



Co-funded by the
European Union

Supporting
Implementation of
Maritime Spatial
Planning
in the
Celtic Seas

Newsletter 4
March 2018

AGENCE FRANÇAISE
POUR LA BIODIVERSITÉ

Établissement public du ministère de l'Environnement



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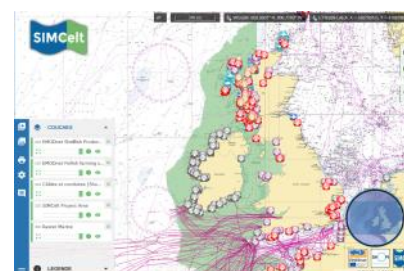
Welcome

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.

Originally the project was due to conclude in December 2017. We received an extension of three months to complete work on our deliverables and design a signposting document to enable MSP stakeholders to discover the most relevant outputs from our work. All of the project deliverables will be available via the website at the end of March 2018.

In this, our final newsletter, we report on events that have engaged MSP stakeholders with our work and showcase the forthcoming outputs from the project and how they might be used after the project ends.

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outputs and resources

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conference

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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

SIMCelt's final outputs

A number of our outputs are already available via the website and you will find all of our final outputs published there by the end of March.

Our **Initial Report 'Developing an Overview'** summarises key issues at the regional level and is a good place to start for those new to the Celtic Seas. Here you can learn more about the different approaches taken to MSP in each country and relevant transboundary issues.

The **Overview Report on the Current State and Potential Future Spatial Requirements of Key Maritime Activities** outlines how scenario planning techniques can be used in MSP and looks at specific scenarios for future marine space utilisation in the Celtic Seas including different countries' approaches to marine conservation.

Reports available from the **Data and Information Requirements for MSP component** analyse data gaps in the Celtic Seas and ways to address them. The outputs also offer data management guidance and suggest ways to improve data inter-operability in the region.

Work under the **Stakeholder Engagement** component reports on potential approaches and mechanisms for stakeholder engagement on MSP including outcomes of pilot testing in transboundary and localised cross-border working situations.

Development of Cooperation on Maritime Spatial Planning offers an analysis of existing mechanisms for transboundary cooperation on MSP in the Celtic Seas and recommendations on future requirements to facilitate efficient cross-border working at different levels of governance.

Examples of evaluation processes trialled in Northern Ireland and Wales form part of the **Evaluation of MSP** report examining ways to involve sectoral stakeholders and decision makers in an adaptive evaluation cycle.

In addition to these comprehensive reports you can find a number of standalone outputs that could be used by stakeholders, researchers and practitioners to support understanding and implementation of the different stages in MSP.

Sectoral Briefing Notes on selected Maritime Activities

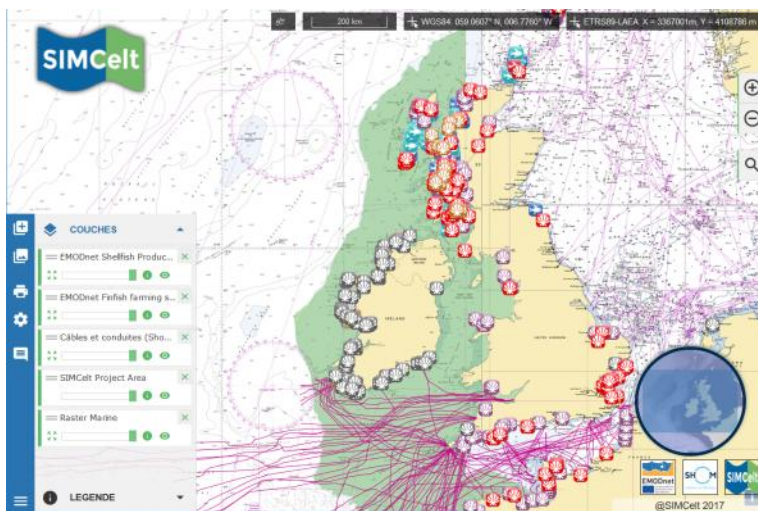
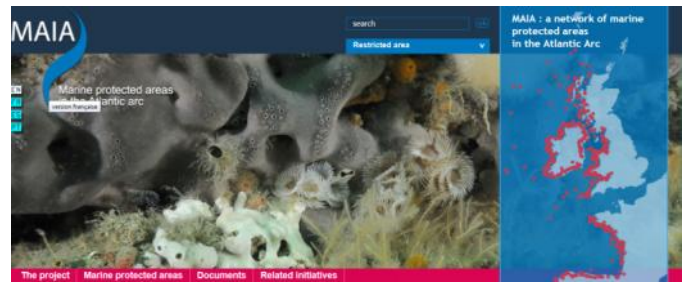
Our Scenarios work includes detailed analysis of the current and potential future key issues in these maritime sectors: Aquaculture, Cables and Pipelines, Offshore Wind Energy, Ports and Shipping, Wave and Tidal Energy. Each note offers insights into emerging trends in the sectors and their interaction with other sectors in relation to marine space thereby informing MSP development.

