**Introduction to the MESMA Governance Analysis Framework**

Governance has been defined as ‘steering human behaviour through combinations of people, state and market incentives in order to achieve strategic objectives’ (Jones et al. 2011). The need to develop cross-sectoral and integrated governance is a key challenge in developing and implementing MSP, as well as in the implementation of ecosystem-based management through MSP, which requires extending the scale of coordinated management across different marine ecosystems and social systems (UNEP 2011). Analysing governance, and evaluating the effectiveness of governance systems, is therefore an essential part in the evaluation of spatial management.

Governance analysis is often concerned with the relative importance of state, market and civil society institutions in ‘steering’ policy- and decision-making processes, i.e. recognising the roles of state control (government and bureaucracy), market forces (capitalism and economies), and public interests (people and civil society). Governance involves a combination of different institutions from all three of these spheres.

MESMA Work Package 6 was focused on governance analysis, with two broad aims. Firstly, it focused on developing and testing a method for analysing and evaluating governance of on-going spatial planning initiatives. This took the shape of an analytical framework, which is discussed and presented here. Secondly, it carried out empirical research on the governance of the MESMA case studies, which aimed to gather and synthesise new insights on emerging marine spatial planning across Europe. The empirical research, which is covered in full in MESMA Deliverables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3, served to test the analytical framework. The following presents the analytical framework as developed at the start of the WP6 empirical research, and reflects critically on the experience of applying it to the MESMA case studies.

The governance analysis framework (also referred to as the ‘WP6 Governance Analytical Structure’) provides a systematic and structured approach to analysing governance in MSP, by ‘deconstructing’ governance into different incentive categories and examining the effectiveness of different governance approaches in addressing the key thematic issues or challenges encountered in existing initiatives with spatial elements. It is based on previous work carried out by UCL researchers on analysing the governance of marine protected areas (Jones et al. 2011), adapted in order to apply it to marine spatial planning initiatives with a range of different objectives (including socio-economic


rather than environmental objectives). In summary, the governance analysis framework deconstructs the governance process as follows:

1) **Context** – The socio-economic and political context of the initiative being analysed, as well as some basic information about the initiative itself (who is involved, its location & scale, its history).

2) **Objectives and management measures** – The key priority objective which the analysis is focused on, which should be the - or one of the - key objective(s) of the initiative itself, as well as existing policies, laws, plans or regulations that facilitate the achievement of the priority objective.

3) **Conflicts** – The conflicts generated by the implementation of the above measures, and the driving forces behind those conflicts.

4) **Governance approach and effectiveness** – The overall governance approach adopted in the initiative (top-down, bottom-up, or market-led), and its effectiveness in achieving the priority objective.

5) **Incentives** – A description of economic, legal, knowledge, interpretative, and participative incentives employed within the initiative in order to achieve the priority objective (a list of possible incentives is supplied within the framework, derived from previous empirical work carried out on MPA initiatives).

6) **Cross-cutting themes** – A discussion of the combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches, inter-sectoral integration, cross-border issues, environmental and social justice issues, and the influence of uncertainty in decision-making.

The governance analysis framework can be used independently (as a way to deconstruct and analyse governance within a marine spatial planning process), or it may be used alongside the main MESMA evaluation framework. Linkages to the main MESMA framework are mapped out in the framework (reproduced below). If the two frameworks are to be used in conjunction with each other, both evaluations should focus on the same operational objective. The governance analysis framework is not designed to support multiple runs for different objectives.

Both frameworks are about evaluating different aspects of an existing marine spatial planning initiative. Such an initiative may be an integrated marine spatial plan or part of the integrated plan; or if there is no integrated marine spatial plan in place, an existing initiative with spatial elements (e.g. sectoral management plan with spatial restrictions) which may be linked or offer valuable lessons to the future development of an integrated marine spatial plan.
The Governance Analysis Framework

1 Context

In this section, please outline the ‘story’ of the initiative you are analysing, including its geographical context, the socio-economic and political context of the host country, and the regional policy framework (e.g. regional sea action plans). Below is a list of key information to be included in this section.

1.1 Basic information

Provide some basic information and background about the initiative you are evaluating, including:

- The name of the existing initiative
- The geographical boundary of the existing initiative
- Location
- The history of the existing initiative (how and why it was established)
- The relevant competent authority/authorities (e.g. which government authority is in charge of the initiative, and collaborating national/local authorities)

1.2 Socio-economic and political context

If the local context is significantly different from the national context, you may focus on the local context and briefly mention the difference between local and national contexts where this information is available. This section should provide information on:

- Per capita GDP
- Population density per km²
- GDP growth rate, and the main driver(s) of economic growth
- Economic structure (e.g. GDP composition by sector, main economic sectors, main source of employment etc)
- Contribution of maritime sectors to the national economy
- Unemployment rate
- Administrative structure (e.g. degree of autonomy of local/sub-national government)
- Governance capacity index (UCL can provide this index for each relevant country)
- Gini index of income disparity (UCL can provide this index for each relevant country)

Most of the indices listed above can be found in the CIA World Factbook (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/). Governance indicators for countries are measured by the World Bank and can be found at www.govindicators.org.

