



Supporting the implementation
of Maritime Spatial Planning in the Atlantic

**Approaching activities' interaction by building scenarios:
a proposed method to strategic thinking**



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Disclaimer

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Purpose of the guide

Imagine that you have processed an overlapping of spatial information for MSP, you have analysed it with refer to a conflict matrix and there is an overlap between two activities. Is this enough to inform the MSP process efficiently? Moreover sometimes the spatial information does not even exist. Even if it does, and it is available, the conflict matrix value may not represent the interaction in a realistic way or/and the analysis does not give the right information for the correct interpretation of the situation. In fact, there may not be a conflict between activities, but coexistence between them or synergy in some cases. The next pages describe a methodology proposed to approach activities interactions beyond the traditional spatial overlapping. You may wonder in which cases is useful this methodology.

There are mainly two situations in which this method can be applied:



A

a) Did you already conduct a spatial assessment and the spatial interaction is confirmed? Now, what?

The methodology could be used in this case to propose correction measures if the interaction is negative and to foster synergies if this is positive.

B

b) Spatial data do not exist so the overlapping analysis cannot be processed. Then, what can be done?

In this situation, the methodology could be used to assess if data should be acquired, and in any case, to design the best way to approach the interaction to propose correction measures and foster synergies.

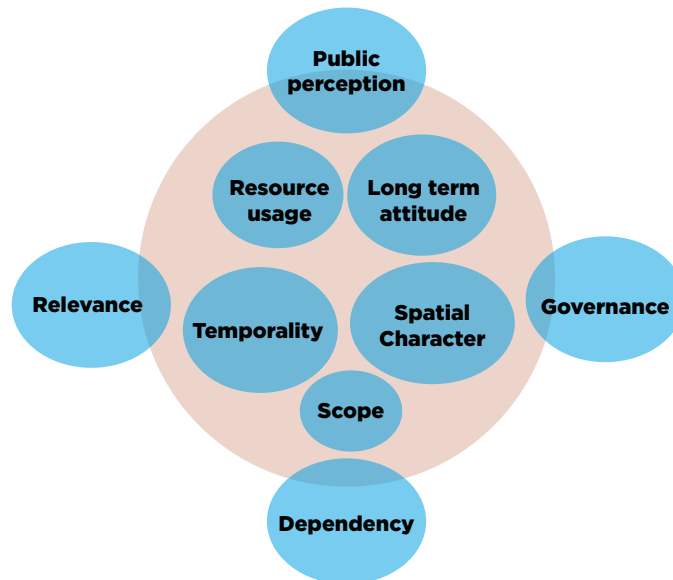
Rationale

Any use has specific characteristics that normally depend on its nature and are constant along time and space therefore they are not likely to change from one country/region to another. Furthermore, each use or activity might work in a different way depending on its context (i.e., provided by specificities of the country, region, the season, etc.).

These factors might as well influence any interaction that this use may have with another use. This is the reason why it is important to describe the nature of each activity but also its context in order to build the specific scenario for which we will need to take decisions.

The case-by-case treatment of these problems therefore takes on its full meaning given the diversity of activities, their organization and the interweaving of management scales inherited from cultural heritages, specific characteristics, political will or other external socio-economic factors. These are some of the aspects that can be defined and tackled applying the proposed method.

Consequently this method is based on the premise that maritime uses and activities can be characterized and categorized based on external and internal variables described in next sections of this handbook.



Conceptual model for characterizing uses

How it works?

As explained in the introductory page, the methodology proposed in this handbook could be considered as a step further to the identification of spatial overlapping. This method considers that there could be a potential interaction in a specific area between a use already in place and a new one to be allocated there. From this premise, the method tries to characterize each use, thus defining the specific interaction through the identification of “building blocks” to build a specific scenario.

