



DELIVERABLE 9.8

FINAL COMMUNICATION REPORT

Work Package 9

Dissemination, Exploitation and Training Activities

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Abstract	<p>Following the UNITED Communication Plan (D9.1), this report presents a comprehensive overview of the communication efforts undertaken during the project, along with the measurement of their impact using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).</p> <p>The communication activities were designed to engage stakeholders, authorities, and administrative bodies at</p>

	<p>various scales, ranging from local to international levels. To achieve this, regular partner meetings, virtual conferences, and coordination committee sessions were held, ensuring a smooth flow of communication and collaboration between work packages and pilot initiatives.</p> <p>The project established a robust communication platform using Microsoft Teams, facilitating seamless communication among consortium members. Regular newsletters, social media updates, and website enhancements contributed to building a strong visual identity for the project and disseminating relevant information to the target audience.</p> <p>As the project progressed, it remained dedicated to its communication goals, including promoting multi-use offshore platforms, advancing the Blue Economy, and contributing to the sustainable preservation of marine ecosystems. The report also highlights the progress made in training activities, community workshops, and dissemination webinars, engaging stakeholders and fostering knowledge exchange.</p> <p>Overall, the UNITED project's final communication report showcases the success of its communication activities, setting a solid foundation for the follow-up project, ULTFARMS. The project's experience and outcomes serve as valuable lessons for future initiatives in the field of marine multi-use and sustainable blue growth.</p>
Keywords	Communication, Outreach, Engagement.

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ACRONYMS

CCT	Coordination Committee Team
CSET	Core Services Exploitation Team
CT	Consortium Coordination Team
EC	European Commission
IPR	Intellectual Property Right
PA	Partner Assembly
PM	Project Management
SAB	Stakeholder Advisory Board
WP	Work package
Sm	Social Media
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UNITED Final Communication Report presents a comprehensive overview of the project's communication activities as defined in the Deliverable 9.2 Initial Communication Plan. This report reflects the project's commitment to fostering effective communication with stakeholders at various levels, creating awareness, and promoting the uptake of multi-use offshore activities for sustainable marine activities.

The Initial Communication Plan laid out the initial flow pathways for internal and external communication, ensuring a well-coordinated consortium and successful interactions with stakeholders. Throughout the project, a continuous dialogue with authorities, administrative bodies, and relevant stakeholders has been maintained to facilitate the smooth implementation of pilots and ensure the effective dissemination of project results.

Throughout the document, communication efforts and outcomes are measured and analyzed based on the defined KPIs. Short-term and medium-term evaluation goals have been assessed, offering valuable insights for refining communication strategies and enhancing engagement.

The UNITED project underscores the paramount importance of effective communication in achieving its objectives. This Final Communication Report serves as a comprehensive account of all communication and outreach activities, showcasing the project's commitment to driving progress and fostering awareness about the concept of multi-use and its effects within the Blue Economy and beyond. Through effective communication and dissemination actions and continuous engagement with stakeholders, the project aimed to ensure the successful uptake and implementation of UNITED results and outputs, contributing to the growth of sustainable marine activities.

Often times it may be difficult to distinguish between the communication and dissemination as these activities are often intertwined in efforts to encourage the exploitation and maximise the impact of the project. While this report covers the topic of communication in the UNITED project, the D9.1 Final Dissemination report builds on it to provide a comprehensive overview of the dissemination and exploitation actions undertaken in the project.

1. INTRODUCTION

UNITED Final Communication Report is a comprehensive account of the project's communication activities, as defined in the Initial Communication Plan. This report is a testament to the project's dedication to foster effective communication with stakeholders at multiple levels, driving awareness and promoting the uptake of multi-use offshore platforms for sustainable marine activities.

Detailed descriptions of the stakeholder's engagement can be found in Deliverable 5.1, which plays a crucial role in guiding the project's communication strategies. Building on this, the identification of and collaboration with relevant multipliers has been conducted in this task to ensure a more targeted approach towards communication and dissemination in the project and maximize its outreach to the relevant target groups.

Throughout the document, communication efforts and outcomes have been measured and analyzed using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that were identified initially in the project proposal and afterwards included in the Deliverable 9.2.

1.1. Internal communication

The communication activities within the UNITED project were carried out through a well-structured internal communication flow and a range of external outlets. Internal communication primarily involved bi-monthly meetings, virtual conference calls, and coordination committee team (CCT) meetings, ensuring continuous engagement and collaboration among partners and work packages. The kick-off meeting played a crucial role in aligning activities and introducing key stakeholders to the project's objectives.

