

## **DELIVERABLE N°4.1.**

# **Recommendations on making MSP in the EU an enabler of the Green Deal**





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## List of Abbreviations

BC: Biodiversity and Ecosystem protection and restoration

BCE: Blue Circular Economy

CC-DT: Cross-cutting - Data and Tools

CC-GP: Cross-cutting - Governance and Policy integration

CC-MU: Cross-cutting - Multi-Use

CC-PA: Cross-cutting - Processes and Approaches

CCA: Climate Change Adaptation

CCM: Climate Change Mitigation

DG: Directorate General

EGD: European Green Deal

EMFAF: European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund

EU: European Union

FAMENET: Fisheries and Aquaculture Monitoring, Evaluation and Local Support Network

FJT: Fair and Just Transition

HELCOM: Helsinki Commission

MED-MSP-CoP: Mediterranean MSP Community of Practice

MPA: Marine Protected Area

MSP: Maritime Spatial Planning

MS plans: Maritime Spatial Plans

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

SFP: Sustainable Seafood Production

VASAB: Visions and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea

WP: Work Package

WWF: World Wide Fund

ZP: Zero Pollution

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Project overview

The MSP-GREEN project runs from 2022 to 2024 and contributes to aligning maritime spatial plans (MS plans) to the ambition of the European Green Deal (EGD) by creating a framework for plans as enablers of the marine components of the EGD. This framework provides a cross-cutting approach to the EGD key topics relevant to the marine environment and the sustainable transition of the blue economy: climate change adaptation, climate change mitigation, biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration, sustainable seafood production, zero pollution, and blue circular economy. In addition, MSP GREEN also tackles some fair and just transition aspects related to Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and EGD.

To capture the wide differences in national contexts and MSP processes, MSP-GREEN involves partners from all the EU sea basins: the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea and the Baltic Sea (Figure 1).



Figure 1. MSP GREEN partners and their locations.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- Assess whether and how MS plans of MSP GREEN partners have considered the EGD objectives.
- Assess what are the major gaps, challenges, and trade-offs in mainstreaming EGD into MSP.
- Identify and exchange valuable practices of incorporation of EGD elements in MSP plans.



- Identify, design and set the frame for implementing additional actions (so-called “new actions” within the MSP-GREEN project) to strengthen the implementation of EGD-related objectives.
- Co-develop recommendations to foster the use of MSP to deliver EGD objectives related to marine and maritime aspects.
- Engage regional sea communities in a dialogue on the role of MSP in supporting the EGD's ambition and objectives.

## 1.2 Report objectives and structure

The EC COM(2022) 185 final highlights MSP as a powerful enabler of the marine and maritime dimension of the EGD. In the upcoming years, Member States must continue reflecting the evolving ambitions set by the EGD objectives in their MS plans. Moving from these considerations, MSP-GREEN WP4 aimed to develop recommendations to reinforce the MDP-EGD nexus and strengthen the use of MSP and its plans to contribute to delivering several EGD goals. Acknowledging the importance of producing recommendations relevant to different contexts and several target users, MSP-GREEN adopted a co-creation approach to identify, prioritise and design these recommendations. Such an approach enabled the engagement of experts on MSP and EGD beyond the project partners. Recommendations were developed for cross-cutting issues and EGD-specific topics (including climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration, sustainable seafood production, zero pollution, blue circular economy, and fair and just transition) as more detailed described in the following chapters.

Given the heterogeneity of MSP and MS plans across Europe, the relevance and use of the recommendations 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.

The present report is formed by a few summary chapters and several annexes. The report chapters illustrate the adopted co-creation approach (chapter 2), describe the recommendations in a nutshell (chapter 3), and provide final considerations on their possible and desirable uses in terms of dissemination and capitalisation beyond the end of the project (chapter 4). The annexes are an integral part of the report. Annex 1 provides the key contents developed in WP4, i.e. the recommendations on how to strengthen the integration of the EGD maritime components into MSP. Other annexes substantiate important methodological steps (annexes 2 and 3) and the outcome of dialogues on MSP-EGD integration at the sea basin level (annex 4).

## 2. Methodology for the co-development of MSP-GREEN recommendations

The MSP-GREEN recommendations were co-developed through three interwoven processes: desk analysis, engagement of the MSP-GREEN partnership, and engagement of other experts and stakeholders on MSP and EGD at the EU and sea-basin levels.

The desk analysis reviewed the outcome of the assessment of project partners' MS plans (WP2) and the cross-analysis of valuable practices and new actions (WP3) to identify challenges and needs about a strengthened integration of EGD into MSP and input for recommendations addressing such challenges and needs. The capitalisation of the results of other projects was equally important in this phase of the methodological approach. Among the others, the eMSP project<sup>1</sup> developed knowledge and approaches for the implementation phase of MSP in the Baltic and North Sea, taking on board the EGD ambition and implications. The eMSP policy briefs on 5 urgent emerging MSP topics (ocean governance, sustainable blue economy, data sharing, ecosystem-based approach, and monitoring and evaluation) were of great inspiration for the MSP-GREEN recommendations. REGINA MSP<sup>2</sup> investigated the way the participation of regional authorities in MSP can be improved and how this can contribute to the EGD goals; several case studies from different regional contexts were addressed in the project.

The engagement of the MSP-GREEN partnership and other experts and stakeholders forms the essence of the co-development process, as described in the following sections. Figure 2 shows the cascade of events that operationalised such an approach.



Figure 2. The co-development process of MSP GREEN recommendations: lighter green boxes refer to project partners' events, while darker green boxes refer to events engaging experts and stakeholders beyond the partnership.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.emspproject.eu/>; last access on 08.11.2024

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.regina-msp.eu/>; last access on 08.11.2024

## 2.1 Drafting the recommendations: the MSP-GREEN focus groups and the workshop in Kemi

In the MSP GREEN context, a focus group can be defined as a small, diverse, and expert-based group of people brought together to discuss specific MSP-EGD-related topics or issues. Through a guided discussion, the focus groups explored available knowledge, co-developed a common understanding of the addressed topics and issues, identified input to answer key questions, and co-constructed the MSP-GREEN recommendations. Within MSP-GREEN, three focus groups were specifically organised, respectively focusing on:

- Climate change adaptation and Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration (CCA-BC)
- Climate change mitigation and Zero pollution (CCM-ZP)
- Sustainable seafood production and Blue circular economy (SFP-BCE)

In total, the three focus groups gathered 17 experts from different DGs of the European Commission (DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries and DG Environment, specifically), EU-level associations and organisations of maritime sectors (European Sea Port Organisation, Renewables Grid Initiatives, Wind Europe, Europeche, FAMENET, European Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform), NGOs (WWF), and universities and research institutions (University of Lisbon, Gdansk University, Finnish Environment Institute) also representing other projects (i.e. eMSP).

The focus groups met online for the first time in February 2024: CCA-BC on 21.02.2024, CCM-ZP on 21.02.2024, and SFP-BCE on 27.02.2024. After the presentation of the MSP-GREEN project and the achieved outcome from the previous work packages, participants were invited to discuss and take notes on Miro (Figure 3) about the following issues, focusing on their focus group EGD topics:

- Opportunity for MSP to contribute to the EGD goals.
- Spatial needs for the EGD transition at sea and other pre-conditions to be satisfied for such transition.
- Challenges for a strengthened integration of EGD and MSP. The discussion was based on the challenges identified by the MSP GREEN analysis: (i) spatial needs, distribution and compatibility of uses; (ii) data gaps and limitations; (iii) managing uncertainties; (iv) different scope, mandate and nature of MSP; (v) contrasting policy objectives; (vi) limitation of the MSP process (for more details see MSP-GREEN deliverable D3.2 New actions fostering MSP contribution to Green Deal<sup>3</sup>).

The first meeting of the focus groups also discussed the expected number and structure of the recommendations.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://mspgreen.eu/results/>; last access on 08.11.2024

**BRIDGING MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING (MSP)  
AND THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL (EGD)**  
Focus groups to develop recommendations for a better integration of EGD into MSP

Discussion topics:  
Climate change adaptation  
Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration

**QUESTION 1: What is your opinion about the ambition to contribute to EGD objectives through MSP? Are there any opportunities? Which ones?**

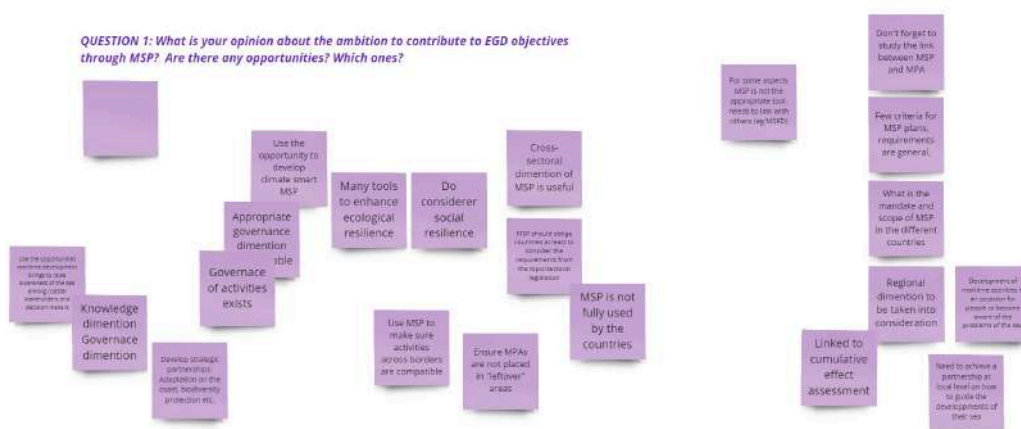


Figure 3. Example of Miro notes taken during the first meeting of the CCA-BC focus group.

The results of the first focus group meetings were analysed, aggregated and structured according to a common narrative. These were used to identify a set of specific issues (for cross-cutting aspects and the six EGD topics) to be considered for the development of the recommendations. Such issues were discussed and consolidated in a dedicated session of the MSP-GREEN project meeting and internal workshop held on 12-13 March 2024 in Kemi (Finland). These issues were then developed into draft recommendations, also based on the results of the desk analysis of MSP documents and literature.

The focus group met again online for a second meeting in April 2024, specifically: CCA-BC on 24.04, CCM-ZP on 22.04, and SFP-BCE on 29.04. Firstly, MSP-GREEN partners presented the draft recommendations and the sources and methodology used for their preparation, discussing with the participants the structure and layout of the final document to be produced. Then, focus group members were invited to contribute to a Miro-structured discussion on both cross-cutting and topic-based draft recommendations aimed at:

- Assessing the relevance of each proposed recommendation.
- Providing specific comments on the recommendations.
- Suggesting missing recommendations.

Experts also provided their views about the next phases of the co-creation process (specifically about the aims and dynamics of the EU-wide workshop) as well as on dissemination opportunities of the recommendations within and beyond the project duration.

### TOPIC-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



Figure 4. Example of Miro notes taken during the second meeting of the CCM-ZP focus group.

## 2.2 The EU-level workshop and the finalisation of the recommendations

The outcome of the focus groups' activities and desk-based analysis were used by the MSP-GREEN partnership to consolidate a second draft of the recommendations. These were deeply discussed in the EU-level workshop held on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 in Svendborg (Denmark), back-to-back to the EU Maritime Day. This workshop allowed us to refine the draft recommendations and gather input for additional elements. Workshop participants were divided into three groups, which firstly discussed cross-cutting recommendations and successively worked on those focusing on the EGD topics considered by the MSP GREEN project. For each group discussion, invited experts:

- Briefly discussed the relevance of the draft recommendations, suggesting a few elimination or merging.
- Commented the draft recommendations and provided feedback for their specification.
- Identified target users and provided input for the specification of urgency and readiness of each recommendation.
- Provided examples (in terms of existing practices and possible new actions) about the concrete implementation of the recommendations.

Annex 2 provides a detailed description of the workshop's methodological approach



and its main outcome. Based on these inputs, the MSP-GREEN partnership finalised the recommendations.



*Figure 5. MSP-GREEN EU level workshop: group working on recommendations focusing on climate change adaptation and biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration.*

## 2.3 The sea basin perspective

Once the recommendations were finalised, they were presented in sea-basin workshops to reflect on regional specificities and identify relevant topics, priorities and examples of actions to be taken into consideration at the sea-basin level to advance in the shared implementation of most relevant EGD topics through MSP. Specifically, the following four events were organised between June and September 2024:

- “Joint Black Sea Basin workshop: bridging maritime spatial planning with the European Green Deal and better integrating marine protected areas” (20<sup>th</sup> June 2024, Varna, Bulgaria), co-organised by MSP GREEN, MPA Europe and MSP4BIO projects.
- “European Green Deal through the eyes of MSP in the Baltic Sea region” (17<sup>th</sup> September 2024, Riga Latvia), organised back-to-back with a joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group meeting, which took place on the days following the workshop.
- “Maritime Spatial Plans as Enablers of the European Green Deal: insights from a Mediterranean perspective” (20<sup>th</sup> September 2024, Izola, Slovenia), organised within the event “Mediterranean Coast and Macro-Regional Strategies Week 2024: Stronger Cooperation for a Better Future”. The workshop was held in a hybrid format to engage the members of the Mediterranean Community of Practice on MSP (MED-MSP-CoP).
- Maritime Spatial Planning and the European Green Deal: insights from the Atlantic and Channel-North Sea basins (26<sup>th</sup> September 2024, Saint-Malo, France).



Figure 6. The Baltic (top) and Mediterranean (down) MSP-GREEN sea-basin workshops.

The four workshops adopted customised approaches in consideration of the specifically addressed sea-basin context and focused on its priorities. Nevertheless, they shared a common general structure including:

- A first moment setting the scene for the workshop by presenting the MSP-GREEN project outcomes and the workshop objective and structure.
- The discussion of regional specificities related to MSP, EGD and their interconnection, including the identification of priority topics at the transboundary level.
- The discussion of MSP-GREEN recommendations for the identification of the most relevant ones for the sea basin, specific elements to be considered in the application of the recommendation in a given sea basin, and/or examples of actions for the operational implementation of the prior recommendations.

The detailed reports of the four sea-basin workshops are included in Annex 3. The key outcome of these workshops informed the elaboration of five sea-basins policy briefs included in Annex 4. Similarly to the workshops, the policy briefs focus on the sea-basin specificities, still adopting a common structure:

- Background and key sea basin specificities. This section briefly describes the geographical, cultural, and institutional characteristics of the considered sea basins relevant for the EGD implementation through MSP.
- Relevant EGD-MSP topics for the sea basin. This part of the policy brief focuses on the elements emerging from the workshop discussion as more relevant EGD-MSP-related topics or the specific sea basin.
- Priority recommendations to be taken into consideration at the sea basin level. This section of the policy brief discusses the most relevant and priority recommendations for the sea basin context.

### 3. MSP-GREEN recommendations in a nutshell

MSP-GREEN recommendations are reported in Annex 1 of this report. This was designed as a standalone document to ease the dissemination and capitalization of the recommendations. In total, MSP-GREEN co-developed 57 recommendations. 23 of these recommendations deal with cross-cutting elements addressing how MSP is expected to respond to new needs emerging from the EGD ambition and objectives, while 31 focus on the six marine EGD topics identified by the MSP-GREEN project. A few recommendations (3) address fair and just transition in the marine domain, tackling some MSP-related societal topics, including stakeholder engagement. The distribution of the recommendations for cross-cutting elements and topics is reported in Table 1. Recommendations are identified through a coding system, made of coding letters referring to the addressed element/topic (also reported in Table 1) and a progressive number.

For each of the considered categories (cross-cutting elements, EGD topics, and fair and just transition), the document in Annex 1 includes an overarching recommendation. This aims to interlink the specific recommendations developed for each category into a wider framing umbrella. For the six EGD topics, the document also sums up the key outcomes of the analysis and assessment of the MS plans from an EGD perspective, as detailed in MSP-GREEN D2.1. For each recommendation, target users are identified, distinguishing between:

- 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 subnational (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.

The co-developed process also enabled to define timing for the implementation of the recommendations, both in terms of urgency and readiness for required solutions. Both elements are categorised according to three possible periods: 1-3 years, 3-5 years, and 5-10 years.

*Table 1. Overview of the typologies and number of MSP GREEN recommendations.*

Typology	Element/Topic	Number of recommendations	Code
Cross-cutting recommendations	MSP processes and approaches to improve EGD implementation	8	CC-PA
	Data and tools for MSP: new needs and opportunities driven by the EGD	5	CC-DT
	Governance and policy integration to strengthen the role of MSP in achieving EGD objectives	5	CC-GP
	Multi-use in MSP: a tool to reach marine EGD objectives	5	CC-MU
EGD topic recommendations	Climate Smart MSP: climate change adaptation	5	CCA
	Climate Smart MSP: climate change mitigation	7	CCM
	Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration	6	BC
	Sustainable seafood production	6	SFP
	Blue circular economy	4	BCE
	Zero pollution	3	ZP
Recommendations for a "fair and just transition"		3	FJT

## 4. What next: opportunities for dissemination and capitalisation

The recommendations on making MSP in the EU an enabler of the Green Deal represent an important legacy of the MSP-GREEN project. The experts and stakeholders engaged in different moments (EU focus groups, EU-level workshops and sea-basin workshops) provided input for possible follow-up actions. These include the dissemination of the recommendations to several contexts and events, i.e.:

- The EU Member States Expert Group on MSP.
- EU-level events on MSP, such as the 2025 European Maritime Day or the annual meeting of the European Blue Forum.
- Other events organised by the MSP Assistance Mechanisms and dissemination through the EU MSP Platform.
- Meetings and other events targeting the national MSP competent authorities, focusing on the recommendations relevant to the users at the national level and the priority topics for a given country.

Thanks to the sea-basin workshops, MSP-GREEN embarked on an initial reflection about the MSP-EGD nexus at the sea-basin level. This has to be continued in dedicated sea-basin events and initiatives, as those organised in the frame of regional sea conventions and other sea basin cooperation mechanisms. In addition, particularly important is further engaging the regional MSP community of practices in this discussion and more in-depth analysis focusing on the sea-basin challenges and needs. A great opportunity in this sense is represented by the upcoming EMFAF-funded project MEDIGREEN.

This project aims to advance the EGD transition in the Mediterranean Sea through transnational cooperation in MSP. In the framework of the multi-sectoral dimension of EGD and MSP, MEDIGREEN will undertake an operational approach, focusing on key uses and activities (either traditional or emerging) relevant to the basin context: offshore renewable energies, fisheries, aquaculture, and nature protection. The project will allow EU countries to strengthen EGD-aligned actions in the MSP plan finalization or implementation phases and to prepare the floor for the enhancement of such actions in the next MSP cycle. Involvement of non-EU countries, parties of the Barcelona Convention, will contribute to target EGD-oriented, marine management coordinated actions at the sea-basin level. MEDIGREEN will engage the Mediterranean MSP Community of Practice (MED-MSP-CoP) in the discussion on improved EGD-MSP integration in the Mediterranean Sea.

# **DELIVERABLE N°4.1.**

## **Recommendations on making MSP in the EU an enabler of the Green Deal**

**Annex 1 – Policy brief: Bridging MSP and the  
EGD. Recommendations on how to  
strengthen the integration of the EGD  
maritime components into MSP**



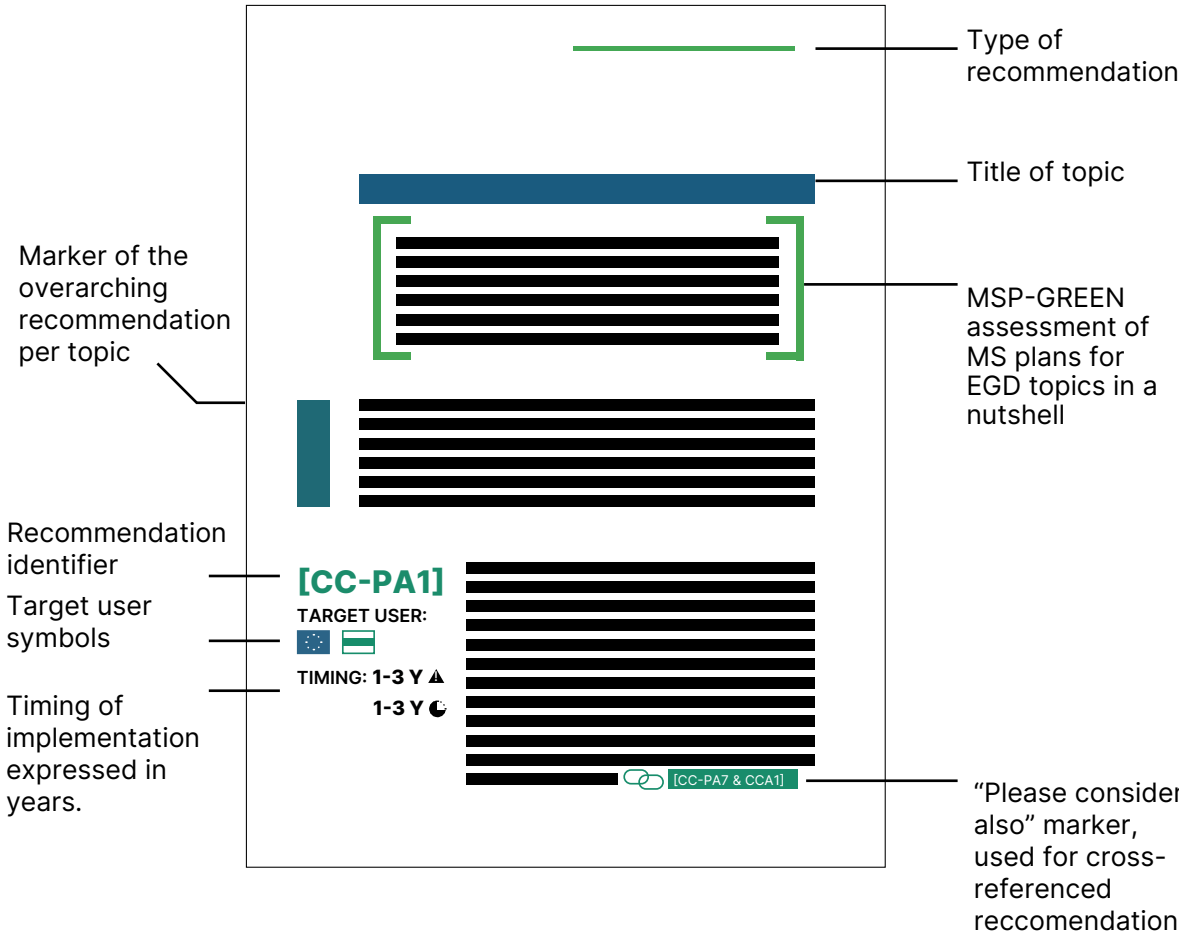


# BRIDGING MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING [MSP] AND THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL [EGD]







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.

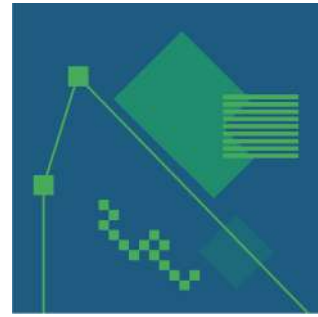
The [MSP Directive 2014/89/EU](#) recognizes that healthy marine ecosystems and their multiple services can deliver substantial benefits if integrated into planning decisions. Benefits include food production, recreation and tourism, climate change mitigation and adaptation, coastal protection, disaster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

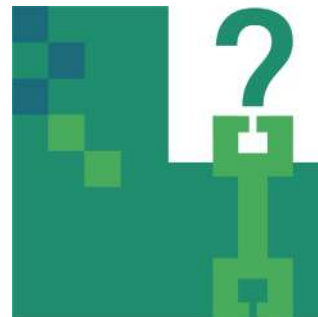


# Cross-cutting recommendations

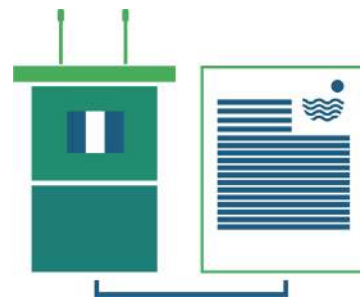
## Processes and approaches



## 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, and reusable). **MS plans should allow for the incorporation of data updates**  [\[CC-PA4 & CC-PA5\]](#): 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-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.

**[CC-MU1]**

TARGET USER



▲ 1-3Y TIMING

● 3-5Y



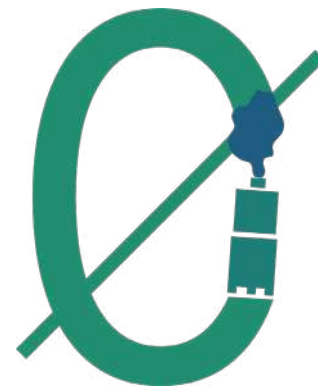
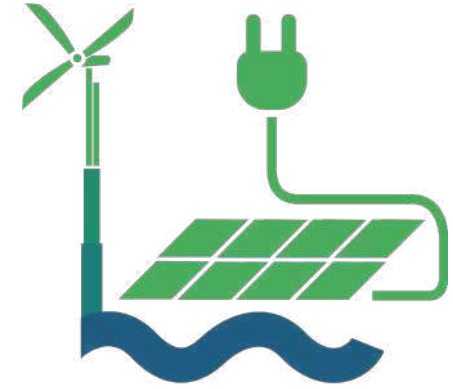
# EGD topic-related recommendations

**Climate  
Change  
Adaptation**



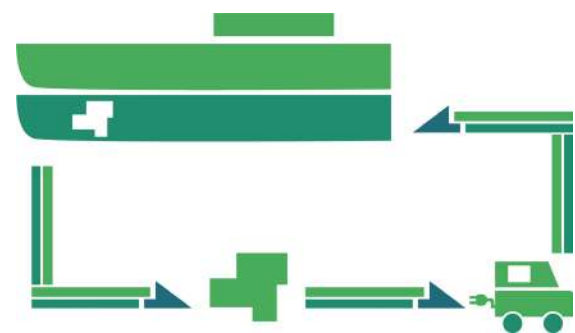
**Sustainable  
seafood  
production**

**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** complementing other measures, directly targeting biodiversity conservation and restoration, such as nature-based solutions. 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.

