p>	M24
Ethics and IPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Privacy and data security Accountability of avatars <p>Defense of IPR</p>	Set of policy recommendations on ethics and IPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D2.5 Roadmap for an Open and co-created metaverse (V2) D7.6 Third policy brief 	M30
Roadmap for virtual worlds in the next funding programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence for the importance of virtual worlds in the view of boosting its funding in the next programme 	Set of policy recommendations on how to boost funding for virtual worlds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D2.5 Roadmap for an Open and co-created metaverse (V2) D7.6 Third policy brief 	M36

First OPENVERSE dialogue: Skills for the Virtual Worlds: Preparing for the Next Digital Frontier

- **Possible venue:** policy session at the DATA WEEK 2024: <https://data-week.eu/>
- **Concept note:** The lack of digital skills was identified as a critical obstacle to innovation and competitiveness before the mandate of the incumbent European Commission¹. The last year of the incumbent European Commission was marked by an intense activity across the building blocks of the European Digital Decade. 2023 was the European Year of Skills and the beginning of 2024 saw the definitive approval of the Interoperable Europe Act and the Artificial Intelligence Act. These policies, together with others, complement each other in stepping up

¹ <https://www.digitaleurope.org/events/digital-skills-for-greater-competitiveness-and-innovation-in-regions-and-cities/>

Europe’s preparedness to be competitive and innovative in the development and uptake of new technologies across industries. These policies have also another common denominator: the need to establish solid safeguards to ensure responsible development of technology while allowing enough flexibility to enable experimentation and innovation.

In that regard, the first OPENVERSE dialogue shall focus on the importance of digital skills in the virtual worlds considering two facets:

- Importance of Digital Skills for Exploiting Virtual Worlds.** In the rapidly evolving landscape of virtual worlds, the possession of advanced digital skills is paramount for individuals and organizations aiming to maximize their potential within these spaces. Virtual worlds, as part of the broader metaverse, offer vast opportunities for innovation in areas such as education, business, and social interaction. However, to fully exploit these opportunities, users must be equipped with skills in virtual reality navigation, digital collaboration tools, content creation, and an understanding of the underlying technologies such as blockchain and artificial intelligence that power these environments. These skills enable users to create and manipulate digital assets, engage in complex interactions, and build immersive experiences that are both engaging and transformative. As virtual worlds become more integrated into everyday activities, the ability to navigate these digital spaces skillfully will become a critical asset, opening up new avenues for creativity, economic opportunity, and personal development.
- Importance of Digital Skills for Defense Against Fraud and Misinformation in Virtual Worlds.** Equally important is the development of digital skills aimed at safeguarding users from the risks inherent in virtual worlds, notably fraud and misinformation. As these digital landscapes become more sophisticated and populated, they also become ripe targets for malicious activities. Skills in digital literacy, such as the ability to identify credible sources, understand digital rights management, and implement secure online practices, are essential for users to protect themselves and their digital assets. Furthermore, knowledge of cybersecurity measures, including data encryption and secure user authentication, helps users defend against potential scams and hacking attempts. Educating users on the manifestations of misinformation within these platforms is crucial, as it empowers them to critically evaluate the content and interactions they encounter. By fostering a well-informed user base, equipped with robust digital defense skills, the integrity and safety of interactions within virtual worlds can be maintained, ensuring a trustworthy and secure environment for all users.

Table 3: Tentative programme of the first OPENVERSE Dialogue

No	Presentation	Presenter
1	Introduction to the OPENVERSE dialogues	Lisbon Council
2	Overview of OPENVERSE initiative Brief introduction to OPENVERSE and its objectives	BruBotics - Vrije Universiteit Brussel Lisbon Council
3	Keynote: challenges in digital skills and education (representative from DG EAC of the European Commission, working on the “Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027”)	TBD

	Panel with experts on digital skills and innovative education approaches (representatives from EUN, OECD, EP)	TBD
4	Interactive co-creation session – elaboration of policy recommendations on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills for exploiting virtual worlds; • Skills for a safe experience in virtual worlds. 	TBD
5	Wrap-up and conclusions	

5.4 WORKSHOPS AND WEBINARS TO ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

Within the broader communications strategy encompassing our project, WP4 will support the organisation of the workshops planned in other WPs. Our approach will be:

- Creating website and social media visuals.
- Enable registration through the website (if necessary).
- Promote workshops announcement through our social media channels.
- Content creation after the workshops (articles, blog posts).

