

MSPACE Knowledge Sharing and Future Planning Workshop: Wales

Report

Draft version: November 6, 2023



MSPACE

This report has been prepared by the University of Essex with materials and evidence supplied via the cooperation of the SMMR MSPACE project partnership. We thank these partners for their participation and collaboration in compiling and sharing information for this report, as well as in the MSPACE Project in general.

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Background

Two workshops were held for Wales. The first Wales Workshop took place online via Teams with the MSPACE Team located in Plymouth at the Plymouth Marine Laboratory on September 25, 2023, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Karen Robinson, the case lead for Wales who is from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), was present with five colleagues from NRW working in the marine space including senior specialists, advisors for coastal ecosystems, habitats, climate change, marine plan implementation, natural resource management and marine evidence. Nine MSPACE presenters/organisers were present.

The second Wales workshop took place online via Teams with the MSPACE Team on November 6, 2023, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Karen Robinson, the case lead from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), was present as well as Fiona Trappe (Seas the Opportunity, North Wales) as well as 10 other stakeholders. Seven MSPACE presenters/organisers were present.

The presentation format for both workshops was similar with a general overview of the MSPACE project followed by a presentation of WPs 1-3. The second workshop included for the first time a presentation of WP-4 and the Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) tool that will be developed to build scenarios.

Presentations took place in the morning and early afternoon (WPs1-3). Presenters solicited feedback from the participants throughout the presentations which was readily given by participants in Workshop 1, and fewer participants providing feedback in Workshop 2. This feedback was gathered by each WP presenter and through note taking by Pat Danahey Janin and Océane Marcone during the presentations. The meetings were recorded and transcribed to help with precision.

The workshop presentations sought to accomplish the following:

- Present an overview of MSPACE, followed by the outcomes of WP1 - Climate smart marine planning, WP2 – Governance maps, values, and preferences for the region, WP3 – Economic input-output model applied to the maritime sector. In Workshop 2, to present WP4 and how the MCDA tool will be developed.
- Obtain feedback from the participants on the utility of the work, possible specialized reports geared towards regional preoccupations and priorities, additional data sources and potential future representations of the governance maps. This feedback helps work towards the MSPACE project central goal (triple bottom line): advising policy makers regarding climate-smart, economically viable and socially acceptable marine planning strategies.

It is worth noting that the Wales case study has been difficult to develop due to the unavailability of stakeholders and their inability to prioritise MSPACE over other projects or demands. Therefore, to facilitate communication, a shorter workshop of presentations only was proposed for the NRW staff as a start to open the line of communication on the MSPACE project. The second similar workshop was set up for November 6, 2023, to present to a wider audience.

Workshop Presentation Feedback

WP1 Feedback

Following the WP1 presentation on how the MSPACE project seeks to deliver a decision support system to enable climate-smart marine spatial planning, participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

- Is this information useful?
- Is there interest in regional products?
- Do you have questions about the work?

Responses

Workshop 1: One participant was interested in learning more about the future scenarios and how they identify hot spots, resilient and refugia areas. Another participant mentioned that policy scenarios – with the social and economic view and alternatives - could be developed with NRW to create scenarios that make sense to Welsh waters. MSPACE PI Ana Queiros explained the various scenarios, such as moderate and high emissions scenarios for the biogeochemical model and fisheries data for species distribution.

Karen Robinson, the case lead for Wales (NRW) asked a question about climate change refugia in the shallow coastal waters and the limited types of species. She wondered what might be more greatly affected in terms of species and the functions those species provide noting that for Wales most biodiversity is in more coastal shallow areas compared to the deeper offshore waters. Consequently, what might the impacts be of projected climate change losses?

MSPACE PI Ana Queiros responded that the report looks at that spatial and temporal data, the habitats and what can be lost as well as looking at what are the more resilient species in fisheries (winners and losers). The analysis does not consider new species, some species are increasing that were not important historically. However, she can take into consideration the benthic features of interest and work with colleagues to specify area needs to produce something more refined for Wales. The maps help to think differently about how we designate conservation areas – for example, 2 of the MPAs for UK in high waters are climate hot spots.

Questions about the work focused on how to engage policy makers in Wales given these outputs and the experience of the other MSPACE workshops. A number of suggestions of people to contact were made, and mention of the potential of the upcoming 2nd MSPACE workshop for Wales. Ana asked how climate evidence fits within the planning process, whether it would be possible to engage stakeholders in aquaculture. One participant explained how in Wales, they are thinking about what evidence they need to bring to the table if they start to think about prioritizing or allocating space in time. The MSPACE work could be useful in that context and in the work around MCZ's and thinking about where the network goes in the future. There is also a policy within the plan which is about resilience to climate change which could be interesting for developers who for the moment

are not engaging with that. Having that information available on the Welsh government marine planning portal could be useful.

