

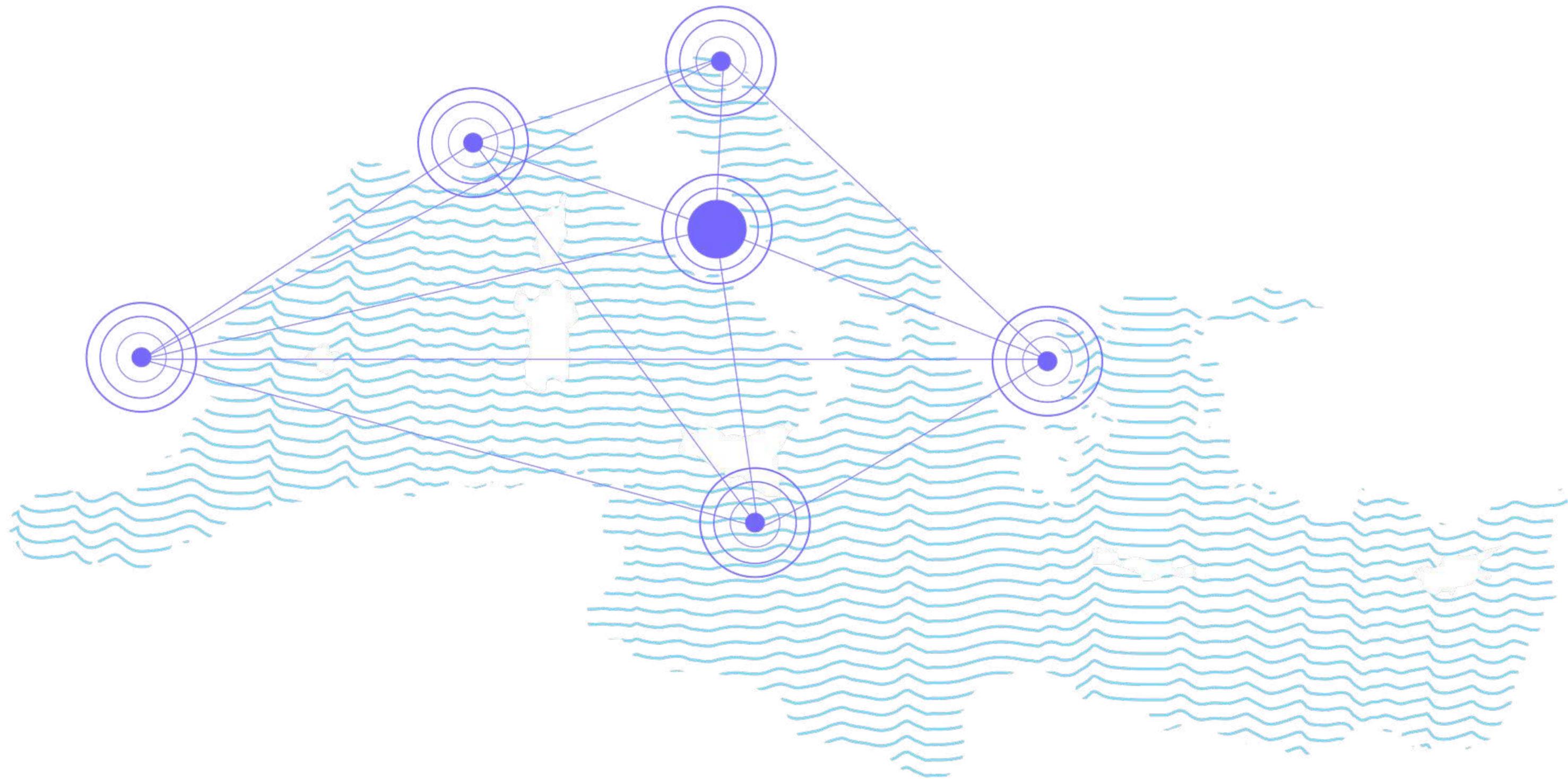


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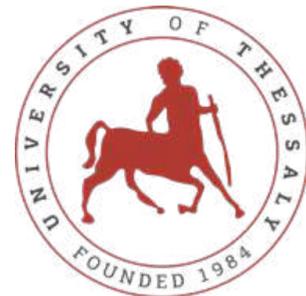
Towards the operational implementation of
MSP in our common Mediterranean Sea

**A common planning framework
in the Mediterranean Sea**
Outcomes of the MSP-MED project





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1 The project: achievements and challenges

When the MSP-MED project was designed, with passion and effort, the partners from Italy, France, Spain, Greece, Malta and Slovenia joined forces to create an instrument to help the implementation of the MSP directive towards the preparation of national MSP plans. In doing so, the assistance to singular countries should benefit the entire basin, by sharing experiences and perspectives, strengthening cooperation bonds across EU and non-EU countries and by harmonizing approaches to MSP and the use of data.

The project goals were ambitious: supporting the implementation of six national maritime plans was not an easy feat and the indeed long. The complex national processes and their different stages were heavily delayed by Covid-19; that in turn influenced the delivery of some of the project results. The many results achieved by the project were possible thanks to the operational effectiveness and strong relationships among involved countries and partners. Minor issues such as difficulties in engaging stakeholders or budget reallocation were easily addressed thanks to the highly professional and proactive attitude of involved bodies and their proposed solutions to the Project Coordinator.

