

PROTECT BALTIC project: a strategic approach to protect and restore the Baltic Sea ecosystem

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UBC Talks Webinar

EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters

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The Baltic Sea

– unique in the world



Young



Shallow



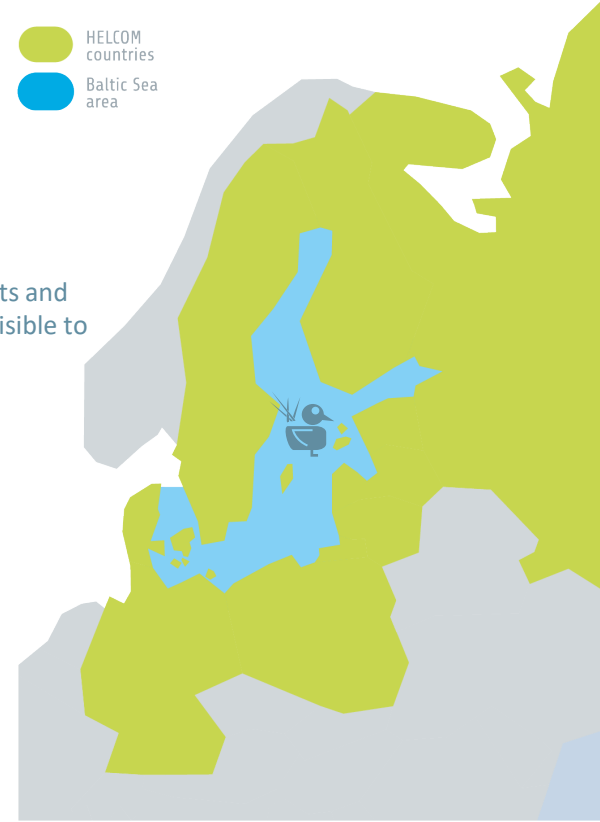
Isolated



Small

Home to **5,000 species** of algae, plants and animals, of which around 3,000 are visible to the naked eye.

But more than anything else, it is variable



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An underwater photograph showing a dense patch of brown and green seaweed in the foreground, with greenish water and ripples extending to the surface in the background.

Protection - the why and the what

Credits: Juuso Haapaniemi

The Baltic Sea and Society



Catchment area:
4x area of the sea



9 different countries



Population (catchment):
85 million



One of the most heavily used marine areas in the world



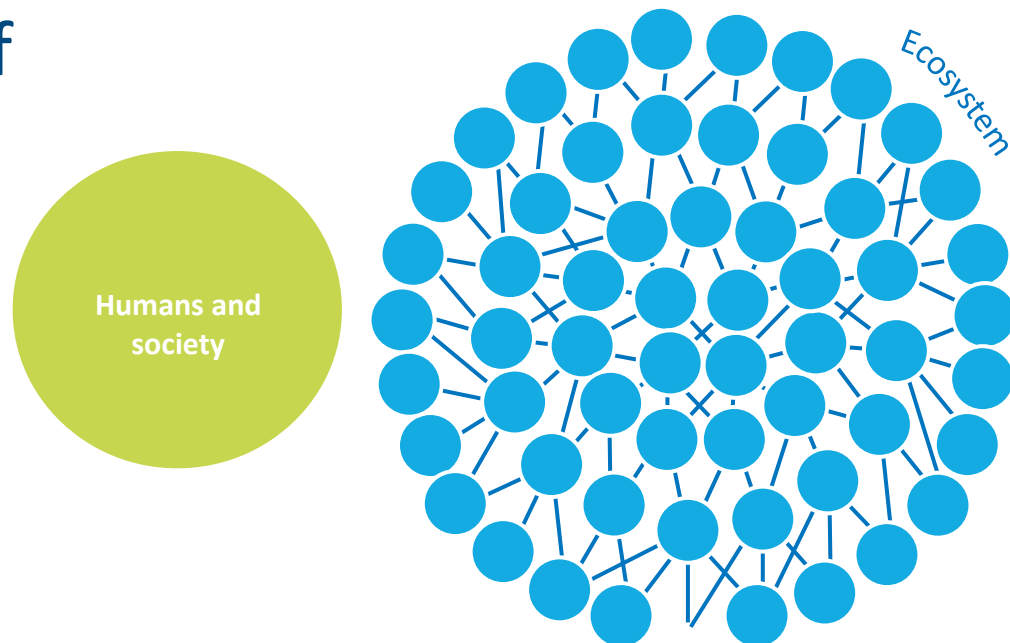
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The Relationship of the Sea and Society



