

D10.9, April 2020

# Interim Dissemination Report





## **D10.9, April 2020, Interim Dissemination Report**

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## Executive Summary

Work Package 10 of the AURES II project is tasked with disseminating objectives, methods, tools and results of the project at local, national and European level among different stakeholders. These include policymakers, industries and the academic community. The second task the WP is tasked with is fostering communication and knowledge sharing among policymakers and market participants.

In general, all communication and dissemination efforts are designed and intended to pursue and support the three main objectives of the AURES II project:

- Generate and communicate new insights on the applicability, performance, and effects of specific auction designs, given various policy objectives on national level and in a European context.
- Provide tailor-made policy support for different types of auction applications.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange between stakeholders.

Shortly after the beginning of the project, at Month 4, an initial plan was prepared (see Deliverable 10.1), building on the experience of the AURES project (Grant agreement no. 646172, ended in December 2017), addressing good and bad practices and with the aim of further assessing the key project elements among the varied community of people and institutions involved in renewable energy auctions in Europe, ranging from researchers and academia to policymakers and market players.

The **main goals** of the present Interim Dissemination Report are:

- to report on the communication and exploitation activities conducted during the first 18 months of the project, comparing those activities and their outcomes with the initial plans and explain what changes were necessary.
- to review and update the plans for the next phase of the project.



# 1 Background: review of the main elements of the initial communication and dissemination plan

This document is a follow-up and an update of the AURES II Communication Plan, which was finalized on 01 November 2018 as Deliverable D10.1. That document set forth a framework for four tasks included in Work Package 10 of the project: (i) a communication and dissemination strategy, (ii) the project visual identity, (iii) a series of communication activities, and (iv) a set of dissemination activities.

As mentioned in the Communication and Dissemination Plan, in this area of activity the main objectives of the project were:

- disseminate objectives, methods, tools and results of the project at local, national and European level among different stakeholders, including policymakers, industries and the academic community.
- to foster communication and knowledge sharing among policymakers and market participants, with the aim of creating a knowledge exchange platform.

According to the aforementioned Plan, these objectives have been split up into three more operational goals that were addressing all the target groups, ensuring that they:

- are aware that AURES II exists.
- engage in a mutually beneficial dialogue on the topic.
- consider AURES II one of their main go-to resources for issues related to RES auctions.

Based on the previous experience with the first run of the AURES project and the direct experience of some partners in other H2020 and similar projects on the topic, the Communication and Dissemination Plan already identified six main activities that were intended to be narrowed down into the single actions taken. Those general activities were intended to facilitate the achievements of the communication and dissemination actions. They were:

- facilitating internal communication in agreement and collaboration with the project coordination and management.
- supporting and promoting dialogue with stakeholders and players inside and outside the project, with special attention devoted to the already existing community of stakeholders.
- developing and creating professional and effective web and editorial communication tools, to convey the project results.
- supporting the capacity building and face to face events.
- designing and developing novel communication strategies adapted to maximize impact of this project.
- reaching a diversified range of stakeholders and interested parties.

## Difficulties and Critical Points

The initial Plan already pointed out some difficulties and critical points in the development of the WP's activities. Those were:

- validation of contents and making sure that the entire communication strategy was in line with the project identity and innovative contributions.
- involving partners in active participation and support to communication.
- timely information on events and any other work and advancement by partners.
- dissemination through social media.



The team working on WP10 proposed, supported and managed the implementation of the following solutions among all partners:

- collection and consistent tagging of all partners institutional as well as personal (when available) social accounts to strengthen the circulation of information through social media.
- bi-monthly internal survey through an online easy-to-access tool (such as Google forms or email to all partners);
- to facilitate a common repository of all internal and official document and to maintain an organized archive of the project development per each WP, a Microsoft SharePoint folder has been created and shared with all project partners.



