WATERAGRI

D1.1: Stakeholder Management Plan

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Author(s)/Organisation(s)	Tamara Avellán/OULU
Contributor(s)	
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Abstract:	This Stakeholder Management Plan will assist WATERAGRI with managing and facilitating engagement through the lifetime of the project to ensure maximum impact of the project results.

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Participant Number	Participant organisation name	Short name	Country
1	LUNDS UNIVERSITET	ULUND	SE
2	EDEN MICROFLUIDICS	EDEN	FR
3	FORSCHUNGSZENTRUM JULICH GMBH	FZJ	DE
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14	UNIWERSYTET PRZYRODNICZY WE WROCLAWIU	UPWr	PL
15	BAY ZOLTAN ALKALMAZOTT KUTATASI KOZHASZNU NONPROFIT KFT	BZN	HU
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22	INSTITUT NATIONAL DE RECHERCHE POUR L'AGRICULTURE, L'ALIMENTATION ET L'ENVIRONNEMENT	INRAE	FR
23	MARTIN REGELSBERGER	TBR	AT

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EU GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
OPTAIN	OPtimal strategies to reTAIN and re-use water and nutrients in small agricultural catchments across different soil-climatic regions in Europe
EAB	External Advisory Board
WP	Work package
IMT	Intellectual Property Rights Manager and Innovation Management Team

1 Introduction

Diffuse pollution from agriculture is a significant pressure in European River Basins. Efficient water management in agriculture can reduce pollution and enhance resilience supporting *sustainable agricultural food production* and ecosystems in line with European bio-economy strategy. WATEAGRI will develop integrated water management approaches to achieve sustainable agricultural production and food security.

The WATERAGRI vision is to *solve agricultural water management and soil fertilisation challenges in a sustainable manner to secure affordable food production* in Europe for the 21st century. The WATERAGRI concept *aims* to introduce a *new framework* for the use of *small water retention approaches* for managing excess and shortage of water as well as better *recovery of nutrients* from agricultural catchments applying a *multi-actor approach*.

WATERAGRI is a Research and Innovation Action funded for 48 months by the European Commission. It is composed of 23 consortium members which on the one hand each pursue their own academic or commercial goals and on the other hand work together to deliver on the overarching project goals mentioned above. The project works in ten climatically and socio-economically divers cases that range from single large farms (500 ha+) to regions of many small farms (40+).

1.1 Purpose and scope of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan

In WATERAGRI consortium members come from various disciplines. The project therefore embraces interdisciplinarity and learning from each other. At the same time, solutions are to be tested in fields in ten case studies across Europe. Each location comes with a significant number of actors. The project applies a transdisciplinary approach of working with and through stakeholders in each site allowing for learning experiences between consortium members and local actors (vertical learning), as well as learning experiences across actors of multiple locations (horizontal learning).

WATERAGRI pursues two societal goals: (1) develop, produce and market locally adapted solutions that improve nutrient and water retention, (2) inform and influence local, national or supranational policies in relation to nutrient and water management in (European) agriculture (refer to Deliverable 8.3 Policy Impact Strategy to learn more about how WATERAGRI intends to influence policies). WATERAGRI also pursues a scientific goal of enhancing the academic knowledge base on sustainable water and nutrient management practices in agriculture.

Stakeholders are defined here as "individuals, groups and organizations who are affected by or can affect those parts of the phenomenon (this may include nonhuman and non-living entities and future generations)" (Reed et al. 2009). Therefore, stakeholders include consortium members which in this plan are sometimes refer to as 'internal stakeholders' vs. non-consortium actors which are then referred to as 'external stakeholders'. While the project intends to achieve its goals in as much of a participatory manner as possible it is also limited in time and funds. Hence, not all stakeholders that would want to partake in the project may be possibly included to the degree that they would want to. At the same time other stakeholders may be relied upon more heavily than they had anticipated. The Consortium will take the utmost care in considering all stakeholders needs and desires, but may, unintentionally or because of its projects' limitations, fail to do so.

It is important to note that this plan is intended for the WATERAGRI project as a whole. Therefore, stakeholder analysis and subsequent suggested actions with stakeholder groups are based on the impact of these actions on the overarching project goals. However, the project is also composed of 10

case study sites with particular interventions in each as well as different technical solutions. Case study goals or solution development goals, while in line with the overarching project goals, may be more specific to the local or business needs than the overarching project goals. Thus, stakeholder engagement strategies to pursue case study specific or solution relevant goals may differ from the actions outlined in this plan and are out of the scope of this plan (Figure 1). It is highly recommended that case study owners develop case study specific, or solution relevant stakeholder engagement plans that align with the steps outlined in this current plan and its results feed back into it.

Overarching Stakeholder Management Plan for project as a whole

Potential Stakeholder Management Plans for Case Studies	Potential Stakeholder Management Plans for Solutions

Plan for Case Study 1	Plan for Case Study 2	…	Plan for Solution 1	Plan for Solution 2	…
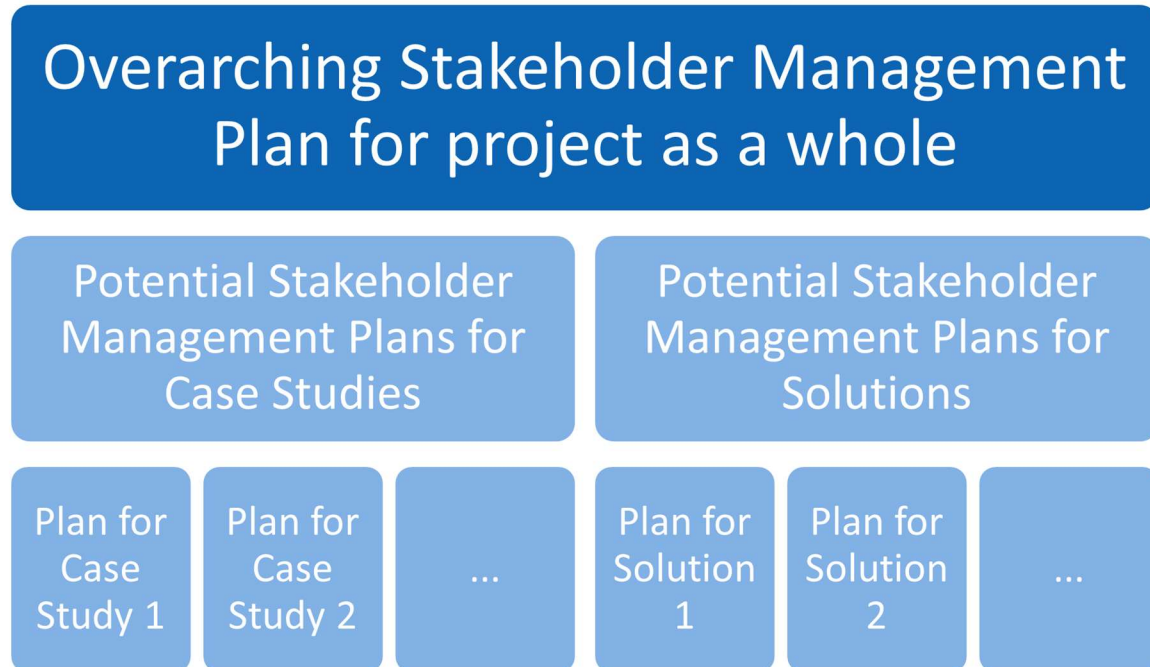
Figure 1: Scope of this current Stakeholder Management Plan which focuses only the top layer (dark blue) but encourages the development of individual stakeholder management plans (light blue) for WATERAGRI case studies and solutions following the 5 steps outlined below.

