There are two types of institutional arrangements required for marine spatial planning: (1) for the development and (2) for the implementation of a marine spatial plan. The most effective arrangements for each of these stages of marine spatial planning might be different.

A marine spatial plan must be enforceable under existing or new legislation. Policies and legislation that relate to a marine spatial plan should be reviewed. For example, Vanuatu reviewed their legislation, policies, plans and strategies in 2015 regarding the use and management of their oceans.

Legislation supporting a marine spatial plan has at least nine sections: Objective/purpose, Definitions, Administration, Marine Spatial Planning, Public participation & access to information, Sustainable funding, Offences and enforcement, Miscellaneous and Schedules.

A draft Marine Spatial Plan should be made available as part of the public consultation plan and must include a draft of all aspects of the final marine spatial plan (see Step 10).

Each country’s government processes will implement the finalised plan, usually through gazettal. The marine spatial plan must have:

- Vision and objectives
- A description of the plan area (i.e. boundaries)
- A description of the final ocean zones
- Map of where the ocean zones are
- Governance arrangements
- Management measure needed to achieve the objectives
- Surveillance arrangements
- Performance monitoring and evaluation arrangements
- Timetable for formal actions needed to implement and review the plan (who does what, when) including timing of any reviews
- Funding arrangements
- Schedule with coordinates of ocean zone boundaries

Anybody affected by the plan should be allowed to participate in its periodic review. The plan can be adapted upon receipt of new information or when ecological, socio-economic or cultural conditions change. Performance monitoring allows for adaptive management and, therefore, for marine spatial planning goals to be met over time.

What is Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)?

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is a process to spatially organize how people use the ocean to minimise user-conflict and maintain ecosystem health. This is especially important in Pacific Island countries where ~98% of these nations is ocean, and where livelihoods, food security, cultural wellbeing and economic dependencies are intertwined with the sea.

MSP involves an inter-sector and participatory public process of identifying and achieving economic, social and ecological objectives in a transparent and organised way.

**STEP 1** IDENTIFY NEED, POLITICAL WILL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The need for a marine spatial plan (MSP) can be assessed by assessing the value of the nation’s marine resources and the adequacy of existing management to sustain those values. Government leaders must then consider whether to progress marine spatial planning (or not).

If a decision is made to progress MSP, then an MSP working group must be established. It can be an existing or new group. This group must have the required skills and appropriate authority. For example, Tonga’s Marine Spatial Planning Steering Committee (the Ocean 7) has Cabinet-level support and representation from the seven relevant Ministries. This committee answers to the National Environment & Climate Change Committee as well as to Cabinet.

Government financing may or may not be adequate, so multiple financing options may be necessary – especially in the MSP development phase. Possible financing options are: private sector, NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as direct allocations from government budgets.

**STEP 2** PREPARE AND IMPLEMENT A CONSULTATION PLAN

The consultation plan must be comprehensive and should have 3 phases. For example, Tonga’s consultation plan included the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Audience
3. Phase A: National consultations – introduce MSP concept
4. Phase B: National consultations – looking for input to the draft MSP
5. Phase C: Education and information about final MSP
6. Internal communications – how MSP working group ensures government itself is well informed
7. Resourcing the Consultation Plan
8. Appendix A: Possible technical information sheets
9. Appendix B: Potential issues that may need to be addressed (FAQs)

At each phase (A, B and C, above), the consultation objective(s), key messages and consultation tools and mechanisms were identified. They are different for each phase.

**STEP 3** DEFINE VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Every marine spatial plan should have a clear vision. For example the Solomon Islands’ vision is ‘A healthy resilient, secure and productive ocean, that supports sustainable use and development for the benefit of the people of Solomon Islands now and into the future’.

Within the vision, it is useful to define broad objectives for the MSP. These can be derived by drawing upon existing, government objectives that the MSP can contribute towards (e.g. protect marine resources, build climate change resilience). These broad objectives can contain more detailed, SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) objectives.

For example:
- Fiji will have 30% marine protected areas by 2020
- All coral reefs will have a 12km no-tuna-fishing zone around them by 2020.

**STEP 4** GATHER AND MAP BASELINE DATA AND FUTURE CONDITIONS

Any spatial information that may be useful for MSP should be assessed as to its reliability and utility. Regional and global datasets are good open-sources for spatial information. Country data should also be applied to the MSP.

An important dataset is one that describes the entire marine environment of a nation to enable it to achieve its commitment under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Describing marine bioregions throughout a country provides a basis for identifying “ecologically representative” marine areas. See: [http://macbio-pacific.info/Resources/draft-marine-bioregions-southwest-pacific/](http://macbio-pacific.info/Resources/draft-marine-bioregions-southwest-pacific/)

Below is a map of Fiji’s marine bioregions.

**STEP 5** IDENTIFY ANY SPECIAL, UNIQUE MARINE AREAS (SUMA)

Use available spatial data together with in-country knowledge to identify any special or unique marine areas (SUMAs). Criteria for identifying SUMAs include:

- Uniqueness, rarity; vulnerability, fragility, existence of threatened or declining species and/or habitats, high biodiversity or productivity;
- Number and kind of information sources;
- The geographic explicitness of the location of the SUMA; and
- Existing government commitments to protect the habitats or species.


**STEP 6** DEFINE DESIRED OCEAN ZONES

There are multiple possible ocean zone types which allow or prohibit human uses including: fishing (industrial, subsistence), mining, tourism, dumping and conservation. Marine spatial planning allows countries to create ocean zones that help them achieve their vision and objectives and that are legally enforceable.

For example Vanuatu developed four different types of ocean zones:.
- General Use Zone (GUZ)
- Community Conservation Area (CCA)
- Sustainable Use Zone (SUZ)
- Limited Use Zone (LUZ)

**STEP 7** PREPARE DESIGN PRINCIPLES TO ASSIST WITH ZONING DECISIONS

There are two types of scientific design principles (or ocean zone site selection criteria) that can inform decisions about where to place ocean zones:

1. Socio-economic, cultural and management feasibility design principles; and
2. Biophysical design principles.

Some examples of science-based biophysical design principles for offshore no-take marine protected areas are:

- Represent at least 10% of each known habitat and 20% per bioregion in no-take MPAs;
- Ensure that no-take marine protected areas include critical habitats and biologically or physically special or unique areas;
- Have at least three replicate no-take MPAs per bioregions;
- Ensure no-take ocean zones are a minimum of 50-200km in diameter;
- Choose permanent or long-term protection over temporary protection.

There are two types of scientific design principles (or ocean zone site selection criteria) that can inform decisions about where to place ocean zones: