CrossGov

Coherent & Cross-compliant Ocean Governance for Delivering the EU Green Deal for European Seas

Evidence-based policymaking in marine governance: the role of Science-Policy-Society Interfaces

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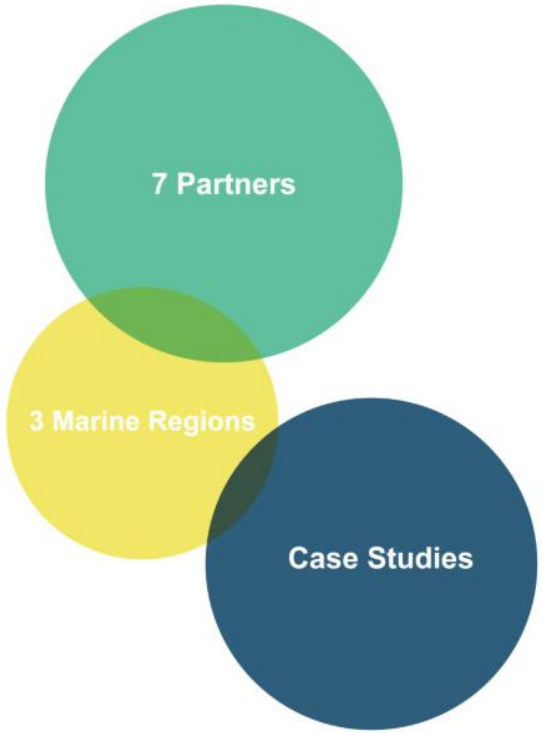
The CrossGov Project

Key words:

- Coherence and cross-compliance of marine related policies;
- EU Green Deal's goals:
  - protection of marine ecosystems and biodiversity,
  - zero pollution,
  - nature-based climate adaptation and mitigation.



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Evidence-informed policymaking

*"In this era of **complex policy challenges**, it is key that policymaking makes **best use of scientific knowledge**. This is not only a much needed **response to the complexity** of climate change, global pandemics, artificial intelligence etc. It also recognises the complex political environment in which policymaking takes place now. A better use of science can help boost **public trust in governments** and their competence. It can help **explain better** the policy choices to the public, **fight disinformation** and improve **support and implementation of adopted policies**."*

(SWD(2022) 346 final. Supporting and connecting policymaking in the Member States with scientific research)

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What are Science-Policy-Society Interfaces (SPSIs)?

Science-Policy-Society Interfaces are defined as *social processes which encompass relations between scientists and other actors in the policy process, and which allow for exchanges, co-evolution, and joint construction of knowledge with the aim of enriching decision-making* (Van Den Hove, 2007).

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Science-Policy-Society Interfaces methodology

Methodology to analyse how **efficient and effective SPSIs** can contribute to **sound policy-making and decision-making**, including enhanced coherence and cross-compliance of selected and **Green Deal-related marine policies**.

A **step-by-step operational procedure** methodology.

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A step-by-step operational procedure methodology

Step 1 – **Inception phase**: Defining the policy and geographical scope of the analysis and identifying data and information sources

Step 2 - Defining the **Science-Policy-Society system** under analysis

Step 3 – Characterising the **Building Blocks** of SPSI to answer the research questions

Step 4 – Synthesis: answering the **research questions**

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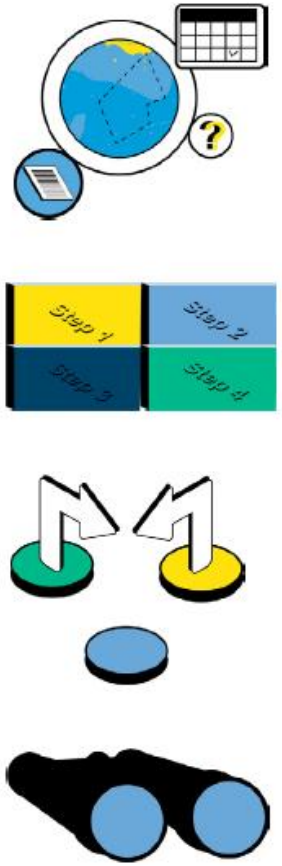
Step 1: Inception phase



