



# TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION in the Celtic Seas



Reflections from the SIMCelt project



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# Introduction to the SIMCelt project: Supporting Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning in the Celtic Seas

Co-funded by the European Commission, SIMCelt's purpose was to promote practical cross-border cooperation between three EU Member States, the UK, Ireland and France, on the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive in the Celtic Seas.

SIMCelt brought together seven partners from government bodies and research institutes in the UK, Ireland and France to develop practitioner-focused, ecosystems-based management tools to support coherent transboundary MSP processes within the Celtic Seas region. SIMCelt's over-arching objective was to support these three Member States, and by extension others, with practical ways of implementing the EU MSP Directive. It built upon existing mechanisms for cross-border working to enhance cooperation and engagement and reduce potential for cross-sectoral conflicts.

The project ceased activity in March 2018. This document signposts users and stakeholders towards appropriate SIMCelt outputs and resources by providing summaries of the main findings.

You can read more about the project, find links to interactive outputs and download all of the reports and case studies at **[www.simcelt.eu](http://www.simcelt.eu)**

## *Project area*

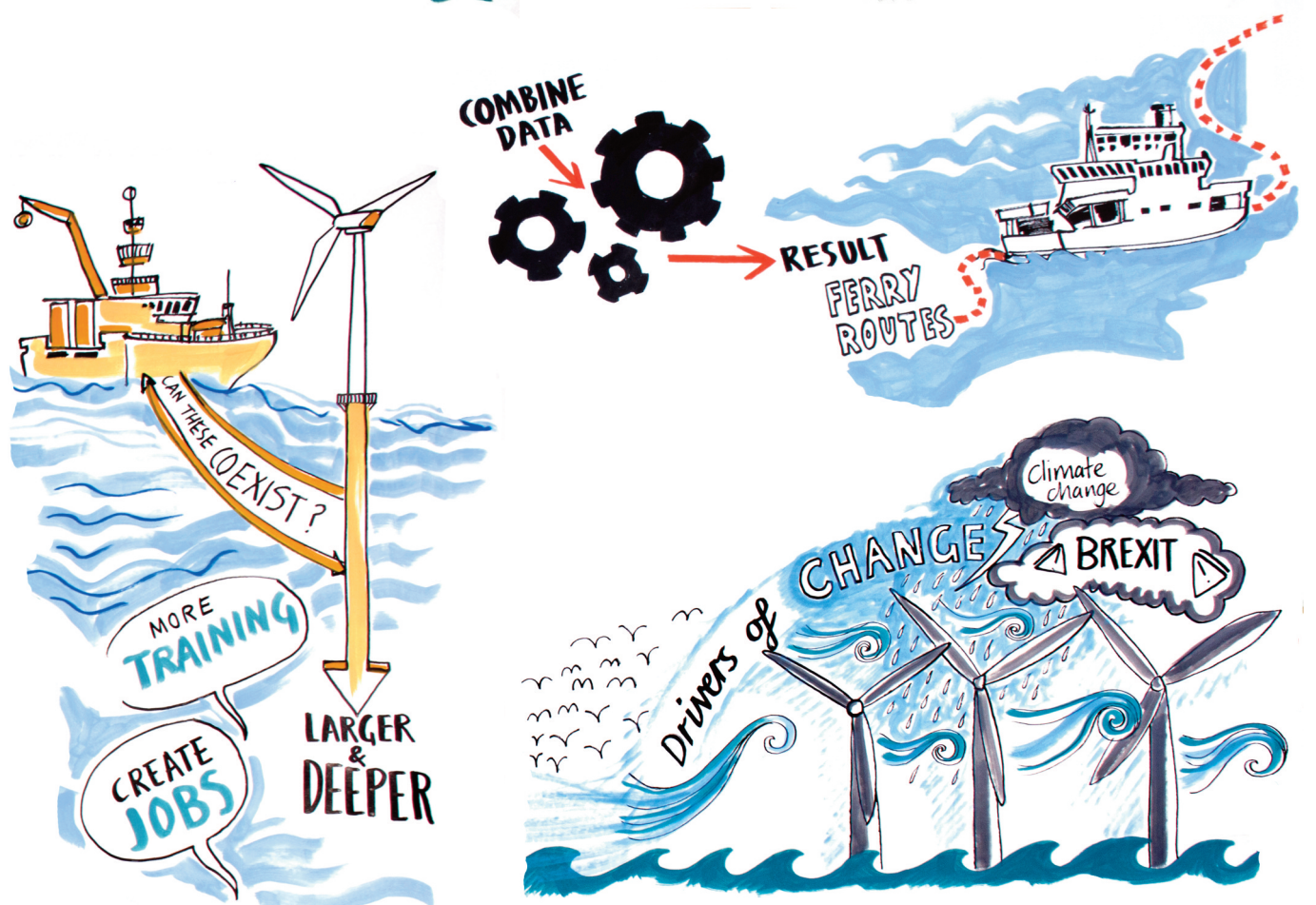
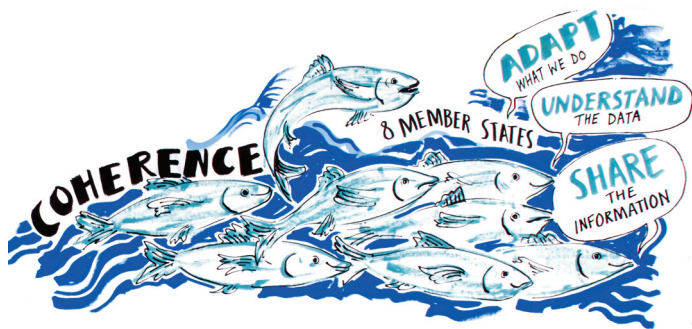
The SIMCelt project focused on the Celtic Seas area, based on OSPAR Region III, an administrative boundary used in the implementation of the OSPAR Convention. Somewhat confusingly, there is also a geographical area known as the Celtic Sea off the south coast of Ireland and south-west coast of England.

In accordance with a proposed extension of OSPAR Region III, however, SIMCelt included an additional sea area superjacent to the Celtic Seas Shelf. Inclusion of this area increases coverage of the French Atlantic seaboard thereby enhancing the involvement of competent authorities for MSP in the region.

The project region traverses parts of the Exclusive Economic Zones of three EU Member States including Ireland, the UK and France. SIMCelt involved partners from 5 of the 6 countries bordering the Celtic Seas area, consulting and engaging with Wales as well as the Isle of Man to ensure coherence and inclusivity across the project region.









# Project components

*Below are the project's components and their associated deliverables (D)*

## Component 1: Supporting Implementation of MSP

### C1.1. Initial Assessment - Developing an Overview

Summary Information on Marine Aspects of the Celtic Seas (D1)

### C1.2. Support for Member States Implementation of MSP

#### C1.2.1

Spatial demands and scenarios for maritime sectors

Desk analysis: Influence of Marine Protected Areas on Maritime Activity in the Celtic Seas (D3a)

Analysis of the North East Atlantic MPA Database (D3b)

Series of Maritime Sector Briefing Notes (D2)

Overview Report on the Current State and Potential Future Spatial Requirements of Key Maritime Activities (D3c)

#### C1.2.2

Data and information requirements for MSP

Analysis of Data Needs and Existing Data Gaps - Specifically Relating to Transboundary Working (D4)

Agreed Action Plan to Address Data Needs and Improve Data Exchange (D5)

Initial Activity to Address Data Needs (D6)

Data Management Guidance Document (D7)

Decision Support Tool

Thematic Digital Atlas Charts Relevant to MSP in the Celtic Seas (D8)

Training Workshop (on data aspects)

#### C1.2.3

Stakeholder Engagement

Report: Potential Approaches for Stakeholder Engagement on MSP and Pilot Testing at Local Transboundary level (D9)

#### C1.2.4

Establish case studies on Approaches to MSP implementation (D16)

**Case Study 1** - Understanding specific cross border issues and opportunities  
Issue Specific Analysis - Practice Focused and Policy Relevant (D10)

**Case Study 2** - Assessment of cumulative impacts in the Irish Sea  
Story Map and Recommendations on Cumulative Effects Assessment Methodology (D11)

**Case Study 3** - Planning across borders  
Case Study Reports on Approaches to Cross-Border Cooperation Including Stakeholder Engagement Mechanisms (D12)

