

# SIMNORAT – Final conference

## Workshop: Ecosystem-Based Approach in MSP

### Objective of the workshop

Ecosystem-Base Approach (EBA) is a very wide concept that encompasses a large range of different principles. Following a short introduction of EBA concept, discussion aimed to raise and detail concrete ideas/proposals to foster EBA in the context of MSP.

Two sessions of the workshop were organized, bringing together about 15 people each.

### EBA introduction

Thanks to a quite comprehensive literature review on the concept (IOC UNESCO, CBD, Helcom-Vasab, Pisces project, Barcelona Convention...), we proposed 12 principles addressed by the EBA concept. They show that EBA covers very different principles related to environment as well as socio-economic matters or management concerns.

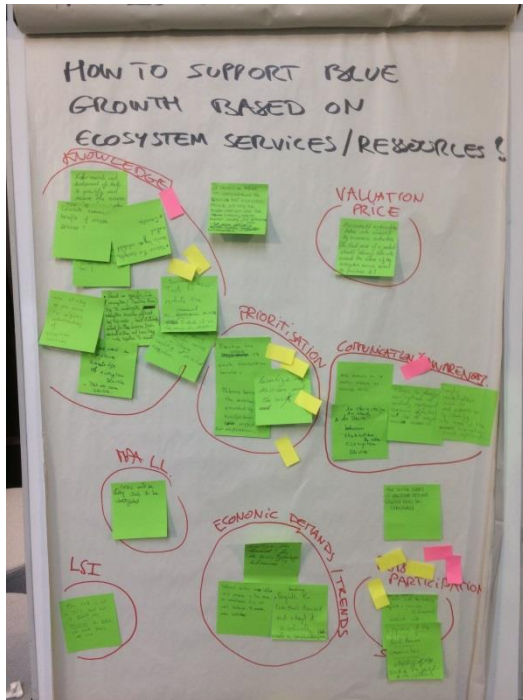
Then, participant where asked to choose between one of the four topics we proposed to sum up EBA principles: Environment protection, Scales, Linkage between economy and environment or Adaptive Management. Groups of the two sessions decided to discuss on the same topic: linkage between economy and environment.



**12 EBA principles introduced during the workshop**

## Brainstorming on concrete proposal

Then, each participant was asked to think about two concrete proposals to properly support sustainable blue growth based on ecosystems. Each participant had to write his proposals on sticky notes and alternately introduce them to the group. When all proposals had been shared, a collective synthesis was done to identify the main themes of proposals.



Many proposals from the two groups pointed out the need to increase **knowledge** about ecosystem services (how to evaluate them from economic, social or cultural point of view?) as well as effects of maritime uses on the ecosystems (pressures and impacts, carrying capacity...). It was also raised that environmental assessment is not only an administrative process but a technical issue and how to improve best practices. The development of more research was a key aspect, including tools to quantify resources and give a value to ecosystem services to make them accountable. Investigate lessons learnt from Marine Protected Areas shall also be encouraged. It was also underlined how to foster transdisciplinary knowledge and better integrate the use of social sciences.

The **promotion of sustainable uses** was pushed by several ideas, such as encouraging nature-based solutions, creating eco-labels, innovating

about multi-uses platforms or promoting eco-tourism.

**Communication and awareness raising** appeared as a priority through a significant number of proposals. Education programs and innovation in ecosystem services representations could be a mean of meeting this need, which concerns not only stakeholders, but also administrations and decision makers as well as the whole population.

It was also pointed out that the value of several services from ecosystems is closely linked with **people perceptions**. It should be developed mechanisms to get public and stakeholders involved in the evaluation of ecosystem services.

It was also pointed out that **economic demands and trends** must be known, in order to encourage sustainable blue growth. Solutions to collect economics demands from stakeholders could be developed and foresight approaches should be carried out to anticipate trends.



