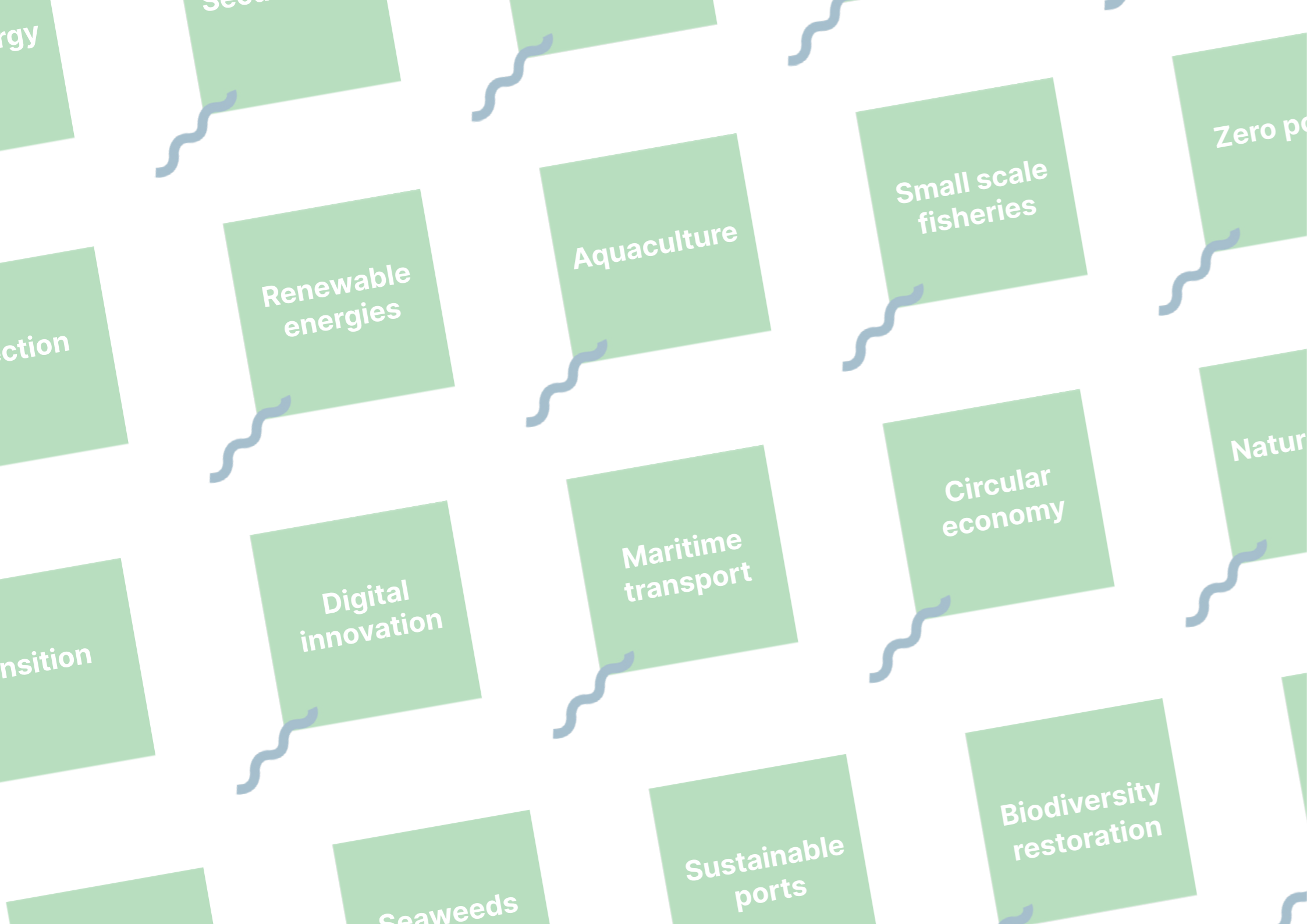




COMMUNICATING THE MARITIME EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

A companion for MSP practitioners,
decision makers and marine
sustainability communicators



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Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
Republic of Latvia

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DISCLAIMER

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Taking into consideration that the document was prepared in the early phase of the project to ensure practical guidance to project partners, a review of the document should be considered in the final phase of the project to ensure that practically adapted approaches are included for more targeted communication activities.

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Foreword

This document is conceived to inspire. It is informed by official EU policies regarding the European Green Deal (EGD) and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), a survey submitted to MSP experts, input from the MSP-GREEN project consortium and scientific literature.

In order to support communication actions and campaigns surrounding the EGD, the document provides a series of suggestions. Of course, we do not claim these to be comprehensive, and other options and approaches are always feasible.

In addressing WHAT to communicate about the maritime EGD and HOW to do this, making choices was extremely difficult. In fact, all aspects of the maritime European Green Deal are important, and deciding what to prioritise can be a matter of minimal differences.

Similarly, while some media seem a perfect fit, we do note the importance of current trends in communication. While this document is valid in the current context, it will hopefully be overtaken by the changes triggered by the green transition itself. Future readers in particular may wish to verify that the suggestions presented here have not lost their validity.

Readers will find a series of suggestions regarding the main aspects of the maritime European Green Deal and how it could be communicated more clearly and effectively using different media and communication methods.

Communication is always a complex recipe where the ingredients need to be mixed for a specific audience. The hope is not to bore them but to leave them wanting more. Institutional communication is even more intricate, and the number of variables encompassed by MSP and the EGD, especially when considering an entire sea basin, make it very difficult to set out standard approaches.

That said, readers will find examples of different maritime realities which may help to engage maritime stakeholders and coastal populations by means of relatable content surrounding MSP and the EGD.

The information contained in this document is not set in stone. Readers might like to think of it as an educated companion who can provide some useful suggestions.

Target Users

This companion is conceived primarily for three groups involved in marine management, although it will hopefully inspire a broader audience:

Policy and decision makers involved in MSP within the EU at every level of governance will find suggestions on how to improve communication policies. Moreover, they could also be inspired regarding narratives they want to propose to European citizens.

MSP practitioners, dealing with the ecological transition of plans and sectors, will find ideas on how to engage sectors and people to improve the sustainability of plans.

Communicators and researchers, engaging with stakeholders that can contribute to the maritime European Green Deal are offered an overview of experiences and food for thought in terms of communication theory.



Methodology

The MSP-GREEN project (2022-2024), fully titled 'Maritime spatial planning as an enabler of the European Green Deal' aims at aligning maritime spatial plans with the ambition of the European Green Deal. Based on a cross-cutting approach, MSP-GREEN systematically investigates all relevant marine and maritime pillars of the EGD: (1) *Carbon neutrality*, including the production of marine renewable energy, the contribution of maritime sectors to climate change mitigation and protection and restoration of blue habitats; (2) *Climate change adaptation* of ecosystems and maritime and coastal activities, (3) *Sustainable sea-food production* (encompassing aquaculture, macroalgae production, sustainable fisheries etc.), (4) *Biodiversity and ecosystem protection*, including marine habitat restoration, (5) *Circular economy* in the diverse maritime sectors; and (6) *Zero pollution*. Additionally, the project addresses horizontal components of the EGD such as achieving a just, fair and inclusive transition.

This companion is the result of project activity 5.3. 'Communicating the maritime European Green Deal (EGD)'. It reviews strategic guidance documents that are relevant across sea basins, cultural trends, and specificities when communicating the EGD in an MSP context.

The main objective is to present sea basin-specific elements of the maritime EGD that could be considered in communication strategies. Maritime cultural specificities of the EU sea basins that could act as enablers of maritime EGD communication are also considered.

The key guiding questions in the creation of the deliverable were:

What are the EGD objectives that should be integrated into maritime spatial plans? How do we enable their effective, long-lasting integration?

What are the differences and similarities in the implementation of the EGD through MSP across the diverse European basins and coastal countries?

How can maritime cultural landmarks of the various sea basins enable the Green Deal or innovative pathways towards transition?

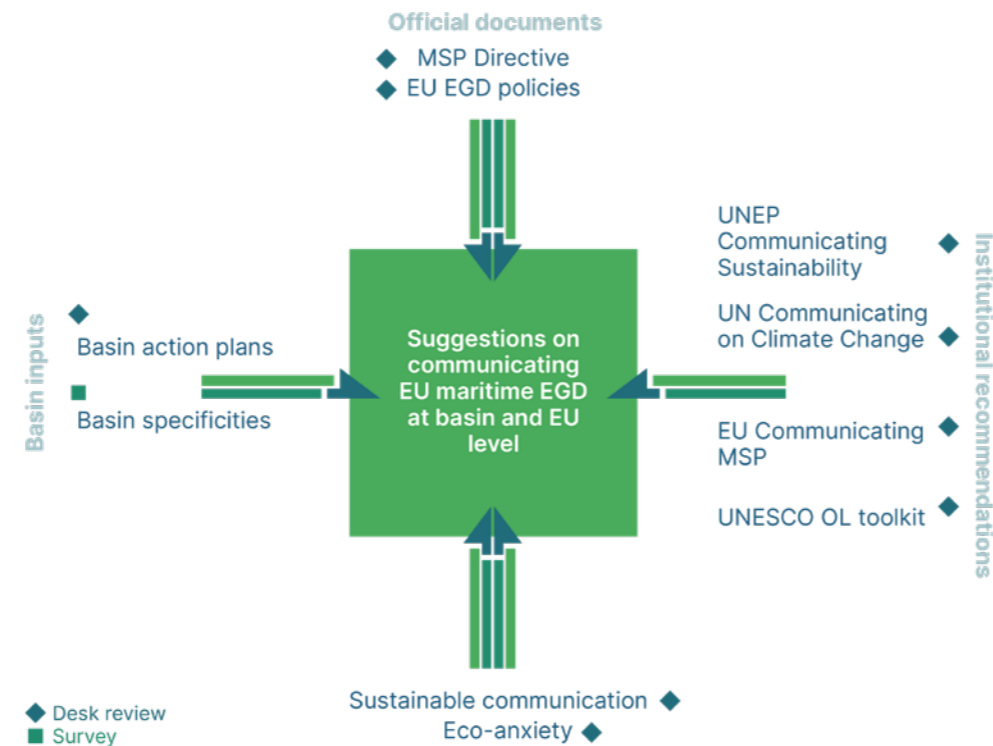
MSP GREEN is based on a cross-basin approach. Here, sea-basin

specific maritime cultures are used as a basis for linking EU maritime regions.

The objective of this deliverable is to help promote the green transition of maritime sectors by means of planned activities in EU Member States, in line with the objectives of the EGD and the EU MSP Directive.

The task was implemented via a review of EGD policies. Suitable approaches for different levels of communication to reach various stakeholders/topics were selected from dedicated literature. Methods, including information on voice, tone and channels of communication were drawn from EU guidelines for communicating MSP (EC, 2021), as well as guides on Ocean Literacy (UNESCO, 2017) and sustainability (UN, 2008).

For more in-depth information on the methodology of this task, please refer to the MSP-GREEN Communication plan outlined in section 1.4.



WHY COMMUNICATING THE EGD IN MSP?

