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## Background

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23-2021) was held online on 16-17 November 2021. The Meeting was attended by all HELCOM Contracting Parties except for Denmark and Lithuania. Danish representatives informed the Secretariat that unfortunately no representative was able to attend the Meeting. Observers from the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC) and the International Council of the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) also attended the meeting as well as invited guests. The Meeting was chaired by the Co-Chair of the Working Group, Mr. Joacim Johannesson, Sweden, and the Vice-Chair, Mr. Kai Trümpler, Germany.

This document contains the Outcome of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23-2021. The complete Outcome including all Annexes can be found here. Matters requiring specific action by HOD 61-2021 are outlined below.

## Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the Outcome of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23-2021 in general and consider it as appropriate. Specifically, the Meeting is invited to:

- take note of the current drafting process of the upcoming work plan of the Working Group for the period 2022-2024;
- approve that the intersessional meeting of the Working Group (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23A-2022), which will continue the drafting the next work plan of the Working Group, be held online on 27 January 2022,;
- take note that the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23-2021 agreed on the prolongation of the Baltic Sea Region MSP Data Expert Sub-group mandate until 2024;
- take note that Mr. Joacim Johannesson was re-elected as Co-Chair of the Working Group from the HELCOM side;
- take note that Mr. Kai Trümpler was elected as Co-Chair of the Working Group from the VASAB CSD/BSR side;
- take note that Penina Blankett was re-elected as Vice-Chair of the Working Group from the HELCOM side;
- take note that the second post of Vice-Chair, from the VASAB CSD/BSR side is vacant and the election will be considered during HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 24-2022;
- approve that HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 24-2022 will be held on 31 March – 1 April 2022 (place to be confirmed).



## OUTCOME OF THE 23<sup>rd</sup> MEETING OF THE HELCOM-VASAB MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING WORKING GROUP (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23-2021)

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## OUTCOME OF THE 23<sup>rd</sup> MEETING OF THE HELCOM-VASAB MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING WORKING GROUP (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23-2022)

### Introduction

0.1 The 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23-2021) was held on 16-17 November 2021. Due to COVID-19 circumstances the Meeting took place online. The Meeting was attended by representatives of all Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention and VASAB Members except Lithuania and Denmark. Danish representatives informed the HELCOM Secretariat that unfortunately, no representative can attend the Meeting. HELCOM observers were represented by the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC) and the International Council of the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). The Meeting was also attended by invited guests from Capacity4MSP project platform, the EU MSP Assistance Mechanism and the BEMIP Offshore Wind Working Group. BEMIP Offshore Wind Working Group was represented with participants from the Polish Ministry of Climate and Environment as well as the European Commission, in addition to the participants from the European Commission which are part of the delegation representing the European Union. The list of Participants is contained in **Annex 1**.

0.2 The Meeting was chaired by the Co-Chair of the Working Group, Mr. Joacim Johannesson, Sweden, and vice-chair Mr. Kai Trümpler, Germany.

0.3 The Meeting welcomed Kai Trümpler co-chairing the Meeting from VASAB side.

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

0.5 Ms. Lotta Ruokanen, HELCOM Professional Secretary, assisted by Mr. Florent Nicolas, Associate Professional Secretary and Deborah Shinoda, Project Researcher, acted as Secretaries of the Meeting.

### Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

1.1 The Meeting recalled that HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 22-2021 invited colleagues from Leopoldina to consider the preparation of a document for HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 22-2021, containing concrete proposal on how to address underwater heritage in MSP. The Meeting noted that due to time constraint, this topic which was planned to be introduced by Leopoldina and the BalticRim project consortium is postponed to the next meeting of the Working Group, HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 24-2022, in spring 2022.

1.2 The Meeting noted that the topic of Green Infrastructure (AI5) will be covered within different agenda points, such as discussion about the upcoming work plan and projects (i.e. eMSP NBSR and Capacity4MSP).

1.3 The Meeting agreed to consider the update of the VASAB Long-Term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region (LTP) (**document 2-2**) under the agenda item 3.

