DIVINFOOD

**Co-constructing interactive short and mid-tier food chains
to value agrobiodiversity in healthy plant-based food**

Deliverable D7.4

Evaluation of DIVINFOOD Management tools and procedures

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Executive summary

Objectives

The deliverable 7.4 aims to evaluate DIVINFOOD management tools and procedures developed by the coordination and the project management team from INRAE and INRAE Transfert (IT), in order to improve the DIVINFOOD management and ensure maximum efficiency of the related processes and tools. Items evaluated in this report include internal communication, the collaborative workspace, the reporting process, the deliverable and milestone process, meeting organisation, day-to-day assistance and more general questions about DIVINFOOD management and coordination. Evaluation is based on feedbacks collected via an online survey of all DIVINFOOD partners using the tools and procedures put in place for this project.

Rationale

This evaluation took place 23 months after the start of the project, so that the partners have had sufficient time to familiarise themselves with the tools and procedures. In addition, it gives time for the coordination team to take into account the lessons learnt from this evaluation towards the end of the project, implementing corrective actions when possible.

Teams involved

Author: Cassandra Togna (IT)

Internal reviewers: Luca Colombo (FIRAB), Yuna Chiffoleau (INRAE), Laurane Desoutter (INRAE), Vincent Troillard (IT)

1. Introduction

1.1 Objectives

The main objective of deliverable 7.4 is to evaluate DIVINFOOD management tools and procedures developed by the coordination and the project management team from INRAE and INRAE Transfert (IT).

This evaluation was led by the coordination team in order to improve the DIVINFOOD management, bring maximum satisfaction to DIVINFOOD partners and increase efficiency within the consortium. This was done by collecting feedbacks from partners on the different management tools and procedures. A draft action list has been elaborated from participants' feedbacks to adapt them to their needs and expectations (see Annex 1).

1.2 Methodology

Format

The evaluation was in the form of an online survey. The survey has been developed by INRAE Transfert team through EU Survey, a simple free open source tool to use allowing quick answers.

Respondents

In a first step, the survey was sent to all DIVINFOOD active partners (n=90). Then, the main users of the management tools and procedures (WP leaders, representatives of each partner) were specifically invited to answer the survey.

Management tools and procedures evaluated

The different items evaluated in this report are (1) the internal communication, (2) the collaborative workspace, (3) the reporting process, (4) the deliverable and milestone process, (5) meeting organisation, (6) the day-to-day assistance and (7) more general questions about DIVINFOOD management and coordination.

Timing

This evaluation took place 23 months after the start of the project, so that the partners have had the time to familiarise themselves with the tools and procedures. In addition, it gives the coordination team time to take into account the results of the survey for the end of the project, where possible.

The survey was launched for all questions at the same time, at the beginning of January 2024, and partners were given one month to complete the survey. During this period, the DIVINFOOD project manager monitored the response rate, regularly reminded the partners to respond and sent specific emails to the main users of the tools and procedures in order to get their feedbacks first (WP leaders, representatives of each partner).

1.3 Survey and participation

The survey included 60 questions divided into 7 categories. For (i) the internal communication, (ii) the collaborative workspace, (iii) the reporting process, (iv) the deliverable and milestone process, (v) the ExCom, (vi) the General Assembly and (vii) the annual meetings sections.

Thirsty-two (32) persons completed the survey (representing 36% of those active in the project). Annex 2 presents extracts of their feedbacks. Among respondents, six (6) respondents are WP leaders, seven (7) are task leaders, one (1) is member of the administrative services (Financial services), four (4) are General Assembly members and the others (10) are participants in DIVINFOOD's activities. Among the respondents to the survey, most organisations are represented (57%), among them INRAE, PURPAN, CREA, UNIPI, FiBL, SLU, UEvora, BioCivam11, CRBA, FIRAB, AGRI KULTI, ICOEL, OFFr, ACTIA, IPBR.

The section "collaborative workspace" gets the highest response rate, and the related suggestions collected highlight the interest of project members in using this tool.

To complete the evaluation of DIVINFOOD's tools and procedures, data issued from a specific survey on the first annual meeting organisation have also been taken in account. This survey has been sent to each participating DIVINFOOD member just after the event in May 2023. Fifty-eight (58) people were invited to participate and sixteen (16) responded, representing 28% of the participants (see Annex 3: DIVINFOOD Annual Meeting 2023 – Your feedbacks on the meeting).

The results of both the online survey and the first annual meeting evaluation are summarised in this deliverable. This report provides an overview of the feedbacks provided by partners on the relevance and the efficiency of DIVINFOOD management tools and procedures as well as details of the corrective measures taken to improve them.

This report aims to assess the management tools and procedures, but not the effectiveness of the project itself.

2. Results

2.1 Internal Communication

2.1.1 Questions addressed

1. How satisfied are you with your level of information on the progress of the project (overall progress, work of the WPs, communication actions...)? This question concerns the content of the information provided.
2. How would you rate the frequency of communications from the project management team?
3. How would you rate the clarity of the messages sent by the project management team?
4. How would you rate the relevance of the messages sent by the project management team?
5. How would you rate the usefulness of the contact list? Why and how can we improve?
6. How will you be kept informed about the project?

All these questions (except N°6) can be answered by [very satisfied – satisfied – neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – dissatisfied – very dissatisfied] and are followed by two other questions: Why? How can we improve?

2.1.2 Responses from participants

Evaluation of internal communication *(level of satisfaction)*

|	very satisfied	satisfied	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	dissatisfied	very dissatisfied
How would you rate the usefulness of the contact list?	50%	28%	16%	3%	3%
How would you rate the relevance of the messages sent by the project management team?	50%	41%	9%		
How would you rate the clarity of the messages sent by the project management team?	47%	22%	28%	3%	
How would you rate the frequency of communications from the project management…	44%	38%	13%	6%	
How satisfied are you with your level of information on the progress of the project…	38%	38%	25%		

Figure 1. Evaluation of internal communication (n=32)

The internal communication within the project has received mixed reviews based on participant feedbacks. Participants expressed a high satisfaction with their level of information on overall project progress, work packages (WP) activities and communication activities. However, there are challenges in identifying overall progress, especially for those who haven't been able to attend recent annual meetings. The frequency of communication from the project management team is generally rated positively, but participants sometimes find the clarity of the messages insufficient. The relevance of the messages has been rated highly, indicating that the Project Management Team (PMT) is effectively addressing relevant issues. The contact list is considered useful, but two respondents were dissatisfied and very dissatisfied with its usefulness. They mentioned the need for clarity on partner commitment and task timescales, suggesting the creation of specific calendars per partner and clearer definitions of responsibilities.

In detail, the following bar diagram graph (see Figure 2) counts the level of satisfaction expressed by the respondents. All these questions were answered on a scale from 5 - very satisfied, 4 - satisfied, 3 - neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 2 - dissatisfied to 1 - very dissatisfied.
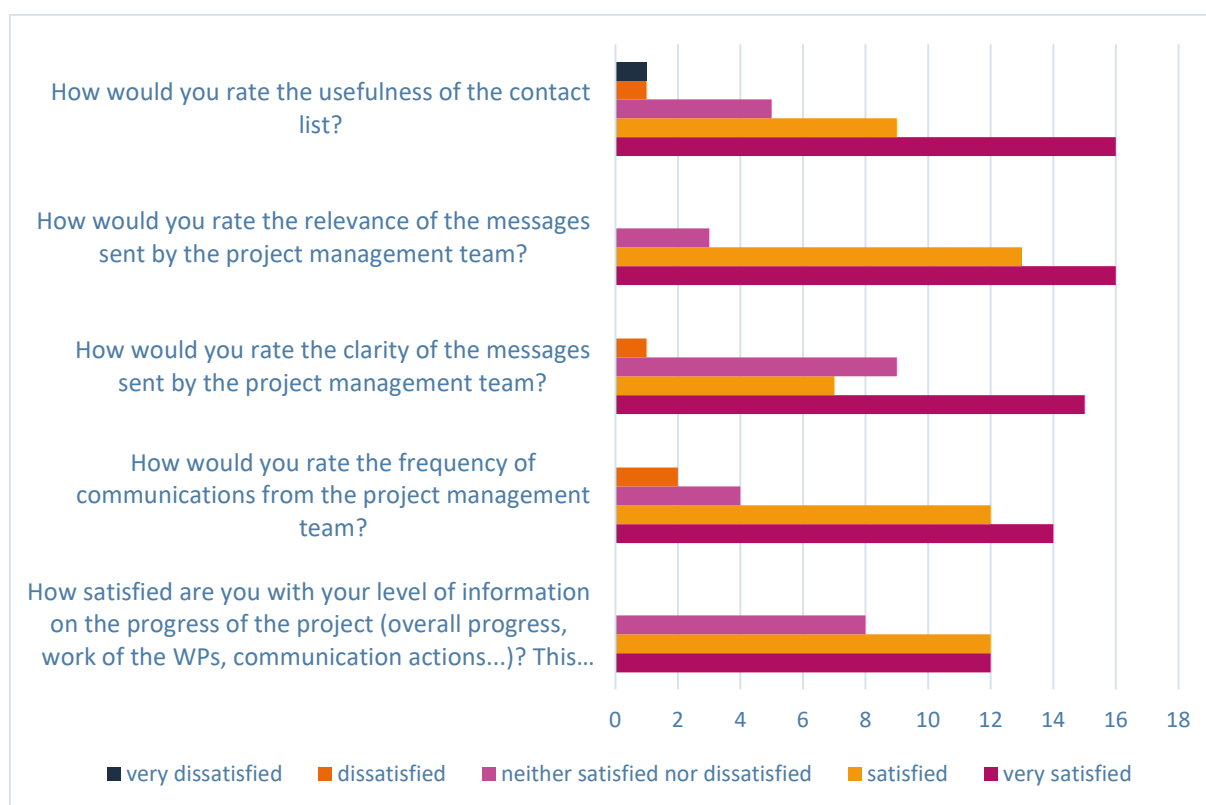
Figure 2. Detailed internal communication ratings (n=32)

