

Notes from 7th MSP Planners' Forum

12.11.2025.

Riga, Latvia

Planners' Forum (supported by Interreg BSR [PASPS project](#)) is a platform for practical exchange for MSP practitioners, topics to discuss remain flexible and adaptive; participants of Planners' Forum can raise pressing MSP issues to be included in the agenda upon the need. The 7th meeting concentrates on reflections on 5th Baltic MSP Forum and coastal planning.

News from VASAB and HELCOM

VASAB:

VASAB Secretariat informed the MSP Planners' Forum participants about such news and updates:

- VASAB will use the results and conclusions of 5th Baltic MSP Forum in further implementation of VASAB Vision 2040.
- VASAB organized parallel session "Towards a Climate Resilient Baltic Sea Region" within EUSBSR Annual Forum 2025 in Sopot, Poland. It was organized jointly with PA Secure and PA Energy.
- VASAB is participating in ESPON project competition on spatial resilience which is lead by VASAB Polish Chairmanship
- VASAB is planning organization of 3rd Young Planners Summer School in August 2026 in Gdansk, Poland.
- Land Based Planners' Forum project will have its final event in Tallinn, Estonia on February 11-12, 2026.
- VASAB is cooperating with other EUSBSR PAs in order to identify the progress of implementation of VASAB Vision 2040.
- VASAB is identifying further possibilities to extend stakeholder network in BSR countries.

HELCOM:

HELCOM informed the Forum about the latest MSP related developments. Particularly, that HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group in October considered a revised Guideline on MSP output data and recommended the document for approval by HELCOM HOD and VASAB CSPD/BSR.

HELCOM informed about the progress in revision of EBA Guidelines and related Recommendations. The latest version of the document has been circulated to HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG for consideration via correspondence and recommendation for further adoption by HELCOM HOD and VASAB CSPD/BSR. However, the study reservation placed by Finland on the Recommendation and proposal to integrate EBA related recommendations into the Recommendation on MSP and coastal zone management is currently under revision.

Further, participants were informed about ongoing work on the development of a joint HELCOM-VASAB Recommendations on MSP and coastal zone management, embracing respective Recommendations previously adopted in HELCOM and VASAB frameworks.

Finally, the Forum participants took note of the ongoing interim assessment of the implementation of the MSP Roadmap. Respective taskforce has progressed, and the results are supposed to be presented at the next session of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG in spring 2026.

News from countries

Denmark

MSP remains valid, covering all Danish waters. The pressing issues now include the work on MSP amendment that will begin in 2026 with the focus on expanding strictly protected areas towards the EU target with subsequent reduction of areas designated for mineral extraction. Respective ESPOO consultations will be held. The development of a national CIA tool is also rapidly progressing. The work is conducted utilizing the experience gathered in Sweden developing the Symphony tool. However, it is uncertain when the tool will be operational.

Denmark highly evaluated the 5th Baltic MSP Forum and thanked the organizers for excellent work, emphasizing that the Forum became a unique opportunity to meet colleagues around the Baltic Sea and beyond and exchange national experiences in MSP. The Forum's expo was regarded as a successful platform for debates and knowledge transfer. The Sea2Land Navigator tool presented at the Forum was regarded as a valuable and useful tool for MSP practitioners.

Estonia

The national MSP is in effect, and the evaluation and review process has commenced. This evaluation is being carried out in close collaboration with stakeholders through interviews. One challenge is the gap between existing legislation. For example, in one case, the permitting process for a wind farm was initiated more than 15 years ago, but according to a court decision, wind farms are not permitted in that MSP. The developer wishes to proceed with the permitting process, but a new spatial plan is required before the wind farm can be established.

Finland

Finland is currently revising their MSP and it is expected to be accomplished in the end of 2027. During this process a CIA has been launched. Notifications of cross-border consultations have been forwarded to Baltic Sea region countries. Impacts on regional economy and its different sectors are being studied. Finland expressed satisfaction with the 5th Baltic MSP Forum highlighting that this is an excellent opportunity to discuss pressing issues with colleagues and establish new working contacts.

Åland (not present, but submitted their updates in written form)

Åland's first MSP was adopted in 2021. Current legislation requires that their plan is updated every 6 years. However, due to limited resources, they are working on amending the Water Act in line with the MSP directive to extend the update interval to every 10 years.

