



## OUTCOME OF THE 15th MEETING OF THE HELCOM-VASAB MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING WORKING GROUP (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 15-2017)

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## OUTCOME OF THE 15th MEETING OF THE HELCOM-VASAB MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING WORKING GROUP (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 15-2017)

### Introduction

0.1 The 15th Meeting of the joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 15-2017) was held on 7-8 November 2017 in Warsaw, Poland upon invitation by the Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation.

0.2 The Meeting was attended by representatives of all HELCOM and VASAB members except Estonia and Lithuania. The Meeting was also attended by CCB and WWF as Observers, and EU MSP Platform and BONUS BALTCOAST project as Invited Guests. The List of Participants is contained in **Annex 1**.

0.3 The Meeting was chaired by the Co-Chairs of the Working Group, Mr. Joacim Johannesson, Sweden, and Ms. Katarzyna Krzywda, Poland.

0.4 The Co-Chairs opened the Meeting and welcomed the participants.

0.5 Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, HELCOM Executive Secretary, welcomed the participants to the Meeting.

0.6 Mr. Talis Linkaits, Head of VASAB Secretariat, also welcomed the participants to the Meeting.

0.7 Mr. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky, Professional Secretary of HELCOM, assisted by Mr. Ville Karvinen, Project Coordinator of HELCOM, acted as Secretary of the Meeting.

### **Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda**

Documents: 1-1, 1-2

1.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda (document 1-1) elaborated by the HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats in consultation with the Co-Chairs.

### **Agenda Item 2 Matters arising from other HELCOM and VASAB work**

Documents: 2-1

2.1 The Meeting took note of the information on the outcomes of recent HELCOM and VASAB meetings as presented by HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats.

2.2 The Meeting took note of the information on the major themes identified for the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting, which will be held on 6 March 2018, and the ongoing preparation of the Ministerial declaration.

2.3 The Meeting also took note of the information on the existing MSP-related commitments made at the HELCOM Ministerial meetings so far, and that HELCOM Heads of Delegation mandated the Secretariat to invite the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG to provide input to the preparations of the Ministerial outcome.

2.4 The Meeting discussed possible topics to be proposed for the Ministerial outcome and took note of the following comments by the participants:

- MSP is a globally growing issue and the BSR could be regarded a world forerunner in MSP development;
- MSP is closely related to the implementation of the UN SDGs, as well as to sustainable blue economy and sustainable ocean governance;

- Practical aspects of coherence of the spatial plans in the region, including environmental coherence as well as integration of MPAs into the spatial plans are important;
- The recommendations of the Baltic SCOPE project could be utilized as background information for formulating the input to the preparation of the Ministerial outcome.

2.5 The Meeting established a drafting group, consisting of Germany, Finland, Sweden, HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats and Co-Chairs, to come up with a proposal for input. The Meeting considered the outcome of the drafting group, supported the suggested input, as presented in **Annex 2**, for further consideration in the preparation of the Ministerial outcome in principle and invited the members of the group to consult the proposed input nationally and inform HELCOM Secretariat ([monika.stankiewicz@helcom.fi](mailto:monika.stankiewicz@helcom.fi)) **by 15 November 2017** accordingly.

### **Agenda Item 3 Regional coordination and policy follow-up**

Documents: 3-1, 3-1 appendix, 3-2

3.1 The Meeting agreed that the second revision of the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern MSP (Germany) could be presented at HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 16-2018.

3.2 The Meeting took note of the results of the second international consultations on a draft Polish MSP as presented by Poland.

3.3 The Meeting took note that Poland is awaiting for the comments on marine transportation corridors by December 2017 and that the SEA procedures will be conducted through the Espoo Convention focal points.

3.4 National MSP developments:

Denmark: Started collation of existing data and future data from stakeholders and authorities, which is to be completed by April 2018. Then the MSP development will start and an international meeting is planned to be arranged by the end of 2018.

