

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

MINUTES OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF HELCOM-VASAB MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING	
	WORKING GROUP (HELCOM -VASAB MSP WG) ..... 1
Introduction	..... 2
Agenda Item 1	Adoption of the Agenda..... 2
Agenda Item 2	Information on Maritime Spatial Planning developments, projects and events in the Baltic Sea Region ..... 2
Agenda Item 3	Towards the Ministerial Conferences ..... 5
Agenda Item 4	International legislative basis for Maritime Spatial Planning ..... 7
Agenda Item 5	Practical application of the ecosystem approach in Maritime Spatial Planning..... 8
Agenda Item 6	Data gathering and mapping processes needed for MSP in the Baltic Sea 9
Agenda Item 7	Any other business.....10
Agenda Item 8	Future work and next meeting .....11
Agenda Item 9	Outcome of the Meeting .....12
Annex 1	List of Participants .....13
Annex 2	List of Nominated Experts.....16
List of Documents.....	19
List of Presentations.....	20



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**MINUTES OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF  
HELCOM-VASAB MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING WORKING GROUP  
(HELCOM -VASAB MSP WG)**

**INTRODUCTION**

0.1 The Fifth Meeting of the Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 5/2012) was held at the HELCOM Secretariat in Helsinki, Finland, on 13-14 September 2012.

0.2 The Meeting was attended by nominated experts from all Contracting Parties/Member Countries, except from Belarus, Norway and Lithuania, as well as by various invited guests and EUCC - The Coastal Union Germany, the European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO) and WWF as Observers. The List of Participants is contained in **Annex 1**.

0.3 The Meeting was chaired by the Co-chairs Ms. Anita Mäkinen, Finland and Mr. Andrzej Cieslak, Poland.

0.4 The HELCOM Executive Secretary Ms. Monika Stankiewicz welcomed the participants on behalf of the HELCOM Secretariat and highlighted the most important tasks for the Meeting: the input from the Working Group to the upcoming HELCOM and VASAB Ministerial Meetings and the fulfilment of the commitments from the previous Ministerial Meetings. Also the application of the ecosystem approach, the legislative basis and the role of the Working Group in relation to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the data gathering and mapping processes needed for MSP were highlighted.

0.5 Ms. Stankiewicz acted as Secretary of the Meeting assisted by Ms. Laura Meski, Assisting Professional Secretary from the HELCOM Secretariat.

**Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda**

Documents: 1/1

1.1 The Meeting considered the Agenda, agreed to include information on the Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Expert Group established under the EU Integrated Maritime Policy Group under Agenda Item 3 and adopted the Agenda (document 1/1) elaborated by the HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats in consultation with the Co-Chairs.

1.2 The Meeting took note of the comment on the necessity to keep the deadline for submission of documents to the meetings.

**Agenda Item 2 Information on Maritime Spatial Planning developments, projects and events in the Baltic Sea Region**

Documents: 2/1, 2/2, 2/3, 2/4, 2/5, 2/6, 2/7

2.1 The Meeting took note of document 2/1 on MSP developments in the Contracting Parties/Member Countries as well as updates by the Contracting Parties/Member Countries as follows:

- Denmark informed that the work is ongoing on better coordination on national and international level in order to prepare for MSP and a business case is being developed on marine spatial data infrastructure to look into the benefits of data availability for MSP.
- Estonia informed that the National Spatial Plan for 2030 and the Maritime Policy for 2020 have been approved by the Government in August 2012. In relation to the Maritime Policy, the Ministry of Economics is preparing an action plan for the years 2012-2015. Two pilot projects on MSP are ongoing in Pärnu and Hiiumaa County.

The GORWIND project, which Estonia has been taking part in, is ending in October 2012.

2.2 The Meeting took note of the information by the EU that as it looks now the policy initiative on MSP (and ICZM) will be presented by the end of the year to the Council and the Parliament. The delay is due to the many aspects to be taken into account when making the policy initiative.