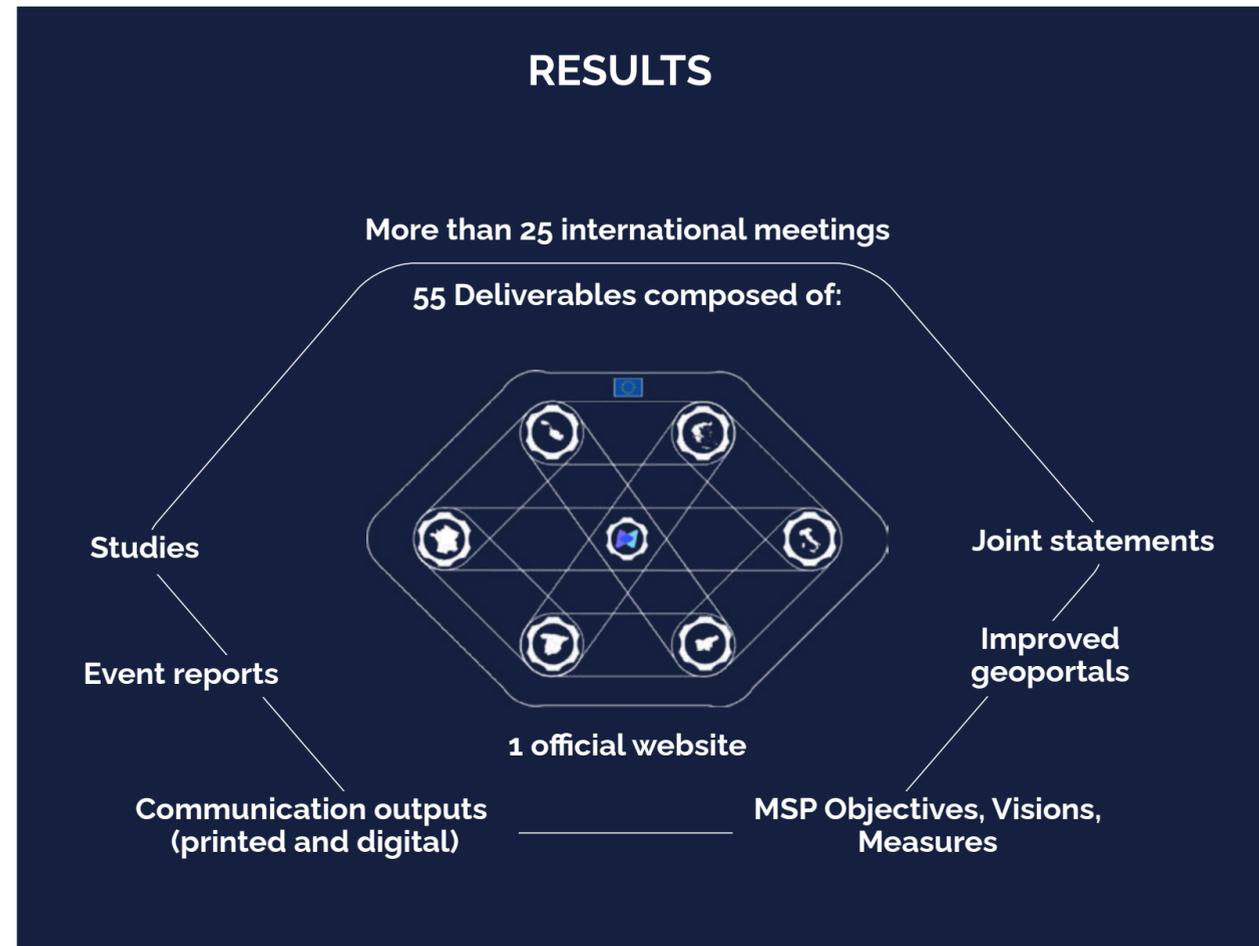


Diagram of results: the project working as driving belt among national MSP processes

Main Findings and Outcomes Summary Box:

The plans of EU Mediterranean countries have advanced quite substantially compared to the beginning of the project. Geoportals were updated or they were created anew. The work of the TEG for MSP Data benefitted from the project. A new Community of Practice for MSP in the Mediterranean was launched thanks to the project support and work with the WestMED initiative. New knowledge on impacts and synergies between uses and environment was produced, especially in regard to the underwater dimension. Studies were performed in terms of MSP and surveillance, MSP and Offshore renewable energies, MSP and underwater noise, MSP and cultural heritage and landscape. Eventually intensive communication campaigns and actions were designed and performed, whilst also collaborating with UNESCO. Synergies with several international bodies and initiatives were identified and allowed for collaborations, including the MSP Platform, the WestMED initiative, the European Marine Board, EUSAIR, Eurisy.

Main results in figures

3 national plans were ameliorated to meet the implementation deadline set by the MSP directive. This was the case of Italy, Greece and Slovenia.

2 countries' MSP were better informed in terms of scientific research on specific topics. This is the case of France and Spain.

1 country's MSP benefitted in its review phase. This is the case of Malta.

5 national geoportals were updated, developed or created.

1 common data catalogue.

12 meetings were organized at national level with relevant stakeholders.

6 international technical meetings were organized to allow sharing of information.

4 bilateral meetings were organized involving national authorities at ministerial level.

2 trilateral events were organized involving national authorities at ministerial level.

2 Pan-Mediterranean events were organized: One in Athens and one in Tunisia.

1 joint Event was organized with the MSP Platform.

1 survey for data.

1 survey for transboundary PSSA in the western Mediterranean.

15 and more external events were attended to present the projects' results including the EMD, Aquaculture Europe, ACCOBAMS meetings, MSP Conference, UNESCO O&C village, Commocean, etc.

1 dedicated website and **3** other dedicated social media pages were created, reaching more than 8500 visits/followers/interactions.

1 social media campaign in cooperation with UNESCO.

More than 200 Stakeholders were engaged, especially from the governance sector.

55 Deliverables, ranging from reports to technical studies and communication outputs.

1 Final conference involving all partners, their competent authorities, international guests was organized as a culmination of the entire project.

Access of Results: A Guide Box

The results described are accessible, as numbered deliverables (D1, D2, D3, etc...), in the project's website at: www.MSP-MED.eu/results, the following table gathers all those deliverables by thematic areas to make it easier for the reader.

Countries	Studies on national issues and plans	Studies on data tools:	Reports of national workshops	Reports of international workshops	Communication outputs/tools	Basin picture
Italy	D4, D5, D6	D28, D29	D5		D47	
Spain	D10, D12, D7, D8, D9, D11, D48					
France	D7, D8, D9, D11, D48	D38				
Greece	D13, D15		D14			
Slovenia	D18, D20, D36		D19, D21, D35			
Malta	D16, D17	D30, D31				
All		D26, D27		D22, D23, D24, D37, D39, D40, D43, D44, D52	D41, D53, First leaflet	D45, D50, D51, D54, D55

Key Lessons box

- ▶ Sharing experiences among Member States, also outside the Mediterranean increases knowledge and solutions in plan development.
- ▶ Member States have peculiar needs and plans shall consider them, even if building blocs are very similar. In all cases the relevance of involving governance and sectorial stakeholders was key to define or refine planning assets.
- ▶ Increased joint studies and joint management experiences can help tackle issues of common concern in transboundary areas.
- ▶ Exchanges, mutual learning and joining forces can allow a stronger data infrastructure.
- ▶ Some sectors and especially the protection of biodiversity can benefit from international approaches, especially studies on new uses and ecological impacts may be broadened thanks to joint efforts.
- ▶ Good exchange channels between MSP practitioners and Competent Authorities can ease the official consultations across borders required by the MSP Directive.
- ▶ Non-EU states in the Eastern and Western shores have valuable experiences and practitioners eager to develop national frameworks in regard to MSP.
- ▶ Eastern and Western basins have different blue economies but many points of commonality are present, exchange among experts of the two sub basins should be fostered.
- ▶ A Mediterranean specificity is the high value of cultural heritage and landscape, a value that should be preserved and correctly used as a driver for blue economies.

