

NORDREGIO NEWS

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Baltic Sea Region and Beyond*

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**YOUTH PERSPECTIVE
IN MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING**



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Dear Reader,

The Baltic Sea Region is one of Nordregio's four geographical focal areas. In November 2016, more than 1000 people joined the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy Forum in Stockholm. Nordregio co-organized two well-attended workshops, one on maritime spatial planning (MSP) and the other on territorial monitoring.

The common denominator for this EU macro-region is the Baltic Sea. The basic prerequisite for the Baltic Sea Region Strategy is sea-water quality, as stressed in the opening speeches by Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and the entrepreneur and capitalist Niklas Zennström, co-founder of Skype and initiator of Race for the Baltic.

Four years ago, I was approached by two gentlemen from the Swedish national sea authority who asked if Nordregio was interested in participating in a project on MSP. The background to this offer was that the EU Directorate for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, DG MARE, had decided to follow up their decision to make it mandatory for every member state to adopt a maritime spatial plan before the end of 2021, with some project money being available to enhance cross-border co-operation. The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) took the lead in developing such a project for the Baltic Sea Region.

With our background in research on governance and terrestrial spatial planning, Nordregio became an active partner in the Baltic SCOPE project, in which the governance aspects are especially strategically important. By starting with a consensus-oriented subject such as spatial planning, the states around the Baltic Sea were able to develop cross-border co-operation that may open the door to joint actions on more controversial topics, such as tackling the region's devastating water pollution or the distribution of fishing quotas.

In this issue of Nordregio News, you can learn more about the outcome of the Baltic SCOPE project and its successor, PanBaltic SCOPE, which is expected to start at the beginning of 2018. We also report on how MSP is implemented in Poland, which was one of the first countries to introduce MSP into its legal system in 2003. How cross-border co-operation on MSP is being developed in the Adriatic and Ionian Sea Region is also covered here, and you can read about BONUS BASMATI, a new research project on MSP for sustainable ecosystem services led by Aalborg University with Nordregio as one of the partners.

Finally, from the perspective of youth, we ask: what does it mean to make the Baltic Sea a better environment for future generations? I believe it means a healthy living Baltic Sea where future generations can swim without the risk of being poisoned by blooming algae and where they will still be able to enjoy the taste of freshly caught trout, smoked eel and fried herring.

Enjoy reading this issue. We look forward to your feedback. ■



I sometimes think of a maritime spatial plan in the same way that I thought, in a former job, of forestry plans – as long-term decisions on how to use and protect the grounds and their resources. That is what a maritime spatial plan does.

However, maritime spatial plans are more complex because, as a single forest owner, I could make decisions by myself. In contrast, at sea, so many different parties must co-operate and share the resource, ranging from local beach-goers to global shipping companies to the microalgae producing our oxygen. As a result of this complexity, it is important to have a Nordic (or even larger) perspective on maritime planning.

In the actual process of making a maritime plan, it is equally important to collaborate and ensure participation.

Maritime spatial planning is about creating the future we want. We must undertake it, perhaps not as a common workload, but indeed with a common understanding of our plans because of the sea that we hold in common.

Do we share the same vision of the future we want? Yes, I believe we do. Maybe it differs in the details, but it is clear that we all want to have a secure, socially harmonious, environmentally safe and economically prosperous future.

Making plans that impact on the use of our sea is an important way to prepare for this future.

There is a great deal happening in maritime spatial planning today. All EU member states with sea territories are preparing plans. The UN has a great interest in ensuring that planning governing the global seas is for everyone's benefit. In Sweden, nationwide consultations on plan proposals will be launched in February 2018. Numerous projects, including SmartSea, BalticLINES, SimCelt, NorthSEE, and MARSPLAN-Black Sea, are already improving the conditions for planning. The current results and lessons from one of those projects - the Baltic SCOPE can be read on page 3, in the article entitled *Creating the future we want – How "our" six countries accelerated Maritime Spatial Planning for the Baltic Sea*.

An excellent place for keeping track of developments in maritime spatial planning and finding useful tools is the EU MSP Platform, www.msp-platform.eu.

Finally, I would like to invite you to check out our *Inverted Map* on our website www.havochvatten.se, where we have invented names for underwater hills and meadows to make the sea-scape more relatable. Our seas and oceans are the basis for all life on earth. Let's care for them! ■

CREATING THE FUTURE WE WANT –

HOW “OUR” SIX COUNTRIES ACCELERATED MARITIME
SPATIAL PLANNING FOR THE BALTIC SEA

Maritime Spatial Planning is about creating the future we want. It is about providing predictable conditions. It is also about local fishermen, clean energy, national security and the small shrimp you find among the seaweed. Ideally, it is a democratic, inclusive and participatory process that leads to a spatial plan showing the most effective and sustainable way of using our seas. But how do we make decisions about the way our seas are used, particularly when national borders divide a common sea? The Baltic SCOPE collaboration partly answered this question and laid the foundation for national plans that should fit better together with the national plans of neighbouring countries in the future.

