



Regions to Boost
National Maritime
Spatial Planning



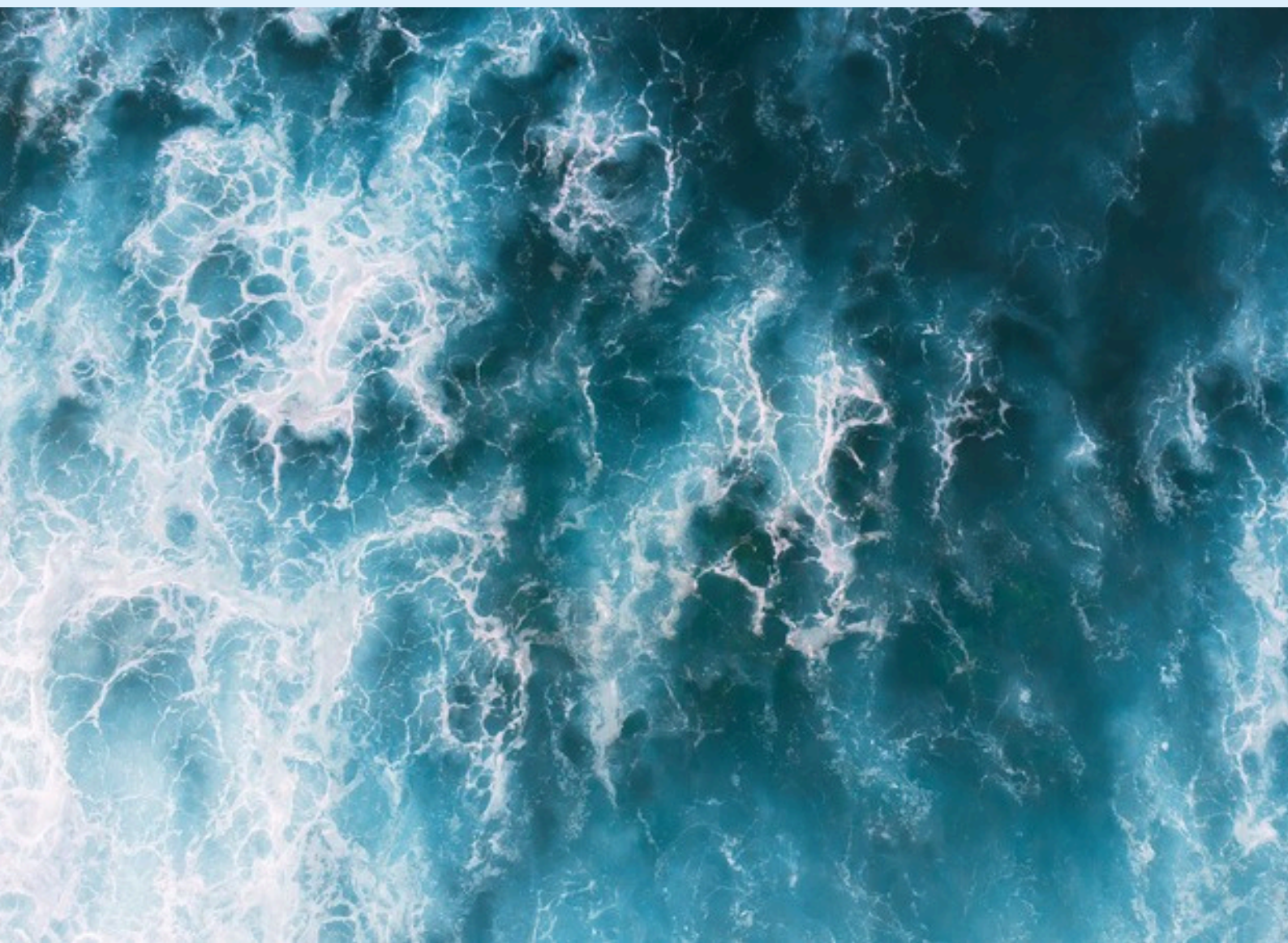
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REGINA-MSP

