



NordGen

# COMMUNICATIONS FOR GENEBANKS

Meeting of the ECPGR Genebank Managers Network

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# Agenda

- ECPGR update
- Science communication essentials for genebanks
- Survey results and reflections
- Communication examples from NordGen
- Discussion





# ECPGR Update



# ‘New AEGIS’ project

## Ongoing progress, February 2025

- 10 new **operational genebank manuals** developed or under development (ECPGR can contribute to the preparation of 10 more - €700)
- All **manuals being analyzed and compared**. Overview of current practices/recommendations will be presented at final meeting
- 2 **crop-specific genebank standards** under development (Berries and *Malus/Pyrus*)
- 1 AEGIS Associate Member will publish their **SOPs**
- 14 genebanks tested the **genebank metrics**. A peer-reviewed paper has been drafted and will be submitted to impact journal
- 9 reciprocal **genebank visits** are planned between Feb-Apr (**Nordgen**/Austria/Hungary; **Netherlands**/Latvia/Portugal; **Czech**/Georgia/Romania)
- Final in-person meeting to discuss results planned for 22 May, Prague

# Showcasing your participation in ECPGR Initiatives




**The European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources** is a network that promotes the conservation, management and sustainable use of plant genetic resources in Europe by:

- Sustaining *ex situ* conservation
- Strengthening the plant genetic resources information system
- Expanding *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives & wild food plants
- Promoting on-farm conservation and management
- Facilitating access for use in breeding, research, training and farming



[www.ecpgr.org](http://www.ecpgr.org)







**AEGIS**  
A European Genebank Integrated System

AEGIS is an ECPGR initiative connecting European genebanks to efficiently conserve and provide access to unique germplasm in Europe through the establishment of the European Collection.

The accessions in the European Collection are maintained by the participating institutions at an agreed quality standard and are made available following the terms of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.



[www.ecpgr.org/aegis](http://www.ecpgr.org/aegis)




**THE EUROPEAN SEARCH CATALOGUE FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES**



- > 2 million accessions
- > 6,700 genera
- > 45,000 species

- > 400 institutes
- > 43 countries

EURISCO is a European online database that provides information on crop plants and their wild relatives preserved by more than 400 institutes in Europe, as *ex situ* accessions or *in situ* populations.



<http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/>

EURISCO is maintained at the Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK), Gatersleben, Germany on behalf of ECPGR




**EVA**  
European Evaluation Network



**BREEDING COMPANIES, RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND GENE BANKS JOINING FORCES TO EVALUATE CROP DIVERSITY IN EUROPEAN COLLECTIONS**

- Crop-specific public-private partnerships
- Joint phenotyping and genotyping
- Evaluations in different European environments
- Identification of climate-resilient breeding material
- Enriched genebank inventories

[www.ecpgr.org/eva](http://www.ecpgr.org/eva)

**PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**  
Increasing ECPGR knowledge and opportunities on public-private partnerships for the use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture



FREE TO PUBLISH  
FREE TO READ



**Genetic Resources**

A full open-access peer-reviewed journal serving all genetic resources stakeholders

[www.genresj.org](http://www.genresj.org)

Publishing research and tools on plant and animal genetic resources in the European region and worldwide

- Research articles
- Reviews
- Strategies
- Guidelines
- Short communications
- Methods
- Protocols
- Case studies and more



Genetic Resources is supported by:




This project has received support from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement 101019719.

Contact: [n.capozio@cgiar.org](mailto:n.capozio@cgiar.org)



The image features a close-up of several green leaves with prominent veins, likely from a plant like a mulberry. A horizontal banner with a green-to-purple gradient is centered across the image, containing the title text in white. The leaves are brightly lit, showing some shadows and highlights.

# **Science communication essentials for genebanks**

# What is science communications?

Practice of making scientific knowledge, methods and discoveries accessible and engaging to people outside the scientific community.

## Why it matters

- Helps people understand the impact of science on daily life
- Provides evidence for informed policies and choices
- Ensures discoveries reach and benefit society
- Strengthens the relationship between science and society



# Who is responsible for science communications?



## **Scientists**

Translate their findings into clear, accessible messages.



## **Institutions**

Universities, research institutes and policymakers promote science outreach.



## **Media professionals**

Bridge the gap between science and the public through storytelling.



## **Science communicators and educators**

Specialists dedicated to engaging audiences through different formats.



