

Notes from 3rd MSP Planners` Forum

28.11.2023 Online

Planners` Forum (supported by Interreg BSR [PASPS project](#)) is a platform for practical exchange for MSP practitioners, topics to discuss remain flexible and adaptive; participants of Planners` Forum can raise pressing MSP issues to be included in the agenda upon the need. The 3rd meeting concentrates on European Green Deal and its linkages with maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea Region countries.

News from VASAB and HELCOM and EU MSP Platform

VASAB: After endorsement of [VASAB Vision 2040](#) at the VASAB Ministerial Conference on 2 June 2023 in Wismar (DE), VASAB Committee on Spatial Planning and Development in the Baltic Sea Region (VASAB CSPD/BSR) has started an active work on identifying potential tasks, actions and projects targeted to VASAB community and other relevant stakeholders in order to foster the implementation of VASAB Vision 2040. This work is also linked with MSP Planners Forum which remains as a main platform for identification of project needs related to MSP.

Final [Conference of eMSP NBSR project](#) will be hosted on 31st January-1st February in Gdansk and will present the outcomes of project on such themes as Ocean Governance, Ecosystem-Based Approach, Sustainable Blue Economy, Monitoring & Evaluation, Data issues, Climate Change and EU Green Deal. Registration is open until 9 January 2024.

HELCOM: HELCOM Ministerial Meeting will be held on 25 April 2024 in Riga. Currently there is ongoing process of reviewing the structure of HELCOM. The reporting on the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action plan will take place the next year. HELCOM is coordinating the Task Force which has started the work on the revision of the guideline on the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in MSP in the Baltic Sea region (so called 'EBA guideline'). With support from several projects HELCOM is maintaining the work over BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-group. Within ReMAP project, Basemaps data sharing system is being advanced by general visualization of data structure and integrating analytical tools into it. In the HELCOM there is an extensive work related to the marine protected areas in the Baltic Sea region with support from such projects as MSP4BIO and PROTECT BALTIC.

On 29th November 2023 there is Community of Practice (CoP) meeting organised for ecosystem-based approach (EBA) within eMSP NBSR project. It is expected as a final session of this CoP in which the project recommendations on strengthening EBA in MSPs as well as results from study cases will be presented. Additionally, reflections on the work of CoP and its future will be shared.

EU MSP Platform: Regards the European Blue Forum, on 27 November 2023 Commission published [a press release](#) about Position paper to be delivered to the Parliament, helping European Commission to establish policies for upcoming years.

EU MSP Assistance Mechanism is supporting the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group by conducting the review on strategic environmental assessment in MSP processes. The first draft report will be sent out for review in January 2024.

European Commission is preparing the study on multi-use based on results of different EU research projects, including eMSP NBSR project. It aims to help Member States to foster multi-use in their marine waters. The document will be available soon.

There are discussions about another potential support paper - on spatial implications and measures and fisheries (bottom trawling) in high seas.

News from countries: MSP status updates

**Context: participating members were invited to share their recent MSP news and pressing issues. Additional insight was given into the new draft Swedish MSP plan which is currently given to national consultations.*

Denmark: On 27th November the amendment to Danish MSP was given to consultation in Denmark. The work on this amendment has been taken place since 2021. There are no pressing issues at the moment.

Estonia: The monitoring of Estonian MSP has just started. It aims to gather necessary background information for the annual review and the input for the MSP review, which according to Estonian law, should take place five years after its adoption, so in 2027. To gather necessary information, interviews with the representatives of all sectors will be conducted, as well as monitoring the implementation of the MSP action plan will be carried out. Most pressing issue is related to wind farms and the cables.

Finland: The next planning round for Finnish MSP has been started with support of several state-funded activities related to MSP. Several offshore wind energy studies are being carried out in cooperation with Finnish Maritime Spatial Planning coordination group. One study is for potential areas for offshore wind energy in Finnish waters, to be conducted in the beginning of next year and finalized by 2026. The results of the study will be used for the next MSP planning round, as it will provide new data and zoning analysis. Other study is exploring how to make Finnish MSP more effective so that wind energy developers would commit to the plan.

