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UCC University College Cork, Ireland  
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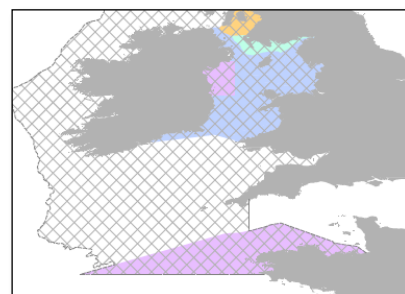


Co-funded by the EC Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, SIMCelt is a two-year project that aims to enhance cross-border cooperation between Member States on the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Directive in the Celtic Seas.

Two of our deliverables are now available revealing more in-depth information on MSP in the Celtic Seas and an analysis of the gaps in our understanding of this area in terms of data.

Our outreach work continues as we have had a presence at many different MSP events since the last issue, raising awareness of the work SIMCelt is doing and forging connections with stakeholders and collaborators. We have also begun to plan our own closing conference, which seems to have come around rather quickly! You can find out more about the sessions and themes we'll be exploring on page 9.

#### IN THIS ISSUE



View our study area map and learn which parts of the Celtic Seas we are investigating for our components and case studies.

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Find out where we have been promoting the project including our EMD workshop.

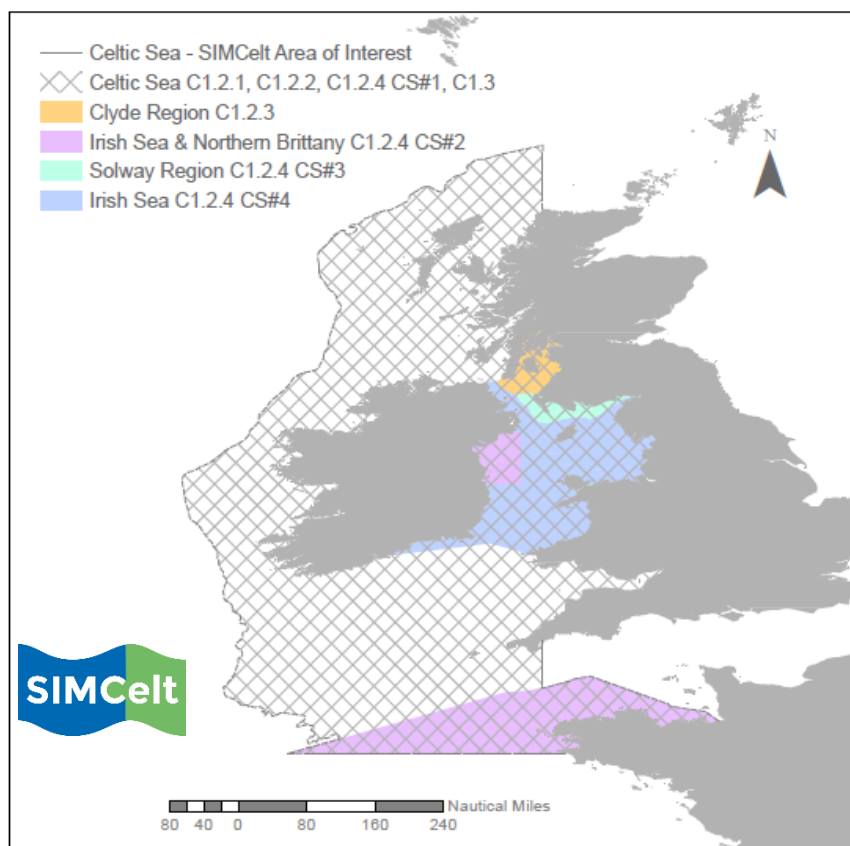
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*Produced and edited by Charlotte Billingham, Dept. Geography and Planning, University of Liverpool.*

*All views expressed are opinions of the editor and do not represent those held by the European Commission or other project partners.*

*You can download this newsletter in pdf form from <http://www.simcelt.eu/project-outputs/newsletters/>*

## Our work continues



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### Study area map

We have produced this map to show the project focus areas in more detail. Full version at [www.simcelt.eu/about/project-components/](http://www.simcelt.eu/about/project-components/)

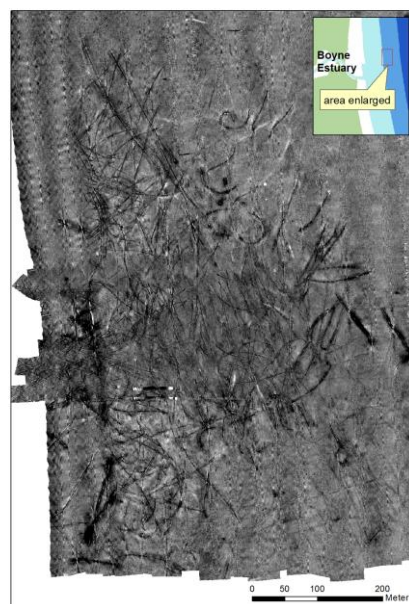
While SIMCelt has a remit for the entire Celtic Seas region (cross hatched area), some components and case studies centre on specific areas.

