



Vision 2030

Towards the
sustainable planning of
Baltic Sea space



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BaltSeaPlan Vision 2030

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Summary

Towards the sustainable planning of Baltic Sea space

The Baltic Sea is a special environment that requires extra care. As a result, Baltic Sea space is a valuable asset deserving our special attention. The more users compete for a share of Baltic Sea space, the scarcer and more valuable this space becomes. Since sea space cannot be multiplied, we must plan for its use in a systematic and coordinated way, not only accounting for existing uses, but also anticipating future needs. In doing so, the natural conditions and needs set by the environment need to be respected as well as goals set by the political decision making bodies for the wellbeing of society.

Using Baltic Sea space sustainably requires that this space is organized in an integrated and coordinated manner across the entire Baltic, in a way that transcends national borders and takes into account the hinterland. Planning this jointly is a way for Baltic countries to positively influence future developments.

Guiding principles

The BaltSeaPlan Vision 2030 sets out the following guiding principles, which should apply to all decisions about Baltic Sea space:

Sustainability: Maritime spatial planning seeks to secure economic prosperity, social well-being and a healthy and resilient Baltic Sea ecosystem at the same time. Planners protect the integrity of the ecosystem by minimizing the impacts of sea uses on the wider Baltic and use space frugally by keeping back as much space as possible.

Pan-Baltic thinking: Planners regard the Baltic Sea as ONE planning space and ecosystem at all stages of the MSP process. Planners base their decisions on commonly agreed environmental, economic and social quality objectives and targets developed for the whole Baltic Sea and ensure that these are not compromised by short-term gains. Planners also acknowledge that different priorities may make sense in different areas of the Baltic.

Spatial efficiency: Baltic Sea space is a valuable public good, and the Baltic Sea is no repository for problematic land uses. Uses have to prove their maritime dependence and will only be considered if they can demonstrate good reasons for being placed in the sea. Baltic Sea space is used sparingly: Uses are concentrated as much as possible to keep other areas free, and co-uses, synergies and multiple spatial use are promoted. Immovable sea uses and functions such as existing infrastructure or habitats have priority in the allocation and designation of sea space and are an automatic consideration for priority status.

Connectivity thinking: Implementing these principles means planners engage in connectivity thinking. Planners connect the different elements of a system across space and time, such as shipping lanes and ports, or habitats and breeding areas, or the present situation and potential future change. Spatially, connectivity thinking means thinking in linear infrastructure, corridors and patches. Transnational linear structures and patches are planned at the pan-Baltic level and are given due regard in national maritime spatial plans

Key transnational topics

Four topics have been identified as particularly important for the sustainable development of the Baltic Sea. They are at the heart of the pan-Baltic MSP approach since they cannot be achieved at a national or sub-national level alone.

- a healthy marine environment
- a coherent pan-Baltic energy policy
- safe, clean and efficient maritime transport
- sustainable fisheries and aquaculture

Objectives and targets have been set for these four topics. Baltic Sea space is allocated to each of these based on a Baltic Sea wide environmental assessment and, where applicable, a socio-economic cost-benefit analysis in order to identify the most suitable areas.

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) has become a widely acknowledged and necessary tool for co-ordinating spatial use in the sea. Currently, however, this tool is far from being established practice. In order to change this 14 partners around the Baltic Sea worked together in 2009–2011 within the 3.7 million € project “BaltSeaPlan” part-financed by the ERDF Baltic Sea Region Programme. The BaltSeaPlan Vision 2030 was developed jointly by all partners, making it a reflection of a broad range of different backgrounds and perspectives. It shows how MSP could ideally have been translated into practice by 2030.

Key elements of implementing MSP

Implementation of the above relies on the following:

Data management and monitoring: Good knowledge of the sea and the trends and pressures it faces is essential for MSP to be delivered successfully. Trends are monitored in the environment, the economy, in society and technology and this data is translated into spatially relevant information. Cooperation among data networks ensures that information is easily accessible when needed.

