

Sub-Regional Workshop on Stakeholders' Involvement in the Context of Marine Spatial Planning Implementation

Split, Croatia, 27-28 November 2018

Conclusions

The Sub-Regional Workshop on Stakeholders' Involvement in the Context of Marine Spatial Planning Implementation held in Split, Croatia, at PAP/RAC premises, on 27-28 November 2018, concluded as follows:

Agenda item 3: Potential Approaches and Proposed Steps for Stakeholders' Involvement in Marine Spatial Planning

1. The meeting appreciated the work undertaken by the Secretariat in preparation of the meeting; particularly with regards to the working document UNEP/MED WG.455/2 on potential approaches for stakeholder engagement on MSP, prepared with support from SUPREME Project;
2. The meeting reviewed the main methodological elements for the preparation of the Report, including the analysis of the legal and policy framework for stakeholders' involvement in MSP, the assessment of existing methods and tools for stakeholders' involvement as well as the proposed steps presented;
3. The meeting highlighted the importance of appropriate involvement of stakeholders as an integral part of the MSP process, and its contribution in developing realistic and easily implemented marine spatial plans and ensuring ownership by different sectors; it further agreed on the main steps to be followed including:
 - Integration of stakeholders' involvement into the MSP implementation strategy/plan;
 - Relevant stakeholders' identification and mapping;
 - Initiation of communication (through use of databases);
 - Preparation of workshops through calendar and concept notes distribution;
 - Organization of workshops complemented by other means of participation (small meetings, interviews, questionnaires etc);
 - Consultation on the outcomes of the process and the list of key actions;
 - Establishment of follow-up and monitoring plan.
4. The meeting acknowledged the importance of public perception throughout MSP implementation process.

Agenda item 4: Experiences from Stakeholders' Involvement in the Case Studies

5. Following the presentation by SUPREME Case Studies representatives of the stakeholders' involvement approaches followed in the framework of case studies, the meeting provided substantive inputs on the definition of best approaches for stakeholders' involvement in MSP and highlighted key elements to be taken into consideration;
6. The meeting concluded that stakeholders' involvement should be clearly designed at an early stage, clarifying the groups of stakeholders to be involved and their level, the appropriate timing and means of involvement, highlighting the importance of providing clear information on the MSP process and its potential impacts in the development of the area;

7. The meeting highlighted the development of scenarios as a useful tool for MSP, during which contribution from stakeholders is essential, especially regarding data collection and future trends analysis;
8. Regarding scenario building the meeting pointed out that during plans' development, it is important to go beyond the sectorial approach and take into account cumulative impacts from different sectors in line with integrated management approach, as well as cross-cutting elements, including climate change and its possible impacts on marine and coastal environment and maritime activities;
9. The meeting highlighted the importance of ensuring that the environmental sector is actively involved in all stages of plans preparation, to provide substantive inputs on the basis of environment-related data analysis and assessments, noting however that even in cases where there is still uncertainty the precautionary principle should be applied;
10. The meeting stressed the distinction between the two phases of MSP, namely the one on the draft proposal and the one on official proposal of MSP;
11. The meeting highlighted the need to invest adequate time in order to inform different stakeholders on the MSP process and its potential impacts on different sectors, and noted that an issue-driven approach can be very helpful in bringing stakeholders around the table;
12. The meeting acknowledged the importance of synergetic implementation of MSFD and MSP, and the role that MSFD is expected to play in informing stakeholders on the status of marine environment, which can guide the development of marine spatial plans;
13. The meeting acknowledged the important activities on MSP implementation carried out in the area, including with support from Projects (SUPREME, SIMWESTMED, GEF Adriatic) and through the Cooperation Agreement between UN Environment/MAP and IMELS.

