



## Deliverable 3.1 Review of Institutional Barriers Literature

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## D3.1 REVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS LITERATURE

*This is a summary version of the systematic scoping review performed in D3.1 which focuses on institutional barriers that prevent effective policy implementation in the European marine context. The full report will be made available in late 2024.*



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# 1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Institutional barriers are important obstacles to policy implementation. Many studies have reported on barriers to policy implementation in marine European contexts. However, the cumulative learning from this body of literature is impaired by terminological and conceptual diversity, and because the literature is dispersed across scientific fields and specialized journals.

This report presents a short summary of a systematic scoping review of peer-reviewed studies of institutional barriers that limit policy achievement in a European marine governance context.<sup>1</sup>

The systematic review was primarily developed to be of use within the PERMAGOV project.<sup>2</sup> Funded by the Horizon Europe program of the European Commission and UKRI, the PERMAGOV project aims to improve EU marine governance so that it can better meet the goals and objectives established in the European Green Deal. The identification of institutional barriers represents an important step towards this aim. The review will subsequently support the development of a diagnostic tool that will help to identify institutional barriers in the context of the project's case studies. Possible pathways to overcome the barriers will be identified in collaboration with end-users affiliated with the case studies. As such, the systematic review presented here initially serves to provide a basis for the subsequent research and development work within the project.

The purpose of the systematic review is threefold: a) to develop a typology for institutional barriers for the purpose of the PERMAGOV project; b) to analyse institutional barriers within the regime complexes of marine energy, maritime transport, marine life, and marine plastics; and c) to provide a broad understanding of institutional barriers (e.g. bounded rationality, institutional fragmentation, skewed participation in policy development and implementation etc.) across a range of marine policy settings. The systematic reviewed was carried out according to the guidelines and recommended protocol developed for conducting a systematic scoping review, published by Tricco et al. (2018) and made available by PRISMA.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. BACKGROUND

Institutional barriers often prevent the effective implementation of policies. A great number of studies have reported on institutional barriers, which altogether comprise a large body of literature. However, the cumulative learning from this body of literature is impaired by terminological and conceptual diversity, and because the literature is dispersed over many scientific fields and is typically published in specific journals of those fields (Oberlack, 2017). Learning from the vast and heterogenous body of literature on institutional barriers may be facilitated through a systematic review with a view to propose standardized terminology and

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<sup>1</sup> The full report of this review will be made publicly available once it has been reviewed. The expected delivery date is late fall of 2024

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.permagov.eu/> (last visited 20.09.2023)

<sup>3</sup> <https://prisma-statement.org/> (last visited 14.09.2023)

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identity types of institutional barriers, as was done by Oberlack (2017) for the area of barriers to adaptation to climate change. A systematic scoping review is better suited than a systematic review of studies of institutional barriers because of the terminological and conceptual diversity that is involved with such a review. Based on a systematic scoping review, this work will develop a typology of institutional barriers that may prevent effective policy implementation within a European marine and maritime context.

### 3. CONCEPTS AND APPROACH

For the present purposes, institutions can be defined as “a relatively stable collection of practices and rules defining appropriate behaviour for specific groups of actors in specific situations” (March and Olsen 1998, 948). More broadly, Ostrom (2005) defined “institution” as “...the prescriptions that humans use to organize all forms of repetitive and structured interactions, including those within families, neighbourhoods, markets, firms, sports leagues, churches, private associations, and governments at all scales.”

Institutional barriers can be defined as “impasses in governance processes that are rooted in the institutional context of the adaptation situation” (Oberlack, 2017: 807; Eisenack et al. 2014). Many studies have reported on institutional barriers, which altogether comprise a very large body of literature. However, the cumulative learning from this body of literature is impaired by terminological and conceptual diversity, and because the literature is dispersed over a number of scientific fields and is typically specific journals of those fields (Oberlack, 2017). Learning from vast the heterogenous body of literature on institutional barriers may be facilitated through a systematic review with a view to propose standardized terminology and identify types of institutional barriers, as was done by Oberlack (2017) for specific for the more specific area of barriers to adaptation to climate change. A systematic scoping review is suitable for supporting an analysis of a rather heterogeneous literature, which employs different terminologies and concepts. Based on a scoping review and drawing on and adapting the terminology proposed by Oberlack (2017) we propose a typology of institutional barriers with particular relevance for marine governance. The primary purpose of this typology is to support an analysis of institutional barriers in a European Marine policy context. Accordingly, the review and typology have been developed with this focus in mind, but the typology may be found to be useful to support analysis of institutional barriers in other contexts as well.

