



Regions to Boost  
National Maritime  
Spatial Planning

# EDITO



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“ the ocean is important in climate system, both as a thermometer for measuring climate warming and as an opportunity to mitigate it ”

## Political attention to the ocean is increasing

At the occasion of the session entitled “Towards an Intergovernmental Panel for Ocean Sustainability” organised within the framework of COP28, the European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries recalled the connection between the climate and the ocean. He reminded attendees of the importance of the ocean in climate system, both as a “thermometer for measuring climate warming (since it absorbs up to 90% of the excess heat generated by greenhouse gases) and as “an opportunity to mitigate it”. As the numerous events and multilateral processes of recent and upcoming years testify, political attention to the ocean is increasing (the High Seas Treaty adopted in 2023; the UN Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona in 2024; Our Ocean Conference in Athens in 2024; the third UN Ocean Conference in 2025 in Nice).

## Building a sciences-policy interface

During this session at the COP28, discussions addressed the question of how to create a “sciences-policy interface” and the need for scientific knowledge to support decision making and reduce environmental pressures. Cooperation between all scales (local and

international) and all fields (hard and soft sciences) is crucial to create this “sciences-policy interface” and to achieve the shift towards a greener blue economy. With the eventual goal to produce a state of the art and policy briefs on the implementation of national Maritime Spatial Planning at regional scales, REGINA-MSP contributes to achieving this ambition. The REGINA-MSP project celebrates its one-year anniversary and is progressing through its operational phase. This winter saw the implementation of stronger engagement processes with MSP stakeholders through a series of workshops at regional case studies scale and the third meeting on the emerging REGINA-MSP Community of Practice aiming at sharing experiences on how to adapt MSP plans locally and how to address under-represented topics and actors (small scale fishery, sustainable tourism, agriculture and land-sea interaction, etc.). This newsletter will look back at the highlights from the last few months, update you on ongoing tasks and announce the next steps to be taken.

We wish you opportunities to build bridges between sciences and policy ,

REGINA-MSP team







# THE EMERGING COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Last March took place the third meeting (20-21, March) on the emergence of a community of practice. While the last two (held in Thessaloniki and in Vigo) were aimed at identifying regional issues, the third meeting sought to draft a roadmap for an inclusive, interregional, sustainable and structured CoP.

## A series of 3 meetings

Representatives from the 8 regional authorities participating in the project (Mayo County, Pays de la Loire, Galicia, Murcia, Provence-Alps-French Riviera, Sardinia, Crete, Central Macedonia) contributed to this series of 3 meetings. As well as some regional authorities external to the consortium, especially members of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions.

## Relay on the existing regional fora

An asset towards boosting the role of regions in MSP lays on the existing regional fora (assemblies, committees, networks, etc.), facilitating cooperation and coordination among local and regional stakeholders (administrations, sectors, etc.). Pre-existing regulations and zoning for sectors and for ecosystem protection are basis to feed national MSP processes.



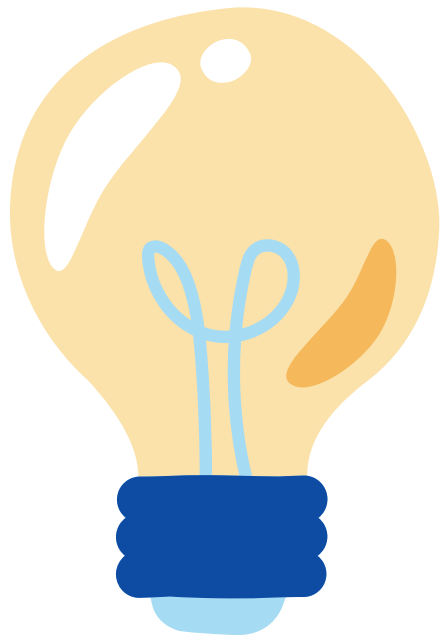
- Settle a network
- Share experiences and solutions
- Common stakes
- Role of regional scales
- Analyse current MSP implementation





# OCEAN LITERACY FOR MSP

“ a blue curriculum in schools that would encompass not just academic learning but also emotional engagement with marine environments and a more holistic approach ”



The University of Venice (IUAV) developed a tool to help local authorities to develop and enlarge their strategies on ocean literacy. Ocean literacy is a broad concept involving culture, education, regulations and research. The overall aim of ocean literacy is to enable informed and responsible decisions about human activities and their impact on the ocean. It emphasizes the need for a blue curriculum in schools that would encompass not just academic learning but also emotional engagement with marine environments, and a more holistic and empathetic approach.

