PLAN4BLUE

Recommendations

SEPTEMBER 2019 MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMIES

Recommendations for maritime spatial planning for sustainable blue economies

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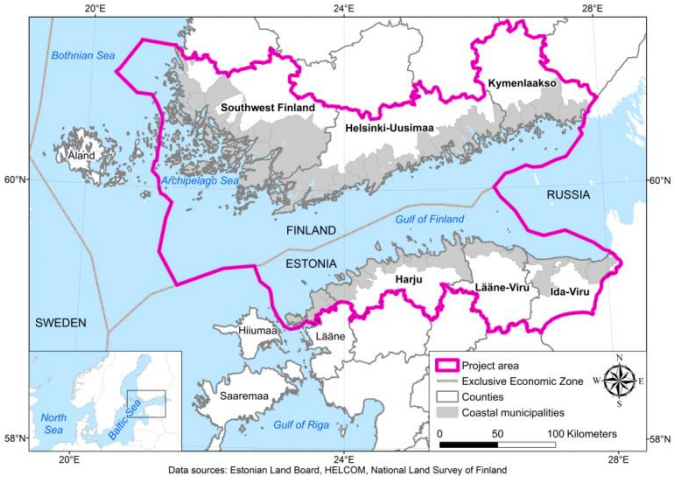
Plan4Blue project (Maritime Spatial Planning for Sustainable Blue Economies, 2016-2019) identified pathways to the sustainable use of the sea areas and resources. The project activities focussed on Estonian and Finnish sea areas in the Gulf of Finland and the Archipelago Sea. Planning and management of these areas requires collaboration between various stakeholders and authorities in different countries, as many of the economic activities in the area and also their impacts cross borders. For this purpose, the project developed cross-border capacity in maritime spatial planning (MSP).



The project approached MSP from complementary, multi-disciplinary perspectives. The four perspectives were blue economy, environmental management, spatial planning and cross-border collaboration. This document compiles recommendations from project activities for the purpose of building cross-border MSP capacity. The recommendations are grouped according to the four perspectives.

The annex to the recommendations describes key aspects of MSP in Estonia and Finland.

All the project publications are available in the project's Publications page. In addition we recommend to check the highlights of the project as presented in the project's last newsletter.

Recommendations for sustainable blue economy

Recommendations for analysis of sustainable blue economy are based to results of qualitative and quantitative research done in scenario process and economic and socioeconomic analyses. Current status and potential of the selected blue economy businesses in the project area was studied with statistical analysis, supported by interviews for future trends and analysis of strategies for the blue industries. Economic performance of blue sectors was studied with statistical analysis and input-output tables. Current status and trends of socio-economic, cross-border networks were identified with quantitative and qualitative methods. Futures studies methods were used in creating the alternative scenarios for Blue Growth.

Use of future scenarios in planning process

Scenarios are a tool which support visionary planning, in particular "long-term" vision of sustainability. Via introducing creation of scenarios as part of planning process, we may avoid a non-preferred future, often referred as the "worst-case-scenario". In the process to create the scenarios, extensive identification of the drivers is recommended.

Alternative scenarios usually consist of the following categories:

- Probable: what will happen
- Possible: what could happen
- Preferred: what should happen

In addition, a non-preferred scenario may be created. With forecasting and backcasting we may identify alternative future images and pathways towards them. In participatory backcasting, the involvement of stakeholders in the process is a key feature.

Target groups: MSP planners, authorities, r&d-projects

Stakeholder involvement in scenario process

Use of the expert matrix in selection of the expert panel guarantees a well-balanced participation in Delphi-panel from public and private sectors, and from non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Private sector representatives tend to be mainly from business-support organisations, associations, or groups. Therefore, offering multiple possibilities to participate in scenario process is recommended: e.g. in addition to questionnaires, arranging workshops and interviews. In particular enterprises will participate more in the online or phone interviews. In addition, enable the use of native language in replying to questionnaires or in interviews, as well as in the regional workshops and meetings in regions.

Target group: MSP planners, authorities, r&d-projects at regional, national and international level

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Development of data and indicators on blue economy

Economic indicators for blue economies need to be developed. Using only official data on companies can be misleading as the national economic statistics do not explicitly contain blue sector companies. Therefore we recommend the use of mixed-method approach. The system of cross-border statistics should be remarkable improved. The generalization level of present statistical information is often too high and do not follow the needs of spatial planners and local authorities of border areas.

