

Baseline assessment on national and regional implementation of MSP and gap analysis



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<p>Abstract</p>	<p>This report is an analysis of the REGINA MSP project survey addressing regional and national implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in European Union countries. It highlights MSP challenges such as integrating regional plans with national policy objectives and showcases gaps and needs. The survey analysis highlights regional strategies and identifies disparities between national and regional priorities and possible solutions such as enhanced technical tools, common criteria, and strengthened legal instruments. The second part of 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. Overall, the report consolidates insights from regional authorities and national competent authorities for MSP as well as other stakeholders (universities, NGOS, fisheries associations), highlighting the importance of stakeholder engagement and recommendations focused on involving local actors, addressing sectoral disparities, and enhancing public participation. In conclusion, the report advocates for multilevel cooperation, territorial specificity, and inclusive planning efforts for successful MSP implementation at both regional and national levels.</p>

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EU	European Union
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ORE	Offshore Renewable Energy
LAG	Local Action Group
EMFAF	European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund
MPA	Marine Protected Area
OECD	Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures
EBA	Ecosystem-based Approach
MSFD	EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive

I. Introduction

The REGINA-MSP project aims at improving the participation of regions, local authorities and stakeholders in the development and implementation of national maritime spatial planning. Regions benefit from the EU's Cohesion Policy and are acting at an appropriate scale for combining EU and national policies with local specificities. They represent a node for mainstreaming policies towards the objectives of the Green Deal, favouring actions at ecosystem level, improving cooperation at sea basin level and collecting relevant data for local issues. Therefore, regional innovation in terms of their participation in MSP preparation and implementation are expected to improve MSP processes and to benefit efficiency and coordination of public policies.

According to the *MSP global international guide on marine/maritime spatial planning*,¹ while defining the planning scales and authorities; “Depending on the physical geography and the political and administrative status, the legal scope may be divided into territorial sections, whose constituent factors are one, or a combination, of: i) the legal regime itself of its waters, seabed and subsoil; ii) the political-administrative organization (regions, provinces, local entities, etc.); iii) the ecosystems or parts of ecosystems existing within the legal scope”. Member States, as determined by the Directive 2014/89/EU² have the responsibility and competency to set up and decide on the format and content of the resulting maritime spatial plans, including any allocation of maritime space to various activities and uses.

Within the REGINA-MSP project, the CPMR acts as the lead beneficiary of Work Package 2 “**Baseline assessment of MSP implementation at national and regional levels and Compendium of regional and subregional experience**” together with University College Cork’s MaREI Centre (UCC-MaREI) and supported by THETIS as consultants. The aim of Work Package 2 is to provide baseline information on how MSP is being implemented at national, regional and sub-national levels to provide input into the further analysis to be undertaken during the eight regional case studies developed in Work Package 3. In WP2, Task 2.1

¹ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379196>

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32014L0089>

consisted of developing a survey on national and regional implementation of MSP, in order to assist with the analysis, which forms the subject matter of this report.

WP2 is also closely linked with other activities of the project, notably with WP3 focusing on an in-depth analysis of eight regional case studies chosen in five countries (Ireland, France, Spain, Italy and Greece) pertaining to two sea basins (Atlantic and Mediterranean) and WP4 which organises participatory workshops with stakeholders, facilitates the emergence of a community of practice and delivers training of administrative officers involved in MSP implementation.

The objective of this report is to analyse the results of the survey about the involvement of regional authorities and other stakeholders in the MSP process. In this survey, participants were asked to share their vision of MSP, to report on their level of involvement, their expectations, and needs. As an overall objective, this report provides a first baseline about regional participation in national marine planning and aims to capture the existence of different regional experiences. It is also a knowledge basis for the production of a compendium on regional best practices in MSP (to be completed later in the project).

The report also capitalizes on previous EU-funded MSP projects, such as, [SIMNORAT](#)³ (Supporting the Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning in the North Atlantic Region) and [SIMWestMed](#)⁴ (Supporting Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning in the Western Mediterranean region) which notably focused on the role of the Regions and both delivered in 2019 a report on [State-of-play of MSP directive implementation process, Focus on the role of the regions - Northern Atlantic](#)⁵ and [Report on the state-of-play of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive Implementation process - Western Mediterranean](#).⁶ This report highlighted the fact that regional authorities can be facilitators to create links with other stakeholders and key players within the territory in the scope of the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (MSPD) and the Birds and Habitats Directives. Regions often lack (full) regulatory powers to implement these Directives, however, they can have a role in the management of human activities in coastal areas through legal powers and influence, support traditional economic sectors (i.e. small-scale fisheries, aquaculture) and are often involved in bilateral cross-border regional cooperation.

³ SIMNORAT: <https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/projects/supporting-implementation-maritime-spatial-planning-north-atlantic-region>

⁴ SIMWestMed: <https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/projects/supporting-maritime-spatial-planning-western-mediterranean-region>

⁵ <https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/projects/supporting-maritime-spatial-planning-western-mediterranean-region>

⁶ https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/state-of-play_of_the_maritime_spatial_planning_directive_implementation_process_-_focus_on_the_role_of_the_regions_r2.pdf

Some regions can also have a role in consultations or in the organisation of specific events in the scope of public consultation processes. From a general point of view, the report demonstrated that there are many disparities in the way regional authorities can be involved in the implementation of EU Directives or processes. They can be directly involved, participating in national boards, and/or developing their own spatial plans in the case of MSP, or not concerned at all. The current report provides a timely update on those preliminary analyses as well as important information on the state-of-play of MSP implementation at regional and national levels.

After this introduction the following section 2 will describe the survey and its methodology, and section 3 will address the results of the survey including the questions related to the current status of MSP, the Regions and stakeholder engagement in MSP, the coordination between regional and national plans, data provisioning, capacity building and awareness raising, the relationship between MSP and other policies including climate action, environmental protection and ICZM. Some conclusions wrap up the main analyses of the survey and provides further axis of reflections.

Disclaimer: The responses provided in this survey are based on the perspectives and opinions of individuals with varying legal competencies. Participants in this survey may include individuals from diverse backgrounds, professions, and legal expertise. The information collected reflects the views of the respondents at the time of the survey and does not constitute legal advice. It is important to note that the responses do not necessarily represent the official stance or position of any specific legal authority or institution. The survey is designed for information and research purposes only, and users are encouraged to consult with qualified legal professionals for advice tailored to their specific circumstances.

The survey results may not capture the full range of legal nuances and complexities, and individual interpretations of legal matters may differ. The organisers of the survey do not assume any responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the information provided by the respondents. The organisers disclaim any liability for actions taken based on the survey responses.

The collected data are stored on the CPMR and University College Cork OneDrive systems and subsequently on the UCC server and no private information will be disseminated. The data will be stored for a minimum of ten years. The survey obtained ethical approval from the UCC Social Research Ethics Committee.

II. Description of the survey

The survey was designed by the MaREI Centre, Environmental Research Institute at University College Cork with the support of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) and THETIS. The questions included in the survey seek to determine the current status of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) or its equivalent in the REGINA-MSP partner countries and their regions, and Member States and regions outside the scope of the project, using the six geographical commissions of the CPMR.

The survey addresses the following questions:

- How is MSP currently being implemented in regions,
- How national competent authorities for MSP assist regions in their own policies and how they are involved in its design,
- Who is involved and in what way (economic, environmental, and social actors),
- How regional plans are coordinated with national plans and other sectoral/economic plans, taking account of the EU Green Deal, Sea Basin Strategies and other relevant policy objectives,
- What the regions are expecting to achieve from MSP,
- What the role of regions is in relation to subregional territorial administrative units,
- Training and awareness,
- Data provision, and,
- Interactions of MSP with other policies: climate change, environmental protection, ICZM.

A copy of the survey is included in Appendix 1. Targeted recipients of the survey were regional authorities, national competent authorities, and other relevant stakeholders including universities, NGOs, associations.

The survey was designed and produced online, using the JOTFORM platform (jotform.com), licensed to the CPMR. The survey was originally drafted in English and subsequently translated into French, Spanish, Italian and Greek to further reach regional and local stakeholders.

The survey was sent to the following mailing lists:

- CPMR maritime working group [number of recipients: 390 – representing 81 regions]
- REGINA-MSP mailing list / newsletter [126 recipients – registered on a voluntary basis]
- MSP National authorities and EU MSP Expert Group [120 recipients – representing 27 countries]

The structure of the survey was divided into two main sections:

- “Section 1: Overview of the current MSP implementation level” which included 11 questions with closed answers and free answers.
- “Section 2: Opportunities for MSP for regional policy objectives”, which included 5 questions with scoring exercises and free answers.

Personal contact details were collected to enable follow-up if needed, each respondent was considered to reply on behalf of their organisations or authorities.

The survey covered the following topics:

- Level of involvement of regional authorities and other stakeholders
- Training and awareness
- Coordination between national and regional plans
- Data provision
- Interactions between MSP and other policies: climate change, environmental protection, ICZM.

For each topic the survey was designed to capture the current state, gaps and needs. It was not a quantitative survey but rather sought to obtain information from the respondents that would inform the project consortium about what different Regions (NUTS2)⁷ are expecting to gain from implementation of MSP, how they are involved in its implementation, how regional and local ambitions sit with over-arching national MSP objectives and whether there are any specific weaknesses that could be addressed or strengths that could be useful to other regional and national contexts.

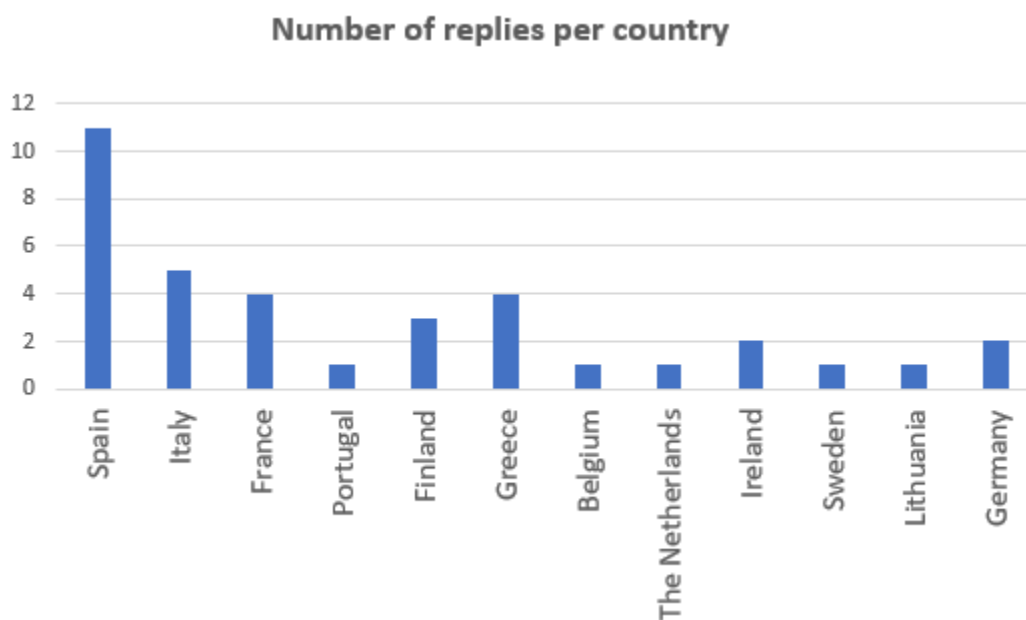
With the objective of covering a wide geographic representation, the survey was distributed across the six geographical commissions of the CPMR including the Atlantic, North Sea, Baltic Sea, Balkan and Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea basins and EU Islands. Participation was voluntary and respondents could decide not to answer specific questions or withdraw from the survey at any stage. The responses were attributed to the country/organisation, not to an individual. The data collected is used for the purposes of the project only.

⁷ NUTS Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics is a geocode standard for referencing the administrative divisions of countries for statistical purposes. For each EU member country, a hierarchy of three NUTS levels is established by Eurostat in agreement with each member state. Each level is a subdivision of the previous level, and the delimitation criteria are based on demographic thresholds: from 3 million to 7 million inhabitants for NUTS 1; from 800,000 to 3 million for NUTS 2; from 150,000 to 800,000 for NUTS 3. Source: <http://geoconfluences.ens-lyon.fr>

Participants

The survey received 36 replies: 33 from the online questionnaire, three from interviews. Replies come from 12 countries. Spain is the most represented country with 9 replies. There were five countries with one single reply. Eight countries out of the REGINA-MSP case studies geographical scope are among the responses (Portugal, Finland, Belgium, The Netherlands, Sweden, Lithuania, Germany). Discrepancies between replies from the same country may appear due to the different types of respondents and their knowledge, background and views at the time of the survey.

Figure 1. Number of replies received by country



List of respondent organisations

Organisation	Category	Region or Cities	Country
Province of West Flanders	Regional authority	Vlaanderen	Belgium

Helsinki-Uusimaa Region	Regional authority	Helsinki-Uusimaa Region	Finland
Regional Council of Kymernlaakso	Regional authority	Kymenlaakso	Finland
MSP Coordination in Finland / Regional Council of Southwest Finland	Regional authority	Southwest Finland	Finland
Secrétariat d'Etat en charge de la mer	National authority	Ile-de-France	France
CEREMA	National agency	Pays de la Loire	France
Direction interrégionale de la Mer (Méditerranée)	National authority	Région Sud	France
Conseil régional Provence-Alpes- Côte d'Azur/ Région Sud	Regional authority	Région Sud	France
Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building	National authority	Berlin	Germany
Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency	National agency	Hamburg	Germany
Ministry of Environment and Energy	National authority	Attica	Greece

Deliverable 2.1 Initial survey



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Central Macedonia	Regional authority	Central Macedonia	Greece
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki	University	Central Macedonia	Greece
Crete	Regional authority	Region of Crete	Greece
Mayo County Council	Local authority	Mayo	Ireland
Cork County Council	Local authority	Southern Region/Cork	Ireland
Regione Calabria	Regional authority	Calabria	Italy
Region Campania – Assessorato Pesca, Agricoltura, Foreste e Caccia	Regional authority	Campania	Italy
Regione Emilia-Romagna	Regional authority	Emilia-Romagna	Italy
Regione Autonoma della Sardegna	Regional authority	Sardegna	Italy
Regione del Veneto	Regional authority	Veneto	Italy
Ministry of Environment	National authority	Lithuania	Lithuania
Regional Directorate for Maritime Policies, of the Regional Secretariat for the Sea and Fisheries, of the Regional Government of the Azores	Regional authority	Azores Autonomous Region	Portugal
Generalitat de Catalunya	Regional authority	Catalunya	Spain

Universidad de Alicante	University	Comunidad Valenciana	Spain
Federación Española de Pesca y Casting (FEPYC)	Fisheries association	Madrid	Spain
Xunta de Galicia	Regional authority	Galicia	Spain
Plataforma en Defensa de la Pesca y de los Ecosistemas Marinos	NGO	Galicia	Spain
Universidad de A Coruña	University	Galicia	Spain
Alianza de Pesca Española Recreativa Sostenible (APERS)	NGO	Illes Balears / Balearic Isles	Spain
Spanish Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge	National authority	Madrid	Spain
WWF España	NGO	Madrid	Spain
Federación Cofradías Pescadores Principado de Asturias	Fisheries association	Principado de Asturias	Spain
Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica y el Reto Demográfico	Regional authority	Región de Murcia	Spain

Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	National authority	Baltic Sea North Sea	Sweden
Provincie Zuid-Holland	Regional authority	Zuid Holland	The Netherlands

