Final policy brief D1.1

Regions to boost
National Maritime
Spatial Planning

REGINA-MSP

December 2024

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Abstract	This report « Deliverable D1.1 Final policy brief » summarises the main activities and results of the REGINA-MSP project. It describes how the work carried out helps to meet the project's general objective of understanding and strengthening the role of regions (NUTS-2) in national Maritime Spatial Planning. Through a synthetic description of the different work packages and tasks, this report reveals obstacles to regional involvement as well as the variety of approaches and activities undertaken to reduce these obstacles. At the end of the document, policy recommendations stemming from the project's findings are proposed to better integrate the regional and sub-regional needs, perspectives and stakeholders into Maritime Spatial Planning.

SUMMARY

LIST OF FIGURES

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AUTh	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
CCAA	Autonomous Regions in Spain
CEREMA	Centre d'études et d'expertise sur les risques, l'environnement, la mobilité et l'aménagement
CMR	Central Macedonia Region
CoP	Community of practice
CORILA	Consorzio per il coordinamento delle ricerche inerenti al sistema lagunare di Venezia
CPMR	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions
CS	Case Study
CSIC-IEO	Centro Nacional del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas - Intituto Español de Oceanografía
DDTM	Department State Services (France)
DECC	Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (Ireland)
DGCM	Directorate-General of the Coast and the Sea (MITERD, Spain)
DIRM	Interregional Directorate for the Sea (France)
DMAP	Designated Maritime Area Plan (Ireland)
DM-LEBA	Levantine-Balearic marine demarcation (Spain)
DM-NOR	North-Atlantic marine demarcation (Spain)
DSF	Document Stratégique de Façade (French MSP Plans)
EMFAF	European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund
EU	European Union
GT-OEM	Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (in Spanish - Grupo de Trabajo de Ordenación del Espacio Marítimo)
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IEO, CSIC	Spanish Institute of Oceanography, Spanish Research Council (by its Spanish acronym)
IUAV	University Iuav of Venice (Italy)
LSI	Land-Sea Interactions
MAP	Maritime Area Planning (Ireland)
MaREI	Research Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine (Ireland)

MITERD	Spanish Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MSP	Maritime Spatial Planning
MSPD	Maritime Spatial Planning Directive
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NMPF	National Marine Planning Framework
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
ORE	Offshore Renewable Energy
OWF	Offshore Wind Farms
PACA	Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur
PUSPS	Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences
REGINA-MSP	Regions to boost National Maritime Spatial Planning
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies
SCoT	Schéma de cohérence territorial (Territorial Consistency Scheme). France.
SRADDET	Schéma régional d'aménagement, de développement durable et d'égalité des territoires (Regional plan for planning, sustainable development and territorial equality). France.
UCC	University College Cork (Ireland)
WS	Workshop

I. Introduction

A. Scope of the project

The project "Regions to boost National Maritime Spatial Planning" (REGINA-MSP) is a European project co-funded by the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF). REGINA-MSP is coordinated by the French public institute CEREMA and gathers 12 project partners. This two-year project (November 1st 2022 - October 31st 2024) aims to **study and boost the role of regions in Maritime Spatial Planning** (MSP).

In the frame of REGINA-MSP and in this document, « regions » refer to territories of level 2 in the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistic[1] (NUTS-2) classification, which typically correspond to territories with a population of 800,000 to 3 million. NUTS-2 regions are often used for regional policy and funding decisions, and are particularly important for various European funding programmes and for the analysis of economic performance, development, and regional policies. In the European Union (EU), there are 100 NUTS-2 Regions with a maritime façade (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The 22 marine Member States and 100 coastal Regions (NUTS-2) part of the European Directive 2014/89/EU on Maritime Spatial Planning (in blue). Source: European Commission.

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[1] NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) is a hierarchical system for dividing up the economic territory of the European Union and its member states. It is used for collecting, developing, and analyzing regional statistics and for determining regional policies.

B. Project background: MSP in the EU and the role of regions

The project was prompted by the following observation: regions are key players in the implementation of MSP at local and regional level, yet they are usually minimally involved in the overall MSP processes in EU countries. Across the EU, countries adopt different ways of planning and organising activities at sea and on the coast, taking into account the need to safeguard marine ecosystems and the services they provide (e.g., food security, recreational and tourism activities, climate regulation and coastal protection).

The organisation of these activities typically refers to MSP, which can be defined as « *a public process of analysing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives* », according to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO [1]. The intended result of MSP is a more coordinated and sustainable approach to how oceans are used and managed.

In the EU, MSP is part of the EU Integrated Maritime Policy, which notably aims to « *support the sustainable development of seas and oceans and to develop coordinated, coherent and transparent decision-making in relation to the EU's sectoral policies affecting the oceans, seas, islands, coastal and outermost regions and maritime sectors* ». In 2014, the **Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council**, **was published to establish a common framework for MSP in the EU.** As stated in the MSP Directive (or MSPD), MSP covers the marine space under Member States jurisdiction (to the limits of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) or the continental shelf) and « [it] shall not affect the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of Member States over marine waters which derive from relevant international law ». MSP is prepared and implemented at different levels (i.e., European, national, regional/sub-regional). While in some EU countries, regions already play a predominant role in MSP (e.g., Finland)[2], **in most EU countries MSP is mainly a nationally-driven process**.

However, regional and sub-regional authorities and stakeholders play a **key role** in planning and managing MSP-related actions. In particular, regions have competencies in port management together with port authorities, in economic activities (e.g. coastal tourism or coastal fisheries though notably the EMFAF implementation for fisheries and aquaculture), as well as in environmental protection initiatives. Notably, ecosystems such as estuaries or seaweed habitats need local management and planning, and the management of pollution largely builds upon coastal land planning and sea basin management, which can be competencies of regions. In most cases, coastal EU regions undertake and manage Integrated Coastal Zone Management

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[2] In Finland, MSP is the full responsibility of regions, both on land and in the EEZ.

(ICZM) policies (in particular those which are part of the Barcelona Convention). They are able to anchor MSP to land, and actively take part in the implementation of Natura 2000 networks, the Common Fisheries Policy and the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), amongst others. In addition, regions can benefit from the European Cohesion Policy support funds and are acting at an adequate scale for combining European and national policies with local specificities. They are directly concerned with the objectives of the European Green Deal, the challenges of socio-economic development and environmental policies. They manage the implementation of European funds for this purpose. Recent literature (Jentoft, 2017 [2]; Morf et al., 2019 [3]) highlights the complexity of marine governance and the necessity for more inclusive MSP at all scales (from local to national and beyond) in order to achieve sustainable management of the seas. This very much aligns with the findings of the REGINA-MSP project.

Despite these regional competences at sea and on the coast, the role and involvement of regions is very diverse among the EU Member States implementing MSP within the shared framework of the 2014 MSP Directive. In most cases, regions are either heavily involved in the preparation of MSP-related plans or not involved at all, and likewise it is common to have an overlap of responsibilities when it comes to spatial planning or the implementation of public policies that lies under MSP.

C. Objective of the project

For all the reasons described in sub-section I.B, the participation of regional and local authorities in MSP, and more broadly local stakeholders, could be enhanced to achieve more integrated and effective implementation of actions. This is the objective of REGINA-MSP, which **aims to better integrate the regional and sub-regional needs, perspectives and stakeholders in MSP**. More specifically, REGINA-MSP first aims to provide an overview of the state of play of MSP implementation in the EU, ten years after the adoption of the MSP Directive 2014/89/EU by EU Member States. It also aims to facilitate the mainstreaming of initiatives from the different administrative levels and communities of stakeholders, through various tools and activities (e.g. workshops with regional and local authorities and stakeholders, training sessions, development of a cross-regional community of practice), as well as to provide momentum for enhanced cooperation at the sea-basin level. The expected impacts of REGINA-MSP, as stated in the Grant Agreement, 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.

D. Methodological approach of the project

To respond to the objective of better integrating regional and sub-regional needs, perspectives and stakeholders in MSP, the methodology combined analysis of existing documents and literature, surveys and interviews of relevant stakeholders (e.g. regional authorities, maritime sectoral users, etc.) as well as participatory workshops to understand stakeholders' needs and perspectives related to MSP processes. Specificities and stakeholders' vision for the future are highlighted and taken into consideration to help inform future MSP development and adaptation. More specifically, the project combined a two-level approach:

- (1) **a general analysis and discussion at the EU level** about MSP implementation with the preparation of a compendium of regional experiences, led by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions[3] (CPMR) and University College Cork. This was the focus of Work Package **(WP) 2 « Baseline assessment of MSP implementation at national and regional levels and Compendium of regional and subregional experiences »**. Part of this WP2, involved the design and completion of a questionnaire (Task 2.1) to understand regional needs and the current state of MSP implementation at both national and regional levels. The compendium of regional experiences (Task 2.2) enabled the collation of « good practices » of regional involvement in MSP with respect to specific thematic areas. Finally, a symposium of regions was carried out, allowing a political declaration of regions on their intentions regarding MSP (Task 2.3), synthesised and presented in a dedicate Policy Paper (Deliverable 2.3).

- (2) **an in-depth analysis in eight case study regions**, focusing on MSP plans and needs for implementation (Task 3.1), data needs and data portals (Task 3.2), stakeholders (Task 3.3) and new priority actions (Task 3.4). The eight case study regions are located in five European countries, i.e. France, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Spain, and refer to County Mayo (Ireland), Pays de la Loire (France), Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (France), Galicia (Spain), Murcia (Spain), Sardinia (Italy), Central Macedonia (Greece) and Crete (Greece) (Figure 2). This in-depth analysis was the focus of **WP3 « Deepening analysis in case study Regions from 2 sea basins, Atlantic and Mediterranean »**, led by CORILA (Consortium for coordination of research activities concerning the Venice lagoon system).

Work package (**WP) 4 « Ocean literacy and effective stakeholder engagement strategies »** was dedicated to the topic of stakeholder engagement in MSP. It was led by the Spanish Institute

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[3] The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) is a French association under the law of 1901, created in 1973 and headquartered in Rennes (France). CPMR brings together more than 150 coastal Regions from 25 countries members and non-members of the European Union.

of Oceanography that belongs to the Spanish Research Council (IEO,CSIC). The first task was dedicated to ocean literacy (Task 4.1), then Task 4.2 focused on training for MSP across scales through the production of a handbook for trainers' and the development of training sessions in the case study regions. Then, the topic of cross-regional communities of practice was further explored (Task 4.3).

The work packages **WP1 (Project management and communication)** and **WP5 (Communication and dissemination)** are both transversal and are led by the coordinator CEREMA.

Figure 2: The eight case study regions of REGINA-MSP

E. Final policy brief D1.1 in the scope of the project

As stated in the Grant Agreement, the present document « Final policy brief » (Deliverable 1.1) summarises the main activities and results of REGINA-MSP, their relevance for the implementation of the MSP Directive and potential suggestions for changes and improvements in current EU policy instruments, as well as at national and regional levels. This deliverable is part of WP1 « Project management and communication », and produced at the end of the project. Its content is based on the results from the project, including the inputs from the project's closing conference in Marseille on 23-24 October, 2024. **The present document consists of an overview of the project's activities and results, and using this to inform policy recommendations.** Recommendations highlighted in the last section of this Final policy brief are based on the content of the work conducted within the project's different work packages.

II. Main activities and results of WP2 – European approach: main results

Work package 2 (WP2), entitled « Baseline assessment of MSP implementation at national and regional levels and Compendium of regional and subregional experiences » first enabled an overview of MSP implementation to be garnered with the identification of MSP needs and gaps across the EU. Under WP2, three main tasks were performed, related to (i) an initial survey report (Task 2.1) in order to understand the state of MSP implementation in the EU, (ii) a collection of various regional approaches to MSP and associated benefits and challenges (Task 2.2), and (iii) a series of policy proposals enhance the EU MSP Directive, from the CPMR's regional authorities and targeting EU institutions (Task 2.3). The main activities and results part of these tasks are described in the sub-sections below.

A. Initial survey report

As part of **Task 2.1 « Initial survey report »**, a survey was developed to understand the state of MSP implementation in EU and the role of MSP in addressing specific topics such as climate action, environmental protection, Land-Sea Interactions (LSI) and Integrated Coastal Zone Mangement (ICZM).

The **survey** involved 36 replies (from national and regional authorities and other stakeholders) from 12 countries. The survey analysis revealed important disparities in the level of MSP implementation across countries, as well as a wide variety of MSP processes, with findings from some countries indicating that MSP is mainly regionally driven (e.g. Finland), but in most cases nationally driven (e.g. Greece) with a few exceptions where well-established MSP regional consultation occurs (e.g., in Ireland, Spain). The disparities in MSP governance between the different countries and case studies of REGINA-MSP are further detailed in section III.A of this document. Survey participants shared their vision of MSP, detailed their level of involvement and expressed their expectations and needs, highlighting a medium regional involvement in MSP on average (Figure 3). The survey analysis revealed a level of dissatisfaction regarding regional involvement in national MSP processes. Additionally, even if in some cases regional plans seem fully consistent with the national ones, the analysis highlights challenges such as integrating regional plans with national policy objectives, and showcases gaps and needs, as illustrated by Figure 4. The survey analysis highlighted regional strategies and identified disparities between national and regional priorities and possible solutions such as enhanced technical tools (e.g.

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additional resources and training), the definition of common criteria for plan drafting, and the strengthening of legal MSP instruments.

Regional involvement in national MSP: All replies

- ■ Fully involved
- ■ Not involved/poorly involved
- ■ Other
- ■ Partially involved

42%
8%
14%
36%

Regional involvement in national MSP: Regions' representatives replies

- ■ Fully involved
- ■ Not involved/poorly involved
- ■ Other
- ■ Partially involved

53%
16%
21%
11%
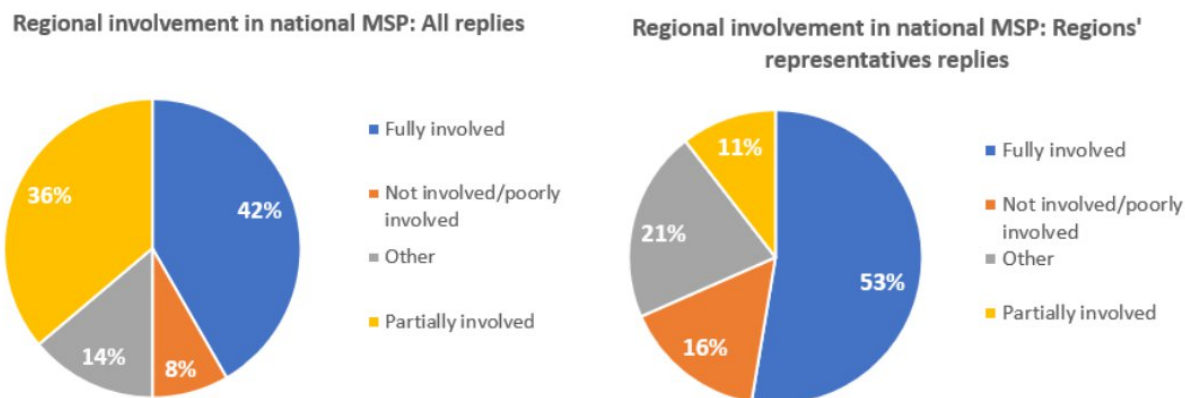
Figure 3: Survey responses for all respondents (left) and only regional representatives (right) to the question « From your perspective, how were regional authorities involved in the design/revision/implementation of the national MSP? »

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

22%
20%
6%
44%
8%

■ Fully consistent ■ Poorly integrated ■ Conflicts ■ Other ■ No answer
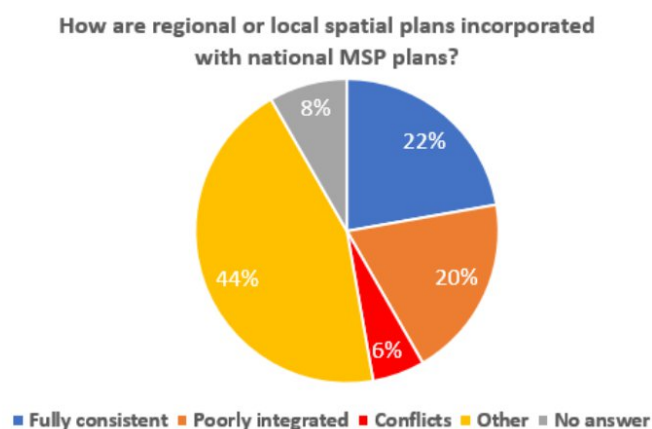
Figure 4: Survey responses to the question « From your perspective, how are regional or local plans incorporated with national MSP plans? »

Regarding the role MSP can play in addressing climate action, environmental protection, land-sea Interactions and Integrated Coastal Zone Management at the regional level, the analyses showed that respondents considered MSP as a relevant tool to mitigate climate change impacts and support the energy transition in line with the European Green Deal. Survey respondents advise that marine spatial plans must be adapted when considering spatio-temporal modifications in human uses and thus in establishing climate-proof spatial measures. However, considering the inclusion of climate change impacts in marine spatial plans is still in its early stages. Survey

responses also underscored MSP's potential for supporting environmental protection and ICZM, stressing collaboration, stakeholder involvement, and conflict resolution. Finally, survey respondents stressed the need for a greater engagement of regional and local stakeholders in MSP processes. Addressing sectoral disparities and enhanced public participation in MSP needs sustained effort. This work provided a solid first overview of regional involvement in national MSP processes in various regions and countries across the EU.

Outputs from T2.1

> ➤ A report « **Deliverable D2.1 Initial survey report** » [4] detailing the findings of T2.1 was produced. Available and downloadable at https://www.regina-msp.eu/deliverables.

B. Compendium of regional experiences

A second aspect of WP2 focused on **Task 2.2 « Compendium of regional experiences»**, which consisted of the collection of different approaches to MSP by various EU regions. The aim was to **capture the diversity of regional approaches to MSP and analyse the potential to transfer** these approaches to other regions and sea basins. A focus was placed on experiences related to the topics of climate change, biodiversity protection, land-sea interactions, ICZM and multi-level aspects. Benefits for regions and local authorities were underlined, as well as challenges (gaps, barriers and needs) through a cross-cutting analysis. This task enabled a general overview of regional aspects into MSP implementation and its evolution at EU level, with the final goal of boosting replication of positive regional experiences to other EU regions and sea basins and encourage multi-level governance in MSP.

A first collection of regional experiences in five countries (Greece, Ireland, Italy, Finland and Spain) aimed at describing how regions are involved in the preparation, revision and implementation of MSP plans that are managed by central authorities. This collection highlighted a variety of approaches in the different countries (i.e. Finland having a fully decentralised governance system, while others such as Greece or Ireland having a centralised system with regional / local involvement in MSP). In general, the pre-existing governance frameworks support regional participation in MSP. However, challenges to more active participation remain. These include the lack of adequate capacity and resources, complex administrative coordination in multi-level governance schemes, resource constraints, limited technical capacity, strategic nature or not legally binding plans.

Then, a second round of experiences was collected, in eight countries (Belgium, Greece, France, Ireland, Italy, Montenegro, The Netherlands and Spain). Fourteen experiences were identified and described with regards to benefits and challenges in integrating the topics of climate change, biodiversity protection, land-sea interactions and integrated coastal zone management in MSP. Benefits of this integration include notably a better alignment of coastal and marine planning through more coherent policies, optimisation and transparency of data collection, as well as the development of collaborative networks (e.g. The Finland spatial planning network), which fosters stakeholder engagement and enhances local capacities in MSP processes.

Outputs from T2.2

➢ The report « **Deliverable D2.2 Compendium of regional experiences** [5]» further details these results, and it is available and downloadable online at https://www.regina-msp.eu/deliverables.

C. Policy paper

Task 2.3 « Policy Paper » consisted of a series of policy proposals from the regions part of the CPMR targeting EU institutions, to enhance the EU MSP Directive 2014/89/EU. These proposals are different from the recommendations detailed at the end of this document, since the proposals in the Policy paper directly correspond to political declarations of the regions (regions here are not only the ones involved in the project; the contributions from regions was mediated by CPMR). The **REGINA-MSP Symposium** "*Shaping the future of Maritime Spatial Planning - Regional perspectives on challenges and opportunities of the development of a sustainable European Blue Economy*" was carried out as part of T2.3 and served as a basis to produce the Policy paper. This event was held on 30 April 2024 in Brussels at the European Committee of the Regions, and gathered high-level speakers from EU institutions, international organisations and regional authorities (Figure 5). The Symposium allowed regional challenges and opportunities related to the EU Green Deal to be showcased. Notably, it highlighted the need to move towards a more effective and innovative multi-level governance framework for implementation of the National Maritime Plans. The Symposium was also an opportunity to identify good practices and draw a wider perspective of the key role played by regional authorities in MSP processes largely driven by national governments.

The Policy paper analysed strategic articles of the MSP Directive in sequential order and **delivered proposals to improve the MSP Directive**, notably regarding the role of regions in MSP. More particularly, the symposium outputs (or policy proposals) referred to the needs to:

- Enhance policy integration for a holistic achievement of the objectives of the Integrated Maritime Policy;
- Drive the full implementation of the ecosystem-based approach;
- Clarify EU ambitions on co-existence and multi-use of the seas;
- Reinforce comprehensive and place-based climate action;
- Position regional authorities as the cornerstone of land-sea interactions;
- Reflect on improving the sea-basin approach for a more integrated and coordinated future of the MSP Directive;
- Call for a **political debate on the relevance and future of the MSP Directive**.

These recommendations are detailed point by point in the Deliverable « D2.3 Policy paper » available in the REGINA-MSP website.

Outputs from T2.3

- ➢ The report « **Deliverable D2.3 Policy paper** [6]» further details these results. It is available and downloadable at https://www.regina-msp.eu/deliverables.
- ➢ A communication brief « **Recommendations at the EU level from the workpackage 2 of REGINA-MSP** [7]» summarizes the activities and results of WP2. It is available and downloadable at https://www.regina-msp.eu/communication-briefs.

Figure 5: Symposium « Shaping the future of Maritime Spatial Planning », 30 April 2024, European Committee of the Regions, Brussels.

III. Main activities and results of WP3 – Deepening analysis in case study regions from 2 sea basins: the Atlantic and the Mediterranean

WP3 consisted of an in-depth analysis of regional MSP implementation, needs and perspectives in the eight case study regions of REGINA-MSP. It aimed to understand and strengthen the operational role of coastal Regions in MSP processes. First of all, an analysis of existing marine and coastal related policies and plans was conducted (task T3.1); then a focus on data availability, data needs and data coordination for MSP at the regional level was developed (Task 3.2). A third task (T3.3) aimed to understand the needs and perspectives of regional and local stakeholders regarding their engagement in MSP. Finally, fed from the result of these three previous tasks , a last task (T3.4) aimed at identifying actions needed to foster contributions of the regional and local levels to MSP implementation. The main activities of WP3 are summarised in Figure 6 below and the associated results are detailed in the following sub-sections B, C and D. To facilitate the reading, a **first sub-section A describes the eight case study regions of REGINA-MSP in terms of MSP governance, building mainly on the results of tasks T3.1 and T3.3**.

Analysis of plans & strategies
(WP3 task T3.1)
Around 140 coastal and maritime plans and strategies analysed

Surveys
(WP3 task T3.2)
3 surveys developed by SHOM to collect key data for regional and local use

Participatory workshops with stakeholders
(WP3 tasks T3.3 and T3.2)
4 workshops organised by SHOM (3 online and 1 in Paris) on data.
17 workshops to understand regional MSP specificities
(2 workshops in Galicia, 2 in Murcia, 3 in Sardinia, 1 in Pays de la Loire, 2 in Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, 4 in Crete, 2 in Central Macedonia, 2 in Mayo County

Interviews
(WP3 task T3.3)
For each regional case study: 30 interviews of State services representatives, regional and local authorities and sectoral local stakeholders

Identification of regional needs and new actions
(WP3 task T3.4)
To enhance the contribution of regional and local levels. For each case study: 30 interviews of States services representatives, regional/local authorities and sectoral local stakeholders
--> Number of actions identified for each CS: 7 actions for Murcia, 8 for Galicia, 5 for Sardinia, 19 for PACA, 11 for Pays de la Loire, 11 for Crete, 14 for Central Macedonia and 8 for County Mayo

Figure 6: Summary of the main activities conducted as part of REGINA-MSP Work Package 3.

A. Overview of MSP in the five countries and the eight regional case studies of REGINA-MSP

This sub-section provides an overview of MSP governance and state of implementation in the eight case study regions that belongs to five countries of REGINA-MSP. It is built mainly on the work done within Task 3.1 through the analysis of MSP related plans and T3.3 through the participatory workshops conducted with regional and local authorities and other local stakeholders.

A.1. Overview of MSP in Ireland and Mayo County case study region

In **Ireland**, the competent authority for MSP is the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), with marine planning functions having been transferred from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to the DECC in May 2024. The national planning system and legislative process has been radically overhauled since the enacted of the Maritime Area Planning Act, 2021 which strengthens the legal basis for MSP, introduces a new consenting process, created a new Maritime Area Regulatory Authority and assigns certain planning responsibilities to An Bord Pleanala and coastal planning authorities, depending on the nature and scale of the development. The MSP Directive 2014/89 was incorporated into Irish law through the aforementioned Act and is augmented by the Marine Planning Policy Statement, the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF), and Designated Maritime Area Plans (DMAPs). Together, these documents establish the legislative and policy framework for managing maritime activities. Ireland's sole national MSP plan, the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF), was published in July 2021. While the NMPF offers guidance on conducting MSP, it does not include zoning or specific priority objectives for sea areas. These aspects will instead be addressed by Designated Maritime Area Plans (DMAPs) under the MAP Act. Three Regional Assemblies - Northern and Western, Eastern and Midlands, and Southern support regional planning through their Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) and their role in MSP is expected to be strengthened in future. In the Northern and Western Region, where the REGINA-MSP case study (County Mayo) is located, the RSES emphasises integrated land and ocean planning for sustainable development of the marine environment and economy.

As a relatively new responsibility within DECC, the MSP area is still under development, with additional staff expected to be in place by the end of the year. There are data gaps in certain coastal and marine areas that need to be addressed to improve the evidence base for marine planning and management decisions. Currently, funding for most types of development remains uncertain, as there is no dedicated funding for MSP or marine infrastructure, unlike land-based

planning, which is supported by the National Development Plan. In 2024, a first DMAP for offshore energy on the south coast was adopted by Government and could serve as a model for planning offshore renewable energy (ORE) in other regions.

The **case study region of County Mayo** is situated in the North West Region of Ireland, bordering the Atlantic Ocean (Figure 7). It is the region with the longest coastline in Ireland, at 1168 km, or approximately 21% of the total coastline of the State, stretching from Killary Harbour in the south to Killala Bay in the north. Mayo has a rich and diverse landscape with many Special Areas of Conservation and Natural Heritage Areas.
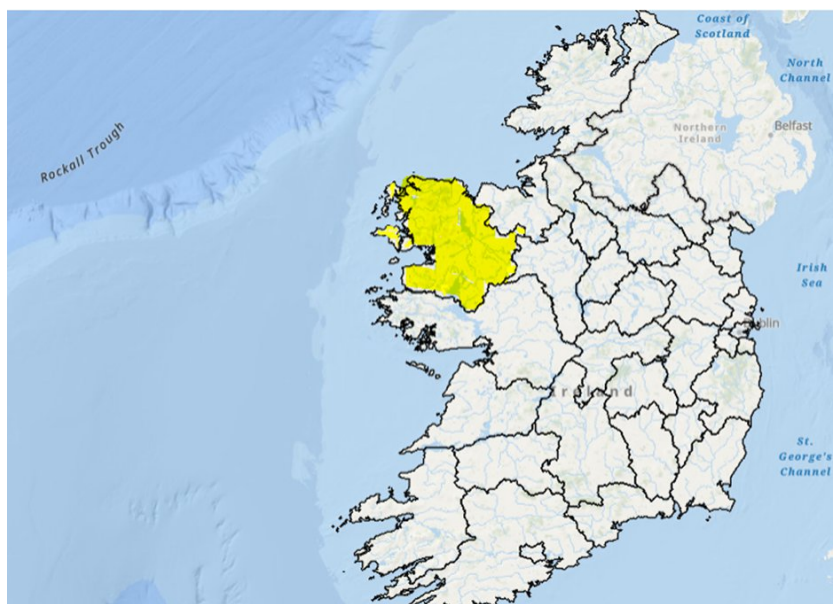
Figure 7: Map of Ireland with the regional case study Mayo County in yellow. Source: University College Cork.

A.2. Overview of MSP in Spain and the case study regions of Galicia and Murcia

In **Spain**, the MSP process is nationally driven. The Directorate-General for the Coast and the Sea (DGCM), which belongs to the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITERD) is the governmental body responsible for the development of the MSP policy and management in Spain. Nevertheless, according to the Spanish Constitution of 1978, there are numerous maritime uses and activities, such as aquaculture and maritime tourism, that are managed by the regional public administrations, which are called autonomous communities (CCAA, by its initials in Spanish - "Comunidades Autónomas"). This system is designed to accommodate diverse stakeholder interests and facilitate coordinated planning efforts.

Final policy brief D1.1

Regions to boost
National Maritime
Spatial Planning

REGINA-MSP

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The Autonomous Community of **Galicia**, a REGINA-MSP case study region, is located in the northwest of Spain. It has a rich maritime heritage, with much of its coastal population historically engaged in fishing and aquaculture. While these industries remain central, there has been recent growth in sectors like tourism and recreational maritime activities, with additional emerging maritime industries anticipated in the future. Coastal zones, especially within the rias, support multiple overlapping uses that require careful management to prevent conflicts and foster positive interactions. Additionally, there is a need for enhanced knowledge, information, and planning tools to effectively guide the future use of offshore areas.
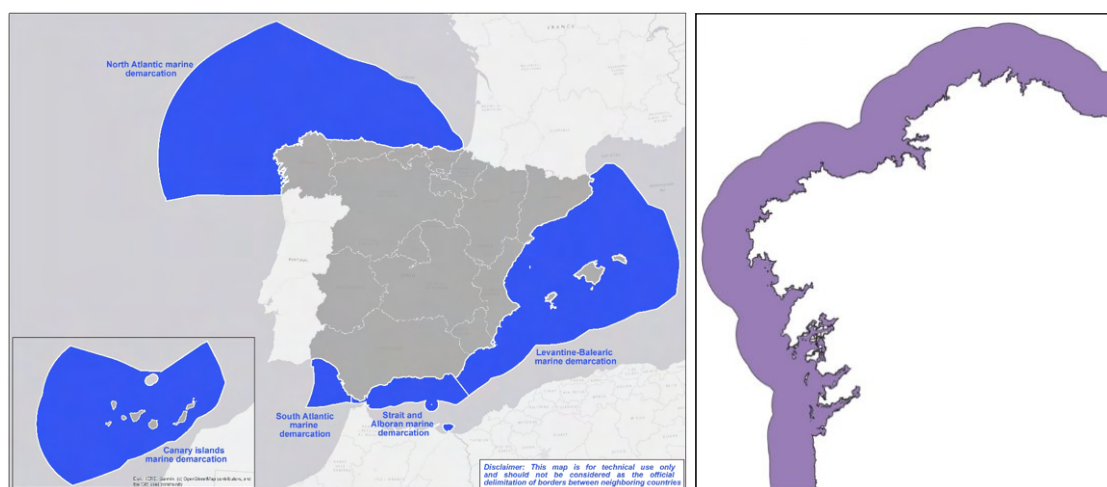
Figure 8. On the left: delimitation of the five Spanish marine demarcations (Source: own elaboration: IEO, CSIC). On the right: Case study area – Region of Galicia territorial waters belonging to the North-Atlantic demarcation (DM-NOR). Disclaimer: The limits of the marine demarcations do not correspond to the jurisdictional limits of the Spanish marine waters. They should not be considered as official delimitation with neighbouring countries.

The **case study region Murcia** is located in southeastern Spain, hosts several ecologically valuable protected areas and nature reserves, contributing to Spain's Natura 2000 network for biodiversity conservation: Calblanque, Monte de las Cenizas y Peña del Águila Regional Park, Salinas y Arenales de San Pedro del Pinatar, Sierra de la Muela, Cabo Tiñoso y Roldán, Mar Menor and Surrounding Wetlands. These protected areas are critical for preserving Murcia's natural heritage and highlight the region's commitment to conserving coastal, marine, and wetland ecosystems. Also, the Region supports growing aquaculture and nautical sectors that poses a risk to the nature conservation of the area.
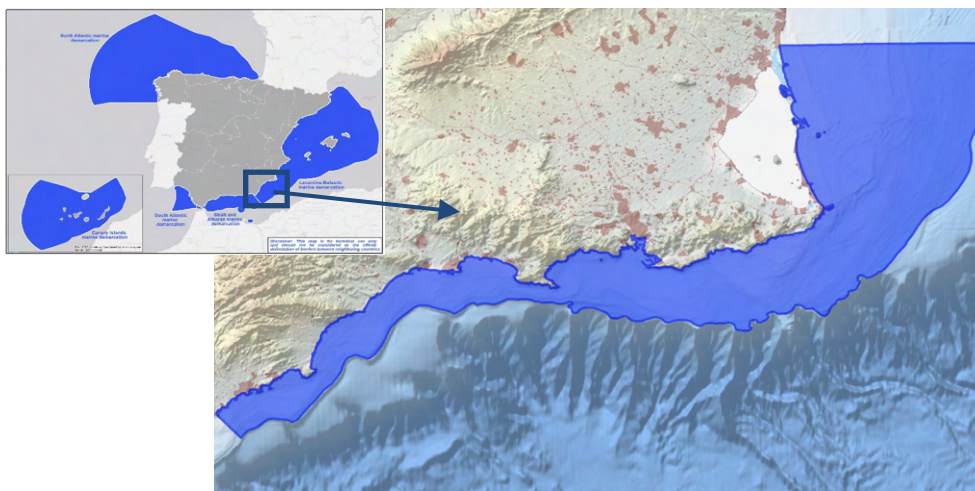
Figure 9: On the right: case study area - Region of Murcia maritime waters belonging to the Levantine-Balearic marine demarcation (DM LEBA); on the left: delimitation of the five Spanish marine demarcations (Source: own elaboration; IEO, CSIC). Disclaimer: The limits of the marine demarcations do not correspond to the jurisdictional limits of the Spanish marine waters. They should not be considered as official delimitation with neighbouring countries.

