TRANSECTS

Transitions in Energy for Coastal Communities over Time and Space

Interdisciplinary Glossary

2024–2028

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Transitions in Energy for Coastal Communities over Time and Space

Report authors

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01 Introduction

Context

TRANSECTS (TRANSitions In Energy For Coastal Communities Over Time And Space) is a UKRI-funded research project (2024–2028) that brings together inter- and transdisciplinary researchers to discuss urgent challenges in the management of marine energy transitions, examining how environmental, social, and cultural research on marine energy comes together with knowledge and expertise from industry and policy arenas to shape energy transition and coastal resilience planning in the UK.

> *"It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties.It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories".*
>
> —Donna J. Haraway,
> 'Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene'

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01 Introduction

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Research background

The current shift to marine renewable energies, with UK investment to top £150bn, will likely transform the sustainability (the balance between economic growth, social well-being, and environmental care) and resilience (adapting to change, adversity and new opportunities) of coastal communities and adjacent seas. History tells us that previous energy transitions have led to profound environmental and socio-cultural change for local communities due to their often boom-and-bust nature. Yet most analyses focus on technical and economic criteria and rarely address environmental, social, cultural, and institutional impacts, or whether transitions are just (i.e., as fair and inclusive as possible for everyone concerned). This oversight must be addressed to reduce carbon emissions in a way that also improves outcomes for coastal environments and communities.

TRANSECTS addresses this oversight using a novel transdisciplinary approach, co-developed with coastal resilience stakeholder partners and combining ecology, sociology, economics, and geography with engineering, history, law, archaeology, and creative arts.

The project adopts a place- and time-based research design using learnings from the experiences of different coastal communities during past energy transitions. It combines natural and social sciences with arts and humanities to explore the shifts from non-renewable marine energy sources (whale oil in the 1800s through to offshore oil and gas in the late 1900s) to more sustainable renewable energy sources in the early 2000s. The project also analyses differences across geographical scales (small areas to large regions), between mainland coastal and island communities and between different UK regions.

01 Introduction

Purpose and aims

Given TRANSECT's interdisciplinary design and its focus on diverse time periods and spaces, the researchers involved in the project must have clarity about how concepts and ideas are understood across disciplines and partners involved in the project.

An interdisciplinary glossary of agreed terminology is produced to enhance collaboration and understanding between the involved disciplines, including law, ecology, archaeology, science and technology studies, history, and arts-based practice.

The glossary should be understood as a working and living tool for researchers involved in the project, and as a means of clarification and context for any audiences engaging with the project's findings and outputs. It is intended for ongoing, practical application and discussion throughout the project's life cycle to aid the conceptual development of the research, disciplinary translation, and, where needed, standardisation.

Scope

The glossary includes terms directly used in the research project, whether in its design and data collection, or its analytical frameworks, findings, and outputs.

We have focused on including terms that commonly exhibit diverse or nuanced definitions within or across disciplines. We have also focused on including terms relevant to the translation of findings, such as those for policy outputs, where there are established definitions. The glossary clarifies where and how we align with, or differ from, these dominant definitions.

The glossary focuses on terms drawn from the disciplines represented by the core project research team, namely, ecology, law, history, marine social sciences, science and technology studies, archaeology, arts-based practice, and geography.

02 Methodology

The glossary was developed through a series of workshops with the core research team. After producing an initial list of core terms based on the project development phase, the glossary was discussed, revised, and updated at three subsequent TRANSECTS project-wide workshops, as well as in additional individual meetings within each project work package.

Through these workshops, terms were compiled based on iterative literature reviews, data collected through archival research, community workshops, and rapid evidence assessments, and team discussions of the project's ongoing interdisciplinary and ethical commitments.

Most of the glossary definitions reflect the team's synthesis of the terms, combined with relevant definitions from the existing literature and applications.

Where the project's definition of a term is directly aligned with an existing definition, this is indicated through the use of quotes in the glossary table. For transparency and robustness, all definitions are cited where they draw partially or fully on existing literature.

