Horizon 2020

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Copernicus Evolution – Research for harmonised and
Transitional-water Observation (CERTO)

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Title:	Communications Plan		
Lead Partner for Deliverable	FC.ID		
Author(s):	Dawn Ashby, PML; Vanda Brotas, FCUL; Jon White, PML		
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1 Executive Summary

- The Communication work package (WP10) is led by FC.ID with specific input on websites and other communications instruments by PML and with support from all other partners. WP10 will produce general materials that promote the project and its achievements as well as targeted exchanges that are specifically aimed at those who may access and benefit from the project's actions. Communication measures will initially focus on disseminating CERTO objectives and will develop with the project to share its achievements and findings as these are realised.

- Effective internal and external communication is essential during the project to ensure maximum impact of its activities. CERTO will employ a range of communication tools and techniques to target particular audiences and share project outcomes in order to maximise the visibility of the project and raise awareness of the new products. As well as a project website, newsletters and brochure, WP10 will share news highlights and success stories through social media, press releases and articles. Wherever possible articles will be targeted at particular outlets (e.g. industry magazines, websites, blogs) in order to reach the most relevant audiences for achieving impact and to tailor the articles to their interests.

- The specific objectives of WP10 are:

  o Ensure effective and productive **communication within the project** through the establishment of a defined participant network with clear involvement levels, so that the communication of results, events, news and opportunities can be targeted as required.

  o **External promotion** of the CERTO objectives and its aims at the start of the project to raise awareness and generate interest in its findings and products as these become available, as well as fostering an on-going relationship with stakeholders, encouraging multidirectional communication and developing contact networks.

  o **Identification of external contacts** and development of a database of relevant stakeholders who will be interested in the project and its findings as well as the outcomes. The database will be tailored so that contacts only receive communications that are deemed to be of specific interest to them, with a particular focus on identifying stakeholders who have an interest in the geographic regions of each case study.

  o **Communicate** the project's findings and achievements to the contacts database, participant network and beyond, through the use of products and tools, such as the project website. This will include locally tailored communication to parties interested in specific case studies.

  o Promote the **products** of the project to relevant groups, to ensure optimal uptake of the project's findings.

- WP10 will work closely with all other work packages throughout the project to ensure effective internal communication and to gather information for communication materials. In particular, WP10 will work closely with the Dissemination and Exploitation work package (WP9) on several aspects of CERTO, in particular jointly promoting science highlights and stakeholder engagement.

- The aim of the WP10 is to create public awareness and enhance the visibility of the project using non-specialised language utilising channels such as websites, newsletters, social and traditional media. This should be compared to the WP9 which aims to generate impact from the project by targeting specific groups such as scientific communities, stakeholders and policy makers using more scientific language and

utilising channels including scientific journal and conferences, research networks and online repositories of data to maximise the uptake of the results from the project.

- Finally, it is noted that the COVID-19 epidemic of early 2020 will impact on the timing and activities in CERTO and WP10; the impact cannot be ascertained at this stage (March 2020).

2 External communication tools and materials

CERTO will develop a communication infrastructure to engage stakeholders, end-users and network communities throughout the project. Using tailored communication channels, CERTO will demonstrate the benefits of the research project to a wider public and its stakeholder community, whilst promoting linkages and interactions with the latter. A wide range of communication tools will be developed. A timeline of communication activities and deliverables is shown in Fig. 1.

Through regular, targeted exchanges, CERTO will develop an on-going relationship with these external audiences, establishing a clear brand for the project and engaging contacts with the project as it progresses. Further details of the main products currently planned are given below.
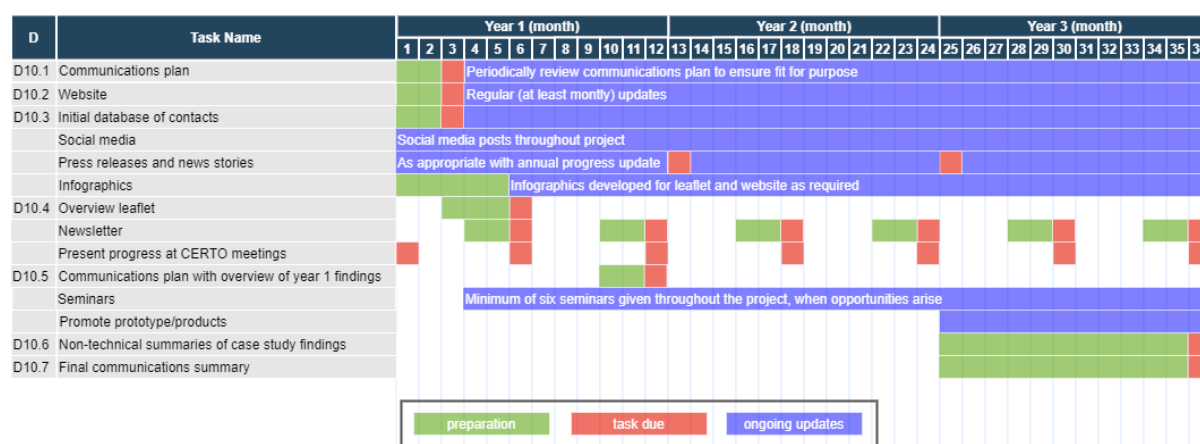

