



**Baltic Sea Region
MSP Data Expert Sub-Group
15th meeting**

DECISIONS

Online, 25-26 March 2021

General:

1. [Capacity4MSP](#) BASEMAPS workshop took place back-to-back with the 15th MSP Data Expert Sub-group (hereafter - Data group) meeting. [BASEMAPS](#) (Baltic WEB Map Service) development as well as its functionalities were presented and demonstrated; participants took the chance to provide feedback. Main aim of the workshop was to test adding new data sets to input data in BASEMAPS and the participants had a chance to test using the admin panel and receive support and assistance from HELCOM Secretariat. Outcomes and main conclusions of the workshop are summarized in Annex 1.
2. MSP Data Experts Sub-group (hereafter - Data Group) members introduced with the latest developments concerning the data issues (“tour de table”):
 - a. **Denmark:** the Danish MSP should be published soon, last finishes to the MSP are done before the national consultation, plan is planned to be distributed for consultations around the 1st of April. Digital MSP will be launched at the same time, it is already developed. Delay was caused by the delays with completion of the National marine strategy that is now completed, it was not possible to finish MSP before that. Data will be available in the digital MSP, as well as is the digital MSDI, which will also have a public version that is under development now.
 - b. **Estonia:** MSP will not be adopted until the deadline. Delay was caused by multiple reasons. COVID-19 restrictions affected public hearing process; conflicts on the contents have arisen and discussions in government have taken longer time than anticipated. There are still many steps to take until the adoption. Government aims to adopt the plan until January 2022 at the latest. Data wise a work on a new MSP portal has been started. During the elaboration MSP portal was provided by the consultant. After the adoption a new web portal will be maintained by the ministry, portal will be comprehensive for both national plan and pilot plans. Ministry is also developing a data platform for the adopted plans. It is hoped that the data platform will support the provision MSP output data services to be uploaded to BASEMAPS.
 - c. **Finland:** Finnish MSP has been approved in December 2020. A copy has been sent to the European Commission. Government of Åland has approved its own maritime spatial plan on 22 April, 2021. Both plans have been uploaded to BASEMAPS, Finnish plan is also in uploaded to EMODnet.
 - d. **Germany:** Currently the stage of revising draft new MSP for the Baltic Sea and North Sea is ongoing. At this point interdepartmental coordination is taking place. MSP data of the first draft from September 2020 are available upon request as shapefiles. This draft will be amended, also regarding designated areas. Next draft will be planned to be consulted April-May 2021. Geodata will be made available upon request. Data group members can in touch with Bettina if they wish to receive the shapefiles. Data

services news – last year fully implemented INSPIRE. Work on AIS data base has started, new project in BSH to follow up the work carried in Baltic LINes project.

- e. **Lithuania:** A new Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania is under development (in the final stage, MSP is a part of it). Data for MSP development was collected from different data owners and most of this data is not publicly available online. Also, the mandatory GIS data of the national spatial planning portal (after approval MSP data will be uploaded here) will not contain MSP data required by BASEMAPS. Shape files of current MSP were adapted from regulatory of BASEMAPS standards and uploaded to BASEMAPS (output data).

After approving the new comprehensive plan of the territory of the Republic of Lithuania, in order to share new MSP data, we are considering the possibility to adapt new MSP GIS data according to BASEMAPS regulation and upload them to BASEMAPS portal (output data), as well as to provide MSP GIS data WMS services.

- f. **Latvia:** Latvian Data is published on BASEMAPS, as well as WMS are published on the Latvian national geoportal, it is also planned to publish MSP output data as WFS on the national geoportal. Additionally, sharing Latvian MSP geodata base on national open data portal is considered. Data on the new administrative borders of the municipalities in Latvia is available on <https://geolatvija.lv/geo/#/> for downloads.
- g. **Poland:** one final step ahead until adoption, but it is likely that the deadline of the directive will be met. Current version of Polish MSP is uploaded to BASEMAPS, but after the adoption the national services with WMS will be revised and updated and the latest version will be uploaded to BASEMAPS.
- h. **Russia:** there are no updates to the Russian data collection information or data services for the past year. Russia is actively developing open data portals under the auspices of the Ministry of Economy of the Russian Federation now, but since there is no MSP in Russian legislation, the shared data do not currently include spatial data on the marine areas. The Roadmap for promoting MSP in Russia will include a block on data exchange formats adopted by the Baltic Sea countries and the need to develop services for MSP data. Also, although the developing of data services is not included in the tasks of the project Capacity4MSP, being implemented currently, we plan to organize workshop for data experts to discuss the prospects for creating national MSP data portal (or possibility to use existing service for MSP data) - who can hold it, what resources it will require. It may be possible to organize a BASEMAPS presentation. Now such a workshop is being discussed by project supporting organizations and experts.
- i. **Sweden:** No updates or changes since the previous meeting have occurred, previous version of MSP is published in BASEMAPS output session. However, no feedback from the government has been received yet, it should arrive in upcoming days. Afterwards changes will be made, data updated and published. Webmaps & services might be published in English later this year after the adopted plans are published.