**Case Study 4** - Understanding and applying ecosystems services to MSP  
Story Map of provisioning, regulating and cultural ecosystem services (D13)

### C1.3 Development of Cooperation on MSP

Guidance on Transboundary Cooperation Between MSs for MSP (D14)

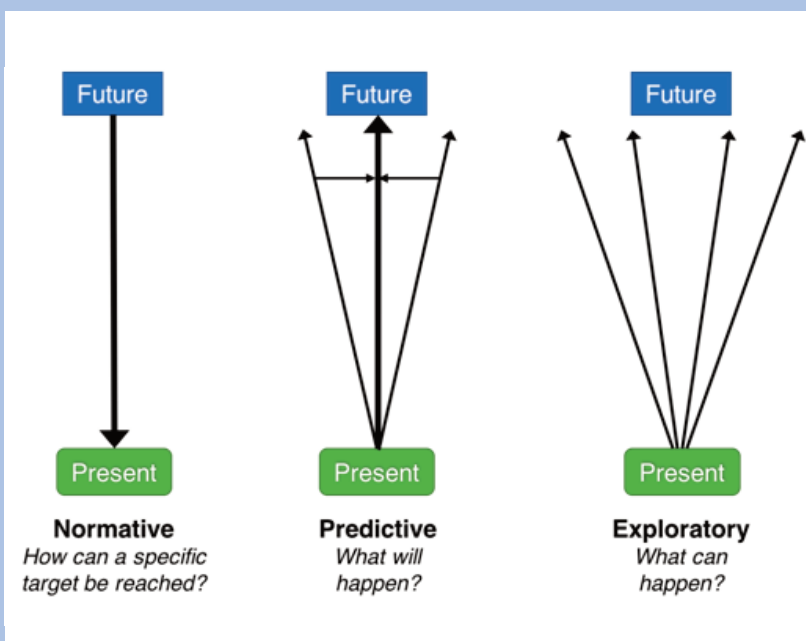
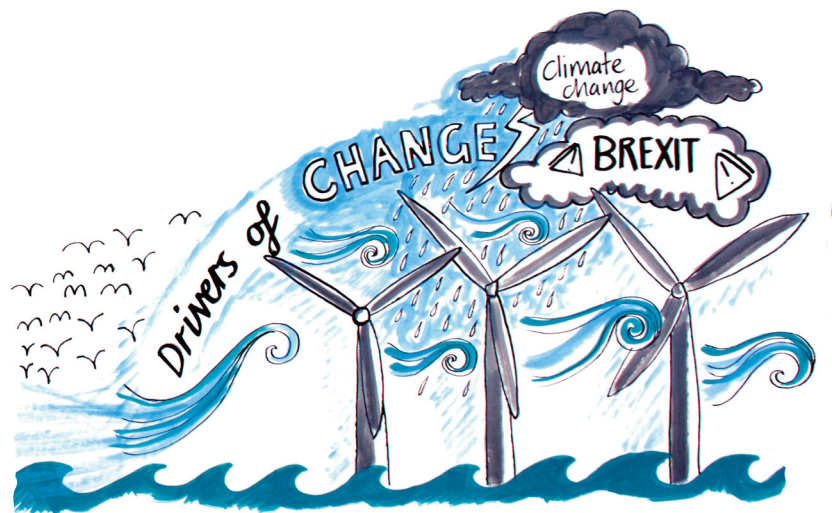
### C1.4 Evaluation on MSP Process

Report on Analysis of Approaches to Evaluate MSP in Celtic Seas and Conclusions (D15)

# Spatial demands and scenarios for maritime sectors and marine conservation

*This component investigates current and potential future spatial demands of key maritime sectors, with reference to cross-border issues.*

Information on trends, drivers for change and planning issues for key maritime sectors (aquaculture, cables and pipelines, offshore wind, ports and shipping, wave and tidal energy) has been set out in a series of Sector Briefing Notes.



## The MSP Directive requires Maritime Spatial Plans to

*"... identify the spatial and temporal distribution of relevant existing and future activities and uses in their marine waters."*

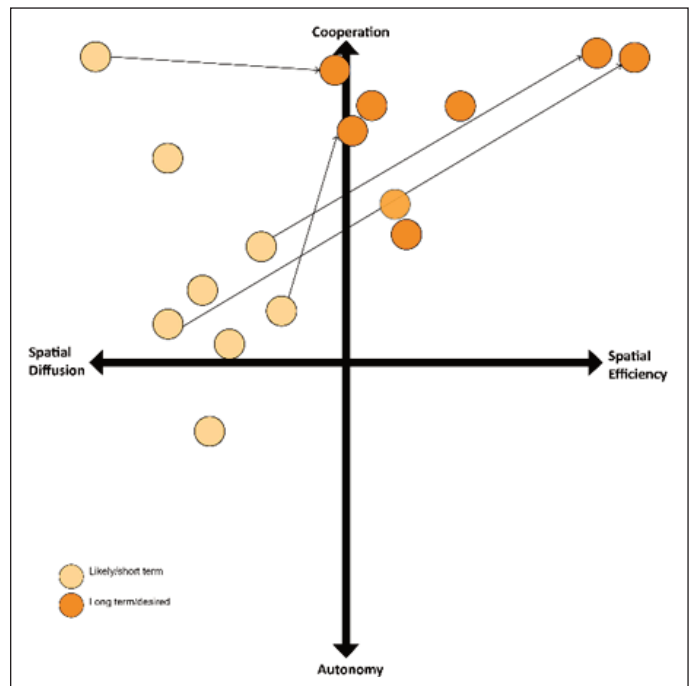
This can be done through the use of a scenarios approach, utilising 3 broad types of scenario.

Each type of scenario can play a useful role in the planning process to identify a business as usual scenario, alternatives and a preferred vision.



A key consideration in future uses of maritime space is spatial diffusion versus spatial efficiency. Some maritime activities are expansive in their use of space and resources, excluding other activities (diffusion), while some use less space and resources and co-locate or coexist with other maritime activities (efficiency).

The four scenarios developed in SIMCelt address these spatial considerations as well as the degree of cooperation between sectors and member states. To better understand the aspirations of maritime sectors, stakeholders from the Celtic Seas tested the scenarios in a workshop. Participants represented their sector on matrices providing insights into how different sectors will develop and cooperate in future.



Offshore wind energy matrix showing current and predicted scenario.

#### The following points can be made:

- The spatial demands of ports and shipping will maintain their priority status in MSP, due to their economic importance at global, national and local levels.
- The existing medium-high level of cooperation within offshore wind is expected to be driven further by the increasing scale of windfarms and the international nature of consortia/project developers. The current cooperation however, is within-sector and not embedded within MSP processes.
- In offshore wind, wave and tidal energy sectors there is a clear message that cooperation will increase, as these growing sectors will need to influence future maritime spatial plans to ensure appropriate locations for energy installations are delineated and conflicts with other developments are minimised.
- The spatial footprint of offshore renewable energy installations will continue to grow, but technological improvements and the co-design of new wave and tidal installations to ensure broad community benefits can help to increase spatial efficiency.
- Co-location between sectors is an aspiration, but may be prevented by lack of appropriate sites, uncertainties about viability and a regulatory environment that favours but does not compel this arrangement.



For a more complete discussion of the issues explored in the workshop as well as using scenarios to support MSP, please refer to **D3(c) Overview Report on the Current State and Potential Future Spatial Requirements of Key Maritime Activities**.



# Marine Protected Areas

*This analysis under the “spatial demands” component considered the marine conservation mechanisms present in the Celtic Seas, particularly Marine Protected Areas. International Conventions and the National Strategies were outlined as well as the different categories of marine protected areas occurring in the region.*

MPA categories deriving from International Conventions and National Legal instruments have different conservation objectives.

## International Categories of MPAs present in the Celtic Seas Region:

Legal Instrument	Category of MPA	Conservation Objective
UNESCO World Heritage Convention	World Heritage MPA	Protect heritage, nature and people interactions.
UNESCO Biosphere Reserve	Marine Biosphere Reserves	Preserve nature taking into account traditional knowledge.
Ramsar Convention	Wetlands of International Importance	Promote the wise use of wetlands.
OSPAR Convention	OSPAR MPA	Protect species, habitats, ecosystems or ecological processes.

