



Dear VASAB friends,

With the new year just around the corner, it's the perfect moment to reflect on the achievements we have made in 2024.

The year 2024 marked a significant milestone for VASAB - 30 years since the approval of its first strategic document. Over time, this document has proven its novelty and relevance, laying the groundwork for its successor, the VASAB Vision 2040.

2024 also celebrated the 10th anniversary of the EU Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, with VASAB playing a significant role in fostering continuous cooperation among countries and international, including intergovernmental, organizations in the Baltic Sea Region, contributing to the successful implementation of the Directive.

This year, we embarked on the journey towards the Land-based Planners' Forum, launched the Northern European Sea Basins project, and continued our work on recommendations addressing the challenges faced by coastal communities. We also cherished our ongoing collaboration with numerous organizations and stakeholders.

As we look ahead, we have paved the way for 2025 and feel ready to embrace its challenges and exciting opportunities. Before the holidays begin, we are delighted to share our latest news with you.

We wish you wonderful holidays and a Happy New Year!



On 7-8 December, 1994 VASAB (Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea Region) Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and Development gathered for the third Conference in Tallinn, Estonia and approved the document 'Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010'.

Over the years, the first VASAB strategic document has proven its novelty and relevance. The methodological approach – setting goals to achieve a desired vision for the Region, implementing concrete actions to realize that vision, and achieving tangible results has been widely adopted for strategic planning purposes at macro-regional, national, regional, and local levels.

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Land-based Planners' Forum

Are spatial planners in the Baltic Sea Region equipped to tackle today's challenges? Creation of Planners' Forum for land-based spatial planning is about to begin!

In the face of challenges like climate and demographic changes, geopolitical shifts, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, spatial planners in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) need more than traditional approaches. The Planners' Forum project funded by Swedish Institute aims to enhance the capacity of BSR planners by fostering collaboration across all governance levels.

This newly initiated network and platform - **Land-based Planners' Forum** - will offer an informal, supportive space for sharing best practices and innovative solutions, empowering planners to build resilience and promote sustainable growth in both urban and rural areas.

[Read more](#)



Mark the date in your calendar for the 5th Baltic MSP Forum that will take place on 11-12 November 2025 in Riga, Latvia.

Be part of this pivotal gathering that will share advancements in coastal and maritime spatial planning practices and magnify multi-level cooperation for the Baltic Sea Region and beyond.

Registration will open in May 2025.

[Follow Forum updates here](#)