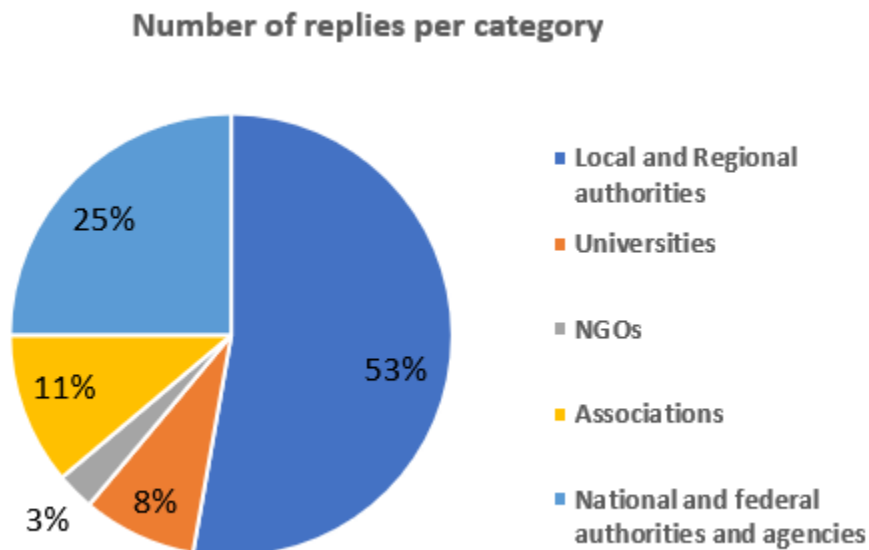
The list of respondent organisations can be sub-divided into:

1. National Authority:
 - A governmental body or organisation at the national/federal level that holds power and control over specific areas or functions, often with the authority to make decisions and enforce laws or regulations within the country.
2. National Agency:
 - An organisation or entity established by the government at the national/federal level to perform specific functions, carry out tasks, or manage programmes that may link to Maritime Spatial Planning.
3. Regional Authority:
 - A governing body or organisation that operates at an intermediate level between the national and local levels, with authority over a specific geographic region or administrative area.
4. Local Authority:
 - A governing body or organisation that operates at the local level within a specific county, municipality, city, or community, responsible for local governance, public services, and decision-making within its jurisdiction.
5. University:
 - An institution of higher education that offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in various academic disciplines. Universities are typically involved in research, teaching, and the dissemination of knowledge.
6. NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation):
 - A non-profit organisation that operates independently of government control and is usually dedicated to addressing social, environmental, humanitarian, or developmental issues. NGOs often work to advocate for certain causes and provide assistance to communities in need.
7. Fisheries Association:
 - An organisation that represents the interests of individuals, businesses, or groups involved in the fishing industry. Fisheries associations may work to promote sustainable fishing practices, advocate for the rights of fishermen, and address issues related to the fishing and seafood industries.

Specific roles and functions of these entities can vary by country and context.

From the total number of respondents, 17 were from regional authorities.

Figure 2. Number of replies received per category of respondent



In Figure 2, five categories of the typology of respondents are represented, as regional and local authorities' percentages are into one category and national and federal authorities and agencies are gathered into one category as well. Most respondents were from regional and local authorities followed by respondents from national and federal authorities. Fisheries associations (from Spain) are represented with four replies, followed by three Universities.

The Mediterranean Sea basin is the most represented with 19 replies; other sea basins are more evenly represented, with the Atlantic Sea basin and Baltic Sea basin comprising five replies respectively and four replies from the North Sea basin.

The survey faced limits and constraints due to several factors:

- Legally the competent authorities designated to design and implement maritime spatial plans are national authorities, accordingly some respondents from regional authorities requested that the survey be directed to those national level entities only.
- Most regional authorities do not have a specific department or division dedicated to maritime spatial planning; hence some constraints were faced in identifying the right contact to respond to the survey.

- Questions were designed to enable diverse types of respondents to reply, notably via open questions. The phrasing of those questions was kept general so as to be sufficiently flexible for all types of respondents.

III. Results

The results from the survey are organised in six main sections that cover all the topics addressed by the questionnaire. The first section (3.1) provides a quick overview of the current status of MSP in the participating countries, to better frame the replies discussed in the following sections. Section 3.2 addresses the issue of regions and stakeholder engagement in the process of MSP, aiming to delineate the current state and the needs raised by participants. Section 3.3 is focused on coordination of different plans (e.g. sectoral plans or integrated coastal management plans) issued at different governance scales. Section 3.4 is about data shared by regions to support MSP, while section 3.5 investigates the topics of capacity building and awareness raising initiatives, trying to capture different experiences. Finally, section 3.6 addresses the relationship between MSP and other policy objectives, namely climate action, environmental protection and ICZM.

For each section, the information collected is used both to reflect the current state of regional participation in MSP and to highlight gaps and needs from regional authorities or other stakeholders. Key points are finally discussed in the conclusion (section 4).

A. Current status of MSP

The first question of the survey aimed at identifying the status of national MSP in each country. Based on the responses, from the 12 countries that participated in the survey, seven i.e. Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, have adopted a National Marine Spatial Plan, five countries i.e. Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Finland and Sweden, have adopted MSP and are in the process of revision (Belgium and Netherlands are in the process of the second revision). Greece's MSP is in preparation and Italy's MSP is prepared but not still officially adopted.

It should be mentioned that in some countries with more than one respondent, there were some inconsistencies between the responses, as shown in Table 1. This may be due to a different level of knowledge on national MSP between respondents, or that some levels of adoption/implementation as phrased in the survey were not clearly understood. This report

analysis reflects the responses received, the official status of MSP implementation processes and more details about the planning per country is available on the EU MSP platform⁸.

Table 1. Different levels of national MSP adoption/implementation. Countries in bold provided responses which vary within that country

National MSP status	Countries
Adopted	Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, Finland , France
Adopted (first version) and in the process of revision	Belgium, Sweden, The Netherlands, Finland , France
In preparation	Greece
Prepared but not still officially adopted (consultation/strategic environmental assessment ongoing)	Italy, Greece

Some respondents gave details on what is also happening at the regional level. For instance, in Portugal, a regional maritime spatial plan has been prepared at regional level (Azores) and is about to be submitted. In Italy, although there are no “regional plans”, the regional authority of Campania reported that the planning of the marine area in front of the Campania region was done (within the national MSP process) within the Multimeasure project (MSP-MED project⁹) financed under the previous EMFF 2014/2020 programme.

B. Regions and stakeholder engagement in MSP

From questions Q2 to Q5, the first part of the survey aims at describing the current state of regional involvement in the MSP process.

Section 1 – Q2 part 1 - Were authorities officially identified at the regional level with role/competence in MSP in your country? Yes/No

⁸ <https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/msp-practice/countries>

⁹ <https://mbspmed.eu/>

Section 1- Q2 part 2 - Specify which regional authority was designated and if a new dedicated governance structure has been established. Add any details you consider relevant to the main regional structures with MSP competency.

From this question, it emerged that 26 respondents (72%) replied positively (i.e. official authorities were identified at regional level for preparing of implementing MSP) while 10 (28%) replied negatively.

The overall responses indicate that in 10 countries, regional authorities have been officially designated and in only two countries they have not been allocated an official role. However, these numbers should be interpreted with a degree of caution, as there were inconsistent replies within some countries i.e. respondents from Spain, Ireland, Italy and Greece sometimes replied “yes” and sometimes “no” as shown in Table 2 below.

As above, the lack of consistency may imply that there is lack of knowledge of the person who replied, or that for some countries the level of each regional authority’s involvement in national MSP may vary. It may also be the case that a regional authority is aware of implementing policies that contribute to MSP implementation, despite having no legally assigned role.

Table 2. Official designation of regional authorities in the National MSP process

Official designation of regional authorities in national MSP processes	Countries
YES	Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Portugal, Sweden
NO	Lithuania, The Netherlands
Inconsistent replies	Spain, Greece, Ireland, Italy

Nevertheless, when isolating the replies of the 19 regional and local authorities’ representatives, (in short “regions’ representatives”)14 replied that their entity was officially designated in the national MSP process and 5 replied that they were not, i.e. 72% replied yes and 28% replied no. The same percentages are found when considering the whole number of respondents.

Finally, some respondents gave more details about which regional / local authorities were involved in their national MSP and whether there are official governance structures that facilitates such involvement, as shown in Table 3.

Table 2. Examples of regional / local authorities involved in national MSP and whether there are official governance structures, based on replies from local and regional authorities

Region/country	Designated regional authority and establishment of dedicated governance structure as described by regions' representatives
Vlaanderen (Belgium)	Amongst others: Flemish Department of Agriculture and Fisheries; Department of Mobility and Public Works; Department of Environment; Province of West-Flanders
Catalunya (Spain)	General Directorate of Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fishing
Galicia (Spain)	Xunta de Galicia (no indication of specific governance structure)
Región de Murcia (Spain)	The Head of the Fisheries Service of the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia acts as a contact person for matters related to marine strategies and marine space planning. The structure of the Regional Government has recently changed but I am not aware of any news regarding the contact person for these matters.
Southwest Finland	The Regional Council of Southwest Finland has a coordination responsibility. Coordinator of the MSP cooperation in Finland is responsible for collaboration between MSP authorities, other authorities, agencies, research institutes, and maritime stakeholders. Cross-border cooperation takes place through joint MSP projects, informal Planners' Forum in the Baltic Sea and the intergovernmental organization HELCOM-VASAB.
Kymenlaakso (Finland)	Regional Councils are the responsible authorities for MSP in Finland. There is a long tradition on spatial planning of territorial sea areas through regional plans carried out by regional councils even before the implementation of the MSP directive
Région Sud (France)	The prefecture of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur/ region Sud and the maritime prefecture of the Mediterranean are jointly responsible for ensuring the development, adoption and implementation of the "document stratégique de façade" (DSF) in conjunction with the Maritime Council of the facade and by involving the public.
Southern Region/Cork (Ireland)	Southern Regional Assembly; Easter and Midlands Regional Assembly; North and West Regional Assembly
Mayo (Ireland)	Local Authorities will have a consenting role and the ability to develop a local Marine Area Plan
Sardegna (Italy)	In the Italian MSP process, the presence of a contact person for each coastal region within the Technical Committee responsible for drafting the Maritime Space Management Plans was envisaged.
Calabria (Italy)	Regions, with the function of contributing to planning and participating in the Technical Committee
Campania (Italy)	The "Vocational Charter" of the Campania Region was defined during the month of June 2023. It will therefore now be necessary to create the governance structure
Veneto (Italy)	A technical table was set up within the Region coordinated by the Territorial Planning Directorate which involved all the competent Directorates, and which following a

	series of discussions prepared the strategic planning document for the Veneto sub-area
Azores Autonomous Region (Portugal)	The authority identified at the regional level with role/competence in Portuguese MSP, concerning the Azores subdivision, was the Regional Directorate for Maritime Policies, of the Regional Secretariat for the Sea and Fisheries, of the Regional Government of the Azores. A Consultative Committee to accompany the development of the plan, concerning the Azores subdivision, was created. A dedicated governance structure of the national MSP plan was defined in the plan itself, which was approved by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 203 203 A/2019, of December 30th.

A summary of the replies shows that for some local or regional authorities no specific governance structures were indicated by Vlaanderen (Belgium); Catalunya (Spain); Galicia (Spain); Southern Region/Cork (Ireland). For others, a specified role of local (Mayo, Ireland) and regional authorities (Calabria, Campania and Veneto Italy) and Région Sud (France) have been agreed and indicated. Other examples include the specification of a person allocated for MSP matters (Región de Murcia (Spain); Sardegna (Italy)). More specific roles and competences have been established at regional council level as well as cross-border and cross-regional cooperative initiatives such as projects, forums and committees (Kymenlaakso and Southwest Finland and Azores (Portugal)).

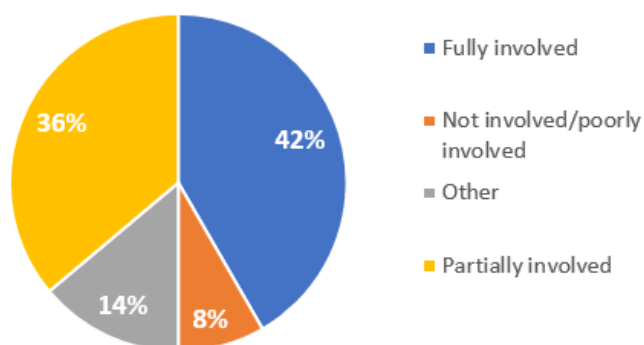
Section 1 - Q3 - Question 3: From your perspective, how were regional authorities involved in the design/revision/implementation of the national MSP? Fully involved/ Partially involved/ Not Involved/ Other

Section 1 -Q3 - Part II - Please briefly describe what kind of activities were organised to facilitate regional engagement in the MSP process (e.g., regular meetings with regional authorities, workshops, consultation process):

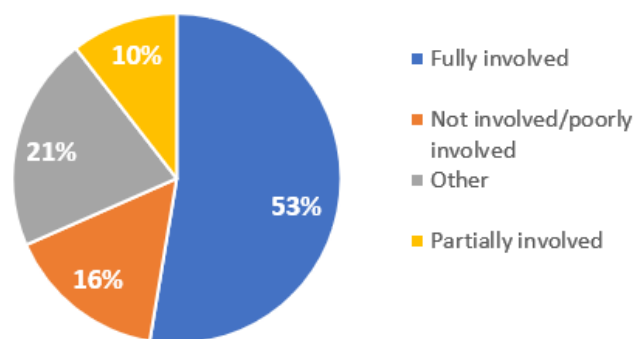
Regarding Q3 on the level of involvement of regional authorities in the national MSP process in the respondent countries, 15 respondents replied that they were fully involved, 13 replied

Figure 3. Figures 3a and 3b. Differences between “all respondents” and “regions’ representatives” replies regarding the level of regional involvement in national MSP between number of respondents per country

Regional involvement in national MSP: All replies



Regional involvement in national MSP: Regions’ representatives replies



that they were partially involved (Regional authorities were consulted after the plan design, with limited decision-making authority), 3 that they were not involved/poorly involved and 5 replied “other”.

However, these numbers differ when compared to the replies of the regions’ representatives as shown on Figure 3b.

Some respondents gave more details about the kind of activities that were organised to facilitate regional engagement in the MSP process. These included, for example, regular meetings with regional authorities, workshops, and formal consultation process.

Likewise, certain respondents gave more detailed examples of ways of participation of the local/regional authorities. For instance, a representative from West Flanders, Belgium provided some online sources of information on how the regional authorities were involved/consulted¹⁰. A representative of Galicia, Spain mentioned that in some cases, the members of the Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (GT-OEM) (that belongs to the Interministerial Commission on Marine Strategies (CIEM), which coordinates the development, application and monitoring of marine environment planning) had carried out prior coordination work with the Autonomous Communities, for activities of autonomous or shared competence, such as in the case of aquaculture. In other cases, coordination with the coastal Autonomous Communities (CC.AA) had been carried out directly by the Directorate General for the Coast

¹⁰ <https://www.health.belgium.be/en/marine-spatial-plan>

and the Sea (DGCM) of the Spanish Ministry for the Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge (MITECO) itself. Periodic meetings were held with the regional authorities and at the same time consultations were carried out to find out the situation regarding the management of maritime space in the autonomous community.

