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ENERGY TRANSITION

H2Deri@BSP

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D1.4 - H2-Derivative Port Residential Communication Strategy

Work Package 1, Activity 1.4

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1. Summary

This report presents the communication strategy developed within the H2Derivatives@Baltic Sea Ports project. The strategy was created in cooperation with a media partner and is based on a structured, participatory process including survey, qualitative analysis of responses, and a multi-stakeholder workshop. The developed document outlines the strategic principles, practical tools, and key messages designed to support acceptance and understanding of hydrogen derivatives–related projects in port environments, with a strong focus on safety, transparency, and local benefits.

2. Abbreviations

H2 - hydrogen

PtX – Power-to-X

EU – European Union

NGO – non-governmental organisation

NIMBY – not in my back yard

BANANA – build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone

3. Introduction

Ports play a critical role in the transition towards climate-neutral energy systems, including the production, handling, and transport of hydrogen derivatives such as methanol, ammonia, and synthetic fuels (European Commission, 2023). While these technologies offer significant environmental and economic benefits, they also raise concerns among local communities, authorities, and other stakeholders. Effective, transparent, and inclusive communication is therefore essential.

The objective of this deliverable is to document the communication strategy developed within the H2Derivatives@Baltic Sea Ports project, including both the strategic framework and the process through which it was created. The deliverable is intended as a practical reference for ports, authorities, and project developers facing similar challenges.

4. Methodology

The communication strategy was developed using a combination of methods, including a survey, structured analysis of the collected responses, workshop, and expert engagement. These methods were deliberately combined to ensure both breadth and depth of insight. The survey provided a structured overview of perceptions, challenges, and expectations across partners and associated organisations. The workshop enabled collective validation of findings and co-creation of key narratives and message pillars, ensuring ownership among partners. Expert engagement ensured that the strategy aligns with established communication principles and practical experience from comparable industrial and EU-

funded projects. Together, this mixed-method approach strengthened the credibility, inclusiveness, and practical applicability of the final communication strategy.

4.1 Survey

A structured questionnaire was distributed to project partners and associated organisations. The survey (see Annex 10.1) aimed to identify:

- H2Derivative project types, nature and statuses at Baltic Sea Region
- How many projects have communication strategy in place
- Which are the main communication target groups, communication channels

4.2 Analysis

The results of the study were based on responses from 18 ports and organizations across six countries — Estonia, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Lithuania, and Finland. Currently, 78% or 14 ports surveyed either have ongoing or planned hydrogen derivative projects. These projects focus on methanol, hydrogen, and ammonia, and cover different areas such as bunkering, storage, production, and end-use. When it comes to communication strategies, the picture is mixed. Six partners already have a defined strategy, but eight do not. The main target groups identified include local communities and authorities, national decision-makers, local politicians, and potential clients. This shows that stakeholders range from grassroots communities to high-level policy makers." Those partner, who have already communication strategy also mentioned most local communities.

The results of the study was presented during the workshop in September and used for preparing the workshop materials.

4.3 Workshop

Communication Workshop – Basis for the H2Deri@BSP Communication Strategy
Date: 17 September 2025
Time: 09:00–13:00
Location: Cruise Terminal, Old City Harbour, Logi 4/2, Tallinn, Estonia

The communication workshop held on 17 September 2025 in Tallinn formed the conceptual and methodological foundation for the development of the H2Deri@BSP Communication Strategy Framework (see Annex 10.2). The workshop brought together project partners and communication experts to strengthen the strategic communication capacity of Baltic Sea Region ports involved in hydrogen derivative initiatives. Given the technical complexity, safety sensitivity and political visibility of H_2, methanol and ammonia infrastructure projects, the event aimed to establish a shared understanding of communication challenges and to co-create structured responses applicable across partner ports.

The primary aim of the workshop was to support partners in translating technical project development into a coherent and measurable communication approach. The session sought to improve understanding of public concerns, identify common communication risks, and define strategic principles that could guide permitting processes and stakeholder engagement. The workshop also aimed to facilitate knowledge exchange between ports that have already gained practical experience in communicating hydrogen and ammonia-related projects and those preparing for implementation.

The workshop was opened by Hele-Mai Metsal and Hartmut Beyer, who emphasised the strategic relevance of communication as an enabling factor for hydrogen derivative projects in the Baltic Sea Region. Their opening remarks highlighted that technical feasibility alone does not ensure project success and that public acceptance, political alignment and transparent governance are equally critical.

The first substantive session presented the results of the H2Derivate initiatives' questionnaire, delivered by Sirle Arro. The questionnaire findings provided insight into current communication practices among partner ports and identified gaps in structured stakeholder engagement. The results demonstrated that safety perception, environmental impact and transparency were the most common areas of concern across regions.

Two practical case studies followed. Erik Laidvee presented communication experiences from the DerivaatNH3 project, focusing on challenges related to ammonia-related public perception and stakeholder dialogue. The presentation highlighted the importance of proactive communication, early engagement and transparent explanation of safety systems. Maria Anglada from the Port of Esbjerg shared insights from communicating energy transition projects in a politically visible environment. Her presentation illustrated how structured stakeholder briefings, narrative clarity and coordinated messaging contribute to maintaining institutional credibility.

A methodological input session was delivered by journalist and communication strategist Elo Ellermaa, who outlined key principles for building an effective communication strategy. The session emphasised the importance of understanding target groups, including identifying potential opposition arguments and addressing community concerns with clarity and transparency. Particular focus was placed on the development of a coherent narrative that connects technical facts with broader societal benefits. The session also examined the selection of communication channels and tone of voice, underlining that complex hydrogen-related topics must be communicated in simple, accessible language while maintaining factual accuracy.

The workshop included a practical group work component in which participants were divided according to target groups. During these sessions, participants defined key messages and identified appropriate communication channels for reaching specific stakeholder groups. The discussions also addressed anticipated objections and possible response strategies. The results of the group work were presented in plenary and discussed collectively. A strong consensus emerged that safety concerns represent the primary driver of public debate, that early engagement reduces escalation risks, and that communication must be structured, proactive and strategically aligned with project milestones.

The workshop directly contributed to the development of the H2Deri@BSP Communication Strategy Framework.

4.4 Expert input

The process was supported by communication professionals with experience in industrial projects, public engagement, and EU-funded initiatives, ensuring both strategic depth and practical relevance.

