



# MED-MSP-CoP

## 2024 Recommendations paper

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## 1. Introduction

The Community of Practice on Maritime Spatial Planning in the Mediterranean (MED-MSP-CoP) is a voluntary expert group from EU and non-EU countries working on MSP in the Mediterranean.

The scope and framework of the MED-MSP-CoP were first discussed and delineated at the WestMED Hackathon held on 30 June 2022 in Malta. The dialogue to frame the MED-MSP-CoP continued and advanced in 2022, including two pivotal events: (i) a *Pan-western Mediterranean workshop* held in September 2022 in Tunis co-organised by the EMFAF-funded MSP-MED project and the WestMED initiative, and (ii) the *Final Conference* of the MSP-MED project held in Rome in October 2022. This process culminated in the MED-MSP-CoP launching event organised by the European Commission Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) and the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) and supported by the WestMED initiative, held in January 2023 in Brussels. Although initially focused on the Western Mediterranean Sea, the MED-MSP-CoP has gradually expanded its scope to the entire Mediterranean Sea, with a current membership of about 100 experts, coming from 15 Mediterranean countries and other countries involved in the WestMED initiative (Portugal and Mauritania). A coordination team has been set up to stir the process.

The main objective of the MED-MSP-CoP is to establish a permanent communication and dialogue across borders between experts on MSP (i.e., planners, technical experts, and researchers), and to exchange knowledge and relevant experiences in the region, to reach a shared perspective on topics of common interest on MSP and enhance the cooperation between the north and the south of the Mediterranean. By connecting with and valorising past, ongoing and upcoming projects and initiatives, and sharing technical understanding on multiple aspects of the MSP processes and the implementation practices, the CoP will help ensure consistency in MSP definition and implementation. The MED-MSP-CoP plans and activities are described in a dedicated space hosted by the EU MSP Platform (<https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/msp-resources/med-msp-cop>).

This paper summarises the outcome of the work done in 2023-2024 which involved the experts of the MED-MSP-CoP and focused on the analysis of two sub-topics of interests in terms of available experiences and knowledge sources, the identification of their challenges, the identification of possible solutions provided by the analysed experiences and projects, and the definition of some persisting challenges. The paper concludes with a few recommendations for the future work of the MED-MSP-CoP. A more detailed analysis and description of the MED-MSP-CoP work and outcome in the biennium 2023-2024 is provided by the study of the MSP Assistance Mechanism “*The MSP Community of Practice in the Mediterranean: progress and next steps*” (Bocci et al., 2025), on which this paper builds on.

## 2. The work of the MED-MSP-CoP in a nutshell

Since its conceptualisation, the MED-MSP-CoP has identified two major topics of interest:

- MSP supporting the extension, improved management and improved connection of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean, towards the targets set at the international and EU level on marine biodiversity protection (hereafter “*MSP supporting marine conservation*”).

- MSP as a key enabler for the implementation of national Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE) strategies and initiatives, through the adoption of an integrated approach and towards the balanced distribution of benefits (hereafter “MSP as an enabler for SBE”).

Two online and one in-presence workshop (held in Malta in June 2023) were organised to narrow the two topics into more specific ones relevant to the Mediterranean Region, discuss related challenges and share knowledge and practices. This process led to the identification of several subtopics of interest and the prioritisation of the following ones:

- *Involvement of maritime sectors in environmental management.*
- *MSP as a strategic framework for SBE.*

This step was followed by work done to identify MSP projects and initiatives in the Mediterranean on the selected sub-topics. In particular, MED-MSP-CoP experts provided information through a structured questionnaire (*project screening*). After that, a *cross-analysis* was developed by the MED-MSP-CoP core team to identify possible solutions (knowledge, tools, methodological approaches, guidelines, case studies, good practices, among others) that these projects can bring to the challenges characterising the two sub-topics. Figure 1 summarises the process.

