European Commission

Study on the implementation by EU Member States of Directive 2014/89/EU on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP Directive)

Annex 2 – Member States Fiches

Milieu Consulting, Ecorys and SML
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Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans

Article 15(3) of the MSP Directive required Member States to establish maritime spatial plans by 31 March 2021 and, under Article 14(1), to notify the Commission and concerned Member States within three months of establishment. Article 6(3) further requires review of MSPs at least every ten years.

This study compiles evidence on new, updated and revised MSPs since the Commission's 2021 report, across the 22 EU Member States with maritime borders. At the time of assessment, two Member States (Croatia and Greece) were still finalising their first MSPs, while most others have moved from first adoption to targeted updates and routine maintenance driven by new policy priorities (notably offshore energy and biodiversity).

The next 2–3 years will therefore feature plan updates and first full reviews in many countries, alongside initial adoption in the remaining cases. The following pages present an overview of the evidence gathered for your Member State for your review and factual checking.

Country Fiche for Belgium

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

The Marine Environment Act was revised in 2022 (11 December 2022) to extend the MSP cycle from 6 to 8 years. In addition, a new Royal Decree (8 November 2023) was established for adopting marine spatial plans in Belgium.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Belgium has adopted its first Maritime Spatial Plan in March 2014 (MSP for the Belgian Part of the North Sea 2014–2020) and the second Belgian MSP for 2020–2026 in May 2019 (in force since March 2020).

Review process

Belgium is currently preparing its third Maritime Spatial Plan (2026–2034), which will replace the current plan when it expires on 19 March 2026. The review process, launched in April 2023 by the Minister of the North Sea, is legally required under the Marine Environment Act (11 December 2022), which mandates renewal every eight years while allowing interim revisions. The update is intended to address growing spatial pressures in the Belgian North Sea and to balance expanding economic uses with environmental protection and societal needs. Authorities have identified three guiding priorities for the new plan: improving maritime safety, strengthening nature conservation, and maintaining public acceptance of MSP decisions. The draft plan is still under development and remains subject to change.

Table 1 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
BELGIUM	Current one: May 2019 Third Belgian MSP to be adopted in 2026	First MSP adopted: March 2014	Belgian State Secretary for the North Sea	6 years, until 2026	Binding	Aquaculture/ Mariculture ✓ Fisheries ✓ Renewable energy ✓ Oil and gas - Shipping/ maritime transport [1] ✓ Ports[2] ✓ Military training areas[3] ✓ Nature protection ✓ Raw material extraction ✓
	Documents reviewed: Draft plan: • Draft: Marine Spatial plan for the Belgian part of the North Sea (2026 – 2034) • Royal Decree with the legally binding rules • Appendix 1: Description of the situation in the Belgian North Sea as it is today • Appendix 2: Long-term vision, which is translated into concrete policy decisions • Appendix 3: Action to be taken to implement the MSP • Appendix 4: Maps Additional documents related to the third draft MSP: • Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment Report.					

1 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

2 See footnote above.

3 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
	• Public consultation on the marine spatial plan[4]. • Fisheries measures to protect the bottom integrity within the Belgian part of the North Sea. • Public consultation on the draft evaluation and revision of the conservation objectives for Natura 2000 in the Belgian part of the North Sea • Aquaculture in offshore wind farms in the Belgian part of the North Sea – Non-technical report					Scientific research	✓
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: The Marine Environment Act was revised in 2022 (11 December 2022) to extend the MSP cycle from 6 to 8 years. In addition, a new Royal Decree (8 November 2023) was established for adopting marine spatial plans in Belgium.					Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
	Review process: Public consultation on the draft of the third Belgium MSP was carried out between May and August 2024[5]. The comments received are now being integrated into the draft.					Tourism/ recreation	✓
						Cultural heritage	✓

4 Last reviewed on 9 October 2025. The website stated: *"We are currently reviewing the comments received during the public consultation. Once the plan is adopted, we will publish it on this webpage, along with a brief description of how the consultation results have been taken into account*".

5 https://www.health.belgium.be/nl/presentatie-ontwerp-marien-ruimtelijk-plan-2026-2034

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study, the review covered in detail the draft version of the third MSP for the period 2026-2034, mandated by the Royal Decree with the legally binding rules. The Strategic Environmental Assessment was analysed as well. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the Belgian documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 2 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Belgium

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	The Belgian third draft MSP operationalises EBA through the principle of *naturalness*, supported by a three-step model (scientific thresholds, mitigation hierarchy, restoration). It explicitly links to MSFD objectives, with SEA connecting activities to GES descriptors and environmental objectives. The approach is applied consistently across MSP stages (design, SEA, follow-up). The new provisions further strengthen implementation with stricter spatial protection (new marine reserves) and enhanced cooperation commitments.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	The Belgian MSP recognises the need for alignment between maritime and terrestrial planning, with qualitative analysis, institutional coordination, and references to ICZM. Coastal protection is integrated strategically (e.g., sand extraction zones, link to Coastal Safety Master Plan), and coordination occurs through formal and informal processes across governance levels. Treatment is mainly anticipatory, with limited operational detail on integration of land and sea planning methods. The new provisions include designation of a coastal protection ribbon and updated dredging landfill areas, showing more land-sea spatial integration.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	The Belgian MSP embeds sustainable development as a guiding principle, balancing naturalness with sectoral growth. It designates zones for renewable energy aligned with EU targets, incorporates multi-use approaches, and ensures protection of sensitive areas. Shipping is safeguarded through designated routes, port expansion zones, and compatibility rules, while fisheries are regulated with restrictions on bottom-contact gear, safety zones, and protection of seabed habitats. Sustainable aquaculture is permitted under strict conditions in renewable energy zones. The new provisions provide additional safeguard zones, expanded anchorage areas, and research initiatives on fishing impacts, operationalising sustainability across key sectors.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	The Belgian MSP provides extensive spatial guidance with designated zones for major activities (renewable energy, shipping, fisheries, aquaculture, sand mining, recreation, scientific research), complemented by compatibility rules and safety zones. Zoning is presented as a framework with binding force deriving from complementary regulations, ensuring clear priorities (e.g., shipping and port expansion, safety, renewable energy). Temporal distribution is addressed through seasonal restrictions (e.g., recreational use, military exercises) and provisions for future needs (port expansion, reserves, climate adaptation). The new provisions strengthen spatial regulation by adding marine reserves, a coastal protection ribbon, safeguard zones, extended anchorage areas, and adjustments to industrial, aquaculture, and dredging allocations
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	The Belgian MSP explicitly promotes multi-use as a core principle and applies a structured framework to manage interactions. It distinguishes dynamic, semi-dynamic, and static uses, and employs a detailed

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	compatibility matrix to assess coexistence, with clear conditions for multiple use (environmental impact minimisation, space optimisation, safety). Zoning and sector-specific permits complement this matrix, while synergies such as co-location of aquaculture in renewable energy zones are encouraged. The 2023 Royal Decree further institutionalises coordination through an Advisory Committee and annual follow-up meetings, reinforcing governance for cross-sectoral compatibility.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	The Belgian MSP's SEA systematically assesses biodiversity, climate change, Natura 2000 sites, and cumulative impacts, with explicit links to GES and a full Appropriate Assessment. Safety provisions include designated traffic systems, buffer zones, coastal defence measures, and provisions for military activities. Social and economic dimensions are treated qualitatively: economic analysis is descriptive, focused on fisheries rather than broader metrics, and social aspects highlight heritage, recreation, and well-being but without structured impact assessment or distributional analysis. The new provisions strengthen environmental protection (marine reserves), safety (coastal protection ribbon, activity restrictions), and social considerations (safeguarding views, fisheries, and recreation), but the overall treatment of economic and social aspects remains less developed.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	The Belgian MSP demonstrates broad coherence with EU directives (MSFD, WFD, CFP, Renewable Energy Directive, Habitats and Birds Directives) and international agreements (UNCLOS, OSPAR, Ramsar). It also functions as the legal instrument for Natura 2000 designations, and coherence is reinforced by shared institutional responsibilities and federal approval processes. Alignment between the MSP and the CFP is affected by separate legal procedures and timelines, and new EU obligations (e.g., Renewable Energy Directive, Nature Restoration Law) introduce further requirements on Belgium's marine space. The new provisions strengthen governance by establishing a legal basis for MSP adoption (Law of 2022), setting up an Advisory Committee (Royal Decree 2023), and introducing a procedural objective of closer federal and international cooperation.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Belgium's MSP process embedded stakeholder participation throughout. Federal and Flemish authorities were aligned early via the Advisory Committee, and stakeholders including local communities, municipal authorities, citizens, and scientists were engaged through workshops, written submissions, public meetings, and targeted briefings. Comments were systematically recorded in a response matrix, with clear feedback on adoption and follow-up actions, including new data collection (e.g., on recreational fisheries). The new provisions strengthened inclusiveness by shifting from bilateral to broader trilateral and group meetings, facilitating more direct stakeholder dialogue and reducing information gaps.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	The Belgian MSP makes extensive use of scientific knowledge and monitoring, integrating recent studies on biodiversity, climate, fisheries, dredging, and offshore wind impacts. It recognises citizen science and local knowledge, designates research zones, and supports innovation through platforms like the Blue Acceleration site. Data is organised through central platforms (e.g., kustportaal.be, marineatlas.be) and aligned with EU obligations, including cross-border fisheries data under the CFP. Environmental thresholds are explicitly tied to MSFD and Habitats Directive objectives. The new provisions aim to enhance transparency with a public-oriented online map viewer and explanatory brochure, strengthening data accessibility.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	The Belgian MSP places strong emphasis on cross-border cooperation, explicitly referencing international conventions (UNCLOS, OSPAR, ESPOO, Ramsar) and engaging in multiple EU and regional platforms (MSP Expert Group, North Sea Collaboration group, North Sea Commission, North Sea Energy Cooperation). Belgium is an active signatory of the Ostend Declaration, committing to ambitious joint renewable energy targets, and

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	participates in the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI) to address cumulative pressures and shared resource management. The MSP also commits to harmonisation with neighbouring states (FR, NL, UK) through bilateral consultations and systematic notification at draft stage, and references several EU-funded cooperation projects (SEANSE, eMSP NBSR, NorthSEE). Transboundary impacts are considered in the SEA and Natura 2000 assessments, though not consistently detailed across all sections. The new provisions reaffirm this trajectory, highlighting GNSBI as a central cooperation forum.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	The Belgian MSP ensures cooperation with third countries mainly through multilateral initiatives. The UK is engaged in the consultation process and included in the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI), while the Ostend Declaration also involves Norway and the UK in joint renewable energy objectives. Beyond participation in these high-level platforms, the MSP does not detail structured bilateral mechanisms or joint planning processes with third countries. The new provisions continue to highlight GNSBI, but without additional instruments for operational cooperation.

Country Fiche for Bulgaria

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

- An act adopting the Maritime Spatial Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria, was issued in 2023.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Bulgaria has adopted its first Maritime Spatial Plan in May 2023.

Review process

In Bulgaria, the review of the Maritime Spatial Plan is at a preparatory stage but not yet formally launched. A feasibility study carried out between 2023 and 2024 identified aspects requiring revision, and the formal update is scheduled for completion by the end of 2027. As required by national legislation, the National Centre for Regional Development, responsible for the original plan, will also prepare the update, which authorities expect to commission by the end of 2025.

Table 3 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

<table>
<tr><th>Member State</th><th>Adoption date</th><th>Previous plans</th><th>Authority responsible</th><th>Duration of the plan</th><th>Legal status of MSP</th><th>Overview of activities reported in the plan</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">BULGARIA</td><td>May 2023</td><td>/</td><td>Minister of Regional Development and Public Works</td><td>15 years, until 2035</td><td>Non-Binding</td><td rowspan="4"><table>
<tr><td>Aquaculture/ Mariculture</td><td>✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Renewable energy</td><td>b</td></tr>
<tr><td>Oil and gas</td><td>✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Shipping/ maritime transport [6]</td><td>✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ports[7]</td><td>✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Military training areas[8]</td><td>✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Nature protection</td><td>c</td></tr>
<tr><td>Raw material extraction</td><td>✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Scientific research</td><td>d</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Documents reviewed:
Plan:
• Marine Spatial Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria 2021-2035
Additional documents:
• Public discussion and public consultations of the Maritime Spatial Plan and Environmental Assessment Report[4]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Updated legislative provisions since 2021: Act adopting the Marine Spatial Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria (2023), link.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Review process: Through the feasibility study (Dec 2023–Nov 2024), Bulgaria began reviewing and updating its maritime spatial plan in Dec 2023. They are finalizing commissioning of the formal update, which - per Bulgarian law - will be led by the National Centre for Regional Development, the plan's original author, with completion scheduled by end-2027. An earlier target to integrate revisions by June 2024 is being revised; a new date will be confirmed.</td></tr>
</table>

6 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

7 See footnote above.

8 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
						Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
						Tourism/ recreation	✓
						Cultural heritage	✓

Notes:

[a] While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping **routes** vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

[b] Member States explicitly report these as potential/future activities.

[c] Not explicitly identified as an activity or use in the MSP. For some MS, a different competent authority is responsible for management under separate legislation (e.g. Denmark with defence and nature protection). For other MS, the activity is treated as part of the contextual background rather than as a maritime activity in itself (e.g. tourism, cultural heritage). However, the plans were developed with these in mind due to their relevance in decision making.

[d] Presented as “blue biotechnology”.

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study, the review covered in detail the final version of the Marine Spatial Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria 2021-2035, as well as the Public discussion and public consultations of the Maritime Spatial Plan and Environmental Assessment Report. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the Bulgarian documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 4 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Bulgaria

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	The Bulgarian MSP places EBA at the core of its planning, referencing international definitions and providing extensive environmental baseline data, socio-economic mapping, and sectoral analyses. It demonstrates the three EBA elements (ecosystem integrity, human uses, governance) and integrates MSFD/WFD monitoring data. Stakeholder consultation was conducted broadly and feedback was incorporated. The plan does not explicitly apply the European Commission's EBA guidance, lacks cumulative impact assessment linked to GES, and has limited provisions for adaptive management or precautionary tools. While GES is referenced, the connection between EBA and achieving GES remains general rather than operational.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	The Bulgarian MSP addresses land–sea interactions through analysis based on the MARSPLAN-BS project and the Burgas case study, identifying conflict zones and proposing mitigation measures. It systematises land–sea links using EU guidance and integrates ICZM as a strategic objective, supported by measures for funding, communication, and good practice exchange. The plan also acknowledges that most pressures arise from land-based activities and notes the influence of terrestrial planning systems. There is no formal mechanism or institutional arrangement to ensure systematic integration of land and sea planning, and the role of local authorities in land–sea interactions is only broadly mentioned.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	The Bulgarian MSP identifies sustainable development as a central strategic goal, with objectives covering regulation of uses, diversified maritime economy, education and knowledge, and international cooperation. Sectoral priorities are set for fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, shipping, and shipbuilding, with references to national and EU strategies. Fisheries are linked to EU programmes, and tourism is framed within the national sustainable development strategy. Sustainability is treated mostly as a guiding principle, without detailed operational measures or spatial tools to implement it across all sectors. Energy and raw material extraction are acknowledged but lack explicit strategies for sustainable development.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	The Bulgarian MSP provides a comprehensive zoning framework supported by static maps and a GIS platform. It designates zones for a wide range of uses (transport, fisheries, tourism, military, extraction, protected areas) with explicit rules on allowed and prohibited activities. The plan introduces a functional zoning system with four categories (prohibited areas, conservation regime areas, multifunctional areas, and future-use areas), applying clear restrictions for safety and environmental protection (e.g., anchorage bans near eelgrass habitats, prohibitions on trawling in protected zones). Temporal restrictions are included through permanent versus seasonal prohibitions, with publication of coordinates in line with international regulations. Future-use zones add flexibility for long-term planning, although no temporal considerations are foreseen in relation to areas designated for future use.

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	The Bulgarian MSP systematically identifies compatible and incompatible uses across sectors, supported by detailed analysis in Section 6.2.1 and informed by MARSPLAN-BS. It applies clear principles (ecosystem conservation, separation of conflicts, sustainable development) and adopts multifunctional areas as the dominant zoning approach, allowing for broad co-location of compatible uses. Specific examples are provided (e.g., tourism with cultural heritage, aquaculture with environmental protection, restrictions for bottom trawling and oil/gas near sensitive areas). The indicative zoning framework ensures flexibility, while the emphasis on multi-use and co-location demonstrates a comprehensive strategy for managing interactions.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	The Bulgarian MSP is accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) that broadly covers environmental factors, GES descriptors, Natura 2000 sites, and cumulative impacts. Climate change is only partially integrated, and no formal Appropriate Assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive was conducted. Coordination gaps remain between MSFD and MSPD as they are under the responsibility of separate authorities. Economic aspects are addressed descriptively, with qualitative sectoral overviews and general forecasts, and there is no quantitative valuation, multi-criteria analysis, or long-term modelling. Social aspects are acknowledged through demographic trends, tourism, and cultural heritage, and there is no assessment of distributional impacts or regional disparities. Safety aspects are robustly integrated, with explicit reference to military, shipping, and transport safety, supported by coordination with multiple national authorities.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	The Bulgarian MSP demonstrates alignment with key EU directives and strategies, including the MSFD, WFD, Habitats and Birds Directives, and Natura 2000. It also references REDII, CFP, ICZM, the EU Biodiversity Strategy, and the Offshore Renewable Energy Strategy. Many major EU initiatives (e.g., European Green Deal, Nature Restoration Law, Zero Pollution, Circular Economy) are not explicitly integrated, and the plan often cites policies without detailing how coherence will be operationalised. Interviews with authorities highlight ongoing challenges in aligning the MSP with the MSFD and REDII, as well as limited treatment of biodiversity management within MSP. At the national level, the plan references multiple legal acts and strategies that provide the enabling framework. Analysis of potential overlaps or conflicts is not provided.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	The Bulgarian MSP followed formal procedures for stakeholder engagement. This included 31 in-depth interviews, a national survey, and public consultations in 2021 with over 70 participants that was supplemented by additional institutional consultations in 2023. Feedback was systematically recorded in official response documents, and some plan adjustments were made accordingly. Participation was limited in scope, partly due to COVID-19 restrictions, and planned focus groups replaced interviews. The process did not expand into more inclusive or innovative participatory practices. The plan also does not reflect in detail how stakeholder input influenced substantive outcomes, nor whether it enhanced the ecosystem-based approach or integration of environmental, social, and economic concerns.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	The Bulgarian MSP is based on a wide range of existing environmental, physical, and socio-economic data, consistent with INSPIRE and drawing on national, EU, and international sources. A GIS platform, database, and metadata were developed to support implementation and future updates, with the Agency of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre ensuring compliance with spatial data infrastructure requirements. However, the plan does not explicitly discuss quality assurance, handling of data gaps, or the use of innovative/participatory approaches (e.g., PPGIS, real-time monitoring). Data use is institutionally driven and limited to conventional sources.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	The Bulgarian MSP shows a clear commitment to cooperation with Romania, particularly through the MARSPLAN-BS I & II projects, which delivered joint monitoring, data sharing, and a pilot cross-border plan for the Mangalia–Shabla area. Regional cooperation is also fostered through the Black Sea

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	Commission and participation in EU programmes (e.g., Black Sea Basin JOP). Institutional coordination and information exchange are emphasised in the plan. It does not detail formal joint decision-making mechanisms, systematic assessment of transboundary impacts, or concrete integration of cross-border outcomes into MSP provisions. Cooperation is present but remains project based.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	The Bulgarian MSP acknowledges the need for cooperation with non-EU Black Sea states and references frameworks such as the Black Sea Basin JOP and the Black Sea Commission. It mentions potential collaboration with Turkey, especially on impact assessments, and recognises shared infrastructure (e.g., submarine fibre optic cables). Concrete mechanisms for structured cooperation, systematic transboundary impact assessment, or integration of third-country inputs into the MSP are not reported. Non-EU states lack their own MSPs, therefore cooperation is general and project-based.

Country Fiche for Cyprus

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

In 2021, the Maritime Spatial Planning and other related matters Law 144(I)/2017 as amended by Law 34(I)/2021, was published. Later in 2021, the Maritime Spatial Planning (General Provisions) Regulations (P.I. 132 /2021), and the Maritime Spatial Planning (Public Consultation) Regulations (P.I. 133 /2021) were issued. In December 2023, the Act adopting the Maritime spatial plan of the Republic of Cyprus (2023) was issued.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Cyprus has adopted its first Maritime Spatial Plan in December 2023.

Review process

None identified.

Table 5 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

<table>
<tr><th>Member State</th><th>Adoption date</th><th>Previous plans</th><th>Authority responsible</th><th>Duration of the plan</th><th>Legal status of MSP</th><th>Overview of activities reported in the plan</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">CYPRUS</td><td>December 2023[9]</td><td>/</td><td>Shipping Deputy Ministry (Integrated Maritime Policy and Spatial Planning Unit)</td><td>Ongoing, subject to review at least every 10 years</td><td>Binding</td><td rowspan="2"><table><tr><td>Aquaculture/ Mariculture</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>Renewable energy</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>Oil and gas</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>Shipping/ maritime transport [10]</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>Ports[11]</td><td>✓</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Documents reviewed:
Plan:
• Maritime Spatial Plan of the Republic of Cyprus[13]
Additional documents:
• Strategic Environmental Assessment[14]
• Policy Statement on Maritime Spatial planning
• Public Consultation Regarding the Content of the Maritime Spatial Planning Policy Statement
• Study on the MSP policy statement
• Cross-Border Cooperation for the Implementation of Marine Spatial Planning (“THAL-CHOR 2”)</td></tr>
</table>

9 In 2015, the THAL-CHOR I project aimed at developing MSP methodology and its pilot implementation for the preparation of marine spatial plans in selected areas of Cyprus and Greece, through cooperation among the two countries. Those general objectives are pursued in the second project THAL-CHOR II (2018-2023).

10 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

11 See footnote above.

13 https://www.gov.cy/dms/en/documents/maritime-spatial-planning-2/

14 https://eia.moa.gov.cy/public/sea/seaview.html?no=132

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
	• Marine Spatial Planning Information Material **Updated legislative provisions since 2021:** The Maritime Spatial Planning and other related matters Law 144(I)/2017 as amended by Law 34(I)/2021. Link; Maritime Spatial Planning (General Provisions) Regulations (P.I. 132 /2021). Link; Maritime Spatial Planning (Public Consultation) Regulations (P.I. 133 /2021). Link Act adopting the Maritime spatial plan of the Republic of Cyprus (2023). Link. **Review process:** The Plan provides for the establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation system within 3 years from its adoption (i.e. by 2026). The drafting of an integrated monitoring and evaluation system for the MSP plan is underway and expected to be finalised by 2025.					Military training areas[12]	✓
						Nature protection	✓
						Raw material extraction	-
						Scientific research	✓
						Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
						Tourism/ recreation	✓
						Cultural heritage	✓

[12] The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study, the review covered in detail the final version of the Maritime Spatial Plan of the Republic of Cyprus and the Strategic Environmental Assessment. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the Cypriot documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 6 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Cyprus

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	Cyprus's MSP demonstrates strong alignment with the EU definition of EBA and embeds it as a legal obligation (Law 144(I)/2017, Art. 2). The plan operationalises EBA through its Strategic Environmental Assessment, which was carried out in parallel and explicitly framed as the "key tool" for applying EBA. Ecosystem functioning is addressed via Natura 2000 integration, mapping of sensitive zones, cumulative impact assessment, and explicit use of MSFD descriptors for monitoring Good Environmental Status. Socio-economic considerations and human uses are systematically integrated, with zoning based on compatibility analysis. Governance arrangements ensure cross-sectoral coordination, legal requirements link project licensing to MSP compatibility, and adaptive management mechanisms are foreseen through periodic monitoring and plan revision. Stakeholder and cross-border consultations were carried out, reinforcing transparency and inclusivity.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	The Cypriot MSP systematically addresses land–sea interactions through GIS mapping, conflict matrices, and analysis of linkages between ports, energy, and tourism. It explicitly integrates with terrestrial planning frameworks (Town and Spatial Planning Law) and the forthcoming ICZM Strategy, ensuring coherence between marine and land-based systems. The MSP is overseen by an Interministerial Committee mandated by Law 144(I)/2017, bringing together all relevant ministries (transport, energy, environment, interior, defence, tourism, etc.). Both the ICZM authority and terrestrial planning authority are represented in the MSP Committee, ensuring cross-sector coordination. Public consultations and inter-agency collaboration further validated the analysis and enhanced transparency. While the plan does not provide a detailed breakdown of responsibilities among authorities or local administrations, the responsibilities of the Department of Environment (ICZM competent authority), the Department of Town Planning and Housing (terrestrial planning competent authority), and the MSP Committee are clearly defined in the respective national legislation of each competent authority.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	Sustainable development is a core objective of the Cypriot MSP, embedded through scenario analysis that balanced blue economy growth with protection of natural and cultural capital. Strategic goals (blue economy, social cohesion, environmental protection, governance) guide sectoral measures. Clear priorities are defined across energy, fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, tourism, and resource extraction, each linked to sustainability principles and aligned with EU/national frameworks.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	The Cypriot MSP provides a structured spatial framework by dividing marine waters into seven geographical units, each with defined provisions for compatible and conditional uses. Priorities are clearly established: defence zones and energy development (renewables and hydrocarbons) hold precedence, while other uses such as fisheries, aquaculture, and tourism are accommodated under compatibility conditions. Environmental protection is integrated through restrictions in Natura 2000 and MPA zones, balancing

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	development with biodiversity conservation. Safety measures are in place around infrastructure and cables, and exclusions apply where necessary. The plan also anticipates future needs by reserving zones for offshore wind, energy connectors, and additional aquaculture. Density and heatmaps help visualise conflicts and compatibilities. Temporal distribution is incorporated through seasonal fishing closures under national and EU rules, ensuring activities are aligned with ecological cycles.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	The Cypriot MSP applies a prescriptive zoning model with clear compatibility rules and priority settings. It promotes coexistence of activities where feasible (e.g., energy centres with transport, cultural heritage with tourism, eco-tourism within MPAs) while restricting uses in sensitive zones such as defence areas and Natura 2000 sites. Future-oriented provisions encourage multi-use solutions, such as offshore renewable energy with aquaculture, supported by conflict-analysis heatmaps and stakeholder input. Conflicts are managed through conditional zoning, buffer zones, and case-by-case decisions by the MSP Committee, ensuring balance across cultural, social, economic, and environmental dimensions. While detailed practical examples of co-location remain limited, the framework is proactive, structured, and aligned with EU guidance.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	Cyprus's MSP is accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) that integrates EU environmental directives (MSFD, WFD, Birds, Habitats). It applies a risk-based matrix to assess sectoral pressures, and evaluates cumulative impacts, though climate change is not fully embedded in mitigation measures. Natura 2000 sites are strategically screened, with site-specific Appropriate Assessments deferred to project level. Economic aspects are addressed through sector-specific contributions (tourism, aquaculture, energy), though no multi-criteria analysis is conducted. Social considerations are integrated, with attention to coastal communities, employment, and cultural heritage. Safety at sea is covered, with clear priority for defence and navigation corridors, backed by consultations with defence and maritime authorities.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	The Cypriot MSP demonstrates strong coherence with EU legislation, explicitly referencing the MSFD, WFD, Birds and Habitats Directives, CFP, ICZM, and aligning its objectives with the European Green Deal, Renewable Energy Directive, and Biodiversity Strategy 2030. It links conservation measures directly to GES descriptors and integrates sectoral priorities (fisheries, aquaculture, energy, tourism) with EU policy goals. There is partial integration of newer initiatives, and the Renewable Energy Directive is only partially operationalised. Potential conflicts between offshore energy, aquaculture, tourism, and conservation are acknowledged, with resolution mechanisms assigned to the Interministerial MSP Committee and supported by a licensing and compliance framework. At national level, the MSP is embedded in a comprehensive set of strategies (e.g. tourism, aquaculture, Natura 2000, coastal development, ICZM), ensuring alignment between land and sea planning. Governance coherence is reinforced through inter-ministerial and local authority coordination.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Stakeholder participation in Cyprus's MSP was systematic, transparent, and regulated under the 2021 Public Consultation Regulations. Engagement was structured and inclusive, beginning with early integrated maritime policy consultations and continuing through the THAL-CHOR projects, which developed conflict and density maps used in discussions. Formal consultations were held on both the National Policy Statement and the MSP draft, with events in all cities, online access to maps and documents, and published responses to comments. Stakeholders across key sectors (energy, fisheries, transport, tourism, environment, defence) were actively involved in shaping provisions, with concrete outcomes (e.g. relocation of aquaculture units, designation of cable landing zones). Transboundary dialogue was also pursued through regional frameworks and EU projects. While the final MSP plan does not detail individual consultation events, supporting documents provide this record.

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	Cyprus's MSP is supported by a national data collection and management system, including a hydrographic databank and mapping of all maritime uses, with strong input from the MSP Committee ensuring cross-sectoral data sharing. Key EU frameworks, particularly the MSFD, guided environmental data integration. The MSP itself provides limited information on methodologies or data-handling procedures. Participatory tools (e.g. PPGIS) were not employed.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	Cyprus's MSP embeds transboundary cooperation both strategically and operationally. It reserves space for cross-border infrastructure projects (EastMed Pipeline, EuroAsia Interconnector), and ensures protection corridors for submarine cables while also recognising bilateral agreements with Egypt and ongoing discussions with Israel and Lebanon. Regional cooperation is structured through the Barcelona Convention, UNEP-MAP, and EU-funded initiatives like THAL-CHOR, which enabled joint mapping with Greece and conflict-analysis outputs. Transboundary effects are explicitly included in the SEA methodology, even though no Espoo procedure was triggered. No significant negative cross-border impacts were reported during consultations, but the MSP provides institutional and spatial mechanisms for coordination, supported by participation in regional and EU platforms (e.g., CPMR, BlueMed, MPA Europe).
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	The Cypriot MSP acknowledges cooperation with non-EU neighbours mainly in the context of energy and infrastructure projects, such as the EastMed Pipeline and EuroAsia Interconnector, and through bilateral agreements on hydrocarbon resources (with Egypt, discussions ongoing with Israel and Lebanon). Cooperation remains largely sectoral rather than integrated into MSP, with no evidence of structured communication processes, joint planning, or application of transboundary environmental assessment tools (e.g., Espoo Convention). The absence of MSP frameworks in neighbouring non-EU countries limits structured collaboration with these countries. The plan shows awareness of regional dependencies and ongoing projects, and geopolitical instability and regulatory differences are recognised as barriers to deeper coordination.