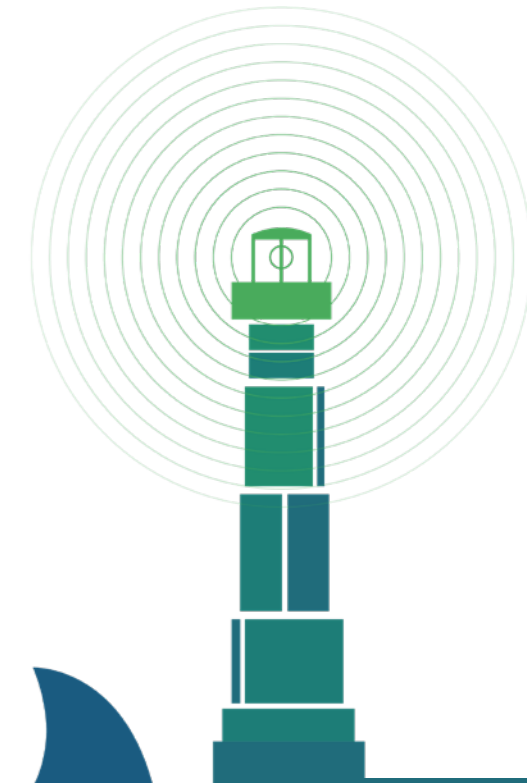
The MSP Directive, establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning in Europe, defines de facto that MSP should facilitate the development of blue economies. As such, it also gives a mandate to MSP to communicate and promote the sustainable green transition of maritime economies.

MSP must therefore be a loudspeaker for the European Green Deal among maritime sectors, especially with regard to nature and biodiversity protection and climate change.

At its core, MSP is a vision proposer: it plans a desirable future and designs purposeful interventions to reach that future. It also uses scenarios to evaluate the most desirable shared vision.

This basic fact should be at the core of communicating the maritime European Green Deal: Imagining and projecting society towards a greener, better future, and rethinking our traditions and lifestyles.

What will our green future look like? What are the most effective and innovative ways to communicate EGD objectives as part of maritime spatial planning? These are questions that need to be asked of stakeholders in order to build a participative and broadly endorsed future vision.



Six ways to use the companion

Would you like to speak about a specific topic in relation to the maritime European Green Deal? Here are six ways in which this companion can help you.

WHAT

Check if the topic you'd like to communicate is directly mentioned in official documents to ensure consistency with your communication objectives and target audiences

Starting from proposals at sea basin level, you can downscale the approach and consider natural and cultural aspects that may create a stronger connection with your audience.

TO WHOM

Have you considered key points that may apply to your communication? Check them out!

Is your message clear, real and propositive? Check the proposed tone and narrative to find the one that best suits your message.

HOW

Which media and channel can support you? A few examples of successful experiences in MSP are presented.

You may get inspired by the listed past communication actions.

Communicating the maritime EGD across EU sea basins:
An introduction

WHAT ARE THE MAIN EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL TOPICS TO BE COMMUNICATED IN THE MARITIME CONTEXT, EXPRESSED IN OFFICIAL GREEN POLICY DOCUMENTS?

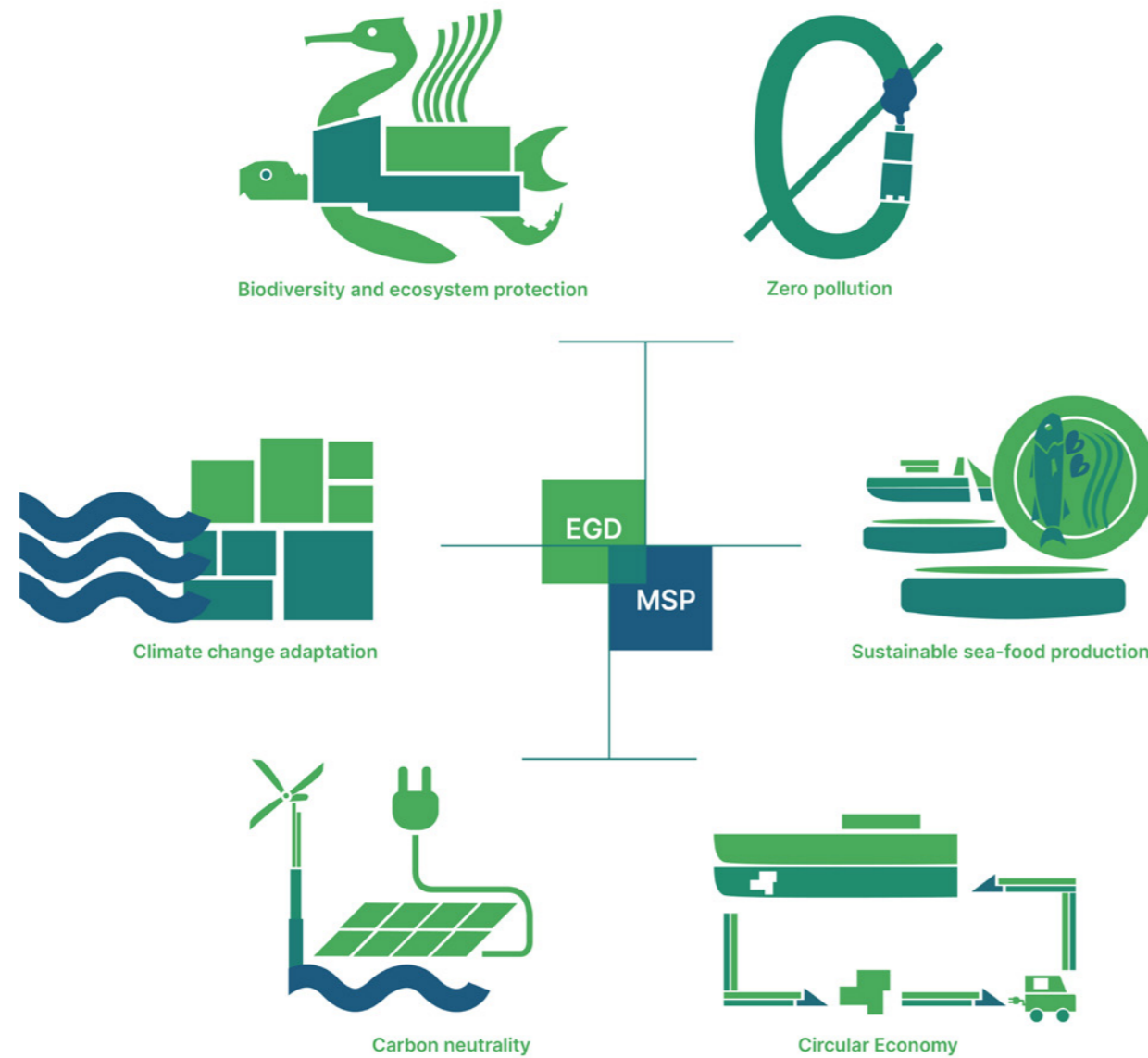


The European Green Deal

Promoting the EGD means promoting a theoretical approach, based on scientific evidence but that can only be achieved by a cultural transformation.

This translates into defining scenarios that can support difficult choices that society will have to take in the near future. By supporting the maritime EGD, the project is, therefore, taking part in shaping our reality by proposing new pathways across EU sea basins a possible future, a future that may be better for current and next generations.

On 17 May 2021, the European Commission issued a Communication on “A new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU: Transforming the EU’s Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future”. The issue lays the basis for the Green Recovery of the European Blue Economy sectors. In that respect, the MSP-GREEN project studies how EU MSP can enable the blue economy components of the Green Deal, highlighting the important role of basin-level communication in its promotion.



“What are the EGD aspects that should be integrated into maritime spatial plans? And how to enable their effective, long-lasting integration?”

MSP-GREEN Grant Agreement

EU-wide Communications on the EGD: An overview

The main communication strategy on the EU Green Deal highlights the new growth strategy, which aims to “transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource usability” also aims to protect, conserve and enhance the EU’s natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of citizens from environment-related risks and impacts. At the same time, this transition must be just and inclusive. It must put people first, and pay attention to the regions, industries and workers who will face the greatest challenges. Since it will bring substantial change, active public participation and confidence

in the transition is paramount if policies are to work and be accepted. Most importantly, in line with the United Nation’s 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), it presents an initial roadmap of the key policies and measures needed to achieve the European Green Deal. Overall it appears that aquaculture and circular economy were topics more addressed in communication terms, possibly because of end-users and economic implications. Various digital means of communication are also often mentioned.

Includes selection per key words (*public, information, dissemination, communication, engagement, stakeholder, awareness*)

| | The European Green Deal. COM(2019) 640 final | A new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU: Transforming the EU’s Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future* | An EU Strategy to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy for a climate neutral future. COM(2020) 741 final. | An European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy: A clean planet for all (in accordance with the Paris Agreement - 2019/2582(RSP)) | EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 - Bringing nature back into our lives | A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system. COM(2020) 381 final. | Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030 COM/2021/236 final | Pathway to a Healthy Planet for All EU Action Plan: ‘Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil’. COM(2021) 400 final |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Description | An EU-wide strategy as the initial roadmap of the key policies and measures required to reach the European Green Deal objectives, it aims to protect, conserve and enhance the EU’s natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of citizens from environment-related risks and impacts. It outlines investments needed and financing tools available, and explains how to ensure a just and inclusive transition. | Communication puts forward the Commission’s proposals for a maritime policy to enable the blue economy transition envisioned in the European Green Deal in practise, setting <i>Mission Ocean, Seas and Waters by 2030*</i> | The EU Strategy to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy for a climate neutral future is a policy at EU level and lays down energy and climate targets for 2050. The objective of this policy is the deployment of offshore renewable energy across all EU sea basins by 2050, in order to increase future power generation in the coming years in a way that meets Europe’s decarbonisation objectives and expected rise in electricity demand in an affordable manner. | Communication setting strategic long-term vision to confirm Europe’s commitment to lead in global climate action achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 through a socially-fair transition in a cost-efficient manner. The document defines the European Union’s long-term contribution to achieving the Paris Agreement temperature objectives in line with UN Sustainable Development Goals, which will further affect a wider set of EU policies. | The strategy sets out a comprehensive, ambitious and long-term plan to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems. The strategy aims to put Europe’s biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030 by ensuring that by 2030 at least 30 percent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity. | The Farm to Fork Strategy aims to ensure a sustainable food value chain, strengthening European farmers and fishermen efforts to tackle climate change, protect the environment and preserve biodiversity. In order to accelerate our transition to a sustainable food system it should have a neutral or positive environmental impact, help to mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts, as well as reverse the loss of biodiversity. | Communication puts forward the Commission’s proposals for a maritime policy to diversified aquaculture responding to the challenges identified in the European Green Deal, by pointing to increasing knowledge and innovation as key instruments to achieve such a target in the EU aquaculture sector. | The Communication sets out a vision to mainstream pollution prevention in all relevant EU policies, to step up implementation of the relevant EU legislation and to identify possible gaps, by reducing: (I) the negative impacts of air pollution on health; (II) noise pollution due to transport; (III) the threat of air pollution on biodiversity; (IV) nutrient losses, the use of hazardous chemicals, and the sale of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture; (V) marine pollution due to plastic litter and microplastics released into the environment; and (VI) total waste generation. |