## 2 Report on the establishment of the project identity

AURES II is a European project that aims at expanding and deepening the results and insights of the first AURES project. Consequently, it inherited an audience familiar with the latter's visual and graphic identity. For this reason, formicablu developed the new project identity based on the values represented by the already existing visual materials.

The detailed graphic and visual identity has been delivered in Month 4 and it has been presented with the document "Project Visual Identity" (D10.2). Here we present a brief summary of the main results.

### Logo update, color palette and project's font

The communication team has developed a range of diverse proposals for a project logo and a consistent graphic identity, after collecting hints from all partners during the kick-off meeting (KOM) on 01 November 2018. The four logo proposals have been submitted to all partners for review and from their comments we developed the final logo and the visual identity. The resulted winner is the following:



And the related color palette:



#0092ac

#4e897b

#ffd040

The chosen font is Roboto. It is an open source font, easily readable both on paper and digital screen:

Rr

ABCČĆDĎEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSŠ  
TUVWXYZŽabcčćdďefghijklmno  
pqrsštuvwxyzžАБВГГДЂЕЁЄЖЗ  
СИІЙЈКЛЉМНЊОПРСТЋУЎФХ  
ЦЧЏШЩЪЫЬЭЮЯабвггдђеєж  
зсиіійјклљмнњопрстћуўфхцчџ  
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A letterhead, a template for reports and documents, as well as a PowerPoint/Keynote template for presentation has been created.

All graphic and visual elements are available to all team members through the shared SharePoint directory that has been established by the consortium and all project public materials (presentations, documents, reports, etc.) have been realized using the project's visual identity.



## 3 Report on the communication activities of the first 18 months of the project

### 3.1 Website

The project website (<http://aures2project.eu/>) has been built in parallel with the development of the visual identity and of the Communication and Dissemination Plan. According to the Plan, the website (D10.3) is a key element in promoting the project towards policymakers, industries and the academic community that works in the RES auction field. For these reasons, it was designed to fulfil the following key objectives:

- Providing policymakers with an overview on the auction tools, glossary, user guides and case studies.
- Being a public repository for all researchers and stakeholders active in the field of all the reports, papers, case studies, and any kind of result coming from the project.
- Giving access to tools developed in the previous run of the project (the auction designer, the cashflow model, the glossary and the first project's webinar series), as well as new ones, such as the auction database (see dedicated section).
- Providing a quick and easy way to get access to all communication products, from news on the project activities to the project newsletter, as well as links to the project's social network accounts (see dedicated section).

#### 3.1.1 Embedding of previous project's tools

Since the beginning of the discussion among partners about the design of the project's website, it has been clear that the continuity with the previous AURES project website had to be guaranteed. For this reason, a technical survey has been conducted with the help of the first AURES communication partner to identify the best way to migrate the already developed tools to the new website.

After a thorough evaluation of the different possibilities, formicablu was able to download the software apps from the "old" website and successfully reinstall them on the actual one. At the beginning of the year 2020, a communication from the first AURES consortium stated that the website is going to be discontinued at the end of December 2020, thus becoming unreachable for the public but also for the technicians. For this reason, a deep technical analysis has been conducted, reassuring that the interactive tools from the first project will still be functioning after the decommissioning of the first project's website.

#### 3.1.2 Auction Database

As planned, an auction database (Deliverable D3.1) on past and planned RES auction rounds in the EU has been realized in Work Package 3. It has been designed and developed between M01 and M15 and at the end of this period it has been made publicly available through the project's website.

The database is freely and easily downloadable as a spreadsheet file and will be updated every six months. It shows all the relevant information including details on auction design, participation, awarded prices and volumes, realization rates and more. Up until now, no such resource existed.

The database excel file is available for download on the AURES II website (<http://aures2project.eu/auction-database/>). Another project funded by DG ENER ("Assistance in facilitating regional cooperation on deploying and supporting renewable energy across EU Member States by increased transparency and coordination through an online platform and best practice exchange on support policies"), in which two of the AURES II partners are directly involved, foresees to implement a dedicated database on future RES auctions by autumn 2020. To use synergies, the AURES II Auction Database will be integrated into the DG ENER database, which will provide a navigation interface to facilitate browsing of the data directly on the webpage. Naturally, the AURES II logo will be visible, as well as a disclaimer noting that past auction data comes from the AURES II project (and has been funded by H2020).