Figure 1. Gantt chart of the WP10 communication activities and deliverables.

2.1 Project logo and branding

A project logo (as seen on the header page) was created at the proposal stage of the project to help to develop the branding for the project and ensure it is easily identifiable. The logo was designed to combine some of the key elements of the project: transitional waters, a data buoy for in-situ validation, and satellite observation (seen at the top of the letter "C").

2.2 Website

A preliminary version of the CERTO website is accessible at http://www.certo-project.org. The domain will be live until at least five years after the completion of the project (2028).

The CERTO website will continue to be developed throughout the project and will be updated and enhanced as required. It will be a repository for open access project information and resources as well as serving as a 'shop-front' for the project, including highlights of the research as it progresses. The website structure will focus around six key themes:

- **About:** general project information in an accessible and succinct format.

- **News:** short accessible articles highlighting progress from the project (to which all partners will provide input), an embedded twitter feed and links to the newsletter.

- **Case studies:** details of each of the six case studies, including a map of each area and summary of the science and local stakeholders.

- **Resources:** details of publications arising from the project, downloadable graphics, leaflets and other materials produced by the project. This page will also provide signposting to external resources (including partners' websites), with details of future opportunities and related projects.

- **Contact:** a contact point and opportunity to register for updates in compliance with EU GDPR regulations. It will provide a feedback mechanism to encourage individuals to engage with the project, discuss opportunities to get involved or provide comment on our work.

The website is described in Deliverable D10.2

2.3 Use of social media

CERTO will make use of social media to tap-in to existing contact networks, create new groups and encourage followers in order to capitalise on these current and active communication channels to keep stakeholders up-to-date.

A CERTO twitter account (@CERTO_project) was established before the kick-off meeting, which gained 50 followers and resulted in 214 engagements during the meeting. The account will continue to keep interested parties informed on developments in the project. Other social media channels may be considered during the project if more appropriate to specific stakeholder groups.

2.4 Infographics

As appropriate to the project, infographics will be developed to help represent particular elements or outcomes from the project in an engaging and visual way. An initial infographic will be created to represent the project structure in terms of the science areas and the key delivery components. The infographic will be used on the project leaflet and website and will contribute to the project branding.

2.5 Project leaflet

An overview leaflet will be created within the first three months of CERTO that provides a concise overview of the project that can be disseminated at conferences and events to raise awareness of the project. An electronic version of the leaflet will be available from the website and will also be distributed to existing contacts of the project partners via email to generate interest and capitalise on these known contacts. The leaflet will sign-post people to the CERTO website for further information and to encourage sign-up for updates via our electronic newsletter.

2.6 Stakeholders/contact database

In order to disseminate communication materials to relevant audiences, CERTO will identify contacts interested in the project and its findings as well as the outcome of research projects linked to CERTO. The list will be GDPR-compliant and tailored so that contacts only receive communications that are deemed to be of specific interest to them, with a particular focus on identifying stakeholders who have an interest in the geographic regions of each case study.

A stakeholders / contacts database will be created to enable interested parties to receive further project information on a regular basis. Project partners will be asked to provide contact information which will be stored at PML according to the UK's Data Protection Act and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR; Regulation (EU) 2016/679). The contacts database is described in Deliverable 10.3.

CERTO will foster multidirectional communication with these contacts by providing accessible communication channels and encouraging feedback and interaction from stakeholders. See Table 5 of Deliverable D9.1 – Dissemination Plan Document for further details of our target audiences and communications infrastructure that will be used to reach them.

2.7   Electronic newsletter

An email-based, twice-yearly update will be prepared and distributed to all members of the contact database to keep them informed of project progress and highlights. This electronic newsletter will focus on facilitating internal communication, while remaining appropriate for external audiences, so that it can keep project participants informed and engaged in activities that they may not be directly involved in or aware of.

