

BONUS POLICY BRIEF: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES FOR MSP INTEGRATION IN THE BALTIC SEA

MSP integration challenges

Marine/maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) aims to promote sustainable governance of marine and coastal areas and resources. This is a challenging task that involves problems of integration over various types of jurisdictional and geographical boundaries and between different sectors, policies, stakeholders and forms of knowledge.

This policy brief presents key policy-relevant research findings from BONUS BALTSAPACE on challenges and possibilities to address integration in MSP. The brief is intended for authorities responsible for MSP processes and all interested and affected stakeholders and policy makers. The recommendations provided here are based on key findings from in-depth case studies at different scales spanning from VASAB-HELCOM's Baltic-wide efforts, to national and subnational marine areas under the jurisdiction of Sweden and Denmark, Germany, Lithuania and Poland. Although the focus of BONUS BALTSAPACE research has been on the Baltic Sea region, it is argued that lessons learned also can be valuable for coping with MSP integration challenges in other marine areas.



01 Horizontal & vertical integration

Integration across administrative and geographical borders is pivotal to enhance functional coherence in the planning of marine areas, particularly at the macro-regional, Baltic Sea wide level. A key challenge is to promote effectiveness and synergies between parallel planning efforts in MSP at different administrative levels and in different countries and regions. This is important, since MSP is grounded in many regulations, norms, and practices at each of the planning levels: European, macro-regional (Baltic Sea region) and national (at times including regional and local levels). Moreover, various interrelated MSP objectives, roles and functions are pursued at different jurisdictional levels in MSP processes.

02 Policy and sector integration

One major challenge of is to increase coherence between relevant global policies, EU Directives, macro-regional commitments, national regulations and strategies, and national implementation. This is especially complex in MSP, as planning is typically embedded in different regulatory and ideological contexts. Also, bringing together and matching their goals, targets and ambitions and expectations towards the marine environment and its resources is important to foster sustainable development of marine areas and to avoid a domination of well organised lobbies.

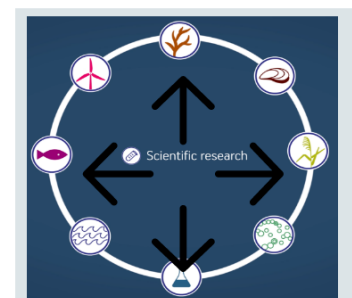


03 Stakeholder integration

The ambition with regard to is an early and broad participation of stakeholders. This remains a challenge, since – despite a growing agreement on the need for such social inclusiveness – most stakeholder involvement in Baltic Sea MSP processes have so far been temporary/project-driven and/or restricted to authorities and key sector representatives. The stakeholder integration reasons for broader stakeholder involvement can be both practical (e.g. improved MSP processes and outcomes) and value and rights based (e.g. linked to democratic rights to participate).

04 Knowledge integration

One of the key challenges related to in MSP centres on how to mix expert and scientific knowledge with other types of stakeholder knowledge to improve the MSP knowledge base. Fair and open communication between scientists/experts and other stakeholders can foster mutual learning across groups over time. However, different deficits and limitations of knowledge, scientific uncertainty and scientific disagreement among different disciplinary perspectives are also important challenges to address.



Solutions: Multi-dimensional integration



MSP can enable the development of mutual understanding, compromises and collaboration, as well as the identification of fundamentally different interests, values and unavoidable trade-off.



To be truly adaptive, MSP authorities must take account of different time horizons of national and international processes



The aims of integration should be clearly defined, and criteria measuring progress should be developed.

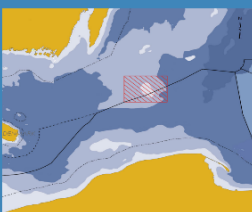


Integration requires institutional capacity building. A more bottom-up approach involving stakeholders and a wider knowledge base is required.

Recommendations / solutions for specific challenges

Hor. & Vertical	Policy & sector	Stakeholder	Knowledge
<p>The HELCOM-VASAB WG on MSP needs to find an agreement on which incompatibilities (e.g. differences in values, goals, priorities, ambitions, administrative routines etc.) between countries are most urgent to address to ensure coherence of the planning efforts at a Baltic-Sea level.</p>	<p>Systematically search to exploit policy and cross-sectoral synergies while transposing international obligations.</p>	<p>Engagement of stakeholders at relatively early stages of the MSP process should be enhanced</p>	<p>Strategic Environmental Assessments as foreseen by the EU SEA Directive or sustainability appraisals may offer potential to integrate ecological and social knowledge.</p>
<p>The HELCOM-VASAB WG on MSP should try to enhance interaction among national sectoral and regional/local level administrations</p>	<p>Closer interaction between environmental protection and resource use (Blue growth) sectors to promote long-term sustainability</p>	<p>Stakeholder involvement in MSP may need to become more continuous than the formal process and clearer in its aims. Authorities should also explore non-statutory forums and methods</p>	<p>MSP should use social science to develop approaches to better support stakeholder engagement, as well as open and democratic forms of MSP decision-making.</p>
<p>National MSP authorities could promote the establishment of bilateral or regional groups to discuss planning issues and share experiences in specific interest areas.</p>	<p>Regional groups of specialists can be set up to refine coordination of policies on specific MSP components to address potential trade-offs and seek synergies between policies and sectors.</p>	<p>Improve the capacity and resources of stakeholders to participate effectively and meaningfully. Also authorities designing and moderating MSP processes need to have the capacity, time and resources</p>	<p>Develop robust evaluative criteria to judge the sufficiency and quality of the evidence base, including consideration of uncertainties and the limits of science.</p>

The BALTSPACE project



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