

FORCOAST



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

PROJECT DELIVERABLE REPORT

Deliverable Number: 7.2

Deliverable Title: Communication and Marketing Plan

Authors: Dina Eparkhina and Vicente Fernandez

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7	15/09/2022	Addition of 'Feedback by reviewers' table (see below), stating how the reviewers comments have been addressed. It includes the project website and Twitter update status and the correct references to the	Luis Rodriguez Galvez

		communication and promotion strategy linked to the business cases.	
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Approvals				
	Name	Organisation	Date	Signature (initials)
Coordinator	Ghada El Serafy	Deltares	15/09/2022	GES
WP Leaders	Ghada El Serafy	Deltares	15/09/2022	GES

Feedback by reviewers		
Date	Comment	Response
08/09/2022	The deliverable has been updated in line with the reviewers' feedback and the primary concern is now that communication takes place as the website is out of date. Also, there are limited Twitter followers (62) and activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The website has been updated, including the following aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More detailed description for each service and updated material (https://forcoast.eu/services/) Blog posts of recent FORCOAST activities and topics in the 'news' section (https://forcoast.eu/news-events/) Conferences and events where FORCOAST took part in the 'events' section (https://forcoast.eu/news-events/events/) All the public deliverables are available Every publication under FORCOAST framework has been included (https://forcoast.eu/products/publications/) Link to the platform prototype included in the top menu bar Twitter activity is increased in the last stages of the project with the most relevant recent information to support the project and offer promotion (https://twitter.com/forcoast_eu) For its effectivity analysis with metrics see D7.3 – <i>An Analysis and Overview of Different Communication Tools</i>
08/09/2022	The plan should be updated to show a clear communication strategy in support to	As part of the business planning, the details of the communication and promotion strategy, in relation with the business case for each of the business scenarios, are described in D6.4 – <i>Final Business Plan</i> , more specifically in:



	the development of the business case	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Section 3.7 Promotion strategy○ Section 4.2 Marketing / Sales strategy
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1. Introduction

FORCOAST, subtitled, Earth Observation services for Wild Fisheries, Oystergrounds Restoration and Bivalve Mariculture along European Coasts, is an EU-funded project. It involves public and private sectors to improve the business uptake of the Copernicus¹ Earth Observation services for fisheries and mariculture.

FORCOAST will develop, test, and demonstrate innovative services based on satellite information from the Copernicus Marine, Land, and Climate Services, local in-situ information, and advanced numerical modelling.

FORCOAST works to deliver high-quality information incorporating water and meteorological indicators, which will help to improve planning, management, and operations in coastal marine aquaculture activities along the European coasts.

The FORCOAST project consortium includes a wide variety of organizations, from marine research institutes to small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which are both service developers and users of marine information. In this way, the project ensures that the services are designed to satisfy the market needs.

This document outlines the FORCOAST plan to approach the users of the project results, expand the user-base, and engage with a broader range of blue economy stakeholders at European, national, and regional levels. Specifics of the marketing plans will be developed by the SME-project partners as part of their business and exploitation plans. The present document will underpin these efforts, by supporting the stakeholder engagement and co-development of compelling messages related to the FORCOAST services or products.

In FORCOAST, communication is a key enabler of a successful engagement with users and stakeholders. All project partners routinely use communication tools to reach out to their audiences at various levels, from local to European. This plan is designed to help the consortium by providing a clear approach to developing engagement and communication outputs.

2. FORCOAST communication targets

FORCOAST is a market-uptake project and users and stakeholders are at the core of its activities. We identify two types of FORCOAST communication targets:

Users:

- 1.1 **Existing users:** already in the FORCOAST consortium (project partners). FORCOAST works with several SMEs to co-design Copernicus applications for their needs. These SMEs are both partners and users of the project's results. FORCOAST project develops its applications in eight national pilot sites in Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria, Belgium, Ireland, Denmark, Romania, and Italy.
- 1.2 **Potential users:** industries working with the consortium users. Successful FORCOAST user engagement and co-design is foreseen to generate interest from industries and SMEs working closely with the existing project users (e.g. national aquaculture and mariculture companies).

