



## **Milestone MS334: Recommendations on integration of feedback mechanism into the KM programme**

Work Package 11 State-of-Knowledge

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N°847593



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### Document information

Project Acronym	<b>EURAD</b>
Project Title	<b>European Joint Programme on Radioactive Waste Management</b>
Project Type	<b>European Joint Programme (EJP)</b>
EC grant agreement No.	<b>847593</b>
Project starting / end date	<b>1<sup>st</sup> June 2019 – 30 May 2024</b>
Work Package No.	<b>11</b>
Work Package Title	<b>State-of-Knowledge</b>
Work Package Acronym	<b>SoK</b>
Milestone No.	<b>334</b>
Milestone Title	<b>Recommendations on integration of feedback mechanism into the KM programme</b>
Lead Beneficiary	<b>SSTC NRS</b>
Contractual Delivery Date	<b>May 2023</b>
Actual Delivery Date	<b>June 2024</b>
Type	<b>Report</b>
Dissemination level	<b>Public</b>
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### To be cited as:

Kondratiev S., Fuzik K., Kutina L., Soloviov O. (2024): Recommendations on integration of feedback mechanism into the KM programme. Final version as of 21/06/2024 of milestone MS334 of the HORIZON 2020 project EURAD. EC Grant agreement no: 847593.

### Acknowledgement

This document is a milestone of the European Joint Programme on Radioactive Waste Management (EURAD). EURAD has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 847593.

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<b>Status of milestone</b>		
	<b>By</b>	<b>Date</b>
Delivered (Lead Beneficiary)	SSTC NRS	01/06/2024
Verified (WP Leader)	BGE	14/06/2024
Reviewed (Reviewers)	PMO	15/06/2024

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## Executive Summary

One of the primary goals of the EURAD knowledge management & networking programme [1] is to capture and share the current state of knowledge in the field of radioactive waste management (RWM). Knowledge management (KM) work package (WP) 11 'State of Knowledge' (SoK) populates the EURAD Roadmap [2] by capturing relevant knowledge and associated uncertainties in the field of RWM and making it available to end-users through dedicated KM documents. An essential aspect of this effort is establishing a feedback mechanism to enhance document usability and usefulness and to improve the document production process.

Previously, Deliverable 11.10 "Feedback Mechanism for Domain Insights (DI), State-of-Knowledge (SoK) Documents and Knowledge Management (KM) Systems – Methods and Results" [3] outlined the framework for the feedback mechanism. The implementation of the feedback mechanism for Domain Insight (DI) and SoK documents, as developed in Deliverable 11.10, was carried out during the final year of the EURAD project. Feedback was collected through online feedback questionnaires [4]-[7] for end-users, authors, and reviewers of the DI and SoK documents, as well as through discussions at EURAD seminars, workshops, and other means.

The collected and analysed feedback demonstrated end-users' interest in the developed DI documents, high ratings for interest and usefulness of DI documents, their structure and quality, meeting end-users expectations, intention to recommend documents to others in the RWM field, and provided valuable insights for further improving DI documents. Feedback from authors and reviewers was positive as well, containing valuable recommendations for further optimisation and development of the DI document production process.

This milestone presents the results of implementing the developed mechanism and tools for obtaining feedback on DI and SoK documents, analysis of feedback received from end-users, authors, and reviewers of DI documents, along with insights and recommendations for its future use based on the collected data.

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## Glossary

### Author

The expert involved in development of the SoK or DI document

### Domain

Level 3 of Goals Breakdown Structure (GBS). An area of activity, interest, or knowledge, especially one that a person, organisation etc. deals with.

### Domain Insight (DI) Documents

Context documents that provide direct links for each knowledge domain to safety and implementation goals related to DGR requirements.

### End-users

Organisations, experts, newcomers who are potential users of DI, SoK documents and KMS in general – EURAD community (WMOs, TSOs, REs) and non-EURAD RWM community, newcomers (somebody who started out in the field of RWM).

### EURAD

The European Joint Programme on Radioactive Waste Management (EURAD). Also referred to as the 'Joint Programme'.

### Feedback

Requesting and receiving opinions of authors, reviewers, end-users regarding DI, SoK documents and KMS in general.