The communication strategist Elo Ellermaa was involved in working out the communication strategy and moderating and conducting the workshop. She has a long experience in the media. Her versatile work as a journalist and presenter in the news department of the Estonian Broadcasting Corporation has given her the knowledge and skills to orientate herself in the different opportunities and needs of the media landscape. Elo worked in the communications team of the state-owned company Elering, where she gained a strong knowledge of the energy sector and its various facets, as well as the needs and

specificities of communication activities of critical service providers. She also worked in Meta Advisory – Estonias largest PR and government relations agency. As a senior consultant, she operated at the intersection of reputation, strategy and influence, advising leaders and organizations on how to align communication, business goals and long-term credibility. She had clients from different fields (banking, public transport, energy, logistics to name a few). Currently she is the communication partner of the Ignitis Group. The group's core activities include power and heat production and supply, power and natural gas trading and distribution, and power system maintenance and development. The development of green energy is a priority for Ignitis Group with an aim to become the region's main competence center for new energy and a leader in distributed energy solutions in the Baltic Sea region and beyond.

5. Best practices

The best practise cases were introduced during the workshop about Estonian and Danish projects (as described in Section 4.3).

Practical communication experience: DerivaatNH3 project, Erik Laidvee.

Practical communication experience: Port of Esbjerg, Maria Anglada.

As part of identifying and validating best practices, an online meeting was organised with representatives of the Port of Hamburg on 24 November 2025. The objective of this meeting was to gain first-hand insights into how one of Europe's leading ports has built and maintained public trust, civic pride, and long-term acceptance of its activities. The discussion focused not only on communication tools, but also on the deeper cultural, historical, and socio-economic factors that shape the relationship between a port and its surrounding community. Particular attention was paid to how strategic narratives are formed, how difficult perceptions are managed over time, and how sustainability and innovation are translated into relatable public messages.

The meeting explored the following guiding questions:

- What aspects of the Port of Hamburg contribute most to citizens' sense of pride? Which initiatives have had the biggest positive impact on public trust and pride?
- Is this pride rooted more in history, economic importance, cultural identity, or something else?
- Do citizens generally understand the port's strategic importance, or is pride more emotional and symbolic?
- How do you involve citizens in port development discussions or decision-making?
- Which communication channels or formats most effectively reach Hamburg residents? Do you adapt messages for different demographic groups (youth, families, business owners, etc.)? How is storytelling used to connect the port's activities with everyday life in Hamburg?
- Have community concerns ever influenced port strategy—and how? Has the port faced negative perceptions in the past, and how were those views changed.
- How aware are citizens of the port's contribution to employment and the local economy?
- What sustainability initiatives resonate most strongly with the public?
- What would you have done earlier or differently in your public relations journey?

6. Actual output of the deliverable – H2 Derivative Port Residential Communication Strategy

The communication strategy was developed following the workshop, where key findings, message pillars, and strategic directions were validated and refined collaboratively. After drafting the full communication strategy, it was circulated among project partners for feedback to ensure alignment, relevance, and practical applicability across different port contexts. The strategy was subsequently revised and further improved based on the partners' comments and recommendations. The final Communication Strategy is provided as a separate document as Annex 10.3.

7. Learnings

Ports across the Baltic Sea are clearly moving forward with hydrogen derivative opportunities, focusing on methanol, hydrogen, and ammonia (IEA, 2023). The success of these initiatives will depend on four factors: funding, policy support, technical know-how, and community engagement. Social acceptance of renewable energy infrastructure is influenced by trust, perceived fairness, and local participation (Devine-Wright, 2011). Strong and strategic communication, paired with collaboration among governments, industry, and EU institutions, will be the cornerstone of overcoming challenges and unlocking the region's full potential. For the successful execution of these projects, it is important to start and maintain an open dialogue — both with stakeholders and within the wider community.

The process has strengthened partner capacity in strategic communication planning, fostered cross-border knowledge exchange and created a harmonised understanding of communication standards across Baltic Sea Region ports.

8. Conclusions

The development of the communication strategy within the H2Derivatives@Baltic Sea Ports project demonstrates that strategic, structured, and participatory communication planning is essential when addressing hydrogen derivatives and other emerging energy technologies in port environments.

The process confirmed that communication challenges are rarely rooted in outright opposition, but rather in limited understanding, safety concerns, fragmented information flows, and uncertainty about local benefits. By combining surveys, workshops, and expert engagement, the project ensured that the strategy is grounded in real stakeholder perceptions rather than assumptions.

The experience also highlighted several key conclusions:

- Early listening significantly improves the relevance and credibility of communication efforts.
- A clear and consistent core narrative is necessary to avoid fragmented or contradictory messaging.
- Safety, local economic benefits, and environmental transparency are the three most critical pillars for building public trust (OECD, 2020).
- Visual tools and in-person engagement remain highly effective when explaining complex technologies such as hydrogen derivatives.

- Trust increases when information is shared equally, transparently, and supported by independent expertise.

The strategy therefore provides not only a communication framework, but also a transferable model for other ports dealing with sensitive industrial developments.

9. References

European Commission. (2023). Hydrogen strategy for a climate-neutral Europe. European Commission.

IEA (International Energy Agency). (2023). Global Hydrogen Review 2023. IEA Publications.

OECD. (2020). Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave. OECD Publishing.

Devine-Wright, P. (2011). Renewable Energy and the Public: From NIMBY to Participation. Earthscan.

Port of Hamburg. (2025). Online best practice exchange meeting, 24 November 2025.

10. Annexes - Supporting materials

10.1 Survey/Questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed via Forms.

Conditional branching logic was applied.

Depending on the answer to Question 5, respondents were directed to different sets of follow-up questions.

As part of the EU project **H2Deri@BSP**, we are collecting information from project partners and stakeholders to better understand the current status, challenges, and communication practices related to hydrogen derivative (H2Derivate) initiatives in European ports and surrounding areas.

This data is used to gather an overview of best practices of H2 Derivatives and will be used for the purpose of developing communication strategy for the H2Deri@BSP project.

Thank you for your valuable contribution!

Section I – General information

1.Organization

2.Country

3. Name of the person answering the questionnaire

4.E-mail

5.Does your port or surrounding areas have ongoing or planned H2Derivate projects?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Section II-A – Respondents with existing or planned H2Derivate projects

(Displayed only if the answer to Question 5 was "Yes")

6.What type(s) of H2Derivate does the project involve? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Hydrogen
- ☐ Ammonia
- ☐ Methanol
- ☐ Other

7.If other, please specify

8. What is the timeline of the project? (Select one)

- ☐ Planned
- ☐ Ongoing/In the progress
- ☐ Operational

9. What is the nature of the project? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Production
- ☐ Storage
- ☐ Bunkering
- ☐ Usage (end-user)
- ☐ Other

10.Optional: Please briefly describe the project (Include project name, timeline, expected volumes, etc.)

