

BONUS BALTSPEACE: Deliverable: D1.3

EVALUATING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF GOVERNANCE: A PROPOSAL FOR EVALUATING MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING IN THE BALTIC SEA

Authors: Fred Saunders^a, Michael Gilek^a, Kira Gee^b, Björn Hassler^a, Anne Luttmann^c, Andrea Morf^d and Jacek Zaucha^c

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Contributions made by: ^a Södertörn University, School of Natural Sciences, Technology and Environmental Studies, Sweden; ^b Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht Zentrum für Material-und Küstenforschung GmbH, Germany; ^c Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research Warnemünde, Germany; ^d Swedish Institute for the Marine Environment, Sweden; ^e Maritime Institute in Gdansk, Poland.

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Summary

This Deliverable elaborates an evaluation design for MSP that responds to a growing call for a more nuanced and critical conceptualisation and implementation of MSP as complex sites of governance. Here we posit that such an evaluation design should be based on 'sustainability of governance' in MSP. Furthermore, that such an evaluation approach should be built on good governance principles of participation, coordination, openness and collaboration in governance processes with the aim to strengthen MSP on both democratic and functionality grounds. To advance this position, we elaborate the relationship between integration as a concept that can be used to examine the sustainability of governance in practice. The conceptual framework is then used to structure a discussion of illustrative examples of the relationship between integration and sustainability of governance across several Baltic Sea case-studies. The results of these case studies are then framed in a discussion on aspects that need to be considered when designing an evaluation process for MSP. Points highlighted here are the need to adopt a deliberative and reflexive approach that draws on a wide body of evidence in evaluation. A set of clustered evaluative criteria (CEC), referring to practices deemed to be desirable for sustainability of MSP governance, are proposed to guide or direct an evaluation process. The CEC were derived through an assessment of what is deemed important in the relevant literature as well as through consideration of the experience of the Baltic cases. The CEC could be seen as indicators of integration that relate to aspects of sustainability of governance in MSP, as well as, in more instrumental terms to support problem-solving aimed at improving MSP coherence. The evaluation design outlined here would require to be tested and trialled in MSP settings to assess its saliency and refine its usability in practice.

1. Introduction

Marine spatial planning (MSP) has been widely acclaimed as a key governance initiative to balance various interests and policy objectives in support of sustainability ambitions in marine and coastal areas (e.g. Douvère 2008; European Commission 2007; HELCOM-VASAB 2010). However, a growing scholarly critique of MSP suggests that we should be more circumspect and cautious about its sustainability prospects. There are growing concerns (most vocally among planning and social science scholars) that the promise of MSP is not being realised in practice. Among serious criticisms pointed at MSP in practice are that it is dominated by a narrow technocratic approach (Kidd and Ellis 2012), drawing on limited knowledge input (Ritchie and Ellis 2010) that tends to prioritise powerful strategic interests (Jones et al. 2016). This type of narrow and instrumental rational approach¹ to MSP is seen as unviable and even undesirable given its loosely framed goals, multilevel complexity and distributed responsibilities/actions and the political character of competing stakeholder interests/perspectives (Flannery et al. 2016; Jentoft 2017; Kidd and Ellis 2012; Qiu and Jones 2013; Ritchie and Ellis 2010; Tafon 2017).

Relations between MSP objectives, strategies, processes and outcomes are not always, or even usually linear. Like many other areas of sustainability concern, the way that these elements of governance interact is better characterised as ‘messy’ and uncertain with many overlapping possible pathways leading to change with lesser or greater preferred end-states (or substantive goals) (Varjopuro 2017). For MSP to negotiate this complexity, it has been widely argued by governance scholars that such arrangements should strive to be collaborative - integrating and coordinating decision making, including multi-level, multi-sectoral, and multi-organisational partnerships, involving government agencies, the private sector and civil society (Lockwood et al. 2010). This view acknowledges that diverse capacities are needed to address complex concerns, commonly labelled wicked problems by Rittel and Webber (1973) because of their uncertain, persistent, intractable and we would add, *political* character. Moreover, the problems facing MSP are seen as complex in the sense that their proper understanding requires cooperative action across a wide range of different interests, ways of knowing and situated perspectives. Both the criticism directed at MSP and the acknowledgement of needs to consider complexity in governance reflect concerns about the social inclusion or legitimacy of MSP, as well as more practical reasoning related to the functionality of MSP (Morf, et al. 2017). For

¹ In the sense of attempting to assert a type of technical control, perhaps connected to important political priorities, albeit with some communication and engagement with stakeholders, over MSP.

example, conducting broad stakeholder engagement in the formative stages of MSP is argued to lead to more complete problem mapping and pre-emptive avoidance of conflicts.

Much of the previous work on evaluation of MSP (Kelly et al. 2014; Ehler 2014; Fletcher et al. 2013; Carneiro 2013; McCuaig and Herbert 2013; Portman 2011) has been aimed at increasing planning efficiency, is output or outcome-oriented, or concerned with elaborating generalised evaluation typologies. Mirroring a tendency in the MSP literature more generally, these writings (with growing notable exceptions) either explicitly or implicitly adopt rationalistic planning assumptions in their evaluative frameworks, which tend to assume linear relations between baseline data, monitoring change over time and generation of actions to improve performance against specific goals. Kelly (2014) characterises this as an instrumental rational approach to evaluation or ‘learning by doing’ – a phrase commonly associated with adaptive strategies of policy development, including MSP.

Considering this gap between previous evaluation work and the conception of MSP as a site of governance, this paper aims to develop an ‘sustainability of governance’ (SOG)² approach to evaluate MSP. We see that such an approach to evaluation should focus on MSP design, processes and practices rather than outcomes or outputs *per se*. That said, presenting planning process and outcome as dichotomous, may be seen as false or problematic as a search for the ends is always present within the planning process or means – otherwise what are the actors interacting about or negotiating over? Regardless, the importance of MSP as a site of governance around the world is growing in prominence, for example as recognised by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 on the ‘conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development’ (Ntona and Morgera 2017:2). Furthermore, as MSP matures, it will be important to adopt a reflexive approach to evaluating its practice that can critically scrutinise existing MSP institutional arrangements, goals and practices and their linkages to crucial aspects of sustainability to generate new ideas. Such an approach to evaluation may be particularly important to recognising problems and rethinking the ends of collective decisions (Dryzek and Pickering 2016) as much of the transformation to sustainability literature advocates as necessary to build bridges to a more sustainable future (Bai et al. 2016; Brondizio et al. 2016).

When the MSP literature does address issues of sustainability, it tends to focus on the important linkages between environment and economy (often seen as ends) rather than on MSP

² Which, arguably will also contribute to MSP meeting its broader sustainable development ambitions.

as a governance process. Focus on these issues is needed of course, but it is argued here that the organisation and practice of MSP (in relation to a range of contextual factors) shapes the ways in which these other issue-based dimensions of sustainability, including the neglected social sustainability pillar, are conceived, articulated and realised. Furthermore, MSP as a site of sustainable governance goes beyond capacity and effectivity concerns to put into focus the normative qualities of governing (Jentoft 2017) – often referred to as ‘good governance’. That is, how governance is organised and practiced. Common understanding of core aspects of good governance, which we call SOG, so as to emphasize the connection to the broader sustainability agenda, touched on here for MSP include, coordination, coherence, participation, deliberation, inclusiveness and accountability. We develop, what we call clustered evaluation criteria (CEC) that reflect these principles, but are specifically derived from MSP experience and geared towards MSP practice. SOG, as conceived here, overlaps with the ambitions of social sustainability. SOG while not directly concerned with ecological and/or economic goals, focuses on the processes through which these goals are pursued - ‘process matters’. Here, the conduct of the governance process is an inherent part of the sustainability agenda rather than merely an ancillary means to achieve sustainability seen as a kind of end-state.

Furthermore, in this Deliverable, we argue that the way that SOG in MSP is realised in practice can be understood by considering different forms of integration in MSP, including how transboundary initiatives interact with national jurisdictions in the region, relations between different jurisdictions (across borders), coordination of policy/sector objectives, engagement with stakeholders and inclusion of different types of knowledge. Hence, we posit that an analytical focus on integration can provide insights into key processual aspects of governance which are likely to affect the realisation of equitable or just outcomes.

