

**Key communication  
messages, mechanisms  
to reach target audiences  
and training aspects**

# A communication strategy

The VME Global Database workshop (FAO, Rome 7-9 December 2011) indicated as primary objective the facilitation of communication among RFMO/As and States, and raising public awareness of civil society with regards to VME issues.

► This objective may be translated into a communication strategy which would be based mainly on two elements:

- Identification of the primary audience
- Elaboration of key messages

NOTE: Adopting the right messages: communicating to policy makers, civil society or scientists may need different messages and/or communication styles.

# Communication plan elements

The development of a full blown communication strategy can be effectively prepared by a communication expert who will be able to set the following elements and suggest others

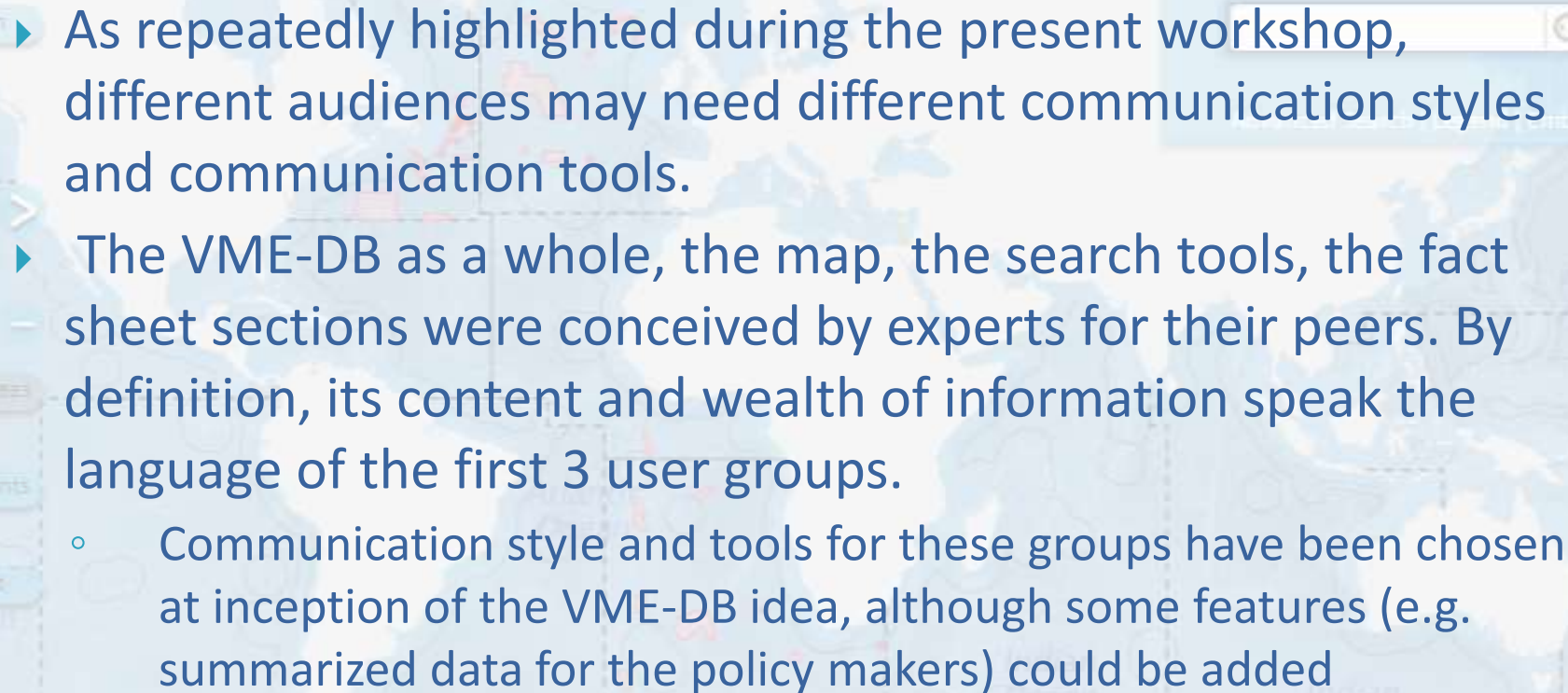
- ▶ Time line, including media opportunities
- ▶ Support data, including regular monitoring of site, user surveys, etc.
- ▶ Measurable targets (e.g. increase of web visits by 10%; appearing among first results in Google, etc.)
- ▶ Focus (i.e. developing home page and thematic pages; developing social media pushes)
- ▶ Identifying appropriate media and channels of delivery (e.g. a FAQ section, glossaries, summarized information made available through the VME portal, links to image, audio and video resources)