Country Fiche for Germany

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

In September 2021, the Second Maritime Spatial Plan for the North Sea and the Baltic Sea was adopted through an Ordinance.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Germany has adopted its first Maritime Spatial Plan in 2009 (MSP for the German Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the North Sea and the Baltic Sea) and in September 2021, it adopted the second German MSP on the EEZ of the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, and the territorial sea areas under jurisdiction of the three coastal federal States: Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

Review process

A Site Development Plan outlining a maritime sector strategy for offshore wind energy was published in early 2025. Later, in July 2025, the BSH (Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency) launched the monitoring and evaluation process of the German MSP involving the scientific advisory board. The scientific advisory board is composed of experts from universities, research institutes, and a regional development authority. The evaluation is scheduled to be completed in 2026.

Table 7 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
GERMANY	September 2021[15]	First MSP plan adopted: 2009[16]	German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community	Ongoing, subject to evaluation (and if necessary, update) every 5 years	Binding	
	Documents reviewed: Plan: • Spatial Plan for the German Exclusive Economic Zone in the North Sea and in the Baltic Sea. Coastal regions: • Schleswig-Holstein State Development Plan – Update 2021 • Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania State Spatial Development Programme (LEP MV) • Niedersachsen State Spatial Planning Programme Additional documents: National EEZ MSP:					Aquaculture/ Mariculture: b Fisheries: ✓ Renewable energy: ✓ Oil and gas: ✓ Shipping/ maritime transport [17]: ✓ Ports[18]: ✓ Military training areas[19]: ✓

[15] Germany's second maritime spatial plan entered into force in September 2021 and covers the German Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. The coastal waters, however, are not included in the EEZ Maritime Spatial Plan; instead, they fall under the terrestrial spatial planning systems of the respective federal states: Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

[16] Germany adopted its first maritime spatial plan in 2009 for the German Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.

[17] While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK, FR, and ES with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

[18] See footnote above.

[19] The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
	• Supporting Document to the Maritime Spatial Plan for the EEZ 2021 • Environmental Report North Sea • Environmental Report Baltic Sea • Evaluation of the international Consultation Second Draft MSP • Extra relevant documents Site development plan (Maritime sectoral plan for offshore wind energy). • Final documents: BSH – Site Development Plan 2025 Schleswig-Holstein MSP: • Annex 3 Environmental Report (Part D) and Summary Statement Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania MSP: • Summary Environmental Statement • Summary Environmental Statement - Supplement • Environmental Report Niedersachsen MSP: • Various documents available • SEA and consultation documents not found. **Updated legislative provisions since 2021:** Act adopting the Second Maritime Spatial Plan of the North Sea and the Baltic Sea (September 2021). Link **Review process:** Germany has just entered a monitoring and evaluation process of its MSP. To this end, the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH) convened the first meeting of the SAC on July 14, 2025, as part of the planned evaluation of the spatial plan. A Site Development Plan outlining a maritime sector strategy for offshore wind energy was published in early 2025.					Nature protection	✓
						Raw material extraction	✓
						Scientific research	✓
						Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
						Tourism/ recreation	-
						Cultural heritage	c

Notes:

[a] While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping **routes** vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR, with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

[b] Member States explicitly report these as potential/future activities.

[c] Not explicitly identified as an activity or use in the MSP. For some MS, a different competent authority is responsible for management under separate legislation (e.g. Denmark with defence and nature protection). For other MS, the activity is treated as part of the contextual background rather than as a maritime activity in itself (e.g. tourism, cultural heritage). However, the plans were developed with these in mind due to their relevance in decision making.

[d] Presented as “blue biotechnology”.

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study, the review covered in detail the main Spatial Plan for the German Exclusive Economic Zone in the North Sea and in the Baltic Sea and the three plans for the territorial waters as part of the terrestrial planning of the federal states. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the German documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 8 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Germany

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	Germany's MSP embeds the EBA throughout the planning process and its SEA, explicitly referencing HELCOM–VASAB principles and operationalising them via precautionary measures, ecosystem service identification, prevention/mitigation, subsidiarity, and coherence. Natura 2000 sites are given priority, and stakeholder engagement was integrated early through thematic workshops and technical discussions, strengthening both knowledge input and acceptance. The SEA applies EBA to cumulative impact assessment and explicitly links it to achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) under the MSFD, drawing on European cooperation projects (e.g., Pan Baltic Scope, SEANSE). Although cumulative impacts remain difficult to quantify, the systematic application of EBA principles in the Regional Operational Plan and SEA demonstrates a structured and holistic integration.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	Germany's MSP addresses land-sea interactions comprehensively by aligning federal EEZ planning with coastal state (Länder) plans, ensuring consistency in shipping routes, subsea cables, and pipelines across the sea–land transition. The Spatial Planning Act provides a strong legal framework, complemented by informal mechanisms through HELCOM–VASAB and NorthSEE projects. ICZM is explicitly referenced (notably in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern), and clear competences are established between the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH) for the EEZ and the Länder for territorial waters and coastal management. While local authority roles are not detailed, coordination between EEZ and Länder plans ensures coherence, particularly within the 12 nm zone, which serves as a practical boundary for integrating terrestrial and marine planning. Some challenges remain in pipeline and cable corridor coordination, but overall, it presents a structured governance, legal anchoring, and sectoral integration
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	The German MSP includes the concept of sustainable development as a core principle in the guiding principle chapter. It is defined as the responsible use of marine resources to ensure a thriving ocean economy that benefits both present and future generations. The MSP emphasises the sea as a connector of people, habitats, and markets, fostering international exchange and cultural interaction. Central to this vision is the adoption of climate-friendly technologies, such as offshore wind energy and other renewable sources, to enhance energy security and meet global climate goals. At the same time, traditional uses like shipping, fishing, recreation, and cultural heritage preservation remain integral. Maritime spatial planning plays a key role by safeguarding marine ecosystems while balancing diverse current and future uses through careful consideration of ecological, economic, and social factors in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This approach promotes international cooperation, integrates land-sea relationships, and ensures orderly spatial development based on precautionary principles and ecosystem-based management, aiming for efficient, reversible, and sustainable use of marine space.

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	Germany's MSP sets out a clear system of spatial allocation using priority and reservation areas, backed by cartographic representation. Priority areas exclude incompatible uses, while reservation areas allow flexibility through preferential consideration. The plan also introduces temporal restrictions, such as seasonal limits on sand and gravel extraction to protect breeding birds, and conditional zoning in cases of environmental or operational constraints. Exclusions are well defined, particularly for offshore wind in shipping corridors, military areas, and conservation zones, ensuring safety and ecological protection. Provisions for future uses, notably significant offshore wind expansion and potential aquaculture co-location, demonstrate forward-looking planning. Although GIS tools are not explicitly mentioned, the zoning system is comprehensive, operational, and adaptive.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	Germany's MSP provides a legal and planning framework that enables co-location of compatible activities, supported by case-by-case assessments under sectoral regulations. Examples include coexistence of nature conservation, offshore wind, and fisheries research, or mounting military transmitters on wind turbines. This flexibility is operationalised through overlapping designations and ancillary approval conditions rather than designated multi-use zones. However, authorities themselves emphasise that multi-use is not a comprehensive solution and remains limited to small-scale initiatives, with larger synergies managed through the Site Development Plan. While incompatibilities are typically excluded from priority areas and potential conflicts are addressed through sector-specific approval procedures, the absence of a dedicated conflict-resolution methodology or a systematic multi-use framework can limit the extent of integration. Overall, Germany's approach supports coordination and helps manage conflicts, though it does not include a comprehensive multi-use framework.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	Germany's MSP is strongly underpinned by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which plays a central role in applying the ecosystem-based approach and integrating environmental protection into planning. The SEA explicitly aligns with MSFD objectives, evaluates cumulative impacts from multiple sectors, and incorporates climate change projections and Natura 2000 site assessments. An appropriate assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive was also included at a strategic level, ensuring compliance with EU conservation law. While the cumulative impacts analysis is qualitative and does not employ GIS-based or quantitative modelling, it systematically identifies pressures and scenarios, contributing to safeguarding GES. The **Site Development Plan's (SDP) SEA** reinforces environmental safeguards: The SDP designates a whole series of planning principles designed to prevent and reduce significant impacts on the marine environment, e.g. strict noise mitigation rules. Prepared by the BSH under the WindSeeG, the SDP SEA is coordinated with the Federal Network Agency (BNetzA), the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), the General Directorate for Waterways and Shipping (GDWS), and the coastal states, ensuring integration of environmental and sectoral considerations in offshore wind planning. The Environmental Report for the Site Development Plan (SDP) prepared by the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH) serves as the formal SEA for offshore wind planning under the WindSeeG. It applies to both the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, ensuring compliance with the SEA Directive and German planning law. The SEA report includes cumulative impact analysis, assessment of interrelationships between sectors, and evaluation of alternatives such as the "no-plan" scenario. It also incorporates an appropriate assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, safeguarding Natura 2000 sites in both maritime areas. Key components include measures to prevent, reduce, and offset significant adverse effects, monitoring provisions, and planning principles such as noise mitigation and ecosystem-based management. This approach ensures that offshore wind development aligns with EU conservation objectives and Germany's climate targets while maintaining high environmental standards across both seas.

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	By contrast, economic and social aspects are less developed. The plan does not apply economic indicators (e.g. GVA, jobs) or conduct cost-benefit or multi-criteria analysis. Ecosystem services are acknowledged conceptually but not valued or operationalised. Social dimensions such as community impacts, distributional effects, or long-term societal trends are absent, with references limited to cultural heritage and land-based planning contexts. Safety is addressed only indirectly, with spatial conflict avoidance used as a proxy, and without a dedicated assessment framework or explicit input from safety authorities.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	Germany's MSP references a broad suite of EU and national legal instruments, including the MSFD, WFD, CFP, the European Green Deal, and the Climate Protection Act, as well as key national legislation such as the Spatial Planning Act and the Wind Energy at Sea Act. This ensures formal compliance with EU and national frameworks and demonstrates awareness of broader policy objectives. However, the plan primarily lists these instruments without systematically analysing overlaps, synergies, or conflicts. For example, while offshore wind planning is coordinated with the Site Development Plan (FEP), the relationship between the MSP and sectoral plans is only briefly acknowledged, and tensions remain around whether MSP should actively promote sectoral targets such as GES or renewable energy expansion. At national level, coherence relies largely on parallel legal frameworks (ROG, WindSeeG, BNatSchG), but the MSP does not elaborate on mechanisms for resolving conflicts or streamlining administrative procedures. Authorities' interviews confirm that Germany views the MSP as a neutral coordination tool, rather than an instrument to pursue sectoral objectives, which can frustrate sectors expecting more proactive alignment. While informal participation in EU-level MSP coordination groups and inter-ministerial contacts are noted, no formal governance structures for ensuring policy coherence are established. Nevertheless, there is close cooperation between BSH and the responsible planning authorities for the German territorial waters to ensure coherence between the EEZ and territorial sea plans, which helps maintain consistency across different jurisdictional levels.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Germany's MSP engaged a wide range of institutional stakeholders, including defence authorities, scientific institutions, and regional partners such as HELCOM-VASAB and the NorthSEE group. Feedback from these actors influenced concrete spatial outcomes, such as the safeguarding of military training zones and the integration of fishery research within offshore wind areas. Coastal federal state plans were also considered, ensuring consistency across EEZ and territorial waters. The process also involved Germany in macro-regional and sea-basin cooperation, strengthening transnational coordination. However, the MSP provides little information on the formats or accessibility of public consultations (e.g. town halls, online portals), and it is unclear to what extent broader societal input shaped the plan. Moreover, while stakeholder feedback improved technical and sectoral provisions, there is no evidence that it enhanced the integration of environmental, economic, or social concerns in line with the ecosystem-based approach. Two recent developments strengthen this assessment: the MSP is undergoing its first full evaluation (to be completed in 2026), offering stakeholders a chance to influence long-term adjustments; and the Site Development Plan (SDP) has included multiple consultation rounds since 2021, with its 2023 update and environmental reports reflecting a structured, transparent participatory process, particularly for offshore wind.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	The German MSP commits to applying the ecosystem-based approach using the best available scientific knowledge of ecosystems and their dynamics. Key data sources include long-standing scientific studies and the BSH's Environmental Report (2021), as well as input from institutions such as the Thünen Institutes, whose research was directly integrated into spatial designations. Knowledge exchange is further supported through Germany's

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	active role in regional cooperation platforms such as HELCOM-VASAB and the NorthSEE (project which was subsequently institutionalised as the North Sea MSP Collaboration Group). However, the plan does not reference EU-level geospatial instruments such as the INSPIRE Directive, nor does it describe the use of innovative or participatory data tools like Public Participation GIS.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	The German MSP embeds cross-border coordination in both the North Sea and Baltic Sea through platforms such as HELCOM-VASAB, NorthSEE (which was subsequently institutionalised as the North Sea MSP Collaboration Group)., and the MSP Shipping Group, alongside bilateral dialogue with Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Poland and Norway. These mechanisms secured coherence in shipping corridors, Natura 2000 sites, and offshore wind siting, with the Shipping Group notably enabling the expansion of wind farms while safeguarding navigation routes. In fact, an ad hoc Study Group on Shipping Safety has been established in cooperation with Denmark and the Netherlands. The Site Development Plan (SDP) reinforces this approach by aligning with the Ten-Year Network Development Plan (TYNDP) and defining gates for cables and pipelines not only to coastal waters but also to other EEZs. While the MSP does not explicitly attribute zoning changes to consultations, there is a strong mix of formal and informal processes, multilateral forums, and sector-specific cooperation.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	The German MSP engages actively with non-EU countries, mainly through NSEC (North Seas Energy Cooperation), GNSBI (Greater North Sea Basin Initiative) and the North Seas MSP Collaboration Group (with Norway, the UK, and Iceland), which grew out of the NorthSEE project and is now a permanent forum. Cooperation with Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands shaped the “Northern Sea Route Concept,” influencing the designation of shipping area SN18. In the Baltic Sea, Germany coordinated with Sweden and Denmark on overlapping NATO-administered military zones. Additional dialogue took place through the North Sea and Trilateral Shipping Groups.

Country Fiche for Denmark

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

On 28 June 2024, Denmark issued an executive order amending the Executive Order on the Danish Marine Plan.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Denmark sent its first t Maritime Spatial Plan into public consultation for six months in 2021. The draft plan was legally binding from the moment it was published for consultation. It was issued as an executive order in 2023[20]. In 2024, Denmark amended its first Maritime Spatial plan.

Review process

Denmark amended its Maritime Spatial Plan in 2024 as a follow-up to a national political agreement, primarily to expand offshore renewable energy zones from 15% to 30% of national waters, in line with climate policy goals and EU energy security. The update also strengthened nature protection, raising the share of strictly protected areas from 4% to 6% , while maintaining the overall protection target of over 30% of marine waters. According to the political agreement, the share of strictly protected areas will be increased to 8% by 2028 and 10% by 2030.Although Denmark operates on a 10-year planning cycle, amendments may be made earlier if major political or societal needs arise, such as new protection measures or resource strategies. Each new plan or amendment requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment under the Environmental Assessment Act, but Danish law does not mandate systematic evaluations of MSP effectiveness. Oversight is carried out by sectoral authorities, while stakeholder input is gathered through public consultations and documented in consultation reports.

[20] Denmark's first MSP entered public consultation in 2021, with plans for the responsible minister to issue an executive order after adjusting the plan based on feedback. However, due to strong political pressure from Parliament, the government decided the plan required parliamentary approval, triggering nearly two years of political negotiations, interrupted by a general election. As a result, the plan that went out for consultation in 2021 was not formally adopted until 2023. Under the Danish maritime-spatial-planning law, the draft plan was legally binding from the moment it was published for consultation.

Table 9 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
DENMARK	First plan submitted for public consultation in March 2021[21]. Issued as an executive order in 2023[22]. An amendment to the first plan was issued in June 2024	/	Danish Maritime Authority (DMA), Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs.	Ongoing, subject to periodic reviews at least once every 10 years. However, it can be amended during this period.	Binding	Aquaculture/ Mariculture ✓ Fisheries ✓ Renewable energy ✓ Oil and gas ✓ Shipping/ maritime transport [23] ✓ Ports[24] ✓
	Documents reviewed: Plan: • Denmark's Maritime Spatial Plan Additional documents:					

21 Prior to 2021, Denmark did not have a holistic spatial plan for the sea, however, a range of sectoral plans have been in use. These plans have made significant contributions to Denmark's MSP process.

22 Denmark's first MSP entered public consultation in 2021, with plans for the responsible minister to issue an executive order after adjusting the plan based on feedback. However, due to strong political pressure from Parliament, the government decided the plan required parliamentary approval, triggering nearly two years of political negotiations, interrupted by a general election. As a result, the plan that went out for consultation in 2021 was not formally adopted until 2023. Under Danish maritime-spatial-planning law, the draft plan was legally binding from the moment it was published for consultation, even before the final executive order was issued.

23 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

24 See footnote above.

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
	• Environmental Assessment • Appropriate assessment (impacts on Natura 2000 sites) • Transboundary environmental impact report (Espoo report 2023) • Transboundary environmental impact report (Espoo report 2021)					Military training areas[25]	c
						Nature protection	✓
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: Executive Order amending the Executive Order on the Danish Maritime Plan of 28 June 2024, link.					Raw material extraction	✓
	Review process: The maritime spatial plan was reviewed based on a proposal from the Danish Maritime Authority to increase the offshore energy and biodiversity targets in the national MSP. An agreement on the new targets was reached by the Danish Parliament in the summer of 2023. Public consultation on the draft MSP amendments and the environmental assessment was launched in November 2023 for a period of ten weeks - until February 2024. The Danish Environmental Protection Agency reviewed the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the amendments to the Danish MSP until February 2024, in accordance with the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention). The new plan has been adopted on June 28th, 2024 by an amendment to the executive order[26].					Scientific research	-
						Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
						Tourism/ recreation	c
						Cultural heritage	✓

Notes:

[a] While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping **routes** vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK, FR, and ES with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

[b] Member States explicitly report these as potential/future activities.

[c] Not explicitly identified as an activity or use in the MSP. For some MS, a different competent authority is responsible for management under separate legislation (e.g. Denmark with defence and nature protection). For other MS, the activity is treated as part of the contextual background rather than as a maritime activity in itself (e.g. tourism, cultural heritage). However, the plans were developed with these in mind due to their relevance in decision making.

[d] Presented as "blue biotechnology".

25 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

26 https://havplan.dk/en/page/hist/5

Analysis of MSP provisions

The current study reviewed the official Denmark's Maritime Spatial Plan, together with the Explanatory Notes (outlining the background, objectives, and scope of the Danish MSP). The Online map was analysed as well. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the Danish documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 10 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Denmark

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	Denmark's MSP embeds the EBA as a core principle, defined through UNCBD and HELCOM guidelines and operationalised via two SEAs (2021, 2023). The 2021 SEA introduced cumulative impact assessments, Natura 2000 mapping, and integration of objectives from Marine Strategy II. The 2023 SEA strengthened this by systematically assessing all maritime activities against the 11 MSFD descriptors, directly linking planning measures to GES. The revised plan doubled areas for renewable energy and energy islands (15% → 30%), raised the share of strictly protected areas from 4% to 6% while maintaining the overall protection target of over 30% of marine waters. According to the political agreement, the share of strictly protected areas will be increased to 8% by 2028 and 10% by 2030. These designations reflect the balance of growth and biodiversity at the heart of the EBA. Stakeholder participation was extensive, including ministries, municipalities, NGOs, businesses, and consultations with neighbouring states under the Espoo Convention. In 2021 and 2023, seven neighbouring countries were consulted, reinforcing regional coherence. Denmark also committed DKK 70 million (~EUR 10 million) to enhance marine data collection and develop a national digital tool for ecosystem analysis and cumulative impact assessment, expected by 2030. Together, these measures demonstrate systematic and adaptive implementation of the EBA.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	The Danish MSP provides a comprehensive framework for managing land–sea interactions, reflecting Denmark's island geography and strong coastal dependence. It explicitly links maritime and terrestrial planning, ensuring coordination for ports, shipping routes, energy infrastructure, and future coastal development. A digital MSP platform further integrates municipal plans, showing local planning layers alongside maritime uses. Competences are clearly divided: the Danish Maritime Authority under the Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs is responsible for maritime spatial planning and management of marine areas. Municipalities, under the Planning Act, regulate land use onshore, including coastal development and smaller port facilities, but their plans must not conflict with the national Maritime Spatial Plan (§ 11 a of the Planning Act). The Coastal Protection Act, administered by the Danish Coastal Authority under the Ministry of Environment, governs coastal protection structures and certain activities at the land–sea interface. Denmark also applies two statutory coastal planning zones on land that help safeguard the coastline: • the coastal protection zone, normally extending about 100 metres inland from the shoreline, where construction and other physical alterations are strictly limited to preserve the natural coastline; and

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	• the coastal planning zone, typically covering a three-kilometre belt inland, where new development must respect landscape, visual and recreational values. Systematic consultation underpins this coordination, involving ministries, coastal municipalities, sector authorities, business organisations, and neighbouring states. The SEA adds further value by identifying and assessing conflicts between marine activities and coastal interests such as nutrient runoff, erosion control, and tourism. The digital MSP platform further enhances land–sea integration by combining environmental, sectoral and socio-economic data from both marine and terrestrial sources. In addition to displaying municipal plans, it visualises areas of intensive tourism and recreation, including recreation hot spots, tourism expenditure by municipality, and AIS data on leisure vessels. This integration enables planners and authorities to better account for tourism pressures, access, and recreational use when balancing coastal and marine activities. Although Denmark does not have a separate Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) framework, the combined use of the Maritime Spatial Plan, the Planning Act, the Coastal Protection Act, and the two coastal planning zones effectively embodies ICZM principles, integrating coastal and climate protection measures while maintaining nearshore waters free of permanent structures to safeguard recreation, tourism, and landscape values.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	The Danish MSP promotes sustainable economic growth and use of marine resources, explicitly linking its objectives to the MSP Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework, and the UN SDGs. Although no formal definition is provided, the plan balances renewable energy expansion, biodiversity protection, and existing maritime uses. Offshore wind farms and energy islands are central to Denmark's green transition, with zoning adjusted iteratively to reduce conflicts with fisheries, recreation, and conservation areas. The Amendments issued in 2024, doubled the designated area for renewables from 15% to 30%, supporting a projected 12.9 GW capacity by 2030, including two large-scale energy islands. At the same time, the share of strictly protected marine areas was raised from 4% to 6 %, with politically agreed targets to reach 8% by 2028 and 10% by 2030, reflecting a dual focus on energy security and biodiversity. Examples of sectoral measures include, shipping corridors, continued fisheries in general use zones[27], and recognition of coastal tourism's socio-economic role. Sustainability is implemented in practice through the Plan's binding spatial designations, mandatory Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) and Appropriate Assessments (AA) (carried out under the Environmental Assessment Act in line with the Habitats Directive), and project-level permitting by the competent sectoral authorities. For example, the Danish Energy Agency conducts spatial screenings and cumulative impact analyses for offshore renewable-energy areas, while other authorities perform equivalent assessments for their respective domains. This coordinated approach ensures that environmental, social, and economic objectives are integrated across all maritime uses.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	Denmark's MSP applies a zoning system with four zone types: development zones, natural and environmental protection zones, special use zones, and general use zones. Fisheries, navigation, and recreation are permitted across all zones unless restricted by other legislation, while specific activities (e.g. offshore wind, aquaculture, CO_2 storage, raw material extraction) are strictly

[27] In the Danish MSP, Fisheries are generally permitted throughout Danish marine waters unless restricted by other legislation or specific spatial designations.

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	tied to designated development areas. The plan is legally binding, and even minor changes require an amendment process with SEA, consultation, and parliamentary approval. The 2023 amendments to Denmark's Maritime Spatial Plan, issued in 2024, introduced a wide range of updates across sectors. These include the expansion of renewable energy zones (+14,127 km², now totalling 24,207 km²), cable corridors (+569 km²), and CO_2 storage zones (total 20,146 km²), as well as increases in protection areas (+2,226 km², now 33,166 km²) and navigation corridors (+1,808 km²). A few aquaculture and raw material zones were removed, while new aquaculture and shellfish farming areas were designated. Land reclamation projects such as Lynetteholm and Holmene were explicitly included, and development zone Ei3 at Bornholm was adjusted due to defence requirements. The plan also reserves areas for future activities such as energy islands, bridges, and tunnels. These examples reflect only part of the broader set of changes introduced with the latest amendment; a complete overview of sectoral allocations is provided in *Annex 1, Table 1* of the official amendment document. Temporal aspects are less developed: the MSP promotes coexistence and phased use but leaves scheduling to sectoral legislation and project-level permitting. Licences for aquaculture, shellfish farming, or oil and gas reflect sector-specific timeframes, while activities such as fishing remain dynamic and un-zoned temporally. Negotiations in 2025 are expected to further expand strictly protected areas (from 6% to 8%) and reduce raw material extraction zones from 7% to 5%, under a forthcoming marine raw materials strategy. Consequently, a new amendment of the Danish Maritime Spatial Plan is anticipated to be launched in 2026.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	The Danish MSP promotes coexistence as a guiding principle, allowing multiple uses of marine areas provided they comply with sectoral legislation, safety rules, and environmental requirements. Zones are designated for primary uses such as renewable energy, but compatible activities like fisheries, tourism, or navigation can continue where no conflict arises. Examples include fishing within renewable energy zones, navigation near wind turbines, and shellfish farming designed to avoid navigation corridors. The online MSP further visualises overlaps, such as aquaculture within raw material extraction zones or renewable energy alongside cable corridors and protection areas, though synergies are not explicitly discussed in the explanatory notes of the MSP plan. Conflict prevention relies on prescriptive zoning, sector-specific licensing, and buffer zones for activities such as aviation and shipping. Environmental impact assessments and inter-agency coordination ensure that new projects avoid sensitive habitats and respect Natura 2000 and MSFD objectives. However, the MSP does not actively promote targeted multi-use combinations (e.g., aquaculture with offshore wind) or provide detailed strategies for managing overlaps. As explained by the Danish authorities during an interview, co-location is acknowledged but framed as potential coexistence rather than deliberate multi-use planning.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	Denmark's MSP is underpinned by SEAs (2021, 2023) that apply goal-based and cumulative impact assessments, linking activities to MSFD descriptors and Natura 2000 conservation objectives. Key pressures include seabed disturbance, underwater noise, habitat fragmentation, and eutrophication, with appropriate assessments confirming compliance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. The 2023 SEA improves integration by explicitly mapping activities to all 11 MSFD descriptors, addressing climate impacts, and incorporating transboundary feedback. Economic aspects are acknowledged through sectoral data (e.g. aquaculture, fisheries, offshore wind, raw materials), and the amended SEA highlights ecosystem services such as storm protection and biodiversity maintenance, though quantitative valuation remains limited. Social aspects are considered qualitatively, focusing on cultural heritage, tourism, and fisheries employment, with recent measures (DKK 75 million –

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	amount allocated as part of the political agreement on the Maritime Spatial Plan. However, these funds are implemented outside the Plan and are therefore not part of the Danish MSP itself.) supporting fisheries' transition under new spatial allocations. Safety is addressed through designated shipping corridors, aviation safety zones, and adjustments for defence, including the reduction of the Bornholm renewable energy zone to accommodate defence considerations. Overall, environmental integration is robust and improving, while economic and social assessments are less systematic but supported by targeted funding and sectoral screening. Safety is firmly embedded in spatial designations and cross-sector coordination.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	The current Danish MSP is strongly anchored in EU and national legal frameworks. It explicitly integrates the MSFD, WFD, Habitats and Birds Directives, Renewable Energy Directive, and CFP, ensuring all licensed activities align with GES and Natura 2000 obligations (current provisions). It supports EU climate and energy goals through offshore wind and energy islands, while ensuring coherence with the Coastal Protection Act and Planning Act at national level. Governance is coordinated through the Danish Maritime Authority and an Interministerial Working Group, with ministerial and stakeholder consultations required for amendments. Service layers in the online MSP enhance accessibility by linking zones with Natura 2000, Ramsar and other protected sites (current provisions). The new amendments further strengthen EU policy coherence by expanding renewable energy zones to cover ~30% of Denmark's marine space in line with the Renewable Energy Directive, while also committing to increase strictly protected marine areas from 6% to 8% by 2028 and 10% by 2030, contributing directly to the EU Biodiversity Strategy (new provisions). During an interview with the national authorities, it was highlighted that balancing large-scale offshore wind expansion with fisheries and marine habitats remains a key challenge. To address this, a permanent dialogue forum between fisheries and offshore wind stakeholders was established, meeting twice a year to discuss coexistence and mitigation.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Stakeholder engagement in Denmark's MSP is extensive and multi-level. During the initial plan, the Danish Maritime Authority coordinated a wide process involving ministries, coastal municipalities, business organisations, NGOs, universities, and neighbouring countries. Underrepresented groups such as the Youth Climate Council and Danish Disability Organisations also participated during the public hearings. Public consultations in 2021 generated 251 responses, supported by online portals, meetings, and bilateral dialogues, though changes to the plan were limited; feedback instead informed the June 2023 political agreement on amendments. In the amendments (new provisions), the second consultation (Nov 2023–Feb 2024) attracted 167 responses from municipalities, companies, NGOs, citizens, and researchers. This process led to targeted changes in three zones (natural protection, shellfish farming, and mining), with other issues deferred to project-level permitting or future revisions. Importantly, a permanent Dialogue Forum for Coexistence was established in 2023, meeting twice annually to facilitate structured engagement between fisheries, offshore wind, NGOs, and other sectors, ensuring continuity beyond formal consultations. Cross-border dialogue with neighbouring states remains part of both current and amended processes.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	The Danish MSP relies on a strong national data infrastructure and multiple digital platforms to ensure transparent and accessible information. Key tools include the Marine Denmark Map (MSDI), which consolidates marine data from government authorities, and Plandata.dk, which provides municipal planning data (current provisions). The official online MSP (havplan.dk) offers interactive layers on uses, nature protection, and licensing constraints, reducing costs for businesses by highlighting low-conflict areas. The SEA process was based on available datasets, supported by EMODnet and national databases, while sectoral agencies like the Danish Energy Agency

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	conducted detailed screenings of offshore wind areas to guide siting decisions. The MSP's data-sharing approach demonstrates compliance with INSPIRE principles and aligns with its emphasis on data interoperability. The Danish MSP itself is published as INSPIRE-compliant WMS and WFS services directly on havplan.dk. Under the amendments (new provisions), DKK 70 million was allocated to strengthen marine data collection and develop a national digital tool for ecosystem-based planning and cumulative impact assessments, expected to be fully operational by 2030. This investment represents a significant step towards improving cumulative impact analysis and evidence-based decision-making, ensuring the MSP continues to apply the best available scientific knowledge.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	Denmark's MSP emphasises coordination with neighbouring states through bilateral and trilateral dialogues (notably with Germany, Sweden, Poland, and the Netherlands), formal Espoo consultations, and participation in HELCOM and OSPAR (current provisions). Cross-border issues include offshore wind, shipping corridors, Natura 2000 sites, and airport approaches. EU projects such as SEANSE, eMSP NBSR and Capacity4MSP supported regional alignment. Amendments strengthened cooperation via the North Sea MSP Collaboration Group (2021) and the Greater North Sea Initiative (2023). Espoo consultations (2023–2024) drew input from seven countries, highlighting concerns about migratory birds, noise, Natura 2000 habitats, and Lynetteholm. These were integrated into the SEA, with risks flagged at Dogger Bank, Kattegat, and near Norway's CO_2 storage zones. Overall, Denmark combines formal processes with informal dialogue, and new provisions have deepened regional MSP cooperation.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	Denmark maintains structured cooperation with non-EU countries, particularly Norway and the UK, through bilateral dialogue and regional platforms. This includes coordinating shipping corridors to ensure efficient navigation and participating in the North Sea Energy Cooperation to advance offshore renewable energy. Authorities note, however, that collaboration can be more complex due to differing legal frameworks, planning traditions, and sometimes conflicting national interests. Denmark also participates in Nordic MSP cooperation under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers, together with Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Åland. The amendments have strengthened this cooperation with third countries. The Greater North Sea Initiative (GNSBI, 2023) explicitly involves Norway and the UK, while both countries also take part in NORSAIC as supporting organisations. The SEA amendments assessed potential transboundary impacts on Norwegian and UK waters, notably CO_2 storage near Norway's EEZ and offshore wind in shared basins, with mitigation measures identified. Beyond Europe, Denmark has also cooperated with Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, and Vietnam on maritime spatial planning. Overall, Denmark's MSP shows consistent engagement with non-EU partners.

