



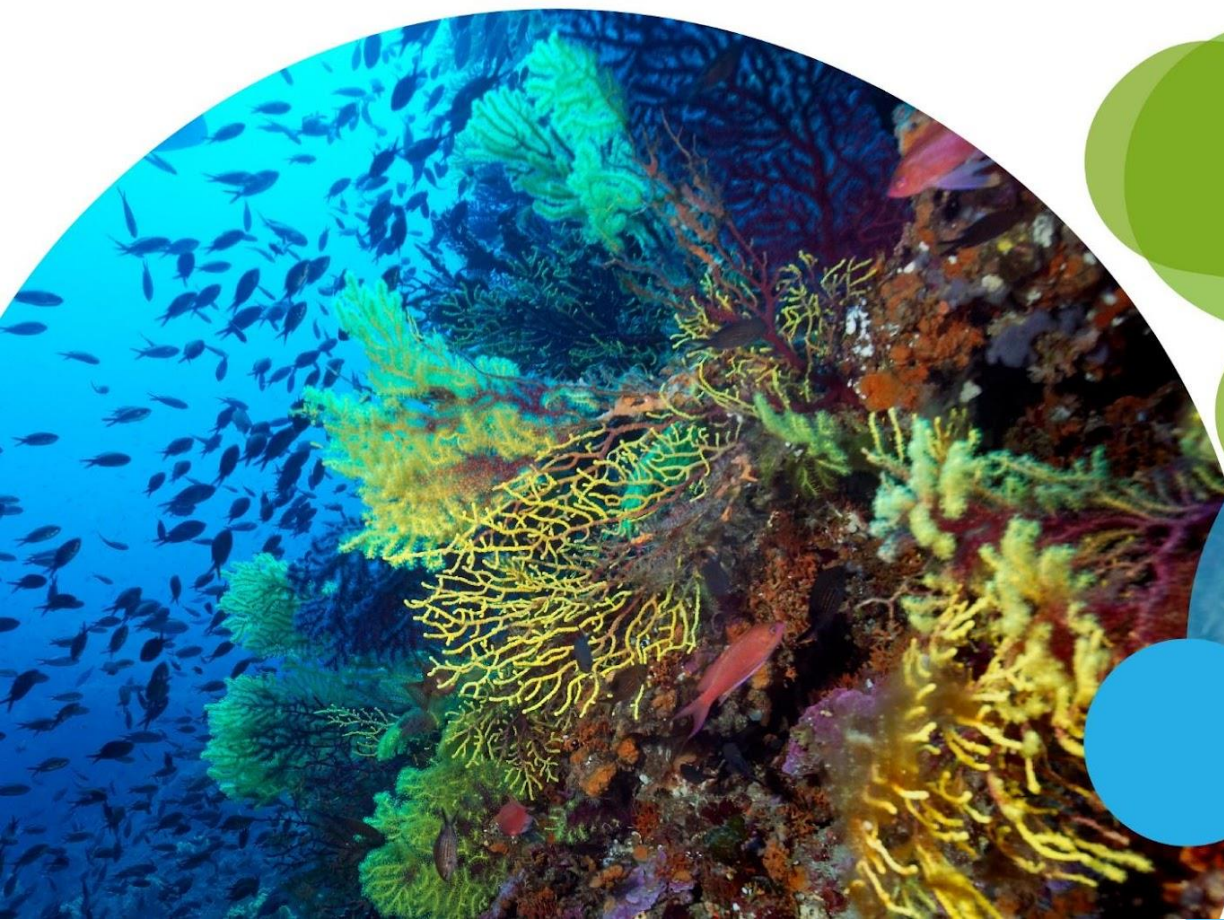
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EFFECTIVE

PROTECTION AND RESTORATION MANAGEMENT · MEDITERRANEAN MPAS

**Enhancing social well being and economic prosperity
by reinforcing the eFFECTIVENess of protection and
restoration management in Mediterranean MPAs**

D9.6 Liaising activities and growth of the
International Stakeholder Community
report



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EFFECTIVE project aims to restore and safeguard the EU's Mediterranean Blue Natural Capital. Recognising the critical role of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and the gaps in their current designation and management, EFFECTIVE aims to establish innovative, science-based frameworks that integrate MPAs into a standardised Ecosystem-Based Management System (EBMS). This methodology is inspired by the Ecosystem Approach (EA) outlined in the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Through the EBMS, EFFECTIVE aligns marine management practices with sustainable development principles, utilising digital tools, multidisciplinary scientific approaches, and nature-based solutions to enhance marine environmental protection and resilience. The project encompasses a comprehensive set of objectives, including the identification of ecological corridors, the deployment of data visualisation tools, and the engagement of stakeholders in preserving and restoring Mediterranean marine habitats.

Deliverable 9.6, titled "Liaising Activities and Growth of the International Stakeholder Community Report," provides a detailed account of the project's initial efforts in building and strengthening its stakeholder network. This report highlights the methodology used to conduct liaising activities and outlines the strategies formulated to expand and engage the international stakeholder community. As the first iteration of this report, it documents both the initial synergies achieved with previous projects and new collaborations established across various sectors. These connections pave the way for EFFECTIVE's participation in networking events, informal meetings, and collaborative initiatives, amplifying the project's impact beyond its immediate geographical focus and fostering broader dissemination of its findings and outcomes.

In addition to showcasing the liaising activities conducted to date, this report presents a strategic plan for the continued growth of the international stakeholder community, detailing the actions taken so far and identifying pathways for future engagement. The document is intended as a dynamic, adaptable framework that will evolve to meet the ongoing needs and goals of the project. Future updates to this plan will ensure that the liaising activities remain aligned with EFFECTIVE's objectives and respond to emerging opportunities and challenges.

This deliverable is the first of three iterations, with two additional versions to follow, allowing for the continual refinement and expansion of EFFECTIVE's outreach and collaborative efforts. The subsequent reports—D9.7, the first updated version in Month 36, and D9.8, the second updated version in Month 48—will provide expanded insights and a comprehensive record of the project's liaison activities. These updates will capture the ongoing developments in knowledge sharing, joint event organisation, cross-promotional efforts, and strategies for engaging stakeholders. Through these iterative updates, EFFECTIVE will strengthen its commitment to building an inclusive, engaged, and well-informed international stakeholder community, ensuring a sustained impact on marine and coastal restoration efforts across the Mediterranean.

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SYMBOLS, ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

D	Deliverable
DoA	Description of Action
EU	European Union
T	Task
WP	Work-Package
MPA	Marine Protected Areas
M	Month
EBMS	Ecosystem-Based Management System
EA	Ecosystem Approach
NBS	Nature-Based Solution

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Overview

In response to the European Green Deal and the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the EFFECTIVE project is dedicated to restoring and safeguarding the EU's Mediterranean Blue Natural Capital. The EU Biodiversity Strategy emphasises the Ecosystem Approach (EA), yet its practical application, particularly through Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) frameworks, faces challenges. Drawing from the KnowSeas project, EFFECTIVE introduces the Ecosystem-Based Management System (EBMS), a standardised methodology aligning management with sustainable development principles.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) play a pivotal role, but existing gaps in their designation and management call for innovative solutions. EFFECTIVE proposes integrating MPAs into the EBMS, utilising digital tools for enhanced marine environment protection. The project's main objective is to develop a comprehensive scientific knowledge base and practical guidance, utilising a multidisciplinary approach that combines science, technology-driven nature-based solutions, digitalization, and social engagement.

