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Lessons Learned in Cross-border Maritime Spatial Planning

Experiences and insights from
Pan Baltic Scope



**Lessons Learned in Cross-border Maritime Spatial Planning –
Experiences and insights from Pan Baltic Scope**

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1. Introduction: why Lessons Learned and who were the learners?

Welcome to the Lessons Learned Report of the Pan Baltic Scope project. This report is a summary and analysis of two intensive years of collaboration to achieve the set goals, joint learning and knowledge co-creation within the Pan Baltic Scope project.

The Lessons Learned report provides an account of project participants' expectations, experiences and the learning processes that occurred within the project activities, including their personal reflections on the main challenges and enablers for transboundary Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR).

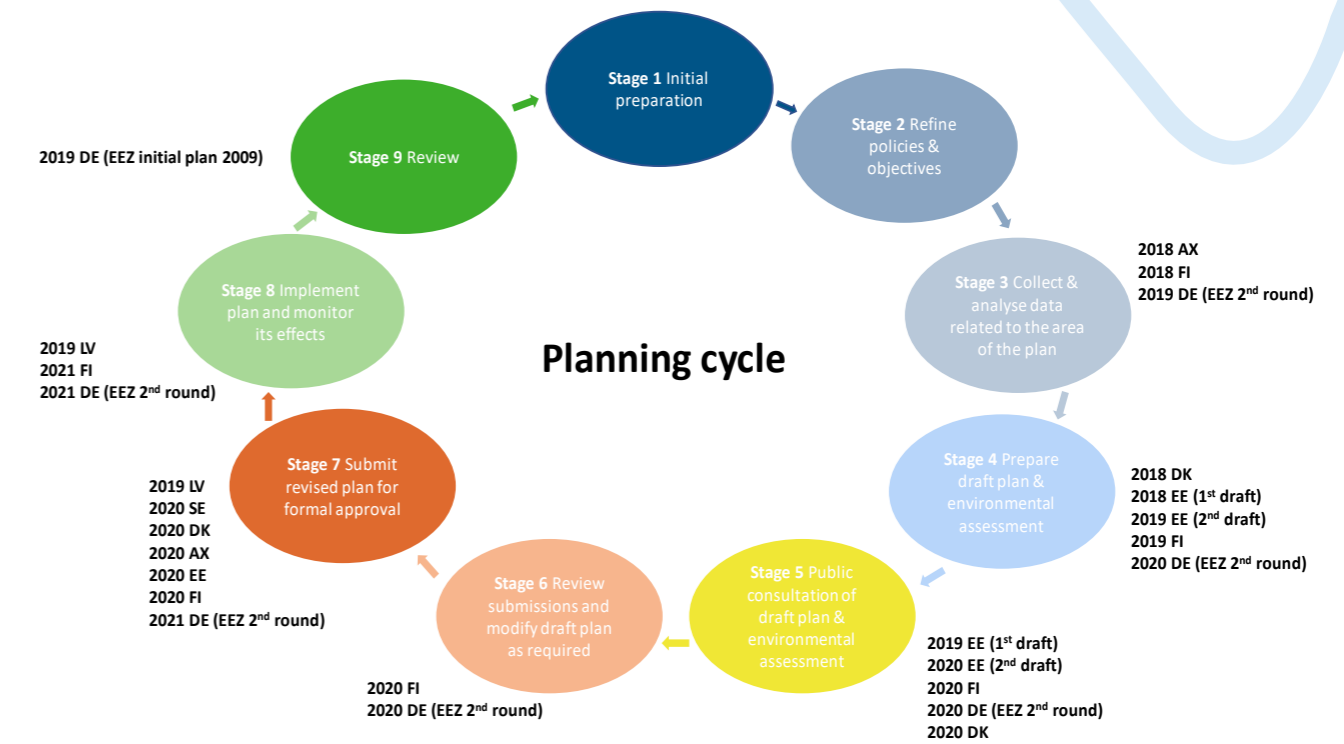
The main objectives of Pan Baltic Scope were to achieve coherent national Maritime Spatial Planning in the BSR and to build lasting macro-region mechanisms for cross-border MSP cooperation.

The project brought together eight MSP planning authorities and three regional organisations in the Baltic Sea Region as part of the consortium. The project team was led by the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwaM), the lead partner in the predecessor Baltic SCOPE project.¹ SwaM is responsible for the Swedish national MSP process, including coordination with other countries.

Sweden has Territorial Waters or Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) bordering all member states represented in the project and has a strong interest in cross-border collaboration to help develop coherent maritime spatial planning. Partners from Denmark, Poland, Latvia and Estonia are also responsible for their national MSP processes and the German Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency is responsible for the planning of its EEZ. The partner from Åland is responsible for the Territorial Sea and the Regional Council of Satakunta for planning the Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone pertaining to the Satakunta region². Each project partner is at a different stage in the development of their marine spatial plans as depicted in Figure 1.

Pan Baltic Scope was designed to support the implementation of the 2014 EU MSP Directive and the objectives defined in the EU BSR Macro-regional Strategy under the core objective 'save the sea'. The project also contributes to the implementation of key objectives outlined in the EU's 2019 Blue Economy and EU2020 Strategy, as well as the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and VASAB Long Term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region (LTP).

Figure 1: Different stages of planning process at the end of the Pan Baltic Scope project.



Pan Baltic Scope had five interlinked work packages (WP):

- WP 1.1 Cross-border Collaboration and Consultation to Support National MSP processes;
- WP 1.2 Advancing the Implementation of the Ecosystem-Based Approach and Data Sharing;
- WP 1.3 Integrating Land-Sea Interactions into MSP;
- WP 2.1 Management and Coordination;
- WP 3.1 Communication and Dissemination.

Practical work on MSP was conducted in WP 1.1., 1.2. and 1.3. with a total of 12 activities (Figure 2).

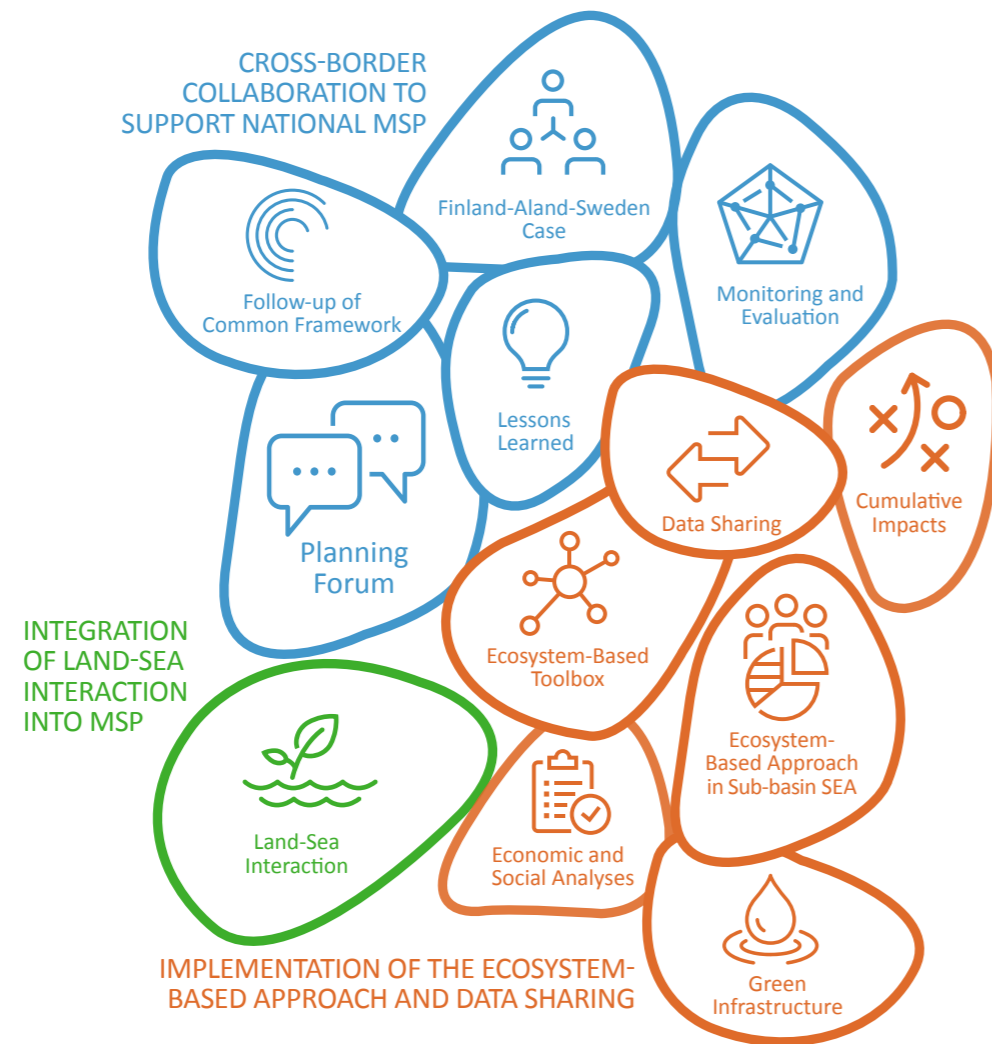
The Lessons Learned activity was part of WP 1 Cross border Collaboration and Consultation to Support National MSP processes. It had two major objectives:

- 1) to document the learning processes that occurred throughout the two years of project collaboration;
- 2) to provide a platform for project partners to voice and share their own personal views and experiences of the main challenges and enablers to transboundary MSP to emerge from different work package activities.

¹ All former partners from the former Baltic SCOPE project are participating in the project and they have been joined by one regional planning authority from Finland and the planning authority of the autonomous region of Åland have joined the new consortium. In addition, three MSP authorities have agreed to participate as associated partners: the Ministry of the Environment of Finland, the Ministry of the Environment of Lithuania and the Ministry for Energy, Infrastructure and Digitalisation of the German Land of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

²The Regional Council of Satakunta is responsible for the MSP area of the Archipelago Sea and the southern part of the Bothnian Sea together with the Regional Council of Southwest Finland.

Figure 2: Pan Baltic Scope work packages



This report examines whether the key objectives of each WP were met and how each WP contributed towards the projects' two main aims of achieving coherent national maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region and building lasting macro-region mechanisms for cross-border MSP cooperation. To achieve this, the report closely analyses the activities conducted under each WP, focusing on the main challenges and enablers to transboundary MSP each WP experienced.

1.1 Methods of data collection

This report is based on different and inter-related steps of data collection:

- Two questionnaire surveys;
- A survey for Activity Leaders;
- Feedback from Planning Forums and Partner Meetings organised throughout the project.

1.2 Surveys

Assessing Expectations of Project Partners Prior to the Start of the Project

The first survey was implemented between January and February 2018. It contained 39 questions and the structure followed that of the Work Packages in the project.³ In addition to WP specific questions, respondents shared their views on stakeholder mobilization and integration and work across cases, activities and WPs. The survey gave each individual planner and expert involved in the project the chance to voice and share views on:

- The main aims and objectives in relation to all WPs;
- The main concerns regarding practical work in the WPs;
- What is needed to help facilitate practical work in all WPs;
- Whether the WP will contribute towards achieving coherent national maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region;
- Whether the WP will help build lasting macro-region mechanisms for cross-border MSP cooperation.

The responses were treated as anonymous and confidential. They were analysed and presented for discussion at the project kick-off meeting in Stockholm (27-28 February, 2018).

Evaluating Progress, Concerns and Facilitation Needs after Year 1

The second survey was conducted between December 2018 and January 2019. It contained 55 multiple choice questions. Like the first survey, the structure followed that of the Work Packages in the project. Furthermore, each individual planner and expert involved in the project was invited to reflect on:

- Whether the main aims and objectives in relation to all WPs were met or have changed;
- The main concerns regarding practical work in the making;
- What was needed to help facilitate practical work until the completion of the tasks;
- Whether the WP will be able to contribute towards achieving coherent national maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region;
- Whether the WP will be able to help build lasting macro-region mechanisms for cross-border MSP cooperation.

³ Cross-border Collaboration and Consultation to Support National MSP processes (WP 1.1.); Advancing the Implementation of the Ecosystem-Based Approach (WP 1.2.); Data Sharing (WP 1.2.) and Integrating Land-Sea Interactions into MSP (WP 1.3.).

Examples of answers from the first survey enabled project partners to assess whether they had made good progress, or if there were problems that needed to be solved during the final year of the project. All responses were treated as anonymous and confidential, and they were analysed by Nordregio and presented to all WP and activity leaders, Planning Forum members and the lead partner.

What have we achieved in the activities, what can we recommend and what next?

The third survey was conducted during June-September 2019 with all activity leaders invited to take part. The survey contained 20 questions, including both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. This final survey gave each activity leader involved in the project the chance to reflect on:

- Whether the main aims and objectives were well met;
- The main achievements;
- The main challenges and obstacles in the practical work in the activity;
- Key enablers and factors that supported success and helped overcoming challenges;
- Stakeholder work;
- Looking back and ahead: recommendations, replication and next steps.

Report structure

The report is structured on a WP basis. Chapter 1 examines work conducted in WP 1 on Cross-border Collaboration and Consultation to Support National MSP processes. Chapter 2 discusses the work completed under WP 2 in terms of advancing the implementation of the EBA. Data sharing related activities are highlighted in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 outlines the work and experience of the WP for Land-Sea Interaction. Each chapter dealing with specific WPs and activities provides activity fact sheets containing summaries of the main achievements, challenges and key enablers that emerged during WP activities. The fact sheet also lists the major outputs from each activity and provides links for further reading. In the concluding section, the report analyses whether PBS has met the two core objectives outlined at the start of the project, namely, contributing to coherent national maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region and building lasting macro-region mechanisms for cross-border MSP cooperation. Finally, we provide a list of project recommendations made by Pan Baltic Scope for improving future cross-border MSP.

2. Cross-border Collaboration and Consultation to Support National MSP processes

Cross-border collaboration is an essential element of maritime spatial planning (MSP) processes (Kull et al. 2019). Cross-border MSP requires new types of spatial thinking, sharing knowledge and working together on common problems (Jay et al. 2016). The 2014 European Union Directive on MSP emphasises the need for coherent maritime spatial planning and aligned plans between independent states (European Parliament and Council 2014).

The MSP Directive notes that “[...] member States bordering marine waters shall cooperate with the aim of ensuring that Maritime Spatial Plans are coherent and coordinated across the marine region concerned. Such cooperation shall take into account, in particular, issues of a transnational nature” (European Parliament and Council 2014).

The Baltic Sea Region (BSR) has been a trail blazer in the promotion and development of pioneering collaborative MSP activities (Morf et al. 2019). Transnational MSP has become an integral part of the EU Macro-Regional Strategy for the BSR, with the core objective ‘save the sea’ aiming to promote collaboration between key stakeholders in the development and implementation of transboundary MSP activities. Transboundary cooperation has become institutionalized through collaborations in the intergovernmental regional organisations, the Helsinki Commission

(HELCOM) and VASAB (Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea). In 2007, countries around the Baltic Sea jointly agreed under the HELCOM Convention to develop a Baltic Sea Action Plan, aiming to achieve a good environmental status in the Baltic Sea by 2021 (Moodie et al., 2019). The Baltic Sea Action Plan emphasized the importance of basing marine spatial planning principles on an ecosystem-based approach. In 2010, the two intergovernmental organizations of HELCOM and VASAB jointly developed 10 principles and guidelines to support the implementation of MSP in the region, with the HELCOM-VASAB MSP working group created to examine transboundary issues in MSP. Transboundary MSP activities in the BSR have become formalized around these institutions, which has helped build networks, collaborations and trust between stakeholders (Zaucha 2014).