While we present a systematically developed approach to evaluating the SOG of MSP that is grounded in different Baltic Sea experiences, it should not be seen as a tool for a comprehensive MSP sustainability impact assessment or a guide to measure what degrees of integration are desirable in different contexts. Our aim has much more humble ambitions to develop a way of thinking to underpin an advisory or signalling process that considers how different dimensions of integration can help evaluate the sustainability of MSP governance.

This Deliverable is structured in the following way: First, the approach adopted for this study is described and empirical cases presented. Second, integration as a multidimensional concept and its relationship to MSP and SOG is developed. Then an analytical approach that describes relationships between different dimensions of integration and SOG is described. We then

present case study material on MSP from around the Baltic Sea Region to illustrate insights into the role of integration and its relationship to sustainable governance. We then link the experience in the Baltic to issues of concern when designing an MSP evaluation approach. In the subsequent section, we propose a set of CEC derived from both the sustainable governance literature and MSP experience in the Baltic Sea, to form the basis of a SOG approach to MSP evaluation. In finishing, we discuss processual factors to consider in evaluation of MSP, including the need for this evaluation approach to be developed further through application to specific MSP contexts.

2. Material and Methods

Below we first develop an analytical framework to identify conceptual links between the multidimensional role of integration and sustainable governance. The thinking we present here builds on earlier work in BONUS BALTSAPCE where an analytical framework to examine the role of integration in MSP was developed³. We then use this framework to explore a range of case studies in the Baltic Sea (Table 1) undertaken as part of the BONUS BALTSAPCE project⁴. Drawing on this material, we propose a set of CEC as a basis to evaluate the sustainability of MSP governance. The CEC proposed constitute a conceptual map of the nexus between integration and SOG to probe the what, why and how of MSP situations and statuses to give contextualised insight into perceptions, decisions, actions. Each clustered evaluation criterion incorporates multiple aspects that are further supported and elaborated in Attachment 1 ‘Additional guidance for the Clustered Evaluative Criteria for SOG - supplementary questions’. Attachment 1 provides more detail about the multidimensionality of CEC and specific questions to support the application of the CEC in exploring SOG in MSP.

The evaluation design proposed can assist in drawing greater notice to the importance of SOG to MSP, by describing what currently exists to define (in context) what may be important in overseeing and directing progress toward sustainable development ambitions in specific MSP contexts (Hicks et al. 2016). The results of such scrutiny should provide renewed collective understanding of, and direction for, marine spatial planning (MSP).

2.1 Case studies and data collection

³ The BONUS BALTSAPCE website is: <https://www.baltspace.eu/> In particular see Saunders et al. 2015 and Saunders et al. 2016 for insights into the thinking underpinning the broader BONUS BALTSAPCE project.

⁴ More comprehensive BONUS BALTSAPCE empirical material and analysis of integration is available in Morf et al. 2017; Hassler et al 2017; Luttman and Mack 2017; Saunders et al. 2017.

The empirical work that informs the development of the qualitative evaluation criteria was derived from a range of Baltic MSP case study settings (Table 1), these included: Swedish/Danish involvement in MSP in the Öresund, German MSP across domestic administrative jurisdictions, the role of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group (HV MSP WG); MSP in Poland and cross-border comparison of MSP between Lithuania and Latvia. The status of the cases provides insights on how work on MSP has advanced in relation to each case study setting. This provides important contextual information when considering the case study material. The case studies were selected through a systematic vetting process to ensure representation of a broad range of geographical, institutional and use/issue contexts, which are likely to illuminate different integration and sustainable governance challenges, problems and possibly solutions (further elaborated on in Zaucha et al. 2016).

In each of the settings, in addition to document analysis, interviews were conducted, which focussed on understanding MSP integration problems and how they were being handled through the views and experiences of those actors involved in the different MSP settings. This included interviewing actors involved in and responsible for MSP in each country/case study setting, as well as relevant national authorities, sector representatives, scientists, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) and other affected actors, such as fishers, wind power entrepreneurs, NGOs (non-governmental organisations), municipality representatives and subnational and local level experts and decision makers, among others (Table 2). The range and types of questions asked differed to some extent between the cases but the focus was on trying to understand salient integration challenges in the case study settings.

Table 1. A summary of the case-study settings

Baltic Sea MSP Case Study	MSP Status	Focus and Rationale for Inclusion
Macro-Regional (Baltic-wide), HELCOM/VASAB	Working arrangements have been established and MSP has been adopted several formal HELCOM/VASAB agreements	HV MSP WG coordinating/norm making role. Gives insights into how member states are cooperating to reach mutual understanding at the Baltic-wide level and to a lesser extent how this relates to adoption in national contexts.
Lithuania and Latvia comparison	Lithuanian has established an MSP. Still in development in Latvia	Cross-border institutional interaction on MSP/comparison on approaches to develop national MSP. Provides contrasting approaches to adoption of MSP, in relation to sector coordination, MSP organisation, participation and knowledge inclusion.
Germany – a sub-national comparison	Established MSP in territorial waters (by Bundesländer) and EEZ (Federal government)	Comparison and MSP cross-border relations between the EEZ and territorial waters in Germany - describing different conceptions of sustainable development and cross-boundary compatibility. Gives insights into different framings of sustainability and of a case where MSP implementation has occurred.
The Sound (Öresund) - Denmark and Sweden	Sweden and Denmark are at different stages of national MSP development. Sweden has municipal MSP in place	An examination of the role of Sweden's and Denmark's different MSP institutional contexts and the implications for cross-level planning in the Sound. Provides an example of contrasting MSP organisation at the national level.
Poland	Development of a national MSP strategy for Poland is ongoing.	A focus on the problems of engaging coastal fishers in MSP in Poland. Highlights the struggles of effectively considering non-scientific/expert knowledge in MSP – especially where there is much distrust among different actors.

Table 2. Sampling of actors in case study interviews

Case	Public authorities/Politicians	IGOs	Sector organisations/users	NGOs	Science
Baltic-wide	17*,**	6	-	1**	1**
Latvia/Lithuania	22	-	-	5	-
The Sound	20	-	5	1	-
Germany	6	2	5	2	-
Poland	5	-	12	3	2

* Interviews partly undertaken by Baltic SCOPE, shared with BONUS BALTSPEACE; **Interviews/Questionnaires/Personal communication

Source: adapted from Hassler et al. 2017

3. Integration in MSP and its Relation to Sustainability of Governance

The EU (and HELCOM/VASAB at the Baltic-wide governance level) has clearly stated that the ambition of MSP is to support sustainable development in marine governance contexts

through agenda or norm setting at the international level (involving aspects of social and environmental sustainability), stakeholder collaboration, and realising optimisation strategies regarding sector/policy integration (EU 2014; HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 1/2010; EU 2014). MSP here is widely seen to be able to provide the governance mechanisms, including the integrating platforms and participatory decision-making tools and processes to be able to achieve the sought-after balance between the different sustainability dimensions (Santos et al. 2014). Integration here is seen as a key way to realise and implement sustainable development (Brown et al. 2005).

In practice, MSP is administered by states within the institutional architecture of multi-national directives, policies and strategies, such as at the EU level, Blue Growth (Jay et al. 2016) and the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (2014/89/EU). Important to note here, is that while states might be subject to a common international institutional architecture, their interests and politico-administrative histories differ and therefore the way that states organise and incorporate sustainability in MSP is also likely to vary. Furthermore, there is likely to be considerable variability in views among sectors and levels of government within nation states about how to incorporate sustainability in MSP. Recent empirical work by Jones et al. (2016) and Jay et al. (2016) show that sustainability in MSP is open to different conceptual and operational interpretations. Also as Ritchie and Ellis (2010) observe, "...for some, the perception of the 'marine problem' may be essentially an environmental one, while others perceive its prime cause lying with the institutional fragmentation governing the management and regulation of the seas" (p.703), yet others would see its role as promoting and optimising the economic exploitation of marine space, through the emphasis given to Blue Growth (Santos et al. 2014; Qui and Jones 2013).

Some are likely to see this definitional prescriptiveness as beneficial as it allows space for different interpretations and applications of MSP sustainability goals and therefore allows more flexibility for integration practices to be adopted to 'local conditions' in a way that is able to consider the unique contexts of contingent institutional, socio-economic and environmental settings. Others see this as a problem in MSP, particularly with the current emphasis in the EU context on 'blue growth' strategies (Flannery et al. 2016).

