Best Practices in Communication

EMB3Rs project

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What's the topic to be communicated?

A platform to calculate energy recovery options

Wouldn't it be nice to have a platform that calculates how to best reuse your excess heat? And to have best district heating network (DHN) routes presented on a map? EMB3Rs is this platform – a tool that matches thermal energy sources with potential sinks. One that is urgently needed to unlock the potential of waste heat, support the shift from fossil fuels, reduce energy prices and simultaneously cut down on greenhouse gas emissions.

After registering at https://platform.emb3rs.eu/, users, like industries that produce waste heat, can provide the essential parameters. These include their location and the available excess thermal energy. The platform then assesses the feasibility of new business scenarios and identifies the technical solutions. End users such as energy communities are able to determine the costs and benefits of industrial excess heat and cold utilisation routes and to define the requirements for implementing the most promising solutions.

To help operators apply the platform, a tutorial video has been produced and uploaded to the project's website www.emb3rs.eu/results/. This, together with a manual, will guide end users through the platform.

"The EMB3Rs project is the Uber of excess heat. There is a lot of potential in reusing excess heat. On one hand, in industry and beyond industry, there are a lot of excess heat producers who don't know what to do with this energy. On the other hand, there is also a lot of demand, often nearby, for this excess heat. But the supply and the demand are not aware that the other side exists, or at least they don't know how to benefit from it. EMB3Rs aims to bring these two sides together and present the best solutions to recover, transport, and reuse excess thermal energy."

Mafalda Silva from INEGI, project coordinator

Telling the EMB3Rs story to the right people

For communication to be successful, the audience's needs must be addressed. In the EMB3Rs case this audience is anyone who could benefit from such a platform or help others to do so:

Industry is an obvious producer of excess heat, and it has a lot of potential to reuse it. With the increasing decarbonisation targets and the recent hike in energy prices, reusing excess heat is certainly something that industries around Europe may want to explore. Journalistic articles published in special interest magazines and on the LinkedIn platform for business connections were used to reach out to this target group. At fairs a dissemination kit came into account.

Local or regional authorities are interested in planning the investment needed for new infrastructure and policies within the energy sector. They could be targeted by publishing in local/regional/national newspapers. Partners' direct connections with local and regional government representatives are helpful as well.

Another important target group is **academia** interested in industrial sustainability, energy systems modelling, thermal recovery systems, decentralised energy markets and innovative business models. Scientists and engineers could benefit from the measurement data, methodology and results of the EMB3Rs case studies to do further research. The platform could be used for research and teaching, as a tool to help solve complex problems or as part of academic courses such as PhDs or Masters.

Thus, all scientific publications could be made available at Zenodo and the website, and be promoted on social media.
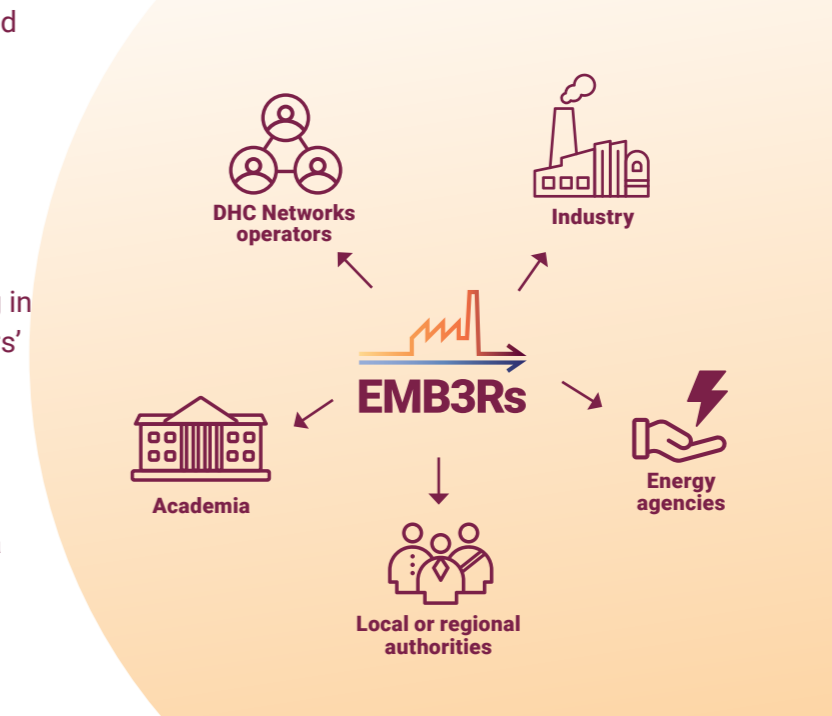
Communication tools used in the project

