

Communicating OCEAN CITIZEN: Blending co-creation and storytelling for an engaging communication



Let's meet!

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Communication often doesn't take center stage in European projects, resulting in a lack of strategic importance and missed opportunities for real impact from the beginning of the project. As a consequence, partners may not be fully engaged and aware of the communication strategy, creativity in actions may be limited, and actions may end up being repetitive and ineffective. All these fac-

tors significantly limit the real impact of our projects and hinder our ability to effectively engage and raise awareness to foster ocean literacy. In this scenario, OCEAN CITIZEN has actively worked to change this dynamic by prioritising communication from the beginning.

- RESTORATION
- CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION
- ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZEN SCIENCE
- AWARENESS
- LOCAL ENGAGEMENT
- ECO-FRIENDLY
- NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS
- BIODIVERSITY
- LONG-TERM VIABILITY
- OCEAN LITERACY
- MISSION OCEAN
- BLUE ECONOMY
- ECOSYSTEMS COMPLEXITY
- COASTAL PROTECTION
- MARINE ACTIVE RESTORATION
- ECONOMIC BENEFIT AND DESIGN APPROACH
- REGENERATION
- CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION
- MARINE BIODIVERSITY
- CIRCULAR ECONOMY
- MARINE FORESTS
- SCALABILITY

Image 1: Keywords selected by partners during a participatory workshop with de partners.

Main challenges

- 1 Develop a comprehensive and inclusive communication strategy.
- 2 Implement a creative storytelling approach to enhance engagement.
- 3 Promote synergies with other projects.
- 4 Share best practices in communication to support OCEAN CITIZEN'S partners.

Methodology

Comprehensive and holistic Communication and Dissemination plan

We crafted a comprehensive and holistic Communication and Dissemination plan that considered diverse target audiences, key messages, and communication channels. This plan aimed to reach various stakeholders effectively, ensuring that each mes-

sage was tailored to resonate with its intended audience. We understood the **importance of starting our communication plan early in the project**. The first step to develop the C&D plan was a co-creative process involving all the project partners.

Co-creative process

Our communication strategy is unique. All partners were involved to collectively assess the project's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis). Following this initial analysis, we conducted **workshops** to identify the primary target audiences and develop key words and messages tailored to each audience segment.

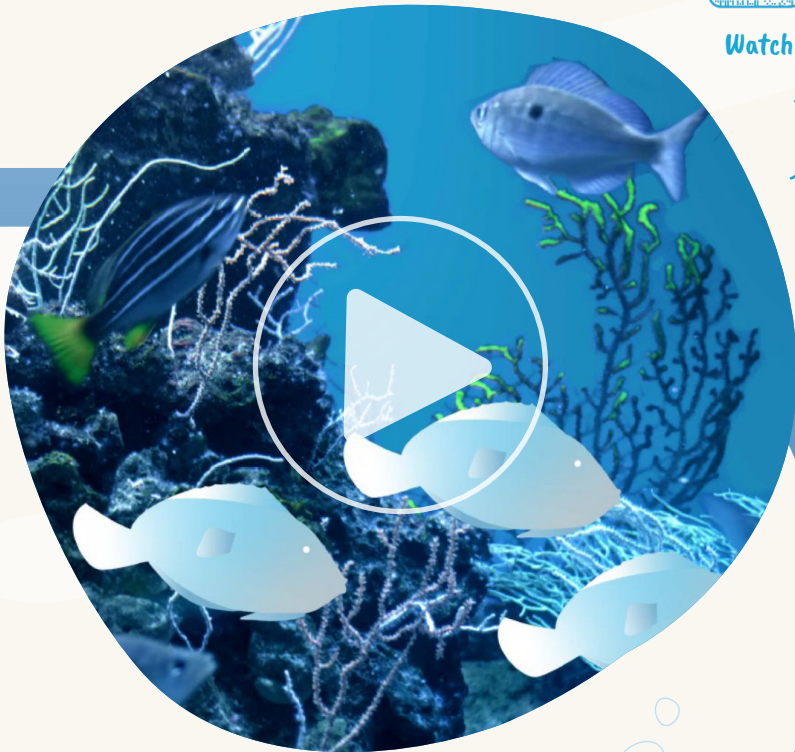


Image 2: Presentation video of the OCEAN CITIZEN project.