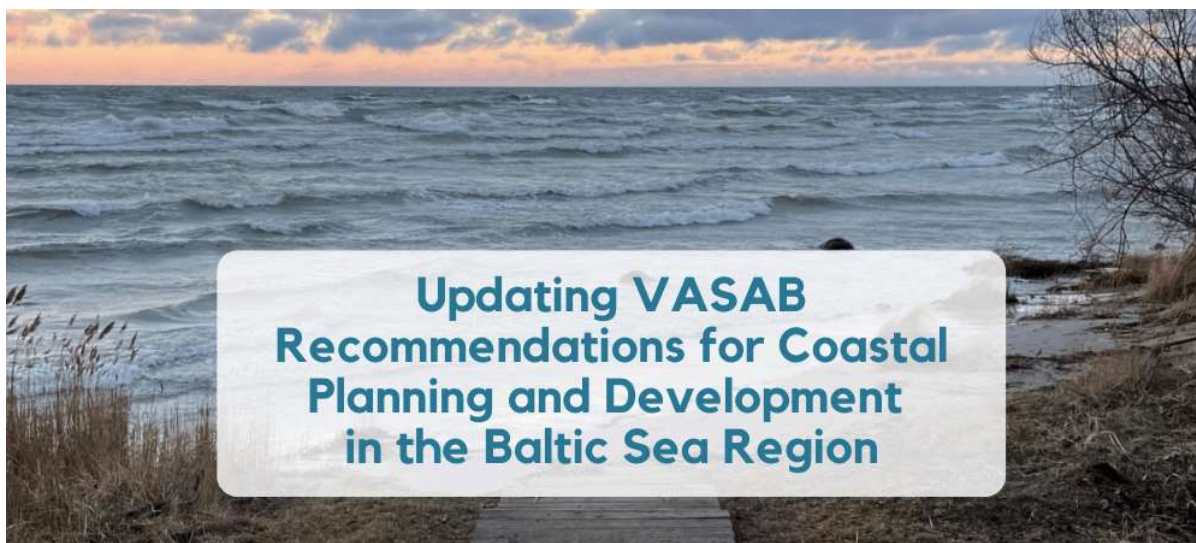


The Annual Forum of the EUSBSR, held on October 30-31 in Visby, Gotland, brought together around 650 participants from 20 countries to address critical themes of sustainability, resilience, and security.

VASAB was excited to contribute to the event with the seminar 'Designing Liveable Cities: Practical Approaches and Regional Perspectives'. Additionally, we organized the Networking Village stand as a stage to showcase the SUMP's for BSR, Baltic Sea2Land, and We Make Transition! projects, as well as the Policy Area 'Spatial Planning' and the VASAB Vision 2040.

Furthermore, in light of the multifaceted challenges facing the Baltic Sea Region and the update of the EUSBSR Action Plan, VASAB actively participated in many important conversations and discussions, particularly on stakeholder engagement.

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In 1996, a few years after founding of the VASAB cooperation, the **Common Recommendations for Spatial Planning of the Coastal Zone in the BSR** were adopted, setting an important precedent for coastal zone management. Now, nearly three decades later, the Baltic Sea Region finds itself amidst profound geopolitical, environmental, and socio-economic changes. In response, VASAB has embarked on a project to review and update these Recommendations within the framework of the **Baltic Sea2Land**.

The process of updating the Recommendations is ongoing, VASAB has already conducted a survey, gathering input from spatial planning professionals and hosted an online webinar that covered topics and issues relevant to coastal areas in the Baltic Sea. Up next is the seminar scheduled for spring 2025, which will build on the insights

gathered, fostering further collaboration and refining the Recommendations to ensure they are robust, forward-looking, and aligned with the region's evolving needs.

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Cooperation between the North Sea and Baltic Sea regions continues through the new Northern European Sea Basins project (NESBp).

The NESBp aims to support the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative - a newly established collaboration among North Sea countries - by fostering international cooperation for Maritime Spatial Planning in the North Sea basin. This includes close cooperation and experience sharing with the Baltic Sea Region.

VASAB is excited to join this project partnership to further advance Maritime Spatial Planning at both the sea basin and cross-sea basin scales. Through this initiative, we aim to better support planners, enhance multi-level governance, and strengthen resilience in the face of climate change, geopolitical tensions, biodiversity loss threats, and the safe and equitable transition to a sustainable blue economy.

[Read more](#)

Oysters with a pearl

Podcast series
presenting
key outcomes
of eMSP NBSR
project



www.eMSPproject.eu/Results



Emerging Ecosystem-based
Maritime Spatial Planning
Topics in the North and Baltic
Sea Regions



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Join us on **“Oysters with a pearl”**, a **captivating podcast series dedicated to unveiling the intricacies of maritime spatial planning**. Each episode is a treasure trove, exploring how we balance protecting marine life with human activities, guided by expert voices and real-world stories.

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Upcoming events

February 2025 (tbc)

NESBp project partners kick-off meeting

February 2025 (tbc)

VASAB webinar on national planning systems & strategies

Mid February 2025 (tbc)

Land-based Planners' Forum project partners meeting

19-20 March 2025 (tbc)

94th VASAB CSPD/BSR meeting

7-9 April 2025, Rostock, Germany

Informal consultation session of HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group

April 2025 (tbc), online

6th MSP Planners' Forum

April 2025 (tbc), online

Baltic Sea2Land 2nd seminar on recommendations for coastal planning in BSR

April 2025 (tbc), Sopot, Poland

Baltic Sea2Land project partners meeting

21 May, Tampere, Finland

Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme Conference 2025

21-23 May 2025, Cork, Ireland

European Maritime Day 2025

NB! All event dates are subject to change.

Follow our activities



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