With specific objectives ranging from identifying ecological corridors to implementing digital data visualisation tools, EFFECTIVE aspires to make tangible contributions toward protecting and restoring coastal and marine habitats in the EU's Mediterranean region. The consortium's expertise, spanning managerial, informational, and participatory domains, ensures a holistic and impactful approach.

1.2 Purpose of the Deliverable

Deliverable 9.6 'Liaising activities and growth of the International Stakeholder Community report' aims to showcase and document liaising activities that are being planned and conducted in the scope of the EFFECTIVE project and to outline strategies aiming to propel the growth of the international stakeholder communities. It's important to highlight that this is the first iteration of this deliverable and that this deliverable will be updated in two more occasions – in M36 and in M48.

The EFFECTIVE consortium has established successful connections to previous projects and initiatives and opened the path to new collaborations. Aiming to disseminate project activities and outputs beyond the involved territories, the project reached out to various projects and initiatives and started developing a plan to participate in networking and informal meetings, to identify potential collaboration opportunities.

All these activities, along with the plan for the growth of the international stakeholders' community are presented in detail in the current report.

1.3 Structure of the Deliverable

This deliverable consists of the following sections:

- Chapter 1: The first chapter provides a project overview, brief introduction to the document and structure of the deliverable.
- Chapter 2: This chapter presents the methodology and strategies used to build synergies and conduct outreach and engagement activities
- Chapter 3: This chapter describes all the achieved synergies and the activities that have been done so far.
- Chapter 4: The fourth chapter introduces plan for the growth of international stakeholder communities and reports on the conducted stakeholder engagement activities.
- Chapter 5: The last chapter provides a summary and conclusions of the document

2. METHODOLOGY

EFFECTIVE sought to liaise thematically and establish synergies with other EU projects and initiatives from Horizon Europe and beyond. This resulted and will result in collaborations such as the co-organisation of online and live events, the involvement of representatives of such initiatives in the EFFECTIVE project (and vice versa), sharing of knowledge and best practices, and the cross-promotion of activities and results, in an increased outreach of the project outcomes.

Furthermore, EFFECTIVE sought to actively engage the international stakeholder community by identifying a wide range of stakeholder groups that could benefit from the project's activities. The project aimed to map these stakeholders and develop a tailored communication strategy to effectively engage and involve them in the project's initiatives.

The monitoring of this activity is led by F6S, with support from all project partners. The involvement of additional partners in the collaboration process was determined on a case-by-case basis, following the joint identification of potential collaboration pathways. Project partners were asked to notify F6S, as the Work Package leader, of any potential collaborations and to provide the necessary information for scheduling initial meetings and further developing this collaboration.

Two Excel files were developed and shared with consortium – one for identifying, regular monitoring and reporting on the progress of liaising activities and the second one dedicated to identifying different stakeholders that may benefit from being part of the EFFECTIVE project network.

Achieving success in synergistic processes generally involves developing a targeted strategy that encompasses identifying shared interests or goals, pinpointing opportunities, defining objectives for generating value, and offering incentives that hold genuine potential to drive exceptional performance.

2.1 Outreach and Engagement Strategies

The following section outlines the key steps and methodologies implemented by the EFFECTIVE consortium to establish a well-defined and functional cooperative network, aimed at exploring potential links, collaborations, and synergies. This process was structured to identify strategic connections with relevant stakeholders, initiatives, and complementary projects, setting the stage for successful liaison activities that maximize the project's impact through synergistic efforts.

The groundwork for these collaborations began with a comprehensive analysis, which took place from Month 9 (M09) to Month 18 (M18), led by F6S and supported by all consortium partners. The first step was conducting desk research to identify projects and initiatives relevant to the EFFECTIVE project, utilizing resources such as the CORDIS database, mobility networks, and association websites. Keywords like "social innovation," "ecosystems," "eco-friendly," and "SHAFE" guided the search, alongside input from project partners and experts. This initial research phase provided a foundation for further mapping, as F6S, in its role as the leader of Task 9.2 – "Stakeholder Identification and Communication Strategy," systematically identified pertinent stakeholders and initiatives within the blue economy and marine restoration sectors.

In parallel, consortium members actively contributed by identifying and sharing information about projects and initiatives in which their organizations were already involved, expanding the network of potential collaborators. Existing synergy channels and networks were also leveraged, notably F6S's

Blue Economy Synergy Channel, which consolidates all blue economy projects where F6S participates as a partner, fostering an environment of shared goals and collective action among related initiatives.

Following the identification phase, the consortium scanned available information about each project and initiative to evaluate potential synergies with EFFECTIVE, resulting in the creation of a "Synergies Matrix" to systematically track opportunities. This matrix served as a foundation for assessing the relevance of each identified project, evaluating potential links, and determining the degree of alignment with EFFECTIVE's goals.

With the mapping and analysis completed, the consortium moved to direct engagement. Contact information was gathered, and F6S led targeted outreach efforts to initiate a series of introductory meetings with the identified projects and initiatives. These meetings provided a platform for team members and representatives from other projects to discuss mutual objectives, explore areas for collaboration, and outline actionable steps for joint liaison activities. Through these structured interactions, EFFECTIVE has built a network of strategic, sustainable, and mutually beneficial partnerships, laying a solid foundation for ongoing collaborative and liaison efforts that will enhance the impact and reach of the project.

2.2 Objectives and strategy of synergetic activities

Task 9.2, Stakeholder Identification and Communication Strategy, is designed to identify key stakeholder groups, establish synergies with relevant projects and initiatives, and create a comprehensive communication strategy to effectively engage these entities in the EFFECTIVE project.

The EFFECTIVE consortium developed this strategy to identify, engage, expand, and strengthen stakeholder and synergy networks through a detailed assessment of existing projects and initiatives in fields such as blue economy, sustainability, innovation, marine conservation, and restoration.

The main steps of our synergy strategy, which will continue to be refined and implemented over the course of the project, include:

- **Evaluating European and international contexts** by identifying key players, trends, and barriers to synergy-building within the blue economy and related fields, setting a foundation for impactful collaboration.
- **Assess identified initiatives** by mapping each work package based on its scope and activities and using this mapping to evaluate the relevance of identified external initiatives for each work package and to assess how external projects align with our objectives
- **Establish synergies** with identified projects or initiatives. Based on initial assessments, work packages prioritise initiatives that have the potential to form meaningful partnerships. The coordination team then provides strategies to integrate these synergies into EFFECTIVE's work streams.
- **Engage relevant community and research stakeholders** by organising participatory events to actively engage relevant community members, researchers, and other stakeholders, ensuring diverse input and support for the project's goals.
- **Create a knowledge transfer strategy** by facilitating exchanges between EFFECTIVE and other initiatives to share knowledge and insights, enriching the collective impact in marine conservation and innovation.

