

# BRIDGING THE OLD WITH THE NEW: HOW CAN WE BUILT A BETTER BALTIC SEA FUTURE FOR 2040 AND BEYOND?

## WORKSHOP REPORT 28 September 2021 12<sup>th</sup> EUSBSR Annual Forum

How would a desired Baltic Sea Region look like by 2040? How do we envision its urban networks and settlement structure, its physical and digital connectivity, the management of its 'commons' that ensure a good quality of life, and how do we envision its maritime and spatial planning by 2040? What do we wish to look different from today? Visions are a powerful approach to imagine desirable futures. VASAB has been one of the pioneers in developing visions, dating back to the first VASAB vision "VASAB 2010. Towards a Framework for Spatial Development in the Baltic Sea Region" in 1994. Today, VASAB updates its Long-Term Perspective for a new time horizon, 2040.

The workshop 'Bridging the old with the new: How can we built a better Baltic Sea Region future for 2040 and beyond?' took place on 28 September 2021 and discussed the first outcomes of the VASAB Long-Term Perspective update. Going through the four metaphors of the vision, i.e., the pearls, the strings, the patches and the system, each representing a different territorial element, and how they would look like by 2040, the workshop engaged participants in discussing desirable futures for the Baltic Sea Region.

Does the vision for each metaphor sound likely to be the future? Is the vision for each metaphor a desirable future? These were the first questions with which participants interacted and provided first feedback. Largely most elements depict a desirable future for the region, with discussions focusing extensively on the most desirable role for the rural areas in the future. Participants stressed the need to highlight the interdependencies of places with each other, as well as the necessity to respect each country's diversity in the development of the vision.

A vision without actions may end up being a wishful thinking, therefore concrete actions on how to implement the vision have also been discussed. These actions reflect the need for more cooperation, more sustainable solutions and more citizen involvement. Hence, actions reflected the exchange between different levels of governance, involving citizens and increasing the capacity building of administrations, other actions were more thematically focused proposing the development of networks and connections between urban areas, sustainable solutions for transport, sustainable production of goods and management of the commons, stronger land and sea links.

Involving key players is another important element for a vision to be realised. Participants, and their representing organisations, showed interest in contributing with concrete actions to the vision, showing an indication of an overall large uptake of the vision by stakeholders.

After the co-creative drafting phase, draft updated VASAB Long-Term Perspective will be given to wider stakeholder consultations in spring 2022. Draft updated VASAB Long-Term Perspective is expected to be adopted by the end of 2022 / beginning of 2023.

More information about the update process of the VASAB Long-Term Perspective find [here](#).

# PEARLS: What would be possible actions?



Urban-rural partnerships	Coordinated work on green infrastructure in pearls of different sizes	Facilitate city networks
Digitalising public SGIs	Circular cities/regions as concept for sustainable pearl development	Facilitated plans and visions for FIJAs
Ensuring high level connectivity between different size urban centres	Capacity building and MLG	Connecting the pearls with various infrastructure
Experience exchange, best practices sharing	Learning through dialogue between comparable regions about improved forms of collaboration (horizontal and vertical). Joint action to strengthen the connectivity between pearls - seen in a wider perspective (priorities based on joint visions).	Promoting multi-level governance approach in planning and finding the solutions for development
Strengthening, clusterization, and shrinkage of some pearls	The city of Tallinn Leads the European Pilot Network Global Goals for Cities, which aims to contribute to the European Green Deal, by supporting the European small- and medium-sized cities to localise the SDGs	Metropolises as innovators for sustainability transition
Localisation of (inter)governmental policies Support both big parts and small parts/cities in sustainable maritime economy, climate action, sustainable tourism, connectivity.	Pearls in managed forests.	Localising (inter)governmental policies (SDGs, climate).
Exploring digitalisation as a tool for strengthening interdependency between urban/rural areas in educational systems	events, projects	Systems or regionalization in several scales (entire region, several countries scale, inner country's region, metropolis or coastal scale)

# STRINGS: What would be possible actions?



Sustainable maritime economy	Localisation of SDGs	transboundary green energy projects
Development of multimodal nodes	From virtual back to physical connections.	Better linking sea and land transport
Integrated Baltic Sea Energy Networks	popularization of maritime transport	People are looking for 'speed'
Integrated settlement and mobility concepts = regional planning	Access to ICT everywhere	Ecomobility and cycling infrastructure
Development of intermodal hubs.	Agile experiments with private companies in testing new mobility concepts and virtual services	Blue Growth BSR concept development
Participation of civil society and authorities	Make strings attractive: string consists of attractive pearls	cross-border digital services development (that has neeb on the EUSBSR agenda since the beginning but with very little success)
Integrated transport systems across the borders	Best practice - Storytelling history - as is - to be	Great that the vision highlights nighttrains!
Make use of maritime spatial planning as a tool from local to interregional scale	Drones Future	Integrated management of land based and at-sea activities, taking into account the fragile environment and with transboundary consultations & data sharing => including MSP to the palette
Links to markets and hubs	blue   green together	

# PATCHES: What would be possible actions?



Sustainable food production and consumption - from farm to fork	Co-creating patches where people meet cross-sectorial, cross-borders, multilevels and digitally	To ask people what patches and where they want to have
Land-sea interactions	Tasty products from fields, forests and water bodies - how to manage sustainable production and attractive selling of them! Product and production as attraction!	The use of patches in context of Green deal, SDGs etc.
Need to explore new ways to protect, to use, to enjoy and to integrate patches, that are NOT obviously developed for settlement or infrastructure, into a world with uncertainty.	Pearls and patches merge in suburban or hybrid way of living	blue/green space planning

# SYSTEMS: What would be possible actions?



Discussion, communication, and showing the benefits of joint/collective action.	Bringing together governments, business, local actors.	Knowledge exchange
Interactive communications	Sub-bsr cooperations, like the STRING Network	Offering engaging collaboratives where stakeholders are brought together co-creating solutions
priority list of projects or priority areas	Capacity building	Informal planners' platform
Strengthen Baltic CBC	Sharing data and knowledge across the topics, countries - this could be built of experience of VASAB, HELCOM, other networks.	Highlight the role of pioneers of change/niche-actors to bring the vision forward
Having supportive national legislation	BSR Open Map	Set up a creative transnational ecosystem of sustainability transition that includes all spheres of quantifiable helix
measurement system or tool to define the level of cooperation or engagement	Addressing poverty concerns vs the changing role of financial wealth in shaping inequalities	Strength through diversity
Investing in capacity building - enable institutions/organisations to integrate transnational collaboration in own strategic development	Changes in legislation, local and international, more closely connecting marine space planning and urban spatial planning	Not sure this is the right place but somewhere carry out a risk assessment including climate change issues
Describe the vision as an ongoing transition process = connect vision and process	Integrating SDGs and maintaining the leading positions of BSR as frontrunners for sustainable development <a href="https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/rankings">https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/rankings</a> Knowledge networking and sharing best practice experience	Implementing the VASAB-HELCOM Regional MSP roadmap 2021-2030 to be adopted in October by the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting
Connect VASAB vision with BSR neighboring areas	Connect to existing platforms/work in EUSBSR	Share data and do transboundary consultations
Implement ecosystem-based approach in all activities		