



EPN 2024 RI

EUROPLANET 2024 Research Infrastructure

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Confidential, only for members of the consortium (excluding the Commission Services)

Executive Summary / Abstract:

Europlanet is a Research Infrastructure (RI) that offers access to facilities and services to support the planetary community in Europe and around the world. Developed through a series of projects funded by the European Commission (EC), Europlanet was established in 2023 as an independent legal structure (an Association International Sans But Lucratif (AISBL) not-for-profit enterprise) based in Brussels, Belgium.

Europlanet has an active policy engagement programme with the main aims of:

- Strengthening Europlanet's influence on space policy, support for research funding relevant to the Europlanet community, and public support for planetary science within the EU and globally.
- Building a planetary community that is informed and actively engaged with policy making at an international, regional, national and local scale.

This Policy Sustainability Roadmap document reviews recent policy initiatives organised through Europlanet and provides recommendations for core activities to be carried out through Europlanet AISBL, within the framework and resources of the newly established not-for-profit enterprise.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Overview of Europlanet

Europlanet is a Research Infrastructure linking scientific institutions and companies active in planetary research in Europe and around the world. Planetary science covers the study of objects in our Solar System and those orbiting other stars, and is an interdisciplinary field that encompasses astronomy and geophysics, robotic and human exploration of other planets, as well as the search for extra-terrestrial life.

Europlanet dates back to a Coordination Action funded by the European Commission (EC) in 2005-2008. Through a series of further EC grants awarded between 2009 and 2024, Europlanet has subsequently developed into a distributed research infrastructure that offers coordinated access to services and facilities spread over 5 continents, supporting a community of thousands of users.

Europlanet was initially conceived to overcome fragmentation within the European planetary science community – an issue highlighted by NASA’s Cassini mission to Saturn, which had significant European involvement in nearly all 16 instruments, and the ESA-led Huygens probe, which explored the atmosphere and surface of Titan. The subsequent success of Venus Express, Mars Express ExoMars TGO and Rosetta heralded ESA and Europe’s emergence as a mature space actor with the ability to conduct successful planetary missions. In establishing a well-networked community that has access to state-of-the-art infrastructure – regardless of where individual researchers are based – Europlanet has helped to ensure that Europe is well placed to extend that leading role through ambitious ongoing and upcoming missions such as BepiColombo, JUICE, the ExoMars Rosalind Franklin Rover, Ariel, Comet Interceptor and EnVision.

Today, Europlanet provides Europe’s planetary science community with a platform to:

- Exchange ideas and personnel.
- Share research tools, data and facilities.
- Define key science goals for the future.
- Engage stakeholders, policy makers and European Citizens with planetary science.

The ‘Europlanet family’ currently includes:

- The [Europlanet Association](#), a not-for-profit Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif (AISBL) established under Belgian law in 2023 to give an overarching, independent legal structure for Europlanet’s activities.
- The [Europlanet Society](#), an organisation for the advancement of planetary science that is open to individual and organisational members and is structured around 10 Regional Hubs.

- The [Europlanet Science Congress \(EPSC\)](#), an annual meeting of over 1000 participants from the academic and industrial sectors in planetary science around the world.
- The [Europlanet Early Career \(EPEC\) network](#) to support young planetary scientists from undergraduate level to up to seven years into an independent career in academia or industry.
- The [Europlanet Research Infrastructure \(RI\)](#), which provides access to virtual services, state-of-the-art laboratories and field sites across four continents. Between February 2020 and July 2024, the RI has been supported through a €10 million grant from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 871149.

From September 2024, Europlanet will launch a new organisational membership programme. Alongside the community-focused membership benefits (Discord community, webinars, training, funding and bursaries), Europlanet will offer mobility calls for expert exchanges and a limited access programme to laboratory and telescope facilities and field sites.

1.2. Introduction to Europlanet Policy Activities

Since 2010, Europlanet has organised an active policy programme with the main aims of:

- a) Engaging with members of the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Strategic Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) to strengthen Europlanet's influence on space policy, support for research funding relevant to the Europlanet community, and public support for planetary science within the EU and globally.
- b) Building a planetary community that is informed and actively engaged with policy making at an international, regional, national and local scale.

Europlanet has organised and participated in briefings, events, conference sessions (e.g. at EPSC) and other opportunities to engage policy makers in the European Parliament and the European Commission with planetary science, as well as engage with high-level representatives of ESA, EUSPA and other national and international space agencies.

The organisation of events within the European Parliament has proved an effective platform to develop relationships with Members of European Parliament (MEPs) and other stakeholders, which is essential if the community is to keep abreast of and feed into discussions on future funding and policies relevant to planetary science. In addition, continuous monitoring of activities at the European Parliament, European Commission, Research Committees and Space Agencies, is important for identifying networking opportunities and keeping the community informed on current and future trends in the space sector.

Europlanet aims to provide bottom-up, community driven input into policy consultations, strategies and roadmaps relevant to planetary science (e.g. by ESFRI and ASTRONET). It also aims to work strategically on policy activities with other research infrastructures within the Astronomy and Space Science Domain (e.g. Opticon, Radionet, JIVE, CheTEC-INFRA), with the wider distributed research infrastructure community (e.g. EOSC, Euro-Labs, MOSBRI) and with other related organisations, e.g. the European Astronomical Society (EAS), International Space Science Institute, European Geophysical Union (EGU), and American Astronomical Society's Division of Planetary Sciences (DPS). In recent years, these activities have laid the groundwork for establishing an Astronomy & Space Network of Networks (NeoNs) and a network of small and medium-sized Distributed RIs (DRIs) that can provide a coordinated voice for these communities.

More broadly, Europlanet aims to inform European citizens of the scientific and societal relevance of outputs of planetary research and industry, as well as to work with outreach providers and educators to counteract common misconceptions and beliefs that challenge evidence-based decision making.

Under the Europlanet 2024 Research Infrastructure (RI) project from 2020-2024, the Networking Activity NA1 has funded a Policy Team to carry out policy engagement activities at around 0.3 FTE (largely focused on the engagement with the European Parliament and with the industrial space sector), with additional contributions from the Management team (largely focused on the strategic engagement with the Commission, ESFRI and related organisations).

1.3. Policy Engagement Activities During the Europlanet 2024 RI Project

The main achievements for policy engagement during the Europlanet 2024 RI project have included a high-level Dinner Debate at the European Parliament attended by MEPs, the EUSPA Director Rodrigo da Costa and the ESA Director General Josef Aschbacher, as well as representatives of the planetary scientific community and of the space industry. It has also organised, together with the industry team, events exploring policy engagement and industry-academia collaboration, including dedicated sessions at the Europlanet Science Congress (EPSC) meetings, and the ERIM 2023 meeting. Networking events and workshops organised in collaboration with the Regional Hubs, the annual Europlanet Science Congress (EPSC), and the Europlanet policy team, all provide opportunities to bring together academics and the planetary community, industry and policy makers, to interact and establish fruitful collaborations. These activities put emphasis on the involvement of under-represented countries, linking them to leading European technological partners and, overall, widening participation in European planetary research and innovation. The Policy Team has regularly updated the Policy & Industry section of the Europlanet website with news related to space policy, planetary science and industry collaborations, funding opportunities, relevant

documents and high-profile events. The Appendix of this document includes [detailed reports](#) on events and examples of [policy posts](#) highlighted on the Europlanet website.

1.3.1.1. EPSC Events

Policy-related events have been organised annually at EPSC. Every year, there is a 'Dialogue with Agencies' session, enabling representatives from ESA and NASA to update the community on plans and answer questions.

Industry-policy sessions have also been organised as splinter meetings since 2020. These have comprised a mix of presentations and discussion time with participants that have included high-level policy makers, industry representatives and members of the Europlanet Community.