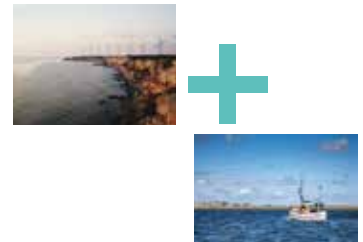
Building scenarios, in this case, gives the opportunity to create images of a specific situation based on the information we have, to represent the scene of a particular issue that we want to solve, providing the framework to develop targeted approaches for it.

The proposed methodology can be applied in three steps:

1

Characterizing uses by their external and internal characteristics:

The proposed method is based on the premise that uses and activities can be characterized and categorized based on external conditioning factors (those that refer to their context) and internal characteristics (those referring to its specific nature).



2

Using these aspects of both uses to characterize and define the interaction

...to analyse how the specific characteristics of both uses interact with each other and in turn, influence the interaction between them.



3

...identifying building blocks to define scenarios and propose targeted recommendations

Building blocks could be classified into descriptors, risks and opportunities. Targeted recommendations could imply the design of technical groups, workshops or specific studies.

Internal characteristics

This section describes characteristics of the use that are normally intrinsic to the activity. These are normally the same indistinctly on the region, as they respond to the technical and management aspects of the use. Different values for one or another characteristic might influence its performance and, thus, its interaction with another use.

Internal characteristics	Guiding questions	Possible values
Long term attitude	<p>How is the modus operandi of the specific sector?</p> <p>Is this activity used to be planned for the long term considering time, space, resources etc?</p> <p>Is it conservative? It normally expresses its need of occupying the maximum space and time regardless the existence of another use in the present?</p> <p>Or it only reacts expressing its need for any kind of requirement (space, time, resources), when there is a risk of losing it.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Proactive (strategic planning) <input type="checkbox"/> Conservative (defensive) <input type="checkbox"/> Reactive (wait-and-see)
Scope	<p>Which is the scope of action of the specific activity? (clue: the scope of aquaculture will be local, while for maritime transport could be international)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> International
Resource usage	<p>Think about it, is the activity exploiting the resource? Extracting it? Or conducting a research about it?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Exploitation <input type="checkbox"/> Extraction <input type="checkbox"/> Research
Spatial character	<p>When representing the activity in a map... is it a fixed point or area or, on the contrary, it occupies different positions depending on the moment?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Spatially explicit <input type="checkbox"/> Spatially diffuse /Ubiquitous nature
Temporality	<p>In relation to the last question, time is an important variable, so again, is your activity always there or is it only sometimes?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent <input type="checkbox"/> Time bounded

External conditioning factors

This section describes variables defining the context, the external conditioning factors. These characteristics of the use are normally variable from one country to another. They do not normally depend on the activity itself but more likely on different governance, policies and cultural backgrounds. However, they might influence the development of the activity and its interaction with others.

External conditioning factors	Description	Possible values
Public perception	How is the activity seen by the local public? Is it attractive, unattractive or simply tolerable	<input type="checkbox"/> Attractive <input type="checkbox"/> Tolerable <input type="checkbox"/> Unattractive
Relevance	Which is the relevance of the activity in the area? Is it part of a national or international strategy? Is it especially important regarding economic aspects?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategically relevant. <input type="checkbox"/> Economically relevant. <input type="checkbox"/> Culturally, socially and/or historically relevant.
Governance	Governance systems may work at different scales depending on the activity. Which is this case? At what scale are decisions affecting this activity taken?	<input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> European <input type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed
Dependency	All activities' functioning depend normally on other factors; however there are dependencies that are more relevant in one activity than the others. Which is the most relevant dependency of this particular activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Dependent on other uses <input type="checkbox"/> Dependent on markets fluctuations <input type="checkbox"/> Dependent on the environment <input type="checkbox"/> Currently dependent on technological development

Characterizing interactions

Once you characterized each use giving values to the presented variables, these values will be confronted among them in order to identify key drivers of interactions.

