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<b>Document title</b>	Proposal for a follow-up mechanism
<b>Code</b>	3-3
<b>Category</b>	CMNT
<b>Agenda Item</b>	3 – Development of the regional MSP framework
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## Background

Capacity4MSP (Strengthening the capacity of MSP stakeholders and decision makers) is a project platform funded by Interreg from August 2019 to March 2022. The sub-activity 2.3.3 aims to propose an institutionalized mechanism for a regular follow-up of progress in MSP on the regional sea level. The activity is led by the HELCOM Secretariat.

The participants of the project partner meeting, held on 16 March 2021, discussed the format and themes for this follow-up mechanism. The mechanism would be a package of recurrent data compilations and assessments constituting the follow-up of the regional progress in MSP and initiated by HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.

HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 22-2021 took note of the initial ideas for the follow-up mechanism (cf. [document 6-3](#) submitted to the meeting) and welcomed the proposal. The meeting also noted that it would be good to include the national progress ('state of play') in the follow-up mechanism (cf. [Outcome](#), para. 3.29). This exercise is regularly done during the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG Meetings, based on [Outcome](#) of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 15-2017, para 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." This task was added to the current proposal.

In this sense, the mechanism proposal includes now four themes:

1. The HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG Work plan,
2. The new Regional Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap (2021-2030),
3. The updated HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP),
4. National MSP developments.



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In the [document 6-3](#) submitted to HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 22-2021, the cross-border coherence was included in the themes. This topic has now been included under the new theme “National MSP developments”. This document presents the proposal follow-up mechanism of progress in MSP on the regional sea level.

### Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- Take note of the information
- Consider the proposal for such a mechanism
- Discuss the current format proposed in this document and its possible implementation.

## MSP Follow-up mechanism proposal

The proposal for a follow-up mechanism developed under Capacity4MSP project platform contains a package of themes to be regularly assessed by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG. A summary description of the mechanism themes is described in the table below.

Themes	Description of the follow-up mechanism	Possible responsible
<b>1. The new Regional MSP Roadmap (2021-2030)</b>	The new Regional MSP Roadmap has actions and milestones which are easy to follow-up. This work would help in anticipating the near future work and assign lead countries for actions.	HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats
<b>2. HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG work plan</b>	There is already a template to evaluate/analyze the current work plan. The HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats could update such a document prior to each WG meetings to follow-up the status of the implementation of the work plan. This task is usually done by the Secretariat when the work plan has to be updated. A follow-up mechanism based on each HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG meeting would ease the process.	HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats
<b>3. The updated HELCOM BSAP</b>	HELCOM Secretariat would report to the WG any progress in the follow up of BSAP (i.e. <a href="#">HELCOM Explorer</a> ).	HELCOM Secretariat
<b>4. National MSP developments</b>	This theme addresses the 'state of play' on the national progress ('state of play') on MSP. This theme comprehends the different MSP phases of development, and also relevant topics for the regional development of MSP, including the cross-border coherence of MSPs.	Contracting Parties providing the information to HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats for compiling the final document

Each one of those themes is further introduced and presented below. Please note that the theme 4 on National MSP developments is an online file for which the CPs would be requested to fill-in prior to each HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG Meeting. The final document will be submitted as an information document to each upcoming WG meeting to keep track of the national developments.

### 1. The new Regional MSP Roadmap (2021-2030)

The new Regional MSP Roadmap is a high-level guiding document, and it is composed of joint actions and milestones. In order to follow-up its development, the table below named "Roadmap Actions and Milestones Follow-up" is proposed. This GANTT chart lists the joint objectives and outputs from the new Roadmap from 2021 to 2030, proposing a timeframe for the achievement of each task. This table provides an overview on the necessary advances towards achieving each objective of the Roadmap within the intended timeframe. The description of Objectives, tasks and follow-up activities are described in Annex I.

The table could be submitted as a meeting document, with the current status highlighted (bold column) and updated according the outcome of the previous meeting. The document update would be under the responsibility of the Secretariats.

