Maritime Spatial Planning in the North Sea - Lessons to learn

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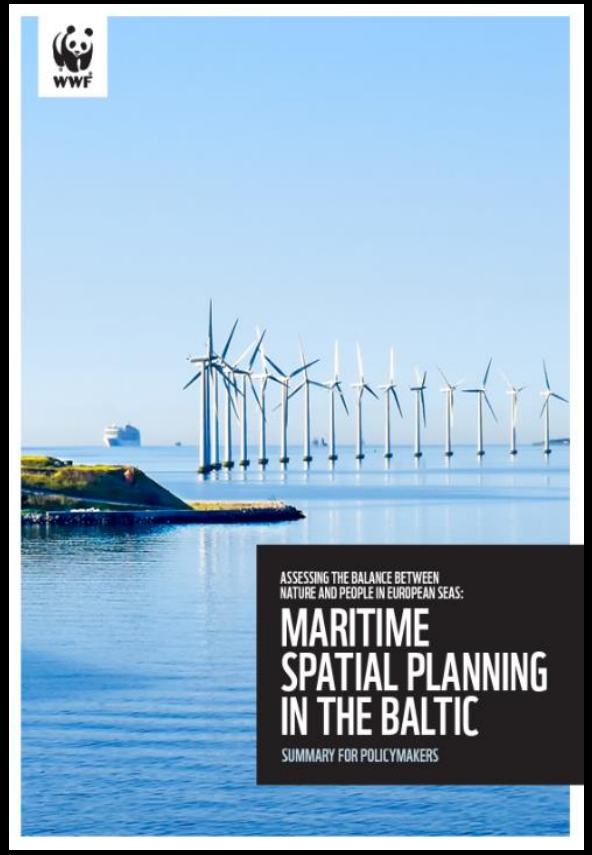
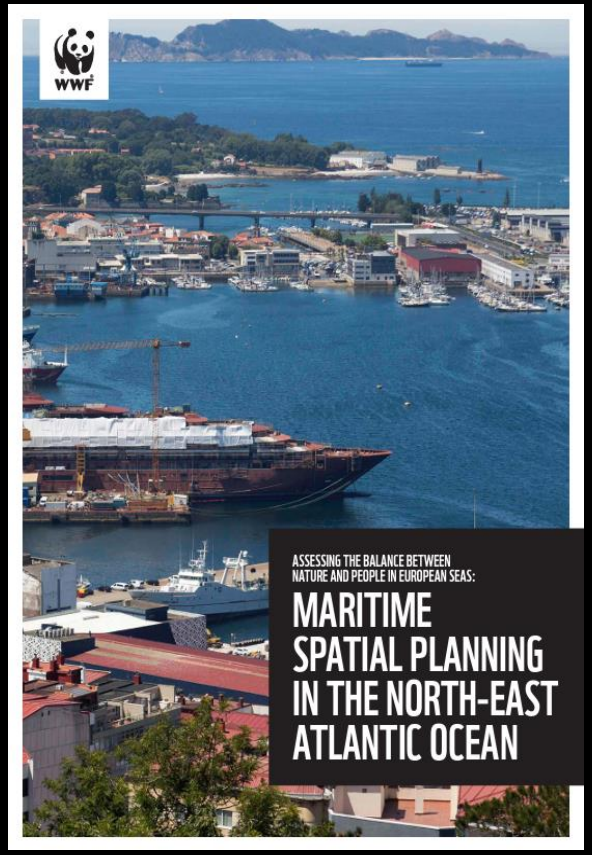

ASSESSING THE BALANCE BETWEEN
NATURE AND PEOPLE IN EUROPEAN SEAS:
MARITIME
SPATIAL PLANNING
IN THE BALTIC
SUMMARY FOR POLICYMAKERS