Effective communication was facilitated using the Microsoft Teams platform, allowing chat functions and document sharing among all consortium members. Questionnaires were employed to enable bi-directional communication between the work package leaders and pilot participants, ensuring the exchange of relevant information. Timelines and due dates of accomplishments were established for efficient planning and review processes. More information about the internal communication in the project is provided in the final UNIED Technical Report under the section 'Management'.

1.2. External communications

On the external front, the UNITED project utilized various outlets to effectively communicate with its audience. A project website was created and regularly updated with project information and relevant news. Social media accounts on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook were used to reach a wider audience and engage stakeholders through frequent posts. Newsletters were released every six months, providing updates on project activities and relevant information from the network. Webinars were conducted approximately every six months to disseminate project results, featuring guest speakers and fostering collaboration.

An outreach campaign was organised for each of the workshops aimed to engage stakeholders, transfer knowledge, and encourage co-creation. These workshops took place periodically and were promoted through various channels, including social media, newsletters, and direct invitations. The project aimed to hold workshops back-to-back with major conferences and symposiums to maximize reach and impact. More often than not, exhibition and promotional booths were organized at some of these in-person events to further communicate about the project and its outputs. Local outreach campaigns were particularly relevant to reach local communities and stakeholders and raise awareness about the concept of multi-use.

By employing these communication and dissemination strategies, the UNITED project sought to promote multi-use concepts, drive advancements in the sustainable Blue Economy, and contribute to the restoration of marine ecosystems. The implementation of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) was instrumental in measuring the success and impact of these activities, comprehensively presented in this report as an account of what has been done so far in terms of communication activities. More information about the project's dissemination and exploitation actions can be found in Deliverable 9.1.

2. PROJECT VISUAL IDENTITY

UNITED project has meticulously developed and consistently used a robust visual identity, encapsulated in its Milestone 9.1 (attached at the end of this report as Annex 2) and associated Visual Identity Guide shared with all project partners. This identity, crafted with precision, integrates a unique logo, a harmonious color palette, and a distinct graphic style, mirroring the project's dedication to fostering sustainable ocean multi-use solutions. Along with the visual identity, several templates have been developed and consistently used throughout the project



Figure 1 UNITED's palette

duration e.g. templates for slide decks, Deliverables, Announcement letters, Agendas, Flyers, social media posts, etc. The purpose of this visual identity extends beyond mere aesthetics; it aims to resonate with the project's innovative approach to integrating diverse activities like aquaculture, energy generation, and environmental protection.

The visual identity of UNITED has been strategically deployed across a spectrum of communication mediums. This includes digital interfaces, print materials, formal reports, presentations at academic and industry conferences, educational workshops, and marketing campaigns. Central to this identity is the logo, a visual representation of the synergy in multi-use ocean space initiatives, which anchors the project's communication efforts. The consistent use of typography and design elements further reinforces the strategic narrative of the UNITED project across all media platforms.



Figure 3 Project's reference Logo



Figure 2 Project's Squared logo

The Visual Identity Guide, a key component of Milestone 9.1, provides partners with two distinct logo variations, each accompanied by specific usage instructions. The guide also includes recommendations for font types and styles, as well as customized templates for Word and PowerPoint, facilitating unified and effective communication. The carefully selected color palette within the guide plays a vital role in maintaining a unified and professional visual representation, pivotal to the collaborative communication efforts in the project.

Designed primarily for the consortium members, this Visual Identity Guide offered a comprehensive framework for accurate and impactful use of the visual elements in both internal and external communications. By adhering



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to these guidelines, the project ensured a cohesive presentation of its mission, values, and objectives, thereby established a strong and influential brand presence. The logo became very recognizable across the EU and has often been used along with reference to UNITED in presentations of our stakeholders e.g. DG MARE Blue Forum presentation referencing UNITED.

3. OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICATION MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

Communication materials have played a vital role in illustrating the breadth and depth of the project's outreach efforts. This chapter does not assess the dissemination and outreach of these materials, which is detailed in tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Deliverable 9.1, but rather focuses on the communication activities and the variety of materials produced to support these initiatives.

