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VALID

Verification through Accelerated testing Leading to Improved wave energy Designs

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Leading to Improved wave energy Designs



Your new platform

Deliverable 7.7

Stakeholders Knowledge Exchange Plan

Version 1.0

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Executive Summary

The VALID concept is to create a hybrid testing platform that encompasses several wave energy technologies as test cases, with the final goal of delivering a novel test rig configuration methodology for accelerating wave energy technological development.

The consortium approach builds upon a unique hybrid method that is highly adaptable to technologies and can minimise expenditure for prototypes and of real sea-testing, as well as development times, whilst increasing product quality and optimising components operation, reliability and adaptability.

The VALID project is organised in eight different work packages specifically designed to develop a Hybrid Testing Platform and communicate, disseminate and exploit project outputs.

As part of WP7, the Stakeholders Knowledge Exchange Plan (D7.7) is a stakeholder engagement plan that aims to build a stakeholders database for the VALID project with a market intelligence approach to provide guidance to WP7 tasks.



Project partner names

- RISE Research Institutes of Sweden AB
- Fundacion Tecnalia Research and Innovation
- Corpower Ocean AB
- RINA Consulting S.p.A.
- Biscay Marine Energy Platform SA
- IDOM Consulting, Engineering, Architecture, S.A.U.
- Aalborg University
- AVL List GMBH
- Wavepiston AS
- Delft University of Technology
- Aquatera Sustainability Ireland LTD
- Julia F. Chozas, Consulting Engineer
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1 Stakeholders

As described in D7.1 Dissemination Plan, there are many approaches to identifying and categorising stakeholders. Through D7.1 the Communications Team (CT) has classified the stakeholders into three main groups: primary stakeholders, secondary stakeholders, and tertiary stakeholders.

1.1 Stakeholder groups

A stakeholder database has been built during the VALID project, categorising the stakeholder groups (SG) as indicated in Figure 1, and following the description below.

- **Primary stakeholders:** VALID's primary stakeholder group is composed of direct users of the main outputs from the VALID project, including:
 - **Potential users of the hybrid platform:** this group is made of potential users of the VALID platform with the aim of harmonising users' needs and existing gaps (i.e., technology developers).
 - **Public bodies:** this group includes public organisations as receivers of knowledge outputs (Kos) (i.e., European Research Alliance (EERA), Joint Research Centre (JRC)).
 - **European ocean energy testing facilities and laboratories:** members of this group share a common mission with existing ocean energy test centres and labs to understand potential synergies. The knowledge transfer activities for this group aim to take advantage of synergies, share knowledge, avoid duplication of efforts, seek opportunities for cooperation in the project's development and in the provision of services, etc. However, above all, collaboration will take place in order to maximise the use of the added value generated by the VALID project.
 - **Industry and value chain:** industry representatives and value chain players related to wave renewable energy will be part of this group. There are links with the Industry Advisory Board and the Ocean Energy EU Funded Project Working Group (i.e., Ocean Energy Europe (OEE), certification agencies, Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) etc.).
- **Secondary stakeholders:** this group has an interest in the added value generated by the VALID project. They are not the ones who take advantage of the services provided or who finance them, but they still benefit, either through industrial or new scientific and technological developments, theoretical developments or through economic benefits. The secondary stakeholder group has three sub-categories:
 - **Research community:** the selected profiles will be of ocean renewable energy doctoral students, university professors or researchers.
 - **Private investors:** this group will be formed of investors who have shown a direct interest in the VALID platform and representatives of private investors who have invested in similar projects, as well as reference investment funds or investors related to green technologies in general and marine energies in particular.
 - **Public funders:** this group comprises agents that provide economic resources (i.e., key regional or national representatives or European public agencies directly involved in the financing of testing platforms, as well as entities that have financed the implementation of specific ocean technology tests or projects).
- **Tertiary stakeholders:** the third group is composed of those stakeholders that are indirectly influenced by the social, environmental, political or financial consequences that the VALID project may produce. These are policy makers, civil society, NGOs, the media and other influencers.

