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D2.1 NGI STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT PLAN

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Abstract	This document presents the NGI Stakeholders Engagement Plan (SEP) that will be implemented along the duration of the CSA NGI4ALL.E, in charge of the NGI Outreach Office on behalf of the Next Generation Internet Initiative of
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	the European Commission.
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* R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)

DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs

DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.

DATA: Data sets, microdata, etc

DMP: Data management plan

ETHICS: Deliverables related to ethics issues.



SECURITY: Deliverables related to security issues

OTHER: Software, technical diagram, algorithms, models, etc.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents the NGI Stakeholders Engagement Plan (SEP) that will be implemented along the duration of the CSA NGI4ALL.E, in charge of the NGI Outreach Office on behalf of the Next Generation Internet Initiative of the European Commission.

The document starts exposing historical efforts made in the past by the previous CSA running the NGI Outreach Office to grow and interact with the NGI community members, as well as the need for a structured SEP to take a step forward in community engagement.

The document defines the proposed plan, its objectives and how to put it into practice in the different stages of the marketing funnel. Moreover, the main stakeholders targeted; and the messages, formats and channels that will be used to address them are defined.

The main global activities proposed in terms of stakeholder engagement are defined, connecting them afterwards with specific qualitative and quantitative KPIs and a list of proposed metrics to track them.

Finally, the document closes with a concluding section outlining the next steps to implement the strategy.



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ABBREVIATIONS

CTR - Click Through Rate

CSA - Coordination and Support Action

DAU - Daily Active Users

DLT - Decentralised Ledger Technologies

EC - European Commission

EU - European Union

KPI - Key Performance Indicator

MAU - Monthly Active Users

NGI - The Next Generation Internet

NOC - NGI Online Community

NOO - NGI Outreach Office

RIA - Research and Innovation Action

RTO - Research and Technology Organisation

SEP - Stakeholders Engagement Plan

SME - Small and Medium Enterprise

SSI - Self-Sovereign Identities

WP - Work Package



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE NGI OUTREACH OFFICE & THE NEED FOR A STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The NGI Outreach Office acts as a hub for NGI stakeholders to exchange knowledge, find information, acquire visibility, learn from past and ongoing efforts, identify synergies and exploitation opportunities, promote their activities, and communicate their messages more effectively.

NGI4ALL.E is the Coordination and Support Action (CSA) running the NGI Outreach Office. This CSA is the logical continuation of the previous one, NGI4ALL, whose consortium, composed of only three partners, was well established and has run the NGI Outreach office for years. However, NGI4ALL.E includes a fourth member of the consortium, Ideas for Change, to ensure inclusion and diversity in all outreach activities.

In terms of the outreach strategy, during the past years in previous CSAs, the efforts that the consortium put in the NGI channels, content and other communication and dissemination activities have paid off. The past CSAs implied substantial growth in terms of members of the NGI community and awareness of the initiative overall. Thus what seems to be the logical steps for the next 30 months is to boost the interaction and engagement of all those community members, while reaching out to similar communities and other relevant stakeholders for the NGI.

Taking into consideration the outcomes of the previous CSAs running the NGI Outreach Office, as well as the comments from the EC and the reviewers, the NGI4ALL.E consortium understands that the next logical step towards the NGI ecosystem is to increase their engagement level. There is an important need to strengthen the links with all the stakeholders across the NGI ecosystem, in order to amplify the result of NGI projects, attract new researchers and innovators and expand the benefits of the NGI in all societal layers.

1.2 THE NGI STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN (SEP)

According to the project management company ASANA, “a stakeholder engagement plan document shows how involved and influential your project stakeholders are. It also outlines your stakeholder communication plan, including when you’ll reach out to each stakeholder, what platform you’ll use, and how much information you’ll deliver”¹. Its purpose, as defined by Northeastern University, is to identify a project or initiative’s core stakeholders, and to outline the methodology and approach to interact and communicate with them.

¹ Source: <https://asana.com/resources/stakeholder-engagement-plan-template>



The NGI SEP identifies the main objectives of the interactions with the NGI ecosystem stakeholders, describes the internal and external stakeholders linked to the NGI initiative, and drafts a plan to approach them along the stages of the marketing funnel. This document outlines the initial version of the plan, which will be reviewed and reported in M18 (D2.2. NGI Stakeholders Engagement Report) and in M36 (D2.3. NGI Stakeholders Engagement Final Report).

1.2.1 The NGI stakeholders

The NGI Outreach Office designs, elaborates and disseminates messages and values to all audiences to which the NGI initiative may and should impact to reach its primary purpose. The NGI addresses various target audiences through a well-defined set of channels: website visitors, members of the NGI Online Community (NOC), subscribers to the NGI newsletter, social media followers and other online audiences; as well as event participants, media contacts, the NGI projects and all involved European institutions.

However, going beyond the simpler definition of 'target audience' as the receiver of a certain message, the NGI stakeholders are as well directly impacted by the decisions and actions of the initiative.

The stakeholders of a project can be of different sorts and natures, internal or external to NGI. Moreover, different stakeholders pursue different aims and have different frustrations and motivations, and therefore need to be addressed through a diverse range of media, formats, channels and messages.

1.2.2 NGI Ecosystem: growth and engagement

In the NGI4ALL.E project framework, the main goal of Work Package 2 (WP2) is to engage, empower and value the NGI Stakeholders. In this regard, the growth in the number of interested stakeholders joining the community, and the strengthening of the relationship with them, is crucial to

- Foster and empowering community-building activities, especially through the NGI Online Community Platform, which offers a wide range of outreach and collaborative services for the NGI stakeholders;
- Spotlight and map the NGI innovators and innovations, showcasing RIAs and funded third parties for facilitating and enforcing exploitation of results, and possibly further investments in NGI outcomes;
- Coaching the NGI intermediaries and innovators in communication and engagement techniques;
- Recognising and rewarding outstanding contributions from NGI innovators.

To achieve these milestones, the consortium builds and implements this plan to attract, connect and engage with the most relevant stakeholders from the NGI Ecosystem.