## **Everyone!**

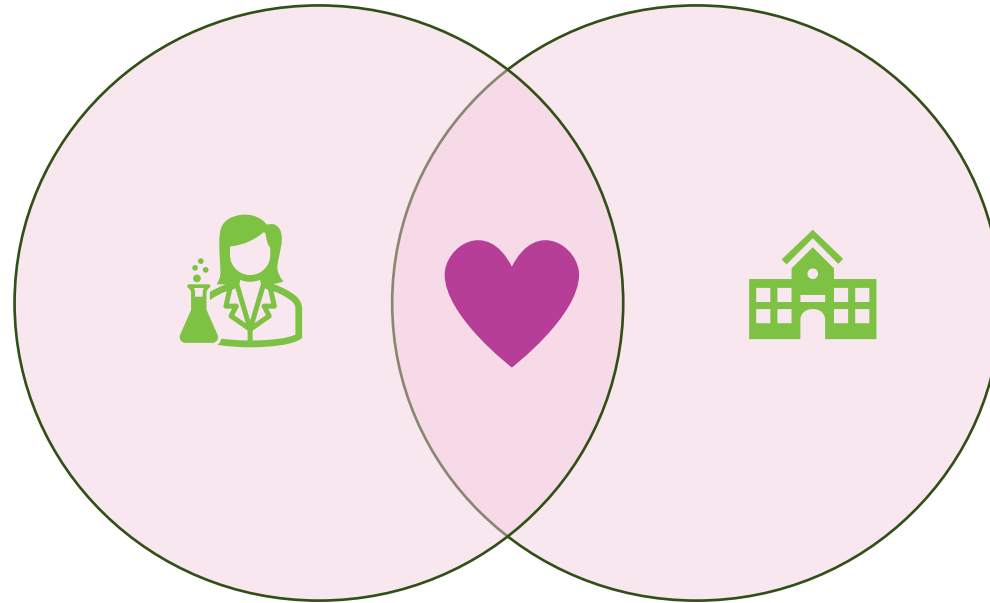
Citizens, advocates and social media users help share and discuss scientific knowledge





# Scientists and institutions working together

**SCIENTISTS**  
Knowledge  
creators



**INSTITUTIONS**  
Amplifiers and  
enablers

Science communication thrives when scientists and institutions collaborate effectively.

Each plays a vital role, and their synergy enhances the reach and impact of scientific knowledge.



# Communication tools for your genebank

- ✓ **Updated website**

(Who you are, what you do, why it matters, who funds you and how to contact you)

- ✓ **Social media presence**

(The platform depends on your priority audiences and country)

- ✓ **Basic materials**

(Simple brochures, one-pagers or presentations explaining your mission and impact)

- ✓ **Good photos!**

(High-quality images of your work, facilities and collections)

- ✓ **Success stories and impact examples**

(Brief case studies or testimonials to showcase your contributions)

- ✓ **Collaboration and recognition**

(Acknowledge partnerships, funders and networks to strengthen credibility)

- ✓ **Consistent branding**

(A simple logo, unified colours and fonts create a professional and recognizable identity)



# Tips for science communications for researchers

- ✓ Know your audience
- ✓ Refine your key messages
- ✓ Connect your work to the big picture
- ✓ Show your passion and excitement for what you do
- ✓ Try to use metaphors and props that help connect your topic with people's experience
- ✓ Connect and work with communications people in your genebank/institute.