## EU categories of MPAs present in the Celtic Seas Region:

Legal instrument and MPA designat	Conservation Objective
Birds Directive: Special Protection Area	Promote the preservation, maintenance or restoration of habitats that are essential for all species of birds.
Habitats Directive: Special Area of Conservation	Maintain and restore natural habitats considering economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects.

Note: France, Ireland and the UK all have SACs and SPAs in addition to their national categories.

## National Categories of MPAs present in the Celtic Seas Region:

Area	Category of MPA	Conservation Objective
Ireland	National Park	Large natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with species and habitats characteristic of the area.
	Natural Heritage Area	Areas considered important for the habitats present or which hold species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection.
	Nature Reserve	Areas of importance to wildlife, which are protected under Ministerial Order.
France	National Parks	Purpose to protect large ecosystems, as well cultural heritage and landscapes.
	Nature Reserves	Protect natural environment from potential harmful human activities and provide protection for sites of national interest.
	Marine Nature Park	Contribute to knowledge on the marine environment, protect the marine environment and sustainable development of the area.
	Biotope Protection Order	Conserve habitats of protected species including include feeding, resting or breeding sites as well as sites critical for the survival of key protected species.
UK	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)	The objective of these areas is to protect species, habitats and geological features of national importance.
	Marine Conservation Zones	Aim to protect a range of nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology.
	Marine Protected Areas (Scotland)	Aim to contribute to the development of ecological coherent and well managed MPAs network, developed under OSPAR guiding principles, fulfilling international and European commitments.

## Observations on the links between MSP and MPAs:

- MSP needs to take MPAs into account because they underpin the whole ecosystem-based approach, which is required by the European Commission
- MSP can support the creation of new MPAs e.g. France has a National Strategy for the creation of MPAs integrated into the National Strategy for the Seas and Coasts
- MPAs can support the achievement of conservation goals. The MSFD and the MSP Directive contain provisions that can foster the expansion of the EU’s MPA network
- Management of MPAs often require implementation of specific spatial measures and rules for other maritime sectors which could be integrated into MSP
- The governance of many MPAs includes a strong participatory process for effective planning and decision making which could serve as an approach for MSP in that region



International, EU and national categories differ mainly in relation to the objectives of protection. Differences also exist in national approaches to management, designation and regulation of activities occurring within their boundaries.

National differences in conservation objectives are of great importance when considering cross-border cooperation required by the MSP Directive and subsequent implementation of MSP. A transboundary approach is a prerequisite to achieve effective marine conservation at both national and regional levels.

Establishing and managing MPAs requires careful planning and management, enabling the inclusive participation of stakeholders in the planning process. As the governance of Marine Protected Areas often involves the participation of many different sectors and civil society this could serve as an example of a process to foster public engagement in MSP.



## MPAs in the Celtic Seas: Completion of the North-East Atlantic MPA Database

*A transnational MPA database has been updated with information related to the MSP context in each SIMCelt partner country, considering the conservation objectives of MPAs and processes for regulation of uses within their boundaries. The database allows MPAs in the Celtic Seas to be mapped and various data to be displayed*

MPAs cannot and should not be directly compared between countries, but the Database enables understanding of their objectives and management methods, based on common attributes. This information can be incorporated into MSP processes and subsequent plans to be implemented in the Celtic Seas.

### Data on MPAs for Maritime Spatial Planning

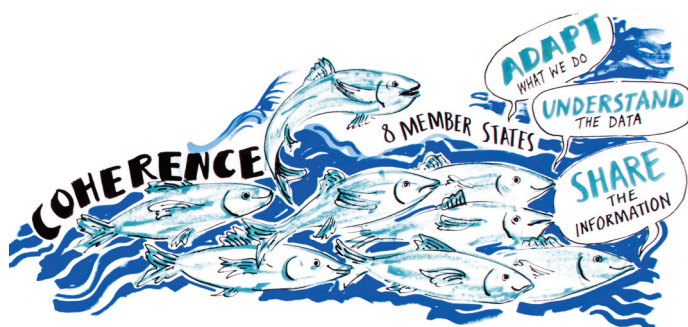
Specific information for each MPA needs to be made available to the relevant planning authorities, in order to inform the conservation issues and regulatory framework for each site. When it comes to MSP, it is important to know:

- The MPA Category
- The conservation objectives
- The activities occurring in the MPA and how they are managed
- The governance of each MPA

**Transnational  
MPA  
database**



The NEA database is a good decision-making tool for MSP. In terms of environmental protection, the data available means that queries can be made to the database to measure the completeness of the network on an international scale. For decision-makers, it also serves to centralise information on the types and categories of MPAs and provides an indication of whether the site's objectives are compatible with a given activity.



# Data and information requirements for MSP

The SIMCelt “Data and Information Requirements for MSP” component, led by SHOM, is a technical study to **identify, analyse and address technical challenges and gaps** in data and information, encountered when displaying and disseminating relevant Maritime Spatial Planning data on both sides of a maritime boundary. This component involved marine planners and experts in geospatial data, working together in the SIMCelt Task Group on Data.

## Analysis of data needs and gaps

The initial output of this component was an analysis of data needs and gaps, including an inventory of data useful for MSP which also meets some technical requirements, like being INSPIRE-compliant or being published under an open or shared licence.



Category	Subcategory	Layer	Area	Producer	Provider	Metadata Type	MD URL
Human activities	raw material extraction	MMO legacy aggregate licence areas	England	The Crown Estate	MMO Marine planning evidence	Rest	<a href="http://mmogis.services.defra.gov.uk/arcgis/rest/services/Marine_aggregates/MapServer">http://mmogis.services.defra.gov.uk/arcgis/rest/services/Marine_aggregates/MapServer</a>
Human activities	raw material extraction	Marine aggregate application areas	England	The Crown Estate	MMO Marine planning evidence	Rest	<a href="http://mmogis.services.defra.gov.uk/arcgis/rest/services/Marine_aggregates/MapServer">http://mmogis.services.defra.gov.uk/arcgis/rest/services/Marine_aggregates/MapServer</a>
Human activities	raw material extraction	Marine aggregate license areas	England	The Crown Estate	MMO Marine planning evidence	Rest	<a href="http://mmogis.services.defra.gov.uk/arcgis/rest/services/Marine_aggregates/MapServer">http://mmogis.services.defra.gov.uk/arcgis/rest/services/Marine_aggregates/MapServer</a>
Human activities	raw material extraction	Aggregate exploration and option areas	England	The Crown Estate	MMO Marine planning evidence	Rest	<a href="http://mmogis.services.defra.gov.uk/arcgis/rest/services/Marine_aggregates/MapServer">http://mmogis.services.defra.gov.uk/arcgis/rest/services/Marine_aggregates/MapServer</a>

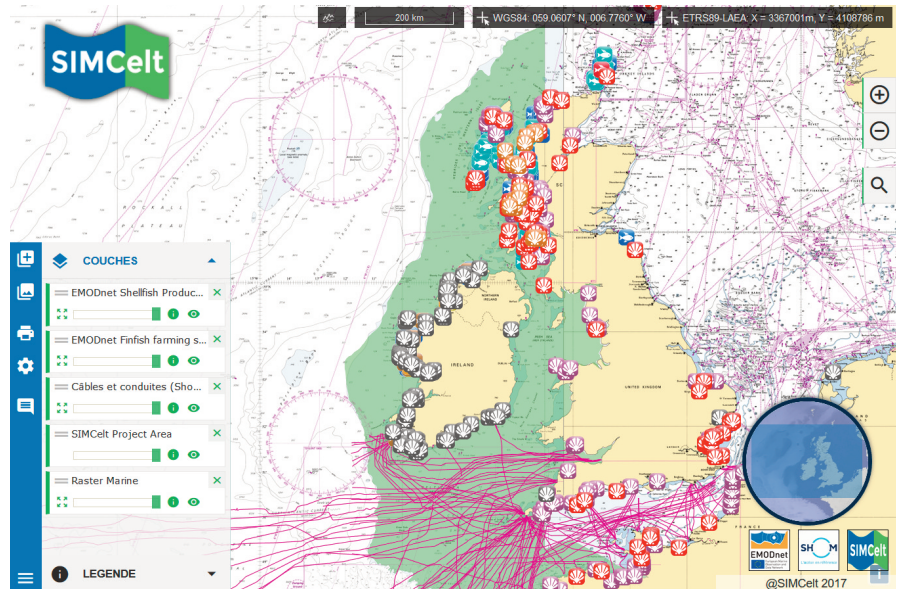




### SIMCelt Data Portal

This tool is a demonstrator to share transboundary MSP knowledge and a technical environment which allows users to explore gaps and possible solutions to solve them thereby supporting the initial data-gathering phases of MSP.

This Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) is based on Web Services: Data is not stored on local servers, it comes directly from the producers' SDI through a harvesting process. The main benefits are to reduce administrative processes, and to ensure display of up-to-date data.



### Data Management Guidance Document

One major objective of the Data and Information Component was to share the experience of building a data portal and experimenting with data interoperability across the Celtic Seas.

This is the role of the Data Management Guidance Document.

This final deliverable describes the technical structure of the SIMCelt Data Portal, explains all the data management processes through several technical sheets, and finally focuses on the main data challenges encountered and the possible solutions to overcome them.

### Some challenges linked to Data and Information

- Despite a situation evolving favourably thanks to the INSPIRE Directive, some difficulties remain when experimenting data interoperability at a transboundary scale.
- This can be caused by differences in the software or diffusion protocols used.
- The variety, and in some cases the lack of information about licence policies can be a barrier. Providing a metadata containing up-to-date usage constraints for every dataset would resolve this difficulty.
- Another solution could be an agreement between partners on a common data licence at the beginning of a project.



# Stakeholder Engagement

*This element adapted and adopted innovative ways of engaging with stakeholders to explain Maritime Spatial Planning in a multi-sector and cross-border environment*



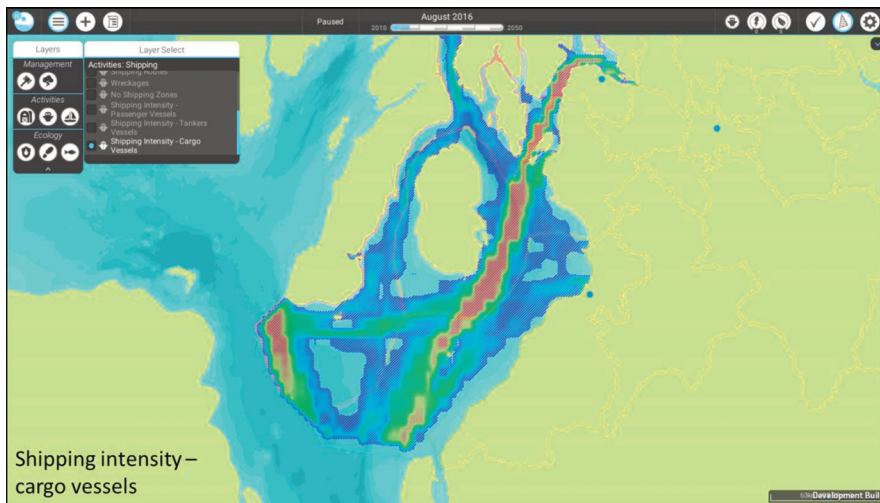
A hands-on game, set in a fictitious sea area bordered by three local authorities, used brightly-coloured tiles and threads to represent marine activities and build up a 3D picture of the interactions between them. In a series of sessions held around the Clyde, participants drew on their own experiences as sailors, fishermen, nature conservation campaigners or members of coastal communities to role-play and plan together for the sustainable use of marine resources and achieve economic and social objectives.

A variety of real-life MSP stakeholders, involved in the development of a Regional Marine Plan for the Clyde Estuary in Scotland, made use of 'serious games' to learn more about the complexities involved in marine planning.

SIMCelt enabled Marine Scotland to work with Dutch colleagues and adapt their MSP Challenge games to a Scottish setting. The results demonstrate that immersive, interactive game play increases overall understanding about MSP and facilitates communication, essential for successful planning in a transboundary environment.

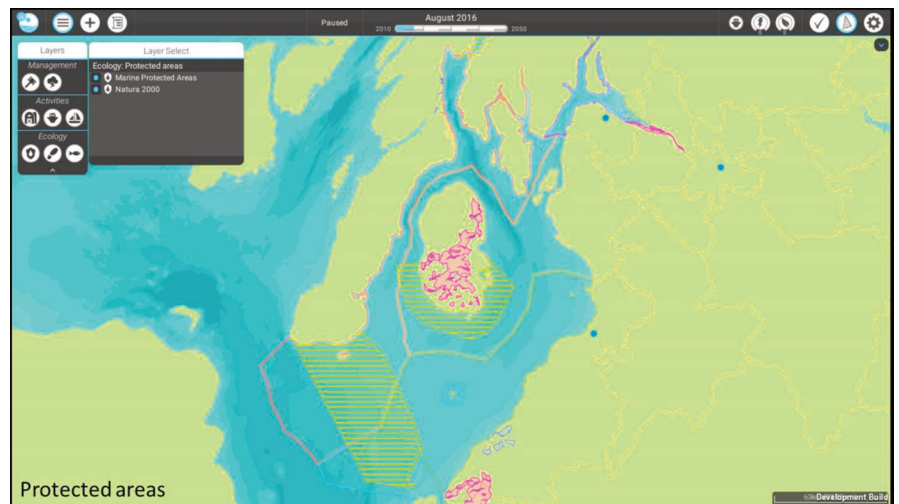






The 'Firth of Colours' digital game was also created, using state-of-the-art graphics and computer models backed by Clyde-related data, to test whether greater understanding of real-life cross-border marine planning situations can be achieved in a virtual environment.

The IT platform enables players to work together to produce marine plans for the Region that reflect individual and combined objectives for shipping, nature conservation and aquaculture. Algorithms also allow players to see the results of their planning over time and the results are not always as expected, especially on habitats and species.



Feedback from both games indicates that learning about a complex subject in a social environment generates a greater interest in that topic and an increased willingness to participate further and find out more.

Even those who are already engaged in marine planning reported that the games bridge the gap between policy, management and science.



They allow for better understanding of different viewpoints and emphasise the importance of taking other interests' priorities into account.

Both games can be used to demonstrate the complexities of cross-border MSP to audiences around Scotland and across the Celtic Seas.



# Case Study 1

## Understanding specific cross border issues and opportunities: Offshore Renewable Energy and Shipping & Navigation

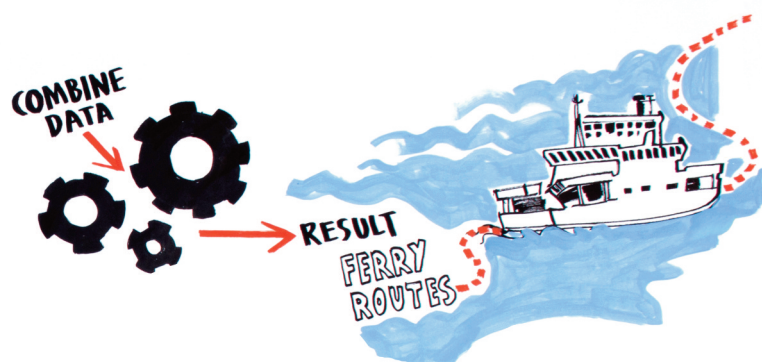
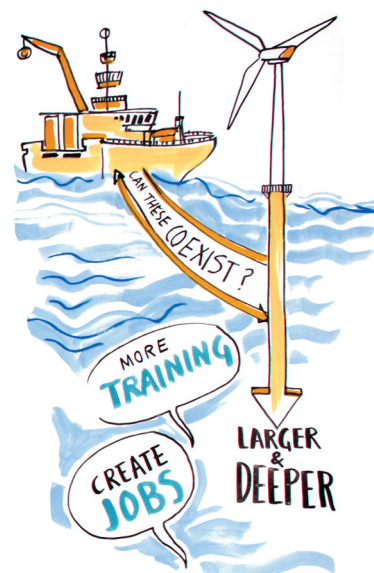
*This Case Study identifies issues and opportunities within the shipping and navigational safety and offshore renewable energy (ORE) sectors from a **transnational perspective** through semi-structured interviews with eight sectoral and regulatory agencies in France, Ireland and the UK.*



These sectors were selected based on the need to avoid conflicts and enhance the potential for co-existence, the international nature of shipping, the different governance structures and processes in the planning of ORE as well as its increasing demand for space.

