

Summary of the 90th CSPD/BSR Meeting

Online, 24 November 2023

Chairperson: Ms. Anna-Leena Seppälä (FI)

Participants: CSPD/BSR members: Mr. Daniel Meltzian (DE), Mr. Jens Kurnol (DE), Ms. Kristi Gríśakov (EE), Ms. Tiina Tihlman (FI), Ms. Algimante Treiniene (LT), Ms. Anita Līviņa Rozenvalde (LV), Ms. Patrycja Artymowska (PL), Ms. Maxi Nachtigall (SE), *invited guests:* Mr. Uģis Zanders (Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat), Ms. Ignė Stalmokaitė (Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat), *VASAB Secretariat:* Ms. Alda Nikodemusa, Ms. Elīna Veidemane, Ms. Jana Patmalniece, Ms. Egija Stapkēviča and Ms. Margarita Vološina.

1. Adoption of the report of 89th VASAB CSPD/BSR meeting

The Committee adopted the Report of 89th CSPD/BSR online meeting on 28 April 2023 with one amendment proposed by Ms. Patrycja Artymowska in point about news and major challenges regarding national spatial planning issues.

2. Adoption of the summary of 89th VASAB CSPD/BSR meeting

The Committee adopted the Summary of 89th CSPD/BSR online meeting on 28 April 2023 with one amendment proposed by Ms. Patrycja Artymowska in point about news and major challenges regarding national spatial planning issues.

3. Information on Open Troika meeting

The Committee took note of the Report of the VASAB Open Troika online meeting on 2 November 2023.

4. Results of VASAB Ministerial Conference & VASAB Experts' Conference on 1-2 June 2023 in Wismar, Germany

The Committee was informed on the results of VASAB Experts' Conference on 1 June 2023 and VASAB Ministerial Conference on 2 June 2023 in Wismar, Germany. The Committee was also informed that digital brochure of Statements and Documents for 9th VASAB Ministerial Conference is available at VASAB website here <https://vasab.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/9th-VASAB-Conference-of-Ministers-2023-Statements-and-Documents.pdf>; information and materials from VASAB Ministerial Conference are available here <https://vasab.org/home/about/ministerial-conferences/wismar2023/>; information and materials from VASAB Experts' Conference are available here: <https://vasab.org/event/experts-conference-on-the-updated-vasab-vision/>; printed VASAB Vision 2040 brochures will be sent to the Committee members upon the need.

The Committee took note on information on the results of VASAB Expert's Conference on 1 June 2023 and VASAB Ministerial Conference on 2 June 2023 in Wismar, Germany.

5. Finnish VASAB Chairmanship priorities and plans

The Committee was informed that the most important task during Finnish VASAB Chairmanship will be implementation of Ministerial Declaration and VASAB Vision 2040. During the Finnish Chairmanship the guidance and concrete steps for VASAB and other stakeholders implementing the VASAB Vision 2040 will be discussed. Particularly further linkages with other Policy areas within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and further promotion of VASAB Vision at relevant networks and events will be considered. Additionally, possibilities in testing cooperation mechanism for land-based spatial planners – so called ‘VASAB Planners Forum’ will be explored. Thematic focus of the VASAB Finnish Chairmanship will be security of maintenance. This is a very exceptional situation in spatial planning. Many questions arise, for example, how can countries be prepared for this present situation and some other demanding situations which might come in the future. How to take care of the society in these situations? How can countries be prepared by planning traffic systems and also the spatial structure. How to take care of the food supply? How to be prepared for the climate change courses? How can countries take all these into account in spatial planning on different levels? How can countries take care of security? In Eastern Finland economic situation is not developing so well and this is something which should be considered in spatial structure in Finland and how to support these areas, what do these areas need and how to react and keep all people on board. This topic is now very interesting for Finland and Finnish Chairmanship would like to discuss this subject with other VASAB countries. Particularly, a webinar on spatial resilience and spatial planning will be organised on 29 February 2024 where experts from the Baltic Sea Region countries will be invited to share their experience. VASAB Committee members are invited to share at the webinar their experience in dealing with these questions. Each VASAB Committee member could prepare a presentation 10-15 minutes long to highlight the main questions and main solutions. After all presentations there would be discussions. Mr. Janne Antikainen will moderate the webinar and he would like to have presentations by the end of January in order to prepare for the webinar. The Committee meeting will be organised on 13-15 March 2024 in Koli, Finland back-to-back with a small seminar on spatial resilience and spatial planning continuing discussions from the webinar. Some Finnish experts might be invited to join the discussions.