| | The European Green Deal. COM(2019) 640 final | A new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU: Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future" | An EU Strategy to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy for a climate neutral future. COM(2020) 741 final. | An European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy And A new Circular Economy Action Plan: For a cleaner and more competitive Europe | EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 - Bringing nature back into our lives | A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system. COM(2020) 381 final. | Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030 COM/2021/236 final | Pathway to a Healthy Planet for All EU Action Plan: 'Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil'. COM(2021) 400 final |
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| Key communication related aspects and strategies/tools identified | <p>The Commission supports sea-basin and macro-regional frameworks for cooperation to push for science-based management of ocean natural resources, including fisheries, by supporting sustainable maritime development within the EU's partnerships and agreements.</p> <p>Promoting collaboration among higher education institutions, research organisations and companies on climate change, sustainable energy, food for the future, and smart, environmentally-friendly and integrated urban transport.</p> <p>The United Nations Ocean Conference, as an opportunity for the EU to highlight the importance of action on ocean issues.</p> <p>Explore measures to ensure that digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, 5G, cloud and edge computing and the internet of things can accelerate and maximise the impact of policies to deal with climate change and protect the environment.</p> <p>An open platform bringing together the buildings and construction sector, architects and engineers and local authorities to address the barriers to renovation, including innovative financing schemes under InvestEU.</p> | <p>Blue Forum for users of the sea to coordinate a dialogue between offshore operators, stakeholders and scientists engaged in fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, tourism, renewable energy and other activities.</p> <p>Sustainable ports subgroup of the European Ports Forum, to discuss with relevant stakeholders and share and promote best practices and bottom-up initiatives in greening port services.</p> <p>The EU4Ocean Coalition, an initiative creating networks for European schools, to bring the ocean issue into the classrooms. The aim is for organizations working on ocean conservation to run joint engagement projects with citizens and amplify the impact and outreach.</p> <p>Public concern for plastic litter in the oceans shows that it remains crucial to expand public awareness of the importance of seas and oceans for life on the planet. Modern mobile applications allow citizens to track, monitor or report on observed environmental damage.</p> <p>The Commission will cooperate with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, Member States and international partners to contribute to the ocean literacy programme of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030.</p> | <p>Digital technologies employed as a key enabler, fostering an acceleration of the offshore energy production into broader energy systems, while minimising environmental impacts, providing precision, efficiency, advanced data analysis and AI-based solutions.</p> <p>EU Sustainable Taxonomy and Grids development, innovation applications and technical maturity can support private capital investment.</p> <p>International cooperation via pilot projects, identifying the environmental benefits of e.g. offshore wind and aquaculture.</p> <p>Design and shape more education and training schemes (e.g. Centres of Vocational Excellence) targeting the offshore renewable energy sector in line with their expected development targets (actions under the "European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience").</p> <p>Important to note that there is indication that each of the EU sea basins shall develop different technologies suiting the specific geological conditions and there is a need to communicate basin-specific stage of offshore renewable energy development.</p> | <p>Involvement of citizens in the energy system through decentralised self-generation of renewable energy, electricity storage and participation in demand response and energy efficiency schemes.</p> <p>To enhance the participation of consumers in the circular economy, the Commission will propose a revision of EU consumer law to ensure that consumers receive trustworthy and relevant information on products at the point of sale, including on their lifespan and on the availability of repair services, spare parts and repair manuals.</p> <p>The Commission will also consider further strengthening consumer protection against greenwashing and premature obsolescence, setting minimum requirements for sustainability labels/logos and for information tools.</p> | <p>Actively involve younger generations in building international, intercultural and inter-generational relationships, which underpin cultural change that will support global efforts for a more sustainable future;</p> <p>As part of its global efforts, the EU will promote biodiversity coalitions with partners and civil society around the world. For example, in March 2020, the Commission launched the Global Biodiversity Coalition of national parks, aquariums, botanic gardens, zoos, natural history and science museums to help raise awareness around the world on the need to protect and nurture biodiversity.</p> <p>The new European Urban Greening Platform acts as a support mechanism for the promotion of healthy ecosystems, green infrastructure and nature-based solutions - systematically integrated into urban planning,</p> <p>European farmers are an essential part of the EU's future and must continue to be the social and economic hub of many communities as biodiversity 'generators', including by promoting eco-schemes and result-based payment schemes.</p> | <p>Development of EU Code of conduct for responsible business and marketing practice accompanied with a monitoring framework, seeking commitments from food companies and organizations.</p> <p>The Commission will also explore new ways to provide information to consumers through other means including digital, to improve the accessibility of food information in particular for visually impaired persons.</p> <p>As part of its approach to food information to consumers and combined with the legislative framework on sustainable food systems, the EU will promote schemes (including an EU sustainable food labeling framework) to support enforcement of rules on misleading information.</p> | <p>Information campaigns about the EU aquaculture sector and production that involve retailers; clarifying the scientific basis of the debate on the impacts of aquaculture activities in the EU.</p> <p>Further opening the sector to the public (opening of farms to visitors including schools and other education providers, providing more information on farming conditions).</p> <p>Ensuring close and early engagement of authorities and industry with stakeholders' groups, including NGOs.</p> <p>Promoting the use of branding and quality labels (subject to appropriate control to safeguard their credibility), including geographical indications, also sustainability aspects.</p> <p>Promoting the value of EU aquaculture as 'local and fresh' with short food circuits.</p> <p>In addition to local authorities, community engagement should not be overlooked, as social acceptability can highly influence the development of aquaculture sites.</p> | <p>Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform to share good practices on cross-cutting topics such as financing for zero pollution innovation and jobs, boosting sustainable production and consumption as well as creating thematic hubs (e.g. air, digital, soil) Create synergies with European Climate Pact, Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, Green City Accord, Business@Biodiversity, Chemicals Roundtable, etc.</p> <p>Civil society has an important role as a compliance watchdog. More generally, open data provision to improve the availability of data to the public and private sector and help businesses, policymakers, researchers and citizens better understand and visualise pollution, data of relevance for the zero pollution ambition.</p> <p>The Earth Observation Programme Copernicus will be a major building block for the EU's Destination Earth initiative, providing large amounts of Earth Observation and monitoring data and information.</p> |

Building on specificities:
Translating EGD from the EU sea basin perspective and its traditional aspects



WHAT ROLE CAN BASIN'S MARITIME CULTURAL LANDMARKS PLAY TO ENABLE THE GREEN DEAL AND ITS INNOVATIVE PATHWAYS TOWARDS TRANSITION?

Importance of cultural specificities

Easily recognizable features such as cultural and on-site landmarks can help people to better relate to local issues and find solutions for them. Historical sites and the coastal landscape embody cultural values and perceptions of the sea. Cultural heritage is not static but a living entity that is constantly changing, as our notions of heritage are tied to changing social values, attitudes, interpretations and assessments. In the context of MSP, it is important to recognize that many maritime cultural heritage features (such as lighthouses, shipyards, shipwrecks and fishing villages etc.) can help to sustain maritime activities and sectors, such as shipbuilding, maritime transport or fishing. A sense of belonging can strengthen personal ties to a place and make communities more resilient in the face of change, e.g by enabling them to find innovative solutions or becoming culturally diversified.

The green transition requires a paradigm shift in our lifestyles. In the face of urgent challenges, cultural patterns may be replaced more easily by new shared habits when we recognize that the diversity of understandings and ideas is not merely about interests, but also about ways of knowing and valuing things for the greater good. This is where we might start to notice the Kuhnian paradigm (1962), namely that many small steps can lead to a sea change in the pathways chosen by society.

How can basin's maritime cultural and physical landmarks enable the Green Deal or innovative pathways towards transition?

MSP-GREEN Opening Conference

'Heritage has a specific role in achieving sustainable and inclusive growth, due to its social and economic impact and its key contribution to environmental sustainability. Culture and cultural heritage can be perceived not only as a structural component, but also as a necessary agent in moving towards a more sustainable society.'

Soini, K., Dessain J. Culture-Sustainability Relation: Towards a Conceptual Framework 2016:6



European Sea basins: an overview

European sea basins are the different bodies of water surrounding the continent of Europe, including the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean. These seas and oceans are not only important for their ecological and economic value but also have a rich maritime heritage that spans centuries. Europe's maritime heritage is vast and diverse, reflecting the continent's long history of seafaring and maritime commerce. Throughout history, European sailors and traders have explored the world's oceans, contributing to the development of global trade. The maritime heritage of Europe is also characterized by its rich cultural traditions, including music, literature, art, and cuisine.

Mediterranean Sea

The Mediterranean Sea is at the crossroads of three continents. As a semi-enclosed basin it is bordered by over 20 countries, making it a global sea-borne trade hub. Half of the EU's fishing fleet is active in the Mediterranean. Despite the socio-economic importance of artisanal fisheries for local communities, industrial fishing is a significant issue in the region. Today, overexploitation of fish stocks and increasing marine aquaculture production are ranked among the most important pressures in the region, along with climate change impacts, biodiversity and habitat loss, and pollution. The Mediterranean also has significant annual tourist flows which greatly impacts the surrounding environment. Although it only covers <1% of the global ocean surface, the Mediterranean hosts 7.5% of the world's marine fauna and 18% of its marine flora, of which nearly 30% is endemic.

North Sea

The North Sea is situated on the continental shelf of North-Western Europe. It forms part of the North East Atlantic region as defined by the North East Atlantic Regional Sea Convention, OSPAR. It opens into the Atlantic Ocean and Arctic waters to the North and into the Baltic Sea to the East via the English Channel. The constant mixing of waters in the shallow sea basin provides a rich supply of nutrients upon which lower marine organisms the basis of the sea's food chain depend. The North Sea is one of the most heavily used seas, with key maritime sectors including offshore wind, offshore oil & gas, aquaculture, shipping, shipbuilding, cruise tourism and coastal protection.

Atlantic Ocean

The European (North East) Atlantic borders four Member States (Ireland, France, Spain and Portugal), covering a vast area and a diverse range of ecosystems. In terms of sea uses, fishing is a major sector within the Atlantic, whilst coastal tourism and shipping are of great importance to all Member States bordering this area. In particular, the Gibraltar Strait and the English Channel act as major shipping gateways connecting Europe to the rest of the world. Accounting for one fifth of the Earth's surface, the global significance of the Atlantic ocean lies in driving our weather patterns by storing significant solar radiation and by distributing heat and moisture around the globe.

Black Sea

Connected to the world ocean through the narrow Bosphorus Strait, the high-salinity brackish Black Sea is almost a closed sea where the deeper layers of the water column do not mix with the upper layers. Regarded as a 'strategic bridge' and economic, geo-political and trade corridor, it offers a privileged environment for developing maritime activities. The Black Sea connects to the Mediterranean Sea via the Marmara and Aegean Seas, and links Europe to Central Asia, south east Asia, China and the Middle East via the Caspian Sea. Its ecosystem is threatened by sea-basin wide eutrophication, pollution from inland industrial and mining waste activities, as well as irresponsible fishing.

Baltic Sea

The Baltic Sea is a semi-enclosed shallow sea basin, experiencing near-arctic conditions in the North and a temperate climate in the South. It is also one of the world's largest inland brackish water bodies, bordered by nine EU member states (Denmark, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Sweden) and Russia. The unique ecosystems of the Baltic Sea are severely affected by biodiversity loss and climate change. Additional pressures are caused by sea basin scale phenomena such as eutrophication, overfishing, and elevated levels of contaminants, such as pharmaceuticals and litter.



Existing EU Basin action plans: searching for synergies

North Sea

North Sea 2030

Relevant priorities:
A productive sustainable North Sea & climate neutral North Sea Region

Synergetic objectives:

- Healthy marine environment.
- Lower emissions and reduced disposal of waste into the North Sea.
- Better coordinated Maritime Spatial Planning across national borders & administrative levels.
- Sustainable aquaculture and fisheries supply-chains and development of new products.
- A global front-runner in sustainable blue economy innovation with higher levels of skills and more career opportunities.

