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Integrated Report on Stakeholder Involvement and Engagement in Maritime Spatial Planning

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Author:

Kristina Veidemane, Baltic Environmental Forum - Latvia

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1. Introduction

Within the framework of the project platform ‘**Strengthening the Capacity of MSP Stakeholders and Decision Makers: Capacity4MSP**’, a practical, interactive collaboration platform for maritime spatial planning (*hereinafter – MSP*) stakeholders, practitioners, decision makers and policy makers is being developed to support current MSP processes in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region (*hereinafter - BSR*), implementing the requirements defined in the policy documents at international, incl. the European Union (*hereinafter - EU*) and the BSR level with regard to the development of maritime spatial plans until 2020/2021.

The Capacity4MSP project platform will synthesize the results of the projects and processes implemented so far on MSP management issues and promote the transfer of knowledge and conclusions gained, and to highlight the main priorities of regional cooperation after 2020.

One of the project activities (No 3.3.) is dedicated to analysis of key aspects of stakeholder involvement and engagement in MSP. This activity supports the implementation of the HELCOM-VASAB Guidelines on Transboundary Consultations, Public Participation and Cooperation. The results of the activity are presented in this Report. The Report contains research-based analysis, experiences and practical examples of stakeholder involvement approaches and methods.

Objectives of the elaboration of the Report are as follows:

- To collect and review lessons learnt, knowledge, conclusions and results from other MSP projects and national MSP processes affecting stakeholder involvement, awareness raising and engagement in MSP involvement at EU, BSR and national or regional level;
- To identify and map stakeholders according to the defined criteria as well as integrate approaches and recommendations from previous and ongoing projects;
- To summarize stakeholder involvement and engagement methods;
- To describe the peculiarities and gaps in communication identified in the national MSP processes and the necessary improvements;
- To propose key conclusions and recommendations for the target group of the Report in the context of stakeholder involvement and engagement within and outside the BSR.

This report is prepared by the Baltic Environmental Forum Latvia in the period from 2020 to 2021 in accordance with the agreement concluded with the VASAB Secretariat.

2. Key terms and abbreviations used in the Report

2.1. Key terms and definitions

Stakeholder: a person, group or organization with an interest or concern in a given maritime spatial plan, its preparation or any other MSP-related process (HELCOM-VASAB, 2016).

The public: one or more natural or legal persons and, in accordance with national legislation or practice, their associations, organisations or groups (European Parliament, Council of the European Union, 2003).

The public concerned: the public affected or likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the environmental decision-making. For the purposes of this definition, non-governmental organizations promoting environmental protection and meeting any requirements under national law shall be deemed to have an interest (UNECE, 1998; European Parliament, Council of the European Union, 2003).

Public participation: the process by which an organization consults with interested or affected individuals, organizations, and government entities before making a decision. Public participation is a two-way communication and collaborative problem solving with the goal of achieving better and more acceptable decisions. Public participation prevents or minimizes disputes by creating a process for resolving issues



before they become polarized. Thus, public participation is very broad, involving not only institutionalized stakeholders but also the general public. Wide public participation helps to ensure a wider acceptance of the planning solution (HELCOM-VASAB, 2016).

Public participation as defined by the EU Directive 2003/35/EC on public participation is determined as early and effective opportunity for the public to participate in the preparation and modification or review of plans or programmes. The focus is on the procedure to be set up and followed by the EU Member States.

Stakeholder engagement and involvement: processes which address concerns and issues raised at the level of stakeholders and/or experts. Unlike public participation, these processes do not necessarily involve the general public.

Maritime spatial planning:

- a process by which the relevant EU Member State authorities analyse and organise human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives (European Parliament, Council of the European Union, 2014);
- an instrument for analysing, co-ordinating and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas in order to achieve a balance between economic, environmental, social and any other interests in line with internationally and nationally agreed objectives (HELCOM-VASAB, 2010).

Countries of the Baltic Sea Region: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden.



Competent authorities (authorities responsible for MSP): authorities that prepare (develop) and/or approve maritime spatial plans.

2.2. Abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Aarhus Convention | Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters |
| BSR | Baltic Sea Region |
| DST | Decision Support Tools |
| EEZ | exclusive economic zone |
| EIA | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| EU | European Union |
| HELCOM | Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission |
| IOC | Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission |
| MSP | Maritime Spatial Planning |
| MSP Directive | Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning |
| MSP principles | Baltic Sea Broad-Scale Maritime Spatial Planning Principles |
| MU | Multi- use |
| PP Directive | Directive 2003/35/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 providing for public participation in respect of the drawing up of certain plans and programmes relating to the environment and amending with regard to public participation and access to justice Council Directives 85/337/EEC and 96/61/EC |
| SEA | Strategic Environmental Assessment |
| SEA Directive | Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment |
| WG | Working Group |
| UNECE | United Nations Economic Commission for Europe |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| VASAB | Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea |

3. Setting the scene

Public participation and involvement of stakeholders are addressed by a number of international conventions, legislations as well as soft laws such as recommendations or guidelines adopted at global, Pan-European, EU as well as BSR level. This chapter of the Report presents the core policy and legislative documents relevant for the MSP process in the BSR. The overview is presented to describe the degree of the participation of stakeholders and authorities from the perspective of MSP.

3.1. Baltic Sea Broad-Scale MSP Principles

Baltic Sea broad-scale maritime spatial planning principles (hereinafter – *MSP principles*) were adopted by HELCOM Heads of Delegations meeting on 8-9 December 2010 and by VASAB Committee on Spatial Planning and Development of the Baltic Sea Region on 13 December 2010 (HELCOM-VASAB, 2010). Ten MSP principles were agreed, which aim to provide valuable guidance for achieving better coherence in the development of MSP systems in the Baltic Sea Region. Two out of ten MSP principles concern public participation. The MSP principles are embedded in the subsequent HELCOM-VASAB guidelines.

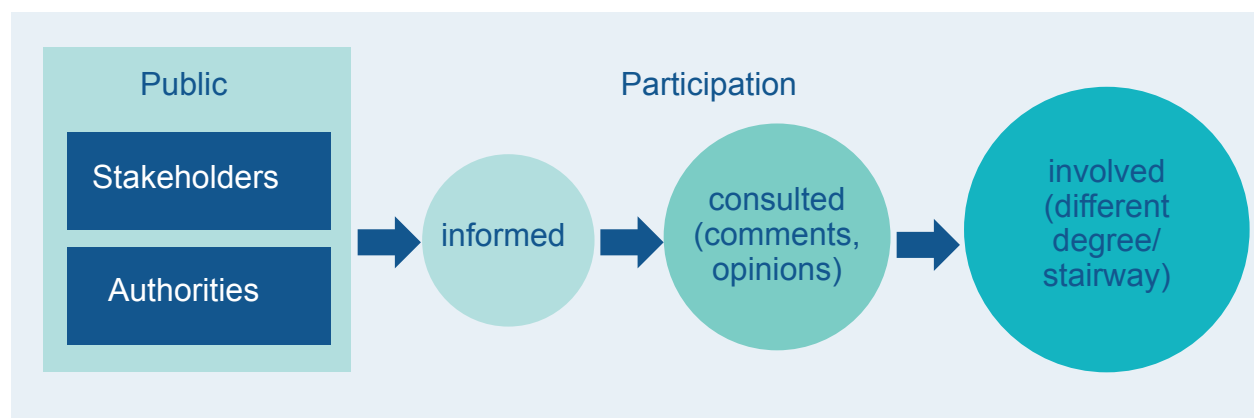


Figure 1. Conceptual scheme on the degree of public participation.

5. Participation and Transparency

All relevant authorities and stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region, including coastal municipalities as well as national and regional bodies, should be involved in maritime spatial planning initiatives at the earliest possible stage and public participation should be secured. Planning processes should be open and transparent and in accordance with international legislation.

7. Transnational coordination and consultation

Maritime spatial planning should be developed in a joint pan-Baltic dialogue with coordination and consultation between the Baltic Sea states, bearing in mind the need to apply international legislation and agreements and, for the HELCOM and VASAB EU Member States, the EU *acquis communautaire*. Such dialogue should be conducted in a cross-sectoral context between all coastal countries, interested and competent organizations and stakeholders. Whenever possible maritime spatial plans should be developed and amended with the Baltic Sea Region perspective in mind.

3.2. HELCOM-VASAB Guidelines on Transboundary Consultations, Public Participation and Cooperation

The 12th meeting of the Joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group, held in Gdansk on 24-25 February 2016, approved **the Guidelines on Transboundary Consultations, Public Participation and Co-operation** (hereinafter - *the Guidelines*) (HELCOM-VASAB, 2016)¹. The Guidelines contain a glossary of key terms and definitions and two sets of



recommendations: 1) Recommendations for Transboundary Consultation and Cooperation for a Specific MSP Process, and 2) Recommendations for Transboundary Pan-Baltic Cooperation on MSP.

The Guidelines highlight the purpose of involving stakeholders in transboundary consultation process to ensure that the voices stakeholders are heard, not only from within the country developing the plan, but also across borders and on pan-Baltic scale.

The Guidelines outline the steps stakeholder consultation as well as list the steps for organising stakeholder involvement in transboundary consultation process.

¹ The Guidelines were adopted by the 72nd meeting of VASAB CSPD/BSR on 8 June 2016 and approved by HELCOM HOD 50-2016 on 15-16 June 2016.

The Guidelines suggest that stakeholder involvement is best organised at national level, as each country has a different culture and legislation (regulations) on public participation and different settings in which stakeholders are organised. It therefore needs to find its own way of involving stakeholders and the general public and engaging them in the MSP process in line with the principle of subsidiarity.

Where appropriate, the competent authority could also consider engaging well-organised stakeholder groups that exist at pan-Baltic level and consult existing transboundary expert groups (such as those established by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG) on specific topics in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity.

3.3. EU MSP Directive (2014/89/EU)

Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning was adopted on 23 July 2014 (*hereinafter – MSP Directive*) and is binding for EU Member States and its provisions have been transposed into national legislation of the Member States and shall be implemented accordingly.

The EU MSP Directive contains several provisions, including a separate article related to public participation and stakeholder involvement. Public participation is also regulated by other EU legal acts; thus the MSP Directive also applies to them, in particular **Directive 2003/35/EC** (*hereinafter – PP Directive*).

Recital 21: The management of marine areas is complex and involves different levels of authorities, economic operators and other stakeholders. In order to promote sustainable development in an effective manner, it is essential that stakeholders, authorities and the public be consulted at an appropriate stage in the preparation of maritime spatial plans under this Directive, in accordance with relevant Union legislation. A good example of public consultation provisions can be found in Article 2(2) of Directive 2003/35/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Recital 24: With a view to ensuring that maritime spatial plans are based on reliable data and to avoid additional administrative burdens, it is essential that Member States make use of the best available data and information by encouraging the relevant stakeholders to share information and by making use of existing instruments and tools for data collection, such as those developed in the context of the Marine Knowledge 2020 initiative and Directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Article 6. Minimum requirements for maritime spatial planning

2. (d) ensure the involvement of stakeholders in accordance with Article 9.

Article 9. Public participation

1. Member States shall establish means of public participation by informing all interested parties and by consulting the relevant stakeholders and authorities, and the public concerned, at an early stage in the development of maritime spatial plans, in accordance with relevant provisions established in Union legislation.

2. Member States shall also ensure that the relevant stakeholders and authorities, and the public concerned, have access to the plans once they are finalised.

3.4. Aarhus Convention and PP Directive (2003/35/EC)

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (*hereinafter* - UNECE) **Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters** (adopted on 25 June 1998) (*hereinafter* - the Aarhus Convention) grants the public the right to access to information (first pillar), public participation (second pillar) and access to justice (third pillar) in governmental decision-making processes on environmental matters in a transboundary context at national, regional and other levels.

The Aarhus Convention has been ratified by EU Member

States, but it has not been signed and ratified by the Russian Federation.

In the EU, the provisions and requirements of the Aarhus Convention were transposed in 2003 with the adoption of two Directives concerning the first and second pillars of the Aarhus Convention:

- Directive 2003/4/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2003 on public access to environmental information;
- Directive 2003/35/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 providing for public participation in respect of the drawing up of certain plans and programmes relating to the environment and amending with regard to public participation and access to justice Council Directives 85/337/EEC and 96/61/EC (*hereinafter* – PP Directive).

Both Directives, 2003/4 and 2003/35, also contain provisions on access to justice, which is the third pillar of the Aarhus Convention.

Both directives play an important role in MSP. MSP must take an ecosystem-based approach, which means that it contains environmental information, which must also be available to the public.

PP Directive 2003/35/EC requires the public be given early and effective opportunities to participate in the preparation and modification or review of plans or programmes. The PP Directive outlines minimum requirements, while detailed

arrangements for public participation must be laid down by the Member States so as to enable the public to prepare and participate effectively.

PP Directive 2003/35/EC, Article 2. "... Member States shall ensure that:

(a) the public is informed, whether by public notices or other appropriate means such as electronic media where available, about any proposals for such plans or programmes or for their modification or review and that relevant information about such proposals is made available to the public including inter alia information about the right to participate in decision-making and about the competent authority to which comments or questions may be submitted;

(b) the public is entitled to express comments and opinions when all options are open before decisions on the plans and programmes are made;

(c) in making those decisions, due account shall be taken of the results of the public participation;

(d) having examined the comments and opinions expressed by the public, the competent authority makes reasonable efforts to inform the public about the decisions taken and the reasons and considerations upon which those decisions are based, including information about the public participation process."