1.2.3 Objectives of the SEP

The general objective of the NGI SEP is to **build, enable and maintain multidirectional and active communications among all relevant stakeholders to the NGI Ecosystem.**

This general objective is comprised of the following three specific objectives:

- To map and describe existing and potential stakeholders that are relevant to the NGI initiative.
- To identify the main channels, messages and formats that will ensure the most effective communication towards and among stakeholders.
- To define the most significant KPIs, metrics and tracking systems to ensure the right direction and success of the strategy.



2 NGI STAKEHOLDERS IDENTIFICATION

The NGI Stakeholders are all those individuals and institutions who have an interest in and are impacted by the NGI programme and its activities, in one way or another. These stakeholders are diverse: public or private, with variable levels of interest and impact, and with a stronger or weaker link to the programme. In this sense, although this plan considers all stakeholders, we cover more in-depth those that have a greater level of influence and interest, according to the diagram shown in Figure 1.

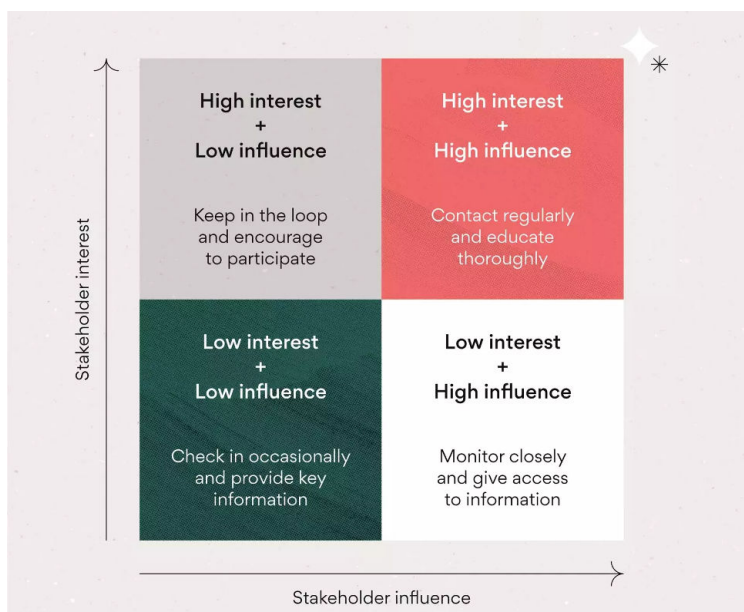


FIGURE 1:STAKEHOLDER INFLUENCE/INTEREST GRID²

In the lines below we will identify and define the types of stakeholders in the NGI ecosystem, focusing on those who have the greatest level of influence and on whose the NGI Outreach Office has the greatest direct impact.

In the tables below there are 4 different NGI Innovators features:

- **Motivation** - reasons why would the stakeholder involve themselves in the NGI ecosystem
- **Frustration** - stakeholder’s frustration with the current situation
- **Interest** - what NGI ecosystem has to offer to this particular stakeholder
- **Contact points** - an encounter where stakeholders and the NGI ecosystem can engage to exchange the information valuable to both sides

2.1 NGI INNOVATORS (INDIVIDUALS)

The individual NGI Innovators are tech experts from Academia or other research institutions that are developing the ‘theoretical’ NGI, creating solutions to build a trustworthy and safe

² Source: [ASANA Stakeholder engagement plan](#).

online environment. They are providers of research-oriented solutions who frequently seek research grants and opportunities.

Motivation	Frustration	Interest	Contact Points
To find grants to prove scientific developments	Scarce research grants available	Growth in fields related to R&D	'Geek sites' / alternative social media
To expand their research	Hard-to-apply research grants (bureaucracy and high competition)	Opportunities to prove their capacity to innovate and contribute to general knowledge in a field	NGI Community
To exchange knowledge with other stakeholders internationally...	Not always enthusiastic about taking their idea to market	Resources to keep investigating in what they are good	Academic publications
To define a trustable, fairer future Internet (emotional motivation)			RTOs
			Funding portal
			Events for techies
			RIAs

TABLE 1: NGI STAKEHOLDERS - NGI INNOVATORS (INDIVIDUALS) FEATURES

The NGI innovators are one of the most relevant stakeholders to the plan because they are the ultimate target of the NGI funding schemes. The aim of this consortium is to reach as many and more diverse individual innovators as possible, to expand the possibilities to enlarge and enhance the theoretical and practical foundations of the NGI, as well as to increase the number of solutions they develop under the NGI umbrella.

○ 2.2. NGI INNOVATORS (START-UPS AND SMES)

NGI Innovators that are start-ups or SMEs are the type of stakeholders that are taking the solutions they develop under the NGI granting schemes to generate and sell new products and services that include the NGI values and approach by default. These market-oriented innovators have the technical knowledge to create NGI-based solutions or/and revamp existing ones according to the NGI approach.

Motivation	Frustration	Interest	Contact Points
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<p>Find technology or market-facing partners that help them to bring their innovations to the market.</p> <p>Find new customers / continue growing</p>	<p>Lack of commercial strategy</p> <p>Weak go-to-market strategy</p> <p>Weak internationalisation strategy</p>	<p>Fields of application of technologies</p> <p>Which markets geographically, but also sector-wise could generate more revenue?</p>	<p>Industry events / startup events</p> <p>Clusters or industrial associations</p> <p>Online channels (NGI portal, NGI community, NGI social media and email lists)</p> <p>RIAs</p>
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TABLE 2: NGI STAKEHOLDERS - NGI INNOVATORS (STARTUPS AND SMES) FEATURES

The SMEs and startups that are funded by the NGI are key in our plan, as they push the adoption of the NGI solutions, thus driving innovation and economic growth associated with the values and use of technology that the NGI promotes, and ensuring a strong, secure European market that is compliant with the EU legal framework.

○ 2.3. NGI RIAs

The NGI Research and Innovation Actions (RIAs) are the EU-funded projects that work towards clear NGI objectives, while at the same time coordinating and working with CSAs to build the NGI flagship and support the NGI vision.

The NGI Outreach Office works towards the RIAs by supporting them in multiplying the impact of their activities, especially in the dissemination of their open calls and other activities for researchers and businesses that share NGI's values. In addition, the Outreach Office provides support to RIAs in acquiring and learning the skills they need to improve the communication and the impact activities of their RIAs.

Motivation	Frustration	Interest	Contact Points
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<p>Have tools and support that allow them to create awareness and engage around their projects</p> <p>Know-how in communications, branding, dissemination and community building</p>	<p>They need help and tools to build communities around their topics of research.</p> <p>They need experts to support them to maximise the reach of their activities and topics of research.</p>	<p>Best practices</p> <p>Tools</p> <p>Training</p> <p>Outreach</p>	<p>NGI Comms email list</p> <p>NGI Comms calls</p> <p>NGI Communication Training and coach</p> <p>NGI Community</p> <p>NGI Forum and NGI events</p>
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TABLE 3: NGI STAKEHOLDERS - NGI RIAs FEATURES

The NGI RIAs and the NGI Outreach Office have a very close interest and dependency on one another. On the one hand, NGI RIAs need the support of the NGI Outreach Office to improve their communication capabilities, expand their reach and exchange information and network with other NGI stakeholders. And on the other hand, the NGI RIAs are contact points and core multipliers of the NGI values and approach, as they work more closely with the Innovators directly.

○ 2.4. POLICYMAKERS

The policymakers are all the NGI-related stakeholders that are responsible for or involved in formulating policies that affect the Internet, its market and regulation across the EU. The ultimate and most important policymaker type of stakeholder in the NGI stakeholder plan is the NGI Unit, representing the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG-CONNECT) of the European Commission.

Motivation	Frustration	Interest	Contact Points
<p>Outsource communication and community building activities around NGI</p> <p>Connection with stakeholders</p> <p>Obtain feedback and input on the impact of the final target of projects</p>	<p>Lack of an owned infrastructure and network.</p> <p>Lack of skills or connections to directly support NGI innovators and researchers</p> <p>Lack of a commercial and</p>	<p>Aggregated KPIs</p> <p>Community management learnings</p> <p>Bottom-up policy and market insights</p>	<p>Meetings with the Head of Unit (or team).</p> <p>Direct contact via coordinator (Martel)</p>



	communication strategy.		
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TABLE 4: NGI STAKEHOLDERS - NGI POLICYMAKERS FEATURES

Policymakers are relevant to the plan, first of all, because they are the captains and guides steering the Next Generation Internet to achieve its goals. But, moreover, the DG-CONNECT and other policymakers play a key role in the NGI stakeholders' plan because they need the input that they get from the NGI Outreach Office coming from all members of the NGI community.

○ 2.5. OTHER NGI STAKEHOLDERS

Other stakeholders identified in the NGI ecosystem are NGI experts (including Ambassadors, open call evaluators and mentors), enablers of indirect dissemination of the initiative; media and individual journalists, both at the European level and in the different EU countries; think-tanks and other private entities dealing with the same topics; sister European projects addressing the same themes; or the end-users of NGI solutions.



3 THE NGI GROWTH HACKING AND ENGAGEMENT FUNNEL

The growth hacking techniques are a set of both conventional and unconventional marketing activities and experiments to expand a business, using low-cost alternatives to traditional marketing. They are usually based on, but not limited to, digital marketing: organic social media, viral marketing, influencer marketing or targeted digital advertising. The growth hacking methodology follows what is called a marketing funnel that represents the aim of transforming a stranger into an advocate of a certain brand, service, product or initiative.

The inbound marketing methodology³ applied to growth hacking, is focused on attracting members through relevant and helpful content and adding value at every stage in the user journey. This way, potential members of the NGI community discover the NGI ecosystem through channels like blogs, search engines and social media, among many others. This methodology includes four steps to convert strangers into promoters, as shown in the figure below (Figure 2):

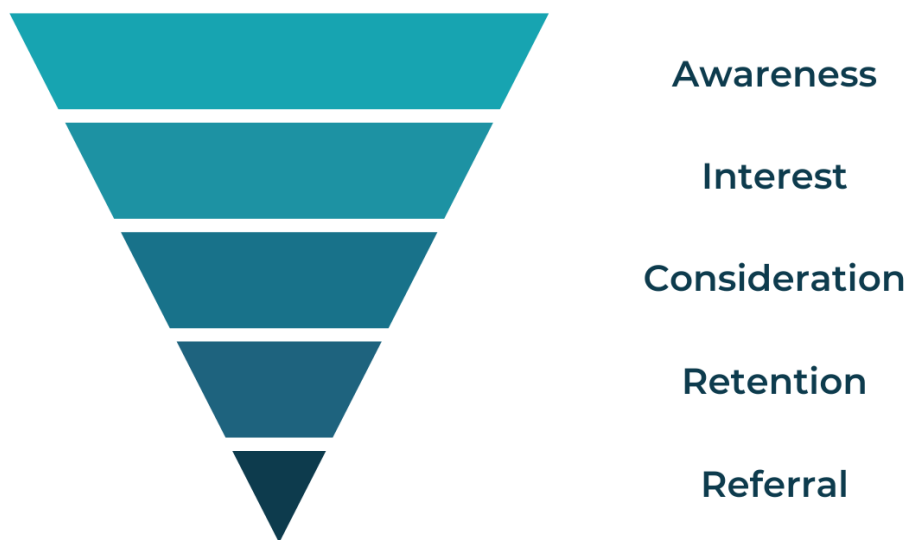


FIGURE 2: THE GROWTH HACKING FUNNEL IN NGI

In NGI, this funnel goes from a stage where the stakeholder is not aware of the initiative at all, to the point where they themselves become a multiplier of the initiative with their advocacy. However, this does not mean that all stakeholders are at the starting point of the funnel and will go through all stages until they reach the end. On the contrary, some stakeholders are already at a more advanced stage in this conversion funnel, and some will not even go through all the stages to become advocates of the initiative.

³ Source: Hubspot. <https://www.hubspot.com/inbound-marketing>



3.1 AWARENESS

The first phase of the growth hacking funnel is focused on the acquisition of members, which means attracting them using inbound marketing techniques. As it can be the first contact a newcomer is going to have with the NGI initiative, it is important to carry out actions that base and root the knowledge of the NGI brand and its value previous awareness and trust to make that newcomer become a returning visitor.

In an initiative as broad and impactful, as the NGI is, the awareness phase of the funnel is crucial. Moreover, the ultimate impact of NGI will be made on the end users of the solutions provided by the innovators. Therefore, for the NGI messages to be able to permeate end users, there is a crucial first step to be taken: make them aware of their existence. In this regard, the efforts put into the awareness phase will be more intense and the target will be broader.