EPSC2020 and 2021 were fully virtual meetings. Although this limited networking opportunities, it enabled more participation from high-level policy makers, with MEPs, representatives of the EC, ESA, national agencies and industry contributing to sessions.

EPSC2022 was held face-to face, enabling further opportunities for networking and discussion. The industry-policy session at EPSC 2022 featured participants from academia, industry, and public bodies. The session was delivered in two parts: "Views from the Hubs," which presented perspectives from the academic community involved in industry and policy activities, followed by a panel discussion with representatives from the industrial and public sectors.

The discussions highlighted several key themes and areas for continued work by Europlanet on industry and policy activities, with a focus on networking, coordinated lobbying, and the industry database. Themes emerging included:

- The need for better networking and more opportunities to bring academia and industry together to develop collaborations.
- The need for structured networking events and better utilisation of the industry database to inform both parties about potential collaboration opportunities.
- Advocating the intrinsic value of science without needing to justify its importance through other metrics such as industrial impact.
- The importance of strategic non-dependence on critical technologies for EU policymakers and industry.
- Consideration that the budgets for major missions are tight, necessitating careful planning and resource allocation by space agencies.
- The need for coordinated communication with policymakers about the importance of space science, alongside direct national communication efforts by local academics.
- Opportunities through targeted engagement with decision-making countries e.g. those taking over the Presidency of the EU Council (see [1.2.1.4](#)).

- Exchanges between industry and academia offering potential benefits, particularly through early career exchange programmes.
- Difficulties faced by SMEs in accessing grant funding.

1.3.1.2. Dinner Debate 2023

On January 24, 2023, Europlanet and MEP Niklas Nienass co-hosted a Dinner Debate with Europlanet at the European Parliament on "Promoting the Importance of Space Policies and a European Space Strategy."

The discussion included keynote speeches and an open debate. The event featured contributions from various high-level participants, including representatives from the European Space Agency, EU Agency for the Space Program, and the International Institute of Space Law, the Europlanet Society President, and representatives of academia and industry. The debate covered the European space industry's global position, regulatory challenges, sustainable space applications, the benefits and challenges of a common space strategy, and the importance of resilience in addressing core interests and needs in turbulent times.

The event was the result of nearly 2.5 years planning, with delays largely related to the Covid-19 pandemic and the prolonged closure of the European Parliament to visitors, which extended well into 2022. The contact with Mr Nienass and his agreement to host the event was a direct result of his participation in EPSC 2020 and EPSC 2021.

1.3.1.3. ERIM 2023

The first Europlanet Research Infrastructure Meeting (ERIM), co-hosted with the fifth Europlanet Early Career Network (EPEC) Annual Week, took place from June 19-23, 2023, in a hybrid format in Bratislava, Slovakia, and online. The interactive workshop format of ERIM enabled reflective discussions on a range of topics and included an [Industry and Policy Track](#) of sessions.

An ERIM Policy Workshop was held on Wednesday, 21 June 2023, organised by the policy team. This workshop focused on several key topics:

- The role of science in policy making,
- Challenges and practical skills needed for engaging with policy makers,
- The needs of policy makers to develop evidence-based policies,
- Skills scientists need to better engage with policy makers,
- The interaction between scientists and policy makers at different academic and working levels.
- The role of space technology in improving various economic sectors and achieving the objectives of national and EU policies.

- How research outputs are perceived and utilised, and assessed opportunities to enhance the visibility and valorisation of policy research in the context of space research.

Further sessions at ERIM included discussions on the RI ecosystem for space and astronomy (see 1.3.1.4 below), as well as overall roadmapping for the sustainability of Europlanet.

1.3.1.4. Research Infrastructure Events

ESFRI, the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures, is a strategic instrument to develop the scientific integration of Europe and to strengthen its international outreach. The Landscape Analysis and Roadmap published by ESFRI are strategic documents that provide an overview of the European RI ecosystem and chart the priority research infrastructures to be developed in Europe, and play a key role in shaping funding calls relevant to Europlanet under Horizon and future Framework Programmes. In 2022, ESFRI launched a Stakeholders Forum, through which Europlanet has participated in activities and consultations.

Europlanet co-organised several events and activities during the 2024 RI project to bring together other research infrastructures for joint learning and to develop collaborations. These included:

- An online two-day workshop hosted by the European Science Foundation in April 2021
- An in-person/online hybrid side event at the International Conference of Research Infrastructures (ICRI), held in Brno, Czechia, in October 2022 focused on distributed RIs that provide coordinated access to networks of multiple small or mid-scale facilities.
- An in-person/online hybrid event during ERIM 2023 in Bratislava for astronomy and space-science related research infrastructures, including Opticon, Radionet, JIVE, LOFAR and the European Astrobiology institute.
- A survey of distributed research infrastructures in 2024 to find out about their operational models, funding and sustainability plans, gathering 30 responses.

Main themes emerging from these discussions include:

- The benefits of enabling distributed RIs share experiences in the development of different sustainability models (e.g. the European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC), Association Sans But Lucratif (AISBL) and French Loi 1901).
- The need for small and medium sized DRIs to raise their profile and have a clearer voice with ESFRI and the EC.
- Challenges for supporting Transnational Access, a unique programme that provides Europe with important scientific advantages and major impact
- Common challenges in engaging with the private sector.

An outcome of the ERIM event was the formation of an Astronomy & Space Network of Networks (NeoNs). The first action of this grouping was to provide coordinated feedback to the draft of the ESFRI Landscape Analysis on the Physical Sciences & Engineering Domain. This feedback resulted in ESFRI changing the name of the sub-domain of '*Astronomy & Astroparticle Physics*' to '*Astronomy, Astroparticle Physics & Space Sciences*', giving more explicit recognition of emerging fields of space science, including planetary science, astrobiology and astrochemistry. Europlanet and Astronomy & Space NeoNs are both namechecked in the ESFRI Landscape Analysis 2024, which was launched in June 2024. The next steps for Astronomy & Space NeoNs will be discussed at the European Astronomical Society (EAS) Meeting 2024.

A further meeting of the Distributed RI community will take place in Budapest on 18 September 2024 as part of the Hungarian Presidency of the European Council.

1.3.1.5. Other events

Two embassy-hosted events organised through Europlanet took place in 2023, including an event at the British Embassy in Budapest and a reciprocal event at the Hungarian Embassy in London. These sessions brought together in-person and online participants from both countries' industrial, academic and science policy communities for presentations, round-table discussions and networking. Europlanet has been informed of at least one contract that has come out of these events.

In collaboration with the EAS, ESA and European Southern Observatory (ESO), Europlanet participated in a day of events and exhibition in the European Parliament in February 2023 on the topic of '*Are we alone in the Universe: Understanding exoplanets*'. The events were hosted by Lina Gálvez Muñoz MEP.

Europlanet has also participated in a number of events organised by partners, including a dinner debate on Space Traffic Management organised by Friends of Europe.

Representatives of Europlanet have also attended the annual European Space Conference and policy meetings such as ICRI and the Belgian Presidency conference on RIs.

1.3.1.6. Data Consortia

In 2020, the Europlanet Society became a member of the International Planetary Data Alliance (IPDA), which is the gathering of space agencies for data management. Europlanet/VESPA is the only non-agency member in the Steering Committee.

Europlanet participation in the International Virtual Observatory Alliance (IVOA) has led to the establishment of the Solar System Interstellar Group, and VESPA has defined the way to share observational data of the Solar System within the Virtual Observatory. This has provided a large visibility for Europlanet in the astronomy and related communities.

