



A DECADE OF MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE

22 October 2024

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Summary Report



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Foreword



Delilah Al Khudhairy

Director Maritime Policy and Blue Economy,
DG MARE, European Commission

“When I was originally asked to write the foreword for this conference publication, celebrating a decade since the EU MSP Directive, it made me really reflect on how far we have all come.

Not only in implementing this relatively young Directive which has quickly become highly relevant in the EU, but also in creating a large and lasting European MSP Community.

Even beyond Europe, through the work of our IOC UNESCO colleagues and our joint MSP Global initiative, lessons learnt in developing and implementing MSP at home have been exported and shared globally.

The EU MSP Directive has not only fostered greater cooperation among Member States and beyond, but has also set a global benchmark for sustainable maritime planning.

The collaborative efforts have led to more efficient use of marine resources, better protection of marine environments, and the promotion of a sustainable blue economy.

These achievements are a testament to the dedication and hard work of everyone involved.

As we look back, it is essential to recognise that our journey is far from over.

Reflecting on our accomplishments allows us to assess our current position and prepare for the challenges, but also for the opportunities laying ahead.

By continuing to work together, sharing knowledge, and embracing innovation, we can build on our successes and address the emerging issues facing Europe’s seas.

*In the words of the renowned oceanographer Sylvia Earle:
The ocean is the cornerstone of Earth’s life support system. It shapes climate and weather. It holds most of life on Earth. It is the blue heart of the planet—we should take care of our heart.”*

This quote encapsulates the importance of our ongoing efforts, particularly in the context of the upcoming European Ocean Pact which will seek to balance the sustainable use of our seas with the need to protect and restore our precious marine environment.

Let us celebrate our achievements, but also remain committed to the path ahead. Together, we can ensure that maritime spatial planning continues to contribute to a sustainable and prosperous future for all.”

Maritime Spatial Planning through the years

Insights from a decade of EMFF and
EMFAF funded projects



MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING IN THE EU



41M€ under EMFF/EMFAF direct management (2014-2023)

A **pro-active** and **engaged** MSP **stakeholder community** is developing in the EU, providing a **point of reference** for best practice in MSP

20 Maritime Spatial Plans by Member States in 2024

30 regional and cross-border projects under EMFF/EMFAF direct management since 2014

WHAT IS MSP?

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) is a fundamental tool for the development of the Sustainable Blue Economy. It allows us to sustainably manage the use of our seas and oceans, to reduce conflicts, create synergies between human activities and ensure they take place in an efficient and safe way.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The next generation of EU MSPs will have a key role in:

- Becoming 'Climate-Smart', in line with the European Green Deal.
- Increasing offshore wind capacity in Europe to at least 111GW by 2030.
- Establishing protected areas on 30% and restore at least 20% of the EU's sea areas.
- Identifying optimal sites for seaweed farming and multi-use.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
Check the European MSP Platform
| (europa.eu)





Study on EU-MSP projects 2014-2024

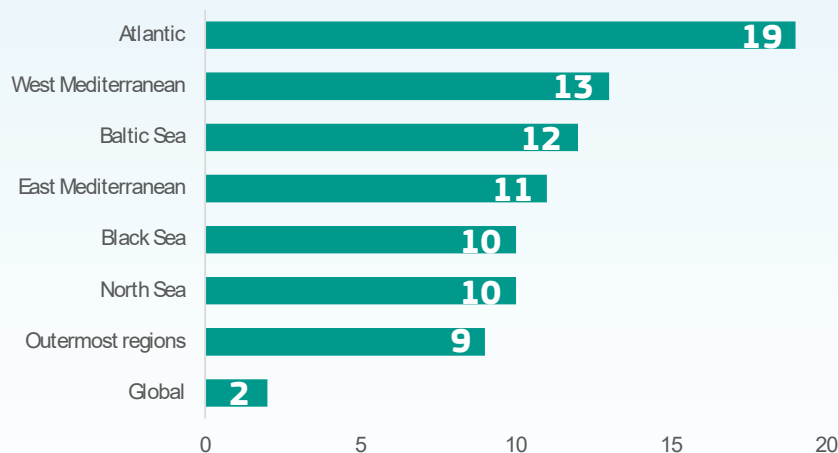
Published in July 2024, this study serves as a comprehensive analysis to understand the evolution of MSP across the European sea basins.

Produced by the MSP Assistance Mechanism and funded by CINEA/DG MARE (European Commission), the study analyses initiatives supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and the European Maritime, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF).

By examining 32 projects and 262 project reports spanning 2014 to 2024, it highlights project achievements, identifies persistent, resolved and emergent challenges, and sheds light on best practices that have shaped and supported the MSP community over the past decade.

Total budget MSP projects
€50,186,584
(EC contribution: €41,918,232)

Equal distribution
of projects across
European sea basins



What have we learnt?

- Each country and sea basin faces unique challenges and requires tailored solutions, but collaboration and shared learning are essential for success.
- MSP is complex, with challenges that evolve and intersect with emerging issues like climate change, often requiring patience and additional resources for comprehensive solutions.
- MSP challenges vary in source and essence, requiring different solutions. Projects addressed the challenges they faced differently—some required technical solutions, such as methodological developments, while others needed strategic recommendations related to policy and governance.
- While projects can propose both operational and strategic solutions, the full impact depends on their adoption by decision-makers and changes to policies or legislation, which often fall outside the project's direct influence.
- Climate change necessitates collaboration across borders to enhance adaptability and address uncertainty, strengthening connections between experts and planners.
- To address the dynamic nature of climate change and its impacts on marine ecosystems, Adaptive MSP Management emerges as a crucial strategy.
- There is a need to broaden the discussion of MSP beyond existing circles and enhance ocean literacy to engage civil society and policymakers effectively.



