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Note that this document was submitted after the established deadline. It will be decided by the Session whether the document can be discussed or is postponed to the next meeting and/or session or handled via correspondence.

Background

The project MSP-GREEN – Maritime Spatial Planning as Enabler of the European Green Deal – started in November 2022 and will run until October 2024 (24 months). The project is funded by the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF).

This document contains an overview of the project activities, its main objectives, and a description of deliverables and foreseen activities.

Action requested

The Steering Group is invited to take note of the information on project activities and discuss the relevance of the foreseen project results applicable for the Baltic Sea on "Recommendations for making MSP an enabler of the EU Green Deal" in the next meeting or session of the Working Group.

Description of the MSP-GREEN project



The MSP-GREEN project addresses the challenge of reflecting and aligning maritime spatial plans (further – MSP) to the ambition of the European Green Deal (further – EGD). There is an overarching and urgent need to operationalize EGD objectives, in order to reinforce coherence between the different directives and to clarify priorities among conflicting objectives. Based on a cross-cutting approach, MSP-GREEN systematically investigates the most relevant topics of the MSP-EGD nexus (key marine and maritime pillars of the EGD):

- **Carbon neutrality**, including production of marine renewable energy, contribution of maritime sectors to climate change mitigation and protection and restoration of blue habitats,
- **Climate change adaptation** of ecosystems and maritime and coastal activities,
- **Sustainable sea-food production** (i.e., through aquaculture, incl. macroalgae production, sustainable fisheries etc.),
- **Biodiversity and ecosystem protection**, including marine habitat restoration,
- **Circular economy** in the diverse maritime sectors
- **Zero pollution**.

Additional horizontal components of the EGD – fair and just transition – are to be addressed across all the analyzed topics.

Project objectives

The specific objectives of the project are to:

- Assess whether and how MSP plans have considered the EGD objectives
- Assess what are the major gaps, challenges and trade-offs in mainstreaming EGD into MSP
- Identify and exchange valuable practices of incorporation of EGD elements in MSP plans
- Identify, design and start implementing additional actions to strengthen the implementation of EGD-related objectives
- Provide recommendations to EU countries on how to use MSP in fostering the achievement of the EGD goals
- Engage regional sea communities – including non-EU countries – in a dialogue on the EGD ambition and the role of marine planning for a Sustainable Blue Economy

Description of Work packages

The project is structured around five Work packages:

WP1 “Project management and coordination” administrates the project to operational and financial achievements;

WP2 “Analysis and evaluation of EGD ambition integration into MSP plans” evaluates whether and how MSP plans have considered the EGD objectives and identify the major gaps;

WP3 “Strengthening MSP contribution to EGD” fosters the role of national MSP Plans in contributing to EGD objectives (WP2);

WP4 “Towards a Greener MSP for Europe: scaling-up and innovating” gathers the outcomes from WP2 and WP3 and elaborates them to be shared across the EU sea-basins. Recommendations will be prepared, addressed to EU MSP Authorities of the five regional sea-basins;

WP5 “Communication and dissemination” shares project outcomes and promotes MSP, the EMFAF actions and maritime EGD.