11.Do you have a communication strategy or principles connected to the project?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

12.Who are/should be the main target groups for the communication efforts for H2Derivates project? (Select up to 3)

- ☐ EU politicians
- ☐ National politicians
- ☐ Local politicians
- ☐ National authorities
- ☐ Local authorities

- ☐ Local communities
- ☐ Neighbours
- ☐ Environmental organisations
- ☐ Port community companies
- ☐ Potential clients/users
- ☐ Other stakeholders

13. What are/would be the main communication challenges related to the H2Derivate project? (Select up to 3)

- ☐ Low awareness
- ☐ Public opposition (NIMBY attitude)
- ☐ Environmental protection concerns
- ☐ Lack of regulations
- ☐ Permit process difficulties
- ☐ Technological complexity
- ☐ Lack of knowledge and resources
- ☐ Other

14.If other, please specify or comment

15.What are/could be your most effective communication channels? (Select up to 3)

- ☐ Traditional media (TV, radio, newspaper)
- ☐ Online news platforms
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Local community meetings or local newsletters
- ☐ Educational campaigns or workshops
- ☐ Project or port-specific channels
- ☐ Other

16.If other, please specify

17.What kind of support or information would help you with an H2Derivate project?

- ☐ Funding opportunities
- ☐ Technical expertise or consultation
- ☐ Policy guidance and regulatory clarity
- ☐ Success stories/main challenges from other regions
- ☐ Public engagement or communication strategies
- ☐ Other

18.If other, please specify

Section II-B – Respondents without existing or planned H2Derivate projects

(Displayed only if the answer to Question 5 was "No")

6. Is your port or region interested in exploring H2Derivate projects in the future?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

7.What are the main barriers to starting H2Derivate projects in your area? (Select up to 3)

- ☐ Lack of funding
- ☐ Limited demand or market for H2Derivates
- ☐ Technological limitations
- ☐ Unclear or missing regulations
- ☐ Permit or approval challenges
- ☐ Lack of local expertise or workforce
- ☐ Public opposition or environmental concerns
- ☐ Competing priorities
- ☐ Other

8.If other, please specify or comment

9.Which actors or stakeholders would be key to enabling future H2Derivate projects in your region? (Select up to 3)

- ☐ National government
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ Industry partners
- ☐ Environmental agencies
- ☐ Research institutions
- ☐ Port authorities
- ☐ EU or international funding bodies
- ☐ Other

10.If other, please specify

11.What type(s) of H2Derivate project would be most feasible or desirable in your area? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Hydrogen (H_2)
- ☐ Ammonia
- ☐ Methanol
- ☐ Not sure

12.If other, please specify

13.What communication channels would be most effective for promoting awareness and support for potential H2Derivate projects? (Select up to 3)

- ☐ Traditional media (TV, radio, newspapers)
- ☐ Online news platforms
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Local community meetings or local newsletters

- ☐ Educational campaigns or workshops
- ☐ Industry or port-specific channels
- ☐ Other

14.What kind of support or information would help you consider launching an H2Derivate project?

- ☐ Funding opportunities
- ☐ Technical expertise or consultation
- ☐ Policy guidance and regulatory clarity
- ☐ Success stories/ main challenges from other regions
- ☐ Public engagement or communication strategies
- ☐ Other

15.If other, please specify

10.2 Workshop agenda

08:40-09:00 Arrival of participants

09:00 Workshop opening by Hele-Mai Metsal and Hartmut Beyer

09:10 Results of the H2Derivate initiatives' questionnaire, Sirle Arro

09:25 Practical communication experience: DerivaatNH3 project, Erik Laidvee

09:40 Practical communication experience: Port of Esbjerg, Maria Anglada

10:00 How to build a communication strategy, Elo Ellermaa (journalist, communication strategist)

- The importance of understanding the target groups and possible opponent argument. How to address the communities and how important it is to keep the communication simple and transparent.
- The importance of having a narrative. What is a good story, what does it include.
- The importance of the channels and the tone of voice. What are the different channels where we can address our target groups.

10:45 Coffee Break

Practical part

11:15-12:00 Group discussions by target groups:

- Key messages for certain target group
- Key channels for reaching certain target group

12:00-13:00 Presenting the results from the group work and discussion.

10.3 H2 Derivative Port Residential Communication Strategy

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D1.4 - Annex 10.3 - H2-Derivative Port Residential Communication Strategy

Work Package 1, Activity 1.4

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One-pager & FAQ

Key Strategic Considerations

Make sure you know who you're speaking to and where.

- Before developing key messages, you need to identify your target groups: who are the key players, who is an average member within the group (create a so-called persona).
- Grassroots communication: before launching communication or PR-activities you should meet with the people closest to the issue (locals).
- Members of authorities & governing bodies are also members of the community.
- Different target groups might be reached through different channels; from in-person meetings to social media to classical media etc.

Make sure your key messages fit the target group.

- Strategic communication starts from the ABCs; you cannot communicate your topic (e.g. ammonia) if the audience doesn't know what it is.
- Listen to people's concerns, assure them and address the issues. Explain how you are going to solve their problems (e.g. new jobs, benefits from new technology, boosting economy etc).
- Although the tone of voice and language may be different while addressing different target groups, the main narrative must remain the same.

Use the power of community.

- Everyone wants to feel a sense of belonging; good communication gives people this feeling by including them within the knowledge loop.
- Boosting local pride by creating a common identity will help people get behind your projects not against it: "Our area is responsible for energy security or innovative solutions."
- Don't underestimate the power of in-person meetings.
- Consider delivering the message through a "trusted voice" in the community to gain trust.

Choose your opponents.

- There are people opposing your project just to oppose something and you can't win these people over by factual reasoning.

- But there are always undecided or opposed people because they are afraid of new things. These fears can be addressed, and these people can be persuaded.
- Take the NIMBY (not in my backyard) and BANANA (build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone) mentalities into account, there will always be people like that.

Key messages must be easy to understand and clear.

- Repetition is key.
- Use landing pages as a starting point: explain what is it that we do, why do we do it, how do we do it etc.
- Use visuals, especially when explaining complex concepts.

Facts over emotion.