Suggestions for clearer and more concise communication could improve understanding (see Annex 2 'Extraction of participants' comments').

2.1.3 Areas for improvement

Based on the feedbacks and responses provided, IT identified some areas for improvement:

1. *Communication about project progress*
   - ❑ Write a new issue of the internal bulletin.
   - ❑ Provide regular updates on different tasks and activities to foster engagement and motivation.
   - ❑ Organise a meeting for the whole consortium to learn about the general progress of the project (per WP and tasks): the format can be a monthly café.

2. *Separate Contact Lists for Work Packages (WPs)*
   - ❑ Clarify whether separate contact lists exist for each WP. If available (e.g., on SharePoint), promote their use for communication between and within WPs.

3. *Improved Communication and Dissemination Activities*
   - ❑ Increase activities from the Communication and Dissemination team.

2.2 Collaborative Workspace

2.2.1 Questions addressed

1. How often do you consult the workspace?
2. Do you find it user-friendly? This question relates to the formatting/articulation of the platform and the tools available, but not to its development, which is independent of the management team.
3. Do you think the workspace is complete enough, with all the information you need to run the project smoothly?
4. What information could be added?
5. How would you rate the ease of access to information? Why? How can we improve the access to information?
6. Which pages do you consult the most? For what purpose?
7. What is the feature that you use the most?
8. Have you used the guidelines provided for the collaboration platform (cf. D7.2)? Why?
9. Do you think another format (online, tutorial, webinar) would be useful to explain the collaborative platform feature? If so, please specify.
10. How would you rate the quality of the collaborative workspace guidelines provided by the project management team at the start of the project?
11. Which of the existing features do you use?
12. Have you ever collaborated on a document with another project member using the collaborative feature of the workspace?
13. What new features would you like to see?

2.2.2 Responses from participants

On the basis of the submitted feedbacks, it is clear that participants consult the collaborative workspace with varying frequency, from once a week to once a year (see Figure 3). While many find it easy to use and appreciate its organisation, some encounter challenges such as difficulty accessing the platform due to technical issues or complex password reset processes. In the context of project SharePoint usage, the figure below represents the distribution of pages that users consult the most (see Figure 4). Each segment corresponds to a specific page type within the project SharePoint.
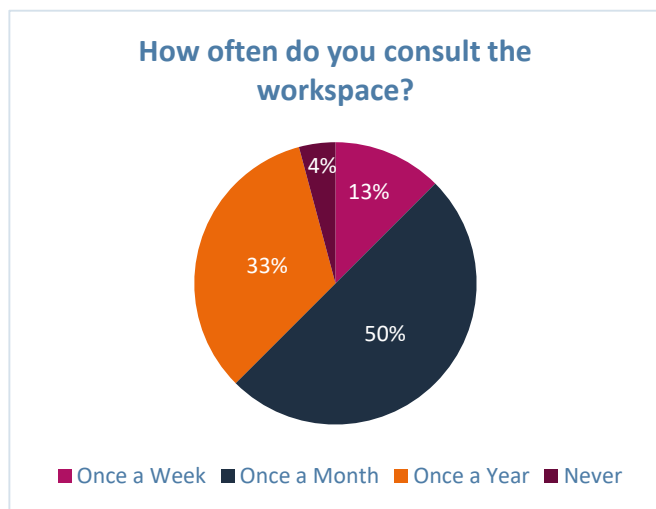

Figure 3. Frequency of use of the collaborative workspace (n=32)

Which pages do you consult the most?
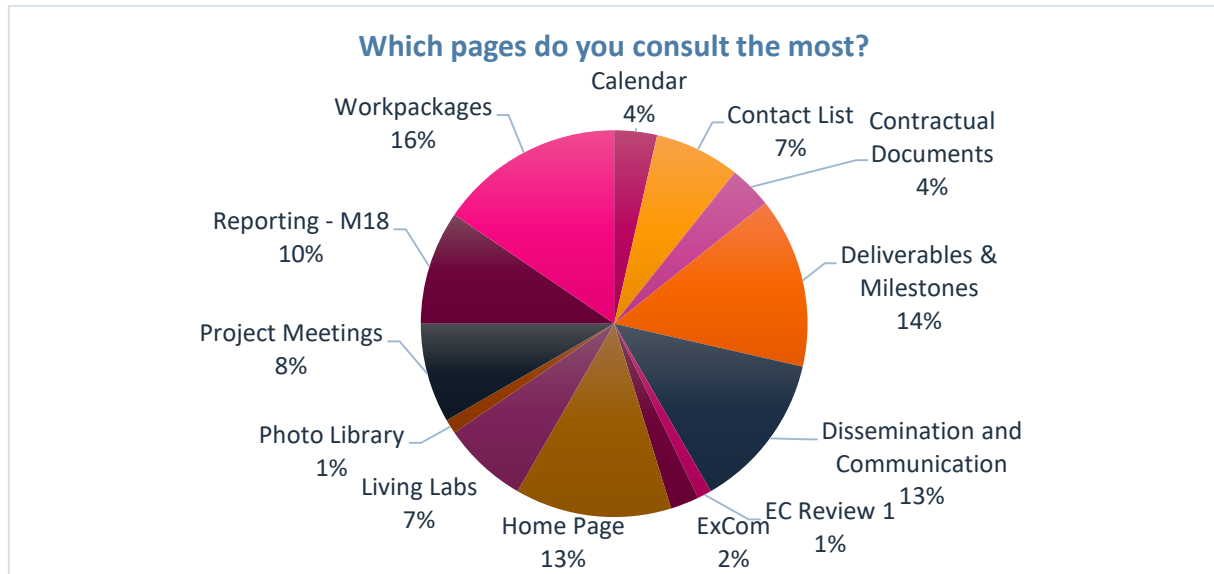
Figure 4. Frequency of use of the collaborative workspace (n=32)

The most consulted categories are "Workpackages" (16% of page consultations), then "Deliverables & Milestones" (14%) and the "Dissemination & Communication" (13%). Pages like "Photo Library", "EC Review 1", and "ExCom" are less frequently consulted, which is understandable as these pages are more recent (and therefore not necessarily yet known) or more specific (e.g., ExCom).

Suggestions for improvement include improving the collaborative features of the platform, ensuring that all project materials are consistently updated and accessible, providing clearer guidelines on platform usage, and offering additional support through webinars or tutorials for partners less familiar with the system. Overall, participants rate the quality of the guidelines provided by the project management team for the collaborative workspace as positive (see Figure 5), but there is a need for continuous improvement to increase ease of access, optimise information finding and facilitate effective collaboration between project members. We would point out that the DIVINFOOD coordinator chose to involve some partners who were not familiar with European projects, in order to amplify the multi-stakeholder approach, which partly explains these feedbacks.

