

Notes from 4th MSP Planners` Forum

18.04.2024.

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 4th meeting concentrates on multi-use & co-existence in maritime spatial planning (MSP).

News from VASAB and HELCOM

VASAB: The next, 5th Baltic MSP Forum will be held at the end of October 2025 which will also be the final conference of Baltic Sea2Land project. Two thematic pan-Baltic webinars will be organised – one this November and one next spring. The EUSBSR Annual Forum will be held on 29th – 31st October 2024 in Visby, Sweden; registration will open mid-May.

VASAB Secretariat will take part at European Maritime Days on 30th - 31st May in Svendborg, Denmark where also eMSP NBSR project workshop ‘eMSP in a nutshell’ will be held. eMSP NBSR project has been prolonged until the end of June 2024 and the results are currently being disseminated. They are available on the project website for downloading: <https://eMSPproject.eu/Results>.

HELCOM: HELCOM is on a strategic pause until further notice due to the geopolitical situation, meaning that that the meetings of all official HELCOM bodies are postponed. Next week there will be a week of events in Riga, hosted by Latvia which is the Chair country of HELCOM. On 25th April ministers and high-level representatives of HELCOM Contracting Parties which are EU Member States as well as from the European Union will gather for the 2024 Ministerial Meeting on the Baltic Sea Marine Environment. This event will be followed by the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Convention.

A few months ago, HELCOM finalized the Third Holistic Assessment of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS 3). The work in planning the next HOLAS has begun: expert groups and different working groups have discussed the scope and workplans. The HELCOM Working Group on Biodiversity, Protection and Restoration (WG BioDiv) will have its third informal consultation session on 6-8 May 2024 in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Secretariat will share relevant information deriving from the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG and a dedicated session on the topic of ecosystem services will take place.

The last informal consultation session of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP was held in Gothenburg, Sweden on 19-21 March 2024. Among several topics, the session considered and discussed the outcomes and progress of projects supporting the implementation of the Regional Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap 2021-2030, the evaluation of the current work plan as well as implementation of the next one, the planning of the interim assessment of the Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030, the status of the ecosystem-based approach guidelines. The next session is planned to be held on 18-20 September in Riga, Latvia, back-to-back with the MSP Green regional conference dedicated to European Green Deal.

News from countries: MSP status updates

**Context: participating members were invited to share their recent MSP news, national MSP status, pressing issues and national approaches on multi-use and co-existence.*

Denmark: Consultation on the amendment of Danish MSP has been finalised in February 2024 and consultation responses are processed. It is expected to leave it to the Parliament to decide whether and when to adopt the amendment. There are no pressing issues at the moment. Discussions on how to manage planning of smaller installations have been going on. Concerning co-existence and multi-use, Denmark's national practice is to deal with them in the planning phase: considering the co-existence and multi-use before allocating a space in the plan.

Estonia: Monitoring process of Estonian MSP's action plan implementing process is ongoing. Interviews have been conducted with different authorities to get input on sectoral changes and also on the relevance of the MSP. Regarding pressing issues, in Estonia we have 4 'first wave' wind farm projects at the EIA stage which have 3 times higher capacity than Estonian needs. The problem is the grid and how the onshore grid can absorb the electricity generated at the sea. In terms of co-existence, the need for it is emphasized in Estonian MSP, it's mostly related to tourism and cultural heritage.

Finland: New wind farm projects have been carried out in regards to Finland's MSP. A research on their impacts will be finalized in late May 2024. Two different scenarios have been made: one is based on current MSP and its covered territories, the other one – on proposals of wind energy companies and the territories chosen for wind farm development. Wind energy collaboration forums have been held between city planners, wind energy developers and fishermen. There have been discussions on how MSP could be guided more effectively, especially regarding wind energy development and economy. Today Finland's Coastal Strategy has been published in various languages. English version can be downloaded here:

<https://wspfi.maps.arcgis.com/sharing/rest/content/items/f98288a537054135995712b66c490ac2/data>

Germany: On a national level Germany's focus is on the German EEZ. Work on monitoring and evaluation of MSP is ongoing. The site development plan for offshore wind infrastructure is being created and the draft version is planned to be finished in May 2024. The focus is mainly on the North Sea, since in the Baltic Sea there is no further space in the German EEZ set for offshore wind development. The main task is designation of offshore wind farms and coordinating new spatial design of the shipping routes in combination with how additional areas for offshore wind can be found. Germany is also working on implementing the RED III. The aim is to accelerate the process of licensing.