Country Fiche for Estonia

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

In May 2022, Estonia adopted the national plan for the maritime area and adjacent coastal area, along with the thematic plan for the exclusive economic zone.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Estonia adopted its first Maritime Spatial Plan in May 2022.

Review process

Estonia is monitoring its maritime spatial plan through annual reviews of the associated Action Plan, using focus group interviews with ministries and authorities to assess relevance and challenges. So far, adjustments have only been required to defence needs, and these can be made at the permit procedure level without requiring a plan revision. The Action Plan undergoes a progress review yearly, but changes to activities or zoning require a formal review, scheduled for 2026–2027 under the five-year review cycle set by national law. The review will begin in autumn with scoping and continue with an implementation impact assessment in cooperation with a consulting company. No early revision is planned, as existing offshore wind designations already exceed national targets, while nature protection remains governed by separate legislation.

Table 11 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
ESTONIA	May 2022[28]	/	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. Land Use and Spatial Planning Policy Department: MSP coordination	15 years[29]	Binding	Aquaculture/ Mariculture ✓ Fisheries ✓ Renewable energy ✓ Oil and gas - Shipping/ maritime transport [30] ✓
	Documents reviewed: Plan: • Estonian Maritime Spatial Plan Additional documents:					

28 The Estonian Maritime Spatial Planning process was initiated in May 2017. In October 2012 the Government of Estonia initiated two pilot maritime spatial plans – in the areas around Hiiu Island and Pärnu Bay - to support the establishment of a legal process to create MSP legislation. The Hiiu pilot was adopted in 2016 and the Pärnu Bay pilot in April 2017. However, offshore wind energy has been excluded within the Hiiu pilot MSP, by the decision of the National Court of Estonia on August 8th, 2018. All other sector-related aspects are still legally binding. They remain in effect even after the adoption of the new national MSP.

29 15 years has been taken as the time perspective, as the development period for larger activities is estimated at 10 years. The experience of European countries in implementing Maritime Spatial Planning (e.g. Germany and Belgium) has been similar. The time perspective also takes into account the fact that according to Planning Act § 25 (1), the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications is obliged to review the national Maritime Spatial Plan at least once every five years, to assess the implementation of the plan (in accordance with Planning Act § 25) and its timeliness and relevance: https://riigiplaneering.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2024-12/maritime-plan-government-order-2022-146.pdf

30 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK, FR, and ES with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
	• Estonian Maritime Spatial Plan: Strategic Environmental Assessment Report (2021) • Other resources					Ports[31]	✓
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: Act on the Establishment of the national plan for the Estonian sea area and the coastal area bordering it, as well as the thematic plan for the economic zone. Link.					Military training areas[32]	✓
						Nature protection	✓
	Review process: Estonia is currently monitoring its maritime spatial plan to gather the necessary information for the annual review of the associated Action Plan. In addition, the development of offshore wind farms is ongoing (licensing and auction processes)[33, 34] as planned by the MSP.					Raw material extraction	b
						Scientific research	-
						Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
						Tourism/ recreation	✓
						Cultural heritage	✓

Notes:

[a] While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping **routes** vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

[b] Member States explicitly report these as potential/future activities.

31 See footnote above.

32 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

33 Auction for the Development of an Offshore Wind Farm in the Saare 2.1 Area

34 Superficies licences for offshore wind farms

[c] Not explicitly identified as an activity or use in the MSP. For some MS, a different competent authority is responsible for management under separate legislation (e.g. Denmark with defence and nature protection). For other MS, the activity is treated as part of the contextual background rather than as a maritime activity in itself (e.g. tourism, cultural heritage). However, the plans were developed with these in mind due to their relevance in decision making.

[d] Presented as “blue biotechnology”.

Analysis of MSP provisions

The current study reviewed the official Estonian Maritime Spatial Plan / Riigiplaneering, together with the Estonian Maritime Spatial Plan: Strategic Environmental Assessment Report (2021). All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the Estonian documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 12 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Estonia

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	Estonia's MSP and SEA explicitly apply the EBA, referencing Article 5 of the MSP Directive and the CBD definition. Ecosystem integrity and dynamics are addressed through tools such as Natura 2000 screening, sensitivity mapping, and the PlanWise4Blue model, which evaluated cumulative pressures from various human activities and planned offshore wind farm zones on 26 biological components. Human activities and socio-economic factors were integrated via the Marine Economic Benefit Model, quantifying ecosystem services and trade-offs. Governance is ensured by a cross-agency working group and cross-border cooperation through HELCOM-VASAB and projects like Baltic Scope and Plan4Blue. EBA principles guided all stages of the MSP: definition, development, addressing, assessment, and implementation. Stakeholder participation was central, with consultations at national and regional levels shaping outcomes such as adjusting wind energy areas to protect bird migration routes. The MSP explicitly links EBA with Good Environmental Status, requiring that all marine uses support ecosystem health. Cumulative impacts, including transboundary pressures, were systematically assessed with PlanWise4Blue.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	Estonia's MSP integrates land-sea interactions as a planning principle, defining them as activities on land or sea that support each other. Chapter 5.16 provides a detailed sectoral analysis (ports, maritime transport, recreation, offshore wind cables, defence, coastal viability, cultural heritage) and highlights ports as key land-sea nodes. Regional "land-sea clusters" were developed based on the Estonian Regional Development Strategy and cultural mapping, though the national authorities indicated that their effectiveness was limited by administrative restructuring. Governance responsibilities are distributed: national ministries and agencies oversee navigation, defence, and MSP coordination, while local governments manage land-based activities, requiring input on issues like visual impacts of offshore wind and nearshore cables. Coordination is supported by pilot coastal thematic plans to reconcile local interests (e.g. tourism, landscape) with national priorities (e.g. offshore energy), with an implementation timeline of 2022–2026. Although ICZM is not explicitly mentioned, the MSP applies integrated marine-terrestrial planning principles consistent with ICZM.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	Sustainable development is identified as a core objective of Estonia's MSP, though without a formal definition. The plan frames it through balancing economic uses, cultural and social values, and the requirement to achieve and maintain Good Environmental Status. Sector-specific provisions reinforce this approach: offshore wind is explicitly tied to sustainable use of natural resources, with 2,439 km² (6.8% of the marine area) identified as suitable for development. Fisheries and aquaculture are promoted for sustainable resource use and employment, while sustainable tourism is supported as part of the blue economy. The MSP also promotes spatial efficiency and multi-use to reduce conflicts: aquaculture is encouraged in wind energy areas, shipping routes are safeguarded from energy development, and certain activities are excluded in defence and refuge

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	zones.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	Estonia's MSP, valid for 15 years, combines designated areas with guiding conditions. Explicit zones are provided for wind energy, shipping routes, and preservation areas for underwater cultural heritage, while traditional uses like fisheries remain governed by sectoral rules. Spatial allocation relies on GIS and modelling tools such as raster analysis for wind energy sites and the PlanWise4Blue model for cumulative impacts. Combined use is encouraged (e.g., coexistence of wind, aquaculture, and shipping), although current implementation is limited with multi-use projects still at early stages. Priorities reflect a balance between GES, blue economy, and safety, with wind energy and aquaculture most explicitly supported. Restrictions safeguard sensitive ecosystems and operations: wind is excluded from Natura 2000, migration routes, and within 6 NM of shore, aquaculture is limited to >5m depth and trawling to >20m. Seasonal limits apply to fish spawning, dumping, and military exercises. Flexibility is built in, with reserve wind zones activated post-2027 if targets require, aquaculture suitability areas identified without fixed sites, the consideration of land-sea interactions and climate change impacts, and the acknowledgement of potential future needs such as undersea cable corridors.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	Estonia's MSP actively promotes combined use of marine space, defined as the joint use of areas or infrastructure by multiple activities. Inspired by the EU MUSE guidance, the plan highlights synergies such as tourism with fisheries or underwater heritage, tourism with aquaculture, and wind energy with fisheries or aquaculture. Spatial layouts illustrate such multi-use solutions, though authorities note that current practical implementation remains limited, with multi-use offshore wind applications still at an early stage. Incompatibilities are managed through suitability rules, e.g. excluding aquaculture from defence zones, Natura 2000 sites, and shipping lanes. Conflicts such as wind farm siting on reef habitats are also acknowledged. Tools supporting assessment include sensitivity mapping and the PlanWise4Blue cumulative impact model. Conflict resolution relies on compatibility rules (e.g. seasonal restrictions on construction), buffer zones (e.g. wind farm distance from shore), and compensatory measures (e.g. for trawl fisheries affected by energy development).
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	Estonia's MSP is supported by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA/Impact Assessment, 2017–2021), approved in 2022, which directly shaped the plan. The SEA applied an extended scope, covering environmental, social, cultural, and economic impacts, and used tools such as PlanWise4Blue for cumulative pressures and the Marine Economic Benefit Model for ecosystem service valuation. Environmental protection is central, with exclusion of new activities from Natura 2000 sites and alignment with MSFD descriptors, notably eutrophication, hydrography, and partial coverage of biodiversity, noise, and food webs. Climate change impacts are assessed to 2100, though not fully integrated into cumulative models. Economic aspects are detailed, presenting sector-specific turnover, employment, and state income figures for fisheries, tourism, and wind energy. Social and cultural dimensions are addressed through protection of heritage sites, community well-being, and visual impact mapping for wind farms, alongside recognition of local vs. national interests. Safety is embedded, with clear protection of navigation routes, ice roads, surveillance systems, and military zones. Overall, the plan integrates these dimensions systematically, with broad stakeholder and transboundary consultations.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	Estonia's MSP explicitly references several EU frameworks, including the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Habitats and Birds Directives, the Water Framework Directive, the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, and the Integrated Marine Policy/Blue Growth. It commits to achieving Good Environmental Status, protecting at least 30% of marine areas, and promoting sustainable blue economy growth. Natura 2000 overlaps are managed through adjusted cable corridors and binding conditions. Regional coherence is supported by Estonia's active

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	participation in HELCOM-VASAB working groups. At the national level, the MSP is prepared as a thematic plan under *Estonia 2030+* and resolves conflicts such as redirecting the grid route to balance electricity supply with offshore wind development. The plan also aligns with county-level spatial plans, the Regional Development Strategy, the National Energy and Climate Plan, the draft ENMAK, and long-term climate adaptation strategies. Coherence is further ensured through binding guidelines in the plan, an interministerial implementation group to oversee delivery, and mechanisms for vertical coordination with municipalities. Land-sea interaction guidelines provide additional harmonisation between coastal and terrestrial planning. According to authorities, conflicts between offshore wind, fisheries, and nature conservation are addressed during the planning phase through interministerial and stakeholder consultations.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Stakeholder engagement in Estonia's MSP was broad, beginning in the initial planning phase and continuing throughout preparation. Authorities, experts, NGOs, developers, municipalities, and international partners from Finland, Sweden, Latvia, and Russia were involved. Dedicated events and meetings, such as seminars, conferences, bilateral exchanges, and public hearings, supported input at different stages of the process. Public consultations included multiple rounds of public display, hearings across Estonia, and a transboundary environmental impact assessment under the Espoo Convention. Despite Covid-related delays, proposals from the impact assessment were incorporated into the final plan, such as additional guidelines to mitigate the visual impacts of offshore wind. The Ministry who was responsible for the spatial planning, coordinated the process with expert and consultancy support, ensuring coherence between the MSP and the Strategic Environmental Assessment, which were developed in parallel. Post-adoption, stakeholder involvement continues through the MSP Implementation Working Group, which brings together ministries, authorities, and municipalities once or twice a year to oversee the Action Plan and address cross-cutting issues. While NGOs and the wider public are not part of routine monitoring, they remain engaged through project-level permitting and environmental impact assessments, particularly in sensitive sectors like offshore wind and aquaculture.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	Estonia's MSP places emphasis on using the best available data and information-sharing to ensure ecosystem-based, transparent planning. A broad expert group involving academia, NGOs, and government agencies contributed sectoral knowledge across environmental, cultural, socio-economic, and health fields. The plan drew on baseline studies, commissioned research, real-time datasets such as AIS shipping data, and modelled habitat maps, while also integrating cultural and marine values gathered during regional consultations. The MSP and its Strategic Environmental Assessment were developed in parallel, allowing continuous data flow between planning and evaluation. Information exchange is reinforced through interministerial working groups and cross-border forums such as HELCOM-VASAB, Plan4Blue, Baltic SCOPE, and MUSES, with Estonia also contributing to EMODnet and EU-funded projects. Formal consultation with neighbouring countries ensured transboundary data coherence. The MSP applies EU-level guidance from the Water Framework Directive, Habitats and Birds Directives, and the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030. Innovative tools further strengthened the data basis, notably PlanWise4Blue, which visualises cumulative impacts, and an online mapping platform hosted by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications that provides public access to spatial data.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	Estonia ensures strong cross-border cooperation primarily through the HELCOM–VASAB MSP Working Group, which provides a regular platform for coordination with Finland, Latvia, and Sweden. The Espoo Convention process was followed across multiple rounds, with notifications sent to all Baltic neighbours and feedback received from Finland, Sweden, and Latvia on issues such as the impact of offshore wind on shipping and aquaculture. Estonia responded by refining spatial allocations and clarifying impact

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	assessments. While the transboundary SEA concluded that no significant effects were expected, it emphasised the need for project-level EIAs to address potential cross-border impacts. Sectoral cooperation is also well established, for example on submarine energy cables to Finland and Latvia, and on maritime rescue and pollution response. Participation in EU-funded projects such as Baltic Scope, Pan Baltic Scope, BalticRIM, Land-Sea Act, and MUSE further strengthens regional alignment. According to authorities, these processes enabled early identification and mitigation of conflicts, ensuring coherence with neighbouring countries' planning.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	Estonia engages in Baltic-wide cooperation frameworks rather than distinguishing between EU and non-EU states, therefore, the information above applies.

Country Fiche for Greece

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

Greece's national MSP is based on Directive 2014/89/EU, which required Member States to adopt maritime spatial plans by March 2021. Greece transposed Directive 2014/89/EU on Maritime Spatial Planning through **Law 4546/2018**. The Ministry of Environment and Energy (YPEN) is the competent authority for both terrestrial and maritime spatial planning. The legal framework, defined by **Laws 4447/2016 and 4546/2018**, as amended by **Law 4759/2020**, establishes Maritime Spatial Planning as an integral part of the national spatial planning system, structured across national and regional spatial frameworks.

Despite the revised framework, Greece failed to adopt a Marine Spatial Plan by 2021, in breach of the EU deadline and obligations. As a result, the European Commission launched an infringement procedure: it sent a letter of formal notice in December 2021 and issued a reasoned opinion in April 2023, as the Marine Spatial Plan had not yet been drafted and notified. In December 2023, the Commission referred the case to the EU Court of Justice for Greece's non-compliance with Directive 2014/89/EU.[28] In February 2025- the CJEU ruled against Greece for failing to prepare a timely MSP.[29]

At national level, there have been preparatory actions. The Ministry of Environment and Energy prepared a draft of a *National Spatial Strategy for the Maritime Space (NSS MS)* and presented it for public consultation from 26 January 2022 to 17 February 2022.

In April 2025, the *National Spatial Strategy for the Maritime Space (NSS MS)* was approved by act of the Cabinet of Ministers 6/17.4.2025, which was published in the Government Gazette on 17 April 2025 (Δ' 227/2025). The National Spatial Strategy for the Marine Space states that the ''*Maritime Space Planning covers all maritime zones. The relevant economic activities take place in territorial waters, on the continental shelf, and in the Exclusive Economic Zone*". The Ministerial Decision (of the Minister and Deputy Minister of the Environment and Energy) no ΥΠΕΝ/ΔΧΩΡΣ/43090/574 on the Designation of Spatial Units for the Establishment of Maritime Spatial Frameworks, which was published in the Government Gazette on 17 April 2025 (Δ' 229/2025), includes a national maritime spatial map that depicts Greece's maritime zones, as defined in accordance with the provisions of UNCLOS - (including inter alia the outer limits of the continental shelf / Exclusive Economic Zone) - and designates the maritime spatial units within which Maritime Spatial Planning Frameworks are to be elaborated.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Greece has adopted its National Spatial Planning Strategy for the Maritime Space of Greece in April 2025.

Review process

None identified.

Table 13 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
GREECE	April 2025	/	Ministry of Environment and Energy (YPEN).	/	/	
	Documents reviewed: Plan: • National Spatial Planning Strategy for the Maritime Space of Greece (2159) Additional documents: • Ministerial Decision on the Technical Specifications for Maritime Spatial Planning Frameworks (MSPFs) • Designation of spatial units for the establishment of maritime spatial frameworks (2207)					
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: National Spatial Planning Strategy for the Maritime Space of Greece - Council of Ministers Act No. 6, ΦΕΚ Δ' 227/17.04.2025. Link. The National Spatial Planning Strategy for the Maritime Space (NSPSMS) was formally approved by Council of Ministers' Act No. 6, titled "Approval of the National Spatial Strategy for the Maritime Space," and published in Government Gazette D' 227, dated 17 April 2025. The Ministerial Decision on the Technical Specifications for Maritime Spatial Planning Frameworks (MSPFs) (Government Gazette 228 D', 17 April 2025)[38], which sets out the methodological and technical requirements for preparing the MSPFs. The Ministerial Decision delineating four (4)					

Aquaculture/ Mariculture	✓
Fisheries	✓
Renewable energy	✓
Oil and gas	✓
Shipping/ maritime transport [35]	✓
Ports[36]	✓
Military training areas[37]	✓
Nature protection	✓
Raw material extraction	✓

35 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

36 See footnote above.

37 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

38 The Ministerial Decision on the Technical Specifications for Maritime Spatial Planning Frameworks (MSPFs)

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
	Maritime Spatial Units (MSUs) within which four corresponding Maritime Spatial Planning Frameworks will be developed (Government Gazette 229 D', 17 April 2025)[39].					Scientific research	✓
	Adoption process: On April 2025, Greece issued the act establishing the National Spatial Planning Strategy for the Maritime Space (NSSMS)[40] which provides the overarching strategic framework for the coordinated, integrated, and sustainable spatial development of marine activities within Greece's maritime zones, aligned with national priorities and EU directives					Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
						Tourism/ recreation	✓
						Cultural heritage	✓

39 The Ministerial Decision delineating four (4) Maritime Spatial Units (MSUs) within which four corresponding Maritime Spatial Planning Frameworks will be developed

40 In parallel with the MSP process, related issues are addressed in "Special Frameworks for Spatial Planning" (National Scale Spatial Frameworks for specific economic sectors). Sectoral plans have been developed for aquaculture (2011, under revision), tourism (near finalisation), RES (2008, under revision), industry (2009, under revision) and raw minerals (new, ongoing), providing spatial planning guidelines for land-based, coastal, and marine segments. These developments refer to the development and organisation of the national space, including coastal and insular areas.

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study, the review covered in detail the Ministerial Decision on the Technical Specifications for Maritime Spatial Planning Frameworks (MSPFs), within which four corresponding Maritime Spatial Planning Frameworks will be developed together with the National Spatial Planning Strategy for the Maritime Space of Greece approved by Council of Ministers' Act. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the Greek documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 14 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Greece's National Spatial Strategy for the Marine Space

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	The National Spatial Strategy establishes EBA as a guiding principle for future MSP, highlighting the need to integrate social, economic, cultural, and environmental data alongside stakeholder knowledge. It explicitly links MSP to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Good Environmental Status, and acknowledges the need to address cumulative impacts. However, implementation remains limited at this stage: the Strategy is not itself an MSP, and no Strategic Environmental Assessment was carried out. Instead, it commits to applying SEA and Appropriate Assessments under the Habitats Directive during the preparation of the maritime spatial plans. The current framework therefore sets out intentions and principles but lacks concrete operationalisation of EBA until the MSP stage.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	The Strategy recognises land-sea interactions as a core principle, requiring coherence and compatibility between terrestrial and marine spatial planning. It establishes a coordination mechanism supported by a shared geospatial database, and specifies that Maritime Spatial Planning Frameworks should complement or, indicate issues or adjustments to be considered at the revision of Spatial Planning Frameworks. The Strategy also explicitly refers to Integrated Coastal Zone Management and cites the ICZM Protocol under the Barcelona Convention, aligning with international principles. However, these provisions remain largely procedural and preparatory, without evidence yet of practical implementation, as MSPs themselves have not been adopted.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	The Strategy frames sustainable development through five pillars of the blue economy: offshore energy, maritime transport, hydrocarbons, tourism, and marine biological resources. It explicitly highlights renewable energy as a strategic focus, linked to national climate and energy targets and the need for grid interconnections, while also emphasising aquaculture expansion, marine tourism, and transport infrastructure. A wide range of sectors to be addressed in future MSPs is listed, covering fisheries, aquaculture, energy, shipping, research, raw material extraction, and submarine cables and pipelines. However, the Strategy does not provide an explicit definition of sustainable development nor concrete mechanisms for balancing sectoral growth with environmental protection. Instead, it establishes broad priorities to be operationalised in the MSPs.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	The Strategy sets out general principles for managing spatial and temporal aspects of maritime uses. It specifies that GIS-based information should underpin the identification and allocation of activities and uses, and acknowledges the importance of accounting for seasonal fluctuations in both ecosystems and human activities, to be managed flexibly. However, the provisions remain at a broad strategic level, without concrete zoning, prioritisation rules, or mechanisms for phasing uses over time. These elements are deferred to the forthcoming MSPs, leaving implementation at

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	this stage relatively limited.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	The Strategy acknowledges the need to manage interactions by allowing MSPs to impose restrictions, buffer zones, intensity limits, or prohibitions on incompatible activities to safeguard ecosystems and comply with protection regimes. It also calls for planning to address potential conflicts proactively. Specific synergies are highlighted, such as the integration of different aquaculture systems with offshore renewable energy parks in the revision of the Special Spatial Framework for Aquaculture, and the promotion of marine eco-tourism as complementary to conservation goals. However, while the Strategy sets out these principles and potential combinations, it does not yet provide operational guidance or tested mechanisms for ensuring coexistence in practice, leaving their implementation to future MSPs.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	The Strategy emphasises economic priorities through the five blue economy pillars, particularly renewable energy, aquaculture, and tourism, but also highlights hydrocarbons and transport. Social aspects are implicit in the promotion of marine tourism and job creation linked to aquaculture and energy investments, though no systematic framework for social impact assessment is outlined. On safety, the Strategy references maritime security, defence, shipping routes, and port infrastructure, underscoring their strategic importance. However, environmental provisions are only indirectly addressed through references to coherence with the MSFD and GES, with no integrated SEA undertaken at this stage.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	The Strategy underlines the need for inter-ministerial cooperation to ensure coordination across sectors, which provides a structural mechanism for policy coherence. It also explicitly references a wide range of EU legal and policy frameworks, alongside national policy documents, as inputs for future MSPs. This demonstrates clear awareness of the requirement to align MSP with broader governance frameworks. However, the Strategy does not yet operationalise how this coherence will be ensured in practice, nor does it detail mechanisms for resolving conflicts among policies. Its role is preparatory, laying the foundation for coherence, while leaving practical implementation to the forthcoming MSPs.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	The Ministry of Environment and Energy prepared a draft of a *National Spatial Strategy for the Maritime Space (NSS MS)* and presented it for public consultation from 26 January 2022 to 17 February 2022. The Strategy explicitly acknowledges the importance of public and stakeholder consultation, linking it to the SEA process and to the development of MSPs. It further proposes the use of participatory tools such as mapping platforms and co-design workshops to enable meaningful involvement. These provisions indicate an intent to embed participatory processes in MSP preparation. However, the actual organisation and effectiveness of engagement is left to future development of the MSP.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	The Strategy highlights the need to base MSPs on best available data, to be secured through a spatial data assessment study. It explicitly refers to fisheries data collected under the CFP and ecosystem data from the MSFD, ensuring alignment with EU monitoring systems. It also proposes the creation of a Monitoring and Evaluation Observatory within the Ministry of Environment and Energy, centralising coordination and data management. Technical specifications further require compliance with the INSPIRE Directive and EMODnet standards, which strengthens interoperability and accessibility. While these provisions establish a solid framework for robust data use, their practical implementation remains pending future MSPs.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	The National Spatial Strategy for the Maritime Space highlights that Greece's maritime zones border both EU Member States and third countries. Cooperation with these neighbouring states is developed not only through bilateral relations (e.g., THAL-CHOR I and II projects) but also within broader EU frameworks, including the European Green Deal, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC), and the European Commission Communication *"Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable*

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	Future" (May 2021). The Strategy also refers to coordination mechanisms under international frameworks such as the Barcelona Convention and UNEP-MAP. However, it does not yet outline specific practical mechanisms, joint initiatives, or procedures for addressing transboundary issues, leaving their detailed implementation to future MSP.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	The NSS MS refers to cooperation with neighbouring third countries, bilaterally or through the mechanisms of the Barcelona Convention (1975, amended 1995) and its Protocols ratified by Greece. However, the Strategy does not yet detail practical mechanisms, joint projects, or procedures for resolving transboundary issues, leaving their application to future MSPs.

Country Fiche for Spain

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

Since 2021, Spain has undertaken significant legislative and regulatory steps in the domain of maritime spatial planning, marking a new stage in the implementation of Directive 2014/89/EU. The most notable legal development has been the adoption of Royal Decree 150/2023, of 28 February, which formally approves the Maritime Spatial Planning Plans (POEMs) for Spain's five marine demarcations: the North Atlantic, South Atlantic, Strait of Gibraltar and Alborán, Levantine-Balearic, and the Canary Islands. These plans constitute the secondary regulatory instruments required by Royal Decree 363/2017, itself the primary transposition of the MSP Directive into Spanish law. Royal Decree 363/2017 was issued in development of Law 41/2010, on the protection of the marine environment, and provides the structural framework for marine planning in accordance with Directive 2014/89/EU. Therefore, Royal Decree 150/2023 completes the legislative implementation process by enacting detailed spatial planning provisions in each maritime demarcation.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Spain has adopted its first Maritime Spatial Plans in February 2023. These are MSPs of five Spanish marine demarcations (POEM).

