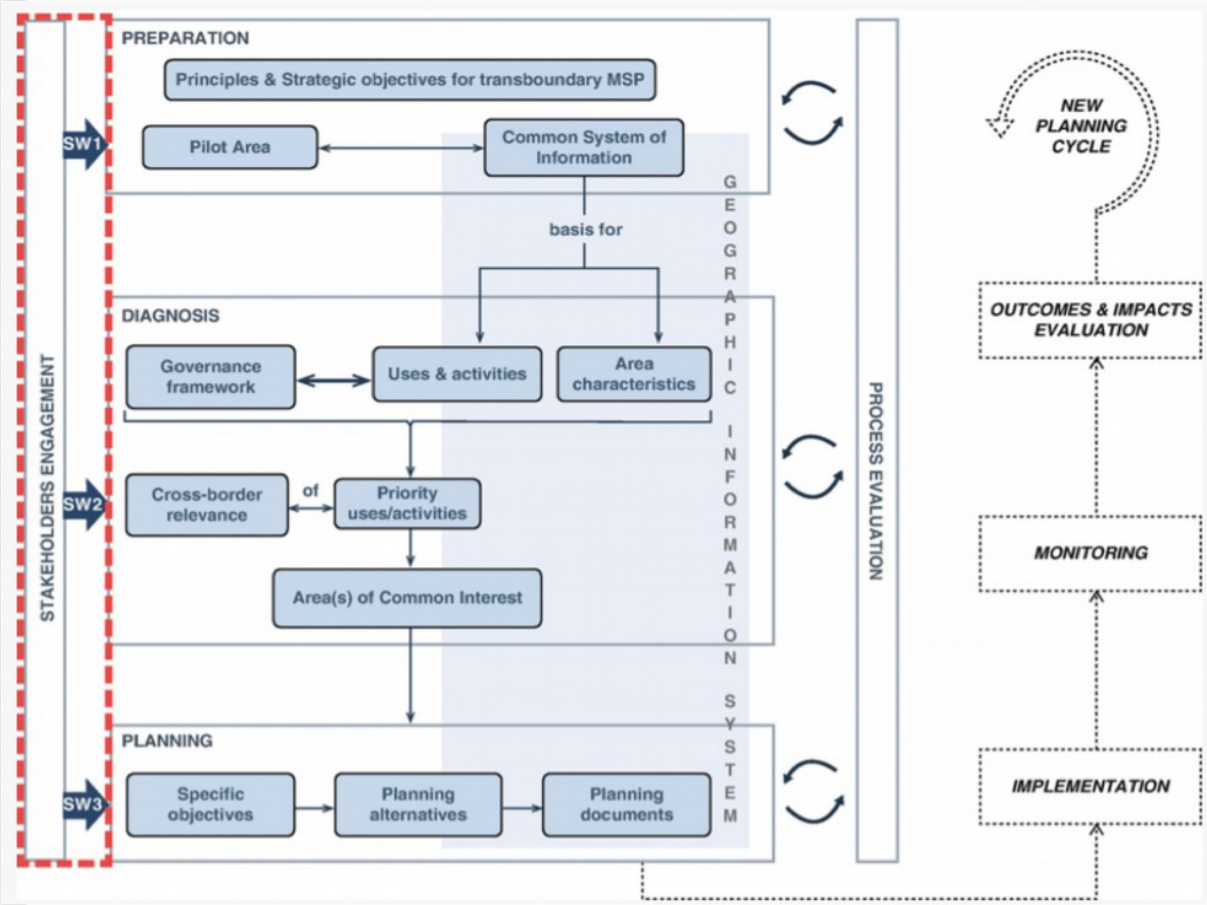
Guidelines
for MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING process
in Albania



MSP cycle

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List of Acronyms

AFDW- Ash Free Dry Weight

EC-European Commission

EIA–Environmental Impact Assessment

FAQ-Frequently Asked Questions

GEF- Global Environment Facility

GIS-Geographic Information System

MSP-Marine Spatial Planning

ICZM-Integrated Coastal Zone Management

CBD-Convention on Biological Diversity

NAPA-National Agency of Proteced Areas

NEA-National Environmental Agency

NIS-Non Indigenous Species NIS

OSPAR Convention-Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic

PSSAs- Particularly Sea Sensitive Areas

SEA- Strategic Environmental Assessment

UN-United Nations

IMAP/MSFD- Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme / Marine Strategy Framework Directive

TPEA-Transboundary Planning in the European Atlantic

CONTENT

FOREWORD

The present Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Guidelines for Albania is elaborated within the framework of the IMAP, the ICZM Protocol and the MSP Decision (Decision on the MSP Conceptual Framework) and are part of the MSP Pilot Project "MSP Pilot project in synergy with SUPREME and GEF Adriatic projects outcomes and to strengthen the EUSAIR Strategy, to be developed into the Adriatic relevant marine areas, subject to major pressures" implemented within the Bilateral Cooperation Contract with the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS). The project is financed by IMELS and is implemented by SPA/RAC under the coordination of the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit.

Particularly, MSP Guideline for Albania is aligned with the GEF Adriatic project. Indeed, The GEF Adriatic Project major outcomes are (i)the establishment of a National Monitoring Programme in Albania and Montenegro and (ii)the MSP process support in both countries.

Land Use Planning and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) are often considered as two different tools. In the concept of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), they are both essential and have to be strictly linked.

For the Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean, spatial planning of the coastal zone is considered an essential instrument for its implementation, as quoted below.

One of the main objectives of ICZM is to *"facilitate, through the rational **planning of activities**, the sustainable development of coastal zones by ensuring that the environment and landscapes are taken into account in harmony with economic, social and cultural development"* (art. 5). Planning is recalled also in other articles of the Protocol, as in the case articles dealing with the protection of wetlands, estuaries and marine habitats (art. 10) or the protection of coastal landscape (art. 11).

The following guidelines have been drafted keeping in mind the different audiences and stakeholders to which they are dedicated and their different objectives:

For the planner and the manager

Ensure a continuity of planning, management, enforcement and monitoring of all activities and potential natural and human impacts and between the terrestrial and maritime domains of the area considered.

For the administrator and the controller

Develop a marine cadastre as the one that has been developed on land and consider over time for the marine environment at least three dimensions: the surface of the sea, the water column and the sea bottom (two others could be considered the air above the surface and the sub-soil at the bottom).

For the communities and the stakeholders

Ensure the coherence between all the activities in the terrestrial and marine domain in order to respect, protect or restore the existing ecosystems, species and biological processes and to provide an equilibrate et harmonious socio-economic environment for supporting the long-term sustainable development of the area.

Amongst the common principles to be considered for the development of MSP, the following are essential:

- Adaptive planning and management: as uncertainties exist when defining a plan or a management system, in particular at the interface of the marine and terrestrial domains, in relation with natural, ecological, social or economical matters, or in case of emergency situation, planning and management have to be adaptive and quickly reactive to new situations.

- Ecosystem approach: For the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Ecosystem Approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. It is based on the application of appropriate scientific methodologies focused on levels of biological organization that encompass the essential processes, functions and interactions among organisms and their environment. It recognizes that humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of ecosystems.

- Transparency (data and process): is an essential tool for effective environmental governance and in particular in public participation and access to information.

- Full participation: the Aarhus Convention on access to information, public participation in decision making and access to justice in environmental matters (to which Albania is Party) provides for opportunities for citizens to access environmental information are increased and transparent and reliable regulation procedure is secured. t is a way of enhancing the environmental governance network, introducing a reactive and trustworthy relationship between civil society and governments.

- Integrated approach (all sectors, land and sea): For the management of marine and coastal resources, planners have to consider multiple-use, systems-oriented modes of management, based on precautionary approaches and ecosystem management principles.

- Connectivity: the integrated approach needs to take into account the connectivity between the marine and terrestrial environments (natural, social, economical) for ensuring an efficient and sustainable management;

- Multi scale approach: all planning and management has to consider the international, national, sub regional and local contexts for defining the constraints and the modalities of implementation.

- Multi dimensional, including time frame: the land is often looked at with three main components, the air, the soil and the subsoil, the marine environment is more complex, with the air, the surface of the sea, the water column, the sea bottom and the subsoil. In both case, time is and additional factor to consider.

- Permanent monitoring, evaluation and revision: a permanent monitoring system has to be setup in order to follow the evolution of natural, social and economic parameters and to be able to assess the risks and propose indicators and alert mechanisms for maintaining the long term sustainability of the planning and management measures;

– Strategic environmental assessment of the proposed plan: a SEA is a systematic decision support process aiming to ensure that environmental and other sustainability aspects are effectively considered in policy, planning, management and program making. It has to be applied regularly to ensure the long-term sustainability of the process and in particular when new activities are programmed in the MSP area.