2. Setting-up National Maritime Spatial Plans in our Common Mediterranean Sea

One of the main objectives of the project was to facilitate the MSP Directive implementation in the Member States of the Mediterranean basin. This was intended to be achieved through the support to national planning processes. Moreover, there was a general need to share experiences across countries because each country involved had peculiarities regarding its legislative and spatial characteristics and planning process. Support was done through workshops with relevant institutional and technical stakeholders during which assessments on specific topics, identification of objectives, organization of data, monitoring or measures and other actions were carried out. Other actions were related to the organization of legislative framework and data, the identification of objectives, monitoring and measures. Specific actions were carried out in the form of Case studies that were also at the core of the project development with multiple results ranging from practical recommendations to methods for cooperation between countries.

The EU Mediterranean countries possess specific identifiable characteristics including natural features and socio-economic aspects. This constitutes the absolutely non-negligible role of cultural heritage that influences the way MSP plans are created and managed. This indeed is a Mediterranean-MSP seed that MSP-MED was keen to help grow over the duration of the project. The Mediterranean Sea is a unique basin characterized by a contrasting by the diversity and complexity of administrative processes within the countries surrounding or surrounded by it. Maritime Spatial Planning is a call for improving the management of marine space to provide clarity for planning and managing maritime activities and uses, whilst safeguarding natural processes and cultural heritage within the context of a changing climate.

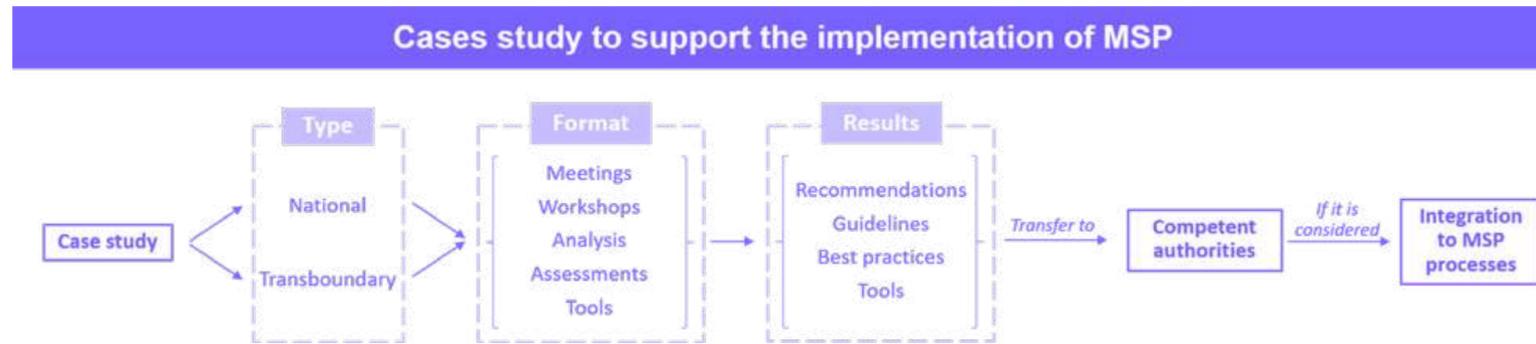
2.1 MSP laboratories: the relevance of case studies

Although Mediterranean countries share commonalities, they have specific particularities and issues to be addressed for an efficient and effective MSP implementation. Projects as MSP-MED offered the opportunity to adapt to their specific needs, to identify when practices of one country may be useful for another and perform as a platform for exchange. Different tools and methodologies have been used as a way to share these experiences: technical meetings, workshops, questionnaires and cases studies as "MSP laboratories" to assess specific topics at the appropriate analysis scale.

One of the most interesting tools to test MSP aspects at the local level has been the development of national and transboundary case studies in different areas of the Mediterranean. Each case study had its specific purpose.

The work carried out with stakeholders is to be pointed out. Numerous agents have been involved in these case studies, allowing the establishment of a dialogue not only at the local level between sectors, but also between technicians, scientists and competent authorities. Technical and scientific experts were able to inform competent authorities of the analyses carried out in the case studies so

that they can be used in the national processes (addressing the science-to-policy interface). Meanwhile, these actions have improved the awareness of actors about the process, reinforcing the participation of sectors and experts.



In the project design, the support to Mediterranean MSP was conceived, also by strengthening the data frameworks. The involved countries needed to consider the cross-border dimension of data, by building a common knowledge base then sharing relevant information at basin scale. Downscaling to the national level, the analysis and development of geoportals and the organization of data meant a very practical step in the national planning activities.

Italy

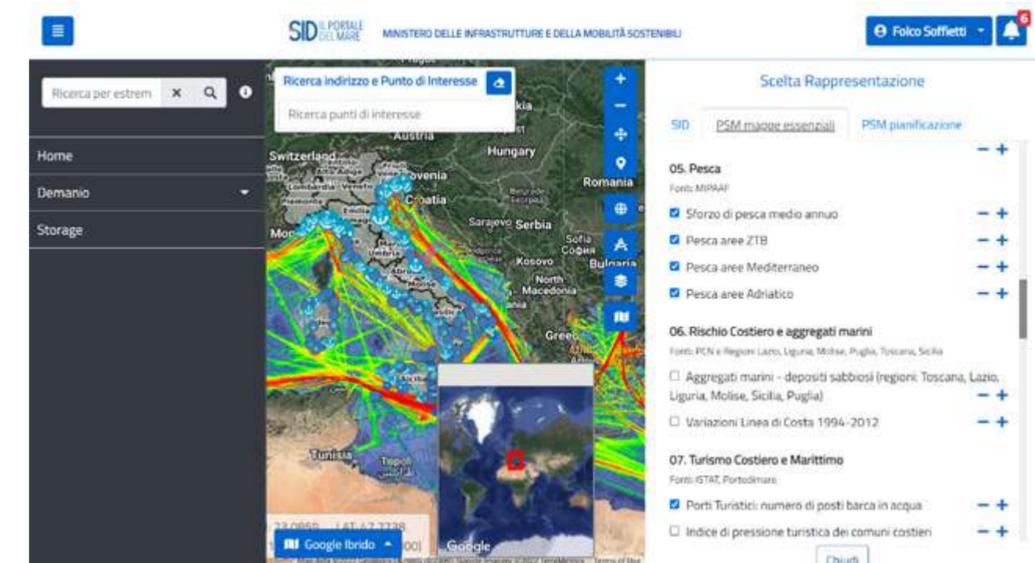
Workshops and exchanges with regional bodies allowed the co-design that is foreseen by a national legislation having entitled large section of planning responsibilities to regional institutions and Super-Intendancies. At regional (sub-area) level, this approach allowed to define a cross-cutting specific vision and specific objectives and measures that are able to consider and integrate the multiple sectors involved. Many workshops were held, and Regions were able to discuss and harmonize the Planning Unit PU choices with their neighbouring regions, allowing continuity among off-shore and coastal sub-areas. Regarding specific measures, some regions had already drafted specific measures for their respective sub-areas, while other cases were in the process of being drafted. The workshops were a tool for the regions without measures to compare themselves with those already drafted to get a boost, in terms of themes and needs.

