



Regions to Boost
National Maritime
Spatial Planning



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REGINA-MSP

Communication brief

North Sardinia case study

The Italian experience



REGINA-MSP communication brief series

The REGINA-MSP project is a two-year project (2022-2024) that aims to greatly 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, a set of policy needs and recommendations has been identified at different levels (European, national, regional). This communication brief summarises the main recommendations identified in the Italian case studies (Northern Sardinia) and their implication for the regional and national levels of governance. 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 country and case study region

The Northern Sardinia maritime area, stretching from the island of Asinara in the west to the Gulf of Olbia in the east, represents a unique interface between maritime activities and conservation priorities.

This region, rich in biodiversity and characterised by high quality landscapes, serves as an exemplary case for MSP, integrating economic development with environmental protection.

The region supports diverse maritime activities such as fishing, aquaculture, shipping, coastal and maritime tourism, recreational boating and port activity, while emphasising habitat and species conservation through several Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), National Parks and Natura 2000 sites.

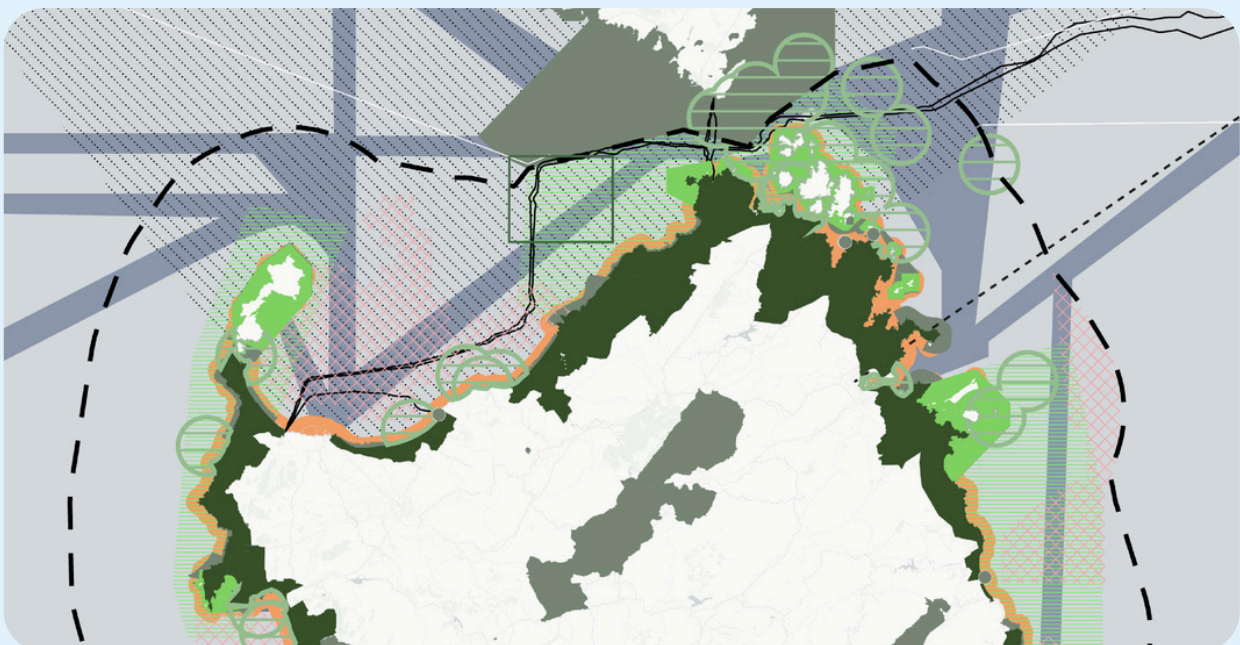


Building on the provisions identified by the Italian MSP plans, the 'Northern Sardinia' case study, through the involvement of regional and local stakeholders, aimed at identifying and mapping, local criticalities related to the present maritime activities, as well as potential actions that may mitigate their conflictual nature in an MSP context.



In particular, the case study focused on the analysis of the interactions between the integrated system of coastal and marine areas under different protection regimes with:

- The port and traffic corridors, in and out of Porto Torres;
- The coastal and nautical tourism sector during the high season;
- The fishing and aquaculture activities in the Gulf of Asinara and Olbia.



