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Background

As part of the [PartiSEApate](#) (Multilevel Governance in Maritime Spatial Planning throughout the Baltic Sea Region) project the VASAB Secretariat contracted sustainable-projects s.Pro GmbH together with the University of Liverpool to develop recommendations for the design of a future governance structure for MSP within the Baltic Sea Region.

This document contains an executive summary for the report on the future governance system for MSP in the Baltic Sea Region. The full report will be submitted by the project to HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 9-2014 at a later stage.

The recommendations presented in the executive summary and the full report are based on the findings from multiple activities and surveys carried out within the PartiSEApate project during 2013 and 2014.

The recommendations can provide a background for development of *Guidelines on transboundary consultation and cooperation in the field of MSP within the BSR* and *Guidelines on public participation for MSP with transboundary dimensions* to be adopted by HELCOM and VASAB by 2015 according to the [Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap 2013-2020](#).

Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the recommendations.



Executive Summary

0.1 The Task

As part of the PartiSEApate project, co-financed under the EU BSR programme, the VASAB Secretariat contracted sustainable-projects s.Pro GmbH together with the University of Liverpool to develop recommendations for the design of a future governance structure for MSP within the Baltic Sea Region. The recommendations will provide the background for a set of guidelines expected to be adopted by the HELCOM/VASAB Working Group on MSP in 2015:

- Guidelines on transboundary consultation and cooperation in the field of MSP within the BSR,
- Guidelines on public participation for MSP with transboundary dimensions.

The recommendations presented in this report are based on the findings from multiple activities and surveys carried out within the PartiSEApate project during 2013 and 2014.

0.2 Definitions

Consultation: The official / formal process which takes place between Baltic Sea Region countries or authorities responsible for MSP.

Cooperation: A more open, informal and often preparatory process of information and knowledge exchange which involves a larger number of stakeholders.

Pan-Baltic: Issues affecting most or all of the Baltic Sea, and/or the level involving most or all BSR countries. In terms of MSP, the pan-Baltic level mainly deals with strategic issues, such as achieving coherence or providing general guidelines.

Cross-border: Issues which are relevant to two or more countries only. These are often related to concrete projects or plans.

Stakeholder involvement: Processes which take into account concerns and issues raised at stakeholder and/or expert level. As opposed to **public participation** these processes may not necessarily involve the general public.

0.3 Pan-Baltic cooperation & consultation

Based on the existing institutional set up, the report suggests the following roles and responsibilities:

0.3.1 Policy Level

Currently, participants as well as the topics dealt with by the HELCOM/VASAB MSP WG involve both practitioner as well as decision-making levels. Country representation reflects VASAB ministries (spatial planning) and HELCOM ministries (environment).

It is recommended that in future authorities responsible for MSP should take the lead and be the contact point for MSP within the HELCOM/VASAB MSP WG.



The work of the HELCOM/VASAB MSP WG should concentrate on policy and decision-making. National decision-making processes and MSP policy discussions – which are a prerequisite for decision-making in the HELCOM/VASAB WG - should be organised by each country independently.

0.3.2 Practitioners' Level

In parallel to the HELCOM/VASAB MSP WG, a pan-Baltic practitioners' network is suggested for those responsible for developing and implementing maritime spatial plans in their countries. Its function is that of an informal discussion platform on good practice in MSP, current and upcoming issues, new tools, etc. Regular meetings will not only foster information and knowledge exchange but also create personal contacts and trust among Baltic Sea MSP practitioners and thus be beneficial for future transboundary MSP processes.

0.3.3 Expert Level

Expert groups should be convened to deal with pertinent hot topics related to MSP development within the Baltic Sea Region. Expert groups are expected to work within a given timeframe towards clearly defined outputs to be presented for decision-making to the HELCOM/VASAB MSP WG.

Expert groups should represent a broad range of relevant perspectives for a given topic. The MSP contact points in each BSR country should be consulted in nominating relevant experts. However, nominees should not be seen as political representatives. Experts are expected to act in their personal capacity as experts in their field.

Each expert group elects a chairperson who is tasked with organising and driving the work of the group and who acts as a spokesperson. Experts should be compensated for their time and the work carried out within the expert group.

Expert group topics shall be selected based on the following criteria:

- urgency of the issue for all BSR countries
- manageable task – clear output possible
- interest by sectors / stakeholders to be involved

0.3.4 A permanent and competent coordination point

The VASAB secretariat should host a permanent and competent coordination point for organising the various tasks and facilitating the MSP governance process. Tasks include to pro-actively suggest topics and members for expert groups, to facilitate the MSP practitioners' network, and to pro-actively engage with other pan-Baltic sector organisations and projects.

0.3.5 Other pan-Baltic Organisations

Sectors have expressed the need to coordinate pan-Baltic MSP issues within their own sectors. The coordinator tasked with supporting the MSP governance process should pro-actively engage with sector organisations.



0.4 Cross-Border Consultation & Cooperation

Cooperation and consultation across borders should exceed Espoo minimum requirements. MS should ensure that cross-border consultation starts at the very beginning of the MSP planning process, and that consultation does not only focus on environmental impacts but extends to socio-economic impacts and planning issues looking also into positive synergies. The MSP authority in charge in the neighbouring country should determine the appropriate forms of stakeholder involvement within their country.

In particular, MS should:

- inform their neighbouring counterparts early of the intention to begin an MSP process,
- make clear the intention and type of the maritime spatial plan,
- invite neighbouring countries to provide and present relevant documents, data or information,
- inform the neighbouring country of the beginning of stakeholder consultation,
- offer input to stakeholder consultation processes in the neighbouring country,
- extend the terms of reference for MSP practitioners charged with preparing an MSP to require pro-active input from neighbouring countries,
- Foster more informal cross-border cooperation processes among MSP practitioners and stakeholders to build trust and commitment.

0.5 Funding Needs & Ways

New funding needs will arise from the more extensive, pro-active and ongoing coordination and facilitation of the work of the HELCOM/VASAB MSP WG, especially:

- Formation and operation of the expert groups,
- Dialogue with other sector organisations,
- MSP practitioners' meetings.

It is highly recommended to operationalise the MSP governance framework through voluntary contributions by some of the VASAB / HELCOM contracting parties using national funding opportunities. The MSP practitioners' network meetings should be hosted on rotating basis by BSR MSP contact points.

From 2016 onwards, additional funding may be possible using existing European programmes. Funding expected to be made available until 2020 for the coordination of the HA Spatial Planning may cater for some of the basic financing needs. In addition, the HELCOM-VASAB WG on MSP should, however, pro-actively ensure the creation of an appropriate set of flagship project(s). The VASAB Secretariat may seek to become a direct partner in such projects(s) and/or may interact with other appropriate players such as the SUBMARINER EEIG, which has recently been established involving some key MSP players around the Baltic Sea, to take on this role.