In the few instances where two or more disciplines within the project use different definitions of a term, where the definition of these cannot undergo interdisciplinary synthesis, the main definition of the term is indicated in the left-side column of the glossary table, with alternative definitions used to a more limited extent in the project indicated in the right-side column.

After a two-year development and review process, the glossary has undergone a "soft" closure, representing the agreed terminology for the project as it moves into its next stages of data collection, analysis, and findings.

Interdisciplinary glossary workshop at the TRANSECTS project's 2nd annual meeting in June 2025.

03 Formatting and usage notes

The glossary follows a standard alphabetised format, providing brief examples where these may clarify the context of the term's application. Cross-reference notes are provided where terms have related concepts included in the glossary. As previously mentioned, in instances where there were significant disciplinary differences in the definition of a term, the main definition adopted by the project is indicated in the main description column, and the definition used by a specific discipline within the project is indicated in the right-hand side column.

As the glossary has been a living document throughout the initial stages of the project (2024-2026), a version history is provided below for transparency:

Work packages involved	WPs 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5
Lead work packages	WPs 1, 2, and 3
Revision history	Version 1 - September 2024 Version 2 - September 2025 Version 3 - January 2026 Version 4 - February 2026
Version	Final (Version 4)
Dissemination level	Public via the TRANSECTS website
Future additions	For comments or additions, please contact the TRANSECTS team via email

04 Interdisciplinary glossary

Term	Definition	Reference	Additional disciplinary definition
Abiotic	Not derived from living organisms— "[n]ot living, non-biological, usually describing factors in an ecosystem: atmospheric gases, humidity, salinity, soil mineral particles, water, and so on". *See also related entry: 'Biotic'*	Mayhew, 2023a	
Activities	Anthropogenic activities which take place in the marine environment. For example, Elliott et al. (2017) consider 15 key marine activities (e.g. fishing, tourism, renewable energy), which can then be subdivided into different sectors (e.g., fishing can be subdivided into potting, trawling).	Elliott et al., 2017	
Biodiversity	The variability among living organisms from all sources, including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.	United Nations Environment Programme, 1992	
Biotic	Relating to or resulting from living organisms —"[a]pplied to the living components of the biosphere or of an ecosystem, as distinct from the non-living, abiotic, physical and chemical components". *See also related entry: 'Abiotic'*	Mayhew, 2023b	
Blue Economy	Economic sectors or services (or jobs) specifically linked to ocean/coastal landscapes. *See also related entry: 'Blue Economy Approach'*	Graziano et al., 2022; Scottish Government, 2022a	
Blue Economy Approach	As an addition to this definition, we also include the Blue Economy Approach. The Scottish Government outlines how this approach requires a transition from "environment versus economic growth" (the prevailing status quo in Scotland and globally) to "shared stewardship" of natural capital that is facing common pressures. *See also related entry: 'Blue Economy'*	Scottish Government, 2022a	

Term	Definition	Reference	Additional disciplinary definition
Boom-bust Cycles	Patterns of rapid economic expansion followed by sharp contraction, commonly associated with resource-dependent and extractive industries.	See e.g., Klasic et al., 2022	
Coastal Communities	Groups of people whose lives, livelihoods or interests are closely connected to coastal or marine environments. This includes those who live in coastal areas (communities of place), those whose work or activities depend on marine or coastal settings (communities of practice), and those who share a strong interest in the marine or coastal environment (communities of interest). Many people involved in marine sectors such as fisheries, marine tourism, offshore energy or transport may also be part of coastal communities.	Scottish Government, 2022b; Scottish Government, 2025; The Coast-R Network+, 2026	
Co-creation	Co-creation is understood as a participatory decision-making process that integrates diverse stakeholder perspectives and kinds of knowledge through collaboration, deliberation, reflexivity, and creativity to identify priorities and challenges, as well as collaborative design tools, methods, and potential interventions in relation to complex systems and problems. Co-creation can be applied in any phase of the research cycle, ranging from agenda-setting shaped by knowledge-sharing and the integration of lived experiences to the design of deliverables based on the identification of mutual value. In TRANSECTS, co-creation is adopted above related terms such as 'co-development' or 'co-design' given its broader focus that encompasses the entire research process and its alignment with transdisciplinary philosophy, emphasising the inclusion of diverse stakeholder groups. As an example, in TRANSECTS, co-creation is applied, for instance, to the identification of socio-cultural natural capital bottom-up indicators for understanding the community impacts of stocks, flows, and benefits. It is also reflected in the project's wider focus on transdisciplinarity and the integration of diverse stakeholders' knowledge into coastal resilience policy planning.	O'Donnell et al., 2025	