Stakeholder collaboration forums for MSP are being organized with wind energy as a main theme. So far 7 (2 national and 5 regional) forums have been held, and they have helped to develop a model for collaboration for drafting the new MSP plan. Additionally, the future scenarios for 2035, 2040 and 2050 and offshore wind development have been elaborated.

Åland: has adopted its MSP in 2021 and according to legislation the plan should be revised in 2027. To secure that MSP knowledge stays within our organization, the plan is to draft the framework for a continuous monitoring of the MSP and set up a process for the revision. There is ongoing work on exploring the possibilities to establish an internal and cross-sectoral MSP group at the government of Åland. The findings from the eMSP NBSR project's 5 learning strands could be incorporated into MSP revision process.

Germany: The study on multi-use has been recently commissioned and will be completed by early 2025. Consortium of companies is looking into multi uses assessing current situation and how multi-use concepts could be applied in German waters.

Monitoring & Evaluation framework is being developed. Annual report on developments which are spatially relevant for MSP in German seas, covering the year 2022 has just been finalised. At the moment it is available in German only, but it will be translated in English and will be available for download at English version of BSH website.

Latvia: The first interim assessment of Latvian MSP has been performed and is now in its final phase for inter-institutional agreement. The assessment provides insights on the things that have changed according to the new policies and policy aims. It also indicates some specific territories that are a subject to change in terms of zoning. Overall amendment to the MSP will start in 2026 when the environmental and biodiversity data in Latvian marine waters will be available within Life REEF project. Amendments to Latvian MSP are planned to be finalized by the end of 2027.

The most pressing issue would be an introduction of the multi-use, as national legislation does not foresee a possibility to issue license for different uses within one territory. The examination on how to introduce this concept to the national legislation will start next year.

Lithuania: Lithuanian MSP is part of the Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of Lithuania and was adopted in 2021. Recently, the implementation program/plan for the MSP has been carried out. It indicates the list of actions and relevant stakeholders. The next round of renewing the implementation plan is expected in 2030. The monitoring is still not fully developed, and the work is ongoing. There are three ongoing Interreg projects of Lithuanian participation focusing on marine environment.

Poland (*didn't participated but submitted their recent news as follows*): The latest developments in MSP are adoption of several MSPs for small ports and bays. EU Commission and Baltic countries have been informed about

the publication of some of the adopted MSPs. Hopefully, all “small MSPs” will be adopted by the end of this year and information will be shared after the publication.

Sweden: The new Swedish MSP is in the middle of the national consultation phase and Espoo consultation material soon will be sent to neighbouring countries. Espoo consultation meeting will be held on the 20th of December 2023, at 13:00 - 15:00CET. Information about the event and registration will be available at SwAM website, as well as via Espoo focal points. There is intended a bilateral meeting with the Finland in January 2024.

One of the pressing topics is cumulative impacts of offshore wind and how the potential cumulative impacts of offshore wind areas across borders could be addressed.

The new draft Swedish maritime spatial plan, by Joacim Johannesson and Jan Schmidtbauer Crona, SwAM.

Proposal for amended Swedish marine spatial plans (for Gulf of Bothnia, Baltic Sea proper and Skagerrak / Kattegat) was presented. In February 2022 Swedish government adopted MSP plans and decided to give an assignment to produce new marine spatial plans in 2-step approach to accommodate the need for additional 90TWh, which corresponds to approximately 20 to 25 GW of offshore wind in the Swedish maritime waters. Climate change and climate policy objectives, repowering of infrastructure and green electrification of the industry and transport - leads to the huge demand for green electricity in Sweden, up to 200 TWh (50GW) in 2050.

First step for the new draft MSP plans was to compile information on suitable areas for renewable energy – report in Swedish is available. In total 53 areas proposed with various levels of potential conflicts with other sea-uses. Second step was the elaboration of proposals for amended MSPs which should be presented to Government by 31st December 2024. According to legislation, two consultation rounds are going to be organized – current one till mid-December and second ‘review consultation’ in the next summer. Espoo consultations will be launched shortly and will continue by February 2024. Proposed areas for offshore energy have been split in 2 groups – proposed areas that have been considered as the best option for energy extraction, and alternative areas for further discussions, as many other uses and interests overlap (particularly, defence, fisheries, shipping, nature protection) or provides an option for future clusters. More knowledge is needed on ice-formation and winter navigation.