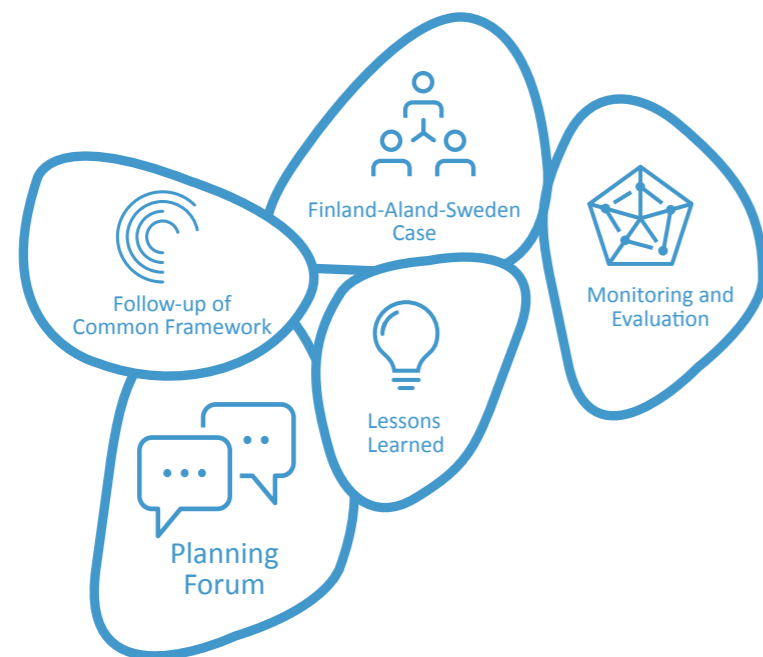
Most transboundary MSP interactions in the BSR had taken place in the form of ad hoc commissioned projects. The Baltic SCOPE project (2015-2017) in particular, was a unique governance exercise in transboundary MSP as it brought together national planners and key stakeholders to identify cross-border issues and integrate national marine spatial plans. The Baltic SCOPE project examined some of the key obstacles and challenges to coordination and collaboration in cross-border MSP, including language barriers, different planning structures and regulations and countries being at different stages of the MSP process. Overall, however, 88% of Baltic SCOPE participants thought the project had successfully enhanced cooperation between planners and stakeholders. Face to face interaction and bi-lateral and tri-lateral meetings between key stakeholders were regarded as important enablers for establishing a framework for dialogue and exchange of information. The Baltic SCOPE project contributed new tools and methods for conducting cross-border MSP, but participants agreed that more permanent cross-border coor-

dination activities and structures are required to establish greater coherence between national MSPs in the BSR (Kull et al. 2017).

Pan Baltic Scope WP 1.1 activities

Work package 1.1. in Pan Baltic Scope draws on the pioneering work in the former Baltic SCOPE project, which enabled concrete and practical cross-border collaboration. The aim of WP1.1 is to carry out national MSP processes in collaboration with other countries' planning authorities. The motivation is to develop common approaches and baselines to solve national as well as transboundary planning issues. The WP involved supporting planning authorities' cross border collaboration at different geographical levels; facilitating information exchange needed for finding appropriate planning solutions; supporting cross-border consultation on plan proposals; testing and making use of guidelines, methods and tools developed for implementation of MSP in the Baltic Sea region at pan-Baltic or at national level and sharing best practices in MSP. The WP is broken down into four main activities:

Figure 3: Pan Baltic Scope WP 1.1 activities



- **Planning Forum:** The Planning Forum is a regular platform for collaboration on general and specific cross-border planning issues identified by the planning authorities and regional organizations.
- **Finland-Åland-Sweden case:** This case study coordinated collaboration of cross-border MSP discussions and network development of planners and marine stakeholders between Finland, Åland and Sweden in the overall Gulf of Bothnia. Case study work further encompassed the marine and coastal area between Åland and Satakunta, focusing on local stakeholder involvement in connection with ongoing MSP processes in Finland and Åland.
- **Monitoring and evaluation of selected national processes:** Building on the evaluation and monitoring framework developed in the Baltic SCOPE project for evaluating transboundary collaboration in MSP, this activity monitors and evaluates national MSP processes conducted in Latvia and Poland.
- **Follow-up of Common Regional Framework:** This activity is designed to follow-up the application of the Baltic Sea Broad-scale maritime spatial planning (MSP) principles and the application of the Guidelines for transboundary consultation, public participation and cooperation.
- **Exchange information** on current and future national plans and best practices and lessons learned on developing and implementing plans. One respondent argued, for example, that the WP could also invite comments, contributions and improvements to the partners' plans.
- **Increased learning**, which emphasised broadening the knowledge and understanding of MSP plans of partner countries and regions. The respondents also outlined individual learning as a key objective in order to foster institutional learning within the organisation one is working for – individuals bring the knowledge back home.
- **Identify cross-border issues**, particularly common challenges and joint solutions. The respondents outlined, for example, that the WP could contribute added value to national MSP processes through jointly developing solutions and identifying common challenges.
- **Enhance cooperation**, particularly between planning authorities and sectoral actors. Building on already established cooperation across borders in the BSR was also highlighted among the project partners. One respondent phrased, for example, “continue the well-established cooperation between the Baltic Sea countries during the Baltic SCOPE” as a key aim of the WP work.
- **Increase alignment of national plans.** Respondents outlined, for example, the need for cross-border cooperation particularly with regard to the MSP Directive. Another objective provided was on how to align handling cross-border sectoral issues in the plans, such as shipping corridors.

2.1 Aims and objectives

During the first survey, respondents were asked to share their opinion on what they regarded as the main aims and objectives of WP1.1. Many respondents reflected on two of the overarching aims of the project, namely enhanced cooperation, particularly between planning authorities and sectoral actors, and the need for an increased alignment of national MSP. The main aims and objectives outlined in the survey are as follows:

In the second survey conducted after one year, respondents were asked whether they thought WP 1.1 activities had helped meeting the main objectives outlined in the first survey. As shown in figure 4 below, over 90% of the respondents thought that exchange of information functioned very well during the project and was the basis for ongoing and increased learning (92%). The majority of the project partners taking part in the survey also thought that the project contributed to the identification of cross-border issues, common challenges and joint solutions. More than half of the respondents thought that cooperation, particularly between planning authorities and sectoral actors, was enhanced. Slightly less than half of the respondents thought that the project contributed to an increased alignment of national plans after the first year.

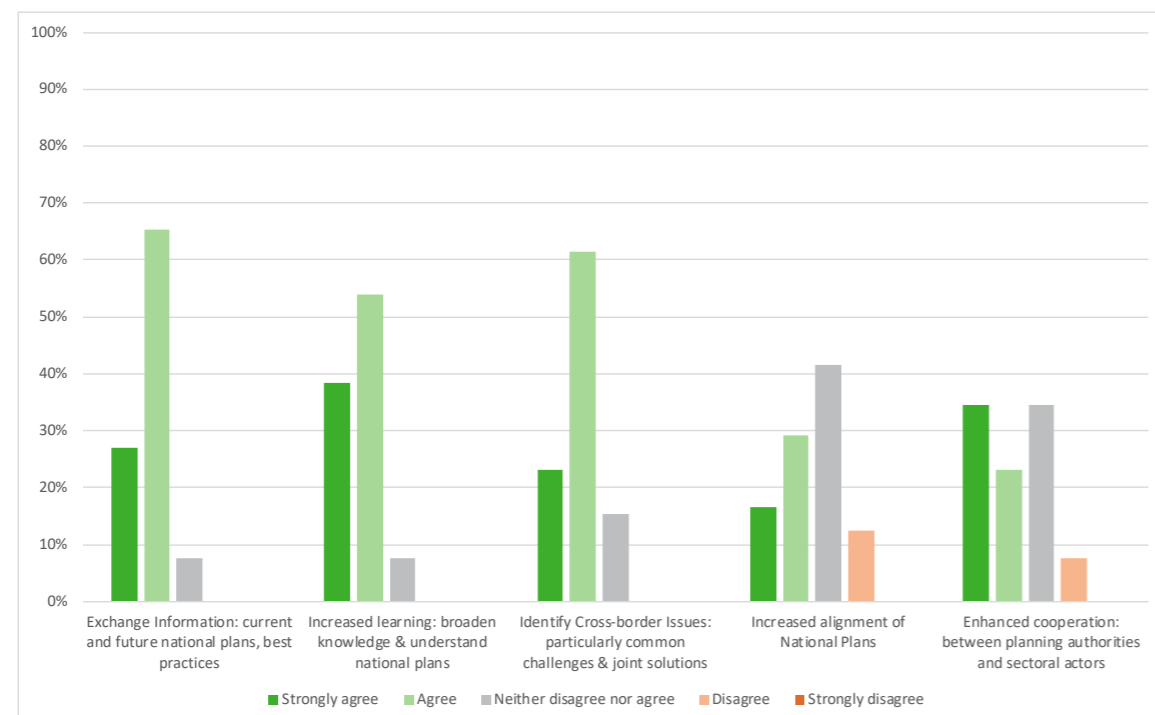
2.2 Main challenges

The first survey asked the project partners about their main concerns regarding practical work in WP 1.1. Many of the issues and concerns raised by the project partners were also brought up in the predecessor

project Baltic SCOPE (Kull et al 2017), including:

- **Different national interests and priorities.** The partners outlined that developing and agreeing on common activities and content within the WP could be obstructed by different approaches to and needs of MSP among the partner countries, as one respondent put it, “the content may not satisfy everybody.”
- **Political change.** The partners stressed the fact that experience from previous transboundary collaborations shows that national priorities may change if new governments are elected. Similarly, resources and capacity for working with transboundary cooperation in the MSP authorities depends on political decision-making level.
- **Lack of clear definitions.** This concerns key issues which the partners are to work with, such as the precautionary principle, transparency and cooperation. Further, the partners highlighted that planning needs to be adapted to characteristics and special conditions of different areas, and the statuses of some MSP principles are different too.

Figure 4: The project’s contribution to meeting each aim and objective outlined in WP 1.1

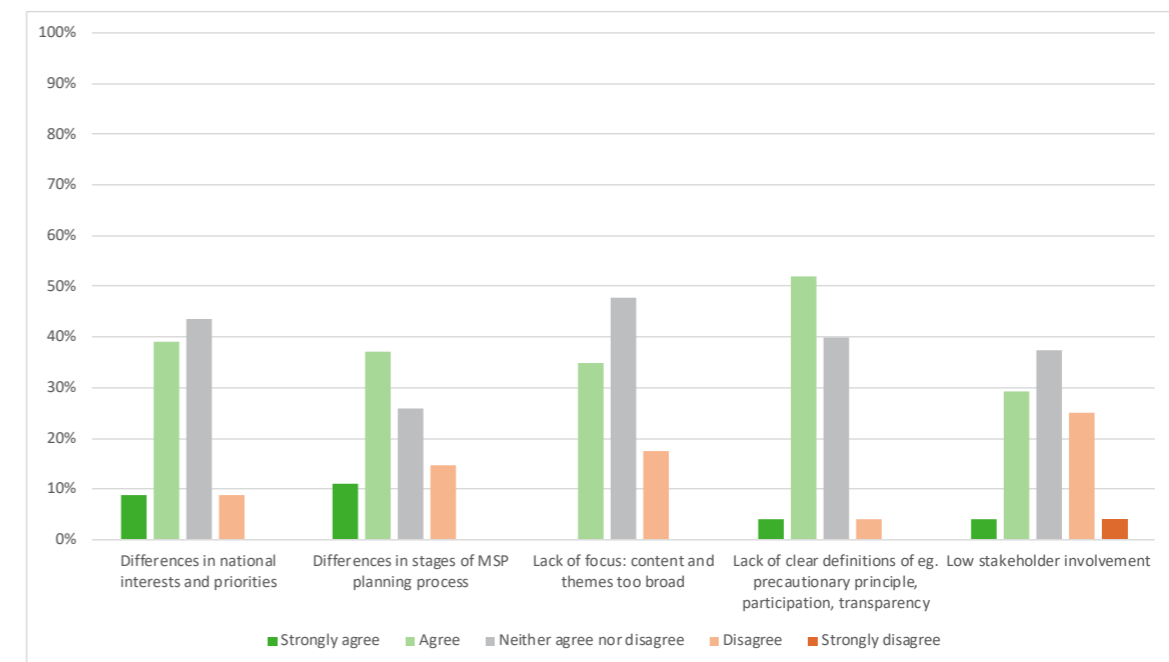


- **Lack of time and focus.** The content and themes of the project might be too broad, and the rather short project might further impede on a thorough work with detailed issues. Can one be engaged in all project activities along with tasks in the national process? Thus, keeping a clear focus and adjusting throughout the project’s lifetime was perceived as important.
- **Low stakeholder involvement.** The respondents emphasised that the planners need expert knowledge from stakeholders, particularly at the local level, to move processes forward. However, low stakeholder involvement may limit the input needed to anchor the knowledge and needs into the planning process.
- **Different stages of planning process.** There were already some approved MSPs in the BSR, while other countries and regions have just started the pro-

cess, such as Åland or the Finnish Region of Satakunta. On the other hand, countries not that far ahead could learn from those that are further advanced in the process.

In the second stakeholder survey, respondents were asked to what extent the activities conducted in the WP had contributed to overcoming these challenges. Figure 5 below shows that the WP contributed to a better understanding of national MSP processes of partner countries. Work on definitions and concepts seemed to be promising, with the majority of respondents stating that the project contributed to overcoming this challenge. Low stakeholder involvement was still perceived as an issue by more than a quarter of respondents. However, it was also stated that the move from scoping to actual work implies more intensive work with stakeholders.

Figure 5: The project’s contribution to overcoming the challenges in WP 1.1



2.3 Enablers

The first and second surveys asked respondents to reflect on different enablers that would contribute to smooth collaborations in a transboundary context. The main enablers they identified included:

- **Communication:** clear communication and constant dialogue between project partners was highlighted as essential for collaboration and coordination. This included constant information exchange between WPs and clear guidance and instructions from project and activity leads;
- **Methods, tools and concepts:** survey respondents noted that they needed to work more intensively on definitions to create a common understanding. They stated that using concrete examples from planning was most useful, as well as developing common practices, since too many methods would increase complexity, even when complexity is not required;
- **Linking PBS to national MSP processes:** integrating PBS findings into national and other regional frameworks when and where similar topics are dealt with to generate synergies. One respondent specified that these are “nationally and cross-border important topics to actually help ongoing processes”;
- **Strong cooperation and collaboration** between the countries’ MSP authorities and sectoral institutions. The importance of working on a common good and “jointly developing common challenges” was highlighted among respondents. After the project, this may require national financing;

- **Strong stakeholder involvement.** What does stakeholder work imply and bring in the short term and long term and how to increase public awareness and community involvement? This requires keeping things simple and not over-complicating them as it decreases motivation of the public to be involved. This involves avoiding professional jargon when collaborating with or informing the public.