Competent Authorities for MSP should consult sectoral agencies early by identifying existing and new links for engagement. MSP and ORE authorities should jointly discuss policy measures with navigational safety agencies to mitigate navigational risks arising from the development of ORE.

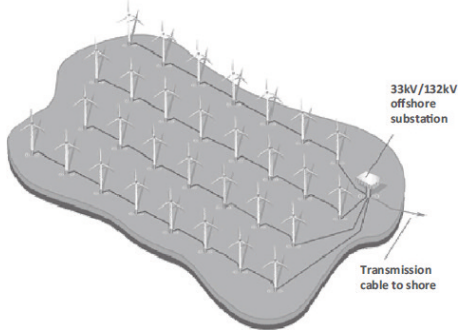
Planning authorities can support co-existence by ensuring that planning and design layouts of offshore wind farms consider the use of space in relation to shipping lanes for recreational users, fishing vessels and aquaculture installations.



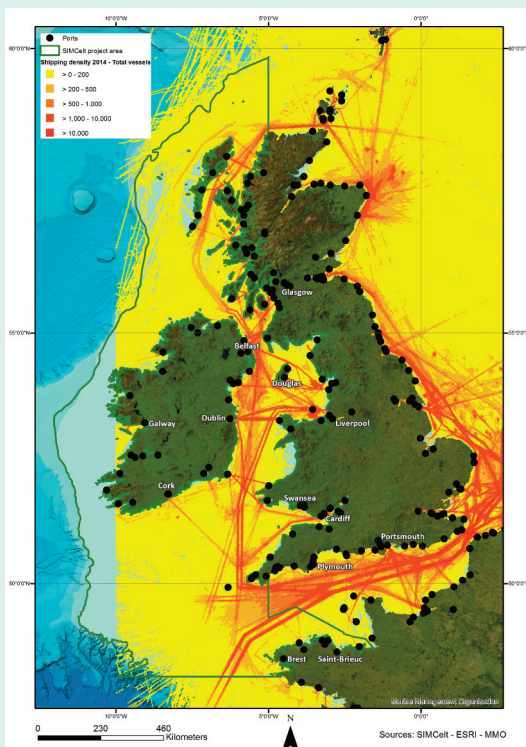
Search and Rescue (SAR) is a key issue for offshore wind farm layouts, the marking of such sites and sequential numbering of the turbines must be carried out with the relevant navigation and safety agency during the pre-planning/development stage of ORE infrastructure to mitigate risks such as choke points and foster cross border coherency.



Experience from the UK shows that planning offshore wind farms in straight lines (at least a two-line) of orientation is the most preferable form.



Sample layout of the Barrow offshore wind farm (Irish Sea)  
Source: <https://www.nap.edu/read/18327/chapter/4>

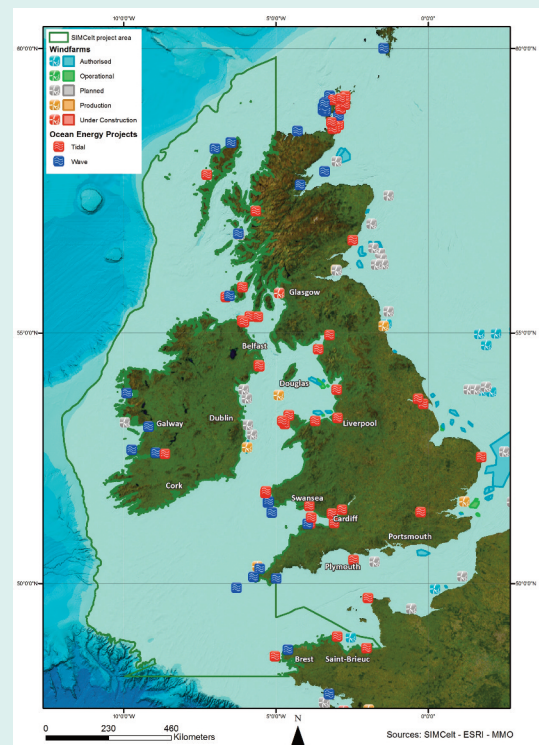


Authorities should be mindful that small vessels do not have an Automatic Identification System (AIS) and are not covered in AIS density maps which has implications for adequate representation of traffic density in a particular area.

Stakeholder engagement, local knowledge and the use of radar are important to account for vessels not carrying AIS, based on best practices in Ireland and the UK.

Cross Sectoral Working Groups at national level should be encouraged and used as platforms to consider operational cross sector/border issues such as mitigating risks, conflicts and facilitating transboundary engagement for MSP.

Planning authorities and sectoral agencies should ensure that mapping/analysis of the marine area and development proposals consider existing, approved, proposed uses and associated infrastructure (within the bounds of their marine area and that of neighbouring countries) so that planning of infrastructure is representative of needs on both sides of a border.



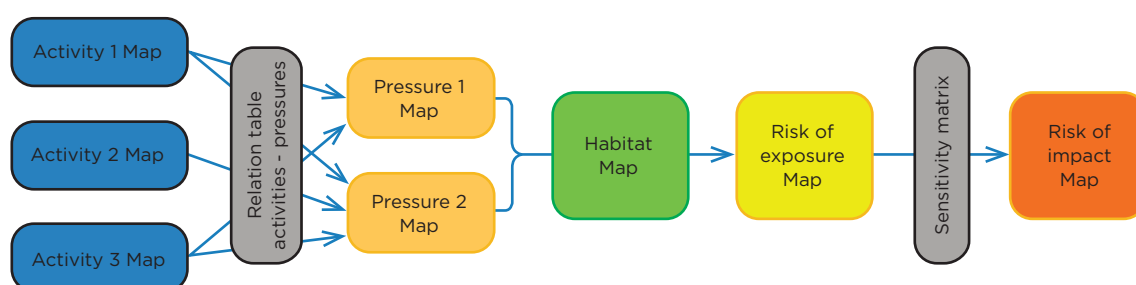
# Case Study 2

## Cumulative Effects Assessment

*This case study was completed to assess how Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA) could be integrated into marine planning. Addressing the cumulative effects of human activities is a fundamental aspect of the MSP process, however, a lack of knowledge about how this should be done is partly due to a wide range of existing CEA methodologies responding to different applications and legislative requirements.*



Two pilot projects, in the Irish Sea and off the Brittany coast, assessed seabed disturbance caused by the occurrence of multiple activities. The pilots analysed spatial data about human activities, pressures and the sensitivity of the receiving environment.