At the same time the support in terms of data organization and stakeholder engagement at ministerial level allowed mandatory aspects of MSP planning to be respected. The work on data aimed at the consolidation of the national Geoportal for MSP in connection with existing data infrastructures. This was done by analysing the current state and the existing and expected features of the Italian National Geoportal, including practical suggestions for its evolution. In Italy the "SID il Portale del Mare" (Portale integrato per la pianificazione del demanio e dello spazio marittimo - Integrated portal for state property and maritime spatial planning) is the reference information base and the tool for sharing and interchanging data related to the management of the maritime state property entrusted

to MIT (Ministero dei Trasporti – Ministry of Transport).

The SID was an already existing portal that is developed and managed by the National Operational Center of the SID; although originally used for the prevailing needs of the Ministry and its peripheral structures as a support to the management of maritime state property, it has progressively expanded its scope of application, thanks to an articulated set of regulatory and administrative tools.

The developed tools were identified by combining: i) the needs of the Italian MSP process and especially the need to publish the spatial representation of the plan as part of the Italian institutional portal (SID - Il Portale del Mare); ii) the need to link the Italian plan with ongoing harmonisation processes at the European level (e.g. EMODNet Data Model; EMODnet, 2021); iii) the need to provide a systematic analysis of the spatial representation of the plan in order to facilitate the identification of possible issues and patterns by the planners and the decision makers. The tools were released as open source software through the use of notebooks documents which are readable documents containing both the analysis description and the results as well as executable documents which can be run to perform data analysis. This was an efficient solution to effectively demonstrate how the tools work and to encourage software reuse.



SID IL portale del Mare interface

Greece

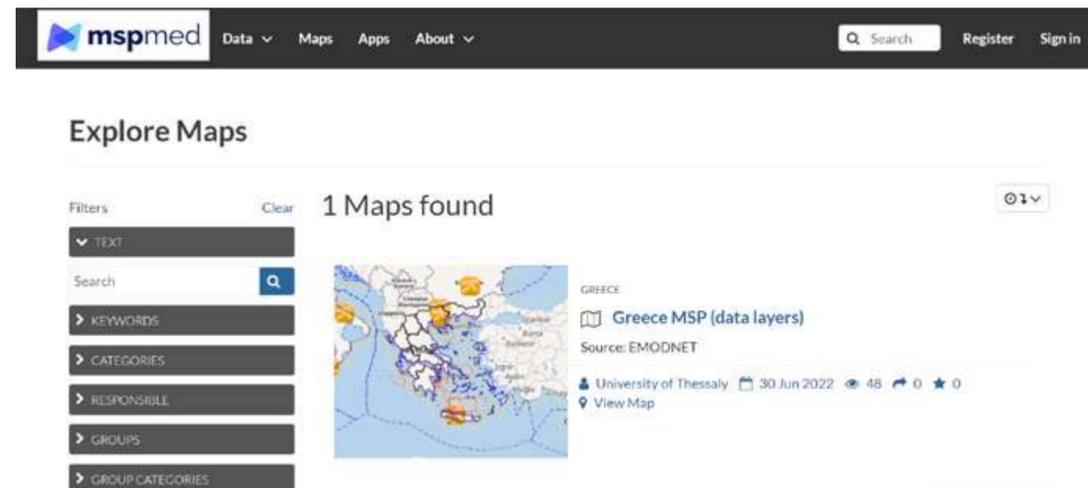
The role of the MSP-MED was significant in supporting Greece in various ways towards its commitment with MSP. The project assisted effectively in facing the specificities of its maritime space that derive from its geography (such as the insularity, the extended coastline, the special oceanographic conditions of a semi-enclosed sea and the geopolitical particularities). It provided a good platform for

bringing-in knowledge and administrative capacities towards spatial development in policy making, particularly effective through the establishment of a strong collaboration between the University and the Competent Authority. It provided also opportunities to exchange experience and knowledge on data relevance and sharing towards MSP.

An efficient and effective collaboration system was crucial in all three key pillars of MSP-MED (governance, data, and cross border aspects) sharing experiences and approaches with partners through teamwork, meetings, and workshops led to a stronger sense of a "common sea" with distinct similarities: natural ecosystems, cultural and socioeconomic development patterns, threats and challenges, strengthening further potential collaboration.

Greece is also currently upgrading and supplementing the existing Geospatial Database: a process that includes the collection of data from public bodies and the creation of Web-GIS. The Greek partners identified the need to develop an integrated information system that could work as a repository of data. Based on national legislation, the inclusion of the Geospatial Database and the GeoPortal for Marine Spatial Planning (GIS) in the Government Cloud (G-Cloud) has already been co-decided at ministerial level.

The work performed encompassed the conceptualization of an integrated information system to collect environmental, social and economic data necessary for the functioning of the MSP observatory. This also works as an innovative stakeholder engagement approach. The platform is an integrated information system for collecting/visualizing environmental, social and economic data necessary for Greek Maritime Spatial Planning and Monitoring. Where registered stakeholders can experiment with zoning, developing scenarios and visualizing their outcomes. The platform provides the users with a series of data layers, thematic maps and interactive applications as well as the relative policies, tools and mechanisms available for MSP in Greece.