Table 1 EU wide communication actions

Communication materials		
Material/Tool	Quantity	Name/ links
General Flyers	2	Leaflet UNITED printable and E-version
Flyers	3	-Flyer with the QR code for the What is Ocean Multi-Use ? video, -Flyer with the QR code for the event satisfaction questionnaire; -Flyer with the QR code for the 'multi-use prize' campaign
Roll-up	2	Old and new disclaimer versions
Videos	21	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGY1lXQiuHlft_uQKghVqW
Templates	>6	Word template, PPT template, UNITED Agenda template, social media post template, Announcement letter, Brief
Set of outreach materials for outreach campaigns in pilots including the T-shirt design, posters and flyers.	4	BE pilot version, DE pilot version, DK pilot version, NL pilot version.
Poster	2	1 general one, 1 template poster

A diverse array of communication materials was meticulously designed and distributed to effectively convey the UNITED project's message and achievements across all 5 EU Sea Basins. These materials were not just tools for information dissemination but also instrumental in engaging a wide audience, spanning from industry experts to the general public. The table in the annex of the D9.1 shows the good distribution of communication effort per counters, highlighting the good overall distribution of the communication effort across the EU.

Two general flyers were created: a printable leaflet and its e-version. These flyers served as a cornerstone of the project's communication, providing an accessible and comprehensive overview of the UNITED project's objectives and activities.

The project also utilized two roll-up banners, one featuring the old disclaimer and the other with the updated version. These roll-ups were essential for physical events, providing a visually engaging and informative backdrop that enhanced the project's presence and visibility.

A notable aspect of the communication strategy was the production [of 21 videos](#), two of which were specifically dedicated to communicating core messages of the project. These videos served as a dynamic and engaging medium to simplify complex scientific research and findings for a broader public understanding.

The videos have reached an estimated **total public of 4,000 views**, where the most viewed one is "[Belgian Pilot : Combining offshore wind, seaweed cultivation, flat oyster aquaculture & restoration](#)" with more than 1,060 views.

Additionally, two types of posters were produced: a general poster providing an overview of the UNITED project and several posters for individual pilots (see under 3.2 Local outreach actions below). These posters were instrumental in visual storytelling and were used extensively during workshops, conferences, and other public engagement activities. These materials, listed in detail in the above table, played a crucial role in the project's success in reaching and engaging a diverse audience, especially the ad-hoc produced pilot materials, such as the

helmet stickers, the QR codes produced for the Greek pilot hunt, the t-shirts designed specifically for the Belgium pilot, among others.

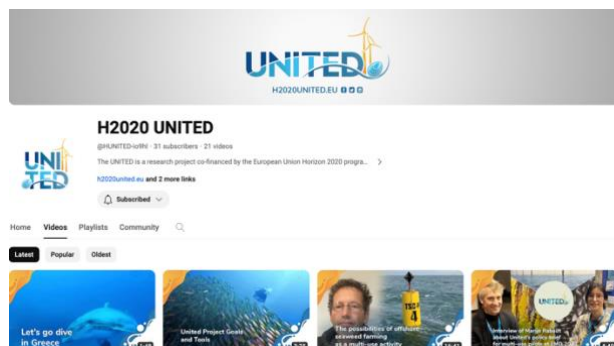
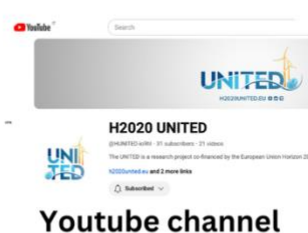


Figure 4 UNITED Youtube channel

To maintain consistency and professionalism in all written communications, three project templates were developed: a Word template, a PowerPoint template, and a UNITED Agenda template. These templates ensured that all project-related documents adhered to the established visual identity and communication standards.



Flyer



Youtube channel



Roll-up

4. AWARENESS RAISING EFFORTS

The UNITED project's communication strategy has been a critical component of its success, ensuring the project's vision, ocean multi-use promotion and achievements reached a broad audience. This section focuses on how UNITED raised awareness and seamlessly integrated its communication efforts with its successor project, ULTFARMS.

The UNITED project's approach to raising awareness was multi-dimensional, focusing on engaging diverse audiences through various platforms. These efforts included:

4.1. Digital Outreach & Social Media Presence

The project's website served as a central hub for public engagement, supplemented by an active presence on social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube. These channels facilitated real-time updates and interactive communication especially with the general public, with the scientific community and with sister projects. The project's social media strategy, encompassing platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Facebook, was characterized by a highly effective engagement approach.

This comprehensive strategy with approximately 900 posts achieved an average engagement rate of approximately 8%, surpassing the typical social media engagement benchmark of 1%-5%.