Review process

The review and update of the MSP plans is mandated to occur no later than 31 December 2027, as stated in: Royal Decree 150/2023 and Article 12 of Royal Decree 363/2017. In 2024, authorities launched the MSP review with a structured engagement programme: By October 2025, bilateral meetings with regional governments, two GT-OEM session with other ministries, and a two in-person stakeholder workshop were conducted. A broadly distributed online questionnaire complemented these events. The aims were to inform public and private stakeholders about the approved plans and to gather proposals for their revision. As a follow-up, national and regional authorities have been asked to submit spatial data to support an inventory of current and future uses.

Table 15 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
SPAIN	February 2023, five plans	/	Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge.	6 years, until December 2027	Binding	
	Documents reviewed: Plans: • North Atlantic Marine Demarcation • Levantine-Balearic Marine Demarcation • Marine Demarcation of the Strait and Alboran • South Atlantic Marine Demarcation • Canary Islands Marine Demarcation Additional documents: • Strategic Environmental Assessment of the five Spanish plans • Strategic Environmental Assessment: Annex I, Annex II and Annex III • Geographic Information System Viewer • Other resources					Aquaculture/ Mariculture ✓ Fisheries ✓ Renewable energy ✓ Oil and gas ✓ Shipping/ maritime transport [41] ✓ Ports[42] ✓ Military training ✓
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: Royal Decree 150/2023 of 28 February approving the maritime spatial plans for the five Spanish marine demarcations. Link.					

41 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR, with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

42 See footnote above.

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
						areas[43]	
						Nature protection	✓
						Raw material extraction	-
						Scientific research	✓
						Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
						Tourism/ recreation	✓
						Cultural heritage	✓
	Review process: In 2024, authorities launched the MSP review with a structured engagement programme: By October 2025, bilateral meetings with regional governments, two GT-OEM session with other ministries, and a two in-person stakeholder workshop were conducted. A broadly distributed online questionnaire complemented these events. The aims were to inform public and private stakeholders about the approved plans and to gather proposals for their revision. As a follow-up, national and regional authorities have been asked to submit spatial data to support an inventory of current and future uses.						

[43] The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study, the review covered the final Spanish plans for the five marine subdivisions and the SEA report as approved by Royal Decree 150/2023 of 28 February. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the Spanish documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 16 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Spain

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	Spain's MSPs reference the ecosystem-based approach and align conceptually with the goals of the MSFD, including the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES). MSFD descriptors are not systematically integrated into the spatial assessments or planning measures. The SEA provides a general environmental baseline, but operational links to GES targets and ecological thresholds remain limited.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	Spain's MSPs provide one of the more robust examples of addressing land-sea interactions. The plans explicitly consider port operations, freshwater discharges, and coastal dynamics, structured by sea basin. Coordination with terrestrial planning authorities is institutionalised and reflected in governance arrangements, reflecting effective implementation of ICZM principles.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	The plans identify relevant sectors, including renewable energy, transport, fisheries, and tourism, and reference national strategies. While sustainability dimensions and sector-specific development pathways are not consistently elaborated, information provided by the MSP authorities indicates that the monitoring and evaluation frameworks - with specific indicators linked to both general and sectoral objectives, including those with environmental dimensions - are expected to contribute to this aim.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	Spain's MSPs provide extensive spatial zoning, with clearly designated areas for existing and emerging uses. Future uses such as offshore wind are planned for with dedicated high-potential zones. Mapping is supported by GIS and the INFOMAR portal, and overlaps or exclusions are clearly defined.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	Interactions between maritime activities are a core focus of the Spanish MSPs. The plans include diagnostic assessments of compatibilities and conflicts, along with spatial rules and multi-use principles. Stakeholder input on compatibility was incorporated, and sectoral combinations are encouraged where appropriate.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	The SEA provides a foundation for addressing environmental aspects. MSFD descriptors are used for describing the current state of the marine environment. Social and safety considerations are treated more generally. While some socio-economic analysis is included, there is limited assessment of long-term societal impacts or risk-based approaches.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	The plans are coherent with national maritime strategies and EU-level frameworks. However, they currently lack concrete mechanisms to address potential inconsistencies between sectoral objectives or to ensure integration across multiple governance levels. Measure OEM6, which foresees the development of a national sustainable blue economy strategy, is intended to strengthen coordination in this regard. At present, alignment is stated rather than actively implemented through joint procedures or monitoring.

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Consultation was structured and multi-phased, with regional and national engagement. The process resulted in some changes to zoning. While the plans and accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment provide only an overview of how comments were addressed, information provided by the Spanish MSP authorities indicates that detailed responses to all submissions are included in internal documentation submitted to the environmental authority. However, this information is not readily accessible in the publicly available materials, and broader outreach to civil society appears limited.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	Spain's plans are backed by a strong geospatial data infrastructure, with access through the INFOMAR platform. While the baseline data is comprehensive, there is no evidence of participatory mapping tools, dynamic updating, or integration with research and citizen science data.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	The SEA process references transboundary considerations and some regional initiatives such as the Atlantic Strategy, the WestMED Initiative, the MSP-MED project, SIMNORAT and SIMWESTMED. However, there is limited evidence of systematic cooperation. No joint MSP processes or alignment of spatial decisions with neighbouring Member States is documented.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	Spain acknowledges cooperation with third countries (e.g., Morocco and Algeria) through the WestMED Initiative and MSPglobal project. However, these references remain general and are not tied to specific joint planning activities or transboundary ecosystem assessments.

Country Fiche for Finland

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

None identified.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Finland has adopted its first Maritime Spatial Plan in December 2020.

Review process

Finland launched the revision of its maritime spatial plan in January 2024, with completion expected in 2027. The process is guided by the MSP Interaction Plan 2024–2027, which sets out workshops, consultations, and cross-border dialogue, and by an internal roadmap for the MSP Coordination Group. Although legally on a ten-year cycle, Finland has shortened the review to six years to better reflect environmental pressures and EU requirements. Key drivers include degraded marine ecosystems, cumulative sectoral impacts, and alignment with the 2024 Coastal Strategy and EU Green Deal targets. The Baltic Sea's geopolitical situation has also heightened the focus on security, food and energy self-sufficiency, and resilience. As of early 2025, the process is in the Marine Vision phase, with sectoral meetings shaping updates and long-term objectives.

Table 17 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
FINLAND	December 2020	/	Finnish Ministry of the Environment	10 years	Non-binding	Aquaculture/ Mariculture ✓ Fisheries ✓ Renewable energy ✓ Oil and gas - Shipping/ maritime transport [44] ✓ Ports[45] ✓ Military training areas[46] ✓ Nature protection[47] ✓ Raw material extraction b
	Documents reviewed: Plan: • Maritime Spatial Plan 2030 Additional documents: • Impact assessment of the Finnish Maritime Spatial Plan • Statement on the requirement to produce a Natura assessment for Maritime Spatial Plans					
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: none identified.					
	Review process: In January-February 2024, the Boards of eight Coastal Regional Councils decided to start the revision of the Maritime Spatial Plan 2030 for Finland. The Plan will be updated and adopted by 2027.					

44 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK, FR, and ES with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

45 See footnote above.

46 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

47 The Finnish MSP Plan identifies significant underwater natural values and ecological connections that complement blue-green infrastructure.

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
						Scientific research	d
						Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
						Tourism/ recreation	✓
						Cultural heritage	✓

Notes:

[a] While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping **routes** vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

[b] Member States explicitly report these as potential/future activities.

[c] Not explicitly identified as an activity or use in the MSP. For some MS, a different competent authority is responsible for management under separate legislation (e.g. Denmark with defence and nature protection). For other MS, the activity is treated as part of the contextual background rather than as a maritime activity in itself (e.g. tourism, cultural heritage). However, the plans were developed with these in mind due to their relevance in decision making.

[d] Presented as “blue biotechnology”.

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study, the review covered in detail the official Finnish Maritime Spatial Plan 2030, as well as the MSP Interaction Plan 2024–2027, defining principles, themes, and stakeholder involvement for Finland's second MSP cycle. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the Finnish documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 18 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Finland

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	Finland's MSP is grounded in the ecosystem-based approach, with a dedicated national report clarifying its application. The approach follows the HELCOM–VASAB EBA guidelines (published in 2016, and currently under revision to be adopted in 2026) and stresses operating within ecological limits to achieve and maintain Good Environmental Status (GES). A strong set of tools supports this, including EMMA (ecologically significant marine underwater areas), VELMU (long-term biodiversity data), Zonation, and FINFARMGIS. These tools are used across planning stages: defining, developing, addressing, assessing, and implementation. The main gap in this process is the systematic assessment of cumulative impacts; however, this is being considered in the revision of the plan. Stakeholder involvement is extensive, with a 380-member (in 2020; and approximately 1000 members since 2023). The Open MSP-Cooperation Network and participatory processes built into all stages. The MSP applies precaution where uncertainty exists and links EBA directly to sector–environment interactions and GES targets. Future updates aim to further integrate ecological connectivity and blue-green infrastructure, reinforcing EBA as a guiding principle.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	Finland's MSP dedicates a section to LSI, applying a three-tier framework (inner coastal/archipelago waters, outer coastal/archipelago waters, and open sea) that integrates land and marine data. Legal provisions under the Land Use and Building Act ensure coherence between terrestrial and marine planning, while the Finnish Coastal Strategy (2024) explicitly embeds ICZM principles and supports system-based, integrated management. Practical benefits include shared planners across land-use and MSP, which strengthens coordination. However, challenges persist because land-use plans are far more detailed than the strategic nature of MSP. The Interaction Plan 2024–2027 strengthens this approach with expanded data, scenario work, and ecological mapping - supported by pilots such as blue-green infrastructure in Kymenlaakso and migratory fish in Gulf of Bothnia. The regional coordination is ensured through VASAB CSPD/BSR work and the implementation of VASAB Vision 2040.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	Sustainability is the core guiding principle of Finland's MSP, framing the plan as a strategic tool to balance ecosystem protection, economic growth, and social well-being. The MSP integrates this principle across its sectoral roadmaps to 2030 and its vision to 2050. Key sectors - offshore wind, logistics, fisheries, aquaculture, and tourism - are explicitly tied to sustainable development, with commitments to climate neutrality, low-ecological-loading aquaculture, and nature-based tourism. Offshore wind zones, shipping fairways, and aquaculture areas are mapped using multi-criteria analysis, ensuring ecological and social considerations guide spatial allocation. No seabed mining areas are reserved, underlining a precautionary stance. While the MSP does not formally define "sustainable development", it operationalises the concept through sector-specific policies and spatial decisions aligned with Good Environmental Status.

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	Finland's MSP employs a zoning framework (inner archipelago, outer archipelago, open sea) combined with GIS-based map markings to allocate functions and manage spatial conflicts. Overlapping map markings indicate areas of significance and with potential, signalling possible synergies or the need for further conflict resolution in more detailed planning. The Plan does not prioritise maritime sectors; instead, it seeks to promote the diverse societal and community values represented by different maritime sectors. Activities incompatible with ecosystem protection, shipping safety, or national defence are excluded. The temporal dimension is explicitly integrated: seasonal activities like fishing, hunting and tourism are considered, offshore wind expansion is phased toward a 2035 capacity target, and adaptive measures account for climate change. The plan combines sectoral roadmaps for 2030 with a strategic vision for 2050, ensuring flexibility and forward-looking spatial guidance.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	Finland's MSP strategically addresses coexistence and conflict management through overlapping map markings, ecosystem-based assessments, and extensive stakeholder engagement. Synergies such as co-location of offshore wind and aquaculture or tourism with cultural heritage are explicitly promoted. Conflicts - particularly between offshore wind, fisheries, and nature conservation - are acknowledged and assessed through modelling tools (e.g., Zonation, FINFARMGIS) and expert assessments. The non-binding nature of the MSP means it guides rather than enforces conflict resolution, relying on cooperation and adaptive management instead of strict zoning rules. Authorities note that multi-use will be made more concrete in the 2024–2027 update through improved mapping and ecological integration. However, persistent challenges - such as the limited political weight of small-scale fisheries compared to energy or infrastructure sectors - are still present.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	Finland's MSP integrates environmental, economic, social, and safety aspects in a structured way, though its non-binding nature limits the depth of legal obligations. Instead of a statutory SEA, a broad non-statutory Impact Assessment was carried out, covering biodiversity, cumulative pressures, and climate change but with acknowledged gaps, particularly on cumulative impacts and land-based pressures. The MSP links directly to GES under the MSFD, and a full SEA is planned for the 2024–2027 update, showing progress. Sustainable economic growth is a central objective, with ecosystem services acknowledged as supporting sustainable industries. Social aspects, including cultural heritage, traditional fisheries, hunting, and recreational values, are addressed, with stakeholder feedback leading to stronger safeguards. Safety concerns are comprehensively integrated, particularly maritime traffic safety and defence needs, which set hard limits for other uses. Authorities note that security and security of supply will be addressed in the 2024–2027 update through scenarios, visioning, and an improved understanding of MSP's role in overall security and resilience building.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	Finland's MSP demonstrates strong coherence with both EU and national policies. It explicitly integrates the MSFD and WFD, aligning marine planning with Good Environmental and Ecological Status objectives, while also referencing the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, and TEN-T transport priorities. Regional coordination is ensured through the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group's Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030 and Workplans, HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, and ICZM principles are embedded via the 2024 Coastal Strategy. At the national level, coherence is underpinned by the Land Use and Building Act, the EEZ Act, and the Government Decree on MSP, with implementation overseen by the Ministry of the Environment in cooperation with regional councils and the Åland Islands. A national MSP Coordination Group provides vertical and horizontal integration, while international alignment is achieved through HELCOM–VASAB MSP WG participation, Planners' Forum, and cross-border consultations. Monitoring provisions link MSP updates to EU policy

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	cycles, and the upcoming revision incorporates multi-use concepts to address potential conflicts, such as between offshore wind and biodiversity.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Stakeholder engagement in Finland's MSP is comprehensive and multi-layered. The process combined electronic hearings, regional and national workshops, public consultations, and transboundary dialogues - ensuring participation from ministries, regional councils, industries, NGOs, and municipalities. The open MSP-Cooperation Network, with approximately 1000 members, broadened inclusiveness by engaging civil-society actors and underrepresented groups. Feedback mechanisms were robust: official statements, comments, and workshop inputs were systematically reviewed and integrated into key plan outputs like Scenarios for 2050, Vision 2050, and Sectoral Visions 2030 and Roadmaps. Digital platforms and social media expanded outreach, while in-person dialogue provided depth to deliberations. Planned improvements for the 2024–2027 update, aimed at addressing representation gaps and enhancing communication, include new cooperation platforms such as a Ministerial-level MSP Cooperation Group, MSP Research Cooperation Group involving 14 research organizations, and Cross-sectoral MSP Cooperation Group with 61 national-level organisations. These measures are expected to further strengthen the stakeholder involvement process in the Finnish MSP.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	Finland's MSP is strongly grounded in the best available data, combining long-term ecological monitoring (e.g. VELMU, EMMA) with advanced spatial tools like Zonation analysis, thematic studies, and area-specific assessments. The extensive VELMU dataset, with over 200,000 observation points since 2004, provides a robust ecological baseline. Transparency is ensured by making all reports, GIS layers, and interactive maps openly accessible in multiple languages through web portals. Data governance is well structured: the MSP Coordination Group ensures alignment across regional councils, while the MSP Cooperation Network enables knowledge exchange with 1000 stakeholders. The BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-Group supports the data coherence and harmonisation in the Baltic Sea. The MSP aligns with EU data-sharing standards (e.g. INSPIRE/EMODnet, HELCOM–VASAB/Basemaps) and integrates Baltic-wide datasets. Innovative participatory tools, such as digital scenario workspaces and interactive hearings, further enhance transparency and inclusiveness. Indicator-based monitoring has been introduced for the update cycle, strengthening adaptive management despite MSP's limited mandate over some issues.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	Finland's MSP demonstrates strong and institutionalised cross-border cooperation, both bilaterally and regionally. The plan is closely aligned with the HELCOM–VASAB MSP framework and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Area Spatial Planning, ensuring coherence across national boundaries. The consultation procedures were followed, with electronic hearings in 2019 and 2020 that incorporated feedback from neighbouring Baltic states, leading to adjustments in shipping lanes and offshore wind areas. Cooperation has been reinforced through EU-funded projects such Plan Bothnia, Pan Baltic SCOPE, eMSP NBSR, MSP-GREEN, and Baltic Sea2Land, which harmonised data and supported pilot exercises. The process also safeguards key transnational energy corridors, like Estlink and Balticconnector, and continues to support new cross-border infrastructure. The second MSP cycle (2024–2027) formalises Espoo consultation and monitoring procedures, strengthening long-term regional alignment. Authorities also emphasise ongoing regional collaboration, including the Nordic MSP Forum 2025, to address shared challenges like offshore wind and fisheries.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	Finland's MSP integrates cooperation with non-EU countries, particularly Russia, through both formal and informal mechanisms. However, due to the Russia's war against Ukraine, MSP collaboration has been suspended since March 2022. The HELCOM–VASAB MSP Working Group is the main platform, providing shared principles, data exchange, and biennial forums where Russia has participated as a Contracting Party. Finland also organised

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	two dedicated international consultation rounds in 2019 and 2020, inviting Russia and other Baltic states to discuss transboundary impacts. These consultations helped shape planning solutions in the Gulf of Finland, including safeguarding fairways to St. Petersburg and cross-border energy corridors like Estlink, Balticconnector, and Nord Stream. Tourism connections were also addressed through ferry and small-craft routes. However, the MSP does not explicitly reference Espoo or the SEA Protocol for third-country notification, leaving a procedural gap. Cooperation has also been supported by EU-funded projects such as Pan Baltic SCOPE, where Russia participated as an observer. Looking forward, Finland aims to expand non-EU cooperation, including with Ukraine, Norway, and Iceland (the latter to be engaged for the first time at the Nordic MSP Forum 2025).

Country Fiche for France

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

On 10 June, 2024, the Decree No. 2024-530, adopting the national strategy for the sea and the coast (Stratégie Nationale pour la Mer et le Littoral - SNML) 2024-2030, was issued.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

France adopted its first Maritime Spatial Plans in October 2019. These consist of four *Stratégies de façade maritime*, which form the first component of the broader *Documents stratégiques de façade* (DSF). Each DSF also includes an action plan and a monitoring mechanism, adopted subsequently between 2021 and 2022.

Review process

France is revising the strategic part of its four maritime spatial plans for mainland France[48] to update strategic objectives, with a focus on offshore wind energy and strong protection zones in line with EU goals. Following a major public debate organised in 2023–2024, by the National Commission for Public Debate, draft plans were submitted to the environmental authority and are undergoing public consultation from May to August 2025, with adoption expected by October-November 2025. The revision, legally required under Article 6(3), is mainly driven by France's choice to implement in single documents both MSPD and MSFD, as well as by European demands for renewable energy expansion and stronger nature protection. Offshore wind and biodiversity have dominated this cycle, while future priorities may include aquaculture and implementing the new EU Nature Restoration Regulation. The process was shaped by the national debate *La mer en débat* (Oct. 2024), and further influenced by the upcoming 2026 evaluation of the MSP Directive.

[48] France has specific processes and frameworks for MSP in the French overseas territories. However, these have not been taking into account in the current study,

Table 19 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
FRANCE	First part, October 2019. Second part between April - May 2022. Four plans[49]	/	French Ministry of the Sea	6 years	Binding	Aquaculture/ Mariculture ✓ Fisheries ✓ Renewable energy ✓ Oil and gas - Shipping/ maritime transport [50] ✓ Ports[51] Military training areas[52] ✓ Nature protection ✓
	Documents reviewed: Plans: • National Strategy for the Sea and the Coast (Stratégie Nationale pour la Mer et le Littoral - SNML) 2024–2030 • DSF for East Channel, North Sea • DSF for North Atlantic, West Channel • DSF for South Atlantic • DSF for the Mediterranean Additional documents: DSF for East Channel North Sea[53]: • Strategic Environmental Assessment					

49 All 4 plans contain two parts: Initial assessment and strategic objectives and MSP - vocational map and fact sheets (finalised between September and October 2019); and monitoring mechanism and action plan (finalised between April and May 2022).

50 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

51 See footnote above.

52 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

53 https://www.dirm.memn.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/document-strategique-de-facade-maritime-dsf-r268.html

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
	• Public consultation • Review of the Maritime Facade Strategy (2025-2030): Ongoing consultation • Review of the Maritime Facade Strategy (2025-2030): Preliminary work 2023-2024 • Review of the Maritime Facade Strategy (2025-2030): Ongoing consultation DSF for North Atlantic, West Channel[54]: • Environmental Statement • Public consultation • Adoption of the supplement to the strategy of the strategic facade document • Supplement to the strategy • Public consultation of the supplement • Adoption of the monitoring system for the strategic facade document • Review of the Maritime Facade Strategy (2025-2030): Ongoing consultation DSF for South Atlantic[55]: • Diagnosis of the existing situation • Economic and social analysis on the use of marine waters • Annex 2b: Assessment of the ecological status of the marine environment and the pressures exerted • Annex 2c: Economic and social analysis of the costs induced by the degradation of the marine environment • Review of the Maritime Facade Strategy (2025-2030): Preliminary work 2023-2024 • Review of the Maritime Facade Strategy (2025-2030): Ongoing consultation DSF for the Mediterranean[56]:					Raw material extraction ✓ Scientific research ✓ Submarine cable and pipelines ✓ Tourism/ recreation ✓ Cultural heritage c

54 https://www.dirm.nord-atlantique-manche-ouest.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/documents-adoptes-r343.html

55 https://www.dirm.sud-atlantique.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/le-document-strategique-de-la-facade-dsf-sud-r770.html

56 https://www.dirm.mediterranee.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/le-document-strategique-de-facade-mediterranee-r335.html

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
	• Ongoing consultation • Environmental assessment • Natura 2000 Analysis • Adoption of the monitoring system for the strategic facade document • Update of the Maritime Facade Strategy – preliminary draft submitted for consultation July 2024 • Update of the Maritime Facade Strategy – electronic public participation • Update of the Maritime Facade Strategy – draft submitted for consultation September 2024 • Review of the Maritime Facade Strategy (2025-2030): Ongoing consultation					
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: Decree No. 2024-530 adopting the National Strategy for the Sea and the Coast (Stratégie Nationale pour la Mer et le Littoral - SNML) 2024–2030. Link.					
	Review process: 6 months consultation in 2024 to define new areas in particular for OWF and "strong" protection - to be considered for next edition of MSP planned in summer /autumn 2025. The MSP public consultation was launched on 5 May and is running until 5 August 2025. Link.					

Notes:

[a] While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping **routes** vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK, FR, and ES with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

[b] Member States explicitly report these as potential/future activities.

[c] Not explicitly identified as an activity or use in the MSP. For some MS, a different competent authority is responsible for management under separate legislation (e.g. Denmark with defence and nature protection). For other MS, the activity is treated as part of the contextual background rather than as a maritime activity in itself (e.g. tourism, cultural heritage). However, the plans were developed with these in mind due to their relevance in decision making.

[d] Presented as "blue biotechnology".

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study, the review covered in detail the final version of the National Strategy for the Sea and the Coast (Stratégie Nationale pour la Mer et le Littoral - SNML) 2024–2030, alongside the four regional plans: DSF for East Channel, North Sea, DSF for North Atlantic, West Channel, DSF for South Atlantic, DSF for the Mediterranean. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the French documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 20 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in France

Provision	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	France's MSP framework embeds the EBA through the joint implementation of the MSFD and MSP Directive. The Marine Environmental Action Plans (MEAPs) form the environmental pillar of the four façade-level MSPs, supported by governance bodies (CNML, CMF) that ensure stakeholder participation. SEAs added consultation and cross-border review, while the DPSIR model structured the integration of environmental concerns across plan stages. The EBA is not formally defined, and its application remains uneven. Ecosystem services and cumulative impacts are only partially addressed, and EU-level guidance is not referenced, leaving methodological gaps. **New provisions:** The revised draft MSPs operationalise previously unassessed Environmental Objectives (EOs) and indicators. In NAMO, a new cross-cutting protection objective was added, while in the Mediterranean, 15 EOs and 32 indicators have been made measurable, though some still require clarification or were removed. Updates also align with the National Sea and Coastal Strategy 2024–2030 and the National Biodiversity Strategy 2030.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	France's MSPs systematically integrate land–sea interactions (LSI) through both legal obligations and governance mechanisms. The *Stratégie nationale pour la mer et le littoral* (SNML) requires coherence between MSPs and terrestrial frameworks (e.g. SDAGE for water, SRADDET for spatial planning), while Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) evaluate the impacts of coastal infrastructure, freshwater inputs, and sediment dynamics. Action plans across façades include concrete measures for estuarine and lagoon connectivity, ecological continuity, and the management of coastal-marine linkages. Governance bodies (*CNML* and *CMF*) provide platforms for coordination, with a dedicated LSI committee in the South Atlantic façade. Even though ICZM is not explicitly referenced, its principles - multi-level governance, integration of land and sea policies, and coastal ecosystem protection - are reflected throughout the MSPs. **New provisions:** Coordination between MSPs and River Basin Management Plans (SDAGE) has been reinforced, with joint measures and funding streams now developed to align WFD and MSP objectives. Consultative processes for both frameworks have also been harmonised. In addition, more emphasis is being placed on coastal lagoons in the Mediterranean.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	Sustainable development of blue economy is explicitly framed as one of the four priorities of the SNML (2024), together with the protection of marine biodiversity, ocean's contribution to carbon neutrality and equity. The national framework requires these to be translated into spatial objectives in the four façade-level MSPs, balancing economic uses with ecological protection. Sectoral orientations include commitments to renewable energy expansion, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, decarbonisation of maritime transport,

Provision	Justification
	regulated mineral extraction, and sustainable tourism. Cross-cutting priorities such as knowledge, innovation, and resilient coastal communities also strengthen the sustainability dimension. **New provisions:** The updated framework extends the strategic horizon from 2030 to 2050, aligning MSPs more closely with France's long-term climate and energy objectives, particularly the development of renewable marine energy. This adjustment reinforces the integration of sustainability with decarbonisation pathways and long-term planning.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	France's MSPs use *cartes des vocations* (vocation maps) to indicate preferred or compatible uses across large maritime zones. These are strategic rather than regulatory, providing guidance for balancing ecological preservation with economic activities. Priority uses vary by basin: professional fishing, aquaculture, and transport are widely prioritised; offshore renewables are strongly emphasised in the Mediterranean; while other sectors like tourism, recreation, and defence are more unevenly integrated. Restrictions apply mainly in marine protected areas, shipping lanes, and military areas, but these reflect pre-existing laws rather than new MSP rules. Temporal aspects are only considered qualitatively (e.g. tourism seasons, fisheries closures), with no temporal zoning or long-term climate integration. Future uses such as offshore wind and MPAs are anticipated in vocation maps, but emerging sectors remain broadly referenced without spatial detailing. **New provisions:** Monitoring has improved through refined socio-economic indicators at the sea-basin level. Technical sheets for designated zones are being revised to make recommendations more operational, and in the Mediterranean, zoning has been simplified by reducing the number of designated areas to facilitate management.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	France has no binding legal framework for multi-use, but coexistence of activities is generally permitted at project level if safety is respected. Interactions are mainly addressed through vocation maps and strategic objectives, which identify priority and compatible uses while promoting coexistence. Some conflicts are acknowledged - particularly between offshore renewables and fisheries, transport and MPAs, tourism and biodiversity, and aggregate extraction and seafloor protection - but these are treated qualitatively and often considered "compatible in principle" rather than systematically assessed. Multi-use management relies on broad zoning, descriptive fiches, and consultation processes rather than formal compatibility tools. Tensions remain between economic development ambitions (e.g. offshore wind) and environmental protection, often debated within façade-level consultative bodies. **New provisions:** The new SNML (2024) introduces experimental co-use initiatives, including fisheries–wind, aquaculture–wind, and more generally co-use in offshore wind farms. Authorities also expressed willingness to explore co-location of conservation and restorative activities. However, these intentions are not yet operationalised in the current façade-level plans.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	France's MSPs are supported by SEAs, covering MSFD descriptors such as biodiversity, water quality, climate change, and pressures from maritime activities. Appropriate Assessments of Natura 2000 sites were included, though depth and quality varied by façade. Cumulative impacts were acknowledged but mostly qualitatively; only the revised North Atlantic–Western Channel SEA introduced a detailed matrix. Climate change was considered indirectly, without quantified projections. Economic and social aspects are analysed descriptively through sector indicators (GVA, jobs, volumes) and visions to 2030. No valuation of ecosystem services was identified. Social elements focus mainly on heritage, fisheries, and jobs linked to emerging sectors. Safety is addressed via risks from coastal erosion, flooding, maritime traffic, defence, pollution, and working conditions, with specific "action sheets" included in the South Atlantic MSP. **New provisions:** Updated SEAs (2024) refined Natura 2000 assessments,

Provision	Justification
	improved cumulative impact matrices, and added issues such as landscapes, GHG emissions, and air quality. MSP horizons were extended to 2050, and zoning for offshore wind and strict protection areas was made more detailed.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	France's MSPs serve as the main implementation framework for both the MSPD and MSFD, with efforts to align timelines and objectives. They also reference other EU frameworks (CFP, WFD, EU Integrated Maritime Policy, Blue Growth), though practical contributions and overlaps are not systematically detailed. Some coordination challenges exist, e.g. CFP financial rules limiting compensation for fisheries. At national level, the SNML (2017-2022 and 2024-2030) is designed to align - among others - with the national biodiversity, research, port, and ecological transition strategies. Compliance with MSP objectives is legally required for regional and territorial plans since 2021. Governance involves ministries, coordinating prefects at façade level, and consultative bodies (CNML and CMFs). Simplification of permitting ("single window") is also promoted. **New provisions:** The 2024-2025 revision improves coordination with the WFD through alignment of MSPs and River Basin Management Plans (SDAGE), including joint measures and shared funding. Consultation bodies were better integrated across water, energy, and biodiversity. The strategic horizon was extended to 2050 to align with climate and energy objectives.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	France ensures broad participation through the consultative bodies at national level and at façade level, each including up to 80 members across state, local, professional, employee, and environmental/user groups. Wider public participation was supported by the CNDP ("La Mer en Débat"), with multiple consultations from 2018 to 2021 and again during the 2025 revision. Environmental Statements and consultation reports summarised feedback and adjustments. While clarifications were integrated (e.g. map details, rewording of objectives), many substantive changes were deferred to action plans or revisions. **New provisions:** The 2024–2025 revision introduced enhanced communication and local public events across France, with feedback leading to new zoning for offshore renewables and strict protection areas (Decision October 2024).
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	France's MSPs rely on the best available knowledge from national agencies, research institutes, and CEREMA, which played a key role in data collection, processing, and cartographic support. Access and transparency are ensured through national platforms: Géolittoral (central MSP data portal), Je participe (consultation platform hosting maps, reports, and indicators) and limitesmaritimes.gouv.fr (portal intended for seeking legal and geographical information concerning French maritime regulation boundaries). Data management aligns with the INSPIRE Directive, with the official Portal of French Maritime boundaries (displaying the legally binding limits of the plans, managed by SHOM), IGN, IFREMER, OFB (the French Office Biodiversity) and CEREMA, providing data, interoperable geospatial layers and metadata catalogues. In addition, the Marine Environment Information System (*Système d'information sur le milieu marin* – SIMM), established under the regulatory framework for integrated sea and coastal management and managed by OFB, organises and references the underlying environmental data. EU datasets (e.g. EMODnet) are integrated for cross-border consistency. Innovative participatory methods are used, including interactive mapping, stakeholder atlases, and pilot tools (e.g. SIMAtlantic), enabling public and stakeholder engagement in data use. Monitoring systems are in place at façade level for regular updates.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	France initiated engagement with neighbouring states (Belgium, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Monaco, Netherlands, Portugal, UK) in 2019, prior to the adoption of the *Stratégies de façade maritime* (the MSP component of the *Documents stratégiques de façade*). These exchanges continued through formal

Provision	Justification
	diplomatic consultations at each stage of the DSF process, including through subsequent façade-level meetings after 2021s. Topics included offshore wind, ecological connectivity, infrastructure (cables, ports), and transboundary environmental impacts. Cooperation was reinforced by regional conventions (e.g. OSPAR), and participation in EU-funded projects (SIMCELT, SIMNORAT, SIMWESTMED, MSP-GREEN, REGINA). However, integration of transboundary concerns (e.g. Belgian objections to Dunkirk OWF, Spain on Gulf of Lion connectivity) into MSPs remains limited. **New provisions:** Cooperation is being strengthened through new platforms such as the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI) in the North Sea, though Mediterranean collaboration remains weaker.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	Current MSPs include limited cooperation with non-EU countries. The UK was consulted in 2019 (East Channel–North Sea, North Atlantic–Western Channel) and via projects such as SIMCELT. Broader cooperation (e.g. with southern Mediterranean countries) was not pursued due to geopolitical sensitivities. **New provisions:** Cooperation with the UK has been reinforced through the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI), focusing on offshore wind investment compatibility and fisheries issues. Mediterranean cooperation remains limited to EU partners (Spain, Italy, Monaco).

