

# GES4SEAS

## Milestone Report

M1.7 – Brief on PAB feedback/outcomes to WPs2-5 (second year).



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## 1. Milestone M1.7

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This *Milestone Report Brief on the Practitioners Advisory Board (PAB) feedback/outcomes to WPs 2 to 5* summarizes the progress made during this active stage of interactive co-development between the PAB and the *GES4SEAS* project partners responsible for the development of the toolbox and several scientific tools (methods, models, indices, approaches, workflows) and supporting resources that will integrate the *GES4SEAS* toolbox. This document serves as roadmap for other WPs, particularly WP2, 3, 4 and WP5, including the needs, expectations and recommendations from the PAB about the toolbox and the different approaches to be followed in the project.

This milestone reports on ongoing activities within WP1:

*(M1-48) Task 1.2. Co-creation and design thinking process*, lead by AZTI and developed in partnership with UAVR, NIVA, AU, SYKE, TI-SF MariLim, Scitation, CNRS, ISPRA.

*(M1-48) Task 1.3. Iterative development & validation of beta toolbox version*, lead by AZTI and developed in partnership with NIVA, AU, SYKE, UAVR, MariLim.

This Milestone 1.7 **Brief on PAB feedback/outcomes to WPs 2 to 5** provides an update on the *GES4SEAS* Practitioner Advisory Board Members, details the approach to maintain a continuous communication flow between the project partners and the PAB, including the strategic updated calendar of participatory events. It also provides an overview of the PAB engagement activities that took place since the last Milestone 1.6 (submitted in February 2024), as well as an outline of the activities planned for the third year of the project and which envisage close interaction with the PAB and other stakeholders.

### 1.1 Update of *GES4SEAS* Practitioner Advisory Board Members

The PAB is now composed by 15 Members from 14 Institutions (*Table 1*). The project PAB has now on-board representatives from all four Regional Sea Conventions in Europe, after the inclusion of OSPAR during the first year of the project. The complete updated list is detailed below and will be included in the project website along with a small profile of PAB Members (<https://www.ges4seas.eu/practitioner-advisory-board-members/>).

Table 1. List of the 15 members of the GES4SEAS Project Practitioner Advisory Board (PAB).

|                                                          |                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Competent authorities from EU Member States</b>       |                      |
| SPAIN                                                    | Lucía García-Denche  |
| IRELAND                                                  | Sorcha Ní Longphuirt |
| ROMANIA                                                  | Otilia Mihail        |
| GERMANY                                                  | Axel Kreutle         |
| ITALY                                                    | Roberto Giangreco    |
| <b>Regional Seas Conventions</b>                         |                      |
| HELCOM                                                   | Juuso Haapaniemi     |
| Black Sea Commission                                     | Iryna Makarenko      |
| UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan                           | Christos Ioakeimidis |
| OSPAR                                                    | Carole Durussel      |
| <b>European Environment Agency</b>                       |                      |
| Johnny Reker, Monika Peterlin                            |                      |
| <b>EU COM Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD)</b>   |                      |
| Camino Liqueste                                          |                      |
| <b>EU COM Joint Research Centre</b>                      |                      |
| Georg Hanke                                              |                      |
| <b>Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Canada</b>         |                      |
| Roland Cormier                                           |                      |
| <b>European Global Ocean Observing System (EuroGOOS)</b> |                      |
| Dina Eparkhina                                           |                      |

## 1.2 Summary of GES4SEAS partners & PAB engagement activities up to M24

A calendar of main participatory events set-up early on the project (**Milestone 1.2**) keeps being **regularly updated** by partners with activities for which they would like the PAB to be involved or consulted. This calendar is shared within the project TEAMS workspace and has been **instrumental to plan participatory events**, avoid overlaps, foster synergies between activities and partners and avoid stakeholder fatigue by optimizing requests and means of collaboration. The calendar has currently 19 entries covering the main planned interactions with PAB with GES4SEAS activities, with details updated as work progresses (*Figure 1*).