- **Policy makers:** EU, national and regional policy makers that have the authority to develop regulations.
- **Civil society & the media:** key representatives of local citizens, visitors, civil society organisations and the press.
- **Other users:** other influencers (i.e., maritime clusters) that have shown interest in VALID activities and outputs, and that are circumscribed to the geographical area where VALID is active.

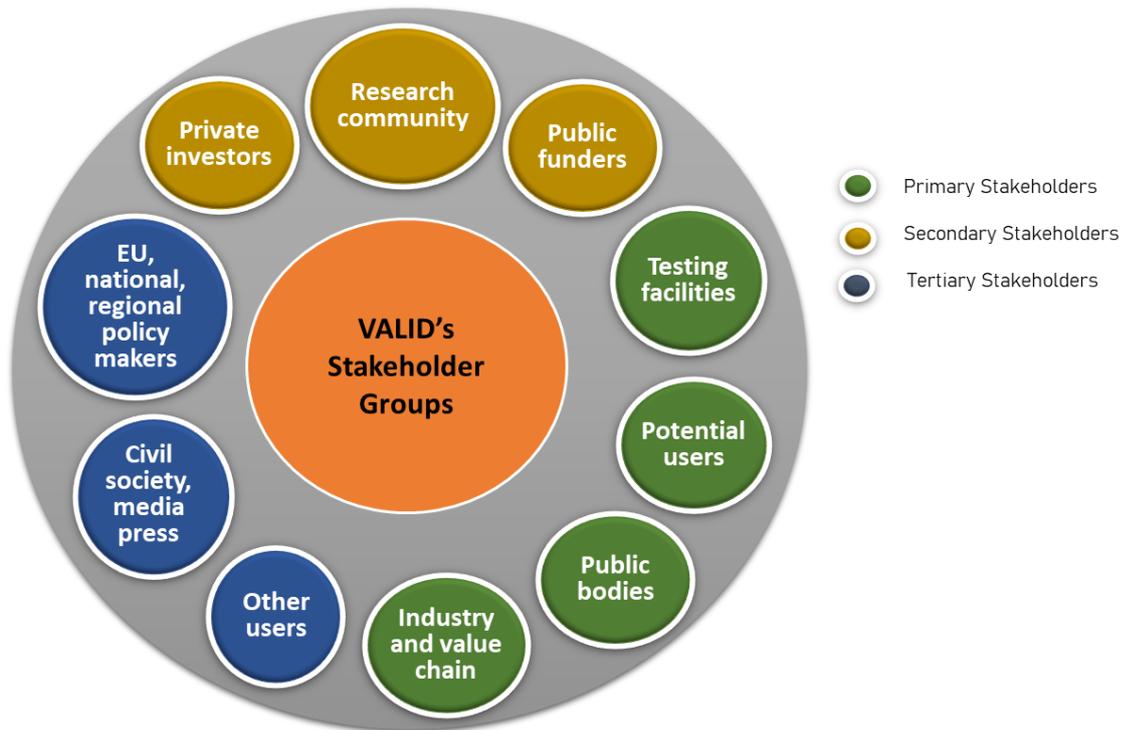


Figure 1: Main, Stakeholder Groups for the VALID project

1.2 Stakeholder database

To interact with stakeholders, a VALID stakeholders database template has been created, as shown in Figure 2.

