



Energy transition and biodiversity in MSP – a structured glossary

A contribution to a common language in MSP
for the Northern European Sea Basins

2026



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Contents

1.	Introduction – Let's talk a common language	4
1.1	Needs and aim of a glossary	4
1.2	Structure and content of the glossary	5
1.3	Sources.....	8
1.4	Collaboration and mainstreaming of the glossary.....	9
1.5	A vision for a sea basin terminological platform.....	11
2	The glossary.....	14

Author: Philipp Arndt, Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH), 2026.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The “Energy transition and biodiversity in MSP – a structured glossary” is the sole responsibility of the document authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Union or CINEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

The ‘Northern European Sea Basins project’ is supported by the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund of the European Union – through the Grant Agreement number 101196969, corresponding to the Call EMFAF -2024-PIA-MSP.

1. Introduction – Let's talk a common language

Speaking a common technical language is key to avoiding misunderstandings and improving the coherence of maritime spatial plans. Terms can be used with different meanings, or different words can be used for the same concept. Such pitfalls must be avoided and clarity must be created.

This glossary gives a systematic overview of terms relevant in the context of maritime spatial planning (MSP) and specialized MSP topics such as offshore energy and nature conservation.

1.1 Needs and aim of a glossary

Guided by the 2014 EU MSP Directive, MSP in Europe has developed into many different national and regional planning approaches. While the Directive provides some common pillars and a shared understanding of MSP, it also leaves considerable flexibility in how MSP is understood and implemented to ensure it can be applied in different national settings. The current status of MSP in the EU thus shows a varied picture: Member States have drawn up plans at different scales, with different levels of detail, with different terminology, and based on different mandates and administrative settings (Zaucha et al., 2024). Policy links are similarly varied, with some countries encouraging close connections between MSP and marine environmental management for example (e.g. MSFD) and others taking a more divergent approach.

Differences in planning systems and MSP plans are reflected in differing terminology. The same term can be used to mean different things, and different terms may come into play when essentially describing the same thing. This can be challenging for planners but also decision-makers or researchers, for instance when aiming to compare systems or plans or when seeking to improve transnational coherence in MSP. It can also be confusing or misleading within countries when different agencies use the same term in different contexts.

One of the key pillars of MSP in Europe is transboundary coherence. A regional seas approach is required for MSP to ensure marine planning and management produce the best possible environmental and socio-economic outcomes, which in turn requires sufficient alignment of plans. This does not imply a universal same-brush approach, but rather ensuring there are coherent outcomes of planning for marine space and ecosystems. A common understanding of terminology is important to enable planners and policy-makers to work towards this alignment.

The aim of this glossary is to create a common understanding of terms. Rather than taking a universal approach, it focuses on selected MSP terminology, aiming to cover

key MSP concepts, aspects related to the environment and key MSP sectors. All are areas where a regional seas approach is particularly important, and where a common understanding of terms is essential for effective collaboration.

With this special focus, the NESPb glossary complements rather than duplicates other work, although there may be some overlap. One example is the MSPglobal2030 glossary, which is a broad compilation of terms commonly used in marine/maritime planning, ecosystem-based management, marine resources management, marine resources economics, coastal zone management, marine protected area management, fisheries management, maritime transport, and other marine sectors.

The present glossary is also distinct from other glossaries by describing who currently uses what term in what context (e.g. national, technical). Where possible, it also traces the origins of terms to their original literature and provides an explanatory definition.

The glossary is descriptive/explanatory only at this point. Agreeing on joint terminology across countries and contexts is another, separate step which could follow on from this. Currently, there appears to be considerable interest in regional institutions in taking up this issue. Section 1.4 sets out options and prerequisites for further development.

1.2 Structure and content of the glossary

The structure of the glossary was developed through broad discussion that extended over several project meetings.

There are different ways of organising a glossary of terms, the simplest being an alphabetical approach. When topics are complex, however, and when the same terms are used differently in different contexts, alphabetical sorting may not be the most suitable structure.

Further examples of structural glossaries:

The GES4SEAS project has created a [document](#) to support a common understanding and coherent use of the Marine Strategy framework Directive (MSFD) terminology and official reporting lists (Smith et al., 2022). The terms in that document are organised following the DAPSI(W)R(M) [scheme](#) (Elliott et al., 2017, 2022), i.e. thematically rather than alphabetically. Priority in that document is given to MSFD official terms and EC/EU official sources.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/365605193_Marine_Strategy_Framework_Directive_Terminology_Definitions_and_Lists

Given that the glossary aims to explain and communicate the interconnections of the various concepts and terms, a relational approach was chosen as the basic structure.

This allows the glossary to be presented by topic, indicating not only the meaning of each term but also the context in which it is used in and by whom.

The content of the glossary was developed based on the contributions by partners and other stakeholders. A synthesis workshop was held to present a draft of the glossary and discuss options for developing it further (see section 1.4).

While it seemed important to cover as many relevant aspects and sectors as possible, the limited project timeframe and resources made it necessary to focus on selected core issues. This also recognised that the topics of MSP itself, biodiversity and energy transition (the content of WP3) are already very complex and multi-layered in themselves. Based on discussions with the work packages “Energy transition and biodiversity in MSP”, the main topics to be covered by the glossary were narrowed down to the following:

- Ecosystem-based approach
- Maritime Spatial Planning
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Sectors (Focus Offshore Wind Energy)
- Protection of the marine environment
- Strategic Environmental Assessment

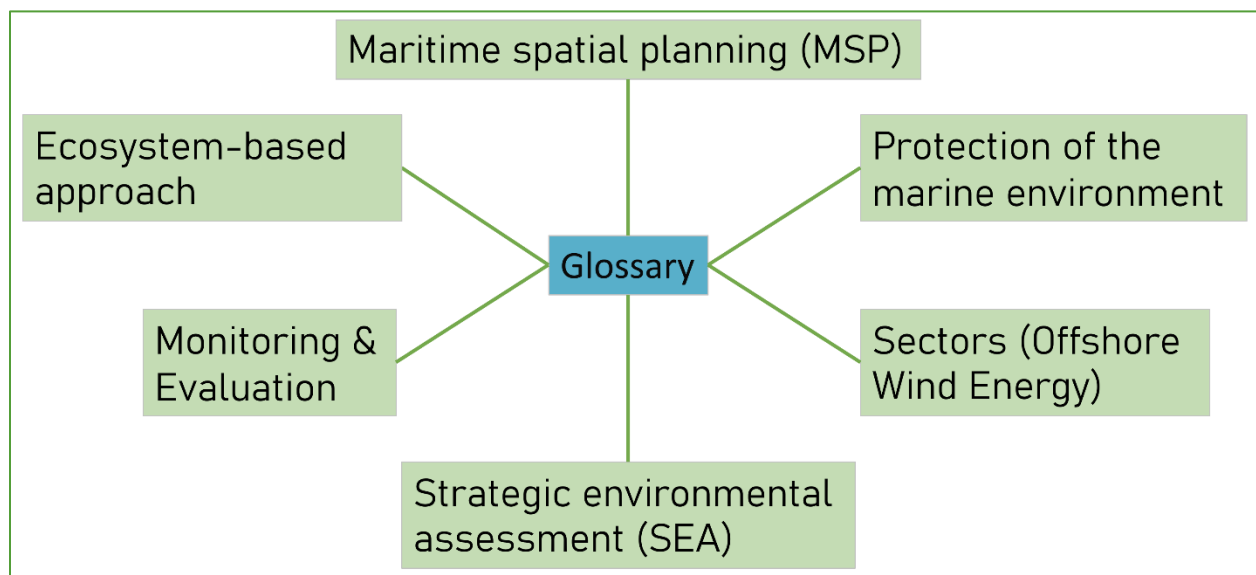


Figure 1: Main topics of the glossary (own figure)

Relevant terms were then collected for each of the six topics using the Miro online tool and mind map function (Figure 2). The inherent advantage of using a graphical mind map is that its structured and relational representation unpacks the complex system of MSP and readily connects marine planning to other sectoral and environmental expertise. In the mind map each of the six main terms represents a node that branches out to the next lower levels, covering the broad subject matter in a logical structure and without being limited to textual definitions. An example of a branch is shown in Figure 3.