Study on EU-MSP projects 2014-2024

What has been achieved?

- Earlier projects emphasised foundational MSP concepts and early-stage processes, while recent projects deliver tangible products tailored to specific planning needs.
- Transboundary projects foster community building at the European level and facilitate science diplomacy to address challenges that transcend national borders.
- MSP initiatives serve as catalysts for geopolitical cooperation by providing a framework for dialogue, mutual understanding, and trust-building among nations with shared maritime interests.
- EMF(A)F-funded projects have made significant strides in community building, capacity enhancement, raising awareness, and providing guidance on methodologies and networking opportunities.
- Projects developed centralised data repositories, leveraged expert inputs to mitigate model uncertainties, defined and analysed future conditions for long-term MSP predictions, created guidelines for result interpretation, and promoted integrated analyses of cumulative impacts and ecosystem services.
- Projects brought different multi-stakeholders together, supported collaboration among them to align their actions with relevant policies and increased their capacity through technical workshops and the development of skills for dialogue and effective engagement.
- Projects facilitated cross-sectoral coordination and provided tools and a structured framework for creating synergies promoting multi-use initiatives.
- Projects supported policy coherence and procedural improvements, emphasising the holistic integration of LSI into the MSP framework.
- Projects have provided a framework for effective monitoring and evaluation and addressed the importance of Cumulative Impact Assessment.
- There is a need to broaden the discussion of MSP beyond existing circles and enhance ocean literacy to engage civil society and policymakers effectively.

MSP Stakeholder Conference

22 October 2024 | Marseille, France





Opening



Charlina Vitcheva

Director General, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), European Commission



“By enabling Member States to plan strategically ahead, it supports our climate commitments and our strategic objectives, at regional, European and global level.

We are looking now into synergies and multi-use of space by design and developing a true regenerative Blue Economy.”



Delilah Al Khudhairi

Director Maritime Policy and Blue Economy, DG MARE, European Commission



“Many of the discussions that are taking place today are very important also, in terms of our reflections as well for the future.

We will be looking at our achievements, we will look at the lessons learned, the experiences and the good practices we have shared together.”



Yann Becouarn

Head of the Maritime Spaces and Coastlines Department, Ministry of Ecological Transition, France



“I am delighted to celebrate 10 years of the maritime spatial planning framework directive in the company of such imminent experts.

This is an important time for the public policy that is still very young but has grown quite rapidly under the initial impetus of the EU Commission.”



Session 1

Navigating the Waves

A Decade of experience with the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive





Keynote speech

Lodewijk Abspoel

Senior Advisor European Integrated Maritime Policy, North Sea and MSP (NL)



Whenever navigating waves, it is essential that you know where you want to go, what you can expect along the way, and what type of boat you want or need. In our case, the direction is forward, future-oriented, with intermediate port goals along the way.”

Key Points

The decade-long journey of the European Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Directive was highlighted, emphasising its role as an ecosystem-based, politically guided, and stakeholder-driven planning process. MSP is like navigating the waves, with clear goals, collaboration, and readiness to adapt to challenges.

The directive found its origins in the 2012 Limassol Declaration, focused on balancing growth, sustainability, and governance in maritime planning. Over the years, its progress includes capacity-building initiatives like the Erasmus Mundus MSP program and cross-border cooperation projects, creating a skilled community of planners.

At the same time persistent challenges remain, such as applying the ecosystem-based approach, addressing land-sea interactions, and navigating unforeseen obstacles like climate change and geopolitical tensions.

What lies ahead is the importance of integrating MSP with broader EU policies, like the European Green Deal, the biodiversity strategy 2030 and the nature restoration law, while fostering stakeholder collaboration and ensuring flexible and future oriented

Ongoing innovation, stakeholder engagement, and robust governance mechanisms are required by a maritime community that continues to navigate complex waters and build on lessons learned to ensure sustainable, inclusive, and adaptive MSP in the future.

Expert panel



Felix Leinemann

Head of Unit Blue Economy
Sectors, Aquaculture and
Maritime Spatial Planning, DG
MARE
European Commission



*“If there is one thing that is
a success, then that is the
community that has been
created.”*

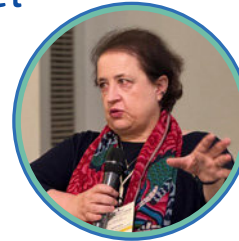


Kyriakos Aliouris

Head of Integrated Maritime
Policy and Spatial Planning
Division, Integrated Maritime
Ecosystem Directorate,
(Cyprus)



*“We have the foundation and
now we have to look forward,
how we can put it to work.”*



Isabelle Perret

National Coordinator for
Integrated Maritime Policy - EU
and International Affairs
Ministry delegate for the Sea
and Fisheries



*“The ship has progressively
reached the shore, we have
found the port.”*



Helena Rodrigues

Ocean Policy Officer,
WWF European Policy Office



*“We have the foundation and
now we have to look forward,
how we can put it to work.”*



Moderator Chris McDougall

Project Leader, European MSP Assistance Mechanism



Discussion summary

The conversation explored the directive's successes, lingering challenges, and areas for future improvement. Key topics included cross-border cooperation, stakeholder engagement, the integration of biodiversity and climate change into MSP, and the alignment of MSP with broader EU policies like the Green Deal. Panellists emphasized the need for collaboration, innovation, and inclusive governance to navigate the complexities of sustainable marine planning.

The discussion emphasized the creation of a cohesive MSP community as a major achievement since the adoption of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Participants noted progress in fostering collaboration through mechanisms such as cross-border projects, expert groups, and knowledge-sharing platforms. Member States have developed national strategies and governance frameworks that align with broader EU policies, demonstrating significant strides in policy integration. The implementation of MSP plans by most coastal Member States was highlighted as a milestone, showcasing the EU's leadership in ocean governance. Capacity-building efforts and initiatives to engage stakeholders and raise awareness about MSP were also recognized as crucial steps forward.

Panellists also identified key challenges in MSP, including cross-border cooperation, hindered by differing national priorities and geopolitical tensions. Stakeholder engagement remains difficult, with a need for earlier, more inclusive participation and improved ocean literacy.

Integrating biodiversity and climate change into MSP, addressing cumulative impacts, and aligning with EU policies like the Green Deal were highlighted as critical issues. Additionally, data availability, quality, and real-time accessibility remain significant barriers to adaptive and evidence-based maritime governance.

The MSP Directive's effectiveness and areas for improvement were examined, with a focus on reviewing national MSP plans before considering changes to the directive.

Integrating climate change adaptation, the Green Deal, and biodiversity goals into MSP was identified as a key priority. Strengthening cross-border cooperation and aligning MSP with other EU policies were also highlighted. Improving data quality, accessibility, and consistency was emphasized to support evidence-based decision-making, particularly in addressing cumulative impacts and ensuring sustainability. Continuous adaptation to evolving challenges is essential.

The subsequent Q&A discussion focused on key challenges and opportunities in Marine Spatial Planning (MSP).

Participants highlighted the need for tailored strategies to engage diverse stakeholders, particularly small-scale fishers and local communities. They explored conflicts between economic development, such as offshore wind farms, and environmental conservation, emphasizing transparent decision-making and scientific data to guide trade-offs. Practical barriers like funding and political will were addressed, with cross-sector collaboration and international cooperation suggested as solutions.

Technology's role was underscored, with digital tools for mapping and data-sharing seen as vital for efficiency. Overall, the discussion emphasized MSP's complexity and potential, urging inclusivity, technology use, and continuous learning for success.

Session 2
Enhancing Regional Cooperation
Innovation in Maritime Spatial Planning





Keynote speech

Olivier Laroussinie

Managing Director for maritime planning, Risks-Water- Sea Technical Department, Cerema (FR)

“*Ten years is just the beginning. It's like finishing primary school. There's still much more to mature in governance and evolve in how we manage the sea.*”

Key Points

Challenges and opportunities in achieving regional cooperation under the European Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Directive were highlighted, including the absence of formal co-planning or co-decision frameworks and the reliance on voluntary cooperation mechanisms like the Espoo Convention. Also, disputes over maritime boundaries and inconsistencies in planning across neighbouring countries are a point of concern.

Political, policy, and technical barriers were underlined, such as national sovereignty concerns, sectoral silos, and a lack of standardized MSP frameworks, data, and terminology.

Despite these challenges, progress has been made in fostering social learning and shared practices through cross-border projects, collaboration groups, and communities of practice like seen in North Sea and Mediterranean initiatives.

More mandatory cooperation provisions in the MSP Directive are recommended with the importance of multi-level planning, ensuring coherence from local to regional scales.

MSP, now a decade old, is in its early stages of development and maturation, with much room for evolution in governance and collaboration.

Expert panel



**Michele Quesada
Da Silva**

MSPglobal Coordinator
(UNESCO-IOC)



“Our main role, is to help the countries that are sharing the same area, to come together and exchange their struggles and experiences.”



**Dmitry
Frank-Kamenetsky**

Special Advisor to the
Secretariat of the Baltic
Marine Environment Protection
Commission (HELCOM)



“We, in collaboration with our dear colleagues from VASAP, coordinate the Regional MSP group... a key policy maker in the field of Marine Spatial Planning.”



Claudine Vliegen

Team Coordinator Regional
Sea and EU Ministry of
Infrastructure and Water
Management (NL)



“We are really focusing on bringing sectors and domains together and to bring people together.”



Andrea Barbanti

Research Manager at National
Research Council (IT) and
member of the coordination
team of the MSP Med
Community of Practice



“We have been able to influence I would say, the research and innovation agendas on the Mediterranean and beyond the Mediterranean in the last 10 years.”



Moderator Eleni Hatziyanni

Policy Officer, Maritime Policy - Sustainable Blue Economy Sectors, DG MARE,
European Commission



Discussion summary

The discussion highlighted the roles of organizations in fostering regional cooperation in Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) by facilitating dialogue, sharing knowledge, and supporting technical processes. Regional initiatives such as the Baltic and Mediterranean platforms were identified as key for promoting cross-border collaboration, capacity-building, and aligning national MSP efforts. Despite challenges like fragmented approaches, limited coordination mechanisms, and sectoral silos, progress has been made through communities of practice and shared learning. One significant initiative is the Mediterranean Community of Practice (CoP), launched in 2022, which facilitates technical exchanges on MSP's role in sustainable blue economy and conservation, including marine protected areas. The CoP aims to expand its influence on national MSP plans and cross-border coordination. Cooperation in the Mediterranean also emphasizes knowledge exchange between EU and non-EU countries, while partnerships in regions like West Africa, supported by the Abidjan Convention, enhance engagement. The Baltic and North Sea initiatives focus on data harmonization, cumulative impact assessment, and nature protection, reinforcing the importance of regional coherence and cooperative planning.

