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Background

BONUS in Brief is published by the BONUS Secretariat to keep the BONUS community, including partners and supporters, informed about current views and news about BONUS activities and accomplishments.

Please find attached an extract of [BONUS in Brief from November 2014](#), which contained two articles on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP):

- “Maritime spatial planning, how to make it from theory to practice in the Baltic Sea area”, by the Co-Chairs of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG,
- “On development of maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea region”, by Professor Jacek Zaucha, University of Gdańsk and Maritime Institute in Gdańsk.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.

Maritime spatial planning, how to make it from theory to practice in the Baltic Sea area

Maritime spatial planning (MSP) is the basis for sustainable development and blue growth of the European sea areas, including the Baltic Sea. After the EU's MSP framework directive was finalised and adopted last summer, we are now facing the moment when we need to put theory of MSP into practice. We have now several years of discussions behind us on the needs of MSP, negotiations on EU's MSP framework directive and planning of how to implement MSP, especially in the cross border areas.



by Dr. **Anita Mäkinen** and Mr. **Andrzej Cieslak**, co-chairs of the HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group

The role of the joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group (WG) is essential in making the theory and goals of MSP in the Baltic Sea concrete. The WG was first established in 2010, and its mandate was continued in 2013 for another three years. The group, which represents ministries responsible for environment and/or maritime spatial planning, meets 2–3 times per year either in Helsinki or Riga where the secretariats of HELCOM and VASAB are located, respectively. The start of the joint WG was a bit challenging owing to the totally different backgrounds and expertise of these two intergovernmental organisations. However, over

the past four years, the joint WG has evolved into one entity and, without any doubt, we can say that this is a happy marriage!

The WG report of the work completed in the first three years of operation was introduced to the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in October 2013 and VASAB Ministerial Meeting in September 2014. The report was quite comprehensive: a total of ten Baltic Sea tailor-made principles for MSP had been developed, adopted as well as tested in practice in several projects, such as BaltSeaPlan, Plan Bothnia and PartiSEApate. The WG had considered also the fundamentally important legal basis and ecosystem approach in MSP as

well as the important issue of land-sea interaction. Furthermore, the HELCOM and VASAB Ministerial Meetings adopted the regional Baltic Roadmap for MSP for the period 2013–2020 and a new work plan for the WG, both also developed by the joint WG. All these documents were, with some amendments, also supported by the VASAB Ministerial meeting.

In each WG meeting, all HELCOM and VASAB member states and EU update each other with the most recent national and the EU Commission's MSP development. In effect, we have developed a good network of professionals who are working on MSP and are quite advanced in comparison to

the other European sea areas. It is quite fair to say that the Baltic Sea area is a forerunner in MSP in Europe, if not globally as well. The work of our joint WG was introduced also e.g. in the latest CBD Maritime Spatial Workshop in Montreal, Canada in September 2014.

In the Baltic Sea, we have one advantage compared to the other sea areas in the European Union: the whole sea area is covered by a regional convention, the Helsinki Convention, wherein EU and all the Baltic Sea coastal states are active members. In addition, the Republic of Belarus in the drainage area of the Baltic Sea and Norway are members to VASAB. All coastal countries

except for the Russian Federation are EU-member states. Thus, developments in the Russian Federation are very important to ensure comprehensive implementation of MSP in the Baltic Sea area. Particularly, in order to encourage the Russian Federation to develop national legislation on MSP, we have organised several seminars and roundtable discussions e.g. during the Baltic Sea Days in St. Petersburg in 2013 and 2014, and the Baltic Sea Summit in 2013. According to the present information, the Russian Federation will have the concept for MSP legislation in place by the end of 2014.

Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap 2013–2020

The goal of the Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap is to apply by 2020 coherent maritime spatial plans that are based on ecosystem approach across the Baltic Sea region.

The necessary steps in implementing the MSP Roadmap deal with the following seven topics:

1. Intergovernmental cooperation on MSP with the goal to draft and adopt by 2015 Baltic Sea regional 'Guidelines on transboundary consultations and cooperation in the field of MSP'.
2. Public participation with the goal to draft and adopt by 2015 Baltic Sea regional 'Guidelines on public participation for MSP with transboundary dimensions'.
3. Ecosystem approach in MSP with the goal to draft and adopt by 2015 procedurally oriented Baltic Sea regional 'Guidelines on the application of Ecosystem Approach in transnationally coherent MSP'.

