Communication and Dissemination Plan

Project Number: 366
Project Name: Innovations for Seaweed Producers in the Northern Periphery Area
Project Acronym: SW-GROW
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Contents

1.0 Introduction

This document is the Dissemination and Communication Strategy for the NPA project SW-GROW communication activities. A final section gives details of how we will monitor and evaluation of the project's communication activities - followed by a timeline for producing and disseminating deliverables and an overview of upcoming events.

The objective of the project is to increase economic opportunities in the seaweed industry by developing innovative working practices that can be widely adopted and implemented as

best practise by SME's in the NPA region to develop quality seaweed products of consistent standard that are identifiable and can be clearly branded.

This work package (WP) will communicate and disseminate the activities and outputs of the SW-GROW project to its lead users, stakeholders and the wider public. The plan forms an integral part of the project and will ensure that project communications are well coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the information needs of the target groups. All WPs feed into this WP since dissemination relies on inputs from all other work activity. This WP also has synergies with WP C but deals with the external communication and dissemination of the project.

1.1 Background

The project will identify common issues throughout the Region and give access to high-level R&D links within academic partners across regional and national borders to pilot solutions that can be adopted throughout the industry - thus developing solutions that enable technology transfer across the Programme area - in particular benefiting SMEs. This will result in higher levels of innovation and competitiveness in remote and sparsely populated areas by transfer and development of models and solutions that facilitate technology transfer to, and across, the Programme area.

Consortium partners will ensure:

- Seaweed extraction is sustainable with a good balance between wild harvesting and cultivation

- Waste is reduced through the utilisation of seaweed from net cleaning and other processes, and extracting the most product from the seaweed used

- Energy use is reduced by effective drying methods and application of renewable energy technologies – where feasible

- DNA characterisation so the geographical source can be established to enable SMEs to create a unique brand for the high-quality product associated with the NPA region.

Because the seaweed source is identifiable, a strong brand can be built around the product. This will benefit all SMEs in the NPA area who work towards the quality standards. The branding will also draw on cultural and historical information.

The Northern Periphery Area has abundant seaweed resources, much of the NPA region benefits from coastal ecosystems supporting seaweed habitats. Red algae and brown algae are harvested from natural populations, and although seaweed farming is in its infancy, brown and red algae are the most common species farmed. However, the diversity of cultivated seaweed species is likely to increase as the industry develops. Although the seaweed resource in the NPA region is abundant and quality is high; the seaweed industry is unevenly developed within the area. Scotland, Ireland, Iceland and Norway lead with relatively strong seaweed economies, whereas areas such as the Faroe Islands and Greenland are just emerging. Potential for developing the seaweed industry based on biological sustainability is extensive within the NPA region and therefore providing significant opportunity for existing knowledge application and exchange between countries.

One of the dissemination objectives is to encourage the development of new SMEs in NPA areas, such as Finland and Northern Sweden, where there is a limited industry.

1.2 Dissemination strategy

The SW-GROW description of work identifies the projects key outputs as well as the groups we would like to inform and engage in the project. The development of a dissemination strategy at the beginning of a project is an effective tool for planning and implementation. A dissemination strategy enables us to take a more considered view of the broad and final

impact we would like SW-GROW to have, to plan for this and according to feedback adjust our dissemination activities.

Targeted dissemination activities will allow SW-GROW to increase awareness of the project, its results and the high quality brand which it will develop. To reach the desired audience, the targeted Plan for Disseminating will establish communication goals, and identify tools for reaching these groups and set out processes for measuring the success of the communication activities.

Project partners will share any information they wish to disseminate with UnaG. Project partners will maintain timelines and inform project members if there is a delay. Each member of the consortium will have a role in the dissemination of project results to local authorities as well as national or regional public bodies, industry actors and research centres via agreed dissemination material with UnaG.

1.3 Communication & Dissemination Objectives

The following will be addressed:
- Maximum awareness of the project's activities and results will be achieved through publications, communication actions and organisation of events.
- High quality professional communication tools will be used to communicate the key messages of the project –
    - why the project is needed;
    - what it sets out to do;
    - the potential benefits of the brand;
    - and the outcomes to the target audiences.
- Project activities and outputs will be transferred to target groups including NGOs, municipalities, SMEs, community-based organisations and citizens to facilitate uptake of results by them, enabling them to use the outcome and results of the project within partner regions and the whole programme area.
- Risks associated with communication activities, and mitigation measures, are identified in the Risk Register.

