



# AGRO4AGRI

Deliverable D8.3 – First version of the stakeholder engagement plan and stakeholder database

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### AGRO4AGRI's details

Project name	FOSTERING THE ADVANCED USE OF AGROCHEMICALS FOR A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
Project acronym	AGRO4AGRI
Grant Agreement number	101130890
Duration and dates	48 months (1 May 2024 – 30 April 2028)
Call and topic	HORIZON-CL4-2023-RESILIENCE-01-34: Advanced (nano and bio-based) materials for Sustainable Agriculture
Granting authority	European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HADEA), under the powers delegated by the European Commission
Official project website	<a href="https://agro4agri.eu/">https://agro4agri.eu/</a>

### The AGRO4AGRI consortium

Nº	NAME	ROLE	COUNTRY
1	AINIA (AINIA)	Coordinator	Spain
2	FUNDACION CENTRO TECNOLOGICO DE COMPONENTES (CTC)	Beneficiary	Spain
3	SYDDANSK UNIVERSITET (SDU)	Beneficiary	Denmark
4	DANMARKS TEKNISKE UNIVERSITET (DTU)	Beneficiary	Denmark
5	FUNDACION GRUPO CAJAMAR (FGC)	Beneficiary	Spain
6	PROEFCENTRUM HOOGSTRATEN (PCH)	Beneficiary	Belgium
7	F. INICIATIVAS, CONSULTADORIA E GESTAO, UNIPESSOAL, LDA (FIG)	Beneficiary	Portugal
7.1	F. INICIATIVAS ESPANA I MAS D MAS I SLU (FI GROUP)	Affiliated Entity	Spain
8	SIPCAM OXON SPA (SIPCAM)	Beneficiary	Italy
9	INSTITUT FÜR HOHERE STUDIEN - INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES (IHS)	Beneficiary	Austria
10	SYSPRO AUTOMATION SL (SYSPRO)	Beneficiary	Spain

Nº	NAME	ROLE	COUNTRY
11	MIRAT FERTILIZANTES SL (MIRAT)	Beneficiary	Spain
12	OPTIMAT LIMITED (OPTIMAT)	Associated partner	United Kingdom

### Project summary

Agrochemicals are chemical products used in agriculture such as fertilizers, plant-biostimulants or pesticides. The application of fertilizers in synergistic combination with biostimulants provides the nutrients required for enhancing the crops yield, while pesticides are used to reduce the risk of loss from plant diseases and weeds on agricultural production. Today, the agricultural sector faces several challenges, namely the loss and leaching of fertilizers, the large amounts of pesticides used, the bioaccumulation and bioconcentration of them and the high dependency on water availability.

In this context, nano and biotechnology strategies have recently gained more interest in the agricultural sector compared to conventional agricultural techniques.

AGRO4AGRI seeks to provide ground-breaking and Safe and Sustainable by Design solutions for plant nutrition and protection consisting of nano and biobased controlled delivery fertilizers and plant biostimulants, and target-specific biopesticides based on RNAi technology, both for enhanced agrochemicals use efficiency. AGRO4AGRI involves R&D and validation stages, aiming to minimize in the long term the use of agrochemicals in agriculture in more than 50% to be aligned with the Farm to Fork Strategy, among other EU initiatives. Further project developments include the evaluation of safety, social and economic impacts, activities to promote society and policy makers engagement to bring wider impacts and better fulfil EU targets and position Europe at the forefront of the agroindustry.

### Document details

Deliverable type	R – Document, report
Deliverable nº	D8.3
Deliverable title	First version of the stakeholder engagement plan and stakeholder database
Lead beneficiary	OPTIMAT
Work package and task	WP8 - Task 8.3 Stakeholder engagement strategy
Document version	(To match the revision history below)
Contractual delivery date	30.04.2025
Actual delivery date	
Dissemination Level	PU - Public

Purpose	This deliverable outlines the strategy for stakeholder engagement and the steps involved. The purpose is to gain stakeholder input to planned activities – including D8.4 and D8.5, and share project results, so that these are aligned with stakeholder expectations. All stakeholder information will be captured in a GDPR-compliant database.
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**ABSTRACT**

The AGRO4AGRI project’s stakeholder engagement plan outlines a strategic approach to building and maintaining productive relationships with key stakeholders to ensure the project’s success and to meet the requirements of relevant stakeholders. It is also designed to foster transparency, collaboration, and active participation throughout the project lifecycle.

The plan is a living document and will be updated as the project develops. This first version describes the initial mapping of stakeholders and the creation of a stakeholder database which form part of the foundation for effective engagement and continuous improvement, ensuring that stakeholders are well-informed, involved, and aligned with the project’s goals. It also serves as a guide for proactive communication, participation, and collaboration across all stakeholder groups.

**Key Objectives:**

This plan and subsequent iterations aim to provide strategies to achieve the following:

- Stakeholder Identification: Comprehensive identification of relevant stakeholders, including public authorities, agricultural organizations, research institutions, industry players, and civil society groups.
- Stakeholder Analysis: Prioritization based on their influence, interest, and impact on the AGRO4AGRI project, ensuring that engagement efforts are targeted and effective.
- Engagement Strategy: Tailored engagement mechanisms for each stakeholder group, such as information-sharing, consultations, workshops, and partnerships, to ensure alignment of interests and mutual benefits.
- Stakeholder Database: The development of a dynamic stakeholder database to track interactions, feedback, and relationship status for ongoing management and engagement.
- Continuous Improvement: Mechanisms for ongoing feedback collection, relationship-building activities, and periodic updates to the engagement strategy based on project needs and stakeholder input.

**Document’s revision history**

The following table describes the main changes done in the document since it was created.

REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR (PARTNER)
V.0.1	31-3-2025	1 <sup>st</sup> draft for internal review	Lesley Tobin (OPTIMAT)
V.0.2	23-4-2025	2 <sup>nd</sup> draft	Lesley Tobin (OPTIMAT)
V.0.3			
V.0.4			

V.1.1	
V.1.2	
V.1.3	

## Terminology and acronyms

TERM/ACRONYM	EXPLANATION
CEN	European Committee for Standardization
DG AGRI	Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development (EC)
DG ENV	Directorate General for Environment (EC)
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
ECHA	European Chemicals Agency
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIT	European Institute of Innovation and Technology
ETP	European Technology Platform
EU	European Union
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
KER	Key Exploitable Results
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LCA	Life Cycle Assessment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
QR Code	Quick Response Code
RNAi	RNA interference
RRI	Responsible Research and Innovation
SCAR	Standing Committee on Agricultural Research
SEIA	Social and Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA)
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
SSbD	Safe and Sustainable by Design
TRL	Technology Readiness Level



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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

### 1.1. Purpose

The purpose of the AGRO4AGRI stakeholder engagement plan and database is to ensure the project is guided and informed by the people and organizations who are most likely to shape, use, or be affected by its outcomes. AGRO4AGRI aims to develop sustainable, safe-by-design solutions for plant nutrition and protection, and achieving that requires input and collaboration from a wide range of stakeholders — including researchers, farmers, agri-tech companies, agrochemical producers, policymakers, regulatory bodies, NGOs, civil society, and funding organizations. The plan provides a structured yet flexible framework for engaging with these entities at the right times and in the right ways throughout the project lifecycle. It aims to support dialogue that enables stakeholders to influence the project direction, provide feedback on results, highlight barriers and opportunities, and help develop pathways to adoption.

The accompanying stakeholder database underpins this by serving as a living, GDPR-compliant tool to organize, track, and tailor engagement activities based on type, interest, and level of influence. Ultimately, the plan and database together help ensure that AGRO4AGRI delivers research and innovations that are not only scientifically robust, but also socially accepted, policy-aligned, and eventually commercially viable. They are key tools in implementing dimensions of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)<sup>1</sup> and principles of Safe and Sustainable by Design (SSbD) both of which are central to the project's goals. This will ensure that AGRO4AGRI remains aligned with societal needs and sustainability goals and provide for adequate potential engagement to foster reflexivity and aid the creation of a societal readiness thinking process. Ultimately, this strategy aims to maximize the project's scientific, policy, and commercial impact, while engendering trust, transparency, and long-term collaboration.

### 1.2. Scope

The scope of the AGRO4AGRI stakeholder engagement plan and database spans the full length and breadth of the project. It covers engagement across the entire agricultural value chain — from upstream raw material suppliers, researchers, and technology developers to downstream stakeholders such as farmers, food producers, policymakers, NGOs, and citizens. The plan applies to all project phases, from early co-definition of research priorities and solution design, through validation and demonstration, to communication, exploitation, and scale-up. It outlines how different types of stakeholders will be involved — whether through consultation, collaboration, knowledge exchange, or dissemination — and ensures that engagement activities are tailored according to the stakeholder's role, expertise, and level of interest or influence. The stakeholder database complements this by providing a structured, GDPR-compliant system for mapping and managing relationships. Stakeholders are categorized by type (e.g. Research Community, Agrochemical Industry, Regulators and Policymakers, NGOs, Consumers/Civil Society, Farming Industry, and Investors/Financial Entities), and prioritized based on their relevance and potential to contribute to or benefit from the project. The database supports targeted outreach, allows for tracking and analysis of engagement activities, and helps maintain a transparent and strategic overview of who has been engaged, when, how, and why. This ensures that AGRO4AGRI's outcomes are grounded in the needs of real users and aligned with European sustainability, innovation, and policy goals.

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<sup>1</sup> Owen, Richard, Phil Macnaghten, and Jack Stilgoe. "Responsible research and innovation: From science in society to science for society, with society." *Emerging technologies*. Routledge, 2020. 117-126

### 1.3. Objectives

The AGRO4AGRI stakeholder engagement plan is designed to build and sustain meaningful relationships with individuals and organizations whose expertise, interests, or influence are critical to the project's success. Its core objectives are to create structured opportunities for dialogue, ensure transparency in how stakeholder input is gathered and used, and strengthen collaboration across sectors and disciplines. The plan aims to identify shared goals and concerns early, reduce knowledge gaps between different communities, and support mutual learning. It also seeks to promote trust in AGRO4AGRI's methods and outcomes by fostering openness and responsiveness throughout the project. By creating mechanisms to listen, adapt, and respond to stakeholder feedback, the engagement strategy plays a key role in ensuring the project delivers solutions that are inclusive, feasible, and future-ready. In doing so, it also contributes to building a broader community focused on safe and sustainable innovation in agriculture, extending the project's influence and legacy beyond its formal end.