Finland: The work on elaboration of 3 plans by 8 regions of Finland has been launched. The coordination group has been set. Now the planning process is at the phase of stock-taking and establishing phase. The work will be organized utilising a digital platform for planners ensuring close cooperation between planners. The active phase of planning will start in 2018.

Germany: Currently at the stage of internal preparation for the second planning cycle. Research efforts on considering nature conservation in MSP are ongoing with the first results expected in the coming year to be introduced in the planning process.

Latvia: Currently at the second phase of planning, which is to be completed by the end of 2017. The strategic environmental assessment report will be completed by the end of January 2018. Then national consultation and consultations within the Espoo Convention process will be launched after SEA report is completed.

Poland: Second international consultation meeting for the preliminary Draft Maritime Spatial Plan of Polish Sea Areas in scale 1:200 000 was held back-to-back with HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 15-2017. Next phase will be the full Draft Plan, which will be subjected to 3rd national stakeholder meeting and comments, together with SEA. Next international consultation is planned for 2019 and the Espoo Convention process after that.

Sweden: Espoo notification was carried out in 2015. National consultations will start in February 2018. International consultation will be held in spring 2018. Consultations in the frame of the Espoo

Convention are also planned before submission of the MSPs to the government, in spring 2018 or at the last consultation stage in 2019.

Russia: Recently launched a new national project on implementation of the HELCOM requirements related to MSP. The project will be focused on the MSP methodologies, mapping of the human activities, biotopes etc. The results of the project might be firstly presented at the 19th Baltic Sea Day Forum 22-23 March 2018 in St. Petersburg. Russia invited all countries to attend the BSD 2018 and also present drafts of the spatial plans.

- 3.5 The Meeting thanked Poland for the fruitful international consultations and pointed out that it also serves for MSP coherence and inspires further development of MSP in the region.
- 3.6 The Meeting took note of the information by Sweden on the Baltic SCOPE recommendations prepared jointly by Sweden, Finland and HELCOM Secretariat.
- 3.7 The Meeting discussed the recommendations and concluded that some of them are relevant for the work of the State & Conservation and other HELCOM groups and are already under consideration. Also some of the recommendations are relevant for the planners and should be communicated nationally. The Meeting provided the following feedback on the particular recommendations.
- 3.8 The Meeting suggested to attend the meeting of the HELCOM SAFE NAV group and also communicate the relevant outcomes of the BalticLINES project to that group. The Meeting suggested to strengthen cooperation with IMO via e.g. HELCOM Maritime group.
- 3.9 The Meeting pointed out that the Baltic Sea Region MSP Data Expert Sub-group will focus on the output data. The group members contacted seed money project aimed at development of the larger project which might facilitate further work on the input data and serve for implementation of the relevant recommendations.
- 3.10 The Meeting took note of the clarification on the three checklists on the ecosystem-based approach developed in Baltic SCOPE. The checklist toolbox has been applied and evaluated for UK- plans by UN Environment initiated by WWF.
- 3.11 The Meeting also took note that the areas for the offshore energy have already been reserved in the MSP and that the BalticLINES project outcomes could be utilized for their better location. The Meeting in principle agreed with the suggestion by Finland that the other sources of renewable energy but wind turbines could be taken into account in the offshore renewable energy scenarios, e.g. wave energy.
- 3.12 The Meeting agreed that the countries will exchange spatial plans and projects with transnational impact within the frame of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP group.
- 3.13 The Meeting took note of the concern about the challenges in elaboration of ecological value criteria. The Meeting was also informed that EBSAs are defined by a set of criteria, and could be of use and also that the HOLAS II results could be used for that purpose.
- 3.14 The Meeting suggested that the group should not only promote the development and application of approaches to assess cumulative pressures and impacts of human activities on the marine environment but also utilize this information in its work.
- 3.15 The Meeting pointed out that the group should promote the development and application of approaches to assess cumulative pressures for the use in regional projects.
- 3.16 The Meeting also took note that HELCOM S&C is looking for the project on, among other tasks, MPA coherence as contribution to implementation of the recommendation to strengthen the linkages between MSP and MPA.
- 3.17 The Meeting emphasized the need to discuss the linkage between MSFD and MSP at the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG meetings, particularly MSFD descriptors and indicators of GES, as well as utilizing

of the GES indicators into EIA and SEA. The Meeting pointed out that MSP is a tool contributing to the GES of the Sea.