Table: Workshops and webinars to engage stakeholders

Activity and Task	Number of workshops
Elaboration and implementation of co-creation methodologies (T1.3)	3
Identify the priority areas and the application areas (T2.3)	3
Technological foresight for an Open and Human Centric Metaverse (T2.4)	4
Roadmapping and Policy Recommendations (T2.5)	2
Ethical and legal workshop (T3.2)	1
IPR and governance workshops (T3.3)	2
Small scale experiments (T3.4, T3.5)	2
Community events and OPENVERSE dialogues (WP4)	6

6 ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Community building is a core activity of the project, given the need to engage stakeholders from an extremely broad spectrum of sectors due to the nature of virtual worlds themselves. Indeed, an entire work package (WP5, *Collaboration and Synergies*) has been dedicated to the engagement of stakeholder groups in all dimensions (technological, policy, ...) and levels (national, European, ...).

To avoid dispersion of efforts, however, a systematic stakeholder engagement methodology is needed, and the approach taken by OpenVerse is described in the following.

6.1 METHODOLOGY FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The engagement methodology of the project is being co-developed by the consortium, under the coordination of Task 4.3. In order to avoid unnecessary and redundant repetition of work, the consortium is committed to building upon existing best practices, based upon a thorough review of existing methodologies that have been elaborated in the context of relevant types of projects, including projects in which consortium members are involved.

A special case in this respect is the XR4HUMAN Coordination and Support Action, which is running in partial concurrence with OpenVerse, starting one year before OpenVerse (with duration 1 November 2022 through 31 October 2025). OpenVerse partner XR4Europe (and Task 4.3 leader) is a member of that consortium. XR4HUMAN is an extremely relevant sister project to OpenVerse, so that its stakeholder engagement methodology and plan (XR4HUMAN public deliverable D1.1) could be taken as a potential point of departure for elaborating the OpenVerse stakeholder engagement methodology. An analysis of the approach elaborated in XR4HUMAN resulted in the following conclusions:

- The **methodological framework** / approach is sufficiently general and pertinent to the context of OpenVerse to be a basis to build upon;
- The **implementation** of the methodology must be adjusted / extended due to the broader scope of OpenVerse.

In explanation of the second point, note that the main objective of the XR4HUMAN project is to “*co-create living guidance on ethical and related policy, regulatory, governance, and interoperability issues of XR technologies within a European community of practice*”. Thus, while the project is very much related to OpenVerse, it has a narrower focus on ethical issues – whereas OpenVerse is considerably broader in scope, effectively encompassing the entire context relative to Virtual Worlds.

6.1.1 Review of existing methodologies and initiatives

The analysis continued with an examination of the existing methodologies and initiatives reported by XR4HUMAN to determine their relevance and possible need for adjustment for the purposes of OpenVerse. The following methodologies were examined:

Six Steps Stakeholder Engagement Plan. This methodology proceeds through a series of key questions to develop the stakeholder groups (e.g., Who?, Why?, etc.). The key insight provided and taken over is that the engagement approach must be fitted to the stakeholder profile – otherwise the stakeholder sees no response to their specific needs.

The International Association for Public Participation Stakeholder Engagement Method. Its key contribution is the definition of five levels of engagement (which were taken over in the OpenVerse approach).

Good Faith Stakeholder Engagement Method. It is rooted in the principle of honesty and sincerity, emphasizing respect, integrity, and autonomy in interactions. It proposes a conscientious approach that fosters collaboration while acknowledging individual freedom. Good faith engagement aims to create a mutual understanding among stakeholders, enabling fair dispute resolution and inclusive participation. Emphasizing ethical dimensions, this approach ensures transparency, mutual respect, and trust, fostering long-term partnerships. Adhering to these principles can lead to both ethical and competitive advantages for corporations engaging with stakeholders.

UNEP's Stakeholder Engagement plan. It was established in 2005 and serves as a foundational model for many existing plans and strategies. It provides a structured five-step process designed to facilitate thorough planning, execution, and evaluation of engagement activities. This process, based on the Rules of Procedure of the United Nations Environment Assembly, operates on both strategic and operational levels, accommodating various types and levels of engagement.

Communities of Interest (Col). Its key concepts include establishing common ground, acknowledging the "symmetry of ignorance," and harnessing social creativity for innovation. Gladwell's "agents of change" underscore the importance of individuals with unique social and persuasive skills, like connectors and mavens, in influencing Col dynamics.