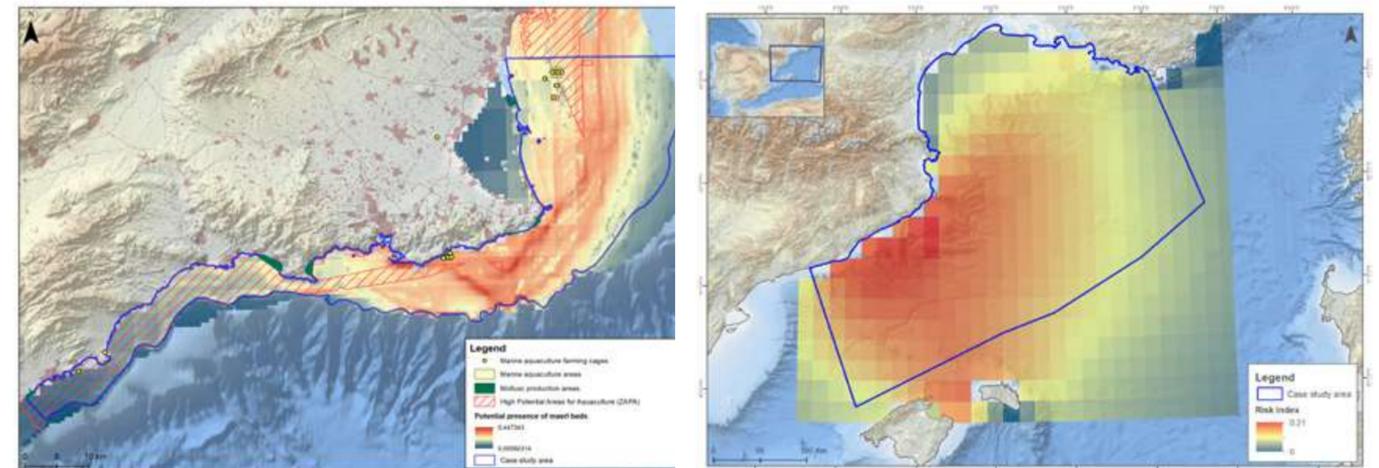


The Greece-MSP geoportal

Spain and France

The Spanish approach was very different from previous ones, being very local and focused in the very specific issue of the Region of Murcia, at the south-east coast of Spain. This case study was designed in order to support a specific need for MSP plans in Spain: more detailed planning for specific hot spot areas. The Region of Murcia presents a concurrence of different types of maritime uses and activities in its sea waters such as navigation of large commercial vessels, anchorages, military manoeuvres, aquaculture, etc. It also benefits from a rich biodiversity, with the presence of numerous species and habitats, many of which are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives. All of this makes this area a real MSP laboratory, hence its selection to be a case study in MSP-MED. Besides the desk analysis conducted with regards to the challenges in the area, a total of 36 participants from private sectors, NGOs, public administrations and research institutions were involved in two consecutive workshops.

These were the opportunity to discuss about the conflict between aquaculture production and the conservation of maerl beds, the impact produced by the unregulated anchorages in seabed habitats and underwater cultural heritage conservation. Both workshops enabled technicians from national and regional administrations, researchers and representatives of the private sectors to establish contact. In turn, this led to the identification of specific recommendations to address the challenges of the region with regards to MSP.



Spanish case studies

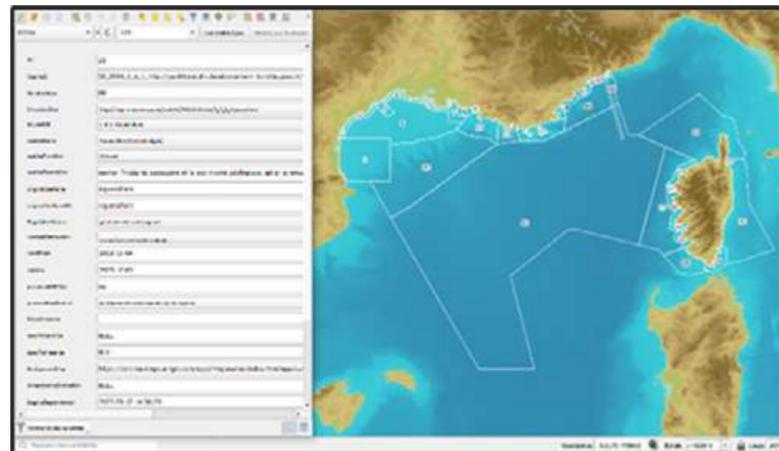
At the transboundary level, the case study of the Gulf of Lions is worth mentioning. This case study also used the two-ways complementary approach: desk-based analysis completed with expert engagement. The case study desk analysis was focused on increase the knowledge synthesis about ecological stakes related to seabirds, marine mammals, sea turtles and canyon deep habitats; the

production of a knowledge synthesis about interactions between offshore windfarms and Mediterranean ecological stakes; and the specific analysis on the estimation of noise propagation and noise pollution effects in the pelagic realm. In total, the case study involved more than 90 experts (in 19 workshops) from France, Spain and Italy and discussions on ecological stakes in the area, underwater noise assessment to inform MSP and the potential impacts of the development of Offshore Wind Farms (OWF) in this part of the Mediterranean.

On the data side, an extensive work was undertaken by Shom towards the publication of geospatial datasets of reference for the French MSP plans (Strategic Sea Basin documents, called DSF for Document stratégique de façade). This task included the assessment of the consistency of the boundaries' geographical positions to ensure their reliability with the regulations, which involved correction where needed and consolidation of the boundaries.

The development of interoperable tools for the display and access to associated information was also sought, as was further work on the adaptation of the data model for the DSF's boundaries towards their publication, following the Mediterranean DIRM's data model selection. Overall, the work performed, leading to an increased interoperability and robustness of the data, will support its publication on the French National Portal of Maritime Boundaries (PNLM, Portail National des Limites Maritimes), which disseminates the official - therefore enforceable - maritime boundaries of France. The work will also support the publication on the EMODnet Human Activities portal, responding to another objective: sharing data across borders.

Shom, reference data provider and supplier for maritime prefectures of custom-made maps dedicated to the Action of the State at Sea, proceeded to the update of the specific Mediterranean map (AEM 7360Z), in collaboration with the Mediterranean Maritime prefecture, then continued with the adaptation of this map to produce a prototype map including the DSF's areas and boundaries.



Geoportail showing the Mediterranean Façade Marine

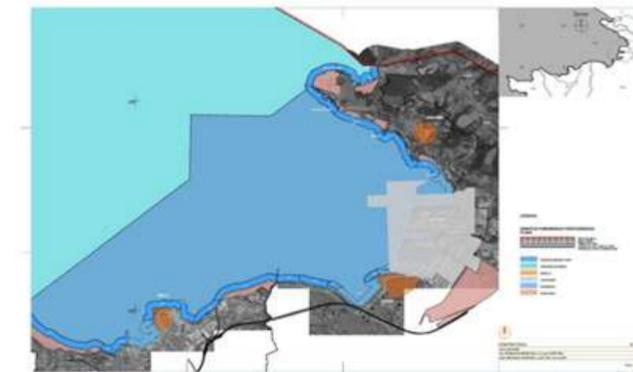
Slovenia

Slovenia's case study was specific since Slovenia has completed the process of preparation and adoption of the MSP already in July 2021. The content was formulated with the MSP competent authority, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (Directorate for Spatial Planning, Construction and Housing). It was agreed that the main purpose of the case study was to demonstrate how to approach spatial planning of the narrow coastal strip in the context of spatial planning at municipal level, based on the Slovenian Maritime Spatial Plan.

The focus of the Slovenian case were: the development of vision and objectives for Koper bay coastal strip, the spatial development concept, (elaborated more in detail for the Koper – Izola coastal strip), and the elaboration of elements for the regional development program, with the list of proposed future projects on the coast. During the project, communication between local stakeholders was established: municipalities, local branches of ministries, research institutions and other interested parties. Two workshops were organized, in which a shared vision was formulated: objectives and priorities using participatory methods, and identified projects related to coastal development in the programming period 2021-2027.