Channels:

- Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube
- NGI Community
- NGI Portal
- Advertising media channels (PR)
- Search engines

Formats:

- Paid and organic content on mainstream social media
- NGI Talks and Ambassador's interviews
- NGI Blog posts and events
- EU press outlets
- Search Engine Marketing (PPC, SEO)

3.2 INTEREST

The interest phase refers to whether, after having caught the potential NGI ecosystem member's attention, the content matches their interest, expectations and needs. In this regard, the members will feel enticed to click and consume the content that offers a certain value to them. That is why it is key to get to know the stakeholders' interests and motivations, in order to be able to provide them with really valuable content.

In this stage, the content is the pivoting element of the strategy:

- Creating and feeding thematic blogs;
- Showcasing collections of solutions;
- Providing video and chat talks;
- Presenting outstanding results of NGI activities;
- Interviewing successful innovators that potential grantees can look up to...

The content can be presented in different formats, such as blog entries, video or audio interviews, community announcements, leaflets, infographics, etc.



3.3 CONSIDERATION (ACTIVATION)

In the NGI ecosystem funnel, in this consideration phase, the NGI community members are aware of the initiative, its benefits and the role they can play in it. They may, in this stage, decide whether they find or not a solution to their frustration across the NGI offer.

Activating and encouraging the dialogue among the different NGI stakeholders is core once they reach this stage of the funnel, especially when there are open calls running, events, or any other project milestone. In this stage, the content provided will bring case studies (i.e. successful innovators' stories) that will inspire them and prove that the NGI will be the solution they are looking for.

3.4 RETENTION

In the retention phase, the main objective is to keep users coming back to the NGI channels, and for this, we need to work on a cohesive content strategy that is providing the members of the community with news, events, opportunities, policy updates and, in general, with any valuable and relevant content for each of the stakeholders, plus activities to engage them. Therefore, the main outcome of the actions implemented during this phase of the funnel is to keep the users returning and interacting with the NGI content and convert them so they participate in the programme in all possible ways.

In the case of retention, we will focus our efforts on creating quality content that is truly relevant to each type of stakeholder. In addition to accurate and appropriate content for our audiences, we will carry out activities that increase engagement, such as:

- Contests in the NOC and social media to win tickets or pitching slots in events
- Participatory debates in the NGI Talks
- Q&A sessions in the NOC
- Participation in the NGI Awards...

All activities should aim at enhancing the participation of all stakeholders and their sense of belonging to the NGI community.

3.5 REFERRAL (ADVOCACY)

The last phase of the funnel is the referral phase. Once the previous phases of the engagement funnel have been properly completed, the community members and other stakeholders of NGI should be the ones making the NGI ecosystem grow organically by inviting their peers and other relevant actors to the scene.

In the referral phase, we should enable technical tools to make it easier for NGI members to call other potential members, for example, through:

- Direct invitations to the NOC
- Direct sharing of NGI content on their social channels,



- Clear calls to action for members to share NGI content, values and activities.

On the other hand, an effort should be made to reward in some way those profiles that actively advocate for the programme, in order to find out more about the NGI online community.



4 NGI CONTENT

The content generated by the NOO across its channels pursues the strengthening and growth of the Next Generation Internet (NGI) ecosystem, amplifying the result of the NGI projects, and attracting new researchers and innovators to the ecosystem. Three core objectives of the content strategy in NGI are:

- To reinforce and empower the outreach of the NGI initiative
- To make the NGI ecosystem grow and empower it
- To ensure the health and continuity of an EU Internet approach and market

4.1 TOPICS AND CONTENT VERTICALS

When breaking down the typology of the content that we will provide to the different stakeholders through the engagement strategy, we must consider two distinct streams of content. On the one hand, technical topics, refer to the technology and solutions generated by NGI projects from a technical point of view. On the other hand, we have the cultural themes, which have to do with the impact that these technologies have on a socio-economic level in the European context.

Some of the technical themes that will determine the content and how it is presented to the different stakeholders are: Blockchain, SSI, human-centric AI, Decentralised Ledger Technologies (DLT), augmented reality, etc. These technologies are approached in the NGI form the privacy by default and are aimed at ensuring Internet trust, online privacy and trustworthiness through European-based software and hardware.

On the contrary, the cultural themes are related to the goal of ensuring that the EU is a global player on the Internet, with Europe-made solutions that are compliant with the community regulations and coherent with a European approach. Some of the cultural themes for the NGI initiative are the Human-centric Internet, the EU Digital single market, the Digital Decade, Open Source, the Internet of Humans.

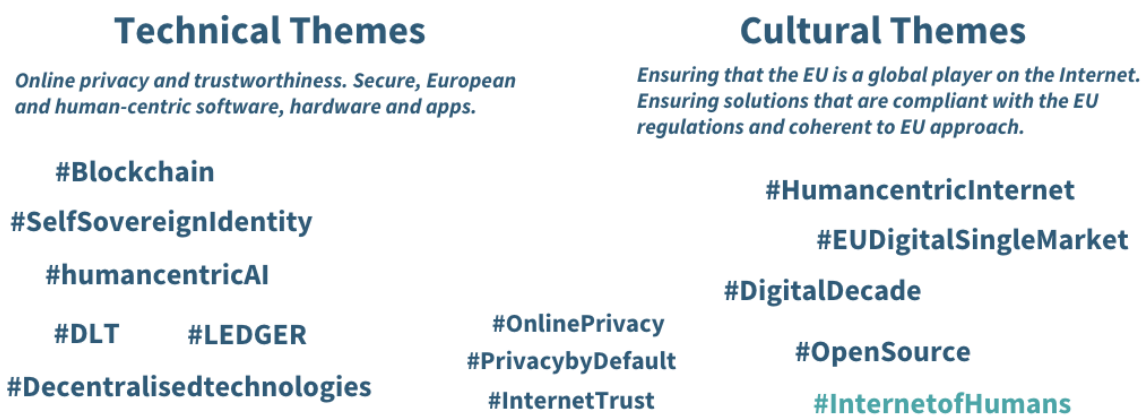


FIGURE 3: TECHNICAL AND CULTURAL THEMES OF NGI

Moreover, to be able to engage with different stakeholders we will focus on three key verticals that cut across the content that is shared with the different members of the ecosystem; these are:

- Privacy by Default Solutions (technological and market-related)
- Human-centric, EU approach to the Internet (policy related)
- More inclusive Internet (sociocultural)

4.2 FUNNEL PLANNING

To determine how we approach each of the stakeholders we want to attract and engage, we need to plan the funnel through which they will move from being aware of NGI to promote it themselves.