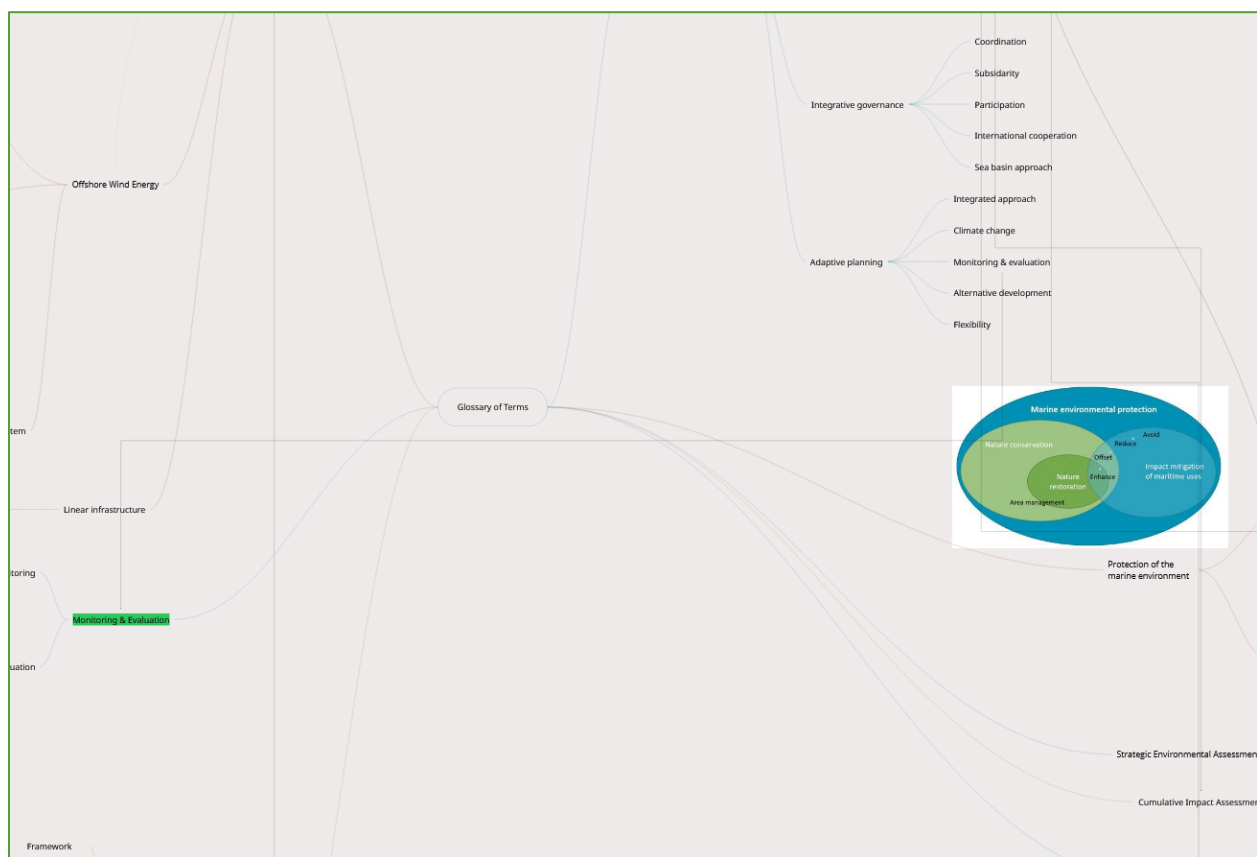
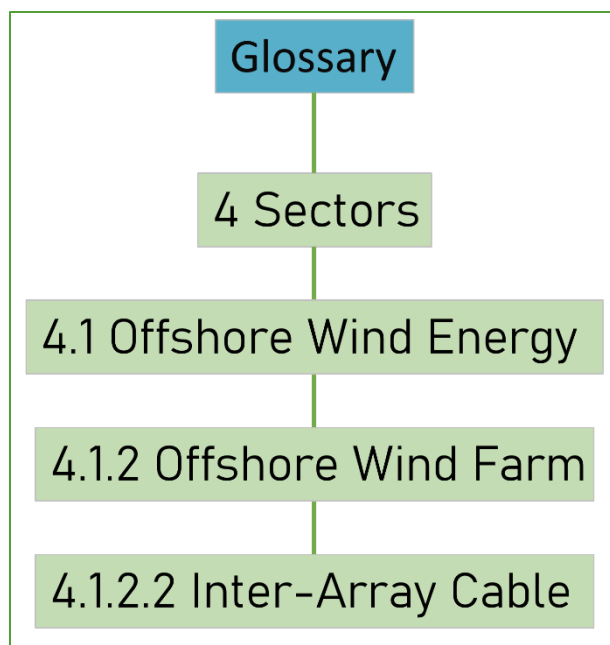


Figure 2: Zoom into the usage of a mindmap in Miro for structuring

Depicted as nodes and branches, readers not only understand the definition of individual terms but can also see how each term interrelates with other terms.

Ideally, an online version of the glossary will be developed that includes filtering options where users can choose between alphabetical and structural ordering options. A map of terms and their relation will be produced as an Annex to this glossary by the end of the NESBp project.



Another category has been added to the glossary to explain how the terms are used: the MSP context. The aim is therefore to improve understanding by providing context, rather than relying solely on what might be a rather complicated and standalone definition.

Figure 3: Example branch of the structural approach of the glossary (own figure)

1.3 Sources

Many potential sources exist for definitions of glossary terms. They include existing glossaries, such as MSPglobal2030, IUCN, IPBES or IPCC, but also factsheets (e.g. OSPAR, HELCOM), conventions, or definitions developed as part of projects. While these are useful starting points, not least to avoid duplication, the aim of the present glossary was to be specific to the North Sea and Baltic Sea region and to develop a common understanding of terminology from first understanding similarities and potential differences. Not all potential sources were therefore felt to be equally relevant.

During project workshops, and based on contributions by other stakeholders, categories were drawn up for potential sources to be consulted. The intention was to first use those sources with direct relevance to national MSP practice and only then draw on others. This led to the following list of sources, ranked in order of priority:

- Legal basis
- Regional conventions, guidelines, etc.
- Existing glossaries
- Other

Another approach for a ranked sources procedure was developed in the PROTECT BALTIC project. There, definitions were searched on the global level first, going through European definitions, scientific literature or internationally renowned dictionaries until the final solution is to draw up an own definition. The scheme is shown in Figure 4.

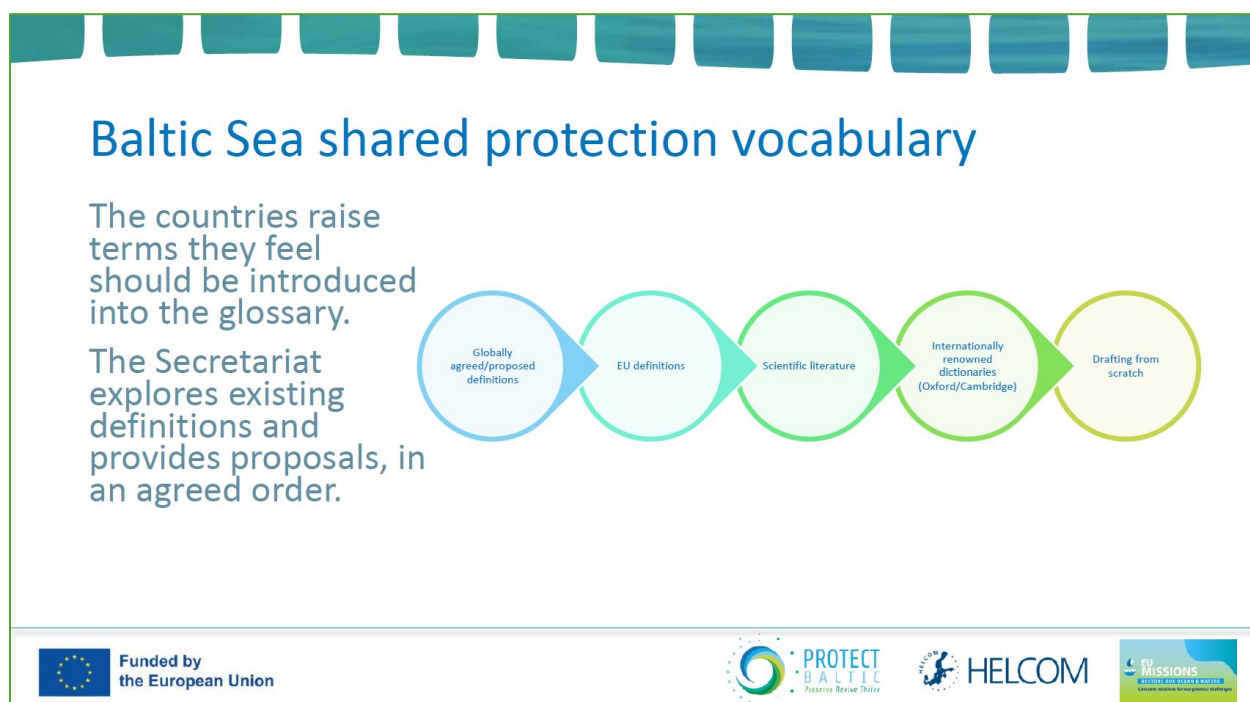


Figure 4: Example of the PROTECT BALTIC project in ranking sources (Katja Laingui, 2026)

1.4 Collaboration and mainstreaming of the glossary

The glossary is designed to be available beyond the project timeline, with a view to expanding and mainstreaming it via various groups such as the GNSBI working tracks, HELCOM-VASAB or the ICES WGMPCZM. However, some aspects still need to be discussed.