The objectives of the AGRO4AGRI stakeholder database are to provide a structured, comprehensive, and adaptable resource for identifying and engaging relevant stakeholders across research, industry, policymaking, NGOs, investors, and end-users. Its primary objectives are to facilitate targeted communication and dialogue through categorization based on stakeholder interest, influence, relevance, and engagement needs; support strategic planning by informing evidence-based engagement strategies and prioritization; and enhance collaboration opportunities by connecting AGRO4AGRI with potential partners and adopters of project outcomes. The database is also intended to function as a dynamic tool that evolves throughout the project, continuously updated to reflect stakeholder feedback, shifting priorities, and external developments, ensuring ongoing relevance and responsiveness.

## 2. Stakeholder Engagement – Overview of the Process

### 2.1. Why engage?

Stakeholder engagement is essential to the success and impact of AGRO4AGRI. The project's ambition can only be achieved if it is informed by, and responsive to, the needs, knowledge, and expectations of those who will ultimately shape, use, regulate, or be affected by those solutions.

Stakeholders bring different perspectives — from technical and scientific to policy, environmental, societal, and commercial. This diversity is a strength, enabling the project to anticipate challenges, co-design viable solutions, and avoid a top-down approach that risks irrelevance or resistance. Stakeholder input helps the project team refine and/or revisit research questions, validate assumptions, and identify regulatory, market, or societal barriers early on.

Specifically, given that AGRO4AGRI's innovations are expected to reach Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 5, stakeholder engagement will focus more on early validation, co-creation, and alignment with real-world expectations, than on market readiness. Stakeholders will play a key role in helping the project understand feasibility, acceptability, and adoption potential in future stages. This approach ensures that the groundwork is laid not just for technical and eventual market success, but for long-term societal and policy relevance.

Importantly, engagement builds mutual trust and supports the principles of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), which encourage transparency, inclusiveness, and mutual learning. Through dialogue, AGRO4AGRI strengthens the credibility, usability, and uptake potential of its outputs.

## 2.2. Levels of engagement

AGRO4AGRI's engagement strategy recognizes that different stakeholders require different types and levels of engagement. Some may need to be regularly consulted or closely involved, while others may be kept informed or approached for specific input at key decision points. Engaging stakeholders allows AGRO4AGRI to work more effectively within a complex and evolving agricultural landscape by ensuring alignment with real-world conditions, values, and systems.

AGRO4AGRI is thus implementing a flexible model of stakeholder engagement, which allows for different levels of interaction based on stakeholder roles, interests, and influence. These levels range from basic awareness-raising to active collaboration and are drawn from recognized frameworks e.g. Wilcox (1994); RRI guidelines; and good practice.

- **Informing**

At this level, the goal is to keep stakeholders informed about the project, its goals, progress, and outcomes. This is a one-way communication process, useful for building awareness and transparency. In AGRO4AGRI, informing takes place through the project website, newsletters, policy briefs, public deliverables, and participation in external events.

- **Consulting**

Here, stakeholders are asked for input on specific questions or options. While decisions remain with the project, this approach ensures that stakeholder voices are heard and considered. AGRO4AGRI conducts surveys, thematic interviews, and consultation workshops to gather insights — particularly from regulators, farmers, industry partners, and related projects.

- **Involving**

Involving stakeholders means giving them more active roles in shaping outcomes. Their contributions help to co-develop ideas, guide implementation, and improve relevance. AGRO4AGRI achieves this through co-creation sessions, bilateral dialogues, and interactive discussions with selected stakeholder groups, including SMEs, consumer groups, and researchers.

- **Collaborating (acting together)**

This deeper level of engagement involves shared decision-making and partnership. Stakeholders become part of the process, not just contributors to it. AGRO4AGRI collaborates closely with value chain actors, technology developers, and policy influencers to co-create business models, demonstration cases, and exploitation plans that can be taken forward beyond the project.

- **Empowering**

Where possible, AGRO4AGRI supports stakeholders in developing their own capacity and agency — particularly smaller organizations or end-users. This may include providing access to tools and knowledge, creating training materials, and helping shape policy recommendations. Empowerment strengthens impact and supports long-term sustainability beyond the life of the project.

This structured, multi-level approach enables AGRO4AGRI to engage stakeholders meaningfully and proportionately, adapting engagement strategies to different needs and project stages.

### 2.3. Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder analysis is a fundamental component of AGRO4AGRI's engagement strategy. It allows the project team to understand who the key actors are, how they relate to the project's objectives, what influence they hold, and how best to engage them. The analysis also helps identify gaps in representation and opportunities for cross-sector collaboration that may enhance the relevance and uptake of project outcomes.

The stakeholder analysis process in AGRO4AGRI follows a structured, multi-step approach. Stakeholders are first identified based on their connection to the agricultural value chain and their potential interest or influence in the areas of plant/crop nutrition, protection, circular bioeconomy, RRI, SSbD, and EU policy frameworks.

The results of the stakeholder analysis are recorded in a structured, GDPR-compliant database. This enables the project to:

- Track stakeholder interactions over time
- Manage relationships and engagement activities
- Ensure balanced representation across stakeholder groups
- Support evaluation and reporting for WP8 deliverables

This analysis is dynamic and will be revisited periodically throughout the project to reflect changes in stakeholder roles, emerging interests, and opportunities for further/deeper collaboration.

The database thus forms the foundation for AGRO4AGRI's targeted engagement strategy. The analytical work enables the project to determine the most appropriate type and level of engagement for each stakeholder or group – ensuring that activities are proportionate, inclusive, and aligned with the project's goals. These decisions are outlined in section 3, which describes how AGRO4AGRI translates this analysis into a strategic, practical, and responsive approach to stakeholder engagement.

### 2.4. The challenges

While stakeholder engagement is fundamental to the success of AGRO4AGRI, it also brings several practical and strategic challenges. These emanate from the diversity of actors involved, the complexity of the agri-food system, and the project's ambition to develop innovations that are both scientifically robust and socially acceptable. Further complexities stem from economic, ecological and ethical issues and uncertainties, and how these can be addressed in exchanges with stakeholders.

Understanding and preparing for these challenges is essential to ensure meaningful and effective engagement.

#### **Stakeholder diversity and alignment**

AGRO4AGRI engages a wide range of stakeholders: from large chemical companies and EU regulators to farmer cooperatives, NGOs, and consumer organizations. These groups often operate with different goals, priorities, timescales, and languages. Aligning such diverse interests can be difficult, particularly when tensions arise between economic, environmental, and societal considerations. Ensuring that all voices are heard without compromising scientific direction or project timelines requires careful facilitation.

Fundamental to the stakeholder engagement activities is the facilitating of stakeholder reflexivity. Through different modes of engagement, stakeholders can offer alternative views, critiques, positionalities, and vantage points, and thus enable researchers to better understand these while reflecting on their own.

#### **Maintaining relevance across the project lifecycle**

The engagement needs of stakeholders may evolve as the project progresses. Some may require early involvement in developing research questions, while others may become more relevant during validation, or subsequent scaling, or exploitation phases. Sustaining interest and ensuring timely, meaningful participation over several years can be a challenge, especially when stakeholders have limited time or capacity to engage.

#### **Balancing inclusivity with manageability**

While inclusivity is a core principle of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), there is a practical limit to how many stakeholders can be actively involved in a project without compromising focus or efficiency. AGRO4AGRI will aim to strike a balance between being open and representative, and managing a focused, strategic engagement process that delivers actionable input.

#### **Power dynamics and trust**

Power imbalances — for example, between large industry players and smaller civil society organizations — can influence who feels able or entitled to contribute. Building trust across these boundaries requires candid communication, neutral facilitation, and safe spaces for discussion. It also requires acknowledging and addressing any perceived or actual barriers to participation.

#### **Resource constraints**

Stakeholder engagement takes time, planning, and dedicated resources. It requires not only outreach and event organization, but also the capacity to analyze feedback, adapt project plans, and follow up appropriately. In a multi-partner project with varied work packages, ensuring coordination and adequate resourcing for engagement activities may be an ongoing challenge.

#### **Ensuring impact**

One of the key challenges is ensuring that stakeholders' voices are not only heard but also acted upon. If engagement feels tokenistic – a 'tick-box' exercise - or disconnected from real project activities and decisions, it can undermine trust and participation. AGRO4AGRI aims to avoid this by embedding stakeholder feedback mechanisms throughout the project, but this requires commitment and responsiveness from all partners.

### **3. Developing the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy**

AGRO4AGRI's stakeholder engagement strategy is grounded in a structured and adaptive approach that links stakeholder analysis to real, purposeful interactions throughout the project. It translates stakeholder knowledge, expectations, and influence into targeted engagement activities aligned with the project's goals, timeline, and work package structure. The strategy is designed to ensure that stakeholders who prefer a deeper level of engagement are not only consulted or informed but actively involved in co-developing and scaling sustainable innovations in agriculture. This section describes the construction and population of the stakeholder database.

#### **3.1. Stakeholder database**

The stakeholder database, as mentioned, is the core tool for managing engagement. It should be noted that for GDPR reasons there are two versions: one is hosted on the Task Leader's secure filesharing space (Optimat MS SharePoint) and contains basic and contact information about the main individuals to be contacted for each entity. A second version - with personal information excluded - is hosted on the coordinator's system (AINIA MS SharePoint) and is accessible to all partners.

