



# Country Fiche

## Latvia

Updated March 2019

## 1. General information



- Marine area under Latvian jurisdiction includes inland sea waters, Territorial sea (12 nautical miles from the baseline) and exclusive economic zone (EEZ).
- Total area of Baltic Sea (including Gulf of Riga) under jurisdiction of Latvia is about 28,500 km<sup>2</sup>, covering 668 km<sup>2</sup> of inland sea waters, 10 178 km<sup>2</sup> of Territorial Sea and 17 656 km<sup>2</sup> of EEZ.
- Marine area of Latvia borders with Lithuania, Estonia and Sweden.

### 1.1. Governance

Latvian marine area is owned by the state and the responsibility for them is divided between respective sectorial ministries (Environment, Agriculture, Transport, and Economics). Recently the competence of planning and management of 2 km zone seawards from coastline has been

given to local municipalities. Relevant authority for maritime spatial planning is Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development.

## 1.2. Contacts

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## **2. General information on legislation**

The legal base for MSP is laid down in the Spatial Development Planning Law enforced on 1 December, 2011. It gives the definition of the maritime spatial plan and deadline for starting elaboration of the MSP. Regulations of the Cabinet of the Ministers Nr. 740 on Development, Implementation and Monitoring of Maritime Spatial Plan have been approved by the Latvian Government in 2012, where the content, elaboration procedure as well as implementation and monitoring procedures of MSP are defined. The MSP must be submitted and announced through ordinary legislative procedures according to the Rules of Procedures of the Cabinet of Ministers. The Government shall approve the MSP.

Marine Environment Protection and Management Law enforced on 18 November 2010 defines the maritime spatial planning as a long-term process for development planning aimed at protection of marine environment, rational use of the sea and integrated management, as well as balancing the social welfare and economic development with the environmental protection requirements. The Law states the necessity of maritime spatial planning and requires to apply ecosystem approach, including featuring of the characteristics of the Baltic Sea, as well to take into account marine environmental status and trends.

Other relevant laws: Maritime Administration and Marine Safety Law; Fishery Law; Law on Specially Protected Nature Territories; Law on Protection Belts; Law on Protection of Cultural Monuments; Law On Subterranean Depths, Law on National Armed Forces, Law on Environmental Impact Assessment, Law on Land Management etc. Several issues of the sea are regulated by the Regulations of Cabinet of the Ministers.

Maritime Spatial Planning is developed taking into consideration the international liabilities of the Republic of Latvia and in cooperation with countries, with which Latvia has common sea border.

Maritime Spatial Plan of Latvia is a national level long-term (up to 12 years) spatial development planning document that defines the use of the sea until 2030, considering the terrestrial part that is functionally interlinked with the sea and co-ordinating interests of various sectors and local governments in use of the sea.

SEA is compulsory for maritime spatial plan according to act on Environmental Impact Assessment.

## **3. General applicability (e.g. territorial Sea, EEZ, other distinctions)**

The above mentioned MSP and legislation applies to all territory of Latvia, including inland sea waters, territorial sea and EEZ.

## **4. Spatial Plans**

The elaboration of Maritime spatial plan of Latvia is in the final stage and the approval of maritime spatial plan by the Government is planned in the end of 2018 / beginning of 2019.

The national MSP will consist of four parts: the explanatory part, strategic section, description of the permitted use of the sea and the graphical part:

1. **Explanatory part**, which includes an assessment of the current situation and trends, covering:

1.1. Relations of the marine plan to other planning documents and legislation;

1.2. Information on MSP area

1.3. Current situation and sectoral interests of shipping, energy, defence, fishery, tourism and recreation, extraction of mineral resources, biological diversity, cultural heritage, landscape values, climate change, ecosystem services.

2. **Strategic part**, which includes:

2.1. Long-term vision of the development of the use of the sea.

2.2. Three strategic objectives.

3. **Description of the permitted use of the sea**, which includes:

3.1. MSP solutions, including main conditions for planning the development in marine waters and conceptual framework defining categories of permitted use.

3.2. Conditions for marine use of each category and types of use and recommendations for granting permits to new activities in the areas of general use.