MSP Challenge

Digital and board versions of this innovative stakeholder engagement game are described in full on p 10.

MPA database

A transnational MPA database has been updated with information related to the MSP context in each SIMCelt partner country, considering each MPA's conservation objectives and processes for regulation of uses within their perimeter. The database allows MPAs in the Celtic Seas to be mapped and various data to be displayed. <http://www.maia-network.org/homepage>



<http://data.simcelt.eu>

Data portal

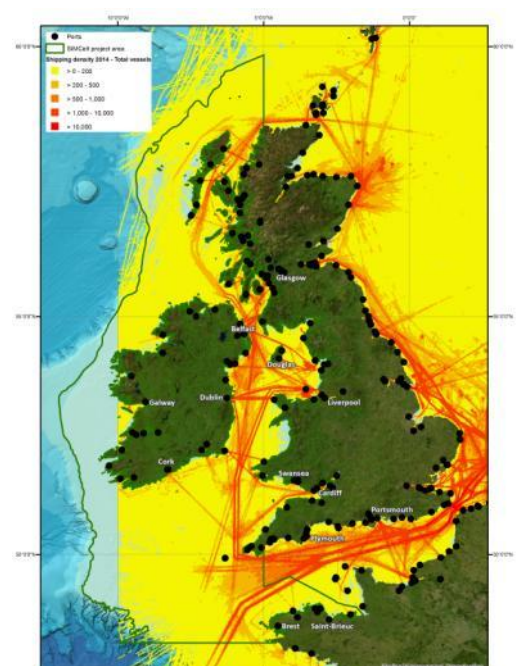
Our data portal is accessible online providing a means to search for datasets across the Celtic Seas and explore the metadata which supports them. This tool can be used to assist marine planners during the scoping phase or in designing effective monitoring regimes to support adaptive planning and evaluation.

Case studies

Complementing and extending the work undertaken in the components outlined above, a series of case studies (thematic and geographic) have been developed. These case studies illustrate how the challenges to MSP implementation, specifically transboundary working, can be addressed.

Case Study #1: Understanding Specific Cross-Border Issues and Opportunities

This case study seeks aims to understand issues and opportunities within the shipping and navigational safety and offshore renewable energy sectors. The analysis identifies issues within the individual sectors and examines what happens when they come together in the same marine space. The case study explores opportunities for both sectors stemming from the implementation of MSP based on interviews with agencies from both sectors.



