ADAPTA BLUES

"Adaptation to climate change through management and restoration of European estuarine ecosystems".

E 1.4: Communication Strategy

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1.1   Background

The information context and the discourse that is transmitted to society today is undergoing a process of constant transformation, mainly due to the "infoxication" to which we are exposed in our daily life and the modifications in our habits when it comes to consuming information.

In this context of information overload, with citizens receiving all kinds of content, climate change is climbing positions in the social interest pyramid, which implies a greater presence in the media. Taking the statistics as a reference, they reveal that the average news related to climate change, our greatest environmental challenge, is rising in those countries where its effects are being felt with notoriety. However, a more efficient and contrastable communication is needed when it comes to training and informing citizens and generating interest for consuming environmental.

Thus, news about climate change usually relate to catastrophic events and natural disasters, international summits or the release of alarming scientific reports (e.g. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issues its verdict publishing the possible impact of a global warming of 1.5ºC). On the contrary, the development of novel solutions to adapt and mitigate climate change do not usually appear in the media.

It is also worth noting the feeling that the receivers of these messages are beginning to feel "defenceless" in the face of the messages they receive from both traditional and social media, or that science is unable to "speak to them in their own language".

1.2   Goals

The main goal of this strategy is to create an effective mode of communication to reach the target audience. The key points will be the messages that nature-based solutions are being researched and applied. Moreover, that this research is at the forefront of the fight against climate change.

To achieve this goal, this communication strategy includes an initial review of the mapping of target audience, targeted communication tools and indicators of monitoring the impact of each communication activity.

2   MAPPING OF THE TARGETED AUDIENCE

Mapping of the targeted stablishes a general scenario based on which we will later select the key audiences or priority audiences of the project. The key audiences are those individuals or social groups (internal and external), with a legitimate interest, who will be affected by the present or future actions of the project and who, likewise, can positively or negatively influence its development throughout the different established stages. The ADAPTABLUES project has some intrinsic characteristics (duration of the project, number of partners involved, objectives) that derive in the establishment of a wide map that, in the strategy, should introduce a prioritization according to:

1. The strategic importance for the project
2. Capacity to influence public opinion
3. Influence on regulatory bodies.
4. Ability to disseminate key messages.

Our map audience recognize four levels of relationships (Figure 1):

