INDEX COPERNICUS INTERNATIONAL

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Bulletin of the Maritime Institute in Gdańsk

Toward Sectoral Stakeholder Involvement in a pan-Baltic MSP Dialogue

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Article history: Received: 27.10.2015 Accepted: 18.11.2015 Published: 15.12.2015

Abstract: Stakeholder involvement is commonly understood as a key principle in marine or maritime spatial planning (MSP). Little information is available, however, on how to organise stakeholder involvement at a transnational level and how to instigate an MSP dialogue within sea basins. This article reports on a study conducted as part of the PartiSEApate project (2012-2014) that focused on identifying relevant sectoral representatives and their willingness to become involved in a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue. Results show that sectors are variously organised at the trans-boundary level and have differing views of MSP. Insufficient understanding of the potential benefits to be gained from MSP is revealed, especially the added benefits of a trans-boundary sectoral perspective for inclusion in MSP. The lack of suitable trans-boundary organisations and platforms makes organising a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue more difficult. Additional awareness-raising and a more coherent message on the purpose and application of MSP on the part of marine planners and stakeholders are needed.

Keywords: maritime Spatial Planning, stakeholder involvement, sectors, pan-Baltic dialogue, PartiSEApate

Streszczenie: Zaangażowanie zainteresowanych stron to zazwyczaj główna zasada obowiązująca w morskim planowaniu przestrzennym (ang. Maritime Spatial Planning, MSP). Nie istnieje jednakże zbyt wiele informacji o tym, jak angażować zainteresowane strony na szczeblu międzynarodowym oraz w jaki sposób początkować dialog w sprawie MSP w basenach mórz. Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia wyniki badania przeprowadzonego w ramach projektu PartiSEApate (2012-2014), w którym skupiono się na zidentyfikowaniu właściwych przedstawicieli sektora i ich chęci zaangażowania się w panbałtycki dialog w sprawie MSP. Wyniki ukazują, że sektory na szczeblu międzynarodowym są prowadzone w zróżnicowany sposób i mają odmienne poglądy na ten temat. Uwidocznił się brak zrozumienia potencjalnych korzyści płynących z MSP oraz w głównym stopniu wartości dodanych sektorowej perspektywy zaangażowania się w MSP na szczeblu międzynarodowym. Brak odpowiednich organizacji i platform międzynarodowych utrudnia zorganizowanie panbałtyckiego dialogu w sprawie MSP. Wymagane są uświadomienie zainteresowanych stron oraz bardziej przejrzysta informacja na temat założeń i zastosowania MSP zarówno po stronie planistów obszarów morskich, jak i po stronie zainteresowanych stron.

Słowa kluczowe: planowanie przestrzenne obszarów morskich, zaangażowanie interesariuszy, sektory, dialog panbałtycki, PartiSEApate

Introduction

It is widely recognised that marine or maritime spatial planning (MSP) requires trans-boundary considerations to ensure that wider sea basin issues such as managing shared resources or ensuring connectivity for habitats are taken into account [1]. The need for trans-boundary coordination is recognised in the EU's 2014 'Maritime Spatial Planning Directive' [2] that calls for Member States to cooperate with each other at sea basin level to achieve coherence across their marine spatial plans. At the same time, the directive also calls for stakeholders, authorities and the public to be consulted at an appropriate stage in the preparation of marine spatial plans. There is little specificity, however, with respect to who should be involved in such consultation or how stakeholder consultation may be linked to trans-boundary coordination.

In the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), stakeholder involvement and trans-boundary coherence have been acknowledged as guiding principles for MSP for some time. An ecosystem-based approach to MSP (considering the entire Baltic ecosystem in planning, which effectively implies trans-boundary coordination) and early stakeholder involvement are recognised as two of eleven MSP principles developed in 2010 by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group [3]. The BaltSeaPlan Vision 2030 [4] builds on these principles but is more explicit in linking the two issues, suggesting that planners and stakeholders should be engaged in holistic, pan-Baltic thinking and consider the Baltic Sea a single ecosystem and planning space. In practice, however, MSP takes place at the national or sub-national level. In order to implement a holistic trans-boundary perspective on Baltic Sea space as suggested, it seems necessary for such MSP efforts to include knowledge of pan-Baltic issues and developments, i.e. those that affect the Baltic Sea as a whole or are important to all Baltic Sea states. This in turn makes the involvement of stakeholders and other actors capable of delivering a transnational pan-Baltic perspective an important requirement.