1.4 The Meeting adopted the Agenda and its annotations elaborated by the HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats in consultation with Co-Chairs and vice-Chairs of the Working Group (**documents 1-1 and 1-2 Rev.1**).

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

2.1 The Meeting took note of the information on the recent HELCOM and VASAB meetings (**document 2-1**).

**Agenda Item 3      Development of the regional MSP framework**

## Status of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group's mandate

3.1            The Meeting took note of the approval of the mandate for HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG until 2030 by HOD 60-2021 and VASAB CSPD/BSR 85th meeting.

## Status of the new MSP Roadmap and planning of the implementation interim assessment

3.2            The Meeting took note that the new MSP Roadmap 2021-2030 was adopted by HELCOM 2021 Ministerial Meeting and VASAB CSPD/BSR 85th meeting, recalled the objectives and tasks described there and that it also contains follow-up. The Meeting agreed to come back to the interim assessment at a later stage, starting from HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 24-2022.

## Status of the update of the HELCOM Baltic Action Plan (BSAP)

3.3            The Meeting welcomed the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan and associated actions relevant for the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, and recalled that the actions HT12-14 in the horizontal segment, as well as actions B12-13 in the biodiversity segment of the BSAP are directly under the oversight by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG. The Meeting took note that the Working Group is also involved in the oversight of the actions S58 and S64 in the sea-based segment and HT17 on economic values in the horizontal segment of the BSAP.

3.4            The Meeting took note that the [Regional Maritime Spatial Planning roadmap 2021-2030](#) is one of the documents which was also considered adopted along the updated BSAP, and noted that the updated BSAP and the MSP Roadmap 2021-2030 are available on the HELCOM website ([link to BSAP](#), [link to Roadmap](#)) as well as VASAB website ([link to Roadmap](#)).

3.5            The Meeting discussed the additional actions from the Annex 1 (i.e. overall list of actions) and if they should be added to the list of relevant actions for HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG and to consider contributing to their implementation (**document 3-5**). The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties and observers to provide, if needed, input regarding the other actions of the BSAP and their relevance and links to the Working Group (cf. Annex 1 of **document 3-5**) by correspondence by Friday **26 November 2021** to the Secretariat ([florent.nicolas@helcom.fi](mailto:florent.nicolas@helcom.fi)).

## Information of the update of the VASAB Long-Term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region (LTP)

3.6            The Meeting took note of the Information of the update of the VASAB Long-Term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region (LTP), welcomed the online workshops on 26 November 2021 and 2 December 2021 organised by VASAB and encouraged the Contracting parties to contribute to the update process (**Presentation 1**).

3.7            The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties and observers to indicate to the VASAB Secretariat ([elina.veidemane@vasab.org](mailto:elina.veidemane@vasab.org)) additional stakeholders who could be invited to give feedback or concepts which the LTP should cover. The information is still available on the VASAB website for contributions. The meeting also invited the Contracting Parties to HELCOM and VASAB members to indicate potential stakeholders which could also be contacted for the next year stakeholder consultations, to comment on the concept and to inform the VASAB Secretariat ([elina.veidemane@vasab.org](mailto:elina.veidemane@vasab.org)) about events organized in the scope of the Working Group for the next spring.

## Update and discussions of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG work plan (2022-2024?)

3.8            The Meeting took note of the analysis for the current HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG work plan (**document 3-4**) and possible future actions and considered the possible input as activities for the next work plan of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG for the years 2022-2024, based on the new MSP Roadmap 2021-2030 (**document 3-2**).

3.9 The Meeting discussed and agreed on the draft input for the new work plan 2022-2024 as contained in the **Attachment 1** to the Outcome and decided to further work on the work plan in an intersessional meeting (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23A-2022) to be organised online on Thursday **27 January 2022**.

3.10 The Meeting contributed to the draft of the new work plan with comments and proposal for tasks, potential lead/co-lead and support, timeframe for the tasks and deliverables as highlighted in the yellow marked columns in the **Attachment 1**. The Meeting agreed that the **Attachment 1** should be considered as a working file to be further developed during HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23A-2022.

#### [Follow-up and further work on the Regional MSP coherence report](#)

3.11 The Meeting took note of the progress on the Regional MSP coherence report and considered the latest version as presented in the **document 3-1**.

3.12 The Meeting agreed to invite the CPs to further test the approach as described in the report for a testing period of two years.

3.13 The Meeting discussed the possibility to publish the report on the HELCOM website under the section of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG and under the overall [HELCOM reports](#) as a product generated by the Working Group. The Meeting noted the information from the VASAB Secretariat on publishing also this report on the VASAB website. The Meeting further noted that publishing this report on both websites would make it available to a broader audience for further uses (e.g. other sea basins, EU Member States, etc.), which is an added value for such technical report, but also to show the transparency of the work carried by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.

3.14 The Meeting noted that a disclaimer could be added at the beginning of the report with a short statement on the technical nature of this report. The Meeting agreed to add such a disclaimer and welcomed the offer from the HELCOM Secretariat for providing to the Meeting participants by Friday **19 November 2021** a proposal for such disclaimer. The Meeting agreed that this disclaimer would be adopted by tacit approval by Wednesday **1 December 2021** closure of business. The Meeting requested the HELCOM Secretariat to add relevant information in the disclaimer that the concept described in this document is being tested voluntarily by the HELCOM Contracting Parties and VASAB Members and that the test period will be two years with a follow-up item to be included in the workplan.

3.15 The Meeting agreed to publish this report on HELCOM and VASAB websites when the disclaimer is finalized and added to the current version of the report.

#### [Status of the work on the mechanism for a regular follow-up of MSP on the regional level](#)

3.16 The Meeting took note of the proposal for a follow-up mechanism developed under the Capacity4MSP project platform (**presentation 2** and **document 3-3**).

3.17 The Meeting discussed the relevance of this proposal and noted that this systematic approach could ease the work to follow-up the activities of the Working Group but also the national MSP developments.

3.18 The Meeting discussed the possibility of having different phases in the MSP process for the follow-up of the national MSP developments, as it can happen that the phases overlap, for example when there are several sub-national plans. The Meeting suggested for those cases that the different phases would be added with the different colour code in different rows in the phase item, as the example of Finland, with the Implementation and Monitoring phases.

3.19 The Meeting agreed to test the approach on the national MSP developments for the next HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG and to further discuss the possible long-term implementation of such follow-up for future meetings. The Meeting invited the HELCOM Secretariat to communicate in due time with the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG Contacts on how to practically work with the follow-up mechanism prior to HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 24-2022.

3.20 The Meeting agreed on reviewing the proposed timeframe on the GANTT chart of the new Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030 when resuming to the document.

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### Third HELCOM Holistic Assessment of the Baltic Sea Environment (HOLAS 3)

3.21 The Meeting took note of the information on the planning and process of the upcoming HELCOM Holistic Assessment of the Baltic Sea Environment (HOLAS 3). The Meeting noted that a general presentation will be made available on the [Meeting Site](#) ("additional presentation – HOLAS 3") and agreed to send questions, if needed, to the HELCOM Secretariat ([florent.nicolas@helcom.fi](mailto:florent.nicolas@helcom.fi)).

3.22 The Meeting invited the HELCOM Secretariat to present HOLAS 3 during HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 24-2023 aiming to give a general overview of HOLAS 3 and also to answer the questions received by the Meeting participants (cf. para 3.19).

#### **Agenda Item 4 Information and data for MSP**

4.1 The Meeting took note on the decisions of the 16th BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-group meeting and the plans for upcoming meetings (**document 4-1**). The Meeting took note of the decision to develop BASEMAPS to be more user-friendly for the data providers as well as the end-users, with different approaches that might tackle the rearrangement of the input datasets and the clearer communication to the end-users.

4.2 The Meeting also took note of the information that a survey hosted by the HELCOM Secretariat will be launched to identify the current users of BASEMAPS and their needs when using BASEMAPS. This survey will be prepared by the HELCOM Secretariat with the support of the BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-Group.

4.3 The Meeting thanked the BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-group for the work and the further plans and encouraged the Contracting Parties to upload their data and support the work. The meeting took note of the Terms of Reference for the Baltic Sea Region MSP Data Expert Sub-group (**document 4-3**) and agreed on the prolongation of its mandate until the end of 2024 (instead of the originally proposed 2023) in order to be synchronized with the upcoming Work Plan.

4.4 The Meeting took note of the information on the last developments of the EU Technical Expert Group on MSP data (**document 4-2**). The Meeting noted that the EU Member States Expert Group on MSP will meet on 29-30 November 2021, and that the work under the EU Technical Expert Group on MSP data will also be presented during this upcoming meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 5 Intergovernmental cooperation and follow-up progress in regional MSP**

5.1 The Meeting took note of the national update on new MSP developments mentioned during the Meeting which were also communicated to the HELCOM Secretariat:

**Estonia:** Estonian MSP process is still ongoing and we are happy that our plan was agreed by ministries in the end of October this year. Therefore we are now at the very last stage on our national official process, right now in national process there is a public display (till 8th of December) about the final solution. After that we can distribute the plan to our Government for adoption. Transboundary official process has ended.

As we have had some additions to the final solution from the national process we would like to arrange informal transboundary notification meeting virtually. It will take place at 15th of December and the invitation will be distributed to all of you very soon.

**Finland:** Finnish maritime spatial plan 2030 is finalized and available on [www.merialuesuunnitelma.fi/en](http://www.merialuesuunnitelma.fi/en). It is digital only. The data model of the plan is being modified to fit into national digital land use and building data model. The aim is to digitalize all Finnish spatial planning and building information to have better access into it, including MSP. At the moment the next planning round and also monitoring and evaluation program for the existing plan is being prepared. Finnish MSP cooperation will also participate in the eMSP –project.

## **Germany:**

### *EEZ*

The new MSP for the EEZ in the North and Baltic Sea entered into force on 1 September 2021 (see also H/V MSP WG Meeting 23 **document 5-6** "Updated MSP (2021) for the German EEZ in the North and Baltic Sea"). Further and more detailed information on the process and content is provided in the revised German Country Fiche (Nov. 2021), which will be available soon.

Currently information is being prepared to be sent out to the neighbouring countries on available documents (translated) and data, including information on how representations from the international consultation have been taken into account.

All documents and data are now available via this [link](#).

### *Schleswig-Holstein*

Schleswig-Holstein has published a revised overall LEP (State development plan, including shares of the German territorial sea in the North and the Baltic Sea), which will enter into force on 16 December 2021.

All related documents and data are available via [this link](#).

**Latvia:** Latvia is in the implementation phase of Latvian MSP. Currently Latvia sees increased interest from offshore wind sector and there are licencing process taking place in 2 of 5 MSP areas designated for offshore wind park development. Latvia and Estonia continue to cooperate on joint Estonian-Latvian offshore wind farm project ELWIND where ongoing work is the pre-feasibility study of the offshore areas and grid development and Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia receives a lot of requests for marine data and continues to provide main marine data. The data sharing will be improved providing downloadable data and WFS data services in national geoportal. We already start thinking about interim assessment of MSP of Latvia and possibility to update the MSP, especially regarding the electricity cable connections to land-based grid.

**Poland:** The Polish MSP, that covers 97,5% of the Polish marine areas, has been in force since May 2021 and is available on [Spatial Information System for Maritime Administration SIPAM](#).

The plans covering the remaining 2,5% of the Polish marine areas are under development and will be adopted by the end of 2023.

**Russia:** Russia does not have any changes in its official MSP process. Federal Law «On the state management of the maritime activities of the Russian Federation» is still at the stage of consultations before being submitted to the State Duma.

International project Capacity4MSP supported by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation developed proposals for an action plan (Roadmap) for Russia's MSP. This document has been sent for review to the Scientific and Expert Council of the Marine Board under the Government of the Russian Federation. Further steps for its discussion and comments of stakeholders are being discussed. Also the proposals to the Russian MSP Roadmap will be presented on 9 December at a conference in St. Petersburg.