### Goals Breakdown Structure (GBS)

The EURAD goals breakdown structure is a thematic breakdown of knowledge and activities essential for radioactive waste management. It comprises Themes (Level 1), Sub-themes (Level 2) and Domains (Level 3), each formulated as goals. Although hierarchical and numbered, the knowledge and activities presented across the GBS should be considered collectively with no weighting to order of importance. Rather it is emphasised that there are many inter-dependencies and linked data across the GBS, where knowledge and activities can be centred in different ways, depending on the end user role and precise boundary conditions of the RWM programme to which the roadmap is applied.

### Knowledge

Knowledge is the acquisition, understanding and interpretation of information. It is often used to refer to bodies of facts and principles accumulated by humankind over the course of time. Knowledge and information each consists of true statements, but knowledge serves a purpose: knowledge confers a capacity for effective action.

### Knowledge Area

An area of activity, interest, or knowledge, especially one that a particular person, organisation etc deals with.

### Knowledge Management (KM)

An integrated, systematic approach of identifying, managing and sharing an organisation's knowledge and enabling groups of people to create new knowledge collectively to help in achieving the organisation's objectives.

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## **Radioactive Waste Management (RWM)**

All activities, administrative and operational, that are involved in the handling, pre-treatment, treatment, conditioning, transport, storage and disposal of radioactive waste.

### **Reviewer**

The expert involved in review of the SoK or DI document.

### **Roadmap**

A high-level overview of a programme's goals, typical activities and knowledge needed to implement a RWM programme, from the generation of radioactive waste to disposal.

### **SoK document**

The document describing the state of knowledge in a specific domain of EURAD Goals Breakdown Structure (GBS). Experts' view of the most relevant knowledge and associated uncertainties in a specific domain applied in the context of RWM programme. Short summary of scientific and engineering facts relevant to the domain. Typically, SoK documents would use a relatively small number of key primary references and signposts out to further detail where necessary (i.e. relevant SoTA).

### **State of Knowledge (SoK)**

Experts' view of the most relevant knowledge and associated uncertainties in a specific domain applied in the context of a radioactive waste management programme. Activities consisting of developing a systematic approach of establishing the state-of-knowledge in the field of RWM research.

### **State of the Art (SoTA)**

Scientific facts underpinning the knowledge base. SoTA documents are oriented typically on a narrower scope and go into significant detail (e.g. focus on mechanistic or process-level understanding). They would not normally demonstrate the application of that knowledge. They typically include lots of technical references and are long documents.

### **Themes**

Themes are large groupings of related Knowledge Domains typical in Radioactive Waste Management. They are the highest level of the EURAD Roadmap Goals Breakdown Structure (GBS).

### **Work Package (WP)**

A work package is a group of related tasks established within EURAD. Because they look like projects themselves, they are often thought of as sub-projects within the Joint Programme.

### **Newcomer**

Somebody who started out in the field of RWM (students, researchers, new employees, etc.).

## 1. Introduction

One of the primary goals of the EURAD knowledge management & networking programme [1] is to capture and share the current state of knowledge in the field of radioactive waste management (RWM). Knowledge management (KM) work package (WP) 11 'State of Knowledge' (SoK) populates the EURAD Roadmap [2] by capturing relevant knowledge and associated uncertainties in the field of RWM and make it available to end-users through dedicated KM documents. The production of SoK and domain insight (DI) documents is one of the key tasks of the KM WP11. In the frame of KM WP11 work it was planned to develop only two SoK documents as demonstration cases, while primarily focusing on the creation of DI documents. An important and necessary component of achieving the objective on capturing the current SoK and making it accessible to interested end-users is the provision of an effective feedback mechanism to improve the document production process and making the documents more user-friendly and useful.

## 2. Development of feedback mechanism and the practice of its implementation

### 2.1 Feedback mechanism framework

The Deliverable 11.10, titled "Feedback Mechanism for Domain Insights (DI), State-of-Knowledge (SoK) Documents and Knowledge Management (KM) Systems – Methods and Results" [3] outlines the framework for the feedback mechanism. It details:

- The goals and objectives of the feedback mechanism,
- The target audience for feedback,
- Various feedback methods,
- Procedures for applying these feedback methods,
- Procedures for evaluating the feedback received,
- Procedures for disseminating and implementing the feedback results, and
- A questionnaire designed for the feedback audience.

### 2.2 Objectives of the feedback mechanism

The primary goal of the feedback mechanism is to ensure that the DI and SoK documents meet the needs of the end-users. The objectives include:

- Assessing the demand and usefulness of the DI and SoK documents for end-users,
- Determining the level of support for the approaches outlined in the DI and SoK documents among end-users,
- Identifying significant gaps in the DI and SoK documents, and
- Ensuring the DI and SoK documents are adapted to meet the needs of end-users.

