



OUTCOME OF THE 14TH MEETING OF THE HELCOM-VASAB MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING WORKING GROUP (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 14-2017)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda.....	2
Agenda Item 2 Matters arising from other HELCOM and VASAB work	2
Agenda Item 3 Regional coordination and policy follow-up and MSP related projects and events	2
Agenda Item 4 Ecosystem-based approach in MSP	4
Agenda Item 5 The new Work Plan and follow-up of the progress	5
Agenda Item 6 Any other business.....	7
Agenda Item 7 Outcome of the Meeting	7
Annex 1 List of Participants	8
Annex 2 Contact addresses of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG in the Contracting Parties/Member Countries.....	9
Annex 3 Developments and activities related to the EUSBSR and HA Spatial Planning	11

OUTCOME OF THE 14TH MEETING OF THE HELCOM-VASAB MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING WORKING GROUP (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 14-2014)

Introduction

- 0.1 The 14th Meeting of the joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 14-2017) was held on 10-11 May 2017 in Stockholm, Sweden.
- 0.2 The Meeting was attended by representatives of all Contracting Parties/Member States, except for Denmark, Lithuania, EU, Belarus and Norway. The Meeting was also attended by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) as Observer. The List of Participants is contained in **Annex 1**.
- 0.3 The Contact addresses of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG in the Contracting Parties/Member Countries is contained in **Annex 2**.
- 0.4 The Meeting was chaired by the Co-chairs of the Working Group, Mr. Joacim Johannesson, Sweden, and Ms. Katarzyna Krzywda, Poland.
- 0.5 Co-Chair of MSP WG Mr. Joacim Johannesson welcomed the participants to the Meeting on behalf of the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM).
- 0.6 The HELCOM Secretariat acted as Secretary of the Meeting.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

Documents: 1-1, 1-1-Rev.1, 1-2

- 1.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda (document 1-1-Rev.1) elaborated by the HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats in consultation with the Chairs.
- 1.2 The Meeting decided to consider agenda item 6 during the first day in connection with agenda item 3.

Agenda Item 2 Matters arising from other HELCOM and VASAB work

Documents: 2-1

- 2.1 The Meeting took note of the information by the VASAB Secretariat on the recent involvement of VASAB in different regional and European events. The 74th VASAB CSPD/BSR has approved the Work Plan of the MSP WG. The CSPD has noted that “ecosystem-based approach” could be used throughout the document instead of “ecosystem approach”. In course of preparations for the next VASAB ministerial meeting, VASAB has created an ad hoc working group on future themes after 2019 and MSP-related topics have also been suggested.
- 2.2 The Meeting took note of the information by the HELCOM Secretariat on ongoing activities in the HELCOM framework and HELCOM meetings as presented in document 2-1.
- 2.3 The Meeting welcomed the information on the outcomes of HELCOM meetings illustrating linkages of the activities of the other HELCOM groups to MSP.
- 2.4 The Meeting suggested to include into agenda item 5 a discussion on MSP-related issues which can potentially be brought to the HELCOM Ministerial meeting 2018.

Agenda Item 3 Regional coordination and policy follow-up and MSP related projects and events

Documents: 3-1; 6-1

- 3.1 The Meeting took note of the following information on national MSP developments:

- Estonia: has not a mandate to start spatial planning. Thus, a preparatory phase is ongoing: gathering data, development of an economic assessment model.
- Finland: has recently started preparation for planning activities in EEZ and territorial waters. A national coordination group has been established including regional councils and the Ministry of the Environment. The group will be in charge for cooperation and coordination needed in planning. The Ministry of the Environment will be responsible for international coordination. The development of a maritime internet portal has been launched. One of the aims is to provide informational support of the planning.
- Germany: the process of revising and updating the 2009 MSPs for the German EEZ will probably be officially announced within the first half of 2018. In 2017 preparatory work will be conducted, e.g. evaluation of the process towards, as well as results of and experiences with implementation of the first MSPs, updating of the data and evidence base, designing the process etc. Schleswig-Holstein is currently in the process of updating and revising their spatial development plan, which includes land and sea areas. The first draft is due to be consulted in 2018. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has only just issued their new/revised LEP in 2016 (Spatial Development Programme).
- Latvia: is drafting a final proposal on national MSP activities and planning to complete it by the end 2017.
- Poland: Preparation of a maritime spatial plan for the Polish EEZ and territorial waters is progressing. A first draft plan should be ready at the end of May 2017. The plan includes mainly functional subdivision of the sea area, which would serve as a basis for issuing licences. It will be presented and discussed during the second international meeting in November. Moreover, in January 2017 the Director of Maritime Office in Szczecin launched the development of a plan for Szczecin and Kamienski lagoons (marine internal waters).
- Sweden: is in the middle of the development of plans. Three plans have been developed and published in December 2016. Now an informal dialog with stakeholders is ongoing as well as a meeting with neighbouring countries held back to back with MSP WG 14-2917. Methodologies are to be updated and new plans are to be published for consultation in the beginning of next year, to be followed by a final review in 2019.
- Russia: relevant legislation is under development and planned to be elaborated in 2018.

3.2 The Meeting noticed the great work done by MSP planners in Poland revealing opinions of local stakeholders, particularly local fishermen society, and taking them into account in the particular plans. The Meeting noted a broad scale of involvement of public society and professional associations into the MSP-related consultations.

3.3 The Meeting discussed opportunities for representation of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG at the EU Member States Expert Group on Maritime Spatial Planning meeting in Malta. The Meeting thanked Sweden for representing HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG at the meeting and suggested to present the Guidelines on ecosystem-based approach and checklist of the Baltic Scope recommendations together with some examples of Swedish achievements in MSP. The Meeting suggested to reflect also the experience gained during elaboration of the Guidelines as an example of a dialog between planners and environmentalists.

3.4 The Meeting also took note that an example of the Kymenlaakso region of Finland will be presented at the Conference on Land-Sea Interactions.

3.5 The Meeting also discussed the Conference on Land-Sea Interactions back-to-back with the Expert group meeting. The Meeting thanked Latvia for representing VASAB and the MSP WG at the Conference and suggested that the outcomes of the Baltic Scope project would become a basis for the presentation with a consideration of a high importance of the land-sea Interactions. The presentation will reflect the current state of the land-sea interaction affairs in the Baltic Sea region and a perspective view.

3.6 The Meeting took note of the information on the EU/UNESCO-IOC MSP Conference, held on 15-17 March 2017 in Paris. The Conference revealed that the MSP is growing also outside the EU. A common

impression was that, despite the MSP objectives are different in different regions, the key issues such as compilation of data, coordination and enforcement are rather similar across the globe.

3.7 The Meeting took note of the information by Finland regarding presentation of a national underwater marine inventory programme and the case study of gathering data on coastal waters of Zanzibar for MSP at the side event of the Ocean Conference in New York in June. The Meeting also took note of the information by Sweden that SwAM is also involved in the preparation of the New York Conference and promotion of MSP.

3.8 The Meeting took note of the findings of the **Baltic SCOPE project** as presented by Sweden, the lead partner in the Baltic SCOPE project (**Presentation 1**).

3.9 The Meeting discussed the recommendations and agreed that some of the recommendations could be included into the agenda of the group, bearing in mind that the work of the group is limited in time and resources. The Meeting also noted that the most urgent recommendations were already included into the project proposal for the PanBaltic SCOPE.

3.10 The Meeting also noted that some of the recommendations are relevant for the work of the State & Conservation and other HELCOM group and are already under consideration. Also some of the recommendations are relevant for the planners and should be communicated nationally.

3.11 The Meeting pointed out that the recommendation should be taken into account in the implementation of the MSP WG work plan.