**Sweden:** The Government is still preparing the marine spatial plans for adoption. The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management has prepared a draft monitoring and evaluation framework to be adopted when there are plans in place. An evaluation of the Swedish planning has been finalised and will be published on the SwAM website. The Government has assigned the County Administrative Boards together with the Swedish National Heritage Board to develop planning evidence on culture heritage to be reported in January 2023. In recent years, a large number of projects for the establishment of offshore wind in all three have

been initiated by the offshore wind industry. The projects include bottom fixed as well as floating turbines. With the aim to facilitate the establishment of offshore wind, the Swedish TSO has been assigned by the Government to extend the transmission grid to contact points in the territorial sea.

5.2 The Meeting took note of the MSP country fiches and regional calendar of national MSP-related processes and meetings (**document 5-4** and **Annex 2**).

5.3 The Countries were invited to check changes in the list of national MSP focal points for transboundary consultation and joint planning in the Baltic Sea Region countries and to inform the HELCOM ([florent.nicolas@helcom.fi](mailto:florent.nicolas@helcom.fi)) and VASAB ([elina.veidemane@vasab.org](mailto:elina.veidemane@vasab.org)) Secretariats in case of any changes.

5.4 The Meeting took note of the information on the BEMIP Offshore Wind Working Group (**presentation 3**), pointed out that there is a high interest in developing the offshore wind capacity in several countries, and considered the presentation of activities very timely and appreciated.

5.5 The Meeting welcomed the cooperation proposals and agreed to have an online bilateral meeting in spring 2022 to further discussion such collaboration. The Meeting invited the HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats to plan possible joint meeting with the BEMIP Offshore Wind Working Group and the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.

5.6 The Meeting took note of the information on the 4<sup>th</sup> Capacity4MSP Planners Forum (**document 5-3 and Att.1**) that will be held on 24th November 2021. The Meeting discussed and considered the latest developments on the possible long-term mechanism of such event in the future (i.e. Terms of Reference).

5.7 The Meeting noted that main changes in the draft Terms of Reference are to have only one Chair and Vice-Chair, and in the tasks concentrating in analysing and discussing future needs and exchanging experiences about the MSP processes. The Meeting encouraged the Capacity4MSP to continue with the work on the Terms of Reference to finalise them after the event on 24th November as an outcome for the project for future consideration.

5.8 The Meeting took note of the information on publication of the Climate Change Fact Sheets (**document 5-1**) and discussed if the national MSP plans contain climate change related perspective. The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to submit written input on national considerations of climate change to the Secretariat ([florent.nicolas@helcom.fi](mailto:florent.nicolas@helcom.fi)) by **17 December 2021** and agreed to come back to the matter of climate change in the intersessional meeting, HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23A-2022, in January 2022 if time allows, but at the next regular meeting at the latest.

5.9 The Meeting took note of the findings of the ClimeMarine project (**document 5-5**), considered the work important for e.g. planning possible practical joint activities for contributing to increasing climate change resilience of the Baltic Sea Region, and welcomed the recommendations for planners (**presentation 4**).

5.10 The Meeting pointed out that the climate change will induce changes in the biodiversity and the system is very dynamic, thus shifts are to be expected; but at the same time the protection of biodiversity can be a tool to mitigate climate change effects, so they walk hand in hand.

5.11 The Meeting took note of the 14th meeting of the HELCOM Expert Group on Marine Mammals (EG MAMA 14-2020) (**presentation 5** and **document 5-2**), raising the importance of cooperation between countries with regard to the presented planning of wind farms in the direct vicinity of MPAs, and how to ensure that the needs of harbour porpoise are accounted for in planning. The Meeting recalled that there are two different populations of harbour porpoise in the Baltic Sea.

5.12 The Meeting took note of the information from Finland that regarding the distribution of harbour porpoise the outcome of SAMBAH Life + project should be used.

5.13 The meeting welcomed the ASCOBANS AC26 decision on establishing an intersessional working group (IWG) to elaborate on how to best develop guidelines for cetacean-friendly MSP and a draft resolution for MOP10. The Meeting was of the opinion that regional guidelines are vital for strategic level decisions in this matter above the national MSP process.

5.14 The Meeting pointed out that that there are many matters to consider related to the MSPs and considering small cetaceans, e.g.

- in licensing of the wind farm building, there is a possibility to issue temporal restrictions for noise-inducing activities like pile driving related to the building;
- there could be mutually exclusive mitigating actions for different species groups (e.g. porpoise and some birds);

5.15 The Meeting invited the HELCOM Secretariat to submit a document to HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 24-2022 on the last information regarding this topic under the frame of ASCOBANS for further discussion by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.

5.16 The Meeting took note of the shared national experience on how the spatial aspect of the conservation of harbour porpoise is taken into account when planning offshore wind farms:

- Sweden and Poland have had cooperation on offshore wind activities possibly colliding with harbour porpoise and birds to exchange experience from national point of views, and to discuss the transboundary aspect with relevant experts;
- In Sweden the environmental strategic assessment in MSP includes qualitative assessment of impacts on harbour porpoise. Temporary effects like impulsive noise from establishment of offshore wind power is not yet included in the Swedish cumulative impacts modelling tool Symphony. The Swedish Agency for Water Management (SwAM) is also commenting in the licensing processes for offshore windfarms in terms of impacts on harbour porpoise and mitigation.
- Germany uses the current scientific knowledge to assess impacts of offshore windfarm planning on harbour porpoises. Germany also has in the North Sea a designated reserved area for harbour porpoise but there is no such area for the Baltic Sea Area, however existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) were designated priority areas. German MSP includes strict measures for the mitigation of pile driving.;

## **Agenda Item 6      Coordination of Policy Area Spatial Planning and MSP related projects and events**

### Coordination of Policy area Spatial Planning

6.1 The Meeting took note of the information on the last developments and activities related to the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the Policy Area (PA) on Spatial Planning (**presentation 6** and **document 6-4**).

6.2 The Meeting took note of the information on the Governance Structure of the EUSBSR and the role of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG as Steering Committee of the Policy Area Spatial Planning related to topics on MSP. The HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats are co-coordinators of Policy Area (PA) Spatial Planning of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR).

6.3 The Meeting took note of the decision-making process in EUSBSR matters and noted that the current HELCOM-VASAB operational framework is compliant with the common structure provided by the EUSBSR National Coordinators Groups and took note that in matters exclusively related with EUSBSR, non-EU countries cannot block the decisions of Member States (**presentation 6** and **document 6-5**).

6.4 The Meeting confirmed that the current work under the EUSBSR is relevant for the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG and highlighted the importance of a good cooperation between the EUSBSR and the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.

6.5 The Meeting invited the HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats to plan how to further encourage the work and emphasize the synergies of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG as Steering Committee of the EUSBSR PA Spatial Planning. The meeting noted that this is linked to the Work Plan and it could be a good way forward on to how to develop the work in the Strategy, and agreed to elaborate on this in the intersessional meeting in January 2022.

### MSP related projects and events

6.6 The Meeting took note of the status and last development of the Capacity4MSP project platform (**presentation 7** and **document 6-1**). The policy briefs developed within Capacity4MSP are now available on the VASAB website.

6.7 The Meeting took note of the information on the synthesis report prepared under the Work Package 2 of Capacity4MSP which contains guidance on the further needs related to MSP in the Baltic Sea Region (**presentation 8**).

6.8 The Meeting took note of the information on the report in implementation and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for MSP in the Baltic Sea Region prepared under the Work Package 2 of Capacity4MSP (**presentation 9**). The report will be finalized by the end of November 2021.

6.9 The Meeting welcomed the work done under Capacity4MSP and noted the relevance of such report for the further tasks of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, for example related to the future work plans.

6.10 The Meeting took note of the information on the newly implemented eMSP NBSR project, which is co-financed by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (**presentation 10** and **document 6-2**).

6.11 The Meeting took note of the current development of the eMSP NBSR Work Package 2 and the Learning Strand on Ecosystem-based approach in MSP, co-coordinated by Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) and HELCOM Secretariat with scientific support of the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE). The objectives of this Learning Strand were developed during the project inception phase. The Meeting also took note of the initial ideas under the Work Package 4 related to handling and sharing data (**presentation 11**).

6.12 The Meeting acknowledged that the project deliverables will be substantial contribution to the implementation of the Working Group's Work Plan and supported the Group's involvement in respective communities of practices, established in the frame of the project.

6.13 The Meeting recalled that some Contracting Parties to HELCOM and VASAB members are not part of the eMSP NBSR project consortium and highlighted the importance of having good communication flows between the project and HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG to ensure that the project's results are covering relevant aspects discussed within the WG.

6.14 The Meeting took note of the information about the conclusion of the joint initiative between IOC-UNESCO and the European Commission's DG MARE MSP Global (**document 6-3**). The Meeting also took note of the information from the European Commission that this is not the end of such cooperation and follow-up projects will be developed in the future.

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

7.1 The Meeting took note of the information from the European Commission on the next meeting of the EU Member States Expert Group on MSP will be held on 29-30 November 2021. The HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats are observers. The Meeting also took note of the invitation from the EU to have a representation of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG to present the work under the WG such as the Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030. The Meeting invited the HELCOM and Secretariats to coordinate with Joacim Johannesson, co-Chair of the Working Group, a joint presentation on the updated BSAP and the Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030.

7.2 The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to HELCOM and VASAB members to update the list of contacts for HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG which was circulated prior to the Meeting by the HELCOM Secretariat. The updated list based on input from the Meeting participants is available as Annex 3.

7.3 The Meeting recalled the importance for the participants to register in due time to the future HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG Meetings.

## **Agenda Item 8 Election of co-Chairs and vice-Chairs of the Working Group**

- 8.1 The Meeting recalled that HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 22-2021 agreed to elect co-Chairs and vice-Chairs at HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23-2021 (cf. [Outcome](#), para 8.6).
- 8.2 The Meeting agreed on the continuation of Joacim Johannesson as co-Chair for the next term. The Meeting also agreed on the nomination of Kai Trümpler, currently vice-Chair of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, as co-Chair for the next term.
- 8.3 The Meeting agreed on the continuation of Penina Blankett as vice-Chair for the next term.
- 8.4 The Meeting agreed that the second post of vice-Chair is currently vacant and highlighted the importance to have a vice-Chair from the VASAB side. The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to HELCOM and VASAB members to propose nomination for the next meeting, HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 24-2022, for the election of a second vice-Chair.

## **Agenda Item 9 Future planning**

- 9.1 The Meeting discussed the possibility to extend the next meetings of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG to ensure that the Working Group can cover all the topics annotated in the agenda. A possible extension of half a day would avoid the Working Group to postpone items to further meetings.
- 9.2 The Meeting highlighted that longer meetings can be problematic for some Contracting Parties to HELCOM and VASAB members due the limited resources (i.e. financial and staff) to attend this meeting as well as limited time to attend longer meetings.
- 9.3 The Meeting discussed the option of having more regular meetings, or to have dedicated sessions on presentations related to national MSP developments and projects.
- 9.4 The Meeting recalled that the Working Group agreed to have an intersessional meeting, HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23A-2022, on **27 January 2022**. This intersessional meeting could also aim to catch-up on the current topics and prioritizing to be discussed by the Working Group.
- 9.5 The Meeting agreed to keep the Working Group Meetings as 2-days meetings.
- 9.6 The Meeting discussed potential dates for HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 24-2022 as well as if the next meeting could be organized as a physical meeting. The Meeting agreed to hold HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 24-2022 on 31 March – 1 April 2022. The Contracting Parties to HELCOM and VASAB members are encouraged, if possible, to host HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 24-2022.

## **Agenda Item 10 Outcome of the Meeting**

- 10.1 The Meeting adopted the Outcome. The Outcome as well as meeting documents and presentations will be made available on the HELCOM-VASAB MP WG 23-2021 [Meeting site](#).