To cultivate Cols effectively, Wenger et al. 2002, propose seven principles:

1. **Design for evolution:** Communities should evolve organically, reflecting the dynamic nature of their members and objectives.
2. **Dialogue between inside and outside perspectives:** Incorporate external viewpoints to enrich discussions and foster innovation.
3. **Allow different levels of participation:** Welcome diverse levels of engagement to accommodate varying interests and expertise.
4. **Provide both public and private spaces:** Offer opportunities for open and confidential interactions to support community cohesion.
5. **Focus on value:** Clearly communicate the benefits of participation to ensure continued engagement.
6. **Combine familiarity with novelty:** Balance familiarity and excitement to create an engaging community environment.
7. **Create a rhythm:** Establish regular activities and events to maintain momentum and sustain community engagement.

The Symmetry of Ignorance. As described by Todeschini, it highlights that each stakeholder contributes only partial knowledge to a community, based on their unique experiences, perspectives, and viewpoints. It emphasizes the importance of connecting these diverse perspectives to foster a shared understanding. Creating an environment where different viewpoints are integrated can lead to the emergence of new ideas and deeper comprehension. OpenVerse is guaranteed to have a broad "symmetry of ignorance" due to its extremely interdisciplinary stakeholder community – so that this particular perspective was considered to be significant in the establishment of the methodology.

6.1.2 Synthesis into the OpenVerse Engagement Methodology

The methodologies of the previous section, together with the experience provided by previous analyses in XR4HUMAN, were synthesized into an appropriate framework for OpenVerse, taking

elements from the Six-Step Methodology (stepwise activity); Communities of Interest (symmetries of interest to ensure that all stakeholder groups are adequately addressed); International Association for Public Participation Stakeholder Engagement Method (identification of levels of engagement per stakeholder group).

The 7-Step Engagement Methodology for OpenVerse serves as the foundational framework for stakeholder engagement, integrating various methodologies and principles to ensure effective collaboration and value creation:

1. **Monitor:** Initiate stakeholder identification early in the project lifecycle, starting from the proposal phase and continuously throughout the project duration.
2. **Message:** Establish robust channels of communication and dialogue to facilitate seamless information exchange among stakeholders.
3. **Value Creation:** Prioritize the perception of value among stakeholders, ensuring that their involvement is meaningful and rewarding.
4. **Involve:** Actively include stakeholders in project activities, decision-making processes, and other relevant engagements to foster a sense of ownership and commitment.
5. **Collaborate:** Address the "symmetry of ignorance" by promoting interactions and collaborations among stakeholders, leveraging their diverse perspectives to drive innovation and understanding.
6. **Empower:** Empower stakeholders at all levels to have genuine influence and decision-making authority within the project, fostering a culture of inclusivity and empowerment.
7. **Innovate:** Embrace innovation as a core principle to ensure the sustainability and achievement of project goals, constantly seeking new and creative solutions to challenges.

This methodology is integral to OpenVerse, guiding its approach to stakeholder engagement and facilitating its mission to create a vibrant and collaborative platform for diverse stakeholders.

6.2 INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

The following table presents the OpenVerse Engagement Methodology, whereby the final column on Implementation represents the initial tailoring of the approach within the concrete overall context of the OpenVerse activities. A consortium-wide workshop was held on 25 January 2024 in order to arrive at a first version of the implementation mapping. This will be a living exercise whereby the evolution of the engagement approach will happen in parallel with the evolution of the OpenVerse activities (such as the launching of key initiatives like the OpenVerse Ecosystem Task Force) that are likely to present new opportunities for engagement.

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH	MAIN GOALS	OVERVIEW	IMPLEMENTATION
1 – MONITOR	Identifying and tracking Stakeholder groups	Determination of the stakeholders' position, the key concerns, the level of exposure to the project, and the involvement status.	OpenVerse Grant Agreement, consultations with the EC in the early phases of the project – e.g., Communication on Virtual Worlds