Impact assessment aims to merge three aspects – environmental, economic and social dimensions and analysing impacts on specific parameter or interest in proposed renewable energy areas.

Comments from discussions: Potential cross-border impacts have been indicated, but there is a need for further discussions towards cumulative impact assessment at cross-border / sea-basin scale. Swedish (and also Finnish) MSP consultation and Espoo consultation processes are not synchronised. Potential energy extraction areas were selected based on set of technical criteria (wind conditions, depth etc.) and viewed against the interests of other sectors. Some areas were emitted or changed. These areas mainly are targeted for offshore wind energy with some possibility for another energy production modes (hydrogen, algae cultivation for energy, solar), that is way these areas are named as ‘energy extraction’. To give a possibility to other BSR countries to share their views on the draft Swedish MSP, Espoo consultation meeting will be organized on 20 December 2023, neighbouring countries as well as other stakeholders like VASAB, HELCOM, European Commission will be invited.

European Green Deal

**Context: participants are invited to share information how European Green Deal is being addressed in national MSP. Session was supported by presentation on MSP GREEN project findings, including two national case studies from Finland and Latvia.*

Denmark: Explicitly work with the EU Green Deal hasn’t been done, but some of the EGD themes have been covered by MSP. In June 2023 political decision was made for Danish MSP to allocate 10% of Danish maritime waters to strictly protection (currently it is 6%). With new amendment to Danish MSP, 30% of maritime area is allocated for renewable energy. Currently the main priority is to speed up the processes of building offshore wind.

Estonia: By 2030 Estonia should use 100% renewable energy, most likely from onshore sites, as permitting and building offshore infrastructures takes more time. There are some legislative changes aiming to boosting renewable energy development and reducing permitting procedures.

Aland: MSP addresses green energy transition for offshore renewable energy and hydrogen. Currently there is ongoing planning process and economic analysis for *Sunnvind* offshore wind park. Additionally, proposals for auction procedure are being drafted. Other topic is biodiversity. With support of the [Biodiversea project](#), new MPAs will be assigned, although this work is challenging due to private ownership of waters with most valuable habitats.

Germany: Reduction targets of EU Green Deal are linked to MSP by delineating areas for offshore energy production. Legally binding targets for wind energy is also written down in the 'wind at sea energy law'. There is the site development plan for offshore wind energy providing specific planning for offshore wind development and necessary power lines needed for that. The plan is to achieve 70GW energy production in German maritime waters in North Sea and Baltic Sea by 2045.

Sweden: Offshore wind as part of the climate change mitigation dimension in the EU Green Deal. As climate adaptation measures, additional areas of high nature values are indicated in the draft MSP for consideration.

The Green Deal component of seven EU MSP Plans - findings by MSP GREEN project, by Vesa Arki, MSP Coordination in Finland: MSP GREEN project contributes to the alignment of MSPs to the ambition of the European Green Deal (EGD) by creating a framework for MSP plans as marine enablers of the EGD. Seven MSPs in 5 sea basins were assessed on how MSPs considers EGD objectives, what are major gaps, challenges and trade-offs in mainstreaming EGD into MSP, valuable practices. The following EGD thematic categories relevant for marine context and MSP were identified and analysed:

- **Climate change mitigation:** Addressed in all plans, in particular by promoting the energy transition at sea, through offshore wind energy.
- **Climate change adaptation:** Most often supported indirectly by the measures and objectives.
- **Sustainable seafood production:** All plans incorporate sustainable food production, through provisions relating to fisheries and aquaculture (fish and shellfish farming), and more rarely to seaweed production.
- **Biodiversity & ecosystem protection and restoration:** Cross-cutting or overarching objectives in all plans. While the designation or extension of MPAs is generally considered outside of the scope of MSP, the plans support extended conservation in several ways.
- **Circular blue economy:** The way blue circular economy is incorporated varies greatly based on the national scope and mandate of MSP and covers a wide range of maritime sectors.
- **Zero pollution:** While all plans consider pollution drivers and pressures, zero pollution provisions mostly focus on prevention and remain sector specific.
- **Fair and just transition:** this is mostly linked to stakeholder engagement. All analysed MSPs processes widely engaged stakeholders to find the best possible balance among sea uses and related area allocations. Regardless, further exploration of the role of MSP in supporting the topic is needed.

