Systems and tools for monitoring, evaluation and revision of maritime spatial plans, including in the context of the implementation of Directive 2014/89/EU

Final Study Report
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List of abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Definition
EU	European Union
IOC UNESCO	International Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
MS	Member State
MSP	Maritime Spatial Planning
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
EEA	European Environment Agency
EMODNET	European Marine Observation and Data Network
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment

Note that the abbreviation MSP is used for the process of Maritime Spatial Planning, not for the resultant maritime spatial plans. In this project, the developed tools and methods for assessment, monitoring and revision cover both MSP and maritime spatial plans.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Assessment	An assessment is conducted to identify the level of performance of a plan ex-ante
Data demand	The demand for data that needs to be fulfilled before a method can generate good quality results
Equity	The situation in which everyone is treated fairly and equally
Evaluation	An evaluation is a systematic and objective examination concerning the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of activities in the light of specified objectives. In the context of this study, we talk about ex post evaluations, used throughout the European Commission to assess whether a specific intervention was justified and whether it worked (or is working) as expected in achieving its objectives and why
Indicator	A variable that provides information on some specific aspects of objectives that lend themselves to be measured
Marine	Related to the sea or sea transport. The term "marine" usually concerns phenomena occurring in the sea
Maritime	Connected with human activity at sea. In this study, we use the term Maritime Spatial Planning, in line with the EU Directive 2014/89/EU
Maritime Spatial Planning	The entire process of designing and establishing a maritime spatial plan
Method	The procedure followed for accomplishing monitoring, evaluation and assessment
Monitoring	Monitoring is a continuous assessment that aims at providing all stakeholders with early detailed information on the progress or delay of the ongoing activities

1 Introduction and structure of the draft final study report

1.1 Introduction

The present document is the final study report for the assignment "Systems and tools for assessment, monitoring and revision of maritime spatial plans, including in the context of the implementation of Directive 2014/89/EU".

This report is one of three deliverables of the project. Also made available are:

- The online "Guide to monitoring, evaluation and revision of maritime spatial plans"
- The interactive pdf document "Toolbox for monitoring, evaluation and revision of maritime spatial plans"

1.2 Structure of the study report

The interim report contains the following main elements:

- Chapter 2: An executive summary
- Chapter 3: Summary of work done
- Chapter 4: Report of the closing workshop

The report comes with 12 annexes:

- Annex 1: Reports selection
- Annex 2: Scientific literature selection
- Annex 3: Literature characterisation
- Annex 4: Schematic representation
- Annex 5: Interview transcripts
- Annex 6: Ranking of best practices
- Annex 7: GAP analysis
- Annex 8: Excel-based version of the guide
- Annex 9: Case study fiche Bulgaria
- Annex 10: Case study fiche Greece
- Annex 11: Case study fiche Netherlands
- Annex 12: RIS file of literature reviewed in Task 1, for import in reference managers
- Annex 13: A summary of reviewer comments, prepared by the Chair of the closing workshop

2 Executive summary

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) is an important policy tool for the sustainable development of marine areas and coastal regions, and particularly for the restoration of Europe's seas to environmental health. The high and rapidly increasing demand for maritime space for different purposes, such as installations for the production of energy from renewable sources, oil and gas exploration and exploitation, shipping and fishing activities, ecosystem and biodiversity conservation, the extraction of raw materials, tourism, aquaculture installations and underwater cultural heritage, as well as the multiple and cumulative pressures on coastal resources, require an integrated planning and management approach.

The Maritime Spatial Planning Directive was adopted in 2014. In Directive 2014/89/EU it is stated that Member States shall review their MSP 'as decided by them but at least every ten years' (Article 6.3). This is needed to deal with uncertainty and incorporate various types of change and requires a cost effective and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan. Yet this explicit attention given to evaluation is not mirrored by a large body of literature or studies on how to evaluate MSPs. It is within this context that this proposal seeks to develop a set of systems and tools that allow Member States and non-Member States to monitor, evaluate and, as appropriate, review their maritime spatial plans.

The objective of this study is to provide guidance to administrators in monitoring, evaluating and revising their maritime spatial plans, in particular in the context of the implementation of the Directive 2014/89/EU on Maritime Spatial Planning (or MSP Directive). To this end, the project provides a "guide" and a "toolbox".

This project was divided into six main tasks. The guide and toolbox were designed based on literature review and expert interviews, tested in case studies and revised subsequentially. A review meeting was organised to validate the findings with external experts.

The guide aims to support EU Member States in developing an approach to monitoring, evaluation and revision. Key issues are identified that Member States could consider when establishing and executing their maritime spatial plans including, but not limited to, the requirement formulated in Directive 2014/89/EU and the intricate relations between Directive 2014/89/EU and other EU Directives.

The guide outlines the steps in monitoring and evaluation of an MSP, with a summary of suggested methods and tools that will be expanded on in each of the steps. It starts with a decision matrix for objectives outlined in Directive 2014/89/EU, designed to get Member States thinking about the reasons why they would pursue certain objectives within their national MSP. Step 2 maps out the minimum requirements identified under article 6 of Directive 2014/89/EU, and matches them to existing requirements and/or considerations in other relevant EU Directives and policy instruments. Step 3a outlines the process of identifying targets under the selected objectives. These targets are divided into governance, socio-economic and environmental. Step 3b is designed to assist Member States in choosing appropriate indicators that match the targets selected in Step 3a. Step 3c presents information on building baseline information for the indicators identified in Step 3b and includes data collection considerations. Step 4 in the process of monitoring, evaluating and revising MSP is not included in the guide: it needs to be decided on by Member States who select appropriate management actions that can achieve set objectives, and associated monitoring strategies to measure the impact of these management actions. Step 5 ties all the previous steps together and concludes the process on monitoring and evaluation of an existing MSP.