3.18 The Meeting took note of the information by Sweden on the national discussion on the application of precautionary principle in MSP. The Meeting also noted the position of Latvia that application of any harmonized precautionary principle in all countries is nearly impossible due to high variability of the available information. The Meeting invited other HELCOM groups and national authorities to discuss how to use the precautionary principle. The Meeting concluded that in general precautionary principle should not depend on data availability but deficit of data requires a more cautious approach to planning.

3.19 The Meeting acknowledged that the precautionary principle is included in HELCOM-VASAB principles on MSP and as well as HELCOM VASAB MSP group working plan.

3.20 The Meeting took note that Finland has already collected reliable information on nursery areas of commercial fish species (VELMU database). Despite the data cover only Finnish coastal areas the models applied for this work could be utilized for other areas. The Meeting also noted that BALTFISH forum and other fishery organizations can be involved in collection of the data for MSP. The Meeting pointed out the need of the advice from the fisheries managers and scientists to improve usability of aggregated data on fisheries in MSP.

3.21 The Meeting suggested to arrange a regional workshop with representatives of relevant HELCOM groups and other regional organizations on the recommendations of the Baltic Scope project and on mapping of ecosystem components, particularly. The Meeting also noted that kick-off meeting of PanBaltic SCOPE project, which might be also used for this discussion, will be held 27-28 February 2018.

3.22 The Meeting took note of the Information on the interim project results of the BalticLINES so far including regarding safety of navigation in MSP.

3.23 The Meeting welcomed the information on the upcoming workshop on the spatial needs of shipping in Riga, Latvia, 24-25 January 2018 and encouraged the countries to attend the workshop and contribute to its agenda. Particularly, the Meeting invited representatives of HELCOM SAFE NAV group to attend the workshop.

#### **Agenda Item 4 Ecosystem-based approach in MSP**

Documents: 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4

4.1 The Meeting took note of the information by Ms. Lena Bergström, HELCOM Secretariat, on the first version of the HELCOM 'State of the Baltic Sea' report, as developed within the HOLAS II project (document 4-1). The current version of the report will be updated by June 2018 to include additional data, in order for the final report to cover the assessment years 2011-2016, and the update will also consider the outcome of a regional consultation and national consultations.

4.2 With regard to the assessment of cumulative impacts in HOLAS II, the Meeting took note of the regional spatial data sets on human activities, pressures and ecosystem components that were used and are now available for use. The Meeting further noted that work is ongoing to develop weighting factors for the different pressures included in the index calculation, and that these results will be considered for potential inclusion in the final report by June 2018.

4.3 The Meeting was informed that more details on the assessment method and datasets used for the assessment are available in the HOLAS II supplementary report on the BSII and the Spatial data fact sheets, which can be accessed at the project results web page: <http://stateofthebalticsea.helcom.fi/>

4.4 The Meeting congratulated HELCOM for the very valuable work done and pointed out that the outcomes of HOLAS II are also of use for the further development of spatial planning.

4.5 The Meeting took note of information from Sweden on the high level of similarity between the BSII approach used in HOLAS II and the Symphony tool being developed in Sweden to support MSP, and its

relevance to support economic and social analyses, as well of the possibility to account for information from indicator-based assessments of environmental status in spatial planning.

4.6 The Meeting pointed out that the applied method for assessing cumulative impacts has the advantage of being transparent at all steps, which makes them suitable in national spatial planning, as all aspects of the assessment can be scrutinized and included in the evaluation.

4.7 The Meeting also took note of the background complementary information on “Green Infrastructure”/“Blue Corridors” as well as an overview of the currently available regional datasets of potential relevance to mapping them, including data on ecosystem components, Red listed species and habitats and biotopes, and MPAs (document 4-3).

4.8 The Meeting took note of the comment by Sweden that the need in aggregation of maps of ecosystem components into green infrastructure was recognized in Sweden at early stage of MSP development and that the term of blue corridors mainly reflects connectivity between ecologically valuable areas.

4.9 The Meeting discussed the significance of the green infrastructure for the MPAs connectivity. The Meeting was of the opinion that connectivity of MPAs is only one dimension of the green infrastructure. The green infrastructure in general reflects valuable ecosystem components both inside and outside MPAs.

4.10 The Meeting took note of the suggestion by Sweden together with Finland, Germany and Latvia (document 4-2) on the work plan on Green infrastructure/blue corridor maps linking MSPs and MPAs and summarizing related ongoing processes.

4.11 The Meeting thanked the task force led by Sweden for the excellent work done to compile information on regional processes related to green infrastructure and planning of the further activities.

4.12 The Meeting pointed out that the green maps, mentioned as one of the final products of the work plan, are to be produced in a scale relevant for spatial planning. The Meeting also noted that the HELCOM project application on MPAs includes a suggestion on workshop which might be used to discuss the matter.

4.13 The Meeting took note of the information on the upcoming CBD Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA) in the Baltic Sea (document 4-4).

4.14 The Meeting pointed out that it could be of use for the members of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP group to attend the Workshop. The Meeting invited HELCOM Secretariat to contact CBD Secretariat regarding invitation of MS planners to the Workshop.

4.15 The Meeting supported further work on EBSA in general and took into account the position of Sweden that MS planners should be involved in the discussion on EBSA from technical point of view. The Meeting invited the organizers of the Workshop to take the MSP aspect into account in the agenda.

4.16 The Meeting further discussed the draft work plan on Green infrastructure/blue corridors and agreed that the first event of the work plan might be EBSA workshop in February 2018. Further, the kick-off meetings of the PanBaltic and other workshops of the projects, e.g. BASMATI, can be utilized for the implementation of the work plan. The Meeting agreed that due to current workload it would be feasible to start cooperation with S&C in autumn 2018. The Meeting invited the task force, led by Sweden, to specify the dates for the work plan in the form of the time table by the next MSP meeting.

4.17 The Meeting agreed on the working plan in general and suggested to include into the work plan a regional recommendation/guideline on how to utilise the green maps for the MSP purposes. The Meeting agreed that practical discussion on the scope of the recommendation/guideline would be supported by PanBaltic SCOPE project and might be started in 2019.

4.18 The Meeting pointed out that EBSA criteria might be utilized as a starting point for the discussion on the criteria or green infrastructure.

4.19 The Meeting suggested to invite BASMATI Project to present the project at the MSP group meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 5 Implementation of the other tasks from the group Work Plan**

Documents: 5-1

5.1 The Meeting took note of the Regional calendar of national MSP-related processes and meetings prepared by VASAB Secretariat (document 5-1).

5.2 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to inform the VASAB Secretariat of the MSP-related processes and meetings to maintain the calendar up-to-date.

5.3 The Meeting took note of the information by Latvia on the progress towards achieving main tasks of the BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-Group and welcomed the progress achieved by the MSP data group.

5.4 The Meeting discussed further steps to implement the item of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG working plan on promotion of the education and professional development of MSP planners. The participants exchanged views on the matter.

5.5 The Meeting took note of the information that in the Latvian master's degree education for spatial planning includes only general lectures on MSP.

5.6 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to provide information regarding the educational programmes in MSP including availability of these programme for foreign students by the next meeting. The information can be then compiled and published at the HELCOM and VASAB websites.

#### **Agenda Item 6 MSP-related projects and events**

Documents: 6-1, 6-2, 6-3, 6-4

6.1 The Meeting took note of the information on recent developments and activities related to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and Horizontal Action (HA) Spatial Planning for which HELCOM and VASAB act as the Horizontal Action Coordinators (HACs) and the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG acts as the Steering Committee concerning the MSP part (document 6-1).

