Workshop Briefing Paper

Maritime Spatial Planning for Islands

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Authors: Lucy Greenhill, s.Pro – sustainable projects GmbH

Reviewers: Hannah Jones, Angela Schultz-Zehden, Lisa Simone de Grunt

European MSP Platform Consortium Contractors:

with Thetis, University of Liverpool, and NIMRD "Grigore Antipa"

Introduction

There are over 2200 populated islands in the national jurisdictions of twenty Member States of the EU[1] and which make an important contribution to their maritime economies. The Outermost Regions of the EU are also islands with a fundamental interest in developing their Blue Economies i.e. Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique, Mayotte and Saint-Martin (France), the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain). As a broad category of populated land-masses surrounded by water, islands vary greatly in their physical, ecological, socio-cultural and governance characteristics, but also share certain challenges primarily due to their insularity and remoteness, although to different degrees.

This discussion paper provides an introduction to the topic of maritime spatial planning (MSP) in relation to islands and the role of MSP in addressing the opportunities for Blue Growth in islands, considering the particular challenges they face. It has been written to support the workshop on "*Maritime Spatial Planning for Islands*" to be held in Gran Canaria on the 11th September 2018, which will provide the opportunity for exchange of experience and perspectives in order to understand how MSP addresses the particular opportunities and challenges of islands. Results of the discussions held at the workshop will be incorporated into a revised report.

Island Governance and MSP Processes

The islands of the EU are of varying size and status, and MSP is applied differently in each case depending on the governance structure and existing institutional arrangements. This is influenced by the level of autonomy of islands in relation to a sovereign state and range from MSP being delivered for the island / archipelago as an autonomous region (e.g. the Azores and other Outermost Regions, and Åland, Finland); islands with some level of autonomy where MSP is delivered for the local area by an island authority but related to an overarching plan (such as in the Shetland Islands, Scotland); and islands as municipalities / regions, or of non-governmental status, which will be considered in a broader regional or national plan (as for most islands, including the Baltic).

Governance and MSP processes are complex, vary in each case and may still be in development, but to support discussion, Table 1 provides a broad categorisation based

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[1] Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom

on the level of autonomy and the potential influence of this on the delivery of MSP. This categorisation can be adapted based on the workshop.

Status	Description and Relevance to MSP	Examples
Sovereign island states or nations	Island countries / groups of islands governed at the member state level. MSP is delivered centrally by national government for the island nation / archipelago.	Malta, Cyprus, Ireland
Autonomous island or groups of islands (archipelago provinces)	Islands that belong to a sovereign state but with a high degree of authority and executive power. In some cases MSP is delivered on the islands through local government structures, in others they will co-ordinate with broader regional or national planning (Balearic Islands)	Autonomous Region of the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), Canary Islands (Spain), Åland (Finland), Balearic Islands (Spain)
Semi-autonomous islands (higher degree)	Islands as regions of a sovereign state with their own authority at municipality or council level but with a higher degree of autonomy than other state regions. MSP may be delivered locally (as in Shetland), although within a broader context of national planning.	Shetland Islands, (Scotland, UK)
Semi-autonomous islands (lower degree)	Islands with their own municipality or council level but with lower levels of autonomy. MSP may be delivered through a larger scale regional / provincial or national plan, with representation from island groups.	Corsica (France), Sardinia and Sicily (Italy), Corfu (Greece), Gotland (Sweden), Fehmarn off the eastern coast of Schleswig-Holstein (Germany), Wolin (Poland).
No official autonomy	Islands hosting local communities which may form different types of groups and community councils which are non-governmental. Such island communities may inform MSP via these groups which is substantially led from the associated mainland state.

These also include islands connected by a bridge or causeway, most of | Most smaller islands in the European Union fall into this category.

Most bridged islands are in the |

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	which are governed from their contiguous mainland, by the state or coastal municipality. These are considered within mainland MSP processes.	Baltic and include Zealand (Denmark), Tjörn (Sweden) and Krk (Croatia).

Table 1. Categorisation of islands according to the level of autonomy and how this relates to MSP.

At the workshop, given their size and relevance, we primarily focus on MSP being delivered at the island level, i.e. autonomous and semi-autonomous islands. However, it is also important to consider how other smaller islands with a lower level of autonomy are represented in MSP processes.

Maritime Spatial Planning for Islands – Current Experience

MSP is underway throughout the islands of the EU as Member States implement the requirements of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive. As described above, MSP will take different forms depending on the design of the process in each country, influenced substantially by the degree of autonomy of the island(s), and the extent to which MSP is developed locally on and for the islands, or as part of a broader regional / national plan. Examples of activities to support MSP in islands are provided in Table 2 - this is not exhaustive and will be augmented based on discussions at the workshop.