| no. | Workpac Task                           | Brief description of the input required                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Period for engagement activity (month of onset)                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Deadline for PAB input (month of project) | Milestone(s)/Deliverable(s) associated (see also)                                                                                                                                                                  | Preferred means of communication (suggestions)                                                                                          | GES4SEAS contact                       | PAB members to engage / invite                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | WP4 T4.1                               | Feedback on Roadmap to develop an innovative assessment framework and the corresponding toolbox (a software containing a set of tools for assessment and other tasks)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | M6-M7                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | March 2023 (M7)                           | D4.1 Beta prototype toolbox combining existing codes for GES and CIA/SEA assessments (M12)                                                                                                                         | E-mail                                                                                                                                  |                                        | All                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 2   | WP2 T2.1                               | Feedback on the final Deliverable 2.1. Review comments on the main topics of this report that will be pertinent to the practical guidelines to be developed and outlined in D2.3.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | M10-M11                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | July 2023 (M11)                           | D2.1 Guidelines management approaches based on a review of the activity pressures effects chain towards achieving GES in the M17D (M9)                                                                             | E-mail                                                                                                                                  |                                        | All                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 3   | WP2 T2.3                               | Feedback on deliverable 2.3 will be taken into account when developing the content of the deliverable 2.3. Digestion of D2.1 PAB comments and reflection of main suggestions and/or concerns in D2.3. Input also into D2.3 made available to PAB.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | M10-M11                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | July 2023 (M11)                           | D2.3 Guidelines (Best Practical Options) for Practical Ecosystem Approach (M21)                                                                                                                                    | Indirect, extracted from with D2.1 comments) & E-mail                                                                                   |                                        | All                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 4   | WP3 T3.1                               | Workshop on Ecosystem Services (WP3): identify Learning Sites applying it + PAB engagement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | M15-M17                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 15-19 January (M17)                       | D3.1 Selected methods and potential applications in Learning Sites (M17)<br>D3.2 Applications of selected tools by LUs, their specific configurations and main outputs to test tipping points and thresholds (M30) | LS online workshop – was any member of the Gerlan Port PAB invited?                                                                     |                                        | Camero Liqueur (IRC-INEC)?                                                                                                                                                                |
| 5   | WP5 T5.2                               | Methods to assess and manage HABs, invasive species, jellyfish blooms and top predators will take into account the outcomes of WP1 (PAB)<br>M18 (2nd Feb 2024): 1st online training workshop on CHIRRA open to PAB (video of session and material facilitated to those not able to attend)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | M9-M12                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | April 2024 (M20)                          | M5.2 Method identified for assessment and management of HABs, invasive species and jellyfish blooms (M13) / D5.2 Review and testing methods for HABs, invasive species and jellyfish blooms (M24)                  | Personal communication and short interviews / training workshops                                                                        | UAgner, UAWR, Other GES4SEAS partners? | All PAB members invited to workshops                                                                                                                                                      |
| 6   | WP2 T2.4                               | Ecosystem-Based Approach (WP2): identify Learning Sites applying it + PAB engagement. Online workshop on the SEA4GES tool (please complete).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | M13 - M19                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 7th March 2024 (M19)                      | D2.4 Lessons learnt in the application of the Guidelines (M48)                                                                                                                                                     | e-mail exchange and online workshop                                                                                                     |                                        | Ariza Franco – no direct PAB participation                                                                                                                                                |
| 7   | WP4/WP5 several WP4 tasks & T5.3, T5.4 | Toolbox application (WP4): all Learning Sites must test it + PAB engagement (Physical workshop in Germany)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | M13-M20                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 22-25 April (M20)                         | M1.7, M4.3, M4.4, M5.1 & D4.2 Framework and toolbox for assessment and analysis of CIA/SEA, GES status, ES, and uncertainty (M30)                                                                                  | e-mail exchange and online meetings among LUs in preparation of Workshop in April                                                       | WP4 & WP5 (tasks leads)                | no direct PAB participation                                                                                                                                                               |
| 8   | WP5 T5.3                               | Assessing the relevance of information gaps, and testing the tools during development, data limitations and information gaps will be identified. Also with the help of stakeholder workshops. Here LS need to clarify which LS stakeholder are also part of the PAB. But there is no dedicated PAB meeting or consultation process                                                                                                                                                                                                       | M2-M40                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | M30                                       | M5.3 Developed tools applied/tested at all LUs (M40) / D5.3 Synthesis of applying frameworks and tipping point concepts to LUs (M42)                                                                               | physical workshop on 22-25 April (M20)                                                                                                  | Ti-SF (Jennifer)                       | no direct PAB participation in workshop; PAB feedback during annual meeting LUs presentations                                                                                             |
| 9   | WP3 T3.3                               | Engage PAB/stakeholders to define management scenarios for pressures and footprints in the future                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | M9-M18                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | April 2024 (M20)                          | D3.2 Applications of selected tools by LUs, their specific configurations and main outputs to test tipping points and thresholds (M30)                                                                             | TS405 possibly with interactive PESTEL. Plus an in-person if we can paper back on to another event                                      | CEIAS                                  | How is this going? Several PAB members, namely Iria Makonnen (Black Sea Commission), Susana Hargreaves (MELCOM) and Otilia Mihail (Romania). Have experienced interest on following this. |