2.4 Stakeholder involvement

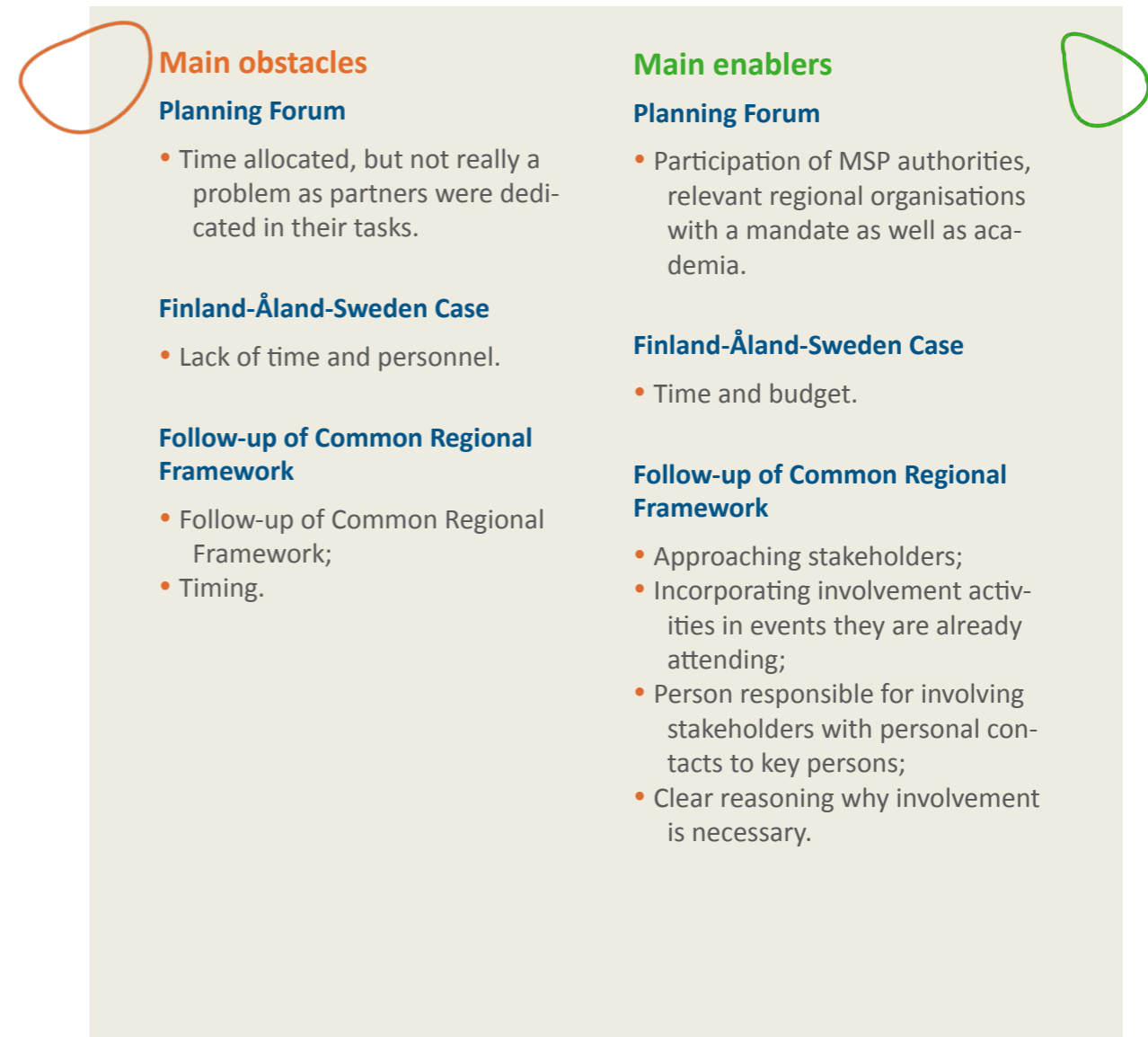
In the second survey, 68% of respondents felt that there was a low level of stakeholder involvement in WP1.1. “Low interest”, “limited time” and “lack of awareness” were cited as some of the main reasons for the low level of stakeholder involvement in WP 1.1. (Figure 6). The figure lists the assessments of the different activities under WP 1.1 in order to show the differences and similarities across them.

Survey respondents recognized the importance of involving a wide range of stakeholders as it enhances the openness and transparency of the process and brings added expertise and knowledge to development and implementation of the plans. One respondent noted that “working with stakeholders at all levels is essential for legitimate MSP processes”. Another noted that “stakeholders provided needed knowledge for MSP,” which “broadens the horizons of planners” and “provides guidance in the development of MSP roadmaps, principles and guidelines”. It is regarded as particularly important to “discuss sectoral issues in a proper manner”, “get a deeper insight of sectors

and their spatial needs” and “highlight MSP and the need for engagement of experts from different sectors”. Respondents pointed out that the major challenge is increasing awareness about cross-border MSP activities and providing stakeholders with an incentive to get involved in the process. As one planner noted, it is important to “raise awareness of key stakeholders of how MSP is done in the BSR and how it can influence them”. Another pointed out that “everyone wants to feel useful and produce something, therefore activating this feeling in stakeholders is a

key element in increasing collaboration between authorities and stakeholders.” Respondents were, however, convinced that there needs to be a specific reason to involve stakeholders and at the outset of planning process it is vital “to identify for what, how, when and whom to involve”. It should not just be a cosmetic process but “activating stakeholders and showing them that their needs are being heard. Not only will they be listened to, but we can show them that their input has also resulted in something.”

Figure 6: Involving stakeholders in the practical work of WP 1.1. activities⁴



⁴The figure is a compilation of the answers provided by activity leaders from the Planning Forum, the Finland-Åland-Sweden Case and the Follow-up of Common Regional Framework activity. The Monitoring & Evaluation activity did not work with stakeholders.



Activity Factsheet: Planning Forum for Cross-border Cooperation

The Planning Forum was a platform for collaboration on the planning issues, identified by the planning authorities and regional organisations and supported by the scientific community. The issues the Forum dealt with were both general and specific. The Forum also guided and informed the other activities in Pan Baltic Scope. These activities presented their work in the Forum and tested their deliverables to get feedback.

Tasks

- Identify planning needs;
- Exchange information and experience;
- Organise cross-border consultation on plan proposals;
- Develop recommendations;
- Spar with the other project activities.

Challenges

- Keeping the ambitious group realistic and focussed on what is feasible to achieve in a limited framework;
- Participants' limited time during busy periods "at home", while they were doing their maritime spatial plans simultaneously.

Achievements

- Dealt with hands-on planning issues between partners;
- Identified common challenges;
- Added cross-border perspective and relevance to national processes;
- Boosted and raised the competence of MSP authorities;
- Exchanged experience between partners, inspiration from other ongoing projects and built on earlier experience;
- Task forces for specific tasks to solve challenges to be dealt with jointly;
- Feedback and support to other work packages and activities.

Enablers

- Working with the authorities in charge of maritime spatial planning it was possible to feed directly into the ongoing national processes, thus creating an added value;
- Build trust by creating an open and inclusive atmosphere;
- Agree early in the process when to do what and plan meeting dates well in advance;
- Prepare each meeting well; think PDORA - Purpose, Desired Outcome, Roles and Responsibilities, and set the agenda accordingly;
- Structured facilitation during meetings, keeping tight schedules;
- Support task forces and activity leaders with clear instructions;
- Be agile. Allow time for spontaneous and current issues at each meeting.

Outputs and products:

Documentations from bilateral meetings

Final report: The Planning Forum - Experiences from Pan Baltic Scope (www.panbalticscope.eu)



Activity Factsheet: Finland – Åland – Sweden Case

The Gulf of Bothnia is shared by Finland, Åland, and Sweden. These waters are fraught with planning challenges and cross-border interactions, as well as a myriad of land-sea interactions. The activity goal was to develop the tools and knowledge needed to ensure that the shared sea and unique environments can be preserved, while at the same time promoting the Blue Economy. Multiple Blue Economy sectors are dependent on the Gulf of Bothnia for their income. Finding multiple sea use possibilities and solutions for coexistence are some of the key challenges that MSP planners face. Increasing collaboration across borders, levels and sectors can help to find solutions for better plans in the future. Case study work included two main case study scopes: a) cross-border networking and planning in the Gulf of Bothnia and b) local fish-stakeholder involvement in the Åland Islands and the Region of Satakunta.

Tasks

- 5 different maritime spatial plans covering the area:
 - Gulf of Bothnia Plan (Sweden);
 - Baltic Sea Plan (Sweden);
 - Northern Bothnian Sea, Quark and Bothnian Bay (Finland);
 - Archipelago Sea and Southern part of the Bothnian Sea (Finland);
 - The Maritime Spatial Plan of Åland (Government of Åland).

Challenges

- Lack of time! Social interactions require time;
- Everyone has their own MSP cycle at different stages.

Achievements

- Cross-border collaboration between planners and sectors in the Gulf of Bothnia;
- Increase stakeholder involvement in MSP from Satakunta and Åland;
- Increased social trust and involvement from stakeholders;
- Increase MSP planners understanding of sectoral needs;
- Develop long-lasting communication possibilities for planners in Finland, Åland, and Sweden;
- Include and understand LSI in MSP in the Gulf of Bothnia.

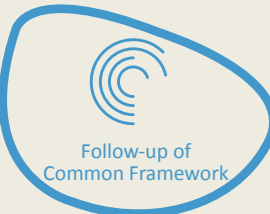
Enablers

- Travel budget;
- Being allowed to have enough formal and informal meetings with other nations and planners.

Outputs and products:

Finland-Åland-Sweden Story Map

(<https://aland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=e0f5913e7ab1415983db739abfocdaad>)



Activity Factsheet: Follow-up of Common Regional Framework

The Baltic Sea Broad-Scale MSP Principles, Regional Baltic MSP Roadmap 2013-2020, and Guidelines on transboundary consultations, public participation and co-operation provide a common regional framework, supporting cross-border cooperation and coherent national MSP implementation in the Baltic Sea Region. Within this activity, the application of the 3 documents in the Baltic Sea countries was evaluated. It was investigated how the framework is applied in practice and how successful the countries have been in implementing the joint framework. Suggestions on possible improvements in the existing framework as well as set the scope for the future agenda were provided.

Tasks

- Assess the implementation of Baltic Sea Broad-Scale MSP Principles and discuss needed amendments;
- Assess the application of the Guidelines for transboundary consultation, public participation and cooperation;
- Assess the achievements of regional targets for MSP in the BSR MSP Roadmap 2013-2020 and suggest possible future actions after 2020 to be included in the MSP Roadmap.

Achievements

- Concrete proposals for improvements of MSP Principles;
- Initiated discussion on what should be included in the future agenda of HELCOM- VASAB MSP Working Group;
- Discussions on how knowledge of MSP has improved/changed over the years.

Challenges

- Process and discussions are time consuming, there is not always enough time to dig into details;
- Overall process of the assessment would benefit if it lasted longer than 2 years.

Enablers

- Highly qualified experts supported work and contributed their expertise;
- Topics of the activity are aligned and integrated with the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group agenda.

Outputs:
 Report: Assessment of the Application of Baltic Sea Common Regional MSP Framework (www.panbalticscope.eu)



Activity Factsheet: Monitoring and Evaluation for Selected National Processes

An evaluation and monitoring framework for transboundary collaboration in MSP was developed in the previous Baltic SCOPE project. Feedback from the spatial planners indicated that, in addition to a general framework, there was a need for guidance on evaluating national MSP. In Pan Baltic Scope, the task on monitoring and evaluation contributed to planning of evaluation approaches in Poland and Latvia, in close collaboration with the respective MSP authorities. The Baltic Scope experience showed that countries not only have different timings in implementing their MSP, they also slightly differ in their objectives for MSP and how MSP processes are organised. This also applies to Poland and Latvia. As MSP is not identical in these countries, it was also important to tailor the evaluation plans to fit the countries' needs. Even though the evaluation guidance was tailored to the needs of the selected countries, this activity facilitated exchange and collaboration between all Pan Baltic Scope countries. With the help of the two case countries, approaches to monitoring and evaluation could be developed also in forms that help other countries in planning their own approaches. The task results give structure, vocabulary and examples for such development.

Tasks

- Describe the MSP context of the countries, including the key objectives of MSP;
- Decide on the scope and purpose of the evaluation;
- Describe the evaluation targets;
- Outline the evaluation approach;
- Plan the evaluation process.

Achievements

- More clarity on the challenges of monitoring and evaluating of MSP;
- Understanding that M&E should apply expert assessments and collect inputs also from stakeholders;
- Development of qualitative and quantitative indicators has to be considered very carefully to avoid too complicated indicator system;
- Understanding the importance of monitoring the development of the broader context of MSP to be able to follow the relevance of the MSP plan;
- A session at the 3rd Baltic MSP Forum.

Challenges

- The task of developing M&E was (paradoxically) too early for the national processes in Latvia and Poland. The planners were occupied by plan-making activities;
- It is paradoxical that consideration of M&E is left to the last phases of plan making, since possibilities of following the impacts of planning should be taken into account already in early phases of planning, e.g. in formulation of objectives.

Enablers

- Online and face-to-face meetings.

Outputs and products:
 Report: Monitoring and Evaluation of Maritime Spatial Planning – cases Latvia and Poland (www.panbalticscope.eu)

3. Advancing the Implementation of the Ecosystems Based Approach

MSP is generally regarded as an important tool for making an ecosystem approach to sea use management a reality (Douvere 2008). The Ecosystem Based Approach (EBA) is a strategy for an integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. The overall aim is to ensure that human use of ecosystems is kept within the limits of the ecosystems' capacity to regenerate their structure, dynamics and function (Schmidtbauer Crona et al. 2017). It is a holistic approach with a focus on preserving/restoring marine eco-systems and maintaining ecosystem services to support human needs. It should provide spatial solutions for the management of human activities in a way that is compatible with the achievement of good environmental status (GES) and the capacity of marine ecosystems to respond to human-induced changes (Schmidtbauer Crona et al. 2017).

The Ecosystem Approach was first defined within the context of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) as “a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way”. (CBD 2019) While originating from the CBD, the Ecosystem Approach has been widely integrated in marine policy, such as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) and the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (2014/89/EC), where it is referred to as ‘Ecosystem-Based Approach’. The Marine Strategy Framework defines the Ecosystem-Based Approach as one “whereby human activities affecting the marine environment will be managed in an integrated manner promoting conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way of oceans and seas”. (European Commission 2008) The Maritime Spatial Planning Directive notes that “the application of an Ecosystem-Based Approach will contribute to promoting the sustainable development and growth of the maritime and coastal economies and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources.” (European Parliament and Council 2014)

Management approaches such as EBA have been difficult to define with no clear strategy for operationalizing the concept (Sardà et al. 2014). A lack of a common definition has led key MSP stakeholders to interpret the approach differently and, as a result, it has not been implemented effectively and has created conflicts in planning processes (Ansong et al. 2017). In response to these challenges, a number of guidance documents have been developed to help explain the concept to stakeholders. For example, in the Baltic Sea Region, the HELCOM/VASAB working group produced MSP guidelines, including a number of key elements of the Ecosystem Approach and a table showing the Ecosystem Approach as part of the planning procedure which includes Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

An Ecosystem Approach task force was formed to develop these guidelines further as part of the Baltic SCOPE project. The task force, led by Sweden and involving project partners from Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Germany and Denmark, aimed to develop a harmonized understanding of what the Ecosystem Approach is and how it can be practically implemented in MSP. As part of this process, the task force created an Ecosystem-based toolbox checklist to support the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach in MSP. As Schmidtbauer Crona et al. (2017) note, the toolbox checklist is designed to:

- Show that applying the Ecosystem Approach in MSP is possible;
- Highlight that there are a number of dimensions in the Ecosystem Approach and you should consider them all;
- Simplify the method for MSP responsible authorities and consultants;
- Contribute to the harmonization of the application of the Ecosystem Approach in MSP.

Working with an ecosystem-based approach was an important part of the Baltic SCOPE project as it took one important step further in the concretization and operationalization of an EBA in MSP. Around 48% of survey participants in Baltic SCOPE thought the project contributed to the development of a useful EBA that could be applied in future MSP processes (Kull et al. 2017). At the end of Baltic SCOPE, participants were ambivalent about the future the direction of the EBA, noting both positives and negatives with the concept. One planner regarded the EBA as central to developing a coherent view on environmental values and protection for the Baltic Sea, saying “My understanding of EBA is to put an effort to map ecological values in a way where the sea is viewed as a single ecosystem, not fragments or sections – this is particularly important for sectors when decisions regarding development will be taken in the future.” Another planner, however, was more sceptical regarding actual implementation: “EBA is still quite complex, and total understanding of ecosystems is unlikely to be achieved, so there is a need for pragmatism.” Baltic SCOPE made small steps towards clarifying the concept of EBA, but further work is required to implement it effectively.