In terms of data, the work focused on three key challenges related to the spatial planning of the coastal strip: the identification of the competences and tasks of the local communities arising from the MSP, the available data and data gaps needed for effective implementation of the plan; establishing a synthesised database of bathing areas and transport infrastructure in the coastal strip.

Despite of the fact that there is no dedicated geoportal for coastal strip planning, a very large amount of data for spatial planning at different levels and with varying degrees of accuracy are available. State-managed data are the most reliable. However, the potential shortcomings or limitations are in keeping them up-to-date, as many of these data layers were created for a specific purpose over a specific period of time. A geoportal needs to be established or upgraded to house all the databases foreseen by the MSP and required for planning.



Koper Bay data

A synthesised database (of all bathing sites) was drawn up on the basis of official records in cooperation with all the coastal municipalities. The capacity of bathing sites and beaches was calculated according to the Rules for protection against drownings, which provide for a bathing area of 7m²/bather. The actual capacity of a bathing site or beach area depends on the beach type (urban or natural) and the expected level of privacy, natural vulnerability, morphology (rocky, concrete, sandy beach), the provision of bathing infrastructure and other factors.

The third task was the establishing of a synthesized database for transport infrastructure (parking) and public maritime transport infrastructure (ports, piers). The created database contains car parks within the 300 m coastal zone, which are deemed to provide sufficient parking capacity to support all bathing sites.

Malta

The tasks for the Planning Authority, as project partner within the MSP-MED project and as Competent Authority for the MSP Directive in Malta, were at a different stage in the MSP process compared to the other project partners. With an MSP plan already in place and a mandate to commence its review, the MSP-MED project provided the opportunity to review the actions taken for the preparation and implementation of the first MSP plan. Improving national policy co-ordination in policy making, data management and enhancing efforts for greater public participation in the MSP process were the main aims for the PA's deliverables.

Focusing on improved governance for MSP at national level has identified the need to strengthen the approach already in place in Malta and to broaden the involvement of relevant sectors that seek to make use of the sea in the future. The public relations campaign designed and launched at national level through the project aimed to increase awareness and prime a wider audience for the consultation process on the revised plans. Tasks related to data management enabled a revision of national datasets relevant for MSP and the design of a dedicated data inventory, enhanced by the national collaboration of relevant national entities.

The first MSP plan in Malta was guided by management needs and focused on the marine space where multiple uses present therein would benefit from the structured approach offered by MSP. The marine spatial extent defined for the purpose of the SPED does not include the administration and implementation of the provisions of the Continental Shelf Act (Cap.553 of the Laws of Malta) and is without prejudice to the possible future declaration by Malta of an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ Act, Cap. 625). The outcome of the MSP-MED project has further enriched the ongoing work on MSP in Malta and will inform the next cycle in the preparation of the second MSP plan.

The tasks regarding data were aimed at strengthening national dataflow processes focusing on the administrative framework required. A first task was to prepare the field with an Evaluation Report that identified the status of different marine databases in Malta. This included a review of different data sets both in-house within the Planning Authority and externally and an intensive data trawling exercise to determine which data is still valid and relevant to MSP, accessibility and ownership and

the identification of any data gaps that need to be addressed. The work of the MSEG TEG on Data informed this exercise which was also supported with the collaboration of the national team working on the implementation of the INSPIRE Directive.

The process was also being carried out in tandem with the SPED policy review desk study being undertaken inhouse where the data capture task was supporting both processes at the same time and informing the outcome of the intended deliverable. The additional by-product of the process was an updated data catalogue. This result was later complemented by a Technical Report with Recommendations that provided a compendium of actions to address the list of the identified issues.

Remarks

Overall, the case studies supported each country according to its specific needs for improvements and according to state of the art in the planning process. The sharing of information had an even broader impact. Through the MSP-MED project, a different perspective on the approach of MSP emerged in which the strategic importance of MSP plans became more evident. Participation in the MSP-MED project has enabled involved countries to gain new perspectives to improve upon national approaches for the coming MSP Plans.

3 Joining Forces: Sharing of Experiences and International Cooperation

During the MSP-MED project, six technical workshops took place to share how key enablers were being developed in different national plans. These technical workshops had common characteristics that touched and engaged all the MSP-MED consortium members. By inviting speakers from other EU countries and non-EU countries, the consortium was able to build new capacities and learn new approaches about key enabling factors of MSP, titled: 1) governance and administrative frameworks on implementation; 2) stakeholder engagement; 3) data availability and sharing; 4) EBM for/in MSP; 5) LSI; 6) monitoring of implementation.

The involved countries were developing their plans following a similar methodology. All plans were created in the framework of the MSFD, the MSP Directive, the Habitat Directive, the Barcelona Convention, while considering the advancements of ICZM and theory of MSP provided by UNEP and IOC-UNESCO. Governance frameworks had to be adapted to national realities as well as stakeholder engagement techniques that had to take into consideration differences in governance levels, size of the population and sectors. With regards to EBM and monitoring, less divergencies could be seen because of similar methods of implementations that were sometimes developed in previous projects. These exchanges have been documented and will be used as a base for future meetings and activities on MSP.

3.1 Sharing data across borders through common standards: a Mediterranean way

One of the specific objectives of the project was the establishment of coherent and coordinated maritime spatial plans across the Mediterranean Region. However, how could we achieve it without a common knowledge base to help the sharing and the compatibility of MSP-relevant data at the Mediterranean scale? This is only feasible if MSP data aligns with the framework and the requirements set up by the INSPIRE directive and connects with relevant initiatives at European scale (especially EMODnet and its Human Activities initiative). To this day, each Member State has developed its own perspective, tools and processes in relation to data use and sharing over the previous years.

Therefore, the MSP-MED project built on past initiatives (e.g. SUPREME, SIMWestMED, PORTODI-MARE) and gathered representatives from each partner in working groups. These were dedicated to discuss a common road to the accomplishment of the foreseen tasks, share experiences, prepare and compile a survey to assess data use approached across national processes and then collect information to fill the MSP Knowledge Catalogue with relevant information from each participating country. This catalogue was implemented to exploit standard metadata and interoperable services to reference relevant information from national MSP data portals, ongoing and past European projects and other European and international portals. The result is an open source used all over the world to organise and make available open data on many different domains.

The MSP knowledge catalogue is a web portal with a simple and clean interface that allows users to access information related to MSP in the Mediterranean sea. The main goal in fact is to allow the creation and possible growth of a centralised hub of curated information that has the aim to make more visible and accessible datasets already organised by Member States in their portals and catalogues.

