

Project Information	
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Description	Dissemination of project's results and engagement with stakeholders towards a sustained results' exploitation are intrinsically evolving. The vision of the project's dissemination at the start of it should evolve as the activities progress. This plan presents an update on the EuroSea dissemination plans as seen a year after the kick-off.
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Work Package title	Communication: Engagement, Dissemination, Exploitation, and Legacy
Lead beneficiary	EuroGOOS
Lead author	Dina Eparkhina
Contributors	Kieran Reilly (Irish Marine Institute, Ireland) Michèle Barbier (SciencEthics, France) Elena Giusta (ISPRA, Italy) Veronica Ortiz and Joaquin Tintoré (SOCIB, Spain) Nicole Koestner (GEOMAR, Germany)
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Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. New ways to engage and disseminate	1
Before the COVID-19 pandemic	1
Adapting to limitations and opening new opportunities	2
Working closer despite the distance - coordinating and sharing efforts	4
3. How to ensure the EuroSea results are exploited durably?	5
4. Wellbeing and teleworking.....	6
5. Gantt chart.....	6
6. Conclusions.....	7

1. Introduction

EuroSea is an innovation action and therefore the project aims to respond quickly and optimally to the evolving conditions. According to the Oxford English dictionary, 'innovation is the introduction of new things, ideas or ways of doing something'.

The first year of the EuroSea operations has seen an astounding chain of unprecedented conditions. The global pandemic has frozen or significantly delayed many project's plans, particularly in relation to dissemination activities.

This project deliverable seeks to set out a new vision for the EuroSea dissemination and engagement, needed for an adequate and durable exploitation of the project's results. It reviews the lessons learnt and makes some recommendations on how to adapt to the 'new way of working' caused by the ongoing pandemic and its impacts.

2. New ways to engage and disseminate

Before the COVID-19 pandemic

From the project's planning to the beginning of its implementation in November 2019, engagement and dissemination have been among the key priorities of the EuroSea communication. They are prerogatives for a successful legacy.

As a European project, EuroSea is well informed and exposed to various pan-European meetings and events. Together with the project's own activities, those were considered the main communication platforms. In addition, the EuroSea stakeholder co-design activities, conducted mainly, but not limited to, the demonstration work packages (WP 5, 6, and 7), included regular in-person workshops planned with the potential future users of the EuroSea products, services, and best practices.

At the kick-off meeting (27-29 November 2019), EuroSea released its [website](#), [poster](#), and [twitter account](#) - to ensure high project visibility from day 1. The kick-off [press release](#) was picked up by many EuroSea partners, which immediately brought traffic to both the website and the twitter account.

In the first months of the project, each EuroSea work package confirmed their [stakeholder engagement and co-design workshop plans](#), while the work package on Communication: Engagement, Dissemination, Exploitation and Legacy (WP8) outlined a series of [promotion opportunities](#).

A calendar of events offering an opportunity to promote EuroSea was prepared, including such events as the UN Ocean Decade preparatory workshops, the All-Atlantic forum, the EGU general assembly, the European Maritime Day stakeholder conference, public engagement events like Seafest in Ireland, and technology fora like SeaTechWeek in France. The events of the peer projects and initiatives in the domains of ocean observing, forecasting, and data aggregation, were monitored as potential dissemination opportunities. EuroSea planned to be visible at those events, via active [representation](#) by the members of the EuroSea consortium, [exhibition stands](#), and [presentations](#).

The WP8 team and all other partners started dissemination and engagement from the first day of the project - some examples are featured below. The EuroSea Communication Plan (Deliverable 8.1)¹ features the strategic directions of the project's dissemination efforts.



EuroSea business card developed in January 2020 for dissemination during networking at stakeholder events. It was used, together with the EuroSea poster, at the projects' exhibition stand at the All-Atlantic Forum in Berlamont in February 2020, Brussels.



Presentation on EuroSea at the UN Ocean Decade preparatory workshop for the Mediterranean region, by Emma Heslop, IOC-GOOS, EuroSea Work Package 1 leader, January 2020, Venice.



Coordinators of sister projects under the BG7 call (from left): BlueCloud, Sara Garavelli, and EuroSea, Toste Tanhua, at the BlueCloud workshop during the All-Atlantic stakeholder week, February 2020, Brussels.