Term	Definition	Reference	Additional disciplinary definition
Complementary Capital	Complementary capital, incorporating manufactured, human, social, and financial capital, is combined with ecosystem services to yield benefits for society, interpreted as positive changes in individual and collective welfare.	Burdon et al., 2024 adapted from Natural Capital Committee, 2019	
Contemporary Archaeology	Archaeologies of the contemporary world (20th and 21st centuries), combining a focus upon ongoing material transformations with social context, politics, oral histories, creative practice and interdisciplinary approaches. It positions archaeologies as emergent presents and futures. Now an established sub-field in archaeology.	Harrison, 2016; Harrison & Breithoff, 2017; McAtackney & Ryzewski, 2017	
Creative Practice	Creative practice encompasses exploration, personal expression, and the process and product of learning through doing. Creative practice can be used as a research method (practice-led or practice related research), often focusing on the process over product.	Chapman & Wright, 2024	In an art context. 'Creative Practice' covers multiple art forms, e.g. visual art, music, creative writing, etc., reflecting the approach of many contemporary artists of working across disciplines. An artist may also be referred to as a 'Creative Practitioner'.
Cultural Ecosystem Service	The ecosystem processes that produce nonmaterial benefits[da1] [JI2] for people, such as "[e]nvironmental settings that enable cultural interaction and activity". Societal benefits from cultural ecosystem services are secured through human interaction with the marine environment. *See also related entries: 'Ecosystem Approach', 'Ecosystems', 'Ecosystem Service (flows)', 'Natural Capital (Stock)', 'Provisioning Ecosystem Service', 'Regulating Ecosystem Service', 'Societal Benefits' [da1]Again this muddies the waters between ecosystem services and benefits.*	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005; Burdon et al., 2024; Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2025	

Term	Definition	Reference	Additional disciplinary definition
DAPSI(W)R(M) Framework	DAPSI(W)R(M) is a problem structuring method which can be used to assess the causes, consequences and responses to change. Whereby Drivers of basic human needs require Activities which lead to Pressures. The Pressures are the mechanisms of State change on the natural system, which then lead to Impacts (on human Welfare). Those then require Responses (as Measures). *See also related entries: 'Drivers', 'Measures', 'Pressures', and 'Activities'*	Elliott et al., 2017	
Distributive Justice	The fairness of how social, economic, and environmental costs and benefits of energy transitions are distributed across groups, places, and generations. *See also related entries: 'Energy Justice', 'Procedural Justice', 'Recognitional Justice', 'Restorative Justice'*	See e.g., Bray & Ford, 2021	
Drivers	The high-level societal factors (social, economic, and cultural) and underlying human needs that motivate human activities. These needs include food, energy, and shelter. See also related entries: 'DAPSI(W)R(M)'	Elliott et al., 2017	
Ecological Value	The high-level societal factors (social, economic, and cultural) and underlying human needs that motivate human activities. These needs include food, energy, and shelter. *See also related entries: 'DAPSI(W)R(M)'*	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2003; Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2025	
Economic Value	Expressed and measured monetarily through market prices for benefits that are traded, especially provisioning goods, and through non-market approaches to valuation otherwise. *See also related entries: 'Ecological Value', 'Socio-cultural Value'*	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2003	