3.5. Espoo Convention and SEA Directive 2001/42/EC

The UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (hereinafter – EIA) in a Transboundary Context (signed in 1991, entered into force in 1997), known as *the Espoo Convention*, sets obligations on the parties to assess the environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of planning and lays down a general obligation on the parties to notify and consult each other on any major projects under consideration that are likely to have significant adverse effects on the environment across borders.

The UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (hereinafter – SEA) to the aforesaid Espoo Convention (signed in Kyiv, 2003) requires its parties to evaluate the environmental consequences of their official draft plans and programmes also in a transboundary context. The SEA protocol applies not only to plans or programs which set framework for projects with significant negative effects, but also with significant positive effects.

The Espoo Convention and its SEA Protocol has been ratified by EU Member States, but has not been ratified by the Russian Federation.

In the EU, the provisions and requirements of the Espoo Convention have been transposed into the Directive. The most recently amended legal act in this area is **Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council** of 16 April 2014, amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

As regards the Protocol on SEA, the EU has transposed requirements into **Directive 2001/42/EC** on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (*hereinafter* - *SEA Directive*) (European Parliament and Council of European Union, 2001). Recital 23 of the MSP Directive (2014/89/EU) states: “*Where maritime spatial plans are likely to have significant effects on the environment, they are subject to Directive 2001/42/EC.*”

The SEA Directive distinguishes between consultation (Article 6) and transboundary consultation (Article 7). For national consultation, the authorities and the public must be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme or its submission to the legislative procedure. Member States shall identify the public to be consulted, including the public affected or likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, including the relevant non-governmental organisations, such as those promoting environmental protection and other organisations concerned.

Transboundary consultations of the authorities and the public of a neighbouring Member State have to be organised where significant transboundary effects are likely. The Member State in whose territory the plan or programme is being prepared shall forward a copy of the draft plan or programme and the relevant environmental report to the other Member State before its adoption. The SEA Directive requires the SEA report to be made available to the authorities and the public. The detailed arrangements for informing and consulting the authorities and the public will be determined by the Member States.

The recent experience in the Baltic Sea region shows that countries notify each other about MSPs in accordance with the SEA Protocol, not only due to identified potential significant impacts, but also to ensure transparency in the spatial planning and environmental assessment process and to collect positions and information from other institutions from abroad, especially from neighbouring countries. The SEA is thus a useful tool for involving stakeholders (authorities, NGOs and the public) at a national and transboundary level at an early stage of the planning process.

3.6. UNESCO-IOC

UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) promotes international cooperation and coordinates programmes in marine research, services, observation systems, hazard mitigation, and capacity development in order to understand and effectively manage the resources of the ocean and coastal areas.

Starting in 2006, UNESCO-IOC convened the first International Workshop on the use of marine spatial planning as a tool to implement ecosystem-based sea use management. The workshop led to the preparation and publication of ***the first international MSP guide 'Marine Spatial Planning: a step-by-step approach toward ecosystem-based management'*** (IOC Manual and Guide No.53), published in 2009 (Ehler&Douvere). One of the key steps (No 4) in the MSP guide is devoted to stakeholder engagement. The guide advises to develop a stakeholder engagement plan that would lead to effective and efficient stakeholder involvement process.

Guide to evaluating marine spatial plan was published in 2014 to help marine planners and managers monitor and evaluate the success of marine plans in achieving real results and outcomes (Ehler, 2014). Monitoring and evaluation are often considered only after a plan has been developed. The guide emphasizes the importance of early

integration of monitoring and evaluation in the MSP process. It also highlights the importance of stakeholder engagement in consultation, evaluating and monitoring the results of MSP implementation.

MSP Guides, global applications and MSP Good Practices are published at <http://msp.ioc-unesco.org/>.

3.7. Overview of tasks and requirements

Timing is a critical aspect pointed out in all documents described above. Early public participation, when all options are open and effective public participation can take place, is highlighted in the MSP as well as in relevant documents supporting public participation. Table 1 summarises the key

issues in planning the public participation process, including stakeholders, in MSP: who should participate; how actively the participants of the process should be involved; when they should be involved.

Table 1. Key issues in the process of public (incl. stakeholder) participation.

| Document | Who should participate? | What are key tasks and requirements? | When should the public take part? |
|------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| HELCOM-VASAB MSP principles | All relevant authorities and stakeholders | Should be involved | At the earliest possible stage |
| | Public participation | Should be secured; open and transparent | In accordance with international legislation |
| HELCOM-VASAB Guidelines | Stakeholders and the public | Detailed tasks/steps are outlined for transboundary consultation | Consultations to be started before the maritime spatial plan is fully drafted |
| MSP Directive 2014/89/EU | All interested parties | Shall be informed | At the earliest possible stage |
| | Relevant stakeholders and authorities, and the public concerned | Shall be consulted | In accordance with relevant provisions established in the EU legislation |

Table 1. Key issues in the process of public (incl. stakeholder) participation.

| Document | Who should participate? | What are key tasks and requirements? | When should the public take part? |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Aarhus Convention | The public The public which may participate shall be identified by the relevant public authority | Shall make appropriate practical and/or other provisions for the public to participate during the preparation of plans, within a transparent and fair framework, having provided the necessary information to the public | Early public participation, when all options are open and effective public participation can take place |
| PP Directive 2003/35/EC | The public Member States shall identify the public entitled to participate | The public is informed of any proposals for plans is entitled to express comments and opinions when all options are open before decisions; is informed about the decisions taken and the reasons and considerations upon which those decisions are based When taking decisions, Member States shall take due account of the results of the public participation | Early and effective opportunities to participate in the preparation and modification or review of the plans |
| Espoo Convention/ SEA Protocol | The public concerned, including relevant non-governmental organizations | To ensure timely public availability of the draft plan and environmental report. The public concerned has the opportunity to express their views on the draft plan and the environmental report | Ensure early, timely and effective opportunities for public participation, when all options are open |
| SEA Directive | Authorities which, by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans; Identified 'public concerned' | Requirement to make the SEA report available to the authorities and the public. Requirement to allow the express of opinion on the draft plan and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan. | Shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames |
| UNESCO–IOC, MSP guide | Stakeholders Public | Detailed steps and guiding questions, good practices and examples are described to support stakeholder involvement and public consultation. | Stakeholder empowerment will be most successful when efforts start early on and continue throughout all subsequent steps of the MSP process. |

4. Overall approach of the study

4.1. Conceptual framework

MSP is the process by which the relevant competent authorities analyse and organise human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives (MSP Directive, 2014/89/EU). The broad scope of MSP calls for an integrative approach and inclusive planning process to achieve sustainable development of the maritime and coastal economies and the use of marine and coastal resources. A conceptual model of the study addresses the key questions regarding public participation: *who, when and how* have been involved in MSP in the BSR countries, either as part of an official process or as a project-based initiative.

MSP is developed and implemented in determined spatial boundaries, either at the level of marine sub-basin (regional level) or within national administrative boundaries. Each marine country establishes its own spatial planning framework as well as corresponding procedures and mechanisms for stakeholder participation. Consequently, there are substantial differences in who is involved in the process, how and when. This study examines the **multi-level aspects** of stakeholder involvement in MSP in the countries of the BSR. The multi-level dimension (from local, regional, national, cross-border to transboundary) in MSP has been addressed by almost all EU-funded cooperation projects over the past decade, consequently transboundary and cross-border aspects have been prevailing in the



implementation of these projects, while local and less common issues may have been neglected.

Another perspective of the analysis is **sectoral integration**, which ensures coherence and avoids fragmentation in MSP. However, there have been observations that not all sectors have the same power and the projected outcomes and processes are shaped by strong interests involved in MSP (Flannery et al., 2016). This study analyses the main stakeholders in the BSR, the coverage of key sectors in national processes, as well as engagement activities in various transboundary projects funded so far.

The MSP process is organised in **different phases** or steps, which are outlined depending on the planning praxis and culture in each of the countries. For EU Member States, MSP is embedded in a legally binding framework that complies with the minimum criteria of Directive 2014/89/EU. The Directive requires MSP to cover the full cycle of identifying of problems and opportunities, gathering information, planning, decision-making, implementing, reviewing or updating, and monitoring implementation. This study focuses its analysis and assessment on the three major phases of the MSP process: the **development** of plan/s, the **implementation** and **monitoring** of the implementation of the adopted plans.



Figure 2. Conceptual framework for stakeholder involvement analysis

Maritime Spatial Plan is one of the tangible results of the process that can motivate stakeholders to take part in it. The established plans could have a strong legal power, setting legally binding requirements for future sea uses. On the other hand, plans can be strategic in nature, describing visions and ambitions for sustainable development in specific areas. This can also affect the willingness to participate.

Stakeholder involvement can be organised for different purposes and needs. This leads to different degrees of stakeholder involvement. Several authors (Arnstein et al., 1969; Morf et al., 2019) and organisations (IOC-UNESCO's Guideline (Ehler & Douvere, 2009), HECOM-VASAB Guidelines, 2016) have developed systematic frameworks for organising public participation and/or consultation. This study will focus on three main strategies:

- **information supply:** one-way communication with passive stakeholder participation, mainly focusing on disseminating information by sending messages to stakeholders and access to information about MSP;
- **consultation:** a two-way dialogue, with the planning authority collecting stakeholder's feedback, opinions and views and taking them into account in the planning process;
- **active participation and empowerment or deliberation:** established, regular dialogue and coordination of MSP. This strategy is also classified as involvement as it includes interaction between stakeholders.

4.2. Methodology of work

The assessment work is mainly performed in the form of desk research, literature review and communication and interviews with experts involved in national or regional MSP processes and projects. An important role has been played by Capacity4MSP project platform meetings and feedback from the Capacity4MSP project platform partner organisations, which were taken into account in drafting the report, including the recommendations.

The final deliverables are the Report and a presentation at the dedicated workshop on stakeholder engagement issues during the 4th Baltic MSP Forum on 1-2 June 2021. Contributions from this MSP Forum workshop have been integrated in the formulation of the overall recommendations.

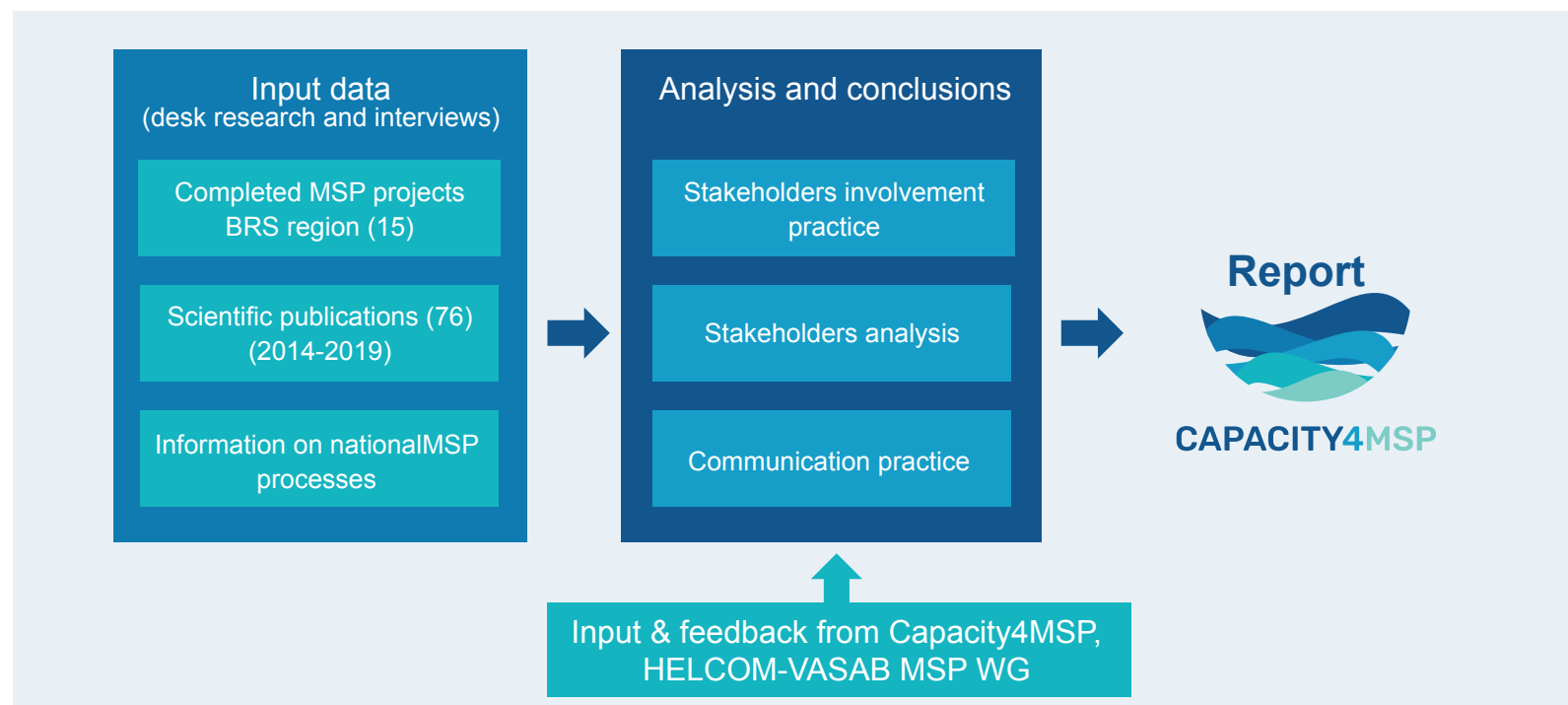


Figure 3. Workflow of the analysis

5. National MSP processes in the Baltic Sea Region

5.1. Competent authorities, planning levels and status

This chapter reflects on the status MSP in the BSR. Germany and Lithuania are developing their second maritime spatial plans, as the first ones were adopted either before or immediately after the adoption of the MSP Directive 2014/89/EU, but before the transposition deadline.

In 2009, **Germany** was the first Baltic Sea country to adopt an MSP in the EEZ, aiming to co-ordinate the growing conflict over maritime uses, in particular between developing and space-intensive offshore wind farms and marine environmental protection goals as well as traditional maritime uses such as shipping and fisheries². Two Federal States (Länder) of Germany have adopted their own MSPs, which cover territorial waters of Germany. The MSP requirements have been integrated in the Spatial Development Programme of the Mecklenburg – Vorpommern, adopted in 2005 and updated in 2016. The programme covers both the terrestrial area and the territorial sea. The State Development Plan for Schleswig-Holstein came into force in October 2010 as a legally binding plan, covering the terrestrial part and the territorial sea. An updated version is currently under development and is anticipated in autumn 2021³.

The first **Lithuanian** MSP was developed and adopted

in June 2015 as an extension of the existing national Comprehensive Plan that was valid by 2020⁴. Now, the new Comprehensive Plan – Lithuania 2030 - establishes a policy for spatial integration which includes marine areas as well⁵.

Russia has not yet adopted legislation that would require MSP; however, the experience is being accumulated in research institutions participating in transboundary projects⁶. In 2020-2021 Russia will develop its MSP Roadmap (as part of Interreg BSR project platform Capacity4MSP), supported by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

Information on the status of the MSP process is regularly updated on the **HELCOM BASEMAPS portal**, as well as in the country fiches published on the VASAB website or other official publications. All EU Member States aim that the new plans are adopted by March 2021. Each country has established a time schedule for developing the plan, including a consultation process with the stakeholders. However, the development of the plans is in a very active phase, particularly during 2020, and stakeholder engagement activities are intensively carried out at local, regional, national and transboundary level.

² Spatial Plan for the German Exclusive Economic Zone in the Baltic Sea 2009 – Text section. https://www.bsh.de/EN/TOPICS/Offshore/Maritime_spatial_planning/National_spatial_planning/_Anlagen/Downloads/Raumordnungsplan_Textteil_Ostsee.html?nn=2043950

³ https://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Landesregierung/Themen/PlanenBauenWohnen/Fortschreibung_LEP/Projekt/projekt_node.html

⁴ <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/en/legal/Act/acabfe0014e411e58569be21ff080a8c>

⁵ <http://www.bendrasisplanas.lt/2019/12/13/en/>

⁶ <https://www.ermaknw.ru/>

Table 2. The MSP planning areas and competent authorities in the Baltic Sea (August 2021); various public information sources.

| Member State | Planning level | Area covered | Competent authority | Status |
|----------------|--|---|---|---|
| Denmark | National | All marine waters | The Danish Maritime Authority | Adopted, but public consultation is ongoing until 30.09.2021. |
| Estonia | National | All marine waters | Ministry of Finance | Elaboration |
| | Regional | Hiiu county's territorial waters | Hiiu County Board | In force (September 2016) |
| | | Parnu county's territorial waters | Parnu County Board | In force (April 2017) |
| Finland | Regional - Northern Bothnian Sea, Quark and Bothnian Bay | All marine waters | Coastal Regional Councils | In force (December 2020) |
| | Regional - Archipelago Sea and Southern Bothnian Sea | All marine waters | Coastal Regional Councils | In force (December 2020) |
| | Regional - Gulf of Finland | All marine waters | Coastal Regional Councils | In force (December 2020) |
| | Regional | Territorial waters | Coastal Regional Councils | Regional land use plans in force; some under development |
| | Local | Territorial waters | Coastal municipalities | Local general and detailed plans in force; some under development |
| | Autonomous territory of Åland Islands | Territorial waters | Government of Åland | In force (March 2021) |
| Germany | Federal | EEZ | Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency | In force (December 2009); a new plan under elaboration |
| | State - Mecklenburg-Vorpommern | Territorial waters and internal waters | Ministry of Energy, Infrastructure and Digitalisation Mecklenburg-Vorpommern | In force (June 2016) |
| | State - Schleswig-Holstein | | Ministry of the Interior, Rural Areas and Integration of the State Schleswig-Holstein | In force (October 2010); a new plan under elaboration |
| Latvia | National | All marine waters | Ministry of the Environmental Protection and Regional Development | In force (May 2019) |
| | Local | Coastal waters: 2 km wide zone from coastline seaward | 17 coastal municipalities | Different; some pilot plans developed |

Table 2. The MSP planning areas and competent authorities in the Baltic Sea (August 2021); various public information sources.

| Member State | Planning level | Area covered | Competent authority | Status |
|------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Lithuania | National | All marine waters and terrestrial areas of the country | Ministry of the Environment | In force (June 2015); a new plan in adoption |
| Poland | National | All marine waters | Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation; Maritime Office in Gdynia; Maritime Office in Słupsk; Maritime Office in Szczecin | In force (22 May 2021) |
| | Local | Szczeciński Lagoon | Maritime Office in Szczecin | Elaboration |
| | | Kamieński Lagoon | | |
| | Local | Gdansk Bay | Maritime Office in Gdynia | Elaboration |
| | Local | Vistula Lagoon | Maritime Office in Gdynia | Preparation |
| | Local | for port area waters, i.e. Szczecin, Świnoujście, Police, Dziwnów, Trzebież, Łeba, Ustka, Rowy, Kołobrzeg, Darłowo and Dźwirzyno | Maritime offices | Preparation |
| Sweden | National - Gulf of Bothnia | From 1 nautical mile from the baseline, incl. EEZ | Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management | In adoption |
| | National - The Baltic Sea | | | |
| | National - Western Waters or Skagerrak/Kattegat | | | |
| | Regional plans - Stockholm and Skåne | Internal and territorial waters | The two regions | One in development, one in force; however, marine issues not fully covered |
| | Municipal comprehensive plans | Internal and territorial waters | 80 coastal municipalities (of which 65 partly overlap with national plans) | In force; however, marine issues not always fully covered |
| Russia | Not defined | Internal waters, territorial sea, EEZ, shelf | Not assigned | In preparation |

5.2. Stakeholder involvement practice

Being an EU Member State means that public participation must be organised in accordance with the MSP Directive (see Section 3.3.) or PP Directive (see Section 3.4.). The minimum requirements for public participation are that the public is informed about the draft planning document and is entitled to express comments and opinions when all options are open before decisions on the plans and programmes are made. Thus, the steps of stakeholder engagement in **information supply** and **consulting to receive comments and opinions** should be based on existing procedures; however, the intensity of these activities can vary. The study details the **additional efforts and methods** applied by planning authorities **to engage with stakeholders**.

In order to engage with stakeholders, some BSR countries have developed specific **stakeholder co-operation, involvement or interaction strategies or plans**. In fact, the documents cover communication activities that are related not only to stakeholders but to any interested party. Communication aspects (including tools for information supply) are also addressed in Chapter 9 of this report.

Information supply is provided on the websites of the planning authorities. In addition, dedicated websites have been set up by a number of countries to ensure transparency of the process and easier-to-follow debates around the MSP (see Table 3). The approach varies considerably. For



example, BSH, Germany, has set up and maintains an active website (<https://wp.bsh.de/en/>) to publish regular news and newsletters; thus stakeholders are kept informed of ongoing activities. With some countries, the webpages or websites are more static and limited to publishing the drafted documents or interim planning results. The information provided on the websites is the same for all stakeholder groups. Examining the websites, all sectors and interest groups appear to have equal access to the same information used in the MSP process, without specific information products for specific stakeholder groups.

Table 3. Links to websites dedicated to the development of MSP

| Country | Address |
|--------------|--|
| Denmark | https://havplan.dk/en/page/info |
| Estonia | https://mereala.hendrikson.ee/en.html (during the development phase) https://www.rahendusministeerium.ee/et/planeeringud (official website of the authority) |
| Germany, EEZ | https://wp.bsh.de/en/ |
| Finland | https://www.merialuesuunnittelu.fi/en/ https://meriskenaariot.info/merialuesuunnitelma/en/merialuesuunnitelma-english/ |
| Latvia | https://www.varam.gov.lv/en/maritime-spatial-planning (official website after adoption) https://www.varam.gov.lv/lv/juras-telpiska-planosana (official website after adoption) |
| Lithuania | http://www.bendrasisplanas.lt/ |
| Poland | https://polishmsp.eu/ (a website for transboundary consultations) https://www.umgdy.gov.pl/?cat=274 (information about the plan) |
| Russia | https://www.ermaknw.ru/projects (information about pilot MSP projects) |
| Sweden | https://www.havochvatten.se/planering-forvaltning-och-samverkan/havsplanering.html https://www.havochvatten.se/en/eu-and-international/marine-spatial-planning.html |
| | Note: the address will change soon |

Consultation meetings are among the most commonly used methods in all the countries. They are organised either to cover the regions closer to the place of work or residence of the stakeholders (e.g. Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Sweden) and/or they are thematic consultation meetings (e.g. Germany EEZ, Latvia, Finland). These meetings ensure dialogues on sectoral and local interests. Organization of public hearing events is a common practice in the BSR; however, due to COVID-19, consultation meetings are held online. In fact, online events

have attracted an additional audience of interested persons who would otherwise not be able to participate in the process. In the implementation phase, a wider consultation is arranged when site-specific activities are negotiated through licensing. In addition to its national plan, Poland is developing local plans and holding consultation meetings with relevant local stakeholders. Stakeholders or the public can also be consulted on mid-term or post-evaluation reports. This requirement is set in the Latvian planning system as well.

Stakeholders are also invited to provide written inputs, sharing data and knowledge. Such contributions have been particularly relevant in sectors where information is insufficient (e.g. coastal fishery and underwater heritage). Estonia launched and contracted several specific studies and assessments to collect and analyse thematic data, in particular on environmental and landscape aspects. Data were provided by researchers of universities as well by NGOs (Ornithologist Society), which all have important data at their disposal. For example, Finland and Åland Islands worked with fisheries-related stakeholders on the Pan Baltic Scope project to gather local knowledge and validate official national data on fisheries.

An advisory committee or a regular work group that represents key stakeholders and supports planners in the process is an effective instrument for integrating stakeholders in the planning process. Such a regular interdisciplinary MSP working group was set up in Latvia to accompany and advise on the development of the plan, and the group is expected to meet regularly during the implementation of the plan as well. In Finland anyone can register with the MSP coordination network and thus be informed about national and regional activities according to their expressed interests, as well as get information about other participation opportunities and the newsletter. In Sweden, the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management was working together with the county administrative boards while consulting coastal municipalities, NGOs and the public. The organization of the planning process was set out in the Swedish MSP RoadMap⁷. A cross-sectoral reference group representing managerial level of the relevant national authorities, municipalities and county boards

was established. The task for the reference group was to plan the process and to ensure a holistic perspective. Cooperation at the level of desk officer was also set up in different groups.

Participatory scenario building has been carried out in several countries. The activity has been supported by implementing EU-funded projects, e.g. Pan Baltic Scope, Baltic LINES. The results directly contributed to the development of plans in Finland, the Åland Islands and Latvia. The projects also supported the development of various tools and the involvement of stakeholder in assessing the impact of alternatives or cumulative assessments.

GIS platforms or web maps with different functionality are common practice for recently developed and published plans. It is expected that digital versions of the plans could be adopted and become legally binding in some BSR countries. The Baltic Sea MSP GIS platform BASEMAPS has also been set up to support stakeholder involvement in a transboundary context. This web service is maintained by HELCOM <https://basemaps.helcom.fi/>.

Table 4. Links to the GIS versions of the MSP

| Country | Link |
|---|---|
| Estonia | https://mereala.hendrikson.ee/kaardirakendus-en.html |
| Finland | https://meriskenaariot.info/merialuesuunnitelma/en/suunnitelma-johdanto-eng/ |
| Poland | https://sipam.gov.pl/geoportal?m=g856 |
| Sweden | https://www.havochvatten.se/planering-forvaltning-och-samverkan/havsplanering/havsplaner/forslag-till-havsplaner/karta-att-utforska.html# |
| <i>Note: the address will change soon</i> | |

⁷ <https://www.havochvatten.se/download/18.6e7da7f9157b7c5f41478b3/1477991596993/fardplan-havsplaneringen-161010.pdf>

The above activities and methods describe the process for the development of plans. At the end of 2020, Sweden launched a task to assess the development of MSP process, involving stakeholders in a survey on the needs or improvement in the MSP development process. The evaluation task will be carried out by the Institute of Marine Environment and Nordregio.