Country Fiche for Ireland

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

The Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 provides the legislative basis for a new marine planning system in Ireland.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Ireland's first Maritime Spatial Plan was approved by Government in March 2021.

Review process

Ireland's MSP review is legally required every six years under the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021, though reforms are being considered to extend the cycle to ten years and introduce a variation process for interim amendments. While the 2021 National Marine Planning Framework is not yet under review, it sets the foundation for the next phase of MSP delivery: the development of Designated Maritime area Plans (DMPAs). Progress is evident with the first Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) for the South Coast, published in October 2024, which identifies four offshore renewable energy zones to help deliver 5 GW of offshore wind by 2030.

Table 21 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
IRELAND	June 2021	/	Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC).	+20 years, long term strategic plan[57]	Binding	Aquaculture/ Mariculture ✓ Fisheries ✓ Renewable energy ✓ Oil and gas ✓ Shipping/ maritime transport [58] ✓ Ports[59] ✓ Military training areas[60] ✓ Nature protection c Raw material extraction ✓
	Documents reviewed: Plan: • National Marine Planning Framework Additional documents: • Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement • Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report • Post Consultation Natura Impact Statement (NIS) • Appropriate Assessment (AA) • Appropriate Assessment (Aa) determination SC-DMAP:					

57 The NMPF is a national plan for Irelands seas, setting out, over a 20-year horizon, how they want to use, protect and enjoy Irish seas.

58 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK, FR, and ES with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

59 See footnote above.

60 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
	• South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan for Offshore Renewable Energy (SC-DMAP). • Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement • Post Consultation Natura Impact Statement (NIS) • Appropriate Assessment • Department Report on Public Consultation • Documents submitted for consultation • South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) Proposal – early engagement					Scientific research: - Submarine cable and pipelines: ✓ Tourism/ recreation: ✓ Cultural heritage: c
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: The Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 provides the legislative basis for a new marine planning system in Ireland. Link.					
	Review process: The South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan for Offshore Renewable Energy (SC-DMAP), adopted and published on October 2024, identifies four areas off the south coast of Ireland for offshore renewable energy.					

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study, the review covered in detail the Project Ireland 2040: National Marine Planning Framework and the Post Consultation Natura Impact Statement (NIS). All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the Irish documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 22 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Ireland

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	The NMPF embeds the EBA explicitly, aligning with OSPAR and the MSFD. Chapter 5 (Environmental – Ocean Health) sets clear planning policies linked to MSFD descriptors (biodiversity, non-indigenous species, water quality, seafloor integrity, contaminants, litter). The plan also references ecosystem services, applies SEA and appropriate assessment, and includes a cumulative impact assessment, though data gaps remain. Governance arrangements are strong: the NMPF was developed under whole-of-government leadership, with extensive stakeholder engagement (over 3,500 submissions, advisory group meetings, coastal consultations). Monitoring obligations (Planning Act 2018) and SEA-linked programmes ensure follow-up. **New provisions:** The South Coast DMAP (2024) for offshore renewables operationalises the EBA by designating Maritime Areas for ORE development based on constraints mapping and SEA analysis of ecological, economic, and social data. Policy objectives explicitly address biodiversity, Natura 2000 sites, and socio-economic interactions, guiding timing and scale of ORE development.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	The NMPF embeds LSI through explicit legal and institutional links with terrestrial planning. Under the Planning and Development Act 2018 (and the new 2024 Act, not yet fully in force), marine and land planning are aligned, with regional and local terrestrial plans required to be consistent with the NMPF and any other marine plans adopted e.g. DMAPs. LSI is addressed across multiple chapters - infrastructure, ports, aquaculture, ORE, fisheries, tourism, air quality - and through policies requiring coordination with terrestrial planning, EIAs, and SEAs. Proposals with land impacts must consult terrestrial authorities (*Transboundary Policy 1*). Local authorities (given the name of *Coastal Planning Authorities* – CPAs in the MAP Act) are formally recognised as Public Bodies with statutory obligations to ensure integration. **New provisions:** The Planning and Development Act 2024 further strengthens alignment by embedding LSI explicitly into both marine and terrestrial systems, ensuring consistent governance, participation, and review.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	The NMPF makes sustainable development a central principle, balancing economic growth, social well-being, and environmental protection. It links to SDG 8, promotes a thriving maritime economy (Chapter 6), and embeds social objectives (Chapter 7) alongside environmental policies (Chapter 5). Sectoral policies (e.g. fisheries, aquaculture, ORE, tourism, ports) explicitly require sustainability, co-existence, and integration with environmental safeguards. **New provisions**: The SC-DMAP (2024) introduces a plan-led framework for offshore renewables, designating four maritime areas for phased development. Policy objectives ensure biodiversity protection, co-existence

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	with fisheries and aquaculture, use of best available data, and sustainable transmission infrastructure. It strengthens the sustainability dimension by requiring projects to undergo a Maritime Area Consent (MAC) and planning approval with public participation, embedding environmental and social safeguards in ORE development.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	The NMPF uses maps and sectoral policies to guide spatial development while maintaining flexibility. It does not prescribe rigid zoning but indicates where activities (e.g. ORE, aquaculture, ports, fisheries, tourism) are most suitable, balancing economic and environmental objectives. Temporal aspects are considered qualitatively (e.g. seasonal tourism, fishing closures, species migration) but not through temporal zoning. Strategic vision extends to 2040 under Project Ireland. **New provisions**: The SC-DMAP (2024) introduces detailed spatial designations, covering ~8,813 km² along the south coast and dividing it into four Maritime Areas (A–D). Area A is prioritised for ~900 MW ORE deployment by 2030, while Areas B–D are proposed for phased post-2030 development. Sequencing will be guided by Department policy, and implemented by MARA (Maritime Area Regulator Authority), with design informed by ecological surveys under the Birds and Habitats Directives. Authorities noted that there were challenges in reconciling ORE siting with as-yet to be determined future MPA designations, which required precautionary judgments.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	The NMPF adopts a cooperative, policy-based framework that prioritises co-existence, conflict mitigation, and shared use of marine space. Each sectoral chapter includes a section on "*Interaction with other activities*", providing guidance on synergies and conflicts (e.g. ORE with aquaculture, fisheries, and ports). Proposals must demonstrate consideration of overlaps and opportunities for co-location, supported by stakeholder consultation and mapping of temporal and spatial activity patterns. While coexistence is promoted, some uses (e.g. shipping lanes) remain exclusive for safety reasons. **New provisions:** The SC-DMAP (2024) introduces specific coexistence policies for ORE. Developers must keep designated maritime areas open to other uses where possible, only applying permanent exclusions for safety or environmental protection, and minimise disruption during temporary exclusion periods (construction, surveys, maintenance). Infrastructure locations must be precisely mapped and shared to enable safe co-use. Authorities note, however, that no ORE projects have yet tested multi-use in practice; feasibility will depend on developer proposals.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	The NMPF is underpinned by SEA and AA, integrates MSFD/WFD goals, and assesses cumulative effects. It embeds economic, social, and safety objectives across sectoral policies, with clear roles for authorities (IRCG, Commissioners of Irish Lights, Defence Organisation). Environmental: SEA and AA applied an objectives-led method, covering all SEA topics and GES descriptors, with cumulative impacts assessed. Consultation was extensive at both the national level and across borders, ensuring engagement and consideration of transboundary issues. Economic: NMPF quantifies sector contributions (aquaculture, fisheries, ports, ORE R&D), sets a 20-year horizon, and includes quantified ORE targets. Social: Chapter 7 policies promote access, employment, heritage, and rural/island community well-being, with a whole-of-government approach. Safety: Clear requirements for navigation risk assessment, SAR capacity, and defence zone protection. **New provisions**: The SC-DMAP (2024) applied SEA and NIS, designated four ORE areas and developed 47 policies (to cover themes such as co-existence with fisheries, shipping, climate change, environmental protection, and governance). It forecasts major jobs and investment for the South Coast, requires ongoing community engagement and a mandatory benefit fund, and strengthens safety with Navigation Risk Assessments and GIS-based

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	shipping density mapping.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	The NMPF is strongly aligned with EU directives, especially the MSFD, which forms its environmental pillar. Policies on biodiversity, water quality, marine litter, and underwater noise are directly linked to MSFD descriptors, while coherence is also ensured with WFD, Habitats, Birds, SEA, EIA, and other EU directives. It also supports broader EU strategies (e.g. Green Deal, Circular Economy, Renewable Energy), though not all are explicitly referenced, in part because of the time at which the plan was developed. Nationally, the National Planning Framework (NPF, the land planning framework in Ireland), provided the model on which Ireland's MSP has been built, ensuring continuity between land and marine planning systems. The NMPF also aligns with the Biodiversity Action Plan, climate and waste policies, and SDGs. Several governance structures promoting coherence with other plans, are outlined in the NMPF: (1) public bodies must act consistently with NMPF objectives under the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018; (2) coordination is ensured through the Interdepartmental Group and the Stakeholder Advisory Group of relevant public bodies; and (3) the Maritime Area Planning Bill streamlines administration and unifies permitting, strengthening efficiency and alignment with EU law. **New provisions:** From 2025, the MSFD and MSP teams will be under the same ministry, improving coherence. The MSP function has been in the Department responsible for energy since 2024. The SC-DMAP (2024) builds on key national strategies (Climate Action Plan 2024, Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy, Energy Security to 2030) and regional/local plans. Implementation is overseen by a Collaborative Forum with bi-annual meetings, plus specialist working groups on ecosystems/ornithology and technical infrastructure. Alignment with RED is advancing but less developed than with MSFD.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	The NMPF was shaped by extensive stakeholder engagement, with regional events, online consultations, and a Stakeholder Advisory Group (MSP Advisory Group) representing economic, social, and environmental sectors. Over 3,500 comments were integrated, and all submissions were published online, ensuring transparency. Engagement also included statutory consultees for SEA, parliamentary debates, and informal transboundary consultations. Ongoing coordination at Government level is supported through an interdepartmental group - Project Ireland Marine 2040 and local planning authority forums. The MSP Advisory Group also meets regularly. New provisions: The SC-DMAP (2024) process combined a nine-and-a-half-week non-statutory public engagement on the initial SC-DMAP Proposal (1 August–6 October 2023) with statutory consultations on the Draft SC-DMAP, its SEA environmental report and Natura Impact Statement in May–June 2024, followed by a further consultation in August 2024. Methods combined in-person events, online workshops, written submissions, and digital tools. Feedback was documented in consultation reports and informed the final draft, with issues addressed in both the SEA and Natura Impact Statement. The early 2023 process focused on views on the overall proposed area (~8 600 km²), whereas the Draft SC-DMAP consultations gathered feedback on specific proposed ORE development areas identified through assessment.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	The NMPF places strong emphasis on using best available data and scientific knowledge. The Marine Institute acts as a national hub for marine data (with IODE accreditation) and manages Ireland's Marine Atlas, the main repository of datasets used in MSP. This Atlas is INSPIRE-compliant and integrates data for MSFD, MSPD, and WFD reporting, covering seabed habitats, protected areas, fisheries, aquaculture, infrastructure, and shipping. Seabed mapping from INFOMAR data system was also a critical input. The plan commits to ecosystem-based management (Chapter 5) and to using MSFD monitoring systems for implementation and review. Information-sharing is supported by *marineplan.ie* and *data.gov.ie*, ensuring transparency, metadata standards, and public re-use of data. The MSP implementation process also improved data quality, for example by harmonising port jurisdiction boundaries -

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	previously fragmented across authorities. **New provisions:** Under the SC-DMAP, the Marine Institute will develop a dedicated monitoring and research programme to track ecosystem changes from offshore renewable energy. This will investigate impacts on benthic and pelagic habitats, fish species, and stocks, collecting robust data before, during, and after ORE deployment. Results will support the ecosystem-based approach, national reporting obligations (biodiversity, climate, conservation), and adaptive management of ORE, with monitoring priorities set in consultation with stakeholders.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	The NMPF embeds a clear framework for transboundary cooperation under the MSP Directive and the Planning and Development Act 2018. Proposals with cross-border impacts must demonstrate consultation with neighbouring authorities (*Transboundary Policy 1*). A standing transboundary coordination group was convened in 2018, bringing together six administrations (Ireland, Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, Isle of Man) and continues post-Brexit. Ireland also participates in the MSP Expert Group, North Sea Energy Cooperation, Greater North Sea Basin Initiative, North Sea MSP Collaboration Group, Atlantic Strategy and maintains regular bilateral ties with Northern Ireland. During the SEA, informal consultations were held with multiple states (UK, Isle of Man, Spain, Portugal, France). Feedback - particularly from UK conservation bodies - shaped adjustments to policies, strengthened language in *Transboundary Policy 1*, and improved baseline data (e.g. recognition of transboundary effects, 50 km buffer zones). Ireland supports cooperation through OSPAR and EU-funded projects (SIMAtlantic, SIMCelt, Interreg), and engages in wider platforms such as the Atlantic Arc Commission and the British-Irish Council, addressing marine policy, energy, and environmental governance.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	The NMPF promotes cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries, particularly the UK. Operational mechanisms include participation in the UK–Ireland VSCG network on recreational safety. The GNSBI and NSEC frameworks also provide a mechanism for cooperation with non-EU countries. Under the SC-DMAP, informal transboundary consultation was undertaken with the Northern Ireland SEA authority at scoping stage. Public consultation processes also incorporated feedback from UK stakeholders, documented in the SEA statement and consultation reports.

Country Fiche for Italy

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

On 25 September 2024, by Ministerial Decree No 237, the Maritime Spatial Management Plans were approved pursuant to Article 5(5) of Legislative Decree No 201 of 17 October 2016.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Italy adopted its Maritime Spatial Plans (for the Adriatic, the Ionian and Central Mediterranean, and the Tyrrhenian) in September 2024.

Review process

None identified

Table 23 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
ITALY	September 2024, three plans	/	Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport	Ongoing, subject to periodic review at least once every 10 years	Binding	Aquaculture/ Mariculture ✓ Fisheries ✓ Renewable energy[61] ✓ Oil and gas ✓ Shipping/ maritime transport [62] ✓ Ports[63] Military training areas[64] ✓
	Documents reviewed (all available at: https://sid.mit.gov.it/documenti-piano): Plan: Italian Maritime Spatial Plans: • Maritime Spatial Plan of the Adriatic Area and Plan's Synthesis • Maritime Spatial Plan of the Ionian and Central Mediterranean Area and Plan's Synthesis • Maritime Spatial Plan of the Tyrrhenian Area and Plan's Synthesis Additional documents: Adriatic area: • Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and related documents • Transboundary consultation • Reception of the observations and recommendations Ionian and Central Mediterranean area:					

61 In Italy' s Plans Submarine cable and pipelines are a "potential sub-use" of the strategic objective "Energy", as renewable energy.

62 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

63 See footnote above.

64 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
	• Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and related documents • Transboundary consultations • Reception of the observations and recommendations Tyrrhenian area: • Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and related documents • Transboundary consultations • Reception of the observations and recommendations Maritime Spatial planning documents Access to the Geographical Information Portal					Nature protection[65]	✓
						Raw material extraction	✓
						Scientific research	✓
						Submarine cable and pipelines[66]	b
						Tourism/ recreation	✓
						Cultural heritage[67]	c
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: Ministerial Decree No. 237 of 25/09/2024 approving the Maritime Space Management Plans. Link.						
	Review process: not identified.						

65 In Italy' s Plans the strategic objectives are based on three cross cutting principles (sustainable development, protection of species, habitats and ecosystems, landscape and cultural heritage).

66 In Italy' s Plans Submarine cable and pipelines are a "potential sub-use" of the strategic objective "Energy", as renewable energy.

67 In Italy' s Plans the strategic objectives are based on three cross cutting principles (sustainable development, protection of species, habitats and ecosystems, landscape and cultural heritage).

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study the review covered in detail the three main Italian Maritime Spatial Plans (PGSM): Maritime Spatial Plan of the Adriatic Area, Maritime Spatial Plan of the Ionian and Central Mediterranean Area and, Maritime Spatial Plan of the Tyrrhenian Area. For an easier understanding, the Synthesis documents for each of the three areas have been consulted as well (MPS Maritime Area Adriatic - synthesis; MPS Maritime Area Ionian-central Mediterranean - synthesis; MPS Maritime Area Tyrrhenian- west Mediterranean - synthesis). All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the Italian documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 24 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Italy

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	All Italian MSPs contain a dedicated EBA chapter (e.g. Adriatic Plan, Ch. 2.7). The plans confirm EBA as a cross-cutting principle applied to all MSP phases, from initial ecosystem assessment to monitoring and adaptation. The approach is based on the CBD definition, with the MSP Directive as legal basis, MSFD as the environmental baseline, and Birds and Habitats Directives as ecological priorities. It also reflects the 11 EBA principles developed in SUPREME and SIMWESTMED (precaution, cumulative impact, adaptive management, connectivity, etc.). EBA implementation combines ecosystem and socio-economic data, cumulative impact assessment tools, and integration of the MSFD Programmes of Measures. Stakeholder involvement is continuous, supported by the SEA process and the national MSP portal **SID – Il Portale del Mare**. While the methodology is robust, practical implementation is still limited. According to MSP authorities, only one thematic working table ("Offshore wind in MSP") is active, with others pending, leaving many EBA measures at an early or preparatory stage.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	Italian MSPs devote dedicated chapters (6.2.6) to LSI, applying a consistent methodology across basins. They combine mapping of hotspots (erosion areas, Natura 2000 sites, ports), sectoral value chain analysis, and ICZM principles as set out in national guidelines (DPCM 1 Dec 2017). Each basin plan tailors priorities: the Adriatic focuses on erosion, tourism and port–city integration; the Ionian on coastal defence, sediment management and industrial reconversion; the Tyrrhenian on coastal protection, climate adaptation, and waterfront redevelopment. Plans highlight interdependencies between marine uses and land-based infrastructure, notably port systems, intermodal transport, and energy networks. Environmental risk management (erosion, flooding, morphology restoration) is closely linked to terrestrial planning and climate adaptation strategies. Governance is anchored in Legislative Decree 201/2016, which mandates LSI in MSP, supported by national guidelines. Coordination occurs through an inter-ministerial committee, technical bodies, and involvement of coastal regions and municipalities, which manage terrestrial planning, coastal strategies, and infrastructure affecting maritime uses. Regional and local authorities thus play a crucial role in integrating LSI into practice.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	Italian MSPs place sustainable development at the core of their Strategic Objectives. Table 2 of the synthesis documents (e.g. Adriatic) frames objectives around environmental protection, economic growth, and social

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	responsibility. The plans link MSP to the EU Sustainable Blue Economy Strategy, the European Green Deal, and national sustainability frameworks. Key priorities include pollution prevention, biodiversity restoration, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, clean and secure energy, circular economy approaches, and sustainable tourism. The MSP also promotes renewable and low-emission energy, sustainable mobility, and port–land integration. Sectoral objectives further operationalise the principle: safe and clean maritime transport, small-scale fisheries protection, aquaculture AZAs (priority zones), renewable energy and CO_2 storage, climate-adapted coastal defence, sustainable tourism diversification, and research to support MSP implementation.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	Italian MSPs organise sea space through Planning Units (UPs), each assigned a use typology: Generic (G), Priority (P), Limited (L), or Reserved (R). This flexible zoning allows multiple uses per UP, with compatibility determined by environmental conditions, existing uses, governance frameworks, and conservation needs. Regional authorities propose coastal UPs, while offshore UPs are defined by the national technical committee. Sectoral priorities are reflected in UPs: aquaculture (AZAs within 3 nm), energy near existing platforms, tourism in coastal zones, and protection in Natura 2000 areas. One explicit restriction prohibits towed-gear fishing within 3 nm. Rather than prescribing fixed uses, the MSP provides strategic guidance, leaving detailed regulation to sectoral plans (e.g. fisheries, coastal defence, aquaculture). The plans also account for temporal dimensions. Defence areas, for instance, include zones of temporary restricted use activated by ordinance. Strategic objectives and visions (Ch. 6) emphasise a forward-looking approach, guiding future activity trends without introducing new uses, but by anticipating their evolution and interactions.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	Italian MSPs manage interactions through a multisectoral, evidence-based approach rather than prescriptive zoning. The MSP sets out a compatibility matrix informed by the MUC Tool (a tool developed through the ADRIPLAN and SUPREME projects, using spatial data, expert analysis, and stakeholder input). Uses are grouped into six macro-categories and assessed for compatibility, conflict, or synergy. Analyses show recurring conflicts: shipping with trawling fisheries (ports, routes), trawling with MPAs, aquaculture with tourism or shipping near coasts, and oil & gas with fisheries and conservation areas. Synergies include tourism with small-scale fisheries (pescaturismo), tourism with aquaculture in traditional contexts, and environmental protection with ecotourism or sustainable aquaculture. Military activities create temporary but significant restrictions in all basins. Despite a robust analytical framework, the multi-use concept remains theoretical. Authorities confirm that co-location (e.g. offshore wind with fishing) is under discussion in thematic stakeholder hearings, but no operational multi-use projects exist yet. Future conflict resolution is expected to rely on technical working groups set up under the 2024 ministerial decree for MSP implementation.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	All three plans underwent SEA, assessing biodiversity, Natura 2000, climate risks, water quality, and cultural heritage. Pressures from fishing, ports, shipping, and tourism were identified and linked to MSFD descriptors (D1, D4, D5, D6, D8, D10). While cumulative impacts are acknowledged, this analysis remains qualitative; a dedicated technical table for quantitative tools was created under Ministerial Decree 237/2024 but is not yet active. Natura 2000 impacts were evaluated through appropriate assessments. In terms of economic aspects, the MSPs promote sustainable growth and

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	highlight the importance of the economic sectors (ports, aquaculture (AZAs), renewables, tourism, and biotechnology) without reporting economic metrics for them (e.g. GVA, jobs). They link environmental protection to ecosystem service benefits, though the MSPs don't provide systematic valuation or monetary assessment. Technical working groups for macro-area economic analysis are foreseen but not yet operational. Social aspects appear in strategies for sustainable tourism, cultural heritage, coastal resilience, and conflict mitigation. MSPs emphasise adaptive management and ICZM to support communities and balance resource use. The MSPs do not provide a systematic distributional analysis of social impacts. Maritime safety is explicitly addressed, aligning with MARPOL, UNCLOS, and the EU Maritime Safety Strategy. Measures include secure navigation routes, SAR, port modernisation, coastal defence, and management of military zones. Safety is institutionally supported through the involvement of the Harbour Master Corps and Ministry of Defence in MSP governance.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	Italian MSPs are strongly embedded in EU and national policy frameworks. At EU level, they align with the Green Deal, MSFD, Nature Restoration Law, Habitats and Birds Directives, WFD, CFP, Floods Directive, and the EU Maritime Safety Strategy. Strategic objectives explicitly support the Sustainable Blue Economy Strategy and Renewable Energy Directive, with coordination ensured through overlapping membership of technical committees and a dedicated offshore wind forum. At national level, the plans reference the Strategia Nazionale per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile, PNIEC (energy/climate), PSNPL (ports/logistics), national aquaculture strategy, LNG strategy, and flood risk plans. ICZM is integrated through regional coastal strategies, complementing MSP objectives on erosion control, infrastructure, and tourism. Governance mechanisms ensure coherence through the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Table (chaired by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers) and a Technical Committee involving central administrations and coastal regions. While potential conflicts are not explicitly addressed in the plans, MSP authorities note that parallel processes (e.g. MSFD, RED III) are coordinated in practice via technical exchanges and joint forums.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Stakeholder consultation was a core element of the Italian MSP process, mandated by national guidelines (Decree 1 December 2017) and carried out in parallel with plan drafting and the SEA. Engagement drew on earlier projects (PlanCoast, Shape, ADRIPLAN) that built participatory capacity through workshops and conferences. During the drafting phase, public and cross-border consultations were held, with official invitations to neighbouring countries (France, Spain, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, Malta, Tunisia). Sectoral stakeholders, research bodies, NGOs, and regional authorities were included. Structured hearings - such as the dedicated forum on offshore wind - enabled targeted input on key issues. The SEA procedure provided an additional platform for consultation, including public submissions and transboundary notifications. Feedback from these processes was explicitly integrated, leading to revisions of objectives, planning units, and environmental measures. At regional level, Emilia Romagna piloted a structured participatory process involving local institutions, technical experts, and civil society. Authorities confirmed that the results of all consultations, along with SEA opinions, directly shaped the final MSPs.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	Italian MSPs are supported by a structured Monitoring Program (PdM), which integrates data from multiple sectoral monitoring systems. The PdM sets standards for collection, quality control, and evaluation of data congruence and completeness, ensuring reliability. Data is organised by theme, sector, and indicator type, with systematic reporting to support

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	cross-sectoral analysis. The plans adopt an adaptive approach: the PdM is designed for continuous updates so that new datasets can be incorporated as they become available. This guarantees that evolving scientific and technical knowledge informs plan revision and monitoring. Spatial data is central, with cartographic layers and interoperable services embedded in the plans. Transparency and accessibility are supported by **SID – Il Portale del Mare**, a national digital platform managed by MIT. It enables free public access to spatial datasets, interactive maps, and planning documents, while providing OGC-compliant services (WMS/WFS) and interoperability with supranational systems. SID also functions as an integrated information hub for MSP, combining administrative, fiscal, and planning data across national and regional authorities.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	Italian MSPs place strong emphasis on transnational cooperation and alignment with EU regional strategies such as EUSAIR and WestMed. Formal transboundary consultations took place in 2022 on the Italian Maritime Spatial Plans and their Strategic Environmental Assessment. These consultations were coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (for MSP Plans) and Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (for SEA), and involved both EU and non-EU neighbours: Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, Malta, France, and Spain among others. Comments from neighbouring states (e.g. Slovenia on border mapping, Albania on cooperation in sub-areas, Croatia on biodiversity protection) were integrated into plan revisions. Cooperation is supported through Italy's leadership in EU-funded projects (i.e. SUPREME, SIMWESTMED, ADRIPLAN, SHAPE, PORTODIMARE), which developed shared methodologies, addressed fisheries and energy conflicts, and created common platforms like the Geoportal for data exchange. Broader regional forums, including the Adriatic–Ionian Euroregion and the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, further enhance cross-border dialogue. Thematic cooperation priorities include environmental protection, navigation routes, fisheries management, port accessibility, risk mitigation, and offshore energy integration. No formal joint measures as a result of cross-border cooperation are defined in the MSPs.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	Italy's MSPs systematically involve non-EU neighbours through both formal consultation and regional frameworks. In 2022, the transboundary consultations on the Italian Maritime Spatial Plans were held, coordinated by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (Competent Authority on MSP) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In parallel, the Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MASE) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated SEA transboundary consultations with Albania, Montenegro, and Greece (Adriatic); Greece, Malta, and Tunisia (Ionian–Central Mediterranean); and France, Spain, Algeria, and Tunisia (Tyrrhenian–Western Mediterranean). Feedback was acknowledged and, in some cases, integrated into the plans, e.g. Albania's call for cooperation in shared sub-areas and Slovenia's requests for clearer mapping of protected areas and power lines. Beyond these consultations, Italy engages non-EU partners through established frameworks: the WestMED Initiative with North African countries, the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion (AIE), the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, and the EUSAIR Strategy, which includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia. These mechanisms cover themes such as blue growth, environmental quality, sustainable tourism, and regional connectivity.