According to Redclift (2014), the struggle to constitute sustainable development settings comes down to a struggle between control and discursivity, which he sees as an inherently political process. Governance in this context is both a formal, top-down (steering or controlling) process that is typically led by governments (leading and doing the planning in the MSP

context), as well as, interacting with a more (discursive) democratic space (which may or may not be formally instituted) that enables different views to be expressed and pursued (bottom-up) (Rosenau 2000). The challenge then becomes how institutions at various levels can be vertically linked to ensure coherency in MSP, while enabling enough flexibility to enable ‘sufficient’ adaptation to different local context (Ostrom, 2008; Stead and Meijers 2009).

While some would argue that MSP should be guided by environmental boundaries (i.e., ‘environmental limits’) that should not be transgressed, others see it as inherently made up of disparate normative ambitions and preferences, which are decided upon through governance processes. Qiu and Jones (2013), in discussing MSP and sustainability, argue that the environment can either be depicted as a competing sectoral interest (‘soft sustainability’) or as a special concern with recognition of ecological limits that frame development possibilities (‘hard sustainability’).

We argue that an analytical focus on integration can provide insights into these different aspects of how sustainability is being implemented in MSP. Regardless of whether a hard or soft approach is adopted, the practice of MSP environmental protection is still likely to be seen as a sector among others, which means negotiations with other sectoral interests will be required in MSP. Where MSP lands in the ‘hard/soft’ debate in particular settings may influence the relative importance accorded to different sectors in marine planning. This implies that, regardless of the implications of the ‘soft/hard’ debate, it is important for MSP to support cross-sector/policy interaction in various ways to affect possibilities of achieving coherence. This may include moderating and tempering intra and inter sector conflicts, addressing intersectoral power inequalities, making considered trade-offs or realising potential synergies. Cross-sectoral planning in MSP is likely to necessitate developing policy packages with cross-sectoral content as well as operational coordination (Healy 2006; Kidd 2007). When thinking of sectors, it may be important to keep in mind that, as discussed here, they are made up by public, private and voluntary components. The extent of inclusion of these multiple components may be important to deepening democracy in marine governance and will affect other aspects of planning and therefore integration - such as what stakeholders are included and what type of knowledge is considered. That said, as Kidd (2013) points out, realising mutual benefits across sectors will also likely require institutional steering where differences in sectoral power are neutralised (or managed) and where antagonistic differences can be put on the table, weighted in some way and addressed.

In line with this idea of MSP as a form of (contested) marine governance for sustainability, commentators on MSP such as Kidd and Shaw (2014) have argued that its development and implementation should be undertaken in partnership and through collaborative processes with a wide range of organisations from the public, private, and voluntary sectors. Stakeholder engagement in MSP, commonly linked to affected sectoral interests, is seen as giving opportunities for different values, interests and types of knowledge to be expressed, exchanged and considered (McCann et al. 2014). Realising this ambition is not without its problems as contestations and conflicts over competing uses are a common occurrence in MSP (Flannery et al. 2016), which raises thorny questions about how to develop proactive integrative planning processes to support this engagement of affected stakeholders across multiple sectors, scales and administrative boundaries in MSP decision-making over time (Olsen et al. 2014). Of course, in this pluralistic approach weak or marginalised groups may not ‘automatically’ become represented, so MSP would need to be cognisant of ways to give voice to these groups. Even if these difficulties could be overcome, planners will often cite resource and capacity limitations as constraints to participation, but as Smith and Jentoft (2017) note, ‘participation may be time consuming, but may also reduce transaction costs at some later stage in the process’ (p.34), such as when the plan is being implemented. In addition, it may also help to establish long-term buy-in and planning continuity.

It is widely acknowledged that fulfilling aspirations to ‘balance’ inter-related sustainable development ambitions in MSP (as espoused for example by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 1/2010 in the Baltic Sea context) requires knowledge input from a range of science (incl. social science) disciplines in addition to the views and experiences from a wide range of affected or engaged stakeholders (Flannery et al. 2016). In forums that support mutual exchange and learning this requires effectively interlinking different forms of expert/stakeholder knowledge to: enable expression of: stakeholder’s experience and views, fill knowledge gaps and support multi-disciplinarity and robust science-based approaches to underpin MSP decision-making (Agardy et al. 2011; Kidd and Ellis 2012; Ritchie and Ellis 2010).

At the conceptual level, notions of what constitutes sustainability are deeply contested. That said, arguably sustainability acts as a kind of ‘fuzzword’ for what could be considered to be ‘the public interest’ thereby providing a focal point to support the viability of dialogue and possibly agreements about what it might mean in particular contexts (Hassler 2017). That is, in practice, different balances between ecological, social and economic dimensions are negotiated and decided upon through governance processes. This Deliverable is mainly concerned with

examining the sustainability of these governance processes through the analytical lens of integration, rather than advocating what ‘the right’ mix is or should be.

As the above discussion indicates, it is highly likely that a variety of sustainability discourses are mobilised by different interests⁵, how these are handled in MSP ultimately hinges on the workings of power, which can be seen as related to how dimensions of integration (Table 3) are handled in specific planning processes, including among others, stakeholder engagement, transparency of decision-making, inclusion of different types of knowledge (attached to stakeholder engagement and influence), adoption of a cross-sectoral approach and coordination over different scales.

Table 3. Relations between MSP sustainability of governance and integration dimensions

Integration Dimension	General MSP Ambition	MSP Tensions	Links to Sustainability of Governance
transboundary/ cross-border	to garner cooperation among jurisdictions (e.g., cross-national and sub-national) borders to further coherent planning and use between maritime activities and good environment status across borders and in the open sea – particularly in transnational marine space	coherence vs. adaptation to context	affects possibilities for coordination/coherence between different jurisdictional levels (harmonised approach across scales to development and environmental protection); the effectiveness of strategic decision-making, and possibilities for adaptation and ‘localised’ participation and influence
policy/sector	to pre-emptively address sectoral use incompatibilities, but also to achieve synergistic interaction between sectoral interests – where mutual benefit/interest is emphasised (and sought after) - rather than only where sectoral interests are pursued	sectoral interests vs. cross-sector agreements/ planning	affects: likelihood of effective consideration (trade-off/synergies) of multiple sustainable development goals (e.g., blue growth vs. environmental protection); prioritisation between multiple sustainability goals; uneven power between sectors
stakeholder	to develop processes to support engagement among a range of stakeholders and put measures in place to manage conflicting interests in a timely and deliberative manner to inform what are regarded as legitimate and high-quality policy/planning processes and outcomes.	tool for legitimacy vs implementation efficiency	affects possibilities across and within scales: for participation and extent of representation of interests, values and socio-cultural diversity; for deliberative decision-making that openly and fairly deals with conflicts and promotes mutual learning; for accountable decision-making
knowledge	to interlink different forms of stakeholder knowledge and to fill gaps, to support multi-disciplinarily and robust science-based approaches to underpin MSP decision-making in pursuit of sustainable marine governance.	scientific knowledge vs stakeholder knowledge	affects the diversity of the evidence-base and opportunities for a broad range of stakeholders’ knowledge to be valued

⁵ For example, in reality in marine planning, small-scale fishers and marine conservationists are likely to conceive sustainable development vastly differently than windfarm proponents.

In Table 3, MSP Tension items are conceived as endpoints in a continuous scale, rather than as binary pairs. These endpoints should not be viewed deterministically or in absolute terms but rather characterise empirical situations that are located somewhere in between, along a conceptual scale. The Links to Sustainability of Governance column elaborates how the MSP Tension items relate to various factors important for sustainability of governance, which will be drawn on to inform the qualitative evaluation criteria developed in the subsequent section. Specific ideas underpinning each integration dimension mentioned above are developed further and linked to illustrative empirical material to explore how they play out in different Baltic Sea MSP contexts.

4. MSP Integration Experiences in the Baltic Sea

This section presents empirical results from BONUS BALTSAPACE case studies illustrative of different integration problems/responses and related SOG concerns.