For example the objective of Case study #2 is to establish how cumulative effect assessment methodology can be incorporated into the MSP process. Two pilot projects are currently underway to test CEA methodologies, in the Irish Sea and off the North Brittany coast.

The pilot projects are demonstrating cumulative effects resulting from seabed disturbance (e.g. abrasion, smothering and substrate loss) and how they impact on benthic habitats. We have mapped the contributing human activities, habitats and conservation zones in these areas and have carried out an assessment of the resulting environmental pressures and the sensitivity of habitats.

CS #4 uses the Irish Sea to study ecosystem services (ES). Outputs from the case study will be displayed in a user-friendly ESRI Storymap that will combine maps with narrative text, and images. The case study will focus on a few examples of how to understand the concept of provisioning, regulating and cultural ES in a sufficiently practical way that can be applied by maritime planners.

*INFOMAR Survey data showing evidence of abrasion in the Western Irish Sea CS#2 area*



## Outputs published

Two of our deliverables are now available to view and download on our website. These outputs form the basis of more in-depth deliverables which will be available toward the end of the project.

### Overview Assessment: Summary Information on Marine Aspects of the Celtic Seas

The purpose of the Overview Assessment is to initiate an investigation into the challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation MSP in transboundary areas of the Celtic Seas. As a foundation of understanding, this document provides an overview of the territorial boundaries and key environmental characteristics of the region; major maritime activities; key sectoral and socioeconomic trends and pressures; existing work of relevance to MSP and relevant European policy and legislation.

<http://www.simcelt.eu/wp-content/uploads/D1.Initial-Assessment.pdf>

### Analysis of Data Needs and Existing Gaps

High quality maritime spatial data and information is a key element for implementing MSP. Data and information sharing is allowed by Marine Spatial Data Infrastructures which support transboundary cooperation as well as national efforts linked to MSP. The associated tools are also critical to enable access to data and information as a basis for dialogue with the public and all interested parties, as well as providing support for decision making.

This report aims to give a description of the state of current data needs and gaps and to identify the challenges and opportunities associated with data and information in support of transboundary MSP in the Celtic Seas.

[http://www.simcelt.eu/wp-content/uploads/SIMCeltD4\\_DataAnalysisReport.pdf](http://www.simcelt.eu/wp-content/uploads/SIMCeltD4_DataAnalysisReport.pdf)

## Developing scenarios for the Celtic Seas

**AQUACULTURE**

Supporting Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning in the Celtic Seas

Component 1.2.1 Spatial Demands and Scenarios for Maritime Sectors and Marine Conservation

Deliverable 2 Sectoral briefing notes

Others in the series

Cables and Pipelines  
Offshore Wind Energy  
Ports and Shipping  
Wave and Tidal Energy

Co-funded by the European Union

**Maritime Sector Briefing Note**

This briefing note summarises the current status of aquaculture in the SIMCelt project area. It looks at the current policy environment and ambitions for aquaculture development in the future, alongside the implications for expansion of the sector in relation to Maritime Spatial Planning.

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As part of our work on Spatial Demands and Scenarios, which explores future development of different maritime sectors in the context of the Celtic Seas, sector briefing notes are being developed covering:

- ⊙ Aquaculture
- ⊙ Cables and Pipelines
- ⊙ Offshore Wind Energy
- ⊙ Ports and Shipping
- ⊙ Wave and Tidal Energy

These notes have been shared with representatives of the various sectors to ensure accuracy and completeness. If you are involved with these sectors or believe you could offer any insights on marine planning as it relates to maritime industries, please contact Lynne McGowan [L.McGowan@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:L.McGowan@liverpool.ac.uk)

Alongside the development and review of these briefing notes, we are planning an event in September which will explore how different scenarios (economic/social/environmental) would interact with and influence development and marine planning in the Celtic Seas. For more information or to register your interest in attending this event please see the event link