## The ocean literacy in French regions: feedback

The tool to help regional authorities to build and consolidate their strategy on ocean literacy was presented to French regional civil servant during a dedicated online meeting the 8th December 2023. The 8 French coastal regions were represented, plus one from the overseas. It was found that only 2 regions have a dedicated department that may offer a focus on ocean literacy. 3 regions have, to this day, a strategic document addressing sea cultural aspects (and one more is in the process of being drafted).

## A strong interest of the Local Action Groups in ocean literacy

Many and diverse actions already taking place at regional level that could be accounted for ocean literacy policy (e.g. educational projects, books, etc.). The main limitations identified to develop a regional strategy on ocean literacy were: a lack of political will, a

lack of understanding of the broad notion of ocean literacy, a lack of networking. Synergies and opportunities were identified: the possibility of a cultural approach, involving cultural and artistic heritage, and the strong interest from Local Action Groups (LAG) of MFAF (European Maritime Fund for Aquaculture and fishery) to develop regional strategies.

## The ocean literacy in Sardinia: pilot test

REGINA-MSP tool to build a regional strategy for ocean literacy was implemented in Sardinia. The region is not currently interested in creating a strategy. However, the region supported the development of a draft strategy carried out by IUAV. The strategy was built using a semi-structured questionnaire with regional representatives and sector experts. The results highlight existing assets and a renewed framework for collaboration. The engagement of different regional departments in the process may prove future regional collaborations regarding Ocean Literacy and MSP. Some features are likely to be present in every region. First and foremost, the internal complexity in aligning different bodies and their needs/objectives. Regional institutions are composed of several units, some of them related to marine protection, others to education, maritime economics, MSP, etc. Regions appear to have established networks that can be reinforced. However, there is a lack of an incentive to help them further develop such strategies, such as national funds or European projects that would assist in setting up and maintaining a working strategy with positive impacts on local realities.

The full deliverable is available [here](#).

# REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANS AND STRATEGIES: INVENTORY & CROSS-ANALYSIS

“ Next MSP cycles will be the opportunity to better transfer MSP provisions from the national to the regional scale. ”

## A lack of integration of regional plans into national MSP

The inventory and cross-analysis of 140 marine and coastal strategies and plans available at the regional and local levels in the REGINA-MSP case studies areas has been conducted. The level of integration of these plans and strategies into MSP varies greatly from country to country, also depending on the role of regions into the MSP process. Lack of operational integration of regional and local plans and strategies into MSP was observed.

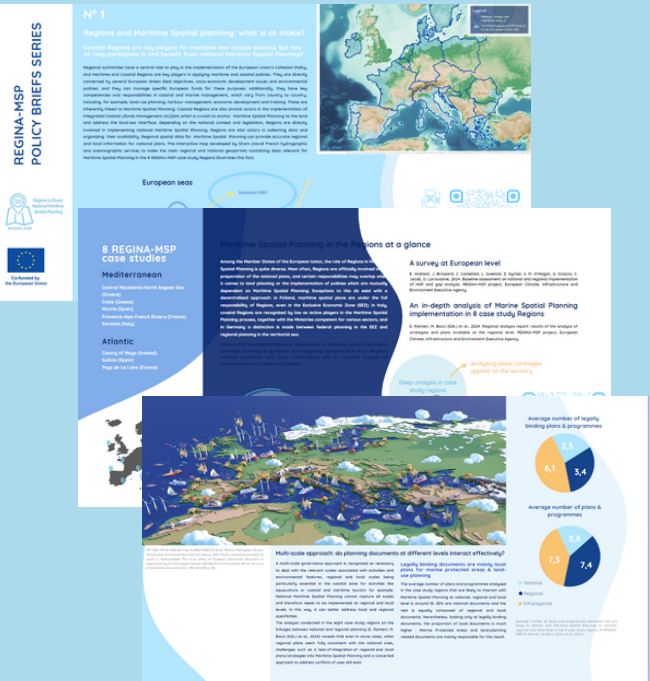
## Next MSP cycles: the opportunity to better transfer MSP provisions from the national to the regional scale