Atlantic Ocean

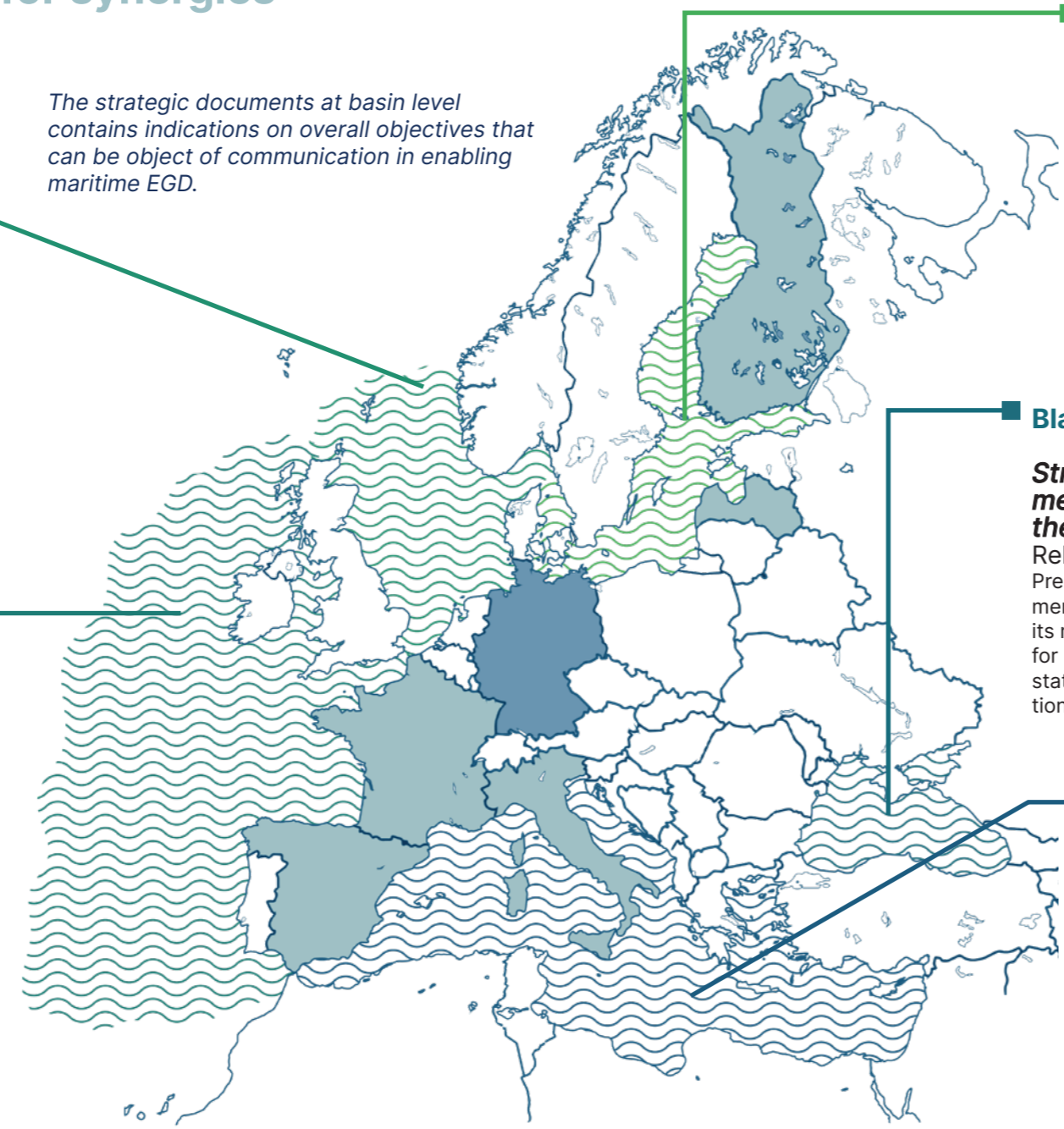
The Atlantic Action Plan 2.0

Relevant priorities:
Atlantic ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy, marine renewable energy, blue skills of the future and ocean literacy, healthy ocean and resilient coasts.

Synergetic objectives:

- Support the sustainable development of the blue economy in the EU countries bordering the Atlantic.
- Align marine renewable energy initiatives covering the EU Atlantic area, based on the philosophy and furthering the objectives of the Strategic Energy Technology plan.
- Develop public awareness using appropriate communication tools on marine renewable energy in the Atlantic and strengthen cooperation in the European ocean energy community.
- Contribute to the protection and improvement of the Atlantic's marine and coastal environment, create synergies for a socially inclusive and sustainable model of regional development.

The strategic documents at basin level contains indications on overall objectives that can be object of communication in enabling maritime EGD.



Baltic Sea

The Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP)*

Relevant priorities:
A healthy Baltic Sea environment with diverse biological components functioning in balance, resulting in a good ecological status and supporting a wide range of sustainable economic and social activities

*Concerning the Baltic Sea, there also exist MSP related policy frameworks:
EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region; VASAB Vision 2040; HELCOM-VASAB MSP Roadmap 2021-2030.

Black Sea

Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea

Relevant priorities:
Preserve its ecosystem as a valuable natural endowment of the region, whilst ensuring the protection of its marine and coastal living resources as a condition for sustainable development of the Black Sea coastal states, well-being, health and security of their population.

Mediterranean Sea

The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (the MSSD)

Relevant priorities:
A prosperous and peaceful Mediterranean region: Investing in the environment as means to secure long-term, sustainable job creation and socio-economic development, and as an essential process for the achievement of long-term development for the present and future generations.

Integrated from the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy from 2021 its synergetic objectives are:

Synergetic objectives:

Guided by the HELCOM vision, the BSAP is divided into four segments with specific goals:

- Biodiversity, with its goal of a "Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient"
- Eutrophication, with its goal of a "Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication"
- Hazardous substances and litter, with its goal of a "Baltic Sea unaffected by hazardous substances and litter"
- Sea-based activities, with its goal of "Environmentally sustainable sea-based activities"

Synergetic objectives:

Long-term Ecosystem Quality Objectives (EcoQOs)

- Preserve commercial marine living resources.
 - a: Sustainable use of commercial fish stocks and other marine living resources.
 - b: Restore/rehabilitate stocks of commercial marine living resources.
- Conservation of Black Sea Biodiversity and Habitats.
 - a: Reduce the risk of extinction of threatened species.
 - b: Conserve coastal and marine habitats and landscapes.

Synergetic objectives:

- Adapt international commitments to regional conditions and guide national strategies and stimulate regional cooperation in the achievement of sustainable development objectives
- Ensure sustainable development in marine and coastal areas
- Address climate change as a priority
- Transition towards a green and blue economy
- Improve governance in support of sustainable development

Macro frameworks of cooperation:
Paris Agreement 2015
UN Sustainable Development Goals
UN Convention on Biological Diversity
The Jakarta Mandate
on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity
Ramsar Convention



Basin identity on Green transition and MSP: How it works*

*The following sea basin-specific identities are primarily based on a survey conducted as part of Task 5.3 in the MSP-GREEN project.

Urgent EGD topics to address:

A list of topics, according to the categories identified by the MSP-GREEN project*, and their priority according to basin's needs.

*Identified categories:

- A. Climate change mitigation
- B. Climate change adaptation
- C. Sustainable sea-food production
- D. Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration
- E. Blue circular economy
- F. Zero pollution

Main challenges in strengthening EGD implementation:

Main conflicts to be considered in communication as to help identify best solutions.

Key cultural assets to base narratives on:

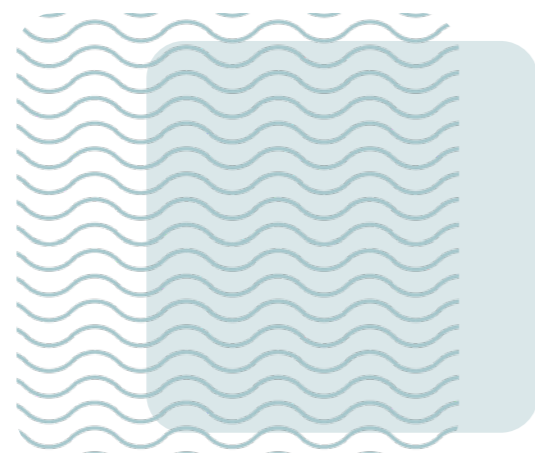
A set of cultural assets that are shared across the sea basin. They can be used in communication to build on a shared culture (nationwide and beyond borders) to trigger engagement and create connections.

Key natural aspects for local community engagement:

A set of natural assets that are shared across the sea basin and can be employed as a common reference to in communication to trigger engagement.

Most impactful activities:

Activities that require re-thinking in order to reduce their impact on the environment and/or the pollution they generate.



A key aspect for communication that links the EGD and MSP is summarized in this box.

Easily identifiable maritime sectors:

Sectors that are representative of the basin and are easily identified by the target audience. Certain sectors are easier to relate to in terms of how MSP can contribute to EGD objectives.

Main challenges in communicating the EGD in MSP:

A description of the main obstacles that should be tackled. These often refer to lack of communication or missing channels of communication between authorities or stakeholders.

Associated climate change impacts:

Relevant climate change impacts in the basin, based on current impacts and climate scenarios

Communicating MSP for Green: How it works

Appropriate communication tone:

The tone of voice in communication* that is understood and appreciated by target audience in the basin.

** The tone of voice in communication refers to the way words or phrases are utilized to create an impact on the audience, to the way the message is delivered conveying our feelings or emotions.*

International communication:

A key aspect of making MSP an enabler of the European Green Deal is to build transboundary relationships, including with non-EU countries. As they are not bound by the EU MSP Directive, these may not have MSP plans in place. However, many non-EU countries have implemented other integrated or sector-based management approaches. A transformation of maritime sectors and protection of the marine environment can only be achieved through a joint effort. Good communication with non-EU countries is also a requirement of the MSP Directive in the context of transboundary consultation. Existing cooperation mechanisms and channels are listed here as a possible vehicle of communication of the maritime EGD.

A good example of information spreading:

In this space an effective example from the basin is presented. It could be used as a reference or help to share experiences between basins.

Successful communication channels:

Practical channels that have been perceived as effective in past communication activities in the selected basin.

Means of effective media:

Media that is perceived as effective in reaching the target and/or a broad audience.

Effective visual tools:

The visual tools that are most appreciated and employed in the basin.

More easily approachable EGD topics to be prioritized in communication:

Based on the categories identified by the MSP-GREEN project*, the topics that may be easier to include in communication to the target audience and the public debate of the basin.

Propose culturally adjusted path - introduce a new habit or highlight a valued one!

We base our habits and activities on traditions, but some may not be sustainable any longer. Then why not to propose a new habit or highlight a set of valued traditions to build on the basin-wide culturalities and develop innovative pathways to make blue economies sustainable?

Landmarks: an example of landmarks to strengthen visual communication and build visual identities.

