



BLUE MISSION BANOS

**Supporting the Mission
Ocean Lighthouse in the
Baltic and North Sea Basins**

Deliverable 1.1 Internal Communication Guide

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TABLE OF CONTENT

TABLE OF CONTENT	3
LIST OF FIGURES.....	4
ACRONYMS.....	5
REFERENCES	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	7
1. BACKGROUND	8
2. GOALS OF INTERNAL PROJECT COMMUNICATION.....	8
3. BMB INTERNAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES	9
4. CONSORTIUM-INTERNAL COMMUNICATION FLOWS.....	10
4.1 USE OF MICROSOFT TEAMS AS AN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORM.....	10
4.2. EMAIL COMMUNICATION	11
4.3. ONLINE AND IN-PERSON MEETINGS	11
5. COMMUNICATION ROUTINES FOR FORMAL PROCESSES	13
2. ANNEXES	15
2.1 ANNEX I: USEFUL RESOURCES ON USING MICROSOFT TEAMS.....	15



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Screenshot of BlueMissionBANOS Microsoft Team's group	10
Figure 2: Communication flows in BlueMissionBANOS Project	13



ACRONYMS

BMB	BlueMissionBanos - Supporting the Mission Ocean Lighthouse in the Baltic and North Sea Basin
WP	Work Package
EC	European Commission
PO	Project Officer
GA	General Assembly
SC	Steering Committee
PP	Project Partner
PC	Project Coordinator
SUB	SUBMARINER



REFERENCES

1. EU HORIZON 2020 UNITED project, Deliverable 10.1: Establishing governance structure, 10 March 2020
2. EU HORIZON 2020 ACTRIS IMP Deliverable 10.1: Updated plan for communication within ACTRIS, 29 December 2020
3. EU HORIZON 2020 HISEA project, Deliverable: 1.2 Guideline for communication flow, 29 June 2019
4. EU HORIZON 2020 EUROBENCH project, Deliverable: 8.3 Communication Plan, 28 May 2018



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Deliverable 1.1 presents guidance for internal communication within the BlueMissionBANOS (BMB) project. The goal is to inform project partners of processes, procedures, and tools for sharing information within the consortium to ensure an open communication flow. To this end, the Internal Communication Guide includes routines, tools, materials, and channels to effectively share information about BlueMissionBANOS activities, achievements, and results amongst Consortium partners. It encompasses internal communication and quality review procedures in line with the Consortium Agreement. Finally, it clarifies the elements of the project governance structures and their functional role in supporting communications.



1. BACKGROUND

Creating structures and routines to facilitate participation, collaboration and commitment amongst project partners is a prerequisite for successful project implementation. To achieve this goal, communication flows in the BMB project must integrate top-down and bottom-up approaches to ensure that every level of the project coordination and implementation (including project coordinator, Work Package (WP) leaders, task leaders and task participants) is well-informed and **up to date** with relevant processes and workflows.

To this end, BMB utilises traditional communication tools, such as physical and online meetings and email, but also introduces collaborative working methods, which include Microsoft SharePoint and Microsoft Teams, online working documents (Microsoft Word and Excel), etc. Specifically, Microsoft Teams allows all participants to 1) store, consult and retrieve project information from a shared centralised repository (SharePoint), 2) collaborate informally and interactively through chat messages, and 3) efficiently organise online meetings. Therefore, all relevant project materials will be made available to the project consortium through Microsoft Teams to ensure open and flexible data sharing and communication.

2. GOALS OF INTERNAL PROJECT COMMUNICATION

Internal communication between the consortium members is essential to ensure proper project implementation. As the project coordinator, SUBMARINER (SUB) is responsible for defining communication procedures in collaboration with all the partners and hosting the project's Microsoft Teams group.

The internal organisation and management of information facilitate the efficient implementation of actions, knowledge transfer, and engagement within the BMB project consortium.