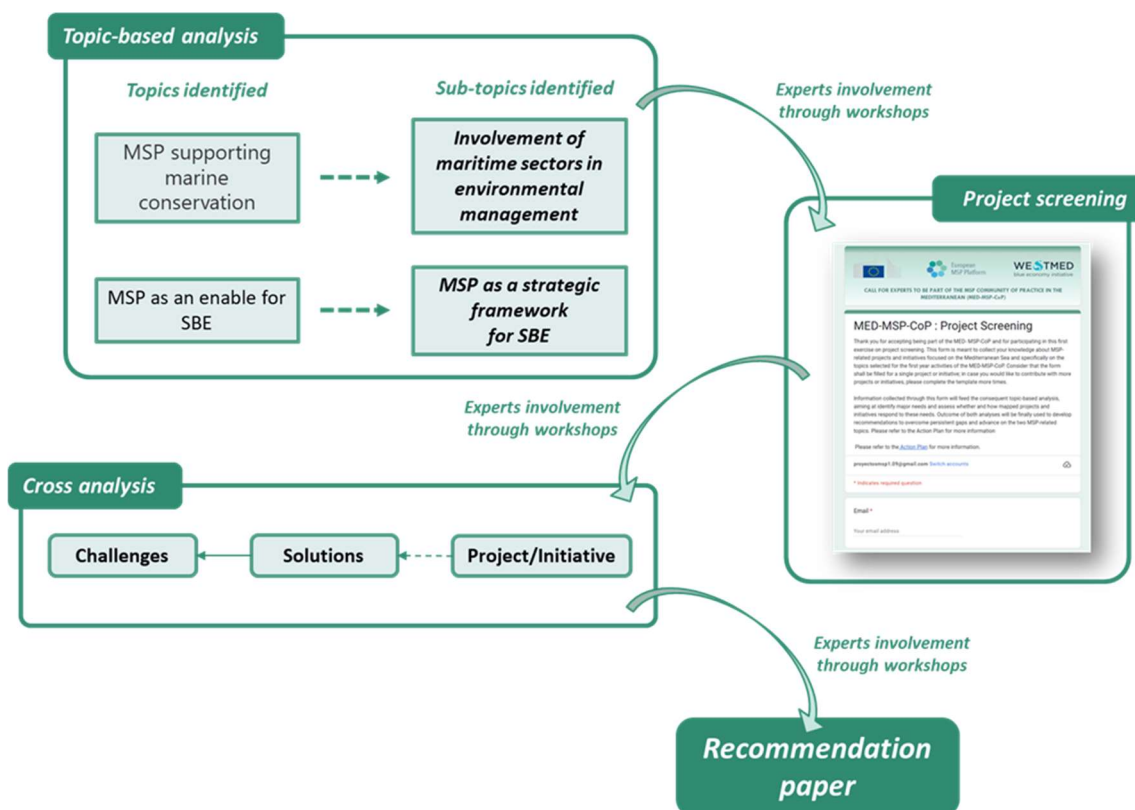


Figure 1. Schematic representation of the process leading to the formulation of the MED-MSP-CoP 2024 recommendation paper.

The work developed in 2023-2024 was carried out thanks to the active participation of the MED-MSP-CoP experts. A total of 7 events were organised:

- Starting with the *first MED-MSP-CoP online meeting* in April 2023, which presented the MED-MSP-CoP structure, objectives, and activities to its members.

- Following with other three workshops in 2023 (two online and one in presence in Malta) aiming to analyse the pre-identify topics, identify and prioritise sub-topics, discuss related challenges, and structure the work on project screening.
- Continuing with two 2024 workshops (one only online and one in hybrid form in Marseille), which focused on the cross-analysis of identified challenges and related solutions available through the scanned MSP projects and initiatives.
- A final hybrid-form workshop in Madrid in January 2025 to finalise the analysis performed and agree on recommendations for the future work of the MED-MSP-CoP, also in the frame of the recently started MEDIGREEN project.

In addition, 7 webinars have also been organised to disseminate and discuss concrete experiences and valuable practices developed around the Mediterranean on the two selected subtopics. The whole process is summarised in Figure 2.