A.3. Overview of MSP in Italy and the case study region of Sardinia

In Italy, the MSP process officially started with the transposition of the MSP Directive through Legislative Decree No. 201/2016 and the Prime Minister's Decree of December 1, 2017. The first decree designated the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport as the Competent Authority (CA), while the second outlined the operational guidelines for developing three Maritime Spatial Plans (MSPs): Tyrrhenian-Western Mediterranean, Adriatic Sea, and Ionian-Central Mediterranean. A Technical Committee, led by the CA and including representatives from five Ministries and 15 coastal Regions, oversees the development of these plans, reflecting the shared legislative responsibilities between the State and the coastal Regions. The 15 coastal regions involved in the MSP process benefited from a multi-scalar planning approach that aligned national strategies with regional objectives, ensuring a coherent and sustainable use of marine resources. Several regions, including Sardinia (regional case study of REGINA-MSP), established internal working groups with various departments and levels of formalization. These groups provided data and insights to inform the process and facilitated agreement on key planning decisions at the regional level.

The case study focuses on the **Northern Sardinia maritime area**, from the island of Asinara to the Gulf of Olbia, as a unique blend of maritime activities and conservation priorities. Rich in biodiversity and high-quality landscapes, it serves as an example for MSP by balancing economic development with environmental protection. The region hosts various maritime activities, including fishing, aquaculture, shipping, tourism, recreational boating, and port operations, while

prioritising habitat and species conservation through Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), National Parks, and Natura 2000 sites.
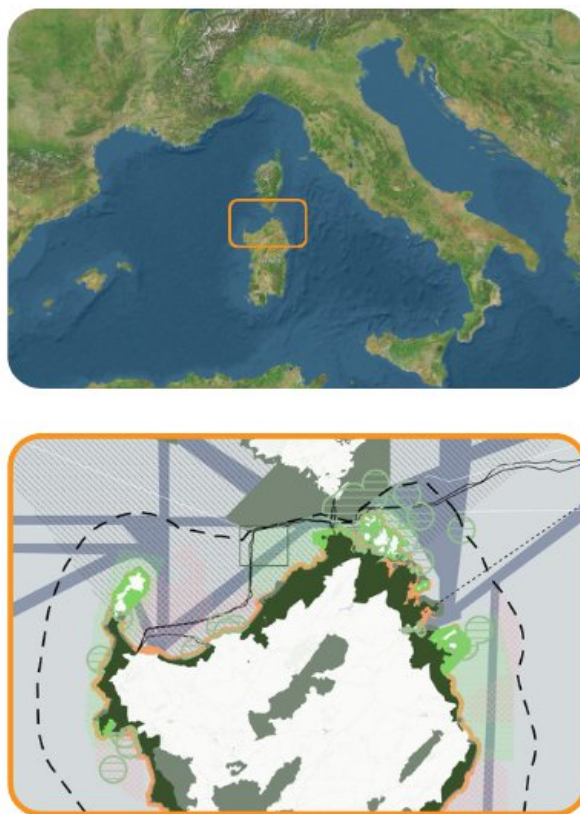
Figure 10: Location of North Sardinia and MSP.

A.4. Overview of MSP in Greece and in the case study regions of Crete and Central Macedonia

In **Greece**, according to the national legislation (Law 4546 of 2018 as amended in 2020 by Law 4759), MSP is performed at two levels: (i) the national level, through the National Spatial Strategy for the Marine Space (NSSMS-ΕΧΣΘΧ) and (ii) the regional level, through Maritime Spatial Plans/Frameworks (MSF-ΘΧΠ). The National Spatial Strategy for the Marine Space (NSSMS) constitutes a policy document, setting the framework and the strategic guidelines at the national level, for the marine parts of the country. The NSSMS of Greece has been recently completed and is pending approval. According to the draft NSSMS, four (4) maritime spatial plans will be adopted in Greece, for each of the marine spatial units (ΘΧΕ 1 - 4). So far, out of the four Maritime Spatial Plans/Frameworks, only one has been drafted and it is pending approval. This is the Plan for the North Aegean Sea (ΘΧΕ1), where Central Macedonia Region (CMR) is located.
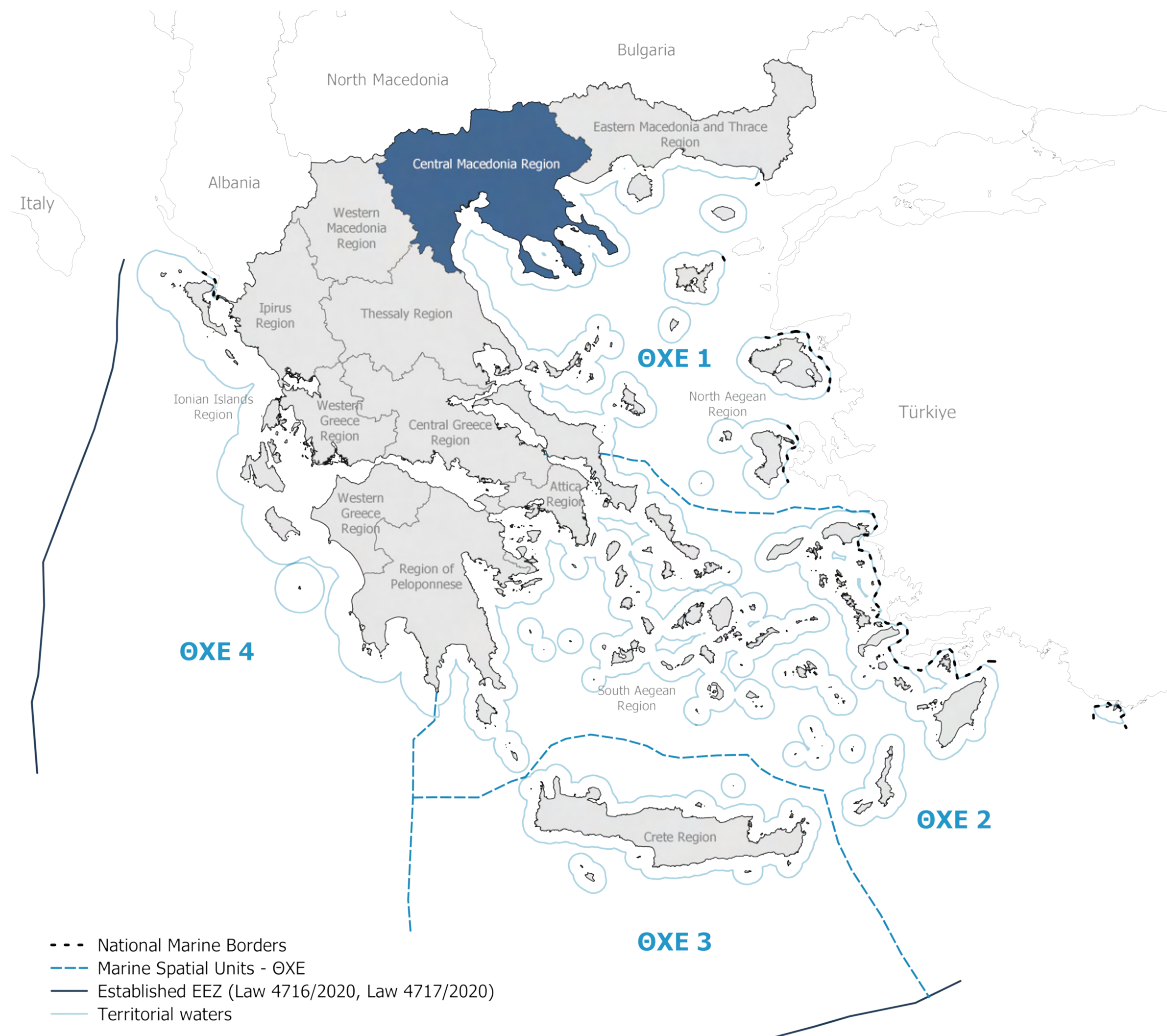
Figure 11: The Greek marine spatial units (source: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki).

Central Macedonia Region (CMR) is the second most populous region in Greece after Attica (Athens), with a population of almost 1.8 million. It is located in northern Greece, with a coastline stretching over 700 km. Thessaloniki, its capital and Greece's second-largest city, is a thriving international transport hub, with a waterfront stretching over 40 km. The region of Central Macedonia is characterised by a unique and sensitive marine ecosystem due to its geomorphological features (numerous shallow, semi-enclosed bays) and other coastal formations (deltas, estuaries, etc.) that are home to a rich biodiversity. In the marine parts of Central Macedonia, there are also several marine protected areas and underwater antiquities. This fragile marine ecosystem is under constant pressure due to the intensity of certain uses (mainly

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aquaculture and shipping), as well as strong land-sea interactions. Tourism and aquaculture are among the most important economic sectors, not only for the Thessaloniki metropolitan area, but also for the region as a whole. Around 80% of national mussel production takes place near Thessaloniki. Along the coastline of CMR, coastal urbanisation is rather intense, due to the uncontrolled expansion of the metropolis of Thessaloniki and the development of coastal tourism, especially in the Halkidiki peninsulas. Central Macedonia Region is part of the Marine Spatial Unit of the North Aegean Sea (ΘXE1), where the first (out of 4) Greek Marine Spatial Plan has already been drafted (pending approval). Within this area, integrated and sustainable maritime spatial planning needs to be achieved, considering blue growth trends, ecosystem services flow and climate change. Currently and until the Marine Spatial Plan of the North Aegean Sea is approved the spatial organization of the marine space of CMR is mainly addressed through the Special Spatial Planning Framework for Aquaculture and legislation of a national range, referring to restrictions for protected areas of natural and cultural importance as well as to regulation of economic activities (such as fishery). Additionally, even though the Regional Spatial Framework of Central Macedonia Region has no focus in the marine space, it refers to land-sea interactions providing relevant guidelines.

Crete region, the largest Greek island, is known for its rich history, culture, and diverse landscapes, spanning both land and sea. Covering 8,336 square kilometres with a population of 617,360 (2021 census), it remains one of Greece's most populous islands. The island's waters support a wide range of uses, from traditional activities such as fishing, shipping and coastal tourism, to emerging activities such as aquaculture, cultural maritime heritage and diving tourism, and offshore renewable wind energy or hydrocarbon extraction. As Cretan economy expands, the marine space faces pressures from either the traditional or the emerging blue economy sectors. Beyond growing conflicts between traditional and emerging maritime activities, overexploitation, pollution, and habitat destruction, compounded by the climate crisis and its impacts, like rising sea levels and ocean acidification, all call for a climate-smart Maritime Spatial Planning. So far, Crete region lacks an approved Regional Maritime Spatial Plan (MSP) (Image 1), despite its definition as a Maritime Spatial Unit to the National Hellenic Spatial Strategy for the Marine Space and current legislation (L.4546/2018). Instead, spatial planning for marine areas is guided by terrestrial-focused plans (frameworks) like the Regional Spatial Planning Framework for the Crete Region (RSPFCR) or guidance from other regional plans (i.e. Regional Strategy for the adaptation to climate Change, PeSPKA) or national sectoral ones (guidelines for tourism, aquaculture, industry, environmental protection, economic development).

A.5. Overview of MSP in France and in the regional case studies of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Pays de la Loire

In **France**, the MSP process in mainly nationally driven. The States Services « Interregional Directions of the Sea » (DIRM) are responsible for producing the main maritime planning documents, called « Façade Stategic Documents » (DSF in French). They are also responsible for engaging the regional and local authorities and other stakeholders in the elaboration of these plans, through the Maritime Councils. At the regional level, there is no dedicated legally binding marine spatial plan, since marine areas are not under the jurisdiction of the Region. However, the Sustainable Development and Equality of the Territories Scheme (SRADDET) elaborated by the Region elaborates the development of the regional territory, including coastal areas, thus having implications for MSP.
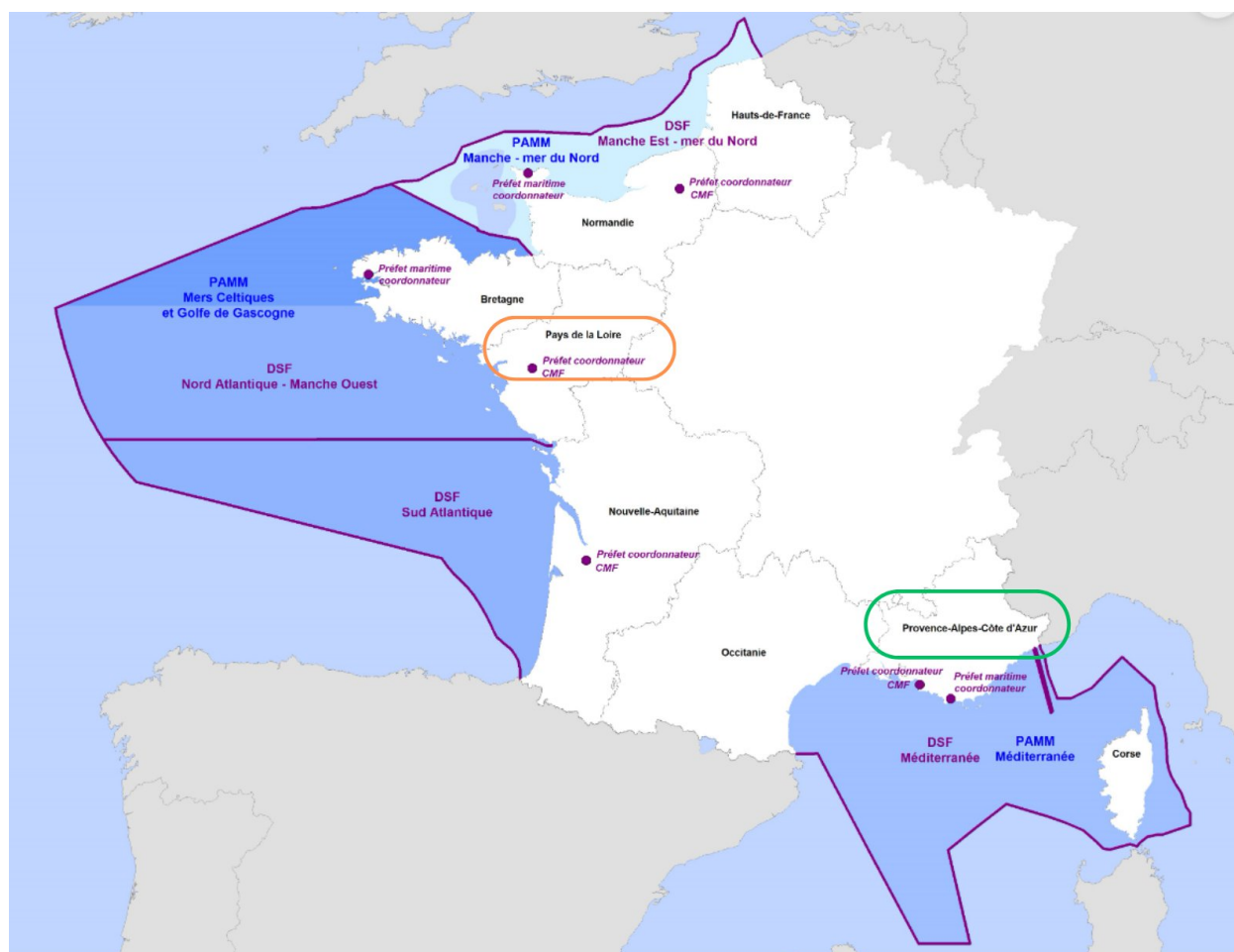

Figure 12: Localisation of the regions Pays de la Loire (orange) and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (green) and the scopes of their respective Façade Strategic Documents (DSF) for MSP.

Région Sud (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur) is one of the eight coastal regions of mainland France. The region borders the Mediterranean Sea and is divided into six departments, three of which being coastal (Alpes-Maritimes, Bouches du Rhône, and Var). The region is a highly reputed tourist area, with numerous beaches and seaside resorts. However, it faces major challenges in terms of protecting and restoring marine and coastal biodiversity on the one hand, and developing the tourism and maritime economy on the other. The coastal and maritime issues facing the Southern Region are diffuse and multi-sectoral, touching on several of the Region's areas of competence (regional planning, sport, tourism, culture, economy, etc.). Its maritime area is covered by the Document Stratégique de Façade (DSF) Méditerranée (Figure 12), a document drawn up at the national level that sets out guidelines for the integrated management of the sea and coastline. The Document stratégique de façade includes a vocation map that spatialises strategic objectives, thus implementing the 2014 European Framework Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning, and incorporates the implementation elements of the 2008 European Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The Region is responsible for the Schéma régional d'aménagement, de développement durable et d'égalité des territoires 'SRADDET), which consists of two parts: guidelines and rules to be adapted or specified in local urban planning documents. The current version includes four rules relating to land-sea interactions, the development of economic activities requiring immediate proximity to the sea, the restoration of ecological continuity and the development of offshore wind farms. However, there are no specific targets associated with these rules. In addition, the Region has defined a voluntary plan for the sea and coast (2019), now incorporated into the regional climate plan, which defines actions in favour of the development of maritime activities and environmental protection in coastal areas. The Region's Sea and Coastal Department manages measures under the European Fund for Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture (FEAMPA).

