Maritime Spatial Planning
Country Information
Croatia

www.msp-platform.eu
Contacts

MSP in general

Vesna Marohnić-Kuzmanović, dipl.ing.arh.
Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets
Sector for Spatial Planning Documents of State Level
Institute for Spatial Development
Head of Service for Strategy and other Spatial Planning Documents of State Level
Republike Austrije 20, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia
Ph.: +358 (0)1 3712-756
E-mail: Vesna.MarohnicKuzmanovic@mpgi.hr

Kristina Kovačić
Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets
Sector for Spatial Planning Documents of State Level
Institute for Spatial Development
senior expert advisor
Republike Austrije 20, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia
Ph.: +358 (0)1 3782 431
E-mail: Kristina.Kovacic@mpgi.hr

Tina Filjak-Juračić, mag.Arch.
Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets
Directorate for Physical Planning and Permits of State Significance
Expert advisor
Sector for Physical Planning
Republike Austrije 20, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia
Ph.: +358 (0)1 3782-454
E-mail: Tina.Filjak-Juracic@mpgi.hr

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Background Information

Basic facts on Marine Waters

Disclaimer: the above map is currently being updated and more information will be available soon

Croatian national waters cover an area of 31,479 km² (35.7% of the entire territory), while the coastline is 6,278 km long: the coastline is made up of 1,880 km on the mainland, and 4,398 km on islands. There are 1,244 islands, islets, rocks and reefs (islands and islets 602, rocks and reefs 642). Only 47 islands are permanently inhabited.

Following the Republic of Croatia’s Maritime Code¹, the maritime area comprises the internal waters and the territorial sea, the air space above them and the respective seabed and subsoil.

In February 2021, the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Croatia in the Adriatic Sea (EEZ)² was declared by the Croatian Parliament following the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the Maritime Code. As a result of this decision, the previously designated area entitled the “Ecological and Fishery Protection Zone (EFPZ)”, extending over an area of 23,870 km², was abolished. The EEZ covers the sea area from the outer boundary of the country’s territorial sea, in the direction of the open sea, to its outer boundary permitted by general international law. As stated in the previously mentioned declaration, the external borders of EEZ shall be determined by international delimitation agreements with countries whose shores lie opposite the Republic of Croatia.

The sea borders with member states and non-EU countries anticipate the following:

— the sea border between Croatia and Italy was defined in the 1968 Agreement on the Delimitation of the Continental Shelf, and the 1975 Osimo Agreement determining the boundary of the territorial sea, both agreements applied to Croatia and Italy by virtue of succession to the predecessor state. In addition, the existing traffic separation schemes established by IMO, based on the proposal put forward jointly by Italy, Croatia and Slovenia, ensure safe and unimpeded navigation under the system for an innocent passage through Croatia’s and Italy’s territorial sea.
— regarding the delimitation with Bosnia and Herzegovina, the line of delimitation at sea has been determined by the 1999 Treaty on State Border which has been in provisional application as of the date of its signature pending ratification by both Parties.

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² Decision on Declaration of the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Croatia in the Adriatic Sea (OG 10/2021)

— final delimitation of the territorial sea between Croatia and Slovenia is still pending. Following a procedural incident arising from the implementation of the Arbitration Agreement of November 2009 (between Croatia and Slovenia), Croatia has decided to terminate the Agreement and to withdraw from the arbitration. After Slovenia appealed to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) against the dispute, the ECJ stated that it was not in a position to intervene between the two countries. It urged Croatia and Slovenia to reach an agreement following international law.

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) authorities and legislation

General

Since the current Croatian physical planning system (PPS) covers both terrestrial and marine areas, maritime spatial planning is traditionally an integrated part of spatial planning. Today’s maritime spatial planning in Croatia incorporates most of the themes and requirements of MSP included in the EU and international regulations, primarily Directive 2014/89/EU – MSP Directive, Directive 2008/56/EC - MSFD and the Protocol to the Barcelona Convention on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean (ICZM Protocol). The regulations relating to the spatial planning of marine and coastal areas, in particular – the ICZM Protocol, have been gradually incorporated over the years into the physical planning system, starting with the declaration on protected coastal and marine zones in 2004.

PPS provides the legal framework to be followed when implementing spatial planning. It provides conditions for the use, protection and management of the Republic of Croatia’s territory as a particularly valuable national asset, enabling the preconditions for social and economic development, environmental and nature protection, quality of construction and rational use of natural and cultural assets.

The system basically relies on:

— essential principles / settings / rules of spatial planning
— over 60 years of planning experience
— integrative approach as a basic principle
— commitment to sustainable spatial development (economic-social-environmental)
— overall national legal framework:
  — territorial-political organisation
  — horizontal and vertical cooperation system
— EU acquis
  — commitments from EU legislation (directives, protocols...), all of which are incorporated into the Physical Planning Act and other acts and regulations

PPS is regulated by the Physical Planning Act (PPA), which essentially defines:

— goals and principles of physical planning
— subjects of physical planning (stakeholders)
— spatial monitoring / monitoring in the field of physical planning
— requirements for spatial planning
— the Spatial Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia
— spatial plans:
  — levels (state / NUTS1, regional / NUTS3, local / LAU2)
  — scope
  — contents, form and standards
  — procedure for the development and adoption
— implementation of spatial plans

1 more detailed examination was carried out for Dubrovnik-Neretva County during the SUPREME project - explained later in text

2 Regulation on Development and Protection of the Protected Costal Area of the Sea (OG 128/2004)

The Spatial Development Strategy is the basic guide for spatial development, setting strategic goals and priorities based on established core values and analysis of the territorial status.

Spatial plans are the main instruments used to implement the national spatial planning policy at all levels - state, regional / county and local. In the formal-legal sense, spatial plans have the force and legal nature of bylaws (Article 58, paragraph 1 of the Physical Planning Act), to ensure that buildings, infrastructure etc are constructed in a way that meets specific requirements. Depending on the level, they are adopted by the Croatian Parliament, the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the representative bodies of counties and cities/municipalities.

The territorial status reports are prepared to obtain a comprehensive overview of spatial development and future spatial development trends, as well as an overview of the implementation of spatial planning instruments and measures taken by competent authorities in the period under review. They are being prepared for a four-year period on state, regional / county and local levels.