¹ <https://www.copernicus.eu/en>

Stakeholders:

1.3 **Interested** in the project results: FORCOAST does not operate in isolation from a broad range of European blue economy activities. It increases the Copernicus service uptake, helps promote the blue economy opportunities and public-private partnerships, and generates innovations which can be further transferred beyond the project's lifetime. Examples of the FORCOAST stakeholders include environmental protection agencies, coastal search and rescue, tourism, ports and shipping, technology platforms, research, the European Commission, and the Copernicus programme.



Figure 1: Schematic representation of the FORCOAST communication targets.

FORCOAST targets include the existing users (part of the project consortium), the potential users (from industries working with the consortium users), and broader stakeholders (interested in the project's results from a broader blue economy perspective).

These main target categories are also reflected in table 1 below.

3. Communication activities

FORCOAST has a set of basic communication tools, such as the project website², information leaflet, and social media accounts^{3, 4}. These are key to support the project's visibility and provide a focal point for main information and deliverables. [FORCOAST Deliverable 7.1](#) details these tools. In the present communications and marketing plan we are addressing targeted communication tools for each type of audience.

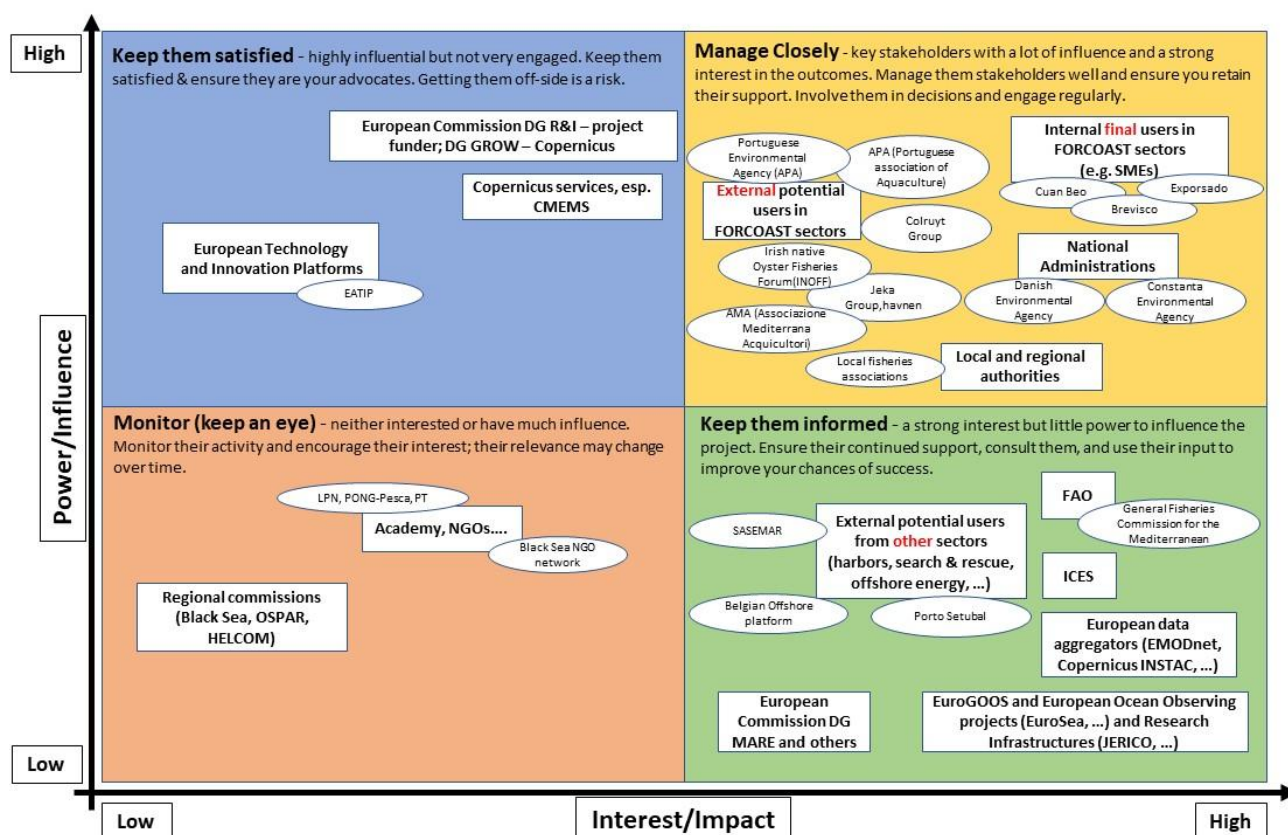
The analysis of the FORCOAST audiences is transferred into this plan from [Deliverable 2.1](#) which offers a comprehensive overview of the project's users and stakeholders and lays the foundations for the communication activities listed below. Table 1 below highlights the main audience categories of the project in a stakeholder prioritization map.