- Emphasize honesty and focus on facts only.
- Showcase your main strengths: competences, expertise, knowledge.
- Consider using neutral spokespersons and/or experts to give your statements more credibility.

FAQ

Internal:

- What are people afraid of and why?
- How can we minimize their fears?
- What are the main biases within target groups?
- What are the tools we can use (one pagers, landing pages, 1:1 meetings, social media, earned media, workshops, public discussions, etc)?
- Is there a risk of my key messages to get a political spin by a specific group or party?
- What are the known success stories/best practices like my project?
- What do the members of a specific target group want to achieve?
- What makes the decision-makers reluctant?
- What are the main resources where your target group gathers information from and how do they consume information?

External:

- What are the main safety concerns with your project?
- How will it benefit me/my community/political or economic interests/municipality/ country etc?
- Why did you choose this specific location?
- Why is your project better than the well-used and known practices?
- Why should I care about H2 derivates?
- What are the potential health concerns?

Possible Challenges and Solutions

The following scenario is a simplified, fictional example to illustrate how strategic communication principles can be applied to a sensitive industrial project. It outlines common challenges and provides a step-by-step framework for addressing them through research, listening, clear messaging, and engagement.

Fictional Case: Methanol Bunkering in a Major City

Local residents are concerned about the safety of the project. Many believe it carries a high risk of accidents or environmental harm, especially since hazardous materials are transported on roads used by local communities. In addition, local NGOs and activists have voiced strong opposition to new industrial infrastructure in general.

Local authorities have a track record of excessive bureaucracy. There is no national long-term energy strategy, and gaps in state-level expertise contribute to reluctance and slow decision-making. Politicians are cautious about associating themselves with projects that could fail or attract public criticism.

There is a communication gap: public discussion is fragmented; people rely on rumours rather than facts, and official information is too technical to build trust.

Practical Guide for Strategy Creation

Start by listening before speaking. Before any communication or PR activity, take time to understand who you are speaking to and what matters to them. Run a respectful “listening tour”: arrange short meetings with municipal officials and regulators, one-to-ones with community anchors, and use social media to observe what locals are already saying. The goal is not to pitch the project: it’s to learn.

We’re mapping fears, information gaps, and trusted voices. For this, identify:

1. a clear list of **top concerns** (safety on roads and nearby housing areas, emergency response, environmental impact);
2. a map of **influential voices and community leaders** who people trust;
3. a baseline of **key misunderstandings** that need fixing (ABC-level explanations, grassroots communication).

Next, identify and segment your target groups. Determine how many different audiences there are, who they consist of, and who is a typical member within each. This will later help you tailor the tone, message, and channels to their specific needs.

Once the listening and mapping phase is complete, summarise what you've learned into a simple internal framework before moving into external communication.

At this stage:

- define your **core narrative** (what do we want people to understand and believe?);
- identify **priority audiences** based on influence and interest;
- decide **the goal for each group** (to inform, reassure, involve or activate);
- choose **the right tone and channels** for each audience.

With that groundwork, we set one simple narrative that never changes across audiences:

"Our city is investing in a clean, safe, modern industrial base. Methanol bunkering brings quality jobs and supplier opportunities, upgrades local infrastructure, and contributes to public services through taxes and community funding. We commit to strict environmental performance and open, verifiable reporting so benefits are shared locally."

From this narrative, we craft three key message pillars, from which we can later develop key messages to corresponding target groups.

1. **Safety by design & independent checks** – we know exactly what the tech is, how hazards are prevented, how emergency drills work, what are the transport rules (e.g., no school-hour transits).
2. **Local benefits & fairness** – good jobs, supplier programmes for local SMEs, a transparent community fund, and a clear grievance channel.
3. **Environment & monitoring** – environmental measures, live dashboards, third-party audits, biodiversity monitoring and reporting.

Choosing Channels and Activities

Once your core messages and pillars are clear, decide how and where to communicate them. Each channel should serve a specific purpose — not everything needs to be shared everywhere.

Before launching any communication, define the goal of each activity:

- **Inform** – share factual information through landing pages, fact sheets, or media briefings.
- **Reassure** – organise local meetings, expert Q&As, or video explainers showing safety and benefits.
- **Engage** – use social media, workshops, and polls to involve the community and collect feedback.

Start simple and scale as needed. Communication activities can range from basic, ongoing actions to larger, more resource-intensive ones.

Examples of activities:

- Create **a single landing page** as the home base explaining: *What / Why / How / Where / When / Who to call*. It can include graphics, videos and animations.
- Prepare **a press kit** including: a press release, 1-page fact sheet, Q&A, photos to send to journalists for background information.
- Aim for **traditional media**: op-eds in local papers, radio interviews, and feature stories that explain the project in human terms. Use trusted local or technical voices as spokespeople.
- Use **the power of social media** to stay present and transparent. Post updates in local groups or create a group and make sure to add relevant up—to-date information. Be committed: reply to all comments within 48 hours.

Each activity should point back to your **central message** and reinforce the same narrative. Consistency builds credibility; repetition is key.

When choosing channels, consider your target groups' media habits: where they get their news, who they trust, and how they prefer to engage (online vs. in-person).
It's better to reach fewer people meaningfully than everyone superficially.

For political and bureaucratic hesitancy, the key is **transparency and shared ownership**. This means providing the same factual materials to all parties at the same time to avoid speculation or blame. Offer short, practical capacity-building sessions for officials to understand the technology and its safeguards — this builds confidence without political risk.

Once the framework and audiences are clear, develop key messages **that translate the strategy into everyday language**. We keep our messages clear and simple. Each message should link back to one of the main pillars and be adaptable to different audiences and formats. Our **spokespeople must be media-trained and well-aware** of all the details in our project.

Examples of Key Messages

Create key messages based on the three key pillars defined earlier. Each message should reflect the same core narrative, while being adjusted to the specific target group and their needs.

Here are two examples:

"Local Benefits and Fairness", main audience: **Local Authorities**

- **Facts for everyone, at the same time.** All materials (routes, safety rules, emergency procedures) are shared openly with residents, media, and officials. No back-room briefings, no selective information. Transparency builds trust.
- **Safety comes first.** Safety rules are engineered and independently verified. We follow international standards, carry out third-party reviews, and conduct joint emergency drills with local rescue services. Transport routes avoid sensitive times (e.g., no school-hour transits).
- **We bring the know-how in and leave it here.** International experts establish methods and procedures, but local specialists are trained and equipped to operate, audit, and continuously improve the system long-term.
- **Local jobs first: careers, not shifts.** We prioritise local hiring and create paid apprenticeships with vocational schools and universities to build lasting, skilled careers in the region.