Country Fiche for Lithuania

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

On 29 September 2021, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania adopted Resolution No 789 Approving the Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania, in Vilnius.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Lithuania adopted its first Maritime Spatial Plan in June 2015.

Review process

Lithuania has no MSP review underway. As explained by the authorities during the interview, the plan (Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania), adopted in 2021, must be reviewed at least every ten years, with the next full review expected in 2030. The Concept to be reviewed in 2050.

Table 25 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

<table>
<tr><th>Member State</th><th>Adoption date</th><th>Previous plans</th><th>Authority responsible</th><th>Duration of the plan</th><th>Legal status of MSP</th><th>Overview of activities reported in the plan</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">LITHUANIA</td><td>September 2021</td><td>First MSP adopted: June 2015</td><td>Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Lithuania: Architecture and Construction former Policy Group (Architecture and Territorial Planning Policy Group)</td><td>10 years, until 2030</td><td>Binding</td><td rowspan="3"><table>
<tr><td>Aquaculture/ Mariculture</td><td>✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Renewable energy</td><td>✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Oil and gas</td><td>-</td></tr>
<tr><td>Shipping/ maritime transport [68]</td><td>✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ports[69]</td><td>✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Military training areas[70]</td><td>✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Nature protection</td><td>c</td></tr>
<tr><td>Raw material extraction</td><td>✓</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Documents reviewed:
Plan:
• General Plan for the territory of the Republic of Lithuania
Additional documents:
• Strategic Environmental Assessment
Engineering Infrastructure for Offshore Energy[71]:
• Development Plan Concept Explanatory Memorandum
• Annex 1. Concept Alternatives Drawing. Marine Part
• Annex 2. Concept Alternatives Drawing. Continental Part
• SEA report with annexes</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Updated legislative provisions since 2021: Resolution No. 789, dated 29 September 2021, adopting the Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania. Link.</td></tr>
</table>

68 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

69 See footnote above.

70 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

71 https://ardynas.lt/viesa_informacija/koncepcija-spav/.

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
	Review process: Foreseen to take place in 2030. However, a thematic plan for the installation and operation of offshore wind farms in Lithuania's Marine Territory, and the associated Strategic Environmental Assessment Report were developed in 2024, providing details on the placement and location of offshore wind farms and their connections to the land.					Scientific research	✓
						Submarine cable and pipelines	-
						Tourism/ recreation	✓
						Cultural heritage	✓

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study the review covered in detail the Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania, 2021, alongside the Development Plan Concept Explanatory Memorandum. Annex 1 on the Concept Alternatives Drawing. Marine Part and Annex 2 on the Concept Alternatives Drawing. Continental Part were included as well. Additionally, Strategic Environmental Assessment and relative annexes, and the Specific Map on the responsible use of the sea and coastline were part of the review process. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 26 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Lithuania

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	Lithuania's MSP applies the ecosystem-based approach and precautionary principle across all planning stages, defining EBA as knowledge-based management to sustain ecosystem integrity and services. It is operationalised through ecological monitoring, sensitive-area zoning, and ecological corridors, supported by the MSFD, CFP, EU Biodiversity Strategy, and HELCOM. The SEA includes full ecosystem assessments and cumulative impact tools. Governance relies on vertical and horizontal partnerships, legal safeguards, and stakeholder input. The MSP explicitly links EBA to achieving GES, and follow-up tools remain under development.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	The MSP embeds LSI within the General Plan, defining a sensitive coastal strip up to the 20 m isobath. Coordination is promoted through partnership models between ministries, municipalities, and business actors, such as the Western Lithuania Partnership Group. While ICZM is not explicitly named, measures like beach nourishment from dredged sand contribute to defence and restoration. According to authorities, planning helped resolve conflicts (e.g. for energy connections), and monitoring tools for LSI are under development (Blue Economy monitoring by Klaipėda Region).
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	Sustainable development is central to Lithuania's Comprehensive Plan of the Territory, explicitly applied to the sea. Offshore wind, ports, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, and mineral extraction are all framed with environmental and social safeguards. New activities (renewables, aquaculture, fish processing) are distinguished from existing ones, with 2030 priorities extending to multifunctional uses and defence. The MSP embeds sustainability across objectives, aligning with EU climate, energy, and biodiversity goals.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	Lithuania's MSP structures maritime space through functional-priority zones, with the "principle of priority" applied in overlapping uses. Defence, ports, transport, renewables, fisheries, and research are prioritised, while restrictions apply to sensitive areas (e.g. aquaculture in protected zones, seabed disturbance near heritage sites, oil and gas in coastal waters). A 30-year concept with 10-year detailed plan reserves areas for ports, wind energy, multifunctional piers, and defence. Continuous coastal management and climate adaptation support long-term planning.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	Lithuania's MSP regulates interactions through functional zoning in six designated zones plus a multifunctional zone, where priority uses prevail in case of overlap. Incompatible uses (e.g. aquaculture in shipping or protected zones) are excluded, and precautionary principle is applied to hazardous areas. Multi-use remains allowed unless the banned priority function is no longer compatible with other activities. Examples include combined use of coastal areas for fishing, aquaculture, and habitat protection, and offshore elevations

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	for renewables and fishing. However, the plan lacks a detailed conflict-synergy methodology; in practice, the main tensions arise around fisheries and conservation, while energy and defence priorities face fewer conflicts.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	Lithuania's MSP and SEA address environmental, economic, social, and safety aspects in an integrated and qualitative way. The SEA provides a broad baseline across 14 components, focusing on maintaining GES, pollution control, and biodiversity. The scope does not extend to scenario modelling or valuation of ecosystem services. Economic provisions are long-term, with strategic projects (offshore wind, port expansion, grid synchronisation, coastal protection) supporting a competitive blue economy. Social aspects emphasise cultural heritage, small-scale fisheries, and tourism development with community participation. Distributional impacts or future vulnerabilities are not explicitly addressed. Safety is incorporated through shipping priorities, risk assessments, precautionary measures, and climate-adaptation works, with further specification in project level plans.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	Lithuania's MSP explicitly references key EU instruments, including the MSFD, Birds and Habitats Directives, WFD, CFP, TEN-T, the European Green Deal, and the EU Biodiversity Strategy, linking them to environmental protection, sustainable fisheries, climate neutrality, and transport integration. At national level, it aligns with the Climate Change Management Strategy, Sea Coast Management Programme, and Baltic Sea and Curonian Lagoon Strategy, supporting coastal defence and ecosystem preservation. Functional priorities provide a practical tool for mediating conflicts, and procedural mechanisms to streamline policy cycles or reduce administrative burdens are not detailed. Interviews confirmed that while EU directives are integrated, coordination across national sectors remains challenging.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Stakeholder consultation in Lithuania's MSP followed legal SEA requirements, involving ministries, public bodies, and the public through the Plan Coordination Commission and working groups. Sensitive issues, notably fisheries versus environmental protection, were addressed by aligning with the EU directives. Authorities confirmed consultations took place over two years via forums, meetings, and electronic submissions, with input integrated into the SEA and final plan (e.g., selection of Alternative II). Stakeholders' involvement and participation encompassed a comprehensive scope and included underrepresented groups or innovative engagement practices.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	Lithuania's MSP relies on established national systems, notably "Teritorijų planavimo ir statybos vartai" for storing functional-priority spatial data, and the Comprehensive Territorial Plan of the Republic of Lithuania 2030 platform, which provides analysis of data and indicators. Data sources include marine monitoring datasets, ship movement records, and the Cultural Property Register, with inter-ministerial committees supporting data exchange during the SEA. The INSPIRE Directive is cited but not operationalised, and the evidence on innovative participatory data tools is not detailed.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	Lithuania's MSP refers to regional instruments like the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and acknowledges participation in the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group. Concrete mechanisms of cooperation are not detailed in the MSP. References to cross-border projects (e.g., energy interconnections, regional offshore wind proposals) remain general. According to authorities, outcomes and partner roles are instead detailed in the lower-level documents. Evidence of structured consultation is limited to sectoral cases such as offshore wind with Latvia under the Espoo Convention. Interviews confirmed informal exchanges and data sharing with neighbours. The plan itself does not outline systematic cooperation processes or transboundary impact assessments.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	Lithuania's MSP, as a state-level strategic spatial plan, contains no explicit provisions for cooperation with third countries beyond general references to HELCOM frameworks.

Counrtry Fiche for Latvia

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

The Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development[72], Spatial Planning Department adopted the Maritime Spatial Plan for the Marine Inland Waters, Territorial Sra and Exclusive Economic Zone Waters of the Republic of Latvia in May 2019.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Latvia adopted its first MSP in 2019.

Review process

Latvia adopted its first MSP in 2019 and completed an interim evaluation for 2019–2023 in October 2024. This legally mandated review identified the need to designate zones for innovation and multi-use, add new marine protected areas based on project LIFE REEF results, and address growing demand for offshore wind. The interim evaluation will lead to amendments, covering zoning, text and maps, requiring Cabinet of Ministers approval. A full revision is expected by 2030 under the ten-year cycle, with the Terms of Reference for amendments due by October 2025 and the process expected to last two years, including an SEA.

[72] As of July 1st 2024. Formerly: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development.

Table 27 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
LATVIA	May 2019	/	Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development, Spatial Planning Department (MoEPRD)	12 years, until 2030	Binding	Aquaculture/ Mariculture ✓ Fisheries ✓ Renewable energy ✓ Oil and gas ✓ Shipping/ maritime transport [73] ✓ Ports[74] ✓ Military training areas[75] ✓ Nature protection ✓
	Documents reviewed: Plan: • The Maritime Spatial Plan for the Marine Inland Waters, Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone Waters of the Republic of Latvia Additional documents: • Summary of Environmental report • Interim assessment of the maritime planning for the internal waters, territorial sea and exclusive economic zone of the Republic of Latvia until 2030 for 2019-2023					
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: none identified.					

73 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

74 See footnote above.

75 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
	Review process: The interim evaluation report of the maritime spatial plan was adopted in October 2024, reviewing progress made in the implementation of the plan during 2019-2023. The amendements to the MSP will start in Autumn, 2025.					Raw material extraction	b
						Scientific research	✓
						Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
						Tourism/ recreation	✓
						Cultural heritage	✓

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study the review covered in detail The Maritime Spatial Plan for the Marine Inland Waters, Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone Waters of the Republic of Latvia, including Annex 2 (Criteria for defining priority uses of the marine spaces) and Annex 3 (Interests of the neighbouring states in the marine space). The Interim assessment of the maritime planning for the internal waters, territorial sea and exclusive economic zone of the Republic of Latvia until 2030 for 2019-2023 was included in the review process as well. Additionally, the study covered the final version of the Environmental Report and the Summary of such report. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 28 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Latvia

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	Latvia's MSP embeds the EBA, defining it as a science-based framework to balance human uses with ecosystem integrity. It applies cumulative-impact mapping, GES indicators, and ecosystem-service assessments, all supported by strong environmental data. EBA is integrated across all stages of planning and supported by wide stakeholder engagement, including a national working group. The approach is anchored in EU and HELCOM-VASAB frameworks and directly linked to achieving Good Environmental Status in the Baltic Sea.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	Latvia's MSP recognises LSIs as a strategic objective, supported by legal frameworks and the involvement of local governments, which manage waters within 2 km of the coast. Coordination is led by MoSARD through a national working group, integrating sectoral inputs and GIS data. ICZM principles are applied in practice, for example in sediment management, coastal tourism, and landscape impact assessments for offshore wind. Different institutional responsibilities for state-led sea planning and municipal land-use planning limit full integration. Recent proposals, such as improving port planning for circular economy goals, indicate steps toward strengthening LSI governance.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	Latvia's MSP embeds sustainable development as a core objective, linking it to coexistence of uses and the ecosystem-based approach. Sectoral measures include support for offshore renewables, cleaner shipping, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, eco-tourism, and responsible raw material extraction. Strategic objectives balance rational use of marine space, ecosystem resilience, and integrated land–sea development. National and EU frameworks (Blue Growth, Latvia 2030) are explicitly referenced, and sectoral priorities such as energy, transport, defence, and tourism are clearly aligned with sustainability goals.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	Latvia's MSP allocates sea space through zoning (shipping, military, wind energy, cable corridors, general use) and embeds layered principles distinguishing priority, existing, and general uses. Restrictions apply in sensitive zones (e.g. MPAs, spawning grounds, military areas), while aquaculture, dredging, and raw material extraction are tightly conditioned. Long-term planning reserves areas for offshore wind, cable corridors, port expansion, and shipping growth up to 2050, with provisions for future uses such as aquaculture and research. GIS-compatible mapping, annual reviews, and cross-border considerations ensure both spatial clarity and adaptability over time.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	Latvia's MSP manages interactions through a compatibility matrix (Annex 2) that classifies uses as compatible, conditionally compatible, or incompatible, supported by exclusion and coordination criteria. Priority is given to legally defined, immovable, or essential uses (e.g. defence, biodiversity), while synergies are promoted, such as shared infrastructure between wind farms and

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	cables. Although multi-use zones are not designated, coexistence is embedded in planning logic. Future provisions recommend introducing a Multifunctional Use Concept and clearer precedence rules to address conflicts, particularly around offshore wind and biodiversity.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	Latvia's MSP and SEA provide a broad environmental assessment covering biodiversity, eutrophication, pollution, seafloor integrity, noise, and ecosystem services, and some topics (e.g. microplastics, non-indigenous species, cumulative impacts) remain underdeveloped. Climate change is acknowledged with adaptation deferred to other programmes. Economic aspects are qualitatively assessed, with ecosystem services mapped but limited by data gaps. Social aspects are indirectly addressed through cultural heritage, tourism, traditional fisheries, and landscape values, and equity and distributional impacts are less explored. Safety is strongly embedded via shipping corridors, military zones, UXO restrictions, and pollution response plans, backed by defence and maritime authorities. Cumulative impact assessment, updated data layers, and more systematic integration of social and economic analyses are needed, consistent with findings in the Interim Assessment Report.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	Latvia's MSP shows strong alignment with EU frameworks, referencing the MSFD, Birds and Habitats Directives, EU Biodiversity Strategy, Blue Growth, and Baltic Sea Strategy, as well as energy and climate goals (NECP, Clean Energy Package). Nationally, it is anchored in the Marine Environment Protection and Management Law, the Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, and defence and security concepts. Governance is supported by Cabinet Regulation No. 740 and the Joint Maritime and Coastal Spatial Planning Coordination Group[76], which ensures cross-sectoral dialogue. Policy conflicts are not explicitly detailed, and strict biodiversity protection and offshore wind siting present competing demands. On the other hand, positive synergies emerge with climate and energy policy. The Interim Report highlights the potential of the EU Green Deal and stronger coordination with the Coastal Plan as priorities for future revisions.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Latvia's MSP process involves broad stakeholder participation through the Maritime and Coastal Spatial Planning Coordination Group (≈50 members across governance levels), considered a good practice. Extensive consultations were held during the SEA and MSP, with ministries, municipalities, NGOs, and sectors represented. It remains unclear how stakeholder feedback was systematically integrated into the final plan, and authorities acknowledged that future revisions should strengthen this aspect.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	Latvia's MSP is grounded in best available data from national institutes (LIAE, LEGMC, NCA), HELCOM assessments, and AIS/marine surveillance systems, with updates integrated annually through the national geoportal www.geolatvija.lv. Data exchange is coordinated via the Maritime and Coastal Spatial Planning Working Group, while public access is ensured through dedicated portals. The SEA identified gaps and called for a maritime data system, and the Interim Report recommends integrating results from EU-funded projects (e.g. LIFE REEF, SELINA, Baltic Sea2Land) and revising biodiversity and wind farm zones accordingly. This data framework is evolving, with ecosystem services mapping and cumulative impact assessment not yet fully developed.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	Latvia's MSP embeds structured, multi-stage cross-border cooperation: SEA scoping and two consultation rounds with LT, EE, SE under Espoo/SEA; sector dialogues on shipping lanes and energy interconnections; and alignment with HELCOM–VASAB principles and the EUSBSR. Transboundary effects were assessed (using a −2 to +2 scoring), with overall positive outcomes, especially for MPAs. Operational work was backed by EU projects (BalticSCOPE, BalticLINes, Pan Baltic Scope) and new initiatives: the Baltic Offshore Grid

[76] As of 2022, formely called: Maritime Planning Working Group.

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	Initiative (LaSGo LV–SE, ELWIND EE–LV—EIA launched), plus Latvia's 2024–2033 TSO plan prioritising offshore links. The MSP flags outstanding coordination items (e.g., cable alignments, OWF interfaces) and foresees ongoing cooperation to 2030 on shipping, RES, grids, fisheries and defence.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	The MSP does not include specific information on the cooperation with third countries beyond the reference to HELCOM (Annex 6).

Country Fiche for Malta

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

The Planning Authority, under the Ministry of Gozo and Planning adopted the Malta Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development in July 2015.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Malta adopted its first Maritime Spatial Plan in 2015.

Review process

Malta's Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED), adopted in 2015, is legally required to be reviewed within five years. The government asked the Planning Authority to start the review. An initial internal assessment of SPED's performance and policy implementation was carried out. is still ongoing. The recently published Malta Vision 2050, which includes "Smart Land & Sea Usage" as a core pillar, alongside EU frameworks such as the Green Deal, climate and biodiversity legislation, and renewable energy targets, now provide the main drivers for revision. The Planning Authority is currently awaiting government direction on how to proceed with the SPED review; meanwhile it is continuing to implement the existing plan, prepare subsidiary plans and policies, assess development applications, and monitor ongoing effectiveness.

Table 29 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
MALTA	July 2015	/	Planning Authority (PA), under the Ministry of Gozo and Planning	2015-2020, currently under review	Guiding / non-binding	
	Documents reviewed: Plan: • The Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED) Additional documents: • Strategic Environmental Assessment • Public Consultation • Malta Vision 2050 • SPED Approved Document • SEA - The Adoption Statement • SEA - A Non-technical Summary					
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: none identified.					
	Review process: Malta's Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED) is currently under revision. An initial internal assessment of SPED's performance and policy implementation was carried out. Working also towards					

Aquaculture/ Mariculture	✓
Fisheries	✓
Renewable energy	b
Oil and gas	✓
Shipping/ maritime transport [77]	✓
Ports[78]	✓
Military training areas[79]	-
Nature protection	c
Raw material extraction	-
Scientific research	-

[77] While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

[78] See footnote above.

[79] The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
	the National Strategy for the Environment (NSE) 2050. Malta Vision 2050 has already been delivered. The Planning Authority is currently awaiting government direction on how to proceed with the SPED review; meanwhile it is continuing to implement the existing plan, prepare subsidiary plans and policies, assess development applications, and monitor ongoing effectiveness.					Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
						Tourism/ recreation	✓
						Cultural heritage	c

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study the review covered in detail the Maltese Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED) approved by Parliament in July 2015 and replacing the Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands (adopted in 1992). In parallel, Public Consultation - Summary of Submission and Responses was consulted as an overview of the main public consultations for the SPED. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 30 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Malta

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	In Malta, the EBA is embedded through the SPED and its SEA, which align with MSFD objectives and national ecosystem policies. Operationalisation occurs mainly via SEA/EIA screening, protected-area mapping, and SPED's Thematic Objective 8 on MPAs, with implementation carried out through development permitting and sectoral policies. The approach ensures integration of ecosystem concerns at the assessment and project stages rather than systematically across planning. Ongoing work to review WFD/MSFD Programmes of Measures and conservation objectives, and to screen sectoral plans for alignment, will support stronger EBA integration in the upcoming MSP revision.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	Malta addresses LSI through the SPED (2015), which provides an integrated framework linking land-based and marine uses under the Development Planning Act (2016). The Coastal Zone and Marine Area section sets objectives for managing fisheries, shipping, energy, and recreation, while safeguarding biodiversity, heritage, landscapes, and climate resilience. Building on decades of ICZM practice since the 1992 Structure Plan, MSP is harmonised within national planning, ensuring coordination across sectors and alignment with WFD, MSFD, and the Integrated Maritime Policy.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	Malta's SPED embeds sustainable development as its guiding vision, framing spatial planning as the balance between socio-economic growth and the protection of natural and cultural assets. While not explicitly defined, sustainable development is interpreted as the integration of economic, social, cultural, and environmental policies. In the coastal and marine context, this is reflected in objectives for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, renewable energy, biodiversity protection, and climate adaptation. In this regard, sustainability is applied mainly through high-level policy guidance rather than detailed operational tools, giving the framework a strategic but general orientation.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	Malta's SPED organises space into urban, rural, coastal, marine, and Gozo areas, with objectives tailored to each, but applies planning principles and thematic objectives rather than strict zoning. Priorities include sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, renewable energy, tourism, cultural heritage, and shipping, with biodiversity and ecosystem protection as overarching goals. Restrictions apply in MPAs, heritage areas, and incompatible coastal zones. The SPED anticipates growth in renewable energy, aquaculture, and tourism, and future pressures (e.g. ORE, submarine infrastructure) will require management. The framework establishes strategic direction through principles and objectives, and does not include spatial prioritisation mechanisms to address these future demands.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	Malta recognises growing competition in coastal and marine space, with conflicts most evident between ports, aquaculture, recreation, energy, and conservation. SPED highlights structural drivers such as limited coastal land, tourism pressure, and concentration of strategic infrastructure, which amplify

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	conflicts. Resolution relies mainly on development permitting and subsidiary policy rather than MSP-specific tools, and authorities note that some sectors (notably offshore energy) still favour single-use due to infrastructure risks.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	Malta's SPED was subject to SEA, which provided a broad environmental baseline, identified key issues (biodiversity, water, climate change, heritage, waste, pollution) and assessed policies against international, EU, and national obligations. It addressed climate resilience, GES objectives, and cumulative effects. It does not include a standalone cumulative-impact methodology or explicit linkage to GES, and there was no Appropriate Assessment despite Natura 2000 coverage. Economic analysis is presented in a broad socio-economic policy framing without indicators or sectoral interdependency assessments, while social aspects focus mainly on land issues such as housing, health, and demographics, with limited treatment of coastal or marine impacts. Safety aspects are absent.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	Malta's SPED shows formal alignment with EU directives and policies, particularly the MSFD, WFD, Habitats and Birds Directives, CFP, and Nitrates Directive, with coherence reinforced through SEA and national transposition measures. Governance mechanisms—such as ERA's statutory role in permitting and cross-sectoral checks—help ensure integration of biodiversity, climate adaptation, and water objectives. At the national level, SPED is consistent with sustainable development, energy, tourism, heritage, and climate strategies, embedding coastal and marine priorities within broader planning frameworks. The SPED was prepared through a structured process, including a comprehensive assessment of the issues that influenced the Plan and that can also be tackled through spatial planning. Based on national and sectoral Government policy documents, it makes proposals for the future spatial distribution of development and the protection of the environment in a manner that is consistent with national policies and integrates Government's social, economic, and environmental objectives. It is a national strategic document guiding other plans, policies, programmes, and process under the Development Planning Act. There are other existing instruments that support the implementation of the MSP plan. While environmental coherence is well embedded, explicit economic or social-policy synergies are less visible, and practical integration depends heavily on permitting and ERA oversight. Future reviews under the Development Planning Act are expected to deepen alignment with evolving government policies.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Stakeholder engagement in Malta's MSP (SPED) combined ministry-level consultations, NGO and sectoral input, and a 12-week public consultation, with SEA feedback integrated during the final eight weeks. Comments and responses were documented in a published report. Participation occurred mainly at the defining phase, and recent steps for the future revision include ministry meetings, a discussion forum on emerging issues, and two national surveys on public attitudes. Any new plan will follow the Development Planning Act's procedures for consultation.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	The SEA for SPED relied mainly on secondary sources but incorporated official monitoring databases and national statistics, using the best available data at the time. Since then, Malta has strengthened its data and research capacity through the Malta Marittima Agency, University of Malta, MCST, and MSP Technical Committee, supported by EU projects (e.g. MSP-MED, SIMWESTMED, SIMNORAT) that improved data sharing and interoperability in line with INSPIRE. The MSP Technical Committee now maintains an updated spatial data inventory to ensure future plans reflect the most current economic, environmental, and social information. The approach to data collection has evolved from reliance on secondary sources to include primary data infrastructure and interoperable systems.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	Neither SPED nor its SEA explicitly assess cross-border impacts or detail structured cooperation processes. However, the Planning Authority coordinates Projects of Common Interest under EC Regulation 347/2013 and participates in

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	regional and EU fora (e.g. MSP Expert Group, Barcelona Convention). Notably, the first Malta–Sicily pilot on MSP was carried out under SIMWESTMED, and Malta now participates in the MED MSP Community of Practice to strengthen regional dialogue. According to MSP authorities, the existing plan identifies no transboundary issues, but the forthcoming revision intends to engage neighbouring countries, at least via the SEA process
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	Malta's current MSP does not identify any transboundary issues or establish cooperation mechanisms with third countries. While Malta participates in regional fora such as the Barcelona Convention and MED MSP projects, no structured engagement with non-EU neighbours is embedded in SPED. According to MSP authorities, future revisions intend to involve neighbouring third countries at least through the SEA process, and this has not yet been operationalised.

Country Fiche for the Netherlands

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

The MSP Directive 89/2014 was initially transposed into the Dutch Water Act, more specifically through the underlying Water Decree. This legal framework has since been consolidated under the **Environment and Planning Act (Omgevingswet)**, which entered into force on **1 January 2024:** Environment and Planning Act | Government.nl

The Dutch North Sea Programme 2022-2027, integrated into the National Water Programme 2022 – 2027 was officially adopted on 18 March 2022. Its adoption was formalised through a notification issued jointly by the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management, the Minister for Nature and Nitrogen Policy, and the Minister for Housing and Spatial Planning. This notification serves as the legal act enacting the programme.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

The Netherlands has adopted its first Maritime Spatial Plan in 2009 and the second Netherlands MSP in December 2015. Every 6 years a full revision as part of the Netherlands Water Programme takes place. Policy - Noordzeeloket UK The *North Sea Programme 2022-2027* replaced the Policy Document on the North Sea 2016-2021.

Review process

The Netherlands is currently revising its maritime spatial plan to, among other objectives, identify and allocate additional offshore wind energy areas for development after 2031. This revision aims to support the national offshore renewable (wind) energy ambition of 50 GW by 2040, and to make spatial decisions on the sand strategy for coastal protection. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management carried out until February 2024 the transboundary consultation on the scope and level of detail of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the partial revision of the North Sea Programme 2022-2027 and in accordance with the Convention on environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context (Espoo-Convention). The partial revision of the North Sea Programme 2022-2027 is ongoing and is expected to be finalised in September 2025. As of April 22, 2025, the Netherlands has submitted the draft partial revision of the North Sea Programme 2022–2027 to the House of Representatives (Dutch parliament). The public consultation procedure of the Partial Revision of the North Sea Programme 2022-2027 and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has started on May 19, 2025.

Table 31 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
NETHERLANDS	Current one: March 2022	First plan adopted: 2009[80] Second plan adopted: December 2015[81]	Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management	6 years, until 2027	Binding	Aquaculture/ Mariculture ✓ Fisheries ✓ Renewable energy ✓ Oil and gas ✓ Shipping/ maritime transport [82] ✓ Ports[83] ✓ Military training areas[84] ✓ Nature protection ✓ Raw material extraction ✓ Scientific research -
	Documents reviewed: Plan: • The North Sea Programme 2022-2027 Additional documents: • National Water Programme 2022-2027 • Strategic Environmental Assessment: National Water Programme 2022-2027 (pdf, 4.3 MB) • Response note to views and advice National Water Programme 2022-2027 (pdf, 5.7 MB) Updates (Supplementary design): • Supplementary Strategic Environmental Assessment for the supplementary design of the North Sea Programme 2022-2027 (pdf, 4.9 MB)					

80 The North Sea Policy Document covering the period 2009-2015.

81 The second spatial plan, the North Sea Policy Document covering the period 2016-2021, is an update from the 2009-2015 document.