To do this, we need to decide for each of the stages of the funnel the type of channels, formats and messages we are going to use. Some examples of channels, formats and message themes are shown in the figure below.

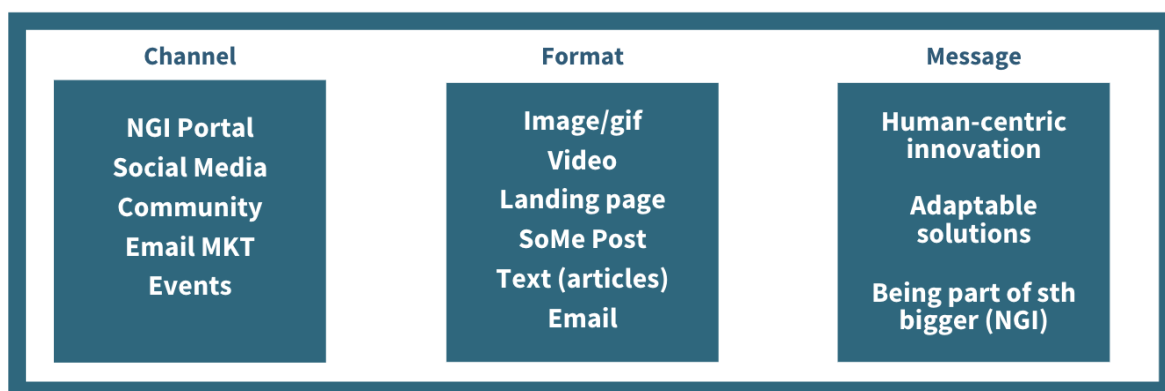


FIGURE 4: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHANNELS, FORMATS AND MESSAGES IN NGI

4.2.1 Messages

Throughout the different stages of the funnel, and depending on the different stakeholders we are targeting, the messages for each stakeholder will vary.

As outlined above in section 2 of this document, we have identified four main types of stakeholders to consider. We will approach each of them with different messages, not only according to their nature but also according to each stage of the funnel.

Below we’ve explained what kind of messages we have defined, in general, for each of the Stakeholders. For each of them, we have also included a figure with examples of the messages we will address to them throughout the marketing funnel.

NGI Innovators (individuals)

The individual NGI innovators are researchers and solution providers who seek to advance the development of a safer, more secure and human-centric internet, without necessarily having a commercial purpose.

The interest of such innovators in NGI will be primarily towards funding opportunities for their research projects or the ability to develop or test solutions, as well as to exchange knowledge with their peers in Europe and beyond.

Therefore, the NGI asset that they particularly benefit from in this case will be the NGI open calls, as well as the events and other activities where they can showcase the progress and results of their research and network with their peers.

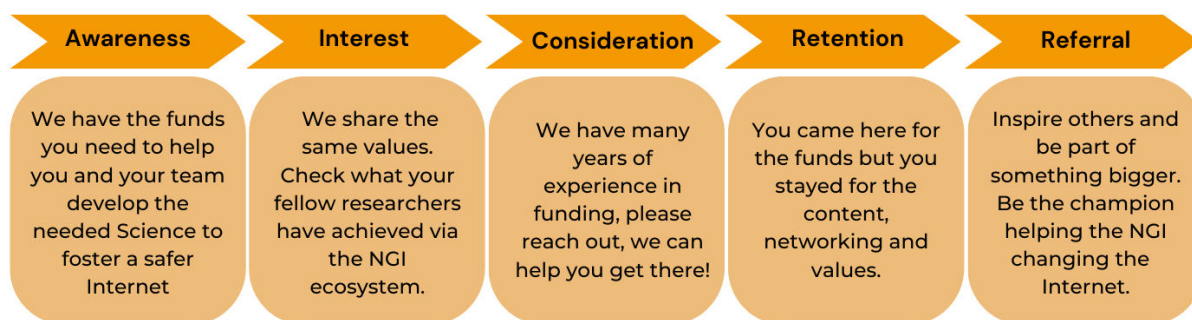


FIGURE 5: POTENTIAL MESSAGES TO NGI INNOVATORS (INDIVIDUALS) ALONG THE FUNNEL

NGI Innovators (startups and SMEs)

Startups or SMEs have a similar interest to individual innovators, with the difference that in their case they have a clear market orientation. They build solutions aligned with NGI's values and approach that they aim to scale, replicate and commercialise beyond the programme.

These stakeholders, which are key to the development of a common European Internet market that respects the values of the Internet of Humans, are also looking for funding opportunities through open calls. In addition, they have a greater interest in showcasing themselves to the world and reaching out to end-users and other companies: they want to take advantage of the opportunity to showcase themselves by participating in NGI activities and initiatives.

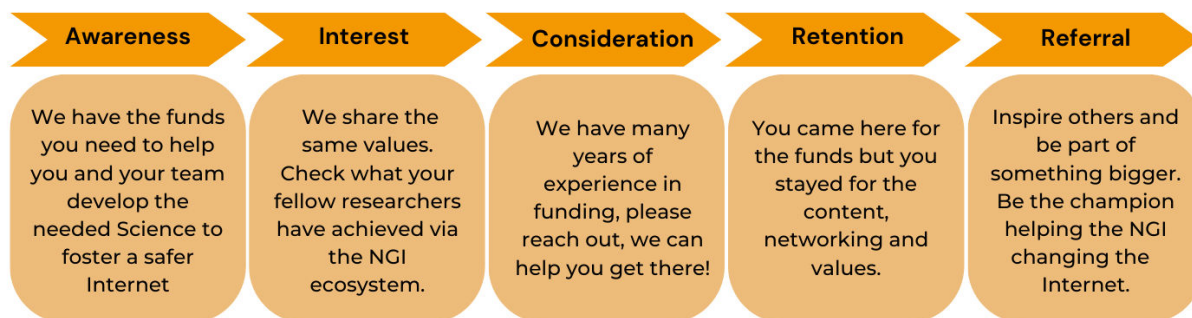


FIGURE 6: POTENTIAL MESSAGES TO NGI INNOVATORS (STARTUPS AND SMEs) ALONG THE FUNNEL

NGI RIAs

The RIAs' primary motivation for participating in the NGI Outreach Office's activities is to expand their reach, either by leveraging the NGI as a whole brand's multiplying capacity or by participating in NGI-related training and knowledge generation activities.