The potential of blue economy in the overall sustainability of coastal regions and industries should be further investigated.

- Including systematic cross-border data collection, professional standards, documents and long-term plans
- Sharing information via creating an ad-hoc organisation which collects, systemizes, synthesizes and distributes cross-border information
- By the means of cross-sectoral networking, developing projects, creating new opportunities.
- Via networking with research institutes

Target groups: authorities, including statistical authorities at regional, national and international level, within EU

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Development of cross-border statistics

The main problems encountered in cross-border statistics are the following:

- The national-level data sources (administrative registry data) are substantially different across EU countries, due to different reporting procedures, metric systems, the content of specific indicators, resulting in no harmonization of registry data.
- European or international level data are harmonized across countries, however, the actual cross-border activities cannot be traced relying on these data and the level of generalization is quite high.

Challenges of development of a harmonized and detailed cross border statistics include:

- Cross-country unified data collection and processing procedures
- Data disaggregation in terms of NUTS regions, enterprise-level financial indicators
- Recorded cross-border operations and financial flows

Target groups: authorities, including statistical authorities at regional, national and international level, within EU

Multi-sectoral and cross-border MSP

Multi-sector planning for MSP is required for sustainable growth. Thus MSP should actively seek to support cross-sectoral and cross-border sustainable growth, including cross-sectoral networking, communication and cross-border project development to create new opportunities. Companies in the blue sector should be included in the MSP process. Cross-border cooperation including sharing “good practice” and developing joint infrastructure can open new possibilities for the more efficient use of resources, and possible declining environmental pressure. Cross-border co-operation in visionary planning, future scenarios is needed to widen the perspective for example related to identification of drivers.

Recommendations on environmental management

Implement the ecosystem risk management framework for Maritime Spatial Planning

The aim of managing the ecosystem risks in the MSP context is to reduce the uncertainties of achieving environmental, social and economic objectives. At that, the spatial and temporal allocations of a marine spatial plan once implemented should reduce the uncertainties of achieving development and conservation objectives. The risk management to achieve and maintain good environmental status is based on the implementation of operational controls that actually reduces the uncertainties of achieving objectives, and it is the program of measures that reduces the uncertainties of achieving and maintaining good environmental status.

Target groups: MSP planners, decision makers, stakeholders and public at large

Establish horizontal integration of stakeholders across levels of governance

The practical implementation of unifying framework for marine environmental management enables scoping, identification and analysis of the Drivers leading to the main events (through Activities and Pressures), anticipatory prevention measures (management Responses as Measures), including those limiting the severity of the main event, the consequences of the events (State changes and Impacts on Welfare), and mitigation and compensation measures (management Responses as Measures) aimed at minimizing those consequences.

Successful integrated marine management requires the coordination of many aspects - an assessment of the source, causes, and consequences of problems, the delivery of ecosystem services and societal benefits, the incorporation of governance from the local to the global, and implementing the ecosystem approach and the success of each of these requires the input from and often agreement with the stakeholders. The horizontal integration of stakeholders, linked to the DAPSI(W)R(M) framework, that is composed of Regulators, Extractors, Inputters, Affectees, Influencers and Beneficiaries enables to incorporate all stakeholders in the framework designed to ensure that sector activities and their pressures are managed effectively to reach the broader policy goals and objectives.

Target groups: MSP planners, decision makers, stakeholders and general public at large.

Assure the quality of the Maritime Spatial Plan

The 10-tenets of adaptive environmental management and sustainability for the successful and sustainable development provide for comprehensive quality considerations for the maritime spatial plan. Environmental management measures should be: 1) Environmentally /

ecologically sustainable, 2) Technologically feasible, 3) Economically viable, 4) Socially desirable/tolerable, 5) Legally permissible, 6) Administratively achievable, 7) Politically expedient, 8) Ethically defensible, 9) Culturally inclusive, and 10) Effectively communicable. The environmental management Quality Objectives are addressed by the Maritime Spatial Planning process in consultation with competent authorities, industry stakeholders and communities of interest with aim to ensure the adequate integration of the ecological and socio-economic objectives and legislative requirements.

Target groups: MSP planners, decision makers, stakeholders and public at large.

