FORCOAST

Earth Observation Services For Wild Fisheries, Oystergrounds Restoration And Bivalve Mariculture Along European Coasts

PROJECT DELIVERABLE REPORT

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Deliverable Title: Guideline for Communication Flow
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Deliverable number	1.2
Deliverable title	Guideline for Communication Flow
Description	This deliverable provides guidelines on the communication flow including typical communication methods such as meetings, email, phone, etc. (task 1.2).
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Contributor(s)	Daniel Twigt
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	Name	Organisation	Date	Signature (initials)
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Executive Summary

This deliverable D1.2 refers to task 1.2 (Establishing communication flow). A key aspect of the successful completion of a big project involving joint effort from different organization members is an efficient project communication scheme where every party is engaged. For this purpose, a protocol of top-down meetings as well as the availability of bottom-up communication is established.

The three platforms enabled at FORCOAST to fit the purpose of file storage and sharing, work management and instant messaging are Microsoft SharePoint, Trello and Slack respectively. Only FORCOAST members have access to the workgroups created in these platforms. The systems are organized in such a way that this gives all participants the option of leaving and downloading information to and from the different WPs and tasks according to their role and responsibilities.

The Internal Communication Flow in FORCOAST is comprised of both a bottom-up and a top-down approach. The former one implies that any of the members can, at any time, ask for a meeting with their WP leader or coordination team if needed. On the other hand, to ensure good progress tracking, a set of different meetings are established in advance on a recurrent basis. The Coordination Committee Team (CCT), composed of WP leaders (AZTI, ULIEGE, Marine Institute, ILVO, Deltares and EuroGOOS) and coordination team (Deltares) has a virtual meeting at least once per month to discuss the status of the different Work Packages, deliverables, problems encountered and plans to move forward. A set of mailing lists have been created to address the different project groups.

It is planned to have a mid-term General Assembly by January 2021, in order to follow up on the progress of the project, identifying possible obstacles and how to solve them as well as the steps forward. During the project lifetime, not only recurring meetings will take place, but also meetings to discuss and reach consensus on specific matters, such a particular deliverables, the business strategy or the FORCOAST platform definition.

Table of Contents

## Table of Figures

Table of Tables

1 Introduction

A key aspect of the successful completion of a big project involving joint effort from different organization members is an efficient project communication scheme where every party is engaged. For this purpose, a protocol of top-down meetings as well as the availability of bottom-up communication is established. To support this, internal FORCOAST communication channels have been opened, set-up and are being maintained on a regular basis in three different platforms with the most updated information and documents serving three separate purposes: file storage and sharing; work management and instant messaging. By providing different communication options, not only just a place to store common files, it is encouraged to use common sharing tools which contributes to the successful joint completion of the FORCOAST objectives.

2 Communication Tools Overview

The three platforms to fit the purpose of file storage and sharing, work management and instant messaging are Microsoft SharePoint, Trello and Slack respectively. Only FORCOAST members have access to the workgroups created in these platforms. The systems are organized in such a way that this gives all participants the option of leaving and downloading information to and from the different WPs and tasks according to their role and responsibilities.