# The primary audience

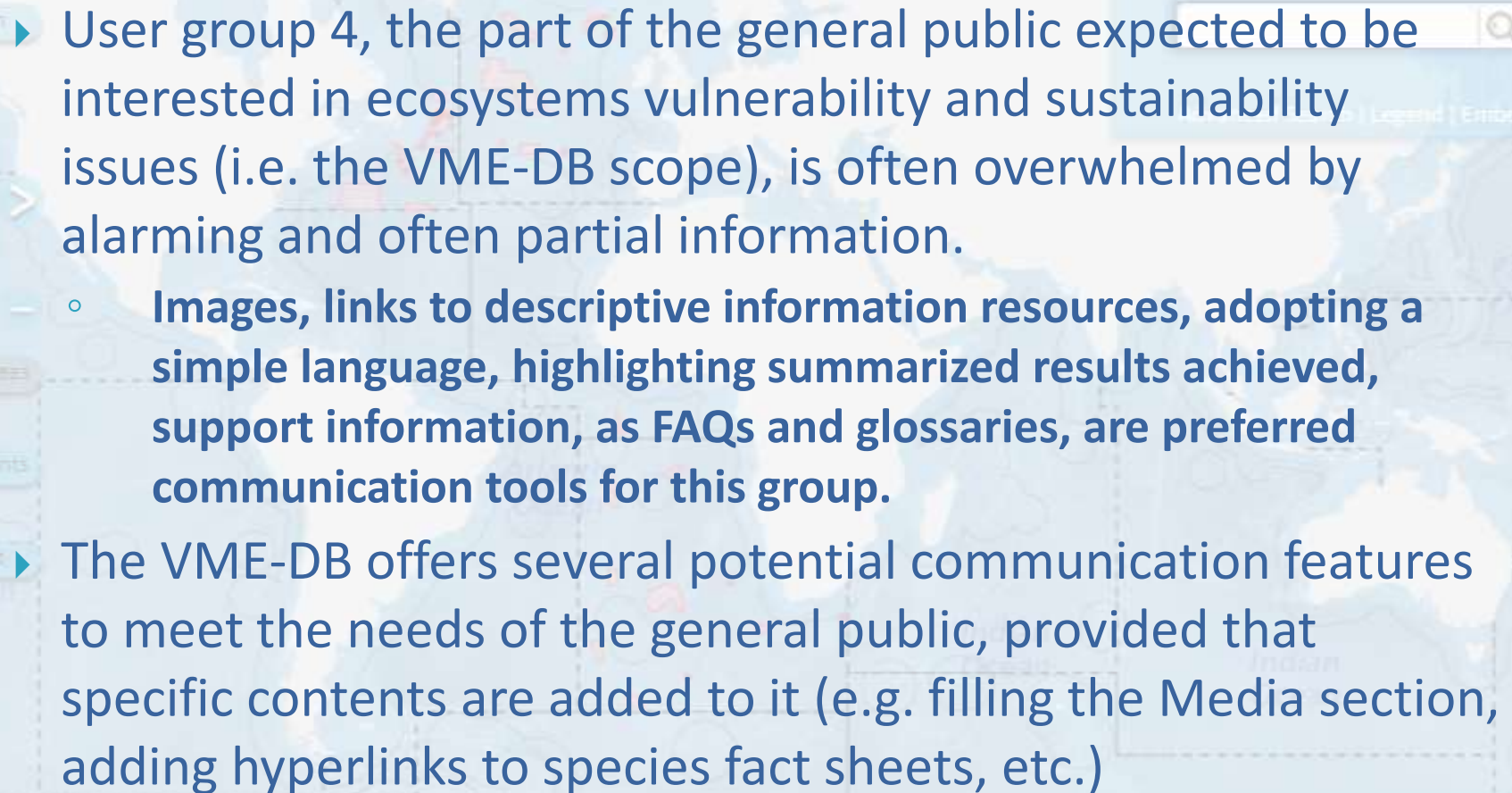
▶ In terms of user groups, the VME-DB objective is expected to provide benefits for:

1. **Fishery managers** - comparison of RFMO/A approaches and application of criteria between regions, identification of best practices, etc.
2. **Industry** - enhance transparency to help show the sustainability of activities and efforts to reduce fishing impact on VMEs.
3. **Policy makers** - summary/aggregated VME data are adequate for the policy and management requirements
4. **Civil society**: increased awareness of the general public on science-based processes within the RFMO/As and subsequent actions taken to protect VMEs.

# Reaching target audiences 1/2

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- ▶ As repeatedly highlighted during the present workshop, different audiences may need different communication styles and communication tools.
  - ▶ The VME-DB as a whole, the map, the search tools, the fact sheet sections were conceived by experts for their peers. By definition, its content and wealth of information speak the language of the first 3 user groups.
    - Communication style and tools for these groups have been chosen at inception of the VME-DB idea, although some features (e.g. summarized data for the policy makers) could be added

# Reaching target audiences 2/2

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- ▶ User group 4, the part of the general public expected to be interested in ecosystems vulnerability and sustainability issues (i.e. the VME-DB scope), is often overwhelmed by alarming and often partial information.
    - Images, links to descriptive information resources, adopting a simple language, highlighting summarized results achieved, support information, as FAQs and glossaries, are preferred communication tools for this group.
  - ▶ The VME-DB offers several potential communication features to meet the needs of the general public, provided that specific contents are added to it (e.g. filling the Media section, adding hyperlinks to species fact sheets, etc.)

# Key communication messages 1/3

The target users groups should allow the identification of:

- ▶ key message(s)
  - best to have 1, no more than 3 - Brief, meaningful and sustainable
- ▶ communications plan and objective(s)
  - clear, attainable, supported by adequate resources as well as designated responsibilities

# Key communication messages 2/3

▶ **Objective:** raising public awareness of civil society towards VME issues

▶ Communication message

- << VME-DB contributes, together with other sources, to the EAF by improving transparency and engagement of the general public in the monitoring of the status of VMEs, as well as science-based processes within the RFMO/As and subsequent actions taken to protect VMEs >>

