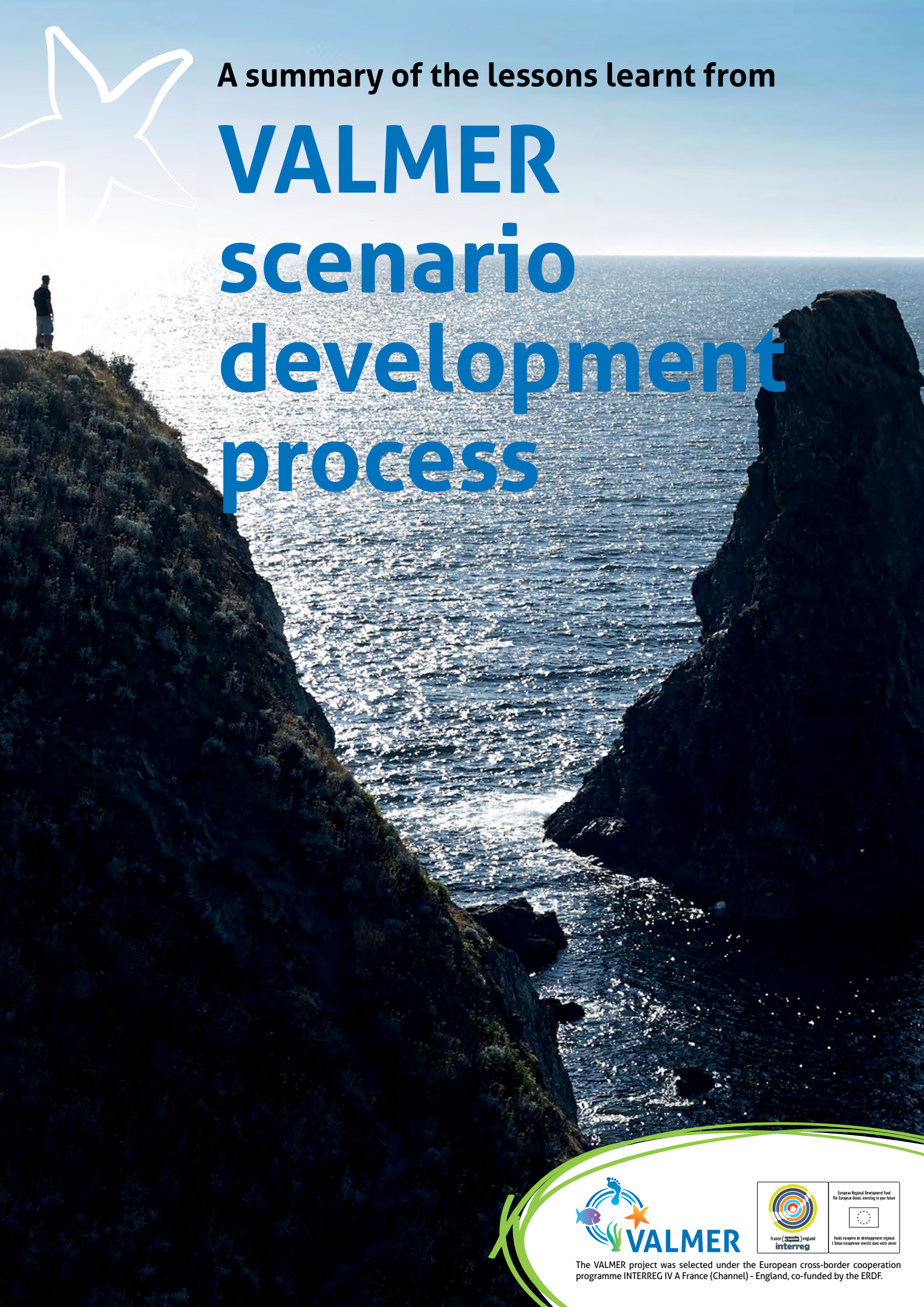
A summary of the lessons learnt from

VALMER scenario development process



VALMER

The VALMER project was selected under the European cross-border cooperation programme INTERREG IV A France (Channel) - England, co-funded by the ERDF.