Pan Baltic SCOPE WP1.2 Activities

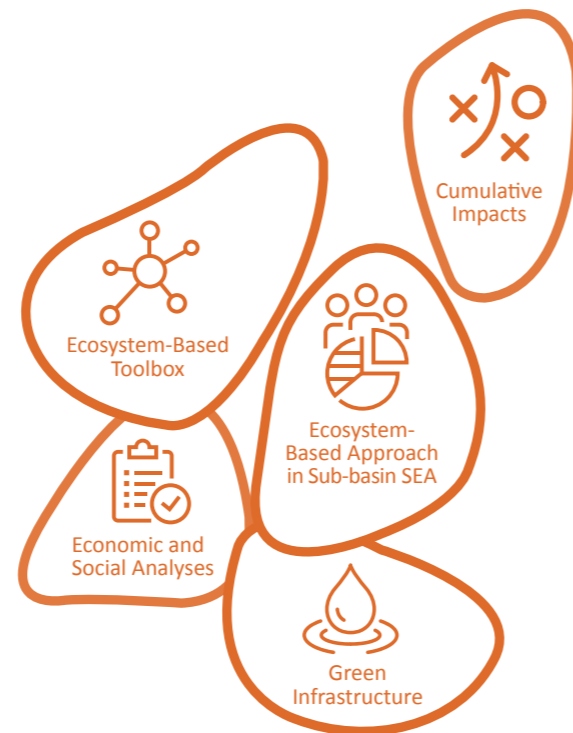
The Pan Baltic Scope WP1.2 (EBA) builds on the work conducted on the EBA during the original Baltic SCOPE project to help further clarify and enhance understanding of the EBA concept amongst key stakeholders. The aim is to advance the implementation of an ecosystem-based approach in MSP in the Baltic Sea region and contribute to promoting sustainable growth of the maritime and coastal economies and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources in the Baltic Sea. WP1.2. (EBA) was split into the five following activities:



- **Ecosystem-Based toolbox.** Share experience on practical implementation of ecosystem-based approach in partner countries, test the HELCOM-VASAB Guideline and the tools for the implementation of EBA. Provide recommendations on potential development of the HELCOM-VASAB Guideline and the EBA toolbox (checklists) developed in the Baltic SCOPE project.
- **Implementation of EBA in sub-basin SEA.** Develop as best as possible trans-boundary coherent SEA using a coherent approach and assumptions for the southern Baltic as test case for methodologies.
- **Cumulative impacts.** Compare and align metadata for spatial information at different scales with the aim to enhance harmonization of spatial data sets on human activities, pressure and ecosystem components. Evaluate robustness and evidence-base of sensitivity scores for assessing the impact of pressures on ecosystem components (common development of knowledge). Perform tests on how to incorporate green infrastructure/blue corridors in the scenarios and assessment for integration with economic and social data, also identify key outputs for assessment and evaluation at different spatial scales and for different legal frameworks.
- **Green Infrastructure.** Outline a concept of 'green infrastructure' utilizing previous and ongoing studies and projects, develop definitions on how to present habitats important for fish and improve Baltic-wide maps on important fish habitats. Collect feedback on the draft concept from the HELCOM-VASAB MSP

- working group and HELCOM State and Conservation group involving designated authorities and agencies dealing with nature protection and biodiversity conservation from all Baltic Sea countries for developing the concept further.
- **Economic and social analyses.** Review the assessment of economic, social and cultural impacts and the existing models in national MSP in the Baltic Sea Region. Investigate the use of a concept of 'territorial monitoring' and the existing data available. Prepare recommendations on how to develop a framework for social and economic analyses for the purposes of MSP, including ecosystem services.

Figure 7: Pan Baltic Scope WP 1.2 activities



3.1 Aims and objectives

The first stakeholder survey asked participants what they regarded as the main aims and objectives of the work package on the EBA. The responses were split into following categories:

- **Exchange information and knowledge.** Exchange information on national experiences of developing and implementing the EBA. Partners wanted to share experiences and learn from different approaches to the EBA being developed and implemented across the Baltic Sea Region to promote greater alignment and coherence. In particular, one planner noted the need to “share experience of socio-economic methods and aspects including ecosystem services in MSP”.
- **Enhance Cooperation.** Increase contact and establish stronger networks between national planners and sectoral groups. As one planner noted, it was important to enable “cross-border communication and sharing experience among partners interested in our field of expertise”.
- **Implementation of EBA in practice.** “Moving from description to the implementation of EBA in practice” was viewed as important by planners. Respondents of the survey highlighted the need to move away from description and definition and focus on effective implementation measures instead, particularly in relation to the development of MPAs, SEAs and green infrastructures. One respondent questioned “what the EBA REALLY in practice is” and another wanted “to actually implement a defined EBA and see how it works”.
- **Relationship between EBA and MSP.** Survey respondents indicated the need for clear guidance on how to use an EBA in MSP and its relation to the MSFD and Coastal and Marine Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPA).
- **Common understanding of EBA.** Survey respondents referred to the need to find a ‘common’, ‘unified’ or harmonized understanding of EBA. This was particularly needed in relation to which values to protect, ecologically sensitive areas and pinpointed species in MPAs.
- **EBA tool development.** Develop more usable EBA tools and guidelines that can be used in national planning processes, such as the ecosystem-based toolbox from the Baltic SCOPE project. Survey respondents spoke of the need for “tools and information that is usable in national planning processes or while implementing EBA”.



Figure 8: The project's contribution to meeting each aim and objective outlined in WP 1.2 (EBA).

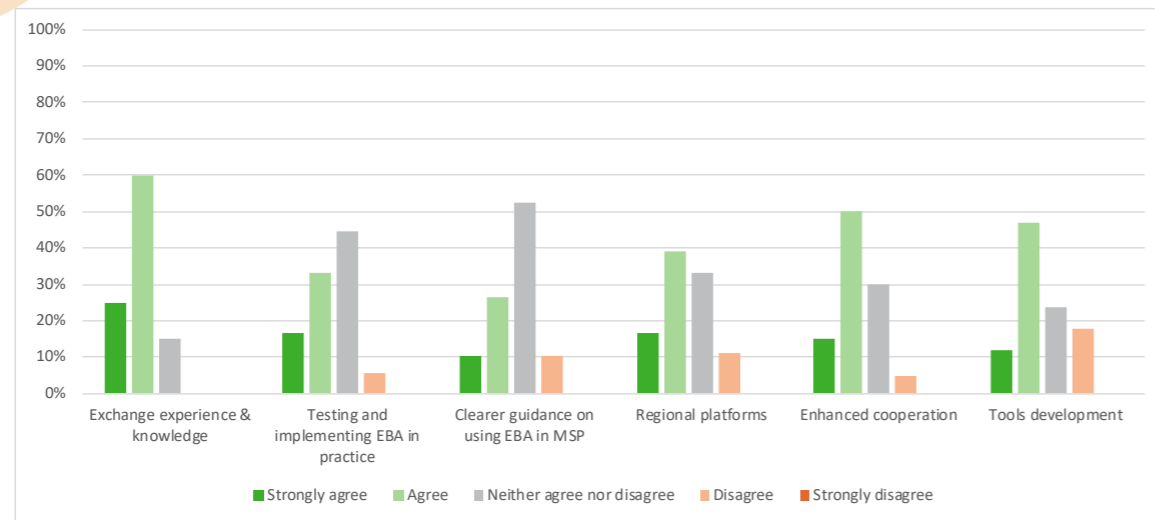


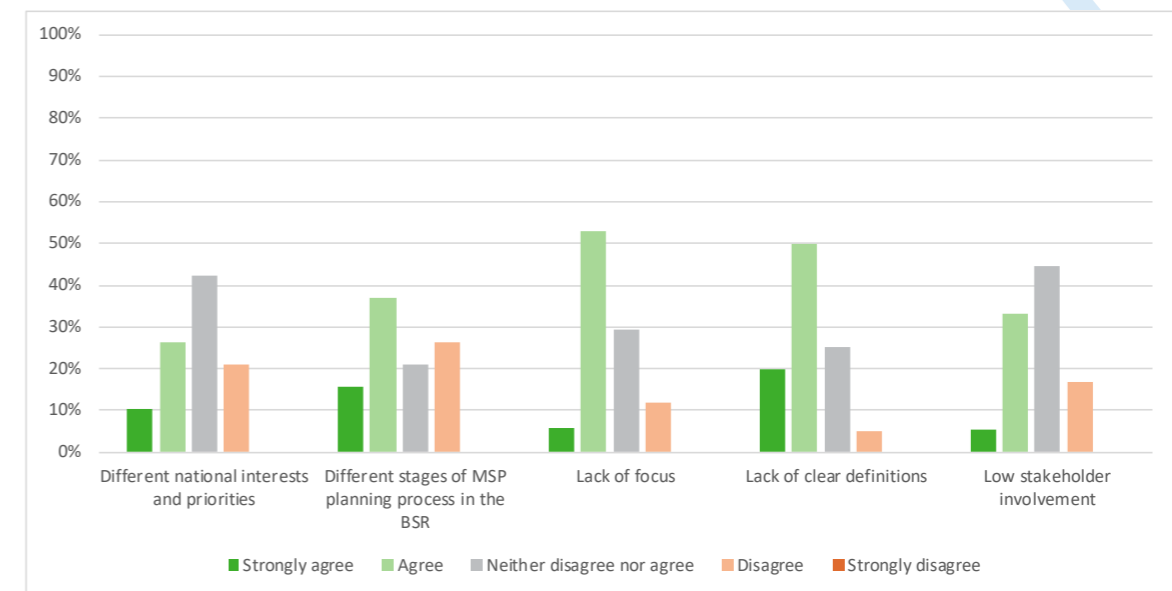
Figure 8 highlights whether WP1.2 (EBA) has contributed to meeting the aims and objectives outlined above. 65% of respondents agreed that the WP enhanced cooperation between project partners, with 85% agreeing that it provided a platform for sharing information on experiences relating to the development and implementation of the EBA. The chart indicates that while the WP has also made a significant contribution towards enhancing understanding of EBA and providing tools for testing and implementation, further work needs to be done. This is particularly the case in relation to providing more clear guidance to planners on how to use the EBA in MSP, as 18% of respondents disagreed that the WP had made a significant contribution towards meeting this aim. As one respondent noted, “further harmonization is needed to get the same understanding about EBA.”

3.2 Main challenges

At the outset of the project, participants were asked what they considered to be the main challenges they would face in relation to this work package. The first survey results highlighted five main obstacles:

- **Different national interests and priorities.** Each country in the Baltic Sea Region has different national MSP interests and priorities, leading to fragmented knowledge and lack of common planning evidence.
- **Different stages of MSP planning processes.** Some countries are more advanced in the development of their national MSPs. As one survey respondent pointed out, this creates a situation where there is “a different level of understanding of the topic by the participants in the discussion”.
- **Lack of focus.** The EBA encompasses many different themes, and it is difficult to connect and assess the relationship between broad topics, including cumulative impacts and economic and social impacts.
- **Lack of clear definitions.** Survey respondents noted that EBA definitions are “extremely vague” and “poorly understood”, with no common understanding or shared interpretations of the concept. As one respondent noted, “We need a common understanding of what EBA is and what it is not.”

Figure 9: The project's contribution to overcoming the challenges in WP 1.2



- **Low stakeholder involvement.** Relevant EBA experts are not involved in the process, therefore, essential knowledge and information is missing from discussions. As one survey respondent noted there is “a lack of those experts responsible for this issue in the country planning”. Another one commented on the “lack of engagement of relevant experts to gain a deeper understanding of key components of the marine environment”.

In the second stakeholder survey, 94% of respondents agreed that WP1.2 (EBA) had helped provide clearer definitions on the EBA concept, with 83% agreeing that the WP activities had provided greater focus and narrowed down the broad scope of the EBA idea (Figure 9). Some respondents, however, disagreed that the WP had helped overcome challenges, including low stakeholder involvement where more could be done to include stakeholders with EBA expertise and experience in the process.

3.3 Enablers

In the first and second stakeholder survey respondents were asked to consider what would help to facilitate the evolution and implementation of the EBA concept. The following key enablers were identified:

- **Communication and information exchange.** Regularly exchanging experiences and identifying best practice examples were regarded as essential tools for planners in the development and implementation of the EBA.
- **Practical testing.** Survey respondents identified the need for practical testing of EBA tools and checklists with guidance on how they can be implemented from a practical planning perspective.
- **Timing.** ‘Early planning’ or ‘planning ahead’ were highlighted as vitally important by planners for implementing an EBA. Adopting an EBA at an early stage will help with the implementation and testing process in later stages of the MSP process. As one planner noted, this involves “structured initial discussions upon available (EBA) definitions”.



- **Expert involvement.** Some survey respondents highlighted that planners needed to include EBA experts in the development and implementation of the EBA in their national MSPs.
- **Political leadership.** ‘Baltic leadership’ from existing intergovernmental organisations is regarded as important by survey respondents in facilitating a shared understanding and common implementation of an EBA at a transnational level.

‘low interest’ levels are the primary reasons for lack of involvement. Respondents did, however, recognize the importance of mobilizing stakeholder interest in the future development and implementation of an EBA. They noted that stakeholders “provide expert knowledge” to the process, including essential information on their priorities and relevant statistical data from the private sector. Furthermore, respondents highlighted that stakeholder involvement in project activities was important to help them “understand EBA and how it is implemented”, “help further develop planning tools and evidence” and “provide insights to the usefulness of the developed tools and recommendations”.

3.4 Stakeholder involvement

81% of survey respondent felt that stakeholder engagement was limited in WP1.2 (EBA), noting that ‘shortage of time’ and

Figure 10: Involving stakeholders in the practical work of WP 1.2 (EBA) activities

Main obstacles	Main enablers
Ecosystem-Based Toolbox and SEA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time. 	Ecosystem-Based Toolbox and SEA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huge interest in EBA/MSP.
Cumulative Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General low involvement. 	Cumulative Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only via planning forum and other Pan Baltic Scope internal meetings.
Economic and Social Analyses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty in identifying stakeholders, e.g. who could be interested or main national contact points; • Lack of interest from the part of stakeholders. 	Economic and Social Analyses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good prior relationships and connections; • Arranging workshops; • Contacts within the project.
Green infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issues are very complex and new for majority of stakeholders. 	Green infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green infrastructure workshops where external experts and stakeholders (e.g. competent authorities were involved).

Activity Factsheet: Ecosystem-Based Toolbox

The activity aim was to contribute to a coherent implementation of the Ecosystem-Based Approach (EBA) in national MSP in the Baltic Sea Region. The aim was to share experiences on the practical implementation of EBA in partner countries, including implementation of SEA (see Activity Factsheet: Ecosystem-Based Approach in Sub-basin SEA), and to test the HELCOM-VASAB Guideline and tools for the implementation of EBA in MSP.

Tasks

- Carry out a synthesis analysis of recent research on EBA in MSP;
- Stocktaking of current practice with regard to EBA in MSP in the Baltic Sea Region;
- Stocktaking of results of other activities in WP 1.2 and how they provide tools for EBA;
- Provide recommendations on potential development of the HELCOM-VASAB Guideline and develop other support for implementation of EBA in MSP.

Challenges

- Finding efficient ways for cooperation and project development;
- Developing tools and approaches for MSP while not being able to apply them in a real planning situation;
- Cooperation between two project activities (1.2.1 & 1.2.2);
- Involving other EBA relevant activities of the project in the development of HELCOM/VASAB recommendations.

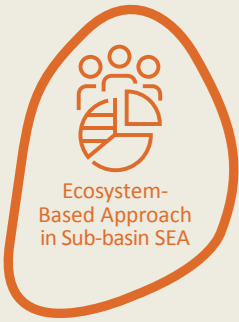
Achievements

- EBA/SEA survey used to evaluate EBA-implementation in partner countries;
- Three EBA/SEA workshops to develop activity deliverables and test ideas on potential recommendations;
- A Finnish/Ålandish EBA workshop in Helsinki including planners and environmental experts to test the first checklist of the EA-checklist toolbox from the Baltic Scope project;
- A Polish/Swedish bilateral SEA-workshop focusing on cross-border issues related to offshore wind power and effects on birds and Harbour Porpoises.

Enablers

- Constructive and positive working atmosphere in the project;
- Common view on the need for cross-cutting communication;
- Sharing of EBA experiences from Baltic national MSP.

Outputs and products:
Please see (www.panbalticscope.eu)



Activity Factsheet: Ecosystem-Based Approach in Sub-basin SEA

This activity focused on the development of coherent transboundary SEA by strengthening the comparability of SEAs across the Baltic Sea Region. This involved a test case in the South-West Baltic, that outlined methodologies and guidance for developing SEAs as an important part in the implementation of an EBA. In addition, an analysis of similarities and differences across SEAs contributes towards a sea basin-wide perspective. A practical modular approach for the implementation of an EBA is one of the main outcomes, easing the planners' daily work with this complex and important topic.

Tasks

- Identify suitable test case area(s);
- Develop questionnaire/survey to compare existing SEA/EIA procedures for different countries;
- Organise 2 Workshops involving project partners and other experts;
- Analyse test case reports and questionnaire responses for:
 - a) development of recommendations on how to align SEA standards and how to integrate the EBA respectively across borders;
 - b) development of a corresponding guideline for national SEAs in a transboundary context.