| 10  | WP4 all                                | Discussions/dialogue with PAB/stakeholders about the minimum requirements for data (pressures and ecosystems), and how to deal with analysis in data poor regions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | M17 - M22                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | May 2024 (M22)                            | WP4 Deliverables and late D5.1 Guidance on recommendation for practitioners – as a brief collection (M48)                                                                                                          | A focus group in a 30/30min online session to present project development need and collect ideas                                        | Torsten, Clara, Jørgen (WP4)           | All (online or present at annual meeting)                                                                                                                                                 |
| 11  | WP3 T3.3, T3.4                         | Starting at the Annual meeting in 2024 discussion and feedback on main technical functionalities of the GES4SEAS toolbox and PAB details on its use and applications. Identify target topics and contents for the brief's collection, resources, technical support and tutorials to be further explored in the 18th Nov 2024 interim meeting – at the PAB session                                                                                                                                                                        | M21-M22                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | May 2024 (M22)                            | D5.1 Guidance on recommendation for practitioners – as a brief collection (M48)                                                                                                                                    | Deliberated PAB session at May 2024 annual meeting                                                                                      | Angeli, Heliana (WP1)                  | All (online or present at annual meeting)                                                                                                                                                 |
| 12  | WP4 all                                | Discussions / dialogue with PAB/stakeholders about the toolbox for acceptance of methods/toolbox, including user friendliness and options for comparison of different methods (old or new versions)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | M7 - M7                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | M7                                        | M7 or D7                                                                                                                                                                                                           | A focus group in a 30/30min online session to present project development need and collect ideas                                        |                                        | WP4 leads                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 13  | WP4 T4.6                               | Discussion with PAB/stakeholders about how to best present uncertainty/confidence of the toolbox                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | M20-M28                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | M30                                       | M4.4 Approaches for presenting and including uncertainty in the assessment (M30)                                                                                                                                   | Discussion at annual meeting plus electronic                                                                                            | All                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 14  | WP3 T3.3                               | Discussion of main topics raised by the PAB in the last annual meeting after the toolbox presentation. Focus on broader topics to support identification of relevant contents for the brief's collection, resources and guidance, as well as technical support and tutorials to be developed by the project partners.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | M26                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | M26                                       | D5.1 Guidance on recommendation for practitioners – as a brief collection (M48)                                                                                                                                    | PAB session at GES4SEAS interim meeting 18th Nov 2024                                                                                   | Angeli, Heliana (WP1)                  | All (online meeting)                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 15  | WP1 & WP5 L5a T5.3, T5.4               | Series of monthly webinars (January to May 2025), each including presentations by two GES4SEAS LUs, where they will showcase their approach to data gathering and preparation to implement the toolbox, and integration with LS specific policy and stakeholders needs. The aim is to share lessons learnt from different scales and content uses and discuss solutions with partners but most importantly to receive feedback from PAB. The whole's L5a L5b presentation will take place after all other LUs in an event to be decided. | M29 January 29 0:33 Gulf of Botnia & 152 Kattegat) M30 February 0:33 North Sea-Helgolands & L5a Celtic Sea) M31 March 1:33 Deep-Sea Mid transition & L5b Western Med) M32 April 1:37 Adriatic Sea & L5b Angolan Sea) M33 May 0:39 Black Sea & L521 French-Polynesia) | M33                                       | D5.1 Guidance on recommendation for practitioners – as a brief collection (M48)                                                                                                                                    | Series of 15 webinars                                                                                                                   | Angeli, Heliana (WP1)                  | Open to all PAB members but target members may be encouraged to participate depending on the LUs at each webinar. Additional external experts or stakeholders may also be invited.        |
| 16  | WP4 T4.7                               | Additional feedback and testing of the toolbox by the PAB from their perspective as end-users of the toolbox                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | M25-M44                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | M44                                       | M7 or D7                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Hands-on tool testing requests combined with feedback exchange using collaborative online tools to collect feedback (e.g. Collaborator) | WP4                                    | ???                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 17  | WP3 T3.4                               | Inputs on practical formats to present and develop the GES4SEAS Guidance with recommendations for practitioners. Discussion on target topics and contents for the brief's collection, resources, technical support and tutorials, etc...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | M33 - M42                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | M42                                       | D5.1 Guidance on recommendation for practitioners – as a brief collection (M48)                                                                                                                                    | yet to be decided – maybe start planning the actual inputs for annual meeting of 2025                                                   | Angeli, Heliana (WP1)                  |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 18  | WP2 T2.4                               | Feedback on the deliverable. Initially on the contents, later on the deliverable                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | M40-M48                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | M47                                       | D2.4 Lessons learnt in the application of the Guidelines (M48)                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                         |                                        | Who to involve from PAB?                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 19  | WP5 T5.4                               | Feedback from stakeholder meetings (WP5) will also be used for improving frameworks and tipping point concepts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | M40-M48                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | M44                                       | M5.4 List of D2/D3/D4 for assessing cumulative effects (M45) / D5.4 Guidelines for monitoring and management of coastal ecosystems exposed to multiple pressures (M48)                                             | e-mail<br>yet to be decided                                                                                                             |                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                           |