# Resources



## COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT

COMMUNICATION FUNDAMENTALS

COMMUNICATING SCIENCE ONLINE

WORKING WITH JOURNALISTS

ENGAGING POLICYMAKERS

IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT

USING MULTIMEDIA & VISUALS

MINI WORKSHOPS

<https://www.aaas.org/resources/communication-toolkit>



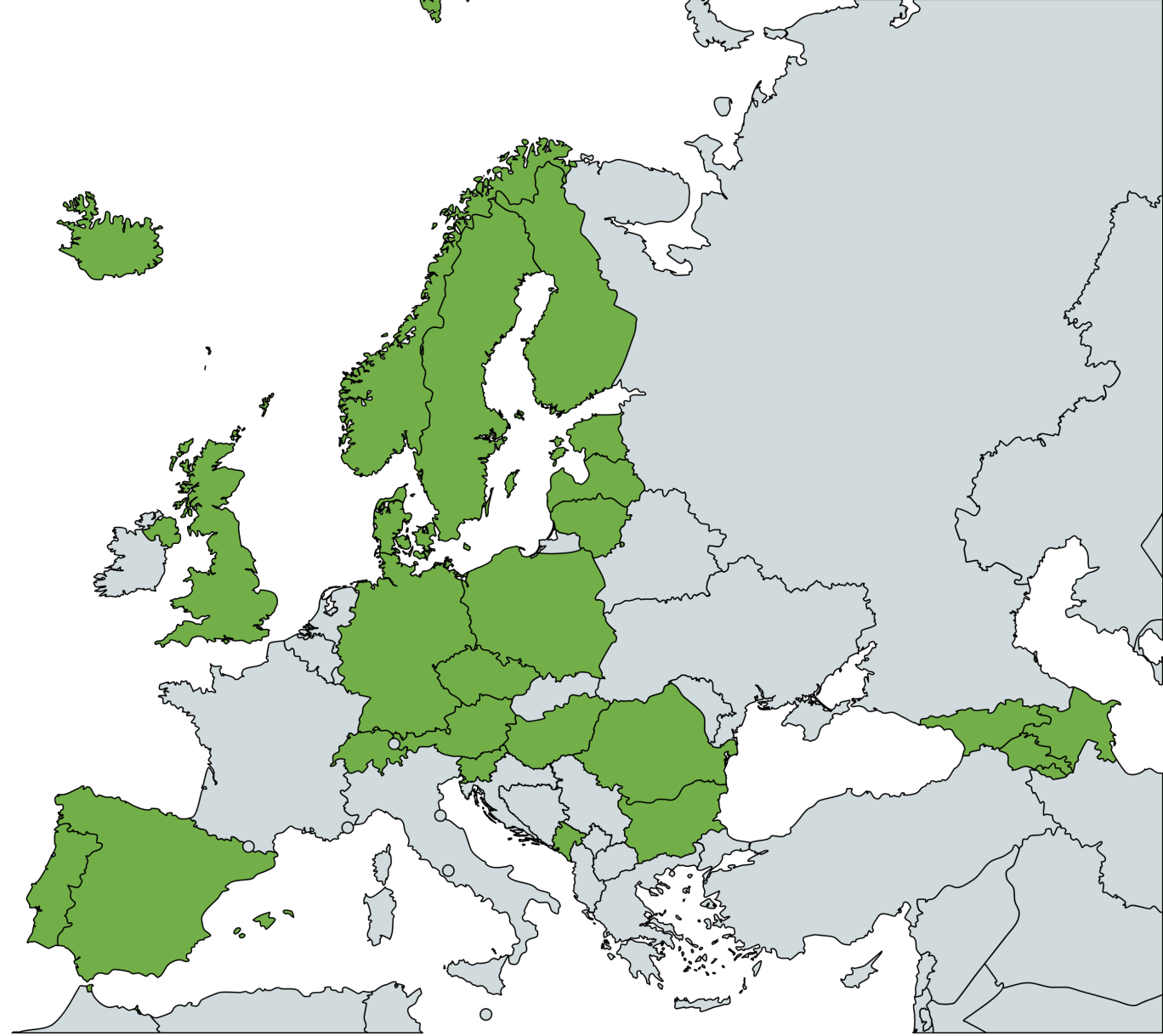
# Survey on communications in European genebanks

## RESULTS



# 27 respondents from 20 countries

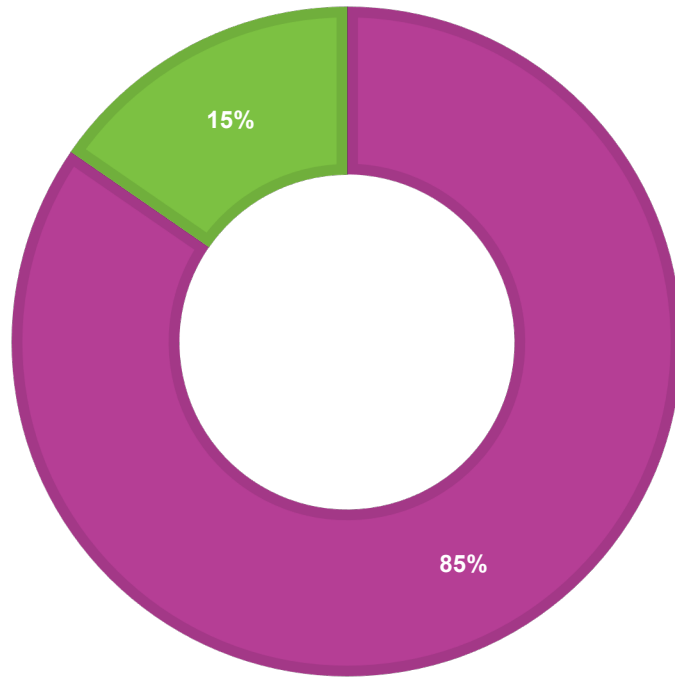
Armenia  
Austria  
Azerbaijan  
Bulgaria  
Czech Republic  
Estonia  
Georgia  
Germany  
Hungary  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Montenegro  
Nordic Countries  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
Slovenia  
Spain  
Switzerland  
UK





