



NEW ACTION: Better integration of maritime safety and MSP

Short description

The new action explores the links between maritime safety and MSP. It analyses how maritime safety has been reflected in the first cycle of French MSP plans. It also seeks to cast light on those maritime safety issues stemming from EGD objectives that have MSP relevance. The information collected will feed into a short expert report prepared with a view to inform future MSP plans.

Project partner(s) responsible for the preparation of the new action

Cerema, UBO, Ifremer

Action typology

(v) Analysis

Topics addressed

Transversal (all activities occurring at sea).

Geographical scope

All continental France MSP plans (Eastern Channel-North Sea, North Atlantic-Western Channel, South-Atlantic, Mediterranean).

Sectors/Activity involved

Multi-sector (maritime safety).

How does the new action support the Green Deal in MSP

At both EU and national level in France, laws and policies make maritime safety a priority issue for MSP. However, according to some of the interviews conducted in France in the framework of MSP-GREEN WP2, French MSP would in practice fall short of appropriately reflecting “at-sea” considerations. As one of the interviewees put it, MSP would “remain too much of ‘land-people’ exercise”, including regarding the maritime safety dimension of the activities addressed by planning.

Besides, important shifts into which and how maritime activities are conducted at sea are also brought by the EGD, with little information available to date as to their maritime safety dimension. Recently, the issue has especially been raised due maritime safety concerns over the development of marine renewable energies (MRE). However, the challenge also concerns other maritime sectors impacted by green transitions. The issues bridging EGD transitions and maritime safety identified and explored in this new action are of both spatial and non-spatial nature, in line with the hybrid spatial/strategic approach of French MSP plans. For instance, in line with decarbonation objectives, new propulsion modes for vessels can lead to spatial challenges such as shifts in traffic patterns, new maritime routes, and exclusion zones, but also non-spatial one such as training and skilling gaps, designing appropriate norms, or appropriate public debate and information sharing systems.

Therefore, it is of the higher importance that maritime safety considerations are duly considered when green maritime transitions are promoted or supported through MSP.

In turn, an increased uptake of maritime safety in MSP would also participate in better implementing the EGD. For instance, it would help taking into consideration seafarers’ views as sea-users, contributing to the objective of fair and just transition. Another example is that fostering maritime safety also would reduce the risks of accidents, and thereby of marine pollution.

Governance context

French MSP plans are drafted by regional and maritime *préfets* (Government representatives at a decentralised level), with support from Maritime and Coastal Policy Coordination Mission within the

Interregional maritime services (*Mission de coordination des politiques de la mer et du littoral, MICO ; Directions Interrégionales de la Mer - DIRM*). In all four MSP plans, maritime committees (*Comités Maritimes de Façades*) composed of maritime stakeholders are also contributing to the preparation of the plans. At a central administration level, the General Directorate for Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture (Direction générale des affaires maritimes, de la pêche et de l’aquaculture - DGAMPA), leads the drafting of the National Strategy for the Sea and Coastline (Stratégie nationale pour la mer et le littoral – SNML). More specifically, the sub-directorate for maritime planning, within the Maritime and Coastal Spaces Service, handles MSP.

France does not operate a coastguard body. Rather, coastguard duties including maritime safety are organised based on the concept of a “coast guard function”. This coastguard function relies on the coordination and involvement of multiple public stakeholders with maritime capabilities at all levels and across administrations, such as the French Navy, Customs, Maritime Gendarmerie, etc. At a central administration level, maritime safety is placed under the responsibility of DGAMPA’s Maritime and Coastal Spaces Service, more specifically the sub-directorate for safety, navigation and control. At a sub-national level, DIRM pilot maritime safety policies. They cooperate with District Directorate for Territories and the Sea (directions départementales des territoires et de la mer – DDTM), and field operators such as the administration responsible for maritime signalisation (Lighthouses and Beacons Service – *Armement des Phares et Balises*) and Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres - MRCCs (Centres régionaux opérationnels de surveillance et de sauvetage en mer - CROSS). *Préfectures Maritimes* also play a key in the operational dimension of maritime safety, since *maritimes préfets* effectively manage and coordinate State’s resources and assets at sea. This means that resources from multiple maritime administrations are, when needed, mobilised by maritime *préfets* for maritime safety operations: the Navy, Gendarmerie Maritime, Maritime Affairs, Customs...