Next MSP cycles will provide the opportunity to better transfer MSP provisions from the national to the regional and local scale, thus strengthening this coherent integration. At the same time, regional and local plans and strategies can provide operational instruments

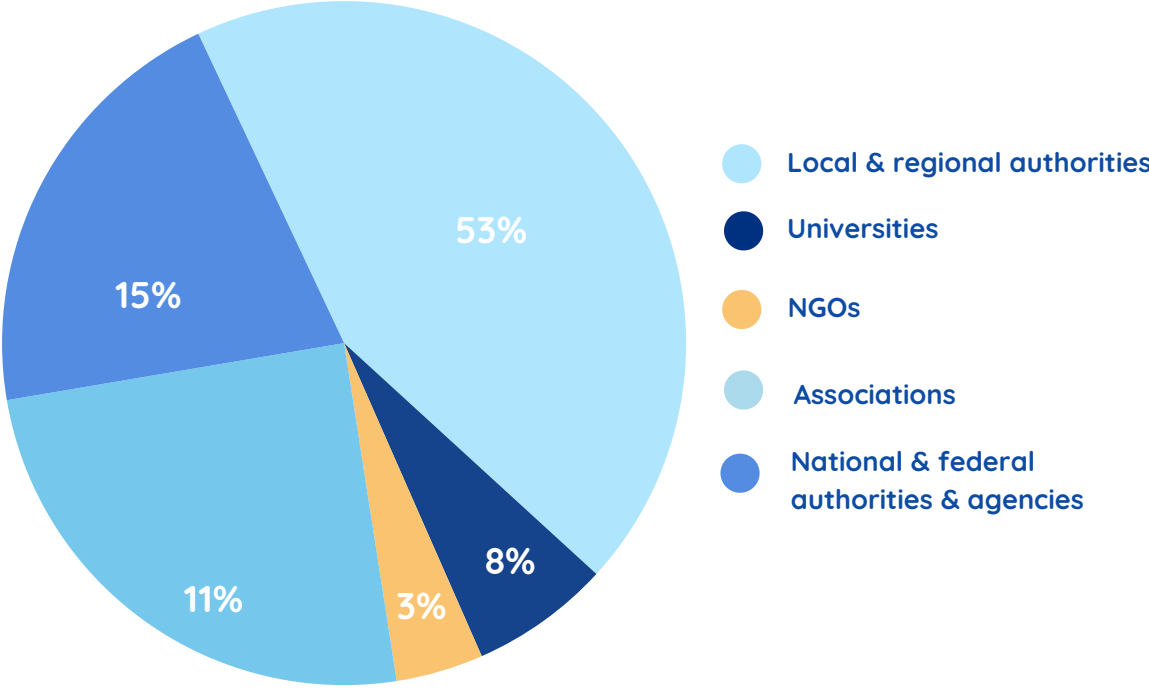
for the implementation of MSP provisions at the sub-national scales. The analysis highlighted other major challenges. Although it is commonly recognised that data unavailability does not represent a major concern for MSP, lack or limited availability of specific typologies of data can hinder the operational implementation of MSP aspects relevant at the regional and local level (e.g. spatial management of small-scale fisheries and leisure boating or preservation of Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH sites). A wider and more effective involvement of local communities and under-represented actors in MSP is needed. REGINA MSP tackles this challenge by engaging stakeholders at the case study level and setting the basis for the establishment of an inter-regional community of practices for MSP.

The full deliverable is available here.