### 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 affordable 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).

#### [CCA5]

TARGET USER



▲ 3-5Y TIMING

● 3-5Y


#### [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]**

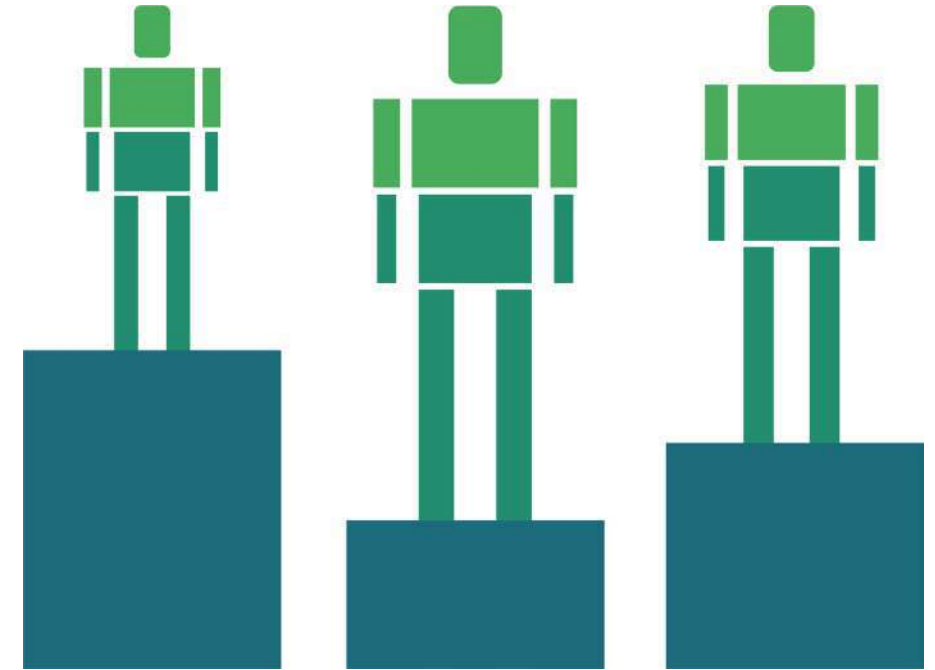
TARGET USER



▲ 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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Folco Soffietti (IUAV).

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## **DELIVERABLE N°4.1.**

# **Recommendations on making MSP in the EU an enabler of the Green Deal**

### **Annex 2**

**EU-level workshop for the  
co-development of the  
recommendations on how to strengthen  
the integration of EGD maritime  
components into MSP**

**- workshop report -**



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## 1 Introduction

This workshop report describes the methodological approach used at the *Milestone 10 EU level workshop* organised in Svendborg, Denmark on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 as a side event of the European Maritime Day 2024. Overall the workshop was joined by 34 participants, 17 members of the project team and 17 invited participants, including external experts and additional experts from the project partner institutions.

The aim of the workshop was to discuss the *Recommendations on how to strengthen the EGD ambition of EU MSP plans*, drafted by project partners and additional experts in the months before the workshop. All participants were invited to bring their contribution by sharing suggestions, comments and experiences.

The workshop included a round of brief presentation of the MSP-GREEN project results, including the process of drafting the recommendations.

Cross-cutting and EGD topic-related recommendations were then discussed in three parallel working groups. Relevance and completeness of recommendations were assessed. Target users, urgency and readiness of recommendations, and examples of implementation actions were identified.

This workshop report is included as an Annex to the Deliverable D4.1 of the MSP-GREEN project.



Figure 1. Group photo.

## 2 Structure and methodology of the workshop

The methodology of the workshop was designed to encourage inclusive, structured, and action-oriented discussions around the draft recommendations. Its structure ensured participants' active engagement and provided diverse perspectives on the recommendations through presentations, group discussions, and feedback sessions.

### Presentations

The workshop began with a series of presentations that helped to align all participants on the project's achievements and on the specific draft recommendations. In particular, information was provided to the audience through a general introduction to the MSP-GREEN project, a presentation on the results achieved in WP2 (*Analysis and evaluation of the Green Deal ambition integration into MSP plans*) and WP3 (*Valuable practices for boosting the Green Deal through MSP and New actions fostering MSP contribution to EGD objectives*) and finally an overview of the recommendations and their preparation process. These presentations established a common foundation for informed discussion during the subsequent sessions.



Figure 2. Presentation by Emiliano Ramieri (CNR-ISMAR).

### Working Groups

Two rounds of working group sessions provided a structured, participatory approach to discuss the recommendations. While the first round was focused on discussing the cross-cutting recommendations, the second one was centred on the topic-specific ones. The following working tables were created for this purpose:

- Group 1 on *MSP processes and approaches to improve EGD implementation* (1st round) and *Climate Change Mitigation and Zero Pollution* (2nd round)
- Group 2 on *Data and tools for MSP: new needs and opportunities driven by EGD* (1st round) and *Climate Change Adaptation and Biodiversity and Ecosystem protection and restoration* (2nd round)
- Group 3 on *Governance and policy integration to strengthen MSP impact on EGD objectives* (1st round) and *Sustainable Seafood Production and Blue Circular Economy* (2nd round)

Each session followed a consistent methodology designed to facilitate detailed analysis and constructive feedback:

- Introduction: Each session opened with a tour-de-table where participants introduced themselves, creating an inclusive setting for discussion.
- Overview of recommendations: Moderators introduced the recommendations (including the overarching ones) to set a clear focus for the session.
- Discussion on relevance and completeness: Participants assessed the recommendations' relevance and identified any missing elements. Rapporteurs documented insights, while post-its allowed for visual capture of key discussion points.
- Exercise on Who-When-How (see Appendix 3 for more detail): Moderators led participants in an exercise focused on the implementation of recommendations:
  - Who: Identifying target users or responsible parties for each recommendation.
  - When: Discussing urgency and required timing for implementation.
  - How: Collecting examples of how the recommendations could be effectively applied.
- Wrap-up: Each session ended with a brief wrap-up led by the moderator to consolidate main points and ensure clarity on feedback collected.

## Discussion Posters

Throughout the workshop, two discussion posters addressed the recommendations on *Multi-use of the Sea* and *Fair & Just Transition in MSP*. These posters provided participants with the opportunity to engage individually with these additional topics during breaks, capturing insights through post-its. The facilitators assisted participants in understanding the structure of the posters and encouraged contributions. The poster content mirrored the structure of the working groups to allow for uniformity in feedback collection.

## Feedback and Reporting

Each round of working groups concluded with a feedback session where rapporteurs summarised key takeaways and highlighted major points raised during group discussions. Facilitators of the poster discussions also provided summaries to integrate poster feedback into the workshop outcomes. This final reporting session ensured that feedback from all activities was captured and synthesised.



Figure 3. Reporting by Martina Bocci (CORILA).



### 3 Results from the working groups

This section synthesises the comments received on each recommendation, grouped per topic, from the workshop participants.

#### MSP process and approaches to improve EGD implementation

The importance of developing sea-basin-specific guidelines, next to the recommended EU ones, for EGD-compliant MSP, was highlighted.

It was suggested to align the recommended strengthening of anticipatory and adaptive capacity of MSP with ongoing monitoring and assessment processes.

Stakeholder roles in handling uncertainties and approaches to managing unpredictability were emphasised regarding the recommended use of the best available knowledge, modelling, visions, co-created scenarios, etc. when planning the sea for the EGD and inevitably dealing with uncertainties.

Concerning the importance of the precautionary principle within MSP and the consequent recommendation of potentially leaving some sea space unused, it was suggested to substitute the term "unused" with "space without assigned uses" to clarify its intended purpose for flexibility in response to climate changes.

Regarding the EGD-related elements recommended to be included in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks for MSP, it was suggested to acknowledge the varying attention EGD objectives receive in national contexts, depending on each country's specific characteristics.

It was suggested to frame the recommended EU-level development of indicators to track the implementation of EGD objectives in MSP as self-assessment tools rather than external monitoring instruments.

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

In general, participants requested the inclusion of societal and ecological transition data, as well as the concept of dynamic planning to incorporate data updates.

It was recommended to highlight the need for an EGD-focused data structure, clarifying that MSP relies also on other processes (e.g. MSFD) for detailed data and knowledge.

Concerning the approaches for cumulative impact assessments, it was suggested to emphasise sensitivity and suitability mapping, encouraging EU-level guidance for standardisation.



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

Participants requested more concrete examples of governance integration. Links to M&E processes were also suggested to ensure the governance recommendations extend beyond plan preparation.

Inclusion of links to recommendations on climate change adaptation and references to integration with biodiversity policies were suggested to clarify these cross-policy needs.

Participants recommended to revise the background information to emphasise that MSP is not only a technical tool but a politically significant one with wide-reaching implications.

Feedback noted the challenge in establishing long-term governance structures for MSP, which is dependent on the country's existing resources and structure. Blue economy strategies were framed as one of several key elements.

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

It was suggested to stress the role of MSP in achieving EGD objectives by fostering multi-use (MU) frameworks at national levels, aligning MU efforts (such as aquaculture with offshore wind) to advance environmental and energy transitions.

To enhance MU, it was suggested to address barriers like regulatory hurdles, technical limitations, and financial gaps by simplifying licensing for investors and enhancing policy support at EU and national levels.



*Figure 4. Working group activities carried out by participants.*

## Climate Change Adaptation

It was suggested to emphasise more the land-sea interactions and to strengthen the role of MSP for climate change adaptation.

It was deemed important to strengthen the link between recommendations related to climate change adaptation and the other EGD topics, to make the link more specific and to reinforce the connection with biodiversity in particular. Moreover, participants suggested reinforcing and explicit the governance aspect of policy integration.

Concerning the development of the recommended catalogue of regionally and locally specific climate change adaptation solutions, participants raised the need to consider local contextualisation of the catalogues and to include the scientific community in their development.

## Biodiversity and Ecosystem Protection and Restoration

Participants supported the idea of reinforcing MSP's role in achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) by aligning with Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). Moreover, they suggested to add references to the importance of ecosystem services.

Given the crucial role of regional cooperation for cross-border biodiversity conservation, especially concerning the 10% and 30% spatial conservation targets, participants suggested emphasising MSP's coordination role in this.

## Climate Change Mitigation

Participants deemed relevant to ensure MSP to account for different national capacities in offshore wind development, addressing spatial allocation challenges and considering fair and equitable use.

Concerning the role of MSP is supporting clean energy transition and decarbonisation of maritime sectors , it was suggested to highlight the role of MSP as a process/framework to integrate different marine policies

It was suggested to separate the recommendations on renewable energy expansion and grid development from the one related to the exploration of blue carbon's role in supporting both mitigation and biodiversity.

Finally, participants recommended fine-tuning the text of the overarching recommendation for greater clarity, referencing recommendations on governance and policy integration.

## Zero Pollution

It was suggested to emphasise the role of MSP in integrating pollution-related objectives from various policies (e.g. Water Framework Directive, MSFD) and standardise data on pollution sources for accessibility in MSP.

Emphasis was put on addressing remediation efforts for industrial and other land-based pollutants, and improving information systematisation for identified high-risk areas.

## Sustainable Seafood Production

It was suggested to emphasise data-sharing mechanisms to enhance MSP's support in sustainable aquaculture and fisheries management, recognizing the positive contributions of low-trophic aquaculture.

Participants recommended to include reference to support culturally significant small-scale fisheries and to strengthen a better alignment of MSP objectives with fair and just transitions, especially in protecting local economies.

Highlighting ecosystem services provided by aquaculture, including nutrient cycling and potential carbon capture, was commented as relevant for recommendations.

## Blue Circular Economy

Participants suggested practical examples (e.g. integrated multi-trophic aquaculture, reusing seafood by-products) to strengthen the spatial dimension of Blue Circular Economy (BCE). For instance, it was suggested to include MSP's potential in enabling BCE in regions with seafood production zones, ensuring cross-sectoral policy links, such as licensing and environmental sustainability.

It was recommended to acknowledge the variability of BCE integration across MSP contexts and foster private sector involvement.

## Fair and Just Transition

It was suggested to emphasise socio-economic sustainability, climate resilience, and equitable access to resources for communities affected by spatial planning changes. Moreover, participants recommended to integrate examples of communities impacted by climate change effects on marine space and maritime activities (e.g. small-scale fishers, coastal residents) to highlight social sustainability, in the fair and just transition dimension, at the national and regional levels of ocean governance.

## 4 Conclusions from the workshop

Apart from a few specific additions, recommendations were considered as comprehensive by participants. Their overall number, also if quite high, was considered adequate to target numerous different aspects encompassed by the European Green Deal.

Participants suggested to better highlight, also graphically, the overarching recommendation provided for each topic.

Target users were identified as a main entry point to recommendations, to be considered when preparing the final layout. The role of sea-basin cooperation mechanisms emerged as particularly important for several recommendations. This governance level should be considered as a key target user, together with EU and national-level ones.

The workshop recommended to highlight the cross-links between different recommendations, and suggested strengthening the linkages also allowing for some repetitions and redundancy, as well as by using the numbering and eventually some elements of the graphic design.

The workshop highlighted the importance to consider and recall as much as possible other ongoing processes, initiatives and structures, avoiding to recommend actions which are already targeted elsewhere.

The importance of always referring to the whole MSP cycle, not only to the plan preparation phase, was recalled. Emphasising actions to be undertaken during implementation, monitoring, assessment, revision was recommended.

The workshop also recommended to highlight the role of cross-border and transnational cooperation, which is relevant for several recommendations, as well as underlining the importance of the political willingness in implementing the EGD dimension of MSP.

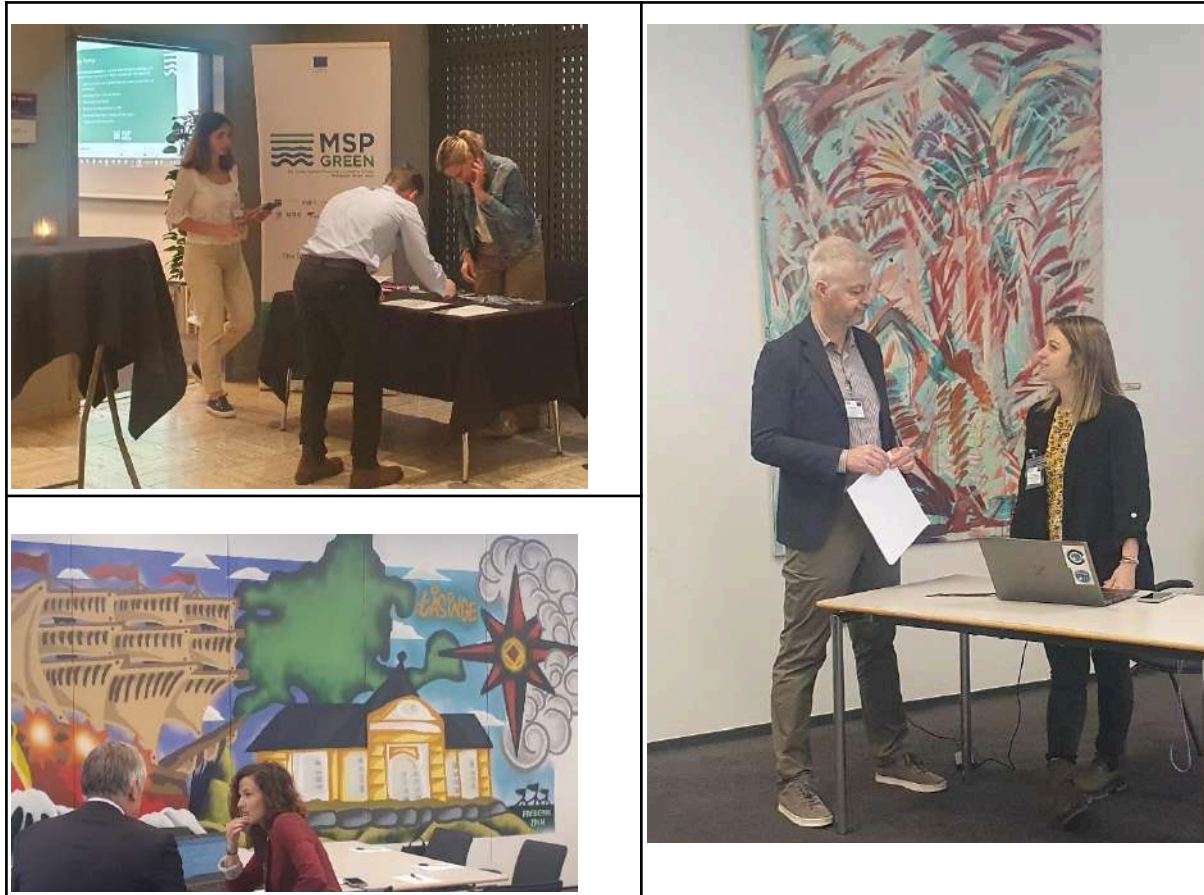
Incorporation of as many examples of actions implementing the recommendation as possible was suggested, in order to provide concreteness to recommendations.

Recommendations should be accompanied by a disclaimer, recalling the high heterogeneity in scope and mandate of MSP in the EU MS, as well as differences in governance systems, nature of the plan (more or less strategic), and legislative context (binding or non-binding). The fact that, in relation to all these heterogeneities, recommendations represent a trade-off between different needs and contexts, should also be stressed.

Recommendations should be read and considered with some degree of flexibility, identifying the specific aspects of possible interest in the different national contexts. Particularly, some of the recommendations are at the border of the MSP mandate (e.g. blue circular economy, zero pollution). Their relevance and applicability will depend on country-specificities. Differences among MS with reference to inclusion of the fishing sector in MSP, including the way the sector is considered (where considered) was also mentioned as an example of heterogeneity.

Finally, it was recommended to Include an overarching recommendation to the EU to

strengthen the cooperation with non-EU countries on EGD objectives, given that the weight of Europe is relatively small when compared with some non-EU countries when it comes to emissions.



*Figure 4. Other photos from the workshop.*



## Appendix 1. Agenda of the event

# BRIDGING MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING AND THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

## Workshop on:

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

**29th May 2024 (h 10:30 - 17:30)**

#### **Hotel Svendborg - Centrumpladsen 1 - DK-5700 Svendborg (DK)**

Dear Expert, thank you for registering to our workshop!

Recommendations on how to strengthen the EGD ambition of EU MSP plans have been drafted by project partners and additional Experts engaged during Focus groups. You are now invited to take part in the discussion for the finalisation of such recommendations.

During the workshop, the main results from the MSP-GREEN project and the draft recommendations will be presented. All participants will be invited to bring their contribution by sharing suggestions and working in groups. Your participation in this process will be acknowledged in the final project documents.

The draft recommendations to be discussed will be distributed one week before the workshop.

#### **Agenda**

10:00 - 10:30 Registration and welcome coffee

10:30 - 11:30 MSP-GREEN project results and the draft recommendations

11:30 - 13:00 Working groups 1st round

13:00 - 14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 14:30 Feedback from the 1st round of working groups

14:30 - 16:00 Working groups 2nd round

16:00 - 16:30 Coffee break

16:30 - 17:00 Feedback from the 2nd round of working groups

17:00 - 17:30 Way forward

17:30 Conclusion



## Appendix 2. List of participants

The list of participants with the related affiliations is reported in the table below in alphabetical order.

Name	Affiliation
Alexandre Cornet	Centre for Studies and Expertise on Risks, the Environment, Mobility and Urban Planning (CEREMA)
Andrea Barbanti	Institute of marine Science of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR-ISMAR)
Anete Bērziņa	Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia (MoSARD)
Anita Livija Rozenvalde	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia (MoEPRD)
Annija Danenbergā	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia (MoEPRD)
Antonia Leroy	World Wildlife Fund European Policy Office (WWF EPO)
Barbara Giuponi	Consortium for Coordination of Research Activities concerning the Venice Lagoon System (CORILA)
Cristina Cervera Nuñez	Spanish Institute of Oceanography (IEO-CSIC)
Cyrielle Goldberg	BirdLife International
Daniel Depellegrin	University of Girona (UdG)
Daniele Brigolin	University of Venice (IUAV)
Emiliano Ramieri	Institute of marine Science of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR-ISMAR)
Emilie Riclet	MSP Assistance Mechanism
Fabio Carella	University of Venice (IUAV)
Folco Soffietti	University of Venice (IUAV)
Giacomo Montereale Gavazzi	Consortium for Coordination of Research Activities concerning the Venice Lagoon System (CORILA)
Ginevra Capurso	Institute of marine Science of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR-ISMAR)
Heikki Saarento	Regional Council of Southwest Finland (FI RCSW)
Hristo Stanchev	Centre for Coastal and Marine Studies (CCMS)

Isabelle Perret	Ministry of the Sea of France
Kira Gee	Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH)
Kristine Kedo	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia (MoEPRD)
Laura Stockute	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE)
Lisa Simone de Grunt	World Ocean Council (WOC)
Margarita Stancheva	Centre for Coastal and Marine Studies (CCMS)
Margarita Vološina	Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea (VASAB)
Martina Bocci	Consortium for Coordination of Research Activities concerning the Venice Lagoon System (CORILA)
Monica Campillos-Llanos	Spanish Institute of Oceanography (IEO-CSIC)
Nathalie Scheidegger	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature of the Netherlands
Nico A. Buytendijk	Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO)
Olivier Larussinie	Centre for Studies and Expertise on Risks, the Environment, Mobility and Urban Planning (CEREMA)
Pierpaolo Campostrini	Consortium for Coordination of Research Activities concerning the Venice Lagoon System (CORILA)
Thanos Smanis	MSP Assistance Mechanism
Vesa Arki	Regional Council of Southwest Finland (FI RCSW)

## Appendix 3. Templates of the working sheets for discussion in groups

The following tables report the templates of the working sheets completed by the working groups during the discussion and the categories for the Who-When-How exercise, with the target users and time scales to be assigned to the recommendations. A legend explaining the meaning of WHO-WHEN is presented below all the tables.

