

Communication plan at the Department of Marine Technology

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The Department of Marine Technology (IMT) communication plan aims to strengthen communication efforts at the department by clarifying priorities. The main purpose of a communication plan is to ensure that we work systematically towards the goals outlined in the department's strategy, enabling us to take the right actions.

The plan contains a plan on student and PhD recruitment, research dissemination and internal communication.

IMT's communication plan aims to implement NTNU's communication policy and the Faculty of Engineering's communication strategy at our department. The plan is anchored in IMT's own strategy and action plan and should be revised and updated annually.

The plan is written by Live Oftedahl, communication officer at IMT, based on an original communication strategy developed by the Head of department Sverre Steen and former communication advisor at IMT, Sigmund Bolme. It is approved by the departments management.

Overarching goals

In the Departments strategy it is stated that “the Department shall contribute to environmentally and economically sustainable ocean industries in Norway and the world.” (...) The most important is the candidates we educate, thereafter research results which push the research forefront forward, and research results which can be useful for the industry.”

The department aims to “recruit and keep enough of the best students to fill up our study programmes, the best research talents in our PhD programme, and the best researchers and lecturers as permanent scientific staff.”

Translated into communication goals this means that we want to recruit talented STEM-students, potential PhD candidates from our own students as well as externally, and bread researchers with a wish to disseminate their research to a broader audience.

Current situation

Last year we had a good uptake of new students and the highest female student percentage ever [with 45 percent female students in the first year](#).

Every year, and especially between the first and second year, we have students leaving to other study programmes which lead to less candidates available for the marine industry eventually.

We have more than 100 PhD candidates. The majority are international PhD students. We need to work on the recruitment of more Norwegian PhD candidates.

When it comes to research projects, we have had many big projects for many years. Now we need to apply for more new projects. We should be more systematic in communicating our research to a broader audience.

Target groups for recruitment and dissemination

IMT's target audiences encompass a broad range of individuals and organizations, including students, permanent and temporary staff, potential students, potential permanent and temporary staff, researchers, politicians, journalists, the industry, and other educational and research institutions both domestically and internationally.

Different target audiences and different goals mean that the department must consider and utilize different channels in its communication efforts. Channels need to be evaluated based on the group one aims to reach, what one wants to convey, and what one hopes to achieve with the communication. Initially, the plan is divided into two parts: external communication and internal communication. Only the external communication plan is available here.

1 External communication

1.1 Scope

This part of the plan primarily includes communication activities aimed at the public (meaning people not professionally updated in our areas). It does not include traditional scientific publishing, such as academic books, articles in scientific journals, and conference contributions at scientific conferences.

Non-scientific channels currently used for external publishing are: [Not provided in the text]

Channel	Aim	Primary target group
Own webpages IMT (no/eng)	Basic information. Brief information about the department – contact information, address, who works here, research activity and projects.	Visitors, the industry, potential PhD candidates and students.
Own webpages – study programs (no/eng)	Recruitment. Present our study programs through text, pictures, and film.	Potential students
NTNU Nyheter/NTNU News (no/eng)	Profiling. News and press releases.	Public, press, and NTNU employees – depending on the social media channel it will be posted in.
Gemini (no) Norwegian SciTech News (eng) and Forskning.no	Dissemination. Popular science versions of our research	Grown-ups interested in research both nationally (Gemini) and internationally (SciTech News) Forskning.no also has webpages targeted towards children in primary and secondary school.
EurekAlert!	Dissemination of the latest scientific papers. EurekAlert! only allows popular science versions based on papers from the last three months: Only new and fresh research!	Research journalists worldwide
Teknisk Ukeblad	Dissemination. Popular science and news	Technically interested grown-ups, and the marine industry
Chronicles and readers posts	Dissemination and profiling. To broadcast our researchers, their	Government, politicians, industrial partners – and the press.

