

# CropBooster-P

*Communication Strategy*

**WP 3.2**



European  
Commission

Horizon 2020  
European Union funding  
for Research & Innovation

# Need for targeted science communication about plant breeding techniques

Development of the strategy based on stakeholder interviews and surveys to capture their communication activities, needs and wishes regarding New Plant Breeding Technologies in Europe

## Stakeholdergroups:

Academia, Consumer and Environ. organisations, journalists (JKI)

-> Study A

Seed & plant breeding sector, farmer, policy maker (Euroseeds/Plant-ETP)

-> Study B

Data collection via qualitative interviews/ workshops and quantitative surveys

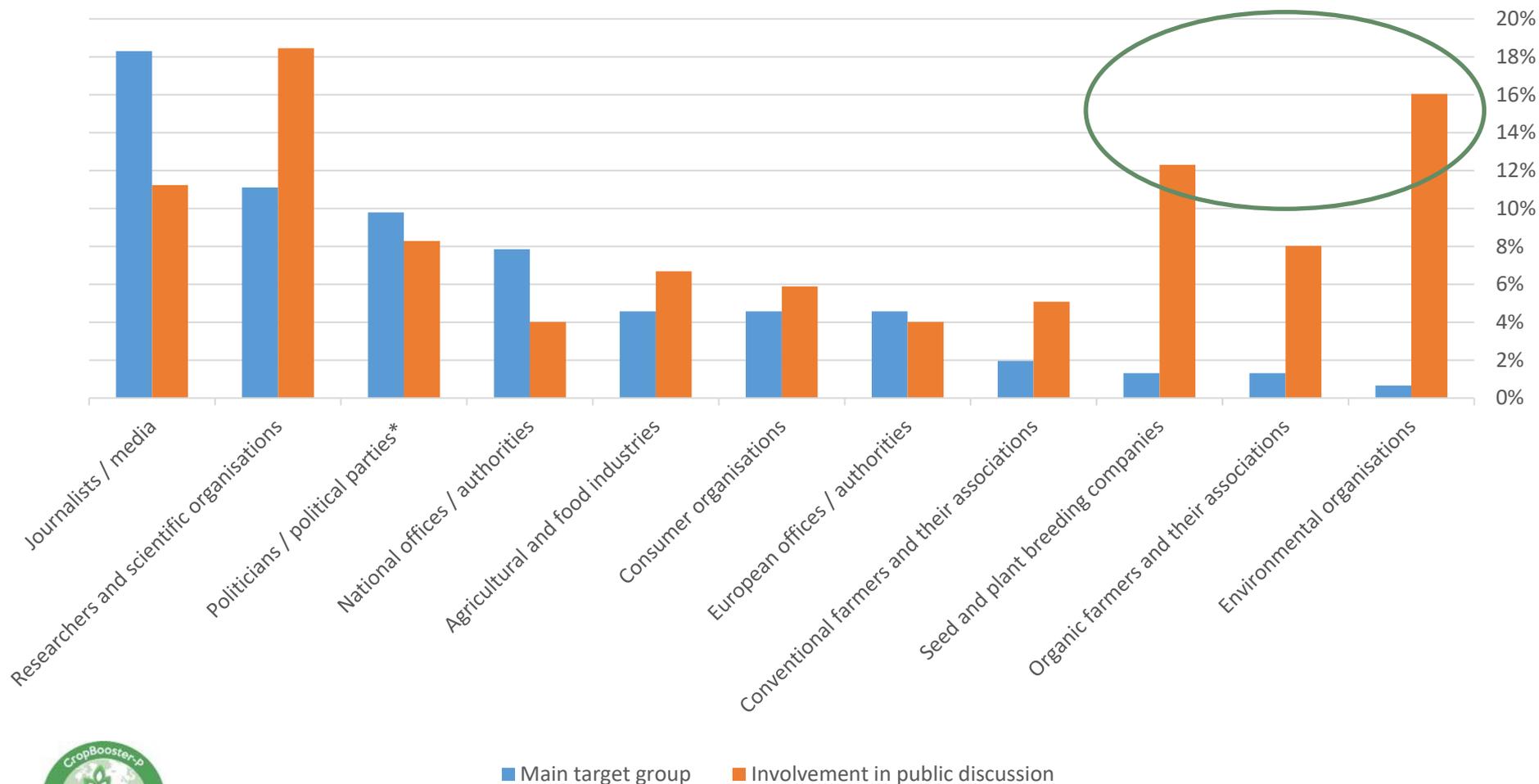


– Unequal group sizes!

# Description of the online surveys

	Study A		Study B	
Survey period	June – September 2021		March – May 2021	
Survey method	Online survey		Online survey	
Survey duration (median)	13.5 min		17.5 min	
Description of the samples	N	%	N	%
<b>Stakeholder group (SHG)</b>	109	100	166	100
Academia	50	46	-	-
Civil Society Organisation (CSO) <sup>a</sup>	22	20	-	-
Journalists	27	25	-	-
Seed & Breeding sector	4	4	100	60
Farmer & Farmer organisation	-	-	55	33
Policy maker	2	2	11	7
Others	4	4	-	-
<b>Region<sup>b</sup></b>	109	100	166	100
Middle European Countries (MEC)	61	56	106	64
Northern European Countries (NEC)	10	9	10	6
Eastern European Countries (EEC)	14	13	26	16
Southern European Countries (SEC)	13	12	22	13
EU	6	6	0	0
Not named	5	5	2	1
<b>Sex</b>	86	100	88	100
Female	35	41	21	24
Male	49	57	66	75
n/a	2	2	1	1
<b>Age</b>	86	100	88	100
25-34	10	12	15	17
35-44	17	20	22	25
45-54	21	24	16	18
55-64	26	30	28	32
≥ 65	12	14	7	8

