

MSP Community of Practice in the Mediterranean

First year activities: January 2023 – January 2024

This document outlines the first year (January 2023 - January 2024) work plan of the MSP Community of Practice in the Mediterranean (MED-MSP-CoP). It also includes some preparatory activities which have been implemented before the kick-off meeting (Brussels, 26th of January). The work plan is structured in four sections, respectively dealing with the organisation of the MED-MSP-CoP, technical activities, next meetings and the timetable of the work plan. The organisation activities mainly involve the members of the Coordination Team, while technical activities also foresee the contribution of the other experts involved in the community. As framed in the [Terms of References](#), the MED-MSP-CoP will initially focus on the Western Mediterranean, being open to experts and observers from the entire Mediterranean. In this perspective content-wise activities can refer to the entire Mediterranean Sea.

1. Organisation of the MED-MSP-CoP

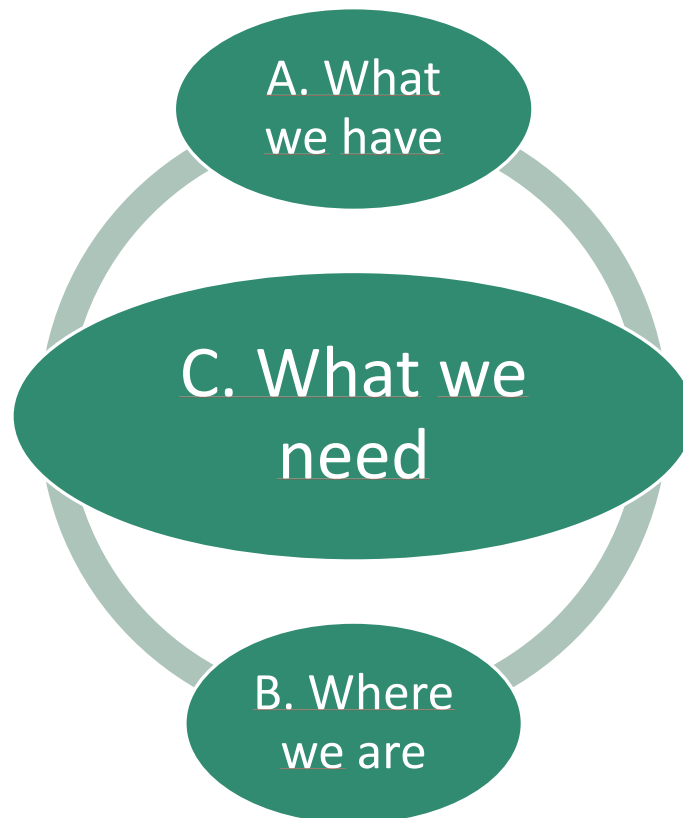
Following organisation activities will be carried on during the first year:

- Identification of members of the MED-MSP-CoP Coordination Team, establishment of the Coordination Team and adoption of the organisational structure of the MED-MSP-CoP (*November 2022 - January 2023*)
- WestMED endorsement of the MED-MSP-CoP (*December 2022*)
- Identification of two co-chairs of the MED-MSP-CoP (*January 2023*)
- Identification of representatives from observers (*January 2023*)
- Preparation and launch of an open call for experts (voluntary-based participation); the activity also includes the definition of who shall launch the call for experts and the related call's modality (*March 2023*)
- Establishment of the Pool of Experts (*May 2023*)
- Possible definition and organisation of MED-MSP-CoP working groups on topics of interest to be fully activated in year 2 (*November 2023*)
- Draft of the 2nd year plan of action (*December 2023*)
- Final version of the 2nd year plan of actions, based on the results of the first year activities (*January 2024*)

The Coordination Team will ensure informal connection with the national MSP processes, informing MSP competent authorities about the on-going work of the MED-MSP-CoP and collecting their requests and feedbacks (*along the entire year 1*). It will also give visibility to the MED-MSP-CoP through communication actions.