Challenges

- Time and resources.

Achievements

- Gathering experts in development of a mutual understanding of EBA and SEA;
- Developing a cross-border understanding of SEAs;
- Developing a modular EBA implementation concept;
- Establishing stronger links between MSP and MSFD;
- Linking to other project activities.

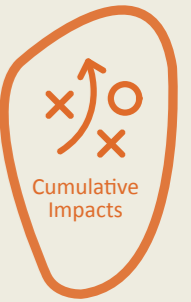
Enablers

- Active engagement and good teamwork between project participants;
- Support from agencies;
- Close cooperation with activity 1.2.1 - EBA toolbox.

Outputs and products:

EBA in MSP – SEA inclusive handbook (www.panbalticscope.eu)

SEA Background Report (www.panbalticscope.eu)



Activity Factsheet: Cumulative Impacts

The aim of this activity was to enhance shared Baltic-wide knowledge capacity and tools for addressing cumulative environmental impacts in connection with MSP. Work was built on experiences from existing regional assessment collaborations, as summarized in the HELCOM 'State of the Baltic Sea' report by the Baltic Sea Impact Index, and from national activities and other projects, including the Swedish Symphony project. Exchange of experiences with other sea-basins was also sought after.

Tasks

- Enhance harmonization of spatial data sets for different sea uses;
- Improve tools and approaches for assessing CI in connection with MSP;
- Identify key outputs for assessment and evaluation of different spatial scales and legal frameworks.

Challenges

- A lack of time and resources;
- Limited data availability;
- Difference in timing of MSP processes between countries

Achievements

- Shared experiences of how CI assessments are, and could be, carried out in different countries;
- Developed a tool for facilitating coherent CI assessments;
- Effective testing of CI assessment tool in case studies;
- Identified connection points between CI assessments and other aspects of an EBA.

Enablers

- Proactive engagement of key stakeholders;
- Structured and efficient project leader;
- Experts in the field contributing to the work.

Outputs and products:

"Cumulative Impact Assessment for Maritime Spatial Planning in the Baltic Sea Region" (http://www.panbalticscope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/PBS_Cumulative_Impacts_report.pdf)

Summary leaflet (www.panbalticscope.eu)

Assessment tool with technical manual (www.panbalticscope.eu)



Activity Factsheet: Economic and Social Analyses

The activity aimed to improve understanding of the assessment of economic, social, cultural and ecosystem service impacts for the purpose of MSP, as well as exchange experiences and information on how these impacts are evaluated across countries. The work built on previous HELCOM and national projects and included reviewing existing approaches and data for assessing societal impacts based on national MSP processes and contemporary literature. In addition, a national model for evaluating the economic and cumulative impacts of MSP in Estonia was produced (PlanWise4Blue). The main activity outputs are recommendations on developing regional economic and social analyses for MSP to establish a shared basis for further work and support national MSP. The inclusion of these analyses in MSP advances the implementation of the EBA by providing information on the linkages between the ecosystem and socio-economic system.

Tasks

- Review the assessment of economic, social, cultural and ecosystem service impacts for the purposes of MSP based on contemporary literature and national work in the Baltic Sea Region;
- Develop further the economic model for the assessment of economic and cumulative impacts of different sea use scenarios in Estonia;
- Investigate the use of the concept of territorial monitoring and the existing data;
- Produce recommendations on how to develop a framework for economic and social analyses for the purposes of MSP, to improve regional coherence and support national work;
- Organize a workshop “Impacts on the environment and importance to society - cumulative effect assessment and socioeconomic analyses in maritime spatial planning” together with the Cumulative Impacts activity;
- Organize two workshops on economic and social analyses in MSP.

Challenges

- Tools and data used in national MSP are under development, which reduced possibilities to obtain information;
- Communication with other activities/ WPs and arranging proper collaboration possibilities outside the activity but within the project;
- Personnel changes which affected continuity.



Achievements

- Literature review and survey of assessing economic, social, cultural and ecosystem service impacts in MSP in the BSR;
- Recommendations on developing a framework for economic and social analyses in MSP;
- Estonian economic model for assessing the economic and cumulative impacts of sea use scenarios (PlanWise4Blue);
- Collaboration within WP 1.2 on advancing the implementation of the EBA;
- Two workshops on ESA in MSP;
- Investigation of existing data on regional indicators.

Enablers

- Support from project management at different levels;
- Active individuals within the activity and work package;
- Collaboration within work package 1.2 Advancing the Implementation of the EBA and Data Sharing.

Outputs:

Recommendations on developing a framework for economic and social analyses for the purposes of MSP (<http://www.panbalticscope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Pan-Baltic-Scope-ESA-recommendations.pdf>)

Integrated model to assess the economic and cumulative impacts of sea use scenarios in Estonia (www.panbalticscope.eu)

Leaflet: Understanding how the sea affects our well-being Developing economic and social analyses in maritime spatial planning (MSP) (<http://www.panbalticscope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Pan-Baltic-Scope-ESA-leaflet.pdf>)



Activity Factsheet: Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure (GI) planning is a step towards the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 and achieving its Target 2: “By 2020, ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing green infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems.” The Pan Baltic Scope project aim was to clarify the concept of marine GI and its possible application in MSP as well as to test the methodological approaches and data availability for mapping marine GI in the Baltic Sea.

Tasks

- Outline the concept of GI utilizing previous and ongoing studies;
- Test the concept by utilizing available data;
- Develop definitions on how to present habitats important for fish and improve Baltic-wide maps on important fish habitats;
- Collect feedback on the draft concept from the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group and HELCOM State and Conservation Working Group involving relevant authorities and agencies from all Baltic Sea countries.

Achievements

- Developing new pan-Baltic maps of essential fish habitats representing spawning, recruitment and nursery areas of commercially important fish species;
- Proposal of a methodology for mapping marine GI;
- Methodology tested at the Baltic Sea scale using available HELCOM data sets and newly developed map of essential fish habitats.

Challenges

- Marine GI is a novel concept and is not sufficiently addressed yet, neither in policy nor research;
- The project team had very limited time and human resources to address such a novel and data driven concept.

Enablers

- Knowledge and competences of the project experts;
- Close collaboration with HELCOM, ICES and national research institutes in mapping essential fish habitats, as well as involving the relevant authorities and experts from the Baltic Sea Region;
- In the heart of success was the willingness from both policy makers and scientists to contribute, resulting in new pan-Baltic maps of essential fish habitats;
- Effective the heart of success was the willingness from both policy makers and scientists to contribute, resulting in new pan-Baltic maps of essential fish habitats.

Outputs:

Report: Green Infrastructure Concept for MSP and Its Application Within Pan Baltic Scope Project (www.panbalticscope.eu)

Brochure: Mapping of Marine Green Infrastructure: Pan Baltic Scope Approach

4. Data sharing

The sharing of reliable and comparable national level and sectoral data is essential for transnational MSP collaborations. Effective cross-border planning processes require trust and open exchange of data between a range of stakeholders, including national governments, regional authorities, sectoral groups, NGOs and international organizations (Kull et al. 2017). Transboundary data management requires agreed processes and harmonization of data to develop a legitimate and robust knowledge base for joint planning processes (Tatenhove 2017). An important step is to build on existing accurate transboundary data in marine areas to be planned (Hassan & Soininen 2015). Much of this existing data and information can now be found in the growing number of geo-spatial planning tools that have been developed or are under construction.

In the Baltic Sea Region, data development and sharing has become a central part of the work conducted by the inter-governmental organization HELCOM; furthermore, the formulation and exchange of planning evidence has been a key element of transboundary projects in the region, such as Baltic SCOPE. Overall, participants in Baltic SCOPE were extremely satisfied with the exchange of information during the project, identifying the formulation of common transboundary maps as an important tool for planners to emerge from the project (Kull et al. 2017). However, a number of data related challenges were also highlighted, including a lack of reliable national level data and strict regulations regarding information sharing.

A number of planners participating in the Baltic SCOPE project noted that “dispersed knowledge” and “different national input data” created a lack of coherence that made the development of useable shared data problematic. One planner specifically highlighted data sharing regulations as an issue, pointing out that “national rules make data exchange often difficult as some of the data sets are not meant for the public.” Moreover, data collection is fragmented between sectors and across national boundaries. All of this implies a considerable effort to identify, collect and assemble data into maps, particularly across boundaries. As one planner observed, “A lot of data was not used and it was hard to identify different country data, because the basis of the data had different understandings. Every country understands data differently and it is essential to establish some kind of common knowledge about data to share it and understand it.” Another pointed out that there is “very inconsistent data available” that is “not sufficiently comparable” (Kull et al. 2017).

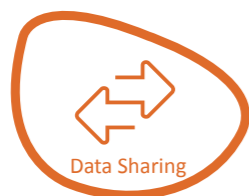


Pan Baltic Scope WP1.2 (Data Sharing) Activities

The Pan Baltic Scope project builds on some of the recommendations to emerge from Baltic SCOPE in relation to data sharing. Issues remain in the development and exchange of transboundary MSP data, but the activities in Pan Baltic Scope work package 1.2 are designed to enhance the quality and harmonization of cross-border data. Countries are obliged to have their Maritime Spatial Plans in place by 2021, which means that access output data should be arranged in a regional context to enable cross-border comparison and planning of common sea space. The aim is to facilitate the development of Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI) and build a web-map interface based on MSDI principles to make available output data resulting from Maritime Spatial Plans. More specifically, the main activities within the work package are to:

- Prepare specifications for harvesting output data from the countries;
- Ensure that national MSP data is available and accessible;
- Develop existing MSP input data access tool to cover MSP output data;
- Enhance regional coordination and communication between data experts.

Figure 11: Pan Baltic Scope WP 1.2 activity

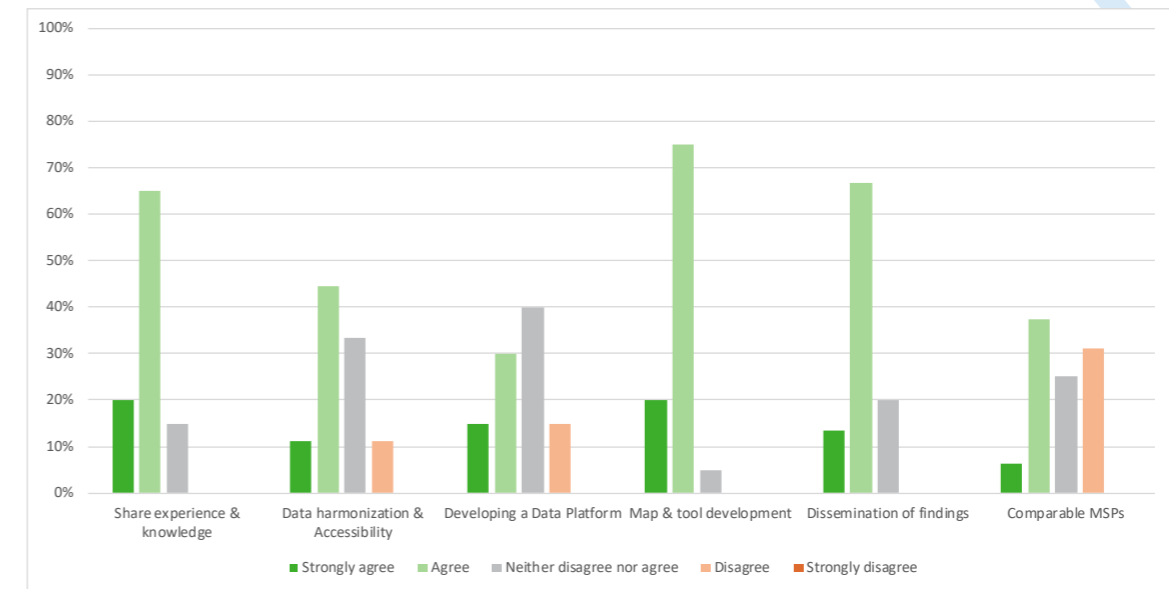


4.1 Aims and objectives

The goal of WP1.2. (Data sharing) was to facilitate data exchange and cooperation under MSP consultations. With the help of a Baltic MSP web-map, countries should be able to exchange MSP output data needed for any kind of analysis in order to have maritime spatial plans coherent across borders. MSP output data refers to the maritime spatial plans depicting the possible sea-use in the future. The activity is being implemented in close cooperation with HELCOM-VASAB MSP Data Expert sub-group, ensuring regional coordination of work and communication with MSP output data providers through out all tasks. At the outset of the project, survey respondents identified six main objectives that would be achieved through activities conducted under WP1.2:

- **Share experience and knowledge.** Enhance knowledge and understanding of the different data priorities and methods used in the Baltic Sea Region and share information on MSP output data. Survey respondents pointed to the need to incentivize planners to share transnational data by highlighting the mutual benefits.
- **Develop comparable MSPs.** National MSPs should be based on similar data that is understandable and enables cross-border comparisons. One respondent highlighted the need for “similar MSPs [that] when adopted, the plans are understandable in the whole Baltic[region]. They do not have to match but should be visibly similar.” Another observed that the aim should be “comparable spatial plans after they are accepted (e.g. if a fishing area has been appointed, everybody understands what’s in it)”.

Figure 12: The project’s contribution to meet each aim and objective outlined in WP 1.2 (Data sharing)



- **Establish a data platform.** Develop a data sharing platform to facilitate the efficient exchange of spatial data between countries.
- **Data harmonization and accessibility.** Ensure that all MSP data is harmonized and open access, clarifying which data should be shared, including arrangements for increasing access to MSP output data.
- **Map and tool development.** Focus on the development of a spatial data tool for managing MSP output data. One survey respondent noted that this should start with the continued development of the Basemap tool from the Baltic Lines project. The respondent highlighted the need to share output data by “developing a tool to access MSP output data (spatial data) and visualize it on a mapping interface”.
- **Disseminate results.** Ensure that the new data, information and tools shared and developed during the project are disseminated widely to encourage learning and spread best practices to a wide range of stakeholders, including planners and data experts.

The second stakeholder survey asked respondents whether they thought that the activities conducted under WP1.2 had helped meet the main objectives they had identified in the first survey. As outlined in figure 9, 95% of respondents agreed that the project had contributed to the development of new data tools and maps, while over 80% of respondents think that the project has provided a platform for planners to share data information and findings. However, 11% of respondents indicated that the project had not led to greater harmonization of national data methods, while 15% noted that the project had not contributed to the development of permanent data exchange platforms.