#### 3.1. SEARCH STRING

We designed a search in Web of Science with different search terms to capture different terms with similar meanings for “institutional” and “barriers” and “marine”. The search was defined as the conjunction of the included alternative meanings for each of these three terms. Hence, the search returned articles that simultaneously matched with listed alternatives for “institutional” AND “barriers” AND “marine”.

The scope of the search was further restricted to a “public policy context” and to a “European marine and maritime context”. The detailed operationalization of the search terms and the criterion for inclusion are described in the full version of the deliverable.



## 3.2. SCREENING

The articles were screened (title, abstract, keywords) in relation to a set of inclusion criteria. Most importantly, to be included in the analysis, articles must describe or identify the evidenced impact of at least one institutional barrier within a European marine or maritime public policy context. The screening was facilitated by the Covidence platform, and each article was screened by at least two researchers.

## 3.3. ANALYSIS

The articles comprising the resulting body of literature were read in full and analyzed by at least two researchers. Additional articles were excluded in this process if they did not satisfy the inclusion criteria, resulting in the body of literature that was analyzed in detail. The overall analytical approach was to code the literature in relation to types of institutional barriers. The coding was partly deductive, based on an initial set of institutional barriers, and partly inductive, representing new types of institutional barriers as these are found in the analyzed literature. Oberlack (2017) proposed a set of institutional barriers for the context of climate change adaptation. An adapted version of Oberlack's typology provided the initial set of types of institutional attributes, barriers and indicators of barriers used in the coding of articles. Additional attributes, barriers and indicators were added in the process of coding articles, whenever the institutional barriers described in articles could not be attributed to the existing list of attributes, barriers and indicators. The resulting list of attributes, barriers and indicators is presented in Annex I.

## 3.4. DATA ITEMS

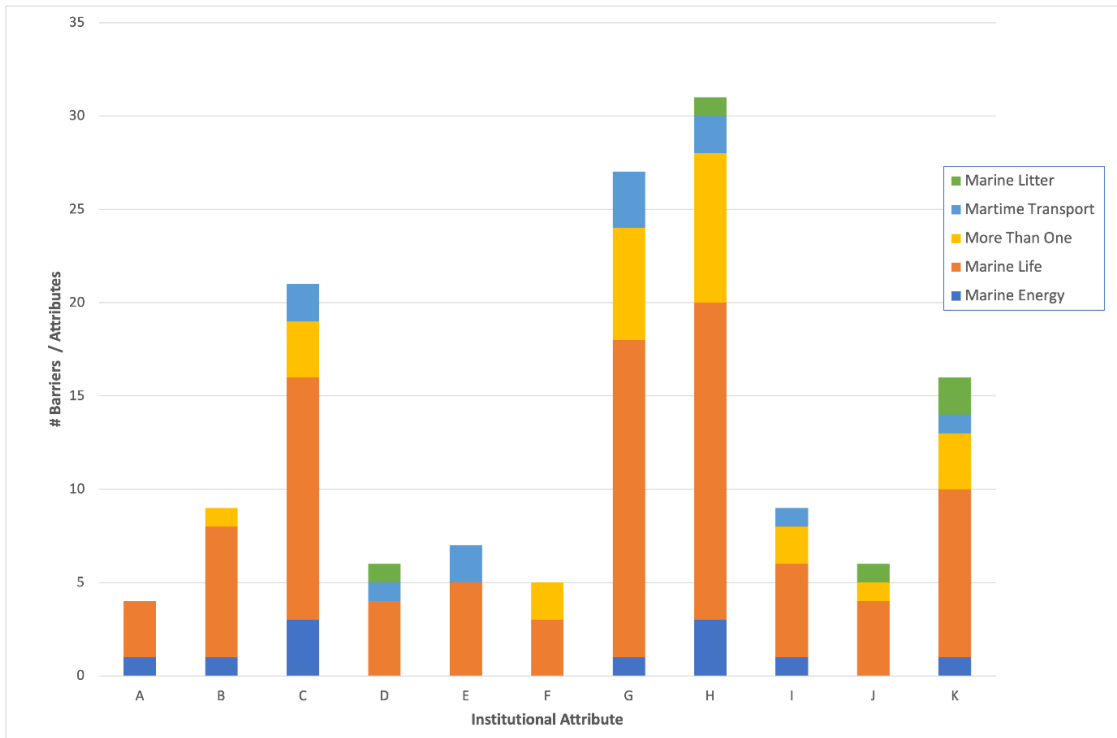
For each article reviewed, the researchers considered up to three institutional barriers, namely those judged to be the most important ones. Linkages between these barriers were identified and described. In addition, researchers took note of additional barriers and their linkages with other barriers, but this information was not imported into the integrated analysis. Each of the up to three main barriers was analyzed and described in context. The following information was recorded for each barrier: Institutional attribute; indicators; linkages with other main barriers; methods used in the article to provide evidence of the barriers, the regime complex and the geographical context of the described institutional barrier. If the relevant information was available, analysts identified enabling factors and approaches to overcome institutional barriers.

