

Acronym: COCKLES

Title: Co-Operation for Restoring Cockle Shellfisheries and its Ecosystem Services in the Atlantic Area

Contract: EAPA_458/2016

Output 2

COCKLES communication material package

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1. Executive Summary

COCKLES Project (Co-Operation for Restoring Cockle Shellfisheries and its Ecosystem-Services in the Atlantic Area) started in October 2017 and is running for 24 months (M). Is an INTERREG-ATLANTIC funded project aiming to restore production and the services provided by cockles, threatened by disease outbreaks and suboptimal management.

A communication and dissemination plan was drafted early in the project with all partners involved. Communication and dissemination strategy of this project have had special focus on the creation of strong bridges connecting Scientifics, stakeholders, policy makers, students and general public for a better awareness and engagement of all in cockle's conservation and sustainable production.

This document aims to provide a report of all dissemination and communication efforts carried out by the COCKLES consortium over the entire M1-M24 period.

2. Introduction

The Project

Cockles provide a wealth of services to coastal communities in the Atlantic Area (AA). COCKLES will restore production and the services provided by this emblematic resource, threatened by disease outbreaks and suboptimal management. Developing aquaculture, resistant strains and recovering natural stocks, optimizing management and upskilling stakeholders will aid recovering resources, increase the understanding of ecosystem services and contribute to the Good Ecological Services and boost coastal economies of Atlantic Area.

Cockles provide meaningful environmental, societal, cultural as well as economic benefits to coastal communities in Spain, Portugal, France, Ireland, and United Kingdom, but are threatened by disease and sub-optimal management. This project will restore and increase cockle production and the services it provides in the Atlantic Area, using the following objectives:

- To assess the health, diversity and interrelationships of cockle populations across the AA by characterizing population dynamics, genetic diversity and larval transport, threats from disease, pollution, invasive species and climate;
- To quantify the wider economic, societal and cultural benefits from ecosystem services provided by cockles (fishery, aquaculture, biodiversity, food for birds, tourism, cultural services), by surveys, interviews and socio-economic analysis;
- To provide new techniques for cockle management by developing new technology and procedures for cockle bed restoration, hatchery technology for seed production, selective breeding programmes to produce disease-resistant and fast growing strains, and conservation of genetic structure/diversity;
- To provide guidance on best practice for producers, administrations, environmental agencies, and NGOs, by evaluating and sharing best practice across the AA and optimizing management through mutual learning. This will result in improved cockle production, a strong, viable and sustainable industry, with recognized societal and biodiversity benefits.

Work Package (WP) 2 Communication and dissemination

WP2 aims to promote open dialogue between all stakeholders: scientists, managers, politicians, fishermen, NGO's and others involved in the use of cockles and to sensitize all, in coastal communities and beyond, about the diversity and value of the ecosystem services cockles provide. The communication strategy of COCKLES combines a range of actions focused on these targets. Communication actions will raise both public awareness and stakeholders' participation and this will be achieved through the design of a project website and on-line community. COCKLES webpage will link to the communication platform of the Atlantic Area. Project outputs (publications, newsletters, brochures,

maps) will be spread through COCKLES website and public events. The involvement of the whole partnership will enable capacity building, cross-disciplinary interaction and to effectively touch the ground of targets in the regions. Synergies with WP3 (Project Capitalization) will be exploited. These objectives will be achieved by COCKLES workshops on specific topics, which will provide a forum for interaction between the project and external audience. The organization of a final conference will join the major players on cockle issues, presenting the major achievements by the project and discussing on the major concerns about cockles. Dissemination will continue beyond the project through the website, the publication of results in journals, technical meetings and congresses and through the organization of a post-project workshop.

Deliverable nr. 2

The scope of this deliverable is to present a communication material package related to the brand development, printed materials, on-line dissemination and promotion activities. It outlines the dissemination and communication objectives and strategy of the reporting period and presents the tools and activities that were undertaken to accomplish the set objectives.

3. Dissemination and Communication tools

COCKLES logo and visual identity

A visual identity of the project was created to ensure that project outputs are consistent and easily recognisable. The logo was created by a designer (Anabela Cotrim) and represents the key species of this project (Figure 1). Templates with COCKLES brand have been prepared for partners use in order to maximize the impact of our visual identity on the audience (Figure 2).



Figure 1 COCKLES Project logo.

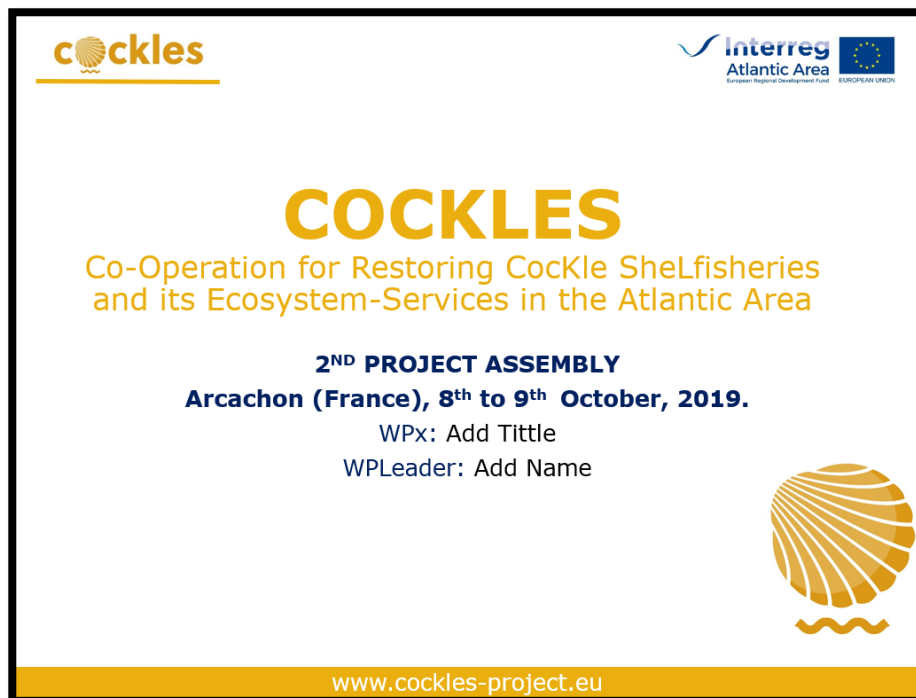


Figure 2 Example of a Power Point template for Project presentations.

COCKLES Promotional Material

UA team created a series of dissemination materials in order to maintain the common identity of the project, raising its visibility and supporting project partners to their promotional activities in workshops, face to face meetings, etc. The following project promotional materials were created:

Brochure

A project brochure with COCKLES summary was produced in the four languages of the partnership: English, French, Spanish and Portuguese (Appendix 1).

Poster/Roll-up

A Poster (61x91cm, Appendix 2) and a roll-up (85x205cm, Appendix 3) with COCKLES Project summary, objectives and identification of the partners involved were produced. This material was used to make the project fully visible at the premises of each partner institution and exposed in all COCKLES dissemination activities such as COCKLES Annual meetings, COCKLES Workshops/Seminars, among others (Figure 3).



Figure 3 Example of dissemination use of the project poster and roll-up.

Other Promotional Material

Several other Promotional Material have been created according to target public of each dissemination activity promoted by COCKLES partners. Mugs, paper notebooks, cotton bags and pens were first distributed in the COCKLES kick-off meeting and since then used to spread COCKLES brand in several other events such as Annual meetings, Workshops, Science fairs, among others. Post-its and puzzles (2 versions) were latter on created to disseminate the goals of the Project among the younger audience and distributed in more than 30 schools in Galicia and during other outreach activities (Figure 4).



Figure 4 Diversity of Promotional Material created and disseminated throughout the project.

COCKLES Newsletters

COCKLES newsletters were created to spread the project main achievements and outputs, including regular information about the partners' field and laboratory activities, publications and communications. Newsletters are also serving to announce COCKLES' future activities, in particular those organised for and with stakeholders such as workshops on specific topics. COCKLES Newsletters have been made public in hard copy format as well as in its digital form.

- The 1st Newsletter was launched in June 2018 announcing the project's objectives, first steering committee, some field and lab work, conferences publications and upcoming events (Appendix 4).
- The 2nd Newsletter was launched in December 2018 with information regarding serious threats to cockles' beds, plenty of field and lab activities of the different partners including already some interesting results. This newsletter presented as well, the first stakeholder opinion article and many dissemination activities attended by COCKLES partners, such as scientific meetings and workshops (Appendix 5).
- The 3rd Newsletter is under construction and predicted to be available during October 2019.

COCKLES website

The website (Figure 5) was created in March 2018 and is the most informative dissemination tool. It consists a major channel of information and communication for visitors and, for this reason, is harmonized and related with the main goals of WP2 to disseminate the project findings as well as to engage key stakeholders with a view to knowledge sharing. The website is a means to share information from the project for a range of audiences and includes a restricted area for documents exchange among partners. Since its launch, the website is regularly updated to maintain a sustained interest in project activities, including multilingual sections, brochures and newsletters. The update of the website content, layout and design is ongoing throughout the implementation of the project. The website performance is frequently evaluated through analytics audience overview (Table 1).