The BSR is often regarded as a model region for transnational cooperation, especially in the context of maritime policy [5] [6] [7]. A number of transnational organisations such as HELCOM (the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission or the Helsinki Commission), VASAB (Visions and Strategies around the Baltic), CBSS (Council of the Baltic Sea States) or BASREC (the Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation) have been operating in the region for more than a decade, offering platforms for a transnational exchange between public bodies, industry and others, as well as data and information exchange (e.g. ecological databases hosted by HELCOM). The BSR is also the first region to adopt a European macro-regional strategy (EUSBSR) which focuses on saving the Baltic Sea, increasing prosperity and connecting the region; maritime spatial planning is one of four cross-cutting topics of this strategy (http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/). Furthermore, over the last decade an unprecedented string of transnational cooperation projects has been carried out in the region with MSP as a main focus, including BaltCoast [8], PlanCoast [9], BaltSeaPlan [10], Plan Bothnia [11] and PartiSEApate (www.partiseapate.eu).

Despite these efforts, the information exchange between the public bodies responsible for implementing MSP and transnational maritime sectors and stakeholder organisations has remained limited. One reason is that MSP is still at varying stages of development in the BSR, nor does it conform to a uniform standard. National MSP in the BSR reflects diverse aspirations, institutional contexts and regulatory frameworks; these in turn have led to diverse interpretations of "stakeholder" and patterns and processes of involvement, some of which are still being designed (e.g. in the case of Sweden). For example, there is considerable variation in who is invited to participate in MSP as a stakeholder (usually a range of public bodies, sectors and associations), the depth of involvement (whether stakeholders are merely consulted or actively involved in drawing up the plan), as well as the mechanisms and timings of stakeholder involvement [12].

Another reason is that it is not clear how stakeholder consultation could be organised to ensure a specifically pan-Baltic perspective on Baltic Sea space. For example, is an informal[1] pan-Baltic MSP dialogue sufficient as a means of obtaining information, or would a formal process of consultation yield more commitment and broader input? Should pan-Baltic stakeholders be consulted through a trans-boundary process, or is it enough to rely on national stakeholders to present transnational perspectives as part of ongoing MSP processes? Who should be responsible for consulting with pan-Baltic stakeholders, how can information be shared among countries, and what issues should such consultation focus on?

Another aspect is that of the stakeholders themselves, and who would actually constitute relevant pan-Baltic stakeholders. In the academic literature, criticism has arisen of the stakeholder concept in general and the unspecific, prolific use of the term [13] [14] [15], leading to calls for specific definitions of "stakeholder" for particular purposes. In an MSP context, stakeholders have been defined as those who are or will be affected by MSP decisions, are dependent on the resources of the management area where MSP decisions will be taken, have legal claims or obligations over areas and resources in the management area, have special seasonal or geographical interest in the management area, or have special interest in the management of the area [16]. But who are those individuals, groups and organisations at a transnational level, and who at a pan-Baltic level may be affected by, involved or interested in MSP decisions?

Transnational maritime sectors and activities such as the shipping, energy, fisheries/aquaculture sectors or nature conservation are obvious candidates, as these have legal claims or obligations over areas transcending national borders; they also cause impacts that transcend national borders and depend on shared resources. They will also clearly be affected by MSP decisions. The central question then becomes how transnational maritime sectors are organised internationally, and whether their level of organisation is sufficient to allow them to become involved in pan-Baltic MSP consultation as a dedicated stakeholder. For example, who would be a suitable pan-Baltic representative of the shipping, fisheries or renewable energy sector, sectors that may be considerably diverse in terms of organisational composition, national organisation and geographical reach? How will intra-sectoral dissent and issues of representativeness and legitimacy be dealt with? And last not least, is there sufficient knowledge on the part of transnational sectors, understanding of the purpose of MSP and willingness to contribute to formats such as formal pan-Baltic consultations or informal MSP dialogues?