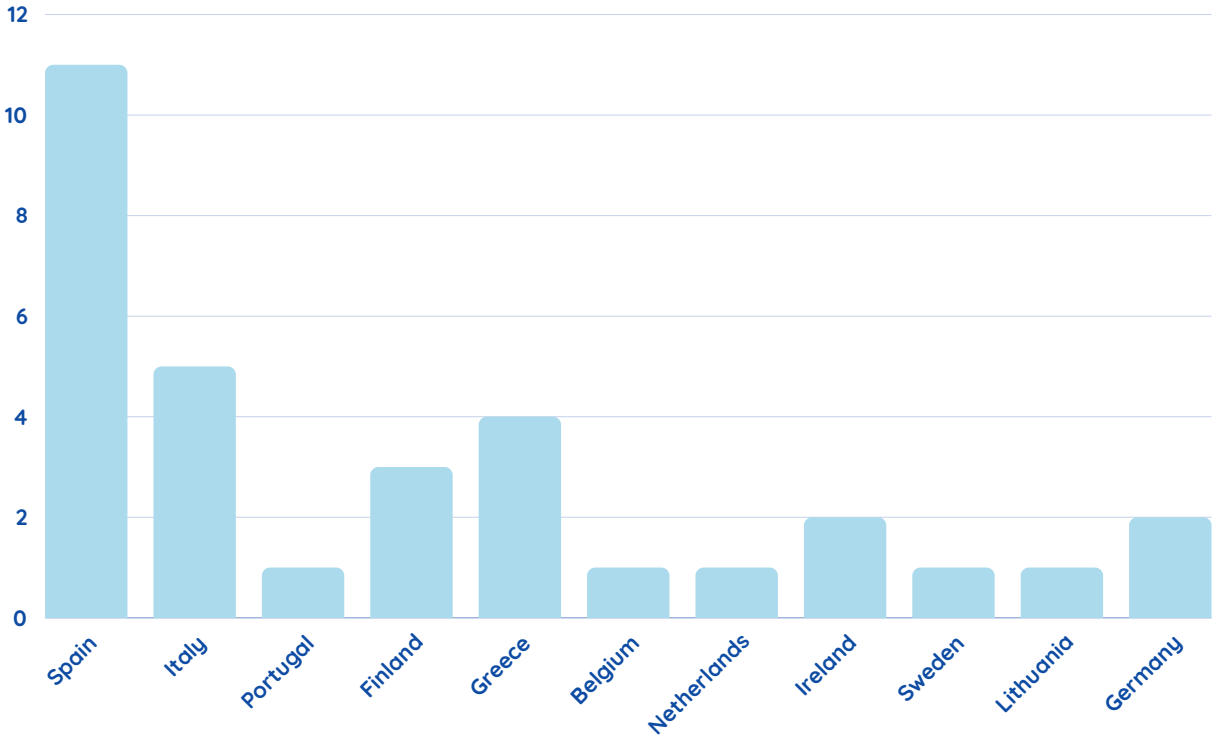
A series of policy briefs will be soon available on [www.regina-msp.eu](http://www.regina-msp.eu)



# A SURVEY ON NATIONAL AND REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF MSP AND GAP ANALYSIS



Number of replies received per category of respondent



Number of replies received by country

“The consideration of the effects of climate change into marine spatial planning is still in its infancy.”

### 36 replies from 12 countries

The REGINA-MSP project released a report analysis following a survey addressing regional and national implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning in European countries. The report was coordinated by the University College Cork’s MaREI Centre (UCC-MaREI) and the conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) and supported by THETIS as consultants, in the framework of the Work Package 2. The report delivers a state of play of the MSP implementation based on **36 collected replies from 12 countries**, including local and regional authorities, national and federal authorities and agencies, NGOs, Universities, and fishery associations.

### The success of MSP relies on effective coordination between national and regional levels

Firstly, the report recalls the success of MSP relies on effective coordination between national and regional levels to ensure a cohesive strategy, respecting regional characteristics while adhering to overarching national and European objectives. It highlights MSP challenges such as integrating regional plans with national policy objectives, and showcases gaps and needs. Possible solutions are identified, such as enhance technical tools, additional resources and training, defining common basic criteria for plan drafting, ensuring stakeholder involvement, improving legal aspects like competencies of regions, and strengthening legal MSP instruments.

