CONTRA

Conversion of a Nuisance To a Resource and Asset

Stakeholder Coordination Strategy

Content

1. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

In general, stakeholders are individuals or organisations who affect the outcome of the project, those that are interested in the project's progress and those that are affected by the project's results.

The overall aim of CONTRA's stakeholder effort is to openly engage with parties across all disciplines and roles in society that will help <u>enable</u> Baltic Sea region coastal authorities to adopt sustainable beach wrack management strategies. Together we will bring about change by:

- pooling resources (knowledge, people, money and technology);
- addressing local, national and regional beach wrack challenges that cannot be solved by single organisations;
- enabling institutions to learn from others, resulting in improvements in wrack treatment and product development;
- informing and educating
  - local authorities on the environmental impact of wrack removal / beach cleaning to improve their decision-making capabilities.
  - the general public on the important natural role that beach wrack plays and hopefully raise their tolerance threshold and
- building trust between public authorities and businesses

The CONTRA partnership brings together a wealth of beach wrack related experience as well as broad disciplinary and geographical coverage around the Baltic Sea region. At the end of the implementation period in 2021, the informal stakeholder network will move from the test / development phase to a formal support network of representatives that can provide practical help on future challenges associated with beach wrack.

2. STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

The identification process will continue throughout the project's implementation period by all partners. The partnership will work together to identify and open effective dialogue with local, national and regional stakeholders so as to meet the project's objectives, communication and dissemination needs. Stakeholders may include:

- Beach cleaning practitioners
- Public authorities for coastal communities
- Tourism service providers/associations operating within and on behalf of coastal resorts
- Scientific and educational institutions
- Local & national businesses operating within resource management and bio-waste management specifically those within the field of water treatment, eco-engineering, fertilizers and landscaping, bioplastics, natural construction materials, animal feed, natural stuffing for household products, cosmetics and food supplements.
- Environmental protection organisations / agencies
- NGOs with a specific interest in sustainable coastal development
- Coastal community groups incl. sport associations, nature/interest groups, schools and youth & outreach programmes
- Funding programs incl. EU, National and regional organisations
- Project monitoring programmes e.g. Interreg Joint Secretariat/ Monitoring Committee.

2.1   Local and National Level

This is where the focus of the project's capacity building work will take place and where we hope to provoke institutional change i.e. improvements to resource management and beach wrack processes by local authorities. Each partner country will establish a Working Group (WG) to meet the project's stakeholder communication needs – for further details, see document *CONTRA - Working Group Guidelines*. The WG Coordinators are responsible for WG organisation, local/national stakeholder coordination and the maintenance of a local/national stakeholder directory in accordance with GDPR 2018 found at ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/. At an early stage in the project, all partners will identify the key stakeholders important for each case study and conduct an 'analysis' exercise to highlight the organisations that they already have a good working relationship with and those that must be newly approached (see *CONTRA - Stakeholder Identification Workshop*).

2.2   Regional Level

CONTRA has a transnational approach to innovation, sustainability and skills in the maritime area, complementing the existing EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). Early in the project, advantage can be taken of existing partner connections to relevant networks in order to raise awareness about the project and its goals. Following this, the partnership will identify and motivate key transnational stakeholders and representatives from other related BSR networks, platforms, forums etc. and build strong connections based on the challenges and the opportunities that lie within sustainable wrack management to help meet regional targets. The WG Coordinators should regularly update GoA 2.1 and WP2 leads on transnational stakeholders and the connections that their local/national stakeholders have to relevant regional networks. The WP2 lead will be responsible for maintaining a regional stakeholder directory in accordance with GDPR 2018.

2.3   Associated Partners

Certain key stakeholders, many of which are local authorities, were identified during the application process and have already offered their support (Associated Partners). It is important that the partners engage with them throughout the implementation period and ensure that these organisations play an active role in all project activities and have ownership of the project's outputs.

3.   STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

3.1   Local Stakeholder Directories

The WG Coordinators are responsible for maintaining a local / national stakeholder directory (Excel file or similar) for their case study site. It holds all the necessary stakeholder information (local & national) so as to serve as a WG management tool and a contact reference document for the duration of the implementation period. Since the directories hold personal and sensitive data, they must be held by the WG Coordinators in accordance with the GDPR 2018 and be kept in a secure place with limited access. A *Stakeholder Directory Template* (Excel file) will be disseminated to partners by the WP2 Lead (EUCC-D).

3.2   Networks and Main Output

One of the project's main outputs is a beach wrack 'Networks Platform'. It is the formal, umbrella platform that will take over from CONTRA on all activities related to beach wrack after the project's lifetime. It will consist of existing local, national & regional networks/forums, together with large organisations e.g. coastal communities & touristic enterprises whose representatives support the work of CONTRA and are motivated to continue the work on beach wrack in the future. The national CONTRA Working Groups will be included within this 'platform'. The Work Package 2 lead (EUCC-D) is responsible for the maintenance of the 'platform's' directory during the project's lifetime which will be made publicly available & published on the CONTRA website.