In order to answer these questions, a stakeholder intervention strategy would ideally be required for MSP at the pan-

[1] informal in the sense of outside of formal or statutory processes of consultation

BMI 2015; 30(1): 139-149 DOI: 10.5604/12307424.1185612 www.bullmaritimeinstitute.com

Tab. I. Maritime sectors identified as important players for transnational MSP processes by PartiSEApate partners [17]

TRADITIONAL / MOBILE SEA USES	NEW / FIXED – PLACE-BASED SEA USES	SECTORS/ISSUES THAT SET CONDITIONS FOR MSP	SECTORS/ACTORS THAT SUPPORT THE MSP PROCESS
Shipping Fisheries	Ports Offshore wind energy Marine aquaculture Underwater cultural heritage	Environmental protection Climate change	Research Data networks

Baltic level based on comprehensive stakeholder mapping and analysis and a differentiated analysis of consultation option. Preparatory work for the development of such a strategy was carried out as part of the PartiSEApate project that ran from 2012 to 2014 and involved MSP authorities and research institutions from Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Germany and Norway (www.partiseapate.eu). PartiSEApate specifically focused on how to establish and organise a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue, seeking to identify appropriate stakeholders and also central issues such a dialogue could focus on. Pan-Baltic dialogue is understood as a discussion of issues that require a coordinated approach across the Baltic Sea, i.e. such issues that cannot be resolved at the national level alone or where a trans-boundary approach may lead to greater overall spatial efficiency [4].

Below we use the PartiSEApate results to explore a range of practical questions related to stakeholder involvement in MSP at the pan-Baltic level. We specifically address the following:

How do transnational sectors in the Baltic generally view MSP?

What potential benefits do stakeholders see from involvement in MSP, and more specifically a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue?

What barriers can be identified to involving sectoral stakeholders in a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue?

What are the implications for establishing a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue?

Methods

The results shown in this paper are based on activities carried out during the PartiSEApate project as well as the Baltic Blue Growth study carried out on behalf of DG MARE [5]. Quantitative and qualitative methods were employed by different PartiSEApate partners to gather empirical data[2]; the same partners were also responsible for analysing and presenting the results. The specific methodological steps are set out below.

Identification of pan-Baltic sector stakeholders

As a starting point, all PartiSEApate project partners (comprising representatives of all existing MSP authorities in the BSR, as well as research organisations, see www.partiseapate.eu) were asked to identify sectors and stakeholders (and contact persons) that should be invited to participate in a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue. Apart from transnational organisations, the list was also open to include national or even regional stakeholders, but only where it was anticipated that they may have an interest and the capacity to participate in and contribute to a pan-Baltic process. Table 1 summarises the maritime sectors identified as important players for transnational MSP processes[3], organised into four groups:

Pan-Baltic stakeholder workshops

Based on these results, the PartiSEApate project carried out a series of exploratory pan-Baltic stakeholder dialogues in 2013 in the form of one- and two-day workshops. Transnational and national sector representatives and planners were invited to single sector workshops as sectors have previously been found to preferentially express their opinions (and to do so in a less biased way) when not confronted with other potentially conflicting sectors [12]. The purpose of these workshops was exploratory, seeking to gather information on the composition and level of pan-Baltic organisation within each sector, general sectoral development trends, views of MSP generally, and willingness of the sector to contribute to a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue. As this was an informal setting, participants were invited to express personal opinions rather than necessarily reflecting the official opinion of the organisation or country represented.

To encourage attendance, workshops were spread around different Baltic Sea Region countries[4]. They took place in easily accessible locations and were sometimes organised back-to-back with other workshops. To offer an added incentive, travel

[2]The Baltic Environmental Forum (BEF) was responsible for the evaluation of the standardised participant questionnaires (see section 2.3). s.Pro was responsible for the evaluation of semi-structured interviews with selected stakeholders as well as of the online survey and selected follow-up interviews with EUSBSR coordinators (sections 2.4 and 2.5).

[3]The sand & gravel extraction and/or coastal and maritime tourism sectors were not included in the sectors identified as they are predominantly seen as being of national/regional character with little cross-border impact (even though this may be debatable).

[4]Date, location and participation in stakeholder workshops:
- Aquaculture, 15-16 April, Gdansk, Poland (42 participants from 7 countries);
- Climate change, 13-14 May, Skanör, Sweden (24 participants from 7 countries);
- Research, 28-29 May, Klaipeda, Lithuania (30 participants from 8 countries);
- Underwater Cultural heritage, 3-4 June, Riga, Latvia (37 participants from 9 countries);
- Data network building, 15-16 October, Hamburg, Germany (21 participants from 6 countries);
- Shipping/ports, 24 October, Brussels, Belgium (28 participants from 9 countries);
- Nature/ Environment, 31 October - 1 November, Riga, Latvia (42 participants from 10 countries);
- Offshore wind energy, 12-13 November, Vilnius, Lithuania (24 participants from 9 countries);
- Fisheries, 14 November, Vilnius, Lithuania (in co-operation with HELCOM) (25 participants from 10 countries).

costs for some participants were reimbursed. Presentations and the ensuing workshop discussions were documented and sent to all participants for comment before being published on the PartiSEApate website. The problem of representativeness in these relatively small and limited workshops was offset by other methods of data gathering, including individual semi-structured telephone interviews specifically targeting those unable to attend.