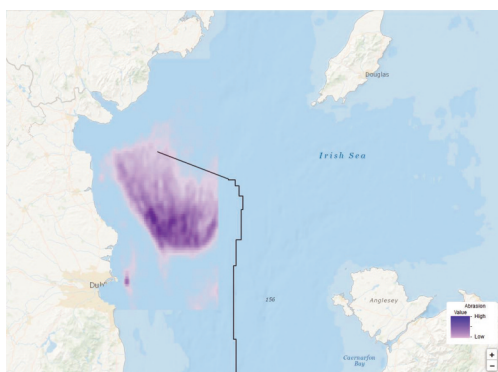
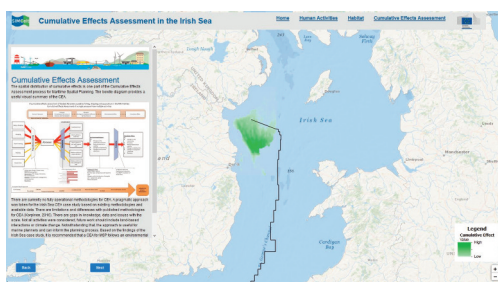
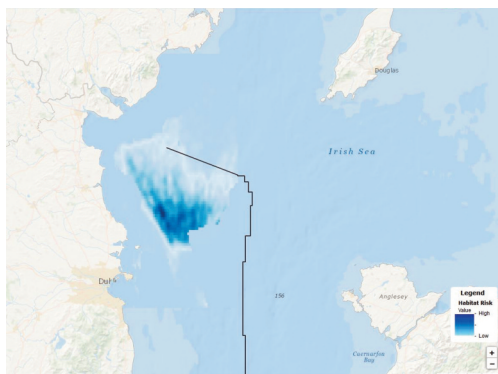
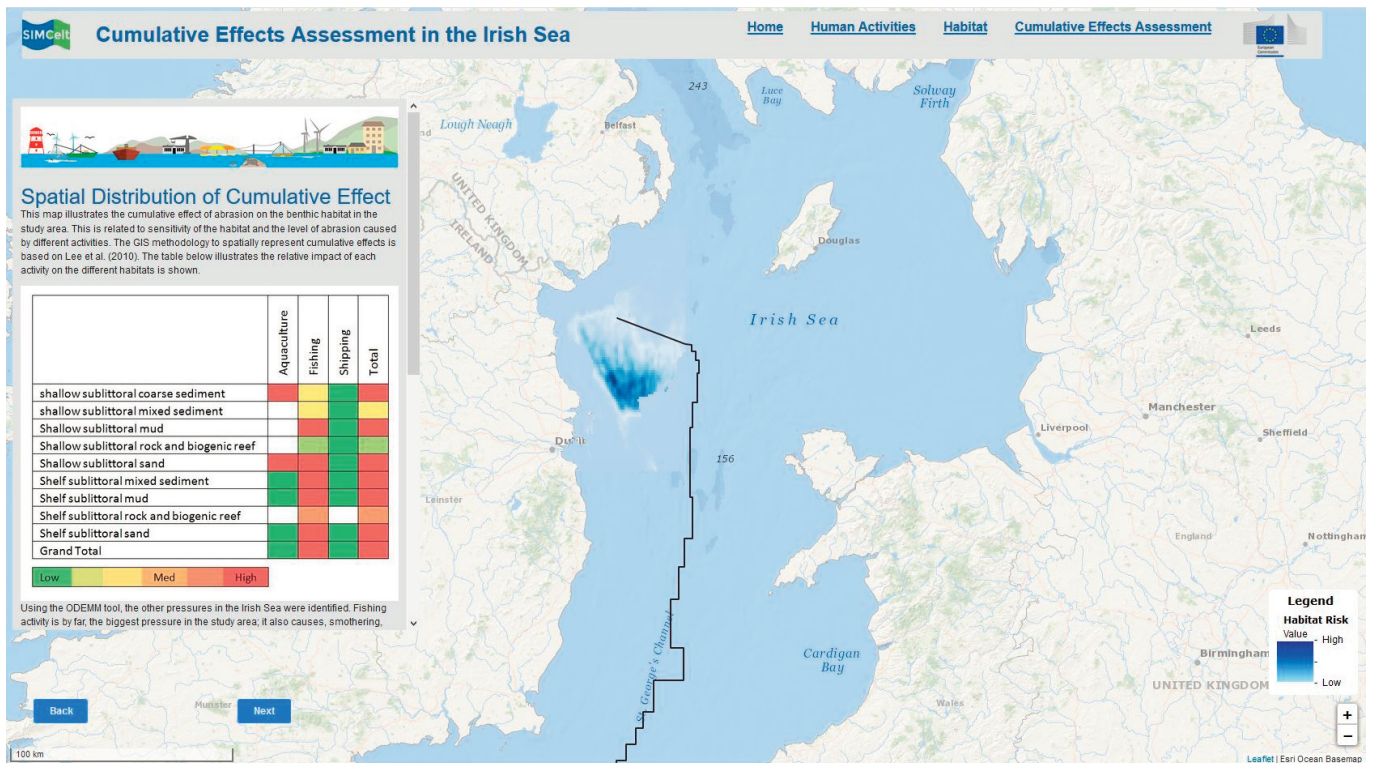
*The Brittany Pilot considered activities and the various sensitivity, exposure and impact risk in the ecosystem*

Good quality human activity data are crucial e.g. about fishing grounds, shipping activity or aggregate extraction. High quality and high resolution data about the habitats and the sensitivity of the receiving environment are also needed.

The use of marine protected areas is a valuable tool for marine conservation and sustainable use of marine resources. Within a Cumulative Effects Assessment, the protected area can provide a mechanism for trade-offs between human uses and conservation.

CEA outputs need to be quickly assimilated by stakeholders, planners or developers and they need to inform management decisions. As part of the Irish Sea pilot project we trialled a web-based Story Map as a means of illustrating cumulative effects to stakeholders.





### Based on our pilot projects, we have identified gaps and challenges associated with CEA in Maritime Spatial Planning.

In November 2017, we facilitated a workshop to explore how CEA might be integrated into MSP processes with CEA experts, MSP practitioners and researchers and from this we have compiled some recommendations:

- CEA is an important and fundamental tool for MSP and developing strategic 'coarse grain' approaches should be a priority in the next phase of development work.
- Consideration should be given to developing common guidelines/principles regarding the use of CEA in MSP processes.
- Support for continuing experimentation in the use of CEA in MSP processes and work addressing related data challenges and methodological development should be provided.
- The engagement of MSP end users should be a central feature of MSP related CEA activities and issues related to effective communication with non-specialist MSP audiences merit particular attention. How best to report and visualise cumulative effects for their benefit?
- CEA related training for those involved in MSP processes should be provided.

# Case Study 3

## Planning Across Borders

*Case Study 3 considered the real-life implications of cross-border ecosystem-based marine planning for the Solway Firth, a single waterbody subject to the very different marine planning requirements of two UK administrations.*



The Solway Firth is unique in the Celtic Seas area: this single estuary straddles the national border between Scotland and England and will be subject to the requirements of two separate marine planning systems. It also has boundaries with Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man.

With marine planning at different stages in the adjacent administrations, the SIMCell project offered the opportunity to identify relevant issues and offer some suggestions about how cross-border aspects could be more effectively addressed.

Assessments of the legislative framework and references to marine and coastal planning policies within Local Development Plans were made to set the policy context. An existing matrix that considered the interactions between marine-related sectors across the estuary was updated and an existing Coastal Partnership provided stakeholder engagement opportunities.



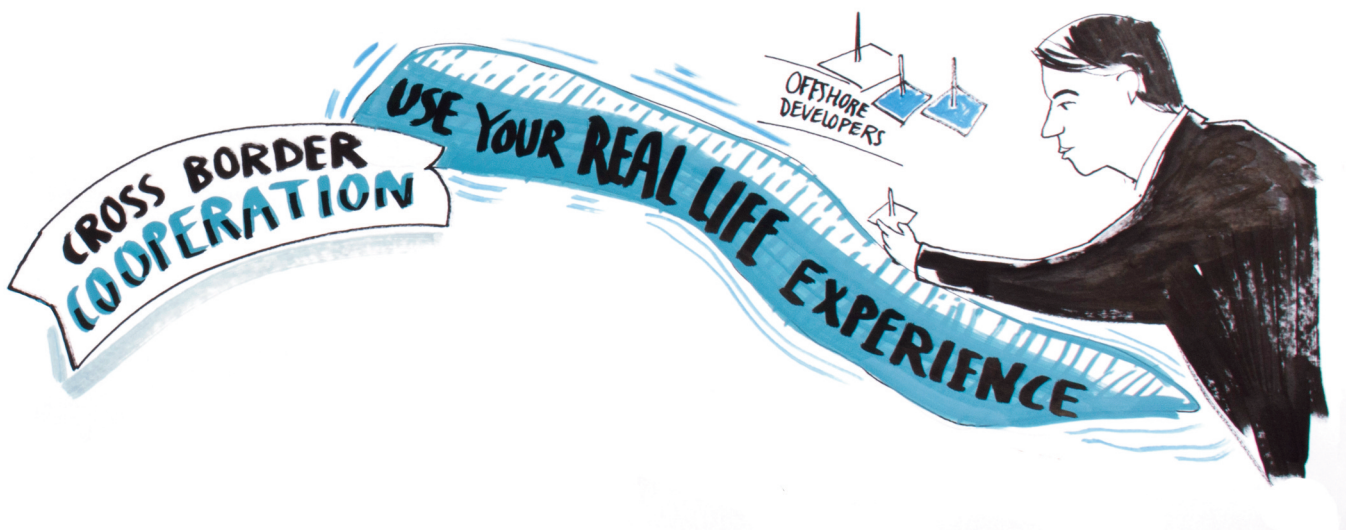




**Reports considering the particular difficulties that transboundary planning in this area might face identified issues arising from:**

- Different timescales for implementation of marine planning
- Non-alignment of marine planning regimes and concerns over respective relationships to terrestrial planning systems over the land/sea interface
- Staggered implementation of plans of different scales leaves the ecosystem vulnerable and results in uncertainty for developers
- Different priorities given different emphasis in emerging marine plans
- Lack of join-up between the marine GIS databases relating to the different marine planning systems
- Dangers of stakeholder fatigue when faced with multiple consultations.