The main identified benefits of MSP are as follow:

- Better understanding of the roles and functions of the marine environment;
- Better coordination between administrations and economic sectors;
- Reduction of conflicts;
- Better definition of the rights and regulations of all parties;
- Increasing knowledge and participation of stakeholders and public;
- Better transparency in rules and restrictions for investment;
- Better protection/conservation of the natural and cultural assets for the benefit of all;
- Better quality of the environment;
- And others.

BACKGROUND Guidelines for MSP

These guidelines have been prepared for Albania within the framework of the IMAP, the ICZM Protocol and the MSP Decision (Decision on the MSP Conceptual Framework).

Contracting Parties decisions (Decision IG.17/6 on "Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment" and the Decision IG.20/4 on "Implementing the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap") reflect the wish to strengthen cooperation and seek synergies with the EU initiative, the MSFD, to achieve a shared vision of "a healthy Mediterranean with marine and biological ecosystems that are productive and biologically diverse for the benefit of present and future generations".

Additionally, Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is based on the allocation of marine space in order to achieve sustainable development, including the protection of marine biodiversity and the conservation of marine resources, along with social and economic objectives, by overcoming the single-sector approach that focuses on a particular use of the sea.

According to the European Commission (EC), MSP fulfills four objectives:

- Reducing conflict on access to maritime space;
- Reducing cumulative impact of maritime activities on the environment;
- Reducing coordination costs for public authorities; and
- Improving certainty and predictability for private investments.

In the Adriatic Sea, implementing the Ecosystem Approach and improving sub-regional management capacity through Marine Spatial Planning aim to restore its balance.

GUIDELINES FOR MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING PROCESS IN ALBANIA

Hereafter is proposed a step-by-step guidelines for implementing MSP in Albania:

1. Data collection on multiple topics

The data collection is essential, as it will anchor the process in the international, national, regional and local context. Particular attention must be given to the following elements:

- ICZM, SEA, EIA, management, planning and enforcement, legislation and institutions at the proper scale (international, national, regional and local)
- Existing and planned policies and strategies at the national, regional, local levels
- Legislation, institutions for ICZM and MSP
- Stakeholders identification
- Research, monitoring, expertise at the national and local levels
- Site data on all relevant sectors (natural, cultural, social, economical)
- Preliminary identification of sites considered as vulnerable, important, impacted or in need of restoration
- Potential impacts of climate change
- Identification of gaps in knowledge, research and monitoring
- Development of complementary research programs to reduce the gaps
- Definition of indicators and setup of a permanent monitoring and evaluation systems
- Consideration of innovative approaches for nature conservation and sustainable development

Box 1 on natural data to be collected

The following data and information are necessary for decision making and planning

Meteorology and local conditions

- Precipitations, wind, temperature, …
- Marine parameters: tide, wave, currents, …
- Geology, sedimentology, geomorphology, tectonic,
- Others to be considered, being sites specific.

Biodiversity

- Community diversity,
- Habitat diversity/ sensitivity,
- Habitat and communities biodiversity loss,
- Incidental mortality,
- Species at risk/ endangered and vulnerable species,
- Invasive species,
- Non indigenous species,
- Genetic integrity
- Charismatic species
- Biodiversity hot spots
- Others to be considered, being sites specific.

Productivity

- Primary and secondary productivity,
- Trophic structure,
- Population productivity,
- Marine species
- stocks status and exploitation,
- Others to be considered, being sites specific.

Marine environmental quality and impacts

- Physical characteristics
- Chemical characteristics
- TDS and organic matter characteristics
- Habitat
- Noise
- Wastes and debris
- Water Pollution
- Sediment Pollution
- Atmospheric Pollution
- Ecotoxicology
- Fishing effort
- Aquaculture and mariculture impacts
- Marine traffic and harbours impact
- Others to be considered, being sites specific.