1.3 Regional policy framework
Sub-section 1.3 and UCL’s review of EU policies and directives can feed into Action 1a in the WP2 framework.

Describe the regional policy framework within which your initiative is ‘nested’, eg regional sea action plans. ‘Regional’ in this context refers to an international region, rather than a region within a country. This sub-section could include the following information:

- How did this regional policy framework come into existence?
- What are the overarching goals and objectives of the regional policy framework?
- Geographical scale and participating countries/parties
- How does this regional policy framework relate to the existing initiative you are evaluating in your case study?

2 Objectives and management measures

Section 2 links to Action 2C in the WP2 framework.

2.1 The priority operational objective

The priority operational objective is the objective on which the governance analysis is focused, recognising that this should also be a key priority in the existing initiative you are evaluating. This may come from a local, national or regional policy level but, where appropriate, relate this objective to the regional policy framework.

The governance analysis framework is not designed to support multiple runs for different objectives. In real-world marine spatial planning initiatives, however, there may be multiple objectives, or related objectives that complement and go alongside the priority objective, which come from a local, national or regional level. These may be included in the analysis whilst maintaining the focus on the priority operational objective. For example, the priority operational objective may be to designate a network of MPAs or to promote marine renewables, and the complementary objective may be to minimise the socio-economic or ecological impacts when meeting the priority operational objective. Note that the priority operational objective may, for instance, be national, whilst complementary objectives may be regional but you should only undertake one analysis with a focus on the priority operational objective.

2.2 Key policies

This section should describe the key policies, legislations, regulations and/or plans that enable/facilitate the achievement of the above priority operational objective. List the titles of these policies, legislations, regulations and/or plans, the year of implementation, and key legal provisions in relation to the priority objective. Focus on those policies, legislations, regulations and/or plans that are of particular importance to the fulfilment of the priority operational objective.

2.3 Measures and actions
Measures and actions put forward by the policies, legislations, regulations and/or plans listed above, in order to promote the achievement of the priority operational objective. Briefly summarise the measures and actions here. The details of how such measures and actions have been implemented on the ground, and how effective they are, should be described in the incentives section below.

2.4 Conflicting objectives and policies

Describe any other specific and particularly important sectoral priorities, objectives, obligations etc that are conflicting, could potentially conflict or be perceived as conflicting with the fulfilment of the priority operational objective. What measures or initiatives are in place to address such conflicts? Such measures could include an existing or emerging marine spatial planning framework and policies.

Please note that while a description of the key policies is needed here, an extensive review of every sectoral policy or legislation is not necessarily. Please focus on the policies and legislations that interact, articulate and/or conflict with the priority operational objective. It is the interactions between the key policies that are of interest here, not the details of individual policies and legislations, ie analogous to a synecology rather than an autoecology approach.

This section is mainly about setting the policy background for the following analysis, so the description on the interactions between different policies should be related to the discussion on conflicts, incentives and cross-cutting themes below.

3 Conflicts

Describe the conflicts generated by the implementation of th management measures aimed at achieving the priority operational objective. Such conflicts will generally include:

- Primary conflicts between environmental conservation and resources use
- Secondary conflicts between different sectors/users

Wherever possible, describe the conflicts in the competition for sea space and related impacts in accordance with the following seven categories:

- Extractive use of living marine resources (eg fishing)
- Extractive use of non-living marine resources (eg aggregate extraction)
- Mariculture
- Commercial shipping
- Biodiversity conservation
- Marine renewables
- Amenity/recreation/tourism

Describe and discuss the conflicts rather than just trying to present and address them through a matrix. Focus on conflicts between people, and the ways in which these conflicts manifest
themselves, rather than on negative impacts of one activity on another (including negative environmental impacts of a given activity).

When describing the conflicts, it may worth exploring the influence of driving forces, i.e. key trends that are influencing conflicts, which may include:

- Changes in regulatory or administrative environments, which promote or restrict a particular type of marine space use, including strategic sectoral obligations, eg 20% of energy from renewables by 2020
- Changes in market conditions, which affect (positively or negatively) a particular type of marine space use;
- Cultural changes, shifts in public perception, etc which support or hinder the development of a particular sector.

4 Governance approach and effectiveness

Describe and discuss the main governance approach being used in the existing initiative you are evaluating and to implement the policy framework described in section 2, i.e. main governance approach that is dominating decision-making processes:

- a top-down approach (relying on government power and regulation), or
- a decentralised approach, whereby a degree of autonomy to fulfil certain responsibilities is granted to lower levels of government: deconcentration, delegation or devolution (see glossary)
- a bottom-up (relying on user participation and community self-governance), or
- a market approach (relying on economic incentives).

Please indicate, wherever possible, if there are any disconnections amongst the key sectoral policies involved in the governance framework. For example, a top-down approach but with different sectoral policies with no effective integration mechanism to address primary and secondary conflicts (see section 3).

Discuss the overall effectiveness of the governance approach in achieving the priority operational objective, using both qualitative and quantitative descriptions wherever possible.

➤ This assessment of effectiveness can be based on the results from the MESMA WP2 framework.