# Discrepancies between the perceived involvement of actors in the public debate and target groups



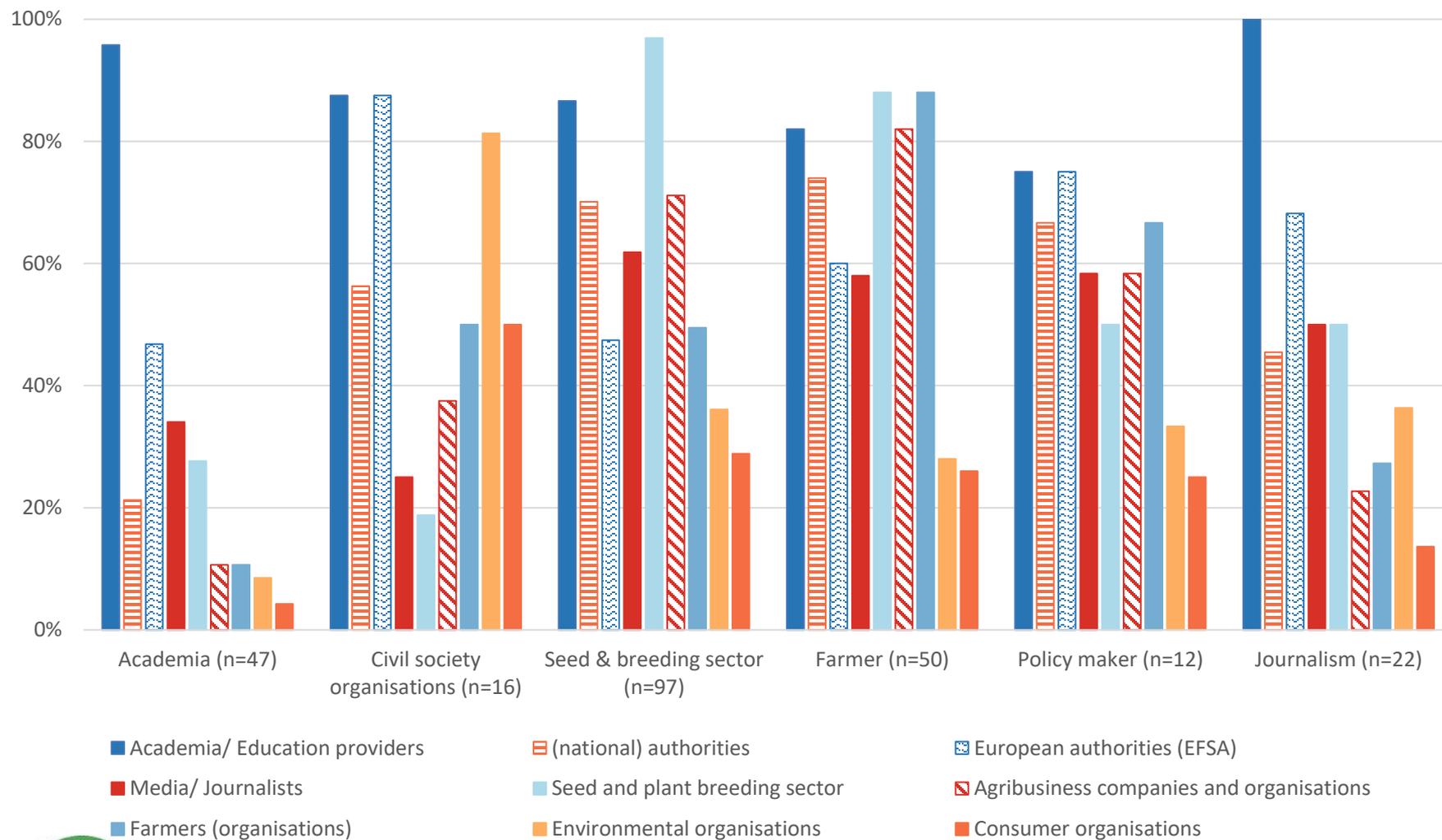
# Gaps in target groups

- The seed & breeding sector and environmental organisations are:
  - mentioned frequently as important actors in the debate
- BUT they are **not** considered as an important target group by “communicators” from academia, CSO, journalists

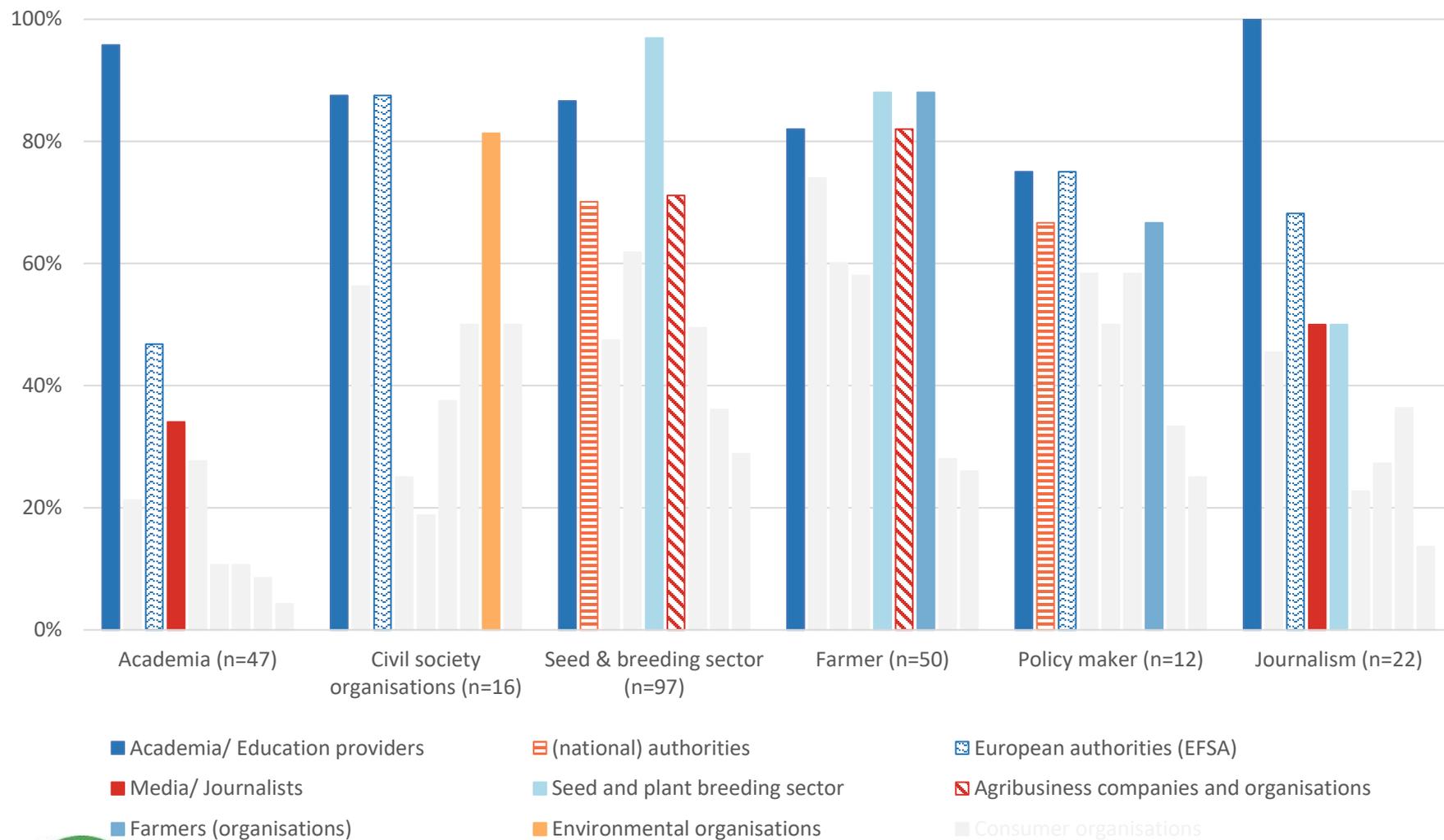
*\*Due to a lack of comparable data sets, the analysis was based on the results from Study A only*