1.4. Sustainable Structures

Following the end of the EU-funded Europlanet 2024 RI project in July 2024, no direct funding is currently foreseen to support a policy team. Nonetheless, the Europlanet community has a number of voluntary structures:

- **Europlanet Policy Working Group (WG)*** – a group of volunteers drawn from the Society and its Regional Hubs that have an interest in policy engagement.
- **Europlanet Industry Working Group (WG)*** – a group of volunteers drawn from the Society and its Regional Hubs that have an interest in engagement with industry.
- **Europlanet Society Executive Board** – the governing body of the Europlanet Society, with defined remits for the 11 members that include policy and industry.
- **Europlanet Science Congress (EPSC) Executive Committee (EC) and Local Organising Committee (LOC)** – the committees responsible for organising Europlanet’s annual meeting overall and for local organisation.
- **Sustainability Working Group** – the Working Group responsible for sustainability planning of Europlanet activities
- **The Europlanet AISBL Board** – the elected Officers of the Europlanet Society, who are directors of Europlanet’s legal entity, the Europlanet Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif (AISBL), hosted by the Planetary Atmospheres Group of the Royal Belgian Institute for Space Aeronomy (BIRA-IASB).
- **Network of Networks (NeoNs)** - the network of astronomy and space science-related research infrastructures and other organisations.
- **Distributed Research Infrastructure Network** - an grouping of small-to-medium sized distributed research infrastructures that have been funded in the past by the EC.

* During the Europlanet RI 2024 project, the Policy and Industry Teams and WGs worked in collaboration on many activities due to common interests and overlap of objectives.

1.5. Audiences

Europlanet policy engagement activities have a number of core audiences, including:

- Policymakers
 - The EU (EC, Parliament, and related agencies)
 - Space Agencies (ESA, NASA, JAXA, ISRO etc)
 - National policymakers and funding bodies
 - Strategic organisations (e.g. ESFRI)
 - Data consortia (e.g. IPDA, IVOA)
- The private sector
 - Large-scale space industry
 - SMEs within the upstream or downstream space sector
 - Other industry with links to planetary science (e.g. instrument manufacturers, service providers)
 - Industry clusters and trade associations
- The research community
 - Research institutions
 - Science consortia, including (European) research projects
 - Higher-Education
- Individuals
 - Researchers
 - Space professionals
 - Early career researchers

1.6. Objectives

This section lists the main objectives of the current Europlanet Policy Activities and the structures that are involved in their organisation.

Table 1: Main Objectives of Current Europlanet Policy Activities

Objective	Lead (e.g. Policy WG, Board, EPSC Executive Committee)	Main Actions
Build a core group of people to lead Europlanet policy engagement activities	Policy Working Group, Executive Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organise regular quarterly meetings and engage with policy representatives from the Europlanet Regional Hubs and (where required or appropriate) other members of the community with policy and industry remits.
Develop a practical and achievable policy engagement strategy for Europlanet	Policy WG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft and review strategic goals for Europlanet in engaging with policy makers.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define objectives and milestones for the Europlanet policy engagement over the coming period. ● Circulate draft strategy to the Europlanet community for feedback. ● Explore funding strategy and sustainability and address requests to the Europlanet Executive Board and other sources.
<p>Engage the planetary scientific community with policy makers to effectively interact with each other.</p>	<p>Policy WG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify networking opportunities for planetary scientists to connect with policy makers (e.g. EPSC, conferences, dedicated meetings, receptions, or informal gatherings where they can engage in dialogue in a more relaxed setting). ● Identify and participate to key events for policy engagement and networking ● Define the necessary budget to attend these activities and communicate it to the Europlanet Society Executive Board
<p>Build a cohort of planetary scientists confident in interacting with policy makers</p>	<p>Policy WG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement feedback mechanisms to gather input from planetary scientists on their experiences interacting with policy makers. This feedback can help identify areas for improvement and inform future training initiatives or resources. ● Offer ongoing support and assistance to the planetary community as they engage with policy makers. This could

		involve providing access to staff or consultants who specialise in government relations or offering personalised coaching sessions to address specific challenges or concerns.
Ensure that the needs of the planetary community are represented in European Research Infrastructure strategy and future other programmes	Policy WG / RI Coordinator / Board / Sustainability Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Represent Europlanet at the European Strategic Forum for Research Infrastructure (ESFRI) events and fora ● Coordinate feedback to ESFRI consultations with Astronomy and Space Network of Networks (NeoNs) ● Lobby ESFRI on behalf of the scientific community ● Coordinate with other distributed RIs to emphasise the importance of continued support and adaptation of distributed research infrastructure projects by EC. ● Gather data on Europlanet distributed RI operations ● Share lessons learned on sustainability

2. Funding

2.1.Sources of income

2.1.1. Europlanet AISBL and Society

Europlanet AISBL is a not-for-profit enterprise that offers key research infrastructure services developed and optimised over nearly 20 years. It is financed through:

- Community subscriptions:
- Individual memberships
- New organisational membership programme

EPSC settlement

- Fees
- Exhibition and sponsorship

Commercial services

- Industry access to facilities at commercial rates
- Consultancy

Members of the planetary science community must subscribe through individual or organisational membership to Europlanet to participate in its activities.

The day-to-day management of Europlanet is coordinated by an Executive Office with approximately 1 FTE paid staff. Activities of the community are carried out by voluntary committees and working groups. The budget of Europlanet is set by the elected Executive Board. All requests for financial support (e.g. to attend meetings, organise events or produce resources) must be made to the Treasurer.

2.1.2. Co-funding opportunities and partnerships

Europlanet exists within a wider ecosystem of thematically or structurally related organisations (EAS, EGU, DPS etc). While not necessarily a direct source of income, strategic relationships (e.g. a Memorandum of Understanding) may help achieve Europlanet policy objectives through reciprocal or in-kind contributions e.g. to establish reciprocal arrangements for organisational membership or for exhibition space at annual meetings.

Co-funding for strategic roles is another option to investigate (e.g. from 2015-2019, the Royal Astronomical Society co-funded a policy officer in Brussels with the EAS. The opportunity for a similar action with Europlanet was discussed in 2018 but not followed up. Europlanet AISBL does not have funding to support a post, but may be able to contribute to shared costs).

2.1.3. Grants

In partnership with other organisations (e.g. NeoNs and distributed research infrastructures), there are various potential sources of funding for Europlanet to achieve strategic goals e.g. in the Horizon Europe Work Programme.

Europlanet AISBL and consortium partners are currently investigating opportunities to collaborate in bids for a COST Action, with a deadline of October 2024, and looking at future RI calls to support Transnational Access under Horizon.

2.2. Expenditure required

Activity	Priority (High / Medium / Low)*	Resources needed (where activities can be scaled, list options)	Potential funding sources and timescale (e.g. per year, per month, occasional)
Policy Working Group	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running meetings and preparing minutes (voluntary, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admin support from AISBL (0.5-1 day per quarter)

		by Policy WG Secretary/Chair	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admin support for meetings (setting up meeting, dissemination). 	
Policy Engagement Strategy	High	Admin support (circulating to the community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admin support from AISBL fees.
Planetary community-policy engagement	High	Registration fees and travel for attending events, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Space Conference 600€ + travel European Space Forum ~160€ for non-profit + travel Costs for event organisation e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catering event ~ 4-5K€ + travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AISBL Co-funding with other organisations
Build cohort of planetary policy advocates	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting up webinars for best practice sharing (1 per year) Fees for training sessions (750-1500€?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admin support from AISBL (0.5 days per event). AISBL Co-funding with other organisations.
Strategic policy workshops and webinars	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting up webinars for best practice sharing (4x per year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admin support from AISBL (0.5 days per event).

* High Priority – **essential** to the long term survival of Europlanet

Medium Priority – adds value to Europlanet and should be carried out where possible

Low Priority – “nice-to-have” where funding is available, but non-essential.

3. Roadmap for 2024-2027

3.1. Recommendations

3.1.1. Policy Infrastructure

Objective: Provide the infrastructure needed for sustainable policy activities within Europlanet.