- To what degree and extent is the priority operational objective in your case study being achieved?
- To what degree are primary and secondary conflicts being addressed? If there are unsolved conflicts, how does that affect the achievement of the priority operational objective?
• Is there any noticeable trend in terms of effectiveness (is the situation being improved, worsened, or stable)?

Specific elements of governance approaches that lead to high or low effectiveness in achieving the priority operational objective will be explored in detail in the next section. However, do briefly outline and discuss the main reasons/factors (could be part of the context, policy framework, governance approach etc.) that contribute to high or low effectiveness in achieving the priority operational objective.

5 Incentives

➔ Sub-section 5.1 feeds into Action 6.1 in the WP2 framework, and sub-section 5.2 feeds into Step 7 in the WP2 framework.

5.1 Overview of incentives used

A summary of the key incentives that have been applied to promote the achievement of the priority operational objective and to address related conflicts in the initiative under evaluation, including an assessment of how particular individual or combinations of incentives have been particularly effective or ineffective. Focus on the incentives that are applicable/relevant to the initiative. The description of legal incentives can refer back to section 2 (Objectives and management measures).

The following provides a list of economic, interpretative, knowledge, legal, and participative incentives that have been used in marine spatial planning initiatives globally:

5.1.1 Economic incentives

E1 Promoting and protecting the rights and entitlements of local ‘customary’ users, eg through assigning fishing rights to certain marine areas and fish stocks

E2 Providing certainty to potential industries and their investors, eg through licensing and granting concessions to renewable energy developers in certain marine areas

E3 Seeking and promoting economic development opportunities and alternative livelihoods that are compatible with the priority operational objective and can generate sustainable income for local people

E4 Providing fair economic compensation for those users who carry costs as a result of restrictions on their activities that cannot reasonably be offset through compatible alternative livelihoods

E5 Providing sufficient government funding to support the development and implementation of the initiative to achieve the priority operational objective, including surveillance and enforcement activities and the use of other economic incentives

E6 Seeking NGO and corporate funding through endowments to support the development and implementation of the initiative to achieve the priority operational objective, including surveillance
and enforcement activities and the use of other economic incentives, whilst ensuring that such funders cannot ‘capture’ governance through an inappropriate degree and type of influence.

5.1.2 Interpretative incentives

I1 Using maps (paper or digital) for displaying boundaries, zones for different activities and related regulatory restrictions to support awareness and implementation of management measures related to the priority operational objective

I2 Promoting recognition of the potential resource development benefits resulting from the achievement of the priority operational objective, whilst being realistic about such potential benefits and not ‘over-selling’ them, eg displaying development zones to potential developers and investors, potential internal and spillover/export benefits of MPAs

I3 Promoting recognition of the biodiversity and ecosystem conservation-restoration benefits of spatial restrictions

5.1.3 Knowledge incentives

K1 Explicitly recognising the challenges raised by scientific uncertainty and the importance of developing approaches to help reduce and address such challenges, eg establishing ground rules for the interpretation and application of the precautionary principle, decision-making under uncertainty, and adaptation in the light of emerging knowledge

K2 Developing mechanisms for independent advice and/or arbitration in the face of conflicting information and/or uncertainty, including transparency in the use of such mechanisms

K3 Promoting mutual respect amongst local resource users and scientists for the validity of each other’s knowledge and promoting collective learning through partnership research, research/advisory groups, participative workshops, etc, eg conducting studies in collaboration with users on the patterns of biodiversity and resource use in the existing initiative, including trends

K4 Using interactive maps (paper or digital) for gathering information from users on spatial and temporal distribution of different activities, environmental impacts of activities, distribution of conservation features, etc to support the achievement of the priority operational objective while reducing conflicts

K5 Maximising scientific knowledge to guide/inform decision-making and monitoring/evaluation in relation to the priority operational objective

K6 Reducing the barriers in access to information and data held by different agencies, user groups and countries, and promoting the exchange, sharing and integrated use of such information and data in the existing initiative, eg geo-spatial data, ecological trends, fisheries data

5.1.4 Legal incentives
L1 Performance standards/conditions/criteria/requirements attached to licenses, concessions and user/property rights, etc in order to ensure the achievement of the priority operational objective, such as achieving environmental criteria and providing access rights for particular uses

L2 International-regional-national-local legal obligations that require the fulfilment of the priority operational objective, including the potential for top-down interventions

L3 Adopting a sensitive but effective approach to legal interventions to address conflicts that would otherwise undermine the fulfilment of the priority operational objective, whilst avoiding a complete ‘command-and-control’ approach

L4 Ensuring that sufficient national-local state capacity, political will, surveillance technologies and financial resources are available to ensure the equitable and effective enforcement of all restrictions on all local and incoming users

L5 Effective system for enforcing restrictions and penalising transgressors in a way that provides an appropriate level of deterrence eg at national, EU or international level

L6 Clarity and consistency in defining the legal objectives of the existing imitative, general and zonal use restrictions, and the roles and responsibilities of different authorities and organizations, including the relationship between the initiative to achieve the priority operational objective and existing plans/regulations for the management of individual sectoral activities

L7 Employing legal appeal and adjudication platforms to address injustices and regulate conflicts at national, EU or international levels

L8 Scope for legal flexibility –subsidiarity, adaptive management and local discretionary action – maintaining, reinforcing, building on and working through lower level institutions, provided that this does not undermine the fulfilment of the priority operational objective

L9 Legal or other official basis for coordination between different sectoral agencies and their related sectoral policies, aimed at addressing cross-sectoral conflicts in order to support the achievement of the priority operational objective.