Representatives from Regional authorities from Finland (i.e. Helsinki-Uusimaa Region, Southwest Finland and Kymenlaakso) indicated that the regional assemblies of the coastal regional councils (7 councils) approved the maritime spatial plans in November–December 2020. The maritime spatial plans are prepared in cooperation with stakeholders. Participation was carried out in accordance with the interaction plan¹¹ with large numbers of meetings and workshops in all coastal regions as well as at inter-regional and national levels.

For the Region Sud (France), the respondent explained that they are associated with all phases of work and consultation prior to the adoption of the “Document Stratégique de Façade” (the DSF sets the guidelines of French national strategy for the sea and coast). Structured around two main modalities, for the strategic and operational aspects: - the establishment of a participatory platform on the internet allowing the public to find out about the issues, to submit their comments on the proposed vision of the future, to share them and to discuss with other contributors¹²; - and the organisation of citizen workshops to explore certain themes in greater depth. Additionally, before the final approval of the DSF there is a three-month public consultation on the document proposed for approval. All of this is part of a regulatory process.

The regional competent authority in the Azores was involved in the joint development of the components of the national MSP plan which were common to all subdivisions, via regular meetings and sharing of documentation.

For Italy some examples of local/regional authorities' participation include: acquisition of proposals for the relevant maritime areas, participation in the Technical Committee (Calabria); constant discussion at the regional offices, the Campanian navies and the Flags with all the associative stakeholders, local institutions, research and scientific bodies (Campania). In the Veneto region, participation occurred primarily through meetings of the technical committee and the dialogue with the technical-scientific working group in charge of drafting the plan. The regions, through a representative appointed by the president of each region, are members of the National Technical Committee in Italy. They contributed to the drafting of the plans, took part in the Committee meetings, provided data and technical contributions (Emilia-Romagna). The Sardegna region also participated in the Technical Committee responsible for drafting the Maritime Space Management Plans (with a contact

¹¹ <https://www.merialuesuunnittelu.fi/en/295/participate-in-the-planning/>

¹² www.merlittordal2030.gouv.fr

person for each coastal region) and in the wider consultation process (SEA and public consultation process provided for by Legislative Decree no. 201/2016).

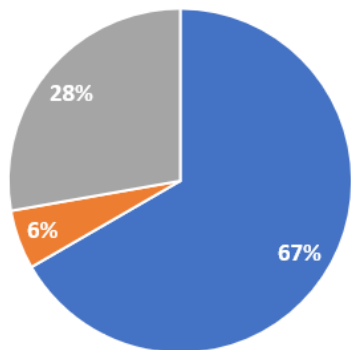
Section 1 - Q4 - Question 4: Since the MSP process started in your country, has the role of regional authorities evolved? Yes/No

Q4 - Part II - Please provide more details on how the role of your region has evolved in the national MSP process:

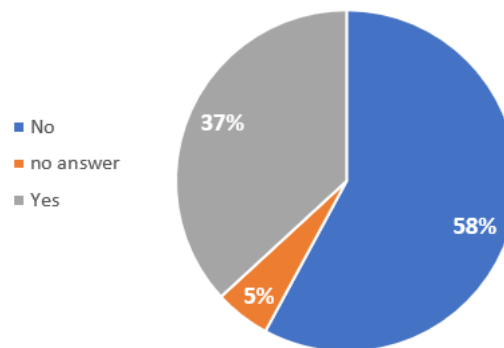
Regarding Q4 on whether the role of regional authorities has evolved since the MSP process started in each country, more than 60% of both “all respondents” as well “regions’ representatives” as shown in Figures 4a and 4d below replied that it has not really evolved.

Figure 4. Figures 4a and 4b. Differences between “all respondents” and “regions’ representatives” (regional and local authorities) replies regarding the evolution of the role of regional authorities in national MSP processes

Evolution of the role of regional authorities: All replies



Evolution of the role of regional authorities: Regions' representatives replies



Again, here the replies differ from region to region within the same country, specifically for Spain

Some of the positive answers by regions’ representatives include some interesting details as shown in Table 4.

Table 3. Examples of how the role of some regions has positively evolved in the national MSP process

Region	Details about how their role evolved
Southwest Finland	Coastal Regional Councils are responsible for strategic MSP and legally guiding land-use planning that covers (in addition to land side) land-sea interface and territorial sea. It should be noted that these MSP planners and land use planners are the same people. Regional Councils have established connections to regional maritime sectors. Due to cross-regional MSP collaboration, Regional Councils evolved a shared national-level understanding of the maritime sectoral needs, operational environments, policies and strategies, as well as marine environment. Together with the Ministry of the Environment, they got to know the national authorities and organisations better. In addition, the role of regional councils as responsible MSP authorities was clarified among national authorities, agencies, etc.
Région Sud (France)	There has been a change of heart on the part of the regional councils, who are keen to make the tools offered by MSP their own. The growing importance of offshore renewable energy in public policies and the associated financial stakes are undoubtedly factors in this.
Cork County Council (Ireland)	Cork County Council, as a Local Authority, are involved as a stakeholder in the development of the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan II at national level, and the preparation of the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan for ORE (Offshore Renewable Energy) currently underway.
Emilia-Romagna (Italy)	In the case of Emilia-Romagna, the region has set up its own working group to support the activities of the regional representative; however, there is no real institutional commitment to manage the process.
Sardegna (Italy)	Regional authorities have become more aware of what MSP is and what it can be used for. To participate in the national planning process, more or less all the regions, including Sardinia, have equipped themselves with organisational solutions to make the various regional entities with competence over the sea work together.

Section 1 – Q5 - Which economic, environmental and social stakeholders/actors have been involved in the design and implementation of the national MSP and how (e.g., regular meetings with stakeholders, authorities, workshops, consultation process)?

Q5 asked which economic, environmental, and social stakeholders/actors have been involved in the design and implementation of national MSP and how (e.g., regular meetings with stakeholders, authorities, workshops, consultation process).

As shown in table 5, of these regions who replied positively they cited the categories of stakeholders that must be included in the MSP process, and the frequency and ways in which

consultation is mandated by the corresponding laws (Belgium, Spain, Greece). In Italy and the Netherlands there is an impression that participation was limited to specific categories and interest groups, while in Portugal and Finland the processes were better organised and more inclusive in terms of stakeholders' categories. More precisely Southwest Finland, Helsinki-Uusimaa Region, Kymenlaakso, Region Sud, Southern Region/Cork County, Calabria and Azores Autonomous Region explicitly mentioned the active and regular participation of the regional/local authorities.

Table 4. Extract of positive responses by regions' representatives regarding the stakeholder categories included in the national MSP process and ways / frequency of participation

Region/county	Indication of economic, environmental and social stakeholders/actors that have been involved in the design and implementation of the national MSP and how
Vlaanderen (Belgium)	All (see Q4) public consultation process and procedure: https://www.health.belgium.be/nl/openbare-raadpleging-het-marien-ruimtelijk-plan-voor-het-belgische-deel-van-de-noordzee-2020-2026 There were three ways to submit to the public consultation: via the online form, by post or via email.
Galicia (Spain)	Royal Decree 150/2023, which approves the POEMs (Spanish MSP plans), describes the approval process and the degree of participation. Royal Decree 150/2023 lists the meetings held with the governments of each Autonomous Region, the ad-hoc groups created on different management areas, the dates on which the meetings were held and the authorities of the participating Autonomous Regions.
Southwest Finland	All maritime sectors as well as authorities and experts from national, regional and local level. Everyone interested in MSP could join the maritime spatial planning Cooperation Network, which served as an information sharing channel via, for example newsletters. Also, members of the Network have been invited to workshops and webinars. The network currently has around 600 members. Several national and regional briefing events, workshops and bilateral meetings were arranged during 2016 - 2020. Two official national-level consultations were included. General public had a right to give their opinions on the Plan. Regional council boards and assemblies with local level politicians were regularly informed of the MSP process
Helsinki-Uusimaa Region (Finland)	The maritime spatial planning cooperation network has served as an information sharing channel. Anyone interested in maritime spatial planning can join the network at merialuesuunnittelu.fi . At the time of completion of the plan, the network had 380 members, who were informed by means of regular newsletters.

Kymenlaakso (Finland)	All stakeholders dealing with regional planning, regional development and environmental planning were involved. Also, their national counterparts were integrated in the planning process.
Région Sud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutional actors' members of the "Document Stratégique de Façade"(DSF) Steering Committee (Regions, State services, French Biodiversity Agency, Water Agency) - Regular meetings for the development, monitoring and implementation of the different strategies emanating from the DSF (moorages, cruising, diving, ecological restoration) between these same actors. - Joint presentation of these strategies to the public. - In the preliminary consultation phase for the DSF, all types of stakeholders involved via working meetings and consultations: blue economy stakeholders, fishermen, ports, communities, general public, etc. <p>https://www.mer.gouv.fr/conseil-national-de-la-mer-et-des-littoraux-cnml</p>
Thessaloniki (Greece)	According to Law 4759/2020, the Ministry of Environment and Energy is responsible for MSP which ensures the participation of the stakeholders.
Heraklion (Greece)	Some Universities only
Southern Region/Cork (Ireland)	Cork County Council Local Authority made submissions to the process as national policy was being prepared.
Mayo County Council (Ireland)	Consultation Processes are very well established in Ireland, so a very thorough consultation was facilitated, and all submissions were openly circulated.
Veneto (Italy)	Consultations have been activated with operators in the fishing and aquaculture sector.
Emilia-Romagna (Italy)	The meetings at national level were limited to the final consultation.
Calabria (Italy)	Mainly Ministries and Regions, with the support of a Scientific Centre.
Sardegna (Italy)	As part of the national planning process, dedicated workshops were held, and the consultation procedures required by law began. Public authorities were involved at various levels (little at local level). Stakeholders, however, are not sufficiently involved.
Campania (Italy)	Campanian marines; Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs); trade associations, coastal municipalities, research and scientific bodies specialised in the management of sea resources.
Azores Autonomous Region (Portugal)	In the pre-planning stage of the development of the MSP Plan for the Azores subdivision, three stakeholder engagement workshops were organised, replicated on the three islands (S. Miguel, Terceira and Faial) and involving 209 participants across the nine workshops, which included representatives from the regional public administration, local government and the private sector, and also members of the scientific and academic community, non-governmental organisations and professionals, trade union and business associations. Additionally, other engagement actions were also carried out with interested parties, namely through the realisation of 139 sectoral interviews, targeting

	<p>various representatives of the main sectors and maritime activities in the Azores, covering the following sectors: fisheries, aquaculture, mineral resources, navigation, security and maritime transport, ports and marinas, tourism, scientific research and marine biotechnology, underwater cultural heritage and the fields of environmental conservation and marine protected areas. In the planning stage, a number of stakeholder group representatives were included in seven thematic Working Groups (WGs), which were created to accompany sectoral aspects of the MSP plan. In addition to integrating the public entities represented on the above-mentioned Consultative Committee, the WGs also included representatives of civil society, the private sector and the scientific community. WG members analysed and contributed directly to the plan. In the current pre-approval stage, a Public Discussion/Consultation period is also predicted to happen very soon, open to the general public, previously to the final approval and publication of the plan.</p>
Zuid Holland	<p>There was a large discussion between the issues of fisheries, energy and nature at sea. The national government established a commission with all these 3 sectors to discuss about organising the space of the North Sea. This agreement has not been achieved so far.</p> <p>They asked to be involved in land sea interactions as well (many connections exist between land and sea), but this did not lead to any concrete result. Probably this request was missed.</p> <p>They did not come to an agreement with the fisheries sector, so it seems currently the national government has not evolved on it so far.</p>

Section 2 – Q5 - Question 5: Considering stakeholders’ engagement and the participation of sectors in MSP processes, which stakeholders/sectors are less structured and/or less represented in decision-making processes and set aside from MSP processes?

For Question 5 in section 2 on *which stakeholders/sectors are less structured and/or less represented in decision-making processes and set aside from MSP processes*, the general public, fisheries and aquaculture, tourism and culture were the most frequently mentioned stakeholders/sectors.

A summary of the replies include:

For Spain, the general audience including coastal communities’ and artisanal fisheries, nautical and recreational fishing and their associations, were the most frequently cited stakeholders that were not involved at all or not sufficiently. Others include the aquaculture, environmental and cultural heritage sectors. It was mentioned also that socio-economic impacts locally have not received the attention they deserve.

In Finland, those from blue biotechnology and those representing enterprise and innovation interests were partly missed during the first MSP planning round. Another missed sector was the extraction sector. Sand and gravel deposits have been examined quite thoroughly in

Finnish territorial waters but when it comes to the exploitation of phosphorus stored in benthic sediments or iron-manganese deposits, there is little information available about the impacts of their use.

For France, again aquaculture is underrepresented despite the structuring role of regional professional committees. Another sector is tourism and the difficulty in assessing its net impact especially due to the diversity of different categories of tourism.

In Germany, the coastal fisheries sector was mentioned as along with tourism and recreation.

In Greece, and specifically in the Central Macedonia Region, professionals and other sectors are well organised under associations and unions. However, most of them have little to no experience participating in spatial planning processes related to the sea (MSP). According to one of the respondents, the general public is not part of the MSP process.

For Lithuania, the sectors and stakeholders that are not prioritised in international and EU legislation are represented less. The underrepresented include the tourism industry, cultural heritage and coastal inhabitants.

In Portugal and specifically regarding the Azores, the economic dependence on a few specific sectors may create imbalances, which can hinder representativeness and equity in the engagement of stakeholders, as some stakeholder groups are underrepresented. Another factor is that the geographical dispersion between islands in the archipelago makes it difficult to gather stakeholders in a common space and makes it hard for them to get wider range representatives (e.g. low levels of association in some sectors, such as maritime tourism).

Finally in Sweden so far, the general public has been less represented although in the current revision process anyone can give their view on the plan proposal via a web form.

Looking at how multilevel collaboration and stakeholder engagement could be supported, section 2 question 4 of the survey also addressed how the different topics could benefit from MSP and how, and in what ways, might these be shared between different levels of national and regional government (e.g. data, experiences, etc.) .

Section 2 - Q4 - Part I - Which other topics can benefit from MSP implementation at regional level?

Section 2 - Q4 - Part II - What could be shared between regional authorities and national authorities to facilitate implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning?

Regarding what other topics could benefit from MSP implementation at regional level, more than half of respondents replied and the most frequent topics refer to:

- enabling regional data collection and availability,
- marine ecosystems protection,
- restoration and monitoring,

- sustainable development of Blue Economy sectors,
- maintenance and improvement of the local Blue Economy sectors by promoting cooperation at the administrative level and coexistence at the spatial level,
- better knowledge of local needs and priorities including culture,
- improved public engagement and awareness.

Summarised replies per country are shown in Table 6.