The toolbox is a comprehensive set of methods and tools that national administrations can draw upon when monitoring, evaluating and revising their maritime spatial plans. The Toolbox developed takes the form of a methods & tools decision support matrix in which each of the identified methods & tools is mapped across their purpose and stage of use (monitor; evaluation; revise). Depending on the needs (purpose and stage), practitioners can select the method or tool that best suits their needs. The methodology fiches provide the descriptions of the identified methods & tools, using the uniform format. Each methodology fiche provides the name, purpose, outcome, applicability, operationalisation, resource needs and pros & cons of the method & tool as well as additional considerations, further information and references.

3 Summary of work done

3.1 Monitoring and evaluation of MSP

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) is an important policy tool for the sustainable development of marine areas and coastal regions, and particularly for the restoration of Europe's seas to environmental health. The high and rapidly increasing demand for maritime space for different purposes, such as installations for the production of energy from renewable sources, oil and gas exploration and exploitation, shipping and fishing activities, ecosystem and biodiversity conservation, the extraction of raw materials, tourism, aquaculture installations and underwater cultural heritage, as well as the multiple and cumulative pressures on coastal resources, requires an integrated planning and management approach.[1]

The Maritime Spatial Planning Directive was adopted in 2014. In Directive 2014/89/EU it is stated that Member States shall review their MSP 'as decided by them but at least every ten years' (Article 6.3). This is needed to deal with uncertainty and incorporate various types of change and requires a cost effective and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan.[2] Yet this explicit attention given to evaluation is not mirrored by a large body of literature or studies on how to evaluate MSPs.[3] It is within this context that this project seeks to develop a set of systems and tools that allow Member States and non-Member States to monitor, evaluate and, if appropriate, revise their maritime spatial plans.

3.2 Objectives of the study

The objective of this study is to provide guidance to administrators in monitoring, evaluating and revising their maritime spatial plans, in particular in the context of the implementation of the Directive 2014/89/EU on Maritime Spatial Planning (or MSP Directive). To this end, the project provides a "guide"[4] and a "toolbox".

The guide aims to enable EU Member States administrations to assess progress in the implementation of the EU MSP Directive. Key issues are identified that Member States could consider when establishing and executing their maritime spatial plans including, but not limited to, the requirement formulated in Directive 2014/89/EU and the intricate relations between Directive 2014/89/EU and other EU Directives.

The toolbox is a comprehensive set of methods and tools that national administrations can draw upon when monitoring, evaluating and/or revising their maritime spatial plans.

3.3 Methodology

This project was divided into six main tasks. The guide and toolbox were designed based on literature review and expert interviews, tested in case studies and revised subsequentially. A review meeting was organised to validate the findings with external experts.

- In Tasks 1 and 2, a review of existing data and methods was carried out while identifying potential knowledge gaps concerning monitoring, evaluation and revision of maritime spatial plans.

[1] Friess, B., & Grémaud-Colombier, M. (2019). Policy outlook: recent evolutions of maritime spatial planning in the European Union. Marine Policy, 103428.
[2] Douvere, F., & Ehler, C. N. (2011). The importance of monitoring and evaluation in adaptive maritime spatial planning. Journal of Coastal Conservation, 15(2), 305-311.
[3] Carneiro, G. (2013). Evaluation of marine spatial planning. Marine Policy, 37, 214-229.
[4] Note that the Terms of Refence used the term "template". During the expert meeting it was concluded that the term "guide" is more appropriate

- In Task 3, a guide for monitoring, evaluation and revision of maritime spatial plans and MSP was developed, specifically in the context of 2014/89/EU. This guide addresses the linkages with other relevant EU Directives and policies. It supports Member States in identifying the most relevant topics for monitoring, evaluation and revision and provides guidance on formulation of evaluation criteria and indicators.
- In Task 4, a toolbox was developed, providing Member States and non-Member States with insight into relevant methodologies for monitoring, evaluating and revising maritime spatial plans.
- In Task 5, case studies from different sea basins were conducted to test and validate the robustness of the guide and the toolbox. The findings of the case studies were used to revise both guide and toolbox.
- Finally, in Task 6, a closing workshop was organised to review the results of the previous tasks and promote a discussion with stakeholders on the further developments of monitoring and evaluating MSP.

3.4 Task 1: Baseline review and State of Play

The structured literature review to comprehend the state of play of monitoring, evaluation and revision of MSP and/or of maritime spatial plans has taken into account relevant scientific literature retrieved from Scopus. A complementary part includes specific repositories, data portals and reports related to marine and coastal environments and MSP. This includes the reports available on the European MSP platform website, reports provided by UNECO/IOC and reports available on the Commission's websites. The literature review was divided into six steps.

1) In the first step, we make use of specific search terms to retrieve available literature. As a result, a long list of scientific (from Scopus) and non-scientific documents (from the complementary part) was compiled containing 244 records. This longlist can be found in Annex 1, Excel file "report identification.xlsx" (46 records) and Annex 2, Excel file "scientific literature selection.xlsx" (198 records).

2) All reports and scientific publications identified in step 1 were assessed by the Study Team, who read the abstract. Publications were scored according to their link with MSP, link to monitoring, evaluation and/or assessment and revision, and reference to tools and methods. For each criterion, publications received a score on a 1-4 scale (4= very clear, 3= clear, 2= likely, not clear, 1= uncertain). This exercise enabled us to identify the most relevant reports and scientific publications. Based on this exercise, we propose to include 17 reports (see Annex 1, column I) and 26 scientific publications (see Annex 2, column AD), with a minimum score of 11 points.