Roadmap Actions and Milestones Follow-up

The version of the Regional MSP Roadmap in this section is the one for the period 2021 – 2030, i.e. the proposal for adoption by the 2021 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting on 20 October 2021. If necessary, the information will be updated based on the Outcome of the Ministerial Meeting.

Considered	Preparation	Ready	Continuous and regular
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	Task no	Timeframe	HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG meetings																									
			22-2021	23-2021	24-2022	25-2022	26-2023	27-2023	28-2024	29-2024	30-2025	31-2025	32-2026	33-2026	34-2027	35-2027	36-2028	37-2028	38-2029	39-2029	40-2030	41-2030						
Objective 1 (Follow up MSP implementation)	1.1	2023																										
	1.2	2025 & 2028																										
	1.3	2027																										
Objective 1 (Knowledge base of the MSP)	1.4	continuous + conference 2023-2025							-	-	->																	
	1.5	2027																										
	1.6a	2022																										
	1.6b	2022																										
	1.6c	2025																										
	1.6d	continuous																										
	1.7	regular																										
Objective 2 (Regional policy coherence)	2.1	continuous																										
	2.2	continuous																										
	2.3	regular																										
	2.4	2026																										
	2.5	2022																										
	2.6	2025																										
	2.7	continuous																										
Objective 3 (Good environmental status, BSAP)	3.1	2025																										
	3.2a	2022																										
	3.2b	2025																										
	3.3	2022																										
	3.4a	2025																										
	3.4b	2023																										
	3.5a	2022																										
	3.5b	2026																										
3.6	2026																											
Objective 4 (Blue economy)	4.1	2026																										
	4.2	2027																										
	4.3	2025																										
	4.4	2028																										
Objective 5 (Climate change)	5.1	2025																										
	5.2	2025																										
	5.3a	2026																										
	5.3b	2026																										
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Milestone: Interim assessment of the progress in the Roadmap implementation</b>												32-2026	33-2026	34-2027	35-2027	36-2028	37-2028	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Milestone: Sound basis for an adaptive Maritime Spatial Planning process applying the ecosystem-based approach is built</b>						38-2029	39-2029	40-2030	41-2030	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Milestone: Final assessment of the regional MSP framework and achievement of the Roadmap goal and objectives</b>

## **2. HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG work plan**

The HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG work plan 2020-2021 is near to be updated. A template for the evaluation/analyzes of the current Working Group Work Plan already exists. In this follow-up mechanism proposal, we suggest the further expansion of this template in order to follow the tasks discussed at the HELCOM VASAB WG meetings, by summarizing the information related to each task in the working group work plan.

The proposal for this theme is that the HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats could update such a document prior to each WG meetings to follow-up the status of the implementation of the work plan. This update would be given by adding the summarized information from the outcomes related to each action under the “Status of implementation”. In this sense, actions addressed in the different meetings could be observed and followed throughout time. This work would help in anticipating the near future work and the work developed within the working group work plan timeframe.

Bellow, a proposal for the update of the template is given. Please, observe that the working group work plan 2020-2021 and the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 22-2021 outcome were used only as an example to illustrate the use of the table for two tasks included in the work plan 2020-2021.

HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG Work plan

Nr	Task description	Lead country/support	Timeframe	Deliverable/ concrete output	Relevance to new MSP Roadmap 2030 (action or objective)	Follow-up on the Status of implementation progress during HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG Meetings			
						20-2020	21-2020	22-2021	23-2021
<b>Action 1. Follow up progress in regional MSP</b>									
1.1	Continuously update of national information on MSP developments including implementation of the joint MSP principles	HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG	Continuous	Updated Country Fiches on HELCOM and VASAB webpages.  Presentation by relevant authority of the recent MSP development at the WG with reflection on the discussion in the WG's outcomes.	1.4. Facilitate exchange of information on the best practices of MSP implementation, monitoring and evaluation across the BSR and other sea basins, 2.1. Continuous dialog utilizing various regional platform e.g. HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, MSP Planners Forum			Country fiches updated. <b>Para 5.2</b>  MSP developments presented at the WG meeting. <b>Para 5.1</b>	
1.2	Compile good practices on the application of the regional MSP related Guidelines (incl. relationship to practical implementation of the ESPOO Convention) and propose revision of the guidelines, if necessary.	HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG Projects (i.e. Capacity4MSP) Sweden	Continuous According to a work plan of projects	Reflection on the implementation of the Guidelines in the meeting outcomes.  An overview of the good practices to implement the guidelines with conclusions on possible needs to revise.	2.4. Review of guidelines on transboundary consultations, public participation and co-operation 3.1 Update the EBA-guidelines			The Meeting took note that Sweden and Germany have already practically used the guidance contained by the document (cross-border coherence) and found it practical. The Meeting took note that Sweden has concrete proposals regarding better reflection of Espoo Convention in the document and invited Sweden to forward these proposals to SYKE and HELCOM Secretariat. <b>Para. 3.20</b>	

### **3. The updated HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan**

The process to approve the new Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) is ongoing. Maritime Spatial Planning is a horizontal topic in the new BSAP, thus potentially affecting the implementation of all elements of the BSAP as a whole. The actions related to MSP are called horizontal actions in the current draft updated BSAP.

The progress in the implementation of MSP relevant horizontal actions within the updated BSAP will be highlighted using the [HELCOM explorer](#). The HELCOM explorer will be updated based on the new BSAP.

### **4. National MSP developments**

A proposal for the follow-up of the national updates on new MSP developments, that are already part of the topics raised during the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group meetings, is given on this [link](#). In order to build and illustrate the proposal, the table considered the outcomes of the MSP WG 20-2020, 21-2020 and 22-2021.

The information is organized per country according to the phase of development of the national maritime spatial plan, information on cross-border/international matters, application of the voluntary guidance for the assessment of cross-border coherence and supporting projects to the development of MSP. In this manner, the proposal intends to provide an overview of the MSP development process throughout time and highlight topics of regional relevance.

The information is intended to be presented for the timeframe of the Working Group work plan (4 meetings), but all the provided information from all the meetings will be stored and could be provided annually.

In this proposal, the countries will be invited by the Secretariats to provide relevant information one month previously to the production of the document for the next HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG meeting. The document to request the information will be shared online via a collaborative OneDrive word file, in a way that all Contracting Parties would not only be able to add the information directly at the document, but also, have up to date access to the latest updated information. The Secretariats will be responsible for the final compilation and organization of the information and to submit it as an information document to the upcoming HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG meeting. The document would keep the developments for the last four meetings to ease the table user-friendly.