In addition, an analysis of the data useful for the neighbouring countries and their availability online at the project level was made. After the identification of data that are useful to neighbouring countries (but not publicly available), France produced/updated or modified its level of confidentiality of some data layers on data.shom.fr; The Shom geoportal provides reference data for the ocean's physical environment.



Meeting of the TEG Data Group

The data was organised in categories, sub-categories and status. Project partners were consulted and asked to complement the list, in an attempt to gather more data in web service format and build further knowledge on data of transnational interest. This work fed a report that also presents Shom's methodology and approach to gather and share data.

The work performed within MSP-MED followed the recommendations of the TEG Data for MSP and was a step further to pursue a full ingestion in the EMODnet platform by Mediterranean countries.

Data is still considered as a key issue: gaps are numerous and harmonization is not yet achieved, the INSPIRE Directive and EMODNet are creating the basis for solutions, but establishing reliable and fast channels of communication between policy makers and enforcers seems of utter relevance. Shared tools for maritime data in the basin, similar to what HELCOM-VASAB achieved in the Baltic, may also support agreed management. In terms of research and innovation, the further projects will be a strategic asset to develop blue corridors, joint monitoring and management tools.

The partners designed workshops that could open new possibilities in terms of study on how some topics are addressed by MSP at Mediterranean level (Landscape, UCH), considering the specificity of the basin in this regard. Well known topics and issues were approached involving several levels of governance and operational branches in terms of research, surveillance, and enforcement that had the opportunity to benefit first-hand from the exchanges.

3.2 Cooperation Among Member States and with Third Countries

When the idea of MSP-MED arose, a short but useful tradition in MSP had been established in the Mediterranean Basin. The project represented the EC and nations' will to merge the different advancements and approaches in both subsea basins. Moreover, the urgency to fully implement the MSP Directive was endorsed by considering that dialogue with non-EU countries should be fostered. Building on the analysis of the awareness of the actors regarding MSP and their habits and needs for data sharing at transnational level, actions were developed to work with the maritime surveillance sector that is usually in charge of MSP plans enforcement. Following a cross-border survey carried out in the maritime surveillance field in 2020, in synergy with the project MED-OSMoSIS (co-funded through ERDF, EU), and in collaboration with national administrations, a report was produced and enabled the sharing of platforms and tools used by maritime surveillance key players. Maritime surveillance stakeholders are in charge of maritime safety, maritime security, border control, maritime pollution, enforcement of marine protected area, fishery control. All those aspects are closely interlinked with the enforcement of MSP plans. The conclusions of the associated report, highlighted a lack of access to data at both national and cross-border levels, a lack of interoperability of the data, and a lack of awareness and understanding about MSP in the surveillance domain.

The findings of the survey and report produced prompted the organisation of a cross-border workshop reuniting both surveillance and MSP actors. It was the opportunity to raise awareness about MSP in the framework of an already existing cross-border cooperation scheme: the RAMOGE agreement involving Monaco, Italy and France in the event of pollution emergencies. The workshop enabled stakeholders to share about platforms, available data, and the mechanisms currently in place.

3.3 MSP Topics of Mediterranean Interest: A Culturally Based Approach for MSP and a Common Frame for Sustainable Development

The results achieved from the bilateral meetings organized within the project were diverse. Some helped define a state of the art; many issues were identified as addressable by joint study and interventions. A specific aspect that emerged is that some issues need to be enlarged because the bilateral dimension is not sufficient, it was clearly the case of cetacean movements and conflicts with maritime uses in the western Mediterranean.

MSP-MED project partners connected the different Competent Authorities, exchanging technical aspects of interest at national level to inform and implement transboundary cooperation. There was always the intention not to interfere in the ongoing diplomatic discussions, especially with regards to the delineation of maritime borders, which limited a little bit the scope of the exchanges. Pan-Western and Pan-Eastern events were created as two twins, not separate but distinct, since the two main sub-basins of the Mediterranean have significant differences. Eventually the results of the two events were able to be discussed jointly during the Final Conference which offered a useful moment for comparison.

The events were designed to include a moment during which MSP-MED involved countries could meet representatives of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya and, on the Eastern side Cyprus, Croatia, Lebanon, Turkey and Israel. In the end, Turkish representatives were not present due to personal impediments in the Pan-Eastern Event. However, experts from Mauritania joined the Pan-Western event. PAP-RAC, IOC-UNESCO, Council of Europe, local Embassies, Ministries of Cultures were also present to share strategies and advancements of MSP and relevant topics in the basin.

The main output of the events has been the progression towards the establishment of an open MSP Community of Practices in the Mediterranean (MSP-CoP), which started with a round table discus-



Pan-Western event, Tunis

sion in the WestMED Hackathon (Malta), it continued during the Pan-Western Mediterranean Workshop (Tunis), was also discussed during the Final Conference of MSP-MED (Rome) and launched in Brussels in 2023. The relevance of the Community of Practice lies in the stable body of practitioners able to maintain and develop harmonization of MSP at basin level as well as transboundary cooperation. It is likely that this will represent a fast lane for better cross-sectors contacts.

Similar remarks were issued from the Pan-Eastern experience, in which the focus was on a more specific topic: 'Land-SeaScape' that needed further development to fully address its relevance and potentiality in a basin renowned for its rich culture and history. However, the need to establish strong cooperation channels, sharing of data, experiences, semi-permanent and permanent tools were underlined, especially in the light of further harmonization between the two sub-basins.

4. Communication and dissemination

The communication developed for the MSP-MED project was able to convey the bright, cheerful and round-edge energy of Mediterranean lifestyle. The Communication team developed an aesthetic that could engage the public beyond policies and technicisms. The several social media campaigns and few printed materials (due to covid-19 and footprint reasons the communication moved online) were created to cover the basics of MSP, for instance via a dedicated visual glossary, and then present as pills of knowledge from past projects, ongoing initiatives, and the national planning processes.

Short videos and animations were produced to convey basic concepts of MSP (EBM, Allocation, New uses, Cooperation), capitalize from past initiatives in the basin (e.g. MSPglobal) and promote the project, the national processes and marine and maritime sectors.

Regarding social media, the communication team promoted the project on Instagram; a social media outlet that is not the usual platform for technical projects and topics, Twitter and Facebook. The figures indicates that Twitter is still the best social network for EU projects but the precedent created by MSP-MED may be useful in terms of visual design for other EU funded initiatives.

Among the many lessons learned, the need for stronger MSP representation at national and international level, among maritime sectors and at least a mild knowledge in the general public appears to be the most evident.

