SIMCelt - Supporting the Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning in the Celtic Seas

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SIMCelt is a two year project co-funded by EC Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries to support cross-border cooperation on the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive in the Celtic Seas' region

Issues

The Celtic Seas' region is classified as a Class II moderately productive ecosystem (ICES, 2016). In the recent years, the Celtic Seas has faced increased pressures due to current and expected growth of maritime sectors. No genuine approach of transboundary planning has been undertaken to mitigate cumulative pressures in the Celtic Seas' ecoregion. To support the implementation of the MSP Directive and overcome this challenge, **SIMCelt contributes to implementing an ecosystem-based approach by supporting transboundary cooperation on MSP** between France, Ireland and the UK.

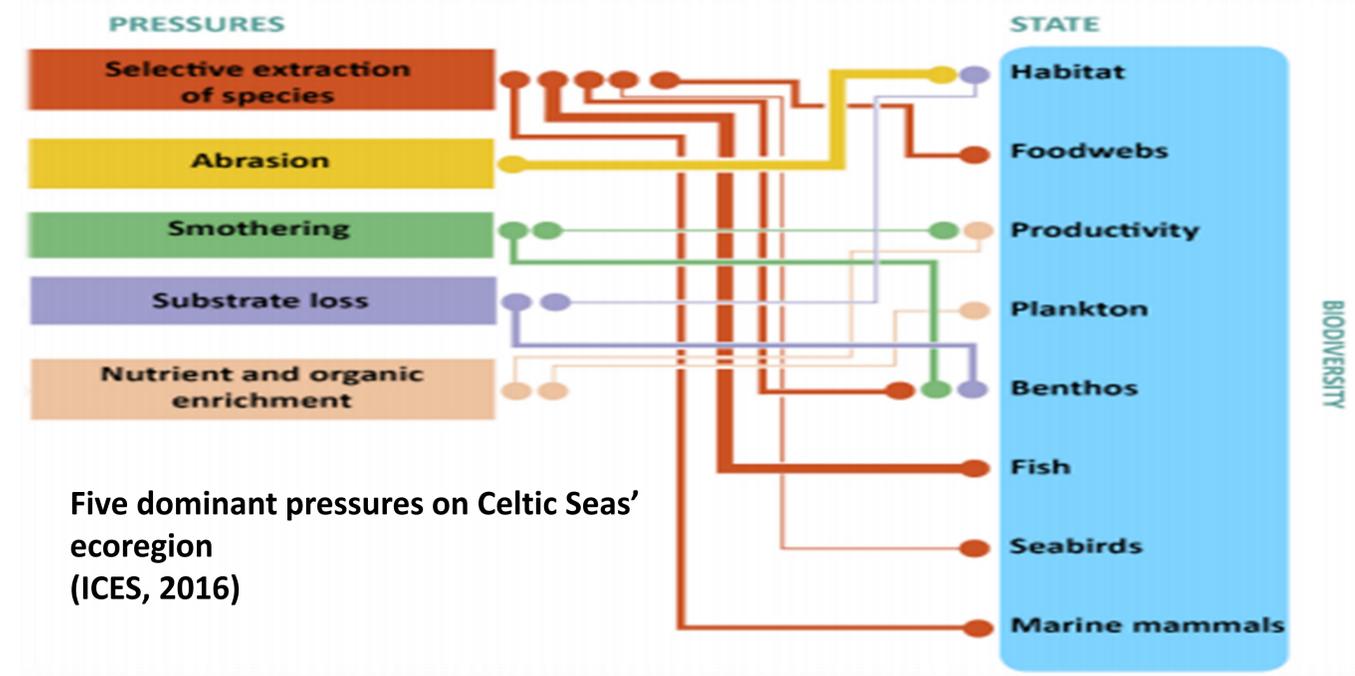## Approach and Expected outputs

Our approach is based on a series of four main research components developing best practices in relation to data requirements, governance and stakeholder engagement. Outputs will include _inter alia_: **the production of Guidance on good practices for cross-border cooperation between Planning Authorities**, an **Interoperable MSP Data Infrastructure for sharing data**, **methodology for cumulative effect assessment, Guidance for stakeholder engagement in a cross-border context**.

Policy implications

By supporting coherent cross-border planning approach,   SIMCelt contributes   to the implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy, the MSP Directive and Priority 2 of the Action Plan of the Maritime Strategy for the Atlantic Ocean Area.

Initial Findings

The Overview Assessment of the Celtic Seas' region has been completed by the SIMCelt team identifying the sources of pressures on Celtic Seas' ecosystems, the institutional and legal frameworks in place for MSP and future trends of maritime activities. Our findings show that institutions and legal framework on MSP are in place in Celtic Seas countries but divergences of progress exist in the implementation of maritime spatial planning.

Five dominant pressures on Celtic Seas' ecoregion
(ICES, 2016)

Current and future trends for key maritime sectors:

Maritime Sectors	Current status	Future Trends and drivers
Maritime Transport and Ports	• **~212 million T of freight transported through Celtic Sea ports.** • ~87 million passengers travelling on domestic ferries, short sea routes or international routes.	• The Atlantic Action Plan seeks to upgrade intermodality of ports, increase port networks and short-sea shipping routes • A 50% growth of cargo handled in EU ports is predicted by 2030
Fisheries and aquaculture	• **~1.1 million tonnes per yr** (2009-2013). • **Aquaculture production:** Static (1.25 and 1.26 MMT) over last decade	• **Total production** (capture fisheries + aquaculture) to increase from >12 Mt (1998) to ~13 Mt in 2030
Offshore Renewable Energy	• Wind: ~1.8 GW of power currently generated. • Tidal and wave: 26 current and projected projects	• 2020: UK: 15% of total demand met; France: 23 % target; Ireland: 16 % target.
Oil and Gas	• In total, ~16 producing oil and gas sites in the Celtic Sea Region. Most of these sites (13) located in the Irish Sea	• Decreasing since 2000. Issues with decommissioning.
Maritime and Coastal Tourism	• ~117 marinas and berths, 897 beaches and 143 blue flag beaches	• £91 billion GVA (Business As Usual Scenario) expected over 2016-2039 - 138,000–160,000 projected jobs by 2036 (ABPmer, 2016)