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

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from the Pan Baltic Scope collaboration**

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

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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:

- 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.

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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 intergovernmental 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, HELCOM-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



Pan Baltic Scope team, September 2019, Helsinki

These are the recommendations from the Pan Baltic Scope collaboration. We hope they will help in bringing even better maritime spatial plans in the Baltic Sea Region in the years to come. The recommendations can be useful to planners, authorities, policy-makers and others dealing with maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea, and possibly beyond.

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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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