



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Maritime Policy and Blue Economy  
Blue Economy Sectors, Aquaculture and Maritime Spatial Planning

# Terms of Reference for the Technical Working Group on Data for MSP

## Version of 25.02.2020

### Objectives

1. To facilitate availability of data and information sharing between Member States on maritime spatial plans across the EU and,
2. To facilitate availability of data and information on the state of the marine environment in connection with the established maritime spatial plans and ensure coherency across the EU.

### Status

The Technical Working Group on Data for MSP:

- has no institutional status, i.e. it is not a subgroup of the Member States Expert Group (MSEG) on Maritime Spatial Planning;
- is not a "policy" group, but a technical one, and its meetings and deliberations will therefore be on technical matters only;
- will develop non-binding recommendations and proposals to responsible authorities (MSP Competent Authorities, Commission);
- will aim at avoiding duplication of work with regard to activities of further (regional) initiatives and working groups on the issue of MSP data. To this end, the Group will work in coordination with other existing forums and initiatives, including:
  - Ongoing and future MSP projects;
  - Regional bodies developing Marine Spatial Data Infrastructures (e.g. HELCOM VASAB "MSP Data Expert Sub-group", OSPAR, etc.);
  - ICES Working Group for Marine Planning and Coastal Zone Management (WGMPCZM);
  - EMODNET;
  - Relevant Groups under MSFD implementation (e.g. indicators, measures);
  - Relevant Groups working on INSPIRE.

- is established for a period of one year, with a possibility of extension if agreed by the Commission, after consultation with the MSEG on MSP.

## **Tasks**

The Group will try to identify what data/information is available, where, and whether this data/information is harmonised or suitable for harmonisation/homogenisation, especially as regards Maritime Spatial Plans.

Specific tasks of the Group could be:

1. Work across sea basins to identify the needs in the area of MSP data for implementation;
2. Produce guidelines (not mandatory) on necessary data, standards for MSP and links this activities with other relevant policies (MSFD, INSPIRE, COPERNICUS, EMODnet, etc);
3. Work on standard parameters that allows MSP plans to be harmonized across sea basin regions and across EU, if possible in line with the INSPIRE Directive;
4. Assist in the production of a European portal containing information on MSP plans.

## **Composition of the Technical Working Group**

### Membership

- members are Data / GIS (Geographical Information Systems) / SDI (Spatial Data Infrastructure) experts and/or MSP planners.

### Selection of experts

- the Commission will invite Member States (MSP Competent Authorities) to suggest experts. The experts do not represent Member States.
- from their side, the Commission and EASME will also identify experts.

Experts are to be selected on the basis of their technical knowledge in the field, exclusively.

The Commission will appoint a final list of experts and will inform the MSEG on MSP.

### Additional experts

- may participate in meetings by invitation of the Chair of the Technical Working Group, depending on issues to be dealt with such as representatives of other organizations, technical experts, etc.

### The Chair

- is appointed by the Commission;
- is supported by a co-chair, also appointed by the Commission;
- will coordinate the activities of the Working Group (e.g. convening the meetings, setting the agenda, invite experts);
- will set objectives and a calendar of priorities/activities, with specific deliverables.

## **Meetings**

- maximum 4 times / year;
- may be set up as group meetings or specialised workshops;
- may be held as face-to-face meetings or online conferences;
- may preferably being held back-to-back other relevant meetings / conferences / Working Groups e.g. relevant MSP projects, European Maritime Day, International MSP meetings, MSEG on MSP meetings, etc.;
- participation of experts in meetings will vary depending on the specific items/topics/task that the group sets itself. Not all the experts in the list need to be invited to all the meetings.

## **Secretariat of the Group**

The Group should have a minimum of secretarial support (e.g. organising meetings, writing minutes, etc.). The Assistance Mechanism on MSP will accomplish this task in the context of the Service Contract.

## **Communication / dissemination**

For its internal work the Group could make use, *inter alia*, of:

- dedicated pages in the EU Maritime Forum
- dedicated pages in a collaborative platform that EASME could set-up for the use of the Group

For the purpose of outreach, the Group could make use of the resources developed by the EU Assistance Mechanism for MSP, such as the website [www.msp-platform.eu](http://www.msp-platform.eu), newsletters, etc.

The Chair and/or individual experts will be invited to participate in MSEG meetings to report on progress on a regular basis.

---