3. The regional pan-Baltic framework is undergoing changes:

- a. The EUSBSR revised Action Plan has been adopted as EC Staff Working Document on 15 February 2021. New Action plan comprises of 14 Policy Areas, Horizontal Action “Spatial Planning” has transformed to Policy Area. MSP is one the action in the new version.

- b. The VASAB Long-term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the BSR update has been started, 1st meeting took place on 19 March 2021. Spatial Foresight together with Nordregio are contracted as consultants to support the update process. MSP is one of the three pillars in the VASAB LTP, therefore MSP practitioners will be involved in the update process.
 - c. HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan update is still ongoing – all the WG in HELCOM are actively involved. The final stages are approaching and BSAP should be approved in October 2021 by Ministerial meeting. HOD & HELCOM Meetings.
 - d. On the level of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, the new regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030 is being finalized. The current final draft was approved by HELCOM meeting. Now it has to be approved by HELCOM HOD in June and HELCOM Ministerial meeting in October.
 - e. One activity in the new Roadmap is directly linked to Data group – under action 1, particularly concentrating on data sharing: action 1.6. Improve MSP related data retention and flows and assuring data actuality. Ensure regional compatibility of the MSP Input and Output Data and strengthen mutual cooperation in broader context, especially EU:
 - Output: MSP Output data is available in BASEMAPS, by 2022,
 - Output: Shortlisting of MSP input data themes to be regularly updated in regional portal, including climate change related spatial data, 2022,
 - Output: Overview on national MSP data portals, 2025,
 - Output: continuously exchange the best practices in MSP related data handling with MSP data platforms beyond the Baltic Sea region.
 - f. The next HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG meeting will take place on 20-21 April. Among other topics, the mandate and work plan will have to be approved.
4. HELCOM FISH meeting will take place next month. The document on recommendations of the fisheries data for MSP prepared by the Data group will be delivered to their meeting. Related to this issue, for the upcoming HOLAS 3 assessment there is a project to organize different data flows needed for the assessment. One of the tasks within this project is to make and advice request to ICES regarding new data sets for fisheries for the time period 2016-2021. This will include fishing effort maps with newer data, updating fishing intensity with bottom contacting maps, collecting data on fishing effort for static gears used for the bycatch indicator. A set of maps will be available in about 1 year.
 5. A task force on cross-border coherence has been working on the draft [Coherence report](#) to develop a checklist to measure the coherence of MSP.
 6. The EU MSP Technical expert group on Data that is working to provide a pan-European MSP output data map. The group has been looking on existing solutions – HELCOM-VASAB Guideline on MSP Output Data, INSPIRE MSP data model. EMODnet has also developed data model on pan-European MSP data model recently. The HELCOM-VASAB model is more generic, based on MSP directive – categorizing sea uses. INSPIRE MSP model is more detailed using the extended Hilux classification and it is three-dimensional. EMODnet model is a hybrid of both previously mentioned models. The Member States can provide the data in both models and it can be incorporated in the EMODnet pan-European MSP map. Group has prepared recommendation on how should MSP output data should be made available that was present to the EU MSP

Expert group. The recommendation foresees that the data can be provided in the HELCOM-VASAB model. Now the status of the group is on ad hoc basis, advisory body. As the model has been produced and that was the main delivery of this group, the work will not be that active anymore.

7. "eMSP" project was approved for funding from EASME, DG Mare, it will include a work package on data. The project start with a inception phase in which the outline and aims of the data work package will be defined.
8. Joni introduced a new data related project – BalticAIMS funded by European Space Agency, which aims to discuss what data from satellite observations could be used for spatial planning.
9. Data group discussed the Discussion paper on long-term needs for BASEMAPS development. Aim of the paper is to share a common understanding on data exchange in the region in the future. Based on the circulated discussion paper and received feedback, there are few issues to be emphasized:
 - a. Involvement of national data providers remains among the most challenging tasks.
 - b. In theory, until the end of the year all the data should be available in line with the INSPIRE directive. If BASEMAPS is compatible, it should be easy to upload input data on it. Data group should consider preparing an overview on how many input data on national level is available according with the INSPIRE directive. It would be useful to know which data sets are in each of the three annexes of the directive.
 - c. A [report](#) on the Data needs and availability was carried out in the Baltic LINes project (2016-2018) that includes the information on the INSPIRE annexes, that is still relevant. However, the data availability has changed. This could be helpful to further develop the input data section on BASEMAPS.
 - d. Keeping in mind the capacity of the Data group, a regional perspective should be considered to check what services from INSPIRE are available already available and to what extent it covers the MSP input data need. It might be convenient to know which data sets might be looked for in INSPIRE in long run. In addition, Open Data Directive and its potential impacts on INSPIRE should be kept in mind as due to this directive more data might be available in the future.
 - e. One of the aims of BASEMAPS input data is to have an overview of the available data in the region. The aim of the regular updates are to check whether the links in BASEMAPS are still active and whether there are any new data sets to be added. It is also important to consider who are the users of the BASEMAPS input data, and the goal should be to provide easy access to MSP data both to planners and stakeholders. Although for some countries work with input data will not be priority for the upcoming years, the planning cycles are not synchronized among BSR countries and available data might be used beyond MSP process. Therefore, routine updates how to be introduced and once they are set up, they should not be too time consuming. In further BASEMAPS validation of data could be carried out on regular basis to identify changes in the uploaded data.
10. Data group members and sectoral experts shared their experience and needs for work with input data:
 - a. In Poland there is a regulation defining what kind of information should be considered in MSP. Request for input data was sent to more than 30 organisations. All the data was compiled in a map that described the current status, so called map of conditions which

is part of the Polish MSP. Map also includes designated areas, so it was a living document. In the process stakeholders submitted also additional data of various contents and quality that had to be processed.

- b. In Latvia national data as well as transnational spatial data in the MSP process was used, including the MSP drafts of neighbouring countries and data gathered in various MSP projects. National data included conditions for sea uses set in legislation (e.g. defence interests and protected areas), bathymetric data, ecosystems related data, fisheries data etc. International cooperation projects, e.g. Baltic Scope, Pan Baltic Scope, have been helpful to develop pan-Baltic data sets. Latvia experienced gaps in data regarding nature related matters and blue economy.
 - c. In Estonia data was gathered from data bases, in special researches, as well as in excel tables. Adopted pilot MSPs and cross-border cooperation were also utilized. In case of Estonia the adopted pilot plans become input data. Some of the spatial data was specifically elaborated for MSP, so after the MSP process is concluded, it is likely that the data will not be maintained. It was highlighted that some of the necessary data is not publicly available and is privately owned, therefore dedicated research to collect the needed data which could be used in the process, but cannot be published.
 - d. Ms. Anda Ikauniece presented the BluBioSites Interreg Seed money projects. Project is addressing the challenge to best allocate areas for Blue Bioeconomy sectors. The State of Play report is looking into existing data, resources as well as monitoring practices and data gaps.
 - e. Mr. Priit Heinla from Elering, Estonian Transmission System Operator presented Baltic Offshore Grid initiative and MSP data needs transmission grid planning. Exercise of planning a common grid has been carried out in the Baltic Sea, BSR countries have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding. A coordination group has been set up. MSP data is a crucial input to offshore grid planning. BASEMAPS could be a useful tool to collect MSP data as soon as all the plans are available. Priit emphasized that from the stakeholders' point of view it is confusing to see the MSP data in various places as it is hard to evaluate which of the data is relevant.
11. Data group discussed possible priority input data sets. Currently there are 12 data themes with 56 layers in BASEMAPS. Some of the input data in BASEMAPS has been prepared especially for the BASEMAPS input data section at the time of elaborating MSP, but no services were required, which means that a regular update is not carried out.
 12. Based on the practical experience, the biggest gaps are in the environmental data. It has to be kept in mind that during MSP process, a big amount of informal data from stakeholders was used. In transboundary context – MSP output data from neighbouring countries is used as input data in national processes.
 13. Stakeholders and potential users of BASEMAPS beyond planners should be identified and that might be helpful to better understand what kind of input data should be gathered in BASEMAPS. Originally the list on input data sets was defined by the Data group and Baltic LINes project, but it was done in a theoretical manner, as actual planning was in early stages and all the data to be potentially used was added to BASEMAPS. During Pan Baltic Scope project a need for sectoral output data was clearly identified; the same applies to input data as well. To

understand the profile of the BASEMAPS users, there is a possibility to organize an end user survey.