These concerns are likely to be replicated in other transboundary areas, where there may be the added complications of different languages or resources available to invest in marine planning.



The Solway Firth is lucky to have a long-established Local Coastal Partnership in place, with a good track record of joint-working with organisations on both sides of the national border to facilitate fisheries management, environmental protection and awareness of cultural heritage. This entity, the Solway Firth Partnership, provided the structural support for the SIMCelt Case Study and is well-placed to continue to play an important role as marine planning evolves in both Scotland and England and across the 12 nm limit with Northern Ireland. Case Study 3 provides some useful lessons and food for thought in the challenges posed by real-life ecosystem-based marine planning in a transboundary environment.



# Case Study 4

## Ecosystem Services

*The aim of the case study was to understand the concept of Ecosystem Services in a sufficiently practical way that it can be applied by maritime planners. In order to achieve this, the case study focussed on the use of existing and readily available datasets that could be used to help evaluate an example of a Provisioning, Regulating and Cultural Ecosystem Service.*

According to the EU Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Directive, MSP shall follow the Ecosystem-Based Approach. An important step in the application of this approach is the valuation of Ecosystem Services. Ecosystem Services are defined as the benefits human beings can obtain from ecosystems (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005 p.v.).



Harmonising data across borders is time consuming and expensive. The ecosystem services chosen for the case study utilise datasets that are inherently harmonised across the Celtic Sea region and which are readily available.

### **The three examples chosen are**

- (1) International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) data to measure the relative importance of fishing areas across OSPAR Region III: Celtic Seas and economic values of certain types of fishing activity,
- (2) the use of EMODNET Seabed Habitat maps to help us think about the contribution a marine area may have towards mitigating climate change
- (3) the use of social media to give us an insight into the cultural ecosystem services of a transboundary lough of the Irish Sea.

The use of inherently harmonised datasets is especially powerful in terms of implementing an Ecosystems Based Approach at regional scales, such as the Celtic Seas, and to assist with the implementation of Transboundary MSP.

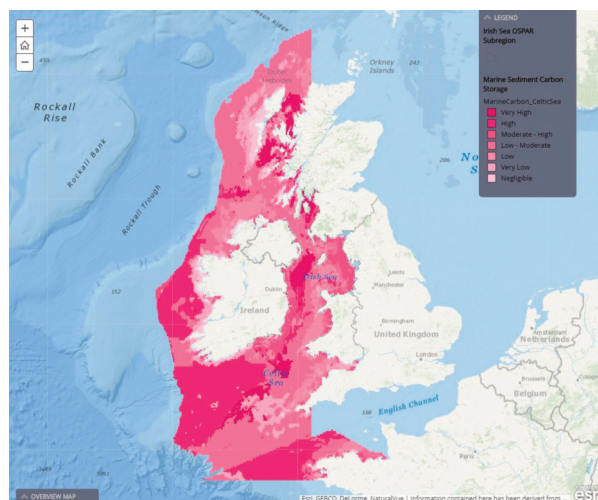
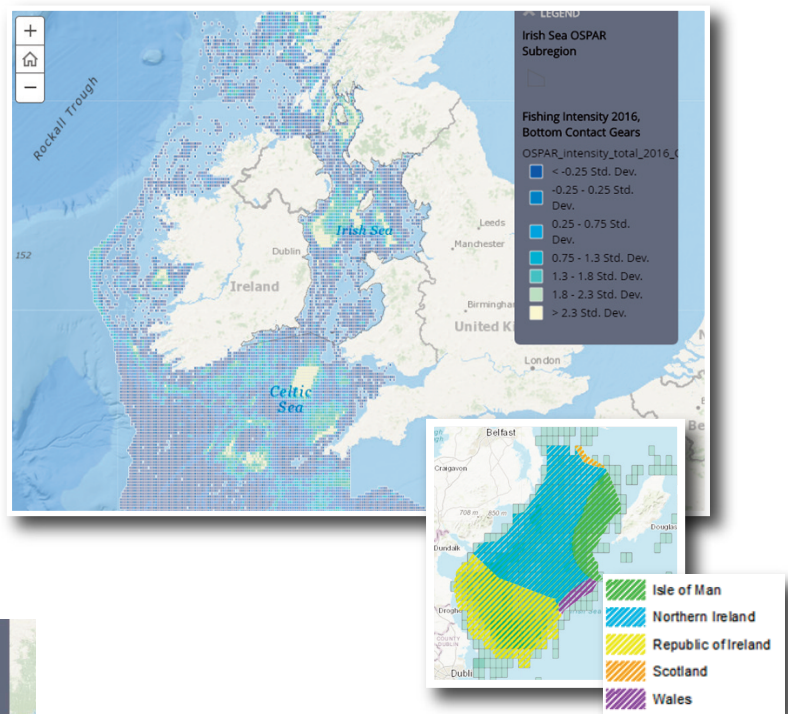


The main output for the case study is an interactive Storymap, which uses an Open Source template to combine text and images alongside a series of interactive maps.



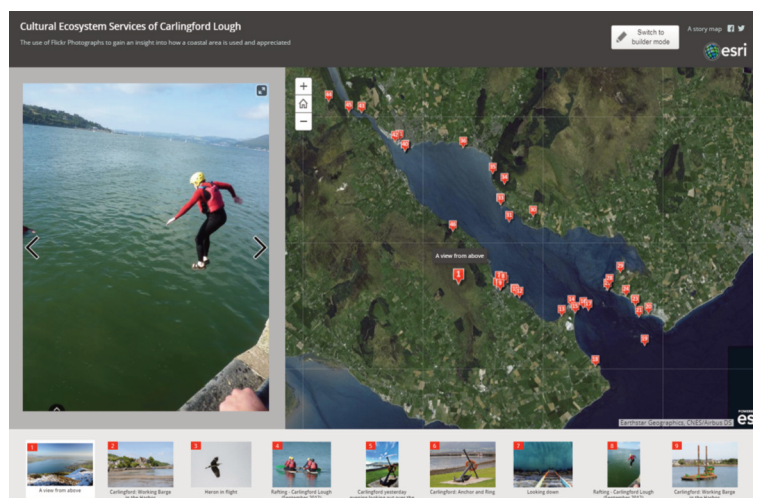
**Provisioning Service:** Fishing - ICES has collated vessel monitoring system and logbook data for vessels using mobile bottom contact gears to identify areas of pressure on the seabed. As economic landings data is also attached, these readily available datasets provide a significant contribution to the economic valuation of fishing activity at the Celtic Seas level.

The harmonised nature of the ICES data provides a clear picture of fishing activity in transboundary areas, such as the Irish Sea Mud Habitat which extends across five jurisdictions



**Regulating Service:** Marine Sediment Carbon Storage - This map, which has been informed by the EMODNET Seabed Habitat dataset, is intended to be used as an aid to a decision maker, to allow them to consider the regulating ecosystem service benefit of marine carbon and see how this may vary across the various sediment types of the Celtic Seas.

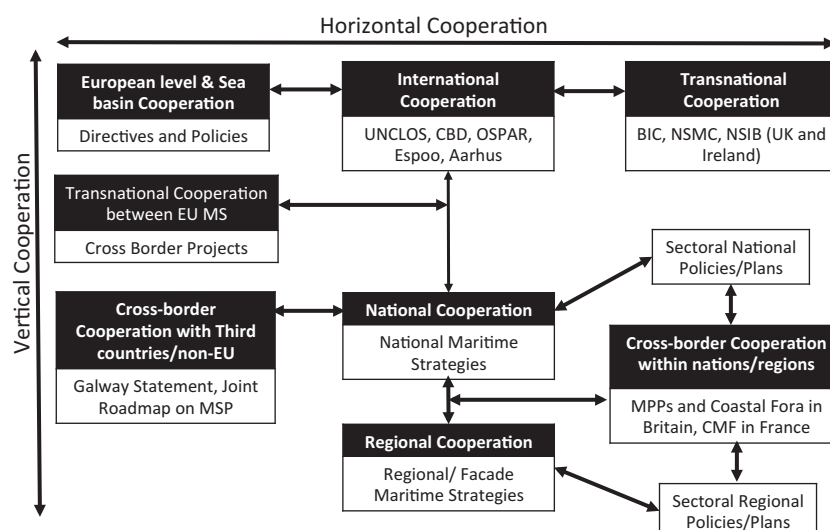
**Cultural Service:** Use of social media/social networking. Cultural Services can be vitally important but can be the most difficult to map or quantify. This interactive map tool uses Flickr photographs in the transboundary area of Carlingford Lough to demonstrate that social media may help inform decision makers of how the public make use of the Cultural Ecosystem Services of an area.