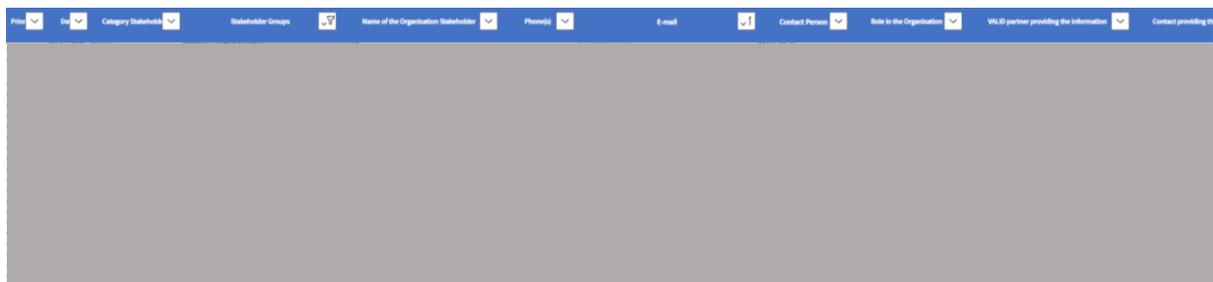


Figure 2: VALID's stakeholders database (print screen).

The columns are distributed with the following information:



- Date
- Category (primary, secondary, tertiary)
- Stakeholder group (category + sub-category)
- Name of the Organisation Stakeholder
- E-mail
- Contact Person
- Role in the Organisation
- VALID partner providing the information
- Contact providing the information

Each stakeholder has been included in a row with the information listed above.

1.2.1 Reaching stakeholders for the VALID project

The methodology for reaching stakeholders to subscribe to VALID has been described in the dissemination and communication activities described in D7.1 and D7.3. In addition, there has been an extensive exercise for collecting contacts from the wave energy sector from the CT team.

Stakeholder information has been compiled from different sources, including but not limited to:

- Technological platforms;
- MRE associations;
- Cordis database of MRE-related projects;
- Contact network of VALID consortium members;

In November 2021, more than 400 potential stakeholders were contacted by email to subscribe to the VALID project. In this first round, approximately 75 stakeholders joined the VALID project newsletter.

This was followed with a more precise exercise in which the CT, led by WP7 leaders, approached key primary stakeholder groups individually.

An extensive list of wave technology developers was built using industry connections and databases. Each developer was then contacted in February 2022 through a second round of stakeholder invitations. Between the second and third rounds, nine new stakeholders subscribed to the project.

Finally, a review of existing wave energy testing laboratories worldwide was conducted together with a third round of invitations in March 2022. Following round three, we have had another 13 new stakeholders subscribe to the project.

The VALID stakeholder database has 94 subscribers as of May 2022. From June to December 2022, the team will review the stakeholders list and engage with other relevant groups, beginning with primary- industry and value chain, and then moving on to the secondary categories.

The database is regularly updated, presented in a user-friendly way, and equipped with a powerful search tool in order to perform searches using different criteria. The stakeholder database is saved in the VALID SharePoint and follows the procedures from D7.2 Data Management.



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All CT members are expected to add relevant contacts and information to the VALID Stakeholder Database during the length of the project. Suggestions can be sent to the WP7 leader who will keep control of the MASTER database. Due to GDPR, we only add stakeholders to the final 'subscribed' list who have voluntarily signed up via the subscriber form on the VALID website. For this reason, we ask that no partner add any names directly to the 'VALID Subscribed Stakeholders' tab within the stakeholder database.

The MASTER document is saved on VALID's SharePoint ([VALID Stakeholder Database 005.xlsm](#)).



2 Stakeholder Engagement Report

Stakeholder engagement provides opportunities to align VALID's business practices with societal and industrial needs and expectations. Successful stakeholder engagement requires a commitment to actively engage with stakeholders, listen to them, build a relationship with them and then respond to their concerns in a mutually beneficial way.

The stakeholder engagement activities involve time, resources, and commitment from all VALID partners, and these activities require advanced planning. D7.7 analyses the impact engagement activities set out in D7.1, D7.3 and D7.6 are having on different stakeholder groups.

2.1 Stakeholders' analysis

Information has been gathered from VALID's subscribers to understand the stakeholders' groups and reach them efficiently during the VALID project. From May 1st, 2022, there are 94 subscribers to the VALID project. The analytics from the stakeholders subscribed to the VALID project are described below.