BY ALBERTO GIACOMETTI, WILHELM GÄRDMARK, INGELA ISAKSSON, MICHAEL KULL, JOHN MOODIE AND ANDREA MORF



BALTIC SCOPE

New tools and knowledge that foster pan-Baltic thinking

The Baltic SCOPE project tackled cross-border maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea. Baltic SCOPE ran for two years, from 2015 to 2017. Project partners were the planning authorities of Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Poland and Sweden and included the organizations Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), Visions and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea (VASAB), Nordregio and the Finnish Environment Institute SYKE. In addition, Finland, Lithuania and the German State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern were associated partners.

Baltic SCOPE increased collaboration and co-ordination between national authorities, working with fisheries, energy, environmental protection, shipping and maritime spatial planning, and also between some other key stakeholders in the Baltic Sea region. The project provided planners with new knowledge, tools and methods to better address transboundary issues. Moreover, through the development of stronger ties between the planning authorities, a pan-Baltic approach to MSP was fostered.



Photo: Lies van Rompaey/rreeimages.com

Challenges regarding novelty, difference and power balance

A transboundary MSP process is not free from complications. Because MSP is a new approach in Europe for organizing sea space, countries have been required to establish institutional structures for undertaking this task. In many sea basins, authorities and stakeholders from neighbouring countries are building up sea-planning expertise at the national level as well as in collaboration with neighbouring countries. Collaborating across sea basins, as is the case in the Baltic Sea, becomes particularly challenging as countries have different administrative and governance structures within which MSP is embedded. In addition, governance structures, including the regulation of relevant sectors, overlap at times and are nested across different levels of public administration and geographical scales.

MSP is also about balancing sectoral interests, for example, those of windfarms and shipping lines. This can be challenging as there is a clear imbalance in the level of sectoral influence over the seas, which is often predetermined by international or global agreements (e.g. the EU's Common Fisheries Policy and International Maritime Organization), as well as by national interests and politics. Furthermore, national priorities and interests are often significantly different and can sometimes conflict with each other, with some countries prioritizing environmental protection, while others the exploration of new economic opportunities. There are also a number of practical and logistical challenges to overcome. While a key aspect of cross-border co-operation in MSP involves the sharing of data and mapping, data are often fragmented, unreliable or simply incompatible across borders because of differences in methods of data collection. Other challenges for partners in the Baltic SCOPE project include language barriers, differences in planning traditions, different stages of the planning processes and the presence of a few politically sensitive issues related to unsolved border conflicts, accessibility to ports and environmental concerns.



Photo: Andrea Morf



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THE BALTIC SCOPE PROJECT
BECAME AN INFORMAL PLATFORM
FOR SHARING INFORMATION AND
EXPERIENCES, WHERE THE COUNTRIES
LEARNED FROM EACH OTHER AND
BUILT NEW APPROACHES TOGETHER
FOR DEALING WITH COMPLEX
TRANSBOUNDARY MSP ISSUES.



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Photo: pixabay.com

Open, informal and creative interactions – producing useful results

On the positive side, the effective rearrangement of administrative structures has allowed for the allocation of MSP activities within existing governance systems. The Baltic SCOPE project constituted an informal platform for sharing information and experiences from which partners of different countries learned from each other and built new approaches together for dealing with complex transboundary MSP issues. Despite some of the inherent difficulties, the creativity, openness and solution-orientated approach of planners and experts in developing new methods and tools for planning that involves the sea has been essential for a successful cross-border collaboration. The presence of inter-governmental institutions such as HELCOM and VASAB and the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group, have significantly supported and propelled the collaborative efforts of Baltic SCOPE countries. At the same time, these organizations are absorbing the lessons learned from Baltic SCOPE, and other collaborative projects, to institutionalize the learning process.



Photo: Andrea Morf

DESPITE THE INITIAL DIFFICULTIES, THE CREATIVITY, OPENNESS AND SOLUTION-ORIENTED APPROACH OF PLANNERS AND EXPERTS HAS BEEN ESSENTIAL FOR A SUCCESSFUL CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION.