Table 5. Summarised replies per country on additional benefits from MSP at regional level

Country	Summary of replies
Spain	Inter-administrative coordination, data collection for various activities and availability, nature conservation and restoration (seagrass meadows, artificial reefs marine protected areas), visibility of problems that authorities and stakeholders are facing at a regional level. However, for one of the respondents MSP may imply overregulation that may not create additional benefits.
Germany	Evaluating the socio-economic impacts of MSP and/or maritime sectoral development: Who is benefitting, where, in what way, who are "winners" and "losers"? Making more place-specific connections to the local level - MSP can become less abstract/strategic and more accessible/community-specific. Communication with the public - explaining why MSP is important for the region and how the region is an essential link between the local and national/international level.
Greece	Ocean literacy of the local population can be improved. Wiser management and collection of spatial geodata at the regional level. More projects and studies for the marine ecosystems' sustainability may be initiated. Strong marine sectoral players may further renegotiate their targets to better fit the local society and their needs. Given that MSP is developing in a constantly changing environment, the planning process must be flexible in order to adapt and allow plans to be revised within a transparent and efficient way. MSP must be in relation to the regional society, economy, and environment maintaining current activities and promoting conflict mitigation and sustainable coexistence, in accordance with European priorities and policies.
Italy	Local and regional Blue Economy sectors will benefit from MSP. The so-called fundamental social licence for the implementation of MSP will be better enabled at local and regional scales.
Portugal (Azores)	Maritime activity sectors are closely linked to the islands' economy and depend on factors such as remoteness and insularity factors, territorial fragmentation and distance to the continent and between islands. Various ecological and geomorphological challenges along with a relative scarcity of resources and greater vulnerability to anthropogenic pressures and climate change, greatly influence the distribution of uses and activities at sea and are reflected in the stricter conservation and resource management policies applied, which ultimately ask for the adaptation of MSP to the regional context.

Lithuania	Blue economy, civil safety, tourism, heritage protection.
Sweden	The national planning level can distribute/make available planning evidence at national level to support regional/local planning.

Finally, some recommendations of what could be shared between regional authorities and national authorities to facilitate implementation of MSP include:

In the case of Spain, a notable effort is being made; however, harmonisation and integration of databases, greater information and collaboration and creation of permanent committees since sectoral competences in maritime areas may be the responsibility either of the state or the regions.

For France a suggestion is that the indicators grids for monitoring the state of the environment and activities should be also used for other objectives pursued.

A respondent from Germany highlighted the importance of monitoring and evaluation of plans and comparison/contradictions between national and regional priorities. Also exchanging experiences between planning authorities as they can relate to the same stakeholders.

For respondents from Greece, communication, collaboration and coordination are key elements along with the importance of spatial geodata, knowledge and experience related to the local marine space. In terms of governance, regional authorities should play a more important role and participate in consultation processes and decision making. When drafting maritime spatial plans (ΘΧΙΙ) at the regional level the consultation organisation of participatory procedures should become official.

Similarly, the importance of data, communication, cooperation, and coordination along with ocean literacy initiatives and training were highlighted by the Italian respondents.

Communication and collaboration that supports “joint management” and “shared management” between the central and regional governments was also a suggestion from a representative from Azores.

A Lithuanian respondent suggested that the local authorities should highlight territorial problematic issues and hence involve more local actors responsible for implementation or affected by the marine activities.

The issue of planning evidence (probably about data collection and availability of data) and especially the need for it to be collected and presented in a uniform way was also highlighted by a Swedish respondent.

C. Coordination between regional and national plans

MSP has emerged as a crucial national process that demands a sophisticated and coordinated approach between national and subnational levels. National MSP frameworks must align seamlessly with subnational plans to ensure a cohesive strategy that respects regional nuances while adhering to overarching national goals. This integration is particularly vital as it enables a more holistic management of maritime spaces, avoiding fragmentation and conflicts between different jurisdictional levels. Regional spatial plans for coastal areas and sectoral development plans (e.g. tourism, fisheries) have a longer history of implementation compared to national MSP, which is a relatively new planning tool¹³. The implementation of the MSP Directive, leading to new overarching plans for the maritime area at the national level requires proper consideration of pre-existing regional plans. This also requires that coordination between agencies responsible for regional planning and the agencies responsible for MSP is ensured. Coordination can be achieved in different ways and using different approaches. In some cases, MSP was even delegated to regional authorities (e.g. Finland), where regional councils were asked to prepare and approve their MSP plans as part of regional planning, ensuring then that different regional plans are reconciled into one coherent plan¹⁴.

Questions Q6 to Q8 of the first section of the survey aim at describing the coordination between regional and national plans, highlighting the existing gaps and focusing on possible solutions to strengthen or improve these relations.

Question 6: from your perspective, how are regional or local spatial plans (e.g., Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans, sectoral plans for maritime activities, economic development plans) incorporated with national MSP plans?

The possible answers were categorised according to four possible options:

- Fully consistent;
- Poorly integrated;
- Showing conflicts;
- Other answers

As summarised in figure 5 below, 22% of the replies stated that their regional spatial plans are fully consistent with the national one. These results arise from seven different nations: Finland, Lithuania, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Greece and France, with representatives both from national and regional authorities. 20% of the respondents highlighted that the regional plans are poorly integrated with the national ones, but no further details on the points of

¹³ Ferreira, M. A., Johnson, D., & Silva, C. P. D. (2014). How can Portugal effectively integrate ICM and MSP? *Journal of Coastal Research*, (70), 496-501.

¹⁴ Haapasaari, P., & van Tatenhove, J. P. (2022). A Finnish regional non-binding MSP approach: What are the consequences for integrating Blue Growth and GES? *Marine Policy*, 141, 105101.

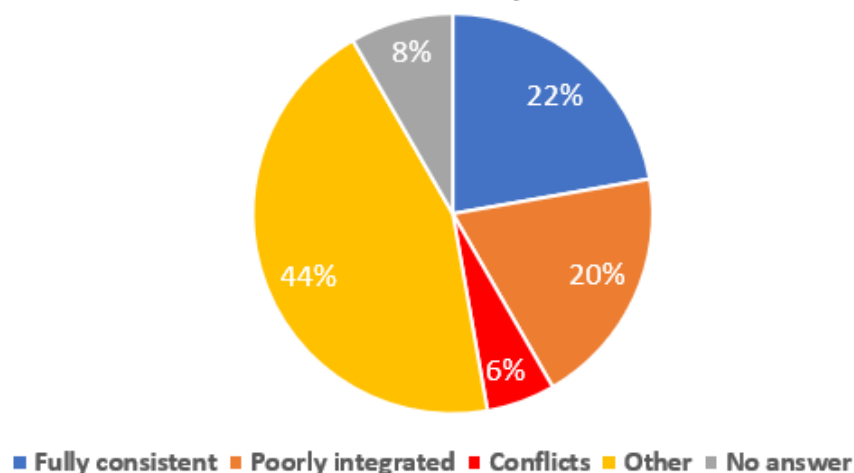
weakness were given. Poor integration of plans is exclusively reported by regional authorities of four countries (France, Spain, Italy and Greece) and from stakeholders of two different Spanish regions (Catalunya and Balearics). Two answers (from France - State Secretariat for the Sea - and Spain - Spanish Federation of Fishing and Casting) representing 6% of the respondents stated the presence of conflicts. From the Spanish side these conflicts are related to the different areas of jurisdiction: the Autonomous Communities are responsible for inland maritime waters, while the central government is responsible for external maritime waters. Conflicts arise for those uses that involve both jurisdictions e.g. submarine cables and pipelines that cross inland waters from external waters to reach the continent.

However, most of the respondents did not find the proposed categories fit for purpose, since they mostly selected the "Others" option (44%). The given explanations reveal quite heterogeneous answers. Main elements refer to:

- Regional plans have been considered and have been integrated as far as possible, but more efforts are needed (Spain, Spanish Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge; Greece - Central Macedonia Region; Germany - Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency);
- More in-depth elaboration of regional spatial distribution of existing and desirable uses is needed to foster their integration into the national MSP (Spain - Ministry for economic transition; Netherlands - regional authority representative);
- Actions are needed to improve coherence and coordination between the different Autonomous Regions (Spanish NGO);
- Need for a more comprehensive view of all sectors in the national Maritime Planning, as some are not included yet. A Spanish NGO stressed for example, *"In this way, in our view, a valuable opportunity is lost to integrate all marine sectors into a single planning document that addresses the long-term management of the seas in a coherent, coordinated and sustainable manner"*.

Figure 5. Responses in percentage on which levels of integration regional or local spatial plans are incorporated into national MSP plans

How are regional or local spatial plans incorporated with national MSP plans?



As part of the same question, participants were also asked to share information on local/sectoral strategies or plans that are under development for the marine area and hence, relevant to MSP:

Section 1- Q6. Part II - *“Is your region developing local/sectoral strategies or plans at sea which are relevant for MSP? Please, specify which ones and describe their legal status and implementation”.*

30 participants provided responses to this question.

The main actions under implementation highlighted by participants include:

- Italy: identification of Aquaculture Zoning Areas’ (AZA) and update of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Guidelines (Sardinia Region); setting up of a Working Group on the Blue Growth whose members include all the regional sectors operating in the field of plans, processes and economic activities concerning the coast and the sea; the completion (not yet approved) of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the Coastal Zone (Emilia Romagna region); a ‘Vocational Chart’ (map with identification of areas dedicated to some uses) is under implementation with the creation of a Regional Sea Observatory (Campania Region).
- Ireland: drafting of a new Designated Maritime Area Plan for offshore renewable energy in the South Coast Maritime Area. The public consultation is ongoing at the time of writing, with final adoption expected in early 2024.

- Spain: local NGOs and authorities highlighted new laws. In Galicia, a Coastal Law has been approved, but not yet implemented. In Catalonia a new law on the sea which foresees the drafting of plans for uses and activities in the marine environment within the limits of coastal waters. Moreover, a Territorial Action Plan for the Green Infrastructure of the Coastline of the Valencian Community and the Catalogue of Beaches of the Valencian Community (Decree 58/2018, of 4 May, DOGV no. 8293) were mentioned.
- France: the Pays de la Loire region's policy in favour of the seas and coasts is drafted by the regional maritime ambition (validated in 2018 and revised in 2023), which feeds into and guides the other more general regional roadmaps and strategies (regional development and territorial equality plan, regional tourism and leisure development plan (2022-2028), regional biodiversity plan, etc.). The two departments (Vendée and Loire Atlantique) have also drawn up a roadmap (Plan Vendée Ambition Maritime and Charte Defi mer et littoral) setting out their political position on maritime and coastal issues. Finally, some local public authorities have developed their own strategies for the sea and coast (e.g. the Nantes - St Nazaire metropolitan area). All these documents influence the regional authority's other strategies and actions, but they are not binding documents.
- Portugal: participants mentioned the Strategy of the Autonomous Region of the Azores for the Sea and a Blue Economy, currently being developed as a strategic document. The Marine Strategy for the Azores subdivision is currently implemented as a plan under the MSFD. The Regional Climate Change Strategy is currently implemented as a strategic document. Coastal Zone Management Plans, for the nine islands of the Azores Archipelago, are currently implemented as instruments of regulatory nature.
- Respondents from Finland gave some links to their plans relevant for MSP¹⁵;
- Belgian respondents also gave links to their MSP related plans¹⁶; their Coastal vision process is also subjected to public consultation currently¹⁷;
- Greece: in the marine space only one national sectoral spatial plan has been adopted (aquaculture sector) and is currently under revision. Apart from that, spatial regulations are included in the management plans of the Greek Marine Protected Areas. Recently new legislation regulates the localization of Offshore Renewable Energy installations.

Question 7 focused on existing gaps between national Maritime Spatial Plans and regional priorities.

¹⁵ <https://uudenmaanliitto.fi/en/development-and-planning/regional-land-use-plans-in-helsinki-uusimaa/>

¹⁶ <https://www.vlaanderen.be/en/departement-mobility-and-public-works/projects/coastal-protection>

¹⁷ <https://www.vlaanderen.be/kustvisie>

Section 1 - Q7: *In your opinion, what gaps exist between national Maritime Spatial Plans and regional priorities (existing strategies/plans if any)?*

The possible answers were categorised into 5 possible options:

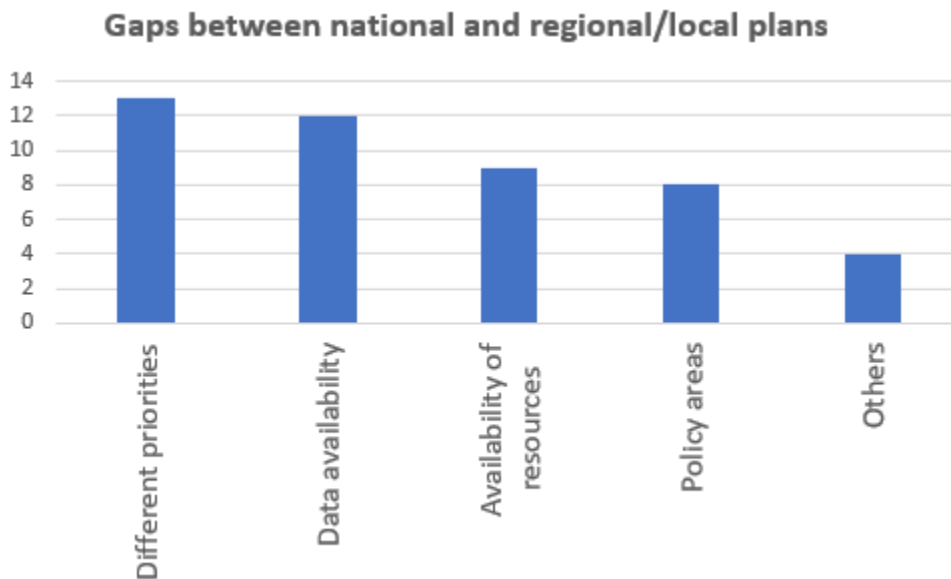
1. Different priorities;
2. Data availability;
3. Availability of resources;
4. Policy areas;
5. Others

As shown in Figure 6, below, different priorities and data availability are the two main gaps identified by the respondents. Secondly, the availability of resources is identified by 20% of respondents, while the differences in policy areas is mentioned by 17%. Overall, the four options (different priorities, data availability, availability of resources and policy areas) are quite equally represented and in many cases the respondents chose more than one option at the same time. Different priorities are often mentioned in relation to the lack of shared criteria for prioritising activities; this is particularly affecting certain sectors such as fisheries and offshore renewable energy with a different degree of importance between the national and regional levels (Italy, Spain). This difference in prioritisation is often mentioned with a strong relation to gaps in policy areas and in coordination among administrations, governance, and participation structures (Spain local stakeholder and Italy regional representative). The different strengths, possibilities and operational environments for maritime sectors are unevenly distributed along the coastline and this is also referred to as a gap that highlight different priorities (Finland).

Data availability often refers to lack of recent data, but also to a lack of knowledge, especially on the environmental, socio-economic and cumulative impacts of the different sectors and territories (Spain local stakeholder and France regional representative).

The need to establish an effective monitoring system and indicators has also been mentioned. Within the “policy areas” option, weaknesses in transboundary cooperation with neighbouring countries was also highlighted (Spain).

Figure 6. Responses collected regarding existing gaps between national Maritime Spatial Plans and regional priorities



Finally, respondents were asked:

Section 1 - Question 8: *How can links between national Maritime Spatial Plans and regional priorities (existing strategies/plans) be strengthened or improved, if necessary? Do you have any suggestions on how to foster MSP through improved governance between national and regional scales?*

Some common elements among the different replies include:

- Foreseeing additional resources, expertise and training can help in implementing MSP and supporting its objectives (Ireland and some Italian regions);
- Support inter- and intra- administrative coordination and cooperation, including exchange at multiple levels (for example with universities); this proposal includes strengthening the communication between the state and the regions and the regional authority's involvement in the MSP process. These proposals were more frequently suggested by respondents from both national (Spain and Germany) and regions' representatives (Spain, the Netherlands and Greece);
- Definition of common basic criteria to be followed for the drafting of regional and national plans. A guideline is suggested from a Spanish national authority as a tool for this purpose;

- Ensure stakeholder involvement where needed: this implies participatory and transparent governance, where stakeholder voices (local communities, fishermen and sea users) are heard and involved in the decision-making process (Spain);
- Enhance the implementation autonomy of the regions for waters of regional interest and acknowledgement of the coastal communities' competences over the territorial sea surrounding their coasts (Spain NGO and Sardinia Italian region);
- Strengthen the legal MSP instruments in the development and implementation of the regional strategies/plan (Portugal regional representative).