- Direct: People and groups who directly interact with the project.
- Indirect: People and groups who do not directly interact with the project but exercise strong influence over direct users.
- Remote: People and groups who remain at a distance from the project but could be affected / influenced by the project.
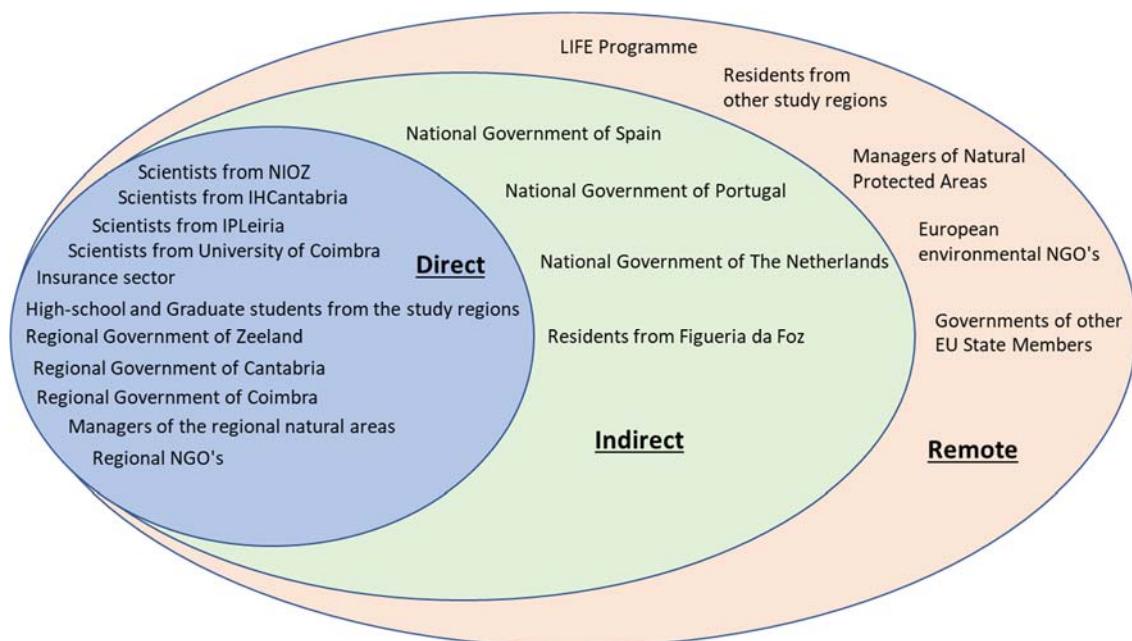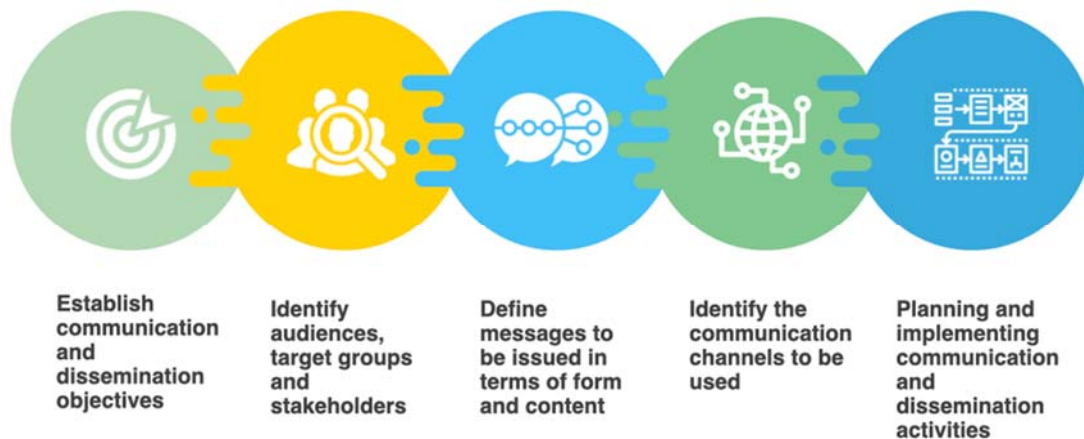- Social: Wider society influences.

Figure 1. Map of the targeted audience.

3 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

The four points mentioned above form the pillars of the communication and dissemination strategy, in which the tools and messages to be disseminated will be adapted coherently to the objectives and target groups. In this way, certain actions will be specifically aimed at some of the groups, but others will be common to the whole.

The communications strategy focuses on:

| Establish communication and dissemination objectives | Identify audiences, target groups and stakeholders | Define messages to be issued in terms of form and content | Identify the communication channels to be used | Planning and implementing communication and dissemination activities |

3.1 Phases

The communication actions may have a variable character in time. Some will be carried out throughout the project and others will be developed at specific moments

Three phases are established for the fulfilment of this communication plan and its actions:

1. **Launch phase:** when the project and its objectives will be announced (corporate image, website, press release, public presentation, brochure, meetings with local agents...)
2. **Development phase:** evolution of the project's actions, objectives achieved (website, notes and press conferences, informative material, information boards, talks, workshops...)
3. **Closing phase:** final results (website, technical seminar, Layman report, notes and press conference, after-life plan...)

3.2 Messages

The messages must be clear and informative, recall the objectives pursued through the project and describe the benefits that will be generated in the area of action in order to promote interest and awareness of public opinion with respect to the project. Transparent and institutional information on the planned interventions must be transmitted.