Further assessment on the role of other policies in incorporating EGD in the MSPs is needed. By the end of 2023 project will provide overview of valuable practices and by April 2024 project will design new actions supporting integration of EGD in MSP. Recommendations will be prepared by October 2024. Baltic Sea basin level workshop could be organised in September 2024.

MSP GREEN: Finnish MSP and EGD, by Mari Pohja-Mykra: With support of MSP GREEN project the first Finnish MSP (that was drafted before adoption of EGD) was analysed in relation to seven identified EGD themes and additions for the next MSP cycle have been proposed. Thanks to knowledge due to MSP GREEN project, the next/second MSP cycle will have broader thematic considerations reflected both in the written plan and MSP map related to EGD, especially energy-food-nature, maritime security and security of supply and climate-smart MSP.

With new challenges and ambitions towards climate neutrality goals, there is a need for new additional space for offshore wind energy production and how to represent the whole marine energy (incl. cable corridors, connections, OWE and other modes of energy production, ports etc.) in the MSP. Existing data that was used for the first MSP,

for second MSP cycle is being updated and new data has been added (such as carbon sinks, natural structures that prevent and reduce coastal erosion and flooding, climate change refugia and hotspots). Marine energy scenarios are being elaborated for 2035, 2040 and 2050 considering spatial and temporal aspects (like winter conditions), land-sea interactions and impact assessment. Need to introduce a 'multi-use' concept as a qualitative criterion for OWE auctions and in relation to sustainable sea-food production. MSP coordination from passive to more active coordination is needed.

A blue-green infrastructure map marking covering the entire land-sea interface and marine area, considering the natural value areas and their interconnections. Blue circular economy is considered a cross-cutting theme for many sectors covered by the MSP, where resource-efficient and circular economy solutions form the basis for a sustainable blue economy. Zero pollution is considered to a lesser extent in the MSP plan by considering the risks of oil and chemical accidents in maritime traffic. The future needs for dredging of ports and merchant shipping fairway and the most suitable banking sites for dredging masses in terms of protecting the marine environment were identified. As for 'fair and just transition', scenarios and visions were made by maritime stakeholders. For the next planning cycle, a 'Participation evaluation, development proposals and interaction plan for 2024-2028' is being developed aiming to overcome the gaps in the first MSP participation process (MLG, EGD themes, 'citizens council'). Additionally, Regional economic impact analysis is being carried out by including all maritime sectors and identifying their linkages with regional economy.

MSP GREEN: Latvian MSP and EGD, by Kristīne Kedo: Latvian MSP was evaluated accordingly to the EDG themes identified by MSP GREEN project and prioritized according to relevance in MSP as follows:

- **Biodiversity and ecosystem protection**, including marine habitat restoration. Currently total area of marine protected areas is 15,4%. In addition, 5 nature investigation zones are designed in the MSP, covering 4,8%. But it is not enough to meet the 30% target set out in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.
- **Carbon neutrality**, including production of marine renewable energy, contribution to climate change mitigation and protection and restoration of blue habitats. Offshore wind energy is a priority. Latvian MSP considers 5 offshore wind farm energy zones (6% of total MSP area). It is not indicated how much energy those areas are supposed to produce, neither specific quantitative objectives are set.
- **Sustainable seafood production** (i.e., through aquaculture, incl. macroalgae production, sustainable fisheries etc.) No specific designations for marine aquaculture but might be some proposals for aquaculture sites in the next MSP which should be carefully discussed due to the impacts on environment. Sustainable fisheries as one of 6 priorities for MSP. Information on the most important fishing areas has been assessed when other sea uses have been considered and allocated.
- **Climate change adaptation** of ecosystems and maritime and coastal activities. Current MSP considers that climate change by 2030 in general could have a relatively small but negative impact - linked to a reduction in the stability of the marine ecosystem, potential changes in the distribution of species and habitats, connection of green infrastructure from shore to the sea, which may call for reassessment of the existing and planned MPAs. There will be further investigations related to that when MSP will be revised.
- **Circular economy** in the diverse maritime sectors. MSP is limited due to gaps in national policy. MSP sets circular economy principles indirectly for disposal site operations of ports.
- **Zero pollution** at sea and coast. Most complicated and hard to address by MSP, as it is indirectly linked to the zero-pollution principle (indirectly as a target to undertake evaluation of spatial cumulative impacts from the use of the sea as guidance)

