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Promoting Effective Governance
of the Channel Ecosystem
Promouvoir une gouvernance efficace
de l'écosystème de la Manche



Informative communication on Channel governance and marine ecosystems.

ABSTRACT

Informative Communication has been undertaken by the Interreg IV projects reviewed. It is an essential element of these projects in order to raise awareness of the work undertaken and as a first step for developing participation in Channel governance. Four audience groups have been identified: Policy makers and government; Industry/Science Community/Sectoral/NGOs; Community/General public; and Schools. The varieties of communication methods are reviewed, by audience and key findings are discussed.

KEY WORDS

DISPLAY
EDUCATION
INFORMATIVE COMMUNICATION
OUTREACH
PRESENTATION

DESCRIPTION OF KEY FINDINGS

Communication and stakeholder involvement are at the heart of the Interreg IV projects and deliverables. Projects have utilised a broad range of approaches to communicate key messages and project findings to audiences ranging from school groups to key policy makers, NGOs and industry representatives. An overview of the approaches used by the project teams is given below. The report also provides case study examples of best practice and lessons learnt from specific projects.

Informative communication is defined in this context as providing knowledge, in particular useful or interesting information. It is most often a one-way flow of information. Informative communication can be useful for sharing complex expert knowledge but in more understandable formats. 'Information' is the first stage in the 'wheel of participation'¹. The approach is used widely to develop effective citizen participation and has been widely adapted to guide effective citizen engagement and public impact. The wheel describes 4 stages, from 'Information' to 'Consultation', 'Participation' and finally 'Empowerment'. The wheel demonstrates the importance of 'High-Quality Information' in supporting the wider participation process. The wheel also shows that providing 'minimal communication' or 'limited information' is unlikely to lead to effective participation in governance processes. Key to the provision of 'good quality information' is 'providing information that the community wants and/or needs'. This has been

¹ Davidson, S. (1998). *Spinning the wheel of empowerment*. In: *Planning*, 1262(3), pp. 14-15.

the focus of the majority of Interreg IV funded project communication activity. When developing informative communication tools and techniques, consultation processes and evaluation have been widely undertaken to better understand audience type. In these cases, information provision has been tailored accordingly to the audience. Participative and consultative communications have also been undertaken through Interreg IV projects and these are described in the related report "Participative and consultative communication on Channel governance and marine ecosystems".

Informative communication has been the most commonly used form of information dissemination by Interreg IV projects. A likely explanation of this is its efficiency at reaching large numbers of people. Additionally, given the limited timeframe of the projects, there is a need to develop 'legacy' resources, which must be available and useful beyond the project's scope. These are often provided in an online format or left with organisations to distribute during their day-to-day role within organisations, e.g. at education events. For example, species identification guides produced for school children as part of the Marinexus project. Also online reports and tools produced for many of the Interreg IV funded projects, including CAMIS and CHARM. However, compared to higher level participative and consultative communication, impact is often harder to ascertain and engagement is usually on a more superficial level. Although not specifically included within this review, use of 'the media' (newspapers, T.V and Radio) has proved an effective means of communicating with the public. The use of web-based press releases and targeted correspondence with journalists has generated valuable publicity. There is still however a need to improve the links between the projects and the press, both in France and the UK.

Across the 10 Interreg IV projects reviewed in the writing of this report, there has been a lack of effective evaluations looking into the different types of communication tools and methods. However, there is a need to evaluate the relative impacts of activities in terms of understanding and behavioural change. These findings should be shared and used to develop effective mechanisms for communication in future projects.

The tools and methods of informative communication used in Interreg IV projects fell into four broad categories:

1. **Printed resources**, such as written reports, newsletters, leaflets, posters, signage, banners and press articles.
2. **Websites**, usually providing information about project outputs, web-based tools, updates and information about partners.
3. **Media**, such as image galleries, training and informative films and audio resources.
4. **In person (verbal)** communication such as training workshops, talks and event stands.

Project	Policy makers and government				Industry/Science Community/ Sectoral/NGO				Community/ general public				Schools			
	Printed	Website	Média	In person	Printed	Website	Média	In person	Printed	Website	Média	In person	Printed	Website	Média	In person
Marinexus	●			●		●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
VALMER	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				●					
SETARMS	●	●		●	●	●		●		●						
CRESH	●			●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●				
CHARM 2 & 3	●	●			●	●			●	●		●				
PANACHE		●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
LICCo	●	●		●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●		●	●
OFELIA		●		●		●		●		●		●				●
MERIFIC	●					●										
CAMIS	●	●		●	●	●		●					●			

Table 1: The use of communication tools and methods in Interreg projects and their primary target audience.

For the purposes of this review, target audiences have been divided into four categories. These are:

- **Policy Makers and Government** - Anyone involved in developing, implementing and enforcing policy to manage activities within the English Channel Catchment.
- **Industry/Science Community/ Sectoral/NGO** - Anyone, using the marine environment in a professional capacity, studying or protecting marine resources and the marine environment.
- **Community/ General Public** - Anyone engaged in visiting, or living in the vicinity of the English Channel catchment, without a specific, known professional or management interest.
- **Schools** - Anyone within the formal education system from early years to University students.