2.1 Microsoft SharePoint

Microsoft SharePoint is an online tool that allows for a variety of online functionalities to work in a group. In FORCOAST, apart from being used as file storage and sharing tool (Figure 1) where documents, templates, minutes and other relevant information can be found. SharePoint acts as a centre point of internal communication and connectivity. Elements present in the FORCOAST SharePoint that enhance this idea are the 'Links' section, Twitter add-on, flowchart and list of tasks, deliverables and milestone with dates and deadlines, and a shared calendar where every member can be aware of the different meetings taking place and join if the topics under discussion are of their interest (Figure 4).
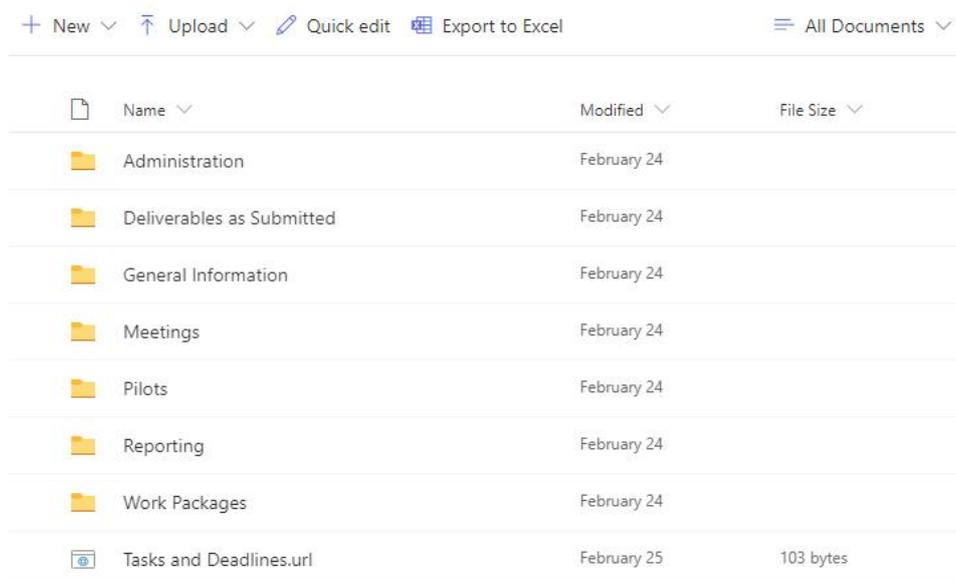
Figure 1: FORCOAST SharePoint folders
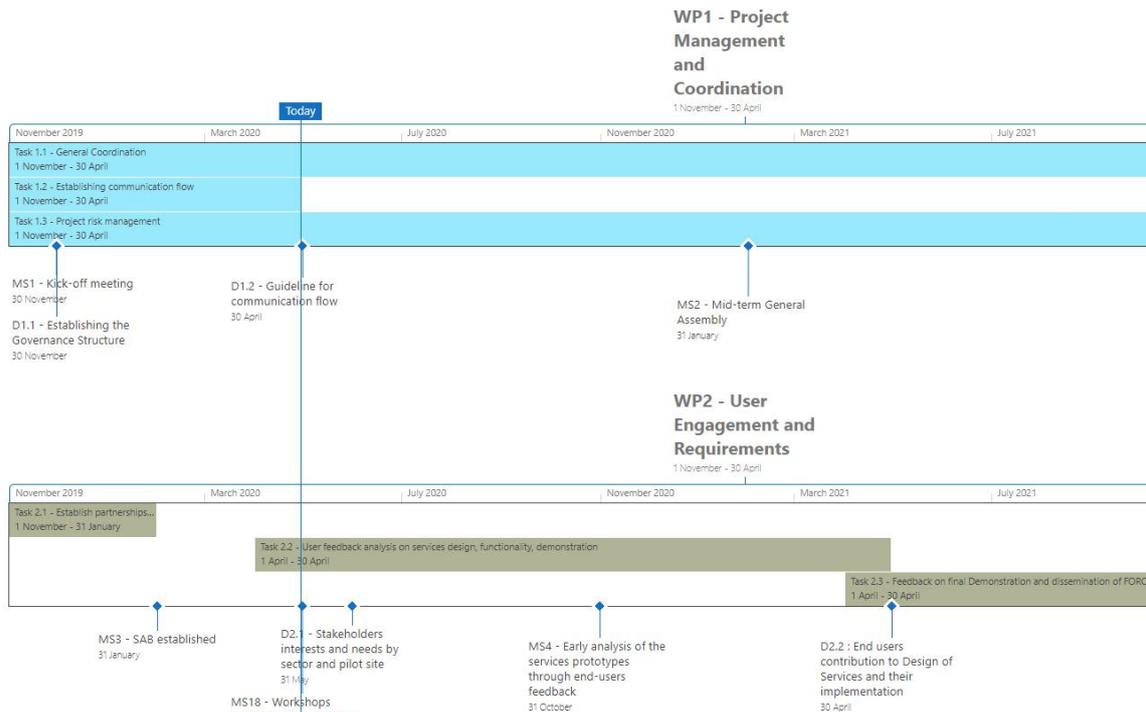
Figure 2: FORCOAST SharePoint Tasks and Deadlines section

