



**VALUABLE PRACTICE: MPA and Fisheries activity**

**Description**

In France, the term “Marine Protected Area” includes: national parks, natural reserves, biotope protected areas, Natura 2000 (N2000) network, Natural Marine Parks (NMP) and the areas managed under the responsibility of the Coastal heritage organisation (Conservatoire du Littoral). Natural marine parks are the most recent tool (2016) in France. France is engaged to declare 10% of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as strictly protected Marine Protected Areas (MPA) in 2030. The transformation of the current MPAs, already mapped in the ongoing MSP documents (called Documents Stratégiques de Façade (DSF)), to strictly protecting will should appear in the future MSP documents and plans. The new strictly protected Marine Protected Areas are targeting habitats and species (such as dolphins or birds) protection from extractive activities such as trawling or longlines fishing. These strictly MPA will reduce considerably the fishing areas and fisheries industry reacted to this new decision by demanding to participate into decision making and their management.

**Practice typology**

(ii) Monitoring, assessment and evaluation + (iii) Process-related practice + (iv) zoning

**Topics addressed**

<b>Main</b>	C. Sustainable sea-food production [C.1 Sustainable fisheries: sustainable fisheries management, including area and time-based measures (C.1.1. Improving the state of fish stocks; C.1.2. Minimize fishing impacts on vulnerable habitats; C.1.3. Minimizing bycatch and unwanted fishing and C.1.6 Multi-use of the sea space: combination including fisheries)].
<b>Secondary</b>	D. Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration [D.1 A coherent network of marine protected areas (D.1.1. Establishment of new or enlargement of strictly marine protected areas (10% target) and definition of strict protection; D.1.4. Elements that improve marine connectivity (i.e. submarine canyons, artificial reef, etc.) and D.1.5. Multi-use of the sea space: combination including biodiversity and ecosystem protection)].

**Sectors/Activity involved**

Fishing and nature protection and restoration.

**Stakeholders involved**

**Related to biodiversity protection:**

EU level

- DG Environment.
- DG MARE.

National level

- Ministry of Environment and ecological transition.
- General Secretariat of the Sea (under the authority of Prime Minister): it leads and coordinates the development of Government's maritime policy, proposes the decisions and ensures the implementation of the policy.
- French Biodiversity Office (public governmental body and national scientific and technical coordinator for the implementation of N2000 policy).
- National Network of managers of all type of MPA's: Capacity building of managers through the organisation of regular national meetings.
- National NGO's (e.g. France Nature Environnement).

Regional/Local levels

- Seafront (Façade) Maritime Councils
- Natural Marine Parks management councils
- Other MPA managers
- Territorial authorities
- NGO's
- Recreational activities representatives

**Related to fisheries:**

European level - DG MARE.

National level - Ministry of Agriculture; Secretariat of the Sea; Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs; Directorate-General for Fisheries and Aquaculture (DGAMPA); National Fisheries committee

Regional and Local level - Regional Fisheries Committees (CRPMEM); Departmental Fisheries Committees (CDPMEM); DIRM; DREAL (coordinates the implementation of N2000 policy in France at a regional scale); DDTM (coordinates the implementation of N2000 policy in France at a county scale); fishers

EU and National policies are resulting from the signature of different international or regional conventions such Ramsar, OSPAR Convention, Barcelone Convention, CBD 1992.

**Geographical scope**

French EEZ.

**Governance context**

**EU legal frame** - 2020: " Biodiversity Strategy 2030 - Bringing nature back into our lives" has an ambitious objective to declare 30% of EU EEZ as MPA and 10% of it as strict protected areas.

**National legal frame** - Two main laws (both updated regularly):

- The Act of Environment (2010).
- The Rural and fisheries act (2010).

2006: The law of National Park, Natural Marine Park and Natural Regional Parks

2021: National Strategy of Biodiversity 2030 and National Strategy for protected areas 2030.

France has 564 MPAs including overseas and 9 of them are Natural Marine Parks (MNP), all represent and important surface (3.4 million km2) and cover 33% of the French EEZ which exceeds the initial objective of the country. However, the type of biodiversity protection is not identical in all MPAs. For example, MNP allows the practice of different extractive activities like fisheries. This is also the case for N2000 sites if an environmental impact assessment study is realised. Only 1% of these MPAs are strictly protected. Following strong pressures from EU, International or national institutions and NGO's, France has to classify 10% of its EEZ as strictly protected MPAs by 2030. This decision was presented and discussed during a symposium of all EU LIFE projects, organised in France under the umbrella of OFB in 2022. During the meeting, open to all users of the sea, fishers didn't hesitate to manifest their opposition to such classification. Through the Seafront/façades Strategic Committees, fishers organisations claimed for participation to decisions impacting fishing activities. It should be noticed that fisheries organisations, thanks to their participation in the management councils of NMP, strength their ability to participate into deliberative arenas. These councils are perceived as “micro parliaments of the sea” as during meetings members share, discuss and decide about the future of the NPM concerning biodiversity, maritime heritage, culture values protection, humans activities and economic development. French NMP are giving the same attention to natural and human dimensions as their aim is to avoid conflictual situations. For example, in the Iroise Sea (Brittany region), NMP management council is seating together States' decentralised authorities, regional