² <https://forcoast.eu/>

³ https://twitter.com/forcoast_eu

⁴ <https://www.linkedin.com/company/forcoast/>

Table 1: Example of the FORCOAST audience prioritization. Level of Interest/Impact indicates how much a stakeholder cares about the outcomes; Level of Influence/Power indicates the degree to which a stakeholder can make or break the project. This map will be reviewed throughout the project duration.



FORCOAST communication activities address two main groups: users, existing and potential, of the project applications and services, and stakeholders, who include a broader and more generic group including decision-makers and administration, data initiatives, environmental monitoring, technology platforms, and others. Two sets of communication outputs are defined in this plan to target each of these two groups of audiences.

3.1 Activities targeted at current and potential users

FORCOAST user engagement activities span various geographical scales with audiences at local, regional, and pan-European levels. The proposed activities were discussed with the FORCOAST pilots in eight national sites in Europe (Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria, Belgium, Ireland, Denmark, Romania, and Italy) to fit the specific requirements and correspond to the perceived user expectations. Leaders of the FORCOAST pilot sites responded to a WP7 survey to determine and prioritize a set of dissemination tools for the project's users. The below list reflects these tools and their prioritization.

1. **Co-design activities:** workshops (physical or virtual);
2. **Local media outreach** (e.g. local newspapers) and press releases;
3. **National-language communications** (brochures and other promotional materials);
4. **Maritime business events** and fairs at local, regional, national levels, and European levels (e.g. Seafood fairs, BlueInvest);

5. **Promotional videos** (short videos and interviews with pilot partners in national languages and in English);
6. **User quotes and testimonials** (used together with other promotion tools);
7. **Best practice sharing** across regions (through FORCOAST joint pilot activities and general assemblies).

Figure 2: Illustrations of FORCOAST pilot sites (from left to right: Romania, Ireland, Italy)



3.2 Activities targeted at broader stakeholders

FORCOAST is a market-oriented project operating in a broader blue economy and European integration landscape. It is important for the project's success to link with a broader diversity of blue economy stakeholders than just the FORCOAST users. Such engagement may not always have a clear output in mind (as compared to the user engagement, which the project conducts for a specific result of co-design or market uptake), rather it aims at ensuring the visibility of the project's results, promoting the European blue economy potential, and addressing future funding opportunities.

- **Participation in European and regional stakeholder events** (e.g. European Maritime Days workshops and exhibitions – Figure 3 to the right features a EuroGOOS stand at EMD2019, Atlantic Stakeholder Platform conferences, Copernicus Marine week; regional Copernicus Marine Service trainings, etc);
- **Participation in relevant science conferences** (e.g. EGU, ICES science conference, etc);
- **Visualizations and infographics** highlighting the project's results in a broader context;
- **Policy-oriented slide deck** including visual examples and user testimonials;
- **Videos** developed for the user category will also be used in the stakeholder context.