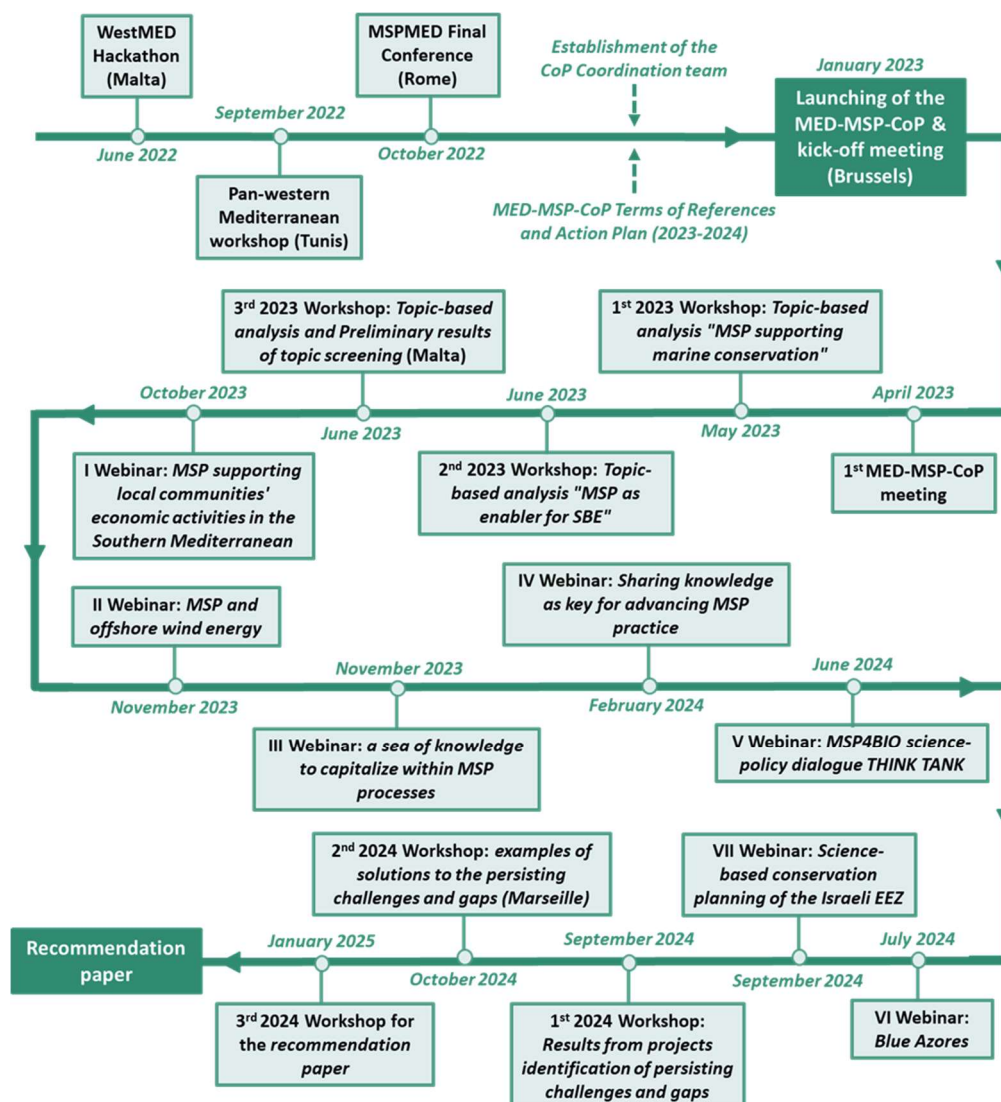


Figure 2. Online and in-presence events organised by the MED-MSP-CoP between June 2022 and January 2025.

### 3. Involvement of maritime sectors in marine conservation: challenges, solutions and recommendations

Involving historical and emerging maritime sectors in marine conservation is crucial to ensure a larger and more efficient process towards the targets set by the Global Biodiversity Framework and the EU Biodiversity Strategy on biodiversity protection and restoration. MSP as a process is an important tool to foster this involvement. Among the several approaches, MPAs and OECMs designation and management should be supported by and integrated into MSP, together with non-spatial regulatory and management measures aimed at reducing the pressures and impacts of maritime sectors and improving the sustainable use of marine resources. All these approaches and tools can be greatly supported by the engagement of sectoral stakeholders in conservation planning and management. There are several ways to foster such involvement, ranging from awareness raising and capacity building to financial support and co-management.

MED-MSP-CoP members emphasised several challenges when considering this sub-topic. There is still a lack of accurate knowledge and understanding about marine areas considered most valuable for maritime sectors and the socio-economic impacts and benefits of conservation measures. Leveraging marine conservation through MSP can be addressed through different solutions such as designating MPAs and other forms of protected areas through the MSP process itself or enhancing the alignment between environmental policies and directives' implementation (including those addressing conservation) and MSP. Understanding the way MSP can efficiently integrate marine conservation still needs research and testing of concrete approaches. Other challenges are related to the alignment of conservation objectives and efforts across borders, the identification of proper approaches and tools to engage and mobilize sectoral stakeholders, and the availability of sufficient economic resources.

Some solutions to these challenges, drawn from projects and insights shared by MED-MSP-CoP members, are presented in the table below, together with recommendations for upcoming activities (within and beyond the MED-MSP-CoP) related to three major categories: activities of working groups and new studies, capacity building, dissemination and capitalisation. These solutions and recommendations integrate and complement those provided by the study *“The MSP Community of Practice in the Mediterranean: progress and next steps”* (Bocci et al., 2025).

Challenge	Solution	Operational recommendations		
		Working groups and new studies	Capacity building	Dissemination and capitalization
1. Valuation and spatialization of economic and social values for maritime sectors	<p><b>Data and tools</b></p> <p>ReMAP project: module regarding socio-economic data</p> <p>Poseidone project (INTERREG Italy-Slovenia): capturing local population perception on MPA socio-economic added values</p> <p>MED-MSP-CoP workshops: Link with data-focused projects or initiatives: Eurostat, EU Blue economy observatory, ESPON Program, SPA/RAC</p>	<p>Develop guidance on data to address the evaluation of economic and social values</p> <p>Elaborate on how to capture stakeholder perceptions</p>	<p>Capacity-building workshops to explain how to use the ReMAP toolkit (made of different modules)</p>	<p>Dissemination of the ReMAP toolkit (made of different modules)</p> <p>Dissemination of MEDIGREEN findings on non-economic values</p>