2.1.1 Stakeholders' categories

From the stakeholders subscribed to the VALID project (see Figure 3), 69% are from the primary stakeholders group. Specifically, potential users of the hybrid platform and ocean testing facilities and laboratories. It would be useful to engage with other stakeholders from the primary group, for example public bodies and industry representatives such as OEE, certification agencies, European Research Alliance (EERA), Joint Research Centre (JRC) etc.

The secondary group comprises 21% of VALID stakeholders. The majority of this group is the research community. An emphasis on private investors and public funders is needed before the project end in 2023.

The weight of the tertiary stakeholder's group is 10% and mostly falls under 'other users'. It would be useful to incorporate more press contacts to the VALID database before 2023.

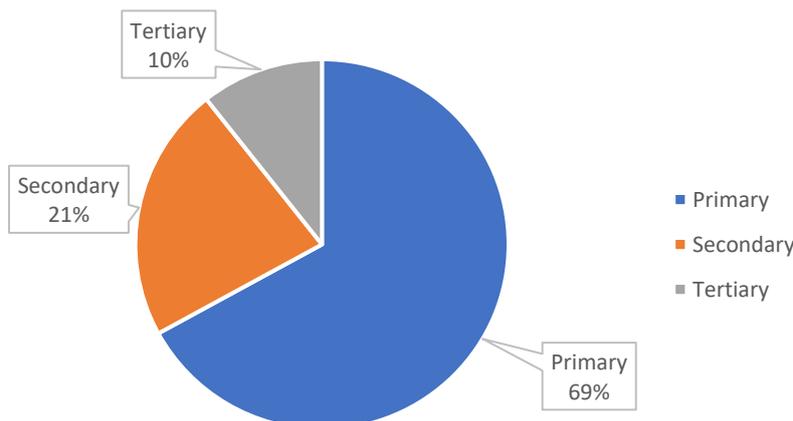


Figure 3: VALID's stakeholder's categories May 2022.

2.1.2 Stakeholders' sub-categories

As shown in Figure 4, in the primary category, the distribution of groups is as follows:



- Potential users of the hybrid platform: 28%
- Public bodies: 1%
- European ocean energy testing facilities and laboratories: 14%
- Industry and value chain: 26%

Under the secondary group the distribution of stakeholders is, from Figure 4:

- Research community: 20%
- Private investors: 0%
- Public funders: 1%

The weight of the tertiary sub-category is, from Figure 4:

- Policy makers: 0%
- Civil society & the media: 2%
- Other users: 8%

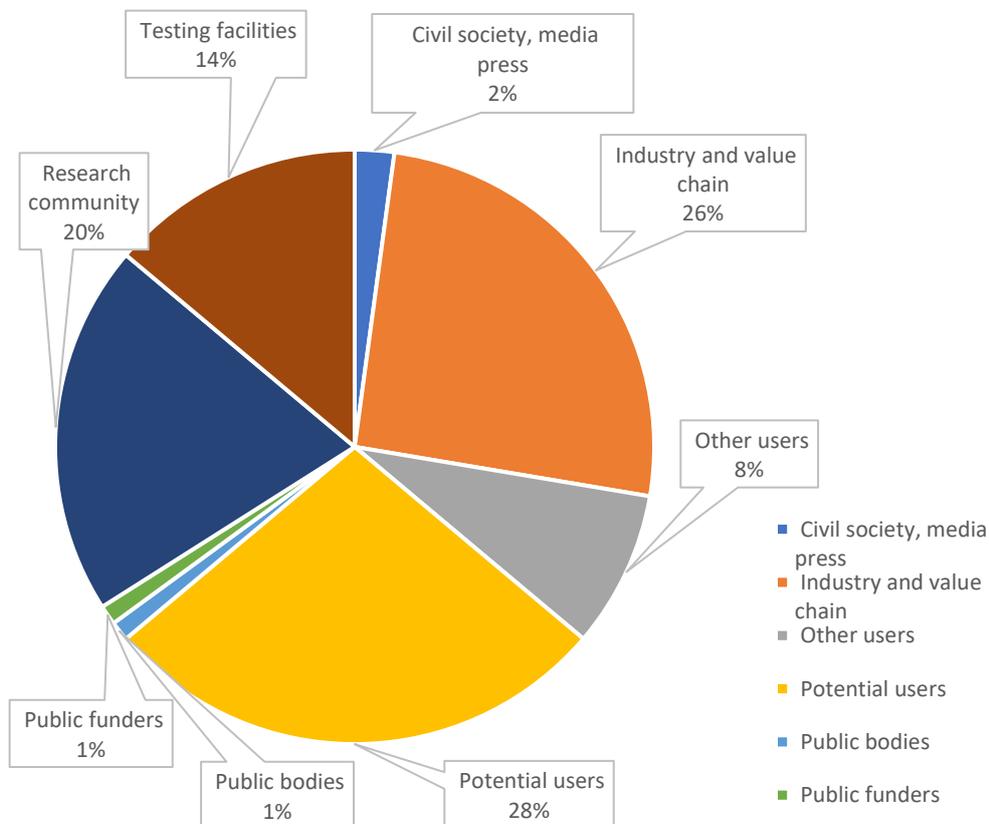


Figure 4: VALID's stakeholders subcategory distribution May 2022.



2.1.3 Stakeholders' countries

The analysis from the subscribers list (see Figure 5) shows that there are 19 subscribers based in Spain and 13 in the UK. There are 10 subscribers in Sweden and 10 in Denmark, 6 in Ireland, 6 in USA, 4 in the Netherlands and 4 Italy. The rest of the countries have one subscriber.

In the 2021 annual report from Ocean Energy System (OES)¹, relevant R&D initiatives for lowering the LCOE of wave energy projects to the sea, globally are described. This information is important for WP7 to understand what countries need more efforts and engagement from the VALID project.

Worldwide, a significant number of universities, research centres, national laboratories, and private companies are building an impressive portfolio of research projects driving technological improvements in wave energy. The countries listed in the OES report with a significant activity in the wave energy sector are China, Australia, The United States, and Mexico.

VALID has 6 subscribers from the US and 1 from each China, Australia, and Mexico. More efforts, listed in 'Next Steps' below, would be needed to bring stakeholders from these countries.

From Mexico, there are organisations involved in wave energy who are not yet VALID stakeholders but would be valuable to engage with for the project. These are:

[Redacted]

From China, it would be worthwhile to engage with [Redacted] and various technology developers, laboratories, and wave technology developers.

From Australia the organisations that CT members should bring into the VALID project are

[Redacted]

In Europe, the VALID project has low engagement to date with Portugal and France.

In Portugal, [Redacted] is already a stakeholder of VALID, but some organisations are missed such as [Redacted]

In France, the communications team (CT) should approach [Redacted]

[Redacted]

¹ <https://www.ocean-energy-systems.org/publications/oes-annual-reports/document/oes-annual-report-2021/>