Figure 3: FORCOAST SharePoint Useful Links (left) and Twitter (right) sections

s Calendar
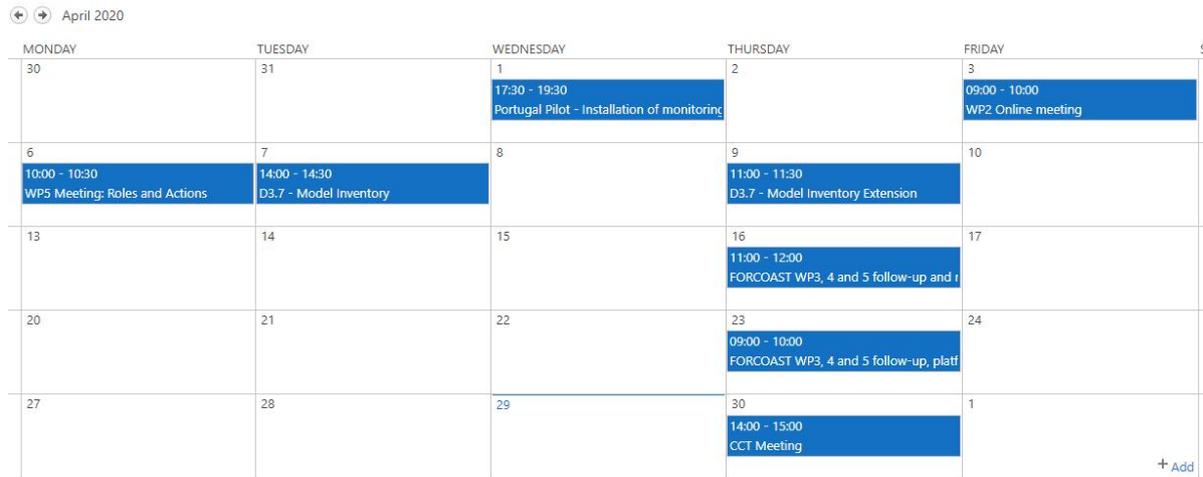
Figure 4: FORCOAST SharePoint Shared Calendar

2.2 Trello

Trello is a collaboration tool that organizes your projects into boards. In general, with Trello it is possible to have an overview about what's being worked on, who's working on what, and task progress. Each Work Package has the possibility of organizing and customizing its own board, which consists of lists and tasks. For example, a board can be organized by tasks or by the progress of the different activities (i.e. pending, in progress, completed...). Figure 5 shows the board of WP3, where each task is a list where updates are posted.
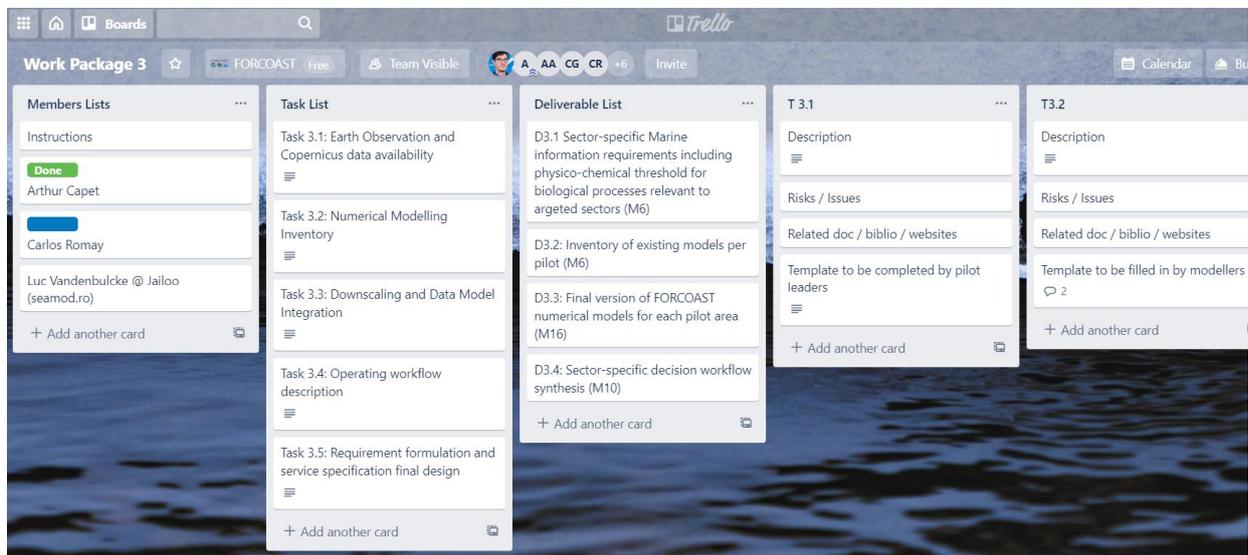
Figure 5: FORCOAST Trello board

2.3 Slack

Slack is designed as a chat alternative to emails in terms of communication and sharing, enabling a faster and more dynamic direct communication. Its workspace provides the option of creating channels for group discussions and gives the option of private messages to share information, files, and more all in one place. However, the main function used in FORCOAST is to have direct communication, thus reducing the number of emails, which can be hard to manage in large groups of people.

