PROJECT WORKSPACE

A project digital workspace has been set up for internal communication and collaboration. Following a thorough analysis of existing workspaces taking into account possible functionalities, security issues, easiness and flexibility of use, as well as cost efficiency, ARVALIS has opted for "Microsoft SharePoint", offered by Microsoft Office365. The workspace is restricted to project partners only. Access can be granted by notifying the SharePoint manager, Pierre Rochepeau (ARVALIS).

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D8.1	WP8 / T8.1

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background/Deliverable description

The aim of this Deliverable was to launch the project workspace in a timely manner enabling secure, structured, and real-time internal communication and collaboration among Root2Res partners. The functionality of the workspace has been designed to digitally store, schedule, and monitor the consortium activities, documents, and progress (including milestones and deliverables).

More specific objectives included:

- creating an intuitive interface with a high level of user-friendliness;
- developing functionalities that are crucial for successful internal communication and collaboration, being aware at the same time not to overload the workspace with unnecessary modules and functions, to ensure optimal user experience;
- guarantee secure digital access and a workspace in which data is safely stored and protected from any unwanted access;
- optimising costs and efforts for the administration and management of users.

1.2. Workspace access and protection

After considering all the needs and above-mentioned requirements, ARVALIS has opted for the commercial solution *Microsoft Sharepoint* by Microsoft Office365.

The Root2Res Sharepoint is accessible *via* a personalised link (https://arvalis.sharepoint.com/sites/Root2Res/SitePages/en/Home.aspx). Only users having been granted access can log-in and use the workspace. A User Guide has been sent to all partners to facilitate access and navigation within the Sharepoint (Figure 1).

Administration of the Sharepoint follows the policy recommendations for securing SharePoint sites, provided by Microsoft365.
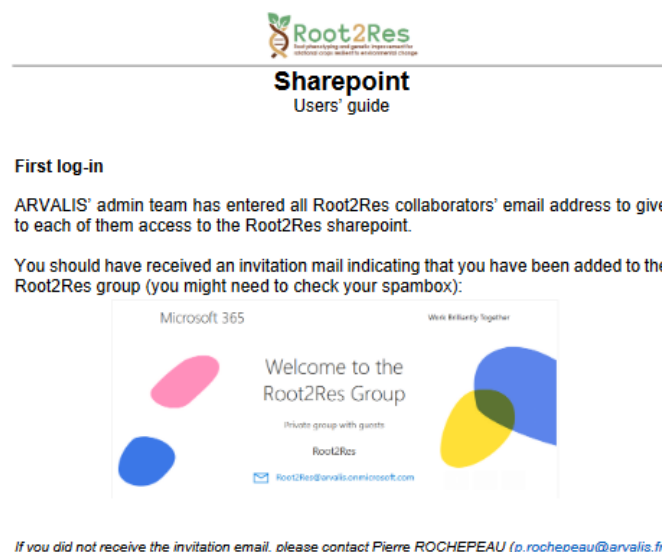

Figure 1: Sharepoint User Guide

2. FUNCTIONALITIES DEVELOPED

A selection of functionalities was implemented, with the aim of optimising internal communication and collaboration, keeping it as simple and intuitive as possible for project partners. Additional functionalities can be added as required allowing the workspace to develop with the project.

2.1.   Document Repository

Partners have access to the repository with the possibility to upload, consult and edit shared documents (Figure 2). All document formats are compatible.
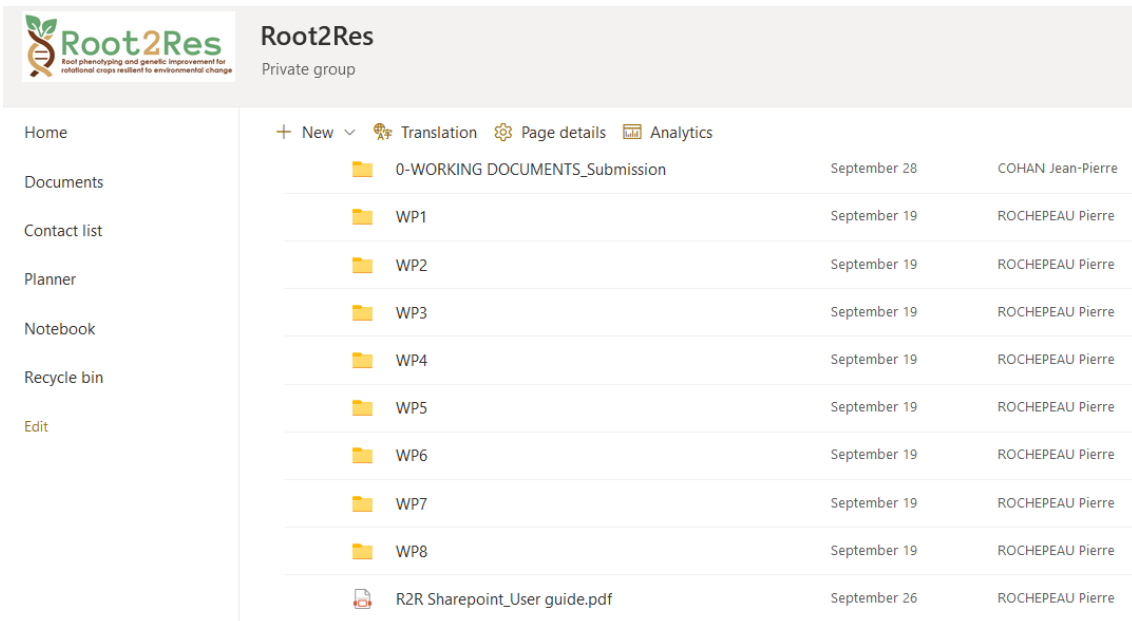