D. Data provisioning

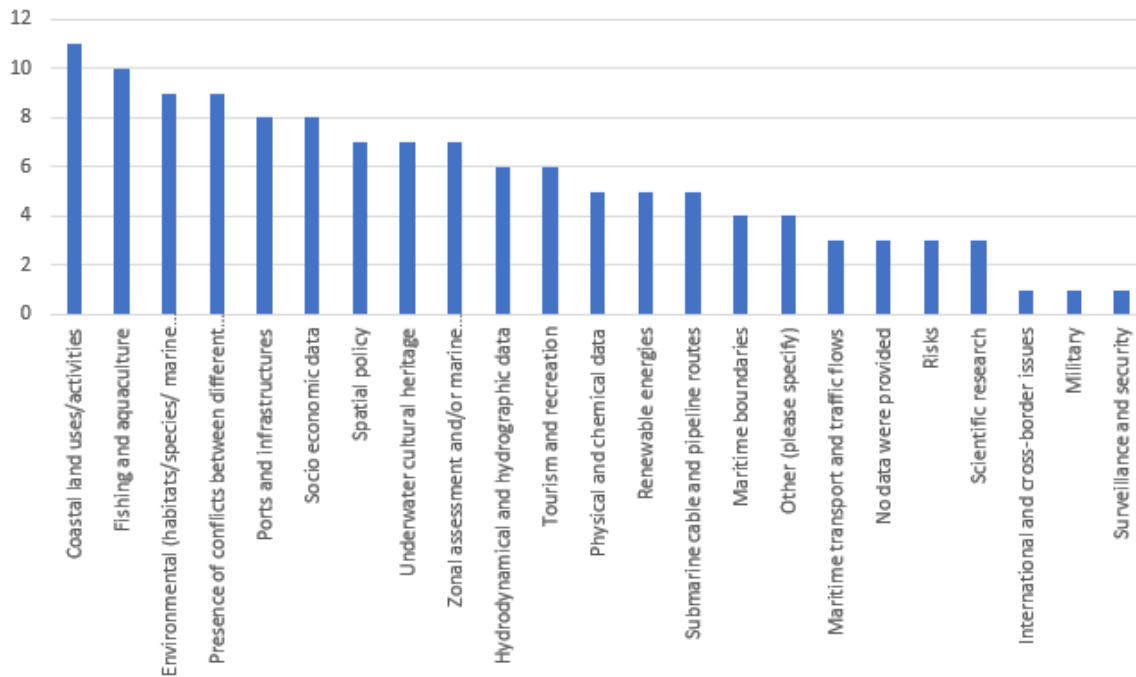
Section 1 – Q9 In your experience, have regions provided any data relevant to national MSP implementation? Tick all that apply¹⁸.

Q9 aimed at identifying typologies of data that have been provided by regions for national MSP purposes. More than half of the respondents (14 out of 19 regions' representatives) gave examples of the data types that regions have provided for national MSP. As shown in Figure 7 the overarching data categories are those related to “Coastal land uses/activities”, “Fishing and aquaculture”, “Environmental (habitats/species/marine biodiversity) data” and “presence of conflicts between different maritime uses”.

Figure 7. Most frequent data categories provided by regions for national MSP

¹⁸ Ref. section 1 Question 9 - see Appendix section, annex 1 for the full list of possible answers.

Types of data provided by regions



However, most of the respondents were not aware of/not able to indicate a usual/standardised process that is officially followed for such data provision, while a small number replied that the data were provided upon request from national competent authorities, or that national competent authorities were also in charge of collecting the regional data.

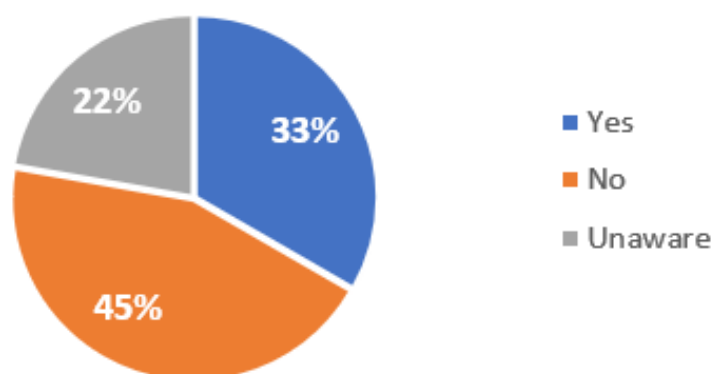
Half of the respondents expressed their views on data management and the use of geoportals. The overarching challenges that were indicated by many were either the lack of a single unified geoportal where all the data are concentrated and the lack of harmonisation of data coming from different sources. Other challenges include the need for continuous data gathering, to ensure up-to-date and improved data for MSP (e.g., available resources). Also, issues such as addressing data gaps (e.g., geomorphological information, distribution of resources, current distribution of certain human activities, spatio-temporal distribution of important and/or vulnerable marine ecosystems, habitats and species; environmental impacts of human uses and activities), deciding on what constitutes sufficient knowledge to warrant decision-making under MSP and lack of accessibility and ability to download data were mentioned by a few respondents.

E. Capacity building and awareness raising

When asked if they had any knowledge or experience of specific training on MSP or related fields (e.g. blue economy), 12 respondents replied positively, 16 replied negatively and 8 gave no reply or stated that they were unaware of the existence of such training as shown in figure 8. When asked for more information about who provided the training (e.g. national government initiative, external provider sought specifically) and what topics were addressed, most respondents replied that there is no actual training organised and provided by some specific body. However, regions and other stakeholders who replied positively, have been able to enhance their knowledge, and exchange experiences via participation in ad hoc working groups, workshops, webinars and information sessions organised either by the national competent authorities (Greece, France) or in the framework of projects and initiatives on MSP (International (e.g. by UNESCO) and European ones such as Regina-MSP itself, MarSP, PLASMAR, PLASMAR+, MSP-OR).

Figure 8. Knowledge of MSP training provided to regional authorities

Knowledge about MSP related training for regional authorities



As to whether national or regional authorities carried out any public awareness events on MSP, more than half of the respondents replied yes as shown in Figure 9 and gave various examples of events mainly organised at national level that can be perceived as “MSP and related topics public awareness events” as shown in Table 7.

Figure 9. Knowledge of organised public awareness events on MSP

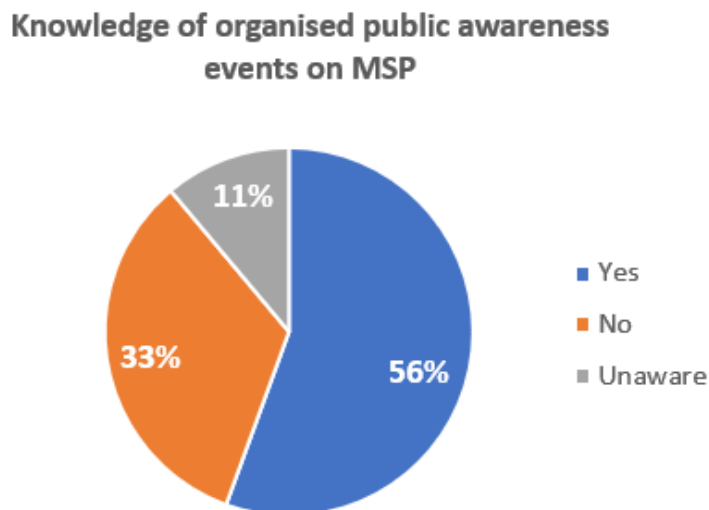


Table 6. Examples of public awareness events with explicit or implicit links to MSP

Country	Examples of events that explicitly or implicitly contribute to public awareness for MSP or similar topics.	Regionally organised
Spain	The consultation process for the development of Royal Decree 150/2023, of February 28, which approves the maritime space management plans of the five Spanish marine demarcations	No
	Awareness campaigns that have been carried out on marine reserves of fishing interest, with information points located close to beaches with a large influx of public	Not clear
	A national open online workshop	No
	Participation of national MSP authorities in numerous events related to the maritime space, such as conferences, seminars, projects, etc.	No
Finland	The maritime spatial planning cooperation network has served as an information sharing channel where anyone can join. More than 380 members can be informed regularly via newsletters. More information on events as part of the Coordination of the Finnish Maritime Spatial Planning cooperation	No
	Regionally organised MSP workshops covering all sectors open to everyone interested	Yes
	Stakeholder-involvement processes	Not clear
France	The public consultations held in 2018 for the adoption of the first façade planning documents were an opportunity to raise public awareness of	Not clear

	these issues. The upcoming public debate on the subject of updating the marine plans will once again be an opportunity to concretely explain to the public what MSP is for and to ask the public for their opinion on this subject.	
Germany	The latest Exclusive Economic Zone marine planning process was accompanied by a public blog; A regular <i>Bundesamt für Seeschifffahrt und Hydrographie</i> (BSH) symposium on the marine environment accessible to anyone; regular presentation of MSP during an annual "Open Day" of Ministries, open to student interns and visiting groups from other countries (upon request); A document that explains the MSP plan in everyday language.	No
	Participation in MSPglobal, European Maritime Day, Vision and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea (VASAB) etc. so more focused on experts than broader public.	No
Greece	Public awareness actions organised by Central Macedonia (ΠΙΚΜ) in matters of environmental protection of the marine and coastal area such as clean-up campaigns	No
	At the national level the ministry of the environment has organised several events that are also open to the public to inform citizens about the ΕΧΣΘΧ and the first ΘΧΠΙ that are under approval; In 2015, the European Maritime Day was held in Athens.	No
Italy	In Veneto regional activities are organised by the FLAG coastal action groups established within the LAGs envisaged by the Leader II programme for the management of EMFF funds.	Yes
Portugal	Inclusion of a talk dedicated to the role of MSP in the Azores in the campaign "Açores Entremares", which took place in June 2020, open to the general public.	Yes
Lithuania	MSP is addressed explicitly in Blue Economy related events	No
Sweden	MSP has been presented in various fora over the years. The PPT-library ¹⁹ contains more than 1100 presentations since 2011.	No

F. Relationship between MSP and other policies

The second section of the survey addressed the relationships between MSP and other related policies: MSP and climate action (3.6.1), MSP and environmental protection (3.6.2) and MSP and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (3.6.3).

¹⁹ <https://www.havochvatten.se/en/eu-and-international/marine-spatial-planning/swedish-marine-spatial-planning/reports-and-documents.html>

After a brief introduction about each policy and how it is conceptually linked to MSP, the following sections describe the survey results. Results both refer to the scoring exercise (participants were asked to score different options based on their relevance for pursuing the integration of policies) and elaborate a high variety of free considerations that were added by participants for each topic. Scores range from 0 (no relevance) to 3 (high relevance) and were assigned according to individual expertise of participants.

a) MSP and climate action

The MSP Directive (2014/89/EU) recognises climate change as a threat and highlights the need to increase resilience both on land and at sea. MSP is emerging as a solution to mitigate climate impacts and to support the energy transition in agreement with the goals of the European Green Deal.

Changing climate conditions can determine spatial-temporal modifications in human uses, calling for an adaptation of marine plans to climate change²⁰ and for climate-informed spatial management²¹. For example, fishing grounds may change in response to variations in temperature patterns and create new conflicts and legal issues with other activities or with environmental protection. New northern routes for marine transport can unfold due to the loss of large extensions of sea ice^{22 23} and new opportunities for renewable energy development²⁴ can emerge or, conversely, be hindered from changes in wind energy distribution. In considering these new challenges and through the establishment of climate-proof spatial measures that mitigate the impacts of climate change on maritime economic activities, MSP can be seen as an effective tool for climate adaptation.

In addition to economic impacts, climate change is threatening communities living in coastal areas and alter biodiversity and the functioning of marine ecosystems. MSP can directly enable adaptation by envisaging coastal defence measures to address erosion concerns, submersion from sea level rise and can also promote spatial conservation measures for

²⁰ Frazão Santos, C., Agardy, T., Andrade, F., Calado, H., Crowder, L.B., Ehler, C.N., García-Morales, S. et al. (2020). Integrating climate change in ocean planning. *Nature Sustainability* 3, no. 7: 505-516.

²¹ Le Cornu, E., Doerr, A. N., Finkbeiner, E. M., Gourlie, D., & Crowder, L. B. (2018). Spatial management in small-scale fisheries: A potential approach for climate change adaptation in Pacific Islands. *Marine Policy*, 88, 350-358.

²² Ng, A. K., Andrews, J., Babb, D., Lin, Y., & Becker, A. (2018). Implications of climate change for shipping: Opening the Arctic seas. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 9(2), e507.

²³ Christodoulou, A., & Demirel, H. (2018). Impacts of climate change on transport. *A Focus on Airports, Seaports and Inland Waterways*.

²⁴ García, P. Q., Sanabria, J. G., & Ruiz, J. A. C. (2021). Marine renewable energy and maritime spatial planning in Spain: Main challenges and recommendations. *Marine Policy*, 127, 104444.

ecosystems particularly vulnerable to climate change (e.g. no take zones, areas where certain uses are banned).

Despite this, few marine spatial plans include climate change considerations in their general planning framework²⁵ and therefore the inclusion of climate action in MSP is still in its infancy.

Furthermore, while MSP is basically a national policy, adaptation often occurs at the local scale, since actions need to be tailored to site-specific impacts and vulnerabilities. Even though implemented at the local scale, adaptation actions always require coordination with higher levels of government and planning. To collect the view of regional and national authorities on this topic, the following question was included in the survey:

Section 2 - Q1- How do you think MSP can help support climate action at the regional level?

The following options were suggested to participants that were also asked to assign a score (from 0 to 3) to each option, based on their relevance.

1. Avoiding new emerging use conflicts due to new challenges posed by climate change, by designing a future-looking plan.
2. Safeguarding biodiversity from the impacts of climate change, by assessing the impacts of maritime activities.
3. Increasing the resilience of vulnerable habitats and species through the safeguard of protected marine areas.
4. Minimising the economic losses for certain maritime activities that could derive from “short-sighted” choices that do not properly consider risks associated to climate change.
5. Promoting the use of marine renewable energy sources, by defining dedicated spatial measures.
6. Preserving blue-carbon ecosystems, as important carbon sink areas.
7. Promoting spatial measures for coastal defence and for mitigating coastal erosion due to sea level rise.

The average score ranges between 1.8 (Minimising the economic losses for certain maritime activities that could derive from “short-sighted” choices that do not properly consider risks associated to climate change) to 2.2 (Promoting the use of marine renewable energy sources, by defining dedicated spatial measures).

These results thus demonstrate high expectations from MSP for the energy transition: as shown in Figure 10, 19 respondents out of 36 assigned a score of 3 (high relevance) to this option, while only two assigned a score of zero. Conversely, the role of MSP in mitigating the impacts of climate change on economic activities (option 4) and in enhancing coastal

²⁵Frazão Santos, C., Agardy, T., Andrade, F., Calado, H., Crowder, L.B., Ehler, C.N., García-Morales, S. et al. (2020). Integrating climate change in ocean planning. *Nature Sustainability* 3, no. 7: 505-516.