Basin identity on Green transition and MSP: Baltic Sea

Urgent EGD topics to address:

- Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Biodiversity protection and conservation
- Sustainable sea food production has also been highlighted

Most polluting or impactful activities:

- Oil spills
- Shipping
- Agriculture
- Defence (dumped munition)
- Offshore renewable energy

Main challenges in strengthening EGD implementation:

Offshore Wind Farms vs. Fishing, Shipping, landscape and Biodiversity protection.
Fishing vs. Communication cables and pipelines

Key cultural assets to base narratives on:

Literature
Visual and performing Arts (e.g. The Baltic Song and Dance festival, exhibition)
Cuisine (e.g. Herring dishes, coastal Northern fauna herbs and berries of significance)
Coastal settlements are a core part of landscape with northern forts and historical wooden coastal towns and fishing villages being present, lighthouses are also common. There is presence of underwater cultural heritage (UCH).

Key natural aspects to engage local communities:

Representative groups of species may be: grey seal, ringed seal (mammals), common tern, sand martins (birds), herrings and sprats (fish), as a symbol of extinction: the sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*). Common coastal features are lagoons, splits and archipelagos. Shores range from rocky to sandy beaches. Coniferous and dry deciduous forests with Northern flora can be found in diverse weather settings, ranging from heavy winds and rain showers, and foggy landscapes, but also experiences warm summer months.



Sustainable development in the BSR is affected by vulnerability of fragile Baltic Sea environment and driven by the necessity for independence of sustainable energy. It is supported by existing MSP framework and cooperation where countries are committed to work jointly for coherent and adaptive MSP.

Easily identifiable maritime sectors:

- Fisheries
- Recreation and tourism
- Transport
- Maritime defence
- Nature and landscape protection

Main challenges to EGD in MSP:

- Ecosystem vulnerability of the specific environmental conditions (e.g. brackish waters)
- Complexity of the EGD topics
- Overlapping EU objectives (e.g. renewable energy development and biodiversity protection in 30% of sea basin)
- Existing competition and diversified development goals of each country
- Geopolitical tensions

Associated climate change impacts:

Increase in water temperature, which fosters eutrophication processes reducing the water quality. Sea level rise. More frequent storm surges resulting in coastal flooding.

For in-depth estimate analyses, the reader may consult: ["Climate Change in the Baltic Sea. 2021 Fact Sheet. Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings n°180. HELCOM/Baltic Earth 2021."](#)

Communicating MSP for Green: Baltic Sea

Appropriate communication tone:

Factual and concise.
Serious and normative.
Evidence-based approach brings out different viewpoints into the discussion, which is backed up by factual information.

Playful tone of voice can be effective to younger audiences.

International communication:

Existing transboundary cooperation mechanism are, for example, the VASAB, HELCOM*, including the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group, CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy, the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan (BEMIP) High-Level Group.

A good example of information spreading:

Meetings are considered as an extensively effective communication channel, of importance is the network of EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and its cooperation among various policy areas. Significant results were obtained also via **the Baltic MSP Planners Forum**. Moreover, The VASAB Young Planners Summer School – an event for the young professionals in the field of spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region took place in 2019 and 2022, where main EGD themes and challenges were integrated for developing solutions addressing spatial challenges in the BSR. From a more illustrative approach covering the Baltic Sea basin, **the WWF booklet "Become a Maritime Spatialist in 10 minutes"** helped reaching the wider public, an easy-to-read, non-scientific brochure used an engaging comic format to depict the objectives and possible benefits of an MSP process. And also, worth a mention is creatively illustrated **video material** to inform wider audiences on explaining MSP in simpler terms **"Marine spatial planning - In a nutshell"**, proving that various digital tools are valuable means to spread information (available at: <https://vimeo.com/219515087>).

Successful communication :

- Conferences
- Community of Practice (CoP)
- Newsletters via email/webpage subscription
- Locally-positioned workshop

Means of effective media:

- Newsletter
- Social media, including video platforms
- Policy briefs

Effective visual tools:

- Infographics
- Videos
- Maps with descriptions
- TV series (given the audience of general public!)

Easier EGD topics to be prioritized in communication:

- Zero pollution
- Biodiversity protection
- Climate change adaptation

Adjust a cultural path - introduce a new habit or highlight a valued one!

Turn to local production - finding new sustainable food sources by supporting coastal communities e.g. algae production.

Increase the use of different fish species as a locally-sourced meal during festivities!

Landmarks: Curonian Spit, Bengtskär lighthouse, Livonian village Mazirbe, Liepāja Fort, the Langhammars Raukar, Käsnu village.



Basin identity on Green transition and MSP: North Sea

Most urgent EGD topics to address:

- Biodiversity protection and conservation
- Climate change mitigation
- Blue circular economy

Most polluting or impactful activities:

- Transport
- Agriculture
- Oil and Gas
- Offshore renewable energy

Easily identifiable maritime sectors:

- Fishing
- Offshore renewable energy
- Transport
- Oil and gas
- Nature and landscape protection

Main challenges in strengthening EGD implementation:

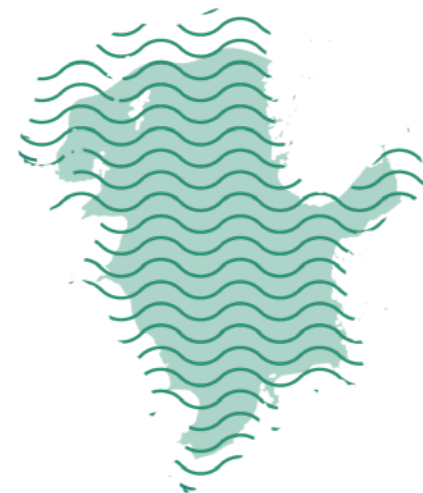
Offshore Wind Farms vs. Fishing
Shipping vs. Biodiversity protection
Fishing vs. Biodiversity protection

Key cultural assets to base narratives on:

Literature
Architecture
Comics (Belgium)
Cuisine as Matjes (salted herring)
The Edge of the World (a culture of the North Sea) and lighthouses as points of connection between countries and continents. Many shipwrecks can also be found.

Key natural aspects to engage local communities:

Representative groups of species may be harbour porpoise, salmon, but also small cetaceans, brown shrimps, as well as migrating birds (geese, cranes). Common coastal features are fjords, estuaries, sandbanks, splits and intertidal mudflats. Shores range from sheer cliffs, deep fjords to sandy beaches or large mudflats. Coniferous forests and Northern flora can be found in a windy, rainy but temperate climate.



The North Sea countries have traditionally a strong relationship with nature and outdoor experiences that could be capitalized.

Main challenges to EGD in MSP:

- Complexity of the EGD topics
- Overlapping EU objectives (e.g. renewable energy development and biodiversity protection in 30% of sea basin)
- Incoherent policies and strategies

Associated climate change impacts:

Shift of species and different composition of food web, biological cycles out of sync, recurrent storm surges

Landmarks: Wadden Sea islands, Lighthouses on the coast of Niedersachsen

Communicating MSP for Green: North Sea

Appropriate communication tone:

Serious, factual and concise.

However it depends on the target group. Stakeholders like concise facts while the public may appreciate something more playful or fun.

International communication:

Existing international groups are, for example, North Sea Data Expert Group, MSP expert group (EU), North Sea collaboration group, North Sea Shipping Group, North Sea Energy Cooperation (NSEC), German-Polish MSP Working Group.

Employ visuals and invite non-EU countries to events to foster more direct exchange, also as part of communities of practice. Policy makers and stakeholders would respond more to “official” channels but dedicated training and workshops would probably have more impact on multipliers.

A good example of information spreading:

The Belgian federal public service ‘Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment’ has creatively used infographic elements listing the main maritime activities by **illustrative cartography, highlighting the sustainability aspects** at: www.health.belgium.be/en/activities-sea. Also, the **Trilateral cooperation regarding the Wadden Sea World Heritage** has significant effects in terms of sustainability, conservation and education that are well presented at: <https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/one-wadden-sea-one-global-heritage>. To note, developed in 2011 by the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment in the Netherlands and the NHTV University of Breda, the **MSP Challenge board game** represents an innovative communications means to explain MSP and the different uses in the sea to stakeholders. Increasing in its application across various sea basins, this table-board strategy game (where a fictitious sea basin is designed on the board with different maritime activities represented by colourful acrylate tiles and symbols). Could this become a creation dedicated specifically to envision the path for green transition for the basin-wide MSP? for meaningful interaction and learning among stakeholders in formal planning processes.

Successful communication channels:

- Legislative communication for consultation on MSP
- Conferences
- On-site workshops with stakeholders

Means of effective media:

- Events
- Tv and Tv series (innovative!)
- Locally-positioned workshop

Effective visual tools:

- Infographics
- Maps with descriptions
- Pictures

Easier EGD topics to be prioritized in communication:

- Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration
- Climate change adaptation

Adjust a cultural path - introduce a new habit or highlight a valued one!

More focus on energy savings rather than production of renewable energy. The use of natural materials from the sea used in ocean technology, construction for sectoral processes (e.g. algal biofuels) could be an interesting asset.



Basin identity on Green transition and MSP: Atlantic Ocean

Most urgent EGD topics to address:

- Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and conservation
- Climate change adaptation
- Climate Change Mitigation

Most polluting or impactful activities:

- Coastal and maritime tourism
- Fishing
- Port activities
- Transport

Easily identifiable maritime sectors:

- Fishing
- Coastal and maritime tourism
- Port activities
- Nature protection and conservation
- Landscape preservation

Main challenges in strengthening EGD implementation:

Fishing vs. Biodiversity protection
Offshore Wind Farms vs. Fishing
Security/Defence (military use of the sea) vs. Other maritime activities.
Shipping vs. Biodiversity protection

Key cultural assets to base narratives on:

Music
Architecture
Cuisine (e.g. oysters, mussels, seafood)
Cinematography
On the coast it is very common to find beautiful lighthouses.

Key natural aspects to engage with local communities:

Representative groups of species may be, for instance, the Atlantic sturgeon, North Atlantic right whale, Atlantic white-sided dolphin, but also the Atlantic puffin. Common coastal features are tidal wetlands and saltmarshes, and sandy beaches with dunes but also rocky shores, Hilly landscape near seashore and Coniferous forestland in a windy, rainy and temperate climate with sunny and warm weather periods.



The Atlantic Ocean is such a biological and economic gateway to other continents that it can play a global role as maritime EGD promoter.

Landmarks: the Cordouan lighthouse (France), Porto do Son, A Coruña (Spain), Cliffs of Moher - Ireland, Bélem Tower (Portugal), the Beachy Head (England)

Communicating MSP for Green: Atlantic Ocean

Appropriate communication tone:

Factual and concise seems the most appreciated by stakeholders.

International communication:

Existing transboundary cooperation mechanism, for example, are the OSPAR Convention, which brings together 15 governments and the EU to cooperate on the protection of the marine environment in the North-East Atlantic. Also, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions.
Making the information available at least in English can help sharing them and agree on possible solutions.

A good example of information spreading:

In this vast basin several examples can be mentioned coming from NGOs and governments. For instance, Irish NGO Fair Seas' advocacy for improved marine protection was considered as effective communication means, also using unusual methods, such as land art (<https://fairseas.ie/media/>)

France has issued various effective white papers dedicated for the MSP topic, also translated into English, based on extensive factual and data driven research. One of such: www.franceagrimer.fr/fam/content/download/69398/document/20230216_CC%20p%C3%AAche%20aqua%20ANG.pdf?version=2. Eventually a number of engaging projects are directed to citizens regarding sustainability, for instance: www.nowuproject.eu.