Latvia: The Latvian MSP has been adopted and endorsed since 2019 and last year the first interim assessment was done which is still to be adopted this year. The main pressing issue is regarding implementation of MSP as such – the provisions and acceleration of new developments which need to meet the goals of EU Biodiversity Strategy. Another issue is that the offshore wind farmers are frightened about the territories that won't be available anymore due to Biodiversity Strategy's regulations. Based on final data and information which is still coming, the amendment of the MSP will be done. Most probably it will start next year.

Poland: Contract has been signed with Gdansk Institute for the development of the report on current status of spatial development in Polish marine areas. This report should be done by the end of this year and about 60 official authorities should be asked for input, about the data and possible changes in the policy plan. When the report will be ready, a decision will be made whether a revision of Polish Plan is needed. The current MSP is all about multi-use and compromises. Some solutions are theoretical, as they are not implemented in real life.

Sweden: Swedish MSP is in the second amendment round and has had public consultation during the end of last year and the consultation has finished in February 2024. Currently all responses are processed and a new amended proposal will be ready within a month. The national review will start on 16th of May. The proposals will be sent to the government in December 2024. Sweden is amending the adopted plans from 2022 and adding quite a lot of energy areas for offshore wind. Most pressing issues as always are assessing cumulative impacts, impacts on migrating birds and on fisheries. Research on cultural heritage has been conducted by all county administrative boards and now results are being included in plans to adjust energy areas according to the cultural heritage. Another

pressing issue is defence interests. There is a lack of needed information to actually designate areas for energy that do not disturb the defence interests. A trilateral meeting was held with Finland, the North End and during the meeting discussion took place on another quite pressing issue - winter navigation or shipping in ice. Co-existence is designated for most of the marine areas and some strategic guidance is also provided on how it can be solved in reality. A new report has been published in English about co-existence between offshore wind, commercial fisheries, aquaculture and nature conservation. Report can be downloaded here: <https://www.havochvatten.se/en/eu-and-international/marine-spatial-planning/swedish-marine-spatial-planning/reports-and-documents.html>

Presentations: Multi-use & co-existence in maritime spatial planning

Multi-use and co-existence compendium from the EU MSP Platform by *Emilie Riclet*

There is a multi-use short study from 2019 from the MSP Assistance Mechanism. The subject was not new at the time. The multi-use topic is more and more discussed. These discussions and interest in the topic of multi-use has been called as multi-use and co-existence compendium. That was an opportunity to focus on synergies and expand research. The compendium with different tools and pages to visit can be found here: <https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/>.

The matrix was presented that can be found on the previously mentioned webpage where anyone can dive into the sections and get introduced to challenges and different aspects of them.

It is a challenge to find a real-life multi-use examples. In the website it is possible to find case studies on multi-use so that anyone interested can find these examples and dive into them as well as get consolidated lessons learned of each case study. There are links leading on references of the content used at the end of each case study page. The 19 case studies can be easily filtered by country, activities and sea basins for easier access. A survey for submitting more experiences to the collection can be found there as well. The page also gathers relevant scientific publications.

In a *Slido* poll launched during the presentation, the results were:

According to you, how feasible is multi-use at sea? *Rated (in total) at 3.7/5.*

What do you think is the main challenge for implementation? *Regulatory frameworks, regulations, legal aspects, clashing interests, security/insurance, will of cooperation, responsibilities, liability due to damage, insurance issues, lack of best practice, test cases, legal framework, political will, conflicting interests, controversial interests.*

Maripark as an ideal solution for a Sustainable Blue Economy by *Dr. Marijn Rabaut & Ir. Kinnie De Beule*

Blue Cluster is a cluster of companies that work on sustainable blue economy. Blue Cluster has 6 teams working each on different focus areas. Blue Cluster brings companies together and supports innovation projects. There is a roadmap for each focus area. An offshore innovation example of Belgium's roadmap is given during the presentation. They have a zonation present and technologies ready for take-off.

The success of a sustainable blue economy asks for an overall vision on the future of our oceans and seas in marine spatial planning. Maripark works as a solution for multi-use. Multi-use is ideal in theory, difficult in reality. It is still a difficult thing to implement, because everything in the system is single-use based. There is a lot of room for synergies between businesses and MSP can be a tool to start these discussions. Environmental improvement is key: nature-based design, breeding areas, stepping stones.