Figure 2: Document repository

2.2.   Contact List

A dynamic contact list has been created to facilitate communication between partners. It includes the contact details, as well as information on the involvement of each collaborator in the different work packages (Figure 3). In addition, the Excel extraction function facilitates the creation of mailing lists by WPs, roles *etc*. This is a dynamic list that will be constantly updated. This functionality also allows for notifications to be automatically sent to WP leaders when a list they belong to has been updated.
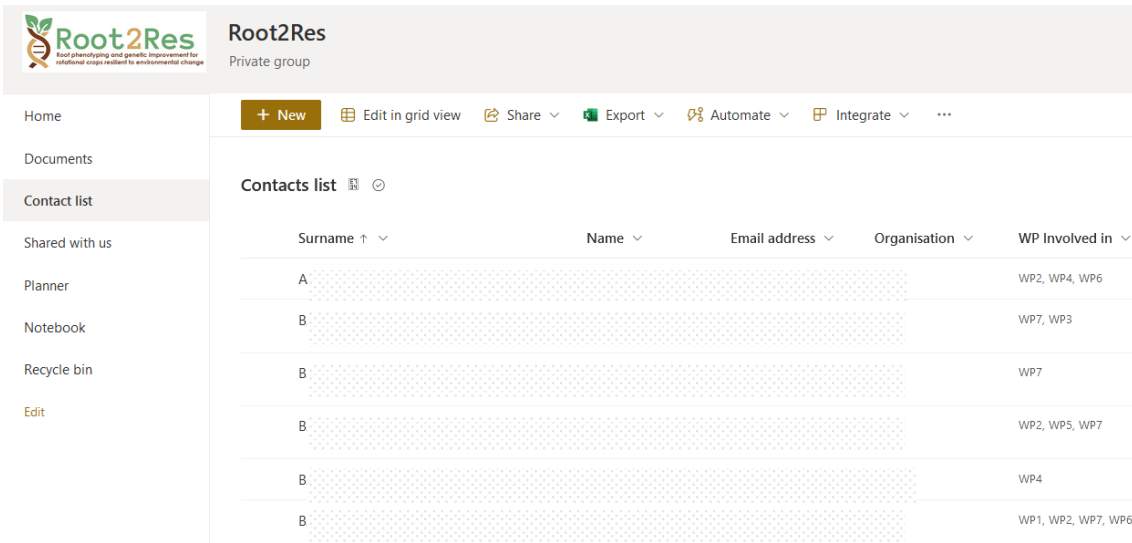
Figure 3: Contact list

2.3. Favourite Links

Shortcuts to quickly access the project website and social media accounts are displayed on the homepage (Figure 4). Shortcuts are convenient and act as reminder to partners to regularly promote and disseminate project activities.