ASSESSING THE BALANCE BETWEEN
NATURE AND PEOPLE IN EUROPEAN SEAS:
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ASSESSING THE BALANCE BETWEEN
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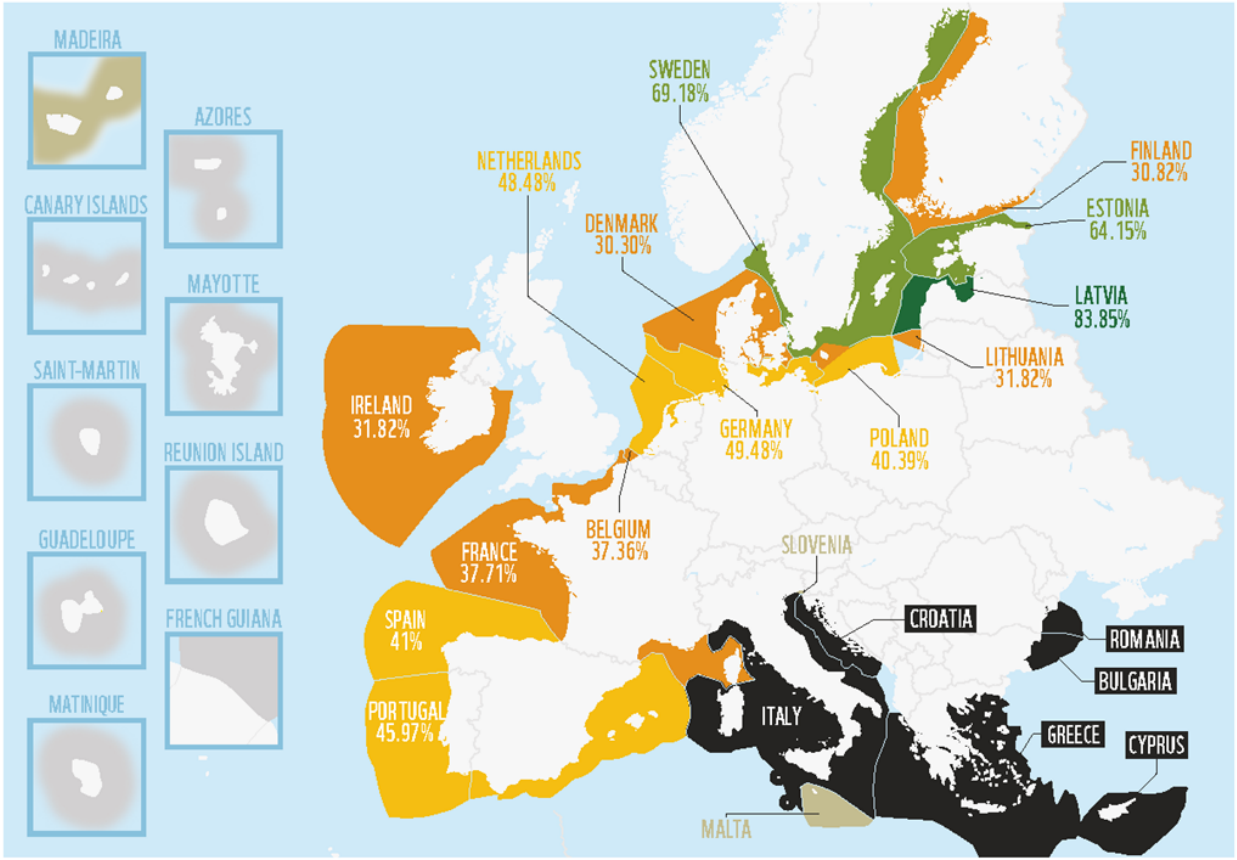
THE EU IS FAILING AT ECOSYSTEM-BASED MSP



KEY

SCORE IN %

A national maritime spatial plan is in place and has been assessed by WWF.
100% corresponds to the complete achievement of an ecosystem-based approach to MSP.

No national maritime spatial plan in place and the country is under infringement procedures by the European Commission.

A national maritime spatial plan is in place but has not yet been assessed by WWF.

No national maritime spatial plan is in place but there is no infringement procedure underway as the outermost regions have more time to comply with EU laws.

TABLE 1: Average Member State score for each Maritime Spatial Planning assessment category

For each Member State, the worst and best scores for each category are highlighted in red and green, respectively. A high percentage score denotes a positive performance, while a score below 50% denotes a negative performance.

SCORE IN % 0-10 11-20 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-70 71-80 81-90 91-100

CATEGORY AVERAGE	INCLUSION OF NATURE	SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS	GOOD OCEAN GOVERNANCE	COMPREHENSIVENESS OF THE COMPLETE MSP PROCESS
North Sea Average	38%	43%	47%	54%
Belgium	20.4%	28.6%	44.4%	56.3%
Denmark	16.7%	28.6%	38.9%	37.5%
France	31.5%	42.9%	44.4%	43.8%
Germany	31.5%	42.9%	55.6%	68.6%
Netherlands	55.6%	28.6%	44.4%	62.5%
Sweden	70%	86%	56%	54%

NB: The indicators in each assessment category are included in Figure 1 on page 12. The North Sea regional score corresponds to the average of all Member States' scores. For the scores, "100%" corresponds to the complete achievement of indicator goals in that category, "50%" represents a partial achievement, and "0%" corresponds to zero achievements.

MSP in the North Sea

Drivers

- The North Sea is simultaneously **one of the most biologically productive seas** and **one of the most disturbed marine areas** in the world
- It is home to some of the world's largest economies, who have an interest in maintaining power – a healthy sea with sustainable management is, therefore, essential
- By the end of 2021, all North Sea nations had published their national maritime spatial plans

Challenges

- One of the most disturbed and traversed seas in the world
- Multiple & overlapping activities: fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, oil & gas extraction, wind energy, sand & gravel extraction, harbours (three of the world's largest ports, Rotterdam, Antwerp and Hamburg) and coastal development
- Limited space and resources, from the surface to the seafloor
- In 2019, fewer than half of the areas set aside for protection (47%) had management plans for implementing and monitoring

Stakeholder engagement (1/2)

All North Sea Member States performed well on stakeholder engagement.