	research and expertise in marine technical issues.	
NTNU blog	Training for dissemination. An excellent area for PhDs and postdocs when it comes to dissemination.	Other PhDs and researchers. Building a culture for dissemination.
Editorial articles – tv, radio, on paper and online	Profiling. Broadcast activity in the department, the Norwegian Ocean Technology Centre, research activity and projects, participate in the public debate and inform the public about developments in marine technology	A research interested public audience, and people working in the same field. Potential students.
LinkedIn: Department of Marine Technology – IMT NTNU (eng)	Networking. News from the department, cooperating partners, and networking through likes and shares.	The industry, potential PhDs, colleagues in our university and other universities.
YouTube (eng/no)	Recruitment of students and PhDs. IMT has its own «YouTube-channel»	Student and PhD recruitment.
Facebook (no)	Internal information. Marin Teknikk NTNU, NTNU TekNat.	Internal and external visibility in NTNU
Instagram (no)	Student recruitment, and also internal information towards our students.	College-kids with STEM-interest, 17-24, own students, bachelor students with relevant study programs for a two year master.
Snapchat (no)	Student recruitment NTNU Teknologi & realfag	STEM-interested college students 17-24 years old.
TikTok (no/eng)	Student recruitment. NTNU Teknologi & realfag	STEM-interested college students 17-24 years old.
Conferences	Profiling. Make visible activity at IMT through presentations and stands. Aqua Nor, TechPort, Brohode havbruk-konferanse og Ocean Technology Day Follow up on the AquaTech Clusters	Networking with colleagues from other departments and universities, the industry, and politicians.
Arendalsuka	Promote the Norwegian Ocean Technology Centre, future renewable energy systems, green shipping etc.	Politicians, organisations, and the industry.

1.2 Goals

The main goals for the department's external communication are:

- To provide the public with knowledge about the significance of the marine domain and marine technology.
- To be a visible and important player in research and education in marine technology.
- To externally communicate important events, news, and research results from IMT.

IMT has four main tasks derived from the overarching goals for external communication:

- Conduct research dissemination to the public.
- Recruit the best STEM-interested students and the best PhD candidates.
- Advise authorities and other decision-makers when the department's field of expertise is relevant.
- Attract good partners from the industry, academia, and other research institutions in collaboration on projects.

1.2.1 Priorities 2023/2024:

- Prioritize relevant projects at the department that demonstrate the importance of marine technology for Norway and the world, emphasizing the significance of developing the Norwegian Ocean Technology Centre and Fjordlab.
- Communication activities related to recruitment, including well-designed study programme pages with a compelling video as the top priority, followed by consistent presence on NTNU's social media channels for the younger audience, presentations at different schools, participation in events like Forskningstorget (targeting elementary school students), Researchers' Night (targeting high school students interested in science).

1.2.2 Measures 2023-2024:

Activity	Deadline
Select researchers, research topics, or projects we want to create stories about, developing mini-communication plans. Ensure representation from all research groups. Establish a prioritized list for the upcoming semester through regular meetings. Example projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ingrid B. Utne and the Safeguard project • Vista Caros project • The MoniTare kelp forest project • PhD candidates on the GoNorth expedition 	Sep. 2023 and running
Encourage PhD candidates in their first or second year to create at least one blog post about their research. Involve communication advisor and reward the best post during events like a Christmas party or summer festival.	At the start of each semester
Annual web report supplemented with a simple PDF, presenting key statistics.	Feb. 2024
Continuously develop and maintain websites for IMT, the Norwegian Ocean Technology Centre, Vista Caros, OceanLab, etc. using SiteImprove for editing errors, missing links, etc.	Running
Work on the future of Ocean Space Race.	Spring 2024
Renew and maintain standard presentations for IMT, school presentations, general presentations about the ocean and marine technology for high school students, and the presentation of the Norwegian Ocean Technology Centre.	Running
Feature social media posts for activities and events at IMT and those involving IMT targeting different audiences on LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube.	Running
Update communication plan for the Norwegian Ocean Technology Centre.	Running

1.3 Research dissemination

1.3.1 Tools:

- Popular science media and trade press.
- EurekAlert!
- Daily press, TV, and radio.
- Participation in conferences, debates, and arrangements for the public.