The Physical Planning Information System (ISPU) is established to develop and monitor the implementation of spatial plans, as well as the preparation of territorial status reports based on continuous monitoring. The ISPU geoportal is a central place for displaying and reviewing publicly available spatial data and layers. The geoportal is accessible to the public (except the parts used for data entry and/or verification) and includes an overview (WMS) of selected maps of spatial plans for all levels.

The system has been evolving over years, adapting its legal framework to the political, economic, and social changes and global trends.

By adopting the amendment to the PPA in 2017 (OG 65/2017), the MSP Directive was fully transposed into national legislation. Protection of the marine environment and the policy of sustainable development of the coastal economy are also an integral part of the physical planning system.

The ministry in charge of physical planning (the Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets - MPPCSA) is the central state administration body competent for spatial planning activities, including MSP.

In Croatia, a spatial plan has a legislative nature, as a subordinate law, and is legally binding for all types of construction. Under the current Act (PPA), a new generation of spatial plans will be developed. The plans will retain the existing levels of hierarchy, covering the topics assigned to each level by the PPA and special regulations. They will be drafted using GIS technologies and will contain geocoded spatial data.

### Planning at the national level

Currently, there is no single MSP plan for the Croatian marine area, but the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia is covered by various spatial plans, which comprise both terrestrial and marine areas.

The backbone of the legislation on physical planning in Croatia is the Physical Planning Act - PPA. Spatial plans in Croatia are binding, with the status of the subordinate regulations. By adopting the amendment to the PPA (OG 65/2017), the MSP Directive was fully transposed into national legislation.

**Spatial plans under state competence:**
1. The State Plan for Spatial Development, covering the entire Croatian territory, up to the external limit of the territorial sea. Preparation of the plan started following the Government Decision of 26 April 2018 (OG 39/2018) – in the process of development
2. *The Spatial Plan for the Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone of the Republic of Croatia
3. *The Spatial Plan for the Continental Shelf of the Republic of Croatia
4. Spatial plans for national parks and nature parks which include marine areas

*Note: In view of the Declaration on EEZ, the development of the plans under points 2. and 3. will be reconsidered in accordance with the amendments to the Physical Planning Act. Following the provisions of the UNCLOS convention (Part V, Exclusive Economic Zone), a single spatial plan of the EEZ area may be developed.

**National MSP authority**

The ministry in charge of physical planning (the Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets - MPPCSA) is the competent state body for spatial and physical planning.

In accordance with the amendments made to PPA in 2018 (OG 114/2018), the former Croatian Institute for Spatial Development continues its work within the MPPCSA. It continues to develop or coordinate the development of spatial plans and performs other professional physical planning activities according to PPA, including MSP implementation in Croatia at the national level.

**Planning at the regional and local level**

Spatial Plans for the regional level are developed at county level. They include provisions for the use of marine areas (up to the external limit of the territorial sea). According to PPA and the regulations enacted under it, these plans include locations for different categories of use, such as ports and marinas, waterways, underwater archaeological sites and aquaculture areas. Some topics have been elaborated in more detail. For example, the Zadar County includes a detailed zonation of the marine space for different types of aquaculture uses in its spatial plan, owing to the importance of aquaculture among the development priorities in the county.

At the local level, each coastal city and municipality has developed its own spatial plan, including elaboration of general urban plans or urban development plans, where it is appropriate or is prescribed by regulations. All plans contain provisions for the use of marine area if it is within their scope.

Physical planning activities in counties and cities/municipalities are under the responsibility of special administrative departments.

**Regional MSP authority**

Coastal counties’ spatial planning institutes are competent for MSP, within the powers defined by the PPA.

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**Details**

The Republic of Croatia has a long tradition of spatial planning defined by legislation and the institutional framework. At the very beginning of the process of preparation and adoption of spatial planning documents, the participation of relevant public bodies is ensured, providing the requirements (data, planning guidelines, conditions, measures and other elements) for the development of a specific spatial plan. In this first step, it is important to identify and understand ecologically sensitive points and areas that may be endangered.

The basic principle of an integrated approach to spatial planning and physical planning system includes the protection of nature and the environment as a continuous component in all segments. Nature protection, including the Ecological Network of the Republic of Croatia, is one of the basic starting values for spatial planning, which must ensure the sustainability of ecological areas in the process of economic and social modernisation.

PPA is the backbone to the legislation on physical planning in Croatia. As previously mentioned, spatial plans are mandatory and no spatial intervention can be approved and carried out unless provided by the plan.

By adopting the amendment to PPA (OG 65/2017), which came into force in July 2017, the MSP Directive was fully transposed into the legislation of the Republic of Croatia. The amendments include the provisions related to:

1. Definition, objectives, and principles of MSP.
2. Cooperation of Croatia with other EU member states in the field of MSP in the Adriatic Sea.
3. Cooperation with the non-EU member states.
4. Competent authorities on MSP.

According to PPA (Art. 49.a-f), the plans that include sea areas are:

1. The State Plan for Spatial Development, covering the entire Croatian territory, up to the external limit of the territorial sea. Preparation of the plan started following the Government Decision of 26 April 2018 (OG 39/2018)
2. The Spatial Plan of the Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone of the Republic of Croatia
3. The Spatial Plan of the Continental Shelf of the Republic of Croatia
4. Spatial plans of national parks and nature parks which include marine areas
5. Spatial plans of counties and of cities or municipalities which include marine areas, and where planning within their boundaries is determined in accordance with special regulations
6. General urban plans and urban development plans which include marine areas

Following the provisions of PPA, spatial plans under points 1-3 will be developed for the first time, while other plans have already been developed within previous legal frameworks and are expected to be revised according to the Act. Based on the physical planning system, existing spatial plans and other spatial planning and development documents in the Republic of Croatia have already considered the themes and requirements of MSP arising from the MSP Directive, MSFD 2008/56/EC and ICZM Protocol. The new spatial plans (points 1-3) will comply with all the obligations of the MSP Directive transposed into the Croatian legal framework.

Given the previously mentioned Declaration on EEZ, the development of the plans under points 2. and 3. will be reconsidered in accordance with the amendments to the Physical Planning Act. Following the provisions of the UNCLOS convention (Part V, Exclusive Economic Zone), a single spatial plan for the EEZ area may be developed. In Art. 50 -52, the Physical Planning Act envisaged the preparation of the Strategy for Spatial Development as the umbrella document guiding the spatial development of Croatia. The Strategy was adopted by the Parliament in October 2017 (OG 106/2017). The Strategy sets out long-term spatial development tasks and strategic directions following overall development, needs and possibilities, expressed in the fundamental strategic state development documents. Based on assessed state and trends, the Strategy defines basic principles, priorities and strategic orientations for both land and marine spatial development. One of the Strategy’s priorities is the sustainable development and use of the coastal area (including marine). As part of that priority, the Strategy requires further emphasis towards MSP, regarding the development of maritime activities, conflict resolution between maritime users and protection of the marine environment and ecosystems. In addition, it requires an integrated approach for the planning of coastal areas and specifically to address Land and Sea Interactions (LSI).