3.12 The Meeting suggested to establish a task force to make a proposal on relevance of the Baltic SCOPE project recommendations to the mandates of HELCOM groups. The Meeting welcomed the offer by Finland and Sweden to elaborate the proposal with the assistance of the HELCOM Secretariat by the MSP WG 15-2017 meeting.

3.13 The Meeting took note of the suggestion by the Co-Chairs to invite representatives of other HELCOM groups to the meeting of MSP WG to present issues relevant to MSP which are currently under the mandate of those groups.

3.14 The Meeting took note of the progress in implementation of the Coherent Linear Infrastructures in Baltic Maritime Spatial Plans project (**Baltic LINES**) as presented by Germany. The Meeting pointed out that outcomes of the project are very important for further development of MSP in the Baltic Sea region and suggested to invite representatives of the project to the next MSP WG, as well as to invite representatives of HELCOM SAFE NAV group to consider the project findings regarding safety of navigation in MSP.

3.15 The Meeting took note of the information provided by Sweden on the intended **PanBaltic SCOPE** project proposal and its objectives to achieve coherent national maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea region and to build lasting macro-region mechanisms for cross-border MSP cooperation.

3.16 The Meeting welcomed the planned activities of VASAB within the PanBaltic SCOPE project to assist the MSP WG to implement a number activities of the Work Plan using the project resources. The project will also serve for the progress of the MSP Data Expert Sub-Group.

3.17 The Meeting thanked for all the contributors to the preparation of the PanBaltic SCOPE project proposal.

3.18 The Meeting took note of the activities related to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and Horizontal Action Spatial Planning, for which HELCOM and VASAB act as the Horizontal Action Coordinators and the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG acts as the Steering Committee concerning the MSP (**Annex 3**).

Agenda Item 4 Ecosystem-based approach in MSP

Documents: 4-1, 4-2

4.1 The Meeting discussed the current development of the concept of green infrastructure/blue corridors and implementation of the related actions from the group's work plan.

4.2 The Meeting took note of the information by Germany regarding recent developments of a research project dealing with implementing EBA in MSP and connecting to the concept of green infrastructure/blue corridors. The Meeting noted that the project is currently in the stage when scientific knowledge of spatial claims of ecosystem components is transferred into planning objectives and principles. Connectivity is also an important aspect for identification of such recommendations. The results of the project are expected by the end of 2017. The project covers German EEZ in the North and Baltic Seas but also taking neighboring areas into account, i.e. when looking at bird migration routes

4.3 As a follow up of the last MSP WG meeting and in connection with the information by Germany, Sweden informed of the latest development of the green infrastructure concept emphasizing significance of the MPAs connectivity. With the recent extension of the MPA's network Sweden has reached a 10% target for MPAs but their connectivity is still an open issue.

4.4 The Meeting also took note of the information by Finland on the inventory of the underwater marine environment (VELMU) (**Presentation 2**). The Meeting also noted that the current stage of the inventory integrates also ranking of the areas according to environmental pressures, distribution of key species, threatened species, etc. The project group on the VELMU programme integrates experts from different spheres including marine spatial planners.

4.5 The Meeting noted that the VELMU database, providing information on the inventory of the marine environment, will be a part of the governmental maritime platform designed to support MSP. The Meeting also highlighted the importance to keep the information updated and that is a challenge in terms of needed resources bearing in mind the scale of the inventory.

4.6 The Meeting welcomed the progress achieved by Finland in compilation of the data on underwater marine environment highlighting that the example is inspiring for the whole region.

4.7 The Meeting also took note of the information on the planned Baltic Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas workshop in early 2018 presented by Finland (document 4-2, **Presentation 3**). The Meeting discussed the potential use of EBSA for supporting the national MSP as well as the regional work of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, in particular in relation to the task on "green infrastructure" in the work plan. The Meeting took note that the EBSA criteria are also applicable to the concept of "green infrastructure" in MSP.

