

# SIMAtlantic: Final brochure

SIMAtlantic was a two-year EU-funded project (2019–21) supporting the establishment and implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in five European Atlantic countries: France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. This factsheet summarises the findings from the project that led to the principal outcome – a SIMAtlantic Vision to provide recommendations for a framework to better achieve coordination and coherency that supports implementation of MSP in the European Atlantic region.

Find out more at [www.simatlantic.eu](http://www.simatlantic.eu)

## Highlights

- Managing marine activities within a transboundary waterbody is complex and there is opportunity for further enhancement of cross-border cooperation mechanisms for its delivery.
- MSP addresses interconnected economic and environmental demands bringing a high level of complexity for communication and stakeholder engagement.
- Land-sea interactions (LSI), that will be exacerbated by climate change, can be transboundary in their influence, making it more difficult to assess their impact upon, and inclusion in, MSP.
- Data and information underpin MSP and are important for cross-border cooperation requiring shared data on pressures and impacts, physical characteristics and maritime boundaries.
- Methodologies such as Cumulative Effects Assessment, bow-tie analysis technique, value chain analysis and stakeholder-led approaches provide options to evaluate and analyse the pressures and impacts of maritime uses and activities in support of MSP.
- Implementation of MSP requires a focus on a vision that enables leadership and policy interactions with monitoring, reporting and evaluation protocols to enhance transboundary coordination and cooperation. impacts of maritime uses and activities in support of MSP.



Image: RRS Discovery



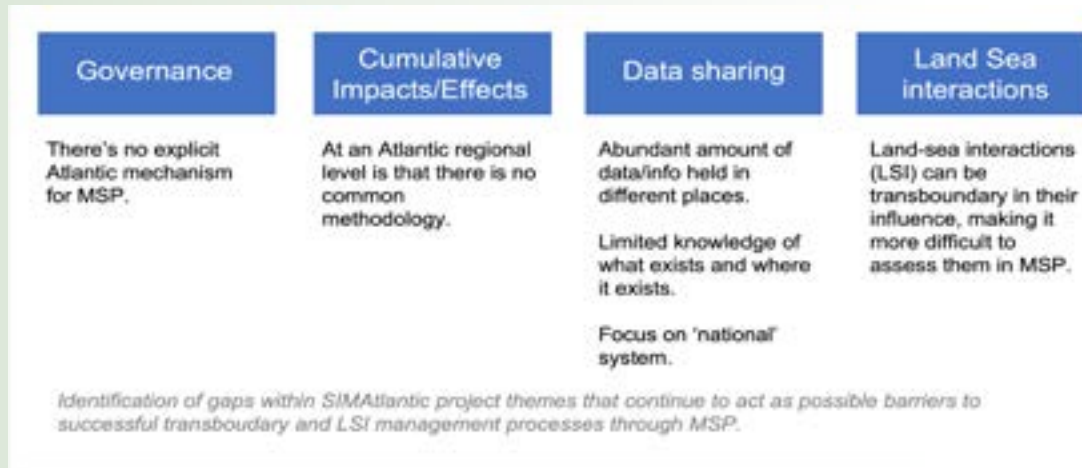
## Project Summary

The “Supporting Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning in the Atlantic region” – SIMAtlantic – was carried out by partners representing academic institutions, marine planning authorities, and scientific public bodies, who worked together to share knowledge and ultimately build long-lasting cooperation in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP).

Project activity culminated in the production of methodologies, practical guidance documents, communication tools, and a catalogue of relevant information to assist the work of MSP authorities. These derived from case studies that explored certain realities of cross-boundary planning and management such as management of marine activities in a transboundary ecosystem between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, communication of MSP in the Gironde Estuary and Pertuis Sea Natural Marine Park in France, transboundary impact assessment between Spain and Portugal and land-sea interactions in the Irish Sea.