The Pays de la Loire region borders the Atlantic Ocean. Its maritime area is covered by the Façade Stategic Document (DSF) Nord-Atlantique Manche Ouest (Figure 12), which sets out guidelines for the integrated management of the sea and coastline. The DSF includes a vocation map that spatializes the strategic objectives, thus implementing the 2014 MSP Directive, and incorporates the implementation elements of the 2008 European Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). The Pays de la Loire region counts two coastal departments, Loire-Atlantique and Vendée, and fifteen coastal inter-municipalities. The region has a proactive policy for the sea and coastline. It has set up a consultation body, the Assemblée régionale pour la mer et le littoral, and developed a specific strategy, the Ambition maritime régionale, adopted in 2018. This strategy contributes to other regional plans and programs, notably the Schéma régional d'aménagement, de développement durable et d'égalité des territoires, adopted in 2022. The Pays de la Loire region's coastal and maritime challenges are numerous. As well as being the

first region to host an offshore wind farm, Pays de la Loire is also home to the leading commercial port on the coast (Nantes-Saint-Nazaire), an industrial hub for shipbuilding and a cutting-edge nautical industry. Fishing and shellfish farming are important activities here, and the coastal tourism economy is a major stake in the coastal area. Numerous plans and programs exist at regional and sub-regional level. Although the sea is not necessarily at the heart of these documents, they provide guidelines on certain maritime and coastal issues, and constitute a framework for the public players involved in these areas. They may have a spatial planning dimension, as is the case with the Schéma régional d'aménagement, de développement durable et d'égalité des territoires (regional plan for sustainable development and territorial equality) or the Schémas de cohérence territoriale (territorial coherence plans) drawn up at local level. This raises the question of the level of coordination between the different approaches and the potential of planning documents to provide responses to maritime and coastal issues.

B. Regional analysis report

Under WP3, task T3.1 « Regional analysis report » identified and analysed the **existing regional and local plans and strategies relevant to MSP across the eight REGINA-MSP case studies** (i.e. Crete and Central Macedonia in Greece, County Mayo in Ireland, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Pays de la Loire in France, Sardinia in Italy, and Galicia and Murcia in Spain). The analysis across the eight regional case studies covered **140 plans or strategies** dealing with MSP related topics. 64% of the analysed plans were legally binding, 45% had a strategic nature, while 21% were regulatory, and 33% had both strategic and regulatory orientations. On average, the plans dealing with nature protection related issues are the most common, reflecting the importance of protecting and restoring marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems. Landscape protection and coastal protection are also well represented topics in plans. A variety of plans dealing with sectors for which regions have competencies (e.g. tourism, recreation activities, fishing and aquaculture) were also identified and analysed. Within the scope of the studied plans, emerging activities (e.g. extraction of marine aggregates and deep-sea mining) were less represented.

Finally, the report identified **commonalities among case studies and persisting gaps in knowledge** (e.g. notably regarding benthic ecosystems, or activities such as recreational fishing) and in the integration of sectoral planning into MSP. In some cases, a mismatch was even observed between regional guidelines (cross-cutting and sector-based) and the real dynamics of maritime activities occurring at the regional/local level. Gaps also referred to the limited stakeholder engagement in MSP at the regional and local levels. Opportunities for further planning

development at the regional and local scales include the leverage of data collection, accessibility and sharing, as well as the development of tools and practices to better involve regional stakeholders in MSP. These opportunities related to data and stakeholder engagement are developed as part of the other WP3 tasks, with T3.2 focusing on data (section III.C of this document) and T3.3 on stakeholder engagement (section III.D).

Outputs from T3.1

➢ The report « **Deliverable D3.1 Regional analysis report** » [8] further details these results, and is available and downloadable online at https://www.regina-msp.eu/deliverables.

C. Data report – analysis of regional data and geoportals of interest for national MSP

The development and access to locally-relevant and up-to-date data is key to better integrate regional and local perspectives in the elaboration and implementation of MSP processes. Through Task T3.2 dedicated to data, an analysis of data needs for regional and local MSP was first conducted, through a collaborative approach, including surveys, online meetings and workshops. Data gaps were identified, linking with data collection (e.g. needs to better understand the impacts of human activities on marine ecosystems, recreational activities, to map the sea-bed), accessibility (linked to the lack of user-friendly platforms) and sharing in a harmonised way. For each of the eight case studies of REGINA-MSP, **data needs specific to the case studies** were highlighted. For instance, there is a pressing need in Murcia to develop knowledge on the effects of non-regulated boat anchoring on coastal seabed habitats such as seagrasses, while for the Pays de la Loire region, data needs relate to developing knowledge on adaptation of coastal areas to the impacts of climate change and improved monitoring of fishing fleets in terms of fishing volume, value and incidental capture. These disparities between regions are further detailed in the project's outputs « Deliverable D3.2 Data report » [9] and the communication brief on Data [8] available on the project's website (https://www.regina-msp.eu/regina-msp-deliverables). Overall, the incorporation of small-scale harmonised data into national and European geoportals remains a challenge that should be tackled as a priority to ensure up-to-date data and consistency across scales.

Actions to reduce these gaps were undertaken, such as the **development of a platform for stakeholders** to share their regional and national geoportals on MSP and an interactive map of

all the geoportals available for MSP users in the EU (Figure 13). A **geoportal** grading scheme built with multiple regional geomatics experts also highlighted initiatives and tools supporting MSP and data sharing processes. In addition to these actions, the project suggests recommendations to further improve data collection specific to regional and local uses, as well as enhance the accessibility and sharing of data and knowledge. The precision and scope of environmental monitoring could be enhanced through the leverage of remote sensing technologies and hydrophone recording. In addition, national and regional MSP data should be more systematically incorporated into EU-wide platforms such as « EMODnet[4] », which is a geoportal of reference for marine data across Europe. This would help promote a standardised approach to MSP data sharing processes, thus enhancing the confidence for users to utilise the data available on these platforms. The last section of the present document (VIII.D) details these recommendations on data and information, ways to implement them, and good practices related to each recommendation.

Figure 13: Screenshot of the interactive map of geoportals for the REGINA-MSP projects. Available at: https://www.regina-msp.eu/inventory-regional-european-geoportals. Source: Shom.

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[4] EMODnet (European Marine Observation and Data Network) is a European Commission (EC) in situ marine data service of the EC Directorate-General Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (EC DG MARE) and funded by the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund. Established in 2009, EMODnet plays a pivotal role as a trusted source of in situ marine environmental and human activities data and data products, serving a diverse user base across various sectors (https://emodnet.ec.europa.eu/en).

Outputs from T3.2

➢ The report « **Deliverable D3.2 Data report** » [9] further details these results, and is available and downloadable online at https://www.regina-msp.eu/deliverables.

➢ A communication brief « **Data and geoportals for MSP** » [10] summarises T3.2 activities and results, and is available and downloadable online at https://www.regina-msp.eu/communication-briefs.

D. Regional specificities

Through Task 3.3 « Regional specificities », the characteristics that would influence the participation of regions in MSP processes were identified. The work also described the actions needed at regional and local levels to foster the MSP implementation that adequately addresses regional needs. The methodology involved conducting workshops in each of the eight case study regions.

The topics addressed and the type of stakeholders involved in the workshops differed from one case study region to another, depending on the **particular features and pressing issues in the regions**. For instance, the workshops in Murcia focused on the impacts of specific human practices (aquaculture, unregulated anchorages) on marine habitats and biodiversity, while a workshop in Crete focused specifically on the issue of energy transition and marine renewable energy (Table 1).

Despite the diversity of topics covered, the cross-cutting analysis revealed common features across regions. In particular, there is a **growing interest in capacity building and stakeholder engagement in MSP** across all eight case study regions. This issue was particularly highlighted in regions where maritime spatial planning is in its infancy, such as County Mayo and Crete. In addition, the findings highlight the need to create new mechanisms to facilitate communication between all stakeholders and the co-design of actions and plans. In this respect, the Sardinia case study highlights the need to establish technical tables to facilitate interaction and communication between private and public sectors. This need was also highlighted in the case of Crete, where a workshop was organised on the creation of a regional community of practice dedicated to offshore wind farms, or in the case of Murcia, where it was proposed to create specific working groups within the national MSP working group (GT-OEM) to tackle specific interactions among uses. Another common and pressing issue highlighted in the eight case study regions is the need to safeguard the natural values of the marine environment, while ensuring the

socio-economic development of coastal communities. To achieve this, certain data gaps need to be filled. For example, the workshops organised in Central Macedonia region showed great interest in geospatial data gaps, and in the case of Galicia, there was considerable concern about the zoning of marine aquaculture in offshore areas declared as "areas with high potential for aquaculture" within the Spanish MSP plans; further studies are needed to ensure the suitability of these high potential areas for the development of the aquaculture activity. To sum up, although there are significant differences in maritime spatial planning processes between countries and regions, the integration of regional and local specificities into national plans and strategies is essential to achieve effective and fair implementation of MSP across regions.

Table1: Workshops (WKs) organised as part of task T3.3 on regional specificities in the eight case study regions.

Case Study region	Number of WKs	Title of the workshop	Dates	Invited Stakeholders
Murcia (Spain)	2	Interaction between marine aquaculture and maerl bed habitats.	April 2024	Central government authorities, national authorities acting at the regional level, regional authorities, sectors, networks of sectors representatives, research sector and NGOs.
		Interaction between unregulated anchorages, Underwater cultural heritage and biodiversity conservation.		
Galician coast (Spain)	2	Integration of Underwater Noise in Maritime Spatial Planning.	May 2024	Regional and national administration representatives, research centres, universities, technology and Innovation centres and companies, NGOs, environmental associations and foundations, fisheries local action groups (FLAGs).
		Prospects for the development of marine cultures in Areas of High Potential for Aquaculture in Galicia		
Sardinia (Italy)	3	Maritime activities: conflicts and synergies in Northern Sardinia – Porto Torres	October 2023	Regional departments and local authorities, bodies managing MPAs, NGOs, FLAGS, port authorities, coastguard, industry, research institutions.
		Present and future of extractive aquaculture activities in the Gulf of Olbia and their integration with other existing uses.	October 2023	
		Joint online workshop. Porto Torres and Olbia stakeholders meet online to discuss and finalize the new action proposals for the Northern Sardinia.	May 2024	
Pays de la Loire (France)	1	Pays de la Loire Case Study	April 2024	Central government, regional and local authorities, relevant experts and stakeholder's representative for the chosen topics.
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA) (France)	2	Levers and hurdles for MSP at regional and local level	January 2024	State services, regional and local authorities, MPA managers, universities
		Regional/local MSP plans		
		Appropriation of the MSP sea basin document by local stakeholders	May 2024	
Crete (Greece)	4	Socio-cultural values in MSP - Location: Lasithi, Crete	October 2022	National authority on MSP, regional authorities, municipalities, scientific stakeholders for energy, Hellenic center for marine research, the Union of Insular Chambers, the super-intendency, FLAGS, private sector, NGOs.
		Transboundary cooperation for the implementation of MSP - Location: Chania, Crete)	February 2023	
		MSP and energy transition - Location: Chania, Crete	April 2024	

		Culture, underwater cultural heritage and territorial cohesion: targeting empowerment of soft power factors - Location: Athens	July 2024	
Central Macedonia Region (CMR) (Greece)	2	First local workshop for MSP in CMR: First Reflections	May 2023	Regional authority and coastal municipalities of CMR.
		Second local workshop for MSP in CMR: Addressing specificities	May 2024	Regional authority of Central Macedonia, Central government based in CMR, coastal municipalities and regional stakeholders with interest in the marine space of CMR.
County Mayo (Ireland)	2	Potential benefits of MSP to a multi-use/multi-sectoral bay (Killala, Co. Mayo and Co. Sligo, Ireland)	February 2024	Stakeholders from the national groups and the local authorities of Mayo and Sligo.
		Integration of [remote] islands in Irish Marine Planning (Inisturk, Co. Mayo, Ireland).		Stakeholders from the national groups, government departments, the Mayo local authority, as well as from the island inhabitants.

Outputs from T3.3

➢ The report « **Deliverable D3.3 Regional Specificities** » [11] further details these results, and is available and downloadable online at https://www.regina-msp.eu/deliverables.

E. Regional actions for MSP

Based on the findings of the previous WP3 tasks described in the above sections, Task 3.4 on « Regional actions for MSP » aimed to define new tailored actions that are aligned with existing regional, national and European policies and that meet regional needs, to foster MSP implementation. Actions were proposed for each of the eight case study regions.

To identify tailored actions, the **methodology** involved the following steps:

- (i) **identification of needs** for a better integration of regional perspectives into MSP, based on the work done in the previous WP3 tasks, the basis of a comprehensive analysis of MSP-related plans (T3.1) and the availability of relevant data for MSP (T3.2).
- (ii) **identification of tailored actions** by case study leaders in collaboration with project partners, for each case study region, on the basis of T3.1 on policies analysis, T3.2 on

data availability, and the results of regional workshops in which stakeholders discussed local specificities and potential actions to address regional gaps and needs in terms of regional involvement (T3.3). This approach ensured that the proposed actions are relevant and targeted, enhancing their effectiveness and sustainability.

- (iii) **categorisation of the actions into four interrelated categories** reflecting both, strategicand practical activities. These categories included (1) strategic and specific objectives, (2) data knowledge availability, (3) zoning, and (4) management measures. This four categories framework of MSP actions was built based on a literature review.
- (iv) then, an analysis was conducted to **identify correspondences among needs and actions**, highlighting actions that could respond to multiple needs.
- (v) **identification of priority actions** to be implemented in each case study region. A priority action corresponded to an action that could **respond to multiple needs**.

For each case study region, a number of actions were highlighted and described: 7 actions for Murcia, 8 for Galicia, 5 for Sardinia, 19 for PACA, 11 for Pays de la Loire, 11 for Crete, 14 for Central Macedonia Region and 8 for County Mayo. These actions are detailed in the report « Deliverable D3.4 Regional actions for MSP » (available at https://www.regina-msp.eu/deliverables).

A cross-cutting analysis among case study regions revealedstrategies **common** to all the regions studied, and distinct approaches required for effective MSP. On one hand, all REGINA-MSP regions emphasised the importance of inclusive stakeholder engagement and multi-level governance, recognising that effective MSP relies on coordinated and inclusive management structures at regional and local levels. In addition, actions in all regions aim to balance environmental protection and economic development, underlining a shared commitment to the sustainable use of the sea. Another common point concerns the need to improve data collection and integration, reflecting the crucial role of solid, up-to-date data in MSP. In addition, some actions highlighted the need to strengthen cohesion between marine and land-based planning. On the other hand, the **differences** between the regions studied mainly concern the scale of action, which varies considerably from one region to another, reflecting different regional priorities and different stages of MSP maturity. While some regions focus on detailed, localised analyses to address specific challenges (e.g. Galicia, Murcia, Sardinia), others adopt broader regional strategies to integrate several sectors and administrative levels (e.g. County Mayo, Pays de la Loire, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Central Macedonia). These differences underline the need for flexible and adaptable approaches to maritime spatial planning, capable of responding to both local issues and broader regional dynamics. Finally, by prioritising actions that address

multiple needs simultaneously, T3.4 provided avenues to enhance the feasibility and efficiency of MSP implementation, through resource optimisation and improved objective integration.

Outputs from T3.4

➢ The report « **Deliverable D3.4 Regional actions for MSP** [12]» further details these results. It is available and downloadable at https://www.regina-msp.eu/deliverables.

IV. Main activities and results of WP4 – Ocean literacy and effective stakeholder engagement strategies

The engagement of regional, local authorities and other stakeholders in MSP is key to better integrate the regional and sub-regional needs and perspectives in MSP processes. WP4 was specifically dedicated to stakeholder engagement, with three examined areas in particular. These areas include the improved awareness of stakeholders to ocean related issues (Task 4.1 on ocean literacy), the training of stakeholders (Task 4.2) and the facilitation of the emergence of a cross-regional community of practices in MSP (Task 4.3). The main results of these tasks are described in sub-sections A, B and C below, respectively.

A. Ocean literacy regional plan

Task 4.1 on ocean literacy aimed to create opportunities for regions to discuss the needs to develop ocean literacy actions in their territories, i.e. **actions supporting the development and sharing of ocean knowledge among a wide range of stakeholders, including the general public, in order to raise awareness of ocean-related issues**. A common definition of ocean literacy refers to « the understanding of human impact on the ocean, its ecosystems, human lives and well-being ». This term also encompasses the need to make the public aware of ocean-related issues in order to encourage citizens and stakeholders to act in a positive way for the ocean. Modern ocean literacy initiatives provide a way to develop marine sustainable practices and policies, promote responsible citizenship and encourage young people to be involved in ongoing and future initiatives. MSP-oriented ocean literacy requires an understanding of the interactions between the different maritime activities and uses, as well as understanding environmental protection related issues. However, while numerous studies have highlighted the role of ocean literacy in supporting MSP, applied experiences remain limited.

