



## Notes from 1<sup>st</sup> Planners` Forum within PASPS project

04.11.2022. Online

During years 2022-2024 Planners` Forums will be organized as part of [PASPS](#) project (funded by Interreg BSR). PASPS project has taken on Planners` Forum from Capacity4MSP project platform (2019-2022, funded by Interreg BSR) and Pan Baltic Scope project (2018-2019, funded by EMFF). The first meeting of the Planners` Forum within PASPS project was intended to set the outline for work for upcoming years as well as to agree on technical organizational matters. Planners` Forum remains a platform for practical exchange for MSP practitioners, topics to discuss remain flexible and adaptive; participants of Planners` Forum can raise pressing issues to be included in the agenda upon need.

### News from countries

*\*Context: participating members are invited to share their MSP news. Special attention was paid to MSP status and pressing issues, as well as countries were invited to share latest news regarding **offshore energy development and how they plan to achieve the '30by30' target set in the EU Biodiversity Strategy – 30% of marine areas have to be protected by 2030.***

**Denmark:** Danish MSP was published and received temporary legal effect in March 2021 and was followed by political negotiations. Governmental election took place on 1 November 2022. Currently, trilateral dialogue with the Netherlands and Germany is taking place on offshore wind farms and shipping corridors.

To speed up green energy transition, more areas should be allocated for renewable energy in MSP. Danish Energy agency has received 19 applications for production of wind energy, many outside the allocated territories, decisions will have to be made on how to address them. The Energy Agency is working on a new assessment framework for comparison of renewable energy applications.

As of now, Denmark has allocated 30% of marine areas for environmental protection in the MSP and those also include areas that haven't been adopted yet. The target of having 10% strictly protected areas has been the most important in political discussions.

**Estonia:** Estonian MSP was adopted in May this year. Now, the MSP is in court, as the fisherman/trawlers disagree with the reserved offshore wind areas and the court decision

**Interreg**  
Baltic Sea Region



**Co-funded by**  
**the European Union**

should be soon available. There is a high pressure from wind farm developers. Environmental assessment for 8 GW is being carried out, exceeding the Estonian energy needs 5 times. Grid capacity is also insufficient, and the government plan is to have grid capacity for 1 GW until 2030, which is inconsistent with the 8 GW production capacity. It is not clear yet how the 30% protection target will be reached, especially to ensure the 10% strictly protected areas.

**Finland:** Finnish MSP was finalized and approved by the end of 2020. Currently Finland is involved in [eMSP NBSR](#), MSP Green and Baltic Sea2Land projects. Due to geopolitical situation the marine energy and food production have become more important and must support self-sufficiency. Currently discussion on starting the 2<sup>nd</sup> MSP round is taking place, planned to start in 2026 the latest, aligned with the reporting of MSFD directive. Two additional national plans that cover sea areas are being updated: National Coastal Zone Strategy being one of the instruments to implement MSP and the Natural Resource Plan for sea areas that deals with the same marine sectors as MSP.

The exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and territorial waters are treated differently in Finnish legislation, as the latter belong to municipalities and are covered by regional plans that are legally binding and have a procedure to produce wind energy. Some of regional plans are being updated. In few areas will be provided to make proposals. In EEZ the procedure is less clear, discussion of how to equalize the systems in EEZ and territorial waters is taking place. Not all the research applications for offshore wind align with territories allocated in MSP. The guidance in MSP or other procedures is not sufficient and there is an intent to provide licences based on market situation.

The approach to achieve the 30% protection target will be complex with various type of protected areas, different tools to ensure protection and definition of strict protection is still under development. Political discussions are taking place on how to reach these targets. A project [Biodiversea LIFE IP — for Marine Nature](#) is starting to define protected areas.