“Safety by Design & Independent Checks”, main audience**: General Public**

- **Safety is engineered, not assumed.** We use proven, certified technology with multiple safety barriers — the same systems already in use in other major European ports.
- **Prepared for every scenario.** Emergency response is trained and tested jointly with local authorities and first responders. People will know what to do and who is responsible in the unlikely event of an incident.
- **Visible, not hidden.** We will show how the safety systems work; through open days, animations, and easy-to-read infographics.

Case Study: Port of Esbjerg

Context and main goal

Port of Esbjerg plays a central role in Denmark’s green energy transition — serving as a hub for offshore wind logistics and Power-to-X (PtX) projects that produce and distribute green hydrogen and ammonia. The port is involved in several EU- and Interreg-funded cooperation projects that aim to develop hydrogen value chains and safe handling standards across Europe.

The main communication goal has been to **inform the general public** about the port’s work in supporting hydrogen and ammonia projects, including awareness and acceptance of new energy technologies. At the same time, the port communicates relevant **results and progress to industry stakeholders**, ensuring that companies and partners are aware of ongoing developments and Esbjerg’s active role within the European green energy ecosystem.

Key Audiences

The port’s communication targets two primary audiences:

1. **Local community** — to raise awareness, build trust, and show how green energy projects contribute to the local economy and everyday life.
2. **Industry and project partners** — to confirm the port’s support for companies developing hydrogen and ammonia projects and to strengthen Esbjerg’s position as a key player in Europe’s green energy ecosystem.

Challenges

1. **EU and Interreg communication barriers:**

Communicating EU and Interreg projects can be challenging, as many people and even local businesses are not familiar with these programmes. To address this, Esbjerg deliberately avoids starting messages with institutional names. Instead, they begin with relatable, outcome-oriented messages about what each project achieves locally — such as new jobs, innovation, and sustainability benefits.

The port calls this the “Christmas tree model”: start with an attractive “shiny top” message to capture attention, then unwrap the details in simple, accessible language.

2. **Public understanding and misperceptions**

Lack of understanding among the public is a recurring issue. Many associate hydrogen and ammonia with risk because of industrial proximity. The port tackles this by providing eye-level explanations and comparisons to familiar fuels, demonstrating that new energy carriers are safe, regulated, and well-managed.

3. **Awareness of the port's role**

There is still a general lack of awareness that the port acts as a facilitator and ecosystem partner rather than only a logistics hub. Esbjerg's communication therefore emphasizes its bridging role: connecting companies, academia, and institutions to advance the green transition.

Communication Tools and Activities

- **Digital brochures and videos** published on the port's website to explain projects and technologies in a simple, visual format.
- **Active participation in local events, conferences, and expert panels** to increase visibility and answer questions face-to-face.
- **Regular guided tours and company presentations** for delegations and interest groups, allowing for direct, transparent dialogue.
- **Focused use of social media** (primarily **LinkedIn and Facebook**) ensuring consistent and meaningful engagement rather than dispersing efforts across too many channels.

Results and Milestones

- **Stronger presence in relevant networks:** The port is now more visible and active within national and international energy communities.
- **Innovation Hub established:** Created to help companies engage with one another and participate in more collaborative, funded projects.
- **Community trust strengthened:** The local community increasingly sees the port as a **facilitator of the green transition**, not just an industrial site.
- **Closer academic collaboration:** Universities and research institutions now approach the port proactively for joint innovation and funding opportunities.

Lessons Learned

- **Have a clear communication strategy.** Define objectives early and map local stakeholders before launching any activities.
- **Tailor your content.** Adjust tone and message depending on the target group: local residents, authorities, or industry partners.
- **Use visuals and maintain an active presence.** Visual storytelling and social media work well if managed consistently.
- **Be selective with channels.** Focus on one or two platforms (Facebook and LinkedIn) that can be maintained continuously, rather than many without a plan.

Key Takeaway

Port of Esbjerg shows that effective communication on hydrogen and ammonia projects is about **translation, not promotion**. By turning complex EU-funded projects into accessible local stories and maintaining regular, personal dialogue with both the public and industry, the port has successfully positioned itself as a **trusted facilitator** and a **key node in Europe's emerging hydrogen corridor.**

Implementation framework

This section transforms the strategic considerations of communication framework for implementing H_2 Derivatives projects.

1. Strategic Objective Definition

Define minimum ONE measurable overarching communication objective (acceptance or permitting support) and 2–3 supporting objectives (awareness, trust, political alignment)

Example measurable objectives:

- Increase local acceptance from baseline X% to Y% by [date].
- Secure administrative and political support for permitting by [date].
- Increase public awareness of H_2 Derivatives and project purpose from X% to Y% within 6–9 months.
- Achieve x % neutral-to-positive public sentiment prior to construction phase.

2. Stakeholder Mapping & Prioritisation

Each project must conduct stakeholder mapping before external communication launch.

	High Influence	Low Influence
High Interest	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
Low Interest	SECONDARY	TERTIARY

Primary audiences typically include: regulators, municipalities, emergency services, directly affected residents.

Secondary: NGOs, SMEs, media.

Tertiary: National public, academia.

Each primary group should have at least one defined persona profile.

Persona example: Concerned Resident Anna – Age 45, parent, concerned about safety. Consumes local Facebook groups and newspapers. Desired outcome: informed neutrality/support.

3. Communication Plan

Put together general communication plan and operational plan for communication activities.

Consider the aspects:

What are we trying to achieve?

Who are we speaking to?

What do they need to understand or feel?

How and when do we engage them?

Who is responsible?

How do we measure success?

What do we do if something goes wrong?

Phase	Key Activities	Target Groups
Pre-Permitting	Listening tour, baseline survey, stakeholder workshops	Primary
Permitting	Technical briefings, political roundtables, media engagement	Primary/Secondary
Construction	Community updates, grievance mechanism, monitoring dashboards	Residents
Operation	Transparency reporting, open days, environmental reporting	General Public

The example of the Operational Communication plan is in the Annex 1.

4. KPI & Measurement Framework

Define KPI-s according to your project and goals. Some examples:

Output Indicators: media reach, website visits, event participation, stakeholder meetings.

Outcome Indicators: sentiment shift, trust index, stakeholder readiness level, permit progress indicators.

Evaluation cycle: Quarterly monitoring + annual strategy adjustment.

