# Marine Spatial Planning Resolution

**December 2024**

Fisheries are one of many human activities in our oceans, constantly competing for marine space with aquaculture, shipping, renewable energy, mining, nature conservation, tourism, military operations, and more. As demands on ocean resources grow, particularly with the expansion of renewable energy and nature conservation projects, fishers increasingly face a "spatial squeeze," with reduced access to traditional fishing grounds and limited alternatives.

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) offers a public management approach to address the rising competition for marine space. MSP is a collaborative process that brings together various sea users—fishers, the energy sector, industry, governments, conservation groups, and recreational stakeholders—to coordinate the spatial and temporal distribution of activities. Through MSP, countries aim to make informed, sustainable decisions on marine resource use.

Many nations are increasingly adopting MSP, which, when thoughtfully applied, can benefit fisheries by balancing their interests with those of other ocean-based activities. In countries lacking marine spatial planning, however, the competition over marine space can create challenges for fisheries.

**ICFA emphasizes the following principles for MSP:**

1. **Fisheries Space and Food Security**
   It is essential that the fishing sector is allocated adequate space to sustain fishing activities, crucial for global food security. However, there is growing concern among fishers about being forced out of traditional fishing grounds due to other economic or conservation activities. MSP must ensure that space is appropriately dedicated to balance three core objectives: food security, nature conservation, and economic activities such as energy production. MSP must recognize the inevitable trade-offs when allocating marine space to different users.
2. **Stakeholder Engagement and Governance**
   MSP processes should facilitate meaningful stakeholder engagement, with particular attention to the historical role of fisheries. The legal and governance frameworks guiding MSP must empower both fisheries and conservation voices in planning discussions. Stakeholders should receive clear feedback on how their input has been considered and integrated into MSP decisions. Innovation is key to fostering effective MSP and promoting coexistence, with innovative solutions in collaboration and funding.
3. **Data-Driven Decision-Making**
   MSP should rely on the best available data to support evidence-based discussions, consensus building, and decision-making. Climate change and shifting fish stock distributions present challenges for MSP; these uncertainties should be accounted for as fisheries science, with climate considerations, continues to evolve. Fisheries should map their significant fishing grounds to strengthen their presence in the MSP process.

4. **Clear Goals, Monitoring, and Transboundary Cooperation**
   MSP efforts require clear goals and objectives to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation, including transboundary cooperation and collaborative planning. Accurate fisheries data strengthens the industry's voice in MSP decisions, and establishing clear, measurable objectives enables better assessment of MSP's impact.

With these principles, ICFA supports the development of MSP approaches that balance the needs of fisheries, nature conservation, and other marine activities for a sustainable future.