Strengthening national MSP processes is essential for effective cross-border collaboration. Functional national plans, developed with active stakeholder engagement, serve as a foundation for coherent sea-basin strategies. While regional sea conventions facilitate collaboration, gaps remain in creating formal mechanisms for integrating national and transboundary MSP efforts.

Examples from the Baltic Sea underscore the potential for success through structured frameworks, which other regions could emulate. Participants emphasized the need for balancing economic and ecological priorities, integrating MSP with policies on marine environments, and fostering political commitment, capacity-building, and stakeholder inclusivity.

The discussion also explored collaboration between sea basin strategies, emphasizing the value of exchanging experiences, aligning agendas, and sharing capacities.

The integration of MSP and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) was discussed as a way to leverage ICZM experience for advancing MSP, particularly in West Africa. A rapid assessment methodology was piloted to map initiatives, identify gaps, and develop actionable plans. Examples like Brazil showcased efforts to integrate MSP nationally while building on ICZM, highlighting MSP's potential as a comprehensive planning process aligned with broader policies, such as fostering a sustainable blue economy.

The evolving nature of MSP was recognised as a tool for addressing complex challenges like cross-sectoral collaboration and capacity gaps. Key themes included the need for political commitment to prioritize MSP, breaking down silos between sectors, and fostering transboundary cooperation.

Participants acknowledged difficulties in scaling national plans to regional and international levels while highlighting the importance of shared data, integrated policies, and stakeholder inclusivity.

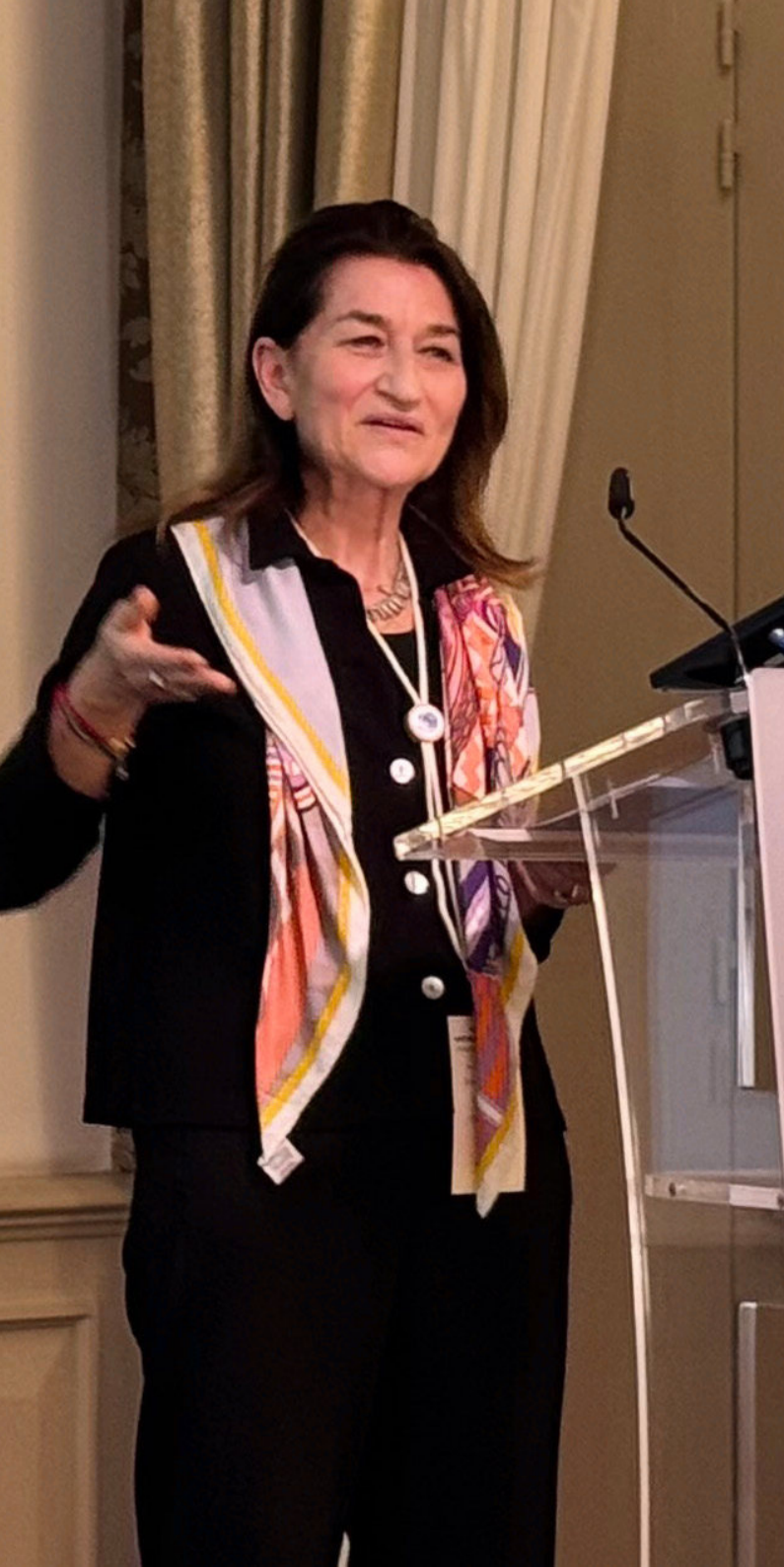
The session concluded by stressing the importance of strategic, holistic planning that balances economic, environmental, and social priorities.