In this context, REGINA-MSP aimed to answer the following question: how can ocean literacy effectively support MSP processes at a regional level (NUTS2)? To answer this question, the methodological approach included the creation of a self-guided questionnaire that could be used by regional policy-makers to assess the extent to which their territory has developed ocean literacy actions, and identify, through a mapping-the-offer exercise, further coordinated actions enabling to build a proper regional ocean literacy strategy. We found that **the majority of EU Regions already have education and dissemination structures and tools that could serve as effective assets to improve applied ocean literacy on their territories**. By testing the

methodology in the Sardinia Region challenge lied in identifying and capitalising on existing resources and networks. The test revealed **limitations in human and financial resources** for the implementation of an ocean literacy strategy, as well as coordination challenges within institutions and between different sectors and stakeholders. Notably, a low consideration of cultural aspects in ocean related services (i.e., the importance of the ocean for recreational activities, traditional practices, spirituality) was highlighted, which can hinder the development of initiatives to promote ocean protection and awareness.

Outputs from T4.1

➢ The report « **Deliverable D4.1 Ocean literacy regional plan** » [13] further details these results, and is available and downloadable at https://www.regina-msp.eu/deliverables.

➢ A communication brief « **Ocean literacy and MSP** » [14] summarises T4.1 activities and results, and is available and downloadable online at https://www.regina-msp.eu/communication-briefs.

B. Capacity building – Trainers' manual

The survey conducted at the EU scale on regional MSP needs as part of Task 2.1 revealed training needs among regional and local stakeholders. Task 4.2 on « Capacity building » aimed at addressing those needs through the production of a **summary guide (handbook) for trainers in MSP**, and the organisation of **training sessions** in the eight regional case studies. These two aspects are further described in the following sub-sections B1 and B2 respectively.

B.1. Handbook manual (summary guide for trainers)

A trainers' manual was developed by PUSPS and distributed to REGINA-MSP trainers, in order to improve the effectiveness of the REGINA-MSP capacity-building process for local and regional staff in partner countries. The manual is structured into three distinct modules, each comprising several sessions:

• **Module 1** provides an in-depth understanding of the basic concepts and principles underlying MSP and the key challenges affecting policy makers at a regional and local level.

- **Module 2** explores how to implement a participatory planning process and the role of relevant stakeholders. It presents key tools, techniques, and data used across scales.
- **Module 3** focuses on climate impacts on marine ecosystems and the integration of climate considerations in MSP. It discusses relevant theoretical regimes about the ecosystem approach in MSP and practical tools like Cumulative Impact Assessments or Scenario building.

Each session of the modules includes a trainer's guide designed to orient trainers in terms of topics to be covered during training sessions, approved learning methods and other useful resources (e.g. scientific literature, videos, training materials). Modules or sessions can be self-contained, offering trainers the flexibility to navigate the content according to their degree of familiarity and expertise with MSP topics or the trainiees' needs. While not exhaustive, the trainers' manual provides a concise overview of key MSP topics.

B.2 Training sessions in the eight case studies

The REGINA-MSP partner countries (Spain, Greece, Ireland, Italy and France) organised a series of training events in 2024 to build stakeholders' capacity in MSP across scales (illustrations on Figure 14). A total of over **215 stakeholders** were trained through **five in-person training events** (1 in Greece, 2 in France, 1 in Italy, 1 in Ireland) and **one online session** (Spain), totalling 75 hours of instruction, knowledge sharing, study visits and a gamified approach in tackling key terms, challenges and opportunities of ocean literacy (Table 2). The training sessions were tailored to the specific needs of each territory, and aimed to enable regional and local stakeholders to understand the challenges and opportunities of their territories in terms of MSP, the interdependence of actions and actors, and the cross-sectoral collaboration required. The sessions also addressed the question of how local/regional actions contribute to national, macro-regional or even European maritime spatial planning objectives, with a view to long-term sustainable MSP.

The training sessions enabled local and regional stakeholders to acquire and develop relevant skills and knowledge to actively and efficiently participate in current and future MSP processes. They focused on tstakeholders' needs directly dealing with MSP related issues, including local and regional authority representatives, coastal communities, maritime industry representatives, NGOs, or less informed stakeholders. Based on the satisfaction questionnaires distributed at the end of the sessions, the **overall feedback was very positive and calls for replication of these training sessions in other locations**. More specifically:

- On average in the five countries more than 70% of the participants found the training very interesting and stimulating,
- Participants stated an improved understanding of MSP and its application,
- Participants acknowledged that the training process enhanced their capability to contribute to local and regional planning initiatives related to MSP.

Table 2: Summary of training sessions held within REGINA-MSP.

Case study region / Partner	Date	Description	Activities
Brittany (France) / CEREMA	27-28 March 2024	Two days onsite session, with 10 participants from Brittany's local authorities (city councillors), Pays de Brest, French Office for biodiversity, representant of shellfish management agency.	Lectures and practical exercises, including serious game on MSP, lectures on the legal aspects of urban planning documents, responsibilities of collectivities, MPAs, and exercise of appropriation of strategic maritime documents, data geoportal exercise.
Sardinia (Italy) / CORILA	23-24 April 2024	A two-days face-to-face workshop organised in collaboration with the Autonomous Region of Sardinia with more than 30 participants (14 trainers, 25 trainees in total). Participants were regional councillors, directorate directors and managers as well as harbour masters and coast guard officers affiliated with the Italian competent authority (Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport).	Gamification for stakeholder engagement and conflict management.
Athens (Greece) / PUSPS	23-25 April 2024	A three-day training programme titled "MSP across scales: from theory to practice" was organized by Panteion University. The event was put under the aegis of the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy and the Region of Attica and hosted by the National Centre of Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA).	Balance between theory and practice, about the 3 modules of the handbook, which are: MSP policies, concepts and key challenges, understanding MSP across different scales and actors, climate-smart MSP.
Ringaskid-dy, Cork	14 May	Held in person over a full day in UCC-MaREI. Participants covered a range of	Lectures, MSP challenge board game and 2 study visits; a) in the National

(Ireland) / MaREI	2024	stakeholders such as representative of Cyber Security – Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), the Marine Spatial Planning team from DECC, Foreshore licencing from Department of Agriculture, Fishing and the Marine (DAFM), Researchers, Northern & Western Regional Assembly (NWRA.ie), Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA.ie), Southern Regional Assembly, and the Irish Naval Service.	Ocean Test Facility in Cork and b) in the Irelands National Maritime College.
Spain / IEO,CSIC	17 May 2024	Online training event (9:30 am -12:00 pm). The event included trainers from the MSP team at IEO-CSIC and an MSP area manager from the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge. More than 110 participants were registered, mainly regional authorities from 10 coastal autonomous regions and 2 autonomous cities in Spain. Since more than 45% of participants had no knowledge at all of MSP processes, the sessions selected were the introductory ones.	MSP policies, concepts and key challenges, understanding MSP across different scales and actors, climate-smart MSP.
Aix-en-Provence (PACA, France) / CEREMA	28-29 Octo-ber 2024	Two days onsite training session entitled « Integrate the sea into the territory project ». Around 20 participants from the local municipalities and collectivities.	Lectures and practical exercises, including on the MSP context and local competencies, lectures on the legal aspects of urban planning documents, financial tools for MSP implementation, MPAs, and exercise of appropriation of strategic maritime documents.

Figure 14: Training sessions of REGINA-MSP. From top to bottom and left to right: in Italy, Greece, France and Ireland.

Outputs from Task 4.2 on capacity building

➢ The report « **Deliverable D4.2 Capacity building – Trainers' manual** [15]» further details these results. Available and downloadable at https://www.regina-msp.eu/deliverables.

➢ A communication brief « **Training for MSP** [16]» summarises T4.2 activities and results. Available and downloadable at https://www.regina-msp.eu/communication-briefs.

C. Community of practice

C.1. Description of task T4.3

Task 4.3 focused on two distinct but related topics, namely (i) the **engagement of the least heard stakeholders** in MSP and (ii) the emergence of a **cross-regional community of practice in**

MSP. As already mentioned in this report (in section I. Introduction), it is important to ensure that as many stakeholder perspectives and concerns as possible are taken into account when organising and managing coastal and maritime activities and the environment. In order to enrich the work carried out within WP2 and WP3 on stakeholder engagement, the work carried out within Task T4.3 included the organisation of three international workshops (in Thessaloniki (GR), Vigo (ES), and Nantes (FR)) to carry out collaborative work on the themes of stakeholder engagement and communities of practice (CoPs) (Figure 15). The aim of these workshops was twofold:

- (i) explore ways of boosting the role of regions in national MSP, emphasising the development of a CoP;
- (ii) identify and involve regional stakeholders, and especially the poorly represented ones, in MSP debates and consultations.

Figure 15: The three workshops organised as part of T4.3 on Community of practice.

The three workshops brought together 116 participants in total, including REGINA-MSP partners (43%), representatives of the regional authorities from the eight case study Regions (27%), representatives from the coastal municipalities of each hosting Region (15%), representatives of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (5.5%), and other representatives (e.g., the Central government operating at the local level) (9.5%).

C.2. Outcomes related to the task on the facilitation of the emergence of CoP

With respect to the first objective on the facilitation of the emergence of a cross-regional CoP, the three workshops helped define what would be a useful and relevant CoP to integrate regional and local needs and perspectives into MSP. The definition of a CoP adopted during the workshops is framed into the general definition provided by Andringa and Reyn (2014):

"**A Community of Practice (CoP) is a meeting place where professionals share analyses, inform and advise each other and develop new practices […]. A CoP goes further than communities of interest and informal networks because it has a collective task.**"

The three workshops enabled:

➢ Commencing and improving collaboration among regions for mutual learning;
➢ Sharing experiences on the role and competencies of regions in MSP across different countries;
➢ Improving inclusiveness in MSP processes, especially by identifying poorly represented stakeholders in MSP debates and consultations, to ensure a more balanced level of representation and contribution;
➢ Drafting a **roadmap for the emergence of a cross-regional CoP** engaging regional authorities and experts across EU (and eventually non-EU) countries, to facilitate experience and knowledge sharing and the discussion around common MSP challenges. This roadmap details the different steps that should be followed to implement an MSP CoP. These steps include notably a preliminary action to ensure the availability of resources needed for the kick-off, medium and long-term operations, the drafting of the Terms of Reference (e.g. the CoP's scope, its principles, SMART[5] objectives, members and meeting structure), the governance of the CoP, its Action plan, the communication platform that could be used, and the kick-off meeting to validate the Terms of Reference and Action plan.

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[5] SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

MSP-CoP type that would suit regions according to the T4.3 workshops' findings:

The three workshops focused on defining a detailed composition and functioning of a cross-regional CoP on MSP that would take better account of regional and local concerns. According to the workshops' conclusions, coastal regions are interested in participating in cross-regional MSP CoPs, which operate at both international and national levels. The more international and multi-level the MSP CoP's composition, the more beneficial it is for the regions, in terms of knowledge and experience sharing, and reaching and interacting with MSP decision-making centres. At the same time, the more local the composition of the MSP CoP, the easier communication is and the stronger the commitment of members, including local players. In addition, the stronger the voice of regional government decision-making centres when it comes to local marine issues.

Regions considered it important to :

- Determine how national MSP can be better adapted to the regional and local levels, especially with regard to addressing environmental protection, integrated coastal management and nature-based solutions;
- Determine how sectoral planning can be integrated into (place-based) MSP;
- Determine how poorly heard stakeholders can be involved in a more meaningful way in MSP;
- Focus on the marine sectors of interest highlighted by regions, i.e. aquaculture, fisheries, offshore renewable energy and coastal and marine tourism.

Finally, the working modalities of the CoP selected during the workshops were the following:

- Working groups, preferably of mixed composition (in terms of nationality, sectors, etc), to take into account different points of view;
- Online sharing platforms, for regular online meetings, circulating documents or Q&A;
- In-person workshops (e.g. once a year) to share experiences through in-depth discussions and strengthen networking;
- Plenary meetings would be held less frequently (e.g. twice a year) and would aim to evaluate the achievements of set objectives, discuss challenges, identify new topics to be discussed and support adaptive management;
- Training courses and field visits covering MSP topics and arising from the operation of the CoP. This would also help to address the issue of critical knowledge and capacity building for MSP.

C.3. Outcomes related to the task on stakeholder engagement and poorly represented stakeholders in MSP

With respect to the second objective of T4.3 on stakeholder engagement - in particular poorly represented stakeholders in MSP - the following tasks were performed during the workshops:

- **1st workshop (October 2023, Thessaloniki, Greece)**: presentation of methods, tools and processes for the identification of regional stakeholders involved in MSP (e.g. building stakeholder databases, stakeholder mapping and ranking, the interest–influence matrix, participatory mapping).
- **2nd workshop (February 2024, Vigo, Spain)**: distribution of a questionnaire to identify the poorly represented regional stakeholders in MSP and the constraints limiting their engagement.
- **3rd workshop (March 2024, Nantes, France)**: the emphasis was placed on poorly heard stakeholders and the interaction with them (via interviews, questionnaires, etc.), focusing on small-scale fishers from various EU regions.

The main findings of the workshops are summarised below:

➢ Although fishermen are traditional users of the sea, they are considered the least-heard stakeholders in maritime spatial planning processes, both in terms of their low level of involvement and degree of representation. In addition, they are subject to significant pressures and losses due to the ever-increasing number of marine uses competing for the same maritime space.

➢ The general public was also identified as a sometimes-neglected element in the marine spatial planning process, although it is widely recognised that local communities and citizens could provide valuable resources for a better understanding of local marine areas (citizen science), but also for integrating local needs and expectations into marine spatial plans.

➢ There is a need to ensure that a broader range of regional and local stakeholders get involved in a meaningful way in all stages of the MSP processes. According to the findings of the workshops, the weaknesses and bottlenecks for the least heard and poorly represented stakeholders relate to:

   o Communication and access to information: the engagement of poorly represented stakeholders is hampered by limited access to information and language barriers. This exacerbates the inherent difficulty of participation, as it is sometimes difficult to navigate bureaucratic processes and understand technical details;

   o Capacity: there is a lack of MSP expertise and ocean literacy more generally among less represented stakeholders in particular;

o   Resources: lack the financial and human resources to engage in participatory procedures, compounded by insufficient access to the necessary technology and tools.

These three levers, i.e. access to relevant information, capacity and resources, should therefore be exploited to enable better integration of poorly heard stakeholders in MSP. The methodology of the T4.3 and the summary of the workshops are presented in three workshop reports.

Outputs from T4.3

➢ The « **Deliverable D4.3 Community of practice** [17]» further details the results of T4.3, and is available and downloadable online at https://www.regina-msp.eu/deliverables. It is composed of the two leaflets (communication briefs) on Community of practice [18] and on stakeholder engagement [19]. In addition to these leaftlets, three unofficial workshops reports have been produced: one for each workshop.

➢ A communication brief « **Community of practice** » [18] summarises in an eight page leaflet the activities and results related to this topic. It is available and downloadable at https://www.regina-msp.eu/communication-briefs.

➢ A communication brief « **Inclusiveness of regional stakeholders in MSP** » [19] summarises in an 8 page leaflet the activities and results related to this topic. It is available and downloadable at https://www.regina-msp.eu/communication-briefs.

➢ A **video** was produced, focusing on the work conducted on the development of a cross-regional community of practice in MSP, with interviews of project partners, CPMR members and regional authority representatives across the countries of REGINA-MSP. Available at: https://vimeo.com/935900796/bba11d2f33?share=copy

V. WP 1 – Management and communication

WP1 focused on the project coordination aspects to ensure a collaborative approach and sound progress over time. Six Steering committee meetings and four Advisory board meetings were organised throughout the project as part of WP1. An opening conference with project partners was held in Plouzané (France) at the beginning of the project. At the end of the project, the closing conference was held on October 23-24, 2024 in Marseille (France) at Palais du Pharo. The event provided an opportunity to present the main activities, results and policy recommendations from the project, and discuss them during three panels with external experts. The conference was co-organised with CORILA as it celebrated jointly the closure of the European projects REGINA-MSP and MSP-GREEN, highlighting the synergetic aspects between MSP, regional involvement and the European Grean Deal. This event brought together around 150 participants, including notably project partners, academics and researchers, members of the European Commission, national and regional institutions and authorities, as well as participants from the private sector.

Figure 16: Closing conference of REGINA-MSP and MSP-GREEN in Marseille, 23-24 October 2024.

Outputs from WP1

In addition to the present **Deliverable D1.1 Final report**:

➢ The report « **Deliverable D1.2 Interim policy brief** » [20] is available and downloadable at https://www.regina-msp.eu/deliverables. This eight-page leaflet provided the baseline structure for the production of REGINA-MSP final policy recommendations.