Throughout the project, we planned various tools to reach out to these target groups.

- **Logo and graphic layout**
- **Project website and social media channels**
- **Dissemination kit including poster, banner and brochure**
- **First and final video**
- **Infographics**
- **Journalistic articles**
- **Press releases**

Three success stories

Three communication tools have proved to be the most successful:
1. Website and social media
2. An alliance with sister projects
3. The final video

This booklet tells their story!

Website and Social Media Channels

The navigation within the website is easy and straightforward with pages accessible from the home page and subpages within the pages. The website has a homepage and five main sections: ABOUT (with Project, Platform, Partners, Advisory Board, Related Projects as subpages), CASE STUDIES, NEWS, RESOURCES (with Training Material, Graphics, Public Deliverables, Scientific Publications as subpages) and CONTACT.

Own content is crucial for the website and social media accounts. Publishing journalistic articles or videos always sparks interest in the project – resulting in more website visitors and a growing community on social media.

Crosslinking to and from other websites (e.g. of sister projects) helps search engines to understand a website. But also interlinking from one page to another keeps visitors on the same website for longer.

Mentioning the website in all communication tools is also definitely a must: journalistic articles, press releases, (whenever it fits) social media posts or even the closer of a project video are good options to place it. On print material this can be done with a QR code.

WEBSITE
The EMB3Rs website, **www.emb3rs.eu,** was set up when the project started. Its objective was to ensure an entry point to the EMB3Rs work. It presents the achievements for the scientific and professional communities and other stakeholder categories (including end users and the public). It contains all the institutional information about the EMB3Rs project. In addition, the website offers a channel for sharing the project's results, involving stakeholders and expanding their community.

All together during the lifetime of the project about 16.000 people visited the website. Taking into account that the project topic is quite niche it's a good result. The website does not provide entertainment but information, and specific people were targeted, not everyone. So it's quality over quantity.

To gather these numbers the analysing tool Matomo was used. It is an open-source analytical platform with advanced features. Additionally, it leaves the data ownership to the website owner, and protects both the owner's and visitors' privacy. Moreover, Matomo's reports are more accurate than those provided by other tools (e.g. Google Analytics).

SOCIAL MEDIA
From its kick-off, the project used two social media channels: **Twitter** and **LinkedIn.**

Twitter was mainly for reaching out to **journalists, academia, local/regional authorities,** and the **general public**.

LinkedIn aimed at **business** and **industry.** Posts were not only placed on the EMB3Rs LinkedIn page; the project news was also posted in **special interest groups** like "Renewable district heating and cooling - RES for DHC" (~ 800 approved members) or "Sustainable Industrial Manufacturing (SIM)" (~ 200 approved members), gaining interactions and up to 171 impressions for a post, depending on the overall activity of these groups.

The success of a social media project channel is in strong correlation with the support of the consortium members. It offers the opportunity to reach out to their contacts. Thus, one of the main tasks is to encourage project partners who are on Twitter or LinkedIn to interact with the posts published. This can be done e.g. by tagging them.

Due to a change of the core design and algorithm after Elon Musk took over Twitter, there has been a noticeable decline in the potential reach of the project's accounts. To offset this, we achieved higher growth and interaction on LinkedIn.