Successful communication channels:

- Conferences
- Social media campaigns
- Direct engagement with local stakeholders (NGOs, sector representatives, etc.)

Means of effective media:

- Newsletter
- Social media
- Locally-positioned workshop
- Emails

Effective visual tools:

- Infographics,
- Photography
- Factsheets

Easier EGD topics to be prioritized in communication:

- Zero pollution
- Blue circular economy
- Climate change topics
- Sustainable food production

Adjust a cultural path - introduce a new habit or highlight a valued one!

Increase seaweed consumption, also through dedicated recipes. Favouring low impact fishing products and local products consumption in restaurants could be an interesting path.



Basin identity on Green transition and MSP: Black Sea

Most urgent EGD topics to address:

- Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and conservation
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Sustainable sea food production
- Zero Pollution

Most polluting or impactful activities:

- Coastal and maritime tourism
- Maritime transport
- Port activities
- Oil and Gas

Easily identifiable maritime sectors:

- Fishing
- Aquaculture
- Coastal and maritime tourism
- Maritime transport
- Nature protection and conservation

Main challenges to EGD in MSP:

Overall transnational organisations coordinating cooperation in the sea basin could be stronger, Bulgaria and Romania are the only EU Member States in the Black Sea that have, therefore, worked on MSP.

The Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea does not address the ongoing MSP process and directly the topics of the EGD and there is a need for a common Black Sea Basin Vision/Strategy on MSP and EGD (bringing together EU and non-EU countries). This results in incoherent policies and strategies, planning and legislative systems are not enough harmonized.

Associated climate change impacts:

Extreme storms and sea level rise/sea flooding. And increased temperature of sea water.*

*The reader may further consult "BSEC Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the Black Sea".

Main challenges in strengthening EGD implementation:

Shipping vs. Biodiversity protection
Security/Defence vs. Other activities at sea
Waste water discharge vs. Nature conservation
Coastal and maritime tourism vs. Biodiversity protection

Key cultural assets to base narratives on:

Rich Underwater Cultural Heritage
Architecture (Archaeological reserves, ancient fortress and ports, shipwrecks)
Cuisine (e.g. Banitsa & white cheese)

Key natural aspects to engage with local communities:

Representative groups of species may be the Common and Bottlenose dolphine (mammal), the Black Sea beluga sturgeon, the Black Sea herring (fish), Yelkouan shearwater (birds). As a symbol of extinction: the Mediterranean monk seal.
Common coastal features are wetlands and lagoons, limestone shores and sandy beaches but also rocky shores in a temperate climate.



Improved stakeholder engagement and channels to make voices heard (e.g. digital platforms) could help in many regards.

Landmarks: Sunny Beach Resort, Cape Kaliakra (Bulgaria), Giresun Castle (Turkey), Bolshoy Ice Dome (Russia).

Communicating MSP for Green: Black Sea

Successful communication channels:

- On-site workshops with stakeholders
- Community of Practise (CoP)
- Newsletters via email/webpage subscription

Means of effective media:

- Social media
- Video platforms
- Events
- Direct Emails
- Newsletters
- Locally-positioned workshop

Effective visual tools:

- Infographics,
- Quantitative graphs
- Maps with descriptions

Easier EGD topics to be prioritized in communication:

- Sustainable food production
- Zero pollution
- Blue circular economy
- Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration

Adjust a cultural path - introduce a new habit or highlight a valued one!

The basin could see employment of developing more nature-based coastal and maritime tourism, applying nature-based solutions for coastal protection. The development of multi-use opportunities in the sea space could also be helpful (e.g. between, tourism, underwater cultural heritage and MPAs).

Appropriate communication tone:

Factual and concise: it is perceived as more practical and easily understandable even from non-expert stakeholders).

International communication:

Existing transboundary cooperation mechanisms, for example, are the Black Sea Commission; Black Sea Assistance Mechanism of the Common Maritime Agenda, Black Sea Virtual Knowledge Centre, Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), and also the Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin programme (NEXT- Black Sea Basin, 2021-2027). Cooperation can be supported by using a dedicated MSP Community of Practice and strengthening international stakeholders meetings. The Central and South Eastern Europe Energy connectivity (CESEC) High Level Group could also foster regional cooperation initiatives in the Black Sea. While continuous communication can be performed via Informative booklets/newsletters in national languages.

A good example of information spreading:

The World Bank - Blueing the Black Sea GEF Regional project created an interesting Stakeholder Engagement Plan, The Horizon 2020 project Bridge Black Sea developed engaging materials for communication and capacity building. The recently established Community of Practice (CoP) in the Western Black Sea test site under the framework of the Horizon Europe MSP4BIO project, which which at a cross-border level (Bulgaria and Romania) is expected to better align the MPA management and MSP process and improve the biodiversity integration in MSP.



Basin identity on Green transition and MSP: Mediterranean Sea

Most urgent EGD topics to address:

- Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and conservation
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Sustainable sea food production

Most polluting or impactful activities:

- Coastal and maritime tourism
- Fishing
- Oil and Gas
- Shipping

Easily identifiable maritime sectors:

- Fishing
- Coastal and maritime tourism
- Maritime transport
- Port activities
- Oil and Gas
- Nature protection and conservation

Main challenges in strengthening EGD implementation:

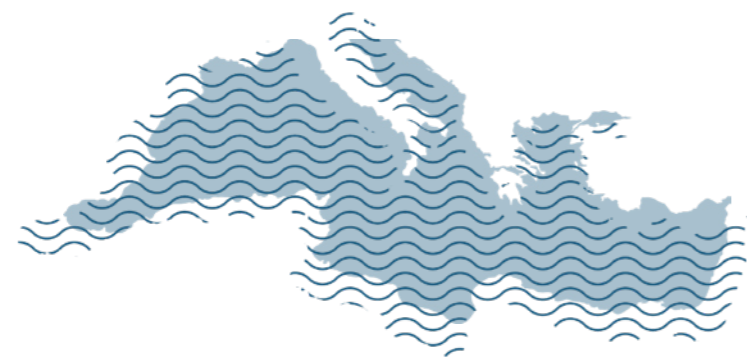
Offshore Wind Farms vs. Landscape and fishing
 Fishing vs. Biodiversity protection
 Shipping vs. Ecosystem conservation
 Tourism vs. Biodiversity

Key cultural assets to base narratives on:

Visual Arts (Mosaics, Christian art, renaissance)
 Architecture (Greek, Phoenician, Roman, Egyptian temples and ruins along the Mediterranean coast and as extensively present underwater cultural heritage.
 Cuisine (e.g. Mediterranean diet: pizza, humus, tzatziki, anis liquors, wine, olives).
 Interpersonal interaction.

Key natural aspects to engage with local communities:

Representative species may be the Posidonia oceanica, the Monk seal and the Loggerhead sea turtle.
 Common coastal features are wetlands and lagoons, limestone shores and sandy beaches but also rocky shores and Mediterranean flora (e.g. Macchia Mediterranea) in a sunny, warm and temperate climate. Archipelagos are especially present in the Eastern basin.



The cultural value of traditional maritime activities and marine assets can be a driver to sustainability.

Main challenges to EGD in MSP:

- Frequent government changes in several countries
- Overlapping EU objectives (e.g. renewable energy development and biodiversity protection in 30% of sea basin)
- Lack of proper stakeholder engagement
- Lack of channels to make voices heard
- Tendency to work in silos

Associated climate change impacts:

Water scarcity and salinization of coastal aquifers, warmer air and sea water temperatures and coastal flooding and increase in erosion

For in-depth information the reader may consult MedECC, 2022.

Landmarks: the Temple of Poseidon (Greece); the Temple of Isis, Sabratha (Libya); Cathedral of Palma de Mallorca, Sohail Castle, Cabrera Island (Spain); Venice Arsenale, the Lagoon Delta del Po Natural Park (Italy).

Communicating MSP for Green: Mediterranean Sea

Appropriate communication tone:

Fun or normative, factual and concise: Depending on the target audience, for the wider public there is a need to make the information factual, concise and preferably ironic, to have it viral. If we are targeting policy actors, the message should still be factual and concise, but also normative.

International communication:

Existing transboundary cooperation mechanism, for example, are the UNEP/MAP - Barcelona Convention system, Union for Mediterranean action on blue economy, the Western Mediterranean (WestMED) initiative, the EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region (EUSAIR).

An MSP Community of Practice is in place since 2023.

Social media campaigns, booklets, infographics translated in all languages as well as dedicated events, including multilateral official meetings could help reach extra-EU countries more easily.

A good example of information spreading:

WWF is perceived as an effective means and actively contributes at Mediterranean level, their campaign against marine plastic (www.wwfmmi.org/plastic_campaign/) worked at a regional scale with the aim of stopping ghost gear. The main media employed were exercised through social media channels, and the institution's official website. The campaign was impressively successful with 2 million people reached. The fact of evaluating the effect and success of a campaign can help better plan future actions.

Successful communication channels:

- On-site workshops with stakeholders
- Social media campaigns
- Institutional campaign on traditional media

Means of effective media:

- Policy briefs
- Industry briefs
- Tv news/series
- Social media

Effective visual tools:

- Infographics,
- Photography
- Maps with descriptions

Easier EGD topics to be prioritized in communication:

- Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration
- Climate change topics
- Sustainable food production

Adjust a cultural path - introduce a new habit or highlight a valued one!

Increased consumption of sustainable seafood alternatives, for instance invasive species (bluefish, blue crab, etc.).

Promote use of sustainable sourced seafood in gatherings.

Different levels of development can be traced in the Western and Eastern sub-basins.



Learning the way:
Communication theories
and key points

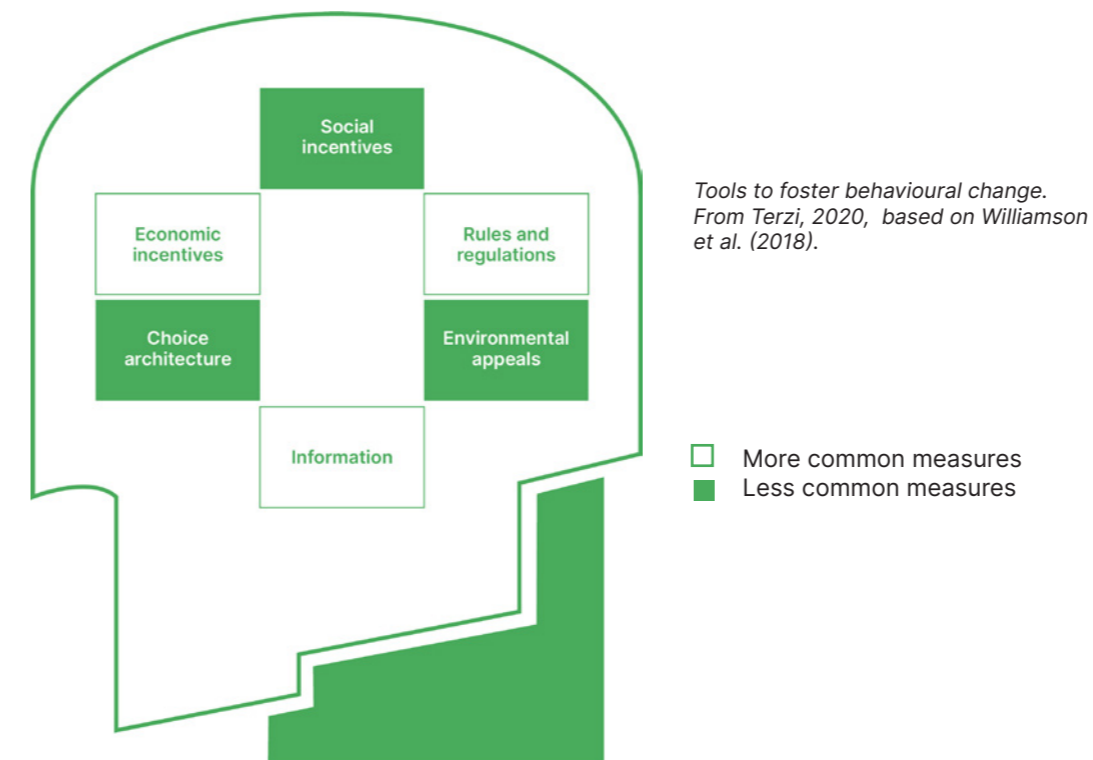


HOW TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION ON MARITIME EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL ACROSS VARIOUS SEA BASINS?