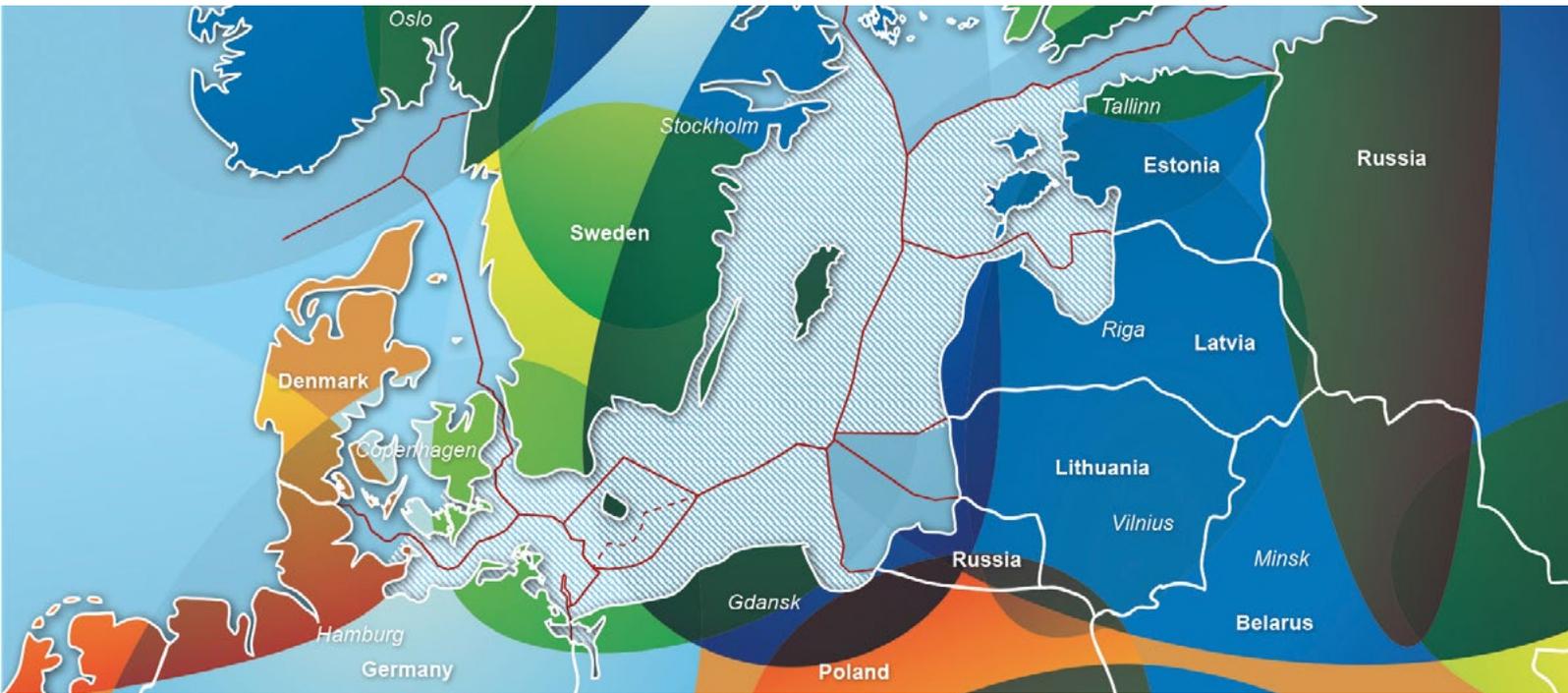
The project has resulted in a number of interesting products and outcomes, including a deeper understanding between planners across the Baltic Sea region, common maps on green infrastructure and shipping activities, harmonized data, planning evidence (methods and tools), checklists for carrying out MSP using an ecosystem approach and policy recommendations for cross-border maritime spatial planning. The project also suggested planning solutions in conflict areas. The results are primarily useful for planners and policymakers, but also for a broad range of stakeholders and academics.

The Baltic SCOPE results were fed directly into the countries' planning processes, and are used by planning authorities nationally and internationally, in the HELCOM-VASAB Joint Working Group on MSP, HELCOM, VASAB and in sister projects.

The project supported the implementation of the EU Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning. The European Commission and the project partners financed Baltic SCOPE.

In the long run, Baltic SCOPE makes an important milestone on the road towards developing coherent national maritime spatial plans across the Baltic Sea, for the sustainable use of marine resources and a sustainable development of the Baltic Sea region. Maritime spatial planning is about creating a future we want; it is about the journey, as much as the destination – the collaboration, as much as the plans.

Join us at www.balticscope.eu. ■



THE BALTIC SCOPE'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING ACROSS BORDERS

The partners in the Baltic SCOPE collaboration developed several recommendations in order to facilitate transboundary collaboration in maritime spatial planning, and for national authorities to achieve a closer alignment of their national plans.

The recommendations deal with transboundary cooperation and

planning evidence for example, and sectors such as shipping and fisheries. A selection of the recommendations is presented below.

The recommendations are based on the joint experience and needs encountered whilst working together towards coherence and cross border solutions in Baltic maritime spatial plans.

TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION

1) Planning authorities should draw attention to pan-Baltic and bilateral issues at the national political level where appropriate, to deal with conflicting national interests that cannot be solved through informal dialogue between planners.

2) Planning authorities should strengthen cooperation with sectorial agencies, which act as contact points to international decision organs, including the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission – Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) and Visions and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea (VASAB) at the regional sea level.

3) Planning authorities should develop a more symbiotic relationship with sector authorities, and the respective sector authority should involve the planning authorities if there are spatial implications in sector negotiations across borders.

PROCESS

1) Ensure that sectoral authorities understand and agree with relevant MSP recommendations in order to promote the successful implementation of MSP.

2) Map transboundary synergies and conflicts, so planners can identify which areas require special attention.

3) Apply experiences from conflict management in other areas to MSP.

PLANNING EVIDENCE

1) Apply and develop common approaches for assessing and evaluating the cumulative impact of human activities on the marine environment.

2) Develop guidelines or criteria for social, economic and environmental impact assessment procedures for MSP.

3) Develop pan-Baltic criteria, based on international guidance, outlining safety distances between offshore installations, fairways, routes and TSSs.

STAKEHOLDERS & PLATFORMS

1) Establish the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group as a permanent forum for networking and sharing knowledge and experience, to ensure close cooperation of planning authorities.

2) Find appropriate forms to contact and mobilize commercial stakeholders and NGOs in transboundary MSP, to enhance knowledge exchange and consultation.

3) Involve sectoral experts and sectoral authorities early, to avoid conflicts and obtain transboundary coherent plans.

The entire set of recommendations is available at www.balticscope.eu



Photo: Lukasz Tylec/freeimages.com

MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING IN POLAND: **A dialogue at various geographical scales**

In 2003, Poland was one of the first countries in the world to introduce Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) into its legal system. However, formal planning did not start until ten years later, in 2013, when preparation began of a comprehensive stock-taking report ([Study of Conditions of Spatial Development of Polish Sea Areas](#)), which was completed early in 2015. Next, elaboration of the Spatial Plan at the scale of 1:200,000, which was tendered by the director of Maritime Office in Gdynia and the winning consortium (Maritime Institute in Gdańsk and National Marine Fisheries Research Institute in Gdynia), began in July 2016. The Spatial Plan is comprehensive, dealing with all existing and future spatial issues related to sea use and the environment, and covers all Polish sea areas except those within ports and the Szczecin and Vistula Lagoons, which require spatial planning at a larger scale (1:25,000 or even 1:10,000) because of the intensity and density of possible conflicts.

BY ANDRZEJ CIEŚLAK, MAGDALENA MATCZAK AND JACEK ZAUCHA

By September 2017, the first draft of the plan will be subjected to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Three more versions of the Spatial Plan will be produced to incorporate SEA stipulations and the results of consecutive rounds of national consultation and public debate. The final version should be ready in the second half of 2019 and will then pass through procedures required by the Espoo convention. The Spatial Plan will then be adopted by regulation of the Minister responsible for the maritime economy. In future, several more detailed plans for the lagoons, Gulf of Gdańsk, sea-waters of ports and other areas identified in the general plan will be developed.

Approach to the planning process

Polish planning culture is largely characterized as expert and authority biased. For MSP procedures, much effort is being made to change this pattern at various geographical scales and in different frameworks. Being a very new activity, many topics may remain insufficiently recognised by the MSP team, no matter how well it has been prepared for the task. The exchange of knowledge, information and ideas between the stakeholders and the planning group may help to avoid many pitfalls. In addition, a possibly close involvement in the planning process should build the feeling of ownership of the plan by the stakeholders, improve their awareness of complex spatial management issues and smooth the way to its final adoption and implementation.

Co-operation

Poland follows the HELCOM-VASAB Guidelines on transboundary consultations, and public participation

and co-operation. Note that these are two different issues. Basically, co-operation prepares the ground for real planning. At the Baltic level, Poland is active in the joint HELCOM-VASAB working group on MSP and has co-chaired the group since 2010. The Polish Maritime Administration has actively participated in several transnational projects, dealing not only with the methodology of producing maritime spatial plans but also with consultation procedures. Many of the projects provided direct input into Polish planning practice, e.g. the consultation handbook by PartiSEAPate, or the check-list for ecosystem approaches by Baltic SCOPE (which will be used in the upcoming stages of plan and SEA preparation). Co-operation is also extended to research communities. For example, in the BaltSpace project the Maritime Institute carried out a study of attitudes, engagement and preparedness for MSP of Polish fishermen. Results of the study will be used in the ongoing planning process.

