

Technical Expert Group (TEG) on Data for Maritime Spatial Planning

Workshop on Advancing Maritime Spatial Planning Data Management:
Insights and future Actions

Outcomes and main messages

Background

Policy framework

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) aims to support efficient marine resource management and sustainable development. Since 2014, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (now EMFAF) has allocated approximately EUR 41 million to support Member States with MSP through 7 Calls for Proposals. To date 30 MSP projects have been implemented across the EU, including the European outermost regions. On 27 February 2024, another call for proposals closed, with potentially two new projects soon to be funded.

The MSP Directive entered into force in September 2014 and established a set of common minimum requirements. It represents an overarching governance framework for EU Member States (EU MSs), which are required to adopt maritime spatial plans by 2021 in all EU marine waters.

Among the requirements, MSs are requested to cooperate with neighbouring countries to ensure coherent plans are established across the marine region concerned and where possible to cooperate with third-country authorities. Furthermore, they are encouraged to make use of existing instruments and tools to organise the use of the best available data, necessary for the creation of the maritime spatial plans.

Workshop Highlights

Recognising that MSP serves as a vital tool for effectively managing marine resources, balancing conservation and economic interests, as well as the complexities and evolving nature of MSP, the European Climate, Infrastructure, and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) and the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) convened two workshops aimed at addressing pressing challenges and charting a course for future MSP initiatives. Drawing participation from over 300 experts and policymakers, these events provided a platform for knowledge exchange, reflection, and strategic planning within the MSP community.

MSP Data Tools and Guidance: TEG on Data for MSP

The workshop, held on March 13th, organised by the Technical Expert Group (TEG) on Data for MSP emphasised the significance of reliable and standardised data for informed MSP decision-making. Presentations showcased the latest tools and guidance published by the TEG, aimed at facilitating data harmonisation among EU MSs. Notably, the hybrid format enabled both in-person and online participation, fostering inclusivity and knowledge dissemination.

MSP workshop: learning from the past to address current and future challenges.

The workshop, held on March 14th, delved into key themes essential to enhance MSP effectiveness, learning from the past and advancing MSP future actions. The day centred on a comprehensive analysis of projects funded under the EMFAF/EMFF programme since 2014. Participants engaged in discussions on the challenges encountered and provided recommendations to enhance project effectiveness. Importantly, the workshop facilitated dialogue on addressing current and emerging MSP challenges, culminating in actionable suggestions for policy improvement and impact optimisation.

Main takeaways



Strengthening cooperation among EU Member States and neighbouring countries is imperative for harmonising MSP data collection efforts. Greater emphasis on interoperability and accessibility of data will foster informed decision-making and policy coherence.



Recognising the complexities inherent in MSP implementation, concerted efforts are needed to overcome barriers and streamline project execution. Strategies may include enhanced stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and targeted support for project implementation.



In light of evolving global challenges and changing marine environments, policymakers must adopt adaptive and responsive policy frameworks. Flexibility and agility in policy formulation will enable effective adaptation to emerging challenges and ensure the long-term sustainability of MSP initiatives.



The workshops underscored the critical role of MSP in achieving sustainable ocean governance, as well as the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing current and future challenges.

MSP Data tools and Guidance workshop, March 13 2024

The Technical Expert Group (TEG) on data for MSP was established in April 2020 by DG MARE and CINEA. The TEG was established to address the current state of play of MSP data management, resolve ongoing issues (such as harmonisation of MSP “output” data) and exchange knowledge and experience between practitioners and experts on MSP.



Since the establishment of the TEG, the voluntary members of the TEG have identified priority areas where intervention was required and established a number of dedicated technical sub-groups to develop guidance, standards and in some cases data models to address these challenges.

The objective of this public workshop was to simultaneously provide an appropriate opportunity for these outputs of the TEG to be presented, providing due visibility to their authors

and contributors, whilst at the same time sharing them with member states’ planners and MSP practitioners worldwide in a practical and useable way, illustrated where possible with examples.

The TEG’s work to date has led to the following five publications below:

- [Maritime Spatial Planning Data Framework \(MSPdF\) – How to structure MSP input data for process, monitoring and evaluation.](#)
- [Metadata Standard for Maritime Spatial Plans - a common structure to describe data associated with maritime spatial plans.](#)
- [Guidelines for the integration of the Socioeconomic impact of MSP](#)
- [Analysing the state of current practices and synergies in data usage between the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Preliminary survey results.](#)

- [The different data models available to support a harmonised MSP plan data available across Europe.](#)

These publications, presented during the workshop, tackle challenges such as data comparability, data reliability, data standardisation and harmonisation, and the importance of using common terminology. They offer practical methods and tools that can support member states' planners and MSP practitioners in their work.

The recording of the workshop, along with the presentations of the speakers are uploaded on the EU MSP Platform and can be found [here](#).

- Presentation 1: Maritime Spatial Planning Data Framework (MSPdF): How to structure input data for MSP process, monitoring and evaluation – *Presenter: Andrej Abramic (Co-Chair of the TEG on Data for MSP, ULPGC)*
- Presentation 2: MSP Input data module based on the MSPdF: Assessment of the MSP data collection – *Presenter Andrej Abramic (Co-Chair of the TEG on Data for MSP, ULPGC)*
- Presentation 3: Promoting and structuring dialogue on Data Knowledge in the European ORs through the MSP data Framework – *Presenter: Victor Cordero Penin (ULPGC)*
- Presentation 4: Thesaurus MSPdF – *Presenter: Bastien Fouque (Developer for MSP unit at SHOM)*
- Presentation 5: Metadata Standard for Maritime Spatial Plans: A common structure to describe data associated with Maritime spatial plans – *Presenter: Andrew Conway (Marine Institute, Ireland)*
- Presentation 6: Socioeconomic impact of the MSP – *Presenter: Marta Ballesteros (CSIC)*
- Presentation 7: Analysing the state of current practices and synergies in data usage between the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive – *Presenter: Stefano Menegon (CNR ISMAR)*
- Presentation 8: Marine Strategy Framework Directive and MSP links module – ReMAP – *Presenter: Alessandro Mulazzani (CNR ISMAR)*
- Presentation 9: Setting the scene for development of the EU MSP data layer – *Presenter: Joni Kaitaranta, (Co-Chair of the TEG on Data for MSP, HELCOM Secretariat)*
- Presentation 10: MSP Output Data – ReMAP: Exploratory Data Analysis of MSP Plans – *Presenter: Stefano Menegon (CNR ISMAR)*
- Presentation 11: EMODnet Human Activities: EU MSP data layer and current state of play – *Presenter: Marta Ballesteros (CSIC)*

Information about the workshop was disseminated through the European MSP Platform, as well as by IOC-UNESCO and the Union for the Mediterranean. The workshop drew participation from approximately 300 attendees, utilising interactive tools like Slido to engage both on-site and online participants. The event concluded with a word cloud exercise (see Figure 1), shedding light on priority topics, notably emphasising the integration of socio-economic data into MSP for a comprehensive understanding and effective policy formulation.

The word cloud exercise revealed key priority areas for participants, prominently featuring the integration of socio-economic data into MSP. This emphasis underscores the importance of understanding the socio-economic impact of human activities on community well-being, social structures, and environmental ecosystems. The word cloud also highlighted critical concerns such as data gaps, harmonisation, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Efforts towards data harmonisation are crucial for informed policy-making and robust governance, enabling comprehensive analysis of the impact of human activities on marine environments. Effective stakeholder engagement at local, national, and regional levels is essential for MSP implementation and cross-border cooperation. Lastly, the increasing attention towards monitoring and evaluation underscores its

significance in the MSP planning process. Proper selection of data and proactive inclusion of M&E considerations are vital for ensuring effective implementation and policy refinement.

What do you consider to be priority topics?

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Figure 1 : Word cloud introduced in the workshop to map priority areas of focus for the next steps of the TEG on Data for MSP