- One is to clarify the actual demand for this type of glossary in the various North Sea and Baltic Sea countries: Who are the actual end users, and what terms may still need further clarification? How and where should the glossary be publicised to engender broad acceptance and use?
- Another is the technical availability of the glossary in the medium term. Clarification is needed on who will take on responsibility for hosting the glossary where (e.g. on what platform) and in what way (e.g. what digital format). A suitable platform would need to be easy to access and maintain, and feasible technical solutions for maintaining, updating and administering the glossary will need to be found.
- Although there is strong interest in this work, it is not clear at this stage how intergovernmental organizations (e.g. HELCOM, GNSBI) would take up NESBp project outputs and whether there is scope to continue developing the glossary. Adding a search function and visualising connections between the glossary terms would be useful future avenues. Clarification is also needed on who needs to agree to abide by the terms and definitions, and who needs to agree before publication.

The present document serves as a proof of concept and is intended to serve as a starting point for the sea basin communities to work towards aligned terminology. Given the interconnectedness of marine systems, harmonisation at sea-basin level seems highly beneficial. Within the project timeframe of NESBp, however, the development and assessment of a structured and functional approach to a glossary was the primary focus. The benefit of starting with a focused and pragmatic approach was confirmed during the NESBp synthesis workshop.

At a more general level, the participants at the synthesis workshop confirmed the need for a glossary and clear terminology. There may be particular interest in the field of maritime spatial planning, which, due to its holistic approach, touches on many other sectors and areas of interest. Certain sectors or stakeholder groups may have different needs, meaning that terminological challenges cannot be addressed with a one size fits all approach.

At the same time, significant differences between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea were highlighted, particularly with regard to institutional structures, historical development, and working methods. These differences make it challenging to apply a uniform solution to both sea basins.

During the workshop, the importance of establishing a clear procedure for agreeing on terms was highlighted as the way forward. This could include validation mechanisms, such as approval by an advisory board or an expert working group.

One proposal was to begin at the international level, enabling clearer communication across borders. Recognising that it may not be feasible to cover all sectors at once, the group suggested prioritising key areas such as biodiversity, offshore wind energy, and cumulative impact assessment.

The discussion also introduced the idea of sustainability, not only in environmental terms but also in relation to the glossary itself. In this context, the concept of a Digital Twin Ocean (DTO) was mentioned as a potential infrastructure. Such a system could ensure both sustainability and transferability, allowing vocabularies developed at different levels to be interconnected.

Building on the work already done in several projects, these insights can be incorporated into the governance processes of the marine basins. Responsibility should be shared. Ultimately, the institutions in the sea basins must establish appropriate processes, with countries playing a central role in determining the way forward.

Next to the NESBp glossary, there are several other projects working on the clarification of the marine and maritime terminology. Each project has a dedicated focus on a specific field of expertise which should be all taken into account for the creation of sea basin-wide approaches by the communities:

- PROTECT BALTIC (protection terminology)
- MEDIGREEN (MSP and the European Green Deal nomenclature)
- GES4Seas (Cumulative Impact Assessment terminology)

Example procedure: PROTECT BALTIC list of protection terminology

Within the work of the PROTECT BALTIC project the process of adding terms follows a strict procedure. Definitions for terms are prepared on the basis of classified sources and discussed within HELCOM's Working Groups "Expert Group on Marine Protected Areas (EG MPA)" and "Working Group on Biodiversity, Protection and Restoration (WG BioDiv)". Terms are only added once both groups have given their approval.

The Northern European Sea Basins project is focussing on the North Sea and Baltic Sea. Therefore, options to take up the project results were discussed during the synthesis workshop.

For the Baltic Sea, the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group (H-V MSP WG) was identified as a relevant structure. Linking to the work of the PROTECT BALTIC project, the already established procedures and the technical possibilities at HELCOM to host a platform, would speed up the process and spread the workload. It was also suggested that HELCOM could play a role in providing guidance on how to use the glossary and how to introduce new terms, for example, by collecting proposals from different HELCOM working groups and facilitating discussions.

In the North Sea context, the landscape is broader, involving groups such as the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI), the North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC), and the North Sea MSP Collaboration Group. Strong encouragement for country-level contributions was considered essential.

1.5 A vision for a sea basin terminological platform

A "living document" approach was strongly supported, allowing flexibility to continuously add and refine terms over time. A hierarchical structure, as developed in this project, was considered highly beneficial. A dedicated website or platform at the sea-basin level would be a suitable solution to ensure long-term sustainability. It should be user-friendly, accessible, and not overloaded with information. Feasible technical solutions for maintaining, updating and administering must be set up.

The idea of “one-size-fits-all” definitions was discussed as well. Instead, the group suggested starting with general definitions while clearly highlighting different interpretations depending on context. Three issues were identified to be aware of and find solutions:

- National traditions and specificities
- Professional or sectoral jargon
- The role of machine learning

Based on the different national frames for the application of MSP and different allocations of responsibilities, not all terms have a single common definition. Some terms are just used differently in different contexts.

For a glossary on sea basin level, it therefore makes sense to divide the terms into two categories, one where a common definition is achievable and one to illustrate and clarify the differences. This approach also helps to avoid misunderstandings. In order to achieve this coordination, the Member States should contribute to the practical coordination within the sea basin institutions.

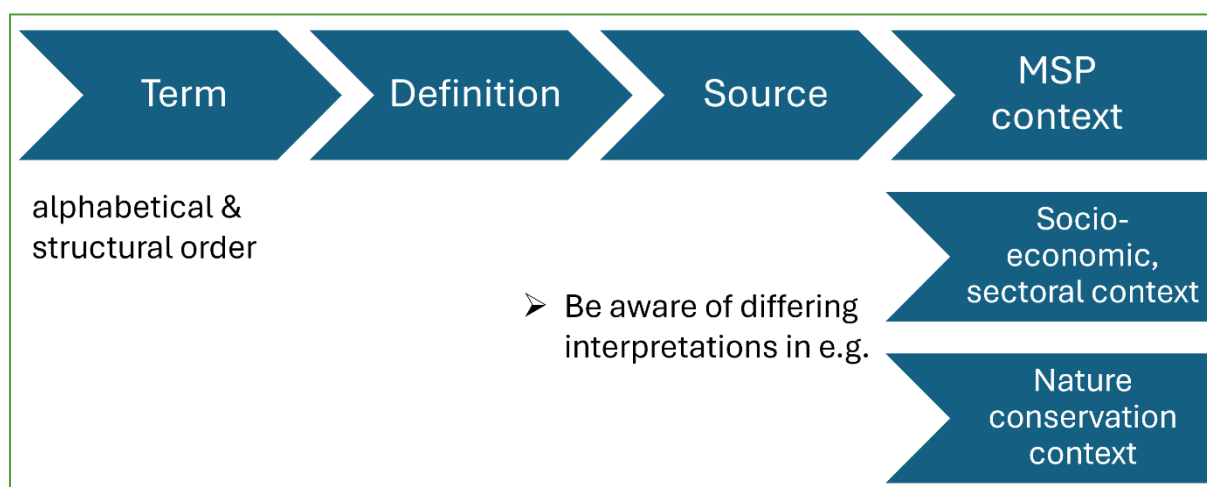


Figure 5: Structure of the glossary categories (own figure, 2026)

One proposal was to begin at the international level, enabling clearer communication across borders. Recognising that it may not be feasible to cover all sectors at once, the group suggested prioritising key areas such as biodiversity, offshore wind energy, and cumulative impact assessment.

The discussion also introduced the idea of sustainability, not only in environmental terms but also in relation to the glossary itself. In this context, the concept of a Digital Twin Ocean (DTO) was mentioned as a potential infrastructure. Such a system could ensure both sustainability and transferability, allowing vocabularies developed at different levels to be interconnected.

A major challenge identified was the administrative workflow, particularly how to organise data updates, maintenance, and collaboration with experts. But regular

updates and review mechanisms are important and should be built in to ensure that new terms and definitions can be added as needed. It was also agreed that while the glossary should remain rooted in the MSP context, it should provide broader explanations of terms to enhance understanding across sectors.

Discussion point human vs. computer usage:

In addition to the need to reduce misunderstandings among planners, a glossary should also take into account the (increasing) use of computers. This is particularly important in light of AI applications and their likely growing significance.

During the WP3 Synthesis Workshop in March 2026 this topic was raised by Matthew Richard (HELCOM). A standardization of terms and the assignment of multiple terms with one meaning (Car / automobile / auto or Herring / Baltic herring / Clupea harengus) will become increasingly important and should be taken into account from the very beginning. Controlled vocabularies therefore reduce ambiguities and improve data search.