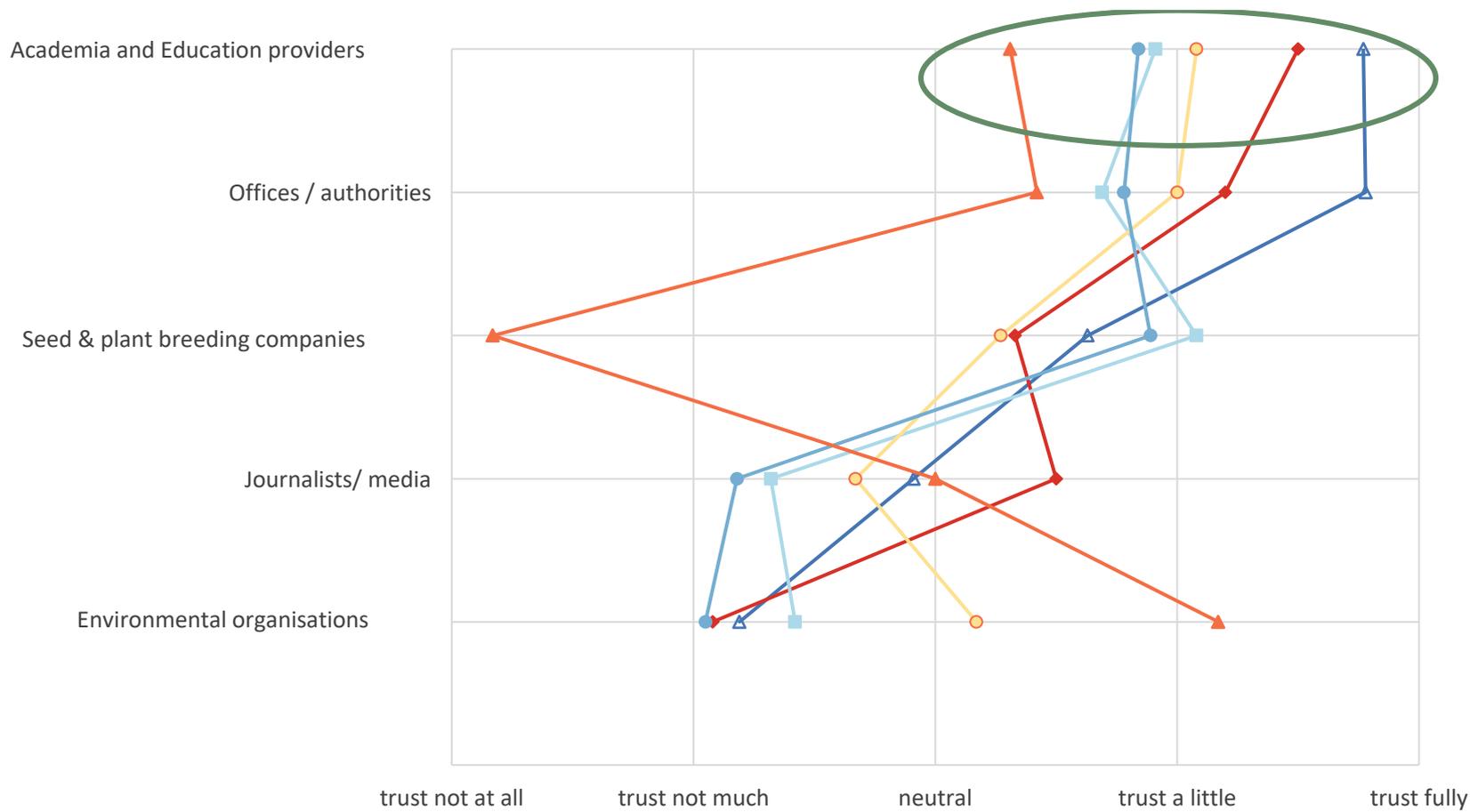
# Preferred information sources of European stakeholders



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# Level of trust survey stakeholders assign to the different actors



▲ Academia (9≤n≤31)

◆ Journalists (5≤n≤13)

■ Seed & breeding sector (101≤n≤103)

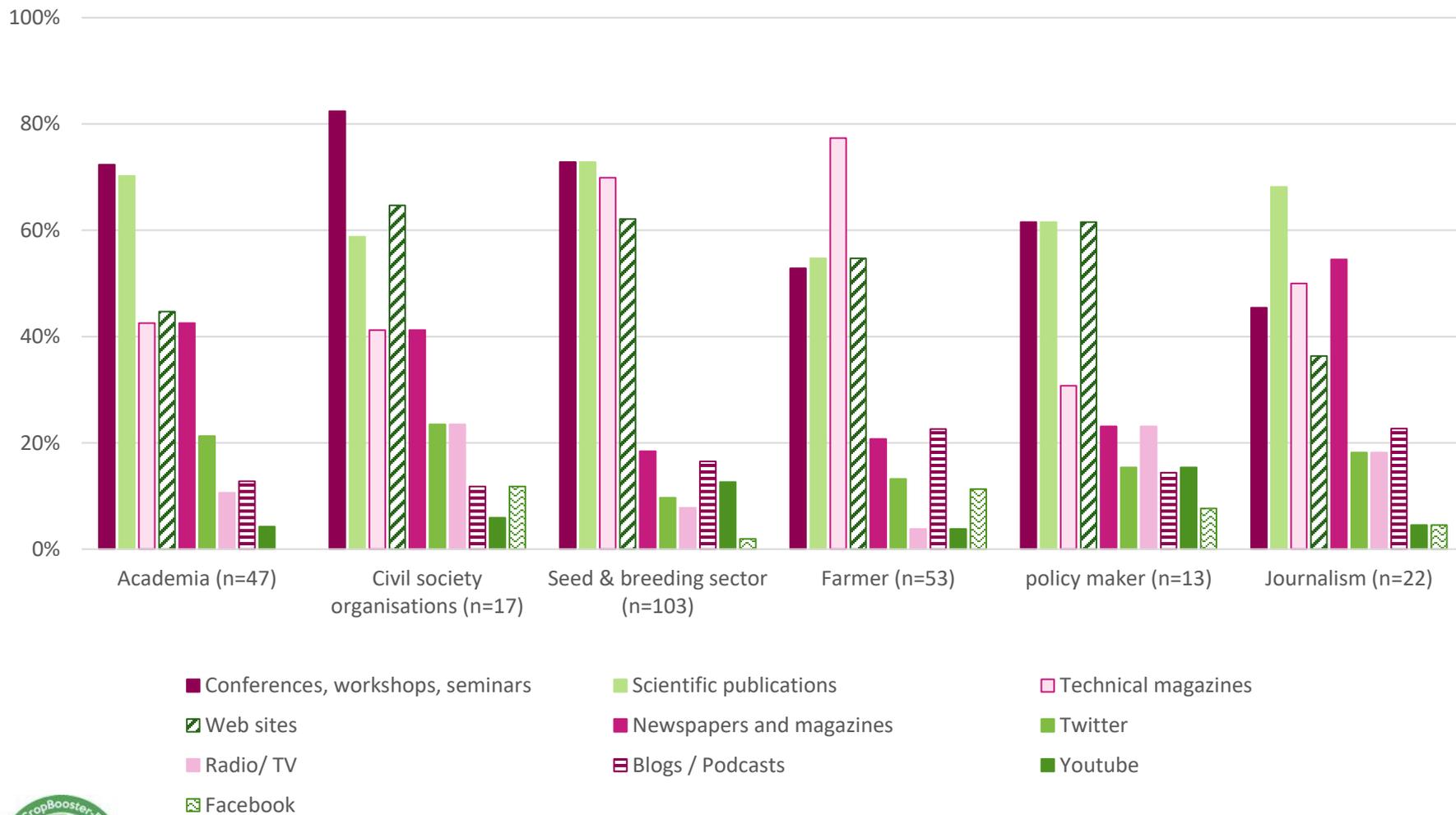
○ Policy maker (11≤n≤12)

● Farmer (n=55)