4. Marketing activities

In 2021, FORCOAST started working on its overall marketing and exploitation strategy through Deliverables 6.1 (Initial Market Analysis), 6.3 (Initial Business Plan), and 6.5 (Initial Exploitation Strategy). Deliverable 7.2 (Communication and Marketing Plan - this document) submitted according to the Description of Action in June 2020 was updated in July 2021 with a view to propose marketing activities stemming out of this overall marketing and exploitation strategy.

The activities outlined in this plan will help FORCOAST to market its products and services to customers. However, this plan is limited by the maturity of the FORCOAST product development. As of July 2021, there are no FORCOAST final products identified and therefore the marketing plan cannot include specifics. Nevertheless, this plan includes the guiding principles, steps to take, update on the marketing messaging, and potential marketing practices to use when the FORCOAST final product development matures.

4.1 Market research

In 2021, FORCOAST identified a series of Service Modules based on the work of the FORCOAST regional Pilots, grouping them per the FORCOAST target sectors. Deliverable 6.5 Initial Exploitation Strategy put forward a portfolio of potential services applicable to each Service Module.

The following services are being developed in FORCOAST (more information is available in Deliverable 3.10):

- **Suitable Fishing Areas** (Fisheries Service Module SM-F1) provides fishers with maps of suitable habitats of small pelagic fish (e.g. withing and turbot).
- **Fronts Detection** (Fisheries Service Module SM-F2) provides fishers with locations of narrow areas in the sea surface where a sharp gradient between two water masses with different hydrodynamic properties occur, i.e. fronts (shelf, shelf-break, coastal-upwelling and estuarine fronts, and frontal areas in the deep ocean) and where some commercial fisheries are more abundant.
- **Operational Scheduler / Marine Conditions** (Aquaculture Service Module SM-A1) helps shellfish farmers plan their activities based on predictions of environmental variables that affect activities at sea (e.g. water level, sunlight period, wind conditions, waves, or currents), providing an scheduler based on user workability thresholds.
- **Harmful Land Discharges** (Aquaculture Service Module SM-A2) helps shellfish farmers foresee troubleshooting of harmful discharges and adapt their plans of action based on that risk.
- **Site Prospection** (Aquaculture Service SM-A3): helps shellfish farmers evaluate the existing aquaculture sites and prospect for new ones.
- **Spat Captures Assistance** (Aquaculture Service Module SM-A4) helps shellfish farmers predict the spat arrival and increase the efficiency of the spat collection.
- **Contaminants Source Retrieval** (Oyster ground restoration Service Module SM-R1) helps farmers to understand the sources of contamination of their oyster grounds.

In 2021, Deliverable 6.1 detailed the Market Analysis conducted for the Service Modules based on the example of the Oyster Ground Restoration Service Module. This Initial Market Analysis plan provided costs for the infrastructures required to collect data needed for the service product development. The costs of potential products were not identified. For the realization of this marketing plan and the overall FORCOAST marketing strategy, the identification of the pricing and new market entries is a paramount step towards reaching the market.

As of July 2021, FORCOAST has established a working group to extend the initial market analysis put forward in Deliverable 6.1 to all Pilots, towards the realization of a full market analysis for FORCOAST.

4.2 Tailored messaging

As soon as the market value, business plan, and exploitation strategy are finalized, FORCOAST should focus on the creation, timing, and placement of specific campaigns and measure the outcomes of these marketing efforts.

The FORCOAST value proposition should be clear to the customer in statements that are front and centre on the website and the branding materials. The value proposition should answer the following questions:

- How can bespoke FORCOAST products or services solve the customer's problem?
- Why should the customer buy this product / service and not another?
- Prices of the products/services should be clearly visible, as well as the sales team contact details.

The collaboration with SMEs in FORCOAST is crucial to define the selling points for the value proposition. The bespoke services/products should be clearly branded on the website and in the outreach materials, rather than promoted through generic descriptions of the FORCOAST activities.