It is therefore worth noting that in France, MSP and maritime safety share multiple authorities.

At a European level, the European Commission’s DG MARE is in charge of MSP, while DG MOVE leads on maritime safety. The European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) provides technical expertise and operational assistance to Member States.

At an international level, maritime safety is especially discussed at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). Within IMO, the Maritime Safety Committee supervises the implementation of key international maritime safety regulations, such as the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (“SAR” Convention).

Other stakeholders to be involved in the new action

Other state operators, such as the National Oceanographic and Hydrographic Service (*Service hydrographique et océanographique de la Marine - SHOM*) and the Centre for Studies and Expertise on Risks, the Environment, Mobility and Urban Planning (*Centre d’études et d’expertise sur les risques, l’environnement, la mobilité et l’aménagement - Cerema*) also provide and operate important information and tools for maritime safety, such as bathymetric data, maritime communication, vessels traffic analysis, etc.

Private operators are closely associated with the State for maritime safety operations, especially the French Society of Sea Rescuers (*Société Nationale des Sauveteurs en Mer - SNSM*). In addition, the State also charters private high seas emergency towing vessels that can be called upon by the Maritime Prefects at any time.



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In practice, maritime safety is a shared responsibility of all sea users be them at sea as seafarers or even at land but managing at-sea activities such as shipowners, insurances... In other words, all maritime activities operating at or relating to the sea are *de facto* maritime safety stakeholders. As sea users, shipping, fisheries, MRE, etc. are primarily responsible for ensuring their own safety of people and goods, as well as those of other sea users.

Description of the new action

Overall, the new action aims to explore and cast light on the relationship between MSP and maritime safety. To do so, it uses the case study of France.

The new action will analyse how maritime safety has been reflected in the current first cycle French MSP plans. This will be done based on a desk-based review of all four MSP plans, covering both their strategic and operational dimensions. Results from this screening exercise will help understand how maritime safety has been accounted for by the French MSP cycle so far. A legal and policy background analysis will also be conducted to map out the already existing relationship between those topics. A literature review drawing from academic and grey literature review will also help complement the MSP/maritime safety relationship analysis as well as to identify more specific knowledge gaps.

In the context of the MSP-GREEN project, the new action will test the assumption that the EGD can trigger transitions in maritime sectors that, in turn, can also have a maritime safety dimension. Once the maritime safety dimension of the EGD will be better identified, the new action will explore the possible links with MSP. Especially, it will try to highlight which elements should be taken into account in future plans, and how MSP could also better support maritime safety.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key public and private maritime safety stakeholders at sub-national, national and EU level.

The analysis will be presented in a short expert report, prepared with a view to inform future MSP plans.

Possible challenges/risks related to the new action

The high degree of technicality of maritime safety could represent an obstacle. Semi-structured interviews will help apprehend and select key information. Specific efforts will be made to present the results of the analysis so that it can be used by a non-specialist audience, including MSP stakeholders. On the other hand, it is possible that maritime safety stakeholders interviewed will have limited knowledge of MSP. An important challenge will therefore be being able to translate MSP questions into maritime safety stakeholders' language.

The relationship between MSP and maritime safety appears as a niche topic. Therefore, it is a possibility that limited information will be available in the literature.

In line with the above point, the new action relies on inputs from experts through semi-structured interviews. A possible challenge therefore lies in the risk not to obtain interviews with the targeted stakeholders.

Gaps or elements that the new action does not consider

The new action aims at informing future MSP cycles in France, including the definition of strategic objectives and the identification of actions for the operational MSP phase. However, Cerema is not a

planning authority. Therefore, there is no guarantee that the expertise presented will ultimately benefit from a policy uptake.

Replicability/Elements that can be capitalized

Although the new action focuses on the case of France, maritime safety is relevant for all MSP contexts. Insights gained from this work will therefore be capitalizable by other countries. Likewise, the knowledge presented regarding the maritime safety dimension of the EGD is likely to remain relevant in all MSP planning processes, as they are likely to face similar technical issues.