Standardised participant questionnaire

In addition to the guided discussion, participants were asked to fill in a standardised questionnaire at the end of each workshop. This questionnaire contained questions on the professional background of participants, importance ratings of goals related to good maritime management, conflicts and synergies at sea between different sectors, and past and future involvement of participants in MSP dialogue. In total, 160 questionnaires were collected, a response rate of 65%. Out of these responses, 51% represented sectors and 20% maritime spatial planners. 27% did not identify themselves as either group.

Semi-structured interviews with selected sector stakeholders

Workshops were followed up by a series of semi-structured telephone interviews carried out in February and March 2014. Interviews took one hour on average and cantered on the same topics as discussed in the workshops, with the organisation of a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue as an added aspect. This included discussion of expectations of a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue, perceived barriers to a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue, forms and structures such a dialogue should ideally take, and the role of existing pan-Baltic organisations in organising such a dialogue. Interviewees included representatives of national and international sectoral organisations (such as national and international industry associations, research institutes, NGOs), as well as representatives from national ministries and competent authorities for MSP.

25 interviews were also carried out with ministerial representatives in BSR countries (including competent authorities for MSP), especially those representing the HELCOM/VASAB Working Group on MSP.

Tab. II. Number of interviews per sector (N=32 as some interviewees spoke for two sectors)

SECTOR	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES
Shipping	8
Ports	4
Offshore wind	4
Aquaculture	4
Fisheries	10
Underwater cultural heritage	1
Environment	6
Research	4 (not considered in this paper)

Online survey and selected follow-up interviews with EUSBSR coordinators

The workshops and interviews were supplemented by an online survey conducted in early summer 2013 with focus on Blue Growth aspects within the EUSBSR. The survey, which was developed by the EUNETMAR consortium / s.Pro, addressed Priority Area Coordinators, Horizontal Action Leaders (HELCOM and VASAB, supported by the joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group), and National Contact Points of the EUSBSR. The questionnaire embraced a range of issues, not all of which are relevant in this context; the results outlined below include statements on pan-Baltic benefits arising within individual sectors and reflections on energy.

Results

Section 3 presents the results along three main focal points. We first describe respondents' views of the role and organisation of their sector at the pan-Baltic level (3.1). We then set out the perceived relationship of each sector to MSP (3.2), followed by consideration of their willingness and ability to engage in a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue (3.3). We do not refer to climate change, research and data networks as these sectors are more concerned with setting conditions for MSP or supporting planning processes rather than transnational sea uses.

Role and organisation of sectors at the pan-Baltic level

Development and comparative strength of sectors

Sectors identified as important at the pan-Baltic level show considerable variation in terms of their development across countries and degree of pan-Baltic organisation. This is partly related to the tradition of the sector (established sectors tend to be better organised than emerging sectors), but also to intra-sectoral diversity, divergence and competition between different actors within the sector. Perceived competition with other sectors and external drivers such as national and international policy also play a role, as does the self-perception of a sector as inherently transnational (as in the case of mobile sea uses) or more national or local in nature (as in the case of place-based activities). Pressures on sectors to develop a transnational "voice" or joint lobbying power therefore vary.

Relatively new sectors in the BSR include underwater cultural heritage, marine aquaculture and offshore wind farming. Out of these, underwater cultural heritage is probably the smallest and least acknowledged sector in the BSR, which according to the respondents results in low visibility and very limited lobbying power in MSP.

Marine aquaculture also has a limited number of industry players as it is currently only present in Denmark, Sweden and Finland. Representatives thought that aquaculture sites were still allocated based on historic claims rather than optimum

criteria, and that larger areas further offshore may be more suitable both economically and environmentally as these are a larger distance away from potentially damaging agricultural nutrient discharge. Like underwater cultural heritage, the sector finds it difficult to compete against other, more established sectors, indicative of limited lobbying power. This may change as there is increasing interest in the sector on the part of research and administrations; there is also the DG MARE Blue Growth initiative [19] which will increase public funding for developing the sector. On other hand, marine aquaculture is highly controversial, and there are strong interest groups that have positioned themselves against the sector.