Scope: Organise and coordinate structures to underpin Europlanet policy engagement activities.

Activity Leads: Policy Working Group, Executive Board.

Resources Needed: Committee and Working Group efforts

Details:

3.1.1.1. → Policy Working Group

- **Objective:** Organise regular internal coordination meetings to plan activities and logistics for all Europlanet policy activities.
- **Format:** Online meetings, discussions on Discord private channel.
- **Frequency:** Monthly/Quarterly.
- **Participants:** Europlanet Hub policy representatives, Industry WG representatives, Executive Board members with policy remits, Sustainability Committee representatives, EPEC and EPSC representatives.
- **Outcome:** A list of budgeted actions that are achievable within the resources of Europlanet AISBL and the Europlanet Society.
- **Logistics:**
 - **Participant List:** Compile and maintain an up-to-date list of participants.
 - **Agenda Preparation:** Draft and circulate the agenda in advance, including key discussion points and objectives.
 - **Invitation Management:** Send out invitations well in advance, with reminders as the date approaches.
 - **Technical Setup:** Ensure reliable virtual meeting platforms with all necessary features for presentations and breakout sessions.
 - **Follow-Up:** Send summaries and action points post-meeting. Make cost proposals to the board for funding requests.

3.1.1.2. → Collaboration Between Policy Team and Europlanet Board and Structures

- **Objectives:** The collaboration between the Policy Working Group, the Europlanet Board, and structures including the Diversity Committee and EPEC is key to developing policy initiatives that are well-informed, strategically prioritised, and effectively implemented and aligned with the broader goals of Europlanet and its community.
- **Format:** Periodic reporting to the Board and other committees on policy activities. Reporting to the Europlanet Community during the Europlanet General Assembly.
- **Participants:** Policy WG, Europlanet Executive Board, Europlanet Committees and Working Groups, EPEC Network.
- **Outcome:** Awareness across Europlanet structures of policy activities and opportunities for engagement.

- Logistics:
 - Biannual reports for the Europlanet Board.
 - Ad-hoc cross-representation at meetings of Europlanet bodies.
 - Annual policy report for inclusion in the Europlanet General Assembly and AISBL Annual Report.

3.1.2. Policy Prioritisation

Objective: Strengthen Europlanet's influence on support for research funding relevant to the Europlanet community, space policy, and public support for planetary science within the EU and globally.

Scope: Identify key policy areas where Europlanet's expertise and research can significantly impact.

Activity Leads: Policy Working Group

Resources Needed: Volunteer efforts, budget for travel and participation in key events.

Details:

3.1.2.1. → Workshops or Webinars

- Objective: Identify priority policy areas where Europlanet can have the most significant impact.
- Format: Virtual workshops and consultations with Europlanet members, partner organisations, policymakers, and external experts.
- Frequency: Quarterly workshops to ensure continuous dialogue and feedback.
- Participants: Europlanet members, partner organisations policymakers, industry experts, and external stakeholders.
- Outcome: A prioritised list of key policy areas and actionable insights for strategic planning.
- Logistics:
 - Participant List: Compile and maintain an up-to-date list of participants.
 - Agenda Preparation: Draft and circulate the agenda in advance, including key discussion points and objectives.
 - Invitation Management: Send out invitations well in advance, with reminders as the date approaches.
 - Technical Setup: Ensure reliable virtual meeting platforms with all necessary features for presentations and breakout sessions.
 - Follow-Up: Send summaries and action points post-meeting.

3.1.2.2. → Policy Events - Dinner Debates - Exhibitions

Objective: Gather key stakeholders to discuss the future of European planetary science and Europlanet's role.

Frequency: 1-2 events per year.

Formats:

- Organisation of a:
 - Virtual Event: Held in February or November to align with key Commission periods, enabling higher attendance and engagement.
 - Physical Event: Held in May, ideally coinciding with major Commission actions or relevant conferences to maximise participation, preferably organised in collaboration with other key partners (e.g. EAS, ESO, ESA etc)
- Participation in external meetings and conferences.

Event Planning and Logistics:

(a) Pre-Event Logistics:

- Investigate opportunities with partners for collaboration.
- Participant List: Develop a comprehensive list of potential attendees including policymakers, industry leaders, scientists, and stakeholders.
- Outreach and Invitations:
 - Identify and reach out to participants through email, newsletters, and direct contacts.
 - Send formal invitations well in advance with all necessary details (date, time, location/virtual platform).
 - Follow-up with reminders and updates as the event approaches.
- Agenda Development:
 - Draft a detailed agenda including key topics, speakers, and session timings.
 - Circulate the agenda to participants ahead of time to ensure they are informed and prepared.
- Registration Management:
 - Set up a registration system to track RSVPs and manage attendee information.
 - Provide clear instructions for event access (virtual or physical).

(b) Event Execution:

- Virtual Event (February/November):
 - Date: Align with key Commission periods.
 - Platform: Use platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or others with capabilities for interactive sessions, networking, and live discussions.

- Technical Support: Ensure technical support is available to assist with any issues during the event.
- Agenda Execution: Adhere to the agenda, managing time efficiently and ensuring smooth transitions between sessions.
- Interactive Elements: Utilise breakout rooms, Q&A sessions, and polls to engage participants.
- Networking Opportunities: Facilitate virtual networking through breakout sessions and virtual lounges.
- Physical Event (May):
 - Location: Select a central and accessible location within the EU.
 - Date: Coincide with major Commission actions or relevant conferences.
 - Venue Setup: Ensure the venue is equipped with necessary AV equipment, seating arrangements, and accessibility features.
 - Logistics Coordination: Manage travel arrangements, accommodations, and onsite registrations for attendees.
 - Agenda Execution: Ensure a smooth flow of sessions as per the agenda, with time allocated for networking and informal discussions.
 - Exhibitions/Posters: Arrange space for exhibitions or poster sessions showcasing Europlanet's work.
 - Catering: Provide meals and refreshments, considering dietary restrictions and preferences.
 - Technical Support: Ensure technical support is available for presentations and AV equipment.

(c) Post-Event Follow-Up:

- Feedback Collection:
 - Distribute surveys and conduct interactive polls to gather feedback from participants.
 - Analyse feedback to identify areas of improvement for future events.
- Documentation:
 - Prepare and distribute a summary report of the event including key takeaways, action points, and any announcements made.
 - Share presentation materials and recordings (if applicable) with attendees.
- Engagement Continuation:
 - Maintain communication with attendees through follow-up emails and updates on future events and initiatives.
 - Encourage participants to join ongoing discussions and working groups within Europlanet.

3.1.2.3. → Policy Alerts and Briefings

Objective: Provide timely and relevant updates on policy developments, upcoming events, and funding opportunities to keep stakeholders informed and engaged.

Content:

- **Research and Policy Updates:** Summarise recent research findings and policy changes relevant to planetary science.
- **Upcoming Events:** Calendar of key upcoming events, including policy forums, workshops, and consultations.
- **Funding Opportunities:** Provide information on new and upcoming funding opportunities, including grants, calls for proposals, and other financial support mechanisms.
- **Recommendations:** Offer strategic recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders based on recent developments and research findings.
- **Contact Information:** Provide contact details for follow-up and inquiries.

Distribution Channels

- **Discord:** Develop an active policy channel within the Europlanet Discord where the community can update and alert each other on policy content and discuss the implications.
- **Newsletter:** Include a policy section in each newsletter
- **Website:** Include posts on policy topics of interest to the community.
- **Events Calendar:** Add policy events to the online calendar.

3.1.2.4. → Strategic relations

Objective: Develop strategic relationships with partners with interests aligned with Europlanet, and provide coordinated input to policy consultations.

Scope: Develop Europlanet's role as a strategic partner and contributor for policy decision making in relevant scientific fields and structural bodies.