2.3 The Meeting requested the Secretariats to update the table on MSP developments according to the new information. The table will be circulated for updating by the Contracting Parties/Member Countries before the next meeting of the Working Group according to the procedure agreed on at HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 4/2012.

2.4 The Meeting considered the information on the ongoing revision process of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the Action Plan (document 2/2) and recalled the role of HELCOM and VASAB to act as Horizontal Action (HA) leaders for HA Spatial "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, including EMODNET".

2.5 The Meeting concurred that the role of the Working Group is to facilitate involvement of and cooperation with relevant stakeholders from the entire macro-region regarding ecosystem based MSP in transboundary context, including facilitation of policy discussions conveying relevant results and recommendation to the policy level.

2.6 The Meeting welcomed the inclusion in the Strategy of an overall sub-objective related to MSP and noted that it is in line with the ambition in this region to draw up and apply transboundary, ecosystem-based maritime spatial plans.

2.7 The Meeting reflected on the MSP objective and related indicator in detail with the main points being:

- the MSP objective and indicator has been endorsed by the Council and is subject to review by the Commission in cooperation with High Level Task Force;
- the meaning of the objective and target on pilot plans in 2013 is ambiguous, and for instance the target can be interpreted as legally rooted pilot plans or plans drafted within pilot projects such as BaltSeaPlan and Plan Bothnia; however, the interpretation of the objective as given in the HA Spatial description provides useful reference point how the indicator should be understood (the Baltic Sea countries should aim at developing national maritime spatial plans based on ecosystem approach and the planning should be coherent across the borders, which calls for close transboundary cooperation);
- involvement of relevant authorities in the process of preparing pilot plans is of crucial importance for the plans to be followed up and possibly to be made legally binding;
- even though not legally binding the pilot plans prepared within the various finalized projects provide valuable experience for further work on transboundary spatial plans and represent a positive development also in the context of the EU Strategy;
- having by 2020 coherent ecosystem based MSP plans in place will require substantial work to meet this ambitious target;
- many countries, such as Finland, do not have at the moment planning legislation for EEZ in place and the deadline of 2020 implies that the necessary legal base should be put in place to be followed by the adoption of the plans.

2.8 The Meeting scrutinized the MSP relevant text in the proposed revised Action Plan of the Strategy and was of the opinion that it could be more forward-looking and reflecting the ongoing advancements in the Baltic Sea region and higher level of ambition of the future work on MSP. The Meeting agreed on proposing the amendments to the MSP description as included in document 2/7, and in addition to correct the last sentence on the upcoming EU policy initiative.

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2.9 The Meeting took note of the information by the EU that the revised Action Plan of the EUSBSR is a coordinated proposal by the Commission.

2.10 The Meeting took note of the presentation by Poland on the PartiSEApate project, which is a project on Multilevel Governance in Maritime Spatial Planning throughout the Baltic Sea Region (document 2/4, **Presentation 1**). The two-year project was approved by the Monitoring Committee of the Baltic Sea Region Programme at its meeting 12 June 2012 in Riga, Latvia. The first project partner meeting was held 6-7 September 2012 in Riga, Latvia.

2.11 The Meeting recalled that the Working Group supported the project through a letter issued by the Co-chairs and welcomed the project and its offer to contribute to the work of the Working Group as well as to the upcoming Ministerial Meetings.

2.12 The Meeting discussed the activities to be carried out within the project and noted the high level of ambition regarding project deliverables, which may require some further prioritization.

2.13 The Meeting took note of the clarification by Poland that the project aim is not to substitute any formal processes but to further test transboundary maritime spatial planning, and that some resources have been accommodated for, e.g. participation of Russian experts.

2.14 The Meeting took note of the information by the EU on a study on multilevel governance to be initiated by the European Commission soon.

2.15 The Meeting agreed to function as Project Advisory Group and provide feedback to the project during its meetings. In addition, the Meeting agreed that the Secretariats and Co-chairs will serve as focal points to the project in order to ensure close cooperation in intersessional period.