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The Relationship of Society and the Sea

- Human survival, prosperity and overall quality of life depends on a healthy ecosystem, including through a multitude of regulating, provisioning and cultural ecosystem services
- Our relationship with the marine environment is defined by a complex interaction of drivers.
- Society can derive benefits from human activities that may have negative impacts on the marine environment.
- A dynamic tension between the need to protect the ecosystem and the desire to use it for our own benefit.



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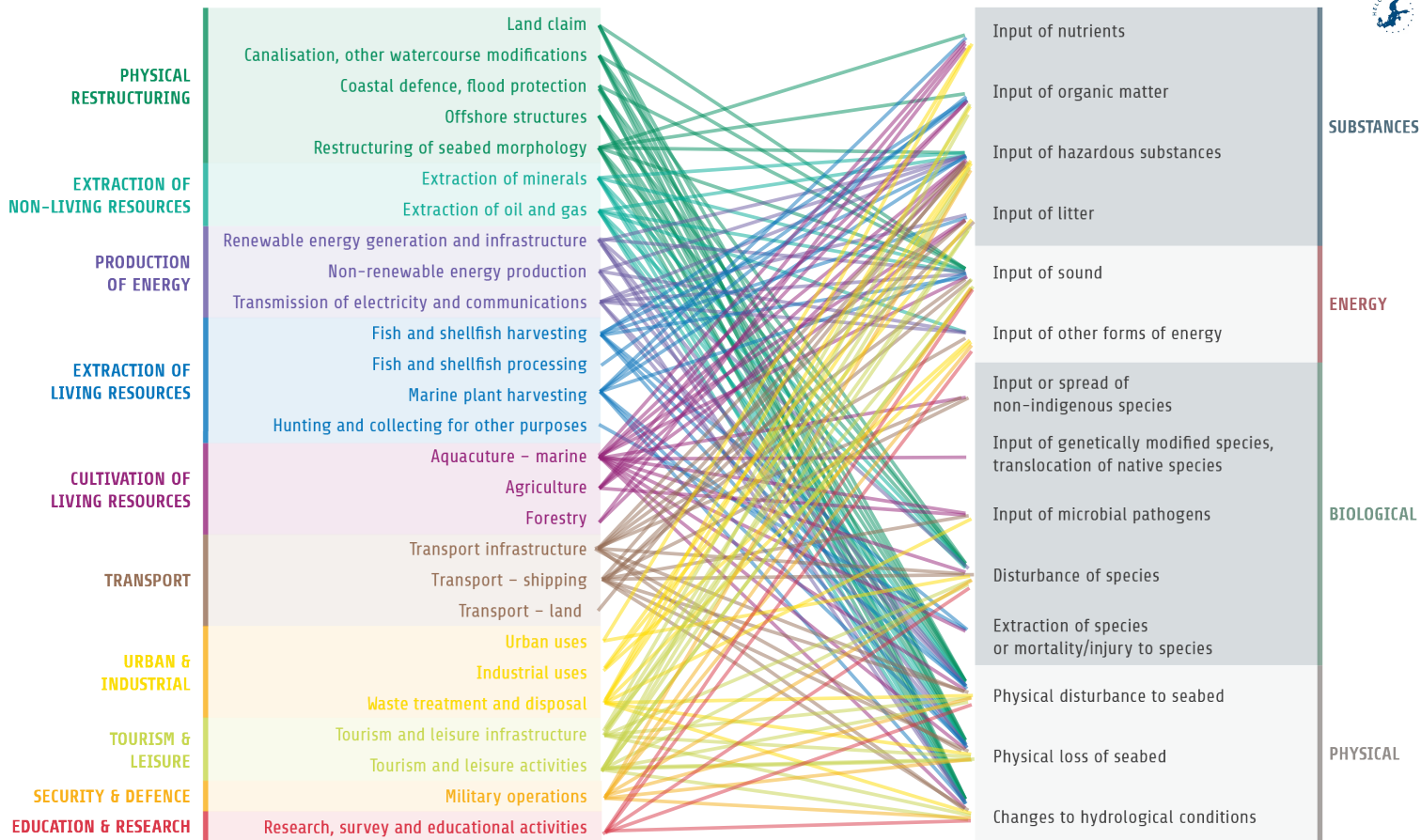