Term	Definition	Reference	Additional disciplinary definition
Ecosystem Approach	A strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. *See also related entries: 'Ecosystems', 'Ecosystem Service (Flows)', 'Cultural Ecosystem Service', 'Natural Capital (Stock)', 'Provisioning Ecosystem Service', 'Regulating Ecosystem Service', 'Societal Benefits'*	Convention on Biological Diversity, 2004	
Ecosystems	A dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit. *See also related entries: 'Ecosystem Approach', 'Ecosystem Service (Flows)', 'Cultural Ecosystem Service', 'Natural Capital (Stock)', 'Provisioning Ecosystem Service', 'Regulating Ecosystem Service', 'Societal Benefits'*	Convention on Biological Diversity, 2000	
Ecosystem Service (Flows)	Ecosystem service flows are the functions and products from nature that can be turned into benefits with varying degrees of human input. Examples of flows produced from whales include carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, and provisioning of whale oil (e.g. for energy or jute manufacturing). *See also related entries: 'Ecosystem Approach', 'Ecosystems', 'Cultural Ecosystem Service', 'Natural Capital (Stock)', 'Provisioning Ecosystem Service', 'Regulating Ecosystem Service', 'Societal Benefits'*	Burdon et al., 2024 adapted from Natural Capital Committee, 2019; Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2025	
Embedded Artist	An Embedded Artist is a creative practitioner that explores a specific problem over a period of time, using their unique creative skills, approaches and ways of thinking (rather than an artist commission which has a pre-defined outcome). "An Embedded Artist Project is a process-oriented project which mixes the skills and competencies of artistic and non-arts partners to address key societal issues".	Creative Carbon Scotland, 2021	

Term	Definition	Reference	Additional disciplinary definition
Energy Transitions Atlas	An interactive, data-driven atlas platform allowing users to explore the findings of the TRANSECTS project. It will be built using Story Maps and combine elements of GIS-based mapping tools, digital exhibition features, and qualitative and quantitative data from the project, including from interviews, surveys, participatory mapping, and archival research. The platform is intended as an exploratory resource for researchers, coastal communities, industry, and policy. *See also related entries: 'Story Mapping'*	Esri, 2026	
Energy Justice	Energy justice refers to the goal of achieving equity in both the social and economic participation in the energy system, while also remediating social, economic, and health burdens on marginalized communities. Energy justice explicitly centres the concerns of frontline communities and aims to make energy more accessible, affordable, clean, and democratically managed for all communities. Energy justice is distinct but interconnected with the concepts of climate and environmental justice, together forming Just Transition. *See also related entries: 'Distributive Justice', 'Procedural Justice', 'Recognitional Justice', 'Restorative Justice'*	Baker, DeVar & Prakash, 2019	
Habitats	Habitats are the areas of the natural environment that provide the basis for ecosystem services. They include urban green spaces, enclosed farmland, mountains and moors, woodlands, wetlands, grasslands, coastal areas, and rivers. The natural home or environment of an animal, plant or other organism.	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2025	
Infrastructure	Infrastructure refers to the fundamental physical and organisational structures and facilities required for the functioning of a society or enterprise. Beyond this core meaning, in line with wider literature, TRANSECTS also distinguishes between different forms of infrastructure. Hard infrastructure refers to the tangible networks such as transport systems, energy grids, water supply, and communication networks that underpin economic activity; soft infrastructure refers to the institutions and services—including education, healthcare, cultural systems, and governance—that sustain social life; green infrastructure refers to human-designed ecological networks, such as parks, gardens, urban forests, wetlands, green roofs, and street trees, that provide ecosystem services; and blue infrastructure refers to human-designed water-related ecological networks—including rivers, lakes, ponds, and wetlands—that provide ecosystem services. Taken together, these categories demonstrate that infrastructure is not only physical but also ecological and social.	Yanamandra, 2020; Pinto et al., 2021; Milic & Bleiziffer, 2024	