### 2.3 Feedback respondents

The feedback respondents includes newcomers and specialists as end-users of the DI and SoK documents from both the EURAD and non-EURAD RWM communities, as well as authors and reviewers of these documents.

### 2.4 Implementation of the feedback mechanism

The implementation of the feedback mechanism for DI and SoK documents, as developed in Deliverable 11.10, was carried out during the final year of the EURAD project. In line with Task 4 of WP11, online feedback forms were created for end-users, authors, and reviewers of the DI and SoK documents. Feedback is collected through questionnaires [4]-[7], discussions at EURAD seminars, workshops, and other means. The feedback from authors, reviewers, and end-users is analysed separately, and the results will be incorporated into the ongoing development of the DI and SoK documents.



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These feedback forms [4]-[7] were made available through:

- 1) Publication on the EURAD website [8] (separate 'feedback buttons' are placed along with the published DI and SoK documents), in the EURAD Wiki [9], in the EURAD newsletters, and as references in WP11 articles, abstracts and posters;
- 2) Sending them to participants of trainings, organised to present DI and SoK documents;
- 3) Sending them to authors and reviewers of the DI and SoK documents with a request for feedback.

## 2.5 Feedback collection campaign

During the feedback collection campaign from June 2023 to May 2024:

- 10 end-user feedback submissions on DI documents,
- 4 author feedback submissions on DI documents,
- 3 reviewer feedback submissions on DI documents, and
- 1 end-user feedback submission on SoK documents

were received through the feedback forms.

Feedback ranged from brief numerical evaluations to comprehensive recommendations for the development of future documents or improvements of existing documents.

During training sessions organised to present/socialise DI and SoK documents, participants verbally expressed positive feedback on the developed documents and highlighted the importance of developing such documents for the transfer of knowledge in the RWM field.

All received feedback is kept and stored by the WP11 team.

## 2.6 Analysis of feedback

Section 3 of this milestone focuses on the analysis of the 17 feedback submissions received from end-users, authors, and reviewers of DI documents, providing insights and recommendations based on the collected data.

Only one feedback was received for the SoK documents, which is insufficient for a thorough analysis; therefore, this will not be covered in this milestone.

## 3. Feedback summary for DI documents

### 3.1 Feedbacks from authors and reviewers of DI documents

The analysis and summary of feedback from authors and reviewers of DI documents were conducted based on the following points, according to [3]:

- the usefulness of DI documents for the targeted end-user groups,
- the structure and content of DI documents, and
- the production and review process of DI documents.

#### 3.1.1 Usefulness of DI documents and their target end-user groups

- Overall assessment of usefulness: All authors and reviewers highly rated the usefulness of DI documents, with an average score of 8.0 out of 10.
- Assessment of targeted end-user group: Authors and reviewers unanimously identified the target end-user group as junior and other specialists beginning work in the specific domain covered by the DI document. They noted that DI documents can be used for:
  - General familiarisation with a particular topic, leading to further study using the references provided in the DI document.
  - Preparation of lecture materials.

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- Onboarding new staff, offering a quick overview of key references and highlighting topical issues not covered elsewhere.

It is recommended to include information about the target end-user group and potential uses of DI documents in their introduction.

### 3.1.2 Structure and content of DI documents

- Overall structure assessment: The structure of DI documents received high positive ratings from authors and reviewers, with an average score of 7.8 out of 10. One exception was the comment by an author of DI document "2.2.5 Transport", who stated that the structure is oriented towards disposal issues, making it less suitable for pre-disposal issues.
- Suggestions for improvement: Authors and reviewers proposed several enhancements to the structure and content of DI documents:
  - Adapt the structure of DI documents under Theme 2 for pre-disposal activities.
  - Include a section on needs and future research in DI documents.
  - During writing, focus on the overall picture, avoiding overly scientific language, and explain concepts in clear, straightforward terms.
- Suggestions for compiling DI documents collections: Authors and reviewers suggested an idea for further review and consideration - grouping individual DI documents on similar topics into collections. For instance, DI documents for domains under a single theme could be compiled into seven collections. When forming such collections, consideration could be made on the following recommendations:
  - Develop an introductory section for each collection to establish consistency for the reader.  
*Note: It should be noted that as part of populating the Roadmap [2] with structured knowledge, Theme Overview documents have been created for each theme. These documents contain broad description of programme goals and typical activities for each theme. Theme Overview documents should also be taken into account when considering the above mentioned idea proposed by the authors and reviewers.*
  - Improve the linkage and cross-referencing of different DI documents.
  - Standardise keywords and key acronyms.  
*Note: It would be advisable to standardise keywords and key acronyms after finalising the production of all DI documents.*