Annex I. Roadmap proposal description

Joint Actions	Outputs	Timeframe
<b>Objective 1: Implementation of MSPs builds knowledge base for the new MSP cycle</b>		
<b>Joint actions to support implementation and follow-up of the MSP plans in relation to the regional MSP framework</b>		
1.1 Develop a guiding framework to support harmonized evaluation of MSPs, including a set of definitions	BSR evaluation framework for MSPs; common set of general definitions ("Implementation", "Knowledge Base", "MSPCycle", "Coherent MSP", "monitoring, assessment, evaluation", etc.), year 2023	2023
1.2 Develop and share a concise and descriptive overview on national plans' implementation (what does implementation mean in different countries; where/when do they impact on decisions on certain projects, spatial and temporal management of activities etc.)	Overview on national MSPs implementation, if possible, inclusion in established country fiches that would have a dedicated section, 2025 and 2028	2025 & 2028
1.3 Develop a regional follow up system on MSP, including monitoring of implementation at the Baltic Sea level	BSR follow-up system of implementation of MSPs, 2027	2027
<b>Joint actions to develop the knowledge base of the MSP</b>		
1.4 Facilitate exchange of information on the best practices of MSP implementation, monitoring and evaluation across the BSR and other sea basins	a. Regular exchange in HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group	continuous
	b. Conference (ca. 2023 - 2025) on Implementation of MSP in the BSR with input from other regions	conference 2023-2025
	c. MSP Planners Forum acting on the regular base	regular
1.5 Analyse and support spatial efficiency by comparing approaches and solutions with regard to spatial use (e.g. exclusive vs multi use of space) and conflicts management	Report on best practices/cases and recommendations on spatial efficiency and good examples of multi-use, 2027	2027
1.6 Improve MSP related data retention and flows and assuring data actuality. Ensure regional compatibility of the MSP Input and Output Data and strengthen mutual cooperation in broader context, especially EU	a. MSP Output data is available in BASEMAPS, by 2022	2022
	b. Shortlisting of MSP input data themes to be regularly updated in regional portal, including climate change related spatial data, 2022	2022
	c. Overview on national MSP data portals, 2025	2025
	d. Continuously exchange the best practices in MSP related data handling with MSP data platforms beyond the Baltic Sea region	continuous
1.7 Establishing of links with relevant scientific frameworks and maritime knowledge; support the education of MSP planners and international educational exchange	Regular consideration of recent scientific developments at regional MSP related events; contributing to regional MSP science and educational needs	regular
<b>Objective 2: Maritime Spatial Planning improves regional policy coherence</b>		
<b>Enhanced collaboration between MSP authorities and stakeholders on the implementation of maritime spatial plans and for the development of MSP policy framework</b>		
2.1 The Baltic Sea countries' MSP authorities continue close collaboration [continuously]	Continuous dialog utilizing various regional platforms, e.g., HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group, MSP Planners Forum	continuous
2.2 Use the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group as a platform for cooperation of MSP authorities with other HELCOM bodies and stakeholders to establish a common understanding on how MSP can contribute to regional goals	Continuous dialog with sectors utilizing various regional platforms	continuous
2.3 Enhance Baltic Sea level collaboration of MSP authorities and planners with various sectors to contribute to aligning sectoral policies and sectoral decision-making and by raising awareness on the role of MSP between involved stakeholders	Regular regional events, e.g., Baltic MSP forum	regular
2.4 Further develop institutional framework for the intergovernmental collaboration on MSP in the BSR	Review Baltic Sea regional "Guidelines on transboundary consultations, public participation and co-operation" by 2026	2026
<b>Improvement of understanding of MSP's relationship with other policy frameworks, including land-sea interaction</b>		