4. Information and data for MSP with the goals to: (a) identify by 2013 competent contact points for MSP for the purpose of transboundary consultation and joint planning. And (b) prepare a future oriented report by 2015 on marine and maritime activities and developments of Baltic Sea regional importance.
5. Education for MSP with the aim (a) to promote the education and professional development of MSP planners and (b) initiate and draw lessons from practical sub-regional experiences of coherent MSP to try out guidelines and joint regional working practices.
6. National and Baltic Sea regional frameworks for MSP in place with the goals to
 - a. have national frameworks for coherent MSP in place in all Baltic Sea countries by 2017.
 - b. apply by 2018 Baltic Sea regional 'Guidelines on

transboundary consultations and cooperation in the field of MSP'.

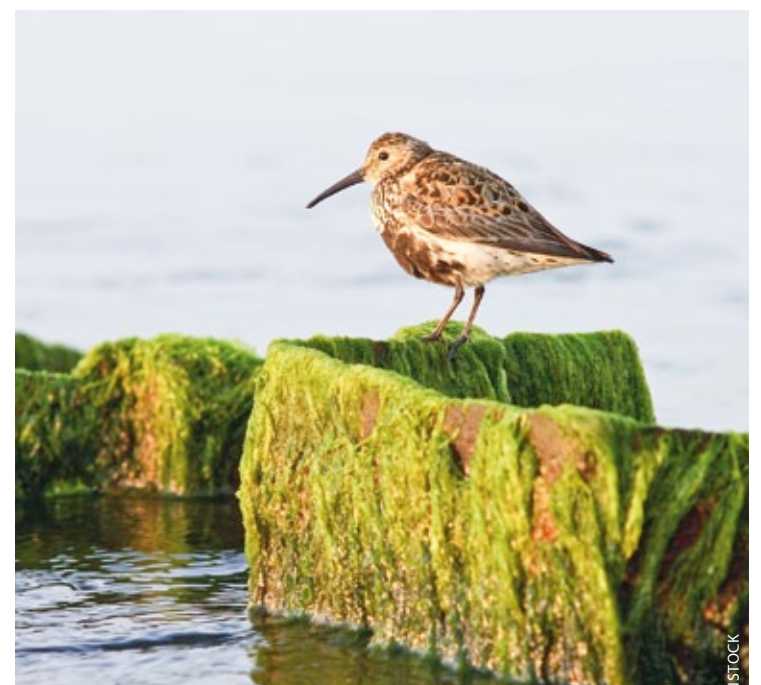
- c. apply by 2018 Baltic Sea regional 'Guidelines on public participation for MSP with transboundary dimensions'.
- d. apply by 2018 Baltic Sea regional 'Guidelines on the application of Ecosystem Approach in transnationally coherent MSP'.
7. Evaluation and follow-up with the goals to
 - a. take further steps related to regular monitoring and evaluation needs of MSP.
 - b. update the Roadmap, if necessary, in 2014 after HELCOM and VASAB ministerial meetings and assess its implementation in 2016, 2018 and 2020.

The Roadmap takes also into account implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, VASAB Long Term Perspective

for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region (LTP), the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and of the EU Integrated Maritime Policy and its goals of blue growth as well

as the Directive of the European Parliament and the Council on a framework for MSP.

The roadmap with summary timetable can be found on the HELCOM website www.helcom.fi



On development of maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea region



by Professor **Jacek Zaucha**, University of Gdańsk and Maritime Institute in Gdańsk

The future of the maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea region depends on addressing two crucial strategic choices, says Professor Jacek Zaucha. The first choice is between active and passive MSP and the other one is related to the degree of the trust perceived, that is, the trade-off between Baltic and national (regional/local) benefits from MSP. The answers to these will determine the practical ways of MSP implementation and the way forward of transboundary MSP in the Baltic Sea region – regardless of the EU directives and the HELCOM-VASAB Roadmap. Professor Zaucha takes a considered look of recent developments around MSP in the Baltic Sea region.

Maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea region has moved leaps and bounds forward and amazed us all. The growing recognition among key decision makers in the Baltic Sea countries, especially on how MSP can act as a tool for alleviation of various conflicts among sea users as well as how it can help to manage sea resources sustainably, has

had an important role. Another important contributing factor has been the successful Baltic Sea regional level cooperation amongst policymakers, planners, scientists and NGOs that has enabled an increased understanding of methodology and legal foundation of MSP in the region. Furthermore, the determination of the EU Commission to enhance MSP as a cross-cutting

tool of an integrated maritime policy in particular in a format of issuing the recently introduced MSP directive has added to the accelerating effect.