82 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

83 See footnote above.

84 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
	• Response note to views and advice Supplementary Draft North Sea Programme 2022-2027 (pdf, 2.4 MB) • Additional Appropriate Assessment for the supplementary design North Sea Programme 2022-2027 (pdf, 1.3 MB) • Notification Supplementary Draft North Sea Programme 2022-2027.pdf • Erratum page 5 search area map PlanMER.pdf • Draft partial revision of the North Sea Programme 2022-2027					Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: none identified. The Noth Sea Programme 2022-2027, as integrated into the National Water Programme 2022 – 2027 was adopted officially on 18 March 2022. The adoption was formalised through a notification issued by the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management, the Minister for Nature and Nitrogen Policy, and the Minister for Housing and Spatial Planning. This notification serves as the legal act enacting the programme. Link.					Tourism/ recreation	✓
	Review process: The Netherlands is revising its maritime spatial plan to increase offshore renewable energy targets to 50 GW by 2040. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management carried out until February 2024 the transboundary consultation on the scope and level of detail of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the partial revision of the North Sea Programme 2022-2027 and in accordance with the Convention on environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context (Espoo-Convention). The partial revision of the North Sea Programme 2022-2027 is ongoing and is expected to be finalized in September 2025. As of April 22, 2025, the Netherlands has submitted the draft partial revision of the North Sea Programme 2022–2027 to the House of Representatives (Dutch parliament). The public consultation procedure of the Partial Revision of the North Sea Programme 2022-2027 and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will start on May 19, 2025.					Cultural heritage	✓

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study, the review covered in detail the final version of the North Sea Programme 2022-2027, as integrated into the National Water Programme 2022 – 2027 and adopted officially on 18 March 2022. In addition, the Draft Partial Revision of the North Sea Programme was considered in the analysis. This was published in April 2025. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 32 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Netherlands

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	The Dutch MSP (North Sea Programme 2022–2027) embeds EBA as its organising principle, requiring all uses - individually and cumulatively - to meet a "healthy ecosystem" standard, operationalised through SEA/EIA, licensing, and a self-binding permitting framework. The North Sea Agreement anchors a "nature transition," ensuring new sea uses are only justified if nature is protected or restored. This is supported by precautionary and cumulative-impact assessments, Natura 2000 safeguards, and a Safety Assessment tool. The MONS programme provides ongoing monitoring and research on ecosystem capacity. EBA is applied across all MSP stages - vision-setting, assessment, implementation, and follow-up - while stakeholder dialogue through the North Sea Consultation ensures that the transitions in energy, food, and nature are managed coherently
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	The Dutch MSP (North Sea Programme 2022–2027) includes a dedicated section on LSIs, analysing interlinkages between offshore and onshore activities in energy, ports, CCS, fisheries, and biodiversity. Coordination is ensured through structured consultation with provinces and municipalities (competent within 1 km of the coast), supported by national programmes for offshore wind and port development. Ports serve as key connectors between marine and inland economies, while ecological and biodiversity objectives are co-managed across governance levels. Updates extend the sand extraction zone (12–14 NM) and parallel plans (VAWOZ/PAWOZ) align cable, pipeline, and hydrogen landfall with MSP priorities.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	The Dutch MSP embeds sustainable development across energy, food, and transport transitions. Offshore wind is the main driver. Currently, 49 TWh annually is reserved, with planned expansion to 42 GW by 2030–2040 through new zones (e.g. 6/7 and Doordewind) that balance ecological protection, shipping safety, and shared use. The MSP also promotes a transition to sustainable food systems, supporting fisheries restructuring, innovation, and aquaculture pilots (including in wind farms). Recent revisions further secure fishing space by establishing an open corridor in zone 6/7 for langoustine fisheries and guillemot protection, while exploring active fishing within wind farms. Maritime transport priorities maintain safe, efficient routes integrated with energy zones.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	The Dutch MSP uses an area-based, multifunctional approach to balance energy, food, nature, transport, and sand extraction. Clear policy and assessment frameworks guide co-use, sand extraction, and new activities, ensuring consistency in permitting. The Partial Revision extends sand extraction zones, refines frameworks for wind farms, cables, and pipelines, and reopens debate on active fishing within wind areas. New activities such as oyster bed and seagrass restoration and seaweed cultivation are noted. Transboundary or SEA frameworks for these activities are not included in the plan.

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	The Dutch MSP emphasises multifunctional use, with wind farms as the central driver of interactions across fisheries, shipping, mining, and new blue economy activities. Current frameworks promote co-use (e.g., aquaculture, passive fishing, nature restoration) while safeguarding shipping clearways and ecological integrity. The Partial Revision adds new clearways, stricter safety buffers, and conditions for joint use (e.g., open zones in 6/7, feasibility of active fishing in Doordewind). It also expands the Sustainable Blue Economy programme, supporting aquaculture and alternative energy pilots within wind farms. Tailored solutions are foreseen for aviation, mining, and infrastructure overlap, keeping ecological and safety limits as guiding principles.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	The Dutch MSP integrates environmental, economic, social, and safety considerations in a comprehensive way. The SEA (PLANMER) assessed cumulative impacts of wind energy and CO_2 storage against Natura 2000, climate adaptation, and water quality targets. Economically, the Netherlands Maritime Cluster (excluding maritime and coastal tourism) contributes ~€25 billion annually, with fisheries, ports, and innovation (e.g. hydrogen, biotechnology, Digital Twin) highlighted as key drivers of sustainable growth. Socially, impacts on fisheries and their cultural importance are recognised, with socio-economic analyses feeding into policy. Underwater cultural heritage is safeguarded under the Valetta Convention. Safety is secured through defence zones, military use compatibility, and formal shipping safety assessments, with ongoing reviews of military co-use in wind farm areas.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	The Dutch MSP closely aligns with EU frameworks including the MSFD, WFD, Habitats and Birds Directives, CFP, the European Green Deal, and the Biodiversity Strategy, embedding GES, climate neutrality, and ecosystem protection in its policies. Nationally, it is anchored in the Climate Act and NOVI, balancing energy, food, and nature transitions. The Partial Revision is coordinated with parallel infrastructural plans (VAWOZ/PAWOZ) on cable landfall and hydrogen transport to ensure consistency. The plan identifies challenges in integrating MPA and fisheries objectives under EU law and balancing offshore wind with biodiversity, as these require transboundary solutions.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	The Dutch MSP process has been highly participatory, involving local authorities, industries, NGOs, and neighbouring states under the Espoo Convention. Engagement was anchored in the North Sea Agreement, which set shared priorities (e.g., seafood as a national interest) and guided supporting research. The North Sea Consultative Body played a central role, with multiple rounds of public consultation, including on the draft plan, SEA, and Appropriate Assessment. Stakeholder input helped refine policies, particularly on ecological impacts, fisheries concerns, and wind farm zones, ensuring the plan reflects both societal and environmental priorities.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	The Dutch MSP relies on extensive monitoring and research programmes (MWTL, WOT, Wozep, MONS) and EU-level initiatives (Horizon Europe, LIFE+, EMFAF, Interreg) to address knowledge gaps, particularly under the MSFD. The DigiShape Digital Twin integrates spatial, ecological, and socio-economic data under FAIR principles, supporting scenario analyses and stakeholder use. Data sharing is coordinated nationally via the Marine Information Centre (IHM) and regionally through EMODnet. Since 2023, the GNSBI has strengthened cross-border knowledge exchange, improving consistency and coordination among Member States.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	The Dutch MSP engages in extensive regional and cross-border cooperation through mechanisms like the North Sea MSP Collaboration, NSEC, OSPAR, and trilateral Wadden Sea cooperation. Since 2023, the Greater North Sea Initiative (GNSBI) has provided a structured governance framework for nine countries, strengthening joint management. EU-funded projects such as NESB and NORSAIC, further support basin-wide and cross-basin MSP collaboration, linking ecological, socio-economic, and governance aspects. Additional cross-border coordination is being pursued to address potential aviation conflicts from German offshore wind turbine heights.

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	The Dutch MSP ensures strong collaboration with non-EU neighbours through NSEC, OSPAR, IMO processes, and the North Sea MSP Collaboration, which includes Norway and the UK. Since 2023, the Greater North Sea Initiative (GNSBI) has deepened this cooperation, bringing together EU and non-EU countries (including Norway, Sweden, and the UK) under a structured governance model. Ministers, Directors-General, and national coordinators coordinate regional priorities, ensuring MSP, fisheries, energy, and nature policies are aligned across borders. This strengthens transboundary management and supports effective implementation of shared North Sea objectives.

Country Fiche for Poland

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

On December 8, 2022, the regulation of the Council of Ministers of November 9, 2022 came into force amending the regulation on the adoption of the maritime spatial plan for the internal marine waters, the territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone on a scale of 1:200 000.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

On 21 May 2021, Poland published the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of April 14, 2021 adopting the national maritime spatial plan for internal waters, the territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone on a scale of 1:200 000.

Review process

Adopted in April 2021, the plan was already amended in December 2022 after a legal threat from a Canadian oil-and-gas concession holder whose Western Pomeranian Sea rights were omitted. The “technical” revision adjusted three basin areas to include the concession-holder’s activities, avoiding compensation claims and requiring no new SEA or public consultation.

In addition, Poland conducted an interim evaluation of its MSPs in 2024, which identified the need to update offshore wind designations, incorporate new defence zones, and align with EU frameworks such as the Green Deal and climate legislation. Updates are also required for ports, underwater cultural heritage, and Natura 2000 datasets, though no full redesign is foreseen. The main driver is offshore wind expansion. The Ministry of Infrastructure has formally decided to revise the plan, but due to budget constraints the process will not start until 2026 and is expected to take 2.5–3 years, including consultation, transboundary SEA and adoption, with technical work outsourced (as explained by the authorities during the interview). Preparatory steps include revising the regulation on MSP scope and structure by the end of 2025 to streamline procedures.

Table 33 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
POLAND	Current one: December 2022	First MSP adopted: April 2021	Ministry of Infrastructure	Ongoing, subject to periodical evaluation at least once every 10 years	Binding	Aquaculture/ Mariculture ✓ Fisheries ✓ Renewable energy ✓ Oil and gas ✓ Shipping/ maritime transport [85] ✓ Ports[86] ✓
	Documents reviewed: Plan: • Polish spatial development plan for internal sea waters, the territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone on a scale of 1: 200 000[88] Local Maritime Spatial Plans[89]: • Seaport in Darłowo • Seaport in Dziwnów • Seaport in Dźwirzyno					

85 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

86 See footnote above.

88 Poland has a national MSP that covers the entire maritime territory (including both internal waters and territorial seas), providing a general framework for spatial management, such as environmental protection, marine activities, and sustainable development. However, there are also local plans focusing on specific maritime areas like ports and lagoons (e.g. Szczecin, Gdańsk, Ustka, among others).

89 Poland developed smaller-scale spatial development plans for areas requiring more granular attention, such as lagoons and small ports. However, from these, only the Szczecin lagoon MSP was used as a reference in this study.

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
	• Seaport in Elbląg • Seaport in Kołobrzeg • Seaport in Łeba • Seaport in Mrzeżyno • Seaport in Police • Seaport in Rowy • Seaport in Świnoujście • Seaport in Szczecin • Seaport in Trzebież • Seaport in Ustka • Kamieński Lagoon • Szczecin Lagoon • Vistula Lagoon Additional documents: • Study on the conditions of spatial development of Polish maritime areas with spatial analysis, 2016 • Environmental Assessment Report, version 4.1. • Reports on the development status of Polish maritime areas					Military training areas[87]	✓
						Nature protection	✓
						Raw material extraction	✓
						Scientific research	✓
						Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
						Tourism/ recreation	✓
						Cultural heritage	✓
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: Cabinet Regulation of 14 April 2021 adopting a spatial plan for internal maritime waters, territorial sea and exclusive economic zone on a scale of 1:200 000. Link. On December 8, 2022, the regulation of the Council of Ministers of November 9, 2022 came into force amending the regulation on the adoption of the maritime spatial plan for the internal marine waters, the territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone on a scale of 1:200 000. Link.						
	Review process: Adopted in April 2021, the plan was already amended in December 2022 after a legal threat from a Canadian oil-and-gas concession holder whose Western Pomeranian Sea rights were omitted. The “technical” revision						

87 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
	adjusted three basin areas to include the concession-holder's activities, avoiding compensation claims and requiring no new SEA or public consultation. An interim evaluation of the MSPs' implementation progress and their alignment with current policy developments was conducted in 2024. This report is the formal requirement from Polish legislation on MSP and is also the basis for decision (taken by minister responsible for maritime economy) of updating the plan. The document was published on 9 May 2025[90]. The decision on updating the plan was made (early 2024)[91]. The ministry is currently looking for sources to finance the update.					

90 https://sipam.gov.pl/2025/05/09/raporty-o-stanie-zagospodarowania-polskich-obszarow-morskich/

91 According to correspondence with MS authority.

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study, the review covered in detail the Polish spatial development plan for internal sea waters, the territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone on a scale of 1: 200 000, alongside the Study on the conditions of spatial development of Polish maritime areas with spatial analysis of 2016 and the Reports on the development status of Polish maritime areas. The Environmental Assessment Report was reviewed in its version 4.1. Additionally, Poland developed smaller-scale spatial development plans for areas requiring more granular attention, such as lagoons and small ports[92]. However, from these, only the Szczecin lagoon MSP was used as a reference in this study. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the Polish documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 34 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Poland

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	Poland explicitly embeds EBA in its Maritime Areas Act (Art. 37b), requiring plans to balance development with ecosystem protection. The MSP integrates EBA across all stages: defining strategic principles to zoning, applying technical rules (e.g., functional water body cards), and evaluating impacts through the SEA, which ensures compliance with Natura 2000 and MSFD obligations. Tools such as horizon scanning, PESTLE, and mapping of sectoral synergies/conflicts were applied, supported by monitoring data, literature, and stakeholder input. Ecological information often serves as contextual guidance rather than strict restrictions, and the SEA provides the binding safeguard as no plan may be adopted if it worsens environmental status.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	Poland's MSP addresses LSI mainly through coordination with local spatial development plans and port infrastructure strategies, with examples such as the Gulf of Gdańsk pilot plan. State of Development reports (Gdynia, Szczecin) included reviews of municipal plans to align coastal and marine uses, though ICZM is not explicitly mentioned. A mutual agreement system ensures municipalities must consent to MSP content, while maritime offices approve land plans impacting the coast, creating formal integration across governance levels. Local MSPs also enable municipalities to embed port, tourism, and infrastructure priorities into the national planning framework.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	Poland's MSP is legally anchored in Article 37b of the Maritime Areas Act, which mandates that plans support sustainable development by balancing economic, social, and environmental objectives, with added attention to climate resilience and national security. While the principle is explicit, the plan does not define sustainable development in detail. Broader guidance is drawn from national strategies, including for sustainable transport and rural areas, agriculture, and fisheries, which frame social and economic priorities. Thus, sustainability is embedded at a strategic level but remains general in its operationalisation within the MSP.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	Poland's MSP allocates sea areas into basin cards with primary and secondary functions, with national defence and environmental protection as overarching priorities. Renewable energy and transport are tightly zoned, while fisheries

92 Seaport in Darłowo, Seaport in Dziwnów, Seaport in Dźwirzyno, Seaport in Elbląg, Seaport in Kołobrzeg, Seaport in Mrzeżyno, Seaport in Police, Seaport in Świnoujście, Seaport in Szczecin, Seaport in Trzebież, Seaport in Ustka, Szczecin Lagoon, Vistula Lagoon

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	remain flexible and largely outside spatial regulation. Secondary uses like tourism and recreation are allowed in designated coastal sub-areas. Temporally, the MSP is limited, but "P" basins are reserved for future uses, banning permanent infrastructure to preserve adaptability. This ensures clarity for current priorities while keeping space open for long-term needs.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	Poland's MSP designates primary and secondary functions but offers minimal guidance on how they should coexist in practice, leaving most conflict-resolution and compatibility analysis to background studies. While aquaculture is absent today, provisions encourage its future co-use with offshore wind by rewarding developers who accommodate it. Sectoral conflicts, such as between fisheries and port development, are managed case by case by maritime offices, with escalation to ministries or ultimately the Prime Minister if unresolved. This pragmatic, ad hoc approach provides flexibility but lacks a systematic framework for multi-use application.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	Poland's MSP is underpinned by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which covers biodiversity, Natura 2000, climate change, water quality, cultural heritage, and cumulative impacts, with mitigation measures integrated. Economically, it allocates space for offshore wind, ports, tourism, aquaculture, and extraction, though growth largely follows national/global drivers; indicators track GDP, energy, and port traffic. Social aspects include cultural heritage protection, zones for tourism and recreation, and support for vulnerable fisheries, with indicators to monitor community well-being. Safety is prioritised through national defence, transport, port operations, and coastal protection, supported by spatial rules, safety zones, and military training areas.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	Poland's MSP does not explicitly cite EU legal acts but was designed to align with UNCLOS, the MSFD, WFD, and national maritime policy. The State of Development Reports show consistency with EU strategies such as the Green Deal, Offshore Renewable Energy Strategy, REPowerEU, CFP, and Biodiversity Strategy 2030, highlighting alignment in fisheries, energy, and ecosystem protection. At the national level, the MSP is broadly consistent with strategies like the National Ecological Policy 2030, Energy Policy to 2040 (offshore wind), and Sustainable Transport Development Strategy. Dedicated governance mechanisms to ensure coherence are not reported, and the MSP does not provide detailed references to EU or national strategies, instead relying on background reports to demonstrate policy alignment.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	While the MSP itself does not detail participation, the SEA records extensive consultations between 2016–2019, including four national and three international rounds with authorities, agencies, municipalities, and private actors. Feedback was integrated into the MSP, with outcomes such as resolving the Denmark "grey zone" dispute and trilateral consultations with Sweden and Germany on the Middle Bank. A 2023 satisfaction survey confirmed generally positive perceptions but highlighted low response rates and risks of institutional memory loss. Consultations followed HELCOM guidelines, used English-language materials, and ensured transparency, preventing formal objections.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	Poland's MSP does not specify how data was structured, shared, or aligned with EU frameworks like INSPIRE, nor does it reference innovative tools. Nonetheless, more than 50 national institutions contributed datasets, including AIS traffic, biodiversity surveys, hydrodynamic models, sediment data, and socio-economic indicators. Information was categorised as open-access or sensitive, ensuring broad input but with limited transparency on long-term management or cross-border integration.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	Poland's MSP does not detail procedures but applied a proactive approach to cross-border coordination, engaging all Baltic states. A joint SEA was conducted with Germany for the Szczecin Lagoon, and three international consultations were held under HELCOM guidelines with materials in English. Key outcomes included resolving the "grey zone" boundary with Denmark and trilateral talks with Sweden and Germany on the Middle Bank. Cooperation was adapted to each neighbour's MSP maturity, ensuring broad alignment despite differing timelines.

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	Poland's MSP and related documents provide no information on cooperation with third countries. According to clarification from the Polish authorities, transboundary consultations were conducted only for two plans with potential cross-border impacts: (1) the Polish spatial development plan for internal sea waters, the territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone (scale 1:200,000), for which all Baltic States were invited to planners' consultations (2016–2017), while the SEA was limited to parties to the Espoo Convention (excluding Russia, which is not a party); and (2) the Szczecin Lagoon plan, for which consultations were held only with Germany (both planners' and SEA consultations).

County Fiche for Portugal

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 136/2024, of 16 October 2024, published in the Official Gazette (Diário da República) No. 201/2024, Series I of 16 October 2024, approved the Maritime Spatial Planning Situation Plan (Plano de Situação de Ordenamento do Espaço Marítimo Nacional) for the subdivision of the Azores. Link.

Law 17/2014, of April 10, which establishes the basis for national maritime spatial planning and management policy (LBOGEM), was amended by Law no. 1/2021, of January 11, 2021. This represents a direct change in the fundamental legal framework for MSP. The main objective of the change was to reinforce the joint and shared management of maritime space between the State and the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira, promoting greater regional autonomy in the management of the sea, without compromising the integrity and sovereignty of the State.

In May 2021, the National Ocean Strategy 2021-2030 was approved. Although the Directive had already been transposed and the Maritime Spatial Planning Situation Plan (PSOEM) for subdivision of the mainland, Madeira and the Extended Continental Shelf subdivisions, was approved in 2019 (Resolution of the Council of Ministries nº 203-A/2019, 30 November), this new Strategy sets the course for public ocean policy for the current decade, defining new priorities and actions that influence the competences and coordination of the DGPM in pursuing these objectives.

Decree-Law No. 26/2023, of April 10, clarified the applicability of environmental assessment to allocation plans, except when these have as their objective the implementation of a project, in which case they are subject to environmental impact assessment.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Portugal adopted its first Maritime Spatial Plan in December 2019, covering the mainland, Madeira, and the extended continental shelf. In 2024, it adopted the Maritime Spatial Plan for the Azores.

Review process

Portugal has no MSP review underway, but the PSOEM (adopted 2019) must be reviewed at least every ten years, with the next full review due by 2029. Earlier revisions can be initiated if needed, for example to integrate allocation plans like the Renewable Energy Allocation Plan (PAER). The first evaluation of implementation, covering 2020–2022, was published in 2023 under Article 87 of Decree-Law 38/2015, launching a performance evaluation cycle.

Table 35 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
PORTUGAL	December 2019 (mainland, Madeira and extended continental shelf) and October 2024 (subdivision Azores)	/	Ministry of the Sea/ Autonomous Region of the Azores, Directorate-General for Sea Affairs/ Autonomous Region of Madeira, Regional-Directorate for the Sea	/	Binding	Aquaculture/ Mariculture ✓ Fisheries ✓ Renewable energy ✓ Oil and gas ✓ Shipping/ maritime transport [93] ✓ Ports[94] ✓ Military training areas[95] ✓ Nature protection ✓ Raw material extraction ✓
	Documents reviewed: Plan: • The National Maritime Spatial Planning Situation Plan (PSOEM) for the Mainland, Madeira and Extended Continental Shelf subdivisions • The National Maritime Spatial Planning Situation Plan (PSOEM) for the subdivision of the Azores Additional documents: Mainland, Madeira and Extended Continental Shelf: • Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Mainland, Madeira and Extended Continental Shelf • Continental Characterization Report					

93 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

94 See footnote above.

95 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
	• Madeira Characterization Report Allocation Plans[96]: • Allocation Plan for Offshore Renewable Energy (PAER) (2025) • Strategic Environmental Assessment of PAER-RAP-Version for Public Consultation • Allocation Plan for Dredged Submergence (2023) Azores: • PSOEM-Azores public consultation • Strategic Environmental Assessment • SEA – Non Technical Summary • Geoportal / Plano de Situação • Geographic Information System SIGMAR – Açores					Scientific research ✓ Submarine cable and pipelines ✓ Tourism/ recreation ✓ Cultural heritage ✓
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 136/2024, of 16 October 2024, published in the Official Gazette (Diário da República) No. 201/2024, Series I of 16 October 2024, approving the Maritime Spatial Planning Situation Plan (Plano de Situação de Ordenamento do Espaço Marítimo Nacional) for the subdivision of the Azores. Link. Law 17/2014, of April 10, which establishes the basis for national maritime spatial planning and management policy (LBOGEM), was amended by Law no. 1/2021, of January 11, 2021. This represents a direct change in the fundamental legal framework for MSP. The main objective of the change was to reinforce the joint and shared management of maritime space between the State and the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira, promoting greater regional autonomy in the management of the sea, without compromising the integrity and sovereignty of the State. New National Ocean Strategy**:** In May 2021, the National Ocean Strategy 2021-2030 was approved. Although the Directive had already been transposed and the Maritime Spatial Planning Situation Plan (PSOEM) for subdivision of the mainland, Madeira and the Extended Continental Shelf subdivisions, was approved in 2019 (Resolution of the Council of Ministries nº 203-A/2019, 30 November), this new Strategy sets the course for public ocean policy for the current decade, defining new priorities and actions that influence the competences and coordination of the DGPM in pursuing these objectives.					

[96] Allocation plans are a maritime spatial planning instrument that complements the situation plan, allocating areas and/or volumes of national maritime space to uses and activities not identified in the situation plan. The allocation plan, once approved, is automatically integrated into the situation plan: https://www.psoem.pt/planos-de-afetacao/

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
	Decree-Law No. 26/2023, of April 10, clarified the applicability of environmental assessment to allocation plans, except when these have as their objective the implementation of a project, in which case they are subject to environmental impact assessment.					
	Review process: Portugal has no MSP review underway, but the PSOEM (adopted 2019) must be reviewed at least every ten years, with the next full review due by 2029. Earlier revisions can be initiated if needed, for example, to integrate allocation plans like the Renewable Energy Allocation Plan (PAER). The first evaluation of implementation, covering 2020–2022, was published in 2023 under Article 87 of Decree-Law 38/2015, launching a performance evaluation cycle.					

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study, the review covered in detail the National Maritime Spatial Planning Situation Plan (PSOEM) for the Mainland, Madeira and Extended Continental Shelf subdivisions of 2019, as well as the later National Maritime Spatial Planning Situation Plan (PSOEM) for the subdivision of the Azores of 2024. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the Portugal documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 36 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Portugal

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	Portugal's MSP embeds EBA as a guiding principle in national law (Law No. 17/2014) and in alignment with the MSFD. The plan emphasises maintaining Good Environmental Status (GES), adaptive management, and balancing ecological integrity with socio-economic uses such as aquaculture, energy, and tourism. Tools include oceanographic mapping, the GeoPortal GIS, and SEA climate scenarios (e.g., storms, sea-level rise). While cumulative impacts are not explicitly addressed, EBA is integrated into governance, cross-border cooperation, and stakeholder engagement. No formal evaluation of effectiveness of the application of EBA is provided.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	Portugal's MSP explicitly integrates land-sea interactions (LSI), requiring coherence with coastal management instruments (POOC/POC) and referencing ICZM and the Action Plan for the Coast. Governance is ensured through interministerial and regional coordination, with sectoral authorities (ports, environment, nature conservation) involved in bridging land and sea uses. Tools like the GIS-based GeoPortal and the Satellite Sea Account link spatial and economic data across domains. Stakeholder consultations, especially with municipalities and coastal users, further embedded LSI. While challenges remain in harmonising diverse legal and cultural planning systems, MSP authorities confirmed that practical solutions have so far been achieved.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	Portugal's MSP is framed as an operational tool of the National Strategy for the Sea, embedding the "Blue Growth" model that links economic development to environmental protection and intergenerational equity. While no formal definition of sustainable development is provided, the plan integrates sectoral policies for energy, transport, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, and raw materials, each with environmental safeguards and spatial zoning. Alignment with national and regional strategies ensures coherence, though sustainability is expressed more through strategic principles and sectoral measures than through a unified framework.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	Portugal's MSP establishes a detailed spatial-temporal framework across Mainland, Madeira, Azores, and the Extended Continental Shelf, dividing maritime space into common uses (e.g., navigation) and private uses (e.g., aquaculture, energy). Overlaps and multi-use are allowed, while exclusion zones and restrictions protect sensitive ecosystems and safety (e.g., Natura 2000, shipping lanes). The GeoPortal ensures transparency through GIS-based mapping. Permits regulate time of use (1–50 years), and temporal compatibility is recognised, allowing sequential activities. Future uses (e.g., offshore platforms, biotechnology) are acknowledged, with a precautionary approach applied to high-risk sectors like deep-sea mining.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	Portugal's MSP embeds multi-use as a legal and planning principle under Law 17/2014 and Decree-Law 38/2015, with Fiche 8C detailing multi-use platforms. Compatibility matrices, zoning rules, and case-by-case assessments guide

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	synergies and conflict resolution, particularly in co-locating offshore wind with aquaculture or tourism. GIS-based mapping and stakeholder input support flexible, multisectoral allocation. Conflicts are addressed through negotiated solutions, impact assessments, and legal prioritisation rules, ensuring optimisation of limited maritime space while balancing economic, social, and environmental benefits.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	Portugal's MSP integrates environmental, economic, social, and safety dimensions through its SEA (2018–2019 for mainland/Madeira; 2024 for Azores), which assessed pressures like noise, seabed disturbance, pollution, and climate change, while aligning with MSFD Good Environmental Status (GES) descriptors. Economic importance is tracked via the Sea Satellite Account, with ecosystem services qualitatively assessed. Social aspects cover cultural heritage, small-scale fisheries, training, and community well-being. Safety is addressed through defence zones, traffic mapping, port access risks, and surveillance by maritime authorities. The approach combines precautionary principles, compatibility matrices, and participatory governance to balance sustainability with national priorities.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	Portugal's MSP explicitly aligns with EU frameworks such as the MSFD, Natura 2000, CFP, WFD, the European Green Deal, and sectoral strategies on aquaculture, offshore renewables, and tourism. It integrates climate adaptation (ENAAC 2020) and coherence with national strategies like the National Strategy for the Sea 2013–2020, serving as its operational tool. Sectoral synergies and potential conflicts (e.g., energy vs. conservation) are addressed via zoning, compatibility matrices, and adaptive management. Governance is supported by inter-ministerial committees, synchronisation with EU cycles, and financial instruments (e.g., Blue Fund, Mar 2020). In the Azores, regional climate and energy plans ensure consistency with national and EU objectives.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Portugal's MSP involved broad stakeholder participation from 2016–2019 through websites, public consultations, working groups, and consultative committees, covering national ministries, regional authorities, NGOs, fisheries, energy, and tourism actors. Consultations were both online and in-person, including cross-border inputs (e.g., Spain, Morocco). Outcomes included revisions to mapping (e.g., mineral extraction overlaps) and Natura 2000 integration. In Madeira and the Azores, participation was regionally tailored, with dedicated portals, public sessions, and sectoral consultations ensuring local priorities were reflected. The process supported conflict resolution and strengthened EBA implementation.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	Portugal's MSP strongly emphasises scientific and technological knowledge, with Objectives 7 and 8 mandating the use of national maritime information and capacity-building. It integrates environmental and socio-economic data from MSFD reports, oceanographic campaigns, sector-specific studies, and EU-funded projects (e.g., PLASMAR, MarSP). A central innovation is the Geoportal PSOEM, a GIS-based platform providing real-time, interoperable access to spatial data, compliant with the INSPIRE Directive. This digital framework ensures transparency, supports adaptive management, and enables continuous data sharing among institutions, stakeholders, and the public.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	Cross-border cooperation is a guiding principle of Portugal's MSP, framed by transboundary planning requirements and the SEA's assessment of cross-border impacts. Formal consultations took place with Spain and Morocco, with Spain identified as a key bilateral partner, particularly through Atlantic and WestMed strategies. EU-funded projects (e.g., MarSP, PLASMAR, SIMNORAT) supported regional knowledge-sharing, data harmonization, and impact assessment, though no joint measures were formally established in the plan. Broader frameworks such as OSPAR, MSFD, and EU territorial cooperation programmes provide the main channels for coordination.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	Portugal's MSP includes limited direct references to cooperation with third countries, aside from formal consultation with Morocco. Broader engagement occurs mainly through multilateral forums and EU-funded projects involving North African partners in the Atlantic and Western Mediterranean (e.g.,

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya), which focus on knowledge exchange and capacity-building. While these initiatives promote shared MSP practices beyond EU borders, the plan itself does not establish concrete mechanisms for sustained cooperation with third countries.