Achieving inclusiveness of regional stakeholders in Maritime Spatial Planning

Lessons learned from the REGINA-MSP project



The REGINA-MSP project and context of the leaflet

The REGINA-MSP project is a two-year project (2023-2024) that aims at greater integrating the regional and sub-regional needs, perspectives and stakeholders in the development and implementation of national Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP). A specific task of REGINA-MSP (task T4.3) was dedicated to the topic of Communities of Practice (CoP) as a way to enhance knowledge sharing among regional authorities and experts to improve the integration of regional and local views and stakeholders in MSP. In particular, the importance to include less heard stakeholders in MSP processes is important to ensure that their concerns are taken into account when organising and managing the sea and coasts. This leaflet (or communication brief) is a deliverable of the REGINA-MSP project for this specific task T4.3. Other associated productions include a second leaflet focusing on the development of a cross-regional CoP in MSP, as well as a video, available on the project website (<https://www.regina-msp.eu>).

The need for a more inclusive Maritime Spatial Planning at the regional level

The need for **participatory democracy** in MSP stems from the fact that all political decisions affect the way in which spaces are planned and used. According to the European Charter on participatory democracy in Spatial Planning Processes (2015), involving the public helps to make decisions that balance different needs and concerns and reduce conflicts. Indeed, according to the Council of Europe, it is important to **greater involve citizens and civil society actors** in local, regional, or national decision-making processes on issues that affect their daily life.

MSP is mainly a nationally driven process in most EU countries. The complexity of marine governance and the **necessity for a more inclusive MSP at all scales** (from local to national and beyond), to achieve sustainable management of the maritime space, have been highlighted in recent literature (Jentoft, 2017; Morf et al., 2019). In this respect, Regions (NUTS 2) - and especially regional authorities - need to strengthen their role in national MSP debates and consultations to make their views more visible and empower them to plan and implement maritime actions.

In relation to these aspects, the REGINA-MSP project:

- **Carried out a questionnaire survey** (Deliverable 2.1., available at <https://www.regina-msp.eu/>) to understand the differences between EU country in terms of marine governance and the how regions are involved in the MSP process. The survey gathered 36 replies from 12 EU countries.
- **Organised three international workshops** (in Thessaloniki, Vigo, and Nantes) to explore the level of regional stakeholder involvement in MSP and provide solutions for Regions to boost their role in national MSP (also through emphasising the importance of being part of a Community of Practice). These workshops are further described below.

The three international workshops at a glance

REGINA-MSP organised three international workshops with a twofold purpose:

- objective (1): explore ways of boosting the role of regions in national MSP (also emphasising the emergence of a Community of Practice), and
- objective (2): identify and involve regional stakeholders - and especially the poorly represented ones - in MSP debates and consultations. The present document focuses on this second aspect.



1

18-20 October 2023 - Workshop in Central Macedonia (Greece)

The need for cross-regional CoPs in MSP - Boosting the role of regions

6-8 February 2024 - Workshop in Vigo, Galicia (Spain)

Simulation of a cross-regional MSP Community of Practice

2



3

19-21 March 2024 - Workshop in Nantes, Pays de la Loire (France)