Figure 1: Snapshot of GES4SEAS Calendar of main participatory events at the end of **Month 24** of the project. The Calendar aim is to support engagement with the PAB during project activities and developments. Blue activities are closed, orange-yellow activities are ongoing or kicking-off during the third year of the project. The remaining activities are planned for a later stage in the project.

Building on the results of the initial Stakeholders' online Survey and discussions during the 1st PAB workshop at the kick-off meeting (26 to 30 of September 2022) several **recommendations and priorities** were made by the PAB that were compiled into a report and disseminated within the project (**Milestone 1.3**). These recommendations include the top features or capacities that stakeholders expect from an environmental assessment toolbox with implications for activities in the different work packages of the project. The PAB recommendations contain information particularly relevant for supporting the scientific methodologies and associated tool developments that took place during the second and third years under WP3, WP4 and WP5.

Based on the Project planned activities, on the topics identified during the initial survey by the stakeholders, including the PAB, as well as based on the continuous exchange with the PAB members (see summary of most relevant activities with PAB engagement up to Month 25 in [Figure 2](#)), WP1 has been able to coordinate and promote a productive communication and interaction aligned with the project goal of generating tools and scientific outputs that are co-created with the input of the actual end-users of the research outcomes produced by GES4SEAS. The main interactions are hereafter described and updated by work package.