This rate is indicative of the project's notable success in engaging and maintaining the interest of its audience. Across these social media platforms, UNITED's efforts reached an expansive audience, **engaging with more than 3,000 individuals**. This significant reach is a testament to the project's broad appeal and its ability to connect with a diverse online community. The total interactions across these platforms, including likes, shares, comments, and views, **significantly exceeded the initial Key Performance Indicator (KPI) target of 600 followers set in the Communication Plan**. This achievement not only demonstrates a high level of active participation but also reflects the keen interest and involvement of the online community in the project's activities and objectives. Moreover, the collaboration with the following project's profiles and platforms have helped boost the social media accounts' visibility, especially @EU_MSP PLATFORM, @FrameMulti (MULTIFRAME's project twitter account), @ULTFARMS and @Renewables Grid Initiative.

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILE NAME	DESCRIPTION
@EU_MSP_PLATFORM	The official Twitter account of the EU's MSP Directive. They tweet about the implementation of the MSP Directive, which aims to coordinate the use of marine space in the EU.
@EU_ENV	The official Twitter account of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Environment. They tweet about environmental policy and initiatives in the EU, including those related to the ocean.
@ULTFARMS	The official Twitter account of the UNITED follow-up project ULTFARMS
@FRAMEMULTI	The official Twitter account of the MULTIFRAME project.
@MARINEENVIRONMENTAL:	The Twitter account of the European Environment Agency's Marine and Coastal Unit. They tweet about marine and coastal environmental issues in the EU, including those related to the ocean blue economy.

@OCEANOOPPORTUNITIES	The Twitter account of the European Ocean Observation and Data Network (EOODN). They tweet about ocean data, observation, and research opportunities in the EU.
@OCEAN_EUROPE:	The Twitter account of the Ocean Europe project, which aims to support the development of the ocean blue economy in the EU. They tweet about ocean-related news, events, and opportunities in the EU.
@EU_SCIENCEHUB	The official Twitter account of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC). They tweet about science and research in the EU, including those related to the ocean.
@EU_MARE:	The official Twitter account of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. They tweet about marine and fisheries policy and initiatives in the EU.
@H2020MARE	The official Twitter account of the Horizon 2020 MARE project, which supports the development of the ocean blue economy in the EU. They tweet about ocean-related news, events, and opportunities in the EU.
@EU_MARINE	The official Twitter account of the EU's Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). They tweet about the implementation of the MSFD, which aims to protect and preserve the marine environment in the EU.
@EUROGOOS	The Twitter account of the European Global Ocean Observing System (EuroGOOS), which supports the development of the ocean observing system in the EU. They tweet about ocean observations, data, and research in the EU.
@EMODNET	The Twitter account of the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet), which aims to improve access to marine data and information in the EU. They tweet about marine data, observations, and research in the EU.
@BLUEMED_H2020	The Twitter account of the BLUEMED project, which aims to support MSP in the Mediterranean Sea. They tweet about ocean-related news, events, and opportunities in the Mediterranean region.
@SUBMARINERNETWORK	Official Submariner Network for Blue Growth twitter account. They mainly tweet about Horizon 2020, and Ocean Mission projects.
@EU_SEABASINS	
MARITIME TRAINING PLATFORM	Platform
@ACTEON_ENV	Official twitter account of ACTEon Environment, a French consultancy & research firm supporting ecological transition and posting mainly on blue related projects.

Figure 5 Social media multipliers



Figure 6 UNITED's twitter page on devices

4.2. Newsletter:

The UNITED project's newsletter played a central role in its communication strategy, serving as an essential tool for keeping stakeholders, partners, and the broader community informed about the project's progress, developments, and events. The newsletters were meticulously crafted using Newsletter2Go, a robust platform that facilitated efficient and visually appealing communication. During the project, a total of 13 newsletters were issued. These newsletters were designed in two distinct layouts to cater to different communication needs:

Standard Layout

The majority of the newsletters were sent out using the standard layout.

This design was utilized for regular updates and comprehensive information dissemination. It included sections for project updates, upcoming events, and highlights of recent achievements.

Flash Newsletter Layout

For more urgent updates or significant announcements, the UNITED project employed a 'flash newsletter' layout. This format was more streamlined and focused, intended to grab the attention of the readers quickly for time-sensitive information or critical project news.

Newsletter Content

The United project newsletters were crafted to cater to the varied interests of the project's audience, ensuring a blend of informative and engaging content. The key elements of the newsletters included:

Project Milestones and Deliverables

UNITED December 2022

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE UNITED PROJECT!

