



PLANNING THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

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Joint final conference of SUPREME and SIMWESTMED METHODS and TOOLS : Mixed working groups

Working groups on Ecosystem Based Approach in MSP

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The workshop was splitted into three 40' talks involving three different groups of participants of about 10-15 persons. Each round started with a very quick introduction of Ecosystem Based Approach principles, based on literature review. Then, each participant was asked to vote for two principles: the most important, and the most challenging one with regards to MSP implementation. participant were asked to rank principles on a paper sheet, based on these two criteria. Then, discussions were driven on the most voted principles. Here are summed up the main findings of the three discussions.

EBA Principles introduced during the workshop

Based on McLeod *et al.* 2005, Ehler and Douvere 2009, UNEP 2011, Pisces 2013, MMO 2014, Barcelona convention 2015, Long *et al.* 2015, Helcom-Vasab 2016, Ansong *et al.* 2017.

1. Have a long term vision
2. Integrate ecological, social, economic and institutional perspectives and recognize their interdependencies
3. Make protecting and restoring marine ecosystems as a priority
4. Take anthropogenic pressures and cumulative impacts into account
5. Consider connections and connectivity between and across ecosystems
6. Take an ecosystem services perspective
7. Promote adaptive management
8. Planning at the appropriate scales
9. Adopt a precautionary approach
10. Use the best available knowledge
11. Involve stakeholders

Results

Principle 1 «have a long-term vision» was the mostly raised by participants, both as an important or as challenging principle. It is an overarching principle which encompasses and drives all the other principles. Among the other principle, the other one considered as a priority by the workshop participants were:

- principle no. 3. “make protection and restoration of the ecosystems a priority”,
- principle no. 7 “promote an adaptive management”
- principle no. 11 “involve stakeholders”.

Main points raised during the discussion

There is a need for a real strategic planning beforehand plan setting. This would encourage the arising of a long-term vision. This seems very challenging since elaborating a planning vision demands an effort in defining a consistent direction of what is desirable and also possible in marine areas. Visioning is a very demanding activity, which is nourished by human capacity and political will. Participants recognized that policy makers are often reluctant to generate long-term visions, and are more concerned by short-term issues. In Croatia, it is the parliament which has adopted the long-term strategy, strengthening the long-term vision. France as well has adopted by national decree a “National Strategy for Sea and coasts” running until 2030.

International and EU policies or commitments, such as Aichi targets (CBD COP 10 decision X/2), United Nation Sustainable Development Goal 14, European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EU), are strong drivers to set a sustainable long-term vision as well as concrete measures to protect the environment. The overlapping between the international, regional, and European requirements should be made explicit, in order to push the decision makers to the adoption of long-term visions.

MPA networks are very important as a starting point to support environmental protection within MSP. MSP can identify priority areas for conservation that are not protected yet, also in relation to existing MPAs.

Conversely, MPA networks are the most often pre-existing to MSP. Policies provided by MPAs have to be considered by MSP processes. To do so, planners should have access to clear and gathered information on MPA management (regulations, governance...).

There is a need to encourage vision sharing and cooperation between competent authorities and administrations in order to foster coherence of their actions. In France, Spain, and Portugal, the same administrations are in charge of the marine environment protection (such as MPA policies or MSFD implementation), and MSP implementation which would encourage coherence between these 2 policy fields. MSP and environment policies are enforced by different competent authorities in Italy and Croatia.

Concerning management, it has been pointed out that plans need to give some clear indications to management (e.g. well-defined planning measures, zoning or regulations) to be properly enforced. On the other hand, plans must be flexible as well, in order to incorporate changes. The balance between flexibility and level of determination (for the plan to be coherently implemented) need to be found. The Portuguese experience was mentioned as a potential model. Requests for plan adaptation can be done by economic

sectors to address new unexpected situations or needs. These requests are evaluated with regards to the coherence of the entire plan. UK licensing model was mentioned as well. The existence of a unique body to manage authorization processes (MMO) is an advantage in maintaining the coherence of the plan though incorporating some changes. The French approach with the “vocation map” could also bring flexibility.

Finally, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been addressed. SEA is an important process to guaranty the environmental sustainability of MSP plans, and, as a consequence, to grant coherence to multiple projects implemented within the general MSP framework. However, the application of SEA on MSP processes is still at its infancy. Much effort is needed in coordinating the implementation of SEA in MSP between countries, to improve the coherent implementation of sustainability principles and targets in the different marine regions.

Then, education has been raised as a major driving force. This concerns not only the civil society, but also raising awareness of the policy makers and civil servants. There is also the need to work with private sectors, in order to create a demand for MSP to support blue growth.

To conclude, the role of planners has been particularly emphasized to provide understandable information and raise the different stakeholders' categories awareness. Planners are also well placed to promote coherence of public action in order to foster the emergence of the so-needed shared long-term vision.

References

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