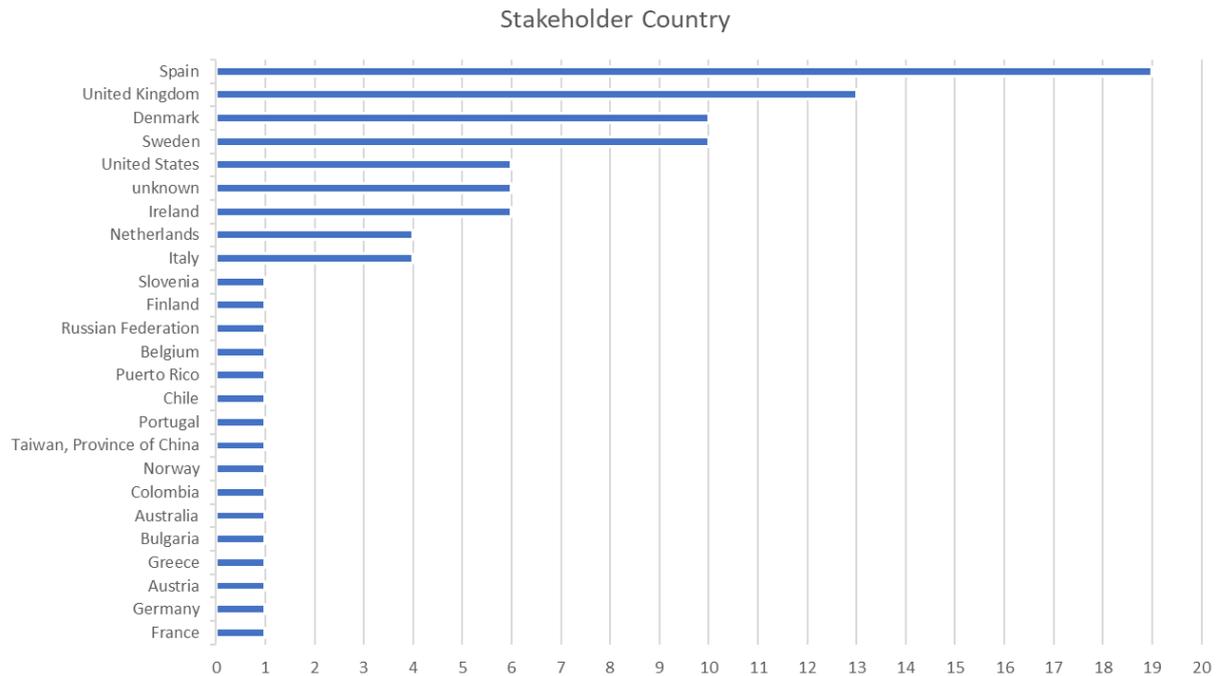


Figure 5: VALID's stakeholder country May 2022.

The data analysis shared in this section is from December 2020 up to May 2022. In 2023, this report will be updated.

2.2 Stakeholder Engagement Analysis

High-level stakeholder engagement began right at the outset of the project. D7.1, D7.3 and D7.6 summarise core activities and the outcomes of interaction with stakeholders based on questionnaires, webinars, conferences, events, newsletters etc.

Below, we list out those key activities according to which stakeholder groups they are aimed (all stakeholders vs. primary/secondary stakeholders), survey the results so far, and provide analysis on what methods are most effective in reaching their targeted groups and where we can improve.

2.2.1 Key activities according to stakeholder groups

Activities already underway

All stakeholder groups:

- VALID's website – D7.3
- Publications – D7.1/ D7.2
 - Submitted scientific papers
 - Articles in ocean energy magazines
- Open access research data – D7.1/ D7.2
- Webinars organised – D7.1
- Social media – D7.3
- Press releases – D7.3



- Stakeholder email engagement (to send regular newsletters or project updates) – D7.3

Primary and Secondary groups:

- Events/conferences – D7.1
- Development of links with other EU funded projects – D7.1
- Ocean Energy EU funded project working group – D7.1

Activities not yet underway

All stakeholder groups:

- Interviews in local radio/tv stations – D7.3
- Knowledge Output/Columbus Methodology – D7.1

Primary and Secondary groups:

- Workshops organised – D7.1
- Development of links with key organisations such as OEE – D7.1
- Face-to face meetings – D7.1
- Phone calls – D7.1
- Questionnaires – D7.1

2.2.2 Engagement Activities Results

Table 1 and Table 2 represent the stakeholder engagement activities that are already underway by stakeholder groups, comparing year-by-year expectations with real results.

Table 1: All stakeholders: engagement activities underway.

Stakeholder Engagement Activity	Method of measurement	Expected results			Progress		
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2 to date	Year 3
VALID's website	Number of site sessions	150	200	250	1076	137	
	Average duration of visits	3 mins	3 mins	3 mins	3m10s	6m35s	
	No. of referrals ('referral' source category)	100	120	149	162	26	
Publications	No. of submitted scientific papers	1	2	3	0	2	
	No of articles in ocean energy magazines	1	1	0	1	1	