2. The glossary

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
1	Ecosystem Approach/ Ecosystem-based approach	“The ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.” “The ecosystem approach can therefore be defined as “the comprehensive integrated management of human activities based on the best available scientific knowledge about the ecosystem and its dynamics, in order to identify and take action on influences which are critical to the health of marine ecosystems, thereby achieving sustainable use of ecosystem goods and services and maintenance of ecosystem integrity”	The MSP directive calls for the application of an ecosystem-based approach in MSP “with the aim of ensuring that the collective pressure of all activities is kept within levels compatible with the achievement of good environmental status and that the capacity of marine ecosystems to respond to human-induced changes is not compromised, while contributing to the sustainable use of marine goods and services by present and future generations”. The EBA is structured in 5 key elements by the revised guideline (HELCOM 2026) to systematize practical application of the EBA in MSP to ensure sustainable development of planning areas and the entire region.	Convention on Biological Diversity HELCOM / OSPAR joint definition (2003)
1.1	Ecosystem integrity – EBA key element	Conserving and restoring nature, and retaining cumulative impacts within ecological carrying capacity.	In the EBA, “Ecosystem integrity” has 7 main features: conservation, restoration, ecological carrying capacity, good environmental status, relational understanding, cumulative effects & mitigation measures.	Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026).

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
1.1.1	Conservation	The protection, care, management and maintenance of ecosystems, habitats, wildlife species and populations, within or outside of their natural environments, in order to safeguard the natural conditions for their long-term permanence.	The EU Biodiversity Strategy requires at least 30 percent of the EU marine area to be designated for nature conservation purposes by 2030, 10 percent of which should be strictly protected. MSP should consider and integrate, to the extent possible, spatial conservation measures to deliver in relation to this target as well as to protect habitats and species under the Birds and Habitats Directive, and contribute to achieving Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) and good environmental status (GES) under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.	Glossary of World Heritage Terms related to the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO IUCN (1996) Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.1.2	Restoration	"The process of actively or passively assisting the recovery of an ecosystem in order to improve its structure and functions, with the aim of conserving or enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, through improving an area of a habitat type to good condition, re-establishing favourable reference area, and improving a habitat of a species to sufficient quality and quantity"	MSP should deliver in relation to the target set by the recently proposed Nature Restoration law, ensuring that 20 percent of the sea area is designated for restoration measures. MSP should have a role in the enhancement of these habitats and their connectivity, aiming for achievement of a good environmental status.	REGULATION (EU) 2024/1991 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869 Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.1.3	Ecological carrying capacity	„Marine ecological carrying capacity refers to the maximum service function the system can provide on the premise of conserving the stability of the system.“	MSP should contribute to restraining pressures within the ecosystem's capacity limits, safeguarding its natural functions. This requires early and careful consideration of single and cumulative impacts, development of alternative planning solutions and mitigation measures.	https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-819911-4.00002-3 Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
1.1.4	Good environmental status	"The environmental status of marine waters where these provide ecologically diverse and dynamic oceans and seas which are clean, healthy and productive within their intrinsic conditions, and the use of the marine environment is at a level that is sustainable, thus safeguarding the potential for uses and activities by current and future generations."	MSP should, within its remit, contribute to the overall achievement of the good status of the marine environment in the planning area through allocating and coordinating human activities, keeping pressures within the ecological limits. The contribution of planning solutions to GES should be assessed during the planning process utilizing respective MSFD descriptors and HELCOM indicators as much as justifiable based on the best available scientific evidence.	DIRECTIVE 2008/56/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.1.5	Relational understanding	Relational understanding is a framework for comprehending the world as a web of interconnected relationships between people, nature, and society.	Various effects on the ecosystem caused by human activities as well as interactions between them and the ecosystem should be considered. This includes direct/indirect, short/long-term, permanent/temporary and positive/negative effects.	https://lifestyle.sustainability-directory.com/term/relational-understanding/ Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.1.6	Cumulative effects	The joint effect of, and interaction between, different environmental pressures. Impact risk is derived from the spatial distribution of activities and pressures, the distribution of ecosystem components, and population dynamic parameters to define sensitivity.	Planning should consider the joint effect of, and interaction between, different pressures. Cross-border/transboundary consultation is an important tool to determine cumulative effects and assure coherence between MSPs across sea basins in order to preserve ecological integrity. Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) terminology is deeply covered by the GES4Seas project and should be linked: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/365605193_Marine_Strategy_Framework_Directive_Terminology_Definitions_and_Lists	(Halpern et al. 2008; Piet et al. 2023) Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
1.1.7	Mitigation measures	"Any procedure or action undertaken to reduce the adverse impacts that a project or activity may have on the environment."	complex of measures should be envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effect from maritime activities on the marine environment.	GEMET, http://www.eionet.europa.eu/gemet/concept/5311 Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.2	Social, cultural and economic considerations – EBA key element	Utilization of ecosystem services and incorporating relevant human activities.	Utilization of ecosystem services and incorporating relevant human activities for MSP. In EBA, "Social, cultural and economic considerations" has 3 main features: Humans as part of the ecosystem, Ecosystem services & Cultural elements.	Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.2.1	Humans as part of the ecosystem		MSP solutions should explore the positive linkages between environment, economy, and social dimensions. A synergy and conflict matrix could be an efficient tool to display interactions between interests.	Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.2.2	Ecosystem services	Ecosystem services are the goods and services provided by ecosystems to humans. Per the 2006 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), ecosystem services are "the benefits people obtain from ecosystems". The MA also delineated the four categories of ecosystem services into provisioning, regulating, supporting, and cultural.	Mapping and assessment of ecosystem services, through e.g. the Common International Classification of Ecosystem Services (CICES), and ecosystem accounting should be based on the best available knowledge of ecosystem components, their condition and produced social and economic benefits and values.	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005). Ecosystems and human well-being: synthesis (PDF). Washington, DC: Island Press. ISBN 1-59726-040-1 . Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
1.2.3	Cultural elements	Tangible and intangible (material and immaterial) dimensions of culture: Includes cultural heritage, which includes monuments and objects but also oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.	Identification and assessment of tangible and intangible values related to past and present sea uses, such as shipping or fishery, should be recognized in MSP to support their existence and viability in the long term. The tangible values are related to different underwater (e.g., wrecks) and coastal (e.g., lighthouses) elements that are often recognized as cultural heritage monuments. Intangible values, such as practices, traditions, skills of craftsmanship, and knowledge that form individual, group, or community values, should also be respected within MSP by mapping culturally significant areas. Cultural values may play an important role in tourism and recreation development and be part of the assessment of cultural ecosystem services.	https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003 Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.3	Comprehensiveness and coherence – EBA key element	Holistic perspective on cross-border and cross-sectoral considerations.	Cross-border and cross-sectoral consideration in MSP. In EBA, “Comprehensiveness and coherence” has 3 main features: Comprehensive knowledge, The Precautionary principle & Land-sea interaction	Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.3.1	Comprehensive knowledge	Understanding of or information about a subject complete and including everything.	The best available scientific knowledge should be fully applied in the development of planning solutions. Spatial data on nature values, pressures as well as social and economic values should be synthesized at an early stage to identify knowledge gaps and organize targeted research to bridge them.	Cambridge Dictionary Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
1.3.2	The Precautionary principle	When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof.	Recognizing the limitations of the best available knowledge is equally important as making use of it. Planners are recommended to consider uncertainties related to the assessment of the true impacts of human activities, and make conservative decisions when uncertainty is high. Uncertainties related to changing climate parameters increase the importance of a precautionary approach.	Brand, Stewart (2010). Whole Earth Discipline. Penguin Books. ISBN 9780143118282 . Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.3.3	Land-sea interaction	Intricate and constantly shifting interconnections between socio-economic activities both in the sea and on land with natural processes that span the land- sea interface. A four-dimensional definition of LSI covers: 1) the social-ecological interactions; 2) the relevant governance frameworks; 3) the related governance processes; and 4) the necessary knowledge and methods to address them.	Maritime activities are not the sole sources of pressure for the marine environment; significant impacts also originate from land-based sources. While organization of land-based activities is beyond the scope of MSP, the effects of	(ESPON, 2020) (Nordregio, 2019) Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.4	Integrative governance – EBA key element	A holistic framework ensuring coordinated organizational functions for effective, responsible, and sustainable outcomes.	Multi-level governance and aligning strategic policy goals and national or regional commitments with ecological objectives and targets. In EBA, “Integrative governance” has 4 main features: Coordination, Subsidiarity, Participation & International cooperation.	https://climate.sustainability-directory.com/term/integrative-governance/ Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
1.4.1	Coordination	The act of making parts of something, groups of people, etc. work together in an efficient and organized way.	Cross-sectoral and multi-level transparency of the planning process strengthens sharing of the best knowledge, accounting for sectoral, national, and local interests, broad acceptance of planning solutions and resolving potential conflicts. Awareness raising and education should become a tool to build trust between stakeholders.	Oxford Learners Dictionaries Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.4.2	Subsidiarity	A general principle of EU law. The general aim of the principle of subsidiarity is to guarantee a degree of independence for a lower authority in relation to a higher body or for a local authority in relation to central government. It therefore involves the sharing of powers between several levels of authority, a principle which forms the institutional basis for federal states. When applied in the context of the EU, the principle of subsidiarity serves to regulate the exercise of the Union's non-exclusive powers. It rules out Union intervention when an issue can be dealt with effectively by Member States themselves at central, regional or local level. The Union is justified in exercising its powers only when Member States are unable to achieve the objectives of a proposed action satisfactorily and added value can be provided if the action is carried out at Union level. The <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> defines subsidiarity as "the principle that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level".	Maritime spatial planning with an ecosystem-based approach as an overarching principle shall be carried out at the most appropriate level, however, seeking coherence between different levels.	European Parliament, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/actsheets/en/sheet/7/the-principle-of-subsidiarity The Oxford English Dictionary Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
1.4.3	Participation	Consultation of stakeholders, authorities and the public at an appropriate stage in the preparation of maritime spatial plans.	Relevant authorities, stakeholders and the wider public should be involved at an early stage in the planning process. They can be identified in national legal acts or through a Public Participation Strategy. Participation can be organized through Community of Practice (CoP) workshops, sectoral (thematic) and/or integrative meetings, or individual consultations.	Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.4.4	International cooperation	International cooperation refers to the cooperation among organisations from different nations to attain a common goal.	Regional Sea Conventions such as HELCOM and OSPAR, as well as the EU through e.g. the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, serve as platforms to coordinate planning and management of cross border pressures and ecosystems. Consultations under the ESP00 Convention also offer opportunities to address anticipated impacts of MSP across borders.	UN Academy Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.5	Adaptive planning	An adaptive approach to planning and management is indispensable to deal with uncertainty and to incorporate various types of change. As are most other planning approaches, MSP is a 'learning by doing' process and needs the flexibility to incorporate newly acquired information to adapt to changing circumstances. An adaptive approach to MSP involves exploring alternative ways to meet management objectives, predicting the outcomes of alternative management measures, implementing one or more of these alternative management measures, monitoring to learn about the effects of management measures, and then using the results to update knowledge and adjust management actions.	Forward looking approach and adaptation of planning solutions to emerging challenges. In the EBA, "Adaptive planning" has 4 main features: Integrated approach, Climate change, Monitoring & evaluation & Alternative development.	Douvere F., Ehler C.N.(2011) The importance of monitoring and evaluation in adaptive maritime spatial planning, J. Coast. Conserv., 15 (2). 305-311, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11852-010-0100-9 Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
1.5.1	Integrated approach	An integrated approach is a methodology that unifies disparate elements, disciplines, or systems into a single, cohesive framework to achieve a more comprehensive and effective outcome.	Feedback from impact assessments should be incorporated in the planning process through iterative revision and evaluation of goals and planning solutions.	Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.5.2	Climate change	A change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcings such as modulations of the solar cycles, volcanic eruptions and persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use.	MSP should address adaptation to climate change by e.g. identifying climate refuges, restoration areas, coastal protection and climate mitigation through areas for renewable energy and carbon sequestration functions of the ecosystem.	Annex VII: Glossary of the Working Group I contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report, IPCC (2021) Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
1.5.3	Monitoring & evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of MSP are therefore becoming increasingly important: to ensure MSP is based on an up-to-date evidence base, to ensure plans deliver on their stated objectives, and to demonstrate the benefits of MSP to politicians and the general public.	Changes in the state of ecosystems, societal and economic demands, as well as a growing scientific evidence base should be recognized in the MSP process. Monitoring of environmental, social, and economic effects of plan implementation should lay the basis for adaptive management of human activities and highlight implementation gaps, through regular or continuous plan revision.	Arndt, P., Matczak, M., Zaucha, J., Gee, K. (eds) (2023). MSP in a sea of change – aim for better and connected plans. Report of the eMSP NSBR Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Strand. Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, Hamburg, December 2023. Download from www.emspproject.eu/results/ Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
1.5.4	Alternative development	Developing different scenarios that primarily focus on different driving forces can affect spatial use in the maritime area and its marine resources. The analysis of possible future planning options and definition of a vision for the maritime space in question is often conducted through interactive exercises. The development of a SEA provides a mechanism for the strategic consideration of environmental effects, assessment of plan-alternatives and potential development of mitigation measures. The SEA process requires consideration of the effects of 'alternatives to the plan'. Interpretation of 'alternatives' varies across different contexts; in some processes the alternative is defined as 'no plan', and the options are simply therefore the proposed plan, or considering the implications of not implementing the plan.	Alternative scenarios should be considered, and reasonable alternative solution developed to avoid or reduce negative environmental and other impacts as well as impacts on the ecosystem goods and services.	EBA in MSP – a SEA inclusive handbook, Altvater et al. (2019) Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
2	Maritime Spatial Planning	A process by which the relevant Member State's authorities analyse and organise human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives. MSP aims to balance ecological, economic, and social goals in a bid to minimise conflicts and promote synergies between different uses. As such, it is an inherently integrative approach designed to cut across different interests and policies. The resulting maritime spatial plans can be seen as integrated spatial expressions of various societal goals.		Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament, Rekola, A., Varjopuro, R., Gee, K. et al. Emerging climate-smart governance through maritime spatial planning in northern Europe. npj Ocean Sustain 4, 61 (2025). https://doi.org/10.1038/s44183-025-00164-z

