SIMNORAT - Final Conference
WORKSHOP: Data needs and information on MSP
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OBJECTIVES

- Presentation of the MSP data needs and gaps for identified in the framework of the SIMNORAT project
- Presentation of the achievements to address these Data Needs and Gaps and to improve the data interoperability in the Northern Atlantic area:
    - Demonstration of the Data Portal Demonstrator
    - Presentation of the notable results on the data portal demonstrator

DISCUSSIONS

- The SIMNORAT portal demonstrator has been conceptualized as a demonstrator to test and improve Data Interoperability. It won't be updated after the project, but through new EU funded MSP projects, there should be the opportunity to maintain the architecture of this tool.
- Participants regret that not enough National and European portals exist to centralise datasets useful for MSP. Building a portal to centralise MSP datasets at European or international level requires a long term project. To gather datasets, the harvesting process would be a relevant principle.

The classification used to inventory and to organise the datasets on the portal is based on the "MSP Data Study Executive Summary, Technical Study under the Assistance Mechanism for the Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning, 2016". Multiple classifications could be used. The choice of the classification grouping the datasets into categories is a sensitive issue which was not addressed in the SIMNORAT project. It would require a major effort from marine stakeholders to agree on a common MSP classification for MSP.
Several users express their difficulties to find a specific dataset in the portal, using the classification of the datasets. Any classification could facilitate finding specific datasets on the portal. But Tools can be developed to help users to find a dataset if needed.

- For example, a searching tool has been implemented in the portal: users can find specific data by typing a keyword in the menu catalogue.
- A map Catalogue has also been implemented: a map is a series of layers with a preconfigured zoom level.

It is necessary that the stakeholders test the portal and inform whether it is easy to find the layers they need when they consult the portal.

- One striking point when implementing a transnational portal is to provide access to users in their native language and in English.
  - As an example and to test the solution, the portal is available in a French and an English version. The layers' name in the layer menu is also available in both languages.
  - Automatic and manual solutions have been used to translate partners' data and metadata. An additional improvement would be to guarantee a fully translated data portal, including the data catalogue.

- The harvesting process is the preferred way to gather data in the SIMNORAT portal. It guarantees up to date data and doesn't require the data to be stored on the portal server.
  Geoserver and MapViewer are the 2 main free Softwares available to gather, and then publish a dataset using the harvesting process. Geoserver has been used in the SIMNORAT project. Web Services instability is still not well managed by Geoserver. No warning system is available to point out input Web Services that do not work anymore. An external tool using External Transform, Load software (FME) has been developed to do this job, but the more efficient way in the long term would be an upgrade of Geoserver to manage the Web Services instability gap. According to the Marine Institute, the Geoserver community is working on that. On another note, the harvesting process isn't managed well by MapServer either.

- Dataset displaying using Web language has been tested with the French Agency of Biodiversity on the Carpe Diem Indicator and the Marine Natural Parks layers. Web language is a relevant way to improve the understanding of complex data. The developments are based on stored Data (PostGIS). A next step would be to base the developments on Web Services.

- Resolution of the data portal: The Data Port Front is based on OpenLayer technology. If necessary, the zoom level of the data portal can be customized by the administrator using Openlayer configuration files. It has been adapted to the portal input layers.

- Data portal relevance in MSP collaborative projects, especially to focus on transboundary topics

  - Such a portal could be used by the partners of a project to compile data and build some comparable layers. In this case the data portal is a tool to support the partner's work and should be available at the beginning of the project, for them to be informed on the data

available in the area. Such a work was done in the TPEA project, for example, and produces useful data layers.

- The aim of the SIMNORAT data portal is different. It aims to explore and enhance the organisation and the data sharing between the countries, with reference to the provisions of the MSP Directive, articles 10 and 11. The approach proposed in SIMNORAT is to harvest the data layers of the producers of data of reference, thanks to Web Services. It allows a dynamic access to the most up to date data, exceeding the duration of the project.
- There is a need for a mechanism in charge to provide MSP data at a European or international level. An approach could be that one portal centralises relevant data through harvesting the national geoportals. This is for example what the SIMNORAT project is testing. The organisation of the data sharing for MSP is unbalanced depending on the countries of the project (Portugal, Spain, and France) and is not ready. For example, only Portugal has set up a MSP data portal.
  In other projects like SIMCelt, SIMWESTMED and SEANSE, similar imbalances of the level of organisation and data sharing of the data are encountered between the countries.
  On the contrary, it seems that a lot of national geoportals exist in the countries of the Baltic region.
- Maintaining such a data portal: although the tool is set only for the duration of the project, it is important to pursue its use and disseminate and update the knowledge available, thanks to other projects.
- In addition, the architecture and functionalities of this tool can be improved thanks to new projects. In particular an objective could be to make available on the data portal a complete MSP data process using tools directly connected to the portal. As an example: a Cumulative Impacts Assessment method could be available on the data portal. This is what has been done on the basis of the data portal set up in ADRIPLAN project
  Such portals focusing on transboundary areas could also take advantage of tools, like scripts, dedicated to the homogenisation of the data layers.
- Despite the investigations and actions undertaken in SIMNORAT and even SIMCelt, SIMWESTMED and SEANSE, a number of questions and issues remain. In particular in many countries, it is necessary to identify what the fundamental data are to feed the national MSP process and to inform the transboundary mechanisms.
- The reporting process by the countries to the EC regarding the MSP Directive implementation may lead to the drafting of guidelines on data.
- The EU MSEG should be informed about the results and lessons on data organisation needs from this kind of projects. Shom will be able to make a communication effort on these topics to the EU MSEG, through new projects which may start.

- Publication of the Source code of the data portal: The Portal Demonstrator is based on free technologies. The front-end has been developed using the free Software Openlayer, these development cannot be shared.