*All partners have been invited to contribute to the database design and determine the typology for the stakeholders to ensure comprehensive coverage and support tailored engagement strategies for each group. The database structure is provided in*

Table 1. In the first instance, it captures the AGRO4AGRI partner who has identified the stakeholder in case an introduction is required. Following the fields for basic and contact information, the database records the type of stakeholder. The typology is currently as follows:

- **Regulators and Policymakers:** EU institutions, national regulatory bodies, and local authorities.
- **Research Community:** universities, research institutes, and scientists in agricultural technology.
- **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):** environmental and consumer protection organizations.
- **Industry:** agrochemical manufacturers; fertilizer, biostimulants, and pesticide distributors, waste, recycling
- **Farming Industry:** farmers, agricultural cooperatives, and producer associations.
- **Consumers/Civil Society:** general public, food chain actors, end-users.
- **Investors and Financial Entities:** public and private funding bodies, venture capitalists.

Additional categories include trade associations and networks. It should be noted here that these categories were established very early on in the project, and will be adjusted to better correspond to the analyses and mapping described later in this report. In particular, 'industry' will be better aligned with the mapping typology.

The next columns require information about their area of expertise, and their perceived degree and nature of impact and influence. When contact has been made, this is recorded in the next columns to capture when and how contact was made, preferred type of engagement and if any follow up action is required. The final column captures additional information.

The database thus enables:

- Prioritization of stakeholders by interest and influence for mapping and engagement
- Targeted invitations to be issued for events and consultations
- Tracking of participation and feedback
- Coordinated outreach across partners

It guarantees that no key group is overlooked, and that engagement is consistent and well-documented across the project lifecycle and that individuals are not contacted too frequently which may deter them from further engagement.

Table 1. Stakeholder database structure

CATEGORY	INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED BY PARTNERS
<b>A4A CONTACT</b>	Known to A4A?
<b>BASIC INFORMATION</b>	Title FirstName Surname Organization & URL Position/Job Title Country
<b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b>	Email Phone No.
<b>TYPE OF STAKEHOLDER</b>	Policy maker Regulatory body Research community NGO Agrochemical industry Biotech industry Waste management/ recycling Farmer/ Producer Food and drink industry Funder/ Investor Distributor End user/ Civil Soc. Trade Association Network Other (specify)
<b>AREA OF EXPERTISE</b>	Agronomy - Biocides and Biostimulants Agrifood Biotechnology Toxicology Environmental science Policy/Regulation
<b>IMPACT AND INFLUENCE</b>	Rationale for contacting them Associated initiatives/ projects Geographic focus: Global, EU etc Level of interest (High Medium Low) Level of influence (High Medium Low) Level of impact by A4A outcomes (High to Low)
<b>CONTACT RECORD AND STATUS</b>	Initial contact made (date) Survey link sent Response Preferred type of engagement (workshops, round tables, other events, 1:1, project updates/newsletters, survey etc...) Registered on BREVO? 1:1 interview conducted? Attended an event? Date? Completed a survey? Which survey? What follow up is needed?
<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>	Any other info resulting from initial contact and / or follow up.

### 3.2. Populating the database

Following the database construction, partners have been involved in an ongoing process of populating it through desk research, partner knowledge, previous EU-funded project networks, and clustering activities.

Numerous entities identified as potential stakeholders have been approached directly via email in the first instance (Figure 1). The email provides information about the project and its objectives, invites the recipient to find out more in a one-to-one meeting, and explains the benefits of engagement to them. Some of these recipients may be on the database but have not yet been approached if they are recent additions. Others are not on the database but have been identified by individual partners and will be added to it with their consent.

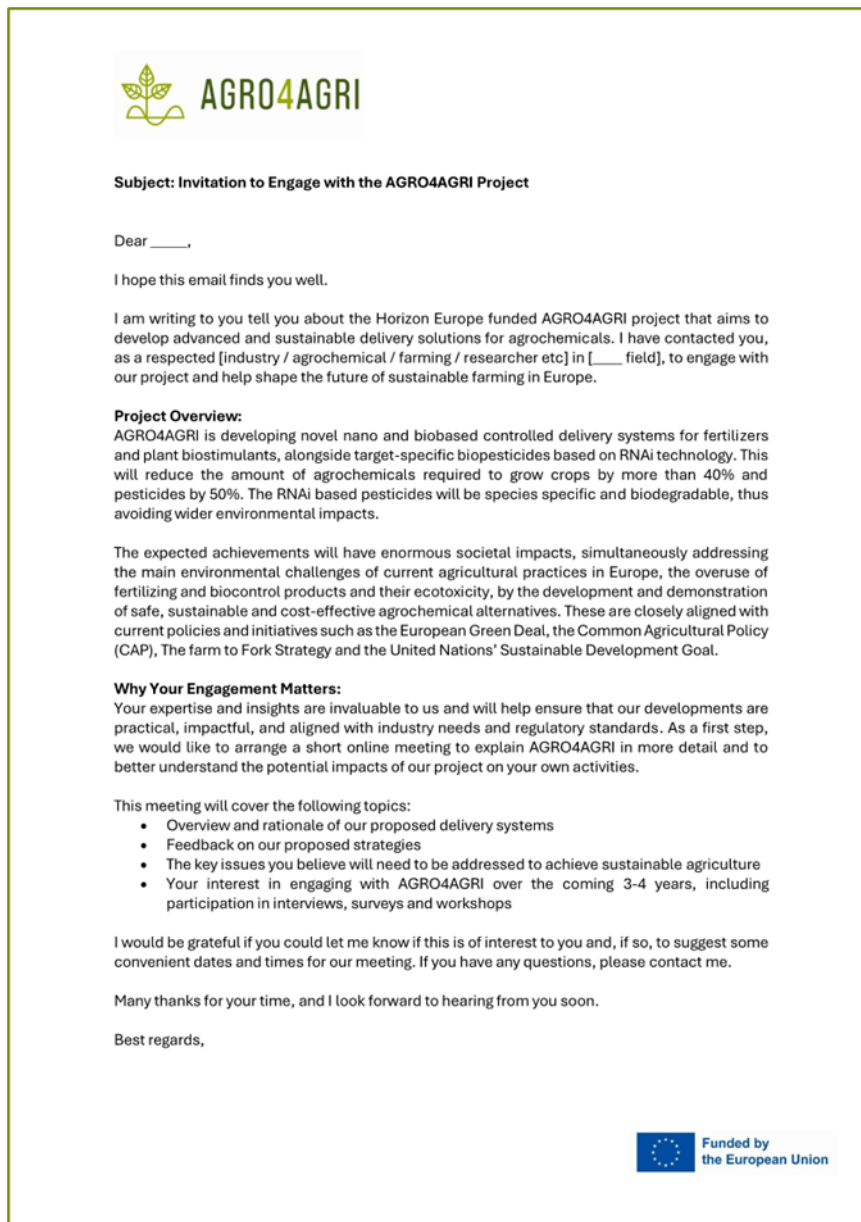


Figure 1. Introductory email to a prospective stakeholder.

At the same time, a ‘broad brush’ approach has also been implemented whereby project communications, [mailshots](#), [reminders](#), social media posts [for example [here](#)] and website news items invite people on a more general basis to register their interest on the stakeholder database.



Figure 2. QR code and linked sign-up form for registering interest

A QR code and a link (<https://bit.ly/A4AComm>) take users to a sign-up form (Figure 2). Since the main database is hosted on MS SharePoint, this registration form auto-populates a list on <https://www.brevo.com>. Registrants can then be contacted to capture further information for the database, including the preferred means and level of engagement.

## 4. Stakeholder Mapping: Analysis, Clustering and Prioritization

### 4.1. The stakeholder matrix

The next phase of engagement entails mapping activities. These analyses help determine how and why stakeholders should be categorized and prioritized for targeting and which engagement methods should be implemented for maximum effect. This process is directed by perceived levels of interest and influence, the stage of the project and the needs of the partners, among other deciding factors.

A standard 2D stakeholder matrix is adapted for AGRO4AGRI’s requirements (Figure 3). This helps to visualize how the stakeholder categories should be mapped into engagement levels.

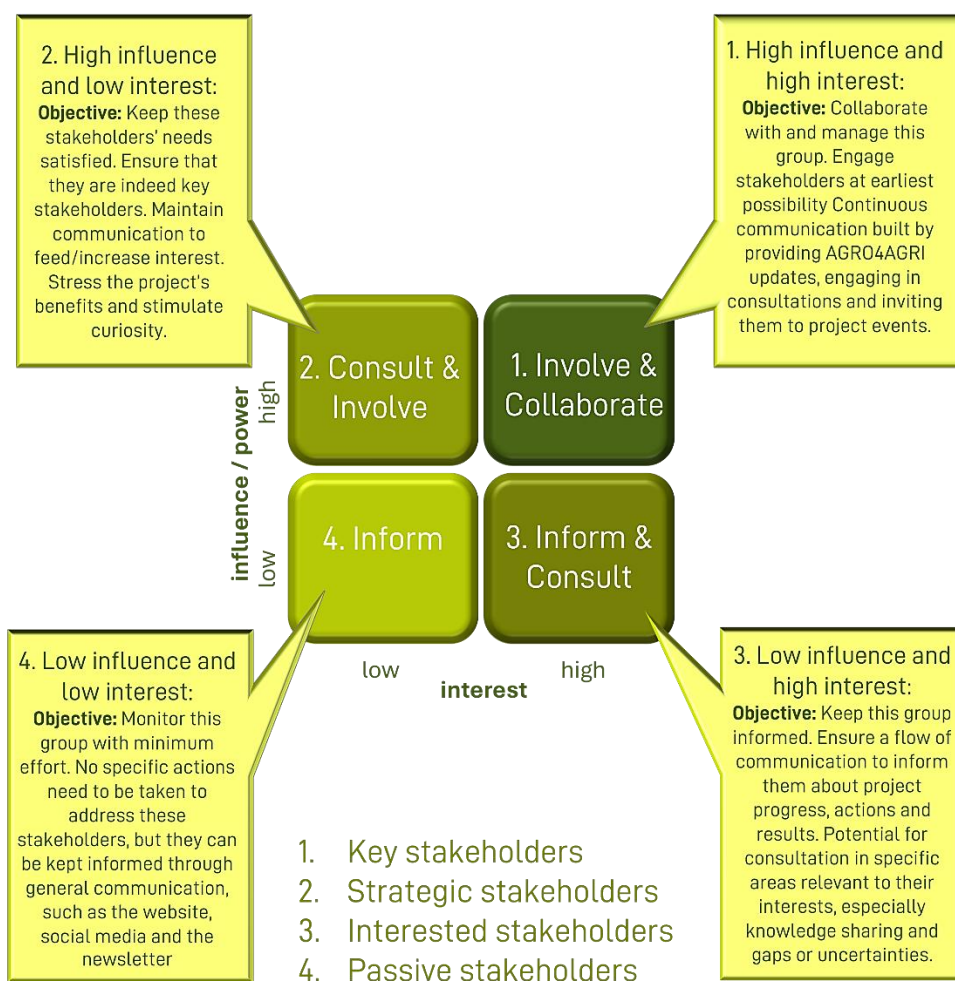


Figure 3. 2D stakeholder matrix adapted for AGRO4AGRI

## 4.2. Engagement levels

The corresponding levels and potential means of engagement, contingent on time, financial and human resources and of course appropriacy, are as follows:

### **Involve and Collaborate**

These stakeholders are actively engaged in the co-creation and execution of project activities. They have a strong interest and are essential to achieving project success.