Figure 4: Favourite links shortcuts

2.4. Events Reminder

Events related to Root2Res are also displayed on the homepage and can be synchronized in partners' Outlook Calendar (Figure 5). This functionality has been added to remind partners about important project meetings and also topic-related events during which dissemination and stakeholder engagement could be operated.
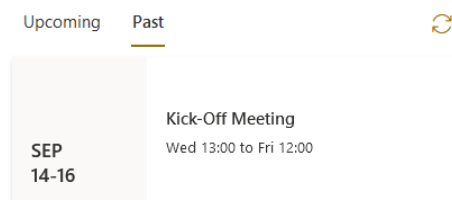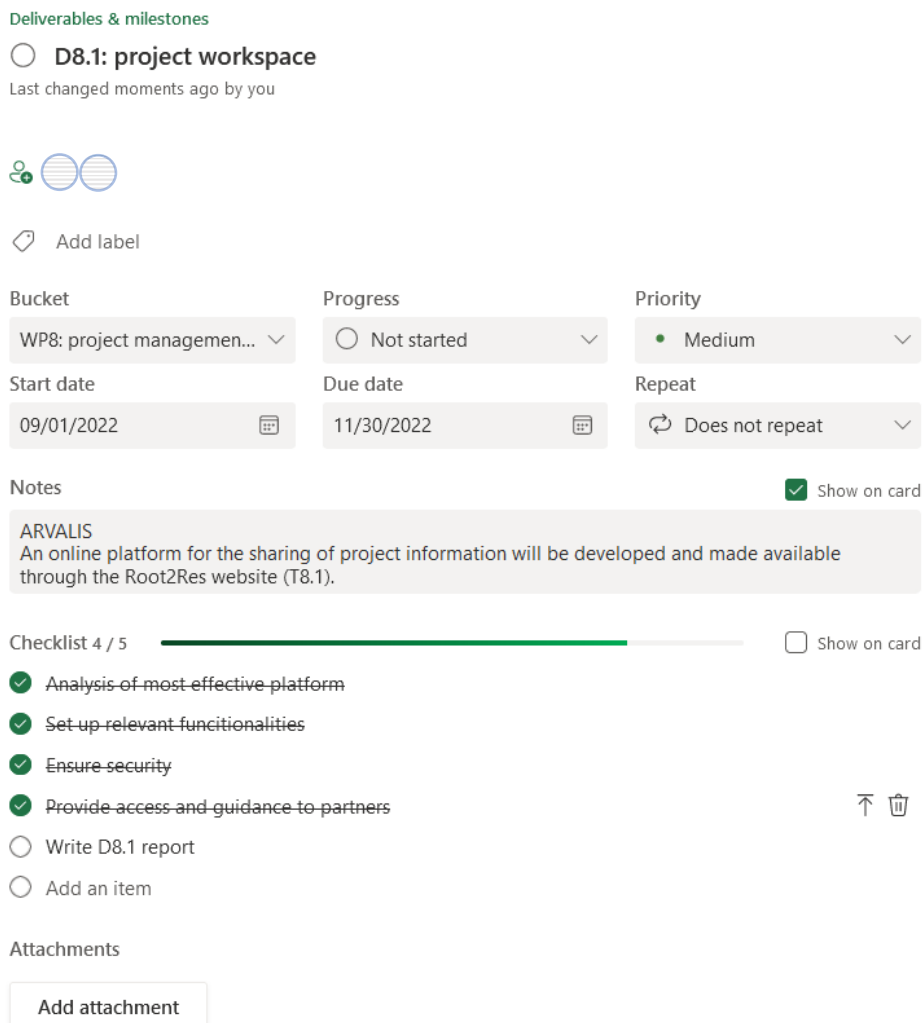

Figure 5: Example of events reminder

2.5.   Deliverables and Milestones Planner

The Microsoft Planner tool was set up to anticipate and automate the preparation of project deliverables and milestones. It is a powerful project management tool that offers many functions (Figure 6):

- schedule of all the deliverables and milestones of the project;
- description of the title, lead organization, expected format & due date;
- assignment of specific collaborators responsible for the production of each deliverable and milestone;
- sending of automatic reminders through emails when delivery due date approaches (few weeks before, and few days before if not yet achieved);
- integration of check-list/intermediate activities to be carried out as part of the deliverable or milestone;
- sharing of comments and relevant documents related to the milestone and deliverable.

Figure 6: Example of Planner functionalities for Deliverable monitoring

Depending on each collaborator's profile and preference, the display and use of the Planner tool can be personalized:

