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POLICY BRIEF

Key Messages from the Maritime Spatial Planning Projects in the Baltic Sea Region

The Policy Brief was developed by the consortium of the Capacity4MSP project.

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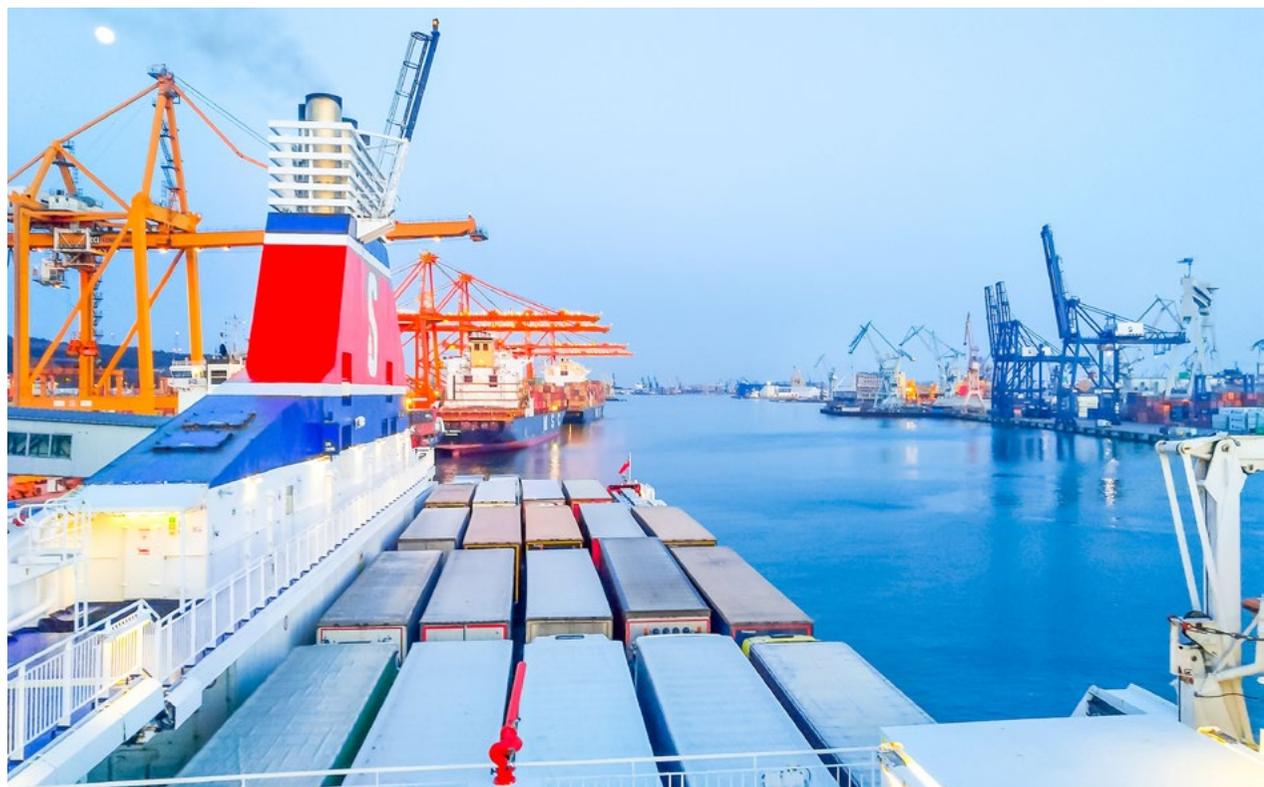
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Policy Brief

The Policy brief of the Interreg BSR project platform Capacity4MSP synthesis report aims at addressing policy makers. It adopts the form of a roadmap/policy brief for maritime spatial planning (MSP) and emphasizes the topics which require public support at the current stage of the MSP development in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) (finalization and adoption of marine plans). The policy roadmap/brief focuses on issues which need to be improved and where gaps with regard to shared common understanding exist. The final part contains supporting tools to be of assistance for practitioners in enhancing the aforesaid development.

The overall aim of the synthesis report is to synthesize and multiply gained knowledge from various MSP projects and MSP practice within and outside the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) in order to supplement EU, pan-Baltic and national commitments towards well-functioning MSP in the BSR by 2021.