Spatial subsidiarity: MSP is understood as a cooperative practice that involves several spatial and administrative levels. Facilitated by appropriate structures and processes at the national and international level, this enables spatial challenges to be dealt with at the lowest most appropriate spatial level.

A transnational approach to transnational issues: A pan-Baltic approach guides transnational topics such as shipping, energy, fisheries and functions such as nature conservation. General objectives and targets are not set nationally, but for the BSR as a whole, allowing Baltic countries to contribute more or less to a particular policy target as long as the overall objective is guaranteed. Transnational MSP solutions are developed based on these.

National and sub-national maritime spatial plans as key implementation tools: The vision 2030 is implemented by means of national and sub-national maritime spatial plans which translate the commonly agreed objectives and targets for Baltic Sea space into a tangible spatial framework. All Baltic Sea states take account of these transnationally agreed principles when drafting and implementing national and sub-national maritime spatial plans. A prerequisite is that all Baltic Sea states have established the structures that allow them to successfully use MSP as a tool for sustainable management of human activities in the Baltic Sea.

International cooperation at the institutional level

A transnational coordinating body: To facilitate the practical transnational MSP process, a transnational coordinating body for MSP has been established that brings together representatives from the national planning authorities plus other relevant institutions and stakeholders. The transnational coordinating body is a technical body responsible for drafting the common vision and developing appropriate MSP methods and contents including requirements for tailored monitoring.

A formal decision-making body: By 2030, ministers responsible for spatial planning in the Baltic (including Russia) have been brought together in a formal body responsible for endorsing pan-Baltic MSP. The task of this ministerial body is to formally endorse the common principles for Baltic Sea space, to agree on the common objectives and targets and – if necessary – adapt the common vision based on the results of socio-economic and ecological monitoring.



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Introduction

- 1.1 The Baltic Sea – a dynamic picture
- 1.2 Why the Vision?
- 1.3 What the Vision can help with
- 1.4 How the Vision was developed
- 1.5 How to read the BaltSeaPlan Vision 2030

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) has become a widely acknowledged and necessary tool for co-ordinating spatial use in the sea. Currently, however, this tool is far from being established practice. The BaltSeaPlan Vision anticipates that this will be the case in 2030. It looks back from that year showing how MSP would ideally have been translated into practice between 2011 and 2030.

MSP seeks to shape and guide future developments rather than passively react to them. It promotes systematic, integrative and forward-looking planning based on common objectives and a shared understanding of common values. MSP thus serves the sustainable development of the Baltic Sea by balancing interests and by acknowledging the underlying natural processes and values in the sea.

The vision in a nutshell

- The vision takes an integrated perspective of sea uses and the Baltic Sea ecosystem.
- The vision deals with spatial aspects, complementing existing visions and policies for the Baltic. Grounded in existing trends and policy objectives, it tries to anticipate future developments and changes.
- The vision aims to provide more coherence and certainty to all users of Baltic Sea space. It is also there to secure all those processes that guarantee the well-being of the Baltic Sea as a living and healthy ecosystem.
- The vision is transnational, but linked to national MSP. It is part of a holistic approach to MSP across scales.



1.1 The Baltic Sea region – a dynamic picture

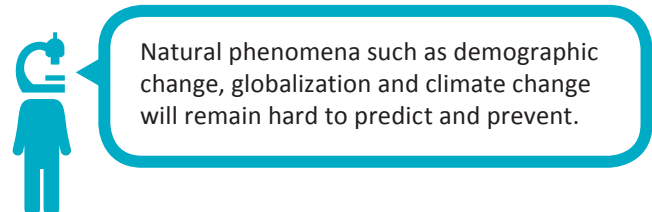
The Baltic Sea is a unique environment governed by special hydrographic and climatic conditions. Connected to the North Sea by only a narrow stretch of water, it is a self-contained sea that is brackish on average, fairly shallow, and covered by ice in some areas in winter. These environmental conditions give rise to unique flora and fauna, and many habitats and species are protected as a result. But those same special qualities also make the Baltic Sea vulnerable, in particular to overuse and pollution. At one point, the Baltic came to be regarded as one of the most polluted seas in the world. Recognizing the particular sensitivity of the Baltic, HELCOM has worked for the last three decades to eliminate pollution and other threats. This has culminated in the Baltic Sea Action Plan of 2007 which aims to restore the good ecological status of the Baltic marine environment by 2021.