➢ A **video of the closing conference** was produced, entitled « *Closing conference of the European maritime spatial planning projects REGINA-MSP and MSP-GREEN in Marseille, palais du Pharo, on October 23-24, 2024* ». This promotional video (~3') will be available on the CEREMA YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkRc5Mpv0Pg4aUGMWnlKNSQ).

VI. WP 5 – Communication and dissemination

Activities performed under WP5 related to the communication and dissemination of relevant elements (e.g. events, results) to project partners and beyond, during the project.

Outputs from WP5

As part of WP5, a communication and dissemination plan was produced at the beginning of the project through the **creation of a visual identity package**, including the logo of REGINA-MSP and the font in all communication materials.

A **website** dedicated to the project (https://www.regina-msp.eu/) was created and regularly updated with general project information, news, events and materials such as deliverables and communication briefs, which are therefore open to the public. On a regular basis, **newsletters** were produced and distributed to a large range of recipients. In addition, **REGINA-MSP LinkedIn posts** (available at https://www.linkedin.com/in/regina-msp/) ensured regular communication on specific project events or key information. Some **popularization articles** linked to the topic of MSP were also published on the CEREMA website (https:/www.cerema.fr/fr/actualites/renforcer-role-regions-planification-espace-maritime-projet   and https://www.cerema.fr/fr/evenements/conference-finale-projets-europeens-regina-msp-msp-green).

In addition, communication materials produced as part of the project include:

- A **video realised as part of T4.3 on Community of practice** during the third Workshop (Nantes, March 2024) by Yannick Derennes, commissioned by CEREMA and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The video is published on the CEREMA YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mATkQJAzbQ).
- The **Communication briefs**, which were not deliverables but produced in order to present and disseminate the results in a clear and synthetised way to a large range of stakeholders. Approximately 20 copies of each of the 15 communication briefs were printed and distributed during the closing conference of the project in Marseille on October 23-24, 2024.

These materials are available on the project website, and on **Ceremadoc documentary platform** (https://doc.cerema.fr/). Some specific REGINA-MSP productions (poster of the project, video of the CoP, communication brief on stakeholder engagement in MSP) and general project information is also available for the general public on the **European Commission's MSP-**

Platform (https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/projects/regions-boost-national-maritime-spatial-planning).

The final conference of REGINA-MSP and MSP-GREEN in Marseille was a good opportunity to disseminate some REGINA-MSP key elements, including:

- **Posters of REGINA-MSP case studies** displayed in the Pharo during the closing conference (and available at https://www.regina-msp.eu/posters)
- Submission of the complete **broadcast of the REGINA-MSP and MSP-GREEN round tables and debates of the closing conference** on the CPMR YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@CRPMCPMR/search?query=regina
- **Kakemonos**: one specific to REGINA-MSP, the other shared with MSP-GREEN
- **Short video** produced by Les Films du Grand Large during the closing conference, entitled « *Closing conference of the European maritime spatial planning projects REGINA-MSP and MSP-GREEN in Marseille, palais du Pharo, on October 23-24, 2024* » (soon to be available)

  - ➢ The document « **Deliverable D5.1 Communication report** » (to be published) describes these activities further and will be available and downloadable at https://www.regina-msp.eu/deliverables.

VII. Summary of the project's main activities

A. Overview of project activities

As described previously in this report, various activities and approaches were carried out during the project, including surveys, analyses of plans and policies, participatory workshops and interviews and geoportal analysis. Figure 17 below provides a summary of these activities, with associated key figures. At the end of the project, **policy recommendations** were formulated on the basis of the REGINA-MSP activities and findings, for both the EU, national and regional levels (Figure 17). These recommendations are detailed in the next section of this document. In parallel, the CPMR produced a series of recommendation proposals from the CPMR regions' perspectives (in Deliverable 2.3 Policy paper), which are different to those produced as part of the project *per se*, as they directly build on regions' political declarations regarding the relevance and future of the MSP Directive, as illustrated in Figure 17.
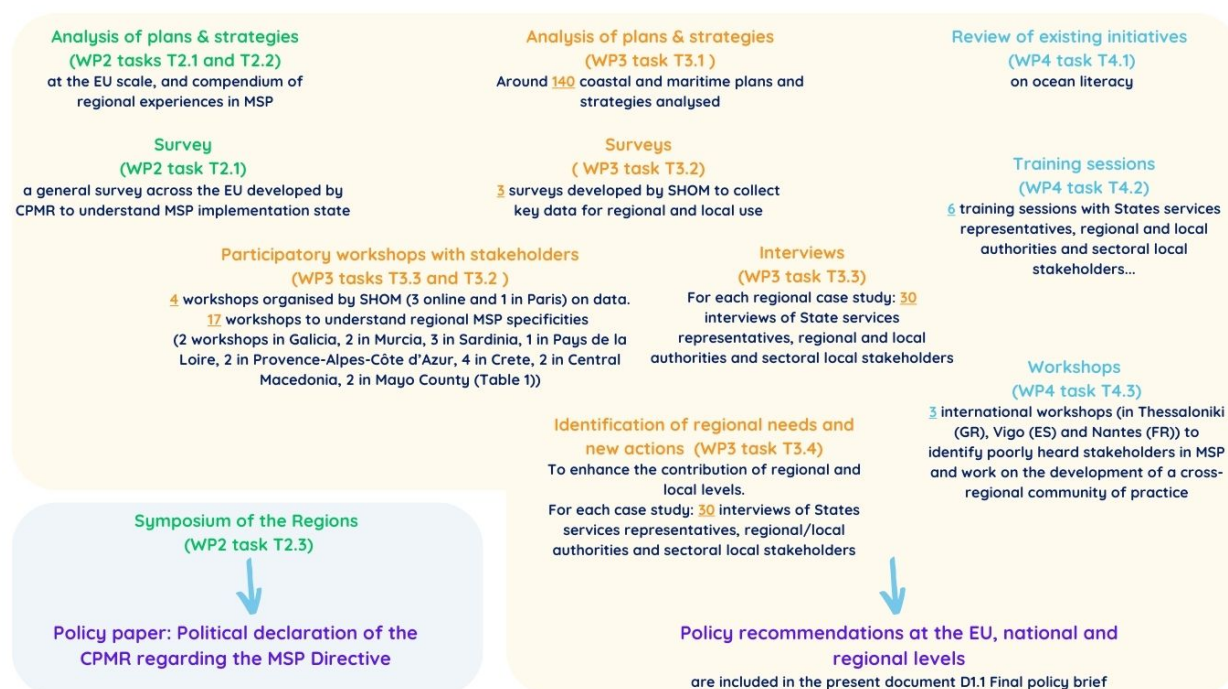

Figure 17: Summary of the main activities carried out within REGINA-MSP. In green, are WP2 activities for the EU scale, in orange the activities from WP3 relating to the in-depth regional analysis in the eight case study regions, and in blue the WP4 activities related to stakeholder engagement in maritime spatial planning.

B. Communication briefs

In addition to being incorporated in this report D1.1, the main activities, results and policy recommendations specific to each case study and country part of the project are incorporated in communication briefs, which consist of short, eight-page leaflets. While Greece, Ireland and France decided to produce different communication briefs distinguishing their national or regional levels, Italy and Spain opted to produce a unique brief combining their national and regional levels. The project also produced a communication brief summarising the findings of the project for the EU level based on WP2 results. In addition, five communication briefs dedicated respectively to the topics of data, ocean literacy, training, community of practice and stakeholder engagement were produced. The complete list of the communication briefs can be found below and is available at **https://www.regina-msp.eu/communication-briefs**.

– Communication briefs including the main activities, findings and policy recommendations for the national and or/regional levels:
  ➢ Communication brief « **France – National level** » [21]
  ➢ Mémo « **Pays de la Loire** » (in French) [22]
  ➢ Mémo « **Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur** » (in French) [23]
  ➢ Communication brief « **Central Macedonia** » [24]
  ➢ Communication brief « **Crete** » [25]
  ➢ Communication brief « **North Sardinia** » [26]
  ➢ Communication brief « **Spain – Galicia and Murcia** » [27]
  ➢ Communication brief « **Ireland – National level** » [28]
  ➢ Communication brief « **Ireland – County Mayo** » [29]
– Communication briefs including the main activities and findings and policy recommendation proposals for the EU level based on WP2 findings:
  ➢ Communication brief « **Recommendations at the EU level from work package 2 of REGINA-MSP** » [7]
– Topic-related communication briefs:
  ➢ Communication brief « **Data and geoportals for MSP** » [10]
  ➢ Communication brief « **Ocean literacy and MSP** » [14]
  ➢ Communication brief « **Training for MSP** » [16]
  ➢ Communication brief « **Community of practice** »[18]
  ➢ A communication brief « **Inclusiveness of regional stakeholders in MSP** » [19]

VIII. Policy recommendations

Based on the work of REGINA-MSP, policy recommendations were proposed to better integrate regional and sub-regional needs, perspectives and stakeholders in MSP processes. The recommendations are categorised into four topics: those related to (A) the regulatory and governance aspects for a better integration of Regions in MSP processes, (B) the engagement of other stakeholders in MSP, (C) the resources, capacity, skills and networks, and (D) data and information for regional and local MSP. A **summary list** of the recommendations can be found below, as well as a detailed table containing the recommendations in the sub-sections A to D for the four topics respectively.

(A) Recommendations related to regulatory aspects and governance

- **A1**: Recognising and clarifying in the legal framework the role of Regions in the elaboration, decision-process and implementation of MSP

- **A2**: Better involve regional authorities in governance and decision-making processes

- **A3**: Advance MSP implementation at both regional and local levels

- **A4**: Add issues that are key for regional policies and have strong interaction with MSP in the regulatory framework of MSP: climate change and land-sea interactions

- **A5**: Improve sea-basin cooperation by involving Regions in the cooperation and coordination mechanisms

- **A6**: Reinforce cross-policy coherence for an easier and more efficient assimilation and implementation of policies at the regional level

(B) Recommendation related to stakeholder engagement in MSP

- **B1**: Involve regional and local sectoral stakeholders and public participation in MSP

(C) Recommendations related to resources, skills, capacity and networks

- **C1**: Increase human resources in the public sector for the development and implementation of MSP

- **C2**: Maintain and increase financial support for the development and implementation of MSP

- **C3**: Develop MSP skills among public stakeholders

- **C4**: Improve coordination and cooperation to optimise resources

(D) Recommendations related to data and information

- **D1**: Identify data needs to ensure consistency between data collection and data needs
- **D2**: Expand data acquisition at a scale appropriate for MSP development and implementation
- **D3**: Ensure open data and interoperability between data
- **D4**: Provide accessible data to all users and enhance data sharing

In the next sub-sections A, B, C and D, the above **recommendations** are detailed. They are formulated in generic terms and developed specifically for each of the three levels, i.e., European, national and regional/sub-regional levels. Then, for each of these levels, **possible ways to implement the recommendations** are proposed, notwithstanding the complementary analysis and consultations that would be necessary to make them applicable. In addition, **good practices** are mentioned; they represent further illustration based on experiences that already exist and have been identified by REGINA-MSP notably through the Task 2.2 Compendium of regional experiences and the deepened analysis in the eight regional case studies.

A. Recommendations related to regulatory aspects and governance

The recommendations proposed in section A refer to the need to better recognize and clarify the role of Regions in MSP through regulatory processes (recommendation A1) and in governance more generally (B1), for a better integration of Regions in both the elaboration and implementation of MSP. This section also suggests ways to advance MSP implementation at the regional and local levels (A3), and advises to better consider certain issues closely linked to MSP - notably climate change and land-sea interactions - in MSP development and implementation processes (A4). In addition, Regions should be more involved in cooperation and coordination mechanisms in order to improve sea-basin cooperation (A5). Finally, this section suggests ways to reinforce cross-policy coherence for an easier and more efficient assimilation and implementation of MSP-related policies at the regional level (A6).

Recommendation A1. Recognising and clarifying in the legal framework the role of Regions in the elaboration, decision-process and implementation of MSP

Justification: Coastal Regions (NUTS-2 level) are key players in the socio-economic development of coastal areas and in the implementation of maritime and coastal policies. Moreover, they have competencies in land planning and are able to anchor maritime spatial planning to the land, including for matters of integrated coastal zone management. Regions also implement the European Cohesion Policy and are active players in the European Green Deal, managing European funds to achieve these policy objectives. In addition, they have relevant knowledge of the MSP issues and of the actors and can relay the informations between the different administratives scales. These capacities and competencies call for a better integration of Regions in MSP processes to improve the development and implementation of MSP related actions. However, the role of Regions in MSP at several levels (EU, national, and regional) is not clearly defined. This may hinder their involvement and, in the end, the development and implementation of actions.

EU	National	Regional
In the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (MSPD): - acknowledge the role of Regions and the need to involve them in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP); - recognise the necessity of a multi-level approach to MSP due to the wide range of national maritime space size; - recognise the diversity of relevant scales related with each marine and maritime issue.	Explore the possibilities at the national level for strengthening / increasing the role of Regions in MSP, through some of the following possible mechanisms: - full responsibility given to Regions; - co-responsibility for planning for specific activities relating to the sea; - technical liaison committee/working groups between State and Regions; - specific role given in the preparation process; - specific role given for the implementation; - multi-scale planning: recognise two or three embedded levels of planning, each one giving responsibilities and guidance to the lower level.	Consider the possibility of introducing downscaling rules for the maritime spatial plans implementation and monitoring in regional / land / coastal planning documents, as applicable.
Possible ways to implement Recommendation A1		
Add in article 4 of the MSPD a new paragraph after paragraph 3: "Elaboration and implementation of the plans are associating the Regions in ways and means appropriate in the national	**Spain**: "Implementation roadmaps" should be developed at the regional level for the overall implementation of the maritime spatial plans, for those actions in which regions may be involved for their implementation	**France**: the regional land-planning strategy (SRADDET) could set up rules for the local (SCOT « Schéma de cohérence territoriale ») concerning the implementation of the national MSP (DSF « Document stratégique de façade »).

context". Add in Article 6 of the MSPD a new paragraph after paragraph 1: "To this end, Member States define the relevant planning scales and provide, if needed, several embedded levels of planning" Add a new paragraph after 6.b: "Take into account environmental aspects, climate change adaptation and mitigation, economic and social interests and objectives of coastal regional and local authorities, as well as maritime safety/safety of navigation dimension." In Article 9 of MSPD, paragraph 1, replace "authorities" by "regional and local authorities".	**Greece**: the MSP gives the possibility for the maritime spatial plans to be interregional, regional or sub-regional. Hence, when regional or sub-regional maritime spatial plans are being elaborated, Regions and regional stakeholders should be involved in a not only consultative way, but also through a decisive responsibility. The state should select the MSP responsibilities that can be exerted by the regions. **France**: precise in the legal framework the compatibility and relative responsibility between the three levels of planning in coastal waters (DSF-SRADDET-SCOT).	
Good practices		

	Ireland: Designated Maritime Area Plans (DMAP): Each region or county can develop a forward plan for either a specific sector (e.g. tourism) in their area or create a plan for a number of activities and sectors (e.g. tourism, Inshore fishing, scubadiving) by developing a DMAP which gives the plan a statutory basis. **Italy**: The Decree 201/2016 transposed the MSPD into Italian legislation. Among its provisions, this decree established a Technical Committee responsible for elaborating the Italian MS plans. The Technical Committee is coordinated by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport and composed of several other Ministries and all the coastal regions, which are therefore fully involved in the MSP process. In particular, regions have been responsible for planning the territorial waters facing their coasts, defining a regional MSP vision, specific objectives for its implementation, zoning, and in several cases regionally adapted measures.	**Sardinia:** Within the National MSP process, the Region established a permanent MSP Interdepartmental group composed of one representative from each of the different departments with responsibilities in maritime affairs. This group actively contributed to defining the regional vision, the specific objectives, the planning units and the specific measures and through a Regional Council's decision these contents were officially approved.

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Recommendation A2: Better involve regional authorities in governance and decision-making processes

Justification: Addressing maritime and coastal sectoral objectives separately, without sound consultation and alignment with regional authorities and their priorities could hinder effective medium and long-term planning. Conversely, coordination and cooperation among stakeholders can lead to better governance structures, with clear roles and responsibilities, reducing the risk of confusion, overlap, or gaps in decision-making. There is a need to involve regional authorities in MSP governance and decision-making processes to ensure that regional priorities are reflected in the MSP processes at both European and national levels and improve ownership of MSP matters at the regional level. Being at the interface between the national level and the local level where actions are implemented, and dealing with key issues at the heart of MSP (e.g. economy and sustainable development, land planning, political cohesion of territories), Regions could be better involved in MSP to make it more coherent and efficient.