	Website visitors, followers & subscribers	Users reached & YouTube views
	16,5K	**60,2K**
🌐	15,9K	
in	331	42,2K
Twitter	302	16,7K
▶	19	1331

Users reached defines the number of people who had a post from EMB3Rs channel enter their feed. Data from 30.5.2023

HASHTAGS

Hashtags, like #EMB3Rs, can be unique in helping your content to be found. They should be clear and short, e.g. #wasteheat, #platform. And they should be relevant and strategic, meaning that they should be used by your audience. They should tell the algorithm what your post is about, e.g. #sustainable, #greenenergy or #districtheating. Using relevant hashtags helps drive traffic to your content so that you can boost views, likes, and shares.

The three **most successful hashtags** for EMB3Rs project at Twitter were #emb3rs (13K reached users), #platform (7,5K reached users) and #wasteheat (7,5K reached users). Relevant and followed LinkedIn hashtags were #renewableenergy (822K), #greenenergy (35,6K), and industry (16,1K). These hashtags were used in successful posts (more than 200 impressions and 20 reactions) and had the highest number of followers.

It's important to keep the number of hashtags low, like max two for a tweet and six at a LinkedIn post. This allows your posts to be more focused and help you connect with a larger audience.

Number of followers of a hashtag

At LinkedIn it's very easy to find out how many people follow a hashtag. How? Type the hashtag into the search bar (e.g. #greenenergy). Then click on the suggested hashtag instead of pressing enter. LinkedIn will show the number of followers at the top.

CAMPAIGNS

Social media campaigns are a good strategy to create content and gain new followers when, for example, there aren't any project results to present yet. The most successful campaign at that time was the #EMB3RsFaces campaign. There ESCI introduced members of the consortium (one per partner). Social media

cards, featuring the portrait of the consortium member, their position/title, and a quote, were designed and posted. This aims primarily to catch the attention of the consortium's network, winning them as new followers.

A similar effect can be reached by introducing one partner institution/company or a case study of the project each week.

When EMB3Rs ended in May 2023 the social media channels had reached more than 300 followers on Twitter and more than 330 on LinkedIn.

Success Story 2:
Clustering with sister projects

A handful of H2020 sister projects, working on waste heat recovery and industrial energy cooperation, came together to boost the dissemination of their projects' results. They supported each other in the social media channels and to plan events together.

As a first joint initiative, the projects EMB3Rs, INCUBIS, R-ACES, SoWhat and S-PARCS held a webinar in November 2020 to present themselves. More than 100 participants attended. Each project also introduced the sister projects on their websites.

The **Alliance for Energy Cooperation in European Industries (Alliance4ECEI)** was consolidated in April 2021, with the signature of a collaboration agreement. When one of the projects ended – S-PARCS in June 2021 – a new board member was sought and invited to join to keep the number of board members up to five. Thus, CORALIS joined in March 2022.

