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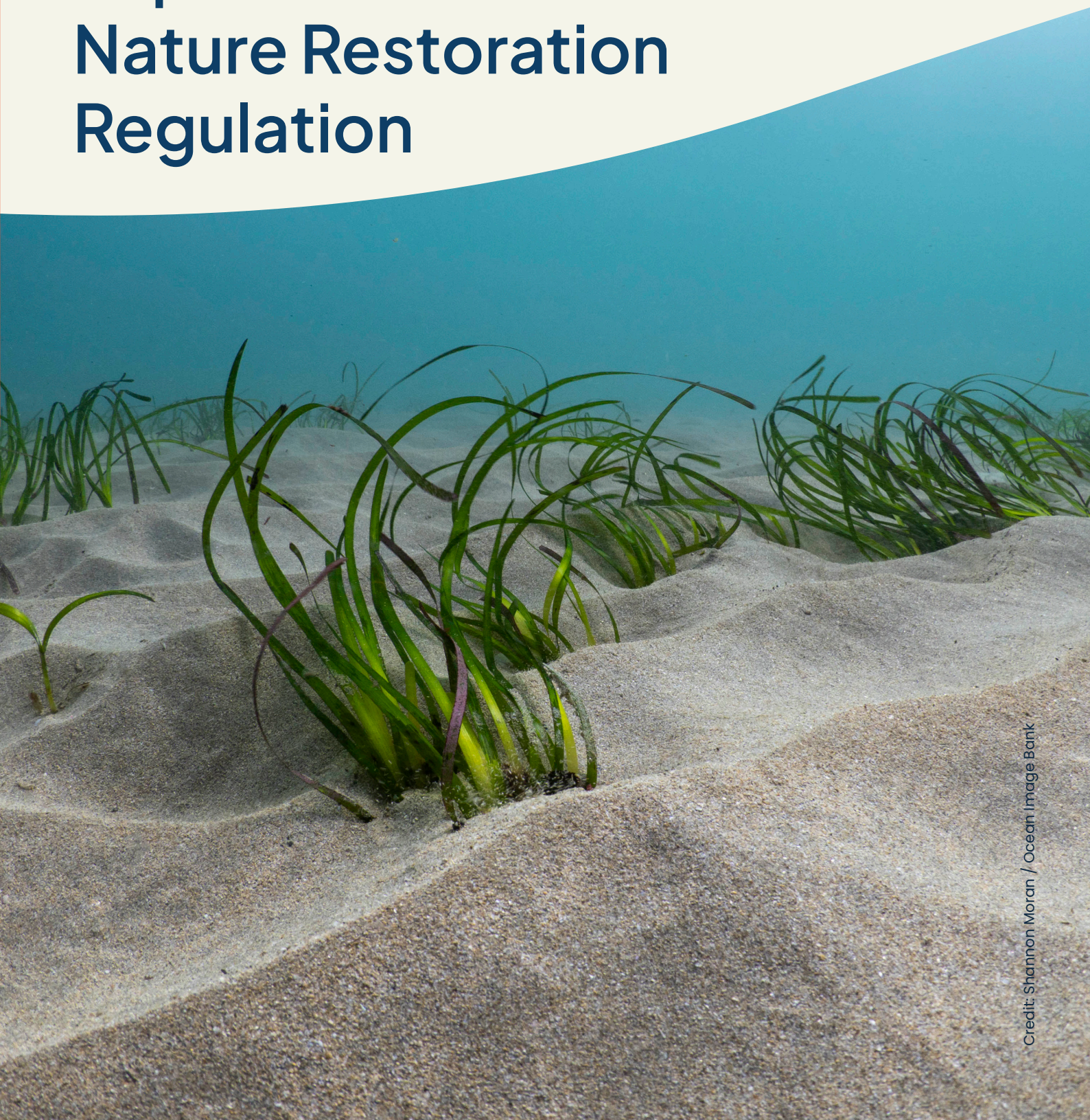
Integrating Blue Carbon Considerations into the Implementation of the Nature Restoration Regulation



Credit: Shannon Moran / Ocean Image Bank

Integrating Blue Carbon Considerations into the Implementation of the Nature Restoration Regulation

Introduction

This policy brief, developed by the JPI Oceans Blue Carbon Knowledge Hub, presents targeted recommendations for strengthening the integration of blue carbon ecosystems under the **Nature Restoration Regulation** (NRR). Blue carbon ecosystems, including vegetated ecosystems such as macroalgal forests and seagrass meadows and other carbon-rich systems, such as sediments in deeper marine habitats, provide a wide range of ecosystem services. They contribute to climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration and storage, support climate adaptation by enhancing coastal resilience, and provide essential benefits for biodiversity, fisheries productivity, nutrient cycling and air quality improvement.

The Nature Restoration Regulation is a landmark piece of EU legislation that establishes legally binding restoration targets for degraded ecosystems in the EU. By integrating strong biodiversity and climate objectives, **the Regulation positions ecosystem restoration as a cross-cutting priority for achieving the EU's environmental, climate and resilience goals**.