The ministry in charge of physical planning (MPPCSA), that is the competent authority for MSP implementation in Croatia, is also responsible for spatial plans at the state level. Following amendments made to PPA in 2018 (OG 114/2018), the former Croatian Institute for Spatial Development continues its work within the MPPCSA. It continues to develop or coordinate the development of spatial plans and performs other professional physical planning activities according to PPA, including MSP implementation in Croatia at the national level. In addition, the spatial planning institutes of the counties are expert institutions for the preparation of plans at the county level. The plans are adopted by the Croatian Parliament or the Government (state-level plans), county assemblies (county level) and city/municipal councils (local level plans).

The integration of activities and requirements into spatial plans is the shared responsibility of many professions/sectors/policies, implemented directly (by spatial planners upon previously prepared analyses) and indirectly (input data from sectors strategic documents or expressed as requests/suggestions in the process of spatial planning). Although the sectors are interconnected and dependent on each other, they sometimes act as if they were independent. A legal framework, followed by the strategies, programmes, and plans, has been developed within each of the sectors, but the integrative connection of strategic settings from these documents occurs through spatial planning / physical planning system for the first time. At the national level, the attempt is to develop consistency in various strategic documents through the Act on the System of Strategic Planning and Development Management of the Republic of Croatia (OG 123/2017).

Overview of other ministries with competencies closely related to the use and protection of marine resources:

- the ministry in charge of maritime affairs: Ministry of Sea, Transport and Infrastructure - MSTI
- the ministry in charge of fisheries and aquaculture: Ministry of Agriculture – MA
- the ministry in charge of nature and environmental protection: Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development – MESD
- the ministry in charge of exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons and other mineral resources in the marine area: MESD
Overview of MSP-related uses and issues

A strategic document *Maritime Development and Integrated Maritime Policy Strategy of the Republic of Croatia from 2014 to 2020* was adopted by the Croatian Government in 2014. MSTI is responsible for the implementation of measures and goals determined by this strategy, in coordination with other state and public authorities in the field of maritime affairs. The strategy sets out two basic strategic goals:

- sustainable growth and competitiveness of the maritime economy and
- safe and environmentally sustainable development of maritime transport, infrastructure, and a maritime area of the Republic of Croatia.

EUNETMAR (2014) identifies the following 7 largest marine/maritime sectors for Croatia at present, listed here in order of importance:

**Coastal tourism**

It is the most relevant maritime activity in Croatia and a major blue sector in terms of employment. This activity still has high growth potential and it is identified as a strategic sector by the national authorities. A Strategy for tourism development by 2020 was adopted by the Parliament in 2013. The drafting of a new Strategy for the Development of Sustainable Tourism until 2030 has been initiated.

**Cruise tourism**

This sector represents an important maritime activity in Croatia\(^6\). Compared to 2010, the total number of cruise ships has reduced but has kept almost the same number of passengers and has increased the average number of stops. The most important cruising destination in Croatia is the city of Dubrovnik, accounting for more than 70% of all cruise tourism in Croatia. However, the daily number of people is often beyond the city’s carrying capacity and, in line with UNESCO recommendations, local authorities are limiting the daily number of passengers to the Port of Dubrovnik.

**Passenger ferry services**

Due to its direct link with the growth of tourism, particularly on the islands, passenger ferry services are among the fastest-growing maritime activities in Croatia, with a continuous increase in the number of passengers. For example, more than 32 million passengers embarked or disembarked in Croatian seaports in 2017, which was 5% more than in 2016\(^7\).

**Short sea shipping**

The economic potential of Croatian seaports is based on its favourable geographical position and the deep penetration of the Adriatic Sea into the continent. Integration into the network of European transport corridors represents a development potential for inclusion in trade flows within the European and world markets. Almost 90% of freight transport in Croatian ports takes place in the ports of Rijeka, Ploče and Split. Passenger traffic mainly takes place in the ports of Split and Zadar, while the majority of traffic in the port of Dubrovnik is in the form of cruise ships.

**Yachting and marinas**

This activity has large growth potential in Croatia. The objective of the *National Strategy for Nautical Tourism Development* for the period 2009 – 2019, was the creation of many new moorings and the construction of new high-quality marinas.

**Fishing and marine aquaculture**

The direct production value of fisheries, fish farming and processing, with accompanying activities, exceeds 1% of GDP. It is estimated that it employs (directly and indirectly) around 25,000 people. The share of aquaculture in the total fishery production in Croatia is only 20% but it has strong potential for growth\(^8\). The farming activities are widespread in all Croatian coastal counties, with the highest concentration being in Zadar County.

In addition to the *Agriculture and Fisheries Strategy of the Republic of Croatia* (OG 89/2002), as the umbrella strategic document in the field of fisheries and aquaculture, another two key strategic documents were developed: *National Strategic Plan for the Development of Fisheries* (prepared under the provisions of Council regulations on the European Fisheries Fund) and *National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture Development 2014-2020*. These documents are in the process of revision. The objectives are to promote sustainable development of the sector, increase productivity and strengthen competitiveness.

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\(^6\) Institute for tourism, 2016  
\(^7\) Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2018  
\(^8\) National strategic plan for the development of fisheries in the Republic of Croatia; OG 123/13
**Oil and Gas**

Gas exploitation occurs in the Northern Adriatic Sea, with 20 operative gas platforms and about 228 km of gas pipeline laying on the sea bottom. In addition, there is a plan to build a large LNG terminal in the Northern Adriatic Sea basin.

According to the Framework Plan and Programme for Hydrocarbon Exploration and Exploitation in the Adriatic (2015), 28 hydrocarbon exploration areas have been defined in the Adriatic Sea, comprising both the territorial sea and the continental shelf of the Republic of Croatia: 8 exploration areas in the northern Adriatic, 15 in the central Adriatic and 5 in the southern Adriatic. A strategic environmental assessment was carried out for the Programme but there is no national consensus on how it should be achieved.

