

BONUS RETURN
Reducing Emissions by Turning Nutrients and Carbon into Benefits

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EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION AND WEBSITE

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Executive Summary

The External Communication Plan is a report on how BONUS RETURN will disseminate communication externally throughout the project. The report outlines the various potential target audiences, providing guidelines on what will be communicated to each of them, as well as the selected communication channels and tools. The two main external communication objectives highlighted in this document provide the rationale through which the plan will operate. It is a document that will be reviewed and updated constantly throughout the project.

1 INTRODUCTION

The degradation of the Baltic Sea is an ongoing problem, despite investments in measures to reduce external inputs of pollutants and nutrients from both diffuse and point sources. Available technological and management measures to curb eutrophication and pollution flows to the sea have not been adapted adequately to the contexts in which they are being applied. Furthermore, measures are often designed based on single objectives, thereby limiting opportunities for multiple benefits.

In addition, there is a general sense that measures to address the deterioration of the Baltic ecosystem are primarily technologically-driven and lacking broader stakeholder acceptance, and the “experts” who define these measures have little engagement with industry, investors, civil society and authorities. This problem is exacerbated by governance and management taking place in sectoral silos with poor coordination across sectors.

As a result, research shows that regional institutional diversity is presently a barrier to transboundary cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) and that actions to achieve national environmental targets can compromise environmental goals in the BSR (Powell et al. 2013). The regional dimension of environmental degradation in the BSR has historically received weaker recognition in policy development and implementation locally. However, developments in recent years suggest a new trend with growing investments in environmental protection supporting social, economic, and territorial cohesion.

The BSR is an environmentally, politically and economically significant region and like other regions globally, its rapid growth needs to be reconciled with the challenges of sustainable development in a global setting that demands unprecedented reductions in GHG emissions. This poses a truly wicked problem exacerbated by the fact many of the challenges in BSR will also magnify in a changing climate. To navigate the uncertainties and controversies associated with a transformation towards a good marine environment, BONUS RETURN will enact an innovative trans disciplinary approach for identifying and piloting systemic eco-technologies.

Focus will be on eco-technologies that generate co-benefits within other interlinked sectors and which can be adapted according to geophysical and institutional contexts. More specifically, emphasis will be given to eco-technologies that reconcile the reduction of present and future eutrophication in marine environments with the regional challenges of policy coherence, food security, energy security, and the provision of ecosystem services.

2.1 Project Objectives

The **overall** aim of RETURN is to improve the adaptation and adoption of eco-technologies in the BSR for maximum efficiency and increased co-benefits.

The **specific objectives** of the project are divided into 6 interlinked categories presented below. The following overview provides a step-wise description of what BONUS RETURN will do:

1) Support innovation and market uptake of eco-technologies:

- Contribute to the application and adaptation of eco-technologies in the BSR through an evidence-based review (systematic map) of the developments within this field.
- Contribute to the development of emerging eco-technologies that have the capacity to turn nutrients and carbon into benefits (e.g. bio-energy, fertilizers), by providing an encompassing framework and platform for rigorous testing and analysis.
- Development of decision support systems for sustainable eco-technologies in the BSR.