2.5 Explore good practices and application of planning and policy instruments for coordination of land-sea interactions across different levels and sectors	Report on good practices addressing land-sea interactions by 2022	2022
2.6 Study the relationship between various policies related to protection and sustainable use of marine resources by continuously following national MSP implementation as well as other related processes concerning marine and coastal domain (e.g. European Green Deal, Sustainable Blue Economy, Offshore renewable energy and Biodiversity strategies, etc.)	Supplement country fiches with relevant information by 2025	2025
2.7 Utilise the prominent role of coordinating Policy Area "Spatial Planning" within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) to improve cross-sectoral and multi-level cooperation across the BSR and contributing to its objectives	HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group acts as the Steering Group for MSP within the EUSBSR Policy Area "Spatial Planning".	continuous
<b>Objective 3: Maritime Spatial Planning contributes to achieving progress towards good environmental status of the Baltic Sea set in the Baltic Sea Action Plan</b>		
<b>New and updated guidelines and methods to apply an Ecosystem Based Approach (EBA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) procedures in MSP</b>		
3.1 Update the EBA-guidelines based on shared experiences in national application of the ecosystem-based approach in MSP and the evaluation of EBA implementation in the latest MSP-round and other relevant input	Updated EBA-guidelines, 2025	2025
3.2 Develop a Baltic SEA-framework including themes, common data, assessment methods for impact evaluation, cross-border consultations	a. Follow-up on the sharing of environmental information and stakeholder participation as part of international consultations and the Baltic MSP Espoo procedures as carried out for the current MSPs, 2022	2022
	b. Baltic SEA-framework to improve compatibility of SEA practices and results, 2025	2025
<b>Achieve better understanding on how MSP can contribute to the achievement of GES and other conservation targets:</b>		
3.3 Establish cooperation between HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group and HELCOM STATE and CONSERVATION and relevant HELCOM bodies to develop common language and views on Ecosystem based management and green infrastructure, cumulative assessment methods, spatial data, status assessments	A regular cooperation process involving HELCOM-VASAB MSP, State and Conservation, and relevant bodies, starting with a joint meeting with State and Conservation in 2022	2022
3.4 Identify how MSP can support conservation and sustainable use in equitable way reflecting marine protected areas (MPAs) and possible Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) or other areas of high natural values in maritime spatial plans (as a basis for steering harmful activities away from such areas) and identify possibilities for MSP to support the BSAP targets related to protected areas, as well as national and regional strategies.	a. Development of Green Infrastructure maps including ecosystem services based on HOLAS III, 2025	2025
	b. Additional section in country fiches demonstrating how MSP supports conservation and sustainable use, 2023	2023
3.5 Promote the use of methods and tools in MSP for assessing cumulative environmental and other impacts of sea-based activities	a. Stocktake and review of the existing methods and tools, 2022	2022
	b. Harmonised approaches for cumulative impacts assessments, 2026	2026
3.6 Evaluate how MSPs are supporting the overarching goals of the MSFD and thereby contributing to deliver to good environmental status	Report on MSP's impact on the implementation of the MSFD, including programmes of measures and achieving GES, 2026	2026
<b>Objective 4: Maritime Spatial Planning contributes to sustainable blue economy</b>		
<b>Established understanding of MSP's contribution to the advancement of maritime sectors towards sustainability</b>		
4.1 Share experiences in guiding sectoral development to minimize economic losses and the weakening of ecosystem services, identify actions that can be enhanced on the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) level through implementation of MSP and apply them in the view of sustainable blue economy, including cross-border perspective	Report/Guiding document on good practices for sectoral sustainable development, 2026.	2026
4.2 Investigate the linkage between environmental and social-economic dimensions through an ecosystem services analysis with cross-border MSP perspective	Joint analysis of ecosystem services in relation to MSP in order to achieve sustainable blue economy, 2027	2027
4.3 Encourage participatory and transparent processes with all stakeholders of sea use to ensure successful integrated and holistic MSP and management towards sustainable blue economy	An overview of MSP impacts on progress towards sustainable blue economy in the Baltic Sea Region, including contribution to the SDGs 2030, 2025	2025
4.4 Update the future oriented report on marine and maritime activities and developments of Baltic Sea regional importance	Updated future-oriented report on marine and maritime activities and developments 2028	2028
<b>Objective 5: Spatial planning contributes to climate change mitigation, adaptation and, thus, increase resilience of the Baltic Sea Region</b>		

5.1 Explore how MSP related sectors will be affected by climate change including how climate change might impact human activities under different future scenarios, aiming at developing MSP-strategies for increasing capacity of different sectors to adapt to expected climate change impacts	A discussion paper as guidance for strategic ways for integrating climate change adaptation into MSP for the next planning cycle, 2025, coordinate timing with mid-term evaluations of national adaptation strategies	2025
5.2 Explore how MSP can contribute to climate change mitigation and [nationally determined contribution in terms of Paris Agreement, including NECPs and relevant national strategies	Stocktaking national experiences, an overview published by 2025	2025
5.3 Identify how MSP can support adaptive conservation strategies to cater for spatial changes in ecosystems (e.g. migration of species, change of critical conditions for habitats), including the further exploration of the potential for including climate refugia in MSP for the entire Baltic Sea	a. Information document on MSP's role in adaptive conservation strategies, including best practices, 2026	2026
	b. Modelled maps of climate change impact on marine ecosystem (depending on availability of spatial data on climate change impacts), 2026	2026