



Report on the Second MOSES Policy Decision Forum (PDF)

Action nº4

Work Package 3

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The Boardroom, Titanic Hotel, Queen's Road, Titanic Quarter, Belfast

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On the 16th of October 2019 the 2nd Policy Decision Forum (PDF) took place at the Titanic Hotel, Belfast. PDFs are part of the MOSES WP3 action nr.4 and intend to deliberate, reflect upon and inform the work carried out in Actions 1-3 of WP3, at three professionally facilitated workshops. The first one was held in Spain, the second recently took place in UK and the third is planned to be held in Ireland next year.

The theme of the 2nd PDF was "Sustainable ports and tourism". The PDF was divided into session I (Sustainability in ports and shipping), session II (Coastal Tourism) and session III (Policy Impact). Participants, consisted of 40 key experts and stakeholders from business, policy making and academia in Ireland and UK representing the two sectors of the theme.

The first two sessions consisted of presentations from project partners and guest speakers (coming from the Belfast Harbor, the University of Cantabria, the Irish Maritime Development Office, National University of Ireland, Galway, Tourism NI and Queen's University Belfast) and corresponding discussions. The talks were about various ports/shipping and tourism initiatives and case studies that demonstrate the state of the art and the key challenges towards the contribution of these two sectors to sustainable Blue Growth (SBG) in Ireland (in appendix A, the titles of the presentations and the presenters' names).

Fruitful discussions based on questions raised by the audience linked the first two sessions with the third one. Session III intended to engage the guests in an interactive exercise where they were asked to state whether they were

optimistic, neutral or skeptical about the potential of the sector they represented to achieve SBG and the role that MOSES could play in it. In order to verify their statements, the participants were asked to identify positive and negative factors that facilitate or hinder such potential and to score them according to their importance, (with +3, +2, +1 for positive importance and -3, -2, -1 for negative importance). The intention was to have two teams of participants, one for each sector sitting in two separate tables where brainstorming and discussions could take place and some commonly agreed factors with respective scoring would be presented. However, the number of tourism sector representatives was double the number of those from ports and shipping (fourteen and seven respectively) so the first were subdivided into two tables.

Through this exercise two objectives could be fulfilled: first to use the information collected for the purpose of WP3 synthesis and translation of the project results and second to test the applicability of this approach as it is a suggested tool for info collection to be used during the WP7 case studies implementation.

The first part of the exercise regarding (a) the potential of each sector to bring SBG and (b) the role that MOSES could play in facilitating such potential, gave the following results:

From the ports and shipping table, four participants were optimistic for (a), with two skeptical and one neutral also. For (b) four were optimistic and three were skeptical. From the tourism tables only eight participants in total replied in this part. For (a) five of them were skeptical, two were optimistic and one was neutral, while for (b) five were skeptical, two were optimistic and one was neutral. As a general picture, there seems to be a more optimistic mood in the Ports and Shipping sector comparing to the Tourism sector, both in terms of their contribution to SBG and their expectations from MOSES.

Then, the second part of the exercise for the identification of enabling and disabling factors and scoring, gave the following results:

For the tourist sector average scores (AS) were calculated by summing up the scores of individually identified factors from both tables. Hence, **the positive and negative factors showed almost the same average importance (+2 and -2,13 respectively). This can be translated as a neutral to slightly negative potential (due to the slight difference of -0,2) of the Tourist sector in Northern Ireland to bring sustainable BG. This is verified also by the statements of the participants in the first part of the exercise.** From the positive factors, those referred to the category “high demand for ecofriendly activities at a unique physical and cultural environment” had the highest AS i.e. 2.4. Second AS (2.3), was for those factors that are linked to the “existence of branding and accreditation of most destinations”. Factors that refer to the “Increase in local employment” had the third highest AS i.e. 2. Next were the factors that refer to the existence of “local awareness for benefits from sustainable tourism” with AS 1.7. Last in importance were those

factors linked to the existence of “policies for Blue Growth for the tourism sector” with AS 1.4. From the negative factors the ones that referred to the “increasing coastal change due to erosion and climate change and the lack of policies to address them” showed the highest average negative importance (-2.5). Those with the second highest negative AS -2.3 were the ones that referred to the “low accessibility of the tourist destination due to lack of available/appropriate transportation, infrastructure and accommodation”. Third in negative importance with AS -1.8 were factors that show “negative impact on the identity of the local communities from increased touristic exploitation”. Finally, the lowest scoring factors with AS -1.5 were those referring to “instability of employment”.

It is worth noticing that for most of the above categories of positive and negative factors, both tables identified similar respective factors, a fact that shows a convergence in opinions between the two tables. The same cannot be said regarding the scoring though, as there are differences between the tables in the scoring of many commonly identified factors. The interpretation of the latter however, calls for an analysis that requires the consideration of the characteristics of the participants of each table and such information is yet to be collected.

For the ports and shipping sector the participants chose to present factors that were collectively agreed and scored. **As such, the positive and negative factors showed almost the same average importance (+2,2 and -2 respectively). This can be translated as a neutral to slightly positive potential (due to the slight difference of 0,2) of the ports and shipping sector in Northern Ireland to bring sustainable BG. This is verified also by the statements of the participants in the first part of the exercise.** From the positive factors, “smart technology that supports sustainability” and “strong policy for sustainability from EU and IMO” got the highest AS i.e. 3. Second AS (2), was given to the “increasing land use environmental pressures” that turns the interest to other blue economy solution and the “targeted funding for Blue Growth” as it is shown by project examples such as MOSES. Finally, one last driver for more sustainable ports and shipping, was the “realization of the natural limits to the marine environment” with AS (1). From the negative factors “the lack of land use and marine spatial planning that would bring efficiency, infrastructure and capacity” got the highest average negative importance (-3). The one with the second highest negative AS i.e. -2 referred to the “lack of evidence, transparency and competency in policy making related to the sector”. Finally, third in negative importance with AS --1 was given to the “lack of awareness of Blue Growth among stakeholders”.

Key messages from this second PDF session could be summarized as follows:

- Projects such as MOSES are important for the promotion of Sustainable Blue Growth but their usefulness and effectiveness must be assessed for the impact they have beyond the projects’ duration. Hence, project outputs such as action plans with best practices and guidelines and methodological frameworks for overcoming barriers towards SBG, are of high importance for serving such a purpose of continuous assessment.

- Stakeholders are those who impact and are impacted from Blue Growth initiatives and hence they must be engaged throughout any decision making and planning processes towards SBG. They can serve as information providers, as commentators on the validity and quality of information collected from other sources and as reviewers of projects outcomes as they are the targeted audience and the end users of project outcomes.
- The success of the second PDF at Belfast can be exhibited by the fact that it managed to address all the above issues effectively.