How would you rate the quality of the collaborative workspace guidelines provided by the project management team at the start of the project?
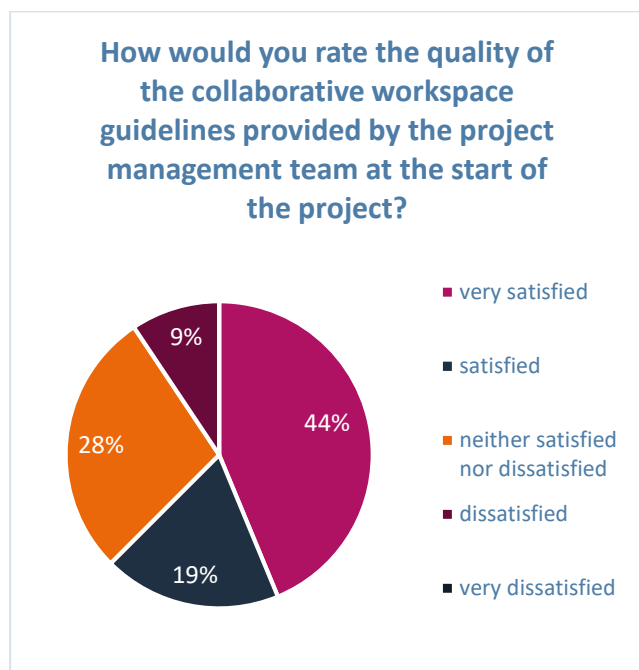
Figure 5. Participant ratings of collaborative workspace guidelines

2.2.3 Areas for improvement

The following recommendations will be addressed to the ExCom according to the feedback received:

❑ Guidance and support: Update deliverable D7.2 "DIVINFOOD Collaborative Workspace Guide" in line with the latest changes to the collaborative platform and a complementary more user-friendly PPT document.

❑ Communication: Share/Promote the deliverable more widely among partners and organise a café session to present it.
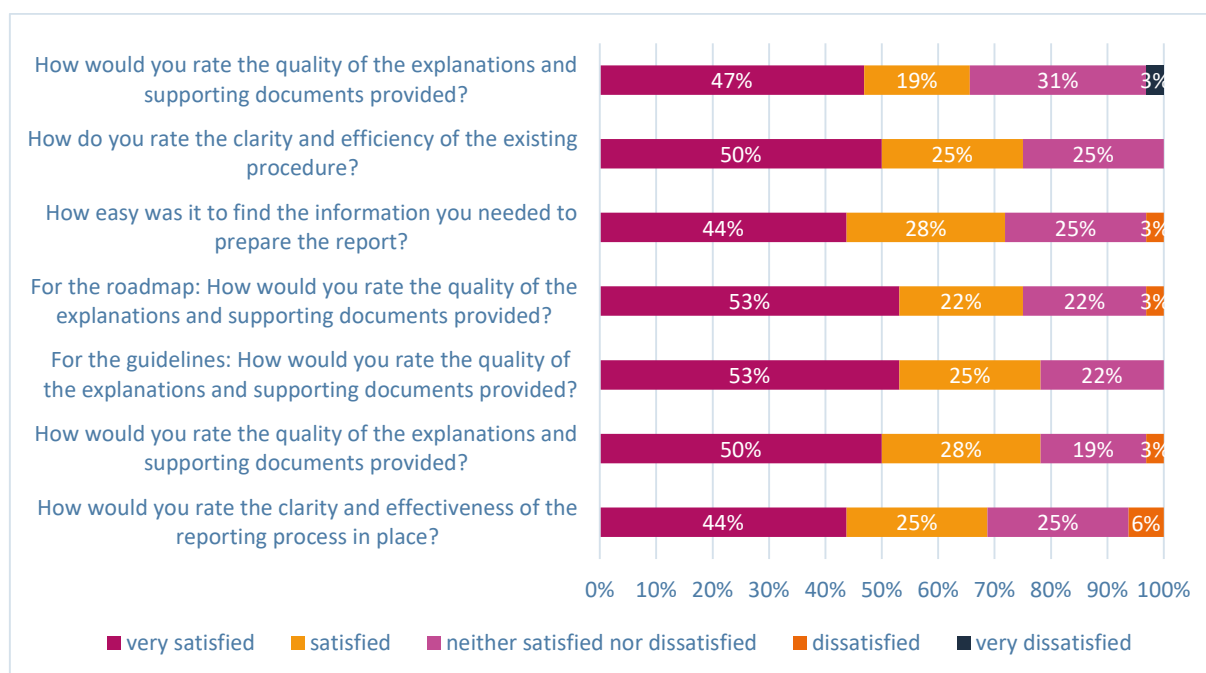
2.3 Reporting Process

2.3.1 Questions addressed

1. How would you rate the clarity and effectiveness of the reporting process in place?
2. Which documents were the most useful for you to prepare the technical report (at the partner or WP level)? If other, please specify.
3. Which documents were the most useful for you to prepare the financial report (at the partner or WP level)? If other, please specify.
4. For the templates: How would you rate the quality of the explanations and supporting documents provided?
5. For the guidelines: How would you rate the quality of the explanations and supporting documents provided?
6. For the roadmap: How would you rate the quality of the explanations and supporting documents provided?
7. How easy was it to find the information you needed to prepare the report?
8. Do you have any suggestions for improving the reporting process for the next periodic report?
9. How do you rate the clarity and efficiency of the existing procedure?
10. For templates: How would you rate the quality of the explanations and supporting documents provided?

2.3.2 Responses from participants

Figure 6. Evaluation of reporting procedure (n=32)

Regarding the feedbacks received (see Annex 2, Extraction of participants' comments) on the reporting process, some participants found the information and guidance provided to be very satisfied (47%) to satisfied (19%), others identified challenges (3% of respondents reported being dissatisfied). One partner mentioned that the guidelines on cost justification were unclear, which led to time-consuming efforts to prepare the report. The need for multilingual accessibility was also raised, underlining the importance of taking into account different linguistic backgrounds within the project consortium. While some participants appreciated the organisation of the process (53% are very satisfied and 22% are satisfied) and found the support provided useful, others highlighted difficulties in collecting and merging information from different sources (represented by 6% of respondents who expressed dissatisfaction), indicating a need for improved the use of the collaborative workspace in this process.

In summary, while the reporting process received generally positive feedbacks, there are clear areas for improvement, including improving the clarity of guidelines, providing better support for smaller partners, ensuring multilingual accessibility, and improving the tool for collecting and collating contributions.

2.3.3 Areas for improvement

The following recommendations for improving the reporting process will be addressed by the project management team based on the feedbacks received for the next periodic report:

- ❑ Ensure that the guidelines for cost justification and other project related aspects are clear and concise.
- ❑ Provide information and documents in multiple languages.
- ❑ Support smaller partners who may be unfamiliar with European project procedures, even if the first report exercise will undoubtedly have been formative.

❑ Simplify the process of compiling information from multiple sources for more efficient reporting – using the collaborative workspace.

2.4 Deliverables and milestones

2.4.1 Questions addressed

1. For procedures: how would you rate the quality of the explanations and supporting documents provided?
2. How would you rate the frequency of the reminders for deliverable and milestone?
3. Are you a leader of a deliverable or milestones, or a WP leader?
4. What documents and processes do you find useful for preparing deliverables and/or milestones?
5. For deliverables and milestone reminders: Is the list of recipients well targeted?
6. Are the contents of the reminders clear?
7. Do you have any suggestions for improving the deliverables process?

2.4.2 Responses from participants
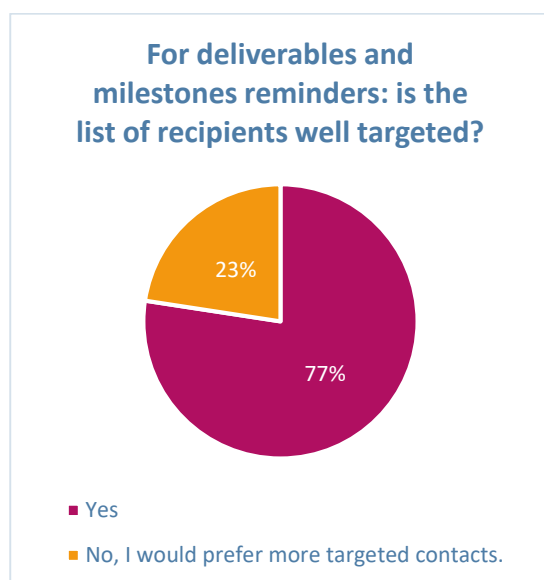
Figure 7. Evaluation of the targeting of deliverables and milestones reminders (n=32)
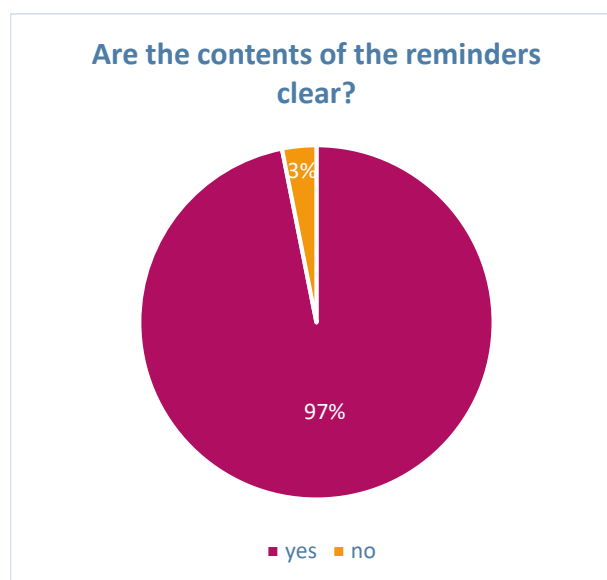
Figure 8. Evaluation of the clarity of reminders

According to respondents, the quality of the explanations and supporting documentation provided for deliverables and milestones is rated as good by 82% of respondents (n=32). Some partners expressed concerns about not receiving responses after reaching out with questions or submitting reports via email. The absence of milestone reminders was another issue raised, indicating a need for improvement in the communication strategy.