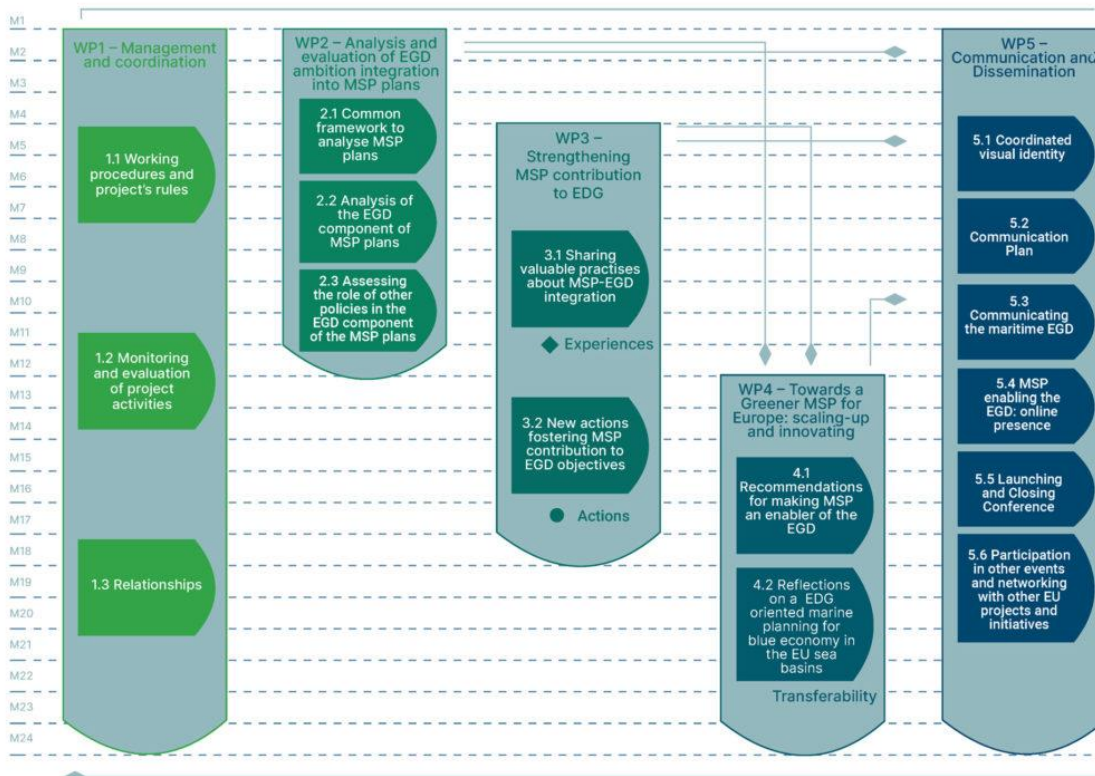


Figure 1. Project MSP-GREEN Working Package overview timeline

Project partnership

The MSP-GREEN project involves partners from seven European Union countries (Italy, Spain, France, Finland, Bulgaria, Latvia, and an associate partner from Germany) covering 5 different sea basins - the Baltic Sea, North Sea, Black Sea, Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean.

Lead partner: Venice Lagoon Systems Research Activities Coordination Consortium (*CORILA*) - *Consorzio Per Il Coordinamento Delle Ricerche Inerenti Al Sistema Lagunare Di Venezia* (IT).

Partnership

Baltic Sea & North Sea: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (LV); Southwest Finland Region (FI); Associates: Visions and Strategies around the Baltic Sea (VASAB) secretariat; German Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (DE).

Black Sea: Center for Coastal and Marine Studies (BG).

Mediterranean & The Atlantic Ocean: IUAV University of Venice - Università Iuav Di Venezia (IT); National Research Council (IT); State agency of the Supreme Council for Scientific Research (ES); Environmental, Mobility and Planning Risk Research and Expertise Center (FR).

Project interim results

Given that the overarching goal for the MSP-GREEN project results is to be transferred and further discussed across the EU sea basins, strengthening the regional dimension and the ambition for a Sustainable Blue Economy (which considers environmental, socio-economic, geopolitical, regional specificities), there is an aspiration to disseminate projects findings among MSP and EGD stakeholders and the public for the benefit of all in the entire European Union and neighbouring countries. Therefore, the session invites to take note of the first MSP-GREEN project deliverables, namely Deliverable 2.1. “The Green Deal component of the EU MSP Plans” and Deliverable 5.2. “Communicating the maritime European Green Deal: A companion for MSP practitioners, decision makers and marine sustainability communicators”. Associated documents are made available at: <https://mspgreen.eu/results/>

Deliverable 2.1. “The Green Deal component of the EU MSP Plans” originates from the WP2 activity [“Analysis and evaluation of EGD ambition integration into MSP plans”](#)

The deliverable illustrates whether and how the national MSP plans of the participant countries consider the EGD objectives and mainstream their implementation. The deliverable is structured accordingly per country, applying a methodology based upon key marine and maritime pillars of the EGD (climate neutrality, climate change adaptation, biodiversity and ecosystem protection, zero pollution, circular economy, sustainable food provision; whilst horizontally applying analysis on fair and just transition components). Associated infographic is made available [here](#).

The multidimensional analysis captures the diversity of the analyzed plans, resulting from particularly the spatial and non-spatial planning approaches, as well as planning contexts. The document indicates key information on the organization of MSP governance from national to local level, the structuring of economic sectors and stakeholders, and the various statuses of planning tools (from strategic to prescriptive) used in MSP. As a result, the nation-specific MSP plan analyses certain gaps in mainstreaming EGD, pointing out challenges, as well as identifying possible trade-offs. The present collection of factsheets wishes to support the accessibility and promotion of the extensive research presented, therefore key findings of European Green Deal elements in the Maritime Spatial Plans of the analyzed countries are briefly presented according to the common taxonomy developed by the project and presented as [country specific summaries](#). Moreover, the deliverable (pages 189 – 220) includes an extensive report of the associated workshop on “Exchanging results from analysis of the Green Deal component of MSP plans”.