ESCI designed a logo, an infographic introducing the five board members, a PPT template, virtual backgrounds for meetings and it created a website www.alliance4ecei.eu, launched in June 2021.
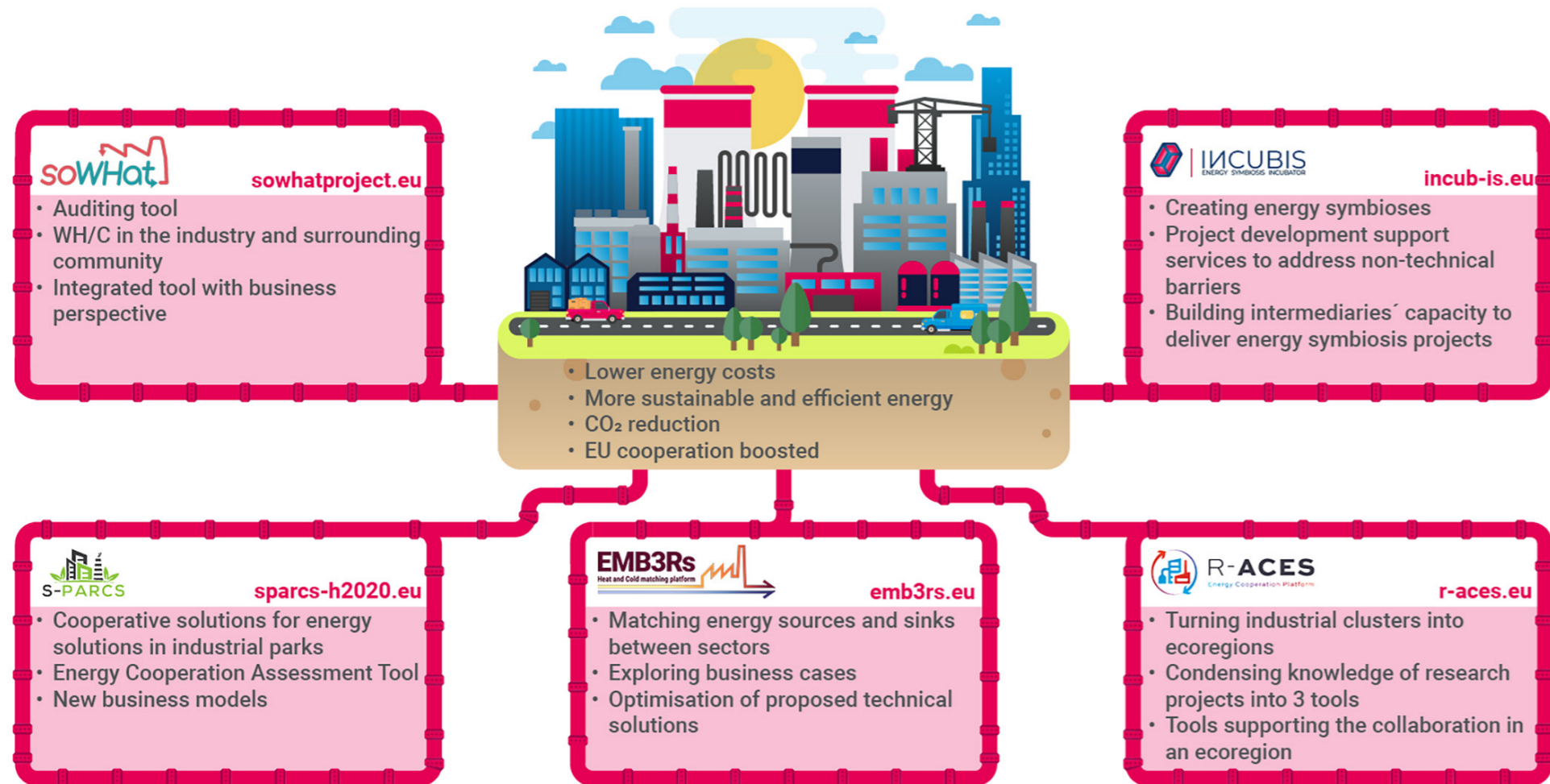
With its own logo, Alliance4ECEI can be easily recognized even when its member projects change. The website is, again, the entry point and offers information about the participating projects and invites further projects to join and replace ending projects. The subpages available are About, Members, News & Events and Contact. The header also includes the buttons of the Alliance4ECEI's social media accounts.

Social media channels were established on Twitter (https://twitter.com/Alliance4ECEI) and LinkedIn (https://www.linkedin.com/company/alliance4ecei). On the YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/@alliance4ecei274), recorded online events by the Alliance4ECEI were published.

