

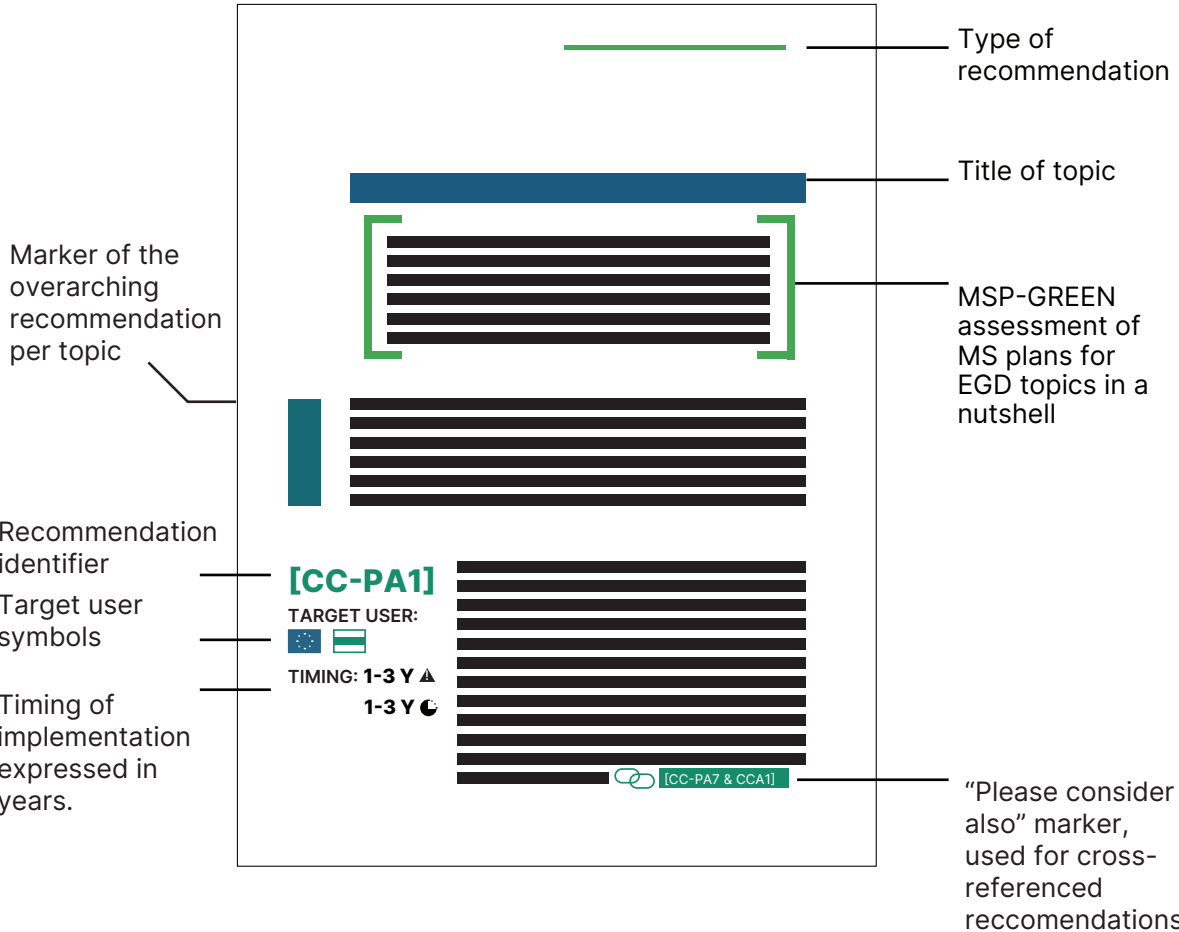


# BRIDGING MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING [MSP] AND THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL [EGD]







Recommendations on how to  
strengthen the integration of EGD  
maritime components into MSP



### How the pages on recommendations read



### How symbols work

-  EU
-  National
-  Sea Basin
-  Sub-national
-  Urgency
-  Readiness

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## FOREWORD

### Where do these recommendations originate from?

The present recommendations have been prepared as part of the [MSP-GREEN](#) project: “Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) as Enabler of the European Green Deal (EGD)”. They provide suggestions on how to strengthen the content of Maritime Spatial plans (MS plans) and their implementation, monitoring and revision in the direction of EGD objectives. The recommendations were initially drafted by MSP-GREEN project partners based on the assessment of their country’s plans and capitalising on the outcome of other projects, such as [eMSP NBSR](#) (Emerging ecosystem-based Maritime Spatial Planning topics in North and Baltic Sea Regions). This initial draft was discussed within three focus groups, engaging about 15 experts with different backgrounds and from different organisations: the European Commission (EC), organisations of maritime sectors operating at the European Union (EU) level, EU-level Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) for nature protection, universities and research institutions. The revised draft was discussed during a workshop organised as a side event of the European Maritime Day 2024 (Svendborg, DK) that saw the participation of about 20 experts, again with mixed composition. Feedback from the workshop was used to finalise the recommendations that are presented in this document.

### What will you find in this document?

**Recommendations on MSP cross-cutting topics** addressing new needs emerging from the EGD ambition:

- MSP processes and approaches to improve EGD implementation
- Data and tools for MSP: new needs and opportunities driven by the EGD
- Governance and policy integration to strengthen the role of MSP in achieving EGD objectives
- Multi-use in MSP: a tool to reach marine EGD objectives





**Recommendations on the six marine EGD topics** identified by the MSP-GREEN project:

- Climate Smart MSP: Climate change adaptation
- Climate Smart MSP: Climate change mitigation
- Sustainable seafood production
- Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration
- Blue circular economy
- Zero pollution

**Recommendations for a “fair and just transition”** in the marine/maritime domain, tackling some key MSP societal topics, including stakeholder engagement.

## Target users

For each recommendation, target users are identified: you can read through the recommendations focusing on those most relevant for your role. Target groups are identified as:

-  **European (EU) level;** actors involved in MSP and MSP-related processes at the EU level: EU institutions and organisations working on MSP, EU-level experts on MSP and MSP-related topics.
-  **National level;** actors involved in national MSP and MSP-related processes: national institutions and organisations working on MSP and MSP-related processes, MSP planners and practitioners, and national experts on MSP and MSP-related topics.
-  **Sea Basin level;** actors involved in MSP and MSP-related processes at the sea-basin level: regional sea strategies, commissions and organisations, MSP planners and practitioners, experts on MSP and MSP-related topics active at the sea-basin level, sea-basin Communities of Practices.
-  **Sub-national;** actors involved in MSP and MSP-related processes at a sub-national (regional/local) level: regional and local institutions and organisations working on MSP and MSP-related processes, MSP planners and practitioners, regional/local experts on MSP and MSP-related topics.

## Timing for implementation

Recommendations are labelled with reference to their Urgency ▲ and Readiness ●. Three time periods are indicated: 1-3 years (**1-3 Y**), 3-5 years (**3-5 Y**), 5-10 years (**5-10 Y**).

## Tips for readers

Given the heterogeneity of MSP and MS plans across Europe, the relevance and use of the recommendations will depend on the country-specific context, e.g. the nature of the plan (more or less strategic; binding or not binding, etc.) or the governance of the MSP process. The scope of MSP varies across countries, depending also on the sectors addressed and the rules and regulations foreseen by a plan (e.g. spatial measures, non-spatial measures, strategic objectives). Some recommendations refer to topics that are not solely within the mandate of MSP (such as the blue circular economy and zero pollution); their relevance and applicability equally depend on country specificities. Therefore, recommendations should be considered with some degree of flexibility, taking into account the different national contexts and interests.

