

# Discussion Paper

## Managing Space and Interactions between Activities

### Baseline Report

The Baseline Report provides an inventory of current activities and conditions in the maritime area. It also begins an analysis of interactions between different activities and the impact those activities may have on the environment. There may be conflicts and compatibilities between activities and between activities and the environment.

### Managing Space and Interactions

Marine spatial planning (MSP) seeks to manage and allocate **space** in a way that minimises conflicts among human activities, as well as conflicts between human activities and nature, and, where possible, maximises compatibilities among uses. Managing **interactions** to enhance compatibilities and reduce conflicts is an important goal and intended outcome of MSP.

### Space and Time are Important

Some areas of the ocean are busier than others—both ecologically and economically. Species, habitats, populations, resources, shipping lanes, etc., are all distributed in various places and at various times. Successful marine planning and management needs to understand how to work with the **spatial and temporal diversity** of marine interests and activities. Understanding these spatial and temporal distributions and mapping them is an important part of MSP.

### Marine Planning and Other Objectives

As outlined in the Baseline Report, marine planning must take into account the broader context in which it operates. Government policy in cross-cutting areas such as climate change, energy and transport may translate into objectives requiring action in the marine sector. Marine planning needs to consider explicitly such plans and actions in

terms of the spatial and temporal pattern of proposed development and capital investments in the maritime area.

### **Future Conditions**

In addition to considering current conditions, MSP is also a forward-looking process that seeks to plan and project for future scenarios based on policies, plans and actions that will apply over the lifetime of the plan.

Defining and analysing future conditions may involve the following tasks:

- Projecting current trends in the spatial and temporal needs of existing human uses;
- Estimating spatial and temporal requirements for new demands of space;
- Considering areas that are available for use or development and areas that need special protection;
- Identifying possible alternative future spatial scenarios for the plan area.

### **Management Actions**

In addition to spatial considerations, marine planning and management needs to consider the management rules and actions required to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan. Management actions may come in the form of a range of quantitative and qualitative measures, such as:

- Specifying the amount of human activity in an area; e.g. limitations on fishing activity and capacity;
- Specifying standards for human activity in an area; e.g. noise conditions for exploration activities, quality of waste water discharging into designated shellfish waters, speed restrictions on entry to ports etc.;
- Specifying where and when human activity can take place; e.g. areas closed to certain human activities, designation of marine protected areas, designation of areas for specific uses, or according to objectives.

## **Spatial Designation in Context**

As illustrated above, spatial designation is one of a broad range of management actions that may be utilised in marine planning and management. It may be used for a range of purposes:

- To provide protection for biologically and ecologically important habitats, ecosystems, and ecological processes;
- To spatially separate conflicting human activities or to co-locate compatible human activities;
- To protect the natural values of the marine management area while allowing reasonable human uses of the area;
- To allocate areas for reasonable human uses while minimizing the effects of these human uses on each other and nature; and
- To preserve some areas of the marine managed area in their natural state undisturbed by humans except for scientific or educational purposes.

It may be achieved through a number of tools, for example, through specific zoning designations as commonly used in the terrestrial planning system.

The final spatial designation product in a large multiple use maritime area will be the result of compromise, accommodating a range of needs, interests, and political requirements.

Spatial designation is an integral part of all forward planning but it is not simple! The main agenda item for discussion at the third meeting of the Advisory Group will be based around one of the consultation questions (extracted below) contained in the National Marine Planning Framework Baseline Report. Members will be invited to offer their initial perspectives on this question.

*“The objectives of a marine plan can be supported or achieved in a number of ways. Some countries have used a policy based approach to guide the decisions of statutory consent authorities with respect to specific sectoral developments or activities. Others have opted*

*for a more prescriptive zoning approach (similar to on-land zoning through County Development Plans in Ireland). Taking account of the extent of Ireland's marine area and the varying degrees of activity that take place in our waters what do you think would be the most appropriate means of supporting the objectives of Ireland's marine plan – prescriptive, policy or somewhere between?"*