

# COMMUNICATION STRATEGY PLAN (FINAL VERSION)



**25<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

This document details the communication strategy and plan of RISEUP-PPD Action. It outlines the objectives, target audiences, communication channels, visual identity, communication tools and monitoring indicators.



RISEUP-PPD  
Research Network  
in Peripartum  
Depression Disorder



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## I. PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

It describes the different tools, channels and means of communication that will be implemented throughout the project duration. The plan also describes the target groups of the dissemination strategy and it outlines the key dates related to planned actions and events. It contains the main strategic and operative guide that shall govern the overall project dissemination and communication activities. These guidelines will help to ensure that relevant information is shared with appropriate audiences on a timely basis by the most effective means. The dissemination activities will be continuously monitored during the project. The main objective of the communication activities is to implement the Action policies on gender and geographical representativeness, as well as disseminate and transfer findings from the Action to the scientific community, health practitioners/carers, women, families and communities. All of this aimed at contributing the achievement of the overall objectives of the Action.

## II. ACTION BACKGROUND

The main goal of Riseup-PPD COST Action is to establish a **Pan-European multidisciplinary network of researchers dedicated to the understanding of Peripartum Depression Disorder (PPD)**, from its prevention and assessment to its treatment and global impact.

Currently available European estimates, show that PPD prevalence ranges from 4% to 38%, carrying significant consequences for women, newborn-infants, and family systems, representing a socioeconomic burden to society.

Riseup-PPD aims to fill gaps in PPD research, practice and social awareness by developing updated reviews fostering research efforts on the standardization of diagnostic criteria, the development of adequate screening tools and cost-effectiveness evaluation of prevention and treatment programs. Additionally, the Action seeks to bridge multidisciplinary knowledge on the determinants of depressive symptoms in the peripartum period, and the mechanisms of action and change. This will be achieved by supporting a network capable of conducting innovative, translational projects on the neuropsychological mechanisms and biomarkers involved in the onset, maintenance and impact of PPD on women, newborn-infants and families, combined with cost-effectiveness analysis and evidence-based and implementation research projects. Finally, Riseup-PPD aims at building a shared database providing research teams with large quality-controlled datasets.

Ultimately, the network will provide new implications for clinical practice, increasing cost-effectiveness and promoting the quality of innovative health care services in PPD, reaching a real impact on end-users.

Riseup-PPD will strengthen Europe's leading position in PPD by means of a network that supports Early Career Investigators, particularly from Inclusiveness Target Countries and female researchers, assuring a geographical and gender balanced Pan-European network.

The project is carried out by a high-quality network of different actors from twenty-nine (29) different countries in Europe, led by the Cost Action Chair Dr Ana Ganho Ávila, CINEICC, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Coimbra, Portugal.

### III. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The present document is designed to support the overall and specific communication and visibility objectives of the project. Specifically, it is aimed at detailing the structure and the goals of the two main levels of the project communication strategy:

- Internal communications
- External communications

The strategy sets up approaches and tools in order to keep the stakeholders regularly informed and to ensure the visibility of the project. On visibility, the strategy contains the requirements to be undertaken by all implementing members of the Cost Action, and suggests activities that may be incorporated to build a strong communication and visibility plan. Communication objectives are the following:

- Ensure effective communication between groups;
- Ensure timely notices for requirements/meetings;
- Ensure optimum results for all communications and project expectations;
- Measure the results of the communication strategy execution and revise accordingly;

In order to maximize the impact of communication efforts:

- Activities need to be timely
- Information used must be accurate;
- Messages should interest the target audience(s);
- Activities should be appropriate in terms of resources (human and financial);

Effective communication is critical to the successful implementation of the project, in order to ensure that the project results are disseminated to the widest possible audience; Communication activities will be implemented in partnership relations with other relevant/similar programmes or initiatives.