### 3.1.3 Other materials available on the website

As well as being an overview of the main goals and accomplishments, the project's website is also a public repository of all the communication and dissemination products coming from within the consortium. A dedicated page contains all the publicly available **deliverables**. Another presents all the **case studies** and one is specifically dedicated to the **reports**.

Alongside this specific technical production, the website hosts a **news section** where the consortium is updating the readers on the life of the project itself: new documents and reports available, past and upcoming events organized by the consortium (such as Regional Workshops), events attended or to be attended by the partners in order to engage in the dissemination of the activities of the project, and so on. This is part of the news items that are spread to the project mailing list as a regular **newsletter** (see dedicated section below).

A dedicated page hosts the **AURES Academy**, a series of 8 webinars from the first run of the project and is already hosting the first webinar of the AURES II series dedicated to "Renewable energy Auction Database and overview of auction schemes in the EU" conducted by Vasilios Anatolitis (Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI) and Ann-Katrin Hanke (Takon). This is the first of a series of nine webinars that will be organized and produced during the project's life (see details in the Dissemination section of this document). All webinars are freely available through the website page and the project's YouTube channel.

In addition to that, a **Media Kit** and a project **Leaflet** have been designed and made available to all partners. The former is a journalistic description of the project, including all project's contacts, and is intended both for all partners to distribute to members of the press they get in contact to and as an agile presentation for other non-specialist audiences. The latter (see below) is a communication product that briefly presents the project and is intended for face-to-face meetings and events, such as workshops and conferences. The Leaflet has been printed in 1000 copies and distributed to partners since the First project meeting (01 – 02 April 2019).





AURES II aims at ensuring the effective implementation of auctions for Renewable Energy Sources (RES) in EU Member States.

Building on the insights of the recently finalized AURES project, AURES II investigates auction design options in more detail to determine their policy performance depending on different policy objectives, and give recommendations on their use.

In AURES II a multi-methodological approach is applied, including literature review, theoretical analysis, case studies, interviews, surveys, and empirical and quantitative methods such as econometric analysis and model simulations.

This approach is accompanied by a strong involvement of relevant stakeholders, including policy makers and industry representatives.

The active dialogue AURES II aims at setting allows stakeholders to learn from best practice and facilitates capacity building across borders in Europe.

Extending the successful work of AURES, new topics that will be investigated include the implementation of technology-specific versus technology-neutral support schemes, exemptions from competitive support allocation for small scale installations, a compulsory cross-border opening of support and special provisions for RES community projects and the effects of auctions on financing conditions for renewables.

In addition, to fill the current gap of a structured overview, AURES II is committed to the development of a comprehensive online database of auction rounds in the EU, where results, details on auction design, and financing conditions will be made freely accessible.

## Objectives

The overarching goal of AURES II is to support policymakers in European Member States and Energy Community countries in improving the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of financial support schemes for RES.

This contributes to maintaining Europe's leadership in renewables and helps keeping support expenditures at a level that is fair to consumers. AURES II will evaluate and assess auctions as competitive market measures in RES support schemes, and will provide updated and specific guidance for their implementation now and under the new 2020-30 target framework.

### CORE OBJECTIVES

- Generate and communicate new insights on the applicability, performance, and effects of specific auction designs, given various policy objectives on national level and in an European context
- Provide tailor-made policy support for different types of auction applications
- Facilitate knowledge exchange between stakeholders

 AURES II has received funds for the years 2019-2021 from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 617619

### 3.1.4 Number of visitors and downloads from the website

The AURES experience and success in communication prompted a more optimistic outlook on the results of AURES II. The goals for AURES II were consequently set as follows: **15,000 website visits** during the duration of the project and **3,000 downloads of the reports**. So far, the numbers are:

- **12,386 visits** to the website.
- A total of **1270 document downloads**, divided as follows:
  - **745 report** downloads;
  - **366 case study** downloads;
  - **159 auction database** downloads (since 01 February 2020).