Case Study #1 Shipping density map

Case Study #2: Assessment of Cumulative Impacts

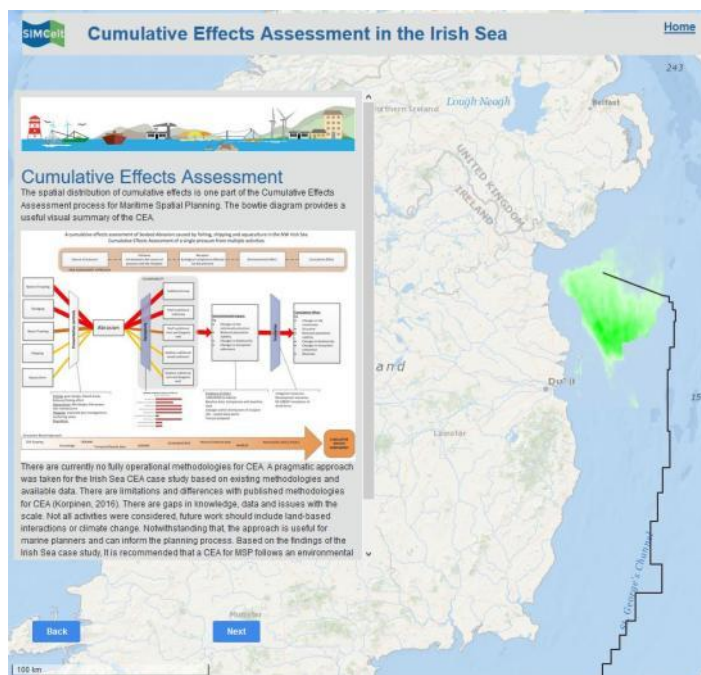
The objective of Case study #2 is to establish how cumulative effect assessment methodology can be incorporated into the MSP process. Assessing such impacts is usually beyond the capacity of one organisation, however, SIMCelt was a significant opportunity to join forces to provide that capacity. The case study builds upon and links with existing initiatives, e.g. OSPAR assessment, DEFRA-led working group on Cumulative Effects Assessment.

Case Study #3: Planning Across Borders

This case study looks at the Solway Firth where cross-border cooperation between marine planning authorities and the challenge of effective stakeholder engagement is brought into sharp focus. A series of short reports examines transboundary working within ecologically coherent units - how to assess and 'align' what is said in marine plans on different sides of a marine border, and what approaches can be taken to stakeholder engagement to ensure effective 'join up'.

Case Study #4: Understanding and Applying Ecosystem Services to MSP

The challenge in adopting an ecosystem approach to MSP is understanding the concept including economic valuation of services under different scenarios. 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.



Storymaps

The case studies exploring Cumulative Effects Assessment and Ecosystems Services include interactive Storymaps based on Arc GIS software. These engaging maps allow users to find out more about the methodologies used in preparing the case studies and show how the concepts could be applied to the marine planning process.

Links to both storymaps will be available from the SIMCelt website by the end of March

<http://www.simcelt.eu/project-outputs/>

Scenarios workshop

Celtic Seas 2050: Developing Scenarios for the Celtic Seas London, September 2017

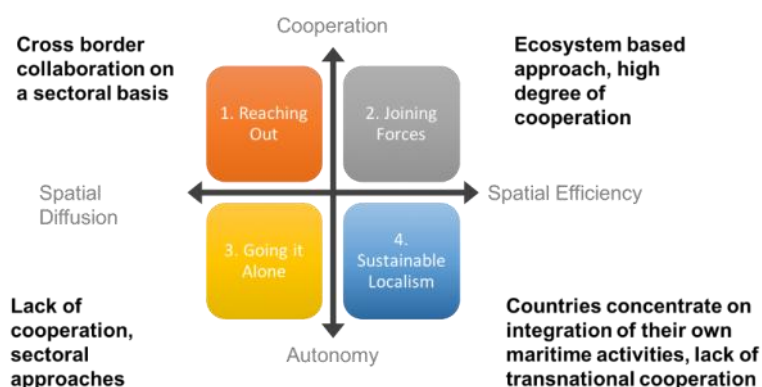


Critical to any forward-looking spatial plan is an understanding of the baseline conditions, drivers of change and future trends that will shape new spatial development. To determine what the most desirable future for any given place might look like, several tools for decision making can be used including the development of visions, strategies, forecasts, road maps, action plans and scenarios.

The overall methodology for developing scenarios for the Celtic Seas has followed three key stages.

1. Sectoral Maritime Activity Briefing Notes developed to gather data about current and future uses of the Celtic Seas
2. Findings from the Briefing Notes used as the basis for developing scenarios tested in a stakeholder workshop
3. Outcomes from workshop analysed to understand the implications for MSP and transboundary cooperation.

During Stage 2, the workshop 'Celtic Seas 2050: Developing Scenarios for the Celtic Seas' tested the scenarios with stakeholders exploring their perceptions of future demands on marine space. Stakeholders came from different maritime sectors in the Celtic Seas administrations and planning authorities and included consultants, researchers, ecologists, marine planners and representatives from the energy, fisheries and shipping sectors.