Main challenges identified – existing contrasts between maritime sector development and nature protection/conservation; contrasting policy objectives (at EU, national, local level) making difficult or precluding EDG incorporation in MSP – EGD sectoral coordination is fragmented; limitations in the MSP process itself – it cannot solve all problems but can help to facilitate comprehensive dialogue with sectors, also regards data availability and interpretation across the sectors.

Regards 'Fair and Just transition', national Maritime and Coastal Spatial Planning Coordination Group has been regarded as valuable practice. It was established to ensure regular involvement and participation of government institutions, planning regions, coastal municipalities and members of the public in MSP process, ensuring a formal platform, where EGD is discussed for the first time in a comprehensive manner.

Based on the interim assessment of MSP for its 4 years of operation time, the next steps for the amendments to the MSP would be: investigating on possibilities for multi-use and innovation in Latvian marine areas; recommendations for safeguarding biodiversity, sustainable aquaculture and sustainable implementation of OWE; reconsideration of OWE zones based on new data.

Comments from participants: presented results of MSP GREEN project and detailed analysis on Finnish and Latvian cases were positively regarded and suggested that other countries could have a similar approach when having their MSPs revised. Therefore, EGD could be discussed in future meetings of MSP Planners forum.

Multi-use still exists as a concept, in this regard eMSP NBSR project investigates 'maripark' approach that could be used as a reference for Baltic Sea with consideration of its environmental conditions, cumulative effects and necessity for nature inclusive design. A joint project could be made investigating and comparing administrative frameworks and potential of multi-use at the sea and how MSP could foster the implementation of multi-use concept.

Project idea development

Within Interreg BSR Programme in the beginning of 2024 there will be an open call for project proposals targeted at circular economy and climate change – if BSR countries are interested in application, separate meeting could be organised.

During the meeting following project needs and gaps were mentioned:

- Cumulative impacts at cross-border and sea-basin scale,
- Circular economy approaches in maritime areas,
- Investigating potential of 'multi-use' in the Baltic Sea,
- Winter navigation in context of OWE development,
- Stakeholder engagement in MSP processes supporting fair and just transition.

Themes and timing for the next Planners` Forum

It is agreed that the next meeting of the Planners` Forum will be held online in April 2024 with the main theme: **multi-use and co-existence**. EC report on multi-use, eMSP NBSR policy brief on 'Sustainable Blue Economy', as well as insights from national work and relevant studies could be considered as main contributions for the next meeting.

Participants of the 3rd MSP 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
Finland	Vesa Arki	Regional Council of Southwest Finland
Åland	Annica Brink	Government of Åland
Germany	Ulrich Scheffler	Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, BSH
Latvia	Kristīne Kedo	MoEPRD
Latvia	Annija Danenbergā	MoEPRD
Latvia	Marta Štūbe	MoEPRD
Latvia	Anete Bērziņa	MoEPRD
Lithuania	Paulius Kliučininkas	Ministry of Environment
Sweden	Jan Schmidtbauer Crona	Swedish Marine & Water Management Authority
Sweden	Joacim Johannesson	Swedish Marine & Water Management Authority
VASAB	Elīna Veidemane	VASAB Secretariat
VASAB	Margarita Vološina	VASAB Secretariat
VASAB	Egija Stapkēviča	VASAB Secretariat
VASAB	Jana Patmalniece	VASAB Secretariat
HELCOM	Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky	HELCOM Secretariat
HELCOM	Florent Nicolas	HELCOM Secretariat
EU MSP Platform	Kristīna Veidemane	EU MSP Assistance Mechanism for the Baltic Sea