3) Once all relevant sources were identified and logged in a document database, the selected documents went through a process of coding (NVivo[5] and QDA Miner[6]) to highlight extracts throughout the text that describe key aspects of the publication, such as methods, geographical scope, indicators, etc. This exercise allows the team to organise, store and process all relevant qualitative data in one central place to ease further analysis and compiling the inventory in Step 4.

4) All relevant documents, collected in the document databases (See Annex 1 and Annex 2), were scrutinised to see what methods, practices and tools were used. This was reported in an Excel database that is the basis for further analysis in Step 5, as well as Task 2 (see Annex 3, Excel file "literature characterization.xlsx"). The identified methods,

[5] https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/home
[6] https://provalisresearch.com/products/qualitative-data-analysis-software/

practices and tools were collected in a database, indicating authors, source, year, geographical scope and links to full documents.

5) The methods, practices and tools compiled were critically evaluated by looking at quality and robustness. Quality is defined as the degree to which a study adheres to scientific standards for research, whereas robustness is defined as the degree to which methods used can be used under different conditions (e.g. different regions). In addition, critical remarks and comments, as reported in the reports and publication by the authors, were complemented by our own analysis of the quality and robustness of the methods used. The results were added to the Excel file (Annex 3) compiled in Step 4 to include scores on quality and robustness.

6) In the last step, we make the findings reported in the Excel file available in a visually attractive format, by showing the number of publications on assessment, monitoring and revision of MSP, identified in step 1 and selected for further review in step 3 to 5; the frequency with which various methods for monitoring, evaluation and revision are used; and the geographic distribution of the methods used. See the illustration in Annex 4 (PDF document "schematic representation").

3.5 Task 2: Critical analysis of the 'Baseline review and State of Play'

An iterative process of desk study and expert consultation was conducted to evaluate methods and tools identified. This task was sub-divided into 4 different steps:

3.5.1 Expert interviews

Explorative, semi-structured interviews with experienced practitioners and evaluators of maritime spatial planning were conducted. Nine interviews were conducted by Skype and two experts gave written feedback on the questionnaire. Seven approved interview transcripts are provided in Annex 5 (PDF document "Interview transcripts"). The response from the expert interviews consisted of general remarks on the key elements of monitoring and evaluation, and feedback regarding guide and the toolbox. Key findings from the interviews include:

- In evaluation, it is a challenge to attribute changes to MSP as a policy intervention, given the fact that other interventions are made simultaneously.
- In MSP, the principles of democracy, participation and transparency are considered a mechanism to deal with power imbalances; to achieve equity and a fair distribution of costs and revenues.
- The importance of the distinction between *ex ante* and *ex post* evaluations regarding impact assessment, process evaluation and evaluation of effectiveness/outcomes.
- Major learning takes place as a result of collaboration and interaction among Member States of a sea basin on best practices; not what to do; but how to do it.

With respect to the guide & toolbox, respondents stressed the importance of:

- An example of best practices in the application of each of the methods in the toolbox: how and when it was applied and for what purpose.
- Clarifying, in the toolbox, how one method connects to the other within a discipline and between disciplines. The challenge for stakeholders is to integrate models for conservation of natural resources with the socio-economic models, thus providing coherence and consistency between the different methods and tools from different disciplines and within a discipline (transdisciplinary approach).

3.5.2 Ranking of best practices

The list of methods and tools from Task 1 are scored considering their compliance with the MSP toolbox implementation. The score includes three main categories: data needs (i.e. describes if the method/tool applied is data intensive and if the data can be easily accessed, gathered or generated at low/affordable cost), resources required (i.e. the resources required describes how costly can be the process of data collection or method/tool development in MSP, which includes financial and human resources, and infrastructure) and technical complexity (i.e. describes the technical feasibility of a method/tool based on the amount of resources required and the status of data acquisition of given indicator). See the scoring Annex 6 (Word document "ranking of best practices").

3.5.3 Gap identification

A gap refers to a situation where no applicable method or tool exists to evaluate MSP against one of the formulated objectives. To identify gaps, we created a confrontation matrix, confronting the objectives in 2014/89/EU and related Directives and criteria for the content of the document with the methods, tools and practices identified. With the confrontation matrix, we scored the relation of each method against each MSP-related objective. The scoring system in the confrontation matrix has five levels: 0 - this method does not provide relevant data; 1 - this method might at best provide some insights; 2 - method is useful but additional methods are surely needed; 3 - method is useful, but might need additional methods to get a full comprehension; 4 - method can be used and will provide enough info on its own. However, it should be noted that this scoring exercise requires coherence as some methods are only partially explored and presented in the reviewed publications, which may "under" or "over" estimate their real potential for addressing MSP objectives. Therefore, each method is scored against 22 objectives by five different researchers of the project team. Very discrepant scores among the referees were internally discussed in order to reach a consensus around a common score. The average of these scores is calculated and used as a final score to identify the overall compliance of the method with a given MSP-related objective. See Annex 7 (Word document "GAP analysis") for the final confrontation matrix with the score averages.

3.5.4 Propose paths for bridging gaps

The GAP analysis illustrates that there are suitable tools and methods to evaluate if MSP contributes to the objectives formulated in Art 5 and Art 6 of Directive 2014/89/EU. Regarding the use of the best available data (art. 6.2.e), it should be noted that there is no specific method used to certify whether a given MSP is using the best available data. That is why MSP evaluation requires an integration of an interdisciplinary technical committee to assess the data quality. In the situation where there is no clear method standing out for monitoring or assessing a particular objective, or if the objective is ambiguous and not clearly addressed by one specific method, our group of specialists choose a specific method that would better represent a particular objective when populating the Toolbox (see Task 4).