At this workshop, participants were split into four thematic groups that most closely matched their interests and the sectors under consideration. These were:

- Aquaculture
- Conservation
- Offshore renewable energy
- Ports and Shipping

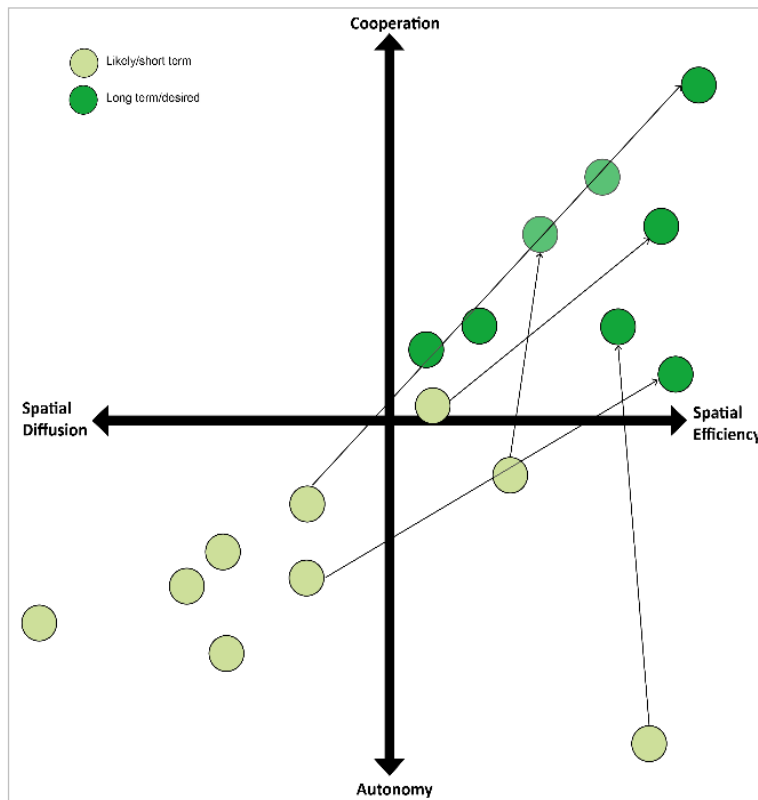
Following presentations from invited guest speakers, workshop participants contributed to three interactive sessions exploring the SIMCelt scenarios (above).

1. Sectoral Ambitions

Four scenarios were presented which outlined differing degrees of cooperation by Member States and varying levels of spatial efficiency in marine planning. In the thematic groups, participants were invited to imagine likely future trends in the sectors they were familiar with and place a marker on a grid of the

four scenarios to indicate where each sector would be in terms of its spatial footprint and level of transnational cooperation.

For example, in considering wave and tidal energy, participants largely agreed that it would move from a position of spatial diffusion and relatively low levels of cooperation in the short term to a more cooperative, spatially efficient pattern of development in the future.



Current levels of cooperation were viewed as being low for various reasons including the fact that most wave and tidal energy is still developer-led rather than planning-led and cooperation is limited to research and environmental monitoring.

The shift from the short term/near future position of the sector to the long term represents quite a dramatic shift and reveals high aspirations for wave and tidal energy. Discussions were optimistic about the development of more strategic approaches to planning for wave and tidal energy, which are currently thought to be lacking. Participants cited the ability of tidal lagoons to offer multiple benefits and support other uses, e.g. public

access, recreation, space for aquaculture

2. Sectoral Interactions

In this session participants were given the opportunity to consider other sectors' ambitions for 2050 and what this might mean for their own sector in terms of potential competition for space or new synergies that might arise. Then they explored how their sector would interact with others and whether there was likely to be conflict or if novel ways of sharing space could be found. For example, the issue of an increase in long haul shipping was seen to represent an increased biosecurity risk in terms of conservation and MPAs.

The co-location of aquaculture and offshore energy was identified as a key opportunity, however some big questions remain about the possibility of co-location as aquaculture areas may not be suitable for some types of energy installations (and vice versa).