The Sunnavind project is preparing a master plan for offshore wind north of Åland, including an auction of areas. It is currently reviewing feedback from a local public consultation and an Espoo Convention consultation. By the end of the year, a consultation report and revised plan will be submitted to municipalities. The project has a strong political priority and is carried out as a separate process, parallel to the MSP process.

The main challenge is limited resources (no continuous MSP process). Also balancing the demand for offshore wind to protect 30% of our seas remains complex. On the larger scale, Åland has transboundary challenges such as offshore wind expansion, cumulative impacts, and maintaining ecological corridors. Åland has a high proportion of privately owned waters, with ownership and user rights closely tied to autonomy and cultural identity. This enables strong local engagement and responsibility, but it also makes protection difficult, as we rely mainly on voluntary commitments. At the same time, Åland's small scale allows close cooperation between authorities and strong local

engagement, and the private water ownership can encourage voluntary environmental action, such as fishing bans and habitat protection, which can be considered a best practice.

Regarding coastal planning, Åland's coastal and marine planning reflects both autonomy and local responsibility. Integrating marine and municipal land-use planning remains a challenge, as private waters are excluded from the MSP (political decision). Private waters constitute most of the coastal zone. In the future, Åland aims for a more adaptive, ecosystem-based approach that balances biodiversity protection with sustainable use and renewable energy development.

Germany

MSP has been implemented and is in force. Working on finalizing of the monitoring and evaluation concept for the 2021 MSP and starting the evaluation process in 2026. A concept of multi-use of marine areas and co-existence of human activities is being elaborated.

An extensive report on the matter has been received. A summary is about to be published in German and English (https://www.bsh.de/EN/TOPICS/Offshore/Maritime_spatial_planning/Anlagen/Downloads/Expert_study_multi-use.html?nn=289706). The full report is supposed to be further translated to English and published. Areas designated for offshore wind energy are soon to be auctioned in line with respective EU regulations. Germany is planning to launch next revision of the sectoral Site Development Plan in 2026.

Germany highlighted a fruitful discussion on ecosystem services which took place in the frame of the 5th MSP Forum, providing interesting and useful examples of practical application of the concept as in the Latvian case through MPA designation and later uptake into MSP.

Latvia

National MSP remains in force as adopted. However, a Terms of Reference for the initiation of its amendment is being developed. The work is expected to be finalized by the end of the year, and respective formal procedures will be launched. The amendments will be performed based on Latvian MSP interim report findings. A study of existing legal framework for licensing procedure is being organised to understand the needed changes in regulations to support multi-use. Latvia expressed satisfaction that Sea2Land Navigator was recognized as a valuable and useful tool during the 5th Baltic MSP Forum.

Lithuania (*not present, but submitted their updates in written form*)

Until 2030, the Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania (CPRL) and its maritime spatial solutions remain in force. Currently, legal acts or their amendments are being prepared, taking into account the CPRL provision regarding the southern expansion of the Klaipėda State Seaport (the southern expansion of the port is planned within the internal port waters by creating new land territory). A separate new law is being drafted to ensure smooth and coordinated implementation of the port's southern expansion project. According to the CPRL provisions and its implementation programme, the southern expansion of the Klaipėda State Seaport is planned to be carried out by 2030.

Poland

Poland will have 23 plans in total, 6 plans are still missing. Missing plans are not adopted yet, because of legal issue: they overlap or partially overlap with 'strategic' plan, which is Maritime spatial plan for marine internal waters, territorial sea, and the exclusive economic zone on a scale of 1:200 000. To be able to adopt them, overlapping parts must be excluded from 'strategic' plan. Poland would like to start the revision of 'strategic' plan next year – depending on funding. Poland is working on updating regulation on required scope of maritime spatial plans.

Regarding the 5th Baltic MSP Forum, Polish representatives found the topics related to safety and security of supply in the Baltic Sea, raised by Finland as most relevant and important for further deliberations.

