

AGENDA ITEM 14: CLME+ COMMUNICATIONS

CLME+ Communications Strategy & Implementation Plan

1. Background:

The CLME+ Strategic Action Programme recognizes that addressing the cross-cutting root causes to unsustainable fisheries, habitat degradation and pollution – the three inter-linked key priority environmental problems requires dealing with the issue of inadequate public awareness and involvement, as but one of the seven key root causes identified.

In responding to the issue of inadequate public awareness, the Results Framework of the CLME+ Project Document (Prodoc), gives mandate for the development of an overarching CLME+ Communications Strategy, with central and decentralized components and responsibilities.

Articulation of these activities through communication, twinning and knowledge exchange targeting the CLME+ Partnership and global LME Community of Practice are a key Project output as is the PCU's mandate to oversee the development and coordinated implementation of the CLME+ Communication (and Knowledge Management and Dissemination) Strategy.

A CLME+ Communications Strategy was developed in 2016 with an ambitious implementation plan. A Communications Specialist was engaged by the PCU in September 2016, to lead the implementation of the plan. However, capacity and time constraints led to a limited number of initial successes under the central component of the Strategy.

In recognition, the CLME+ Communications Strategy is now being refined to address communication arrangements among the CLME+ Partnership, general awareness building among the broader CLME+ stakeholder community and experience exchange with LME Practitioners.

The overarching aim of the Strategy is to contribute to the materialization of the long-term Vision and the Objectives of the CLME+ SAP and the attainment of the SDGs as these relate to the marine environment of the CLME+ region, in particular SDG14.

In achieving this aim while simultaneously ensuring successful delivery under the CLME+ Project Results Framework, the CLME+ PCU considers the following three-pronged approach:

1. The first and most pressing is supporting the **successful and timely delivery of key CLME+ Project Outputs** – by facilitating awareness among primary stakeholders (e.g. country NFPs, Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, PEG and ICM members) and promoting and ensuring country/stakeholder buy-in and ownership .

2. The second is the mobilization of additional major stakeholders and resources (e.g. through the global CLME+ Alliance and Partnership), and the **up-scaling of positive action** on the marine environment in the CLME+/wider Caribbean region. This is in support of **full-scale CLME+ SAP implementation** and region-wide progress towards regional and international commitments, e.g. Cartagena Convention, CBD Aichi Targets and the SDGs.
3. The third is the exchange of knowledge and best practices among the global LME Community and the creation of enhanced awareness among the public at large.

2. Progress and Status:

Under the CLME+ Communications Strategy developed in 2016 a number of initial successes under the central component of the Strategy were attained, led by Ms. Soizic Brun: a project website (www.clmeproject.org), the initial foundations of what is to become a major collaboration and information exchange platform, the CLME+ Hub (www.clmeplus.org), a social media plan (@CLMEplus twitter account), and a (limited) number of e-newsletters (also available through the Project website) were produced at aiming to keep key stakeholders informed about project activities and outputs. Mr. Brun, the first CLME+ Communications Specialist resigned in September 2017.

Communication successes among co-executing Partners have also experienced varying degrees of success and are often correlated to the organization's in-house capacity (e.g. whether they have dedicated Communications Staff on board or not).

A number of regional partners have their own Communications Strategy in which elements related to the CLME Project have been integrated, however this has not been fully guided from an overarching level to ensure consistency and to maximize efficiency and effectiveness in the dissemination of project messages.

Further challenges include the perception of a low level of awareness in the CLME+ SAP as well as low engagement with and **ownership** over project activities among some of the CLME+ countries.

It is to be noted, however, in this context, that in many instances engagement of CLME+ countries in the project activities occurs through sessions and/or meetings organized by CLME+ Project co-executing partners, several of which are Intergovernmental Organisations. Country representatives at these fora do not necessarily coincide with the CLME+ Project designated National Focal Points (NFPs). This, combined with weaknesses/capacity constraints in the initial implementation of the CLME+ Communication Strategy, may have contributed to reduced awareness/appreciation among CLME+ NFPs about how the project is supporting the agenda and programmes/activities of participating countries.

Technical PCU staff such as the RPC, SPO and EMRS have contributed to communications, awareness building and outreach on project activities, outputs and results through their participation in technical workshops of co-executing partners and meetings of the advisory and governing bodies of regional IGO's in addition to the mandatory activities of the global GEF IW/LME Community.

Based on an evaluation of successes and shortcomings of the first half of project implementation, a modification of the overall focus of communications by the CLME+ Project was called for. A decision was taken by the PCU to recruit a more senior and experienced specialist, Mr. Ramon Peachey, starting April 2018 as "CLME+ Senior Communication Lead".

Mr. Peachey is now re-shaping the CLME+ Communications Plan for the second half of project implementation, to ensure it puts a stronger focus on communicating with primary project stakeholders who are **directly responsible** for and/or expected to be the major, most **direct beneficiaries** of priority CLME+ Project Outputs, such as: the strengthened and consolidated, sustainably financed Regional Oceans Governance Framework, the Regional Action Plans for the up-scaling of investments in pollution abatement, marine habitat protection and for the elimination of Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing, the establishment and progressive expansion of a Global "CLME+ Partnership", including enhanced private sector engagement towards the CLME+ Vision of a healthy marine environment supporting livelihoods and a blue economy, and the development and institutionalization of the "State of the Marine Environment and associated Economies" periodic reporting tracking mechanism.

The revised Communications Strategy draws upon some resources from the first Communications Strategy. To date, critical components in executing the strategy are in place including the re-identification of key target audiences, key messages, and communication mediums and tracking mechanisms in place to monitor audience reach.

Given that the Project is mid-term, the urgent need to complete key outputs remains paramount and therefore the communications program is being developed utilizing the 80/20 principle whereby the main audiences – if their full engagement can be sought, will solve 80% of the issues aimed to be addressed e.g. CLME+ and other National Focal Points, Co-executing partners etc.

3. Way Forward and Next Steps

Some key products to be delivered to support the overall Communications Program include:

1. Internal communication e-newsletter for better engagement with audiences on whose the Project's success depends;
2. External e-newsletter for cross collaboration with key external audiences;
3. A innovative media outreach platform and newsroom (include training of CLME+ partners in its use) to engage relevant global and regional media;
4. Media tracking platform to measure outreach and impact;

5. Comprehensive Social Media Strategy;
6. Further development of the CLME+ HUB and Project Website; and
7. Communications marketing material (information and guidance booklets, leaflets etc. on major CLME+ project outputs)

In progressing the Communications Strategy, it will be important that Communication Focal Points are identified, initially from each Co-executing partner and then either the National Focal Point or a designated counterpart to then act as a country communication representative. This will be important to ensure that a Communications Working Group can be established, sensitized and provided with the tools to undertake associated communication activities and to share knowledge and learnings.

The CLME+ Project Steering Committee will have regular oversight of content and importantly communication metrics to ascertain communication reach and impact.

4. Proposed Action:

Action: The Meeting is invited to (a) consider the revised CLME+ Project Communications Strategy framework with the formal Communications Strategy to follow and to (b) endorse the proposed priority areas as defined or as amended.