Find full text of synthesis report in the website **www.capacity4msp.eu** section 'Project outputs'. In the course of the discussions among the Capacity4MSP project partners and with the stakeholders, the tasks identified in the synthesis report were prioritized, as well as the following elements for each task were identified to ensure their implementation:

1. Financial and organizational ways and means of addressing or handling the task (e.g., projects, scientific analysis, political actions);

2. Responsibility for handling the task (who should do what);

3. Maturity of actions in handling the task;

4. Responsibility for bridging gaps.

Table 1. The themes in need of public support in the current stage of the BSR MSP development

No.	Task	Priority *High/ medium/ low*	Financial means *Projects/States*	Responsibility *H-V/ National authorities/ Planners/ Scientists*	Maturity *Spontaneous/ Regular/ Long-term*	Remarks
1.	Repeating BSR MSP Vision 2030 exercise in around 2022 (adding social sustainability to the economic and environmental ones)	Medium	State budgets	Planners as part of the Planners' Forum (supported by scientists who can facilitate the process)	Spontaneous one-time effort	
2.	Launching informal cross-border planning attempts when starting official national MSP processes, in particular with non-EU states	Low	States (within EU co-operation) and projects (with the third countries)	Planners	Ad hoc one-time effort if necessary	Plans have recently been or are about to be adopted.
3.	Extension of the existing modus of co-operation to implement a broader, more multi-level transnational governance model. This should engage other ministries at national (or regional) level.	Low	State budgets	National authorities	<u>Regular and continuous</u> efforts according to specificity of each country, reported regularly at the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group meetings.	
4.	**Spatial analysis tools that help MSP planners to assess possible socio-economic consequences (primary, secondary and tertiary; using the multiplier effect) of allocating a given amount of sea space to a given sea use**	Top priority	Developed within applied and research projects, and disseminated via Planners' Forum	Planners jointly with scientists	Ad hoc, but supported by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG	*Should include ecosystem approach since the value of ecosystems is important for socio-economic development*

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		High/ medium/ low	*Projects/States*	*H-V/ National authorities/ Planners/ Scientists*	*Spontaneous/ Regular/ Long-term*	
5.	Good practices of how MSP should deal with safety concerns such as extreme weather events, massive oil leakages, potential environmental disasters	Low	Developed within both applied and research projects, and disseminated via the Planners' Forum	Planners, experts and scientists, but also planner networks	Ad hoc	
6.	Good practices on handling tourism-related conflicts, multi-use or a new form of tourism, for example yachting, under MSP. Need to promote and valorise the role of UCH and MCH in creating and enhancing well-being, quality of life, identity, sense of place, social capital, and blue growth	Medium	Developed within applied projects, and disseminated via the Planners' Forum	Planners jointly with tourism and MCH experts	Ad hoc	
7.	Impact of new shipping technologies on MSP	Low	Developed within research projects, and disseminated via the Planners' Forum	Scientists and planners	Ad hoc	
8.	Good practices of how MSP should deal with MU	High	Applied projects financed by, e.g., Interreg	MSP authorities in co-operation with sectoral authorities. Also, regions (selected) and companies should be involved in case of mariculture and fishery.	Regular: community of practice (example Belgium working through specific innovation areas)	

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9.	Training targeted at/offered to/ tailored for the needs of: a) authorities from the countries that have the greatest difficulties in implementing MSP; b) communities that are negatively affected by MSP	Medium	State budgets	Planners and scientists	Ad hoc	*Should invite experienced authorities/ planners that can share good examples.*
10.	Extension of the existing fora for information exchange in order to engage a broad range of stakeholders, not only planners and authorities	Very low	State budgets	Planners (mainly Planners' Forum as a vehicle)	Ad hoc	
11.	**Monitoring MSP processes (coherence of MSP), results and monitoring/assessing impact of MSP on other policies**	Top priority	Project run by MSP national authorities and financed by the EU	National authorities co-operating at the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG meetings	Intensive initial phase (facilitating) as a project, followed by a regular, long-term task for the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG to develop the system further	
12.	Ways and tools for the inclusion of local actors in the MSP process	High	Various projects encouraged and monitored by MSP authorities (State should play the role of facilitator and co-ordinator)	Planners jointly with regional authorities and scientists	Can be ad hoc, but the results should be monitored at a regular level in each country	

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13.	**Analysis of the interactions related to social sustainability (how allocation of sea space benefits various social groups on land)**	Top priority	Research projects	Scientists supported by planners if necessary	Long-term, resulting in new knowledge and education	
14.	Connectivity analysis of ecologically valuable areas (continuation)	High	Applied projects funded externally for developing and testing approaches	Planners, national authorities, scientists co-operating together	Ad hoc	
15.	A more comprehensive ecosystem service assessment and improvements in input data quality	Medium	Research projects	Scientists supported by planners if necessary	Long-term (new knowledge should be developed and exchanged regularly by the Planners' Forum)	
16.	Educational support on the essence of EBA	Very low	State budgets	Planners jointly with scientists	Ad hoc	
17.	Support for collecting new data under a BSR harmonised way and schedule (continuation).	High	New project following Capacity4MSP	MSP data providers taking part in the BSR MSP Data Expert SubGroup of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG	Regular, based on the BSR MSP Data Expert Subgroup	
18.	More handy tools for sharing and discussing data between planners and stakeholders, integration of various types of data (blue economy and biological data, MSP data etc.).	High	New projects, but should be partly financed by states	HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG in co-operation with planners and scientists	Long-term, regular, but initial input can come from projects, while demand - from planners	

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No.	Task	Priority *High/ medium/ low*	Financial means *Projects/States*	Responsibility *H-V/ National authorities/ Planners/ Scientists*	Maturity *Spontaneous/ Regular/ Long-term*	Remarks
19.	New ways of generating and storing data. MSP data generation driven by MSP needs. Training MSP planners to formulate needs and understand existing possibilities (e.g., big data).	Low	New projects, but part of the work should be financed by states	HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG in co-operation with planners and scientists	Long-term, regular, but initial input can come from projects, while demand-from planners	
20.	Tools for assessing cumulative impacts (developing and testing)	Medium	Applied projects funded externally for developing and testing approaches	Planners, national authorities, scientists co-operating together	Ad hoc	
21.	Bio-economic models (considering, developing and testing)	Medium	Research projects funded externally for developing and testing approaches	Scientists, planners, national authorities co-operating together	Ad hoc	
22.	Analysing the role of MSP in the long-term resilience of coastal municipalities in the context of climate change	Medium	Applied projects funded externally for developing and testing approaches	Regional authorities, planners, national authorities, scientists co-operating together	Ad hoc	
23.	**Analysing ways of adapting MSP to climate change**	Top priority	State budgets in combination with EU Funds (projects)	HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG	Regular task of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG since new evidence is to be expected, but the initial input can be at project level	
24.	Analysis of the impacts of sectoral and horizontal policies on aquaculture	Low	State budgets in combination with EU Funds (projects)	MSP national authorities and sectoral authorities	Ad hoc, but planners should be informed	

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No.	Task	Priority *High/ medium/ low*	Financial means *Projects/States*	Responsibility *H-V/ National authorities/ Planners/ Scientists*	Maturity *Spontaneous/ Regular/ Long-term*	Remarks
25.	Enhancing technological readiness of mariculture	Medium	EU Funds (projects)	National sectoral authorities	Ad hoc, but planners should be informed	
26.	**Good practices on combining blue growth and the carrying capacity of an environment**	Top priority	Applied projects but partially also national authorities	Scientist as key identifiers of benefits and impacts of maritime activities. Yet planners should be responsible for using research funding and bringing it to the planning practice	Continuous development of good practices	
27.	**Support for multi-use of energy sites**	Top priority	States	Early OWF countries (Denmark and Germany less so) because it should come before licensing	Ad hoc	
28.	New ways of covering MCH by MSP (focus on connectivity between MCH, multi-use and areal approach and intangible values)	Medium	States	HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG	Regular task of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG since new evidence is to be expected	
29.	Good practices on handling transformation of fishery under MSP and securing co-existence of fishery with other sectors	High	States	HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG	Regular task of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG since new evidence is to be expected	

Source: authors elaboration based on the outcomes of the Capacity4MSP project partner discussions

1. Interpreting these findings one can notice the following:

1.1. The highly prioritised tasks/themes are related to broadening MSP and extending it. This includes opening MSP to other sectors and policies, in particular economic ones (**assessing socio-economic consequences of allocating a given amount of sea space to a given sea use, multi-use of energy sites ,** dealing with multi-use in general**, combining blue growth and the carrying capacity of an environment**, handling transformation of fishery under MSP and securing co-existence of fishery with other sectors , integration of various types of data i.e. on blue economy and biological data etc.), but also attracting and understanding new types of stakeholders who have been less active in MSP so far (**analysis of the social impact of MSP, i.e. how allocation of the sea space benefits various social groups ,** tools for sharing and discussing data between planners and stakeholders as well as ways and tools for the inclusion of local actors in the MSP process).

