The emerging field of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) – the extension of land use planning to marine space – is becoming increasingly important as the seas become used for more activities such as renewable energy. As competition for space and resources grows, the development of innovative, coordinated solutions to manage the use of the seas, avoid conflict and promote sustainable development is vital.

The University of Liverpool MSP team works with a range of external organisations to support effective marine planning using ecosystem-based approaches and stakeholder participation. We help clients by supporting the production of marine plans that meet business needs while protecting the environment and acknowledging other users of the sea, such as commercial fishing and shipping companies, marine conservationists and port developers.

Our expertise

We can provide specialist, evidence-based advice, informed by the latest research, in the following areas:

- European and national legislation on MSP
- Transboundary cooperation
- Land-sea interaction and sustainable coastal development
- Current and future marine developments
- Understanding wider policy frameworks.

Our services

We offer support across the lifetime of a project, including:

- Scenario building to help scope potential projects
- Identifying possible challenges or objections
- Improving stakeholder engagement
- Ensuring good governance that is open, inclusive and reflects policy
- Reviewing planning documents
- Evaluating existing processes.
Case study

Client: European Commission

Challenge: In 2014 the European Parliament introduced a new directive on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) meaning all coastal EU Member States are required to prepare cross-sectoral maritime spatial plans for their waters by 2021, with the aim of better coordinating the various activities that take place at sea. MSP plays an important role in promoting sustainable development and growth in the maritime sector, while also ensuring that maritime activities are consistent with the ecosystem-based approach to marine management.

Solution: The University of Liverpool is part of a collaborative project, the European MSP Platform, which was launched by the European Commission to provide a single interface to draw together MSP knowledge and expertise from across Europe, and make it available in readily accessible, implementation-oriented formats.

Working with s.Pro – sustainable projects, a project management and maritime policy consultancy based in Berlin, the University of Liverpool’s MSP expert team are developing a range of important resources. These include contributions to an interactive online portal (www.msp-platform.eu) to help users find relevant experiences and knowledge to craft effective maritime spatial plans. The team also provides an expert service for the Member States to support the implementation of the MSP Directive and is supporting technical studies, writing guidance documents, advising on MSP practice and planning, and hosting workshops and conferences to help with development of MSP plans.

Impact: The project will aid the European Commission and coastal Member States with meeting their MSP development objectives and timescales. As well as increasing knowledge sharing and cooperation across borders, this coordinated approach will, ultimately, lead to improved management of the sea and ensure sustainable blue growth in the future.

Why work with us?

• **Well-connected:** We provide access to a wide network of dedicated, international MSP experts and maritime bodies, including government authorities, as well as a wealth of knowledge and practical guidance from EU Member States currently engaging in MSP initiatives.

• **Specialist:** Our team has particular expertise in MSP in Atlantic coastal countries (UK, Ireland, France, Spain and Portugal) and the wider implementation of MSP throughout Europe.

• **Independent:** We offer independent expertise based on the latest research and good practice in MSP.

• **Cross-disciplinary:** Our team boasts a unique combination of scientific and policy expertise, drawing on specialist knowledge from across the University to support our work.

"The European MSP Platform’s services allow officials, planners and other stakeholders interested in MSP to build on what is already available, avoid duplication of efforts, assist in capacity building and foster development of new good practices."

Angela Schultz-Zehden, Managing Director
s.Pro - sustainable projects GmbH and Contract Lead Manager for the EU MSP Platform