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
2.1	Framework	The Directive 2014/89/EU spans the common legal framework for Member States on MSP application. National laws set out the specific framework for each country.	Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning.	Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament
2.1.1	Binding	In many countries the Maritime Spatial Plan acts as a legally binding document for authorities.	Not all the plans are legally binding and rather serve as a strategic guidance/recommendation while enforcement of certain measures is done via other legal instruments.	Arndt, P., Matczak, M., Zaucha, J., Gee, K. (eds) (2023). MSP in a sea of change – aim for better and connected plans. Report of the eMSP NSBR Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Strand. Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, Hamburg, December 2023. Download from www.emspproject.eu/results/
2.1.2	Non-binding	In some countries the Maritime Spatial Plan acts as a recommendation or strategic document and is non-binding.	Not all the plans are legally binding and rather serve as a strategic guidance/recommendation while enforcement of certain measures is done via other legal instruments.	Arndt, P., Matczak, M., Zaucha, J., Gee, K. (eds) (2023). MSP in a sea of change – aim for better and connected plans. Report of the eMSP NSBR Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Strand. Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, Hamburg, December 2023. Download from www.emspproject.eu/results/
2.1.3	Policy context	'Integrated Maritime Policy' (IMP) means a Union policy whose aim is to foster coordinated and coherent decision-making to maximise the sustainable development, economic growth and social cohesion of Member States, and notably the coastal, insular and outermost regions in the Union, as well as maritime sectors, through coherent maritime-related policies and relevant international cooperation;	Policy context is of particular importance at MSP due to its cross-cutting and holistic approach, which gives rise to a wide range of links to sectoral and other issues.	Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
2.1.4	Stakeholders	Individuals, groups, or organizations that are (or will be) affected, involved or interested (positively or negatively)	affected, involved or interested by marine spatial planning management actions in various ways	Glossary, MSPglobal (2025)
2.2	Principles	In MSP, an essential quality determining the fundamental nature of the marine spatial planning process, e.g., sustainability, precaution, transparency.	With reference to the MSP Directive, it concerns precautionary principle and the principle that preventive action should be taken.	Glossary, MSPglobal (2025)
2.2.1	Adaptiveness	A systematic process for continually improving management policies and practices toward achieving articulated goals and objectives by learning from the outcomes of previously employed policies and practices.	→ See 1.5	Glossary, MSP platform (2025)
2.2.2	Participation	Consultation of stakeholders, authorities and the public at an appropriate stage in the preparation of maritime spatial plans.	→ See 1.4.3	Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
2.3	Aims	Common goal between EU countries defined in directive	Promote sustainable growth, sustainable development of marine areas, sustainable use of marine resources through MSP.	Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament
2.3.1	Sustainable development	'Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. It seeks to reconcile promoting economic prosperity with social inclusion and environmental stewardship, and serves as a basis for all European Union (EU) policies and initiatives. Sustainable development is formally one of the EU's long-term goals under Article 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union.	Sustainable development is a core aim of MSP.	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/sustainable-development.html