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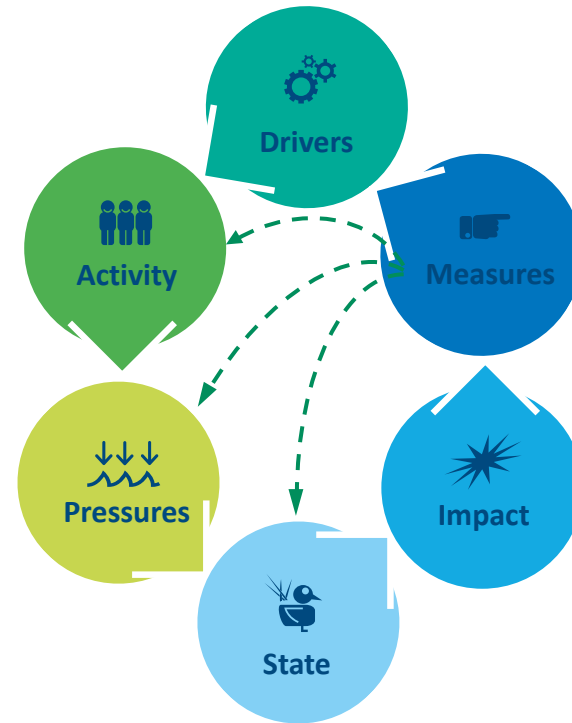
HUMAN ACTIVITIES

PRESSURES



Protection, what is it?

- The practice of protecting, i.e leaving space for, the natural environment from negative impacts.
- This is done by limiting activities and pressures, or improving the status of the environment directly.
- The objectives are to
 - 1) secure biodiversity benefits,
 - 2) enhance ecosystems resilience,
 - 3) maintain or restore its function,
 - 4) ensure that humans can benefit also long term.



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An underwater photograph showing a dense patch of brown and green seaweed on the seabed. The water above is clear and greenish, with many small, concentric ripples on the surface. The text 'PROTECT BALTIC and protection in the Baltic Sea' is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

PROTECT BALTIC and protection in the Baltic Sea

Credit: Juuso Haapaniemi

Global challenges - regional solutions

- Triple planetary crisis.

- Global Biodiversity Targets
- EU Biodiversity Strategy
- Baltic Sea Action Plan



30% of marine area under protection,
1/3 under strict protection, by 2030.