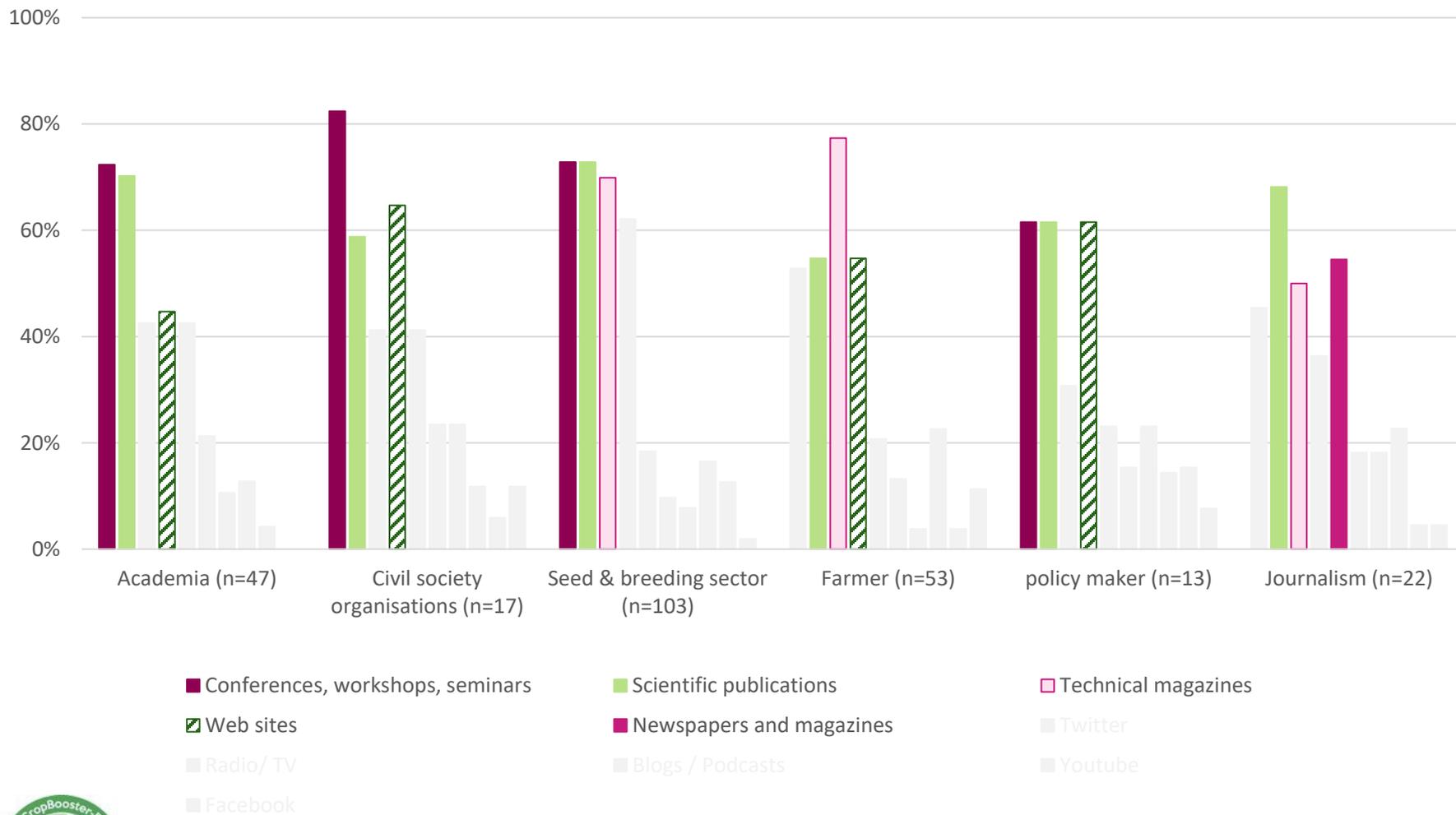
▲ Civil society organisations (5≤n≤13)



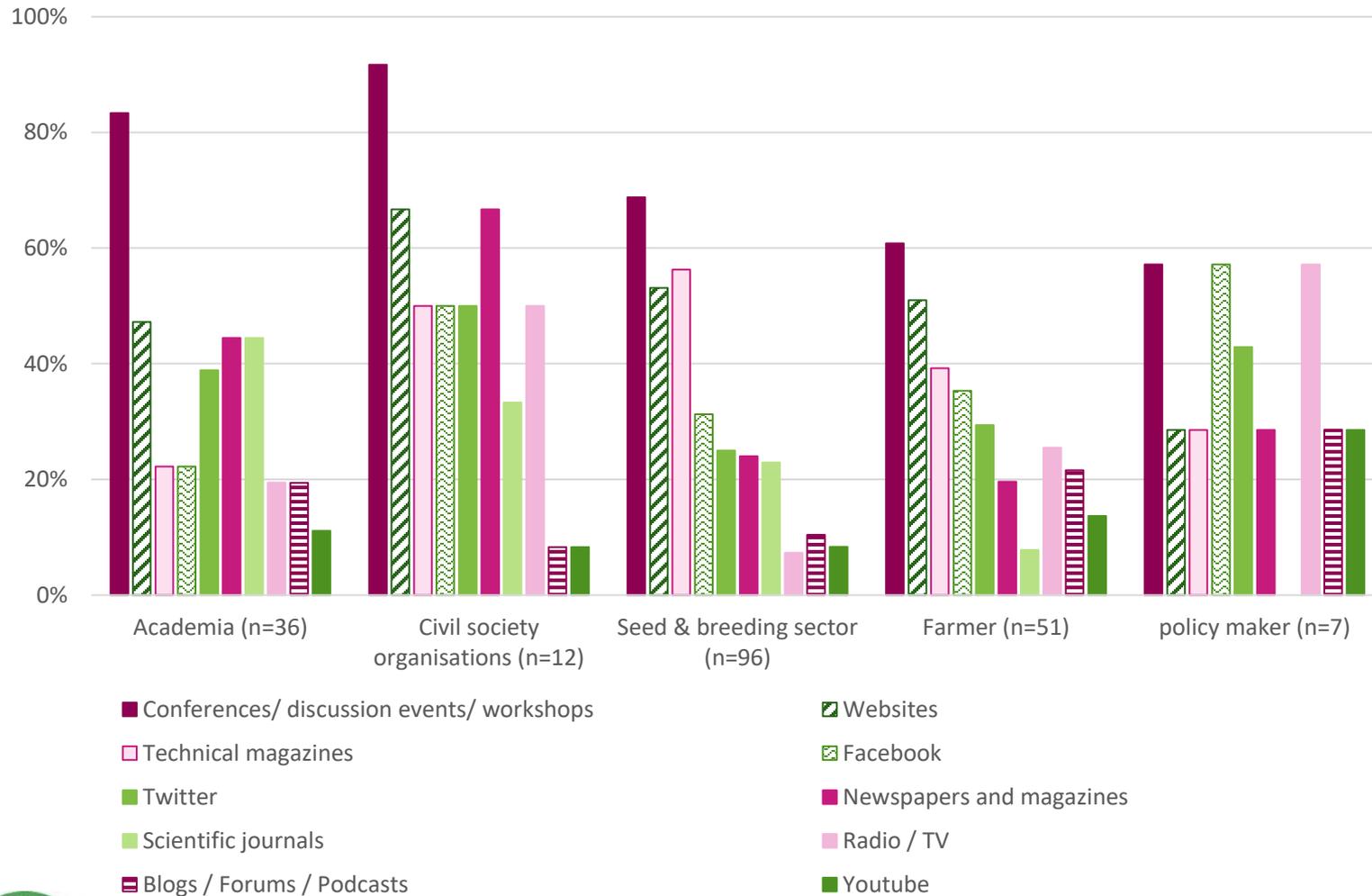
# Information channels of European stakeholders