4.8 The Meeting welcomed the use of EBSA in the region as a harmonized approach to accounting of valuable components of the marine environment in the marine management, and particularly in maritime spatial planning. The Meeting also pointed out that the identification of EBSA in the region requires extra resources which might not be currently available in all Contracting Parties.

4.9 The Meeting took note of the clarification by Finland that a lot of information has already been collected within the HOLAS II project as well as other projects and that there is no need to collect new data but to focus on the interpretation of the existing information.

Agenda Item 5 The new Work Plan and follow-up of the progress

Documents: 5-1, 5-2

5.1 The Meeting took note of the information on updated country fiches published at the VASAB and HELCOM websites. The Meeting pointed out that the country fiches are to be updated at the VASAB and HELCOM websites, as MSP WG is a formal international cooperation platform.

5.2 The Meeting took note of the Work Plan of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP group for 2017-2019 as in document 5-2 and reviewed implementation of the activities from the work plan.

5.3 The Meeting agreed to include the exchange of experience on how to link the implementation of EU MSFD and other legal framework and MSP into the agenda of the MSP WG 15-2017.

5.4 The Meeting suggested to invite a country to present current national MSP developments at each MSP WG meeting.

5.5 The Meeting suggested to compile a regional calendar of national MSP-related processes and meetings and requested the VASAB Secretariat to prepare a reporting template, based on communication with Germany, and circulate it to countries. The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to provide information according to the template to the VASAB Secretariat. The VASAB Secretariat will circulate the compilation in autumn 2017.

5.6 The Meeting suggested to include item 5 of the MSP WG's work plan into the agenda of the next meeting. Countries are invited to provide relevant information to the MSP WG 15-2017.

5.7 The Meeting suggested to consider a revision of the Guidelines on transboundary consultation and implementation of ecosystem-based approach in 2018, bearing in mind ongoing national and regional processes.

5.8 The Meeting discussed the need to highlight the progress in MSP achieved in the region since MD 2013 at the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2018. The Meeting invited the countries to consult nationally regarding national political commitments related to MSP which can be discussed and agreed as regional commitments at the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting. The results of the national consultations will be then presented by national representatives and discussed at the HELCOM HOD 52-2017 meeting.

5.9 The Meeting also took note of the position of Latvia and Sweden that remarkable progress has been achieved in MSP in the region and that this should be brought to the agenda of the HELCOM Ministerial meeting as one of the tools to reach good environmental status of the Baltic Sea in connection with outcomes of the HOLAS II project.

5.10 The Meeting suggested to launch intersessional activities connected with implementation of ecosystem-based approach in MSP, green infrastructure and connectivity of MPAs. The Meeting welcomed the offer by Sweden to elaborate, in cooperation with Germany, Latvia, Finland, representatives of HELCOM S&C group and with the assistance of the HELCOM Secretariat, a working plan for the task summarising related ongoing processes; and present the plan at the next MSP WG for discussion at both HELCOM groups.

5.11 The Meeting took note of the First Report of the BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-group and welcomed the progress achieved by the group (document 5-1, **Presentation 4**). The Meeting also pointed out the high significance of the work being currently done by the MSP Data group as a basis for regional coherency of national MSPs.

5.12 The Meeting discussed further steps towards achieving the main tasks of the BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-group and recommended that the group would focus on identification of the output data sets and as a first step to elaborate minimum requirements for output datasets.