L10 Legal or policy basis for promoting cross-jurisdictional coordination between member states.

L11 Establishing legal provisions to ensure the transparency in policy processes, eg statutory requirements for public access to information, appeals, public hearings, etc.

5.1.5 Participative incentives

P1 Developing participative governance structures and processes that support collaborative planning and decision-making, eg user committees, participative GIS, postal consultations on proposals that provide for detailed feedback, participative planning workshops, etc, including training to support such approaches

P2 Decentralising some roles, responsibilities and powers to local people and their constituencies, including local government, through a clear management structure, whilst maintaining an appropriate balance of power between local people and the state in relation to the priority
operational objective. Managing expectations in this respect can be particularly important by being realistic about the degree of autonomy and influence that local people and governments/agencies can expect

P3 Clear rules on the means and degree of participation from different sectoral groups and the unbiased representation of all sectors in participation processes

P4 Building trust/social capital between different actors through transparency, face-to-face discussions, equity promotion, etc, recognising that this can lead to an ‘upward spiral’ (Ostrom 1999) of cooperation and confidence that cooperation will be reciprocated amongst different actors, whilst erosion of trust through lack of transparency, equity, enforcement, etc can lead to a ‘downward spiral’

P5 Transparent participation and decision-making processes, including about how user participation has affected decisions and why it may or may not have done, and being very clear and honest, once decisions are made, about the potential benefits and costs, as well as the restrictions imposed on certain users

P6 Providing for participative enforcement amongst users, eg peer enforcement, community rangers/wardens, and promoting the potential for cooperation and peer enforcement of restrictions

P7 Promoting consistency with and respect for local traditions, customs, norms and practices, in so far as they are compatible with and contribute towards the fulfilment of the priority operational objective

P8 Promoting recognition & realisation of the potential for a the participative governance of the existing initiative to influence the higher-wider statutory framework, processes and obligations, ie that local users can have an influence on higher level institutions as well as being influenced by them - co-evolution

P9 Bringing in ‘neutral’ facilitators to support governance processes and negotiations or training state employees to do so

P10 Employing ‘neutral’ and widely respected panels to arbitrate on issues, conflicts, options, etc and recommend decisions

5.2 Discussion of incentives used

A discussion on how you think governance could be improved to better meet the priority operational objective and to address related conflicts through improved individual or combinations of incentives. This section might include discussion of different scenarios for improving governance in the existing initiative. The scenarios may include, for example, a key change or break-through in the planning or legislative process, more space for stakeholders to influence the policy process, or more input from scientists. Please note that such scenarios should not be purely hypothetical, and a reality base for the scenarios will be needed, for example, through grounding your scenarios on real examples in the

vicinity of the case study area, where positive changes in the governance have been observed. Describe the incentives that will be needed to support these scenarios drawing on the list above.

6 Cross-cutting themes

This draws on results and findings in previous sections, with the aim of discussing and highlighting broad thematic themes that cannot be captured under previous sections. Section 5 looks particularly at specific and individual incentives, while section 6 looks particularly at wider-scale institutional/structural issues that may underpin or affect the effectiveness of individual incentives and/or the overall governance approach as described in section 4. There are five cross-cutting themes:

- Combining top-down role of state and bottom-up participative approaches;
- Inter-sectoral integration and related power issues including compensation (in emerging MSP framework);
- Cross-border issues between different countries;
- Environmental and social justice issues and related rights of appeal;
- Influence of different knowledges and of uncertainty in decision-making. eg different claims to knowledge, and how uncertainty plays out in decision-making, establishing cause-effect relationships.

Where relevant, the following sub-themes could be included under the five cross-cutting themes:

6.1 Combining top-down role of state and bottom-up participative approaches

6.1.1 Balance of the influence of stakeholders and the influence of national-local government in the existing initiative

6.1.2 Degree of decentralisation (ie level of autonomy of sub-national/local governments) and the relative influence of national/federal and sub-national/local governments on the existing initiative

6.1.3 Role of EC in promoting MSP at national and ground levels, including promoting stakeholder participation to achieve strategic outcomes

6.1.4 Level of consensus, compromise and imposition in the existing initiative

6.1.5 Views of stakeholders from different sectors on the priority operational objective, eg validity, priority

6.1.6 The existing initiative as a vehicle for promoting cooperation and collaboration between different levels of governments (eg national/federal, regional, and local) and different sectoral agencies in developing and implementing marine spatial plans
6.1.7 Transparency in decision-making processes

6.1.8 Role of NGOs eg promoting cooperation in fulfilling the priority operational objective; promoting the views of particular communities