The directory will include information on each of the relevant local/national/regional forums identified, including:

- their main topics of interest
- relevant initiatives and activities
- conference series
- their dissemination tools incl. web address
- member organisations
- interconnections with other networks, forums and working groups
- representative's contact details for beach wrack issues.

The platform's post project organization including statutes, terms of action, location and number of representatives, will be developed during the project's implementation period & agreed upon by the partners. A form of organization / office will be founded by CONTRA for maintaining and for further developing the platform on beach wrack issues.

4.   STAKEHOLDERS AND CLASSIFICATION

Within each of the CONTRA stakeholder directories, stakeholders will be classified according to a category and their influence. It's worth noting that categorisation systems are purely conceptual and often not clear-cut, e.g. an organisation may fall into two or three areas. For ease within this project, a 'best fit' approach will be used and just one category per stakeholder chosen

4.1   Stakeholder Categories

There are four broad categories of stakeholders:

- <u>Operational stakeholders</u> manage beach wrack as part of their daily work e.g. local authorities, beach cleaning and waste management companies.

- <u>Policy stakeholders</u> define and influence the legal framework e.g. Ministries of environment, HELCOM

- <u>Research & Development</u> stakeholders provide the tools and knowledge e.g. universities and science parks.

- <u>Society & Outreach</u> stakeholders are impacted by beach wrack and/or contribute to its value e.g. NGOs, community interest groups and tourist offices.

Stakeholder Categories

4.2 Stakeholder Influence

Stakeholders will also be classified according to the impact they may have on the project's outcomes. This is done on a rating scale of 1-4 with respect to the widely recognized influence/interest grid. Stakeholder influence rating should be assessed by the project partners in discussion with the relevant Case Study Lead, WP Leader and on a local level with the WG Coordinators.

Influence / Interest Grid
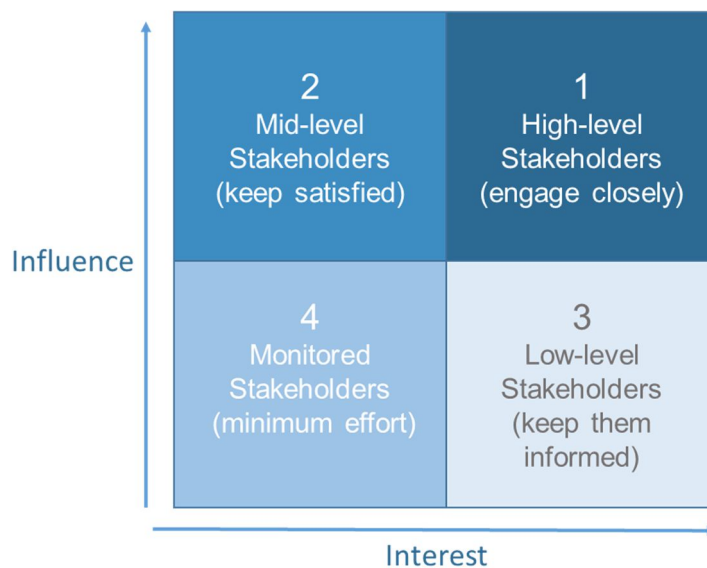
- <u>High Influence Stakeholders</u>: These are individuals and organisations that are key for the project's success both in terms of its progress and the influence they will have on the final outputs. Since they are both motivated and influential, they should be managed closely. Their

input and participation at project events is vital. It is important to recognise that it is not necessarily just large important organisations that are key for the project's success.

- Medium Influence Stakeholders: This is the most difficult stakeholder group to manage. They have a large influence on the project's outcomes but show a low level of interest and support. Respectfully indicate when and for what their input is required and agree upon an *engagement plan*. Efforts should be made to build bridges with these stakeholders and to satisfy their terms without compromising the project's integrity.

- Low Influence Stakeholders: Although their influence on the project's outcomes is low, they are interested and motivated and could quite easily have a large indirect impact. These stakeholders may open doors on unforeseen opportunities, particularly with regards to public relations, 'spreading the word' and introducing partners to other more influential people. It's important that they are kept up to date with all the project's progress and activities and invited to relevant events.

- Monitored Stakeholders: With low influence plus a low interest, they should be informed about the project's findings and monitored. Their engagement plan should indicate how often they would like to receive project updates. See document *CONTRA – Communication Plan* for further information on communication and dissemination tools

In order to rate a stakeholder's influence / interest, the following should also be considered
- What are the stakeholder's role & responsibilities?
- What are the stakeholder's expectations?
- Are there any conflicts of interest between the stakeholder, partnership and/or project objective?
- What will happen if there is no engagement with this stakeholder?
- What are the connections/relationship with other stakeholders?
- Can the stakeholder influence other stakeholders' contributions to the project?

5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Once a stakeholder has been identified, partners should make the first steps to open a dialogue with that individual/organization and find a mutual basis of understanding from where to work.

5.1   Initial Stakeholder Contact:

E-mails and phone calls are a starting point, but direct personal contact is invaluable. Where possible, partners should arrange to meet potential stakeholders face to face to build trust and understanding. Perhaps set up meetings at local events or conferences where awareness for the project can be raised within a local context.