#### 1. Scope of work, aims and objectives

This document describes a general communication strategy and specific activities dedicated to communication of the Cost Action RISEUP PPD. The strategy sets up approaches and tools in order to keep the stakeholders regularly informed and to ensure the visibility of the project. On visibility, the strategy contains the requirements to be undertaken by all implementing members of the Cost Action, and suggests activities that may be incorporated to build a strong communication and visibility plan.

The Communication Plan aims to address activities and communications that will:

1. Give the Action high relevance and visibility in order to create awareness of its research field
2. Optimise the profile of this COST Action
3. Inform and engage the relevant stakeholders in Europe
4. Maximise the impact of the research findings from the work groups on practice, as well as further scientific knowledge in the field
5. Support the establishment of the Action's position in the framework of the Mental Health in Europe

## 6. Establish contact with other similar or complementary projects and initiatives

The content of this activity involves all the relevant tasks that will allow the accomplishment of the highest level of dissemination and communication of the project objectives, actions and results. This activity will run for the whole duration of the Action i.e. 15.04.19 – 14.04.2023

The specific activities proposed are:

- Communication with stakeholders and dissemination of the project results
- Continuous update of the Action's website
- Development and distribution of informative material (newsletters, flyer, poster etc.).
  - Publication in national and international scientific and technical journals and conference proceedings
  - Social media activities
  - Organisation and participation in workshops, conferences & other events.

Objectives:

- a. Create a brand identity and logo of the Action according to the aims of RISEUP-PPD
- b. IDENTIFY of the target audience and stakeholders, communication tools, distribution channels and necessary resources (material and human) to ensure effective communication of the action
- c. Define the Communication Plan Timeline and appoint a person responsible for each task or activity
- d. Plan how to share the knowledge gained in the project and communicate effectively to a broad audience (to which target groups each activity and results are relevant and the best channels to address these) including:
  - i. Academics
  - ii. National health organisations who support the commissioning/provision of care
  - iii. Relevant staff groups and service provider leads
  - iv. Patients, mothers, family and carers organisations and civil society and the public including those seldom heard Departments of Health,
  - v. National and European Policymakers working on health and related issues
  - vi. International organisations (i.e., World Health Organization)
  - vii. Specialised media, in particular focusing on those covering health topics
- e. Define the period for dissemination and communication activities and the responsible partner for the implementation.
- f. Interact with a wide online audience, promotional materials and events
- g. Meet ethics and governance requirements including ensuring all stakeholders that participate in the study receive appropriate feedback

The Science Communication Manager (SCM) will be in charge of developing, maintaining and managing the Communication Strategy of RiseUp-PPD. Key responsibilities of the SCM are to:

- Plan and coordinate the implementation of communication activities at project level.
- Set the tone for internal and external communications.
- Maintain records of communication activities.
- Be the central point of contact with the Cost Association for communication activities only
- Provide information to interested partners and other stakeholders in a convenient format.

## 2. Audiences

There are seven key audiences for this research, these are:

- Target Group 1: Academic researchers
- Target Group 2: Policy makers and health service commissioning organisations
- Target Group 3: Clinical staff and service providers
- Target Group 4: Civil society including patient and family organisations
- Target Group 5: Patients, mothers, families, carers, and the general public including those seldom heard
- Target Group 6: External statutory organisations across the European countries (i.e., WHO)
- Target group 7 Industry

**A list of stakeholders is being compiled with input from WG leaders and beyond in order to create a community interested in the project activities and results.**

The communication activities will target the audiences above with the main purpose of giving support to the dissemination activities by:

- Raising the level of awareness about the definition and diagnosis criteria of PPD, current needs and future directions for prevention, management and treatment of Peripartum Depression Disorder (WG1 consensus) ? Performance and reliability?
- Engaging the stakeholders during conferences, workshops and other targeted events.
- Sharing the results and outcome of the project

## 3. The Key Messages

The messages will be defined taking into account the profile of the different target audiences.