### Cross-cutting recommendations - MSP process and approaches to improve EGD implementation

Code	Short title	WHO	WHEN (URGENCY)	WHEN (READINESS)	HOW
CC-PA1	The way MSP can contribute to the EGD should be communicated as an opportunity; planners should recognise which EGD objectives are best supported by MSP				
CC-PA2	At the EU level, guidelines for EGD-compliant MSP should be developed				
CC-PA3	The EGD requires the engagement of several, and diverse typologies of stakeholders. Training and capacity building might be required				
CC-PA4	The anticipatory and adaptive capacity of MSP should be strengthened				
CC-PA5	Planning the sea for the EGD requires dealing with uncertainties; this implies the use of the best available knowledge, modelling, visions, co-created scenarios, etc.				
CC-PA6	The importance of the precautionary principle within MSP increases when uncertainty is high. This can include leaving some sea space unused.				
CC-PA7	EGD-related elements should be included in M&E frameworks for MSP, and relevant (new) forms of data and knowledge should be generated				
CC-PA8	Support should be given at the EU level to the development of indicators to track the implementation of EGD objectives in MSP				



**Cross-cutting recommendations - Data and tools for MSP: new needs and opportunities driven by EGD**

Code	Short title	WHO	WHEN (URGENCY)	WHEN (READINESS)	HOW
CC-DT1	Data needed to develop an EGD-compliant MSP plan and persisting data gaps should be identified. Targeted research needs should then be specified.				
CC-DT2	Efforts need to be made to validate and transform data into actionable knowledge. MSP-EGD science-policy-society interfaces should be established and/or strengthened				
CC-DT3	Visualise the invisible in a bid to communicate essential EGD issues in MSP as broadly as possible (from technology to art)				
CC-DT4	Comprehensive approaches for cumulative impact assessment need to be further developed, operationalised and used				



### Cross-cutting recommendations - Governance and policy integration to strengthen MSP impact on EGD objectives

Code	Short title	WHO	WHEN (URGENCY)	WHEN (READINESS)	HOW
CC-GP1	A stable mechanism for integrated ocean governance should be established at the national level				
CC-GP2	Rather than focus on conflicts, policy-makers and MSP planners should work with stakeholders and sectors to find ways of reconciling different objectives				
CC-GP3	Improve the operational integration between the MSP and the MSFD processes and objectives				
CC-GP4	The identification of land-sea interactions linked to EGD aspects in MSP plans should be strengthened and reflected in planning decisions on land and at sea.				
CC-GP5	EGD implementation can be facilitated by greater coherence of MSP plans within sea basins. Plans should strive to achieve functional and strategic coherence				

### Cross-cutting recommendations - Multi-use in MSP: a tool to reach the marine EGD objectives

Code	Short title	WHO	WHEN (URGENCY)	WHEN (READINESS)	HOW
CC-MU1	Design areas for multi-use purposes within MSP plans and provide specific measures supporting multi-use trialling and development				
CC-MU2	Consider the concept of Mariparks to capitalise on potential synergies arising from offshore activities				
CC-MU3	Facilitate a holistic and bottom-up approach through MSP to support the development of multi-use				
CC-MU4	Multi-use combinations for sustainable aquaculture and fishery should be promoted				



### Topic-specific recommendations - Climate Change Adaptation

Code	Short title	WHO	WHEN (URGENCY)	WHEN (READINESS)	HOW
CCA1	MSP plans should adopt an even more strategic, forward-looking approach beyond the typical 10-year duration of a planning cycle				
CCA2	MSP plans should consider climate change adaptation in combination with the other EGD objectives, in particular, nature protection and restoration ones				
CCA3	Data and knowledge on the ecological impacts of climate change should be collected, collated, and made available				
CCA4	Data and knowledge on the impacts of climate change on maritime sectors should be collected, collated, and made available				
CCA5	A catalogue of regionally and locally specific climate change adaptation solutions should be developed				





## Topic-specific recommendations - Biodiversity and Ecosystem Protection and Restoration

Code	Short title	WHO	WHEN (URGENCY)	WHEN (READINESS)	HOW
BC1	MSP should reinforce its role in supporting the identification of new protected areas. Operational guidelines for integrating OECMs in MSP should be developed.				
BC2	MSP plans should be coherent with management measures for protected areas, as defined in the plans specifically set for MPAs, Natura 2000 sites, etc.				
BC3	MSP plans should support the establishment of a coherent network of protected areas at sea and across the land-sea interface, operationalising the blue corridor concept				
BC4	EU nature restoration targets and the concept of MGI should be better promoted through MSP, through the identification of areas to be restored				
BC5	The consideration of climate change effects on conservation and restoration actions foreseen by MSP plans should be enhanced				
BC6	The availability, accessibility, and usability of specific data on the marine environment for informed MSP decision-making should be fostered				

### Topic-specific recommendations - Climate Change Mitigation

Code	Short title	WHO	WHEN (URGENCY)	WHEN (READINESS)	HOW
CCM1	MSP plan should be aligned with updated renewable energy production targets and identify the spatial needs these imply (from priority areas to go-to and acceleration areas)				
CCM2	MSP plans should consider offshore renewables other than OWE. Zoning should consider the spatial needs of all ORE infrastructure (e.g. energy storage and transmission)				
CCM3	MSP should identify links to terrestrial and coastal planning related to the expansion of offshore renewables, and check that the onshore prerequisites are in place.				
CCM4	MSP plans should support the clean energy transition and decarbonisation of maritime sectors by specifying corresponding objectives and measures				
CCM5	M&E of EGD-compliant MSP should include the evaluation of the climate impacts of planning designations				
CCM6	Carbon capture at sea should be considered in MSP: mapping blue carbon habitats, evaluating their mitigation potential, and improving their conservation and restoration				

### Topic-specific recommendations - Zero Pollution

Code	Short title	WHO	WHEN (URGENCY)	WHEN (READINESS)	HOW
ZP1	MSP plans should identify marine areas mostly impacted by land-based sources of pollution and related prevention and remediation measures				
ZP2	MSP plans should identify and map areas of marine pollution hotspots and related remediation measures				
ZP3	MSP plans can identify or integrate sector-based measures contributing to zero pollution				
ZP4	MSP should recognise the crucial role of ports in supporting zero pollution				

### Topic-specific recommendations - Sustainable Seafood Production

Code	Short title	WHO	WHEN (URGENCY)	WHEN (READINESS)	HOW
SSFP1	MSP should move to a more comprehensive planning approach, where all fisheries segments are proactively planned and managed				
SSFP2	MSP should better consider small-scale fisheries, including a description of their spatial distribution of this segment, and ensuring the engagement of the operators				
SSFP3	MSP should support low trophic aquaculture (seaweed and shellfish) and its integration with other aquaculture types (including IMTA)				
SSFP4	Aquaculture and fisheries should be planned keeping in mind their environmental sustainability, the broader value chain and the community livelihood.				
SSFP5	MSP should contribute to facilitating the dialogue and improving cooperation between professional and recreational fisheries.				
SSFP6	MSP should anticipate the impacts of climate change on commercial and recreational species (wild and farmed)				

### Topic-specific recommendations - Blue Circular Economy

Code	Short title	WHO	WHEN (URGENCY)	WHEN (READINESS)	HOW
BCE1	MSP should encourage stronger links with national circular economy and blue economy strategies and promote their development where they are not available yet.				
BCE2	A life cycle approach should be considered comprehensively in MSP plans and the following implementation phases				



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

Code	Short title	WHO	WHEN (URGENCY)	WHEN (READINESS)	HOW
FJT1	Assess which areas, sectors, communities, and segments of the population will mostly benefit or negatively affected by EGD-driven MSP plans				
FJT2	Identify the communities, and segments of the populations which will be most affected by climate change effects on marine space and maritime activities				
FJT3	Valorise the local potential of the sustainable blue circular economy by rethinking supply chains with local processing, storage, and other facilities in mind				
FJT4	Strengthen stakeholder engagement in the co-creation of MSP plans; particular attention should be paid to ensuring a balanced distribution of power among stakeholders				
FJT5	Consider the possibility of deliberately leaving some sea space unused, to provide opportunities to accommodate future generations' needs				



**WHO**

	EU level: Policy makers and experts involved in the process of MSP development and implementation
	National level: Policy makers and experts involved in the process of MSP development and implementation
	Regional level: Regional sea conventions and other cooperation mechanisms at regional level
	Others: e.g. Sectors? NGOs? Please specify

**WHEN (URGENCY)**



1 – 3 years
3 – 5 years
5 – 10 years

**WHEN (READINESS)**



1 – 3 years
3 – 5 years
5 – 10 years





# **DELIVERABLE N°4.1.**

## **Recommendations on making MSP in the EU an enabler of the Green Deal**

**Annex 3.a – Atlantic Ocean & North Sea  
workshop report**



## **AUTHORS**

Alexandre Cornet (Cerema), Alan Quentric (Cerema), Adeline Bas (Ifremer), Katia Frangoudes (UBO)

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## **DISCLAIMER**

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## 1.1. Workshop background

This Atlantic Ocean and North Sea joint workshop was held in Saint-Malo (France), on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2024. It was hosted by the MSP-Green French partner Cerema, co-animated by Cerema, the Western Brittany University (UBO) and Ifremer. It was organised as an in-person meeting, gathering 20 experts, from different EU member states and economic sectors related to EGD such as fisheries and renewable energy, as well as decision-makers and representatives from MSP authorities. Based on the recommendations on how to strengthen the EGD maritime components in MSP developed by the MSP-GREEN project, it aimed to link this work to existing strategies characterising the two addressed sea basins: the Atlantic Marine strategy and the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative. The joint workshop enabled us to discuss common interests between the two sea basins and discuss possible synergies between these two neighbouring areas.

Following the initial presentations of the work done by MSP-GREEN project partners and the two regional strategies, an interactive discussion was conducted in sub-groups to receive feedback from the participants on the recommendations' adequacy to the two sea basins and their readiness for implementation.



Figure 1: plenary session for Atlantic and North Sea basin workshop, St-Malo.

Among the 57 recommendations formulated by the MSP-GREEN project, the 10 targeted for the Sea basin scale were supplemented by 11 more, as they were considered relevant to the sea basin strategies, according to the experts organising the meeting. These selected recommendations were categorised into 3 groups, namely: data/approaches/methods, climate change mitigation and adaptation, Governance/fair & just transition/biodiversity/zero pollution/blue circular economy/sustainable seafood production. Grouping the recommendations was just a way to organise the discussions in subgroups, with each subgroup being able to speak in turn on each topic.

For each recommendation, the relevant pillars of the action plan (for the Atlantic Marine Strategy) or the working tracks (for the GNSBI) were previously selected and linked to them in a table by the organisers. During Two following sequences - one for each of the strategies - participants were asked to express themselves on each recommendation with a system of coloured stickers to be affixed on a poster, regarding the urgency to implement the recommendation (red = short term (1-3 years); yellow= mid-term (3-5 years); blue= long term (5-10 years)) and its readiness (red= not ready (5-10 years); yellow= mid perspective (3-5 years); blue= ready (1-3 years)). Finally, each participant could propose specific measures to implement the recommendations, writing them on a post-it. The results of the interactive sessions are presented in section 2.3.

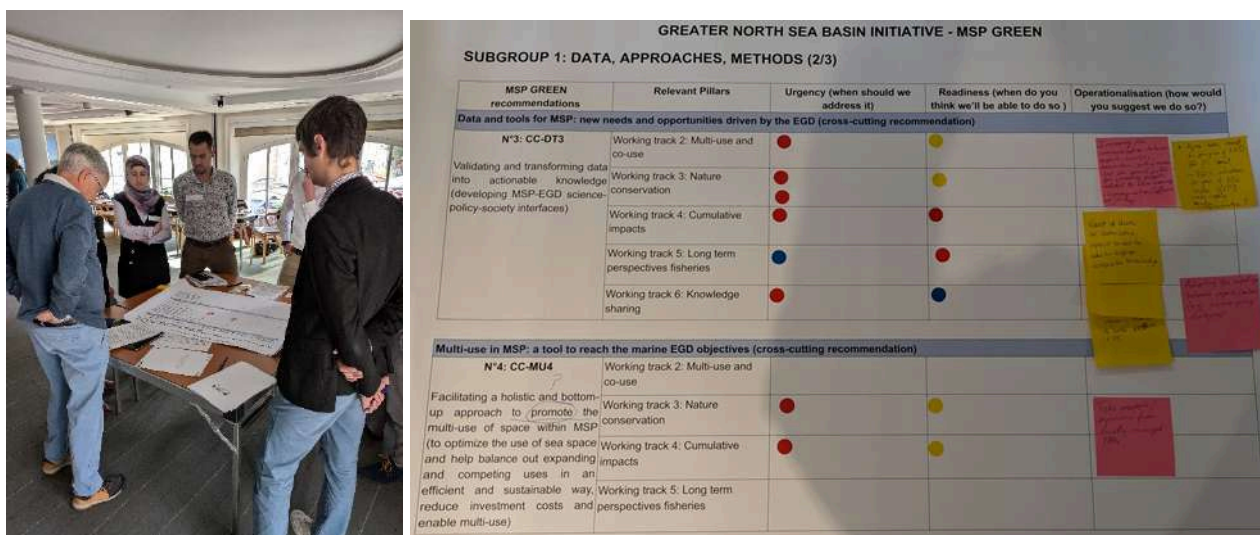


Figure 2: subgroups session, Saint-Malo workshop, 26/09/2024.

## 1.2. Sea basin specificities identified

The Atlantic Ocean is the second largest of the world's oceans and marks the western boundary of the European Union (EU). The Atlantic area constitutes a significant contribution to the blue economy of the EU and according to the 2021 Blue Economy report (EC, 2021), the Atlantic Ocean is the largest sea basin in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA). It involves at the EU level four countries: Ireland, France, Spain and Portugal. In 2011 the European Commission adopted an Atlantic Maritime Strategy. After the first Atlantic Action Plan (2013-2020) setting out practical steps to be taken in the 4 Member States concerned, a revised action plan 2.0 was communicated in July 2020 and structured into 4 pillars:



- Pillar I: Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy
- Pillar II: Blue skills of the future and ocean literacy
- Pillar III: Marine renewable energy
- Pillar IV: Healthy ocean and resilient coasts.

In Europe and globally, the North Sea basin is a heavily used sea with extensive shipping, fishing, aggregate extraction, and energy production. The North Sea basin contains both EU member states (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands) and non-EU countries (Norway and the United Kingdom). The following key sectors are included in a narrow space: offshore wind, offshore oil and gas, aquaculture, shipping, shipbuilding, cruise tourism, and coastal protection. The Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI) was officially established in November 2023, setting the framework for the collaboration between 9 countries from the North Sea (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom), to strengthen cooperation on maritime spatial planning. Six voluntary working tracks have been established by the parties, focusing on governance, multi-use and co-use, nature conservation, cumulative impacts, long-term perspectives fisheries and knowledge sharing.

















### 1.3. Priority recommendations to be taken into consideration at sea basin level





























The results of the interactive session in subgroups are reported in the following tables. Each table reports the results of the analysis of the three macro-categories considered for both the Atlantic and the North Sea. For each question (urgency/readiness), if there was a consensus then a single colour was reported. Otherwise, either an average was reported, or an overall expression of votes with one to 3 colours was used. Empty cells are those for which no sticker has been affixed, which could be interpreted as the fact that the recommendation is not easy to connect with the mentioned pillar/working track.

#### Atlantic Sea basin

##### Recommendations on MSP process and approaches, MSP data and tools, multi-use








MSP GREEN recommendations	Relevant Pillars	Urgency (when should we address it)	Readiness (when do you think we'll be able to do so)	Operationalisation (how would you suggest we do so?)
MSP processes and approaches to improve EGD implementation (cross-cutting recommendation)				

<b>N°1: CC-PA5</b>  Working better in a context of uncertainty: foresight exercise + gathering data from stakeholders and beyond (e.g. financial sector)	Pillar 1: Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy			
	Pillar 2: Blue skills of the future and ocean literacy			Uncertainty has to be considered with the information sharing
	Pillar 3: Marine Renewable Energy			Translate EU objectives into national objectives and sea basin objectives  We may improve sharing experience between "pioneer countries of MRE" (North of Europe) through "second pioneer front countries" (South of Europe)
	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast			OSPAR Atlantic vision
<b>Data and tools for MSP: new needs and opportunities driven by the EGD (cross-cutting recommendation)</b>				
<b>N°2: CC-DT1</b>  Identifying new data and gap data at the EU and sea basin level to evaluate EGD implementation in MSP (developing an EGD-aligned MS plan)	Pillar 1: Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy			Foster data sharing
	Pillar 2: Blue skills of the future and ocean literacy			Citizen expectations – "Undone Science"
	Pillar 3: Marine Renewable Energy			Mobilise more "users' knowledge" to help obtain data
	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast			
	Transversal pillar: Research, development and innovation			
















<b>N°3: CC-DT3</b>  Validating and transforming data into actionable knowledge (developing MSP-EGD science-policy-society interfaces)	Pillar 1: Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy			Work on a DTO application for MSP
	Pillar 2: Blue skills of the future and ocean literacy		 	
	Pillar 3: Marine Renewable Energy			
	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast		 	
	Transversal pillar: Research, development and innovation			
<b>Multi-use in MSP: a tool to reach the marine EGD objectives (cross-cutting recommendation)</b>				
<b>N°4: CC-MU4</b>  Facilitating a holistic and bottom-up approach to promote the multi-use of space within MSP (to optimize the use of sea space and help balance out expanding and competing uses in an efficient and sustainable way, reduce investment costs and enable multi-use)	Pillar 1: Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy	 		Atlantic specificity coastal vs Ocean
	Pillar 2: Blue skills of the future and ocean literacy			
	Pillar 3: Marine Renewable Energy		 	
	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast			
	Transversal pillar: Research, development and innovation			
<b>Data and tools for MSP: new needs and opportunities driven by the EGD (cross-cutting recommendation)</b>				
<b>N°5: CC-DT5</b>  Developing approaches for assessing cumulative impact	Pillar 1: Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy			A common blue economy portal
	Pillar 3: Marine Renewable Energy			
	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast			Common approach at sea basin level. Link with OSPAR.



## Recommendations on climate change adaptation and mitigation

MSP GREEN recommendations	Relevant Pillars	Urgency (when should we address it)	Readiness (when do you think we'll be able to do so)	Operationalisation (how would you suggest we do so?)
Climate change adaptation (EGD topic-related recommendations)				
<p><b>N°6: CCA3</b></p> <p>Collecting and making available data and knowledge on impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems</p>	Pillar 2: Blue skills of the future and ocean literacy	 		<p>Funding of education + training – Gov policy direction on training+ Education</p> <p>E.g.: taxes on windfarms directed to fishing (FR) ⇒ dedicate a part of it on education.</p> <p>EMODNET portal to share knowledge and data</p> <p>Training on CC: blue schools, ocean literacy, Erasmus + EMFAF blue carriers</p>
	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast			<p>Include climate change issues when revising MSFD</p>
	Transversal pillar: Research, development and innovation			<p>Rely on scientific networks such as ICES</p>













<p><b>N°7: CCA4</b></p> <p>Collecting and making available data and knowledge on impacts of climate change on maritime sectors</p>	Pillar 1: Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy	 		
	Pillar 2: Blue skills of the future and ocean literacy			EMFAF Blue Carriers project
	Pillar 3: Marine Renewable Energy		 	<p>Funding of relevant research by marine institutions and government agencies and universities</p> <p>Increasing competences on floating windfarms</p>
	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast			
<p><b>N°8: CCA5</b></p> <p>Developing of catalogue of regionally and locally specific climate change adaptation solutions</p>	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast		 	<p>Develop cooperation at the Atlantic level between local authorities (experience sharing)</p> <p>Capitalise on already existing EU projects on climate change adaptation/ Nature-based solutions</p>
	Transversal pillar: Research, development and innovation		 	<p>Identify particular areas where coastal resilience is a matter of risk management (relocation, adaptation, etc.)</p>
<p><b>Climate change mitigation (EGD topic-related recommendations)</b></p>				







































**Recommendations on MSP governance and policy integration, fair & just transition, biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration, zero pollution, blue circular economy, sustainable seafood production**

MSP GREEN recommendations	Relevant Pillars	Urgency (when should we address it)	Readiness (when do you think we'll be able to do so)	Operationalisation (how would you suggest we do so?)
<b>Governance and policy integration to strengthen MSP impact on EGD objectives (cross-cutting recommendation)</b>				
<b>N°13: CC-GP5</b>  Improving coherence between MS plans and sea basins (regular coordination and consultation among planners)	Pillar 1: Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy			Gov guidelines / Gov funding  Coherence between countries related to MSP and MSFD visions, to be more coherent at sea basin scale
	Pillar 2: Blue skills of the future and ocean literacy			
	Pillar 3: Marine Renewable Energy			
	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast			
<b>MSP processes and approaches to improve EGD implementation (cross-cutting recommendation)</b>				
<b>N°14: CC-PA3</b>  Engaging new stakeholders in the	Pillar 1: Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy			













MSP process to better reflect the dimensions of the EGD + build their skills	Pillar 2: Blue skills of the future and ocean literacy			<p>Involve land stakeholders (such as agriculture) to reduce the impact of land activities on maritime areas (e.g. eutrophication because of industrial agriculture) – ICZM</p> <p>Use new tools (e.g. remote sensing and statistics) to evaluate and prepare for MSP</p> <p>Develop methods to map stakeholders and better identify local stakes</p>
	Pillar 3: Marine Renewable Energy			
	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast			Prioritise the protection of spawning and nursery areas
	Transversal pillar: Research, development and innovation			
<b>Use of the EGD to work towards a fair and just sustainability transition in MSP (EGD topic-related recommendations)</b>				
<b>N°15: FJT1</b>  Developing, operationalising methodologies to 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	Pillar 1: Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy			Funding of research by NGOs + educational for each institution
	Pillar 2: Blue skills of the future and ocean literacy		 	<p>Assess which activities will need to stop due to their impact and how to re-train workforce towards sustainable activities</p> <p>Promote holistic, integrative and multidisciplinary methods, concepts like ecosystem services or</p>

				socio-ecosystems
	Pillar 3: Marine Renewable Energy			Develop multi-use to reduce the impact on stakeholders
	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast			Push for develop more legally binding acts from the EGD
<b>Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration (EGD topic-related recommendations)</b>				
<b>N°16: BC3</b>  Supporting the establishment of a coherent network of protected areas at sea and across the land-sea interface through MSP (research and operationalisation of the blue corridor concept)	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast			<p>Assessment of ecosystem services in order to identify biodiversity areas (not only based on MPAs)</p> <p>Pass legislation/Produce guidelines/designate areas/prepare management plans</p> <p>Create a database sharing knowledge on habitats to increase coherence</p> <p>Don't forget to consider this recommendation in an integrative way (considering all human activities)</p>
<b>Zero pollution (EGD topic-related recommendations)</b>				
<b>N°17: ZP2</b>  Identifying and mapping marine pollution hotspots to prioritise environmental remediation	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast		 	<p>Identification of underwater noise pollution hot spots (related to D11 of MSFD)</p> <p>Legislation and organisation of environmental protection agency</p> <p>ICZM! Identify how</p>

				land pollution is affecting marine biodiversity/habitats
	Transversal pillar: Research, development and innovation	 	 	Ocean literacy! Raise awareness about pollution of the marine environment to engage citizens (link to pillar 2)
<b>N°18: ZP4</b>  Recognizing the crucial role of ports in supporting zero pollution (waste management)	Pillar 1: Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy			Electrification of ports  Change role to responsibility
<b>Blue circular economy (EGD topic-related recommendations)</b>				
<b>N°19: BCE2</b>  Encouraging research into the spatial dimensions of a blue circular economy in order to know the coastal and marine spaces needs, Carrying out a socio-economic impact analysis on the impact of a circular blue economy on society	Pillar 1: Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy			
	Pillar 3: Marine Renewable Energy			Circular economy to avoid resources depletion (especially in the case of MRE)  This recommendation doesn't concern only port, MRE, but all activities at sea. Why no pillars about fishing, tourism, raw resources extraction...?
	Transversal pillar: Research, development and innovation			
<b>Sustainable seafood production (EGD topic-related recommendations)</b>				
<b>N°20: SFP6</b>  Anticipating in MSP the impacts of climate change on commercially and recreationally exploited species to avoid spatial	Pillar 1: Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy			
	Pillar 2: Blue skills of the future and ocean literacy			Education for fishers and markets





competition				consumers
	Pillar 3: Marine Renewable Energy		 	This recommendation doesn't fit with AMS
	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast			
<b>N°21: SFP4</b>  Considering the fair and just transition in aquaculture and fisheries development (value chain, community livelihood, small ports)	Pillar 1: Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy			
	Pillar 2: Blue skills of the future and ocean literacy			Funding to education institutions + to fishers' institutions
	Pillar 3: Marine Renewable Energy			Ensure access to ORE parks for fishers
	Pillar 4: Healthy ocean and resilient coast	 		Fair transition should ensure that fishers can maintain their fishing activities  The coordination between MSP-Green recommendations and Atlantic Marine Strategy pillars is hard to comprehend

## North Sea Basin





### Recommendations on MSP process and approaches, MSP data and tools, multi-use

MSP GREEN recommendations	Relevant Pillars	Urgency (when should we)	Readiness (when do you think we'll be)	Operationalisation (how would you suggest we do so?)







		address it)	able to do so )	
<b>MSP processes and approaches to improve EGD implementation (cross-cutting recommendation)</b>				
<b>N°1: CC-PA5</b> Working better in a context of uncertainty: foresight exercise + gathering data from stakeholders and beyond (e.g. financial sector)	Working track 2: Multi-use and co-use	●	● ●	
	Working track 3 : Nature conservation	●	●	Legislative basis for data collection and designations – Guidelines on protection
	Working track 4 : Cumulative impacts	●	●	
	Working track 5: Long term perspectives fisheries	●	●	Work on scenarios for the future of fisheries with the sector and other stakeholders
<b>Data and tools for MSP: new needs and opportunities driven by the EGD (cross-cutting recommendation)</b>				
<b>N°2: CC-DT1</b> Identifying new data and gap data at EU and sea basin level to evaluate EGD implementation in MSP (developing an EGD-aligned MS plan)	Working track 2: Multi-use and co-use	●	●	Supra-national?
	Working track 3 : Nature conservation	●	● ●	Identifying data gap to implement the Nature restoration law (EGD) ⇒ 20% in EU member states.  Working on data gap for MPAs connectivity to implement the objectives of the EU biodiversity strategy
	Working track 4 : Cumulative impacts	●		Supra national body needed to address OR research
	Working track 5: Long term perspectives fisheries	●	●	Assessment on how CC will affect fisheries.