In addition to these numbers, another interesting fact is that since the beginning of the newsletter distribution (with the first issue sent on the 25 February 2019) the website registered **65 direct clicks to the newsletter issues** available on the site. This means there is a fraction of potential audience for the AURES II topics that is not reached directly through the mailing list but is interested in information and updates on the project. More insights on the newsletter are given in the dedicated section in this document.

## 3.2 Social Media

Since the Kickoff Meeting and the first project meeting in Bilbao (01 and 02 April 2019), it has been clear that the project communication strategy on social media had to face two challenges. The first is the difficulty of involving the partners' communication departments in the social media activities of a specific project. This is a critical point for many EU funded research projects, since larger institutions have a complex communication agenda, intertwined with a press release and event calendar that only occasionally could be



modified by the needs of a single project's social media agenda. That means that a simple retweet from one of these subjects could be a huge effort, much beyond the actual resources of a single project's communication Work Package. It is more and more clear that in the communication arena of today, with so many platforms and a continuous communication flux from so many different subjects, the social media manager is a full-time job. And in many EU funded projects that is beyond the scope and the capability of the consortia.

The second challenge was to continue the social media communication effort that started with the first run of the project that established a Twitter account, a LinkedIn account and a YouTube channel, the last used mostly as a repository of webinars. This meant that the project itself needed to continue being part of the social media conversation through a specific contribution with original contents.

A third, more specific challenge adds to these: the size of the community of people working and potentially interested in the topics of AURES II. According to the discussions the partners had at the first meeting, we estimate this community in around 2-300 people. This is an important point, as this limited number prevents the social media communication from within the project to reach a critical mass that would allow the conversation to – in some cases – go on by itself.

Having acknowledged all of the above, the social media strategy has been developed to maintain a constant presence on Twitter and LinkedIn. This is important from a strategic point of view, since Twitter and LinkedIn, for their respective audiences, are anyway the “grapevines” where anyone would search for a project's presence.

To facilitate the participation of all partners to the social media activity the WP10 worked out two solutions. The first being a regular request for information on the single WP activities through an online form circulating via email to all members addresses. This provided information on the steps undertaken and planned by all partners during the project to the communication team that could design social media's, website's and newsletters' inputs. The second is the shared decision to give access to the backend of the project's Twitter account to all partners, enabling everyone to tweet about their WP's specific activities.

In order to help the latter, WP10 had provided a simple 10-rules handbook (see below) on how to tweet to all members.



## Social media numbers

In accordance with the communication strategy shared among the partners, the social media activities started from February 2019 and are more concentrated around project events, publications and webinars. This means that the consortium decided to communicate when the project has something meaningful to add to the public conversation, as it doesn't have enough resources to ensure a constant presence, as discussed above.

On the 53 official tweets the project made, the **Twitter** account registered a total of 58,260 impressions and 847 profile visits. The total followers are 173, compatible with the estimated size of the reference community throughout Europe.

A different situation is registered on **LinkedIn**, where the project's page has 51 followers. We found more difficulties in broadening the reach on this platform due to smaller size of the audience on the platform and a different environment, where the focus is more on job hunting and job offering. Nonetheless, the LinkedIn presence is a strategic element to improve in the second half of the project, where the consortium has a higher number of potentially interesting materials to offer to the audience (i.e. more publications and the new webinar series).



## 4 Report on the dissemination activities of the first 18 months of the project

### 4.1 Workshops, conferences and other interactions

In a relatively small community as described above, a defining role is occupied by direct interactions and communications, such as private talks, interviews and participation to conferences and workshops.