**Protected areas**

As far as natural protection is concerned, it is worth noting that 266 Natura 2000 marine sites have been established in Croatia (257 SCI and 9 SPA) for a total sea area of 5,279 km² (European Environmental Agency, 2013 - Natura 2000 Barometer), i.e., 16.4% of the country’s marine area.

There is no MPA site defined by Nature Protection Act, but there are many protected areas that include marine areas:

**National Parks**
- National Park Brijuni
- National Park Kornati
- National Park Mljet

**Nature Parks**
- Nature Park Lastovo Isles
- Nature Park Telašćica

In consideration of its high ecological value, in 2014 the Jabuka/Pomo pit was declared an "Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area" (EBSA)²⁰, according to the criteria adopted by the 9th COP of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)²¹. On 17 October 2017, at its 41st session, through the Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/3 on the establishment of an FRA in the Jabuka/Pomo pit in the Adriatic Sea, the GFCM adopted the EU proposal for the establishment of a Fisheries Restricted Area (FRA) in the Jabuka/Pomo pit banning demersal fisheries²².

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²⁰ [https://www.cbd.int/ebsa/](https://www.cbd.int/ebsa/)
Maritime Spatial Plans

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

As mentioned above, there is no single MSP plan for the Croatian marine area, but existing spatial plans cover the entire area of inner waters and territorial sea. The continental shelf area is covered by the Physical Planning Programme of the Republic of Croatia (adopted by the Parliament in 1999 and revised in 2013), a document with strategic and implementation components at the state level.

Existing spatial plans on the state (NUTS1), regional (county; NUTS3) and local (city or municipality; LAU2) level cover the entire sea area up to the outer border of territorial waters. The coastal area is administratively part of seven counties with a total of 133 local units (cities and municipalities) to which the MSP Directive and the ICZM Protocol should be applied. So far, all counties and cities/municipalities, encompassing sea areas, have developed and adopted spatial plans for their administrative territories, including the corresponding sea area. At the state level, spatial plans encompassing the marine area have been developed and adopted for all national parks (Brijuni, Kornati and Mljet) and the Nature park Telašćica.

Seven coastal counties have developed their spatial plans addressing themes relevant to the county and giving guidelines and/or directions for developing plans at both regional and local levels. County-level plans were developed mainly in the period between 2000 and 2003. Some of them have been revised several times, while some counties developed entirely new plans.

At the local level, as of 2016, 133 coastal cities and municipalities developed spatial plans for the area within their authority.
Below are the links to the existing spatial plans covering the maritime area (county spatial plans, local-level spatial plans and state-level spatial plans of nature and national parks).

For maps please look for: „Grafički dio / prilazi“ , „Naziv grafike“ or „Kartografski prikazi“

1. **Dubrovnik-Neretva County:**
   - County Plan: [http://www.zzpudnz.hr/dokumenti_3/dok282.aspx](http://www.zzpudnz.hr/dokumenti_3/dok282.aspx)
   - City/municipality plans, general urban plans: [http://www.zzpudnz.hr/PROSTORNIPLANOVI.aspx](http://www.zzpudnz.hr/PROSTORNIPLANOVI.aspx)

2. **Split-Dalmatia County:**
   - County Plan: [http://zzpu-sdz.hr/prostorni-plan-%C5%BEupanije](http://zzpu-sdz.hr/prostorni-plan-%C5%BEupanije)
   - City/municipality plans: [http://zzpu-sdz.hr/prostorni-plan-ure%C4%91enja-grada-ilij-op%C4%87ine](http://zzpu-sdz.hr/prostorni-plan-ure%C4%91enja-grada-ilij-op%C4%87ine)
   - General urban plans: [http://zzpu-sdz.hr/generalni-urbanist%C4%8DKi-planovi](http://zzpu-sdz.hr/generalni-urbanist%C4%8DKi-planovi)

3. **Šibenik-Knin County:**
   - County Plan: [http://zpu-skz.hr/prostorni-planovi/](http://zpu-skz.hr/prostorni-planovi/)
   - City/municipality plans: available on local websites
   - General urban plans: [https://gis.sibenik.hr/gis](https://gis.sibenik.hr/gis)

4. **Zadar County Plan:**
   - County Plan: [https://www.zpu-zadzup.hr/prostorno-uredjenje](https://www.zpu-zadzup.hr/prostorno-uredjenje)
   - City/municipality plans: [https://www.zpu-zadzup.hr/prostorno-uredjenje/prostorni-planovi](https://www.zpu-zadzup.hr/prostorno-uredjenje/prostorni-planovi)

5. **Lika-Senj County:**
   - County Plan: [https://www.licko-senjska.hr/index.php/o-zupaniji/prostorni-planovi](https://www.licko-senjska.hr/index.php/o-zupaniji/prostorni-planovi)
   - City/municipality plans: available on local websites

6. **Primorsko-Goranska County:**
   - County Plan: [https://zavod.pgz.hr/pdfList.aspx?tip=docsplanovizupanija&id=5](https://zavod.pgz.hr/pdfList.aspx?tip=docsplanovizupanija&id=5)
   - City/municipality plans: available on local websites

7. **Istria County:**

8. **State-level spatial plans:**

All Spatial plans are also available via the central platform (Informacijski sustav prostornog uređenja – ISP/Physical Planning Information System): [https://ispu.mgipu.hr/](https://ispu.mgipu.hr/)

The analysis carried out in the EU-funded Project SUPREME, shows that the majority of the MSP Directive provisions regarding the activities in the sea area are covered in the existing county spatial plans. However, all existing spatial plans will be revised and restructured in the process of transition to the “new generation” of plans according to the Physical Planning Act. The Zadar County Spatial Plan is described below as an example of an existing plan at the county level that comprises both land and maritime areas.

Moreover, Croatia has been involved in several MSP-related projects, some of them include the elaboration of pilot plans also dealing with the marine area. Two examples are provided below: (i) the Coastal Plan for the Šibenik-Knin County, and (ii) the initial information on the pilot case study in Dubrovnik-Neretva County developed within the SUPREME Project (2017-2018).