5. Risk assessment & Crisis Communication Framework

Make yourself aware about the risks that might need the attention and communication activities.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation	Responsible Role
Safety incident	Low	High	Pre-approved statements, emergency drills	Project Director

NGO opposition campaign	Medium	Medium	Early engagement & transparency	Communication Lead
Political shift	Medium	High	Cross-party briefings	CEO / Port Authority

The media protocol for high-pressure moments is proposed in Annex 2: Crisis Communication Protocol – Visual Flowchart & 0–24h Timeline

6. Governance Structure

Minimum required roles for implementation:

• Communication Lead (strategy owner)

• External Spokesperson (media-trained)

• Community Liaison Officer

• Technical Expert (authorised to speak)

• Project Director (overall accountability)

The positions and responsibilities of the roles:

Communication Lead (Strategy Owner)

Core Function: The Communication Lead owns and manages the overall communication strategy and ensures its implementation across all phases of the project.

Key Responsibilities

- Develop and update the communication strategy and action plan
- Define core narrative, key messages and communication objectives
- Coordinate all communication activities and materials
- Ensure message consistency across departments and spokespersons
- Lead media relations (unless delegated to spokesperson)
- Activate crisis communication protocol when required
- Monitor KPIs and report on communication performance
- Ensure compliance with EU project visibility requirements

Decision Authority

- Final review of public communication materials
- Activation of media protocol in high-pressure moments
- Approval of spokesperson participation in media engagement

Required Competencies

- Strategic communication planning
- Crisis management capability
- Media relations experience
- Understanding of political and regulatory context

External Spokesperson (Media-Trained)

Core Function: The External Spokesperson serves as the official public voice of the project.

Key Responsibilities

- Represent the project in media interviews and public forums
- Deliver aligned key messages to external stakeholders
- Provide public updates during critical milestones or crises
- Maintain calm, factual and consistent communication tone
- Avoid speculation and political positioning

Scope of Mandate

- Speaks only within defined and approved messaging framework
- Does not disclose confidential or commercially sensitive information
- Escalates sensitive questions internally before responding

Required Competencies

- Formal media training
- Interview management skills
- High credibility and trustworthiness
- Ability to explain complex topics in simple language

Community Liaison Officer

Core Function: The Community Liaison Officer manages direct relationships with local stakeholders and ensures two-way communication.

Key Responsibilities

- Conduct listening tours and community meetings
- Maintain regular contact with residents, local NGOs and associations
- Organise public information sessions and open days

- Manage grievance mechanisms and feedback channels
- Identify emerging concerns early and report internally
- Support social licence to operate

Operational Role

- Acts as the “trusted bridge” between project and community
- Collects qualitative insights on public sentiment
- Contributes to risk identification and mitigation

Required Competencies

- Strong interpersonal communication skills
- Local stakeholder knowledge
- Conflict resolution ability
- Cultural and political sensitivity

Technical Expert (Authorised to Speak)

Core Function: The Technical Expert provides fact-based, specialised information related to safety, engineering, environmental performance or operational matters.

Key Responsibilities

- Explain technical aspects of H_2 derivatives infrastructure
- Clarify safety systems and risk mitigation measures
- Support preparation of Q&A documents and fact sheets
- Participate in expert briefings and technical workshops
- Assist during crisis communication when technical clarification is required

Communication Boundaries

- Speaks only within defined technical mandate
- Avoids commercial, political or strategic commentary
- Coordinates with Communication Lead before media engagement

Required Competencies

- Subject-matter expertise
- Ability to translate complex information into accessible language
- Confidence in public and stakeholder settings

Project Director (Overall Accountability)

Core Function: The Project Director holds ultimate accountability for alignment between communication, technical implementation and strategic objectives.

Key Responsibilities

- Ensure communication aligns with project milestones and permitting timeline
- Approve strategic messaging and major public announcements
- Represent the project in high-level political or regulatory meetings
- Participate in Level 2 and Level 3 crisis escalation
- Allocate sufficient resources (budget, personnel, tools) for communication

Accountability Scope

- Final decision-making authority in crisis situations
- Responsible for institutional credibility and reputational protection
- Ensures cross-departmental coordination

Required Competencies

- Strategic leadership
- Risk awareness
- Understanding of regulatory and political environment
- Executive-level communication skills

Recommended Governance Structure (Minimum Model for Partner Ports)

Role	Strategic	Operational	Public-Facing	Crisis Role
Communication Lead	✓	✓	✓	Activates protocol
External/Lead Spokesperson	–	–	✓	Primary voice
Community Liaison	–	✓	✓ (local)	Community updates
Technical Expert	–	✓	✓ (technical)	Technical clarification
Project Director	✓	✓	✓ (high-level)	Escalation lead

Principles for designating Spokespersons

Strategic industrial projects such as H_2 Derivatives infrastructure require clearly defined spokesperson roles. Poorly coordinated communication can significantly increase reputational, political, and permitting risks. The following five principles provide a governance framework for appointing and managing spokespersons.

1. Single Point of Accountability

Principle: There must be one clearly designated lead spokesperson per organisation.

This person carries overall communication accountability. All public messaging must be aligned through this role. In crisis situations, this spokesperson becomes the primary public voice. No parallel or competing messaging is allowed.

Role: Typically the Communication Lead, External spokesperson or Project Director (depending on national culture and project sensitivity).

Responsibility:

- Message consistency
- Media interviews
- Final approval of public statements
- Alignment with senior management

2. Topic-Based Authorisation (Speak Within Mandate)

Principle: Spokespersons may only speak within their defined area of expertise.

For example:

Technical Expert → safety systems, engineering standards

Project Director → investment rationale, timelines

Environmental Expert → monitoring and impact mitigation

Community Liaison → engagement activities

Rationale:

Credibility increases when experts speak on facts, but risk increases when individuals speculate outside their domain.

Responsibility:

- Stay within approved messaging
- Escalate sensitive questions
- Avoid political or speculative comments

3. Preparedness & Media Training

Principle: No spokesperson should engage with media without training and preparation.

Mandatory elements:

- Media training (including hostile interview simulation)
- Key message alignment sessions
- Q&A preparation (including difficult questions)
- Crisis simulation exercises

Rationale:

Industrial and energy-transition projects are politically sensitive. Technical expertise alone is not sufficient — communication competence is essential.

Responsibility:

- Maintain updated key message document
- Participate in annual training
- Follow approved communication guidelines

4. Unified Messaging & Internal Alignment

Principle: All spokespersons must communicate the same core narrative and message pillars.

