

MEDSEAPLAN:

Data and Scenarios for a Sustainable Mediterranean Blue Economy

MEDSEAPLAN focuses on future-proof Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP); the need for advanced data; and an increased participation of maritime industry and other key stakeholders in the development of MSP-relevant foresight scenarios. The project has a dedicated multi-actor and cross-border approach to using MSP to deliver a sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean.

At the regional seas level, the transboundary nature of many marine environmental problems and anthropogenic activities increases the need for holistic MSP, which requires an active dialogue between scientists and various stakeholders in order to maintain steady feedback of knowledge as the management process develops. MEDSEAPLAN will focus on novel methods of data collection, including nature-based solutions, the role of maritime industry in collecting and sharing data relevant to MSP, as well as intensive stakeholder engagement in scenario foresight development to achieve cross-border and sector-inclusive development of holistic MSP. Through the development of foresight scenarios for the next 10-50 years, MEDSEAPLAN will use the collected input from stakeholders and the new data sources to assess what the future may look like in several sub-sea basins in the Mediterranean.

“MEDSEAPLAN will focus on assessing current and future data needs for regional MSP and creating relevant new data inputs. It will transform data into actual information that can be used by MSP planners.”

MEDSEAPLAN will advance a ‘Business in Nature’ strategy in enterprises to support increased participation in MSP processes. This concept emphasises the integration of sustainability and environmental considerations into business operations and strategies, promoting the idea that businesses should not only be profitable but also contribute positively to environmental conservation, social well-being, and ecosystem health – thus perfectly aligning with MSP and sustainable Blue Economy objectives.

The novelty of MEDSEAPLAN also lies in the conceptualisation of a single management process to drive this process, the so-called Ecosystem-Based Management System (EBMS), which is a stepwise process combining environmental quality and risk management system theory with Ecosystem Approach principles.



Although MSP is advancing in Europe, the Mediterranean has seen MSP implementation only quite recently, and there is not an excessive amount of information to be digested. However, the acceleration of maritime activities calls for a rapid development of tools that can be used to make all these activities (existing and upcoming ones) part of an ocean sustainability demand, to be considered part of the Sustainable Blue Economy. Cross-border and transnational aspects of maritime activities must be integrated into sub-basin scale MSP and so the strength of MEDSEAPLAN lies in its multi-sectoral and cross-border approach.