Activity Leads: Policy Working Group / Europlanet Board

Resources Needed: Volunteer efforts, budget for travel and participation in key events.

Details:

- **Consultation Alerts:** Inform community of requests and guidelines for input.
- **Collaboration:** Coordinate with partners and related organisations to provide coherent responses and proposals.

- **Meetings:** Attending meetings (e.g. EAS) to develop and consolidate collaborations.

1.1. Risks

→ Regarding section above under “Policy Prioritization”

- **Lack of Functional Policy Working Group:** The Policy Working Group is the engine that will drive Europlanet policy activities. No activities will be possible without a motivated and well organised group of volunteers.
- **Low Participation:** There is a risk of low attendance from key stakeholders, which can undermine the effectiveness of the workshops.
- **Technical Issues:** Virtual meetings rely on technology that may fail, causing disruptions.
- **Ineffective Engagement:** Online formats may not facilitate the same level of engagement and interaction as in-person meetings.
- **Resource Constraints:** Limited funding and reliance on volunteer expertise may restrict the depth and quality of the research and prioritisation process.

→ Regarding section above under “Policy Briefings and Reports”

- **Information Overload:** Keep content concise and targeted.
- **Quality Control:** Implement a rigorous review and editing process.
- **Distribution Inefficiency:** Use multi-channel distribution and maintain an up-to-date contact list.
- **Engagement Issues:** Tailor content to stakeholder interests and solicit feedback.
- **Resource Allocation:** Plan resource allocation and leverage volunteer expertise.
- **Timeliness:** Set clear timelines for content creation and approval.
- **Consistency:** Use a standardised template and style guide.
- **Feedback Incorporation:** Collect and integrate stakeholder feedback.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality:** Review content for confidentiality before publication.
- **Technical Issues:** Ensure robust IT support and backup plans.

By addressing these risks, Europlanet can enhance the impact and reliability of its policy activities.

1. APPENDIX

4. Reports on Policy Activities

4.1. EPSC 2022

The [industry-policy session at EPSC 2022](#) featured participants from academia, industry, and public bodies. The session was delivered in two parts: "Views from the Hubs," which presented perspectives from the academic community involved in industry and policy activities, followed by a panel discussion with representatives from the industrial and public sectors.

The discussions highlighted several key themes and areas for continued work by Europlanet on industry and policy activities, with a focus on networking, coordinated lobbying, and the industry database.

Networking emerged as a crucial area for improvement. Currently, collaborations between academia and industry often occur by chance, as highlighted by Akos Kereszturi (Central Europe) and Jonathan Merrison (Northern Europe), due to pre-existing relationships with agencies. This approach is unsustainable and inconsistent. The session proved particularly beneficial for the Spanish team, composed of national industry representatives (Plataforma Aeroespacial) and public agency representatives (CDTI), who found it to be an effective way of connecting with a broader academic community that they might not have otherwise engaged with. There is a clear need for structured networking events and better utilisation of the industry database to inform both parties about potential collaboration opportunities.

The intrinsic value of science was another key theme. Multiple speakers, including Dominique Tilmanns (Eurisy) in a video address, emphasised that science should be valued for its own merits without needing to justify its importance through other metrics such as industrial impact

Discussions on big science through agencies underscored the importance of strategic non-dependence on critical technologies for EU policymakers and industry. Guenther Hasinger and Fabio Favata from the European Space Agency echoed that budgets for major missions are tight, necessitating careful planning and resource allocation.

Lobbying policy makers was identified as an area needing centralised support. There is a need for coordinated communication campaigns to lawmakers about the importance of space science, alongside direct national communication efforts by local academics. Severine Robert (Benelux) presented specific approaches to maximise impact, such as targeted communications toward decision-making countries like Sweden, which currently leads the EU

council, and planning for future leading countries such as Hungary, Belgium, and Spain. Europlanet has an opportunity to coordinate efforts and make centralised approaches.

Exchanges between industry and academia were showcased as successful through early career exchange programs. Elena Benedetto (Switzerland) highlighted these programs, facilitated by the PlanetS platform, which have led to increased collaborations between academia and industry.

Finally, the session addressed the difficulties faced by SMEs in accessing grant funding. Higinio Alavés (EMXYS) noted that small industries, particularly those with little historical experience in planetary sciences, often find it challenging to secure grants. Typically, they can only obtain small sub-grants from larger players who dominate these grants.

These themes underscore the need for improved networking, the recognition of the intrinsic value of science, strategic technological independence, effective lobbying, enhanced exchanges between academia and industry, and support for SMEs in accessing grants.

4.2. Dinner Debate 2023

On 24 January 2023, Europlanet and MEP Niklas Nienass co-hosted a Dinner Debate at the European Parliament on "[Promoting the Importance of Space Policies and a European Space Strategy](#)". The event gathered decision-makers, academics, and researchers to discuss Europe's growing space sector, the need for a unified policy framework, and the development of a European Space Strategy.

MEP Nienass and Nigel Mason, Europlanet 2024 RI Coordinator, opened the event, highlighting Europe's potential in space activities but emphasising the need for coherent policies. The discussion included keynote speeches and an open debate on Europe's role in the global space race, space policy and law, sustainability, a common European space strategy, academia-industry collaborations, and the challenges in the space launch industry.

Europlanet 2024 RI and the Europlanet Society were highlighted for their roles in integrating planetary science across Europe, providing access to research facilities, and engaging with policy makers to promote the scientific and socio-economic impacts of planetary science. MEP Nienass, a proponent of the European new space economy, underscored the importance of establishing European space legislation and international standards for space traffic management.

The event featured contributions from various high-level participants, including representatives from the European Space Agency, EU Agency for the Space Program, and the International Institute of Space Law. The Society President, Ann-Carine Vandaele, emphasised

the need for space access for scientific purposes, advocating for policy consideration of the scientific use of space.

The debate covered the European space industry's global position, regulatory challenges, sustainable space applications, the benefits and challenges of a common space strategy, and the importance of resilience in addressing core interests and needs in turbulent times.

4.3. ERIM 2023

The first [Europlanet Research Infrastructure Meeting \(ERIM\)](#), co-hosted with the fifth Europlanet Early Career Network (EPEC) Annual Week, took place from June 19-23, 2023, in a hybrid format in Bratislava, Slovakia, and online.

During the ERIM conference, a Policy Workshop was held on Wednesday, June 21, organised by the policy team. This workshop focused on several key topics:

- The role of science in policy making,
- Challenges and practical skills needed for engaging with policy makers,
- The needs of policy makers to develop evidence-based policies,
- Skills scientists need to better engage with policy makers,
- The interaction between scientists and policy makers at different academic and working levels.

The session began with a welcome from Eleni Chatzichristou, who set the scene for the discussions that followed. She outlined the objectives of the session and emphasised the importance of science feedback to policy.

A recorded talk by Rodrigo Da Costa, Director of EUSPA, was then presented. Da Costa's talk focused on the activities of EUSPA and its contributions to the EU Space Program, particularly in knowledge-based policy and decision making. He highlighted the challenges faced and the significant role of space technology in improving various economic sectors and achieving the objectives of national and EU policies.

In person, climate scientist and science policy advocate Noel Baker gave a talk on raising the visibility of space research to policy makers. She aimed to raise awareness about the importance of research in supporting a transformative agenda for policy making in planetary science. Baker emphasised the need for researchers' voices to be better heard in decision-making processes. She critically analysed how research outputs are perceived and utilised, and assessed opportunities to enhance the visibility and valorisation of policy research in the context of space research.

Following these insightful presentations, participants and attendees engaged in a lively exchange of questions and discussions on the topics covered.

