



Regions to Boost
National Maritime
Spatial Planning



Co-funded by
the European Union

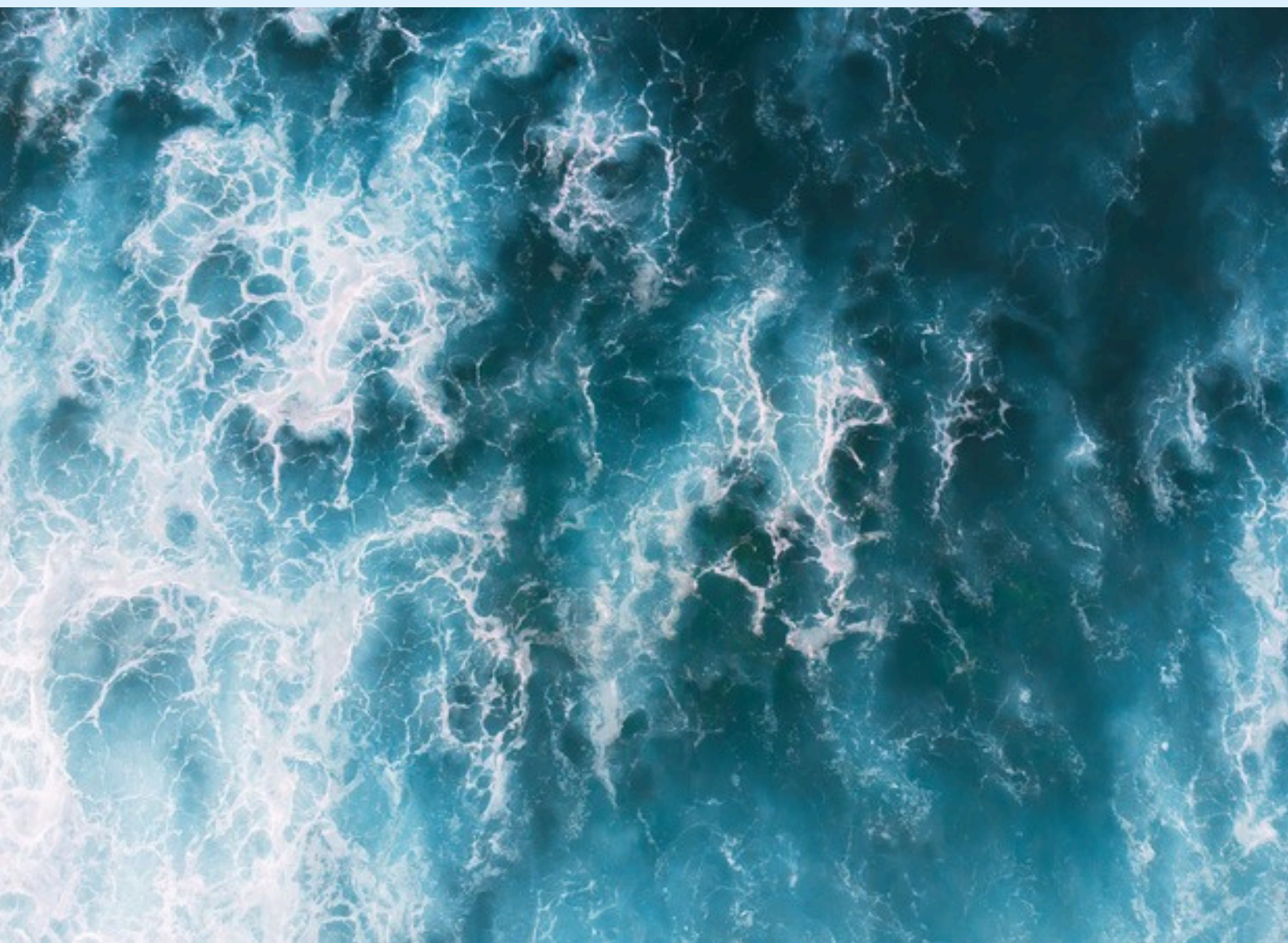


REGINA-MSP

Communication brief

Spanish MSP

The case study of Murcia and Galicia Regions



REGINA-MSP communication brief series

The REGINA-MSP project is a two-year project (2023-2024) that aims to greater integrate the regional and sub-regional needs, perspectives and stakeholders into the development and implementation of national Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP). The project highlights potential challenges to this integration and opportunities to reduce them, building on a general analysis at the European level and an in-depth analysis in eight case study regions in five European countries, i.e., France, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Spain.