In the period between November 2018 and March 2020, the AURES II partners had participated in 33 different events, as detailed in the following table:

#### Interactions and events

November 2018 - March 2020

##### Type of interaction

Type of interaction	n.
Participation to workshop/conference	14
Organization of a workshop	5
Interview with policymakers	2
Pitch event	1
Other	11

Table: AURES II WP10 • Created with Datawrapper

During these events, a varied kind of interlocutors have been reached: members of the scientific community, members of the renewable energy industry, members of the civil society, as well as policy makers, investors and media professionals.

#### Events reach

November 2018 - March 2020

Type of audience	n.
Scientific Community (Higher Education, Research)	245
Industry	595
Civil Society	117
General Public	1
Policy Makers	209
Media	17
Investors	83

Table: AURES II WP10 • Created with Datawrapper

Overall, among all the interactions there have been events specifically related to some impact indicators. In particular: one case cooperation meeting, two case cooperation consultations, one response to a request made by policy makers as part of case cooperation and three responses to requests made by policy makers independent of case cooperation.



## 4.2 Regional workshops and expert talks

A series of 9 expert talks and a series of 6 regional workshops directly organized by the project's WPs are a central part of the dissemination activities. Those events are intended to reach a varied audience of selected stakeholders with a direct or potential interest in the general topics of the project or in the specific activities of the single WP.

In the first 18 months of the project, the first three regional workshops have been organized and took place in Budapest (25 of June 2019), Vienna (22 November 2019) and Copenhagen (29 November 2019).

As Hungary was in the process to start its first auction for RES, the first regional workshop in **Budapest**, organized by REKK on the 25 June 2019 (D10.5), had the twofold objective of contributing to the success of the Hungarian auctions by presenting good practices followed by other EU countries, and elaborating on those auction design elements, which are key components of the multi-technology type of auctions that are planned in Hungary, as well as in other Member States. The workshop was aimed at RES industries and power suppliers, as well as other stakeholders such as policy makers, regulators and associations. The sessions cover the following specific aspects:

- Technology neutral and multi-technology auctions
- Financing issues related to auction
- Special topics of auction

Almost 50 stakeholders participated, coming from different backgrounds, but mainly from the industry and policymakers.

The AURES II second Regional Workshop (D10.6) took place in **Vienna**. The theme was *Renewable Energy Auctions in Austria – Best Practices and Impact Mitigation*. The different sessions dealt with the following topics:

- Case studies on the implementation of auctions and lessons learnt
- Recent developments in Austria, Hungary, and in the Energy Community
- Impact of auctions on citizen energy projects

Almost 20 stakeholders participated, coming from different backgrounds, such as academia, industry and policymakers.

The third AURES II Regional Workshop (10.8) was conducted in **Copenhagen**. Although the deadline for the workshop was at the end of March 2020, the colleagues from DTU used the opportunity of the WindEurope Offshore 2019 Conference in Copenhagen to conduct their Regional Workshop on the topic of "Policy options for cross-country offshore hubs and energy islands in the North Sea" on the 29 November 2019. In addition, it was an excellent opportunity to kick-off the collaboration with the H2020 project PROMOTioN (PROgress On Meshed HVDC Offshore Transmission Networks), which will culminate in a common case study on regional cooperation in the offshore wind sector in the North Sea as part of D6.3.

33 stakeholders participated, coming from different backgrounds, such as academia, industry and policymakers.

In terms of **dedicated workshops**, the consortium conducted two in the first 18 months of the project.

The first one, "Validation workshop on auction design elements and financing" (D10.4) took place in Bilbao on 03 April 2019. The consortium used the opportunity to be part of the WindEurope Conference & Exhibition 2019, the major event of Europe's largest wind power association. Unfortunately, due to some unprecedented events, the number of actual participants at the workshop was rather low. Nevertheless, AURES II was able to conduct a supplementary session in a meeting of the WindEurope Financing Group, where the responsible AURES II partners were able to receive valuable feedback on their work.