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Recommendations on spatial analysis

Spatial information is one of the cornerstones of evidence-based MSP. It is present in all phases of the MSP cycle from preplanning to the evaluation of implemented plans and in feeding information for the next MSP round. Successful evaluation, collection, management, analysis and visualisation of spatial information are the key for making evidence-based cross-border planning decisions. The use of spatial data and participatory mapping methods were tested throughout the Plan4Blue project with an on-line questionnaire, in stakeholder workshops and as part of case studies. These recommendations compress the lessons learned regarding the management of spatial data and the use of participatory mapping methods in cross-border MSP.

Target groups of these recommendations: *MSP planners and authorities, officers involved in and responsible for spatial data management and map production in national and cross-border Maritime Spatial Planning.*

Plan the use of spatial data and maps in cross-border MSP by acknowledging the differences of national MSP systems

Spatial data utilization in MSP faces many challenges especially in cross-border planning due to the differences in national MSP and governance systems. Thus, there is national variation also in practices of using spatial data and performing spatial analyses in MSP. The differences must be explicitly accounted for in the very beginning of the planning process, as the spatial datasets should match. The available spatial data sources also affect the quality of spatial data and analyses. A spatial data inventory of all participating countries in the early phase of cross-border MSP is advisable, to make easier the selection of appropriate and matching data for maps, spatial analyses and visualizations.

Maintain the efficiency and transparency of spatial analyses in MSP

The efficiency and transparency of collecting spatial data, performing spatial analyses and producing maps are important to be maintained throughout the MSP process. This is especially important in cross-border MSP, where uncoordinated and disordered processes may easily be time-consuming and expensive, and make difficult the evaluation of the quality of the spatial data, the mapping process, and maps used in the MSP. Furthermore, the spatial data used and maps produced in previous MSP phases may not be usable during the next phases or in the next round of MSP cycle because of inadequate documentation.

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Following principles are highlighted:

- Spatial data analysis should be guided in the goal-oriented instead of the data-oriented way. Decision-makers, planners and researchers need to communicate with spatial working group to together formulate the goals and methodology for the spatial planning process.
- Officers and planners responsible for spatial data management and spatial analyses should collaborate with all MSP actors throughout the process, to fulfil the first principle.
- Only the best available spatial data should be used in spatial analyses and inadequate data should be excluded.
- Spatial data and analysis methods should be evaluated according to scientific standards.
- The spatial data, analysis methods and their limitations should be carefully described and documented at every step of the MSP process, and regarding all produced spatial analyses and maps. This way they are usable for all parties and in the next planning phases. In cross-border MSP, the documentation should also be provided in English.
- High-quality spatial data should be shared and utilized across administrative and sectoral borders.

Following these principles in MSP ensures that the potential of spatial information and spatial analysis is utilised in decision-making. Moreover, it guarantees that decisions are based on appropriate information and that the end-users themselves can evaluate the usability and quality of the spatial data and maps for their purposes.

Use participatory mapping methods and native languages to collect the stakeholder's views

The participatory mapping aims to obtain the view of a certain group of people, instead of an objective "truth". Participatory mapping is an important method in involving the stakeholders in MSP, and to collect their views and knowledge for the planning processes. The subjectivity of the opinions and the composition of stakeholder groups need to be recognized and evaluated when participatory mapping is used as part of the official MSP processes. The success of the workshops depends largely on good preparation. In particular, expertly crafted maps play an important role in stakeholder participation, helping participants to put the discussion into context and formulate their own visions. Face-to-face methods and online methods both have their advantages and shortcomings in stakeholder involvement. Regardless of the method, in cross-border participatory mapping, the participants should be allowed to use their native languages throughout the processes to allow them freely express their opinions and knowledge. Thus, spatial data should also be available in native languages.

Recommendations on cross-border collaboration

These recommendations summarise key findings on cross-border collaboration. The topic of cross-border collaboration was discussed during the project in two workshops that were organized in December 2017 and January 2019 for relevant authorities in Estonia and Finland. We organized also two dedicated sessions on cross-border collaboration at the final conference of Plan4Blue in June 2019. The project conducted also three cross-border case studies on shipping (link), pelagic fishing (link) and Natura 2000 network (link). In addition, we reviewed literature on cross-border collaboration in spatial in both marine and terrestrial contexts. (a link to the review).

