



MSP4BIO

Science Policy Dialogue Think Tanks

1st meeting (online)
May 2023

Summary report

MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE SCIENCE POLICY DIALOGUE THINK TANKS

The main objective of the Science Policy Dialogue Think Tanks is to co-develop key recommendations in collaboration with linked projects and achieve validation through the engagement with policy actors. The MSP4BIO project in fact aims at collaborating with sister projects to jointly communicate scientific outputs to policy makers in a simple form and to scrutinize them against policy coherence criteria. The Think Tank meetings have initially involved relevant experts and scientists and in a second stage they will also include policy stakeholders at the EU and regional seas level. The Think Tanks also represent an effective way to coordinate among different projects on the engagement with key policy stakeholders, in order to maximise effective engagement processes and to reduce “stakeholder fatigue”.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE 1st THINK TANK MEETING

The specific objectives of the 1st Think Tank meeting are to:

- Initiate a coordination process among current relevant MSP-related projects and initiatives
- Share information about the policy components (goals, objectives, targets and priorities) from current MSP related projects
- Preliminary identification of the priority policy topics and targets to focus on collectively

PARTICIPANTS

The first Science Policy Dialogue Think Tank involved the following stakeholders:

- MSP4BIO project partners
- Scientific representatives from sister projects and other relevant initiatives

(See ANNEX II for the full list of participants)

PRESENTATIONS AND INFORMATION SHARING

Each sister project was given the opportunity to present the main goals and policy objectives. The presentations have been collected and can be accessed [HERE](#).

Furthermore, all participating projects and initiatives had the opportunity to provide information about the key contents of the project in Table 1 below.



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TABLE 1 – Project Information

	KEY WORDS	POLICY FOCUS	SCALE	CASE STUDIES/ PILOT SITES	IN HOUSE EVENTS
MSP4BIO	MSP MPAs Stakeholder Engagement	Achieving the Green Deal Integrating MPAs in MSP processes support implementation of EU Biodiversity Strategy and CBD post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework Focus on biodiversity policy coherence	EU sea basins National, transboundary and regional level	One case study per sea basin	-Think tanks -Community of Practice Meetings -Project meetings -Trainings
MPA Europe	MPA Network Europe Blue carbon Biodiversity Smart (adaptive) MSP	MSPs to consider MPAs within a changing climate context European Green Deal Biodiversity Strategy and post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework	EU Stakeholder engagement per sea basin (national and regional authorities - decision makers))	One case study per sea Basin • 3 case studies to be agreed with stakeholders • no pilots	In person workshop: policy brief on project outcomes and case study development. (Discussion with the stakeholders will lead to a policy brief + recommendations)
eMSP NBSR	MSP Sustainability Energy Biodiversity	Support coherence among MSP plans Cross Learning Green deal and impact of climate change	North Sea and Baltic Sea	Each learning strand has either 1 or 2 study cases. (Learning strands: Ocean Governance, MSP data, Monitoring & Evaluation, Ecosystem Approach, Sustainable Blue Economy)	-Community of Practice events per LS -Project meetings -Final conference -High level conference (TBD)
REGINA-MSP	Stakeholder engagement	innovations in the role of Regions in MSP contribution of MSP to the European Green Deal progress in MSP at regional and local levels positive interaction between MSP and the European Cohesion Policy	Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea Basins and EU Broadly	Murcia Galicia Sardinia Pays de la Loire Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur Crete North Aegean Sea County Mayo CPMR Members	-Training of MSP Authorities -Ocean Literacy Workshop -Communities of practice meetings -Case studies workshops with regional/local stakeholders