## A bit of background: the marine component of the European Green Deal

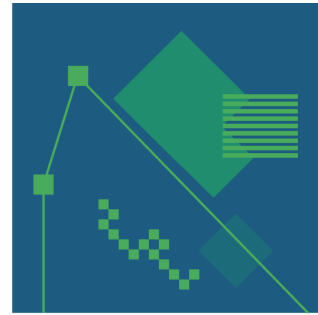
The [European Green Deal](#), approved in 2020, is a package of policy initiatives issued by the European Commission. It aims to set the European Union on the path towards a green transition. The ultimate goal is to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 while improving the well-being and health of citizens and future generations.

The [MSP Directive 2014/89/EU](#) recognizes that healthy marine ecosystems and their multiple services can deliver substantial benefits if integrated into planning decisions. Benefits include food production, recreation and tourism, climate change mitigation and adaptation, coastal protection, disaster prevention, and a just transition and fair distribution of the benefits of a sustainable blue economy.

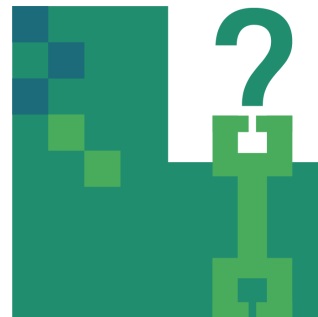
In the conclusions of the EC Report outlining the progress made in implementing the MSP Directive ([COM \(2022\) 185](#)), MSP is considered a powerful enabler for the implementation of the EGD. Therefore, Member States will need to continue reflecting the ambitions of the EGD in their MS plans and align plans with these ambitions.

# Cross-cutting recommendations

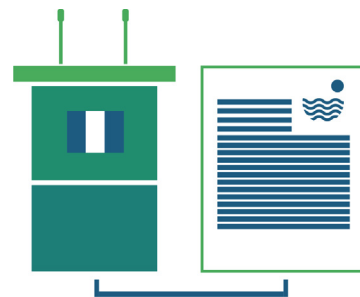
## Processes and approaches



## Data and tools



## Governance and policy integration



## Multi-use



## MSP processes and approaches to improve EGD implementation

The EGD is a comprehensive, future-oriented policy package that brings added value and urgency to MSP. An EGD-aligned MSP plan should be **well-balanced, adaptive, and dynamic**, responding to emerging knowledge, anticipated changes, and technological innovation driven by the EGD objectives. **Other prerequisites for broad-scale EGD implementation through MSP include engaging in regular dialogue with a wide range of sectors and stakeholders**, joint development of visions and scenarios for the marine and coastal space, more structured and dynamic data sharing and update, valorisation of different forms of knowledge, and more adaptive planning policies, including faster revisions of plans based on comprehensive monitoring and evaluation. In a sense, the **EGD drives MSP to be the best it can be and to keep innovating in response to new challenges**.

### [CC-PA1]

#### TARGET USER



TIMING 1-3Y ▲

1-3Y ●

The importance of the EGD and how MSP can contribute to its implementation should be broadly communicated to MSP planners and stakeholders as an opportunity (through infographics, geo-stories, videos, other visual products, communication briefs, etc.; see for example the [Communicating MSP](#) guidance). Communication should break down the EGD into clear maritime spatial goals and use examples to show how EGD objectives can be translated into a comprehensive planning framework. Targeted communication can support those working in MSP in better acknowledging and implementing maritime EGD components and objectives. Based on this, MSP planners should recognise the **EGD objectives and tasks that can be directly supported by MSP** - focusing on country specificities - and **those where synergies with other policies need to be sought**.

### [CC-PA2]

#### TARGET USER



TIMING 1-3Y ▲

1-3Y ●

At the EU level, guidelines to better align MSP to the EGD should be developed to help Member States translate the maritime dimensions of the EGD into spatially relevant actions. These guidelines should also address sea basin specificities.

### [CC-PA3]

#### TARGET USER:




TIMING 1-3Y ▲


3-5Y ●


The EGD is a vast policy package whose implementation **requires the engagement of several, and diverse typologies of stakeholders**, including those engaged in existing initiatives (e.g. the [European Blue Forum](#), sea basin and national forum or platforms on MSP, etc.). The MSP process should fully reflect the EGD's maritime dimensions, especially in the light of new sea uses the EGD may be fostering. **Newly involved stakeholders may require training and capacity building on the EGD and other related aspects**, such as policy coherence or managing uncertainty.



In the light of climate change and other changes driven by the EGD, **the anticipatory and adaptive capacity of MSP should be strengthened** along the entire planning cycle: from the plan's formulation to its monitoring, assessment and revision  [\[CC-PA7 & CCA1\]](#). This requires dynamic, knowledge-based evidence supporting the MSP process and may also require more dynamic planning solutions, such as options for partial plan revisions and more flexible spatial designations. As new data and knowledge emerge it is recommended that MSP processes identify what parts of a plan should be changed, when and how.

**Planning for the EGD transition at sea requires better preparedness from MSP to deal with uncertainties** (e.g. related to climate change projections, the evolution of international policy and economic drivers, sectoral developments, changes in demographic patterns, etc.)  [\[CC-PA6\]](#). **The best available knowledge should be collected from a broad and diversified range of stakeholders, including those not commonly associated with MSP** (such as financing institutions or economic sectors not directly using the sea but engaged further up in value chains). To deal with uncertainties, **MS plans can rely on modelling, shared visions, foresight exercises, and co-created scenarios** linked to EGD targets and taking into consideration both national and sea basin-wide dimensions. Backward-looking approaches (e.g. analysis of historical data and trends, evaluation of past performances, evaluation of case studies, etc.) are also useful to better manage future uncertainties in EGD-aligned MSP. Forecasting and backcasting can be useful tools to communicate with policymakers in underlining the opportunities offered by EGD-oriented MSP.

**The importance of the precautionary principle within MSP increases when uncertainty is high**  [\[CC-PA5\]](#). This particularly applies in times of climate change: planners must consider the uncertain impacts of climate change together with those of other human activities and make decisions for sustainability. **This can include leaving some sea space without assigned uses** (see for example the [Technical study on how to preserve space for the future uses of the seas](#)) to account for future developments and in particular for the implementation of climate change adaptation measures (e.g. climate refugia or relocation of marine uses). The designation of these areas must be based on scientific evidence rather than merely being a default option.

**EGD-related elements should be included in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks for MSP** (see for example the [online guide](#) to monitoring, evaluation and revision of MS plans). **Relevant (new) forms of data and knowledge should be generated**, capitalising on other monitoring mechanisms (e.g. Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)). M&E should evaluate the degree to which the EGD objectives relevant for a given context are  [\[CC-PA1\]](#) reflected in the MSP plan and whether planning provisions successfully foster their implementation. A cross-dimensional approach should be adopted to evaluate the impact of EGD-aligned plans on the environment, sectors of the blue economy, local communities and stakeholders (assessing the distributive effects of a blue sustainability transition) and tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

### [CC-PA4]

TARGET USER



▲ 1-3Y TIMING  
● 3-5Y

### [CC-PA5]

TARGET USER



▲ 3-5Y TIMING  
● 3-5Y

### [CC-PA6]

TARGET USER



▲ 3-5Y TIMING  
● 3-5Y

### [CC-PA7]

TARGET USER



▲ 3-5Y TIMING  
● 3-5Y

### [CC-PA8]

TARGET USER



TIMING 3-5Y ▲  
3-5Y ●

In line with [\[CC-PA7\]](#), **support should be given** (e.g. through EU-focused studies) **to the development of indicators to evaluate the integration of EGD objectives in MSP**. This can capitalise on other experiences, such as the headline indicators adopted by the EC for monitoring progress towards the EU's environment and climate goals ([COM\(2022\) 357 final](#)). **Indicators are an essential self-assessment tool for countries to track their progressive advancement** in integrating the EGD in MSP; as such, some indicators may need to be country-specific. At the same time, harmonised methodologies and indicators can provide a comparative picture at the sea basin level and across regional seas, highlighting both opportunities and challenges associated with EGD implementation and changing policy priorities.