Tone may differ by audience, but:

- The strategic narrative does not change
- Safety, transparency and local benefits remain central
- Data used must be verified and consistent

Operational Rule:

- All external materials pass through communication review

- No informal “off-the-record” briefings
- Social media statements are considered official communication

Responsibility:

- Attend alignment briefings before major announcements
- Use approved factsheets and data sources
- Inform communication team before public appearances

5. Crisis Hierarchy & Escalation Protocol

Principle: In high-pressure or crisis situations, communication authority becomes centralised.

A clear escalation structure must exist:

Level 1 – Minor issue

Handled by Communication Lead

Level 2 – Significant public/media attention

Handled by Lead Spokesperson + Project Director

Level 3 – Safety or reputational crisis

CEO / Port Authority leadership becomes public face

Pre-Approved Elements:

- Holding statements
- Emergency contact list
- Media response timeline (first statement within 60–90 minutes)
- Defined approval chain

Responsibility:

- Immediate internal reporting of incidents
- No unauthorised commentary
- Centralised media response
- Recommended Spokesperson Structure for H_2 Derivative Projects

7. Resource & Budget Guidance

Indicative annual communication budget range per port: €60,000–€250,000 depending on scale and project sensitivity, country, company's own resources etc.

Costs include: website & visual materials, events, monitoring tools, media training, external advisory support, human resources etc.

At Annex 3 is proposed H2 Derivatives Communication Budget Template.

8. Long-Term Communication Roadmap

Communication intensity and focus must evolve alongside technical development stages. Each milestone must be accompanied by a prepared communication package and aligned messaging.
Phase Overview:
• Pre-Permitting: Build awareness, explain technology, establish trust.
• Permitting: Secure political and administrative support.
• Construction: Manage impact, mitigate local disruption risks.
• Operation: Demonstrate performance, maintain transparency and trust.

Phase	Communication Goal	Risk Hotspot
Pre-Permitting	Awareness & trust-building	Fear of unknown
Permitting	Political support	Politicisation
Construction	Maintain acceptance	Noise & traffic
Operation	Demonstrate benefits	Incident management

Annex 1. Example Communication Activity Plan (Fictional Case: Methanol Bunkering Project)

The following example activity plan illustrates how the framework can be operationalised during the pre-permitting and permitting phases of a sensitive H_2 Derivatives project.

Timeframe	Activity	Objective	Focus Group	Channels	Responsible	Indicative Budget (€)	KPIs
Month 1–2 (Pre-permitting)	Listening Tour & Stakeholder Mapping	Identify concerns, build trust baseline	Local authorities, residents, NGOs	1:1 meetings, workshops	Communication Lead + Community Liaison	10,000–20,000	Stakeholder map completed; baseline sentiment survey
Month 3	Launch Project Landing Page & Press Kit	Provide transparent, factual information	General public, media	Website, press release, social media	Communication Lead + External Agency	15,000–30,000	Website visits; media coverage tone
Month 4–5	Public Safety Information Sessions	Address safety fears; reassure community	Residents, emergency services	Town halls, expert Q&A, visuals	Technical Expert + Community Liaison	20,000–40,000	Attendance rate; post-event feedback; sentiment shift
Month 6 (Permitting stage)	Political & Administrative Roundtables	Secure permitting support & alignment	Municipal leaders, regulators	Closed briefings, technical workshops	Project Director + Communication Lead	5,000–15,000	Formal support statements; permit progress

Annex 2. Crisis Communication Protocol – Visual Flowchart & 0–24h Timeline

1. Crisis Response Flowchart (Step-by-Step)

Trigger Event Detected
(Safety incident, media escalation, viral post, political controversy)

↓

Step 1: Verify Facts (0–30 min)
• Confirm known facts
• Identify unknowns
• Inform leadership

↓

Step 2: Internal Alignment (≤45 min)
• Rapid response call
• Define key message
• Appoint spokesperson

↓

Step 3: Holding Statement (≤90 min)
• Acknowledge
• Confirm review
• State update timing

↓

Step 4: Active Media Handling
• Log requests
• Prepare Q&A
• Monitor social media

↓

Step 5: Escalation Decision
Level 1 / 2 / 3
(Comm Lead → Project Director → CEO)

↓

Step 6: Ongoing Updates
• Transparent updates
• Correct misinformation
• Maintain calm tone

↓

Step 7: Post-Crisis Review (≤72h)
• Evaluate coverage
• Assess response
• Update protocol

2. Crisis Response Timeline (0–24 Hours)

Time Window	Action	Responsible Role	Communication Output
0–30 minutes	Verify incident & collect confirmed facts	Technical Expert + Project Director	Internal notification only
30–60 minutes	Internal alignment meeting	Comm Lead + Project Director	Core message defined
60–90 minutes	Issue holding statement if needed	Designated Spokesperson	Initial public statement
2–6 hours	Media handling & social monitoring	Communication Team	Interviews, updates, clarifications
6–24 hours	Provide update or full briefing	Lead Spokesperson / CEO (if Level 3)	Press briefing / detailed statement

Guiding Principle: Fast, factual, calm, consistent and transparent communication within the first 24 hours significantly reduces reputational escalation.

Annex 3. H2 Derivatives Communication Budget Template

This structured budget template reflects average cost levels in the Baltic Sea Region (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Sweden, Poland, Germany coastal regions, Denmark). All figures are indicative annual estimates in EUR (excluding VAT). Partner ports should adapt based on project scale and procurement rules.

1. External Services

Category	Activity	Estimated Annual Cost Range (€)	Port Estimate (€)
Design & Visuals	Infographics, brochures, templates	3,000 – 10,000	
Video Production	Explainer or safety video (1–2 units)	7,000 – 18,000	
Social Media Video Clips	Short clips (3–5 per year)	2,500 – 7,000	
Media Training	Spokesperson & crisis training	3,000 – 8,000	
External Communication Advisor	Strategic support (retainer basis)	15,000 – 40,000	
Crisis Advisory Retainer	On-call crisis support	8,000 – 20,000	

2. Human Resources (Internal Staffing)

Role	Recommended Allocation	Estimated Annual Cost Range (€)	Port Estimate (€)
Communication Officer	1 FTE	45,000 – 75,000	
Community Liaison Officer	0.5–1 FTE	30,000 – 65,000	
Technical Expert (allocation)	10–20% time	8,000 – 20,000	
Project Director (communication allocation)	5–10% time	10,000 – 25,000	
Administrative Support	Part-time	10,000 – 20,000	