Participants explained that stakeholder engagement has been difficult due to a proliferation of (on the surface) similar spatial planning projects launched by government, mainly centered around renewables e.g. MSPri, the Whole of Seabed Approach from TCE, OWEC, OWEAP related activities as well. People feel they are already spending time on spatial planning related activities. It would help if people understood where MSPACE fits into this pretty crowded space with its unique climate change angle. Additionally, the unavailability of stakeholders is symptomatic of resources. There aren't hundreds of stakeholders, and they are very stretched. Aquaculture is not well developed in Wales and the direction of that sector is not set. The Welsh Government led stakeholder group called the Wales Coasts and Seas Partnership which has NGOs, industry and a variety of stakeholders has a resilience subgroup that is being resurrected and may be interested in a presentation.

Another issue raised was that of how information on fisheries is introduced to Wales stakeholders. The information needs to be of interest to Wales and the stakeholder reference group which includes the Wildlife Trust, RSPB, and others. Additionally, in fisheries there is the large number of inshore small boats that cannot relocate so that consideration is not an option. There are few larger boats coming from outside Wales and not represented by the Welsh fisheries stakeholder group. It was suggested that the inshore fisheries people might need more information about moving to another species rather than moving areas. Ana responded that MSPACE does have that information, as well as information about species that consumers care about and could indicate which species are in Welsh waters. However, MSPACE does not have information on the newer species.

A last comment noted that NRW is in the process of designating marine conservation zones and it would be interesting to look at overlaying boundaries with potential hotspots and refugia. The participant requested the shape files for areas for the conservation zones.

Workshop 2: Karen Robinson, the case lead for Wales (NRW) asked about the spatial coverage of the model and whether it covered the intertidal zone and the coastal inshore areas. Ana Queiros responded that the CC assessment domain spans from inshore waters to the intertidal – but not exclusively intertidal – through inshore and to open waters to the middle of the Atlantic.

A second question was asked about what baselines were used by the model to measure the climate impact for example for legacy carbon or ocean acidification. Ana explained that the MSPACE climate modelling starts with the state of marine data now and then assesses by 20-year periods comparing to the reference period. If the results are within the bounds of variability currently experienced, the area is considered a refugia system which will experience the same time of activity as currently carried out with the same results. Change that is for the better renders bright spots and change that is for the worse renders hot spots. A third question raised the point of terminology and what was meant by the term multi-use. Industry for example considers Windfarms and solar farms combined with Aquaculture as multi-use. Ana gave the example of multi-use as co-location of activities such as offshore aquaculture and fishing in the same area.

WP2 Feedback

The presentation of WP2 came in two halves, focusing on governance maps and values and preferences for the first workshop.

The portion focused on governance maps of Conservation, Fisheries and Aquaculture in Wales. Following the presentation, participants were asked:

- What would you like the maps to show that they don't already tell you?
- Would extra network mapping (with a short survey) help you?

Responses – governance maps

Workshop 1: The Welsh Govt has produced a governance report from the regulatory side with a sector locational guidance report. Most people know who they need to connect with, except a few new players who are unfamiliar with the governance structures. The more accessible document should be published soon, and this will be communicated to MSPACE.

One participant suggested that getting the stakeholders engaged was more important than thinking about mapping them. A tangible offer of how MSPACE could help them may create interest.

Workshop 2: The Governance Maps were not presented.

The second part of the presentation addressed the question of values and preferences of the different stakeholders with the objective of recommending untapped avenues for interaction to pursue most important and shared values. In Workshop 2, the presentation included an explanation of how these values would be operationalized for WP4 which will deliver scenarios based on environmental, economic, and social data points.

Responses – values and preferences

Workshop 1: One participant raised the subject of the challenges around terminology and marine planning wondering if stakeholders understand what the Welsh National Marine plan does. When the topic of fisheries comes up, the focus of the discussion is not about the plan but about management of fisheries and other plans that may not be spatial. However, the MSPACE evidence could be used to support planning and the creation of the plan. Values are important and the social, cultural, economic elements are areas planners struggle to engage with which could be useful in the decision-making process. Another participant added that figuring out what information to bring to bear for the social value side of spatial management is difficult. Perhaps targeted communication around useful outcomes from the MSPACE project may help.

Workshop 2: In reaction to the few responses from Wales stakeholders, one participant asked how significant that would be, how the responses from Wales compare to other regions, and finally how cohesive the responses are in respect to the level of importance and attention to issues that essentially affect the single body of ocean water. Another participant echoed the interest of the

Government in Wales in integrating social values and preferences as part of the evidence base used for marine planning.