5.13 The Meeting took note of the national experiences in implementation of the guidelines on transboundary consultation and implementation of ecosystem-based approach as follows:

- Finland: the regional councils and also stakeholders have been informed of the regional guidelines;
- Germany: is still on the preparatory stage checking the existing framework and will be in the position to report on the implementation of the guidelines at the next meetings;
- Latvia: the transboundary consultation was evaluated within the Baltic SCOPE project by preparing a check list on the implementation of the guidelines;
- Poland: is currently involving national and international stakeholders into the consultations, for that a number of informal meetings are organized. Ecosystem-based approach in MSP is required by national legislation. The guidelines on ecosystem approach is implemented through accounting of the environmental data at the initial stages of the maritime spatial planning processes.
- Sweden: Ecosystem approach was a part of the Baltic Scope project and project partners evaluated application of the key points of the guidelines. The follow-up of the implementation of the guidelines will be evaluated in the particular planning process. The SEA and cumulative assessment are central in Swedish implementation in ecosystem-based approach (SYMPHONY).

Agenda Item 6 Any other business

- 6.1 The Meeting elected Kai Trümpler (Germany) and Penina Blankett (Finland) as the Vice Co-chairs of the MSP WG.
- 6.2 The Meeting congratulated the elected Vice Co-chairs.
- 6.3 The Meeting took note of the information by WWF regarding the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.
- 6.4 The Meeting took note of the information by Russia on a project application (PlanGoF), prepared jointly by Finland and Russia, on Maritime spatial planning concept of the eastern Gulf of Finland. The Meeting welcomed the initiative and supported the project as a contribution to the development of MSP in the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland region and requested the VASAB Secretariat to write a letter of support.
- 6.5 The Meeting agreed that the next meeting will be held in Warsaw, Poland, on 7-8 November 2017. The Meeting will provisionally start 13.00 and will be terminated at 16.00.

Agenda Item 7 Outcome of the Meeting

- 7.1 The Meeting adopted the draft Outcome of the Meeting as contained in document 7-1.
- 7.2 The Outcome of the Meeting has been finalized by the HELCOM Secretariat and made available in the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#) as well as on the [VASAB website](#), together with meeting documents and presentations considered during the Meeting

Annex 1 List of Participants

Representing	Name	Organization	E-mail address
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Annex 3 **Developments and activities related to the EUSBSR and HA Spatial Planning**

HELCOM and VASAB are co-coordinators of Horizontal Action (HA) Spatial Planning of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). The joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group acts as the steering committee for the HA Spatial Planning concerning MSP issues. Both Secretariats assist the WG in this role, by e.g. keeping the group informed of activities related to the (EUSBSR) and HA Spatial Planning (such as funding opportunities and meetings) and representing the HA in various meetings and processes as needed.

Amendments to the EUSBSR Action Plan

The amendments to the EUSBSR Action Plan were approved by Council of European Union on 29 March 2017.

- Content based amendments have been made for PA Transport, PA Education;
- Suggested a new procedure for the change of thematic coordinators and updated list of thematic coordinators;
- Chapter of HA Spatial Planning remains unchanged.

Council conclusions on macro-regional strategies

The Council Conclusions on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies adopted on 25 April.

- macro-regional strategies are an instrument for optimal use of existing financial resources, better use of existing institutions and better implementation of existing legislation;
- all four strategies face common and individual challenges and can be further developed, notably regarding governance, result-orientation, purposeful funding, communication and cooperation
- considers that the governance of the strategies could be further strengthened to improve their effectiveness.

Flagship projects

Within the HA Spatial Planning there is one on-going flagship project with relevance to the MSP issues – **“Baltic LINes - Coherent Linear Infrastructures in Baltic Maritime Spatial Plans”**.

Ongoing and completed flagship projects are listed in an Annex to the EUSBSR Action Plan.

Other projects

Let's Communicate project is the Communication Point of the EUSBSR replacing INTERACT Point Turku in maintaining the communication channels of the EUSBSR (webpage, social media) and in functioning as the driving force of developing both the internal and external communications within the EUSBSR framework.

There are defined 5 groups of activities:

- 1) Finding relevant and interesting stories and messages to communicate about;
- 2) Dissemination of stories and messages;
- 3) Equipping EUSBSR stakeholders relevant tools for efficient communications;
- 4) Communication face-to-face via events and workshops;
- 5) Reaching out for new target groups and making the EUSBSR known in broader societal context.