The dialogue

Consultations and participation are taking place at various levels. As a starting point, at the national level, the Maritime Administration invited all stakeholders to send proposals and suggestions for the plan. The response exceeded expectations, showing a significant improvement in awareness among the stakeholders. In 2014, about 120 proposals were submitted after a similar invitation at the beginning of work on the "Study of Conditions of Spatial Development of Polish Sea Areas". Two years later, in 2016, the response rate jumped to over 800.

At the Baltic level, Poland notified the countries in the region of the start of planning work. Their MSP-competent authorities were invited to a meeting in autumn 2016 to discuss the assumptions and goals of the Polish plan and SEA and the timetable. Common interests, multilateral and bilateral, were listed. The meeting also helped to lay foundations for co-operation between Denmark and Poland in planning for the "grey zone" between the two countries. Apart from possible formal or informal bilateral contacts, two more international meetings are planned: the first in late 2017 to present and discuss the first version of the plan, and the second in early 2019 to present and discuss the hopefully final version.

At the national level, a similar event was organised in March 2017 with the participation of nearly 200 stakeholders. Three more national consultation meetings are planned: at the end of 2017 (first version of the Spatial Plan), the third quarter of 2018 (the Spatial Plan corrected after first version of SEA) and a final conference in mid-2019. Coordination within the government is carried out through the inter-ministerial working group on Maritime Policy. The first draft of the Spatial Plan was presented to this group. As a result, smaller meetings will be organised to discuss particular problems or solutions. The first meeting, on assigning priority functions of sea space in relation to the national defence system, was held in July.

Many meetings at local level and within separate interest groups of stakeholders are planned to discuss, develop and/or modify solutions of the plan and SEA. They will be held after finalizing the first version of the plan, which will provide a basis for the talks. ■



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Photo: Andrea Morf

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BALTIC SEA MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING

FOR SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

The current and potential use of the seas and oceans is often called the 'Blue Economy'. Recently, the European Commission launched its Blue Growth Strategy on the opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth. The European Commission considers that Blue Growth is a long-term strategy in the marine and maritime sectors with great potential for innovation and economic growth. Holistic spatial planning systems supporting sustainable development have proved themselves in terrestrial planning and are also needed at sea. Due to this reason, the BONUS BASMATI project is based on the ecosystem services approach to assist in assessing sustainable solutions corresponding to policy goals.

BY HENNING STEN HANSEN AND LISE SCHRØDER

The seas have been exploited by people for millennia, but mainly for fisheries and transport of goods and people until recently. In recent decades, new marine uses, such as off-shore oil and gas production and wind energy have become a part of the marine environment. Aquaculture along coasts and in fjords is becoming a major industry, and marine mineral resources and marine biotechnology are contributing strongly to the rapid evolution in the use of seas and oceans. Among the activities competing for marine space are also the increasing cruise tourism and extended recreational activities in coastal areas, which have been emphasized as an important element in the EU strategy for growth and jobs in coastal and maritime tourism.

The use of the seas and oceans is overall regulated by the United Nations (UN), implemented by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which defines rights and responsibilities on the seas and oceans. However, with the rapidly increasing use of the seas and oceans, it is inevitable that conflicts will arise. Accordingly, there has been an increasing international recognition of the need to manage human activities that influence the marine environment and its ecosystems in an integrated, cross-sectoral manner. The paradigm of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) aims at minimizing the conflicts among different sea uses. This approach includes involving various stakeholders and sectors while targeting sustainable growth.

Blue Growth planning based on sustainable ecosystem services

The traditional approach to spatial planning of terrestrial areas aims at balancing the use and protection of areas in support of sustainable development, from environmental, societal and economic perspectives. Similar planning systems are required at sea and in the interconnecting areas of land and sea, the coasts. The point of departure for the BONUS BASMATI project is the concept of ecosystem services (Figure 1). MSP requires a spatially

explicit framework for decision-making; therefore, the overall objective of the project is to develop integrated and innovative solutions for marine and coastal ecosystem services and marine protected areas. The work will be built on the results of former MSP projects and will be carried out in close co-operation with relevant stakeholders in the Baltic Sea region.

