



Workshop Report



Cumulative Impact
Assessment

Workshop Hamburg
1-3 July 2026

*With a focus on building a Community
of Practice for CIA development and
application in the Greater North Sea
and Baltic Sea, by working on
ambitions, strategic alignment and
organisation*

Assigned by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management in the Netherlands

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Summary and next steps

The Hamburg workshop confirmed a shared interest in the Initiative's goal to strengthen cooperation on Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) in the Greater North Sea and Baltic Sea. Participants recognized that CIA can support more integrated, ecosystem-based and forward-looking maritime decision-making, particularly in relation to maritime spatial planning (MSP), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and wider marine-policy objectives. The workshop also demonstrated that substantial expertise, data resources and methodological experience already exist across the region.

A key outcome was the recognition that greater alignment can add value where marine ecosystems, pressures and planned developments extend across national boundaries. At the same time, participants noted the importance of retaining flexibility for national contexts, mandates and decision-making processes. The shared ambition is therefore not necessarily to establish one common CIA method, but to improve mutual understanding, interoperability and the comparability of results where this is useful for cross-border cooperation.

The proposed **Community of Practice (CoP)** offers a practical basis for continued exchange between national authorities, regional organizations, scientists and policy advisers. It can support knowledge sharing, connect ongoing initiatives, identify common questions and facilitate targeted collaboration. The CoP should build on existing structures and complement, certainly not duplicate, established roles and responsibilities within organizations such as GNSBI, HELCOM, OSPAR, ICES and relevant MSP processes. A light, flexible and non-binding format was broadly supported, provided that it has clear priorities and delivers practical value for participants.

Main lessons

- There was a consensus amongst participants to convene a CIA Community of Practice.
- Develop an overview of CIA applications in maritime spatial planning. Establish, through the GNSBI Working Track on CIA, a clear overview, preferably in a visual format, of how CIA can be applied at different stages of MSP. This should distinguish relevant use cases, such as strategic scenario development, assessment of spatial options, identification of cumulative-pressure hotspots, comparison of alternatives, and evaluation of mitigation or management measures.
- CIA is most effective when linked to practical decisions. Its value lies in informing strategic planning, scenario development, cross-border consultation and the consideration of cumulative pressures, rather than functioning as a stand-alone technical exercise. Early consideration of CIA within MSP and SEA processes can help ensure that it informs choices at an appropriate stage.
- Comparable results are more important than identical tools. National and regional approaches can remain diverse, while greater coherence can be achieved through common terminology, transparent documentation of assumptions and uncertainty, compatible datasets and clearer communication of outputs.
- Data and monitoring remain central enabling conditions. Better access to and compatibility of spatial data, pressure-impact information and monitoring results would support more

consistent applications over time. Progress can be made incrementally, based on existing information and practical priorities, without waiting for complete data harmonization.

- The science–policy interface deserves continued attention. CIA information should respond to clear policy questions, be proportionate to the decision context and communicate both insights and limitations in an accessible manner. Regular engagement with planners and policymakers can help ensure relevance and appropriate use.
- Collaboration can improve efficiency and mutual learning. Participants identified value in sharing experience, practical cases, data approaches and lessons from national applications. Cooperation may help reduce duplication, improve understanding of transboundary issues and support more coherent regional dialogue.

Proposed next steps

- Confirm a light framework for the CoP. Develop a concise, living document that clarifies the CoP's purpose, scope, relationship with existing organizations, working principles and expected contributions. This framework should be reviewed periodically and remain adaptable as cooperation develops.
- Refine the shared vision and communication narrative. Prepare a short statement explaining the purpose and added value of CIA cooperation at sea-basin scale, including its relevance to MSP, SEA, ecosystem-based management and cross-border marine issues.
- Identify a limited set of practical priorities. Potential initial themes include terminology, use cases for CIA in planning, approaches to uncertainty, data interoperability, pressure–impact linkages and the translation of assessment results into management considerations.
- Develop an overview of ongoing work. Map existing national and regional CIA approaches and outputs, available data resources, planned activities and relevant institutional roles. This can help identify opportunities for exchange and avoid unnecessary duplication.
- Organize targeted exchange and learning. Continue with focused online sessions, practical workshops and periodic in-person meetings, using real cases to explore common challenges and share lessons learned.
- Explore joint pilot applications. Where there is interest and capacity, pilot work in a shared marine area could help assess the practical comparability of different approaches and generate useful insights for future cooperation.

Overall, the workshop indicated that the conditions are favorable for a pragmatic next phase of collaboration. By focusing on shared needs, practical exchange and incremental progress, the Community of Practice can strengthen the evidence base for marine planning and contribute to more coordinated consideration of cumulative impacts across the Greater North Sea and Baltic Sea.

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List of Abbreviations

CIA	Cumulative Impact Assessment
CoP	Community of Practice
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
GES	Good Environmental Status
GNSBI	Greater North Sea Basin Initiative
HELCOM	Helsinki Commission (Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission)
I&W	Dutch ministry of Infrastructure & Water Quality
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
KEC	Ecology and Cumulative Effects Framework
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MSP	Maritime Spatial Planning
NSEC	North Seas Energy Cooperation
OSPAR	Oslo-Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
SCAIRM	Spatial Cumulative Assessment of Impact Risk for Management
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEABAS	SEABAS is a Baltic Sea regional platform project co-funded by EU/Interreg
SPIA	Strategic Planning and Impact Assessment
Symphony	Tool for cumulative marine impact assessment
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WGCIAM	ICES Working Group on Cumulative Impact Assessment Methods
WT	GNSBI Working Track
WT CIA	GNSBI Working Track for Cumulative Impact Assessment

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Purpose and approach of the workshop

Introduction

The CIA expert workshop took place from 1 to 3 July 2026 at the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH) in Hamburg and was organised by the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI) Working Track on Cumulative Impact Assessment and the Northern European Sea Basins project, Work Package 3 Task 4. The workshop brought together experts, practitioners, policymakers and researchers working on cumulative impact assessment (CIA) in marine environments, with participation in both in-person and online formats, and was designed to strengthen collaboration, align ambitions and support the development of a shared Community of Practice (CoP).

The workshop aims to create an open and collaborative environment where participants can exchange experiences, identify common challenges, and jointly shape future cooperation on cumulative impact assessments.

Purpose

The goal

"To enhance collaboration between regional institutes and countries that work on CIA within the Greater North Sea Basin and the Baltic Sea."

The expected outcomes of this workshop:

- > Strategic alignment on content: developing consensus on a shared vision, mission, CIA principles and next steps toward harmonization.
- > Networking and community building: fostering relationships, trust, and familiarity among participants.
- > Vision and governance for Community of Practice: shaping the long-term role and direction of a CIA Community of Practice.
- > Knowledge and experience exchange: sharing insights on national progress, challenges, and good practices.

The audience

For this assignment we have involved two groups of stakeholders:

- > CIA researchers from four regional institutes: HELCOM, ICES, NSEC, OSPAR.
- > Policy officers working with CIAs from 14 countries: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom. And policy officers from other sea basins that are interested in learning from this community of practice for their own sea basin CIA developments.

Overall approach

The workshop was designed as a three-day process moving from exchange of vision and ambition, to strategizing, to network-building, with outputs intended to be captured in concrete deliverables. See annex 1 for the agenda. Day 1 focused on sharing vision, knowledge and experiences; Day 2 on strategic alignment around key themes and sharing knowledge and experiences; and Day 3 on defining how the community should work together, creating a structured pathway from mutual learning to more coordinated future action through a Community of Practice. All presentations are published on the NESBp website ([link NESB webpage](#)).

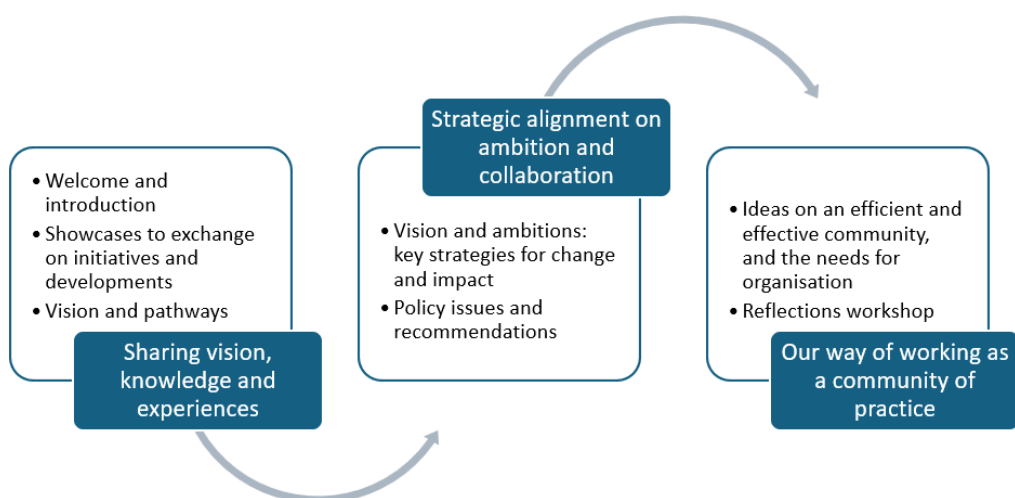
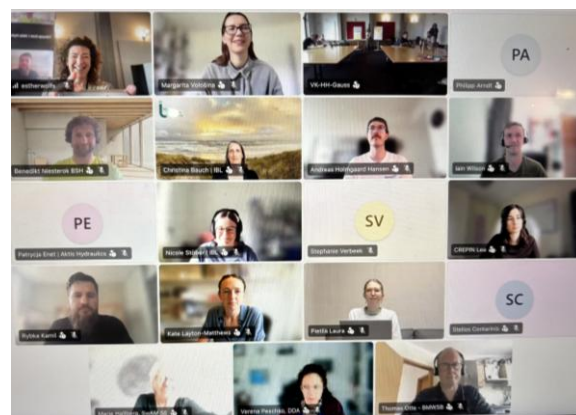


Figure 1. Three-day set-up of the Hamburg workshop

The workshop was organised by the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI) Working Track on Cumulative Impact Assessment and the Northern European Sea Basins project, Work Package 3 Task 4, and facilitated by P2 and Value of Nature. The workshop was hosted by the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH). The full agenda can be found in annex 1.





Day 1. Sharing vision, knowledge and experiences

Presentations and showcases

Day 1 established a common baseline by combining introductory showcases with a forward-looking group exercise on vision and pathways. All presentations are published on the NESB website ([link NESB webpage](#)).

The current state of play – Jitske Nugter – Task lead NESBp 3.4

During the presentation the activities and the progress of the task 3.4 concerning CIA development and application in the greater North Sea and Baltic Sea under the NESB project were explained. Knowledge was gathered on the current state of play in 2025 amongst regional organisations and countries and consolidated in a visual, also published on the NESB website ([link NESB webpage](#)). The participants also received a visual of the key observations, conclusions and recommendations from the 2025 activities. These results guided the setup of the workshop, focusing on key areas where we could all benefit from strengthened collaboration: agree on a common perspective on CIA, improve data interoperability, clarify uncertainty and linkages, run targeted pilots, and strengthen communications.



Mapping and analysis of cumulative impacts in Europe's seas: from testing to applications – Jesper Andersen, chief scientist, NIVA Denmark Water Research

The showcase situated the workshop within a wider trajectory of European CIA development. Jesper Andersen traced the evolution from earlier Halpern-based cumulative effects and impact assessment approaches to the newer Tikta tool developed through GES4SEAS. Showing how CIA methods have moved from testing toward practical applications in the North Sea, Wadden Sea and wider European contexts. The core message was that cumulative impact mapping has become increasingly operational, but that the usefulness of any tool still depends on the research and/or management question, the scale of analysis and the availability of fit-for-purpose data.

Cumulative Impact Assessment: Principles and Evaluation Criteria (ICES advice for GNSBI) – Simon Jennings, vice-chair, ICES Advisory Committee

The presentation by Simon Jennings outlines how ICES has responded to a request from the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative by synthesising knowledge, defining principles and evaluation criteria ([ICES advice to GNSBI](#)), and recommending methods for cumulative impact assessment to inform management decisions. The presentation highlighted ICES's role in advancing Cumulative Impact Assessment methods. Through the Working Group on Cumulative Impact Assessment for Management (WGCIAM), ICES is developing risk-based approaches that support marine management and policy decisions. This work builds on ICES expertise in science, data and scientific advice.

Different applications of SCAIRM to inform policy – Gerjan Piet, senior scientist marine ecology, Wageningen Marine Research

Gerjan Piet's presentation showed how the SCAIRM methodology puts the ICES cumulative impact principles into practice by focusing on clear purposes and decision support. Using impact risk as a unifying metric, SCAIRM identifies the main anthropogenic threats to Good Environmental Status (GES) for different ecosystem components and can display them at whole ecosystem and at different spatial scales. It also evaluates offshore wind and other planning scenarios over time (baseline, 2030, 2050), showing modest increases in impact risk and how spatial data and proxies together capture most of the total impact. Within the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Good Environmental Status (GES) is the desired condition of marine waters in which seas are ecologically diverse, clean, healthy and productive, and human activities are carried out at sustainable levels. A key feature is the transparent scoring system, which supports dialogue with stakeholders such as cable-laying operators to refine hazard and magnitude scores based on actual practices and mitigation, often justifiably lowering assessed impacts. Finally, Piet highlighted ongoing, incremental improvements that add more quantitative and spatial information to SCAIRM; while absolute risk values change somewhat, the ranking of activities and pressures remains stable. Reinforcing SCAIRM's role as a robust decision support tool rather than a prescriptive regulatory instrument.

Interactive group sessions on 'Vision and Pathways'

The central questions on vision and ambition were: What should a Community of Practice ultimately achieve, how can CIA application in the Greater North Sea and the Baltic Sea evolve toward best practice by 2035, and which priorities and strategies are needed to get there? This framing made participants mutually agree on the fact that CIA should not be developed as an end in itself, but as a practical means to support ecosystem-based management, maritime spatial planning (MSP), Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) implementation, and better cross-border decisions. A vision can be used to clarify what CIA can do and what (policy) needs can realistically be met by it.

All groups emphasized that for CIA to be effective, stronger alignment is needed between science, policy, and governance. A shared priority was improving the usability of CIA in decision-making through clearer frameworks, harmonized data, and better communication of results. Participants also highlighted the importance of cooperation across countries and sea basins, supported by joint monitoring, shared tools, and coordinated governance structures.

Another common theme was the need to clarify fundamental concepts—such as acceptable levels of uncertainty, thresholds, and baselines—and to strengthen stakeholder involvement and legitimacy in the use of CIA. Monitoring and adaptive management were seen as essential to ensure that measures are effective and can be revised over time.

Similar issues across groups that the CoP potentially could focus on:

- > Need for harmonized and accessible data, including shared standards, tools, and methodologies across regions.
- > Importance of aligning science and policy, ensuring CIA outputs are actionable and trusted in decision-making.
- > Recognition of uncertainty and the need to define acceptable thresholds, baselines, and levels of evidence.
- > Demand for stronger governance and cooperation at sea-basin level, including joint monitoring and coordination mechanisms.
- > Emphasis on clear communication of CIA results and their added value for policy and society.

The break-out discussions generated three closely related but distinct emphases.

- > The first group described a positive long-term vision of “reliable and useful” CIA applied and implemented across the Greater North Sea and Baltic Sea, then mapped a logic chain from governance, to messages, to shared data, to interoperable methods, to action, and finally to political uptake and implementation. Their discussion stressed that governance, harmonised monitoring, data-sharing and common language are not peripheral issues but prerequisites for any meaningful sea basin-scale CIA application.
- > A second group focused more explicitly on the implementation gap. In their discussion, participants argued that the core knowledge base is already relatively mature: the broad logic of ecosystem-based management is clear, CIA tools exist, and data availability is improving. Yet there remains a persistent gap between technical capability and actual use in management and planning. This group clarified that CIA could identify cumulative pressure hotspots and indicate where management action may reduce risk, but on its own it cannot reliably quantify how much improvement will result or how fast change will occur without proper monitoring and follow-up.
- > The third group emphasised comparability and meaningful use in planning. Their vision was not just that countries should produce CIA results, but that results should become comparable across borders, based on agreed pressure categories, ecosystem components, impact matrices and sufficiently aligned data structures. Participants also argued that the value of CIA lies in its ability to inform planning choices, mitigation measures and trade-offs, and not simply in producing technical outputs.

For the detailed output from the interactive session, see Annex 2.