Challenge	Solution	Operational recommendations		
		Working groups and new studies	Capacity building	Dissemination and capitalization
	Group of Experts on MPA in the Mediterranean			
2. Valuation of economic impacts and benefits of environmental management measures	<p><b>Methods</b> (Mapping and evaluating ecosystem services)</p> <p>ReMAP project: ecosystem service mapping tool.</p> <p>AMARE project: monetized evaluation of ecosystem services provided by Posidonia meadows.</p> <p>MPA Europe project: Ecosystem classification, blue carbon database, species richness tool.</p> <p>MARBEFES project: identification and analysis of links between ecosystems, functions and services.</p>	<p>Benchmark on the ecosystem services mapping methods developed so far and assessment of usefulness for MSP</p> <p>Building connections between economy and ecology-oriented projects to better assess ecosystem services.</p> <p>Further research on social-cultural aspects related to ecosystem services.</p>	<p>Training on methods for mapping ecosystem services and the use of newly established digital tools</p>	<p>Methodological handbook</p> <p>Guidelines to organise data collection to implement the methods</p>
	<p><b>Methods</b> (Climate change)</p> <p>MEDIX, MSP4BIODIVERSITY and MPA Europe project: modelling of climate refugia</p>			<p>Report on available methods, potential use and limitations.</p>
3. Conservation through MSP implementation (activity banning/limitation from specific areas, technical regulations, promotion of sustainable practices...)	<p><b>Analysis and recommendations</b></p> <p>MEDIGREEN project: proposing new Area Based Management Tools (ABMT) through MSP implementation - example from the Italian Southern Sea (straight of Sicily)</p> <p>MPA Europe project: recommendations for future MPAs based on climate change scenarios</p> <p>MSPGlobal: guide on biodiversity inclusive MSP</p> <p>MarinePlan project: an ecosystem-based</p>	<p>Identifying harmonised typologies of different ABMTs</p> <p>Guidance on suitable tools to address various management challenges</p>	<p>Link with MSPGlobal training on biodiversity-inclusive and climate-smart MSP.</p>	<p>MEDIGREEN project will develop a technical paper about the role of MSP in supporting biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean: importance of capitalizing on the analysed projects and initiatives</p> <p>MPA Europe will prepare an atlas to become a tool for MSP authorities regarding future MPAs</p> <p>Dissemination of the MarinePlan ecosystem-</p>

Challenge	Solution	Operational recommendations		
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	<p>approach to MSP (EB-MSP) assessment tool</p>			based marine spatial planning (EB-MSP) tool.
	<p><b>Analysis</b> (Coherence and integration between MSFD, WFD and MSP)</p> <p>ReMAP project: tools for analysis</p> <p>CROSSGOV project: coherent implementation of MSP, MSFD and WFD towards biodiversity conservation objectives (case studies from France, Italy and the whole Mediterranean)</p> <p>French MSP process: the action plan structure shows complementarities between the environmental and economic objectives of the MSP plan.</p>	<p>Extend to topics not covered by MSFD (such as climate change)</p> <p>Evaluate how to extend to non-EU countries, including the alignment with UNEP-MAP policies (e.g. between MSFD and IMAP)</p>	<p>Training on ReMAP tools</p>	<p>Reports and recommendations from CROSSGOV</p> <p>Factsheet from the French MSP action plan, as an example of synergies between conservation and use developments.</p>
	<p><b>Scenarios</b></p> <p>MPA-Europe project: Marine uses evolution about conservation measures</p> <p>MSP4BIODIVERSITY project: scenario of sea uses and conservation measures in 3 pilot sites in Italy</p> <p>GES4SEAS project: applying present and future management measures related to offshore windfarms, shipping and fishing using different climate change scenarios (EwE models) to see how management and climate change affect the entire ecosystem (applied to Western Mediterranean Sea)</p>	<p>Support the MSPGlobal 3.0 initiative to set up a data toolbox on scenarios (link with the report that could be elaborated; see capitalization recommendations)</p>		<p>Report on developed and implemented methods for scenario development and analysis (i.e. MarinePlan, MSP4Biodiversity etc).</p> <p>Capitalization on the method developed by GES4SEAS.</p>

Challenge	Solution	Operational recommendations		
		Working groups and new studies	Capacity building	Dissemination and capitalization
4. Sectors' engagement in marine conservation	<p><b>Analysis</b></p> <p>MED-MSP-CoP workshops: Review of MSP instruments for marine conservation.</p>	<p>Exchanging reflections with no-EU countries, also considering that some do not have an MSP plan.</p> <p>Continuing the work through the MEDIGREEN project, specifically on several maritime sectors.</p>		<p>Dissemination of the different instruments through factsheets (also considering different typologies of factsheets for different target users) with practical examples of how to enforce them.</p>
	<p><b>Data</b></p> <p>TEG on Data for MSP: Standardizing and harmonising sea use data and layers in MSP</p>	<p>Develop a standardised typology of sea-use function in MSP.</p>		
	<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p>AMARE project: co-creation of environmental management measures with stakeholders.</p> <p>MSP/MPA Agadir: participatory workshop to co-create an MPA proposal.</p> <p>MSP4BIODIVERSITY project: Setting up of a transdisciplinary centre for MSP at the national scale (Italy), also promoting knowledge sharing and stakeholder engagement.</p>			<p>Lesson learned from a participatory process to address solutions for conflicts between maritime uses and ecosystems.</p> <p>Good practices from MSP4BIODIVERSITY to establish a permanent forum on MSP.</p>
	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>MSP4BIO project: best practices for the co-management of maritime uses in MPAs.</p> <p>MSPGlobal: good practices about engaging offshore wind industries in MSP, also covering environmental aspects.</p>	<p>Engaging stakeholders in the evaluation (relevance and feasibility) of management measures proposed</p>		<p>Guidance factsheets by sector about how to operate in MPAs and other typologies of protected areas</p>