2.4.3   Areas for improvement

Based on the feedbacks received, the following recommendations are addressed:

1. *Deliverable Format*
    - ❑ Consider improving the official template for deliverables: make it more readable and visually appealing; allow flexibility in language and format to reflect participant needs.

2. *Reminders*
    - ❑ Include not only authors but also the WP leaders and internal reviewers in deliverable and milestone reminders.
    - ❑ Ensure all relevant participants receive timely notifications.

3. *Roadmap*
    - ❑ Provide clearer information about each partner's milestones and roadmap.
    - ❑ Take into account the right time for planning, involvement, and data sharing related to deliverables.

4. *Monitoring tool*
    - ❑ Improve the monitoring tool to make it easy to access and communicate on the different stages of the deliverables (already accessible on the collaborative workspace - SharePoint).

2.5 Executive Committee

2.5.1   Questions addressed

1. Are you a member of the ExCom?
2. How would you rate the frequency of the ExCom meetings?
3. How would you rate the preparatory documents for the meeting (agenda, other documents)?
4. How would you rate the quality of the minutes?
5. How would you rate the minute format?
6. Why? Do you have any suggestions for improving the ExCom meetings and minutes?

All these questions (except N°1 and N°6) can be answered by [very satisfied – satisfied – neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – dissatisfied – very dissatisfied] and are followed by two other questions: Why? How can we improve?

2.5.2 Responses from participants
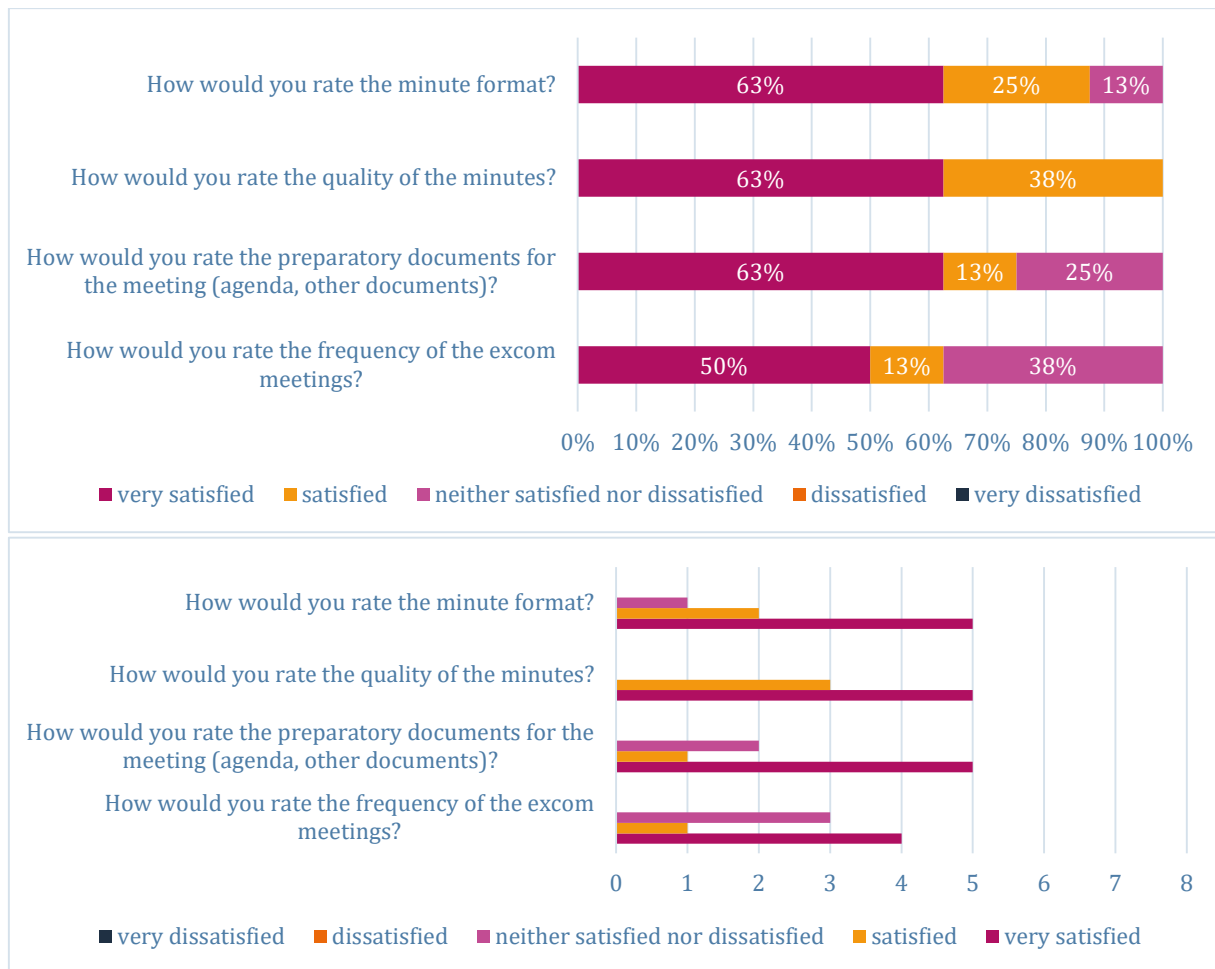
Figure 9. Evaluation of the Executive Committee (n=8)

The Executive Committee (ExCom) received positive feedbacks in general (regarding its frequency, the preliminary documents, the quality and format of the minutes). Participants expressed satisfaction with the existing format and found the minutes to be complete and easily accessible on SharePoint.

2.5.3 Areas for improvement

Based on the feedbacks provided, the following recommendations for improving ExCom meetings and minutes can be addressed:

❑ Facilitate access to meeting minutes on the project's collaborative workspace – SharePoint.
❑ Allow more time for open discussion: encourage open participation and feedbacks during ExCom meetings to create a collaborative atmosphere.
❑ Look at additional ExCom meetings: Consider adding 1-2 additional ExCom meetings per year to facilitate participatory organisation of the annual meeting agenda.

2.6 General Assembly

2.6.1 Questions addressed

1. Are you a member of the General Assembly?
2. How would you rate the frequency of the meetings?
3. How would you rate the preparatory documents for the meeting (agenda, other documents)?
4. How would you rate the quality of the minutes?
5. How would you rate the minute format?
6. Do you have enough information to vote when asked to?
7. Why? Do you have any suggestions for improving?

All these questions (except N°1, N°6 & N°7) can be answered by [very satisfied – satisfied – neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – dissatisfied – very dissatisfied] and are followed by two other questions: Why? How can we improve?