4.2 Main challenges

The main concerns regarding data sharing were explored in the first Lessons Learned stakeholder survey with participants identifying a number of challenges in relation to data gathering and exchange, including:

- Data collection methods.** Countries in the Baltic Sea Region do not gather the same data, with data collection processes driven by areas of national interest. Project partner countries focus their data gathering activities on specific sea use sectors that are important for regional economic growth and environmental sustainability. As one survey respondent notes, “Not every country gathers the same data. If Estonia had wind conditions clearly modelled, it might not be the same in other countries.” This was confirmed by another respondent who pointed out that “Covered [data] fields are different country by country, e.g. Estonia has wind layers and Finland does not.”
- Data standardization.** Countries in the Baltic Sea Region use different data gathering, analysis and management methods making the standardization of data methods difficult. As one respondent noted, “standardization differs between countries” with “different formats and understanding on how to name metadata”. Other respondents questioned whether it would be possible to develop a standardized format for MSP output data due to its heterogeneous nature. For some respondents data standardization should not be an aim in itself, as one pointed out, “Standardization is still an issue and to my mind it cannot be solved, because national interests and needs are different, therefore, we should welcome different approaches and try not to put everything into a frame.”
- Different timing.** Countries in the Baltic Sea Region are at different stages in the development and implementation of their national MSPs. Data collection ac-

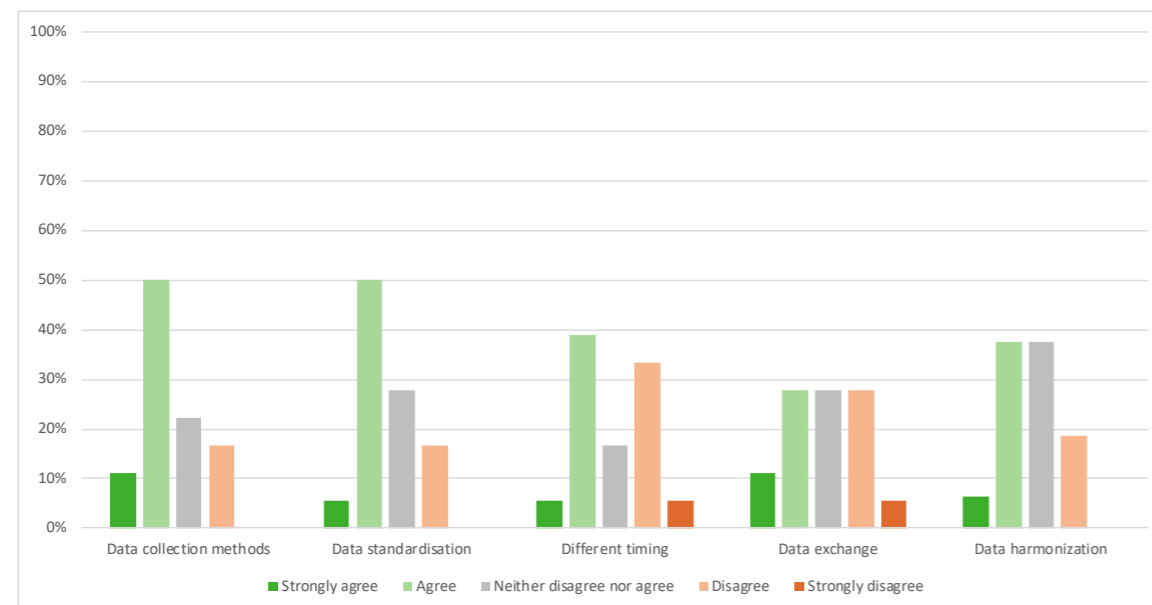
tivities are still ongoing for countries at an early stage in the process, and there are concerns about sharing unfinished work based on incomplete data. One survey respondent highlighted that there are “difficulties in spatial data exchange due to the fact that everyone is on a different level of work; some countries already have valid versions, others have preliminary versions and others have draft versions.”

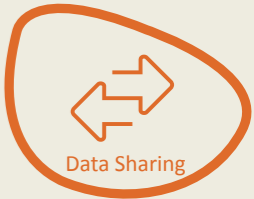
- Data exchange.** Data exchange is low due to a lack of national data services and the unwillingness of existing data providers to share information openly. Respondents raised the issue of data accessibility, noting that it is “extremely difficult to get data from national organizations” with others arguing that there is “a lack of national data services”.
- Data harmonization.** There is a large number of different national datasets that need to be adapted and standardized, which is a time-consuming task

and too difficult to focus on during the development of national MSPs. As one planner noted “data needs to be adapted to fit and no one has the time to do that job.”

In the second stakeholder survey, respondents were asked to what extent the activities conducted in the WP had contributed to overcoming these challenges. Figure 10 below shows that the project has made some contribution to overcoming these challenges, but obstacles remain. 61% of respondents indicated that the project had enhanced data collection efforts between partner countries, while 56% pointed out that the project contributed to the standardization of data between countries. However, 39% of respondents felt the project had not overcome the challenges posed by the countries being at different stages of data gathering process, and 35% noted the continued challenge of the lack of data availability from national sources.

Figure 13: The project’s contribution to overcoming the challenges in WP 1.2 (Data sharing)





4.3 Enablers

In the first and second stakeholder survey respondents were asked to consider what would help to facilitate transnational collaboration in relation to data sharing. The following key enablers were highlighted:

- **Common understanding of data requirements.** Respondents to the survey noted that there needs to be agreement on common data requirements, particularly a greater clarity on why transnational MSP data is needed, what kind of data is useful and how the data will be used.
- **Data experts.** Survey respondents were in broad agreement that there is a need to closely involve data and GIS mapping experts in the process. Planners argued that it is important to “establish good communications between GIS specialists”, “create a dialogue with MSP DATA ESG” and to enhance “the participation, contact and involvement of national data providers”. Of particular importance is “consultation with practitioners in the field of data exchange and in creation of interactive map portals”.
- **Permanent cooperation.** “Continuity of collaboration” on data both inside and outside project settings is viewed as important, with survey respondents supporting the establishment of permanent and formalized data collaborations at the Baltic Sea level.
- **Raise awareness.** One survey respondent pointed out that “We must remember that cooperation in the field of data exchange can bring benefits to everyone.” Respondents agreed that there is a need to raise awareness and incen-

tivize MSP stakeholders to participate in cross-border data sharing activities. For many respondents this could only be achieved by providing stakeholders with practical examples: “Awareness: partners must think this [data sharing] is useful for them, but how do you do that? By showing examples!”

- **Time and resource.** The short time span and limited money available through projects places serious restrictions on what can be achieved in relation to data gathering and collaborative mapping activities. More time and resources need to be allocated to transnational data sharing if greater harmonization of useable data is to be achieved.

4.4 Stakeholder involvement

70% of survey respondents indicted low stakeholder involvement in the data sharing WP. Most respondents pointed out that stakeholder engagement was not an essential element of this WP, which was focused on encouraging planners from national MSP authorities to share and discuss data. Survey respondents did, however, acknowledge the importance of engaging stakeholders in future transnational MSP data cooperation activities. One respondent noted that it is important to define what is meant by the term ‘stakeholder’ in relation to data activities, with strong agreement emerging that ‘stakeholder’ would, in this case, mainly refer to national data and GIS specialists. The involvement of national data specialists is regarded essential because they have the most access to usable data and might be able to identify new relevant data sources.

Activity Factsheet: Data sharing

The goal of the data sharing activity was to facilitate data exchange and cooperation through MSP consultations. With the help of a Baltic MSP web-map, countries are able to exchange MSP Output data in order to create coherent maritime spatial plans across borders. It is also possible for sectoral stakeholders to see potential places for their business ideas in the BSR, including those territories that are prioritized and those that have some restrictions. MSP output data refers to maritime spatial plans that depict possible sea-use in the future. The activity was implemented in close cooperation with HELCOM-VASAB MSP Data Expert sub-group, ensuring regional coordination of work and communication with MSP output data providers throughout all tasks.

Tasks

- Develop BASEMAPS for MSP Output data;
- Create common visualization of BSR MSP plans;
- Develop data validation and upload function for national data providers;
- Prepare guidance for sharing and viewing data.

Challenges

- Baltic Sea countries being at different stages of their MSP processes;
- Establishing agreement between national MSP data providers on visualization and upload of data on BASEMAPS;
- Time.

Achievements

- BASEMAPS up and running with adopted plans and some draft plans already available;
- Step-by-step guidance on viewing the data developed;
- Guidance for sharing data prepared for national MSP data providers.

Enablers

- Close cooperation with HELCOM-VASAB MSP Data Expert group;
- In-house GIS expertise and capacity development within HELCOM;
- Regular discussion and coordination between key actors.

Outputs and products:

Project data and step-by-step user guidance is available on BASEMAPS: <https://basemaps.helcom.fi/>

5. Integrating Land-Sea Interactions into MSP

Cross-border maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea region (BSR) and in the precursor project Baltic SCOPE has so far mostly focused on coordinating planning in the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of each country. However, the concept of land-sea interaction(s) has gained significance in the European Maritime Spatial Planning discourse and practice. This is not the least due to formulations in the EU Directive on MSP, stating that “Marine and coastal activities are often closely interrelated. In order to promote the sustainable use of maritime space, maritime spatial planning should take into account land-sea interactions” (European Parliament and Council 2014). As a result, a new generation of cross-border MSP implementation projects include an integrative perspective on land and sea. Indeed, linking marine planning and management across territorial waters and land is essential for considering synergies and conflicts between sectoral uses and impacts, coordinating the planning processes and decision-making mechanisms that extend the land-sea divide (Morf et al., 2019).

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The spectrum of integrative approaches include linking between land and sea, such as Integrated Coastal and Ocean Zone Management (ICZM), as well as comprehensive coastal planning in the territorial water zone such as in Finland, Germany and Sweden. However, the planning and management systems dealing with environmental and societal issues across the land-sea divide differ across the BSR, and there is so far little common guidance on how to work with LSI – both nationally and across borders (Morf et al., forthcoming).

Operationalising the concept of land-sea interactions (LSI) and defining common aims make a crucial puzzle in an institutional multi-level and cross-border MSP perspective also in the BSR (Morf et al., 2019) The question how to integrate a LSI



perspective into MSP processes implies both conceptual confusion, institutional and knowledge gaps.

Considering LSI in MSP implies no universal operational toolkit. Rather, it is enacted differently among Pan Baltic Scope partner countries, which hold different aims, institutional structures and planning approaches to marine space, sea uses. Moreover, also planning status varies between countries and across the land-sea boundary. Whereas some countries and authorities are far advanced in marine and coastal planning, others still work on developing the basics in terms of legislation, responsibilities, contacts and processes, and related knowledge and methods (Morf et al., 2019).

A crucial part of working with WP 1.3 and the development of LSI in MSP in the Baltic Sea Region has therefore been to find a working definition of the concept possible to apply in different places and contexts of marine, coastal or even land-based uses and at different geographical and temporal scales and levels of governance.

Pan Baltic Scope WP 1.3 Integrating Land-Sea Interactions into MSP

WP 1.3 Integrating Land-Sea Interactions into MSP aimed to identify and practically work with essential aspects of land-sea interactions in the Baltic Sea Region, including knowledge and method development to integrate land-sea interactions into MSP. A tentative working definition of LSI has been developed in the WP which outlines:

“The term of Land Sea Interaction(s) in coastal and marine spatial planning encompasses on the one hand all natural and human-induced flows and processes between marine and terrestrial environments in both directions and on the other hand how these interactions are perceived and managed by societies and their different actors through MSP and other governance frameworks and processes (i.e. authorities, enterprise, users, NGOs and what they do about them)” (Morf et al. 2019b: 19).

The WP 1.3 tasks were outlined as:

- Identify important issues that arise when MSP has to include an LSI perspective in relation to knowledge, methods, plans, processes and institutional frameworks;
- Based on practical experiences through case study work in the Riga Bay and in the Gulf of Bothnia:
 - Develop knowledge and methods for analyses relevant for practical problem solving;
 - Extract important obstacles and solutions to integrate an LSI perspective into MSP;
- Highlight good practices and formulate recommendations on how to continue working on integrating an LSI perspective in MSP in the Baltic Sea Region and beyond.

WP 1.3 activities were based on a pragmatic, problem-based approach aiming to delineate the concept and work practically, reflecting the present interests and needs of the partner organisations. For this purpose, efforts were combined between two work packages: WP 1.1.2 on Cross-border Interaction on MSP for Finland-Åland-Sweden and WP 1.3 on Land Sea Interaction, with Latvia and Estonia as partners. Based on repeated group discussions, surveys and a literature study facilitated and led by Nordregio, the scoping of the LSI work package 1.3 developed a list of relevant topics and a 4-dimensional analytical framework. Based on this, two overall case study areas for work on integrating a land-sea perspective into MSP were identified, resulting in case study work in two areas with different and complementary institutional and geographical settings:

- **The Gulf of Bothnia.** It included integrating LSI perspectives into the two subcases which a) encompassed the overall Gulf of Bothnia, focusing on

Figure 14: Pan Baltic Scope WP 1.3 activity



identifying cross-border MSP issues in the area and the development of a network of planners and marine stakeholders in the Gulf of Bothnia as well as for subcase; b) covered the marine area between Åland and Satakunta (FIAX), focusing on local stakeholder involvement, trust, fisheries and aquaculture in connection with the on-going Finnish and Ålandish MSP.

- **The Riga Bay,** a large bay with predominantly sandy seashores including larger islands. This study concentrated on the border municipality of Salacgrīva in Latvia, but in terms of context and project activities also included other coastal municipalities in Latvia and Estonia. Focus here was on local authorities' needs and opportunities to get engaged in planning the sea, based on surveys and workshops with municipalities and a pilot planning study in Salacgrīva with the aim to develop a guideline for coastal planning.

Moreover, through a literature analysis and a data integration study by Nordregio, participation in other Pan Baltic Scope activities and repeatedly discussing preliminary results within the project and at external events, the work package members were able to include broader perspectives on LSI experiences from other Pan Baltic Scope partner countries and beyond the project.

5.1 Aims and objectives

In the first stakeholder survey respondents were asked to identify their main aims and objectives in the WP, which included:

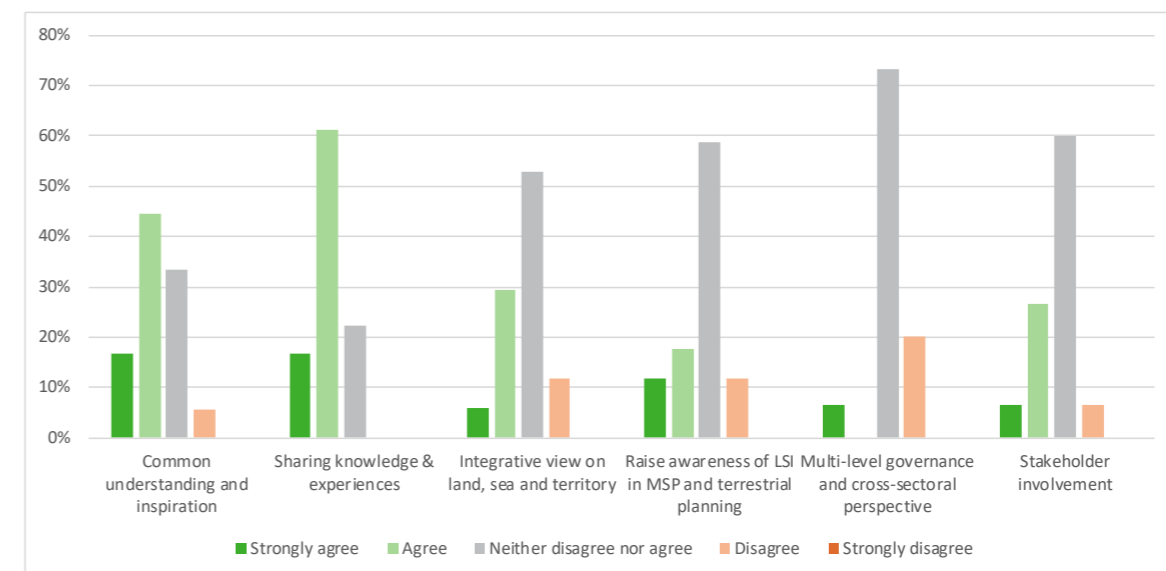
- **Common understanding and inspiration** in considering different practices and perspectives that may be carried across different countries in the Baltic Sea Region, as well as identifying common challenges.
- **Adopting an integrative and holistic view on land and sea,** which may enhance the understanding about LSI and the extent of an LSI zone as well as the integration and overlap of MSP and terrestrial planning.
- **Sharing knowledge and experiences,** which implies learning about LSI experiences across partner countries and planners engaged in MSP. The respondents also highlighted raising awareness of MSP among terrestrial planners and the general public, as suggested by a respondent, "Make land people more aware of the activities and sea and vice versa."
- **Working with multi-level governance and cross-sectoral perspective** that includes regional and local levels, while the respondents also emphasised en-

gaging a transboundary and cross-sectoral perspective as important. One example highlighted by a respondent follows "Increase the understanding of the importance of anchoring national plans to regional and local level in a pan-Baltic context."

- **Mapping and involving stakeholders** was frequently referred to as important aims in WP 1.3. The issue of identifying important sectors, their needs and overlapping activities and identifying LSI hotspots as well as stakeholders' further involvement in MSP were raised as important. The aim of mapping and involving stakeholders also emphasised the importance of working with the blue economy.

In the follow-up survey one year later, the respondents were asked to consider the Pan Baltic Scope project's contribution to meeting the main aims and objectives outlined above. Generally, the project contribution was high in sharing knowledge and experiences, as well as common understanding and inspiration. The project contribution to multi-level governance, which would include regional and local level, was, however, considered lower, as visualized in figure 15.

Figure 15: The project's contribution to meeting each aim and objective outlined in WP 1.3.



