

The 3rd Meeting of Steering Group of the EUSBSR Policy Area Spatial Planning on Maritime Spatial Planning

25 October 2023, Riga Latvia

(3-2023 SG EUSBSR PA SP on MSP)

The Steering Group (SG) was attended by representatives of Estonia, Finland, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. The Session was also attended by invited guests from the EU MSP Platform, the Espoo Convention (UNECE) Secretariat, the Finnish-Swedish Transboundary River Commission, the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative as well as MSP-GREEN, Baltic Sea2Land, eMSP, MSP4BIO and ReMAP projects.

The SG was chaired by Joacim Johannesson (Sweden), Penina Blankett and Tiina Tihlman (Finland). Coordinators of Policy Area Spatial Planning Elina Veidemane (VASAB Secretariat) and Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky (HELCOM Secretariat) acted as secretaries of the SG. Since the Steering Group meeting is an integral part of the third informal consultation session of the HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (IC HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 3-2023), documents submitted to the Steering Group meeting and presentations are numbered accordingly.

[Information on recent developments and activities related to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region \(EUSBSR\) Action Plan and Policy area \(PA\) Spatial Planning](#)

1. The Steering Group took note of the information on the activities related to the Policy Area Spatial Planning of the EUSBSR and potential revision of EUSBSR Action Plan (**document 5-1**).
2. The Steering Group welcomed the progress achieved by the Policy Area and thanked the Secretariats, acting as coordinators for the work done, to implement the PA's work plan and ensure synergy between various regional projects and processes, as well as identifying the knowledge gaps and project needs on MSP. The Steering Group also positively reflected on the experience of a workshop organized in June 2023 on ecosystem-based approach and using Community of Practice as a form of stakeholders' involvement.
3. The Steering Group pointed out the coordinating role of MSP for regional development and highlighted the future effort by the PA SP to establish cooperation with policy makers in the fields related to energy, transport, environment as well as other regional key players.
4. The Steering Group took note of the information about the PASPS project and welcomed the progress achieved in the implementation of its work plan. The Steering Group invited co-chairs to sign the Feedback from the Steering Group after technical adjustments of the draft Feedback document (annex 3 of document 5-1).

[Workshop on Maritime Spatial Planning for strengthening spatial conservation measures and supporting sustainable blue economy \(13-15 June 2023\) as a step towards strengthening cooperation between environmentalists and planners.](#)

5. The Steering Group recalled that the workshop was jointly organized by eMSP NBSR project, MSP4BIO project and PA Spatial Planning and took note of the workshop's outcomes (**document 5-2 and 5- 2 Att.1**).

6. The Steering Group welcomed the contribution of the Workshop in the implementation of regional roadmap objectives and the impact of the workshop's outcomes on the revision of the guideline on EBA in MSP.

7. The Steering Group also pointed out the benefit of mutual learning between North and Baltic Seas for building knowledge base for the next MSP cycle, which is the goal of the Regional Baltic MSP Roadmap 2021-2030.

Planners' Forum

8. The Steering Group took note of the information on the Planner's Forum meeting which is planned to be held online on 28 November 2023 and would allow the BSR countries to exchange on pressing issues in MSP. The main theme of the meeting is 'EU Green Deal'.

9. The Steering Group recommended to the Planner's Forum to look closer into the topic of procedures or requirements of possible go-to areas for offshore renewable energy (cf. document 3-11) and include this item in an upcoming meeting next year.

10. The Steering Group took note of the information shared by the HELCOM Secretariat on the initiative of Belgian experts to attend the Planners' Forum and discuss issues related to an energy island. However, since the agenda of the upcoming Planners' Forum is already full the issue was proposed to be included in other Planner's Forum meeting.

Follow-up and progress of regional projects and/or initiatives – outputs of high regional significance:

11. The Steering Group took note of the general information and interim results of MSP-GREEN project presented by Latvia (**document 5-6** and **presentation 6**).

12. The Steering Group pointed out the importance of integration and balancing of various Green Deal's commitments and applying an ecosystem-based approach when considering the offshore energy development.

13. The Steering Group stressed the importance of the progress of the MSP-GREEN project for national MSP processes. The Steering Group took note of and welcomed the plan to arrange a workshop involving the Baltic Sea countries and also to regularly share results with HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG as well as to contribute to the implementation of the Regional Baltic MSP Roadmap 2021-2030.