To summarize, key preliminary challenges were identified for MSP to become as an enabler of the EGD. Namely:

- Implementing the EGD may result reinforce spatial competition among the uses at sea;
- The implementation of various EGD elements analyses through the MSP spectrum faces obstacles relating to data gaps, fragmentation or lack of interoperability;
- The geographical scope, overall legislative approach and mandate of MSP define its capacity to address the EGD components;
- Contrasting policy objectives may make it difficult to articulate EGD within MSP;
- The overall MSP plan limitations in the development process may restrict the ability to address the EGD due to lack of resources, time constraints and dynamic participation across the levels of governance.

Deliverable 5.2. “Communicating the maritime European Green Deal: A companion for MSP practitioners, decision makers and marine sustainability communicators”

To support maritime spatial planning communication actions and campaigns surrounding the EGD, the document in a handbook format provides a series of suggestions. The overarching goal for the handbook is

to act as a guide promoting the green transition of maritime sectors by means of planned activities in EU Member States, aligned with the objectives of the EGD and the EU MSP Directive. It reviews strategic guidance documents and includes applicable academic literature that are relevant across sea basins, cultural trends, and specificities when communicating the EGD in an MSP context. As the MSP GREEN project is based on a cross-basin approach, here sea-basin specific maritime cultures are used as a basis for linking EU maritime regions. And therefore, under the section ‘Sea basin identity’ presents basin-specific elements of the maritime EGD that could be considered in promoting the green transition.

The key guiding questions in the creation of the deliverable were:

What are the EGD objectives that should be integrated into maritime spatial plans? How do we enable their effective, long-lasting integration? What are the differences and similarities in the implementation of the EGD through MSP across the diverse European basins and coastal countries? How can maritime cultural landmarks of the various sea basins enable the Green Deal or innovative pathways towards transition?

Suitable approaches for different levels of communication to reach various stakeholders/topics were selected from dedicated literature. Methods, including information on voice, tone and channels of communication were drawn from EU guidelines for communicating MSP, sustainability, and ocean literacy.

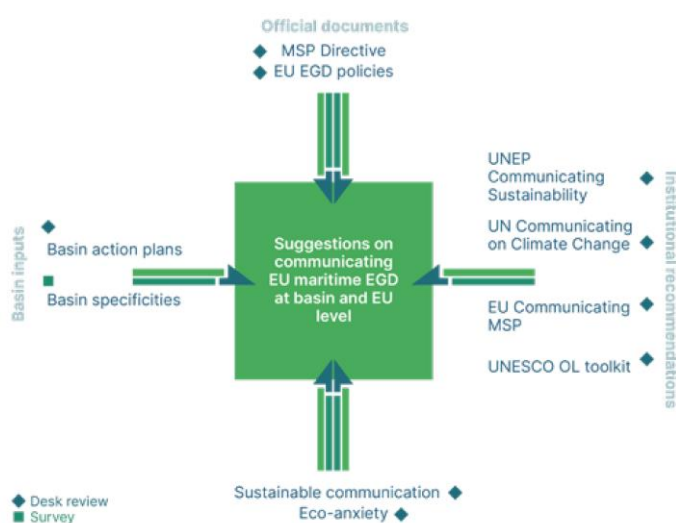


Figure 2. Applied methodology of the deliverable “Communicating maritime Green Deal”.

Information on next planned activities

By the end of 2023, the WP3 activities foresee to exchange valuable practices at different stages of MSP process (planning, implementation, evaluation practices, etc.). The overall set of actions will aim to provide experiences on the different EGD topics as defined in T2.1. Results acquired through the development and analysis of the valuable practices and the identification of new actions will provide the basis for recommendations to be formulated under WP4. Summary descriptions of new actions will be prepared to feed the “repository of best practices and lessons learnt” that will be released with D3.3. The repository will be disseminated through the project web page and/or the EU MSP Platform.

In 2024 the main MSP-GREEN project deliverable will result in *“Recommendations for making MSP an enabler of the EU Green Deal”*, making its significant relevance also for the Baltic Sea region countries.

To note, this project contributes to macro-regional cooperation on maritime spatial planning and development, including land-sea interactions in general.