4.1 Transboundary/cross-border

First, despite the long history of cooperation and common requirements under the European Union MSFD and other marine policies⁶ and Baltic Sea governance, national jurisdictions are likely to adopt MSP differently (Hassler 2015). There have been significant recent efforts at the regional BSR level, via the HV MSP WG to provide non-binding guidelines on key aspects of MSP to foster regional understanding and direction for member countries. For instance, there has been the adoption of the Baltic Sea Broad-scale Maritime Spatial Planning Principles (HV MSP WG 2010). This advisory document promotes the overarching goal of sustainably balancing environmental, economic and social interests through adoption of the Ecosystem Approach and by giving effect to 10 principles to improve coordination of national MSP strategies. In addition, the MSP principles urge that all relevant authorities and stakeholders should be involved in MSP initiatives at the earliest possible stage and public participation should be secured' (p.3). While there is some evidence of interaction between the international and the national level MSP (e.g. through projects and consideration of principles and guidelines in national MSP) our case-study work showed that exchange and/or explicit transposition of principles between the international and the sub-national level are more limited. Perhaps this is

⁶ These are MSP initiatives applicable to all Baltic Sea rim countries except Russia. These include: the Espoo Convention, the EU Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (MSPD 2014/89/EU), the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD 2008/56/EC), and to some extent the Water Framework Directive (WFD 2000/60/EC).

not so important if the national level becomes an active carrier/interaction point for international principles that are then adapted to context and transposed in domestic systems. For this to occur, arguably the responsible authority at the national level would play the role of transferring the principals to other relevant national and subnational authorities and agencies. This can be seen, at least in formal function if not in practice, in the Swedish case described below. Alternatively, a less formalised practice may see HV MSP WG participants bringing home ‘impulses’ to domestic settings, where systematic mechanisms for facilitating this type of transfer would still need to be in place to support adoption and diffusion in national settings.

In Sweden, the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) as the authority responsible for developing the Swedish national MSP is assisted by County Administrative Boards (CABs) at the regional level to develop different MSPs. Furthermore, economic, environmental and resource planning is distributed between the national level and municipalities, whereas in Denmark these functions are much more centralised - responsibility for MSP is entirely national, located with the Danish Maritime Authority (with political direction from the Ministry of Commerce). Cross-sector coordination in Denmark implied sector-led hearings and roundtable discussions of ministerial and national sector actors about specific applications and ideas for development. This greater centralisation in Denmark, while providing opportunities for more political influence and more streamlined decision-making, has also resulted in protests where local authorities and residents have demonstrated over the (proposed) placement of offshore wind energy (OSWE) and demanded more influence over outcomes at the local level.

The transnational character of the Sound necessitates joint MSP between Denmark and Sweden. Cross-border interaction related to marine planning has so far been minimal and highly sector-based at international level (e.g. shipping, fisheries). Despite seemingly overall favourable conditions for multilevel, transnational collaboration, potential benefits may be hard to realise. In terms of institution-driven coordination above the national level, these two neighbouring countries, with just a few kilometres between them across the Sound, have almost identical commitments in relation to relevant global treaties, the EU, HELCOM and VASAB, but quite different domestic MSP (and sector-based) institutional architecture. Even taking into consideration the early stage of Denmark’s domestic MSP strategy, bilateral coordination at the national level has so far been surprisingly limited.

4.2 Policy/sectoral

The development of the MSP in Latvia systematically involved broad-ranging workshops and seminars, sectoral face-to-face meetings as well as three rounds of cross-sectoral regional seminars, including discussions on alternative MSP scenarios and proposed sea use solutions (Interview with BEF Latvia 2016). This quite ambitious inter-sectoral engagement contrasts with that undertaken in Lithuania, where there was relatively little dialogue with local or regional actors or non-state actors. Rather the Lithuanian process was dominated by key sectoral actors and has been characterised as expert dominated and politically oriented towards supporting a fast expanding OSWE sector. It involved a minimum number of formal consultation events with key sectoral stakeholders and governmental institutions (Blazauskas et al. 2014). The limited stakeholder engagement undertaken, according to our respondents, was merely informational about what had already been decided. This experience suggests that the role of the state in MSP is critical to possibilities for integration and how it is likely to play out in practice. This underlies the point that how sectoral representation is defined in the MSP decision-making space is likely to significantly affect both the extent of stakeholder inclusion as well as what knowledge is included (see below the discussion of fisheries in the Polish case). That is, if sectoral boundaries are constituted narrowly (as development of the national MSP in Lithuania thus far appears to have been), it may be the case that a high degree of integration is achieved, but government authorities and perhaps powerful private sector actors will dominate decision-making processes and therefore have a more influential effect on outcomes. Alternatively, in other governance contexts, the boundaries of sectoral representation have been cast more widely to include civil society, the private sector and other actors. This suggests that the range of sectoral actors who participate in MSP decision-making is influenced by how different countries demarcate and enact sectoral boundaries in MSP processes. In addition to differences in MSP national plan development discussed above the lead party contracted to develop the respective MSPs contrasted markedly. In the Lithuanian case, this work was contracted to the natural science inclined, Coastal Research and Planning Institute (Klaipeda University), while in the Latvian case it was undertaken by an NGO, Baltic Environmental Forum Latvia.

The German case tells us that sector boundaries are also demarcated differently in sub-national contexts. Germany is unique in the Baltic context for having established MSPs both in the EEZ and territorial waters. The primary focus in this example is placed on experiences from cross-border alignment and bridging of sectoral divides in Germany, with focus on its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the Baltic Sea and the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (MV). The Federal Spatial Planning Act (“Raumordnungsgesetz” – ROG) applicable to both the EEZ and

MV territorial waters stipulates that MSPs shall aim at sustainable resource use, efficient coordination, balancing of sectoral interests and reconciliation of ecological, economic and social goals.

In practice, despite this common legal framework, the EEZ plan is a regulatory plan designed to minimise conflict between a narrow range of strategic interests whilst the MV plan is a regulatory spatial development programme designed to deliver tangible environmental, economic and societal benefits. Although the EEZ plan also seeks to deliver this range of benefits, this is made much less explicit and is not pursued in the sense of actively developing space – the approach is restricted more to proactively managing spatial conflicts, involving a narrower range of strategic sectoral interests (see more on this below).

In recollecting the initial formation of the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Landesraumentwicklungsprogramm (MV LEP) MSP in 2005, a planner commented that the initial planning work was mainly about “resolving and pre-empting future conflicts of use in coordination with other authorities” [MV LEP Planner]. The MV LEP was subsequently reviewed in 2016. From the planners’ view, the 2016 MV LEP was improved because the attitude of stakeholders had begun to change towards MSP:

“We had much more open discussions in some areas, more willingness to participate with own information and knowledge (leading some planning stipulations to be altered because of better or additional data), not least because sectoral authorities had seen an added value in working with us to realise their interests.” [MV LEP Planner]

The German MV MSP review process involved extensive formal consultation with a wide range of public authorities, sector interests, municipalities, business and civil society actors. This constituted a process that appears to have been widely accepted by stakeholders and not generally called into question. This established a continuous platform of cross-sectoral interaction, albeit a quite formalised one. Furthermore, the planning authority is legally required to respond to every comment and must explain how it intends to deal with any suggestions or statements made. At the Länder level marine planning forms an integral part of a wider state regional plan, where similar consultations on local and regional plans are common. Public information meetings and hearings also form part of the formal consultation process; six such information events took place during the first round of consultation on the MV LEP 2016.

Both MSP planners and stakeholders, reflecting on their experience in the 2005 and 2016 formal processes also stressed the importance of establishing informal contacts prior to and outside the formal consultation (also see Janßen et al. forthcoming):

“Things don’t work out without the informal level. It’s the most important thing as otherwise, you just hit the wall during the formal procedure.” [MV LEP Planner]

“There was an informal exchange with technical experts and partly also with NGOs during the preparation phase. We also bought in scientific expertise. The same applied to the actual LEP process.” [MV LEP Planner]

This informal interaction was mostly cross-sectoral between ministries and authorities but also with some NGOs, mostly nature conservation NGOs. Thus, the planning process consisted of informal cooperation and negotiation prior to the actual planning process, using the formal consultation process only as a formality to confirm or instrumentally legitimise a draft plan already developed. The EEZ MSP planners also noted this as an important lesson, particularly when planning is controversial, as in the case of OSWE development.