3.6 Task 3: Development of the guide for monitoring, evaluation and revision of maritime spatial plans, in particular in the context of Directive 2014/89/EU

The guide is an interactive tool which allows the user to follow through a series of steps in the process of monitoring, evaluating and revising an MSP (Figure 11). The user can select the most relevant options at each step to come to a tailored summary of key factors, targets and indicators to consider in monitoring, assessment and revision. The full guide can be found in Annex 8 (Excel document "Guide"). The guide was originally designed in Microsoft Excel. Following the comments made in the review meeting, an online, user-

friendly version was prepared which will be hosted on the website of the MSP Assistance Mechanism.

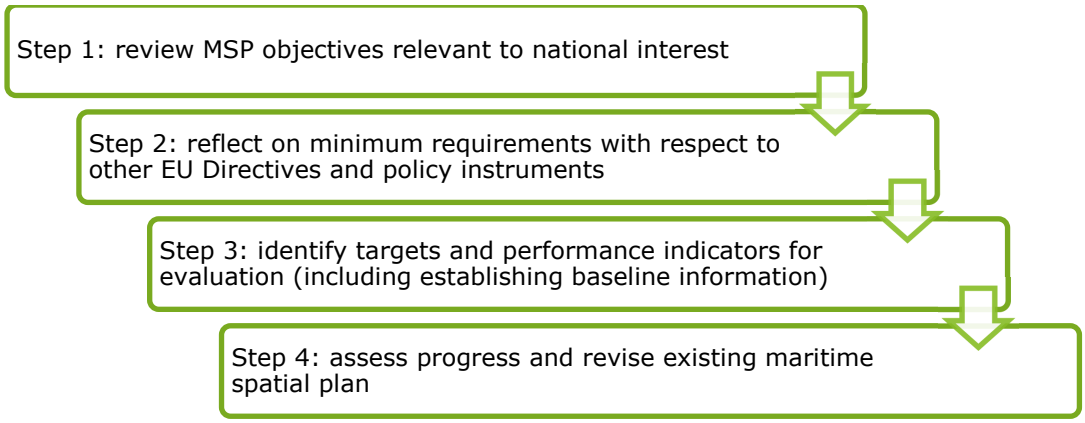

Figure 1: Visualisation of guide for assessment of MSP

Throughout the guide, methods and tools from Task 4 are also suggested to Member State representatives at each step to assist them in undertaking that particular step. Furthermore, an overview page is provided at the beginning of the guide so that Member States can skip ahead to the step that's most relevant to the stage of their progress without having to go through all the prior steps.

All in all, the guide provides clarity to Member State representatives on the following questions:

1. Which maritime sectors have become important to the national MSP objective since the last review or the establishment of the MSP?;
2. What considerations need to be made in order to comply with the minimum requirements set out in article 6 of Directive 2014/89/EU, as well as other relevant EU Directives and policy instruments?;
3. Which targets are appropriate based on the objectives selected and the indicators that are most relevant in assessing progress made to achieve those targets?; and
4. Which methods and tools can assist in carrying out points 1-3?

With regards to considerations relating to interactions with other EU Directives and policy instruments against minimum requirements set out under Directive 2014/89/EU, this is done through prompting leading questions. For example, the leading questions against the minimum requirement of land-sea interaction considerations in developing a blue energy sector include: "What will be the impact on indirect land-use change from establishing blue energy?" (2015/1513/EU) and "Will the indirect land-use change occur in areas with high-carbon stock, such as wetlands and peatlands (impacting emissions)? Or biodiverse areas, that could threaten or endanger ecosystems or species?" (2018/2001/EU).

For the development of targets and indicators, core principles are outlined to assist Member States in selecting the most appropriate targets and indicators. For example, targets should follow a SMART framework, and indicators should embody characteristics of good indicators. More specifically, the SMART framework for targets is defined as:

- Specific: well-defined outcomes of an MSP sector;
- Measurable: can be quantified and measured by indicators;
- Achievable: realistic and attainable with reasonable means, in terms of both time and resources;

- Relevant: desired outcomes are relevant to other commitments made at the national, EU or international level;
- Time-bound: there is a deadline in which to achieve the targets.

And the characteristics of good indicators are as follows:[7]

- Relevant: to the objective or impacts of the management action it seeks to measure
- Measurable: observable and readily measured with existing tools and programmes in a timely fashion
- Specific: to the aspects that are intended to monitor and be separated from other responses or impacts of management measures
- Scientific: based on grounded evidence and not subject to biases
- Clear: easily interpreted by the target audience, especially for aspects of importance to the target audience
- Comparable: over time, i.e. consistently measured under the same principles and definition
- Responsive: sensitive to management measures and provides timely and reliable feedback to the impacts of management measures
- Cost effective: monitoring cost of indicator or data collection should not outweigh the benefits of monitoring.

Lastly, guidance is provided for efficient utilisation of existing databases and data sources that can provide the necessary information for some of the indicators developed.

3.7 Task 4: Development of the toolbox for monitoring, evaluation and revision

A toolbox was developed to identify,describe and map methods & tools that can be used to monitor, evaluate and revise maritime spatial plans. The toolbox builds upon the review of methods (Task 1) and critical evaluation (Task 2). The purpose of this toolbox is to provide practitioners easy access to methods & tools that they can use during the different stages of the maritime spatial planning process.

In the development of the toolbox, the following approach was taken:

3.7.1 Identify, categorise and map relevant methods, practices and tools

The database of methods & tools developed in Task 1 and critically evaluated in Task 2, was the starting point for this task. It was used to identify the most relevant, robust and scientifically sound methods & tools that can be used for the monitoring, evaluation and revision of maritime spatial plans. To this end, the short-listed and reviewed papers (from Task 1 and 2) were read, and relevant methods & tools were categorised based on i) their purpose and ii) the stage of the maritime spatial planning process in which they can be used.