### The consideration of climate change impacts in marine spatial planning is still in its early stages

In a second part, the report focuses on MSP’s role in addressing climate action, environmental protection, and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) at the regional level. Survey responses underscore MSP’s potential for supporting environmental protection and ICZM, stressing collaboration, stakeholder involvement, and conflict resolution. On climate issues, it states the inclusion of climate change impacts considerations in marine spatial plans is still in its early stages. However, marine spatial plans must be promptly adapted and consider spatio-temporal modifications in human uses and thus in establishing climate-proof spatial measures.

### Continuous monitoring and evaluation processes need to be improved

In conclusion, as the survey collected key messages and needs expressed by regional authorities and other stakeholders with regards to a successful MSP implementation at the regional and national levels, the main relevant topics to be addressed included governance, planning schemes and continuous monitoring and evaluation processes improvements, addressing data-related challenges, considering stakeholders and sectoral engagement with a focus on involving local actors and encouraging public participation in MSP as well as emphasizing the necessity of collaborative, inclusive, and well-coordinated planning efforts.

The full deliverable is available [here](#).





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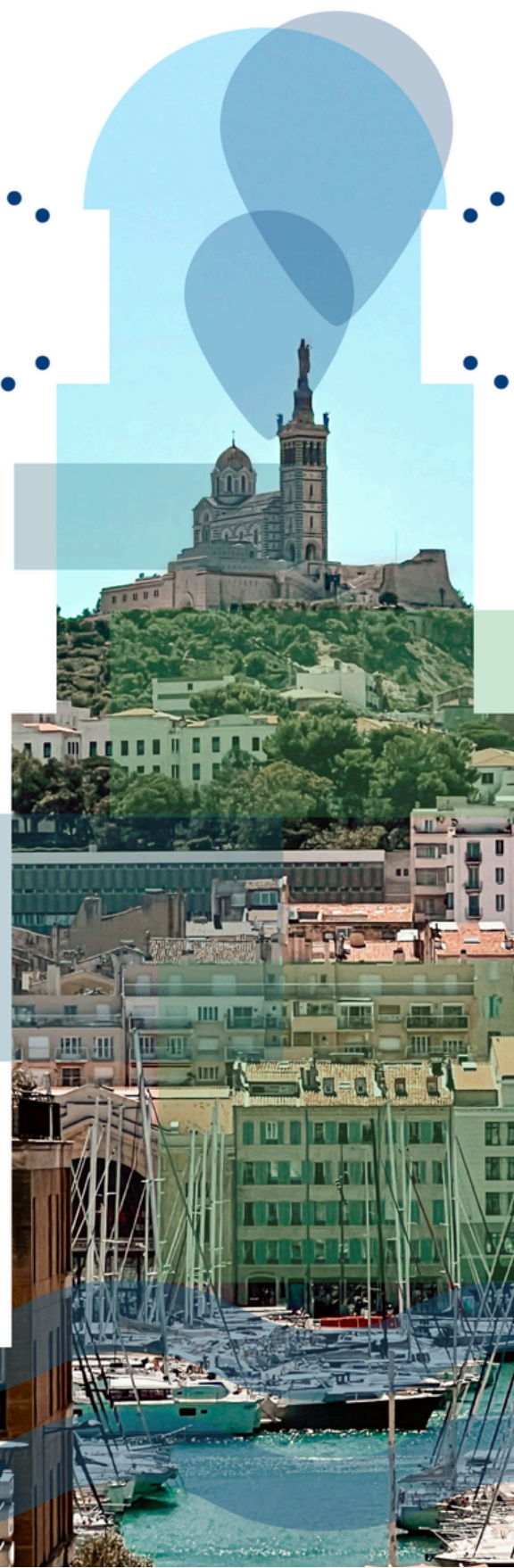
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