Adapting to limitations and opening new opportunities

In the fourth month of EuroSea (March 2020), Europe and the world locked down because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Physical dissemination was no longer possible, and all the planned stakeholder activities were cancelled, from conferences to engagement workshops.

WP8 reviewed the key communication channels to gain a higher digital visibility in the time where physical dissemination became impossible.

EuroSea strengthened its digital identify to increase visibility in the virtual space

- **Upgraded website:**
Upgraded with a view of maximum clarity for the user. Interactive diagrams visualize the project and allow intuitive navigation, infographics bring attention to the key concepts and translate complexity into a clear visual language.
- **PowerPoint slide deck:**
The slide deck was released online, prepared with the project's infographics designed during the kick-off meeting.
- **Public awareness video:**
The video planned as a EuroSea milestone was postponed to October 2020 because of the COVID-19 crisis. It will now include subtitles in all EuroSea languages to increase digital dissemination across the nations.

¹ https://eurosea.eu/download/outputs_and_reports/deliverables/EuroSea_D8.1_CommunicationPlan_29.04.2020.pdf

- **Summary overview of key deliverables:**

This will allow stakeholders to quickly learn about the main points of a EuroSea report. First such summary document will be released in November 2020 for Deliverable 1.1, Report on Initiatives and Strategies Contributing to Foresight in Ocean Observing².

Virtual dissemination and engagement platforms

- **EuroSea 1st Anniversary Webinar:**

The 1st anniversary webinar is planned as a large outreach event, which will showcase the EuroSea project activities and bring together representatives of some of the project's key stakeholders to discuss progress. EuroSea partner IOC-GOOS will provide its license to GoToWebinar and assist technically.

It is foreseen to have regular webinars on EuroSea activities in the coming years of the project.

- **Stakeholder co-design workshops in virtual space:**

Demonstration work packages (WP 5, 6, 7) rely on stakeholder engagement and co-design to develop user-oriented products and services.

While the pandemic's physical meeting restrictions affected some of the plans, virtual meetings have been held more frequently and were deemed efficient.

All demonstration work packages testify about their positive experience in engaging with their stakeholders or across the work package via online tools. The following virtual meeting platforms are used: GoToMeeting, Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet. WP6 testified that the success of the efficiency of online meetings was due to prior engagement personally and prior working relationships.

While delays were not experienced in stakeholder co-design work by the demonstration work packages, it is expected that all deployments will be significantly affected should the pandemic crisis continue.

- **Booths and networking at virtual events:**

This best practice is still in its infancy but augmenting the virtual meetings with networking and dissemination opportunities is already part of the new way to hold conferences. Virtual exhibitions, poster sessions, and coffee breaks already take place at some events, e.g. at the Ocean Best Practices System workshop in September 2020 and SeaTechWeek in October 2020.

EuroSea will hold a virtual networking lobby at the end of its 1st Anniversary Webinar. Options are considered for the networking sessions at the virtual EuroSea General Assembly (see below).



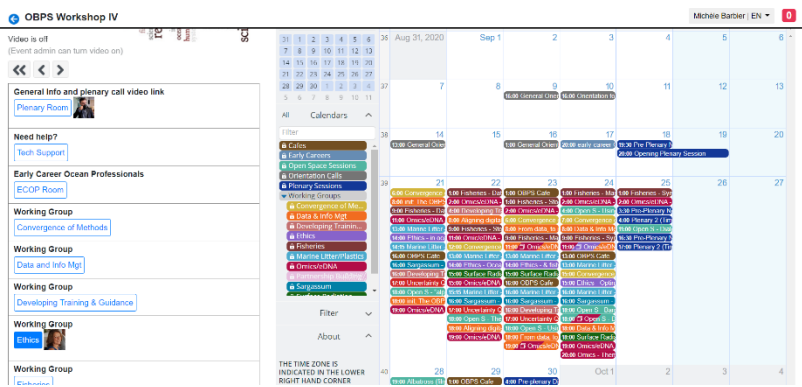
Save the date announcement for the EuroSea 1st Anniversary Webinar on 20 November 2020

² https://eurosea.eu/download/outputs_and_reports/deliverables/EuroSea_Deliverable_1.1_Policies_Foresight.pdf

Lessons learnt from the Ocean Best Practices Online Workshop

Evolving and Sustaining OBPS Workshop IV³ took place in several sessions between 18 and 30 September 2020. The aim was to gather practitioners to collaboratively address best practices and recommendations in ocean observing and its applications. Many EuroSea partners participated as organizers, speakers, or participants. The outcomes of this workshop will guide the next implementation phase of the Ocean Best Practices System (OBPS) and will be transferred through the EuroSea work to broader European ocean observing community.