Although both German marine plans have grown from similar concerns over growing pressures of use and the potential for new sectoral-based conflicts in marine space, and despite essentially identical descriptions of the purpose of spatial planning, slightly different interpretations of “sustainable development” and “ordering marine space” have ultimately led to different priorities for space and inter-sectoral interaction.

4.3 Stakeholder

While there is a suggestion to engage in participation beyond government in the HELCOM-VASAB MSP guidelines when developing national MSPs, there is no direction on who should be involved or how this should be done. That is, no guidance is provided on whether all affected stakeholders need to be included in a way where they can genuinely affect the outcome of the planning matter under consideration. While participation is mentioned as important in relevant MSP EU directives and Baltic Sea governance statement of principles, it is left rather vague what this should mean in practice. As the Lithuanian and Latvia case described above shows, stakeholder participation is left to the discretion of the different Baltic countries and therefore subject to interpretation through diverse political circumstances. It is an obvious, but important point to make that stakeholder engagement should be understood in the context of the MSP process or event taking place.

In marine planning in Poland there is no legal definition of who is a stakeholder, therefore, at least in theory, anyone who considers their interests to be affected by the development of the national MSP can participate in the related stakeholder processes. There are also general legal guidelines for how public consultations should be performed. Such an open approach to marine planning can be seen to be inclusive, but it also raises questions about whether all potential stakeholders have the financial and human resources necessary to effectively participate in MSP

processes in a consequential way (i.e., able to influence outcomes). It also gives no insights about how stakeholders are treated in the engagement process (there is more on this below on fisheries and MSP in Poland). Other factors that have been implicated that may limit wider stakeholder inclusion in MSP as the development of the national MSP proceeds include Poland's strong tradition of expert-based spatial planning and the tendency to grant privileged positions to well organised or strategically important stakeholders. Several commentators have described these tendencies and a general disappointment with how public institutions have implemented consultations in the past (Celiński et al. 2011; Kolarska-Bobińska 2013; Kaczmarek and Wójcicki 2015).

The most deep-rooted conflicts in relation to recent interaction over marine planning have been between different parts of the fishing sector and conservation proposals and potential offshore wind energy (OSWE) developments as reflected in a Polish fisher's comment below:

“We [the fishers] are aware that offshore wind farms will have to be developed sooner or later as this is what the modern world demands. However, we wish we were treated as partners and not as savages as we have been using the sea for years. And I often have a feeling that all these men and women behave as if they were visiting some kind of natural park full of uneducated savages. And they felt they should give us some colourful beads.” [Polish fisher]

In general, tensions between fishing and nature conservation have proved difficult to resolve seemingly with little or no possibility of a consensus type agreement under the current institutional arrangements. An important aspect of this conflict seems to be attributable to contests over the validity of fishers' knowledge, which is largely seen to be imbued with self-interest and therefore partial – this is elaborated on more below.

In Sweden, stakeholder engagement in MSP was historically undertaken at the municipal level, where stakeholders have had the capacity to participate and affect plans. Such as in a municipality in the Sound, where an ecologist working for the municipality informed us that the public has been involved in the mapping processes that have resulted in changes to municipal marine spatial plans. Now with the roll-out of the national MSP, key sectoral stakeholders have been involved in early and on-going high-level dialogue, but it is not yet clear how more localised participation (e.g., regional or municipal stakeholder engagement will feed into and influence the national process). This emphasis on the importance of early stakeholder in MSP was echoed across several of case studies (Janßen et al. forthcoming).

In Germany, the organisation of stakeholder engagement in the EEZ has been criticised by some of those affected. The EEZ has important ecological values (nature protection) and is heavily used for important strategic sectoral activities such as shipping and defence and to a

lesser extent fishing and mineral extraction, among others. The development of OSWE was also a key driver of the planning process. The clear hierarchy of strategic interests, underpinned by legalistic reasoning, articulated early in the planning process clearly affected possibilities for stakeholder involvement and influence among sectoral interests. To the extent that the emphasis on sectoral priorities left some (weaker) stakeholders disgruntled about whether they could have affected the plan and less than sanguine about how integrated the eventual plan turned out to be. On this last point, there is no evidence that there were opportunities for cross-sector stakeholder interaction or exchange of views in the planning process.

4.4 Knowledge

At the Baltic-wide level much emphasis has been placed on underpinning MSP with natural science as the dominant evidence-base. More recently the HV MSP WG is also directing efforts towards incorporating socio-economic data into MSP. This dominant approach is reflected in the two key documents on MSP produced by the HV MSP WG 2010 – the Broad-scale Maritime Spatial Planning Principles and the 2016 Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area. While there have been efforts to develop norms around data sharing, little effort has been put into how to integrate different forms of knowledge into MSP. This experience has also been mirrored in other Baltic country contexts most dramatically in the case of Polish fisheries.

Polish fishers expressed a lack of trust that their knowledge would be valued and given effect in decision-making processes in marine governance in general and MSP specifically, as the following quotes from fishers indicate:

“(…) it was the ‘Ministry of Environment’ that has decided about all marine issues, but [their officials] have had no knowledge about the sea. And this was our major problem. And this is wrong because it leads to serious conflicts.” [Polish fisher]

Fishers tended to accept science-based evidence but contested how scientific data is applied – seeing science: policy interactions as politicised and weighted against their interests. Many fishers underlined that the role of science should be to solve practical problems and assist in managing marine areas and natural resources. Instead scientists were seen to be self-serving, rather than working in the broader public interest, as can be seen by the following quote from a fisher:

“[Science] is important but only when it is linked to practice; if it is done only to advance in academic career, it is worth nothing.” [Polish fisher]

Lack of incorporation of fishers' local knowledge, claims and objections into final decisions about sea use and management (i.e., capacity to influence) is not the only problem. The way that they saw themselves being treated during 'pre-planning MSP interactions', and more generally in overall fisheries management, is similarly important.

In line with this, many of the Polish fishers interviewed saw marine governance decisions being made unilaterally by central authorities possessed with scant knowledge and understanding of the sea and fisheries. Polish fishers also complained that the scarcity of scientific data is also used to excessively promote environmental protection by invoking the precautionary principle instrumentally to serve conservation interests. While fishers may accept science-based evidence, they expressed strong concerns how this evidence-base is used in marine governance.

In recollecting the initial formation of the MV LEP MSP in Germany in 2005, a planner commented regarding knowledge gaps and cooperation problems:

"either because knowledge didn't exist, or because the responsible authorities hesitated to give us their data, or because information wasn't available in the right format. Some partners said yes, interesting, we'll make available data to you, but we couldn't use them as they stood. But we persevered and took a pragmatic approach. We did what was possible with the idea that further information could be added later (...) and took planning decisions where we could. It was mostly about resolving and pre-empting future conflicts of use in coordination with other authorities". [MV LEP Planner]

The MV LEP was subsequently reviewed in 2016. From the planners' view the 2016 MV LEP was based on better data because the attitude of some stakeholders had begun to change towards MSP:

"We had much more open discussions in some areas, more willingness to participate with own information and knowledge (leading some planning stipulations to be altered because of better or additional data), not least because sectoral authorities had seen an added value in working with us to realise their interests." [MV LEP Planner]

In contrast, the German approach to OSWE in the EEZ MSP was deemed to be more 'limited' in the type of knowledge it admitted to guide planning decisions. As can be seen in the following quote, while the strategic planning interests (OSWE) are centred in the planning approach, the ambition was to consider other interests and related knowledge to minimise spatial conflicts:

"For example, if offshore wind farming is the major objective, then data and information is included that has to do with offshore wind farming. The key planning question is where can there be options for offshore wind farming without destroying other interests" [German Water and Shipping Directorate representative]

While acknowledging the value of gaining ‘comprehensive’ knowledge of the sea and that engaging meaningfully with stakeholders is worthwhile, the following comments provide an insight into the planner’s approach in this case:

“[] having to know everything can make planning more difficult” [Planners should have] “the courage to plan despite gaps” [German Water and Shipping Directorate representative]

This comment from an institutional stakeholder suggests that incomplete knowledge is an everyday occurrence that planners must deal with and that the uncertainty is ever-present in MSP decision-making.