Country	MSP Project	Description
Azores (Outermost Region of Portugal)	GPS Azores: Geographical and Political Scenarios in Maritime Spatial Planning for the Azores and North Atlantic[2]	This on-going project will analyse existing maritime governance, and, through identifying uses, conflicts and possible development scenarios, support a MSP proposal for the Azores.
Shetland Islands (Scotland)	Shetland Islands Marine Spatial Plan (NAFC, 2015)	Building on previous pilot MSP projects, the Fourth Edition of the Shetland Islands Marine Spatial Plan (SIMSP) is adopted as 'Supplementary Guidance' to the Shetland Local Development Plan. A further iteration of the MSP is underway, through the Scottish regional marine planning process.

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[2] https://www.msp-platform.eu/projects/gps-azores-geographical-and-political-scenarios-maritime-spatial-planning-azores-and

Limassol (Cyprus)	Cross-border Cooperation for Maritime Spatial Planning Development (THAL CHOR)[3]	While no formal MSP exists yet for Cyprus, the THAL CHOR regional pilot project analysed activities for conflicts and compatibilities in the coastal and marine areas around Limassol.
Lesvos and Rhodes (Greece)	Cross-border Cooperation for Maritime Spatial Planning Development (THAL CHOR) pilot plan for Lesvos and Rhodes[4]	Also under the THAL CHOR project, pilot plans have been developed for the islands of Lesvos and Rhodes in Greece.
Ionian Sea (Greece)	Experiences from the Ionian Islands pilot project (part of "MSP Med – Paving the Road to MSP in the Mediterranean")[5].	Work undertaken to support implementation of ICZM in the Mediterranean, with specific focus on the Ionian Islands, is therefore applicable to the development of MSP.
Saaremaa and Hiiumaa (Estonia)	Towards a Pilot Maritime Spatial Plan for the Saaremaa and Hiiumaa Islands (Martin, et al., 2012).	A pilot maritime plan was developed for the Saaremaa and Hiiumaa islands through the BaltSeaPLan project[6].
Åland (Finland)	PanBalticScope - Finland-Aland-Sweden Case[7], Aland Islands (Finland)	The MSP for Åland is being developed by the Government of Åland, through the PanBalticScope project. This builds on previous work through the HELCOM-led project on planning the future of the Bothnian Sea ("Plan Bothnia"[8]).

Table 2. Examples of MSP activities applicable to islands in the EU.

Specific Features of Islands Relevant to MSP

The islands of the EU are hugely variable, from those with extensive marine areas within their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) compared to their landmass, such as the Azores, to those with small marine areas such as Åland, Finland. This influences the complexity presents different challenges for the MSP process - addressing a much larger area may have consequent demands for data, access to a broader range of stakeholders including

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[3] https://www.msp-platform.eu/practices/pilot-msp-plan-limassol-cyprus

[4] https://www.msp-platform.eu/practices/pilot-msp-plan-lesvos-and-rhodes-greece

[5] https://www.msp-platform.eu/practices/experiences-ionian-islands-pilot-project

[6] http://www.baltseaplan.eu/index.php/Hiiumaa-and-Saaremaa;838/1

[7] http://www.panbalticscope.eu/activities/cross-border-collaboration-and-consultation-to-support-national-msp-processes/finland-aland-sweden-case/

[8] https://www.msp-platform.eu/practices/transboundary-msp-pilot-bothnian-sea

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international actors, etc., whereas islands with small sea spaces may have better access to data of their marine area but may face higher density of sea use and competition.

The governance arrangements of each island also vary (as introduced in Table 1), and the respective roles and interactions between local, regional and national institutions, which also informing the design and implementation of MSP, which needs to support interaction between these governance actors to achieve integrated Blue Growth policy.

However, many islands share common features, principally associated with their insularity (although to different degrees) and which can present barriers to growth and development. Challenges of insularity include limited land-based resources, remoteness from decision-making centres, small domestic markets, the ecological fragility of the natural environments and vulnerability to external forces, including economic or environmental, including the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. Demographic challenges of low or declining populations and in retaining residents can also limit 'social capital' on islands – including the skilled people and capacity to develop Blue Economy sectors, as well as to deliver MSP locally.