In FORCOAST, there are channels available for different topics (OOO): Work Packages and Pilots, consortium, events, contacts… As the project advances, more channels are created for various reasons to have a more fluent and engaging communication, such as specific deliverables, platform structure or pilot kick-offs.
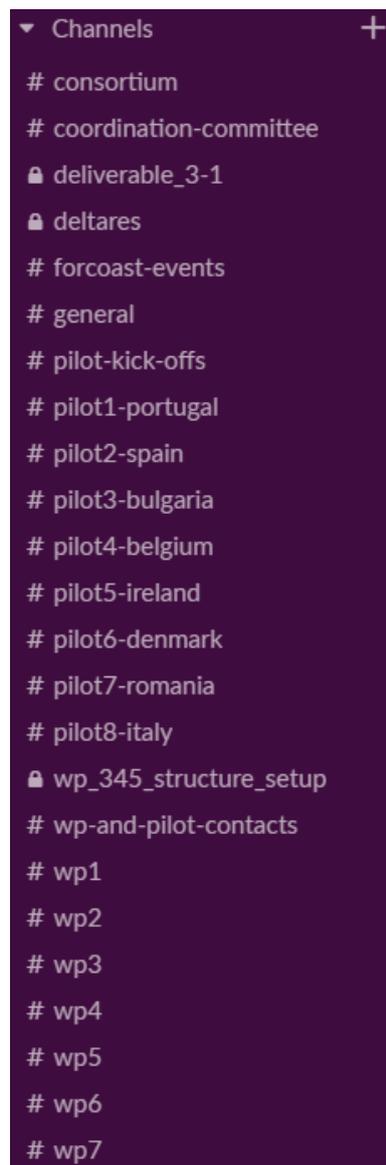

Figure 6: FORCOAST Slack current channels

4

3 FORCOAST Internal Communication Flow

The Internal Communication Flow in FORCOAST is comprised of both a bottom-up and a top-down approach. The former one implies that any of the members can, at any time, ask for a meeting with their WP leader or coordination team if needed. On the other hand, to ensure good progress tracking, a set of different meetings are established in advance on a recurrent basis.

A set of mailing lists have been created to address the different project groups (Table 1).

Table 1: FORCOAST mailing lists

Group	Mail address
Consortium (every FORCOAST member)	consortium@forcoast.eu
Coordination Committee Team - CCT (WP leaders)	cct@forcoast.eu
Management (every Deltares member)	management@forcoast.eu
Pilots	pilots@forcoast.eu
WP1	wp1@forcoast.eu
WP2	wp2@forcoast.eu
WP3	wp3@forcoast.eu
WP4	wp4@forcoast.eu
WP5	wp5@forcoast.eu
WP6	wp6@forcoast.eu
WP7	wp7@forcoast.eu

The Coordination Committee Team (CCT), composed of WP leaders (AZTI, ULIEGE, Marine Institute, ILVO, Deltares and EuroGOOS) and coordination team (Deltares) has a virtual meeting at least once per month to discuss the status of the different Work Packages, deliverables, problems encountered and plans to move forward. This meeting takes place the last Thursday of every month at 14:00 CET via GoToMeeting unless stated otherwise.

The project kick-off meeting took place in Scheveningen in November 2019 at the start of the project. Individual pilot kick-offs were held during the first quarter of 2020, with the attendance of Deltares in each of them. Pilot meetings will take place regularly across the project duration with no more than 1-2 months between meetings. In the same way, regular Work Package meetings are expected to ensure the good functioning of the groups, especially during periods where activities are carried ou in the Work Package.

It is planned to have a mid-term General Assembly by January 2021, in order to follow up on the progress of the project, identifying possible obstacles and how to solve them as well as the steps forward. The location of the Assembly has yet to be determined and it will be chosen according to the convenience to the project partners as well as attending to potential travel restrictions that may limit mobility between countries. The Stakeholder Advisory Board, a group of experts in the FORCOAST fields which provides guidance and inputs to the optimization and monitoring of project activities and goals, considering and complementing the innovation in both academia and industry, is invited to the General Assembly as well as to the CCT meeting to provide feedback on the progress towards the project goals and bring on strategically relevant knowledge and experience.

During the project lifetime, not only recurring meetings will take place, but also meetings to discuss and reach consensus on specific matters, such a particular deliverable, business strategy or the FORCOAST platform definition. These meetings will be open to the contribution of everyone within the consortium.