The MSP process in Italy. The national legal framework

The Italian statutory MSP process officially started with the transposition of the MSP Directive by the Legislative Decree No. 201/2016 and the Prime Minister's Decree of December 1, 2017.

The first decree established, among others, the Ministries of Infrastructure and Transport as the Competent Authority (CA) for the MSP process, while the second decree defined the Guidelines containing the operational phases and criteria to develop three Maritime Spatial Plans (MS Plans): the Tyrrhenian-Western Mediterranean, the Adriatic Sea, and the Ionian-Central Mediterranean. The MSP plans development has been entrusted to a Technical Committee, led by the CA. This committee includes representatives from five Ministries and 15 coastal Regions, ensuring that its composition reflects the distribution of legislative responsibilities between the Italian State and the coastal Regions on coastal and marine matters.



The 15 coastal regions involved in the MSP process benefited from the multi-scalar planning approach adopted, aligning national strategies with regional objectives to ensure coherent and sustainable use of marine resources.

Several Italian regions, including Sardinia, set up internal working groups involving different departments and with different levels of formalisation.

These were used to feed up the process (with data and knowledge) and to agree on key planning decisions at regional level.

The experience of the Sardinian region within the national MSP process was transferred into the REGINA-MSP project and influenced the case study approach and objectives.

The case study focused on operational needs emerged at the regional level during the national MSP process, aiming at proposing new solutions to address such needs. This, also allowed to actively engage a multitude of regional and local stakeholders. Three workshops were organised for the cooperative identification of regional needs and the co-development of solutions.



Activities conducted in Sardinia Region within REGINA-MSP

1. Analysis of planning instruments

The first phase involved a review of existing coastal and marine plans relevant to MSP falling within three main categories: cross-cutting plans and strategies; protection and conservation-oriented plans and strategy; and plans for economic sectors and other marine uses and activities.

Facilitated by the multi-scalar approach adopted for the Italian MSP Plans, the outcome of the analysis highlighted a good integration of the analysed regional plans and strategies with MSP, particularly for those addressing nature protection and conservation. Some mismatches still exist, being related to the same nature of other plans addressing only marginally the sea space, as in the case of the current version of the regional Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change.

2. Data base analysis and geoportal utilization

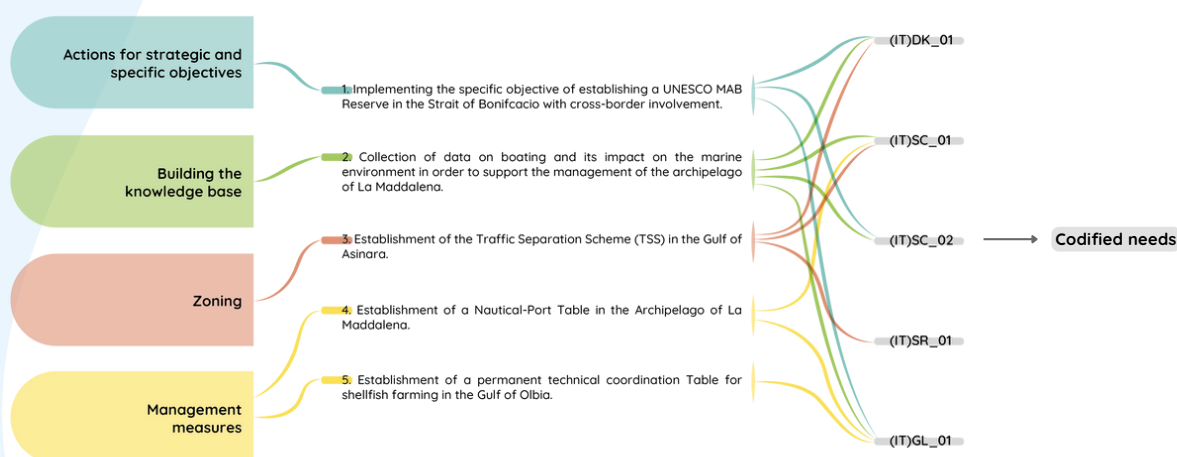
Regional data and geoportals are crucial for supporting comprehensive maritime spatial planning. This task focused on assessing the availability of data necessary for effective MSP and identified gaps in the Sardinian regional context, such as the distribution of recreational boats, data on small-scale and recreational fisheries, megafauna and the cumulative impacts, to support robust decision-making.