2. Technical activities

The first year work plan includes activities aiming at the mapping and topic-based analysis of MSP-related projects and initiatives as well as the identification of persisting gaps. These activities will focus on two topics of common interest for the CoP (see Annex 1), related to the overall issues identified in the [Terms of References](#): EBA in MSP and Sustainable Blue Economy. The work is organised in three interconnected tasks. Tasks A and B will be performed in parallel, providing results to then be used in task C.



Task A – “What we have”. Mapping and baseline analysis of relevant MSP-related projects and initiatives

Scope of the task is to map past, on-going and upcoming projects and initiatives dealing with the two MSP-related topics identified by the CoP (see Annex 1). These includes projects and initiatives at different levels: Mediterranean, sub-regional, national and sub-national. The main output of this activity is a catalogue of projects and initiatives with all relevant descriptive metadata.

- Definition of the conceptual framework and template for mapping of projects and initiatives (*March 2023*)
- Initial mapping of MSP-related projects and initiatives of interest for the MED-MSP-CoP, and identification of key involved actors and contact points (*May 2023*)
- Refined mapping of MSP-related projects and initiatives of interest for the MED-MSP-CoP, through the involvement of the Pool of experts (*September 2023*)

Task B – “Where we are”. Topic-based analysis

Task B will evaluate if and how projects and initiatives mapped in step 1 provide “knowledge” and more in general output and outcome (data, information, reports, tools, good practice, evidence-based case studies, methodologies, guidelines, recommendations, capacity building, ocean literacy initiatives, networks, specific CoPs, etc.) that can respond to the needs and challenges of the MSP-related topics.

- Definition of a conceptual framework and template for the for topic-based analysis. The whole activity includes: a draft release of the framework, its testing and final realise (*June 2023*)
- Analysis of mapped projects and initiatives through the conceptual framework, aiming at identifying how they can provide added values to the MED-MSP-CoP objectives and to respond to identified, topic-based needs and challenges (*October 2023*)

Task C – “What we need” – Gap analysis and recommendation for the next year

Based on the mapping exercise and the topic-based analysis, this task evaluates till what level the mapped projects and initiative provide solutions to topic-based needs and challenges, identifies what are the remaining major gaps and needs and possibly provide a first set of recommendations. Outcome of this step feeds the preparation of the next year action plan (see section 1).

- Identification of gaps and (policy and research) needs based on the analysis of projects and initiatives as well as a survey involving the pool of experts of the MED-MSP-CoP (*December 2023*).
- Definition of a first set of recommendations for possible future actions (e.g. specific topics for future studies, proposals to build synergies among different project or initiative, organisation of thematic workshop in Mediterranean, etc.) (*December 2023*).
- Identification of other topics of possible interest for the MSP-MED-CoP (e.g. climate change, land-sea interactions and/or landscape in MSP) (*January 2024*)

3. Meetings

During the first year, it is expected that the MSP-MED-CoP will meet 4 times, whenever possible in presence. In presence and hybrid meeting will be planned in time, to properly deal with logistic aspects and enabling non-EU countries participation (e.g. time is needed to get VISA). Whenever possible, in presence and hybrid meetings will be organised back-to-back to other important events. Here is a tentative schedule of CoPs meetings.

- 26.1.2023: kick-off meeting, Brussels

Modality: in presence

Participants: coordination team, observers, EMFAF projects and other invited experts

Main objectives: (i) present the status of the MED-MSP-CoP, (ii) agree on the 1st year Action Plan, (iii) discuss specific organisation aspects of the 1st year Action Plan, (iv) link with on-going projects and other CoP experiences.

- 06.2023: Malta

Modality: hybrid

Participants: coordination team, pool of experts, observers

Main objectives: (i) extended kick-off meeting with the pool of experts, (ii) mapping of projects and initiatives, (iii) conceptual framework for the topic-based, structured analysis of projects and initiatives.
- 10.2023: to be defined

Modality: hybrid or online

Participants: coordination team, pool of experts, observers

Main objectives: (i) workshop on results of mapping and structured analysis of projects and initiatives of interest for the scope of the MED-MSP-CoP. (ii) initial input for the next year action plan.
- 01.2024: to be defined

Modality: in presence; to be organised back-to-back with another event to enable the involvement of institutions and organisations not directly part of the MED-MSP-CoP

Participants: coordination team, pool of experts, observers.

