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the Sustainability EducationAl programme
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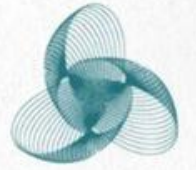
MODULE 10: PORT ENERGY TRANSITION THROUGH COMMUNICATION AND STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

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Learning objectives of the course

(I) Understand why communication is important for energy transition in ports

(II) Identify and classify port stakeholders

(III) Understand how to engage port stakeholders in decarbonisation topics

(IV) Learn about port decarbonisation communication strategies

(V) Assess the current energy transition communication strategies in the largest European ports

(VI) Organise stakeholders' engagement events with a focus on port decarbonisation topics

(VII) Be able to develop and implement effective communication strategies for port decarbonisation strategies

Introduction

The global maritime industry is facing energy transition towards cleaner and sustainable operations. This module will equip you with the key tools for successful communication and stakeholder engagement. You will learn how a clear communication strategy facilitates collaboration among diverse stakeholders involved in the transition for a successful decarbonisation of ports and the maritime industry.

Baseline

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Imagine you had started energy transition in your port and that you had been reaching achievements, but you seem to reach very few people. Is it not frustrating? A strategic communication plan may be the missing piece you need to turn this situation around and to engage in a captivating dialogue with your stakeholders and the entire port community. By completing this module, you will know how to express messages that linger, plan interesting activities and measure your communication strategy impact.
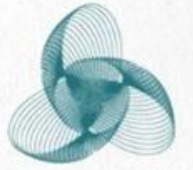
Who are stakeholders?

The Project Management Institute (PMI) defines stakeholders as *individuals and organisations who actively participate in a project and whose interests may be positively or negatively affected by project execution or successful completion (PMI, 2004).*
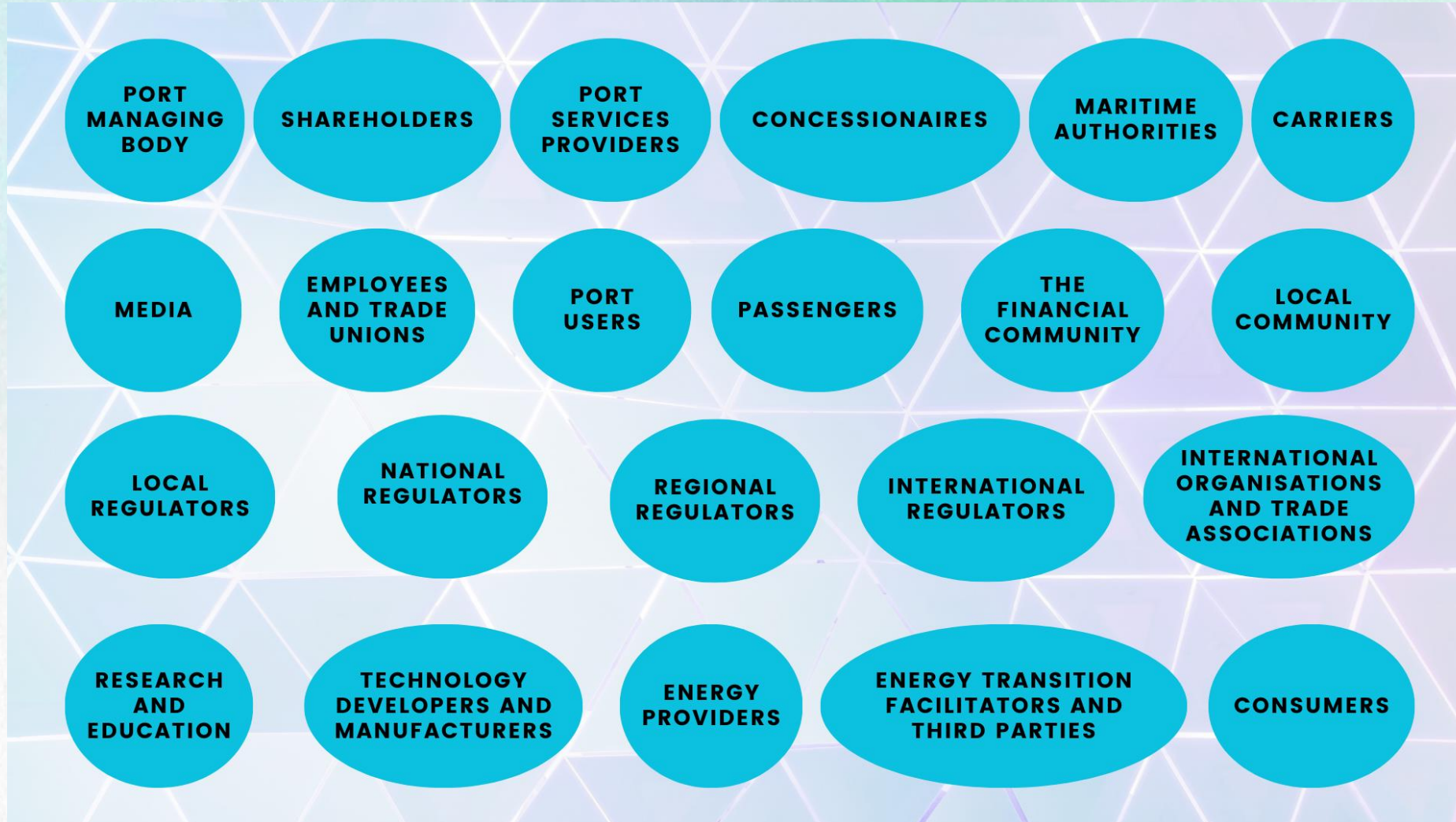
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Stakeholder Identification
The main 22 stakeholder groups (fig.1)