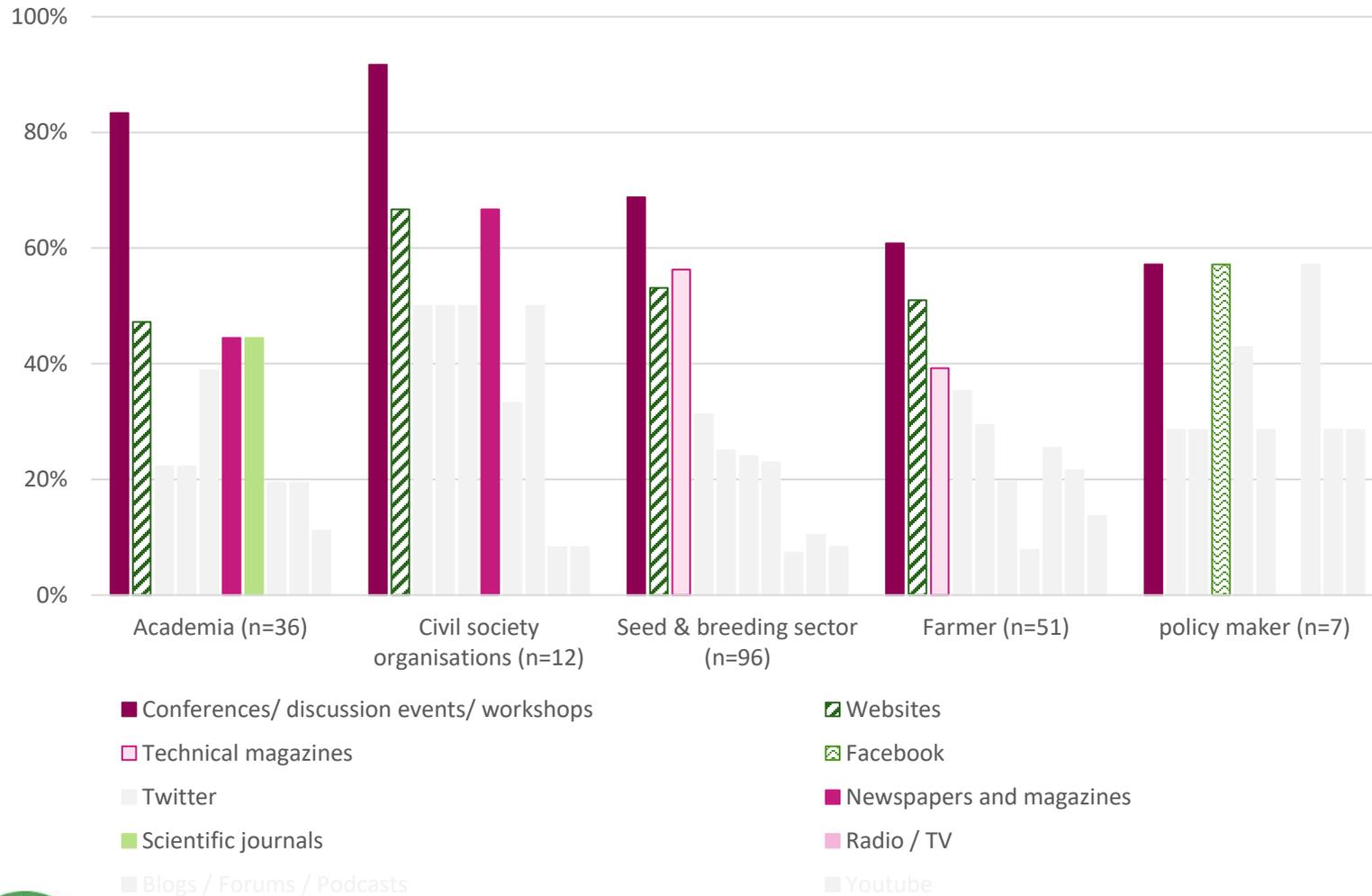
# Information channels of European stakeholders