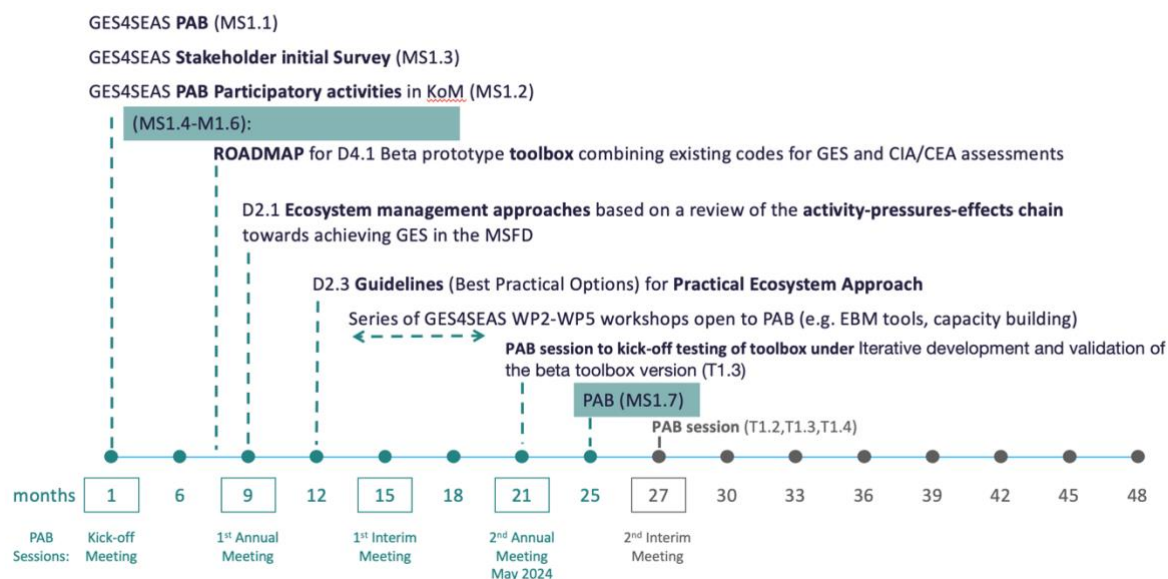


Figure 2: Main activities and Deliverables with PAB engagement and contribution during GES4SEAS first 24 months.

## WP2 | Developing the conceptual framework and knowledge base for ecosystem-based management

During the stage of co-creation and design thinking process (coordinated by WP1 under Task 1.2) the PAB engaged mostly with the activities within WP2 with important contributes for Deliverables:

- D2.1 Ecosystem management approaches based on a review of the activity-pressures-effects chain towards achieving GES in the MSFD and
- D2.3 Guidelines (Best Practical Options) for Practical Ecosystem Approach;
- but also punctually on D2.2 Technical report on the state-of-the-art in support of EBM approaches to address HABs, jellyfish outbreaks invasive species and decline of top predators.

## WP3 | Understanding the mechanisms that determine the cumulative impacts of human activities and climate change

Engage PAB & stakeholders through the GEs4SEAS Learning Sites (in coordination with WP5) to define management scenarios for pressures and future footprints (WP3) that will contribute to D3.2 **Applications of selected tools by LSs, their specific configurations and main outputs to test tipping points and thresholds** (M30). Dedicated online sessions are being planned (Task 3.3.) to engage with PAB and other targeted stakeholders with respect to scenarios setting (*Figure 1*).

## WP4 | Linking pressure and status assessment with the capacity to supply ecosystem services into a unifying holistic framework and nested toolbox

After the important feedback and relevant contributions of the PAB to the ROADMAP for a Beta prototype toolbox combining existing codes for GES and CIA/CEA assessments (leading to future D4.1 - a living document central to WP4 developments), the beta version of the tool was showcased to the PAB for comments at the first

annual meeting (May 2023). The subsequent ongoing developments were presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> online interim meeting (November 2023) and at the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting (May 2024), where the most updated version of the tool (current version 1.2 “Levant”) was presented. These progress meetings allow for effective co-creation (T1.2) and iterative development (T1.3) between GES4SEAS researchers and the PAB. An upcoming PAB session is being prepared for the 2<sup>nd</sup> interim online meeting, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (Month 27) .

**WP5 | Learning sites: Testing and synthesis** Through WP2, 3 & 4, Learning Sites at the WP5 are receiving guidelines and inputs that already benefited from the PAB feedback. This WP5 activity has kicked-off in force since the practical workshops that started in January (Month 17) and had relevant developments during the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting (M24), in which the PAB and also some LS specific stakeholders actively discussed the different steps of the tests with real data and scenarios. Specific thematic and capacity building workshops (*related with WP2, 3 and 5*) aiming to support learning sites and inform relevant stakeholders on thematic progresses were also concluded (*Figure 2*): one on Cumulative Impact Assessment & constructing a linkage framework and another on methods to assess & manage invasive species. Interaction of PAB with the Learning Sites (WP5) will become more active after the second interim meeting (November 2024), through a series of webinars (planned for Jan 2025 to May 2025) where the experience and the lessons learned from testing the toolbox by the LSs will be shared and discussed with the WP4 developers and the PAB, initiating the validations steps according to agreed project timescale (T1.3).