An example of a county spatial plan with a maritime dimension is detailed below:

- **The Zadar County Spatial Plan** was developed in 2001. It addresses the demand for different uses of its marine area, including protected areas, maritime transport, ports and others. The Plan also obliges municipalities and towns to define sea use within their coastal belts, through their spatial plans. It identifies four different marine

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1 available on link: [https://www.msp-platform.eu/practices/addressing-msp-implementation-case-study-areas-dubrovnik-neretva-county](https://www.msp-platform.eu/practices/addressing-msp-implementation-case-study-areas-dubrovnik-neretva-county)

Addressing MSP Implementation in Case Study Areas: Dubrovnik – Neretva County, chapter: E.1.1. Existing spatial plans encompassing areas of internal and territorial sea in the spatial planning system
zones for mariculture, which is one of the most important maritime activities for Zadar County, amounting to approximately 60% of total mariculture production in Croatia. Mariculture zoning is based on the “Study on the use and protection of the sea and seabed in Zadar County”, of which the main objective was to initiate the ICZM process in the County and simultaneously propose zones for different types of mariculture, based on suitability assessments.

**Legal basis:** the plan was initially developed following the provisions of the Physical Planning and Construction Act (1994, and amendments). The Plan has been revised and adjusted several times (amended in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2015). Its alignment with the Regulation on Protected Coastal Area Development and Conservation (2004) was particularly important for the spatial planning of the coastal area. The Plan was adopted by the County Assembly.

**Legal impact:** the plan has the legal force of subordinate regulations. According to the Physical Planning Act, all city and municipal spatial plans (local level plans) in Zadar County must be aligned with this plan.

**Area covered:** the total area covered by the plan is 7,275 km², which includes 3,643 km² of land and 3,632 km² of marine area.

**Objectives of the plan:** the main objectives of the plan include economic development, coastal development, rational use of natural resources, protection, landscape protection, and protection of historical heritage.

**Designated uses:** referring to MSP and LSI themes, the plan has designated: marine ports for different purposes, marine traffic routes, island heliports, sea salt harvesting area(s), underwater cables, freshwater supply, areas for mariculture with detailed zoning and capacities, and the following areas with special restrictions for users:
- particularly sensitive and especially endangered habitat areas, sources of marine pollution, areas defined according to building density along the coastline (natural coast, planned building areas, illegal construction of different types)
- protected areas (coastal and underwater archaeological zones, protected landscape, natural park)
- restricted area (1,000 m of land and 300 m of sea surface measured from the coastline)
- areas for aquaculture with detailed zoning and capacities (based on detailed study).

**Planning regulations:** regulation for the implementation of the plan (Odredbe za provođenje) has been developed with the last version dating back to 2015.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA):** a Strategic Environmental Assessment was not carried out, but the plan contains provisions related to the protection of the environment and the natural landscape.

**Public Participation:** public hearings were carried out during the preparation of the plan and its amendments. Major stakeholders were involved according to the regulations and their views on specific subjects were sought after. The County Institute for Spatial Planning was responsible for the preparation of the plan.

**Harmonisation with other plans:** the Zadar County plan was harmonised with the national spatial development strategic documents and relevant spatial plans according to the regulations.

**Monitoring and Review:** the territorial status report is the basic instrument for monitoring the plan’s implementation. It envisages the use of standard indicators to monitor spatial development, such as the occupation of land, parameters of land use, construction of infrastructure, etc. No use of specific MSP indicators was envisaged.

**Electronic resources:** the plan is available in Croatian at: [https://www.zpu-zadrup.hr/prostorno-uredjenje#1](https://www.zpu-zadrup.hr/prostorno-uredjenje#1)

### Pilot plans or projects

- **The Coastal Plan for the Šibenik-Knin County** is not sector-specific. It was developed as a pilot project, thus as an indicative plan addressing the coastal areas and land-sea interactions. However, the County Assembly adopted the plan. The preparation of the Coastal Plan started in January 2013. The plan was finalised in December 2015 and was approved by the County Assembly in April 2016.

**Legal basis:** it is a pilot plan which is not legally binding. However, the Coastal Plan is an indicative plan, adopted by the Šibenik-Knin County Assembly, that became an official guidance document.
Area covered:

Area covered by the Šibenik-Knin County Plan (red boundaries define the Plan area; the yellow square is the influence zone). Source: PAP/RAC, 2016. Coastal Plan for the Šibenik-Knin County

Objectives of the plan: the objectives of the Coastal Plan for Šibenik-Knin County are to:

- promote sustainability and resilience as coastal zone development criteria
- create prerequisites for defining sustainability in concrete domains (population, coast, space, water, sea, nature, production)
- contribute to the strengthening of participation and education
- provide guidelines for sectoral policies and plans to achieve sustainability and resilience
- make recommendations for resolving conflicting issues in achieving sustainability and resilience
- offer a platform for sustainable development of the Šibenik-Knin County coastal zone based on water as its fundamental resource, blue economy and smart specialisation.

The Coastal Plan may support the allocation of EU funds linked to coastal development and coastal resilience building. In addition, the Coastal Plan contributes to the protection, restoration and preservation of the coastal zone's resources, among others.

Designated uses/areas: A Coastal Plan is not a substitute for a spatial plan and, therefore, it does not prescribe specific uses of the land or sea. Its focus is climate change adaptation, coastal water management and spatial development. The plan identifies coastal zones vulnerable to several climate change-induced threats and proposes a set of coastal policies and measures. The plan also identifies several MSP issues and proposes a specific policy and several measures to improve them at the county level. The plan specifically addresses LSI and is concerned with the rapid growth of coastal maritime tourism and its negative impacts on the coastal and marine environment. This is an area that will have to be regulated with a marine spatial plan in the future.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): A Strategic Environmental Assessment was not undertaken.

Public Participation: stakeholders were engaged through four workshops within a four-step participatory process intended to describe, assess and examine the past, present and future levels of sustainability of a local socio-economic system, setting goals and monitoring the system’s progress towards sustainable development. A total of 40-60 people participated in each of the workshops. In addition to the workshops, a set of interviews was conducted with key stakeholders. The aims of interviews was to acquire local knowledge,

For more information about the plan: http://pap-thecoastcentre.org/projects/coastal_plans.html#skc.
elicit local creative ideas and create a relationship of trust on which the future implementation of the Coastal Plan can rely.

Croatia has also been involved in several ICZM and MSP European projects, most of them involving transboundary cooperation between the Eastern Mediterranean countries.

- The **PlanCoast Project** (2006-2008) aimed to provide best practice examples and tools for effective integrated planning in coastal zones and marine areas. The key objective was to show the strengths of spatial planning instruments in facilitating effective Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and maritime policy. The project analysed the role of spatial planning within ICZM, sea use planning in practice and ICZM in action as well as the role and potential of modern GIS and information exchange as necessary pre-conditions for good marine spatial planning.