New brochure on HA Spatial Planning

An updated brochure on HA Spatial Planning has been prepared. The brochure provides updated information about the objectives and structure of HA Spatial Planning, flagship projects and other related projects.

Follow-up on funding activities

Interreg BSR Programme – the results of 2nd Call assessment will be available after 24th May 2017. Within the 2nd Call the project proposal **“Towards Integrated Maritime Heritage Planning and Management in the Baltic Sea”** was submitted. The project has been supported by the joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group on 1 June 2016.

Interreg Central Baltic Programme – the results of 3rd Call 1st step assessment will be available by 15 May. There is no indication whether any project proposal with MSP relevance has been submitted.

EUSBSR Seed Money

Seed money is EU funding to prepare projects that contribute to one of the priority areas or horizontal actions of the EUSBSR. The Seed money gives an opportunity to draft a project plan that can be further developed into an application to any of the EU or national funding sources.

In the 1st EUSBSR Seed Money Call 1step there were received 5 project ideas out of which 3 project ideas were supported for further project proposal elaboration in 2nd step. All 3 project proposals were elaborated and submitted to the Interreg Joint Secretariat. The decision of approved projects will be available after 24th May 2017. Estimated project start could be in June 2017 (for one year).

The next – 2nd Seed Money Call could be open in late 2017/beginning of 2018 however there is not a clear decision yet. The seed money projects will not manage to prepare applications for regular calls of Interreg programmes in the region in this programme period anymore as most of the funds will be committed by then. Thus, the focus of the seed money projects should be clearly on other funding sources.

Events related to EUSBSR

The 8th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR will be held in 13-14 June 2017 in Berlin, Germany. HA Spatial Planning will be present via several workshops and activities in the Forum.

Baltic LINes project is organising a seminar **“What’s the future? Testing the possible scenarios for shipping and energy in the Baltic Sea and how to integrate them into maritime spatial planning”**. Participants of the seminar will be introduced to proposals for future scenarios of the shipping and energy sectors in relation to maritime spatial planning that are developed in frames of the Baltic LINes project (Coherent Linear Infrastructures in Baltic Maritime Spatial Plans).

During the seminar, participants will have the chance to play a strategy board-game “MSP Challenge” in which the proposed scenarios with the focus on shipping industry will be visualised.

EUSBSR HAC/PAC Spring meeting was held in Sweden, 5-6 April 2017. Meeting discussed common and individual challenges and approaches among HAC&PAC, the concept of flagships, as well as how the alignment of funding is functioning in practice in the present programme 2014-2020. The next HAC/PAC meeting is expected to be in September 2017 and might discuss the alignment of funding after 2020.

Other events

HA Spatial Planning will be represented in the [European Maritime Day](#) in Poole (UK) on 18-19 May 2017 by having a joint booth showing the current activities and on-going projects in the Baltic Sea Region. EMD is the annual meeting point for Europe’s maritime community to network, discuss and forge joint action.

The Baltic Sea Region achievements and projects in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) were presented in [the 2nd International Conference on Marine/Maritime Spatial Planning](#) (organised by UNESCO-IOC and EC) on 15-17 March 2017 in Paris. Baltic approach of stakeholders’ involvement in MSP was presented by former VASAB Chair Jacek Zaucha in the Conference's Session: "Engaging stakeholders in MSP". Additionally, Baltic SCOPE project was taking active role in the Conference by facilitating Session: "Good practices for science-based MSP".

Horizontal Action "Spatial Planning" was represented by having a "Baltic booth" at the Conference Exhibition area. In the Baltic booth participants of the Conference were invited to try the digital tool on MSP developed during Baltic SCOPE project to dive deeper into transboundary cooperation and cross-border challenges, as well as get more information about regional efforts on coherent MSP throughout the Baltic Sea and ongoing projects, like Baltic LINes, Plan4Blue and others.