1.3.2 Approach

- The department has a communication advisor with extensive press experience who can write popular science research articles. The process involves drafting an article for Gemini and having it reviewed by the Gemini editorial team. They publish the article through their channels, on Norwegian SciTech News for an international audience, on Forskning.no, and in Teknisk Ukeblad. In cases where the article is deemed newsworthy, they work to pitch it to other media outlets such as NRK before their own channels.
- The Gemini editorial office can also be asked to write research news articles.
- NTNU is a partner in EurekAlert! where the audience is research journalists globally. The scientific paper must not be older than 3 months before the popular version is made for this channel to be used.
- For broad dissemination of research results, news media are an effective channel for the adult population. Social media platforms like Snapchat, TikTok, and Instagram are preferred for reaching youngsters. When working on a project with potential media interest, efforts should be made to engage journalists in collaboration with the communication advisor *on an early stage*.
- Conferences, debates, and presentations serve as supplements to the media, reaching a smaller audience but acting as a stepping stone to other channels. If relevant debates are covered in the media, the department should attempt to involve its experts.
- Regarding research dissemination, individual researchers are encouraged to take the initiative and inform the communication advisor about research projects with potential for dissemination.
- Incentives for communication can be integrated into the approval of research projects, requiring a popular science presentation. Artificial intelligence can be used as a tool to make popular science versions of the research topic in for example EU-projects.

1.3.3 Responsible:

Researchers, project leaders, research leaders, department management, and the communication advisor.

1.4 Student recruitment

1.4.1 Tools:

- Study programme web pages in marine technology at NTNU's website.
- Social media, primarily Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok.
- Presentations from current students previous high schools, coordinated with the faculty.
- Campus visits with presentations from our student ambassadors
- Participation in Forskningsdagene and Researchers' Night

1.4.2 Approach:

- To recruit the best students, IMT must present itself as a good educational institution with a positive student environment, emphasizing that the education provides excellent career

opportunities in *the right channels*. Focus on the forward-looking aspects of the education, such as green shipping, renewable energy, sustainable aquaculture, the importance of monitoring and inspecting marine installations.

- Social media can reach smaller, more targeted groups more precisely than traditional media. It serves as the main channel for information for the youth, who often search for the social profile of education after reading about the study offerings on the websites.
- NTNU and IMT websites are crucial sources for prospective students. It's essential to have updated, professional, and easily accessible information on these platforms.
- School visits with presentations by marine students are direct recruitment channels where role models visit their former schools to talk about their study choices and student life.
- News media can complement these efforts, but the overall image created by the department and the study program should be positive.

1.4.3 Responsible:

Employees involved in recruitment, students in the recruitment group, and the communication advisor.

1.5 Consulting

1.5.1 Tools:

- Direct contact (meetings, phone, and email).
- Reader posts and chronicles in newspapers.
- Non-scientific conferences.

1.5.2 Approach:

Direct contact is effective for expressing viewpoints to the right people, although scheduling actual meetings can be challenging.

Op-eds and chronicles provide a platform where politicians and stake holders can be reached.

Conferences and debates offer a chance to participate in ongoing discussions and speak directly to those interested in the issues. Sending experts to these events is a way for IMT to establish its presence and have a voice in the debate.

1.5.3 Responsible :

The department management, innovation manager, relevant researchers, and communication advisor

1.6 Attract cooperation partners

1.6.1 Tools:

- Direct contact (meetings, phone, and email).
- Conferences
- IMT webpages
- Rankings
- Trade press and daily press.

1.6.2 Approach:

As with recruitment, presence in relevant media and forums will be necessary to attract partners. Direct contact, where you pitch a project, is the best way to initiate collaboration. Conferences, where you can meet key players, is crucial.

The websites of IMT and a proper presence in the media will contribute to creating a positive impression of the department, enhancing its attractiveness as a collaboration partner. Academic rankings help strengthen IMT's position as a key player, making it more appealing to other universities and researchers. This is crucial for the business sector as well, but practical applications of research must also be demonstrated.

A positive external image, combined with actively seeking desired partners for specific projects, will be essential for IMT to attract the right institutions, companies, and organizations.

LinkedIn is also a valuable strategic channel for networking.

1.6.3 Responsible

Department management, relevant researchers, HR, communication advisor.