# How important do you think communication is for the success of your institute?

■ Very important   ■ Somewhat important

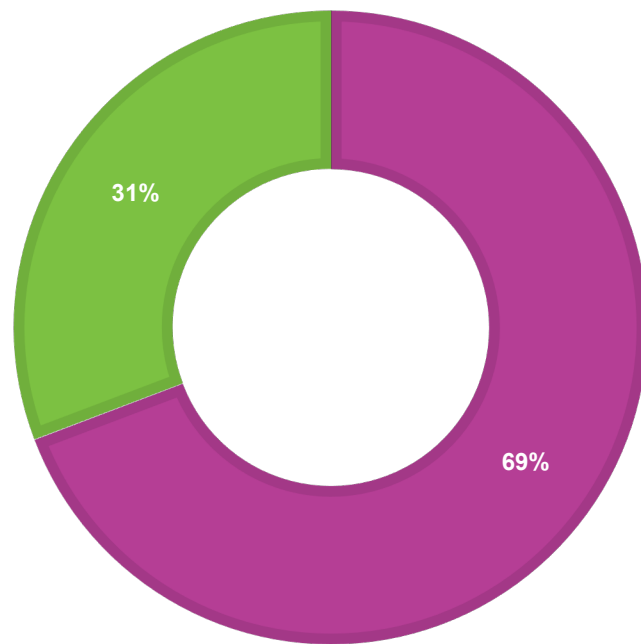


Very important	22
Somewhat important	4
Neutral	0
Not very important	0
Not important at all	0



# Does your institute actively engage in external communication activities (e.g. public outreach, media relations, social media, etc.)?

■ Yes, consistently   ■ Yes, occasionally



Yes, consistently	18
Yes, occasionally	8
No, but it's being planned	0
No, we don't engage in communication	0
I'm not sure	0



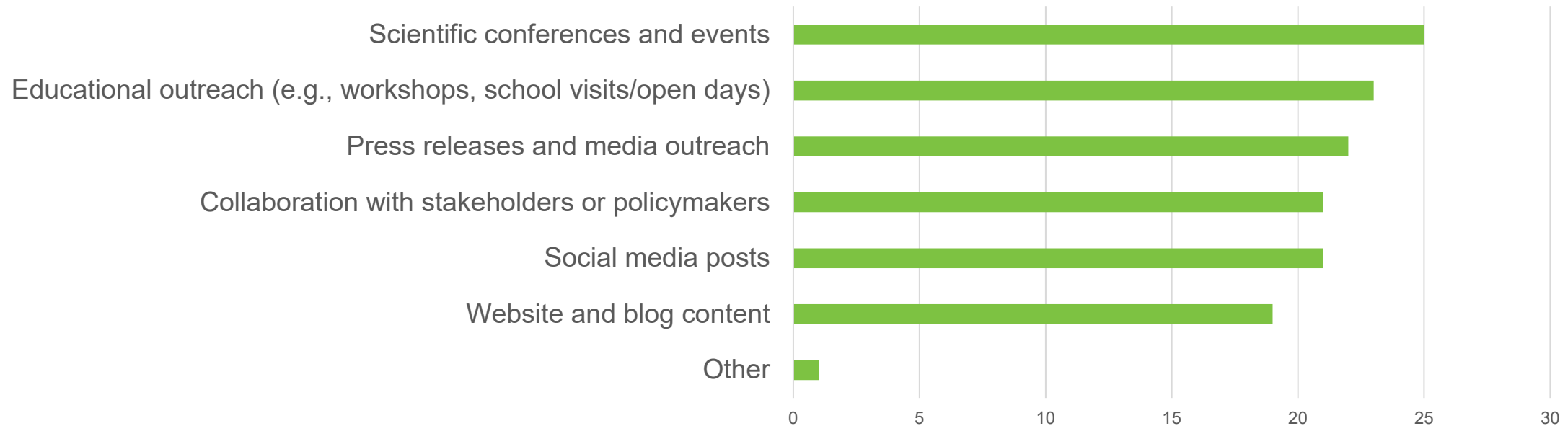
# Who is primarily responsible for communication activities at your institute?



