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| <b>Document title</b>  | InterMSP – application for flagship project status          |
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| <b>Submitted by</b>    | InterMSP project group through Prof Marko Joas, Åbo Akademi |
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## Background

A group of experts from different academic disciplines in four different countries around the Baltic Sea have joined forces to establish a cross-scientific project on various challenges linked to marine spatial planning (MSP) in the region. The project, entitled 'Interdisciplinary Analysis of Obstacles to Marine Spatial Planning in the Baltic Sea Area' (InterMSP), will apply for a BONUS research grant under the Blue Baltic call, with a deadline on 10 March 2016.<sup>1</sup> A positive funding decision by BONUS is a precondition for implementing the project.

## Action requested

The Working Group is requested to approve the project's application for status of a flag ship project under the EU BSR Macro-regional strategy, Horizontal Action: Spatial Planning.

The Working Group is also requested to decide on whether it agrees to be part of the group of 'end users' in the InterMSP project.

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.bonusportal.org/programme/competitive\\_calls/bonus\\_call\\_2015\\_blue\\_baltic](http://www.bonusportal.org/programme/competitive_calls/bonus_call_2015_blue_baltic)

## InterMSP – application for flagship status

### Summary of project

The purpose of the InterMSP project is to provide a genuinely cross-scientific study of the various challenges linked to performing maritime spatial planning (MSP) at different scales, anything from covering purely local areas to a Baltic Sea-wide scale. It focuses on particularities in terms of the physical and biological environment, but also on the traditions of spatial planning, and on legal and governance challenges in the region. The project accordingly has the potential to highlight a number of challenges of major importance for 'scalable' and practical MSP in the region, but which have so far largely escaped scientific attention.

In InterMSP the research pin-points the most relevant challenges from the point of view of marine biology, geography, economy, law and cultural traditions between the states surrounding the Baltic Sea. It focuses in the four partner countries (Finland, Germany, Estonia and Russia) as representative of various traditions in this respect. Apart from the scientific analyses, the project also reviews certain key practical challenges related to the establishment of a common conceptual framework for MSP and a single database for MSPs in the region. The objective of the study is to highlight the key challenges involved in different disciplines, to address ways of overcoming them and hence to pave the way for a truly transnational and 'scalable' system of planning in the region. The project extends beyond mere planning, as it also covers challenges related to implementation, monitoring and enforcement.

### Consortium

The group of partners (see below) include experts on planning (UTU, UT), marine biologists (AAU) and geographers (UTU) who understand the scientific basis that natural sciences can and cannot provide for MSP and what aspects specifically ought to be covered by such plans at different scales. Natural scientists are joined by lawyers (AAU), economists (UNECON), social scientists (IRS) as well as experts on public administration (AAU) to add their own perspectives on the challenges and ways to deal with them. The end product is a holistic synthesis of the different scientific analyses which interlinks the challenges, but also proposes a practical implementation plan and an efficient data management scheme for achieving the objective of a fully scalable MSP.

InterMSP will also have good compatibility with the work of the organizations that work with MSP on a Baltic Sea-wide level, such as notably HELCOM and VASAB. Other collaborators in the project include the Centrum Balticum Foundation, the Regional Council of Southwest Finland who have broad experience in managing and storing MSPs and the Baltic University Program which are experienced suppliers and marketers of academic training, including on on MSP, across the region.

### Output

In terms of output, the project will firstly result in a series of scientific studies, both intra- and inter-disciplinary, mainly at post-doctoral level, to unfold the identified obstacles in more detail. Secondly, it will reach out beyond the academic community in the form of a series of training and other stakeholder engagements. A region-wide training course that can benefit both university students and civil servants and others with an interest in MSP will be offered as a regular feature throughout the project and, hopefully, beyond. Finally, a series of practical tools will be developed for the benefit of anybody involved in MSP in practice. These include, on the one hand, a model framework for conceptual tools and administrative solutions for use in MSPs in the Baltic Sea region, including shared legislative concepts (terminology and definitions) and administrative solutions (such as national coordinators, single contact points and

streamlined procedures). On the other hand, the projects seeks to support HELCOM-VASAB by laying the basis for the creation of a single integrated and scalable Baltic-sea-wide database of all MSPs in the region and thereby to provide concrete tools for further advances and integration both nationally and throughout the region.

### **Actions**

In view of all these considerations it is considered that the InterMSP project meets all criteria for being a flagship project under the EU's Macro-regional strategy for the Baltic Sea region and that it is therefore both pertinent and justified to applied for such a status.

In a separate but related matter, the Working Group is hereby also invited to decide on whether it agrees to be part of the group of InterMSP 'end users'. This signifies that the working group would be regularly informed of the progress of the project and have an opportunity to indicate its views on the relevant challenges and solutions under review. A representative of the WG would also be invited to an annual meeting for the project's end users.

### **InterMSP partners**

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