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Background

The attached document contains an overview of the Plan4Blue - Maritime Spatial Planning for Sustainable Blue Economies project, which is the main outcome of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) Seed Money Facility project "BALTWISE" project. The Plan4Blue project applies funding from the Interreg Central Baltic Programme from its "Southern Finland – Estonia" sub-programme. The project's first step application was accepted for the second step that has a deadline of 1 April 2016.

This is the second time that this project idea is presented to the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG. The project was granted a support letter by the working group in 2015. Last time, however, the project idea was not granted a national co-financing in Finland, which is why the second step application was not submitted. Now we have modified the project idea to conform to the requirements of the Finnish co-financing body.

The material for this document has been submitted by the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) to the HELCOM Secretariat.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- take note of the information,
- consider supporting the project idea with a letter of support.

BALTWISE seed money project's outcomes

EUSBSR Seed money facility funded in 2014 a seed money project to prepare a MSP project. The project was called BALTWISE. Project partners were: Finnish Environment Institute (lead partner), HELCOM Secretariat, University of Turku, University of Eastern Finland, University of Tartu (Estonian Marine Institute), Research Institute of Urban Planning Perspective (St Petersburg), Maritime Institute in Gdańsk.

The project reviewed existing MSP projects and national MSP approaches in BSR region as well as conducted an overview of available geodata for Gulf of Finland area. A key objective for BALTWISE was to plan 'a main project' – a new MSP project. A starting point for project planning was to focus on how MSP can support sustainable Blue Growth in a cross-border setting.

Potential funding sources were assessed during the seed money project. BALTWISE consortium had good knowledge of other planned MSP projects for BONUS programme, INTERREG BSR programme and for the DG MARE call for proposals. In the end, the INTERREG Central Baltic programme turned out to be the most suitable target for BALTWISE project planning.

Below is a short overview of the project, which is the main outcome of the BALTWISE project.

“Maritime Spatial Planning for Sustainable Blue Economies – Plan4Blue”

Funding to be applied from: INTERREG Central Baltic programme (Southern Finland – Estonia) in 2016

Project duration: 3 years

Budget: ca. 2 million euro

Geographic area: Estonia and Southern Finland covering the sea areas of Gulf of Finland and Archipelago Sea. Inputs also from Russia and Åland.

Partnership:

- Finnish Environment Institute: Environmental Policy Centre, Marine Research Centre and Communication Unit (Finland)
- University of Turku: Centre for Maritime Studies and Department of Geography (Finland)
- University of Tartu: Estonian Marine Institute and Faculty of Economics (Estonia)
- Baltic Environment Forum Estonia (Estonia)
- Uusimaa Regional Council (Finland)
- South West Finland Regional Council (Finland)

External expert services and associated partners

- Estonian Ministry of the Finances
- Russian planning experts
- Åland planning authorities
- Kymenlaakso Regional Council (Finland)
- Ida-Viru county administration (Estonia)
- Lääne-Viru county administration (Estonia)
- International experts

Project's key question:

How can MSP contribute to sustainable growth of maritime sectors in a cross-border setting?

The project brings together the key interest groups (maritime economic actors, environmental groups) and spatial planners and marine managers from Estonia, Finland, as well as from Russia and Åland. These are the central actors in implementation of the maritime spatial planning, EU Blue

Growth strategy and environmental protection policies that are all encouraged by the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR).

In a collaborative process that continues throughout the project duration, the project develops jointly agreed planning approaches to gain economic benefits for blue economy sectors in environmentally and socially sustainable manner through the MSP process and cross-border collaboration in spatial planning. The project's practical objective is to support implementation of MSP directive in the project area by building of joint understanding and approaches between the key actors across the borders.

The collaborative process will be supported by focused analyses of economic and environmental consequences of the growth of blue economies. Furthermore, use of GIS methods and spatial analysis help to elaborate the results in spatial terms to support development of maritime spatial planning approaches. Spatial planning expertise is provided by close collaboration with spatial planning authorities from regional and national levels.

The project has four phases. It starts with a stocktaking phase that prepares for the consequent project activities. The second phase is "future developments and impacts" that develops plausible future development paths for selected economic sectors and assesses economic and environmental impacts of the development paths. The third phase is called "results to planning". This phase turns the previous results into spatial planning objectives and practices. The last phase of the project focuses on ensuring the policy uptake of the project outputs and on supporting mutual learning of spatial planners and managers across the border. This stage facilitates identification of common principles and objectives for spatial planning to give an area-specific interpretation to the joint HELCOM-VASAB principles for MSP and the objectives of the EU directive on MSP.

The project collaborates with other Baltic Sea Region MSP projects, such as BalticSCOPE and BaltSpace that have started in 2015 and BalticLINES to be started in 2016.

The consortium asks for a letter of support from the HELCOM-VASAB MSP working group to support the project idea.