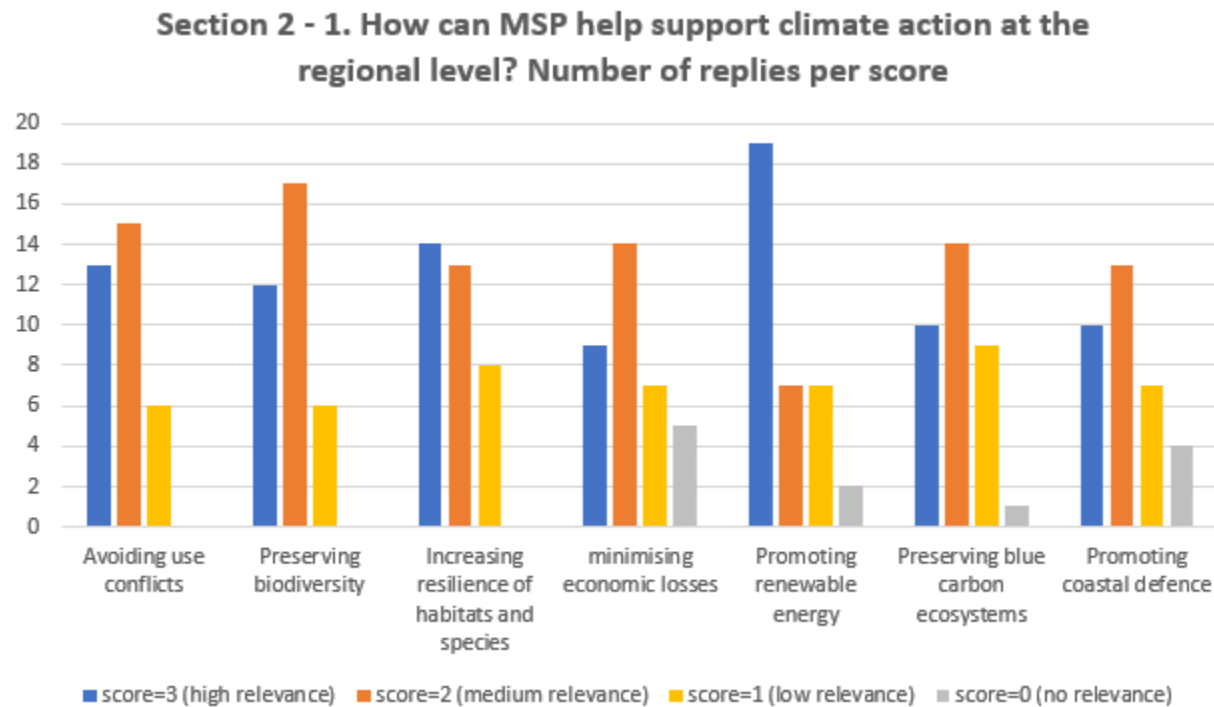
defence measures (option 7) is perceived as slightly less relevant (average score of 1.8 – 1.9). However, also for the less voted options, very few respondents assigned a score corresponding to no relevance (score =0) or low relevance (score =1).

In addition to the scoring exercise, participants were invited to add their considerations about how climate action could be progressed at the regional level through MSP. Although only seven answers were collected, they addressed key topics, listed here:

- Collaboration with local and regional authorities: The need for multi-level governance in addressing the issues of climate change in MSP emerge from the responses of three participants, both from the regional level and from the national level. In particular, the need for regional and local *“action plans and strategic projects”* that implement the national marine plan has been expressed by Lithuania (national authority). According to the region of Galicia, in Spain, progress can be achieved by *“transferring more competencies to coastal authorities”*. In the Netherlands (Zuid Holland province) *“good relationships with the national authority”* were reported. For example, national and regional authorities usually collaborate to ensure the long-term safety of coastal areas against flooding (by preserving sandy coasts). However, all these interactions *“happen outside MSP”* in the Netherlands, thus lacking a holistic approach.
- Different time scales. Different priorities influence MSP and its implementation, so that long-term climate change issues struggle to be incorporated in a plan with a shorter horizon time. According to the German experience (Federal agency perspective) MSP *“may need to respond to current policy priorities for a medium-term planning horizon rather than being able to be fully forward-looking in terms of climate change. So, the ability of MSP to consider the anticipated impacts of climate change varies depending on the timescale of that change”*. In this regard, a Spanish NGO pointed out that *“the expectations placed on MSP are very different from its reality”*, thus suggesting that the integration of climate change in marine spatial planning represents a serious gap.
- Knowledge gaps: The issue of knowledge gaps arose from Portugal (Azores regional government) who reported the need for *“understanding the effects of climate change on chemical, physical, and biological conditions, and the way ecosystem structure and functioning is being affected, also considering the lack of baselines and thresholds”*. Another reported that a fundamental gap was the lack of knowledge about how ecosystem services are changing in response to climate change, thus potentially affecting human activities and *creating “an added level of uncertainty to MSP processes”*. In the Azores plan, the issue of climate change was incorporated in the sectoral analysis of the main maritime uses, whose future development trends are significantly affected by climate change. MSP addressed climate change also in *“defining possible areas for beach or coastal renourishment”* and *“in the context of land-sea interactions”* incorporating climate change risks in coastal zones. Finally, the issue of renewable energy was remarked upon by Germany, stating that *“MSP fosters*

the expansion of renewable energy in a sustainable and balanced way, e.g. defining space for wind energy and infrastructures without disturbing tourism or nature protected areas”.

Figure 10. MSP and climate action: relevance of different options based on scoring



b) MSP and environmental protection

The application of the Ecosystem-based approach (EBA) is one of the fundamental principles of MSP in the EU MSP Directive, making a direct link to the Article 1 of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). By applying EBA, MSP aims at “ensuring that the collective pressure of all activities is kept within levels compatible with the achievement of a good environmental status and that the capacity of marine ecosystems to respond to human-induced changes is not compromised”²⁶.

²⁶ L. Quinio, M.Ripken, T. Klenke, B. Trouillet, HS Hansen, L. Shroder. 2023. Exploring ecosystem-based approaches in MSP through actor-driven perceptual mapping. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0308597X23001318>

The EBA concept arises from the international UN Convention on Biological Diversity that defines it as the “integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way”. The ecosystem approach requires that ecosystems are managed within their natural boundaries and that an appropriate scale of analysis is adopted. This implies that MSP considers, natural boundaries in the definition of marine planning units, often beyond administrative boundaries, and that a long-term approach to planning and management is included. This also implies that within MSP, maritime activities are allocated consistently with the goal of environmental protection, and in a way that they do not interfere with the need to maintain ecosystem services²⁷.

The EBA is a guiding approach to MSP and vice-versa, MSP is a tool to support the implementation of EBA²⁸. However, though the ecosystem-based approach is widely recognised, no consensus on its definition exists, especially when it comes to the details of what principles should be included, lacking a universal application framework²⁹. For MSP, it means that EBA operationalisation in practical experiences of MSP is far from being fully realised³⁰. Moreover, the importance of protecting the marine ecosystems is often overlooked by economic interests and in the short-term goals of different sectoral policies³¹.

The Commission’s assessment report on the first implementation cycle of the MSFD (COM(2014) 97 final) shows that biodiversity loss is not halted in European’s seas, despite many efforts and measures taken. The role of local and regional authorities in protecting the marine environment could be better recognised and could accelerate the achievement of the good ecological status of European Seas, as recognised by the European Committee of the Regions in 2021 (2021/C 300/08).

To understand the potential role of MSP in operationalising the EBA at the regional level, the following question was asked to the survey’s participants:

Section 2 – Q2- How do you think MSP can help support environmental protection and restoration at the regional level?

²⁷ Farella, G., Menegon, S., Fadini, A., Depellegrin, D., Manea, E., Perini, L., Barbanti, A., 2020. Incorporating ecosystem services conservation into a scenario-based MSP framework: An Adriatic case study, *Ocean & Coastal Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2020.105230>

²⁸ Ansong, J., Gissi, E., Calado, H., 2017. An approach to ecosystem-based management in maritime spatial planning process. *Ocean & Coastal Management* 141 (2017) 65e81. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2017.03.005>

²⁹ Long, D.R., Charles, A., Stephenson, R.L., 2015. Key principles of marine ecosystem-based management. *Marine Policy*, 57(2015)53–60. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2015.01.013>

³⁰ Ansong, J., Gissi, E., Calado, H., 2017. An approach to ecosystem-based management in maritime spatial planning process. *Ocean & Coastal Management* 141 (2017) 65e81. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2017.03.005>

³¹ Frazão Santos, C., Agardy, T., Andrade, F., Calado, H., Crowder, L.B., Ehler, C.N., García-Morales, S. et al. (2020). Integrating climate change in ocean planning. *Nature Sustainability* 3, no. 7: 505-516.

Participants were asked to assess different pre-defined categories of opportunities offered by MSP. The proposed categories are:

- Including objectives of nature conservation and restoration for the long-term planning of the marine areas,
- Ensuring coherence between MSP goals and regional goals of environmental protection,
- Improving the identification and mapping of seabed habitats,
- Improving the identification and mapping of ecosystem services,
- Improving the identification and mapping of environmental impacts of maritime activities,
- Promoting the development of maritime activities sustainable for the environment, and
- Identifying areas for the definition of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) or Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs).

As shown in Figure 11, results show that all categories are quite relevant, demonstrating that MSP is offering (or it is expected to offer) a high variety of opportunities to strengthen environmental protection. Average scores range between a minimum value of 2.0 to a maximum value of 2.4. The lowest score refers to the opportunity of improving the identification and mapping of seabed habitats. Indeed, existing data on marine habitats and species (often collected for other policy objectives) commonly feed into marine plans while the opposite flow (marine plans that provide knowledge about the distribution of marine habitats) can be considered less likely. However, MSP may bring out some knowledge gaps that can trigger the development of new tailored research activities on marine habitats and species. Conversely, the maximum score (2.4) refers to three different opportunities that can arise from MSP: (1) including the objective of nature conservation and restoration for the long-term planning of the marine areas, (2) ensuring coherence between MSP goals and regional goals of environmental protection and (3) identifying areas for the definition of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) or Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs).

The survey's participants were then asked to share their ideas about how environmental protection could be enhanced in maritime regions through MSP. Main messages have been clustered as follows:

- Establishing areas where conservation is prioritised: This is a recurrent issue emerging both from regional authorities and from state authorities and agencies. In those areas where conservation is prioritised by MSP, other maritime uses are forced to be constrained by conservation priorities (Xunta de Galicia, Spain). MSP can “*go beyond protected areas in making provisions for protection*” (federal agency, Germany) and can “*include guidance for planning in areas with high natural value*” (Sweden agency). Similarly, for the Azores (regional authority, Portugal), beyond marine protected

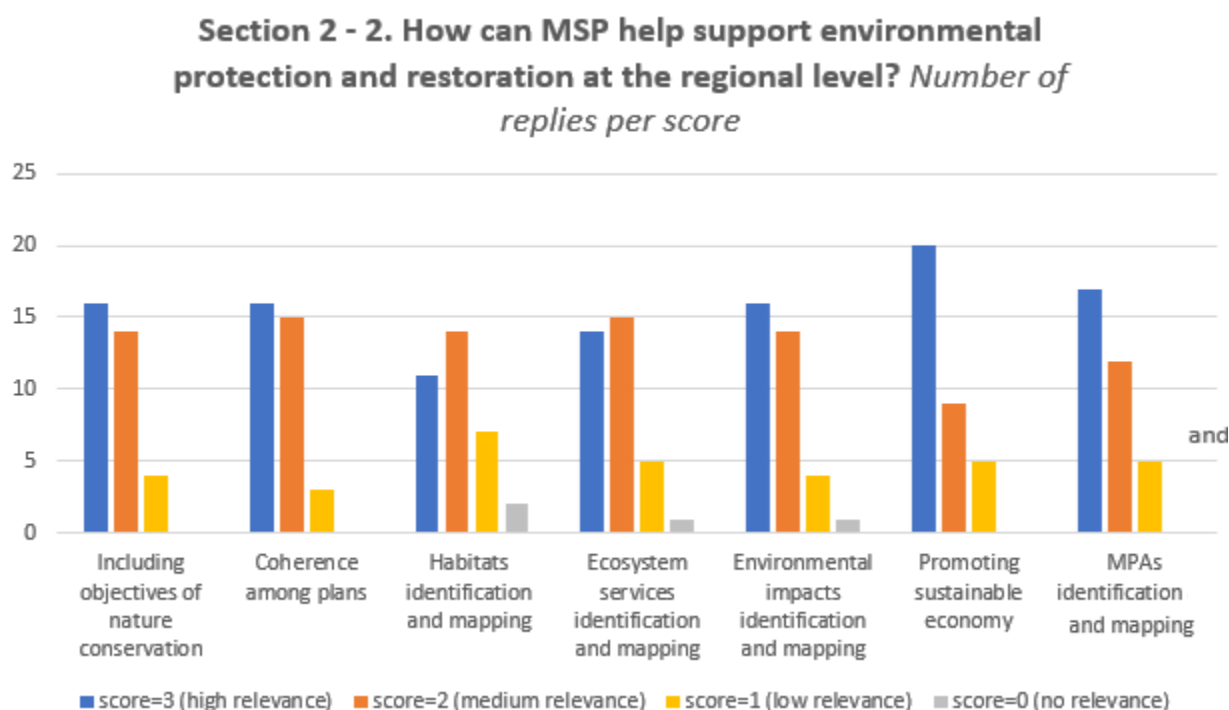
areas, MSP “*identified and characterized other areas, not yet classified as protected areas, which are considered of special value for conservation*”. In Greece (university’s perspective), special spatial planning measures can be defined not only within the designated MPAs but also in the “*surrounding buffer zones*”. Indeed, as mentioned in the experience of Germany and Finland, the establishment of a protected area might not be a direct competence of the MSP authority, falling instead under the nature conservation agencies and environmental ministries. However, the definition of specific areas where conservation is prioritised or where specific measures are highly recommended to preserve their natural value is a key opportunity coming from MSP. In Lithuania, “*action plans for improving conservation*” are strongly needed to implement MSP provisions.

- Agreeing on strong guiding principles on EBA (Ecosystem Base Approach): According to the German experience, “*MSP can take an ecosystem-based approach that ensures the environment is not merely considered as a sector. Agreeing on strong guiding principles on an EBA across the federal states and the EEZ would be useful*” (federal agency, Germany). In addition, it was stated that MSP should be coordinated with the MSFD with the final goal of “*obtaining or maintaining the good environmental status and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity, marine ecosystems and the maintenance of ecosystem services*” (Azores).
- Collaborating with neighbouring countries: Collaboration on MSP with neighbouring countries is essential and remarked upon by both from Germany (federal agency) and from the Netherlands (Zuid-Holland province), so that “*coherence across sea basins in conservation and restoration is ensured*” and “*consistency among policies is achieved*”. This issue should be addressed together with neighbouring countries to ensure consistent policies.
- Involving all actors and improving communication and transparency: The importance of involving stakeholders by consulting all represented sectors and of communicating in an effective way was stated by two fisheries associations (Portugal, Spain), and by the Central Macedonian region who also highlighted the need for increasing awareness and public participation. In particular, the top-down approach should be avoided, and the data collection process should be more transparent and organised in a “*common European application, avoiding the dispersion of initiatives*”.
- Reducing pressures and impacts of economic activities on fragile systems: In the Galician (regional level) and French experience “*estuaries are fragile spaces that support a very high degree of anthropogenic activities that lead to their degradation/disturbance*” and “*MSP can facilitate considering the fragility of ecosystems in the development of activities at sea*”. Similarly, according to the Catalanian region in Spain, MSP could encourage “*effective management of activities that reduces pressure on habitats and species that are especially sensitive to them*”. MSP at the regional level is also responsible for ensuring that the carrying capacity of

marine ecosystems is not exceeded and that economic activities are performed in a sustainable way, without compromising the flow of ecosystem services (Greek university, West Flanders region). At the same time, according to a fisheries association in Spain, MSP provisions should find solutions for avoiding conflicts between fisheries (including fishing sport activities) and nature conservation.