5. Developing Criteria for Evaluation of SOG in MSP

This section both discusses the rationale underpinning the formulation of the CEC, including their connection to the empirical material, as well as providing insights on what needs to be considered in applying them in MSP evaluation.

In discussing the relative strengths and weakness of several models of planning evaluation Carneiro (2013) underlines the point that the key role of evaluation is to reflect on what has been learnt and respond to this experience. Carneiro (2013) further notes, that the lack of practical experience of MSP (i.e., ‘implementation data’) is likely to limit possibilities to meaningfully adopt rational planning or conformance models of evaluation. This is a salient observation in the Baltic Sea context, as all countries embarking on the development of national MSPs are at formative stages, except for Germany. Additionally, the multiplicity of ambitions and the inherent need to trade-off between competing alternatives in seeking balance in MSP is likely to make over-rationalistic and goal-targeted evaluation problematic to perform, particularly while meaningfully considering broader sustainable development goals. This is shown in the contrasting ways that Latvia and Lithuania have pursued MSP, where there are huge variances in governance processes and arguably strategic priorities, i.e. environmental protection vs. Blue Growth. Thus, it is likely to be more feasible (or productive) to design an evaluation approach in the Baltic Sea Region with the aim of generating knowledge that has policy implications, but also importantly, could work to foster policy learning⁷ and broaden social awareness and reflexivity about the role of integration in meeting MSP’s sustainability ambitions. With this in mind, we propose a set of clustered evaluative criteria (CEC), synthesised from insights from the literature on the relationship between integration and SOG

⁷ Policy learning here refers to a capacity to ‘change thinking’, on a policy issue area in a structured and intended way. It will also usually involve elaborating a theory of change, which explicitly elucidates assumptions underlying thinking about how change will occur, i.e., actions and intended changes (Van Es et al. 2015).

and Baltic Sea MSP case studies. Insights from the case studies are used to construct the CEC in terms of what might be considered desirable practice in terms of SOG. In this way, the CEC, while rooted in the mixed experience of MSP in the Baltic Sea are abstracted from any specific context. While this approach to evaluation does not seek to explicitly deal with the substantive content of MSPs, it does shed light on the sustainability of governance issues, which will have a bearing on the way that the ‘balance’ between sustainability dimensions is elaborated. An evaluation process that centres reflexivity and deliberation and that looks for opportunities for further integration within the frame discussed in this Deliverable, is warranted on good governance and sustainability grounds, but is also needed to assess specific MSP contexts. This implies that the proposal outlined here may be most usefully applied at the national level, although there is no compelling impediment to its application to other MSP contexts, beyond national settings.

Rather than seeing evaluation as a relatively simplified task with a limited focus on enhancing efficiency or effectiveness linked to progress only towards expressed goals, the Baltic cases presented above show that the reality is that MSP settings are more likely to have multiple goals, which are difficult to evaluate across different MSP constituencies. Moreover, there are high levels of uncertainty, complexity and contingency, which makes MSP processes suited to a more open-ended and reflexive type of evaluative inquiry. In such settings, a reflexive approach would be applied through transdisciplinary processes, bringing together diverse expert and non-expert stakeholders in deliberative processes. So, to be clear, those who would be engaged in the evaluation process would be stakeholders involved in and affected by the MSP aspect being considered. The CEC and related questions in Attachment 1 would help to support this type of evaluation. MSP processes, like planning more generally, are also settings where tensions are prevalent between enhancing stakeholder engagement (deepening democracy) and pursuing efficiency in resolving planning concerns (Metzger et al. 2017). The contrasting ways in which stakeholders have been included in different national MSP processes reflect choices between these two aspects. The presence of high stake (powerful) stakeholders, such as those promoting ambitious OSWE capacity development, is likely to be an important factor that influences the balance adopted between planning efficiency and more democratic involvement (cf. Jones et al. 2016). This underlines the point of stakeholder heterogeneity with the likely consequence of uneven influence over MSP. That is, increased stakeholder participation in general terms is likely to deepen democracy, however we need to be wary of MSP situations where there are grossly uneven opportunities among stakeholders to participate, forward their views or influence decision-making.

As van Tatenhove (2017) points out, in supporting the call for reflexive governance, reflexivity is especially important in MSP contexts, where there is a need to deal with inevitable tensions and perhaps even unwanted consequences (e.g., incongruences, incompatibilities, incoherencies, exclusions) that arise between different levels and types of MSP organisation, such as sub-national, national and transnational levels. Here reflexive evaluation also demands ‘the integration⁸ of different and often conflicting interests and interest groups...’ (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1993: 752). This call for heterogeneous participation to support the construction of an evidence-base reflecting a plurality of perspectives contrasts with views of current practice such as that from Smith and Jentoft (2017) when they note that MSP has tended to insufficiently recognise ‘difference’ among stakeholders. This, of course, has implications for how and when representation in MSP occurs and therefore what evidence is considered in MSP decision-making. Evidence collected to inform the evaluation design discussed here need not be comprehensive (or representative) but respond to the CEC developed below (with additional guidance from Attachment 1. Additional guidance for the Clustered Evaluative Criteria for SOG - supplementary questions) by allowing a contextually valid account of MSP.

Clearly, another important aspect for any approach to evaluation is how to use evidence – or indeed what constitutes evidence? What forms of evidence count in evaluation? Under what circumstances can stakeholders’ views be used as evidence in evaluation? Who frames this question and how it is answered will clearly affect how ‘stakeholderhood’ (‘the property of being considered legitimately concerned’, Metzger et al. 2017:2) is formed, including how and what stakeholders are represented and included in evaluation and indeed what the purpose of evaluation is. As discussed earlier, MSP strongly urges an ‘evidence-based approach’ to decision-making underpinned by scientific knowledge, while at the same time emphasising the importance of stakeholder collaboration and inclusion (another tension). To realise this, what would be valuable is variation in viewpoints (scientific and non-scientific) to form an unsmoothed over, triangulated evidence-base, developed through deliberative processes, to interpret CEC and assess their expression in practice. For evaluation, ensuring the ‘credibility’ of data to planners and experts and its legitimacy (and salience) to stakeholders (and interested and affected publics) will be particularly important. Such an approach to evaluation assumes that experts and stakeholders’ heterogeneous problem framings and arguments can be held in

⁸ Integration here is synonymous with the ideas of inclusiveness, participation, deliberation and reflexivity discussed throughout this Deliverable. While not so helpful in showing how to achieve ‘integration’, this perspective sees value being added to knowledge generation processes through pluralism both in terms of procedural legitimacy and the quality of knowledge production.

productive tension and collectively examined within MSP organisational contexts. Achieving this of course is much easier said than done as exemplified by the voluminous academic writings on the difficulty of moving beyond antagonism to a form of agonism in governance. Agonism, in this sense, would constitute a form of productive tension, where disparate views would be able to be expressed and considered without disadvantage to the protagonist (cf. Mouffe 2005). That said, it is conceivable that adopting antagonistic stances and actions 'outside of MSP' as a form of 'protest' or to bear pressure may work to stimulate shifts of balance between the dimensions of sustainable development in some cases, as well as to foster conditions where agonism in MSP may be possible (Fougère and Bond 2016).

How deliberation can productively handle expertise and stakeholder participation will vary from context to context, but will generally include aspects of engaged dialogue to support participants in getting beyond the preconceptions or ideological filters (which appear to be so evident, in for example, the Polish case) and becoming more open to collective reflexive scrutiny of epistemological assumptions and established practices (Cornell et al. 2013). This approach also strives to get beyond the so-called, 'deficit model', where the ambition of engagement between experts and publics is seen as remedying public ignorance (Groves 2017). While not without its difficulties (see Flannery et al. 2016), it has been extensively argued elsewhere that mixing multidisciplinary expert knowledge and other forms of knowledge in deliberative modes of interaction is more likely to promote accountability and transparency as well as contribute to generating collaboratively constructed experience-based knowledge (Spruijt et al. 2014). The experience of the German MV LEF, shows a case in the region where marine planners have gone beyond a *de facto* position of rational planning as a process of 'applying scientific knowledge' to establishing processes of engagement with stakeholders where there was a willingness to revise understandings and preferences in the light of credible claims made by others. The Latvian case, inspired through an interpretation of the Ecosystem Approach, also shows a willingness to actively draw on ecological and resource use knowledge and experience from a wide range of experts and stakeholders. Where they, in concert, generated what might be considered a form hybrid knowledge for MSP, inclusive of science but also of a wide range of experiential knowledge. Applying CEC, in particular MSP contexts, may also allow insights into how tension between stakeholders can be productively handled, exposing and negotiating among views and counterviews in interaction.