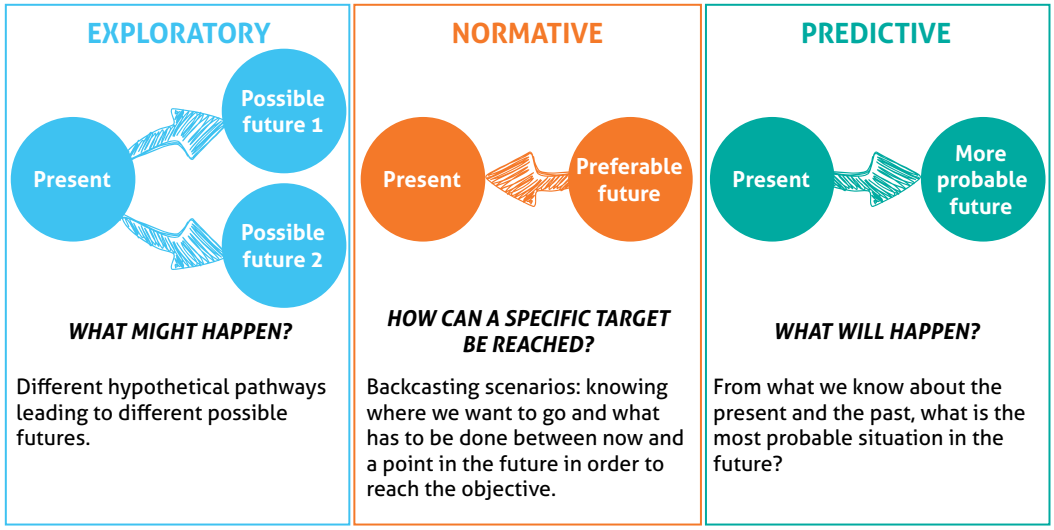
A summary of the lessons learnt from the VALMER scenario development process

A key part of the VALMER project was engaging important stakeholders in discussions. The "scenario" approach has been chosen deliberately, as it is an effective way of involving people and moving from theory to practice.

Good engagement of stakeholders can give better shared ownership of decisions that then improve the delivery of policy. In VALMER, scenarios were used with ecosystem service assessments and valuations to explore stakeholder views and preferences on various management options and trade-offs.

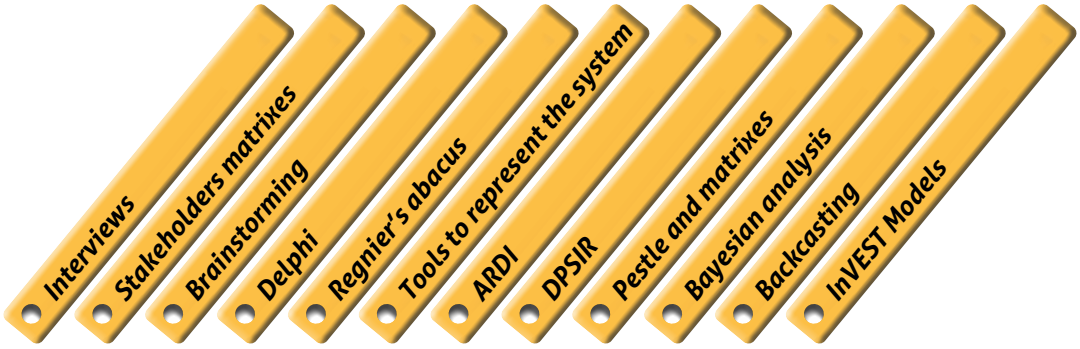
Scenarios are stories that portray plausible futures. They are designed to systematically explore, create and test possible and/or desirable future conditions. Scenarios can be exploratory (what might happen?), normative (how can a specific target be reached?) or predictive (what will happen?) depending on the question asked.

The three major types of scenarios: exploratory, normative and predictive



Scenarios are a useful tool to create a range of possible future options by combining various elements in different ways. Because these exercises can help people to interpret complex knowledge and information associated with multiple issues, they are often employed to help with complex management questions (e.g. environmental management, climate change, urban planning, etc.). Often a number of scenarios can be developed in parallel (e.g. 3 to 4) and take different forms including a story or "narrative" consisting of a few lines of text, to many pages, with maps, graphics, drawings, pictures, etc. Modelling and/or simulations can also accompany scenarios.

Technical scenario guidelines have been produced during the VALMER project to help the case study sites in the construction of their scenarios. These guidelines set out how to build scenarios in five complementary phases and provide a toolbox of twelve tools:



Although the tools presented are not an exhaustive collection, they have been selected to echo the needs of VALMER project site managers. They were sourced from scientific and other literature on scenarios and horizon scanning.

The guidelines are gathered in a report ("Building site based scenarios: tools and approaches for implementation in the VALMER project") available here: www.valmer.eu.