Defining:

- The **geographical scope** of the analysis
- The **policies under analysis** and which **stages** of the policy process need consideration
- The **time frame** of the analysis
- The **research questions** to be addressed
- The most important **sources of information**
- **Co-creation** activities with **stakeholders**

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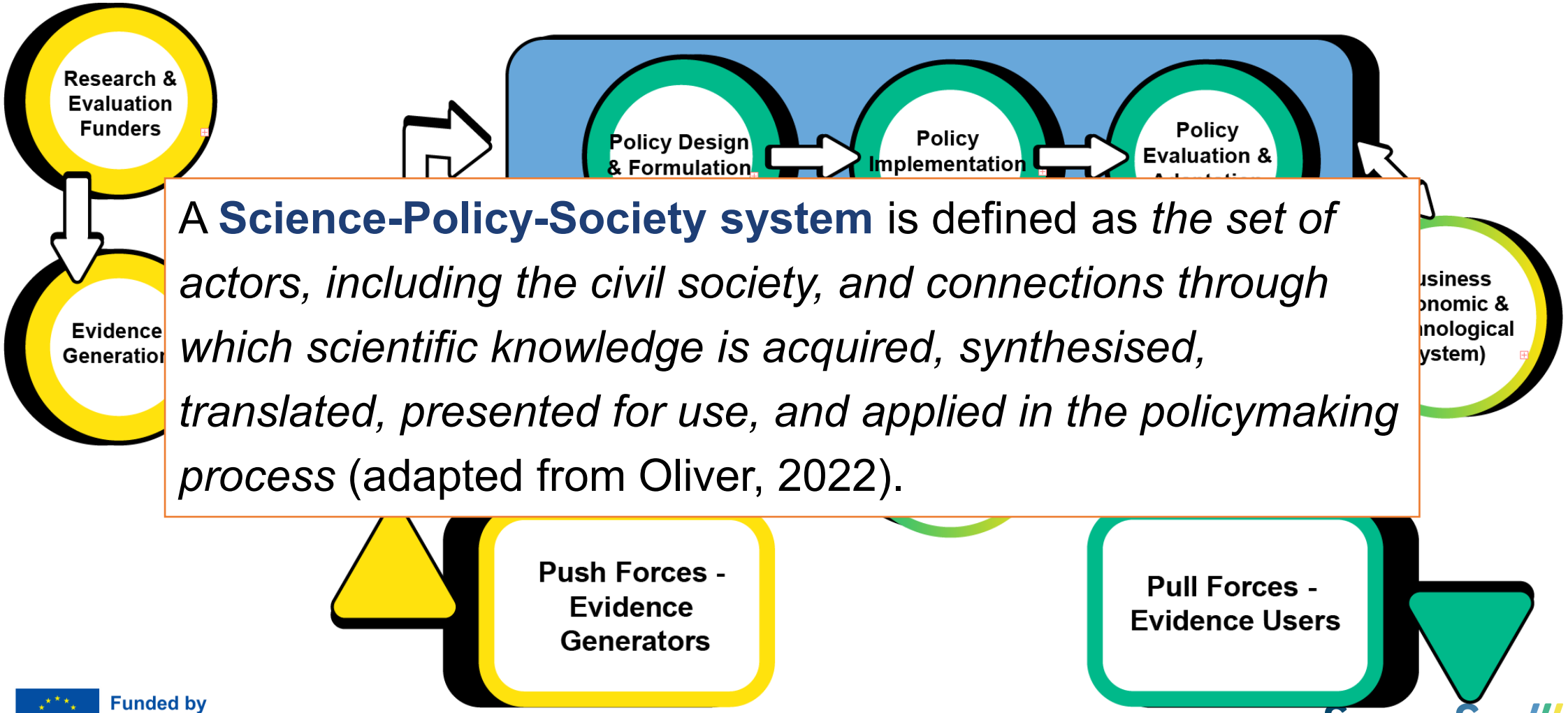
Step 2: Defining the Science-Policy-Society system under analysis



A **Science-Policy-Society system** is defined as *the set of actors, including the civil society, and connections through which scientific knowledge is acquired, synthesised, translated, presented for use, and applied in the policymaking process* (adapted from Oliver, 2022).