The case studies were complemented by four wider cross-cutting themes, explored further in the project, namely 1) governance, 2) cumulative effects/impacts assessment (CEA/CIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), 3) data and information and 4) land-sea interactions. Work on these themes improve Member State understanding between adjoining Atlantic Member States, including progress to date on MSP, their objectives and priorities as well as potential for cooperation and collaboration.

**The project activities identified a suite of challenges for transboundary cooperation for MSP:**



## 'Atlantic Vision'

The final project outcome is a 'SIMAtlantic 'Atlantic Vision' to provide recommendations to support a means to evolve a coherent approach towards addressing the connections between the various maritime uses/activities and users, and between the hinterland and the sea, that pose a particular set of challenges for continued and sustained cross-border cooperation on MSP presented by transnational and transboundary settings for the EU Atlantic region.

The SIMAtlantic Vision, through the outcomes of the individual research elements of the project, provides tools and pathways that can lead to and enable greater cross-sectoral and multi-level co-ordination between different authorities addressing sectors and issues, engaging stakeholders and capacity building, particularly where MSP is a new process. Such tools and pathways can help provide a long-term focus for MSP that may exceed political cycles and jurisdictional borders. Accounting for future uses of both existing and new uses, and achieving better land-sea integration of planning, is a key feature to achieve integrated transboundary MSP. The SIMAtlantic Vision thereby identified that cooperation and coherence can be strengthened in the following areas:

**Governance:** The SIMAtlantic Vision proposes the creation of a mechanism where transboundary and LSI issues can be discussed cooperatively in order to raise areas of mutual concern, identify and develop appropriate transboundary MSP tools and agree on a common monitoring and evaluation framework that would reflect transboundary issues.

**Cumulative impacts and effects:** The SIMAtlantic project proposes a methodology to assess cumulative impacts/effects (CEA-Cumulative Effects Assessment) across borders that is suitable for transboundary contexts.

**Data sharing:** The SIMAtlantic Vision proposes an architecture for a Geoportal that can gather data and information related to maritime spatial planning for the Atlantic region to facilitate sharing of information and data between data networks and platforms between countries to promote transnational interoperability.

**Land-sea interactions (LSI):** The SIMAtlantic Vision proposes a series of approaches for use in a North East Atlantic context to address the transboundary effects of LSI which can be far reaching, often extending beyond regional and national borders, and can be environmental, social and economic in their nature, and reconcile potential contestation across multiple activities, uses and users.

Find out more at [www.simatlantic.eu](http://www.simatlantic.eu)



## Project resources

More focused aspects of governance, CIA, datasharing and LSI were tested in case study sites and all the associated reports, factsheets and project outputs are available on the resources page project website.

[www.simatlantic.eu/resources/](http://www.simatlantic.eu/resources/)

The resources page is organized into several categories:

- Reports:** Four reports are listed, including 'Description of MAI research infrastructure for Atlantic Ireland', 'Current and future use and needs of the European Atlantic Region', 'Atlantic coast for WFP Roadmap', and 'Report focusing on aquaculture in Carlingford Lough'.
- Leaflets and factheets:** Three items are shown, such as 'Introduction to Simatlantic', 'Carlingford Lough', and 'Sea Clinging Sea Urchins'.
- Tools and guidance:** Three items are listed, including 'Operational Agreement for Atlantic Ireland's building scenario (SI)', 'Handbook: Aquaculture activity selection by feeding scenario (SI)', and 'SI2: Risk guide for communication for the management plan of the Atlantic Islands and Pelagic Sea Urchin Resource Bank'.
- Newsletters:** Three newsletters are shown, dated November 11, March 2020; November 2, November 2020; and November 9 July 2021.
- Additional factheets:** A separate row contains three factheets: 'Communication in maritime water plans', 'Transboundary impact assessment', and 'Cumulative impacts and Strategic Environmental Assessment'.
- Further factheets:** A final row contains three factheets: 'Managing marine activities in transboundary cooperation', 'Land use interactions in the Irish Sea', and 'Land use interactions'.