Scenario experience sharing for UK and French case study sites

In order to share the scenario building exercises developed by VALMER case study sites, two transnational stakeholder workshops were held on the 5th December 2014 at Séné (France) and the 15th December 2014 at County Hall, Exeter (UK). The purpose of these workshops was to discuss, analyse and record the scenario building experience and to compare these.

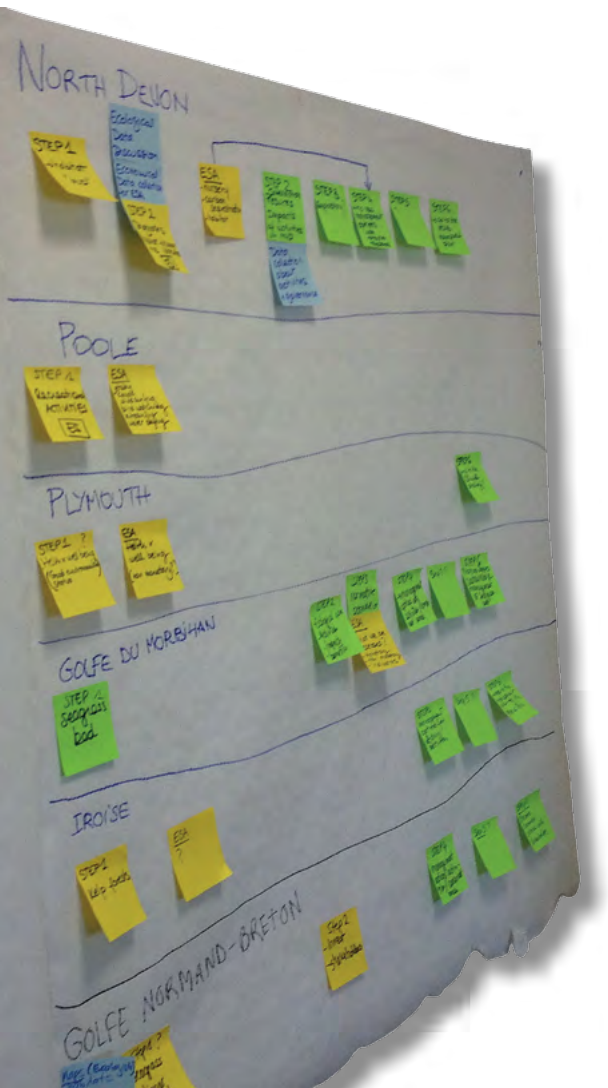
Presentations were made from the case study sites at Plymouth-Fowey, North Devon Biosphere Reserve, the Marine Park Project in the Golfe Normand-Breton, the natural Marine Park in the Iroise Sea and the natural Regional Park in the Golfe du Morbihan. The Poole Harbour case study site followed an alternative methodology that did not involve the scenario building process and an analysis of this work was undertaken independently of this workshop.

Following the presentations an open discussion was facilitated by the VALMER Work Package 3 lead organisation (Devon County Council in the UK and the natural Regional Park of the Golfe du Morbihan in France). The facilitated discussion allowed for a comparison of experiences and an overall consensus on the outcomes of the analysis.

In addition, under VALMER Work Package 4, an independent stakeholder questionnaire was undertaken and this included a question relating to the scenario process. There were some interesting and useful responses and these have helped inform the process of learning from the experience of conducting scenarios.

Set out below are the advantages and disadvantages of using the scenario process, as identified by case study site coordinators and stakeholders that participated in the transnational stakeholders workshop and from the answers to the questionnaire. These sources have also been used to list some considerations to be used when designing a scenario development methodology.

Advantages of developing scenarios for marine site management



- The concept of the "theoretical" approach that scenarios offer can help promote more willingness to engage in discussion.
- The initial stages of developing scenarios can be very helpful in building an agreement of what is to be discussed and what is not and in establishing a baseline of understanding of the site.
- Scenario development is a useful means for building trust and cross-sector knowledge and understanding.
- Scenario development can result in very creative ideas coming forward with a great opportunity for lateral thinking.
- Scenario development can result in a helpful overview being arrived at for a particular site or management issue and be useful in creating a common culture.
- Scenario development can help build understanding of a management issue.
- There is an opportunity to develop the outputs from case study sites into practical actions in the future.
- New perspectives on management issues can result from scenario development.
- There is an opportunity for the scenario process to present and review more acute options than might otherwise have been considered but this is not always comfortable territory for all.
- A well run scenario process can convince stakeholders of the feasibility or otherwise of a course of action so unrealistic expectations can be managed.
- Using scenario development to plan in the long-term lends a greater opportunity for agreement to be reached.
- The outputs from scenario development can be used to present evidence to decision makers outside of the scenario process.
- The scenario process, if well run, will be enjoyed by the participants.
- At a local level, issues can be animated or "brought to life" through the scenario process.