3. Communication Tools & Systems

Tool/System	Purpose	Estimated Annual Cost Range (€)	Port Estimate (€)
Project Landing Page / CMS	Public information hub	5,000 – 15,000	
Full Microsite (if needed)	Extended project platform	15,000 – 35,000	
Media Monitoring Tool	Press & online tracking	3,000 – 8,000	
Social Listening Tool	Public sentiment monitoring	2,000 – 8,000	
Environmental Transparency Dashboard	Public data display	8,000 – 25,000	
Crisis Hotline Setup	Dedicated incident contact	2,000 – 5,000	

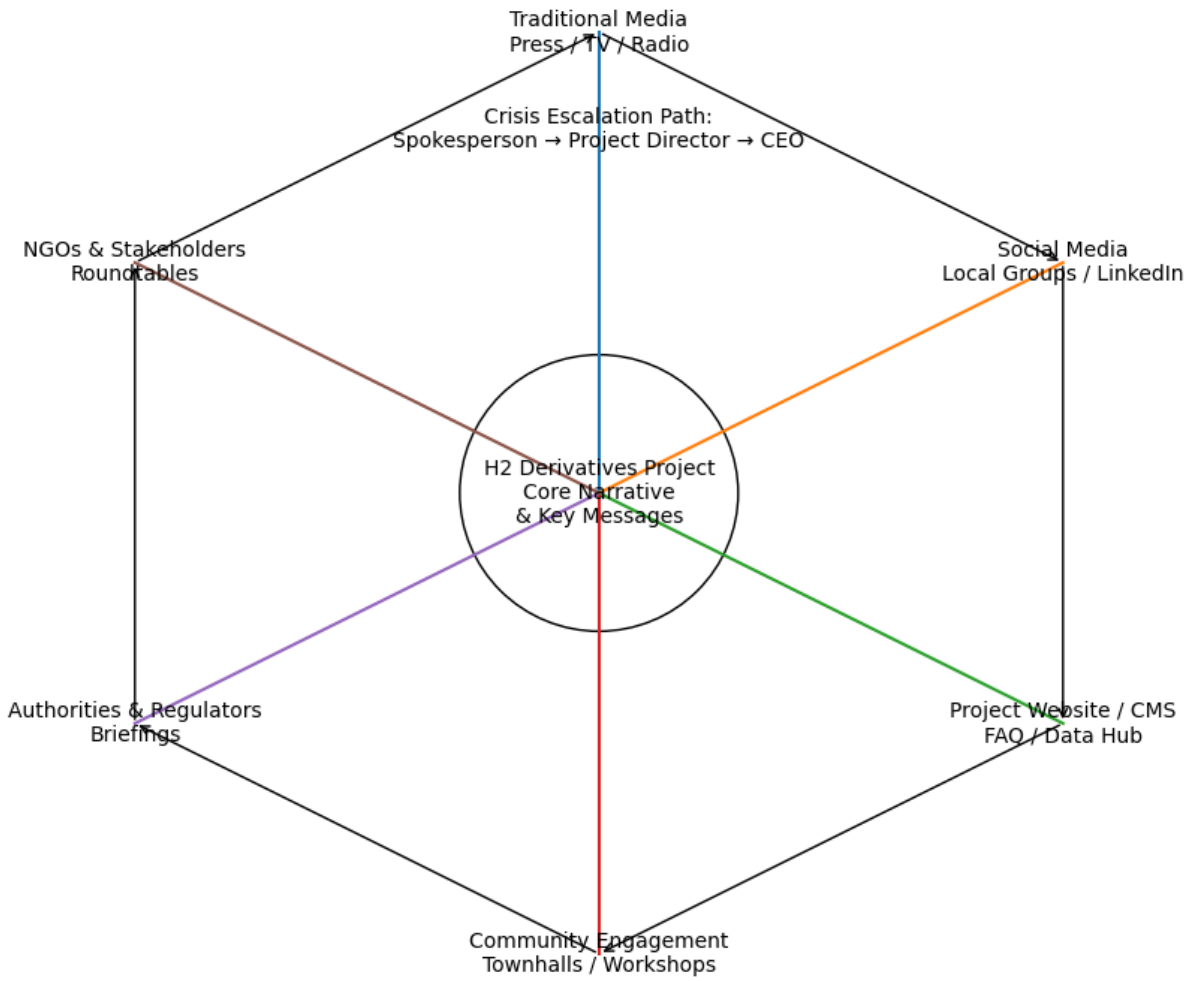
4. Total Estimated Communication Budget Summary

Project Sensitivity Level	Indicative Annual Budget Range (€)	Port Estimate (€)
Low Sensitivity (early planning)	60,000 – 120,000	
Medium Sensitivity (permitting phase)	120,000 – 220,000	
High Sensitivity (construction/public debate)	220,000 – 350,000	

Recommendation: For sensitive H2 Derivatives projects in Baltic Sea ports, communication resources typically represent approximately 3–5% of early-stage project development costs. Early allocation significantly reduces permitting delays and reputational risks.

Annex 4. Examples of visuals

Channel ecosystem map:



Message House – Methanol Bunkering in a Major City example

CORE STRATEGIC NARRATIVE

Safe, transparent and economically beneficial methanol bunkering positions the city as a leading clean maritime hub while strengthening regional energy security and long-term competitiveness.

SAFETY BY DESIGN	LOCAL ECONOMIC VALUE	ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE PERFORMANCE
• EU Seveso III compliant systems • Triple containment & leak detection • 2+ joint emergency drills annually • Controlled logistics routes • <0.01% calculated incident probability • Independent engineering certification	• 120–180 direct qualified jobs • 300+ indirect jobs in services/logistics • €15–25M annual regional economic impact • Local SME supplier inclusion programme • Maritime innovation ecosystem growth • Strengthened port competitiveness	• 15–25% CO_2 reduction per vessel • 90% SOx reduction vs conventional fuel • Significant NOx reduction • Continuous emissions monitoring • Annual third-party audits • Public KPI transparency dashboard

FACT-BASED CREDIBILITY FOUNDATION

• Approved Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
• Verified quantitative transport risk assessment & logistics modelling
• Full compliance with EU Seveso III Directive, IMO regulations & national law
• Independent safety & engineering certification bodies involved
• Quarterly public KPI reporting & regulatory oversight
• Transparent stakeholder access to environmental monitoring data

Note: Quantitative KPIs are illustrative examples and must be validated with project-specific feasibility and environmental assessments before public use.