2.16 The Meeting took note that an expert group will be established within the project to which all Baltic Sea countries as well as the HELCOM Secretariat are invited to nominate their representative. Also the Co-chairs of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG are invited to participate.

2.17 The Meeting considered nominating the PartiSEApate project as a flag ship project for HA Spatial, and after clarifying the nomination procedure and criteria (document 2/2, page 13) the Meeting agreed on granting the flagship project status to PartiSEApate.

2.18 The Meeting welcomed the project to report on the progress of the project at the Working Group meetings and to distribute all relevant information to the group.

2.19 The Meeting was of the opinion that more flag ship projects should be initiated/nominated in the future.

2.20 The Meeting took note of the information on the BALTFIMPA project on managing fisheries in marine protected areas (document 2/6). HELCOM is currently running an inception phase of the BALTFIMPA project to produce the initial generic tool to assist decision making on possible negative impacts of fishing gear and practices on habitats and species in the Baltic Sea. The Meeting invited BALTFIMPA and PartiSEApate to cooperate as there are synergies and potential for mutual benefits in the projects' implementation.

2.21 The Meeting took note of the information on the XIII Baltic Sea Day International Forum which was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, 21-23 March 2012 with the topic "Towards environmentally safe, secure and prosperous Baltic Sea Region – Roadmap from Stockholm, 1972 to Rio-De-Janeiro, 2012 (Stockholm+40 / Rio+20)". During the Baltic Sea Day Forum a two-day roundtable was arranged on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) as a tool for integrated management of human activities and nature conservation in marine areas. The roundtable was well visited with around 60 participants during both days. The Meeting especially took note of the conclusions and recommendations of the resolution (document 2/3).



3.4 The Meeting noted that some guidance could be given on how to fill in the table and clarified that the meaning of the principles is given in the description of the HELCOM-VASAB broad-scale MSP Principles so these should be read together.

3.5 The Meeting took note of the information by Finland that even though no national MSP legislation has been issued, the land use act enables planning in territorial waters in that country. The Meeting further clarified that the table attempts to assess whether the MSP Principles are covered by legislation, whether it is MSP relation or legislation that allows MSP; however, it does not intend to give insight how these principles are implemented.

3.6 The Meeting took note of the comment by Germany that information for Germany needs to be corrected in the table.

3.7 The Meeting agreed to revise the table to contain all MSP Principles and requested the VASAB Secretariat to amend the table accordingly, also taking into account the above comments and to re-distribute it to the Contracting Parties/Member Countries for amendments within a month for presentation at the next meeting of the Working Group. The Meeting further agreed that the overview should be accompanied with the evaluation/synthesis that could be used in the compendium on national legislation (cf. paragraph 4.1).

3.8 The Meeting took note of the presentation by Germany on the Pomeranian Bight pilot MSP plan (**Presentation 3**, document 3/2).

3.9 The Meeting considered it important to go into depth in the few pilot plans which are available, e.g. the Pomeranian Bight and Plan Bothnia, and to find sufficient time during the meetings for the discussion. The Meeting agreed to focus on lessons learnt from these cases (e.g. chapter 7 of the Pomeranian Bight report) at the next meeting of the Working Group, based on the document to be prepared by the Secretariats and Co-chairs addressing some selected key issues such as principles used in conflict resolution (i.a. fisheries vs. marine protected areas).

3.10 The Meeting recalled the discussion on the MSP related 2020 objective and agreed that a roadmap is needed to fulfil it. The Meeting further agreed that the evaluation of the MSP Principles in the regional framework is an important input to the Ministerial Meetings in 2013 (HELCOM) and 2014 (VASAB) and should be part of the road map.

3.11 Further, the Meeting found it valuable that some kind of operational guidelines are developed for selected Baltic MSP Principles.

3.12 The Meeting took note of the suggestions for further work on transboundary MSP based on the Plan Bothnia project outcome (document 3/4) and was of the opinion that the suggestions/recommendations can be further developed into such guidelines on some of the broad scale MSP Principles, e.g. the principle on transnational coordination and consultation, to be included in the road map.

