



Document title	Progress of the Baltic LINES project
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Background

Baltic LINES is supported as a flagship project by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group and approved by the EUSBSR national coordinators. Its goals correspond directly to the ambition of this Horizontal Action Plan to “Encourag[e] the use of maritime and land-based spatial planning in all Member States around the Baltic Sea and develop a common approach for crossborder cooperation”. With its pan-Baltic approach, Baltic LINES helps to achieve the goal of implementing MSPs that are coherent across borders in a particularly comprehensive manner, and thus helps to develop enabling conditions for Blue Growth.

Baltic LINES focusses on maritime activities which are of a transnational nature, e.g. shipping and linear energy infrastructure. By discussing different transnational planning solutions and agreeing on common planning criteria Baltic LINES seeks to increase transnational coherence of shipping and energy corridors in Maritime Spatial Plans in the BSR. The steady institutional and informal exchange between countries, together with an improving access to data will help to prevent cross-border mismatches of maritime uses and secure transnational connectivity of linear infrastructure as well as sustainable and efficient use of Baltic Sea space.

The Baltic LINES partnership consists of 15 project partners representing all eight Baltic EU-countries. It is led by the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (DE). Most countries except Denmark and Lithuania are represented by their official national MSP authorities. In addition, HELCOM, VASAB as well as different scientific institutes are involved; inter alia the NHTV University of Applied Sciences (NL) which is concerned with the development of a “Baltic” version of the MSP Challenge game. It is also planned to involve the Russian Scientific and Research Institute for MSP ERMAK NorthWest with funding via the Swedish Institutes Third Party Cooperation Programme. As of 4th November, this decision is still pending.

<p>Baltic LINES Partnership</p> <p>Lead Partner: Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (DE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HELCOM • VASAB • Ministry of Energy, Infrastructure and State Development Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (DE) • Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SE) • Maritime Office in Gdynia (PL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maritime Institute in Gdansk (PL) • Polish Offshore Wind Energy Society (PL) • Coastal Research and Planning Institute (LT) • Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (LV) • University of Tartu (EE) • Aalborg University (DK) • Finnish Environment Institute (FI) • Finnish Transport Agency (FI) • NHTV University of Applied Sciences (NL)
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Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the work accomplished and next steps in the Baltic LINES project.

Baltic LINES – Completed and ongoing activities

Baltic LINES was approved on 20th November 2015 and officially started on 1st March 2016. Since the kick-off meeting in Berlin in April 2016 a lot of project activities started in different work packages. A summary of accomplished work as well as next steps is given in the following.

Work package 2 “Requirements for MSP in relation to the shipping and energy sector in BSR” of Baltic LINES aims to increase the understanding of maritime spatial planners on future sectoral developments as well as anticipated spatial consequences for the Baltic Sea. To obtain information on the energy sector, the shipping sector and potential stakeholder groups per country, project templates were designed and completed by the partners. A state-of-the-art report on shipping in the Baltic Sea was compiled to summarize available information on planning criteria and expected international sector development. The gathered information was fed into the analyses of similarities and differences regarding the past, present and future developments of the national energy and shipping sectors in the Baltic Sea. The stakeholder information was used to set up individual stakeholder strategies for national energy and shipping sectors that will be used to involve relevant groups in the project. The identification of spatial impacts related to different national approaches for the designation of areas for energy and shipping is still ongoing. The results will be used to develop future scenarios to highlight cross-border mismatches and discuss potential gates for shipping corridors and power cables within work package 4.

Work package 3 “BSR MSP data infrastructure for shipping routes and energy corridors” is concerned with the development of a pan-Baltic data infrastructure in collaboration with the HELCOM-VASAB data expert group. As one of the first steps it was identified which standard formats of data are currently used by the spatial planners in the different countries. By conducting interviews with planners and the inspection of institutions using SDI the desired functionalities are identified to specify the data infrastructure in more detail. Furthermore, the possibilities of including real data in a new Baltic version of MSP Challenge are tested. Currently, a report presenting the first results of the work package is compiled and will be published in February 2017.

Work package 4 “Transnationally coherent planning of infrastructure” aims to develop and propose transnationally coherent planning solutions for linear energy infrastructures and shipping corridors which are in line with the ecosystem approach. The work package will build on the results accomplished in work packages 3 and 4.

Work package 5 “Governance for the coordination of linear infrastructures” ensures that project activities and results are shared among project partners and relevant stakeholders. It is important to safeguard the main outputs for implementation after the finalization of the project. Namely, recommendations for a formalized BSR agreement on transboundary consultations on linear infrastructures within the MSP process will be developed. The HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group will be constantly informed by all project findings, especially during the finalization phase of the project in late 2018 / early 2019.

Baltic LINES benefits from synergies with related projects. The project will draw on the findings of predecessor projects (e.g. BaltSeaPlan, PartiSEApate) and capture synergies with the currently on-going projects Baltic SCOPE and Baltic InteGrid. In addition, Baltic LINES closely works together with its sister project NorthSEE under the North Sea Region Programme.