# Preferred communication channels

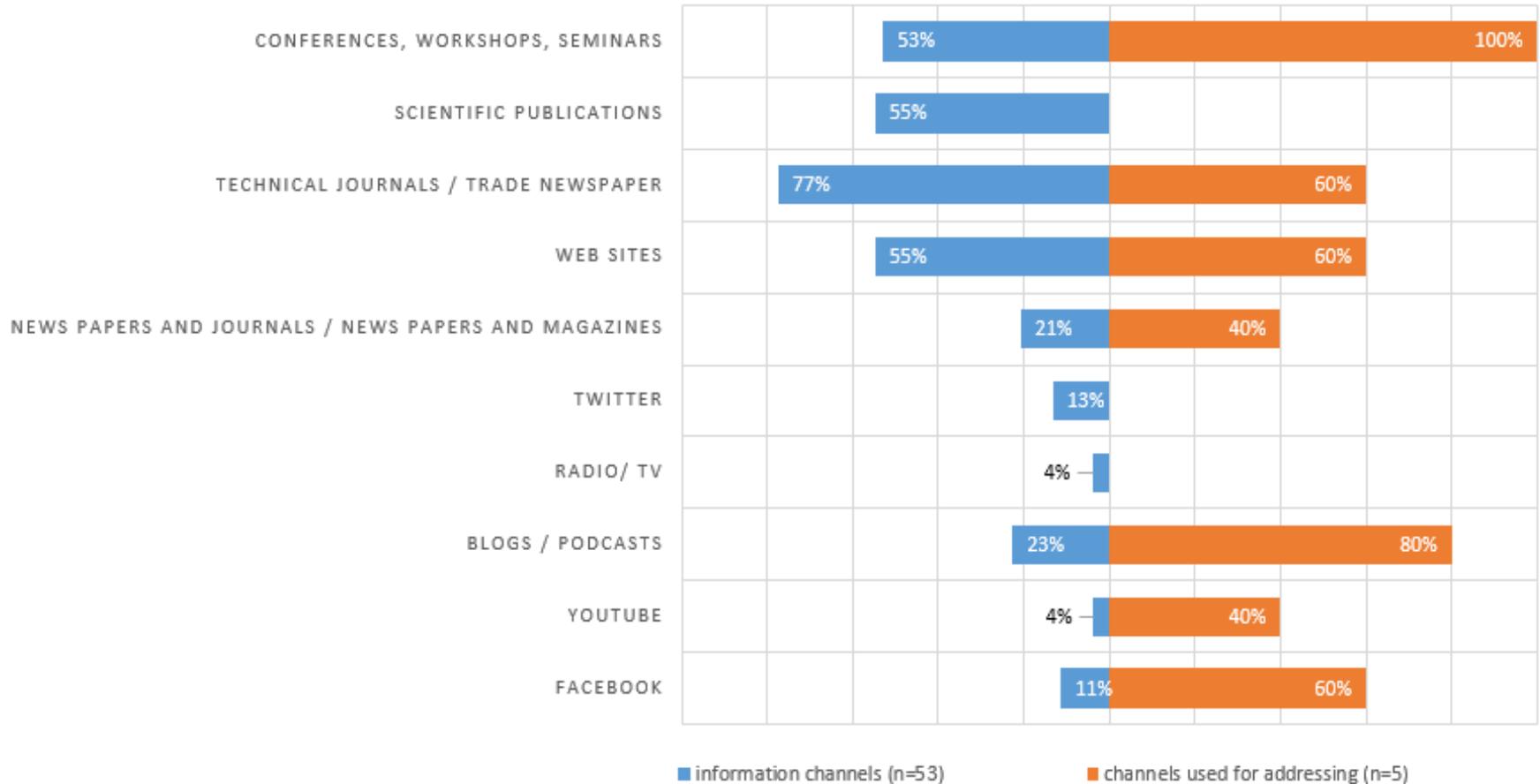


# Preferred communication channels

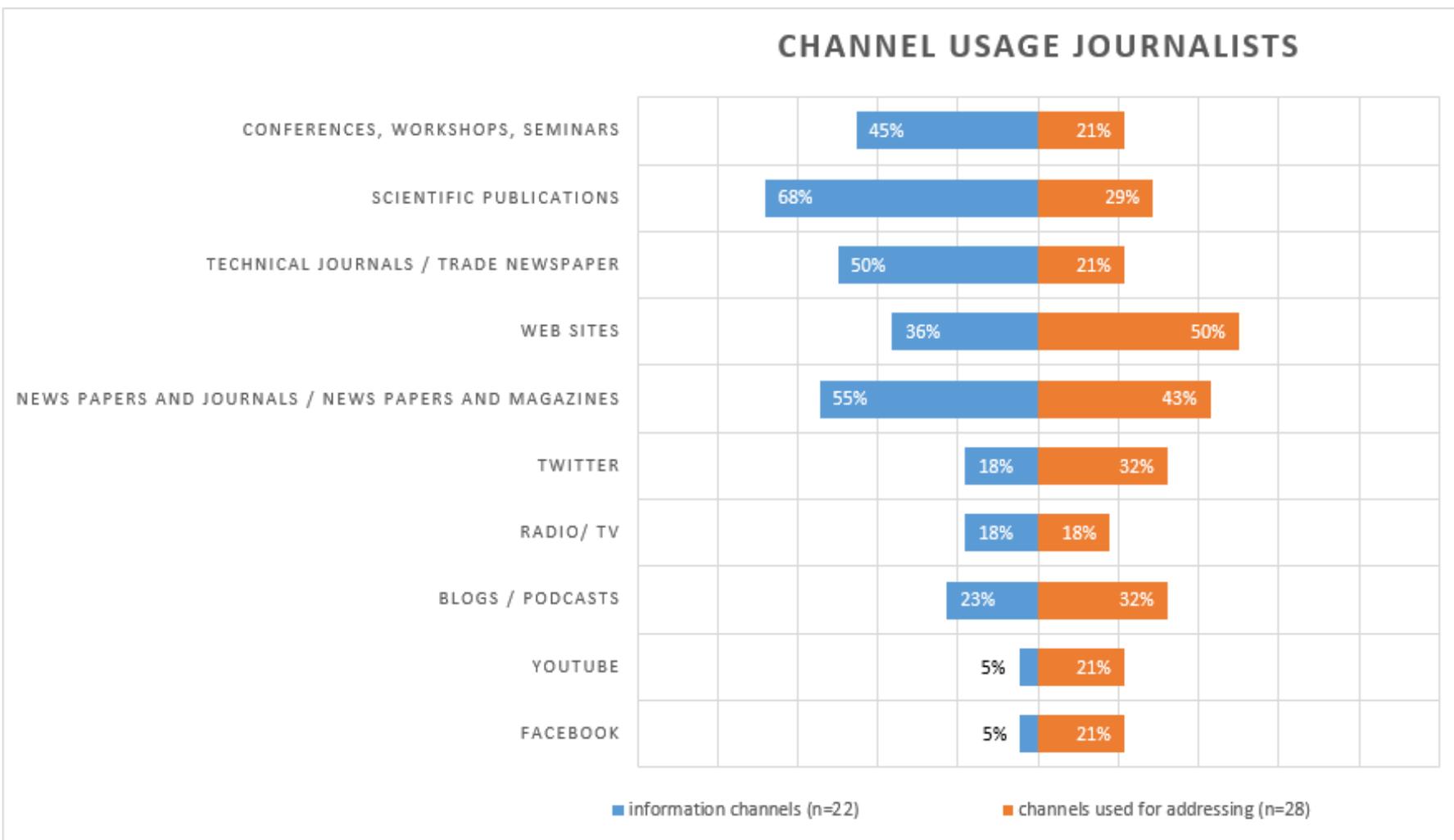


# Gaps in addressing channels (example)

## CHANNEL USAGE FARMER

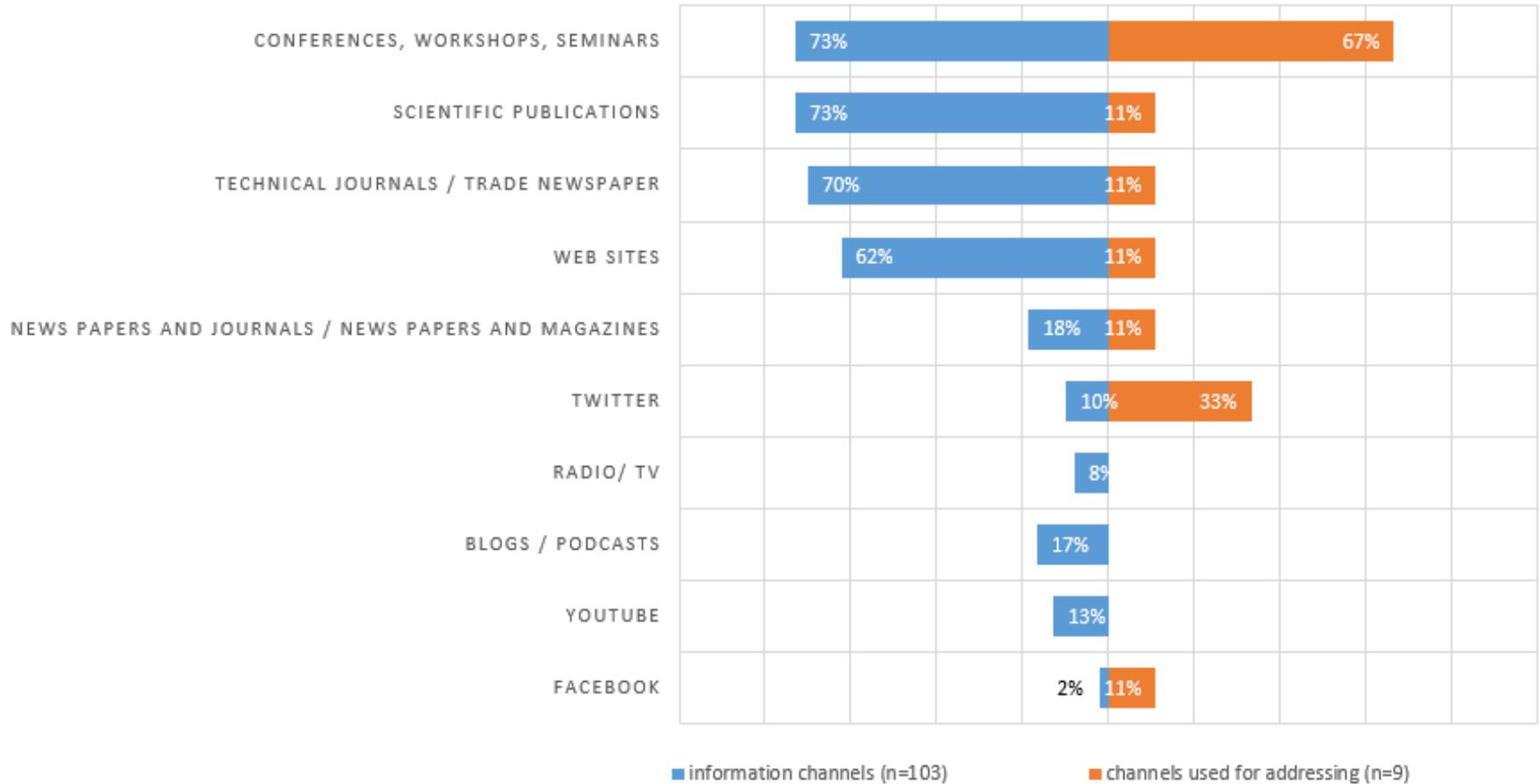


# Gaps in addressing channels (example)

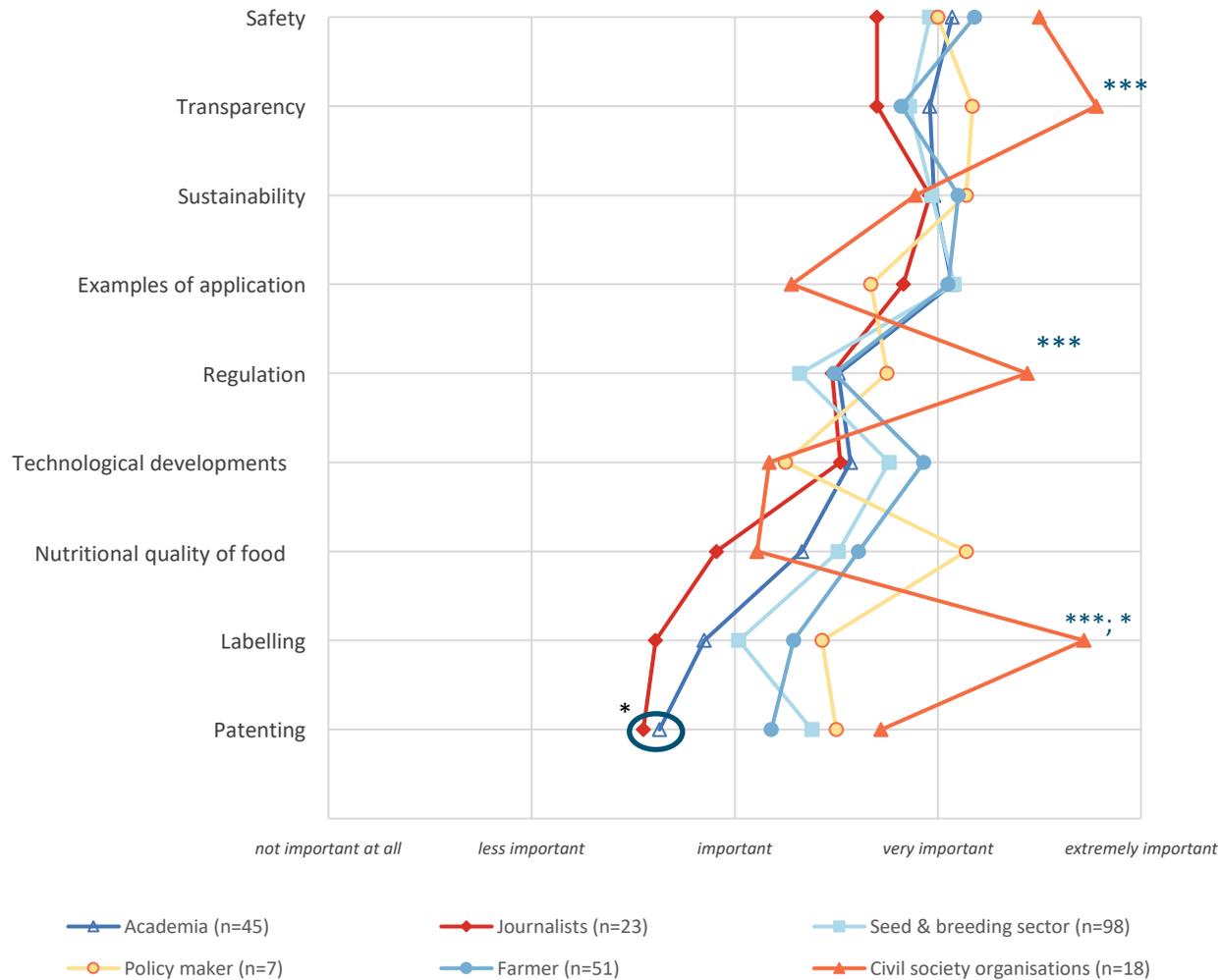


# Gaps in addressing channels (example)

## CHANNEL USAGE PLANT AND BREEDING SECTOR

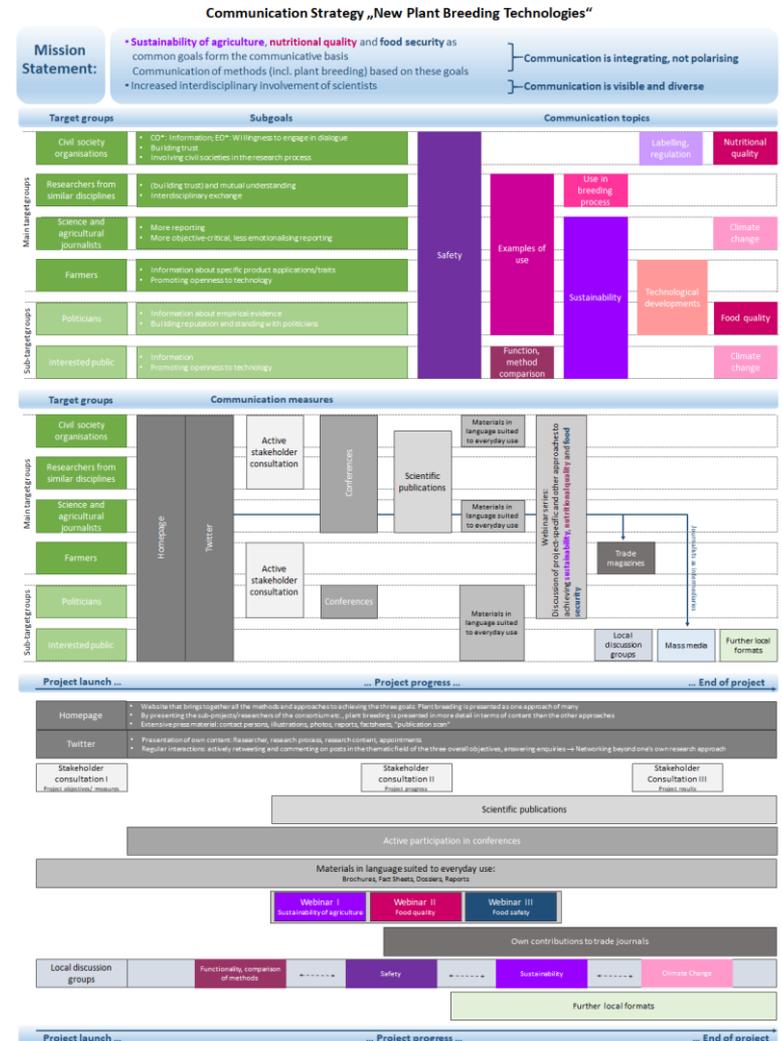


# Importance of different topics



# Feedback-Interviews

- Critical discussions on the developed strategy with communication scientists and communicators:
  - „Must-haves“ and „nice-to-haves“
  - Institutional implementation
  - Communication budget
- Online interviews using the Online-Whiteboard-Tool Conceptboard, Telephone interview