REUSING INDUSTRIAL EXCESS THERMAL ENERGY

soWHat — sowhatproject.eu
- Auditing tool
- WH/C in the industry and surrounding community
- Integrated tool with business perspective

INCUBIS — incub-is.eu
- Creating energy symbioses
- Project development support services to address non-technical barriers
- Building intermediaries´ capacity to deliver energy symbiosis projects

Central hub:
- Lower energy costs
- More sustainable and efficient energy
- CO_2 reduction
- EU cooperation boosted

S-PARCS — sparcs-h2020.eu
- Cooperative solutions for energy solutions in industrial parks
- Energy Cooperation Assessment Tool
- New business models

EMB3Rs — Heat and Cold matching platform — emb3rs.eu
- Matching energy sources and sinks between sectors
- Exploring business cases
- Optimisation of proposed technical solutions

R-ACES — Energy Cooperation Platform — r-aces.eu
- Turning industrial clusters into ecoregions
- Condensing knowledge of research projects into 3 tools
- Tools supporting the collaboration in an ecoregion

**Infographic of the first five board members**

Twitter and LinkedIn accounts from the alliance turned out to achieve lower reach than expected, mostly because information was duplicated on the project and alliance channels. Therefore, we learnt that cluster's social media channels aren't that supportive when no one publishes individual posts regularly.

Despite this, labour-intensive joint events like workshops were a good way to attract attention to the projects. Assigned project experts delivered topical presentations and informed the audience about the latest developments and results in each project. The Alliance4ECEI had joint presentations in 2021 at S-PARCS final event, Sustainable Places. It hosted an online session as part of the European Sustainable Energy Week extended programme and in 2022 held a webinar at the Sustainable Energy Days. There was also a platform testing event with the R-ACES project in March 2023.

Naturally, another important aspect is the appropriate distribution of tasks among the alliance partners, so that everyone has the chance to shape the upcoming event and bring along their networks.

With projects ending, the Alliance4ECEI is exploring ways to draw on this group that is already established, bring new members on-board and continue cooperation beyond the projects' lifetime. The Alliance4ECEI social media channels are still used to share EMB3Rs project information.
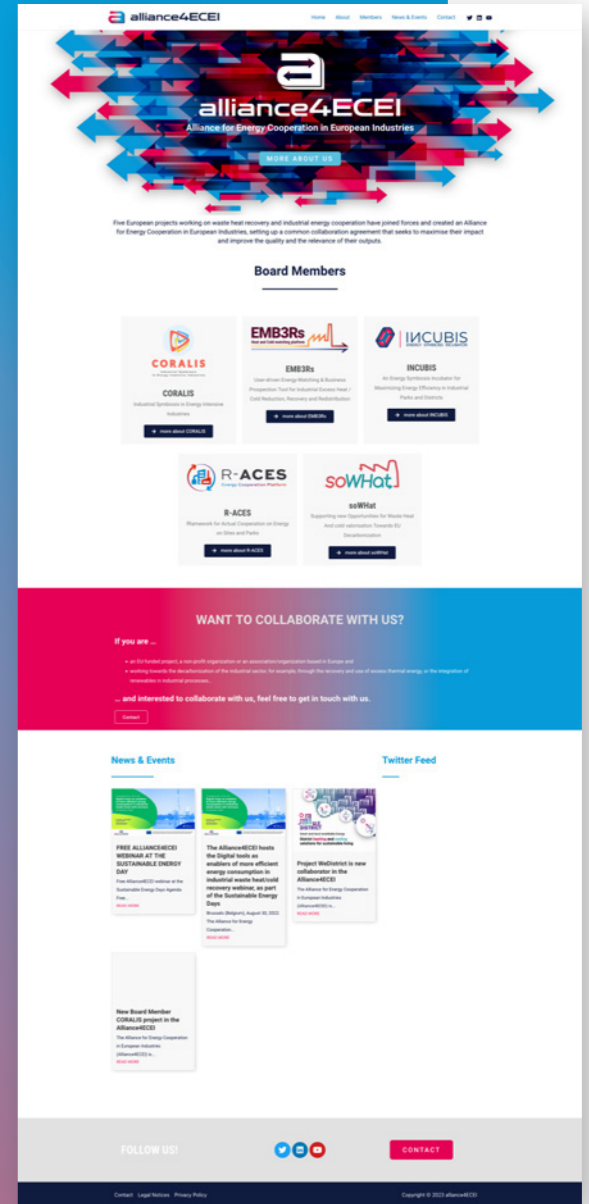
Website of the Alliance4ECEI

Sister projects funded under the same programme and with the same topic can be found on the CORDIS website https://cordis.europa.eu

The Horizon Results Booster (HRB) also gives guidance to identify similar ongoing projects from any other EU, national and regional funding initiatives to group with.

