

HOW TO ARRIVE AT A REGIONAL VISION OF OCEAN GOVERNANCE USING MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING TECHNIQUES

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Marine spatial planning (MSP) is a tool that enables integrated, forward-looking and consistent decision-making on the use of the sea. It seeks to organize and regulate patterns of sea use for the benefit of users, the environment and society as a whole. A sound understanding of the sea use patterns and spatial behaviors of multiple stakeholders must serve as a basis for the management strategy. MSP is both a framework and a process for more integrated decision-making about uses of marine space. There are five basic elements of marine spatial planning: 1. Establish the context within which the management process will be implemented; 2. Analysis and plan preparation; 3. Implementation; 4. Monitoring of plan performance; and 5. Evaluation and adaptation. Similarly, the objectives of marine spatial management typically focus on five main themes: 1. Sustainable use of resources; 2. Marine conservation; 3. Optimization of space use; 4. Avoidance and resolution of spatial conflicts; and 5. Enhancing the living standards and quality of life of coastal communities.

The basis for proper MSP should focus on the operable word “spatial” which put another way is place- or area-based and includes the range of activities. Although MSP should apply to match ecosystem boundaries, it is often limited to political jurisdictions with many levels of government and regulation within these boundaries. Too large a scale can result in large science and data gaps, generalized stakeholder involvement, and vague planning areas. Too small a scale can result in unmatched ecosystem boundaries and a lack of larger physical ocean boundary and human use context. Applying MSP on a regional scale creates a platform for addressing different pressures, opportunities and knowledge base, as well as aligning with large marine ecosystem boundaries.

A key step in marine spatial planning is the development of spatial sea use scenarios using proper baseline assessment data and stakeholder participation. Communication and planning tools are often a first step to realizing cooperative action and a shared vision. This activity assumes that there will be differences within and among each sector, but

that articulating the range of visions will prove helpful for informing regional ocean governance and stewardship.

This panel will discuss the methods, tools and best management practices for applying MSP at regional scales. This visioning process will include the development of baseline ecological, economic and social assessments and visioning processes for appropriate principle setting and stakeholder involvement. Participants will be engaged to analyze how the basic principles of marine spatial planning including best management practices and lessons learned, as presented by the panelists, could be applied in their region. Participants will be surveyed on familiarity with these techniques and trained in the methods.

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