Blue carbon ecosystems are particularly relevant to the implementation of the NRR, as they sit at the intersection of climate, biodiversity and marine policies. Implementing the following recommendations would support Member States in the preparation and implementation of **National Restoration Plans** (NRPs), strengthen policy coherence and **ensure that the climate and biodiversity benefits of blue carbon ecosystems are fully reflected in restoration planning and implementation.**

Credit: Thomas Horig / Ocean Image Bank

Key Recommendations

1. **Integrate blue carbon ecosystems in NRPs with clear targets, baselines, and indicators** reflecting their contribution to climate mitigation and adaptation objectives

2. **Strengthen monitoring and reporting of blue carbon ecosystems through harmonised methodologies** to identify, map and prioritise blue carbon ecosystem restoration sites

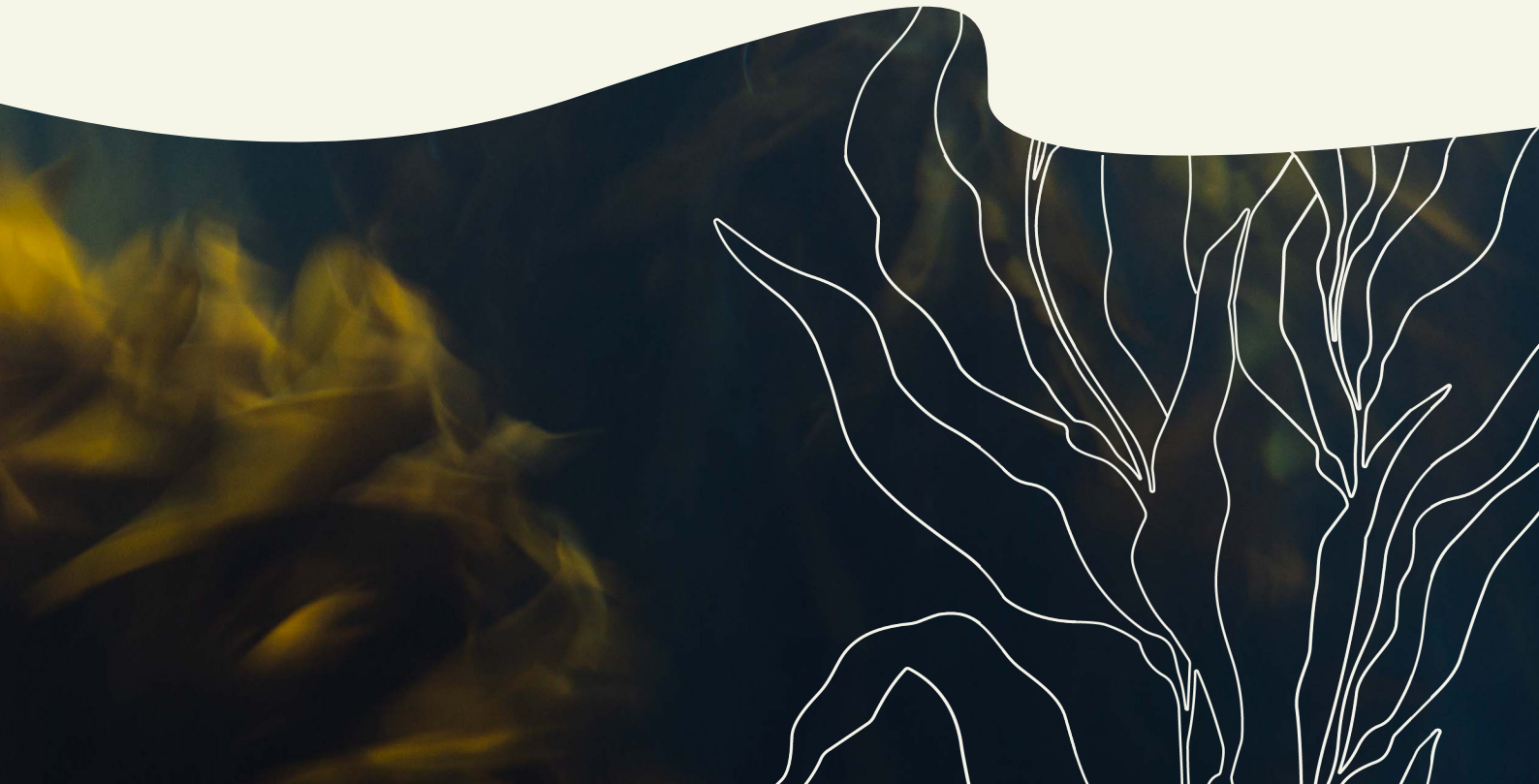
3. **Identify and mitigate policy conflicts affecting blue carbon ecosystem restoration** early in the restoration planning process and include explicit safeguards in NRPs

4. **Strengthen guidance, coordination and knowledge sharing at EU level** on how to integrate blue carbon ecosystems into NRPs

5. **Align restoration with climate strategies and policy frameworks**, recognising blue carbon ecosystems as carbon sinks in greenhouse gas inventories

6. **Secure dedicated and diversified public financing for blue carbon ecosystems at national and EU level** to support their restoration and long-term ecological recovery

7. **Mobilise private finance through supportive public policy and blended approaches** while carefully avoiding greenwashing practices and ensuring additionality.



Advancing knowledge, informing policy, driving innovation

The JPI Oceans Blue Carbon Knowledge Hub is led by Ireland, with Germany, Greece, Malta, Norway, Portugal and the United Kingdom as participating countries.

JPI OCEANS

Rue du Trône 4
1000 Brussels, Belgium

+32 (0)2 626 16 60
info@jpi-oceans.eu

jpi-oceans.eu