Crafting an effective narrative on green transition

Terzi (2020) pointed to an analysis on how policymakers can communicate with citizens more effectively on green transition. This is crucial not only in order to foster the lifestyle changes that could lead to a reduction in households' direct GHG emissions, but also because of its indirect effects in democratic countries, where the overall political palatability of Green Deal will determine their feasibility (Terzi, 2020).

In the context of specific policies, or in this case concerning the European Green Deal set policy targets in relation to marine territories, it is important to realise that there are different degrees of palatability in various situational settings. Meaning that segmentation of audience can take various angles. Either when there are existing cultural variations, political orientation etc., targeting specific policy shows more persuasiveness when it is framed as a positive outcome.



“Implementing green behaviour initiatives will require policy to walk a strategic line between encouraging and enforcing”

European Commission (2012)

- 1) Highlight local and regional impacts
- 2) Reduce temporal distance
- 3) Link to personal benefit
- 4) Highlight concrete actions and their effects
- 5) Manage uncertainty
- 6) Targeting

Addressing the various maritime concerns and responding to the global energy demand will require not only policy action such as regulation and economic incentives in the form of a comprehensive Green Deal package, but also bottom-up engagement by citizens. The reason for this is twofold: first, ambitious policies will need to secure consistent political support by the population, and second, it shall be supported by communication strategies messaging current time frame in order to foster citizen engagement with climate mitigation more effectively.

Noting that there is no one-size-fits-all, it points that the various European Sea basins must align its communication incentives to the local context, and its main messages shall be adapted to the audience and purpose in order to yield an impact of meaning.

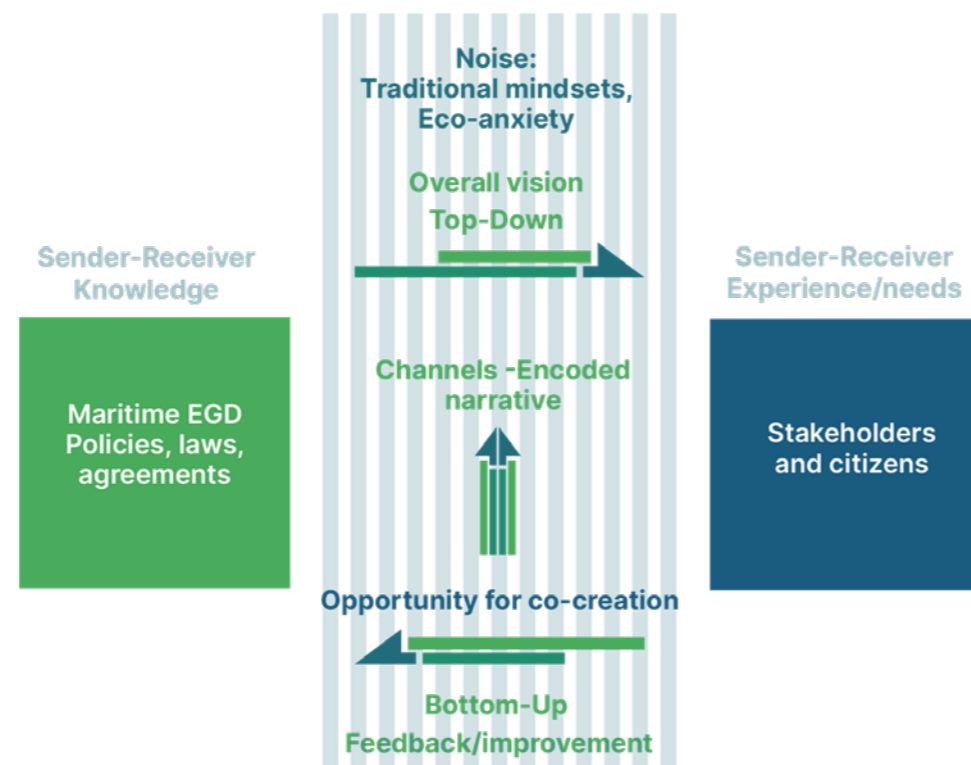
Realising the enormous scale and complexity of a particular problem, people prefer to distance themselves from it. **How to turn it into an opportunity?** The narrative accompanying the green transition should inspire wide public participation, rather than encourage people to see the European Green Deal objectives as a top-down policy only. Storytelling is suggested as a powerful tool in giving sense to the world and mobilising people to act (Akerlof and Snower, 2016; Carmichael, 2019).

Messages may be more effective when they incorporate elements of novelty, capture attention, demonstrate personal relevance, appeal both to rational thought and emotion, and clearly state a course of action.

“Managing a fair transition and overcoming problems demanding global co-ordinated action will surely require more than effective communication alone, but at the same time, powerful narratives and a shared sense of purpose will determine the possibility set for policy decisions to be taken.

Policy and communication are but two sides of the same coin.”

European Commission (2012)



A visualization pointing to highlight an interactive communication between the EC and citizens regarding maritime EGD as a valued opportunity but also as a subject of interpretation, based on Schramm's model of communication.

There is, therefore an opportunity to reflect on the communication we wish to build at European level and how it will downscale to local realities. Starting from a traditional communication model in which the EU is a standard sender and holder of an overall vision, above personal interests, the bottom-up approach can enable the co-creation of a shared narrative that can be endorsed by citizens. This could prove useful, in addition, to identify a behavioural theory, linked to circular economy and fairness to overcome the somehow painful contradictions of western society in terms of consumerism and sustainability facing climate change (Bettie et Al. 2016).

Culturally supporting maritime EGD: Ocean Literacy

Awareness and engagement can be supported by activities of dissemination and education in the broader population. Ocean Literacy is identified as the discipline that can support positive changes to protect the ocean and use its resources in a sustainable way. The broadness of its scope, the effort made by UNESCO to promote it and the important networks already established, such as EU4Ocean, suggests that it may also be the best framework to convey information about MSP and maritime activities. Considering this, a set of principles, inspired by UNESCO Ocean Literacy Principles, have been identified.

Principles of EGD-MSP-OL

Ocean literacy for MSP-EGD is an understanding of the impacts that human activities have on the ocean and how a green transition supported by MSP can help reduce them.

An MSP-EGD literate person understands the core concepts that intersect MSP and the EGD, can communicate about transition in the maritime sectors in a meaningful way and is able to make informed and responsible decisions regarding the transition happening in the ocean.



MSP-EGD Principles

Every MSP-EGD literate person should consider the following principles:

Maritime activities have an impact on the environment

Maritime spatial planning can help reduce impacts and ensures the coexistence between human activities and the protection of ecosystem services

Maritime management and spatial measures can support green transition of sectors

The green transition should be consistent with an ecosystem-based approach

Maritime spatial planning is a safe framework for maritime stakeholders from all sectors and levels of governance to express their views

Maritime sectors concerned by the EGD are in need to be presented to the public, in the light of opportunities for a green transition

Key points in communicating green transition and MSP

Considering the European recommendations on communicating MSP (Fisheries, 2021) and *UN Communicating on Climate Change* and *UNEP Communicating on Sustainability* (2005) a set of key points have been identified.

Use science-based information

Avoid confusion, misconceptions and futile debates of dissent: base your message on consistent knowledge from sciences and official documents. Ensure your data and figures sources are reliable. For instance, the Earth Observation Programme Copernicus.

Product narratives

When engaging stakeholders or promoting specific sectors, such as food production ensure that sustainable products are well advertised and information is useful to consumers. The EU is specifically concerned by ensuring consumers understand the benefits of aquaculture and its promotion as 'local and fresh' with short food circuits. Moreover, citizens should receive correct information regarding circular economy. For instance, labels can be a space to promote MSP EGD while branding and quality labels can ensure credibility and provide sustainability references (provenience, production method, etc.). Sectors should be more open to the public (e.g. site visits, open days).

Don't fall for greenwashing

When presenting solutions and valuable experiences from maritime industries make sure they (and companies providing them) are in line with expected impact reduction. When relevant inform the public to strengthen consumers against green claims and premature obsolescence.

Use champions or trusted messengers

When promoting change in regulations and management of maritime activities co-design is a key aspect for endorsement.

Having on your team a sector "champion" that has the respect of his/her group but understands the importance of transition can have positive effects in terms of knowledge flow and engagement.

Conflicts and solutions, or synergies

When presenting issues make sure you point out that solutions are needed, MSP is not limiting sectors but suggesting best management options and this shall apply also on transition of the activities.

Relatable narratives

Presenting local case studies and examples that stakeholders can relate to is useful to create a direct connection with the audience. Employ jargon only when useful to engage with the stakeholders. Create a connection with shared interests and values like safety, stability, recreational and spiritual values of the sea. Moreover, MSP can be presented through practical and concrete examples.

Empower stakeholders

Stakeholders are the actors of change, both at institutional and sector level, they need to understand that their choices have the power to affect reality. This is true also for coastal populations that can support change in terms of lifestyles and scrutiny. An example is the involvement of citizens in the energy system. Moreover, civil society can play a role as a compliance watchdog. Data should be made available, and citizens should be allowed to contribute to database feeding, according to set procedures.

Inclusive narratives

Consider that the European Green Deal puts social fairness at its heart, leaving no person and no place behind during the EU's transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Your

narratives should ensure fairness is represented and stereotypes are avoided. Youth should be informed and engaged to understand and continue the transition. Stakeholders should be supported in building international, intercultural and intergenerational relationships. Engagement of authorities and industry with stakeholders' groups, including NGOs must be reinforced. Collaboration among higher education institutions, research and companies on EGD topics should be promoted. This is also seen an opportunity to build shared storytelling and visions.

Timely narratives

There is a need to act promptly, the climate is changing rapidly, EGD deadlines are approaching and transition should happen in a timely manner. However, some of the effects of change may be experienced later on, sometimes by next generations and target audiences should be aware of it.

Proactive narratives

The European Green Deal is an opportunity to rethink maritime activities, seascapes and landscapes, coastal communities and traditions. An opportunity for change that may bring human societies to a better future in which coexistence with the environment is more harmonious and resources are secured for future generations. This can trigger a sense of belonging and gather people to co-design the green eutopia.