In order to properly portray this unprecedented dynamism, it is useful to bring together all important facts and initiatives related to MSP in the region in recent years. These are all interlinked with clear synergies with

one another and include such as **the extensive maritime spatial plans that are in place or being developed currently in all countries around the Baltic Sea** (Box 1), **the highest political level support gained for MSP** (Box 2), **the strong cooperation across the region** (Box 3), as well as **the research effort acknowledged to provide MSP tools for sustainable use of marine space** (Box 4).

Also some challenges remain (Box 5), many posed by different planning cultures, financial constraints and, in places, non-integrated programming and policy developments.

The worldwide recognition of the Baltic Sea region achievements in the field of MSP are clear and attempts have been made even to conceptualise a Baltic specific MSP model. In the coming months and years, hopefully the overall result will be that the individual Baltic Sea countries' plans will fit together seamlessly across the region with the overall macroregional coherence improved. It is now in our region's hands how the critical strategic choices that shape the future of the MSP in the region are made. ■

BOX 1

Maritime spatial plans have been developed or are under development in all coastal countries around the Baltic Sea

- **Sweden**, the country with the longest sea border in the region, has recently started its pre-planning (stock-taking) phase. This will affect all other countries that are sea neighbours of Sweden. Sweden actively seeks bi- and multilateral cooperation with them in order to ensure harmony between its maritime planning and their efforts.
- **Poland** has reached the same phase of the planning cycle as Sweden. A document on conditions of marine areas and the coastal strip will be ready in December 2014.
- **Lithuania** has almost finished preparation of the marine part of its national spatial plan.
- **Latvia and Estonia** have officially launched their MSP processes.
- **Finnish** counties have extended their spatial plans off-shore, thus regional spatial plans are in place in the Finnish territorial waters.
- In **Russia**, some maritime pilot plans have been started as an initiative of responsible public authorities while the work on preparation of the MSP legislation has been continued.
- In **Denmark**, the initial steps to start MSP have been commenced. Ministries responsible for sea issues have agreed on how to deal with MSP in Danish waters.
- In **Germany**, where maritime plans have existed for many years, a new project with the aim to advance environmental approaches for further development of MSP in the European Economic Zone was initiated in 2013. ■

BOX 2

Maritime spatial planning has support from the highest political level in the Baltic Sea region

- The Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap 2013–2020 was adopted by the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in October 2013 and by the VASAB Ministerial Meeting in September 2014. The Roadmap encourages coastal countries to make every effort possible to draw up and implement coherent maritime spatial plans that apply the ecosystem approach throughout the Baltic Sea region by 2020. This will require continuation of the joint work of the Baltic Sea countries particularly on following issues:
 - Ecosystem approach in MSP – preparation of joint regional 'Guidelines on the application of Ecosystem Approach in transnationally coherent MSP'
 - Information and data sharing for MSP
 - Cross-border consultations and cooperation – preparation of joint regional 'Guidelines on trans-boundary consultation and cooperation in the field of MSP'
 - Public participation – preparation of joint regional 'Guidelines on public participation for MSP with trans-boundary dimensions' ■



BOX 3

Cooperation among maritime spatial planners increases common understanding of methodological results

■ In 2011, maritime spatial planners updated the vision of the MSP in the region with information about what should be done together by the Baltic Sea countries and according to what principles. This update was also acknowledged by the VASAB Committee. In a broader sense, over the recent times planners have been able to create a coherent regional level community to which different initiatives and projects have contributed.

The ‘Maritime Spatial Planning Course for Professionals’ organised in 2013 at the initiative of VASAB (Baltic University Programme in cooperation with Maritime Institute in Gdansk, Åbo Akademi, Blekinge Institute of Technology, Gothenburg University, Swedish Institute for the Marine Environment and World Maritime University) saw 20 participants, mainly professionals, representing eight Baltic Sea countries come together and establish mutual understanding and trust between one another and bring closer together the methodological aspects of MSP in the region.