While activities at the pilot sites are on a well-deserved winter break, enjoy our round up of news from the last couple of months:

NEWS



UNITED Belgian pilot is running for the Blue Innovation Award, an initiative of the Blue Cluster

[Read more](#)

The FuE Kiel, the North Sea Farmers and the Ghent University have been selected as "key innovators" by the European Commission

[Read more](#)



UNITED researchers from the Belgian and German Pilots joined the Aquaculture Europe Conference in Rimini, Italy

[Read more](#)

These sections provided regular progress updates and highlighted significant achievements that marked pivotal stages in the project's evolving landscape of the United project and its continuous advancement. *Figure 7 Part of December 2020 UNITED Newsletter made with the standard layout*

Event Announcements

Anticipating the need for active involvement, the newsletters included comprehensive information about upcoming workshops, webinars, and conferences. These announcements were vital in keeping the audience abreast of the latest events and opportunities for direct participation in project-related activities.

Research Findings

Readers were kept informed about the latest research findings and innovative developments emerging from the project. This section offered summaries and highlights, making complex research accessible and engaging to a broader audience.

Collaborative Initiatives

Reflecting the project's collaborative spirit, updates on partnerships, interactions with other projects, and stakeholder engagements were regularly shared. This section emphasized the interconnected nature of the project with the wider research and development community.

4.3. Engagement and Outreach Strategies

To ensure the newsletters went beyond mere information dissemination, interactive elements were strategically incorporated.

These included:

- **Links to Full Articles and Reports:**

These links provided readers with easy access to in-depth information, allowing them to delve deeper into topics of interest.

- **Event Registration Pages:**

By including direct links to registration pages for upcoming events, the newsletters facilitated active participation, bridging the gap between information and action.

Such interactive components were instrumental in sustaining an active and engaged subscriber base. They fostered a sense of community among the readers and encouraged continual engagement with the project's evolving narrative.

- **Conferences and Media Engagements :**

The UNITED project made a significant impact through its participation in and organization of various events.

Over 119 events were attended or organized by the project, attracting more than 63,105 attendees. These events were instrumental in disseminating the project's results and facilitating engagement with a broad spectrum of stakeholders from different sectors.

Communication Outlets			
Project outlet	Link / Account name	KPI target	KPI reached
Website	H2020united.eu	600 followers (views)	92,000 views and 33,960 Users -number up to Dec 10th

Social Media	Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube	@H2020UNITED	600 followers each 7 engagement per post	553 posts outreach 3 K engagement rate 10%
	Newsletter		12 newsletters sent by the end of the project, 500 Subscribers	More than 500 subscribers
	Press releases		1	https://www.h2020united.eu/images/UNITED_first_press_release_flyer_final.pdf

4.3.1. Highlighted Key Events

Some of the final and pivotal events of the project included:

1. Commercialisation Webinar (September 2023):

Organized in collaboration with BlueInvest and Horizon Results Booster, this webinar focused on the commercial aspects of the project's outcomes. It served as a platform to discuss and explore market potentials and commercialization strategies.

2. Final UNITED Event in Gothenburg (14-16 November 2023):

This comprehensive 3-day event featured 7 sessions and was held in conjunction with the Ocean Mission Arena conference. The event successfully attracted over 500 attendees, including industry professionals, startups, accelerators, policymakers, planners, and researchers. This wide-ranging participation underscored the project's interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral appeal.

4.3.2. Collaborative Sessions:

The project also engaged in collaborative sessions with initiatives like BlueMissionBANOS, FLORES (focusing on offshore renewables education), and WinBig Women in Blue projects (addressing gender issues in the blue economy). These sessions emphasized the project's commitment to broader societal and environmental issues related to ocean multi-use.

4.3.3. Exhibition Booths and Interactive Engagements

UNITED hosted over 15 exhibition booths at various events. Collaboration was always made with other projects and initiatives to maximize impact. These booths were not just informational hubs but also interactive spaces where stakeholders could engage with the project through various initiatives such as:

- Together with the EU4OCEAN at the European Maritime Days
- Together with EU SCORES in Hague for opening of the DEMO Energy Hub in the Netherlands

- **'Win a Cracker' Games and Interactive Activities at the European Maritime Days and at The UNITED Final Event:** Engaging and entertaining activities like games made the booth visits memorable, encouraging deeper engagement with the project's objectives.