Term	Definition	Reference	Additional disciplinary definition
Intangible Cultural Heritage	The 'intangible cultural heritage' means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2003	
Interdisciplinary	Integrating knowledge and methods from different disciplines, using a true synthesis of two or more disciplines, leading to the establishment of a new level of discourse and integration of knowledge. "Interdisciplinary research is understood to achieve outcomes (including new approaches) that could not be achieved within the framework of a single discipline. Interdisciplinary research features significant interaction between two or more disciplines and/or moves beyond established disciplinary foundations in applying or integrating research approaches from other disciplines". See also related entry: 'Trandisciplinary'	Stember, 1991; Beaumont, 2020; Research Excellence Framework, 2021	
Just Transition	Just Transition refers to a fair distribution of burden and benefits as we transition to a low-carbon economy. Precise definition and scope of Just Transition will vary depending on context. A narrower definition of Just Transition focuses on workers, owing to the term's origin from United States trade unions in the 1980s. A wider approach emerged, particularly in academia, bringing together all elements of society in transition, and encompassing energy, climate, and environmental justice.	Shapovalova et al., 2025	
Law and Regulation	Laws (acts and regulations) are sets of rules and procedures binding on the relevant actors, and usually associated with enforcement and sanctions for non-compliance. Acts are adopted by the Parliament and are more difficult to repeal/amend than policies. Regulations are used to support Acts and are adopted by governmental bodies. For example, for offshore wind consents, some of the relevant laws are Electricity Act 1989, Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, and Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.	Kelly, 2016, p. 5	

Term	Definition	Reference	Additional disciplinary definition
Marine Energy Transitions	The energy transition refers to a shift away from using energy derived from fossil fuels (such as coal, oil, and gas) towards energy generated from alternative renewable sources (such as wind, tidal, and solar). These alternatives produce little or no carbon emissions and are therefore cleaner and more sustainable. The energy transition involves not only changes in energy production, but also broader shifts in infrastructure, regulation and consumption. “The growth and decline of marine energy industries, of which the contemporary phase is the transition to marine renewable energies”.	Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland, 2026	
More-than-human	More-than-human is a concept from human geography that is increasingly used to capture that which lies beyond the human domain, reminding researchers that “the non-human world not only exists but has causal powers and capacities of its own''. For instance, in the context of natural capital, 'more-than-human' can be applied to capture those impacts that fall outside of human benefits/disbenefits, such as the intrinsic value of species and their right to exist.	Castree, 2013	
Natural Capital (Stock)	Stocks are the “part of nature which directly or indirectly underpins value to people, including ecosystems, species, freshwater, soils, minerals, the air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions”. Examples include whales, oil, gas, and wind. *See also related entries:* '*Ecosystems*', '*Ecosystem Approach*', '*Ecosystem Service (Flows)*', '*Cultural Ecosystem Service*', '*Provisioning Ecosystem Service*', '*Regulating Ecosystem Service*', '*Societal Benefits*'	Burdon et al., 2024 adapted from Natural Capital Committee, 2019	
Participatory Mapping	The co-creation of maps by participants to capture knowledge an understanding and instigate change. Participatory maps can help enable communities to take action. For TRANSECTS, participatory mapping can form part of a creative engagement in-place, as well as the co-creation of maps in a workshop or through online surveys.	Adaptation Scotland, 2025	

Term	Definition	Reference	Additional disciplinary definition
Place-based Research	Place-based research situates enquiry in specific physical locations that embody the intersection of multiple identities, histories, knowledges, peoples, and environments. It takes individual places as starting points for examining broader research themes, showing how these themes are co-constructed within the unique contexts of real-world places.	Vanni & Crosby, 2023	
Policy	Policy is a set of Government's objectives, ideas, targets that can be changed and updated based on political priorities. Policies are non-binding but can set the direction for drafting/updating laws and regulations. Relevant energy policies include: Powering Up Britain: Energy Security Plan (UK), Scotland Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (draft).	Scottish Government, 2023; UK Government, 2023 See e.g., King's College London, 2023	
Drivers	Pressures, as a result of one or more activities, reflect the mechanisms of change and can result in changes to the natural system (state changes) and subsequently the social system (impacts on human welfare).	Elliott et al., 2017	
Procedural Justice	The extent to which decision-making processes are inclusive, transparent, and allow meaningful participation by affected communities. *See also related entries: 'Energy Justice', 'Distributive Justice', 'Recognitional Justice', 'Restorative Justice'*	See e.g., Bray & Ford, 2021	
Provisioning Ecosystem Service	The ecosystem processes that produce products obtained from the ecosystem, such as food and fuel. Societal benefits from provisioning ecosystem service involve extraction of resource from the marine environment (e.g. the extraction of fish and shellfish for human consumption). *See also related entries: 'Ecosystems', 'Ecosystem Approach', 'Ecosystem Service (Flows)', 'Cultural Ecosystem Service', 'Natural Capital (Stock)', 'Regulating Ecosystem Service', 'Societal Benefits'*	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005; Burdon et al., 2024; Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2025	

