

## Notes from 5<sup>th</sup> MSP Planners` Forum

17.10.2024.

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 5<sup>th</sup> meeting concentrates on cumulative impacts in maritime spatial planning (MSP).

### News from VASAB and HELCOM

#### VASAB:

The joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group was held in Riga, Latvia on 18-20 September 2024, which act also as the steering group meeting for PA Spatial Planning of EUSBSR. We have submitted PASPS project prolongation for the years 2025-2026, which is the supporting project for PA Spatial Planning, the MSP Planners Forum and MSP Data Group.

Regarding upcoming events, the first one in VASAB's agenda is the annual EUSBSR Strategy Forum 2024 in Visby to be held on 29-31 October 2024. VASAB and PA Spatial Planning will be represented at the Networking Village with a stand where some of the PA Spatial Planning projects [will promote themselves](#) on October 30. VASAB together with the UBC is organising a seminar - Designing liveable cities in the Baltic Sea Region on Wednesday, 30 October, 16:30 - 18:00.

On November 20, VASAB is organising an online seminar "Towards updated coastal planning and development recommendations for the Baltic Sea Region". The registration is open until 13<sup>th</sup> of November. More information: <https://vasab.org/register-bs2l-1st-seminar-bsr/>

And another upcoming event is [5<sup>th</sup> Baltic MSP Forum](#). Participants were invited to save the date. The Forum will take place on 11-12 November 2025.

Participants were invited to share their insights in Survey on coastal planning and development in the Baltic Sea region. Find out more here: <https://vasab.org/bs2lsurvey-2/>

#### HELCOM:

HELCOM has agreed on the next holistic assessment of the health of the Baltic Sea, beginning the next year and expected to be accomplished in 2029. HELCOM continues its work on improvement over nature conservation and other special conservation measures. Projects have been launched in order to develop coherent Baltic Sea NPS network in line with the Strategy 3030, as well as projects which are aimed at means and tools to integrate all NPS management plans into MSPs. There has been a joint session with representatives from HELCOM-VASAB WG and HELCOM BioDiv WG beginning a discussion on how to prove cooperation in terms of special protection and other protection measures as well as on the guidelines to improve co-operation on ecosystem-based approach in MSP, which are currently under revision. Data expert group the is about to launch revision of the MSP output data guideline. All revisions will be agreed and launched at HELCOM-VASAB WG's next meeting. HELCOM recommendations on Coastal zone management have been outdated and are open for revision to incorporate new policies and modern spatial planning approaches. HELCOM will disseminate their knowledge of MSP and the importance of MSP as well as PA Spatial Planning knowledge in EUSBSR Annual Forum with a stand in Networking Village.

## 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 cumulative impacts.*

**Denmark:** On 28<sup>th</sup> June Denmark's revised MSP was officially adopted, entering a slower period now with no pressing issues. Main topics on Denmark's agenda are ecosystem-based approaches and cumulative impacts to effectively integrate them in MSP processes.

**Estonia:** No pressing issues or news to share about MSP. Regarding cumulative impacts, in Estonian practice it's still in an early stage – designing phase, so nothing to share with the group yet.

**Finland:** Finland is currently revising their MSP. The first planning round has been evaluated to improve the process, especially, collaboration. Two national events to be carried out annually have been set up: MSP webinar in June and MSP days in November. With the latter coming up soon and around 100 participants attending, preparation work has begun. This year's main topic is European Green Deal and the event will serve as a kick-off for the second planning round: work with stakeholders and how they use marine space. New collaboration networks such as Inter-ministerial MSP group has begun their work. Another network including representatives from national and regional level is about to have their first meeting with representatives from universities and research centres. Then there is an open MSP network for anyone to join. Regarding cumulative impacts, Finland has excellent data to rely on, but no methods adopted yet to assess the cumulative impacts.

**Åland:** MSP revision is about to begin next year, with ecosystem-based approaches as first in Åland's agenda. With the most pressing issue being time and resources for MSP revision, it may not be possible to incorporate cumulative impacts now.

**Germany:** The project on multi-use is still ongoing, focusing on different multi-use concepts, but one of the most relevant questions for BSH is multi-use between offshore wind farms and fisheries. First steps to prepare MSP evaluation in 2026 have been taken. Received comments from nature NGOs that expect the plan to be updated earlier (not just evaluated in 2026) according to the sectoral plan on offshore wind that defines additional areas for offshore wind that are not included in the current MSP. The main pressing issue is remaining the same as in the last meeting – implementing the RePower EU directive (RED III) on national level.

**Latvia:** On October 1<sup>st</sup> the Cabinet of Ministers of Republic of Latvia accepted the interim assessment of MSP. Based on this interim assessment, there are many amendments that must be made, so these necessary amendments make up the most pressing issues for Latvia. By the end of this year, there should be proposals to about procedures for development, implementation, and monitoring of the MSP. The proposal of amendments to enable multifunctional and efficient use of the sea, so implementing the multi-use concept in the licensing regulations has to be done until the end of next year. Regarding national approach on cumulative impacts, it is proposed that there should be development of methodology for assessing the cumulative effects such as model tools based of scientific evidence and data, but the interim assessment noted that there is not enough data, so the development of this concept should be extended until more data is collected.