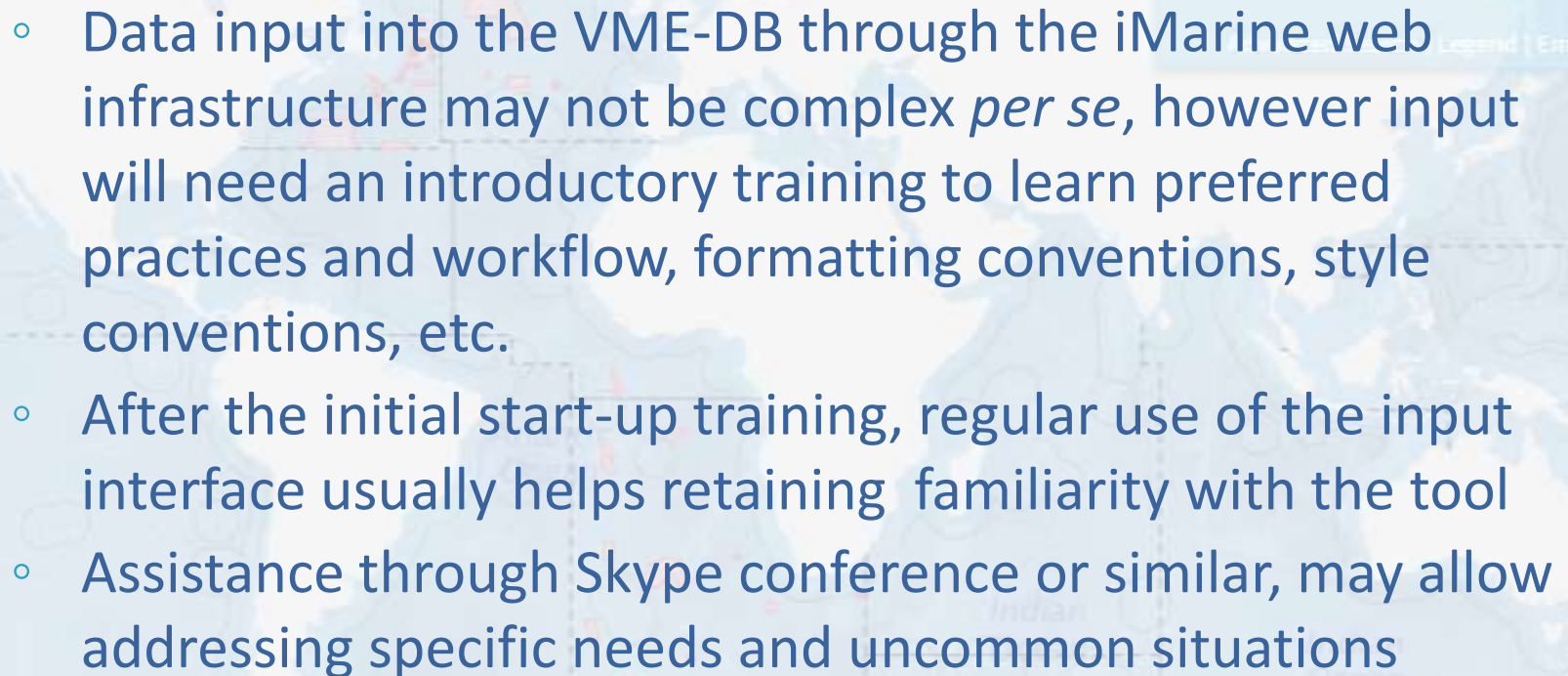
▶ Communication plan:

- promote links to the VME-DB website from national agencies websites
- promote the dissemination of VME-DB fact sheets from RFMO/As websites
- invite national focal points to disseminate their VME-DB published fact sheets through their national agencies websites

# Key communication messages 3/3

- ▶ **Objective:** facilitating partnerships and networks among information contributors and those working on the protection of VMEs in the high seas
- ▶ To LME / regional ecosystem projects
  - << VME-DB authoritative, objective, credible, and sustainable information on VME areas will contribute indicators of the state of these ecosystems>>
- ▶ To NGOs advocating on sustainable fisheries
  - << VME-DB provides the foundations for iNGOs to build more specific evidence-based advocacy to support concepts of sustainable fisheries>>
- ▶ Communication plan
  - Offer summarized, downloadable, reusable artifacts (e.g. brochures, summarized data, thematic pages, Newsletters, Radio interviews, communication material) meant for further re-dissemination and exchange
  - Through social media and other tools promoting dialogue and exchange between different user groups

# Training

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- Data input into the VME-DB through the iMarine web infrastructure may not be complex *per se*, however input will need an introductory training to learn preferred practices and workflow, formatting conventions, style conventions, etc.
  - After the initial start-up training, regular use of the input interface usually helps retaining familiarity with the tool
  - Assistance through Skype conference or similar, may allow addressing specific needs and uncommon situations