Systematic stakeholder involvement **in the implementation of the plan** is established through supervisory or advisory groups (e.g. in Latvia) or through detailed planning of specific areas or coastal governance. Finland envisages continuous implementation as part of regional development and land use planning, and through links to natural resource plans and other maritime management plans.

Licensing activities of new major developments or sea uses also foresee public participation and stakeholder involvement, as required by the legislation on environmental impact assessment for EU Member States. However, the involvement process is limited mainly to commenting and expressing opinions on the intended activity.

The **monitoring** of the plan is closely linked to setting up data and information exchange between the authorities in order to receive regular updates on the status of the environment and sea uses. So far, the proposed monitoring and evaluation schemes for recently developed MSPs have been organised on the basis of an indicator approach. For example, Latvia has intends to carry out an interim evaluation of the implementation of the plan based on indicators and stakeholder comments on the mid-term reports. Finland



has a developed monitoring and evaluation model for MSP⁸ that also foresees the engagement of stakeholders in the collection, analysis and reporting of relevant data and the use of indicators. The developed model is rather conceptual and can be used as a template and inspiration for setting up their own approach. A separate table has been created to link the MSP goals and targets with the monitoring indicators. However, the model does not specify who will ensure the engagement the stakeholders in line with the defined model.

⁷ https://www.merialuesuunnittelu.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ME_report_2020.pdf

Table 5. Overview of methods for engaging with stakeholders at national/sub-national level during plan development

| Country | Information supply | | Consultation | | | | Active participation | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Newsletter/ Leaflets | Website ⁹ | Public hearing | Questionnaire/ Interviews | Seminars, workshops, forums | Written input, comments | Working groups/ Advisory committees | Scenario development/ modelling | Impact assessment |
| Denmark | | X | X | | X | | X | | |
| Estonia | | X | X | X | X | X | | X | |
| Finland | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| Åland, FI | | | X | | X | X | | X | X |
| Germany, EEZ | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | X |
| Latvia | | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Lithuania | | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| Poland | | | X | | X | X | X | | |
| Sweden | X | X (partly) | X | X | X | X | X | X | |

⁷ If a special website or portal for MSP has been set up.

6. Lessons learnt from the MSP projects

In the past decade, a number of transboundary and transnational projects have been implemented in the BSR aiming at supporting the MSP process by developing and testing approaches, methods and tools that help to improve MSP or foster particular maritime sector in relation to MSP.

The projects are funded by various EU programmes:

- **Interreg**¹⁰ aims to support cross-border cooperation by jointly tackling common challenges and finding shared solutions in fields such as health, the environment, research, education, transport, sustainable energy and others. There are three types of Interreg programmes: cross-border (between two countries or sub-regions), transnational (between several countries or larger regions) and interregional (at pan-European level).
- **Horizon 2020**¹¹ is the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. The goal is to ensure that Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and facilitates public-private sectors cooperation in innovation.
- **BONUS**¹² is a joint Baltic Sea research and development programme for years 2010-2017 aimed at supporting research.

- **European Maritime and Fishery Fund**¹³ contributes to enhancing the development and implementation of the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy. Among other things, the fund supports the development of cross-sectoral initiatives of mutual benefit to different maritime sectors and/or sectoral policies, taking into account and building upon existing tools and initiatives such as maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management processes.

This chapter reviews MSP-related projects supported by the above-mentioned EU funding programmes and synthesizes the lessons learnt and conclusions regarding stakeholder involvement. Some of the projects have presented recommendations for better stakeholder involvement, which are highlighted in the analyses below. The chapter also presents common practices and unique examples of stakeholder involvement and engagement in MSP within and beyond the BSR.

The information provided in this chapter is obtained from web pages or websites of the respective projects or their deliverables and publications.

There are also several projects which are still ongoing – Blue Platform, GRASS, Knowledge Flows in MSP, Land-Sea-Act, SeaPlanSpace, UNITED. Their results and recommendations are not reflected in the report.

¹⁰ www.interreg.eu

¹¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en>

¹² <https://www.bonusportal.org/>

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/emff_en

Several projects have supported development of the blue economy, particularly new uses in the Baltic Sea Region, e.g. SUBMARINER, InnoAquaTech, Baltic Blue Growth. These projects primarily focus on the needs of their sectors and are not always relevant to MSP. Nevertheless, the participants of the blue economy projects are among the stakeholders of the MSP process, and thus their experience

in stakeholder involvement is valuable.

As the projects support an informal stakeholder involvement process, a variety of methods and tools are applied to ensure an efficient process and desired outcomes. The table below presents an overview of the methods and tools applied in engaging with stakeholders.

Table 6. Overview of the recent MSP-related projects.

| Project | Interview, survey, focus groups | Meetings, workshops, regular forums/ work groups | Study visits | Visions, scenarios | Manual/ handbook | Maps and GIS tools | Decision Support Tools |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|--|--------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| AquaBest | X | X | | | X | | |
| Baltic Blue Growth | X | X | | | | | X |
| Baltic InteGrid | | X | | X | | | |
| Baltic LINes | | X | | X | | X | X |
| Baltic SCOPE | | X | | | X | X | |
| BalticRIM | | X | X | | X | X | X |
| BaltSeaPlan | X | X | | X | X | X | X |
| BONUS BaltSpace | X | X | | | | X | X |
| BONUS BASMATI | | X | | | X | X | X |
| Coast4us | | X | | X | X | X | |
| InnoAquaTech | | X | X | | | | X |
| MUSES | X | X | | | | | |
| Pan Baltic Scope | X | X | | X | X | X | X |
| PartiSEApate | X | X | | | X | | |
| Plan Bothnia | | X | | X | | X | |
| Plan4Blue | X | X | | X | | X | X |
| Submariner | X | X | | | | | |

The projects have also been implementing various **dissemination activities** that inform about the project activities (leaflets, newsletters, flyers), organizing final conferences and producing publications in the form of brochures or videos. All projects either have their own webpages or are part of organisation websites. The summary of the projects is published on the EU MSP platform at <https://www.msp-platform.eu/>.

Few of the above-listed projects have produced **recommendations or roadmaps** that include aspects of stakeholder involvement in the development of maritime spatial plans. The following key recommendations for MSP competent authorities have been presented towards the end of the implementation of cooperation projects.

Consultations and integration with sectorial stakeholders

- Carry out appropriate stakeholder mapping and analysis in to know stakeholders, their needs, interests and relationships.
- If stakeholders participate in the planning process, they are more likely to assume that decisions will be made on a sustainable basis in the long term. The stakeholder integration process should therefore be facilitated at an early stage of planning.
- Stakeholder integration can foster synergies and coexistence with other uses.
- It is important to continue and expand efforts to involve



a wider range of stakeholders.

- Organize many informal meetings with coffee and cake, as informal meetings are crucial for building understanding, trust and solutions.
- Develop processes that support meaningful engagement of a broad range of stakeholders, eliminating unequal power relations while constructively integrating conflicting views.

- Authorities designing and moderating MSP processes need to have the capacity, time and resources to ensure access, legitimacy and transparency for different groups and remain attentive to the complexity and changing environment of stakeholders.
- Create local and regional networks to foster interaction between key stakeholders and increase cooperation and multi-use of the resources.

Knowledge exchange

- Stakeholder discussions are vital to outlining the scale and complexity of the issues involved in decision-making.
- Building consensus among stakeholders will both accelerate the process through knowledge sharing and render any solution identified more acceptable.
- Engaging sectorial representatives and interest groups (e.g. divers, fishermen, coastal tourism experts) in data collection and exchange provides evidence and a knowledge base for MSP.
- The data generated throughout the process should be shared with stakeholders to promote possible opportunities for multi-use development.

Transparency of the planning process

- Transparent planning can reduce conflicts with different stakeholders, therefore it is important to provide continuous access to and build a base for

comprehensive and reliable data and information, knowledge and expertise.

- A transparent process, communicated in advance, also means that stakeholders are aware of what is expected from them and will be able to plan their participation and contribution.
- Authorities should also explore non-statutory forums and methods beyond formal MSP procedures. In developing such informal participation, it is important to take steps to maintain sufficient transparency.

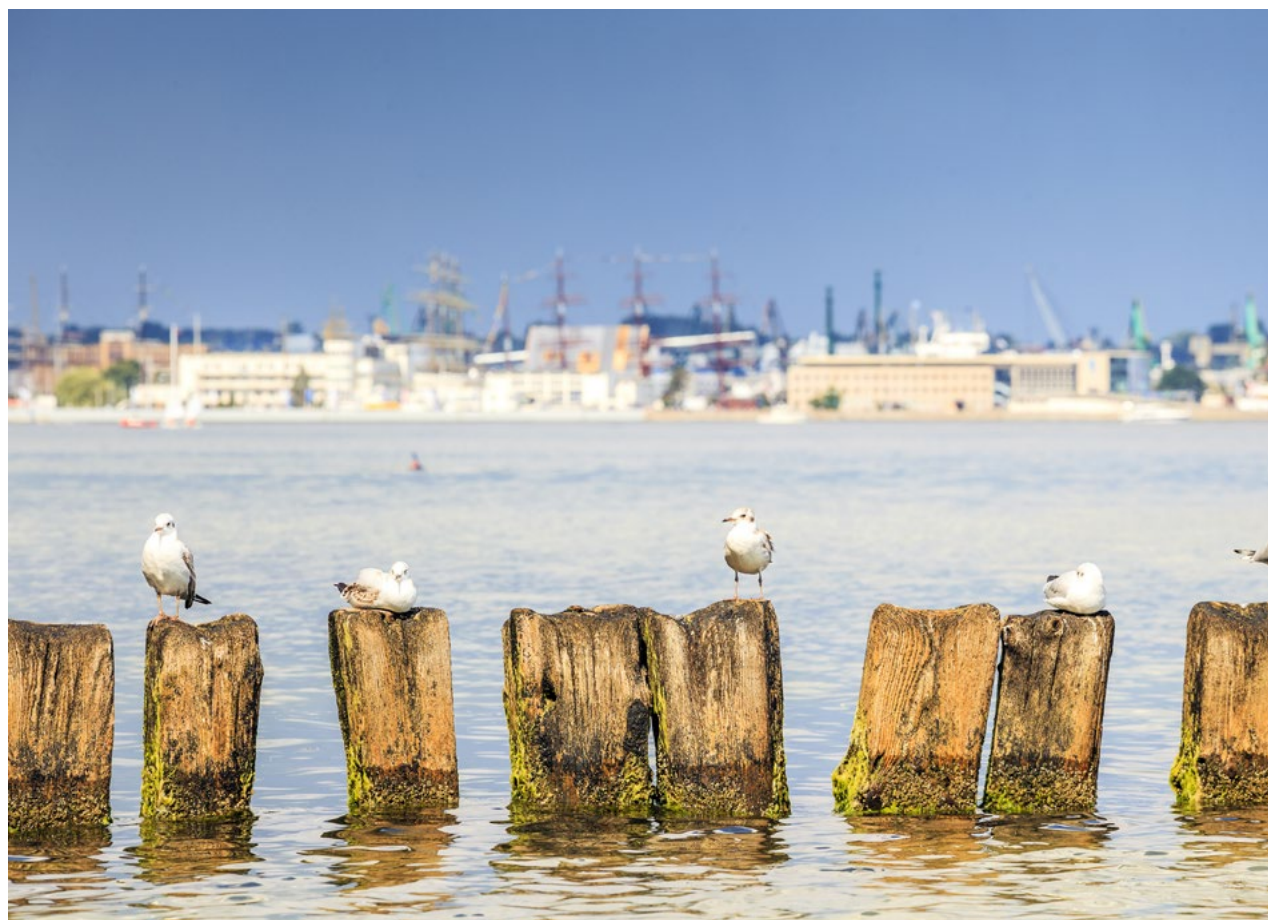
Awareness raising and capacity building

- Raising awareness of the benefits of new sea uses facilitates its acceptance by other sectors and the public at large.
- Use available visualisation methods to make certain information (e.g. underwater cultural heritage) more tangible, accessible and attractive.
- MSP must support different capacity building needs, such as know-how, training, finance, logistics, to be addressed to ensure the success of the process.
- There is a need to promote good practices and disseminate information about the multiple benefits through existing regional and sea basin forums and networks in order to facilitate their replication and encourage investment in sea uses, particularly the new blue economies.

Cooperation at transboundary level

- Countries should utilize the existing platforms for collaboration and create new ones.
- Establish the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group as a regular and continuing forum for networking and sharing knowledge and experience to ensure close cooperation of planning authorities.
- Recommendations to establish a technical pan-Baltic offshore energy and grid stakeholder group.
- Find appropriate forms to contact and mobilize commercial stakeholders and NGOs in transboundary MSP.
- Take advantage of links and cooperation with regional and global initiatives, such as the UN Decade of Ocean Science.
- Countries should create a mechanism or process to share with their neighbours what they have learnt in the implementation and review phases of the plans.
- Countries can also jointly explore the possibility of cooperating in the implementation of the plans, especially regarding sectors that operate across borders.
- It is important to use both formal and informal forms of cooperation. Informal meetings between planners and, importantly, stakeholders from different sectors allow for an exchange of ideas and detailed discussions on planning practices and topics. Informal collaboration provides an environment for mutual learning.