2.6.2 Responses from participants
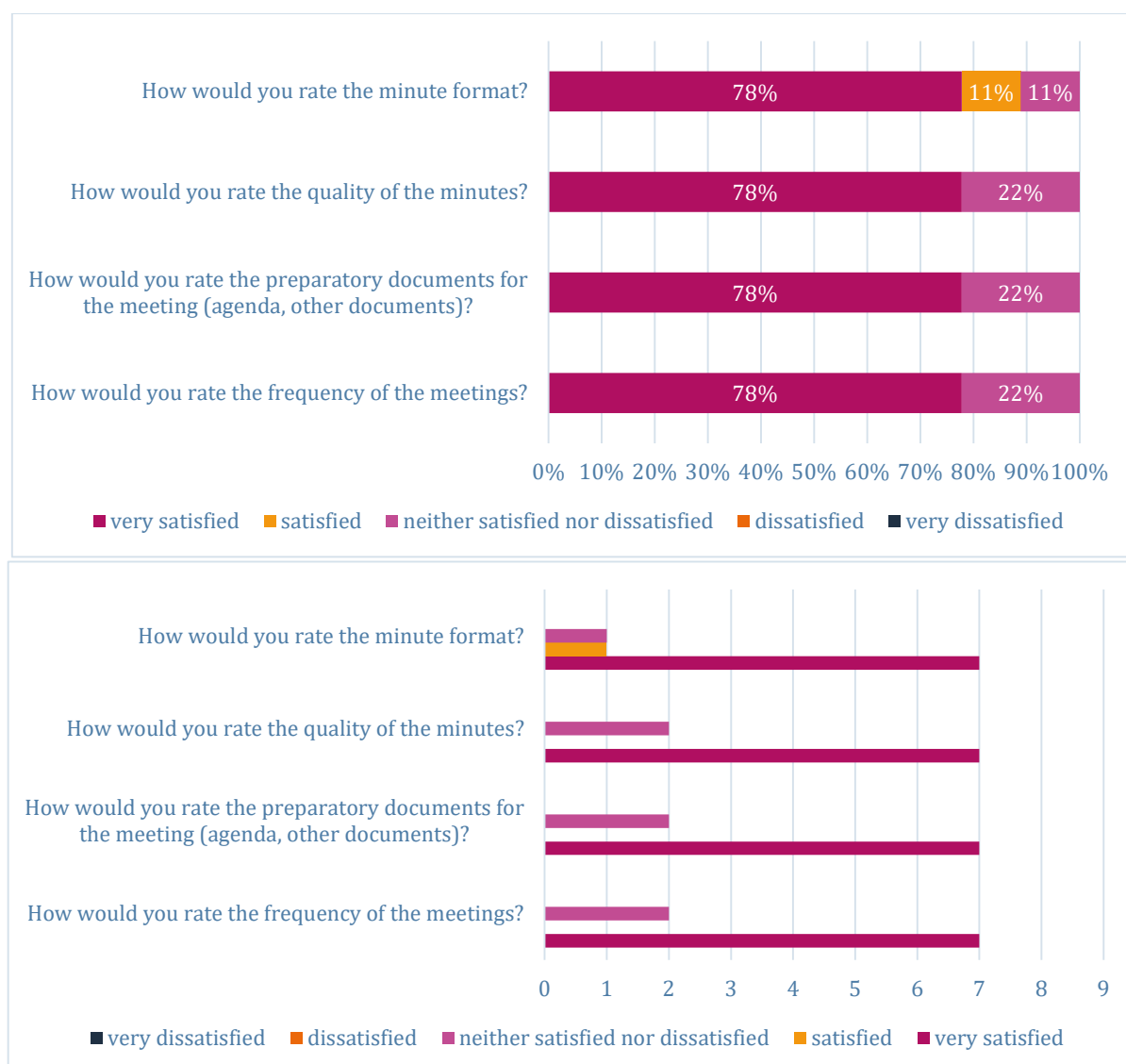
Figure 10. Evaluation of the General Assembly (n=9)

The General Assembly (GA) meetings received positive feedbacks on their frequency, the preparatory documents, the quality and format of the minutes. Participants appreciated the existing format and had no specific suggestions for improvement. Additional recommendations have been expressed:

1. Increase the visibility of the General Assembly: make the GA more visible within the context of the Annual Meeting.
2. Vote for next annual meeting location at the General Assembly: encourage members of the GA to vote on the next location of the annual meeting during the GA session.

Overall, maintaining the current format while increasing the visibility of the General Assembly and involving participants in location decisions can contribute to positive upcoming general assemblies.

2.6.3 Areas for improvement

According to respondents, the recommendations for improving the General Assembly are:

❑ Make the General Assembly more visible within the context of the Annual Meeting to ensure broader participation and engagement.
❑ Include a vote for the next Annual Meeting location as part of the General Assembly agenda to involve all members in the decision-making process.

2.7 Annual Meeting

2.7.1 Questions addressed

1. Have you attended the DIVINFOOD Annual Meeting?
2. How would you rate the format of the Annual Meetings as proposed in previous Annual Meetings?
3. How would you rate the preparatory documents for the meetings (agenda, other supporting documents)?
4. How would you rate the format of the exchanges in these meetings?
5. How would you rate the minute's format?
6. How would you rate the break times during the meeting?
7. Why? Do you have any suggestions for improving?

All these questions (except N°1 & N°7) can be answered by [very satisfied – satisfied – neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – dissatisfied – very dissatisfied] and are followed by two other questions: Why? How can we improve?

2.7.2 Responses from participants
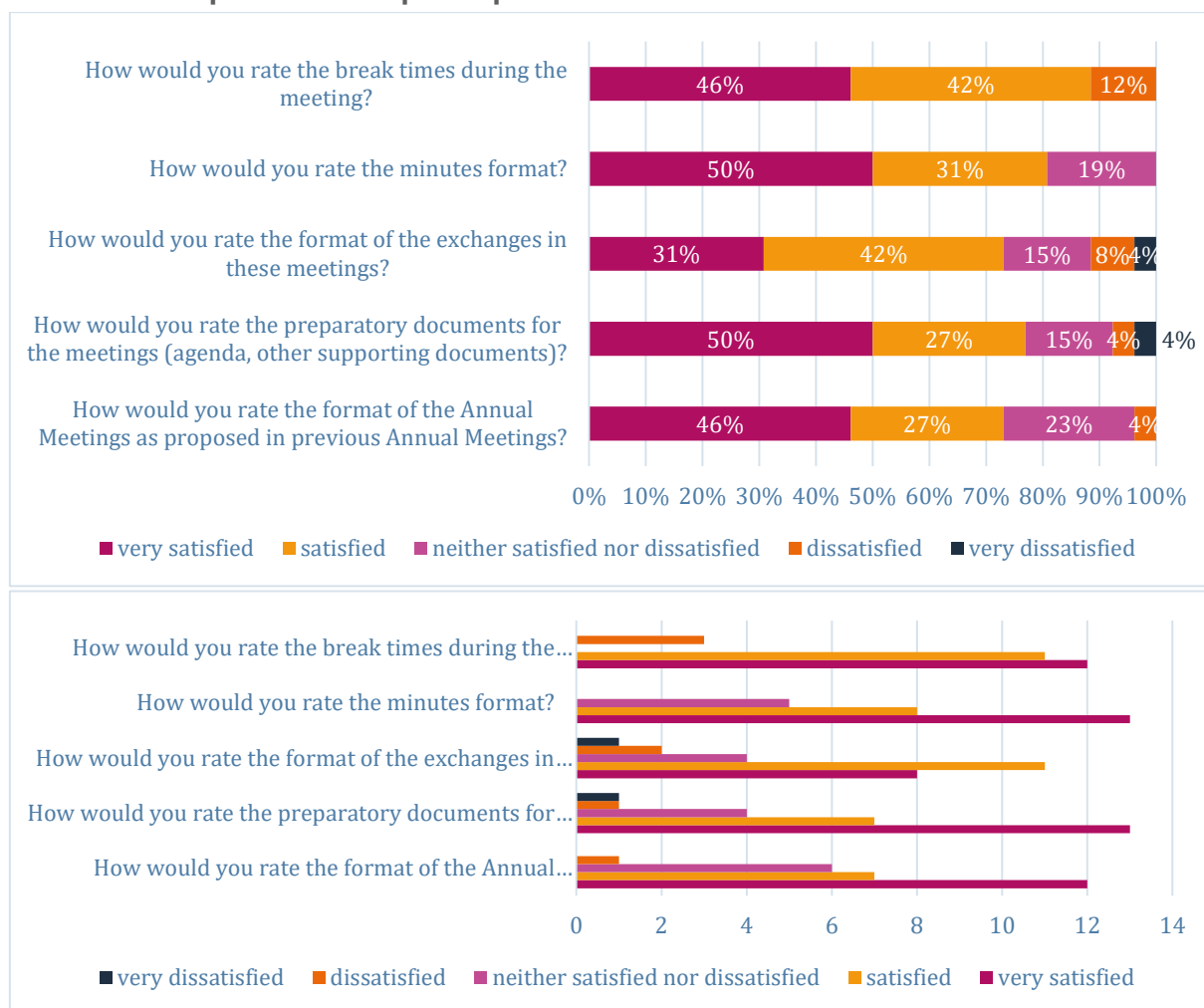
Figure 11. Evaluation of the Annual Meetings (n=26)

According to the feedbacks from participants and the specific survey conducted after the Annual Meetings, the format, the preparatory documents, the format of the minutes and the break times of the Annual Meetings have been rated positively. At the same time, there are still areas for improvement. Despite the high level of satisfaction (78%), participants in the comments section expressed dissatisfaction with the format of the exchanges during the meetings and mentioned a lack of dynamism during the meetings. Suggestions include the introduction of more dynamic formats such as smaller group discussions and interactive workshops, as well as the introduction of parallel programmes to cater for different interests. Logistical issues such as excessive daily travel and time lost in transport also need to be addressed.