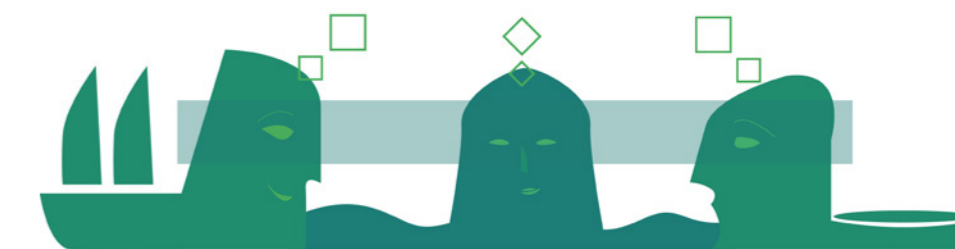
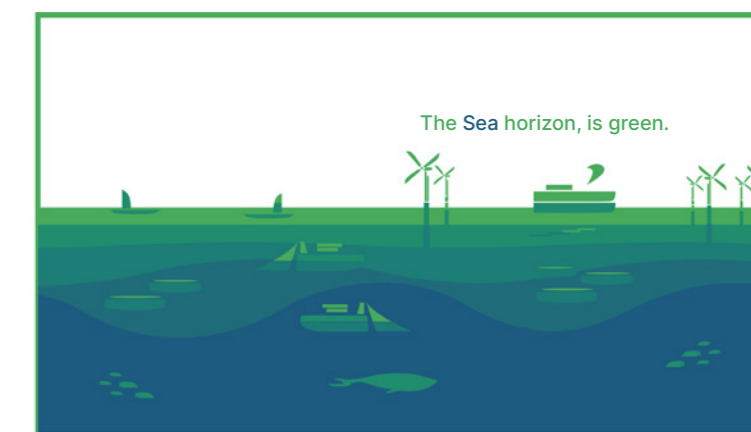
International narratives

The MSP Directive stresses out the importance of consult neighbouring countries and cooperate with extra-EU ones. This is increasingly true regarding EGD because as long as many international partners do not share the same ambition as the EU, there is a risk of dissipating efforts and make some of the results less useful, especially in terms of environmental protection. The EGD MSP narrative should be shared with extra-EU countries aiming at proposing it as an opportunity for their development.

Cooperation at an international level is key to tackle issues of common concern. In terms of communication much can be promoted in the framework of shared initiatives, such as Global Biodiversity Coalition, MSP Global, Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030, the EU4Ocean Coalition. But also MSP dedicated events, such as the European Maritime Days (EMD) and the United Nations Ocean Conference. An important aspect is to promote the use of existing platforms among EU stakeholders via initiatives such as the Blue Forum, Sustainable ports subgroup of the European Ports Forum, Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform etc.

Multi-narratives

One Green Deal, many deals. Basin, national, local, sectoral, the maritime Green Deal will be interpreted in many ways, including different points of view. It is important to remain open to plurality as long as the objectives are the same and the discourse is a proactive one.



Tone and narrative: promoting marine ecological citizenship

The European Climate and Health Observatory, as well as mental health experts have pointed out the increasing frequency of eco-anxiety, seen as a concern linked to climate change and a related sense of fear and insecurity of the future. The fear is reinforced by the awareness of being part of a wider problem; as certain individual and collective lifestyle behaviours are contributing to the process of making our planet less hospitable for future generations.

It is therefore a necessity when disseminating facts and figures linked to the green transition of maritime activities, to avoid blaming specific sectors. Since people are part of a complex economy and in accordance with existing laws and procedures. It is also counterproductive to reflect fear in stakeholders and the population, since it appears that this may trigger inaction due to resignation. Or even, we may turn to our past hierarchical habits, hoping for own's safety at least.

The maritime Green Deal can be proposed as an opportunity: the transition is not caused by the fear of losing our status quo or to doom the human population, but rather by a need to rethink and re-adjust our economies and lifestyles. As a metaphor we could say that if your house suffers structural damage, you have a choice: to repair it out of fear or to think it is an opportunity to refurbish it as to make it better than before.

With this aim, there is a need to better define (Buchan et Al. 2023) and inspire marine ecological citizenship as a positive and proactive alternative (Jefferson et al., 2015) that aware stakeholders and citizens can embrace, without dogmas but with environmental actions and change of behaviours that may help ease the contradiction of developed societies in which awareness is paired with consumerist inputs and high standards expectations.

Eventually, marine environmental citizenship can improve the sense of belonging, a powerful human asset. By making stakeholders part of collective efforts in policy-making and promoting the idea of togetherness in shaping desired societal futures.



Time expectations

Time is a core resource to living beings, a dimension that affects human action and whose perception affects societies and their livelihoods. This perception can also be tricky in proposing sustainable narratives and scenarios. In fact, the lack of visible results over short periods of time (our main mindset) may ignite once more resignation and frustration. It is true that an urgent action is required and 2030 and 2050 are up-close deadlines but it may prove useful to propose a mindful approach, understanding that large economies have long evolutionary paths and the effects of sustainable changes may not be instantly visible. However, this comes with the understanding that human experiences, just as any other species, are not bound to an individual lifetime and should be rather evaluated at a generational scale.



THE GAME
STARTS
HERE



Final Reflections

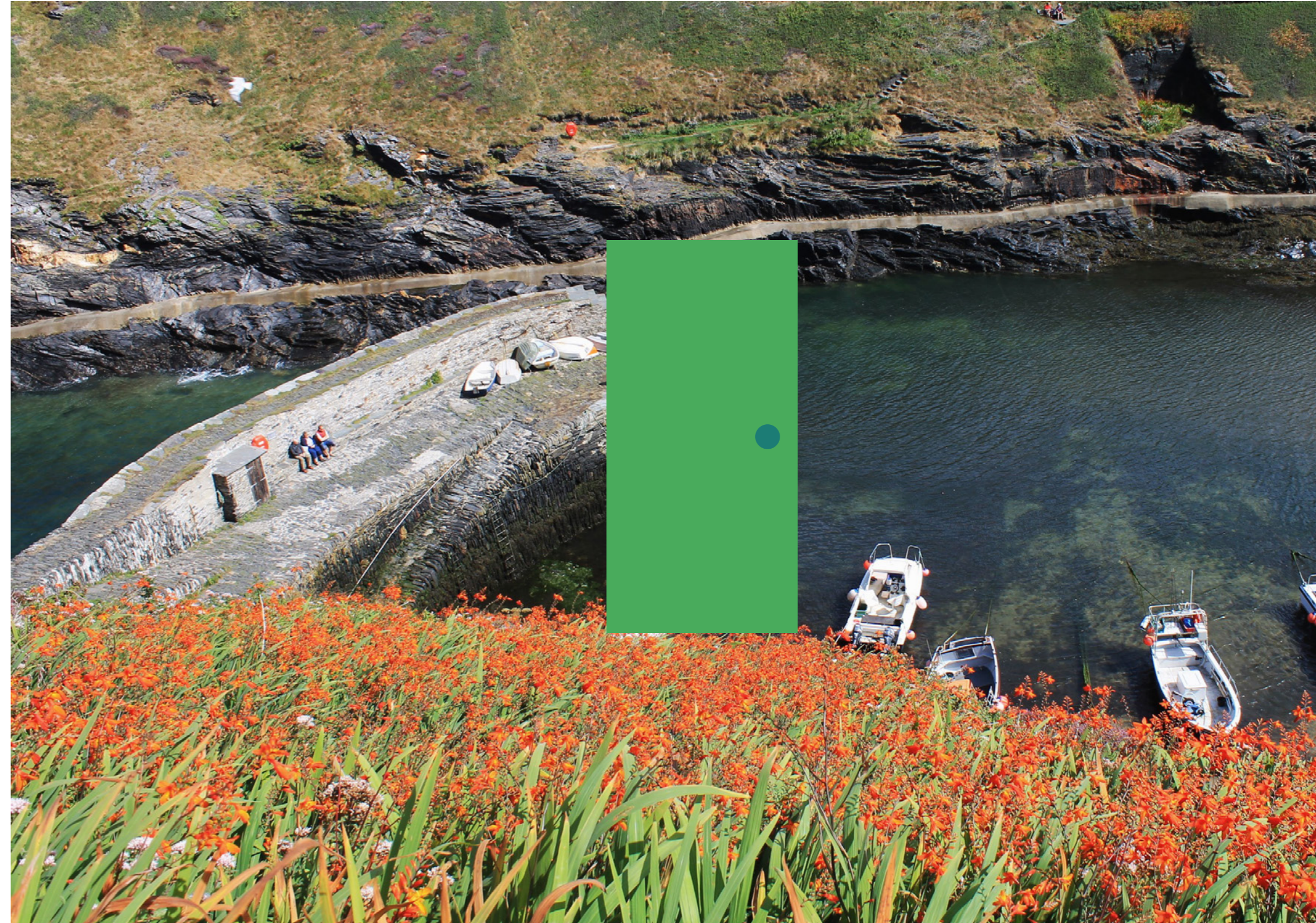
This companion comes to an end but new adventures start now, they are the communication campaigns and actions that will be created thanks to the reflections of this booklet. The choices of policy makers and MSP practitioners in terms of narratives will trigger citizens efforts or will leave them in the current situation. The objective of this document was to suggest what a recipe for engaging outputs in green maritime spatial planning would look like. As any good recipe it has to be seasonal, employing up to date data and information, so research in these terms is needed every time. It has to be offered to target audiences, so don't be afraid to modify every time, as well as adding personal touches that may make it unique. Human beings are sensible to dedicated actions and will feel that effort is a signal of interest in them and their lives. Don't forget, when it is time to serve, the plating and the effect that visuals can have in reinforcing your information.

Eventually, it is worth noticing that despite being difficult to highlight the main Green Deal aspects at a macro level, it appears that basins have a set of commonalities and differences that will help prioritizing communication means, aiming at moving society on each front, with some battles being more urgent than others.

How will your communication be like?

Bold
Creative
Inclusive
Engaging
Practical
Innovative
Factual
Powerful
It will be

Scientific
Tailored
Digital
Green
Multilevel
Gentle
Cultural
Effective



Acronyms

BSEC - Black Sea Economic Cooperation

BSAP - Baltic Sea Action Plan

CESEC - Central and South Eastern Europe Energy connectivity

CINEA - European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency

EUSBSR - EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region aiming for cooperation between the countries bordering the Baltic Sea and EU on a wide range of policies and thematic areas in order to Save the Sea, Increase the Prosperity and Connect the Regions.

EGD - European Green Deal

EC - European Commission

EcoQOs - Long-term Ecosystem Quality Objectives

ENP - The European Neighbourhood Policy is a foreign relations instrument of the European Union (EU) which seeks to tie those countries to the east and south of the European territory of the EU to the Union.

EMFAF - European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund

GHG - Greenhouse Gas Emissions

HELCOM - The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission is an inter-governmental organization governing the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention).

HELCOM-VASAB MSP Roadmap 2021-2030: identifies strategic goals and objectives for coherent and adaptive MSP development in the Baltic Sea.

MSP - Maritime Spatial Planning

MPA - Maritime Protected Areas

OSPAR - Originating from the Oslo and Paris Conventions, it serves as a mechanism by which 15 Governments & the EU (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom) cooperate to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic.

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

USH - Underwater Sea Heritage

VASAB - Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea serves as an intergovernmental multilateral cooperation of the Baltic Sea Region on spatial planning and development.

VASAB Vision 2040: sets long-term territorial perspective for a vibrant, resilient, well-connected Baltic Sea Region, comprising the land-based and maritime spatial elements of the Region.

WWF - World Wildlife Fund



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