**Latvia:** After the latest election, there is intent to form a new Ministry for Climate and Energy, organizational changes and focus shift to energy development are expected. Latvian MSP was adopted in 2019 and interim assessment is scheduled with contribution from projects MSP-Green and Baltic Sea2Land Latvia is involved in. Other BSR countries will be invited to contribute to the assessment. There might be potential changes in MSP after the assessment. A joint project between Latvia and Estonia 'Elwind' for energy production, including hydrogen is planned. Three licensing processes are ongoing and being evaluated by the Ministry of Economy and harmonised with other ministries before the approval in Cabinet of Ministers.

In Latvia several projects are carried out to define marine protected areas (MPAs), Life project ['Reef'](#) is identifying marine areas. Nature Conservation Agency intends to establish large marine protected areas with an ambitious target to have almost 30% of Natura 2000 territories and 10% strictly protected areas might be achieved.

**Poland:** Polish plan was adopted in April 2021; currently minor amendments mostly addressing legislative issues are being made and should be finalized until the end of this year. One issue to be addressed is the conflict of licensing of exploration and exploitation areas that were issued

before the adoption of MSP and with the new MSP are in areas which prohibit such activities. In parallel, the detailed plans for the Polish lagoons, the biggest ports and other areas needing more detailed approach are being carried out by Maritime offices. Monitoring of the plan will be among the next steps.

All areas designated for energy developments are now a subject of licensing. In the first phase of energy developments, there are currently 8 concluded contracts for offshore wind farms with the capacity of 5,94 GW. The next step is to receive building permit and the production should start at 2026-2027. In the second phase there are 11 proceedings within 11 sites with competitive character. It is planned to issue location permits which is the first step to start developing offshore wind farm by the end of first quarter of 2023. Total capacity of these projects is estimated to be more than the national goal of 11 GW. There is a precise regulation in place on the criteria for developers to be eligible to apply for offshore development sites.

The already existing forms of nature protection in Poland, like Natura 2000, national parks, landscape parks, Ramsar sites, etc., cover 23.8% of Polish maritime areas. Around 26% of the MPAs in the sea are achieved with MSP which excludes human activities in concrete areas.

**Sweden:** The Swedish MSPs were adopted in February this year, English version should be available soon. There is a strong interest in offshore wind energy production and many applications, leading the government to call for the second planning phase. Four times more territories should be allocated for offshore energy production. Until the end of March jointly with relevant sectoral agencies possible areas for offshore wind have to be identified. The MSP process will be started afterwards with the aim to deliver revised proposals on MSP to government by the end of December 2024. Then it will be followed by consultation stage and review stage according to the MSP regulations. National consultation is planned for next summer, but Espoo consultation by next autumn when also draft plans will be shared with other countries.

There are multiple ongoing offshore wind projects in licensing phase. Another governmental assignment is to develop a more efficient system to align planned developments, overlapping applications and new MSP.

Sweden has developed a national framework for MPA system, including regional action plans. There's a discussion about the level of ambition, strictly protected areas with regard to fisheries. The amount of MPAs in Sweden is comparably high, but unevenly distributed.

Sweden is also involved in the eMSP NBSR project where SWaM is co-leading the EBA learning strand with HELCOM.

**Comments from discussions:** Although it would be interesting to compare licensing and auctioning systems for offshore wind farm development, in many countries this is not the responsibility of the authority responsible for MSP, therefore planners could only provide an insight without too much detail.



Co-funded by  
the European Union

## News from VASAB and HELCOM

**VASAB:** VASAB Vision 2040 has been elaborated through co-creative process with wide stakeholder engagement. After stakeholder consultations this spring/summer, draft Vision 2040 has been adjusted according to received feedbacks.

During this autumn VASAB has been participating in various events to inform about the draft Vision 2040 – organizing workshop at EU Week of Cities and Regions, representation during the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Lappeenranta, Finland. Under the EUSBSR Annual Forum umbrella was a webinar discussing new spatial challenges that have arisen due to the war in the BSR was organised.