EU	National	Regional
Set up an information channel on MSP targeted to the Regions and include feedback from the Regions for the assessment of the Directive implementation and future developments.	Establish official permanent MSP contact bodies to foster dialogue between national and regional authorities.	Connect regional authorities and infra-regional authorities in making and implementing MSP.
Possible ways to implement Recommendation A2		
Encourage the Committee of the Regions (CPMR) to contribute to the reflection on MSP. Take stock and analyse the existing co-management processes at regional and local levels, where regional authorities have set up participatory approaches to both address the uses of the seas and the sustainable management of Marine Protected Areas. Report on and compile multi-level governance practices on the EU MSP Platform.	At a political level: a "maritime territorial conference" between regional authorities and the Minister in charge of MSP. At a technical level: a national working group or steering committee for national MSP.	Set-up a MSP coordination group between State and regional/local authorities. Create new or consolidate existing (e.g. in the case of Italy) regional MSP working groups involving different regional departments. Such a process requires a political endorsement, empowerment of human resources, strengthened technical capacities and funding opportunities.
Good practices		

- **Spain**: Monitoring Committees for Marine Strategies of the five marine demarcations, assembling regional (autonomous communities) and national authorities in charge of marine strategies issues; and ad hoc working groups for specific topics, formed by regional and national administrations and other institutions, such as some research centres.

- **Greece**: National Spatial Planning Council, among its 22 members, one must represent the Association of Greek Regions and another the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece. In addition, Greek Regions are involved in a meaningful way in terrestrial spatial planning. This experience and governance schemes can be adopted in MSP as well.

- **Italy:** the Italian legislative decree 201/2016 identifies the MSP competent authority in the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport and defines some fundamental aspects of MSP in the country, including coordination mechanisms. It refers to supplementary guidelines to provide common principles for the MS plans and to regulate their detailed elaboration. The MSP guidelines were adopted by an Inter-Ministerial Coordination Table on MSP, which was also in charge of checking the correspondence of the MS plans with such guidelines. The legislative decree 201/2016 recognises that competencies relevant to MSP in Italy are shared among the State and sub-national administrative bodies (i.e. the regions). The development of the MS plans has therefore been appointed to a

- **Brittany (France)**: the Breton coastal areas Charter for an integrated management of coastal zones in Brittany (2007) set up a Regional Conference of the Sea and Coastal areas, as a governance and consultation body, co-chaired by the regional prefects and the President of the Regional Council. Sea and Coastal Commissions at the level of the Local Fishing and Aquaculture Action Groups (LAGFAs), supported by EMFAF, managed by the local authorities and covering all the coastline of the region, complete the collaborative framework.

- **Zuid Holland (Netherlands)**: This province manages coastal spatial planning and protection, sharing responsibilities with national authorities. A comprehensive analysis of land-sea interdependencies informs regional MSP, though it remains somewhat disconnected from national MSP efforts.

- **Italy**: Several Italian coastal Regions set up internal MSP working groups involving different regional departments and having diverse levels of formalisation. These groups contributed to the MSP process (with data and knowledge) and agreed on key planning decisions at the regional level. The experience of the working groups enabled as well to improve the dissemination to sectoral officials of information on MSP and its role in managing conflicts among uses at sea, promoting synergies, improving the protection of marine biodiversity, and minimising the impacts on the marine environment

- **Emilia-Romagna (Italy):** in Italy, the National Technical Committee is in charge of the MSP process and Regions are in charge to identify the current status and future trends of coastal activities. For that, Emilia-Romagna has created a dedicated transversal working group to set up a vision for the subarea front of the

	Technical Committee, coordinated by the MSP competent authority and composed of several Ministries and the coastal Regions. These mechanisms define a multi-level governance for MSP implementation in Italy.	coastline. Together with a scientific group.

Recommendation A3: Advance MSP implementation at both regional and local levels

Justification: Regional and local authorities and public stakeholders are at the same time key players in implementing national MSP strategies, and have competencies to develop and implement local actions related to MSP (e.g. land planning, creation and management of a marine protected area, touristic infrastructure, etc), in coherence with the national strategy. However, governance constraints such as lack of coordination and information between the different governance levels can hinder the sound implementation of national maritime spatial plans as well as the development and implementation of actions that should reflect both local priorities and national priorities.

EU	National	Regional
Enhance regional operationalization of the national maritime spatial plans through greater ownership of these plans by local and regional players, to ensure the implementation of the plans' objectives at the local level. Raise visibility to local and regional players' initiatives in terms of MSP implementation.	Systematise a multi-level governance scheme wherein all levels of administration (local, regional, national) are effectively involved. Raise awareness among regional and local authorities of their role in implementing the national maritime spatial plans and facilitate their involvement. Enhance regional operationalization of the national maritime spatial plans through greater ownership of these plans by local and regional players, to ensure the implementation of the plans' objectives at the local level. Give visibility to local and regional players' initiatives in terms of MSP implementation.	Improve coordination of public stakeholders in MSP at the regional and sub-regional scale. Involve municipalities and public institutions for inter-communal cooperation to a greater extent in drawing up and implementing local MSP plans. Improve coordination at the cross-regional and cross-border scale: Establish or revise cross-regional governance schemes for regions of the same sea-basins, and enhance cross-regional and cross-border cooperation. Enhance regional operationalization of the national MS plans through greater ownership of these plans by local and regional players, to ensure the implementation of the plans' objectives at the local level.
Possible ways to implement Recommendation A3		
Dedicate a session of the Blue Forum to local players	Develop informing sessions.	Coordinate decision-making for matters which involve multiple regional administrative departments, such as anchorages. Give visibility to local and regional players' initiatives in terms of MSP and MSP implementation. The concept of Communities of Practice between MSP

		experts and authorities should be further explored. NGOs and cultural institutions could be more systematically invited to network, to promote knowledge on the ocean and the maritime spatial plans.
	Good practices	
	Case study workshops developed as part of REGINA-MSP in the case study regions **Ireland**: workshops were carried out with some regional stakeholders to discuss how MSP could be included in their county development plans and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies	**Pays de la Loire (France)**: The region has developed a sustainable coastal management agreement in collaboration with the French government to protect the coast against flooding risks. This agreement aligns with the North Atlantic and West Channel façade strategic document, which guides the implementation of the MSPD. **Sardinia (Italy)**: In addition to the national measures foreseen in the Italian maritime spatial plans, the region of Sardinia has identified 40 regional measures focusing on its territorial waters and facilitating, according to financial availability, site-specific implementation of regional needs to achieve its specific objectives.

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Recommendation A4: Add issues that are key for regional policies and have strong interaction with MSP in the regulatory framework of MSP: climate change and land-sea interactions

Justification: Regional and sub-regional authorities play a key role in the integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), notably in managing the socio-economic development of the coastal areas, developing and managing climate change related actions, such as climate adaptation strategies in the coastal areas. In addition, Regions have high experience, knowledge, data and information regarding their territories, and they know the key actors on their territories. These roles are acknowledged at the European level notably through the Article 7 of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (MSPD) that addresses land-sea interactions (LSI) - allowing flexibility for Member States in integrating these interactions into the planning process - and the EU's Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Recommendation (2002) for Regions. However, the consideration of these issues (climate change, LSI and ICZM) is not systematic in MSP processes. A better consideration of these issues could help achieve a more coherent and comprehensive MSP.

EU	National	Regional
In the MSPD: - strengthen the text of the Directive, make it mandatory to deal with climate change and LSI, which are additional but related issues, - revise the geographic scope of the Directive in order to cover coastal zone adaptation to climate change and its connection to watershed planning.	Clarify the interactions between land/urban planning and maritime spatial planning.	
Possible ways to implement Recommendation A4		
By introducing the notion of mutual influence with areas other than marine waters in the scope of the MSPD. In Article 6 paragraph 2b, add after "environmental," the words "climate change adaptation and mitigation" By complementing Article 7 of the MSPD with explicit requirements regarding links with the Water Framework Directive and the European Climate Change Strategy, as well as references to regional and local climate mitigation and adaptation strategies/plans.	Mandating better cooperation between land and maritime/marine authorities.	

Good practices		
	Ireland: Using legislation of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 - Ireland have added 3 nautical miles to the responsibility of the coastal planning authorities so the land/sea interaction should be more seamless in planning and monitoring and enforcement. **In Finland**, MSP practioners (who are responsible also for the coastal strategy) organise in networks and different governance levels to reflect together on how to consider climate change and land sea interactions in both the MSP strategy and the coastal strategy, which overlap.	**Cork (Ireland):** The county emphasizes MSP to enhance renewable energy for climate change mitigation. A draft South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) for Offshore Renewable Energy was published in May 2024 and aims to become part of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). The Cork County Development Plan and Climate Action Plan also link climate action, including adaptation strategies, to MSP, envisioning collaboration with designated Implementation Groups. **Crete (Greece):** Crete's Regional Spatial Planning Framework (RSPF) addresses both climate adaptation (coastal erosion) and mitigation (renewable energy projects). The Regional Plan for Climate Change Adaptation (PeSPKA) includes measures specifically for coastal and marine areas, reinforcing the relevance of climate considerations in MSP. **Pays de la Loire (France):** The region has developed a sustainable coastal management agreement in collaboration with the French government to protect the coast against flooding risks. This agreement aligns with the North Atlantic and West Channel façade strategic document, which guides the implementation of the MSP Directive. **West Flanders (Belgium):** As Belgium's only coastal province, West Flanders ensures that land-sea interactions are prioritized during public consultations on MSP revisions. The upcoming Belgian national MSP includes a 'coastal ribbon' policy to protect coastal areas. **Calabria (Italy)**: Calabria's regional marine plan integrates LSI into its vision and objectives, linking maritime economic development with environmental and cultural heritage protection. This region emphasizes LSI across its coastal planning units.

Recommendation A5: Improve sea-basin cooperation by involving Regions in the cooperation and coordination mechanisms

Justification: A strong sea-basin level action is required to tackle transboundary issues, considering the mobility of marine life and of certain activities (e.g. shipping, fisheries), as well as the growing interrelation of other sea uses such as offshore wind farms networks. European countries must increasingly deal with transboundary challenges and should strengthen their effort to have a larger-scale approach to MSP in order to enhance policy consistency at the sea-basin scale.

EU	National	Regional
In the MSPD: be more precise concerning the required cooperation among Member States, including reference and mobilisation of Regions and Interreg programmes as levers for it. In the MSPD: give guidance for transboundary dialogue with non-EU States and consider the possible lever of cross-border cooperation between regions.	When producing a Sea Basin Strategy document, States should consider co-production with regional and local authorities	
Possible ways to implement Recommendation A5		
Complement the following sentence in Annex "Competent Authorities" of MSPD: "a summary is required of the mechanisms established, in order to ensure coordination between Member States where their waters are covered by MSPD and fall within the same marine region or sub-region" with: "this summary should be common to the Member States concerned by the marine region or sub-region and include consideration for the contribution of Regions. »		
Good practices		
		Interreg North Sea supporting the project Cooperation Governance for Next-Level Maritime Spatial Planning in the North Sea (Norsaic)

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Recommendation A6: Reinforce cross-policy coherence for an easier and more efficient assimilation and implementation of policies at the regional level

Justification: Regions have responsibilities in terms of policy integration, notably through land planning and the EU Cohesion Policy. There is a need to provide a coherent legal policy framework to improve the capacity of Regions to implement their integrative responsibilities.

EU	National	Regional
Investigate scenarios for enhanced coordination of EU maritime policies, to reinforce both thematic and sectoral policies' synergetic potential and the implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning Directive: fisheries, environment, water, nature, biodiversity, energy, transport,… Include implementation of Nature restoration law in the MSP directive recital.	Give a more comprehensive marine/maritime national framework for the implementation by regional land planning and other policies, by appointing the same competent authorities and/or creating a joint body, and at least supporting interactions between the authorities in charge of the implementation of MSPD and Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Water Framework Directive, Habitats Directive and Birds Directive..	
Possible ways to implement Recommendation A6		
Coordinate the implementation timelines of related legislation and policies such as reporting dates, common indicators, mutual assessment.		
Good practices		
	Spain: MSP and MSFD processes are linked by law and share the same coordination mechanisms: the Interministerial Commission for Marine Strategies and the Monitoring Committees for Marine Strategies of the five marine demarcations. **France**: MSP is embedded with MSFD in the same planning document which even has a broader scope (integrated management of sea and coast) **Italy**: The participation of both national authorities competent for the MSP (Ministry of	

	Infrastructure and Transport) and MSFD (Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security) in the Italian MSP Technical Committee provided the basis for an initial MSFD-MSP integration during the development of the plans, in particular for the assessment phase and the identification of MSP planning measures coherent with those included in the MSFD programme of measures. The need to strengthen this integration was recognised: the MSP plans include a specific measure aimed at establishing a technical working group to further advance in the strategic and operational integration between MSP and MSFD (and with the Biodiversity Strategy and Fishery policies, too).	

B. Recommendations related to stakeholder engagement

Recommendation B1: Involve regional and local sectoral stakeholders and public participation in MSP

Justification: Stakeholders and sectors not prioritised in the EU legislation are identified as being under-represented or insufficiently involved in MSP. These include coastal communities, artisanal and recreational fishing, nautical activities, aquaculture and cultural heritage sectors notably. These stakeholders could be more systematically involved in MSP processes to better make their voices heard. Besides, the general public also could be better involved in MSP processes (e.g. through a sound public consultation) to both better hear local voices and enhance the social acceptance of measures.

EU	National	Regional
Reflect the different points of view of stakeholders' representatives depending on the scale at which they operate. Promote more structured and consistent methods for stakeholder engagement at all levels of MSP.	Participatory governance should be actively pursued, ensuring that all stakeholders, including civil society, have a voice in the decision-making process to look for suitable solutions for all sectors and actors. Regional and local authorities to serve as the "focal points" for regional and local stakeholders (including private actors) to participate in national processes.	Improve the procedures for identification and engagement of stakeholders at regional level. Strengthen the level of involvement of sub-regional authorities in the development of sectoral projects in the preliminary phase Maintain and regularly update a database of relevant local and regional stakeholders to communicate with regularly on MSP-related topics and issues.
Possible ways to implement Recommendation B1		
	Establish official and permanent communication channels through the regions to keep civil society informed about the MSP process.	Leverage existing regional and local consultation bodies and processes to broaden local stakeholder participation in the preparation and implementation of national MSP plans. Set-up regional governance schemes, the relevant (regional) MSP stakeholders will strengthen their voice towards the national MSP decision-making centres. Develop and maintain a bridge with the general public: NGOs and cultural institutions could be more systematically invited to network, to promote knowledge on the ocean and MSP.

		International networks and resources can also be mobilized, such as European Marine Science Education Association, EU4OCEAN, The European Marine Board or the New Blue Curriculum. These networks can be valuable resources for additional support to local institutions in developing ocean literacy activities that can enable factual changes in the management of marine resources.
	Good practices	
	In **Finland**, a lot of networks have been put in place from local to national levels to deal with MSP related issues, involving both the regional authorities, academics and other stakeholders. These networks are for instance very useful for the management of salmon resources. Maintain and regularly update database of relevant stakeholders is done in **Ireland** for MSP and was very useful in developing the first spatial plans.	**Central Macedonia region (Greece)**: numerous stakeholders, including local and regional authorities, environmental groups, and key industries like aquaculture, fishing, and tourism, are integral to the environmental planning and implementation process that has positive implications for MSP. Examples of how regions and local authorities are leveraging MSP to address specific issues (such as climate change): - **Crete (Greece):** Crete's Regional Spatial Planning Framework (RSPF) addresses both climate adaptation (coastal erosion) and mitigation (renewable energy projects). The Regional Plan for Climate Change Adaptation (PeSPKA) includes measures specifically for coastal and marine areas, reinforcing the relevance of climate considerations in MSP. - **Brittany (France**) utilizes multi-stakeholder platforms to integrate local sea and coastal commissions, essential for conflict resolution in maritime sectors. - **West Flanders (Belgium):** As Belgium's only coastal province, West Flanders ensures that some maritime topics (such as land-sea interactions) are prioritized during public consultations on MSP revisions. The upcoming Belgian national MSP includes a « coastal ribbon » policy to protect coastal areas.

C. Recommendations related to resources, skills, capacity and networks

The availability of resources in regional and local administrations is considered as insufficient to tackle maritime issues, in particular when dealing with the MSP integrated perspective. The recommendations of this section refer to the need to increase human resources dealing with MSP topics (recommendation C1), adequate financial support for the elaboration, implementation and moniroting of MSP-related policies and action plans (C2) and the access to relevant information for MSP practitioners (C3). In addition, improving coordination and cooperation efforts are important to reduce the costs associated with duplicated efforts, conflicting regulations and inefficient use of resources (C4).

Recommendation C1: Increase human resources in the public sector for the development and implementation of MSP

Justification: Human resources are necessary, in a context where concerns relating to enabling a sustainable blue economy and protecting the marine ecosystems are rising; yet the analysis conducted as part of REGINA-MSP reveals that human resources are often lacking.

EU	National	Regional
	Develop human resources dedicated to the sea within the government departments dealing with maritime issues.	Develop human resources dedicated to the sea within the technical departments of regional and sub-regional authorities.
Possible ways to implement Recommendation C1		
	Interministerial team (horizontal view -between Departments - and vertical deep - into a same State administration)	This could be done through project initiatives (e.g., MPA management, creation of an aquarium, creation of a research centre) that can allow to benefit from the presence of specialized teams and increase the number of competent people on the territory.
Good practices		
		PACA (France): Gulf of Saint-Tropez marine observatory is an existing initiative which has set up a specialized team.

