

The role of knowledge and research in two case studies on cross-border MSP in the southern North Sea

Hommel, S., Pastoors, M.A., Stelzenmüller, V., Goldsborough, D., Maes, F., Sørensen, T.K., Gerits, R., Stuver, M., de Vos, B.

Within the southern North Sea, several EU member states are developing or have already implemented marine spatial plans for their EEZs. However, marine spatial planning (MSP) is usually carried out at the national level and largely ignores the possible mutual benefits of cross-border cooperation. The MASPNOSE project has facilitated two concrete, cross-border MSP initiatives:

- 1) The Thornton Bank area on the border between Belgium and the Netherlands where cross-border coordination could be used to address wind energy development, shipping and fisheries management.
- 2) The Dogger Bank international fisheries management plan developed by the North Sea Regional Advisory Council (NSRAC). Here cross-border MSP was used to develop a stakeholder perspective on spatial management measures.

The two case studies were in different stages of the cross-border MSP process. In this paper we focus on the role of knowledge and research in these two planning initiatives. We describe the knowledge requirements that have been articulated (e.g. on ecosystem components, spatial-temporal patterns, current and future human use, institutional setting) and how these requirements have been addressed through data workshops with stakeholders, analysis of policy documents and interviews. In the Thornton Bank case-study the knowledge requirements focussed on the institutional and administrative settings and the identification of policy priorities. In the Dogger Bank case study, stakeholder knowledge was combined with research knowledge to assess zoning options for the Dogger Bank area.

Keywords: Marine Spatial Planning, cross-border, North Sea, Dogger Bank, Thornton Bank

Contact author: Saskia Hommes, Deltares, The Netherlands, saskia.hommes@deltares.nl