Promo booth together with the EU SCORES project in Hague for the opening of the Dutch Marine Energy Center DMEC



EMD Booth together with the EU4OCEANS fireside chat with stakeholder on multi-use and film screening in collaboration with MULTI-FRAME project



Seaweed crackers competition at the EMD in collaboration with ULTFARMS and The Nordic Sea Farm

4.3.4. Social Media Promotion:

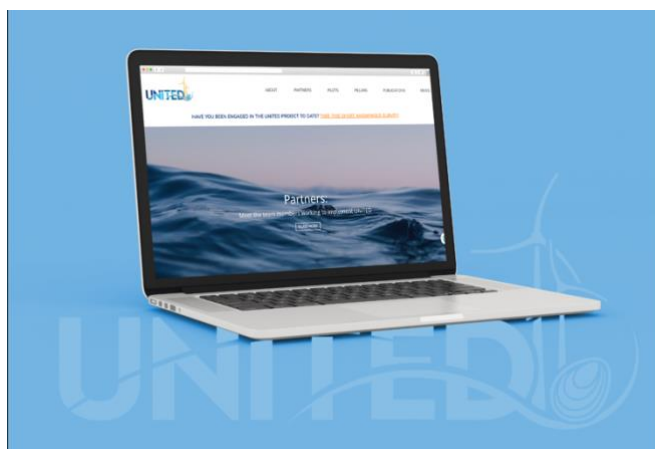
Recordings and highlights of these initiatives were actively shared on social media platforms, enhancing the project's visibility especially through the project Twitter (X) and LinkedIn account and raising awareness about the importance of ocean multi-use.

4.3.5. Impact

The project's engagement in these events played a vital role in raising awareness, fostering stakeholder interaction, and promoting the project's findings. These conferences and media engagements were crucial in showcasing the UNITED project's achievements and in laying the groundwork for future discussions and collaborations in the realm of sustainable ocean use.

UNITED's comprehensive approach to conferences and media engagements significantly contributed to its visibility and impact. The diverse range of events and innovative engagement strategies employed by the project not only disseminated its findings effectively but also established a strong foundation for ongoing dialogues and collaborations in the sector.

4.4. PROJECT WEBSITE



- URL: H2020United.eu
- KPI set: 600 views
- KPI reached: ☒
- 92,000 views

The UNITED project's website, meticulously crafted using Joomla for its dynamic and flexible features, emerged as a pivotal digital gateway for the project. It served as an essential platform for sharing comprehensive information about the project's goals, collaborative efforts, and key initiatives. Reflecting the project's commitment to accessibility and engagement, the website comprised seven distinct sections, as outlined in the milestone M9.1: Project Website and Identity Established.

4.4.1. Core Sections of the Website:

Homepage :

With user-friendly navigation, effectively showcased vital project information and events, it highlighted important aspects like pilot projects and upcoming gatherings. **Achieving 92,000 views**, it successfully engaged a broad audience, highlighting the project's significant achievements and outreach.

ABOUT:

This introductory section presented the UNITED project's overarching mission and core elements. It offered interactive components to illustrate the '5 Pillars,' '5 Pilots,' '5 Blue Economy Sectors,' '3 Regional Seas,' '3 Technology Readiness Levels,' and '3 Implementation Phases.' The section was enriched with a video, elucidating the project's objectives and providing an engaging overview.

The section gained 6,200 approximately views overall the lifecycle of the project.

PARTNERS:

Detailing the collaboration at the heart of UNITED, this section profiled each partner organization, accompanied by descriptions and links. It concluded with insights into the UNITED Advisory Board, offering brief bios of its members.

The section gained approximately 4,800 views overall the lifecycle of the project.

PILOTS:

An interactive map in this section guided users through the various pilot projects integral to UNITED. Detailed information about each pilot project was provided, highlighting the diverse strategies being pursued.

PILLARS:

This section delved into the project's five key dimensions, offering a deep dive into each area's specific focus and contribution to the overarching goals of the project.

The section gained approximately 8,000 views overall the lifecycle of the project.

PUBLICATIONS:

As a central repository, the PUBLICATIONS section housed key materials including the 'Training Hub - Knowledge and Technology Transfer' and 'Policy Brief Box.' Additional deliverables and documents related to the project's various phases and pillars were available for user engagement.

The section gained approximately 8,300 views overall the lifecycle of the project.

NEWS:

Keeping visitors updated, the NEWS section shared the latest project developments and upcoming events. An interactive poll featured here garnered visitor insights on their engagement with the project.