1.2. Important actions for the success of MSP, i.e. its opening and broadening, seem to have been taken in the past, but they should be continued: e.g. connectivity analysis of ecologically valuable areas or support for collecting new data under a BSR harmonised way and schedule.

1.3. Nevertheless, one can notice new challenges for MSP that require joint intensive efforts: **monitoring the governance of the MSP processes (coherence of MSP), MSP results and monitoring/assessing the impact of MSP on other policies, as well as analysing ways of MSP adaptation to climate change**. In either case the existing experience is limited and needs to be accumulated.

2. As far as financing is concerned, there is a great deal of expectations related to external EU funds for both research and application-oriented (INTERREG type) projects.

2.1. This funding should enhance ten of the 12 high and top importance themes of the synthesis report.

2.2. In a few cases projects might be complemented by in-house planning effort that might be financed from national budgets. Such efforts can help with the preparation/identification of tools for sharing and discussing data between planners and stakeholders, **analysing ways of MSP adaptation to climate change, good practices on combining blue growth and the carrying capacity of an environment.**

2.3. Only two themes have been considered as remaining entirely in the financial responsibility of national authorities: transformation of fishery under MSP and securing co-existence of fishery with other sectors and **multi-use of energy sites.**

2.4. An interesting observation is the high role of the

Planners' Forum in disseminating the project results. This is a new element in the BSR co-operation set-up. So far, this role has been played mainly by the bi-annual BSR MSP forums. The HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG has time and resource restriction to do that, as well as limited interest.

3. Responsibility for developing themes was divided in a more balanced way. Each type of MSP body or level has been assigned some tasks. However, three patterns can be noticed: the themes requiring BSR policy level leadership, those that can be performed at national level and the rest (the largest group) requiring joint harmonious efforts of various bodies. One task was regarded as science-oriented.

3.1. Future Agenda for the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG (i.e. national authorities in co-operation):

- enhancing **monitoring governance of the MSP processes;**

- initiating work on a**nalysing ways of MSP adaptation to climate change;**

- starting work on transformation of fishery under MSP and securing co-existence of fishery with other sectors;

- collecting new MSP data under a BSR harmonised way (BSR MSP Data Expert Subgroup of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG);

- elaboration of handy tools for sharing and discussing data between planners and stakeholders, integration of various types of data (the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG in co-operation with planners and scientists).

3.2. Tasks requiring collaboration of various dispersed actors:

- Planners together with scientists should develop tools assessing **the socio-economic consequences of MSP allocations.**

- MSP authorities in co-operation with sectoral authorities should work on good practices of how MSP should deal with multi-use.

- Planners, regional authorities and scientists should jointly come up with tools for the inclusion of local actors in the MSP process.

- Scientists supported by the planners should analyse **the MSP interactions related to social sustainability**.

- Planners, national authorities and scientists should jointly continue work on the connectivity of ecologically valuable areas.

3.3. National task:

- **Support for multi-use of energy sites** should be tested and applied by early OWF countries because it should come before licensing.

3.4. Scientific task:

○ **Good practices on combining blue growth and the carrying capacity of an environment** should be developed by scientist since they have a key role in identifying benefits and impacts of maritime activities. Yet, planners should be responsible for using research funding and bringing it to the planning practice.

4. The majority of the tasks would require regular, organised efforts. Most of these efforts should be organised or at least monitored by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG. This shows the importance of this group for the success of MSP in BSR and huge amount of trust accumulated thanks to its current work. In cases when tasks require mainly ad hoc actions (this is related to accumulation of good practices or some scientific analysis) it is postulated to make use of the concept of community of practice (the Belgium example of working through specific innovation areas). This ensures firmer basis for the work and smaller risk of diminishing the result of the project. With regard to the BSR situation, such community of practice can be formed at the Planners' Forums.

5. The gaps related to the prioritised task.
The initial list of gaps for all tasks/themes identified is presented in Annex 2. After discussions among the project partners, gaps for the most important themes were substantiated and remedies were proposed. These gaps and remedies are presented in the table below. The bodies proposed to be responsible for alleviation of the

gaps are either at the EU or Baltic level. This indicates the importance of continuation of MSP collaboration in multi-lateral set-ups. As far as the BSR level is concerned, the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG should work on eliminating the following gaps through the following means:

○ Bridging the MSP **monitoring deficit** by framing a professional discourse on monitoring at the Baltic level. Establishing collaboration with other sectors would be very helpful.

○ **Insufficient willingness of the countries to work on connectivity of ecologically valuable areas** can be alleviated by building common understanding among the countries on the importance of it (e.g. ministerial declarations).

○ BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-group should continue as an important forum for MSP to **diminish disbelief in concrete benefits from data sharing.**

○ Insufficient political commitment on combining blue growth and the carrying capacity of an environment would require that HELCOM and VASAB enhance a holistic collaboration between environmental and blue economy stakeholders and authorities.

○ Lack of critical mass of experience on transforming fishery under MSP and securing co-existence of fishery with other sectors calls for HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG effort in order to ensure a take-off (by covering transaction costs).

Table 2. Gaps and remedies in the current stage of the BSR MSP development

No.	Task	Priority	Gap	
		High/ medium/ low	Essence	Remedies
1.	Spatial analysis tools that help MSP planners to assess possible socio-economic consequences (primary, secondary and tertiary, using the multiplier effect) of allocating a given amount of sea space to a given sea use	**Top priority**	Important gaps among countries and different schools of planning	There is a need for an EU-wide debate on the socio-economic consequences of MSP as part of various events. Examples of covering this topic by national MSP should be highlighted.
2.	Good practices of how MSP should deal with multi-use	High	Important gaps among countries and lack of critical mass of experience	Policy commitment to multi-use can be provided by the European Commission and European Parliament. Accumulation of experience would require pilot actions financed at the EU level.
3.	**Monitoring MSP processes (coherence of MSP), results and monitoring/assessing impact on other policies**	Top priority	The theoretical foundations do exist but deepening and further practical testing should be done since there is a general deficit in this domain	The EU should finance applied projects on testing various approaches to MSP monitoring. The HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG has the key role in framing professional discourse on monitoring at the Baltic level. Establishing collaboration with other sectors would be very helpful.
4.	Ways and tools for the inclusion of local actors in the MSP process	High	Lack of critical mass of experience. Differences in stakeholder engagement strategies among the countries (problem of costs and time pressure). Different planning cultures and paradigms.	The European Commission and European Parliament should take a policy lead in pursuing this theme.
5.	**Analysis of the interactions related to social sustainability (how allocation of the sea space benefits various social groups on land)**	Top priority		
6.	Connectivity analysis of ecologically valuable areas (continuation)	High	Insufficient knowledge and experience coupled with differing priorities among the countries on the importance of this issue	The HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG's guiding role in building common understanding among the countries should be continued.

Table 2. Gaps and remedies in the current stage of the BSR MSP development

No.	Task	Priority *High/ medium/ low*	Gap *Essence*	*Remedies*
7.	Support for collecting new data under a BSR harmonised way and schedule (continuation)	High	Insufficient resources and different data culture among the countries	BSR MSP Data ESG should continue as an important forum for MSP data sharing. MSP planners should have a much stronger voice on how and which data is generated, also with the use of modern technologies
8.	More handy tools for sharing and discussing data between planners and stakeholders, integration of various types of data (i.e. blue economy and biological data, MSP expert data etc.)	High	Lack of convincing experience that new tools improve the stakeholder process. Lack of trust that data sharing provides more benefits than costs	
9.	**Analysing ways of adapting MSP to climate change**	Top priority	Lack of critical mass of experience	The European Commission and European Parliament should take a policy lead in pursuing this theme
10.	**Good practices on combining blue growth and the carrying capacity of an environment**	Top priority	Insufficient political commitment and lack of knowledge. Siloed way of policy making	A need for political commitment at the HELCOM and VASAB level to enhance holistic collaboration between environmental and blue economy stakeholders and authorities
11.	**Support for multi-use of energy sites**	Top priority	Lack of Baltic or European energy Vision or policy commitment on that	Policy commitment to multi-use can be provided by the European Commission and European Parliament
12.	Good practices on handling transformation of fishery under MSP and securing co-existence of fishery with other sectors	High	Lack of critical mass of experience	A need for leadership of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG to ensure a take-off

Policy Oriented Tools

This part of the synthesis report aims mainly at informing the EU funding programmes about what tools are necessary to enhance the BSR MSP in the future. As a part of the Capacity4MSP project, the need and directions for developing supporting tools for practitioners for the top priority tasks have been identified. Such tools should enhance and improve the implementation and development of the priority tasks for future success of BSR MSP. The needs and directions were identified in an interactive dialogue between MSP planners and experts, in particular project partners and representatives of the associated organisations of the Capacity4MSP project. It seems that only a few top priority tasks require new tools, while for some of them the existing tools should be adjusted. For some of the tasks elaboration of new tools seems preliminary. The synthetic results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Tools