1.2 Objectives of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The overall aim of this Stakeholder Engagement Plan is to outline activities of stakeholder engagement that help achieve the WATERAGRI goals. The plan will set out a strategy and provide rough guidelines of whom to involve in which process and why. This allows for better transparency in the selection of involved stakeholders while maintaining inclusiveness but also enhancing commitment without overburdening.

The key objectives of this plan are as follows:

- Obtain an oversight and collect relevant information of stakeholders and stakeholder groups related to the project (internal and external);
- Help identify stakeholders and stakeholder groups that are relevant to either of the societal goals;
- Help identify stakeholders and stakeholder groups that can maximize scientific impact;
- Inform D8.1 Dissemination & Communication Strategy on the most effective means through which to disseminate project information, and to ensure regular, accessible, transparent and appropriate consultation and co-decision as deemed fit;
- Outline a stakeholder's engagement process that provides stakeholders with an opportunity to influence product design and policy recommendations;
- Define roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the plan; and

- Align with the project's reporting and monitoring measures to ensure the effectiveness of the stakeholder engagement process and periodical reviews of the plan based on findings.

1.3 Privacy rules

In accordance with WATERAGRI's D9.4 and D10.3 stakeholder data and information will be collected, stored, analysed and archived in line with EU GDPR rules by the event organiser. The Data Officer contacts will be presented to each attendee (Stakeholder) after completing successfully the registration process. See more about the kind of data that is relevant for this in the next section. Stakeholders are asked to consent to the use of their data and are referred to the Privacy Policy rules that can be found in Annex 1 and that can also be found on the WATERAGRI website.

All consortium members interacting with stakeholders (by collecting the data) are to follow these rules and are solely responsible for any misconduct. No specific stakeholder management or stakeholder relationship management tool will be used. Tracking of interactions with stakeholders is the responsibility of the consortium member interacting with those stakeholders. Reporting about issues is to be done through the respective grievance channels set up within the project.

2   An overview of Stakeholder Engagement

2.1 Principles of effective stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement is usually informed by a set of principles defining core values underpinning interactions with stakeholders. Common principles based on International Best Practice ('Stakeholder Engagement: A Good Practice Handbook for Companies Doing B' n.d.) include the following:

- **Commitment** is demonstrated when the need to understand, engage and identify the community is recognised and acted upon early in the process;
- **Integrity** occurs when engagement is conducted in a manner that fosters mutual respect and trust;
- **Respect** is created when the rights, cultural beliefs, values and interests of stakeholders and neighbouring communities are recognised;
- **Transparency** is demonstrated when community concerns are responded to in a timely, open and effective manner;
- **Inclusiveness** is achieved when broad participation is encouraged and supported by appropriate participation opportunities; and
- **Trust** is achieved through open and meaningful dialogue that respects and upholds a community's beliefs, values and opinions.

WATERAGRI will adhere to these principles while keeping in mind that local circumstances of case studies may put more or less emphasis on the points above thus respecting the diversity of stakeholders and stakeholder needs.

2.2 Stakeholder engagement and participation in sustainability sciences

Sustainability sciences aspire to include perspectives that go beyond the one of involved scientists and are therefore strongly related to transdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research. Transdisciplinary is "*a facilitated process of mutual learning between science and society that relates a targeted*

multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary research process and a multi-stakeholder discourse for developing socially robust orientations about a specific real-world issue (either a problem or a case)" (Scholz and Steiner 2015)*.* This multi-stakeholder discourse often results in participatory processes which may pursue (1) top-down means of communication through information-sharing and consultation of opinions and/or (2) bottom-up modes such as deliberations, co-design, co-production and co-decisions (Mark S. Reed et al. 2018). As depicted in Figure 2 the stronger the involvement of the stakeholders the higher the likelihood of their influence decision-making:

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION				
INFORM	**CONSULT**	**INVOLVE**	**COLLABORATE**	**EMPOWER**
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Figure 2: Overview of the goals of public participation and the influence on decision-making (from (Arciniegas et al. 2019).

Similar to the principles mentioned in the previous section sustainability sciences and participatory research process have identified a set of criteria to follow (from Table 8 in de Vente et al. (2016), Figure 2 of in Reed et al. (2014) and Munaretto and Battilani (2013)):

1) Careful selection of participants – balance power interests
2) Attractive and easy participation – employ different modes of communication
3) Fostering of trust amongst participants – work for mutual trust
4) Provision of information and actual decision-making power to participants – respect local knowledge
5) Use of professional (independent) facilitation and structured methods for information aggregation – build capacity for engagement
6) Promotion of long-term commitment (beyond project life cycle) – local ownership of ongoing process
7) Exhibit flexibility and adaptive capacities to local situations (language, culture, etc.) – aim high but be realistic
8) Mediation by collective management bodies – bridging knowledge gaps across stakeholder groups

2.3 Stakeholder engagement considerations

The following considerations should be made when planning for stakeholder engagement:

- **It takes time and resources**: It takes time to develop and build trust-based relationships with stakeholders. The consensus from practitioners is that from the outset relationships with stakeholders should develop and grow, and that these relationships should be nurtured and not fostered to fade. Additional stakeholders might be identified that also want to be engaged. No willing stakeholder should be excluded from the process of engagement. Some stakeholders will need to be educated about the concept of engagement itself, as well as on the complex issues requiring specialized and technical knowledge. These demands can increase the cost of consultation required to meet external expectations, and often this occurs at a time when a project lacks the internal capacity and resources to implement a broad engagement strategy ('From Words to Action, Volume 2: The Practitioner's Handbook on Stakeholder Engagement | Stakeholder Research Associates' n.d.).