#### **Key Stakeholders** (High Influence / High Interest)

Actions:

- Invite to participate in advisory boards or expert groups.
- Involve in co-design of methodologies (e.g., SSbD, impact models).
- Offer early access to results and invite technical validation.
- Organize regular bilateral check-ins or focus sessions.
- Include in joint events with other high-level stakeholders.

### **Consult and Involve**

These stakeholders contribute valuable input and feedback. They have medium to high interest but may not have high influence.

#### **Engage Closely** (Medium Influence / High Interest)

Actions:

- Organize participatory workshops or thematic roundtables.
- Offer testing or pilot participation (e.g., demos, stakeholder feedback).
- Tailor communications to reflect their specific use case.
- Involve in dissemination and scenario-building activities.

#### **Involve** (Low Influence / High Interest)

Actions:

- Involve in co-design of use-case scenarios.
- Offer demos or training on project outcomes.
- Use plain-language briefings and clear calls to action.
- Invite to feedback loops or peer-to-peer exchanges.

### **Inform and Consult**

These stakeholders should be kept informed and occasionally consulted for insights and feedback, particularly when their influence is high but interest is moderate.

#### **Keep Satisfied** (High Influence / Medium Interest)

Actions:

- Targeted policy briefs and briefing sessions.
- Include in structured consultation formats.
- Provide short, digestible updates with clear implications.
- Invite to speak at public or technical dissemination events.

#### **Consult** (Medium Influence / Medium Interest)

Actions:

- Engage via surveys and focus groups.
- Consult during milestone reviews or strategy planning.
- Involve in clustering or community-building events.

### **Inform**

These stakeholders require regular communication to maintain awareness and provide transparency. Engagement is mostly one-way.

#### **Monitor Strategically** (High Influence / Low Interest)

Actions:

- Keep informed with high-level updates.
- Engage reactively as interest grows.
- Include in policy-level mapping or foresight dialogues.

**Inform** (Low Influence / Low Interest)

Actions:

- Include in newsletters and website updates.
- Share impact stories and visual content.
- Maintain transparency through accessible reporting

### 4.3. Stakeholder entity categorization

To facilitate the next stage of mapping, a typology is created for the different types of stakeholders so that entity types can be grouped into larger categories (Table 2).

*Table 2. Categories of stakeholders and entity types*

Category	Types of Entities
Input Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seed producers and breeders</li> <li>• Fertilizer manufacturers (including biofertilizers and minerals)</li> <li>• Biostimulants and soil enhancer producers</li> <li>• Pesticide and biopesticide manufacturers</li> <li>• Irrigation technology providers</li> <li>• Agri-tech firms (drones, sensors, climate tools)</li> <li>• Machinery and equipment suppliers</li> <li>• Nanomaterial and encapsulation material suppliers</li> </ul>
Primary Producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers (smallholders, large-scale, organic, conventional)</li> <li>• Grower cooperatives and unions</li> <li>• Contract farming companies</li> <li>• Agri-food SMEs and family farms</li> <li>• Urban or vertical farms</li> </ul>
Research and Innovation Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universities and research institutes</li> <li>• Agricultural R&amp;D centres</li> <li>• EU-funded and national research projects</li> <li>• Living labs and innovation hubs</li> <li>• Plant breeding and biotech companies</li> <li>• Soil science and environmental monitoring labs</li> </ul>
Extension and Advisory Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural extension officers</li> <li>• Farm advisors and consultants</li> <li>• Digital agriculture platforms</li> <li>• Knowledge brokers</li> <li>• Farmer training programmes</li> </ul>
Regulatory and Standardization Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU institutions (e.g. EFSA, ECHA, DG AGRI, DG ENV)</li> <li>• National regulatory authorities</li> <li>• Local environmental agencies</li> <li>• Certification and labelling bodies (e.g. organic, SSbD)</li> <li>• ISO/CEN standardization bodies</li> <li>• Health and safety regulators</li> </ul>
Processing and Storage Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grain storage facilities</li> <li>• Food and feed processors</li> <li>• Milling companies</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bio-based industry users (e.g. for starch, oil, fibre)</li> <li>• Packaging firms (especially if crop-derived)</li> </ul>
Distributors and Retailers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wholesalers and traders</li> <li>• Supermarkets and food retailers</li> <li>• Online food distributors</li> <li>• Feed suppliers</li> <li>• Co-ops and food networks</li> </ul>
Consumers and End-Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Households and individuals</li> <li>• Food service companies</li> <li>• Feedlot and livestock producers (for feed crops)</li> <li>• Industrial users (e.g. bioenergy, textiles, packaging)</li> <li>• Civil society and citizen platforms</li> </ul>
Waste Management and Circularity Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composting and anaerobic digestion plants</li> <li>• Agricultural waste recyclers</li> <li>• Wastewater treatment facilities (e.g. sludge reuse)</li> <li>• Biomass valorization actors</li> <li>• Landfill operators and regulators</li> <li>• Circular economy initiatives</li> </ul>
Policy and Governance Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU policymakers and thematic working groups</li> <li>• National ministries of agriculture/environment</li> <li>• Local government and rural development agencies</li> <li>• Trade and customs regulators</li> <li>• Agricultural finance and subsidy bodies</li> </ul>
NGOs and Civil Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental NGOs</li> <li>• Farmer rights organizations</li> <li>• Consumer advocacy groups</li> <li>• Climate action networks</li> <li>• Food sovereignty and agroecology groups</li> </ul>
Financial and Market Enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Venture capital and agri-tech investors</li> <li>• Development banks (e.g. EIB, EBRD)</li> <li>• Agri-insurance companies</li> <li>• Carbon market brokers</li> <li>• Commodity traders and financial analysts</li> </ul>
Supporting Platforms and Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural platforms and clusters (e.g. ETPs)</li> <li>• Technology and innovation councils</li> <li>• Stakeholder platforms (e.g. SCAR, ETP 'Plants for the Future')</li> <li>• Media and science communication networks</li> </ul>

#### 4.4. Prioritizing the stakeholder categories

These categories are then prioritized for engagement according to two key dimensions:

- Level of interest in AGRO4AGRI, such as thematic relevance, likelihood of uptake, policy relevance
- Level of influence on AGRO4AGRI, such as the extent to which they can impact the project's success and/or broader systemic change

Each category is then labelled 'Key Stakeholder', 'Interested Stakeholder', 'Strategic Stakeholder' or 'Passive Stakeholder'.

- Key stakeholders: high interest, high influence are prioritized for close collaboration.
- Strategic stakeholders: low interest, high influence may require tailored communication and strategic advocacy.
- Interested stakeholders: high interest, low influence are targeted for involvement and empowerment.

- Passive stakeholders: low interest, low influence are to be kept informed about developments through general communications and monitored.

The rationale underpinning the assignment of these labels to each category and how they are prioritized is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Assignment of perceived levels of interest/influence and corresponding prioritization for engagement with rationale

Category	Level of Interest	Level of Influence	Rationale	Engagement Priority
Input Suppliers	High	High	<p>Input suppliers are critical for innovation adoption and materials sourcing. They provide the foundational materials and services needed to grow crops and they are heavily invested in the development and adoption of new agricultural technologies and products. They have significant influence through their control over essential inputs. Seed producers and fertilizer manufacturers have a high interest in the project's outcomes as these will directly impact their product development and market opportunities. They also wield significant influence due to their role in providing essential materials and technologies for agricultural production.</p> <p>-Seed producers and breeders: May shape breeding trends and adopt SSbD-related crops.</p> <p>-Fertilizers/biostimulants/biopesticides manufacturers: Key for AGRO4AGRI compatibility and uptake.</p> <p>-Machinery &amp; irrigation tech providers: Relevant for application, less central to R&amp;D.</p> <p>-Nanomaterial/encapsulation suppliers: Direct relevance to AGRO4AGRI innovation.</p>	Key Stakeholder - Involve and collaborate
Primary Producers	High	High	<p>These are the people and organizations who grow and harvest crops. Farmers and their organizations are directly impacted by the project's outcomes. Farmers and grower cooperatives are key beneficiaries of AGRO4AGRI's solutions, giving them a high interest in the project. Their influence is also high, as they are the end-users of the technologies developed, and their adoption is crucial for the project's success.</p> <p>-Farmers, cooperatives, agri-food SMEs: Essential for adoption. However, they have low direct policy influence, but their collective voice can grow.</p>	Key Stakeholder - Involve and collaborate
Research and Innovation Actors	High	High	<p>These entities - universities, research institutes, and R&amp;D centres have a high interest in the project as it aligns with their research goals and provides opportunities for scientific advancement. They develop, test, and validate new technologies and systems and are involved in developing the knowledge and innovations that drive the project. They have influence through their expertise and</p>	Key Stakeholder - Involve and collaborate