The situation is different for offshore wind farming, which is particularly prominent in Denmark, Germany and Sweden. Unlike underwater cultural heritage and marine aquaculture, offshore wind energy production is promoted through national policies and regulatory systems in many BSR countries, which has led to rapid development of the sector and its emergence as a key player in MSP. It is also a sector with positive spill-over effects for other maritime sectors such as ship building. Although some industry representatives claim otherwise, offshore wind is a powerful stakeholder, especially in Denmark and Germany where it has political support across all political parties and a significant industry lobby. The sector is less strong in other BSR countries where it is only beginning to develop.

Shipping is an example of a traditional and well-established sector in the BSR. Shipping is widely expected to grow in the Baltic, mostly in the field of container shipping, requiring deeper and wider shipping lanes. Stricter safety standards and environmental regulations will soon enter into force, rendering sea transport more expensive. The growth of the shipping sector has impacts on ports in that these are moving out of the city centres into coastal sea areas closer to shipping lanes. There is a tendency towards concentration to fewer, but highly developed ports, and awareness on the part of respondents that new navigation structures and corridors will need to take into account other installations such as pipelines, cables and offshore wind farms.

Fisheries as the other main transient sector has remained comparatively opaque as it is mostly driven by international regulations and economic pressures.

Transnational sectors in the Baltic therefore have rather different starting points from which to consider involvement in MSP.

Level of pan-Baltic organisation of sectors

Intra-sectoral exchange at the BSR level seems a prerequisite for sectors to develop joint positions that could be fed into a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue, thus increasing the likelihood of the sector's concerns to being heard. Here we give an overview of existing pan-Baltic platforms in the various sectors (Table 3).

Marine aquaculture is organised in Finland, Sweden and Denmark, but there is no pan-Baltic organisation that could act as an intermediary for pan-Baltic discussions. However, three transnational projects (Aquabest, Aquafima and SUBMARINER) have recently been carried out that led to cooperation among the various players at the pan-Baltic level and also resulted in preliminary assessments of the general position of marine aquaculture within MSP processes.

The energy sector is organised at the pan-Baltic level through BASREC, the transnational organisation of the Ministries of Energy around the Baltic Sea. A study was commissioned in 2012 by BASREC Wind on "conditions for deployment of wind power in the Baltic Sea Region" [20] outlining a set of strategic BSR wide actions, many of which are in countries where offshore wind farming is still in its infancy. In practice, however, BASREC does not act as a pan-Baltic voice of the offshore wind industry; there is also little visibility of offshore wind farming in the EUSBSR. Pan-Baltic cooperation is mostly restricted to transnational projects that bring together regional authorities, national wind energy associations and research groups (i.e. GADOW, EcoWINDS, Mare-Wint, South Baltic OFF.ER, SEANERGY 2020, POWER), although there is some level of regional and national cooperation among grid operations within the pan-Baltic ENTSO-E Group. Only one cross-border cooperation project was identified at "Kriegers Flak". The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission has a Renewable Energy Working Group, and there is also the European Wind Energy Association (EWEA) as an industry organisation, although this represents a more general industry platform and lobbying organisation. Overall, this leads to the conclusion that actual pan-Baltic cooperation with regard to offshore energy and grid development is limited, restricting the ability of the sector to speak with one pan-Baltic voice.

Underwater cultural heritage is the opposite case to offshore wind farming, where there is relatively little involvement in MSP at present but great willingness to cooperate across borders to make the voice of the sector heard. The sector has a pan-Baltic cooperation platform, a working group established under the CBSS, although this has not yet engaged with MSP.