- **It raises expectations**: Stakeholders can have unrealistically high expectations of benefits that may accrue to them from a project. As such project proponents from the outset must be clear on what they can and cannot do, establishing a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The engagement processes should provide project proponents with an opportunity to develop relationships with stakeholders to learn and grow together.

- **Securing stakeholder participation**: Cultural norms and values can prevent stakeholders from freely participating in meetings. Often there are conflicting demands within a community, and it can be challenging for a project to identify stakeholders who are representative of common interests. This might be avoided by employing local community liaison officers who are sensitive to local power dynamics, which requires project proponents developing an awareness of the local context and implementing structures to support and foster effective stakeholder engagement.

- **Stakeholder fatigue**: Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that stakeholders can easily tire of consultation processes especially when promises are unfulfilled, and their opinions and concerns are not taken into consideration, or product development/decision-making cycles do not correspond with their timetables. Often stakeholders feel their lives are not improving as a result of a project and this can lead to stakeholder meetings being used as an area to voice complaints and grievances about the lack of development. This might be avoided by ensuring that consortium members do not make promises to stakeholders, but rather use the foreseen workshops as an opportunity to manage expectations, challenge misconceptions, disseminate accurate project information, and gather stakeholder opinions which are feedback to the consortium.

2.4 Roles and responsibilities of consortium members

The WATERAGRI consortium is made up of a diverse group of members who have different roles within the project and therefore also different roles towards stakeholder engagement. Table 1 below outlines the roles and responsibilities of consortium members with respect to this stakeholder engagement plan.

Table 1: Overview of roles and responsibilities of the different types of consortium members within WATERAGRI.

Type of consortium member	Role towards stakeholder engagement	Responsibility in stakeholder management
All consortium members	Identify and analyse stakeholders (include themselves)	Inform stakeholders while following privacy policies
Project Coordinator, Project Manager and WP leads	Identify and determine key stakeholders	Engage with and empower key stakeholders also beyond the lifetime of the project Ensure issues are resolved
Work Package 1 Team	Identify, determine and manage involvement of key stakeholders	Ensure continuous engagement of stakeholders via annual workshops and other means
Case study owners	Identify and analyse case study specific stakeholders Identify and determine stakeholders from the case study that are relevant to the project as a whole	Engage with and empower case study specific stakeholders Recommend relevant actions for these stakeholders that make an impact and avoid stakeholder fatigue
Solution providers	Identify and analyse market relevant stakeholders Identify and determine 'market' stakeholders that are relevant to the project as a whole	Engage with and empower 'market' specific stakeholders Recommend relevant actions for these stakeholders that make an impact and avoid stakeholder fatigue
Other consortium members with a speciality (e.g. relation to policy makers, media relations, etc.)	Identify and analyse respective relevant stakeholders	Recommend relevant actions for these stakeholders that make an impact and avoid stakeholder fatigue

As noted further above, interactions with stakeholders specific to one case study location can differ from the actions outlined in this plan. As a general guidance to case study owners the stages outlined in this plan can and should be carried out while defining and considering the case study specific goals (which may be different to the overarching project goals). An indication of the issues of case study stakeholders was assessed in workshop 1 (refer to Table 1 of deliverable D1.4) and more details about a first case study specific stakeholder mapping exercise carried out there can be found in D1.4 Workshop 1 Report. In preparation of the first workshop a mini-training on the do's and don'ts of facilitation was delivered to case study owners, moderators and rapporteurs of the respective cases-study specific break-out rooms. This training also serves as the basis for good conduct regarding to stakeholder interactions with a few to foster strong and trusting relationships amongst stakeholders and avoiding stakeholder fatigue.

Further lessons learned from the first two workshops include the need for face-to-face interactions in local languages – a desire which was and is challenging to implement due to the contact restrictions enforced by different governments as a measure to reduce infection rates in the Corona Pandemic and that was partially implemented in the first workshop. In addition, it became apparent that clarity of objectives of the workshops need to be established at consortium level to be able to better shape the agenda and delivery of the workshops. Future recommendations for workshops include:

- reduction of the use of English and avoidance when engaging with farmers,
- careful selection of stakeholders attending the multi-regional workshop (looking for champions or collective management body representatives),
- conducting a series of local workshops in the lead-up to the multi-regional workshop focusing on specific needs while maintaining the view of the overall workshop goal,
- connection with field and on-site visits to better grasp the reality and foster collective knowledge generation and sharing, and
- step-up and created sustained three-way engagement between solution providers, case study leads and those directly impacted by the intervention (often farmers).

Similarly, solution providers may engage in a stakeholder engagement plan that is specific to their market needs. In all cases, it is important to highlight stakeholders from these subsets that may be of particular relevance to the project as a whole thus allowing for feedback loops between the (two) levels.

3 Stages of Stakeholder Engagement

In line with the purpose and scope of the WATERAGRI project and the principles of effective stakeholder engagement in general but also specifically within sustainability sciences, WATERAGRI will consider five phases of stakeholder engagement as depicted in Figure 3. Phases 1 and 2 can be considered as the early engagement, whereas Phase 3 and 4 correspond to continuous engagement and engagement beyond the project end respectively. Phase 5 is an evaluation step that is carried out continuously with milestones in the middle and the end of the project. Each phase will be explained in more detail in the following sub-sections.

Figure 3: Overview of the 5 phases of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan in WATERAGRI.

3.1 Stakeholder analysis

The first phase is critical. It consists of the identification and categorization of all stakeholders (people, entities or organizations that are affected or affect the project) of the project. Understanding stakeholders is essential for achieving the goals of the project. Stakeholder analysis consists primarily of two essential steps: (1) identifying stakeholders and (2) analysing stakeholders.