Several platforms were used to enable various levels of interactions in the virtual space: QiqoChat, Zoom, Google Meet, Google Drive, Teamup, and Slack. QiqoChat allowed a central access point for participants. A Teamup calendar (image below) provided the schedules of different sessions in individual time zones. All workshop documentation was available through the Google Drive links from the central platform. Several network spaces were set up for additional discussions and networking.



The Teamup calendar with all sessions and working groups indicated in your time zone during the OBPS Workshop, September 2020

The diversity of virtual platforms and a central focal point of access allowed fruitful discussions and exchange. Participants testify a feeling of community was achieved across different continents and time zones, because of the ease of joining various discussions at any given time and on any workshop topic.

Working closer despite the distance - coordinating and sharing efforts

All parts of the EuroSea activities, as well as the EuroSea stakeholders, have suffered from the pandemic-caused restrictions. EuroSea is putting in place a framework to work more actively and closely in the virtual space. While we are missing the benefits of personal interactions and co-working sessions, virtual co-working is showing some new benefits. Meetings can be condensed, shortened, and more efficient, while the project partners help each other to solve common issues in a more proactive way. Where travel and a workshop lasting several days would have been planned, a series of virtual calls help achieve many of the objectives. As a result, we expect that the EuroSea partnership will become more closely bound together when the planet is leaving the pandemic period, and future physical meetings will bring even more benefits.

³ <https://www.oceanbestpractices.org/community-engagement/workshop-iv-2020/>

Shared objectives = shared stakeholders

EuroSea stakeholder engagement training organized by WP8 is running during Autumn 2020 to help the consortium conduct comprehensive stakeholder analysis and plan target engagement. The ease of meeting virtually, as compared with physical meetings, has prompted a new opportunity to co-work across work packages, addressing common stakeholders, and at the same time learning about the details of each other's work.

WP8 is conducting meetings with each of the EuroSea work packages to aid the stakeholder analysis. This will result not only in a more efficient approach to stakeholder activities, but also enable a more profound understanding of the project among partners.

Virtual General Assembly

The EuroSea General Assembly was bound to move to a virtual space. This will cause the working sessions to be shorter and more condensed. It was decided to expand the formal meeting by adding virtual coffee breaks and networking zones, where the partners and invited guests and speakers can interact informally.

Horizon 2020 Dissemination and Exploitation Booster

The online activities of the EU H2020 dissemination and exploitation booster, already planned before the pandemic, will now be enhanced. EuroSea foresees to join forces with other related EU projects to optimize the use of time and the exploration of common solutions. This will result in an added advantage of mutual learning across various EU initiatives. A key element of this process is the identification of commonalities between projects in terms of results, areas of research, and target stakeholders.

3. How to ensure the EuroSea results are exploited durably?

An exploitation strategy is being developed within WP8 to ensure that the EuroSea results are exploited durably.

Key exploitable results (knowledge, methods, agreements, technologies, products, and services from the demonstration work packages) are being identified and their direct and indirect value and impact for different stakeholders are being considered. These include commercially exploitable results and other exploitable results such as those to be used to inform policy or for further research purposes, for example.

For the commercially exploitable results a business plan will be developed to outline a pathway to market beyond the project end. This will include information on target and potential customers and end-users, market size, customer needs, and impact for customers.

Three key exploitable results from the demonstration work package will be addressed through the Horizon 2020 Dissemination and Exploitation Booster, namely:

- Software ‘Oceanographic Services for Ports and Cities’ for real-time alerts providing forecasts of sea conditions – developed by WP5;
- Solution for aquaculture management to measure and forecast oxygen, heat, and pH related to extreme marine events – developed by WP6; and
- User-driven calibrated seasonal ocean forecasts – delivered by WP7.

Barriers and risks in relation to the successful exploitation of EuroSea results have been identified and mitigation actions are being developed. The barriers include insufficient stakeholder engagement or little emphasis on impact, as well as financial, legal, and technical barriers to reaching the market.

EuroSea Innovation and Stakeholder Committee is providing feedback on the exploitation strategy. In addition, WP8 has organised stakeholder engagement training webinars for EuroSea partners (see p. 5).