Considering outcomes from consultations and workshops, [a final version of VASAB Vision 2040](#) is being circulated among stakeholders for final refinements. Planners` Forum participants are invited to share their comments if any. The aim is to adopt the Vision 2040 during the next VASAB CSPD/BSR meeting on 13 December and endorse it during the VASAB Ministerial Conference that will be organised in early summer 2023 in Germany.

**HELCOM:** HELCOM is on strategic pause due to the political situation until further notice, therefore work is carried out through informal consultations sessions without participation of Russia. Restructuring of the working groups within HELCOM is carried out, however, the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group (WG) won't be affected except that cooperation with new groups might be taken on. The HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG agreed to work more closely with State & Conservation, which is the Working Group covering nature conservation and biodiversity protection, as well as monitoring and assessment, but this group will be restructured. HELCOM continues working in projects – eMSP NBSR, MSP4BIO, REMAP, PASPS projects. HELCOM holistic assessment (HOLAS 3) assessment is carried out.

## Technical setting-up of future Planners` Forums

**Introduction to EUSBSR & PASPS project:** Starting this meeting Planners` Forum is organized within PASPS project. PASPS (Policy area 'Spatial Planning' Support) is an Interreg BSR project aimed to assist implementation of the EU Strategy for Baltic Sea Region ([EUSBSR](#)). EUSBSR is a framework helpful for macro-regional cooperation around the Baltic Sea with a joint Action Plan implemented within 14 Policy areas (PAs), Spatial Planning coordinated by VASAB jointly with HELCOM being one of them. Overall aim of the PA 'Spatial Planning' is to increase territorial cohesion in the BSR with two action fields – land-based spatial planning and MSP. Planners` Forum fits in the latter being linked with the work of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG. PASPS project is the 4<sup>th</sup> project in a row to assist the work of PA 'Spatial Planning' and is including the work of Planners` Forum as an informal platform to increase territorial cohesion in the region. Work of BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-group has been supported by PASPS and its predecessors as well. PASPS project has given VASAB Secretariat the capacity to organize Planners` Forums – prepare the agenda and notes, facilitate meetings. HELCOM Secretariat will assist. It has to be noted that the capacity is more limited compared to Pan Baltic Scope and Capacity4MSP projects.

PASPS project is implemented in line with the [work plan of PA 'Spatial Planning'](#), where Planners` forum is included under 3<sup>rd</sup> Action – project idea development, which will create a new direction of work for Planners` Forum. Planners` forum is also linked with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Action in the work plan – Ensuring Coherent Maritime Spatial Plans throughout the Baltic Sea. As an

informal cooperation platform, Planners` Forum is appropriate to also discuss knowledge gaps and project needs in MSP. One of the project deliverables delivered by the end of 2024 will be a compilation of project ideas on land-based spatial planning, MSP and land-sea interactions, and Planners` Forum will contribute to the development of MSP related ideas.

That being said, focus of Planners` Forum remains on discussing current state of MSP, enlisting knowledge gaps, and exchanging among participants. Compiling project ideas is strongly linked with other tasks of the Planners` Forum. To some capacity other stakeholders could be included in compiling project ideas. Planners` Forum also will serve as a place to discuss results of other relevant MSP projects and relate their results to national MSP contexts. Planners` Forum can serve as a place to have a wider discussion that in the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG. Agenda of Planners` Forums remain flexible and can be adjusted according to emerging challenges.

**Membership:** It was decided during the IC HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 1-2022 that the group members will nominate 1-2 core members to participate in the Planners` Forum. Most countries have done that prior to the Planners` Forum meeting, some countries have suggested core members and their substitutes. In the same meeting it was suggested to invite relevant experts to Planners` Forum meetings depending on the theme discussed. However, the number of participants cannot grow too big for the Planners` Forum to continue operate effectively. Two types of experts have to be distinguished: experts from other sectors and maritime spatial planners who work on specific topic within MSP but are not part of the Planners` Forum.