The plan will ensure that the project activities are widely disseminated throughout the whole programme area.

1.4 Communication goals and key messages

This project communication plan will focus on helping SMEs improve the quality of their products and by providing a useful "brand" of excellence for their products. A website will be maintained throughout the life of the project which will communicate progress and give notice of upcoming events, activities and outputs.

Project branding, logos and targeted promotional material will be used to raise awareness. Newsletters and E-zines, project videos and social media tools including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube will be used to reach a wide audience in the Programme area, the project target groups and relevant policy makers.

A project poster based on the NPA template will be displayed at all partner organisations visible to the public.

Clear communications will be made with the project officer and each project's First Level Control Officers to ensure timely and efficient discharge of duties and prompt response to queries and concerns.

Targeted dissemination channels to communicate SW-GROW activities to identified shareholder groups.

2.0 Guidelines of Communication Actions

The communication actions of the SW-GROW project will seek the maximum impact, by using different forms and methods adapted to the beneficiaries of the projects. Priority will be given to dissemination through electronic means: websites, email, social networks, etc.

All communications will be consistent with EU and mandatory programme publicity requirements and Communication synergies will be created to increase the impact and increase the effectiveness of the measures.

Communication actions will not be discriminatory, will not use sexist language, and will promote equality between women and men, and social inclusion.

3.0 Target groups

The target audience for dissemination are regional/local public authority, national public authority, General Public, SME's involved in the marine and seaweed sector, sectoral agency, interest groups including NGOs Higher Education and Research bodies, Media and in each project partner area and throughout the NPA.

3.1 Local/Regional and National Authorities

Local and regional and National authorities will participate in the project activities sharing data about their territory, discussing the strategies, methods and tools - they will be invited to participate in the Local Follow-up Committees (LFC) assessing all the project deliverables and achievements.
Main dissemination channel: face to face meetings, promotional material, Communication events and visits organized by the project.

3.2 General Public

General Public/Local communities of the project territories will be studied and involved in the raising awareness and in testing the social acceptance of the brand developed. They will also be invited to participate in the other activities through its representatives in the LFC. They will also be targeted as potential natural resource entrepreneurs aiming at strengthening the local economic force.
Main dissemination channel: face to face meetings, promotional material, project updates printed in relevant media, Presentation at industrial events or exhibits, Communication events and visits organized by the project, Online dissemination and social media

3.3 SME's

SMEs that will be the main beneficiaries of WP3 will be selected to participate in the pilots' development since one of the main objectives of SW-GROW is to increase those SME's sustainability as well as help them characterise their quality goods. Other SMEs/stakeholders will be involved by invitation to information tours to pilots in NPA regions represented in the project implementation and by invitation to take advantage of the partners' network.
Main dissemination channel: face to face meetings, promotional material, project updates printed in relevant media, Presentation at industrial events or exhibits, Communication events and visits organized by the project, Online dissemination and social media

3.4 Sectoral agency Interest Groups & NGO's

We shall consult with sectoral agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and especially local community groups, including resident associations, local co-ops, communities, island trusts, and marine communities.
Main dissemination channel: face to face meetings, promotional material, project updates printed in relevant media.

3.5 Higher Education and Research Bodies & Education/Training Centres and school

Higher education and research bodies will be consulted and informed of the projects workings and outcomes. Education/Training centres and schools will be informed of the projects outcomes and results.
Main dissemination channel: promotional material, project updates printed in relevant media.

3.6 Media

Local media have a significant role to play both as multipliers and as strategic partners. In remote rural area, some of these become champions if they can be convinced of the merits and benefits to their local communities.
Main dissemination channel: Local media will act as a channel of dissemination by including articles in local newspapers, local radio interviews and local news coverage.

4 Tools for dissemination

Reaching our intended audience

A number of communication tools will be used to reach target groups identified above in order to disseminate the information on SW-GROW activities. These tools include:

- Project website
- SW-GROW factsheet
- Visual identity
- Videos
- Press releases
- Social Media
- Meetings with SME's

4.1 SW-GROW website

A public facing website will be maintained throughout the life of the project and will communicate progress and give notice to visitors of upcoming events, publications and outputs. The theme of the website is to be in keeping with all marketing, promotional and secretarial material to ensure aesthetic coherence across all aspects of the project. Social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram will be linked on the website. SW-GROW.eu has been procured. The website will feature all aspects of the project. It will highlight key messages to ensure information is available in all languages and appropriate for the wide intended audience.