	Working track 6: Knowledge sharing	●	●	
<b>Data and tools for MSP: new needs and opportunities driven by the EGD (cross-cutting recommendation)</b>				
<b>N°3: CC-DT3</b> Validating and transforming data into actionable knowledge (developing MSP-EGD science-policy-society interfaces)	Working track 2: Multi-use and co-use	●	●	Increasing the communication between experts, scientists, researchers, policy makers and the general public for upcoming projects related to blue economy  Agree data shared for purchase of EGD – Basic indicators as part of EGD under MSPD made legally binding – MSFD indicators?
	Working track 3 : Nature conservation	●	●	
	Working track 4 : Cumulative impacts	●	●	Lack of data on CI to be able to engage actionable knowledge
	Working track 5: Long term perspectives fisheries	●	●	Scenario planning for fleet changeover
	Working track 6: Knowledge sharing	●	●	GNSBI could facilitate sharing agreeing harmonisation of data sectors  Adapting the wording between experts/sectors (e.g. science-policy dialogues)
<b>Multi-use in MSP: a tool to reach the marine EGD objectives (cross-cutting recommendation)</b>				
<b>N°4: CC-MU4</b> Facilitating a holistic and bottom-up approach to promote the multi-use of space within MSP (to optimize the use of sea space and help balance out	Working track 2: Multi-use and co-use			
	Working track 3 : Nature conservation	●	●	Take example/experience from locally-managed MPAs.

expanding and competing uses in an efficient and sustainable way, reduce investment costs and enable multi-use)	Working track 4 : Cumulative impacts			
	Working track 5: Long term perspectives fisheries			
<b>Data and tools for MSP: new needs and opportunities driven by the EGD (cross-cutting recommendation)</b>				
<b>N°5: CC-DT5</b> Developing approaches for assessing cumulative impact	Working track 4: Cumulative impacts			Develop standards/norms at the EU level for CIA

**Recommendations on governance and policy integration, fair & just transition, biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration, zero pollution, blue circular economy, sustainable seafood production**

MSP GREEN recommendations	Relevant Pillars	Urgency (when should we address it)	Readiness (when do you think we'll be able to do so )	Operationalisation (how would you suggest we do so?)
<b>Governance and policy integration to strengthen MSP impact on EGD objectives (cross-cutting recommendation)</b>				
<b>N°13: CC-GP5</b> Improving coherence between MS plans and sea basins (regular coordination and consultation among planners)	Working track 1: Governance			Need to consider the role of stakeholders, in particular local authorities  Between plans and the 4 policies targeted by GNSBI: energy, fisheries, environment, MSP
<b>MSP processes and approaches to improve EGD implementation (cross-cutting recommendation)</b>				
<b>N°14: CC-PA3</b> Engaging new stakeholders in the MSP process to better reflect the dimensions of the EGD + build their	Working track 1: Governance			
	Working track 6: Knowledge sharing			

skills				
<b>Use of the EGD to work towards a fair and just sustainability transition in MSP (EGD topic-related recommendations)</b>				
<b>N°15: FJT1</b> Developing, operationalising methodologies to 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	Working track 1: Governance			
	Working track 2: Multi-use and co-use	●	●	
	Working track 5: Long term perspectives fisheries	●	●	
	Working track 6: Knowledge sharing	●	●	Setting Greater North Sea Basin Initiative portal in connection with Emodnet  Need to set common standards for data sharing
<b>Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration (EGD topic-related recommendations)</b>				
<b>N°16: BC3</b> Supporting the establishment of a coherent network of protected areas at sea and across the land-sea interface through MSP (research and operationalisation of the blue corridor concept)	Working track 3: Nature conservation	●	Policy ●  Knowledge ●	Coherent is the important word  Horizon Europe research and deo projects
<b>Zero pollution (EGD topic-related recommendations)</b>				
<b>N°17: ZP2</b> Identifying and mapping marine pollution hotspots to prioritise environmental remediation	Working track 3: Nature conservation	●		Nuclear waste
<b>N°18: ZP4</b> Recognizing the crucial role of ports in supporting zero pollution (waste	Working track 2: Multi-use and co-use	●	●	Could be included in work package 4  Capacity (not ready) vs

management)				recognition (done)
<b>Blue circular economy (EGD topic-related recommendations)</b>				
<b>N°19: BCE2</b> Encouraging research into the spatial dimensions of a blue circular economy in order to know the coastal and marine spaces needs, Carrying out a socio-economic impact analysis on the impact of a circular blue economy on society	Working track 2: Multi-use and co-use		●	Support smart spatialization at local level (S3) (S4D) Matchmarking of sectors at local level to develop local projects supporting local (circular) economy
	Working track 6: Knowledge sharing		●	Building on FANENET FLAG with BE focus not only fish or aquaculture Research about circular economy between land/coastal activities and marine activities
<b>Sustainable seafood production (EGD topic-related recommendations)</b>				
<b>N°20: SFP6</b> Anticipating in MSP the impacts of climate change on commercially and recreationally exploited species to avoid spatial competition	Working track 5: Long term perspectives fisheries	● ● ●	●	Including CC in the fisheries management
<b>N°21: SFP4</b> Considering the fair and just transition in aquaculture and fisheries development (value chain, community livelihood, small ports)	Working track 5: Long term perspectives fisheries	●	●	Involvement in local communities in national MSP (in relation with local development)

## Recommendations on climate change adaptation and mitigation



MSP GREEN recommendations	Relevant Pillars	Urgency (when should we address it)	Readiness (when do you think we'll be able to do so)	Operationalisation (how would you suggest we do so?)
<b>Climate change adaptation (EGD topic-related recommendations)</b>				
<b>N°6: CCA3</b> Collecting and making available data and knowledge on impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems	Working track 3: Nature conservation	●	●	Involve sectors (fishermen) to collect data
	Working track 4: Cumulative impacts	●	●	We begin to qualify CI, now we need methods and tools to quantify them
<b>N°7: CCA4</b> Collecting and making available data and knowledge on impacts of climate change on maritime sectors	Working track 2: Multi-use and co-use	●	●	Evaluating interactions between sectors
	Working track 5: Long term perspectives fisheries	●		We need to assess the indirect impacts of the "adaptation" to fisheries to change in MSP  Modelling approaches/projects to foresee stock shifts according to CC ⇒ scenarios on fishing activity  CC impact on social aspects of maritime sectors ⇒ need assessments
<b>N°8: CCA5</b> Developing of catalogue of regionally and locally specific climate change adaptation solutions	Working track 3: Nature conservation		●	Marine Green infrastructure: identification/mapping ⇒ support development of nature-based solutions

Climate change mitigation (EGD topic-related recommendations)				
<p><b>N°9: CCM2</b></p> <p>Considering offshore renewable energy other than offshore wind energy in MS plans</p>	Working track 2: Multi-use and co-use	●	●	<p>Technologies still under development</p> <p>Multi-use projects ongoing → co-development of several renewable energy systems in the same area; hydrogen mod.</p>
<p><b>N°10: CCM4</b></p> <p>Identifying links to terrestrial and coastal planning to ensure that onshore spatial prerequisites are in place to allow for offshore renewable energy development (grid, ports)</p>	Working track 2: Multi-use and co-use	●		<p>Coherence across scales: local ↔ National ↔ International</p> <p>Terrestrial grid dimensioning according to E production capacity</p>
<p><b>N°11: CCM5</b></p> <p>Supporting the decarbonisation of maritime sectors through MSP (MSP = framework for the integration of objectives and measures set in other sectors or cross-cutting policies and plans ; significant role of port)</p>	Working track 2: Multi-use and co-use	●	●	<p>Need a strategy, scenarios for ports activities in the future (ex. At port scale MSP could promote basin level)</p> <p>MSP to create a common framework for ports in the region to progress towards decarbonation (not only for ports)</p>
	Working track 5: Long term perspectives fisheries	●	●	
Climate change mitigation (EGD topic-related recommendations)				
<p><b>N°12: CCM7</b></p> <p>Considering carbon capture and storage at sea in MS plans (blue carbon habitats)</p>	Working track 2: Multi-use and co-use			
	Working track 3: Nature conservation	●	●	<p>Conservation approaches exist and are known, but still difficult to implement</p> <p>Marine infrastructure analysis.</p>

## 1.4. Relevance of the recommendations for the sea basin and input for their implementation

A majority of the 21 recommendations have been considered as urgent to implement, which can be interpreted as a good endorsement by participants of the relevance of these recommendations for the two sea basins. Despite differences between the two sea basins, no specificity emerged in the answers gathered during this workshop regarding the recommendations.

## Atlantic Sea basin

Regarding the recommendations dealing with **Data, Approaches, Methods**:

- 4 recommendations out of 5 were designated by the participants as «urgent to address», in connection with the issues of the Sea Basin.
- A certain number of issues (e.g. marine renewable energy, Healthy ocean and resilient coast), are estimated to be immediately implemented for the Atlantic sea basin. Among the options raised by the participants, using OSPAR framework, or mobilising «users' knowledge» to improve data collection have been expressed as a good way to operationalise the recommendations.

Regarding **climate change adaptation and mitigation**:

- 6 recommendations are considered urgent
- Not all of these recommendations are estimated to be ready to implement, but some ideas are raised in order to make it possible:
  - Dedicate a part of offshore wind farms to education (skills)
  - Include climate change issues when revising the MSF directive.

Regarding **Governance, fair & just transition, biodiversity, zero pollution, blue circular economy, sustainable seafood production**, all recommendations are categorised as « urgent to address », some of them being ready to implement (“Improving coherence between MS plans and sea basins”, “Engaging new stakeholders in the MSP process to better reflect the dimensions of the EGD + build their skills”, “Supporting the establishment of a coherent network of protected areas at sea and across the land-sea interface through MSP”). Others should take more time to be ready to implement.

## North Sea basin

Regarding «**Data, Approaches, Methods**»:

- All recommendations are seen as « urgent to address »
- Some of the recommendations deal with an upper scale from the Sea basin scale (EU or international level) and should therefore be addressed at these levels, according to the participants: this is the case for multi-use and cumulative impacts assessment
- There is a need for a better dialogue between stakeholders (scientists, maritime economy actors, legal authorities) to strengthen the links and the efficiency between the European Green Deal, marine spatial planning and the existing sea basins frameworks and initiatives
- a specific question is raised about fisheries and the impact of climate change on its behaviour: thought should be given to a long-term vision for this sector in particular, based on models and scenarios.

Regarding **Climate change adaptation and mitigation**:

- Once again, recommendations are seen as «urgent to address»
- Ideas to operationalise the recommendations deal with the need of research programs, the development of marine green infrastructures, improving coordination between scales (particularly in the case of land offshore renewable energy infrastructures).

Regarding the **Governance, fair & just transition, biodiversity, zero pollution, blue circular economy, sustainable seafood production**:

- Recommendations are seen as « urgent to address »
- The local level is seen as a good lever to find concrete solutions (circular economy, fair and just transition in aquaculture and fisheries, coherence between plans).

In summary, the 21 MSP-GREEN recommendations that have been submitted to the participants are believed to be relevant for both Atlantic and North Sea basins, and in line with current strategies, despite being in some cases general and challenging to implement in concrete actions. The participants expressed their desire to rely on existing mechanisms, like OSPAR, the Atlantic marine strategy, and the Greater North Sea basin initiative. Some of them pointed out that mandatory actions (marine spatial planning) and strategies that use voluntary processes complement each other. It is important to acknowledge that these processes are tools for public policies like the European Green Deal. Although the EU scale is suitable for EGD implementation, there was no specificity between the two sea basins that emerged from this workshop. Finally, the concepts are numerous, now concrete actions are needed.



*Figure 3: participants of the workshop in St-Malo.*



## **DELIVERABLE N°4.1.**

# **Recommendations on making MSP in the EU an enabler of the Green Deal**

**Annex 3.b - Baltic Sea workshop report**





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## 1.1 Workshop background



Figure 1. Workshop opening screen.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of September 2024, a workshop "European Green Deal through the eyes of MSP in Baltic Sea Region" was organised in Rīga (Latvia) with the aim of presenting and discussing the MSP-GREEN project recommendations on how to strengthen the European Green Deal (EGD) ambition in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). Welcoming a wide range of stakeholders, a total of 30 participants (including MSP practitioners, planners, decision-makers, experts and other interested parties) reflected on the Baltic Sea regional specificities to identify relevant topics, actions, and priorities from the recommendations that should be taken into specific consideration.

The workshop was organised by the Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development of Latvia in collaboration with the project's BSR partnership - the coordination of Finnish MSP cooperation represented by the Regional Council of Southwest Finland, the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, and the Visions and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea (VASAB) Secretariat. The workshop was held back-to-back with a joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group<sup>1</sup> meeting, which took place on the days following the workshop between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2024.

The workshop was structured around five sections titled 'waves':

1. Wave 1. Opening session.

<sup>1</sup> The Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG) was launched in October 2010 by HELCOM and VASAB Committee on Spatial Planning and Development of the Baltic Sea Region (CSPD/BSR). The Working Group was established to ensure cooperation among the BSR countries for coherent regional MSP processes in the Baltic Sea.

Welcome part with opening words by the organisers, introduction to the MSP-GREEN project and the purpose and objectives of the BSR workshop. Thematic MSP&EGD ice-breaking activity.

2. Wave 2. BSR country perspective on Maritime Spatial Plans.

Video presentation and a panel discussion on BSR MSP status and country-specific issues.

3. Wave 3. Basin identity and regional maritime EGD specificities.

Setting the scene by identifying geographical and cultural BSR characteristics and current EGD-related challenges.

4. Wave 4. Adapting MSP-GREEN recommendations to sea basin specificities.

Working with the recommendations: identification of the most relevant recommendations for the BSR.

5. Wave 5. Way forward.

Towards actions enabling the maritime EGD in the BSR and communication matters.

A closing section summarised the workshop results and provided closing remarks.

The following methodologies were applied in the different waves.

For Wave 2 a panel discussion “BSR MSP status and country context-specific issues in relation to the maritime EGD” was organised to gain insights from the national perspectives. Almost all countries from the BSR were represented by a **panellist**:

- Finland: Mari Pohja-Mykrä - Coordinator of the Finnish Maritime Spatial Planning Cooperation.
- Germany: Bettina Käppeler - Maritime Spatial Planner - Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency.
- Latvia: Kristīne Kedo - Departmental Unit Head of Spatial Planning and Policy Division – Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development.
- Lithuania: Paulius Kliučininkas - Advisor within the Architecture and Innovation Policy Group – Ministry of Environment.
- Poland: Kamil Rybka - Head of Department of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation - Ministry of Infrastructure.
- Sweden: Jan Schmidtbauer Crona - Senior Analyst - Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management.

For Waves 3, 4 and 5, the workshop participants were divided into four groups (6-8 people per group). Each group was led by a facilitator. Work continued in the same groups throughout the workshop.

The overall objective of Wave 3 was to reflect on regional specificities and identify relevant topics and key challenges related to aligning the EGD with MSP at the Baltic Sea basin level, by considering aspects of, for example, maritime geography/biophysical conditions; governance and policy; maritime culture and regional communication narratives (see Figure 1 for example categories). The participants were presented with introductory questions focusing on the

characteristics of the Baltic Sea basin in combination with a mapping exercise: each group was provided with a printed map of the BSR and a set of colour-coded “post-it” notes for different categories. Thereafter, the notes were placed on the BSR map to set out the regional situation context. This was helpful to foster interaction and the thinking process in relation to the real-life environment so as to create a common storyline for the Baltic Sea basin identity. The following questions were considered:

- What are the key environmental characteristics of the Baltic Sea?
- When it comes to the BSR, what cultural features could be named?
- What MSP challenges exist in the BSR? How do they relate to EGD?

<b>Environmental/ biophysical characteristics   Example categories</b>
Specific placed-based weather conditions (e.g. strong winds)
Hydrographic features (e.g. strong inputs from river waters, low salinity)
Geological / geomorphological features (e.g. water depth)
Marine ecosystem habitats (e.g. fauna, flora species richness)
Common coastal features (e.g. rocky shores, sandy beaches, coniferous coastline)
Environmental pressures (e.g. hazardous substances, eutrophication, oil pollution, bycatch, climate change)
<b>Cultural characteristics   Example categories</b>
Coastal landmarks (e.g. lighthouses)
Underwater heritage (e.g. shipwrecks)
Coastal communities (e.g. fisherman villages)
Cuisine (e.g. herring)
Cultural activities (e.g. arts and crafts, recreation, traditional)
<b>Example challenges</b>
Spatial competition among uses at sea
Uncertainties to project future decisions,
Contrasting policy objectives (e.g. Biodiversity protection vs. Climate mitigation targets OWP)
Process limitations (e.g. lack of resources, know-how methods)
Data gaps, fragmentation or lack of interoperability
The geographic scope, approach and MSP mandate define the capacity,

Figure 2. Example categories for Wave 3.

During Waves 4 and 5, the focus was on the recommendations developed in the MSP-GREEN project. The groups worked in parallel using a similar approach, but each focused on different recommendation categories:

**Group A:** climate-smart MSP - 12 recommendations on climate change adaptation [CCA] and mitigation [CCM] plus 3 recommendations from fair and just transition [FJT].

**Group B:** 10 recommendations on biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration [BC] and zero pollution [ZP] plus 3 recommendations from fair and just transition [FJT].

**Group C:** 9 recommendations on sustainable seafood production [SFP] and blue circular economy [BCE] plus 3 recommendations from fair and just transition [FJT].

**Group D:** cross-cutting recommendations - 23 recommendations on MSP processes and approaches to improve EGD implementation [CC-PA]; Data and tools for MSP: new needs and opportunities driven by the EGD [CC-DT]; Governance and policy integration to strengthen the role of MSP in achieving EGD objectives [CC-GP];

Multi-use in MSP: a tool to reach marine EGD objectives [CC-MU].

An A1 size print template with the questions (Figure 2), printouts of the recommendations (A4 documents together with separate prints of each recommendation for more convenient workflow), pens and “post-it” notes for writing were used as supporting tools during the task.

Within this workshop report, the identifiers for the specific recommendations from Deliverable N°4.1. *Recommendations on making MSP in the EU an enabler of the Green Deal of the MSP-GREEN project* were used to refer to the recommendations.

	The 4th wave - Adapting MSP-GREEN recommendations to sea basin specificities		The 5th Wave: Way forward		
	How is the recommendation relevant for you / the Baltic Sea?	What are the issues that need to be considered from your /the Baltic Sea perspective when it comes to the recommendations?	From your perspective, what needs to be done to implement the recommendation at the Baltic Sea?	Which actors need to be involved and what is the role of cross-border / sea basin level collaboration?	What is the role of communication in the implementation of the recommendation?
Recommendation 1.					
Recommendation 2.					
Recommendation 3.					
Recommendation 4.					
Recommendation 5.					

Figure 3. A1 size print template for group work during wave 4 and wave 5.

From their perspective, each group selected the five most relevant recommendations for the BSR for further discussion. The next step was to rank the chosen recommendations in order of importance/urgency, pinpointing the most important one as “Recommendation 1” in the table (Figure 2). The participants were then asked to answer two **predefined questions on the five selected recommendations**, namely:

- How is this recommendation relevant for you / the Baltic Sea?
- What are the issues that need to be considered from your/the Baltic Sea perspective when it comes to the recommendations?

At the start of Wave 5, a brief presentation was given on the maritime EGD sea basin enabling elements and communication aspects of the green transition in the marine domain. The presentation was based on the MSP-GREEN project deliverable 5.2 *Communicating the European maritime Green Deal: A companion for MSP practitioners, policy-makers and sustainability communicators* - a handbook issued on the topic. After the presentation, the group work on the selected recommendations was continued by answering the following questions:

- From your perspective, what needs to be done to implement the recommendation at the Baltic Sea level?
- Which actors need to be involved and what is the role of cross-border / sea basin level collaboration?



After this task, the groups selected the two most urgent and the two most ready-to-implement recommendations.

A final task during Wave 5 was to consider appropriate communication aspects of the maritime EGD, responding to the following questions:

- What is the role of communication in the implementation of the recommendation? What type of actions are needed and why?
- What impact may this action/activity yield? E.g. raising awareness, improving skills, fostering more effective collaboration etc.

The questions were answered on the “post-it” notes and the A1 print template (see Figure 2).

At the end of the sessions, each group’s facilitator provided a brief oral presentation of the results. More details on the next steps and how the information gathered during the workshop will be used was provided by the project team.

It is **important to note** that even though some recommendations were not prioritised in the workshop, it does not mean that they are irrelevant for the BSR. The prioritisation exercise highlights the five most relevant recommendations as perceived by the participants of the workshops and as such present a Baltic Sea perspective, although to some extent in a limited scope.



Figure 4. Workshop participants.

## 1.2 Sea basin specificities identified

### 1.2.1 Panel discussion

The panel discussion provided an overview of the ongoing process and challenges faced in the national MSP processes around the Baltic Sea, especially from the perspective of the EGD. To start the discussion, the panellist presented the current status of the national MSP processes and ongoing issues within their countries. All countries have their Maritime Spatial plans (MS plans) currently in force. Finland and Sweden are in the process of revising the plans, while Germany, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia are focusing on the implementation and assessment phase with revisions

planned further in the future. Many of the panellists highlighted the current importance of offshore wind energy (OWE) development for MSP. For example, Sweden is updating the plan with a special focus on the topic and Poland is assessing the current MS plan with OWE as an important topic to consider. The Latvian panellist, on the other hand, emphasised the importance of an ecosystem-based approach in MSP and that the current plan is strongly ecosystem protection-oriented.



*Figure 5. Panellists from Latvia, Finland, Sweden, Germany, Poland and Lithuania discussed the ongoing topics related to the alignment of the EGD with MSP in the Baltic Sea countries.*

The panellists highlighted multiple specific topics and pressing issues that they have faced and are currently experiencing when it comes to the alignment of MSP with the EGD ambition. All countries, excluding Lithuania, brought up OWE as a key topic under discussion. Requirements to look at the cumulative impacts and evaluate the new pressures on nature and existing sea uses are key topics to consider both at the national and the Baltic Sea basin levels. During the panel discussion, fishing was brought up as a key sector to consider in MSP when it comes to OWE development: how possible is it for the two activities to co-exist in the same area and if they cannot co-exist, what areas should be reserved for fishing. The panel highlighted the need for considering different forms of fishing with different target species, the future changes faced by the sector (e.g. climate change) and the economic viability of the activity.

Additionally, the short timeframe for making planning decisions was identified as a central stress factor. Overall, the topic of reconciling different needs is in line with the

need to support a fair and just transition in MSP. Other topics brought up during the discussion focused on reaching the biodiversity protection and restoration targets at sea, the impacts of and adaptation possibilities related to climate change on marine nature and the different sectors and the numerous challenges in promoting a green transition that emerge in the implementation phase of MS plans.

The participating countries presented valuable examples from their national MSP context that could be learned from and implemented when aiming to consider the EGD within MSP. Many of the panellists highlighted practices related to OWE development. These included for example:

- The overall approach to OWE planning in MSP taken in Poland, which has been able to impact other planning processes on the topic.
- The approach to identifying potential areas for OWE development in Sweden, which included collaboration between multiple organisations to form a holistic overview of the situation.
- The collaboration at the North Sea to create a harmonised approach to shipping routes in MSP that enabled the identification of additional energy areas.

Additionally, valuable experiences from stakeholder engagement were presented, including examples of different methods such as the co-creation of alternative future scenarios for the marine areas in Finnish MSP and the formation of a Joint maritime and coastal spatial planning coordination group in Latvia consisting of representatives from different sectors and governance levels, which has aided in the institutionalisation of stakeholder engagement, making planning processes more fluent and effective in practice.

The panellists also shared some ideas on what actions they wished could be implemented in MSP in the future. These included, for example, a basin-wide approach to the definition of suitable areas for offshore energy production and of a network of blue-green infrastructure supporting biodiversity objectives that goes beyond the national borders. Other topics that were considered included (1) leaving as much space as possible unused or unplanned in the MS plans to increase the capacity of MSP to adapt to future changes and (2) promoting a stronger vision-driven approach in MSP that would go beyond following objectives set in the directives. Multi-use and MariParks are potential topics where such an approach could be beneficial, supporting the implementation and possibly simultaneously saving space for other sea uses.

### 1.2.2 Sea basin identity and EGD-related challenges

As the basis for composing a shared understanding amongst the workshop participants on the BSR basin identity in relation to the MSP and EGD topicality, an interactive mapping exercise with an emphasis on relevant MSP-EGD challenges was performed under Wave 3.

As a result of the group work's interactive discussions, the Baltic Sea basin was characterised as a semi-enclosed sea with some of its biophysical features including low salinity, partial ice coverage during winter and low water exchange, which results

in oxygen-low water conditions. The sea is also susceptible to eutrophication leading to challenges with water quality, especially in archipelagos and shallow areas. The Baltic Sea basin is considered a fragile ecosystem with relatively few species that are adapted to the specific brackish conditions. Additionally, there is diversity in coastal types, spanning from sandy beaches to cliffs and rocky shores.

Features of cultural significance for the sea basin include, for example, activities performed by coastal communities along the mainland and archipelagos' coasts with all year-round and summer residents and visitors to important tourist destinations. Fishing and aquaculture are vital livelihoods. There is also sunken ammunition from World War II and many shipwrecks as features of underwater heritage. When associating the Baltic Sea coastline with cultural significance, certain coastal landmarks were especially highlighted: for example, historical fishing villages, lighthouses and particular locations with aesthetic natural scenery. When considering specific cultural activities that are important for the Baltic Sea basin identity, besides the common boating culture, region-wide celebratory events were also mentioned, such as The Night of Ancient Lights (at the end of August, bonfires are lit up along the whole Baltic Sea coast).

A key challenge that the Baltic Sea is currently facing is the race for OWE development all around the sea basin. This raises questions not only on coordination of the new activities at sea with maritime traffic, fishing and addressing environmental issues, but also with the development of new ports for their building and maintenance. Other challenges include conflicts between biodiversity protection and other economic activities (e.g. aquaculture), persistent erosion of sandy coasts due to climate change and conflicts of interest between coastal inhabitants and seasonal tourists. Coastal community values were often highlighted directly in relation to challenges concerning the differing sectoral interests in sea space (e.g. the importance of local fisheries industry versus the development of offshore aquaculture (fish farms); OWE development versus the coastal scenic (aesthetic) values for shoreline residents and visitors). Additional elements concerning the aspect of fair and just transition (stemming from the EGD horizontal components) were pointed out in relation to equity - in which one sector might have more power in the decision-making process and the others have less means of raising their voices. While multi-use of sea areas was seen as a potential solution to many challenges, counter arguments were raised based on the potential additional risks of designating a specific area for multiple functions.