- overview of deliverables and milestones *per* work package (Figure 7). The view is particularly useful for work packages leaders/co-leaders.
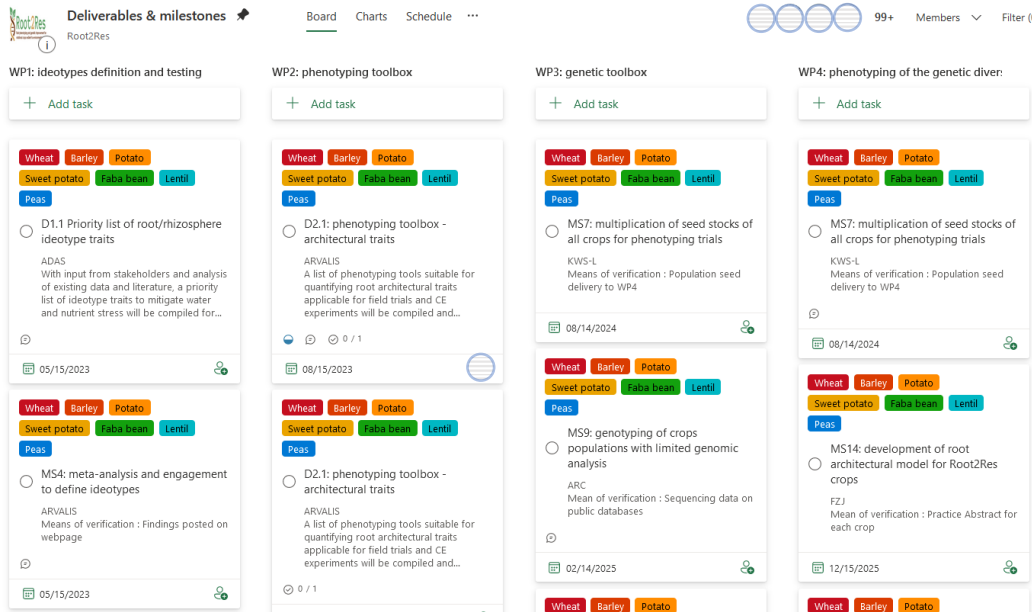

Figure 7: Example of deliverables and milestones visualization per work package

- overview of deliverables and milestones per species (Figure 8). This view is particularly useful for crop leaders.
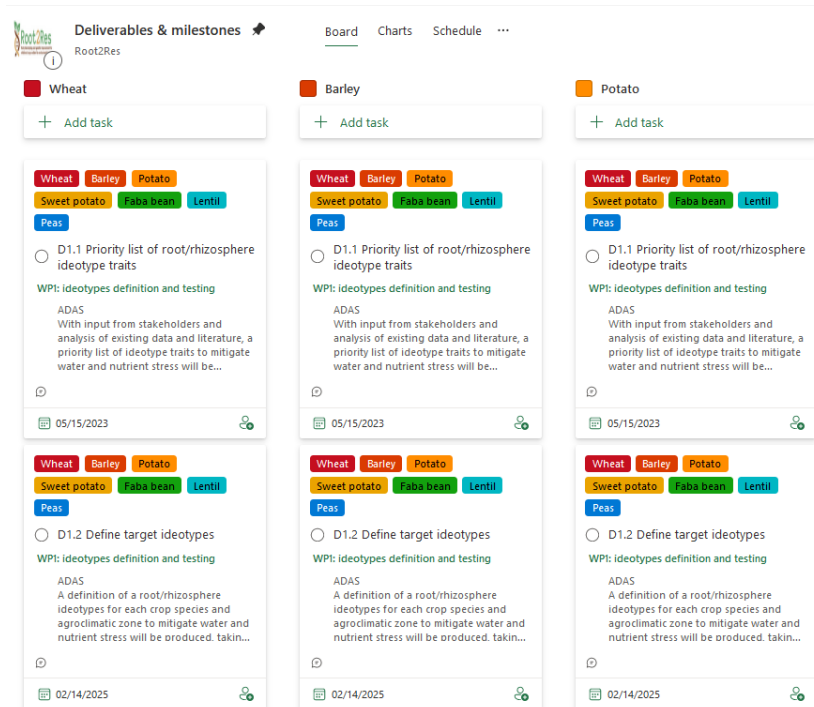

