



Adopted by HELCOM HOD 34-2010 and the 54th Meeting of VASAB CSPD/BSR

BALTIC SEA BROAD-SCALE MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING (MSP) PRINCIPLES

HELCOM and VASAB,

RECALLING the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan commitment to jointly develop by 2010, as well as test, apply and evaluate by 2012, in co-operation with other relevant international bodies, broad-scale, cross-sectoral, marine spatial planning principles based on the Ecosystem Approach: whereby all Contracting Parties and relevant HELCOM bodies shall co-operatively participate; thereby giving guidance for the planning and ensuring the protection of the marine environment and nature, including habitats and seafloor integrity; securing sustainable use of marine resources by reducing user conflicts and adverse impacts of human activities,

RECALLING the “HELCOM Recommendation 28E/9 on development of broad-scale marine spatial planning principles in the Baltic Sea area” adopted to facilitate the protection and sustainable use of the Baltic Sea.

RECALLING that Maritime Spatial Planning is promoted and called for by the VASAB Long Term Perspective, Nordic Council of Ministers, the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and its objectives, The European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union, including its roadmap with Maritime Spatial Planning Principles, and the work of UNESCO.

AWARE that while management and regulation of human activities is divided into sectoral frameworks, the Baltic Sea ecosystem hosting these activities and enabling economic and social prosperity, is a single entity which has limits in terms of ecological integrity and available space, and is inherently connected to activities and processes on land.

AWARE that there is an increasing need and competition for marine space of the Baltic Sea which requires an integrated, cross-sectoral approach of managing human activities.

AWARE that Maritime Spatial Planning is an instrument for analysing, coordinating and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve a balance between economic, environmental, social and any other interests in line with internationally and nationally agreed objectives.

AWARE that the Baltic Sea is in great need of a developed, well adapted and coherent Maritime Spatial Planning to accomplish long term trade-offs between different and sometimes competing human activities, thereby providing a predictable framework for maritime economic investment and activities, for creating job opportunities and at the same time ensuring compatibility with good environmental status, thus promoting sustainable development of the marine areas and the Baltic Sea Region.

AWARE that according to sustainable development the needs of the present generation should be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

ACKNOWLEDGE that although substantial work has already been carried out in the Baltic Sea Region as regards Maritime Spatial Planning and Management, still great differences exist between the Baltic Sea Region countries in terms of Maritime Spatial Planning systems.

AGREE that this document, including the following ten principles, will provide valuable guidance for achieving better coherence in the development of Maritime Spatial Planning systems in the Baltic Sea Region:

1. Sustainable management

Maritime Spatial Planning is a key tool for sustainable management by balancing between economic, environmental, social and other interests in spatial allocations, by managing specific uses and coherently integrating sectoral planning, and by applying the ecosystem approach. When balancing interests and allocating uses in space and time, long-term and sustainable management should have priority.

2. Ecosystem approach

The ecosystem approach, calling for a cross-sectoral and sustainable management of human activities, is an overarching principle for Maritime Spatial Planning which aims at achieving a Baltic Sea ecosystem in good status -a healthy, productive and resilient condition so that it can provide the services humans want and need. The entire regional Baltic Sea ecosystem as well as sub-regional systems and all human activities taking place within it should be considered in this context. Maritime Spatial Planning must seek to protect and enhance the marine environment and thus should contribute to achieving Good Environmental Status according to the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan.

3. Long term perspective and objectives

Maritime Spatial Planning should have a long term perspective in relation to the goals it seeks to attain and to its environmental, social, economic and territorial effects. It should aim for long-term sustainable uses that are not compromised by short term benefits and be based on long term visions strategies and action plans. Clear and effective objectives of Maritime Spatial Planning should be formulated based on these principles and national commitments. The establishment of a legal basis for Maritime Spatial Planning in the Baltic Sea countries should be investigated including vertically and horizontally well-coordinated decision making processes concerning sea space uses to ensure efficient implementation of maritime spatial plans and to provide for an integrated sea space allocation process when such plans do not yet exist.

4. Precautionary Principle

Maritime Spatial Planning should be based on the Precautionary Principle. This implies planning has an obligation to anticipate potential adverse effects to the environment before they occur, taking into account Article 3 of the Helsinki Convention, and take all precautionary measures so that an activity will not result in significant harm.

A similar, but distinct, forward looking perspective should be applied with respect to the economic and social dimensions.

5. Participation and Transparency

All relevant authorities and stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region, including coastal municipalities as well as national and regional bodies, should be involved in maritime spatial planning initiatives at the earliest possible stage and public participation should be secured. Planning processes should be open and transparent and in accordance with international legislation.

6. High quality data and information basis

Maritime Spatial Planning should be based on best available and up to date comprehensive information of high quality that to the largest extent possible should be shared by all. This calls for close cooperation of relevant GIS and geo-statistical databases, including the HELCOM GIS, monitoring and research in order to facilitate a trans-boundary data exchange process that could lead to a harmonised pan-Baltic data and information base for planning. This base should cover historical baselines, present status as well as future projections of both environmental aspects and human activities. It should be as comprehensive, openly accessible and constantly updated as possible and compatibility with European and Global initiatives should be ensured.

7. Transnational coordination and consultation

*Maritime spatial planning should be developed in a joint pan-Baltic dialogue with coordination and consultation between the Baltic Sea states, bearing in mind the need to apply international legislation and agreements and, for the HELCOM and VASAB EU member states, the EU *acquis communautaire*. Such dialogue should be conducted in a cross-sectoral context between all coastal countries, interested and competent organizations and stakeholders. Whenever possible maritime spatial plans should be developed and amended with the Baltic Sea Region perspective in mind.*

8. Coherent terrestrial and maritime spatial planning

Spatial planning for land and for the sea should be tightly interlinked, consistent and supportive to each other. To the extent possible legal systems governing spatial planning on land and sea should be harmonised to achieve governance systems equally open to handle land and sea spatial challenges, problems and opportunities and to create synergies. Synergies with Integrated Coastal Zone Management should be strengthened in all BSR countries and in a cross-border setting.

9. Planning adapted to characteristics and special conditions at different areas

Maritime spatial planning should acknowledge the characteristics and special conditions of the different sub-basins of the Baltic Sea and their catchments. Consideration should be taken of the need for separate sub-regional planning adapted to such areas including sub-regional objectives supplementing regional objectives specified in principle 3. In general maritime spatial plans should seek coherence across ecosystems.

10. Continuous planning

Maritime spatial planning should reflect the fact that planning is a continuous process that will need to adapt to changing conditions and new knowledge. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of maritime plans and its environmental, as well as socio-economic, effects should be carried out with a view to identify unforeseen impacts and to improve planning data and methods. This monitoring and evaluation should, particularly in its trans-boundary dimensions and in addition to national and transboundary monitoring schemes, build on, and if possible be part of, regional monitoring and assessments carried out by regional organisations.