The Committee took note of the information about Finnish VASAB Chairmanship priorities and plans.

The Committee agreed that VASAB Secretariat sends a ‘Save the Date’ e-mail about the webinar on spatial resilience and spatial planning on 29th February 2024 to the Committee members as soon as possible and Committee members invite interested colleagues/stakeholders.

The Committee agreed that each Committee member prepares a 10-15 minute presentation for VASAB webinar on spatial resilience and spatial planning and/or suggests additional experts who can give presentations in this field.

The Committee took note of the information about VASAB Chairmanship calendar up to year 2030 that is followed accordingly to the CBSS rotating chairmanships. As there are some countries that are represented in CBSS, but are not members of VASAB, the Committee took note of upcoming challenge in shared chairmanships in year 2031 and that further discussion will be needed.

6. News and major challenges regarding national spatial planning issues

Poland: news in spatial planning:

- Pilot action to Territorial Agenda 2030 on *Understanding how sector policies shape spatial (im)balances: Region-focused Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA PA)* is coming to the end.

Understanding how sector policies shape spatial imbalances through an in-depth Territorial Impact Assessment was the topic and focus of the pilot action to implement Territorial Agenda 2030 led by the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy in Poland with partners from Czechia, Germany, Slovenia and the Netherlands and support from EC, EoR, ESPON and NTCCP. Territorial Impact Assessments help in better understanding how different legislations, policies and directives affect different territories and provide evidence for policy and decision making. Pilot testing/ implementations of various TIA methods were carried out in Czechia, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovenia. The result of the literature review and research work is a draft of TIA method, named SPA(TIA), which takes into account cross-border diffusion effects. The final report – manual on TIA with the description of the developed SPA(TIA) method and the TIA cases from partner countries is ready to be published at the TA webpage <https://territorialagenda.eu/>.

- Changes in spatial planning at the local level.

This is the first stage of the reform of the spatial planning system and concerns the local level. The solution to the diagnosed problems was last amendment to the Act of 27 March 2003 on spatial planning and development. The new regulations apply from 24 September 2023 and will be implemented by the end of 2025. The new act on spatial planning:

- 1) introduced a requirement for all municipalities to prepare and adopt their strategies related to land development in the municipalities;
- 2) introduced a requirement for all municipalities to prepare and adopt general spatial development plans, to be converted into local legislation;
- 3) introduced a requirement that obliges investors to carry out additional projects for the benefit of the municipality when building new development projects, to reduce the development of housing without a sufficient provision of services;
- 4) defined the process of social participation in drafting of strategies and general plans in municipalities.

Germany: news in spatial planning:

- A persistent challenge in Germany is reaching the land take target of 30ha minus X bis 2030. Political discussions are ongoing how to make the target obligatory. On Federal state and regional level the most important issue is to find enough suitable space for renewable energies production. A Federal target is set by law for 2% of total space of Germany for wind energy which is now an overriding public interest and contradicts the land take target. Other renewable energies, especially solar energy are following.
- Another issue is to link compensation areas for large infrastructure projects into a more valuable biodiversity network. This shall be done by a Federal spatial plan but political discussions are ongoing to which extent.
- A larger change of the Federal Building law is upcoming which will include changing the Federal Spatial planning law.
- Lastly a large package of measures to further fasten planning and permit procedures has been adopted by the chancellor and the minister presidents of the Federal states and will be transposed in the upcoming two years.

Sweden: news in spatial planning:

- Investigator Lena Erixon was tasked to carry out a preliminary study on national spatial planning. The assignment is reported as National spatial planning, Ds 2023:28. The report describes three alternative ways forward for Swedish spatial planning and the national level:
 - Planning legislation with a national planning level;
 - National target image;
 - Active management of the current system.

It is the study's conclusion that there is a great need for renewed spatial planning in matters relating to the state's interests to land and water areas. Criticism that emerges concerns the current legislation and its application, lack of national clarity and national targets in spatial planning, lack of ability to nationally manage an increasing supranational impact, the actions

and coordination of state authorities as well as the planning system's lack of timeliness and thematic demarcations.

The study believes that a new unified planning legislation would be necessary to solve these concerns, alternatively a comprehensive review of the current legislation. Expanded and renewed legislation is not the only available measures, but if a comprehensive and systematic streamlining in spatial planning is to be done, the study believes that new legislation is required.

