Marine Spatial Planning in Reality
Outputs from governance research under the MESMA project

This is a full outline of the governance-related outputs of the Monitoring and Evaluation of Spatially Managed Marine Areas (MESMA) project, all of which are now available. Linked pdf of this outline available at http://tinyurl.com/mesma-wp6. The findings reported in all these outputs are summarised and discussed in the papers arising from the MESMA governance research:-

Jones PJS, Lieberknecht LM and Qiu W (2016) Marine Spatial Planning in reality: introduction to case studies and discussion of findings. *Marine Policy* **71**, 256-264, **Open Access** doi:10.1016/j.marpol.2016.04.026. Draws on 12 case studies, including eight case study papers in the special section *Marine Spatial Planning in Reality,* based on the governance stream of the MESMA project.

Highlights

- The realities of marine spatial planning contrast with related conceptual ideals.
- National blue growth priorities lead to a focus on 'strategic sectoral planning'.
- Top-down approaches dominate from which participative platforms are disconnected by design.
- Politically expedient focus on integrated-use is undermining environmental priorities.
- A more critical empirical approach to marine spatial planning research is needed.

Abstract

This paper explores the realities of marine spatial planning (MSP'ing), drawing on 12 case studies around Europe, employing a structured qualitative empirical approach. The findings indicate that (1) MSP'ing is often focused on achieving specific sectoral objectives, related to nationally important strategic priorities, and might better be termed 'strategic sectoral planning'. (2) MSP'ing processes tend to be complex, fragmented and emergent on an *ad hoc* basis, rather than cyclical, adaptive and prescribed on an *a priori* basis. (3) Top-down processes tend to dominate, more participative platforms tending to be 'disconnected by design' from executive decision-making. (4) Blue growth is the dominant overall priority, often aligned with strategic sectoral priorities, despite growing indications that the target for Good Environmental Status (GES) by 2020 is unlikely to be met. This is consistent with growing concerns about the tensions between the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Directive Establishing a Framework for Maritime Spatial Planning. It is concluded that the realities of how MSP'ing is working contrast with widely recognised concepts and ideals as to how MSP'ing should work, as integrated-use MSP'ing based on political expedience and blue growth priorities is diverging from and potentially competing with ecosystem-based MSP'ing, including marine protected area networks, based on GES priorities. It is argued that a more empirical approach should be taken to MSP'ing research, whereby conceptual approaches which integrate sustainable blue growth and GES co-evolve with marine spatial planning practices through critical analyses of whether the realities of MSP'ing are consistent with these concepts.

Eight case study papers in this special section

Pecceu E, Hostens K and Maes F (2016) Governance analysis of MPAs in the Belgian Part of the North Sea. *Marine Policy* **71**, 265-274. doi:10.1016/j.marpol.2015.12.017

Lieberknecht LM and Jones PJS. (2016) From stormy seas to the doldrums: The challenges of navigating towards an ecologically coherent MPA network through England's Marine Conservation Zone process. *Marine Policy* **71**, 275-284. doi:10.1016/j.marpol.2016.05.023

Johnson KR, Kerr SA and Side JC (2016). The Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters and Scotland - planning Europe's Atlantic gateway. *Marine Policy* **71**, 285-292. doi:10.1016/j.marpol.2015.12.006

Olsen E, Holen S, Buhl-Mortensen L and Røttingen I (2016) How Integrated Ocean governance in the Barents Sea was created by a drive for increased oil production. *Marine Policy* **71**, 293-300. Open Access, doi:10.1016/j.marpol.2015.12.005

D'Anna G, Fernández TV, Pipitone C, Garofalo G and Badalamenti F (2016). Governance analysis in the Egadi Islands Marine Protected Area: a Mediterranean case study. *Marine Policy* **71**, 301-309. doi:10.1016/j.marpol.2015.12.009

Piwowarczyk J and Wróbel B (2016) Determinants of legitimate governance of marine Natura 2000 sites in a post-transition European Union country: a case study of Puck Bay, Poland. *Marine Policy* **71**, 310-317. doi:10.1016/j.marpol.2016.01.019

Sørensen TK and Kindt-Larsen L (2016) Uncovering governance mechanisms surrounding harbour porpoise conservation in the Danish Skagerrak Sea. *Marine Policy* **71**, 318-324. doi:10.1016/j.marpol.2016.01.017

Slob AFL, Geerdink TRA, Röckmann C and Vöge S (2016) Governance of the Wadden Sea. *Marine Policy* **71**, 325-333. doi:10.1016/j.marpol.2016.04.043

Other MESMA governance analysis papers

Qiu W and Jones PJS (2013) The Emerging Policy Landscape for Marine Spatial Planning in Europe. *Marine Policy* **39**(1), 182-190*.* Open Access - doi:10.1016/j.marpol.2012.10.010

Jones PJS (2012) Marine Protected Areas in the UK: challenges in combining top-down and bottom-up approaches to governance. *Environmental Conservation* **39**(3), 248-258*.* Open Access - doi:10.1017/S0376892912000136.

Katsanevakis S, Stelzenmüller V, South A, Sørensen TK, Jones PJS et al. (2011) Ecosystem-based marine spatial management: review of concepts, policies, tools, and critical issues. *Ocean and Coastal Management* **54**(1), 807-820. doi:10.1016/ocecoaman.2011.09.002

For the other MESMA outputs related to governance issues, involving 12 case studies around the EU**,** see 1st (*Typology of conflicts*), 2nd (*Approaches for addressing conflicts*) and 3rd (*Toolbox of incentives for addressing conflicts*) deliverable reports, along with our Full and Summary case study report on the Finding Sanctuary MCZ process. Also see related Presentation at Coastal Futures conference (20 January 2016) *Emerging tensions between blue growth and good environmental status*. Builds on previous related blog and keynote at OECD Workshop: *Marine Protected Areas and Marine Spatial Planning: co-evolution or competition?* (Lisbon, June 2015). A copy of the presentation of the overall MESMA governance analysis findings to the Commission's assessment advisers can be viewed here, whilst a copy of the presentation from the final MESMA workshop '**Who is at the helm of MSP in the EU?**' can be found here and a transcript of an online discussion on the findings of this research can be found here.

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