Overall, the goals of internal communication are:

- To increase involvement and engagement among BMB project partners
- To keep BMB partners connected and informed
- To build and share a common understanding of BMB's goals, vision and mission
- To develop a sense of community between project partners
- To raise awareness of the ongoing/future activities within the community
- To ensure the project's success



3. BMB INTERNAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The project's governance structure comprises the following consortium bodies:

- The Project Coordinator
- The General Assembly
- The Steering Committee

The project's governance structure was established at the onset to ensure sound legal, contractual, financial, and administrative management of BMB in compliance with the contractual obligations, good management practices and the provisions of the Consortium Agreement.

General Assembly

The General Assembly (GA), the ultimate decision-making body of the consortium, consists of one representative of each Project Partner, who is duly authorised to deliberate, negotiate and decide on all matters related to the Consortium Agreement.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee (SC), which includes all WP leads/co-leads and is chaired by the Project Coordinator, is the project's supervisory body responsible for the proper execution and implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly. The SC will regularly evaluate all project risks and challenges to ensure high-quality and efficient implementation and overall project effectiveness in terms of budget and adherence to deadlines, among others. The SC shall report and be accountable to the General Assembly.

Project Coordinator – Project Management Team

The Project Management Team comprises the Project Coordinator (PC) and their team, responsible for the overall project coordination. The PC is responsible for quality assurance and risk management. In addition to their responsibilities as a project partner, the coordinator shall perform the assigned tasks described in the Grant Agreement and Consortium Agreement and assure strategic guidance and effective internal communication within the consortium and vis-à-vis the European Commission.



4. CONSORTIUM-INTERNAL COMMUNICATION FLOWS

Project partners will communicate regularly over two main channels: 1) emails and 2) Microsoft Teams. SUB will facilitate smooth communication and collaboration flows and make tools available for partner exchange. SUB will also ensure that WP leaders organise regular calls (monthly or bi-monthly) with their task leaders and participants to coordinate upcoming tasks and deliverables.

4.1 USE OF MICROSOFT TEAMS AS AN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORM

A private project repository was created on Microsoft Teams (Figure 1) to share preliminary results and internal documents (e.g. working papers, deliverable drafts, calendar of events, etc.) amongst project partners, jointly develop or collaboratively comment on documents, and quickly discuss via chat or call. The system allows participants to upload and download information and organise it in folders according to WP and task.

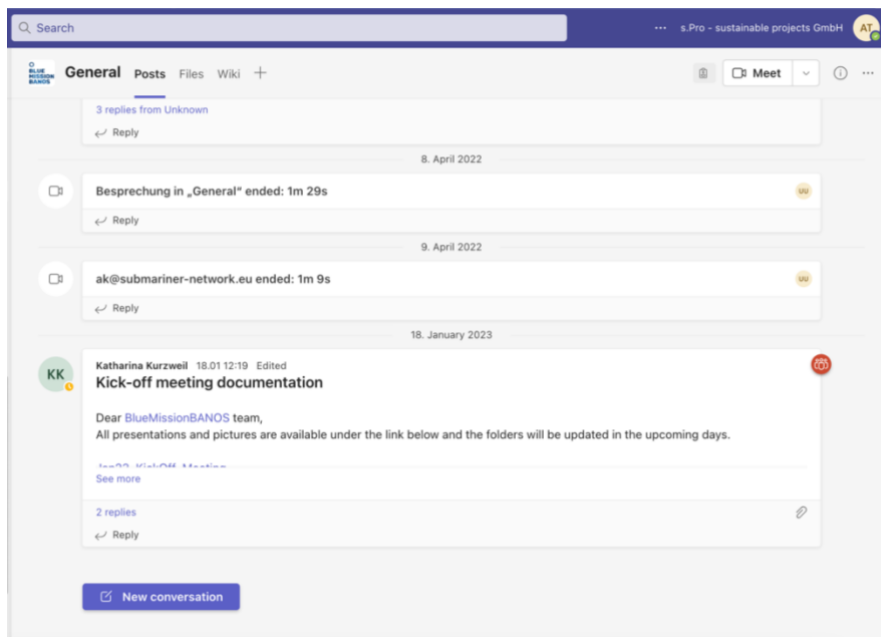


Figure 1: Screenshot of BlueMissionBANOS Microsoft Team's group



Microsoft Teams is, therefore, a discussion board and collaborative repository structured as follows:

- Each WP has a dedicated channel, including a chat and a repository for deliverables, meetings and notes, reports, etc., where partners can upload documents.
- All working documents, especially deliverable drafts, should be developed directly on Microsoft Teams to ensure that partners have access and can contribute collectively to their finalisation, providing input and comments.
- Each WP channel is complemented by a “Files” tab, encompassing a file storage system (SharePoint). WP leaders are advised to structure their document repository following their WP’s task structure.
- A channel named ‘General’ contains all general documents related to the project, from official documents (project development, application, consortium agreement etc.), reviews, meeting minutes, and submitted project deliverables.

All WP leads are invited to actively use their WP channels to exchange with project partners, jointly work on the deliverables, hold WP/task meetings, etc.

Internal news and official announcements will be cross-posted on Microsoft Teams and email to ensure all partners view them.

Guidelines on how to use Microsoft Teams are provided in Annex I.

4.2. EMAIL COMMUNICATION

In addition to Microsoft Teams, several group mailing lists will be created to facilitate communication. Project partners are advised to always start their email subject with BMB (e.g. Email subject: BMB – First WP1 meeting announcement). These include regularly updated email distribution lists (e.g., WP-related: wp1@bluemissionbanos.eu) to facilitate reaching the right target audience and sharing findings and updates effectively.

4.3. ONLINE AND IN-PERSON MEETINGS

Conference calls are organised regularly to assess the project status, including risk management and activity planning. BMB has defined different interest groups with varying routines of meetings.

Steering Committee monthly meetings

The Steering Committee (SC), composed of WP leaders, meets monthly to monitor overall project progress, exchange information, and exploit synergies and cross-linkages between WPs. Furthermore, this group discusses risks and possible delays in the project implementation and elaborates on mitigation strategies to ensure high-quality results. Notes from SC meetings, including agreed action items, are circulated on Teams.

Meeting minutes are taken and shared by SUB via Microsoft Teams with all SC members, highlighting 1) action points, 2) agreed/suggested deadlines, and 3) responsible partner.



General Assembly meetings

General Assembly (GA) meetings, including all project partners, take place at least once a year to discuss strategic issues, including possible concerns and delays, taking decisions on finances and intellectual property rights, and potential changes in the project consortium.

SUB takes and shares meeting minutes via email and Microsoft Teams with all project partners. GA meetings will usually be held back-to-back with in-person project partner meetings. Still, extraordinary GA meetings can be organised *ad-hoc* if needed (e.g., if a project partner is missing in action, for any financial or quality concerns in the project, etc.).

Individual Work Package and Task meetings

Each WP lead should organise regular check-in meetings, e.g. once a month with partners working on their WP tasks to ensure alignment and coordination. Task leads may also organise smaller task group meetings regularly and/or *ad-hoc*.

Doodle polls

The project meetings mentioned above will be organised via [Doodle Polls](#) as needed to ensure schedule management and proper participation of WP/task leads.

Meeting minutes should be taken and shared by WP/or task lead with the respective group working on a given WP/task, highlighting 1) action points, 2) agreed/suggested deadlines, and 3) responsible partner.



5. COMMUNICATION ROUTINES FOR FORMAL PROCESSES

Communication with the European Commission Project Officer responsible for BlueMissionBANOS

The BMB lead partner, SUB, facilitates all communication with the Project Officer (PO) appointed by the EC. Any financial, legal, administrative, and content-related issues in the project should be communicated to SUB, who will contact the PO to discuss the matter. Partners should refrain from contacting the PO individually.

Figure 2 below shows the official communication flow in the project.