Co-I Gina Yannitell Reinhardt Reinhardt responded that the values are indicative and not representative. She then showed a table of the responses across case studies to compare the values for biodiversity for example. Finally, she confirmed that the values of stakeholders are quite diverse. However, planners across the UK have a more cohesive set of readings and are quite aligned.

WP3 Feedback

WP3 presented the input/output model to analyse ocean related activity.

Workshop 1: One participant found that this approach could be an angle and a way to hook in the Welsh government through the next round of monitoring and reporting for the Welsh National Marine Plan which is done every three years and is a statutory requirement. The reporting includes indicators on whether the marine plan is doing anything for employment and GVA in the Welsh Marine plan area. However, GVA and employment are areas where there is not good baseline information and certainly not very good information for the past three years since the Marine Plan was published. This lack of baseline data seems to be a common theme across the UK with all UK marine planning authorities struggling. The participant encountered two issues: they were able to find good sectoral data, however, it was either very hard to disaggregate from a UK level down to a Welsh level; or it was hard to unpick from terrestrial. Previous attempts had found that the ONS codes either didn't quite work or didn't always have data that went down to the level needed (level 5 for example). Additionally, some of the data was very old. Therefore, this participant would be quite interested in seeing how MSPACE fares with the data.

Workshop 1: No feedback forms were given to participants to fill out after the WP3 presentation on input/output economic analysis of ocean related activity.

Workshop 2: No feedback was given or questions raised.

Workshop 2: Feedback forms were given to participants to fill out after the WP3 presentation on input/output economic analysis of ocean related activity.

Workshop 2: Only 1 feedback form was returned.

WP4 Feedback

For the first time in a stakeholder engagement workshop, WP4 assessing potential climate-smart management scenarios was presented to the stakeholders by Océane Marcone. Her presentation focused on how the management scenarios will be built via the Multiple-Criteria Decision Analysis.

One participant asked whether MSPACE was still looking for criteria to use and the metrics, where the criteria come from, and whether there was wide consensus on the criteria selected.

Océane responded that the criteria have to correspond to an existing data base – cultural identity would be interesting but no data set. The team also must be realistic given time remaining for the project and the existing available data sets.

Afternoon Workshop

The afternoon workshop did not take place due to the unavailability of the stakeholders.

Pre- and Post-session Survey Results

Workshop 1: Pre- and Post-session surveys were not administered.

Workshop 2: One Pre- and Post-session survey was returned and the results were not included due to high level of non-response (1 survey returned).

Conclusions

The Wales workshop was the third of a series of four programmed workshops seeking to first present Climate Smart MSP Work Package progress to date and receive feedback on the outcomes. Two workshops were held to reach a larger public. The afternoon participatory session in this case did not take place due to a lack of interest and availability of Wales Stakeholders.

However, the morning information sessions allowed each WP to receive constructive feedback after the WP presentation indicating participant engagement with the material and the usefulness of the information presented. Participants provided numerous suggestions to clarify and use the proposed information documents, maps, and scenarios to engage the Welsh government.

Of interest for the WP1 were the MSPACE future scenarios and how they identify hot spots, resilient and refugia areas and the impacts of projected climate change losses in the intertidal zones and shallow coastal waters. An insightful discussion around how to engage policy makers in Wales with these outputs yielded a number of suggestions of people to contact, MSPACE contributions to MCZ decisions and targeting information and communication to help the specific needs of Wales fisheries, developing aquaculture and other planning initiatives given the climate angle of the work. Baselines used for the climate change model and terminology for multi-use and its meaning were additional key points raised in the second workshop.

For WP2, engaging with stakeholders was deemed more important than mapping the governance actors for the three sectors in Wales, in particular since the Wales government has a governance report from the regulatory side with a sector locational guidance report. There was interest in how to incorporate values and the social, cultural, economic elements since they are elements planners struggle to engage with yet could be useful in the decision-making process. The significance of the few responses from Wales stakeholders for the WP2 interviews and survey presented a concern and interest in a comparison of responses across the UK. This led to a question about cohesiveness of

responses and how some form of agreement would be reached if all stakeholders hold different values and preferences.

For WP3, the input/output model and disaggregated data could potentially interest the Welsh government in particular for the monitoring and reporting activity that is done every three years and is a statutory requirement.

For WP4, a question arose around the selection of the criteria and whether MSPACE was open to other suggestions.

Overall, the outcome is constructive with interested participants who now know about MSPACE and see how it might help them in providing an evidence base for marine planning work.