- The **ADRIPLAN project** (2013-2015) funded by EC DG MARE developed recommendations and proposed MSP exercises for transboundary maritime spatial planning in the Adriatic and Ionian seas. In particular, the project identified two Focus Areas for which MSP exercises were developed:
  - MSP exercise in ADRIPLAN Focus area 1 – Northern Adriatic
  - MSP exercise in ADRIPLAN Focus area 2 – Southern Adriatic and Northern Ionian.

Main ADRIPLAN deliverables include downscaling and application of the developed methodology in the two project Focus Areas, ADRIPLAN Data Portal, and MSP tools (conflict score and cumulative impacts tools).

A vision and related objectives were also set by the ADRIPLAN project and described in the publication “ADRIPLAN: Developing a maritime spatial plan for the Adriatic-Ionian Region”. Moreover, the ADRIPLAN project identified seven activities of socio-economic importance and two additional uses forecasted to take place in designated locations of the Adriatic-Ionian region.

- The **SUPREME Project**\(^\text{15}\) (2017-2018), is an EU-funded project involving public authorities in charge of MSP in four EU Member States (Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia). Concerning Croatia, the Croatian Institute for Spatial Development participated in the project. The project aimed at helping Member States to implement the European directive by developing MSP projects in several case pilot areas. The development of those case studies has provided a review of the approach to MSP and cross-border cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean while exploring issues highlighted previously by the Member States.

One of the case studies carried out in the scope of the SUPREME Project concerned the **Croatian Dubrovnik-Neretva County**, coordinated by the Croatian Institute for Spatial Development. This county is located in the southernmost part of the Croatian Adriatic Sea. It has a total area of 9,272 km\(^2\) and a high portion of maritime zones (corresponding to the 81% of its total extension). The marine zone of the County represents almost 25% of the total Croatian maritime area. The neighbouring continental shelf included in the case study area, with an area of about 9,350 km\(^2\), represents almost 40% of the total Croatian continental shelf area. The land area consists of two main functional zones: a relatively narrow longitudinal coastal zone and the area of the Neretva Valley with its gravitating coastal zone. The narrow and heterogeneous coastal zone is separated from the hinterlands by the steep mountain-massive, while the whole area suffers from traffic connectivity issues and isolation from the rest of the country. The region is characterised by a high proportion and biodiversity of natural protected areas, rich cultural heritage (e.g. Old Town of Dubrovnik is under UNESCO protection) and a specific coastal landscape.

\(^{15}\) The Ministry of the Environment and Energy is one of SUPREME Project partners (http://www.msp-supreme.eu)
One of the main outputs of the case was a comprehensive analysis of the spatial planning framework and socio-economic characteristics of the maritime sectors present in Dubrovnik – Neretva County, including:

1) vision and scenario building
2) establishing objectives and indicators for MSP in the study area
3) spatial plans for internal waters and territorial seas and the EEZ and continental shelf of the study area
4) recommendations for the improvement of maritime spatial planning in Croatia
5) implementing a transboundary approach between Croatia and Italy.
Aspects of the MSP process

Sustainable development and growth in the maritime sector

Croatia is part of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), which has been supporting and leading numerous regional and national initiatives for the development of the Blue Economy for over a decade, including the ongoing MedCoast4BG project. This project aims to find common approaches and planning tools (ICZM and MSP) to co-evaluate the human activities and the natural systems situated in coastal areas. The UfM Regional Stakeholders' Conference on the Blue Economy was held in 2017 in Naples (Italy), and the next one, which was planned to take place in 2020 in Barcelona (Spain,) was cancelled due to the pandemic. Instead, Ministers from the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) countries participated in the virtual Ministerial Conference for the promotion of sustainable blue economy in the Mediterranean region, on 2 February 2021 and six years after the first Union for Mediterranean Ministerial Declaration on Blue Economy, Ministers adopted a new declaration, firmly committing to cooperate closely and address joint challenges in the key blue economy sectors. They agreed to promote transformative policies and tools such as maritime clusters or maritime spatial planning, and support the overall shift towards low-emission technologies and circular blue economy. New joint activities and projects will be set up on a wide range of issues, including “blue skills”, marine litter, marine renewable energies and nature-based tourism.

Croatia is also a partner of the BlueMed Initiative, set up in 2014 as a means to foster the integration of knowledge and efforts to develop the Blue Growth in the Mediterranean. BlueMed aims to promote joint actions at the Mediterranean level on relevant research and innovation priorities. The Initiative has identified key challenges including MSP and ICZM. The Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA), updated in 2017, considers MSP and ICZM among the key sectoral enablers in the Mediterranean region and identifies the following actions to be undertaken:

- Improve knowledge of the land-sea nexus and develop coastal ecological engineering solutions and measures to reach Good Environmental Status (MSFD).
- Develop tools to assess the cumulative impact of human activities, to ensure that exploitation of marine resources is ecologically sustainable.
- Identify the trade-offs between ecological dynamics and socio-economic needs to improve adaptive management scenarios for resource use.
- Research into the governance and management of multi-stakeholder processes to support maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management policies.
- Use integrated decision tools to select appropriate sites for offshore installations, to ensure that they meet energy and environmental requirements.

Blue Economy is also a pillar of the European Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR), of which Croatia is a part, as it promotes research, innovation and business opportunities in blue economy sectors, the adaptation to sustainable seafood production and consumption, and the improvement of the sea basins’ governance.

Ecosystem-based approach (EBA)

The ecosystem-based approach is referenced in the Strategy for the Management of the Marine Environment and Coastal Zone and the principles of spatial planning determined by PPA.

Additionally, 266 Natura 2000 marine sites have been established in Croatia (257 SCI and 9 SPA) for a total sea area of 5,279 km² (European Environmental Agency, 2013 - Natura 2000 Barometer), i.e., 16.4% of the marine area. Spatial plans for protected areas managed by national authorities, covering both terrestrial and marine areas, have been developed. These include the National Parks of Brijuni, Kornati and Mljet, and the Nature Park of Telašćica, while a spatial plan for the Nature Park Lastovo Isles is expected to be developed. Depending on the type of plan, they include zonations for different levels of protection.