Recommendations include extending the schedule to allow for more informal interactions and improving communication by ensuring timely distribution of preparatory documents. In addition, involving work package leaders in agenda development, conducting online pre-meetings and streamlining content can improve the effectiveness of future annual meetings. Providing more opportunities for networking and discussion during breaks is also recommended to encourage collaboration and build relationships among participants.

2.7.3 Areas for improvement

Based on these feedbacks, we have made the following recommendations for the improvement of the next annual meetings:

- ❑ Clarify the objectives and targets of the meeting to ensure alignment with participants' expectations, especially regarding involvement of professionals like farmers.
- ❑ Increase interaction and involvement of Work Package (WP) leaders in the development of the Annual Meeting agenda and activities.
- ❑ Organise an ExCom meeting online before the Annual Meeting to save time and resources.
- ❑ Make the meeting more dynamic and participatory, by encouraging for example small group activities and parallel programs to meet different interests and needs.
- ❑ Provide more opportunities for informal exchanges and networking among partners during breaks, potentially by extending break times or reducing the number of workshops.
- ❑ Ensure efficient transport and accommodation arrangements to minimize time lost in transit between conference venues and hotels.
- ❑ Consider the ecological impact of the meeting, particularly in terms of travel, and explore ways to reduce it, such as virtual participation options or organizing parallel events closer to participants.

3. Conclusion and perspectives

Only 32 people out of 90 completed the survey (36%), which seems rather low despite the various reminders. This could be explained by the timing of the survey (just after the Christmas holidays). The length of the survey, which was designed to be exhaustive on all management points, could also explain the low response rate.

In order to improve the methodology, the different parts of the questionnaire could be sent out at different times during the project and not in a single package, as did at the end of the first annual meeting: the same process could be done at the end of a reporting period, etc. In fact, it seems more effective to send shorter questionnaires at the end of a process than to send a single questionnaire on several topics at once.

The improvements summarised below will be prioritised, implemented and monitored by the Project Management Team, who will translate them into an action plan (see Annex 1: Draft action list). Whereas most improvements will directly benefit DIVINFOOD, some long-term developments will benefit the next projects managed by INRAE Transfert. This deliverable and the action plan will be shared with partners. The Project Manager will report regularly on the implementation of the action plan towards the Executive Committee.

Summary of recommendations

Internal Communication

Write a new issue of the internal bulletin.
Provide regular updates on different tasks and activities to foster engagement and motivation
Organise a meeting for the whole consortium to learn about the general progress of the project (per WP and tasks): the format can be a monthly café.
Separate Contact Lists for Work Packages (WPs): Clarify whether separate contact lists exist for each WP. If available (e.g., on SharePoint), promote their use for communication between and within WPs.
Improved Communication and Dissemination Activities: Increase activities from the Communication and Dissemination team.

Collaborative Workspace

Guidance and support: Update deliverable D7.2 "DIVINFOOD Collaborative Workspace Guide" in line with the latest changes to the collaborative platform and a complementary more user-friendly PPT document.
Communication: Share/Promote the deliverable more widely among partners and organise a café session to present it.

Reporting Process

Ensure that the guidelines for cost justification and other project related aspects are clear and concise.
Provide information and documents in multiple languages.
Support smaller partners who may be unfamiliar with European project procedures, even if the first report exercise will undoubtedly have been formative.
Simplify the process of compiling information from multiple sources for more efficient reporting – using the collaborative workspace.

Deliverables and milestones

Deliverable Format: Consider improving the official template for deliverables: make it more readable and visually appealing; allow flexibility in language and format to reflect participant needs.

Reminders: Include not only authors but also the WP leaders and internal reviewers in deliverable and milestone reminders. Ensure all relevant participants receive timely notifications.
Roadmap: Provide clearer information about each partner's milestones and roadmap. Take into account the right time for planning, involvement, and data sharing related to deliverables.
Monitoring tool: Improve the monitoring tool to make it easy to access and communicate on the different stages of the deliverables (already accessible on the collaborative workspace - SharePoint).

Executive Committee

Facilitate access to meeting minutes on the project's collaborative workspace – SharePoint.
Allow more time for open discussion: encourage open participation and feedbacks during ExCom meetings to create a collaborative atmosphere.
Look at additional ExCom meetings: Consider adding 1-2 additional ExCom meetings per year to facilitate participatory organisation of the annual meeting agenda.

General Assembly

Make the General Assembly more visible within the context of the Annual Meeting to ensure broader participation and engagement.
Include a vote for the next Annual Meeting location as part of the General Assembly agenda to involve all members in the decision-making process.

Annual Meetings

Clarify the objectives and targets of the meeting to ensure alignment with participants' expectations, especially regarding involvement of professionals like farmers.
Increase interaction and involvement of Work Package (WP) leaders in the development of the Annual Meeting agenda and activities.
Organise an ExCom meeting online before the Annual Meeting to save time and resources.
Make the meeting more dynamic and participatory, by encouraging for example small group activities and parallel programs to meet different interests and needs.

Provide more opportunities for informal exchanges and networking among partners during breaks, potentially by extending break times or reducing the number of workshops.

Ensure efficient transport and accommodation arrangements to minimize time lost in transit between conference venues and hotels.

Consider the ecological impact of the meeting, particularly in terms of travel, and explore ways to reduce it, such as virtual participation options or organizing parallel events closer to participants.

4. Annexes

4.1 Annex 1: Draft action list

The PMT has compiled a draft action list, outlining specific steps to address each area for improvement. This list will serve as a roadmap for improving management practices during the project lifecycle.

#	What	Who	Estimated delivery time
	Internal Communication		
1	Write a new issue of the internal bulletin.	IT	March 2024
2	Organize a monthly/quarterly café meeting for the whole consortium		
3	Increase activities from the Communication and Dissemination team	WP6 leader and deputy	
	Collaborative Workspace		
4	Update deliverable D7.2 "*DIVINFOOD Collaborative Workspace Guide*" in line with the latest changes to the collaborative platform and a complementary more user-friendly PPT document.	IT	June 2024
5	Share/Promote the deliverable D7.2 more widely among partners and organise a café session to present it.	IT	Continuous
	Reporting Process		
6	Simplify reporting process	IT	March 2025 and the next reporting periods
7	Ensure clear guidelines		
8	Provide information in multiple languages		
9	Support smaller partners		
	Deliverables and milestones		
10	Improve deliverable template	IT with the support of WP6 and INRAE	Continuous
11	Revise and update the list of reminders recipients	IT	
	Executive Committee		
12	Facilitate access to meeting minutes	INRAE, IT, ExCom	Continuous
13	Encourage open participation		
	General Assembly		
14			
	Annual Meeting		
15	Clarify objectives, involve WP leaders, organize online ExCom meeting, encourage the organisation of meeting dynamic and participatory, provide networking opportunities, ensure efficient transport and accommodation, consider ecological impact.	INRAE, IT, ExCom and the annual meeting organizing team	Continuous improvement leading up to each annual meeting and beyond

4.2 Annex 2: Extraction of participants' comments

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION
Why and how can we improve?
I think there are sometimes a long waiting time form sending an e-mail to getting an answer back. E.g. I sent the D2.5 report recently but never heard back from anyon. It would have been nice with a "Thank you for the delivery of the report - we will look into it and get back to you if something is missing, the report is approved etc".
Thinking about it here, it is a bit difficult to to have an idea of the overall progress of the project incl. progress of different work packages. However, I couldn't attend the last meeting in Portugal, where I guess participants got at sufficient overview of Divinfood as a hole. Thus, it is partly my own fault. I think the yearly physical meetings is a good opening for getting this information.
Clarify the overall engagement of 1 partner, and time needed for the tasks according to the DOA. Example it is hard to follow all dimensions of the project, but it would be great to have a specific calendar per partner, with the tasks we are involving/leading only. It is still pretty unclear if LL coordination means involving in all activities or not.
It would be interesting to have a project management tool (like Team, or Slack ?) where there is an easier way to communicate (different than mails). It could help to visualize the advance of project by uploading some unfinished version of the deliverable, and to have access to a global calendar where the meeting take place to see the evolution of each living-lab.
We would need more general updates on the different tasks and activities to be truly included and feel more engaged and motivated in the project
If possible translate message in French for those who are not fluent in English for having same understanding
I am still unsure whether there are separate contact lists for each WP available somewhere. If there was such a thing e.g. on SharePoint, it would make communication between WPs and within WPs easier.
More activities from the Communication and Dissemination team. Info to the global mailing list for achievend Milestones / Deliverables with a short summary.
Overall I am satisfied
COLLABORATIVE WORKSPACE
What would you suggest for improvement?
Not very friendly in the 1st version (e.g. impossible to download/upload several files, some bugs...). Better now. The process to get accesses to the sharepoint seem complicated and it is not very flexible regarding the movements in human resources in the engages partners
Need for greater fluidity and instinctiveness
It is not clear who has to make eventual changes on it
The layout changes regulary (mainly the homepage, the place of the reporting documents, monitoring tool) It would be nice if this did not change quite often.
What information could be added?
A channel to discuss by task, a more dynamic calender with the workshop and living lab meeting registered, and advanced on the task project and deliverables. (Which living lab is where, if late, why do they have troubles, etc).
See my comment above about contact lists. Also, I don't think every WP uploads all materials/it is often unsure whether things need to be uploaded here or sent to different leaders/members.
Milestones and deliverable deadlines, name of the reviewers are not updated regulary. There is no regular email sent about upcoming events (online/international workshops organized by project partners in the frame of DIVINFOOD)
In the workspace, we can usually find the final materials, work materials are not there, and the intermediate steps and timing of some tasks are not well-tracked
Why? How can we improve the access to information?