Based on various activities carried out within REGINA-MSP and further described in this communication brief (e.g., workshops, bibliographical analyses), a set of policy needs and recommendations has been identified at different levels (European, national, regional). This communication brief summarizes the main policy recommendations for the national level in Spain. This brief is part of a series of communication briefs produced as part of REGINA-MSP, focusing on various topics related to MSP (such as ocean literacy or communities of practice) and on each case study region and country part of the project.

Characteristics of the case study regions

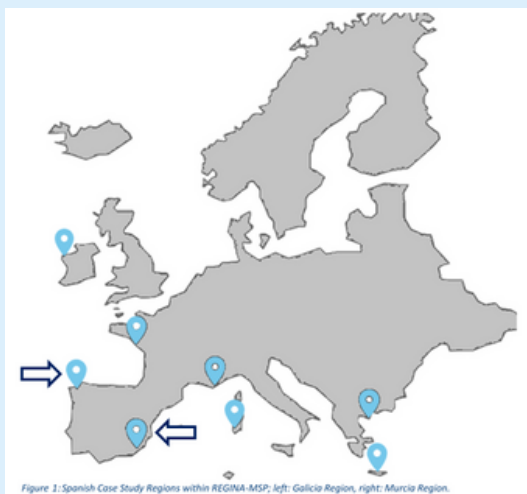


Figure 1: Spanish Case Study Regions within REGINA-MSP; left: Galicia Region, right: Murcia Region.

This communication brief refers to Murcia and Galicia Spanish coastal Regions. These Regions belong respectively to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic sea basins.

Both case studies were grounded in detailed analyses that examined specific conflicts or issues within the area. Workshops were organized to engage stakeholders in discussions on topics of particular relevance to these regions. The workshops saw significant participation from public administration officials (operating at both national and regional levels), private sector representatives, researchers, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Although each Region counts on specificities, both case studies shared common objectives:

- Identification of regional specificities.
- Validation of recommendations that eventually favour coexistence between sectors.
- Enrichment of the national MSP process.

Legal framework

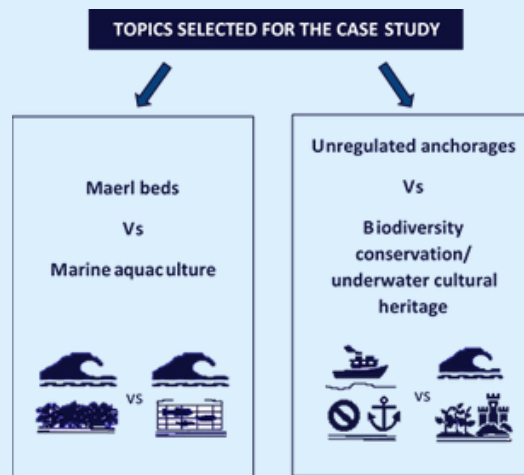
Maritime Spatial Planning competences in Spain fall under the national government. The Directorate-General for the Coast and the Sea (DGCM), which belongs to the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITERD) is the governmental body responsible for the development of the MSP policy and management in Spain. Nevertheless, according to the Spanish Constitution of 1978, there are numerous maritime uses and activities, such as aquaculture and maritime tourism, that are managed by the regional public administrations, which are called autonomous communities (CCAA, by its initials in Spanish - “Comunidades Autónomas”).