Challenge	Solution	Operational recommendations		
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5. MSP alignment across borders to meet regional conservation objectives	<p><b>Cross-border collaboration</b></p> <p>MED-MSP-CoP: availability of several cross-border studies on environmental conservation priorities</p> <p>SIMWESTMED project: knowledge synthesis on marine birds, marine mammals and benthic deep habitats</p> <p>MSP4BIO (FR/IT case study): considerations for the protection of deep ecosystems and marine mammals</p> <p>MSPGlobal: Western Mediterranean case study; addressing environmental aspects at supra-national scale.</p> <p>MarinePlan project: proposing new EBSAs in the Western Mediterranean Sea; Prioritization of conservation areas in the Western Mediterranean Sea using 3D planning and priorCon (connectivity).</p>	<p>Working Group to bring together the multiple projects and initiatives that address environmental conservation stakes and policies with MSP initiatives</p> <p>Ecosystem services analysis, leading to the identification of new biodiversity hotspots (for both conservation and marine restoration) at the Mediterranean level.</p>	<p>Workshop and training on methodologies to analyse ecosystem services applied to the identification of biodiversity hot-spot areas (also based on non-Med projects, e.g. MSP-OR and Baltic Scope)</p>	<p>Basin-scale maps of environmental stakes to be considered (i.e., MarinePlan tools)</p>
6. Funding environmental measures/action from maritime sectors (voluntary initiatives, taxes...)	<p><b>Communication and awareness-raising</b></p> <p>MED-MSP-CoP workshops: proofing benefits of conservation measures; Link with the UN Natural capital accounting initiative.</p>	<p>Mobilizing private sectors to identify funding solutions</p>		

#### 4. MSP as a strategic framework for SBE: challenges, solutions and recommendations

Several strategies and plans for maritime activities are developed and implemented independently at the sectoral level, often without consideration of objectives set for other sectors. This fragmented approach can result in implementation incompatibilities, conflicts between uses, and the potential to exceed the ecosystem's carrying capacity. Such outcomes

risk undermining the provision of ecosystem services, which, in turn, may jeopardize the sustainable development of the same maritime economic activities. MSP plays an important role in providing a strategic framework to align and integrate the perspectives and objectives of various sectors. Also, where integrated strategies for SBE are available, MSP analysis and designation are expected to translate their objectives into coherent spatial provisions, reducing conflicts and exploiting synergies between maritime uses as well as reconciling nature protection with economic development, in line with the principles of COM(2021) 240 final. To achieve this, it is essential to develop approaches that integrate pre-existing sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies and plans, where they exist, while also incorporating methods to account for emerging developments and perspectives. In this context, MSP can also address factors contributing to the social sustainability of maritime developments, as it is inherently a process grounded in stakeholder engagement.

Direct integration of SBE objectives into MSP should be a key component of any maritime spatial plan. The level of enforcement can vary by maritime sector, ranging from strategic guidelines to prescriptive measures. Additionally, the flexibility of the maritime spatial plan to adapt and align with sector-specific strategies should also be considered. Finally, the role of maritime spatial plans in filling strategic gaps for sectors without established strategies should be explored.

Several questions arise when trying to visualize how MSP can serve as a dynamic and integrative tool to influence and align sectorial strategies, through the implementation of an integrative SBE, e.g. by: fostering inter-sectoral dialogue, incorporating strategic and (spatial and non-spatial) provisions set in other existing strategies and plans, adapting to evolving priorities and future uses, and promoting an ecosystem-based approach in strategic decision-making.

MED-MSP-CoP members identified specific challenges that need attention when using MSP as a strategic framework for SBE (or the other way around when SBE strategies provide the strategic frame to develop MS plans). To enable MSP to integrate and align existing sectoral strategies, there is a need to ensure policy coherence, support less structured sectors, influence regionally and internationally regulated activities, foster cross-border collaboration, and engage stakeholders to harmonize sectoral objectives at various scales. While MSP's capacity to address these challenges varies, it is undeniably a valuable tool for driving improvements in these areas. Some solutions, drawn from projects and insights shared by MED-MSP-CoP members, are presented in the table below, together with recommendations for upcoming activities (within and beyond the MED-MSP-CoP) related to three major categories: activities of working groups and new studies, capacity building, dissemination and capitalisation. These solutions and recommendations integrate and complement those provided by the study *“The MSP Community of Practice in the Mediterranean: progress and next steps”* (Bocci et al., 2025).

Challenge	Solution	Operational recommendations		
		Working groups and new studies	Capacity building	Dissemination and capitalization
1. Integration of existing sector's strategies into MSP: How to align their content	<b>Scenarios</b> MSP4BIODIVERSITY project: methodology to co-develop and analyse future scenarios for maritime use planning and	Review of studies and projects on future scenarios for planning and management of the Mediterranean Sea or its sub-regions	Training on scenario development based on available experiences and digital tools	A one-day workshop on scenarios for sea planning and management.  Dissemination of GES4SEAS