6.2 Inter-sectoral integration and related power issues including compensation (in emerging MSP framework)

6.2.1 General approaches adopted for promoting interactions and dialogue between different sectors, eg employing fora, bilateral consultations etc in order to reduce divide, mistrust and conflicts among different sectors and user groups, including the interactions between new (eg renewables) and existing sectors (eg conservation); role of NGOs as intermediaries for resolving inter-sectoral conflicts;

6.2.2 Competition for space between sectors (eg renewables and conservation) and within sectors (eg between different renewable companies) as a source of influence on and drive for the existing initiative

6.2.3 The development and implementation of the existing initiative as a vehicle for promoting integrated management of different sectors: influence of the existing initiative over the management if different sectoral activities

6.2.4 Potential winners and losers in the existing initiative, power struggles and displacement issues

6.2.5 Rising role of NGOs in promoting particular agendas and objectives

6.3 Cross-border issues between countries

6.3.1 Cross-border issues regarding historical fishing access rights under ‘relative stability’

6.3.2 Effectiveness of transboundary cooperation and collaboration in the existing initiative, eg in designing, designating and managing adjoining MPAs for biogeographical features that cross national borders

6.3.3 Sharing of data and information between different member states in the existing initiative

6.3.4 Role of the EC and the principle of subsidiarity: what can the EC say and not say about cross-border and cross-sector management in MSP?

6.3.5 Mechanisms for cross-border monitoring and integrated assessments

6.4 Justice issues

6.4.1 The provision of legal rights to appeal and effectiveness in the use of adjudication platforms at various levels (international, EU and national) in addressing justice issues
6.4.2 Environmental justice issues – conserving marine environment for indirect benefits (ecosystem services) of wider society

6.4.3 Social justice issues – rights of users to access areas/resources for their livelihoods and ‘way of life’

6.5 Influence of different knowledges and of uncertainty in decision-making. eg different claims to knowledge, and how uncertainty plays out in decision-making, establishing cause-effect relationships

6.5.1 Relative influence of expert and local knowledge in decision-making processes

6.5.2 The power of information and innovative communication tools (eg mapping and innovative ways of display) in influencing people’s perceptions and behaviour

6.5.3 Effects of uncertainty in decision-making and different options for addressing such uncertainties, eg uncertainties regarding the effects of key activities (eg wind farms) and of the cumulative impacts of multiple activities; role of the precautionary principle

6.5.4 Transparency on issues arising from uncertainty; ie how such issues are communicated, debated and accommodated, eg by scientific advisory bodies.

6.5.5 Expanding role of scientific advisory bodies, eg ICES in gathering data and providing advice on marine management

6.5.6 Accessibility to and transparency of existing data and information held by expert bodies, within sectors and by different nations

6.5.7 Uneven distribution of data and information between countries and regions; differences in capacity for gathering and providing of data and information

7 Conclusion

A summary of the key messages and conclusions from the analysis.
Methods for Governance Analysis

The methods outlined here can be used to collect information under the main headings of the governance analysis framework, particularly the cross-cutting themes and sub-themes identified in the case study. The first two methods can be used in the beginning of the research to gain an overall understanding of the context and key issues, followed by semi-structured interviews and questionnaires to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives of individual stakeholders, and stakeholder workshops can be organised at a later stage of the research to collect new information and verify research findings.

The selection of methods to apply in a particular case study will depend on the context, research questions as well as the amount of research effort available. However, the selected methods should be applied to collect information relevant to the cross-cutting research themes and sub-themes identified to be relevant in a particular case study.

1) **Document analysis**: going through reports, meeting minutes, policy documents, newspapers etc. to collect information relevant to the research themes.

2) **Participant or non-participant observation**: observing an event or process (meetings, workshops, consultation process etc.), to collect information relevant to incentives and cross-cutting themes and sub-themes identified. The researcher can both participate in the event or process, or attend the event or process purely as an observer. To make the best use of participant or non-participant observation, the researcher often prepares a list of topics and questions relevant to the research themes, which will guide the collection of information during the event/process. The information collected can be recorded in field notes or in a research diary (containing information collected as well as the researcher’s synthesis and reflections).

3) **Semi-structured interviews**: semi-structured interviews are one of the most common methods used in governance studies. Semi-structured interviews are based on the use of an interview guide, which comprises of a list of questions and topics to be discussed during the interviews. For governance research using the governance analysis framework in appendix 1, the interview guide can comprise of the cross-cutting themes and sub-themes identified to be relevant in the case study. However, the questions raised by the researcher during the interview process are not restricted to a set of predetermined questions. If there are relevant issues and topics that emerge from the actual interview process, the researcher can explore these issues and topics with the interviewee. In conducting semi-structured interviews, the interviewer intervenes when the conversation moves too far from the research themes. Wherever possible and with the consent of the interviewee, the interviews are taped for further analysis. After the interview, the researcher prepares an interview report which records key information collected, organised and structured in accordance with
the research themes. Below is a list of common advice that applies to semi-structured interviews:

- Find suitable gatekeepers (who are trusted by the people you want to interview and can introduce you to potential interviewees)
- Prepare a short self-introduction (about the researcher, the purpose of the research and why you want to talk to the interviewee)
- If possible, introduce yourself as an independent researcher when conducting this governance research
- Start interviews with little information in the beginning, let people talk about their stories. After 5-10 minutes or towards the end of the interview, you can ask more challenging questions
- Conclude interviews with questions looking into future prospects
- Length of interviews: varies but usually keep within 2 hours
- It will be preferred to have one researcher dedicated to both conducting and analysing the interviews; but for difficult interviews (e.g. with multiple interviewees), it may be better to have two researchers
- How to conduct interviews is always a learning-by-doing process, therefore it will be better to start with the interviewees who you can go back to (allowing for mistakes)

4) **Structured questionnaires**: this can be done in person, by mail/phone etc.

