

Press release
Riga, 19 April 2012

VASAB supports BaltSeaPlan Vision 2030

On 19 March 2012, VASAB Committee on Spatial Planning and Development of the Baltic Sea Region has acknowledged the BaltSeaPlan Vision 2030. VASAB finds that BaltSeaPlan Vision 2030 is an important input towards common understanding of maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). Based on the assumption that MSP will be established practice in 2030, the Vision lays out a possible roadmap on the steps to be taken between now and 2030 in order to achieve a jointly agreed framework on MSP in the Baltic Sea Region.

With a view to likely future developments, the *“BaltSeaPlan Vision 2030 – Towards the sustainable planning of Baltic Sea Space”* shows the transnational and spatially relevant elements that are inherent in many topics. Four topics were identified that require a common approach: 1) a healthy marine environment, 2) a coherent pan-Baltic energy policy, 3) safe, clean and efficient maritime transport and 4) sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. The development of these topics affects the entire Baltic Sea Region; moreover, they are driven by international policy objectives.

A key lesson of the Vision 2030 is therefore that maritime spatial planners and the stakeholders involved in the process need to regard the Baltic Sea as **one** planning space and ecosystem.

Moreover, the vision puts forward “spatial efficiency” and “spatial connectivity” as guiding principles for each planning exercise. In other words: space should be used as sparingly as possible, with multiple use of sea space promoted wherever uses are compatible with one another and the environment. Also, connections need to be ensured between the different elements and structures of sea use, resulting in a coherent concept from the transnational all the way to the local level.

In order to turn it into a living practice, it is not only necessary that all BSR states establish the appropriate structures that allow them to successfully use MSP. The vision also suggests to the BSR states to agree on common objectives and targets for Baltic Sea space and suggests establishing a transnational MSP coordinating body, which ensures adequate data management, the development of MSP methods as well as tailored monitoring.

This BaltSeaPlan Vision results from a work of a partnership of 14 partners from 7 Baltic Sea Region countries in the INTERREG IVB BSR project “BaltSeaPlan – Planning the future of the Baltic Sea - 2009 -2012”. This project was part-financed by the European Union under the European Regional Development Fund.

VASAB is an intergovernmental co-operation providing a ministerial platform and expert network for 11 Baltic Sea Region countries to coordinate spatial planning and development - the EU countries Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden as well as Norway, Russia and Belarus. It is guided by the conference of ministers and steered by the Committee on Spatial Planning and Development of the Baltic Sea Region where German Länder adjacent to the Baltic Sea and Russian North West Oblasts and city of St.Petersburg are also represented. Germany is the current chairing country of VASAB. More information can be found at www.vasab.org