- **Build a network for knowledge exchange** by establishing and fostering a platform for sharing knowledge, best practices, and recommendations in the field of blue economy, marine restoration and conservation, innovation and sustainability.
- **Participate in joint activities** by collaborating on joint actions, including communication and dissemination efforts, with selected projects or initiatives to maximise impact and visibility.

Through these efforts, EFFECTIVE aims to foster a strong and interconnected network of stakeholders and initiatives, amplifying the project's contributions to marine conservation and the blue economy.

3. SUMMARY OF SYNERGIES ACHIEVED SO FAR

This section of the report provides an overview of the collaborations and synergies that EFFECTIVE established with other stakeholders and initiatives within the first 18 months of the project. Table 1, provided below, summarises all the partnerships, synergies, and collaborative activities that have been successfully launched up to M18, illustrating the broad and dynamic network that EFFECTIVE has cultivated. Through these efforts, EFFECTIVE continues to strengthen its foundation for impactful, cross-sector collaboration that will drive forward the project’s mission and contribute to the overall success of its objectives.

Table 1. Summary of EFFECTIVE’s synergies achieved so far

Initiative Acronym	Initiative Full Name	Project/Initiative Type
iMERMAID	Innovative solutions for Mediterranean Ecosystem Remediation via Monitoring and decontamination from Chemical Pollution	Horizon Europe
ADT4Blue	Advanced Digital Technologies for the Blue Economy	Interreg Atlantic Area
BlueMissionAA	Building a Coordination Hub to Support the Mission Implementation in the Atlantic and Arctic Basin	Horizon Europe
TRANSEATION	Advancing Ecosystem-Based Management through Hybrid Blue-Grey Infrastructures in Marine and Coastal Areas	Horizon Europe
MEDSEAPLAN	Data and Scenarios for a Sustainable Mediterranean Blue Economy	Horizon Europe
BEE	Blue Economy Entrepreneurship	Erasmus +
PLANET4HEALTH	Translating Science into Policy: A Multisectoral Approach to Adaptation and Mitigation of Adverse Effects of Vector-Borne Diseases, Environmental Pollution and Climate Change on Planetary Health	Horizon Europe
SUNDANSE	Sustainable Sediment solutions for the Danube - Black Sea system	Horizon Europe
REMEDIES	Co-creating strong uptake of REMEDIES for the future of our oceans through deploying plastic litter valorisation and prevention pathways	Horizon Europe
REST-COAST	Large Scale RESToration of COASTal Ecosystems through Rivers to Sea Connectivity	Horizon 2020

Baltic MUPPETS	Baltic Mussel Products for Pet-foods	Horizon Europe
Green Marine Med	Mediterranean Green Shipping Network	Horizon Europe
Restore4Life	Restoring wetlands for a sustainable future	Horizon Europe
AlgaeProBANOS	Accelerating Algae product development for a more sustainable future	Horizon Europe

3.1 Collaboration with iMERMAID

iMERMAID¹ stands for Innovative solutions for Mediterranean Ecosystem Remediation via Monitoring and decontamination from Chemical Pollution. The project will integrate, coordinate and synergise innovative solutions that prevent, monitor and remediate against chemical contaminants. It will construct a multidimensional framework, underpinning policymaking and altering societal perspectives. Cutting-edge sensors and remediation methods will be advanced, tackling contaminants at their source while curbing upstream pollution. By bringing together SMEs, researchers, regulators and innovation professionals, iMERMAID aims to strengthen regulations, boost economic prospects, enhance EU residents' quality of life and, ultimately, create contaminant-free waters in the Mediterranean.

Within the Mediterranean Sea basin, iMERMAID will deploy and demonstrate the developed solutions in various use cases at the source (agriculture waste, pharmaceutical contaminants, heavy metals, oil, PFAS, etc), intermediary (WWTP), and destination (Mediterranean Sea), providing the basis for future scale-up of the developed solutions addressing chemical pollution from its source to its destination. The project also will launch two open calls inviting associated regions for extended demonstration and testing of the innovative iMERMAID solutions.

Both iMERMAID and EFFECTIVE share a commitment to addressing critical environmental challenges in marine and coastal ecosystems. Each project focuses on implementing innovative solutions to improve ecosystem health and resilience, albeit through different, yet complementary, approaches. iMERMAID is one of the projects from the F6S' Blue Economy synergy channel and the collaboration between EFFECTIVE and iMERMAID has been highly productive. So far, this partnership has involved sharing best practices, exchanging knowledge during monthly synergy meetings, and promoting each other's initiatives through newsletters, social media channels, and other cross-promotional activities.

¹ <https://imermaid.eu/>



Less than 2 weeks to apply for the IMERMAID Open Call #1 and combat pollution from chemicals of emerging concern (CoEC).

👉 Successful applicants will be supported in developing comprehensive roadmaps, plans, and projects to prevent, eliminate, and remediate these pollutants.

More details in the post below:



Figure 1. EFFECTIVE is promoting the iMERMAID Open Call 1 on its social media channels

3.2 Collaboration with ADT4Blue

ADT4Blue² – Advanced Digital Technologies for the Blue Economy is an EU-funded project under the Interreg Atlantic Area programme, running from September 2023 to August 2026. The initiative aims to accelerate the use of advanced digital solutions to tackle key challenges in the Blue Economy across the Atlantic region.

The project is supported by a network of 14 partners, including stakeholders in the Blue Economy, digital technology, and entrepreneurship, from five Atlantic regions across four countries (France, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain). ADT4Blue focuses on enhancing digital skills among students and early-stage entrepreneurs in the Blue Economy sectors. Participants receive tailored training, mentorship, and support in securing funding for their ventures.

ADT4Blue will identify critical challenges in the Blue Economy and launch three Open Calls to select innovative ideas and teams. These teams will develop pilot solutions using advanced digital technologies to address the challenges in various sectors. The selected participants will benefit from training and mentorship to equip them with the necessary skills to succeed.

ADT4Blue and EFFECTIVE share a focus on addressing Blue Economy challenges by fostering innovation, with ADT4Blue emphasising digital skills and technology solutions while EFFECTIVE focuses

² <https://adt4blue.eu/>

on utilising technology and innovation in marine restoration and conservation, making their efforts complementary in advancing sustainable, impactful outcomes for ocean ecosystems. ADT4Blue is one of the projects from the F6S' Blue Economy synergy channel and the collaboration between these two projects so far focused mainly on mutual promotion on social media, website and via project newsletters. The two projects are currently working together on participating and delivering one webinar session on ocean literacy and citizen science that will be organised in collaboration with the BlueMissionAA project (see section 3.3 for more info).



Figure 2. A visual promoting the Ocean Literacy and Citizen Science webinar

3.3 Collaboration with BlueMissionAA

BlueMissionAA³ is the coordination hub supporting the implementation of the EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030 in the Atlantic and Arctic basins. It focuses on the restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems and increased climate resilience.