5.2 Main Challenges

The first survey asked project partners about their main concerns over practical work in WP 1.3. The main concerns were outlined as following:

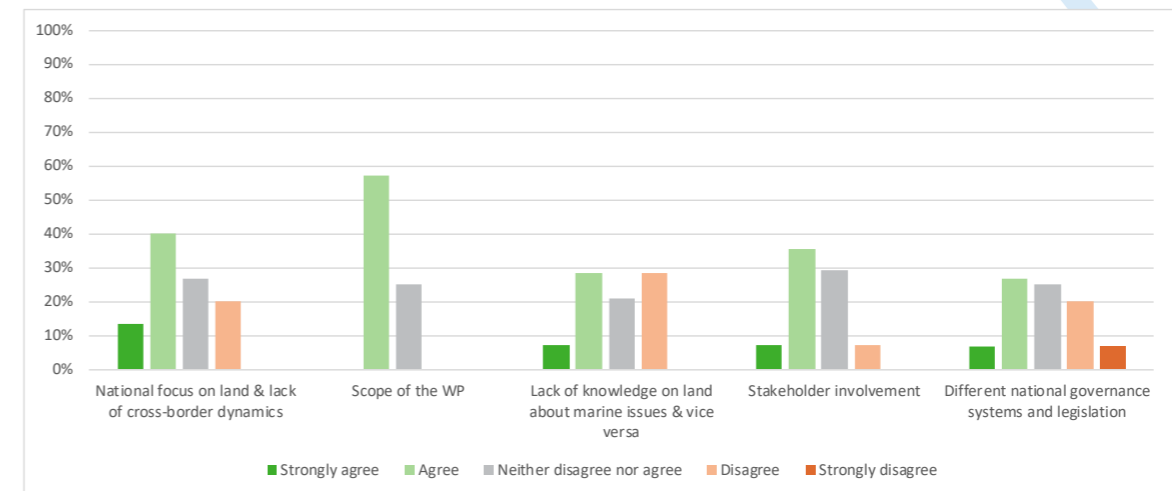
- **Different national governance systems and legislation.** The respondents stressed the challenge of working across different countries, governance systems and administrative levels with different approaches to marine space and the extent of an LSI zone. Linking MSP processes at different stages across the land-sea line was also highlighted, reflecting a perceived complexity of balancing the intra-national institutional development for considering land-sea interactions and working with cross-national collaboration.
- **National focus on land and lack of cross-border dynamics.** Examples of challenges brought up also reflected complexity in balancing between recognising the differences in the national legal and administrative systems, while tending to the cross-border perspective of the WP. A respondent stated “We’ll lose cross-border component as we

start tackling the national issues.” Another respondent further argued that “[...] as we talk about the land, it does not have the dynamics and cross-border impact of the sea”.

- **Defining scope of the WP** and understanding what the concept of LSI implies. Defining the scope of the WP was, for example, reflected in that differences in prioritisation and statuses of planning across the partner countries made it difficult to move further with common topics in the scoping phase. In terms of understanding what the concept implies, one respondent argued, for example, that LSI seems self-evident to most planners and that there is no further need for conceptualizing it, while other respondents found LSI vague and complex.
- **Lack of knowledge on land about marine issues and vice versa.** A highlighted example identified in relation to WP 1.3 was including and encouraging local municipalities to take MSP related issues and knowledge into consideration. There was also a perceived lack of knowledge at sea about the activities on land.
- **Stakeholder involvement**, which generally concerned with cooperation with local governments, and interest were perceived as low.

In the follow-up survey conducted after one year from the first, the respondents generally found that the project contribution to overcoming the challenges/obstacles outlined above was strongest in terms of defining the scope of the WP as well as facilitating stakeholder involvement. The challenges of different governance systems and legal systems were the least overcome (see figure 16).

Figure 16: The project’s contribution to overcoming the challenges in WP 1.



5.3 Enablers

The first and second survey asked the respondents about how to facilitate practical work in WP 1.3. The following enablers were highlighted:

- **Cooperation and communication** which included the importance of communication and collaboration between project partners involving local governments and different sectors. The continuation of the cooperation was also highlighted among the respondents. Cross-sectoral meetings were suggested as an enabler in working with WP 1.3.
- **Early planning and coordination**, identifying synergies, involving stakeholders and finding common denominators for transboundary issues and LSI topics.
- **Clear objectives for case studies** was emphasized among the respondent as an enabler in the WP work. This also included the mapping of stakeholders and their needs as well as finding common denominators. Working with a bottom-up and a realistic problem-based approach was also emphasized as an important enabler for working with the LSI WP and its inherent activities.

- **Ambitions adjusted to the need and capacity of the authorities.** Setting more realistic ambitions on what can be achieved during the course of the project in relation to participant time and resources would be beneficial to future transboundary projects.
- **More expertise.** Engaging experts in project dialogue and development of project outputs was viewed as a significant enabler. Similarly, capacity development among MSP authorities was emphasised, which included budgeting and allocating time to work with LSI related issues. The need for capacity building at local and regional planning authorities to engage in LSI issues was also highlighted.

5.4 Stakeholder involvement

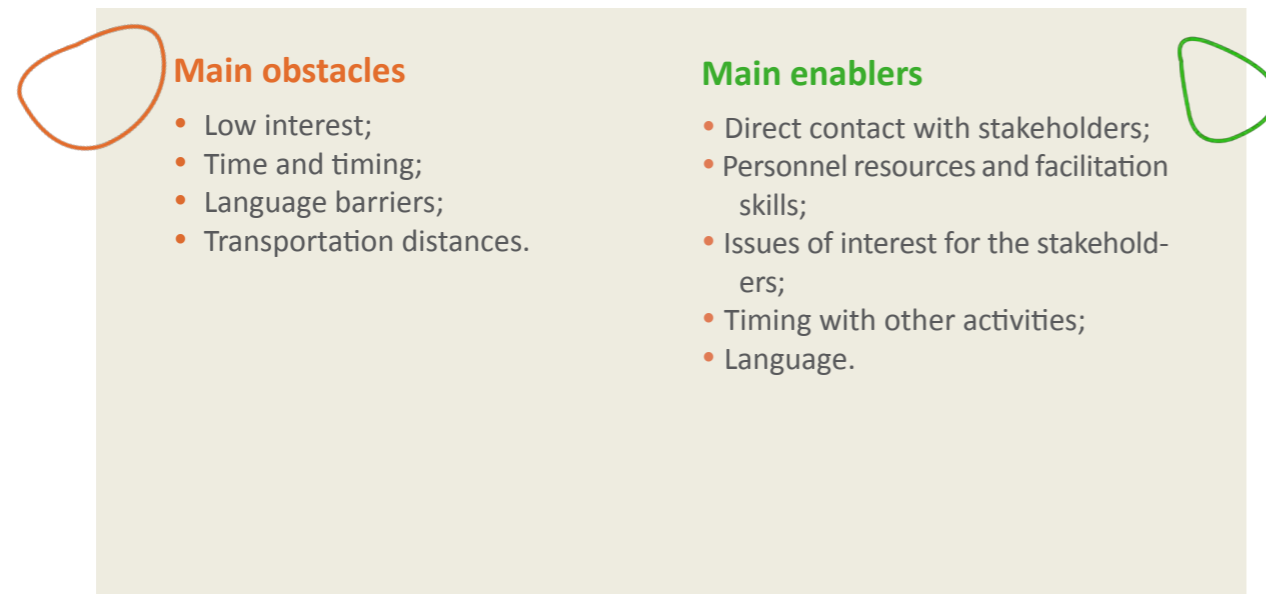
The key purposes of working with stakeholders in WP 1.3 were identified as making local municipalities aware of MSP issues and further involving them in the processes, as well as integrating perspectives and needs from LSI relevant sectors, such as wind power and fisheries. The overlap of activities across land and sea was highlighted as an important stake-



holder issue, particularly in relation to LSI. Respondents resonated that the key purposes of stakeholder involvement in WP 1.3 also include raising further awareness and acceptance of the planning processes for better planning considerations and outcomes. As found one year into the project, the stakeholder involvement in WP 1.3 was generally considered low and, as shown in figure 13, low interest among stakeholders to participate was found to be an obstacle for stakeholder involvement. However, this could be due to the fact that many of the cross-border and collaboration meetings were yet to be arranged. A WP 1.3 stakeholder involve-

ment perspective towards the end of the project pointed towards a high stakeholder involvement, as the cases in WP 1.3 include authorities, sectors and municipalities and target groups for case study work. Main enablers for facilitating stakeholder involvement in the WP activity work were outlined as focusing on issues that reflected the interest of stakeholders as well as timing with other activities in the marine areas of the case study work. Establishing a direct contact with the stakeholders was also perceived beneficiary, where adapting the language to the needs of the participants also played an important role.

Figure 17: Stakeholder involvement in the practical work of WP 1.3 activities



Activity Factsheet: Integrating Land-Sea Interactions into MSP

The land-sea interaction (LSI) activity aimed to identify important aspects and challenges when working with LSI in Baltic Sea Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and to test ways to address these practically, based on concrete needs of the BSR countries presently developing their coastal and marine planning. The work encompassed four dimensions of LSI: 1. the processes and issues, 2. relevant governance institutions, 3. Related processes and 4. knowledge and methods to address them and identified two overall case study areas with slightly differing but complementary focus for working to integrate a land-sea perspective into MSP: the Gulf of Bothnia case and the Riga Bay case. The Gulf of Bothnia case, as part of the Finland-Åland-Sweden activity, included Subcase 1, encompassing the overall Gulf of Bothnia, which focused on identifying cross-border MSP issues and network development of planners and marine stakeholders in the area. Subcase 2 in the marine area between Åland and Satakunta, focused on local stakeholder involvement, trust, fisheries and aquaculture in connection with ongoing Finnish and Ålandish MSP. The Riga Bay case took place specifically around coastal municipalities in Latvia and Estonia. It was driven by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia and the Estonian Ministry of Finance. It focused on how to promote municipal planning in the coastal zone, based on surveys and workshops with municipalities and a pilot planning study in Salacgrīva.

Tasks

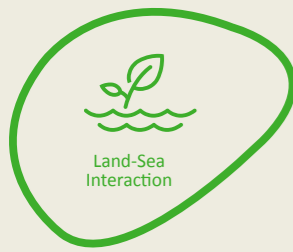
- Identify important issues arising when MSP has to include an LSI perspective (knowledge, methods, plans, processes, and institutional frameworks);

Based on practical experiences in the form of practical case study work in the marine waters linking Sweden, Åland and Finland and in the Riga Bay:

- Develop knowledge and methods to make analyses relevant for practical problem solving when working with LSI in coastal and marine spatial planning;
- Distil important obstacles and related solutions to integrate an LSI perspective into MSP;
- Highlight good practices and formulate recommendations on how to continue working to integrate an LSI perspective in MSP in the BSR and beyond.

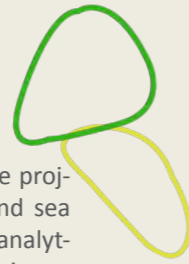
Challenges

- Long scoping phase as it was difficult to find common grounds because the pre-conditions differed: planning systems and responsibility, capacity, timing of planning process, but also the scale and type of issues;
- Participants' motivation to engage with LSI as a concept varied depending on planning status and systems;
- Too many activities in a short time frame; process based learning and network development takes time;
- Vulnerability/stress within the project due to too limited of human resources;
- Difficult to plan learning process: problem-based learning and bottom-up scoping as such can be difficult to predict.



Achievements

- Improved understanding within the project of the elusive concept of land sea interactions and a 4-dimensional analytical framework to structure reflection;
- Scoping for two needs-based case studies exploring how to work practically with LSI in two different types of coastal areas – also across borders: archipelago and sandy seashore/bay;
- Initial scoping for LSI issues, challenges and enablers in relation to the cases, verified in an expert workshop in Malmö in 2018 and reported in a Scoping Report;
- Data sharing exercise and planning system analysis to explore how to work with LSI;
- Communicating, networking and collaborating across borders;
- Presentation and discussion of results in two expert workshops at the 3rd Baltic MSP Forum in Riga 2019;
- Project applications to continue working with LSI with interested partners.



Enablers

- The 4 dimensional analytical framework supported systematic reflection and data collection within and across cases;
- Synthesising through text and graphics and writing a scoping report and a final synthesis report with input from partners and presenting the results together at internal and external workshops and conferences promoted learning within and across cases and beyond the project;
- Distilling key insights from cases and boiling them further down into project recommendations together with the partners helped seeing what is more generally relevant and for whom;
- Contingency planning, thinking ahead and providing an appropriate analytical and organisation structure to process everything and in the end join multiple tracks of thinking and working;
- Time and adjustments to realistic ambitions;
- Resources (additional personnel to reduce vulnerability and stress for those who have to be part of everything);
- Collaboration! - in terms of:
 - Face-to-face interactions and workshops (or interaction in general). Skype is fine – face2face is best
 - Interest in each other's work, planning systems and issues to address
 - Making it fun and achieving things together enhances the feeling of achievement.

Outputs and products:

Scoping report: Integrating a Land Sea Interaction Perspective into Marine/Maritime Spatial Planning (www.panbalticscope.eu)

Story-map Finland-Åland-Sweden (<https://aland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=eof5913e7ab1415983db739abfocdaad>)

Planning Guidelines for coastal municipalities in Latvia (Riga Bay) Guideline (www.panbalticscope.eu)

Final Report: Lessons, Stories and Ideas on how to integrate Land-Sea Interactions into MSP (www.panbalticscope.eu)

Recommendations to work with LSI



6. Conclusion: contributing to the Pan Baltic Scope core objectives

The two main objectives of the PBS project were 1) contributing to coherent national maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region and 2) building lasting macro-region mechanisms for cross-border MSP cooperation. Throughout the duration of PBS, project partners and activity leaders have been asked to elaborate on how the activities and WPs have contributed to the core project objectives.

6.1 Contributing to coherent national Maritime Spatial Planning in the Baltic Sea Region

As elaborated by Activity Leaders and project partners, the WPs and activities have broadly contributed to more coherent national Maritime Spatial Planning in the BSR. The positive examples outlined in the surveys reflected that WP activities have boosted the competence and knowledge of the respective MSP authorities on how to deal with transboundary Maritime Spatial Planning issues. Work in different activities has contributed to raising awareness and understanding of other countries' frameworks and priorities for MSP. One respondent felt that the regular exchange of information on national MSP processes and current topics has improved their own procedures and practices. There has been strong emphasis on good collaboration, network building and group learning throughout the project. Similarly, it was also found that joint learning throughout PBS has contributed to the development of a common MSP language and terminology among the participants.

Positive steps were also found to be taken in relation to sharing practices, data and knowledge, which help improve coordination and coherence of MSP in the BSR. For example, respondents found that the project work has contributed to a more harmonised approach to the implementation of key MSP features, such as the Ecosystem Based Approach and Green Infrastructure, as applied in some dedicated Pan Baltic Scope activities and discussed by members of the Planning Forum. However, some activity leaders argued that coherence can be enhanced further if common data sets on a Baltic scale are more readily available and regularly updated, for example, on marine ecology. Further empirical knowledge on economic and social impacts of MSP as well as impacts on ecosystem services is also needed for coordinating MSP measures and development across the BSR. Participants also noted that PBS activity results needed to be integrated into the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group in order to improve the future common framework for coherent MSP in the BSR, as a formalized means of promoting common BSR guidelines and principles. This was also emphasized in relation to establishing lasting macro-region MSP mechanisms, as elaborated in the following section.

Some respondents found that while the activity work has contributed to more coherent Maritime Spatial Planning in the Baltic Sea Region, there is a difference between coherent plans and coherent planning. For example, it was emphasised

that the drafting and development of national MSPs is different in the respective partner countries. As one respondent argued, "Baltic Sea Countries, thus partner countries, have different needs, positions and aims for the project which have to be respected." Furthermore, the objective of contributing to coherent MSP in the BSR was found to be somewhat obstructed by the respective national planning processes being at different stages and phases in the planning cycle, with different priorities and aims of MSP implementation. However, joint learning and sharing data was viewed to enhance understanding about different national planning processes, establishing a foundation for more cooperation and coordinated planning. Thus, key factors that have contributed to coherent MSP in the BSR have been common learning, sharing information and building networks. Monitoring and evaluation can be important mechanisms when moving towards the implementation stage and later review phases of national MSP and to foster mutual learning at a pan Baltic scale.