Figure 8: Example of deliverables and milestones per species

- assignments view provides an overview of the involvement of each collaborator for the production of deliverables and milestones (Figure 9).
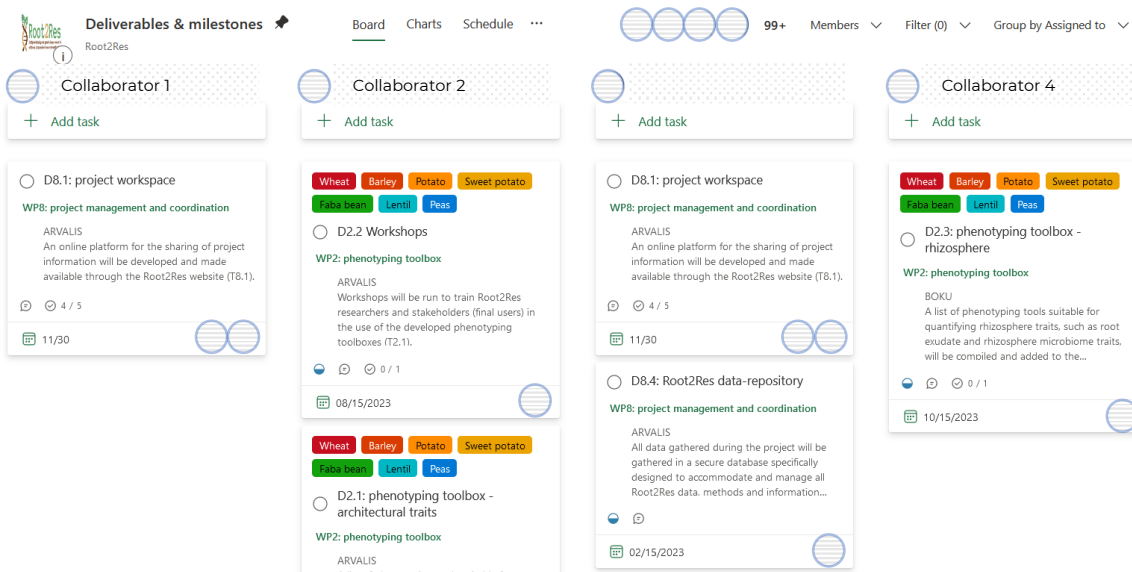

Figure 9: Example of assignments per collaborators for deliverables and milestones

- Due date view to monitor progress and readily anticipate the upcoming deliverables and milestones (Figure 10).
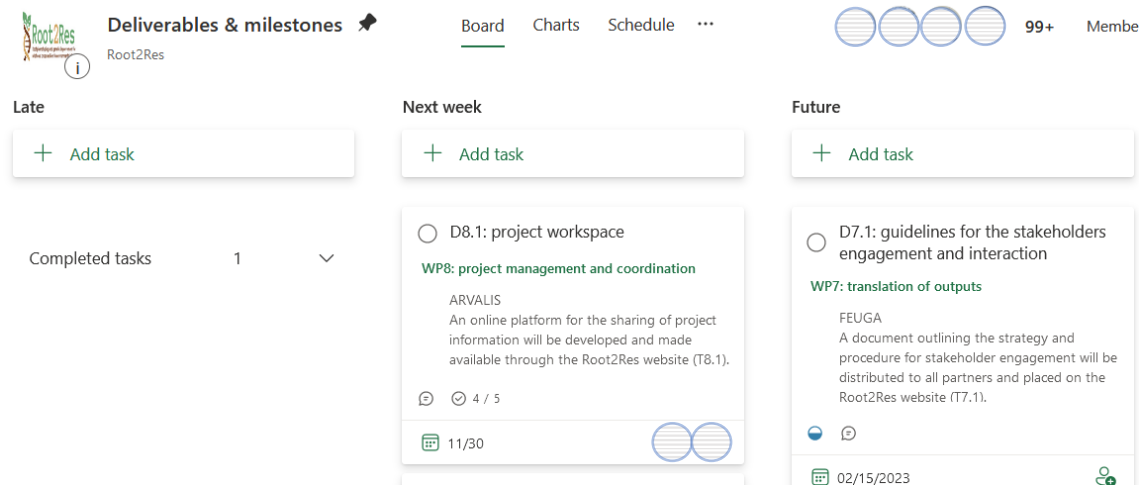

Figure 10: Example of due dates view

A PowerPoint practical tutorial guide has been circulated to the consortium to guide all partners in the full use of the Planner tool according to their needs.

Excel extraction of all the above-mentioned information is possible and will facilitate the monitoring process of deliverables and milestones in preparation of appropriate project meetings.

3. ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS

Although the Root2Res Sharepoint has been launched and has been operational since September 2022, there are a few functionalities that are currently still undergoing improvement.

- The deliverables and milestones Planner:
  - o assignments are still missing for some deliverables and milestones. An email has been sent to WP leaders in order to validate their assignments. WP leaders will then set up the Planner accordingly, by mid-December 2022.

- Set up of a Planner to animate and monitor activities for each WP:
  - o Work Package leaders will be invited to create their own WP Planner, to facilitate the monitoring of activities within and across WPs.
  - o In addition to the PowerPoint tutorial that has been created for use of the workspace, ARVALIS will hold an online training session for WP leaders who ask for support in the implementation of these WP Planners. These should be operational in all likelihood before January 2023. This will also be recorded and made available to any consortium member needing training in the use of Sharepoint.