BlueMissionAA has a structuring effect, to consolidate and mobilize a wide community of relevant stakeholders and EU citizens toward the achievement of Mission objectives at the basin level. It is working towards delivering an effective governance framework aligned with policies, initiatives, and actions at the national, regional, and EU levels, builds a well-coordinated monitoring framework to assess the progress of the implementation on an ongoing basis, provides a wide range of supporting services, fosters an attractive innovation ecosystem for ecological restoration, and empowers EU citizens to engage in the preservation and restoration of oceans and waters through participative means.

Six case studies have been selected across a range of representative restoration approaches (e.g., protection, active restoration, sustainable harvesting) to showcase existing and proven methodologies

³ <https://bluemissionaa.eu/>

from recent and ongoing projects and networks. These case studies deliver guidelines and recommendations regarding optimal governance approaches for environmental protection and restoration in marine, freshwater, and transitional water systems, with scalability for achieving mission objectives. BlueMissionAA is developing two region-specific proposals for effective mission lighthouse governance: one for the Atlantic and one for the Arctic.

BlueMissionAA and EFFECTIVE share common goals in restoring and safeguarding marine ecosystems, focusing on engaging a broad network of stakeholders, fostering citizen involvement, and driving innovation and sustainable practices in the Blue Economy. Both projects emphasize collaborative efforts to support EU mission objectives, strengthen governance frameworks, and ensure impactful, scalable solutions for ecological preservation across European waters.

The collaboration between BlueMissionAA and EFFECTIVE centers primarily on cross-promotion and mutual participation in events to strengthen outreach within the blue economy domain. A key component of this partnership is BlueMissionAA’s weekly webinar series, the “Atlantic & Arctic Lighthouse Weekly Hour,” which highlights impactful projects and initiatives across the blue economy. In December 2024, EFFECTIVE will take part in one of these webinars alongside five other blue economy projects, focusing on the theme of “Ocean Literacy and Citizen Science.” Representing EFFECTIVE, SPOTTERON, a member of our consortium, will showcase our approach to citizen science and the ways we engage communities in marine ecosystem preservation.

3.4 Collaboration with TRANSEATION

TRANSEATION⁴ is an innovative project aimed at advancing sustainable marine and coastal infrastructure through the integration of Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) and hybrid blue-grey infrastructures. The project focuses on enhancing coastal and marine resilience while supporting biodiversity, ecosystem services, and renewable energy production. TRANSEATION’s key objectives include the development of sustainable aquaculture systems, ecological enhancement of offshore renewable energy platforms, and hybrid coastal protection measures. Through interdisciplinary collaboration, the project brings together cutting-edge research, technological innovation, and practical implementation. TRANSEATION will establish clear criteria for genuine NbS, ensuring that interventions are both environmentally sound and economically viable. By testing and demonstrating these hybrid solutions in real-world settings, the project aims to provide scalable and replicable models for global adoption. TRANSEATION seeks to contribute to the sustainable management of marine resources, offering resilient and adaptable solutions to the challenges posed by climate change, coastal erosion, and marine biodiversity loss. The project’s outcomes will support policy development, foster industry partnerships, and promote the broader application of NbS in marine and coastal infrastructure planning.

TRANSEATION and EFFECTIVE share a common focus on utilizing Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) and engaging citizen science, particularly through the collaborative platform COSEA. Both projects are dedicated to enhancing marine and coastal resilience while supporting biodiversity, leveraging COSEA to empower citizens to contribute valuable data and insights. This synergy allows both initiatives to strengthen sustainable marine management, integrate community involvement, and provide scalable, real-world solutions for broader application. One of the most fruitful results of this collaboration to this point is the joint organisation of the I Summit on Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) for the Blue Economy, organised on February 28, 2024 in Murcia, Spain.

⁴ <https://transeation-europeanproject.eu/>



Figure 3. Visual presenting main organisers of the I Summit on NBS for the Blue Economy containing EFFECTIVE and TRANSEATION



Figure 4. Photo of all attendees at the I Summit on NBS for the Blue Economy

3.5 Collaboration with MEDSEAPLAN

The MEDSEAPLAN⁵ main objective is to develop a comprehensive scientific knowledge-based tool for the application of the Ecosystem-based Approach (EBA) to be used in MSP processes with the intention to drive a Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean region.

⁵ <https://www.linkedin.com/company/medseaplan>

The collaboration with the MEDSEAPLAN project is a newly established one and, so far, projects' teams have organised an introductory meeting and agreed on mutual promotion on websites, social media and in newsletters.

3.6 Collaboration with BEE

The BEE⁶ project is grounded in tailoring the needs of adults living in European islands in 5 EU countries (Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Cyprus and Malta) who have access to fewer opportunities and are facing economic difficulties and challenges. Islands have a limited capacity to develop creative mass and expertise in new fields, which may lead to difficulties in adapting to a smart economy. The project partners will develop and exchange information and case studies related to the situation in their respective countries and communities regarding the blue economic sector, entrepreneurship, and sustainable tourism.

The BEE's methodology includes the design of an E-course related to entrepreneurs to acquire business skills aimed at creating a blue ecotourism company. It is planned to be a self-learning and didactic tool that young adults can use to improve their skills and knowledge of the entrepreneurship field and the blue ecotourism sector. The E-course will be tested in the local phase in each participating country, allowing the transfer of competencies between adult educators and adult learners, and providing its stakeholders with a new educational offer.

BEE and EFFECTIVE share a commitment to fostering sustainable economic growth in the blue economy by supporting local communities and building entrepreneurial skills. Both projects aim to empower stakeholders through tailored educational tools and training, with a focus on enhancing knowledge and capacity within underserved regions and promoting sustainable practices. BEE is part of F6S's Blue Economy synergy channel, and the collaboration with EFFECTIVE has primarily centered on mutual promotion through social media, websites, and project newsletters. Currently, both projects are also collaborating to deliver a webinar session focused on ocean literacy and citizen science, organized in partnership with the BlueMissionAA project (refer to section 3.3 for further details).

3.7 Collaboration with PLANET4HEALTH

PLANET4HEALTH⁷ is a Horizon Europe Health RIA project named "Translating Science into Policy: A Multisectoral Approach to Adaptation and Mitigation of Adverse Effects of Vector-Borne Diseases, Environmental Pollution, and Climate Change on Planetary Health," funded by the European Union. Its mission is to generate new knowledge and tools to address the impacts of environmental degradation on human, animal, and ecosystem health. The project aims to support policy-making processes and raise citizens' awareness about sustainable planetary health, climate and environmental policies, and strategies for adapting to and mitigating natural hazards. PLANET4HEALTH will conduct research and draw overarching conclusions from four case studies: 1) vector-borne diseases in the Iberian Peninsula, 2) air pollution and its adverse health effects in South Africa, 3) food safety in Central Europe, and 4) mental well-being in the context of environmental and climate factors. These studies will span various geographical regions, leveraging the extensive project network to develop universal conclusions and replicable solutions that enhance predictive capabilities and preparedness.