Box 2 on relevant sector of human activities to be considered

- Fishing: commercial artisanal and industrial, recreational, sport fishing,
- Aquaculture and mariculture,
- Maritime transport: goods, passengers, oil and gas,
- Maritime channels and signalization,
- Oil and gas exploration and exploitation,
- Energy production (wind, waves, alternative and ecological energy sources, ...),
- Mining (sand, gravel, mineral, …),
- Dredging,
- Dredged material disposal,
- Pumping and discharge at sea (sewage and rainwater, cooling, desalination, …),
- Cables and pipelines,
- Offshore structures,
- Recreational activities nearshore and offshore,
- Nautical private boats,
- Conservation areas for natural resources, seascapes,
- Cultural sites (traditional use, shipwrecks, archaeological sites…),
- Military activities, restricted zones,
- Scientific research and bio-prospection,
- Illegal human activities as illegal fishing
- Illegal coastal construction,
- Illegal coastal use such as illegal coastal sand exploitation, illegal wastes/chemical products
- Others to be considered, being sites specific

2. Data organization and availability

A Geographic Information System (GIS) is a system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present spatial or geographic data. GIS applications are tools that allow users to create interactive queries, analyze spatial information, edit data in maps, consider each activity separately and cumulatively to evaluate their impacts, the conflicts between activities and identify solutions for present and future developments while respecting the quality and the productivity of the environment. For the purpose of the study area, different elements could be considered, as follow:

- Develop a GIS system to map the activities
- Develop a free access platform on the area (with maps, references, analysis, conflicts, stakeholders, etc.) for transparency and participation
- Provide an analysis of the present use of the marine environment and of the interactions between land and sea use
- Provide an analysis of the present conditions, status and quality of the marine environment
- Provide a analysis of cumulative impacts
- Provide an analysis of conflicts and compatibilities between activities
- Identify risks when new activities are considered,
- Identify scenarios for the future, select the most appropriate for the area or the sub-areas, develop the planning, identify indicators and a system for permanent follow up and evaluation of the plan and its necessary modifications.

Box 3 Sample on Guidance: The INFOMAP SYSTEM is the UN Mediterranean knowledge platform conceived to provide and share data, information services and knowledge for the benefit of the Mediterranean Action Plan components and Contracting Parties. It is also able to support the Mediterranean Quality Status and the State of Environment Report. Its scope is to:

- Provide access to Reporting system;
- Harmonize data structure and models;
- Create a common catalogue of resources;
- Integrate data with interoperability layer;
- Create a common platform to view, query and analyze data;
- Produce tools to support data & Information dissemination.

- http://www.info-rac.org/en/infomap-system

Box 4 on stakeholders

The stakeholders analysis will have to provide general and detailed information on all the actors at the national, regional and international levels, precising their stakes in the area or the sub areas and defining the best ways for their participation on all the process. The main categories of stakeholders are as follow and details are provided in the technical report associated to these guidelines:

- Administrations (national and local to include line ministries and relevant agencies such as NAPA, NEA, etc),
- Universities and scientific research institutes,
- State companies,
- Private companies,
- Foundations,
- NGOs,
- Citizens,
- Others as needed, being sites specific.

3. Marine Spatial Planning and Management

This phase of the process is certainly the most important, as it will define the vision, the strategic goals for the future. Based on all the data collected and the different scenarios considered, all the stakeholders will have to select one option, define the activities, the management measures, the control and enforcement system, the monitoring, the evaluation and the time frame for implementation with priorities. As well, the monitoring and the definition of indicators will allow to setup alert mechanisms, to define when adjustments are needed and to change if necessary the zoning and the related rules for each activity.