Since the bespoke final products/services are not yet developed as of July 2021, only potential messaging is introduced below, which will need to be adapted to the specifics once those are available. The FORCOAST services are described in deliverables D3.9 and D3.10 from a operational and technical point of view respectively. Prices and further information regarding the final business aspects of the services will be documented in deliverables D6.4 and D6.6. As a main idea, tailor-made services with the collaboration of local users, which integrate data collected on the spot and which allow the user some degree of customization, have a high degree of probability of being more efficient than other generalist products and, therefore, resolve the concrete problems of users.

Table 2: Tailored messaging per service and its customer sector/users

Service provided	Customer sector/users	Value proposition
Dynamic maps for commercial fisheries habitats	Fishers	Help fishermen to maximize the economic efficiency of their activities
Dynamic maps of frontal zones	Fishers	Reduce the time at sea and the distance travelled, with the final purpose of contributing to a more efficient activity
Met-ocean conditions on site	Shellfish farmers	Access to an operation scheduler based on user values to better plan farming activities at Sea
Near-real-time maps of harmful discharges	Shellfish farmers	Assess the risk of a farm being affected by material released from potentially harmful sources
Site suitability maps for shellfish	Shellfish farmers	Minimize the challenges associated with high spat mortality and variable year-to-year growth depending on the prospected environmental conditions

Predict of spat arrival	Shellfish farmers	Predict the time window where spats are likely to arrive to put the spat collectors in the water not too early to avoid heavy biofouling, as well as not too late
Backward retrieval of pollution sources	Shellfish farmers	Find out potential sources of sea water contamination

4.3 Platforms for product and service promotion

Chapter 3 of this plan (Communication Activities) proposes a list and a prioritization of the FORCOAST communication activities as discussed with the FORCOAST pilots in eight national sites in Europe (Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria, Belgium, Ireland, Denmark, Romania, and Italy). In addition to these activities, marketing promotion services will be needed to reach the objectives of the marketing strategy. A mix of those platforms will be considered for each campaign depending on their necessities and capabilities.

Table 3: Platforms for product and service promotion

User sector	Activity	Details	Costs
SMEs involved in wild fisheries, oystergrounds restoration, bivalve mariculture (Cuen Beo, Brevisco, Exporsado, etc – see D2.1)	Product co-design workshops	Key to not only determine the bespoke products but also the best marketing strategies to reach the users	Costs of the workshop organization are covered through the FORCOAST activities
Local authorities with an overview of blue economic activities in the region Fisheries associations	Articles in local newspapers and trade magazines	Articles promoting FORCOAST as an EU-funded blue economy project, and its products/services	Articles in English via the direct project funds; translation costs will be added
National administrations (Danish Environment Agency, Constanta Environment Agency, etc – see D2.1)	Brochures on the FORCOAST product portfolio	Information on the portfolio of products and services to be disseminated at industry fairs, e.g. Seafood fairs (EU BlueInvest)	Production of brochures covered through the project; translation costs will be added
National and international industry associations (Portuguese Association of Aquaculture, Irish native Oyster Fisheries Forum, Associazione Mediterranea)	National and international business fairs with FORCOAST product/service demonstrations	Proactive engagement with potential FORCOAST users through the fairs, including stands and product demonstrations by	Costs of the fair participation will be added to the staff time and costs covered through the project

Acquicultor, Jeka Group, Colruyt Group, SASEMAR, Porto Setubal, Belgian Offshore Platform, etc – see D2.1)		the FORCOAST marketing team and dissemination of promotional materials	
SMEs involved in wild fisheries, oyster grounds restoration, and bivalve mariculture National and international industry associations	Paid ads on YouTube	Ads with experts and users who have already been engaged talking about the benefits of the products and services	Costs of the paid YouTube services
SMEs involved in wild fisheries, oyster grounds restoration, and bivalve mariculture	Reward system for users	Reward system for users who (i) contribute to surveys; (ii) give service design feedback; (iii) suggest new potential users; (iv) recommend the service to others	Reward to be agreed with the FORCOAST Pilots and coordinator, upon advice by the SMEs involved in FORCOAST
Broader stakeholders as defined in D2.1 (FAO, ICES, harbour operators, search and rescue operators, offshore industries, etc.) Potential FORCOAST users (National and international industry associations (Portuguese Association of Aquaculture, Irish native Oyster Fisheries Forum, Associazione Mediterranea Acquicultor, Jeka Group, Colruyt Group, SASEMAR, Porto Setubal, Belgian Offshore Platform, etc – see D2.1) National administrations (Danish Environment Agency, Constanta	Paid search engine services LinkedIn paid announcements	Investment in search engines to stay on top for certain keywords Personalized ads featuring FORCOAST products/services customized for specific needs will help building the brand awareness, drive traffic, and help measure the uptake	Costs to be defined including the source of funding