In these recommendations we raise key points with special relevance for the project area, but we feel that they can be applicable also beyond the project area. The first of the recommendations highlight the importance of sharing information, the second brings up the importance of learning and long-term cyclical nature of MSP. The last of the recommendations suggests practical means of organizing collaboration.

Target groups for these recommendations: *MSP planners (and other regional planners), decision makers, stakeholders.*

Exchange of information is the main purpose of cross-border collaboration

For successful collaboration and to avoid unnecessary problems it is essential to know how the neighbouring countries have organised MSP and what they are aiming at. In Finland there are several MSP planning areas and also other marine planning levels. This should be taken into account in cross-border collaboration also within Finland. Through collaboration and regular communication countries should share information on:

- Basic characteristics of the plans
    - Planning areas, spatial scales, temporal planning horizons
    - Binding or non-binding nature of the plans
    - Status of MSP in the national planning system
- Planning priorities, including information:
    - Sectors and topics that are addressed in plans and how MSP can steer or influence them.
    - The level of details how sectors and topics are addressed. Also whether there are in the plan or in the background documents.
- MSP procedures
    - Responsible authorities
    - Progress and timing of MSP process
    - Publication of different documents and draft plans
    - Consultation periods and stakeholder hearings

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- It is also useful to inform the neighbours about delays, obstacles and limitations that have been met
- MSP related R&D projects that are launched to support planning processes

Countries are developing data sets to support planning and establishing national data portals that utilize Wep Map Service (WMS) or other data standards. When possible, such data should be made available to neighbouring countries. HELCOM data portal and the new BASEMAPS platform could be used for this.

The first planning cycle is a learning process

We should utilise the opportunity of sharing experiences and learning from each other. Such learning should take place during planning processes, but soon after the first round of MSP planning there is particularly useful period to assess the planning and share experiences. This assessment should pay attention also to how cross-border collaboration was conducted. The main purpose is to conduct the next planning cycle better both in national and cross-border perspectives.

Countries should share experiences on:

- Challenges that were met related to, for instance:
    - Background information and availability of data
    - Stakeholder involvement
    - Making stakeholders and sectors to understand what MSP is and what it is not.
- On the solutions that were developed

Implementation phase of the plans lasts several years, during which countries monitor implementation of the plans. Towards the end of the planning cycle countries will evaluate and review the plans. Monitoring and evaluation can produce knowledge that is useful and relevant also for the neighbours.

- Countries should create a mechanism or process for sharing with their neighbours what they have learned from implementation and review phases of the plans
- Countries can also jointly investigate the possibility to collaborate in implementation of the plans, especially regarding sectors that operate across borders

Collaborate in formal and informal fora

It is important to utilize both formal and informal forms of collaboration. Informal meetings between planners – and importantly with stakeholders from different sectors – allow exchange of ideas and detailed discussions on planning practices and topics. Informal collaboration provides an environment for mutual learning. There can be situations that need formal decisions to be effectively solved. There are also formal procedures that countries need to follow, for instance consultation on cross-border environmental impacts (Espoo consultation).

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Countries should utilize the existing platforms for collaboration and create new ones.

HELCOM-VASAB MSP working group is an official forum where countries share information and agree on principles and guidelines. There is also the EU member states' expert group on MSP for exchange on the European level.

EU-funded projects have proven valuable in creating informal settings for cross-border collaboration. In recent years there have been projects such as Baltic SCOPE, Baltic LINes, Pan Baltic SCOPE, SustainBaltic, Plan4Blue and the new Capacity4MSP. It is recommended that such opportunities will be utilized also in the phase of MSP implementation.

Regular exchange of experiences in implementing and follow-up of MSP should be organized in the Baltic Sea level. There could be joint reporting on implementation of MSP by BSR countries and it is important to continue to organize regular Baltic Sea region MSP forums. In the future the MSP forums should have representation of different sectors and their authorities and organisations as they have a role to play in implementation of MSP.

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Annex 1. Background information

The Maritime Spatial Planning processes differ between countries, as the EU MSP Directive (2014/89/EU) gives wide possibilities how each country shall organize their official MSP process. That to say, there are also differences how MSP process is organized and how MSP is like in Estonia and Finland. Table 1 summarizes how MSP process is organized in both countries and table 2 summarizes the core characteristics of the Maritime Spatial Plan of Estonia and Finland.

Table 1. There are slight differences how maritime spatial planning is organized in Estonia and Finland.