- Documentation of feedback directly on the board
- 3 interviews
- Duration: 40 – 60 min



\* CO = consumer organisations; EO = environmental organisations



# Communication Strategy (Part 1)

**Communication goal: promoting an open and factual social dialogue between science and society on NPBT**

**Mission Statement:**

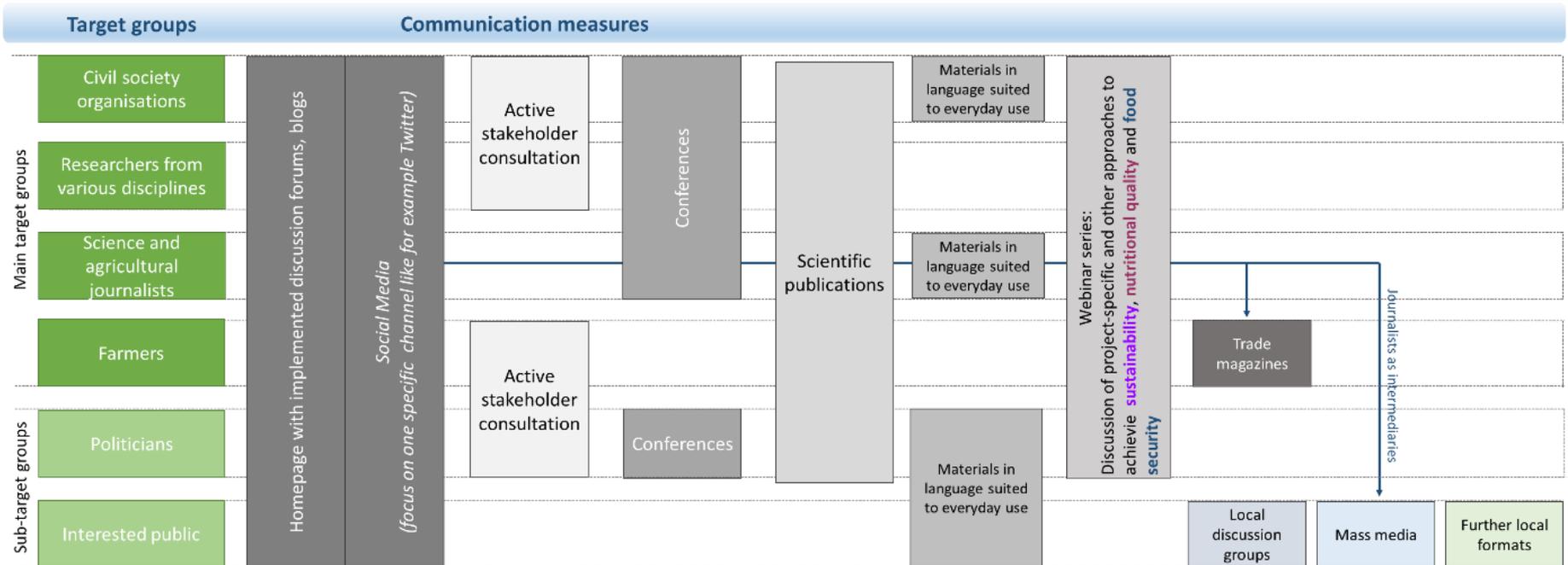
- **Sustainability of agriculture, nutritional quality** and **food security** as common goals form the basis for communication
- Communication should be holistic (consider different breeding techniques and how they contribute to the breeding process, also consider complementary approaches)
- Communication should be two-sided, evidence based and consider different actors