⁶ <https://bee-project.eu/>

⁷ <https://planet4health.eu/>

Both PLANET4HEALTH and EFFECTIVE aim to address the impacts of environmental degradation on human and ecosystem health, with a shared focus on generating knowledge that supports policy-making and raises public awareness about sustainable practices. Additionally, both projects employ a multisectoral approach to tackle complex environmental and health challenges across different regions. Having this in mind, the two projects (in collaboration with STREAMS and Restore4Life projects) participated in the 11th edition of the European Urban Resilience Forum (EURESFO). These projects were showcased at the event's Marketplace alongside other groundbreaking environmental sustainability projects supported by EFFECTIVE consortium partner F6S. EFFECTIVE, Restore4Life and STREAMS tackled one of the event's main topics - *Water resilience and promotion of the Blue Economy within and beyond the Mediterranean region*, by showcasing projects' developments and solutions. This event proved to be a valuable opportunity to promote the EFFECTIVE project and highlight its commitment to restoring and preserving the marine protected areas across the entire Mediterranean.



Figure 5. F6S presenting EFFECTIVE at the EURESFO

3.8 Collaboration with SUNDANSE

SUNDANSE⁸ is a 48 months long initiative that brings together 20 innovation stakeholders and educational entities from 10 different European countries, who share a common vision to develop a sustainable sediment solutions for the Danube – Black Sea system. The Danube River has been incredibly important for both people and wildlife for hundreds of years. However, human activities since the late 1800s have significantly changed how the river functions to better serve our needs. Unfortunately, these alterations, combined with the effects of climate change, have disrupted the river's natural balance. This is where SUNDANSE plays a big role! SUNDANSE will conduct a survey of the configuration and dynamics of the Danube River via REXDAN, the newest and most advanced

⁸ <http://www.rest-coast.eu/>

research vessel in Europe. With this, among other benefits, a complete map of the main characteristics of the Danube River from Vienna to the Black Sea will be gained and a Sediment Management Handbook for the Danube River basin, including intervention strategies will be created. Moreover, throughout the duration of the project, SUNDANSE will launch two Open Calls and distribute financial support to at least five Associated Regions (up to 100 000€ each) to engage in Danube River Sediment Management.

Both SUNDANSE and EFFECTIVE focus on sustainable ecosystem management and aim to address the environmental impacts of human activities on water systems. Both projects are committed to developing practical solutions and knowledge resources, such as intervention strategies and management guidelines, to support restoration and balance within critical aquatic ecosystems. SUNDANSE is part of F6S's Blue Economy synergy channel, and the collaboration with EFFECTIVE has primarily centered on mutual promotion through social media, websites, and project newsletters.

3.9 Collaboration with REMEDIES

REMEDIES⁹ is built around the three main pillars of monitoring plastic litter, its collection and valorisation and, of course, the prevention of the distribution of non-degradable plastics. REMEDIES will do so by strongly building on former projects addressing these topics and by connecting to previously identified major initiatives active in this area. The most promising aspect is the activation and necessary participation of citizens affected by plastic pollution directly on the shorelines. The project will guide them to becoming plastic entrepreneurs with a deeply rooted knowledge base and the right tools to start their own businesses through the valorisation of collected plastic litter and the provision of zero-waste solutions to all actors. REMEDIES plans to employ 4 breakthrough innovations per pillar (monitoring, collection, prevention) that are neatly interwoven, building upon each other to create an even better whole. The project will test these solutions in 8 demonstration sites in 8 Mediterranean countries and after validation, scale them up in 33 more sites with the potential to be launched across the whole Mediterranean. In parallel, two open calls will be organised to third parties to attract more solutions for implementation following the same methodology. All-in-all, REMEDIES plans to map out 170 km² for plastic litter, reach circa 100,000 citizens, collect around 400 tons of plastic waste, and build up plastic prevention pathways through scaling and replication for an equivalent of 3,700 tons of plastic.

REMEDIES is one of the projects included in F6S's Blue Economy synergy channel, and the partnership with EFFECTIVE has thus far focused on mutual promotion and outreach activities. This collaboration has been facilitated through various digital platforms, including coordinated promotions on social media, dedicated features on both project websites, and regular mentions in project newsletters. A key example of this cross-promotional effort is illustrated in Figure 6, which showcases a screenshot from the EFFECTIVE LinkedIn page where the REMEDIES Open Call was actively promoted. This joint visibility effort not only raises awareness about each project's initiatives but also helps to amplify the reach of both projects by tapping into each other's audiences and networks. Through such synergy-driven promotional activities, EFFECTIVE and REMEDIES continue to foster a supportive ecosystem within the Blue Economy sector, driving shared objectives and maximising their collective impact.

⁹ <https://remedies-for-ocean.eu/>

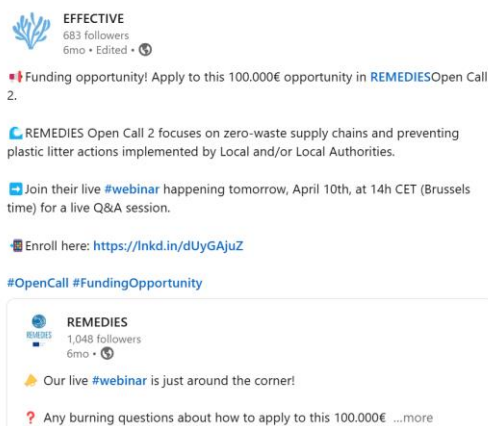


Figure 6. Screenshot of a social media post from EFFECTIVE LinkedIn page promoting the REMEDIES Open Call

3.10 Collaboration with REST-COAST

The REST-COAST¹⁰ project demonstrates that upscaled coastal restoration can provide a low-carbon footprint solution for climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction for threatened coastal systems, combined with gains in their biodiversity and ecosystem services delivery. This solution is based on a "Restoration Revolution" to overcome current obstacles and improve coastal restoration interventions through new technical, financial, management and transfer tools, aligned with the needs of vulnerable coastal regions and society.

During the project, hands-on restoration actions are developed in nine pilot sites, with different ecosystems and socioeconomic and governance situations to improve coastal restoration practices and techniques. On the one hand, REST-COAST generates data and new modelling tools to assess risk reduction at different climate change levels to provide consistent risk estimates across time scales and lower financial, social and political barriers to large-scale restoration. On the other hand, innovative and sustainable financial arrangements and business plans are being designed for restoration upscaling.

Both REST-COAST and EFFECTIVE focus on large-scale environmental restoration and adaptation efforts that integrate ecosystem-based solutions to enhance climate resilience and biodiversity. Additionally, both projects emphasize stakeholder engagement, sustainable financing, and digital tools to facilitate knowledge sharing and support long-term, scalable impacts in ecosystem restoration. The synergy between the EFFECTIVE and REST-COAST projects was initiated by EURECAT, a consortium partner that is actively involved in both projects. To date, the collaboration has primarily focused on the exchange of knowledge and best practices, allowing each project to benefit from shared insights and methodologies. Given the strong alignment in objectives and approaches—especially in areas like ecosystem restoration and conservation and stakeholder engagement—there is significant potential for deeper collaboration. Moving forward, the consortium plans to explore additional synergy opportunities that will enhance the impact of both projects and drive further advancements in sustainable coastal and marine ecosystem management.

