

## Marine Protection and Nature Inclusivity

**Date:** Tuesday, 29 April 2025

**Theme:** Marine Protection and Restoration

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The session was opened by **Magdalena Matczak**, setting the scene with an introduction to marine protection goals and the status for Polish marine protection and -spatial plans.

After this, the word was handed over to **Estefania Cortez**, presenting the Protect Baltic project. Giving a brief overview of the MPA status in the Baltic, she concluded we are far from reaching a coherent MPA network, and that we need to promote more recognition of MPAs as strict protection and look beyond the “30 by 30” target. The project has looked into the management of existing MPAs, what this means in different countries, and what we can learn from each other. It is clear that the management plans are just a piece of the puzzle, but that there are more challenges. Also, local managers play a key role in understanding management, and need to be included for qualitative management.

**Tymon Zieliński** followed with an overview of the MARBEFES project, establishing links between biodiversity, ecosystem functions, and the societal benefits they provide. They focus on developing tools to enable a comprehensive evaluation supporting sustainable policy and governance, and to value biodiversity.

**Ivana Stojanovic** and **Jacek Zaucha** from the project MSP4BIO highlighted the importance of integrating biodiversity, social justice and economy into MSP. The project has developed an ecological socioeconomic (ESE) framework relevant for most European sea basins, a comprehensive guidance document for MSP planners and managers including biodiversity mainstreaming, MSP/MPA integration guide and other guidance.

The final speaker, **Marcin Rakowski** presented the new project REFEST, focusing on retrofitting of the fishing fleet with short payback time and easy deploy solutions to reduce GHG emissions from the sector. This includes mechanical design adaptations, electric transition, battery efficacy, hull redesign, etc.

After the speakers, Magdalena invited to a “live poll” activity. A question was announced with four response options (A-D), and participants walked to the table with the corresponding letter to cast their vote. Then a 5 minute discussion was allowed around the table before sharing the arguments.

### Question 1: Are MPAs enough to meet the EU's biodiversity goals?

A) Yes – as there is ever increasing body of evidence of the ecological benefits of MPA (0 votes)

B) Yes - but there is a need of ... (17 votes):

*We need a clear system; where, why, legal requirements and connectivity with land. We also need to consider the future, and what measures need to be taken or what areas might be interesting to protect or use.*

C) No - as there is little evidence that these benefits translate outside the MPAs. (0 votes)

D) No - over-reliance on MPAs reduces a chance of finding new approaches to marine conservation (8 votes):

*Everything also outside the MPAs is important for reaching the goals, and there is a certain over-reliance on MPA labels.*

### Question 2: Can marine spatial planning contribute to marine protection beyond MPAs?

A) Yes – as MSP is the key instrument enhancing comprehensive and coordinated protection of our seas and oceans (1 vote):

*If managed in the proper way it offers a lot of flexibility and will help maintain resources and biodiversity.*

B) Yes - as MSP can enhance proper/wise trade-offs and not only displacement of human activities outside the protected areas (MPAs) (19 votes):

*MSP brings people together to understand how to change our relationship with nature. It is also a top-down approach or tool to say biodiversity is a priority.*

C) No – as MSP is mainly about enhancing economic goals and can only create an illusion of marine protection (0 votes).

D) Other opinions (4 votes):

*MSP can do some things for marine protection, but we do not know enough about carrying capacity to do proper MSP for protection.*

### Question 3: Can economic valuation of ecosystem services drive better marine policies?

A) Yes - talking about nature and its protection in economic terms often resonate better with politicians and decision-makers and can gain additional support for ecosystem preservation (15 votes):

*In reality, all agree with C but want to support A to give nature a proper voice. "Money talks".*

B) Yes, economic valuation allows comparison between very different ecosystem goods and services (2 votes):

*Ecosystem services is a good tool for valuation. Restoration is a good example in terms of "Who will pay?". Our society is based on monetary values, so unfortunately also what cant be valued needs to be translated into understandable terms.*

C) No, putting a price on nature is too anthropogenic; it further implies that nature only has value if it generates measurable services to humans (7 votes):

*More a criticism to the ecosystem monetization tool, as we should talk about ecosystem values in other terms. The value is only for humans, and does not reflect real value. This enforces an unhealthy relationship with nature.*

D) No, monetarization of nature means taking away decisions crucial for the survival of humans from the public and trusting them to the market's invisible hand (0 votes).

### Questions:

#### Is rising the tax a good solution to protect marine areas?

(Ivana and Jacek): If you use a resource, you should pay for it. Everyone can use the sea, so everyone should pay for protecting it. However, we should not use tax pricing as an estimation for its value. But taxing will change the perception about the ocean by attaching value to it.

#### What is the trade-off in technology adjustments?

(Marcin): In the project we don't know as the technical parameters are not ready, and it certainly depends. We focus on GHG emissions, but of course that is not the only impact and full life-cycle assessments become complicated. E.g. electricity is not green everywhere. However, the delimitation must be made for the project [REFEST].