Practical work with stakeholders has been enhanced under a project called

PartiSEApate. Completed in September 2014, this represented the first broadscale effort to enhance Baltic dialogue between maritime spatial planners and other stakeholders including sectoral authorities, businesses and NGOs. PartiSEApate brought transnational, national and regional stakeholders together in a series of workshops fostering holistic thinking for MSP across the region. The topics discussed in a series of multi-cultural events organised included: shipping and port development, offshore wind energy, underwater cultural heritage and tourism, aquaculture and new uses of marine resources, research and environmental protection, climate change and also data network building. Through these workshops, stakeholders gained an understanding of what MSP means to them and why it is important to treat certain topics on a transnational level. Planners in turn got an insight into their priorities, objectives, expectations, fears and hopes, and what is the stage a given sector should be involved in the MSP process. As a result, a handbook on multi-level consultations in MSP was produced. ■

BOX 4

Research providing tools for sustainable use of marine space and integration

■ Research on MSP has also progressed in the region. The results obtained have been communicated in various books published by authors from different countries and with different planning background and experience – to mention here only such contributions as Backer and Frias (2012), Schultz-Zehden and Gee (2013), Zaucha (2014). First attempts have also been made to mainstream MSP into the spatial planning literature.

New tools for MSP are being developed, and, for instance, the BONUS call 2014: Sustainable ecosystem services included maritime spatial planning as a key topic open for funding proposals (currently in negotiation stage). The successful transnational and multidisciplinary projects will be announced in time for April 2015 start. Any MSP project funded by BONUS is envisaged to provide science-based approaches and tools to clarify and improve the capacity of MSP as a policy integrator and enhance the capabilities of society to respond to current and future challenges of the governance of the Baltic Sea region. Also, any BONUS funded MSP project would be interested in all different forms of integration (e.g. across

policies, sectors, stakeholder inputs, knowledge, ecological and (geo)political scales, scientific disciplines etc.).

The seed money funded BALTWISE project will integrate MSP and blue growth but also support concrete planning efforts and transboundary collaboration of the planners. The project will cover Central Baltic and Gulf of Finland area and reduce east-west gap in MSP in the region. An ambitious goal is to help the planners to reach an agreement on cross-border planning procedures (in line with HELCOM-VASAB Roadmap and its forthcoming guidelines).

There are some other projects and initiatives in the pipeline as well. Among them is the joint planning of the Baltic electricity grid together with offshore wind farms. Also the project on practical cross-border collaboration has been recently prepared under the leadership of Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SWAM). The result of the work will be that participating countries will adopt jointly, or develop their own plans and take decisions separately, but nevertheless based on common solutions resulting from the joint discussions. ■

BOX 5

Key challenges

■ Challenges for the MSP also exist in the Baltic Sea region, despite all the advancements made, and the fact that for instance some of the current projects (as listed in Box 4) offer also good ways forward. Areas of concern include:

- Transnational cooperation and collaboration in the field of MSP is still weak and needs strengthening in some (mainly eastern) parts of the Baltic Sea
- Integration of MSP within various policies still remains in conceptual phase e.g. Marine Strategy Framework Directive, energy policy, fisheries policy, blue growth and some other
- Planning process differ among existing maritime plans which in turn makes the entire picture slightly patchy regarding the quality of planning materials used for preparation of the plans, detail level of different plans and engagement of stakeholders in the planning process
- Baltic wide agreement on the use of the sea resources and their protection is missing in various fields (e.g. it is not obvious how much wind energy should be produced from the sea or how to deal with underwater cultural heritage in the exclusive economic zone or what type of marine landscapes should be protected)
- Baltic planners are more inclined to think in terms of problems and conflicts than synergies (for instance there is no ‘synergy know-how’ prompting co-existence of different uses)
- Despite ongoing international efforts, the willingness of various actors and entities to share relevant information to MSP is limited and the research enhancing information base has been poorly coordinated within the region (among countries and sectors) ■

Suggested literature for further reading

- **Backer H., Frias M.**(eds.) 2012. Planning the Bothnian Sea –key findings of the Plan Bothnia project. Finepress Turku 154p.
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- **Schultz-Zehden A., Gee K.**, 2013. BaltSeaPlan Findings – Experiences and Lessons. Berlin: S. Pro
- **Zaucha J.**, 2012. Offshore Spatial Information – Maritime Spatial Planning in Poland “Regional Studies” vol. 46, issue 4, s. 459-473.
- **Zaucha J.**, 2014a. The Key to governing the fragile Baltic Sea. Maritime Spatial Planning in the Baltic Sea Region and Way Forward. Riga, VASAB, 110p.
- **Zaucha J.**, 2014b. Sea basin maritime spatial planning: A case study of the Baltic Sea region and Poland. „Marine Policy” vol. 50, pp. 34-45. ■