Decision support and stakeholder involvement across the Baltic Sea

To achieve the goals mentioned above, a decision-support tool, the Baltic Explorer, will be developed. This system will be built on interactive information technology and will support an integrated, ecosystem-based approach to MSP. The development of the Baltic Explorer tool will take advantage of the interdisciplinary partnerships in the project team, combining competences from natural, social and technical sciences. The Baltic Explorer will be a multi-channel platform offering an interactive web map and a large multi-touch display for accessing, displaying and analysing harmonized cross-border data from marine spatial data infrastructures available in the Baltic region. The Baltic Explorer will support the collaborative setting of values for different uses of marine space, and will facil-



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ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

PROVISIONING SERVICES

Products obtained from ecosystems

REGULATING SERVICES

Benefits obtained from regulation of ecosystem processes

CULTURAL SERVICES

Non-material benefits obtained from ecosystems

SUPPORTING SERVICES

Services necessary for the production of other ecosystem services

Figure 1: The concept of ecosystem services in the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) framework (www.millenniumassessment.org)



Photo: Lise Schrøder

itate the negotiations between the regional stakeholders. The use of extensive stakeholder value mapping guarantees the support of ecosystem services and Blue Growth. The Baltic Explorer will utilize open standards for spatial data delivery and modern web technologies, and will be built on open source components to guarantee the free use and extensibility of the application.

Enabling MSP at both local and pan-Baltic scales

A central aim of the project is to facilitate cross-border collaboration. The organization supporting the BONUS BASMATI project include seven partners located across the Baltic Sea Region: two Danish Universities, Aalborg University and Aarhus University; the Nordic research

institute Nordregio; two Finnish partners, the Finnish Geospatial Research Institute and University of Turku; the Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology; and the Leibniz institute for Baltic Sea Research from Germany. During the project, which will run until 2020, new data will be produced and tested in assessments corresponding to policy goals to support the combined analysis of the four elements of the concept of ecosystem services described in Figure 1. The impact of the project will be facilitated and assessed in transnational case studies for which integrated solutions are required. At the local scale, this will include case study areas in the Fehmarn Belt and the Gulf of Finland, and a pan-Baltic case study will be performed across the region. ■



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THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE BONUS BASMATI PROJECT ARE TO:

- analyse governance systems and their information needs regarding MSP in the Baltic Sea region for developing an operational, transnational model for MSP, while maintaining compliance with existing governance systems;
- develop methods and tools for assessments of planning proposals based on an approach including spatially explicit pressures and effects on maritime ecosystem services;
- create a spatial data infrastructure for the Baltic Sea region to facilitate broad access to information;
- design and develop an innovative, web-based decision-support system providing easy access to information through intelligent discovery.

BONUS BASMATI

receives funding from the BONUS Baltic Organisations' Network for Funding Science EEIG funded by its members, the national research funding institutions in the EU member states around the Baltic Sea and the European Union's Seventh Programme for research, technological development and demonstration.

You can find more information about BONUS BASMATI at www.bonusbasmati.eu

You can find more information about BONUS at www.bonusportal.org/projects



INFO BOX

GATHERING PRACTITIONERS FOR MSP DISCUSSIONS

After two productive years of fostering trans-border collaboration in maritime spatial planning (MSP) across the Baltic Sea Region, the need to continue the conversation emerged. In May, a consortium of eight countries submitted a proposal to the European Commission for a new MSP project, named PanBaltic SCOPE.

BY JOACIM JOHANNESSON

A platform for practical MSP solutions

The overall project includes MSP activities at different geographic scales from pan-Baltic to site specific. The proposed project will support the member states by providing a platform for hands-on cross-border collaboration. At the subregional level, there will be a specific case related to the busy geographical area between Finland, Åland and Sweden. The case includes cooperation between the Regional Council of Satakunta in Finland, the Government of Åland and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM).

The project will also develop and test tools and methods for the practical implementation of an ecosystem-based approach to MSP. It will also build experience on how to integrate land-sea interactions in MSP and deliver new and developed planning knowledge for direct practical use in national planning processes. At the pan-Baltic level, the project will contribute to further development of the trans-boundary cooperation on MSP in the Baltic Sea Region.

Towards a common MSP strategy

The PanBaltic SCOPE project is built on the results and experiences of a series of MSP-related projects in the Baltic Sea region as well as on national MSP processes. In particular, the experiences from real-life planning and recommendations on further work from the Bal-

tic SCOPE project from 2015 to 2017 will be utilized.

The Baltic SCOPE project determined various sectorial activities that often conflict with each other. Whether it is the development of the offshore wind farms installations over existing shipping routes or fisheries over environmental goals, they all need transboundary collaboration between the countries in the Baltic Sea region. The overall objective of the proposed PanBaltic SCOPE is to achieve coherent national maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea region and to build lasting macroregion mechanisms for cross-border MSP cooperation.

Participants and implementation

The recent collaboration was established between eight MSP authorities from Denmark, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Sweden and Finland, including the autonomous region of Åland, the Finnish Environment Institute and three regional organisations: HELCOM, VASAB and Nordregio. The consortium is led by SwAM.

The project is designed to support the implementation of the EU MSP directive and the objectives defined in the EU BSR Strategy, 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.