Shipping is well organised at the pan-Baltic level, both with respect to cooperating with national authorities and within the industry itself. A wide range of transnational organisations

exists that act as a forum for lobby work, supporting services and policy development, including HELCOM Maritime, the CBSS Expert Group on Maritime Policy and the Baltic and International Maritime Council (the largest international association of ship owners). Other active fields include the charting, safety and efficiency of maritime transport. The shipping sector is also very active within the EUSBSR and represented in the Priority Areas "Maritime Safety and Security" and "Clean Shipping" that initiate and coordinate a policy dialogue as well as numerous related flagship projects in this field. The Priority Area Coordinator has initiated a new joint steering

Tab. III. Overview of pan-Baltic platforms in transnational sectors (adapted from [18])

SECTOR	TYPE OF ORGANISATION
Marine aquaculture	
(BALTFISH Forum (see Fisheries))	Government
AQUABEST (EU project, 2011-2014)	Acad./Research Government NGO
AQUAFIMA (EU Project, 2011-2014)	Acad./Research Government NGO
SUBMARINER Network	Acad./Research Government NGO Private/Industry
Energy	
BASREC	Government
CPMR Baltic Sea Commission – Renewable Energy Working Group	Regions/cities
European Wind Energy Association (EWEA)	Private/industry
ENTSO-E - Baltic Sea Regional Group	Private/industry
GADOW (EU project, 2011-2015)	Acad./Research
EcoWINDS (EU project, 2012-2015)	Acad./Research Private/Industry
Mare-Wint (EU project, 2012-2016)	Acad./Research Private/Industry
South Baltic OFF.ER (EU project, 2010-2013)	Acad./Research Government Private/Industry
SEANERGY 2020 (EU project, 2010-2012)	Acad./Research Private/Industry
POWER (EU project, 2008-2011)	Acad./Research Government Private/Industry
Underwater cultural heritage	
CBSS - Baltic Sea Monitoring Group on Heritage Cooperation	Government
Shipping	
HELCOM Maritime	Government
HELCOM Baltic Sea Region e-Navigation Forum	Government
CBSS Expert Group on Maritime Policy (EGMP)	Government
Steering Committee for the EUSBSR Priority Area on Clean Shipping	Government
Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO)	Private/industry
European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA)	Private/industry
Interferry	Private/industry
CPMR Baltic Sea Commission – Transport Working Group	Regions/cities
Ports	
Baltic Ports Organisation	Private/industry
Environment	
HELCOM Habitat	Government
Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) - Commission on Environment (EnvCom)	Regions/cities
Baltic Environmental Forum (BEF)	NGO
Coalition Clean Baltic	NGO
WWF	NGO
EUCC	NGO
Fisheries	
BALTFISH Forum	Government
HELCOM FISH/ENV FORUM	Government
Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council (BS RAC)	Private/industry
Fisheries Secretariat (FISH)	NGO
DISPLACE (EU Project, 2013-2015)	Acad./Research

committee involving representatives from all BSR countries as well as the European Commission, which meets regularly. Despite the presence of numerous pan-Baltic organisations, however, interviewees often referred to a lack of cooperation at the pan-Baltic level as shipping is mainly organised at an international scale, involving organisations such as the International Maritime Organization, the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities, the International Hydrographic Organisation, and the International Chamber of Shipping.

Ports are a different case yet again. Regardless of the fact that they are organised in national associations, and although there is a Baltic Ports Association, ports are also competitors both at a national and pan-Baltic scale. This makes it difficult for them to speak with a single pan-Baltic voice.

The environmental sector is also well organised at the pan-Baltic level, but diverse in terms of transnational organisations or platforms. HELCOM is by far the best-known pan-Baltic organisation for environmental protection, although formally it only represents government authorities. On the part of NGOs, the WWF and EUCC are well organised transnationally, evidenced in the fact that they are regular observers at HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group meetings. Other well-known actors include the Baltic Environmental Forum and Clean the Baltic Sea Coalition. This diversity of international actors makes clear that there is no single national or pan-Baltic opinion in environmental protection. Also, despite the presence of EU Directives, there is no strong cooperation between those in charge of designating Natura 2000 sites and MPAs in different BSR countries.

The fisheries sector is one of the oldest in the Baltic Sea, and therefore also shows a high degree of pan-Baltic organisation. However, the sector is organised into different groups: associations of fishermen and related authorities are organised in the Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC) and also in BaltFISH (as part of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region). Conservation of fish stocks is mainly organised through HELCOM, and data and research on fish is mainly collated by ICES. There is an uneasy relationship between fishermen and environmental organisations, and there is some suspicion that MSP is predominantly focused on nature conservation, leading to the exclusion of fishing from certain areas. Presently, despite the high degree of pan-Baltic organisations, there seems to be little interest on the part of the fisheries sector in becoming involved in the MSP process.