- Contribute to better assessment of eco-technology efficiency via integrated and participatory modelling in three catchments areas in Finland, Sweden and Poland.
 - Contribute to methodological innovation on application and adaptation of eco-technologies
- 2) Reduce knowledge gaps on policy performance, enabling/constraining factors, and costs and benefits of eco-technologies**
- Assess the broader socio-cultural drivers linked to eco-technologies from a historical perspective
 - Identify the main gaps in the policy environment constraining the implementation of emerging eco-technologies in the catchments around the Baltic Sea
 - Inform policy through science on what works where and under which conditions through an evidence-based review (systematic map and systematic reviews) of eco-technologies and the regional economic and institutional structures in which these technologies evolve.
- 3) Provide a framework for improved systematic stakeholder involvement:**
- Develop methods for improved stakeholder engagement in water management through participatory approaches in the case study areas in Sweden, Finland and Poland.
 - Enact a co-enquiry process with stakeholders into opportunities for innovations in eco-technologies capable of transforming nutrients and pollutants into benefits for multiple sectors at different scales.
 - Bring stakeholder values into eco-technology choices to demonstrate needs for adaptation to local contexts and ways for eco-technologies to efficiently contribute to local and regional developments.
 - Disseminate results and facilitate the exchange of learning experiences, first within the three catchment areas, and secondly across a larger network of municipalities in the BSR.
 - Establish new cooperative networks at case study sites and empower existing regional networks by providing information, co-organize events and engage in dialogues.
- 4) Support commercialization of eco-technologies:**
- Identify market and institutional opportunities for eco-technologies that (may) contribute to resource recovery and reuse of nutrients, micro-pollutants and micro-plastics (e.g. renewable energy).
 - Identify potential constraints and opportunities for integration and implementation of eco-technologies using economical models.
 - Facilitate the transfer of eco-technologies contributing to win-win solutions to multiple and interlinked challenges in the BSR.
 - Link producers of eco-technologies (small and medium enterprises - SMEs), to users (municipalities) by providing interactive platforms of knowledge exchange where both producers and users have access to RETURN's envisaged outputs, existing networks, and established methodologies and services.
- 5) Establish a user-driven knowledge platform and improve technology-user interface**
- Develop an open-access database that maps out existing research and implementation of eco-technologies in the BSR. This database will be intuitive, also mapped out in an interactive geographical information system (GIS) platform, and easily managed so that practitioners, scientists and policy-makers can incorporate it in their practices
 - Develop methodologies that enact the scaling of a systemic mix of eco-technological interventions within the highly diverse contexts that make up the BSR and allows for a deeply interactive media of knowledge.

2.1 Project Structure

BONUS RETURN is structured around 6 Work Packages that will be implemented in three river basins: The Vantaanjoki river basin in Finland, the Stupia river basin in Poland, and Fyrisån river basin in Sweden.

Work Package 1: Coordination, management, communication and dissemination.

Work Package 2: Integrated Evidence-based review of eco-technologies.

Work Package 3: Sustainability Analyses.

Work Package 4: Environmental Modelling.

Work Package 5: Implementation Support for Eco-technologies.

Work Package 6: Innovative Methods in Stakeholder Engagement.

2.1 Deliverable context and objective

The current deliverable (D 1.3) is part of Work Package (WP) 1. The objectives of WP1 are:

- 1) To ensure the smooth realization of the project, optimizing the organization and timing of activities and resources, so that both scientific and strategic project goals can be fully achieved.
- 2) To ensure effective cooperation and collaboration between WPs, partners and end users.
- 3) Ensure quality assurance of process and deliverables.
- 4) Lead and deliver on effective internal and external communications. External communication includes dissemination, outreach of project deliverables and active use of social media and liaising with traditional media.

The communication requirements of the project to be delivered by Work Package 1 include:

- 1) Developing a plan for external communication.
- 2) Establishing lines of communication with media.
- 3) Developing appropriate tools to ensure effective outreach with target audiences.
- 4) Communicate emerging findings and results using broadcast media, social media (Twitter), academic papers, international conferences and policy briefs addressed to the project's end-users and stakeholders, including the general public.

2.1 Outline of the report

This report outlines the external communication plan for the duration of the BONUS RETURN project. It is a living document that will be periodically reviewed, assessed and updated when necessary. The plan acts as a guide for external communications, ultimately supporting the successful delivery of the project objectives. The purpose of this report is to:

- 1) Identify ways of effectively communicating with external audiences;
- 2) Outline a plan for outreach including dissemination of various communication materials
- 3) List the preferred communication channels to be used by this project, as well as a dissemination plan.

It is structured as follows: external communication strategy which includes guiding principles and definition of terms as is used in this report; dissemination which includes the objectives and strategy as well as communication channels and tools being used in the project; and finally, a highlight of the websites used in the project.

2 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION AND WEBSITE

2.1 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The external communication plan is vital as it outlines the strategies set to support and deliver the project objectives successfully. A pre-requisite for this is a set of external communication objectives that serve as a guide towards realizing the project objectives.

Monitoring and evaluation of the communication plan will be done on a quarterly basis to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy, messages, tools used, and impact created. The strategy, messages and actions are guided by the following principals and elements:

Awareness: What is the key message/story? How will we tell it and through which channels?