4.4. Distributed Research Infrastructure Workshops

A consortium of Distributed Research Infrastructures (DRIs) and the European Science Foundation (ESF) initiated a programme in 2021 to try to bring together similar projects and provide them with a forum to raise their profile, identify common challenges and share best practice. DRIs form the majority of EU RIs as listed in the current European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) landscape, with many hundreds of small and medium sized DRIs established through EC Funding Frameworks over the past 30. However, to date, they have been under-represented as a strategic voice within the RI community.

As a first step, a [two-day virtual meeting](#) was organised in April 2021. This proved very successful, attracting 130 participants. The outcomes included a recommendation to organise annual meetings to allow the distributed RI community to continue to interact.

As a follow-up, a [side-event](#) was organised at the International Conference on Research Infrastructures (ICRI) in Brno, Czech Republic. The event was organised by the ESF, Europlanet, and the EC-funded MOSBRI and VITALISE projects and attracted 50 in-person participants, with over 70 registering to take part online.

A day of sessions focused on [astronomy and space science DRIs](#) was organised as part of the Europlanet Research Infrastructure Meeting (ERIM) 2023.

A survey on DRIs was issued in early 2024 and gathered over 30 responses, giving details of DRI operational models, funding and sustainability plans. Planning for an in-person event in Budapest on 18 September is underway, organised as part of the Hungarian Presidency of the European Council. A White Paper on the needs and impact of DRIs will be published following this meeting.

5. Policy Posts

The Policy Team at Europlanet is dedicated to providing timely and relevant updates on key policy developments, research findings, and strategic recommendations. Our goal is to keep stakeholders informed and engaged with the latest advancements and opportunities in planetary science. Below are a few of the posts the Policy Team has uploaded on the website, showcasing our commitment to fostering informed dialogue and advocacy for robust space policies within the EU and globally. Below are a few of the posts the Policy Team has uploaded on the website.

1. **Policy News and Events - Save the Dates:** This article provides important dates for upcoming policy and industry-related events organised by Europlanet Society, focusing on space exploration and planetary science advancements. [Read more](#)

2. **European Space Law Delay - An Assessment:** An analysis of the delays in European space law and its implications for space policy and industry within Europe, discussing potential solutions and impacts. [Read more](#)
3. **The 16th European Space Conference - A Confluence of Ideas, Innovation, and Policy:** Highlights from the 16th European Space Conference, emphasizing key discussions on innovation, policy, and collaboration in the space sector. [Read more](#)
4. **16th European Space Conference January 2024 - Registration is Now Open:** Announcement of the registration opening for the 16th European Space Conference in January 2024, detailing the event's significance and expected participants. [Read more](#)
5. **ESA Space Summit - Ministers Back Europe's Sustainable and Competitive Space Ambitions:** A report on the ESA Space Summit where ministers endorsed initiatives for a sustainable and competitive European space sector. [Read more](#)
6. **Space Briefing - New Position Paper in the Bundestag:** Details on a new position paper presented in the Bundestag, focusing on current issues and future directions in space policy. [Read more](#)
7. **Machine Learning for a New Era of Data-Driven Planetary Science:** Discusses the role of machine learning in advancing data-driven approaches in planetary science, highlighting recent developments and future prospects. [Read more](#)
8. **Opinion: Off-Earth Resources and Market Expansion:** Discusses how space exploration and colonization will drive the market for off-Earth resources, creating new economic opportunities. [Read more](#)
9. **Space Briefing: Space Sustainability:** Emphasises the necessity for prioritizing space sustainability to ensure long-term viability of space activities. [Read more](#)
10. **Space Briefing: Space Debris Problem:** Highlights the growing issue of space debris and the urgent need for effective mitigation strategies. [Read more](#)
11. **Space for Island Nations Conference 2023:** Reviews the key discussions and outcomes of the Space for Island Nations Conference 2023. [Read more](#)
12. **Space Briefing: SpaceX in Ukraine:** Provides an overview of SpaceX's involvement in Ukraine, focusing on their contributions and challenges. [Read more](#)
13. **Space Briefing at the European Space Conference:** Summarises key points and discussions from the European Space Conference's space briefing sessions. [Read more](#)
14. **New Funding Opportunity by 100x Impact Accelerator:** Details a new funding opportunity aimed at accelerating impactful space-related projects. [Read more](#)
15. **Lack of Space Transportation in Europe:** Addresses the challenges and implications of Europe's insufficient space transportation infrastructure. [Read more](#)
16. **Agreement at ESA Ministerial Council:** An overview of agreements reached during the ESA Ministerial Council, focusing on future space missions and budget allocations. [Read more](#)

17. **Political Agreement on New European Satellite Constellation:** Discusses the new political agreement for launching a European satellite constellation aimed at enhancing connectivity and security. [Read more](#)
18. **Space Traffic Management:** Addresses the growing need for effective space traffic management to ensure the safety and sustainability of space activities. [Read more](#)
19. **Industry Committee Adopts Secure Connectivity Programme:** Reports on the Industry Committee's adoption of a programme to ensure secure satellite connectivity across Europe. [Read more](#)
20. **Horizon R&D Partnership Scaled Down:** Details the reduction in scope for the Horizon R&D partnership, impacting various space research initiatives. [Read more](#)
21. **Secure Connectivity Debate Gains Momentum:** Highlights the increasing momentum and discussions around ensuring secure satellite connectivity within Europe. [Read more](#)
22. **Making Space Matter Summit:** Summarises the key outcomes and discussions from the "Making Space Matter" summit, focusing on space policy and industry impact. [Read more](#)
23. **Report of the Conference on the Future of Europe:** Provides insights from the Conference on the Future of Europe, with a focus on space policy and cooperation. [Read more](#)
24. **From a European to a Global Green Deal:** Discusses the transition from a European Green Deal to a global framework, emphasizing the role of space technologies. [Read more](#)
25. **MEP Niklas Nienass on STM - Towards a European Space Law:** MEP Niklas Nienass discusses the need for a European Space Law to manage space traffic. [Read more](#)
26. **The Future of International Cooperation:** Explores the future of international cooperation in space, highlighting opportunities and challenges. [Read more](#)
27. **Europlanet Society Webinar - ESA Human and Robotic Exploration:** Details the webinar discussing ESA's strategy for human and robotic exploration over the next decade. [Read more](#)
28. **14th European Space Conference:** Summarises key discussions and outcomes of the 14th European Space Conference, focusing on space policy, innovation, and collaboration in Europe. [Read more](#)
29. **European Research and Innovation Days 2021 Conference Report:** Provides an overview of the European Research and Innovation Days 2021, highlighting significant sessions and their implications for future research and innovation in Europe. [Read more](#)
30. **The European Business Summit 2021:** Reviews the European Business Summit 2021, focusing on discussions around business, policy, and economic growth in the European context. [Read more](#)

31. **World Space Forum 2021 - Space 4 Climate Action:** Discusses the 2021 World Space Forum's emphasis on using space technology and data to combat climate change. [Read more](#)
32. **Conference on the Future of Europe:** Highlights the key themes and outcomes of the Conference on the Future of Europe, with a focus on shaping future European policies and initiatives. [Read more](#)

The following section provides an enriched overview of the vision for the Policy Working Group and outlines additional action items to enhance their strategic initiatives and impact. This comprehensive approach aims to align Europlanet's policy efforts with the latest developments and opportunities in the planetary science domain, ensuring that the group remains proactive and influential.

A. Policy Working Group Proposal

Engagement and Policy Advocacy

Objective: Strengthen Europlanet's influence on space policy, funding decisions, and public support for planetary science within the EU and globally.

1. **Policy Prioritization:**

Scope: Identify key policy areas where Europlanet's expertise and research can significantly impact.

Activity Leads: Policy Working Group.

Resources Needed: Minimal funding for research and prioritization efforts, primarily leveraging volunteer expertise.