Therefore, a key message will be selected for each target audience and support based on the following table:

INFORMATION TO DISSEMINATE	MESSAGE	TOOLS
What is LIFEAdaptablues for	"The European littoral ecosystems are degraded due to intense economic and urbanistic activity and high population density within these areas. As a consequence, coastal areas are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change."	Press Releases, Website, Brochures, Rollups, video…
	"In Europe, approximately one fifth of the population lives within 10 km from the coast and many littoral areas are already below sea level. Therefore, there is a need for coastal communities to adapt to climate change risks."	Press Releases, Website, Brochures, Rollups, video…
Conservation is a good strategy	"**Conservation and restoration** of estuarine ecosystems is an efficient strategy to enhance adaptation to climate change in coastal areas of the European Atlantic coast."	Press Releases, Website, Brochures, Rollups, video, dissemination tools…
LIFE Adaptablues "Big Figures"	"5 Years || 2.2 Millions || 4 Partners || 3 Countries || 5 Estuaries || 1 City Council"	Press Releases, Website, Brochures, Rollups, video…
Need for execution of scheduled tasks	The non-execution of a project such as LIFE adaptablues can lead to an increase in the impacts derived from climate change	Press Releases, Website, Brochures, Rollups, video…
Get to know better LIFEAdaptablues	The LIFE ADAPTA BLUES project aims to demonstrate that the conservation and restoration of estuarine ecosystems is an efficient strategy to enhance adaptation to climate change in coastal areas of the European Atlantic coast	Press Releases, Website, Brochures, Rollups, video, open participative workshops, educational materials…
Sharing experiences	The results obtained will be shared for the debate and exchange of experiences with agents related to coastal use and management, so that they can serve as a basis for the development of actions in other regions	Workshops, networking actions…
Nature based Solutions	"Nature Based Solutions (NbS) cover a range of approaches which use natural processes and species to address societal challenges and provide solutions for environmental problems."	Press Releases, Website, Brochures, Rollups, video, Public talks, workshops at schools…
What can the estuaries do for you	"How estuarine ecosystems help reducing climate change risks"	Press Releases, Website, Brochures, Rollups, video Public talks, workshops at school…

4 SWOT

We introduce below an approach to the SWOT, which could be completed and verified with information such as the one mentioned above and complemented by the proposal for a communication action.

For the elaboration of this SWOT, the technical document of the LIFE project (Technical application forms), the study of the public information and the study of the press appearances of the coordinating partner of the project have been used.

In the action plan we present the tentative strategy for the next years to be revised, extended and agreed with all the partners of the project. The weaknesses and strengths refer to the project, the threats and opportunities to the environment.

The SWOT proposed is a previous analysis, pending verification and validation by the project's Communication Committee, and a review of the studies already carried out and the experience that can provide more objective, measurable and contrastable information.

WEAKNESSES

Terminology:

- Difficult to disseminate due to the technicality of the project information.

Economic:

- There are few socio-economic previous studies on the consequences of the implementation of these adaptation measures.

Management:

- The physical distance from the areas of study may result in less participation by civil society.

- Risk of poor communication of actions among partners, dispersion, poor communication. Information does not arrive quickly enough; it is not anticipated.

STRENGTHS

Terminology:

- Presence of emblematic species and a rich natural heritage

- To be able to integrate the values of biodiversity and the eco-systemic services to the users and the institutions responsible for its management and conservation.

Management:

- Blue message. Nature Based Solutions.

- Project with participative will (partners, institutions, sector etc...).

- Dynamism of the partners.

- Motivated and trained project partners in conservation, management and coastal research.

THREATS

Terminology:

- Confusion of project objectives.

- Confusion with other projects with similar themes

- Generalist media with little scientific knowledge and scientific means with little diffusion.

Economic:

- Lack of interest for the insurance designed products

- Project results not in line with the strong investment made.

Management:

- Social distrust of the effectiveness of public administration in the project management.

- Disappointment regarding the results achieved.

- Lack of knowledge on the part of project managers to these new approaches and concepts.