The study therefore makes its proposals with the aim of strengthening the national level of spatial planning. The main proposal means that a new unified spatial planning legislation would be drawn up with a national spatial planning level that would result in a proposal to a national spatial plan decided by the government. The proposal means that the government decides on national targets that would be the basis for the tasks of state authorities in matters concerning spatial planning. The second proposal means that the government would decide on a national spatial planning targets that would be the basis for tasks of state authorities in matters concerning spatial planning. For other spatial planning actors, the targets would to be regarded as the state's expression of will in certain spatial planning matters. In this proposal, the national interest system remains, however with a comprehensive review of the legislation. The third proposal is the least far-reaching of the proposed proposals and primarily means the more active management of the current system. The proposal includes amendments to regulations, proposals for letter investigations and government assignments. The purpose of these proposals is to secure a more active supervision and keeping the state authorities tasks up to date as well as better compliance with current legislation on planning. The study and proposals of the study are now with the national government who will decide on next steps.

Estonia: news in spatial planning:

- The new government (elected in March 2023) is prioritising the green transition and promoting holistic spatial development via following ongoing activities: In July 2023 ministries were reorganised to Ministry of Climate and the Ministry of Regional Affairs, with spatial planning tasks being transferred to the latter. Additionally, a separate body of Land and Spatial Board will be created in 2025 to support and monitor planning practices and the development of high-quality living environments. It is yet not clear how the tasks of the current Spatial Planning department will be divided between the different units. Also, within the Ministry the spatial planning tasks will be reorganised to a bigger unit involving mobility and land policy (currently spatial planning is sharing a unit with Regional Development and Municipal policy). It is hoped that these changes will address current planning issues such as organisational silos, the lack of a cohesive spatial vision, and limited cooperation with and between municipalities when steering spatial development.
- In January 2023, the development of a new Strategic Spatial Plan for Estonia 2050 was initiated and is expected to be completed by 2026. Currently we are finishing the stage of approving the 'initial positions' document of the plan and continue with spatial scenario analysis and other planning activities in 2025. The planning law is undergoing a change in coming year to make the procedures more effective and flexible. There is quite a lot of debate regarding redefinition of planning levels - especially the role of the regional planning level.
- My unit is in charge of developing the methodologies for cohesive monitoring system for the review of plans and planning processes both on national and local level. We are also developing a new toolbox to help local level planners plan both high quality as well as sustainable living environment. If other VASAB members are currently involved in similar activities, it would be very good to exchange ideas and practices.

Latvia: news in spatial planning:

- New minister for Environmental Protection and Regional Development (I. Bērziņa) as of September. The priority approved for her term is to even out the development among

regions. It is planned to implement a development funding distribution system that is based not only on financial and demographic assessments but also on entrepreneurial characteristics and municipal initiative to support entrepreneurship.

- A revision report on citizen engagement in municipal decision-making was published this year: https://www.lrvk.gov.lv/lv/getrevisionfile/29652-LYOaCJdhwHHIAmJf_YBTLUHqC_qQHhoj.pdf

It took review of the engagement processes and initiatives in 11 municipalities across all municipal government responsibilities including planning. The main conclusions are that despite the presence of some good practice in several instances the municipalities reviewed mostly practiced low citizen engagement and that they currently lack in accessibility, accommodations and encouragement when it comes to motivating and enabling citizen engagement. All municipalities (not only those reviewed) plan to devote more funds towards citizen engagement in the future, however, this is at their own discretion.

- The interim assessment of the Latvian Maritime Spatial Plan has been conducted. The assessment was drafted with the help of governance stakeholders of municipal, regional and national levels in 6 thematic meetings of the Maritime and Coastal Planning Coordination Group. The main focus of the interim assessment is on biodiversity and offshore wind park exploration zones and provisional issues to be addressed in updating national MSP until the end of 2027. The assessment is now in its final interinstitutional agreement stage before approval by the government.
- A subsequent new priority is to begin work on the interim assessment of the Coastal Thematic Plan. Stakeholders were introduced to the upcoming activities preliminarily in the last Maritime and Coastal Planning Coordination Group meeting, but they will receive information on the full work timeline during the next meeting on 20th December. Work on this assessment is conducted under the piloting activities of the Baltic Sea2Land project.
- MoEPRD is dedicating 1,4M EUR of the Just Transition Fund to educating and supporting municipalities in regard to implementing climate neutrality on the ground.
- Within the LIFE LATESTadapt project 3 Latvian cities (Rīga, Cēsis, Valmiera) are starting work on drafting Greening Plans that will serve as a precedent to other Latvian cities to create a cohesive green infrastructure network through the country with emphasis on urban greening and introducing of nature-based solutions in planning process.

