On 24-25 March 2026, HuFoSS organised the third overarching stakeholder workshop in Zandvoort, the Netherlands. The workshop brought together stakeholders and project partners from across Europe involved in the MARBEFES and MarineSABRES projects. In this phase of stakeholder engagement, the event focused on the hands-on testing of the project tools developed to support marine biodiversity management.

Bringing stakeholders together

Participants travelled from a wide range of European case study areas to join the workshop. The event created an opportunity for stakeholders who had previously been involved in the regional consultations to meet, exchange experiences, and reflect collectively on the tools developed throughout the projects.

Hands-on testing of project tools

A central part of the workshop consisted of interactive sessions in which stakeholders tested several tools developed within the projects, including:

- the MARBEFES Toolbox website
- the Bow Tie risk assessment tool
- the simple Social-Ecological System (SES) Decision Support System
- the Governance Organogram tool

The participants explored the functionality of the tools, applied them to real-world scenarios, and discussed their potential usefulness for marine planning, biodiversity management, and environmental decision-making. Stakeholder shared insights from their own professional contexts, ranging from policy and governance to research and community engagement.

Overall, the tools were well received by participants, who provided generally positive ratings during the feedback sessions. At the same time, stakeholders offered constructive suggestions for further improvements, particularly regarding usability, clarity of guidance, and practical application in different management contexts.

Field excursion in the dunes

In addition to the workshop sessions, participants joined a guided walk through the nearby dune landscape, offering a moment to reflect on the ecological importance of coastal ecosystems. The excursion by local guide Antje Ehrenburg provided an informal setting for continued discussion while highlighting the relationship between nature, society, and the economy.

Looking ahead

The Zandvoort workshop demonstrated once again the importance of close collaboration between researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders. Their feedback plays a crucial role in ensuring the tools are not only

scientifically robust but also practical and relevant for real-world use.
The insights gathered during the workshop will now contribute to the final refinement of the tools and make sure they are accessible, useful and capable of supporting decision-making processes beyond the lifetime of the projects.
HuFoSS would like to sincerely thank all stakeholders who travelled to Zandvoort and contributed to the discussions and testing sessions, as well as the many partners involved in the development of the tools.

Group on beach picture by Lars Olav Sparboe, other by MARBEFES members: Dominga van der Vliet, Tomasz Kijewski

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