**Lithuania:** No news on MSP and relevant regulations, so the focus is on implementation and sectorial issues, for example, protected areas and offshore wind farms. There is no proper framework for cumulative impact assessment yet in Lithuania, however, there has been a successful process on environmental impacts assessment.

**Poland:** MSP is in place and doing well, but Poland is still working on the adoption of detailed plans, such as plans for the marine waters of ports and lagoons. Hopefully these plans will be adopted by the end of the year. The most pressing issue is report of the big Polish plan, which will give an insight about the validity of the plan and will serve as the green light for starting revision of the plan. No established cumulative impact assessment plans yet, however, there has been an analysis conducted within the Strategic Environmental assessment.

**Sweden:** Sweden has been working with finalizing their amended plan proposals and impact assessments, will send the proposals to the government in the end of December. Two public consultation rounds have been carried out;

some bilateral meetings are planned soon. Regarding cumulative impact analysis, Sweden is using the Symphony tool, so there is a methodology developed, but a lot of improvement is needed, especially for the cross-border issues.

## Presentations: Cumulative impacts in maritime spatial planning

### Introduction from *Kristīna Veidmane (Baltic Environmental Forum Latvia)* on impact assessment approaches and tools used in BSR countries to develop MSP

To oversee the status quo of impact assessment in BSR countries, it's important to see the background: MSP Directive, recital 23 has a direct link to Directive on Strategic environmental assessment which is an important tool for integrating environmental considerations in preparing plans and programs. Another background document to remember is Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2023 in which there are specific objectives that state a need to develop joint Baltic Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment Framework to improve compatibility of practices implemented during development of maritime spatial plans.

Two methodologies for the environmental impact assessment are laid out and explained with examples: mapping of nature values (status assessment), pressure assessment, analysis of environmental problems. To emphasize that there is not a harmonized approach yet, it is explained that each country has developed unique methodologies and tools to assess impacts within their MSP, reflecting diverse priorities and contexts.

Regarding cumulative impact assessment, there are two approaches: cumulative impact per certain area (e.g. Natura 2000) or cumulative impact per scenario/alternative/proposed planning solution. Different methodologies used – qualitative, semi-quantitative and quantitative are explained.

Synthesis report is available here: <https://maritimespatialplanning.ec.europa.eu/media/document/15281>

### Exploring how the Spatial Pressure and Impact Assessment Tool (SPIA) from HOLAS could support MSP, *Deborah Shinoda (HELCOM)*

Spatial distribution of Pressures and Impacts Assessment (SPIA) aims to reveal the combined spatial pattern and magnitude of pressure and impacts in the Baltic Sea and serves as the umbrella term for the assessment of pressures and impact in the holistic assessment of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS) that happens every six years. SPIA methodology is built on the concepts developed by Halpern et al. (2008) and aims to estimate the cumulative burden by summing all the impacts in one assessment unity that in the case of SPIA has a resolution of 1 km<sup>2</sup>. The results present the relative distribution of potential pressures and impacts, so they cannot be understood in absolute terms, in other words, the results are a powerful way to communicate with the spatial patterns and to highlight hot spots where further attention is needed. As contrary to indicators, having a more sectoral approach, the SPIA draws attention to the cumulative burden of pressures across ecosystems on an accurate spatial scale. A deeper insight is given into the results divided into categories of Baltic Sea Impact Index (BSII), Baltic Sea Pressure Index (BSPI) and two thematic analyses.

The ReMAP project aims to support the assessment of how maritime spatial plans are performing, based on evidence produced by tools and data models to support a sound decision-making process that considers the connection between policies and areas, and also operationalises critical dimensions that currently are not well developed in spatial terms such as socio economic and governance dimensions. Its expected outcome is a set of tools covering different topics relevant for MSP that aims to be simple, reusable, and replicable, and when combined they can produce complex information. Challenges (data needs, simplification and use in MSP) for cumulative impact assessment (CIA) tool as well as CIA Analytical Module are explained.

SPIA contributes to MSP in three ways: by recognizing and displaying the potentially most impacted areas in the region; by providing a unique, region-wide, and harmonized data resource to support management and projects; by visualizing potential impact of human activities which can help raise awareness of impacts.

A Miro board is shared with participants to interact with three questions: (1) How can the results of Cumulative Impact Assessment be effectively communicated to planners; (2) How can incompatibilities between IUCN categories and marine uses be effectively communicated to planners; (3) How can we best communicate the links between GES components and sea uses to support planning?

### **Cumulative effects assessment (CEA) development and use in MSP, Stefano Menegon (Italian National Research Council)**

There is a Tools4MSP Research Group that is based in Venice and is a part of the National Research Council Institute for Marine Sciences. Tools4MSP Research Group is involved in various projects, one of them being H2020 BRIDGE-BS. This project is developing the predictive tools and capabilities necessary to understand and predict the impacts of climate-driven and anthropogenic multistressors on the services stemming from Black Sea ecosystems. There is a specific focus on ecosystem services in the project and Tools4MSP Research Group is in charge of specific work package that is called adapting management where they apply their methodology in in three specific pilot sites.