If finally approved, the PanBaltic SCOPE project will start in January 2018. ■



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Photo: Johannes Jansson/norden.com



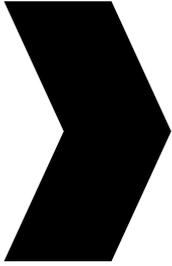
Photo: Andrea Morf

Challenges of implementing maritime spatial planning in the Eastern Mediterranean

The Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (2014/89/EU) was launched to create a common framework for maritime spatial planning (MSP) in Europe. The case of the Adriatic and Ionian Region (AIR) is emblematic of the peculiar challenges to be faced while implementing MSP in the region.

BY ELENA GISSI AND FRANCESCO MUSCO

MSP BEYOND NORDEN



The AIR is crowded by many typical marine and maritime uses concentrated in a relatively small area that is densely populated: transport of goods and passengers, fisheries, aquaculture, oil and gas, energy and communications cables, coastal tourism, military uses, sand extraction, cultural heritage and protected areas.

Moreover, the AIR is a hotspot for conservation because it is characterized by high biodiversity, which is conditioned by high heterogeneity in terms of bathymetry, coastal morphology, sediment composition, circulation and trophic conditions (Mosetti and Lipizer, 2014).

In 2014, the establishment of a European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), which was promoted and coordinated by the European Commission with a strong and direct involvement of Member and non-member States of the region, delivered the Action Plan of the EUSAIR (Communication (COM(2014) 357

final) (EC, 2014a; EC, 2014b). The action plan provides a framework for a coherent macroregional strategy towards smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the AIR. The plan is directly linked to the key economic drivers of the AIR and is structured in four pillars: Blue Growth (Pillar 1); Maritime Transport, Intermodal Connections and Energy Networks (Pillar 2); Environmental Quality (Pillar 3); and Sustainable Tourism (Pillar 4). The plan recognizes that the development of maritime uses can be achieved only through the sustainable coexistence of maritime activities and an ecosystem-based approach. MSP is explicitly cited as a cross-cutting tool to implement the plan, both at national and cross-border level.

Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia, as Member States, are called to implement MSP, taking into consideration the EUSAIR Strategy, to collaborate and co-operate with each other and non-member States, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania, which share a significant part of the AIR.

A key concern relates to the governance structure that will be created to support the process of implementing

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Photo: Andrea Morf



EUSAIR through MSP, to cope with the co-ordination of actions in the areas where countries share responsibilities related to natural marine resources. At present, Albania, Greece, Montenegro and Italy have not claimed any exclusive economic zone (EEZ) or *sui generis* zone beyond the territorial sea (Barbanti et al. 2015). Consequently, parts of the Adriatic–Ionian waters still fall under the regime of the “high seas”, even though the states have the right to exploit marine resources on the continental shelf to the midline, and coastal states do not have any right (or duty) beyond those that are generally applicable to all states. In some cases, coastal states have not agreed upon maritime boundaries delimiting their respective maritime entitlements. One of the main disputes in the area concerns the definition of maritime boundaries between Croatia and Slovenia at Piran Bay.

The countries involved in MSP are characterized by different planning cultures in territorial and spatial planning, with different planning tools that work at different scales. The existing multilevel, multiscale and multisectoral framework of competences is differentiated by country;

therefore, the level of complexity in organizing the governance structure is high.

The capacity of Member States to cooperate and collaborate proactively will strongly influence the effectiveness of the MSP implementation in the AIR in achieving the EUSAIR targets, while simultaneously coping with Blue Growth and environmental quality.

The European Commission is promoting several initiatives in the AIR, to build a path towards collaboration between Member States. Recently, project SUPREME (Supporting Maritime Spatial Planning in the Eastern Mediterranean) involves public authorities in charge of MSP, as designated by the governments of Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia, and the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention. SUPREME focuses on: 1) Supporting the implementation of MSP in EU Member States; and 2) Launching and carrying out concrete and cross-border MSP initiatives between Member States. SUPREME will test operative solutions to transboundary concerns in implementing MSP, while building dialogues between the relevant authorities. ■



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YOUTH OPINION

The need to include young people in marine spatial planning



Marine spatial planning (MSP) is an important tool in managing marine resources in a sustainable manner. However, the MSP process must become better at including young people. The marine environment is facing many challenges, including climate change, unsustainable fishing, exploitation, insufficient management and pollution. It is clear that the actions being taken today are not sufficient to address these challenges. Although young people are aware of the importance of action to deal with future issues and environmental consequences, their means of influence is limited. All actors involved in MSP need to take more responsibility to include the perspectives of young people.