It is important to highlight that the challenges described here impact the relevance and application of the recommendations that were identified in the MSP-GREEN project, as place-based regional specificities require context-specific problem-solving (including prioritisation). For instance, considering the challenges currently faced by various BSR stakeholders and the marine ecosystem, there is a need to gain comprehensive knowledge on the cumulative impacts of planning decisions and the existing and potential marine activities and their spatial implications on marine and coastal ecosystems and communities at the sea basin level. Understanding the impacts of marine activities on species can be difficult, especially when factoring in climate change, meaning that migratory routes and fish spawning sites might shift or be at higher risk of degradation. Therefore, it is important to consider how to allocate zones appropriately in the long run in MS plans across borders in the BSR, given the unpredictability of changing socio-ecological conditions. The latter aspect was largely



considered when discussing the prioritised recommendation [CCA4] in close interlinkages to [FJT2], described in more detail in chapters 3.3 and 3.4.

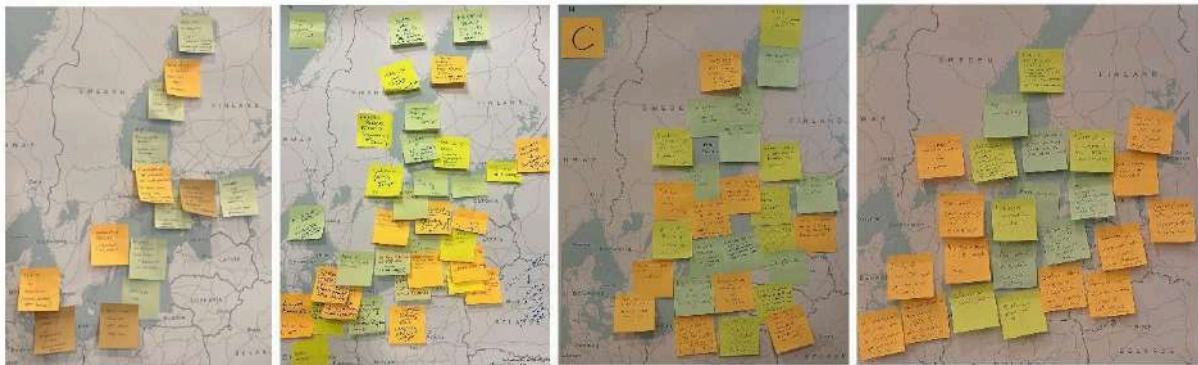


Figure 6. Results from the BSR basin identity mapping exercise.

### 1.3 Priority recommendations to be taken into consideration at the sea basin level

At the beginning of Wave 4, the participants within each group selected the five most important and/or relevant recommendations for the Baltic Sea basin based on their personal experience and expertise. Each group had been given specific recommendations as a basis for their selection, so only the recommendations on fair and just transition could be selected in more than one group. Three of the groups ended up combining some recommendations within their discussions, resulting in more than five recommendations for some groups.

In total, the four groups selected twenty-four recommendations out of which 21 were unique (i.e. not repeated in more groups). The second recommendation for fair and just transition [FJT2] was selected by three groups. The most relevant recommendations identified for each parallel group are briefly listed below.

#### Group A - Climate-smart MSP: Climate change mitigation and adaptation

1. [CCA4] Data and knowledge on the impacts of climate change on maritime sectors should be collected, collated, and made available.
2. [FJT2] Stakeholder engagement in the co-creation of MS plans should be further strengthened, considering their needs and proposed solutions.
3. [CCA5] A catalogue of regionally and locally specific climate change adaptation solutions should be developed.
4. [CCM7] Carbon capture and storage at sea should be considered in MS plans (e.g. blue carbon habitats and geological carbon sequestration).
5. As recommendations presented interlinkages, a set of three recommendations was identified as the fifth priority [CCM1/CCM4/FJT1]:
  - a. MS plans should be aligned with updated renewable energy production targets (in line with national energy and climate plans) [CCM1].

- b. This should not be separated from action towards [CCM4], i.e. for MSP to identify links to terrestrial and coastal planning related to the development and expansion of offshore renewables.
- c. Additionally, it should include the recommended action of [FJT1] to 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.

*Note: the first three recommendations were primarily considered as an entity that strengthens an integrated approach in relation to the impacts of climate change and the necessity for adaptation measures in MSP.*

*Note: a higher ranking in the prioritisation process was given to the recommendations that were considered less visible/non-existent in the currently developed MS Plans.*

### **Group B - Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration and zero pollution**

1. Due to the interlinkages between recommendations, the group identified a set of three recommendations as the first priority:
  - a. [BC1] MSP should take a stronger role in supporting the identification of new areas relevant to nature conservation and foster their effective design and management.
  - b. [BC4] MSP should more explicitly support and promote EU nature restoration targets and the concept of marine green infrastructure.
  - c. [BC3] MS plans should support the establishment of a coherent network of protected areas at sea and across the land-sea interface (including the blue corridor concept).
2. [BC2] MS plans should be coherent with management measures for protected areas. Additionally, MS plans could support other spatial and non-spatial management measures designed to improve biodiversity conservation.
3. [ZP3] 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.
4. [BC6] The availability, accessibility, and usability of marine environmental data for informed MSP decision-making should be fostered.
5. [FJT2] Stakeholder engagement in the co-creation of MS plans should be further strengthened, considering their needs and proposed solutions.

### **Group C - Sustainable seafood production and circular blue economy**

1. Due to the interlinkages between recommendations, the group discussed [SFP1] and [SFP4] together as the most and second most relevant recommendations.
  - a. [SFP1] 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.

- b. [SFP4] 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.
2. [FJT2] Stakeholder engagement in the co-creation of MS plans should be further strengthened, considering their needs and proposed solutions.
3. [BCE3] A life cycle approach should be considered in MS plans and associated licensing.
4. [BCE1] 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. Specific spatial measures supporting the blue circular economy should be identified and included in MS plans.

### Group D - Cross-cutting topics

1. [CC-GP5] 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.
2. [CC-PA3] The EGD is a vast policy package whose implementation requires the engagement of several, and diverse typologies of stakeholders. The MSP process should fully reflect the EGD's maritime dimensions, especially in the light of new sea uses the EGD may be fostering.
3. [CC-PA6] The importance of the precautionary principle within MSP increases when uncertainty is high (e.g. in the case of climate change). This can include leaving some sea space without assigned uses.
4. [CC-DT1] 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. This includes, for example, adapting the scope of existing data platforms and groups to new EGD data needs, specifying targeted research needs and identifying new cross-cutting data needs.
5. [CC-MU4] Facilitate a holistic and bottom-up approach through MSP to support the development of multi-use.

The recommendations, their relevance and possible first steps to their implementation within the BSR are described in more detail in chapter 3.4.

## 1.4 Relevance of the recommendations for the sea basin and input on their implementation

### 1.4.1 Climate-smart MSP: Climate change mitigation and adaptation

The first group focused on eleven specific recommendations from the categories of climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as fair and just transition.

The most relevant recommendation was considered to be [CCA4] which states that data and knowledge on the impacts of climate change on maritime sectors should be delivered ensuring maximum regional specificity, in alignment with direct sector

support 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). In this context, it is necessary to mention that recommendation [CCA4] to a large extent was discussed in direct connection with recommendation [FJT2] - prioritised as the second in its relevance to the BSR - which highlights that stakeholder engagement in the co-creation of MS plans should be further strengthened, taking into account their needs and proposed solutions, including a balanced distribution of power among stakeholders.

When underlining the importance of [CCA4]'s role in the BSR in relation to [FJT2], it was expressed that there is a need for MS Plans to be strategically data-driven and future-oriented, including the ability of plans to be adaptive in response to changing environmental and climatic factors. Although historically effective and strong establishments of institutional systems for ensuring integrated BSR cooperation and joint decision-making have already been established in the context of the Baltic Sea (under HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group), this was considered more as a matter of national coordination action (e.g. for evaluating the plans' ability to respond to EGD objectives). The division of responsibilities on MSP and related sectors among multiple levels of governance was pointed as a crucial obstacle to overcome, given that there are various national institutional systems operating on related topics with their own unique procedures and processes. Importantly, such action cannot be initiated without close stakeholder cooperation in co-creating solutions, including sector representatives and other groups of stakeholders directly impacted and/or less engaged (e.g. the involvement of members from the general public in order to create awareness on the impacts of climate change).

The following steps were identified for implementing the recommendations:

1. Firstly, an agreement on strategic requirements is needed between all BSR Coastal Member States (under the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG).
2. Second, it is necessary to align responsibilities at various levels of governance, including across the ministerial divide and across sector-based actions (e.g. via an MSP national coordination mechanism that can delegate tasks, including scenario and model building).
3. The first two steps require political will regarding the MSP mandate and enforceability as defined within national legislation.
4. As it is a cross-border issue, a common approach should be reached via consensus-building dialogues and united knowledge creation on a basin level.
5. There is a need to ensure that the issue at hand is approachable and understandable to all stakeholder groups. Moreover, communication should play a vision-oriented role that strategically incorporates future implications.

A brief discussion was initiated when setting up the previously mentioned steps on the ways the two recommendations could be strengthened by supporting the role of knowledge creation on a basin level for specific climate change adaptation solutions. This resulted in the group overlooking the recommendation [CCA5], which addresses the development of regionally and locally specific climate change adaptation solutions, building on Integrated Coastal Zone Management experiences (e.g. Marine Green Infrastructure). Further discussions concerned the unpredictability around climate change impacts that are increasingly coming into today's planning related decision-making. As a result, there is a necessity to account for uncertainty.

Amongst the group participants, various questions were raised on how to do it / what are ways to enable it in the maritime sectors: are we in need of more data-driven future scenarios? Is there a way for MS plans to be dynamically adaptive, which refers to solutions such as options for partial plan revisions and more flexible spatial designations? For example, do the current marine protected areas (MPAs) take into consideration the potential future changes in species habitat distributions? Examples of issues include considerations on how to strategically account for adaptive specific zone allocation in the context of MPAs and current and future species distributions.

The group members highlighted an approach where some sea space is left without assigned uses 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). Moreover, measures of integrated land-sea planning are needed when developing regionally and locally specific climate change adaptation solutions. More specifically, developing cross-border strategic plans for sectoral climate adaptation measures were indicated as a necessity. These should be developed at the sea basin level and in close oversight in-between neighbouring nations.



Figure 7. Work in progress in Group A.

There is a need to acknowledge the cumulative impacts of climate change in the Baltic Sea basin and co-create an appropriate action plan that is adaptive in nature. On this topic, the fourth recommendation [CCM7] was noted as relevant to the climate change mitigation theme. The recommendation states that carbon capture and storage at sea should be considered in MS plans. This implies mapping blue carbon habitats, evaluating their climate change mitigation potential by accessing other co-benefits and improving their conservation, protection and restoration through specific MSP objectives. This recommendation was highlighted as a cross-border issue that is not widely recognised neither on a basin scale, nor nationally.

Appropriate data obtaining and its modelling was identified as one of the actions necessary to implement the recommendation to gain a more in-depth understanding for undertaking appropriate planning decisions, especially in the case of geological carbon sequestration (e.g. basin-level subsoil mapping was seen as a prerequisite).

Similarly to the previously mentioned recommendations, the action should be supported by a political will. Additional support mechanisms should be implemented especially for countries that are not forerunners and/or have fewer resources available, as to ensure BSR wide coordinated actions.

When discussing issues of climate change mitigation in relevance for the BSR maritime space, the group pointed to existing knowledge gaps and problems arising from fragmented coordination. As a result, remarks were given on the fifth recommendation [CCM1] focusing on fostering climate neutrality efforts via offshore renewable energy (ORE) development, including provisions for aligned BSR energy targets and MS plan zoning allocations. The recommendation states that MS plans should be aligned with updated renewable energy production targets, by identifying priority areas for offshore renewables development in line with actual expansion needs and targets. Moreover, it calls attention to the cumulative impacts of ORE expansion, by mitigating the influence on the surrounding marine ecosystem, including the avoiding of valuable habitats. The group participants reflected that the expansive OWE developments tend to be set as a national priority. However, more aligned data on the energy targets for the whole basin is required, including data on the impacts of offshore energy development.

Importantly, the group pinpointed that the mitigation alignment should not be separated from the actions described in [CCM4], for MSP to identify links to terrestrial and coastal planning, related to the development and expansion of renewable energy, as the majority of national energy plans tend to determine the sources of renewable energy planned inland, in separation from the offshore developments. Additionally, particular attention should be devoted to energy efficiency and limiting the overall usage, however those are aspects considered out of the MS plans operationalisation scope.

Whereas the recommended action of [FJT1] to 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, was specifically regarded as a crucial point for CCM1 and CCM4, as many stakeholders from various sectors and the general public are impacted by such decisions. As a result, there is a need for assessing the impacts of sector-based decisions on other stakeholder groups, including local communities. Additionally, early-stage communication should be initiated as a prerequisite for ORE area reinforcements in MS plans.

### 1.4.2 Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration and zero pollution

The group focused on thirteen specific recommendations on biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration, zero pollution and fair and just transition. Out of these recommendations, five were identified as the most relevant for further discussions. It was challenging for the participants to decide which recommendations to choose regarding biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration as from the groups' perspective all of them were considered relevant. Additionally, due to the perceived connections in the issues the recommendations address, the group felt it was difficult to choose a single recommendation to prioritise as in practice many of them could be implemented at the same time.

The most important recommendation was considered [BC3] which states that 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. In the group's opinion, it is closely linked to two other recommendations, since defining blue corridors includes:

- a. the identification of new areas, which is also highlighted by [BC1] noting that MSP should take a stronger role in supporting the identification of new areas relevant to nature conservation and fostering their effective design and management.
- b. building marine green infrastructure, which is related to [BC4] stating that MSP should more explicitly support and promote EU nature restoration targets and the concept of Marine Green Infrastructure, especially by identifying areas to be restored at sea and along the coast.

These recommendations are based on the EU Biodiversity Strategy targets and requirements of the EU Nature Restoration Law.

The relevance of building a coherent network/blue corridor concept is based on the fact that BSR countries are in various stages of implementing this concept. For example, Latvian MSP does not include the concept, whereas, from the German perspective, stronger interlinkages between sectoral planning and nature protection are needed. Although the concept can be defined nationally, the network should be planned and managed for the entire Baltic Sea. Also, other sectoral strategies should be considered internationally to ensure their coherence and integration with the blue corridor concept. To initiate implementation, it was highlighted that closer cooperation of various HELCOM working groups for nature protection with the HELCOM-VASAB MSP working group is needed. The strategic workflow to implement the combination of three recommendations would include developing a framework for building a BSR-wide concept of an MPA network together with blue corridor proposals via HELCOM as a roof institution for all BSR.

Regarding communication, the group outlined the need to build a common understanding of other sectors' perspectives (i.e. *"walking in their shoes"*) and the importance of nature and the critical state of the Baltic Sea. Especially to highlight the connection between nature and economic development, for example, *"to fish you need fish"*. In addition, there should be communication about the importance of a coherent network for MPAs explaining the need for it and the future benefits across borders.

Following the need for a coherent network of protected areas, [BC2] was proposed as the second most relevant recommendation highlighting, that MS plans should be coherent with management measures for protected areas - as defined in the plans 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 Areas, Areas To be Avoided, Traffic Separation Schemes, limits to velocity) and non-spatial management measures (e.g. technical, behavioural, and educational measures) designed to improve biodiversity conservation. The relevance is justified by the fact that in the BSR there is no established common framework for these measures.

First, an assessment/evaluation about the existing situation should be done. Participants also highlighted that assessments do not sometimes fit with political objectives. This can make the process complicated as decision-makers might be



reluctant to promptly advance the action. In the opinion of the group, the first steps would be designing the concepts for coherent management measures for protected areas, secondly creating a more detailed framework for these measures and reaching an agreement on the framework within the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group level to initiate it. The group also agreed that measures should be (1) clearly explained for all prospective sea users in BSR and (2) comparable - in this case a common categorisation for measures could be implemented and the creation of a framework should be based on collaboration between marine scientists/researchers and decision-makers. This could also include communication regarding the interlinkages of these measures, especially about how MSP supports sectoral interests and to raise awareness on why coherent management of measures for protected areas in BSR is needed.

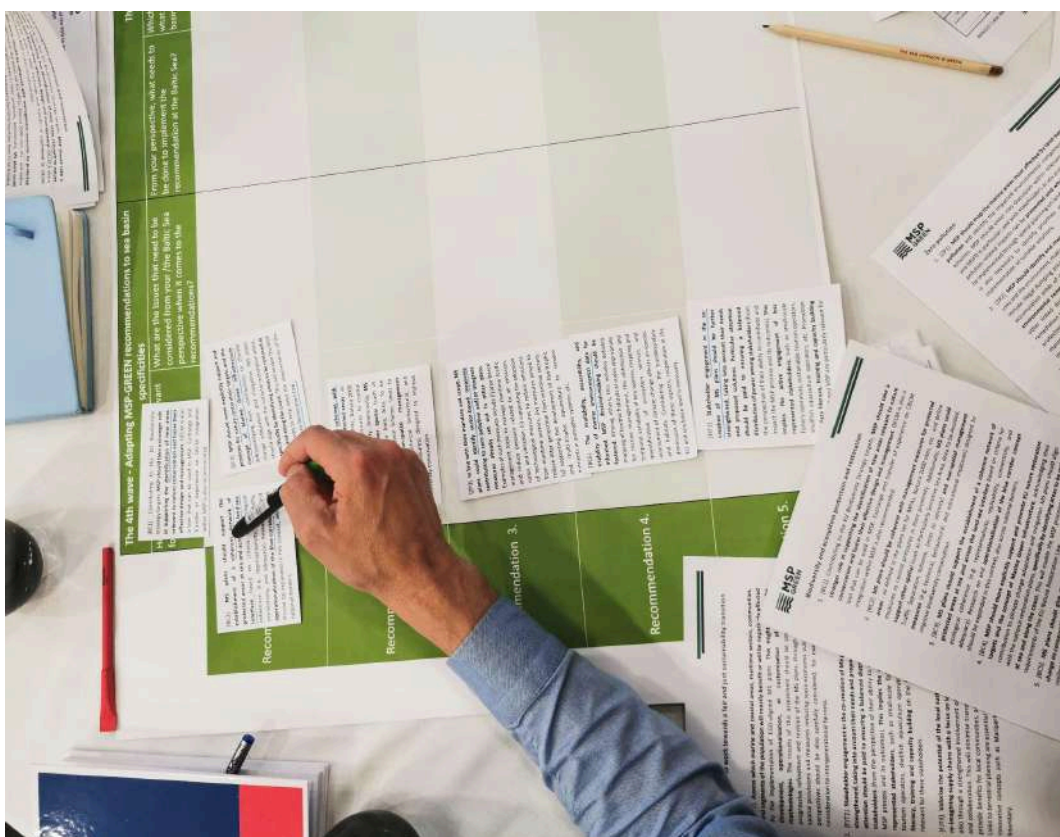


Figure 8. Work in progress on biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration, zero pollution and fair and just transition recommendations.

The third most relevant recommendation was from the zero pollution theme. The discussions led to the shared opinion that zero pollution is not a realistic objective to solve through MSP. Moving towards zero pollution can be supported through minimising the impacts of polluting activities and reducing pollution, for example, implementing more smart technologies.

Regarding recommendations related to the zero pollution theme, only one was considered as suitable to be implemented in the MSP process based on its mandate and scope: [ZP3] states that MS plans could identify sector-based measures contributing to zero pollution and/or integrate measures already set out in other plans. Existing MSP practices in BSR do not include zero pollution measures (at least none



that the participants were aware of) but looking forward these measures could support the building of a common framework to supervise/monitor the achievement of targets towards zero pollution through MSP. To implement this recommendation the first step should be collecting information from responsible sectors and communicating with them about integrating sectoral policies, for example, shipping, non-renewable energy, agriculture sectors etc., whose actions impact the sea-basin. Main actors involved in these actions should be planning experts, representatives from different countries and sectors, and institutions responsible for WFD and MSFD implementation both nationally and at the basin-level. When discussing the role of communication on zero pollution, the group suggested that the communication approach/perspective should be changed from stressing the negative outcomes and scenarios to highlighting opportunities to lessen the amount of pollution in the Baltic Sea.

The meaning of data for the MSP process is crucial. None of the tasks described above could be done without a base of data and knowledge. Therefore, the fourth recommendation that the group chose was [BC6], regarding the importance of fostering the availability, accessibility, and usability of marine environmental data for informed MSP decision-making. Considering the transboundary dimension of the marine realm as the shared data space between countries, cooperation at the EU and sea-basin level is necessary. In the BSR a lot of data is still scattered into different organisations and data services and is available in non-harmonised formats. Therefore, it can be challenging to find and collect data for different use cases. The group also emphasised that not all data is available digitally and spatial components for data can be missing. Also, participants highlighted that in their experience usability and performance of open data concept is debatable. In the MSP planning process decisions might need to be made without sufficient information and knowledge base in the beginning. For example, in Latvian MSP precautionary principle was used based on theoretical model-based information rather than actual results from research due to the unavailability of data on various aspects of the marine environment. To solve these issues, first, there should be more discussions between data generators (scientists, organisations responsible for preparing data sets) and planners, who aim to use the data, so that the necessary data can be provided to the users. Communication regarding data needs to be approached from two directions: (1) communication about the data (to oversee the whole existing and possible data catalogue) and (2) communicating the data (to represent data in a manner that is understandable and efficient).

Finally, the fifth recommendation chosen by the group was [FJT2]: Stakeholder engagement in the co-creation of MS plans should be further strengthened, considering their needs and proposed solutions. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring a balanced distribution of power among stakeholders. This implies the active engagement of less represented stakeholders, such as small-scale fishery operators, sustainable tourism operators, shellfish aquaculture operators, etc. The recommendation also highlights the promotion of data literacy, training and capacity building on the EGD and MSP. From the BSR perspective there are many stakeholders and interests, but not all stakeholders always have the same opportunities to impact planning, depending on their place in the power hierarchy. The main issue is that MSP cannot achieve its objectives if the various interests are not balanced during MS plans' co-creation process. To overcome this challenge, the main task is to engage with stakeholders in an effective way that should be guided by communication experts. Well thought-through approaches and techniques are key elements to endorse and activate the implementation of this recommendation.

To sum up, the most urgent recommendations to implement are [BC2], which is also the most important in the groups' opinion regarding the need for the development of a coherent network of protected areas and [FJT2] focusing on stakeholder engagement. It is worth mentioning that the recommendation regarding stakeholder engagement [FJT2] is both most urgent and ready to be implemented together with [BC6] about the importance of marine environmental data in MSP.

### 1.4.3 Sustainable seafood production and circular blue economy

The group focused on twelve specific recommendations on sustainable seafood production, circular blue economy and fair and just transition. Out of these recommendations, five were identified as the most relevant for further discussions.

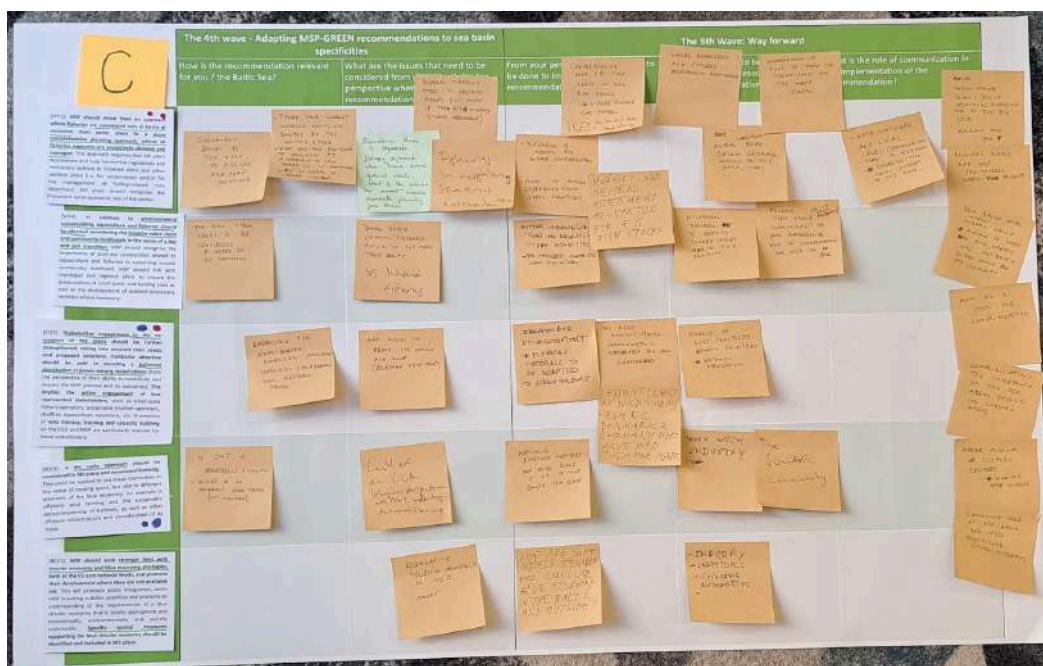


Figure 9. Results of the group work on sustainable seafood production, circular blue economy and fair and just transition.

