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Background

The Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme core project Baltic Sea2Land (“Fostering integrated governance for the joint sustainable use of human and natural capital in the near shore zone”) started at the beginning of 2023. The main result of this project will be the production of the Sea2Land Navigator, which is to serve as a digital platform that promotes, eases and aids in governing marine and coastal space.

Action requested

The Steering Group is invited to take note of the information on development progress on Sea2Land Navigator.

The Baltic Sea2Land project is funded by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme 2021-2027 as a core project under Priority 2 “Water-Smart Societies”. The full project name is “*Fostering* integrated governance for the joint sustainable use of human and natural capital in the near shore zone”, it commenced at the beginning of 2023 and will last until the end of 2025. The project is a collaboration between:

1. The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia (LV)
2. Saaremaa Municipality (EE)
3. Tallinn University (EE)
4. Regional Council of Southwest Finland (FI)
5. Baltic Environmental Forum Germany (DE)
6. City of Fehmarn (DE)
7. HELCOM (FI)
8. Baltic Environmental Forum Latvia (LV)
9. Kurzeme Planning Region (LV)
10. Association “Klaipeda Region” (LT)
11. Institute of Oceanology Polish Academy of Sciences (PL)
12. VASAB (LV)
13. The Association of Sea Cities and Municipalities (PL)

Project background

The context of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, the European Green Deal being implemented in different national contexts, as well as ongoing complex environmental, climate, sustainable energy, coastal community and land-sea interaction challenges in the Baltic Sea Region call for a cohesive approach. While each of the Baltic Sea Region countries has a different planning system and institutional jurisdictions over marine and coastal spaces, a key issue persists – there are competing interests in need of balancing.

The Interreg Baltic Sea Region project Land-Sea-Act explored how integrated planning is often obstructed by unbalanced voices of different sectors and stakeholders, overlapping jurisdictions of various authorities, complexity of land-sea interactions, inefficient coordination and non-collaboration. The experiences of the 6 Land-Sea-Act project pilots, pilot methodology analysis and Blue Economy analyses were drawn together. This allowed to explore the potential of multi-level governance to deal with these complexities through intensive collaboration of stakeholders and confrontation of potential stakeholder conflicts pre-emptively. From this exploration a Multi-Level Governance Agenda was created – a guidance document that outlines key goalposts of application of multi-level governance principles and rationale to marine and coastal planning, lists potential methods and instruments, further readings that may be used and shortly illustrates these approaches with examples from the Land-Sea-Act project.

The Baltic Sea2Land project aims to build on these experiences through:

- Turning guidance produced previously from less approachable long-text formats to a digital platform with accessible digital tools and resources in a Multi-Level Governance Tool,
- Enabling better circulation, interpretation and use of spatial and statistical data in a Data Hub.

- Creating a tool and method catalogue (Knowledge Hub) that conveniently organizes potential approaches to marine and coastal planning and not only names options, but provides basis for analyzing appropriateness for a specific case via a profile and use examples,

The summation of this is the Sea2Land Navigator - a tailored guidance and decision making-support platform for public authorities and Sustainable Blue Economy stakeholders.

Building the Navigator

The Navigator consists of the 3 outlined components – the Data Hub, the Knowledge Hub and the Multi-Level Governance Tool:

- The Multi-Level Governance Tool is being schematically built by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia based on the Multi-Level Governance Agenda (Land-Sea-Act) and based on partner needs. The tool's schema is currently in its 3rd round of improvements in partner consultations.
- The Data Hub contents are being collected from all project partners and implemented in the tool by HELCOM. Project partners are still working on gathering datasets and ensuring appropriate licensing. This work is expected to continue until mid-2024, however, once the Navigator is finalized there are plans to write a protocol for maintaining data and new data submission.
- The Knowledge Hub is currently being built by Tallinn University who are gathering qualitative information from past projects, scientific publications and from partner practical experiences. The Knowledge Hub will be enriched by materials and knowledge produced throughout the project, possibilities to continue Hub building post project end in 2025 are being explored.

The technical solution of the Navigator is being built in the ArcGIS Online environment by HELCOM.

Testing the Navigator and implementation

The Navigator and the usability of each of its components will be tested in 3 levels of pilots:

- The local level: by Saaremaa Municipality, City of Fehmarn and Polish coastal cities
- The regional level: by Kurzeme Planning Region and Regional Council of Southwest Finland
- The national Level: by The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia and by associated coastal regions of Finland (facilitated by Regional Council of Southwest Finland)

Each pilot will regularly record their piloting activities and interactions with the Navigator and its contents. This recording is now being set up with first entries expected by the end of the year 2023. These records will provide a basis for cross-pilot reports for each level and will also feed into an evaluation of the Navigator.

These experiences and evaluation will be used to further improve the platform for outside-project partnership use, as well as to produce platform documentation and user guidance.