5) **Stakeholder workshops**: workshops for stakeholder representatives to discuss and debate key issues relating to the cross-cutting themes and sub-themes identified. Stakeholder workshops are usually mediated by a facilitator. It is an opportunity to observe the interactions between individuals representing different stakeholder groups to gain an understanding of the similarities and differences between the perspectives of different stakeholder groups.

In applying these methods in social science research, there are some common issues that the researcher should be aware of and address properly during the research process:

**Confidentiality and privacy**: the results of a social science research may sometimes have practical consequences for the informants involved (eg information collected from fishermen may be used to regulate fisheries). Therefore when necessary, caution should be taken to protect the identities and interests of the informants. A common practice is to give assurances of anonymity to the informants. Furthermore, the informants’ personal data (eg name, user group, place of residence) can be coded so that any records of the interview conducted (eg interview reports) cannot be used to trace the identities of the informants.

**Informed consent**: the principle of informed consent requires that the researchers fully inform the informants regarding the intent, scope, and possible effects of the study as they seek to obtain their consent to participate in it. Informants should also be given information on the measures to be taken to protect their identities and interests.
**Positionality:** while recognising that there is no ‘value-free’ social research, efforts should be taken to remain as neutral as possible when applying the research methods (particularly semi-structured interviews and stakeholder workshops). Even if the researcher’s professional association may places him/her in a certain position (eg conservationists), it is useful to state to the informants that during this particular governance research, it is all about listening to the informants’ stories and perspectives. Every effort should be taken to avoid imposing the researcher’s own perspectives on the informants.


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Reflections on the governance analysis framework as an evaluation tool

The framework as a process analysis tool

There is no single correct way to deconstruct and analyse governance. The MESMA analytical framework should not be seen as a fixed product, but rather as one possible approach, which can be further developed or adapted depending on circumstances. Indeed, the framework was treated as work in progress during the MESMA research – the case studies served to test its usefulness in deconstructing and analysing a diverse range of marine spatial planning initiatives.

Feedback from MESMA WP6 researchers indicated that, in combination with support and guidance on research methods provided by UCL, they largely found the framework to be a useful and workable tool. Through applying it, they were able to tease apart different elements of their case studies and understand them better. Thus, the framework performed well as an aid to deconstructing, describing, analysing and understanding the different case studies.

Early on in MESMA WP6, there was a degree of concern amongst participating researchers about the fact that the WP6 analytical framework is designed for focus on a single primary objective, even if the process being analysed is working towards multiple objectives. Simultaneously focusing on multiple objectives using this framework would render the analysis unwieldy and confusing – the incentives analysis, in particular, is based on the premise of multiple incentives being used to achieve a single objective, rather than different sets of incentives in place to achieve different (possibly competing) objectives. WP6 researchers were therefore instructed to focus on a single primary objective from within their initiative, and use that as a guiding thread through their analysis.

Several participating researchers initially struggled with this idea, arguing that it was not appropriate to limit their analysis to a single objective when in reality their initiative had multiple objectives (e.g. the Barents Sea and the Belgian case studies). Several MESMA participants felt strongly that a governance analysis tool for analysing marine spatial planning processes should be designed for multi-objective processes, and thus be able to focus on multiple objectives simultaneously. However, as their work progressed, it became clear to participating researchers that focusing the governance analysis on a single primary objective is not the same as ignoring the reality of multiple objectives where that exists: Through the conflict analysis and cross-cutting themes (especially the one focused on integration), the framework ultimately draws out any process elements relating to multiple objectives. The single-objective focus merely serves as a ‘way in’, a manageable approach to completing what might otherwise be an overwhelming and confusing task in gaining a comprehensive and structured understanding of a multifaceted process.
The framework as a process evaluation tool

Whilst the analytical framework worked well purely as an analytical tool (i.e. helping to deconstruct and understand processes), using it as a tool for process evaluation proved to be more complicated. Process evaluation can either focus on whether or not a process is effective at achieving its stated objectives (a challenging proposition in multi-objective marine spatial planning initiatives where different objectives might compete with each other), or it can focus on whether or not it is a ‘good’ process based on pre-defined criteria or values that are independent of the process itself. Within the MESMA WP6 framework, there is a potential for a degree of conflation between the two.