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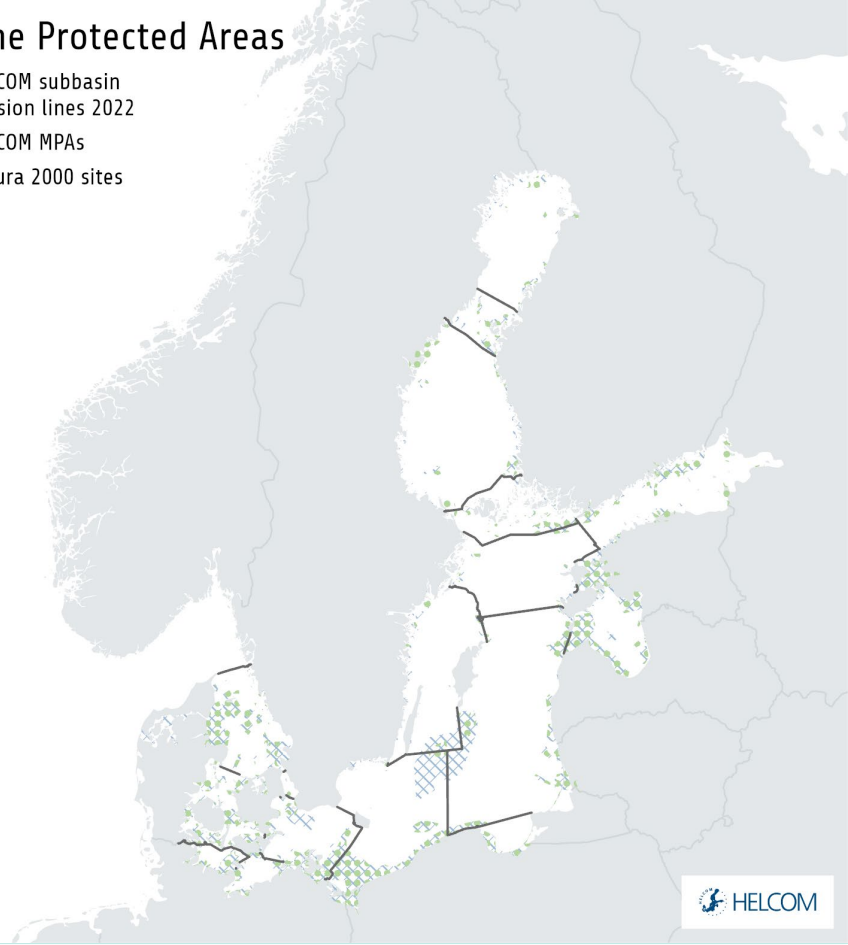


Marine Protected Areas

- HELCOM subbasin division lines 2022
- HELCOM MPAs
- Natura 2000 sites

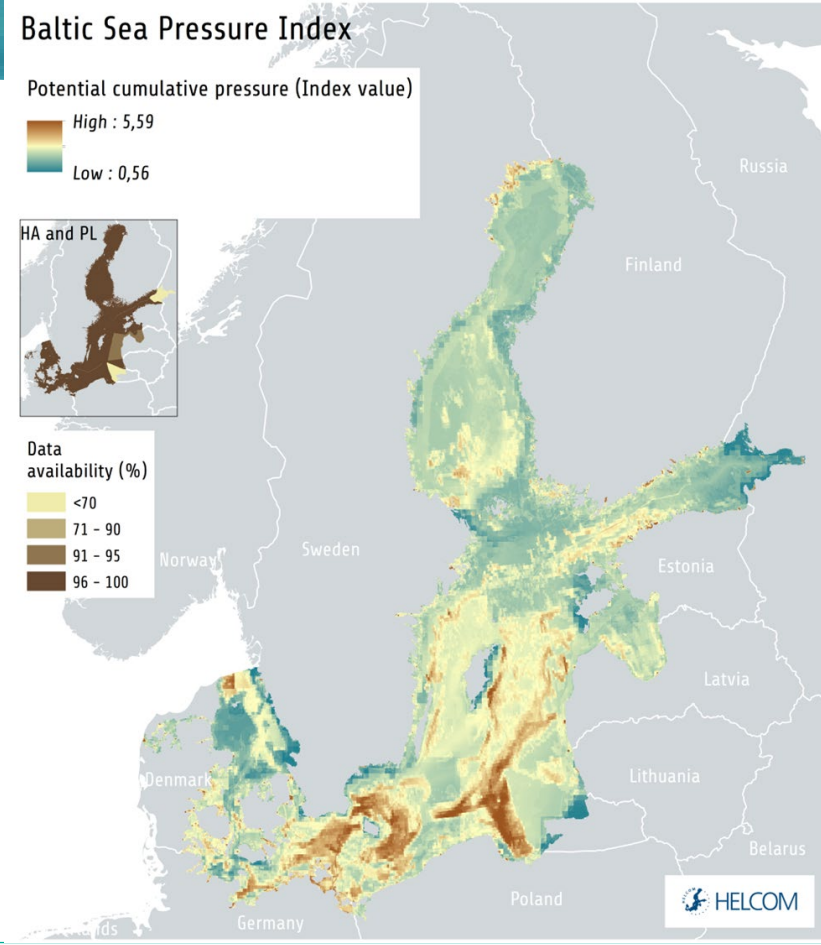
Current situation – the good

- First region in the world to reach the global 10% target.
- As of December 2022, the Baltic marine protected area (MPA) network covers approximately 16.5% of the Baltic Sea.