**All WPs | Dedicated sessions** were set during the **project 1<sup>st</sup> annual meeting in May 2023** in Denmark, with the presence of PAB members on site and others through remote attendance. An overview of the project implementation and discussion of main ongoing activities was presented to the PAB, opening a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas and recommendations. Six months after the annual meeting, **the first interim online meeting** of the whole project with the attendance of the PAB took place, in *November 2023* (Month 15). A six-month frequency overview was envisaged within the project to foster regular feedback and communication between the PAB & all GES4SEAS WPs (*Figure 2*). Another important participation of the PAB took place in the **GES4SEAS 2<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting** (*27<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> May 2024, Istanbul, Turkey*), with attendance in person as well as online. The PAB members attending in person were able to follow the joint plenary sessions as well as the several hands-on sessions prepared for the event, according to their topics’ preference and expertise. A dedicated PAB session, dedicated especially to Regional Seas Conventions needs, gathered relevant inputs for the third year of the project, identifying broader topics to be discussed within different WPs. The main issues raised by the PAB and solutions to those challenges will be discussed with all consortium and the PAB session in the upcoming **GES4SEAS 2<sup>nd</sup> interim meeting** (*18<sup>th</sup> November 2024, online*). In addition, **continuous information feedback** between the PAB & GES4SEAS has been ensured through sharing of relevant meeting minutes and dissemination of project deliverables and other outputs with no direct engagement of the project. This was maintained throughout the entire period and coordinated by WP1 leads.

The PAB has also been instrumental in **identifying relevant fora**, namely MSFD working groups (e.g. MSCG) and other venues (Regional Sea Conventions) where the project could present its objectives

and developments to future end-users of its most relevant outputs. **WP1** and **WP4** partners have been presenting GES4SEAS developments at some of these events, working towards meeting the expectations of the implementing authorities and developing outputs fit for endorsement by policy-makers.

### 1.3 Planning of PAB engagement activities for 3<sup>rd</sup> year

Ongoing and near future activities will be communicated and discussed with the PAB during the 2<sup>nd</sup> interim online meeting (Month 27) (*Figure 3*). Besides **WP4** activities leading towards **further testing of the toolbox newest versions**, the activities with the PAB within WP3 and WP5 will also intensify in year 3. In **WP3** particularly regarding **scenarios setting** that can be used for **investigating effects of measures on mitigating impacts**, and in **WP5** regarding the **challenges faced and lessons learned** from **Learning Sites testing of the toolbox**, for which we expect to collect feedback from PAB and other relevant stakeholders.

The means to interact with PAB vary according to the project needs, allowing the PAB to provide feedback both on ongoing developments and upcoming outputs, e.g.:

- workshops with PAB members invited according to interest and scope
- in-person meetings try to match or back-to-back with other events
- through online tools, e.g. quick surveys
- online focus group (e.g. 1h30min session) to present project development needs and collect ideas (webinar series)
- personal communication and short interviews
- training workshops.



#### Upcoming interactions with PAB

18th November 2024

**PAB session** on project 2<sup>nd</sup> online interim meeting (WP1,WP4, WP2)

until end of 2024 tbc

Engage PAB/stakeholders in defining **management scenarios for pressures and future footprints** (WP3)  
into D3.2 Applications of selected tools by LSs, their specific configurations and main outputs to test tipping points and thresholds (M30)

Jan - May 2025 March

Webinar series **Learning Sites** experience from **toolbox application** (WP5, WP4) - for project partners, PAB and targeted stakeholders  
into D1.1 Guidance and Recommendations from and for practitioners, as a brief collection (M48)



Figure 3: Main activities requiring PAB engagement or contribution during this GES4SEAS third year (green period).





2024