3.13 The Meeting referred to the best practices document, developed as part of the Plan Bothnia project by Mr. Jacek Zaucha and agreed that this document, as well as documents 3/3 and 3/3/Add, could be used as part of the evaluation.

3.14 The Meeting highlighted the importance of MSP in reaching the goals (Good Environmental Status, GES) of the HELCOM BSAP, as well as of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) for countries being EU members, and agreed that the link between MSP and GES in the context of the ecosystem approach as well as goals of other policy areas should be reflected upon in the evaluation of the principles and the road map.

3.15 The Meeting invited Sweden to share experiences in combining implementation of MSFD and MSP processes and provide input to the evaluation paper.

3.16 The Meeting decided to establish an intersessional drafting group to draft the roadmap, consisting of the Co-chairs as well as the two Secretariats, for consideration by the next meeting of the Working Group. Also the Contacting Parties/Member Countries are invited to participate in this intersessional work.









number of general challenges such as fragmentation of data, data shortage and availability, etc., that need to be solved to enable high-quality data for MSP.

6.5 The Meeting took note of the presentation by the HELCOM Secretariat on the experiences of the Plan Bothnia project on MSP data concerning sharing data and project information, noting that there are cases where the data does not exist but it is often also a question of limited access as well as comparability (**Presentation 8**).

6.6 The Meeting took note of a central message on data issues from the Plan Bothnia project, which is that ensuring access to data is a central element, regardless of the way in which data is distributed or quality controlled, and that regional projects should be encouraged by the Working Group to share the data they have collected with other actors in the region. The wide sharing of the data also raises its quality as limitations and errors are often only spotted during actual use.

6.7 The Meeting took note of the clarification that while data on shipwrecks and migratory routes in coastal areas has been made available within the Plan Bothnia project, these data are scarce for the open sea.

6.8 The Meeting highlighted the importance of data reliability and the understanding of what kind of data are needed for MSP, including regarding trends and future developments as well as temporal scales. Quality of the data should be shown, as this affects planning.

6.9 The Meeting noted that accuracy of the data is related to the planning scale and for instance, for defined hot spot areas more detailed information is needed.

6.10 The Meeting took note of the information by Germany that as far as the national level is concerned, data are being exchanged within special marine data architecture available to authorities that follow the INSPIRE Directive.

6.11 The Meeting clarified that there is no need to create a new pan-Baltic database with MSP relevant data, but instead to ensure, facilitate and enhance the data exchange and sharing that could also be used for MSP.

6.12 The Meeting discussed how to ensure coherent MSP relevant dataset that cover the whole Baltic Sea and how to organize the work also within the Working Group on data gathering and mapping processes needed for MSP in the Baltic Sea. The Meeting found the added value in taking a pro-active role by the MSP Working Group with the aim to identify and communicate the needs in terms of data for MSP towards national, regional and European data developments, such as EMODNET (cf. newly open call for human activities data).

6.13 The Meeting agreed on the need for a practical way forward for the Working Group to address the complexity of the issue and contribute to ensuring coherent MSP relevant datasets for the Baltic Sea. In this respect, the Meeting invited the PartiSEApate project to contribute to the work of the Working Group on MSP relevant data to the next meeting of the group.

6.14 The Meeting took note of the presentation by Mr. Jens Perus on the SeaGIS (Cooperation for ecosystem based planning of the marine environment using GIS) project, which is a project related to MSP in the Northern Quark Region between Finland and Sweden (**Presentation 9**). SeaGIS is a three-year project which started in September 2011 with a budget of one million euros. The partners of the project are both from Finland and Sweden. Mr. Perus underlined that SeaGIS is not a planning project but rather a capacity building project. More information on the project can be found at <http://seagis.org>. The Meeting thanked Mr. Perus for then presentation on the project.