Agenda item 5: Possible Steps towards Common Approaches for Marine Spatial Planning at Sub-Regional Level with a focus on the Adriatic (exchange of views)

14. The meeting appreciated the strong experience and knowledge generated in the region through CAMP both for stakeholder involvement as well as for the development of tools that can be used in the framework of MSP (imagine, carrying capacity, scenario building etc.);
15. The meeting acknowledged the added value in working at sub-regional level, especially regarding sharing of experiences, best practices and lessons learnt related to different aspects of MSP implementation and addressing transboundary elements of MSP;
16. The meeting pointed out that the application at national and sub-regional level of certain tools and methodologies that are in place should be supported with the view of using this feedback for validation and use at a more aggregated level;
17. The meeting highlighted the importance of ensuring synergies between MSP and MSFD/IMAP implementation towards GES-oriented MSP;
18. The meeting concluded that the Adriatic area is an excellent candidate to develop sub-regional tools and promote MSP implementation in a harmonized manner, mainly due to the good baseline on MSP implementation in the area and the ongoing work carried out in almost all the countries. It further highlighted that the capacities built through different projects and processes have created a good momentum to take MSP to a higher level and identified the following key areas towards conceptualization of common sub-regional approaches for MSP, with support from the Secretariat:
 - Support further development and implementation of regional monitoring and assessment through IMAP indicators and other socioeconomic related indicators addressing drivers, with the view to

- ensuring that the MSP fully meets environmental objectives to achieve and/or maintain GES and promotes development of different sectors, with no cost for the environment;
- Promote the multidisciplinary dimension in the MSP implementation and related tools and reach out to sectors beyond the environmental sector;
 - Develop cross-cutting tools related to cumulative impact assessment, scales of assessment and reporting, drivers' analysis including scenario building, carrying capacity etc. which can support the contribution of the environmental pillar to the implementation of MSP by clarifying in a quantifiable manner the environmental objectives to be met through this process (i.e. through thresholds, clear definition of GES, baseline values, reference values etc.);
 - Contribute to the establishment of indicator-based reporting systems to show the effectiveness of implementation of MSP in its entirety, including economic development and growth, environmental sustainability and social development; the Adriatic can be a best candidate area to undertake this work before going at a more aggregated level;
 - Support MSP as a tool for defining measures while on the other hand ensuring that MSP takes into account existing obligations deriving from the MAP Barcelona Convention Protocols and relevant Regional Plans/ PoM;
 - Continue capacity building and awareness raising activities to further strengthen the added value of MSP as a tool to support the sustainable development of maritime economic sectors and LSI, provided that environmental protection and Ecological Objectives are fully taken on board in a coherent and integrated manner.

Agenda item 6: Land-Sea Interactions in the Context of Marine Spatial Planning Implementation

19. The meeting appreciated the work undertaken by PAP/RAC on the development of a methodological guide for analysis of LSI in the framework of MSP with support from SUPREME Project, as presented in working document UNEP/MED WG.455/3;
20. The meeting highlighted the importance of integrating LSI into MSP process and considered the methodological guidance, and the excel prepared by PAP/RAC, as an important tool to support decision makers in integrating LSI into MSP;
21. The meeting stressed that LSI analysis should not be seen as an additional process or requirement, but rather as an element which needs to be fully streamlined into the MSP implementation process aiming at avoiding duplication of efforts;
22. The meeting highlighted the LSI should not concern only the present interactions but also potential future interactions taking into account development projections and future trends as well as emerging issues that may affect the natural processes and human activities in the coastal area, and may be linked with scenario building processes;
23. The meeting suggested some updates on the excel sheet, including possibility to select multiple options, clarification of marine zones etc.
24. The meeting stressed that the quality and extent/depth of LSI analysis depends largely on the amount and quality of data and information available;

Agenda item 7: Specific Issues related to Stakeholders' Involvement

25. The meeting concluded on specific questions related to stakeholders' involvement as follows:

a) Stakeholders' Involvement in Transboundary/ Cross-border Marine Spatial Planning

26. Stakeholders involvement in the context of transboundary/ cross-border MSP implementation has some additional challenges to overcome including among others the different administrative and institutional set up, the different priorities in terms of sectoral development, gaps in data availability interoperability, and exchange etc. In view of overcoming the difficulties and ensuring the engagement of stakeholders in transboundary/ cross-border MSP a number of elements were highlighted by the meeting:

- Start with identification of the relevant public authorities and administration levels in charge of MSP implementation and undertake a classification and comparison;
- Assess the applicable legal and policy framework, to identify common processes and instruments, as well as bilateral/multilateral agreements applicable, taking also into account to the extent possible intranational partnerships and agreements within sectors;
- The Transboundary Strategic Environmental Assessment (TSEA), which should be applied in transboundary MSP can be a good basis to start exchanges among stakeholders; need to make sure that these two processes are implemented in strong synergy;
- Identify and assess different priorities among involved countries in terms of sectoral development, but also common objectives and priorities; in this respect, regional and global instruments and processes (established through Regional Seas Conventions, Global MEAs, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, EU expert groups, EUSAIR Strategy etc.) can provide a solid basis for the identification of common objectives and priorities;
- Strengthen data and information availability, interoperability and exchange among countries, with support from Regional Seas Conventions and Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programmes (IMAP), in line with SEIS principles;
- Consider Regional Seas Conventions as the most appropriate structures to support stakeholders' involvement in transboundary MSP, promoting dialogue and sharing of experiences, definition of common region-wide objectives, and integrated assessment; the meeting highlighted that the MAP Regional Activity Centre on Information and Communication (Info-RAC) can contribute to the establishment of a platform for exchange of information among countries;
- For the Adriatic area, EUSAIR can also provide an important platform for the definition of common vision and objectives at sub-regional level;
- In parallel with the coordination at the high national level, dialogue should be also promoted between relevant sectors, in view of producing information which can be then fed into discussions at the higher level.

b) Organization of one-to-one Sectoral Meetings

27. One-to-one sectoral meetings can be a useful method for stakeholders' involvement, taking into account the following elements:

- The main criterion highlighted by the meeting for the identification of the sectors to be invited to one-to-one meetings should be conflicts to be resolved, starting from major ones, following an issue-driven approach;
- The meeting highlighted that one-to-one sectoral meetings should not be seen individually but rather as part of a multi-step approach, including:
 - Initial meetings with representatives from a single sector (one-by-one meetings) aiming at building common understanding within the same sector;
 - One-to-one meetings, bringing together sectors which significant (potential) conflicts;
 - Meetings with multiple sectors, in line with a "net approach";
- Cumulative impacts should be also taken into consideration for the identification of sectors to be brought together.

c) Ways to Ensure Balanced and Equal Representation of Different Sectors

28. Building on the outcomes from stakeholders' involvement in the case studies, the meeting highlighted that the number of stakeholders who responded to the invitations and participated in the pilot cases' workshops varied from low to significant, noting that the level of participation has been affected among others by the following factors:
- Officiality of the process (if the process is perceived as pilot and not official, participation level would be lower);
 - The role and responsibility of the institution organizing the stakeholder consultation process (if MSP responsible authority is organising the event it can be expected that the participation would be higher);
 - Understanding the MSP process by the stakeholders;
 - Perception of stakeholders of their role and concrete benefits of the process;
29. The meeting pointed out that in all case studies the level of involvement of the private sector and civil society was lower, while representatives of the public sector were the majority of participants;
30. The meeting highlighted as a best practice the organization, prior to MSP stakeholder involvement process, of one introductory workshop where MSP and its overall benefits/ impacts would be clearly elaborated;
31. The meeting further stressed the lack of constructive discussions noted in some cases, noting that more creativity in the organization of stakeholders' involvement should be ensured, including for example the combination of different tools (i.e. workshops combined with individual meetings, focus groups and B2B meetings).

d) Involvement of Stakeholders from Land-Based Sectors in line with LSI

32. The meeting concluded that stakeholder involvement in LSI should be part of the overall stakeholder involvement in MSP, and highlighted the need to involve stakeholders from key land-based sectors, mainly those with significant interactions with sea area;
33. The meeting noted that stakeholders from land activities and sectors were involved in the case studies' workshops, but mainly as representatives from coastal municipalities.