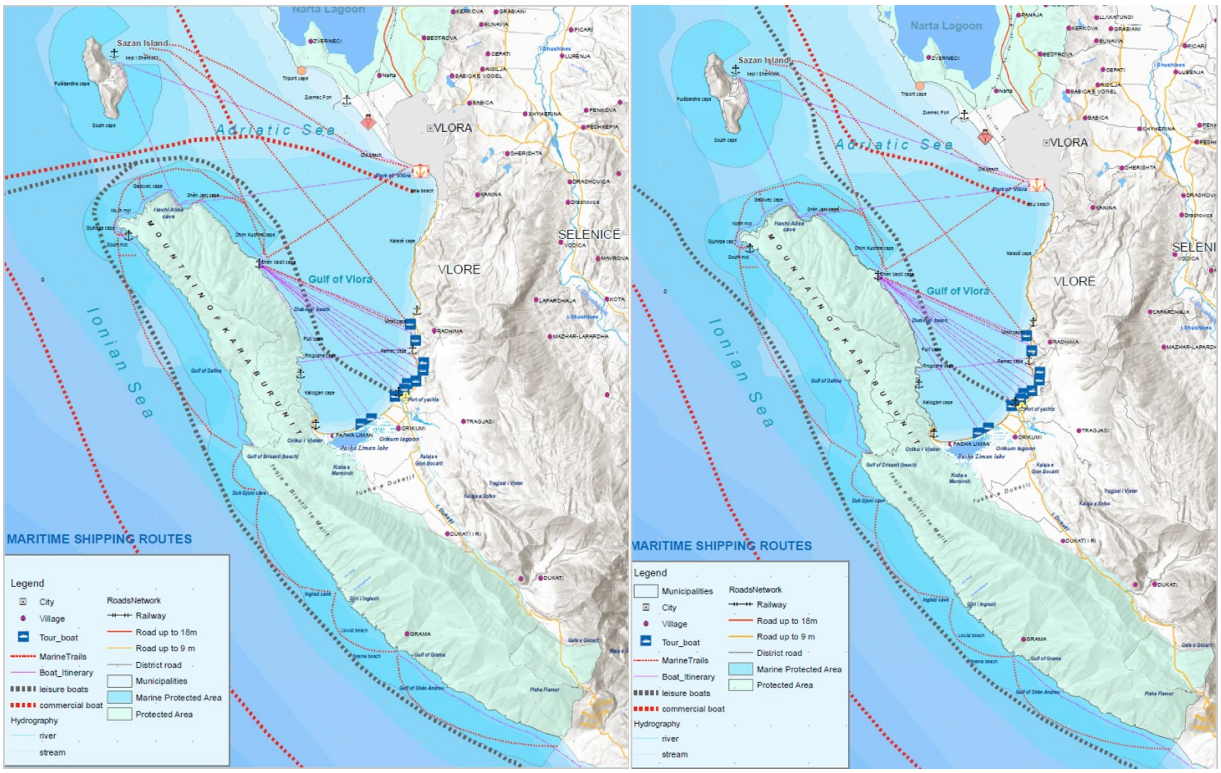
The main elements to consider during this phase areas follow:

- Participatory process is essential
- Develop a vision that define the long-term objectives of the use of the sea, the coastline and the coastal watershed
- First draft of MSP (multi-dimensional zoning, timing, marine cadastre, …)
- Realize a Strategic Environmental Assessment on the proposed draft MSP
- Proposed time frame for implementation
- Monitoring, evaluation and adjustment mechanism
- Emergency situations (pollution, tsunamis, …)

Box 5: Marine spatial planning tools to produce during the process

- Sea use management plans
- Marine cadastre
- Zoning maps and regulations
- Site plans
- Investments plans for infrastructures
- Special management areas
- Regulations
- Surveillance and enforcement (adequate fines and suspension of permit or concession)
- Standards for species, water, sediment
- Permits and concessions for human activities
- Economic instruments related to permits and concessions, creation of an MSP fund
- Administration, creation of special agency
- Development of guidelines, on best environmental practices/codes of practice or conduct
- Monitoring programme
- Network of technical assistance
- Education and awareness
- Information platform
- Empowering and involving the new Blue and Green Tourist generations
- Training and capacity building

Box 6: Sample of two different marine traffic planning in the Strait of Sazan, Vlora bay Albania - Courtesy of "ADRIATIC REGION WORKSHOP ON PSSAs" organized in Tirana on 10-13 December 2019.



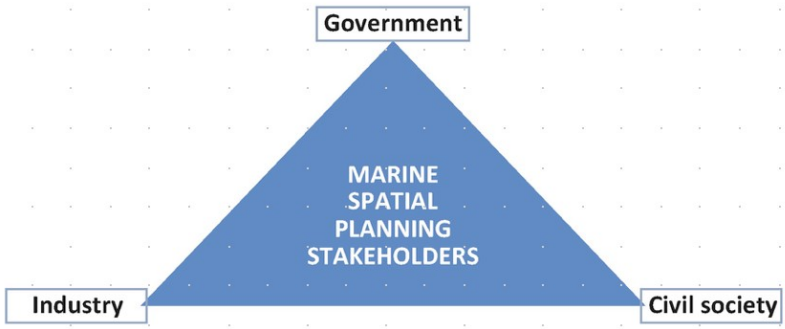
Existing plan: marine traffic across the Strait

Proposal: marine traffic out of the Strait

Box 7 on participatory approach

The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus, 1998) has been ratified by Albania in 2000. The convention describes the necessary mechanisms to set for a proper participation based on transparency and access to information to all Stakeholders.

