

18/05/14 - Preparing the present for a better future

By Conor Norton, Research Director



The European Commission's latest adoption of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive in the summer of 2014 made surprisingly very little waves, if any, in the Irish media. Is this because we are well prepared or because we know very little about marine policy?

New directive means new laws and new expectations. As clear as water as it seems, it will be a long and difficult journey for all involved. Ireland must prepared by 2021 its first marine spatial plan which will strive to achieve two goals: enable Ireland to benefit from its very large and wealthy marine resources, while protecting and enhancing its marine biological communities and environment.

The plan will have the difficult task to organise Irish marine waters so that conflicting uses and users find their ways and ultimately agree on a common future, as opposed to the long lasting tradition of sectoral policies which has transformed marine waters all over the world into puzzles of policies, players and jurisdictions.

Irish marine waters are currently governed by an extremely fragmented legislative and policy framework where much of the planning, licensing and regulation for marine-related activities is driven by sectoral policies and on-demand basis.

**Towards an Integrated Policy Framework for Marine Spatial Planning in Ireland** will investigate the means by which Ireland can provide an integrated policy framework to its marine area, so that the marine plan or plans can be prepared in an integrated manner where all stakeholders will work together to ensure successful delivery of a marine spatial planning framework for Ireland.

Our project will investigate the means by which integrated governance can be strengthened and identify development mechanisms for the implementation of integrated approaches to coastal and marine planning. Building on experience from Ireland and abroad, it will further focus of the transferability of those lessons to Ireland to help policy-makers set out the governance framework necessary to implement marine spatial planning in Ireland and meet the minimum requirements of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive.

We will keep you updated as the project progresses, so please watch this space and if you have any comments get in touch at [info@mspframework.com](mailto:info@mspframework.com)