¹⁰ <http://www.rest-coast.eu/>

3.11 Collaboration with Baltic MUPPETS

Baltic MUPPETS¹¹ stands for Baltic Mussel Products for Pet-foods. It's a three-year project funded by the EU, bringing together 13 partners from 5 countries to explore new ways to use small Baltic mussels. With expertise across mussel farming, product development, and marketing, we aim to turn these small mussels into valuable products. Baltic MUPPETS is dedicated to showing that mussel farming can be both profitable and beneficial to the environment. By developing new uses for small mussels, we're creating a value chain that not only boosts local economies but also provides essential ecosystem services that reduce eutrophication and improve water quality in the Baltic Sea. We're focused on turning small Baltic mussels (1-3 cm) into sustainable pet food, developing new farming and harvesting technologies, and creating innovative products for pets and ornamental fish. This project also supports new business opportunities, encouraging start-ups and SMEs to enter this exciting market. Mussel-based pet food has the potential to be a win-win solution for both business and the environment.

Both Baltic MUPPETS and EFFECTIVE emphasise creating sustainable, environmentally beneficial value chains within the blue economy. Each project explores innovative solutions that benefit local ecosystems—Baltic MUPPETS through reducing eutrophication in the Baltic Sea, and EFFECTIVE through marine protected areas restoration efforts—while promoting new business opportunities and sustainable products that support economic growth. Baltic MUPPETS is one of the projects from the F6S' Blue Economy synergy channel and the collaboration between these two projects so far focused mainly on mutual promotion on social media, website and via project newsletters. Currently, both projects are actively collaborating to co-host an upcoming webinar on ocean literacy and citizen science. This session, organized in partnership with the BlueMissionAA project (refer to Section 3.3 for further details), will serve as an important platform for exchanging knowledge, promoting citizen engagement, and showcasing the impactful work of both Baltic MUPPETS and EFFECTIVE in advancing sustainable practices within the marine ecosystem.

3.12 Collaboration with Green Marine Med

Maritime transport, crucial for global trade, faces growing pressure to reduce its significant greenhouse gas emissions. The industry's diverse fleet, including merchant and cruise ships, fishing boats, and yachts, contributes to this environmental impact, with port operations alone responsible for up to 67% of emissions. "Green Shipping" encompasses not just transitioning the fleet to alternative fuels but the entire maritime fuel supply chain, infrastructure, and logistics. Stakeholders, from vessel owners and operators to entrepreneurs developing innovative technologies and investors, play a vital role in this transition. The GREEN MARINE MED¹² project unites the Mediterranean Green Shipping Network, representing the full value chain, including vessel communities, ports, marinas, fuel and energy sectors, finance, investment, innovation, and other stakeholders. This Network forms the foundation for a comprehensive Monitoring and Technology Foresight on Mediterranean Green Shipping. Through the project's unique accelerators and business support programs, we'll empower Green Shipping entrepreneurs and start-ups in the region.

The collaboration with the Green Marine Med project is a recent development, with both project teams having conducted an introductory meeting to explore areas of synergy. During this initial discussion, the teams agreed to engage in mutual promotion through their respective websites, social media channels, and newsletters, laying a solid foundation for further collaborative efforts.

¹¹ <https://balticmuppets.eu/>

¹² <https://www.oceancouncil.org/greenmarinemed/>

3.13 Collaboration with Restore4Life

Restore4Life¹³ showcases the remarkable socio-economic benefits derived from a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to restoring freshwater and coastal wetlands in the Danube basin. By creating new blue-green infrastructure that bolsters regional climate change resilience and mitigation efforts, Restore4Life paves the way for a sustainable future. By creating new blue-green infrastructure that bolsters regional climate change resilience and mitigation efforts, Restore4Life paves the way for a sustainable future. The project's core activities center around reinstating lateral connectivity in riverine corridors, crucial for restoring the ecological balance. To support this mission, Restore4Life introduces the long-term wetland restoration service called Restore4Life Wetland Reconstruction Accelerator.

Both Restore4Life and EFFECTIVE focus on enhancing environmental resilience through ecosystem restoration and the creation of blue-green infrastructure. Each project emphasizes interdisciplinary approaches to climate adaptation and mitigation, aiming to restore ecological balance and deliver sustainable, long-term environmental benefits. The two projects joined forces to participate in the 11th European Urban Resilience Forum (EURESFO). Both EFFECTIVE and Restore4Life were showcased at the event's Marketplace, alongside other pioneering environmental sustainability initiatives supported by EFFECTIVE consortium partner F6S. Together with the STREAMS project, they addressed one of the event's central themes—water resilience and the promotion of the Blue Economy within and beyond the Mediterranean region—by presenting each project's innovative solutions and progress. This event provided a valuable platform for promoting the EFFECTIVE project, underscoring its commitment to restoring and preserving marine protected areas throughout the Mediterranean.



Figure 7. A booklet showcasing a group of environmental sustainability projects that participated at the EURESFO 2024

¹³ <https://restore4life.eu/>

3.14 Collaboration with AlgaeProBANOS

The Baltic and North Sea (BANOS) area faces a critical challenge: reconciling economic development with social and environmental objectives in line with Mission Ocean. There is a rising demand for green and sustainable consumer products. In this context, the EU-funded AlgaeProBANOS¹⁴ project emerges as a pioneering solution. It aims to accelerate the development of and market access to algae-based solutions. Through six business pilots, the project will introduce eight algae products, ranging from food to cosmetics, fostering a sustainable industry that preserves precious resources while meeting consumer demands. The project's impact will extend beyond BANOS, benefiting the entire algae industry and contributing to a thriving future by 2050.

Both AlgaeProBANOS and EFFECTIVE focus on developing and promoting sustainable solutions that align with environmental and societal goals, with AlgaeProBANOS advancing algae-based products for green consumer markets and EFFECTIVE working on restoring marine ecosystems and promoting the Blue Economy. Both projects aim to foster sustainable industries and contribute to long-term environmental resilience through innovation and collaboration. AlgaeProBANOS is part of F6S's Blue Economy synergy channel, and the collaboration with EFFECTIVE has primarily centered on mutual promotion through social media, websites, and project newsletters.

¹⁴ <https://algaeprobanos.eu/>

4. GROWTH OF THE INTERNATIONAL STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY PLAN

4.1 Stakeholder identification

To effectively support the work of all project partners, particularly those involved in WP2-WP5 with their transdisciplinary efforts and training, and to ensure the widespread impact of the EFFECTIVE solutions, a comprehensive and systematic analysis, identification, and mapping of stakeholder groups was carried out. This process was led by F6S, with substantial contributions from all project partners. Their collective efforts ensured that stakeholder groups from all associated regions were included, thereby maximising the potential for achieving a broader and more significant impact.

The stakeholders identified and analysed through this mapping process include a diverse array of groups, such as scientists, citizens, NGOs, traditional businesses, entrepreneurs, local communities, public authorities, policy actors, MPA managers, tourist operators, and scuba diving communities, among others. By engaging in this meticulous stakeholder mapping process, we are building a robust network of stakeholders that will enable us to communicate and disseminate project activities effectively. This network will also inform the development of a targeted communication strategy and facilitate the successful organization of events by project partners.