In MSP, the term 'stakeholder' refers to *any individual, group, or organisation that are or will be affected, involved or interested (positively or negatively)* and can be classified into the following three broad categories:



- Government decision-makers at various levels (i.e. government stakeholders including ministries, state agencies, municipalities and local government);
- Commercial or industry stakeholders representing the key marine sectors operating in the area;
- Civil-society stakeholders represented by the research community, citizen and community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and conservation groups.

Fig 1 MSP stakeholder: To be continued with other schematic illustration in section 4.

Box 8: on monitoring needs (in line with IMAP/MSFD)

- Meteorology
- Sea water chemical monitoring (with transects in direction along the coast and transects in coast-wide direction)
- Current, tide and waves monitoring
- Allochthonous and autochthonous sea bottom floor organic matter (AFDW) and biochemical protocol)
- Allochthonous and autochthonous sea water/marine plants organic matter (AFDW and biochemical protocol)
- Eutrophication - Chlorophyll-a concentration in water column and sediment
- Eutrophication - key nutrients concentration in water column and sediment
- Monitoring of marine benthic communities (sandy sea bottom floor)
- Monitoring of marine benthic communities (rocky sea bottom floor)
- Marine plants meadows evaluation, mapping and monitoring
- *Posidonia oceanica* and marine algae monitoring like Cystoseiraceae (Carlit index and others)
- Non Indigenous Species NIS and Invasive Species monitoring campaigns
- Charismatic species census (Marine mammals, Sea Birds and Marine reptiles, ...)
- Visual fish census monitoring protocol
- Demersal Fish stocks evaluation

Box 9: on Sample Guidance: web link of GEF_Adriatic GAP assessment & monitoring programmes:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1fC5bWLstP_25kLYVANQcyywohIsib_ba

provides solid guidelines to follow for marine monitoring purpose taking into consideration that some of these guidelines are approved by government.

4. Implementing the MSP (continuous mechanism)

When all the previous steps have been completed and the plan agreed upon, it is time for implementation, which is a continuous process, including permanent monitoring and regular evaluation. The follow up and administration, better at the local level (regional or local structure), will be conducted by a team of professional including legal, institutional, scientific, social, economic, educational and communication expertise, supervised by a board including representatives of the main concerned ministries or administrations.