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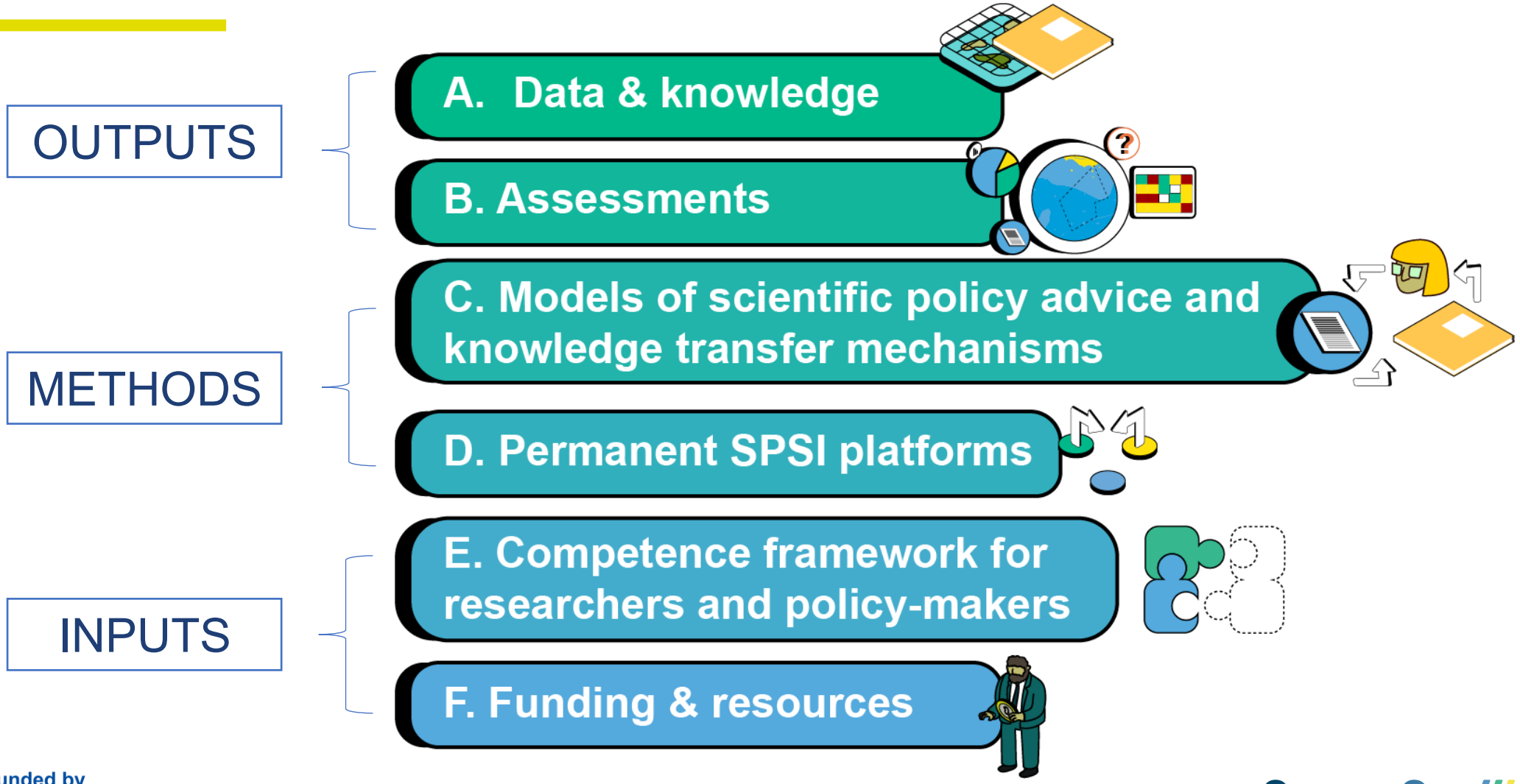
Step 3: Characterising the Building Blocks of SPSI



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Step 3: Characterising the Building Blocks of SPSI (2)

BB-A - Data & knowledge

How data and knowledge are made available and used in the policy making and decision making process.

Key attributes: Availability and access to data; Gaps and uncertainty; Problem framing.