4.1 Ocean Literacy and Mediterranean culture

The promotion of key figures of Mediterranean and ocean functioning, considering maritime sectors aimed to increase the people's knowledge about the sea. The cultural aspects emerged during WP4 were supported and way anticipated by WP5. The exchanges among partners inspired the communication team to develop a new set of campaigns; the

Med Academy being the most evident output.

Building on the educational recurring separation of disciplines, the Med Academy tackles 7 different subjects: geography, languages, cultural heritage, socioeconomics, law, sciences and history. Each discipline had a dedicated post with the title of the topic, a brief description (often detailed in the caption and complemented with links to sources) and a picture to visually convey it. This campaign was created to increase ocean literacy, knowledge and awareness about the Mediterranean Sea and reinforce a cultural concept of Mediterranean heritage beyond EU borders. Therefore, the communication output can be regarded as a direct transposition of the objectives of MSP-MED WP4 because of its intent of creating a fertile ground for cooperation across countries building on common shared history and cultural similarities.

The Mediterranean Ocean Literacy was not only sought to present the natural assets of the sea, but also the human uses. These human uses are, now more than ever, processes that enter the ecological dynamics.



MED Academy samples

5. Conclusions and recommendations

During the second half of the project, it emerged that Ecosystem Based Approach (EBA) alone was not sufficient in covering all the assets that MSP processes address. The Mediterranean basin has been a cradle of civilizations, stratification of history, and to this day populations and cultures exist in the region as a beautiful mosaic. Relying on the scientific method in an ecosystem view is the best approach to guide choices that will benefit humans and environment alike. However, the cultural tangible and intangible aspects cannot be overlooked as they are foundations of a society.

This has to be done to achieve engagement, hence full participation of citizens for positive chang-

es, and correct development of markets and sectors. In this regard, a proper use of the tangible and intangible resources of cultural heritage and landscape is certainly an asset to develop further in its interactions with MSP. This consideration is also valid in terms of developing new uses, taking into consideration the aesthetic and spiritual value of the sea for the Mediterranean populations.

From a sharing-experience point of view, it was very interesting to have around one table experts from Morocco, Libya, Algeria and other EU Member States (even from outside the basin). This achievement was not an obvious one, given existing divergences of political views. However, the fact of having experts from EU presenting experiences with Israel and Lebanon practitioners felt as an outstanding result. Initiatives and projects like MSP-MED bring these countries together to share on common blue topics. The MSP-MED project created a safe space to meet, with the hope that it will be capitalized soon by further joint experiences.

During the last year of the project, many exchanges with the EC, the WestMED initiative and UfM took place. The last events of the project (including the Final Conference) were designed to launch the definition of an Agenda that may guide next steps in Mediterranean maritime management and development.

The studies undergone and the advancements of national plans open now a new phase for the exploration of what MSP can help achieve on a larger scale. In this regard, MSP-MED opened the path for new projects, also thanks to the partnerships reinforced over its duration.



Pan-Eastern participants, Athens

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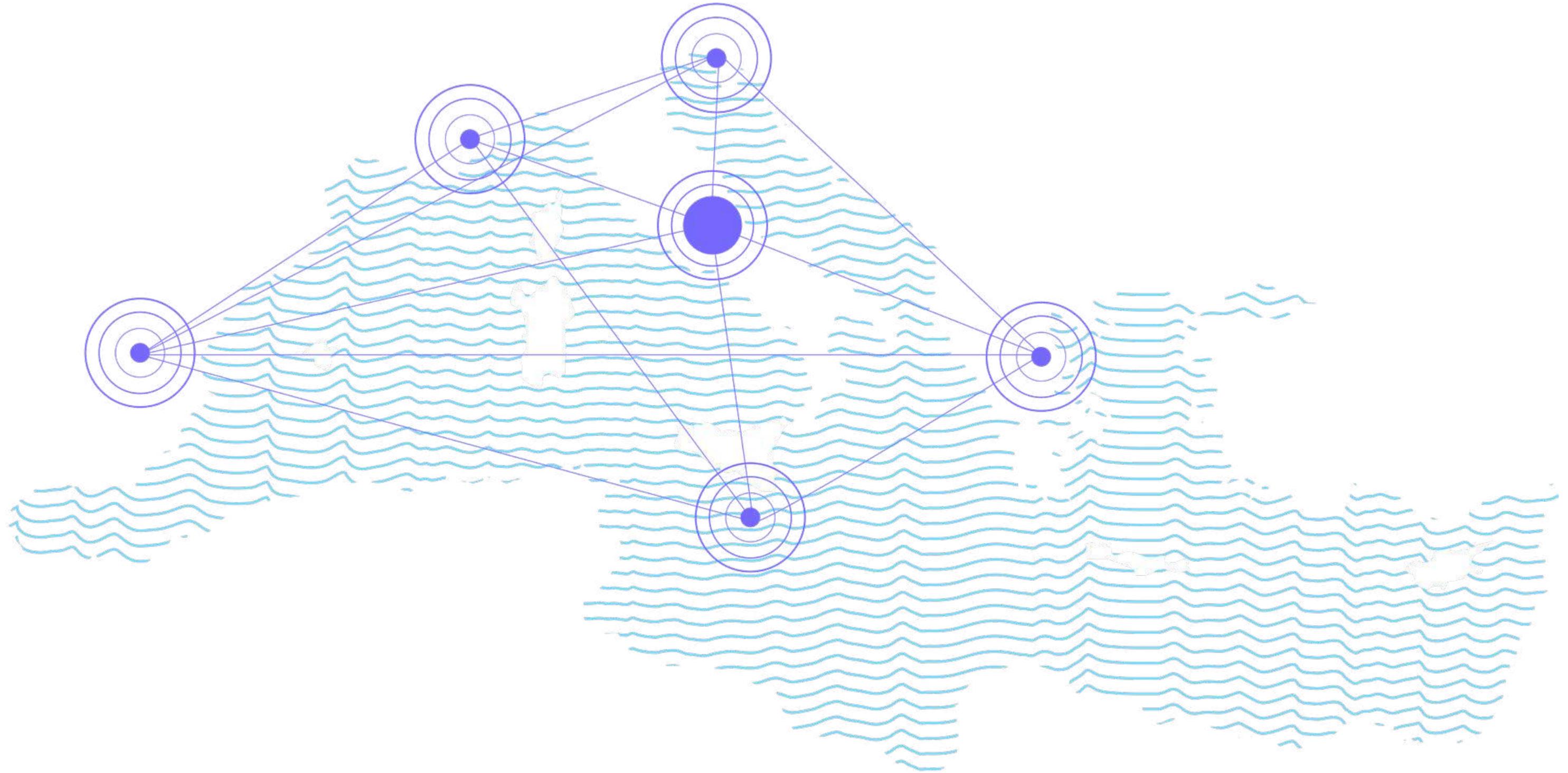
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