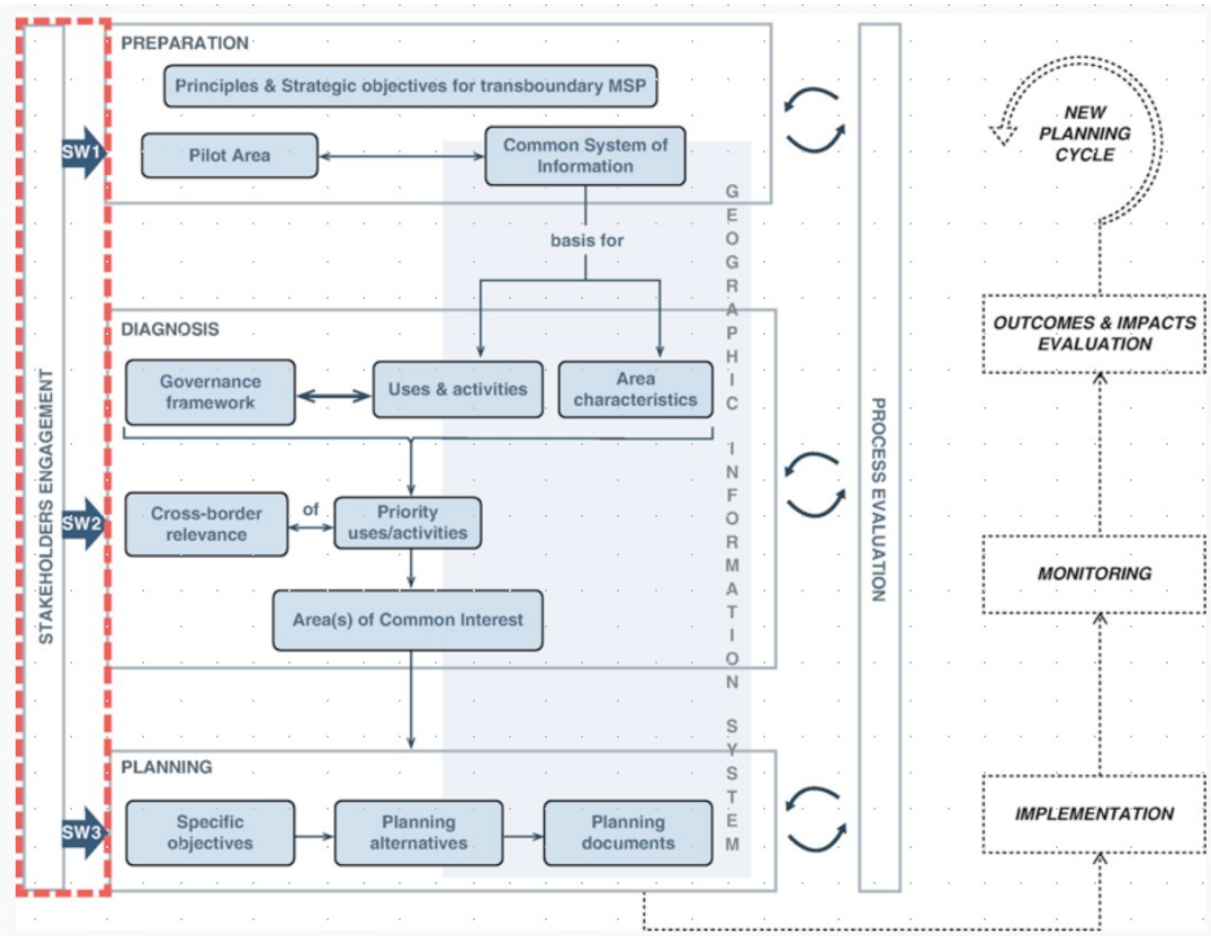


Fig 2. Phases of the MSP cycle illustrating how the participation of stakeholders informed the entire process of the Transboundary Planning in the European Atlantic (TPEA) project. (SW=Stakeholder Workshop) (Twomey and O'Mahony, 2014)

The main elements to set in place for the implementation are listed hereafter:

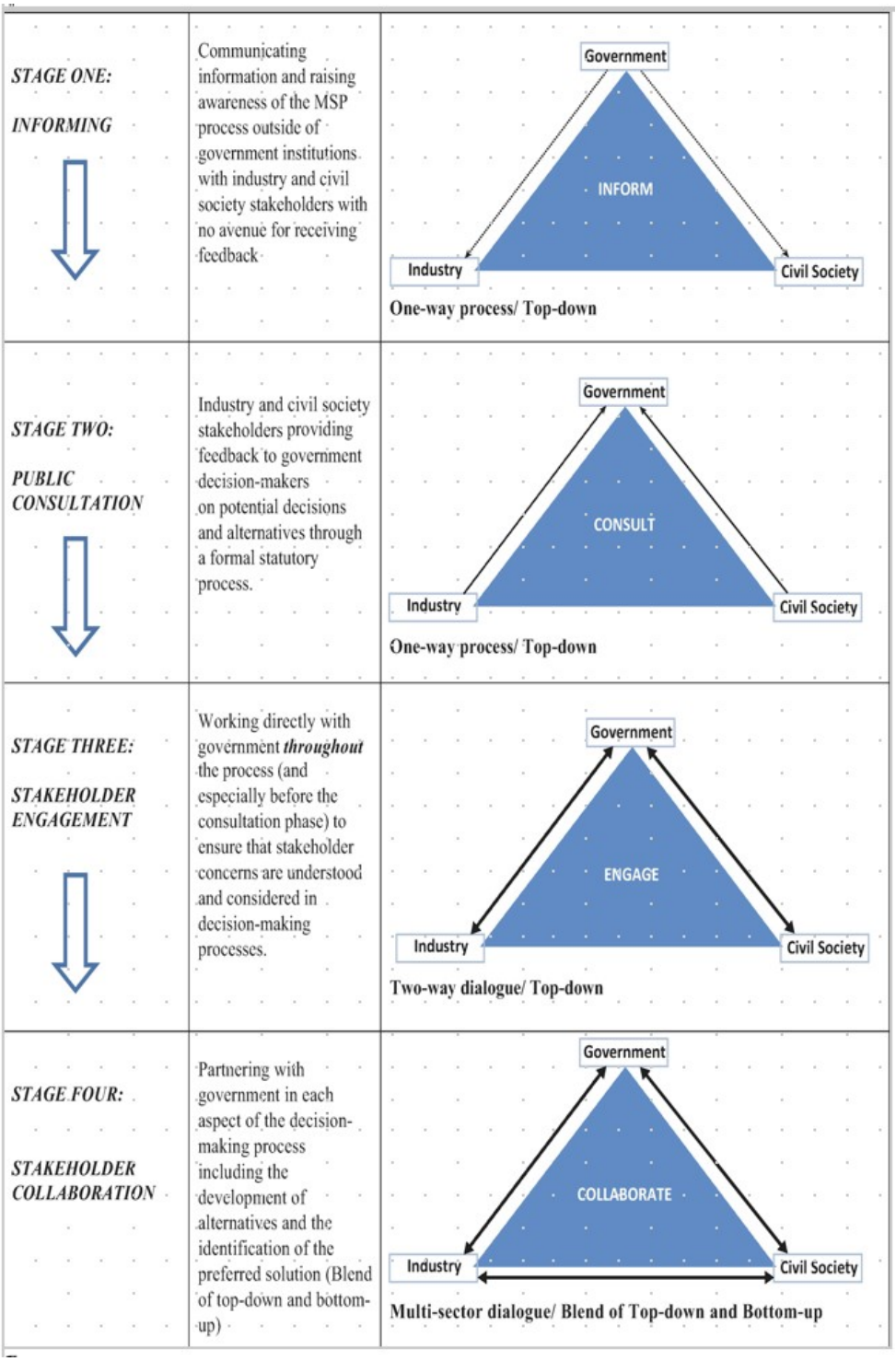
- Setup a permanent participatory mechanism;
- Identification of planning and management objectives linked to the strategic vision;
- Identification of the managerial team/institution for the implementation and follow up;
- Identification of the legal and institutional mechanisms/framework for the implementation and follow up;
- Mapping and physical delineation of the zoning of activities in the marine environment;
- Definition of regulations in each zone;
- Communication and awareness on the plan and management measures;
- Time frame and budget (3 to 5 years to be defines in a Manual of MSP);
- Set up a complete monitoring system (natural, cultural, social and economical) in line with IMAP/MSFD; (frequency TBD in a Manual of MSP)
- Evaluation (financial every year, implementation every 3 to 5 years to be defined in a Manual of MSP);
- Revision of the MSP (every 3 to 5 years and when considered appropriate in relation with specific events or changes in sea use to be defined in a Manual of MSP).

