



## **Support to Aquaculture and the Fishery Industry**

Grant Agreement No. 607155

Userboard meeting (UB-1)

Part B

Communications consultation summary & actions

University College Cork, Ireland

29<sup>th</sup> March, 2014

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## Overview

The userboard were consulted on a number of aspects regarding SAFI's communications activities and strategy, namely:

- Gauging a list of recommended projects with good communications methods.
- Methods & manner of communications for SAFI
- Shaping SAFI's newsletter

Consultations were implemented using participatory Group Facilitation Methods developed by the staff of the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) and more commonly known as Technology of Participation (ToP)<sup>®</sup>. The University College Cork (CMRC-UCC) and Daithi O Murchu Marine Research Station (DOMMRS) staff deployed on this exercise have been trained in this methodology through the UCC Staff Training programme. Further information on ToP<sup>®</sup> can be found at [www.ica-usa.org/](http://www.ica-usa.org/)

Following the consultation, notes and responses were distilled into achievable actions to be carried out by the appropriate parties working within the SAFI project. The project partners would also like to take this opportunity to thank the contributing users consulted, for their input, enthusiasm, and constructive criticism on both the project, and our communications strategy.

### **Participants:**

#### **Internal**

10 internal users

#### **External**

6 external users

### **Facilitated by:**

Rory Scarrott (UCC-CMRC)

Dee McElligott (DOMMRS)



## **SAFI Userboard Communications Consult – Notes & Actions**

### **Good Project & Poor project communications**

Good:

- AQUA T-NET
- ASIMUTH
- SAF-LAND

Poor:

- How many EU projects communicate to end -users (project websites, etc.).
- Inappropriate language – “keep it simple”

Notes:

- Lack of feedback to end-users who helped shape the product initially
- A lack of awareness on how to communicate (using an appropriate form of language) with their target audiences serves only to hamper communications.

**Action(s):**

1. *SAFI Communications to keep an eye on language used, and how appropriate it is to the target audience*
2. *SAFI to ensure that feedback to consulted users is a vital component of its communications strategy.*

### **Information Delivery**

Suggested dissemination (communication) methods:

- Email list – people can decide whether to subscribe or not
- Word of mouth (discussion of the project outside the consortium by its members)
- Organise meetings with relevant people – the importance of fact-to-face meetings cannot be underestimated.
- Workshops
- Social media
- Newsletter – the importance of an active (i.e. voluntary) subscription to any such newsletter was highlighted
- Presentations both in academic and broader interest forums

**Action(s):**

3. *SAFI Communications to investigate the potential of each suggestion and factor it into the SAFI Communications strategy. Delivery methods will also be subject to resource availability.*



## Newsletter content

Content people want to hear about:

- Clear information of SAFI's objectives.
- Summary of parameters/info potentially or actually available from the SAFI service.
- Methodologies used and the results obtained to date (important not to just report results because they are there, they should be interesting or not included in a newsletter – i.e. they should be “newsworthy”).
- Practical applications of the SAFI service to industries and sectors.
- Demonstrable benefits of the SAFI service to industries and sectors.
- The CMRC newsletter was cited as a good example (agreement from a number of attendees, including external users on the board)

**Action(s):**

4. *These suggestions to form the basis of subject matter guidance for all three SAFI newsletters.*

## Newsletter delivery

The question was posed as to whether users would be more inclined to read a newsletter received in the post, or by email:

- Email, however, Email must be very good! Most newsletter emails are deleted immediately.
- Irish Sailing Association – cited as a good example by an external user
- Uses format of a catchy headline which is clickable for more detailed information.
- Content
  - show abstract
  - clickable headings
- Hard copies can be better than emails, depending on who is being targeted.
- People often lack the time to read email or newsletters at their desk.
- For print newsletters, CMRC-newsletter format is very nice.
- Print format newsletters usually read over lunch break away from the desk, particularly if left in the canteen.

**Action(s):**

5. *SAFI to carefully consider its target audiences, who is key to receiving the information, and how they typically respond to newsletters (where they would read them etc.).*
6. *SAFI communication plan/strategy to consider designing articles in print, then narrowing it down into an email format.*
7. *SAFI to ensure newsletter emails are subscribed to voluntarily, providing a mechanism for signup on the SAFI website and an “unsubscribe” option.*



### **Other feedback**

- Overall, feedback on SAFI Communications thus far has been positive.
- Feedback and two-way information exchange is essential.
- Re. WebGIS, recommended to tailor it towards the (multiple) interest sectors. E.g. target aquaculture, target administrators, etc. This requires multiple options for language/phrasing to be used.

### **Action(s):**

8. *SAFI Communications to ensure the User feedback and the actions SAFI takes to incorporate this feedback is made available to consulted users.*
9. *SAFI project to report on how user feedback has been incorporated at the next user meeting.*
10. *SAFI DSS designers to scope the option for multiple interest sectors to be addressed using the same core system (with multiple front-ends tailored to users?).*

## **Summary of actions as determined by Userboard.**

1. *SAFI Communications to keep an eye on language used, and how appropriate it is to the target audience*
2. *SAFI to ensure that feedback to consulted users is a vital component of its communications strategy.*
3. *SAFI Communications to investigate the potential of each suggestion and factor it into the SAFI Communications strategy. Delivery methods will also be subject to resource availability.*
4. *Subject & content suggestions to form the basis of subject matter guidance for all three SAFI newsletters.*
5. *SAFI to carefully consider its target audiences, who is key to receiving the information, and how they typically respond to newsletters (where they would read them etc.).*
6. *SAFI communication plan/strategy to consider designing articles in print, then narrowing it down into an email format.*
7. *SAFI to ensure newsletter emails are subscribed to voluntarily, providing a mechanism for signup on the SAFI website and an “unsubscribe” option.*
8. *SAFI Communications to ensure the User feedback and the actions SAFI takes to incorporate this feedback is made available to consulted users.*
9. *SAFI project to report on how user feedback has been incorporated at the next user meeting.*
10. *SAFI DSS designers to scope the option for multiple interest sectors to be addressed using the same core system (with multiple front-ends tailored to users?).*