The newsletter will include details of:

- Scientific highlights and activities including fieldwork
- Progress of the case studies
- Key outputs including non-technical summaries of scientific papers/reports
- Reports from conferences and events where CERTO research is presented

The bulletin will provide accessible and succinct headlines with links to the full information on the project website. This will help to keep the newsletters accessible and focused on highlights but also generate traffic to the website where other information is also available. It will also provide a regular process for making sure the website is kept up-to-date and fresh with new items and materials that are then also available to non-subscribers.

2.8   Press releases

Press releases will be sent to generate media interest and reach a wider general audience, thus contributing to the increase of Literacy of the Ocean by the general public. Where press releases relate to a specific geographical area these will be translated into the local language if appropriate and distributed to local press contacts.

At least one news story per year will be produced showing the overall progress of the project, with additional timely press releases when important developments are made within the project. One press release will be produced for each of the six case studies towards the end of the project highlighting issues local to the case study area.

2.9   Non-technical summaries of case study findings

Summaries from each of the regional case studies will be created towards the end of the project highlighting issues local to the case study area. These summaries will be used to demonstrate issues in local, coastal/transitional areas that can be used to present relevant information to agencies, GEO Initiatives, to the relevant Copernicus services, Space agencies, local policy makers and environmental management authorities. The case study examples will also show the project relevance to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Some end-users have already been identified for each of the case studies, and throughout the project we will seek to expand our contacts database to send tailored communications to

parties interested in specific case studies. The stakeholders, networks and potential end-users that have been identified by CERTO are listed in Table 3 of Deliverable D9.1 – Dissemination Plan Document.

The six regional case studies are:
- Curonian Lagoon, Russian Federation/Lithuania
- Elbe estuary/German Bight, Germany
- Razelm-Sinoe Lagoon, Romania
- Tagus estuary, Portugal
- Tamar estuary, UK
- Venice Lagoon/North Adriatic Sea, Italy

2.10 Seminars and open days

To promote the project at least one seminar or open day will be held at each of the 10 participating institutions. The seminars will be aimed at a broad audience and will also include specific presentations or sessions targeting the general public. To increase and broaden participation some seminars from smaller institutes may be held online. WP10 will work with project partners to arrange and promote these sessions.

3 Internal project communications tools

The Communication work package will ensure effective and productive communication within the project through the establishment of a defined participant network with clear involvement levels, so that the communication of results, events, news and opportunities can be targeted as required.

A **project email address** has been set up that is accessible to all the WP10 participants in the project to ensure all effective communication within and to/from the work package (comms.certo@pml.ac.uk). An internal e-mail list has also been set up in order for all project members to be able to communicate directly to all others within the project. Customised e-mail lists have also been created, such as the *Work Package Leaders* e-mail list and the *Innovation Team* e-mail list to ensure that everyone working on the project receives communications relevant to them.

At an internal level CERTO will use the **Alfresco content management system** to store and manage documents within the project and for group discussions. This will be separate from the external website as a closed, password-protected secure hosting service that can be used for sharing confidential and / or draft documents that are not appropriate to make open access on the project website.

The electronic newsletter will be a key focus on facilitating internal communication, so that it can keep project participants informed and engaged in activities that they may not be directly involved in or aware of.

WP10 will participate in CERTO project meetings to help keep abreast of project activities and to present an update of activities on communication.

4 Key points

4.1 Language

The primary language for communications within and external to the project will be English. However, where communications such as press releases relate to a particular geographical

area, these will be translated into the local language, if appropriate, and distributed to local press contacts.

4.2 Cultural/gender issues

All communication activities will consider cultural and gender issues to ensure that products and services appeal to as wide an audience as possible and do not discriminate in any way. All products will be written using non-technical terminology and will be produced in English and in the local language depending on the target audience.

4.3 Water Literacy

Where possible, communication materials will be developed to contribute to the advance of water literacy and to help others to understand the influence of all water (fresh, transitional and marine) on daily lives and impact on water resources. In particular, press releases will be written using language that is accessible to all, avoiding technical terms, thus aiming to reach a wider general audience.

5 Evaluation

The effectiveness of CERTO's communication materials will be measured by analysing the audiences reached and engagement with the project. Several tools are available to support this, such as **Google Analytics** to monitor website traffic, **Altmetric** to monitor the online response to scientific papers and databases and analytics from social media feeds.

We will evaluate and report on the success of the communication materials in Deliverables D10.5 and D10.7.