

India's first Marine Spatial Planning

February 18, 2023

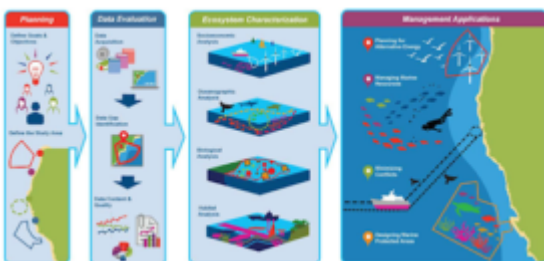
In news– Puducherry has launched the country's first Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) framework as part of a pact under the Indo-Norway Integrated Ocean Initiative.

About Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) framework-

- It is a public process of analyzing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives that have been specified through a political process.
- **It seeks to balance growth alongside sustainable management of ocean resources** and coastal environment preservation.
- **Puducherry and Lakshadweep were chosen as coastlines to pilot the MSP initiative that grew out of a 2019 memorandum of understanding that envisaged India and Norway collaborating on implementing MSP in the oceanic space.**
- The beta version of the MSP for the Union Territory was put together in **a collaborative exercise involving the Norwegian Environment Agency, the Ministry of Earth Sciences**, the National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management, the Puducherry Coastal Zone Management Authority and Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Puducherry.
- Notably, the World Bank and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have expressed interest in supporting MoES in conducting MSP, a societal-beneficial initiative for India's coastal regions.
- It is said that the **MSP would serve as a vital**

governance tool in ensuring the emergence of a blue economy characterised by a sustainable and equitable ocean resource management, instead of an environmentally unsustainable “brown economy.”

- The blue economy concept is a lens by which to view and develop policy agendas that simultaneously enhance ocean health and economic growth in a manner consistent with principles of social equity and inclusion.
- The MSP is an enabler of the blue economy as it helped identify sites for new and emerging uses following an ecosystem-based approach, and it also mitigates inter-sectoral conflicts, and creates multi-use spaces for coexistence and synergies.
- For instance, in Puducherry tourism and fisheries are two prime drivers of the economy. But in many instances the demands for tourism growth tend to conflict with the livelihood concerns of fishercommunities in terms of the use of coastal land and marine waters.
- In such situations, the MSP could be a vital tool in balancing conflicting interests.
- In fact, down the line, clearance and sanction funds for projects could even be on the basis of their MSP-compliance.
- During the same event, Chief Minister of **Puducherry** N. Rangasamy released ‘**The Shoreline Change Atlas of the UT of Puducherry**’.



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