The above reveals a range of pan-Baltic organisations within most sectors, yet also a diversity of interests that are partly expressed in separate organisations. Differences can be noted with respect to the type of transnational organisations and platforms, with some sectors predominantly organised through governmental platforms and others at the level of NGOs or EU projects. In particular both traditional and established sectors such as the environmental, fishing and shipping sectors show a high degree of fragmentation, making it difficult for individual organisations to speak on behalf of the entire sector or to agree on joint positions for the purpose of a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue. Some sectors reveal contradicting national and international interests. Offshore wind, for example, is commonly regarded as an important driver of blue growth and also of national MSP, but there is little commitment on the part of the sector to work together at the pan-Baltic level. This seems due to the prominence of micro-economic and national interests; there is also a lack of recognition of the potential macro-economic and pan-Baltic benefits that could be gained from increased cooperation. An added factor is the considerable variation in enabling conditions (such as policy frameworks) for offshore wind energy at the national and regional level. Presently, the diversity of interests and organisations within sectors suggests there may not be a single point of contact for sectors for a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue, and that adequate involvement of sectors may require issues of representativeness to be resolved within the sector first.

Perception of MSP and willingness to become involved

Sectors differ in their view of MSP and their perceived need to become involved in MSP both at the national and pan-Baltic level. 20 out of 32 interviewees (Tab. 2) considered MSP "highly relevant", with another 9 considering it "relevant". Two thought MSP "somewhat relevant" for their sector, and one "not at all relevant".

Interviewees had two main reasons for their willingness to engage with MSP. One is visibility and the perceived need to claim a 'stake' in the face of competition for marine space. This is a particular issue for smaller and weaker sectors. Marine aquaculture, for example, considers itself the "forgotten sector" and perceives MSP as an opportunity to gain greater recognition for its interests. Similarly, underwater cultural heritage representatives perceive MSP as a means of raising awareness of underwater heritage and an opportunity for greater cooperation with other sectors.

The other reason for wanting to be involved in MSP is the perceived role of MSP in resolving inter-sectoral conflicts. Done "right", MSP is understood as a potential arbiter between conflicting interests, or a place where claims for space can be brought. There is an expectation that claims will at least be heard, although some expect that larger, more powerful sectors will be better placed at securing their interests. The need for conflict resolution is widely understood as most interviewees acknowledged specific conflicts or conflict potential with other sectors. Those between fixed installations that depend on particular site conditions (such as offshore wind farms) and mobile sea uses (such as fisheries and shipping) are the most frequently mentioned, and awareness of spatial conflicts is strongest in site-dependent sectors that consider themselves limited with respect to the spatial choices available to them. Representatives from the offshore wind farming and marine aquaculture sectors were most aware of potential incompat-

ibilities with other uses, mentioning shipping routes, military areas, extraction of mineral resources, cables and pipelines, fisheries, nature conservation and to some degree tourism. An interesting aspect is that the marine aquaculture sector acknowledged that no clear siting criteria had so far been drawn up or translated into spatial targets or claims for sea space. Inability to "speak the language of space" is therefore understood to limit a sector's bargaining position in MSP.

Of note is the neutral to positive attitude towards MSP expressed by the environmental sector. Respondents acknowledged that the ecosystem-based approach has been endorsed in all relevant MSP strategies, and that the importance of viable marine ecosystems for the preservation of resources and ecosystem services has been widely understood. However, they also pointed to a need for better understanding of the ecosystem-based approach and what it might mean in MSP practice. Most environmental stakeholders regard MSP as a tool for nature conservation, especially for ensuring environmental connectivity through a network of marine protected areas. They also regard MSP as an important tool for achieving Marine Strategy Framework (MSFD) objectives, arguing that some of the MSFD indicators could be used for setting MSP objectives and evaluating its success. There was consensus on the role of MSP in supporting existing MPAs through appropriate zoning, although MPA designation as such was clearly considered a matter for conservation authorities and experts.

Shipping and fisheries are the sectors expressing the greatest ambivalence to MSP. The shipping sector currently aims for flexible re-routing schemes and is sceptical of an MSP process that is seen to be about fixed shipping routes. Sector representatives considered MSP as powerless to act with regard to national shipping routes, as these need to be consulted via the IMO. However, it was also acknowledged that shipping lanes have been shifted in Norway for protection of the marine environment and fishing areas and in the United States to reduce whale strikes, demonstrating that MSP can achieve results with regard to balancing interests. This points to a need for greater clarification of the role of MSP as a facilitator and coordinator between different sectors, as most shipping and port authorities as well as companies still appear uncertain as to the implications of MSP for their sector and tend to resist involvement in MSP.