Term	Definition	Reference	Additional disciplinary definition
Recognitional Justice	The acknowledgement and respect of diverse identities, values, knowledges, and lived experiences, particularly those historically marginalised in governance processes. *See also related entries: 'Energy Justice', 'Distributive Justice', 'Procedural Justice', 'Restorative Justice'*	See e.g., Bray & Ford, 2021	
Regulating Ecosystem Service	The ecosystem processes that produce benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes. For example, " [e]cological processes that regulate and reduce pollution and other adverse effects". Societal benefits from regulating ecosystem services are associated with benefaction (e.g., filter-feeding organisms bio-regulate waste to feed and in so doing benefit human well-being by improving water quality). *See also related entries: 'Ecosystems', 'Ecosystem Approach', 'Ecosystem Service (Flows)', 'Cultural Ecosystem Service', 'Natural Capital (Stock)', 'Provisioning Ecosystem Service', 'Societal Benefits'*	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005; Burdon et al., 2024	
Re-peopling the Past	Re-peopling the past situates present-day transitions within longer histories of work, identity and landscape change.	Gormley et al., 2026	
Research-creation	Research-creation can be described as the complex intersection of art practice, theoretical concepts, and research. It is an experimental practice that cannot be predicted or determined in advance. It is trans-disciplinary and is used by artists and designers who incorporate a hybrid form of artistic practice between the arts and science, or social science research; scholars attuned to the role of the arts and creativity in their own areas of expertise; and educators interested in developing curriculum and pedagogy grounded in cultural production. Research-creation is attuned to processes rather than the communication of outputs or products.	Springgay & Truman, 2016	

Term	Definition	Reference	Additional disciplinary definition
Resilience	Resilience is the ability to "function in response to change" (The Coast-R Network+, 2026). Responses may include absorbing, adapting, and recovering from a disruptive event (UNDRR, 2025). Resilience involves having the capacity and capability to withstand change or disruption, including economic changes, ecological disturbance, or social disruption. In TRANSECTS, resilience is understood to be value-neutral, meaning that it is not inherently a positive or negative ability.	Davoudi et al., 2012; Duke University Press, 2019; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2025; The Coast-R Network+, 2026; Rigby & Zemanek, 2026	
Response (as Measures)	Many marine management responses emanate from a governance background which relates to the political landscape and marine policies and administration, and the large amount of legislation required to manage all marine activities. The expansion of management Responses to include '(as Measures)' enables the DAPSI(W)R(M) approach to become more harmonised with the terminology used within European Union Directives such as the MSFD and the WFD.	Elliott et al., 2017	
Restorative Justice	An approach to justice that seeks to address and repair historical harms and legacies of past extractive or exclusionary practices. *See also related entries: 'Energy Justice', 'Distributive Justice', 'Procedural Justice', 'Recognitional Justice'*	See e.g., Bray & Ford, 2021	
Social Capital	An individual's access to a collective resource derived from social connections.	Bourdieu, 1986	
Social Licence to Operate	"A social license to operate (SLO) refers to the perceptions of local stakeholders that a project, a company, or an industry that operates in a given area or region is socially acceptable or legitimate".	Raufflet et al., 2013	
Socially Engaged Art	Socially engaged practice, also referred to as social practice or socially engaged art, can include any artform which involves people and communities in debate, collaboration or social interaction. This can often be organised as the result of an outreach or education program, but many independent artists also use it within their work.	Tate, 2026	