The call to action focused on fostering political will, improving governance structures, and ensuring collaboration across domains to make MSP more effective and adaptive for the future.

Session 3

Data, innovation, and harmonisation within MSP





Keynote ‘scene-setting’ speech

Emerging future of ‘Smart’ MSP

Delilah Al Khudhairi

Director Maritime Policy and Blue Economy, DG MARE, European Commission

“*We need to go deeper, deeper in our collaboration, deeper in our affection for the MSP and see how we can smarten up the MSP for a better future.*”

Key Points

Achievements of the past decade were highlighted, challenges, such as governance, acknowledged, and a forward-looking vision for “smart” MSP presented. Since the MSP Directive was adopted, the European Union has become a global leader in maritime spatial planning with some significant milestones, like the fact that 20 of 22 coastal Member States successfully adopted their maritime spatial plans.

This progress can largely be credited to robust EU support mechanisms, including the European MSP Platform, facilitating collaboration and information sharing, and the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) funding cross-border projects. It is also important to further go digital, with EMODnet as an example allowing access to harmonized, reliable data and explore synergies with initiatives like the Digital Twin Ocean.

Going forward, there are 6 main issues: transnational cooperation (also with non-EU countries), multi-use planning, synergies with other EU initiatives, suitable areas for offshore wind farms, digital data driven MSP, and sustainable ways to adapt to climate change. Addressing these issues to ensure MSP remains effective and sustainable in the longer term, continuous stakeholder engagement is absolutely key, with the European Blue Forum as one the tools for this.

The presentation concluded with pointing to some some major upcoming activities, such as the Fisheries and Ocean Dialogues to help shape the European Ocean Pact and the Commission’s MSP Directive implementation report, planned for 2026.



Keynote speech

Joni Kaitaranta

Senior Data Manager at HELCOM and Co-Chair of the EU Technical Expert Group (TEG) on MSP data

“The big question is, where do we go from here? Now we have a standard, and we have a harmonised EU level data set. It still has some gaps, and I think those who have analysed and worked with the data can agree that it’s not perfect. We need to still work further on that in many levels.”

Key Points

Data in MSP functions as a critical driver of innovation and harmonisation. Early efforts focused on creating a digital map of MSP areas in the Baltic Sea, successfully introduced the concept of online data sharing. This experience laid the foundation for a European-wide approach to harmonising data, ensuring it is accessible, machine-readable, and aligned with EU standards.

For the future of data in MSP, there is the need for flexible, standardised data formats that accommodates the diverse needs of different Member States, enabling cross-border collaboration. Although significant progress has been made, data gaps still exist, particularly in areas like environmental monitoring and human activities. Addressing these gaps is essential for effective MSP, and new initiatives such as autonomous vehicles and digital twins were seen as key tools for filling these gaps and improving data collection efficiency. There is also the growing importance of real-time data and its role in adapting to rapidly changing marine environments. The integration of data from various sectors, including the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), is crucial for ensuring coherent and sustainable marine governance.

Continued collaboration and data sharing according to the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) principles will allow for better data management and ensure the development of a dynamic and adaptive MSP in the future.

Expert panel



Monika Peterson

Expert on sustainability transitions for oceans and freshwater
European Environment Agency



"We hope to have a faster progress, so that in the next round it will be easier to do things and will be able to build scenarios and models, we are really into this."



Conor Delaney

Technical Coordinator
EMODnet



"What I need from the MSP community at the moment, is digital maps of your plans."



Laurent Kerléguer

Director General
Shom



"The priority should be to focus in those areas which are the most under pressure, meaning the human pressure, which are usually in coastal areas with heavy traffic."



Sheila JJ Heymans

Executive Director
European Marine Board



"There is actually quite a lot of data out there, good science, from the observation side and I think that is probably something that needs to also be included in this."



Moderator Xavier Guillou

Team Leader Marine Renewable Energies and Maritime Spatial Planning,
DG MARE, European Commission



Discussion summary

The panel discussion brought together representatives from various sectors to explore the challenges and opportunities in data innovation and harmonisation for MSP. A central theme was the need to enhance the availability and interoperability of data, especially in areas with high spatial pressures. Despite progress, gaps remain in integrating human activity data and dynamic environmental factors such as ocean currents and habitat changes.

The need for comprehensive and harmonised data to support effective MSP across the EU is a critical priority. Detailed data on human activities, such as fishing, shipping, tourism, and aquaculture, is critical for addressing spatial conflicts and fostering coexistence among sectors. So are robust environmental and ecological datasets, including seabed habitats, water quality, and biodiversity, for ecosystem-based planning. Although progress has been made in areas like bathymetry, data on seabed ecosystems and ecological processes remains inadequate. Standardized and authoritative data is crucial for cross-border collaboration and governance, but challenges persist with real-time data collection, which is often slow and costly. Emerging technologies, such as autonomous vehicles and digital twins, are considered able to address these challenges.