Involvement: How would we like for our target audiences to be engaged? What would we like them to think or do? in what ways will they be involved and with which activities?

Advocacy: How will we convert their commitment into third-party endorsements and collaborations? In what ways and with whom will they talk about the project?

Who	• Target audiences?
What	• Communication materials?
When	• Timeframe?
Where	• Channels?
Why	• Purpose?
How	• Activity plan?

The following are definitions of terms as will be used in the external communication plan:

I. Project information

In the context of the external communication plan, external dissemination of information includes:

- Blogs, Op-eds, press releases, tweets, videos, emerging findings, case study summaries, event stories, news, reports, fact sheets, presentations and other documentation available in the internal communication platform.

II. Target audiences/groups

Target audiences and groups will be described under each specific objective to determine what information will be relayed to them depending on their roles, needs, likely wants and motivations. The preferred communication channel for each of these audiences is also highlighted, bearing in mind beliefs and practices, as well as improvements in understanding and/or behaviour needed to successfully deploy effective eco-technologies in the Baltic Sea Region.

III. Stakeholders

Stakeholders represent the different organizations, people, and groups involved in the project and should be engaged early. Identification of these people and clarification of their roles in the project

will be coordinated through WP 6. Examples of stakeholders includes project partners, businesses, entrepreneurs, research organizations, NGOs, user groups, industries, innovation agencies, Baltic Sea populations, investors, municipalities, boundary partners, and society at large.

Following the iterations of stakeholder identification in WP 6, the communication plan will be updated to highlight the following elements for the different stakeholders:

- Stakeholder's communication requirements.
- The specific information that needs to be communicated.
- Reason for specific distribution of each communication material.
- Time frame and frequency of the distribution.
- Channels of communication.
- Person responsible for disseminating specific information and authorization of confidential information.

IV. Project networks

The consortium has a wide contact network of relevant actors in the Baltic Sea Region, with particular emphasis in Sweden, Finland, Poland and Denmark. These include, for instance, the network of municipalities brought together by Race for the Baltic; Swedish Water; KTH's Water Centre; Stockholm University's Baltic Sea Centre; as well as through regional and international events like the Baltic Sea Future, World Water Week, amongst others.

V. Emerging findings

The project's findings and results from each work package will be communicated externally through BONUS RETURN's websites.

2.2 DISSEMINATION

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY

The communication plan seeks to highlight the project objectives clearly and precisely. It defines the key theme or message to be relayed, how it will be sent, at what time frame and the purpose of the message which highlights the expected outcome. Targeted audiences of each objective will be identified iteratively and in cooperation with WP6.

Communicating with external parties throughout the project is vital to fulfilling the goals of BONUS RETURN. This external communication strategy will work towards the following main objectives:

1. To raise awareness of the Baltic Sea problem and the BONUS RETURN project.
2. To present and communicate emerging findings and progress of the project.

Prior to establishing a plan to realise the specific objectives, the communication process must first provide a clear working definition of the terms used as well as a description of who will be reached, the key messages, relevant channels, and purpose of the communications.

OBJECTIVE 1: TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE BALTIC SEA PROBLEM AND THE BONUS RETURN PROJECT.

- Creating awareness of the need to address the Baltic Sea problem and why projects like BONUS RETURN are important in providing solutions.
- Highlighting success stories of organizations and projects working to address problems in the Baltic Sea.
- Highlight the project's contribution to the SDG agenda 14 on oceans and seas.

- Promoting the image of the BONUS RETURN brand, what it stands for, its mission, vision and goals.
- Engaging these stakeholders to participate in the conversation about the Baltic Sea, its problems, possible solutions, what they could mean to marine life and people.
- How BONUS RETURN's solutions can be beneficial to them.
- Exploring the importance of attending events with themes relevant to the project.

TARGET AUDIENCE: General public; Baltic Sea Region citizens/residents.