14. Still challenges to understand under which categories or themes data should be allocated occur. In addition, currently there are HELCOM data added under certain categories as there was lack of national data. It was done to provide planners, BASEMAPS users and stakeholders with an overview of the BSR even if the data from all countries is missing. The HELCOM data has been already removed in certain fields, when the data from countries is updated, more layers can be removed.
15. Data group members shared their consideration regarding the categories used for input data on BASEMAPS:
 - a. Relations between input and output data categories have to be considered. Current set of categories for input and output data fit well together.
 - b. Data is often not available as services and it is hard to access.
 - c. The current categorization limits possibility to upload all the available input data to BASEMAPS. A broader, more general and flexible categorizations would help, e.g. transport, nature.
 - d. A further possibility suggested is to have different categories under each of the countries, so they can be adjusted to national specifics.
 - e. There might be a separate category for the data which is relevant, but does not fit under any of the listed categories.
 - f. It has to be kept in mind that the data availability is likely to change within the next 2-3 years due to INSPIRE implementation, therefore the shortlisting of the data in BASEMAPS have to be considered in long-term.
 - g. This is good opportunity to evaluate and shift from theoretical broad list of various data sets to a list of data sets that were actually useful and valuable during the MSP process.
 - h. As the planning process is different among countries, input data sets used will also differ, therefore a goal to have a data under each category from all the countries is not realistic and logical. For each country there should be relevant national data should be available instead of all the available data.
 - i. Removal of subcategories is suggested as one of the way to generalize the categorization of data in BASEMAPS.
 - j. Categorization of the output data might serve as a starting point for starting the categorization of input data.
16. A text field for more detailed explanations of a certain service is possible to implement on BASEMAPS. In a long-run also a search function to find the necessary data more easily might be considered.
17. Output data from Finland, Aland and Lithuania has been added to BASEMAPS since the previous meeting. Uploading has gone rather well this time. The validator had some issues, but they were solved.
18. Data group shared their experiences on uploading output data in BASEMAPS:
 - a. Uploading of the Finnish MSP was smooth. The only challenge was with the Gulf of Finland area as the coastline was very detailed and had to be generalized a bit in order to upload it. The people who worked on uploading said it was easy and worked well.

- b. For German MSP there was a need to make changes in vertexes, but otherwise it worked well.
 - c. In case of Swedish MSP if there are multiple uses for certain areas, it cannot be seen on a map in the same time. So the colour scheme might be adjusted. Marie will send an e-mail to HELCOM Secretariat for further details.
 - d. The disclaimer on the output data being harmonized could be accompanied with links to national MSPs and contact points.
19. As majority of the plans are uploaded to BASEMAPS it is suggested to have a WMS with output data. If the Data group agrees it is possible to implement, however, it has to be kept in mind that the data available in BASEMAPS is generalized not the MSP itself, therefore it was agreed that the data won't be available for download in BASEMAPS output section. In some countries there are objections to downloading data directly from BASEMAPS. WMS service for viewing might be possible. But there is a need for further discussions on national level before an agreement can be made. A possibility to have a WMS for internal use for the Data group members might be considered.
20. A workshop "How to enhance tools for data driven decision making in MSP?" will be organised in the 4th Baltic MSP forum. Data group was introduced with the workshop concept and were invited to share their thoughts on possible speakers and contents. The workshop will include presentations on various tools developed to support MSP process and a panel discussion. Various suggestions were made:
- a. The presentations and panel discussion should concentrate on how to use the tools mentioned in real planning;
 - b. HOLAS process could be emphasized;
 - c. Linkages with the EU wide and EMODnet should be considered, this could be a good chance to highlight the Baltic experience;
 - d. It would be interesting to discuss about cumulative impacts in a cross border context and strategic environmental assessments;
 - e. A hypothetical case, e.g. on developing offshore wind, could be elaborated and discussions could concentrate how the mentioned tools could be applied in the situation and what would be the added value.
 - f. Presentation of the BlueBioSites project should be changed in a way that it really addresses the data gaps.
21. HELCOM Secretariat will reach out to Bettina regarding the potential case study for the Data workshop.