Here, in discussing aspects of an evaluation process for MSP, we have conceptualised MSP not just as regulatory or policy guidance mechanisms and outputs but, as institutional and

organisation arrangements, social relations, planning exercises and action that coalesce in the ‘performance of the plan’. This suggests, in consideration of the aspects discussed above, that a pragmatic evaluation approach is needed that is adaptable to context and can elicit learning and reflexivity while fostering planning continuity.

6. Proposed Criteria to Evaluate SOG in MSP

The set of Clustered Evaluative Criteria (CEC), focussed on MSP processes presented below, have been selected through an assessment of what is deemed important in the relevant literature discussed, related to Sustainability of Governance (SOG) as well as through consideration of the experience of the Baltic cases presented above. The CEC can be seen as indicators of integration that relate to aspects of SOG, but also in more instrumental terms to support problem-solving to improve coherence and different types of integration. The CEC are considered adaptable enough to suit the messy empirical reality, complexity and heterogeneity of MSP contexts. Each criterion is focused on a particular aspect of integration, nevertheless they clearly intersect and overlap and thus reflect the multidimensional complexity and interdependencies between aspects of integration as a concept and process within MSP (important for SOG). They should not be seen in objective or essential terms and thus require supporting deliberative and reflexive processes - subjective interpretations through dialogical processes - to give them meaningful application in specific contexts. Questions related to each evaluation criterion have been developed in Attachment 1 ‘Additional guidance for the Clustered Evaluative Criteria for SOG - supplementary questions’.

6.1 Cooperative action (in a transboundary regional context)

Cooperative action in a transboundary regional context refers to multilateral action on MSP understood as a site of sustainable governance. In the Baltic Sea context, cooperative work among states (and others) on MSP has largely been limited to states contributing to agenda setting and norm building (across transnational regions) through such acts as the development of common frameworks, guidelines and principles. The role of these guidelines is to avoid incoherency and provide direction, without ‘overly’ stymying opportunities for local adaptation and innovation over time. Thinking on decentralisation, devolution and reflexivity in governance suggests that it may be beneficial for government and non-governmental institutional configurations to work in loosely cooperative ways to forge mutual understandings, broker accountability and develop ways of advancing work towards agreed upon sustainability goals. This criterion would assess the states’ ongoing contribution to

transnational work as well as review its uptake and interpretation of brokered guidelines, norms etc., as they are adopted and being implemented in practice. These state-based reflections could be channelled through transnational MSP networks (such as the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG) to further refine and elaborate transnational agreements considering MSP praxis and contextual interpretation.

6.2 Functional coherence (across boundaries and borders)

Functional coherence refers to the establishment of understandings and arrangements between countries to ensure the compatibility of MSP across borders in pursuit of policy and spatial coherence. How different MSP jurisdictions correspond to each other (e.g., flow of information, institutional arrangements, mutual impact, timing of planning, interests and spatial use continuity/compatibility) is likely to be important to determining what degree of integration is warranted and how it should occur. However, to stimulate trust and learning processes, cross-border groups would need to jointly identify spatial areas and related issues that could benefit from improved coordination (in efforts to pre-emptively address conflicts or incompatibilities). These groups would benefit from including actors both working with thematic issues across sector borders, as well as those with more direct responsibility for MSP. The degree of integration (or coherence) deemed necessary between plans is likely to be influenced by the potential severity of (negative) implications of non-cooperation across borders, which will vary from case to case. For example, it may be vital to achieve spatial continuity of transboundary infrastructure such as shipping lanes or gas pipelines, whereas ensuring compatibilities between human activities and conservation values may be more important for environmental protection.

6.3 Inter-sectoral cooperation

Inter-sectoral cooperation refers to how sectors (and subsectors) are organised within MSP, including which sectors are included, where the boundaries of sectoral representation are placed and what processes have been developed to support intra- and inter-sectoral interaction. On the last point, different sectoral actors may seek to cooperate (even outside formal MSP) when they see it as in their interests to do so. In lieu of such favourable integration conditions, MSP authorities should develop the institutional architecture to promote inter-sectoral collective action. In assessing the factors referred to above, it is also important to reflect on the balance or the relative weight given to environmental protection or maritime development in inter-sectoral MSP interaction and whether mechanisms/processes are in place to deal with incongruences/incompatibilities of interest and conflicts. If sectoral representation and inclusion in MSP is constituted too narrowly government authorities are likely to dominate the

decision-making processes and strategic priorities may dominate, without broader accountability measures bringing transparency to the values and ethics underpinning public choices. Such an approach may have several implications, including hindering the formation of a broader, shared vision of sustainability, reducing opportunities for synergies and working to screen conflicts and uneven power relations. Alternatively, such an approach may be warranted in some MSP contexts (such as remote offshore areas) where there may be less stakeholder interest and therefore more constrained policy ambitions and less conflict over marine use.

6.4 Organisational coordination

Organisational coordination refers to the institutional arrangements in place to formulate and give effect to MSP. Where responsibility for MSP is placed within government arrangements will affect both strategic priorities and the way in which MSP is developed and implemented. The presence of an authority responsible for MSP at a national level that is (and seen to be) ‘even-handed’ may help to push an inter-sectoral agenda, especially if inter-sectoral strategies, forums and platforms are established. While greater centralisation of authority and responsibility in MSP (and how it connects to economic, social and environmental planning) is likely to provide opportunities for strategic and streamlined decision-making, it may suppress or temporarily displace conflict, restrict opportunities for local involvement and adaptation, and other bottom-up collaborative actions. On the other hand, this may not occur if such an authority explicitly enables deliberative exchanges across multiple levels and sectors in MSP.

6.5 Representativeness

Representativeness is a multidimensional criterion which refers to whether all affected stakeholders are included in MSP, as well as, the terms of their inclusion. This relates to both inclusion in the formation of national MSPs, as well as the provisions in plans for stakeholder engagement in implementation, evaluation and review. Important aspects to consider here include conducting a stakeholder analysis, which would recognise all affected and interested actors and define the terms of their inclusion/participation. In addition, other factors deemed important in achieving effective representation include, early and continuous stakeholder involvement, clarification of stakeholder roles and assessment of the capacity of stakeholders to engage and have meaningful opportunities to affect MSP decision-making. On the last point, in cases where there are difficulties with particular stakeholders being able to engage effectively in MSP, due to uneven power relations or other factors, different types of intervention may be warranted to ensure their effective inclusion.

6.6 Deliberation

Deliberation refers to an ongoing interactive process (how it is organised and practiced) where stakeholders, experts and planners have opportunities to exchange views, have disagreements and work and learn together under mutually agreed conditions in MSP. Important here is to enable forums or platforms to support respectful engagement and negotiation among conflicting interests thereby allowing differences to be expressed and taken into consideration in MSP. While reaching consensus may be desirable, this ambition should not marginalise or exclude legitimate views. This will necessitate, before and during the stakeholder engagement process, considering the relative power relations among the various stakeholder groups (i.e., capacity to act, argue and influence), which will have a bearing on their influence and willingness for ongoing engagement in MSP. It also means examining whether the articulation of difference through exchange of conflicting views has shaped an iterative learning process for all stakeholders involved.

6.7 Knowledge comprehensiveness

Comprehensiveness refers to the capacity to understand and incorporate plural knowledge perspectives as the evidence-base underpinning MSP. This includes platforms and processes that enable data and knowledge coordination and sharing among relevant authorities, sectors and levels (sub-nationally and internationally). Engendering knowledge pluralism, including but going beyond different types of scientific/expert knowledge, is vital to help to solve complex collective action problems in governance, such as those confronted in MSP. Ensuring this, rests on a willingness by diverse MSP actors to share knowledge and in doing so be assured that this knowledge will not be summarily dismissed, but will be subjected to discursive scrutiny in deliberative and transparent processes to appraise the contribution it can make to MSP. Important here are tools and approaches that can broker epistemic-based conflicts, which are inevitable. In these situations, knowledge bridging, involving deliberation is required to assess the relevance, meaning and interpretations of different knowledge input in MSP. Such deliberative processes can capture policy-relevant knowledge dispersed among diverse stakeholders and thereby meet divergent purposes (such as those inherent in notions of sustainability).