WORKING EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLAN – OBJECTIVE 1

MATERIALS (WHAT)	SCHEDULE (WHEN)	CHANNELS/TOOLS (WHERE)	DESIRED OUTCOME	IMPACT MEASUREMENT
1. Print media: Publications; e-bulletins; blogs; flyers/brochures; roll-ups; progress reports.	Continuous	BONUS e-bulletins; SEI and other partner's publications, newsletters, and websites.	Promotion/awareness of the project and the Baltic Sea problem; knowledge sharing; project aims.	Website stats; increase in newsletter registrations; requests for materials.
2. News/Online media: Press releases; news stories; webinars (live streaming) and tweets.	Continuous	BONUS RETURN website; Bonus projects website; Social media (Twitter); press contacts;	Third-party endorsements; reach wider audience; Share the project's progress, vision, aim and goals.	Online engagement on: websites, social media; Views/tweets/retweets on Twitter; quotes on news stories.
3. Events: Meetings, seminars, conferences, workshops, training sessions.	Continuous	Face to face; presence at relevant events in participating countries; organizing own events.	Relationship building; knowledge exchange; attract investors'/innovators' interest; awareness of the project's progress.	Invitations to present at relevant events; requests for key speakers from the project; quotes.

OBJECTIVE 2: TO PRESENT AND COMMUNICATE EMERGING FINDINGS AND PROGRESS OF THE PROJECT.

- Focus on relationship building with external stakeholders as a pre-requisite for establishing long-term collaboration and partnership.
- Participating and leading discussions to create awareness about the project and the issues it seeks to resolve.
- Facilitate debates about the methodological innovations implemented by BONUS RETURN.
- Present emerging findings on current eco-technologies, as well as the development of emerging eco-technologies and their levels of sustainability in the Baltic Sea Region.
- Providing easy access to project material available to all stakeholders.
- Providing communication tools to support the awareness of the project, its progress, mission, vision and goals.

- Aiming to establish two-way communication with the stakeholders, share the experiences of BONUS RETURN, and learn from similar projects.
- Using the stakeholder mapping from work package 6 to create and manage a contacts database, and to monitor stakeholder engagement throughout the project.
- Engaging innovators, investors, and SMEs in the process of market readiness for the established eco-technologies.
- It is assumed that this audience understands key Baltic Sea problems and may be working with Baltic Sea related issues or projects in the Baltic Sea Region.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Policy makers, Boundary partners, advisory board, city & municipality decision-makers, investors, innovators, academics, SMEs, NGOs, EU-level organizations and private, public or civil society.

WORKING EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLAN – OBJECTIVE 2

MATERIALS (WHAT)	SCHEDULE (WHEN)	TARGET AUDIENCE (FOR WHO)	CHANNELS/ TOOLS (WHERE)	DESIRED OUTCOME (WHY)
1. Status reports				
- First periodic report: policy briefs,	June 2018	-EU-level organizations (e.g. EUBSRS; Marine strategy)	Face to face dialogue; BONUS EPSS; BONUS RETURN website; partner websites, social media (Twitter).	Communicate project progress and emerging findings; encourage interaction and discussions with target audience; Initiate and maintain collaboration.
- Second periodic report	June 2019	-National level -Local case sites - Policy makers		
- Third periodic report	June 2020	-Boundary partners - Baltic Sea cities & municipalities - Innovators		
- Scientific final report	June 2020	- SMEs - NGOs - Investors -Public/ private/ civil society. -Advisory board		
2. Online Media				
Newsletter	Once every three months	ALL	Email list.	Update and audience engagement.
Videos	Continuous	ALL	SEI YouTube channel; Partners' YouTube channels; Twitter; BONUS RETURN website.	Communicate project progress & information; audience engagement; awareness; project visibility.
Blogs; articles; news stories.	Continuous	ALL	SEI & partner newsletters & websites; BONUS e-bulletin; BONUS projects website; BONUS RETURN website.	