3.1.1 Stakeholder identification

Stakeholder identification is primarily a process of listing, collection and storage of basic information about people, entities or organizations that are affected by or affect the project. In WATERAGRI this is done through snowballing, i.e. by consortium members being asked to think about stakeholders. When identifying stakeholders the following is important to take into account:

- **Marginalising "Usual suspects".** Organisations sometimes try to avoid involving the "usual suspects" (i.e. stakeholders that are heavily engaged, standing-by to help, with time on their hands, etc.), which has become a term of denigration for people who habitually give time and effort to what they see as their civic responsibilities. Describing someone as a 'usual suspect' should never be grounds to exclude them from a process any more than it is grounds for including them: people should be involved because they are the right people.
- **Opponents.** It is equally wrong to exclude an individual or an organisation for being a known opponent of a given purpose or process. Indeed, there are often good reasons for keeping opponents "inside the tent": these can be the people who most need to be involved so that they gain some ownership of the process and perhaps become more likely to support the final outcome (or at least, less inclined to undermine it as they might have, had they been excluded).
- **Hard-to-reach Groups.** It is important to try to include all relevant stakeholders, and those who often get omitted are the hard to reach groups (e.g. women and youth groups, the elderly, people with disabilities, or people with little time). Extra effort and innovation will be needed to contact and engage with these groups or individuals, who do not generally come forward by their own volition. Including these minority or "hard to reach" groups is important to obtaining a more balanced picture from the engagement process.

In WATERAGRI stakeholder information is organized and stored in a stakeholder register is drawn up as an Excel document that includes the following data items collected for each identified stakeholder:

- Last Name of Stakeholder
- First Name of Stakeholder
- Designation
- Organization
- Role in Project
- E-mail
- Type of Stakeholder (as drop-down menu from 22 categories – see below)
- Expectations (or also potential driving factors)

This document is placed in the consortium's shared data platform and is only intended for the use within the consortium. While not all stakeholders consent for the storage (and subsequent analysis) has been requested nor obtained, consent is requested when contact information is used for stakeholder engagement i.e. in the project's workshops. All information that is stored in the register is either publicly available information from the internet or information provided by consortium

members. Stakeholder identification and collection is a continuous process that is carried out throughout the lifetime of the project.

3.1.2 Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder analyses can take a multitude of forms and pursue the primary goal of getting a better and more detailed understanding of the type of stakeholders one is confronted with. For WATERAGRI we limit ourselves to three aspects (1) a categorization of stakeholders; (2) a power-interest identification; and (3) a general assessment of their knowledge/interest of the project. These analyses in particular the latter two can and will be repeated throughout the project to be able to continuously adapt to the needs, wants and interests of stakeholders in order to minimize stakeholder fatigue and maximize project outcomes and eventually impacts.

3.1.2.1 Stakeholder categories

In WATERAGRI different stakeholder categories were already suggest during the proposal writing stage. Three broad categories were established for communication purposes, namely: GA – General Audience; EA – External Audience; IA – Internal Audience. The following categories are therefore based on those suggested there and expanded upon to include stakeholders that are of relevance for all project goals:

1. Civil society (GA)
2. General public (GA)
3. Public initiatives (GA)
4. Policy makers at local level/municipalities (GA)
5. Policy makers at national level (GA)
6. Policy makers at EU level (GA)
7. Farmers or farm managers (out)[1] (EA)
8. Agricultural chambers, farmer associations (EA)
9. Extension services, farmer schools (EA)
10. Local water management organizations (EA)
11. Water retention industry (EA)
12. Nutrient recycling industry (EA)
13. Research peers (EA)
14. OPTAIN consortium members (EA)
15. Media/science communicators (EA)
16. Farmers or farm managers (in)[2] (IA)
17. Researcher in project team (IA)
18. Project Executive (IA)
19. EAB member (IA)
20. Other consortium member (IA)
21. Letters of support[3] (IA)
22. EC project counterparts (IA)

Stakeholders are 'placed' in one of the categories based on the subjective perception of the consortium member (or stakeholder) that suggested this actor to be a relevant WATERAGRI

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[1] External stakeholders, i.e. not part of the project consortium
[2] Internal stakeholders i.e. consortium members
[3] These are stakeholders that have expressed their support to the project by providing the consortium with Letters of Support.

stakeholder. Stakeholder categories help consortium members to 'think outside the box' or beyond the 'usual suspects' thus allowing to also expand the stakeholder identification.

An overview of the initial distribution of stakeholders placed in the various categories can be found below in Figure 4 with the top five categories with the largest number of stakeholders being (1) Letters of support (IA), (2) Policy makers at local level/municipalities (GA), (3) Researcher in project team (IA), (4) Local water management organizations (EA), and (5) Agricultural chambers, farmer associations (EA). The following categories had not been selected a single time and may therefore be inappropriate or not useful: Water retention industry (EA), Policy makers at EU level (GA), Other consortium member (IA), General public (GA), Civil society (GA).
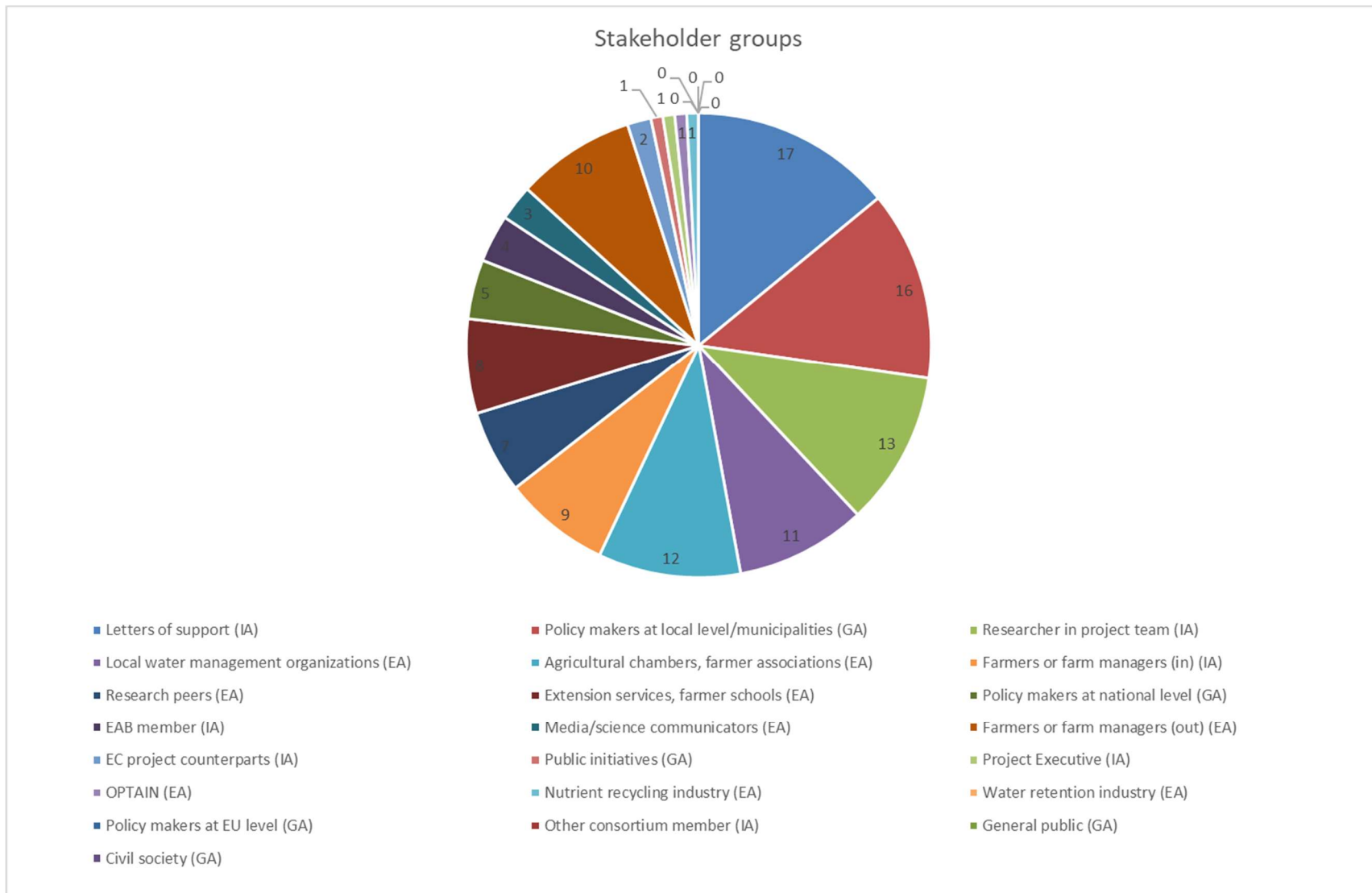
Figure 4: Overview of the number of stakeholders classified per stakeholder category as per documented stakeholders in December 2020 (initiation phase of the project).