3.7.2 Formulate use instructions, including cross-links to existing sources and examples

The methods & tools selected for inclusion in the toolbox were described in further detail, to support EU and non-EU states in the application of the methods & tools. For each method & tool, a 'Methodology fiche' was prepared, using a uniform format with the following headings:

- Name (Common name/names of method/tool)
- Purpose (What does the method/tool aim to achieve?)

[7] Based on https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/sub_landing/files/8_2-Intro-to-IndicatorsFMEF.pdf

- Outcome (What information does the method/tool provide?)
- Applicability (When and where can the method/tool be applied?)
- Operationalisation (How does the method/tool work?)
- Needs (What resources are required for applying the method, in terms of time/ data/costs/skills?)
- Pros and cons (What are the strengths and weaknesses of the method/tool?)
- Considerations (What issues should be considered when using the method/tool?)
- Further information (Any particular website or case study that is useful?)
- References.

3.7.3 Provide decision support in selecting the most appropriate method:

Finally, the methods & tools were mapped according to i) their purpose and ii) the stage of the maritime spatial planning process in which they can be used. Depending on the needs (purpose and stage), practitioners can select the method or tool that best suit their needs.

The considered purpose categories are Generic monitoring and evaluation methods, Methods on social impact, Methods on environmental impact, Methods on economic impact, Methods taking spatial approach and Legal. No additional categories for specific tools, such as for stakeholder participation and environmental valuation, were included as these are not MSP-specific and generally accessible through dedicated toolkits. In the Methodology fiches, included in the "Toolbox for monitoring, evaluation and revision of Maritime Spatial Plans" we refer to such toolkits when appropriate.

3.8 Task 5: Case studies

3.8.1 Objective and method

In each case study, we initially proposed a combination of desk research of relevant MSP documentation along with expert interviews (approximately 10) in each country with MSP competent authorities and local experts. The desk research includes the resources on MSP in the concerned sea-basis, as outlined on the European MSP Platform[8] and also go through the national and regional reports based on relevance to MSP or included sectors. Additionally, working sessions were conducted with local experts in the sectors that would be part of the MSP. In the proposal and the interim report, five case-study countries were proposed out of which three countries were selected after consultation with the steering group and the countries:

- **Greece**: Proposed to test the guide before drafting a MSP.
- **The Netherlands**: Proposed to test the toolbox for a recently developed MSP.
- **Bulgaria**: Proposed to test application of the toolbox during the MSP development.

Once the initial contact was established with the proposed contacts, additional experts were jointly identified to contribute towards the toolbox and the guide.

3.8.2 Working sessions for case study

In light of COVID-19 constraints, an alternative 3-step method of working sessions with MSP competent authorities from the country was used. This method was applied over the course of a few weeks to collect information and test the toolbox and the guide with the case study countries.

[8] https://www.msp-platform.eu/

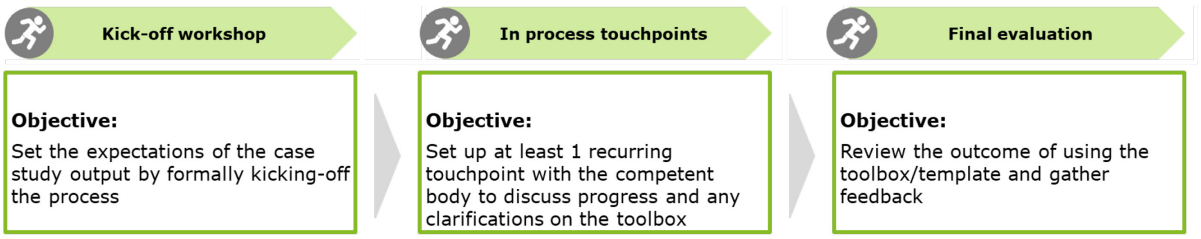

Figure 2: Working sessions to test guide and toolbox for case study

The kick-off workshop set the expectation of the case study by formally kicking off the process with the competent authorities and other experts, and was used to:

- Review the toolbox/guide to evaluate the MSP with the team.
- Walk through all the steps of using the toolbox/guide with the competent authorities and the experts.
- Clarify queries on the usage of the toolbox/guide from the participants.
- Gather feedback on the working session process and the first impression of the toolbox/guide.

As a second step, a duration of few weeks was provided to the experts to go through the toolbox and the guides. In case of queries, the expert and consortium interacted (on need basis) to clarify any queries regarding the toolbox, guide or the evaluation questions

In the final step, an evaluation session was conducted to review the outcome of toolbox/guide application and received detailed feedback from the participants. Additionally, this session was used to collect detailed feedback on the usage of the toolbox/guide and receive suggestions for improvement

3.8.3 Case study output

Through these sessions, the consortium was able to collect feedback and evaluation of the case study countries on;

- The overall usability of the guide (Greece) and the toolbox (Bulgaria and the Netherlands) for the local context
- The ease of understanding the guide and the toolbox to identify relevant information

As such, the case studies provided valuable information to improve the guide and the toolbox and make it better fit-for-purpose for all users, irrespective of their current phase of MSP.

Feedback received was used to revise the guide and toolbox, before presenting them to external experts (See Task 6). The main changes made include:

- Clarification of the objective of toolbox and guide
- Greater emphasis on social impact of MSP in guide
- Increased opportunity to add own objectives and indicators to the guide, allowing the user to tailor it to country-specific situation
- Adding an example of a method or tool being applied to the toolbox.

The detailed evaluation feedback received from the countries has been represented in country fiches. These fiches provide a more detailed account of the evaluation and the feedback received from each country.

The case-study fiches are available in the following Annexes:

- Annex 9: Bulgaria case-study fiche
- Annex 10: Greece case-study fiche
- Annex 11: Netherlands case-study fiche.