Involvement of the potential users in the development of the EuroSea products and services is key to ensure that the user expectations are met, and the needs are fulfilled.

This work is underpinned by the activities in the EuroSea Communication Plan as well as the present Updated Dissemination and Exploitation Plan. Engagement and dissemination plans are reviewed regularly and will be part of the EuroSea impact assessment review during the project.

4. Wellbeing and teleworking

EuroSea dissemination and engagement shift from physical to virtual is part of a broader question of teleworking. A recent Joint Research Council (JRC) study and policy brief ‘Telework in the EU before and after the COVID-19: where we were, where we head to’⁴, show that there are large differences in the prevalence of teleworking across EU Member States, sectors, and occupations. Telework preparedness is higher in ICT and knowledge-intensive sectors, and generally for high-skilled workers. This supports what has been observed through anecdotal evidence in EuroSea – the members of the EuroSea consortium are part of these categories and may have been affected less than other sectors by the shift from physical to telework.

However, new challenges have risen which are not linked to the direct experience in prior teleworking only. Testimonials from some EuroSea project partners reveal a higher degree of worry and workload. The number of virtual calls has increased, combination of family and work duties has become more challenging, absence of in-person interactions remove part of the pleasure of socialization, exchanges of ideas are less fluid through virtual interactions. It was noted by some partners, that while these changes are manageable in a short term, negative cumulative impacts are starting to show now.

5. Gantt chart

The below chart represents the upcoming dissemination opportunities for EuroSea, from the time of this plan’s submission. Only large events and conferences known at the time of this document’s submission are included during the period October 2020 - June 2021. EuroSea virtual workshops and working meetings, as well as targeted stakeholder co-design meetings, are not reflected in this chart.

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/jrcsh/files/jrc120945_policy_brief_-_covid_and_telework_final.pdf

While this chart will be regularly updated, it gives an idea of the expected frequency of the EuroSea dissemination activities.

Dissemination and engagement activities will include:

- Communication around the event with regard to EuroSea objectives, products, and services;
- Participation in the event with the EuroSea affiliation and promotion of the project either formally (speaker/panellist) or informally (networking, discussion sessions);
- Physical or digital dissemination of the EuroSea outputs.

Months-->	Oct '20	Nov '20	Dec '20	Jan '21	Feb '21	Apr '21	May '21	June '21
EOOS Technology Forum at SeaTechWeek, virtual	■							
EuroSea 1 st Anniversary Webinar, virtual		■						
All-Atlantic Ocean Research Forum, virtual			■					
Ocean and Human Health Conference, Monaco			■					
EuroSea General Assembly, virtual				■				
ENVRI week, Germany					■			
European Geosciences Union Conference, Austria						■		
EuroGOOS Conference, France							■	
Liège Colloquium on Ocean Dynamics, Belgium							■	
European Maritime Day conference and exhibition, Netherlands							■	
EMODnet Conference, Belgium								■
Ocean Decade Kick-Off, Germany								■

6. Conclusions

The first year of the EuroSea operation has seen an unprecedented change of conditions for the project’s dissemination and engagement which are required for durable exploitation of its results, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

EuroSea is adapting its dissemination and exploitation activities with the view of:

- Taking note of the lessons learnt from virtual meetings, adapting the session duration and frequency, as well as exploring the use of multiple platforms for the same event which increases opportunities for different types of online interactions;
- Exploring fully all available means to allow informal interactions via virtual networking;
- Exploring online exhibition opportunities;
- Exchanging best practice and learning from each other among the European and global projects and initiatives, on how to enhance dissemination and engagement via virtual means;

- Considering cumulative impacts for the wellbeing at work caused by the shift from physical to virtual interactions;
- Using hybrid, physical-online, meeting options when this becomes possible;
- Engagement of all partners in supporting EuroSea digital presence via social media and the website by delivering timely information and proactively contributing to the project's visibility;
- Considering the gains from the online meeting experience once the travel restrictions are lifted.

Several EuroSea deliverables will address the success of the dissemination and exploitation plans (both the current document and its future revisions adapting to the evolving conditions). The EuroSea impact and stakeholder relevance are being closely monitored by WP8 in collaboration with all other work packages. This will allow a flexible and efficient response to the evolution of the EuroSea dissemination and exploitation needs.