



# MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING



# MARISMA

Enabling Sustainable Ocean Use  
in the Benguela Current Region

## WHAT IS MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING?

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is a decision-making process that guides where and when human activities occur in the ocean. Making sure the right activity takes place in the right area helps the ocean economy to grow sustainably – benefitting humans and the environment alike.

## HOW DOES MSP WORK?

MSP helps sectoral decision-makers to plan in a more complementary way. It reveals spatial conflicts and synergies between uses, and it encourages the shared use of marine areas to benefit as many industries as possible. MSP also helps to maintain a healthy ecosystem by integrating conservation objectives for marine biodiversity, which is a prerequisite for sustainable ocean development.

MSP is an integrative process that engages a wide range of stakeholders. Government departments, industry, NGOs and communities cooperate in working towards an agreed marine plan that is supported by as many stakeholders as possible and implemented by public authorities.

## WHY MSP?

- Saves time and money for investors and developers by giving clear guidance on activities and areas to consider or avoid.
- Encourages shared use of busy areas to benefit as many industries as possible.
- Ensures that developments consider marine life and the natural environment from the start.
- Enables marine users and coastal communities to be actively involved in planning and plan implementation.
- Integrates with Coastal Zone Management and planning on land.

## HOW DO WE MAKE A MARINE SPATIAL PLAN?

Drawing up a marine spatial plan involves a preparatory, a drafting and an implementation phase. Each of these brings opportunity for engaging a wide range of stakeholders. Descriptive and analytical data and information are used at each stage, initially to assess the geographical, economic and policy context of the plan and to draw up its strategic objectives. Later stages analyse potential conflicts and synergies in the planning area and consider spatial solutions. These are then translated into spatial regulations, to be implemented by public authorities. MSP is an ongoing process that involves regular evaluation and adaptation of the plan.

## WHAT DOES A MARINE SPATIAL PLAN CONTAIN?

A marine spatial plan consists of text and maps. It contains spatial regulations that set out which activities are encouraged where in the area. Permits or licences for marine uses are a way of implementing the regulations.



### Preparatory Phase

- Assessing the context
- Drawing up strategic and specific objectives

Stakeholder Engagement  
Data and Information

### Drafting Phase

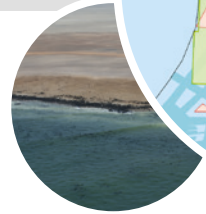
- Analyse conflicts and synergies
- Consider alternative spatial solutions
- Draft and finalise the plan

Stakeholder Engagement  
Data and Information

### Implementation Phase

- Implement the plan
- Monitor and evaluate

Stakeholder Engagement  
Data and Information



## WHAT DOES A MARINE SPATIAL PLAN DO?

- Sets out priorities and directions for future development within a planning area.
- Encourages the development of marine industries.
- Ensures that environmental protection is incorporated into marine decision-making.
- Helps marine users understand the best locations for their activities, including where new developments may be appropriate.
- Provides a transparent framework for decision-making.

## WHAT ARE THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF MSP?

- Ecosystem-based: balancing ecological, economic, and social objectives towards sustainable development
- Integrated: across sectors and agencies, and among levels of government
- Area-based
- Participatory: marine users and relevant stakeholders are actively involved in the process
- Adaptive: an ongoing process, learning from experience
- Strategic and anticipatory: focused on the long-term

## HOW IS MSP RELATED TO OTHER OCEAN MANAGEMENT MEASURES?

Not all challenges of ocean use can be resolved by spatial management. MSP is therefore often complemented by other measures such as marine protected areas, voluntary agreements, or temporary restrictions on activities. Integrated coastal zone management and land use planning also need to work hand in hand with MSP to ensure that land and ocean are managed in a connected way.







# MARISMA

Benguela Current Marine Spatial  
Management and Governance Project

This brochure is made available through the MARISMA project which is a partnership between the Benguela Current Commission (BCC), its member states Angola, Namibia and South Africa and the government of Germany in pursuit of the sustainable development of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem.

The cooperation project supports the BCC and its member states in maximizing socio-economic benefits of the ocean whilst ensuring the safeguarding of the marine ecosystem's health and maintenance of marine services provision. The project's approach to enable sustainable ocean use in the Benguela Current region focuses on implementing MSP and moving the region's Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) "from maps to action" through linking scientific information to MSP.

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