3.3. Implementation of MSP with tasks to achieve the three strategic objectives.

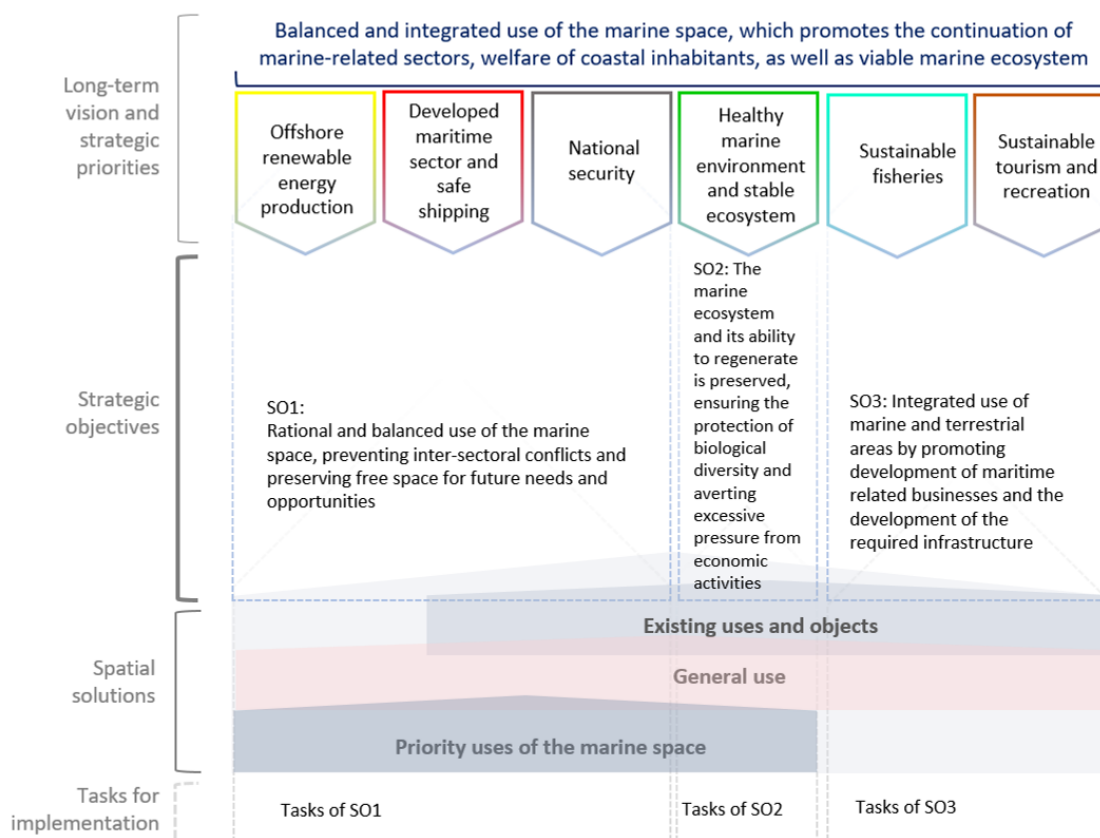
3.4. Monitoring of the implementation of MSP and updating the MSP.

4. **Graphical part**, which is made up of a map on permitted use of the sea and thematic maps.

The geospatial data in graphical part of the MSP is in WGS84 (World Geodetic System 1984) coordinate system of Mercator projection (57 °) using geodetic (elliptical) coordinates with the scale 1:200 000. For the thematic maps appropriate scale was chosen.

The framework and interlinkages of priorities, strategic objectives and spatial solutions can be found in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Interrelations of strategic priorities of long-term vision and strategic objectives and spatial solutions



The designated categories for the use of the sea in MSP of Latvia (or MSP output data) are:

- 1) **Priority uses of the marine space;**
- 2) **Existing uses of the sea;**
- 3) **General use areas**

**The priority uses of the marine space** are defined by excluding or setting restrictions to other activities which may cause disturbances or damage the existence or development of the prioritised use. The areas of potential offshore wind energy development are also included in this category - suitable areas are identified, taking into account the natural conditions, possible impact to the marine ecosystem, as well as potential conflicts with other sea uses. The conditions for each type of use of the marine space are included in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of use of the marine space and conditions for use

Type of use priorities	Conditions of use
<b>Areas reserved for shipping</b> (T1, T2, T3)	Stationary constructions or constructions that are not related to the ensuring of safe navigation or not involved in the provision of shipping services are not permitted (incl. WPPs, wave energy stations, hydrocarbon extraction platforms, aquaculture fields), except for cases where the location of the areas reserved for shipping and construction overlaps, but necessary agreements and spatial solutions

	for safe navigation have been reached.
<b>Military interest area</b> (M1, M2, M3)	Stationary constructions or constructions that are not related to ensuring safe navigation (incl. WPPs, wave energy stations, hydrocarbon extraction platforms, and aquaculture fields) are not permitted, without the consent of the Ministry of Defence.
<b>Investigation area of nature values</b> (B1, B2, B3, B4, B5)	Until the exploration of respective zones, the issuance of licences for new uses (incl. WPPs, wave energy stations, hydrocarbon extraction platforms, aquaculture areas) that could potentially endanger habitats and species, is not permitted.
<b>Research area for wind park development</b> (E1, E2, E3, E4)	New licences for the installation of a WPP and related research shall only be issued in these zones by the Ministry of Economics. Prior to the construction of a WPP all procedures specified in regulatory enactments shall be performed, incl. an environmental impact assessment.
<b>Corridor of perspective electricity cable</b> (K1, K2, K3, K4, K5)	When planning the transnational interconnections and/or WPP connection to the onshore grid, suggested directions should be investigated first.