¹⁴ <https://www.submariner-network.eu/>



The established transboundary Baltic Sea regional cooperation network is one of the main outputs of the project to ensure the continuity of cooperation. The **SUBMARINER Network**¹⁴ has been established to promote innovative approaches to sustainable use of marine resources. It

offers a platform for cooperation between related actors and initiatives in the Baltic Sea Region. The **Baltic Offshore Grid Forum**¹⁵ has been established to explore and discuss the benefits of offshore wind energy development in the Baltic Sea with all relevant stakeholders and to pursue the objective of an integrated offshore electricity grid for a clean, sustainable and reliable energy market. However, it seems that the network has not been publicly active since the end of the project.

Several projects have developed specific handbooks on stakeholder involvement. The PartiSEApate project produced a ***Handbook on Multi-level Consultations in MSP*** (Matczak et al., 2014). The handbook aims at those who initiate consultations and provides a step-by-step guide based on key milestones in the planning process. The consultation tasks and activities of the guideline focus primarily on stakeholders at different levels and not the general public.

BONUS BASMATI has produced a ***Handbook: Process, Methods and Tools for Stakeholder Involvement in MSP*** to provide good practices and insights into stakeholder involvement in marine spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region (Giacometti et al., 2020). The handbook is targeted at practitioners and provides systematic practical answers to the questions related to stakeholder involvement in MSP. It presents a range of methods and tools for working with stakeholders.

¹⁵ <https://bogf.eu/>

Towards monitoring and evaluation

The Baltic SCOPE project was **the first to start work on frameworks for monitoring and evaluating MSP and to provide methodological guidance** (Varjopuro et al., 2017) regarding transboundary aspects. The guidelines describes the role of stakeholders in the evaluation process, pointing out challenges, e.g. lack of motivation of stakeholders to participate in transboundary process as such. The Report recommends that the collection of stakeholder information, evidence and feedback for evaluation should be organised as an integral part of stakeholder engagement in the transboundary MSP process itself.

The Pan Baltic Scope project continued to work on monitoring and evaluation, but with regard to national processes. MSP in Poland and Latvia were selected as case studies, implemented in close cooperation with planning authorities. With regard to stakeholder engagement, it is recommended to organise systematic expert and stakeholder assessment processes, which can help reduce uncertainties about the outcomes of MSP and their potential influence on the maritime sectors, the marine environment and the society. A practical solution would be the formation of national MSP monitoring and evaluation networks, based on the existing national working groups that support the preparation of MSP plans.

7. Conclusions from recent scientific publications on stakeholder involvement and engagement in MSP

This chapter presents the main conclusions from recent scientific publications on stakeholder involvement and engagement in MSP. The scientific publications cover the period from 2014, when the EU MSP Directive was adopted. The review was conducted using the search functions and results in the SCOPUS data base. The search focused on three components of the publication: the title of the article, the keywords and the abstract of the publications, and then additional keywords among the pre-selected publications. The search was implemented in August and September 2020.

Peer-reviewed publications in the English language were found using the following sets of keywords and their combinations: **‘Maritime spatial planning AND stakeholders’**, (79 publications) **‘Marine spatial planning AND stakeholders’** (306 publications) as well as keywords **‘stakeholder’**, **‘Baltic Sea’**. For further analyses the papers selected with keywords **‘stakeholder’** and **‘Baltic Sea’** were used for further investigation.

The generated lists of publications were compared and a consolidated list of **76 publications** mentioning marine or maritime spatial planning, stakeholder and the Baltic Sea was produced. Abstracts of these papers were read to assess if the publication address aspects of stakeholder



involvement and engagement. If the relevant aspects of this study were reviewed in the abstract, the full article was reviewed and the main findings were integrated into the analysis of this chapter.

7.1. Stakeholder knowledge about sea uses

The incorporation of stakeholder knowledge into developing MSP is one of the issues addressed by papers exploring stakeholder involvement in marine or maritime spatial planning. The primary reason for collecting stakeholder knowledge is the need to fill data gaps on topics such as traditional ecological knowledge, mapping of used areas (Quesada-Silva et al., 2019; Calado et al., 2019).

Spatial data and local knowledge of fishing activities, including coastal or small-scale fishery, has been identified as a challenge for MSP in the Baltic Sea Region. In Poland, as in other countries, accurate information on catch locations of small-scale vessels (less than 12 m in length) is not available. Therefore, the researchers carried out a study to collect data to determine important fishing grounds for coastal fishing with appropriate spatial resolution (Psuty et al., 2020). The data were obtained from individual face-to-face interviews using a standard questionnaire and paper maps. One of the outcomes of the study was the detection of a maritime area important for Polish small-scale fishing vessels.

During the preparation of the Polish plan, a dedicated survey (semi-structured interviews) with fishers was carried out at the very beginning of the second stage of MSP (prior to the MSP consultation process). Discussions have been implemented and the obtained data analysed and assessed by researchers (Piwowarczhyk et al., 2019). The survey

covered three issues regarding knowledge: What kind of knowledge and data are collected and used in MSP? Have you observed any conflicts between different types of knowledge? How were these conflicts handled? How was data scarcity and data uncertainty communicated and handled? The key findings from the interviews revealed a lack of trust between fishers and scientists due to scientific assessments related to nature conservation aspects, restrictions on fishing activities and gear.

Methods: semi-structured interviews, standardized interviews and participatory mapping.

7.2. Perceptions and attitudes

Stakeholders' perceptions have most frequently been used to obtain qualitative data on environmental or socio-economic impacts, where no other data are available, or to gain an understanding of stakeholders' opinions about certain aspects of MSP. The surveys carried out in Poland included questions not only related to knowledge but also to perceptions and attitudes with regard to challenges that hinder the active involvement of the fishing sector in MSP. Another study was performed to investigate the differences between the attitudes of Polish fishermen and other stakeholders towards MSP (Ciołek et al., 2018).

In the Baltic Sea Region, surveys have been carried out in relation to new sea uses. A study has been implemented to address the question of whether arguments and criteria

can be found that could promote greater support and a positive image of a local aquaculture enterprise in Kiel Bay & Fjord. A widespread regional survey showed less public reservation towards aquaculture business in Kiel Fjord than initially expected (Ahrendt et al., 2018).

A study on the ecosystem approach to management in Sweden's marine spatial planning was carried out to explore if MSP can complement existing environmental governance systems and promote closure of gaps. The paper concludes that most improvement is needed in the coordination and integration of different policies and measures, without which significant closure of 'goal-state' gaps is difficult to accomplish (Karlsson, 2019).

Method: interviews, surveys, content analyses of documents and received feedback during consultations.

7.3. Decision support tools and participatory modelling

Policy development and spatial planning are supported with a variety of tools, including GIS-based tools and their applications. They support discussions on conflicting issues and compromises and thus develop most optimum solutions and make decisions based on a number of criteria, parameters, values, and so on.

A review paper (Gee et al., 2019) comparing five tools and approaches relevant for MSP has been published. The

selected tools are analysed also with regard to potential contribution to stakeholder integration (see Table 7).

Table 7. Tools and their relevance for integrating stakeholder knowledge and views:

| Name | Characteristics |
|--|--|
| Culturally Significant Areas (CSAs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ broad participation tool; relies on stakeholder input to generate primary outputs ○ broadens the range of stakeholders |
| Integrated Indicator System for monitoring the spatial, economic and environmental effects of MSP solutions (IIS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ applicable in a participatory or non-participatory setting |
| Marxan Marxan with Zones (MAR) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ expert-led approaches or as participatory exercises ○ the number of stakeholders that can realistically be involved at any one time is probably small |
| Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation (OS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ broad participation; relies on stakeholder input to generate primary outputs ○ can also be used without a participatory process |
| Spatial Economic Benefit Analysis (SEBA) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ expert-led approaches or as participatory exercises ○ useful for private sector integration |

A review of seven well-known Decision Support Tools¹⁶ (DSTs) has been published (Janßen et al., 2019). It is based on the replies of 59 MSP practitioners from at least 25 countries around the world about their experience with the tools. The results revealed that, while the respondents were largely positive about using the DSTs in MSP processes, these tools are still mainly used in the academic realm and have not yet become part of everyday MSP practice. There is a broad range of reasons for not using DSTs, including the complexity of these tools, the resources required to operate them, the low stakeholder confidence in the DSTs outcomes, and the lack of added value in using DSTs.

A review on the DSTs carried out by Pınarbaşı et al. (2017) revealed that the majority (57%) of the identified DSTs were used to collect data, define the current situation and identify issues, constraints and future conditions. In addition, 16% of the tools were used to develop alternative management actions.

Multi-criteria analysis based on stakeholder involvement can be used to analyse the whole range of human activities and interests found in marine coastal areas. The method can help to facilitate discussion and mutual understanding between sectors by raising awareness of competitors' concerns and preferences for any location. The method was applied in a case study located in Finland, where stakeholders from fisheries, aquaculture, energy (hydroelectric), and tourism were involved (Ramos et al, 2015).

A Bayesian approach involving stakeholders in the

decision-making process was applied as part of the MSP project at the easternmost part of the Baltic Sea, the Gulf of Finland, and a continuous Bayesian Belief Network (BBN) model was developed to incorporate stakeholder values to support decision-making. The area is moderately to heavily altered as a result of multiple human activities, and planning for future development unavoidably leads to trade-offs. Considering the perceptions of stakeholders, the BBN model helps to identify and understand formally optimal environmental decisions, from a wide range of priorities and values (Laurila-Pant et al., 2019).

The AquaSpace tool is one of the first open source GIS-based planning tools that allows for a spatially explicit and integrated assessment of indicators reflecting the economic, environmental, inter-sectorial and socio-cultural risks and opportunities for potential aquaculture systems. Its technical concept and implemented functionality were developed by using a bottom-up approach that reflects stakeholder needs. Given that the settings and datasets of the tool can be freely changed, the tool has proven to be flexible. The tool was demonstrated on the example of the German Bight of the North Sea, but has also been tested in other parts of Europe (Gimpel et al., 2018).

Simulation games or serious games are another type of communication and learning tool for planning and decision-making.

Developed as a simulation game, **MSP Challenge** has evolved into computer-based and board-based formats (sometimes used in combination) and is intended for both

¹⁶ Atlantis, Cumulative Impacts Assessment Tool, InVEST, MarineMap, Marxan/MarZones, NatureServe Vista, and Zonation.

professional and general public audiences. Since its launch in 2018, the **MSP Challenge** simulation platform has been used for seven transboundary ecology, shipping and energy stakeholder sessions in the Baltic Sea, North Sea and Clyde areas. The **MSP Challenge** board game is another format that allows stakeholders to be involved in discussing planning options and sharing information, evidence and stories from their own experience. While playing the game, players jointly develop an ecosystem-based marine/maritime spatial plan while addressing the language and communication challenges posed by MSP (Abspoel et al., 2019).

Keijser *et al.* (2018) assessed the efficacy of the boarded game **MSP Challenge** based on post-game surveys. The results show that the board game, overall, has been a very efficient and effective way of familiarising a wide range of stakeholders with MSP. It also creates meaningful interaction and learning among stakeholders in formal planning processes. However, the case studies also show that the efficacy of the game is affected by contextual factors such as the level of familiarity with MSP and the participants' perceptions of sustainability (Keijser et al., 2018).

7.4. Cross-border cooperation

The requirements for cross-border spatial planning technologies in the European context have been analysed within the INTECRE project (Frank et al., 2017). Stakeholder involvement is addressed as one of the challenges. As

recognised by the authors, cross-border cooperation is influenced by limited or no funding for cooperation activities and insufficient willingness on the part of stakeholders to participate in the process.

Hassler et al. (2018) analysed cross-border cooperation in the case studies identified by the BONUS BALTSAPCE project. The main finding on bilateral coordination between adjacent countries was that the process was complicated, especially in cases where there are substantial institutional incompatibilities. To manage transnational institutional incompatibilities, permanent bilateral forums on such governance components could be established.

Saunders et al. (2019) have analysed the dimensions of integration in various MSP case studies on the basis of the BONUS BALTSAPCE project work. Cross-border integration is one such dimension that checks coherence (or compatibility) of MSP policies/sectors/uses across administrative border. The successful examples of cross-border integration highlight the importance of combining both informal and formal approaches to build networks of relations that can then function actively in MSP processes. The authors acknowledge that effective cross-border integration is easier to achieve within countries than between countries. Arguably this is because (a) coordination is easier in more similar settings, and (b) governments have much more leverage in managing domestic matters than international organisations have in managing transnational issues.

Another dimension analysed by Saunders et al. (2019)

is stakeholder integration in relation to both inclusion in the formation of national MSPs and engagement during different MSP policy phases, i.e. implementation, evaluation and review. The analysed cases underlined the importance of developing systematic strategies for stakeholder participation, involving different platforms and means of interaction. Some important stakeholders may be more difficult and complex to engage than others (e.g. fishers). Effective integration in these situations may require the development of tailored approaches that consider the particularities of different groups, addressing questions such as why it is important that stakeholders participate, how their aspirations will be considered in planning and what can be expected from participation.

