



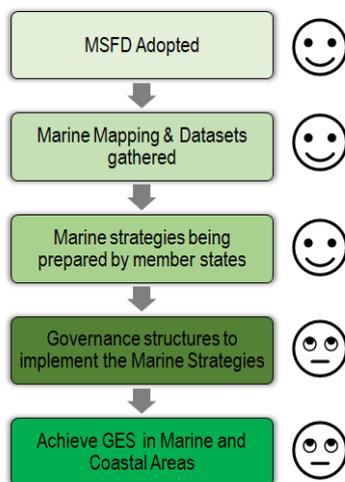
POLICY BRIEF 2020/1

Policy Brief: Governing Land Sea Interaction

SUMMARY

The range and intensity of uses and activities in the land-sea interface has grown significantly in the recent past. This growth presents challenges to the health of our ocean and coastal habitats and it has also led to conflicts between users of coastal and marine resources. In addition, the negative impacts of climate change phenomena is particularly evident in marine and coastal areas. Calls for more sustainable management of the marine and coastal environment were addressed in the EU by the adoption of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) in 2008. This Directive is the legislative framework that requires EU Member States to adopt an ecosystem approach to managing human impacts on the marine environment in order to ensure the sustainable use of marine resources, to maintain biodiversity and achieve Good Environmental Status (GES).

Research undertaken in the Ocean and Coastal Governance COST Network has revealed that significant progress has been made since the adoption of the MSFD with a much higher level of awareness of the challenges facing our marine and coastal areas. Extensive data sets on marine resources and biodiversity levels have been gathered, marine areas have been mapped and this information has been used to prepare and inform Marine Spatial Plans in each EU Member State. The need for effective governance is also recognised and member states have developed new mechanisms to improve their marine and coastal management systems. However, the COST research also demonstrates that further improvements are required at multi-level governance scales and between different regulatory domains at Member State level to ensure that GES can be delivered.



KEY RESULTS

- Governance of land sea interaction is challenging as natural and social systems are dynamic and closely interacting and the intensity of use is increasing.
- Land sea interaction is firmly on the policy agenda in member states due to EU initiatives. However, limited marine and coastal management experience has led to a noticeable level of uniformity in governance approaches despite heterogeneous coastal conditions.
- While notable advances have been made, fragmentation in the governance with overlaps and voids among actors and structures remains.
- This fragmentation is often addressed by national coordination bodies that lack vertical integration.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Governance mechanisms should ensure a continuation in marine data collection, processing and sharing through interoperable systems.
- Current fragmentation should be overcome by creating more inclusive and transparent coordination mechanisms.
- Best practices should be shared without forgetting existing particularities.
- Existing governance structures should be reviewed to make sure that they facilitate the effective implementation of the adopted marine and coastal management plans

THE CONTEXT

Land sea interaction is an emerging topic of governance and planning. For a long time, the marine part of the coastal zone has not been the centre of interest. With Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning a powerful agenda was put in place. However, it still requires a lot of governance innovations, to adapt to the special coastal conditions.

The following characteristics are of central importance to understand governance of land sea interaction:

- The land and the sea are closely and complexly connected social-ecological systems
- Interdependencies characterise land sea interaction
- The interaction of heterogeneous actors from many different sectors is a feature of land sea interaction.
- The coastal realm is characterised by a high level of ecological and social dynamism which requires the constant evolution of governance.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Governance of land sea interaction does not have a very long history and is a challenge, as natural and social systems are dynamic with close inter relationships. Many actors are using the realm jointly and the intensity of use is increasing. The EU are playing a central role in putting the governance of land sea interaction firmly on the policy agenda in different countries. Notable advances have been made but fragmentation in the management of ocean resources and ecosystems remains both between and within Member States. Attempts have been made to address these deficiencies by preparing overarching marine spatial plans (frequently at national level) and developing mechanisms (such as high level co-ordination committees) to ensure better integration between government ministries and other relevant agencies. A uniformity in the approaches taken is

visible among member states with limited experience of ocean and coastal management. These uniform management approaches ignore the fact that the scale and diversity of marine and coastal environments differ significantly throughout the EU. Evidence has emerged in the research which demonstrates that some Member States are incorporating MSP governance structures into existing systems to meet the required deadlines under MSFD and to enable the implementation of national level MSP plans that are under preparation. However, it is not clear if these new governance structures are adaptations of existing systems or new layers of management. The link between effective governance and GES is clear'. Therefore, the governance structures will strongly influence if the new MSP plans can be implemented and if GES can be achieved.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The development of comprehensive data sets on marine and coastal resources as well as extensive seabed mapping has helped to raise awareness of the need for ecosystem-based management of the marine environment and to foster knowledge-based management of marine and coastal areas. It is recommended that data sets are continuously monitored and updated to further observation initiatives of environmental and socio-economic processes in the land-sea interface by taking into account spatial scales at all

levels - EU, regional and local. Effective governance mechanisms for integrated data collection, processing technologies and knowledge sharing infrastructure that are interoperable across European sea basins and member states shall be installed.

The current unfavorably high levels of coastal and marine governance fragmentation and the resulting lack of coordination among the different responsible authorities



shall be overcome. This could be achieved by developing broad based coordination mechanisms that are more inclusive, transparent and which link all governance levels (between member states, national, regional and local level).

At EU level, best practice governance arrangements should be established which enable integrated governance across all levels and which facilitate engagement by all users of coastal and marine areas (including coastal communities and NGO's). The best practice guidelines should also address the need to adapt governance structures to take account of diverse marine environments and member states with large marine areas (and long coastlines) and those with more limited marine and coastal resources. These best practice guidelines should provide assistance to member states when reviewing and reforming their existing governance structures for coastal and marine environments.

At member state level, all member states should review their existing governance structures to ensure that they are fit for purpose and that they will facilitate the implementation of their adopted national level marine spatial plans. Detailed reviews of existing governance

arrangements may reveal a need for new mechanisms. Examples of mechanisms that support more collaborative management across scales of government include the establishment of cross-border and international (particularly basin-scale) advisory councils and clusters of experts, with representatives of the relevant governmental bodies, academic institutions, private sectors and NGOs. At member state level, a good practice for optimizing local, regional and national-scale cooperation is the establishment of regional working groups and national commissions on coastal and maritime-related affairs, again with the participation of all stakeholders involved. However, new mechanisms and approaches should only be introduced at member state level following the review of existing governance structures and to address gaps in oversight.

All member states should also ensure that European Green Deal priorities with respect to developing green energy sources, preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity and realising a zero pollution ambition are reflected in their plans and strategies for marine and coastal management.

REFERENCES

This policy brief was particularly informed by a special issue, developed within the working group land sea interaction of the Ocean Gov Cost Action: Schlüter, Achim, Kristof Van Assche, Anna-Katharina Hornidge and Nataša Văidianu. 2020. "Land-sea interactions and coastal development: An evolutionary governance perspective." *Marine Policy* 112:103801.

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ABOUT OCEANGOV

The European COST Action "Ocean Governance for Sustainability - Challenges, Options and the Role of Science" comprises a unique, transdisciplinary network of 29 European countries.

The network aims to establish an integrative vision and a series of approaches that informs research and future policy directions on sustainable ocean governance within regional waters, and the open ocean in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

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