Category	Level of Interest	Level of Influence	Rationale	Engagement Priority
			<p>research outcomes and contribute essential knowledge and expertise to the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research &amp; Innovation Actors: Shape methods and collaborate on validation.</li> <li>- Universities, R&amp;D centres, biotech firms: Key for development, not always politically influential.</li> </ul>	
Extension and Advisory Services	Medium	Medium	<p>These help producers make informed decisions and play a role in disseminating knowledge and facilitating the adoption of project outputs. Agricultural extension officers and farm advisors have a moderate interest in the project, as its outcomes can enhance their service offerings. Their influence is also moderate, as they play a role in disseminating knowledge and facilitating technology adoption among farmers. While they can facilitate knowledge transfer, they have comparative low strategic power.</p>	Interested/Strategic Stakeholder - Inform, consult, involve
Regulatory and Standardization Bodies	High	High	<p>These oversee, assess, and enforce rules and guidance, implementing the regulatory framework that influences the project's direction and the adoption of its results. Their influence is very high. They are the gatekeepers of compliance and SSbD criteria and have regulatory influence over AGRO4AGRI outcomes.</p>	Key Stakeholder - Involve and collaborate
Processing and Storage Actors	Medium	Medium	<p>These entities handle raw crops post-harvest. They are part of the agricultural value chain and have a stake in the quality and sustainability of inputs. Their interest and influence are moderate. Specifically, food and feed processors have a moderate interest in the project, as its outcomes can indirectly affect the quality and sustainability of their inputs. Their influence is moderate, as they form a part of the value chain that AGRO4AGRI aims to impact. They are therefore relevant to downstream use and value chain alignment.</p>	Interested/Strategic Stakeholder - Inform, consult, involve
Distributors and Retailers	Low	Low	<p>These connect crops and crop-based products with markets. These entities are further down the value chain and have a limited direct interest or influence on the project's core activities. Their influence is predominantly over market access and consumer trust.</p>	Passive stakeholder
Consumers and End-Users	Medium to High	Medium to High	<p>Consumers drive demand and shape sustainability expectations. They have a growing interest in food safety and sustainability. However, their influence is increasing as consumer demand shapes agricultural practices. Consumers and consumer advocacy groups have a moderate to high interest in the project, as it addresses concerns about food safety and environmental sustainability. Their influence is potentially high, as consumer demand can drive changes in agricultural practices and policies. Ultimately, they affect demand and social acceptance.</p>	Strategic/Key Stakeholder - Involve, consult, collaborate
Waste Management and Circularity Stakeholders	Low	Low	<p>This group deal with what happens after use. While important for overall sustainability, these stakeholders have a less direct role in the project's immediate outcomes. They have limited direct interest and</p>	Passive stakeholder - Inform, consult

Category	Level of Interest	Level of Influence	Rationale	Engagement Priority
			influence, as the project's primary focus is not on waste management. However, there may be indirect connection if project outputs affect agricultural waste streams. They support the project's circularity aims, but their influence varies.	
Policy and Governance Actors	High	High	Policy and governance stakeholders shape systemic change, incentives, and strategy. These entities alter and shape the policy landscape and help generate funding for agricultural research and development. Their influence is substantial. EU policymakers and national ministries have a high interest in AGRO4AGRI, as its outcomes can inform agricultural and environmental policies. Their influence is substantial, as they shape the regulatory and funding landscape for the agricultural sector.	Key Stakeholder - Involve and collaborate
NGOs and Civil Society	High	High	NGOs and Civil Society stakeholders advocate, monitor, and co-develop solutions. They advocate for environmental protection and social responsibility in agriculture and can significantly influence public opinion and policy. Environmental NGOs and consumer advocacy groups have a high interest in the project, as they are concerned with the environmental and social impacts of agricultural practices. Their influence can be significant, as they can shape public opinion and advocate for policy changes, for example in safety, transparency, and sustainability.	Key Stakeholder - Involve and collaborate
Financial and Market Enablers	Medium	Medium-High	These entities fund and shape market dynamics, as well as provide funding and investment for agricultural innovations. Their interest and influence are moderate but important for commercialization. They can shape risk, investment, and funding priorities.	Interested/Strategic Stakeholder - Inform, consult, involve
Supporting Platforms and Networks	Medium-High	Medium-High	<p>These platforms and networks build capacity, coordinate and communicate. They facilitate collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovation in the agricultural sector. Their interest and influence are moderate.</p> <p>The tech platforms can facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration among stakeholders, giving them moderate interest and influence in shaping project directions and outcomes.</p> <p>The councils play a role in promoting technological advancements and innovation in the agricultural sector, leading to a moderate level of interest and influence in projects like AGRO4AGRI.</p> <p>Platforms like SCAR and ETP 'Plants for the Future' have a high interest in AGRO4AGRI as they are focused on shaping agricultural research agendas and innovation. Their influence is also high as they can drive strategic directions and priorities within the sector.</p> <p>Science and comms networks have a moderate interest in the project for disseminating information and shaping public perception. Their influence is also moderate, as they can impact public awareness and acceptance of project outcomes.</p>	Strategic/Key Stakeholder - Involve, consult, collaborate

Category	Level of Interest	Level of Influence	Rationale	Engagement Priority
			They can enable coordination, dissemination, and clustering.	

#### 4.5. Percentage distribution of identified entities

Following this, the number of entities captured for each category is calculated. This count can take place at any time in the project, for example for KPI assessment or for a stakeholder engagement activity. Currently, there are 180 stakeholders in the database, some of which are affiliated to the same organisation. The percentage distribution therefore takes into account the affiliations as opposed to individuals.

The current distribution is shown below (Figure 4).

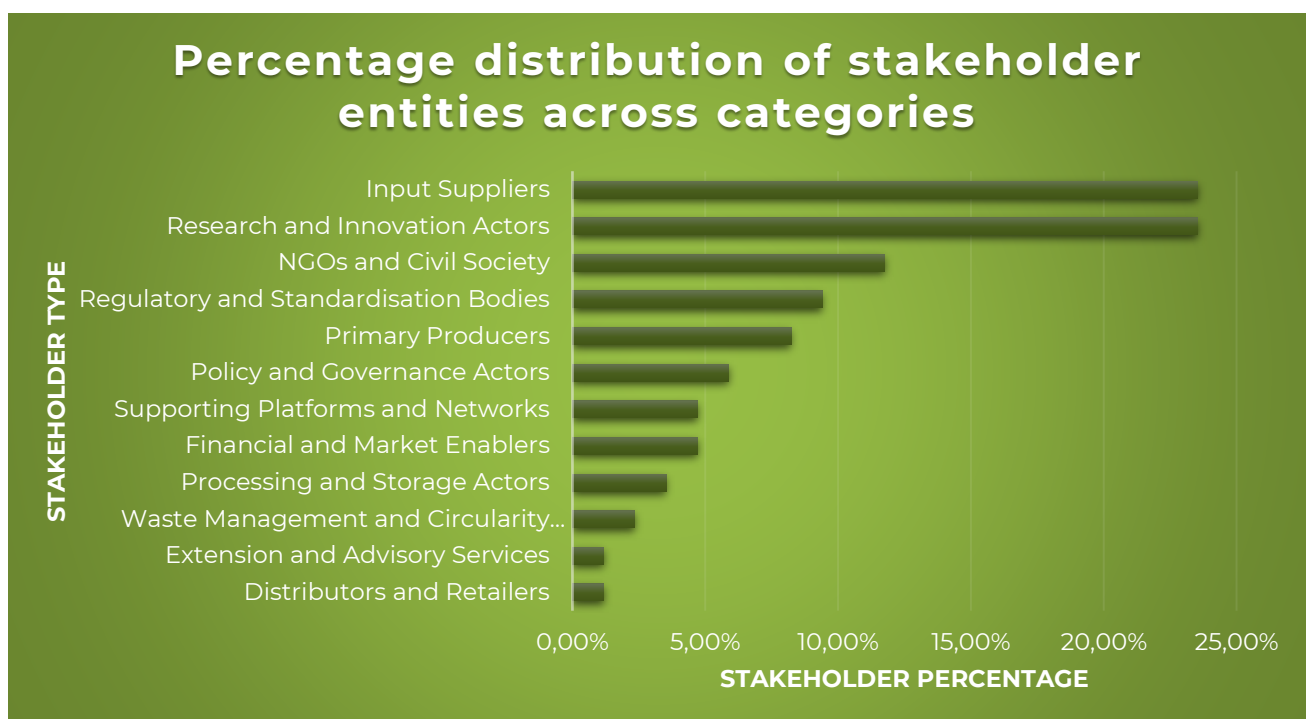


Figure 4. Percentage distribution of stakeholder type

#### 4.6. Mapping the stakeholder categories

To enable the comparative visualization of how stakeholders are prioritized, the main categories are finally mapped onto the 2D matrix according to the perceived levels of interest and influence. The size of the circle represents the current population, i.e. number of stakeholders, of that group in the AGRO4AGRI database.

The matrix serves as a visual and strategic tool that enables AGRO4AGRI to:

- Target resources efficiently
- Tailor engagement intensity and method
- Plan follow-up actions
- Anticipate challenges in uptake or alignment

This matrix will be reviewed regularly as the project evolves, particularly in conjunction with key milestones such as pilot demonstrations, regulatory assessments, or policy developments, and events where certain categories need to be represented. Moreover, priority entities may change over time, depending on the project’s needs and progress. Should this occur, the necessary adjustments can be made. In addition, if one category is seen as being underrepresented, efforts can be made to capture more entities.