Janßen et al. (2018) have highlighted that data and information exchange (knowledge integration) is essential for successful cross-border integration in MSP. The data needs to fit the scale and objectives of the integration. There is a need to collect data from national and other levels, especially when territorial seas are included, such as marine straits and coastal zones.

7.5. Transboundary cooperation

Stakeholder integration in transboundary process has been analysed and presented in several publications based on research within the BONUS BASMATI, BONUS BALTSPEACE, Pan Baltic Scope projects.

Moodie et al. (2019) analysed the challenges and enablers identified by the Pan Baltic Scope project. Stakeholder integration is one of the assessed dimensions that concerns the inclusion and active involvement of stakeholders in transboundary MSP processes, particularly which stakeholders are involved, what they need, their level of involvement and influence. The article highlights the success of the Pan Baltic Scope approach and the formal and informal collaboration methods applied. At the same time, one of the findings is that integrating stakeholders into transboundary MSP activities remains a serious challenge outside project settings, especially if they do not see an incentive to participate. Indeed, further research is required on how to integrate stakeholders into transboundary activities on a regular basis, in particular on the role of politicians and citizens in highly complex and technical planning processes.

Morf et al. (2019) particularly address the challenges and enablers for stakeholder integration in transboundary marine spatial planning in the Baltic Sea by synthesizing the results of two transboundary projects - BaltSpace and Baltic SCOPE. The authors conclude that, with the exceptions of countries with well-established marine planning at some level (Germany, Sweden) and Latvia as an ambitious pioneer, stakeholder involvement in MSP has often been either top-down or ad hoc and project-driven or sector-based – even more so across borders. The legal codification of stakeholder integration ranges from a minimum requirement (one-off consultation) to more intensive participation, both in terms of who are regarded as stakeholders and how to

include them. Authority stakeholders from different sectors and levels are relatively well integrated into MSP, both *de jure* and *de facto*. The participation of non-authority stakeholders is primarily encouraged by instrumental objectives, although features of an open process can be observed. Many marine stakeholders are new to MSP and vary widely in their business models, ambitions and needs and may already have established sector forums in place (e.g. IMO for shipping, HELCOM for environmental issues), which adds to the complexity in a transnational setting. In particular, with regard to the integration of transboundary stakeholders, responsibilities remain unclear in all countries studied.

Morf et al. (2019) also provide recommendations for strengthening the MSP governance model developed by Schultz-Zehden & Gee, 2016; Zaucha, 2014. It is noted that stakeholder involvement and monitoring of progress could be more prominent on the agenda of the biannual HELCOM-VASAB MSP working group meetings. In addition, it would be beneficial to integrate subnational stakeholders into MSP also into cross-border settings (multi-level governance), and training in various forms should continue, including a stronger focus on stakeholder integration within MSP curricula and continued training under transnational collaboration projects.

Hassler et al. (2018) studied transnational policy coordination and regional coherence in the Baltic Sea Region within the BONUS BALTSAPACE project. The article assessed the role of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working

Group in the collective action between the binding EU Directives and national planning policies. The HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG provides a forum for discussion between different national and sectoral administrators, thus helping to share knowledge, identify problem areas and facilitate the development of frameworks to address them. As found out by the authors, partial agreements between a rather diverse group of administrators in the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG do not always have a significant effect on regional coherence. If the lessons learnt and converging points identified are not passed on to domestic policy makers and key administrators, it is not likely that the working group will be very effective in making effective use of the limited policy setup established by the EU planning Directive and other international policy instruments based on collective action decision-making. Therefore, the implementation deficit may continue to abound.

Imbalances in interaction for transboundary marine spatial planning have also been analysed by Janßen et al. (2018). This article examines current practices and procedures of transboundary MSP interactions in the Baltic Sea Region. It summarizes the results of observations in the MSP and interviews with marine planners in two recent research projects (Baltic SCOPE and BONUS BALTSAPACE). The authors conclude that formal transboundary consultations often seem to be limited to environmental and health issues, and to stakeholders in these areas. The planners interviewed have also acknowledged that informal projects provide very good input to formal MSP collaboration.

8. Stakeholder analysis

One of the key prerequisites for an efficient and successful MSP process is the involvement of relevant stakeholders. Where MSP is embedded in the existing national or regional development planning framework and established public participation procedures, planning authorities can perform only formal minimum public participation procedures on informing and consulting with the public. Fortunately, this does not apply to MSP, as the process is relatively new in most countries and unexplored in terms of content and expected outcomes. Consequently, most planning authorities have made every effort to set up a proper stakeholder involvement process to ensure a bottom-up approach in MSP. This includes identifying and mapping stakeholders, as well as involving stakeholders from the outset in the planning process.

This study addresses the following aspects of stakeholder analysis: stakeholder identification and mapping activities, stakeholder classification and, last but not least, stakeholder participation. The information for stakeholder analysis is derived from completed project reports and publications.

8.1. Stakeholder identification and mapping

There are several approaches to identifying and mapping



stakeholders. The easy way to start is to create a list or a table that will cover two main clusters of stakeholders: 1) sectors; 2) institutional set-up. For institutional set-up it is important to follow a multi-level approach, from national to local or vice versa, to include all levels of national administrative

and development planning. Depending on the country, some stakeholder groups might not be present, e.g. sea mining industry or oil extraction industry. Therefore, sectors can also be classified as traditional, new or potential. Some sectors are well-organized with associations and societies, so they have bodies that can represent them at meetings, while some businesses, mainly local (e.g. campsites, guest houses, fishermen), do not have such organizations and will therefore be engaging as individuals.

The Table 8 presents an initial stakeholder mapping template that could be/is involved in MSP. In practice, such a table or list is created as an xls data base, which allows you to sort and identify stakeholders by the required features, e.g. find and select all stakeholders representing underwater cultural heritage, or select all stakeholders from particular administrative or planning level or location. This helps with arranging stakeholder meetings and events or sending targeted information. It also helps to record activity level and document event attendance or other communications. The table or list is a 'living document' that is regularly updated and supplemented with new names and contacts.

It is obvious that at the beginning of the MSP process, the names and institutions and their interests are not well known. Initially, the planning authority knows its colleagues at the governmental bodies and within their own institutional system. For example, the Ministry of the Environment knows its stakeholders in environmental and nature conservation, while the Ministry of Economy/Energy knows its stakeholders; the Ministry of Transport/Communication

knows its stakeholders. It is therefore important to ask colleagues to share contacts and promote information about the opportunity to take part in the MSP process.

Calling for interest by joining a working group or cooperation network can be one way of expanding the involved stakeholder group. Finland has published an online call and an invitation to register any interested parties to join the MSP cooperation network.

After creating a list or table, the next challenging task is to get accurate contact details for those working at the identified institutions. The institutional hierarchy and administrative procedure for nominating representatives to participate in the MSP process may take some time. In addition, people tend to change jobs and positions, thus the contacts might become invalid. Therefore, regular communication with the key stakeholders is essential not only during the elaboration but also during the implementation phase of MSP to avoid interruptions in cooperation.

Engagement/interaction/collaboration plans developed by planning authorities have already been mentioned in Section 5 of the report. These documents list the main stakeholders with which the planning authorities will be involve. The identified types of stakeholders reflect the information presented in Table 8.

Many MSP-related projects carry out stakeholder mapping for their needs. The contacts and networks established by the projects can be further used in national process, with the consent of the institution or person concerned.

Table 8. A possible template for the identification of stakeholders by sector and institution

| Sector | Stakeholder Type | | | | | | | | | Acting level | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|--|--|--------------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|---------------|
| | Government/ Politicians (Decision makers) | Agencies/ Boards (sectorial or horizontal) | NGO (civil society groups) | Professional associations | Science community / Research institutes | Largest companies/ enterprises of maritime business | Interested parties (individuals), e.g. fishermen or camping sites, tourism managers | Planning authorities (MSP and land-use) | International organisations | Local | Regional | National | International |
| Fishery (coastal and deep sea) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Energy (incl. grid) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Aquaculture | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Shipping | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Harbour & Logistics | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tourism & Recreation | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Defence | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Telecommunication | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mining & Dredging | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Oil & gas | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Health | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Environment | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cultural heritage | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Education | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Civil defence (coastal protection) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

8.2. Stakeholder classification

Depending on the size of the country, the list of stakeholders (sectors, institutions, scale, names and contacts) might be exhaustive. It is therefore recommended to classify stakeholders according to various criteria. One way to classify stakeholders is by influence (power) in the development and adoption of MSP or in the implementation of MSP. This aspect is important for planning authorities to reconcile interests and achieve plan adoption within a set timeframe (Quesada-Silva et al., 2019; Flannery et al., 2018). Another approach is to classify them according to the effects/impacts of the plan on the particular stakeholder group (Quesada-Silva et al., 2019; Ehler and Douvère, 2009). Such a classification allows to focus stakeholder involvement activities, including information supply and consultation activities.

The classification exercise largely depends on how well planners already know stakeholders, their interests and their powers from earlier planning or decision-making processes. For example, nature conservation and environmental interests have been strong arguments for influencing the design of MSP in Estonia by including multiple studies and assessment on specific environmental aspects. This was also stipulated by the example of the Supreme Court case process of Hiiumaa regional MSP, where deficiencies in the strategic environmental impact assessment, including determining the impacts of the planned offshore wind energy development activities on Natura areas and protected species, led to the decision to revoke the portion of the Hiiumaa MSP concerning the areas for the production of wind energy,



Figure 4. Initial stakeholder classification approach

while leaving other portions of it in force. Consequently, the planning authority and the consultants involved liaise and cooperate with the relevant environmental organisations in order to consider, as far as possible, the interests of nature, the environment and society (landscape/ marine landscape) in the development of the national MSP¹⁷.

In Latvia, the shipping and harbour sector has been the most influential player in development and land use planning¹⁸, therefore additional efforts were made to engage stakeholders to raise awareness and communicate with this stakeholder group within the MSP, supported by Baltic LINES project¹⁹. The Latvian case study of the Baltic LINES project elaborated its own stakeholder classification scheme based on the following criteria: power, link to a transnational perspective, willingness to participate, territorial claim, interest in transnational issues.

In Poland, the focus is on fishery sector, including coastal fishery, whose interests and perceptions have been studied by researcher teams (Piwowarczyk et al. 2019). One finding was that, compared to other European countries, Polish fishermen have a high level of mistrust towards planning authorities and other actors involved in MSP (Piwowarczyk et al. 2019). This lack of trust stems from previous negative experiences with the management of the environment and Natura 2000 areas (Piwowarczyk & Wróbel, 2016). Small-scale fishery views MSP as a mechanism to facilitate

the introduction and expansion of offshore wind energy in Poland's marine space (Tafon, 2019). These findings influenced the MSP process in Poland, where MSP outreach was offered to targeted groups of fishermen in the form of trust-building measures (Ciołek et al., 2018).

The situation is different with the role and power of local and regional municipalities in developing national MSP. Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management has been developing MSP very closely with county administration boards, as required by the regulations (Miljödepartementet. 2015). The county administrative boards also support the Agency by, among other things, coordinating the participation of municipalities²⁰.

In Finland, the approach of close cooperation and engagement of regional and local stakeholders is linked to the situation where the planning mandate is at a regional level. In Finland, maritime spatial plans are drafted and approved by regional councils, which have used their established stakeholder networks at a regional and local level. This practice is extremely essential in a situation where plans are approved by local politicians in regional boards. In addition to regional stakeholders, also national stakeholders and authorities were involved in the planning process²¹. By way of contrast, the first Lithuanian MSP process can be described as centralised, unidirectional and occurring late in the process. Under Lithuanian law, there is no formal requirement to involve

¹⁷ From communication with stakeholders.

¹⁸ From communication with stakeholders.

¹⁹ https://vasab.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Stakeholder_Involvement_Latvian_Case.pdf

²⁰ <https://www.havochvatten.se/planering-forvaltning-och-samverkan/havsplanering/delta-och-paverka/roller-och-ansvar-i-havsplaneringen.html>

²¹ Maritime Spatial Planning Interaction Plan. 27/09/2018. https://www.merialuesuunnittelu.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/vuorovaikutussuunnitelma-27.9..2018_EN.pdf

regional and local authorities in the planning process, with the exception of public consultations, thus coastal authorities have had a minor role in the development of the first Lithuanian MSP (Hassler et al, 2017).

8.3. Stakeholders involved in MSP projects

Transboundary and cross-border projects have addressed and involved different stakeholders at different scales and intensities. The Interreg²² Programme mainly supports projects that support cross border cooperation to address common challenges through project funding. The projects are implemented in partnership between at least two countries in cross-border cooperation programmes or a larger number of countries in transnational or interregional programmes. However, each programme has different eligibility criteria for participation, which determine stakeholder involvement in the projects.

For example, the Interreg Europe²³ programme supports cooperation between regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policies, thus their support is targeted at public authorities and managing authorities/ intermediate bodies responsible for the Investment for Growth and Jobs programmes or European Territorial Cooperation. There is no approved project dedicated to maritime spatial planning funded by this programme. The Interreg Baltic



Sea Region²⁴ supports a wide range of stakeholders: public authorities from the local, regional and national level, research and training institutions, sectoral agencies and associations, NGOs and enterprises can participate in projects and receive funds. In addition, MSP is seen as a tool for sustainable and resource-efficient blue growth in the BSR (the specific objective 2.4 of the Programme 2014 -2020). Consequently, several projects have cooperated on MSP-related issues.