Success Story 3:
Final video

The final video was produced in the last months of the project. It targets stakeholders at large so that they can identify, understand and begin to apply the project's results.

But the final video was also designed to become an important tool for the exploitation of the project's results, in particular to highlight the benefits of the EMB3Rs platform. The different application options for the platform are featured and the experts involved share their experiences.

To achieve all this, we decided to film at four case studies in Portugal and Greece, and at the platform developer's office. An interview was also recorded with the coordinator Mafalda Silva from INEGI.

We created animated maps to visualize the locations of stakeholders, providing data to the project. A website trailer of the EMB3Rs platform gives the viewer an impression of the platform's look.

Reusing the excess thermal energy in the industr

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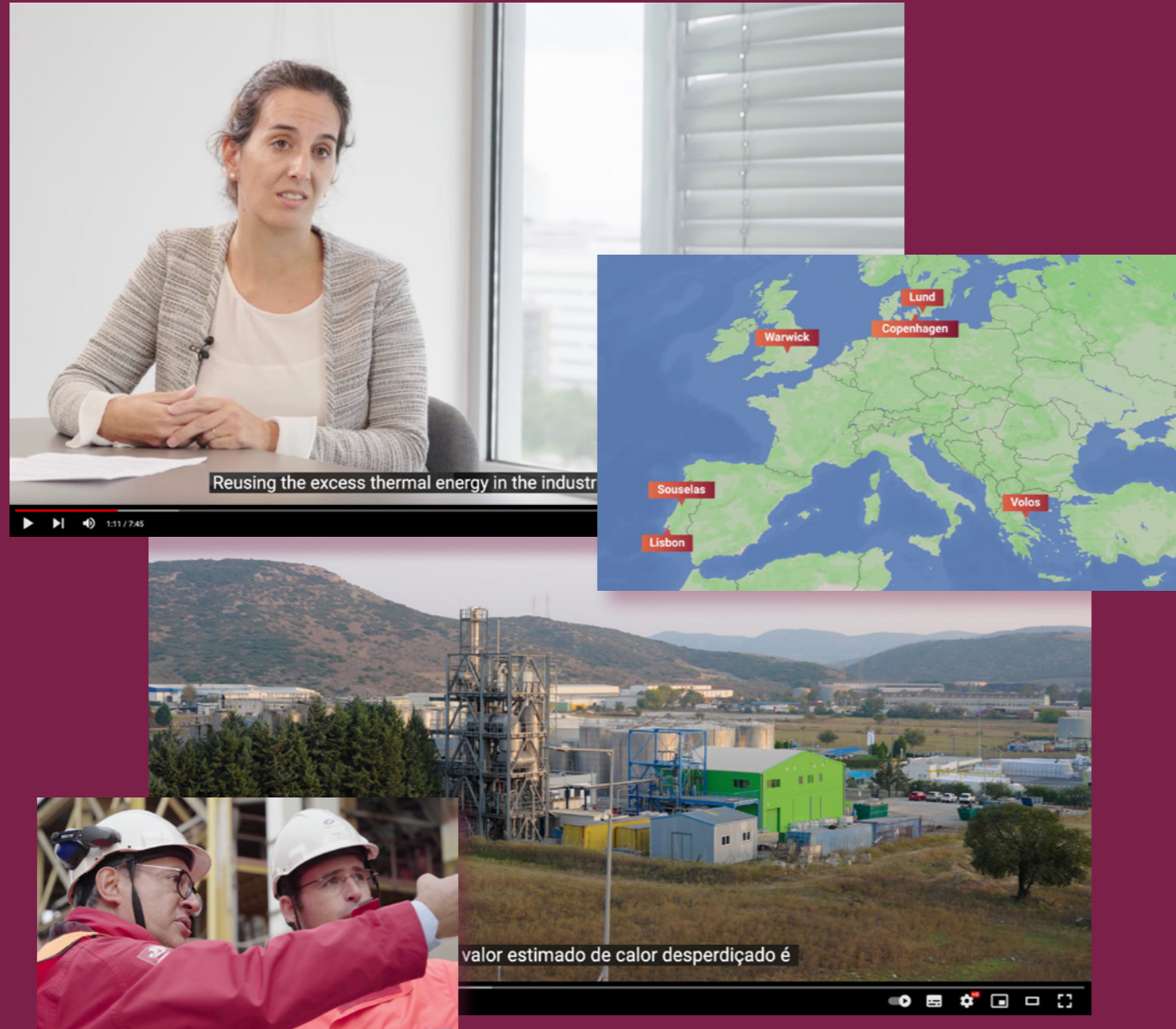
The final project video was released on 9 May 2023 on the ESCI and EMB3Rs YouTube channels. The video was intensively promoted at the social media channels and according to data of 30 May 2023, the video had already generated 669 views in total (on both YouTube channels). As this is an organic growing process, the number of views is expected to grow further and reach 1000 views by mid-June.