I don't miss anything on the platform.
better explanation of the tools we are suppose to use to bring info about what is happening from a partner side. E.g. a toolkit of what we are suppose to upload such as meeting reports... Also some specific tools have been thought to keep track of events in the LL, but at the end it was just overwork since it did not help for reporting.
The folders and documents inside are not complete.
At the moment it works well- no need to improve it.
Need for greater fluidity and instinctiveness
It's ok like this
there are many working groups and the addresses are not always very clear
Make the INRAE workspace more collaborative
I thing the problem is mine (regarding network) sometime the code does not work well
I think that the structure is logical and I can usually find what I need.
Information is already well organised
The information available at SharePoint is good, but it is SO DIFFICULT to get in and have access to the platform. It takes an hour each time because of incorrect password etc. where its very hard to get a new password and the communication in this process is French.
For some WPs / Tasks the files are not up to date. It seems that not all material produces is online.
Remind Task leaders that all the files produced for the project should be updated "
I find that the accessabilty of information in any collaborative workspace is often limited to some degree by the (sometimes complex and counterintuitive) structure of the workspace itself. It helps to consult the workspace frequently, which is my own responsability.
This platform seems easy to use for me
I'm satisfied with the workspace
For me the present ease of access is good
I suggest that you could receive specific e-mail notification of sharepoint uploads for each of the marked surfaces.
I think it is accessible enough.
The SharePoint structure are very well designed
Do you think another format (online, tutorial, webinar) would be useful to explain the collaborative platform feature? If so, please specify.
webinar/tutorial could be great so people think they need only can participate Also it could be great to have a support contact (I supposed it was INRAE TRANSFER?)
I have not used it before so could be fine with and introduction to the features, but it's easy to use and find documents so worked fine anyway I think.
For partners who are less familiar with SharePoint, webinar
It would be good to receive information when new important documents are posted.
How would you rate the quality of the collaborative workspace guidelines provided by the project management team at the start of the project? Why? How can we improve the access to information?
Workspace was in an early version with problems
Nothing to be improved.
I wasn't there for the KickOff meeting
Sorry, I don't know which guidelines you are referring to...
I never used it
It's ok like this
too many pages to read
Access is good, but It's sometimes hard to do collaborative work with the tools we have
Often reminder (if new or important information shared) to consult (sometime we still being busy with our daily work)
I found the introduction to the platform clear.

Information is already well organised
Have not been introduced, but maybe because I haven't been in the project from the very beginning. If you are new underway of the projects, some introduction could be fine, also for colleagues who are new in the project.
I was not aware that such guidelines existed
I'm satisfied with the guidelines
For me the quality of the collaborative workspace guidelines is good
I have no suggestions
The guideline was informative and useful.
I think it is accessible enough.
What new features would you like to see? Please specify.
visioconference
Research time on going (for exchange/sharing of methods or approches used in case of similary topic)
'Edit in Excel' mode not working only 'continue in browser". Working in desktop app would be useful.
REPORTING PROCESS
Please rate from 1 - 'very dissatisfied' to 5 - 'very satisfied': For the templates: How would you rate the quality of the explanations and supporting documents provided? For the guidelines: How would you rate the quality of the explanations and supporting documents provided? For the roadmap: How would you rate the quality of the explanations and supporting documents provided? How easy was it to find the information you needed to prepare the report? Why? How can we improve?
I think the information and guiding was sufficient.
"Guidelines on justifications of costs were unclear; most of the reporting process have been time consuming because of a bad DOA writing so building on that was hard because most of the expenses weren't foreseen.
Also we need to emphasis on small associations and partners that are not familiar with european projects and big money procedures. Since we did not have a specific colleague on that it was very time consuming for a technician to get on this..."
Nothing to improve.
very well organized - nothing to improve I think
Les échanges et les documents devraient être accessible dans notre langue.
It's ok like this
direct communication to WP leaders
Everything was clear
Summary in French of guidelines / milestones / some financial template
the process was well managed within INRAE.
Clearer and more harmonised sharing of info
Everything went fine, good email communication with
I'm satisfied with the documents
The problem is that to prepare the report we need to merge information from very different sources and this is what I find more difficult. To compile all the information from the different sources.
The support was very useful and helped me whenever I needed it. The guidelines and roadmap were clear.
DELIVERABLES AND MILESTONES
For deliverables and milestone reminders: Is the list of recipients well targeted? Please specify.

I am not sure how to answer this question, but we tried to reach out with some questions when writing the D2.5 Report but never heard back. We did not hear anything back when we submitted the report by email either...
I didn't have any list of contact for the deliverables.
All possible recipiente
I would suggest to always include the WP leader + internal reviewer of the related milestone / deliverable in the reminders and not only the authors.
I think it is adequate, however I haven't looked at it in detail since the milestones and deliverable I am responsible for are not due until month 40 and beyond. My response concerns both the list of recipients and content of the reminders.
reminders about scientific deadlines should be sent only to the researchers of the partners teams, and not the project partner management staff.
Are the contents of the reminders clear? Do you have any suggestions for improving the deliverables process?
The official deliverable template is hardly readable and very ugly. Why not have more flexibility on the deliverable format, including language, so we can truly create deliverables that make sense for the project but can also be useful for field stakeholders and farmers?
I think there were not enough emphasis on what is the roadmap per partner and it's own milestones calendar (with Deliv leading, and mainly for all the ones we need to involve, participate, bring data and informations... bref the right time we need to plan for this)"
Maybe a few more reminders about upcoming deadlines.
To provide more time to prepara and digeste information
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Why? Do you have any suggestions for improving the ExCom meetings and minutes?
I think that the minutes are complete and easy to find in the sharepoint.
To consider extra-meetings if and when relevant
In general, I am very happy about the ExCom meetings. Have more time for open discussion and questions. Often too short time. Maybe 1-2 more ExCom meetings for a participatpry organisation of the annual meeting agenda
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Why? Do you have any suggestions for improving the ExCom meetings and minutes?
nothing, I think that the format is good.
Make more visible the General Assembly in the context of the Annual Meeting. Vote for next AM location in thee General Assembly.
ANNUAL MEETING
Why? Do you have any suggestions for improving?
Very unclear for the targets of the meeting. We made large organization efforts to bring professionals farmers etc.... But nothing was planned for them!! We had to organize ourself in parallel a program in Portugal for them.
The format including field visits and working time is good. Having social moments like the dinner was great also.
But the working time were sadly organized... not participatory, boring.... As I keep it in mind we spent two full days sat listening conferences!! Moreover people engaged in just one specific part were just losing time 90% of the meeting! The format has to change totally to be more dynamic like small groups etc. Following a visioconference 60 person in an amphitheater is also a bit sad...
We need absolutely two parallel program: internal working sessions (dynamic, fun, concrete), and a parallel program with visits, practical, cultural, artistic?, natural, etc experiences... So the moment one is not directly concerned by the internal work session, one cans escape to do something fun and have a nice interesting experience travelling by plane to the other side of europe!
Rating the ecological impact of such a meeting??? (60+ people taking flights, sometimes for 1-2 days...)"