**Existing uses of the sea** are those that have been defined in the regulatory enactments of Latvia prior to the development and approval of the MSP. Two defined types of areas may be identified in the regulatory enactments – those that have specific conditions of use or restrictions in respect to other uses of the marine space, and different type of features whose actual location is defined. These include:

- Marine protected areas, incl. reserves and neutral areas;
- Cultural monument, incl. buffer zone;
- Telecommunication cable lines, incl. buffer zones;
- Surveillance towers and their buffer zone;
- Military training areas and their protection zones;
- Port areas, incl. port roadsteads;
- Forbidden and restricted an areas for diving;
- Licence areas and licence fields for the research, exploration and extraction of hydrocarbons;
- Explosives dumping grounds;
- Sediment disposition areas.

In **General use area** any sea use (including fishing, shipping, tourism and recreation, research etc.) that is in line with regulations and does not harm marine environment is permitted. There are also recommendations for selected activities - the installation of wave power plants, underwater cables, marine aquaculture and of new disposal sites, as well as recommendations regarding the exploration and extraction of hydrocarbons.

## **Access to the MSP data**

The MSP data (in WMS format) after the approval of the MSP will be accessible via national Geoportal, see URL link: <https://geolatvija.lv/geo/search>

## **5. What countries want to share**

### **5.1. Pilot plans**

Within “**BaltSeaPlan**” project a pilot plan for Latvian territorial sea and EEZ waters of Baltic Sea was elaborated. The plan was a good practice for stakeholder involvement in planning process, where during the project:

- 17 stakeholders events were held in Latvia
- 245 individuals took part at the stakeholder’s events
- ca. 450 participants took part at all events in total
- Core group of stakeholders was established (ca. 30 people).

More information on pilot plan can be found here:

<http://www.baltseaplan.eu/index.php/Latvian;839/1>

### **5.2. Results of MSP related projects**

Within “**Baltic LINES**” project a document “[Stakeholder Involvement in Long-term Maritime Spatial Planning: Latvian Case](#)” on Latvian experience in stakeholder involvement was developed and it could be useful for MSP institutions of other Baltic Sea region countries.

Within “**Baltic SCOPE**” project one of main results was “Recommendations on Maritime Spatial Planning Across Borders” that include general recommendation on cooperation within MSP and sectoral recommendations and extensive information about the elaboration of the first draft of MSP of Latvia can be found in project output “[Development of a Maritime Spatial Plan. The Latvian Recipe](#)” (2017). The “Pan Baltic SCOPE” project is an ongoing continuation of “Baltic SCOPE” project with new activities and everyone can follow the developments within this project on <http://www.panbalticscope.eu/>.

## **6. New developments / current status**

Development of MSP for whole Baltic Sea area under Latvian jurisdiction was started in 2014 when a national MSP coordination group was established and initial enlightening seminar about national MSP for general public was organized.

Latvian MSP is still in the final stage of elaboration. 1<sup>st</sup> draft was prepared during 2015. National public consultations and cross-border consultation within the framework of ESPOO Convention were held in late 2015 and early 2016. After 2016 by consulting the amendments to the plan were made and the MSP 2<sup>nd</sup> draft was prepared by July 2018 when repeated public consultation was conducted. The MSP is planned to be approved by the Government in late 2018/early 2019.

Elaboration of the plan is led by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development. In late 2014 consortium led by the Baltic Environmental Forum was contracted as a consultants for MSP related information gathering and analysis, as well as for making



proposal for MSP draft and carrying out Strategic Environmental Assessment. The MSP 1<sup>st</sup> draft was prepared and discussed until May 2016. Afterwards, another round of stakeholder consultations was performed and the MSP 2<sup>nd</sup> draft was prepared in July 2018.

The Summary of the MSP 2<sup>nd</sup> draft and Environmental Report 2<sup>nd</sup> draft can be accessed by following this link:

[http://www.varam.gov.lv/eng/darbibas\\_veidi/maritime\\_spatial\\_planning/?doc=26326](http://www.varam.gov.lv/eng/darbibas_veidi/maritime_spatial_planning/?doc=26326)

## **7. How coastal and marine Baltic Sea protected areas (HELCOM MPAs) are taken into account in MSP**

Environment and nature protection is a horizontal priority within the Strategic part of Latvian MSP and MPAs are listed as areas of priority interest in the sea/spatial solution (under category “Existing uses of the sea”). Areas of priority interest is a category, that includes the existing and potential uses of the sea essential to ensure the achievement of the priorities as defined in the Strategic Part, e.g. healthy marine environment and stable ecosystem, national security, developed maritime affairs and safe navigation, as well as sustainable fishery and tourism. The areas are established for these types of uses of the sea by excluding or setting restrictions to activities which can cause disturbances or damage to their existence or development.

In addition to that Investigation areas of nature values were introduced with MSP – a total area of 1355.5 km<sup>2</sup>, where the issuing of licences for the sea uses activities, which could potentially endanger the protected marine habitats and species, are not allowed before the completion of the investigations. This includes wind parks, wave power stations, extraction of the hydrocarbons, aquaculture farms.