## Data and tools for MSP: new needs and opportunities driven by the EGD

Data and knowledge availability can be limiting factors in MSP, particularly when it comes to assessing EGD implementation through MSP. Data platforms at the EU level are available and continuously updated with contents relevant to MSP: [Copernicus](#), [EMODNet](#) and [Wise Marine](#) are among the most relevant examples. Data platforms are also available at sea basin and national levels. Nevertheless, data used for MSP still suffer from fragmentation (data is scattered between many actors and administrations) and incompatibility (different stakeholders produce, process, and use different types of data, at different scales). In some cases, data is already available on existing platforms but not used in the MSP process.

The first step is thus to **identify new data needs for assessing EGD implementation in MSP and based on this, data gaps and associated research needs**. **Data structures for MSP should be revised at the EU and national level to facilitate data aggregation around the main EGD topics**. **Data harmonisation also needs to be strengthened** in cross-boundary contexts based on transboundary work already ongoing. As in all data contexts, existing and new data should be compliant with the FAIR principle (findable, accessible, interoperable, [\[CC-PA4 & CC-PA5\]](#)). **Plans should allow for the incorporation of data updates**: this should be part of the dynamic planning dimension. Last but not least, data also plays an important role in **communication with stakeholders and the public at large**, making information products and packaging knowledge an important task with links to ocean literacy.

### [CC-DT1]

TARGET USER




TIMING 1-3Y ▲  
3-5Y ●

**Data needed to develop an EGD-aligned MSP plan and persisting data gaps should be identified nationally and at the sea-basin level as early as possible**. Opportunities to extend and adapt the scope of **existing data platforms and groups** - such as the [Technical Expert Group \(TEG\) on Data for MSP](#) - **to new EGD data needs** should be exploited, as well as developing working groups at the sea basin level. **Where data and information are not yet available, targeted research needs should be specified**. One example is understanding the impacts of climate change on the blue economy and assessing any resulting spatial demands, including those of existing sectors (e.g. tourism, shipping, aquaculture, and fisheries) and emerging ones (e.g. offshore seaweed, shellfish farming, and offshore renewable energy (ORE)). **New cross-cutting data needs should also be identified and addressed**, e.g. data needed to assess the socio-economic impacts of EGD-MSP implementation and data needed to assess the societal dimension of MSP with a focus on ensuring a fair ecological transition.

In front of persisting gaps and new needs, **new forms of data gathering should be undertaken, including using technological innovation.** Given the opportunity for blue economy developments provided by an EGD-oriented MSP, **sectors should be further engaged in data acquisition** and provide the necessary investments.

**Efforts must be made to validate and transform data into actionable knowledge**, i.e. knowledge that is understandable and easy to use for MSP planners and other stakeholders, to deliver EGD goals. For example, while MSP will benefit from data indicating the distribution of marine habitats, it is the capacity of these habitats to act as a carbon sink that may be actionable for EGD implementation. **MSP-EGD science-policy-society interfaces should be established and/or strengthened**, at various scales (from the national to the sea basin and European level), to create and discuss such knowledge with full and fair representation of all relevant maritime and land-based interests.

Communication is key to understanding the urgency of reaching EGD objectives. For data to become actionable knowledge  [\[CC-DT3\]](#) and **to communicate EGD-related issues in MSP as broadly as possible, the invisible needs to be made visible.** Communication should highlight how MSP contributes to the marine dimension of the EGD, using EGD's main topics as a structuring aid. Representation of MS plans and how they relate to the EGD should be as comprehensive as possible, including also the socio-economic dimension. Communication tools can include geostories, 2-D and 3-D tools for plan visualisation, digital twins of the ocean, as well as art and design elements.

**Comprehensive approaches for cumulative impact assessment** (considering multiple targets and activities) **need to be further developed, operationalised and used.** Cumulative impact assessment, sensitivity and suitability mapping are urgently needed to properly locate traditional and emerging maritime activities while limiting conflicts and impacts. Cumulative impact assessment should also consider impacts on the marine environment that are terrestrial in origin. Monitoring of cumulative impacts of activities over time and along full life cycles (e.g. construction, operation, and decommissioning of offshore wind farms (OWF)) is required. Funding should be secured at the EU and national level to research, to improve the robustness of models and the acquisition of data to validate models' results.

**[CC-DT2]**

TARGET USER 

▲ 5-10Y TIMING

● 5-10Y

**[CC-DT3]**

TARGET USER   

▲ 1-3Y TIMING

● 1-3Y

**[CC-DT4]**

TARGET USER  

▲ 3-5Y TIMING

● 3-5Y

**[CC-DT5]**

TARGET USER  

▲ 1-3Y TIMING

● 3-5Y

**Governance and policy integration to strengthen MSP impact on EGD objectives**

EGD objectives are challenging, ambitious and in some cases potentially contradictory. As an inherently integrative, adaptive approach, MSP can play an important role in achieving them in the maritime domain. However, **for MSP to have maximum impact on the EGD, strong governance and policy integration are required** across different policy areas and at different scales **so that MSP can achieve its strategic potential and different instruments can work in concert to achieve the EGD objectives.** Integrated ocean governance, sectoral planning, marine nature conservation, licensing regimes, land-based planning and other instruments such as Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECM) all need to pull in the same direction if the EGD is to reach its full potential. For this, **transboundary cooperation on MSP and EGD-related policy areas needs to be further strengthened.** Policy integration must also work across the land-sea interface to achieve greater blue-green integration and coherence in decision-making.

**[CC-GP1]**

TARGET USER 

TIMING 3-5Y ▲  
5-10Y ●

**A stable mechanism for integrated ocean governance should be established at the national level to find ways of reconciling different objectives.** This could make use of existing structures, committees and communities of practice, including national coordination mechanisms, whose mandate should be extended to ensure their stability for the long term. Such mechanisms should lay the groundwork for EGD-aligned MS plans that work in concert with other policies and mechanisms to achieve EGD objectives.

**[CC-GP2]**

TARGET USER 


TIMING 3-5Y ▲  
5-10Y ●

Rather than focusing on conflicts, **policy-makers and MSP planners should work with stakeholders and sectors to find practicable ways of reconciling different EGD objectives**, using high-level policy priorities (such as biodiversity conservation and restoration, sustainable blue economy, social-ecological transformation, etc.) as well as specific national aspirations as a guide. This can lead to clearer operational guidance and action which is fundamental for EGD implementation.

**[CC-GP3]**

TARGET USER  

TIMING 1-3Y ▲  
5-10Y ●

**Operational integration between the MSP process and other relevant policies (e.g. MSFD, EU Biodiversity Strategy, Habitats and Birds Directive, EU Nature Restoration Law, Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)) should be strengthened**, as also addressed in other recommendations. **Particular focus should be on the operational integration between MSP and MSFD** e.g.: using the most up-to-date MSFD assessment when designing MS plans, ensuring that MSP objectives are coherent with MSFD ones, ensuring coherence and complementarity between the MS plans and the MSFD Programme of Measures. At the EU level, the ongoing revision of the MSFD is a good starting point for achieving a better formal connection between MSFD and MSPD. In consideration of the importance of land-sea interactions, improved alignment with the Water Framework Directive (WFD) is also important. Aligning MSP, WFD and MSFD cycles would help improve their operational integration. **Monitoring the impact of MSP on achieving the objectives of other policies** and reporting on this achievement is also highly relevant to improving policy integration  [\[CCA-PA7\]](#).