Communication is integrative, not polarising  
 Communication is defensible, visible and diverse

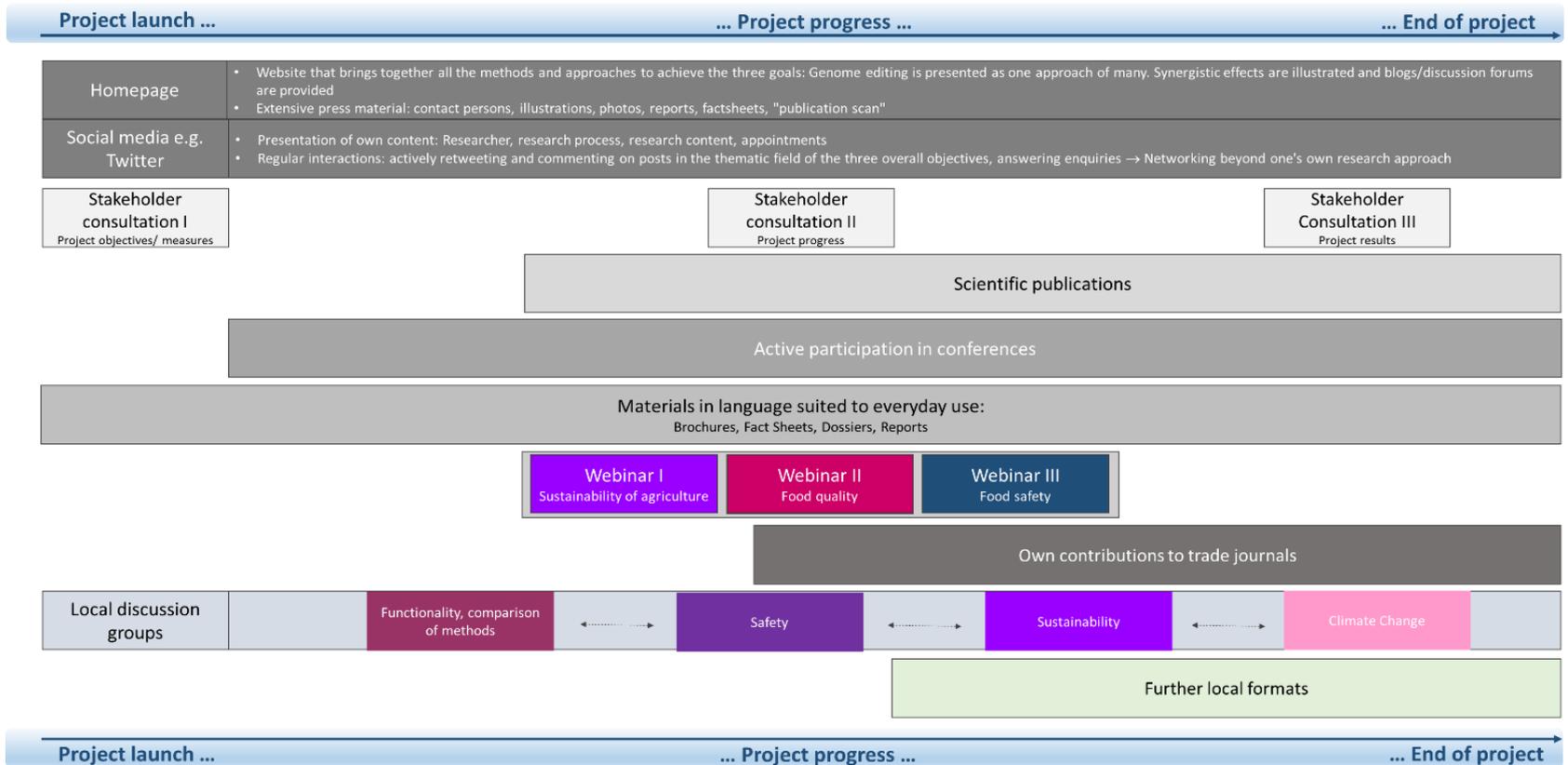
	Target groups	Subgoals	Communication topics				
Main target groups	Civil society organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CO*: Establish a dialogue; EO*: Willingness to engage in dialogue</li> <li>• Building trust</li> <li>• Involving civil societies in the research process</li> </ul>	Safety	Examples of application	Sustainability	Labelling, regulation	Food quality
	Researchers from various disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building trust and mutual understanding</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary exchange</li> </ul>				Use in breeding process	
	Science and agricultural journalists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More balanced (consider advantages vs limitations and risks vs benefits) and less emotionalising reporting</li> </ul>					Climate change
	Farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue on specific product applications/traits</li> <li>• Promoting openness to technology</li> </ul>				Technological developments	
Sub-target groups	Politicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about empirical evidence</li> <li>• Building reputation and standing with politicians</li> </ul>					Food quality
	Interested public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue addressing societal needs</li> <li>• Promoting openness to technology</li> </ul>				Function, method comparison	Climate change



# Communication Strategy (Part 2)



# Communication Strategy (Part 3)



# Recommendations I (an excerpt)

- Communication about plant breeding research (e.g. genome editing) is far too complex to be handled by a scientist on the side, so *professional communicators* are needed.
- The big challenge for communicators is to *motivate and guide* project partners to get engaged and to provide appropriate material
  - Communication should focus on *tangible applications* and how they can help achieve *societal goals*, rather than on the technology as such.
  - The desire to *support a dialog* must be formulated and implemented in the communication strategy.
  - Communication in the given context should not be “lecturing”.



## Recommendations II (an excerpt)

- The selection of the target groups and their priority should meet with topics, goals, the duration of the project and associated budget.
  - There are more target groups than considered in this survey (e.g. retailers, edu, ...)
- Personal contacts are seen most crucial in order to reach most target groups
  - Trust building measures may need to be set up, especially when reaching out to environmental organisations (or CSO)
- Scientific publications are mentioned as an important information source throughout the stakeholder groups surveyed
  - Provide summaries in a non-technical language



## Recommendations III (an excerpt)

- Not all groups being perceived as prominent actors within the public debate are currently addressed in a balanced way. This gap should be tackled by considering appropriate formats to especially “environmental organisations” and “seed and plant breeding companies” more prominently
- Align the channels used to reach out to a target group with the channels the respective group uses for information retrieval
- Social media use depends on the target group with even regional preferences



# Thank You!



# Sample selection

## Study A

- Obtained from contact databased created through online searches
- Consists of 408 entries (EO=98; Acad=90; CO=65; Journalists=155) from 16 European countries

## Study B