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and district authorities, mayors of municipalities surrounding the park, agriculture and fisheries industries, recreative activities (divers, fishers, boats sailors), the Chamber of Commerce, the Union of seaweed processors, local and regional environmental NGO's and scientists. Decentralized administration and scientists are excluded from the vote as their role is either informative or advisory. Another reason that is motivating fishers organisations to claim is the fact that, since Natura 2000 policy has been granted with a management authority, fishermen's organisations have taken on this role. The last and not the least is fishers important capacity of nuisance. In France, fishers showed their dissatisfaction towards restrictive rules by occupying roads, harbours or administrative buildings. They always use the argument "we provide fish to feed the society" to convince the society that their actions are just.

**How this MSP practice can support the EU Green Deal**

The aspects in which this practice mainly supports EGD are:

D.1.5. Multi-use of the sea space: combination including biodiversity and ecosystem protection and through C.1.6 Multi-use of the sea space: combination including fisheries. The definition of MPAs locations and, if possible, of fishing areas in the 4 MSP documents will contribute to the protection of biodiversity and ensure fisheries activity and food security. Fishers organisations are mapping fishing areas to prevent grasping from other users. These mapping is realised through a national project called VALPENA coordinated by the National Scientific Research Center (CNRS) and supported by the FEAMPA. Another fishing areas mapping is realised with the use of Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) data. Both maps are still not yet included in the four MPS documents.

This practice also supports EGD through D.1.1. Establishment of new or enlargement of strictly marine protected areas (10% target) and definition of strict protection. The designation of the 10% of strictly protected MPAs to protect vulnerable species such as dauphin or birds, and to fulfill the objectives of the National Biodiversity Strategy 2030, avoid accidental catches and bycatch. From the beginning of the designation process fishers take a dim view of this new protection. In parallel, environmental NGOs claimed for the realisation of French commitments concerning the strictly MPAs. The integration of fishing areas into MSP documents will recognized its presence and sustain the activity.

**Challenges/gaps/inconsistencies still to be addressed**

Natura 2000 network and other tools targeting the protection of biodiversity are already represented in MSP documents. For some other stakeholders and sectors (eg., harbour authorities), this integration facilitated the negotiation process for the designation of vocational areas (zoning perspective of French MSP plans, including priority areas) during the first cycle of MSP documents, as many conflictual issues were discussed and solved within the NMP management councils. Fishers are supporting the implementation of MPA's and Natura 2000 because they contribute to restore the marine ecosystem and support marine resources status and often they are managers of N2000 sites. Fishing areas are unfortunately not appearing in MSP documents despite the different available maps and fishers are fearing their appropriation from others users.

Transformation of N2000, until now targeting conservation of biodiversity and practice of fisheries activity, to strictly MPAs, will create tensions with the fishing industry. For instance, the transformation of a portion of N2000 site called "Celtic Seas-Talus du Golfe de Gascogne", located on the limit of French EEZ in Bay of Biscay, to a strictly protected MPA. This future strictly protected MPA targets the protection of birds and bottlenose dolphins (*Delphinus truncatus*) overwintering in the area with the objective to avoid accidental catches. This future strictly protected area should

be validated in the next French MSP documents and maps of two seafronts (South Atlantic and North Atlantic-West Channel façades). This means the end of fishing activities in that portion of the N2000 site which will impact on French, Spanish, Irish, Belgium and other fleets. The question here is to know how this decision will be legitimated towards French fishers and how this French decision will be accepted by Member States fleets. Which deliberative arena will be used: OSPAR, NEAFCA or fisheries Advisories Councils? Which other fleets will be impacted with the deployment of French fleet into others areas of French EEZ, as they are not delimited in the MSP plans?

**Replicability /Elements which can be capitalised**

- ✓ 10 % of strictly protected MPAs should be discussed within deliberative arenas, taking the example of Marine Natural Parks (MNP) management councils to be accepted by all. This example can be replicated in other management councils regarding MPAs.
- ✓ The transnational MPA should find the best deliverative arena in a way to convince all users to comply on measure taken by one MS
- ✓ The example of the crossboarding Natura 2000 (see Fact Sheet) illustrates well the difficulties to manage in common protected areas.
- ✓ Is North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (Regional Fisheries Organisation) or the Advisory Councils of fisheries (North West Atlantic and Atlantic) the best place to share information and convince the fleet of other EU MS to comply to the rules applied by France?