Challenge	Solution	Operational recommendations		
		Working groups and new studies	Capacity building	Dissemination and capitalization
<p>(strategic objectives, action plans...) with MSP plans (zoning, spatial prioritization, spatial measures...)</p>	<p>management aimed at improved nature conservation, based on different assumptions.</p> <p>GES4SEAS project: Applying present and future management measures related to offshore windfarms, shipping and fishing using different climate change scenarios (EwE models), to see how management and climate change affect the entire ecosystem (applied to the Western Mediterranean Sea)</p> <p>ARIEL project (Greece): modelling scenarios for co-development of several activities (mutual benefits)</p> <p>MPA Europe project: modelling CC scenarios for future refugia</p> <p>MEDSEAPLAN project: development of scenarios through a private-oriented approach.</p>	<p>Review of sectorial development targets across the Mediterranean Sea, with regards to MSP plans contents and levers</p>		<p>transboundary analysis, recommendations and scenarios</p>
	<p><b>Analysis</b></p> <p>REGINA-MSP project: Analysis of sector plans integration in MSP at the sub-national level, identification of gaps and solutions.</p> <p>MED-MSP-CoP workshops: To clarify the governance structure for national maritime policy, it is essential to explore various working options to provide greater transparency and effectiveness. Identifying existing synergies among sectors that could help in this regard. Identification</p>	<p>Analysis of how existing sectorial initiatives at the Mediterranean level (i.e. clusters, sectoral platforms) can be used to foster synergies and promote a more integrated approach to the SBE governance, also through MSP.</p> <p>Development of a study on MSP and defence security in the Mediterranean.</p> <p>Identification of challenges when implementing multi-use/coexistence concepts and identification of sectors</p>	<p>Training addressing sector representatives on the MSP process and the way it can address/integrate sectoral objectives</p>	<p>Use of REGINA-MSP outputs to discuss possible solutions to improve coherence in governance between sectors and scales in the Mediterranean and its sub-regions.</p> <p>Workshop on how to strengthen the uptake of projects' results on MSP and SBE into national, statutory MSP processes.</p>

Challenge	Solution	Operational recommendations		
		Working groups and new studies	Capacity building	Dissemination and capitalization
	<p>of successful cases (i.e. Canada)</p> <p>MSP-GREEN project: analysis of EGD components integration on MSP plans, design of new actions and provisions of recommendations to improve it.</p>	<p>for which realistic solutions are available.</p> <p>Workshop on the identification of sectors' objectives and approaches for their integration in MSP (sharing different countries' experiences).</p> <p>Creation of an inter-administrative working group involving national and subnational competent authorities on MSP and SBE, to discuss common approaches.</p> <p>Study on the way MSP-related components of the EGD can be applied to non-EU countries (based on MSP-GREEN results)</p>		
	<p><b>Communication and awareness-raising</b></p> <p>MED-MSP-COP workshops: Improved communication to the sectors of the important, added values and benefits of their involvement in marine conservation.</p> <p>MED-MSP-COP workshops: Identification of project outcomes and experiences implementing multiuse to showcase its benefits to the sectors.</p>	<p>Guidelines for communication to sectors</p>	<p>Capacity-building activities on engagement and communication with stakeholders, to create the needed skills</p>	<p>Capitalization of MSP-GREEN results on "Communicating the Maritime European Green Deal".</p> <p>Capitalization of the upcoming MEDIGREEN "Guideline on communicating MSP-EGD in the Mediterranean."</p>
<p>2. Improved coherence between policies (environmental and sectoral) in formulation and implementation stages</p>	<p><b>Methodologies, analysis and roadmaps</b></p> <p>MSP4BIO, PERMAGOV, CROSSGOV projects: methodological approaches, case studies, cross-case studies analysis, roadmaps/recommendations</p>	<p>Technical Working Group focusing on coherent implementation of major marine/maritime policies and legislation</p>	<p>Training course on novel methodology for coherence analysis and improvement.</p>	<p>Workshop on concrete case studies of coherent implementation of integrated and sectoral policies.</p>

Challenge	Solution	Operational recommendations		
		Working groups and new studies	Capacity building	Dissemination and capitalization
	<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p>MarinePlan project: Western Mediterranean study on transboundary governance and recommendations for improved coherence between marine policies and processes</p>	<p>Implement a comprehensive assessment of the full policy process (design, implementation at the regional and national level, monitoring, compliance, enforcement, etc.) to identify critical elements that contribute to improving policy coherence.</p>		<p>Capitalization of the REGINA-MSP training and capacity-building modules on governance aspects related to the role of sub-national authorities in MSP</p>
3. Alignment of existing stand-alone sectorial strategies through MSP implementation	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>MSP-GREEN project: Recommendations to strengthen the role of MSP in contributing to the EGD objectives also through sectoral policies and plans</p>			<p>Dissemination of MSP-GREEN recommendations to national MSP and sector-competent authorities in dedicated events.</p>
	<p>MED-MSP-CoP workshops: To establish calls for projects that require mandatory collaboration between sectors to address specific topics.</p>	<p>A working group composed of MSP experts could be established to guide funding organizations on appropriate criteria for project calls.</p> <p>Identify the main elements preventing cross-sectoral coherence to help focus further action accordingly (e.g. which sectors resist and what are the reasons? Which sectors are more likely to align? Are there elements external to the MSP process?)</p>		
4. Using MSP to elaborate sectorial strategies for less structured sectors	<p><b>Scenarios</b></p> <p>MSP4BIODIVERSITY project: methodology to co-develop and analyse future scenarios for maritime use planning and management aimed at improved nature</p>	<p>Analysis and revision of tools and methods for scenario development that can support strategic decision-making and planning for less structured and</p>	<p>Training on scenario development based on available experiences</p> <p>Training on how to combine tourism with blue economy: implications for MSP</p>	<p>A one-day workshop on scenarios for sea planning and management</p>