Research data	No. of open access research data set categories	1	1	1	0	0	
Webinars	No of webinars organised	0	1	2	0	1	
	No of registrants	0	40	40	0	71	
	No of attendees	0	25	25	0	36	
Social media	No. of followers (VALID Twitter and LinkedIn accounts each – cumulative to 300 on each platform over 3 years)	100	200	300	LinkedIn: 82 Twitter: 10	LinkedIn: 98 Twitter: 23	
	Page visits/profile views (LinkedIn/Twitter)	200	200	200	LinkedIn: 124 Twitter: 1247	LinkedIn: 58 Twitter: 541	
	No. of shares on posts	15	20	30	LinkedIn: 5 Twitter: 0	LinkedIn: 6 Twitter: 1	
Press releases	No. of press releases	2	2	4	1	0	
Stakeholder email engagement	No. of email campaigns sent (not including reminder/recordings)	0	3	4	0	1	
	Average no. of recipients	-	75	125	-	94	
	Average open rate	-	25%	25%	-	56%	

Table 2 Primary and Secondary stakeholders: engagement activities underway.

Stakeholder Engagement Activity	Method of Measurement	Expected Results			Progress		
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Attendance to events	No. of oral communication at congresses and events	1	5	8	2	3	



	No. of attended industrial events and/or fairs	1	1	4	0	0	
	No. of flyers or other material distributed at events (limited due to COVID)	10	40	100	2	0	
Development with other EU-funded projects	No. of OE projects contacted	2	2	2	0	1	

2.2.3 Engagement Activities Summary

All stakeholder groups:

VALID’s website surpassed its expected results for Year 1. Halfway through Year 2, we should focus on continued updates to the website to increase engagement from all stakeholder groups. This will also be heavily linked to social media. By increasing our followers and our regularity of posts linking back to project website on Twitter and LinkedIn, we will increase website traffic across all our target groups.

Both publications and open access research data are likely to play more of a role in VALID’s dissemination toward the end of the project. Toward the end of 2023, the CT should reach out to various WP leaders to get a sense of the type of work that could be included in publications or as research data.

The CT is on track for its targeted number of webinars produced and exceeded expected registrants. Our first webinar provided perhaps the most productive direct engagement with stakeholders to date. Following our targeted exercises to build the stakeholder database, we then sent an email invitation to our confirmed list of 94 stakeholders spanning all categories. Of those registered 42 were primary, 12 were secondary and 13 were tertiary or unknown individuals. We also had interest from 24 countries, with Spain, United States and Denmark being the top three of interest.

Social media is a crucial tool in reaching all stakeholder groups and can serve as a gateway for further engagement activities such as press releases and news items and downloading of deliverables on our website, networking opportunities at in-person or virtual events, and connection with other EU-funded projects. We need to increase our engagement across social media to best take advantage of this asset, through increased posts, a drive to attract more followers, and increase in engagement with industry contacts. To accomplish this, it is crucial to have the assistance of VALID’s partner organisations, who can utilise their own well-established social networks to lift the profile of [@VALIDhtp](#).

Press releases function to highlight key moments within a project’s lifespan, as well as providing ready-made material with which to reach out to stakeholders and demonstrate the progress VALID is making toward its goal of creating a hybrid testing platform for wave energy. Our first press release went out to more than 40 media personnel across Europe and internationally, and was picked up by the following news publications:

- Renewable Energy Magazine
- ReNews.biz
- Off Grid Energy Independence



- Energy Watch
- Offshore-energy.biz
- Energy Supply (DK)
- Helsingør Dagblad (DK)
- Energias Renovables

Through coverage in Energy News publications, we can assume this demonstrates reach of the VALID launch press release across all stakeholder groups. However, further effort is needed to produce more regular press releases, and the project should plan to produce 2 in the remaining months of 2022, followed by 4 in 2023 to stay on target and maximise our reach to key stakeholder groups like media, industry & value chain, funders and the research community.