Details:

Workshops and Consultations: Organise virtual workshops and consultations with Europlanet members, policymakers, and external experts to identify priority policy areas. These sessions will facilitate dialogue, gather diverse perspectives, and ensure that the prioritization reflects the most pressing issues.

Strategic Plan Development: Create a comprehensive strategic plan outlining how Europlanet's research can address these priority areas. This plan should detail specific objectives, targeted policy changes, and the expected impact of Europlanet's contributions.

Policy Focus: Concentrate efforts on policies that support space exploration, planetary science, climate change mitigation, and international collaboration. Ensure that these focus areas align with Europlanet's strengths and capabilities to maximise impact.

Resource Allocation: Allocate resources strategically to focus on high-impact areas. This includes directing volunteer efforts, seeking partnerships, and applying for grants or funding where necessary.

2. *Communication Strategy:*

Scope: Develop a targeted bidirectional communication strategy to reach policymakers and stakeholders effectively.

Activity Leads: Communication and Outreach Team.

Resources Needed: Budget for communication tools (newsletters, social media, webinars), personnel time for content creation and management.

Details:

Dedicated Communication Channels: Establish and maintain communication channels such as a dedicated newsletter, active social media accounts, and a website section specifically for policy updates and engagement.

Content Creation: Develop and distribute policy briefs, newsletters, and press releases tailored to various stakeholder groups, including policymakers, industry leaders, and the general public. Ensure the content is accessible, engaging, and informative.

Quarterly Meetings: Organise virtual quarterly meetings with Europlanet Hubs to ensure continuous engagement and feedback from regional representatives. These meetings will serve as a platform to share updates, discuss challenges, and align on strategic objectives.

Annual Workshop: Plan an annual online workshop that invites stakeholders and policymakers to discuss Europlanet's contributions and future plans. This workshop should include presentations, panel discussions, and interactive sessions to foster dialogue and collaboration.

Highlighting Societal Benefits: Tailor communication to emphasise the societal benefits of Europlanet's work, such as advancements in science and technology, educational opportunities, and economic impacts. Use case studies and real-world examples to illustrate these benefits.

3. *Annual Europlanet Policy Forum:*

Scope: Gather policymakers, space agency representatives, industry leaders, and scientists to discuss the future of European planetary science.

Activity Leads: Europlanet Policy Working Group.

Resources Needed: Budget for virtual event organization, personnel for planning and execution, marketing materials.

Details:

Event Planning: Select a date and platform for the annual virtual forum. Ensure that the platform supports interactive sessions, networking, and live discussions.

Agenda Development: Develop a detailed agenda featuring keynote speeches from high-profile speakers, panel discussions on critical policy issues, and breakout sessions for in-depth exploration of specific topics.

Speaker Invitations: Invite high-profile speakers from the policy, industry, and scientific communities. Ensure a diverse lineup that can provide various perspectives on planetary science and policy.

Networking Opportunities: Plan virtual networking sessions to foster collaborations between attendees. Utilise breakout rooms and virtual lounges to facilitate informal discussions and connections.

Promotion: Promote the event through various channels, including newsletters, social media, and partner organizations, to maximise participation and impact.

Feedback Collection: Collect feedback from participants to improve future forums. Use surveys and interactive polls during the event to gather real-time insights and suggestions.

4. Policy Advocacy Campaigns:

Scope: Launch targeted campaigns advocating for increased funding and support for planetary science research and missions.

Activity Leads: Collaborative effort between Policy and Industry Working Groups.

Resources Needed: Development of advocacy materials, budget for digital campaigns, partnerships with external communication experts.

Details:

Identify Funding Opportunities: Continuously monitor and identify key funding opportunities and policy initiatives relevant to planetary science. Maintain a database of upcoming funding calls, grant opportunities, and policy reviews.

Advocacy Materials: Develop compelling narratives and advocacy materials, including infographics, videos, and testimonials, highlighting the importance and impact of planetary science.

Digital Media Campaigns: Utilise digital media, including social media, websites, and online petitions, to engage the public and policymakers. Create shareable content and leverage influencers and advocates within the scientific community.

Partnerships: Partner with other organizations, such as space agencies, academic institutions, and industry groups, to amplify advocacy efforts and reach a broader audience. Coordinate joint campaigns and collaborative initiatives.

Public Engagement: Organise public seminars, workshops, and webinars to educate and engage the community. Highlight how public support can influence policy decisions and funding allocations.

Impact Measurement: Track and measure the impact of advocacy campaigns using analytics tools. Assess engagement levels, media coverage, and policy outcomes to refine strategies and improve future campaigns.

5. Policy Briefs and Reports:

Scope: Produce and promote policy briefs and reports summarizing Europlanet's research findings and recommendations.

Activity Leads: Policy Working Group.

Resources Needed: Budget for research, writing, and distribution of briefs and reports.

Details:

Research and Compilation: Identify key research findings and policy recommendations to be included in briefs and reports. Collaborate with scientists and experts to ensure accuracy and relevance.

Standard Format: Develop a standard format and template for policy documents to ensure consistency, professionalism, and ease of understanding.

Writing and Editing: Write concise, well-researched briefs and reports that are accessible to policymakers and stakeholders. Employ professional editing services to enhance clarity and impact.

Promotion: Actively promote these documents through newsletters, social media, webinars, and direct outreach to policymakers and stakeholders. Use targeted distribution lists to reach the most relevant audiences.

Interactive Platforms: Create interactive online platforms where stakeholders can discuss and provide feedback on the reports. Use forums, comment sections, and virtual discussion groups to facilitate engagement.

Community Incentives: Develop incentives for community members to read and engage with policy documents, such as recognition programs, participation certificates, or integrating insights into community initiatives.

6. Engagement with Policymakers:

Scope: Establish regular interactions with policymakers at the Hub level and provide opportunities for engagement.

Activity Leads: Hub Coordinators and Policy Working Group.

Resources Needed: Budget for travel and virtual events, training program for effective engagement.

Details:

Regular Meetings: Schedule regular virtual meetings with policymakers to discuss research priorities and policy recommendations. Use these meetings to build relationships, share insights, and advocate for supportive policies.

Virtual Visits: Organise virtual visits for policymakers to Europlanet facilities to showcase ongoing research and its impacts. Use virtual tours, live demonstrations, and interactive sessions to engage policymakers.

Training Program: Develop a training program to equip scientists with the skills to effectively engage with policymakers. Include workshops on communication strategies, policy writing, and negotiation tactics.

Guidelines and Resources: Create guidelines and resources for engaging with policymakers, including communication templates, key talking points, and best practices. Distribute these materials to Europlanet members.

Mentorship Program: Establish a mentorship program where experienced scientists can guide less experienced researchers in policy interactions. Pair mentors and mentees based on expertise and interests.

Simulation Exercises: Conduct simulation exercises to provide scientists with practical experience in engaging with policymakers. Use role-playing scenarios to simulate real-world policy discussions and negotiations.

7. Policy Monitoring and Response Team:

Scope: Monitor EU policy developments affecting planetary science and mobilise the community in response.

Activity Leads: A dedicated team within the Policy Working Group.

Resources Needed: Access to policy monitoring tools, personnel for policy analysis.

Details:

Policy Monitoring Services: Subscribe to free or low-cost policy monitoring services to track relevant EU policy developments. Use tools that provide real-time updates and alerts on policy changes.

Rapid Response Protocol: Develop a rapid response protocol for timely actions, including drafting position papers, organizing community actions, and coordinating with other scientific organizations. Ensure the protocol includes clear roles and responsibilities.

Community Updates: Regularly update the community on policy changes and mobilise support when needed. Use newsletters, social media, and virtual meetings to disseminate information and rally support.

Action Plans: Prepare action plans and briefings to facilitate quick and effective responses to policy changes. Include step-by-step instructions for community members to get involved and take action.

8. Funding Advocacy:

Scope: Advocate for increased funding for space exploration and planetary science research.