3.9 Task 6: Organisation of a closing workshop

3.9.1 Objective and method

This task featured the organisation and implementation of a workshop with the purpose of presenting draft findings and gathering feedback for incorporation in the final Study Report. The team designed and implemented the workshop. The workshop was held in English.

A detailed concept note for the workshop – describing our approach to organising the logistics of the workshop and its proposed planning – was provided as part of the offer and then refined as part of the inception report. In light of COVID-19, as part of the interim report, potential pathways to handling the situation were provided while keeping the possibility open to fully or partly (in a hybrid approach) organise the workshop as in-person event. Between the interim and final report a final decision was taken to organise the workshop fully online.

The original date proposed for the workshop was 15 October 2020. Due to delays in the project timeline it was decided to postpone the workshop to 10 December 2020.

This closing workshop was organised using the videoconference platform Microsoft Teams, given the recent switch of the European Commission IT framework that allows using this platform. Microsoft Teams was chosen over Webex due to its better functionality and connection stability.

To make the workshop more interactive and engaging, two additional tools were used: the interactive whiteboard platfarm MURAL[9] (for breakout sessions) and the live polling tool Menti[10] (to make panel sessions more interactive).

The final agenda, which was revised to take into account the online setting (including reducing it to a half-day workshop) is presented below.

[9] https://www.mural.co/
[10] https://www.mentimeter.com/

1: Agenda of the closing workshop

Time	Agenda item	Tools
09:15-09:30	Technical check, experts and participants log in	n/a
09:30-09:35	Welcome by DG MARE	Presentation
09:35-10:00	Presentation of the study by the project team *Team presents purpose, methods and findings/deliverables of the project*	Presentation
10:00-11:15	Discussion of feedback from expert panel experts. *Expert panel discussion, led by chair.*	Mix of presentation and online polling systems
11:15-11:30	Short break	n/a
11:30-13:00	Discussion of elements in breakout rooms *Two or more breakout groups, each led by the project team, in which main outcomes of the expert feedback are discussed and common solutions are sought together with all participants.*	Mural
13:00-13:30	Closing session ○ *Summary of discussions by rapporteurs from each break-out session and the chair who will have listened in to each group discussion* ○ *Recap of main gaps of the study and way forward* ○ *Closing words by DG MARE*	n/a

3.9.2 Experts and chairperson

As part of the offer, a selection of experts to be invited for the workshop was identified and then updated throughout the course of the project, based on feedback and availablility of the experts (following the change of the date of the workshop).

Both the chair and the experts reviewed the project outputs (toolbox and guide) in written form following a review outline provided by the consortium, and attended the workshop to present and discuss their review. The chair synthesised the written feedback and presented the synthesis during the workshop (see Annex 13 for the written summary of reviewer comments). The experts and chair then discussed their feedback in more depth during the workshop.

Additional participants were invited to join the workshop, including:

- Relevant EC services
- MSP planners (practitioners)
- EU Monitoring & Evaluation experts

The consortium took detailed minutes of the discussions during the workshop (including the discussions in the breakout sessions) and together with the written statements from the experts this feedback was used to revise the guide and toolbox. The full report of the review meeting is available in Chapter 4.

3.9.3 Revision of guide and toolbox following the closing workshop

This section describes the main changes made to guide and toolbox to address the comments made during the workshop.

Table 2: Revision to guide and toolbox after the closing workshop

Comments	Changes to guide and/or toolbox
Guide was difficult to understand and operate. **Experts suggested an interactive online tool.**	The Excel-based guide is converted into a more user-friendly interactive online tool.
The guide should assume that a maritime spatial plan is in place. This is not always clear.	This is made more explicit in the online version of the guide.
Guide appears to be "stiff", not accommodated to different planning cultures in Europe.	Member States have the opportunity to add objectives and indicators to accommodate for national preferences. In the online tool, this is made more clearly visible.
Equity is an important emergent issue in relation to maritime spatial planning and should be incorporated.	Equity is now explicitly addressed in guide and toolbox. In the guide, equity is added as one of the cross-sectoral requirements. In the toolbox, it is indicated which tools can be used for studying equity.
Various discussions on the appropriate terms and confusion in terminology.	A glossary is added to guide and toolbox. The "template" is now called "guide". The phrase "monitoring, assessment and revision" is replaced by "monitoring, evaluation and revision".
More attention should be paid to the skills and capacities needed in monitoring, evaluation and revision of maritime spatial plans.	A separate section on skills and capacities needed is added to the guide.
The level of specifity of tools presented differs.	This is acknowledged but considered inevitable by the study team. The differences in specificity are now acknowledged in the toolbox.
Participants suggested an online version of the toolbox with an option to submit new tools in order to create a growing database.	The toolbox is now made available through an interactive pdf file that can be made available online. The suggestion to update it regulary is welcomed but cannot be addressed in the scope of the project.

4 Report of the closing workshop

4.1 Objective

The objective of this workshop was to gather feedback from expert reviews to the draft final deliverables of the project mentioned in the title. These deliverables included the draft versions of the "template"[11] to guide the review process of Member States' planning authorities and of the "toolbox", which provides a collection of methods and tools to perform monitoring and evaluation of MSPs. The review collected during the workshop contributed to the further improvement of the deliverables.

4.2 Structure

Members of the expert panel had received the template and toolbox in advance to prepare their comments. These were presented and discussed among the panelists in the first main session. Subsequently, in two parallel breakout sessions, concerns, questions and suggestions from all participants were collected and structured. The table below summarises the workshop structure.