6.2 The Meeting took note of the information on the PanBaltic SCOPE (document 6-4) as presented by Sweden. The Meeting welcomed information that the project is in the process of signing of the grant agreement.

6.3 The Meeting took note that the project has a specific task to support implementation of the HELCOM VASAB MSP group working plan. The Meeting agreed to discuss the matter in detail at the next MSP Group meeting and coordinate the project activities with the implementation of the group's working plan.

6.4 The Meeting pointed out that the PanBaltic SCOPE Project would benefit from involvement of Russia in its implementation. The Lead Partner of the project agreed to consider the instruments for involvement of Russian experts in the implementation of the project.

6.5 The Meeting took note of the information on the BONUS BALTCOAST project (document 6-2).

6.6 The Meeting discussed the problem of delimitation of the coastal areas, decision making tools in relation to the integrated coastal management including EIA procedures and potential policy messages from the project outcomes.

6.7 The Meeting took note of the information on the BONUS BALTSPEACE project (document 6-3).

6.8 The Meeting took note of the brief information on the BalticRIM project provided by Russia and that almost all Baltic Sea countries are involved in its implementation.

6.9 The Meeting took note of the information on the recent MSP related events:

- The Maritime Spatial Planning for Blue Growth Conference was held 11-12.10.2017 in Brussels as presented by the EU.
- EU Member States Expert Group on Maritime Spatial Planning meeting was held in Malta as presented by Sweden.

#### **Agenda Item 7      Any other business**

Documents: 7-1, 7-2

7.1            The Meeting took note of the latest updates of the Country fiches as presented by VASAB Secretariat and that the updates are available on the VASAB web site.

7.2            The Meeting updated the list of nominated experts for the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG (**Annex 3**).

7.3            The Meeting emphasized the importance of cooperation with other HELCOM groups and agreed that the results of the BalticLINES project are to be considered at the upcoming meeting of the HELCOM Maritime working group. The Meeting invited BalticLINES project with assistance of HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats to submit the outcomes of the project to the HELCOM Maritime working group meeting in September 2018.

7.4            The Meeting encouraged the group members to inform HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats on any suggestions on strengthening cooperation with other HELCOM groups.

7.5            The Meeting agreed to include into the agenda of the next meeting such themes as: PanBaltic project implementation, detailed work plan on green infrastructure as well as MSP aspects in maritime policy.

7.6            The Meeting took note of the document on experiences in the implementation of maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea (document 7-1) and agreed to provide possible comments and additions to the overview to the HELCOM Secretariat ([laura.meski@helcom.fi](mailto:laura.meski@helcom.fi)) by 17 November 2017.

7.7            The Meeting agreed that the next meeting will be held in Helsinki, Finland, in spring 2018. The Meeting took note of the suggestion by Finland to arrange the meeting back-to-back with presentation of the progress in national MSP. The Meeting invited Finland to contact HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats to identify the dates suitable for the meeting by 30 November 2017.

#### **Agenda Item 8      Outcome of the Meeting**

Documents: 8-1

8.1            The Meeting adopted the draft Outcome of the Meeting as contained in document 8-1.

8.2            The final 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 the presentations considered during the Meeting.



## Annex 1 List of Participants

Representing	Name	Organization	E-mail address
Chair	Joacim Johannesson	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	joacim.johannesson@havochvatten.se
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<b>Invited guests</b>			
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## **Annex 2 Proposed input to the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting**

Recognize the Baltic Sea region as a forerunner in regional cooperation on MSP, involving HELCOM and VASAB and facilitated by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, and the important contribution MSP can make to fulfil the Agenda 2030, in particular SDG 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;

Re-iterate the common goal of all Baltic Sea countries to, by 2020, establish maritime spatial plans that are coherent across borders and apply ecosystem approach, and in this regard, stress the importance to utilize/follow the agreed principles and guidelines in the planning practice and develop them further as needed;

**Annex 3 Contact addresses of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG**

Contact addresses of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG in the Contracting Parties/Member Countries

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