Activity Leads: Policy Working Group and Executive Board.

Resources Needed: Budget for developing evidence-based arguments, travel for lobbying efforts (where necessary).

Details:

Evidence Compilation: Research and compile evidence demonstrating the economic, technological, and societal benefits of planetary science. Use case studies, statistical data, and expert testimonials to support arguments.

Persuasive Arguments: Develop persuasive arguments and presentations to communicate these benefits to policymakers. Tailor messages to address the specific interests and concerns of different policy audiences.

Meetings with Policymakers: Organise virtual meetings with key policymakers to present the case for increased funding. Use these meetings to build relationships, present evidence, and discuss funding priorities.

Collaborative Efforts: Collaborate with other organizations, such as space agencies, academic institutions, and industry groups, to strengthen advocacy efforts and present a unified front. Coordinate joint lobbying efforts and advocacy campaigns.

Funding Opportunities: Monitor funding opportunities and submit proposals to secure additional support for Europlanet's initiatives. Develop compelling grant applications and seek partnerships to enhance funding prospects.

9. Research and Infrastructure Development

Objective: Enhance Europlanet's research capabilities through investments in both physical and digital infrastructures.

Enhance Research Capabilities:

Scope: Invest in both physical and digital infrastructures to support advanced planetary science research.

Activity Leads: Research and Infrastructure Committee.

Resources Needed: Funds for advanced equipment, facility upgrades, and software development.

Details:

Needs Assessment: Conduct a thorough needs assessment to identify the most critical infrastructure gaps. Gather input from researchers, facility managers, and technical staff to prioritise investments.

Equipment Procurement: Allocate funds for procuring state-of-the-art observational instruments, computing resources, and data management platforms. Ensure that new equipment meets current research standards and enhances capabilities.

Facility Upgrades: Upgrade existing facilities to ensure they meet current research standards and capabilities. This may include laboratory renovations, installation of advanced research equipment, and improvement of data storage and processing capabilities.

Software Development: Develop and implement software solutions to facilitate data sharing and analysis across the Europlanet network. Invest in platforms that support collaboration, remote access, and advanced data analytics. There is an opportunity to connect Europlanet/VESPA with the EOSC ecosystem, building on VESPA's Europlanet 2024 RI activities (VESPA cloud programme with EGI, VM on EOSC used during workshops, etc). This is a sustainability objective, and an occasion to develop data-driven approaches.

Personnel Training: Train personnel on new technologies and data management practices to maximise the impact of infrastructure investments. Provide workshops, online courses, and hands-on training sessions.

Partnerships: Establish partnerships with other research institutions to leverage additional resources and expertise. Collaborate on joint research projects, share facilities, and exchange knowledge.

Sustainability Plan: Create a plan for maintaining and upgrading infrastructure to ensure long-term sustainability. Include regular maintenance schedules, budget forecasts, and plans for future upgrades.

10. Education and Public Outreach

Objective: Boost public interest and understanding of planetary science through educational programs and outreach initiatives.

Boost Public Interest:

Scope: Implement diverse educational programs and outreach initiatives leveraging digital media and public events.

Activity Leads: Education and Outreach Working Group.

Resources Needed: Budget for online content development, marketing, and event logistics.

Details:

Online Educational Portal: Develop an online educational portal featuring interactive resources, virtual reality experiences, and educational modules. Ensure the portal is accessible, user-friendly, and regularly updated with new content.

School Collaborations: Collaborate with schools and educational institutions to integrate planetary science topics into curricula. Provide lesson plans, educational materials, and guest lectures by Europlanet scientists.

Public Lecture Series: Organise virtual public lecture series featuring leading scientists to share recent discoveries and advancements. Promote these lectures through social media, newsletters, and educational networks.

Workshops and Activities: Plan online workshops and hands-on activities to engage communities and stimulate interest in planetary science. Use interactive formats, such as webinars, virtual labs, and citizen science projects.

Digital Media: Utilise social media and other digital platforms to reach a wider audience and promote educational content. Create engaging posts, videos, and infographics that highlight Europlanet's work and its relevance to everyday life.

Media Partnerships: Partner with media outlets to create documentaries, articles, and other content highlighting Europlanet's work. Seek opportunities to feature Europlanet scientists and research in popular science media.

Program Evaluation: Evaluate the effectiveness of outreach programs through surveys, feedback forms, and engagement metrics. Use this data to continuously improve initiatives and tailor them to audience needs.

Volunteer Network: Establish a volunteer network of scientists and educators to support outreach activities and extend their reach. Provide training, resources, and recognition to volunteers for their contributions.

11. To bridge the gap between scientific communities and policymakers, it is crucial to equip scientists with the tools and knowledge they need to effectively communicate and collaborate with decision-makers. Implementing a multifaceted approach can significantly enhance these interactions, ensuring that scientific insights are accurately conveyed and considered in policy development. Key strategies to achieve this include establishing mentorship programs, developing centralised resource hubs, organising specialised training sessions, and sharing case studies and best practices. These initiatives aim to foster productive and informed dialogues, ultimately leading to more evidence-based policy decisions.

- **Mentorship Programs:** Establish mentorship programs where experienced politicians or former policymakers can provide guidance and advice on how to effectively navigate interactions with policymakers. Pairing EP members with mentors who have relevant expertise or experience can be particularly beneficial.
- **Resource Hub:** Develop a centralised resource hub or online platform where scientists can access relevant materials, guides, and tools to assist them in their interactions with policy makers. This could include templates for drafting communications, tips for preparing for meetings, and links to additional resources.
- **Training Sessions:** Organise training sessions and workshops specifically aimed at educating scientists on effective ways to interact with policy makers. These sessions could cover topics such as communication strategies, understanding the policymaking process, and building relationships with key decision-makers.
- **Case Studies and Best Practices:** Provide case studies and examples of successful interactions between scientists and policy makers. Highlighting best practices from experienced politicians or successful advocacy campaigns can offer practical insights and inspiration.

B. Risks

Risks of Carrying Out Activities:

1. Financial:

Risk: Over-reliance on uncertain funding sources or overspending on initiatives.

Mitigation: The Policy Working Group should seek external resources if necessary and regularly assess the financial feasibility of initiatives. Develop a diversified funding strategy to mitigate financial risks.

2. Engagement:

Risk: Unrealistic expectations may lead to ineffective engagement activities.

Mitigation: Set achievable goals and regularly assess the feasibility of ongoing and planned initiatives. Use pilot programs to test new ideas and scale successful ones.

3. Operational:

Risk: Operational inefficiencies or delays due to unforeseen challenges or resource constraints.

Mitigation: Conduct thorough planning, regular progress monitoring, and maintain flexibility in project timelines. Develop contingency plans to address potential setbacks.

4. **Stakeholder Engagement:**

Risk: Misalignment of interests or lack of buy-in from stakeholders.

Mitigation: Involve stakeholders early in the planning process and maintain transparent communication. Use regular feedback loops to ensure alignment and address concerns promptly.

5. **Regulatory Compliance:**

Risk: Failure to adhere to regulatory requirements could lead to legal and reputational risks.

Mitigation: Regularly review and update compliance procedures and seek legal advice when necessary. Train staff on regulatory requirements and best practices.

Risks of Not Carrying Out Activities:

6. **Scientific Impact:**

Risk: Missing scientific opportunities or falling behind in global planetary science efforts.

Mitigation: Prioritise infrastructure investments and collaboration initiatives to maintain scientific competitiveness. Engage with the global scientific community to stay abreast of developments and opportunities.

7. **Policy Influence:**

Risk: Policies affecting planetary science research and funding may evolve without adequate input from the scientific community.

Mitigation: Engage actively with policymakers and advocate for the interests of the planetary science community. Develop strong, evidence-based advocacy campaigns and maintain regular communication with policymakers.