Current situation – the not so good

- Incomplete knowledge base for decision making and designation.
- Gaps in governance.
- Insufficient use of adaptive management.
- **It took 30 years to get where we are, now we need to double it in 7 years.**
- **But it isn't about getting to 30%, it's about getting there in a way that actually provides the biodiversity benefits.**



PROTECT BALTIC and the Bigger Picture

Addresses two aspects of the triple planetary crisis: biodiversity loss and climate change.

Overall aim: sufficient spatial protection and restoration of the marine environment

EU level: Supports implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, MSFD, HBD, CFP, and the upcoming EU restoration law.

Regional sea level: Fully or partially directly implements 32 of 199 BSAP actions, and provides support to many more.

Global level: SDG 14 (as well as 5, 10 and 13) and the CBD global biodiversity targets for the Baltic Sea countries.



Project stats

Timeline: mid-2023 (August)-mid 2028 (five years in total)

17 partners covering EE, FI, DE, DK, LT, LV and SE, as well as Coalition Clean Baltic

HELCOM Secretariat coordinating

Total budget: € 8 482 131.25

Primary target group: governing authorities, implementing and planning agencies, site managers, international organizations and agencies

Highly relevant also for: NGOs and economic actors (e.g. fisheries, tourism)



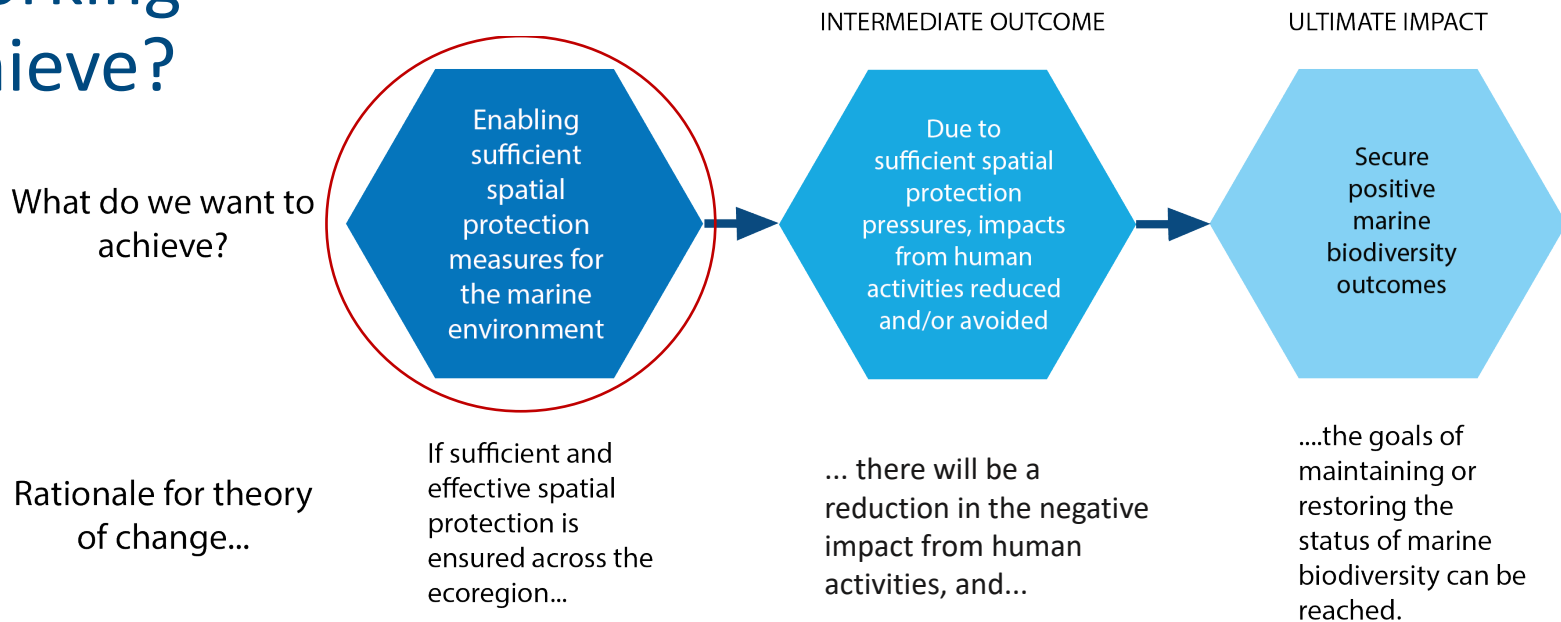
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What are we working to achieve?