Maripark is designed to accelerate transition from sector-specific, single-use activities to sector-unspecific, multi-use business. It creates a shared physical infrastructure, sea transport and carbon neutrality. Cost-effectiveness, sustainability, safety and security are central aspects of Maripark. A central authority for efficient management and maintenance of Maripark is crucial for effective governance. It can also be seen as business park on sea, if we compare Maripark to land approach business parks – designated zones for commercial activities.

Recommendations such as integrated research, cumulative aspects and mitigation of measures, infrastructure synergies, specific requirements and regulatory framework and other have been given at the end of presentation.

Comments from discussions: Since the Maripark example covers Belgium, a question about differences of North Sea and Baltic Sea arose. The authors think it's a general approach, but the details of a Maripark can differ based on context. It's transferrable as a concept, but it needs to be adapted.

Another question was about the infrastructure, since Baltic Sea doesn't have as much wires as North Sea, so who would practically finance the connecting energy infrastructure – the state or would it be shared between Maripark developers? In Belgium it was the responsibility of the developers. But since it is a multi-use structure, the state would profit from it as well, so discussions about their involvement could be held. A wind farm can be turned into a Maripark – a wind farm can be left as a single-use infrastructure or turned into a multi-use park, the time is now.

What makes Maripark cost-effective? It's not as if it's a concept invented from new. It is obviously a costly investment, but once it's built, it has a lot of opportunities. It works the same as industrial parks in a city – once the infrastructure is built, it's useful. One thing we can save on is – on time.

Nature inclusive design of the Belgian Princes Elisabeth Energy Island by Lieve Jorens

Princess Elisabeth zone will be an island in the North Sea to provide energy for Belgium. Its surface will be 281 km² and it will be divided in 3 lots. The steps for its implementation are: (1) a team with experts (from universities, NGOs, consulting firms, engineers, experts from public and private institutions) has been assembled; (2) 6 workshops on NID strategy; (3) decision phase to translate the strategy into feasible measures; (4) preparation of the execution by obtaining permits and creating a financing plan; (5) execution (2024-2030). A visualisation video of the project is shown during the presentation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLk8qA3eX30>.

Comments from discussions: A question about permitting was asked, since it was mentioned in the presentation that the island is going to be permitted for 40 years and 20 years of support mechanism. 40 years is the time for a permit being active and the latter is the time for provided support. Regarding a question about a vision for the future, Lieve Jorens says that it's not likely that there will be more energy islands given the small Belgium's sea space.

First experiences with the adoption of marine multi-use in Finnish MSP by Laura Pietilä

There are workshop series on Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE) in Finland that have been held: (1) on sustainable marine food production; (2) on sustainable marine energy production; (3) on nature-inclusive design and Finnish MSP; (4) on multi-use and MSP. In addition to the workshops, Finland had begun working on Eurajoki Maripark. Eurajoki area is a "special area" that is used for cooling down a nuclear power plant making the water warmer than average giving opportunities for a multi-use area. However, the area was later agreed to be unsuitable for a Maripark due to safety and technical issues regarding the power plant.

Nevertheless, the case provided a starting point for multi-use MSP, so Finnish Maripark expert group was established. The group has had 3 meetings. In the first one interviewing process began with local companies. The results highlighted a need for deeper understanding of actors' requirements, a clear administrative framework, understanding of responsibilities. Secondly, an exploring process of NID compensation models and permitting was done. In the third meeting focus was on harnessing GES indicators for MSP and Mariparks, linking indicators with human pressures and developing CIA for a Maripark according to specific functions. Some criteria for the indicators have been developed such as that they must reflect effects that can be directly linked to human activities, any changes caused by a Maripark must be detectable through a detector and others. It is intended to bring forward the concept to planning process in 2024 through work in MSP-GREEN project and other actions.

Comments from discussions: A comment about choosing the islands for development was brought. Another question about the Eurajoki Maripark's "failure" arose it was cleared that safety and areas unsuitability for fish-farming were the most impactful factors.

Findings from MSP interim assessment and challenges in the legal system for practical implementation of multi-use in Latvian sea waters by Kristīne Kedo

Regarding the MSP interim assessment a preparation was carried out in 2023, including analysis of existing and planned uses of sea, proposal of scope of changes to legal acts and MSP review. Pre-approval discussions on a political level are still ongoing. The "playground" is the controversial aspects of the Green Deal – offshore wind fields versus biodiversity.