The Digital Twin of the Ocean offers significant potential to transform MSP by enabling enhanced data integration, scenario modelling, and evidence-based decision-making. By simulating various scenarios, it enables the evaluation of marine activity impacts on ecosystems, optimizes spatial arrangements, and improves resource allocation.

However, its effectiveness relies on access to high-quality, up-to-date data, making it vital to address current data gaps. Equally important is aligning the Digital Twin's insights with practical MSP processes to ensure simulations translate into actionable strategies.

Key areas for innovation include the development of real-time data collection tools like autonomous vehicles, drones, and smart sensors. Advances in geospatial analysis and modelling, including AI and machine learning, offer valuable insights into spatial conflicts, ecosystem impacts, and multi-use potential. Equally critical is policy innovation to foster cross-sector collaboration and align MSP with broader EU objectives, such as the European Green Deal and the MSFD.

Ensuring data consistency, accessibility, and interoperability, it supports a unified approach to marine governance. Harmonising environmental, socio-economic, and human activity data enables informed decision-making that aligns MSP and MSFD objectives. Real-time monitoring and data updates are crucial for both frameworks, allowing adaptive management and tracking progress towards good environmental status. Digital platforms and geospatial systems enhance coordination, facilitate data sharing, and promote transparency across policy areas.

In conclusion, the panel recognised the critical role of data in aligning MSP with broader policy objectives, including the forthcoming European Ocean Pact.

Session 4

Navigating Future Seas

MSP and the European Green Deal





Keynote speech

Tom Wooley

Marine Planning Advisor at Government of Ireland - Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

“It is envisaged that Maritime Spatial Planning will be strengthened to help optimise the different uses of the sea and the ocean’s economic potential while safeguarding its health and resilience.”

Key Points

The European Green Deal and related strategies, such as the Biodiversity Strategy, seeking to enlarge Natura 2000 areas and establishing the Nature Restoration Law, and the Blue Economy Strategy, communicated in 2021, provide a framework for sustainable growth and the decoupling of economic growth from emissions.

Ireland’s Climate Action Plan targets offshore renewable energy, aiming for 5GW of wind capacity by 2030 and further developments in green hydrogen.

Maritime spatial planning (MSP) in Ireland has transitioned to a plan-led approach, supported by frameworks like the National Marine Planning Framework and the Maritime Area Planning Act. These tools foster stakeholder engagement and ensure ecological considerations are prioritised. Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are set to expand to 30% of Ireland’s marine region by 2030, backed by substantial funding for nature-based solutions. Efforts to tackle marine pollution through a circular economy and international agreements were also highlighted.

Looking ahead, MSP will play a vital role in aligning Europe’s policies under the proposed European Oceans Pact, enhancing regional collaboration, and integrating climate-smart trends. Ireland will continue to refine its plans and engage in regional cooperation to meet shared environmental and economic goals.

Expert panel



Kenn Skau Fischer

Executive Committee Chair of
the North Sea Advisory Council



*"I wish there were more
representatives of the
fishers here today, because
we learned a lot from this
discussion."*



Tom Woolley

Marine Planning Advisor at
Government of Ireland
Department of the
Environment, Climate
and Communications



*"Alongside traditional
actions, new sectors
such as ocean renewable
energy, are evolving,
growing, providing new
opportunities."*



Jurre Honcoop

Senior public and regulatory
affairs advisor, Ørsted EU and
global affairs team



*"MSP and hopefully the
future ocean pact, helps in
front-loading essentially
political, spatial and in the
end regulatory challenges."*



Rémi Cosetti

Marine Policy Officer,
Seas at risk



*"Our main expectations from
this ocean pact, is that it
needs to be more than just
a declaration of intent, more
than just a communication."*



Moderator Christina Christoforou-Livani

Project Manager, European MSP Assistance Mechanism



Discussion summary

The panel brought together representatives from a Member State planning authority, a private sector, an NGO, and a fisheries Advisory council. This diverse composition ensured a holistic perspective on the future of MSP, enabling a comprehensive discussion of its multifaceted challenges and alignment with the European Green Deal.

The upcoming Ocean Pact, set to be launched in 2025, has already received significant attention from stakeholders, each with their own expectations. Similarly, the panellists shared their perspectives on its potential impact.

Emphasis was given to the importance of incorporating the recently launched Blue Manifesto as a foundational blueprint, particularly its impact on MSP in areas like offshore energy development, marine protected areas, and coastal adaptation.

The Ocean Pact is, also, viewed as an opportunity to align marine policies including MSP, fostering greater coherence between Europe's environmental and energy goals.

In this context, inclusive stakeholder engagement is crucial, with a cautionary note against processes driven by lobbying that could exclude essential groups, such as fishers.

With the urgent need for climate action, attention has shifted toward developing climate-smart, ecosystem-based MSP. The dynamic nature of ocean environments highlights the critical need for better data, continuous monitoring, and adaptable planning to keep pace with changing ecosystems and climate impacts.

Ireland serves as a successful example, advancing its transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy with offshore wind projects aiming for 5GW by 2030 and integrating nature-based solutions and habitat-informed carbon sequestration.

Efforts to advance how marine space is used often create spatial pressures as expanding economic sectors compete for limited space, leading to the need for compromises from other sectors.

To address this, more thoughtful MSP, enhanced dialogue, and active stakeholder engagement are essential to maximise the efficiency of space use. One approach that has gained traction in recent years is the multi-use/co-use of marine spaces.