Drafting a roadmap for a cross-regional Community of Practice

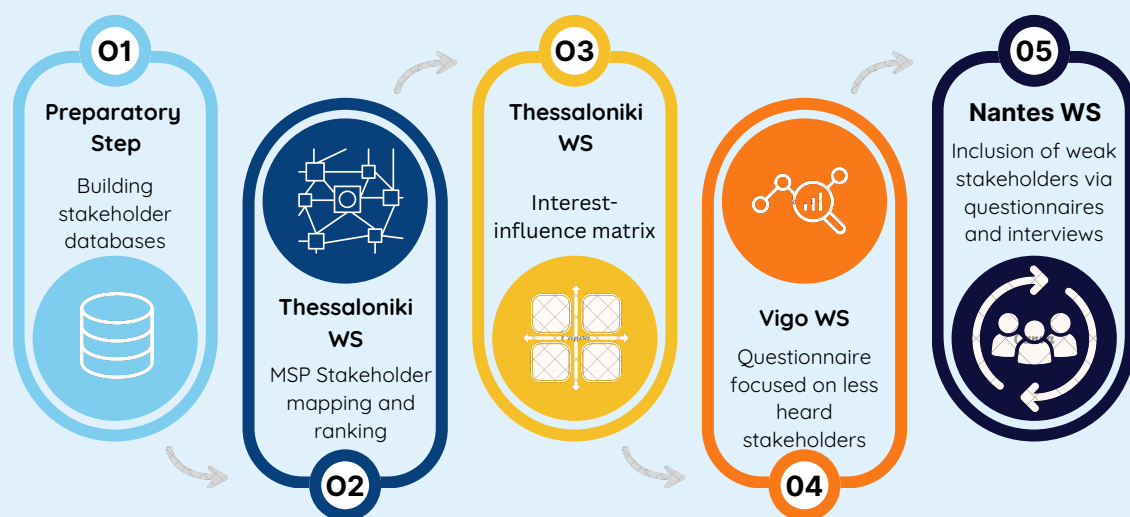


The three workshops brought together **116 participants in total**, including REGINA-MSP partners (43%), representatives of the regional authorities from the 8 Regions participating in the REGINA-MSP project (i.e., Central Macedonia, County of Mayo, Crete, Galicia, Murcia, Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur, Sardinia and Pays de la Loire, the hosting Region) (27%), representatives from the coastal municipalities of each hosting Region (15%), representatives of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (5.5%), and other representatives (e.g., the Central government operating at the local level) (9.5%).

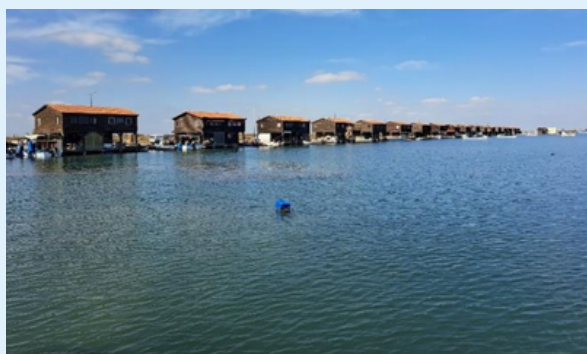
The methodology behind the REGINA-MSP international workshops to identify poorly heard stakeholders and ways to boost their role in MSP

With respect to the objective (2) described in the previous section, the following tasks were performed during the international workshops:

- **1st international workshop (Thessaloniki, Greece):** the workshop introduced methods, tools, and processes for the identification of regional stakeholders to the REGINA-MSP participating regions. The tools and techniques used during the workshop included building stakeholder databases, stakeholder mapping and ranking, the interest-influence matrix, participatory mapping etc.
- **2nd international workshop (Vigo, Spain):** a questionnaire was distributed, to identify the “weak” and least heard regional stakeholders, understand the reasons for their weakness, and identify bottlenecks and barriers limiting their engagement in MSP.
- **3rd international workshop (Nantes, France):** the emphasis was placed on poorly heard stakeholders and the interaction with them (via interviews, questionnaires, etc.), focusing on small-scale fishers from various EU regions.



Steps and tools used for stakeholder identification in REGINA-MSP



Photos of field visits proposed to the participants of the REGINA-MSP workshops. On the left, the view of fishermen huts in Thermaikos Gulf (Thessaloniki, Greece). On the right, discussion with a professional small-scale fisher in the offshore wind farm area of Saint-Nazaire, France.



Photos of working sessions during the REGINA-MSP workshops.

Building an MSP stakeholder database from a regional perspective

Following combined work delivered throughout the project (see for example Deliverables 3.3. and 4.3. at <https://www.regina-msp.eu/>), the key categories of stakeholders identified as central for inclusive MSP debates and consultations at the regional level and to build a stakeholder database include:

- 1 Public Sector: Regional and local authorities, central government institutions/offices operating at the regional level
- 2 Research and educational institutions operating in the regions (e.g. Universities, research centres, technology and innovation centres)
- 3 Port Authorities
- 4 Private sectors, representing all relevant maritime uses (e.g. Associations, Federations, professionals, companies)
- 5 Non-governmental organisations and societies, environmental associations and foundations,
- 6 Informal groups of citizens
- 7 The general public

Identifying the “weak players”, or poorly heard stakeholders

Throughout the three international REGINA-MSP workshops, emphasis was placed on introducing methods, tools, and processes for the identification of the poorly represented and least heard MSP stakeholders at the regional level. For this purpose, the following tasks were performed:

- **Stakeholder mapping:** this task used the previously built “**stakeholder database**” (that identified all relevant regional MSP stakeholders) to rank them, based on their degree of representation and level of involvement in MSP. In other words, taking into consideration whether they were “hard to reach” or “typically engaged” and what was the degree of their representativeness in the MSP process.
- **Interest-influence matrix******:** to identify different levels of stakeholder interest and influence in MSP, enabling the identification of priority groups or individuals in MSP.