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PORT MANAGING BODY	SHAREHOLDERS	PORT SERVICES PROVIDERS	CONCESSIONAIRES	MARITIME AUTHORITIES	CARRIERS
MEDIA	EMPLOYEES AND TRADE UNIONS	PORT USERS	PASSENGERS	THE FINANCIAL COMMUNITY	LOCAL COMMUNITY
LOCAL REGULATORS	NATIONAL REGULATORS	REGIONAL REGULATORS	INTERNATIONAL REGULATORS	INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	
RESEARCH AND EDUCATION	TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPERS AND MANUFACTURERS	ENERGY PROVIDERS	ENERGY TRANSITION FACILITATORS AND THIRD PARTIES	CONSUMERS	

Stakeholder Classification

Here are 3 different possibilities to classify the stakeholders groups:

- By their connection to the port : internal/external
- By their influence: primary/secondary
- By their behaviour: supportive/neutral/opposing

After classifying the stakeholders, you may want to ask stakeholders to understand their needs and concerns. Stakeholders have their own agenda and may not always keep with the project goals. There may be working week differences, multiple time zones and different languages.

Remember: it is necessary to update stakeholder analysis during the entire life cycle of the energy transition.

10 key principles of stakeholder engagement (fig. 2)

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Comunicate

Consult early and often

Remember they are human

Plan it

Relationships are key

K.I.S.S.

Part of managing risk

Compromise

Understand what success is

Take responsibility

Stakeholder Communication (fig.3)

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STAKEHOLDER GROUP	PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT	ENGAGEMENT METHOD MATERIALS/MEANS OF COMMUNICATION	LOCATION	RESPONSIBLE CONTACT WITHIN THE PORT	TIMING

What is a communication plan?

A communication plan is a comprehensive roadmap that outlines to put into practice (specific actions) your communication strategy. A sound communication plan must include the following 8 elements:

- Target audience

- Core messages

- Communication Channels

- Timeline

- Responsibilities

- Budget

- Monitoring and Assessment

How to assess if your current port communication plan is working

Do I have an official yearly communication plan which outlines responsibilities, procedures and tasks? (absence of a documented communication plan)

What are my communication channels?

Do I have a clear target group?

Do all my stakeholders use the same ships, terminals, costumes passengers, safety regulationts?

Has all the port staff been trained on the communication plan? Are all port stakeholders familiar with it?

Is there a limited information flow?

How to assess if your current port communication plan is working

Is there real-time information sharing?

Is my communication still paper-based?

Am I being redundant (duplication) with the information that has already been published?

Is there anything relavant that I must communicate that is missing?

When people contact the port (or a specific department) what is the delay in responding to enquiries?

What kind of language am I using? (Ambiguous, jargon, misinterpretation, lack of standardised language)

What is my port's preparedness for emergencies? (critical situation protocols, infographics, drills)

How to assess if your current port communication plan is working

How do I retrieve feedback from stakeholders and port community?