### 3.1.3 Production and review process of DI documents

- Overall process assessment: Authors and reviewers positively evaluated the development process of DI documents in which they participated.
- Selection of authors. It was suggested that DI documents are developed collaboratively by experts from research entities (REs), waste management organisations (WMOs), and technical support organisations (TSOs), involving individuals closely connected to the industry.
- Initial development stage: For the initial stage of DI document development, authors and reviewers recommended:
  - Providing authors with more consistent guidance while allowing greater freedom in organising sections.  
*Note: It should be mentioned that this issue has already been addressed, and a document [10] with detailed recommendations and explanations for experts on the production process has been developed and published as part of the EURAD WP11 plan.*
  - Reviewing existing information from IAEA and other DI documents, and some authors may need access to published and 'grey' literature.
- Development and review process: While authors and reviewers did not encounter significant difficulties during the development and evaluation process. Nevertheless, some challenges were noted:
  - Lack of time for document development, as the work was not planned in advance.
  - Prolonged wait for reviewers' comments.

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It is necessary to plan the development and review of DI documents in a more systematic way in advance (also considering the issue of consistency of DI documents - see below).

- Dissemination and feedback: Authors and reviewers emphasised the importance of effective dissemination mechanisms and obtaining feedback. They proposed:
  - Establishing dissemination mechanisms targeting the end-user group directly (junior and other specialists starting work in the DI document's domain).
  - Requiring authors to prepare lecture materials and conduct lectures on the DI document's topic.
- Consistency and compilation of DI documents: To ensure the consistency of DI documents and their compilation into collections, authors and reviewers suggested:
  - WP coordinators should facilitate interaction among authors developing DI documents on related topics.
  - High-level experts should serve as final editors of DI document collections on specific themes, forming a board that meets regularly.
- Review of DI documents: Authors and reviewers noted the necessity of reviewing DI documents again, when new significant developments and benchmark information emerge. Monitoring these developments and updating DI documents could be managed by high-level experts. Most authors and reviewers indicated their willingness to participate in the review process but also believed other specialists could perform these tasks.
- Motivation: The motivation of authors and reviewers to participate in the development and review of DI documents varied. Generally, there was a desire to produce high-quality documents for knowledge transfer to junior specialists. The importance of ensuring of adequate compensation for all participants in the development, review, and revision of DI documents was also emphasised.

### **3.2 Feedbacks from end-users of DI documents**

The analysis and summary of feedback from end-users of DI documents were conducted based on the following issues:

- Interest and usage of DI documents,
- DI documents structure and content, and
- Usefulness of DI documents.

#### **3.2.1 Interest and usage of DI documents**

- Interest in the topic: Respondents are primarily interested in the topic due to their work and research activities (including thesis preparation) in RWM field, or to comprehend the importance of knowledge management and aligning practices with international benchmarks.
- Use of information: The information from the DI documents will be used for personal knowledge, to align and enhance current practices in organisations with international standards, for training new employees, and for academic references. Additionally, it will aid in comparing national programmes.

#### **3.2.2 DI documents structure and content**

- Document structure: The structure of the DI documents received an average rating of 8.2 out of 10. The DI documents were praised for being well structured and easy to understand.
- Satisfaction with information: Respondents rated their satisfaction with the DI document information at an average of 8.2 out of 10. While the documents are considered easy to understand overall, some sections are too detailed and could be simplified, whereas others require more detail and specifics depending on the DI document. Respondents appreciated the use of tables and charts. Explicit goals and activities were also identified as lacking in certain chapters. Suggestions for improvement included adding more links to other repository types and longer abstracts.
- Harmonisation with other DI documents: The harmonisation with other DI documents received an average rating of 8.3 out of 10.