Photos of working sessions during REGINA-MSP workshop. On the left, at the Thessaloniki workshop. On the right, a diver presents a participatory science project to map seabed biodiversity in the offshore wind farm of Saint-Nazaire, France.

***Stakeholder Database:** it consists of a document that contains all stakeholder information across different pre-established categories. In this case, it is a comprehensive, organized collection of information about authorities, groups, and organizations involved in or affected by MSP. The database can facilitate effective communication, engagement, and management by tracking stakeholders’ interests, influence, and contact details, and also support inclusive and informed decision-making.

****Interest-influence matrix:** it can be used to categorize a list of stakeholders depending on their power and interest in the project. Some may have the power to either block or advance the project. Some may be very interested, others may not be. Four categories emerge:

- High power – High interest: these stakeholders are likely to be decision-makers and have the biggest impact.
- High power – Low Interest: stakeholders who may not be interested in the outcome, but have power. They should be dealt with caution because they could use their power in a negative way.
- Low power – High interest: stakeholders that need to be adequately informed, can often be very helpful. **The “weak” stakeholders are part of this category.**
- Low power – low interest: stakeholders have little to zero interest in participating in the project (C40 CITIES, 2019)

Challenges limiting inclusiveness of regional stakeholders in national MSP

The work carried out at the three international REGINA-MSP workshops allowed to identify the following challenges, which could limit inclusiveness and efficiency, and prevent regional perspectives, priorities, and needs from being adequately addressed in national MSP:

- **Regions** - and more specifically regional authorities - are poorly or partially involved in national MSP, with a few exceptions where well-established MSP consultations occur (e.g., in Ireland, Spain, and Italy). As a result, regional and local governments express their interest in strengthening their participation in national MSP (also by participating in Communities of Practice).
- **Fishermen**, despite being traditional marine users, are considered the least heard stakeholders in the MSP processes, both in terms of their low level of involvement and degree of representation. In addition, they are under pressure and suffer significant losses due to the constant increase in the number of marine uses competing for the same maritime space.
- **The general public** was also identified as a sometimes-missing part in the MSP process, although it was widely acknowledged that local communities and citizens could provide valuable resources for a better understanding of the local marine areas (citizen science), but also for bringing local expectations and needs into the maritime spatial plans.

Improving the involvement of the least heard and poorly represented stakeholders

There is a need to ensure that MSP stakeholders get involved in a meaningful way in all stages of the MSP process. According to the findings of the international REGINA-MSP workshops, the weaknesses and bottlenecks for the least heard and poorly represented stakeholders relate to:

- **Communication and access to information:** the engagement of poorly represented stakeholders is challenging also due to limited access to information and language barriers. This exacerbates the inherent difficulty of participation, as navigating bureaucratic processes and understanding technical details can be overwhelming.
- **Capacity:** There is a notable lack of MSP expertise and ocean literacy among many stakeholders and especially “weak” ones.
- **Resources:** Many stakeholders sometimes lack the financial and human resources to engage in participatory procedures, compounded by insufficient access to the necessary technology and tools.

These three levers, i.e. access to relevant information, capacity-building and resources, should therefore be exploited to enable better integration of the poorly heard stakeholders in MSP.

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Citation

Papageorgiou, M., Pozoukidou, G., Istoriotou, T., Kostopoulou, T., Sakellariou, S., Châles, F., Laroussinie, O., Cervera-Nuñez, C., Campillos-Llanos, M., Gutiérrez-Ruiz, E., Ramieri, E., Guennal, L., O'Hagan, A.M., and Kyriazi, Z. (2024). Achieving inclusiveness of regional stakeholders in Maritime Spatial Planning. 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.



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