It is important to understand that the WP6 analytical framework is not designed to evaluate the effectiveness of a process, i.e. to determine whether or not the environmental, social or economic goals of a given process are being achieved (because, in theory, this is what the main MESMA is designed to do, and this can be used alongside the governance analytical framework). The WP6 framework is instead designed to help the researcher gain an understanding of the reasons why objectives might not be being achieved, the causes of obstacles and barriers to progress, and the way different elements of a process interact either to facilitate or obstruct the desired outcomes. In this sense, the framework was found to be a successful tool: Section 4 of the analytical framework explicitly encourages the analyst to discuss the effectiveness of the process, drawing information from other sections of the analysis.

The governance analysis framework performs less well as a method for evaluating a process based on pre-defined external criteria. As indicated in the introduction, the governance analysis framework is rooted in empirical research on MPA governance, so it evolved from research with an environmental focus. For the MESMA research, it was adapted to widen out its scope beyond purely environmental planning, but the environmental origins of the framework are still evident. For example, the framework splits conflicts into ‘primary conflicts’ (those between conservation and human use sectors), and ‘secondary conflicts’ (those between different human use sectors). This suggests that environmental concerns deserve to be afforded more significance than conflicts between different human activities.
Thus, the framework at times contains an implicit assumption that the process that is being analysed is aiming to be in line with principles of ecosystem-based management, and that if it is jeopardising environmental sustainability, it is deficient. This is a step beyond evaluating whether a process is effective at meeting its objectives (which could conceivably be entirely focused on economic development, depending on the way in which ‘marine spatial planning’ is interpreted by practitioners and decision-makers). Within the context of the MSFD, building environmental criteria into a process evaluation methodology might be seen as appropriate, so this is in itself not necessarily problematic. However, the fact that these environmental values are implicit in the framework rather than explicit might be seen as a drawback. The framework could be improved in future by differentiating more clearly between elements designed to evaluate effectiveness in delivering process-defined objectives (e.g. section 4), and elements designed to evaluate whether a process (irrespective of its objectives) is environmentally sound.

Similarly, the cross-cutting themes within the framework prompt the analyst to consider a number of value-laden aspects of governance, such as justice, equity, transparency, and accountability. One might take a neutral stance towards these concepts per se, and simply analyse whether there are any obstacles to effectiveness within the process that relate to them, e.g. a lack of transparency leading to loss of trust in institutions and thus increased conflicts or opposition to spatial management measures. The analyst might conclude that increased transparency might, pragmatically, make the process more effective (leading to better compliance with management measures). On the other hand, the analyst might see transparency (and justice, equity and accountability) as ends in themselves, which every governance process should implement. Any governance process failing to meet a given standard of equity, justice, transparency, accountability, and participation might be seen as lacking legitimacy, and therefore deficient. The framework does not explicitly prompt the analyst to make this differentiation, and could be improved by doing so.

In conclusion, the analytical framework should continue to be seen as flexible, as a tool that can be adapted and evolved, rather than a fixed product. The above limitations in terms of its use as a tool for evaluating a process against external benchmarks of environmental sustainability and legitimacy should be borne in mind. However, the fact that it was successfully applied to a broad and diverse range of case studies in MESMA WP6 demonstrates that in its current form, it serves as a workable tool for deconstructing, analysing, and evaluating effectiveness in marine spatial planning processes. It has, in combination with some expert guidance, also proved to be a tool that can be used in a multidisciplinary environment, including by non-experts in governance research.
Governance Analysis Themes from the April 2013 MESMA Governance workshop

Following the completion of the initial governance analyses by the case study researchers, using the governance analysis framework, UCL organised a workshop for case study researchers to share their findings. The governance analytical framework was too complex and detailed for structuring the discussions and conclusions of the workshop (the incentives, in particular, are very detailed). UCL researchers therefore developed an alternative, more streamlined approach to analysing the MESMA case studies, centred on six overarching cross-cutting themes, reproduced in full below. These six themes could be used as an alternative, broader analytical framework for guiding future governance research, for the purpose of describing and understanding the most important aspects of on-going processes in marine spatial planning without going into as much detail as the original WP6 analytical framework. In summary, the six workshop themes were:

1) **Governance approach and structure** – the basic story of the initiative, the players involved, their roles and responsibilities, their objectives, the ways in which they interact, and the role of the researcher within the initiative.

2) **Conflicts** – the main conflicts emerging within the initiative, the drivers behind them, the ways in which they manifest themselves, the ways in which they impact on outcomes, and any mechanisms for addressing these conflicts.

3) **Integration** – horizontal integration across multiple sectors, vertical integration through levels of government, and integration between plan and reality (i.e. the impact that the initiative is having on the ground)

4) **Participation, transparency and accountability** – mechanisms of participation and roles for stakeholders within the initiative, transparency within the process, and accountability of key actors / decision-makers

5) **Equity and justice** – power struggles, differences in influence between actors, winners and losers of the initiative, and any mechanisms to ensure fairness within the process and its outcomes

6) **Uncertainty** – uncertainties within the process, impacts on the process and outcomes, and mechanisms of addressing uncertainties.

Given that there is no single ‘correct’ way to deconstruct, analyse and evaluate governance processes, these six themes could be used as an alternative to the original WP6 analytical framework for future governance analyses in marine spatial planning, e.g. for researchers wishing to focus less on detail and more on overarching themes running through an existing process.