BY AMANDA NYLUND AND LINA WAARA

Today's youth has grown up in a globalized world with transnational problems. Although sustainable management of the oceans has been discussed in international conferences for decades, active management measures have barely commenced. The MSP process concerns users across international borders, commercial sectors, social groups and ages, and therefore it is necessary to take a wider view in managing the ocean for future usage. In the context of the widespread perception of inaction on climate change and environmental issues, there is an opportunity for MSP to become an inspirational example to disheartened young people through the implementation of concrete international measures towards a sustainable future.

Inclusion is vital

The bridge between youth and the administrative institutions is not always obvious and we want to highlight the importance of inclusion, and a stronger use of dialogue with citizens in the MSP process. The implementation of strategies must occur locally, as members of society are ultimately responsible for making sustainability happen. Thus, to stimulate local engagement in MSP questions, it is important to foster dialogue between the younger generations and the actors involved in managing MSP in society.

It is vital that the MSP process is managed from a scientific basis, and that there is caution in relation to current knowledge gaps and potential future changes. Dialogue with different groups in society is required as it enables a mutual exchange of ideas and experiences. To target young people and inspire them to action in the MSP process is not only a great opportunity, but also a necessity to achieve sustainability goals. Many young people would welcome the opportunity to take action and contribute to common

future goals. Avoiding the concerns that younger people have about the complexity of environmental issues could damage their trust in political institutions and ultimately harm the political system.

We are members of a marine network in the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and, as volunteers working to raise public awareness in the marine sector, we are concerned with the management of the ocean and its shores. As active members of society, we are strongly aware of the lack of a dynamic and living relationship between political institutions and citizens. At the same time, we witness great efforts and commitment from members in our network to issues regarding the use of marine space and resources. The management of our oceans concerns everyone, which is why we want to be included in the MSP process.

How to engage young people in MSP

We think that a lack of inclusion is a key reason why young people are not strongly engaged in MSP. There is a huge difference between inviting and actually including. Young people are willing to invest time in a process when they feel that their participation will make a difference and that decision-makers are interested in their perspective. Effort is required from the administration to encourage young people to participate in the MSP process as a means of advocacy. In particular, the invitation to participate must be sincere: no one is interested in involving themselves in a process if it is just for show. Moreover, most young people are unfamiliar with this kind of environment and there will be large knowledge gaps between individuals from different participating sectors. Therefore, young people may feel excluded if it is assumed that all participants already have the necessary knowledge to take part in the MSP process. This must be considered and addressed if local governments and other involved actors want to reach more than the most determined young people.

Overall, we consider MSP to be an issue that could attract the attention of young people because they have a high awareness of the marine environment and intergovernmental problems. To create an environment of inclusion, it must be accepted that time is required to include young people, as they need to be able to participate on equal terms. We believe that successful inclusion is possible when the right information is provided and when there is patience for learning within the process. The current weak link between MSP and young people is not the result of a lack of interest. On the contrary, MSP is an issue in which young people are both interested and concerned. ■



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Photo: Andrea Morf

CLEAN NORDIC OCEANS:

AN INITIATIVE BY THE NORDIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

The United Nations (UN) estimates that each year, at least 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans as a result of human consumption. This seriously affects marine species and ecosystems as well as coastal economies and could have a dramatic impact on human health. Nordic countries are joining the global UN effort #CleanSeas with a project named Clean Nordic Oceans and a programme to reduce the environmental impact of plastic.



The need for improved knowledge about the environmental consequences of marine pollution has prompted the Nordic countries to initiate a three-year project, named Clean Nordic Oceans. The project aims to reduce the danger of ghost fishing and littering of the oceans by establishing a network that will exchange and disseminate knowledge between the participating countries, and promote increased recycling and waste management from both commercial and recreational fishing in Nordic waters. Clean Nordic Oceans is led by the Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries in cooperation with Sweden and Denmark and funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Focus on plastics

Earlier this year, the Nordic environment ministers also announced a new Nordic programme that enunciates a common vision to reduce the environmental impact of

plastic and to promote recycling. The programme is a strategic tool, encouraging synergies between Nordic countries and raising awareness of, and the level of knowledge about, plastics in the region. The Nordic Council of Ministers for the Environment highlighted the challenge posed by marine waste and the role played by plastic in a circular economy. In particular, they underlined the importance of creating a second-hand market for plastics, stimulating design that encourages recycling and introducing measures to combat the use of microplastics in consumer products.

In addition to setting a course for the Nordic region, the Nordic programme to reduce the environmental impact of plastic will also provide input to international efforts including the UN sustainable development goals (the Agenda 2030 SDGs), the UN Environment Assembly and the UN campaign against marine waste, #CleanSeas, which is being coordinated by the UN Environment Programme. ■

For more information about the Clean Nordic Oceans project, visit the cnogear.org website. You can also follow the project on Twitter (twitter.com/cnogear) and Instagram (instagram.com/cleannordicoceans).



Clean Nordic Oceans

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