In order to guarantee greater effectiveness in the choice of the message, we will base ourselves on the triangle principle, that is, the message will contain information relating to:

- The need statement: Needs that the action wants to address
- The programme strategy: How the Action program address the needs
- The program results: Expected outcomes of the Action

Addressing the different target groups we will find well balanced communication formats taking into account the necessity of adaptation of language (from technical/field experts to common understanding/general public), format and mode.

#### 4. Project visual identity

As it is vital to have a strong visual identity, commissioning the Action's logo was one of the first steps towards establishing it. All dissemination materials will be prepared in line with this visual identity to enable effective "branding" of the project, in addition to all mandatory COST acknowledgements including COST's own logo and European Union branding. The design of the project website will also represent and reflect the project's identity. The logo – in one of the many forms that were created - will appear on all public documents, publications, presentations etc. in order to increase visibility of the Action. Partners are provided with some tools that should be adopted for use in relation to all Action related work including:

- Template for PowerPoint presentations
- Template for Word documents
- Template for posters

#### 5. Communication Channels and Activities

During the Action lifetime, the Network will make use of the below channels and activities in order to promote RISEUP-PPD at international, national, regional and local levels.

##### ***Internal communications***

The project seeks to be transparent both in relation to the project participants as well as external stakeholders with interest in the subject. Both the dedicated webpage of the project <https://riseupppd18138.wordpress.com/dissemination/> and the google drive will be used throughout the project's implementation to share documents. The google drive is an online collaboration environment for storing, organizing and sharing information and is accessible from almost all devices. You can access it through its shortened, easy to remember, link [bit.ly/ca18138](https://bit.ly/ca18138). Parts of the Drive may only be accessible to certain people (e.g., the Core Group folder may be accessed only by Core Group members with previously white listed e-mail addresses).

**A Slack Workspace and specific channels per WG have also been created to facilitate discussions online.**

Skype and Zoom will be used for organising online meetings among the project partners via a virtual environment.

##### ***External communications***

The external communication and dissemination activities will use different channels in order to diversify and maximum outreach to the target groups and all stakeholders accordingly. They include:

1. Project Website
2. Social Media
3. Communication materials: flyer and infographics
4. Newsletter and
5. Press releases
6. General Media and Trade Media and specially those covering health issues
7. Transnational Events and conferences
8. Open events for the wider public

### **1. Project website <https://riseupppd18138.com>**

A professional and user-friendly website has been developed for the Cost Action with the aim of making the project's results publicly available, offering easy access from anywhere in the world and working as a strong dissemination tool addressing all stakeholder groups. The website is included in the e-Cost website. It will provide information on the project results, project activities and events as well as information on other relevant issues. The website will be updated regularly by Core Group members, who will get access so as to enable them to edit (parts of) the content. The focus of the website will be on the provision of relevant information to interested stakeholders, including information for the different working groups. The website includes Cost features, Cost logo, EU emblem and accompanying text as indicated in the Dissemination Guidelines of the programme.

The Science Communication Manager will monitor the COST action results, based on the information provided by the members of the Action and the Core Group.

All project partners where permitted will be asked to include a link to the RISEUP PPD website in their own organisation's website. This will allow a higher traceability and outreach.

### **2. Social media**

Social networks provide the opportunity for timely and real-time information about project activities, interacting thus with the target groups involved and concerned by the Action. The latest posts will be shown on the projects' website will also be shared across the project's social media accounts. By doing so, we will gain more visibility for the project, managing thus, to extend the coverage of the project and improve our Google search ranking.

A Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts have been created where we will target different audiences. Facebook is more tailored for the general public and LinkedIn and Twitter for Academia, industry, health professionals and policymakers.

The Action members will make use of their own institutional and/or personal social media accounts (LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter) to distribute news on a regular basis. Whenever possible, the news will also be distributed through the official social media channels of the Cost Association (i.e. <https://twitter.com/COSTprogramme>, <https://www.linkedin.com/company/costoffice>). These accounts will be used as additional distribution channels of the project results.