Term	Definition	Reference	Additional disciplinary definition
Societal Benefits	Societal benefits are changes in "human welfare (or wellbeing) that result from consuming goods, or from the knowledge that something exists". Benefits may be positive, negative or neutral depending on the perspective of the beneficiary. *See also related entries: 'Ecosystems', 'Ecosystem Approach', 'Ecosystem Service (flows)', 'Cultural Ecosystem Service', 'Provisioning Ecosystem Service', 'Regulating Ecosystem Service', 'Natural Capital (Stock)'*	Burdon et al., 2024 adapted from Natural Capital Committee, 2019	
Socio-cultural Value	Including shared values which we hold in common as communities, cultures and societies, and which are not easily reducible to conventional economic values e.g., relating to cultural identity and the degree to which that is related to ecosystem services. *See also related entries: 'Ecological Value', 'Economic Value'*	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2003	
State Changes	State changes relate to changes in the natural environmental system (including ecosystem service delivery) as a result of a single or multiple Pressures, especially changes in physico-chemical variables and changes to the health of all levels of biological organisation – the individuals, populations, communities and ecosystems.	Elliott et al., 2017	
Storying	Telling a story or narrative of a series of events, sometimes with an improvisational element. Philips & Bunda (2018) define storying as "[t]he act of making and remaking meaning through stories". Storying is an active and unfolding process.	Phillips & Bunda, 2018	
Territorial Waters	The UK territorial sea is defined by the Territorial Sea Act 1987 as the sea extending 12nm from the baseline. For the most part the territorial sea of the UK does not adjoin that of any other state. Parts of the UK territorial sea form part of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales for the purpose of exercising devolved functions. The Scotland Act 1998 defines 'Scotland' as including so much of the internal waters and territorial sea of the United Kingdom as are adjacent to Scotland (section 126(1)).	UK Government, 2009	

Term	Definition	Reference	Additional disciplinary definition
Theory of Change	Theory of Change seeks to identify overarching (often long-term) goals and, by back-casting, identify the necessary prerequisites or conditions required in previous steps (intermediate goals) to achieve that end-objective.	Noble, 2019 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2026	
Transdisciplinary	A holistic approach which creates a unity of intellectual frameworks beyond the disciplinary perspectives, subordinating disciplines and resulting in an outcome which is not recognisable from the original parts. “Transdisciplinary research has various definitions but is often defined as research that transgresses boundaries between disciplinary knowledge or integrates different bodies of knowledge and actively co-creates knowledge between academic and societal partners such as policy makers or business”. See also related entry: 'Interdisicplinary'	Stember, 1991; Klein, 1990 as cited in Beaumont, 2020	
Walkshops	Walkshops are workshops outside and in-place. They involve the primary method of walking, facilitating journeys and movemen t to explore different perspectives or themes during the activity. For TRANSECTS, walkshops will include creative activities and interventions to explore marine energy themes.	URBACT, 2026	
Wellbeing	In line with definitions by Breslow et al., 2016 and Fudge et al., 2021, we understand wellbeing as “a state of being with others and the environment, which arises when human needs are met, when individuals and communities can act meaningfully to pursue their goals, and when individuals and communities enjoy a satisfactory quality of life”.	Breslow et al., 2016; Fudge, Ogier & Alexander, 2021	

05 Reflections

Developing an interdisciplinary glossary: lessons learned

Credit: Freddie Ramm via pexels.com

The process of compiling and revising the glossary has generated insights into the value of interdisciplinary research teams working together on shared terminology. These insights may offer guidance to similar teams considering using such glossaries in future work.

Firstly, the ongoing glossary discussions have revealed, not surprisingly, some initial differences between disciplines in their understanding of shared terminology, such as 'valuation'. These variations can be useful for revealing the need for clarification in usage, as well as for highlighting potential tensions between different definitions, which encourage disciplines to re-examine the assumptions underpinning their respective definitions and applications.