Lithuania: news in spatial planning:

- At institutional level, we have made changes to the Ministry's of Environment administrative structure in spatial planning and urban policymaking. Four policy groups under the responsibility of two separate vice-ministers deal with Architecture and Innovation, Construction and Housing, Land and Spatial planning, Spatial Data. This enables a broader and deeper analysis of these issues for taking integrated solutions.
- At the level of urban policy implementation, the urban unit under the authority of the Ministry of Environment also has been set up. Its task to coordinate the implementation of spatial planning documents, assist municipalities to elaborate the solutions of the Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of the Lithuania in their municipal level spatial planning documents, and to analyse further changes that are needed.
- Some new tools and instruments to achieve sustainability in spatial planning have been established.
- A tool for municipalities - Comprehensive Plan and its implementation programme. This programme sets basis for multilevel governance, as it defines the roles of the state, municipalities, and other institutions in the implementation of Plan's solutions.
- The Sustainable Cities Guidelines that are a toolkit to identify the level of sustainability in Lithuanian cities are on preparation for minister's approval. To achieve this objective, a sustainability planning tool "Sustainable Cities Compass" is being developed. It allows to assess the territorial challenges of urban development and benchmark sustainability between cities.

- A package of legislative amendments has now been drafted and submitted to the Parliament for consideration. These amendments aim to make more efficient spatial planning and construction processes. Changes in Laws on Construction, Territorial Planning, Architecture, Architects Chamber and some others have been made to speed up the process in issuing building permits, to revise responsibilities of actors involved in construction and spatial planning, to give more powers to municipalities' chief architects in taking decisions on spatial planning of their territories and design of buildings.

Finland: news in spatial planning:

- The Land Use Act is being renewed and it consists of 2 parts: land use and building. Previously the Parliament approved only the building part of the act and then also the part which was about digitalization of the land use and building. Land use part remained and came back for preparation. But now it is going forward. The renewal of the Land Use Act has been ongoing from 2018, but each government has a little bit own targets and this government now wants to speed up clean energy investments. That means that we have the same challenge as Germany, that we need to find ways to speed up the processes that includes spatial planning but also the permitting processes.
- Some other big issue at the moment is the digitalization which is proceeding quite well.
- We have a new government which wants to accelerate permitting and make it quicker. We are now establishing 11 authorities which would give all permits.
- We are starting the second maritime spatial planning round in the beginning of next year and our aim is that it will be finalized by 2026.
- The Ministry of Environment has made a coastal strategy which is finalized and it will be published soon. Now it is in Finnish but we are translating it currently into Swedish, and afterwards in English.
- We have been part of Baltic Sea2Land project which Latvia is leading and we have some pilot testing cases in that project. We are going to test how to implement the strategy nationally.

News, challenges and forthcoming plans regarding CBSS (Council of the Baltic Sea States) agenda:

- CBSS currently has Finnish Presidency who has a very ambitious agenda regarding sustainable and prosperous region as a long-term priority. Recently committee of senior officials approved budget for the next year for the CBSS and there were very tough discussions considering all the challenges we are facing now in geopolitical terms. Expert group work on sustainable maritime economy will definitely continue. Finnish Presidency priorities are linked to promoting green shipping corridors in Baltic Sea Region and it is linked with the international agreement of Clydebank Declaration for Green Shipping corridors were from current Member States Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway and Sweden are signatories of the declaration and during the presidency that encouragements for other Member States to join the declaration will be promoted and also discussions will concentrate on a renewal on the new mandate of expert group for sustainable maritime economies. Topics related to the emissions to the sea will be discussed also during the Finnish Presidency. Food waste, grey waters and other kind of discharges in the Baltic Sea will be as the topics of expert group for sustainable maritime economy as regards sustainability, sustainable development issues.
- After Finnish Presidency the Estonian Presidency is following and there have been already indications that green shipping corridors will be also on Estonian Presidency.

The Committee took note of the information about political news and major challenges regarding national spatial planning issues.

7. Terrestrial spatial planning country fiches

The Committee was reminded that all VASAB member countries should regularly update the Country fiche on terrestrial spatial planning and send to Secretariat to publish on VASAB website.