OPPORTUNITIES

Terminology:

- Practical for the consumer, good for the consumer, offers him natural resources from the environment.

Economic:

- Future profit potential for insurance sector.

- Increasing opening of new sustainable business opportunities

- Growing perception by the users of the sea that a large part of the economic sectors that depend on it are threatened in the medium term.

Management:

- Presence of habitats and species of Community interest.

- The project will allow the partners to strengthen their knowledge, capacity to

action and interaction.

- Interest and institutional support from the Government and the European Community.

- Social sensitivity to climate change problems.

- Statistics (Eurobarometer) and other studies indicate that protection of the environment is one of the priorities of European citizens.

- Positive prospects for partners at European level: ability to achieve other projects on the basis of know-how (learning through practice).

5 COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Different tools will be used for disseminating the goals, activities and results of the LIFE ADAPTA BLUES project.

The relationship between objectives, target-groups and messages/tools is as follows:

	Direct					Indirect		Remote				
	Scientist	Regional Government	RNA Manageers	Regional NGO´s	Students	National Governments (Spain, Portugal, Netherlands)	Residents Figueira de Foz	European environmental NGO´s	Other National Governments	Other regions students	NPA Managers	LIFE Programme
5.1.1.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.1.2.												
Brochures	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					x
Rollups	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					x
Newsletters	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Video		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Animations	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.2.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.3.1.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.3.2.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.4.	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.5.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.6.		x	x	x		x		x	x		x	
5.7.					x		x			x		

5.1 Visual and physical communication

5.1.1 Identity of the project

A recognizable graphical identity has been produced, that includes a project's logo, banners for social networks and templates for presentations and reports.

All the communications and reports of the LIFE ADAPTA BLUES project will include this visual identity trying to facilitate the recognition of project results.

Figure 1 shows the LIFE ADAPTA BLUES logo. The design of this logo includes various elements symbolizing an estuary, such as leaf, mountains and the sea, which shapes adapt and protect each other forming the isotype. The selected colors were the blue, which is usually associated with the water or the sea, and the light green to represent vegetation.

Figure 2. Logo of the LIFE ADAPTA BLUES project.

The chosen font is GEOMETOS (Figure 2), a modern, clean and balanced typeface. We have opted for a type without a serif that is especially indicated for screen displays, remaining legible in small sizes and clean in large ones.

GEOMETOS

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNÑOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnñopqrstuvwxyz

Figure 3. Selected font for the visual identity of the LIFE ADAPTA BLUES project.

With the aim to unify reports and dissemination materials, different templates have been carried out for presentations (power point template) and reports (word template).

5.1.2 Physical communication tools

Different physical communication tools are being implemented:

- Brochures
- Roll-ups
- Newsletter
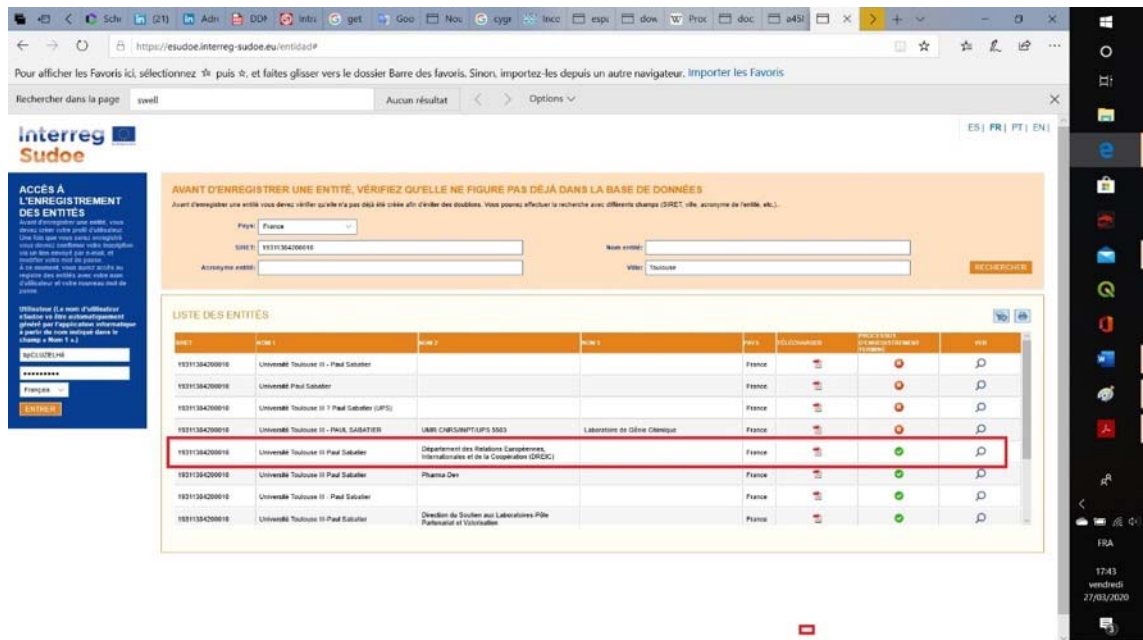
- Video: Videos about the project will be created and shared though IHCantabria´s vimeo account (https://vimeo.com/ihcantabria/). It is important to note that this vimeo channel shows an accumulated audience of 15.000 people.
- Animation: A graphic video will resume the main aspects of the project through a problem-solution narrative, combined with the visual description of concepts. The animation will be published by social media and will be available on the project website.

5.2 Project webpage

A website has been launched on https://www.lifeadaptablues.eu . This is the basis of the project's communication strategy.

All visibility and communication work will begin and finish on the website (Figure 3). In order to maximize the dissemination of the webpage, all the information about the project is available in the four languages of the project: English, Spanish, Portuguese and German.

The website provides the basic information about the project (goals, actions, partners, and expected results), as well as the last news about the project and its activities and all the resources developed. Moreover, the website has been designed as a platform for the exchange of the documents and reports produced in the project between the partnership and the LIFE monitoring team.

Figure 4. Home page of the website www.lifeadaptablues.eu

In order to engage a widespread audience, the partners of the LIFE ADAPTA BLUES project will publish different entries/notices in their own websites to announce the beginning and end of the project and the results of their main actions.

5.3 Social media

Another communication tool is the use of social platforms. It refers to not only Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn, but also to information portals, forums, social channels, Internet mentions, opinions, blogs, etc.

The use of social media for communicating the research of the LIFE ADAPTA BLUES project will increase the impact of the project dissemination due to the connection with the non-academic. Moreover, the use of social networks allows the feedback from stakeholders and to invite them to participate in the project actions.

5.3.1 Twitter

Twitter will be used as the main social network of the LIFE ADAPTA BLUES project. For this purpose, four profiles have been created for the LIFE project, one in each language: Spanish, English, Portuguese and German.

All the published twits will follow some recommendations:

- Use a hashtag that everyone should use
- Add the URL of the website in each action
- Use of twitter cards, a new way to interact in other people´s timeline by using images with a message over it.

5.3.2 Facebook

A unique profile has been created in multi-language format (English, Spanish, Portuguese and German). If necessary, the publications will be segmented to the country of reference according to the news/post published. In this way, we are able to create a single channel and to prevent the message dispersion.

5.4 Content marketing

An additional tool of the communications strategy is the invitation to "Guest Blogger or Guest Speaker" to participate in the LIFE ADAPTA BLUES project.

It is a technique widely used among bloggers. They write as a guest on another blog, which allows the guest to access followers who may not have, helps him/her in terms of SEO and positioning, and allows the host to cover more topics. This is a very productive synergy.

5.5 Traditional media

Traditional media (radio, newspaper and tv) are also being used as communication tool for the LIFE ADAPTA BLUES project.

