



Suggestion for a Terms of Reference for a Baltic Sea Region Maritime Spatial Planners' Forum

Annex to the Planning forum report

2022



Background

Coherent planning across borders is needed to ensure efficient and optimal use of the Baltic Sea and to meet economic, social and environmental objectives. The official MSP collaboration between the Baltic Sea countries is organized through the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group. Several MSP projects in recent years have shown a need for more informal and practical knowledge exchange and cooperation among marine spatial planners to complement the official platform. Planners' forums have been performed within the frames of the previous projects and the good experiences indicate that there is a need for a lasting mechanism to support the exchange.

Objective

The Baltic Sea Region Maritime Spatial Planners' Forum (hereinafter Planners' forum)

1. looks into the future and aims to improve joint planning evidence and coherence for the next round of plans
2. facilitates knowledge exchange, discusses current issues, strengthens the application of an ecosystem-based approach and thus supports the MSP cycle
3. supports cross-border MSP cooperation
4. supports and complements, at a technical level, the work within the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group, including the implementation of the Regional Baltic MSP Roadmap and the rest of the MSP framework.

Status

The Planners' forum

5. is a forum for professionals involved in preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the maritime spatial plans in the Baltic Sea Region
6. is a platform to meet, discuss and exchange views and experiences and to develop a common understanding as well as advice and proposals related to the objectives above
7. is an expert sub-group (Expert Group or Expert Network) to the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group which it informs at a regular basis.

Membership

Core members of the Planners' forum

8. are professionals involved in MSP from all countries in the Baltic Sea Region and the Åland Islands appointed by competent planning authorities or the MSP contact points (coordination on national level). In general, 1-2/country + deputy. In cases where the MSP responsibility is more distributed, one additional member can be appointed

9. are representatives from the HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats. In general, 1-2/secretariat + deputy.

Representatives from other organisations

10. may participate in meetings by invitation by the Chair, depending on issues to be dealt with.

The Chair

11. is agreed by the countries of the Planners' forum for a defined period of time to be decided by the group
12. is supported by a vice-chair, appointed on a rotational basis, hosting the face-to-face meetings.

Modus operandi

Forums

13. are held at least twice a year. Meetings may be held more frequently whenever necessary
14. should be held as face-to-face meetings hosted by the vice-chair at least once a year if possible. Face-to-face meetings should be held back-to-back with other events whenever possible. Additional meetings can be organised online if it is found more suitable by the Chair
15. can be organised as workshops or in any other format appropriate for the purpose. The Chair can appoint moderators for specific events or discussions
16. can facilitate bilateral discussions if relevant. Bilateral discussions can be organised as separate meetings.

The agenda of the Planners' forum

17. is prepared by the Chair. Any member can propose agenda items.

A work plan for the Planners' forum

18. specifies the work and focus for one or more years
19. can be amended when needed in order to address emerging issues
20. is prepared and agreed by all core members.

Technical and administrative support

21. is given by the HELCOM Secretariat and the VASAB Secretariat.

Communication

22. is maintained primarily by e-mail (internal, between members) and by a common online platform [the HELCOM meeting portal].

23. other communication channels such as a specific website and the use of a hashtag may be used if necessary.

Tasks

The Planners' forum will, at a technical and expert level, for example:

24. analyse and discuss future needs that MSP should address as well as prepare for the next planning round
25. exchange experience about the MSP processes at a national level and in a regional context in the BSR, regarding e.g.:
 - implementation
 - monitoring, evaluation and follow up
 - coherence among plans and cross border cooperation
 - applying an ecosystem based approach
26. exchange experience about MSP issues and solutions in the BSR, regarding e.g.
 - cross border issues
 - conflicting issues and multi-use
 - climate issues
 - sustainable blue growth
27. exchange MSP experience with other sea basins
28. analyse and discuss any issues that are brought up by the members of the Planners' forum
29. support the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group and the implementation of the Regional Baltic MSP Roadmap by performing specific tasks that are commonly agreed by the Planners' forum and the MSP Working Group.

The above list is neither mandatory nor exhaustive. Tasks will be amended as necessary and specified in the work plan as well as in the agenda for specific forums.

Resources needed

Basic funding for participation in meetings should be provided through national funding. External funding should be sought for the Chair and vice-chair as well as for technical and administrative support. Additional funding could be attracted from projects.