Belgium, Germany, Netherlands and Sweden scored 100%, while Denmark and France scored 50%.

However, all were, overall, unsuccessful in considering all industries and stakeholders in their final national plans, both in terms of allocating space to different maritime sectors and in preparing a forward-looking vision that steers those sectors towards more sustainable models**.**

Stakeholder engagement (2/2)

- Across the region, measures contributing to the EU Green Deal have been established, however, they are neither comprehensive nor the result of transboundary cooperation, which is necessary to deliver increasing energy production and well-connected protected areas.

- Belgium, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands all failed to consider how income and labour would change as new maritime sectors (e.g. offshore renewable energy) grow and/or others are decommissioned (e.g. oil and gas).

- They also failed to designate exclusive fishing areas that align with the requirements stipulated in the EU Common Fisheries Policy and Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

- Positively, all countries successfully designated space for offshore renewable energy development in line with EU wind and energy targets.

Successfully balancing sectors

Steps taken by NGOs, industry and government in the Netherlands as part of **the North Sea Agreement (NSA)** serve as positive examples of balancing multiple maritime sectors in a small sea space:

- Good collaboration between stakeholders, including the fishing sector, will see bottom-contacting fisheries reduced by 15% in certain areas by 2030.
- Industry development/expansion has improved consideration for nature, via identifying and implementing the best-available techniques to minimise environmental impacts.
- The Dutch government has agreed not place any wind farms within either Natura 2000 or MSFD areas, i.e. areas where the negative impacts of human activities already require addressing.
- An overarching programme for increased ecological monitoring and research has been established to provide the NSA governing board with scientific information to ensure that the evolution of maritime activities remain within the carrying capacity of ecosystems.

Offshore renewables

The expansion of offshore wind in the North Sea is expected to be the largest in the EU.

💯 All North Sea Member States designated enough space to fulfil the EU's climate-neutrality commitments for 2030 (i.e. space for offshore renewable energy development) and are now looking into ways of expanding these areas further.

🎧 As offshore wind farms are developed in sites which were previously occupied by fisheries, additional considerations should be taken to ensure that this development does not jeopardise the wellbeing of coastal communities that directly depend on marine resources.

👎 Belgium currently allows offshore wind farms to be expanded into Marine Protected Areas that were being considered to support the 10% strict-protection target of the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

👎 Germany has also published plans to build offshore wind farms in the Dogger Bank, which includes Natura 2000 sites protected under the EU Habitats Directive.

A closer look at Belgium

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Learning from other MS practices
(nature inclusion)

FR

Land-sea interaction

Some coastal activities analysed and considered, with guidance on mitigation measures given. Improvements are needed on land-sea impact assessments to focus more on ecosystems.

- MSP considered agriculture impacts
- Tourism (e.g. beach attendance) considered to measure pressure. Regarding tourism, other MS like Latvia have engage in EU project "LandSeaAct" = identify the sea-uses

NL

Restoration

The Netherlands was the only North Sea nation to explicitly designate areas for restoration activities (e.g. 100 km^2 of flat oyster reef restoration within an MPA).

- Areas have been designated **but** concrete steps for achieving restoration targets have not yet been laid out.

SE

Network of well-managed Marine Protected Areas included

- MPAs covered and map under the category of nature and public interest areas
- Guidance exists for 25% of areas, but 10% strict-protection still lacking

Learning from other MS practices

FI (Aland)

Job and income generation scenarios

Spatial evaluations of different scenarios about job and income generation have been conducted

- A study has been conducted
- Although very descriptive information are now available

DE

Sustainable multi-purpose uses

Multi-purpose use-areas (temporal or spatial) have been identified and entered into the draft plan

- Temporal measures introduced to reduce negative impacts on environment (i.e. bird migration); multi-use concepts (i.e. fisheries research and offshore wind)

SE

Various scenarios of sustainable sea uses considered

The plan explores the full range of instruments for steering the sea uses towards sustainable passways

- Scenarios were discussed as part of the impact assessments and screening different options of locating offshore wind areas

Way forward

- **The North Sea is the main stage for the EU's offshore renewable energy development**, with Belgium, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands committing to deliver at least 150 gigawatts in the sea by 2050 – enough to power 230 million European homes.

  How **labour and income in maritime industries will change over time** must be better understood to support the **just transition** of workers from the oil and gas industry into high-quality jobs in the renewables sector.

- Similar efforts are needed to **halt the loss of North Sea biodiversity** and ensure the region's maritime activities **support a truly sustainable blue economy**.

  It is crucial that all North sea Member States dedicate more space to nature via **effectively-managed MPAs that cover at least 30% of national waters, with at least 10% of areas under strict protection**.

- They must also adopt a **regional approach to monitoring** the cumulative impacts of human activities. This includes t**ransboundary cooperation** and **collaborative planning**.

Dank u, Merci

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