- Boosting local initiatives: To move forward, the need for initiatives undertaken at the local level is stated by the Central Macedonian Region who calls for “*local management bodies of environmentally protected areas, commitment and clarity of the plan*”. Moreover, according to Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur region, MSP “*establishes a partnership and a space for exchange to guide and support local initiatives, particularly through the implementation of operational strategies, calls for joint projects, etc.*”.
- Respecting local communities: Another added value of an EBA that can be fostered by MSP is, according to a Spanish fisheries association, the preservation of traditional activities. MSP should “*respect existing uses, the way of life of local communities, especially fishing communities, as well as their cultural heritage. Artisanal fishing should be preserved, and small coastal communities should be prioritized when establishing spatial planning*”.

Figure 11. MSP and environmental protection: relevance of different options based on scoring



c) MSP and Integrated Coastal Zone Management

MSP and ICZM are both planning processes that seek to overcome sectoral management approaches, encouraging instead a holistic view in organising human activities in coastal and marine areas, with the overall goal to achieve economic and social objectives whilst safeguarding ecological integrity³². Based on the wide Mediterranean experience on ICZM, prompted by the ICZM Protocol under the Barcelona Convention, ICZM has been advocated as an integrated management approach based on the assumption that the coastal area is a whole system comprising both land and sea components, with interdependent human uses and coastal resources³³. This means that MSP and ICZM are strictly connected and need to be implemented in a coordinated way.

At the EU level, the policy foundation for ICZM can be found in the ICZM Recommendation (2002/413/EC) that requires a strategic approach to preserve, amongst others, the coastal integrity, to develop sustainable economic opportunities, and to coordinate actions in managing land-sea interactions. Following the recommendation's adoption, several EU countries promoted various ICZM initiatives, mainly strategies and plans, to implement its provisions.

The MSP Directive recommends Members States to consider land-sea interactions in developing their MSP plans.

While MSP is mainly a national task, ICZM often takes place at the subnational level, involving coastal regional authorities and coastal municipalities as major actors. The available experience showcases that national MSP can offer relevant opportunities for remarking and strengthening the role of ICZM plans issued at the subnational level. Vice-versa, ICZM plans can be utilised as an input for the national MSP process to address land-sea interactions and highlight the regional specificity of regional development strategies.²⁸ Based on the analysis of different ICZM cases in Estonia and Finland issued at the municipality or regional level, the authors state that the vague state of ICZM within MSP has resulted in possible reduced

³² Le Tissier, M., (2020) Unravelling the Relationship between Ecosystem-Based Management, Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning. In: Ecosystem-Based Management, Ecosystem Services and Aquatic Biodiversity. Theory, Tools and Applications. Timothy G. O'Higgins, Manuel Lago Theodore H. DeWitt (eds). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-45843-0>

³³ Ramieri, E., Bocci, M., Markovic, M., (2019). Linking Integrated Coastal Zone Management to Maritime Spatial Planning. In: Maritime Spatial Planning. Present, past, future. Jacek Zaucha and Kira Gee (eds). Printed by Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98696-8>

understanding of synergies between the two processes, but also offered the possibility of testing alternative approaches to ICZM and MSP tailored to the specific regional or local needs³⁴.

To investigate the role of MSP in ICZM and vice versa, the following question was asked to participants:

Section 2 – Q3 - How do you think MSP can support ICZM at the regional level?

Participants were asked to assess different pre-defined categories of opportunities offered by MSP for strengthening ICZM at the regional level and to assign a score that reflects their respective relevance, according to individual experiences. The proposed categories are reported in the following list.

- Incorporating the analysis of Land-Sea Interactions in the national MSP,
- Recognising the role of ICZM plans already issued by regional authorities,
- Promoting the preparation of new ICZM strategies and plans by regional authorities,
- Involving stakeholders with a key role for coastal issues (e.g. tourism),
- Promoting spatial measures for coastal defence,
- Promoting spatial measures to avoid the impacts of sea-based or land-based activities on the coastal area,
- Mitigating conflicts between different coastal economic sectors at the regional level, and,
- Solving cross-border issues relating to the management of coastal and marine areas.

The responses revealed that all the proposed categories can be considered quite relevant, meaning that there is a quite high expectation for MSP to integrate and strengthen ongoing and future ICZM processes. Indeed, as shown in Figure 12, the number of people that assigned a “no relevance” score (score = 0) or “low relevance score” (score = 1) is far less than the number of people that assigned medium to high relevance. The medium score ranged between 2.1 and 2.5 among the different categories, without a winning factor able to suggest a dominant thought. The highest score refers to “Involving stakeholders with a key role in coastal issues” (score 2.5) followed by “Incorporating the analysis of Land-Sea Interactions in the national MSP” and “Promoting spatial measures to avoid the impacts of sea-based or land-based activities on the coastal area” (score 2.4).

In addition to the scoring exercise, participants were invited to spontaneously share their thoughts on the ICZM/MSP topic by adding their suggestions about how ICZM could be progressed at the regional level. Suggestions can be summed up as follows:

³⁴ Hietala, R., Ijäs, A., Pikner, T. *et al.* (2021). Data integration and participatory process in developing integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) in the northern Baltic Sea. *Journal of Coastal Conservation* 25, 47. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11852-021-00833-4>

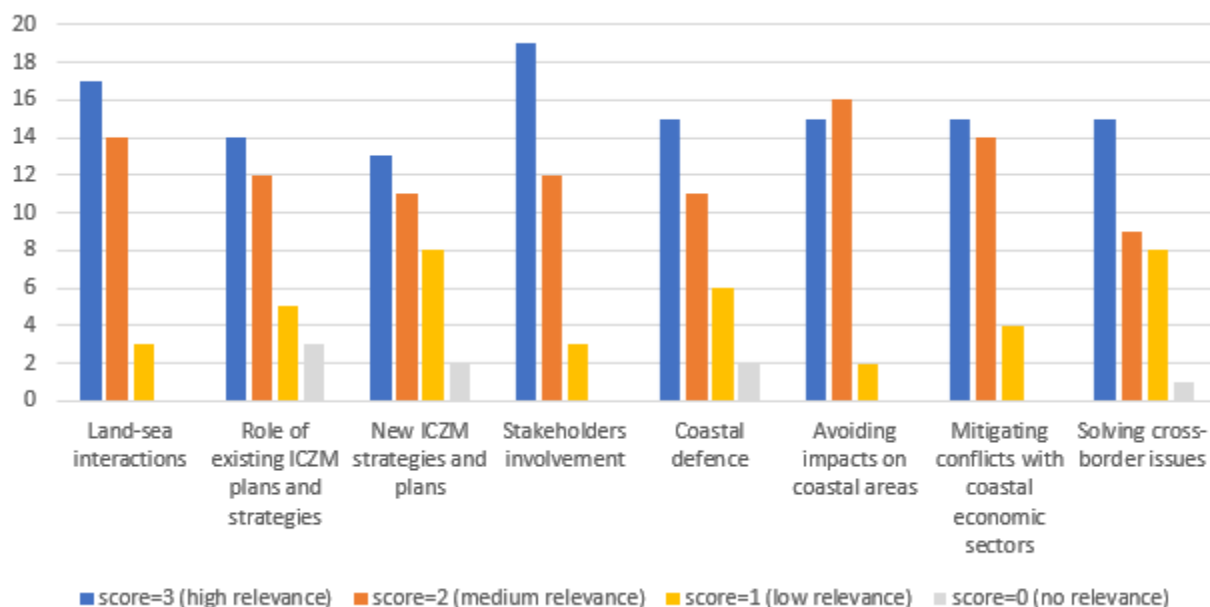
- Better consideration of coastal economic activities in MSP: This issue has been raised both from a national perspective (Greece) and from a sectoral perspective (fisheries association of Spain). According to the received responses, *“tourism activities taking place in the coastal zone should be taken into account and considered a priority for MSP when organizing activities in the adjacent marine space. Given the demanding issues that the tourism sector is facing and the growing threat of climate change, the interaction between the coastal and marine space is a key challenge that MSPs are expected to address. Moreover, the location of marine productive activities in close proximity to the coastal area directly affects landscape and therefore special attention should be given to the protection and the preservation of the landscape”*. Similarly, the importance of fisheries and *“their contribution to food security and sovereignty”* should be better recognised.
- Improved collaboration with regional, local authorities and various stakeholders: National MSP can encourage regional/local collaboration over administrative borders. This issue was raised both by a national agency (Sweden) and by other types of stakeholders (a university, a NGO, a sectoral association of fisheries) all located in Spain. Moreover, *“the establishment of individual integrated management groups has been suggested to manage different coastal areas in a tailored way”* (Galicia, Spain).
- Preparation or update of new plans and strategies: The need for new or updated plans for the coastal areas, in line with MSP provisions, has been mentioned by two regions of Spain (Galicia, Catalanian), two regions of Italy (Emilia Romagna, Calabria) as well as by one university (Coruña).
- Better consideration of Land-Sea Interactions: For the regional government of Azores, within MSP, *land-sea interactions were evaluated from the perspective of interactions between human activities in the maritime space and in the coastal land space, taking into account the existing territorial management instruments for the coastal zone. The result was a matrix of land-sea interactions. An important way ICZM can be further progressed at regional level is to acknowledge that there is room for improvements in the analysis of land-sea interactions in the next cycle of MSP, more adapted to specific cases and considering the inclusion of interactions related to natural processes*. In Greece (university point of view), *“although ICZM plans are not included in the spatial planning system of Greece, land-sea interactions are fully considered when drafting regional spatial plans for the terrestrial and the marine parts of the country”*.
- Clear and binding rules for ICZM: The need for more clarity, clear responsibilities and binding plans and strategies for ICZM was a common issue raised by five respondents coming from Spain (three different regions plus an NGO), Italy (one region) and Greece (one region). In particular, *“more clarity on the legal framework at administrative and institutional levels and the articulation mechanisms between these instruments (MSP and ICZM)”* were mentioned by Azores.

Another interesting suggestion for strengthening the integration of MSP and ICZM comes from Spain (fisheries association) that highlighted the need for “*integrating the management of coastal and marine protected areas*”, as for example being tested in a marine co-governance project in the marine area of the Marina Alta (Valencian Community).

The need for financial and human resources is also stated by one respondent (France, Région Sud / Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur)

Finally, the questionnaire revealed the existence of different approaches to MSP and ICZM. For Greece, MSP and ICZM fall under different entities and ICZM plans are not included in MSP, even though the coastal issues are covered by the analysis of Land-Sea Interactions. On the other side, MSP and ICZM are going “*hand in hand*” according to the experience of Finland where coastal regions councils (regional MSP authorities) took part in the steering committee of MSP led by the Ministry of Environment. Indeed, in the Finnish experience, both instruments “*aim to promote sustainable development addressing the European Green Deal targets such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity and zero pollution*” (Southwest Finland). Similarly, according to the Zuid Holland experience, ICZM and MSP are “*mutually supportive*”.

Figure 12. MSP and ICZM: relevance of different options based on scoring



IV. Conclusions

This report highlights the importance of coordination between regional and national levels in the context of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in EU countries. MSP is a strategic tool to address the diverse interests within the maritime domain, and this report underlines the need for a coordinated multilevel approach that can integrate regional plans and priorities. The success of MSP relies on effective coordination between national and regional levels to ensure a cohesive strategy, respecting regional nuances and characteristics while adhering to overarching national and EU objectives.

The implementation of the MSP Directive at the national level requires careful consideration of pre-existing regional plans. The survey conducted on the linkages between national and regional planning reveals that even if in some cases when regional plans seem fully consistent with the national ones, challenges such as a lack of integration and a concerted approach to address the conflicts of uses still exist.

The participants also provided insights about local and sectoral strategies or plans at sea, relevant for MSP, being developed in their regions. Examples included aquaculture zoning areas, climate change adaptation strategies and territorial action plans. Additionally, gaps between national MSP plans and regional priorities were identified, with different priorities and data availability being the primary concerns. The respondents suggested that the lack of shared criteria for prioritising activities and the weaknesses in transboundary cooperation with neighbouring countries are also relevant factors.

To strengthen links between national MSP plans and regional priorities, the survey results highlighted various suggestions. These include foreseeing technical tools such as additional resources and training, defining common basic criteria for plan drafting, or governance approaches such as ensuring stakeholder involvement and fostering legal aspects like enhancing the competencies of regions, and strengthening legal MSP instruments.

In the second part, the analysis discussed the role of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in addressing climate actions, environmental protection, and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) at the regional level. In the context of climate change, MSP is a relevant tool to mitigate climate change impacts and support the energy transition in line with the European Green Deal. Marine spatial plans must be adapted in considering spatio-temporal modifications in human uses and thus in establishing climate-proof spatial measures. However, the inclusion of climate change impacts considerations in marine spatial plans is still in its early stages.

Concerning environmental protection, MSP can operationalize an Ecosystem-Based Approach (EBA), in line with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). The analysis emphasized the importance of MSP in incorporating nature conservation objectives, ensuring coherence with regional environmental goals and identifying areas for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) or Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs). The survey indicated that MSP is expected to offer a variety of opportunities for strengthening environmental protection, with the highest scores given to the identification of objectives related to nature conservation, coherence with regional goals, and the identification of protected areas.

In the realm of ICZM, the analysis suggested that MSP can support ICZM at the regional level by incorporating the analysis of land-sea interactions, recognizing existing ICZM plans by regional authorities, promoting the development of new ICZM strategies and involving stakeholders crucial for coastal issues. Survey responses emphasized the need for collaboration, stakeholder involvement and measures to address conflicts of uses and cross-border issues.

Overall, the responses from the survey and the additional comments provided insights of the perspectives of regional and national authorities, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, clear rules and consideration of local specificities in advancing these planning processes.

The report enabled to summarize some key messages and needs expressed by regional authorities and other stakeholders with regards to MSP implementation at the regional and national levels.

In terms of governance, respondents stressed the importance of cooperation and coordination, and the involvement of regional authorities in governance and decision-making processes. In that sense, the establishment of permanent committees with sectoral competences lying on both the state and regions, or a collaborative scheme supporting "joint management" and "shared management" between central and regional governments could foster better collaboration.

In terms of data and planning, more collaborative efforts are needed between regional and national authorities in terms of data, including integration of databases and harmonisation, information sharing and exchanging experiences among authorities. A need for uniform planning evidence was underlined, particularly regarding data collection and availability.

