



Document title	Follow-up and further work on the Regional MSP coherence report
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Agenda Item	3 - Development of the regional MSP framework
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Reference	

Background

The HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG Meeting 18-2019 agreed that there is a need to create a common understanding on the coherence of the plans and subsequently on common criteria for following that the goal set in the Baltic Sea MSP Roadmap is achieved. The meeting decided to form a task force on the topic.

The task force that is led by the HELCOM Secretariat has representatives from Finland, Germany, Latvia and Sweden. VASAB Secretariat contributes also to the work. The task force has worked on an online document and held several on-line meetings to produce the current version of the report.

The most important part of the document is the checklist. The task force concluded that the checklist approach is the most pragmatic approach. Its purpose is to support Baltic Sea countries for evaluating and improving cross-border coherence of MSP. By using the checklist, the countries can identify the important aspects of cross-border coherence that can be found both in the MSP plans and in the practices of cross border collaboration (planning and collaboration processes). The checklist will improve understanding of the key elements of coherence and focus the attention on the critical things for achieving the coherence.

HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 22-2021 discussed the use of the document and suggested that at first stage the document will be utilized as a voluntary guidance for assessing cross-border coherence of MSPs (cf. [Outcome](#), paras 3.21-26). After gaining experience and receiving examples of practical application of the document, the report will be advanced and developed.

HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 22-2021 agreed to return to the consideration of Regional MSP coherence report during HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23-2021 and to agree on the testing period for the document.

The last version of the report “Voluntary guidance for assessment of cross-border coherence” is available as [attachment 1](#) to this document. The document was finalised by Riku Varjopuro at the Finnish Environment Institute with the financial support of Finland.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- consider the last version of the report and to agree on the next steps to test the approach,
- discuss the option to publish the report on the HELCOM website under the section of the [HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG](#) and under the overall [HELCOM reports](#) for its dissemination.