While multi-use can increase space efficiency, promote coexistence, and reduce conflicts, the panellists emphasised the need to carefully consider the needs of existing users, such as fisheries, provide new economic opportunities and set realistic expectations supported by robust data evaluating multi-use initiatives.

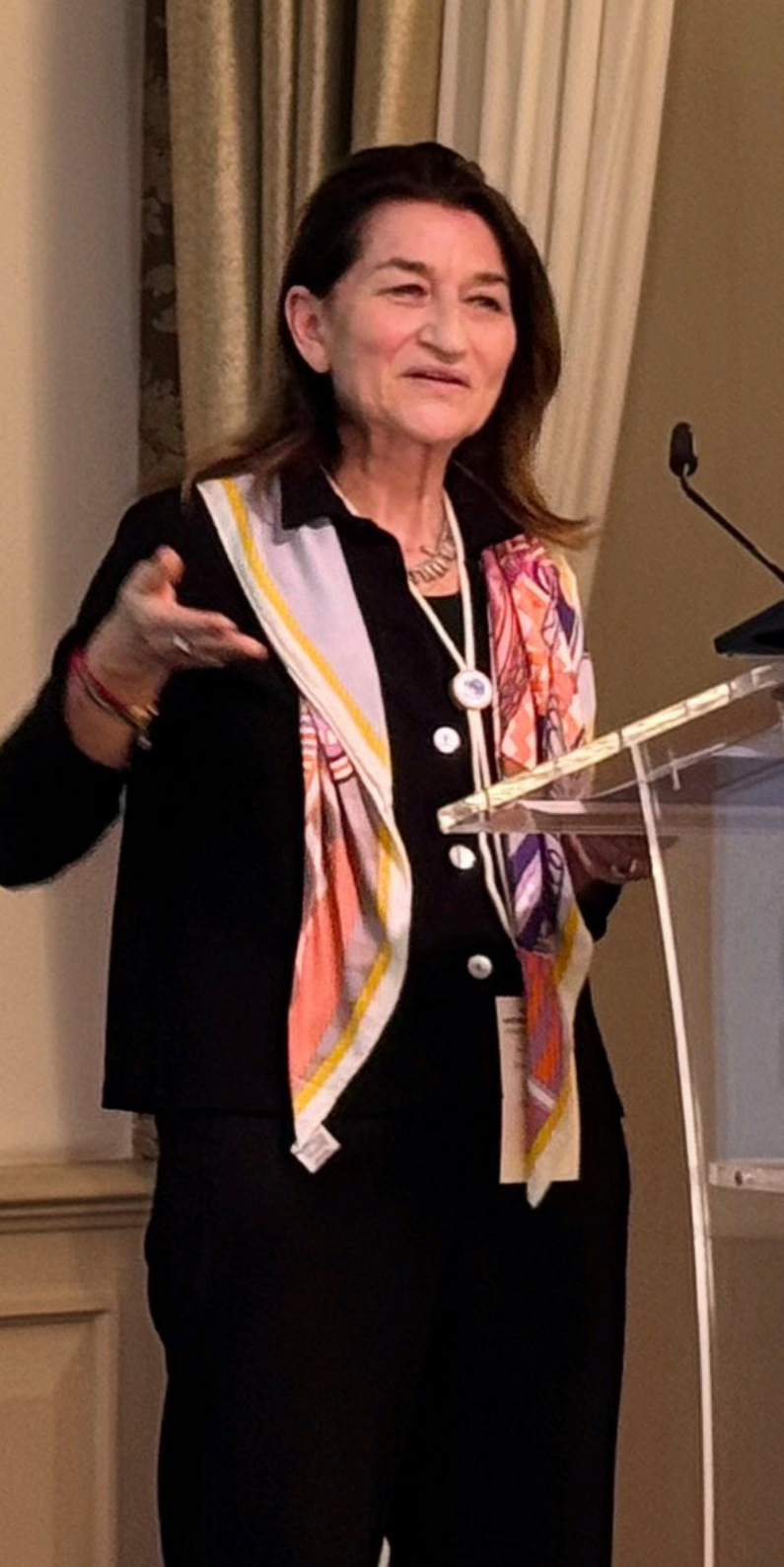
Additionally, nature conservation areas and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) should not be treated simply as sectors for co-use.

Closing message to the Commissioner-designate for Fisheries and Oceans:

MSP must serve as a cornerstone of Europe's maritime strategy, supporting the objectives of DG MARE, DG ENV (e.g., nature restoration), and DG ENER (e.g. low-carbon energy).

Strengthening dialogue at the EU level is crucial for aligning policies and achieving our shared global goals.

The Ocean Pact should play a vital role in enhancing decision-making by leveraging improved data, expertise, and approaches to environmental challenges, ensuring the full implementation of existing commitments.



Conference closing

Delilah Al Khudhairy

Director Maritime Policy and Blue Economy, DG MARE, European Commission

“ *We need MSP more than ever before, we have lots of input, ideas and your experiences on how we can make those next 10 years better.*”



Celebrating a decade of MSP in Europe





European MSP Platform

A service for Member States to share relevant knowledge and experiences on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP).
It contains a wealth of resources to support the MSP community.