**EGD-related land-sea interactions should be identified and reflected in planning decisions for the sea and on land** (e.g. as part of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), other typologies of coastal plans, municipal/regional plans, etc.). Successful EGD implementation needs more targeted thinking across the blue-green interface, recognising the myriad of connections and flows across spatial scales, value chains, and areas of governance. Opportunities should be sought for maritime development to support policy objectives on land and vice versa. This implies strengthening dialogue between national and sub-national (regional and local) levels of planning and more communication about MSP outside the maritime world. Specifically, terrestrial planners should be made aware of the maritime EGD objectives contained in MS plans and any measures they can take in support of MSP.

**EGD implementation can be facilitated by greater coherence of MS plans within sea basins. Plans should strive to achieve at least functional coherence for EGD objectives, but also strategic coherence for their overall aims and visions.** Regular consultation and coordination among planners of the same sea basin help to ensure plans take account of any new EGD-driven demand coherently. This can make use of existing mechanisms such as the EU Member State Expert Group on MSP, mechanisms set in the frame of sea-basin conventions, macro-regional strategies, and other regional initiatives, but also thematic cross-border projects and Community of Practices.

**Multi-use in MSP: a tool to reach the marine EGD objectives**

Given that marine space is limited, **multi-use represents an opportunity for implementing multiple EGD objectives in MSP.** Multi-use for achieving EGD objectives should be understood as more than co-location and be promoted in MS plans, recognising both its potential and practical constraints. **MSP should support the exploration and trialling of different forms of multi-use, through objectives, zoning and/or measures.**

**Designate areas for multi-use purposes within MS plans**, specifically including opportunities for multi-use trialling and development. A relevant source of information on current initiatives, challenges and levers is the [Multi-use and co-existence compendium](#), provided by the European MSP Platform.

**[CC-GP4]**

TARGET USER



▲ 1-3Y TIMING

● 1-3Y

**[CC-MU2]**

TARGET USER



TIMING 1-3Y ▲

3-5Y ●

**Use an ecosystem-based approach to MSP as a guiding principle for multi-use designations.** Where relevant, nature-inclusive design should be considered in the development of multi-use options relying on offshore infrastructure. Research on nature-inclusive design should be encouraged.

**[CC-MU3]**

TARGET USER



TIMING 3-5Y ▲

5-10Y ●

**Consider the concept of Mariparks to capitalise on potential synergies arising from offshore activities,** through pilot areas and related instruments. Mariparks aim to create a stable business area at sea that reduces investment risks, especially for emerging multi-use entrepreneurs or new maritime sectors. Mariparks provide the basic physical infrastructure that facilitates the development of multi-use, (such as anchors, docking facilities, and sensors) and technologies (such as drones or other instruments for monitoring and maintenance operations).

**[CC-GP5]**

TARGET USER



▲ 1-3Y TIMING

● 3-5Y

**[CC-MU4]**

TARGET USER



TIMING 1-3Y ▲

1-3Y ●

**Facilitate a holistic and bottom-up approach through MSP to support the development of multi-use,** e.g. by using a community of practice-based approach, to bring together planners, business operators, and other typologies of stakeholders at different levels, from EU to sea-basin, to national. Such an approach should consider the different steps that are necessary to implement multi-use from planning to implementation, as well as environmental, economic, social, technological, financial, and political implications. The aim should be to de-risk investment in multi-use and create viable business cases that can contribute to transformation, moving away from sector-specific single-use activities, and making licence procedures easier for multi-use.



**[CC-MU1]**

TARGET USER



▲ 1-3Y TIMING

● 3-5Y

**[CC-MU5]**

TARGET USER



TIMING 3-5Y ▲

3-5Y ●

**Multi-use combinations for sustainable aquaculture and fishery should be promoted through MSP,** e.g. through co-use with offshore wind energy (OWE) production. Appropriate support should be provided to create attractive conditions for investors (e.g. through feasibility studies, market studies, pre-environmental assessments), and to de-risk such combinations for the sectors involved (e.g. by making available suitable insurance or funding support). This is particularly important for smaller enterprises that may be taking a greater risk.



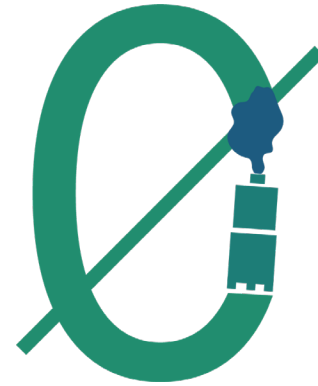
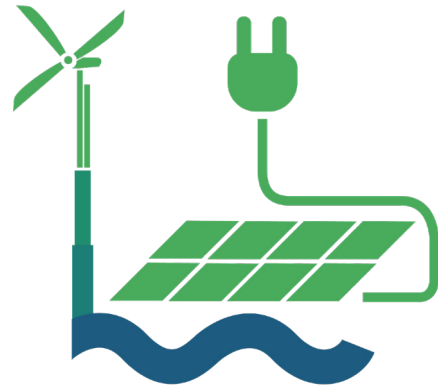
# EGD topic-related recommendations

**Climate Change Adaptation**



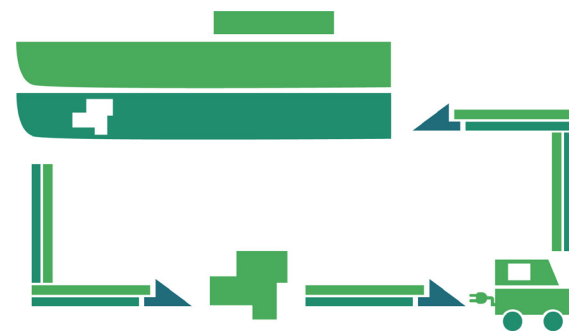
**Sustainable seafood production**

**Climate Change Mitigation**



**Zero Pollution**

**Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration**



**Blue circular economy**

## Climate-smart MSP


MSP can contribute to reconciling climate resilience with a prosperous blue economy by **implementing a comprehensive set of actions that can work together to make MSP more climate-smart**. An important aspect of climate-smart MSP is that **adaptation and mitigation actions should be seen as complementary rather than alternatives**. As adaptive capacity is limited, societies need to invest in concurrent climate change mitigation as soon as possible. Climate adaptation and mitigation actions form the core of climate-smart MSP which anticipates climate change impacts on marine ecosystems and uses, adapts to changing conditions and contributes to carbon neutrality.

**Ecosystem-based MSP is the cornerstone for climate-smart EGD-aligned MSP.** Healthy ecosystems and Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) are critical for adaptation and mitigation and can also provide a wide range of additional services and benefits to people. For example, healthy ecosystems help species and habitats to be climate resilient, with implications e.g. for sustainable seafood production. They are also better able to capture and store carbon. MSP should therefore enhance their protection and restoration both for biodiversity and climate change mitigation scopes. Underlining the importance of ecosystem-based MSP is also a call to safeguard ecosystems in the face of pressures from other uses, including when designating marine areas for renewable energy production.

### Climate change adaptation

#### MSP-GREEN ASSESSMENT OF MS PLANS IN A NUTSHELL

While some elements of climate change adaptation are identified in the plans assessed, the topic is not tackled as an overall priority. Plans focus on specific risks related to climate change, such as coastal erosion or flooding, but do not take a more comprehensive and integrated approach. While plans contain various sector-specific provisions that indirectly contribute to climate change adaptation, such as marine conservation, most are not explicitly integrated in wider and clearly formulated adaptation strategies. Climate change adaptation requires cross-cutting visions, and adaptation efforts need to span various sectors and geographical scales.