i arrived at months M14 only so i cannot compared with previous annual meeting. The program was quite booked and there where a lack of ice-breakers for exchange with other partner during the break. And maybe there is a need to gather the members involved in the task of the following year so that they can more easily contact each other to exchange and help.
I only attended one Annual meeting - the 2023 one. It was great. The only difficulty is that it was very packed - lots of meetings, presentations, etc. It may be inevitable, since we only meet once a year, or we could think of leaving more "open" spaces for informal get-togethers between the partners which I found really useful. Maybe longer breaks then? Or shorter sessions?
More focus by WP
less workshps
Increase break time (as an opportunity to discuss with WPs Leaders or individual exchange between participants
I think that some of the session formats could have been improved. The purpose of all of the activities was not fully clear. Are we supposed to be advancing on collective work together or just reporting activities/results?
I believe that the annual meeting held in Portugal in the Spring of 2023 had a schedule that was way too overcrowded. It lacked time for informal meetings/breaks when we could get together with the colleagues whereas several presentations were held where the information delivered could have been sent out via e-mail. If the same amount of programs should be kept for 2024' annual meeting, I would consider extending it with one extra day - allowing for more effective work on all days.
Greater interaction on contents
Very good to meet other participants, it really improves the collaboration afterwards. Maybe even more social networking at the annual meetings because it's very fruitful to talk and discuss instead of listening to information that you could read or listen to online - but really take use of the situation that we are physically together.
The ExCom meeting before the Annual Meeting was not very useful. Rather do that online 1-2 week before the event?
I would suggest to include more the WP leaders in the development of the Annual meeting agenda and activities.
My response concerns the kickoff meeting in Lyon, March 2022. I did not attend the annual meeting 2023.
To much daily travel (From Tomar to Alvaziere) and too long days/program.
Due to the location (Tomar - Alvaiazere), a lot of time was lost in transport between the conference venue and the accommodation. It is better if it is also possible to travel individually between the locations.
The preparatory documents and the agenda were very useful, but we received them a little late on the spot. :)
The annual meeting was well organised. Supporting documents were superb, too bad they arrived only on the last day.The dinner on the second day was a bit too late, found it hard to concentrate the next day. Sometimes found informal chats in the breaktimes very fruitful
The meeting was very well attended, but not all parts were interesting/relevant for all participants. Having parallel sessions, divided into working groups to discuss certain issues could make the process run more smoothly.

4.3 Annex 3: DIVINFOOD Annual Meeting 2023 – Your feedbacks

klaxoon   👤 16

DIVINFOOD AM 2023 - Your feedbacks on the meeting

Nombre de participants	16
Nombre de questions	8

Question 1
How would you rate the information received prior to the meeting?

`évaluation avec commentaires`

★★★★☆   **4,1**
                              Moyenne du groupe

commentaire

Marion ESTEVE
★★★★★
Very clear and precise informations about the organisation, the venue and accommodation

klaxoon   👤 16

Question 2
How would you rate the meeting organisation?

`évaluation avec commentaires`

★★★★☆

3,8
Moyenne du groupe

commentaires

gjard
★★★☆☆
Du travail en petits groupes (répartition dans des petites salles) aurait été préférable. Départ tôt et retour tard à Thomar assez fatigant

chicharo!
★★★☆☆
The first official meeting day (Tuesday) was long but really well balanced - more formal meeting time in the morning with plenary and workshop sessions, then visits in the afternoon. Wednesday was the opposite : too much sitting down, insufficient interaction and collective sessions, it felt more like an ex-com meeting with too many people feeling excluded/lost, and it was difficult to follow and stay focused. Some presentations also felt like they were prepared last-minute, the audience definitely felt that...would have been nice to have a structure resembling more that of Tuesday with less formal presentations and more interactive workshops (a few "interactive" workshops were not so interactive in practice...), i.e. more work in small groups One final comment regarding the local LL in Alvaiazere : would have been nice to have more time to interact and exchange with the stakeholders, beyond just the short panel discussion we had Tuesday evening...I think they could have been more integrated into our sessions. Overall I learned a lot about the Chicharo but feel that half of the meeting time could have been better organized. The coffee breaks and social time was great for getting to know better DIVINFOOD participants. Thank you !

s
★★★☆☆
Personally I think that the meeting's schedule was way too tight. The fact that there was approx. 8 hours in the day between us leaving the group and meeting again, this left way too little time for sleeping, personal hygiene, etc (meaning I slept approx 4 hours each night and didn't even have time for washing my hair…) For me, this meant a huge drop of productivity as the meeting progressed. I also think some of the events on the stakeholder day were unnecesarry. + I know that the lack of nametags was due to a lost baggage, but I'm sure some could have been printed in Portugal…

Marion ESTEVE
★★★★★
Very good organisation

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Question 3
How did you like the content of sessions?

évaluation avec commentaires

★★★½☆

3,5
Moyenne du groupe

commentaires

gjard
★★★☆☆
Trop d informations et pas assez de détail sur les wp nous concernant. Un travail par LL d une part et par WP aurait été nécessaire.

chicharo!
★★★☆☆
I prefer for workshop/group sessions, and there was not enough of that the workshop on ecosystem services felt a bit top-down in that the criteria were already decided beforehand, would have been nice to see which criteria emerge from each group

DVF
★★★☆☆
Quite big variations in the sessions. But good with workshops and interactions and the poster presentations. The field trip was a very good break from the more formal sessions.

S
★★★★☆
Workshops were useful, however, I found many events on the stakeholder day somewhat pointless. Instead, more time could have been allocated to the different WP workshops.

Marion ESTEVE
★★★★★
Interesting and important to have a review of all the WP and Living Lab. some information not always useful for everybody but interesting to see which issues other WP or LL can find

klaxoon 👤 16

Question 4

How did you like the programme in general?

`évaluation avec commentaires`

★★★★☆

3,8
Moyenne du groupe

commentaires

gjard
★★★☆☆
Des sessions parallèles ou visites ou travail au choix aurait été plus profitable pour les stakeholders et ceux pas impliqués dans toutes les tâches. Il aurait fallu avoir plus de stakeholders pour plus d intérêt

participant
★★★☆☆
Long Tuesday (too long)

DVF
★★★☆☆
Big variations and with too long breaks. In my opinion it could have been more efficient.

klaxoon 👤 16

Question 5
How was the timing of sessions?

`évaluation avec commentaires`

★★★☆☆

3,2
Moyenne du groupe

commentaires

participant
★★☆☆☆
Need small breaks Wednesday

gjard
★★★☆☆
Très long et pas assez interactif. Format grand groupe difficile pour discussion sur le fond

chicharo!
★★★☆☆
at times it felt way too dense, needed a bit more time to decompress, especially at the end of the day. Tuesday was great but also very long and I felt very tired the next morning, I wasn't able to focus as much as was needed...

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Question 6
What did you appreciate the most?
`question ouverte`

nickname
The interactions between different partners

gjard
Travail interactif par petits groupes, échanges informels pendant les pauses

participant
To meet the other participants, talk to eachother, go into the field and also taste grasspea products

Teresa
Round table with LL from Alvaiazere; Exercise about empathy map

BELAHCEN
Visit

chicharo!
the field visits, the social time and the workshop sessions

Szira Fruzsina
Farm visits and hand-on workshop (miso)

Marie
Visits

S
Visit to the grass pea LL's different locations was super interesting + the fermentation workshop as well

DVF
The field trip and poster presentations and the interactive sessions to learn about stakeholders expectations.

Marion ESTEVE
Interactive workshop

klaxoon　　　　　　　　👤 16

Question 7

What should be improved for future meetings?

`question ouverte`

gjard
Plus de travail parallèle par WP et par LL

participant
Better logistics, stuck in Alvaiázere, why have it so far away from Tomar or Lisboa

Teresa
I liked very much the main meeting. The ExCom on Monday evening was fine but not very useful (most things were repeated in the main meeting). Do we really need the ExCom before the actual event?

BELAHCEN
Shorten coffee breaks to start at 8:30 and finish earlier. Days were too long

chicharo!
- the interaction time with local stakeholders, personally I feel I did not get a proper chance to exchange with them ! is there perhaps a way of including them more in our sessions ? - the timing - days felt very very long, need more break time to disconnect in order to be able to re-focus

Szira Fruzsina
Less bus travel, looser agenda, more precise communication prior to the meeting

Marie
More time dedicated to discussion in each WP

S
See my above comment on the tight schedule - a bit more time for sleep, time for (maybe even organized) sightseeing (this would allow for informal socializing) would be great. Maybe the meeting's two days outside of the stakeholder day could have stayed in Tomar - that would've meant less time on the bus and maybe even more time for wp workshops. Generally, I think more emphasis should be on the wp workshops in the next meetings.

DVF
More focus on green meals with NUCs for lunch and dinner (as the project is also related to the EUs F2F strategy) and not having the gala dinner in a place where people can not get home from themselves after the actual programme ends.

Marion ESTEVE
More interactive workshop and maybe some session in different group to have a better focus about some point

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klaxoon 👤 16

Question 8
Any other comment?
question ouverte

participant
Looking forward to meet each other again