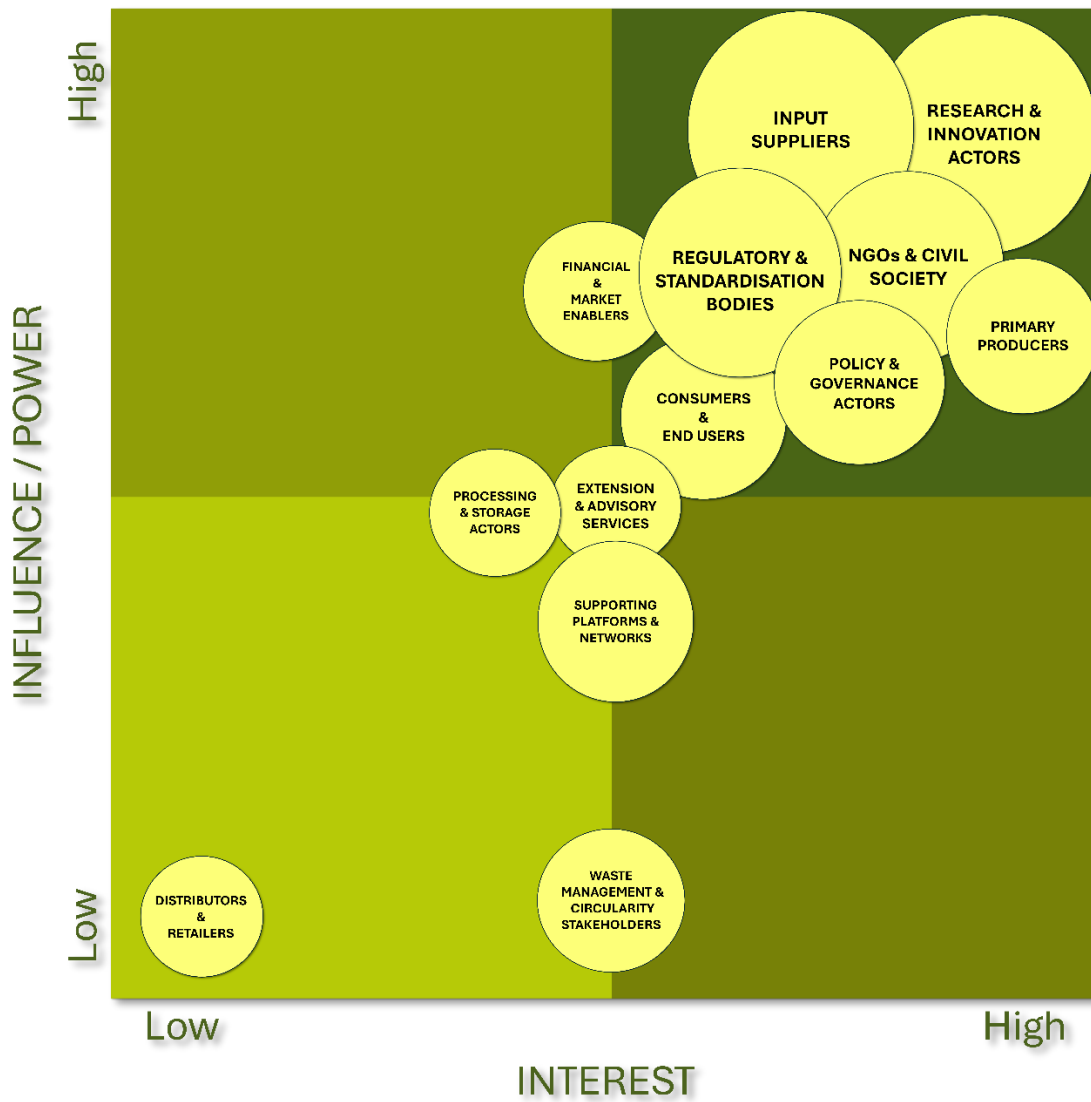


Figure 5. Stakeholder mapping for AGRO4AGRI

## 5. Engaging the Stakeholders

### 5.1. Planning the stakeholder engagement

The stakeholder engagement plan in AGRO4AGRI has been designed to be both strategic and adaptive, ensuring that actual engagement is purposeful, timely, and tailored to the specific objectives of each project phase. Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, the plan takes into account the diversity of stakeholders involved, the complexity of the agricultural innovation landscape, and the need for different types of input at different stages. Engagement is not treated as a standalone activity, but as an integral part of the project's implementation — embedded into the planning of technical work packages, dissemination, and exploitation efforts.

Stakeholder engagement is planned across four main dimensions:

#### 1. Timing

Engagement is mapped to the project's lifecycle, from early scoping and co-creation (e.g. contributing to SSbD design) through to validation, demonstration, exploitation, and post-project impact. Specific phases include:

- **Initial engagement and onboarding:** awareness-raising, stakeholder database sign-up, early consultation via 1:1 introductions, early consultation via survey
- **Mid-term involvement:** co-creation workshops, technical feedback sessions, bilateral meetings
- **Final-phase engagement:** exploitation planning, policy dialogue, and legacy-building activities

#### 2. Stakeholder Type and Role

Each type of stakeholder (e.g. regulators, researchers, SMEs, NGOs, consumers) has a different role to play, and engagement activities are tailored accordingly. For example:

- **Regulators and policymakers** will be invited to review SSbD criteria and discuss enabling policy frameworks.
- **Farmers and industry end-users** will participate in demonstration and feedback loops during WP6.
- **NGOs and civil society** will be engaged on environmental, safety, and ethical considerations.

#### 3. Level of Engagement

Drawing on the engagement levels described in Section 2.2, stakeholders will be engaged through a mix of:

- **Informing** – via newsletters, policy briefs, and updates
- **Consulting** – through surveys, interviews, and thematic workshops
- **Involving** – through interactive discussions, workshops, consultations
- **Collaborating** – in co-design activities, exploitation planning, and advisory roles

#### 4. Methods and Channels

Engagement methods will vary depending on the audience and objective. Planned approaches include:

- **Online tools:** surveys, webinars, sign-up forms
- **In-person/virtual events:** workshops, clustering sessions, demos
- **Bilateral and group meetings:** with key actors, e.g. regulators, investors, or technology developers
- **Knowledge-sharing formats:** factsheets, explainer videos, briefs, and stakeholder feedback loops

The engagement plan is coordinated by WP8 but designed to be collaborative across the consortium. Each partner plays a role in connecting with stakeholders relevant to their expertise, geography, or work package. The

stakeholder database plays a central role in ensuring coordination, consistency, and strategic targeting across all activities.

This strategic engagement planning lays the groundwork for the practical engagement methods, tools and channels described in Section 4.2, which outlines how stakeholders are being — and will continue to be — engaged throughout AGRO4AGRI.

## 5.2. Engagement methods

Engagement methods will be contingent on the engagement priority assigned to each stakeholder according to their perceived levels of interest and influence, and the type of entity, among other factors. The level of engagement described in 0 will also be used as a guide.

Engagement methods suggested for each stakeholder category are shown in Table 4.

*Table 4. Recommended engagement method for each stakeholder category*

Stakeholder Category	Recommended Engagement Methods
Input Suppliers	Technical workshops, bilateral meetings, co-development or testing discussions to ensure compatibility with encapsulation, biostimulants, etc.
Primary Producers	Demonstrations, participatory design, feedback surveys, practical guidelines to support adoption at farm level.
Research and Innovation Actors	Joint publications, living labs, data-sharing, co-development of methodologies, ongoing involvement in SSbD and R&I feedback loops.
Extension and Advisory Services	Practical briefings, webinars, and involvement in field trials. Equip them with messages/tools to reach primary producers effectively.
Regulatory and Standardization Bodies	Policy roundtables, targeted briefings, technical white papers. Frame findings around risk, safety, and regulatory alignment.
Processing and Storage Actors	Technical exchanges on downstream compatibility, discussions on quality, safety and efficiency.
Distributors and Retailers	Scenario workshops on supply chain integration, end-product messaging, and market demand.
Consumers and End-Users	Public-friendly content (infographics, animations), citizen science opportunities, social media engagement, and short surveys on perceptions.
Waste Management and Circularity Stakeholders	Collaboration on life cycle modelling, joint innovation workshops, alignment with circular economy objectives, and end-of-life assessments.
Policy and Governance Actors	Executive summaries, high-level roundtables, clustering with similar EU projects, alignment with EU Green Deal, CAP, SSbD and Horizon Europe missions.
NGOs and Civil Society	Transparent reporting, inclusive dialogues, and impact workshops. Engage through ethics and health lenses.
Financial and Market Enablers	Investment briefings, business model summaries, TRL and scalability updates. Invite input into exploitation planning or market pathway discussions.
Supporting Platforms and Networks	Dissemination support, joint events, alignment with innovation missions. Share materials, tools, and outcomes to multiply visibility.

A comprehensive table showing stakeholder categories, entity types, examples, levels of influence and interest and the corresponding engagement methods that are recommended is provided in Annex 7.1

### 5.3. Engagement strategy

An engagement strategy outline for the first two years of the project has been created and is provided below. It should be noted that these are potential methods that will be selected based on opportunities and needs. Moreover, this is flexible, and additional activities can and will be incorporated when opportunities present themselves, or can be created.

#### Years 1-2

#### Stakeholder Mapping and Initial Outreach

##### 1: Stakeholder Identification and Mapping

- Lead the landscape analysis to identify relevant stakeholders within the research community, agrochemical industry, farming industry, regulatory bodies, NGOs, consumers, and investors.
- Develop a comprehensive stakeholder mapping matrix to categorize stakeholders based on their influence, interest, and potential impact on the AGRO4AGRI project.
- Create a detailed stakeholder database capturing essential information such as contact details, areas of interest, potential influence, and preferred engagement methods.

**Output:** Comprehensive stakeholder map and database

##### 2: Initial Outreach

- Coordinate and execute personalized introductory emails to identified stakeholders, providing an overview of the project and inviting them to participate in initial engagement activities.
- Create a generic PowerPoint for introductory meetings
- Conduct follow-up phone calls or virtual meetings with key stakeholders to discuss their interests and potential involvement in the project.
- Support the dissemination of the first IHS survey <https://forms.office.com/e/YPFzFX7LUQ>. for the participatory impact assessment under task 7.3
- Connect with projects funded under the same call with a view to evolving into joint engagement
  - PHAntastic <https://phantastic-project.eu/> •
  - VINNY <https://www.projectvinny.eu/>
  - BioBIVE

**Output:** Initial engagement emails, introductory meetings, and stakeholder contact logs

#### Communication Infrastructure Development

##### 1: Project Website Launch (FIG)

- Create a branded sign-up form linked to Brevio to auto-populate a list of registered stakeholders
- Create branded QR code linked to the sign-up form
- Ensure the sign-up form is accessible via the website
- Collaborate with the web dev team to ensure the website is user-friendly, informative, and regularly updated with significant project developments and resources to generate and sustain stakeholder interest.