Anticipating difficulties for marine management scenarios

- To be successful, scenario development must be given sufficient time, which can be longer than expected.
- It is important not to underestimate the lead-in time in the scenario development process.
- Without a sufficient availability of resources scenarios can be partial in their success, in that they either just engage a selected and compliant group of stakeholders or they are channelled into investigating issues for which a critical mass of data exists.
- If the selection of scenario themes is perceived to be driven primarily by the availability of particular data, it can inadvertently disengage some stakeholders as local priorities might appear to have been arbitrarily dismissed.
- If the use of extremes in the scenario building process (e.g. an Armageddon scenario) is not understood then it can be counterproductive in engaging stakeholders.
- For management issues within the marine environment it is often difficult to secure truly maritime practitioner stakeholders.
- Some stakeholders have concerns that outputs are merely theoretical and that they have little or no probability of happening which can, in extreme circumstances, lead to some stakeholders withdrawing from the process.
- If a consistent group of stakeholders cannot be maintained throughout the process, continuity is compromised and effort wasted.

Some considerations when designing the scenario methodology for your site

- The capacity within an organisation to undertake the development of scenarios and the expertise it has are important limiting factors that need to be acknowledged at the outset.
- Openness and transparency in selecting and developing scenarios are critical factors in reaching successful outcomes.
- It is important to ensure that the balance of effort between the scenario process and any analytical process such as an ecosystems services assessment is decided carefully, beforehand.
- It is helpful generally, to include professional, technical and scientific stakeholders in the process of building scenarios.
- A scenario building exercise would be improved by ensuring that realism is maximised at the planning stage.
- The choice of scenarios to work on should be determined at the outset by taking a broad view of all management issues on a site.
- Ensuring that the stakeholder group has the confidence that all important sectors and interests are represented helps to build commitment.
- It is very important to ensure that all stakeholders that have chosen to participate are then enabled to do so by ensuring they are provided with the necessary knowledge and understanding of issues and that no group is ignored.
- Scenarios need to be sufficiently different to provide contrast.
- Voting on options is an effective way of making decisions.
- Having understandable and sufficiently accurate modelling software as a support tool is important in building the confidence of stakeholders.
- Unrealistic, unachievable and some theoretical scenarios lose credibility with stakeholders.
- Having sufficient and appropriate data for stakeholders to use is important. Missing data can detract from the stakeholders' confidence in the process.
- Positive results are more readily arrived at if there is no perception of decisions being "loaded".
- It can make discussions easier if there is not a formalised management structure in place.

Recommendations for developing scenarios

- Carefully assess and decide whether you have sufficient time and resources before you engage any stakeholders.
- Make sure that stakeholders from all the key sectors are involved.
- Create confidence between stakeholders through transparency and open-discussions
- Be clear about the overall aims of the project.
- Decide at the outset whether you are testing your own priorities or inviting wider stakeholder ideas and then make this clear to them.
- Set out the aims and limits of the scenarios clearly and use the right level of detail.
- Ensure stakeholders understand how the scenario process will work as early as possible.
- Make sure your stakeholders understand the issues and have all the available information they need.
- Vary the participation methodologies to get the most out of stakeholder participation.
- Use scenario development alongside other discussions, meetings and plans.
- Use existing networks to share and disseminate the results of the scenario process.

Conclusions

The deployment of a "scenario development" process in site management can yield great benefits. It can also be time consuming and result merely in "theoretical" outcomes. The use of a scenario-based approach should not be adopted without allowing sufficient time to properly design the approach and to ensure that this will, with the best of endeavours, result in useable outcomes. If the outcomes are not useable or cannot lead to the development of actions at a later stage then there is a risk of disenchantment and commitment from the stakeholder community.

The scenario process can be very resource intensive. However, it can result in new and universally accepted approaches to management that might not have been otherwise realised. It is important to spend time planning and in being satisfied that an effective and efficient process has been agreed.