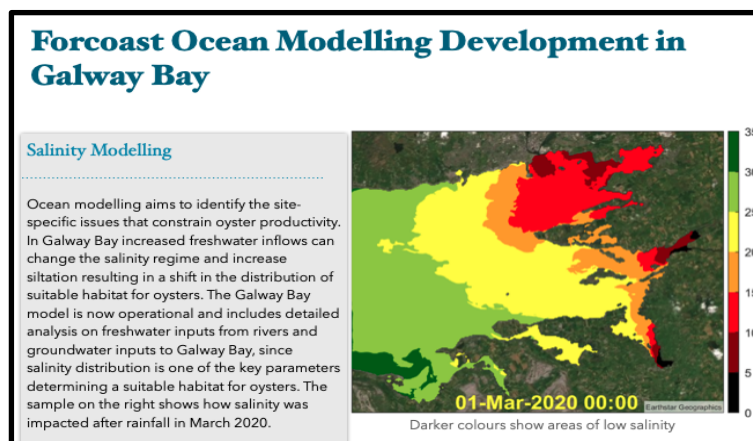
Environment Agency, etc – see D2.1)			
European Commission	Copernicus website user case catalogue (https://www.copernicus.eu/en/use-cases)	Use cases of FORCOAST Copernicus-based products/services	Covered through the project (no additional marketing costs, only staff time)
Copernicus User Forum			
European Technology and Innovation Platforms			

4.4 Communication and marketing activities in Pilot 5 Ireland for the Oyster Reef Restoration

Deliverable 6.1 detailed the Market Analysis of the Oyster Ground Restoration Service Module. This initial market analysis allowed identifying specific communication and marketing actions required for this service module.

- **Newsletter**⁵ is being released monthly by Cuan Beo, containing a FORCOAST section with the updates on the ongoing work and examples of how the FORCOAST services have been applied in Galway Bay, Ireland.