Activities conducted in Murcia and Galicia within REGINA-MSP

Murcia Region

The Murcia case study is a continuation of the work initiated under the MSPMED project (2020-2022), where certain information gaps were identified. Specific actions were subsequently designed and implemented through the REGINA-MSP activities to address these gaps.

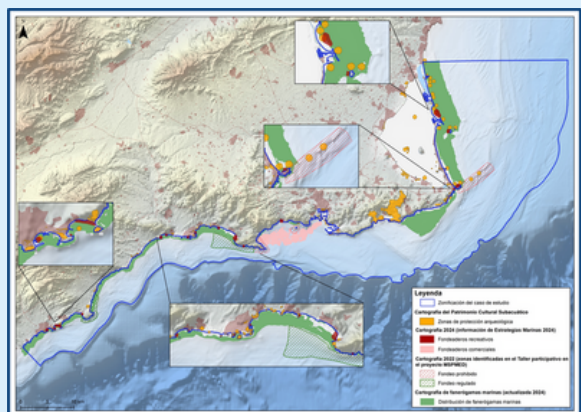
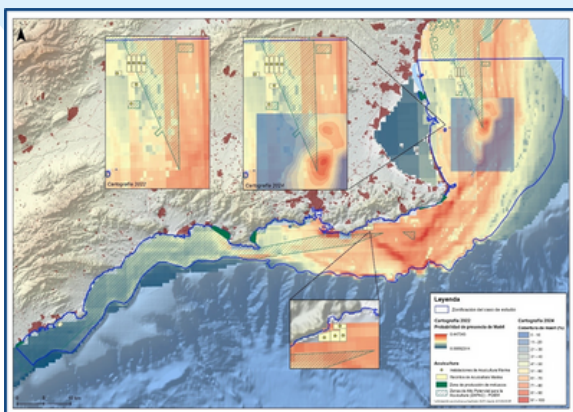
Two interactions among maritime activities and uses were analysed and tailored-made cartography was designed to better understand the potential interactions among uses/activities at sea.



An oceanographic campaign was developed to collect high resolution cartography regarding maerl beds in the marine waters that bathe the coast of Murcia.

This cartography shall inform the zoning of aquaculture in the area.

New analysis on unregulated anchorages were performed to obtain a smart-scale cartography in the area. Seagrass meadows cartography was updated (MSFD implementation). UCH cartography had not been updated since 2022, when MSPMED workshops were held.



Galicia Region

The Autonomous Community of Galicia (NW of Spain) holds a strong legacy of maritime activity, involving a large part of the population living along its coastline. Traditionally it has been characterized by a high aquaculture and fishery production. At present, there has been an increase in sectors such as tourism and maritime recreational activities, and new emerging maritime activities are projected in the future. Coastal areas, mainly inside the rias, concentrate many uses, which can potentially overlap and that should be properly managed to avoid conflicts and promote synergies. Moreover, knowledge, information and tools are needed to plan future uses in offshore areas.

TOPICS SELECTED FOR THE CASE STUDY



- Identification of the areas where tourism activities are carried out in marine environments, along with the quantification of these activities in socioeconomic terms.



- Advancement in the development of knowledge and information to facilitate the planning of offshore aquaculture practices in the coastal waters, outside the rias.



- Assessment of underwater noise due to vessel traffic at local level to deliver guidance to its integration in the maritime planning process.

TOURISM

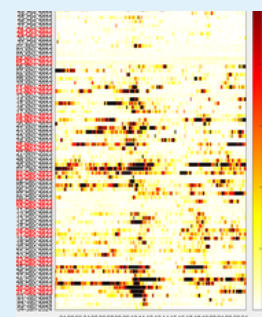
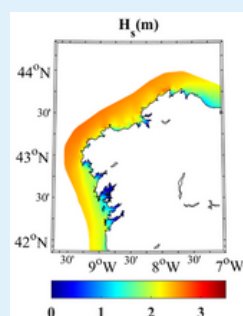
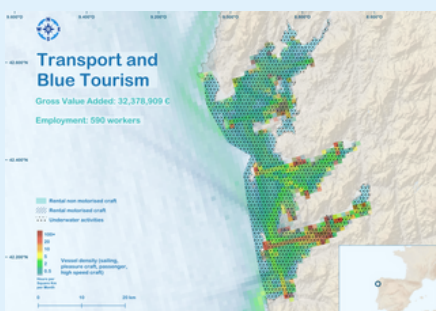
Forty-five sea-based tourism companies, mainly focused on maritime transport and leisure, were identified. Their direct economic impact is €17.6 million, involving nearly 300 workers, with a total impact of €32 million and 600 workers in the coastal area.

