

**VASAB Workshop on
Assessment of Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap 2013-2020
24 February 2016, Gdansk, Poland**

CHAIR AND MODERATOR CONCLUSIONS

Highlights

- Building joint understanding how to pursue planning stages after plan elaboration [PLANNING CYCLE]
- Sorting out issues matured enough for political support [POLICY SUPPORT]
- Monitoring and evaluation what works and what not and what should be improved [MONITORING/EVALUATION]
- Deepening understanding what transboundary coherence of plans mean in practice [COHERENCE]
- Building broader support and understanding for MSP (engaging sector, educating people, decision makes etc. [CAPACITY])

Political support

It was acknowledged that more political support is needed for MSP work, especially as planning has its limits and not all issues can be solved by planners themselves or by the joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group.

Example of such issues requiring political attention are border settling, data sharing and transboundary consultations.

Thus working level process have to be coupled with a political dialogue to lift certain MSP issues to a higher level.

To anchor MSP on a political level, topics that can drive political attention could be identified. Based on the collaboration so far, we should also be able to identify which are specific topics to be addressed by policy-makers/politicians. Example can be minimum legal content of MSP legislation, ensuring coherence of legislation, joint vision or document on avoidance of conflicts etc.

Added value of our cooperation

The added value of regional cooperation on transboundary MSP is that doing it together we ensure the coherent implementation of MSP. We can effectively utilize existing legislative and policy contexts, covering both EU and non-EU countries, for the region to become an area of best practice for MSP. Dialogue is our major mean to achieve coherence across the borders – among planners, countries, the sectors.

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Coherence of maritime spatial plans across the borders

Minimum requirements for preparing and implementing MSP across the borders are needed, and could be further identified, to make the requirement for coherence effective on a transboundary level. Coherence related to both national legal requirements and technical aspects and achieving it should be facilitated by policy process.

Joint documentation could be useful to realize and address coherence needs, based on the identified differences of national planning processes, and underlying legislation including for transboundary consultation.

Technical coherence (of parameters) is under development such as for shipping or pipelines, bearing in mind existing governance frameworks for different sectors.

Another example is that we have not achieved a full understanding how to apply ecosystem-approach in MSP in practice, which is also a question of coherent implementation (of various legislation).

Link between sea and land planning has not been fully explored, in this ongoing cycle of MSP.

For uniform pan-Baltic implementation, a higher level governmental agreement (beyond working group or a project) might be needed.

Data and information sharing

In order to obtain coherence in the plans, the underlying data should be as uniform as possible. In order to achieve this, a common understanding and documentation should be achieved on what thematic datasets should be sourced from international sources and what data is from national sources. In addition, listing of required parameters by thematic datasets needs to be agreed.

We should not forget of the importance of making sense out of data – sharing also concerns information and expertise (how to interpret data).

Knowledge integration should be enhanced, especially on natural and social science.

Monitoring and evaluation

Once the MSPs are in place, continuous monitoring is needed and evaluation organized as a coordinated process (between the countries). The need for continuous monitoring and evaluation cannot be fulfilled within projects.

Revisiting the joint guiding documents should be part of the evaluation process.

Sectorial cooperation

We acknowledge the necessity and value of engagement of public and commercial sectors in regional MSP considerations. Especially regional ministerial level cooperation is to be strengthened.

Such engagement could be organized around themes and as regional overarching discussions and should recognize and tackle different time-scales of sectorial planning.

We wish for holistic planning and thinking to become inherent part of the sectorial policies. Territorial perspective could be brought to existing sectorial networks in particular HELCOM Working Groups.

Capacity building and learning

Education on MSP is needed ranging from introductory courses of a few hours to full scale years long education in MSP to help building up the common understanding on MSP and to fit all levels from general public, students, authorities and politicians.

Planning as iterative process – towards the next planning cycle

Countries are at the phase of preparing maritime spatial plans. Sharing of experiences on practical aspects of implementing the jointly agreed guidelines and principles is invaluable, to facilitate iterative process of planning and collecting lessons learnt for the next cycle of planning and its transboundary dimension.

In few years' time the countries will move from the first generation of Maritime Spatial Plans into the next cycle, planning beyond 2020 is a matter of few years' time.

Thus, time-perspective needs to be more strongly incorporated in identifying and planning tasks ahead within international cooperation on transboundary MSP.

Experience gained from the first cycle can form regional MSP *acquis*, which may include common terminology, revision of the pan-Baltic guiding documents, etc.

After the first cycle – having concrete plans covering the whole Baltic Sea in place, a new cooperation needs will likely emerge and pan-Baltic thinking strengthened.