BB-B - Assessments

How assessments assemble the best knowledge available in a form useful for decision making.

Key attributes: Credibility, Relevance and Legitimacy; Data and knowledge providers; Problem framing.

BB-C - Models of scientific policy advice and knowledge transfer mechanisms

Models and transfer mechanisms used and their effectiveness

Key attributes: Type of model; Credibility, Relevance and Legitimacy; Type of transfer mechanisms; Utilisation.

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Step 3: Characterising the Building Blocks of SPSI (3)

BB-D - Permanent SPSI platforms

Permanent platforms (e.g. expert panels, Communities of Practice, SPSI networks, research outreach associations, co-developed web platforms) and their role in SPS and in implementing knowledge transfer mechanisms

Key attributes: Type and role of platforms; Participants; Problem framing.

BB-E - Competence framework for researchers, policy-makers and stakeholders

How competence frameworks (i.e. interdisciplinary knowledge, skills and attitudes) and related capacity building activities influence the SPS process.

Key attributes: Type of competence; List of competences; Training & capacity building activities and targets.

BB-F - Funding & resources

How funding and availability of infrastructures and human resources affect the multiple dimensions of SPSI.

Key attributes: Type of funding; Drivers for funding; Level and adequacy of funding and resources (including human resources).

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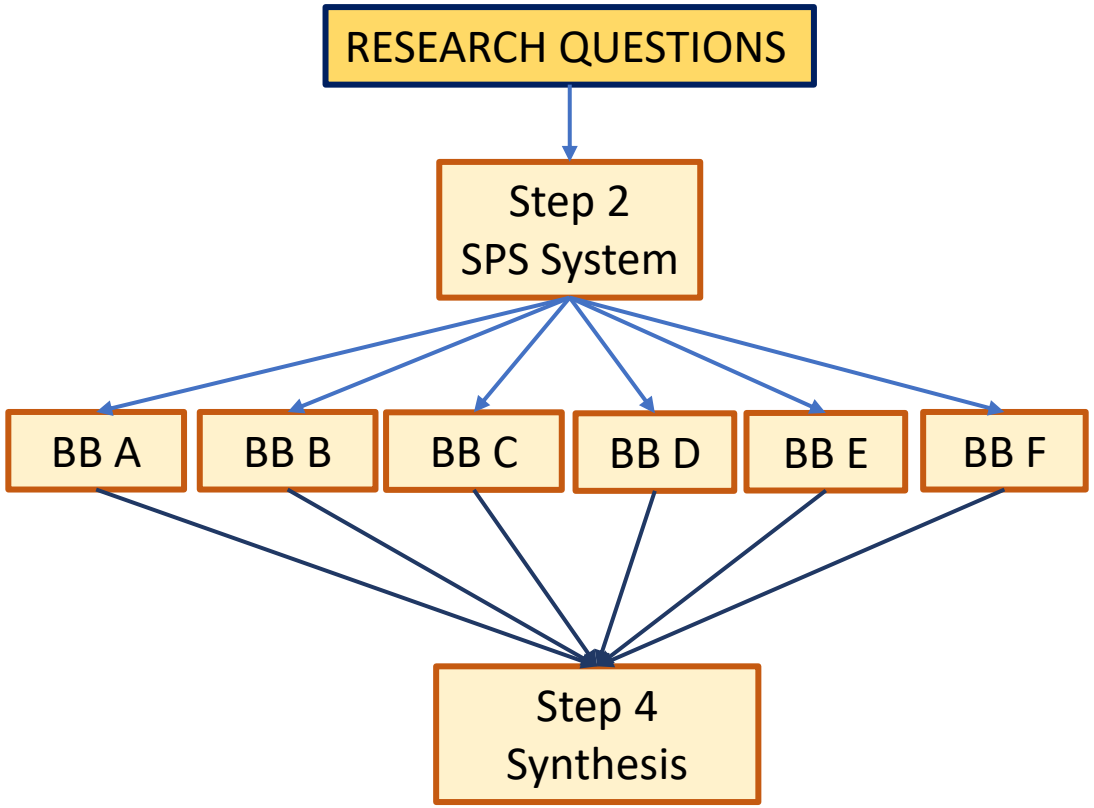
Step 4: Synthesis, answering the research questions

1. What **type of science, knowledge, and interactions do we need** for coherent and cross-compliant formulation and implementation of policies?
2. What type of **knowledge is currently provided and used** in the different formulation and implementation stages?
3. Which **role does science play** in planning, policy-making and decision-making?
4. How is knowledge contributing to **horizontal and vertical coherence and cross-compliance** of policies?