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
2.3.2	Sustainable blue economy	Sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihood and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health. SBE “provides social and economic benefits for current and future generations; restores, protects and maintains diverse, productive and resilient ecosystems; and is based on clean technologies, renewable energy and circular material flows”.	Sustainable growth through sustainable blue economy is a core aim of MSP.	Glossary, MSP platform (2025) Turning the Tide: How to finance a sustainable ocean recovery – A practical guide for financial institutions, UNEP FI (2021)
2.3.3	Ecosystem-based approach	Aim of ensuring that the collective pressure of all activities is kept within levels compatible with the achievement of good environmental status and that the capacity of marine ecosystems.	→ See 1	Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament Revised Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. HELCOM (2026)
2.4	Objectives	In MSP, an objective is a statement of a desired outcome or desirable behavioral change that represents the achievement of a goal; characteristics of good objectives include: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound, i.e., SMART objectives.	Consider economic, social and environmental aspects to support sustainable development and growth in the maritime sector, applying an ecosystem-based approach, promote the coexistence of relevant activities and uses	Glossary, MSP platform (2025)
2.4.1	Coherence	In general coherence means a situation when different parts of a broader whole connect or follow in a natural or reasonable way.	In relation to cross-border coherence of MSP plans this would mean that the plans should connect and follow in a natural or reasonable way across the borders.	HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG: Voluntary guidance for assessment of cross-border coherence in Maritime Spatial Planning (2022)

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
2.4.2	Multi-use	Multi-use refers to the specific and actively managed shared use of marine resources by two or more maritime activities in close spatial or functional distance.	This involves actively linking activities, for example through the shared use of infrastructure, coordinated operating processes, or complementary environmental objectives.	Schultz-Zehden, A., Drews- von Ruckteschell, F., Dittmer, P., Smolka, U., Staufenberger, T., Strothotte E., Schatz, V. (2025). Gutachten zur Mehrfachnutzung von Flächen in der deutschen ausschließlichen Wirtschaftszone (AWZ) in der Nordsee und Ostsee. Zusammenfassender Bericht.
2.4.3	Integrated planning / LSI	Integrated maritime spatial planning is a coordinated, cross-sectoral, and cross-border planning approach that takes into account land-sea interactions and aims to ensure the sustainable use and protection of maritime areas.	Integrated maritime spatial planning and the consideration and integration of Land-Sea-Interactions is an important part of MSP to reach coherence.	https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/msp-resources/glossary
2.4.4	Spatial efficiency	Spatial planning fulfils basic organising, developing, balancing, and protective functions. Its primary task is the organising function: ensuring a well-ordered spatial structure.	MSP aims to fulfil these functions whilst making the best possible use of the space and protecting the marine environment. MSP plans aim to be efficient and effective; both aspects need to be considered in their evaluation.	Diller, Christian (2018): Spatial planning (Raumordnung). https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0156-559917644
2.4.5	Transboundary cooperation	Engagement of multiple entities (e.g. countries, states, provinces) across one ecosystem in an MSP process.	Engagement of multiple entities (e.g. countries, states, provinces) across one ecosystem in an MSP process. Entities may necessarily share a common border, and it can encompass sub-national entities as well as include consideration for the high seas. Each entity has individual jurisdiction over different ocean spaces, different economic considerations, and drivers for MSP.	https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/msp-resources/glossary

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
2.5	Spatial designations	Area designations are a spatial planning tool. They usually contain “positive” provisions in the sense that they explicitly promote certain activities rather than prohibiting them completely. In most cases, the focus is on a specific sector. The legal consequences of the provisions vary between EU countries.	Spatial designations are a core part of MSPs, showing where the plan sets spatial priorities.	Zaucha, J., Gee, K., Ramieri, E., Neimane, L., Alloncle, N., Blažauskas, N., ... & Ehler, C. N. (2025). Implementing the EU MSP Directive: Current status and lessons learned in 22 EU Member States. <i>Marine Policy</i> , 171, 106425.
2.5.1	Harmonized spatial designations	Translation of national spatial MSP categories into an overarching structure.	Existing approaches to translate national MSP structure into shared categories: EMODnet: Zoning areas Basemaps: Output data	Guidelines on transboundary MSP output data structure in the Baltic Sea. HELCOM (2026).
2.5.1.1	Priority area (sea uses)	In the priority area for a specific use or function, other uses that are incompatible with the priority use or function are not permitted.	Indicates planned sea use (-s) which has a priority in a given sea area.	Guidelines on transboundary MSP output data structure in the Baltic Sea. HELCOM (2026). Spatial Planning in the German Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), BSH (2023)
2.5.1.2	Reserved area (sea uses)	In the reservation area, in the event of a conflict of interest with other uses or functions, greater weight is attached to the designated use or function.	Indicates planned sea use (-s) to be given specific weight in relation to other spatially relevant activities.	Guidelines on transboundary MSP output data structure in the Baltic Sea. HELCOM (2026). Spatial Planning in the German Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), BSH (2023)
2.5.1.3	Allowed sea uses	Indicates planned sea use (-s) which is allowed in a given sea.	Indicates planned sea use (-s) which is allowed in a given sea.	Guidelines on transboundary MSP output data structure in the Baltic Sea. HELCOM (2026).
2.5.1.4	Restricted sea uses	Indicates planned sea use (-s) with some kind of restriction is imposed in a given sea area.	Indicates planned sea use (-s) with some kind of restriction is imposed in a given sea area.	Guidelines on transboundary MSP output data structure in the Baltic Sea. HELCOM (2026).

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
2.5.1.5	Forbidden sea uses	Indicates planned sea use (-s) which is forbidden in a given sea area.	Indicates planned sea use (-s) which is forbidden in a given sea area.	Guidelines on transboundary MSP output data structure in the Baltic Sea. HELCOM (2026).
2.5.2	Zoning	The primary purpose of zoning is to separate uses that are thought to be incompatible. In practice, zoning also is used to prevent development of new uses from interfering with existing uses. Spatial management tools such as zoning to give clear, spatial expressions to diverse sectoral policies at sea.	An important enforceable planning/management action to implement comprehensive marine spatial management plans usually through a zoning map or maps and regulations for some or all areas of a marine region. Ocean zoning is an effective tool of MSP	Glossary, MSPglobal (2025)
2.5.3	Sectors	Maritime human activities specified/divided as economic sectors to be considered in MSP.	Member States shall aim to contribute to the sustainable development of energy sectors at sea, of maritime transport, and of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, and to the preservation, protection and improvement of the environment, including resilience to climate change impacts. In addition, Member States may pursue other objectives such as the promotion of sustainable tourism and the sustainable extraction of raw materials. →See 4	https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/msp-eu/introduction-msp
2.6	Planning process	The planning process refers to the actions necessary to draw up and implement a plan that achieves previously defined aims.	The planning process and its legal requirements define what has to be done how and when while setting up an MSP.	Glossary, MSPglobal (2025)
2.6.1	Scoping	The competent authority may, at the developer's request, give an early opinion on what topics and how much detail the environmental impact assessment report must cover. This process is called scoping and shall improve the quality of an environmental impact assessment, simplify the procedures and streamline the decision-making process.	With regard to plan making process, the scoping should define the scope of the strategic environmental assessment of the national draft plan. This can include an analysis of the expected environmental impacts based on the designations.	DIRECTIVE 2014/52/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
2.6.2	Drafting	Based on the results of the preliminary investigations and scoping, a first draft plan is developed. This step can be repeated iteratively, with reference to the participation.	Member States shall establish means of public participation by informing all interested parties and by consulting the relevant stakeholders and authorities, and the public concerned, at an early stage in the development of maritime spatial plans. Consulting the draft of a plan ensures participation and best available knowledge.	DIRECTIVE 2014/52/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
2.6.2.1	Information	Stakeholders are informed about the plan and its aims.	Sharing information with stakeholders and neighbouring countries is an essential part of MSP. Keeping each other updated strengthens the coherence of plans and alignment.	DIRECTIVE 2014/52/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
2.6.2.2	Consultation	Possibility for stakeholders to express opinions, concerns or suggestions about the draft.	Member States should consult and coordinate their plans with the relevant Member States and should cooperate with third-country authorities in the marine region [...]. In order to promote sustainable development in an effective manner, it is essential that stakeholders, authorities and the public be consulted at an appropriate stage in the preparation of maritime spatial plans [...].	DIRECTIVE 2014/52/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
2.6.3	Implementation	Act of starting to use a plan, put a plan into action	The act of implementing a plan into national law and carrying out the aims and objectives contained within it.	https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/implementation
2.6.4	Evaluation	Process of judging something based on quality aspects, importance, amount or value	Analyzing the plans determinations figuring out the extent to which they have been effective and contributed to the achievement of aims.	https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/evaluation
2.6.5	Revision/adaptation	process of changing a plan, system or law on order to improve it	Update of the plan which should have due regard to land-sea interactions and best available knowledge.	Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament; https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/revision