Figure 4: Sample of FORCOAST Promotion from Cuan Beo April 2021 Newsletter

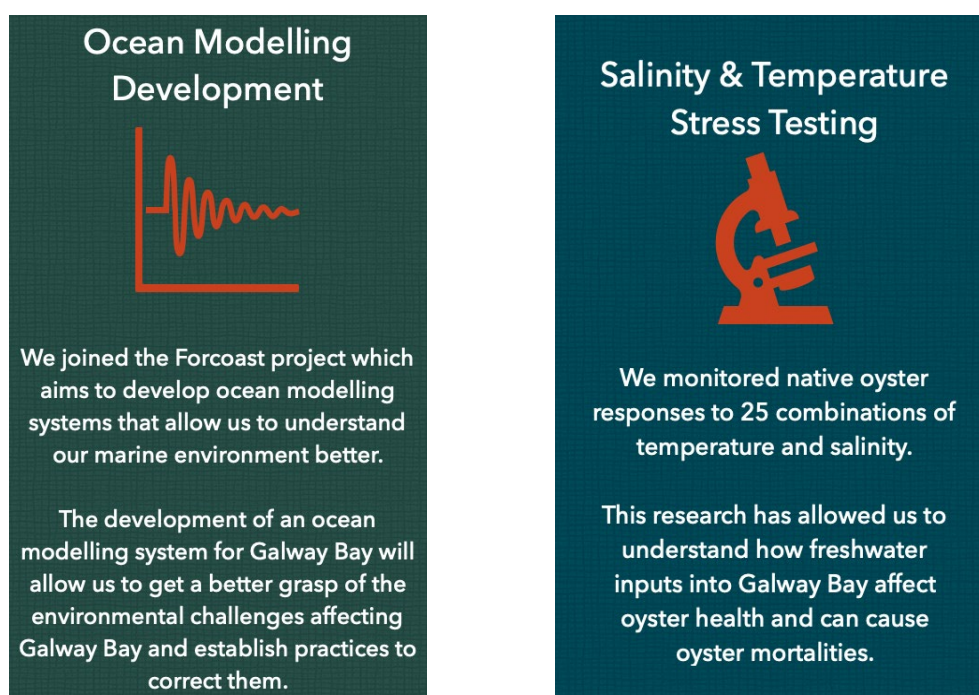


- **Poster**⁶ explains the role FORCOAST is playing in helping to better understand marine environmental conditions in Galway Bay.

⁵ <http://cuanbeo.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/April-2021-Newsletter-Final.pdf>

⁶ <http://cuanbeo.com/2021/06/03/galway-bay-oyster-restoration-project-2020-work-programme/>

Figure 5: FORCOAST promotion poster by Cuan Beo



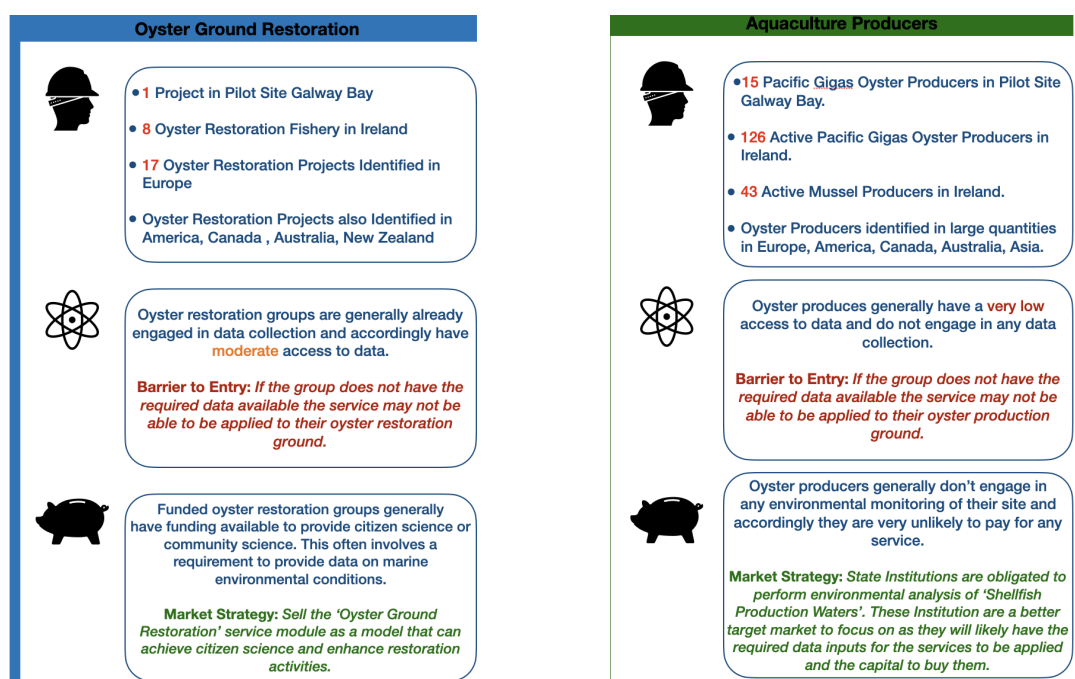
- **Videos⁷** outline the FORCOAST work on the Galway Bay Oyster Reef Restoration and how a monitoring system helps better understand the marine environment.
- **Demonstrations at industry workshops** took place to demonstrate the Oyster Reef Restoration service models in action. Several workshops were conducted actively looking for innovative and engaging ways to present the service and how it helps improve oyster reef restoration or aquaculture (see presentations made by Cuan Beo at NOR Conference: <http://cuanbeo.com/video/>). The following other workshops are considered to strengthen the industry engagement and demonstrate the FORCOAST Oyster Reef Restoration service:
 - Industry workshop with scientific, state, and community groups involved in Irish Oyster Reef Restoration;
 - Industry workshop with co-operative societies involved in Irish Native Oyster Fishery Management;
 - Participation in and engagement with the European Native Oyster Restoration Alliance study on the procedure of site selection for Native Oyster Reef Restoration;
 - Participation in and engagement with Native Oyster Restoration Alliance industry conference on Oyster Restoration in Europe;
 - Participation in industry workshops hosted by Native Oyster Network UK and Ireland;
 - Engagement with International Oyster Restoration Groups;
 - Community engagement with Galway Bay users (recreational, commercial, state, scientific);
 - Engagement with Irish Seafood Development Agency (Bord Iascaigh na Mhara) and Irish State Scientific Institute (Marine Institute) on the current systems for monitoring marine environmental conditions;
 - Workshops on early model demonstrations with end users.