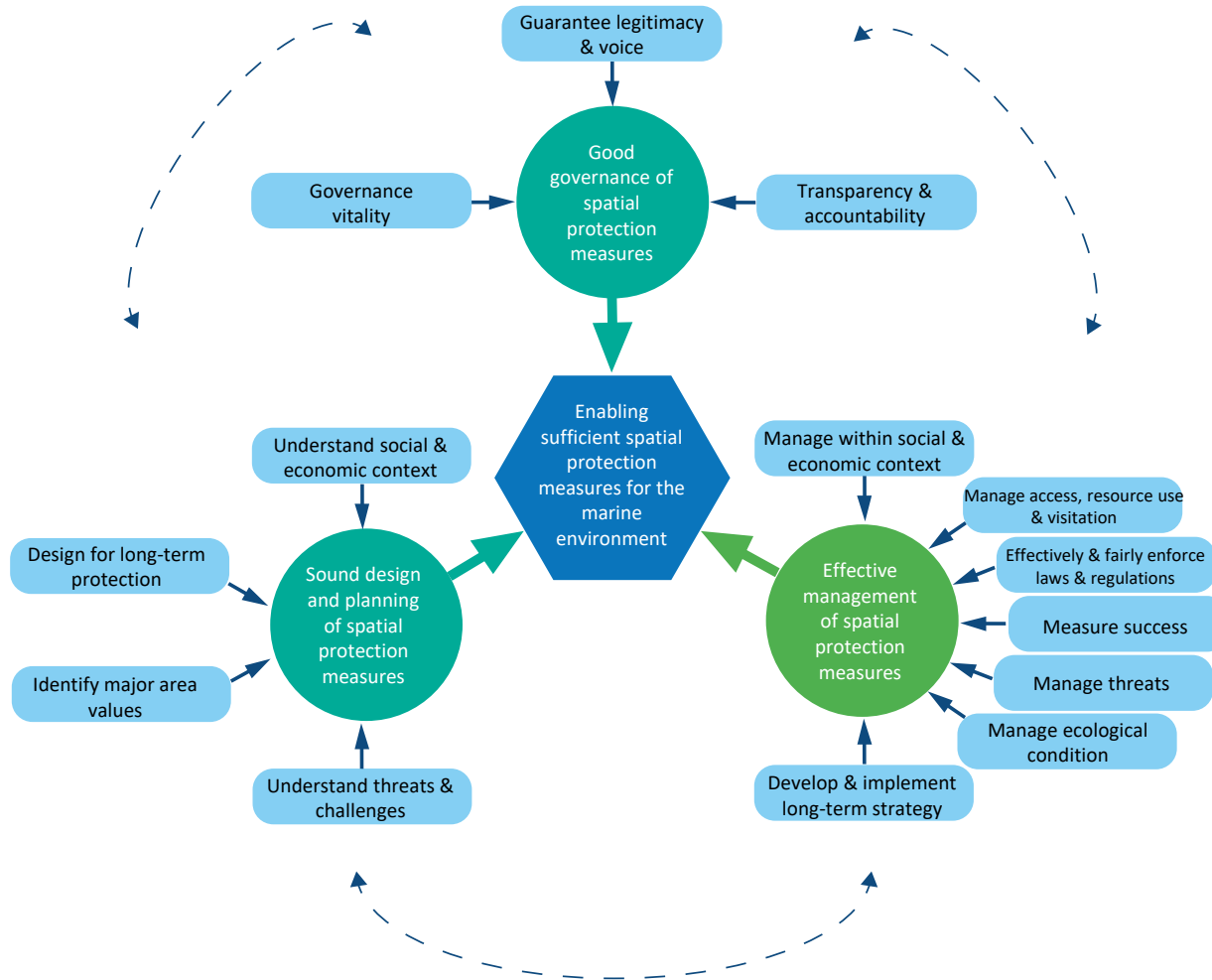


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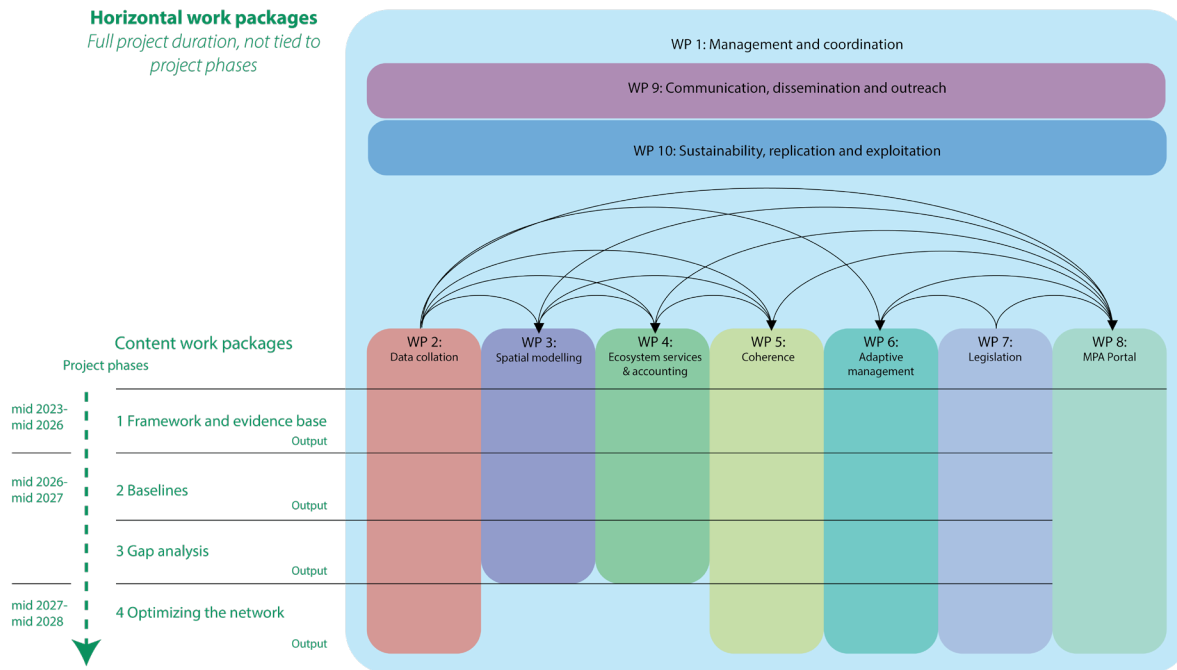


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Project structure (i.e. what will we be doing?)



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Lorem ipsum



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When preparing deliverables and products

We want them to be:

- Ecologically relevant
- Cutting edge and state-of-the-art
- Long lasting
- Adaptable
- Transparent
- Replicable (process documentation and blueprints)
- Scalable



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Mission Ocean

The project carries forward the EU's Restore of Ocean and Waters Mission.

With a 2030 target, the mission aims to protect and restore the health of our ocean and waters through research and innovation, citizen engagement and blue investments.

<https://missionoceanwaters.eu/#/>



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Thank you!

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