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
3	Monitoring & Evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of MSP are therefore becoming increasingly important: to ensure MSP is based on an up-to-date evidence base, to ensure plans deliver on their stated objectives, and to demonstrate the benefits of MSP to politicians and the general public.	→See 1.5.3	Arndt, P., Matczak, M., Zaucha, J., Gee, K. (eds) (2023). MSP in a sea of change – aim for better and connected plans. Report of the eMSP NSBR Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Strand. Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, Hamburg, December 2023. Download from www.emspproject.eu/results/
3.1	Monitoring	Monitoring is understood here as the routine (ongoing) and ideally systematic collection of data and information during the lifespan of the marine spatial plan and during the drafting process. It aims to provide planners and stakeholders with information on the status of ongoing activities.	Monitoring is highly relevant for the implementation of the plan, gathering constant information and being aware of its effect.	Van den Burg et al. (2023)
3.1.1	Environmental monitoring	Environmental monitoring is a tool to assess environmental conditions and trends, support policy development and its implementation, and develop information for reporting to national policymakers, international forums and the public.	Environmental monitoring for MSP is required for EU Member States by Article 10 of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC). In addition to monitoring the significant environmental effects of MSP implementation, monitoring can (and should) cover other or general changes in the marine environment. This is particularly important in the context of climate change and the expected environmental changes this will bring. Being aware of changing baselines is important for the next planning cycle, especially when observed changes might lead to a (part) revision of the plan.	https://unece.org/environmental-monitoring Arndt, P., Matczak, M., Zaucha, J., Gee, K. (eds) (2023). MSP in a sea of change – aim for better and connected plans. Report of the eMSP NSBR Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Strand. Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, Hamburg, December 2023. Download from www.emspproject.eu/results/

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
3.1.2	Sector development	Observing the development of all sectors relevant for MSP is therefore important as it feeds the knowledge base for future plan revision processes.	Human activities in the sea and within maritime sectors change over time. Events in 2022 have shown that change may be faster than expected and that MSP may be required to respond quickly to newly emerging demands on marine space. Observing the development of all sectors relevant for MSP is therefore important as it feeds the knowledge base for future plan revision processes.	Arndt, P., Matczak, M., Zaucha, J., Gee, K. (eds) (2023). MSP in a sea of change – aim for better and connected plans. Report of the eMSP NSBR Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Strand. Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, Hamburg, December 2023. Download from www.emspproject.eu/results/
3.1.3	Policy development	Changes to or additions to the political and legal framework.	A highly dynamical global situation with the chance of suddenly upcoming new threats, needs or demands for the spatial planning shows an even greater relevance for M&E systems, [...]. Awareness for policy changes and the associated consequences for MSP is necessary.	Arndt, P., Matczak, M., Zaucha, J., Gee, K. (eds) (2023). MSP in a sea of change – aim for better and connected plans. Report of the eMSP NSBR Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Strand. Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, Hamburg, December 2023. Download from www.emspproject.eu/results/
3.2	Evaluation	Evaluation is a periodic activity that establishes whether the objectives of the plan or the planning process have been achieved, or that asks more precise questions of what works, why and how, in order to then make the necessary improvements to a plan or planning process. Evaluation depends on a good knowledge and information base [...].	Evaluation refers to a retrospective assessment of the MSPs impact (relevance and benefits), forward-looking management, and a review of the processes or process steps employed. The aim is not only to determine whether the objectives have been achieved, but also to identify the underlying factors (impact analysis).	Arndt, P., Matczak, M., Zaucha, J., Gee, K. (eds) (2023). MSP in a sea of change – aim for better and connected plans. Report of the eMSP NSBR Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Strand. Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, Hamburg, December 2023. Download from www.emspproject.eu/results/

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
3.2.1	Steering effect	The capacity of maritime spatial plans to guide, shape and reconcile human activities at sea.	MSP employs area-based tools (zones) for different uses for direct steering and/or spatial/economic/ social/environmental policy targets and strategic goals as indirect instruments to achieve the desired steering effect.	Own definition based on Maritime Spatial Planning Country Information – Germany. EU MSP Platform, October 2022.
3.2.2	Planning process	The cyclical process of plan-making: Plan preparation, drafting, finalising, implementing, evaluating and revising MSP plans.	“MSP is the public process of analysing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives that are usually specified through a political process”	Ehler & Douvere 2007, “Visions for Sea Change”, UNESCO/IOC
4	Sectors	Maritime human activities specified/divided as economic sectors to be considered in MSP.	Due to the scope of the work package and the glossary, the focus lies on offshore wind energy and should be enriched with further sectors in the up taking processes on a sea basin level. →See 2.5.3	Cambridge dictionary and own addition
4.1	Offshore Wind Energy	Electricity generated from wind turbines located in offshore areas, harnessing wind power to produce renewable energy.		https://offshorewindfacts.org/glossary/
4.1.1	Spatial Designations	Area designations are a spatial planning tool. They usually contain “positive” provisions in the sense that they explicitly promote certain activities rather than prohibiting them completely. In most cases, the focus is on a specific sector. The legal consequences of the provisions vary between EU countries.	→See 2.5	Zaucha, J., Gee, K., Ramieri, E., Neimane, L., Alloncle, N., Blažauskas, N., ... & Ehler, C. N. (2025). Implementing the EU MSP Directive: Current status and lessons learned in 22 EU Member States. <i>Marine Policy</i> , 171, 106425.
4.1.1.1	areas (DE)	Sections in the exclusive economic zone or in coastal waters for the construction and operation of offshore wind turbines connected to the grid.		§ 3 WindSeeG (https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/windseeg/)

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
4.1.1.2	sites (DE)	Sections within areas where offshore wind turbines connected to the grid are to be constructed in close proximity to one another and for which a joint tender is therefore being issued.		§ 3 WindSeeG (https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/windseeg/)
4.1.1.3	gate (DE)	Defined transfer location at border of two countries or between EEZ and territorial sea for coherent planning of linear infrastructure (interconnector, pipeline).		BSH
4.1.1.4	interconnector	An extra-high voltage transmission line running between two countries.		https://www.netzentwicklungsplan.de/en/verstehen/glossar/i
4.1.2	Offshore Wind Farm	A collection of wind turbines located offshore, designed to generate electricity from wind energy.		https://offshorewindfacts.org/glossary/
4.1.2.1	Offshore Wind Turbine	Wind turbines are large mechanical devices that use blades to capture wind energy and convert it into electrical power through a generator.		https://blog.armoda.com/offshore-wind-energy-terms-to-know
4.1.2.1.1	rotor	The rotor is the rotating section of the turbine. It consists of the turbine blades and the hub that connects the blades to the shaft.		https://blog.armoda.com/offshore-wind-energy-terms-to-know
4.1.2.1.2	rotor blade	The large blades attached to the rotor of a wind turbine that capture the wind's energy and convert it into rotational motion.		https://offshorewindfacts.org/glossary/
4.1.2.1.3	tower	The tower is typically a tubular steel structure that supports the nacelle. It also provides access to the nacelle, houses electrical and control equipment, and provides shelter and storage for safety equipment.		https://guidetofloatingoffshorewind.com/guide/t-wind-turbine/t-3-tower/
4.1.2.1.4	nacelle	The housing at the top of a wind turbine tower that contains the generator, gearbox, and other key components.		https://offshorewindfacts.org/glossary/

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
4.1.2.1.5	foundation	The structure that supports a wind turbine in the seabed, providing stability and anchoring the turbine.		https://offshorewindfacts.org/glossary/
4.1.2.1.6	transition piece	A part of the foundation that provides the connection between the foundation and the wind turbine tower. For monopiles, it is usually installed after piling. For non-monopile steel or gravity base foundations, the transition is connected to the main structure before installation.		https://guidetoanoffshorewindfarm.com/glossary/
4.1.2.2	Inter-Array Cable	Electrical cable that connects the turbines to each other and the offshore substation.		https://guidetoanoffshorewindfarm.com/glossary/
4.1.2.3	Transformer Station / Substation	A transformer station, also known as a substation, is a component within the electricity grid that is used to connect grids with different voltage levels (e.g. 380 kV and 110 kV) via transformers. Similarly, these facilities can also be used to connect different sections of the same voltage network with one another or to switch certain sections off. In such cases, the term switchgear is used.		https://www.netzentwicklungsplan.de/en/verstehen/glossar/t
4.1.3	Grid Connection System	The umbrella term for all installations used for the transmission of electrical energy between the network connection terminal of an offshore wind farm and the grid connection point using the transmission network. If only three-phase electric power is used for transmission, then this is called an AC grid connection system. If direct current is used for at least one section of the transmission path, then this is called a DC grid connection system.		https://www.netzentwicklungsplan.de/en/verstehen/glossar/g