		USE 1									
		INTERNAL CHARACTERISTICS					EXTERNAL CONDITIONING FACTORS				
		Long-term attitude	Scope	Resources usage	Spatial Character	Temporality	Public perception	Relevance	Govenance	Depedency	
INTERNAL CHARACTERISTICS	Long-term attitude										
	Scope										
	Resources usage										
	Spatial Character										
	Temporality										
EXTERNAL CONDITIONING FACTORS	Public perception										
	Relevance										
	Govenance										
	Depedency										
USE 2											

The matrix format is just to show how the methodology works but you can address this part of the assessment in the way that better suits you.

Some pairs of characteristics might not have any relevant interaction; sometimes various cells will provide the same or similar outputs; this could be interpreted to weight this particular factor of the interaction.

Building blocks

The conclusions you obtained from addressing the values of the variables by pairs will work as “building blocks” to construct scenarios. You will realise that these building blocks can be also classified, but the way of doing it is up to you, regarding to what are your needs and objectives. For instance, a good way to facilitate the understanding of the scenario could be referring to the different building blocks as “descriptors”, “risks” and “opportunities”.



External conditioning factors	Description	Possible values
Descriptors	They are characteristics of the scenario determined by the interaction of particular characteristics of both uses. They are used to describe the interaction scenario defining the type of conflict, main impacts (positive or negative) and who “suffer” them.	The targeted approach will be built upon specific recommendations designed according to the descriptors, to tackled risks and to capitalize in opportunities. It might include measures like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of workshops or specific mechanisms for collaboration (i.e. working groups). • Conduct consultations (to stakeholders and/or experts). • Design and conduct specific studies.
Risks	They refer to the aspects of the interaction that are more difficult to manage if the interaction is positive, or, if the interaction is negative, these will be the hot spots that need to be addressed more carefully in order to conduct the interaction to a good end.	
Opportunities	They are aspects specific to the interaction or the framework (MSP) that can be used as facilitators for the integration.	

Finally, while analysing building blocks and developing specific recommendations, you should make a reflection on the following questions:

Were there other processes addressing this interaction prior to the present analysis? What were their results?



This information should feed transversally into the whole analysis.

Has the MSP the power/competence to apply the recommendation in the specific case?

If yes, what are the specific actions that need to be taken? What kind of interventions are possible?

If not, can MSP be a framework/platform to facilitate the development of the appropriate actions?

Now that you have described micro-scenarios in a strategic way, it should be easier for you to propose specific measures to address the main “hot spots” of the interaction. It is suggested that these recommendations are concrete enough to be implemented. For instance, if your recommendation is to create a multidisciplinary working group, you should set the objectives of this working group and who should be in it, who is going to moderate it, etc.

The outcome of the methodology will be a report containing these detailed recommendations and should be accompanied of a “summary sheet” that could be a very useful tool to engage decision makers on complex issues in a digestible and user-friendly way while it can act as an evidence trail of how this thinking and information was used to come to a decision and the weighting that was used to arrive at that point.

Summary



Hi! This hand book is targeting MSP practitioners and professionals dealing with interactions between activities in the maritime area.

We are proposing here a methodology that provides a systematic approach to define and characterize uses in specific time and space, identifying where the conflict lies and allowing considering the weight attached to the various considerations of the final decision. It helps identifying the kind of action needed (resource mobilization, policy driven interventions, specific measures) and who and/or at what level of governance should be conducted.

On the other hand, the process may be useful in highlighting where gaps in knowledge exist and assist in identifying areas of additional focus for the user in (or prior to) decision making judgement.

Of course, this method does not pretend to be the panacea, it needs to be highlighted that it is based on qualitative judgement; the viability of results will depend quite highly on who conducted the analysis, what information opted to use and the importance each one attaches to the various variables analysed in the process.

It definitely will not give you a straight answer to follow, however, it is a good way to organize your thinking towards a specific issue, and given the complexity of marine matters in general, this is not something trivial.

If you want to access the complete deliverable “Current and Future Uses and Needs of the Atlantic region” please visit: <https://www.simatlantic.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/D1.2-Current-and-future-uses-and-needs-in-the-European-Atlantic-region.pdf>