Thus, our message to RIAs will aim to inform and unite all the projects that fall under the NGI umbrella. But, in addition, the message to them will focus on how the NOO can support them.



FIGURE 7: POTENTIAL MESSAGES TO NGI RIAs ALONG THE FUNNEL

Policy makers

The policymakers involved in NGI are mainly the European bodies on which the NGI initiative depends. But they will also be those institutions that have the power and capacity to drive the knowledge and adoption of NGI solutions, both at the European level and lower geographic levels.

We need the European Commission and other institutional stakeholders to be aware of the importance of the NGI initiative. At the same, we must keep the NGI Unit close to and involved in the activities to be carried out to have clear needs as well as the necessary indications and guidance from who is actually our main customer.

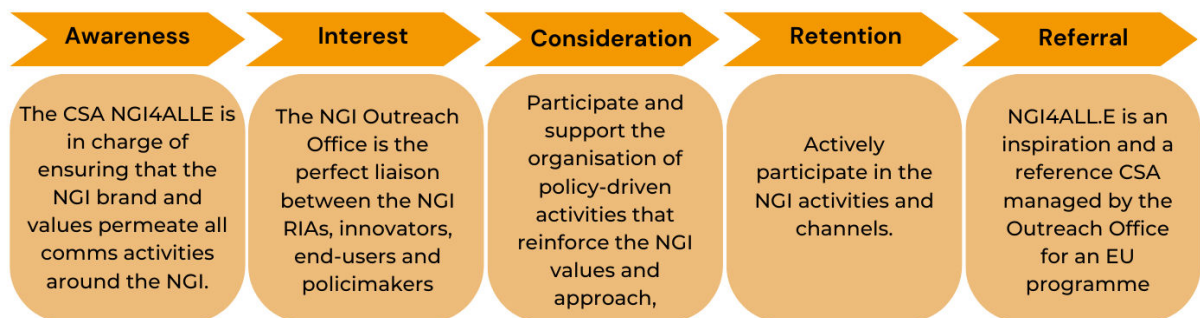


FIGURE 8: POTENTIAL MESSAGES TO NGI-RELATED POLICY MAKERS ALONG THE FUNNEL

4.2.2 Channels

In this section, we have listed the most important channels that we envision use in NGI's engagement activities. These channels are managed by the consortium, led in most cases by one of the members, according to a common strategy.

In terms of the channels used, we will choose the most appropriate ones for each type of audience based on the level of familiarity with the programme and the nature of the stakeholders themselves.



The main channels to use come listed below.

NGI Portal/Website

The NGI website is hosted on the domain ngi.eu. It is the central point of NGI's communications, in that it collects both static (informative and timeless) information about the NGI initiative and the projects that hang from it, as well as news and events that reflect current realities, topics and happenings in the NGI ecosystem.

NGI Social Media

NGI is present on the following social media channels:

- LinkedIn, with a dedicated [page](#) and a [group](#).
- [Twitter](#)
- [Mastodon](#) (account managed directly by the EC)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#) (currently in disuse)

All NGI channels interact according to common objectives, although the most active and effective in terms of engagement are Twitter and LinkedIn.

NGI Community

The NGI Online community is an online platform that allows users to interact with each other (peer-to-peer) thanks to a dedicated software - FundingBox Spaces⁴. As of January 2023, the NGI community had more than 3,200 members. It hosts different sections and spaces (communications channels) dedicated to NGI RIAs, innovators, the latest news and events, NGI open calls, etc.

While the NGI portal is unidirectional and informative, the NGI community aims to promote the active participation of the members of the NGI ecosystem. To this end, it has different features such as the possibility of creating working groups, forums, 1 to 1 messaging, threads of conversation on current topics, etc. For this reason, the community will be a key element in promoting the participation of the different stakeholders in the NGI dialogue.

Events (owned and external)

Events related to the technical and cultural themes of NGI are a very important focal point for meeting and attracting new and existing stakeholders.

In previous years it has been difficult to establish an effective event strategy. The COVID pandemic prevented most industry events from taking place. In contrast, online events became

⁴ FundingBox Spaces and Communities Service ([FundingBox Spaces](#)) is a complete collaboration tool that empowers communities to build knowledge and networks. FundingBox Spaces allows building customisable Communities with very easy-to-use software.



commonplace and, in many cases, overwhelming in number, which led to a decline in attendance in all the areas online.

In the coming years, NGI4ALL.E will be participating in external industry events, as well as organising its events in the form of talks, seminars or large formats, such as the NGI Forum. In addition, the NGI Outreach Office supports the participation of RIAs in relevant events as ambassadors of the NGI initiative at both niche and cross-cutting technology events.

PR and media

Another very important channel for NGI is the media. Media outreach and PR both at the European level and in the different countries that make up the ecosystem are key to multiplying the impact and engagement of stakeholders.

The NGI Outreach Office, through its partner TIPIK, has a liaison agency with the general and specialised media relevant to NGI, through which it will reach more qualified stakeholders.

NGI Ambassadors

The NGI Ambassadors are a group of experts who want to contribute to the dialogue and growth of the NGI community. They master a variety of fields of digital technology including Open Source, Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, Digital Identities and Distributed Ledger Technologies.

The NGI Ambassadors are considered enablers and multipliers of the NGI initiative and activities because they are in one way or another linked to the topics that are relevant to the programme. The NGI Ambassadors' goal is to widen the size of the NGI network: they will use their influence capacity to increase and enhance the impact of the NGI Activities while attracting new members to the NGI ecosystem.

Email

Email is one of the most powerful communication channels to reach stakeholders.

On the one hand, email is used daily for one-to-one communication with different members of the ecosystem and stakeholders. In addition, for mass communications, NGI4ALL.E also has mailing lists, for example, to make specific announcements to RIAs or the consortium members themselves.

On the other hand, it uses proactive emailing to external audiences. NGI4ALL.E sends out an official newsletter every two months, with the most relevant content of the programme. In addition, these mailings are complemented by occasional mailings in the form of news flashes to communicate specific ad hoc events. Moreover, the NGI online community sends out a monthly digest with the most important publications, events and announcements of the community, which leads to higher retention rates of community members.

4.2.3 Formats

The messages that we will send to the various stakeholders will be delivered in the following content formats:

- Blogs/written content
- Video
- Podcasts and Webinars (NGI talks)
- Social Media organic posts
- Social Media ads
- Search engine ads
- Online and On-site events
- Printed material

It will be more convenient to use one or the other format depending on the activity and type of audience, as well as the stage of the funnel in which we find ourselves.



5 STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT PLAN: MAIN ACTIVITIES

5.1 NGI ONLINE COMMUNITY PLATFORM (NOC)

The NOC is an online, GDPR and trustworthy environment, where NGI stakeholders can interact to cooperate, gather information and news about the NGI, disseminate their work and look for synergies. NGI4ALL.E intends to increase platform interactivity using the platform chat live supporting the exchange of messages, documents, pictures and links, sub-groups, or one-on-one discussions.

The NOC is a well-established platform that by the end of 2022 counted on more than 3,200 interacting users gathered to interact on NGI-related topics. In order to enlarge the number of members and increase engagement in the NOC, the following actions will be performed in the community:

- New *Highlights* section to show the most active members and the most shared content on the NOC home screen.
- A community monthly digest with the best content of the community and exclusive content for NGI Community members.
- A survey will be sent every 6 months to the members to assess the most and least valued content and features of the community.
- Improvements in the user experience and user interaction levels.
- Community *meta content* to educate the members: enhanced onboarding email, links to the NOC Wiki, video tutorials and UX walkthroughs.
- Enable dedicated matchmaking activities for NGI-funded solutions (NGI Accelerator tasks)
- Dissemination and promotion across the NOC Platform of NGI Innovators achievements.
- Long-lasting call or campaign calling NGI stakeholders via the NOC to advertise their work and contribute to the NGI Innovator Database
- Promoting funding opportunities and mentoring/acceleration services for NGI innovators (in line with NGI Accelerator tasks).
- Perks for NGI innovators joining the community (provided by FBC): events tickets or free use of the paid version of digital tools.
- Reach out to new communities to engage under-represented groups and policy representatives.
- Liaise to open-source communities and similar national and regional initiatives.
- A specific space in the NOC to engage with media representatives will also be created.



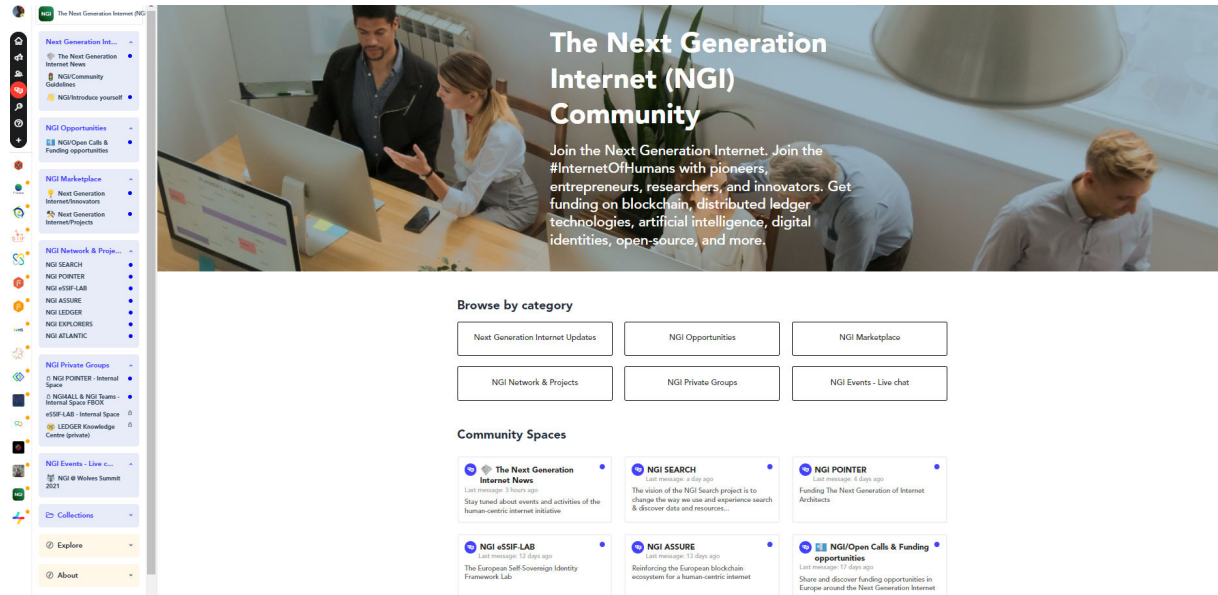


FIGURE 9: NGI COMMUNITY LANDING PAGE

5.2 NGI INNOVATORS DATABASE

The NGI Innovators Database represents the central showcase for NGI solutions coming from the NGI projects. It is a core focal point to promote the outputs of NGI projects and boost the adoption of the solutions deployed under the NGI programme.

The plan to improve and better exploit the NGI Innovators database includes:

- Refining the structure of the database to support the growing number and diversity of funded innovations.
- Liaising with the NGI RIAs for continuous updates.
- Aligning with other tasks to ensure the promotion of NGI solutions to the press and via NGI online and offline channels.
- Facilitate the NGI assets exploitation (also in line with the NGI Accelerator tasks), by exhibiting the NGI solutions to potential users, customers, interested developers and investors.
- New features: support for “geography” visualisation, links to other relevant portal content (or to the NOC platform), feeds from innovators' social media accounts, videos of demos, and detailed statistics on database population and the visits to it.

The evolution of the NGI Innovators database will be coordinated with all ongoing RIAs to ensure the mapping considers new needs.

5.3 NGI COACHING AND TRAINING

The communications coaching and training programme provides knowledge, experience and support to the NGI stakeholders on communication and engagement, through online training sessions, both for NGI intermediaries (CSAs & RIAs) and beneficiaries (NGI innovators).