Challenge	Solution	Operational recommendations		
		Working groups and new studies	Capacity building	Dissemination and capitalization
	<p>conservation, based on different assumptions.</p> <p>GES4SEAS project: Ecosystem modelling using future scenarios based on different future climate change projections, including MPAs management measures, offshore windfarms and shipping</p> <p>ARIEL project (Greece): modelling scenarios for co-development of several activities (mutual benefits)</p> <p><b>Analysis</b></p> <p>HERSEA project: Integration of Marine Cultural Heritage/ Underwater Cultural Heritage (MCH/UCh) in MSP</p>	weaker sectors (e.g. small-scale fisheries)		
5. MSP influence on sectors regulated at regional/international scale (e.g. fishing, shipping)		To build a working group to look for case studies that exemplify solutions to this challenge.		
6. MSP cross-border collaboration to enhance the coherence of sectorial strategies at the basin scale	<p><b>Scenarios</b></p> <p>MSPGlobal initiative: Scenarios for maritime uses in the Western Mediterranean depending on different visions</p> <p>HM Cantabria: Projections/scenarios on social and economic values of economic activities and multi-use approach in different scenarios in the Mediterranean</p>	Scenarios considering the implementation of international policies and strategies (including UNCLOS), in addition to the EU ones		Verification and review/integration of transboundary scenarios (e.g. MSPGlobal ones) in a dedicated workshop/event involving MSP competent authorities and experts
	<p><b>Analysis</b></p> <p>MEDIGREEN project: Technical papers on the</p>	Development of case studies between 2 or more countries focusing on the role of MSP in	Training on cross-border MSP for non-EU countries to improve the regional	

Challenge	Solution	Operational recommendations		
		Working groups and new studies	Capacity building	Dissemination and capitalization
	<p>role of MSP in supporting the EGD-driver sustainable development of key Mediterranean uses: fisheries, aquaculture, and ORE</p> <p>MarinePlan project: Western Mediterranean Sea study on transboundary governance and recommendations for improved coherence between marine policies and processes</p> <p>MBPC project: Transboundary priority areas process and methods in the Adriatic (EBM)</p>	<p>supporting the sustainable development of one or more maritime sectors.</p>	<p>perspective on MSP and SBE.</p>	
	<p><b>Data and tools</b></p> <p>ReMAP project: modules to be tested in cross-border contexts (i.e. North-western Mediterranean)</p>		<p>Capacity-building workshops to explain how to use ReMAP modules</p>	<p>Dissemination of ReMAP toolkit</p>
<p>7. MSP's role in stakeholders' engagement to align sectorial strategies</p>	<p>MEDSEAPLAN project: identification of private sectors of the maritime economy that have MSP data not sufficiently considered by MSP and can be made available to planners.</p> <p>MED-MSP-CoP workshops: MSP to consider local community empowerment, including identification of co-management approaches (e.g. stakeholder table of Catalunya)</p>	<p>Development of participatory strategies as a stage in MSP, designed by a team of interdisciplinary experts (with scientific, economic and social skills)</p>	<p>Capacity-building activities on engagement, communication and negotiation with stakeholders, including local communities, to create the needed skills.</p>	

## 5. Recommendations for the future work of the MED-MSP-CoP

The co-created analysis described in chapters 3 and 4 identifies a set of potential solutions provided by available MSP projects and initiatives and the way these can be used (recommendations) to feed studies, capacity building and training, and dissemination and capitalization opportunities. These recommendations integrate and complement those provided by the study “*The MSP Community of Practice in the Mediterranean: progress and next steps*”. A few of these recommendations could be developed in new MED-MSP-CoP activities in the future, while others are of potential interest to other actors, including international, EU, regional, sub-regional and/or national authorities, expert groups and initiatives.

The performed analyses identify several opportunities for the organisation of capitalisation workshops or wider capacity-building events, (e.g. on scenarios co-creation and analysis, use of available tools and methodologies addressing specific MSP aspects), emerging topics for MSP (e.g. identification, designation and implementation of OECSs and their integration into MS plans), approaches for improved stakeholder engagement, multi-level governance, etc. Other suggestions point to the elaboration of guidelines (e.g. on communication and awareness on the role of MSP in supporting marine conservation and SBE), more detailed reviews of studies and projects on specific aspects, development of cross-border or sub-regional case studies (e.g. to test coordinating approaches between SBE development and MSP, and elaboration of new studies or projects.