Offshore Renewable Energy development was thought to have further negative impacts on conservation, e.g. underwater noise impacts from construction or decommissioning, seabed disturbance due to cabling and cumulative impacts.

3. Promoting Cross-Border Cooperation

Finally, specific issues with a transnational element were discussed and potential solutions or pathways to resolution were put forward. The potential of designated 'no-take' zones co-located where windfarms are installed was suggested and the potential of MSP policy and licensing to facilitate this was discussed. The findings from this workshop are discussed in more detail in the final report on Future Spatial Demand Scenarios in the Celtic Seas which will be published at the end of March 2018.

Closing conference

Maritime Spatial Planning: Transboundary Cooperation in the Celtic Seas

Liverpool, UK 28th-29th November



Overview

The conference brought together stakeholders, practitioners, maritime industries, government agencies and researchers involved in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Celtic Seas and beyond. SIMCelt's outputs formed the basis of the majority of sessions at the conference featuring collaborations with other projects and organisations to give a wider perspective.

Interactive sessions on the MSP Challenge introduced both the digital and board versions of the game, which are designed to facilitate stakeholder engagement with MSP processes. You can read more about how the game has been used within the SIMCelt project on p10.

The proceedings of the conference were captured by artists using the visual minute-taking technique, leaving an engaging graphical representation of the different sessions for posterity. Below is a summary of the different sessions and you can find all the presentations and photographs from the conference online.

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

Setting the Scene

This session set the context for MSP in the Celtic Seas with Felix Leinemann from the European Commission's DG MARE placing SIMCelt's work in the wider context of supporting implementation of the MSP Directive across the EU. Delegates heard about each country's approach to implementing the Directive and how the different stages of implementation link to different outputs from SIMCel. The Celtic Seas Partnership project discussed the legacy of the project and how such EU funded projects can help build a platform for engagement of maritime stakeholders beyond the life of the project. The Seabed User Development Group highlighted the importance of involving stakeholders from maritime sectors and industries in the plan-making process to help reduce conflicts arising subsequently during regulatory and licensing processes.

Future Oriented Approaches to Spatial Management

Outputs from the SIMCelt components covering scenario-building, marine conservation, evaluation processes and ecosystem services were the focus of this session. This was complemented by insight from the Marine Management Organisation on their consultation processes and how specific issues raised by stakeholders such as marine litter are dealt with in marine plan making. Speakers discussed the purpose of developing scenarios and the approach taken to reviewing future development of maritime sectors. SIMCelt Partners AFB presented the North East Atlantic Marine Protected Area database and their work on comparing national MPA management approaches. Work on the Ecosystem Services Case Study was presented by DAERA who demonstrated a StoryMap that uses examples of provisioning, regulating and cultural services to show how ecosystem services may be mapped and understood at a transboundary level.

Data



The “Data & Information Needs for the Celtic Seas” workshop presented the SIMCelt Data Portal and discussed the issues linked to data interoperability. Delegates were introduced to the main principles and organisation of the portal learning how to explore the map viewer’s main features, as well as the workflow and challenges of publishing a layer on the portal. The workshop group, including members of the SIMCelt Working Group on Data, looked at the potential of Web Processing Services for sharing tools used in MSP.

Transboundary cooperation

This session focused on sharing experiences of how cross border working on MSP is approached in the Celtic Seas, based on findings to date from the SIMCelt project. Participants heard about how SIMCelt has examined cross border working in its case studies and components including:

- Case Study: Specific Cross Border Issues – Shipping and offshore wind
- Stakeholder Engagement and Clyde Case Study
- Case Study: Planning Across Borders – Solway Firth
- Development of co-operation on MSP, existing mechanisms for transboundary working

The panel discussion among speakers and delegates looked at how challenges to cross border working can be addressed and potential approaches for fostering and strengthening cross border working.