Apart from its significance as a natural environment, the Baltic Sea is also a dynamic economic and cultural space. It lends identity to an entire region and has given rise to long-standing traditions. As a transport space the Baltic offers connections to other nations within the region and beyond, and more recently it has also become an energy space, through offshore wind farming, or oil and gas extraction, or LNG ports and associated facilities. Old and new marine-dependent industries are an important source of jobs; moreover, they represent the cornerstones of a competitive maritime economy which has become a key policy focus for the EU and Baltic Sea states. This is reflected by the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy which presents an integrated framework to address the challenges and opportunities of the Baltic Sea Region.

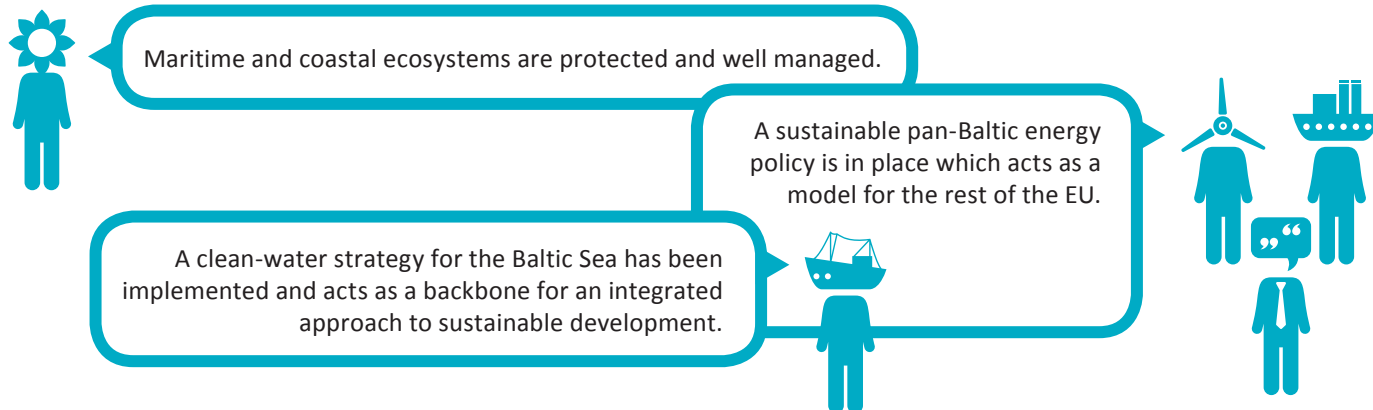
As the world is becoming ever more connected, global trends will increasingly influence the Baltic Sea region. Climate change is one example, leading to temperature change, salinity change or acidification in the Baltic Sea ecosystem. Other trends are the liberalisation of markets and trade, the growing political role of regions, increased competition for natural resources, or the need for renewable forms of energy. Despite the opportunities these may bring, we cannot be sure what impacts these will really have on

the natural environment or the socio-economic development of the region. Already today, new economic demands are putting growing pressure on tight marine resources. Changing views of the benefits we can obtain from the Baltic Sea are likely to increase this pressure further.