Islands in general have an inextricable link to the sea, built upon long histories of interaction with it through industry, commerce and culture. They are often more dependent on maritime activities which make up a substantial part of their economies, with sectors such as tourism, shipping, fishing often of critical importance. As addressed in an earlier conference on the topic, held in Malta, June 2017 understanding and accounting for land-sea interactions (LSI) is critical to MSP[9] and this has particular relevance to the case of islands.

However, there are also potential advantages for islands, including a greater sense of engagement and ownership of island communities in relation to maritime activities, which may positively affect their willingness to engage with MSP. Given the complexity involved in developing MSP, the smaller scale of planning at an island or archipelago scale may enable more effective MSP efforts, with reduced administrative complexity, greater data availability, good stakeholder engagement, etc.

Islands also provide opportunities for the development of small-scale, 'bottom-up' initiatives such as community ownership of renewable energy schemes which can support the development of sectors in some contexts where local acceptance may otherwise be challenging.

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[9] https://www.msp-platform.eu/events/msp-conference-addressing-land-sea-interactions

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Many islands have had a level of autonomy for many years and a history of coastal planning, whether Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) or other approaches. This provides a strong basis for delivering locally relevant MSP which considers local information, experience and the specific needs of island communities. For example, the Shetland Islands in Scotland have undertaken planning for their own sea area since the powers granted to them by the Zetland County Council Act of 1974, and MSP will now be formally developed by the Shetland Islands Marine Planning Partnership. The marine plans produced by the Partnership will need to be approved by national government ministers, but they have been awarded powers to develop guiding policies within their Plan, which will influence the management of marine activities in their territorial sea area.

There is a strong identity and often sense of solidarity between islands, and even where they may be subject to the policies of a mainland national sovereign authority, they may have more in common with other islands, e.g. in terms of physical geography, socio-cultural characteristics, etc. (Baldacchino et al., 2015). This has led to networks being established which support interaction, knowledge-exchange and co-operation on issues facing islands and their communities, and these could provide a useful resource in providing information for, and sharing experience in MSP. Examples of these networks and organisations promoting the specific interests and requirements of islands are listed in Annex 1, to be expanded upon in the workshop.

The boxes below summarises some of the features of islands that may provide advantages in relation and MSP, and vulnerabilities which need to be considered.

Opportunities
- Connectedness to the sea tends to be greater as there is greater reliance on the sea and maritime activities.   - The distinct planning powers and experience of some islands, as well as being of smaller scale, may provide a strong basis for locally relevant MSP.   - Engagement of local communities in marine activities and hence MSP may be greater.   - Solidarity and networks between islands at EU and global level to enable sharing of experience in MSP through partnerships and alliances.   - Smaller scale and more discrete communities may provide particular opportunities for innovative local management and community ownership models, e.g. through small-scale renewable energy or development of MPAs.

Challenges
- Insularity and distance from decision-making centres, which may influence representativity in MSP.   - Greater reliability on maritime activities increases the importance of MSP to islands and vulnerability to poor performance in these sectors.

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- While planning powers may exist, there may be a lack of local administrative capacity for planning, e.g. due to small populations or problems of emigration.
- Remoteness – with effects on e.g. transport costs, availability of local skills, etc.
- Ecological sensitivities may be greater, due to the smaller and more vulnerable ecosystems, and to climate change related factors such as sea level rise.
- Islands tend to be much more reliant on imports and exports and hence can be economically vulnerable to market fluctuations and supply interruptions.

Roundtable Discussion 1

Considering the introduction above and presentations at the workshop, in Roundtable Discussion 1 we will discuss the following questions:

Question 1: What are the key economic, environmental, governance and social features that need to be considered in MSP for islands? How do these vary across islands of the EU?

Question 2: What role can MSP play in responding to these features?

Blue Growth in Islands

The Blue Economy of islands are highly important given the proportion of landmass relative to their often large marine areas, and their consequent heavy reliance on maritime sectors. Tourism is often the dominant sector which contributes significantly to their economies, as in many of the Greek and Balearic islands, Cyprus and Malta where coastal tourism contributed 75.4% of GVA in 2016 (EC, 2018). Significant revenue arises from tourism in relation to the natural environment and underwater cultural heritage, and such important features requires specific protection to ensure their on-going contribution to the islands, from an economic as well as socio-cultural perspective. Countries like Finland, Italy and Greece have particularly valuable underwater archaeology which support a significant diving industry (Ecorys, 2012).

New developments in coastal tourism, particularly sustainable tourism, are identified areas of Blue Growth in some islands, as is currently being promoted in Mayotte through the European Regional Development Fund (European Commission, 2017), however flight costs, particularly to remote islands are a constraint. Cruise tourism is a well-established sector contributing to many island economies, and is considered a growth area in the Blue Economy, with consequent implications for ports, marinas and the coastal towns, where coastal infrastructure may be limited Other shipping and maritime transport is of critical importance for linking islands with the European mainland and elsewhere.