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### 3.2.3 Usefulness of DI documents

- Meeting expectations: The DI documents met the end-users' expectations with an average rating of 8.1 out of 10. DI documents were found useful for understanding deep geological repository planning.
- Starting point for further exploration: The DI document can serve as a starting point for exploring RWM domain-related issues, receiving an average rating of 8.2 out of 10.
- Usefulness of references: The references in the document received an average usefulness rating of 7.2 out of 10. Respondents strongly suggested adding more references.
- Recommendations to others: With an average recommendation rating of 8.8 out of 10, DI documents are recommended by end-users to all dealing with RWM, national policy, and DGR programmes.
- Insights and level of detail: Respondents found DI documents to provide useful new insights and actionable steps. They valued the international good practices as benchmarks and highlighted that while some did not gain new insights, the documents are still considered good. The development of documents with more detailed descriptions of the issues considered in the DI documents will be appreciated by end-users.

## 4. Summary and conclusion

Previously, the deliverable 11.10 "Feedback Mechanism for Domain Insights (DI), State-of-Knowledge (SoK) Documents and Knowledge Management (KM) Systems – Methods and Results" [1] outlined the framework for the feedback mechanism. Specific forms for obtaining feedback from end-users, authors, and reviewers of the DI and SoK documents [4]-[7] were created within this framework. These forms were published on the EURAD website [8], EURAD Wiki [9], and in EURAD newsletters. They were also referenced in the WP11 publications, abstracts and posters, presented during trainings organised to introduce DI and SoK documents to end-users, and sent directly to the authors and reviewers of these documents with a request for feedback.

A feedback collection campaign, conducted from June 2023 to May 2024, received:

- 17 submissions for DI documents through questionnaires [4]-[6]: 10 from end-users, 4 from authors and 3 from reviewers of DI documents.
- 1 submission from end-user of SoK documents through questionnaire [7]. As there is only one feedback submission for the SoK documents, which is insufficient for a thorough analysis, it is not considered in this milestone.
- Verbal feedback on DI and SoK documents from participants in training sessions organised to present these documents. This feedback was positive, highlighting the importance of developing such documents for knowledge transfer in the RWM field, and is not separately presented in this milestone.

The analysis of 17 questionnaire responses for DI documents are presented in this milestone. Distribution of number of feedback received from end users, authors, and reviewers for each DI documents published on [7] is presented on Figure 1 (status as of May 22, 2024).

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Figure 1 – Distribution of number of feedback received from end users, authors, and reviewers for each DI documents published on [7] (status as of May 22, 2024).

The feedback from authors and reviewers of DI documents was generally complete, comprehensive and positive, offering valuable recommendations for improving the document production process. The usefulness of DI documents was rated highly in the feedback, with an average score of 7.3 out of 10 (see Figure 2). It was noted that the documents are particularly useful for junior and other specialists beginning work in the specific domain covered by the respective DI document. The structure of DI documents received a score of 7.8 out of 10 (see Figure 2), though some suggested improvements included adaptation to Roadmap Theme 2 pre-disposal activities, adding sections on future research needs, and simplifying scientific language. They also recommended combining related DI documents into collections with standardised keywords and key acronyms and improve the linkage and cross-referencing of different DI documents. Authors and reviewers positively evaluated the DI document production process and suggested it to be done collaboratively by experts from various EURAD colleges), involving individuals closely connected to the industry. They recommended providing more consistent guidance during the initial development stage, ensuring authors have access to necessary literature, and planning the development and review process more systematically to avoid time constraints and delays. Effective dissemination mechanisms targeting end-users and the preparation of lecture materials were emphasised as being crucial for knowledge transfer. To maintain consistency and keep DI documents up-to-date, high-level experts should facilitate authors interactions, serve as final editors, and monitor significant developments for timely updates. The need for ensuring adequate compensation for contributors was emphasised



Figure 2 – Summarised numerical results of authors' and reviewers' feedback to DI documents.

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The feedback from end-users of DI documents, whose experience ranged from PhD students with no experience to consultants with up to 40 years in RWM, highlighted several key aspects. End-users are primarily interested in DI documents for their work and research activities and find them valuable for aligning practices with international benchmarks. The DI documents are used for personal knowledge, organisational enhancement, training of new employees, and as references. The structure of DI documents received positive feedback (see Figure 3). The overall satisfaction with the content was also high, with respondents appreciating tables and charts, but making individual suggestions for simplifying or detailing sections in some DI documents. Harmonisation with other DI documents was well-received. The usefulness of the documents was confirmed, aiding in deep geological repository planning and serving as a starting point for further exploration. The provided references were found to be helpful, with an expression of interest in having more references for further reading. The end-users would recommend DI documents to colleagues dealing with RWM, national policy and deep geological repository programmes. Respondents valued the insights and actionable steps provided, appreciating the international good practices as benchmarks, and suggested that more detailed descriptions of issues in next level KM documents would enhance the usefulness of the DI documents.