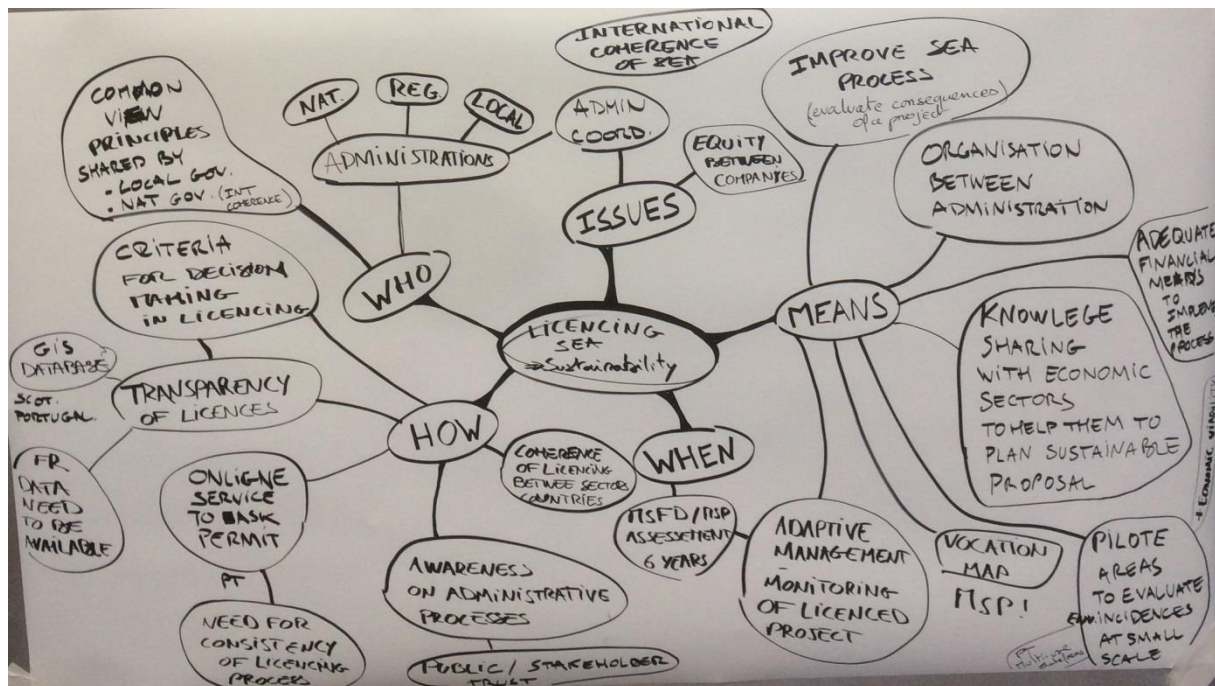
The ideas of setting **fees** (creating “eco-incentives” for sustainability) for nature services and strengthening the polluter pays principle were raised.

Finally, the role of **licensing processes** and **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** in promoting sustainable blue growth was questioned. It was pointed out that procedures could enhance coherence between maritime policies (such as MSP, MSFD, WFD, Habitat and Bird directives...). It was also raised the need for clearer and simpler administrative procedures.

## Deeper discussions

Following the brainstorming on proposals to enhance EBA in MSP processes, participants were asked to choose a proposal theme to be detailed further, particularly concerning concrete implementation: who should be in charge of the implementation? Who is targeted? How to do? Are there particular needs (financial, human resources...)? What is the most relevant step of the MSP process for its implementation? What are the potential difficulties?...

### How could Strategic Environmental Assessment and licensing process strengthen EBA?



Attendees of the first session decided to address licensing processes (that deliver administrative authorizations for maritime sectors’ projects). This process and the accompanying environmental assessment (SEA for Strategic Environmental Assessment) are ways to consider ecosystems and their relationship with maritime economy when maritime uses are planned and developed. Discussions were focused on how these processes could be improved and how they could bring sustainability to maritime economy.