**Climate change adaptation should be among the priorities of any MSP process. Direct adaptation measures** such as anticipatory planning, relocation of marine uses, adaptation of coastal and marine infrastructure, and climate refugia, **should be considered within MS plans** on top of indirect measures, such as nature-based solutions or other measures related to biodiversity conservation and restoration. Adaptation measures and pathways should be considered for all maritime sectors and marine uses (including nature conservation, landscape and seascape protection, and underwater cultural heritage preservation), also taking into account land-sea interactions  **[CC-GP4]**. This integration should also be approached from a cross-cutting perspective, including the link to fair and just transition and effective governance aspects. Climate proofing of MS plans requires mutual alignment with national and sub-national adaptation strategies and plans.

## [CCA1]

TARGET USER



TIMING **3-5Y** ▲  
**5-10Y** ●

**Based on relevant climate-related policies and projections, MS plans should adopt an even more strategic, forward-looking approach beyond the typical 10-year duration of a planning cycle.** Implementing anticipatory and adaptive approaches to manage uncertainties, such as those developed with the aid of forecasting and backcasting tools  **[CC-PA5]**, may require planning decisions to be designed for the longer term. This should also be reflected in the time frame defined for the implementation of each specific objective and measure. Sharing good practices and cases among o countries would facilitate the implementation of this recommendation.

## [CCA2]

TARGET USER



TIMING **1-3Y** ▲  
**3-5Y** ●

**MS plans should consider climate change adaptation in alignment with other EGD objectives and related policies and strategies** (consider also the overarching recommendation on policy integration, under the Governance and Policy Integration section). For example, adaptation actions taken in MS plans may also benefit **biodiversity protection** (as required by the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the Habitats and Birds Directive) and **restoration** (as required under the EU Nature Restoration Law). To take full account of climate change adaptation, MS plans therefore need to be well integrated with other policies supporting climate change adaptation, in particular those related to biodiversity conservation.

## [CCA3]

TARGET USER



TIMING **1-3Y** ▲  
**3-5Y** ●

**Data and knowledge on the pressures and impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems should be collected, collated, and made available**, ensuring maximum regional specificity. Specific data and knowledge represent an essential prerequisite for developing effective climate change adaptation strategies within MSP. To address knowledge gaps, the use of scientific methods and tools, such as ecological models or digital twins, should be enhanced. This will help identify the areas, habitats, and ecosystem services most vulnerable to climate change and facilitate the development of targeted solutions like climate refugia, new protected areas, and specific conservation and restoration measures. This could be also done at the level of the sea basin through international projects.

## [CCA4]

TARGET USER



TIMING **1-3Y** ▲  
**3-5Y** ●

**Data and knowledge on the impacts of climate change on maritime sectors should be collected, collated, and made available**, ensuring maximum regional specificity, to identify changing trends, modalities, spatial needs, and possible solutions (i.e. adaptation measures and pathways). Sectors should support this process by providing first-hand data and information on actual and expected climate change impacts (e.g. change of species caught by fishers, or distribution of non-indigenous species driven by changed climatic conditions). Fostering alliances to leverage data from economic sectors through sector representatives at the national and EU level is recommended.

**A catalogue of regionally and locally specific climate change adaptation solutions should be developed**, addressing the coastal and marine environment as well as all maritime sectors, and building on Integrated Coastal Zone Management experiences. MSP should facilitate the implementation of innovative solutions, including climate refugia, NBS, and Marine Green Infrastructure (MGI), considering both the offshore dimension and land-sea interaction to enhance resilience and sustainable resource use. This catalogue could also inform the marine components of national and sub-national adaptation strategies and plans. Assessment of the transferability of solutions and contextualization of the catalogue at the local level should be carefully considered with the support of the scientific community. Synergies with ongoing relevant activities and processes (e.g. [Climate-ADAPT](#), the [EU Mission on Climate Change Adaptation](#), the EU Initiative for Water Resilience, etc.) should be researched and promoted.

### [CCA5]

TARGET USER



▲ 3-5Y TIMING

● 3-5Y

#### Climate change mitigation

##### MSP-GREEN ASSESSMENT OF MS PLANS IN A NUTSHELL

Offshore wind farming (OWF) is the main mitigation-related provision in the MS plans assessed. Other forms of marine renewables are comparatively poorly reflected and still mostly considered niche research and innovation topics. Not all plans adopt a comprehensive approach to deploying offshore renewable energies, including from a land-sea interaction perspective. For instance, only some of the plans consider energy transportation from offshore production sites, grids and landing sites. Some plans include mitigation provisions beyond marine renewable energy, focusing e.g. on the energy transition and decarbonisation of specific maritime sectors such as shipping or fisheries. Generally, there is little overarching consideration of blue carbon and the role of ecosystems in climate change mitigation which was considered a major shortcoming across all assessed plans.

**MSP should continue to support the implementation of ambitious targets on home-grown cheap renewables, including in particular OWF, set at EU and national levels.** At the same time, it should be ensured that the expansion and operation of OWF are **ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable**. Countries should also **consider other offshore renewables** within their MS plans and consider making OWF expansion more contingent on the development and trialling of regionally suitable multi-use combinations. **More effort should be made to consider the land-sea interactions of offshore renewables** in MS plans (e.g. in terms of grid connections). To enable a real energy transition, **MS plans** of countries extracting hydrocarbons at sea **should integrate medium-to-long-term objectives aimed at the progressive phasing out and decommissioning of offshore infrastructures** (in line with related sector plans). Decommissioning can also consider the reuse of offshore platforms from a multi-use perspective (including rig-to-reef options).


### [CCM1]

TARGET USER



TIMING 1-3Y ▲

1-3Y ●

**MS plans should be continuously aligned with updated renewable energy production targets** (in line with national energy and climate plans). **The resulting spatial needs should be identified as early as possible.** In addition to identifying priority areas for offshore renewables development, MS plans should indicate or reinforce the indication of specific go-to-areas and/or acceleration areas for offshore renewables development and expansion, in line with the designation of these areas in sectoral plans. At the same time, the use of sea space for this purpose should be limited to actual expansion needs and targets. **The cumulative impacts**  [\[CC-DT5\]](#) of ORE expansion should be assessed and mitigated, and valuable habitats and MPAs should be avoided, as should adverse effects (including displacement) on other users of the sea (considering e.g. the updated [Guidance document on wind energy developments and EU nature legislation](#)).

### [CCM2]

TARGET USER



TIMING 3-5Y ▲

3-5Y ●

**MS plans should consider offshore renewables other than OWE** (such as wave, tidal, current, and solar) in terms of objectives, zoning and/or measures. This might require mapping of energy sources other than wind, analysis of available technologies, evaluation of interactions with other sea uses, environmental impact assessment, identification of suitable areas for ORE development including space for trialling innovative technologies, and evaluation of multi-use opportunities.

### [CCM3]

TARGET USER



TIMING 3-5Y ▲

3-5Y ●

**MS plans should explicitly consider any spatial needs resulting from the storage and transmission of offshore renewable energy.** Among other things, this implies involving public and private stakeholders responsible for grid development in MSP, including any grid initiatives at the regional sea level.

### [CCM4]

TARGET USER




TIMING 3-5Y ▲

5-10Y ●

**MSP should identify links to terrestrial and coastal planning related to the development and expansion of offshore renewables. MSP should work to ensure that onshore spatial prerequisites are in place to allow for ORE development.** MS plans should highlight gaps and possible actions to ensure land use planning and other forms of land-based planning align with MSP to enable and actively encourage the expansion of ORE. Important elements to be considered include the landward connection of transmission grids and the port infrastructure necessary for the construction and maintenance of ORE infrastructure.



**MSP could strive to help reduce the carbon footprint of maritime sectors** (such as maritime transport, fisheries, aquaculture, etc.), e.g. by favouring low-carbon or carbon-neutral activities and specifying objectives and measures designed to support the decarbonisation of maritime sectors. MS plans could also act as a **framework for the integration of objectives and measures set in other sectors or cross-cutting policies and plans**. A particular aspect is to **recognize the significant role of ports** (in line with port plans and initiatives) **in supporting decarbonization**, e.g. through improved energy efficiency, the use of renewable energy, the use of alternative fuels for shipping, and the role of ports as blue circular economy hubs. Cooperation between stakeholders and among countries can strengthen the ports' ambitions towards the EGD.

**M&E of EGD-aligned MSP**  **[CC-PA7]** **should include the evaluation of the climate impacts of planning designations**, also as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process. This evaluation can be based on calculating the carbon footprint of different planning options and decisions as well as the greenhouse gas emissions likely to be produced by the different maritime sectors in response to the EGD. Such evaluation should inform the design and revision of MS plans to minimise their carbon footprint.

**Carbon capture and storage at sea should be considered in MS plans. This implies mapping blue carbon habitats** (e.g. seagrass meadows and salt marshes), **evaluating their climate change mitigation potential, assessing other co-benefits** (e.g. as habitats for marine species of commercial importance), **and improving their conservation, protection, and restoration** through specific MSP objectives, zoning designations, and/or measures. The implementation of this recommendation calls for improved use of MSFD and Habitat and Birds Directives (H&BD) data and might require additional surveys and monitoring activities (for example to assess the real mitigation potential of different blue carbon habitats). MSP could also reserve space - if relevant - for trialling and pilot activities of geological carbon sequestration.

**[CCM5]**

TARGET USER

▲ **3-5Y** TIMING● **3-5Y****[CCM6]**


TARGET USER

▲ **3-5Y** TIMING● **3-5Y****[CCM7]**

TARGET USER

▲ **5-10Y** TIMING● **5-10Y****Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration****MSP-GREEN ASSESSMENT OF MS PLANS IN A NUTSHELL**

Protecting the marine environment is a priority in all assessed plans. In practice, plans are not to designate new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), which is outside MSP's mandate, but as facilitators or in support of such processes. Some plans include biodiversity-oriented zoning measures, such as the delineation of ecologically significant marine underwater areas or the identification of priority areas for nature conservation, which may in turn support MPAs designation or extension processes. Many biodiversity-related provisions in MS plans are actually related to or reflect the implementation of existing environmental legislation, such as the MSFD or the Birds and Habitat Directive. In turn, focusing on the implementation of those specific provisions means that plans can fall short of adopting more integrated approaches as well as of considering issues not included in such legislation. For instance, only some of the analysed MS plans include elements related to marine connectivity or "blue corridors" and Marine Green Infrastructures. Current plans therefore do not fully reflect the role MSP could play as a platform for articulating area-based conservation measures and achieving objectives such as establishing a coherent network of MPAs. Similarly, Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures were not commonly found in MS plans. In the light of the EU Nature Restoration Law, it is worth noting that only one of the assessed MS plans explicitly addressed the restoration of marine ecosystems. The lack of consideration for the effects of climate change on protection and restoration measures constitutes another shared shortcoming of the assessed plans.

Among its overarching objectives and through the adoption of an ecosystem-based approach (see e.g. the document on [Guiding the Application of an Ecosystem-Based Approach in Maritime Spatial Planning](#)), **MSP should support achieving and maintaining Good Environmental Status (GES) of EU marine waters**, as defined under the MSFD, as well as **identify and foster actions for marine restoration** in line with the EU Restoration Law. In addition, **MS plans should coordinate and be coherent with national processes designed to reach EU biodiversity targets**, requiring at least 30 per cent of the EU's marine area to be designated for nature conservation purposes by 2030, including 10 per cent for strict protection. From this perspective, **MSP should reinforce its role as facilitator and driver for biodiversity conservation**, including zoning and spatial conservation measures tailored to the national context. This would enhance the contribution of MSP to protecting species and habitats under the H&BD, achieving GES under the MSFD and preserving ecosystem services and nature's benefits to people. **MSP should contribute to keeping environmental pressures within ecosystem capacity limits**, to safeguard the natural functions of the marine ecosystems. **This requires early and careful assessment of single and cumulative impacts**  **[CC-DT5]**, the development of alternative planning solutions to minimise impacts, and the identification of mitigation measures. Last but not least, MSP can contribute to enhancing regional cooperation on biodiversity conservation, for instance by focusing on cross-border protection needs.




Contributing to the EU Biodiversity Strategy targets, **MSP should take a stronger role in supporting the identification of new areas relevant to nature conservation** (such as MPAs, Natura 2000 sites, etc.) **and foster their effective design and management**. OECM is also a tool that can be used in MSP. The [EU criteria and guidance for protected areas designations](#) offer guidance for the identification of OECM and could serve as a basis for analysing how OECM can best be considered by MSP. Exchange and transfer of experience on OECM integration within MSP is also recommended, for example as one of the activities of the EU Member State Expert Group on MSP, MSP community of practices or even national working groups on OECMs that may be established.

**MS plans should be coherent with management measures for protected areas** - as defined in the plans specifically set for MPAs, Natura 2000 sites, etc. and define measures to control pressures in their proximity. Additionally, **MS plans could support other spatial** (such as Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA), Area To be Avoided (ATA), Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS), limits to velocity) **and non-spatial management measures** (e.g. technical, behavioural, and educational measures) designed to improve biodiversity conservation.

**MS plans should support the establishment of a coherent network of protected areas at sea and across the land-sea interface** based on criteria for ecological coherence (e.g. representativity, replicability, connectivity, and adequacy). Research on and **operationalisation of the blue corridor concept** should be expanded in this context, also across national borders.

**MSP should more explicitly support and promote EU nature restoration targets and the concept of MGI**, acknowledging their contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation. MS plans should align with the national restoration plans, **specifically by identifying areas to be restored at sea and along the coast**. This will enable the MSP processes to help Member States meet the requirements of the EU Nature Restoration Law.

**MS plans should give greater consideration to the effects of climate change on conservation and restoration actions**. This should aim at improving the resilience of marine ecosystems, habitats, and species under changing climatic conditions, also considering the transboundary dimension and the need for cooperation at the sea-basin level. Biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration  [\[BC4\]](#) should be framed within the context of climate change, incorporating adaptive management strategies, including specific planning provisions in terms of zoning and measures.

**[BC1]**

TARGET USER



▲ 1-3Y TIMING

● 1-3Y

**[BC2]**

TARGET USER



▲ 3-5Y TIMING

● 3-5Y

**[BC3]**

TARGET USER



▲ 3-5Y TIMING

● 5-10Y

**[BC4]**

TARGET USER



▲ 3-5Y TIMING

● 3-5Y

**[BC5]**

TARGET USER



▲ 1-3Y TIMING

● 5-10Y

**[BC6]**

TARGET USER



TIMING 1-3Y ▲

5-10Y ●

**The availability, accessibility, and usability of marine environmental data for informed MSP decision-making should be fostered.** Among others, key areas for data enhancement include detailed mapping of benthic habitats at scales appropriate for marine management, the distribution and temporal variability of key species, mapping and quantification of ecosystem services, and detailed assessment of climate change effects on species and habitat distribution and health. Considering the transboundary dimension of these aspects, cooperation at the EU and sea-basin level is necessary to achieve the desired results.