<p>2 – MESSAGE</p>	<p>Establishing communication with stakeholders</p>	<p>Networking with different stakeholder groups, considering the specifics, requirements, and preferences of communication pathways</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Social media • e-newsletters
<p>3 – CREATE VALUE</p>	<p>Uniting stakeholders, considering the unique stakeholder profiles involved</p>	<p>OpenVerse necessarily involves various stakeholder groups. Each stakeholder group has its own needs, interests, and spheres of influence in the project. To successfully engage each group, it is essential to create value for each individual stakeholder profile, while creating a single project-level vision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publications • Workshops • Conferences – Multiple workshops over multiple WPs, OpenVerse Summit, etc. • Observatory / Radar • XR lab visits
<p>4 – INVOLVE</p>	<p>Ensuring the involvement and participation of stakeholders at different levels</p>	<p>OpenVerse will be in continual evolution, so that it is important that stakeholders are continually involved in this evolution. It allows them to better understand each other, overcome miscommunications, create new sustainable connections, and establish partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • OpenVerse Ecosystem Task Force • OpenVerse Dialogues • Blog, White Papers • Conferences (see above) • Observatory / Radar • XR lab visits
<p>5 – COLLABORATE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excitement • Acknowledgement • Familiarity 	<p>To fulfil the goals of the project, it is important to ensure the adoption of virtual worlds technologies and primarily to arouse the general public’s interest and excitement, to familiarise key stakeholders with the use of technologies, and to establish the technologies as a familiar practice. This</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • OpenVerse Ecosystem Task Force • OpenVerse Dialogues • Blog, White Papers • Conferences (see above) • Commission events • Clustering with other projects (e.g., XR4HUMAN)

		also holds for the involvement of developers and scientists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • XR lab visits
6 – EMPOWER	Final decision- making is in the hands of the key stakeholders	All stakeholders, including the most vulnerable and those most affected by virtual worlds, must be provided with assurances of safety and inclusiveness at the outcome of the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • Conferences (see above) • Press releases • Public events (e.g., the Summit) • Observatory / Radar • XR lab visits
7 – INNOVATE	Shared work on common objectives of the project and its stakeholders. Include co-creation and co-implementation of new ideas	To create and maintain long-term stakeholder engagement and participation, it is important to create new goals together and develop cooperation and partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-creation workshops • Social media • OpenVerse Dialogues • Commission events • Public events (e.g., the Summit) • XR lab visits

As noted earlier, the specifics of the steps, the goals, and the implementation in the context of the evolution of the OpenVerse activities will be refined over the course of the project, as new opportunities are identified and corrections in the orientation of the engagement initiatives are made to reflect experience gained.

7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

7.1 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) FOR COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

Measure	Target	Target at the end of the project
Flyers	N. of flyers	> 4
Posters/roll-ups	N. of posters/roll-ups	> 4
Website	N. of unique visitors to the website (average per year)	> 2500
Social Media	N. of Twitter followers	> 1000
	N. of LinkedIn followers	> 300
e-Newsflashes	N. of issues	>15
Press Releases	N. of press releases	At least 2 per year
Videos	N. of videos published on OPENVERSE YouTube and average N. of views	6 videos per year, 200 views p/video
OPENVERSE Summit	N. of participants and N. of Editions	500 attendees, 2 editions
Workshops in WP activities	N. of participants and N. of editions	At least 23 with 1000+ participants
Participation in events and presentations	N. of external events partners attended to promote OPENVERSE	At least 20 events and presentations
Peer-reviewed publications	N. of papers published	At least 2

MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES

List of milestones

No of the Milestone	Name of the Milestone	Status
6	First major community event organised	M12
7	Last major community event organised	M36
8	Project visual identity, comm. channels and strategy and materials	Accomplished

List of deliverables

No. of the Deliverable	Name of the Milestone	Status
D4.1	Communication and Dissemination Strategy and Plan	Delivered
D4.2	First Diss. and Communication Activities Report	M18
D4.3	Final Diss. and Communication Activities Report	M36

CONCLUSIONS

The "Communication and Dissemination Strategy and Plan" for the OPENVERSE project lays a robust foundation for effectively sharing the advancements and insights generated throughout the course of the project. As the OPENVERSE project moves forward, it will continue to build on the established communication foundations with an emphasis on sustainability and long-term impact.

The next steps are to turn the described plan into tangible activities by guaranteeing that all required tools, routes of communication, and engagement initiatives are appropriately arranged. The implementation strategy will prioritise reaching significant milestones and tracking advancement to ensure that our efforts are producing the intended outcomes.

In conclusion, our engagement strategy aims to establish a strong foundation for incorporating stakeholders at all stages. By means of tailored exchanges, focused communication, and ongoing update and refinement, the goal is to establish solid connections that will bolster the project's accomplishments and guarantee the best possible distribution of its results.