Publications; Scientific journals.	As required	- Academics	Leading journals; BONUS Projects website; BONUS RETURN website	Project visibility; Action towards academic/science policies.
Policy briefs	-October 2018 - January 2020	Policy makers (national & regional)	Email; Newsletters; BONUS RETURN website.	Synthesise key messages and findings; Give recommendations on implementation of BONUS RETURN's methodology in national and regional water management strategies.
Subject discussions/ debates/ opinions; webinars; speeches;	Continuous	ALL	Social Media (Twitter) -Live streaming -Tweets/hashtags	Audience engagement; awareness.
Project outputs; progress updates; publications; blogs.	Quarterly	-Boundary partners - Advisory board	Email	Update; Build and maintain relationship and interest;
Suitable eco-technologies; established methodologies;	Continuous	-Policy makers - Innovators - SMEs - Cities & municipalities - Investors	Blogs; Email; BONUS RETURN website.	Stakeholder involvement, participation & collaboration; awareness of emerging findings.
Progress report meetings	Yearly	Municipalities: - Uppsala - Slupsk - Helsinki	Conference calls; site visits; BONUS RETURN website.	Updates on the progress of case study sites.
3. General PR				
Press releases; press pitches; news stories.	Continuous	ALL	Press contacts including journalists, online press portals; face to face; BONUS projects website; BONUS RETURN website.	Project visibility; build & maintain relationship with press.
Events: Final project conference	April, 2020	- Consortium - Partners (advisory board, boundary partners) - Policy makers (national & regional) - Academics -Private sector	- Physical location - Live streaming - Live tweeting - News story/blog - Press pitch - Videos -Flyers/Brochures -Pictures	Project visibility; presentation of findings and solutions.

Regional & international conferences/ seminars/ workshops	As required	ALL		
BONUS RETURN organized event	June 2019	- SMEs - Innovators - Investors	- Physical location - flyers/brochures - blog - videos -live streaming/ tweeting	Discussion on eco-technologies; Solutions addressing nutrient pollution; market-readiness; scaling options.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS/TOOLS

The choice of communication tools used is tailored to the specific target audiences. External stakeholders are vital to this project as their participation and contribution supports the search for solutions this project aims to address, as well as increasing the project's visibility.

Therefore, maintaining a close relationship with these audiences will contribute to a healthier communication process. The communication officer is responsible for leading and implementing the plan, however, active member participation is required. Work Package leaders are responsible for certain tasks to ensure better follow-up.

Communication channels are the cornerstone for disseminating project information, and material will be prepared and translated into national languages (if needed) to meet the needs of specific target audiences.

Materials to be published include (but are not limited to): publications, blogs, op-eds, videos, case study summaries, events and news, reports, presentations, etc.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS/TOOLS	PROVIDES INFORMATION	GENERATES ENGAGEMENT/DIALOGUE	PROMOTES RESEARCH/PROJECT OUTPUTS	PROMOTES EVENTS
Blogs	√	√	√	√
Newsletters	√		√	√
Emails	√	√		
Videos	√	√	√	√
Twitter	√	√	√	√
Face to Face meetings	√	√		
Webinars	√	√	√	√
Conference calls	√	√	√	
Events	√	√	√	√
E-bulletins	√		√	√
Workshops	√	√	√	√
Seminars	√	√	√	√
Journals	√	√	√	
Live streaming/tweeting	√	√	√	√

2.3 WEBSITE

BONUS www.bonusportal.org

This is the main website of BONUS RETURN's funding body 'BONUS'. The site provides information about BONUS as well as all BONUS projects, including: news, publications, events, relevant links, e-bulletin, programmes, and information about BONUS stakeholders. Relevant reports for external publics will also be made available on this website. These include for example: the first, second, third and final scientific report.

BONUS PROJECTS www.bonusprojects.org

This is a website created by BONUS for all BONUS projects. Each project coordinates its own respective site and is expected to post information such as project news stories and blogs. The direct URL for BONUS RETURN is:

https://www.bonusprojects.org/bonusprojects/the_projects/blue_baltic_projects/return

BONUS RETURN www.bonusreturn.eu

This is the main website for the BONUS RETURN project, launched in October 2017. It is managed by BONUS RETURN's communication officer and updated on a regular basis.

The purpose of the website is to communicate project information with the aim of reaching a wider audience. The website aims are:

- I. To *Inform*: Provide information and awareness on the Baltic Sea problems the project is working with.
- II. To *engage*: Allow engagement, participation and involvement of interested parties and relevant stakeholders.
- III. To *promote*: The platform showcases project work including updates on progress, emerging findings, and promotional material such as: videos, images, features, publications, events, etc.