As such, the tensions between disciplinary differences can lead to terminology that is more nuanced and recognises its limitations and assumptions. Debates around these tensions can also help clarify ambiguities and justify the precise definition of a term and its use to external audiences.

However, one surprise to emerge from the terminology discussions has been the few differences noted across disciplines in the final glossary. We intentionally include a section of the table to indicate where significant differences occur. Yet, over the course of development, we have, through discussion, reached a synthesis of most terms that is more productive and better reflects the project's orientation than any single disciplinary definition. This type of conceptual synthesis, developed through debate, is a key demonstration of the value of an interdisciplinary glossary in aiding collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

05 Reflections

Developing an interdisciplinary glossary: lessons learned

Discussions about methodological terminology have raised considerations about divergences between work groups and disciplines in their research design and approaches to participatory research. For instance, conversations about the use of 'co-design' versus 'co-creation' opened a discussion about which stages different work packages sought to include participant contributions, such as during the design of research questions or methods versus the creation of solutions to research questions. These exchanges provide an opportunity to discuss alignment or divergence in how researchers seek to involve participants at the methodological and practical levels, as well as the implications of these approaches for epistemological and ethical research design commitments.

In terms of collaboration, the glossary also functions as an aid across disciplines, institutions, and work packages. Work packages oversee specific parts of the glossary explicitly aligned with their research focus, in addition to the sections shared by all work packages. This has led to discussions not only about the terminology but also about the conceptual focus and analytical framework of the work packages. For instance, the 'natural capital' terminology in the glossary reflects the focus of work package 2 in the project. Its inclusion in the glossary means that we need to have ongoing conversations about how other groups understand the concepts underpinning this work package's research focus, including how they see their work aligning with these concepts and their associated outputs.

A core function of any research glossary is to set out how the definitions used within the project align with or differ from existing uses in scholarship. The review of the existing academic literature, as well as related knowledge landscapes such as policy, has clear value beyond the glossary itself, prompting close consideration of the relationship between the project and existing studies and surfacing assumptions and limitations of normative terminology.

An important example of this was raised in previous conversations regarding the concept of 'valuation', which has been discussed in relation to both its dominant uses in existing scholarship and studies. As previously mentioned, this involves clarifying differences in disciplinary definitions and applications of the concept, including distinctions between, for instance, 'socio-cultural valuation', 'economic valuation', and 'ecological valuation'. This includes important consideration of how these varying understandings of valuation are conceptualised, measured, and analysed across different disciplines.

05 Reflections

Developing an interdisciplinary glossary: lessons learned

Credit: Susanne Jutzeler via pexels.com

Similarly, recurring debates about how to define a concept central to all work packages, 'coastal communities', highlight the ambiguities and lack of robust guidelines for defining the boundaries of coastal communities across the wider marine energy policy and scholarship landscape. As such, it raises important questions not only for the collaboration within the project, but also for how coastal communities are conceptualised analytically and methodologically more broadly.

Finally, the glossary is developed with an awareness of parallel efforts to develop glossaries for projects currently working on related topics, including our collaborators, The Coast-R Network+ project. Being mindful of how related projects and associated consortia understand shared terminology is important for considering continuities or differences in the wider research landscape. As such, the interdisciplinary glossary can prompt discussions and reflections on the points raised above for our work within the project on a broader scale, supporting alignment across research projects taking place in parallel.

05 Reflections

Using interdisciplinary glossaries to improve research practice

To summarise some core lessons emerging from our glossary development and reflections, the use of interdisciplinary glossaries can improve research practice by:

- Supporting consistency across disciplines and work packages
- Supporting engagement and knowledge-sharing across disciplines, such as in our case of comparing social, ecological, and economic valuation
- Aiding engagement with the wider scholarship and policy landscape for alignment, as well as the identification of gaps in existing approaches
- Informing research design on a methodological and ethical level, such as in relation to participatory research
- Providing clarity when writing for non-specialist audiences, including other scholars, for example, by prompting reflection on assumed knowledge and on which concepts require iterative clarification and justification

Interdisciplinary glossary workshop at the TRANSECTS project's 2nd annual meeting in June 2025.

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