No.	Top priority Task	Needs and direction of development of Policy oriented tools
1.	Spatial analysis tools that help MSP planners to assess possible socio-economic consequences (primary, secondary and tertiary, using the multiplier effect) of allocating a given amount of sea space to a given sea use	The existing tools such as the Spatial Economic Benefit Analysis, Maritime spatial rent, maritime spatial multipliers (based on input-output matrices) provide an interesting starting point. Yet these tools should be used cautiously, e.g. multiplier effects are normally very difficult to assess and impact analysis is only one out of many inputs in the MSP decision-making process. Directions for development: ○ The tools should better reveal trade-offs between uses (i.e. economic results of allocating more space to one use at the expense of another one) and synergy effects between uses. ○ There is a need for better discrimination between marine and terrestrial activities in the EUROSTAT data (e.g. marine tourism versus non-marine tourism).
2.	**Monitoring MSP processes (coherence of MSP), results and monitoring/assessing impact on other policies**	There is no need for new tools. The existing tools should be tested and verified by various countries. This experience should be discussed and broadly debated among experts and practitioners and a catalogue of the most promising monitoring tools should be created. Each of the countries will select the most appropriate tools from the catalogue. Therefore, the key task is to provide a framework for assessing which tools work in which contexts and why, rather than to jointly create specific tools in the BSR. Desired characteristics of the potential tools: ○ easiness to apply; ○ consistency over time; ○ providing an overall picture (one indicator positive, the other negative); ○ easiness to communicate the results.
3.	**Analysis of the interactions related to the social sustainability (how allocation of the sea space benefits various social groups on land)**	There are some promising tools, such as hit maps, for measuring emotional bond to the sea and various indicators measuring the fairness of the MSP process. Yet, the most important task (before finetuning the tools) is to make social sustainability a more explicit objective for MSP. Directions of tool development: ○ Who benefits is more important than measuring benefits and loses due to MSP. ○ Territorial impact assessment/sustainability appraisals should be expanded to include various social aspects.

Table 3. Tools

No.	Top priority Task	Needs and direction of development of Policy oriented tools
4.	Analysing ways of adapting MSP to climate change	Existing tools, like Symphony, Baltic Sea Impact Index Tool and PlanWise4Blue have similar limitations, as they analyse resilience and migration only. These tools are very helpful, but do not give new information in relation to adaptation to climate change. Directions of tool development: ○ a need for a model which predicts changes in the ecosystem to be expected if areas are climate proofed; ○ knowledge base about the existing tools, i.e. their strong points and limitations, has to be improved.
5.	Good practices on combining blue growth and the carrying capacity of an environment	Sectoral tools do not cover all aspects of the ecosystem carrying capacity, and cumulative impact assessment tools should be improved and used more widely. Directions of tool development: ○ The duration of the impact should be evaluated more precisely – how long it/they are/is lasting. ○ Heritage and other tourism features should be included. ○ Additional information on noise, sand extraction, marine litter impacts on the carrying capacity should be integrated. ○ A comparison of impacts on land vs. in the sea (nutrient concentrations, energy) should be taken into consideration. ○ The depiction of the results of various impacts should be improved. ○ The positive impacts of nature-based solutions should also be taken onboard. ○ Data quality for relevant assessments should be improved.
6.	Support for multi-use of energy sites	The existing tools: MUSES DABI approach, MULTI-FRAME Assessment Approach, SOMOS Risk Assessment Framework, Community of Practice and UNITED are in the phase of pilot tests as a proof of concept. They suffer from severe shortcomings related to planning system and legislation (who decides on multi-use and how is that decided, voluntary versus mandatory character of multi-use, the problem of overlapping permits, the way of implementing multi-use into MSP, technical challenges, e.g. what fishing gear is suitable, question of quotas) Directions of tool development: ○ removing gaps and advancing/testing the existing tools; ○ concentrating on the engagement forms/tools needed to facilitate the 'creation' of multi-use, and on communication tools for communicating multi-use benefits.

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The Interreg BSR programme's co-financed project platform Capacity4MSP aims to strengthen the capacity of maritime spatial planning stakeholders, policy- and decision-makers through intensified dialogue activities and amplifying gained knowledge in maritime spatial planning. Capacity4MSP builds on the results of the current and recently completed MSP projects and ongoing MSP processes in the Baltic Sea Region.

Since June 2020 project platform is granted with a flagship status of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region under the policy area Spatial Planning.

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Own contribution:	€ 192,695.88

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