### **3: Communications Materials: Flyers and infographics**



Informational material need to convey a rounded impression of the project in a way designed to draw attention and create interest. Texts should be short and simple and photographs should be used where possible, to illustrate the action and its context. Any material produced in paper form should also be made available in electronic form, so that it can be sent by e-mail and posted on both the internet and social media.

An informative flyer will be produced by WG6 in collaboration with other WG leads and distributed to the relevant target groups. It will contain information about the project, an overview of the topics of the working groups and activities, and include information about how to join the Action. The flyer will be distributed mainly in electronic format.

Infographics will be designed including project results and activities containing data which is interesting for targeted stakeholders as well as for the EU policymakers. These may be used on the website, in social media, in conferences and workshops as posters or appealing visual content.

### **1. Newsletters**

A newsletter will be published every 6 months in order to report on the project activities and develop awareness about the topics tackled but more importantly about the Action and the network. The Newsletter will be edited by the Newsletter Editor with the Core Group members. The main contents of these newsletters shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following items:

- Welcome note
- A brief summary of the newsletter content
- Reporting on events
- List of relevant coming workshops, training schools, short-term scientific missions etc.
- Progress of the Action in terms of publications and activities/results
- Personal stories

### **2. Press releases**

Press releases will be drafted by a nominated member of WG6 in collaboration with Core Group members and newsletters by the Newsletter Editor with input from other members aiming to link it to key dates (such as World Health day etc) to attract media and stakeholder attention. They will be distributed via the project website as well as via email to the networks of contacts of the members/action participants.

### **3. General Media and Trade Media**

Media are an effective communication tool to reach a wide range of stakeholders and the public. The members of the Network will look for opportunities to promote publication of their scientific articles but also publish articles about the project in media focussed publications such as The Conversation. A list of media is being compiled to identify the most suitable outlets to disseminate the project activities and results asking for input from WG members.

### **4. Conferences and events**

In order to achieve the maximum exposure of the project results and to encourage the involvement of the stakeholders, the members of the Action in collaboration with the WG leaders and the Action Chair will present RISEUP PPD in major relevant conferences and workshops. A number of forthcoming events will be identified and listed on the google drive asking from input from WG leaders. This list will be continuously updated with new events as suggested by members of the network.

Examples of relevant up and coming events include:

**The Society for Reproductive and Infant Psychology Conference; 8-9<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Chester UK**  
<https://srip.org/about/conference/>

**The International Marcé Society for Perinatal Mental Health Biennial Scientific Meeting; 5-8 October, 2020. Iowa USA** <https://marce2020.com/>

## 5. Open events

During the action period, conferences in several countries could be identified where a wider audience (not only experts and practitioners) attend such as national baby fairs (feria bebe in Spain, Babywelt in Germany, Kidexpo in France or the Baby show in the UK). We could see how to communicate to the wider public some key messages easy to understand on prevention and treatment of PPD or maternal well-being.

## 6. Monitoring

Effective communication can be identified when it reaches and is heard by its target audience. The effectiveness and efficiency of the actions of information and public awareness depend on (i) the content transmitted, and (ii) the channel used.

To measure the efficacy of the tools included in this Plan, the SCM and WG6 will keep track on the below-mentioned indicators (Key Performance Indicators) that will determine the efficient implementation of this strategy.

For consistency purposes it is suggested to perform this exercise at the same time as reporting to the Cost Association

- Appearance of the logo in all material and dissemination activities created under the Action.
- Number of visits to project's website.
- Media coverage (e.g. articles published in press/online, interviews etc.).
- Number of events attended by network members relevant to the Action.
- Number of newsletters and flyers disseminated.
- Number of recipients/subscribers of the Action's newsletter.
- Number of conferences and workshops organized
- Number of Tweets on the Action's Twitter account, re-tweets and impressions.
- Number of followers on the Action's Twitter account.
- Number of followers on the Action's LinkedIn account.
- Number of followers on the Facebook account, likes and impressions
- Number of presentations of the Action at conferences or events (presentation, poster, paper).
- Number of scientific publications.