8. Implementation of VASAB Vision 2040

The Committee was introduced with planned setup of the brainstorming session for selection of tasks for implementation of VASAB Vision 2040. In the brainstorming session for the Implementation of VASAB Vision 2040 the Committee worked in two breakout-rooms - Group I: Pearls & Patches and Group II: Strings & Systems. Groups discussed potential future tasks for three potential future actions within VASAB Vision 2040 that were selected by Committee via online voting. Each group gave a summary from brainstorming session.

The Committee agreed that each Committee member checks again the Miro board and adds their proposals or clarifications until 15 January 2024 not only to the Potential Future Actions which were discussed in breakout-rooms, but also to the rest of the actions that weren't discussed but there is seen a need for an action. Additionally, the Committee agreed to provide the feedback on draft Guidance document for the Implementation of VASAB Vision 2040 until 15 January 2024.

9. EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

Policy Area 'Spatial Planning' activities

The Committee was informed about the latest developments and activities within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Area 'Spatial Planning': potential revision of EUSBSR Action Plan in 2024 (decision is coming up after National Coordinators meeting on 29th November 2023); 14th EUSBSR Annual Forum on 4-5 October 2023 in Riga; next 15th EUSBSR Annual Forum to be planned in Sweden (tbc – Visby, autumn); monthly PACs & NC meetings online; next in-person PAC meeting planned in the beginning of February (tbc); Policy area 'Spatial Planning' will host a webinar in mid-January 2024 on project needs to address the challenges of the Baltic Sea Region (indicated by VASAB Vision 2040) and how spatial planning can support to overcome them. The Committee was informed about open calls for project applications, as well as ongoing projects with Policy area 'Spatial Planning' involvement and other projects relevant for Policy area 'Spatial Planning' and VASAB Vision 2040.

The Committee took note of the information about EUSBSR Policy area 'Spatial Planning' news and activities.

CSPD/BSR feedback on PA 'Spatial Planning' work in 2023

The Committee was introduced with main achievements of Policy area 'Spatial Planning' in year 2023 and informed that the Committee as Steering Group for Policy area 'Spatial Planning' should provide feedback on Policy Area 'Spatial Planning' coordinators work in year 2023 as it is a requirement for 'PASPS' project.

The Committee took note of the information about EUSBSR Policy area 'Spatial Planning' achievements in Policy area coordination in 2023 and suggested to include also achievements related to PA's involvement in organisation of 14th EUSBSR Annual Forum, as well as emphasized the need to address the implementation of VASAB Vision 2040 also to other organisations and networks, as well as an intended webinar on spatial resilience as for future tasks of PA in 2024.

The Committee agreed on proposed feedback for EUSBSR Policy area ‘Spatial Planning’ Steering Group’s for land-based planning achievements in year 2023 and its submission to the Interreg BSR Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.

EUSBSR Annual Forum, 4-5 October 2023, Riga, Latvia

The Committee was informed about involvement of VASAB Secretariat in organisation of EUSBSR Annual Forum 2023 held on 4-5 October 2023 in Riga, Latvia. VASAB Secretariat supported registration process, development of visual materials and website section of the Annual Forum 2023, organised networking village with a pitch corner, contributed to the development of the Forum agenda. Ms. Anna-Leena Seppälä presented VASAB Vision 2040 in the closing session of the Forum. Forum was attended in total by around 430 participants.

The Committee took note of the information about VASAB’s involvement in organisation of the 14th EUSBSR Annual Forum which was held on 4-5 October 2023 in Riga, Latvia.

Information about upcoming project calls and VASAB’s role

The Committee was informed on upcoming project calls and funding opportunities, as well as new project developments and VASAB’s role.

The Committee took note of the information about upcoming project calls, funding opportunities, new project developments and VASAB’s role, and agreed that VASAB Secretariat will submit project application on testing VASAB Planners’ forum approach for land-based spatial planning for Swedish Institute Baltic Sea Neighbourhood Programme call which closes on 15 February 2024.

The Committee agreed to support VASAB participation in extension of ‘eMSP NBSR’ (Emerging Ecosystem-based Maritime Spatial Planning Topics in North and Baltic Seas Regions) project by 4 months until 30 June 2024 in order to disseminate project results.

The Committee agreed on participation of VASAB Secretariat in potential new project application which will be prepared for European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) call with the objective to facilitate the implementation of MSP in the EU. Proposal for VASAB role in project: cooperation with other Baltic Sea Region Policy areas and support with project communication.