Risk-based CEA for MSP pairs the CEA with risk-based assessment framework. There are three stages: risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation. The Tools4MSP meta-model approach for CEA is explained step by step. Pressure modelling for MARine activities (PMAR) is introduced as a conceptual model for a pressure modelling and assessment decision support tool (PMAR) with an example of calculating spatial concentration of a pollutant given its emission.

The results come in different forms of maps: mental maps, map of total CEA or single use score and heatmaps of pressures or effects on environmental components. Tools4MSP GeoPlatform is introduced as a platform where the user can upload their own use layers.

#### **Comments from discussions:**

A question was asked about how to identify the core areas for ecosystem services given that they are a part of the risk analysis, but at this moment detailed information on that cannot be given yet, since it involves activities assigned to a different Work Package, and the integration work between CEA and Ecosystem Services has not yet been completed.

Another question is about the risks – where to get the scores for them? It is answered that it's covered a lot in researches and there has to be good quality data to rely on to create a vulnerability assessment.

### **Discussions**

The discussion part begins with a presentation from Jan Schmidtbauer Crona on the Symphony tool used by Sweden in CEA. Its idea is to get a holistic view similar to the Spatial Pressure and Impact Assessment Tool (SPIA) from HOLAS. The tool is explained step by step, emphasizing its ability to evaluate the potential effects of the future planning decisions. It is continuously updated to meet their needs.

Discussions arise from countries that do not use CEA tools – how to know which tool to choose? Since the approaches are slightly different, countries need to understand their needs to find out which tool would suit them best. Each tool has a different input and presents a different output. It is concluded that the final decision mostly depends on the needs from the different countries for the user of the different cumulative impact assessment tools. It is also discussed how these tools could contribute to a macro-regional CEA.

### **5th Baltic MSP Forum (11-12 November 2025)**

Participants are invited to save the date for the 5<sup>th</sup> Baltic MSP Forum that will take place on 11-12 November 2025 in Riga, Latvia. The preliminary structure consists of 8 parallel sessions as well as keynote speakers, an evening

reception, and an expo. Preliminary themes: liveable coastal communities, safe and secure coast / defence and civilian, energy production and the coast, environmental regeneration and tourism, built environment in the coastal zone and accessibility of the coast.

Participants are welcome to suggestions for workshop themes and leaders. For additional information and suggestion, please contact Emīls Rode ([emils.rode@vasab.org](mailto:emils.rode@vasab.org)) and Margarita Vološina ([margarita.volosina@vasab.org](mailto:margarita.volosina@vasab.org)).

It is suggested by a participant among other themes to discuss implementing some kind of specific functional zoning for the coastal territories, such as a quiet beach or active coastal area.

### **MSP Planners' Forums in 2025**

It is suggested that the meeting after next meeting could be held in person, back-to-back with 5<sup>th</sup> Baltic MSP Forum as a separate session for this specific group. Participants were supporting this idea.

### **Themes and timing for the next Planners' Forum**

It is agreed that the next meeting of the Planners' Forum will be held online in Spring 2025 and the main topic will be an aspect of Sustainable Blue Economy decided by a voting. The meeting after the next meeting will be held in person, back-to-back with 5<sup>th</sup> Baltic MSP Forum and its main topic will be coastal planning.

## Participants of the 5<sup>th</sup> MSP Planners Forum within PASPS project:

Country	Name	Organisation
Denmark	Daniel Gross Bjerregård	Danish Maritime Authority
Estonia	Lembe Reiman	Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture
Finland	Mari Pohja-Mykrä	Regional Council of Southwest Finland
Åland	Annica Brink	Government of Åland
Germany	Annika Koch	Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, BSH
Latvia	Laura Rubane	Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development
Latvia	Marta Štūbe	Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development
Latvia	Anete Bērziņa	Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development
Lithuania	Paulius Kliučininkas	Ministry of Environment
Poland	Kamil Rybka	Ministry of Infrastructure
Poland	Katarzyna Falinska	Ministry of Infrastructure
Poland	Joanna Adamowicz	General Directorate for Environmental Protection
Sweden	Elin Celik	Swedish Marine & Water Management Authority
Sweden	Jan Schmidtbauer Crona	Swedish Marine & Water Management Authority
Sweden	Joacim Johannesson	Swedish Marine & Water Management Authority
Sweden	Veronica Berntson	Swedish Marine & Water Management Authority
Sweden	Marie Hallberg	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
<b>Supporting organisations</b>		
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
VASAB	Emīls Rode	VASAB Secretariat
HELCOM	Florent Nicolas	HELCOM Secretariat
HELCOM	Deborah Shinoda	HELCOM Secretariat
EU MSP Platform	Kristīna Veidemane	EU MSP Assistance Mechanism for the Baltic Sea
Tools4MSP	Stefano Menegon	Italian National Research Council