

# Workshop “Integrating an ecosystem-based approach into maritime spatial planning”



# Capturing the complexity of ecosystems

- ▶ Strong links are required between the **MSFD** and the **MSP** in terms of data exchange on pressures, ecosystem functioning, their relation to human activities (see next point). It is essential that protected areas defined under the MSFD are set in the MSP with the space allocated to other human (economic) activities after. One of the challenges faced is time: with delays in the MSFD implementation, it was not possible to feed MSP with the right MSFD data at the right time. Also, sufficient resources need to be allocated to bringing MSFD data and knowledge to the MSP process.
- ▶ More integration is required with: the Bathing water Directive, Aquaculture development, fisheries...
- ▶ The complexity of ecosystems is not well understood by all - including by stakeholders mobilized in the MSP process. Thus, efforts are required to enhance “marine ecosystem literacy” for all, an issue that is relevant for both Romania and Bulgaria
- ▶ We need to find clever ways to integrate the philosophy, data and priorities of the MSFD into MSP (we need to be proportionate and not try to integrate everything and the full complexity of the MSFD) - the same applies also to the WFD, Biodiversity, CFP, cultural heritage (underwater), ICZM/ICM => **how to decide/prioritize what is essential to consider in MSP is an important question.**
- ▶ SEA can address cumulative pressures => it is a key instrument that can support the MSP process.

# Giving attention to the human-ecosystem connections and integration

- ▶ Port and oil installation legislation and impact assessments need to be considered as these sectors have significant pressures on marine ecosystems. Setting maritime transport routes for reducing negative impacts on biodiversity is also an aspect that requires attention.
- ▶ Setting aside protected areas for spawning can lead to fish stock improvements. Dedicated areas can also be set for Aquaculture. The definition of such areas can build on fishers' knowledge. Overall, adequate collaboration between economic activity representatives and environmental bodies are essential in defining these areas.
- ▶ The future EMFF provides opportunities that can support the development of sustainable marine aquaculture. Setting areas for aquaculture development can also drive actions for improving the quality of these areas, including when these are to be implemented in the WFD context for addressing land-based polluting pressures.
- ▶ The future of marine activities needs to be considered, including in relation to the ambition of the Green Deal (will impact blue power, aquaculture and alike..). We need to better consider how sectors will want to develop in the marine environment (including when these developments are linked to sectoral directives and strategies) so we can allocate these future developments to areas where there is the lowest (no) negative environmental impact.
- ▶ More attention is required to setting the interface between ICM and MSP, and find ways to better address the land-sea interface. Information on land-based activities and pressures can come from the MSFD. However, the MSFD does not provide enough information on litter that comes from land (quantity, origin...).

# Organizing the MSP process

- ▶ Formal governance mechanisms are required at the formal level for bringing different sectors in. In Romania, for example, the sustainable exploitation of resources in the fisheries sector is defined by a common order for fisheries developed by the AGRI and ENV ministries, building on studies done by scientific institutes (endorsed by Academy). The application of this common order is expected to lead to improvements in stocks and in related MSFD indicators
- ▶ It is important that professionals (fishers, tourism, maritime transport...) from all sectors are made aware of the MSP role and objectives.
- ▶ Stakeholder mobilization requires mechanisms for bringing up ideas from wider group of people, including via small meetings at local levels with good facilitators and communicators, building e.g. on existing networks of facilitators and sectors in countries (such as FARNET). You need to that government officials have dedicated times to put the MSP process in place, and that sufficient resources is allocated to facilitation. It is essential to avoid putting in place a stakeholder process that (a) does not have any follow-up and feedbacks (e.g. explaining its results and implications) and (b) delivers a strategy that nobody applies!
- ▶ We need to support a “planning culture” so people trust the legislation and the institutions (a different culture as “territorial spatial planning”, even if both are quite linked and use similar tools and concepts?). Developing such a culture might face cultural challenge in countries that had experiences in “planned economy”.
- ▶ Do not hesitate to make best use of digital tools, social media and alike - we are all using them today anyway
- ▶ Knowledge and information that is accessible in global platforms such as EMEDNet can help filling knowledge gaps. These general platforms and databases have the advantage of providing harmonized data sets, an asset in transboundary processes.
- ▶ We need more research as there are still many things to be known in the Black Sea. Research should be driven by demands from authorities that need to be made explicit to researchers. It is essential that research delivers open access data very quickly, so up-to-date data is used as basis for planning.
- ▶ New mechanisms are required to better connect “terrestrial” and “marine/maritime” planning processes.
- ▶ Covid makes “good cooperation” challenging (despite all virtual tools...)

# The role of international Commissions

- ▶ The Black Sea Commission could strengthen its connections and collaborations with regional fisheries organisations.
- ▶ It can plan the role of coordinator for the implementation of MSFD and MSP. As many riparian countries are not EU MS with the same obligations, developing a soft instrument that follows the same MSP Directive principles could be a way forward facilitating the mobilization of other non-EU countries. Other (regional) instruments already in place could offer opportunities to address MSP (such as experienced in the Mediterranean sea that builds on ICZM experiences to discuss MSP)
- ▶ It is important that the Black Sea Commission supports all countries with the “sharing of experience”, concrete projects, concrete learning possibilities....