3.1.2.2 Power-interest relationships

The power and interest of the stakeholders are rated on a scale from -10 to +10 of the stakeholder towards the WATERAGRI as a whole (as opposed to in a case study) as perceived by the consortium member listing the stakeholder in the register. Power is the ability of the stakeholder to change or stop the project whereas interest is the amount of involvement the stakeholder has in the project, namely the size of the overlap between the stakeholder's and the project's needs. This characterization helps classify stakeholders into four categories (Figure 5). This categorization is intended to inform D8.1 Communication Strategy. It also helps in identifying key players that may play a leading role in D8.3 Policy Impact Strategy. Overall, this analysis helps using the means of the project in a targeted manner and reduces stakeholder fatigue by tailoring communication products towards the particular needs of the stakeholder.
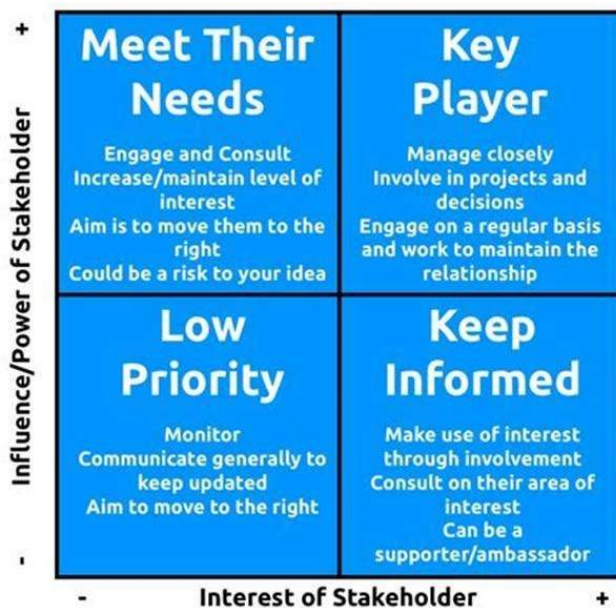
Figure 5: Categorization of stakeholders based on their power and interest in WATERAGRI (from http://stakeholderresearch.com/publications/from-words-to-action-volume-2-the-practitioners-handbook-on-stakeholder-engagement).

3.1.2.3 Stakeholder Assessment Matrix

The stakeholder assessment matrix is a subjective perception by a consortium member of the stakeholder's current level of awareness of WATERAGRI as well as their assessment of the desired state of awareness. Thus, a particular stakeholder might be unaware of the project today, but the consortium member may suggest that this stakeholder should be rather in a leading role. This assessment can help target and tailor particular communication products to a sub-set of stakeholders thus efficiently using time and effort of the consortium. Regular yearly updates of this assessment can help in measuring progress towards the desired level of awareness of the stakeholders but also change when the stakeholder's interests (or power) have changed throughout the course of the project.

Stakeholders can have the following different levels of awareness:

- Unaware
- Resistant
- Neutral
- Supportive

- Leading

3.2 Stakeholder Engagement

In WATERAGRI stakeholder engagement is carried out through a set of actions that are described primarily in WP1 and WP8 (and WP5&6). Most actions carried out to engage with stakeholders are top-down actions and are briefly summarized as follows:

1) Five stakeholder engagement workshops focusing on different aspects and phases of the WATERAGRI project;
2) Stakeholder training (formal and innovative, i.e. through webinars, youtube channel etc.) and training material about the findings of the technical solutions and their applicability in WATERAGRI for farmers, farmer schools, higher education, etc.;
3) Interactions with case study stakeholders to obtain permissions to implement the suggested WATERAGRI solutions and install the respective equipment for data monitoring;
4) Organisation of Open Day events at WATERAGRI test site locations to demonstrate first-hand to other farmers all the possibilities and benefits of implementing WATERAGRI solutions;
5) Focus groups or surveys with stakeholder sub-sets on the effectiveness/ usefulness/ user-friendliness/ sustainability of the solutions presented and developed in WATERAGRI – stakeholders are here either the target of the questions and/or help formulate the questions;
6) Regular communication and dissemination tools and materials such as a website, social media channels, newsletter, exhibitions, presence at events, etc.;
7) Consortium-internal peer-to-peer learning through staff exchange, mini-trainings, higher education courses (Master/PhD workshops) etc.;
8) Targeted requests for help and support of stakeholders relevant to achieve policy impact, such as comments on policy briefs, requests to speak on behalf of the project, provision of information, etc..

