



## **RiverCare communication strategy for reaching beyond**

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Effectively communicating river research to water professionals and researchers working in multiple disciplines or organizations is challenging. RiverCare studies the mid-term effects of innovative river interventions in the Netherlands to improve river governance and sustainable management. A total of 21 researchers working at 5 universities are part of the consortium, which also includes research institutes, consultancies, and water management authorities. RiverCare results do not only benefit Dutch river management, but can also provide useful insights to challenges abroad. Dutch partner organizations actively involved in RiverCare are our direct users. However, we want to reach water professionals from the Netherlands and beyond. To communicate with and disseminate to these users, we set up a communication strategy that includes the following approaches : (1) Netherlands Centre of River studies (NCR) website to announce activities post news, not limited to RiverCare; (2) A RiverCare newsletter that is published twice per year to update about our progress and activities; (3) A multimedia promotional providing a 'first glance' of RiverCare. It consists of four video episodes and an interactive menu; (4) An interactive knowledge platform to provide access, explain RiverCare results and gather feedback about the added value and potential use of these results; and (5) A serious gaming environment titled Virtual River where actors can play out flood scaling intervention and monitoring strategies to assess maintenance scenarios. The communication strategy and related approaches are being designed and developed during the project. We use participatory methods and systematic evaluation to understand communication needs and to identify needs for improvement. As a first step, RiverCare information is provided via the NCR website. The active collaboration with the NCR is important to extend communication efforts beyond the RiverCare consortium and after the program ends. The RiverCare newsletters are being distributed mainly through the NCR mailing list. As part of the multimedia product, four videos are in development as 'theaters of river research'. The first video presented our societal contribution to river research. Subsequent videos will be released approximately every six months. The knowledge platform is being designed as a combination of online services including: a content management system in which storylines are the main component; a data repository; and hyperlinks to online sites that present our results via short news articles. A storyline example has been prepared to explain research outputs instead of or in addition to more technical means such as scientific papers and reports. As for the serious gaming environment, a concept is being designed for experimentation in river and floodplain scenarios in regard to maintenance intervals and scaling of floodplains. Early results from the number of viewers of the NCR website, newsletter and first video show that dissemination efforts reach the NCR network but should also address other networks. Furthermore, the videos create interest and visibility in RiverCare. However, the audience should be challenged in different ways to look for additional information. Challenges of our research are to limit the overlap between the different communication approaches and to evaluate the effectiveness of the communication strategy.