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
4.1.3.1	High-Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Grid Connection System	An electric power transmission system that uses direct current for the bulk transmission of electrical power. For long-distance transmission, HVDC systems may offer lifetime cost advantages over HVAC systems over long transmission distances. They are currently only used for point-to-point connections.		https://guidetoanoffshorewindfarm.com/glossary/
4.1.3.1.1	converter (platform & station)	<u>Converter</u>: A converter combines two functions: It converts alternating current into direct current and vice versa. This takes place in the frequency converter, the core element of a converter. Converters include transformers that adapt the input voltage to that of the grid into which the electricity is fed after conversion. <u>Converter platform</u>: An offshore structure to house the converter and other offshore components of a HVDC transmission line, including all secondary installations. The converter platform itself is part of the HVDC transmission line. <u>Converter station</u>: An onshore structure to house the converter and other onshore components of an HVDC transmission line, including all secondary installations.		https://www.netzentwicklungsplan.de/en/verstehen/glossar/c
4.1.3.1.2	High-Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission line	The energy generated at offshore wind farms is transported to a point in or close to the respective offshore wind farm cluster. If a DC grid connection system is being used, the energy is then transmitted from here through an HVDC transmission line to an onshore grid connection point.		https://www.netzentwicklungsplan.de/en/verstehen/glossar/h

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
4.1.3.2	High-Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) Grid Connection System	An electric power transmission system that uses alternating current for the bulk transmission of electrical power. Alternating current is the form in which electric power is generated by wind turbines and delivered to an end user.		https://guidetoanoffshorewindfarm.com/glossary/
4.1.3.2.1	High-Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) transmission line	An AC connection is used to carry generated electrical energy from the transformer platform of an offshore wind farm to a converter platform (for DC grid connection systems) or to a bundling point (for AC grid connections systems). From here, the electrical energy is transmitted via a HVDC transmission line or an AC transmission line to an onshore grid connection point.		https://www.netzentwicklungsplan.de/en/verstehen/glossar/a
5	Protection of the marine environment		Environmental protection terminology is deeply covered by the PROTECT BALTIC project and should be linked: https://protectbaltic.eu/glossary	
5.1	Nature conservation	Conservation means a series of measures required to maintain or restore the natural habitats and the populations of species of wild fauna and flora at a favourable status.		Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, Art. 1, http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/1992/43/oj

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
5.1.1	Preservation	The aim of preservation is to obviate damage liable to be caused by environmental or accidental factors, which pose a threat in the immediate surroundings of the object to be conserved. Accordingly, preventive methods and measures are not usually applied directly but are designed to control the microclimatic conditions of the environment with the aim of eradicating harmful agents or elements, which may have a temporary or permanent influence on the deterioration of the object.	Preservation in MSP is mainly taken up through the SEA process. → See 6	UNESCO Glossary, https://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/preservation
5.1.2	Maintenance	Ongoing conservation measures to keep natural habitats and species at a favourable conservation status	An obligation under the Habitats Directive, paired with active habitat restoration	www.era-comm.eu/EU_Nature_Protection_Legislation/stand_alone/part_2/part_2_3.html
5.1.3	Restoration	'Restoration' means the process of actively or passively assisting the recovery of an ecosystem in order to improve its structure and functions, with the aim of conserving or enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, through improving an area of a habitat type to good condition, re-establishing favourable reference area, and improving a habitat of a species to sufficient quality and quantity in accordance with Article 4(1), (2) and (3) and Article 5(1), (2) and (3), and meeting the targets and fulfilling the obligations under Articles 8 to 12, including reaching satisfactory levels for the indicators referred to in Articles 8 to 12	Restoration plans should be taken up into MSP.	Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869 (Text with EEA relevance), Art. 3, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1991/oj

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
5.1.4	Marine protected area (MPA) management plans	The management plans regulate or compensate harmful human activities through different actions, such as restricting activities during a certain time or in a certain area, prohibiting certain activities completely, restoring degraded areas, maintaining sustainable and traditional use when appropriate and substituting certain materials or substances with less harmful ones. (HELCOM)	MSPs should support MPAs from the overarching level.	PROTECT BALTIC Glossary, https://protectbaltic.eu/glossary-2nd-page-j-z#bf29b415-e946-4888-9c25-9216476847d4
5.2	Mitigation	The process of preventing, minimising or offsetting the negative environmental impacts of a project or policy through a series of mitigation measures. Environmental mitigation involves actions taken to lessen negative impacts on natural systems. These measures reduce or compensate for adverse environmental effects resulting from human activities or development projects. Strategies include avoiding impacts, minimizing their extent, restoring affected areas, or offsetting unavoidable damage through compensatory actions. The objective is to achieve no net loss, or a net gain, of environmental value.	Mitigation measures can provide planning options though understanding impacts of human activities and avoid or reduce these.	https://news.sustainability-directory.com/news/environmental-mitigation/
5.2.1	Avoidance	Part of the mitigation hierarchy: First avoid damage (to habitats/species through human activities), then minimise unavoidable impacts, and then compensate for any residual harm. The purpose is to achieve no net loss in relation to a baseline (e.g. target species or habitat conditions)	Through mindful planning, MSP can contribute strongly to the avoidance of impacts from human activities.	www.biodiversityinfrastructure.org/handbook/3-mitigation-hierarchy/3-1-concept-regulation-and-practice/

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
5.2.2	Reduction	Actions, procedures or installations undertaken to reduce the extent or degree of negative effects on human health and the ecosystem introduced by human design or interaction with the environment.	Creating plans to minimise the spatial or temporal scale of the impact during design, construction, etc.	GEMET, https://www.eionet.europa.eu/gemet/en/concept/4160
5.2.3	Offset	Another term for compensating losses from unavoidable impacts to achieve no net loss for biodiversity. Biodiversity offsets are measurable conservation outcomes designed to compensate for adverse and unavoidable impacts of projects, in addition to prevention and mitigation measures already implemented.		https://iucn.org/resources/issues-brief/biodiversity-offsets
5.2.4	Enhance	Environmental enhancement denotes deliberate actions to improve the condition of natural systems. These interventions aim to restore ecological functions, augment biodiversity, or mitigate environmental degradation resulting from prior disturbances. Such practices frequently involve habitat reconstruction, pollution abatement, or the introduction of species to bolster ecosystem resilience. Effective environmental enhancement requires a comprehensive understanding of ecological processes and potential unintended consequences.	MSP or the nature conservation planning can apply measures to create new benefits.	https://news.sustainability-directory.com/news/environmental-enhancement/

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
6	Strategic Environmental Assessment	The 'process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully integrated into the preparation of Plans and Programmes and prior to their final adoption. The SEA requires the environmental authorities to be consulted at the screening stage; scoping and it requires an assessment of reasonable alternatives and the Member States must monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans / programmes in order to identify unforeseen adverse effects and undertake appropriate remedial action'.	The SEA process is key to achieve the aim of the MSP directive for the preservation, protection and improvement of the environment.	https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/msp-resources/glossary
6.1	Environmental assessment	'Environmental assessment' shall mean the preparation of an environmental report, the carrying out of consultations, the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the consultations in decision-making and the provision of information on the decision in accordance with Articles 4 to 9;		Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, Art. 2, http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2001/42/oj
6.2	Environmental report	'environmental report' shall mean the part of the plan or programme documentation containing the information required in Article 5 and Annex I;		Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, Art. 2, http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2001/42/oj

Order	Term	Definition	MSP context	Source
6.3	Environmental monitoring	Environmental monitoring is a tool to assess environmental conditions and trends, support policy development and its implementation, and develop information for reporting to national policymakers, international forums and the public.	→See 3.1.1	https://unece.org/environmental-monitoring Arndt, P., Matczak, M., Zaucha, J., Gee, K. (eds) (2023). MSP in a sea of change – aim for better and connected plans. Report of the eMSP NSBR Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Strand. Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, Hamburg, December 2023. Download from www.emspproject.eu/results/
6.4	Espoo convention	The Espoo (EIA) Convention and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Kyiv, 2003) set out the obligations of Parties to assess the environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of planning. It also lays down the general obligation of States to notify and consult each other on all major projects under consideration that are likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact across boundaries.	The Espoo convention provides a formal consultation process for the SEAs of MSPs. Supporting the international cooperation on a broad basis.	https://unece.org/environmental-policy/convention-environmental-impact-assessment-transboundary-context-espoo-0



Let's talk a common language in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)

Speaking a common technical language is key to avoiding misunderstandings and improving the coherence of maritime spatial plans. Terms can be used with different meanings, or different words can be used for the same concept. Such pitfalls must be avoided and clarity must be created. This glossary gives a systematic overview of terms relevant in the context of maritime spatial planning and specialized MSP topics such as offshore energy and nature conservation.



Netherlands Enterprise Agency



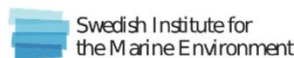
Swedish Agency
for Marine and
Water Management



Nordregio



Ministry of Infrastructure
and Water Management
of the Netherlands



Co-funded by
the European Union