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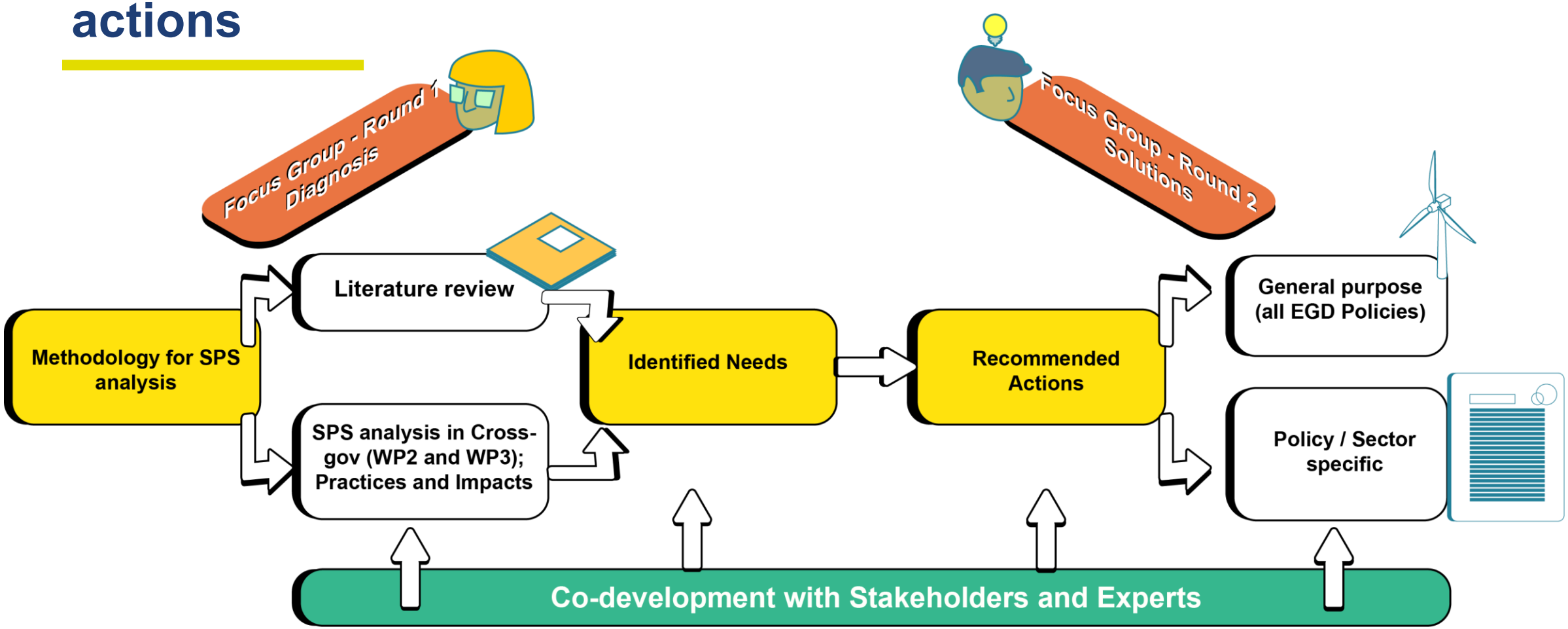
CASE STUDIES
2019-today
Oslo Fjord
WFD and Ocean Management (including EGD goals on biodiversity)
2019-today
Baltic Sea
WFD, MSFD, MSPD, agriculture and offshore wind energy policies (including EGD goals on pollution, climate adaptation, sustainable blue economy and biodiversity).
2004-today
German North Sea
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) role in offshore wind farms (OWF), MSPD, MSFD and biodiversity policies (including EGD goals on these)
2018-today
French Mediterranean
MSFD, WFD, MSPD, fisheries, energy and biodiversity policies (including EGD goals on these)
2010-today
Mediterranean Sea
Fisheries, biodiversity and climate change policies (including EGD goals on these)
2014-today
Northern Adriatic Sea
WFD, MSFD, MSPD, fisheries and biodiversity policies (including EGD goals on this)