The website will serve as a central point for information. It will be used specifically for the partners before it becomes accessible to the public. The lead partner (LCC) will be responsible for the management of the website and the lead project partner for dissemination and other project partners (where applicable) are to supply them with relevant information.

The website is required to be updated regularly, in order to achieve this target an annual update check of the website will be carried out. When the project concludes, LCC will maintain and upkeep the website.

Informative areas of the website:
- Background to SW-GROW,
- Information on the consortium partners and the work they are carrying out in SW-GROW
- News
- An events section with details of upcoming and past events, including partner meetings and beyond with relevance or connection to the project. Videos and photos will illustrate progress on the SW-GROW project.
- Links to other renewable/ energy efficiency websites as well as the NPA website and European websites that partners are linked to. Links to online adaptation tools and web resources.
- Private area for use by Project Partners

4.2 Project factsheet

This will feature information about the project partnership, programme area, technology aims and benefits to society. It will illustrate and explain the project benefits. It will be made available in community languages and can be used by all partners as a local tool to help inform our key audiences.

An electronic version PDF for web publishing and electronic files suitable for printing will then provide the main form of distribution and electronic files suitable for filing and can be sent as an attachment.

The factsheet will include consistent branding and comply with IEE communication regulations using the correct EU symbol and NPA symbol. The factsheet will be created by UnaG with input from all partners. Project Partners are responsible for translation to their language for regional dissemination.

4.4 Visual identity – Logo and slogan

The logo is to be developed by UnaG with input from project partners.

Project branding will ensure that the SW-GROW project is visible and recognisable throughout the lifetime of the project. A strong project logo will enhance the visibility of the project. Brochures, newsletters and flyers will be disseminated at national and regional conferences, exhibitions and seminars. Posters will be displayed at all partner events.

Use of SME and project partner's logo's and affiliate links can be used throughout the project and on project material where applicable.

4.5 Audio-visual materials

Both short (approximately. 3 min) and longer videos will be developed to promote the project in community languages and presented at most appropriate events. Both will include the rationale for the project. These include national conferences/events and will be used for dissemination of information at community and stakeholder events to present a visual description that will give instant understanding of SW-GROW. Use of SW-GROW marketing materials will be used throughout the video where possible.

UnaG will be responsible for organising the production of the videos where applicable. However, input and recordings must be made available from each project partner.

These will be produced throughout the project; however, a compilation may be made available at the end of the project to demonstrate the 'SW-GROW Journey'.

4.6 Press releases

Press releases will be issued in each partner region to coincide with key milestone including the project launch; each of the pilot launches prior to all project events. These will be sent to local newspapers and radio. In relevant countries, press releases will be released to national, regional media. Press releases will be created by the responsible partner UnaG using the projects template for press releases. All documentation and information intended for the press release must be sent to UnaG two weeks prior to Press release date. Project Partners are responsible for translation to their language for regional dissemination. It is planned that there will be 9 press releases throughout the duration of the project. Please see timescale below of press release.

All partners are responsible for the dissemination of press releases in their region, following guidance from UnaG. A press kit will be developed to facilitate media coverage.

Press Release Schedule			
Press Release	**Topic**	**Responsibility**	**Date:**
1	SW-GROW Project Overall	All partners via UnaG	M6
2	Cultivation	TARI	M12
3	Waste Reduction	ARTEK	M16
4	Improved drying processes	LCC	M18
5	DNA Characterisation	NUIG	M26
6	Chemical (elemental) and biochemical analysis of algal biomass	SLU	M28
7	Disposing of biomass waste from harvested and processed seaweed and making fuel from it.	UoI	M30
8	SME's input/benefits from projects	All partners via UnaG	M36
9	Project Outcomes	All partners via UnaG	M36

4.7 Social media

All partners will share or generate content and send to UnaG who will organise the release of the content through each social media channel. Social media use, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter will have links to our SW-GROW.eu website. Sharing information from project partners, SME's, related parties and marine industry marketing material and content will be permitted on SW-GROW social media. Furthermore, SW-GROW's social media is authorised to appear on project partners, SME's, related parties and marine industry social media. UnaG is responsible for social media management with all project partners aiding with content creation.

The target audience for the social media is SME's, aquaculture sector employees, special interest groups

Facebook is the main social media source for information sharing, connecting with local communities and can be a useful tool in gaining insight to the target audience.

Twitter will be used in conjunction with both other social media. Short, concise updates will be available with a link to more information.

