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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 “Encourage the use of maritime and land-based spatial planning in all Member States around the Baltic Sea and develop a common approach for cross-border 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 Sea version of the MSP Challenge simulation. The Russian Scientific and Research Institute for MSP ERMAK NorthWest contributes to project activities with funding via the Swedish Institutes in the framework of the parallel project “Baltic LINES-RU”.

<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 Digitalization 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) • 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.

The Meeting is also invited to support the workshop and request Secretariats to distribute the invitation to attend the Workshop through the HELCOM and VASAB network

Baltic LINes – Completed and ongoing activities

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.

Maps have been produced to capture the current and planned use of space by offshore energy and shipping. For shipping, “Past, present and future developments relevant for Maritime Spatial Planning” have been identified in a report. For energy the report analyzing the status quo as well as future developments relevant for MSP is delayed due to the dropout of the project partner PTMEW (Polish Offshore Wind Energy Society). This delay is a bottleneck for proceeding with the subsequent steps, which will be solved by other Baltic LINes partners taking up the tasks. The reports on status quo and future developments are the basis for developing future spatial scenarios.

For shipping, scenarios are currently being developed. The scenarios will be verified by sector stakeholders with the help of the MSP Challenge, an interactive computers simulation. The involvement of stakeholders is carefully planned, based on a stakeholder involvement strategy. A test-run of interactive stakeholder involvement was carried through at the 8th EUSBSR Annual Forum, where a table top (board game) version of the MSP Challenge was played. As a result of the entire outlined process, the project will identify the sectoral demand for space in the future. This demand will be evaluated against other sectors’ spatial claims and preferences as well as environmental protection needs in work package 4.

The aim of Baltic LINes **Work Package 3** is to develop a prototype system to access MSP cross-border data in the Baltic Sea. It is based on a Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI) where data is accessed from the original source and no central database storage is involved.

The first step to achieve that aim was to identify the availability of the data and assess its quality. The report “Data needs and availability”, released by HELCOM in April, is a catalog with links to decentralized standard services available so far (OGC WMS and WFS) by country. The report shows that there are still many datasets missing especially via WFS services because of the difficulty of publishing them.

This report has been updated recently with new links and with centralized data links, most of them from the HELCOM HOLAS II project. Hence, planners of the project can access the already available data to elaborate their plans. On 11th of October, HELCOM asked the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Data Expert Sub-Group to update the list of datasets links.

The project has also delivered requirement specifications elaborated by Aalborg University. This document describes the main prerequisites for the prototype to access MSP data. It includes a study of available systems providing interoperable data and existing technology standards. It also presents the analysis of user demands and a conceptual model.

HELCOM, supported by Aalborg University, is currently working on the development of the prototype which we call BASEMAPS. BASEMAPS, currently still work in progress, is an interactive online tool to access the decentralized data currently available. The version 0 was presented in the last partner meeting in Gothenburg. The next steps are to improve functionalities, user experience, investigate the possibility of publishing metadata, research ways to implement a harmonization tool and consider the implementation of a tool to add links easily to the system. The next versions are planned to be released in December 2017 (V1), May 2018, in the next partner meeting (V1.1), October 2018, in the final conference (V2) and in February 2019 (V2.1)

Finally the development of the MSP Challenge Baltic Sea Edition, led by NHTV, has continued. NHTV received all the datasets that are available in HELCOM and has been implementing them in the simulation game as much as possible. New and improved features have been and are being implemented. Development continues and is scheduled to be wrapped up at the end of 2017. For 2018 it is planned to

have three MSP Challenge stakeholder meetings, one each for shipping and energy, and one common session. The first meeting termed “Shaping the Future of Shipping in the Baltic Sea: An International Meeting and an Interactive What-If Simulation” is already intensively prepared and will be held 25-26 January in Riga, Latvia.

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 2 and 3.

Although not all results from these two work packages are available yet, first steps to a comprehensive overview of planning criteria were made. To investigate planning criteria as concrete as possible different approaches were chosen for energy and shipping.

For shipping information on existing legal frameworks (IMO, UNCLOS) and other international regulations were collected. In the course of a partner meeting it was discussed how the existing regulations were transferred to the national planning of shipping corridors and it was found that essential differences exist regarding importance and national approaches for the spatial planning of shipping. These findings suggest that it will be difficult to totally agree on certain planning criteria – especially since the national MSPs in the Baltic are at different stages. However, the project aims to present potential planning solutions that are coherent across borders, e.g. by using AIS data as a basis for shipping corridor designations. Findings will be presented in clearly structured info papers and maps to support the practical work of planners. A final report will give in-depth information on data and methods and a comprehensive overview about the results attained.

For the planning of offshore energy where there is no such international legal framework as the IMO for shipping a comprehensive collection of natural, technical, socio-economic and exclusionary planning criteria was prepared and discussed within the partnership. It was agreed that only those planning criteria will be focused that have a direct spatial effect and thus highly impact MSP. For a set of spatially relevant planning criteria different national approaches will be highlighted via info graphics and possibilities for a common agreement of planning criteria will be explored in a final report.

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.