The most relevant recommendation was identified from the sustainable seafood production theme. The recommendation highlights the need for MS plans to actively promote innovative and sustainable forms of fisheries and aquaculture through a more comprehensive planning approach, where all fisheries segments are proactively planned and managed instead of considering fisheries only in terms of exclusion from some areas [SFP1]. In the discussions, the recommendation was strongly interlinked with another recommendation on sustainable seafood production.

The second recommendation highlights the need to plan aquaculture and fisheries with broader value chains, community livelihoods and the issues related to a fair and just transition in mind, in addition to considering the environmental sustainability aspects [SFP4]. The two recommendations are presented here together as a key issue to consider in MSP when aiming to support sustainable seafood production.

Their relevance arises from the current challenges in reconciling the needs of fisheries with other sea uses, especially with OWE development. In addition, the limited

availability of space and more generally the geography of the Baltic Sea creates a challenging setting for reconciling sectoral needs and emphasises the need for cooperative planning both at the national and sea basin scale. As fishing can happen in the waters of another country, it becomes inherently a cross-border issue in the Baltic Sea. It is also important to consider separately the various needs of all types of fishing that arise from, for example, different fishing methods and target species. Small-scale coastal fisheries can be considered typical for the BSR. MSP needs to better understand the realities of their day-to-day activities and aim to reconcile the conflicts with both other sea uses and different forms of fishing. Although fishing is most often done in certain areas, it needs to be considered that these areas might change due to changing conditions. Finally, the reproduction of the fish stock needs to be considered both in terms of securing the breeding sites and setting sustainable fishing quotas for the Baltic Sea.

To support the implementation of the recommendations on sustainable seafood production multiple actions are needed. First, there is a need for comprehensive data on the state of the fish stocks in the Baltic Sea. The data should be approached by an assessment of the situation from a neutral organisation. The results could act as the basis for discussions and planning of fisheries within the Baltic Sea. Additionally, an unbiased mutual body could provide recommendations for actions specific to the sea basin. The role of HELCOM groups in data gathering and interpretation for MSP usage could be considered. As an example, the connection between the HELCOM working group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (WG Fish) and the joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group could be strengthened.

In general, possibilities regarding implementation were identified at multiple scales from local to sea basin level. Smaller scale pilots could be supported and local and professional knowledge from fishers and coastal communities better integrated into the MSP process. Scenarios and models for alternative futures of the fisheries sector could be developed at the national and sea basin scale. On the cross-border level, there is a need for more bilateral discussions to identify shared issues and to find common solutions. Harmonisation of the ways fishing areas are defined and presented in MS plans would help in forming an overview of the situation within the whole sea basin. Emphasis should also be put on communication-related to fisheries, especially aquaculture, to mitigate potential conflicts with other sectors (e.g. recreation and tourism) and risks involved in their development. Both national and local scale communication (including the involvement of the local actors) is needed.

The third recommendation was selected from the fair and just transition theme. The recommendation focuses on the importance of stakeholder engagement in the co-creation of MS plans with a special emphasis on increasing involvement and the consideration of their needs and proposed solutions [FJT2]. This issue was considered as relevant for MSP everywhere, but in the context of the BSR emphasis could be put on cross-border dimensions, including bi-lateral collaboration bringing out sectoral issues. A key objective for implementation is stakeholder empowerment, which could increase their willingness to adopt the planning materials. Overall, there is a need for more science-based planning and communication that is approachable by all stakeholders. Although stakeholder involvement happens often in a national context, sharing best practices and identifying possible applications for different contexts is valuable. Especially for OWE development, a large challenge for MSP currently at the Baltic Sea, experience from countries with longer histories on the topic (such as Denmark and Germany) would be beneficial.

The fourth and fifth identified recommendations focus on the blue circular economy

theme. The fourth recommendation focuses on the consideration of a life cycle approach and the associated licensing in MSP [BCE3]. The discussion was mainly centred around OWE development: how irreversible is the activity and where do the materials come from. These questions are not widely considered currently in MSP, which emphasises the relevance of the recommendation. Additionally, there are existing methods for estimating the life cycles of different activities. Therefore, the recommendation was seen as ready for implementation in national MSP processes and also as something to be scaled for the whole Baltic Sea. For a successful implementation in practice, MSP would need to involve both the marine industries and the scientific community.

The final recommendation focuses on the need to seek stronger links between MSP and circular economy and blue economy strategies both at the EU and national levels to promote their co-development [BCE1]. This topic was considered to a lesser extent, with discussions mostly focusing on possibilities of modelling and scenario building methods for the circular blue economy in the BSR. Experiences should also be gathered from other sea basins and globally to identify best practices. Regardless of the chosen approach, actors such as marine industries, investors and licensing authorities need to be involved in the implementation.

The role of communication in aligning EGD with MSP was considered in the group mostly in a cross-cutting manner, not applicable only to a single or a set of recommendations. In communication, the interface between science and policy was seen as important. All MSP-related actors from both science and policy (including MSP planners) need to be included to support the transfer of knowledge. At the sea basin scale, HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group could be a key actor boosting the science-policy interaction. One possibility is to form a sea basin-level marine science group consisting of all sea-related disciplines with the task of sharing knowledge and increasing the science outreach to the whole MSP community.

Related to the science-policy interface, the use of maps as communication tools both at the national and basin scale was emphasised. Additionally, multiple very practical communication issues were considered. Communicating the importance of the seas beyond the coastal areas is important to increase the impact of MSP. Planning of marine areas could also be made more visible by promoting exhibitions on the topic in marine museums and cultural centres around the Baltic Sea. The variety of languages was considered as a practical challenge for the implementation of any communication activities. As a partial solution to this challenge, the use of predominantly visual messages could be tested.

#### 1.4.4 Cross-cutting topics

The fourth group focused on discussing the cross-cutting topics, which include twenty-three recommendations in total. The cross-cutting recommendations deal with MSP processes and approaches to improve EGD implementation, data and tools for MSP, governance, and policy integration to strengthen the role of MSP in achieving EGD objectives, and multi-use. As in the other parallel groups, five of these recommendations were selected as the most relevant for the Baltic Sea region and were further discussed from a sea basin perspective.

The recommendation that was chosen as the most relevant concerned facilitating coherence among MSP plans within sea basins. The plans should strive to achieve at least functional coherence for EGD objectives, but also strategic coherence for overall



aims and visions [CC-GP5]. The relevance and priority of this recommendation was quickly established as it was agreed that planning a shared sea requires a transboundary approach. Creating coherent maritime spatial plans that discuss with each other across borders is a step in the right direction. A larger goal down the line is to create one shared plan for the Baltic Sea. It was stated that there have been many common projects and initiatives strengthening regional cooperation along the years, but commonly agreed solutions are yet to be established. A shared approach requires practical discussions, political decisions and tangible objectives. Currently, shared approaches in the BSR are only adopted in issues addressed by the EU, which include for example shipping. Issues that do not fall under the EU, should also be addressed together and this could be done through a sea basin level cooperation.

Some concrete steps to address coherence include cross-border MSP planners' meetings with enough allocated time and resources. It is important that discussions are had on the level where planning decisions are made, not only in high-level meetings. This was also seen to link to challenges in communication and how the right actors are not currently reached through a top-down approach. For instance, coastal municipalities should be better informed and involved. Actors from local to government-level decision-makers should be better engaged. Already existing regional bodies, such as HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group, are central to the cooperation.



*Figure 10. Active discussions in the group D.*

The recommendation considered as the second most relevant highlights the importance of stakeholder engagement in implementing the EGD at sea. Diverse types of stakeholders need to be involved, including those engaged in existing initiatives [CC-PA3]. The relevance of this recommendation was seen to be tied not only to the

importance of stakeholder engagement as a part of the MSP process but also to the requirements and ambitions brought on by the EGD objectives.

Although many marine stakeholders are skilled in ocean literacy, the new and emerging ones may need an introduction to the overall MSP principles and the ecosystem-based approach. It was also stated that new stakeholders can have a rather sectoral view of the sea, and it may take time to shift it towards a more holistic one. It was highlighted that efforts should be made to reach a larger coverage of different stakeholders with a special effort on those often overlooked in planning processes. Communication should be targeted to these less-heard stakeholders to break existing pathways and promote new ideas. It was noted that the Baltic Sea region has a long history of stakeholder engagement even from times before the MSP Directive. As such, there is capacity and readiness to involve new stakeholders. The recommendation was seen as the one, which the Baltic Sea countries are the readiest to tackle within the cross-cutting categories.

Applying the precautionary principle within MSP was ranked as the third most relevant recommendation among the cross-cutting topics. Its importance is highlighted as uncertainties are growing [CC-PA6]. The precautionary principle is not new, and it is widely known, but the recommendation was selected among the most relevant ones as the principle is still often disregarded by current policies. The principle should be prioritised in planning and brought out of a merely declarative level. The group saw that the role of MSP should not be to solely divide the sea area for different users and uses, but it should also guarantee that space is left without assigned uses to increase the adaptive possibilities of planning in the future. Countries should share good examples in the region, such as preserving areas for future use. HELCOM-VASAB's working groups and MSP Planners' forum are places where more concrete actions on the topic could be taken.

The fourth recommendation chosen by the group focused on gathering data and filling data gaps to develop an EGD-aligned MSP plan [CC-DT1]. The recommendation was seen to be as relevant for the Baltic Sea as it is for any other sea basins. Reacting to new objectives requires new data. The participants saw that there is readiness in the region to implement this recommendation as there is a long-standing cooperation among countries on data questions. Preparing a list of data and information requirements in the face of EGD was mentioned as a concrete step towards the implementation of the recommendation. This task could be undertaken by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Data Expert Sub-Group. Some other actors to include in the process are stakeholders and data providers. The role of communication was also highlighted: specific communication is needed and non-targeted broad statements should be avoided whenever possible. The specifics should be directed towards the right audiences, for example, experts and scientists who can provide data that is needed.

The final recommendation that was chosen among the top five was directed towards facilitating a holistic and bottom-up approach through MSP to support the development of multi-use [CC-MU4]. The recommendation was included among the most relevant ones as finding agreement among different sectors can be a complicated task. For example, municipalities and legal experts are needed to tackle issues related to permitting. By reducing the space that is available for different uses, multi-use becomes more attractive as a concept to develop and take into practice. Reducing available space links also to the recommendation [CC-PA6] on the precautionary principle and safeguarding areas for future use. Additionally, in cases where legislation is not aligned with multi-use, or does not support it, it should be adapted and revised.





## **DELIVERABLE N°4.1.**

# **Recommendations on making MSP in the EU an enabler of the Green Deal**

**Annex 3.c – Black Sea workshop report**



## **AUTHORS**

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## 1.1. Workshop background

The Black Sea Basin Workshop "Bridging Maritime Spatial Planning with the European Green Deal and better Integrate Marine Protected Areas" was conducted on June 20<sup>th</sup>, in Varna, Bulgaria as a hybrid event. The workshop was jointly organised by the three EU projects MSP-GREEN, Horizon Europe MPA Europe and MSP4BIO projects, and hosted by the MSP-GREEN and MSP4BIO partner from Bulgaria, the Center for Coastal and Marine Studies (CCMS). The workshop aimed to present and discuss MSP GREEN recommendations at the Black Sea basin level on how to strengthen and promote better integration and implementation of the EGD maritime objectives within MSP. The Black Sea workshop addressed all aspects of the MSP GREEN recommendations; however, in view of the joint organisation with MPA Europe and MSP4BIO projects, it focused on improved science-based MSP for biodiversity protection and better alignment and integration of MPAs management with MSP.

The workshop got together 30 experts (in person and online) from the MSP and MPAs governance systems of Bulgaria and Romania, the Black Sea Basin Directorate, key regional sea basin cooperation mechanisms (Black Sea Commission, and the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation), blue economy sectors, environmental and research organisations.



*Figure 1. Presentation of the MSP-GREEN results.*

After the presentation of the MSP-GREEN objectives, main results, deliverables and recommendations on the MSP-EGD nexus, a productive discussion was held with the workshop participants to reflect on regional specificities and identify relevant topics, actions and priorities to be taken into consideration by MSP at sea basin level. The discussion enabled us to identify:

- the key EGD MSP challenges and enablers relevant to the Black Sea;
- the main EGD MSP MSP-GREEN recommendations relevant to the Black Sea.

The workshop referred to the Black Sea strategies (i.e. the Convention on the

Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution) and relevant regional sea cooperation initiatives (i.e. the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea and its Assistance Mechanism), the ongoing MSP processes, and MPAs management remarking on the need for its improvement. The workshop linked these biodiversity-related aspects to those of a sustainable blue economy from an EGD perspective.

## 1.2. Sea basin specificities identified

During the discussion, key MSP-EGD challenges of particular relevance for the Black Sea basin were identified. These include gaps and overlaps between strategies, policies, and economic objectives relevant to Black Sea countries. Another challenge is the great difference in the policy and governance framework characterising Black Sea countries: Bulgaria and Romania are the only EU Member States, therefore required to implement the EU Directives and policies (including those on MSP and EGD in general), while non-EU countries follow mostly regional and national strategies. The lack of transboundary collaboration was also highlighted as a key challenge, currently exacerbated by the difficult geopolitical situation due to the Russian war against Ukraine, which blocked the opportunities for a full collaboration at the regional sea basin level. The workshop also remarked on the need for a strengthened science-to-policy dialogue in MSP, EGD, and related topics. This is particularly remarkable to contribute to the ambitious goals of the EU Biodiversity Strategy (i.e. protection of 30% of the marine area, including a 10% of strict protection). This challenge of these goals is exemplified by the current situation in Bulgaria, where only 8% of the maritime space is under protection).

## 1.3. Priority recommendations to be taken into consideration at sea basin level

In general, the workshop highlighted the following priorities for the Black Sea: biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration; the need for publicly available, precise, and easily accessible data; climate change mitigation and adaptation; opportunities for co-location and multi-use (also including nature protection); reconciliation of policy objectives and improved integration with regional strategies, and fair and inclusive stakeholder engagement. The MSP-GREEN recommendations were communicated to participants before the workshop for their introduction and they were presented by main categories at the meeting. After that workshop participants were invited to discuss and identify the MSP GREEN recommendations of priority importance for the Black Sea.

The following cross-cutting recommendations were highlighted:

- 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 [CC-PA1]. Such efforts of improved communication should involve also non-EU countries of the Black Sea basin.
- Recommendations aiming at making MSP data more open, publicly available, easily accessible, and usable [CC-DT1, CC-DT2, and CC-DT3] were all considered highly relevant.

- Designate areas for multi-use purposes within MS plans [CC-MU1], stressing the importance of this recommendation to pursue synergies among different uses. Given that sea space is limited, multi-use represents a great opportunity for implementing multiple EGD objectives in MSP in the Black Sea.
- Facilitate a holistic and bottom-up approach through MSP to support the development of multi-use [CC-MU4], e.g., by using a community of practice-based approach, to bring together planners, business operators, and other typologies of stakeholders.
- Improving the operational integration between the MSP and the MSFD processes and objectives, e.g.: using the most updated MSFD assessment when designing the MSP plans, ensuring that MSP objectives are coherent with MSFD objectives, ensuring coherence among MSP plans and MSFD national Programme of Measures (PoM) [CC-GP3]. This was highlighted as particularly important for policy-makers, conservation managers, and MSP planners of the Black Sea.

Given the identified gaps and challenges, the workshop emphasised the importance of the MSP GREEN recommendations focusing on policy integration, also across the land-sea interface.

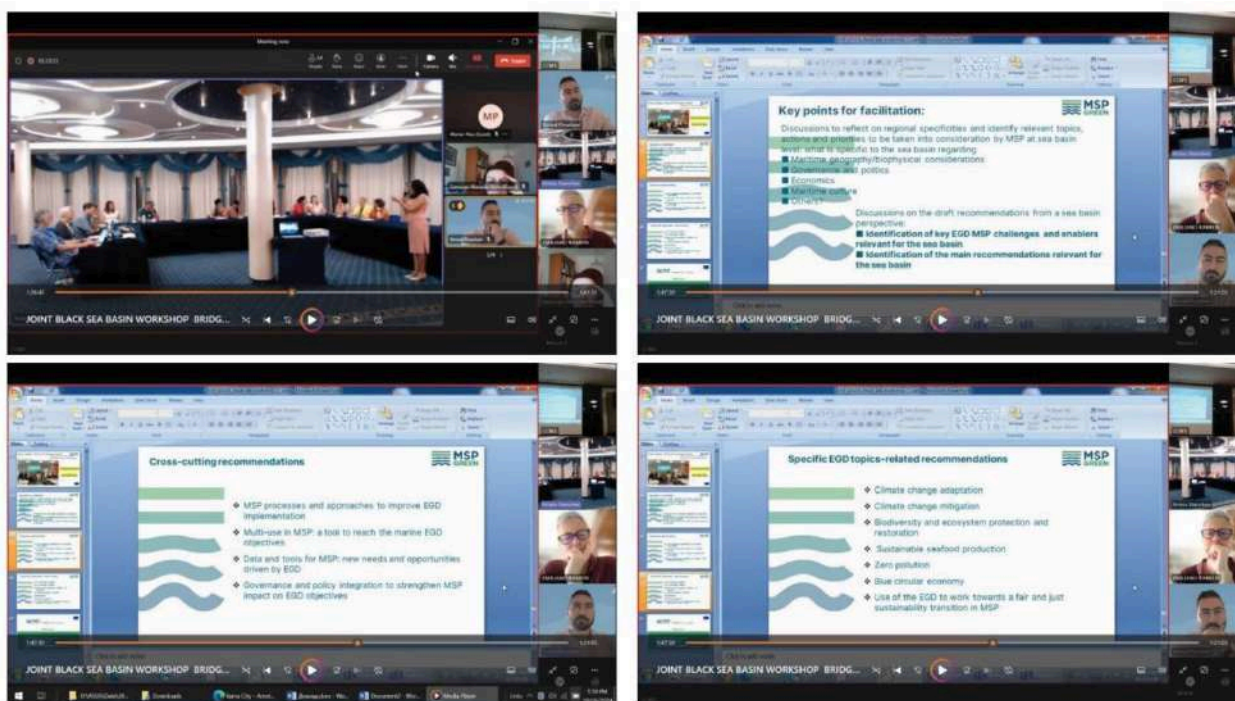


Figure 2. Discussion on MSP-GREEN recommendations.

In relation to EGD topics, biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration were pointed out as the most relevant ones, because all the others depend on it. Consequently, all recommendations dealing with this topic [BC1; BC2, BC3, BC4, BC5, BC6] were highlighted as priorities. The workshop remarked that MSP planning should be ecosystem- and science-based: ecosystem-based MSP is the cornerstone for



climate-smart MSP and EGD-compliant MSP in general. 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, the development of alternative planning solutions to minimise impacts, and the identification of mitigation measures (CCA1, CCA2).

## 1.4. Relevance of the recommendations for the sea basin and input for their implementation

Several enablers to strengthen the use of MSP-GREEN recommendations in the Black Sea basin were identified. These include capacity building and training of trainers for decision-makers (coaching on the EGD-MSP and other related aspects, such as policy coherence or managing uncertainty). There is a need for reconciliation of policy objectives at the regional level, i.e. rather than focus on conflicts, policymakers and MSP planners should work with stakeholders and sectors to find ways of reconciling different objectives, using current and future high-level policy priorities (such as biodiversity conservation and restoration, sustainable blue economy, etc.). The discussion also highlighted that MSP provides a flexible framework to accommodate and integrate different policies, human uses, and EGD ambitions (such as those related to the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030).

The stakeholders participating in the workshop highlighted the importance of closer interaction between MSP and the process of designation and management of MPAs. A strengthened integration between MSP and MSFD (and related national PoM) through a common regional approach was also considered highly relevant. Transboundary collaboration should be strengthened to involve also the non-EU countries; this could act as a flywheel for more funding opportunities, EU-funded projects, and regional initiatives on the MSP-EGD nexus, including its linkages with MPA planning and management.

The workshop discussion finally emphasised that MSP should be science- and ecosystem-based, as well as sufficiently flexible and dynamic to integrate sustainably the EGD dimensions in all maritime socio-economic activities and in biodiversity protection and restoration.



*Figure 3. In-person and online workshop participants.*

Some cross-cutting contributions from the MSP4BIO and MPA Europe projects were also identified at the workshop:

- To strengthening transboundary cooperation on MSP to address particularly biodiversity protection, the MSP4BIO Black Sea cross-border test site (Romania and Bulgaria) aims to improve science-based cross-border MSP and biodiversity integration in MSP by applying an integrated Ecological and Socio-Economic framework (ESE). MPA Europe highlights that better outcomes and more efficient use of regional sea space can be delivered if countries cooperate on designating MPAs.
- To climate-smart MSP and EGD-compliant MSP in general, the MSP4BIO elaborated approach for assessing the blue economy sectoral impact on ecosystem services in different scenarios and defining the best management measures for sectors within MPAs and its implementation impacts, incl. nature-inclusiveness. The MPA Europe also entails that adequate biodiversity conservation is a cornerstone of effective MSP thus supporting the implementation of the new Nature Restoration Law. MPA Europe also provides the first marine ecosystem classification for European seas, which is required for an ecosystem-based approach.
- MSP should reinforce its role as facilitator and driver for biodiversity conservation and supports the establishment of a coherent network of protected areas at sea and across the land-sea interface based on the elements of ecological coherence (e.g. representativity, replicability, connectivity, and adequacy). MSP4BIO developed an Ecological Toolkit as a detailed step-by-step guide to help decision-makers navigate the complex processes of MPA prioritisation and connectivity. By taking a more

strategic and forward-looking approach, MSP can help accelerate progress towards achieving the 30by30 goal, alongside other MSP objectives. MPA Europe will provide models of optimal national and regional networks of MPAs towards the 30by30 goal which maximise the range of biodiversity protected and address ecological coherence - representativity, replicability, connectivity, and adequacy.





# **DELIVERABLE N°4.1.**

## **Recommendations on making MSP in the EU an enabler of the Green Deal**

**Annex 3.d - Mediterranean Sea  
workshop report**



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## 1.1. Workshop background

The workshop “Maritime Spatial Plans as enablers of the European Green Deal: insights from a Mediterranean perspective” was organised on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September in Izola (Slovenia) as part of the wider event “Mediterranean Coast and Macro-Regional Strategies Week 2024: Stronger Cooperation for better future” (16-20 September 2024). This large event hosts several meetings and workshops and aims at raising awareness of the sea and coast and the need to balance their economic potential and environmental sustainability. Over the years it became recognized as one of the central occasions when four EU macro-regional strategies (EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region - EUSAIR, EU Strategy for the Alpine Region - EUSALP, EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region - EUSBSR, and Danube Region Strategy) meet and exchange on relevant topics. Such exchange of experiences enables faster development in macro-regional cooperation, generates new ideas and approaches, builds synergies, and ultimately delivers better results and greater added value to macro-regional cooperation.



*Figure 1. The MSP-GREEN Mediterranean workshop was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September in Izola, as part of the Mediterranean Coast and the “Macro-Regional Strategies Week 2024: Stronger cooperation for better future”.*

The MSP-GREEN workshop was organised in a hybrid format by the three MSP-GREEN Italian partners: CORILA, IUAV and CNR-ISMAR. It aimed to present and discuss the MSP-GREEN recommendations on how to strengthen the European Green Deal (EGD) ambition in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), focusing on the specific features and needs of the Mediterranean Sea region. In total, the workshop engaged 34 participants (15 in-presence and 19 online), MSP planners, MSP experts and experts on MSP-related topics (e.g. sector planning and nature conservation) from national and sub-national administrations, research institutions, sectorial associations (e.g. on tourism), protected areas, NGOs, macro-regional strategies (EUSAIR in particular) and regional sea conventions (UNEP-MAP PAP-RAC in particular). The invitation to the workshop was extended to the Mediterranean Maritime Spatial Planning Community of Practice (MED-MSP-CoP); about 10 participants (excluding the organisers) are

members of the MED-MSP-CoP.

The workshop was organised around two sessions. The first session presented the objectives of the workshop, MSP-GREEN and its main outcomes, and the recommendations developed by the project to strengthen the integration of EGD elements (including cross-cutting and topic-based ones) in MSP. The second session engaged the participants in a dynamic discussion, focusing on the EGD topics more relevant to the Mediterranean region, namely biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration, climate change adaptation, climate change mitigation, and sustainable seafood production. Each topic was introduced through a presentation focusing on the evaluation of the extent and way the MS plans considered by the MSP-GREEN project (from France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Bulgaria, and Finland) integrate related EGD objectives, persisting gaps and relevant recommendations. In-presence and online participants were then invited to prioritise the EGD topic recommendations via Slido, selecting the two most relevant ones. Afterwards, the discussion about specificities for the Mediterranean Sea basin focused on the most voted recommendations.



*Figure 2. Prioritisation of the MSP-GREEN recommendations focusing on biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration through Slido.*

To get most of the benefits from the workshop, during the break in-presence participants were invited to conduct the same exercise on posters for the recommendations addressing the other two EGD topics, i.e. zero pollution and blue circular economy. Those participating online used Slido to contribute to the prioritisation of these recommendations, as well.



Figure 3. Prioritisation of the MSP-GREEN recommendations for zero pollution and blue circular economy.