Growth is expected in coastal protection, particularly in the defence against rising sea levels which is of relevance to islands. Aquaculture is also considered a key growth sector with ambitious growth objectives for the EU as a whole, and national strategies setting growth targets in many countries with associated islands, including for example Croatia[10].

Desalination is an important activity for islands where terrestrial water supplies are limited such as in the Mediterranean (particularly Malta, Spain, Greece and Cyprus), and desalination activities are expected to increase, in Spain to double existing capacity over the next 50 years, some of which may be island-based (EC, 2018).

Emerging sectors of the Blue Economy which are expected to develop include aquaculture of algae / seaweed cultivation for a variety of products including for biofuels, food and pharmaceutical uses. Blue biotechnology and the use of marine organisms in the pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries is at an early stage of investigation but is relevant in some island areas, with huge possible economic significance. Such opportunities are being developed and making progress in the Azores and Madeira (Ecorys, 2012).

Ocean energy is also a promising sector in the EU although feasible only where resources exist, and may face challenges in islands given the need for electricity transmission and other infrastructure and the likely small local demand for energy. Given the amenable topography suitable for testing of prototype devices, islands such as the Orkney Islands, Scotland, have developed industry around this emerging sector through the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) and associated industry. The "Clean Energy for EU Islands" initiative[11], launched in May 2017 in Malta, aims to support islands in becoming more self-sufficient in terms of energy, reducing energy costs as well as addressing air quality and greenhouse gas emissions. It provides an opportuity for islands to share their specific challenges, best practice and experience from pilot projects.

Other strategic potential growth areas included marine monitoring, research and surveillance, including of maritime traffic, pollution control, fisheries control and illegal immigration, including in the Outermost Regions and the Canary Islands (ECORYS, 2012).

Threats include climate change and related effects of sea-level rise and ocean acidification, consequent degradation of natural habitats including coral reefs and the potential negative effects on tourism, illegal fishing and invasive species, along with the increased competition between marine uses as blue economy activities intensify.

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[10] https://www.msp-platform.eu/sites/default/files/download/croatia_2017.07.19.pdf
[11] https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/energy-strategy-and-energy-union/clean-energy-eu-islands

Summary

The many islands of the European Union have an important contribution to make to the overall Blue Growth strategy, given the greater relative importance of maritime activities to their economies. While they differ widely according to socio-political, cultural and physical characteristics, there are a number of features which may be general to many, and which influence maritime spatial planning. These include issues relating to vulnerability such as remoteness, administrative capacity, etc. as well as the specific opportunities presented by the smaller scale of governance and the potential for greater engagement of local communities. In terms of Blue Growth, opportunities exist in islands which can be explored in relation to the sensitivities and development objectives of the particular islands in question.

This topic will be discussed further at the interactive sessions of the MSP in Islands workshop. Based on the outcomes of the workshop, this paper will be refined into a report to document the specific challenges faced by islands and how these can be considered in MSP in order to address the Blue Growth opportunities of islands.

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Annex 1. Examples of networks and groups representing the interests of islands in the EU

Network / Group	Description
European Small Islands Network (ESIN) https://europeansmallislands.com/	ESIN promotes the resilience of small islands and their communities, at the local level of exchange of knowledge and experience and promoting understanding of their issues in EU policies and institutions.
Global Islands Network (GIN) https://www.globalislands.net/	The Global Islands Network represents a hub that connects and coordinates efforts to help ensure a healthy and productive future for islanders worldwide.
Islands Commission of the CPMR (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe)	The Islands Commission works with European institutions and Member States to encourage special attention to islands and their specific challenges. It also aims to foster interregional cooperation between islands.
B7 Baltic Islands Network (http://www.b7.org/)	The B7 is a co-operation of islands in the Baltic Sea countries that began in 1989. The partners are Gotland (Sweden), Hiiumaa (Estonia), Rügen (Germany), Saaremaa (Estonia), Åland (autonomous region of Finland.
The Network of the Insular Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the European Union (INSULEUR)	Based in Greece, INSULEUR oversees the close cooperation between insular Chambers of Commerce in the EU

http://www.insuleur.org/pagina.php?Cod_fam=7)	and aims to promote the economic and social development of islands in the EU.

Examples of networks and groups representing the interests of islands in Europe (to be expanded based on the workshop).

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