Reflections of day 1

- > The emergence of socio-economic and ecosystem service considerations. Some participants argued that, particularly from an MSP perspective, CIA outputs will ultimately have to connect with questions of value, trade-offs and impacts on sectors and ecosystem services if they are to influence policy decisions. At the same time, the group recognised that this remains a difficult frontier because valuation data and operational methods for integrating social, economic and cultural dimensions are still incomplete.
- > A strong sense of shared direction was emerging despite different disciplinary and institutional starting points. There was a mix of frustration and optimism: frustration that experts are not always heard and that many efforts still happen in parallel, but optimism that the community is already converging around similar questions, similar building blocks and a similar need to improve the science-policy dialogue.
- > Participants repeatedly argued that CIA must be paired with monitoring if it is to become a credible basis for adaptive decision-making. In that sense, the conversation moved away from a narrow focus on model development and toward a broader systems view, where assessment, monitoring, communication and implementation have to function together.

In summary, the vision for 2035–2040 is not simply to carry out more Cumulative Impact Assessments (CIA), but to ensure that CIA is useful, credible and implementable in support of ecosystem-based management and maritime spatial planning. CIA should be understood as a decision-support tool and a means to an end, rather than as an objective in itself. The overarching ambition is a healthy and resilient marine environment in which socio-economic activities are planned and managed in balance with ecological needs and limits. This can be supported by more comparable CIA results across countries, clearer understanding of cumulative pressures and risks, and the effective application of CIA in the development of better-informed plans and management decisions. And comparability does not necessarily require a single tool, but it does require common reference points in language, data, assumptions and output. Finally, the transition from assessment to action depends on stronger links with governance, monitoring and decision-making processes. These themes became the backbone for the strategic discussions on Day 2.





Day 2. Strategic alignment

Day 2 was designed to move from broad visioning to strategic alignment. The day combined plenary feedback on Day 1, two morning showcases, a carousel session on four strategic themes, an afternoon showcase on the German EEZ case, and a panel session on policy issues and priorities for a policy brief.

The plenary recap at the start of the day already revealed a stronger collective narrative. Participants reflected that the previous day had shown both the breadth of ongoing CIA work and the difficulty of turning technical advances into practical uptake. Day 1 had produced both inspiration and a clearer sense of where further narrowing and concrete action would be needed. All presentations and the visual are published on the NESBp website ([link NESB webpage](#)).

Showcases

A Danish CIA tool: Project status, context, user profiles and challenges – Malte Hvidsten, MSP and data specialist, Danish Maritime Authority, MSP Secretariat

The showcase on the Danish CIA tool, illustrated what it looks like when political mandate, institutional cooperation and digital infrastructure come together. Hvidsten explained that Denmark's MSP and marine nature policy context has created a concrete demand for a CIA tool that can support planning decisions, scenario analysis and eventually wider environmental assessments. The tool is being developed through a cross-sectoral working group and is intended to be user-friendly for planners while retaining a scientifically robust backend. Participants responded positively to the clarity of user needs, the modular design, and the explicit attention to transparency and uncertainty, while also stressing the importance of cross-border compatibility and the inclusion of land-sea interactions.

Here be (No?) Dragons: The Challenge of Using Cumulative Impact Assessments in Marine Spatial Planning – Daniel Wood, principal marine ecologist, Cefas

The second showcase offered a complementary perspective by showing the practical challenges of using CIA in MSP for offshore wind planning. Wood's case demonstrated how cumulative impact logic can help identify areas of lower ecological risk, but also highlighted familiar constraints: incomplete data, the difficulty of integrating benthic and seasonal information, and the tension between the "best" conceptual data and the data actually available for operational planning. This showcase reinforced a recurring workshop lesson: many challenges are not about whether CIA is conceptually useful, but about whether the required datasets, classifications and interpretations are mature enough for the decision context.

Cumulative Impact Assessment in the German EEZ – A Tailored Framework and Its Application to Marine Mammals – Antje Gimpel & Constanze Staab, scientific officers, Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH)

The afternoon showcase, by Antje Gimpel and Constanze Staab, on the German EEZ grounded the strategy discussions in another national application context. This presentation demonstrated

how an apparently similar method to other methods can still evolve differently when tailored to specific planning and ecological questions, in this case including marine mammals and construction-phase impacts. This case helped participants move toward a more nuanced understanding of convergence.

Interactive group session on strategic alignment

The core of Day 2 was the carousel session, in which four themes were discussed:

- > Vision and ambition, led by Marie Dahmen
- > Exchange on knowledge and data, led by Daniel Wood
- > Harmonisation of CIA methods and application, led by Adrian Judd
- > The science-policy interface, led by Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky

The science-policy interface focused on making CIA more explicit and effective as a decision-support instrument. The vision and ambition asked what a CoP should seek to achieve by 2035 and how it should define its value proposition. The harmonisation of CIA methods and application explored what should be aligned, why alignment matters, and where differences may remain justified. And the exchange of knowledge and data examined how existing CIA information, tools and datasets could be made more accessible and interoperable across countries, and how the Community of Practice might prioritise key data gaps, sharing mechanisms and practical examples to avoid duplication and strengthen joint learning. For detailed output on this session, see Annex 3.

Vision and ambition

Participants received a draft vision, prepared by the steering group in advance (Annex 3).

The concept of CIA development and application for the Greater North Sea and Baltic Sea is appreciated for its strong level of ambition and clear mission statement, providing a solid foundation for future development. Participants valued the continuity in the vision, noting that the specific timeline is less important than the progression of milestones related to data, harmonization, and decision-making. The content is considered relevant and meaningful, offering useful guidance on how to move forward. At the same time, reviewers noted that while many important elements are already included, the text would benefit from greater concreteness and clearer structuring.

What should be improved:

- > Participants argued that the community needs a clearer and shorter shared narrative. There is broad support for a concise statement that explains why the community exists, what CIA should deliver at sea-basin scale, and how this supports better policy and planning across borders. There was a strong sense that the draft vision should be inspiring but also practical: ambitious enough to guide joint effort yet concrete enough to be used in communication with decision-makers and partner institutions.
- > Several areas were identified for strengthening the concept. First, the vision would benefit from a more explicit overarching ambition, emphasizing that CIA outcomes should be trusted, actionable, and lead to concrete decisions across sea basins. Structurally, the text

should be better organized using thematic subheadings (e.g. methods, data, management responses) to improve readability and focus.

- > Clarification is also needed on the role of the Community of Practice (CoP), including practical examples of how it contributes. Participants highlighted the importance of strengthening the science-policy interface, making this a more explicit component of the vision.
- > In terms of content, the text should more clearly describe use cases and policy linkages, particularly connections to MSFD, SEA within MSP, and the ecosystem-based approach. It should better articulate the purpose of CIA, its added value – especially in a transboundary context – and the objectives of assessments. Finally, there was a call to ensure alignment at policy level on the need for sea-basin scale CIA and to streamline the text by removing overly detailed elements such as standardized data collection methodologies.

Exchange on knowledge and data

The breakout session on CIA knowledge exchange highlighted key challenges related to time constraints, fragmentation, and lack of focus. Participants noted that while a broad range of work is underway, with different users requiring different types of knowledge. There was a shared recognition that waiting for perfect data is not feasible, and that clearer objectives and prioritization are needed to make progress.

Participants highlighted that a large amount of CIA-relevant information already exists, but remains fragmented, unevenly accessible and difficult to assimilate. It has been stressed that experts are often doing similar things in isolation, and that the community should focus less on collecting everything and more on identifying the most relevant questions, the most important data gaps and the most useful examples and at the same time, to focus on solvable steps. This implies that the CoP should not become a passive repository, but an active mechanism for prioritising, translating and sharing knowledge.

A central outcome was the need to move from broad exploration to more focused and practical collaboration. This includes working with realistic goals, breaking down complex issues into manageable topics, and learning from existing examples. Converging methods and knowledge into actionable, policy-relevant outputs (“salient science advice”) was seen as a priority.

The Community of Practice (CoP) was identified as a key mechanism to improve knowledge exchange and overcome fragmented approaches. Suggested approaches included thematic clusters, focused workshops, and regular meetings at both general and subgroup levels. In-person interaction was considered particularly valuable, alongside the use of shared platforms and libraries to store and exchange knowledge.

Finally, participants emphasized the importance of strengthening transboundary cooperation and identifying the right moments to engage with planners and policymakers, ensuring that knowledge exchange effectively supports decision-making processes.

Harmonisation of CIA methods and application

The breakout group emphasized that harmonization of Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) across sea basins is essential to achieve comparable and policy-relevant outcomes within Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). A shared conclusion began to emerge that complete methodological uniformity is neither realistic nor necessarily desirable. What matters more is

interoperability and clarity on when and why different approaches are used. A key message was to avoid overcomplicating processes and to start with practical, small-scale pilots while building on existing national approaches.

Regarding processes and workflows, the group highlighted the need for a shared terminology (e.g., “collective pressures” and “in combination”) and stronger collaboration through the Community of Practice (CoP). The CoP can play a central role in initiating joint projects, facilitating knowledge exchange, and strengthening collaboration with policymakers. Harmonization was also seen to increase political acceptance, as internationally aligned approaches enhance trust and comparability between countries.

For tools, the focus should be on achieving comparable outputs rather than standardizing a single method. Different methods and tools (such as SCAIRM, Tikta, and Symphony) can coexist, provided their results are interoperable and comparable. A key next step is to conduct pilot studies in a shared area using multiple tools to better understand differences and align outcomes.

In terms of data, there is a need for internationally agreed approaches to transform raw data into spatial information for CIA. Harmonization of datasets (e.g., through the INSPIRE Directive) and agreement on pressure–impact relationships (e.g., via a common matrix) are critical. Transboundary challenges, such as mobile species, further underline the importance of coordinated data use and shared responsibility at the sea basin level.

For decision-making, CIA results must be clear, transparent, and usable for policymakers. Communicating uncertainties and limitations is essential to build trust. Stronger links are needed between CIA outputs and policy objectives, including better insight into the effectiveness of measures. Joint Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) within MSP frameworks, such as in the SEABAS project, were identified as promising approaches.

Finally, the importance of mutual learning was emphasized. The CoP can serve as a platform for targeted workshops addressing specific challenges and solutions, while fostering a shared understanding of environmental, social, and economic dimensions within CIA.

The science-policy interface

During this session participants sharpened the problem definition that CIA is only valuable when decision-makers understand what it can do, what it cannot do, and how it should be used in planning and policy processes.

The breakout group identified key bottlenecks at the science-policy interface in applying CIA, centring on issues of trust, communication, and alignment with policy needs. A core challenge is ensuring that both scientific knowledge and local insights effectively reach the right policy audiences, recognizing that multiple interfaces and users exist. Participants stressed the need for standardized and policy-relevant scientific outputs that address key questions on trends, future scenarios, risks, and management options. These outputs should be robust yet adaptable to different applications, such as spatial planning and evaluation.

Improving the “how” of communication was seen as critical. This includes delivering clear, consistent messages through existing governance structures, ensuring ownership at an appropriate scale (e.g. sea basin level), and being transparent about uncertainties and

limitations. Messages should be simple, neutral, and targeted to the appropriate policy actors to build trust and usability.

Timing was also highlighted as a major factor. CIA should be integrated early in decision-making processes, aligned with policy cycles, and communicated regularly to remain relevant. Proactive engagement—before environmental impacts escalate—was seen as essential to increase the effectiveness of CIA in shaping policy.

Overall, the participants called for clearer examples, more focused communication, stronger links to concrete policy questions, and a practical acceptance that “perfect data” will rarely exist. Rather than waiting for fully harmonised methods or datasets, the group leaned toward a more iterative approach: start with what is already possible, improve transparency, and use collaboration to progressively reduce inconsistencies and uncertainty.

Panel discussion on policy issues

Chair: Philipp Arndt | Members: Peter Heslenfeld, Lembe Reiman, Alf Skovgaard, Aurélia Care

The final session of the day was the panel discussion on policy issues and recommendations for policymakers. The agenda positioned this session as a bridge to a future policy brief, and the issues that surfaced most clearly. Participants stressed the need to apply CIA earlier in MSP processes, to strengthen common terminology, to demonstrate the value of cross-border cooperation, and to focus recommendations on areas where collaboration is essential for planning and assessment to work in shared sea basins.

The panel session brought together national perspectives on the current challenges and opportunities in applying CIA, with a focus on strengthening its role in policy and decision-making. Discussions highlighted that while international alignment is essential—particularly given shared ecosystems and cross-border impacts—differences in methodologies, data, and assumptions between countries can lead to inconsistent outcomes, complicating policy uptake and communication.

Panellists emphasized several “no-regret” actions for the coming years. These included improving transparency around data, assumptions, and uncertainties in CIA; developing a common terminology; and applying CIA earlier in maritime spatial planning processes to inform strategic choices. There was also a strong call for pragmatic collaboration, such as joint pilot studies and better coordination of spatial data collection, alongside closer alignment in the interpretation of relevant legislation across countries.

The CoP was widely seen as a key mechanism to support this progress. Its main value lies in facilitating exchange of knowledge, building shared approaches, improving comparability, and strengthening communication between countries and towards policymakers. At the same time, panellists stressed that the CoP should remain practical and focused, avoiding the risk of becoming an additional bureaucratic layer without clear objectives.

Finally, participants cautioned against over-formalization and overpromising the capabilities of CIA. There was a clear preference for maintaining national flexibility, avoiding new regulatory burdens, and focusing instead on collaboration, mutual learning, and demonstrating the added value of CIA in decision-making. For the detailed discussion, see Annex 4.

Reflections day 2

Across the whole of Day 2, a more mature picture of the CoP began to emerge. The CoP could be a structured arena for aligning language, improving comparability, sharing applications, surfacing data and policy bottlenecks, and building enough mutual understanding that different national and regional efforts can support one another rather than diverge further.

Several strategic directions are distilled from Day 2. First, the community should work toward practical interoperability rather than rigid uniformity. Second, the science-policy interface should be treated as a central workstream. Third, concrete use cases and showcases are one of the strongest assets of the network, because they make methodological and governance questions tangible. Fourth, the policy brief should focus on timing, comparability, terminology, and the need for cross-border application of CIA in real planning contexts.



Day 3. Way of working as a Community of Practice

Day 3 shifted from diagnosis to organisation. The agenda framed the day around “our way of working as a CIA Community of Practice (CoP),”. The goal was to focus on the “how”: how the group would collaborate, how it would be structured, and how it could convert momentum from the workshop into a sustained way of working.

The idea is that the CoP as an informal and non-binding collaboration gives participating countries and organisations flexibility while providing a practical framework for cooperation and alignment. It could function as a regular forum for scientists, governmental experts and policymakers or advisors to work together on methods, language, data, principles and science-policy bottlenecks in cumulative impact assessment, explicitly building on existing regional structures rather than duplicating them.

Interactive session on community building

During this session participants were asked to individually reflect on the following 6 questions:

- > How should we structure, organise ourselves? What if we do not organise ourselves?
- > What leadership is needed from whom to make this successful? What can you offer?
- > What would you like to start tomorrow? What is a no go?

The first key outcome was broad support for a light but purposeful structure. Participants did not favour a heavy formal institution or a fixed membership model with burdensome obligations. Instead, the discussion leaned toward a flexible framework with enough structure to maintain momentum, clarify responsibilities and support continuity, while remaining open and demand driven. This is closely aligned with the concept note, which suggests a practical, non-binding platform guided by shared priorities, short thematic meetings, and tangible outputs.

A second key outcome concerned governance and leadership. Participants broadly endorsed the need for clear leadership on both organisational and thematic topics but also stressed that leadership should be collective rather than overly centralised. Regional bodies such as GNSBI, HELCOM, OSPAR, NSEC, ICES and related MSP structures were seen as important anchors or platforms, while countries and active members should retain ownership of thematic progress.

The third major theme was roles and responsibilities. Participants argued that the CoP should be clear about what it is and is not responsible for. The CoP should help connect people, align understanding, exchange practice, and structure work on selected priorities, but it should not attempt to replace formal decision-making arenas, national mandates, or existing regional assessment processes. This point echoes the vision and ambition paper, which already noted that the CoP should support streamlining and dialogue on CIA without replacing existing MSP- or policy platforms.

Participants distinguished between short-term and longer-term actions. In the first 12 months, they proposed to define a joint understanding of vision and ambition, select strategic priorities, organise online showcase sessions, create overviews of existing approaches and datasets, and

identify key science-policy bottlenecks for the policy agenda. Over 3–5 years, the CoP could point to coordinated pilots, increased data and indicator alignment, stronger links to MSP- and MSFD cycles, and development of a shared knowledge repository.

Another recurring point was the importance of not starting from scratch. Participants repeatedly said that the CoP should build on what already exists, use existing meetings where possible, and connect to current institutional processes rather than create parallel structures. This was partly a resource issue, since many participants noted limited time and capacity, but it was also strategic. The CoP was seen as most useful when it acts as a connecting layer between regional organisations, national practices and technical communities, rather than as another isolated initiative.

The discussion on documentation and continuity was especially practical. Participants suggested that the group would benefit from a guidance document, roadmap or living framework that sets out what the CoP is trying to do without turning it into a rigid formal charter. Such a document could capture scope, principles, thematic priorities and expectations for participation, while leaving room for adaptation as the network matures. This idea aligns closely with the proposal for a living document, yearly review and adaptive work planning. Trust and safe space also emerged as important operating principles; meaningful exchange requires openness, a manageable group composition and room for technical discussion across borders and institutions.

During this session we shaped the start of a coherent model for the future way of working. The CoP should be informal, light and flexible, but not vague. It should have some coordination capacity, thematic leadership and a shared work plan. It should focus on a limited number of practical priorities and visible outputs. It should use hybrid formats and combine online exchange with periodic in-person meetings to sustain trust and momentum. And it should position itself as a connector across countries, regional institutions and thematic workstreams in the Greater North Sea and the Baltic Sea region. For more detailed information of this session, see

Reflections day 3

By the final reflection session, several participants suggested that the CoP had, in a sense, already begun. The workshop itself had created a first layer of community through concrete exchange, shared language development and recognition that many participants are working on highly similar problems despite different institutional contexts. The shift in mood from uncertainty to cautious confidence was notable. Participants stated that the meeting had shown there is already more convergence than previously assumed, especially in core concepts, practical needs and the recognition of where alignment matters most.

Participants reflected positively on the workshop, highlighting strong learning outcomes on both the practical application of CIA and its policy relevance, particularly around harmonization and implementation. The exchange of expertise and real-life examples was highly valued, helping to clarify the complexity of CIA and making it more accessible.

A key takeaway was the clear need for, and momentum behind, establishing a CoP. Participants appreciated the collaborative atmosphere, noting that many are working on similar challenges and that the workshop helped build connections, align efforts, and “break the glass wall” between initiatives.

While some found the topic complex and at times overwhelming, the overall experience was described as constructive, energizing, and timely. There was a strong sense that the group is already on the right track, with a shared willingness to continue collaboration in a more structured and pragmatic way, including deeper exchanges and ongoing contact.

For a list of reflections, see Annex 6.



Conclusion and actions

The Hamburg workshop confirmed a shared interest in strengthening cooperation on Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) across the Greater North Sea and Baltic Sea. CIA was recognised as a practical decision-support tool for ecosystem-based management, maritime spatial planning (MSP), Strategic Environmental Assessment and cross-border coordination, not as an objective in itself. The common ambition is to support a healthy and resilient marine environment, alongside balanced socio-economic activities, through more comparable and transparent CIA results and their timely use in planning and management. Further progress should build on existing regional and national structures through a light, practical Community of Practice that supports knowledge exchange, data and methodological interoperability, and clearer communication at the science-policy interface.

Follow-up actions

- **Prepare external scientific communication on CIA-method convergence**
Develop a concise communication product, such as a joint statement, briefing note or position paper, setting out the current convergence of Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) methodologies, areas of remaining difference, and the implications for comparable and policy-relevant application across sea basins.
- **Explore cross-border CIA scenario applications**
Identify opportunities to apply CIA jointly across national boundaries, building on the different approaches to assessing future activity scenarios within Maritime Spatial Plans (MSPs). A practical case could demonstrate how scenario-based CIA can support shared planning questions, cross-border consultation and comparison of results.
- **Develop an overview of CIA applications in maritime spatial planning**
Establish, through the GNSBI Working Track on CIA, a clear overview, preferably in a visual format, of how CIA can be applied at different stages of MSP. This should distinguish relevant use cases, such as strategic scenario development, assessment of spatial options, identification of cumulative-pressure hotspots, comparison of alternatives, and evaluation of mitigation or management measures.
- **Assess the scope for a follow-up scientific-advice request in 2027**
Explore whether a potential follow-up request for scientific advice could be developed for 2027, potentially with joint or partial national funding. The request could focus on priority questions identified by the Community of Practice, such as suitable CIA approaches for specific MSP questions and scales; the comparability of existing methods and outputs; common data and pressure-impact linkages; treatment of uncertainty; or approaches to transboundary cumulative impacts.

Annexes

1. Detailed agenda

Day	Time	Session
Day 1. Wednesday 1st of July 2026	13:00 – 13:30	Welcome by Kai Trümpler and Philipp Arndt (BSH).
	13:30 – 15:15	Showcases CIA: sharing and learning > Jitske Nugter: State of Play, NESB project > Jesper Andersen: Mapping and analysis of cumulative impacts in Europe's seas: from testing to applications. > Simon Jennings: Cumulative Impact Assessment: Principles and Evaluation Criteria (ICES advice for GNSBI). > Gerjan Piet: Different applications of SCAIRM to inform policy.
	15:15 – 15:45	Coffee & networking.
	15:45 – 17:00	Vision and pathways for CIA applications towards 2040: break-out groups on 'How collaboration for application of CIA should or could develop in the coming 15 years'.
	17:00 – 17:15	Reflection and conclusions of the day.
Day 2. Thursday 2nd of July 2026	09:00 – 10:00	Start and plenary feedback on the results of day groups discussing vision and pathways on day 1.
	10:00 – 10:45	Showcases CIA: sharing and learning > Malte Hvidsten & Søren Enghoff: A Danish CIA tool – Project status, context, user profiles and challenges. > Daniel Wood: Here be (No?) Dragons: The Challenge of Using Cumulative Impact Assessments in Marine Spatial Planning.
	10:45 – 11:15	Coffee & networking
	11:15 – 12:30	Strategic alignment regarding four topics identified in previous interviews and working sessions. Carousel session to enrich the ideas on strategies for a community working together on CIA and its application: > CIA vision and ambition, building further on the day 1 session of vision and pathways, discussions led by Marie Dahmen. > Alignment and harmonization of CIA in our sea basins, discussions led by Adrian Judd > Exchange of knowledge and data for CIA development and application, discussions led by Daniel Wood. > Bridging the science policy interface, discussions led by Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky.
	12:30 – 13:30	Lunch at BSH.
	13:30 – 15:00	Continuation on strategic alignment regarding the four topics: last carousel round and plenary feedback.
	15:00 – 15:45	Showcase CIA: sharing and learning > Antje Gimpel and Constanze Staab: Cumulative Impact Assessment in the German EEZ A Tailored Framework and its Application to Marine Mammals.
	15:45 – 16:45	CIA policy issues and our recommendations on priorities for policy makers: panel session led by Philipp Arndt. Panel members: Alf Skovgaard, Aurélia Care, Lembe Reiman, Peter Heslenfeld.
	16:45 – 17:15	Reflections and conclusions of the day.
Day 3. Friday 3rd of July 2026	09:00 – 09:15	Start.
	09:15 – 11:00	Way of working in our CIA community of practice: interactive session and discussion led by Sebastiaan Mestdagh.
	11:00 – 11:45	Reflections on the workshop and next steps.
	11:45 – 12:00	Closure of the workshop.

2. Interactive session vision and pathways day 1 detailed output

Goals of this session

- > To envision CIA in the longer-term future and back cast to understand what needs to happen;
- > To describe risks and opportunities with each other;
- > To share stakes and needs in your own work field.

Format

- > In 3 break-out groups the participants: Each day group will gather and take 1 hour to discuss what could have been achieved by 2035 and what the roadmap could have looked like.
- > In a plenary session we discuss the vision and pathways per group and have time for questions and discussions.

Day group 1

> Clarity/agreement on what level of data/ spatial information/ expert judgement is good enough to base policy decisions upon and taking measures > Science-policy is extended with politicians: to enable decision-making on CIA and MSP (even when it is difficult) > National policy goals are aligned > What level of stakeholder involvement is needed to use CIA outcomes in decision-making? When is it legitimate? > Balancing needs between policy: society – economy – environment > Countries include the international aligned CIA in their national MSP > CIA for all regions can be compared and merged
> Agree on trends for all maritime uses > Clear boundaries > Clarity/ agreement on scale and timeframe of CIA analyses useful for which ecosystem components what on local, national and international scale? > Same knowledge and ecosystem sensitivity > Agreement on baseline to be used in CIA > Which CIA tool to use for which type of policy question?
> Requested information is harmonized and available at sea basin > Sharing of data > Data shared at sea basin scale in a harmonized way > Transferable results, data and/or models across member states > Apply harmonized CIA on different scales
> Improving understanding of pressure interactions: additive, synergistic, antagonistic, multiplicative > Which impacts can be regulated by MSP? (problem: climate change, fisheries) > Same understanding of ecosystem risks > What is the cumulative tipping point? > What are we wanting the CIA/SEA to achieve?
> Joint training programs for different stakeholders > Learning from each other on mitigation measures > Identify management options > Regular joint revision based on monitoring results is changed

- > Regional governance system coordinating cooperation is set
- > Frequent communication
- > Shared governance joint monitoring
- > Application of comparable tools for same research questions
- > CIA messages are clearly defined

Day group 2

Vision	> Need for formulating a vision from decision-makers (definition of clear question and needs before thinking about tools and data) > Pressure reduction > Willingness to apply the program of measures proposed by scientists
Pathways	> Effective Ecosystem Based Approach in management > Monitoring to check progress, status and pressures > Integrated tools (already existing) open to collaborate between contracting parties OSPAR and HELCOM (transparency, ownership, technical integration) > Clear understanding of the role of CIA in the process of decision-making
CIA and monitoring:	> CIA provides cumulative risks for guiding the implementation of measures → science > Monitoring provides the check of effectiveness in reducing pressures and environmental state → policy

Day group 3

> Public recognition of the environment: value of nature > Meaningful environmental assessment > CIA leads to better plans, finding best locations bringing together sectors and nature > Vision 2040: social-economic dimension is connected through ecosystem services
> Sea basin wide approach to protect species by biogeographic distribution (whale protection) > Awareness for positive impacts > Agreeing on thresholds, mitigation, alternatives > Agreeing on a list of ecosystem components > Awareness of uncertainties at different levels and the reliability of results
> Harmonization of data: bringing data together on the bigger scale > Vision: comparable data and comparable results > Data gathering and monitoring should contribute to CIA and is available > Agreeing on 1 impact matrix
> The MSFD coordination process can be an example for CIA coordination > Reducing development and preparation workload > Find a consensus about ecoregions and work together
> Value of scientific knowledge for policy decisions > Communication is clear and easy > Social economic dimension can be assessed with CIA (be clear about process and assessment)
> GNSBI is the organisation to coordinate CIA in the North Sea



3. Interactive session strategic alignment day 2 detailed output

Goals of this session

- > To share ideas on potential ambitions and strategies that can be joint approaches of the Community of Practice
- > To describe concrete actions (short term and longer term) for those strategies and how that will look like: who will be doing what and which stakeholders should be engaged?
- > To prioritise actions for the coming 2-3 years and to describe the needs to do this.

Format

- > A carousel session of three rounds of 30 minutes with four topics:
 - o Vision & ambition: Marie Dahmen
 - o Harmonization and alignment: Adrian Judd
 - o Knowledge and data: Daniel Wood
 - o Science and policy: Dmitry Frank Kamenetsky
- > Each topic is guided by a table lead of one of the international institutes. There is a factsheet available with ideas of the earlier workshops in 2025
- > The first group starts to draft ideas; the following groups enrich the ideas and add more concrete information to the flip over, the last groups start to prioritise
- > Plenary feedback of 60 minutes: the table leads decide who will give a short presentation on the results to the whole group.

CIA Vision and ambition

Starting point was a vision document prepared by the steering group, see box 1.

Box 1. Draft text steering group for a vision and ambition

Vision and ambition 2035 – CIA development and application for the Greater North Sea and Baltic Sea

This draft text has been prepared as a starting point but is open to discussion and change. It has been developed based on the output of the 2025 workshops.

By 2035, cumulative impact assessment (CIA) in the Greater North Sea and Baltic Sea region are routinely carried out on an ecologically meaningful regional scale. These assessments contribute to maritime spatial planning and related processes, enabling a knowledge base to support timely cross-border consultation, reducing conflicts of use, and safeguarding ecosystem integrity at the appropriate ecological scale. When applying CIA in nationally mandated human uses, all countries use (as much as possible while maintaining national authority) harmonized methods with a high degree of comparability, shared data bases, and common pressure-impact linkages driving comparable and easily interpretable results. Have a common understanding of what matters most for maritime spatial planning policy and management and delivers coherent, ecosystem-based policy making beyond borders.

1. CIA is routinely conducted at sea-basin scale through regional cooperation mechanisms such as GNSBI, NSEC, HELCOM, OSPAR, and ICES avoiding duplication of efforts. Integrating both current pressures on the ecosystem and forward-looking scenario analyses of human activities and plans. These include cumulative effects with specific attention to transboundary ecological processes such as bird migration routes and marine mammal habitats.



2. All countries when applying CIA in their national MSP processes operate on a shared reference grid, standardised data collection methodologies, aligned activity–pressure matrices, and interoperable datasets covering all maritime sectors, supported by open and secure data-sharing frameworks. Thus, making results across borders coherent and easily interpretable.

A mature community of practice ensures continuous exchange on methodologies and innovations, while harmonised timelines databases and basin-wide activity datasets provide insights into cumulative effects. Uncertainty and outcomes are transparently assessed, and communicated through agreed language, allowing policymakers to make informed, precautionary decisions. The applications should be able to show where the greatest combined efforts (can) occur, what they mean for ecosystem components, and which policy or management responses are most effective.

The role of the CIA CoP is to support the CIA streamlining by being a dialogue platform on CIA, but not to replace the actual dialog platforms on MSP. The community members can benefit from pooling resources, building joint capacity, and reducing duplication across national and regional initiatives.

As a result, cumulative impact assessment (CIA) contributes to maritime spatial planning and related processes with a clear understanding of transboundary cumulative impacts. Enabling timely cross-border consultation, reducing conflicts of use, and safeguarding ecosystem integrity at the appropriate ecological scale. In doing so, it delivers tangible regional impact by supporting the early identification and mitigation of cumulative pressures, reducing ecological risks across borders, advancing sustainable blue economy development, and providing a robust, science-based foundation for coordinated policy decisions across the Greater North Sea and Baltic Sea.

What is good:

- > Ambitions
- > Continuation. The year is less important: good for milestones on data, harmonization, decisions
- > Clear, good content
- > Mission statement
- > Gives good guidance for the how, but needs more structure
- > Quite a bit is in the text, but it should be more concrete

What should be changed or added:

- > Add overarching dream: outcome of CIA is respected and leads to action. Reliable and useful CIAs are applied and responded to in the Greater North Sea and the Baltic Sea
- > Structure (sub-headings): Valuable to group sub-ambitions/pathways on topics, e.g. methods, data, management responses
- > Clarify CoP: give clear examples of how the CoP can act, to make its role clear
- > Policy dialogue: add the science policy interface / dialogue
- > Clarity of use cases, application (SEA, EBA, MSFD): add the CIA linkages to monitoring MSFD and environmental management, add CIA link to SEAs for MSP as part of EBA
- > Attention to science and policy
- > Clear aim: why are we doing CIA? Highlight the benefits of transboundary CIA
- > Clear idea of the objective of the assessment
- > Agreement on policy level on the need of sea basin CIA and to respect results
- > Take out of text: standardized data collection methodologies

Exchange of knowledge and data

> Too much, no time > Realistic goals set by management “time” > Can't wait for the perfect data > We have been very broad, now need to break down, identify key breakdown > Same tasks, but working in isolation
> Different users, different knowledge needed > Clear objectives > Practical examples e.g. OSPAR > Focus, clarity > CIA method + knowledge = salient science advice > Methods converged to common information
> CoP also a tool to break through silos > CoP is a useful tool to build shared knowledge jointly by different users > Clusters: maintain focus on topics > Focused workshops > Regular meetings (for all and for subgroups): about a specific topic > When to have informed dialogue with planners/ policy? > In person learning works best > Use platforms / libraries for knowledge exchange and status quo > Network to store ideas > Transboundary cooperation should be a strategic priority

Alignment and harmonization of CIA in our sea basins

1. Processes and workflows	> Not over think it, try on small cases > Language terminology of CIA/CEA ‘collective pressures’ ‘in combination’ > Overview of literature/ studies (under development) on CIA for MSP > CoP members can start common projects for CIA for MSP > Terminology through CoP CIA, sea basin structure, GNSBI H/V MSP WG > CoP involved in every step, providing more influence on policymakers > Comparable outcomes/ results of national CIA methods. What is needed now to achieve that? > Different tools/ methods for different use cases > Harmonization provides potential for more political acceptance due to the international agreement > MSP goals: understanding across national MSP > Drivers: social, cultural, economic, environmental > Collective understanding of priorities, similarities, differences > Learning from each other on mitigation/ restoration > GNSBI linking WT CIA and WT nature
2. Tools	> Different tools/ methods for different use cases > Focus on output not on tools, we need comparable results > Compare tools in a pilot area, e.g. SCAIRM+ TIKTA + Symphony and understanding / test the outcomes > GNSBI should keep track of what is going on in each country. Ensure that national CIAs can be harmonized > “Just” do it. We need to start practical work. Overthinking will delay things > Harmonization needed to enhance interoperability (tools and datasets can work together) > Compare methods: methods become more comparable and compatible with each other

	> Ensure that results are more coherent and easier to be compared between countries > CIA for MSP: How to prioritise or categorise species and habitats? > What's better: one agreed methods or multiple methods with (hopefully) some outcomes? Very important if you want to sell your measures decided upon the CIA outcomes > Next project: have run several methods/ tools (SCAIRM, TIKTA, Symphony) on one same Q and compare outcomes
3. Data	> Internationally agreed approaches/ models of going from raw data to spatial distribution data (request for the CIA models) saves time, secures acceptance and accuracy > Inspire directive: harmonization spatial data, is it being used? > Activity to pressure linkage framework: can we agree on one matrix? > Use sea basin wide data for CIA pilots, protect Baltic project data > Use the momentum: all countries start with CIA development. Establish a common approach > Responsibility for mobile stocks/species: multinational cross-border issues > With adoption of SCAIRM in Tikta methods are largely converged, talking can move to data and decision making
4. Decision-making	> Develop joint SEA in MSP framework, including CIA. Done in Seabas project > Decision-makers use of results > Level of explainability of CIA by policy makers, researchers, stakeholders > Results need to be clear for policymakers > Gaining policy maker trust in outputs: limitations, uncertainties clearly communicated > Metrics link to goals > Understanding effectiveness of measures > Requires appropriate data/ monitoring and literature
5. Learning from each other	> Use CoP for problem/ solution targeted workshops > GNSBI task: develop a workshop/ project to fully understand environmental, social, economic

Overcoming the science policy interface

Why	> Trust > Science to reach the policy interface > Local knowledge to reach the policy interface > Who are the policy users? > Multiple interfaces!
What	> Standardized scientific output, reliable with different applications (main threats, future scenarios, spatial, evaluation) - o Key questions: What are the trends? What are the scenarios? What are the risks involved? What are the risk management measures?
How	> Reflect the facts > Recurrent messages, but not cause fatigue > Utilize existing structures to deliver the messages > Ownership: coherent with at least a sea basin > Clearly communicate limitations, simple narrative to build trust, tone of messages should be neutral > Find the right policy people to talk to and acquire what's the best way to reach them
When	> Before the disaster has happened! > Integrated into decision making process (MSP) > Respect policy cycles > Define frequency: regular updates and vocalisation of key messages

4. Panel discussion day 2 detailed output

Goals of this session

- > To share experience on the issues countries face in the understanding of CIA, the challenges they have in developing policy tools for CIA, the integration of CIA in decision making, etc.
- > To define a set of key issues that countries face at this moment in the application of CIA and to discuss how to tackle these issues.
- > To select 3-5 recommendations on behalf of the Community of Practice to share with policy makers and decision makers

Format

- > A panel session of 60 minutes with a chair (Philipp) and 4 panel members: Peter Heslenfeld (NL), Lembe Reiman (EE), Alf Skovgaard (DK), Aurélia Care (Fi)
- > Each panel member will be asked to reflect on the issues and the recommendations. The panel members will receive a list of questions before the session
- > The panel starts with questions to the panel members, but it is the idea to have a discussion with both panel and audience.

Q: Risk or opportunities of international alignment?

- > It is a big puzzle that we have in our government, and we should also do it for the surrounding waters. We promised to do a CIA for the next period of 2028-2033.
- > Not only important for planning but also for licensing. We have different assumptions from different countries.
- > Demonstrate that countries need each other instead of stumbling over each other. We need to look at it from the broader area, cause that is also impacting e.g. harbour porpoise. Advice: do this with your neighbouring countries. It is more important to align.
- > There is a variety of CIA approaches. Different qualities, different assumptions: so we can have different results. Then it can be difficult for policy makers to base the policies on the result of CIA. Conflicting results make it more difficult to communicate the outcomes.

Q: For the next two years, what would be no regret measures, how should we invest time, knowledge and resources?

- > Should not be considered as an absolute truth. It makes clear what is known and what is uncertain. Limitations should be clearly communicated. CIA reports should describe what data was used, which assumptions were made.
- > It should be applied earlier in MSP for strategic choices. Actually the CIA in the first step.
- > We need a common terminology.
- > get some action. Do a pilot study, do a CIA on a specific case. Like NL is suggesting to include Germany and Belgium. So others can see that something is happening.
- > Do the same exercise for the different directives. Is legislation interpreted in all countries. Make sure we have all the same basis.



- > Just do it: work on spatial data. It takes a long time to get the spatial data sets and we all do it separately from each other. Coordinating who is doing what. We all need the spatial data.
- > We should all be on top of any legislative changes.

Q: What is the role of the CoP and the benefits and risks?

- > It is a benefits if we can exchange experiences, successes and failures. Building together common approaches. Improve comparability.
- > Risk: without clear objectives and clear activities it will not lead to common approaches.
- > Good to know who has what data and exchange on improvements and complexity. We should avoid that we all talk in separate room, we should get together.
- > Praise this community. Long dream to do this. But now it happened. It is a platform to transfer knowledge. We know can do a dialogue and develop better input to our government. E.g. we rely on experiences from the North Sea for the Baltic Sea applications. We can develop messages together and we can learn from each other. Communication amongst each other can be improved and towards others. Super useful CoP.
- > Why is wind energy important to the Baltic Sea, it is not the biggest pressure? It is an additional effect, and changes current behaviour, you actually building a new ecosystem. We do not know all about it. It will define the future of the Baltic Sea.

Q: what we do not want?

- > A new bureaucratic layer. I want new friends, I need help. Exchange of information, but not a new OSPAR or HELCOM.
- > There is a strong wish that we do not work towards more constraints. Not new rules.
- > We need national flexibility. No new rules, only new friends.
- > We should not overpromise CIA, it is not a factual tool.
- > Show the value of applying CIA for decision making. Be open for joint assessments.
- > Make sure countries benefits from exchange. Avoid sovereignty.

5. Interactive session community of practice day 3 detailed output

Goals of this session

- > To define the potential of community building with attention for governance;
- > To define the perspectives in the group on the idea of a community of practice;
- > To assess the level of commitment to a community of practice and discuss leadership, individual or as a group;
- > To assess potential to develop a guideline for the community of practice document on how to organise the CoP;

Format

- > Participants are asked to visit three galleries (flip-overs) with on each gallery two questions about the same topic:
- > In a plenary discussion we will look at the harvest of each gallery. We continue with a plenary discussion zooming out and asking ourselves what this means for the longer term and short term. What do we learn from the input, and can we describe common grounds, like a guiding document (how would that look like, what would it mean)? This discussion is led by Sebastian Mestdag.

Gallery 1. Structure and organisation

A. How should we structure, organise ourselves?

> Overview: who is doing what already? Who has resources/ is best at something? > Who is doing what and when: GNSBI, ICES, HELCOM, etc. > Keep having meetings sharing information about CIA status in countries and try to align the process for easy comparison. > Technical meetings already lead to collaboration > Single topic meetings, for technical exchange. Broad get togethers for overview > Clear topics and target groups for meetings, don't target all at once. > Informal network > We share experiences
> Follow the same process in doing CIA, use the same terms, learn from each other. > Regional framework for transboundary consultations > Regional or cross sea basin data sharing platform > Regional collaboration platform > To fill the CIA gaps
> A governance structure at sea basin scale
> GNSBI + HELCOM policy-science > OSPAR: long term trends > ICES WGCIAM organises science into salient advice > Science working group on information feeding tools > Use the ICES advice as a basis > ICES WK season workshop
> Split the work into questions/ topics and work on these > Specific topics require specific groups of experts



> Systematic: looking beyond single sectors
> Develop practical guidance and recommendations that countries can use
> Guidance documents to give directions: living documents
> Baltic Sea MSP growth map, policy agreement
> Virtual platform
> Clear list of concrete actions with dedicated roles, shared with GNSBI
> Thematic working groups
> All actions smart
> Action plan to include what other groups could do or are doing
> WT CIA action plan
> Clear objectives and concrete deliverables
> International target groups with environmentalists from national agencies – pure CIA focus
> Include policy makers during the whole process

B. What if we do not organise ourselves?

> Too much work
> Inefficient work in silos (doing the same things by ourselves)
> Years to solve a problem, topic that could be solved in one expert workshop
> Loss of knowledge, no shared experiences or shared resources
> Inertia
> Risk to lose yourself in details versus risk to not dive deep enough doing data
> Slow down development, no progress
> No new friends
> No alignments, no communication
> Different conclusions
> We will get different results in each country
> No concrete methods will be reached, issue of credibility
> We will do everything different, resulting in isolated MSPs and eventually unhealthy seas
> If we do not do a joint analysis for the North Sea, we have to do it all separately at NS basin scale, which is a lot of euros
> Need to assess whole North Sea on your own!
> Environmental losses
> Economic losses

Gallery 2. Leadership

A. What leadership is needed from whom to make this successful?

> Facilitation for coming together, like NESBp is doing
> Regional coordination led by an organisation where all countries are represented
> We are a big group, for sure a certain structure and facilitation is needed and highly appreciated. While NESBp is still ongoing under this WP flag? Longer term under GNSBI flag?
> Secretariat or point of coordination. GNSBI?
> GNSBI WT-CIA and OSPAR, HELCOM, ICES NSEC
> Community coordinator
> Collaborative governance
> Make use of OSPAR, ICES, WGCIAM with clear roles
> Make use of ICES groups, use existing roles
> Leadership of HELCOM: based on the wishes of the countries



> Shared ownership of community: active involvement to support leadership
> Coordination on thematic exchange when needed
> An email group? Adresses collected to use for sharing scientific papers, questions, ideas etc.
> Coordination should avoid a lot of work load and give focus
> Advisory forum
> Participation is also important, without you it isn't working
> Create overview about how to do and apply CIA already
> More coordination leads to more exchange. Share and do things together
> Action oriented leadership
> Focus on actions, forum for advice
> Clear roles and resource to lead
> Follow-up to NESB project
> Now we may need a strategy to start working together in application across borders
> If we want to come to a concrete alignment and harmonization we need a lead and a product as a means to an end: project based?

B. What can you offer?

> GNSBI WT CIA: leadership, links to WTs
> Jointly with Big 4 leads
> Connection to other GNSBI WTs if useful
> GNSBI knowledge platform as hub for the CoP for communication
> ICES WGCIAM science to advice
> Share experiences from OSPAR CIA work
> MSP experience from Estonia
> Share lessons learned of national implementation of CIA NL
> Share experiences from DK regarding CIA and our new tool under development
> Host for workshops
> Monthly online sessions
> MSP & CIA digital twin as long-term ambition
> A list of current knowledge gaps
> Enthusiasm
> My time and my willingness to help

Gallery 3. Energy and action

A. What would you like to start tomorrow?

> Communication: what is needed? By who? How to use CIA?
> Communication: workshop to discuss how to do this?
> Put our alignment and agreements into a position paper (or the like): statement of scientific consensus international
> Info sheet on differences CIA, SEA, in combination, collective pursue etc. from legislation, regulation.
> Communication is key, consider policy questions, NL is doing this
> Position paper on consensus about the methods
> Using CIA for MSP scenario's on the sea basin or cross border scale (tool DK)
> On the use of CIA in practice on sea basin scale. An output forces us to have the discussions
> Do CIA for 1-3 countries (get started)
> Scenario parameters on sea basin level for 2040-2050
> We need action: start something cross boundary subsea level



> The development at a BS regional framework for SEA including CIA methodology
> Sharing lessons learned (successes and mistakes) > Explore new topics in more depth > Topics for next meetings: lessons learned/ brainstorm/ expertise on the implementation phase: translation of CIA into measures > Expert exchange knowledge with each other > Series of problem-solution sessions with experts: learning from each other > What can we learn already? > Start discussing CIA results from an MSP perspective
> Merge new knowledge and existing local policies for better interpretation > Tools will evolve over time: our current models will be outdated > Integration of tools > Converge tools > Transparency > Review whether we use existing harmonization mechanisms consistently and coherently, e.g. inspire directive > Apply the same tools on different countries to see how different they actually are. > Agreed list of activities, pressures, receptors, linkages, spatial datasets > Need to move on with specific themes and topics: how to work with seasonal effects, how to work on transboundary CIA
> Joint session science-policy on question formulation and show practical CIA application > Answering the raised questions: what tool for what policy question? What tool for what scale? Shall we do a GNSBI-wide CIA and for what purpose? Take these questions into a new Q to ICES, on behalf of GNSBI? > Fair Inspire (= directive?) > Translate the ICES advice to a national policy advice
> Define a plan with concrete actions and deliverables > We made a start, we are preparing the DBs, we made ourselves familiar with CIA, we would welcome a common approach
> Extend my network 'new friends' > We need a CoP dialogue

B. What is a no go?

> New tools x2 > New methods > New tools or methods > Convergence of tools is happening (good) > No new software now, learn from what we have > Not focus on own tools but on coherence among tools > Stop producing tools for the sake of tools > Focus should not go to the tools and methods but to the results of these tools and methods > Tools are the engines, we have them, every country will choose add-ons
> Big reports that won't be read (too complex) > Data hoarding > Duplication > Just more work-load without benefits
> New rules > We want to 'do' not 'must to do' > Legal restrictions for member CPs. CIA may however lead to restrictions > Extra bureaucracy



> Unnecessary bureaucracy
> Becoming discussion only
> We don't take any action
> Not following up sufficiently and letting this initiative fade out
> Meetings with experts from too many fields of expertise
> Excluding sectors
> Losing the MSP focus
> SEA, including CIA, does not substitute EIA

6. Reflections and take aways of the workshop

- > Learned about practical examples.
- > Learned a lot on CIA: about harmonization and the policy angle. Useful output.
- > The community of practice is needed.
- > How to harmonize and use CIA for own policy work.
- > I have learned a lot from a lot of expertise.
- > Positive experience, also overwhelming: more questions than answers. Good that we had mixed group. Practical discussion on CoP was good.
- > Enlightening to meet like this: to talk, meet and exchange.
- > We are all doing really similar things. There is hope. This event helps to break the glass wall.
- > CIA confuses due to complexity. The meeting has helped to organise it.
- > Happiness. Good to have a varied group with different work focus. Showcases are very good to learn from. Face to face meeting is good.
- > The CoP had already started, not something new. Day 1 felt like we have to go a long way, day 3 feels like it is a shorter way. It helps to guide and position our work.
- > Positive. A lot of learning. We are quite harmonized already. Right timing to start CoP and this workshop. Knowing who does what is good.
- > Especially the last day we had a very constructive exercise. Eager to be part of the CoP.
- > Great to get feedback on our case. We may reach out to you.
- > Satisfied. Good discussions also with deeper diving on risks, impacts and uncertainties. A lot of materials produced. We are on the right track.
- > We need to start collaborating in pragmatic way. We need deep dives. We need to keep in contact. Looking forward to the workshop report.
- > Good to meet in person. Good ideas have been gathered
- > Workshop show that it was the right time. Start small: we went to concrete points. We are more than participants of a group, we create something
- > Glad to be part of this group. Gives energy. Network is important. Expertise of all of us is important
- > Interesting workshop. We are all dealing with the same things and tools
- > Enthusiasm and energy from the group. Good to see you all in person. Quite a lot of commonalities, the engine room is going.



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