How often do I analise the stakeholders' information, queries, needs and concerns?

How aware am I of the changes in technologies, regulations, port operations?

How frequently do I improve/adapt my communication plan?

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Why a communication plan is important

A well-structured communication plan is an essential tool for European ports committed to decarbonisation and environmental protection. This plan not only enhances the visibility of their efforts and achievements but also fosters collaboration and the exchange of best practices among ports and other maritime stakeholders. Effectively promoting decarbonisation activities through communication channels helps raise awareness among communities and stakeholders about the importance of reducing carbon emissions.

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Why a communication plan is important

Implementing a detailed communication plan allows European ports to **highlight their sustainable initiatives and demonstrate their leadership in combating climate change**. This includes showcasing innovative projects, such as the use of renewable energy, energy efficiency improvements, and the adoption of clean technologies. Additionally, a proactive communication approach can facilitate the education and awareness of the public and businesses about the benefits of decarbonisation, promoting a culture of sustainability in the maritime sector.

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Why a communication plan is important

A crucial aspect of the communication plan is **transparency**. Keeping stakeholders, including governments, local communities, and business partners, informed about the progress and challenges of decarbonisation efforts builds trust and continued support. Utilizing diverse platforms, such as social media, newsletters, events, and conferences, allows for reaching a broader and more diverse audience, amplifying the impact of key messages.

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Why a communication plan is important

Promoting decarbonisation activities also reinforces the reputation of ports as **leaders** in sustainability and environmental resilience. This recognition can attract investments and support for new green initiatives, as well as foster strategic partnerships with other organizations committed to sustainability. In an increasingly environmentally focused global landscape, the ability to effectively communicate decarbonization achievements becomes a significant competitive advantage.

Why a communication plan is important

In summary, a comprehensive and well-executed communication plan is fundamental to driving the green transition of European ports. It not only strengthens their positioning as key actors in the fight against climate change but also contributes to global well-being by promoting sustainable and responsible practices in the maritime sector.
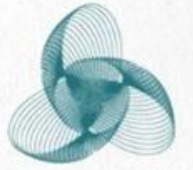
Now we will review the 3 main ports of Europe to see their best practices in terms of communication.

Port of Rotterdam

The Port of Rotterdam aims at:

1) Creating economic and social value by achieving sustainable growth in the world-class port in collaboration with customers and stakeholders.

2) Contributing to a healthier living and working environment for all

3) Producing of green hydrogen, biofuels, and recycling activities within the port. To this end, they have built new infrastructure with heat, hydrogen, and CO_2 pipelines. And they are making maritime transport more sustainable through onshore energy projects and facilitating the supply of clean fuels.

4) To become a smart partner in logistics chains, a port sustainability accelerator, leader in impactful entrepreneurship.

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Port of Rotterdam – Valuable communication strengths

- Their website has a simple and intuitive interface, it is well-designed and easy-to-navigate. It provides relevant information in the homepage, a significant quote, sliding interactive elements. They highlight that their port is EVOLVING ALL THE TIME. There are different sections dedicated to each main stakeholder group.

- Social media: LinkedIn, X (Twitter), Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. They share news, events, and other information on social media, and they also use it to respond to customer questions and concerns. The port encourages stakeholders to stay up-to-date on their activities by visiting their website, watching their videos, and following them on social networks. Their social media are updated very regularly, which is a positive.

Port of Rotterdam – Valuable communication strengths

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- Organising events such as World Port Days to engage with its stakeholders and promote the port and inform about the energy transition. The events displayed are upcoming ones, the past ones become part of their news section. https://www.portofrotterdam.com/en/events

- Their website can be read in four languages: English, Dutch, German, Chinese which their information is available and accessible in multiple languages.

- Tools and Services section (internal and external) useful for stakeholders: https://www.portofrotterdam.com/en/tools-and-services

Port of Rotterdam – Valuable communication strengths

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- Types of media displayed:

High quality photos
(https://www.portofrotterdam.com/en/pressroom/photo-gallery)

Own videos
https://www.portofrotterdam.com/en/pressroom/films

Outstanding Figures
https://www.portofrotterdam.com/en/pressroom/throughput-figures

Port of Antwerp

https://www.portofantwerpbruges.com/

The port of Antwerp aims at:

- facilitating the efficient, sustainable, and safe trade and transport of goods, thanks to its state-of-the-art infrastructure with modern and technologically advanced facilities for cargo handling, making it an efficient and competitive port at a global level. It also has an extensive network of land, rail, sea, and river connections that link it to the rest of Europe and the world, facilitating the rapid and efficient transport of goods.

