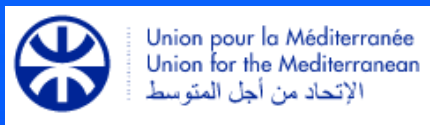




Med Blue Economy Platform - Outreach strategy

CLIENTE:



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globalcad.org

MedBlueEconomyplatform

Outreach strategy

1. Overall Outreach Strategy

1.1. Overall communication objectives:

The following communication objectives have been identified and will serve to define the communication plan:

1. **Expand the Blue Economy community** by increasing website awareness and traffic: current average daily traffic to the web is low (around 20 users daily); ensure stable links with the other communities and constant flows of information among communities through an agreed, simple mechanism.
2. **Ensure flow of information and communicate all content types** (events, knowledge products, project lists, etc.) in an appealing, engaging, shareable way (use compelling visuals, infographics, social media “visual cards”).
3. **Engage the community:** be the go-to platform for practitioners, policy makers and academics interested in Blue Economy and build new opportunities for partnership.
 - a. Get platform users to share content and connect with each other through the internal messaging system; They will be regularly invited and reminded to do so through the newsletter and specific contents in the website are published (news, events).
 - b. Get partners to see the platform as a key dissemination tool and proactively share content, by promoting webinars, sharing of training tools and more through the platform

1.2. Target audiences:

The concept of “UfM Blue Economy Stakeholders Community” or more simply the “UfM Blue Economy Community” is already consolidated and should be promoted at widest. Three main target audiences have been identified:

- **Blue Economy practitioners**, experts, academics consultants working in the private or public sector “on the ground” – both in the Mediterranean as in other coastal regions;
 - **High level policymakers** including the official UfM Blue Economy Focal Points as well as representatives from the local to the regional level working in the area of Blue Economy, sustainability, coastal protection and other related topics;
- UfM partners working in the topic** – Such as UFM labelled projects and Mediterranean countries that are an active part of the UfM’s activities related to Blue Economy. They are commissioning reports, hosting events and supporting policies regarding ocean and coastal preservation in the region. Once the new look of the website is ready, GlobalCAD will prepare an email to invite the UfM labelled coordinators to visit the new website, and invite them to share information in the platform as well as events, news etc.

1.3. Platform’s mission and vision:

The platform's mission & vision should guide all communication efforts and make sure resources are being used in an optimized way to reach the platform's goals on the short and long term. Below an example of proposed mission & vision:

Mission: The MedBESP is a web portal aimed at providing a coherent and systemic framework to improve maritime governance in the Mediterranean.

Vision: To contribute to the development of an interactive Blue Economy Community by sharing general, technical, and sectoral information related to marine and maritime affairs in the Mediterranean.

2. Online strategy

Available tools:

1. Website
2. Newsletter
3. Social media channels (UfM's Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn).
4. News of UfM's webpage, that can be used as a channel to disseminate news from the platform for key events such as the online consultation, the re-launch of the 'new' look of the platform, etc.

2.1 Website

This is the centrepiece of the strategy and it is where all relevant content is available to the different target audiences. After revising the current platform, we believe MedBESP website needs to:

- a. Revise its overall architecture and look and feel, so users can easily access the information they are looking for, find new, useful resources and upload information of general interest (a set of "quick-wins" based on a first analysis of the website that would help improve site navigation and brand image is available);
- b. Offer updated, useful content so that the audience uses it as a one-stop-shop for information related to maritime and marine affairs in the region.

Recommended next steps:

- a. **Better understand current audience profile and website use:** run a detailed analysis of the site's Google analytics to understand source of traffic, most visited pages, most frequent landing pages and user behaviour inside the website. This analysis will inform us of how users are currently engaging with the site, most sought out content pieces reasons for bouncing out/ prematurely leaving the site and the key drivers (such as special events or consultations) of traffic to the website.
- b. Use the information obtained from item a) to **revise the current page structure and modernize the page's look and feel.** At this stage, we recommend defining brand guidelines (based off of UfM's branding guide) and stock photos image guidance to guarantee visual coherence in the long term. Main photo of the website will be permanent to create a

consisting visual look. In addition, a stock of photos to use for selected news will be created. These photos will be changed in a bi-weekly period, once new news are uploaded on the platform.

- c. **Define a streamlined process to get UfM partners to send content with a certain frequency.** Create a list of “content providers” - organisations that are potentially key sources of content for the website (based on past contributions and relevance to the topic) and send e-mail “check-ins” twice a year to ask for relevant content. Promote most interesting content on social media and share reach and engagement data in the next e-mail to content providers to reinforce the platform’s added value and stimulate content sharing.
- d. **Define and implement a non-cost SEO strategy¹.** Traffic to the MedBESP site is low, which does indicate an opportunity to improve the outreach and implement an SEO plan. However, given the current high bounce rate and low time on site, we believe that the first step is to re-structure the site and revamp its look & feel to improve user experience before focusing on a more complex strategy to attract users to the platform. To that matter, time on site is one of the influencing factors behind Google’s prioritizations, so guaranteeing a good user experience, thus longer time on site, will certainly also help improve the platform’s SEO. There are a few actions that can be taken during the site revamp that will help improve SEO organically (such as fine-tune page titles according to most relevant search terms, make sure all images are properly uploaded, trying to keep a minimum amount of content per page, when applicable and link building). These actions will produce “quick-wins” and could be implemented during the first year of the assignment.

2.2 Newsletter (pending to be finalized)

This bi-annual tool is MedBESP’s most direct point of contact with its community. The newsletter will be launched in English, French and Arabic. Subscribers have established their interest in the topic and the channel should be leveraged to:

- a. **Inform subscribers** about most relevant information regarding Blue Economy in a way that is appealing and easy to access;
- b. **Drive traffic to the website**, where subscribers can access full content and find other useful resources;
- c. **Promote engagement and nurture relationships.**

To that end, we recommend the following:

- a. **All visual changes made to the website** (typography, colours, use of appealing images, etc.) **should be applied to the newsletter and related mailing, design as much as possible to**

¹ Once the platform is revamped and steps to improve SEO organically have been taken, the option of a paid SEO strategy could be evaluated. For that purpose, an extra budget should be calculated as it is not part of the budget presented to implement this assignment. Professional SEO services should be hired. For the size of the platform, we estimate that a specialized agency would charge around 400 euros/ month for the service.

ensure brand cohesiveness. Insights from the abovementioned analysis will also be used to categorize items within the newsletter to help guide the audience through the content, such as: Past Conferences | Upcoming Events | Call for Proposals | New Knowledge Resources | Job Opportunities.

- b. When possible, links from the newsletter will link off to the MedBESP website. Depending on the source of the news, links to the original news/events page will be also included.

2.3 Social Media

Using UfM's social media profiles to disseminate MedBESP's content is on one hand challenging as it limits posting frequency and ability to respond to current relevant affairs in a proactive way. On the other, it gives MedBESP access to an audience of over 460k followers (combined followers between Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), which is an opportunity that should be leveraged in the best possible way. Social Media should be used in the outreach strategy to:

- a. **Increase awareness** of the platform and increase website traffic;
- b. **Promote key website content forms** (events, knowledge resources, opportunities for partnership, etc);
- c. **Engage with the community.**

To that end, we recommend the following:

- a. **Establish a calendar of two monthly postings**, in which one will be focused on generating overall awareness of the website (e.g.: "Did you know that in the Mediterranean Blue Economy Stakeholder Platform you can find all current Blue Economy projects in the region, filtered by topic and country? Access the platform to learn more. ") and the other focused on a specific content (e.g.: "The report Maritime Clusters in the Mediterranean Region offers an overview types of maritime clusters and their potential to boost sustainable grown. Access the platform to learn more"). In addition, the launch of the bi-annual newsletter could be promoted through social media.
- b. **Use website brand guidelines and visuals to compose the message.** While most of the posts will be traditional post+link formats, work on different formats to be used once every two months: visual cards | infographics | short videos (key messages in text + stock photos and videos).

Example of visual card to accompany post - pending insert relevant logo(s): yes but only maritime I would say



- c. **Define a set of generic and specific hashtags** to accompany posts and increase reach (e.g.: #BlueEconomy, #BlueGrowth, #ClimateChange, #Fisheries, #Oceanography). Seemingly, **identify twitter handles of partner organizations and influencers** on key Blue Economy topics and make sure to tag them accordingly. The information to be sent to the Communication UfM's team will contain:
 - a. Text (if it's an event: place, time, type of event, etc.)
 - b. Photo
 - c. Links
 - d. Hashtags
 - e. Preference of social network
 - f. Partners' and organisations tags
- d. **Take into account particularities of each social media channel** to fine-tune the content accordingly:



LinkedIn

Primary audiences: UfM's partners and Blue Economy practitioners;

Secondary audiences: Larger Blue Economy community, including influencers, UfM mailing list Blue Economy Community

LinkedIn is a popular business-oriented social networking service with more than 380 million members. UfM has a company page with over 11k followers. The voice will be direct and professional, covering the information with a more robust and still engaging text.



Facebook

Primary audiences: Blue Economy practitioners, General Audience interested in current affairs related to Blue Economy (such as climate change);

Secondary audiences: MedBESP current website visitors and potential new visitors, UfM partners (organisations and individuals), Blue Economy community including influencers, UfM mailing list Blue Economy Community

Facebook is a powerful tool to reach citizens and general public. The approach on Facebook is informal, which means that content should be adapted for a less-expert audience and avoid endogamy and jargon. Post length shall follow best practice, which is not to exceed two paragraphs, and always be published with an image / link / video.



Twitter

Primary audiences: MedBESP current website visitors and potential new visitors, UfM partners (organisations and individuals), Blue Economy community including influencers and other development organisations;

Secondary audiences: Blue Economy practitioners, General Audience interested in current affairs related to Blue Economy (such as climate change), UfM mailing list Blue Economy Community.

While most Facebook walls are only public and readable for their networks, public feeds are the most common option on Twitter. The reason for that is the extended professional use of the microblogging tool that is used in several ways: from a media/news/professional content curation tool to a professional engagement tool.

The voice and style here is professional but still more flexible than on LinkedIn. Any LinkedIn and Facebook content could be published on Twitter. Hashtags will be used to mark keywords or topics in a tweet, and @mentions should be used as a seamless way of drawing someone's attention to a page or comment and increasing chances of retweets.

Additionally, live Twitter chats could be a good opportunity to build towards MedBESP's vision to become an aggregating platform that contributes to the development of an interactive Blue Economy Community. To that end, MedBESP could ask key partners to lead live webinars focused on particular region or topic (e.g.: coastal preservation), moderated by MedBESP. Events could last 10-20 minutes, where host would give a short introduction on the topic and open up for questions from a live audience. It would be hosted on UfM's Twitter account, with social media posting prior to it to increase awareness.

3. Complementing owned-channels outreach strategy: PR outreach

An additional tool to increase the platform's awareness is to establish a media strategy focused on online channels. Given the specificity of the platform's scope and the fact that there is very little original content being published in the website, we recommend focusing efforts on sectorial media, who will most likely have a natural interest on Blue Economy and related topics and will address an audience also more prone to engage with the platform.

To that end, we recommend the following:

- a. **Identify media outlets covering topics related to Blue Economy** (climate change, fisheries, ocean conservation, etc.), with both global and regional reach, creating a comprehensive contact list of potential media partners.
- b. **Craft and send out an introductory press release** communicating the website (once visual revamp is done), its main features and benefits.
- c. **Send out bi-annual press releases** (around the time the newsletter is sent, leveraging on the content writing efforts) with top news/events in the topic of Blue Economy, always linking them to the platform and adding a summary paragraph of MedBESP in the end of each press release.
- d. **Bridge the connection between UfM partner's and media partners** whenever a relevant report/policy paper or event is launched. This will build on MedBESP's efforts to be the go-to platform practitioners and partners go to both look for and post relevant content.

4. Evaluating the Strategy – KPIs

In order to follow the effectiveness of the outreach strategy, a series of KPIs have been defined and will be monitored through a specific monitoring framework. After a few months, it will be possible to identify trends and establish goals for each indicator.



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