The section gained approximately 3,800 views overall the lifecycle of the project.

4.4.2. Design and User Experience

The website's design was anchored on user-friendly navigation, facilitated by the prominently placed UNITED logo, which redirected users to the homepage, **which reached more than 92,000 views.**

Each section was crafted to offer a structured and engaging exploration of the project's multiple aspects. The consistent presence of the UNITED project's disclaimer across all sections underscored the commitment to transparent and informed public engagement.

4.4.3. Website and Project Transition

The website not only served as an effective communication tool during the UNITED project but also laid the groundwork for the transition to its successor, ULTFARMS. The website's structure and content strategy were pivotal in ensuring the seamless flow of information and continued engagement with a broad audience interested in sustainable ocean use and aquaculture innovation. While the UNITED website will be maintained for the 5 years after the project ends, the strong link already established with the ULTFARMS project will allow for an ongoing promotion of the UNITED outputs and continuation of awareness raising campaigns started in UNITED. Extensive links with the ULTFARMS project are already present throughout the UNITED website as well as in the social media. The transition to the ULTFARMS newsletter is also taking place where UNITED final outputs will also be promoted once approved in February 2024.

4.5. Local pilot communication

UNITED's local outreach campaigns have been instrumental in raising awareness and engaging communities in the concept of ocean multi-use. The campaign creatively utilized various promotional materials to foster identity and unity among the project team and local stakeholders.

4.5.1. T-Shirts and Promotional Material

The project designed four unique t-shirt designs, each representing a pilot project in Belgium, Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands. These t-shirts played a dual role: they were promotional items that helped create a sense of identity and unity, and they also functioned as marketing tools. For instance, in the Greek pilot, the t-shirts invited tourists to participate in multi-use diving expeditions. Additionally, UNITED logo stickers were used for helmets during TV documentaries and other promotional materials like posters, which were strategically placed in local schools, museums, bus stops, hotels, and tourist information offices to spread awareness about the pilot projects.



Figure 8 United T-Shirts for the GK Pilot

4.5.2. NDR Documentary: 'Algae Cultivation Between Wind Turbines'

The German public broadcaster NDR produced a [documentary titled 'Algae Cultivation Between Wind Turbines,' focusing](#) on the German UNITED pilot. This documentary provided an in-depth look into the project's research at Kiel University of Applied Sciences, where high school graduates contributed to seaweed cultivation research. This educational initiative brought the project into classrooms, giving students hands-on experience with marine cultivation and highlighting the importance of combining food security (aquaculture) with energy security (offshore wind) in multi-use platforms.



Figure 9

4.5.3. Educational Tours and School Projects

A series of educational tours near the shore of the German pilot allowed local school students to learn firsthand about the pilot project. A significant initiative was a school project organized with a local Gymnasium. The program, conducted with the support of the project team from FuE, included lessons on algae cultivation, its uses, and challenges. Students participated in experiments, setting up algae cultivation tanks at school and monitoring the growth of algae seedlings. This hands-on experience was complemented by monitoring environmental parameters and documenting the growth process. The culmination of this educational outreach was documented in a regional television report, available online, showcasing the project's impact on local education and awareness.



4.5.4. Media Coverage and Impact

Figure 10 Screenshot of the TV reportage about the school outreach activity

The combined efforts in local outreach, educational initiatives, and media coverage significantly enhanced the project's visibility and impact. The integration of practical learning experiences with media exposure not only educated students but also reached a broader audience, effectively communicating the UNITED project's objectives and achievements in ocean multi-use. These initiatives served as a powerful tool in engaging and educating the public, particularly the younger generation, about the importance and potential of sustainable ocean use practices.

4.5.1. Online outreach campaigns

The online communication in pilots mainly relied on the social media and newsletter of local pilot partners. Several general communication materials produced in the project such as the 'What is Ocean Multi-Use video?' (worthy to underline that video has been produced in collaboration with the MULTIFRAME project) and pilot posters have been translated to local languages where this was deemed necessary (e.g. Greece and Denmark).

5. HIGHLIGHTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The UNITED project has achieved remarkable success in its mission to promote sustainable ocean multi-use solutions. The project's comprehensive and multifaceted communication strategy has played a crucial role in this success, effectively reaching a wide array of stakeholders and significantly impacting industry dynamics, policy development, and public awareness.