There is inevitably some overlap between audience groups and many resources will have been developed for use by representatives from more than one of these categories. The following sections provide additional detail about some of the communication methods, summarised in table 1.

Policy Makers and Government

Providing high quality information to policy makers and government agencies is a key step towards influencing effective governance and guiding the sustainable management of Channel resources. Many Interreg IV projects require dissemination of their work at this level. These projects developed a number of tools specifically for communicating with policy makers and stakeholders. The key to success of these tools and methods has been in the understanding of the needs of the audience. In many cases, participative and consultative engagement was undertaken in order to produce effective communication tools. For example, the Integrated Maritime Strategy produced within CAMIS was developed in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders. The Strategy was developed as a tool to support effective management of the Channel. The project team also developed a 'Cross Channel Atlas'², including information about the geography, population, transport, environment, economy, culture, and training and research. The aim of this was to further develop the knowledge of the Channel area, and contribute to the development and planning of initiatives as well as to co-operation schemes shared between both countries, whilst retaining a Channel scale approach. The Cross-Channel Atlas is supporting decision-making and the dissemination of knowledge about the Channel region. It enables different scales of analysis to be conducted, from local to global scale, and investigation of current and future issues.

² University of Caen Basse-Normandie. Cross Channel Atlas. Available at: <http://atlas-transmanche.cerfic.unicaen.fr>

CHARM 2 & 3 produced a series of more than 13 technical reports and synthesis papers designed for use by regional and national management authorities on a range of subjects, including marine fish distribution and the diversification of fisheries. VALMER will produce an advice note on the application of the ecosystem service approach in marine governance and a guide on the use of the ecosystem service approach as a tool for stakeholder engagement in marine governance. This method is a common way of communicating technical information to governing bodies and generating useful resources.

Several projects have produced practical tools for environmental managers. For example, waterproof species identification guidebooks and monitoring protocols were produced as part of the Marinexus project for use in the effective management of non-native species.

The most widely used forms of informative communication used to reach this audience was 'in person' and 'web-based' communication with respectively 8 and 7 projects out of the 10 projects reviewed using these methods (see table 1). Projects made use of opportunities to present at existing workshops, conferences and other events. Many also organised promotions events of their own. The majority of projects produced web-based resources aimed at this audience. Several projects (for example, CAMIS, CHARM and VALMER) produced online 'resource libraries' in order to make available a range of tools and reports. None of the projects reviewed used targeted media (video, audio, etc) in order to communicate with this audience. Media can be a powerful communication tool. However identifying an appropriate way to present such resources to this audience can be problematic.

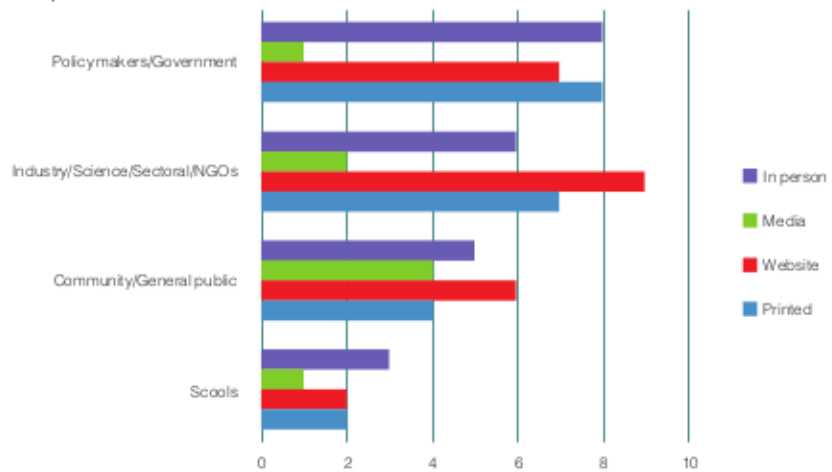


Fig 1: Number of projects using selected informative communication methods targeted at specific audience groups

Industry / Science Community / Sectoral / NGOs

A range of 'Best practice guides' were developed, specifically targeting users groups. For example the CRESH project produced a guidance document to advise the fishing community about issues relating to cuttlefish harvesting. The SETARMS project produced guidance documents for port managers regarding good practice in dredging.

Resources such as the CAMIS 'Cross Channel Atlas' described previously have been developed for industrial, scientific and sectoral audiences, as well as for policy makers and government. The atlas is a good example of a multi audience resource, which integrates information in a single place making it available and widely usable.