Time	**Agenda item**
09:30-09:35	Welcome
09:35-10:00	Presentation of the study by the project team
10:00-11:15	Discussion of feedback from expert panel experts.
11:30-12:50	Discussion of elements in breakout rooms 1. Template 2. Toolbox
13:00-13:30	Closing session

4.3 Participants

Expert Panel: Charles Ehler (UNESCO/IOC), Andrea Barbanti (National Research Council, Italy), Helena Calado (University of the Azores), Odran Corcoran (WWF), Wesley Flannery (Queens University Belfast), Javier Garcia Sanabria (Cadiz University), David Langlet (University of Gothenburg), Massimiliano Mazzanti (University of Ferrata), Tanya Savova (Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications, Bulgaria), Riku Varjopuro (Helsinki Commission Secretariat), Tom Woolley (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Ireland)

Invited participants: Daniel Depellegrin, Tony Zamparutti, Triin Lepland, Elin Celik, Margarita Stancheva, Vesselina Troeva, Patricja Enet, Stella Kyvelou, Joacim Johannesson, Sagrario Arrieta Algarra, Goncalo Carneiro, Anestis Gourgiotis

European Commission and agencies: Anja Detant, Guido Schwarz, Monika Peterlin, Stephane Isoard, Javier Villar Burke, Jordi Guillen, Sarah Neehus

[11] Note that the term "template" was replaced with "guide" after this workshop. For this reason, we use "template" throughout the workshop report.

Project team: *Wageningen University and Research:* Sander van den Burg, Peter Roebling, Maggie Skirtun, Deborah Bakker, Olga van der Valk, Walter Rossi Cervi; *Deloitte:* Gurvinder Arora; *Ramboll:* Thomas Neumann, Jacob Steinmann

4.4 Meeting notes

After a short welcome by the European Commission represented by EASME and DG MARE, the project team presented the methodology, process and context of preparing the deliverables.

4.4.1 Expert panel review

The presentation of the review carried out by the expert panel started with an introduction by the chair *Charles Ehler*. He stated that evaluation is often an afterthought and not considered at the initial stages of most planning processes. However, evaluation should be an essential part of all planning to ensure that achievements towards the objectives can be measured, a process called adaptive management. In this context, he emphasised the importance of this project and its deliverables. He also congratulated the project team on the comprehensive work done up to the draft report stage. In prior coordination with the experts, it was agreed to focus the main review comments on the template, as this has evoked most questions and concerns out of the two deliverables.

On this note, the chair invited the members of the expert panel to share their general remarks on the template in a first round.

Helena Calado commented that the template is difficult to understand and operate from a practitioner's perspective. In her view, the template would benefit from clear definitions of the underlying terms like "monitoring, assessing, reviewing", clearer instructions with real-life examples and an additional graphical abstract summarising the steps and their connection to the planning process.

Riku Varjopuro added that, indeed, the work was very comprehensive, but a problem is that there are so many different ways of performing MSP across Europe. Thus, it is impossible to capture all aspects, even with such comprehensive work and some level of generalisation needs to be adopted.

Matteo Mazzanti criticised the presentation of the material. In his opinion, they too often took the form of lists instead of a narrative to entice authorities to follow good planning procedures. For him, more connection between different indicators would be useful. This would facilitate to integrate different data sources and methods.

Wesley Flannery mentioned the different cultures of planning across Europe. The current form of the template might be too stiff to reflect this. In this respect, he calls for culture to be included in the considerations of benefits and trade-offs. Additionally, he was critical that equity is mentioned but that it is not shown how it could be integrated in the planning process. As a suggestion, he mentioned adding an E (equitable) to the definition of SMART objectives.

Javier Garcia Sanabria presented his view that the template has a sectoral approach, whereas MSP is meant to be cross-sectoral. Moreover, he called for stronger support on the assessment component. This should not be limited to compliance but focus on desired outcomes and why some have been achieved while others have not.

Andrea Barbanti shared the comments from his co-experts. In his opinion, the deliverables will be helpful to the Italian MSP process. To further improve the usability, he suggested adding an example of all steps of the template based on a virtual plan.

David Langlet also mentioned the equity dimension, which is introduced but not further defined, as are other terms in the template and toolbox. Overall, however, he congratulated all on the impressive work done, which only needs some improvement.

To complete the first round, *Tom Woolley* commented that the focus on quantitative indicators pulls decision makers away from cultural implications. More qualitative indicators around hard to monitor cultural criteria would be welcome to counteract this.

Charles Ehler then focused the discussion on the use of terms such as "assessment" and "evaluation". He asked the panel which wording would be more suitable. In his experience, planners do not like the strong implication of "evaluation". Along these lines, he also urged to retitle the "template" as a "guide" to avoid the impression of this being the only right way to follow.

Andrea Barbanti agreed that the terminology creates a grey zone. After reading the report and also underlying Terms of Reference, he preferred to use "assessment" over "evaluation".

Tom Woolley emphasised the importance of consistent terminology and specific indicators that need a stronger focus in the deliverables. In particular, process indicators that define the planning and evaluation approach need more attention in comparison context and outcome indicators that can be captured by factual data.

Riku Varjopuro pointed out that evaluations should take place to hold authorities accountable and create learning. This is his understanding of an evaluation and in this way, it adds value to society. For him an assessment has the connotation of an impact assessment. It can be practiced within an evaluation but is a distinct concept.

Charles Ehler concluded this discussion with the suggestion to include a glossary to define the important terms.

As another discussion point, the chair *Charles Ehler* led the discussion to focus on how the work performed could best be communicated. In his opinion, an Excel sheet is not very user friendly. However, a report would not be a better option. He recommended to focus on more and better graphical representations to offer guidance to practitioners that work under time constraints.

On this point, *Tania Savova* commented that she also prefers simpler communication forms than Excel sheets and suggests combining template and toolbox in one place to simplify the navigation.