In order to conduct this process as effectively as possible, a Stakeholder Identification Webinar was organised by F6S. This webinar gathered all the project partners to engage them and join our efforts to leverage partners' networks and identify as many stakeholders as possible.

To facilitate this collaborative effort, an Excel file specifically designed for stakeholder identification was developed and circulated among the consortium members. This file was meticulously structured, with each stakeholder group listed on a separate sheet, ensuring clear organisation and focus. Partners were tasked with populating this file with detailed information on stakeholders, including the name of the institution and the country or region in which they operate. Importantly, the process was conducted with strict adherence to GDPR guidelines, ensuring the protection of privacy and data security. An example of the process can be seen in Figure 8, which illustrates the list of scientists and researchers specialising in marine observation, monitoring, and restoration, showcasing the thoroughness and specificity of the stakeholder identification process.

EFFECTIVE Partner Name	Stakeholder institution name
ETT	University of Genoa
OE	Bernat Hereu
OOF	CNR Oristano - Italian National Research Cent
Eurecat	Institute of Agrifood Research and Technology (IRTA)
Coral Soul	University of Cádiz
Coral Soul	University of Sevilla
CMMI	Environmental Awareness Center Cape Greco
CMMI	Birdlife
CMMI	Terra Cypria
CMMI	Federation of Environmental Organizations of
UkrSCES	The Institute of Market and Economic & Ecolo
UkrSCES	Institute of Marine Biology of the NAS of Ukra
UkrSCES	Odesa State Environmental University
UkrSCES	Black Sea Branch of Environmental Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (NGO)
UkrSCES	NGO Black Sea Women's Club
UkrSCES	NGO Institute of Ecology
OE/SV	AZTI-TECNALIA

Figure 8. A snippet from EFFECTIVE's stakeholder identification file

4.2 Stakeholders' Benefits Identification

After successfully mapping and identifying the key stakeholder groups, the next critical step was to identify the specific benefits they could gain by becoming part of the EFFECTIVE project's network. To facilitate this process, a dedicated session was organized as part of the Stakeholder Identification Webinar. During this session, partners collaborated to brainstorm and document potential benefits for each stakeholder group using a specially designed Miro Board.

The consortium partners were strategically divided into two breakout rooms to maximise the efficiency and depth of the brainstorming process. The first breakout room focused on identifying benefits for the first six stakeholder groups, while the second breakout room concentrated on the next seven stakeholder groups. This division allowed for a more targeted and comprehensive analysis.

Participants in each breakout room used sticky notes on the Miro Board to capture their ideas and insights. The interactive nature of the session encouraged creativity and ensured that a wide range of potential benefits were considered. After completing the exercise, the groups reconvened to review and discuss the identified benefits. This collective discussion ensured that the final list was not only comprehensive but also aligned with the project's goals and stakeholder needs.

The session concluded with a consensus on the benefits that stakeholders could expect from their involvement in the EFFECTIVE network. Figure 9 provides a visual representation of the final Miro Board, showcasing the well-rounded and thoroughly vetted benefits for each stakeholder group. To ensure that all the ideas generated from this brainstorming workshop are visible and readable enough, materials generated in each of the breakout rooms is depicted in Figures 10, 11, 12. This collaborative effort laid a strong foundation for engaging stakeholders and ensuring that they are fully aware of the value they stand to gain from participating in the project.



Figure 9. Screenshot of the Miro Board containing the list of EFFECTIVE stakeholder groups and the benefits they may receive by being part of EFFECTIVE network

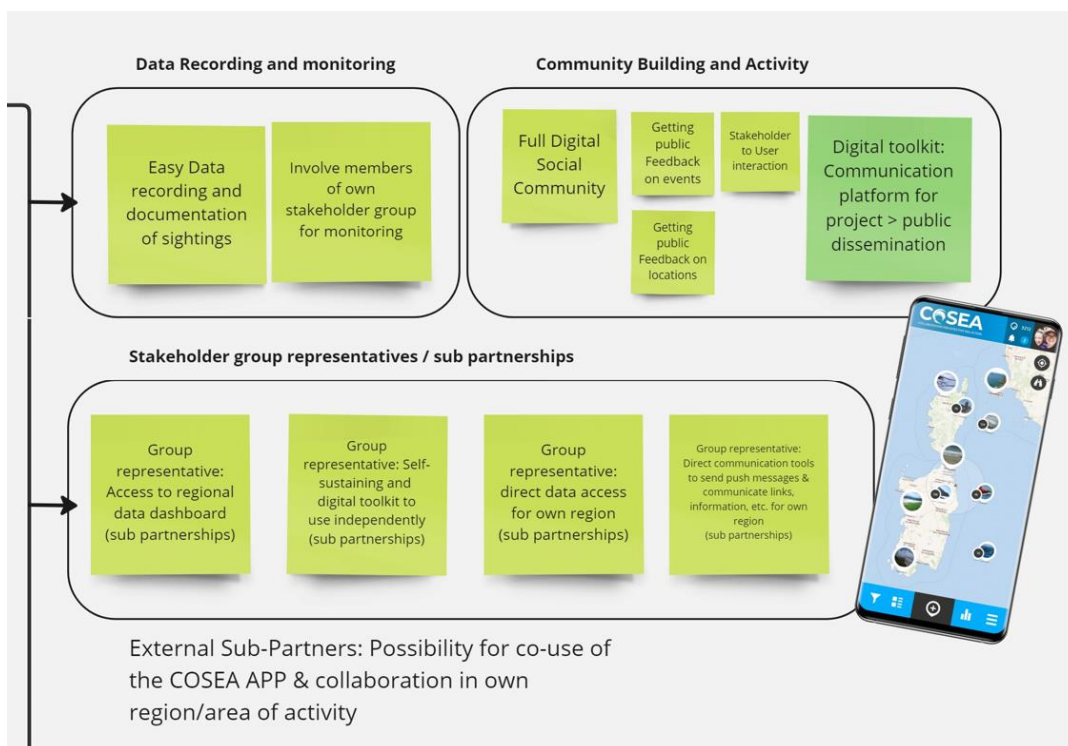


Figure 12. Screenshot of the Miro Board containing the list of EFFECTIVE stakeholders' benefits

4.3 Stakeholder Engagement

Once the benefits for stakeholders were clearly identified, the next phase of the project focused on actively engaging these stakeholders through targeted communication and outreach efforts. A comprehensive communication campaign was launched to ensure that the project's activities, as well as the potential benefits for stakeholders, were effectively communicated and widely disseminated. The campaign was designed to resonate with each specific stakeholder group, ensuring that the messaging was relevant, impactful, and aligned with their unique interests and needs.

The insights provided by project partners during the Stakeholder Identification Webinar were instrumental in shaping the content of this campaign. Leveraging this input, a substantial body of content was developed, including 13 articles and over 15 carefully crafted social media posts. Each piece was tailored to address a specific stakeholder group within the EFFECTIVE network, presenting the unique benefits they could gain by participating in the project—ranging from access to cutting-edge research and new collaboration opportunities to contributing directly to vital marine conservation efforts. All articles are published in the News¹⁵ section on the EFFECTIVE website. All the stakeholder groups that were identified, as well as articles and social media posts that have been developed for the purpose of engaging these stakeholder are listed in table 2.