Outcomes:

- 22. It is agreed to take up the work done in 2016 by Baltic LINes project regarding INSPIRE themes mapping. HELCOM Secretariat will check the geographical coverage of different data sets available to provide a general overview until the next meeting.
- 23. It is agreed that in a long run BASEMAPS should harvest INSPIRE data.
- 24. It is agreed that in the future instead of workshops, dedicated help desk sessions for support on working with BASEMAPS should be organized upon request. It could be accompanied with tutorials and other teaching materials. As there are different needs and challenges, that would

be the most efficient way to provide support to those who need support uploading data to BASEMAPS.

25. It is agreed that the updating of BASEMAPS input data should be described in more details in the Discussion paper on long-term needs for BASEMAPS. It should include information that one month before the Data group meetings HELCOM would deliver an overview of identified gaps in BASEMAPS – services not valid anymore or dataset is missing. Now the report is prepared manually, but in the future, the regular check-up should be carried out automatically.
26. Discussion on the linkages with other processes and data portals should be discussed further in upcoming meetings.
27. It is agreed that the State of Play report from the BlueBioSites seed money project will be circulated in the Data group for feedback when available.
28. It is suggested that the discussion on the MSP and offshore grid planning could be brought to the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.
29. The shortlisting of input data sets on BASEMAPS have to be considered a long-term task as the data sets will change and more services are likely to be available in the upcoming years in line with the implementation of INSPIRE directive.
30. It is agreed that the current navigation in BASEMAPS does not work and needs updating, therefore it should be added as a task to the discussion paper on long-term needs for BASEMAPS.
31. An overall observation is that the current categorization of INPUT data on BASEMAPS is not working well for planners, therefore it is agreed that in long-term the subcategories should be removed from the BASEMAPS and data themes might be adjusted afterwards.
32. There is a need for feedback from the Data group on the current data categories in BASEMAPS, therefore an overview table to fill in will be prepared by the HELCOM Secretariat. Table should include following columns:
 - a. existing category as it is now in BASEMAPS,
 - b. compatibility with INSPIRE themes and their availability on INSPIRE Geoportal,
 - c. cross-check if there is a relevant category in output data section,
 - d. opinion of the members of the Data group if there is certain type of data and whether it should be included and any other comments.Table should be prepared as a living document that could be regularly updated. Data group members will provide feedback on the overview that will be discussed in the next Data group meeting.
33. An opportunity to prepare a WMS of the MSP output data should be further discussed within the national hierarchies and considered in the upcoming Data group meetings.
34. Data group agreed to invite the Baltic AIMS project to participate in the next Data group meeting.
35. Data group elected a new Chair – Ms. Natalia Zajac, Head of Integrated Development and Maritime Spatial Planning Unit in the Ministry of Infrastructure in Poland.

Tasks and next steps:

36. List of MSP Data Focal Points on the VASAB website should be updated (*Liene*)

37. A paper on the recommendation for MSP output data produced by the EU MSP TEG Data to be circulated within the Data Group (*Liene*)
38. Preparation of a general overview on data availability on BASEMAPS based on the Baltic LINES report and crosschecking with available data themes in INSPIRE portal (*HELCOM Secretariat*).
39. Discussion paper on long-term needs for BASEMAPS development is to be updated based on the discussions and decisions made and distributed to the Data group for feedback until April 15 (*Liene and Kristine*).
40. An overview table on input data (No. 32) is to be developed and distributed to the data group until 19 April (*HELCOM Secretariat*). Thorough feedback on the overview table provided until 19 May (*Data group members*).
41. A compilation on the feedback received and suggestions on feasible changes possible to introduce to BASEMAPS to improve usability is prepared for the next Data group meeting (*HELCOM Secretariat*).

Future meetings:

42. Upcoming autumn meeting of the Data group should take place in September or October 2021, preferably in Warsaw, or online.
43. 4th Baltic MSP Forum together with the final conferences of Capacity4MSP Project Platform and Land-Sea-Act project is planned to be organized on 1-2 June 2021, online.