	Estonia	**Finland**
Authorities and organization in charge of MSP	National MSP is developed by the Estonian Ministry of Finance with help of the consulting company Hendrikson & Ko.	Eight Regional Councils are in charge for drafting three maritime spatial plans. Åland will compile its own plan. The Ministry of the Environment is responsible for general development and guidance of the MSP process and cooperation with the neighbouring countries. Maritime spatial planning is guided by a coordination group formed of representatives of the coastal regional councils and the Ministry of the Environment
Timing	The first proposed draft in May 2019. The aim is to have the plan adopted by the end of 2020.	Draft of MSP´s on consultation in mid 2020. Approval by Regional Councils spring 2021.
Planning area	Internal waters, territorial waters and EEZ except for Hiiu and Pärnu marine areas, where MSPs at county level has been already adopted. The maritime spatial plans of Hiiu and Pärnu marine areas were made as a pilot plans and will be taken into account in the national MSP process. They stay valid even when the nation-wide maritime plan is enforced.	Internal waters, territorial waters and EEZ.

Stakeholder process	Public hearings of the prepared outline of MSP and strategic environmental assessment were organized in spring and summer 2018. In the working phase of the draft several other unofficial meetings, like meetings with different stakeholders, were organized. Official hearing of the draft plan took place in June 2019, in 5 counties, which are connected with MSP.	Public consultation on stocktaking and preliminary draft of future scenarios in April 2019. Series of workshops on future scenarios organized in spring and early summer 2019 and planning workshops on three planning areas in fall 2019 and early spring 2020. Draft of MSP´s on concultation mid 2020.
International cross-border consultation	Consultation based on ESPOO convention for neighbouring countries, organized by the Ministry of Environment with cooperation of the Ministry of Finance.	Unofficial consultation for neighbouring countries, organized by the Ministry of the Environment with regional councils.
MSP in relation to land-use planning system	National maritime spatial plan and Hiiu and Pärnu maritime spatial plans are only covering marine areas. In the national MSP, land area is defined through the functional interactions (so-called land-sea interactions). The MSP provides guidance on the planning of land areas for national designated spatial plans, comprehensive and designated spatial plans of local governments and detailed spatial plans. Land-use planning is only land based.	Regional councils are in charge for drafting maritime spatial plan for the maritime areas covering both territorial waters and EEZ. MSP is a non-binding, general level strategic plan. Municipalities and regional councils have the planning mandate on territorial waters and they can draft land use plans for it.

Table 2. Characteristics of the national maritime spatial plans in Estonia and Finland.

	Estonia	**Finland**
Legal bindingness	Legally binding	Not legally binding. Provides information and guiding for land use planning on maritime waters
Objectives	The aim is to agree on the *long-term* principles of Estonian marine area use *in order to* attain and maintain a good status of the *marine environment* and promote the *maritime economy*. The areas and conditions in which activities can be carried out will be defined by the plan. During the preparation of MSP, *synergy* between	Promote sustainable development and growth on maritime areas, sustainable use of maritime resources and good state of waters.

	the existing marine uses and the planned activities will be addressed.	
Sectors	Fishery, aquaculture, maritime transport, sea rescue, pollution response and border guard~~,~~ energy production, infrastructure on the seabed, tourism and recreation, good environmental state and ecosystem-based approach, nature protection, marine culture, national defence, natural resources, dumping **The primary focus of the plan is the combined use and new uses of the marine area (wind energy and aquaculture).**	Energy, maritime transport, fishery and aquaculture, tourism and recreation, preservation, improvement and protection of the environment and nature. Attention should be paid to characteristics of the sea area, land-sea interaction and to the needs of defense. Also seabed mining, biotechnology, maritime industry, and cultural heritage are handled in the planning.
Scales	One national maritime spatial plan The maritime spatial plans of Hiiu and Pärnu marine areas will be taken into account in the national MSP process and stay valid even when the nation-wide maritime plan is enforced. There is no dedicated scale	Three coherent plans. The Åland Islands will compile its own plan. Regional councils have agreed of the scale of 1:750 000.
Review cycle	According to the planning act Ministry of Finance should review the plan once at least every 5 years. After reviewing the plan we can decide to do a new plan right away or decide that it is still valid. The plan is made in 15 year perspective.	According to the land use and building act MSP`s should be assessed at least every ten years.