To date, our stakeholder email engagement (sent to full subscribed stakeholders list via Wix.com) has only been used to advertise for our first webinar. We received a high open rate of 56%, compared to a general average of 21.33% across all industries, according to a [report](#) by mailchimp.com. We will continue to monitor this as we send our first project update newsletter in September 2022. So far, direct engagement to our stakeholders via email marketing efforts has been our most successful avenue for reaching stakeholders (compared to website and social media.)

Primary and Secondary groups:

VALID's attendance to and presentations at various events over Year 1 and Year 2 is on track for our expected results, especially given the complication of COVID-19 and a general freeze on in-person events in Year 1. VALID representation at events to date include three presentations and two events where partners displayed information at their stands:

- 2021-04-27 – Tecnalia presentation at the Basque Energy Cluster Event
- 2021-04-27 – Display of VALID leaflet at Tecnalia's virtual stall at ICOE 2021
- 2021-10-12 – Presentation by IDOM at Ocean Energy Conference in Bilbao
- 2021-12-07 – VALID leaflet distributed to partners who had stands at OEE 2021
- 2021-12-07 – Presentation by Wavepiston at OEE 2021

The VALID CT is currently planning a joint-side event with the Horizon-2020 IMPACT project for ICOE-OEE 2022, which will be our first significant event engagement to date, and we anticipate this will have a strong impact on our aims to reach all sub-categories of primary and secondary stakeholder groups.

Development of links with other EU funded projects has begun with the above work on our ICOE-OEE side project. WP7 leader, Aquatera Atlantico, is working closely with IMPACT communications work package leaders, SINTEF, to plan the event, and we have laid the groundwork for continued project collaboration after the event. We anticipate continued collaboration with a project under the same Horizon-2020 funding call as VALID to help us raise awareness amongst primary stakeholders specifically.



3 Next Steps

An extensive list of stakeholders was built using industry connections and CT databases. Based on VALID stakeholder profiles and their priority groups, as identified in the stakeholder database, D7.7 considers the market knowledge to reach each of these profiles through D7.1, D7.3 and D7.6.

D7.7 also analyses the engagement activities created in the earlier WP7 deliverables to assess where we are, what tools have been effective in reaching stakeholders across different categories, and where we need to focus our attention moving forward.

The below recommendations will provide action items to focus on in WP7 for the remainder of 2022 and 2023. D7.7 is a live document and will be updated in June 2023.

3.1 Stakeholders

A next round of stakeholder gathering will involve contacting specific organisations within the countries and sectors for which VALID has had limited engagement. WP7 leads will target specific organisations as listed in 2.1.3 using the CT's network of connections, to expand our reach. Our attention will focus first and foremost on:

- The countries listed in the OES report with a significant activity in the wave energy sector: China, Australia, The United States, and Mexico.
- Portugal and France

We also aim to maintain engagement with the stakeholders already involved in the project, and the next steps planned for our engagement activities listed below will help us to achieve this.

3.2 Engagement Activity

As we move toward the end of Year 2, the focus for engagement activity is as follows:

All stakeholder groups:

- Maintain
 - Webinar schedule
- Increase
 - Project press releases
 - Publication of scientific papers
 - Publication of open access research data
 - Social media activity
 - Regular posting on LinkedIn and Twitter
 - Engagement on other organisations social media
 - Website activity
 - Adding news updates and press releases
 - Continuing to upload relevant deliverables
 - Encourage project partners to share our updates and help build our followers
- Begin
 - Quarterly newsletters



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- Interviews in local radio/tv stations
- Knowledge Output/Columbus Methodology

Primary/Secondary groups:

- Maintain
 - Attendance and presentations at events and conferences
- Increase
 - Development of links with other EU funded projects
- Begin
 - Ocean Energy EU funded project working group
 - Development of links with key organisations such as OEE
 - Face-to-face meetings
 - Phone calls
 - Questionnaires
 - Workshops organised – first planned for ICOE-OEE 2022



4 Nomenclature

Abbreviations

EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
H2020	Horizon 2020
WP	Work Package
PC	Project Coordinator
PMT	Project Management Team
PSC	Project Steering Committee
WPL	Work Package Leaders
SG	Stakeholder Groups
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights