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<b>Document title</b>	Development and activities related to the EUSBSR and HA Spatial Planning
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## Background

The support given by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020 under the objective 4.2 'Coordination of macro-regional cooperation - Support to the Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) and the Horizontal Action Coordinators (HACs)' provides a possibility for the HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats to follow EUSBSR development and to report to the working group accordingly.

This document contains information on developments and activities related to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region ([EUSBSR](#)) and Horizontal Action (HA) Spatial Planning (full name: Encouraging the use of Maritime and Land-based Spatial Planning in all Member States around the Baltic Sea and develop a common approach for cross-border cooperation) for which HELCOM and VASAB act as the Horizontal Action Coordinators and the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG acts as the Steering Committee concerning the MSP part.

Roles and responsibilities for the implementing stakeholders of the EUSBSR can be found [here](#).

## Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.

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## Developments and activities related to the EUSBSR and HA Spatial Planning

### Communication strategy for the EUSBSR

[Communication Strategy for the EUSBSR](#) was finalised in the late 2015. The strategy was approved by the group of National Coordinators in their meeting on 11 December 2015. The Communication Strategy aims to strengthen EUSBSR's position, increase the awareness of the EUSBSR, promote the results it delivers, measure the impact it gives, show the benefits it provides for the countries involved and ordinary people, and lower the threshold for people to join the actions.

The overall goal of the communication is to support internal and especially external communication, as well as brand building, lobbying and marketing of the Baltic Sea Region. This will help to identify stories to tell and stories to follow.

### Flagship projects

Baltic LINes project (Coherent Linear Infrastructures in Baltic Maritime Spatial Plans) was approved in November 2015 for funding by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020 and is included as a flagship project under HA Spatial Planning together with the project [Baltic SCOPE](#) (Towards coherence and cross-border solutions in Baltic Sea Maritime Spatial Plans). Both projects were supported by HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 10-2015 and were approved by the EUSBSR National Contacts meeting in June 2015.

Ongoing and completed flagship projects are listed in an Annex to the EUSBSR Action Plan.

### New brochure on HA Spatial Planning

An updated brochure on HA Spatial Planning is being prepared. The brochure provides updated information about the objectives and aims of HA Spatial Planning, flagship projects and other related projects.

### EUSBSR Seed Money

Seed money is EU funding to prepare projects that contribute to one of the priority areas or horizontal actions of the EUSBSR.

MSP related projects which have received support from the EUSBSR Seed Money Facility are Baltwise Seed (April 2014-March 2015) and Smart Coast (November 2014-November 2015).

The project MSP &MHM focusing on integration of Maritime Cultural Heritage to MSP processes, which was supported by HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 11-2015, is expecting a financial decision shortly from the fourth financial decision.

### Funding opportunities

#### *BONUS programme*

The BONUS programme has launched the pre-announcement and details of the '[Blue Baltic](#)' call. Proposal has to be preregistered by the deadline 9 February 2016, 17.00 CET as the proposal is submitted to the BONUS Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS) by the deadline 10 March 2016, 17.00 CET.

The call is divided into 2 themes and several sub-themes under following BONUS strategic objectives:  
Theme 1:

- Understanding the Baltic Sea ecosystem and functioning
- Meeting the multifaceted challenges in linking the Baltic Sea with its coast and catchment
- Enhancing sustainable use of coastal and marine goods and services of the Baltic Sea
- Improving the capabilities of the society to respond to the current and future challenges directed to the Baltic Sea region

- Developing improved and innovative observation and data management systems, tools and methodologies for marine information needs in the Baltic Sea region

#### Theme 2:

- Meeting the multifaceted challenges in linking the Baltic Sea with its coast and catchment
- Enhancing sustainable use of coastal and marine goods and services of the Baltic Sea
- Developing improved and innovative observation and data management systems, tools and methodologies for marine information needs in the Baltic Sea region

#### *European Maritime and Fisheries Fund*

EMFF has also planned calls for proposals in such areas as Maritime Spatial Planning, Blue technology and Innovative solutions for maritime challenges. The call has not been launched yet, but as soon as available, there will be information on the EUSBSR website.

#### *Executive Agency for SMEs*

Executive Agency for SMEs in the European Commission has launched two calls related to MSP.

1. Call for proposals in [Projects on Maritime Spatial Planning \(MSP\)](#). The objective is to support Member States to develop MSP in their marine waters and implement cooperation on cross-border planning in their sea basin. The action seeks to stimulate the development of a cross-border, ecosystem-based approach towards MSP on the basis of the requirements of the Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning. The deadline for submission for this call for proposals is 31st March 2016 at 16.00 (Brussels time).
2. Call for [Thematic Routes on Underwater Cultural Heritage](#). The general objective is also to promote the creation of these routes and its preservation as a way to promote competitiveness of the coastal and maritime tourism sector. The deadline for applications is 15 March 2016.

#### *Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme*

1. Interreg Baltic Sea Region has opened the call for applications for funding from the Policy Area and Horizontal Action Coordinators of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The call is open from 2 December 2015 to 17 February 2016. According to the call, Horizontal Action "Spatial Planning" co-coordinators HELCOM and VASAB have prepared a "HASPS 2" project proposal. The project proposal aims to support objectives and related activities to improve coordination, stakeholder involvement and achievement of the strategic targets of the HA Spatial Planning. The proposal aims at adding capacity to the both Secretariats to support the joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group in its function as steering group for HA as well as providing assistance to the work to implement Regional Baltic MSP Roadmap 2013-2020 and the 2014 EU MSP Directive (2014/89/EU) as far as EU countries are concerned. , as well as
2. Interreg Baltic Sea Region has opened the call for applications for targeted support and communication measures for the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). The call is open from 14 December 2015 to 29 February 2016.

The projects funded under this call support the implementation of the EUSBSR by:

- Ensuring its visibility as well as contributing to the implementation of the EUSBSR Communication Strategy,
- Providing capacity building for the key implementing stakeholders of the EUSBSR (National Coordinators, Policy Area Coordinators, Horizontal Action Coordinators and other relevant financial institutions),
- Providing support to evaluation of the EUSBSR.

3. 2<sup>nd</sup> call of the Interreg Baltic Sea Programme is launched on 1 March 2016 as a two-step call. The deadline for the submission of concept notes is planned for end of May/early June 2016. The agreement is still subject to official approval by the Monitoring Committee in February.

#### [Upcoming meetings related to EUSBSR](#)

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum of the EUSBS will be held in 8-9 November 2016 in Stockholm, Sweden.