Although cooperation with sectors has been acknowledged as important, planners` Forum participants are more in favour of inviting few experts from other sectors, preferably able to provide a comprehensive view on a concrete subject. Too wide sectoral representation could lead the discussions away from MSP. There is an option that each country has nominated few MSP practitioners and depending on the theme for respective Planners` Forum nominated member with most expertise or interest would participate in that particular meeting.

It was agreed that the Planners` Forum would remain a small group that is oriented on discussing practical solutions in which participants trust each other and can speak freely to address pressing issues they have to deal with their MSP work. The work in Planners` Forum should remain informal and therefore the group should be limited with 1-2 nominated members from each country and depending on the topic further maritime planners could be invited. In addition, starting next meeting also representatives from Aland will be invited. From meeting to meeting, potential invitees could be further discussed.

**Chairmanship:** The Terms of Reference (ToR) for Planners` Forum developed during Capacity4MSP project platform lifespan suggest that Planners` Forum should be chaired by one of the BSR countries and VASAB and HELCOM Secretariats would assist. However, the ToR cannot be approved while HELCOM is on strategic pause. During the pre-consultations, most participating countries mentioned lack of capacity to immediately take on the chairing of Planners` Forum. Therefore, VASAB will facilitate the meetings of Planners` Forum for the period of PASPS project as interim solution. The opportunity to chair Planners` Forum remains open.

**Projects and initiatives that could be followed during Planners` Forum:** Planners` Forum could serve as a place to discuss valuable MSP project results as not all countries participate in all relevant MSP projects. Few projects to mention at this stage are eMSP NBSR, MSP-GREEN, Baltic Sea2Land, [SELINA](#), [MSP4BIO](#). [BEMIP](#) is an initiative Planners` Forum would like to have an exchange with. HOLAS 3 results might be presented. The list is not exhaustive and can be extended at any time.

**Planners` Forum as test bed for Community of Practice approach:** As part of the [workshop](#) 'Sustainable oceans by governance and planning – dream or reality? Baltic Sea Perspective' that was organised as part of the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Lappeenranta, Finland on 29 September, an idea was suggested that Planners` Forum could be a place for wider cooperation with other sectors and potentially the 'Community of Practice' ([CoP](#)) approach applied in the eMSP NBSR project for North and Baltic seas could be tested within the Planners` Forum for the BSR. Compared to the current format of Planners` Forum, CoP is more open and wider cooperation where wide group of stakeholders is being involved and can lead the thematic process. Planners` Forum on the other hand is a closed group for MSP practitioners. Therefore, the concepts are quite different and not compatible. Testing CoP approach would be time consuming and currently it is tested widely as part of the eMSP NBSR project.

**Swedish Institute funding to increase capacity of Planners` Forum:** As the PASPS project can provide less resources for Planners` Forum as the predecessor projects funding for networking provided by [Swedish institute](#) to possibly gain extra capacity for Planners` Forum was presented. Swedish institute is a public agency providing smaller grants for cooperation initiatives in BSR and beyond. They plan to launch a new program for networking activities in which Planners` Forum would fit in well. It is planned to have two-year small projects with around 90 000 EUR funding, and it would require a Swedish lead partner. One of the resources missing within PASPS project is financial means to organize physical meetings and cover travel costs for participants. This might also be a chance to expand the work of Planners` Forum in upcoming years. This may also provide additional capacity for chairing of the Planners` Forums.

The participants of the Planners` Forum expressed their satisfaction with existing format of Planners` forum facilitated by VASAB, some countries also showed willingness to organize and host Planners` Forum meetings. It can be foreseen that MSP scene will be intense for next two years and extra funding could be utilized for cross-border consultations. However, as previously agreed, Planners` Forum should remain a small group for practical exchange. Therefore, it was decided that at current stage there is no need to attract extra capacity for Planners` Forum, but it could be considered for upcoming years.