AQUACULTURE

Historical data sets of temperature, salinity, NO₃, O₂, pH, and chlorophyll were collected and evaluated to identify suitable offshore areas for aquaculture. The optimal development periods for selected species (fish, bivalves, and crustaceans) were also analyzed.

UNDERWATER NOISE

A Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM) device was deployed for three months in the outer section of Galicia's largest estuary, and the average sound pressure level was calculated. The study identified sensitive zones and species, providing a foundation for discussions with key stakeholders.



Key messages from the 2 case studies

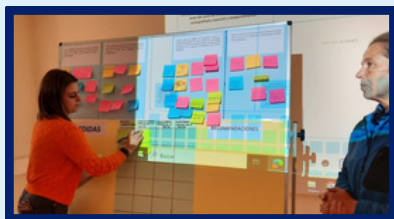
Key messages from the case study of Murcia

- Long-term research on the interactions among uses is necessary.
- It was recommended to establish ad hoc working groups within the Ministry's MSP working group to analyze the interactions between various uses and activities.
- Participatory governance should be actively pursued.
- Coordination and communication mechanisms among public administrations and with the maritime sectors need to be improved.



Key messages from the case study of Galicia

- Blue tourism in Galicia (NW Spain) doubles the economic return for every euro generated and creates an extra job in the broader economy for each one in the sector.
- A broad knowledge of the meta-oceanic and biological characteristics in offshore areas is necessary to establish the target species to harvest and the aquaculture systems that can withstand the environmental conditions in the area.
- Underwater noise poses a major challenge due to the lack of AIS technology on small fishing vessels and limited monitoring of noise from aquaculture, recreational, and industrial activities. The inability to access vessel spectral signatures hinders the characterization of this human impact. Measures to address these gaps should be encouraged.



Proposals of policy recommendations for the national level to better consider regional and sub-regional needs, perspectives and stakeholders

Legal aspects

- "Implementation roadmaps" should be developed at the regional level to execute the actions outlined in the MSP Plans. These roadmaps must take into account regional specificities and be supported by smart-scale cartography and scientific knowledge.

Murcia has presented in 2024 a "Maritime Strategy" with specific measures to be implemented before 2030. This strategy offers a common vision to foster the Blue Economy and includes seven axes of action, being the 5th the "Maritime Spatial Planning" of the Region.



The Law for the Planning and Integrated Management of the Galician Coast (LOLGA), approved in July 2023 and upheld by the Spanish Constitutional Court in 2024, promotes an ecosystem-based, integrated approach to ensure the sustainable development of coastal and marine activities.

Governance

- The enhancement of governance coordination is needed for matters that involve multiple regional administrative departments, such as unregulated anchorages.
- At the national level, it is important to improve the coordination and collaboration between the central government and the regions in matters of shared interest /competence.
- "Participatory governance" should be actively pursued, ensuring that all stakeholders, including civil society, have a voice in the decision-making process to look for suitable solutions for all sectors.
- Regional and local authorities serve as the "focal points" for regional and local stakeholders (private actors) to participate in national processes. This role should be recognized and supported by the national competent authority on MSP.
- It is essential to establish official and permanent communication channels to keep the civil society informed about the MSP process.



During the stakeholders' workshops held in Murcia, there was a common recognition of the regional administration's efforts to improve the communication mechanisms with the sectors, although there remains a significant journey ahead.