5.1. Key Highlights

5.1.1. Extensive Reach:

The project's diverse dissemination activities engaged approximately 3.5 million individuals (as detailed in Deliverable 9.1), far exceeding the initial outreach goals. This extensive reach is a testament to the project's relevance and its appeal across various sectors and the general public.

5.1.2. Digital Engagement:

The project's digital strategy, including the website and social media presence, achieved notable success. The website **received over 92,000 views**, surpassing the initial KPI target of 600 followers. Similarly, the social media platforms reached around 3,000 individuals with over 900 posts, showcasing an impressive average engagement rate of 8%.

5.1.3. Events and Workshops:

Over 119 events and workshops organized or attended by the project attracted more than 63,105 attendees, underscoring the project's role as a catalyst for discussion and collaboration in the ocean multi-use sector.

5.2. Lessons Learned

5.2.1. Adaptability in Communication Strategy:

The project's ability to adapt its communication strategies in response to changing audience preferences and digital trends was crucial. This adaptability ensured the relevance and effectiveness of the project's messaging.

5.2.2. Tailoring Content for Diverse Audiences:

Creating content tailored to various stakeholder groups, including industry professionals, policymakers, the scientific community, and the general public, was vital in resonating with and engaging these distinct audiences.

5.2.3. Balancing Digital and In-Person Engagement:

The project's experience highlighted the importance of balancing digital outreach with in-person interactions, leveraging the strengths of both approaches to maximize stakeholder engagement.

5.2.4. Navigating COVID-19 Challenges:

The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges, especially in organizing in-person meetings. The project's swift pivot to virtual platforms exemplified the importance of flexibility in face of unforeseen circumstances.

6. EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF NEGATIVE FEEDBACK:

The UNITED project's approach to managing negative feedback was a vital aspect of its communication strategy. The project emphasized open communication channels and early stakeholder engagement, which proved instrumental in addressing concerns and fostering a positive project environment.

6.1. Key Strategies

6.1.1. Open Communication Channels:

UNITED prioritized transparency in its interactions with stakeholders. This approach included providing clear contact information across various platforms such as the project's website, flyers, and digital presentations. This accessibility encouraged stakeholders to voice their opinions and concerns, creating a receptive and responsive atmosphere.

6.1.2. Early Stakeholder Engagement:

Proactive engagement with stakeholders from the project's inception allowed for timely discussions on potential concerns. This early engagement was key in building trust and understanding among stakeholders, minimizing the likelihood of escalated negative feedback.

6.1.3. Interactive Surveys and Feedback Management

1. Satisfaction Survey - Stakeholder and Public Engagement in UNITED:

This survey was filled out by 71 respondents. Significantly, all respondents positively acknowledged the contribution of multi-use and co-location to sustainable European sea use. The survey participants spanned 21 different countries, with the majority hailing from Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. This wide reach and positive feedback indicated strong support for the project's objectives.

2. Satisfaction Survey - Danish Pilot Windfarm Visitors:

Another survey targeted visitors of the Danish pilot windfarms, receiving responses from around 170 individuals. This survey provided insights into visitor experiences and perceptions, contributing valuable feedback for project evaluation.

6.1.4. Impact on ULTFARMS

The findings and methodologies from these surveys have been crucial in shaping the management of negative feedback within the UNITED project and its successor, ULTFARMS.

By incorporating lessons learned and stakeholder perspectives from UNITED, ULTFARMS can develop more nuanced and effective strategies for engaging with its audience. This includes anticipating potential concerns and addressing them proactively.

The UNITED project's strategic handling of negative feedback, particularly through interactive surveys, has been a cornerstone of its communication success. This approach not only mitigated potential issues but also provided a wealth of insights for ongoing and future initiatives. As its follow-up project, **ULTFARMS inherits a robust framework for stakeholder engagement and feedback management, poised to further the mission of sustainable ocean use with enhanced understanding and support from its diverse audience base.**



7. LINK TO ULTFARMS

As the baton is passed to ULTFARMS, the lessons learned, and successes achieved by the UNITED project provide invaluable insights. These will guide ULTFARMS in advancing Low-Trophic Aquaculture systems in challenging offshore and low-salinity environments. The UNITED project's legacy, marked by innovation, collaboration, and impactful communication, will continue to influence sustainable ocean use practices, and foster future advancements in the field.

In summary, the UNITED project has not only achieved its objectives but also set new standards in communication and stakeholder engagement within the realm of ocean multi-use. Its comprehensive approach and the insights gained will serve as a valuable blueprint for future projects in the sector.