~50% of non-specialists

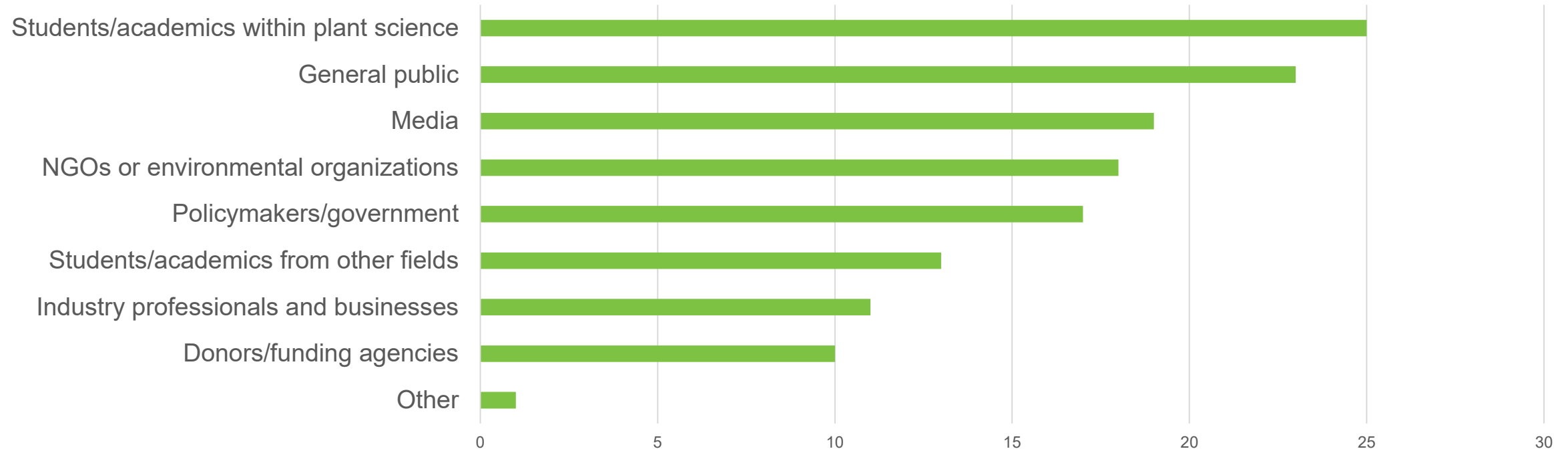


# What types of communication activities do you or your institute engage in?

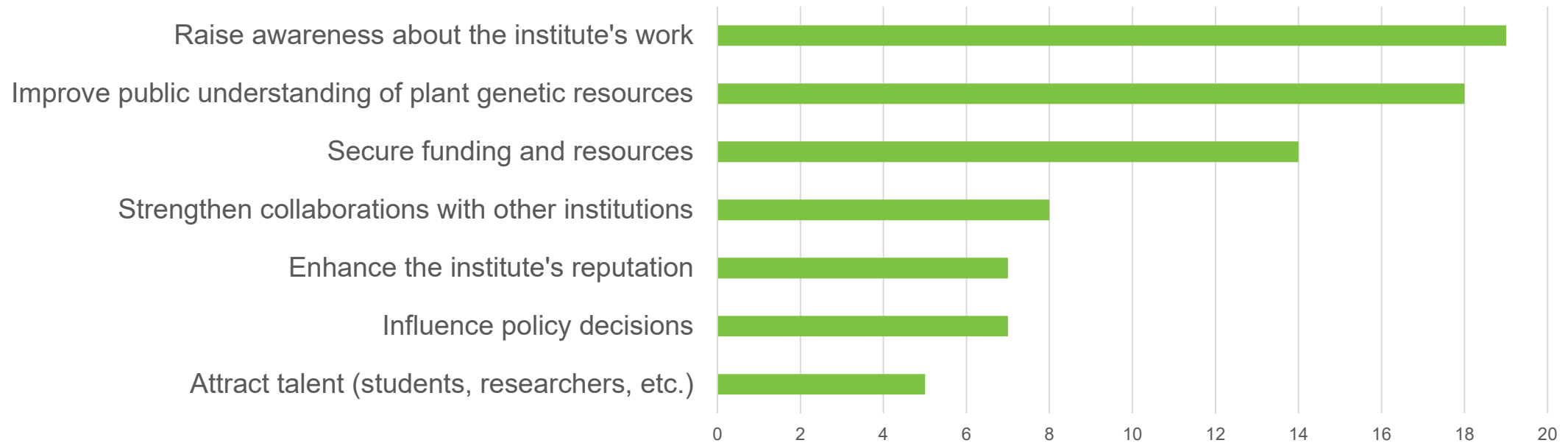




# Which audiences outside of your peers do you or your institute engage with through communication activities?

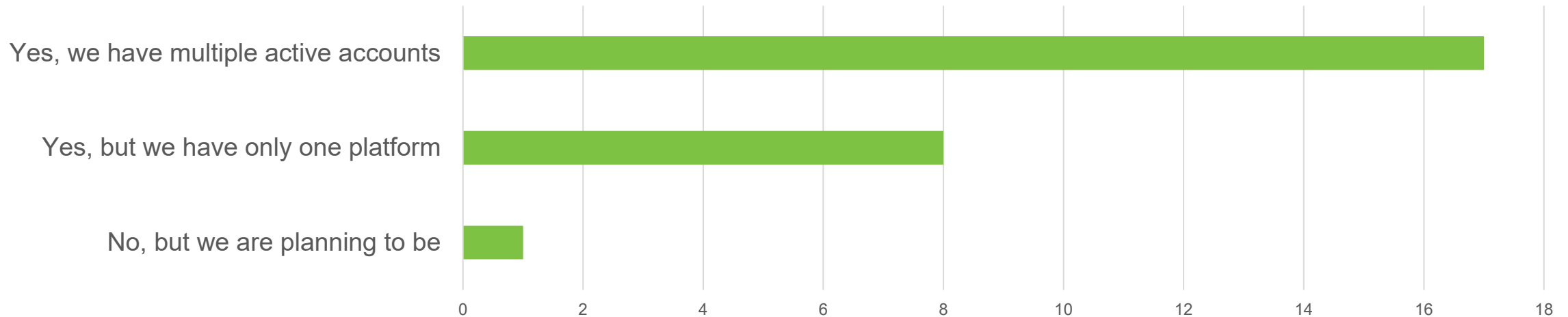


# What would you like to achieve with communication efforts at your institute? (Select your top 3 priorities)

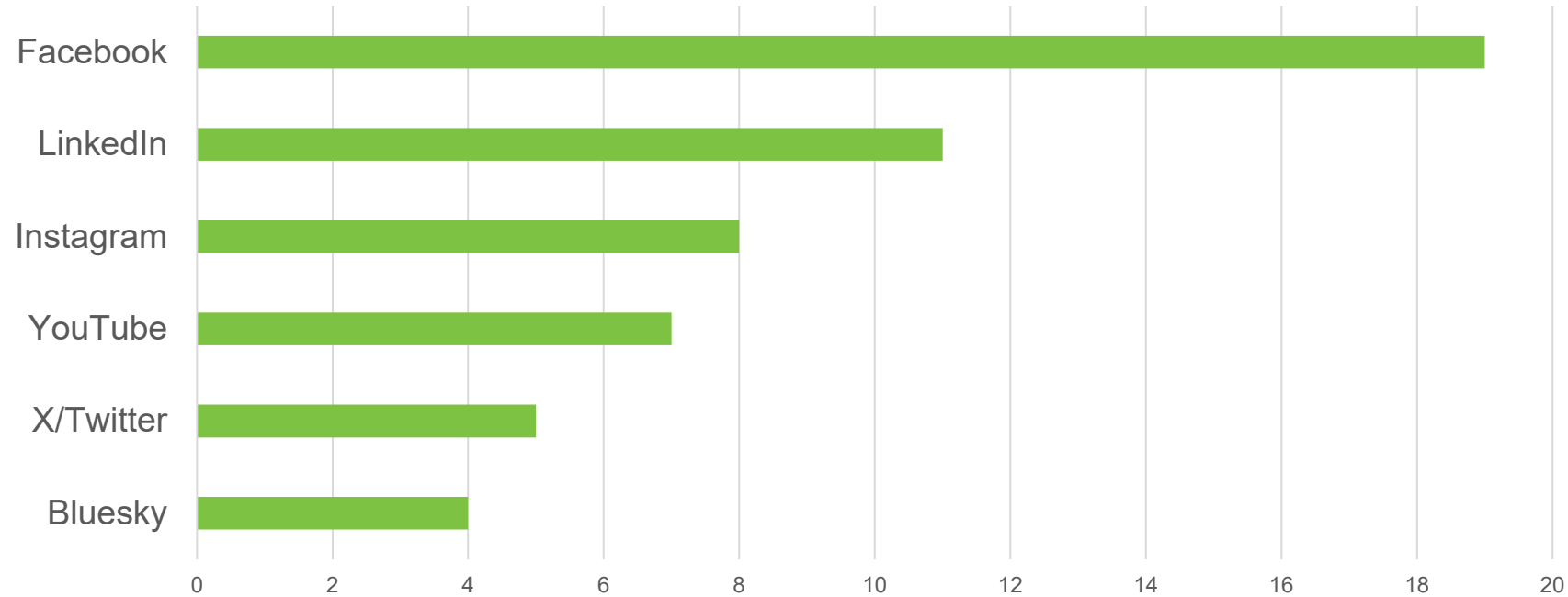




# Is your institute active on social media platforms (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram)?

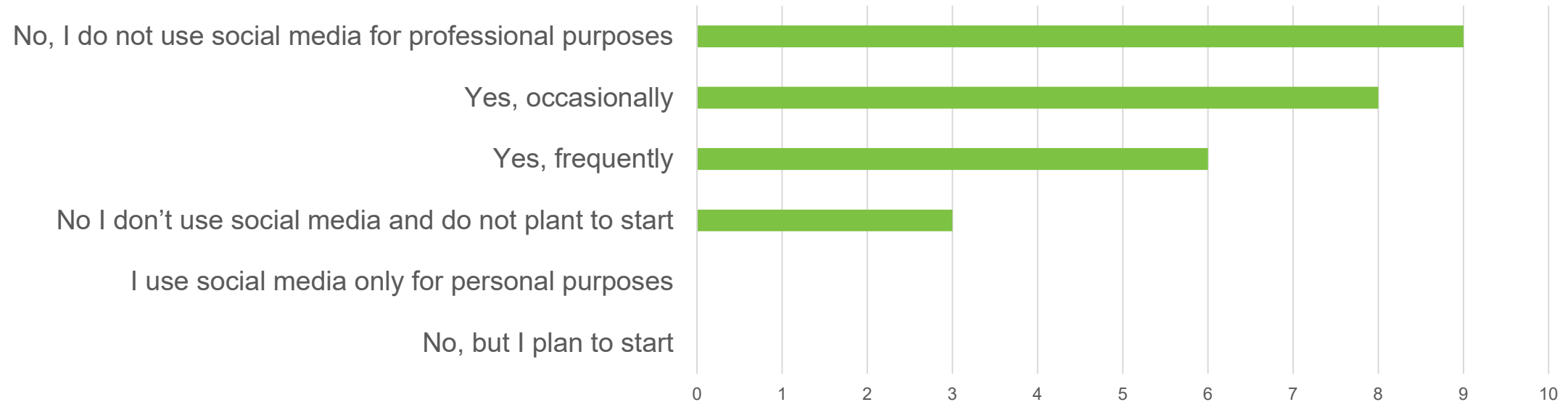


# Which platforms does your institute use?

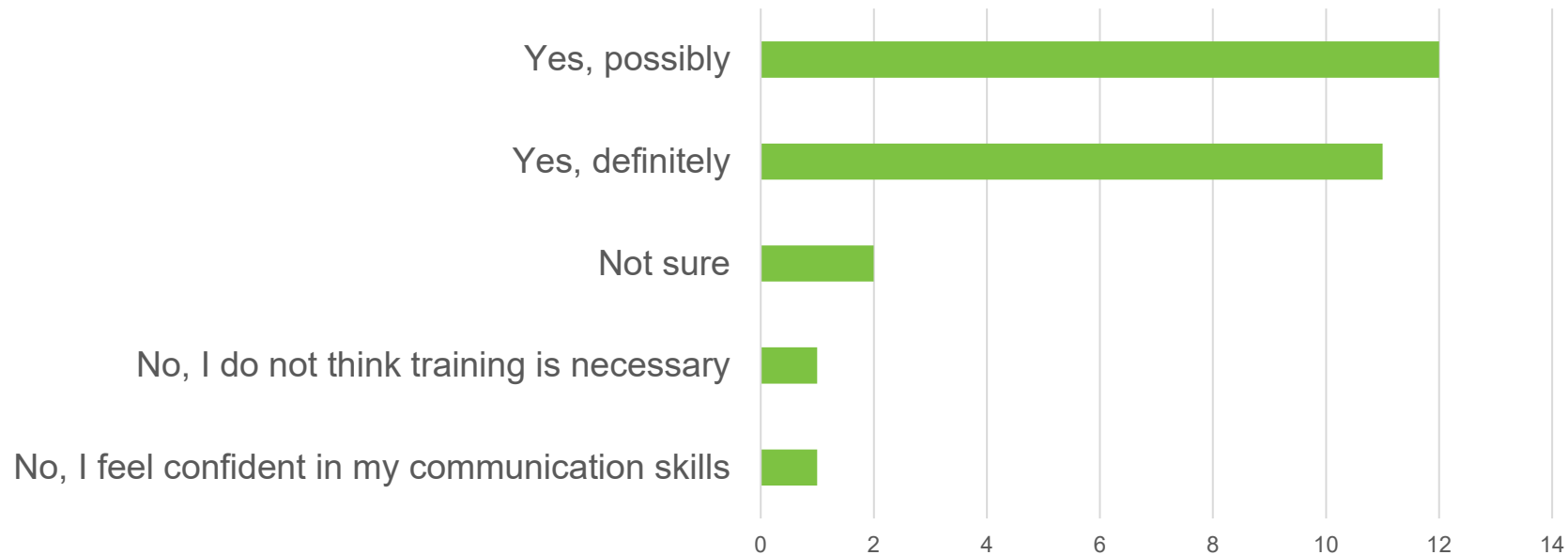




# Do you personally use social media in your professional life (e.g. sharing research, networking)?



# Would you be interested in receiving training or resources to improve your communication skills?



# Communication at NordGen

- Two communicators since 2021
- Former journalists with experience of written, photo and video content
- Serving 30 employees and some 20 projects
- Also knowledge centre for genetic resources of plants, farm animals and forest



# Channels and content

- LinkedIn: professional content