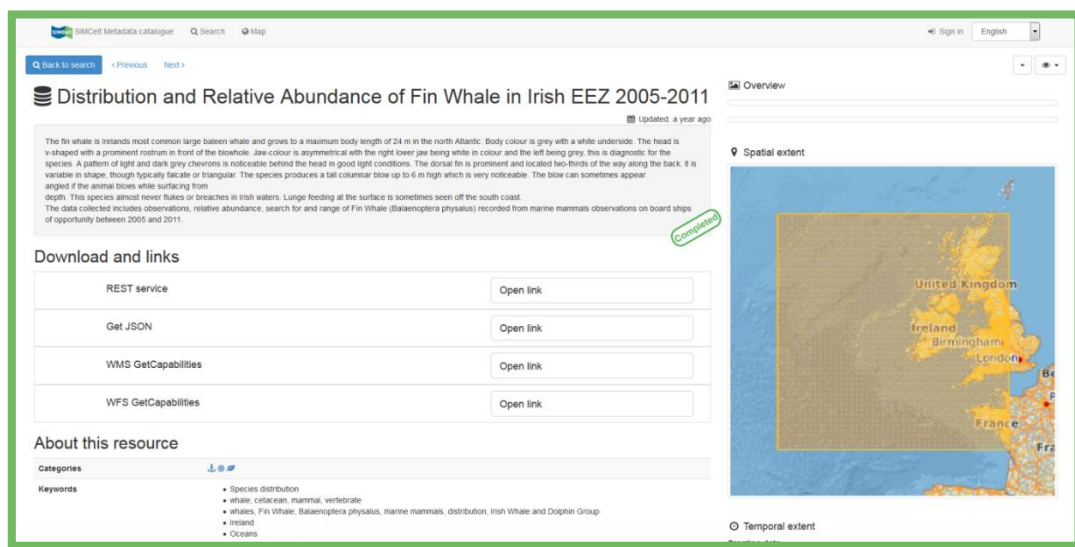
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/developing-scenarios-for-the-celtic-seas-tickets-35003391085?ref=estw>



## SIMCelt data portal demonstrator

The SIMCelt data portal demonstrator is a tool with a primary objective to support the study outlined above **Analysis of Data Needs and Existing Gaps**. Issues are most often encountered when displaying and disseminating relevant Maritime Spatial Planning data on either side of a maritime boundary. Data and information analysis is facilitated by the existence of the portal, which allows testing of compatibility between different data sets and uncovers issues such as differing scales, symbology or missing data.

Its secondary objective is to address the needs and gaps discovered during the project by publishing relevant MSP data on the Celtic Seas alongside a metadata catalogue.



*An example of a metadata record*



*SIMCelt data portal demonstrator interface*

This Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure is an important contribution to overcoming data incompatibility issues, helping to build a shared knowledge for stakeholders particularly in a transboundary area. The portal demonstrator also features a map viewer to enable users to visualise the data and will provide a thematic digital atlas of pre-loaded maps to display data, for example, on specific human activities in areas. The portal is still under development, and should be available from September 2017.



## MSP Challenge game - stakeholder engagement on the Clyde

They say that if you want to understand another person's perspective, you should walk a mile in their shoes. Marine stakeholders on the west coast of Scotland had the chance to do just that this summer, without even getting their feet wet, when the Clyde Marine Planning Partnership (CMPP) brought the MSP Challenge board game to a range of coastal towns as part of a SIMCelt-funded case study on exploring new ways of engaging with stakeholders.

This 'serious game' was developed in the Netherlands as a fun way of introducing the complex world of marine planning to those who work, live and play next to our coasts and marine areas. Set in the fictional Rica Sea, participants represent the diverse uses made of the sea, playing roles ranging from Aquaculture to Shipping and everything in between. They promote their ideas for the development of different activities as part of a long-term Marine Plan for the area; those playing the role of

'Marine Planners' must decide which proposals benefit the three areas bordering the Sea as well as secure a sustainable future for the Sea overall.

The sessions took the game to a number of venues around the Clyde and gave the organisers much food for thought as the process for developing a Regional Marine Plan for the area begins. It also gave an Aberdeen University student the raw data for his M.Sc. dissertation on environmental partnerships and marine planning and a taste of real-life stakeholder engagement! Public participation is fundamental to marine planning in Scotland and the initial results of the MSP Challenge board game's summer tour indicate interest in the process along with a useful insight into how different factors influence decision-making. A full report on innovative means of stakeholder engagement will be published as an outcome from the SIMCelt project.



You will have a chance to play the MSP Challenge game at our closing conference (see page 9) where it will be showcased as part of the SIMCelt project but also in the context of the work being done by the Strategic Partnership on MSP (SPMSP) – read more about this on page 7. The conference ‘Project Marketplace’ will also feature a digital version of the game. The ‘MSP Challenge 2050’ is a computer supported simulation-game which gives maritime spatial planners further insight into the diverse challenges of sustainable planning of human activities in the marine and coastal ecosystem. A version of this game is currently being developed for the Clyde under the SIMCelt initiative.

Find out more <http://www.mspchallenge.info/>  
<http://www.simcelt.eu/project-outputs/the-msp-board-game/>

## Events



A key aim of this UN 'Oceans' Conference was to build momentum for the implementation of SDG 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development) as a core component of the 2030 Agenda. Over 4,000 delegates attended from government representatives to intergovernmental organisations, civil society, research institutions and the private sector.

The Conference culminated in three outcomes: a Call for Action; a registry of voluntary commitments; and key messages from partnership dialogues which focused on marine issues (e.g. pollution, conservation of marine biodiversity, sustainable fisheries, etc.). In the Call for Action high-level representatives, stressed the need for an "integrated, interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach, as well as enhanced cooperation, coordination and policy coherence, at all levels." They called on all stakeholders to take certain key actions urgently including many that complement the ongoing work of the SIMCelt project, for example:

- ⊙ Strengthen cooperation, policy coherence and coordination among institutions at all levels ([Click to view SIMCelt component 1.3: Development of Cooperation on Maritime Spatial Planning](#))
- ⊙ Dedicate greater resources to marine scientific research as well as the collection and sharing of data and knowledge to promote decision-making based on the best available science ([Click to view SIMCelt component 1.2.2. Data and information requirements for MSP](#))
- ⊙ Support the use of effective and appropriate area-based management tools, e.g. marine protected areas ([Click to view 1.2.1 Spatial demands and scenarios for maritime sectors and marine conservation](#)) and other integrated, cross-sectoral approaches, including Maritime Spatial Planning based on best available science, as well as stakeholder engagement and applying the precautionary and ecosystem approaches ([Click to view SIMCelt case study #4 Understanding and Applying Ecosystem Services to MSP](#)).

It is hoped that the SIMCelt project can continue to contribute in some small way to the larger challenge of implementing SDG 14.

The full text of the "Our ocean, our future: call for action" can be found at <https://undocs.org/A/CONF.230/11> and more coverage of the Oceans Conference at: <https://oceanconference.un.org/>

### MSP Paris Conference



The 2<sup>nd</sup> International conference on MSP took place in Paris in March organised by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC) and the Directorate-

General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the European Commission. Joseph O. Ansong from MaREI-University College Cork gave a presentation as part of the session on Institutional Capacity Development for MSP. He highlighted some of the EU MSP Capacity building initiatives through MSP education/ training and through research projects like SIMCelt. As a beneficiary of the Erasmus Mundus Masters Course on Maritime



Spatial Planning, he discussed his academic experiences during the 2 year course, its contribution and progression into another EU capacity building initiative (SIMCelt) and how the project is building institutional capacity for MSP through partnership and cooperation among planning authorities and stakeholders.

The outputs from the various sessions were summarised into the “Joint Roadmap to accelerate Maritime/Marine Spatial Planning processes worldwide” published after the conference. Actions by DGMARE and UNESCO on capacity building will include joining efforts to identify specific regional training needs, providing training worldwide, launching a pilot project in 2018 and facilitating the exchange of MSP expertise between European institutions and those from other parts of the world. Other actions by IOC-UNESCO and DG MARE which complement the work and aim of the SIMCelt project in facilitating cross border cooperation include:



- ⊙ Continued funding support for the establishment of lasting mechanisms for cross-border cooperation covering all EU sea-basins until 2021 and the launching of a pilot project in 2018 to test practices of cross-border cooperation with non EU Member States
- ⊙ Developing guidance to facilitate the implementation of transboundary MSP.

The full text of the “Joint Roadmap to accelerate Maritime/Marine Spatial Planning processes worldwide” can be found at: [http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/Joint\\_Roadmap\\_MSP\\_v5.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/Joint_Roadmap_MSP_v5.pdf)

All the ePosters, presentations and photos from the MSP Paris event are now available at: <http://www.msp2017.paris/presentations> and video coverage of the event can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWuYED1WVJIOk5ZhsoTWOOrDSqcWvRP9l>



### MSP challenge game educates the next generation of marine planners

The Erasmus funded Strategic Partnership on MSP aims to develop the European higher education landscape in the emerging field of marine or maritime spatial planning. An international Foundation Module on MSP will aim towards a transnational and practical understanding of the governance and spatial planning of the marine environment. Similar structured lectures and seminars will be developed and designed to introduce participants to MSP and the complexity of merging economic, societal and environmental objectives towards a sustainable use of European Seas.

As part of the development of these curriculum materials, the MSP challenge game has been used with groups of students at the University of Liverpool to facilitate their learning around stakeholder engagement. This innovative use of the game was supported by Marine Scotland who shared their experiences of using the game as part of the work on SIMCelt component 1.2.3: Stakeholder Engagement (see p5 above).



## European Maritime Day



SIMCelt organised a workshop in collaboration with partners BalticScope and NorthSee at EMD in Poole in May. Each project shared experiences from the Baltic, North and Celtic Seas to consider specific issues in transboundary MSP implementation. Participants then joined in the “Living Q” exercise from NorthSEE to examine interactively, how stakeholder subjectivity influences transnational cooperation. Participants explored various statements relating to MSP and had to decide whether they agreed or disagreed with them through a relative ranking process.

The main challenge in cross-border MSP is a duly needed harmonization of regulations & legislative arrangements	Ecosystem based management should be seen as the foundation for cross-border MSP	Cross-border stakeholder engagement is more effective at a local level	Marine planning and terrestrial planning are strongly linked and should not be separated	A strong degree of cooperation between national authorities is crucial for MSP
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The resulting discussions highlighted where attitudes to the MSP process converged or diverged most strongly and allowed people to discuss the reasons for their positions and understand those of others. It is a highly useful exercise for getting people to think about the views others hold and the foundations for these views which can help to facilitate greater understanding and cooperation. The data gathered through running the exercise with various different groups over the life of the NorthSee project will illuminate the most controversial aspects of the MSP process where there is potential for disagreement and conflict.

Photos and final conference report now available at

<https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/maritimeday/en/content/conference>

## MAPSIS conference

**International Conference on MSP, Ecosystem Approach and Supporting Information Systems (MaPSIS), Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 24-28 April**



The MaPSIS Conference was an open forum for researchers, policy and decision makers, professionals and other stakeholders to discuss three main themes including Maritime Spatial Planning & Blue Growth, Marine strategies & environmental planning and Marine/Maritime Information Systems.

Joseph O. Ansong presented on SIMCelt, discussing the importance of cross border

cooperation in the implementation of maritime spatial planning which was one of the major recommendations from the conference. The conference also afforded the opportunity to interact with researchers and decision makers from other member states in the Atlantic and advertise the SIMCelt final conference. Abstract authors and presenters at the conference have also been invited to publish in the MaPSIS Ocean & Coastal Management Special Issue.





## SeaScotland, Dundee



The second annual Sea Scotland conference took place in Dundee on June 23<sup>rd</sup> providing a multi- interest forum for Scotland-focused dialogue and knowledge exchange. The topics under consideration were the implications of constitutional change on environmental policy and progress towards sustainable development in the marine area.

The conference provided a platform for keynote speakers to highlight Scotland's activities post EU-Referendum and non-EU mechanisms to secure progress towards sustainable development. Key themes such as marine conservation, scientific research requirements and marine governance were highly relevant to the SIMCelt project.

Charlotte Hopkins, University of Liverpool, was in attendance as part of a wide range of marine stakeholders. Delegates had the opportunity to participate in roundtable discussions on Food, Ports & Energy and Recreation & Tourism. Delegates were asked to consider the challenges and risks in achieving sustainable development, obligations that continue outside EU membership, opportunities and priorities.



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## SIMCelt Closing Conference



You may have seen our closing conference publicity over the last few weeks inviting you to join us in November to explore SIMCelt's outputs. Many of you have registered already which is great to see, if you haven't yet you can find all the information on our web page

<http://www.simcelt.eu/events/project-closing-event/>

Our programme is still in development as the work we are doing within the project will shape the content and format of our conference sessions. We are also collaborating with other MSP projects and initiatives to ensure the work we have done is situated in the broader context of MSP. Please spread the word amongst your own networks and contacts.

The conference is free to attend. Register here <https://tinyurl.com/CelticSeasMSP>