MSP Resources

- MSP Library
- Co-existence and multi-use of activities
- Related databases and platforms
- Glossary
- FAQs

MSP Initiatives

- MSP Projects
- MED MSP CoP
- Technical Expert Group on Data for MSP

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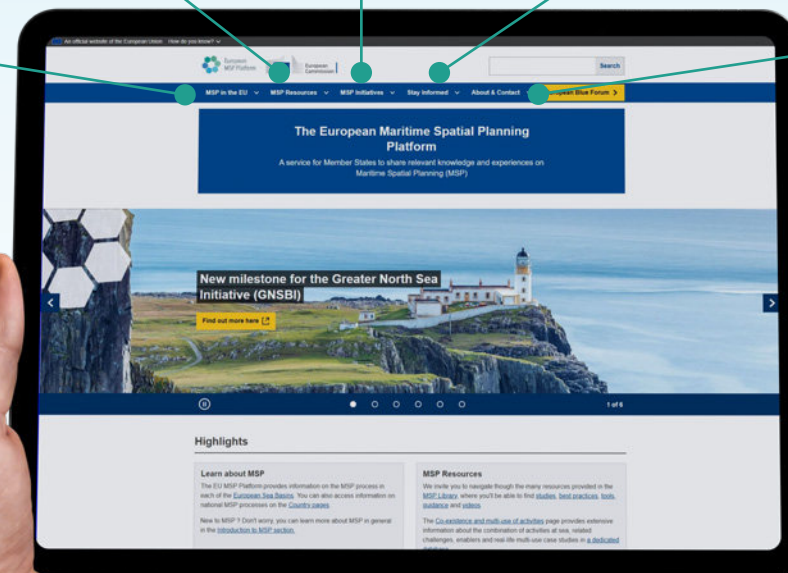
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Multi-use and co-existence compendium

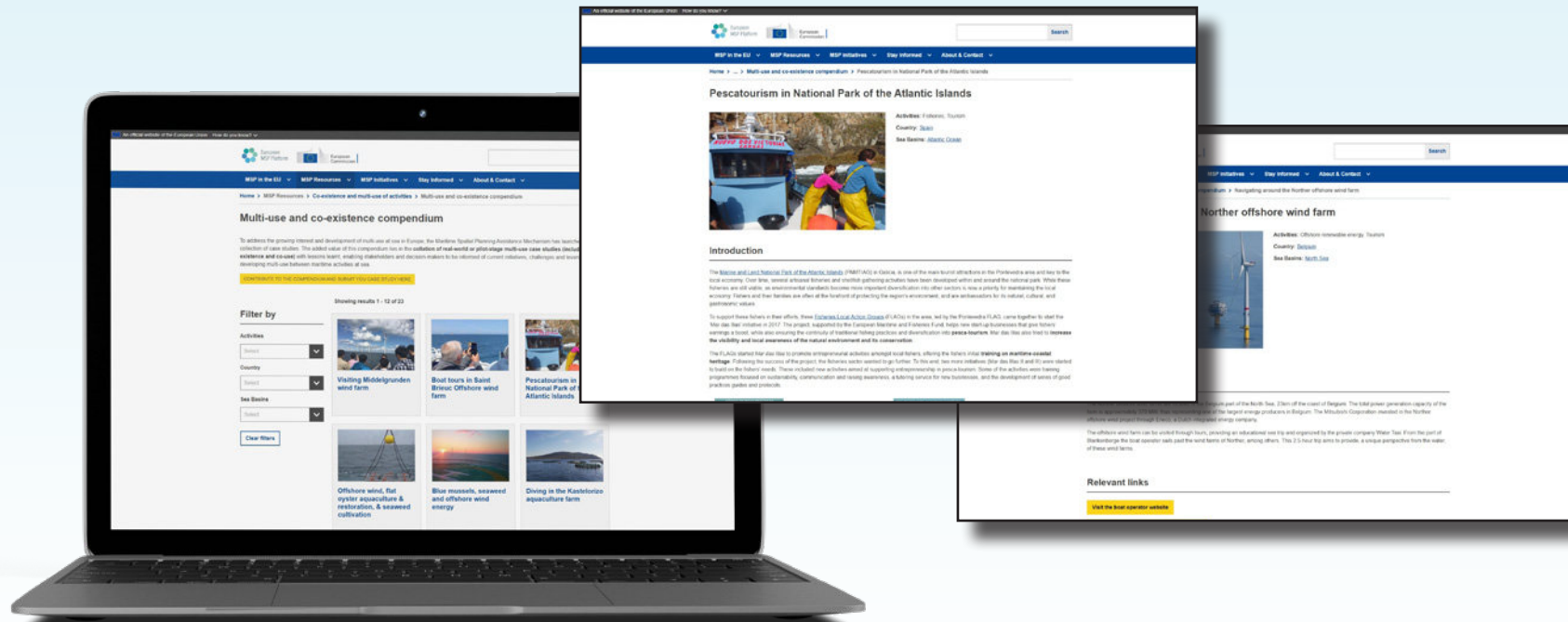
To address the growing interest and development of multi-use at sea in Europe, the Maritime Spatial Planning Assistance Mechanism has launched a collection of case studies.

The added value of this compendium lies in the collation of real-world or pilot-stage multi-use case studies (including co-existence and co-use) with lessons learnt.

It enables stakeholders and decision-makers to be informed of current initiatives, challenges and levers for developing multi-use between maritime activities at sea.

To contribute to the compendium, projects can submit their own case study by filling in the form.

The compendium is accessible on the European MSP platform >> [click here](#)



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