Croatia is also participating in the MedPan project, a network of Marine Protected Area Managers in the Mediterranean. Today, it brings together close to 100 institutions and NGOs that either have direct responsibility for managing Marine Protected Areas (MPA) or are involved in the management, monitoring or development of MPAs in the Mediterranean. The MedPan network’s mission is to promote, through a partnership approach, the sustainability and operation of a network of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean that are ecologically representative, connected and effectively managed to help reduce the current rate of marine biodiversity loss. Concerning Croatia, six MPAs have been established along the country’s coasts. Despite these MPAs being mainly terrestrial, they also include surrounding marine areas.

Croatia is also a partner of the PHAROS4MPAs project (2017-2020), which aims to enhance management effectiveness and networking for Mediterranean MPAs, to contribute to the conservation of marine biodiversity and natural ecosystems, taking into account the complex ensemble of human activities developed within the Blue Growth perspective and their interaction with protected areas and marine ecosystems.
Resilience to climate change impacts

In 2017, Croatia published its National Adaptation Strategy, a document “developed in synergy with [...] all relevant sectoral strategies that have been adopted or are in the process of adoption[16]”, which includes the Strategy for Maritime Development and Integrated Maritime Policy of the Republic of Croatia, the Spatial Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia, and the Draft Management Strategy for the Marine Environment and Coastal Region of the Republic of Croatia. These documents address climate change issues and propose appropriate measures.

Land-sea interactions

The PPA explicitly addresses land-sea interactions (Art. 8, 49.b.1, 49.c) as part of the key principles of spatial planning. In addition, the Act defines the Protected Coastal Area (PCA) (Art. 45-49.f) as a zone of special State interest, encompassing the area of coastal cities and municipalities. Within that zone, and to ensure protection and sustainability of development and planning, a restricted area comprised of a 1,000 m wide terrestrial belt and a 300 m wide sea belt, measured from the coastline, is established. Furthermore, additional limitations are in place for building and construction within 100 m from the coastal line.

The protected coastal area represents an area of special interest for the Republic of Croatia and was declared for the first time by the Regulation on Protected Coastal Area Development and Conservation in 2004. Special conditions exist for the planning, development and utilisation of the PCA and the restricted area and its conservation. All spatial plans within the protected coastal area need to be approved by the ministry in charge of physical planning (MPPCSA).

A monitoring and observation programme[17] was adopted in 2014 and a Programme of measures for protection and management of the marine environment and the coastal area of the Republic of Croatia, the most comprehensive document addressing land-sea interactions, was adopted by the Government in 2017 (OG 97/2017).

The SUPREME project (2017–2018) also had a specific focus on land-sea interactions.

Stakeholder Involvement

Public consultation in spatial planning is prescribed by the PPA (Art. 94). It refers to both land and marine spatial planning because spatial plans cover both terrestrial and maritime areas. The Act also defines the subjects of physical planning (public bodies, institutes and persons registered to carry out physical planning activities) as stakeholders with special duties and responsibilities in the spatial planning process. They are invited to submit their requests and data immediately after making decisions on the development of spatial plans.

Preparation of all strategic documents requires consultations with the public. The preparation of the Strategy for Spatial Development and the Strategy for the Protection and Management of the Marine Environment and Coastal Zone was undertaken through extensive consultation with responsible institutions, as well as with the public, through public hearings.

Through the implementation of MSP related projects, there have also been conferences and workshops bringing together regional stakeholders, as in the case of the ADRIPLAN project[18] and the SUPREME project, which included several consultation events, both at the scale of the whole Adriatic-Ionian region and the Focus Areas for the MSP exercises. The SUPREME project also aimed to promote mechanisms for transboundary cooperation on MSP implementation, involving all relevant stakeholders in the planning and, in perspective, in the management phase.

Co-existence of uses

The ADRIPLAN project analysed interactions between human activities in the Adriatic-Ionian region through a spatial analysis based on a methodology developed with the COEXIST project (Gramolini et al., 2013). The analysis described the potential relation between all types of combinations of activities and assigned different conflict scores to each set of combinations.

Transboundary cooperation

Transboundary cooperation between Croatia and other Adriatic countries (Italy, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro) on marine issues has been formalised through a series of treaties and legal acts. A recent important effort on transboundary cooperation, supported by significant contributions from Croatian and Italian scientists, brought the 41st session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) in October 2017 to the adoption of the EU proposal for the establishment of a Fisheries Restricted Area in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit, effectively banning demersal fishing (i.e. bottom-set nets, bottom trawls, and some long lines and traps). The marine area of at least 2,700 km², recognised as an essential nursery and spawning ground for several marine species, is placed outside the territorial waters of Italy and Croatia.

The relevance of transboundary issues has been demonstrated as part of the different projects and programmes, such as ADRIPLAN, Shape, PlanCoast, COASTANCE, ECASA, IPA Adriatic Cross-Border Programme, MedPAN, PEGASO, SECURESEA, and SUPREME. For example, at the level of pure MSP exercise, the ADRIPLAN project identified transboundary planning issues in the Adriatic Sea, including unresolved transboundary matters between Italy and Croatia.

Use of best available data

TOOLS4MSP, a geo-platform created within the ADRIPLAN project, holds a compilation of MSP-relevant data from the Adriatic and Ionian Sea (including Croatia) as well as at regional level. It is intended for partners, stakeholders and the general public to search and share knowledge, data, and information related to MSP. It offers tools to analyse data (e.g. conflicts, cumulative impacts) and is continuously updated with new data.

In Croatia, spatial databases within individual sectors are in the process of being developed. Some sectoral information systems have already been established and well maintained, while some of them are only partially established or the spatial component is not covered at all.

One of the tasks and challenges is the inclusion of data from a wide range of stakeholders/sectors in the Physical Planning Information System (ISPU), including building a unique module for MSP.

In addition to the previously described Geoportal of Physical Planning Information System (ISPU), other geoportals contain valuable data for MSP:

- Geoportal MORE (http://baltazar.izor.hr/portal/slojevi/), providing access to data and databases related to the marine environment, legislation related to the marine environment and national monitoring of the marine environment (Review of the annual assessment of the quality of the sea for swimming on Croatian beaches, Overview of area monitoring according to MSFD descriptors, Display of data on sea currents and wave height, and Databases and indicators of the state of the marine environment, aquaculture and fisheries)
- Geoportal of cultural properties of the Republic of Croatia (https://geoportal.kulturanadobra.hr/geoportal.html#/), providing access to spatial data on cultural property under legal protection (including sea area)
- bioportal (http://www.bioportal.hr/gis/), providing access to spatial and other data on biodiversity and nature protection in Croatia

Coherence with other processes

Besides the MSP Directive 2014/89/EU, the MSFD 2008/56/EC and ICZM Protocol have also been transposed into the Croatian legal and strategic framework, adopting international obligations for protecting nature and the marine environment, protecting cultural heritage and supporting a policy of sustainable development of the coastal economy.

Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)

Due to the variety of existing policies related to the management of marine and coastal environments that are mutually connected, in 2012 the Government of Croatia decided to link the obligations arising from the MSFD and the ICZM Protocol, including links with Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and climate changes in the coastal area, into one strategic document that would reflect and harmonise the management solutions for the sustainability of the coastal and marine environment, economy and society. According to the Environmental Protection Act, the Croatian Government adopted Regulation on development and implementation of the documents of the Marine Environment and Coastal Zone Management Strategy (OG 112/2014). The development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Zone Management Strategy (Marine Strategy) is coordinated by MESD. The National Committee, representing inter-
ministerial coordinative body was established in 2012 for the development and implementation of the Marine Strategy and its members were appointed by the Croatian Government.\(^\text{19}\)

Within the process of Marine Strategy development, preparatory documents and action programmes were developed as follows:

- **The Initial Assessment of the Status of Marine Environment and the pressures thereon in the Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea** (adopted in 2012)
- **Set of Characteristics for Good Environmental Status for the Marine Waters under the Sovereignty of the Republic of Croatia** (adopted in January 2015)
- **Economic and social analysis of the use and the cost of degradation of marine and coastal environment** (adopted in June 2015)
- **Monitoring system for the ongoing assessment of the status of the Adriatic Sea** (OG 153/2014)
- **Programme of Measures for the Protection and Management of the Marine Environment and Coastal Zone of the Republic of Croatia** (OG 97/2017), as the most comprehensive document addressing land-sea interactions
- **Action Programme for the Marine Environment and Coastal Zone Management Strategy: Monitoring system for the ongoing assessment of the status of the Adriatic Sea 2021-2026** (OG 28/2021)

The first three documents were revised in 2019.

**Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)**

Many relevant ministries are indirectly involved in the MSP process. In particular, the ministry in charge of nature and environmental protection (MESD) is closely linked to the MSP process, as it is responsible for the implementation of the MSFD and for coordinating the implementation of the ICZM Protocol for the Mediterranean in Croatia. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Croatia began preparing the Strategy for the Management of the Marine Environment and Coastal Zone, integrating the requirements of the MSFD and the ICZM Protocol.

Specific efforts have been made regarding ICZM, predominantly emerging from sectoral needs. The planning authority of Zadar County, for example, prepared a study to apply ICZM to identify suitable locations for aquaculture. Furthermore, the Šibenik-Knin County has developed an indicative Coastal Plan for the entire county, which was approved by the County Assembly in April 2016. Dubrovnik-Neretva County Assembly adopted ICZM guidelines for Dubrovnik-Neretva County in 2011.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The national regulation on Strategic Environmental Assessment\(^\text{20}\) stipulates that it is mandatory to undertake an SEA prior to the development of national strategies, plans and programmes, including their amendments at national, regional and local levels in certain sectors (including spatial planning), if the implementation of these documents could have environmental impacts. Before these documents can be adopted, the ministry responsible for nature and environment protection (MESD) issues a final opinion on the validity of the SEA procedure.

Furthermore, expert background documents for nature protection are mandatory for the development of the spatial plans of national parks and nature parks.

**Cooperation with third countries**

Croatia is a party to the Barcelona Convention.

Additionally, Croatia is involved in the European Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR), involving both EU and non-EU countries of the Adriatic and Ionian region. In both cases, MSP is considered a relevant tool/process for the sustainable management of marine space.

**Work in progress**

The state of implementation of the MSP Directive for Croatia is as follows:

- Existing spatial plans on the regional and local levels cover the territorial sea. They can be found through the links listed in the previous chapter *Existing Maritime Spatial Plans.*

\(^{19}\) the expert team for developing the documents includes: the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries, the Faculty of Economics of the University of Split, and the Priority Actions Programme - Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC) of the UNEP-MAP

\(^{20}\) Environmental Protection Act (OG 80/2013, 153/2013, 78/15, 12/2018), Regulation on Strategic Environmental Assessment of Strategies, Plans and Programs (OG 3/2017)
• State-level spatial plans for all national parks comprising sea areas have been developed. Additionally, the Spatial plan for the Telašćica Nature Park has been developed. All these plans are expected to be revised (new plans will be developed). Spatial plans for the Velebit and Lastovo Isles nature parks, which comprise the sea area, are to be developed, but the area is covered by the existing regional and local level spatial plans, respecting the special rules on nature protection for these territories. Links to the mentioned state-level spatial plans are listed in the previous chapter - Existing Maritime Spatial Plans.

• The State Plan for Spatial Development will cover the whole of the territorial sea according to state-level planning. This plan is still under development. Currently, the draft proposal is being drafted and the web portal, for its further development, is being elaborated. The above plan will be published once the proposal and maps have been finalised.

• The Spatial Plan for the Ecological and Fishery Protection Zone and the Spatial Plan for the Continental Shelf of the Republic of Croatia, are to be reconsidered given the Declaration on EEZ.
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Relevant legislative acts

There are many sector legislative acts and strategic documents that are relevant for the effective implementation of MSP, including those dealing with: physical and spatial planning, coastal zones, nature protection, environmental aspects, maritime affairs, fisheries, aquaculture, and tourism. Due to the integrative and interdisciplinary character of spatial planning, all of them are to be taken into consideration in the process of spatial planning.

The most important are listed below:

• Decision on Declaration of the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Croatia in the Adriatic Sea (OG 10/2021)

• Environmental Protection Act http://www.zakon.hr/z/194/Zakon-o-zaštiti-okoliša

• Nature protection act https://www.zakon.hr/z/403/Zakon-o-%C5%A1titi-prirode

• Marine Environment and Coastal Area Management Strategy of the Republic of Croatia http://www.mzoip.hr/hr/okolis/more-i-priobalje.html


• National strategic plan for the development of fisheries in the Republic of Croatia (OG 123/2013) http://www.mps.hr/ribarstvo/UserDocsImages/NSP/NSP_OP_06112013/1511OP_NSP_ENG/National%20strategic%20plan%20for%20development%20of%20fisheries%20in%20the%20Republic%20of%20Croatia.pdf

• Physical Planning Act http://www.zakon.hr/z/689/Zakon-o-prostornom-uredenju