**Sustainable seafood production****MSP-GREEN ASSESSMENT OF MS PLANS IN A NUTSHELL**

Sustainable seafood production is generally well reflected in the MS plans assessed. Plans includes multiple spatial and non-spatial provisions to enhance the sustainability of fisheries. The role of MSP in supporting sustainable fisheries greatly varies from country to country, depending on the degree of integration between fisheries and planning policies at the national level. The lack of information on small-scale fisheries, including their spatial distribution, is a common limitation in all the assessed plans. Some MS plans adopt an integrated approach to fisheries, embedding the whole supply chain. Sustainable aquaculture is commonly considered in MS plans from the perspective of fish and mussels farming. However, differences were observed, depending on whether the activity takes place in coastal areas or in the open sea. Some aspects related to the sustainability of European seafood production were less commonly considered or missing entirely from the plans, especially algae production, management of recreational fisheries and accounting for and anticipating the impact of climate change on seafood sectors.

Sustainable seafood production encompasses a wide range of activities and sectors that should all be developed and transformed in line with sustainability objectives. Considering that the EU MSP Directive links MSP with fishing and aquaculture (see Article 8), **better integration of Common Fishery Policy provisions in MSP should be achieved**, not least to be able to leverage fisheries measures in support of EGD objectives in MSP. **In the case of aquaculture, the EGD requires countries to further foster the transition to sustainable practices**, implying diversification, innovation in terms of practices and technologies, minimisation of environmental impacts, and anticipatory approaches to planning to properly account for climate change effects.

**MSP should move from an approach where fisheries are considered only in terms of exclusion from some areas to a more comprehensive planning approach, where all fisheries segments are proactively planned and managed.**

This approach requires that MS plans incorporate and help harmonise regulations and limitations defined in fisheries plans and other sectoral plans (i.e. for conservation and/or for the management of fishing-related risks objectives). MS plans should recognise the important socio-economic role of the sector.

**MSP should more explicitly consider the needs of small-scale fisheries.** This requires a stronger focus on small-scale fisheries-related data (including for example the distribution of fishing activities) and data sharing as well as **improved engagement of operators in the planning process.** Planners should consider the potential impacts of other activities on small-scale fisheries (including EGD-related ones), as well as promote synergies with other uses (e.g. tourism) and the management of MPAs.

**MSP should support sustainable aquaculture in a way that is coherent across different spatial scales. Low trophic aquaculture** (seaweed and shellfish) should be promoted both as a commercial activity and for its environmental co-benefits, e.g. uptake of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) from seawaters. Integration should be sought with other aquaculture types, **including through integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA).** MS plans should identify priority areas for such activities, together with measures to mitigate/eliminate any resulting conflicts and impacts. Any positive effects and co-benefits of low trophic aquaculture should be openly communicated.

**In addition to environmental sustainability, aquaculture and fisheries should be planned considering the broader value chain and community livelihoods in the sense of a fair and just transition.** MSP should recognise the importance of land-sea connections related to aquaculture and fisheries in sustaining coastal community livelihood. MSP should link with municipal and regional plans to ensure the preservation of small ports and landing sites as well as the development of seafood processing facilities where necessary.

**MSP should contribute to facilitating dialogue and improving cooperation between professional and recreational fisheries.** Data and information on recreational fisheries (effort, spatial distribution, impacts on stocks and the environment, conflicts with other uses, social impacts, etc.) should be collected (e.g. through direct interaction with recreational fishers) to support better management of the sector within MSP. Based on the analysis of distributional data and the identification of more heavily impacted areas (e.g. in terms of take and/or access), area restrictions could be introduced for recreational fisheries where necessary.

## [SFP1]

TARGET USER



▲ 1-3Y TIMING

● 1-3Y

## [SFP2]

TARGET USER



▲ 1-3Y TIMING

● 1-3Y

## [SFP3]

TARGET USER



▲ 3-5Y TIMING

● 3-5Y

## [SFP4]

TARGET USER



▲ 1-3Y TIMING

● 3-5Y

## [SFP5]

TARGET USER



▲ 3-5Y TIMING

● 3-5Y

## [SFP6]

TARGET USER



TIMING 3-5Y ▲

5-10Y ●

To the best degree possible, **MSP should anticipate the impacts of climate change on commercially and recreationally exploited species** (fished and farmed) and any spatial displacement this may entail. To avoid future spatial conflicts, MSP should ensure coordination on these aspects between neighbouring countries and at the sea basin level.

## Zero pollution

## MSP-GREEN ASSESSMENT OF MS PLANS IN A NUTSHELL

Zero pollution has received relatively little attention in the MS plans of the MSP-GREEN project countries. Nevertheless, all plans refer to either GES and/or MSFD implementation. Pollution-related provisions are generally included in MS plans, mostly focused on pollution prevention and sector-specific measures. Identified drivers of pollution include shipping, activities related to maritime logistics, tourism, fisheries, aquaculture, offshore energy, security, and port activities. Some plans consider pollution sources from land and land-sea interactions., e.g. by including objectives relating to discharges in the sea from land-based activities, such as nutrients from agriculture, landfills, or sewage plants. Pollution remediation is rarely considered in the plans.

A large part of marine pollution originates from land-based sources, over which MSP has no mandate. Still, the link between MSP and pollution prevention/remediation is not yet fully explored. Based on national specificities, **MS plans should identify how they can contribute to zero pollution at sea (considering nutrients, chemicals, litter, noise, and other pollutants) through objectives and spatial and regulatory measures.** Several of these objectives and measures are also addressed by other sectoral or cross-cutting policies, particularly the WFD and MSFD. **MS plans are expected to integrate relevant objectives and measures from other policies to form a coherent picture.**

## [ZP1]


TARGET USER




TIMING 3-5Y ▲

1-3Y ●

**MSP should map the marine areas most affected by land-based sources of pollution** and identify the impacted environmental components and economic activities. MSP should enter into discussion within relevant processes (the WFD and MSFD in particular) and with stakeholders at sea and on land, to consider how pollution-related impacts can be **prevented and what remediation** measures can be implemented through spatial planning on land and sea. Beyond the national dimension, sea-basin-wide analysis is necessary to identify priorities and support the identification and implementation of suitable solutions.

**MSP should identify and map marine pollution hotspots** that affect marine uses and the environment, making use of available data (including those available in EU repositories such as EMODnet and Wise Marine). Marine pollution hotspots include illegal dumping areas at sea, areas of concentration of abandoned ammunition, accumulation areas of marine litter on the sea floor, etc. In these areas, **MSP should prioritise environmental remediation measures** coherently with the implementation of other linked directives (the WFD and MSFD in particular) and of specific remediation plans (at the national, sub-national, and local levels). Remediation measures also need to be linked to biodiversity protection as indicated in the EU's Restoration Law  [BC4]. Given the transboundary nature of some marine pollution hotspots, an analysis at the sea-basin level is considered important to identify priorities and design solutions.

**In line with their mandate and scope, MS plans could identify sector-based measures contributing to zero pollution and/or integrate measures already set out in other plans.** Examples of such measures include (i) area-based management tools to manage maritime traffic and reduce pressure related to air emission, noise, and vibration; (ii) analysis of alternative scenarios for shipping routing to reduce emissions; (iii) supporting the adoption of technological measures to reduce emissions from maritime sectors; (iv) measures aimed to reduce litter generation from maritime sectors; (v) supporting the development of low-trophic and multi-trophic aquaculture to remove nutrients in eutrophic systems  [SFP3]; (vi) measures aimed at improved monitoring of emerging sources of pollutants (e.g. chemical and plastic debris from OWF), etc.

As a specific aspect of [ZP3], **MSP should recognise the crucial role of ports in supporting zero pollution**, e.g. by supporting proper waste management, providing the necessary infrastructure and service for "fishing for litter" practices, or enabling blue circular economy opportunities. While many of these aspects are outside the mandate of MSP, MSP can and should engage with other sector plans or cross-cutting policies and plans (including port plans) to improve the interface between sustainable port development and MSP. Co-operation between stakeholders and among countries can strengthen port ambitions towards the EGD and clarify the synergies that exist between EGD-aligned MSP and sustainable port development.