Co-creation process towards recommended actions



BLUEPRINT

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Introducing the *needs*: some examples

BB-A – Data & knowledge	Timely availability and accessiblity; ackowledgment of knowledge gaps; consideration of interlinkages across policies, sectors, disciplines
BB-B – Assessments	Transparency, relevance, legitimacy, credibility; recognition of knowledge providers; integration of all relevant sectors and disciplines; inclusion of scenarios
BB-C – Models and mechanisms	Collaborative models; improvement and reinforcement of SPS governance; less fragmented SPS ecosystems
BB-D – SPSI Platforms	Promotion and/or reinforcement of SPS platforms; set up and reinforcement of boundary organisations in knowledge translation and cross-sectoral collaboration
BB-E – Competence framework	Adequacy of competences (inter- and trans-disciplinary); inclusive and available capacity-building activities; recognition to scientists for SPS work
BB-F – Funding & Resources	Mixed set of drivers for funding; adequacy of amount, continuity, allocation of resources

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From *needs* to *recommended actions*: examples (1)

Relevance in general for **EGD related marine policies**	Prepare a **guideline to analyse, evaluate and improve SPS governance** and promote a continuous analysis of SPS systems.
	Support the development of **knowledge practices across policies** at the national and EU level.
	Support and promote **multi-actor SPSI Platforms** and promote **research boundary organisations.**

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From *needs* to *recommended actions*: examples (2)

Relevant for specific policies (i.e. **WFD, MSFD, MSPD**)	**WFD, MSFD & MSP**: Develop and support **interconnected repositories across land and sea**, starting from knowledge catalogues of metadata.
	MSFD & MSP: Improve and complete threshold methods and values for **GES assessment** and use these criteria and values as key elements and targets of **Ecosystem-Based MSP**.
	MSP: Develop methods to improve **quali-quantitative socio-economic analysis** in MSP.

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From *needs* to *recommended actions*: examples (3)

Relevant for specific sectors (i.e. **off-shore wind energy, agriculture and fisheries**)	**Agriculture and water protection**: Strengthen, support and disseminate advisory services for farmers on water protection policies.
	Fisheries: Improve the uptake of knowledge by small-scale and recreational fishers and complement with enhanced data collection.
	Off-shore wind energy: Improve the operationalisation of methods and tools for **cumulative impacts assessment**.

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Linking to the ongoing policy discussions

European level

Ocean Pact (EC, 2025): puts knowledge & governance among its foundational pillars.

Key instruments:

- International Platform for Ocean Sustainability (IPOS)
- Ocean Act (overarching framework)
- Ocean Board (high-level coordination)
- EU Ocean Pact Dashboard (monitoring progress)

Global level

One Ocean Science Congress (OOSC) + Manifesto (UNOC3, Nice 2025):

- Emphasis on integrating scientific, Indigenous & local knowledge.
- Calls for stronger investment in research & observation infrastructure.
- Advocates for stronger SPSIs to guide decision-making at all levels.

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Where can you find these info back?

- CrossGov website: ***crossgov.eu***
  - **Deliverable 1.4** – **Methodology** for SPS analysis
  - **Deliverable 4.3** – A co-created **Blueprint** to strengthen SPS interfaces in the marine domain
  - These contents are also available in the **MOOC** developed in the project
  - A **Policy Brief** – Strengthening evidence based policymaking in marine governance to achieve the European Green Deal goals (**Deliverable 4.5**)
- Do you find this **relevant/useful/applicable** in your research? Get in touch!

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Just before concluding

European and international institutions and platforms:

- **JRC (Joint Research Centre, European Commission)**
- **ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea)**
- **EEA (European Environment Agency)**
- **Mission Ocean & Waters / Horizon Europe projects**

- **IPOS (International Platform for Ocean Sustainability)**
- **IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services)**

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Thank you for listening!

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