10. Next Young Planners Summer School

The Committee discussed potential funding sources for organising next Young Planners Summer School and potential universities which might be interested to host the event, as well as potential possibility to link VASAB Summer School with Global Planners Forum.

11. Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) issues

Informal consultation session of the Joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group Meeting 24-25 October 2023 in Riga, Latvia

The Committee was informed about the outcomes of informal consultation session of the Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group Meeting which was held on 24-25 October 2023 in Riga, Latvia: implementation of HELCOM-VASAB work plan 2022-2024; online workshop on interim assessment on Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030 implementation on 26 February 2024; the work on the update on EBA-Guideline: agreement on scope of the revision & establishing Task Force; ongoing survey on the strategic environmental assessment

(SEA) in MSP in the Baltic Sea Region by EU MSP Assistance Mechanism; information on the Great North Sea Initiative and potential collaboration with the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG; draft guidelines on the ASCOBANS Cetacean-friendly MSP for commenting, deadline – 30 November 2023; next meeting will be held on 19-21 March 2024 in Gothenburg, Sweden.

The Committee took note of the information about the outcomes of informal consultation session of the Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group held on 24-25 October 2023 in Riga, Latvia.

BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-group

The Committee was informed about the outcomes of 3rd informal consultation session of the BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-Group online meeting held on 2 October 2023: recent developments of national MSP data, revision of terms of Reference for the BSR MSP Data ESG and its workplan, potential revision of the MSP output data structure in relation to OWE development.

The Committee took note of the information about the outcomes of 3rd informal consultation session of the BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-Group online meeting held on 2 October 2023.

Planners` Forum

The Committee was informed that 3rd MSP Planners` Forum within ‘PASPS’ project will take place online on 28 November 2023 and the main points to be discussed are: exchange on pressing issues in MSP, new draft Swedish MSP-plan, ‘EU Green Deal’ as main theme with inputs from MSP GREEN project and Finland and Latvian cases.

The Committee took note of the information about the 3rd MSP Planners` Forum within ‘PASPS’ project to be held online on 28 November 2023 and hosted by VASAB Secretariat.

Progress of eMSP NBSR project

The Committee was informed about the progress of project ‘eMSP NBSR - Emerging ecosystem-based maritime spatial planning topics in North and Baltic Seas Regions’. In the beginning of 2024 eight Policy Briefs will be ready on themes ocean governance, ecosystem-based approach, sustainable blue economy, monitoring and evaluation, MSP coherence, data sharing, climate-smart MSP, community of practice approach. Project Final Conference will be held in Gdansk on 31 January - 1 February 2024. VASAB Secretariat is constantly fulfilling its tasks in supporting project partners in communication (promotion, deliverables design production, dissemination) as well as regards content in the ongoing process of writing Policy Briefs. Furthermore, Secretariat joins discussions on potential application for a continuation in new project (with Greater North Sea Basin Initiative and more).

The Committee took note of the information about the progress of project ‘eMSP NBSR’ (Emerging Ecosystem-based Maritime Spatial Planning Topics in North and Baltic Seas Regions) and its final conference to be held on 31 January - 1 February 2024 in Gdansk (Poland).

Progress of Baltic Sea2Land project

The Committee was informed about the progress of project ‘BalticSea2Land’ and reminded about VASAB’s tasks in the project. Project is ongoing and for the years 2024-2025 main tasks of the VASAB Secretariat are: 2 thematic pan-Baltic workshops/webinars tackling coastal planning and management issues exchanging of knowledge and good practice discussing needs and gaps in LSI (Autumn 2024, Spring 2025); exploring possibilities to enable LSI network at

macro-regional scale, elaborating recommendations for coastal development and planning in the Baltic Sea Region; organising and hosting 5th Baltic MSP Forum in Riga (autumn 2025).

The Committee took note of the information about the progress of project ‘Baltic Sea2Land’.

12. VASAB Budget

The Committee accepted the VASAB budget for 2024 as proposed by the Secretariat with 317 335 EUR in revenues, 134 994 EUR Secretariat office expenses, 10 000 EUR additional expenses to be decided by CSPD/BSR, as well as 26 088 EUR – eMSP NBSR project, 51 402 EUR – PASPS project, 85 539 EUR – Baltic Sea2Land project and project reserve – 50 000 EUR.

13. VASAB Secretariat news

The Committee was informed about VASAB newsletter issued in June 2023 and to be issued in December 2023, VASAB-related events and administrative report.

The Committee took note of the information about operations of the VASAB Secretariat.