## [ZP2]

TARGET USER



▲ 1-3Y TIMING

● 5-10Y

## [ZP3]

TARGET USER



▲ 5-10Y TIMING

● 3-5Y

## [ZP4]

TARGET USER



▲ 5-10Y TIMING

● 3-5Y

## [BCE1]

TARGET USER



TIMING ▲ 1-3Y

● 3-5Y

## [BCE2]

TARGET USER



TIMING ▲ 3-5Y


● 3-5Y

## Blue circular economy

## MSP-GREEN ASSESSMENT OF MS PLANS IN A NUTSHELL

Whether and how MS plans address blue circular economy depends on their scope and mandate, including the degree of integration of MSP with relevant policies at the national level, such as those covering circular economy at large or recycling. As a result, the MS plans assessed address the blue circular economy in different ways. Some plans cover the topic both at a strategic and an operational level, with explicit references and dedicated objectives and measures. Others consider the topic only to some extent or indirectly, either through generic mentions only or by addressing some specific blue economy sectors or segments. Some plans have not identified any connection between MSP and the circular economy. While blue circular economy might at first seem out of scope for MSP, the plans that do consider the topic, as well as the new practices explored by MSP-GREEN partners, demonstrate that MSP could actually play an important role in contributing to this EGD topic. Further research should be conducted on the integration of MSP and the blue circular economy.

There are various opportunities for MSP to encourage the development of a sustainable blue circular economy, although some innovative and lateral thinking may be required. Where possible, **MSP should seek to prepare the ground for suitable licencing decisions by defining targeted sector-specific measures. MSP can also foster consideration of a sustainable blue circular economy more broadly, e.g. by enhancing the understanding of value chains across the land-sea interface.**

**MSP should seek stronger links with circular economy and blue economy strategies, both at the EU and national levels, and promote their development where they are not available yet.** This will promote policy integration, assist MSP in setting suitable priorities and promote an understanding of the requirements of a blue circular economy that is locally appropriate and economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. **Specific spatial measures supporting the blue circular economy should be identified and included in MS plans.** MSP should work closely with terrestrial planning to support relevant circular economic activities, such as using biological products from the sea, using waste from seafood production, re-using sea shells in construction, encouraging IMTA  [SFP3], re-using ghost nets collected by fishers, promoting vessel and boat repair and refitting, etc.

**Research into the spatial dimensions of a blue circular economy should be encouraged** to assess how much marine and coastal space is needed for activities now and in the future. A **socio-economic impact analysis** should be carried out on the impact of a circular blue economy on society, with a focus on blue justice and the well-being of coastal communities. Operational implications of research outcomes for the various stages of the MSP process should be highlighted.

**A life cycle approach should be considered in MS plans and associated licensing.** This could be applied to sea areas themselves in the sense of reusing space, but also to different elements of the blue economy. An example is offshore wind farming and the sustainable decommissioning of turbines, as well as other offshore infrastructure and consideration of its reuse.

**[BCE3]**

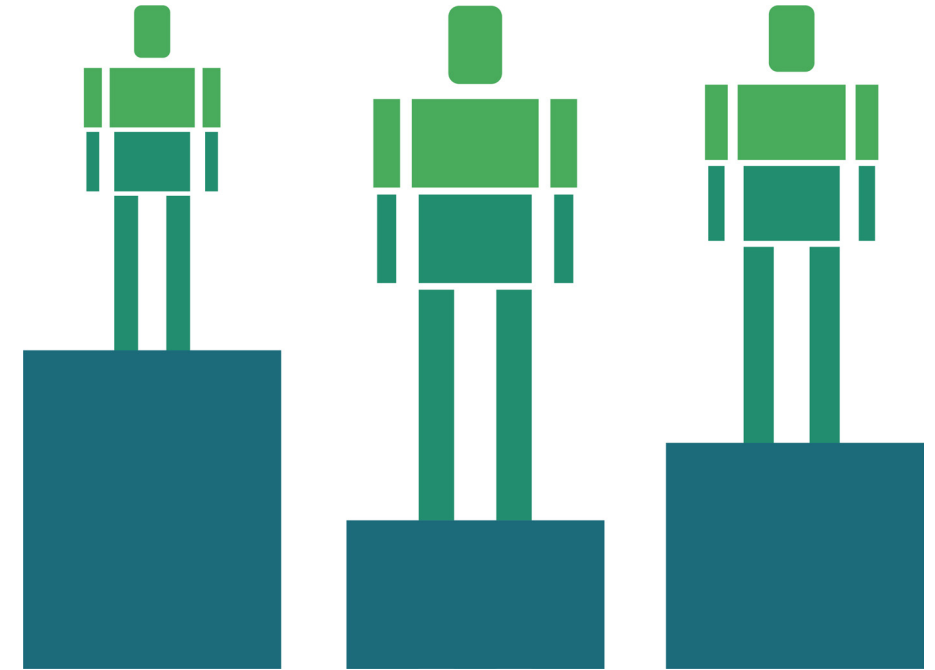
TARGET USER



▲ 3-5Y TIMING

● 5-10Y

# Fair & Just transition





## Use of the EGD to work towards a fair and just sustainability transition in MSP

**Implementing the EGD within MSP comes with a renewed opportunity to work towards a fair and just sustainability transition.** It is an opportunity **to ensure MSP leaves no one and no place behind** and to use EGD-aligned MSP **to increase stakeholder buy-in in the planning process.** The success of implementing the EGD will not least depend on whether the costs and benefits of planning decisions are seen to be **distributed fairly across space and time**, and whether there is a real opportunity for stakeholders, especially smaller and less organised ones, to be heard in the process. Planners are well aware of the importance of stakeholder recognition and representation when designing and reviewing MS plans, and efforts are being made in all countries to make planning processes as inclusive as possible. However, **more methods and approaches are needed to assess the socio-economic effects of MS plans and scenarios so that a fair (re)distribution of the costs and benefits of MSP can be ensured.**

**Assess which marine and coastal areas, maritime sectors, communities, and segments of the population will mostly benefit or will be negatively affected** by the implementation of EGD-aligned MS plans. **This might require the development, operationalisation, or customisation of assessment methodologies**, to be supported by dedicated funding resources at the EU and national level. The results of this assessment should be considered in the progressive refinement and revision of the MS plans, through the definition of spatial provisions and measures reducing socio-economic vulnerabilities. Future perspectives should be also carefully considered, for example, to give due consideration to intergenerational fairness.

**Stakeholder engagement in the co-creation of MS plans should be further strengthened, taking into account their needs and proposed solutions.** In light of the fair and just transition principles, **particular attention should be paid to ensuring a balanced distribution of power among stakeholders** (from the perspective of their ability to contribute and impact the MSP process and its outcomes). **This implies the active engagement of less represented stakeholders**, such as small-scale fishery operators, sustainable tourism operators, shellfish aquaculture operators, etc. **Data literacy, training and capacity building** on the EGD and MSP are particularly relevant for these stakeholders and should be promoted with dedicated resources.

**Valorise the potential of the local sustainable blue circular economy by re-imagining supply chains with a focus on local processing, storage, and other facilities** (consider also the Blue Circular Economy recommendations), also through a strengthened involvement of the private sector through projects and collaboration. This will minimise transport, add value to the local economy, provide benefits for local communities, and encourage sustainability in general. Links to terrestrial planning are essential here (e.g. in the context of ports), as are innovative concepts such as Mariparks that could work across the land-sea boundary.

### [FJT1]

#### TARGET USER



▲ 3-5Y TIMING

● 3-5Y

### [FJT2]

#### TARGET USER



▲ 1-3Y TIMING

● 3-5Y

### [FJT3]

#### TARGET USER



▲ 5-10Y TIMING

● 5-10Y

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