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Notes & News: Belgium – England – EU – Ecosystem services – Blue carbon – Ocean acidification – Map of European MSP – Using film to inspire management action

Belgium approves updated marine spatial plan

On 20 March, Belgium approved a new maritime spatial plan for the Belgian part of the North Sea, a significant update of the country's 2003 master plan for its marine area. In contrast to the 2003 plan, which presented a zoning approach largely based on single-sector interests and with no legal authority, the new plan is fully integrated and enforceable under new legislation. The new plan lays out principles, goals, and spatial policy choices for the management of all activities in the Belgian territorial sea and EEZ: fishing, shipping, dredging, offshore energy, tourism, MPAs, and more. For more information, go to www.unesco-ioc-marinesp.be/spatial_management_practice/Belgium

England publishes marine plans

On 2 April, England published its first-ever marine plans providing guidance for sustainable development for the English coast and seas. The two plans cover the inshore and offshore areas, respectively, of the country's East region, from Flamborough Head to Felixstowe. A total of 11 plans covering all English waters are anticipated by 2021.

The marine plans will inform and guide decisions on development in these marine and coastal areas, while also conserving and enhancing the environment and recognizing leisure uses. Use of the marine plans is expected to reduce costs and increase certainty for developers, boosting economic and employment benefits for coastal communities and other entities. The marine plans are available at www.marinemangement.org.uk/marineplanning/areas/east_plans.htm

European Parliament endorses maritime spatial planning legislation

On 17 April, the European Parliament endorsed a Directive for Maritime Spatial Planning to help member states develop plans to coordinate marine activities, including fishing, aquaculture, marine protected areas, and maritime infrastructures (cables, pipelines, shipping lanes, and energy installations). Once the directive is ultimately adopted by ministers, member states must transpose the directive into their national legislation by 2016. Learn more at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-459_en.htm

The new directive is designed to help avoid potential conflicts between uses and create a stable environment attractive to investors. It sets minimum requirements for the drawing up of national maritime spatial plans. These plans will identify all existing human activities, taking into account land-sea interactions, and the most effective way of managing them. As many of the activities run across national borders, the directive will help member states co-operate more efficiently.

New publication on incorporating ecosystem services into planning

A new article in the journal *Marine Policy* examines the use of ecosystem service valuation for marine planning. The paper presents current approaches to marine planning in the US and UK, highlights steps in the marine planning process where valuation can inform marine planning and policy-making, and discusses challenges to ecosystem service valuation techniques in the context of marine planning. Co-authored by an international team of 15 researchers, the paper "Incorporating ecosystem services into planning: The role of valuation" is at www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X14000311

New guide to building blue carbon projects

The Abu Dhabi Blue Carbon Demonstration Project has released "Building Blue Carbon Projects - An Introductory Guide." This guide aims to stimulate discussion regarding projects that support the conservation and restoration of coastal ecosystems using their climate mitigation value. It provides a snapshot of common blue carbon project elements based on existing projects and introduces key issues for consideration.

The target audience for the guide is the range of potential project proponents interested in developing blue carbon projects to mitigate climate change and support coastal ecosystem management. The guide is available for download at <http://bluecarbonportal.org/?download=11412>

New ocean acidification website launched

A new website on ocean acidification brings together the latest infographics, publications, presentations, and news for researchers, policymakers and the public. Produced by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research, and the Ocean

European Atlas of the Seas adds MSP project locations

The European Atlas of the Seas has added a new map showing the location of European MSP projects. View the new map at http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/atlas/index_en.htm

Transcript available: live chat on using film to inspire management action

A transcript is available from the OpenChannels live chat on 29 May about inspiring conservation and management action through film: <https://www.openchannels.org/node/6515>. The chat guests were Karen Anspacher-Meyer and Eva Barnett of Green Fire Productions, who answered audience questions on their Ocean Frontiers films (<http://ocean-frontiers.org>). They showed several video clips during the chat, and these are embedded in the transcript.

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