The first project in the BSR that specifically targeted stakeholder groups at the Baltic Sea level was PartiSEApate (2012-2014) before the adoption of MSP Directive 2014/89/ EU. The project focused on the following sectors: shipping / port development; offshore wind energy; cultural heritage / tourism; mariculture / new uses of marine resources; research / environmental protection and climate change. Emphasis was on transboundary consultation to establish a dialogue between national stakeholders and to set up a cooperation network at the BSR level.

²² <http://www.interreg.eu>

²³ <https://www.interregeurope.eu/>

²⁴ <https://www.interreg-baltic.eu/about-the-programme/project-partners.html>

Table 9. Overview of sectors and projects implemented in BSR

| Sector | Project Acronym | Participating countries | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | DE | DK | EE | FI | LV | LT | PL | RU | SE |
| Fishery (coastal and deep sea) | Baltic SCOPE, BONUS BaltSpace, Land-Sea-Act, Plan Bothnia, Pan Baltic Scope | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X |
| Energy (incl. grid) | Baltic InteGrid, Baltic LINes, Baltic SCOPE, Land-Sea-Act, MUSES, UNITED, PartiSEApate | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X |
| Aquaculture | AquaBest; Baltic Blue Growth; GRASS, InnoAquaTech, MUSES; Submariner, UNITED, PartiSEApate | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X |
| Shipping & Harbour & Logistics | Baltic SCOPE, Baltic LINes PartiSEApate | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | * | X |
| Tourism & Recreation | BalticRIM (underwater cultural heritage), Muses (multi-use aspects), Baltic Blue Growth (multi-use aspects), Land-Sea-Act (costal tourism), SustainBaltic ²⁵ | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X |
| Environment | Baltic SCOPE, Pan Baltic Scope, PartiSEApate, BONUS BASMATI, BONUS BaltSpace | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X |
| Cultural (underwater) heritage | Baltacar; BalticRIM, PartiSEApate | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Education | Knowledge Flows in MSP; SeaPlanSpace | X | X | | X | | X | X | | X |
| Civil defence (coastal protection) | PartiSEApate (from climate change perspective) | X | | | | X | X | X | | X |
| Planning & Governance | Baltic SCOPE, Blue Platform, BONUS BaltSpace, BONUS BASMATI, Coast4us, Land-Sea-Act, MUSES, Pan Baltic Scope, Plan Bothnia, Plan4Blue | | | | | | | | | |
| Defence | - | | | | | | | | | |
| Telecommunication | - | | | | | | | | | |
| Mining & Dredging | - | | | | | | | | | |
| Oil & Gas | - | | | | | | | | | |
| Health | - | | | | | | | | | |

* Russia was contracted for activities in the Baltic LINes project.

²⁵ <https://sites.utu.fi/sustainbaltic/>

Thematic projects have been implemented in almost all sectors identified in Table 9. The focus has been diverse, from data and knowledge collection to identifying sectoral interests and supporting the development of new blue economies. Table 9 lists the MSP projects (some of them near to completion) in which sectors were involved to varying degrees. There are several projects that had a holistic view of the planning project and supported stakeholder involvement, reflecting the ambition of MSP to integrate all sectors and stakeholder groups. However, there are also sectors which have not been particularly cooperative at the BSR level.

Table 9 shows that only a few projects related to the fishery sector have been implemented. In the Pan Baltic Scope project, a dedicated study about motivating engagement of fishery stakeholders was implemented in the Åland Islands and in the Satakunta region of Finland. The study also explored trust of local-level fishing stakeholders towards planners and institutions to make the right decision for them and involved local stakeholder in information and knowledge collection²⁶. As pointed out by Piwowarczyk et al. (2019) in the frame of the BONUS BALTSPEACE project, the (small-scale) fishers may be the least powerful group in MSP and the most vulnerable to external pressures. Also, fishery sector does not see MSP as a key policy instrument compared to EU Common Fishery Policy. Moreover, there is an established ICES Working Group for Marine Planning and Coastal Zone Management that discusses current developments around marine spatial planning (MSP) and

coastal zone management (CZM) in the ICES area²⁷.

Another sector which has not been involved actively is tourism and recreation, with the exception of cruises, which are related to maritime transport (shipping). Tourism and recreational issues have been addressed in the context of the development of new sea uses, ensuring synergies and preventing conflicts. The Land-Sea-Act project is particularly relevant to coastal tourism in the context of MSP and coastal governance. The passive role of the tourism sector in MSP can be explained by the diversity of tourism activities from mass tourism to niche tourism. Another reason is that tourism is mostly developing at local and regional level, while MSP is taking place at a wider national level. However, tourism organisations are active in the BSR with their cooperation platform through the Baltic Sea Tourism Center (<https://bstc.eu/partnerships/about-the-bstc>) and the annual BSR tourism forums. Also, they are implementing sector-specific projects.

Biodiversity, nature conservation and a holistic approach to the environment were not priorities in the Baltic Sea Region programme 2014-2020, which focused on Blue Growth and clean waters (eutrophication, hazardous substances), but did not finance projects that focus on ecosystem-based approach or carrying capacity issues. Some support was provided by the European Maritime and Fishery Fund (Baltic SCOPE and Pan Baltic Scope) and research projects working with stakeholders to develop tools and methods for MSP (BONUS BASMATI; BONUS BALTSPEACE).

Although most projects contain a certain training component to increase stakeholder awareness or skills, a lack of

²⁶ <https://aland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=e0f5913e7ab1415983db739abf0cdaad>

²⁷ <https://www.ices.dk/community/groups/Pages/WGMPCZM.aspx>

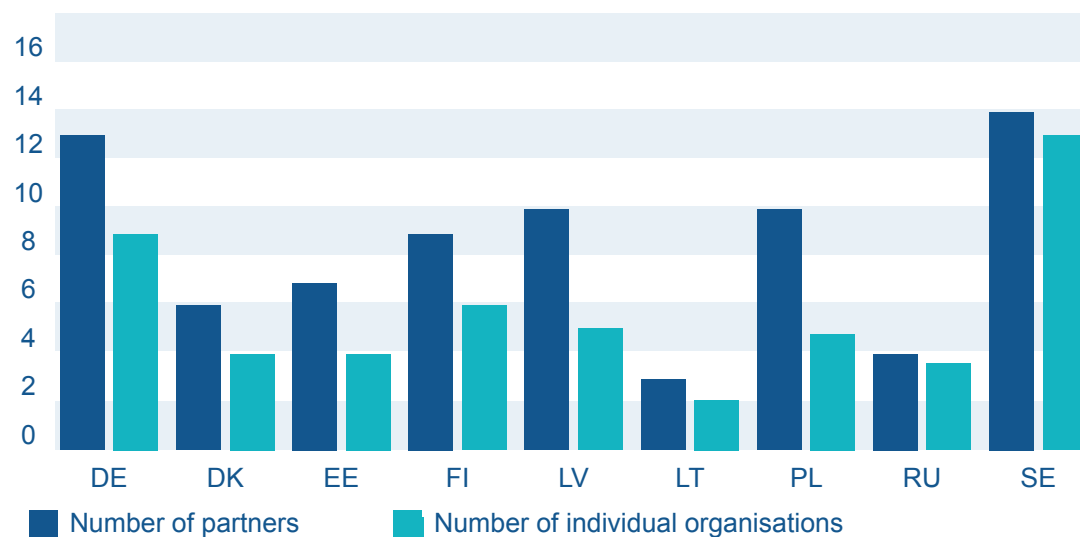


Figure 5. Participation per country in MSP related project in Interreg BSR 2014-2020
(data source: <https://projects.interreg-baltic.eu/>).

capacity to participate in the planning and implementation of MSP has led to the development of educational and capacity building programmes to support the sustainability of planning activities. Two recent projects (Knowledge Flows in MSP; SeaPlanSpace) have been launched to develop planning competences outside universities or higher education.

All EU Member States of the Baltic Sea Region have participated at least in one project in each sector (Table 9). Due to the conditions and requirements of the EU funding schemes, Russia has been involved only in a few of projects. However, it is currently participating in several Interreg Baltic Sea Region projects, which particularly address MSP and stakeholder involvement – BalticRIM, Capacity4MSP and GRASS.

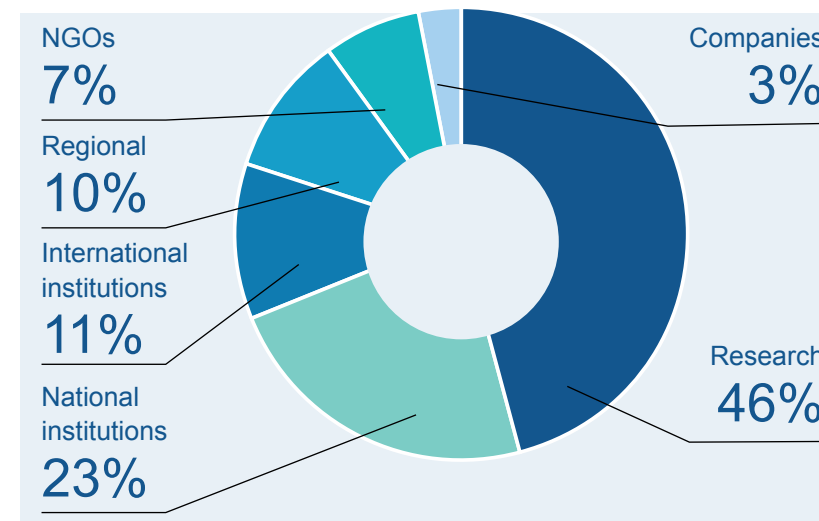


Figure 6. Partnership per type of stakeholder in MSP related project in Interreg BSR 2014-2020
(data source: <https://projects.interreg-baltic.eu/>).

The Interreg Baltic Sea Region 2014-2020 has published a list of beneficiaries. Statistics reveal that six transboundary projects involve 76 participants or 51 individual organisations (some participating in several projects) representing various institutions in the BSR. These projects are led by partners from three countries - Germany, Sweden and Latvia. A review of the list of partners reveals that researchers make the largest contribution to the Programme's activities, which are overseen by national institutions. Companies and NGOs have the fewest participating organisations due to the financial and administrative conditions of the programme. During the Capacity4MSP projects, organized by the Planners' Forum on 17.03.2021, participants indicated that companies and trade organisations should be more actively involved in the future. Another important group would be regional and local authorities.

9. Communication with stakeholders

This chapter reflects on communication strategies and practices during the MSP process, with a particular focus on the communication needs and interests of stakeholders. Communication with stakeholders is governed by the MSP competent authority/ies (Figure 7). The communication approach can be mainly based on one-way communication flow, limited to the provision of information to the relevant target groups as a whole or to selected groups of stakeholders, or to the provision of specific information to the relevant stakeholder group. Another approach to communication is a two-way flow of communication that includes consultation and dialogue.

In the two-way communication process, authorities provide information and collect feedback, opinions, additional data and knowledge support to improve MSP outcomes. Existing legislation and guidelines on public participation require the relevant authorities to consult on the draft MSP, thus providing an opportunity to be informed as well to express opinions. In most BSR countries, the consultation process includes at least the following minimum requirements: a draft document is issued for comments and a public consultation meeting is organized.

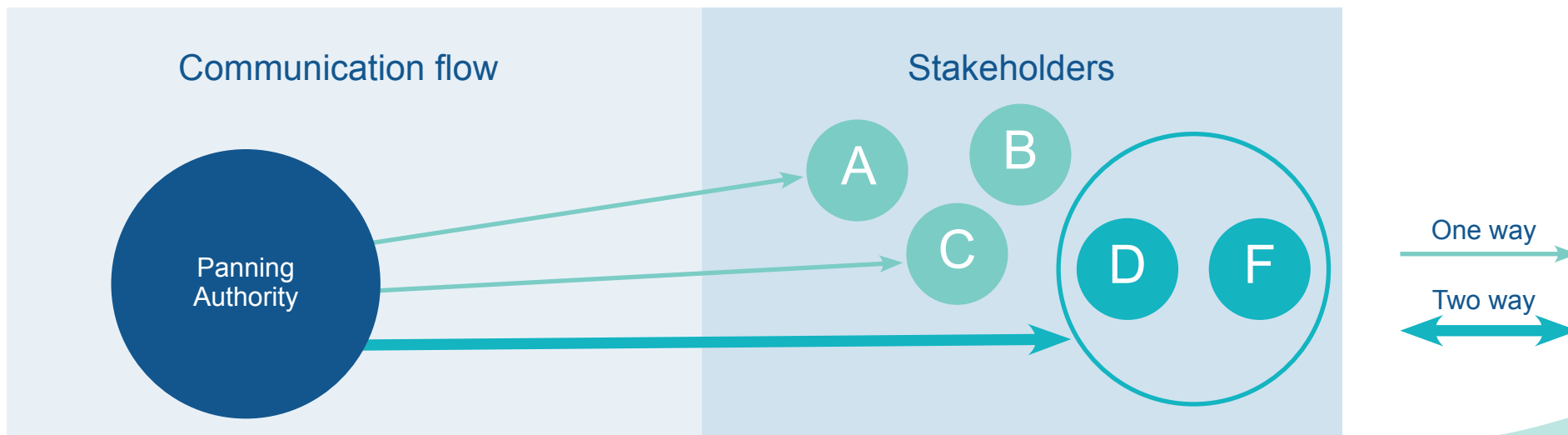


Figure 7. Communication approaches in the MSP.