### Coordination among administrations

It was clarified that licensing processes are under the competences of States or local government administrations, at different scales, national, regional or local. This multi-scale and multi-actors organization creates complexity leading to very complex and long procedures. This brings the need to foster coordination among these different administration

scales. It could be a severe issue if not meet. Initiatives should be proposed to share between administrations vision and principles about licensing.

### **Transparency, consistency and information availability**

Transparency and consistency of the licensing procedures was emphasized as a main stakeholder expectation. Improving awareness on this aspect would bring confidence and trust in MSP and maritime policies. On a hand, this concerns process steps and criteria to evaluate applications from economic stakeholders. On the other hand, information about delivered licenses should be made more readily available.

Moreover, stakeholders should have a better access to existing knowledge and data both on marine ecosystems and maritime uses, in order to facilitate application drafting.

It was raised current initiatives or perspectives on the development of tools, such as online geoportal, GIS data base which would deliver to stakeholders' baseline knowledge and data as well as updated information on licenses already given. For example, in Scotland there is a GIS data base enabling to show the licenses.

Finally, it was mentioned the Portuguese initiative to set a unique national online service up for licensing application. This unique portal will distribute each application to competent administration, depending on their nature. This is a very interesting way to simplify procedures, make them transparent and strengthen coordination between administrations.

### **Confidence in decision making**

Equity between operators in applications process was also underlined, as well as providing tailored – support in developing applications.

### **Monitoring/Evaluation of licensed projects**

In line with the EBA principle promoting adaptive management, it was raised the need to improve SEA process concerning the evaluation of authorized uses. Environmental status of Member States' waters is to be evaluated every 6 years through MSFD implementation. Evaluation of licensed uses should be carried out in consistency with MSFD evaluation and monitoring program.

### **Crossborder coherence**

It was pointed at that consistency in SEA and licensing process is also expected across borders.

### **Pilot areas**

Concerning innovation and new maritime uses, it is proposed to set pilot areas to evaluate at a small scale environmental incidences as well as economic viability of new projects. This could be a way to face uncertainty linked with new or future maritime uses. It was raised example of Portugal, which has planed pilot areas for the development of multi-use platforms.

### **Predictability**

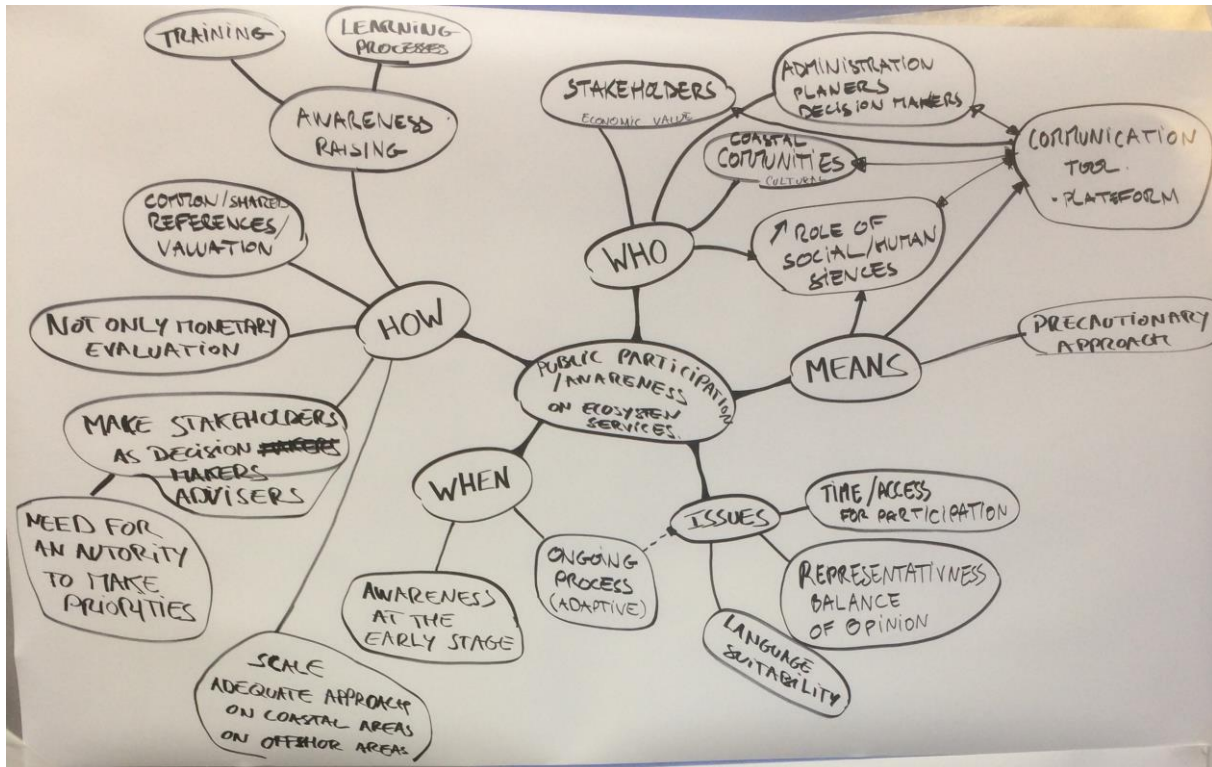
Finally, along with the need for clear and shared criteria for the evaluation uses authorization requests, the need for predictability and visibility on planning priorities was pointed at. Actually, this refers to the need for MSP, bringing to maritime sectors a clear view on where and how their activities would be authorized.