Instagram will be used to share photos and information. Attractive photos to catch the target audience will be used in conjunction with other marketing material. Seaweed of the month feature will be present where photos and videos of a particular type of seaweed will be showcased, and information given about that type. This can be shared on Facebook and a link made available on twitter.

YouTube - one video minimum will be developed each year for the project. Short (3min) and longer videos will be developed for this project

4.8 SME Meetings

Project partners to arrange meetings with SME in order to ascertain valuable information and to share knowledge gained from SW-GROW on a regular basis. Input from regional SME's are required throughout the duration of the project.

5 Monitoring and evaluation

As part of the monthly online meeting of the partners all Work Packages are addressed and targets for each are discussed and monitored by the lead partner to ensure that each partner is delivering their responsibilities. These include a frequent review of SW-GROW dissemination activities.

Online dissemination tools (website, newsletters, and social media) will be continuously monitored, accompanied by periodic reviews. Stand-alone activities such as events will be evaluated during, or in immediate follow-up to the activity. Website usage will be monitored using a series of key performance indicators (KPIs) to allow for periodic evaluation. Social Media will be assessed against KPI's in the table below. Periodic qualitative evaluation may also be carried out to gain user feedback on the newsletter's content. Such an evaluation may provide information on the relevance, reliability and novelty of content being provided. Twitter can be quantitatively measured using a number of integrated features contained within the management platform. In addition, retweets and mentions will be monitored to assess which type and presentation of information is preferred by followers.

In addition to these specific monitoring and evaluation activities, regular contact will be made with project partners to assess general dissemination activities being carried out in the context of the SW-GROW project. Internal evaluation will focus on the performance of the project team and the execution of the dissemination strategy. This focuses on whether implementation is occurring as planned, and what strengths and weaknesses can be identified in the plan.

Key questions and elements will include:

- Has the strategy been followed?
- What remains to be done?
- Who has responsibility for the remaining elements?
- Have past deadlines been met? Are activities on track to meet upcoming deadlines?
- Have dissemination activities been appropriately budgeted for? Which measures are/were the most cost effective?

- Have the dissemination activities worked towards the vision and objectives of SW-GROW defined in the dissemination strategy?

External evaluation examines the impact that dissemination activities had on the target group(s). Key questions and elements to be considered include:

- Are the intended target group being reached? Are the communication channels working as perceived?
- In terms of outputs, how many people in the target groups were reached, how many times and over what period of time? What were the 'push statistics' (e.g., how many newsletters were sent out, how many articles published)?
- How is the target group receiving the dissemination activities of SW-GROW, and are their perceptions or behaviour changing? Do they understand the intended messages?

Social Media KPI								
	Action Item	M6	M12	M18	M24	M30	M36	Total
Twitter	Followers	5	10	15	20	25	35	**110**
Instagram	Follower	20	30	40	50	60	80	**280**
Facebook	Follower	20	40	50	60	80	100	**350**
YouTube	New Video content on the page	/	1	/	1	/	1	**3**

6 Timeplan

Press releases will be issued in each partner region to coincide with key milestone including the project launch; each of the pilot launches prior to all project events. These will be sent to local newspapers and radio. In relevant countries, press releases will be released to national, regional media.

6.1 Communication & Dissemination Actions

Internal communication timeline			
No.	Name	Lead	Delivery date
1	Project website	LCC	M3
2	Social Media Site Setup	UnaG	M4
3	Press Release 1 (content sent two weeks prior)	UnaG	M6
4	Creation of branded material (coats/stationary) made available for next project meeting.	UnaG	M6
5	Project Partner Meeting	TARI	M6
6	Project Posters Created and Delivered to each partner	UnaG	M8
7	Project website (updated I)	LCC	M12

8	Project Partner Meeting	ARTEK	M12
9	Press Relese 2(content sent two weeks prior)	UnaG	M12
10	Press Release 3(content sent two weeks prior)	UnaG	M15
11	Project Partner Meeting	TBC	M18
12	Press Release 4(content sent two weeks prior)	UnaG	M20
13	Project website (updated II)	LCC	M24
14	Project Partner Meeting	TBC	M24
15	Press release 5(content sent two weeks prior)	UnaG	M24
16	Project Partner Meeting	TBC	M30
17	Press Release 6(content sent two weeks prior)	UnaG	M30
18	Project website (updated III)	LCC	M36
19	Press Release 7, 8 &9(content sent two weeks prior)	UnaG	M36
20	Final version of the project website	LCC	M36
21	Project Launch	LCC	M36