Cumulative Effects Assessment



The aim of the SIMCelt Cumulative Effects Case Study was to put forward recommendations about how Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA) methodology may be incorporated in MSP. The objective of the conference workshop was to establish wider stakeholder views on the practicalities of integrating CEA methodologies within MSP processes. Delegates considered the relationship between the MSP Directive and CEA and the interaction of CEA and MSP processes by reference to UNESCO’s Step by Step Approach to MSP. Participants engaged in semi-structured roundtable discussions reflecting both individually (commenting on post-it notes) and collectively on the strengths and challenges of applying CEA in MSP processes and possible solutions to the challenges identified. The full findings of this workshop will be presented in a forthcoming paper in Marine Policy.

Planning for Blue Growth

In this session convened by the MSP Platform project, they presented the findings of their study 'MSP for Blue Growth: MSP as a Tool to Support the Blue Economy'. This study examined how visions for maritime space are developed, the future spatial demands for space from key sectors, and indicators to examine how plans and processes cater for Blue Growth. An address from the support team for the Atlantic Action Plan gave an overview of the mid-term review of this assistance mechanism and how it has benefitted 'real projects'. The preliminary results from this review suggest that in the UK some stakeholder groups are under-represented in the MSP conversation which tends to be dominated by universities and research organisations.



Looking Ahead

In our closing plenary, we reflected on salient discussion points from the conference and the future challenges of MSP in Europe. Representatives from DG MARE and EASME highlighted ongoing and upcoming projects addressing these challenges and potential future sources of funding to support MSP implementation. A perspective from the Baltic Scope project, completed in 2017, offered an insight into the drivers, enablers and results of cross-border cooperation in MSP as well as obstacles and challenges from their experience in the Baltic. SIMCelt partners reflected on our overall aim in the project – to support cooperation between Member States on the implementation of the MSP Directive in the Celtic Seas. What tools and initiatives are still needed and how can those already in existence adapt to support transboundary MSP? Government and stakeholder led initiatives to promote transboundary MSP already exist in the Celtic Seas, but what impact will Brexit have on their capacity and operation? Are these mechanisms currently effective for MSP and what could improve them? These reflections and questions form the basis of our report on 'Development of Cooperation on MSP' which will be available at the end of March.

Stakeholder Engagement

MSP Challenge – ‘serious’ games for marine planners of all ages

An over-arching aim of the SIMCelt initiative is to consider how marine planning can be effected across borders but one of its outputs has taken international collaboration to a new level. Marine Scotland has worked with a team of game developers at the University of Breda, NL, on innovative ways of engaging with stakeholders. The results are two games, developed under the banner of the MSP Challenge initiative (www.mspchallenge.info), encompassing cutting edge computer visioning technology as well as tactile, ‘hands-on’ kit enabling the complexities of maritime spatial planning to be explained and experienced in an immersive way. In our first newsletter, we wrote about trialling the MSP Challenge board game at the Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference in 2016 and since then the game has had many outings, being played with students, academics, regulators and real-life marine planners.

The Clyde Marine Region

During 2017 and early 2018, stakeholders around the Clyde on the west coast of Scotland have had marine planning brought to life by the two games. The Clyde Marine Region is one of 11 similar Regions set up by the Scottish Government to facilitate sub-national marine planning in the context of the overarching Scottish National Marine Plan. The Clyde Marine Planning Partnership has been directed by Scottish Ministers to produce a Regional Marine Plan for the area by March 2020, with stakeholder engagement and public participation considered to be key elements of the process (www.clydemarineplan.scot).

A series of sessions has utilised both low and high-tech equipment to test the idea that playing games enables participants to understand a new language, which effectively communicates a way through complicated situations in an engaging and enjoyable manner. Results have been promising and offer considerable scope for continuing the process as marine planning itself develops at the subnational, national and international levels.