The video is available at:
https://youtu.be/p8yUr6s55iA
https://youtu.be/xOOqeRtOuio

Portuguese subtitles were included so that the viewer can choose from two languages.

With 504 views the ESCI channel has a noticeable higher outreach than the EMB3Rs project channel. The ESCI YouTube channel is an organic growing channel, regularly publishing new project videos. It now has about 900 subscribers.

Our recommendation therefore is to use – if available – the channel of the communication leader of the project and not having an own project channel for the publication. Being in charge of several EU projects is beneficial for all project videos. To separate the different projects, the videos should be compiled in playlists dedicated to each project.

In EMB3Rs' case the YouTube channel was created at the beginning of the project for the introduction video, before ESCI's channel was set up. As all other EMB3Rs videos have been published on the EMB3Rs channel, we decided to have the final video there as well. However, this gave us the opportunity to compare the outreach on both channels.

The video will be used by the consortium well beyond the end of the project, continuing the development and adoption of EMB3Rs solutions.

Advantages of a video

Videos …
… are captivating and keep users on pages for longer.
… incorporate audio and visual elements that appeal to multiple senses.
… actually show the projects results.
… give visibility to participating partners/case studies and their input into the project.
… can help improve SEO.

Key take aways

A **website** is the entry point of a project. Here all information can be stored and found. To raise awareness about the website, social media and crosslinking are crucial. Regularly uploaded own-created content keeps the page attractive.

Due to a change of the core design and algorithm after Elon Musk took over Twitter by, there has been a noticeable decline in the potential reach of the project's accounts. **LinkedIn** seems to become a more reliable platform for a project like EMB3Rs.

Well-chosen **hashtags** help to drive traffic to the created content. This boosts the number of views, likes, and shares.

Smart **campaigns** help to raise awareness and gain new followers, even when there are no projects results to communicate about.

Clustering with sister projects boosts communication. Crosslinking the projects on the website, supporting each other's posts and holding joint events open new doors for the promotion of a project.

Having an own **logo** helps a collaboration to be recognized even when its member projects change.

The **website** is the entry point. It offers information about the participating projects and invites further projects to join and replace ending projects.

A **professional video** is effective for presenting project results. The audio and visual elements help explain how the platform works and what it's for. Experts can share their experiences with the project or their input in interviews. This is a nice way to promote the project even after it ends and thus to further support the exploitation.

For publishing we recommend to use a living YouTube channel that is organically growing. This could be – if available – the channel of the project communication partner.