**Output:** Sign up form linked to database, QR code

## 2: Establishment of Social Media Profiles

- Support social media profiles on platforms such as LinkedIn, BlueSky to reach a broader audience
- Support posts and invitations to register.
- Monitor and respond to inquiries or comments to foster active stakeholder interaction.

**Output:** Social media accounts/presence online (FIG)

## First Stakeholder Workshop

### 1: Planning the Workshop

- Define the objectives, agenda, and format of the first stakeholder workshop in collaboration with consortium members.
- Identify and invite key stakeholders to participate in the workshop.
- Develop workshop materials, including presentations, discussion guides, and feedback forms.

**Output:** Workshop agenda, invitation list, and preparation materials coordinated by OPTIMAT and FIG

### 2: Delivering the Workshop

- Host the workshop, ensuring active participation and engagement from all stakeholders.
- Present the project's detailed objectives, expected outcomes, and benefits, emphasizing stakeholder roles and contributions.
- Facilitate interactive sessions to gather stakeholder feedback, identify concerns, and discuss potential improvements.

**Output:** Workshop proceedings and stakeholder feedback collected by OPTIMAT.

### 3: Post-Workshop Analysis and Reporting

- Analyse the feedback and insights gathered during the workshop.
- Prepare a report summarizing the key discussions, stakeholder feedback, and proposed actions.
- Share the report with all workshop participants and project partners. Use the insights to refine the engagement strategy and project plans.

**Output:** Workshop report with actionable insights prepared and distributed

## 5.4. Connections with other work packages

Collaboration with AGRO4AGRI partners is fundamental to the success of the engagement strategy and concomitant activities. The stakeholder engagement strategy is closely integrated with the technical, scientific, regulatory, and impact-driven activities across AGRO4AGRI's work packages, thus stakeholder insights are essential to ensuring that the project's innovations are practical, acceptable, and aligned with end-user expectations. The connections between stakeholder engagement and other work packages are described below:

- **WP1 – Project Management and Coordination:** WP8 contributes to internal coordination by feeding back insights from stakeholders to the Steering Committee and General Assembly. This supports informed decision-making, risk mitigation, and alignment with external developments.
- **WP2 – Process and Solutions Design According to SSbD Principles:** Stakeholder input — particularly from regulators, policy experts, and NGOs — is critical in applying the Safe and Sustainable by Design (SSbD) framework. Engagement activities help WP2 address societal concerns, anticipate regulatory barriers, and align materials and processes with market and policy expectations from the outset.
- **WP3 – Development of Advanced Delivery Systems for Fertilizers:** Engagement with technology developers, researchers, and raw material providers (e.g. biomass and waste stream processors) supports WP3 in selecting and validating nanocarriers (such as biochar, nanocellulose, and mesoporous silica) based on functionality, availability, and sustainability.
- **WP4 – Development of Novel Safe and Sustainable Target-Specific Nematicides:** Dialogue with scientists, biopesticide experts, and regulatory stakeholders informs the selection of target genes, the design of RNAi molecules, and the development of encapsulation methods — all crucial for ensuring regulatory acceptance and public trust in these novel biological solutions.
- **WP5 – Integration and Upscale Formulation of Agrochemical Solutions:** Industry stakeholders, including agrochemical formulators and producers, are central to ensuring that scale-up activities meet technical, economic, and regulatory feasibility. Stakeholder feedback also contributes to assessing shelf life, cost-efficiency, and marketability of the final products.
- **WP6 – Pilot Demonstration of AGRO4AGRI Solutions:** Farmers, agricultural cooperatives, and potential end-users are engaged in field trials and demonstrations to validate the real-world performance of AGRO4AGRI solutions. Their feedback helps refine dosage protocols, assess product efficacy, and increase future adoption potential.
- **WP7 – Environmental, Socio-Economic and Sustainability Assessment:** WP8 supports WP7 by engaging stakeholders in reflection workshops, interviews, and surveys to inform Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), Social and Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA), and ethical evaluations. Insights from regulators, civil society, and farming communities directly influence sustainability criteria and assessment frameworks.
- **WP8 – Dissemination, Communication and Exploitation:** WP8 itself manages stakeholder engagement but also plays a pivotal role in integrating these interactions into dissemination materials, exploitation strategies, policy briefs, and training resources. Stakeholder input contributes directly to identifying key exploitable results, shaping business models, and informing long-term sustainability strategies.

By ensuring ongoing feedback loops between engagement activities and technical work packages, stakeholder knowledge is not siloed, but can help frame AGRO4AGRI's technical, commercial, and policy impacts. These interdependencies heavily underline the importance of all partners actively engaging with stakeholders.

## 6. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating the stakeholder engagement strategy is essential to ensure its effectiveness, responsiveness, and ongoing relevance throughout the project lifecycle. This will be achieved through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, embedded in an iterative process of reflection and adaptation.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) — including the number and diversity of stakeholders engaged, the types and frequency of interactions, response rates to consultations, and quality of feedback — will be tracked systematically through the GDPR-compliant stakeholder database.

Regular updates will capture new contacts, engagement outcomes, and evolving stakeholder interests or influence levels. In addition, qualitative insights will be gathered through post-event feedback, surveys, and bilateral dialogues to assess stakeholder satisfaction, perceived impact, and alignment with project objectives.

This evidence base will inform periodic reviews of the engagement strategy, allowing for recalibration where gaps or challenges are identified, and ensuring that engagement activities continue to add value to the project and its stakeholders.

Ultimately, this monitoring approach supports transparency, accountability, and the development of innovative solutions that are more likely to be adopted, impactful, and aligned with societal needs.

## 7. Conclusion

The AGRO4AGRI stakeholder engagement plan has been designed to establish meaningful, constructive interactions and dialogues across the agricultural value chain, with the aim of fostering collaboration and ensuring that project outcomes are both practical and relevant, and aligned with stakeholders' needs. By mapping stakeholders, continuing to develop a comprehensive database, and implementing tailored engagement strategies at appropriate stages of the project, we can continue to create a robust framework that supports structured interaction and targeted communication.

The progress made so far — from identifying stakeholders, defining stakeholder categories and analysing influence-interest dynamics to initiating outreach efforts — provides a strong foundation for the project's wider engagement activities. However, this is intended as a dynamic, evolving process that will require ongoing refinement and responsiveness to feedback, ensuring that our approach remains relevant and effective.

Moving forward, the emphasis will be on implementing the engagement strategies outlined in this plan, refining them based on practical experience, and continuously updating the database to reflect new contacts, new insights, new developments and emerging priorities. This will be essential for maintaining momentum, building confidence, and ensuring that throughout its duration, the project remains aligned with the interests and needs of diverse stakeholder groups.

Ultimately, success will depend not only on effective dissemination of results, but on the efforts of all partners to actively involve stakeholders in shaping, applying, and validating AGRO4AGRI's findings. Maintaining transparency, fostering inclusivity, and responding proactively to stakeholder feedback will be central to maximizing the project's impact and ensuring that its outcomes are genuinely valuable and applicable.

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## ANNEXES

### 7.1. Annex 1: Table showing stakeholder categories, entity types, examples, levels of interest and influence, rationale, prioritization and recommended engagement methods

Stakeholder Category	Entities	Examples of Entities	Level of Interest	Level of Influence	Rationale	Engagement Priority	Recommended Strategy / Engagement method
Input Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seed producers and breeders</li> <li>• Fertilizer manufacturers (including biofertilizers and mineral)</li> <li>• Biostimulants and soil enhancer producers</li> <li>• Pesticide and biopesticide manufacturers</li> <li>• Irrigation technology providers</li> <li>• Agri-tech firms (drones, sensors, climate tools)</li> <li>• Machinery and equipment suppliers</li> <li>• Nanomaterial and encapsulation material suppliers</li> </ul>	CropLife International, AseBio, Fertilizers Europe, Syngenta Crop Protection, Bayer	High	High	<p>Input suppliers are critical for innovation adoption and materials sourcing. These provide the foundational materials and services needed to grow crops. They are heavily invested in the development and adoption of new agricultural technologies and products. They have significant influence through their control over essential inputs. Seed producers and fertilizer manufacturers have a high interest in the project's outcomes as they directly impact their product development and market opportunities. They also wield significant influence due to their role in providing essential materials and technologies for agricultural production.</p> <p>-Seed producers and breeders: May shape breeding trends and adopt SSbD-related crops.</p> <p>-Fertilizer/biostimulants/biopesticide manufacturers: Key for AGRO4AGRI compatibility and uptake.</p> <p>-Machinery &amp; irrigation tech providers: Relevant for application, less central to R&amp;D.</p>	Key Stakeholder - Involve and collaborate	Technical workshops, bilateral meetings, co-development or testing discussions to ensure compatibility with encapsulation, biostimulants, etc.

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					-Nanomaterial/encapsulation suppliers: Direct relevance to AGRO4AGRI innovation.		
Primary Producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers (smallholders, large-scale, organic, conventional)</li> <li>• Grower cooperatives and unions</li> <li>• Contract farming companies</li> <li>• Agri-food SMEs and family farms</li> <li>• Urban or vertical farms</li> </ul>	ASHA Kisan, Copa Cogeca / Confcooperativa, FAME, Capsa Vida, Bhaikaka farms, The World Vegetable Center	High	High	<p>These are the people and organizations who grow and harvest crops. Farmers and their organizations are directly impacted by the project's outcomes. Farmers and grower cooperatives are key beneficiaries of AGRO4AGRI's solutions, giving them a high interest in the project. Their influence is also high, as they are the end-users of the technologies developed and their adoption is crucial for the project's success</p> <p>-Farmers, cooperatives, agri-food SMEs: Essential for adoption. However, they have low direct policy influence but their collective voice can grow.</p>	Key Stakeholder - Involve and collaborate	Demonstrations, participatory design, feedback surveys, practical guidelines to support adoption at farm level. Use farmer-centric language and co-creation.
Research and Innovation Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universities and research institutes</li> <li>• Agricultural R&amp;D centres</li> <li>• EU-funded and national research projects</li> <li>• Living labs and innovation hubs</li> <li>• Plant breeding and biotech companies</li> <li>• Soil science and environmental monitoring labs</li> </ul>	Calgary University, University of Manitoba, Cornell, University of Queensland; PHAntastic <a href="https://phantastic-project.eu/">https://phantastic-project.eu/</a> VINNY <a href="https://www.projectvinny.eu/">https://www.projectvinny.eu/</a> BioBIVE	High	High	<p>These entities - universities, research institutes, and R&amp;D centres have a high interest in the project as it aligns with their research goals and provides opportunities for scientific advancement. They develop, test, and validate new technologies and systems and are involved in developing the knowledge and innovations that drive the project. They have influence through their expertise and research outcomes, and contribute essential knowledge and expertise to the project.</p> <p>- Research &amp; Innovation Actors: Shape methods and collaborate on validation.</p>	Key Stakeholder - Involve and collaborate	Joint publications, living labs, data-sharing, co-development of methodologies, ongoing involvement in SSbD and R&I feedback loops.