# 4. RESULTS

A total of 82 articles were analysed systematically in terms of the information they provide on up to three institutional barriers in a European marine and maritime context. This resulted in a detailed analysis of 165 institutional barriers. The analysis included a detailed description of the institutional barrier in its context and also of the linkages between the barriers extracted from each paper. For each of the analyzed barriers, information was systematically recorded about regime complex, geographical affiliation (in terms of country and ICES ecosystem regions), empirical methods used to gather evidence in support of the institutional barrier in question, as well as enablers and solutions to overcome these barriers.

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A large share of the analysed articles was attributed to the PERMAGOV regime context Marine Life, which is defined as a quite inclusive category (Figure 1). The review and analysis therefore contain most information for this regime complex.



**Figure 1.** The contribution of analysed attributes/barriers from each regime complex. The letter codes for the attributes/barriers are presented in Annex I of the full report.

Geographically, many of the analysed barriers were reported to involve more than one of ICES' ecosystem regions. The Mediterranean represented the single ecosystem region with the highest number of analyzed barriers. From the analysed articles, institutional barriers identified under the institutional attributes Scale of Institutions (H), Development and Use of Knowledge (G) and Actor Control (C) were most frequent (Figure 1). These barriers were frequently characterized by a few specific indicators. For instance, the indicator of fragmentation was a very common barrier for Scale of Institutions, and data fragmentation was common for Development and Use of Knowledge. Specific combinations of indicators were observed with a high frequency for these most prevalent types of barriers/attributes.

Linkages between Barriers of the attribute Scale of Institutions (H) and Development and Use of Knowledge (G) represented the most frequent type of linkage, followed by linkages between Actor Control (C) and Use of Knowledge (G), and by linkages between Institutionalized Incentives (K) and Scale of Institutions (H). These linkages were between the attributes/barriers that are most frequent in the data set.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The presented systematic scoping review of institutional barriers in a European marine and maritime context has the three-fold purpose of developing a typology for institutional barriers for the purpose of the PERMAGOV project; analysing institutional barriers within the four



PERMAGOV regime complexes; and providing for a broad understanding of institutional barriers across a range of marine policy settings. In the following, we briefly account for how and to what extent this purpose was achieved, and address how the related work will proceed within the project.

With a basis in Oberlack (2017), we have provided a typology of institutional barriers of use for further work in the project, essentially this typology comprises a list of institutional attributes, barriers and indicators together with other terminology developed for this purpose. Overall, the typology has proven to be analytically suitable. This is the case although in many cases it was difficult to decide about whether to assign a given problem to one or another attribute/barrier.

The fact that an institutional problem in many cases could be assigned to different types of institutional barriers inspired the development of an approach to study linkages between institutional barriers. This may represent a methodological novelty, and we see a potential for moving forward with this approach. In part it could support the subsequent work with developing a tool for diagnosing institutional barriers within the project, in part it could be an approach that has wider applicability in the field of institutional analysis.

The analysis of this information presented in this report is tentative, in part since this deliverable was due quite early in the PERMAGOV project. However, project research on institutional barriers will proceed from the work presented in this report as the plan is to follow this work up with a manuscript for a peer-reviewed journal. More importantly, the work described here will inform subsequent project work focused on developing a tool for diagnosing institutional barriers (PERMAGOV Task 3.2) and with identifying institutional barriers in case studies (PERMAGOV Task 3.3).

**The full report on this work will be made public once it has been reviewed. We expect that will happen in late fall 2023.**

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