

State of the art on key barriers and levers for policy coherence (D6.1)



SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

To effectively halt biodiversity loss, integrating biodiversity considerations into a broad range of policies, including those outside the traditional environmental scope, is essential. The MSP4BIO project's Task 6.1 focused on assessing the incorporation of biodiversity into EU marine policies and sectors, evaluating the barriers to and facilitators of such integration, and understanding the role and effectiveness of the maritime spatial planning directive (MSPD) in promoting biodiversity conservation across the European Union.

The study involved a comprehensive analysis of how biodiversity is integrated into environmental, economic, and marine spatial planning (MSP) policies at EU, regional, and national levels, examining eight EU member states and four Regional Sea Conventions. Through interviews, workshop outcomes, and policy document reviews, the project identified how biodiversity is prioritized and the ambition behind conservation efforts within these policies.



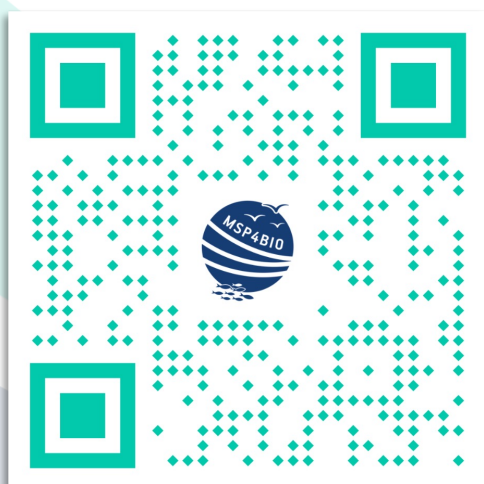


The EU's updated Biodiversity Strategy aims for significant conservation targets, including protecting 30% of European seas. However, findings show that achieving these targets faces challenges like low economic sector commitment and varying levels of policy integration and implementation across countries. Fisheries, maritime transport, and offshore energy sectors show differing levels of biodiversity prioritization and conservation ambition.

Barriers to effective biodiversity integration include policy conflicts, inflexible frameworks, inadequate monitoring, and lack of clear mandates. Meanwhile, enhanced scientific understanding, public support, and EU-led policies and funding are identified as critical levers for improvement.

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) being a critical tool for conserving marine biodiversity, offers a platform for cross-border collaboration and interdisciplinary approaches. However, its effectiveness is limited by challenges such as inconsistent implementation across countries, economic pressures overshadowing biodiversity concerns, and issues with stakeholder engagement and public participation.

The study highlights the need for clearer guidelines, improved intersectoral coordination, and stronger enforcement mechanisms to enhance biodiversity conservation across various sectors. It underscores the importance of ongoing research, policy development, and dialogue between scientists and policymakers to strengthen biodiversity mainstreaming efforts.



Overall, Task 6.1 of MSP4BIO provides valuable insights into the current state of biodiversity integration in EU marine policies and sectors, identifies key challenges and opportunities, and lays the groundwork for future efforts to enhance biodiversity mainstreaming through MSP and economic sector policies.

The full study will be published in MSP4BIO's website once finished.