- Facebook/instagram: general public
- Have left Twitter, investigating Bluesky
- Newsletters (4-6 times/year) to about 3 500 subscribers
- Website, events, publications

Cutting peas sprouts! 🌱

As part of our project "Next generation genebanking - unlocking the potential of plant genetic resources in the sequencing era", we will send our entire protein crops collection for DNA sequestration. The project, conducted in collaboration with [Center for Quantitative Genetics and Genomics - Aarhus University](#) will lead to a major improvement for the genebank collection and means that researchers and plant breeders will be able to access brand new information about NordGen's seeds - information which is vital for developing the plant based protein sources of the future.

Definitely worth sharpening the scissors for! ✂️

**2,000 SAMPLES OF OUR  
PROTEIN CROPS...**





# Three concerns

1. Finding the time
2. Reaching the target groups
3. Translating the complex





# 1. Finding the time

- The nature of communication
- Anything is better than nothing
- 1%
- Use planning tools for social media
- Communication investments pays off



NordGen

Published by Sendible



· January 17 at 9:00 AM · 🌐

One of the many important tasks in the seed laboratory is to carry out germination tests. Pictured is one of the peas grown last year. This particular seed sample is classified as research material of German origin. Impressive roots, right?

[#biodiversity](#) [#cultivation](#) [#greenprotein](#) [#peas](#)



## 2. Reaching the target groups

- Adapt your message to the audience
- Don't be shy, reach out
- Don't give up, it takes time



# 3. Translating the complex



Tell it as to a child or a friend, focus on the “why”



Chose your words, use images and videos, engage in storytelling



Use metaphors, connect to every-day life



Use a funnel. Start easy, move on into the complex



# Final tips and tricks

- Build an image/video library. iPhone gets you far
- Use Canva (or similar) for coherent design of videos, social media content, reports, etc.
- Use Sendible (or similar) for planning social media
- Don't hesitate contacting media, politicians, state officials, businesses and others to talk about your work





Be brave  
– and have fun!  
Thank you.



# Not communicating today? Where to start:

- Create social media accounts (but dare to prioritize)
- Create an image library
- Invite the outside world (through newsletters, visits, social media)
- Get inspiration (don't think twice about stealing a good idea)
- Have fun!

# A Genebank Communications Network – worth exploring?

## A simple, collaborative, flexible communications network

**Goal:** enhance visibility, knowledge exchange and coordination by leveraging existing tools and expertise

## What can this network do?

- Share best practices (quick guides, templates and success stories)
- Help coordinate outreach (e.g. joint campaigns, social media collaboration, synchronized messaging for greater impact)
- Align messaging for advocacy/funding
- Facilitate training and capacity building (webinars, workshops and shared resources)





# Next steps

- Who is interested?
- Set up an informal mailing list – contact of all genebank comms people
- Create a shared list of social media accounts and follow each other
- Identify key priorities, needs and opportunities





# Discussion





The image features several ears of corn in various colors, including red, purple, and yellow, arranged on a dark background. The corn is the central focus, with some ears showing a mix of colors. The text "THANK YOU" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font, centered horizontally. A horizontal bar with a rainbow gradient is positioned below the text.

# THANK YOU