Unlike the past CSA, NGI4ALL.E has extended the communication coaching and training to the NGI innovators (and not only to the other CSAs and RIAs), with the objective of strengthening the community's communication skills, sense of belonging and cohesion. NGI4ALL.E also provides the entire training programme in a much shorter period (three months), twice a year and possibly three times a year if this is considered relevant.

This activity offers

- Common training sessions organised and planned on a weekly basis - for topics of relevance to all stakeholders
- Dedicated training sessions to be arranged along the course of action as appropriate, for topics that need to be addressed on a project-by-project or groups of projects basis.
- Addressing the following topics: NGI Ecosystem and branding implementation, Communication Strategy, Content Strategy, Engagement Strategy, The Art of Storytelling, Websites, SEO, Social Media tactics, Analytics, Online presentations, GDPR and digital trends.
- A Media Relations session inviting journalists.
- Two training sessions addressing Venture Capital and Technology transfer (provided by FBC).

5.4 NGI AWARDS PROGRAMME

The NGI Awards will reward exceptional contributions from NGI beneficiaries. The main idea is to help NGI innovators gain visibility for their further growth; to select the best promoters of NGI values and objectives to inspire others to join the NGI, and to showcase outstanding achievements accelerating adoption and exploitation.

There will be 2 NGI Award editions (co-located with NGI Forum 2023 and 2024), with 3 different categories:

- **NGI Impact Award** to the NGI solution with the greatest socio-economic and environmental impact.
- **NGI Women Innovator Award** to the most outstanding NGI women innovators' contributions.
- **NGI Inclusion Award** to the most relevant diversity-aware solutions promoting an inclusive internet.

All NGI beneficiaries included in the NGI Innovator Database will qualify for the award but will have to apply for a specific category. The final winners (for each edition and each category) will be chosen from among the submitted applications by a Selection Committee of invited members relevant to the category awarded, including EC representatives, NGI stakeholders, external experts, NGI Ambassadors, and selected women in tech.



The prize will consist of a package which will include an invitation to present at a major NGI event (sponsored travel and accommodation), a tailored dissemination and promotional campaign, and participation in the NGI matchmaking sessions.



6 PERFORMANCE TRACKING: KPIS AND METRICS

One of the NGI4ALL.E key objectives is to empower and value the NGI Community. To strengthen the NGI ecosystem by engaging its constituency in an even more valuable and sustainable way, helping NGI innovators and stakeholders to grow and succeed. NGI4ALL.E also aims at bringing the NGI beneficiaries together and closer to NGI intermediaries and providing incentives for all participants in the ecosystem to be more active in promoting their work and the overall NGI vision.

To be able to assess the deployment of the SEP, NGI4ALL.E will track the growth of the NGI community; how researchers, start-ups and SMEs interact and engage within; will coach other projects in effective communication and marketing; and will foster the establishment of liaisons with similar initiatives at national/regional level.

The accomplishment of a successful SEP will be assessed by the accomplishment of the following KPIs:

- Animate and activate the NOC Platform (reach at least **4,000 members**, an increase of at least 35% compared to the beginning of the project).
- Interactivity and communication among NGI stakeholders via online and offline activities.
- Enlargement of the outreach to open source communities (**liaisons with 25 - 30 communities**).
- Growth of the NGI Innovators Database (**at least 1,400 entries**) and facilitating access to NGI solutions, promoting success stories.
- Training and coaching both the NGI intermediaries and beneficiaries in communication and marketing (**12 common and 12 dedicated sessions**).
- Reward and value outstanding efforts across the NGI as a way to increase their impact/visibility (**3 editions of the NGI Awards with ≥ 100 innovators participating per edition; ≥40% women participating overall**).

Some of the metrics that we will use to measure the success of the strategy and KPI meeting are shown in Table 5.

KPI	Metrics
Animate and activate the NOC Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community page views - Number of community members - Number of community interactions - New sign-ups/period (campaigns) - Community DAU and MAU - Retention rate - Number of referrals (invitations) - Number of monthly digests sent



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly Digests: Open Rate - Monthly Digests: CTR - Number of surveys completed
Online/offline interaction among stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emails sent via mailing lists - Number of followers in all NGI channels - New followers/period in NGI channels - Number of social media interactions - Number of attendees to events and NGI Talks - Number of messages sent via the NOC - Number of requests to NGI channels - Social media CTR
Outreach to open source communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of open source communities mapped - Number of open source communities contacted - New community members coming from open source communities (tracking invitations)
Grow the NGI Innovators Database and facilitate access to it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total number of solutions in the Database - Number of new solutions included in the database - Number of innovators from the database showcased in the Who's NGI blog - Number of innovators from the database showcased in the NOC Platform. - Number of innovators from the database applying/awarded at the NGI Awards - Number of social media and NOC content items related to the database (and CTR).
Communications coaching and training to innovators and RIAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of coaching sessions deployed - Number of sign-ups to the sessions - Number of final attendees (total/per session) - Times that the calls for the sessions were shared in different NGI channels - Number of post-attendance surveys completed
Reward and value outstanding efforts across the NGI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of editions of the NGI Awards - Number of applicants to the NGI Awards - Number of NGI Awards finalists in 3 categories - Number of awardees by the end of the CSA - Number of interviews with awardees - % of women and less represented groups among awardees



TABLE 5: RELEVANT METRICS TO TRACK KPI ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE SEP

7 CONCLUSION

In this document we have broken down the elements of the engagement plan for NGI. We have defined the stakeholders that are considered most relevant, the messages for each of them throughout the conversion funnel, and the channels and formats used. In addition, we have planned the core activities to be carried out according to the tasks detailed in the Grant Agreement.

The timing of the activities is diverse: from transversal activities that run throughout the project (such as the online community or the innovators' database), to specific activities that respond to project milestones (such as the NGI Awards). In addition, the activities related to NGI content and topicality will depend on the development of the latter, so they will be defined ad hoc according to the elements detailed in this plan.

As the next steps, a mapping of the most relevant stakeholders for NGI will be carried out, as well as a specific definition of them based on defined parameters such as their level of influence, their geographical area, the type of stakeholder, the stage of the funnel in which they are, etc.

Once the main stakeholders have been identified, engagement activities will be listed, both in the NOC and in other online and offline channels, that best suit the different stakeholder profiles. They will then be contacted through the chosen channels and formats and reported accordingly in a dedicated document.