## Funding

To dedicate adequate funding to support the whole process, including quality control and assessment shall be essential.

### *How to raise stakeholder and public awareness about ecosystem services and how to engage them in their evaluation?*



Participants of the second session decided to focus on ecosystem services, particularly on questions about appropriation of the concept by the stakeholders and public. Public involvement, required for the evaluation of several service categories such as the cultural services, was addressed as well.

### **Raising Public and stakeholders' awareness**

Services provided by ecosystems are complex to understand. There is a need to progress on the awareness of public as well as stakeholders in order to get them more closely involved in their evaluation. This objective could be met by setting a concrete learning process, offering training sessions adapted to each public category. This awareness initiative is to be launched at the early stages of the MSP processes.

However, lack of time and difficulties to be involved in discussions are issues that can be enlarged to the global question of stakeholder engagement in MSP processes.

### **Involving the entire range of stakeholders**

It was pointed out that the question of services provided by ecosystems concerns not only economic stakeholders (who will be particularly interested in economic services) and coastal communities (which will focus more on services such as cultural or coastal protection), but also administrations, planners and decision makers who need to improve their skills on this topic. The communication strategy has to be adapted to its targets and language suitability

must be considered to avoid a too technical language especially when addressing communities and general public.

Moreover, the definition of the territory and the scale is important. Not the same people can be concerned depending on the chosen scale and a consultation and decision-making process needs an adequate approach.

### **Role of the scientific community**

The crucial role of social/human scientist was emphasized, concerning knowledge improvement as well as dissemination. National initiatives exist (such as the EFESSE French program). A comprehensive review need to be done in the context of MSP.

However, the complexity of addressed concept and specific language need to be considered to make scientist contribution efficient.

### **Communication tool**

It was proposed to set a communication platform up, adapted to each category of people concerned and to the MSP context. This platform should set at the international scale to benefit from various experiences.

### **Evaluation/Prioritization of ecosystem services**

Since public and stakeholders must be involved in the evaluation of services provided by ecosystems, a way to involve them in the prioritization of various services should be found. This would give them an important role in decision making or at least in advising planning authorities. Stakeholders can be made advisers, however, attention has to be paid on the representativeness of the various opinions.

It has been pointed out that competent authorities keep their competences when arbitration is needed.

### **Long term process**

It has also to be considered this is an ongoing and adaptative process (which can indeed create some lassitude) but this cannot be a one-shot consultation and it has to be considered on a long-term and adaptative process.