Table 2. List of all EFFECTIVE's stakeholder groups, articles and social media posts published so far

No	Stakeholder group	Article published (Y/N)	Social media post published (Y/N)
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¹⁵ <https://effective-euproject.eu/news/>

1	Blue economy companies	Yes	Yes
2	Marine monitoring, restoration and observation specialists	Yes	Yes
3	Scientists and researchers	Yes	Yes
4	MPA managers	Yes	Yes
5	Fisheries and aquaculture producers	Yes	Yes
6	Scuba divers	Yes	Yes
7	Port managers	Yes	Yes
8	Local communities	Yes	Yes
9	Teachers and students	Yes	Yes
10	Regional authorities and policymakers	Yes	Yes
11	Ecotourism entrepreneurs	Yes	Yes
12	Offshore energy companies	Yes	Yes
13	Tourist operators	Yes	Yes

These communications highlighted the tangible benefits stakeholders could gain by participating in the project, such as access to cutting-edge research, opportunities for collaboration, and contributions to marine conservation efforts. By customising the content to the specific concerns and priorities of different stakeholder groups—whether they were scientists, public authorities, NGOs, or local communities—the campaign successfully fostered a sense of inclusion and relevance. This approach not only raised awareness about the project but also encouraged active participation and engagement from a diverse range of stakeholders, thereby amplifying the project's reach and impact. Figures 13 and 14 show examples of articles published on the EFFECTIVE website and social media that showcase the benefits that EFFECTIVE has to some of its stakeholder groups.

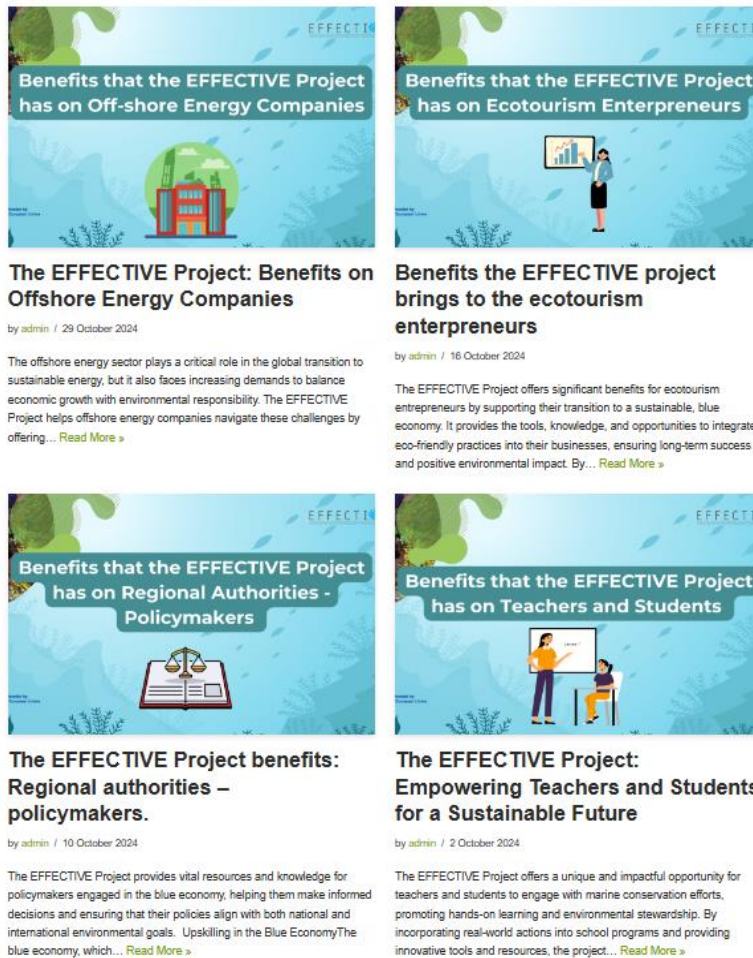


Figure 13. Screenshot of four articles published on the EFFECTIVE website that showcase the benefits that EFFECTIVE has to some of its stakeholder groups



Figure 14. Social media post on the EFFECTIVE LinkedIn page promoting benefits that the project has on scuba divers

5. CONCLUSION

This deliverable, *D9.6 Liaising Activities and Growth of the International Stakeholder Community Report*, represents the first iteration of a comprehensive assessment of EFFECTIVE's collaborative efforts and stakeholder engagement initiatives. It marks the starting point for documenting our progress in building a vibrant and interconnected stakeholder community within the Blue Economy sector. This deliverable will be followed by two additional iterations to capture the continued evolution and expansion of these activities. *D9.7 – 1st Updated Version of the Liaising Activities and Growth of the International Stakeholder Community Report* will be released in M36, and *D9.8 – 2nd Updated Version of the Liaising Activities and Growth of the International Stakeholder Community Report* will be published in Month 48. These subsequent reports will provide updated insights and more detailed accounts of our ongoing liaison activities, including developments in knowledge sharing, joint event organisation, cross-promotional efforts, and engagement strategies.

The synergies identified to date have laid a solid foundation for meaningful collaboration between EFFECTIVE and its partner projects, and the project team is eager to build upon these connections. In the coming months, our efforts will be directed toward materialising the initial synergies we have achieved, transforming them into impactful actions through structured knowledge-sharing initiatives, co-hosted online and in-person events, and extensive cross-promotional efforts on social media, websites, and newsletters. By establishing regular channels for communication and interaction, we aim to enhance the visibility of each project's achievements while pooling resources to amplify our collective influence within the Blue Economy sector. This approach not only strengthens our immediate partnerships but also creates a network of shared expertise that can drive long-term progress.

Moving forward, there will be an intensified effort to broaden and diversify these synergies, actively seeking new partnerships and creating additional avenues for cooperation that align with our objectives. We are committed to expanding the range of realised synergies, striving to add value to each project through enhanced collaboration and more frequent joint initiatives. By fostering an environment of open exchange, we hope to inspire new ideas, innovative solutions, and impactful actions that address the core challenges in marine sustainability and resilience.

A key focus for the upcoming period will be on engaging a wider network of stakeholders and nurturing the growth of an international stakeholder community. This engagement is vital for increasing the reach and impact of the project's work, fostering a more connected and informed ecosystem of industry leaders, policymakers, researchers, and community organizations. To support this, there will be intensified collaboration between WP9 and other work packages. Together, we will work on developing detailed strategies and structured work plans aimed at expanding stakeholder engagement activities. These plans will include the organisation of events, webinars, workshops, and other interactive formats, all designed to facilitate knowledge exchange, build partnerships, and foster an inclusive dialogue around sustainable development and ocean literacy.

Ultimately, this strategic approach will allow EFFECTIVE to not only solidify existing synergies but also to continuously expand its network, ensuring that our collaborative efforts contribute to meaningful advancements in the Blue Economy and provide lasting benefits to both the environment and society.