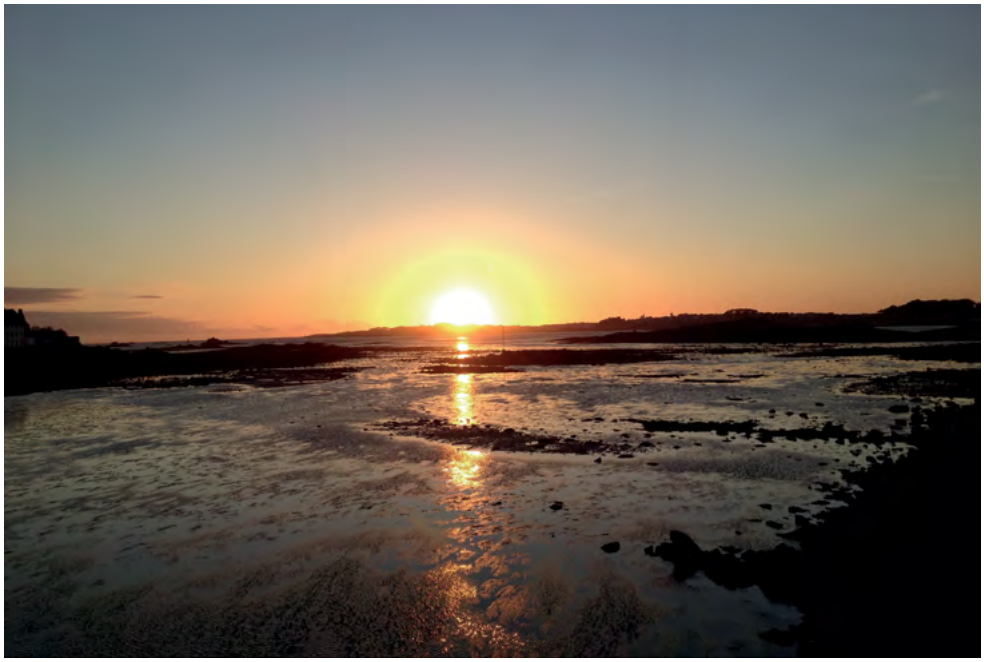
It is difficult to conceive of a more adaptive and participative way of involving stakeholders in site management and in overcoming challenging issues. Other methods, such as consulting on a draft plan for a site or loosely defined "ideas" sessions can often prove less successful and more costly in the long term.

The VALMER project aims to help managers define better management options with the benefit of an ecosystem services approach that considers the interactions between species, habitats, human activities and the governance context. This integrated approach was developed in VALMER through the combination of two major processes: the ecosystem services assessment (ESA) and the scenario building process.

These approaches are complementary and feed each other. The ESA can be used as a first step to illustrate the current situation (as a reference point) in the case study site and then it can be used to understand and compare the consequences of possible scenarios including different management options.

The ESA and scenario approach can help managers to:

- Structure knowledge, data and information on the socio-eco-system;
- Create trust and understanding between stakeholders;
- Identify the best management options;
- Find technical solutions;
- Highlight management measures and decisions and
- Define a coastal and maritime vision shared by stakeholders.



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VALMER Valuing ecosystem services in the western English Channel

'The VALMER project was selected under the European cross-border cooperation programme INTERREG IV A France (Channel) - England, co-funded by the ERDF.

The aim of the project was to examine how marine ecosystem services assessments (ESA) can support effective and informed marine management. The project involved six case studies at three sites in the UK and three sites in France. You can find further information about VALMER on the project website www.valmer.eu.

This document forms part of a complementary set of reports and recommendations from VALMER, which we suggest be read together for a better understanding of the use of ESA in marine ecosystems. All VALMER outputs are available on the project website www.valmer.eu. Supporting evidence for this summary can be found in the reports "Building site based scenarios: tools and approaches for implementation from the VALMER project" and "Transnational scenario synthesis: results of the scenario building processes developed by VALMER's case study sites. Other VALMER outputs include:

- Advice note for using ecosystem service assessment to support marine governance
- A Framework for the Operational Assessment of Marine Ecosystem Services
- ESA lessons learned
- Scenario guidelines
- Scenario synthesis report

With the contribution of the project partners:

Agence des aires marines protégées · Ifremer · UBO université de bretagne occidentale · UPMC Sorbonne Universités · Parc naturel régional du Golfe du Morbihan · PML Plymouth Marine Laboratory · Marine & Coastal Policy with Plymouth University · The Marine Biological Association · Cornwall Council · Devon County Council · Devon maritime forum · Dorset County Council · Dorset Coast Forum