Some of the above actions are also combined in one event. As such for instance the stakeholder engagement workshops often consist of elements that provide stakeholder training (i.e. explanatory videos of the WATERAGRI solutions), undertake focus group discussions (i.e. in break-out rooms) and/or surveys (sent before and/or after the workshop), are often case study specific and are widely announced and reported on through communication and dissemination channels. The actions also act on a different degree of engagement as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: Rough categorization of actions based on the degree of involvement of stakeholders towards decision-making.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Stakeholder trainings Peer-to-peer learning Regular communication & dissemination tools Stakeholder engagement workshop –	Focus groups and surveys (stakeholders are target) Stakeholder engagement workshop – break-out groups	Case study work – seek farmers input Stakeholder engagement workshop – feedback on implementation of solutions	Focus groups and surveys (stakeholders formulate questions) Targeted requests for policy impact	Case study work - farmers to implement solutions

inform on new developments				
Open Days				

The list above also shows that not all stakeholders identified will need to be engaged in all purposes. While some guidance can be given in the actions below about how act within WATERAGRI, stakeholder engagement activities are manifold and specific decisions will have to be taken on a case-by-case basis. The question of whom to involve in which process thus arises. Here are some useful tips to keep in mind when selecting stakeholders for the respective actions:

- **Who decides who is involved.** As the selection of participants can be such a politically charged responsibility, it is useful to make the selection process as transparent as possible. WATERAGRI is structured in a hierarchical manner. Decisions on selection should be made within the task participants and discussed with the work package lead. In case, of need the Executive Board or the Project Coordinator can be asked to get involved. It is wise to ensure that the reasons for selection are noted so that any questions about selection can be answered.

- **Resisting pressure on numbers.** There is often internal and external pressure to expand or reduce the list of those involved. The number of people involved should not be arbitrary but based on a coherent understanding of the purpose and the context of the process. As such, not all cases studies or solution providers involved in WATERAGRI may want to or have to be part of each workshop that is planned under WP1.

- **Everyone does not have to be involved in everything.** With good planning, and the agreement of participants, different people can be involved only in those parts of the process which are most relevant to them. Regular and early consultations by the task leads can help ensure this.

- **Campaigning organisations**. Many campaigning bodies, especially national NGOs, are constantly asked to be involved in participatory exercises, and do not always see these as the most effective use of their limited resources. In addition, some see the compromise that can be inherent in some participatory processes as conflicting with their primary purposes. It can be useful to consider (and discuss with them) at which stage of the policy process NGOs are best suited to participate: agenda setting, policy development, policy implementation or policy review. This is particularly important for the interventions at the case study level and an open communication should be sought with those bodies early on, considering also the next point.

- **What's In It for Them (WIIFT)?** It is important to consider and discuss with participants what they want to get out of the process and what could prevent them from participating. If everyone's motivations can be clarified at the start, there will be less confusion and everyone is more likely to be satisfied with the outcomes. This is especially important in an area that is suffering from consultation fatigue. In the context of the WATERAGRI project the stakeholders relating to the farming community are important and their timetables are bound to climate and weather aspects. Avoiding time of high demand (sowing, harvesting, etc.) and clarifying their economic interest can help sustain their interest.

3.3 Stakeholder Management

Stakeholder management is strongly linked to stakeholder engagement and pursues the main purpose of reducing the risk of stakeholder fatigue and maximizing the gains of the stakeholder engagement

for the project outcomes. Whereas for stakeholder engagement the kind of stakeholders to be engaged is more relevant and thus the stakeholder categorization is useful, stakeholder management relies more strongly on making use of the understanding of the stakeholder's interests and their perceived need to be engaged.

The Power-Interest analysis gives a good indication about which key stakeholders to take particular care of. An analysis of a first set of results, based on the data in the stakeholder register status as of Dec. 2020, indicates that high power – high interest stakeholders fall into four main categories: (1) a sub-set of consortium members (mostly WP leads), (2) project executives - primarily EC counterparts, (3) farmers of cases study sites and personnel on those farms, and (4) local or scientifically specific media outlets. On the other end, low power – low interest stakeholders identified mostly fall into the category of policy maker and research peers (see Table 3).

Some stakeholder categories fall into several categories at the same time. This results from the diversity of stakeholders across the case studies and their different 'strength' in the different locations. Special care thus has to be taken to develop actions that target specific stakeholders (and not just the stakeholder category in general) to ensure successful engagement. Similarly, other stakeholder categories do not appear prominently in the current analysis (such as water or environmental authorities). This is simply the case because consortium members have not assigned any power-interest values to these stakeholders and respective data is therefore (currently) lacking.

Table 3: Preliminary overview of the most common categories of stakeholders in the power-interest grid with data as of Dec. 2020.

Low interest – high power	High interest – high power
(1) Policy maker (2) Local water management organizations	(1) WP leads (2) Project executives - EC counterparts (3) Farmers of case study sites (4) Specialized media outlets
Low interest – low power	**High interest – low power**
(1) Policy makers (2) Research peers	(1) Researchers in project team (2) Local water management organizations (3) Agricultural chambers, farmer associations (4) Farmers or farm managers

The stakeholder assessment matrix can further help in identifying the level of awareness of those stakeholder sub-groups. The low power – low interest stakeholders were mostly described as unaware of the WATERAGRI project but desired to be supportive of it. On the other hand, the high power – high interest stakeholders were mostly already supportive or even leading, which is where the consortium member also desired them to be.

Combining the types of engagement from the section above with the power-interest matrix results provides an overview of action targeted by stakeholder. Table 4 below provides an overview of those actions as per the preliminary overview of stakeholder categories identified per quadrant of the power-interest matrix. A stakeholder specific standing and thus engagement strategy can be derived from the collected data. Whereas low priority (bottom left) stakeholders are only to be kept informed, key players (top right) shall be engaged in all actions from informing to empowerment. However, in order to not overload these critical stakeholders care has to be taken in the selection of actions to

involve them in with a clear priority on actions related to collaboration and empowerment (thus the smaller font for secondary actions).

In general, stakeholders on the left (low interest) shall be targeted with actions to increase their interest (move them to the right). This is particularly striking for the case of stakeholders classified as policy makers which are currently found on the rather low interest end. WATERAGRI intends to also impact and influence policy. To achieve this goal a higher interest of policy makers in the project outputs and outcomes is critical as also outline in D8.3 Policy Impact Strategy.

Table 4: Engagement actions classified by stakeholder category and their respective placement in the interest-power matrix.