## 1.2. Sea basin specificities identified

Bordered by three continents the Mediterranean hosts exceptional biological diversity and socio-cultural richness. Due to its semi-enclosed sea nature and complex topography, the basin is characterized by unique physiographic and ecological features. Despite representing only 0.7% of the world's ocean area, the Mediterranean is a hotspot for marine and coastal biodiversity, with 28% of endemic species as well as 7.5% of the world's marine fauna and 18% of its marine flora living in its waters. Overall the Mediterranean is home to more than 17,000 marine species. Certain species form the foundations of the marine environment, like in the case of Posidonia meadows and coralligenous beds. Several other sensitive habitats are found: deep-sea coral communities, underwater caves, submarine canyons, seamounts, coastal dune areas, coastal forests, and coastal wetlands that are of international importance for birds.

The coasts in the region are under constant and growing human pressure caused by the activities of 150 million residents and the arrival of 200 million tourists every year (source: SPA/RAC website), the consequences of which have for decades been uncontrollable.

In the sea basin more than 1,200 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and other protection/management area-based measures have been established (source: SPA/RAC website): their coverage is about 8% of the Mediterranean Sea, but only 10% of these spatial protection measures are implemented by a proper management plan. In addition, only 0.04% of the surface of the Mediterranean Sea is covered by no-go, no-take or no-fishing zones.

The Mediterranean region is highly exposed and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, particularly prolonged and stronger heat waves, increased drought in an already dry climate and risk of coastal flooding (IPCC, 2023). Southern and eastern countries are generally more vulnerable than countries in the north. Key risks include increased water scarcity (notably in the south and east) and droughts (in the north),

coastal risks due to flooding, erosion and saltwater intrusions, wildfire, terrestrial and marine ecosystem losses, as well as risks to food production and security, human health, well-being and cultural heritage. Climate change strongly interacts with other environmental pressures, resulting from urbanisation, land use change, overfishing, pollution, biodiversity loss and degradation of land and marine ecosystems.

Countries along the Mediterranean Sea share a common cultural heritage and some aspects of lifestyle and values. Notwithstanding this, disparities between Northern and Southern countries, as well as the Eastern ones still persist (and have been even exacerbated recently) in terms of demography, economic development, access to natural resources and environmental protection (United Nations Environment Programme, 2020).

Historically, the Mediterranean Sea has been crucial for the economy of coastal communities and countries. Nowadays, traditional (e.g. aquaculture, fisheries, coastal and maritime tourism, shipping, ship-building/repair, ports) and emerging maritime economy sectors (e.g. blue biotechnology, ship recycling, ocean energy) show enormous potential for inclusive prosperity and growth. Such potential is linked to the capacity to apply sustainable management practices to maintain the health and integrity of marine ecosystems and the ecosystem services they provide.

Fisheries is a key sector, not only economically but also from a social and cultural heritage point of view. Half of the EU's fishing fleet is active in the Mediterranean, mostly small-sized and artisanal vessels. Aquaculture is a traditional activity which is sharply increasing in recent times.

Coastal and maritime tourism is the backbone of Mediterranean economies and development strategies, as it triggers sectoral synergies (e.g. between the transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, and entertainment sectors) (Europarc, 2019). Due to its climatic, historical and cultural assets, the Mediterranean offers numerous tourism activities associated with the sea, well-being, culture, sports, nature and business. The Mediterranean attracts about one-third of world tourism. The region is also the most popular cruise destination for European travellers and the second market globally, hosting 10% of the world's cruises (8 million passengers) (Plan Bleu, 2022). The Mediterranean Sea is also a well-known destination for recreational boating.

The Mediterranean Sea is characterized by high wind potential, but its deep waters have so far limited the development of offshore wind energy. However, they provide a great opportunity for floating offshore wind. Wind capacity could reach up to 12GW by 2030 and close to 40GW by 2050 for the Mediterranean EU countries (Plan Bleu, 2024).

### 1.3. Priority recommendations to be taken into consideration at sea basin level

The following tables report the results of the prioritisation exercise, in terms of the percentage of participants who selected the recommendations as particularly relevant for the Mediterranean context.

Considering all four EGD topics more relevant to the Mediterranean region, [BC1]



resulted in being the most preferred recommendation. It calls for MSP to adopt a stronger and more direct role in supporting the identification and establishment of new areas relevant to marine conservation (MPAs, Natura 2000 sites, OECMs, etc.). This recommendation also aims to foster the effective management of protected areas to avoid them being only “paper parks”.

The biodiversity crisis in the Mediterranean is perceived as importantly linked to climate change as well. The second most-voted recommendation for climate change adaptation ([CCA3]) highlights the need to improve data and knowledge about the effects of climate change on marine ecosystems to identify the areas, habitats, and ecosystem services most vulnerable to climate change and facilitate the development of targeted solutions. A strong interest in an operational-focused approach was confirmed by the identification of [CCA5] as the most relevant recommendation for climate change adaptation; this calls for the development of a catalogue of regionally and locally specific adaptation measures that can be promoted via MSP.

The link to biodiversity conservation and restoration also emerges when looking at climate change mitigation. [CCM7] was the most-voted recommendation for this EGD topic, inviting MSP to better integrate aspects related to mapping and conservation of blue carbon habitats (in particular seagrass meadows), given their role in carbon sequestration and the several ecosystem services they provide.

Finally, the exercise on sustainable seafood production stressed the relevance of small-scale fisheries for the Mediterranean Sea basin. The most-voted recommendation resulted in being [SFP2], calling MSP national and sub-national actors to better consider this fishery segment in their plans. This implies improved collection of data on small-scale fisheries, mapping of their fishing areas, improved engagement of operators in MSP, understanding and resolution of spatial conflicts with other activities at sea, and operationalisation of potential synergies, e.g. with tourism and co-management of MPA.

*Table 1. Results of the prioritisation of MSP-GREEN recommendations on biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration. The sum of percentages does not make 100% as each participant expressed two preferences.*

Code	Recommendation in short	Percentage
BC1	MSP should take a stronger role in supporting the identification of new areas relevant to nature conservation and foster their effective design and management	61%
BC6	The availability, accessibility, and usability of marine environmental data (e.g. on benthic habitats, key species, ecosystem services, etc.) for MSP decision-making should be fostered	43%
BC2	MS plans should be coherent with management measures for protected areas and should support other spatial and regulatory measures to improve biodiversity conservation	29%



Code	Recommendation in short	Percentage
BC3	MS plans should support the establishment of a coherent network of protected areas at sea and across the land-sea interface	29%
BC4	MSP should explicitly support and promote EU nature restoration targets and the concept of marine green infrastructure. Areas to be restored to be restored should be included in MS plans	29%
BC5	MS plans should give greater consideration to the effects of climate change on conservation and restoration actions	11%

*Table 2. Results of the prioritisation of MSP-GREEN recommendations on climate change adaptation. The sum of percentages does not make 100% as each participant expressed two preferences.*

Code	Recommendation in short	Percentage
CCA5	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	54%
CCA3	Data and knowledge on the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems should be collected, collated, and made available for the MSP process	46%
CCA1	Based on climate policies and projections, MS plans should adopt an even more strategic, forward-looking approach beyond the typical 10-year duration of a planning cycle.	42%
CCA2	MS plans should address climate change adaptation in alignment with other EGD objectives and related policies and strategies (e.g. co-benefits for nature conservation and restoration)	38%
CCA4	Data and knowledge on the impacts of climate change on maritime sectors should be collected, collated, and made available for the MSP process	21%

*Table 3. Results of the prioritisation of MSP-GREEN recommendations on climate change mitigation. The sum of percentages does not make 100% as each participant expressed two preferences.*

Code	Recommendation in short	Percentage
CCM7	Carbon capture and storage at sea should be considered in MS plans. This implies mapping blue carbon habitats, improving their protection and restoration	48%

Code	Recommendation in short	Percentage
CCM1	MS plans should continuously align with updated renewable energy production targets. The resulting spatial needs and related impacts should be identified early	39%
CCM5	MSP could strive to help reduce the carbon footprint of maritime sectors, providing a framework for the integration of objectives and measures set in sector policies and plans	39%
CCM2	MS plans should consider offshore renewables other than OWE (such as wave, tidal, current, and solar) in terms of objectives, zoning and measures	30%
CCM3	MS plans should explicitly consider any spatial needs resulting from the storage and transmission of offshore renewable energy	17%
CCM6	M&E of EGD-aligned MSP should include the evaluation of the climate impacts of planning designations (i.e. the MSP carbon footprint)	13%
CCM4	MSP should identify links to terrestrial planning related to the development and expansion of offshore renewables, working to ensure that onshore spatial infrastructure is in place	9%

*Table 4. Results of the prioritisation of MSP-GREEN recommendations on sustainable seafood production. The sum of percentages does not make 100% as each participant expressed two preferences.*

Code	Recommendation in short	Percentage
SF2	MSP should more explicitly consider the needs of small-scale fisheries, also through the improved engagement of operators in the planning process	55%
SF4	Aquaculture and fisheries should be planned also considering the broader value chain (through LSI) and community livelihoods in the sense of a fair and just transition	41%
SF3	Low trophic aquaculture (seaweed and shellfish) should be promoted through MSP. Integration should be sought with other agricultural types (including through IMTA)	32%
SF1	MSP should move from an approach where fisheries are considered in terms of exclusion from some areas to an approach at proactively planning all fishery segments	32%
SF6	MSP should anticipate the impacts of climate change on commercially and recreationally exploited species.	23%

Code	Recommendation in short	Percentage
SF5	MSP should contribute to facilitating dialogue and improving cooperation between professional and recreational fisheries, to improve the management of resources	14%

The recommendations of the other two EGD topics were also prioritised, although not discussed during the workshop. For Zero Pollution, the most voted recommendations were those most focused on the MSP mandate and, in particular, its mapping and zoning dimension, i.e. [ZP1] “MSP should map the marine areas most affected by land-based sources of pollution and contribute to the identification of prevention and remediation measures” and [ZP2] “MSP should identify and map marine pollution hotspots and contribute to the identification of environmental remediation measures”. For the blue circular economy, [BCE2] “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” and [BCE3] “A life cycle approach should be considered in MS plans and licensing. This could be applied to sea areas in the sense of reusing space, but also to different elements of the blue economy” got the same number of preferences, while [BCE1] was considered poorly relevant.

## 1.4. Relevance of the recommendations for the sea basin and input on their implementation

Based on the prioritisation exercise, the discussion highlighted the following elements relevant to the specification and implementation of the MSP-GREEN recommendations in the Mediterranean context.

### **Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration**

The participants in the workshop stressed the importance of approaching biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration at the macro-regional (Mediterranean Sea) scale, also considering the specificities characterising different sub-regions (e.g. Levantine Sea, Aegean Sea, Adriatic-Ionian region, Western Mediterranean region, etc.). In this regard, the EUSAIR Thematic Steering Group 3 (TSG3) in its studies and projects has proposed several ideas for establishing new protected areas and restoring the ecosystems of the Adriatic and Ionian region, which have also been presented to the EC DG MARE.

In addition to MPA and Natura 2000 sites, biodiversity and ecosystem protection in the Mediterranean should be addressed through OECMs. Fishery Restricted Areas (FRAs) are highly promising in this sense and can significantly contribute to the 30% target set by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Collaboration with fishing operators - those from small-scale fisheries, in particular - is highly important for the identification of the areas to be protected and their co-management.

Improved management of marine protected areas implies an improvement in monitoring to assess the effectiveness of conservation measures. This includes a

proper design of observation and monitoring systems, paying greater attention to biodiversity conservation aspects. Although several data are already available, the approach to biodiversity monitoring is still heterogeneous and fragmented in the Mediterranean due to the complexity of the sea basin and the heterogeneity of the topic. Improved cooperation on biodiversity monitoring, data collection and data dissemination are essential to capture the macro-regional and sub-regional perspectives.

### **Climate change adaptation and mitigation**

MSP-GREEN recommendations stress that adaptation and mitigation should be seen as complementary rather than alternatives. Both are essential to evolve towards climate-smart MSP. This aspect was remarked by the workshop participants are particularly relevant for the Mediterranean, given its great vulnerability to climate change.

The participants, including the representative of EUSAIR, recalled the importance of developing a catalogue of climate change adaptation solutions focused on the Mediterranean specificities and the characteristics of its sub-regions (see recommendations [CCA5]). There are several past and ongoing projects and initiatives to be capitalised on, including:

- Climate Adapt - the EU climate change adaptation platform – that includes a database on adaptation options and case studies on their concrete implementation.
- The adaptation platform focused on the Adriatic region developed by the AdriAdapt project (co-funded by the Interreg Italy-Croatia program).
- The EU MSP Platform, which provides several pieces of knowledge dealing with climate-proof and climate-smart MS plans.
- The MSP workspace part of the ICZM platform developed and managed by UNEP-MAP PAP RAC that proposes the online “Climate Action and MSP Planning Tool” to support the identification of climate change actions within MSP.
- Upcoming projects, such as one of the next EUSAIR flagship projects focusing on climate change impacts and adaptation in the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

Climate change adaptation should take into consideration the entire spectrum of climate-related risks and impacts on the marine environment and coastal and marine uses and activities. These include sea level rise (SLR), to be addressed both in terms of average and extreme SLR.

In relation to climate change mitigation, the importance of progressing towards an improved understanding of the role of blue carbon habitats in terms of carbon capture and storage was remarked (see MSP-GREEN recommendation [CCM7]). MSP can play a great role in supporting their mapping, protection, and restoration.



Figure 4. Discussing the MSP-GREEN recommendation on blue carbon habitats [CCM7].

### Sustainable seafood production

The ecological transition of fishing and aquaculture is considered essential for the Mediterranean and MSP is recognised as an important tool and enabler of this transformation. The sustainable management of the sectors requires to continue in reducing their impacts on the environment and solving present and future conflicts with other maritime uses. Among these uses, some of the participants in the workshop remarked on the importance of managing conflicts between professional and recreational fishing. According to a 2019 study mentioned by WWF, recreational fishery activities can be responsible for about 10-20% of total landings in the Mediterranean; this estimation is expected to be higher in 2024 and the future.

Participants acknowledged that MSP-GREEN recommendations address some key aspects of fishery management in the Mediterranean, including a more proactive and efficient integration of this activity and its operators in MSP ([SFP1]), greater attention to small-scale fisheries ([SFP2]), the need to fill some of the major data gaps including those related to recreational fisheries ([SFP5]).

It was stressed that the operational implementation of several recommendations can benefit from a proactive engagement of fishery and aquaculture operators, towards a co-management process. Examples were shared during the workshop, in particular about the involvement of small-scale fishing operators in the deployment and maintenance of artificial reefs in Morocco. Artificial reefs have been used to protect vulnerable habitats and fishing grounds against illegal trawling, create new habitats, and improve local biodiversity. They can be even combined with low-trophic aquaculture activities, thus tackling several EGD topics.

### Consideration of other topics and cross-cutting aspects



The discussion remarked that MSP can facilitate detecting and integrating in a unique cross-cutting framework measures implemented by sectors, such as the transition to clean fuel or the improvement in energy efficiency for maritime transport. Several of these sector measures have a direct link to EGD topics as in the case of zero pollution.

Eventually, representatives of the regional and sub-regional cooperation mechanisms (UNEP-MAP PAP/RAC and EUSAIR) who took part in the workshop highlighted the general relevance of the MSP-GREEN recommendations for the Mediterranean seabasin, remarking their interest in further disseminating them and contribution to the implementation of some of the proposed actions.



*Figure 5. Discussing the role of regional and sub-regional cooperation mechanisms in supporting the EGD transition through MSP.*



## **DELIVERABLE N°4.1.**

# **Recommendations on making MSP in the EU an enabler of the Green Deal**

### **Annex 4 – Policy briefs with reflections on sea-basin specificities**

Atlantic Ocean  
Baltic Sea  
Black Sea  
Mediterranean Sea  
North Sea



# Atlantic Ocean Basin brief

This summary is issued from the study and basin event carried out within MSP-Green project. Mentioned recommendations are available on the official website, at this link and via the QR code on the right-end of the brief.

## Background - Key sea basin specificities

The Atlantic Ocean is the second largest of the world's oceans and marks the western boundary of the European Union (EU). The Atlantic area constitutes a significant contribution to the blue economy of the EU. According to the 2021 Blue Economy report (EC, 2021), the Atlantic Ocean is the largest sea basin in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA). It involves at the EU level 4 countries: Ireland, France, Spain and Portugal. In 2011 the European Commission adopted an Atlantic Maritime Strategy. After the first Atlantic Action Plan (2013-2020) setting out practical steps to be taken in the 4 Member States concerned, a revised Action Plan was issued in July 2020 and structured into **4 pillars: (i) Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy; (ii) Blue skills of the future and ocean literacy; (iii) Marine renewable energy; (iv): Healthy ocean and resilient coasts.**



## Relevant EGD-MSP topics for the sea basin

The objectives of the Atlantic Marine Strategy align with several objectives of the European Green Deal (EGD), in particular those referring to offshore renewable energy development, decarbonisation of ports and maritime transport, sustainability of the blue economy sectors, protection of biodiversity and ecosystems, and sustainable seafood production. The interconnection of marine-related EGD topics identified in MSP-GREEN makes all of them particularly relevant to the Atlantic context. Improved transnational cooperation and research development are acknowledged as significant drivers to achieving the EGD goals in the sea basin.

## Priority recommendations to be taken into consideration at the sea basin level

Improved data and tools for MSP are considered highly relevant to support the objectives of the Atlantic Maritime Strategy. Information sharing should be fostered, especially through OSPAR technical groups. The expectations of citizens should be taken more into account and guide future science programs. Future works on a digital twin of the ocean should provide specific applications for MSP. Relevant recommendations: **CC-PA5 CC-DT1, CC-DT3, CC-DT5.**

Climate change mitigation and adaptation are also of primary importance. Offshore renewable energy objectives addressed at the European level should be translated into operational sea basin and national targets. Education, training and funding for research are levers to be activated to improve solutions for climate-proofed MSP. Relevant recommendations: **CCA3, CCA4, CCA5, CCM2, CCM4, CCM5.**

Other EGD-related elements are acknowledged as important for the Atlantic region. More legally binding acts for the EGD could improve its efficient implementation. There is a need for improved coherence at the sea basin scale between visions developed by single countries for MSP and MSFD implementation. The assessment of ecosystem services has been pointed out as an interesting tool to identify marine natural areas to be protected. The involvement of land stakeholders is key for several EGD-related topics, such as coastal resilience, zero pollution, circular economy and sustainable seafood production. Relevant recommendations ready to be implemented: **CC-GP5, CC-PA3, BC3.** Other relevant recommendations needing more time to be ready: **FJT1, ZP2, ZP4, BCE2, SFP4, and SFP6.**



# Glossary of cited Recommendations:

The texts provided are a summary of the recommendations; for the full version, please refer to the document “Ramieri, E., Bocci, M., Gee, K., Capurso, G., et al., 2024. Recommendations on how to strengthen the integration of EGD maritime components into MSP. MSPGREEN project.”

## MSP processes and approaches to improve EGD implementation

[CC-PA5] Planning for the EGD at sea requires better preparedness from MSP to deal with uncertainties. The best available knowledge should be collected from a broad and diversified range of stakeholders. In addition, MS plans can rely on modelling, shared visions, foresight exercises, and co-created scenarios.

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

[CC-DT1] 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. Where data and information are not yet available, targeted research needs should be specified.

[CC-DT3] Efforts must be made to validate and transform data into actionable knowledge. MSP-EGD science-policy-society interfaces should be established and/or strengthened.

[CC-DT5] Comprehensive approaches for cumulative impact assessment need to be further developed, operationalised and used.

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

[CC-GP5] 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.

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

[FJT1] 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.

## Climate change adaptation

[CCA3] Data and knowledge on the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems should be collected, collated, and made available for the MSP process.

[CCA4] Data and knowledge on the impacts of climate change on maritime sectors should be collected, collated, and made available for the MSP process.

[CCA5] 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.

## Climate change mitigation

[CCM2] MS plans should consider offshore renewables other than OWE (such as wave, tidal, current, and solar) in terms of objectives, zoning and measures.

[CCM4] MSP should identify links to terrestrial planning related to the development and expansion of offshore renewables, working to ensure that onshore spatial infrastructure is in place.

[CCM5] MSP could strive to help reduce the carbon footprint of maritime sectors, providing a framework for the integration of objectives and measures set in sector policies and plans.

## Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration

[BC3] MS plans should support the establishment of a coherent network of protected areas at sea and across the land-sea interface.

## Sustainable seafood production

[SF4] Aquaculture and fisheries should be planned also considering the broader value chain (through LSI) and community livelihoods in the sense of a fair and just transition.

[SF6] MSP should anticipate the impacts of climate change on commercially and recreationally exploited species.

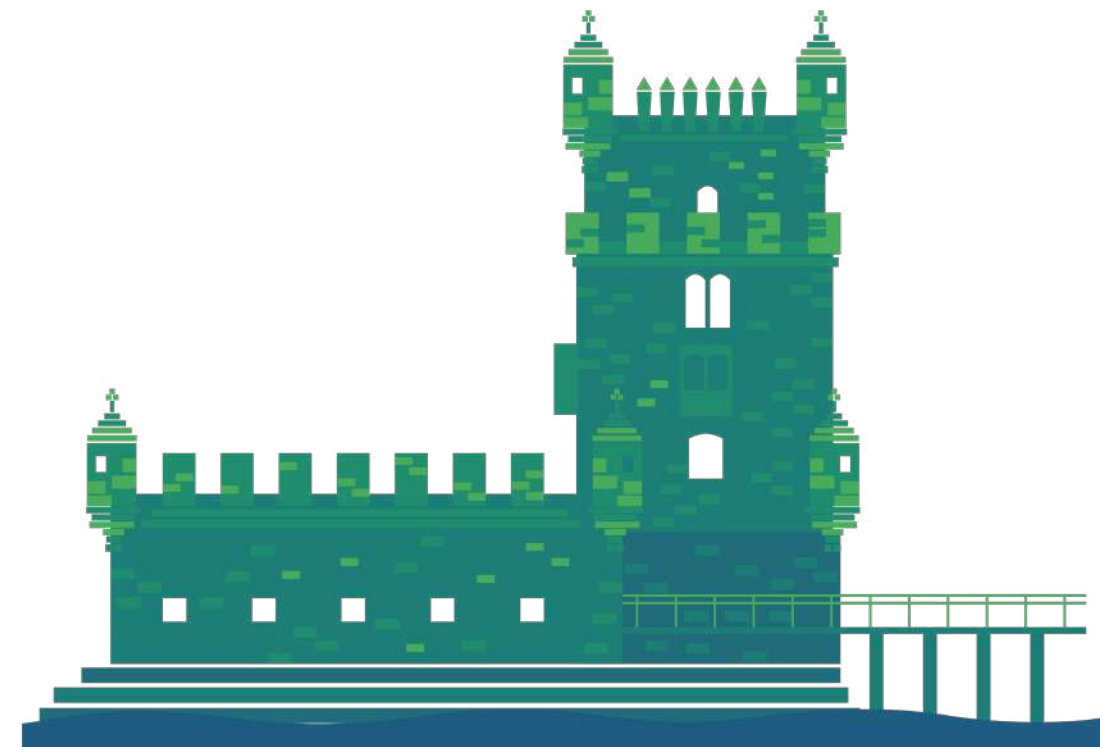
## Zero pollution

[ZP2] MSP should identify and map marine pollution hotspots and contribute to the identification of environmental remediation measures.

[ZP4] As a specific aspect of [ZP3], MSP should recognise the crucial role of ports in supporting zero pollution of several economic sectors.

## Blue circular economy

[BCE3] A life cycle approach should be considered in MS plans and licensing. This could be applied to sea areas in the sense of reusing space, but also to different elements of the blue economy.





# Baltic Sea Basin brief

This summary is issued from the study and basin event carried out within MSP-Green project. Mentioned recommendations are available on the official website, at this link and via the QR code on the right-end of the brief.



## Background - Key sea basin specificities

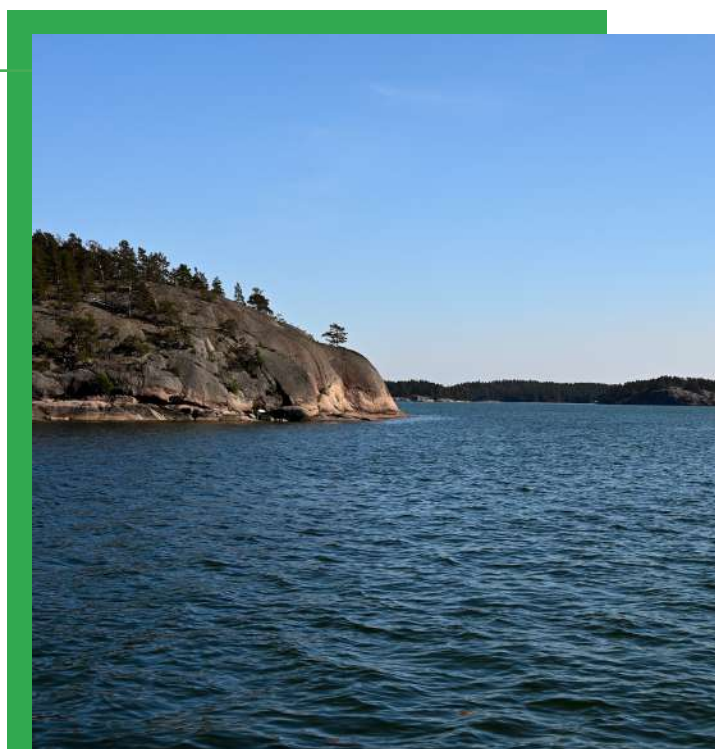
The Baltic Sea is a **unique environment highly sensitive to human impacts**. Relatively few species are adapted to the brackish conditions and factors such as partial winter ice coverage, low levels of water exchange, and a naturally low oxygen content increase the risk of eutrophication. **Climate change brings many uncertainties** as to how the sensitive marine and coastal ecosystems will be able to adapt to changing conditions.

