



Bridging gap between **public** & **EU Mission** ‘Restore Ocean and Waters’:

*case-studies
from
Flanders*

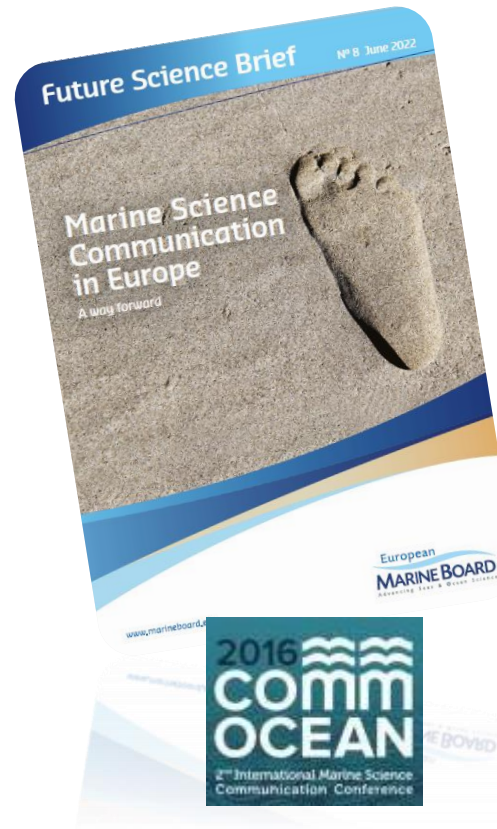
Jan SEYS
Spokesperson/
head scicomm
VLIZ

Ocean Literacy

Marine Science
Communication

VLIZ background

Horizon Europe



Baltic & North Sea
Lighthouse

CARBON-NEUTRAL &
CIRCULAR ECONOMY

discover



PREP4BLUE
METHODS AND TOOLS FOR MISSION OCEAN & WATERS

Public Engagement:

- What?
- Why?
- How?

Case-studies:

- (1) 'Plastic Pirates go Europe': youngsters & river pollution
- (2) 'Zeekerweten': festival public engagement @coast/sea
- (3) 'SeaWatch-B'/'Big Annual Seashell Survey':

citizen science & biodiversity on the beach

Take home messages



Public Engagement

- = Citizen participation
- = Citizen engagement
- = Citizen involvement
- = Community engagement
- = Civic engagement

*when individuals
from diverse
backgrounds/expertise
engage with
knowledge-production
and/or decision making
in a collective endeavour*



Why PE?

*“Europe can not thrive without ensuring the best possible **match** between the immense potential achievements science has to offer and the needs, values and aspirations of citizens”.*

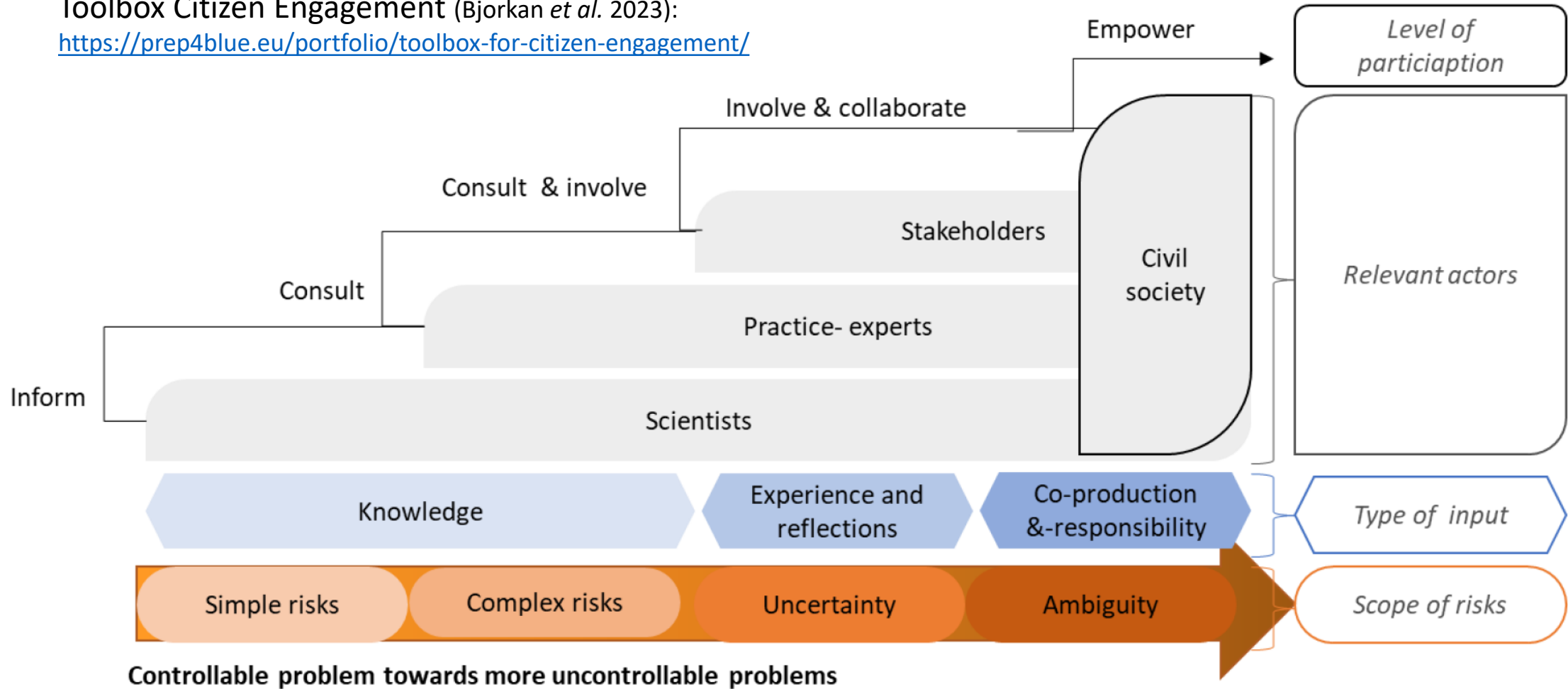
*“**Citizen science** can make science more socially relevant, accelerate and enable production of new scientific knowledge, increase public awareness about science and ownership of policy making, as well as increase the prevalence of evidence-based policy-making.”*