The MSP Challenge board game

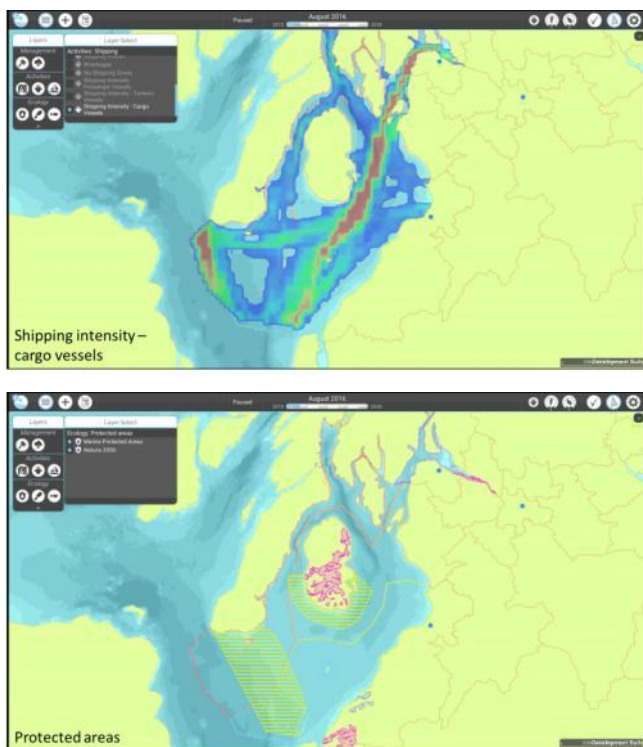
On a table-top board measuring around 4m by 2m, a fictional sea area is shared by three ‘local authorities’, all subject to the policies within an overarching National Marine Plan. Each of the local authorities has different ideas for how ‘Blue Growth’ should be implemented in their area but all are dependent on support from the other municipalities in securing their economic, environmental and social goals. Different coloured plastic tiles represent different habitats, species and economic or social interests and threads indicate an array of vessel traffic moving around the sea area. Participants adopt roles as representatives of key local interests and sectors and negotiate with each other, the local Marine Planner and a Nature Conservation Advisor on possible opportunities and options for economic development and marine protection. The presumption is that multiple uses can co-exist in the same or adjacent areas unless particular issues such as safety require dedicated spatial planning.



Feedback from the sessions carried out around the Clyde Marine Region in summer 2017 indicated that the majority of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that the board game was easy to play, enjoyable and represented the challenges associated with marine planning. Furthermore, the majority

also agreed or strongly agreed that they could better understand what marine planning is, could better imagine the different viewpoints represented as part of the MSP process and gained more insight into the important factors within marine planning and how they can influence each other. Finally, they were likely to recommend the game to others. We conclude that the MSP Challenge board game has demonstrated its value as a novel method of stakeholder engagement at the Regional Marine Planning level within Scotland. We believe that the same results will be observed as/when the game is played at an international scale.

The MSP Challenge digital game – ‘The Firth of Colours’



If the board game represented what could be done with a few sheets of MDF board, some plastic tiles, threads and anchor pins, the digital game was at the other end of the scale. Designed to be played by those with a more established understanding of marine planning, it was developed by the NHTV team to be a bespoke mechanism for testing the results of decision making by members of the Clyde Marine Planning Partnership. It used their geographic region as the physical base for the game and also utilised data sets held by [National Marine Planning Interactive](#), the Scottish Government's marine planning GIS tool. Participants operating as representatives of local planning authorities have the opportunity to create Marine Plans for their area, which are implemented over time. By projecting into the future, players can see the effects that their decisions have on environmental indicators such as the health and distribution of biomass and disturbance to benthos.

Future applications

Considerable interest in the games has been generated amongst practitioners and educators who see the potential of the game to engage stakeholders and possible future marine planners. It allows people to understand the often nebulous processes involved in MSP and highlights the huge challenge involved in reconciling the diverse perspectives and demands on marine space. SIMCelt partners University of Liverpool have purchased a board game outside of the project to use as a tool allowing students to gain real life experience of facilitating stakeholder engagement workshops. The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, competent authority for MSP in Ireland, plans to use the game at the inaugural meeting of its MSP Advisory Group in Dublin in March 2018.

Lessons learned from the Clyde experience will be fed into the further development of new versions of the digital game for the Baltic Sea and North Sea, supported by two other EU-funded projects looking at the challenges of cross-border and transboundary MSP: BalticSCOPE and NorthSEE.



SIMCelt will conclude and cease research activity in March 2018 however all of our outputs plus further information on the project can be found on the website www.simcelt.eu

Thank you to all our supporters who have given us feedback, attended events, re-tweeted us and helped share the work we have done!

