The role of ‘Regions’ in North Sea MSP

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• Cross-border and transboundary MSP with particular focus on:
  • Shipping
  • Energy
  • Ecology

• Role of ‘Regions’ in MSP to add context to marine planning work
  • MSP at different stages at national and sub-national levels
  • Clarify roles and interests of sub-national actors in MSP at all levels

➢ What’s needed for these actors to participate effectively in emerging MSP processes?
‘Regions’: many and varied!
MSP in North Sea countries

• No single approach - even within countries!
• Pre/post MSP Directive – different drivers & timescales evident
• Sub-national approach to spatial planning evident: mainly terrestrial but some marine examples too
• Relationship of Regions to national MSP Authority:
  • National approach can be perceived as ‘top-down’, centralised and lacking recognition of local priorities
  • Frustration!
Draft report in preparation

• “Regions” = ?
  • Eurostat NUTS criteria are a starting point but national divisions for MSP don’t always match up

• Consider role of “local authorities” in MSP
  • Also known as Provinces, Councils, Municipalities, etc.
  • N.B. Not the same things and operating at different levels across sea basin

• Consideration of previous/current role in planning in coastal and offshore areas (if any)

• Drawing on experiences gained so far

• Case studies: Shetland (Scotland) plus another

• Tools to address identified challenges
Preliminary findings & suggestions

• Complex picture:
  • MSP is not always well understood or at top of Regional bodies’ priorities. :: opportunities for engagement missed?

• Early MSP Plans & review of processes offer opportunities for ‘lessons learned’:
  • Iterative process to facilitate greater involvement over time

• Use existing representation mechanisms better
  • Sub-national, National & Supra-national
  • Identify links between MSP & regional interests: land/sea interactions, policy alignment, etc.
  • Exchange of knowledge & experience
Tools to address challenges

• What do North Sea Regions need to be better able to participate in Maritime Spatial Planning?
  • Direct engagement with national process, if currently lacking?
  • Clear explanation of roles & priorities? (In both directions)
  • Better understanding of where Regions fit in national picture?
  • National forum for exchange of ideas & views?
  • International forum to facilitate transboundary MSP?
  • Resources? (Human, financial, legislation, goodwill)
  • Capacity-building?
  • Time? RE-INVESTMENT in human capital over time
MSP Challenge!
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