The flow of two-way communication in the MSP process in the BSR countries exceeds the minimum requirements of public consultation. There is a wide range of interactions with a stakeholder group or groups, as well as with representatives of individual stakeholders. Consultations are organized not only when a draft planning document has been prepared, but already at an early stage in the development of the. The intensity of communication depends to a large extent on the resources and capacity of the MSP competent authority. Less resources and a lack of professional engagement of communication experts can result in some stakeholders receiving only general information and being insufficiently addressed or less actively engaged, unless the group is self-organized and strong.

9.1. Communication practices and identified challenges and gaps

Communication in the MSP process is essential to ensure openness and transparency. Communication strategies, also called interaction plans, have been developed and implemented to support MSP in several BSR countries. However, these strategies/plans do not cover communication needs during the implementation and monitoring and evaluation phases.

The approach to organizing communication activities may differ from case to case, from country to country. The planning authority performs the communication activities either by mobilizing **internal** resources (such as the available or newly appointed communication manager of the ministry or agency) or by **outsourcing and delegating** the task to a public relations company or company responsible for developing the MSP (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Communication activities in the MSP process

The BSR countries have different approaches to organising of communication activities (see Table 10). Some countries have developed specific communication strategies and plans (e.g. Sweden²⁸), while others have developed public stakeholder interaction/involvement plans, e.g. Finland²⁹ and Latvia (Veidemane, 2017). Some countries have developed internal communication or interaction plans (e.g. Finland and Estonia) to assist the planning team in organising communication activities. The importance of consistent and targeted communication efforts has been emphasized in an interactive communication guide recently published by the European Commission's Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries and EASME³⁰. This guide presents the Finnish example of an interaction plan as an case study of outstanding communication throughout the MSP process.

The recent approach is for all EU planning authorities to base their communication activities on the internal human resources (public relations specialists and planners) of the ministry or agency (Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Sweden). Some countries have also involved an external (subcontracted or outsourced) company or experts to support communication on MSP. In Finland, the contracted MSP coordinator was responsible for the MSP communication. The coordinator worked with a group of professional public relations specialists from the regional councils (9 people) responsible for the development and approval of the MSP plans and a public

relations specialist from the Ministry of the Environment.

The availability of external communication support depends to a large extent on the availability of additional funding from the state budget or projects. This has been strongly recognised by planners and experts participating in the Planners' Forum.

Russia is currently organizing communication with the support of external experts. Sweden has also appointed a public relations / communication manager for MSP, which is not the same as the planner. This is not a common practice in the BSR.

Table 10. Overview of the communication approach during the development of the MSP (based on survey results, March 2021)

| | DK | DE | M-V, DE | EE | FI | LV | LT | PL | RU | SE |
|---|----|----|------------|----|----|-----|----|-----|----|----|
| Communication or interaction plans for MSP development | x | | x | x | x | x | | | - | x |
| Communication resources: I - Internal O - Outsourcing | I | I | O&I | I | I | O&I | I | O&I | O | I |
| Appointed public relations /communication manager for MSP, which is not the same as planner | | | | | x | | | | | x |

²⁸ <http://www.havochvatten.se/planering-forvaltning-och-samverkan/havsplanering/om-havsplanering/dokumentation-och-rapporter-om-havsplanering/kommunikationsstrategi-for-planeringsfasen-inom-havsplanering.html>

²⁹ Maritime Spatial Planning Interaction Plan. 27/09/2018. https://www.merialuesuunnittelu.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/vuorovaikutussuunnitelma-27.9..2018_EN.pdf.

³⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/news/communicating-msp-inspiring-era-cooperation-between-institutions>

Multiple channels and tools have been used to implement communication / interaction plans or to perform communication activities (see Table 11).

Table 11. Overview of communication channels and tools during the development of the MSP (based on survey results, March 2021)

**As there is no formal MSP process in Russia, the current communication activities cannot be attributed to official information channels.*

| | DK | DE | M-V, DE | EE | FI | LV | LT | PL | RU* | SE |
|---|----|----|------------|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|
| Special website for MSP | | | | X | X | X | X | | | |
| Page at the authorities' website | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | | X |
| Social media (Facebook/Twitter) | | | | X | X | X | X | | | |
| Newsletters | | | | | X | | | | | X |
| Blogs | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Animations (cartoons) | | | | X | X | X | | | | |
| Videos | | | | | X | | | | | X |
| GIS platform | | | | X | X | | | | | |
| Press announcements | | | | | X | X | | X | | X |
| E-mails to all identified stakeholders | | | | | | | | X | | X |
| Kick-off or opening meeting | X | | | X | X | X | X | X | | X |
| Closing/final event | | | | X | | X | X | X | | |
| National conferences/seminars | | | | X | X | X | | X | X | X |
| Thematic/sector meetings | | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| International events | | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Public hearing on draft MSP | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| Network meetings/Forums for those interested (signed-up) in regular communication | X | | | X | X | | X | X | X | X |
| Maps for drawing on them | | | | | X | | | X | | |
| Newspaper articles | | | X | X | X | | | X | X | X |

Table 11. Overview of communication channels and tools during the development of the MSP (based on survey results, March 2021)

**As there is no formal MSP process in Russia, the current communication activities cannot be attributed to official information channels.*

| | DK | DE | M-V, DE | EE | FI | LV | LT | PL | RU* | SE |
|--|----|----|------------|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|
| Brochures | x | | | | | | | x | x | x |
| Leaflets | | x | x | | x | x | x | x | | x |
| Posters | x | | | x | x | x | | | | x |
| Articles in maritime sector magazines and journals | | | | | x | | | | | |
| Stickers | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pens, pencils | | | | | | x | | x | | |
| Bags | | | | | | | | | | x |
| Badges | | | | | | | | | | x |
| Memory sticks | | | | | | | | | | |
| Notebooks | | | | | | | | x | | |
| Organisers | | | | | | | | x | | |

Communication evaluation is performed to reveal progress in achieving the communication objectives of a particular planning phase. During the preparatory planning phase (at the beginning of the MSP development), it is important to describe clearly the communication objectives for the three planning phases separately (development, implementation and monitoring) as well as the whole planning process. In practice, the authorities in the BSR countries focus on the development phase, while the next phases are neglected. The main communication objectives for the development phase can be synthesised as follows:

- Increase awareness and focus on MSP (as the process is new to most BSR countries), thereby mobilizing stakeholders and interest groups.
- Receive input/feedback from stakeholders, which increases the quality of the planning process and the outcome and ensures collective ownership of the outcome.
- Disseminate the outcomes of MSP to increase visibility and recognition, share experiences and ensure access to the gained knowledge and data.

The success in achieving the communication objectives can be measured by metrics or indicators. Success is commonly evaluated quantitatively using measurable output indicators such as the number of events organised, people reached or audiences covered. The types of indicators are already defined when developing communication strategies or interaction plans. However, the indicator approach is not yet widely used in the MSP process. For example, the Latvian MSP Public Participation Strategy envisaged that regional consultation meetings would be organised in three coastal regions of Latvia three times in addition to national measures during the development of the MSP.

The Finnish interaction plan³¹, developed by the MSP cooperation group, asked any interested person or organisation to register with the MSP Coordination Network, which has approximately 400 members. The interaction plan outlines the key events (kick-off events in the regions), national events, workshops. The exact number of events is not specified here, rather the events should be organised depending on necessity. The actual participation success, measured in terms of the number of events and people reached in the target group, has been summarized in reports at regional and national level.

Social surveys can provide qualitative information on people's perceptions of the binding and attractiveness of MSP or an assessment of whether the communication has change their perception of MSP. Currently, public authorities have collected information only about communication

activities as such and in some case on outreach, while qualitative information on how the activities have been perceived has not been studied yet.

Another approach to evaluating communication is to assess the impact of the activities and the result of communication, e.g. the enthusiasm of stakeholders for the topic, the quality/usefulness of the feedback or dialogue, the number of participants who considered that their voice was heard. These aspects have not been analysed by the BSR planning authorities yet. Sweden plans to carry out such a study in 2021. In Poland, a study on stakeholder involvement and communication is likely to be carried out after the adoption of the national plan.

Some of the countries see that communication on MSP should continue after the adoption of the plan, while others have not yet fully identified the situation. Representatives of the planning authorities have pointed out that in the next MSP phase, which is implementation, stronger and more targeted communication at the local level is important. Meetings, workshops and other communication tools are feasible to be used in the further process. Cooperation projects have been identified as an important support mechanism also during the implementation phase. Guidance, tools and training are also preferred as assistance to the countries. Some people would like to have elaborated templates for communication materials.

³¹ https://www.merialuesuunnittelu.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/vuorovaikutussuunnitelma-27.9..2018_EN.pdf

9.2. Key messages on how to improve communication in the BSR and beyond

- Resources, including funding for communication, need to be planned and allocated adequately. Engagement of a professional communication manager is a significant advantage for the successful achievement of communication and outreach objectives. Having communicators and public relations experts support MSP will release planners from taking active role in communication activities and let them focus more on direct planning tasks.
- A well-developed communication strategy/plan helps to organize communication activities in a timely and systematic manner; There is a strong intervention between communication (dialogue) and stakeholder involvement process that needs to be linked in the development of a communication strategy. As MSP is an interactive process, the communication plan must also be also flexible to be able to adapt to emerging situations.
- Dissemination of the MSP outcomes could improve the understanding of the plan and its implications for the sector, for each stakeholder group and for the daily lives of communities. This needs to be communicated clearer. Dissemination activities are given more attention when real projects and investments are presented and evaluated.



- Communication strategies / interaction plans should also include measurable indicators to evaluate the success in achieving communication objectives. An ex-post survey is also needed to assess the quality and effectiveness of communication activities.
- Different thematic workshops with stakeholders are considered to be one of the most efficient communication tools; however, organized discussion on various alternatives and options should be organized at different locations to ensure wider participation. The engagement of local and regional stakeholders could be strengthened. If wider participation were needed, some of the events could be broadcast through social channels.
- Personal/ individual communications are also important to reach consensus on critical and divergent issues.

10. Recommendations for stakeholder involvement and engagement

Stakeholder involvement process

- Experience shows that **early stakeholder involvement** brings multiple benefits to MSP. Through formal and informal methods, the continuation of the participatory process should be ensured during all stages of the MSP. Planners as well as all stakeholders acknowledge that building trust is an incremental process and requires time and efforts from all parties; consequently, resources for collaboration should be allocated.
- **A variety of tools or models** to support communication with stakeholders should be developed for specific purposes and also different phases in MSP such as a joint e-mail list, thematic working groups, a mapping database, thematic games or interactive exercises. However, the survey found that **thematic workshops/ events** with stakeholders are rated as the most efficient tools to date.
- Tools can be attractive by also integrating game features, however, they need to be able to empower the stakeholders involved. Methods and tools must consider cultural and political differences. The planners or communication managers need to be skilled to be able to select the most appropriate tools for the local context to avoid irritation and discontentment.



- The engagement of **local and regional stakeholders** could be strengthened in the next round of MSP development or during the revision phase. Discussion should be organized openly, with various alternatives, at different locations to ensure wider participation; more broadcasting of events through social channels when large-scale participation is required.

- **Incentives** need to be mobilized to ensure that all relevant and significant (powerful) stakeholders sit at the same table. Stakeholder mapping and analysis should consider the leverage of adopting a plan, which goes beyond the inclusion of all interests in planning process. Politicians are one of the main stakeholders; thereby, the communication with them should be regular to ensure that MSP is on the political agenda.
- **The HELCOM- VASAB MSP WG** could also serve as a platform for strategic reflection on stakeholder involvement issues. This activity could be supported by transnational projects or other platforms (such as the Planners' Forum), which could support the organisation of thematic or ad hoc groups and discussion related to stakeholder involvement in MSP.

Communication process

- Communication and dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders should be planned **strategically and systematically** to achieve true inclusiveness in the planning process. A Communication and Interaction Plan developed at the beginning of the process could support and guide planners, as well as **provide transparency and information** on the planning sequence and its results.
- Communication and interaction plans should also include **measurable indicators** to evaluate the success in achieving communication objectives. An ex-post survey or study is needed to assess the quality and effectiveness of communication activities.

- **Dialogue and exchange of experience** among communication professionals, as well as between planners and communication professionals, could be supported in the process of developing and implementing MSP. All MSP practitioners should acquire basic communication skills to facilitate effective dialogue with stakeholders. Such cooperation and capacity building activities could be supported by transnational projects.

Dissemination of the results of the MSP could improve the understanding of the plan and implications for their sector, each stakeholder group and the daily lives of the communities. The outcomes and the next implementation steps need to be communicated more clearly.

- Bringing national and sub-national level **MSP outcomes to the local level** and discussing the implications and benefits of implementation is one of the key activities of MSP authorities. This would increase the involvement of civil society and local actors from different maritime sectors.
- Resources for communication and stakeholder involvement must be planned and allocated adequately; involving communication professionals can improve communication practices in the planning process.

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