Subtitles in different languages can be easily created on YouTube (but need to be checked by a native speaker!).
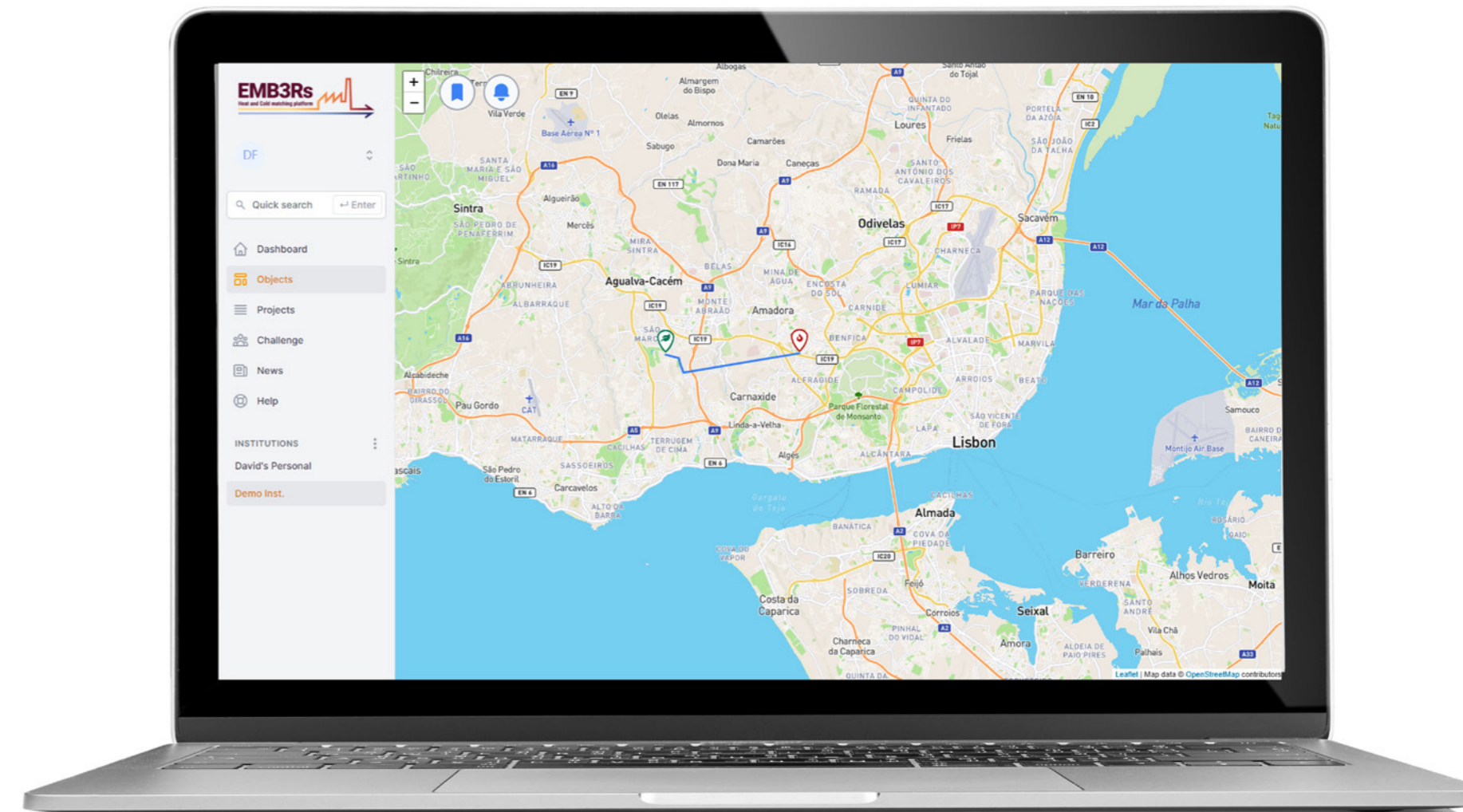
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in **EMB3Rs**

Contact

ESCI – European Science Communication Institute gGmbH
Bleicherstraße 11
D–26122 Oldenburg

Tel.: +49 441 779 222 80
Email: info@esci.eu
www.esci.eu

Project partners