Multi-use concept in Latvian waters highlight that many sectoral interests overlap in terms of requirements and available space: depth, distance from shore, possibility to connect infrastructure and proximity of a multifunctional port. There will be a potential innovation zone designated to safeguard biodiversity values, foster the development of blue economy and test the multifunctional aspects. The first perspective innovation research zone is proposed on an overlap of sectorial interests, 23km from Liepāja port.

Two core national legal acts have been identified as a regulatory framework. The licencing process in Latvia is very complex, including 3 parties: developer, Ministry of Economics/Agriculture and The Cabinet. A difficult scheme of the process is shown during the presentation. No one has completed the scheme from A to Z yet.

Current challenges include multi-use being a theory-based concept rather than something actually required; obligation to comprehensively include interested stakeholders and experts already during the first steps of amending regulations; complexity of adjusting regulations and building recommendations before revising Latvian MSP and creating multi-use zones.

Early-stage insights into a multi-use study in the German EEZ by Bettina Käppeler

The study on multi-use of marine areas in the German EEZ in the North Sea and Baltic Sea is commissioned by BSH, processing period is September 2023 – February 2025. When thinking about multi-use in marine space, it's seen as a scale Conflicts ← Co-existence → Synergies. A more complex scheme is shown during the presentation. Level 2 or co-existence is the current state between ships, fisheries and mining, but the goal is to move up to the synergies level which guarantees multifunctional use and collaboration: targeted joint utilisation of marine resources.

First two work packages include evaluation of current findings from studies and projects as well as existing concepts and approaches for implementation of multi-use in other countries. The third work package focuses on investigation of realistic combined uses in the German EEZ, the fourth – on development of a concept for multiple use in the German EEZ and the final work package (2025) would include conclusions and recommendations for the implementation of multiple use.

Comments from discussions: A question about the project results being transferrable is addressed: since the project is focusing on EEZ, will the results be suitable for open waters? It is explained that it is related to Germany's specifics. A comment is added about added value for EEZ, but the real challenge still remains of multi-use concepts in open waters. The colleagues are looking forward for the results, especially on the different environments of the North Sea and Baltic Sea. A small exchange of experiences about the licencing period in different countries is held.

Themes and timing for the next Planners` Forum

It is agreed that the next meeting of the Planners` Forum will be held online in autumn 2024 and the main theme will be decided by a new voting on relevance of the topics. There will be an option to include additional topics in the questionnaire.

Participants of the 4th MSP Planners Forum within PASPS project:

Country	Name	Organisation
Denmark	Trine Skovgaard Kirkfeldt	Danish Maritime Authority
Denmark	Daniel Gross Bjerregård	Danish Maritime Authority
Estonia	Lembe Reiman	Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture
Finland	Tiina Tihlman	Ministry of Environment
Finland	Laura Pietila	Regional Council of Southwest Finland
Germany	Philipp Arndt	Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, BSH
Germany	Bettina Käppeler	Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, BSH
Germany	Annika Koch	Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, BSH
Latvia	Kristīne Kedo	MoEPRD
Latvia	Marta Štūbe	MoEPRD
Latvia	Anete Bērziņa	MoEPRD
Poland	Kamil Rybka	Ministry of Infrastructure
Sweden	Elin Celik	Swedish Marine & Water Management Authority
Belgium	Kinnie De Beule	Blue Cluster
Belgium	Marijn Rabaut	Blue Cluster
Belgium	Lieve Jorens (VdS)	Cabinet of the Minister of Energy
Supporting organisations		
VASAB	Jana Patmalniece	VASAB Secretariat
VASAB	Tīna Šipkēvica	VASAB Secretariat
VASAB	Alda Nikodemusa	VASAB Secretariat
VASAB	Margarita Vološina	VASAB Secretariat
VASAB	Egija Stapkēviča	VASAB Secretariat
HELCOM	Florent Nicolas	HELCOM Secretariat
HELCOM	Lotta Ruokanen	HELCOM Secretariat
EU MSP Platform	Kristīna Veidemane	EU MSP Assistance Mechanism for the Baltic Sea
EU MSP Platform	Emilie Riclet	EU MSP Assistance Mechanism & the European Blue Forum
EU MSP Platform	Thanos Smanis	EU MSP Assistance Mechanism
EU MSP Platform	Pierre-Maël Deffontaines	EU MSP Assistance Mechanism