Country Fiche for Romania

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

On 9 November 2023, the Government of Romania adopted Emergency Ordinance No. 97 approving the Maritime Spatial Development Plan. It was published in the Official Gazette No. 1027 on 10 November 2023, subsequently approved by Law no. 152/2024. All regulations contained in Directive 2014/89/EU are transposed into Romanian legislation through Government Ordinance No. 18/2016.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Romania adopted its first Maritime Spatial Plan in November 2023

Review process

None identified

Table 37 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
ROMANIA	November 2023	/	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works and Administration	Ongoing, subject to periodical evaluation at least once every 10 years	Binding	Aquaculture/ Mariculture	✓
						Fisheries	✓
						Renewable energy	✓
						Oil and gas	✓
						Shipping/ maritime transport [97]	✓
						Ports[98]	✓
						Military training areas[99]	✓
						Nature protection	✓
						Raw material extraction	✓
						Scientific research	✓
	Documents reviewed: Plan: • Maritime Spatial Plan of Romania Additional documents: • Environmental report • Environmental notice • Appropriate Assessment Study • Form with comments from authorities/interested public and responses						
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: Government Ordinance nr. 97/2023 approving the Maritime Spatial Plan of Romania. Link.						
	Review process: not identified						

97 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

98 See footnote above.

99 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
						Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
						Tourism/ recreation	✓
						Cultural heritage	✓

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study the review covered in detail the Maritime Spatial Plan of Romania, adopted in 2023, alongside the MSP Country Fiche, providing an overview of the MSP framework. Additionally, the Environmental report, Environmental notice and Appropriate Assessment Study were also analysed. The Form with comments from authorities/interested public and responses, compiling the comments, observations, and feedback received from competent authorities and the interested public regarding the draft Marine Spatial Plan, the Environmental Report, and the Appropriate Assessment Study were also reviewed. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the Romanian documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 38 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Romania

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	Romania's MSP integrates EBA mainly through EU-funded projects (notably MARSPLAN-BS I & II) and national legislation, with EBA principles embedded late in the process. The plan functions as a broad strategic framework rather than a prescriptive one. MPAs established under Natura 2000 and national laws are central to EBA implementation, while earlier projects (CEMAR-NUCLEU, SOP Environment) supported habitat mapping and site designation. Romania also engaged in international initiatives (e.g., CREAM, MAREFRAME) applying EBA to fisheries. National monitoring programmes, complemented by projects like PERSEUS, ensure ongoing ecological data collection. Operational details on EBA application are limited, and EU EBA guidance is not explicitly referenced.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	Romania's MSP addresses LSI through a dedicated section on conflicts and compatibilities, analysing pressures such as urbanisation, pollution, and tourism with mapping and expert surveys. The plan builds on terrestrial frameworks, including land-use data, development strategies, and coastal protection plans, and is supported by ICZM principles under Government Ordinance No. 18/2016. Coordination is ensured by the inter-ministerial MSP Committee (HG No. 406/2017, updated 2022), complemented by ICZM cooperation. While MSP does not directly influence terrestrial plans, impacts are reviewed case-by-case, with local actors engaged via MARSPLAN-BS II consultations.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	Romania's MSP frames sustainable development as its core objective, aligned with the 2030 Agenda and SDGs 14 and 15. It balances environmental, economic, and social dimensions: It takes into account the EU biodiversity objectives, including the reference target of expanding MPAs to 30% of maritime space, as set out in national strategic documents of the Ministry of Environment. This target is treated as a guiding reference, not as a direct objective of the MSP itself. The plan further aims to ensure GES, and apply EBA, while supporting growth in energy, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, and transport under environmental safeguards. Active involvement of socio-economic actors is encouraged to ensure community benefits. Sectoral priorities include offshore renewables (and potential hydrogen), Constanța port expansion, aquaculture sites, sustainable tourism, and resource extraction under strict ecological conditions.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	Romania's MSP sets spatial restrictions for safety, security, and conservation. These inlude exclusion zones for pipelines, offshore installations, military areas, and underwater cultural heritage sites, grounded in EU directives and national laws. Temporally, it accounts for seasonal tourism pressures, phased offshore oil and gas exploitation, and fishing closures for vulnerable species like sturgeon. Forward-looking elements include monitoring provisions for future activities such as floating wind, hydrogen production, aquaculture, and marine research, with allocations to be

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	reviewed through adaptive updates led by sectoral authorities.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	Romania's MSP establishes a legal and methodological framework (GO No. 18/2016) for managing sectoral interactions, using multi-criteria analysis, stakeholder involvement, and the MSP Committee for coordination. Conflicts are addressed through compatibility criteria, consultations, and spatial delineation, while promoting multi-use in high-demand zones. Examples include co-location of aquaculture with offshore wind, and seasonal overlaps of tourism and fisheries. Synergies are also encouraged, e.g. conservation with tourism or energy with biodiversity protection. Fisheries remain a sensitive area, particularly in relation to offshore wind and protected zones, requiring ongoing negotiation.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	Romania's MSP is supported by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA), adopted in 2023, which identify key pressures such as overfishing, litter, noise, erosion, and pollution, while aligning with GES objectives under the MSFD. It includes a cumulative impact assessment and projected climate scenarios with adaptation measures. Economically, the MSP highlights growth potential in offshore wind, hydrogen, ports, fisheries, aquaculture, and tourism. Qualitative insights on these areas are presented. Social aspects include protection of underwater cultural heritage, sustainable tourism, and coastal community benefits, and distributional impacts are not assessed. Safety is addressed through Vessel Traffic Services, updated nautical charts, restricted military/security areas, and safety zones around pipelines and offshore infrastructure.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	Romania's MSP explicitly aligns with EU directives and strategies, including the MSFD, WFD, Habitats and Birds Directives, CFP, Renewable Energy Directive, EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, TEN-T, and the European Green Deal. It supports GES, renewable energy, fisheries sustainability, and expanded protected areas. Other relevant EU instruments (e.g., Nature Restoration Law, Farm to Fork, Offshore Renewable Energy Strategy) are not directly cited but reflected in practice. National coherence is ensured through coordination with land-use planning and the ICZM Committee, with cross-ministerial representation in the MSP Committee safeguarding sectoral integration.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Romania's MSP involved extensive stakeholder engagement through both formal and informal channels. Core ministries, agencies, and research institutes contributed expertise, while MARSPLAN-BS I and II projects created a permanent stakeholder platform and database for ongoing dialogue. Opinion surveys and informal workshops shaped early drafts, complemented by formal statutory consultations under SEA requirements. Cross-border engagement with Bulgaria was also facilitated through MARSPLAN. Interviews confirmed that empirical evidence and collaboration with diverse actors, from ministries to NGOs and local authorities, were central to ensuring inclusive and cross-sectoral governance. According to GO no. 18/2016, the development and implementation of the maritime spatial plan ensure the consultation and involvement of stakeholders and competent public administration authorities, by informing them from the early stage of drafting the MSP or its subsequent revisions.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	Romania's MSP built on data compiled during the MARSPLAN-BS projects with Bulgaria, creating a common cross-border database for marine planning. Sector-specific inputs came from key institutions such as INCDM, ANRM, ANPA, and the Directorate for Maritime Hydrography. The MSP Committee oversees ongoing monitoring through agreed indicators, ensuring systematic updates. Data sharing relied on inter-ministerial consultations, public meetings, and academic engagement, while spatial information was made publicly available for transparency. Innovative tools like participatory GIS or EU-wide harmonisation platforms were not applied.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	Romania's MSP embeds cross-border cooperation mainly through the MARSPLAN-BS I and II projects with Bulgaria, which developed joint methodologies, pilot plans, and institutional frameworks for shared marine areas. While no formal joint governance body has been created, continuous dialogue between Romanian and Bulgarian authorities ensures coordination, especially on Natura 2000 sites and ecological connectivity. Cooperation has been highly effective during planning, though largely dependent on EU-funded initiatives. Ongoing discussions are

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	exploring a new joint project for the monitoring phase, reflecting the need for sustained collaboration beyond planning.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	Romania's MSP addresses cooperation with third countries through participation in regional frameworks. It aligns with the Bucharest Convention and its Strategic Action Plan, focusing on pollution reduction and biodiversity protection, and engages through the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. Romania is also a signatory of the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea (2019), promoting sustainable blue economy initiatives among EU and non-EU states. No formal bilateral MSP mechanisms exist with non-EU neighbours, and the plan situates itself within a broader basin-wide framework.

Country Fiche for Sweden

Status of MSP adoption / revision

New/updated national legislation

Government Decision adopting the plans of 10 February 2022.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

In February 2022, The Swedish Government approved three Maritime Spatial Plans: Marine spatial Plans for the Gulf of Bothnia, the Baltic Sea and the Skagerrak/ Kattegat

Review process

Sweden is reviewing and updating its MSPs, with the process focused on offshore wind expansion. Work began in 2022 with data collection and assessments, followed by stakeholder engagement in 2023, public and Espoo consultations, and a review consultation in mid-2024 involving 149 stakeholders. The revised plans were submitted to the Government on 20 January 2025. The main driver is to increase offshore wind capacity from 20–30 TWh/year to an additional 90 TWh/year, supporting the energy transition and meeting future demand. Other priorities include cultural heritage, nature protection, shipping, fisheries and defence. Consultations significantly shaped the updates, and new data on heritage, environment and routes have been integrated. All documents reviewed are presented in the table below. In addition, a framework for monitoring and evaluation is planned to be adopted by the end of 2025.

Table 39 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
SWEDEN	February 2022, three plans	/	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM)[100]	/	Guiding/ non-binding	
	Documents reviewed: Plan: • Marine spatial Plans for the Gulf of Bothnia, the Baltic Sea and the Skagerrak/ Kattegat Additional documents: • Environmental Impact Assessment of marine spatial plans for the Gulf of Bothnia, the Baltic Sea and the North Sea. • Consultation report - background to the government • Report on the dialogue in marine spatial planning • Review report on proposals for marine spatial plans • Sustainability description of marine plans - submission to the government • Nature in marine planning - background for the government • Collaboration on maritime planning between neighbouring countries through projects.					Aquaculture/ Mariculture: c Fisheries: ✓ Renewable energy: ✓ Oil and gas: - Shipping/ maritime transport [101]: ✓ Ports[102]: Military training areas[103]: ✓ Nature protection: ✓ Raw material extraction: ✓

100 SwAM is the competent authority, however, the plans are adopted by the government.

101 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

102 See footnote above.

103 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
	• Regional collaboration Proposal for amended marine plans 2025: • Proposal for amended marine spatial plans for the Gulf of Bothnia, the Baltic Sea and the North Sea • Impact assessment of proposals for amended marine spatial plans for the Gulf of Bothnia, the Baltic Sea and the North Sea • Consultation report regarding consultation on proposals for amended marine spatial plans • Espoo report on Espoo consultations with neighboring countries (PDF) https://www.havochvatten.se/planering-forvaltning-och-samverkan/havsplanering/havsplanerna-andras-for-att-mota-okat-elbehov.html • Account of the dialogue during the work on amended marine plans • The impact of offshore windfarms on winter navigation, Chalmers University of Technology • How is Swedish commercial fishing affected by offshore wind power? Agrifood Economics Centre at SLU • Hydrographic effects in Swedish waters of future offshore wind power scenarios, SMHI • Planning basis for marine cultural environmental values in national marine planning - National compilation of appropriation letter assignments Review of proposal for amended marine plans 2024: • Proposal for amended marine spatial plans for the Gulf of Bothnia, the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, Review version • Impact assessment of proposals for amended marine spatial plans for the Gulf of Bothnia, the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, Review version Websites: • MSP global • Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management. • Sweden Country Profile					Scientific research: - Submarine cable and pipelines: ✓ Tourism/ recreation: ✓ Cultural heritage: ✓
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: Government Decision adopting the plans of 10 February 2022. Link not available.					
	Review process: Sweden is reviewing and updating its MSPs, with the process focused on offshore wind expansion. Work began in 2022 with data collection and assessments, followed by stakeholder engagement in 2023, public and Espoo consultations, and a review consultation in mid-2024 involving 149 stakeholders. The revised plans were submitted to the Government on 20 January 2025. The main driver is to increase offshore wind capacity from 20–30 TWh/year to an additional 90 TWh/year, supporting the energy transition and meeting future demand. Other priorities					

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan
	include cultural heritage, nature protection, shipping, fisheries and defence. Consultations significantly shaped the updates, and new data on heritage, environment and routes have been integrated. All documents reviewed are presented in the table below. In addition, a framework for monitoring and evaluation is planned to be adopted by the end of 2025.					

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study, the review covered in detail the Swedish Marine spatial Plans for the Gulf of Bothnia, the Baltic Sea and the Skagerrak/ Kattegat, presenting the three approved Swedish Marine Spatial Plans, alongside the Proposal for amended marine spatial plans for the Gulf of Bothnia, the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, presenting the proposals for the revised Swedish MSP. All reviewed documents are presented in the table above.

Table 40 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Sweden

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	Sweden's MSP integrates the ecosystem-based approach, with a dedicated chapter defining it in line with the CBD's Malawi Principles and EU guidance. The plan applies all three EBA dimensions: safeguarding ecosystem integrity and resilience (including non-designated high-value areas and climate refugia), integrating socio-economic uses alongside environmental objectives, and embedding governance through adaptive management and multi-level cooperation. Tools like the Symphony model support cumulative impact assessments and alignment with GES under the MSFD. Stakeholder engagement was early and inclusive, strengthening legitimacy and socio-economic balance. A formal evaluation of EBA effectiveness is not provided.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	Sweden's MSP embeds land-sea interactions through the Planning and Building Act, which extends municipal planning into territorial waters and aligns local comprehensive plans with national MSP. Around 60 municipalities have already integrated marine areas into their comprehensive planning[104], supported by the KOMPIS programme, which fosters inter-municipal cooperation and ICZM-like practices. Areas near the coast are more frequently and more thoroughly addressed in the plans than those further offshore in the territorial sea. Coordination also involves counties with regional planning responsibilities, and scale differences between national and local plans pose challenges. Offshore wind cable corridors and grid connections are left for project-level decisions due to technical uncertainties.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	Sustainable development is a core, explicit goal of Sweden's MSPs, balancing environmental, social, and economic objectives. The plans link directly to the EU Green Deal and multiple UN SDGs, framing sustainable growth as dependent on ecosystem health. Sector-specific provisions cover offshore renewable energy (with expanded areas proposed in 2025), sustainable shipping, resource-efficient fisheries, future aquaculture, tourism, and raw material extraction, all subject to environmental safeguards. A dedicated sustainability assessment (pp.146–150) evaluates the contributions of these provisions toward sustainable growth.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	Sweden's MSPs use zoning to designate "most appropriate uses" based on environmental, social, and economic priorities, with clear hierarchies under the Environmental Code. GIS-based tools like Symphony map cumulative impacts on a fine grid, supporting evidence-based spatial allocation. Future needs are anticipated, with readiness for aquaculture, carbon storage, and new resource uses. Temporally, the plans account for seasonal patterns in fisheries, recreation, and nature protection, adjusting activities (e.g. sand extraction, porpoise presence) to minimise impacts. The long-term vision extends to 2050, with adaptive revised proposals every eight years to integrate new knowledge and address emerging uses.

[104] Based on the latest report on the indicators in the Swedish Maritime Strategy 2021-2022: https://www.havochvatten.se/download/18.31bcef111866b59bc0b3e5f4/1692214422087/ru-redovisning-uppfoljning-indikatorer-for-maritima-strategin-2020-2021.pdf

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	Sweden's MSPs manage interactions through a flexible, multisectoral framework grounded in the Environmental Code and Planning and Building Act. Each area has a "most appropriate use", and co-location and multi-use are permitted where compatible. Compatibility is assessed case by case, with examples including defence and shipping, nature and recreation, or offshore wind and fisheries, provided conflicts are minimised. Vertical and seasonal co-use are acknowledged, and are assessed qualitatively. Offshore wind is presented as the most challenging activity to balance, particularly with defence and fisheries. Stakeholder dialogue and adaptive planning support coexistence. The approach prioritises governance and legal safeguards over rigid zoning to enable practical multi-use in Sweden's marine areas.
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	Sweden's MSP is strongly underpinned by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), supported by the Symphony tool for cumulative impact analysis, covering biodiversity, eutrophication, noise, contaminants and more. Climate change is acknowledged as a pressure, and it is not modelled. Economic aspects are treated qualitatively through some sectoral indicators (e.g. fisheries landings, energy production, shipping costs) as well as a broad multi-criteria analysis in the 2019 proposal. Social aspects emphasise regional development, recreation, cultural heritage and public health. Systematic distributional impact analysis is not included. Safety is integrated, with shipping measures (TSS, Sea Traffic Management)
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	Sweden's MSP shows strong coherence with EU frameworks, particularly the MSFD, WFD, Habitats and Birds Directives, and CFP, with environmental quality standards guiding decisions regardless of zoning. Strategic EU policies (Sustainable blue development, Integrated Maritime Policy, offshore renewables) are embedded through objectives like offshore wind expansion and ecosystem resilience. At the national level, the MSP aligns with the Swedish Maritime Strategy (2015), national climate and energy policy (fossil-free electricity by 2040), and environmental ordinances. Governance coherence is ensured via SwAM's coordination with agencies, counties and municipalities, supported by impact assessments and stakeholder dialogue.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Sweden's MSP involved broad and structured stakeholder participation, coordinated by SwAM with municipalities, regions, sectoral associations (e.g. fisheries, offshore wind, shipping), environmental NGOs, and local actors. The process included early informal dialogue, followed by two formal consultation rounds with feedback incorporated into plan revisions. There were also consultations on a road map for the planning process and a status report respectively. The 2024 review of amendments engaged about 160 actors through written comments and 11 meetings, directly shaping revisions (e.g. improved fisheries impact assessment). General public participation was limited, sectoral and governmental stakeholders contributed significantly, and the MSP reflected practical conditions and priorities.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	Sweden's MSP is grounded in best available knowledge, guided by the precautionary principle where data gaps exist. Key tools include the *Green Map* for mapping ecological assets and Symphony for cumulative impact assessment, using datasets from SGU, SMHI, SLU and others. Expert input informed sensitivity matrices, and broad institutional cooperation was part of the process. Data and raster maps are made publicly available via SwAM, supporting transparency and reuse. No participatory GIS methods were applied, and the planning relied on authoritative scientific and institutional datasets.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	Sweden's MSP reflects cross-border cooperation with nine neighbouring states. Cooperation was advanced through EU-funded projects (e.g. Baltic SCOPE, Pan Baltic Scope, NorthSEE), which developed tools on data, cumulative impacts and green infrastructure. Sweden also participates in HELCOM–VASAB frameworks and follows Espoo procedures for transboundary consultation, enabling dialogue on routes, fisheries and shared data. In addition, it engages in sea basin level MSP initiatives, including the GNSBI (Grater North Sea Basin Initiative), the North Seas MSP Collaboration Group, and the Baltic Sea MSP Planners' Forum. The MSP does not specify concrete joint measures or long-term arrangements, and cross-border alignment is supported through project

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	participation and regional governance frameworks.
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	Sweden's MSP engages non-EU states indirectly through regional platforms like HELCOM, VASAB, North Sea MSP Collaboration Group, GNSBI and Espoo consultations, the latter including Norway and previously Russia. These frameworks provided opportunities for dialogue on basin-wide issues such as environment, fisheries, and shipping. The plans do not detail specific joint outcomes and actions, or adaptations to changing geopolitical contexts. According to MSP authorities, Swedish MSPs take neighbouring countries' plans into account to ensure consistency, but they were not intended to establish formal joint measures.

Country Fiche for Slovenia

Status of MSP adoption / revision

Updated legislation since 2021

Decree on the adoption of the Maritime Spatial Plan of Slovenia (No. 116/2021). Link.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

In July 2021, Slovenia adopted its first Maritime Spatial Plan.

Review process

Slovenia's Maritime Spatial Plan does not have a fixed validity period, but its revision is legally mandated under Article 71 of the Spatial Planning Law (ZUREP-3), which requires an update every ten years. The next formal revision is therefore expected in 2031, with preparatory work likely to begin around 2029. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

Table 41 – Overview of Member State maritime spatial plans and MSP legislation

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
SLOVENIA	July 2021	/	Ministry of natural resources and spatial planning	Ongoing, subject to periodical evaluation at least once every 10 years	Binding	Aquaculture/ Mariculture	✓
						Fisheries	✓
						Renewable energy	b
						Oil and gas	b
						Shipping/ maritime transport [105]	✓
						Ports[106]	
						Military training areas[107]	✓
						Nature protection	✓
						Raw material extraction	✓
						Scientific research	✓
	Documents reviewed: Plan: Maritime Spatial Plan of Slovenia (2021) Additional documents: SEA report and other relevant documents						
	Updated legislative provisions since 2021: Decree on the adoption of the Maritime Spatial Plan of Slovenia (No. 116/2021). Link.						
	Review process: Plan revision is foreseen for 2031						

105 While the MSPD (Article 8(2)) does not list shipping/maritime transport and ports as separate uses/activities, the Directive states that possible activities and uses are listed without prejudice to Member States' competences. Since some Member States report them as one activity while others treat them separately (i.e. shipping routes vs ports), they are presented as separate categories here to capture this diversity. It is noted that while only one activity may be explicitly listed in a Member State's plan (e.g. DK and FR with maritime transport), this does not necessarily indicate that related activities (e.g. ports) have been excluded from their maritime spatial plans.

106 See footnote above.

107 The MSPD does not apply to activities for the sole purpose of defence or national security (Article 2(2)), however, areas designated for military training is listed as a use/interest relevant to maritime spatial planning (Article 8(2)).

Member State	Adoption date	Previous plans	Authority responsible	Duration of the plan	Legal status of MSP	Overview of activities reported in the plan	
						Submarine cable and pipelines	✓
						Tourism/ recreation	✓
						Cultural heritage	✓

Analysis of MSP provisions

For the current study, the review covered in detail the Maritime Spatial Plan of Slovenia of 2021, alongside the Decree on the Maritime Spatial Plan of Slovenia, formalising the adoption of the plan, and the Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia 2050 (SDS 2050), as the overarching strategic spatial planning document. Published in 2024. All documents reviewed are presented in the table above.

The table below summarises the evidence gathered from the review of the Slovenian documents and interviews with the MS authority for each of the key MSP provisions.

Table 42 – Overview of implementation of MSP provisions in Slovenia

MSPD Provisions	Justification
Ecosystem-based approach & GES (Art. 5(1), Preambles 2, 14, 22)	Slovenia's MSP defines the EBA in line with EU and international frameworks, integrating GES descriptors, biodiversity corridors, and links to the Marine Environment Management Plan. It embeds EBA across all stages of planning, with monitoring indicators and governance mechanisms to support implementation. According to MSP authorities, marine protection has dictated the content of the plan. In the planning process, cumulative impact tools or ecosystem service valuations were not applied, and socio-ecological trade-offs were assessed qualitatively. Stakeholder input contributed to certain adjustments (e.g. relocation of mariculture), although specific roles and influence of participants are not fully detailed.
Land-sea interactions (Art. 4(2), 6(2)(a), 7)	Slovenia's MSP covers a defined "coastal strip" under the ICZM Protocol, integrating both landward (100 m) and seaward (150 m) zones. The plan recognises functional interdependencies (e.g. ports, mariculture, wastewater, tourism) and considers land-based activities that affect the marine environment. The four coastal municipalities retain responsibilities for land-use planning and managing parts of the coastal strip according to their competences. The plan does not establish formal inter-institutional mechanisms to align terrestrial and marine planning, and land-sea interactions are addressed holistically, reflecting spatial logic, existing activities, and the compact size of Slovenia's marine area.
Sustainable development of key sectors (Art. 5(2))	Slovenia's MSP frames sustainable development as its core purpose, aiming for balanced growth of maritime economies, ecosystem protection, and local community development. It recognises blue/green corridors and links to protection regimes, reflecting EU and UN sustainability principles. However, explicit references to "sustainable development" appear only in fisheries and cultural heritage sections. Other sectors implicitly follow sustainability principles, without detailed objectives, indicators, or integration across all activities, and the approach remains broad and partly conceptual. MSP authorities indicated that a system of indicators is being developed within the monitoring methodology to support future revisions of the MSP.
Spatial and temporal distribution of uses (Art. 8(1))	Slovenia's MSP provides detailed spatial objectives for 12 sectors, mapped through planning units and supported by restrictions, permissions, and coordination principles. Overlaps are generally allowed, with exclusions applied for defence, nature protection, and transport corridors. GIS-based maps from the Geodetic Institute support spatial allocation, though no hierarchy of uses is formally defined. In terms of temporal aspects, future activities (e.g. marine energy, tourism, flood protection) are anticipated, but no time-bound or seasonal management measures are specified in the MSP.
Interactions of uses and activities (Art. 8(2))	Slovenia's MSP addresses interactions through sector-specific rules and a horizontal coordination model, permitting overlapping uses unless explicitly restricted. Some activities (e.g. mariculture, fisheries, and transport) must be spatially separated, while others (e.g. salt production in nature parks) are conditionally compatible. Vertical and horizontal coordination are mentioned but not clearly defined in the Plan. Furthermore, coordination was carried out primarly

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	through ministries and municipalities. Rather than using formal tools (e.g. matrices, compatibility models), decisions were informed by expert judgement and local knowledge, reflecting the small scale and less complex marine area of Slovenia...
Environmental, economic, social and safety aspects (Art. 6(2)(b))	Slovenia's MSP is underpinned by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which evaluates impacts on biodiversity, GES descriptors, Natura 2000 sites, and climate risks. Scenario-based CIA comparing "with plan/without plan"; semi-quantitative matrices across themes (tourism, mariculture, ports, etc.), with cross-border effects acknowledged. Although the assessment is largely qualitative, it accounts for sectoral interactions, land-sea dynamics, and marine ecosystem vulnerabilities. Economic aspects are described with sectoral data and GDP contributions, but without structured indicators, valuations, or multi-criteria analysis. Social aspects emphasise cultural heritage, traditional uses, and community resilience, though distributional impacts are not systematically assessed. Safety is addressed through designated navigation corridors, defence areas, and coordination with safety authorities, ensuring maritime security and conflict prevention.
Coherence with other plans and processes (Art. 6(2)(c))	Slovenia's MSP explicitly references the MSFD, WFD (via the SEA), the Habitats and Birds Directives, the CFP, and the ICZM Protocol under the Barcelona Convention. Broader EU strategies (e.g. Green Deal, Biodiversity Strategy 2030) are not cited directly but their principles are reflected in objectives for biodiversity, pollution control, and sustainable use. Other EU strategies (REDII, Offshore Renewable Energy, Zero Pollution, Circular Economy, etc.) are absent, partly due to timing. At national level, the MSP aligns with Slovenia's maritime, transport, and energy policies, and implementation is coordinated through a multi-level working group. According to MSP authorities, spatial planning and design function as a form of dispute management. Dispute resolution mechanisms are taken into account where relevant.
Stakeholder involvement and public participation (Art. 6(2)(d), 9)	Slovenia's MSP highlights the importance of stakeholder participation and coordination. The plan followed an inclusive approach, engaging all relevant ministries (energy, maritime transport, fisheries and aquaculture, raw material extraction, environmental protection, tourism, underwater cultural heritage and urban development). Istrian municipalities, the Slovenian Council for the Adriatic Sea, among other authorities and agencies. Engagement aimed to balance sectoral objectives, preserve the marine environment and ensure coordinated solutions, with the draft plan and companying SEA. The SEA process included a workshop and public disclosure phase, which led to some adjustments (e.g. relocation of mariculture areas). While the plan does not detail all actors' roles or engagement methods, it reflects a structured process of consultation, coordination and alignment with national and local responsibilities. The process involved expert input, with participation primarily supporting technical refinements rather than broad deliberation. In addition, a Working Group for the Implementation and Monitoring of Slovenia's MSP has been established. This is composed by national ministries and agencies, research and public institutions, local governments and regional and development bodies.
Use of best available data (Art. 6(2)(e), 10)	Slovenia's MSP relies on data from official institutions such as the Geodetic Institute and Institute for Nature Conservation, with the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning coordinating inputs. Maps and spatial information were prepared, but no consolidated list of data sources or explicit data standards is provided. Past cooperation with Italy and Croatia (e.g. SHAPE, PEGASO projects) indirectly supported baseline data. The SEA's public disclosure phase enabled some new information and mitigation measures, and a Spatial Information System exists, (where all data related to planning and building are available), but no innovative approaches (e.g. PPGIS) or explicit use of EU data platforms are mentioned. MSP authorities indicated, however, that a system of indicators is being developed within the monitoring methodology to support future revisions of the MSP.
Cooperation with other MS (Art. 6(2)(f), 11)	Slovenia's MSP recognises its Adriatic-Ionian context and cites the MoU with Italy and Croatia on maritime traffic separation, as well as alignment with the Barcelona Convention. The planning process and draft MSP were presented to the EU's Member State Expert Group on MSP (MSEG). During the 60-day public

MSPD Provisions	Justification
	consultation, the Ministry conducted cross-border coordination, inviting Italy and Croatia to comment on the draft MSP and accompanying SEA, both translated into their languages. Italy provided comments that did not materially affect the plan, while Croatia did not respond. Informal cooperation with Italy and Croatia supported a shared North Adriatic baseline, and the plan does not include joint measures. The SEA acknowledges potential cross-border pressures but concludes no significant adverse impacts, noting some positive effects (e.g. MPAs).
Cooperation with third countries (Art. 6(2)(g), 12)	Slovenia MSP and SEA processes show no evidence of direct cooperation with non-EU countries during their preparation. However, Slovenia engages in broader regional and transnational frameworks (e.g. Barcelona Convention, Adriatic-Ionian initiatives such as EUSAIR) that encourage cooperation with third countries. No concrete coordination or joint planning measures with third countries are documented.

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