All spatial datasets have their limitations and need to be interpreted with caution, however, there is much potential for the using existing authoritative spatial datasets to help marine planners incorporate Ecosystem Services towards the achievement of balanced decision making.

# Development of Cooperation on MSP

*This component explored potential mechanisms for supporting cooperation between MSP authorities in the Celtic Seas, by examining existing legislation, institutional structures and approaches for transboundary cooperation whilst taking into account the needs of Member States. Mechanisms for cooperation on MSP are needed at all governance levels.*



## International, EU and Sea Basin Level

1. Some form of Clearinghouse mechanism for international structures such as OSPAR, ICES, the British-Irish Council, Atlantic Arc Commission (AAC) and the Atlantic Strategy/Stakeholder Platform channels will be needed to ensure that their work is coordinated and made relevant to MSP. This would also facilitate cooperation on MSP implementation between EU Member States and Third Countries (non-EU).

2. Outcomes from international cooperation mechanisms with relevance to MSP implementation need to be communicated to all governance levels and stakeholders e.g. results from transboundary marine SEA and EIS processes. Sharing details of planned Nationally Significant Projects, their impacts, and any necessary mitigation must be cooperatively addressed at an early stage.



3.




Consultation on MSP should consider sectors that are international in nature, such as fisheries, shipping, cables and pipelines and nature conservation. Further engagement with sectoral authorities will also be needed, to provide a clear picture of their common interests across borders and their relation to MSP.






### Transnational/Bilateral and National Level

4.  If and when the realities of Brexit come into play, bilateral mechanisms for cooperation will have to take a more prominent role. The EU MSP Expert Group could also consider non-EU Member States as observers to foster wider cooperation on MSP but this could only be done on an informal basis.
5. Member States must identify, share and update relevant contacts since cross-border contact between Competent Authorities and sectoral agencies change over time. Having a national MSP contact point/person would facilitate communication and consultation between authorities and sectoral organisations.
6. Neighbouring Competent Authorities should give early notification and detailed information on the nature of their MSP process, planned activities and possible infrastructure development. This would facilitate joint stakeholder processes and environmental assessment, between neighbouring Member States/Administrations.
7. Results from stakeholder consultation and processes should be communicated to neighbouring Member States by the Competent Authority for MSP during the drafting of maritime spatial plans. A common language, terminology and appropriate visual materials should be used to engage with a broad range of stakeholders.
8. During cross border consultation on MSP, information on transboundary impacts, cumulative effects and synergies (social, cultural, environmental and economic) should be presented and discussed in detail. In the UK, the Sustainability Appraisal process is a good example of how this can be achieved.
9. Informal and frequent communication between neighbouring Competent Authorities for MSP through site visits, emails, and phone calls should occur through the plan-making process.



10.  There is enthusiasm from the Competent Authorities in the Celtic Seas to have bi-annual meetings to share experience on plan making, forthcoming projects of relevance and transboundary issues. This should be supported by the various government departments with responsibility for MSP.

### Sub regional and Local Level

11. Cross border MSP projects will help align approaches for MSP implementation and better support cooperation between Competent Authorities and sectoral agencies if they have a longer timeframe and are appropriately resourced.
12. Planning policies must support the alignment of MSP with local development plans on land and have the associated resources and capacity to assist in engaging all stakeholders. Coastal partnerships in the UK provide a good example of this and should be encouraged in certain interregional and national contexts.



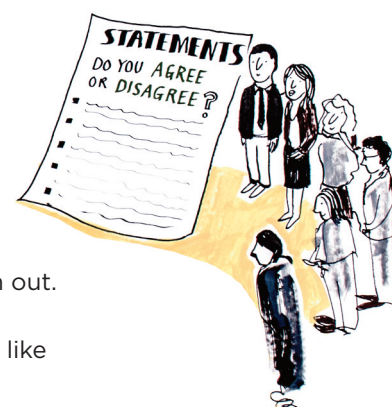
# Evaluation of MSP Process

*This component was designed to examine approaches taken to the evaluation of MSP by marine planning authorities working in the Celtic Seas and identify areas of common interest from which consensus may be built.*

Clear, measurable objectives are critical at the beginning of the MSP process against which progress can be measured and performance evaluated, e.g. If the plan contains an objective to communicate effectively with stakeholders, how can you evaluate whether the objective has been achieved?

Evaluation processes should be designed with the resources available in mind, including the time needed for planners and stakeholders to carry them out.

For this reason they should make use of relatively simple and easy-to-use tools like checklists and questionnaires.



Working with SIMCelt, the Northern Ireland marine planning team designed a quick online questionnaire to be completed annually. Decision makers in the NI marine planning team were asked to gauge whether the NI Marine Plan policies have influenced recent changes in different sectors.

Tailor-made evaluation processes can be developed for individual MSP processes to reflect their specific needs.

An evaluation framework for Northern Ireland was created to analyse how MSP processes were effected.

Criterion	Key Questions	Prompts	Evidence
A. Process Evaluation			This column was populated with plan-specific information in response to the questions in the previous columns
Diagnosis			
10. Efficiency	a. Has the plan making process been carried out comprehensively and efficiently?	Q. How long did the process take? Q. Were there adequate resources for the plan making process? Q. Were particular steps especially demanding of time and resources?	
B. Plan Evaluation			
Evaluation of Plan Contents			
11. Coherence	a. Is there a Vision for the Plan? Are there objectives, indicators and targets?	Q. Are the objectives conceptual (e.g. conserve biodiversity) and/or operational (e.g. protect 15% of the coastline)? Q. Do the objectives logically stem from the plan making process/Legislative mandate?	



## Welsh National Marine Plan Aggregates chapter section 'Future'

This section is concerned with the availability of aggregate resource in the Welsh marine area.

### Proposed Evaluation Questions

*EQ. What are the current trends in demand for marine aggregate?*

*EQ. What is the current status of resource supply in viable aggregate resource areas?*

Q3.a. Do you think these proposed evaluation questions are adequate and appropriate in order to evaluate the contribution of aggregates to this cross cutting policy (future)?

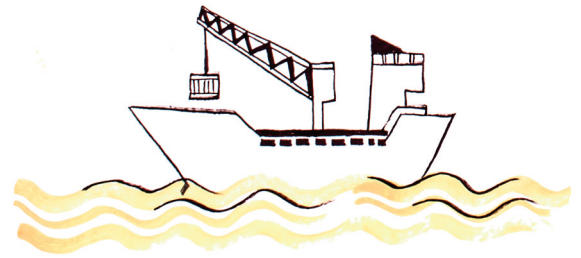
Q3.b. Will it be feasible to answer the proposed evaluation questions?

Q3.c. Can you suggest any other evaluation questions in relation to this section of the plan?

Please provide your response:

.....

.....



Not only planners, but also stakeholders, should be involved in the evaluation of certain aspects of MSP, in order to test the effectiveness of maritime spatial plans in practice.

Working with the Welsh government, a questionnaire was used to consult relevant stakeholders on proposed evaluation questions for the aggregates section of the Draft Welsh National Marine Plan. Their feedback will support the development of a practical, realistic and cost-effective evaluation framework.



- Evaluation processes should also be as comprehensive and rigorous as possible and form part of an adaptive MSP cycle. This means building in evaluation at every stage of MSP and revisiting original objectives at key stages to evaluate how the plan making process is supporting them.
- Evaluation exercises so far carried out in the Celtic Seas point to key challenges and knowledge gaps for MSP as a whole, including land-sea interactions and transboundary working.



All of SIMCelt's outputs and further information on each of the components and the project activities can be found online at **[www.simcelt.eu](http://www.simcelt.eu)**

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