**Next meeting:** The date and format for the next meeting remains open as it will be coordinated with the next meetings of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG and BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-group as well as other potential MSP events. Opportunities to organize face-to-face or hybrid meeting will be explored.

## Overarching themes for Planners` Forum

**Potential themes for the Planners Forum:** From the pre-consultation following themes have been identified for Planners` Forum: energy related topics, climate change, co-existence or multi-use, overarching topic of European Green Deal and its` impact on MSP, underwater cultural heritage, data, factors influencing MSP, scenario development, stakeholder engagement, sustainable blue economy, cumulative impacts. There are topics, like energy production in the sea, that are pressing and widely addressed in various ways and there is also a big interest to discuss these during Planners` Forums. However, the Planners` Forum should aim to keep a holistic view and include also more diverse topics. The work should be thematically linked with the work of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, especially tasks assigned in the Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030 and work plan of the group.

Coherence and monitoring and evaluation are topics that planners have emphasized in addition to those identified prior to the meeting. Many countries are starting interim assessments of their MSP as well as starting new MSP cycles. Planners` Forum can serve as a place to discuss various project results and to learn about national MSPs in more detail as there is no time for that during other meetings, these presentations can be linked with the overarching theme of respective Planners` Forum.

Meeting participants filled out a short survey to evaluate which topics they would like to discuss during Planners` Forums during PASPS project (15 themes were to be evaluated in a scale from 1 to 7) and the results were following:

European Green Deal and MSP	Climate change and MSP	Offshore wind energy	Cumulative impacts	EBA in MSP
5,88	5,25	6,25	4,75	5,13
Sustainable Blue Economy	Alternative offshore energy production	Data for MSP	Underwater Cultural Heritage	Factors influencing MSP
5,25	3,875	3,375	3,625	3,25
Aquacultures	Co-existence/ Multi-use	Stakeholder Engagement	Scenario development	Monitoring & Evaluation
5,125	5,875	3,25	3,75	6,625

During voting, the clear leader was monitoring and evaluation, as this is a planning phase in which most of the countries are at the moment. It is followed by the offshore wind energy development. European Green Deal was also noted as important, while it was also commented that this topic is very broad and includes various other topics, e.g., co-existence, food production in the sea, fisheries, aquacultures. Sustainable Blue Economy, Ecosystem-based approach, co-existence also pair well. Nature protection could be combined with cumulative impacts and may become more important in upcoming years. Collecting data for monitoring is also an important topic. The currently ongoing eMSP NBSR project could provide input on

monitoring and evaluation, sustainable blue economy, ecosystem-based approach. Further projects (e.g., Baltic Sea2Land) may provide more knowledge on land-sea interactions.

In addition, participants suggested to address topic of cross-border coherence of MSP (mentioned in 3 out of 9 surveys filled). Another theme proposed was to include more detailed presentations of national MSPs. In addition, the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG work plan addresses land-sea interactions, spatial efficiency, strategic environmental assessment, topics related with nature conservation.

During the meeting, a discussion on preparing maps on existing and planned wind farms took place. However, it was agreed that creating extra workload specifically dedicated to the Planners` Forum should be avoided, but participants are encouraged to be prepared for the meetings and utilize existing resources. For exchange of data, it is suggested to use BASEMAPS to the extent it is possible. Suggestions on what kind of information should be added there can be made by Planners` Forum. For offshore wind development, an existing resource is [4Coffshore](#), however, the data there is not always up to date.

Further topic raised during the meeting was Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECM) – can these measures be included in '30by30', are there countries with clear criteria on how to define OECMs? HELCOM has been working with OECM on Baltic Sea scale, especially in the State & Conservation Group. OECM should have more linkages with MSP. It is agreed though, that OECM is a topic to be discussed in the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.

It has to be noted that there are two approaches to address certain topic during Planners` Forum. Firstly, it can mean that the countries exchange on specific topic among themselves (e.g., on monitoring and evaluation). As a result of exchange all countries would have a comprehensive view on how a particular task is carried out across the Baltic Sea Region. Secondly, it may imply inviting external experts, in some cases sectoral, to share more knowledge on specific theme (e.g., co-existence).