## **Agenda Item 7**

## **Any other business**

Documents: 7/1, 7/2, 7/3

7.1 The Meeting welcomed the information presented by Mr. Kai Myrberg from the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) on the “Gulf of Finland Year 2014” (**Presentation 10**). The Gulf of Finland Year 2014 is an initiative that is already ongoing, will cumulate in 2014, and is planned to last after 2014. Its main aim is to advance trilateral cooperation on the Gulf of Finland, foremost regarding research, in five themes. One of the themes is maritime spatial planning, and for instance a relevant issue could be the planned second line of the Nord Stream pipeline. It is foreseen that a ministerial declaration will be produced in 2014 covering these themes as well as a number of events organized.

7.2 The Meeting took note of the invitation by Co-chair Ms. Anita Mäkinen, leading the MSP theme, to the Contracting Parties/Member Countries to actively engage in the Gulf of Finland Year initiative on MSP, with a view to, e.g. possibly establishing a MSP cross-border project similar to the Plan Bothnia project.

7.3 The Meeting took note of the more detailed information on the requirements and costs for organizing the simulation game “MSP Challenge” in the Baltic Sea region (document 7/3). The Meeting discussed the different possibilities for organizing the game as well as the timing and invited the HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats to consider the possibility to organize it back-to-back with an event, for instance, within these organizations.

7.4 The Meeting suggested having a more real world scenario for the Baltic Sea played possibly as a simulation game.

7.5 The Meeting took note of the presentation by Mr. Holger Janßen on the ESaTDOR (European Sea and Territorial Development Opportunities and Risks) project (**Presentation 11**) and thanked Mr. Holger Janßen for the presentation. The project is a cooperation between many partners funded by ESPON 2013 Programme. Cross-border governance papers produced by the project are available on the web page (<http://www.io-warnemuende.de/esatdor.html>).

7.6 The Meeting took note of the presentation by WWF on the “Counter Currents - Scenarios for the Baltic Sea towards 2030” report (**Presentation 12**, document 7/2). The report presents a range of possible futures for the Baltic Sea leading up to the year 2030. Four scenarios give indications on where we are going, indicating a tremendous growth in the area with heavy demands on the Baltic Sea. The report is the result of a process that was launched in 2011 and that has involved a broad spectrum of stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. A two-day workshop held in March 2012 involved some 50 persons representing a wide range of countries, sectors and institutions from all around the Baltic Sea. The Meeting thanked WWF for the presentation.

7.7 The Meeting requested the Contracting Parties/Member Countries to check and update the List of nominated experts for the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG (document 7/1) to be communicated to the Secretariats ([laura.meski@helcom.fi](mailto:laura.meski@helcom.fi) and [info@vasab.org](mailto:info@vasab.org)) **by 21 September 2012**. The list of nominated experts for the HELCOM-VASAB MSP is contained in **Annex 2**.

7.8 The Meeting took note of the information by Sweden on the meeting of the ministers responsible for integrated maritime policy under the EU Presidency of the EU that is proposed to cover also MSP.

## **Agenda Item 8 Future work and next meeting**

Documents: 8/1

8.1 The Meeting took note of the Work Plan 2010-2013 for the Working Group and decided to start drafting the follow up Work Plan for the following years at the next meeting of the group based on the proposal by the Secretariats and Co-Chairs.

8.2 The Meeting decided to arrange its next meeting (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 6/2013) in Riga, Latvia to be hosted by the VASAB Secretariat, on 29-30 January 2013 starting at 09:00 on the first day and finalizing no later than at 16:00 on the second day.

8.3 The Meeting agreed that the priority topics for the next MSP WG should be related to the Ministerial Meetings and the agenda for the meeting should be organized accordingly, allowing sufficient time for discussion. Further, the number of Power Point presentations should be limited and bulky documents presented together with a summary.

8.4 The Meeting also preliminarily agreed on the timing of the seventh meeting of the Working Group (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 7/2013) to be held on 6-7 May 2013, to be hosted by the HELCOM Secretariat in Helsinki.