Sweden

Revised plan not adapted. Several studies producing new planning evidence regarding offshore wind and e.g. cultural environment and land- and seascape has been launched. However, Espoo consultations are still progressing. Stakeholder involvement is under evaluation, and some national representatives have been or might be interviewed. M&E is supposed to be launched next year. Sweden is considering a new legislation on designation of offshore wind farm areas based on a proposal of auction agency with subsequent approval at the governmental level.

Discussions

The Forum discussed the German study on multi-use which is about to be accomplished and invited Germany to present the results in the frame of MSP Planners' Forum. Germany accepted the invitation informing that an additional contribution to the study on multi-use from North Sea region is anticipated. The Forum further took note of the information on an extensive analysis of coastal landscapes, ongoing in Sweden and that Sweden would be highly interested to learn experience gained in other countries. Latvia informed about a project on mapping of beaches and adjacent land areas, evaluating aesthetic aspects and accessibility. Social dimension of land use might be considered in MSP. Latvia is willing to share experiences. Finland informed about ongoing nation work to collect information about the most used areas in coastal zone and their accessibility. Finland is also willing to share outcomes of this work.

Part II: Work in groups

As this time MSP Planners' Forum was held in-person and back-to-back with the 5th Baltic MSP Forum, the second part of the meeting was dedicated to celebrating the MSP community in the Baltic Sea region. The participants created 3 groups, and each group had to visit 3 stations.

Station 1: Reflecting on 5th Baltic MSP Forum, previous MSP Planners' Forum meetings

Station description: There is a sheet with two axes: "Importance/significance for the region" and "Need for further discussion / level of advancement" and post-it notes listing previous meeting topics. Participants place post-its on the matrix. There are blank post-its for new, future topics; they place these as well.

Conclusions: The highly rated topics for the vertical axes, "significance", were off-shore wind farms in MSP, cross-border impact assessment, cumulative impact assessment in MSP and maritime defence. The highly rated topics for the horizontal axes, "level of advancement", were maritime defence, resilience of marine space, multi-use and co-existence in MSP. Overall, the highest rating for both axes was for maritime defence, and the lowest – for European Green Deal and MSP.

Station 2: Baltic Sea MSP Trivia

Station description: Groups fill out the question forms by circling the correct answer's letter.

Conclusions: All three groups are well-educated in MSP in the Baltic Sea and received 9 points out of 10 in the Trivia.

Station 3: Identifying missing gaps

Station description: There is a three-column template: challenge, root cause, opportunity. Participants write one challenge per sticky note and place it in the first column. They discuss it and the group identifies root causes (for example, capacity, data, governance). They write an opportunity or project idea responding to that root cause.

Conclusions: There were several challenges that appeared in more than one group's table, such as limited resources, climate change. Other significant challenges include geopolitical situation security, funding, lack of data, EBA and CIA, different sectorial interests. The identified opportunities indicated the need to engage more in EU funds, climate-smart MSPs, more nature-based solutions for coastal planning and CO2 capturing, security scenarios for the Baltic Sea, political prioritization as well as structure, flexibility, and adaptation.

Themes and timing for the next MSP Planners' Forum

It is agreed that the next MSP Planners' Forum meeting will be held in spring 2026, online. The topic will be decided through survey.

Participants of the 7th MSP Planners' Forum within PASPS project:

Country	Name	Organisation
Denmark	Malte Hvidsten	Danish Maritime Authority
Denmark	Sif Flor	Danish Maritime Authority
Estonia	Lembe Reiman	Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications
Finland	Mari Pohja-Mykrä	Regional Council of Southwest Finland
Finland	Essi Kärpijoki	Regional Council of Southwest Finland
Germany	Kai Trümpler	Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, BSH
Germany	Philipp Arndt	Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, BSH
Germany	Bettina Käppeler	Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, BSH
Latvia	Marta Štūbe	Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development
Latvia	Anete Bērziņa	Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development
Poland	Kamil Rybka	Ministry of Infrastructure
Poland	Jakub Turski	Maritime Institute of GMU
Poland	Magdalena Matzak	Maritime Institute of GMU
Sweden	Ingela Isaksson	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
Sweden	Elin Celik	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
Sweden	Eric Stromberg	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
Sweden	Jonas Bjärnstedt	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
Supporting organisations		
VASAB	Jana Laiviņa	VASAB Secretariat
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