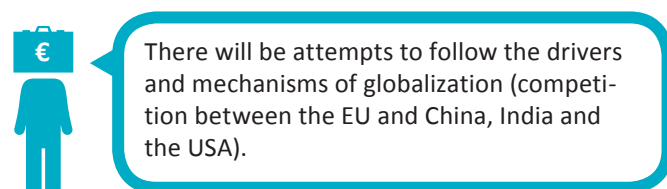
As a result of these trends, the Baltic is changing as a planning space. Sea space is already much in demand, and the more users compete for it, the scarcer and the more valuable this space becomes. Since sea space cannot be multiplied, it is vital that we plan for its use in a systematic and co-ordinated way. Wise planning needs to anticipate future needs and also deal with existing objectives for space. It needs to make sure the future mix of uses is compatible with ecological objectives, for instance biodiversity, the protection of key habitats and water quality. It needs to consider what use is best suited where, in the sense of both economic viability and environmental sustainability in the long term. VASAB was the first to lay the foundation for MSP in the Baltic Sea when it published its “VASAB 2010+ Spatial Development Action Programme” in 2001.



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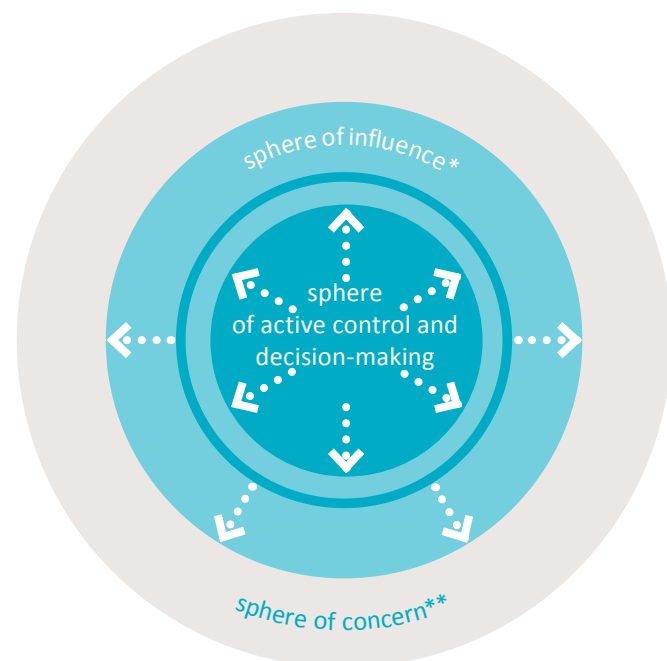
1.2 Why the vision?



If individual countries or sub-regions act and plan jointly as a macro-region, they can increase their influence on international trends and developments. As a result, they can become better prepared for the unexpected that may arise in a globalized world.

MSP is a way of taking the initiative and expanding our thinking beyond the actual circumstances. MSP extends our planning horizon, allowing us to actively influence developments rather than wait for things to happen. MSP also forces us to be more integrated and less sectoral in our thinking, both within our national borders and beyond them.

Extending pro-active decision-making to ensure efficient spatial planning



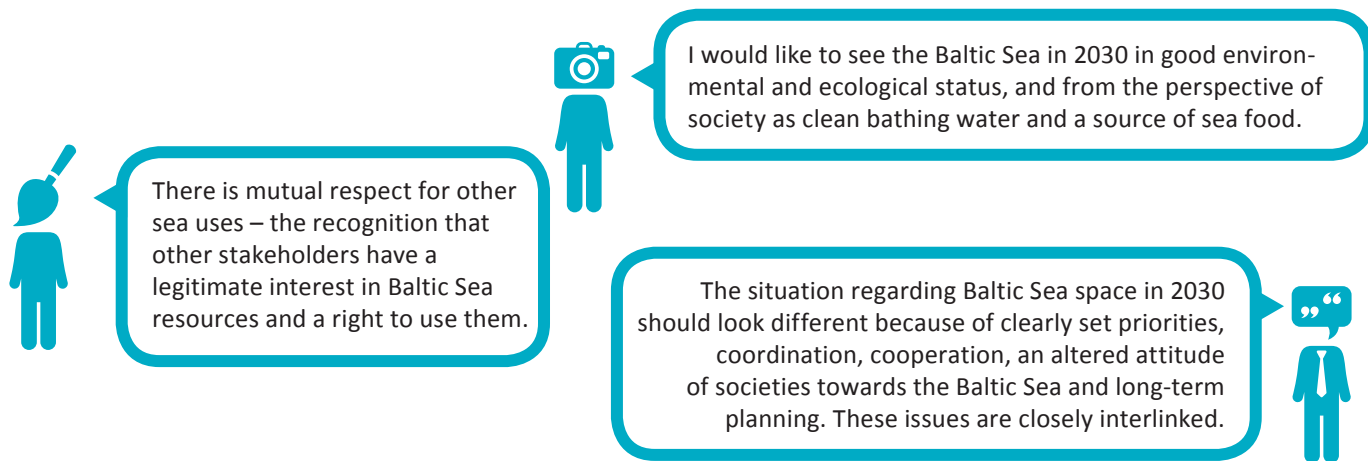
Given the small size and sensitivity of the Baltic, joined-up thinking based on shared values is essential if we are to achieve the balanced and sustainable use of Baltic Sea resources. This means thinking in larger contexts and wider connections: connections between the various Baltic Sea uses, between the hinterland and the sea, or between the various Baltic Sea countries and the people living and working in the region.