Tom Woolley saw the need to take a step back and consider the message sent for the set-up of planning teams. Since maritime spatial planning is complex, it takes specific skills, time capacities and dedication. Guidance documentation therefore needs to ensure to point out that skills need to be in place in MSP teams.

Wesley Flannery added that also stakeholder capacities need to be evaluated to understand who is missing from providing input in planning processes and why this is the case. As an example of good practices, he mentioned the planning performed by the Department for Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) in Canada.

Charles Ehler emphasised the existence of relevant best-practice examples beyond Europe, such as New Zealand. He followed up on the necessary skills for planning teams, as in his experience, the skills for MSP are often inadequate. He asked what the most important skills would be.

Riku Varjopuro answered that any planning team needs to be multidisciplinary. However, he pointed out that evaluation of planning requires a different skillset than the planning itself. In any case he presented leadership of the team as crucial. He agreed that the project deliverables could give more ideas on how to build a team for planning and evaluation.

Helena Calado stressed that this needs to be taken into account from the beginning of the process. In her opinion, a specified planner is required in an MSP team. But as they can be biased, more people need to provide expertise from other perspectives such as biology, economy, society. Additionally, skills in communication, digital tools, and negotiation are necessary for successful planning.

Javier Garcia Sanabria commented that two different sets of skills are needed. First the topical knowledge and second the personal skills in leadership and communication.

Tom Woolley added that also political insights and legislative understanding are important to be able to position the planning in the legal context and political agenda.

Charles Ehler then concluded the first review session. He summarised that as important elements, details on equity and additional examples, also from outside of the EU are missing from the written deliverables.

4.4.2 Parallel breakout sessions

In the following session, more in-depth discussions on the two components, the template and the toolbox followed. For the parallel discussion, the participants were split in two groups, each switching topic after 40 minutes.

Template:

The first group discussed the template with positive comments on steps 1, 2, 3b and 3c. However, most steps also received comments to improve their usability. As a first point such comments concerned the interconnection between parts of the template such as different indicators in different steps, trade-offs and benefits. Second, there was confusion about the flow of the steps and their relation. A flow diagram or other figure as an overview was seen to be necessary. Third, participants called for more examples and potential data sources to support the understanding and reduce the perceived complexity when starting the steps. Fourth, certain indicators were questioned. For example, the number of issued licences does not include the purpose of these licences. Also, governance indicators were mentioned as missing.

Fifth, and important, the template was described as being too focused on compliance rather than instructing to set ambitious but relevant targets and evaluating their achievement.

As a remark on the communication and usability, experts suggested an interactive online tool instead of an Excel sheet.

The second group structured their discussion less around the steps suggested in the template. Instead, general features were commented on and discussed. First, again the equity dimension of objectives was emphasised by the participants. Second, a sectoral approach is not adequate for the overarching nature of maritime spatial planning and the multiple uses competing in the maritime space. Third, the participants commented on the lack of objectives and indicators for biodiversity and procedural aspects such as cross-sectoral communication. In conclusion, the participants saw the need to include a broader set of considerations when designing the objectives.

Additionally, a stronger connection to the UNESCO MSP process was suggested that builds on the existing structure. The template could be developed to add more depth to the specific steps mentioned in the UNESCO framework.

Other remarks left by the members of this group were to name the steps for clarity, emphasise on the guiding nature, and to add more recommendations on how to mitigate and mediate conflicts arising from trade-offs between interests.

Toolbox:

The first group started by commenting that the toolbox is a useful collection of tools for the planning process. Positive remarks were that most tools are described in a flexible way and often include reference to real-life examples.

Asked about weaknesses of the toolbox, participants raised the issue of the heterogeneity of the tools. They were described as ranging from very specific to high-level, where the latter tools often can be achieved with different methods themselves (e.g. land-sea interaction). Moreover, tools for the reconciliation of trade-offs between interests and objectives were mentioned to be missing. Also, participants called for consistent definitions to be added across all tools.

Further comments on the toolbox included that a closer link to the monitoring and evaluation steps in contrast to the planning stages would add further clarity and that more practical examples would be helpful to practitioners when first using such tools.

Similar comments were raised in the second group. The participants also congratulate the team on the toolbox, its organisation and broad coverage. However, not all aspects are equally well covered. As examples, tools on negotiation, trade-off and mediation as well as communication and engagement are only represented in small numbers. Also, the focus on M&E is said to be missing for many of the tools. Participants remarked again that the level of specificity differs between the tools (e.g. capacity building compared to serious games) and that definitions of terminology would add clarity to the document.

As with the template, participants suggested an online version of the toolbox with an option to submit new tools in order to create a growing database. This online presentation should also include more visualisations of the interactions between tools, highlighting where they are complementary.

4.4.3 Closing session

The closing session started with a brief summary of the discussions in the two breakout sessions. For the template, the main topic is to include further details on how equity considerations can be strengthened in the MSP process. For the toolbox, more information on the interaction between the various tools will be useful.

In the following, *Charles Ehler* presented his conclusions from the workshop. He emphasised the importance of monitoring and evaluation in the process to achieve successful planning and policy action. In this context equity is a rather new concept that has come to the equation. It is, however, crucial to ensure political support from a wide basis of stakeholders and the public in general.

He reiterated that the two deliverables – the template and the toolbox – are valuable resources. Improvement in the communication and attractiveness of the documents would further increase their value. Additionally, the number of enumerations should be reduced and instead interconnections between steps, tools and other existing structures need to be strengthened according to the chair of the expert panel. With these changes, the project

deliverables we described as strong support in guiding Member States' authorities in the process of assessing, monitoring and revising MSPs.

Ultimately, *Anja Detant* closed the workshop on behalf of EASME and DG MARE. She thanked all participants for the valuable comments that will contribute to the re-thinking of the work and further improvement of the documents to be used by Member State planners.