6.8 Acknowledging uncertainty

Acknowledging uncertainty refers to the limits of the existing (scientific) knowledge (on current and future uses and states) as well as what strategies are adopted to deal with these limits. Knowledge gaps are a fundamental and ever-present condition of MSP that can never be

completely addressed given the uncertainty, dynamism and complexity of MSP as a form of forward-looking governance for sustainability. Additionally, an important reason to effectively handle uncertainty is to avoid it being exploited by stakeholders to promote particular interests. Dealing with uncertainty is likely to necessitate the establishment of clear rules, responsibilities and processes to interpret and apply the precautionary principle (at different stages of MSP). Application of the precautionary principle should not only consider current states and uses (giving weight to preventing environmental degradation and social disruption), but be anticipatory in terms of having regard for the future implications of current planning decisions. This will also involve invoking adaptation strategies in the light of emerging knowledge. How non-science-based stakeholder knowledge (incl. so called socio-cultural knowledge) could help to complement understandings and provide more nuanced and contextualised understandings to inform MSP should be part of dealing with uncertainty.

7. Discussion and Concluding Remarks

This paper has described an evaluation approach with descriptive, procedural and normative aspects. Descriptive in the sense that it suggests what criteria and related questions to consider when characterising what might constitute integration in different aspects of MSP (across various social and institutional contexts). Processual (deliberative and reflexive), both in relation to MSP processes more generally and in evaluation, because it emphasises the importance of a wide range of stakeholders being able to express interests and arguments under conditions where they can engage with one another towards ‘collectively balanced’ decisions. Normative in the sense of arguing for the use of CEC to stimulate reflection of what these various states of integration might imply for realising SOG, with the ambition of setting directions for socio-environmental change in MSP.

We have not set out to develop guidelines or an outcomes-based approach to MSP evaluation here, but propose an approach to evaluation that is more likely to question the taken for granted assumptions of the politics of MSP (such as a facilitator of economic growth) and their intended and unintended effects (such as the potential alienation of a key part of a fishing sector). An ambition with this proposal is to contribute to the literature advocating that MSP should be brought into more critical light through subjecting it to review by those affected by its decisions, including those situated beyond narrow sectoral boundaries. In other words, this implies a transdisciplinary approach to evaluation including a broad range of stakeholders, but steered by MSP authorities.

A focus on integration as a multidimensional analytical concept in relation to sustainability of governance has been able to show how trade-offs, preferences, exclusions, inclusions, synergies play out in MSP practice. This analytical focus highlighted how institutional arrangements and policy development processes affect possibilities for sustainable governance of MSP and informed the structure and content of the CEC. The reflexive approach promoted here recognises that the act of deliberative evaluation itself can foster capacity for critical reflexive evaluation to support processes of policy learning and institutional change.

While the CEC were informed by drawing on relatively few empirical cases in the Baltic Sea region, we considered and drew on a broader relevant literature in their development. Arguably, the CEC encapsulate this experience of MSP, while incorporating SOG aspects in a way that may give them more general utility in MSP. To demonstrate this, however, the evaluation proposal outlined here, including the CEC considerations outlined in section 5 and the questions elaborated in Attachment 1, would need to be refined and packaged in a way to assess its saliency and usability in practice.

There are several outstanding questions and concerns however that might work to circumvent the refinement and application of the evaluation proposal presented here. These include methodological concerns, such as how to apply the thinking presented here in practical applications where issues or ‘stakeholderhood’ and scaling up processes of deliberation are likely to be difficult and costly (in the short term) to address. There are also likely to be more substantive concerns raised in opposition to this proposal that see no value in striving for SOG (as outlined here). This objection is likely to be raised on several grounds, including a practitioner’s concern with efficiency or at a more political level that strategically prioritises sustainability dimensions. However, as we have argued throughout this paper, it is our strongly held view that a focus on the SOG of MSP is necessary if we are to realise (or even steer towards) SDG 14’s ambitions of conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources.

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Attachment 1. Additional guidance for the Clustered Evaluative Criteria for SOG - supplementary questions

The CEC described in section 6. and the related questions posed here are intended to support the proposed MSP evaluation process. That is, they explicitly consider how integration links to the ambition of sustainability of governance in MSP. They should be adapted to suit the MSP context being considered, including refining or adding CEC and/or relatedly supplementary questions.

Clustered Evaluative Criteria (CEC)	Supplementary CEC Questions
<i>Cooperative action (in a transboundary regional context)</i>	How present are Baltic-wide MSP principles in the conduct and practice of (sub-)national MSP?
	Has there been outreach/practical support from international governmental organisations and/or national authorities?
	Has the organisation of MSP decision-making constrained sectoral/stakeholder involvement, particularly at sub-national and local levels?
	How are MSP and related authorities at national and sub-national levels shaping and contributing to the work of transnational MSP networks at, for example, the Baltic-wide level?
<i>Functional coherence (across boundaries and borders)</i>	Have responsibilities and accountabilities for cross-boundary coordination and action been clearly elaborated?
	Has the purpose and scope of the cross-border collaboration been agreed (e.g., to achieve functional coherence – to avoid incoherence)
	Has there been agreement on how results of cross-border collaboration will be utilised?
	Are there cross-border mechanisms (either sectorally or inter-sectorally) in place to pre-emptively deal with potential conflicts?
<i>Inter-sectoral cooperation</i>	Have platforms been created to allow for a meaningful dialogue between different sectors?
	Are mechanisms/forums in place that allow for conflicts to be aired and trade-offs made in an open and transparent way?
	Are synergies between and within sectors actively being pursued with support from the MSP planning authority?
	Does the MSP plan actively encourage co-use of sea areas (in space and over time)?
<i>Organisational coordination</i>	Does the overall organisation of MSP support transparency, legitimacy and accountability?
	Has there been sufficient consideration to the responsibility, capacities and roles for coordinating MSP, given its inherent multi-levelness and its multi-sectoral ambitions?
	Are there platforms that connect economic, social and environmental issues across multiple levels and sectors in MSP?
	Does the organisation of MSP allow consideration of strategic goals, while supporting engagement with, and adaptation to regional or local context?

<i>Representativeness</i>	Have all the actors with a legitimate interest (affected or interested) been clearly identified, informed and included?
	Are stakeholder roles clearly elaborated and communicated?
	Have stakeholders been involved early, regularly and throughout the different phases of marine planning?
	Do all stakeholders have fair and reasonable opportunities to affect MSP decision-making?
<i>Deliberation</i>	Has consideration been given to ‘evening up’ power relations between stakeholders where there are clear disparities among their capacities to engage in and influence MSP?
	Have all stakeholders had opportunities to express argumentation and interact with others (even if outside the conventional parameters of MSP) in the process of MSP?
	Have conflicting views/interests between stakeholders been possible to be expressed through interactive/dialogical processes and then linked to decision-making?
	Have the results of stakeholder engagement had a genuine impact on the MSP process and on MSP policy decisions? In an open and transparent way?
<i>Knowledge Comprehensiveness</i>	Are there mechanisms to share data and knowledge among relevant authorities, sectors and levels (sub-nationally, cross-border, internationally)?
	Has a broad range of knowledge types been included and considered in MSP decision-making?
	Does marine planning (and the practices of related authorities) actively seek to include different types of knowledge and assess their value, including local and socio-cultural knowledge?
	Have different types of scientific and expert knowledge, covering the various dimensions and ambitions of sustainable development, been included in MSP?
<i>Acknowledging Uncertainty</i>	Are knowledge gaps (across the dimensions of sustainable development) acknowledged and efforts made to address shortfalls?
	Have clear rules, responsibilities and processes/procedures to interpret and apply the precautionary principle (at different MSP phases) been developed (and applied)?
	Do interpretations of the precautionary principle in MSP practice consider concerns of possible environmental degradation as well as social disruption?
	How, and to what extent, is marine planning anticipatory, in terms of having regard for the future implications of current planning decisions and how adaptation strategies will be adopted to cope with changing conditions?