Dissemination and Communication Activities for Mars Analogue Research

P. Cabezas[1]

N. Walter[1], P. Rettberg[2], M. Bohmeier[2], E. Rabbow[2], K. Beblo-Vranesevic[2], A. Perras[3,4], P. Schwendner[5], C. Moissl-Eichinger[2,6], P. Vannier[7], V. Marteinsson[7], E. Monaghan[8], P. Ehrenfreund[8,9], L. Garcia-Descalzo[10], F. Gomez[10], M. Malki[11], R. Amils[11], F. Gaboyer[12], F. Westall[12], C. Cockell[5]

(1) European Science Foundation (ESF), France.
(2) German Aerospace Center (DLR), Germany.
(3) Medical University of Graz, Austria.
(4) Department of Microbiology and Archaea, University of Regensburg, Germany.
(5) University of Edinburgh, UK.
(6) BioTechMed Graz, Aus-tria.
(7) MATIS - Prokaria, Iceland.
(8) Universiteit Leiden, Netherland.
(9) George Washing-ton University, USA.
(10) Centro de Astrobiología (INTA-CAB), Spain.
(11) Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain.
(12) Centre de Biophysique Molécu-laire, CNRS, France.

The Mars Analogues for Space Exploration (MASE) project is bringing new insight about Mars potential habitability but also some new knowledge about Earth organisms and the functioning of extreme terrestrial ecosystems. The overall aim of the MASE project is to study a variety of Mars-like environments in order to further our understanding of Martian habitability, as well as our ability to detect organisms that might be present on Mars.

For communication with the scientific community, we are benefiting from Open Access scientific publications and international conferences. Mars exploration missions are massive undertakings that are managed and implemented by space agencies/industry sector in a collaborative manner. Activities performed and results obtained from MASE have a direct impact on a search for life mission design and planning. Thus, MASE is in regular contact with the European Space Agency and activities to engage with other agencies will be soon taken into action.

Providing a link between life on the Earth and life on Mars, has the potential to raise significant interest from the general public. For the project to reach this audience, we targeted journalists from science popular magazines and also organized a set of press conferences. This approach dramatically increased the visibility of the MASE project on outreach publications and media platforms. Alternative communication channels as press releases, newsletters and blog entries have also been regularly used to communicate with broader audiences with a positive outcome. Moreover, MASE scientist have been quite involved in outreach events to promote astrobiological research at local level. More recently, the MASE project have created a booklet title "A guide to Martian landscapes on Earth" to promote Mars analogues research. This hard-copy printed product resulted very successful to attract the attention of both specialized and general public audiences in conferences and science outreach events. A variety of internet based products are also used on regular basis to convey the main outcomes of the MASE project:

MASE website www.mase.esf.org Twitter @MarsAnalogues Facebook MASE @MarsAnalogues

These social media platforms have been proved to be the fastest and more effective way to internationally communicate MASE outcomes. Through Facebook, we have mostly engaged with general audience interested on space and astrobiology research topics, while Twitter audience is narrower and directly linked with the astrobiology scientific community.