Participants in the two workshops in Galicia showed that, despite the existence of communication channels and working groups, there are still significant information gaps in the study area. Regional authorities, and public-private partnerships (e.g. FLAGs) can jointly facilitate a stronger stakeholder's interaction and engagement.

Resources, capacity, skills and professional networks

- Develop knowledge about MSP in regional administrations in order to: (1) improve their capabilities of participation in the process and (2) improve their capabilities to engage local and regional stakeholders (focusing on the least heard stakeholders).
- A dossier of "Good Practices" and/or strategies addressing this issue should be compiled at the European level.
- Develop ocean literacy strategies tailored for regional specificities.
- A database should be created to identify the competent body to contact for each topic, use, or activity, serving as a "focal point." Each region could develop a list of public focal points, which should be accessible at the national level.



During Murcia's CS workshops, participants expressed strong interest in appointing a regional focal point to maintain an updated database of contacts for the relevant authorities in each area.



Galicia has numerous geoportals and viewers, developed by the regional administration and other public bodies, that provide valuable information for planning, managing conflicts, overlapping uses, and addressing growing human pressures.

Data and knowledge

- Establish specific working groups within the national MSP working group to address particular interactions among uses (e.g., unregulated anchorages with UCS or seagrass meadows), where regional authorities and experts can collaborate.
- Utilize smart-scale information for detailed planning at the regional level by identifying specific areas and topics where high-resolution data is required to enhance planning efforts.
- Studies on cumulative pressures and impacts must be carried out at an appropriate resolution to provide a correct distribution of areas subject to high levels of pressure.
- Climate change should be considered when designing and managing MSP processes.



In Murcia, a regional working group on anchoring was deemed essential. It shall be part of the national MSP-WG, involving national and regional authorities, relevant sectors, and research institutions.

The Galician regional administration, in partnership with CETMAR, is developing MARPLAN, a geoportal for assessing the socioeconomic and environmental aspects of aquaculture, shellfish gathering, and fishing. It also provides key environmental data for offshore marine cultivation.



References

Gutiérrez-Ruiz, E., Cervera-Núñez, C., Campillos-Llanos, M. et al. 2024. Regional specificities. Results of the regional workshops and other discussion initiatives. REGINA-MSP project, European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency.

Gutiérrez-Ruiz, E., Campillos-Llanos, M., Cervera-Núñez, C., Ruiz-Fernández, J., Follana-Berná, G., Gómez-Ballesteros, M. (2022). Pilot case for maritime spatial planning in the Region of Murcia with respect to the habitat conservation. Deliverable 12 of the MSPMED project (EASME/887390/MSPMED/EMFF-MSP-2019). (MSPMED). 164 pp.

Citation

Gutiérrez-Ruiz, E., Gómez-Gesteira, J.L., Cervera-Núñez, C., Campillos-Llanos, M, Fernández, M, Ovejero, A., Soto, E., Santiago, J.L., de Miguel, M., Simoes, C., González-Liaño, I., Communication brief. Spanish MSP: The case of Murcia and Galicia Regions. REGINA-MSP project, European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency.

Disclaimer

This communication brief has been developed as part of the REGINA-MSP project. Its content is based on the activities carried within the framework of the project and does not necessarily represent the views of the authors' organizations and nations.



Co-funded by
the European Union



Regions to Boost
National Maritime
Spatial Planning



regina-msp.eu

I
-
-
U
-
-
A
-
-
V

Università Iuav
di Venezia



An Roinn Comhaltait,
Ardáil agus Comairle
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications



CETMAR
CENTRO TECNOLÓGICO DEL MAR

RÉPUBLIQUE
FRANÇAISE
Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité



SHOM
L'océan en référence



CNR
ISMAR



UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOileáine Corcaigh



MaREI
Energy - Climate - Marine



CPMR
CRPM



CSIC
CONSEJO SUPERIOR DE INVESTIGACIONES CIENTÍFICAS



ARISTOTLE
UNIVERSITY OF
THESSALONIKI