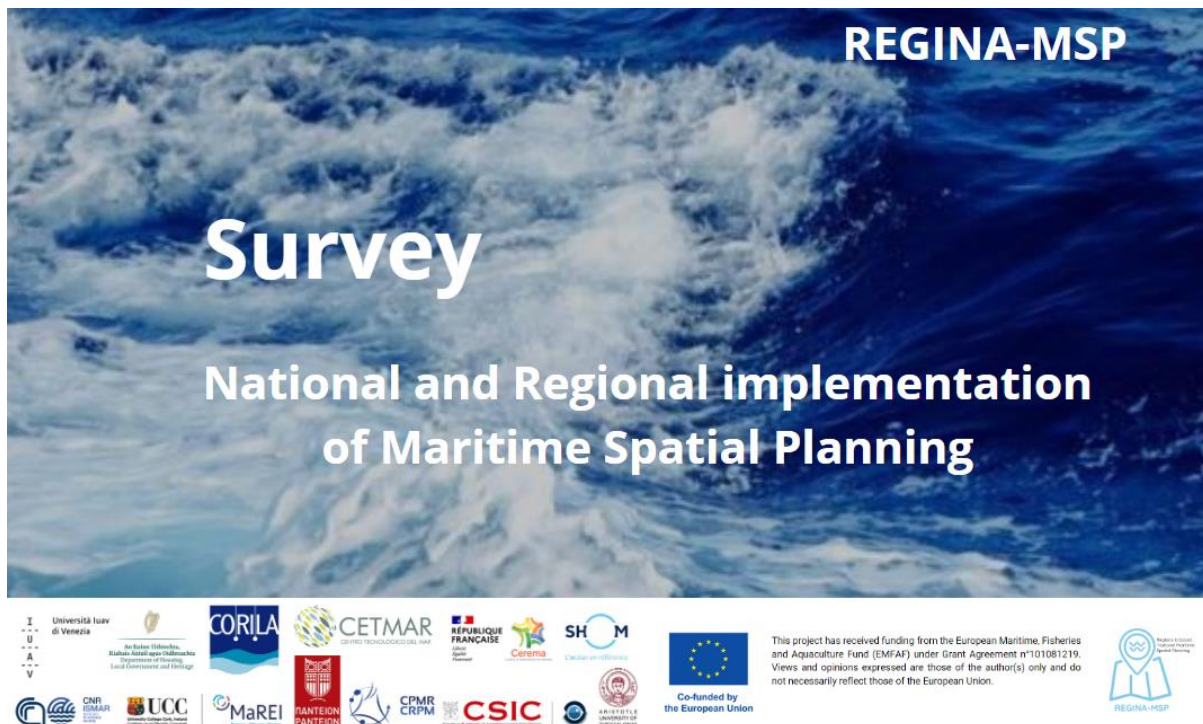
An emphasis could be placed on monitoring and evaluating plans, addressing the comparison and contradictions between national and regional priorities, and including indicator grids for environmental monitoring.

Regarding stakeholder engagement, a need for the involvement of more local actors in MSP implementation was also underlined. In various countries, stakeholders and sectors which are not prioritised in international and EU legislation, are identified as being underrepresented or insufficiently involved in MSP, including coastal communities, artisanal fisheries, nautical and recreational fishing, aquaculture, environmental and cultural heritage sectors. More attention could also be paid to blue biotechnology, innovations, and the extractive sector. In insular territories, economic dependence on specific sectors creates imbalances, hindering representativeness and equity among stakeholders, and geographical dispersion among islands makes it challenging to gather stakeholders, affecting sectors like maritime and coastal tourism. Finally, the general public has been less represented in MSP, but as in some current revision processes, inputs can be provided through web consultations.

To conclude, the report reveals that key aspects for a successful MSP implementation at the national and regional levels rely on fostering multilevel cooperation and to integrate a clear consideration of territorial specificities. 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 processes are among the main recommendations for advancing MSP implementation at both regional and national levels, emphasizing the necessity of collaborative, inclusive, and well-coordinated planning efforts.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Survey on national and regional implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning



The REGINA-MSP project aims at improving the participation of the Regions, local authorities and stakeholders in the development and implementation of national Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP). It is funded by the European Commission through the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), administered by the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA). The project will run from November 2022 until October 2024.

REGINA-MSP combines a general analysis and discussion at European level under the auspices of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), with an in-depth analysis at the level of eight Regional case studies chosen in 5 countries (Ireland, France, Spain, Italy and Greece) pertaining to two sea basins (Atlantic and

Mediterranean). The methodology combines analysis of existing documents and literature, interviews with actors and participatory work with stakeholders. Specificities and stakeholders' vision for the future will be highlighted and taken into consideration to help inform future MSP development and amendment. Policy briefs will summarise the background information collected and policy papers will issue recommendations at the three levels of case study Regions, countries and the European Union. The expected impacts include enhanced mobilisation at regional level in favour of MSP and its contribution to the Green Deal, as well as possible evolutions in the legal and policy frameworks. A better interaction between MSP and the European cohesion policy is also expected.

This survey has been designed by the MaREI Centre, Environmental Research Institute at University College Cork with the support of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) and THETIS. The purpose of this document is to explain to you what the work is about and what your participation would involve, so as to enable you to make an informed choice. The questions included in the attached survey seek to the current status of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) or its equivalent in the REGINA-MSP partner countries and their regions, using the six geographical commissions of the CPMR.

The REGINA-MSP project consortium hope that the information provided from the responses will inform them about what different Regions (NUTS2³⁵) are expecting to gain from implementation of MSP, how they are involved in its implementation, how regional and local ambitions sit with over-arching national MSP objectives and whether there are any specific weaknesses that could be addressed or strengths that could be useful to other regional and national contexts.

Should you choose to participate, you are asked to complete this online form. We would like to have wide geographic representation across the six geographical commissions of the CPMR including Atlantic, North Sea, Baltic Sea, Balkan and Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea basins and EU Islands. Participation is, however, voluntary.

³⁵ NUTS Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics is a geocode standard for referencing the administrative divisions of countries for statistical purposes. For each EU member country, a hierarchy of three NUTS levels is established by Eurostat in agreement with each member state. Each level is a subdivision of the previous level, and the delimitation criteria are based on demographic thresholds: from 3 million to 7 million inhabitants for NUTS 1; from 800,000 to 3 million for NUTS 2; from 150,000 to 800,000 for NUTS 3. (Source: <http://geoconfluences.ens-lyon.fr>)

There is no obligation to participate, and should you choose to do so you can refuse to answer specific questions or decide to withdraw from the study.

You maintain the right to withdraw from the study at any stage up to the point of data submission. It should be noted that the responses you provide will be attributed to your country/organisation, not to you as an individual. The data collected will be used for the purpose of the project only.

The data will be stored on the University College Cork OneDrive system and subsequently on the UCC server and no private information will be disseminated. The data will be stored for a minimum of ten years. As stated above, the information you provide will contribute to the work of the REGINA-MSP project as well as for research publications and/or conference presentations. As a final outcome, UCC and CPMR (supported by THETIS), will release a compendium of regional best experiences related to the implementation of the MSP Directive. The data collected will also support the development of other REGINA-MSP activities, linking with Ocean Literacy, MSP data gaps and needs, training opportunities and stakeholder engagement.

This study has obtained ethical approval from the UCC Social Research Ethics Committee. If you have any questions about this research, the process or the questions posed, please contact Dr Anne Marie O'Hagan at a.ohagan@ucc.ie and for any queries related to the CRPM, please contact Lise Guennal, Senior Project and Policy Officer, lise.guennal@crpm.org.

If you agree to participate in this study, please fill in the consent form below.

Kind regards,

Dr. Anne Marie O'Hagan
Senior Research Fellow: Coastal & Marine Governance,
MaREI: the SFI Research Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine,
Environmental Research Institute: Beaufort Building, University College Cork,
Co. Cork, Ireland.

CONSENT FORM

Do you consent to participate in this study?

Yes

No

SURVEY QUESTIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name*:
Surname*:
Position:
Organisation*:
Postal Address:
Region/county:
Country*:
Email*:
Phone number:

SECTION 1: Overview of the current MSP implementation level

Question 1

What is the current status of national MSP in your country?

- Adopted
- Adopted (first version) and in the process of revision
- Prepared but not still officially adopted (consultation/strategic environmental assessment ongoing)
- In preparation
- Other (please specify)

If available, please provide any relevant information on your national MSP or any policy documents (links to online version etc.)

[add possibility to upload files]

Question 2

Were authorities officially identified at the regional level with role/competence in MSP in your country?

- Yes
- No

Specify which regional authority was designated and if a new dedicated governance structure has been established. Add any details you consider relevant to the main regional structures with MSP competency:

Question 3

From your perspective, how were regional authorities involved in the design/revision/implementation of the national MSP?

- Fully involved (Regional authorities actively participated in the design of the Plan)
- Partially involved (Regional authorities were consulted after the plan design, with limited decision-making authority)
- Not involved/poorly involved (Regional authorities were not involved at all or simply informed at the final stages of the plan preparation)
- Other

Please briefly describe what kind of activities were organised to facilitate regional engagement in the MSP process (e.g., regular meetings with regional authorities, workshops, consultation process):

Question 4

Since the MSP process started in your country, has the role of regional authorities evolved?

- Yes
- No

Please provide more details on how the role of your region has evolved in the national MSP process:

Question 5

Which economic, environmental and social stakeholders/actors have been involved in the design and implementation of the national MSP and how (e.g., regular meetings with stakeholders, authorities, workshops, consultation process)?

Question 6



From your perspective, how are regional or local spatial plans (e.g., Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans, sectoral plans for maritime activities, economic development plans) incorporated with national MSP plans?

- Regional plans are fully consistent and embedded in national MSP
- Regional plans are poorly integrated in the national MSP
- Regional plans show some conflicts with the national MSP
- Other

Is your region developing local/sectoral strategies or plans at sea which is relevant for MSP? Please, specify which ones and describe their legal status and [plan for] implementation below:

Question 7

In your opinion, what gaps exist between national Maritime Spatial Plans and regional priorities (existing strategies/plans if any)?

- Policy areas (please specify which ones)
- Availability of resources
- Different priorities
- Data availability
- Other (please specify)

Add your considerations here:

Question 8

How can links between national Maritime Spatial Plans and regional priorities (existing strategies/plans) be strengthened or improved, if necessary? Do you have any suggestions on how to foster MSP through improved governance between national and regional scales?

Question 9

In your experience, have regions provided any data relevant to national MSP implementation? Tick all that apply.

- Presence of conflicts between different maritime uses
- Environmental impacts and pressures of certain maritime activities
- Environmental (habitats/species/marine biodiversity) data
- Physical and chemical data
- Hydrodynamical and hydrographic data
- Zonal assessment and/or marine protected area/spatial conservation areas
- International and cross-border issues
- Maritime boundaries
- Maritime transport and traffic flows
- Ports and infrastructures
- Submarine cable and pipeline routes
- Surveillance and security
- Fishing and aquaculture
- Spatial policy
- Military
- Risks
- Renewable energies
- Scientific research
- Tourism and recreation
- Underwater cultural heritage

- Coastal land uses/activities
- Socioeconomic data
- Other (specify)
- No data were provided

Please add your considerations here about the process of data provision:

Please add your views in terms of data access and data gaps, limitations, overlapping, or specific needs in terms of data and geoportal :

Question 10

According to your experience, have regional authorities benefitted from any specific training on MSP or related fields (e.g. blue economy)?

- Yes
- No

Please provide information on who provided the training (e.g. national government initiative, external provider sought specifically) and what topics were addressed:

Question 11

Have your national or regional authorities carried out any public awareness events on MSP?

- Yes
- No

In cases where such campaigns on Ocean Literacy³⁶ have taken place, please provide some information on these events such as where (school, museum, public square, etc.), on which topic (education, sustainable food, diving expedition, fishing-tourism, etc.), and to whom (students, general public, etc.) and/or associated contact persons:

SECTION 2: Opportunities from MSP for regional policy objectives

Question 1

How do you think MSP can help support climate action at the regional level?

Score each option between 0 (=not relevant/unfeasible) and 3 (=high relevant/completely feasible)

³⁶ Ocean literacy necessitates understanding the ocean's influence on us and how we influence on the ocean so that we can make responsible choices to protect the ocean more effectively and use the opportunities it provides us with in a sustainable way.

- Avoiding new emerging use conflicts due to new challenges posed by climate change, by designing a future-looking plan
- Safeguarding biodiversity from the impacts of climate change, by assessing the impacts of maritime activities
- Increasing the resilience of vulnerable habitats and species through the safeguard of protected marine areas
- Minimising the economic losses for certain maritime activities that could derive from “short-sighted” choices that do not properly consider risks associated to climate change
- Promoting the use of marine renewable energy sources, by defining dedicated spatial measures
- Preserving blue-carbon ecosystems, as important carbon sink areas
- Promoting spatial measures for coastal defence and for mitigating coastal erosion due to sea level rise

How could it be progressed at regional level? Add other possible elements here:

[upload documents]

Question 2

How do you think MSP can help support environmental protection and restoration at the regional level?

Score each option between 0 (=not relevant/unfeasible) and 3 (=high relevant/completely feasible)

- Including objectives of nature conservation and restoration for the long-term planning of the marine areas*
- Ensuring coherence between MSP goals and regional goals of environmental protection*
- Improving the identification and mapping of seabed habitats*
- Improving the identification and mapping of ecosystem services*
- Improving the identification and mapping of environmental impacts of maritime activities*
- Promoting the development of maritime activities sustainable for the environment*

- Identifying areas for the definition of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) or Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMS)*

How do you think that MSP process can contribute to the protection, conservation and restoration of marine and coastal environment of your region? Please explain how could it be progressed at regional level? Add other possible elements here:

Question 3

How do you think MSP can support integrated coastal zone management (ICZM³⁷) at the regional level?

Score each option between 0 (=not relevant/unfeasible) and 3 (=high relevant/completely feasible)

- Incorporating the analysis of Land-Sea Interactions in national MSP*
- Recognising the role of ICZM plans already issued by regional authorities*
- Promoting the preparation of new ICZM strategies and plans by regional authorities*
- Involving stakeholders with a key role for coastal issues (e.g. tourism)*
- Promoting spatial measures for coastal defence*
- Promoting spatial measures to avoid the impacts of sea-based or land-based activities on the coastal area*
- Mitigating conflicts between different coastal economic sectors at the regional level*
- Solving cross-border issues relating to the management of coastal and marine areas*

Please specify how ICZM could be progressed at regional level? Add other possible elements here:

³⁷ Integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) is a dynamic, multidisciplinary and iterative process to promote sustainable management of coastal zones. It covers the full cycle of information collection, planning (in its broadest sense), decision making, management and monitoring of implementation. ICZM uses the informed participation and cooperation of all stakeholders to assess the societal goals in a given coastal area, and to take actions towards meeting these objectives. ICZM seeks, over the long-term, to balance environmental, economic, social, cultural and recreational objectives, all within the limits set by natural dynamics. (source: eea.europa.eu)

Question 4

Which other topics can benefit from MSP implementation at regional level?

What could be shared between regional authorities and national authorities to facilitate implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning?

Question 5

Considering stakeholders' engagement and the participation of sectors in MSP processes, which stakeholders/sectors are less structured and/or less represented in decision-making processes and set aside from MSP processes?

Further comments and information

Should you wish to add any supplementary information or comments on Maritime Spatial Planning in your country or Region, please add them below:
(if some relevant topics have not been addressed or if some regional specificities were not captured in the questionnaire, e.g. those that apply in the Outermost Regions)

Deliverable 2.1 Initial survey



Co-funded by
the European Union

Are you available for a follow-up interview to share further information on your experience in MSP process?

- Yes
- No

Thank you sincerely for taking the time to complete this survey and contributing to the REGINA-MSP project.

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