Close cultural and economic connections to the sea are sustained in the rich maritime heritage and the many coastal communities that engage in fishing, tourism, and recreational activities.

**Transboundary collaboration is strong in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR)** and has been coordinated by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group since 2010. The 2021-2030 regional MSP roadmap aims to strengthen joint efforts and promote coherence in MSP throughout the BSR.

## Key challenges in the Baltic sea

- Extensive offshore wind energy development, leading to unknown impacts on the environment and other uses such as fishing;
- Data and knowledge gaps, e.g. related to cumulative impacts and the potential regional impacts of climate change;
- Broader socio-economic and structural changes for traditional maritime sectors, requiring pathways for a fair and just sustainability transition;
- Challenging geographical settings for improving transboundary coherence and cooperative planning based on a common vision.



## Relevant EGD-MSP topics for the sea basin

In the BSR context, the EGD can act as a guiding vision and strategic policy package; as such, every EGD topic is relevant. Although climate change mitigation and adaptation (especially offshore wind energy development), sustainable seafood and biodiversity conservation stand out in terms of their urgency, all EGD initiatives are interconnected, meaning that prioritised actions also often support the implementation of other EGD goals.

Cross-cutting topics such as transboundary coherence, marine multi-use, filling data and knowledge gaps (e.g. on cumulative impacts), and fair and just transition are of particular importance for the sea basin. Cooperative planning calls for a common vision for the region that transcends national interests yet still allows for context-specific prioritisation.

## Priority recommendations to be taken into consideration at the sea basin level

Given the special ecological conditions and increasing pressures from climate change in the Baltic Sea, MSP should emphasise the implementation of the ecosystem approach. Relevant recommendations: [\[CCM7\]](#), [\[CCA5\]](#), [\[BC1\]](#), [\[BC2\]](#), [\[BC3\]](#), [\[BC4\]](#), [\[BC6\]](#), [\[ZP3\]](#).

**Actions on habitat restoration, supporting carbon sinks and establishing coherent networks of MPAs support an ecosystem approach.**

Data and knowledge on climate change impacts is urgently needed. This requires monitoring and collaboration with knowledge holders: expanding the range of stakeholders, investing in targeted modelling and fully utilising the long-standing BSR data cooperation. Relevant recommendations: [\[CCA4\]](#), [\[CCA5\]](#), [\[FJT2\]](#), [\[CC-DT1\]](#).

**Identifying climate refugia and gaining knowledge on climate change impacts on maritime sectors can increase resilience.**

Given the many uncertainties and knowledge gaps, the precautionary approach should be strengthened to support the strategic ambition of MSP and secure its future adaptive capacity. Relevant recommendations: [\[CC-PA6\]](#).

The expansion of offshore wind farming to mitigate climate change and the concurrent need to ensure a fair and just transition require stronger stakeholder involvement in MSP through e.g. early engagement, equal representation and recognition and targeted support of less powerful actors. Relevant recommendations: [\[FJT1\]](#), [\[FJT2\]](#), [\[CCM1\]](#), [\[CCM4\]](#), [\[CC-PA3\]](#).

**Long experience on stakeholder engagement within the BSR should be used to communicate the opportunities gained from aligning MSP with the EGD.**

Networks such as the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group should be utilised for transboundary work on creating the necessary conditions for EGD implementation in MSP. Strategies such as the BSR regional MSP roadmap 2021-2030 should be used as a basis for aligning the overall aims and visions of national MSP. Relevant recommendations: [\[CC-GP5\]](#).

# Glossary of cited Recommendations:

The texts provided are a summary of the recommendations; for the full version, please refer to the document “Ramieri, E., Bocci, M., Gee, K., Capurso, G., et al., 2024. Recommendations on how to strengthen the integration of EGD maritime components into MSP. MSPGREEN project.”

## MSP processes and approaches to improve EGD implementation

[CC-PA3] The EGD is a vast policy package; its improved integration in MSP requires the engagement of several, and diverse typologies of stakeholders. Newly involved stakeholders may require capacity-building.

[CC-PA6] The importance of the precautionary principle within MSP should be fully acknowledged, in particular when uncertainty is high. The application of this principle can include leaving some sea space without assigned uses.

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

[CC-DT1] 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. Where data and information are not yet available, targeted research needs should be specified.

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

[CC-GP5] 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.

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

[FJT1] 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.

[FJT2] Stakeholder engagement in the co-creation of MS plans should be further strengthened. In light of the fair and just transition principles, particular attention should be paid to ensuring a balanced distribution of power among stakeholders.

## Climate change adaptation

[CCA4] Data and knowledge on the impacts of climate change on maritime sectors should be collected, collated, and made available for the MSP process.

[CCA5] 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.

## Climate change mitigation

[CCM1] MS plans should continuously align with updated renewable energy production targets. The resulting spatial needs and related impacts should be identified early.

[CCM4] MSP should identify links to terrestrial planning related to the development and expansion of offshore renewables, working to ensure that onshore spatial infrastructure is in place.

[CCM7] Carbon capture and storage at sea should be considered in MS plans. This implies mapping blue carbon habitats, and improving their protection and restoration.

## Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration

[BC1] MSP should take a stronger role in supporting the identification of new areas relevant to nature conservation and foster their effective design and management.

[BC2] MS plans should be coherent with management measures for protected areas and should support other spatial and regulatory measures to improve biodiversity conservation.

[BC3] MS plans should support the establishment of a coherent network of protected areas at sea and across the land-sea interface.

[BC4] MSP should explicitly support and promote EU nature restoration targets and the concept of marine green infrastructure. Areas to be restored to be restored should be included in MS plans.

[BC6] The availability, accessibility, and usability of marine environmental data (e.g. on benthic habitats, key species, ecosystem services, etc.) for MSP decision-making should be fostered.

## Sustainable seafood production

[SFP1] MSP should move from an approach where fisheries are considered in terms of exclusion from some areas to an approach aiming at proactively planning all fishery segments.

[SFP2] MSP should more explicitly consider the needs of small-scale fisheries, also through the improved engagement of operators in the planning process.

[SFP3] Low trophic aquaculture (seaweed and shellfish) should be promoted through MSP. Integration should be sought with other aquaculture types (including through IMTA).

[SFP4] Aquaculture and fisheries should be planned also considering the broader value chain (through LSI) and community livelihoods in the sense of a fair and just transition.

[SFP5] MSP should contribute to facilitating dialogue and improving cooperation between professional and recreational fisheries, to improve the management of resources.

[SFP6] MSP should anticipate the impacts of climate change on commercially and recreationally exploited species.

## Zero pollution

[ZP3] 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.

## Blue circular economy

[BCE1] MSP should seek stronger links with circular and blue economy strategies and promote their development where they are not available yet. Measures for BCE could be identified in MS plans.

[BCE2] 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.

[BCE3] A life cycle approach should be considered in MS plans and licensing. This could be applied to sea areas in the sense of reusing space, but also to different elements of the blue economy.





# Black Sea

## Basin brief

This summary is issued from the study and basin event carried out within MSP-Green project. Mentioned recommendations are available on the official website, at this link and via the QR code on the right.

### Background - Key sea basin specificities

The Black Sea is the **EU's eastern gate**, an important transport and energy hub, a crossroads of different cultures, and a region with political, social, and economic fragmentation. Until now, **MSP has been implemented only in the EU Member States of Bulgaria and Romania**; their MS plans have been approved and are now being implemented. A few other Black Sea countries are developing preparatory projects and initiatives.

Key challenges impacting a strengthened integration between MSP and EGD objectives include gaps and unclear overlaps between existing strategies, policies, and economic goals. **The great difference in the policy and governance framework characterising EU and non-EU Black Sea countries is acknowledged as another important barrier towards a common approach to EGD-aligned MS plans.** Transboundary collaboration should be strengthened, through more funding opportunities and reinforced cooperation mechanisms. However, the difficult geopolitical situation due to the Russian war against Ukraine is currently blocking the opportunities for full collaboration at the regional level.



### Relevant EGD-MSP topics for the sea basin

Black Sea marine **ecosystems and species are highly endangered due to current human pressures and climate change threats**. Consequently, biodiversity protection and restoration and climate change adaptation emerge as relevant EGD-MSP topics. The **protection and restoration of Black Sea biodiversity links to several specific aspects to be considered in MSP**: the establishment of a coherent network of marine protected areas, the achievement of the 30% target of marine areas under protection (including a 10% under strict protection), the development of multi-use opportunities of the sea space promoting synergies between biodiversity protection and maritime activities, and strengthened coordinated, transboundary initiatives towards improved conservation and restoration. For **climate change adaptation, major relevant sub-topics include the anticipation of climate change-related effects on marine ecosystems** (e.g. through the identification of climate refugia) and their improved protection. The identification of spatial-based adaptation measures (e.g. areas to be used under future climatic conditions) for specific sectors (e.g. fisheries and aquaculture) is also of key importance.

### Priority recommendations to be taken into consideration at the sea basin level

All MSP-GREEN recommendations dealing with biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration are considered of priority relevance for the Black Sea **[BC1, BC2, BC3, BC4, BC5, BC6]**. MSP should be ecosystem- and science-based, acting as a cornerstone for climate-smart and EGD-aligned planning and management of the sea.

MSP should contribute to keeping environmental pressures within ecosystem capacity limits, and to safeguard the natural functions of the marine ecosystems. This requires early and careful assessment of single and cumulative impacts, the development of alternative planning solutions to minimise impacts, and the identification of mitigation measures, in line with MSP-GREEN recommendations **CCA1 and CCA2**.

The following **cross-cutting recommendations** have been flagged as particularly important for the Black Sea:

Making MSP data more open, publicly available, easily accessible, and usable **[CC-DT1, CC-DT2, and CC-DT3]**.

Facilitating a holistic and bottom-up approach through MSP to support the development of multi-use **[CC-MU4]**.

Improving operational integration between MSP and MSFD processes and objectives, e.g.: using the most updated MSFD assessment when designing the MSP plans, ensuring coherence among MSP and MSFD objectives, and MSP plans and MSFD PoM **[CC-GP3]**.





# Glossary of cited Recommendations:

The texts provided are a summary of the recommendations; for the full version, please refer to the document “Ramieri, E., Bocci, M., Gee, K., Capurso, G., et al., 2024. Recommendations on how to strengthen the integration of EGD maritime components into MSP. MSPGREEN project.”

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

[CC-DT1] 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. Where data and information are not yet available, targeted research needs should be specified.

[CC-DT2] 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.

[CC-DT3] Efforts must be made to validate and transform data into actionable knowledge. MSP-EGD science-policy-society interfaces should be established and/or strengthened.

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

[CC-GP3] Operational integration between MSP and other relevant policies and directives (Marine Strategy Framework Directive, EU Biodiversity Strategy, Habitats and Birds Directive, Nature Restoration Law, Common Agricultural Policy, Common Fisheries Policy, etc.) should be strengthened.

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

[CC-MU4] Facilitate a holistic and bottom-up approach through MSP to support the development of multi-use.

## Climate change adaptation

[CCA1] Based on climate policies and projections, MS plans should adopt an even more strategic, forward-looking approach beyond the typical 10-year duration of a planning cycle.

[CCA2] MS plans should address climate change adaptation in alignment with other EGD objectives and related policies and strategies (e.g. co-benefits for nature conservation and restoration).

## Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration

[BC1] MSP should take a stronger role in supporting the identification of new areas relevant to nature conservation and foster their effective design and management.

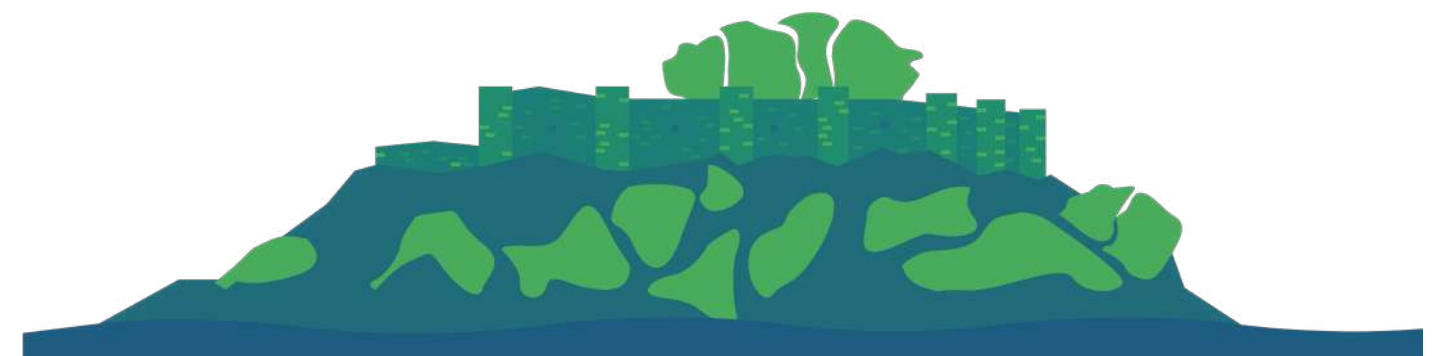
[BC2] MS plans should be coherent with management measures for protected areas and should support other spatial and regulatory measures to improve biodiversity conservation.

[BC3] MS plans should support the establishment of a coherent network of protected areas at sea and across the land-sea interface.

[BC4] MSP should explicitly support and promote EU nature restoration targets and the concept of marine green infrastructure. Areas to be restored should be included in MS plans.

[BC5] MS plans should give greater consideration to the effects of climate change on conservation and restoration actions.

[BC6] The availability, accessibility, and usability of marine environmental data (e.g. on benthic habitats, key species, ecosystem services, etc.) for MSP decision-making should be fostered.



# Mediterranean Sea Basin brief

This summary is issued from the study and basin event carried out within MSP-Green project. Mentioned recommendations are available on the official website, at this link and via the QR code on the right-end of the brief.



## Background - Key sea basin specificities

Bordered by three continents, the Mediterranean hosts exceptional biological diversity and socio-cultural richness. Despite representing only 0.7% of the world's ocean area, the Mediterranean is a **hotspot for marine and coastal biodiversity**, with 28% of endemic species. However, **only 8% of this sea basin is somehow protected**. Mediterranean coasts are under constant and growing pressure caused by over 150 million residents and the arrival of **200 million tourists every year**. Traditional and emerging maritime economy sectors show enormous potential for inclusive prosperity and growth, although they are expected to increase pressure on the fragile marine environment. **Disparities between Northern and Southern countries**, as well as the Eastern ones persist, in terms of demography, economic development, access to natural resources and environmental protection. In addition, the Mediterranean region is recognised as a climate change hotspot for its extreme vulnerability. Transboundary collaboration has a long tradition in the region and is expanding to MSP, including initiatives such as the **UNEP-MAP Working Group on MSP**, the **Union for the Mediterranean Regional Platform on Sustainable Blue Economy**, and the **Mediterranean MSP Community of Practice**.



## Relevant EGD-MSP topics for the sea basin

The Mediterranean is both a biodiversity and climate change hotspot. Climate change adaptation and biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration emerge as particularly important EGD topics for this sea basin, also in consideration of their strict nexus. Climate change adaptation is perceived as complementary to mitigation; their mutual strengthening within MSP is essential to evolve towards climate-smart plans. These topics stand out in terms of urgency, directly linking to several others, such as the sustainable transition of seafood production, given the socio-economic importance in the region of fishery and aquaculture.

The Mediterranean shows tremendous differences and disparities among sub-regions and countries. The attention to fair and just transition aspects within MSP should be increased, including the co-development of a common vision for the sustainable future of the region.

## Priority recommendations to be taken into consideration at the sea basin level

MSP in the Mediterranean should take a stronger role in supporting the identification of new areas for nature conservation (MPAs, N2000 sites, OECMs, etc.) and foster their effective design and management [BC1]. This should be a science-based process, relying on robust and accessible data on marine habitats, species and ecosystem services [BC6].

The biodiversity crisis in the Mediterranean is perceived as strictly linked to climate change. The availability of actionable knowledge on the effects of climate change should be improved to support the identification of the most vulnerable areas and habitats and the development of targeted solutions through MSP [CCA3] [CC-DT3].

Transboundary MSP initiatives should aim at improving mapping, conservation and restoration of Mediterranean habitats, such as seagrass meadows and salt marshes, both playing an important role in climate change adaptation and mitigation [CCA5].

Overall, a strengthened adaptive and forward-looking approach is considered essential to address future uncertainties, including those related to climate change [CCA1] [CC-PA5].

In terms of climate change mitigation, MSP implementation and adaptation in the Mediterranean provides opportunities for offshore renewable production development [CCM2] and can help reduce the carbon footprint of maritime sectors [CCM5].

Fishing (in particular small-scale) and aquaculture are important economic activities for several Mediterranean coastal communities. MSP is called to address their needs more directly through the strengthened engagement of operators in co-planning, exploitation of opportunities provided by broader value chains, and support to innovative and more sustainable practices [SFP2], [SFP4], [SFP3], [SFP1].

# Glossary of cited Recommendations:

The texts provided are a summary of the recommendations; for the full version, please refer to the document “Ramieri, E., Bocci, M., Gee, K., Capurso, G., et al., 2024. Recommendations on how to strengthen the integration of EGD maritime components into MSP. MSPGREEN project.”

## MSP processes and approaches to improve EGD implementation

[CC-PA5] Planning for the EGD at sea requires better preparedness from MSP to deal with uncertainties. The best available knowledge should be collected from a broad and diversified range of stakeholders. In addition, MS plans can rely on modelling, shared visions, foresight exercises, and co-created scenarios.

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

[CC-DT3] Efforts must be made to validate and transform data into actionable knowledge. MSP-EGD science-policy-society interfaces should be established and/or strengthened.

## Climate change adaptation

[CCA1] Based on climate policies and projections, MS plans should adopt an even more strategic, forward-looking approach beyond the typical 10-year duration of a planning cycle.

[CCA3] Data and knowledge on the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems should be collected, collated, and made available for the MSP process.

[CCA5] 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.

## Climate change mitigation

[CCM2] MS plans should consider offshore renewables other than OWE (such as wave, tidal, current, and solar) in terms of objectives, zoning and measures.

[CCM5] MSP could strive to help reduce the carbon footprint of maritime sectors, providing a framework for the integration of objectives and measures set in sector policies and plans.

## Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration

[BC1] MSP should take a stronger role in supporting the identification of new areas relevant to nature conservation and foster their effective design and management.

[BC6] The availability, accessibility, and usability of marine environmental data (e.g. on benthic habitats, key species, ecosystem services, etc.) for MSP decision-making should be fostered.

## Sustainable seafood production

[SFP1] MSP should move from an approach where fisheries are considered in terms of exclusion from some areas to an approach aiming at proactively planning all fishery segments.

[SFP2] MSP should more explicitly consider the needs of small-scale fisheries, also through the improved engagement of operators in the planning process.

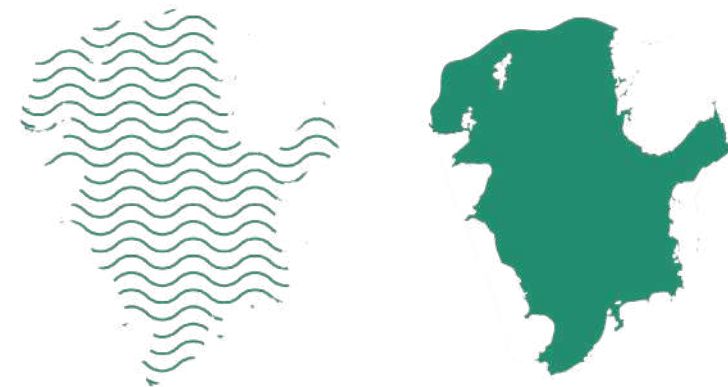
[SFP3] Low trophic aquaculture (seaweed and shellfish) should be promoted through MSP. Integration should be sought with other aquaculture types (including through IMTA).

[SFP4] Aquaculture and fisheries should be planned also considering the broader value chain (through LSI) and community livelihoods in the sense of a fair and just transition.





# North Sea Basin brief



This summary is issued from the study and basin event carried out within MSP-Green project. Mentioned recommendations are available on the official website, at this link and via the QR code on the right-end of the brief.

## Background - Key sea basin specificities

The North Sea is a heavily used sea with extensive shipping, shipbuilding, fishing, aquaculture, aggregate extraction, energy production (including both wind and oil and gas), cruise tourism, and coastal protection. The Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI) was officially established in November 2023, setting the framework for the collaboration between 9 countries from the North Sea and its nearby area (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom) to strengthen cooperation on maritime spatial planning. Six voluntary working tracks have been established by the parties, focusing on governance, multi-use and co-use, nature conservation, cumulative impacts, long-term perspective fisheries and knowledge sharing.



## Relevant EGD-MSP topics for the sea basin

MSP and managing the interactions between various human activities are crucial for the Greater North Sea due to the high density of such activities in a relatively small area. The European Green Deal (EGD) can be seen as a facilitator for the definition and prioritisation of objectives for the sea basin. Among the challenges addressed by the EGD, coastal resilience, offshore renewable energy development (offshore windfarms in particular), decarbonisation of ports and maritime traffic, sustainable fisheries and marine biodiversity conservation are the main issues at stake. In a post-Brexit context, the GNSBI can act as a good vector to foster and strengthen transnational cooperation and enhance the governance of the sea basin.

## Priority recommendations to be taken into consideration at the sea basin level

Improved data and tools are considered of high relevance to strengthen EGD integration into MSP in the North Sea. Identifying gaps in data availability, developing common norms and standards, and establishing specific indicators related to the EGD objectives could be facilitated by the work of the GNSBI. Relevant recommendations: **CCP-PA5, CC-DT1, CC-DT3, CC-DT5, CC-MU4.**

Climate change adaptation and mitigation are also seen as urgent challenges to be tackled. Modelling approaches should help to establish scenarios and assess the consequences of climate change for the sea basin. Long-term strategies should be supported by the GNSBI for key sectors such as ports or fisheries. Other topics, like coastal resilience, should be addressed at a more local scale while remaining consistent with decisions taken at the national or transnational level. Regarding offshore renewable energy, some technologies are still under development and should be supported by adapted research programs at the seabasin scale. Relevant recommendations: **CCA3, CCA4, CCM2, CCM4, CCM5, CCM7.**

Other EGD-related elements are acknowledged as very important for the North Sea. Regarding governance, GNSBI is seen as a good facilitator of the coherent implementation of policy and objectives dealing with energy, fisheries, environment and MSP. For several topics (for example blue circular economy, fair and just transition in aquaculture and fisheries, coherence between plans), the local level is seen as a lever to develop concrete solutions, coherently with what is defined and implemented at upper scales. Relevant recommendations: **CC-GP5, FJT1, BC3, ZP2, SFP4, SFP6.**

# Glossary of cited Recommendations:

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## MSP processes and approaches to improve EGD implementation

[CC-PA5] Planning for the EGD at sea requires better preparedness from MSP to deal with uncertainties. The best available knowledge should be collected from a broad and diversified range of stakeholders. In addition, MS plans can rely on modelling, shared visions, foresight exercises, and co-created scenarios.

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

[CC-DT1] 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. Where data and information are not yet available, targeted research needs should be specified.

[CC-DT3] Efforts must be made to validate and transform data into actionable knowledge. MSP-EGD science-policy-society interfaces should be established and/or strengthened.

[CC-DT5] Comprehensive approaches for cumulative impact assessment need to be further developed, operationalised and used.

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

[CC-GP5] 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.

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

[CC-MU4] Facilitate a holistic and bottom-up approach through MSP to support the development of multi-use.

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

[FJT1] 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.

## Climate change adaptation

[CCA3] Data and knowledge on the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems should be collected, collated, and made available for the MSP process.

[CCA4] Data and knowledge on the impacts of climate change on maritime sectors should be collected, collated, and made available for the MSP process.

## Climate change mitigation

[CCM2] MS plans should consider offshore renewables other than OWE (such as wave, tidal, current, and solar) in terms of objectives, zoning and measures.

[CCM4] MSP should identify links to terrestrial planning related to the development and expansion of

offshore renewables, working to ensure that onshore spatial infrastructure is in place.

[CCM5] MSP could strive to help reduce the carbon footprint of maritime sectors, providing a framework for the integration of objectives and measures set in sector policies and plans.

[CCM7] Carbon capture and storage at sea should be considered in MS plans. This implies mapping blue carbon habitats, and improving their protection and restoration.

## Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration

[BC3] MS plans should support the establishment of a coherent network of protected areas at sea and across the land-sea interface.

## Sustainable seafood production

[SFP4] Aquaculture and fisheries should be planned also considering the broader value chain (through LSI) and community livelihoods in the sense of a fair and just transition.

[SF6] MSP should anticipate the impacts of climate change on commercially and recreationally exploited species.

## Zero pollution

[ZP2] MSP should identify and map marine pollution hotspots and contribute to the identification of environmental remediation measures.

## Blue circular economy

[BCE3] A life cycle approach should be considered in MS plans and licensing. This could be applied to sea areas in the sense of reusing space, but also to different elements of the blue economy.