⁷ <https://youtu.be/L-AnGcuJr8g>

● **Messaging on the market needs:**

1. There remains a significant knowledge gap and a lack of investigation on the water quality status of coastal and estuarine waters. This has resulted in a pronounced lack of any targeted actions in planning to improve water quality specifically in these water bodies.
2. There is an under-evaluation and failure to account for the additional water quality pressure and water pollution affecting shellfish waters.
3. A failure to clarify the argued beneficial or negative effects of aquaculture on aquatic habitats continues to drive inaction in affecting any reformative policies for improving water quality in these habitats.
4. For drainage works, flood relief programmes, storm water overflows and sewage discharges, the easiest and opted for solution for decision makers is to direct the resulting water from these activities to the sea. There appears to remain a general belief that pollutants and debris arising from these activities are diluted into the open Atlantic and result in no harmful impact on the marine environment. The opposite is true and the pollutants and debris from these activities remain in the coastal environment for significant periods of time and present a substantial challenge for coastal marine life.

Figure 6: Summary of Potential Market for Oyster Reef Restoration Services in Pilot 5 Ireland



5. Impact assessment

It will be important in the realization of the FORCOAST marketing strategy (underpinned by the full market analysis, portfolio of products and services, business plan, and exploitation strategy) to include metrics to assess the impact of outreach and marketing efforts. This will help not only to track the efficiency of the efforts but also to adapt the activities, dropping the ineffective ones and avoiding unnecessary marketing costs. Metrics to measure the results of the marketing efforts should also include the reporting timelines. The marketing activities should be adjusted on an ongoing basis based on the findings from the metrics that show which efforts are having an impact and which are not.



The FORCOAST Coordination Committee Team, comprising all work package (co-)leaders and the coordination unit, will annually review the project's impact. The first impact meeting will take place in the first year of the project to define a set of potential FORCOAST success stories. The impact meetings will also review the stakeholder prioritization map exemplified in Table 1.

In addition to the analysis of the marketing strategy implementation, FORCOAST success stories will be promoted including the Copernicus products and applications developed through the project as well as fruitful co-design approaches. Other indicators of success may include uptakes by key media and communication channels and cross-fertilisation activities with relevant EU or national activities.

The impact assessment will include strong involvement of Work Package 2 and will be linked with Milestone 4 on user feedback and Deliverable 2.2 on service design and implementation.

FORCOAST has implemented a dissemination log to track the uptake of its activities. This uptake database will also contribute to the impact assessment. Deliverable 7.3 will analyse the success of different communication tools and help adapt the plans accordingly at the end of the project.

The FORCOAST stakeholder conference foreseen at the end of the project will be a key showcase of the project impacts.