The following is some combined illustration on MSP stakeholder's participation Guidance

Table 1 List of key international and European instruments relevant to the European Atlantic that require stakeholder participation.

INTERNAL	EUROPEAN UNION
Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992) and Agenda 21	Atlantic Strategy and Action Plan
Convention on Biological Diversity (CDB)	Directive 2014/89/EU on Maritime Spatial
OSPAR Convention and the North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy	Directive 2003/4/EC on Public Access to Environmental Information
Aarchus Convention	Directive 2003/35/EC on Public Participation

Fig.3 The Continuum of stakeholder participation (using the categories of industry, civil society and government—the latter can include different levels of authority from local, regional to national) in European MSP with various stages ranging from information provision to collaboration between all categories of stakeholders. The arrows represent the flow of information and the direction of interactions between stakeholders.



• Encourages ownership of the plan, engenders trust among stakeholders and decision-makers and voluntary compliance with rules and regulations.
• Improves understanding of the complexity (spatial, temporal) and human influences of the marine management area.
• Develops a mutual and shared understanding about the problems and challenges in the management area.
• Increases understanding of underlying (often sector-oriented) desires, perceptions and interests that stimulate and/or prohibit integration of policies in the management area.
• Examines existing and potential compatibility and/or conflicts of multiple use objectives of the management area.
• Aids the generation of new options, consensus and solutions that may not have been considered individually.
• Expands and diversifies the capacity of the planning team, in particular through the inclusion of secondary and tertiary information (e.g. local knowledge and traditions).

Table 2 Participatory mechanisms proposed by the TPEA stakeholders and justifications for their use in an engagement process

Participatory Mechanism	Justification
Identify organisational champions	Committed individuals with access to extensive networks can support engagement efforts of planning team
Involve politicians	Builds trust and allows for in-depth discussion
Use of social media	Twitter and LinkedIn are the new media of choice for many professionals
Stakeholder forum	Potential to cater for numerous interest groups
Public campaign	Means of raising awareness and encouraging involvement
Public meetings	Provides participants with a voice and an opportunity to contribute, and planning team to cover any technical aspects to plan
Visualization (GIS/ MSP Simulation/ Communication and advocacy)	Can be novel tools to initiate and facilitate discussion
Online forum	A means of communicating FAQs and preferred media for many
Roadmap/strategy for engagement	Sets out where and how stakeholders can get involved