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<b>Document title</b>	Procedures for granting flagship project status and support letters
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<b>Agenda Item</b>	6 - MSP related projects and events
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## Background

Flagship projects under the [EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region](#) (EUSBSR) Action Plan contribute to fulfilling the objectives, indicators and targets of the Strategy and are related to the implementation of one or more actions of a specific Policy Area or Horizontal Action. These projects have a macro-regional impact and start from joint initiatives involving partnership from different countries. Annex 1 contains information on flagship projects nature and procedure on how to become one, extracted from [EUSBSR roles and responsibilities publication](#).

The HELCOM and VASAB, as the co-leaders for HA Spatial Planning, through their Secretariats are the contact points for MSP projects interested in applying for flagship project status under HA Spatial Planning. The VASAB Secretariat serves as the contact point for land based spatial planning projects.

The Secretariats also serve as the contact points for letters of commitment/support for MSP and land based project applying for financing. A letter will be issued by the Chairs of the HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group if the MSP related project proposal is considered relevant against HA Spatial Planning.

[HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 10-2015](#) agreed on a procedure for issuing letters of commitment/support for Interreg 2014-2020 projects as previously agreed on for EUSBSR Seed Money projects (cf. [HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 6-2013, paragraph 2.10](#)):

- The HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats serve as contact points for the requests;
- The requests are circulated to the Co-Chairs and Vice-Co-Chairs of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, to consider the relevance of a project against HA Spatial Planning;
- A letter of support is issued by the Chairs;
- The HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG is informed of the letter

## Action requested

The meeting is invited to recall the existing procedure for granting flagship status and support letters.

**Annex 1.**

## Flagship project: concept and labelling process

The actions of the EUSBSR are implemented by means of flagship projects. Flagship projects demonstrate the progress of the EUSBSR, and may serve as pilot examples for desired action. A flagship project is frequently the result of a policy discussion within a Priority Area/Horizontal Action. A flagship project translates the desire and ambition of a Priority Area/Horizontal Action in a specified field of action. A flagship project may e.g. develop key solutions, new methodology or practises or new forms of cooperation. A flagship project may also concern key investment of regional importance. Once approved, a flagship project is listed in the Action Plan.

A flagship project by structure is either:

- a. single project or
- b. a set of projects (a group) operating in the same field. The set of projects may compile single projects; flagship projects and linked projects even if those are implemented under different fields (topics or themes).

The label of a flagship project can be granted to a project, which fulfils the following criteria:

1. A flagship project must fulfil the following key criteria:
  - a. it has a high macro-regional impact;
  - b. it is contributing to fulfilling the objectives of the EUSBSR;
  - c. it is related to the implementation of one or more actions of the Priority Area/Horizontal Action concerned.
2. In general, a flagship project is also expected to:
  - a. have a clear transnational dimension (has cooperation between and/or impact on at least three Baltic Sea Region states or at least two Baltic Sea Region states if the other Baltic Sea Region state (Russia and Norway) is involved<sup>1</sup> );
  - b. be mature for implementation:
    - can be implemented within a realistic timeframe;
    - has a clear financial and activity plan which e.g. encompass setting aside resources for attending relevant activities of the respective Priority Area/Horizontal Action and the EUSBSR;
    - a partnership is established and a flagship project Leader is identified.

Priority Area Coordinator(s)/Horizontal Action Leader(s) may decide on specific criteria under respective Priority Area/ Horizontal Action after consultation with National Contact Points and EC Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO).

## Procedure to become a flagship project

Projects or project ideas interested in obtaining the label of flagship project in the EUSBSR are to undertake the following:

1. Identify under which Priority Area/Horizontal Action of the EUSBSR, the proposed flagship project would fit;
2. Establish contact with the Priority Area Coordinator(s) for the Priority Area concerned or Horizontal Action Leader(s) for the Horizontal Action concerned;
3. In order to assess the proposed flagship project, the Priority Area Coordinator/Horizontal Action Leader may invite the proposed project to attend a meeting of the Priority Area/Horizontal Action;
4. If the project proposal is supported, the Priority Area Coordinator(s)/ Horizontal Action Leader(s), after consulting the main stakeholders (National Contact Points, steering committee and/or Priority Area Focal Points/Horizontal Action Focal Points) make a recommendation to DG REGIO regarding the project;
5. DG REGIO considers the proposal and makes a recommendation to the High Level Group;
6. The High Level Group agrees on the flagship projects to be included in the Action Plan.

A project can be listed as a flagship project in one Priority Area/Horizontal Action only. In case a project contributes to more Priority Areas/Horizontal Actions, it may liaise with the other relevant Priority Areas/Horizontal Actions. A flagship project does not have the exclusive right to undertake action in the Priority Area/Horizontal Action under which it is listed. The Priority Area Coordinator(s)/Horizontal Action Leader(s) may at any time accept more flagship projects in the same field.

Further, throughout the implementation of the flagship project, its leader shall fulfil the tasks of the Flagship Project Leader vis-a-vis the EUSBSR as specified in the tasks of the Flagship Project Leader above.