14. The Steering Group recalled the plan to arrange a workshop in spring 2024 dedicated to the interim assessment of the Regional MSP Roadmap and encouraged the project to make at least preliminary results available for planning the interim assessment.

15. The Steering Group highlighted the importance of strengthening the integration of the project results in the regional MSP work and potential leading role of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG members involved in the project for achieving regional policy objectives.

16. The Steering Group took note of the information on the development progress of the Sea2Land Navigator presented by Latvia (**document 5-7** and **presentation 7**).

17. The Steering Group clarified that the information produced in the project result Sea2Land Navigator will integrate the existing MSP related information resources.

18. The Steering Group took note of the latest progress of ReMAP project orally presented by the HELCOM Secretariat which is currently at the final stages of the development of conceptual modules, including the Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) module. The work encompasses the data model for input data, the Spatial Pressure and Impact Assessment (SPIA) tool's processing procedures, and the defined output. The project is now transitioning towards tool development and

data acquisition.

19. The Steering Group further noted that ReMAP has also collaborated with the BSR MSP Data ESG, that is steering the work for Basemaps development in the project, and that priority areas have been selected, which are the revision of the output data structure and data visualization, and which will be further developed in more detailed proposals for the next BSR MSP Data ESG session.

20. The Steering Group welcomed the first ReMAP Workshop for selected Baltic stakeholders' engagement that will take place on 5 December 2023 in Helsinki. The workshop aims to gather valuable insights from stakeholders into tools designed to review and evaluate MSP monitoring and assessment.

21. The Steering Group took note of the latest progress of MSP4BIO project orally presented by the HELCOM Secretariat, with several deliverables published related to data availability, marine protection measures by test sites and ecological criteria, to be available in the [project website](#). The Session further took note that policy coherence analysis (WP6) is making significant progress and is on track to be submitted before the end of the year and with this deliverable, barriers and levers will be analyzed in EU, regional and national level.

22. The Steering Group recalled that MSP4BIO task 6.3 is in the process of organizing the second in- person Think Tank meeting to be held in December 2023, where policy coherence results will be presented to policy makers and their opinions will be asked and that other related projects such as MSP GREEN representatives are also invited.

23. The Steering Group took note that on upcoming MSP4BIO events, with a workshop during the Blue Mission Banos 1st Mission Arena event in Gothenburg on 15 November 2023 where the topics of marine protection and MSP integration will be discussed, and that a SeaSketch tool-based trade-off exercise will be conducted during the project's third CoP interaction as an essential part of the Ecological-Socioeconomic- Economic (ESE) framework.

24. The Steering Group took note of the PERMAGOV project overview presented by the HELCOM Secretariat (**document 5-4**).

25. The Steering Group took note of the clarification that national competent authorities are supposed to be involved in the project implementation with concrete involvement to be further decided. The Steering Group recommended to analyze inter-institutional barriers in the ocean governance. The Steering Group noted that several workshops will be arranged next spring where MSP experts could be involved. The Steering Group also recommended to cooperate closer with MSP GREEN project since both projects are addressing the EU Green Deal.

26. The Steering Group took note of the introduction to the PROTECT BALTIC project presented by the HELCOM Secretariat (**document 5-5**). The Steering Group recalled that this project was mentioned during the last session of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, but there was no document or presentation. The Session took note that representatives of the project will present the project in more depth during the next session of the WG.

27. The Steering Group welcomed the ambitious project and highlighted the linkage of the project with the green infrastructure concept, which is not seen in other presented projects.

28. The Steering Group took note of the Overview of projects and their contribution in the implementation of the Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030 (**document 5-3**).

29. The Steering Group thanked the HELCOM Secretariat for the initiative recognizing presented overview as a good starting point for the interim assessment of the Regional Roadmap's implementation and recommended to include MSP GREEN and PERMAGOV projects into the consideration. The Steering Group also recommended considering including mapping of partners and



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their roles in the projects in the overview.

Any other issues related to the work of the Steering Group

30. The Steering Group agreed to include representatives of the Baltic Sea Strategy Point (Supporting Group for the EUSBSR) in the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG contact list as invited guests for the next meeting or session of the WG.