The process (I) Level of participation

Toolbox Citizen Engagement (Bjorkan *et al.* 2023):

<https://prep4blue.eu/portfolio/toolbox-for-citizen-engagement/>



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PREPARATION

- Mapping participants
(“Who to include”)
- ‘Engagement fatigue’ (!)
 - Building relationship/trust

IMPLEMENTATION

- Method/strategy
(cf. level of participation)
- Toolboxes online:
 - ACTION CATALOGUE
(<http://actioncatalogue.eu/search>)
 - GAP2 Toolbox
(<http://gap2.eu/methodological-toolbox>)

ASSESSMENT

- Purpose? Be explicit!
- Focus on outcome or on process?
- In different stages
(start, during, end)

'Plastic Pirates – GO Europe'

CASE- STUDY 1



- Citizen science
- **Litter** (rivers/coast)
- Schools/scientists
 - °2016: DLR
 - <https://www.plastic-pirates.eu/>

'Plastic Pirates – GO Europe'

CASE-STUDY 1

2016



2021

2023



'Plastic Pirates – GO Europe'

LESSONS LEARNT

Learning by **doing** *(every river is different)*

Clear **message**/convincing storyline

Output for science & policy? Make sure to pay enough attention to **quality control** of the data

Consolidation/Europeanisation & **long-term engagement**



‘Zeekerweten’

- PE/CS campaign
(~ BlueMissionBANOS)
- **Healthy Ocean**
- Public/science/BIEc (1200 p)
- 2022: VLIZ/Scivil/NP *et al*
- <https://www.zeekerweten.be/en>
- 2024: Belgian presidency EU

**ZEKER
WETEN**
BURGERWETENSCHAP AAN DE KUST

22, 1000
8 mei '22



1st MISSION ARENA

14-16 November 2023

Gothenburg - SE



**BLUE
MISSION
BANOS**

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

REGIONAL FOCUS ARENA 1
NORWAY | South
SWEDEN | West-South
DENMARK | East
GERMANY | Schleswig-Holstein

‘Zeekerweten’

LESSONS LEARNT

‘Co-creation’ is fancy (*but many formats top-down*)

Be **open-minded**, get **inspired** by others

Test, test, test & **evaluate**!

Strong **bias** biodiversity/species in CS (future?)

Campaigning ! (where can citizens contribute?)

Need more **scientists who communicate**
(*Science Barometer*)



'Big Seashell Survey'

['SeaWatch-B']

CASE-STUDY 3

- CS program (LifeWatch)
- Shells/**biodiversity**
(285,000 !)
- Public/government/
science (>5000 participants)
 - 2018-... (6 editions)
- <https://groteschelpenteldag.be>



'Big Seashell Survey'



CASE-STUDY 3

Leiden European City of Science 2022



Netherlands (2022)



N-France (2023)

LESSONS LEARNT

Start **small**/test/be **flexible** & prepared

Look for **opportunities** & **coordination**! (cf. NL)

Topic hits the hearts of **people**/output for **science**

Strong **partnership** needed (different roles)

Communication role of **local government**
(vs. few CS-projects coordinated by them)





SHRIMP PEELING in RESTHOMES



Creativity!

‘PLASTIC MERTRAND’



‘MIRROR BUNKER’ (ART/VISUALISATION)



vrt nws

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP
GULL SCREECHING

Take home messages

- Think **big**, start **small** (if needed) & learn by **doing/testing/evaluating**.
- Consider your **current situation** and goals carefully before you start (*controllable situation?*). Have a convincing **message/story**.
- Build a strong and diverse **partnership**, with the right areas of **expertise** (science, communication, organization,...)
- Be **open-minded & flexible**. Look for **win-win** situations, make work-with-work.
- Watch out for boredom and too much habit creeping in. Keep **innovating**.
- Don't shy away from **out-of-the-box** and creative approaches.
- Demonstrate what citizens can do ('**campaigning**'). Stimulate **scientific outreach**.

**Thanks for your
attention!**

