Fostering Ecosystem-Based Marine Spatial Planning in Campania

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Research context

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is the main governance process that ideally balances economic, ecological and socio-cultural goals through the regulation of human uses at sea. With the global and regional conservation and green energy targets ahead, there is an urgent need to better align MSP and strategic conservation planning, hence the operationalisation of an ecosystem approach to MSP. The EU-funded project MarinePlan supports the implementation of ecosystem-based MSP through the development of a Decision Support System (DSS). To inform the DSS, research has been conducted on the effectiveness of current governance regimes across eight European study sites, including Campania. Through an institutional and policy audit, supported by interviews and a questionnaire survey with key marine actors, detailed information has been developed on the barriers and enablers of adaptive marine governance in each region.

Governance targets and objectives

A key objective for the Campania region is to assess and evaluate the implementation of the regional Marine Spatial Plan. The regional Plan would regulate and enhance, for tourist-recreational purposes, the 450km of regional coast. The Plan fits into the broader scenario of the Integrated Maritime Policy of the EU. Additionally, the National Strategy for Biodiversity 2030 outlines the objective of protecting at least 30% of the marine environment. However, such ambitions are subject to a range of governance challenges. These include confusion regarding the responsibilities of regional planners. These challenges, as well as proposed solutions to overcome them, are listed on the page below.

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Barriers to achieving targets and recommendations

Barrier #1 – Ineffective stakeholder consultation processes regarding the design, implementation and management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

Recommendation – To enhance cooperation, higher levels of integration among institutional frameworks must be facilitated. This should involve better framing MPAs within the process of National MSP. This should be supported by the introduction of legislation to make public consultations a mandatory component of MPAs. This should ensure that all MPAs undergo formal consultation processes with relevant stakeholders.

Barrier #2 – High levels of cumulative pressures are resulting in conflicts among competing users of the marine environment

Recommendation – To address conflicts among competing users in Campania, an adaptive management process that balances the interests of multiple sectors should be established. Such a process should aim to develop a shared vision for sustainable maritime space use in the region. This should be supported by the co-development of a shared set of guiding principles that can be updated regularly to address new pressures, scientific data, and stakeholder concerns.

Barrier #3 – Lack of ecological connectivity, stemming to a failure to identify and protect ecological corridors, within the Campania MPA network

Recommendation – Include different connectivity facets – e.g., physical, genetic, functional – in the development of a coherent MPA network. To develop such a network, robust data must be collected at adequate resolution. This should be done by conducting a scientific assessment to identify key ecological corridors that link different MPAs and critical habitats. Additionally, the most ecologically sensitive areas should be mapped, so that appropriate management measures can be defined.

Barrier #4 – Lack of personnel with stable employment positions to support MPA directors in design, management and monitoring activities

Recommendation – Develop recruitment programs in order to hire qualified personnel at all levels, including in policy development and enforcement positions. Simplifying bureaucratic procedures for management agencies could free up staff time for fieldwork and monitoring tasks. Additionally, the government could promote monitoring programs to be entrusted to various marine research institutions.

Barrier #5 – Limited political will or commitment to develop adaptive marine

Recommendation – Mobilise public support and align political incentives with sustainable marine policies. This can be achieved by identifying political figures who can act as champions for the marine environment. Such leaders can develop new engagement networks and create adaptation roadmaps.

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More information

To read more on MarinePlan's recommendations for Campania, click on the below links to an ArcGIS StoryMap, Deliverable reports, and a publication presenting an EB-MSP assessment tool:

ArcGIS StoryMap [English, Italian]

'Fostering ecosystem-based MSP in Campania'

Deliverable 4.1

'Report on existing policies and institutions'

Deliverable 4.2

'Report on adaptive capacity of governance'

EB-MSP Assessment Tool

'Assessment tool to address implementation challenges of EBM principles in MSP processes'

References

ArcGIS StoryMap [English] – https://arcg.is/WfGyz1
ArcGIS StoryMap [Italian] – https://arcg.is/0GTuKX0
Deliverable 4.1 – doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10829632
Deliverable 4.2 – doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13862281
EB-MSP Assessment Tool – doi.org/10.1038/s43247-024-01975-7

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