The evaluation of communication activities will determine the degree to which the communication objectives have been reached, and the relationship between the outcomes and the efforts made to reach the goals.

In addition, project partners must ensure that:

- Signed list of participants in hardcopy is kept for all workshops, conferences, seminars and events organised under the project.
- Presentations and word documents are in accordance with the specific template provided.
- Photos are being taken as evidence of action implementation.

The spreadsheet (annex 1) aims to document all the dissemination activities carried out during the project and to monitor them using different metrics (e.g. number of publications, number of visits to the project website, number of flyers distributed). The spreadsheet will be available on google drive and can be edited by all partners at any time. The SCM will remind the members to update it particularly prior to reporting and MC meetings. The file is divided in the following sheets:

- Publications
- Events
- Website references
- References in social media
- Mailshots (i.e. newsletters or informational material sent etc.).

### Risks and Mitigation Measures

The implementation of the communication plan can be influenced by a wide range of factors, both internal and external.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RISKS PROPOSED	RISK-MITIGATION MEASURES
<b>Low level of engagement/Disengagement of the Action members</b>	Ensure equal interaction with all the members of the Action to ensure regular updates on activities.
<b>Low level of awareness about the activities of RISEUP PPD from the expert community and the general public</b>	Regular updates of quality content related to the Action's activities on the available Communication Channels (especially on the Action's Webpage and Social Media Platforms)
<b>Lack of structure in the communication activities</b>	Set-up regular meetings of a communication team of the Action and chaired by the Science Communication Manager to define the content and schedule of the communication activities.
<b>Noncompliance to the agreed templates and/or formats of documents, reports etc.</b>	These will be agreed upon and made available to all from the initial stages. The Science Communication Team will monitor throughout the project and the Action leader will intervene to take corrective actions, where necessary.
<b>Insufficient effort by partners to publicize the project and its results at the nation or</b>	The Science Communication Team will monitor

<b>European level</b>	effort at regular intervals and will discuss progress during MC meetings with the Core Group and Chair/Vice-Chair, so as to prevent or correct such incidences
<b>Lack of interest by stakeholders groups in the project</b>	Efforts will be throughout the lifecycle of the project through panel meetings, workshops etc to engage and interact with the stakeholders to prevent or correct such incidences.

#### **IV. Role of the partners**

The SCM in close cooperation with the Coordinator of the Cost Action, will be responsible for the project dissemination and communication plan, guarantee consistency in the message delivered and ensure all the targets are successfully reached. All partners will contribute to the implementation of the stakeholder and public engagement strategy and play a key role in networking with stakeholders.

Specifically, all partners will be responsible for:

- Creating a bridge between the project and the networks they are involved in;
- Providing input to the content of the project's website, communication materials and media channels;
- Disseminating the activities and results of the project through to their social media channels;
- Disseminating the activities and results of the project at specific events/fairs;
- Ensuring that all dissemination activities and outputs correctly acknowledge COST Association and European Union funding. More information on how to correctly acknowledge COST funding can be found here: <https://www.cost.eu/visual-identity/>

#### **V. Data processing**

Data coming from the project website usage, social media, dissemination and networking activities will be electronically stored. Action members will also directly provide information about specific organisations, contact people, etc., from the target groups of interest for the project. No personal information beyond name, corporate email address and company address and telephone will be stored. The network and the Cost Association officers will have access to this information. No use of this information unrelated to the project will be made. Any public data published on the website can be used also by third parties. The googledrive will only be used by Network members via links provided by the chair of the action and the action co-ordinator.

Personal data will be stored and managed according to the GDPR.



**RISEUP-PPD**  
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