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					- Universities, R&D centres, biotech firms: Key for development, not always politically influential.		
Extension and Advisory Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural extension officers</li> <li>• Farm advisors and consultants</li> <li>• Digital agriculture platforms</li> <li>• Knowledge brokers</li> <li>• Farmer training programmes</li> </ul>	Valoral Advisors	Medium	Medium	<p>These help producers make informed decisions and play a role in disseminating knowledge and facilitating the adoption of project outputs. Their interest and influence are moderate but important for project success.</p> <p>Agricultural extension officers and farm advisors have a moderate interest in the project, as its outcomes can enhance their service offerings. Their influence is also moderate, as they play a role in disseminating knowledge and facilitating technology adoption among farmers. While they can facilitate knowledge transfer, they have comparative low strategic power.</p>	Interested/ Strategic Stakeholder - Inform, consult, involve	Practical briefings, webinars, and involvement in field trials. Equip them with messages/tools to reach primary producers effectively.
Regulatory and Standardization Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU institutions (e.g. EFSA, ECHA, DG AGRI, DG ENV)</li> <li>• National regulatory authorities</li> <li>• Local environmental agencies</li> <li>• Certification and labelling bodies (e.g. organic, SSbD)</li> <li>• ISO/CEN standardization bodies</li> <li>• Health and safety regulators</li> </ul>	Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL), DG GROW.F1-REACH, ECHA, DG SANTE E.4 (Pesticides and Biocides), Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES), EFSA, EPA,	High	High	They oversee, assess, and enforce rules and guidance, implementing the regulatory framework that influences the project's direction and the adoption of its results. Their influence is very high. They are the gatekeepers of compliance and SSbD criteria, and have regulatory influence over AGRO4AGRI outcomes.	Key Stakeholder - Involve and collaborate	Policy roundtables, targeted briefings, technical white papers. Frame findings around risk, safety, and regulatory alignment (EFSA, ECHA, SSbD).

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Processing and Storage Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grain storage facilities</li> <li>• Food and feed processors</li> <li>• Milling companies</li> <li>• Bio-based industry users (e.g. for starch, oil, fibre)</li> <li>• Packaging firms (especially if crop-derived)</li> </ul>	FoodDrinkEurope, FEFAC, Cafes Dromedario	Medium	Medium	These entities handle raw crops post-harvest. They are part of the agricultural value chain and have a stake in the quality and sustainability of inputs. Their interest and influence are moderate. Specifically, food and feed processors have a moderate interest in the project, as its outcomes can indirectly affect the quality and sustainability of their inputs. Their influence is moderate, as they form a part of the value chain that AGRO4AGRI aims to impact. They are therefore relevant to downstream use and value chain alignment.	Interested/Strategic Stakeholder - Inform, consult, involve	Technical exchanges on downstream compatibility, discussions on quality, safety and efficiency. Consider engagement through value chain pilots.
Distributors and Retailers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wholesalers and traders</li> <li>• Supermarkets and food retailers</li> <li>• Online food distributors</li> <li>• Feed suppliers</li> <li>• Co-ops and food networks</li> </ul>	COCERAL	Low	Low	They connect crops and crop-based products with markets. These entities are further down the value chain and have a limited direct interest or influence on the project's core activities. Their influence is predominantly over market access and consumer trust.	Passive stakeholder	Scenario workshops on supply chain integration, end-product messaging, and market demand. Emphasize consumer trends and sustainability metrics.
Consumers and End-Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Households and individuals</li> <li>• Food service companies</li> <li>• Feedlot and livestock producers (for feed crops)</li> <li>• Industrial users (e.g. bioenergy, textiles,</li> </ul>	Not explicitly listed as entities but represented by BEUC	Medium to High	Medium to High	Consumers drive demand and shape sustainability expectations. They have a growing interest in food safety and sustainability. However, their influence is increasing as consumer demand shapes agricultural practices. Consumers and consumer advocacy groups have a moderate to high interest in the project, as it addresses concerns about food	Strategic/Key Stakeholder - Involve, consult, collaborate	Public-friendly content (infographics, animations), citizen science opportunities, social media engagement, and short

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	packaging) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil society and citizen platforms</li> </ul>				safety and environmental sustainability. Their influence is potentially high, as consumer demand can drive changes in agricultural practices and policies. Ultimately, they affect demand and social acceptance.		surveys on perceptions.
Waste Management and Circularity Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composting and anaerobic digestion plants</li> <li>• Agricultural waste recyclers</li> <li>• Wastewater treatment facilities (e.g. sludge reuse)</li> <li>• Biomass valorization actors</li> <li>• Landfill operators and regulators</li> <li>• Circular economy initiatives</li> </ul>	FEAD (European Waste Management Association), AgriLoop	Low-Medium	Low	They deal with what happens after use. While important for overall sustainability, these stakeholders have a less direct role in the project's immediate outcomes. These stakeholders have limited direct interest and influence, as the project's primary focus is not on waste management. However, there may be indirect connection if project outputs affect agricultural waste streams. They support the project's circularity aims, but their influence varies.	Passive stakeholder - Inform, consult	Collaboration on life cycle modelling, joint innovation workshops, alignment with circular economy objectives, and end-of-life assessments.
Policy and Governance Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU policymakers and thematic working groups</li> <li>• National ministries of agriculture/ environment</li> <li>• Local government and rural development agencies</li> <li>• Trade and customs regulators</li> <li>• Agricultural finance and subsidy bodies</li> </ul>	DG Agriculture and Rural Development Unit F2 Research and Innovation, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI.F1), EU CAP, FAO (UN), DG RTD.E3 - Industrial Transformation	High	High	Policy and governance stakeholders shape systemic change, incentives, and strategy. These entities alter and shape the policy landscape and help generate funding for agricultural research and development. Their influence is substantial. EU policymakers and national ministries have a high interest in AGRO4AGRI, as its outcomes can inform agricultural and environmental policies. Their influence is substantial, as they shape the regulatory and funding landscape for the agricultural sector.	Key Stakeholder - Involve and collaborate	Executive summaries, high-level roundtables, clustering with similar EU projects, alignment with EU Green Deal, CAP, SSbD and Horizon Europe missions

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NGOs and Civil Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental NGOs</li> <li>• Farmer rights organizations</li> <li>• Consumer advocacy groups</li> <li>• Climate action networks</li> <li>• Food sovereignty and agroecology groups</li> </ul>	Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe), Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), Friends of the Earth (Europe), Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF), European Environmental Bureau (EEB), La Via Campesina, Greenpeace Europe	High	High	NGOs and Civil Society stakeholders advocate, monitor, and co-develop solutions. They advocate for environmental protection and social responsibility in agriculture and can significantly influence public opinion and policy. In particular, environmental NGOs and consumer advocacy groups have a high interest in the project, as they are concerned with the environmental and social impacts of agricultural practices. Their influence can be significant, as they can shape public opinion and advocate for policy changes, for example in safety, transparency, and sustainability.	Key Stakeholder - Involve and collaborate	Transparent reporting, inclusive dialogues, and impact workshops. Engage through ethics and health lenses. Invite participation in validation
Financial and Market Enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Venture capital and agri-tech investors</li> <li>• Development banks (e.g. EIB, EBRD)</li> <li>• Agri-insurance companies</li> <li>• Carbon market brokers</li> <li>• Commodity traders and financial analysts</li> </ul>	Pascual Innoventures, Yield Lab Europe, Convent Capital, Capagro	Medium	Medium-High	These entities fund and shape market dynamics, as well as provide funding and investment for agricultural innovations. Their interest and influence are moderate but important for commercialization. They can shape risk, investment, and funding priorities.	Interested/ Strategic Stakeholder - Inform, consult, involve	Investment briefings, business model summaries, TRL and scalability updates. Invite input into exploitation planning or market pathway discussions.
Supporting Platforms and Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural platforms and clusters (e.g. ETPs)</li> <li>• Technology and innovation councils</li> <li>• Stakeholder platforms (e.g. SCAR,</li> </ul>	BIOVEGEN - Ecosistema de Innovación Vegetal, EIT Food, EIP-AGRI, Bioeconomy for Change (IAR)	Medium-High	Medium-High	These platforms and networks build capacity, coordinate and communicate. They facilitate collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovation in the agricultural sector. Their interest and influence are moderate. The tech platforms can facilitate	Strategic/Key Stakeholder - Involve, consult, collaborate	Dissemination support, joint events, alignment with innovation missions. Share materials, tools,

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	ETP ‘Plants for the Future’) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media and science communication networks</li> </ul>				<p>knowledge sharing and collaboration among stakeholders, giving them moderate interest and influence in shaping project directions and outcomes.</p> <p>The councils play a role in promoting technological advancements and innovation in the agricultural sector, leading to a moderate level of interest and influence in projects like AGRO4AGRI.</p> <p>Platforms like SCAR and ETP ‘Plants for the Future’ have a high interest in AGRO4AGRI as they are focused on shaping agricultural research agendas and innovation. Their influence is also high as they can drive strategic directions and priorities within the sector.</p> <p>Science and comms networks have a moderate interest in the project for disseminating information and shaping public perception. Their influence is also moderate, as they can impact public awareness and acceptance of project outcomes.</p> <p>They can enable coordination, dissemination, and clustering.</p>		and outcomes to multiply visibility.