Frontiers in Social-Ecological Research:
Achieving the Promise of Integration in Marine Spatial Planning for Resilient Social and Environmental Outcomes

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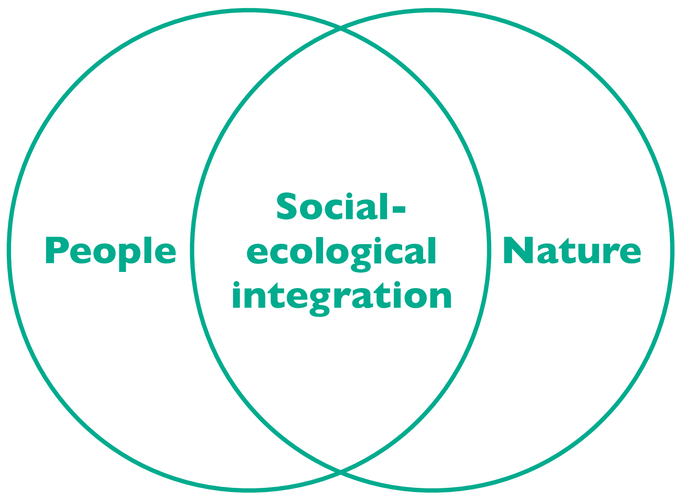
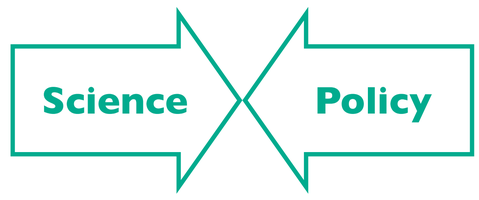
SocioEcoFrontiers - What is it about?

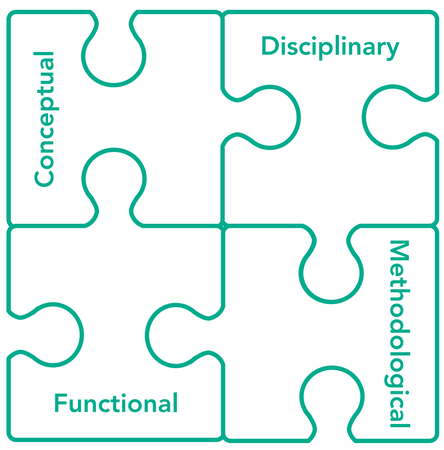
People and nature are inextricably linked. Overcoming global challenges (e.g. food security and sustainable development) thus requires an **integrated social-ecological perspective**.



Although essential for achieving international nature-development goals (e.g. IPBES; Blue Growth agenda; SDGs), the operationalisation of social-ecological **integration remains challenging**.

In particular, **functional integration** (i.e. bridging of science with policy or practice) is **crucial for social and ecological resilience** in light of current environmental change.





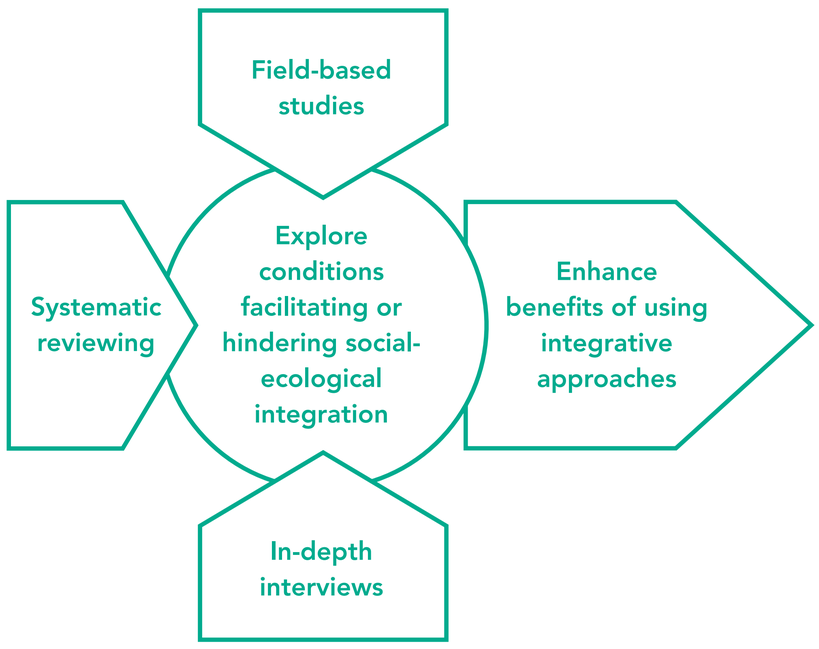
Social-ecological systems research points to **different ways in which social-ecological integration can occur** *(Guerrero et al. 2018)*: **conceptual** (i.e. consideration of both social and ecological components within single study), **disciplinary** (i.e. inclusion of approaches from multiple disciplines), **methodological** (e.g. using multiple tools), and **functional** (i.e. bridging of science with policy or practice).

Aims

The overall aims of this project are to **critically analyse progress** towards achieving social-ecological integration **using marine spatial planning (MSP)** as a specific integrative process used worldwide, and to **identify barriers and opportunities** for facilitating a **greater uptake of social-ecological tools** and interventions within natural resource management and biodiversity conservation.

Research Plans

Focusing on coastal and marine social-ecological systems and MSP, I will combine **field-based studies**, systematic **reviewing** and in-depth **interviews** to critically **explore conditions facilitating or hindering social-ecological integration** at global, European and national scales and **enhance benefits of using integrative approaches**.



Two impactful case-studies (small-scale fisheries in São Tomé and Príncipe and Mozambique) will allow me to undertake a comprehensive analysis of these issues and their **implications for marine biodiversity and human wellbeing, including socio-economic and gender aspects**.

These research objectives will be addressed by **three work packages** over a four-year period (2020 - 2024):

Work Package 1

Objective - **Characterise key integrative approaches adopted in MSP** projects **worldwide** and their application, and usefulness, to guide implementation of resource management interventions.

Action - Review the **application of social-ecological approaches in MSP worldwide**

Work Package 2

Objective - Critically **explore key science-policy-practice linkages** and explore relationships between operational conditions behind functional integration and social-ecological outcomes across a wide range of **EU member states**.

Action - Undertake a **European-level analysis** of planning and implementation of MSP projects with a focus on functional integration (i.e. science-policy-practice interface)

Work Package 3

Objective - Assess the **role of cross-sectoral and inter-stakeholder MSP linkages** on knowledge production, uptake of findings and anticipated social and environmental outcomes for addressing specific sustainability challenges **in two study systems.**

Action - Conduct a detailed **case study comparison** focused on MSP related to small-scale fisheries management **in São Tomé and Príncipe and Mozambique**

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