Low interest – high power	High interest – high power
(1) Policy makers (2) Local water management organizations	(1) WP leads (2) Project executives - EC counterparts (3) Farmers of case study sites (4) Specialized media outlets
Meet their needs (Inform, Consult & Involve) Focus groups and surveys (stakeholders are target) Stakeholder engagement workshop – break-out groups Case study work – seek input Stakeholder engagement workshop – feedback on implementation of solutions Stakeholder trainings Peer-to-peer learning Regular communication & dissemination tools Stakeholder engagement workshop – inform on new developments	**Key players (Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate & Empower)** Focus groups and surveys (stakeholders formulate questions) Targeted requests for policy impact Case study work - farmers to implement solutions Focus groups and surveys (stakeholders are target) Stakeholder engagement workshop – break-out groups Case study work – seek input Stakeholder engagement workshop – feedback on implementation of solutions Stakeholder trainings Peer-to-peer learning Regular communication & dissemination tools Stakeholder engagement workshop – inform on new developments
Low interest – low power	**High interest – low power**
(1) Policy makers (2) Research peers	(1) Researchers in project team (2) Local water management organizations (3) Agricultural chambers, farmer associations (4) Farmers or farm managers
Low priority (Inform) Regular communication & dissemination tools	**Keep informed (Inform)** Stakeholder trainings Peer-to-peer learning Regular communication & dissemination tools Stakeholder engagement workshop – inform on new developments

Open Days

3.4 Stakeholder Sustainment

At the end of a project often interactions cease, and collaborative actions stop. Engaged stakeholders often tend to disengage as it is unclear to them how future engagement with the project team will be possible. WATERAGRI is not immune to this reality but will try to provide sustainment strategies to provide stakeholder with (1) the knowledge base produced and (2) a set of targeted contact points for further interaction. Most and foremost WATERAGRI intends to develop the stakeholder's capacities to implement the solutions as well as boost the level of the solutions towards their commercialization, thus fostering sustainable water and nutrient management. The following set of actions are foreseen to provide stakeholders with interactions points and the possibility to sustain their interest:

1) The project website remains running and is maintained providing information about specific innovations (products and services) and links to relevant people.
2) Innovations proposed are taken up for commercialisation by stakeholders including external companies, ideally before the project ends or shortly after the project ends.
3) The serious game developed in WP1 will remain available for future use and is accessible for external use.
4) A start-up company with the support of the IMT toward the end of a project and ensure it is funded with some initial capital for a year after the project ends. The company will offer project innovations to the market and facilitate their uptake. It should raise additional capital to sustain itself for a longer period of time.
5) Some of the consortium members will explore an opportunity to get engaged in a new HORIZON EUROPE projects in order to further advance WATERAGRI solutions or to apply the solutions in other sectors.

WATERAGRI will also intend to maintain contact with key stakeholders beyond the lifetime of the project. Those key stakeholders might be impactful advocates of the achieved goals of the project and further communication and potential collaboration may thus be beneficial in multiple ways.

4 Reviewing and evaluating the Stakeholder Engagement Process

4.1 Ongoing assessments

It is mandated to assess the effects of the stakeholder engagement and the perception of stakeholders about their engagement. These assessments can help steer the stakeholder engagement process and give a timely indication about the level of satisfaction of and understanding about the WATERAGRI project. For this purpose, this plan suggests using the following set of indicative questions after an action has been carried out or to solicit feedback on ongoing products (i.e. the website) in regular intervals:

1. Please select the Stakeholder Category that best represents you from the list (*show list of stakeholder categories*).

2. Please select your gender.

    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. Other
    d. Prefer not to mention

3. Please rate the following statements from a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree):

    a. The objectives of the [action] were clear.
    b. The allocated time/dedicated space was sufficient to express my views.
    c. The [action] addressed my concerns.
    d. The [action] fulfilled my expectations.
    e. I now have a better understanding about [topic of the action].

4. Please select your level of awareness about the WATERAGRI project after this [action]:

    a. Unaware
    b. Resistant
    c. Neutral
    d. Supportive
    e. Leading

5. Please select your level of engagement in the WATERAGRI project through this [action]:

    a. Informed
    b. Consulted
    c. Involved
    d. Collaborated with
    e. Empowered

6. Further comments/questions/concerns (open text box below)

A shortened and modified version of this questionnaire (i.e. all questions except °3 and removing the specificity to the action) is placed on the WATERAGRI homepage to allow stakeholders for a constant feedback option.

4.2 Mid-term reviews

WATERAGRI will undertake mid-term reviews (Month 18 and 36) of the stakeholder engagement process and provide a summary report of progress up to date at the respective general assembly meeting.

4.3 Final evaluation

A final evaluation will be carried out towards the end of the project assessing the following key criterion:

    a) Whether the (engagement) process met its own aims (i.e. desired outcomes) and originally agreed purpose
    b) Whether the process met the explicit and implicit demands of the participants
    c) Whether the process met the standards of "good practice" in participatory working
    d) Whether the process indicates effective engagement after the project end.

The results of this evaluation will be presented at the last general assembly meeting.

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6 Annex

6.1 Annex 1: Privacy Policy for stakeholder data and information

This Privacy Policy describes the personal data collected or processed when being placed in the WATERAGRI Stakeholder Register. It also explains how your personal data is used, shared and protected, what choices you have relating to your personal data, and how you can contact us.

What personal data we collect and why we collect it

WATERAGRI pursues two societal goals: (1) produce and market locally adapted solutions that improve nutrient and water retention, (2) inform, influence or steer local, national or supranational policies in relation to nutrient and water management in (European) agriculture (refer to Deliverable 8.3 Policy Impact Strategy to learn more about how WATERAGIR intends to influence policies). WATERAGRI also pursues a scientific goal of enhancing the academic knowledge base on sustainable water and nutrient management practices in agriculture.

WATERAGRI intends to pursue its goals in a participatory manner through a multi-actor approach. Stakeholders are identified through consortium members and other stakeholders. All stakeholders are asked to consent to the storage and use of their personal data through an online form. **The following data is collected about stakeholders** in the WATERAGRI stakeholder register:

- Last Name of Stakeholder
- First Name of Stakeholder
- Designation
- Organization
- Role in Project
- E-mail
- Type of Stakeholder (from 22 pre-defined categories)
- Expectations (or also potential driving factors)

Being placed in the WATERAGRI stakeholder register **allows the research consortium to tailor their interaction to the stakeholders needs and interests**. Stakeholder engagement is critical for the success of the project, but we understand that interaction with and in a research project may not be in line with each stakeholder's interest. Thus, understanding stakeholder interests and needs is important to avoid stakeholder fatigue while providing interested stakeholders means for being kept informed, interacting or even co-deciding.