Last year the impact of IHCantabria in traditional media was 203 citations. IHCantabria appears in radio, newspapers or tv programs at least once every 2/3 days, with an average reach of 250.000 per appearance. This social impact will be used to disseminate the activities of the ADAPTA BLUES project.

The actions planned are:

- Press releases will be circulated at the beginning and the end of the project.
- The notes will have an internal accompaniment with talking points to unify the message.
- The audience for this story will be:
    o Agencies
    o Media Direct
    o Contacts with editors

5.6 Capacity building activities

The development of capacity building activities is another communication tool that will be implemented by the LIFE ADAPTA BLUES project.

The development of specific technical workshops allows spreading the knowledge generated during the project to the academia, the scientific community and technicians of public administrations with competences in the management of coastal areas. These activities increase the visibility of projects and promote the engagement of stakeholders.

On the other hand, the targeted audience will be increased by the launch of a Specialist Diploma as an official degree from the University of Cantabria.

5.7 Contest

The last communication tool is a student contest, which will enhance social awareness. Lessons learnt on previous LIFE projects (e.g. CONVIVE LIFE project) has shown that public contests are a useful tool for the dissemination of the goals and results of European projects.

6 MONITORING OF THE IMPACT OF EACH COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY

The communication activity will be continuously monitored with the aim to adapt the communication strategy if the dissemination of the project does not achieve the established targets.

To achieve this goal, we have designed the following framework (Table 1), with the objective of contextualizing the actions and establishing the mechanisms of evaluation and decision making.

	INPUTS	ACTIVITES	OUTPUTS	OUT-TAKES	OUTCOMES	IMPACTS
	What we'll do to prepare the communication	Things that we are going to produce	What we will put out	What audience will do with our products	The effect our comm have in the audience	The results caused by our communication
KEY STEPS	**OBJECTIVE** To create a effective model of communication to reach the targeted audience as shown in chapter 2 **BUDGET** 88.935,00 € **RESOURCES** Own staff External contractors	**COMM RESEARCH** Research and analysis of trends and what is being done in environmental communication **PRELIMINARY PRODUCTION** Visual identity manual Communications plan Stablish media relations General content writing	**FOR DISTRIBUTION** Leaflets and brochures. Diverse viscom (e.g. Rollups, Informative panels at estuaries,etc...). Material produced for project digital media (e.g. Twitter cards, photographs, infographs,etc...). **TO EXPOSE** Project website . Project Social Accounts. Contest outputs. **TO ORGANIZE** Contests. a. For scholars b. For University	Give attention. **Awareness and understanding.** By rising the knowledge of the problems and the actions of the project **Engagement & Participation.** By increasing the willingness to participate in similar projects **Consideration**	Knowledge Attitude change Satisfaction Trust Preference Intention Advocacy	Increase of reputation Engage new relationships Public/social change of way of thinking about the issue
EXAMPLE METRICS AND MLESTONE	**SMART OBJECTIVES** Generate knowledge and awareness about nature based solutions Show how this works in the four estuaries object of this project **KEY INDICATORS** A communications dashboard will be developed, that it'll include the most usual KPI's (eg. Daily website visits, impact on Social media accounts, personal visits to the action's places, traditional media interest, etc...)	Current awareness by developing a survey	Content produced Media relations	unique visitors views **engagement** (follows, likes, etc...) Returning visitors positiveness subscribers	message acceptance trust levels, statemnts of support registrations, brand preference, reffirming (staff satisfaction)	public support meets with targets staff retenttion wellbeing increase
METHODS OF EVALUATION	Internal analysis Previous knowledge Feasability analysis SWOT analysis Metadata analysis. (e.g. past researchs and metrics)	Expert review Partner consultation	Dashboard metrics Activity reports	Dashboard metrics	Dashboard metrics Ethnography (by direct observation) Netnography Opinion polls Stakeholders survey Interviews to focus groups	**Database records** CRM data Survey data Reputation studies

COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

Table 1. Communication framework and mechanisms of evaluation.