**Agenda Item 9**

**Outcome of the Meeting**

Documents: None

9.1 The Meeting adopted the List of Decisions.

9.2 The Minutes of the Meeting have been finalized by the Secretariats of HELCOM and VASAB in consultation with the Co-chairs of the Meeting and made available in the HELCOM Meeting Portal as well as on the VASAB website, together with meeting documents and the presentations given during the Meeting.

**ANNEX 1**

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**ANNEX 2**

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## LIST OF DOCUMENTS

<b>HELCOM - VASAB MSP WG 5/2012</b>	<b>Date dd.mm.yy</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Submitted by</b>
1/1	12.07.12	Provisional Annotated Agenda	VASAB and HELCOM Secretariats
2/1	30.08.12	Maritime Spatial Planning developments reported by Contracting Parties/Member Countries	VASAB and HELCOM Secretariats
2/2	30.08.12	Ongoing revision process of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the Action Plan	HELCOM Secretariat
2/3	30.08.12	XIII Baltic Sea Day International Environmental Forum	HELCOM Secretariat
2/4	05.09.12	PartiSeaPate – Project on Multilevel Governance in Maritime Spatial Planning throughout the Baltic Sea Region	Poland
2/5	05.09.12	European Maritime Day 2012 and the Plan Bothnia project final conference	VASAB and HELCOM Secretariat
2/6	12.09.12	Managing Fisheries in Baltic Marine Protected Areas (BALTFIMPA) Inception Phase (2012-2013)	HELCOM Secretariat
2/7	14.09.12	Revised description of the sub- objective “better cooperation” for the Action Plan of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region	Poland
3/1	30.08.12	HELCOM Danish Chairmanship and Ministerial Meeting 2013	HELCOM Secretariat
3/2	05.09.12	Developing a Pilot Maritime Spatial Plan for the Pomeranian Bight	Germany
3/3	10.09.12	Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning principles in national legislation on MSP	VASAB Secretariat
3/3/Add	12.09.12	Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning principles in national legislation on MSP	VASAB Secretariat
3/4	13.09.12	Transboundary MSP – some suggestions based on the Plan Bothnia project	HELCOM Secretariat
3/5/WP1	14.09.12	Outline for key issues to be addressed by the HELCOM and VASAB Ministers	Drafting group
4/1	30.08.12	Overview on national legislation on MSP and processes to put MSP in place	Germany
4/1/Add	12.09.12	Overview on national legislation on MSP and processes to put MSP in place	Germany

4/2	14.09.12	Proposal for conclusions regarding the international legal basis for MSP	European Union
5/1	11.09.12	Ecosystem approach in drafting a plan for maritime areas	Finland
5/1/Rev	13.09.12	Ecosystem approach in drafting a plan for maritime areas	Finland
6/1	10.09.12	Green Paper on "Marine Knowledge 2020; from seabed mapping to ocean forecasting"	HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats
7/1	30.08.12	List of nominated experts for the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG	VASAB and HELCOM Secretariats
7/2	05.09.12	Counter Currents - Scenarios for the Baltic Sea towards 2030	WWF
7/3	05.09.12	The Maritime Spatial Planning simulation game "MSP Challenge"	VASAB and HELCOM Secretariats
8/1	12.09.12	Work Plan for 2010 – 2013 for the Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group	HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats

**LIST OF PRESENTATIONS**

No.	Title	Presented by
1.	PartiSEApate - Overview: Background, Outputs, Activities	Poland
2.	Plan Bothnia: A brief review	Stephen Jay
3.	BaltSeaPlan	Nico Nolte
4.	Ecosystem approach in HELCOM	HELCOM Secretariat
5.	Applying the Ecosystem Approach in Maritime Spatial Planning	Sweden
6.	HELCOM Data activities	HELCOM Secretariat
7.	BalSeaPlan - Findings - Data for MSP	Nico Nolte
8.	Plan Bothnia - Reflecting about data	HELCOM Secretariat
9.	SeaGIS	Jens Perus
10.	Towards the Gulf of Finland Year 2014	Marine Research Centre, SYKE
11.	Towards a spatial typology - Results of the ESaTDOR project	Holger Janßen