6.2 Building lasting macro-region mechanisms for cross-border MSP cooperation

The WPs and activities have broadly contributed to building lasting macro-region mechanisms for cross-border MSP cooperation. This was particularly referred to by one survey respondent who stressed that the project has facilitated a more structured dialogue and platform where MSP cooperation is conducted in practice. A structured dialogue between partners was found to be most fruitful when facilitating and balancing both formal and informal communications and cooperation.

It was found that the activity work has contributed to more adapted ways of working with varying organizational cultures and

practices of the partner countries. Activity work also contributed to building trust among the partners, which was outlined as an important ingredient for cross-border cooperation. Furthermore, the development of a common Baltic approach to mapping green infrastructure could also provide a thematic example of more established transboundary cooperation mechanisms. Another respondent pointed to the need for greater harmonization of the links between MSP and the MSFD, as well as the good environmental status targets.

However, activity leaders highlighted that lasting macro-region mechanisms for cross-border cooperation also heavily depend on the political decision-making level. It is regarded as particularly important to allocate adequate funding and budgeting for personnel and human capacity within MSP authorities, also to engage in such cross-border networks and to work practically with transboundary MSP on a long-term basis. This will create institutional memory in the competent MSP authorities, helping them to develop cross-border cooperation procedures and planning with a transboundary lens.

Respondents noted that capacity building among regional and local authorities and proactive stakeholder participation in cross-border MSP is vitally important to building lasting macro-regional mechanisms. One respondent stated that "MSP at regional level still in its infancy – platforms like Pan Baltic Scope can help mature coordination of regional approaches to MSP." The cooperation mechanisms were found to differ depending on the scale and what kind of marine areas are considered, for example, when further considering coastal and territorial waters in a transboundary MSP context.

6.3 Looking to the future of cross-border MSP in the BSR

Overall, the future of cross-border MSP in the BSR looks promising and Pan Baltic Scope has contributed to lasting trans-boundary cooperation mechanisms. However, the project partners have underlined the important continuation of basin-wide projects with MSP agencies to promote knowledge exchange and cooperation between planners. In summary, this report concludes that Pan Baltic Scope activities have contributed well to the main aims and objectives of the project through the identification of cross-border issues, exchange of information and increased learning. The good collaborative environment and group learning that occurred

has brought positive developments for the BSR MSP cooperation, as the project partners unite in diversity while uniting diversity.

Looking ahead, a number of recommendations were developed by the Pan Baltic Scope partnership aiming to enhance coherent national maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region and build lasting macro-region mechanisms for cross-border MSP cooperation. These recommendations focus on creating a common framework for collaboration, ensuring sound application and implementation of an EBA, the integration of LSI into MSP and developing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of MSP.



7. Recommendations for bringing better maritime spatial plans in the Baltic Sea Region from the Pan Baltic Scope collaboration

These recommendations reflect the views of the Pan Baltic Scope collaboration and not necessarily the views of each separate organization in the collaboration.

Better plans for the years to come

These are the recommendations from the Pan Baltic Scope collaboration.

Our recommendations are useful to planners, authorities, policy-makers and others dealing with maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea, and possibly beyond.

The goal of the Pan Baltic Scope collaboration was to achieve coherent national maritime spatial planning around the Baltic Sea and to build long lasting mechanisms for cross-border cooperation on maritime spatial planning. We identified focus areas and created solutions in a collaborative process.

We:

- developed common tools and approaches;
- built on experiences from previous projects, like Baltic SCOPE;
- carried out concrete cross-border cooperation that supported national planning solutions.

These recommendations are yet one more way in which we develop our maritime spatial planning to bring better plans.

The recommendations are sorted under five themes:

- **Better together** – Cooperate across borders;
- **MSP for everyone** – Involve more dimensions and knowledge;
- **Look beyond borders** – Share to understand;
- **Save the sea, get prosperity** – Use the ecosystem-based approach;
- **Do the right thing!** – Monitor and evaluate.

For each recommendation, there is a named target group.

These recommendations reflect the views of the Pan Baltic Scope collaboration and not necessarily the views of each separate organization in the collaboration.

We hope these recommendations will bring better plans for the Baltic Sea region.

The Pan Baltic Scope collaboration

Better together

Cooperate across borders

1. Continue the practical, hands-on transnational cooperation across the Baltic Sea to:

- a. identify common solutions and share good practices;
- b. generate understanding on each other's governance and administrative systems, objectives and challenges;
- c. achieve greater coherence between national plans.

Target groups: Planning authorities, HELCOM, VASAB.

2. Maintain existing platforms for inter-governmental MSP cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region by extending the mandate of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group beyond 2021 and by continuing to support cross-border MSP related projects.

Target groups: HELCOM, VASAB, Ministerial level in charge.

3. Establish the Planning Forum as a practical, hands-on sub-group of HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group, to implement recommendation number one.

Target groups: HELCOM, VASAB, Ministerial level in charge

MSP for everyone

Involve more dimensions and knowledge

4. Ensure transparency in MSP, so that all interested stakeholders and the general public can participate at any step of the process.

Target groups: Planning authorities, Policy makers, Sector authorities, Researchers.

5. Identify stakeholders that have not been included through existing participation strategies. If needed, adjust strategies to be more inclusive and transparent.

Target groups: Planning authorities, HELCOM, VASAB.

6. Coordinate, and if possible align, the planning and management systems on land and sea to facilitate planning and problem solving across the land-sea boundary.

Target groups: Planning and sector authorities at all levels, Legislators.

7. Raise awareness among authorities and stakeholders from an early stage and throughout the planning process on activities and processes that have implications across the land-sea boundary. Be especially aware that these can vary considerably across geographical scales, societal and institutional context and over time.

Target groups: Planning authorities, Sector authorities, Policy makers.

8. Increase awareness and understanding of complex socio-ecological systems by integrating local and societal knowledge.

Target groups: Environmental authorities, Planning authorities, Researchers, HELCOM.

9. Give more attention to social and cultural aspects in MSP in future work, to ensure all aspects of sustainable development are covered.

Target groups: Planning authorities, Sector authorities, Researchers.

10. Pay more attention to multi-use as well as resource and space efficiency approaches in MSP in future work.

Target groups: Planning authorities, Policy makers, Researchers.

11. Facilitate cross-sectoral dialogue to anticipate and mitigate conflicts between different marine users.

Target groups: Planning authorities, Sector authorities, HELECOM-VASAB MSP Working Group.

12. Use a differentiated understanding of marine and coastal planning, along the following interlinked dimensions:

- a. social-ecological processes to plan and manage;
- b. necessary interaction between planning and management systems;
- c. related planning processes and stakeholder interactions;

Target groups: Planning authorities, Sector authorities, Stakeholders.

13. Allocate resources and build capacity to work across the land-sea boundary. Particularly at the initial stage of institutional development and with regional and local authorities.

Target groups: Politicians and planning authorities at all levels, Training funders, Training providers.

Look beyond borders

Share to understand

14. Develop coherent approaches to assess the impact of MSP on the economy, society and environment, to improve cross-border comparability of data, methods and results. This will support decision-making at national and regional levels.

Target groups: Planning authorities, HELCOM, VASAB, Researchers.

15. Share methods, data and practices nationally and at a pan-Baltic scale to ensure coherent plans across administrative borders and geographical boundaries.

Target groups: Planning authorities, Sector authorities, Researchers, HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group.

16. Share methods, data and practices nationally and at a pan-Baltic scale to ensure

- a. transparent, coherent and comparable strategic environmental assessment processes and cumulative impact assessments
- b. spatially referenced social and economic analyses and cumulative impact assessments
- c. closing knowledge gaps

Target groups: Planning authorities, Strategic environmental assessment authorities, Sector authorities, Researchers, HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group.

Save the sea, get prosperity

Use the Ecosystem-Based Approach

17. Develop tools and mechanisms for enhancing cooperation between different national administrative levels in marine planning and marine management to implement the ecosystem-based approach.

Target groups: Planning authorities, Local and regional authorities, Sector authorities, Sector representatives, NGOs.

18. Integrate the ecosystem-based approach into sectoral planning initiatives to facilitate its implementation in MSP.

Target groups: Planning authorities, Local authorities, Sector authorities, Sector representatives, NGOs.

19. Link MSP closer to the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive at national, transnational and HELCOM levels. Develop spatially related Good Environmental Status objectives that can be supported by MSP and used in Strategic Environmental Assessments.

Target groups: Planning authorities, Policy makers, Sector authorities, HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group, Researchers.

20. Integrate cumulative impact assessment as a key component of the Strategic Environmental Assessment of maritime spatial plans.

Target groups: Planning authorities, Sector authorities, Researchers.

21. Develop a common understanding of the precautionary principle as part of adaptive management, as a part of handling uncertainties in planning in a similar way.

Target groups: HELCOM, National governments, Planning authorities, Licensing authorities.

22. Evaluate cumulative impacts on green infrastructure, including foreseen future alterations of key habitats as a result of climate change.

Target groups: Planning authorities.

23. Apply the green infrastructure concept in the MSP process to support implementation of the ecosystem-based approach, in steps such as stocktaking, development of spatial solutions and Strategic Environmental Assessment. This would increase relational understanding on marine ecosystem functioning and connectivity, as well as its contribution to societal benefits. The information on marine green infrastructure should be considered to guide away the potentially harmful developments from ecologically valuable or sensitive areas.

Target groups: Planning authorities.

24. Use the most recent version of essential fish habitat maps, produced in Pan Baltic Scope, available at HELCOM.

Target groups: Planning authorities.

25. Further develop Essential Fish Habitats maps, by including more species and assessing changes under climate change, to support adaptive MSP.

Target groups: Fishery agencies, Researchers, HELCOM.

26. Produce up to date pan-Baltic maps on key components of the ecosystem – birds, mammals, fish, benthos – using the same approach applied in mapping Essential Fish Habitats in the Pan Baltic Scope project.

Target groups: Environmental authorities, Researchers, HELCOM.

27. Develop further the marine green infrastructure concept and mapping methods to increase the knowledge on functioning of marine ecosystem and relational understanding of socio-ecological systems. This should include the connectivity analysis as part of the ecological value mapping as well as more elaborated approach to ecosystem service mapping.

Target groups: Researchers, HELCOM, HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group.

28. Further develop pan-Baltic green infrastructure mapping approach to support cross-border coordination of planning solutions, in respect to ecological values, thereby improving the connectivity of the functionally interrelated parts of the ecosystems.

Target groups: HELCOM, Researchers.

Do the right thing!

Monitor and evaluate

29. Broad and specific objectives are needed to provide overall direction and purpose for MSP. However, to ensure successful monitoring, develop detailed sub-objectives too. The sub-objectives need to be realistic, clearly defined and verifiable. Qualitative and quantitative indicators for monitoring of MSP should be linked to the sub-objectives, as well as to broader developments in maritime sectors, the marine environment and society.

Target groups: Planning authorities, Sector authorities.

30. Organise systematic expert and stakeholder assessment processes that can help reduce uncertainties about the outcomes of MSP and how it influences maritime sectors, the marine environment and society. A practical solution for this would be to form national MSP monitoring and evaluation networks, based on the existing, national working groups that support the preparation of MSP plans.

Target groups: Planning authorities, Sector authorities, Researchers.

31. HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group or planning authorities in the Baltic Sea Region should organise, in a few years' time, a workshop for all Baltic Sea Region countries to discuss first national monitoring outcomes and possibilities of cross-border co-operation in monitoring and evaluation.

Target groups: HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group, Planning authorities.



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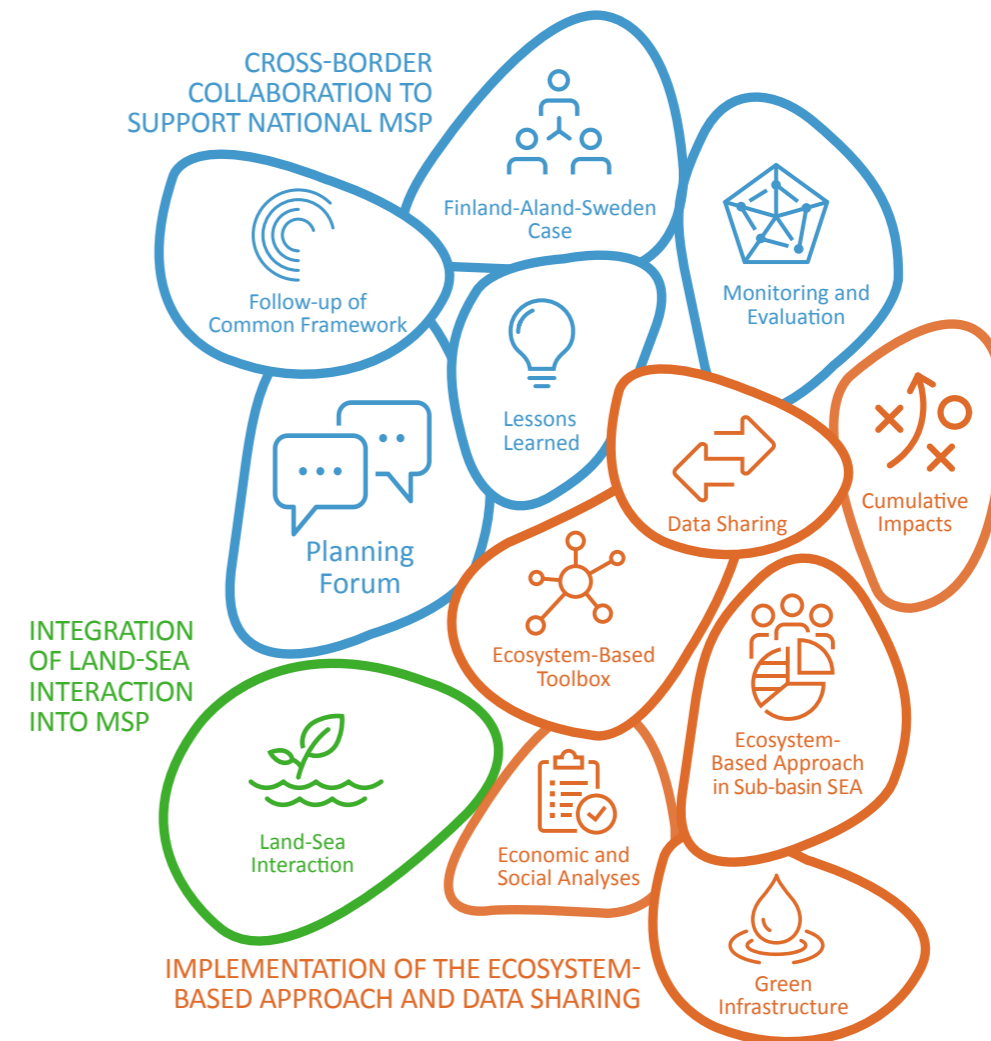
Pan Baltic Scope focused on cross-border collaboration and had three interlinked work packages with 12 activities.

We established a **Planning Forum** as the central platform for our collaboration on specific planning issues identified by the planning authorities and regional organisations.

We carried out concrete cross-border activities at **different geographical levels** to meet the **needs of the national** maritime spatial planning processes and to support the successful implementation of the **EU MSP Directive**.

We developed **tools and approaches** at pan-Baltic level, to contribute to coherent maritime spatial plans in the Baltic Sea Region, including:

- implementation of an ecosystem-based approach;
- cumulative impacts;
- green infrastructure;
- land-sea interactions;
- socio-economic analyses.





The Lessons Learned Report is a summary and analysis of two intensive years of collaboration to achieve the set goals, joint learning and knowledge co-creation within the Pan Baltic Scope project. The report provides an account of project participants expectations, experiences and the learning processes that occurred within the project activities, including their personal reflections on the main challenges and enablers for transboundary Maritime Spatial Planning in the Baltic Sea Region.

Pan Baltic Scope is a collaboration between 12 planning authorities and organisations from around the Baltic Sea. We work towards bringing better maritime spatial plans in the Baltic Sea Region.



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