During the April 2013 workshop, participants agreed to work on peer-reviewed papers for their respective case studies, structured along the above six themes. In order to aid the authors in drafting these papers, UCL put together some guidelines which explain each of the above six themes in a bit more detail. These guidelines are reproduced below. Whilst they do not constitute a formal MESMA product, and should not be seen as a replacement for the governance analytical framework, they
could in future be built on and developed into an alternative approach for deconstructing and understanding governance processes in marine spatial planning.
1. Introduction

In this section, please give a brief account of

- The context of your case study, including geography (with a small map showing the area if possible), and socio-economic and political context;
- The history and nature of the initiative (when was the initiative established and what it is for);
- The main legal/policy basis of the initiative (stick to the key legislation/policy);
- The focus of your case study, if you chose to focus on specific elements of the whole process (e.g. specific time periods or objectives);
- Your own role or interest in the process you are analysing.

2. Case study process and governance

- Describe the main organisations involved in decision-making in your case study, which may include government organisations, NGOs, stakeholder groups and scientific organisations.
- Explain the main roles and responsibilities of different organisations in the initiative, as well as the flow of information/influences/control between them.
- Try to represent the organisational set-up in a diagram, as you have done during the workshop.
- If possible, comment on whether this is a top-down, bottom-up, market-led approach, or a combination.

3. Conflict analysis

- Describe the main conflicts in your case study, providing details of the nature and dimensions of the conflicts. Focus on the strongest conflicts and those with the greatest impacts on your process and decision-making.
- Distinguish between primary and secondary conflicts.
- Consider both inter- and intra-sectoral conflicts.
- Discuss the drivers of the conflicts.
- Try to represent key conflicts and drivers in a diagram, as you did during the workshop.
- Discuss whether there is any mechanism in place to address the conflicts.

4. The degree of integration

- Drawing on previous sections, discuss whether effective integration exists between
  - 1) different sectors (horizontal);
  - 2) different levels of government (central-regional-local).
- Discuss any mechanisms used for promoting the integration and cooperation between different sectors and organisations, and whether such mechanisms are effective or not.
• Discuss if the plan has been implemented/enforced effectively in reality, i.e. has it led to changes in decisions, processes and/or practices in different sectors?
• Discuss the main barriers for effective integration (consider the role of leadership, influence of certain powerful interests/sectors, unresolved conflicts/tensions etc).
5. Participation, transparency and accountability

- Describe the different ways/platforms through which stakeholders participate in the process (e.g. regular forums, consultation, ad-hoc events, public hearings, lobbying, campaigning)
- Discuss the formal role that stakeholders have within the process (receive information – consultation – collaboration – co-decision making)
- Discuss the roles and influence that stakeholders actually have (either through a formal role, or through other means, e.g. lobbying, campaigning)
- Discuss the level of transparency in the process, and whether / how this relates (positively or negatively) to participation, conflicts, or equity and justice.
- If applicable, discuss how the level of transparency has varied over time, or any differences in transparency for different people.
- Discuss if government officials / organisations are held accountable for delivering actions that they are responsible for.
- Discuss the role of leadership in promoting effective participation, transparency and accountability.

6. Equity and justice

- Discuss the main winners and losers, and why they might be considered as such
- Discuss if there is any power struggle between different sectors/stakeholders
- Discuss if there are any mechanisms aimed at achieving full representation of all affected stakeholders within your CS (drawing relevant links to your discussion of participation in the previous section)
- Discuss if there are any mechanisms to ensure that the process and its outcomes are fair
- Discuss if access to court and judicial services is important in promoting equity and justice, and whether these services are effective and equally available / accessible to different people

7. Uncertainty

- Describe the different types of uncertainty in your case study (you can differentiate between scientific and process uncertainty, as some of you did at the workshop, following the Celtic Sea example – or you may have a different way of describing your uncertainties)
- Think beyond scientific uncertainty and data gaps, e.g. about uncertainties people might face about how the CS will impact their activities and livelihoods, or uncertainties about the future costs and benefits of implementing the initiative.
- Remember to consider multiple stakeholder perspectives – put yourself in the shoes of the different actors / stakeholders within your CS, and think about how uncertainty affects them and their behaviour / opinions.
• Discuss the effects of uncertainty on process and outcomes. e.g. does uncertainty fuel conflicts, put off stakeholders from participating, or is it used as a political excuse for (not) taking certain decisions/actions?
• Discuss any approaches used to deal with uncertainty (e.g. scientists’ approach vs. engineers’ approach, ‘deploy and monitor’ in renewable industry vs. evidence-based approach in conservation planning).
• Discuss the role(s) of scientists in interpreting and communicating uncertainty, both to decisions-makers and to stakeholders and the general public.

8. Conclusions

Draw some brief conclusions on

• the key messages/findings from your analysis
• what the prospects are for your case study initiative (in terms of meeting its objective), and what the key catalysts / obstacles are
• the prospects for more integrated, transparent and equitable MSP processes in your country (or region) in future

As an option, you may also wish to consider the prospects for moving towards ecosystem-based MSP (versus ‘blue growth’) in your country.