APPENDIX A

OPENVERSE Brand Guidelines

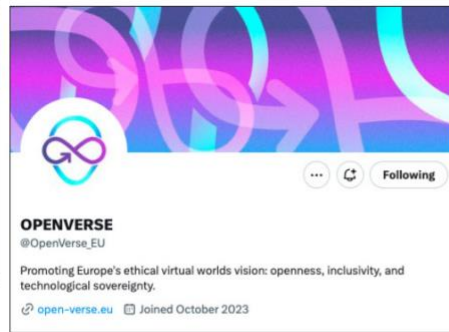
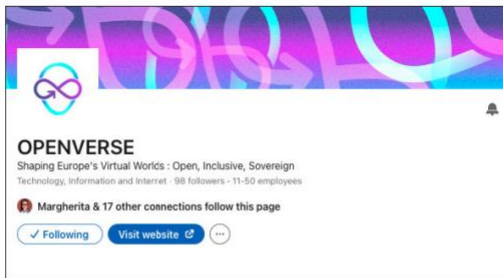


What is a brand identity?

A brand identity allows you to recognize a consistent look and feel across all outlets (electronic and printed visual media). It defines how those who come into contact with the brand should perceive it and influences their opinion of the brand.

This document lists and explains the visual identity elements of OPENVERSE project. These are rules and values to help you create and compose visual designs using its identity.

Examples of OPENVERSE’s brand identity across different outlets (X/Twitter and LinkedIn accounts):



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Logo

Main version of the OPENVERSE logo with some basic recommendations.

Main version



Safe area



Icon version (for social media outlets)



Minimum size



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2

Logo variations

The main logo is also provided in the variations depicted here below, to allow readability over dark backgrounds or for black and white printing purposes.

Negative version



Black&White version



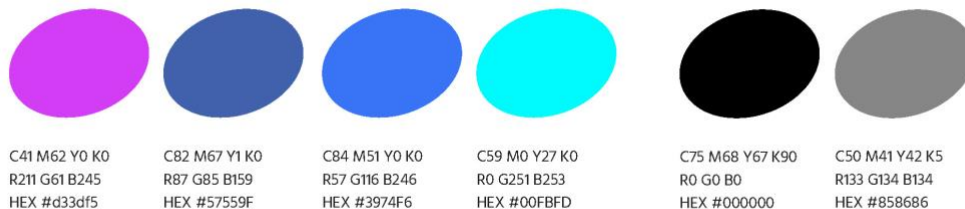
Corporate colours

A main palette of 4 colours based on the logo colour scheme. In combination with the main colours palette, two more greyscale colours can be used.

For slide presentations and deliverables: the colour of standard elements has been defined and locked in the respective templates, as those documents are likely to be mainly edited outside design departments.

To change colours (icons or additional text), editors will find the corporate colour palette in the templates.

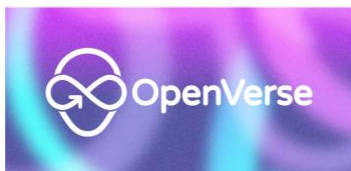
Palette of corporate colors



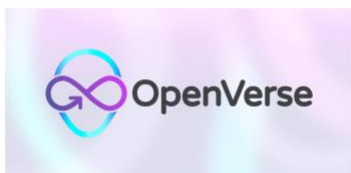
Dos and dont's

Basic instructions on how to use the main logo - and its variations - over different types of backgrounds.

Dos



Negative version on high contrasted background.



Main version on background assuring high contrast.

Don'ts



Not enough contrasted background.



Not enough contrasted background.

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Funding Acknowledgements

All the EC/SERI funded projects **should clearly show** the acknowledgement to the EC and SERI funding, side by side, in all Dissemination & Communication materials (e.g. flyers, posters, roll-ups, brochures, videos, website, etc). Here below we present examples of the elements to show - and their required arrangement - in different contexts.

The assets featured in this page (and their negative versions for use on dark backgrounds) are available in the project repository.



**Funded by
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Project funded by



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Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER
**State Secretariat for Education,
Research and Innovation SERI**

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7



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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER
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Research and Innovation SERI**

Font types

OPENVERSE’s brand uses Google Fonts’ open source font Fredoka (Medium version) for headings (Bold version) and Hind for body copy (Regular and Bold versions). This applies to the website and all other promotional materials.

For deliverables and presentations, the system font Calibri (only Regular and Bold versions) should be used instead, to avoid missing font issues, as those documents are likely to be mainly edited outside design departments.

Headings (website and all promotional materials)

Fredoka Medium
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Alternative body copy and headings (for deliverables and presentations)

Calibri regular
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Calibri bold
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Body copy (website, other promotional materials)

Hind regular
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Hind bold
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Funding Acknowledgements – Scientific publications/press releases/blogs/deliverables

The following combined disclaimer **must be used** in scientific publications/press releases/blogs/deliverables (which feature authors and in which opinions/comments/conclusions are stated). All alignments presented here below are permitted.

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