Figure 5 COCKLES website homepage, available at <http://www.cockles-project.eu/>.

Table 1 Website analytics data, from April 2018 to September 2019.

Variables	Data
Users	1058
Page views	11662
Average Session Duration	00:03:18
Returning visits	17.5%

COCKLES social media

Social media profiles play a promotional role for the project and promote visibility of the project to a wide range of audiences. Their popularity, easy access and rapid information flow identify them as very effective online dissemination tools, therefore profiles in Facebook and Twitter (Figure 6) were created. Number of “likes” and “followers” have been frequently monitored (Table 2).

A.



The screenshot shows the Facebook profile for 'Cockles'. The profile picture is a yellow and white cockle shell. The cover photo is a promotional banner for a 'WORKSHOP EM PROCEDIMENTOS DE CULTURA DE BERBIGÃO' at the University of Aveiro, Portugal, on September 23, 2019. The main post is an agenda for the workshop, listing activities like 'Recepção de Boas Vindas', 'Sessão de Abertura', and 'Discursos Políticos e Partes Interessadas'. The right sidebar shows 'Related Pages' including 'Vale Aromático', 'Cooperminho', and 'EnhanceMicroAlgae'. The page is in Portuguese and was created on October 22, 2017.



Figure 6 COCKLES Facebook (A) and Twitter (B) front pages. Available at <https://www.facebook.com/Cockles-2022119738069662/> and https://twitter.com/cockles_project, respectively.

Table 2 Social networks data, until September 2019.

Social Network	Data
Facebook	231 likes
Twitter	204 followers

COCKLES Promotional Activities

COCKLES partners promoted several communication and dissemination activities presented in a very accessible language that covered the major project topics: cockles population status; cockles threats; cockles conservation; cockles aquaculture; etc. These activities improved the awareness about cockles situation, raised opportunities for improvement and took many different forms: technical meetings, outreach activities, workshops on specific topics, among others. All actions were properly accompanied by promotional material and dissemination leaflets (Figure 7).

The input to this section is based on the dissemination activities excel template that was internally circulated to partners for completion regarding their activities and publications (Appendix 6).



Figure 7 Example of a leaflet produced to promote a COCKLES Stakeholders Workshop.

Table 3 Summary table with COCKLES Project

Action #	Action title	Indicator	Target	Real
2.1	Building-up the AA on-line community to enhance COCKLES	Number of participants	8000	1493*
2.2	COCKLES project branding and communication material for target users	Number of newsletters	5	2
		Number of participants	1500	428*
2.3	Short technical workshops	Number of actions	300	51*
		Number of workshops	4	5
2.4	Diverse outreach and dissemination activities for general public, including students	Number of participants	400	166*
		Number of participants	300	211764
2.5	Dissemination of COCKLES technical results in publications and international conferences in the AA	Number of publications	30	33
2.6	COCKLES final conference	Number of participants	300	07-20

The public interaction through the COCKLES on-line tools (website, Facebook and Twitter) are below expectations and some corrective actions must be adopted. Stakeholders engagement must also be improved both in terms of participants and actions number. However, these numbers (marked with *) reflect stakeholders' participation in organized actions (workshops and official meetings) and do not take into account stakeholders freely involvement in the project (newsletter reading, webpage consultation, social media visit and face-to-face contacts) and then may be underestimated. On the other hand, number of participants in COCKLES promotion actions is above the proposed target, with highlight to general public and students' participation. COCKLES consortium has been very active in scientific meetings and publications with numbers already above the target.

4. Proposed Corrective Actions

Social media

- UA and other partners will create short stories and videos with people from their own professional networks or attendees to cockles workshops (for example, testimonials by general public, students and stakeholders) that will be posted on social media. The aim of this action is to attract larger audience through the project's social media profiles. Partners will try to make them viral through their own profiles and networks.
- Quotes by partners to briefly explain the project and/or its innovative character will be posted on COCKLES social media profiles with a view to attracting more followers and to raise the visibility of the project in social media. The design of these quotes will be undertaken by UA with partners providing appropriate input to this action.

Stakeholders engagement

A more conscientious and measured approach to stakeholder engagement is essential and therefore encouraged.

- COCKLES consortium will invest some effort in identifying and building stakeholder close relationships to increase the confidence.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – COCKLES Brochure (English version) – 2 pages

Appendix 2 – Poster – 1 page

Appendix 3 – Roll-up – 1 page

Appendix 4 - COCKLES Newsletter #1 – 5 pages

Appendix 5 – COCKLES Newsletter #2 – 11 pages

Appendix 6 – Complete list of COCKLES dissemination activities – 4 pages