In order to effectively communicate research outputs to the science community with integrity, peer reviewed scientific publications are a key communication mechanism. The process is often time consuming and can be slow. However it is well established in the science community and the most important way of

communicating and validating ideas with this audience. Scientists working in several Interreg funded projects (including CRESH, Marinexus, VALMER, CHARM and CAMIS) involving original scientific research have produced and published scientific papers as part of their work with several others 'in press' or in preparation. Nine of the 10 projects reviewed generated web-based resources aimed at this audience, making web resources for this audience the most commonly used form of communication overall (see fig 1).

Community/general public

Communication with the general public or community is otherwise known as 'Public outreach'. Although this form of communication targets the general public, it often engages representatives from other groups that have a personal interest. Therefore, public outreach can be described as 'non audience specific', providing general communication to a range of audiences (e.g., representatives from industry, NGOs and those from a science or policy background). Even when targeting a general audience, it is important to ensure that resources and activities also target specific audiences and it is usually necessary to divide the audience into specific subsets. For example, activities taking place in an aquarium setting will often be developed for a younger audience, but talks given during an evening will often be targeted at a more knowledgeable (if non-specialist) adult audience. In this case, the language and type of resource used will be adapted in order to communicate to this non-specialist group.



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*Interactive workshop aboard MV Armorique (Brittany Ferries) during "Science on board" events.
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The projects reviewed engaged in public awareness, through public events and lectures, website development and the use of other general forms of communication. Examples from the Marinexus project included science talks and a film shown on Brittany Ferries. Science stage-shows were also developed and run in public spaces and at the National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth (UK). The use of this novel method for engaging wider audience to gain greater interest in scientific subjects and issues related to governance of the English Channel were well received. Science displays and interactive workshops also took place on board public ferries and at large public events on both sides of the channel. Marinexus also developed public artworks, including a sculpture in Roscoff (France) and a series of large flags displayed on the waterfront. Such high profile activities helped raise awareness of the project and generated additional interest in web-based information resources.

Several Interreg IV projects made use of existing events as a way of promoting their messages and ensuring good-sized audiences. Examples of these events include World Oceans Day and National Science and Engineering Week in the UK. Incorporating public outreach activities in with these annual, large-scale events was highly attractive to the press and allowed projects to work with an already established audience.

The general public were the main audience for most multimedia resources. For example, videos were produced as part of Marinexus to appeal to this audience. VALMER is also producing a film to explain the ecosystem services approach to a broad audience, including the general public. Seven of the ten projects reviewed specifically targeted members of this audience (see table 1) with websites being the most commonly used method.

Schools

Often referred to as 'schools outreach', engagement with young people in a formal learning environment can be an effective method of community engagement, helping to develop and change long-term values and skills for the future. School children often share information and key messages learnt with their peers and family. Engaging effectively with schools can be challenging initially as messages, resources and activities must be incorporated within the school curriculum, considering learning targets. Informative communication is far more effective if combined with participative communication 'learning by doing' and by involving the learner in the development of an effective education program. Combined with educator training and active participation by teachers, printed, web and media resources can be created. The most effective school outreach programs are developed with teachers and provide resources and experiences that enhance their own teaching and learning. Examples are those resources used within the Marinexus and PANACHE programs. Marinexus worked with a variety of school year groups, developing school science clubs, shore visits, science cruises and laboratory sessions.

Engagement with schools has been relatively low throughout the Interreg IV projects reviewed, with only 4 of the 10 projects undertaking work in this area. Reasons for this may be that working with school groups is quite specialist and there are often complexities in integrating communication that also helps teachers develop their required curriculum. It is also often perceived that work targeting school children takes a long time to benefit and influence governance as school children are not yet able to vote and are seldom involved in policy development. This may explain why schools have not been targeted by the majority of projects. It is also possible that school groups will have been targeted within the 'general public' category outside their formal education setting. One method used in a number of Interreg IV projects was for scientists and experts to visit classrooms and take part in workshops. This relatively low-cost method of school engagement can be extremely valuable, presenting a positive impression of the project and providing aspirational experiences for school children.

CONCLUSIONS/WORK LEADS

- Interreg IV projects in general provided information to a wide and diverse audience on both sides of the channel, developing many novel methods of communication to enhance perception and engagement.
- All of the projects reviewed have undertaken Informative communication for policy makers and government agencies, Industry/Science Community/Sectoral/NGO. Schools were not targeted by all projects. Of those reviewed, three did not target Community/general public audiences and six did not target schools audiences.
- There is a need to evaluate the effectiveness of communication efforts and make the findings publicly available in order to support future work.
- Whilst some projects have made use of multimedia platforms in order to communicate information, this has not been a widely used method compared to other tools. With developments in public use of the internet and the use of new technology to access information, it is likely that in the future, use of video and other media will become increasingly important in order to effectively engage desired audiences.
- Interreg IV projects produced many high quality information resources. However a sense of ownership and participation in the development of these tools is key to ensure good uptake and use.
- The most effective communication methods involved consultation and participation from audiences in order to develop useful, meaningful information provision. It is suggested that this interaction is vital and should be considered at the beginning of all projects where communication is required.