3. Stakeholder engagement

Regional stakeholder engagement is a cornerstone of the MSP process. Within this tasks, regional and local stakeholders from different maritime sectors, such as NGOs, port authorities, fishing and aquaculture operators, local research institutions, MPA authorities, etc., got involved through workshops and events for gathering local knowledge and needs and aligning the MSP with regional needs and priorities.

4. Regional actions for MSP

Based on the findings of the previous tasks and in response of the discussed needs, this final task identified a set of 5 actions for Sardinia, aiming at improving biodiversity protection, sustainable management of specific human activities at sea and cross-border cooperation within the frame of MSP. A deliverable (D3.4) of the project focusing on this task is available at <https://www.regina-msp.eu/actualites>.



Extract of the regional actions for MSP for the case of Sardinia, as part of task 3.4 of REGINA-MSP

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

Based on the findings of the Sardinian case study and the overall experience of the Italian MSP process, the follow policy recommendations aim to inform and make more effective MSP in a national, regional or local non-site-specific context. These recommendations fall within four macro-categories: governance, stakeholder engagement, resources and data.

The scope is to capitalise on a tailored integrated approach that supports both the conservation of the rich marine environment and the sustainable development of the maritime economy. These strategies, designed to be dynamic, allow for iterative updates and refinements based on ongoing assessments and stakeholder feedback, ensuring that MSP remains responsive to changing conditions and priorities.



Governance

- Establish permanent Coordination Tables on MSP within each coastal Region to facilitate knowledge exchange across departments, improve integrated marine-coastal planning management and allow coordinated regional efforts for the sustainable management of marine resources and the sea space. Formal endorsement by Regional Councils can strengthen the role of such Coordination Tables within MSP. (Regional and Sub-regional)
- Establish a national legislation that positions regions as co-responsible partners together with the national government of the MSP process. This might require the definition of robust coordination mechanisms (as the Technical Committee set in place in Italy for example), incorporating robust coordination mechanisms to integrate regional priorities into the national MSP framework effectively. (National)





Workshops in Sardinia as part of the REGINA-MSP project

Stakeholder engagement

- Establish permanent MSP Working Groups within each region, composed of diverse regional representatives, to oversee MSP implementation and effectively engage stakeholders. These groups should be formally recognised through an administrative act to ensure legal support, and be linked to larger intraregional Communities of Practice (CoPs) to promote broader stakeholder engagement, knowledge sharing, and continuous learning in MSP at both regional and sub-regional levels. (Regional and Sub-regional)
- Implement continuous stakeholder engagement throughout the entire MSP cycle to ensure inclusivity and transparency, utilising tools like participatory mapping and digital platforms. (Regional and Sub-regional)
- Empower regional authorities to autonomously implement MSP measures in their adjacent waters, involving stakeholders in co-planning to address local needs effectively. (National)

Resources

- Enhance regional authorities' capacity by developing attractive career paths and specialised training programs. (Regional and Sub-regional)
- Establish regional professional networks and organise inter-regional workshops to enhance skills development and address regional issues effectively. (Regional and Sub-regional)
- Create dedicated national funds to support MSP activities at the regional level, recognising the need for coordinated financial support. (National)
- Establish national support units to provide technical assistance and capacity building to regional authorities, helping integrate the latest research and technology into MSP practices. (National)

Data

- Improve regional authorities' and stakeholders' capacity to use geospatial data for MSP through targeted training and user-friendly tools. (Regional and Sub-regional)
- Develop and maintain dedicated regional spatial data portals, or integrate MSP functionality into existing platforms, to support collaborative decision-making and monitoring. (Regional and Sub-regional)
- Promote the active use of national geospatial portals designed for MSP by regional stakeholders, ensuring consistency in data standards and facilitating cross-regional collaboration. (Regional and Sub-regional)
- Develop a national MSP geo-database integrating data from diverse sources and make it accessible through an online platform with advanced search and visualisation tools. (National)

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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.



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