Main objectives: (i) present and discuss the results of first year activities: mapping of projects and initiatives; topic based, structured analysis of projects and initiatives; major policy and research gaps and needs, (ii) agree on the 2nd year action plan, in case including plans for working groups.

Above timetable could be changed in the course of year 1, to properly consider the development of the different activities and to take advantage of any event organised in the frame of other initiatives. The Coordination Team of the MED-MSP-CoP will identify future events to capitalize on for the possible organization of back-to-back meetings.

4. Timetable

	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24
Definition of the coordination team	Yellow												
Call for experts	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow										
Group of experts				Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	
Working groups										Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	
Work plan for year 2												Yellow	Yellow
Step 1 - What we have: mapping			Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green				
Step 2 - Where we are: analysis				Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green				
Step 3 - What we need											Green	Green	Green
Kick-of-meeting	Blue												
II meeting						Blue							
III meeting									Blue				
IV meeting													Blue

Annex 1

MSP Community of Practice in the Mediterranean

Topics identified for project mapping and topic-based analysis in year 1

Topics	Examples of issues/challenges to consider
<p>MSP as key enabler for the implementation of national Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE) strategies and initiatives, through the adoption of an integrated approach and towards the balanced distribution of benefits</p>	<p>Each Mediterranean country has specific priorities, but countries also share common needs and common opportunities for the development of maritime and coastal activities. Lack of coordination on the stages of planning and implementation becomes a waste of resources that could be capitalized for more than one Mediterranean country. Lack of coordination can also increase cumulative impacts on the environment. On top of all, some SBE challenges have an important transboundary dimension (e.g. maritime transport management or energy grid connection).</p> <p>Recently, several WestMED countries defined their National Blue Economy Strategies. Although, these strategies have different priorities, they all stress the role of MSP for the integrated and sustainable development of a blue economy</p> <p>MSP is also an important tool/process to support transnational dialogue on SBE (i.e. in the frame of the Roadmap for the implementation of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean) and approach some of the major challenges as for example data and knowledge gaps differently affecting EU and non-EU countries.</p> <p>⇒ The MED-MSP-CoP will address the topic of coordination among sectorial strategies at different scales and point at perspectives provided by the framework of MSP implementation in this sense.</p>
<p>MSP supporting the extension, improved management and improved connection of Marine Protected Areas and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures in the Mediterranean, towards the targets set at the international and EU level on marine biodiversity protection.</p>	<p>MSP can provide the framework for and support the establishment, extension, improved management and connection of MPAs. The way MSP support MPAs may differ from country to country. A common approach is needed, taking in consideration the specificities of the Mediterranean Sea and integrating regional strategies and initiatives (i.e. UNEP/MAP ones).</p> <p>MSP shall also support the establishment and management of Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), defined as: “A geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in situ conservation of biodiversity with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values (CBD Decision 14/8)”. Examples of OECMs may include Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs) or Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA). The way OECMs are integrated into MSP may differ or be inexistent.</p> <p>MPA and OECM should form a network, that have to be designed and managed as such. In a transboundary perspective, MSP should support this functioning, for the benefit of conservation objectives within MPAs and also beyond their perimeters.</p> <p>MPA and OECMs establishment and/or extension is not the only priority of MSP. One of the major challenges MSP has to face is the balancing of environmental protection and blue economy development needs. At the same time, MSP properly address cumulative impacts of maritime activities.</p> <p>⇒ The MED-MSP-CoP will point at challenges MSP could tackle to improve biodiversity protection and share good practices on improved coordination of protection and economic development objectives, specifically by using spatial conservation tools such as MPAs and OECMs.</p>