

# A NORTH SEA PERSPECTIVE ON SHIPPING, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS IN MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING: **the NorthSEE project**



## Background

The North Sea contains unique nature conservation interests and it is one of the busiest areas in the world for shipping and offshore energy production (oil, gas, wind, wave and tidal).

To balance the often competing interests of different users in the context of environmental protection, Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) promotes sustainable development of the sea. It is important that all the countries around a particular sea area work together to achieve this.

For the North Sea, the countries surrounding it are forerunners when it comes to MSP. Most of them have already developed their own Plans using their own methods and processes but sharing approaches and methods between countries can be a valuable way to improve and share best practice. The NorthSEE project, which runs until December 2018, aims to encourage coordination between MSP authorities in the North Sea Region (NSR). The project is made up of a number of themed activities grouped in 'Work Packages' (WP), which will improve coordination

across three specific areas - environment, shipping routes and energy infrastructure.

All findings and recommendations will be published, which will inform national MSP processes to ensure ongoing transnational MSP dialogue beyond the project's lifetime.

## Objectives

The objectives of NorthSEE are to :

1. Develop a multi-level MSP coordination framework across the North Sea Region (NSR)
2. Develop an information and planning platform to share evidence for MSP
3. Increase stakeholders' participation in transnational MSP
4. Ensure transnational coherence in :
  - Environmental protection approaches and objectives in MSP (WP 3)
  - Shipping routes (WP 4)
  - Offshore energy infrastructure in NSR (WP 5)

## Project approach

All activities of the project are based on:

- **The ecosystem-based approach:** by agreeing on minimum criteria on how to apply the ecosystem-based approach (i.e. promote conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way)
- **Data-driven analyses:** by compiling national and transnational data for planning on shipping routes, energy corridors, MPA network, using analytical methods and tools
- **Stakeholder involvement:** by developing and testing joint consultation processes on North Sea topics with national public bodies and other NSR-wide stakeholders

### Activities

#### Sectoral work packages

Focus on three main transnational issues relevant to Maritime Spatial Planning:

- ▲ Shipping.
- ▲ Energy.
- ▲ Environment.



#### Integrated MSP work package

Focus on coordination and coherence among national Maritime Spatial Plans and planning processes.



#### Step 1: Analyse status quo

#### Step 2: Analyse trends

#### Step 3: Develop planning solutions

#### MSP Challenge

A computer simulation game on MSP is used as a method to learn from each other and gather stakeholder input.



#### Infoquarium

Online platform for sharing information on MSP in the North Sea Region.



#### Result: Improved coordination

The 3-step approach will lead to:

- ▲ Recommendations for MSP planning processes.
- ▲ Suggestions for creating synergies and preventing incompatibilities among national MSP plans.

## Project duration

April 2016 - December 2018

## Project contribution

Total budget € 4,049,578

European Regional Development Fund contribution € 1,894,100

## Partners

### MSP authorities

-  Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency
-  Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment
-  Ministry of Transport
-  Scottish Government (Marine Scotland)
-  Ministry of Climate and Environment
-  Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management

### Other partners

-  Norwegian Environment Agency
-  Institute of Marine Research
-  Aalborg University
-  University of Oldenburg
-  World Maritime University
-  Breda University of Applied Sciences
-  Province of North-Holland

## Project activities

Marine Scotland is the lead partner for the activities around Energy infrastructure in MSP, known as Work Package 5. This includes establishing the current state of energy provisions within the North Sea and identifying transnational incompatibilities, analysing policies and future trends, and identifying interconnections possibilities and on-land grid connections.