The role of the vision is to help this process of joined-up forward thinking. It starts by setting out common goals, values and priorities and asking what the Baltic Sea region could or should be like in 2030. It then goes on to ask what spatial governance framework is necessary in order to achieve this.

Because it is an international vision, it focuses on the larger pan-Baltic context, always looking at the whole Baltic Sea as a planning space. As such, it takes account of the existing environmental and socio-economic objectives that have already been agreed for the Baltic Sea region under the umbrella of the EU, VASAB or HELCOM.

***sphere of influence:**
Managers cannot control the near environment, but they can influence it.

****sphere of concern:**
Factors that can be neither controlled nor influenced by decision-makers.



International policy developments and estimates by BaltSeaPlan partners: What are the most important targets, trends and demands in the Baltic?

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By 2020 good environmental status will need to be achieved for the Baltic Sea (EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive). The HELCOM Baltic Sea Action plan tackles all major environmental problems with the aim of restoring good ecological status by 2021. Additionally, more protected habitats are likely to be designated as more data becomes available. These will form a network of well managed areas.
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The VASAB Long Term Perspective for the territorial development of the Baltic Sea Region plays an important role towards better territorial integration within the Baltic Sea Region and its integration with other areas of Europe.
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Significant growth is expected in the total megawatts produced by offshore wind farms. This goes with an increase in the total sea area dedicated to offshore wind farming. National renewable energy targets will likely lead to a favourable climate for investment and growth up until 2020 and beyond based on EU wide targets for renewable energy.
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Continuous growth in transport is expected. The number of cargo ships, overall shipping frequency and the volumes transported (bulk and container) are also likely to increase although shipping will become more expensive due to higher fuel costs. This goes along with increased safety standards for shipping and environmental protection rules for shipborne emissions.
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In all ports, investment in port infrastructure is planned as part of national strategies, such as deeper channels and landward cargo handling facilities. Connections to the hinterland will become increasingly important for ports. Some ports already have plans for extension (e.g. Szczecin, Gdansk, Klaipeda, Kalinin-grad), including the construction of LNG terminals. These developments are aligned within a European strategy.
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Recreational boating will increase in line with further growth in tourism.

1.3 What the vision can help with

Although the vision is a practical hands-on vision, it is not a panacea that will solve every problem once and for all. Also, the vision is not set in stone, but a living entity that can and should be revisited regularly. The vision needs to be turned into reality by spatial plans: forward-looking instruments that allocate space in a balanced way and take account of ecological, economic and social considerations. Spatial plans, in turn, need to be complemented by matching operational objectives within the respective sectors as well as non-spatial management approaches.

- The vision can make clear why forward-looking thinking is important and why it pays to take action now rather than later.
- The vision can provide a holistic cross-sectoral view on issues that are often regarded separately.
- The vision can help to communicate the benefit of the entire BaltSeaPlan approach.
- The vision can be used to facilitate stakeholder dialogue.
- The vision can help to achieve transnationality in MSP and cooperation between Baltic Sea states on matters of sea use.

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