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Recommendation C2: Maintain and increase financial support for the development and implementation of MSP

Justification: The limited availability of financial resources can prevent the development and implementation of actions. In particular, financial resources are needed to implement the recently adopted national MSP plans in the EU countries (e.g. Italy adopted its first national MSP plans on September 2024).

EU	National	Regional
Call on the European Commission to provide adequate resources to support innovative public-private investments contributing to the implementation of MSP plans. Dedicate a part of the national EMFAF envelop to fund MSP capacity development in regional and local authorities.	Include an estimate of the financial needs associated to a full implementation of the maritime spatial plans and provide opportunity to meet them. Establish dedicated national funds to support MSP activities in general and the active involvement of Regions in the process in particular.	The Regions should include in their Interreg programmes for sea basins some actions dedicated to the exchange of experiences and the implementation of plans.
Possible ways to implement Recommendation C2		
Tapping into the full potential of existing platforms such as BlueInvest and diversifying funding models to complement EU-funded projects.	National competent authorities should quantify the resource requirements, the tools and documents to be used to strengthen the implementation of MSP objectives and actions by regional and local authorities. National competent authorities could provide a guidance document, listing the sources of funding from the State and public agencies available to regional and local authorities. Through the LEADER, which could be a good relay for maritime and coastal issues at local level.	
Good practices		
		The LEADER is for example used in the local development scheme in place in **Pays-de-la Loire** (France) along the entire Loire coastline.

Recommendation C3: Develop MSP skills among authorities

Justification: Despite the existence of a huge amount of MSP documentation, this information is not always transformed into knowledge that can be relevant for planners and other public stakeholders. Training and awareness-raising sessions can be organized to sensitize stakeholders to the challenges of maritime spatial planning and best practices for its implementation. However, it should be acknowledged that proposing training and awareness-raising sessions is often a challenge (for universities for instance).

EU	National	Regional
National and EU-level policy-makers should promote the replication and scaling of successful regional MSP experiences across the EU and its sea basins.	Conduct regular training sessions targeting government staff but also regional and local actors. Foster experience-sharing on how existing tools available to regional and local authorities can contribute to achieving the objectives for maritime issues. Develop cross-regional communities of practice among experts and public stakeholders to enhance knowledge on MSP and inclusion.	Develop knowledge about MSP in regional administrations in order to improve their capabilities of participation in the process and their capabilities to engage local and regional stakeholders (focusing on the least heard stakeholders). Conduct regular training sessions targeting government staff but also regional and local actors.
Possible ways to implement Recommendation C3		
Sharing of good practices could be facilitated through knowledge-sharing platforms and targeted funding for regions demonstrating innovative MSP practices	The concept of Cross-regional Communities of Practice between MSP experts and authorities should be further explored. Information sessions for politicians at national level (Members of Parliament, Associations of local authorities,…). Periodic training sessions could be established and given to network of sectors, associations (e.g. FLAGS), etc.	Training sessions developed as part of REGINA-MSP in the case study regions could be replicated in other regions. The Regions could encourage the development of guides and reference documents on MSP, as well as experience-sharing networks. The regional administrations could build on existing assets and networks to enhance ocean literacy.

Good practices		
	In **Spain**, training sessions (held online) were open to authorities belonging to all maritime Regions.	In **Central Macedonia Region (Greece)**, there is already an established cooperation with the School of Spatial Planning of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. In **Central Macedonia Region (Greece)**, the REGINA-MSP project managed to engage the political leadership for the development of a community of practice, which came to understand the importance of a community of practice and to secure acceptance and support for its development.

Recommendation C4: Improve coordination and cooperation to optimise resources

Justification: By working together, public authorities and institutions can reduce costs associated with duplicated efforts, conflicting regulations and inefficient use of resources. This leads to a more efficient use of resources and reduced expenditures. Cooperation also allows for the efficient allocation of resources, such as assigning priority to specific activities and zones, and ensuring that each interested party group has access to the necessary information and contacts to pursue their objectives.

	Enhance coordination of services that are responsible for MSP and its implementation at different levels.	Coordinate actions and interactions with private stakeholders. Cooperate to have all the necessary expertise.
Possible ways to implement Recommendation C4		
	Improve the identification procedures for stakeholders (e.g. create a database identifying the competent body to contact regarding each topic/use/activity per region).	Develop a coordinated front office for private stakeholders' requests. Set up thematic working groups. Train some local agents to be specialists in MSP related issues, in a network of local communities. The concept of Cross-regional Communities of Practice between MSP experts and authorities should be further explored.
Good practices		
	Spanish Interministerial Commission for Marine Strategies consists of several working groups, one of which is the Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (MSP-WGGT-OEM, by its initials in Spanish). This working group is of a technical nature and brings together the different units of the Ministries that regulate maritime activities at the sectoral level, as well as technical advisory institutions.	**Murcia (Spain)**: In Murcia a thematic working group on marine protected areas was established, bringing together various institutions to support the national MSP plan. This group, formed by the regional MPA administrations and the national ones, discussed and agreed on how to consider MPAs in the MSP plan.

D. Recommendations related to data and information

Data gaps remain, hindering MSP processes. To reduce these data gaps, there is first a need to identify the data needed to advance regional and local MSP, in order to effectively orientate data acquisition (defined here as new data) and data collect (gathering existing data that are spread) (recommendation D1). Once data needs are identified, there is a need to expand data acquisition to reduce knowledge gaps (D2). To optimize data acquisition and collection efforts, data should be in open access, and interoperable between the different scales. This will help increase transparency on the methods used to collect/acquire data, and have harmonized datasets (D3). Finally, data should be accessible to a wide range of users who are not expert in data in order to support the sound decision-making and implementation of MSP actions at regional and local scales (D4). This implies having accurate and up-to-date data that respect the FAIR (findable, accurate, interoperable, reusable) principle to the best possible extent. We advocate that data platforms such as geoportals can be useful tools to represent data in a way that is accessible to a wide range of users and can help make visible the invisible, i.e. the gaps in data.

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Recommendation D1: Identify data needs to ensure consistency between data collection and data needs

Justification: There is often a lack of locally relevant data and knowledge about the spatial dimension of some sectors (e.g. small-scale fisheries and recreational fishing, preservation of environmental and cultural heritage sites, or benthic habitats) and socio-economic data at the sub-regional scale on maritime uses (in particular regarding tourism, for which data is very fragmented). Cumulative impact assessments are also increasingly needed with regards to emerging activities (e.g. offshore windfarms).

EU	National	Regional
Ensure that data needs for regional implementation are known by the EU bodies.	Define a monitoring framework of MS plans (indicators, timelines of monitoring) and evaluate MS plans to ensure alignment with national and regional priorities and, where possible, include common national-regional indicators for environmental, social and economic monitoring. Establish specific working groups to address particular data aspects, where regional authorities and experts can collaborate.	Define a regional strategy for data acquisition (new data) and collect (gathering of existing data which are spread) to reduce data fragmentation and enhance collaboration. Utilise smart-scale information for detailed planning at the regional level by identifying specific areas and topics where high-resolution data is required to enhance planning efforts. The Region should encourage regional players to work together on data collection to optimize efforts to set up databases, which are useful tools to identify knowledge gaps.
Possible ways to implement Recommendation D1		
Through regular surveys to understand local data needs. Example of data needed for the European scale: Enhance seabed mapping and map its evolution and ensure marine and coastal data transparency will help assess the impact of human activities on marine ecosystems	Set up working groups on specific topics where data gaps should be addressed in priority (such as for instance unregulated anchorages with Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH) or seagrass meadows in the region of Murcia)	Examples of main data gaps that should be addressed: -Case of **Pays de la Loire region**: o Data for climate change adaptation in the coastal strip o Monitoring of the small-scale coastal fishing fleet o Monitoring water quality and pollution to identify sources) -Case of region **PACA**: o Regional inventory and data collection on the blue economy, in particular tourism, recreational activities, artisanal fishing, yachting... o Data on coastal erosion o Data on marine ecology with the Regional Agency for Biodiversity and the Environment

Good practices		
The ReMAP project developed a tool to identify which data is missing or should be updated for local purposes.	In **Spain**, a specific working group focused on anchoring was created within the MSP-Working group.	

Recommendation D2: Expand data acquisition at a scale appropriate for MSP development and implementation

Justification: Once data needs are identified, there is a need to expand data acquisition to reduce knowledge gaps. Data acquisition is defined here as the acquisition of new data. Data acquisition must be made at a scale appropriate for MSP development and implementation to optimize data acquisition efforts and ensure the data is useful.

EU	National	Regional
Support data acquisition at regional level.	Expand survey vessels and engage citizens in participatory science to help monitor environmental impacts and enrich biodiversity data. Associate the private sector to the financing of data acquisition concerning their activities and impacts.	Engage local stakeholders in data acquisition. Citizen science can provide useful data and information about specific topics (e.g. tourism). Strengthen the links with local data owners to improve local data collect and production.
Possible ways to implement Recommendation D2		
Include a budget line in EMFAF for data acquisition for MSP, including for regional implementation.	Expand existing survey vessels campaigns to monitor e.g. intensive fishing, bycatch, seabed mapping to see the impact of anchorage on benthic habitats, increase water quality and pollution monitoring, find way to monitor where does this pollution comes from. National authorities should promote the monitoring of small-scale fisheries. In Greece, Spatial, economic, social and environmental analyses are not organised in a way that makes them useful for MSP. It is important to acquire appropriate data to perform analyses, such as land-sea interactions, marine risk and hazards economic valuations of marine sectors...	Promote specific observatories of activities associating organisations of stakeholders and local scientific teams.
Good practices		
	Participative sciences in France: Biolit for coastal habitats, LITTOREA for shore fishing.	VALPENA: scientific grouping associating the University of Nantes and Professional fisheries organisations, for monitoring small scale fisheries activities.

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Recommendation D3: Ensure open data and interoperability between data

Justification: To optimize data acquisition and collection efforts, data should be in open access (considering the data owners' rights and needs for instance regarding military or fishing issues), and interoperable between the different scales. This will help increase transparency on the methods used to collect/acquire data, and have harmonized datasets.

EU	National	Regional
Enhance data sharing on MSP across Europe through platforms to establish a more unified and well-informed strategy for MSP, ensuring a balance between sustainability and economic development. Ensure that data platforms are interoperable and accessible to a broad range of stakeholders. Encourage the use of OpenData and EMODnet at an EU scale.	Ensure interoperability between regional and national geoportals and geodatabases. Promote the active use of national geospatial portals designed for MSP by regional stakeholders, ensuring consistency in data standards and facilitating cross-regional collaboration.	Strengthen the role of existing regional geoportals to support the elaboration of MSP plans.
Possible ways to implement Recommendation D3		
The European Technical Expert Group on Data for MSP recommends sharing data on platforms like EMODnet and Copernicus to ensure a uniform approach for a pan-European MSP. Plan the topic of supporting data platforms for MSP in EMFAF calls. To the best possible extent, data should be filling the FAIR principle (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) to be accessible and useful to a wide range of users.	It could be useful to work with the National Institute of statistics to set up a framework to collect and produce data at different scales in order to ensure the harmonization and interoperability of the data between scales. To the best possible extent, data should be filling the FAIR principle (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) to be accessible and useful to a wide range of users.	Encourage OpenData so datasets can be collected once and reused often. In **Greece**, regional geospatial databases should be built, to include higher resolution data, which are necessary for the drafting of plans at the regional and local scale. To the best possible extent, data should be filling the FAIR principle (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) to be accessible and useful to a wide range of users.
Good practices		
	In **Ireland**, the Marine Institute collects and hosts a number of different data sets on biodiversity and activities as well as seabed mapping which has been completed for most of our Exclusive Economic Zone.	**Emilia-Romagna (Italy)** developed a regional marine and coastal information system to support ICZM and MSP and contributed to the Adriatic-Ionian Geoportal (GAIR).

Recommendation D4: Provide accessible data to all users and enhance data sharing

Justification: In order to support the sound decision-making and implementation of MSP actions at regional and local scales, data should be accessible to a wide range of users who are not expert in data. The data must be accurate, up-to-date, and transferred from science to all stakeholders in a clear and transparent way (e.g. the method used to produce data must be set clearly to increase the confidence of users in data robustness, thus facilitating data sharing). Data platforms such as geoportals can be useful tools to represent data in a way that is accessible to a wide range of users, since data has already being processed and can be visualized spatially and over time. Ultimately, these data platforms and geoportals which are accessible to all users can help make visible the invisible, i.e. the gaps in data. Regions develop and use some geoportals, but at the national and EU scales, other geoportals (e.g. EMODnet) are preferably used. The multiplicity of data platforms and geoportals can make it difficult to access data and ensure data interoperability between scales.

EU	National	Regional
Encourage regions to develop and maintain geoportals and data platforms that integrate environmental, economic, and social data to support MSP decision-making.	Clarify the responsibilities of Regional and State services in data collection and sharing to enhance MSP knowledge at all levels.	Develop and maintain MSP geodatabases to address regional and local scales. If a regional MSP geodatabase already exists, ensure it is used by regional and local authorities by strengthening the promotion of the tool.
Improve and extend the capabilities of existing geoportals and data platforms to integrate regional features so that they can be of best use to Regions and sub-regional actors.	Raise awareness and train staff to the use of geoportals and data platforms to improve decision-making and stakeholder involvement, to facilitate environmental assessments, coastal planning, and regional governance.	Enhance stakeholders' ability to use data tools such as geoportals through targeted training and user-friendly tools.
Possible ways to implement Recommendation D4		
Through training programmes or workshops on how to access and use the existing data. EMODnet could serve as the primary portal for marine spatial data across Europe. This includes integrating more detailed and higher resolution datasets, ensuring that data from all Member States is available and up to date, as well as enabling the collection and	Through training programmes or workshops on how to access and use the existing data.	Through training programmes or workshops on how to access and use the existing data.

dissemination of data of regional interest. Take into account the local and regional scale in the development of the European digital twin ocean, as well as the European open science cloud.		
Good practices		
	In **Greece**, an open-access national geospatial database is available. This database should be continuously updated and enriched with missing data, referring to the sea. The geoportal INFOMAR was created in **Spain** with the objective of compiling and give public access to all the data related to the MSFD and MSPD, where the regional data should be integrated. **Ireland** has developed a public facing site www.Marineplan.ie to enable all information to be visible in one place for all users with links to access the data	**Galicia (Spain)** created geoportals like MARPLAN, which includes socio-economic and environmental data to support spatial planning for aquaculture and fisheries. **Region Sud (PACA, France)** launched the platform called "Mon Littoral Provence-Côte d'Azur", connecting coastal stakeholders and sharing best practices. Challenges encountered include data harmonization, financial sustainability, and the need for continuous updates. Future improvements focus on enhancing data resolution, providing accessible tools, avoiding platform duplication, and securing funding. Benefits include well-organized knowledge repositories aiding decision-making, collaboration with scientific partners, and enhanced stakeholder engagement through public data access and co-creation processes.

CONCLUSION

The REGINA-MSP project used a wide variety of approaches to understand and reinforce the role of regions in national MSP. First, the work provides an overview of MSP implementation ten years after the adoption of the MSP Directive. The findings show the diversity of governance approaches and practices across the EU countries with regard to the involvement of regions in MSP depending on national contexts, ultimately underlining the diversity of interpretations of the MSP Directive between Member States. While pre-existing governance frameworks generally support regional participation in MSP, challenges to more active participation remain. These include the lack of adequate capacity and resources to effectively implement maritime spatial plans, complex administrative coordination in multi-level governance systems, resource constraints, limited technical capacity, strategic nature or non-legally binding plans. The project tasks seek to reduce these challenges, through participatory interviews and workshops with authorities and stakeholders less heard in MSP, as well as analyses of policy frameworks and plans, but also the updating of a maritime geoportal to integrate relevant and updated data for regional and sub-regional scales.

Based on the project's activities and results, the project provides policy recommendations at European, national and regional levels for a better integration of regional and sub-regional needs, perspectives and stakeholders in maritime planning. These recommendations cover a wide range of proposals related to the need to improve regulatory and governance frameworks, to engage stakeholders in MSP, to provide adequate resources and capacity, and to improve the collection, access and sharing of up-to-date data and information. Specific ways of operationalizing these recommendations are proposed, based on the project results and in collaboration with national, regional and local authorities and experts. In addition, concrete examples of good practices are highlighted for each recommendation. Additional recommendations specific to the countries and case study regions part of REGINA-MSP are also identified and summarized in dedicated leaflets (or communication briefs) available on the project website (https://www.regina-msp.eu/). A direct output of the project is the political declaration by the CPMR's regions on the future of the MSP Directive. Finally, the project directly contributes to a better integration of regional and sub-regional needs and perspectives in MSP through the various workshops and participatory meetings, for example by providing direct support to government departments to encourage local stakeholders take ownership of maritime and coastal issues and to facilitate the exchange of information between the different levels. However, the long-term involvement of regions in MSP will require sustained efforts over the long term.

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