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	KEY WORDS	POLICY FOCUS	SCALE	CASE STUDIES/ PILOT SITES	IN HOUSE EVENTS
BLUE4ALL (www.blue4all.eu)	MPA networks Resilient and Efficient MPAs Blueprint platform	Restore EU oceans and waters	EU	25 sites across Mediterranean Sea, the Baltic Sea and the North-East Atlantic regions	-policy analysis -questionnaires -tests
REMAP	MSP Monitoring & Review Data Tools Models Data sharing	provide EU Member States with innovative technical framework for the support of the European MSP process Policy Briefs + co-development of tools with stakeholders	EU	Local - Galicia (Spain) Cross Border - Western Mediterranean Sea basin - Baltic	Beta-test of tools Galicia (Spain), Venice (Italy) and Helsinki Final Conference October 2025 Helsinki
PLASMAR+	Progress of MSP CIA development EIA Supporting methods Ecosystem Services	Macaronesia regional collaboration developing tools, products and methodologies for operative MSP	Sea-basin scale, the European Macaronesia	Azores Madeira Canary Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of project Conference • Capacity Buildings • Stakeholder's engagement initiatives
Shetland marine plan	Marine Development Framework	sustainable development	Local scale - Shetland		Workshops
MSPGREEN	MSP EGD	Role of MSP plans as enablers of EGD Role of other policies (e.g. fisheries, nature conservation)	National level (analysis, actions) EU level (recommendations) EU sea basins (link with Sustainable Blue Economy)		Workshops
MarinePlan (marineplan.eu)	EB-MSP conservation EBSA Stakeholder engagement	integrate marine conservation into MSP processes in European Seas	EU	Azores Celtic Sea Western Baltic Sea Western Mediterranean Campania (Italy) Greek Aegean Bay of Biscay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high level stakeholder workshops (EU level) • planning site Stakeholder workshops • project meetings (Barcelona, Azores, etc.) • end of project conference



BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Summary notes

What was highlighted in the Priority Topics for Cooperation section was the cooperation and alignment on stakeholder engagement, to optimise processes, avoid overlapping, as well as to align approaches and exchange findings from the policy coherence analysis (or at least to make them complementary). Finally many participants agreed that joint policy recommendations should also be pushed forward.

The number of events considered really relevant for the projects to target policy actors is limited, however many identified European Maritime Day and the MSP Conference as the most relevant ones. It could be beneficial to start discussing possibilities of organizing events specifically dedicated to projects' alignment and ensuring synergies.

The need to involve additional projects (e.g., PERMAGOV) was mentioned during the breakout session and they will be involved in the next meetings.

Most projects target the same key priority policies, particularly the MSPD, EU Green Deal and EU Biodiversity Strategy, as shown below in the outcomes of the exercise. Sister projects included a number of priority policy activities, which suggests that the different projects complement each other and this could be used as a tool, if well-coordinated, to not double efforts across projects working on similar topics.

As additional topics of discussion and collaboration, various groups highlighted policy coherence analysis, as well as stakeholder engagement optimisation so to avoid stakeholder fatigue. Finally many highlighted the importance of cooperation among projects in the development of tools to support integrated policy implementation and planning.

Key results from the MIRO exercise (combined)

What are the key policies that your project relates to?

Top priorities identified include the following:

- MSP Directive
- EU Green Deal
- EU Biodiversity Strategy
- EU Restoration Law
- Repower EU

What are the main policy related activities of your project?

The key policy related activities identified include the following:

- Policy Brief on MSP and climate adaptive MPAs
- Participatory workshops and training
- Support policy implementation
- Inputs for MSP revision
- Support policy integration in decision making processes across the sectors
- Policy Briefs on MSP and climate adaptive MPAs
- Inputs and recommendations for MSP revision process
- Coordination on stakeholder engagement
- Policy coherence briefing
- Review of MSP data at regional level
- Support policy integration in decision making processes across sectors



What are the main policy events that you have already identified as key to your project?

The priority policy events for most projects are the following:

- European Maritime Day
- MSP Conference
- Group meetings with national/regional authorities
- MSEG

Which policy stakeholders are you targeting within your project?

Most projects are focusing on the following stakeholders:

- Regional Policy Makers (EU, Regional authorities)
- MPA Managers
- Authorities in charge of MSP related issues/MSP Planners
- National Policy Makers

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The first Think Tank workshop confirmed that many of the current projects that are focusing on the integration of conservation priorities into MSP, target similar stakeholders and policies. The projects are very much complementary and therefore fostering collaboration opportunities can certainly lead to better synergies and especially, to an increased level of impact. Many participants agreed on the need to collaborate and showed major interest in the initiative.

Among the top 2 collaboration opportunities that have been identified are the following:

- Coordinate across projects to propose a set of tools and approaches that can improve the integration of the Ecosystem Approach in the implementation of the MSP Directive.
- Develop a set of tools, briefings and events to support policy coherence and implementation, particularly focusing on the integration among the MSPD and other EU Environmental Policies such as the MSFD and Habitat Directive (among others) and on the EU Green Deal in general.

These top collaboration opportunities will be further explored in the next think tank meeting, where policy actors will also be invited to contribute to the discussion. By then, more tool, methodologies and project results will also be available and will be shared during the meeting.

A shared policy Stakeholder engagement approach emerged as another key conclusion from the workshop and this topic will be further explored in the next meeting, that will be organized in the autumn of 2023.