5.2   Raise Stakeholder Interest

Within the context of their role and expertise, explain the challenges that the project will address. It is important to point out that the partnership is working to bring about tangible results and practical solutions that can be implemented. Highlight the importance of their input and opinions and the benefits of working together.

5.3 Understand Stakeholder Expectations

Build up a profile of the stakeholder's expectations, their influence on the project and their preferred methods of engagement. Can their expectations be met within the project's lifetime? Remember, stakeholders will have their own specific view on beach wrack, the challenges and the solutions. If they invest time and effort, they will expect something in return whether it be a project action or partner response.

5.4 Plan of Engagement

Together with the stakeholder, develop a brief, mutual individual *plan of engagement* for the whole project period, which ensures that both the stakeholder's expectations and project goals can be fulfilled.

- Communication channels to be used (see document *CONTRA - Communication Plan*)
- Type of engagement activities and their frequency
- Milestones and timeline

6. ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The stakeholder's preferred method of engagement should be respected whenever possible. Try to organize meetings etc. back to back with other shared events to keep travel time, expenses and carbon footprint to a minimum. During each stakeholder activity, initiate further discussions and gather useful information and opinions. Take the opportunity to get more relevant contacts from the stakeholders who are already involved (snowball effect).

6.1 Activity Plans

Before each planned stakeholder activity, whether it is a one-to-one meeting or a workshop, develop an *Activity Plan* that includes overall aim of the activity, content (agenda), possible topics for discussion and the desired outcome. It is important that stakeholders feel confident about your efforts, so prior to each activity, send the *Activity Plan* to each participant. This gives the stakeholder an opportunity to flag up any misunderstandings and avoids time wasting and disappointment on the day. The plans will also be useful for reviewing the success of your engagement after the event.

6.2 Stakeholder Working Groups

The project assumes the creation of a stakeholder working group (WG) at each case study site. Key, local and national stakeholders should be encouraged to become members (signing of a participation/membership agreement is optional) and take part in a min' of two meetings per year. The groups will serve as a forum for dialogue, interaction and conflict resolution. The WGs are vitally important as this is where a large proportion of CONTRA's capacity building work will be done and where local activities from across all work packages 2, 3, 4 & 5 will be organized and reviewed. Participating members should be local authorities, SMEs, community groups, NGOs, research institutes and industry sector representatives – all to be identified by the case study leads in conjunction with the respective national partners. A WG coordinating partner for each site will be established before the first meeting. See document *Working Group Guidelines* for further information.

6.3 Workshops

Whether they are held at WG meetings, on a national level or at a transnational event, workshops are a great way to disaggregate theoretical knowledge and apply it to real life situations and practical learning. Workshops should be pre-planned, adapted for the participants and have a definite aim with capacity building and the project's objectives in mind.

6.4 Interviews

Gathering stakeholders' knowledge, opinions and attitudes is an important task, particularly during the baseline study phase of the project. If questions are well prepared, interviews can be an effective tool to quickly glean a great deal of expert knowledge on very specific issues. Research questions should be unambiguous and open ended to avoid purely yes/no replies. Ignite further discussions without jeopardizing the planned interview questions.

6.5 Questionnaires

If formulated well and based on sound research incl. past surveys, questionnaires can reach and gather valuable information and opinions from a wide audience. A standard, comparable format should be employed with the use of simple, clear questions. Here, the use of closed - questions and rating scales are most appropriate. A survey plan should be promulgated and agreed upon by all partners undertaking the questionnaires.

7. ENGAGEMENT OUTPUTS

7.1 Report back to stakeholders

After the activity, each stakeholder should receive a protocol detailing the participants, main topics discussed, specific points that were raised, outcomes and the next steps that have been agreed upon. Again, like the activity plan, this avoids any misunderstandings and instills confidence as well as providing documented evidence of project capacity building work.

7.2 Review the Process

Could the engagement have been planned/executed better? Were the outcomes in line with your expectations/plan? If not, why? Document a few 'lessons learnt' points that can be put into practice next time – perhaps the points are useful for other partners too.

7.3 Keep stakeholders involved & informed

Don't just report back. Ask stakeholders for further input and involve them in future activities e.g. working group meetings and workshops. Communicate project findings that might be relevant to them via email or other means (see document *CONTRA - Communication Plan*) and let them know where they can find more information/updates i.e. project website and social media platforms. Refer to their individual 'plan of engagement' that was agreed upon, to meet their expectations and the project objectives. Ensure that any agreed 'next steps' are arranged and do actually happen.

8. DATA PROTECTION

It is important that all stakeholders give their permission before their personal data is included in any stakeholder directory. Stakeholders must also be made aware that the personal data that they provide may be shared by the partners with other interested parties within the context of CONTRA and beach wrack management. Every individual listed in the CONTRA directories has the right to information that concerns their own personal data, as well as a right to rectification or erasure, restriction of processing, or to lodge a complaint against any processing.