While the project intends to achieve its (academic) goals in as much of a participatory manner as possible it is also limited in time and funds. Hence, not all actors that would want to partake in the project may be possibly included to the degree that they would want to. At the same time other actors may be relied upon more heavily than they had anticipated. The consortium will take the utmost care in considering all stakeholders needs and desires, but may, unintentionally or because of its projects' limitations fail to do so.

The personal data you provide to the WATERAGRI stakeholder register are subject to processing and are stored in a file under the responsibility of the **University of Oulu**. **We use your data** only for reasons relating to:

a. the communication and dissemination of information in relation to the WATERAGRI project (except the subscription to the WATERAGRI newsletter which is governed through a different privacy policy),

b. processing of your requests,

c. the invitation to partake in WATERAGRI engagement workshops, consultation workshops related to WATERAGRI solutions, events relating to outreach and advocacy that highlight the policy importance of WATERAGRI outputs and outcomes, and other similar events that foster WATERAGRI societal goals,

d. the invitation to provide comments and or feedback on WATERAGRI scientific outputs such as publications, technical briefs and assessments, technical conferences and other similar activities that foster WATEAGRI academic goals,

e. any other requests to partake in WATERAGRI specific surveys, with your additional explicit consent.

Your personal data are not allowed to be used by any third party, except as provided by the law and this Policy. The WATERAGRI stakeholder register collects and processes information that is considered purely personal data, as well as other information that is not considered as such. The WATERAGRI stakeholder register does not collect or process sensitive personal data, namely, data related to a user's health, sex life, sexual orientation, genetic or biometric data, or data revealing one's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, or religious or philosophical beliefs. When you are placed in the WATERAGRI stakeholder register, we collect the information you provide us, including your e-mail. The personal information we collect will be only used for the defined, explicit, and legitimate purposes explained to you and will not be further processed in a manner incompatible with those purposes. Moreover, we limit the collection to only that information that is appropriate, relevant and necessary for the purposes explained to you. If not required by law, we will not obtain your consent before collecting your personal data from third parties. Instead, it will be deemed that you have previously given such consent to any third party from whom WATERAGRI receives such information.

Your rights

The consent is valid until further notice. You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time. You do this by contacting info@wateragri.eu or tamara.avellan@oulu.fi. We will in this case cease to process personal data that we have collected based on this consent. However, data included in results that have already been obtained will not be affected by the withdrawal of your consent. Certain data may also be archived in accordance with Finnish law.

You have the right of access to information about the personal data we process about you. You also have the right to have incorrect personal data about you corrected. If you have a complaint about our processing of your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer via info@wateragri.eu or tamara.avellan@oulu.fi. You also have the right to submit a complaint to the supervisory authority (i.e. Finish Data Protection Agency), if you think that we process your personal data incorrectly.

Privacy Policy Changes

Although most changes are likely to be minor, WATERAGRI may change its Privacy Policy from time to time, and in WATERAGRI sole discretion. Should changes to the Privacy Policy occur WATERAGRI will let you know and request you to consent to or decline the changes.

Credit and Contact Information

This privacy policy was created by WATERAGRI. If you have any questions about this Privacy Policy, please contact us via: info@wateragri.eu or tamara.avellan@oulu.fi

6.2 Annex 2: Template stakeholder register

How to use this Document							
Dear user of this document. Please fill in the tab Stakeholder Register. It contains 3 sections for each stakeholder which are described below.							
When in doubt email me at tamara.avellan@oulu.fi							
1) Stakeholder Register							
Please add all stakeholders that you can think of to the list considering and selecting from the following categories:							
GA - General Audience; EA - External Audience; IA - Internal Audience							
When in doubt about which category to chose from, chose the one that fits you/the stakeholder BEST!							
Civil society (GA)	interested in the project and benefitting from more food security						
General public (GA)	interested in science and new water management technologies						
Public initiatives (GA)	linked to the farming community						
Policy makers at local level/municipalities (GA)	involved in water or agricultural issues						
Policy makers at national level (GA)	involved in water or agricultural issues						
Policy makers at EU level (GA)	involved in water or agricultural issues						
Farmers or farm managers (out) (EA)	not directly involved in the project						
Agricultural chambers, farmer associations (EA)							
Extension services, farmer schools (EA)							
Local water management organizations (EA)	e.g. Water User Associations (WUAs)						
Water retention industry (EA)							
Nutrient recycling industry (EA)							
Research peers (EA)	Scientists interested in the project outputs and outcomes						
OPTAIN (EA)	members of the OPTAIN project						
Media/science communicators (EA)							
Farmers or farm managers (in) (IA)	directly involved in project						
Researcher in project team (IA)	directly involved in project						
Project Executive (IA)							
EAB member (IA)							
Other consortium member (IA)							
Letters of support (IA)							
EC project counterparts (IA)							
For the expectations, use your knowledge on the stakeholder about what you think would be a motivation for them to be involved.							
2) Power/Interest							
Please weigh the stakeholders based on your best knowledge on a scale from -10 to +10 on their power as well as on their interest in WATERAGRI							
Power is the ability of the stakeholder to change or stop the project.							
Interest is the amount of involvement the stakeholder has in the project. It is the size of the overlap between the stakeholder's and the project's needs.							
3) Level of awareness							
Please classify stakeholders based on where you think they CURRENTLY (C) are and where you WOULD LIKE THEM to be (D).							
Stakeholders can have different levels of awareness:							
Unaware	The stakeholder is unaware of the project and its potential consequences to them.						
Resistant	The stakeholder is aware of the project but opposed to it.						
Neutral	The stakeholder is neither supportive nor opposed to the project.						
Supportive	The stakeholder is in favour of the project, and wants it to succeed.						
Leading	The stakeholder is actively engaged in project success, and willing to lend assistance to the project management team.						
This is clearly linked to the interest of the section above. However, this classification adds granularity and can help us better design communication strategies.							

Stakeholder Register

			Power/Interest	Level of awareness

Project Name:	WATERAGRI	Date:	01.07.2020	C = Current	D=Desired
Project Phase:	Initial				

Last Name of Stakeholder	First Name of Stakeholder	Designation	Organization	Role in Project	Email	Type of Stakeholder	Expectations (or also potential driving factors)	Interest	Power	Unaware	Resistant	Neutral	Supportive	Leading