ANNEX I – AGENDA

TIME	CONTENTS
10:00 – 10:10	Introduction to the Think Tank's objectives + Agenda
10:10 – 11:00	Presentations from all participating projects with a specific focus on the respective policy components and policy tools
11:00 – 11:10	Break
11:10 – 11:45	Breakout groups + facilitated discussion (with MIRO Board) addressing the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the recurring policy priorities that emerge from the projects?• What are the main synergies among all projects? (Key activities/events already identified, opportunities to collaborate on specific topics)• What are the key policy actors to target?
11:45 – 12:15	Groups presentation and Discussion
12:15 – 12:30	Final remarks and conclusions



ANNEX II - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

No	NAME	EMAIL	ORGANIZATION	PROJECT
1	Débora, Gutierrez	debora.gutierrez@uac.pt	UoA	MSP4BIO
2	Belinda, Bramley	belindabramley@gmail.com	Climazul	MPA Europe
3	Kemal, Pinarbasi	kemal.pinarbasi@helcom.fi	HELCOM	MSP4BIO
4	Sofija, Babić	sbabic@wwfadria.org	WWF Adria	Blue4ALL
5	Marta, Ballesteros	mballesteros@cetmar.org	CETMAR	REMAP
6	Thanos, Smanis	tsmanis@gmail.com	CLIMAZUL	MPA Europe
7	Rachel, Shucksmith	rachel.shucksmith@uhi.ac.uk	UHI SHETLAND	Shetland Marine Plan
8	Margarita, Stancheva	stancheva@ccms.bg	CCMS	MSP4BIO and MSPGREEN
9	Riku, Varjopuro	riku.varjopuro@syke.fi	SYKE	MSP4BIO, EMSP
10	Andrea, Morf	andrea.morf@nordregio.org	NORDREGIO	EMSP
11	Olivier, Laroussinie	olivier.laroussinie@cerema.fr	CEREMA	mSP4BIO
12	Froukje Maria, Platjouw	fmp@niva.no	NIVA	CROSSGOV
13	Kinnie, De Beule	kinnie.debeule@blauwecluster.be	DE BLAUWE CLUSTER	ESMS
14	Allahyar, Valiyev	allahyar.valiyev@ugent.be	CLUE CLUSTER	
15	Andrea, Barbanti	andrea.barbanti@ismar.cnr.it	CNR-ISMAR	MSP4BIO
16	Marjoleine, Karper	marjoleine.karper@rvo.nl	BLAUWE ECONOMIE	EMSP
17	Bérénice, Lequesne	berenice.lequesne@shom.fr	SHOM	EMSP and MSP-OR
18	Patrik, Krstinić	pkrstinic@wwfadria.org	WWF Adria	Blue4All
19	Kora, Dvorski	kdvorski@wwfadria.org	WWF Adria	Blue4ALL
20	Dmitry, Frank-Kamenetsky	Dmitry.Frank-Kamenetsky@helcom.fi	Helcom	EMSP
21	Fien, De Raedemaeker	fien.de.raedemaeker@vliz.be	Flanders Marine Inst.	MSP4BIO and BLUE4ALL
22	Ivana Stojanovic	is@sustainable-projects.eu	S-PRO	MSP4BIO
23	Anna Barbanti	abarbanti@wwfmedpo.org	WWF	MSP4BIO
24	Mauro Randone	mrandon@wwfmedpo.org	WWF	MSP4BIO
25	Andrej Abramic	andrej.abramic@ulpgc.es	Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria	EMFAF-REMAP
26	Vanessa Stelzenmueller	vanessa.stelzenmueller@thuenen.de	THUEN	Marine Plan
27	Virgil Zetterlind	virgil@anthinst.org	Anthropocene	MSP4BIO Advisory Board
28	Anna Reichel	anna.reichel@thuenen.de	Thunen Institute	Marine Plan
29	Emiliano Ramieri	e.ramieri@ismar.cnr.it	ISMAR CNR	MSP4BIO
30	Ivana Likic	il@sustainable-projects.eu	S-PRO	MSP4BIO
31	Céline Jacob	celine.jacob@cerema.fr	CEREMA	MSP4BIO
32	Bob Rumes	brumes@naturalsciences.be	NAT SCIENCE	BLUE4ALL
33	Hrvoje Ceprnja	hceprnja@wwfadria.org	WWF	BLUE4ALL
34	Martina Bocci	martina.bocci.1@gmail.com	CONSULTANT CORILA	MSPGREEN