



EUR-OCEANS Fact Sheets

Definition: the fact sheets are a key tool for transferring research-based knowledge arising from partnerships within the Network to external users.

General Description

The fact sheets are short succinct, two-sided A4 documents that provide scientific information on the research and topics explored by EUR-OCEANS scientists. The fact sheets will be at popular science level e.g. New Scientist and are specifically aimed at influencing decision-makers (research managers, policy makers, agency advisors) both in Europe and internationally. They will have a strong scientific focus but should avoid jargon and specialized terms. They should be focused on providing targeted information that will influence and inform policy, i.e. policy driven rather than science driven. Each fact sheet must be able to stand alone, although when a number have been produced they can be put together to provide a portfolio of EUR-OCEANS scientific activities, and should provide clear evidence for integration.

Each fact sheet will be generally organised into 7 'boxes'. The size and layout of these boxes can be tailored to suit the needs of the specific topic whilst still adhering to the EUR-OCEAN Fact Sheet style and corporate look.

Box 1. Title/Question

This provides the first 'hook' to capture the reader's attention. It should be interesting and eye-catching to encourage further reading. The fact sheets will be predominantly driven and structured around pertinent policy questions.

Box 2. Introduction

This section will introduce the topic, identify the problem or research question. Should provide a brief general background to the topic, highlight why it is important. Again should be interesting, adequately describe the state of knowledge prior to the information presented in the fact sheet, and encourage the reader to want to find out more. Highlight the importance of the research and its contribution to a particular policy issue.

Box 3. The topic in depth

The research is elaborated here. This section gives the reader a broad understanding of the research undertaken. This section should focus on highlighting the results and outline their implications rather than focusing on the scientific methods used. If necessary essential technical issues can be presented but use of jargon should be avoided.

Box 4. Science in context

In this section the science is put into context, highlight its relevance to a particular question or debate. Explain specifically why the science is relevant in a policy context and how the findings can be used. Where relevant provide information on the following:

- further research required
- what policy changes need to occur
- how long will it take to effect change
- how can success be measured, cost of changes
- what would happen if nothing changed
- suggest solutions to problems that have been identified
- provide suggestions for moving forward
- include timelines for actions if relevant
- suggest ways of measuring success
- if further research is required state a case for it here.

This section is vital to the fact sheet having an impact on its audience, and should really demonstrate why there was a need for a fact sheet on this topic.

Box 5. Action points

This section should highlight actions to be taken. It should give a clear message on what needs to be done.

There must be a strong action message

Images

Only those relevant to the topic will be included, ideally between 2-5 images. Images should be eye catching and easily understand by non-specialists.

Box 6. Further information

Provides details on who to contact to find out more about the research topic, e.g. websites or contact details.

Box 7. Contact Details

Provides contact details for the Knowledge Transfer Unit.

The boxes are used as a template and allow for EUR-OCEANS PI's to write the sections themselves and then pass them on to the KTU for swift production. Alternatively the KTU can tailor information provided by PI's to the style of the fact sheets (this method will lead to slower production rates). The fact sheets are cost effective to produce and can be very much tailored to specific needs.

Summary of points to remember

- ✓ Identify what the problem is and why findings of the research are important
- ✓ Focus on the implications of the research rather than the information
- ✓ Summarise the wider implications of the research
- ✓ Show research in relation and comparison to other knowledge sources
- ✓ Show specifically how the research can shape policy and why it is important
- ✓ Highlight any short term observable benefits that could be gained.
- ✓ Identify specifically what can or should be done
- ✓ Show how it could be achieved (ideally including a time frame)
- ✓ Provide a method for measuring success
- ✓ Structure ideas simply and persuasively
- ✓ Simplify complex information and make your point clearly and concisely
- ✓ Avoid information overload - condense the research into actionable, solution based points.
- ✓ Clarity uncertainty and risk where relevant

Target Audiences

The fact sheets have a number of knowledge transfer uses:

1. The fact sheets will be predominantly targeted at policy makers, research managers and advisory agencies, and thus must be targeted to answer specific policy questions in a timely manner and provide solutions to problems.
2. Can be made in advance of major conferences or events for use as discussion points
3. When relevant, fact sheets can be targeted at corporate users to highlight the uses and benefits of specific research. Can be used a promotional tool to engage businesses/SMEs in cutting-edge science.

Fact Sheet Template

Box 1.

Title/Topic/Question – must be snappy, interesting, eye-catching – the title will be the first draw for readers.

Box 2. Introduction and background information

This section will introduce the topic.

- identify the problem or research question.
- highlight the importance of the research for the users
- why is it important?

Approx 150 words

Box 3. The Topic

This section will provide the key information on the topic/research.

- the research topic and the science explained
- methods can be outlined very briefly avoiding technical jargon.
- highlight main results/questions
- compare to other research on the topic if relevant
- highlight why this research is relevant.
- Summarise conclusions and their implications for policy

Approx 300 words

Image 1

The number of images will vary depending on topic

Box 4. The science in context

The message given in this section will be dependant on the target/goal of the fact sheet.

Puts the science in a relevant context and should include where possible the following points:

- why the findings are relevant and to whom
- what are their specific implications?
- what this means for policy?
- **provide tangible solutions** do not just present problems
- how can success be measured
- cost of changes
- how long will it take to effect change
- repercussions of no change.
- outline gaps in knowledge
- make links with other research activities

This is the most important section!

Approx 300 words

Image/Figure 2.

The number of images will vary depending on topic

Image/Figure 3.

The number of images will vary depending on topic

Image/Figure 4.

The number of images will vary depending on topic

Box 5. Action points

This section should highlight distinct action points and include where relevant information on the following:

- further research required
- what policy changes need to occur

There must be a strong action message

Max 150 words

Box 6. Further information

Provide details for all authors, so that readers can contact the scientists and access full research report, or for general enquires about the work.

Box 7. Contact

Produced by: EUR-OCEANS Knowledge Transfer Unit. For more information about the work of the Unit please contact jessh@pml.ac.uk GLOBEC IPO, UK or visit the website at www.EUR-OCEANS.org/KTU