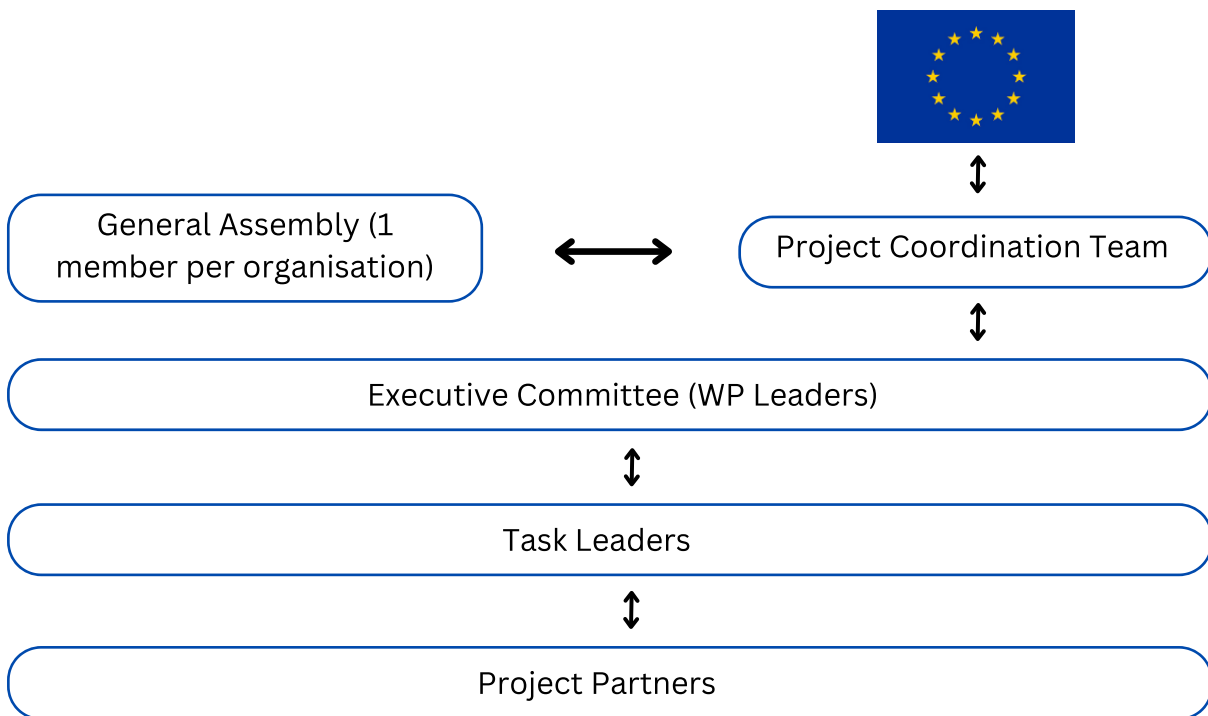


Figure 2: Communication flows in BlueMissionBANOS Project

Project document templates

It is crucial that project communication, external and internal, is carried out using consistent and brand-compliant templates. For this purpose, SUB has produced BMB-branded Word and PowerPoint templates for project partners to use in all project-related activities and communications.



Procedure for reviewing BMB deliverables

Deliverables should be submitted to the PC and assigned to internal reviewers one month before the contractual deliverable deadline. Two internal reviewers will be assigned for each deliverable from project partners' representatives, voluntarily or assigned by the PC. Upon receiving the deliverable, the reviewers and the PC have 14 days to review it. Upon receiving comments, the partner responsible for the deliverable has 14 days to finalise it and submit the final version to the PC, who uploads all the final deliverables onto the ECAS portal.



2. ANNEXES

2.1 ANNEX I: USEFUL RESOURCES ON USING MICROSOFT TEAMS

What is Microsoft Teams: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jugBQqE_2sM&list=PLXPr7gfUMmKxiPKpMocZRkA-AUDI9N1RB

Working on shared documents: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQVzxFh9yBc>

Chatting and video calling – individually and as a group: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7HXc3yWAlk>

How to create a folder in Teams: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WRByHIP49M>

How to upload a document on Teams: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lufKJi3gLnc>

How to call someone on Teams: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40EQEocWxfU>

Teams general How-Tos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykymIT5IL5E&list=PLXPr7gfUMmKzwFu2OKzlwuCfhBlv6KCJG>