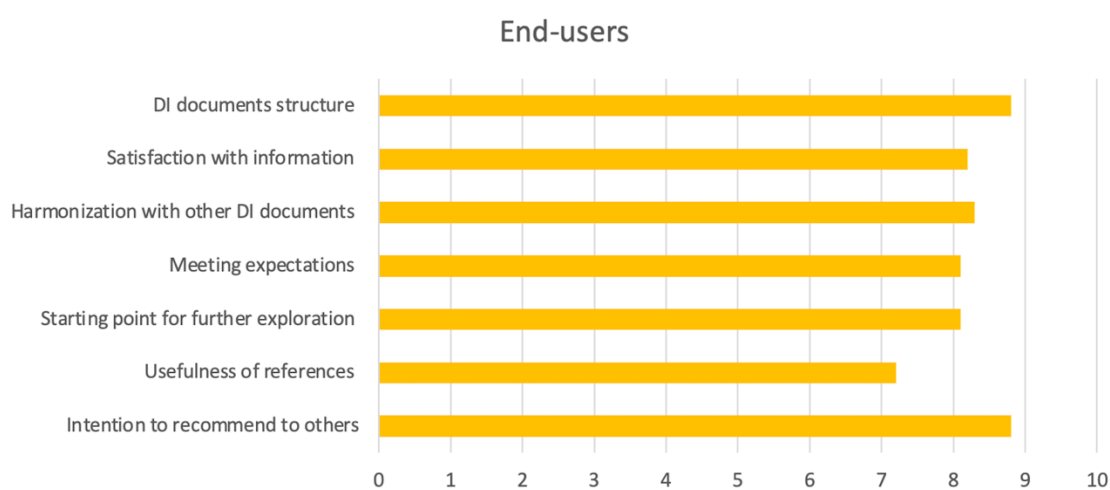


Figure 3 – Summarised numerical results of end-users' feedback to DI documents.

In conclusion, the feedback mechanism tools were successfully disseminated across EURAD project platforms and within the EURAD community. Testing of the mechanism began in the final year of the EURAD project. The collected and analysed feedback demonstrated end-users' interest in the developed DI and SoK documents, high ratings for their structure and quality, meeting end-users expectations, intention to recommend documents to others in the RWM field, and provided valuable insights for further improving DI and SoK documents. Feedback from authors and reviewers was positive as well, containing valuable recommendations for further optimisation and development of the DI and SoK document production process.

The process of collecting feedback on the developed KM documents should continue alongside knowledge transfer efforts in further joint programmes, as end-user input is essential for improving the documents to better meet their needs. While, the number of responses suggests that the EURAD community's commitment to feedback is relatively low, it is important to consider the timing of the feedback request. Many PhD students (and new-comers) were likely in the final stages of their work and no longer needing a general overview of the knowledge domain they were working on. Furthermore, other EURAD members were probably focused on finalising deliverables and project closure. To increase feedback submissions and engage end-users, the following could be considered for future implementation:

- (i) strategically timing the requests,



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- (ii) simplification of the feedback process (for example, adjusting end-users friendly feedback forms, minimising the time and effort required to provide feedback, creating and distributing short surveys on social media platforms to gather quick feedback through polls or posts),
- (iii) offering incentives or encourage end-users (for example, sending follow-up emails to thank end-users for their feedback and inform them of any actions taken based on their input, offering opportunities to participate in workshops or training sessions related to the field of the DI document, either open within the project or focused within individual WPs (with the consent of WPs experts)),
- (iv) highlighting the importance of RWM community input,
- (v) promoting the feedback request through multiple channels,
- (vi) sending personalised invitations, and
- (vii) follow-up reminders to potential responders (end-users, authors and reviewers of DI documents).

Additionally, PMO representatives, WP and tasks leaders, and KM ambassadors could be involved to encourage participation and demonstrate that feedback is valued by sharing how it is used to make improvements.

The mechanism developed and its tools, together with the experience gained, the results of the surveys and feedback analysis and the recommendations, form a framework for similar future endeavours. This framework can be valuable for members of the joint programme community who are involved or will be involved in planning and organising similar feedback collection efforts for KM documents in subsequent joint programmes. This enhanced feedback collection initiative will effectively support knowledge transfer and aligns practices with international benchmarks.

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