



## **MANDATE FOR THE JOINT HELCOM-VASAB MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING WORKING GROUP**

*Prolongation agreed on by HELCOM HOD 60-2021 and the 85<sup>th</sup> VASAB CSPD/BSR Meeting*

### **1. The Rationale**

The Baltic Sea is an important common resource for the Baltic Sea Region countries and further neighbouring countries. It represents an important economic potential and at the same time a vulnerable ecosystem. The current environmental status requires intensive efforts towards stabilisation and improvement. Many sea use conflicts call for a wise management and coordinated introduction of continuous Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP). Development potential for future uses needs to be preserved.

### **2. Political Context**

The joint effort by the Baltic Sea countries to draw up and apply maritime spatial plans throughout the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) has already made the Baltic Sea Region a global forerunner and a European Model Region for MSP. The development is based on the broad-scale Maritime Spatial Planning Principles adopted by HELCOM and VASAB CSPD/BSR in 2010, relevant HELCOM Recommendations and HELCOM-VASAB Guidelines.

Regional framework for maritime spatial planning is develop considering the EU directive on establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning, the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the EU Integrated Maritime Policy as well as corresponding legislation of Russian Federation. It contributes to achieving the goals and objectives of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and VASAB Long Term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region as well as to the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030, Paris Agreement and EU Green Deal to combat climate change and to adapt to its effects. The Regional MSP Roadmap identifies strategic goal and objectives of the MSP development.

### **3. The Joint Working Group and its overall aims**

The VASAB Committee on Spatial Planning and Development of the Baltic Sea Region (VASAB CSPD/BSR) and Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) set up a joint co-chaired Working Group on Maritime Spatial Planning to ensure cooperation among the Baltic Sea Region countries for coherent regional Maritime Spatial Planning processes. The Joint Working group is committed to:

- Provide a forum for regional, trans-boundary and cross-sectoral dialogue on Integrated Coastal Management and Maritime Spatial Planning -enabling a common approach and facilitating coherent Maritime Spatial Planning across the borders.
- Assist the VASAB CSPD/BSR and its member states in implementing the actions decided in VASAB Long Term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region.
- Assist HELCOM and its member states to implement the Maritime Spatial Planning related actions of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan.
- Provide Baltic Sea Region countries a platform to discuss the links between relevant International Agreements, EU legal instruments and policies, Baltic Sea Region and national policies.
- Assist the Baltic region in profiling itself as a global and European forerunner in maritime spatial planning.

### **4. Anticipated Tasks**

In order to implement these commitments, the Group will:

- Promote the development of maritime spatial planning in the region and follow up its implementation as outlined in VASAB Long Term Perspective, as well as HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and relevant HELCOM Recommendations, joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Principles and

Guidelines, including supporting the setting-up of governing structures, legislative basis, transboundary and cross-sectoral consultations.

- Facilitate and follow up the progress towards the goal and objectives of the Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030.
- Propose to organize workshops and events as well and information material on maritime spatial planning.
- Follow up and examine as well as make use of the outcomes and findings of regional project activities relevant to MSP.
- Promote the development of compatible datasets and information relevant to BSR maritime spatial planning and thus ensure keeping BASEMAPs and other regional GIS data portals such as HELCOM MAP&DATA SERVICE up to date with best available information.
- Prepare decision proposals on Maritime Spatial Planning in the BSR for the forthcoming VASAB Ministerial Conferences and HELCOM Ministerial meetings.
- Act as steering committee for the PA Spatial Planning of the EU SBSR in relation to MSP.

The Group will develop a Work Plan, for adoption by VASAB CSPD/BSR and HELCOM HOD every 3 years.

## **5. Membership**

Participation is open to representatives from relevant ministries or government agencies in all VASAB and HELCOM Member Countries/Contracting Parties as well as for experts delegated by them. The members should be nominated by the Member Countries/Contracting Parties. A representation of all VASAB and HELCOM countries with sea/coast is envisaged.

VASAB and HELCOM observers can participate. Other guests, organisations and initiatives from around the Baltic Sea and from other parts of Europe with a substantial maritime spatial planning interest can be invited as observers.

## **6. Organisation**

The Working Group will be jointly co-chaired by a VASAB CSPD/BSR chair (nominated by the Working Group and adopted by VASAB CSPD/BSR) and HELCOM chair (nominated by the Working Group and adopted by HELCOM HOD). The two chairs will, with the assistance of both HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats, jointly prepare meetings and Agendas for the Working Group.

The Working Group will document its meetings. A concise outcome will be adopted before the end of each meeting. The outcome is agreed by consensus. All meeting documents and the outcome will be made freely available to the public shortly after the meeting through the HELCOM and VASAB websites.

Meetings will take place up to three times a year. The Group may change the frequency of meetings according to need. In addition to meetings, exchange of e-mails will be used for intersessional work. The Group reports to both the VASAB CSPD/BSR and HELCOM HOD, which approve operational and strategic framework of the group (including proposals for establishing sub-groups). The working language is English.

## **7. Timeframe**

The Mandate is given to the Group by the VASAB CSPD/BSR and HELCOM HOD for the period of implementation of the Regional MSP Roadmap. The Group may request a prolongation jointly from the VASAB CSPD/BSR and HELCOM HOD.

## **8. Resources**

Costs for the participants including travel costs to meetings will be covered by the delegating institutions. Direct costs for meetings will be borne by the host country if not arranged within HELCOM or VASAB Secretariat premises. Staff support from the VASAB and HELCOM Secretariats will be provided for technical support (e.g. preparation of meeting documents including minutes, registration of participants, etc.) and Secretariat attendance at meetings.