For the second workshop "Workshop on cross-border auction cooperation cases" (D10.7), AURES II was able to secure a slot at the CA-RES meeting in Brussels on 27 November 2019. There, the partners involved in WP6 were able to discuss their first results, receive initial feedback on their work and find suitable and interested partners from the various ministries to be involved in the cross-border cooperation case studies of D6.3.



Three more regional workshops, seven more expert talks/workshops, as well as the final conference are going to be organized in the next 18 months of the project, with tentative locations such as Berlin, Madrid and London, as well as Brussels. As of the emerging of the health crisis due to the spread of the coronavirus in Europa and the consequent limitations in travelling and meetings, the project is already working on solutions to move part of these event to a digital online platform and on formats that could accordingly fit the dissemination goals of these activities.

## **4.3 Newsletter**

### **4.3.1 Critical issue: GDPR**

The adoption of a regular newsletter publication has been considered as a key factor for the dissemination activities since the beginning of the project. That conviction was based on the excellent results of the newsletters issued during the first run of the project. That mailing list comprised a total of 213 subscribers, which was an excellent result according to the estimated size of the potential audience.

Unfortunately, the new consortium couldn't rely on the same mailing list, since between the end of AURES I and the beginning of AURES II the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) became effective from 25 May 2018. That meant that all mailing lists created before that date were no longer legally usable. Sending mailing list issues to a subscriber who didn't explicitly approved the management of his or her personal data according to the GDPR was no longer possible. What was still possible was inviting individual email address owners to subscribe to a new newsletter that was compliant with the GDPR requirements. That was possible from personal accounts.

So, the communication and dissemination team from WP10 prepared a special invitation layout that all partners used to invite peers, stakeholders, researchers and other potential members of the audience to subscribe to the new newsletter. And the promotion of the mailing list has been carried out also through the website and the social media accounts. Far from ideal, the tentative solution proved quite good: the subscribers in the first 18 months of the project are 102.

### **4.3.2 Numbers of the newsletter**

These subscribers belong to a "higher communication and dissemination level" because they willingly subscribed to the publications, proving in so doing that they are directly interested in the topics and the project. This was proved by the opening rate of 60%, much higher of the 12-15% opening rate found in literature for this kind of publications.

The first newsletter issue was published on 25 February 2019 and since then 4 more issues have been sent to the project's audience. To these regular newsletters, two special issues have been sent as invitation to the Regional Workshop held in Vienna (22nd November 2019, opening rate: 59%) and to the joint workshop organized with the EU Horizon 2020 project PROMOTioN (PROgress On Meshed HVDC Offshore Transmission Networks) (Copenhagen, 29th November 2019, opening rate: 53,8%). The special issues strategy proved effective and will be implemented on a regular basis for all the upcoming events.

## **4.4 Webinars**

On 12 February 2020 the first webinar of the new series was held through the Leonardo ENERGY webinar platform. This decision follows the good relationship built during the first run of the project and presented some advantages for the project. Leonardo ENERGY, a digital platform for education, training, information exchange on energy related topics ([www.leonardo-energy.org](http://www.leonardo-energy.org)), has a long history and could help the AURES II webinars to reach a wider audience. The platform has its own promotion channels and only the YouTube channel has more than 4,000 subscribers.

The first instalment of the AURES II Auction Academy had 252 registrations and was actually seen by 132 users, enlarging the reach of the message beyond the European Union Member States. The list of viewers



comprised attendees from 60 different countries, from Ukraine, Brazil, China, Argentina, Benin, United States and more. In terms of backgrounds, the audience came from different industries, educational institutions, governmental offices, as well as the consultant industry. The success of this collaboration led to the decision of conducting the future 8 webinars through the Leonardo ENERGY platform.



AURES II is a European research project on auction designs for renewable energy support (RES) in the EU Member States.

The general objective of the project is to promote an effective use and efficient implementation of auctions for RES to improve the performance of electricity from renewable energy sources in Europe.

[www.ares2project.eu](http://www.ares2project.eu)