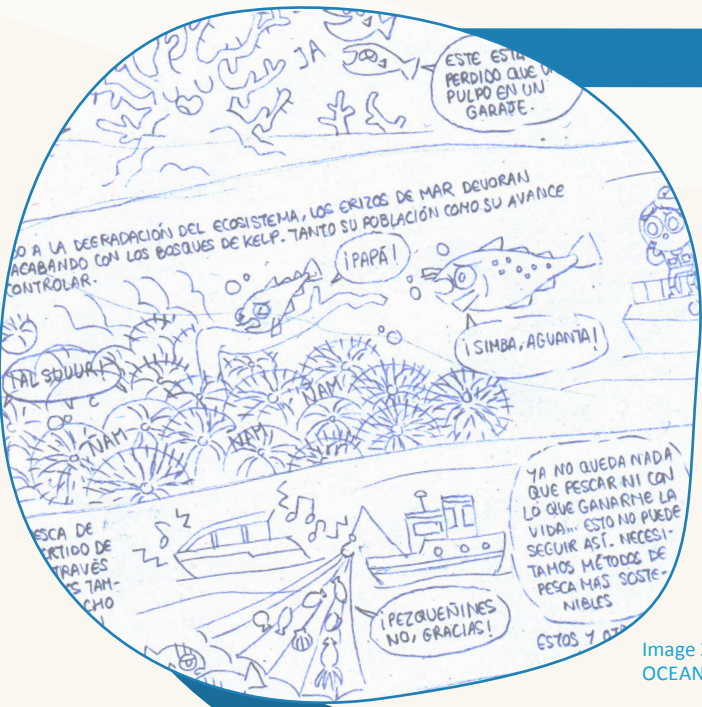


Image 3: Part of the sketch of OCEAN CITIZEN's first comic.

Creative storytelling approach

We developed a storytelling approach, inspired in the process of ecological succession, where project milestones seamlessly blend into our communication strategy. This narrative framework allowed us to **engage our audience emotionally** and effectively convey the project's objectives and achievements.

Through various channels such as our website and social media platforms, we share compelling narratives and use **visual aids like comics** or **emotional presentation video**, to captivate our audience and deliver our message in a memorable manner.

Content plan management

In the content plan, we've gone beyond simply reporting on project activities. We've proactively curated content that we believe will be compelling to our audience. This includes providing context about the project, such as information about our part-

ners and the various pilot sites. Additionally, we've incorporated educational content designed to inform and engage our audience. All the content plan has been guided and inspired by our creative storytelling approach.

Key learnings

First step, to have a C&D plan: establishing a comprehensive plan early on is crucial for aligning communication efforts with project goals and maximizing impact.

Create and decide together: foster collaboration and inclusivity in decision-making processes to enhance stakeholder engagement and ownership.

Be flexible and open in your communication: flexibility and adaptability are key to seizing new opportunities.

Seek multidisciplinary: embrace diverse perspectives and expertise to address complex challenges effectively.

Creativity and emotion to achieve an actual change: using creative storytelling and channels to inspire meaningful action.

Leveraging audience' emotions: connecting audiences emotionally to the plight of the ocean fosters empathy. When people can relate to the challenges faced by marine life and ecosystems, they are more likely to care for and take steps to protect and restore them.



Image 4: *Leptogorgia viminalis*. Laura Busquier, UGI.

Synergies and flexibility

This approach enables us to explore opportunities beyond the project's boundaries and adapt to new circumstances. By constantly looking for new collaborations and synergies, we want to **amplify the strength and impact** of our messages.

OCEAN CITIZEN looks to enhance networking, efficiency, and overall effectiveness by combining our strengths, resources, and expertise toward common goals to achieve the MISSION OCEAN.



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