Concerning the latter point the following topics have emerged as of interest:

- Identification of hot spots for nature conservation in the Mediterranean,
- MSP and biodiversity restoration
- Harmonised integration at the sea basin scale of area-based management tools (including OECSs) within MSP
- Assessment of the effectiveness of conservation measures and the way this can be reinforced through MSP
- Mapping and analysis of the relationship between SBE strategies development and MS plans in the Mediterranean countries
- Ecosystem services supporting SBE
- Sustainable management of small-scale fisheries through MSP
- MSP supporting the extension and sustainability of aquaculture
- Socio-economic impacts of MS plans

The MED-MSP-CoP workshops and meetings of its core team provided the opportunity to reflect also on **strategic recommendations for the future work of the community of practices**, i.e.:

- The MED-MSP-CoP should continue working on strengthening its pan-Mediterranean dimension, further enlarging the membership and participation of experts from eastern and southern Mediterranean countries. The new MEDIGREEN project provides good opportunities in this sense, through dedicated resources to the MED-MSP-CoP coordination and mobilisation, the direct involvement of full and associated partners from non-EU countries, and the organisation of two workshops aimed at reflecting on the needs and priorities of non-EU countries for EGD-driven (and climate-smart) MSP.
- The future work of the MED-MSP-CoP should be structured around working groups to properly address details of specific issues and aspects. Each working group should be coordinated by a reference person in charge of steering its activities in line with the



overall scope of work and action plan of the MED-MSP-CoP. The alignment with the MEDIGREEN project requires the activation of four working groups, focusing on nature protection, aquaculture, fishing, and offshore renewable energy. Other working groups can be formed based on the interests of MED-MSP-CoP members, also considering links with experiences promoted by other initiatives and projects (e.g. the Technical Expert Group on DATA or MSP or the REGINA-MSP project, which conceptualised and opened the way to the creation of a CoP on the role of regions – NUT2 level – in MSP).

- The MED-MSP-CoP should map MSP-related working groups activated under other cooperation or collaboration frameworks, particularly on topics of common interest (such as AquaWest the WestMED working group on sustainable aquaculture, or the GFCM small-scale fisheries' forum) to develop synergies and mutual capitalisation.
- While the MED-MSP-CoP must operate through working groups, it is of pivotal importance to have transversal moments to put together and cross-fertilise the work of the different established groups. It is also important that the activities of the working group are structured around an overarching common – still flexible – approach.
- The 2023-2024 experiences showed great success (in terms of participants and discussions) of MED-MSP-CoP webinars. It is recommended that webinars and other capitalisation opportunities (e.g., peer-to-peer meetings, thematic workshops, focus groups, etc.) are continued, focusing on the open share of experiences and practice on themes of common interest. Indeed, the 2023-2024 MED-MSP-CoP topic and project-based analysis revealed the availability of a rich set of experiences coming from projects and statutory processes. The MED-MSP-CoP paves the way for permanent capitalization, based on an open and bottom-driven approach process. In addition, it is recommended the mapping of MSP-related projects and initiatives be transformed into a catalogue, to be possibly integrated into the EU MSP Platform and disseminated through other channels (i.e. the MSPGlobal website). Finally, MED-MSP-CoP members have expressed interest in the organisation of focused training events on MSP and related topics, approaches, methodologies, tools, etc, capitalising on the rich knowledge available from projects and statutory MSP processes.
- The connections with the MED-MSP-CoP observers (UfM, UNEP-MAP WG, WestMED, EUSAIR, UNESCO-IOC MSPGlobal, etc.) should be strengthened and observers regularly invited to join relevant events (workshops, webinars, etc.) organised by the CoP. In addition, the MED-MSP-CoP should continue mapping the events on MSP organised by the observers and benefit from them to disseminate MED-MSP-CoP activities and their outcomes. At the same time, these events should be an opportunity for the MED-MSP-CoP to collect needs and expectations.
- Relating to the previous point, the collaboration of the recently established Working Group on MSP of the UNEP-MAP system is of pivotal importance and should be operationalised around some concrete actions, as the ongoing review of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSDD) and the elaboration of a position paper on advancing MSP in the Mediterranean.
- CoP's experiences are flourishing in other sea basins and international contexts. The MED-MSP-CoP should enter into dialogue and exchange with these initiatives for cross-fertilization (on objectives, approaches, methodologies and contents) and to reach a common position on the role of MSP and of the MSP CoPs in addressing future challenges, including those related to the ambitious implementation of the European Green Deal targets and the objectives of the upcoming European Ocean Pact. The parallel implementation of the two siblings MEDIGREEN and NESBp (in the North and Baltic seas) projects offers a great opportunity in this sense. At the same time,



strengthening the collaboration with the IOC-UNESCO MSPGlobal initiative should provide the opportunity to develop common activities in the Mediterranean region, based on the capitalisation of past experiences, as well as to bridge the MED-MSP-CoP with extra-European experiences.

- The MED-MSP-CoP aims to reach a shared technical perspective on MSP – cross-cutting and sector-based - topics of common interest. This should be then transferred to the decision-making level and therefore to the MSP processes (including the stakeholders' level), ensuring consistency across borders. This implies reporting and transferring the MED-MSP-CoP's work and the available knowledge (from research, projects and studies) to the MSP national processes. Ultimately, there is the opportunity for the CoP to become the voice of the MSP practitioners from the region. This aspect has been marginally addressed till now and should be framed and operationalised. The issue is rather complex, and it is suggested to organise a dedicated brainstorming event of the MED-MSP-CoP to identify operational modalities (e.g. dedicated workshops back-to-back with events and meetings organised in the frame of formal MSP processes) to fulfil this scope. An increased exchange would also help the MED-MSP-CoP further understating operational needs and gaps.