- contributing to the economic development of the region and the country. They act as a strategic partner for their customers and stakeholders, offering innovative and tailored solutions to their needs in the areas of intelligent logistics, health, talent, and technology.

Port of Antwerp – Valuable communication strengths

- Homepage (most visited, inspirational + some news)

- Specific news section on their website. Clear design to navigate through the webpage.

- Social media: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn & YouTube.

- Information accessible in **3 main world languages**: English, Spanish and French. The sustainability responsibility of the Port of Antwerp is based on promoting economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable development, with the aim of ensuring the long-term viability of the port and contributing to the well-being of the local community and the care of the environment.

Port of Antwerp – Valuable communication strengths

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- The sustainability responsibility of the Port of Antwerp is based on promoting economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development to ensure the long-term viability of the port, while contributing to the well-being of the local community.

Areas for improvement:

- There is no readily available information about the security protocols.

- More interactive visual elements. They ought to be more captivating or dynamic to fully engage stakeholders and highlight their progress.

Port of Marseille

The port of Marseille aims at:

- Participating in local, national, and international events to showcase its capabilities, attract new business, and strengthen its presence

- Sponsoring sporting, cultural, and social events, such as regattas, art exhibitions, and festivals to show their commitment to supporting the community and building relationships with local stakeholders

- Collaborating with other public and private entities to enhance port infrastructure and develop corporate social responsibility initiatives. This collaborative approach promotes efficient resource utilization and shared expertise.

Port of Marseille

The port of Marseille aims at:

- organising educational and awareness-raising activities to inform the public about the significance of maritime transport, environmental sustainability, and the port economy.

- encouraging active participation from the community in decision-making processes related to port development and maritime infrastructure management. This promotes **transparency, accountability, and shared ownership of the port's future**.

Port of Marseille – Valuable communication strengths

- Homepage with a section dedicated to digitalisation: https://www.marseille-port.fr/en/filieres/digital

- Specific news section on their website.

- Easy to understand icons

- Social media: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn & YouTube.

- Information accessible in **4 main world languages**: English, Spanish and Chinese.

- Their own training centre:

https://www.marseille-port.fr/index.php/en/node/261

Port of Marseille – Valuable communication strengths

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- Their own training centre:

https://www.marseille-port.fr/index.php/en/node/261

Port of Marseille – Valuable communication strengths

■ *Bi-yearly strategic project 2020-2024 accessible. It highlights the uniqueness of the port of Marseille: "A green port serving the blue economy". They pursue environmental excellence (natural spaces, air and water quality) competitiveness, and economic attractiveness.*

Areas for improvement:

- Videos and interactive visual elements. They ought to be more captivating or dynamic to fully engage stakeholders and highlight their energy transformation achievements.

- Weekly news updates and landmarks highlights.

References

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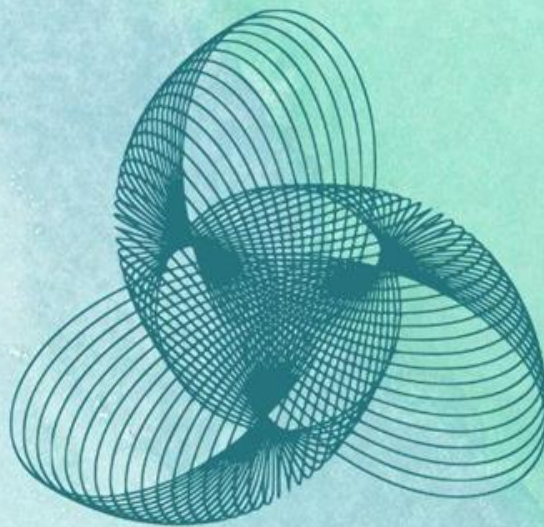
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- All figures were created ad-hoc for this module.

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FOR YOUR ATTENTION