Next Planners` Forum will have two thematic parts – first will be on **monitoring and evaluation**, countries will be invited to share their approaches, frameworks and experiences. The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the meeting will be dedicated to **offshore wind energy developments**, where besides national updates also external experts will be invited to share knowledge on the topic. As regards offshore wind development cumulative cross-border impacts, presenting existing and planned areas for offshore wind farms, licensing and auctioning systems, grid developments, cumulative impacts. The second Planners` Forum of 2023 will be dedicated to European Green Deal and topics it entails beyond offshore energy production.

As the needs and topics are rapidly changing, it is decided to keep the overarching themes for 2024 open and be decided later. Themes addressed by Planers` Forum remain flexible and participants can continue suggesting topics by reaching out to VASAB Secretariat in-between meetings.

## Project idea development

As part of the PASPS project, a new task has been allocated to the Planners` Forum – to contribute to a list of project ideas that would support implementation of EUSBSR PA ‘Spatial Planning’ action field of MSP. Planners` Forum participants discussed on the most useful format for such a compilation of project ideas and what kind of information should be included. It is suggested that the list of project ideas also includes key stakeholders who could participate in the meetings, e.g., regional authorities. National authorities may not have the capacity to participate in the projects themselves, however they have a picture on MSP needs in their countries. In addition, if external stakeholders develop MSP related project applications, there is a list already at hand on the MSP needs. It is acknowledged that New Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030 as well as the work plan for HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG can serve as an inspiration. VASAB Vision 2040 also has set of project needs and ideas relevant for spatial planning. An initial list of project ideas was developed as one of the outputs for the Capacity4MSP project platform and that should be reviewed. As part of pre-consultations most countries have submitted some initial ideas.

Having a joint list of project ideas would identify topics that are of pan-Baltic importance, relevant for multiple BSR countries. During meeting a proposal to further think of potential monitoring and evaluation projects was made. The topics discussed during Planners` Forum beyond project idea development can also serve as input, e.g., identification of existing knowledge gaps. However, the list of project ideas could be useful also for smaller transnational programmes, e.g., Interreg Central Baltic. This exercise can also be utilized to cross-reference the funding possibilities of this programming period and project needs. It should be considered on how to reach ‘outside the MSP bubble’ and address other stakeholders and also identify which other sectors can contribute to MSP, e.g., project on underwater cultural heritage can provide data valuable for MSP. One of potential approaches is to co-operate and exchange with other Policy area coordinators within EUSBSR who will be summarizing project ideas in their thematic fields.

Each Planners` Forum meeting will have an hour dedicated for project idea development to discuss what kind of projects are needed in the future to have more expertise in MSP. The aim of the exercise is to have ‘bucket’ of ideas and potential partners to ease developing new project applications when needed. For the next meeting available inputs will be summarized and presented as a starting point for discussions.

## Participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> Planners Forum within PASPS project

Country	Name	Organization
Denmark	Trine Skovgaard Kirkfeldt	Danish Maritime Authority
Estonia	Lembe Reiman	Ministry of Finance
Finland	Tiina Tihlman	Ministry of Environment
Finland	Mari Pohja-Mykrä	Regional Council of Southwest Finland
Latvia	Mārtiņš Grels	MoEPRD
Latvia	Marta Štūbe	MoEPRD
Poland	Rybka Kamil	Ministry of Infrastructure
Poland	Zajęc Natalia	Ministry of Infrastructure
Sweden	Jan Schmidtbauer Crona	Swedish Marine & Water Management Authority
VASAB	Liene Gaujeniete	VASAB Secretariat
VASAB	Elīna Veidemane	VASAB Secretariat
VASAB	Alda Nikodemusa	VASAB Secretariat
HELCOM	Florent Nicolas	HELCOM Secretariat