The fisheries sector also shows little inclination to become involved in MSP processes. This is due to a sense that it is neglected in current MSP processes (or conversely, it neglects to participate in many MSP processes) and would lose out if forced to make concessions. There are doubts with regards to the neutrality of MSP and its role as an objective coordinator of sea use, supported by the fact that most MSP processes have so far failed to include the fisheries sector, with the slight exception of identifying biologically important areas in maritime spatial plans. Widespread agreement already exists that fish spawning grounds, nursery areas and essential fish habitats should be treated as priority areas in MSP. Despite its reluctance, fisheries are regarded as an important sector by planners who consider it critical for MSP to understand the spatial extent and distribution of fishing activities as well as essential habitats for fish and their connectivity. More information is also needed on the spatial extent of recreational fisheries. However, competition within the sector can lead to reluctance to release information on fishing sites to MSP. Improved communication between the shipping and fisheries sectors appears to be essential.

Willingness to engage in a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue

In line with their general views and attitudes to MSP, sectors also differ in their willingness to engage in a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue.

Sectors with fixed locations such as marine aquaculture, offshore wind farming, ports, and underwater cultural heritage were unsure of the role they could play in pan-Baltic MSP deliberations. Sites are primarily seen as local and affected by national licensing processes and rarely of trans-boundary relevance. If conditions are right and the industry grows, marine aquaculture sites – including trans-boundary sites or sites with cross-border impact – were regarded as potentially more important in cross-border and pan-Baltic MSP, which would increase the sector's willingness to become involved. For offshore wind farming, the pan-Baltic debate is currently dominated by the development of transnational supergrids which would call for greater cooperation within the offshore wind energy sector. Presently, though, there seems to be a lack of consensus on the real need of such transnational grids. International consultation on the German Baltic Offshore Grid Plan has shown that neighbouring countries do not raise any issues, calling into question the added value of a transnational approach. Perspectives such as these can make it difficult to understand the purpose in becoming involved in a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue even though the value of MSP at the national level is generally well understood. Most sectors therefore express an interest in a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue, but are more cautious in terms of their willingness to actually engage.

Overall Findings

Table 4 summarises the overall picture that emerges for the various transnationally relevant sectors, both in terms of their presence in BSR countries, level of organisation, and interest and involvement in MSP.

Generally, the following opportunities and challenges emerge for MSP in the BSR with respect to pan-Baltic stakeholder involvement.

A positive image of MSP, but differing outlooks

MSP is widely acknowledged as a valuable framework for representing sector interests and a trigger for debate within sec-

BMI 2015; 30(1): 139-149 DOI: 10.5604/12307424.1185612 www.bullmaritimeinstitute.com

Tab. IV. Summary of results from the sectors. n.a. = information not available at the time

SECTOR/OVERVIEW	MARINE AQUACULTURE	OFFSHORE WIND	UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE	SHIPPING	PORTS	FISHERIES	ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Presence in all BSR countries	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Economic relevance in all BSR countries	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	-
National organisation in all BSR countries	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Policy support	Yes at EU level	Yes in DK/DE	Some	Yes	Yes	Yes at EU level	Yes
Sector composition	Research, administration	Industry, research, administration	Administration, research,	Industry	Industry, public authorities	Industry, research, administration	Administration, Research, NGOs,
Lobbying power	Weak	Strong in some countries	Weak	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong in some countries
Pan-Baltic organisations	No	No	Yes (CBSS)	Yes - several	Yes but relatively weak	Yes - several	Yes - several
Pan-Baltic representative/ contact person	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Claims made for sea space at the pan-Baltic level	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Level of understanding of MSP	Strong	Strong	Mixed	Weak	Weak	Mixed	Mixed
Outlook towards MSP	Positive	Positive	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Negative	Mixed
Interest in involvement in MSP at national level	Strong in countries with aquaculture (DK, SE, FI)	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong
Interest in involvement in MSP at pan-Baltic level	Weak	Mixed	Strong	Weak	Weak	Weak	Strong

tors. Nevertheless, there is evidence for different expectations and interpretations of MSP and the potential benefits of stakeholder involvement. Planners tend to have a more positive outlook of pan-Baltic sector involvement in MSP, emphasising "learning from the sectors", greater cooperation between countries, and the development of a comprehensive perspective of the sea as key advantages. Perceived benefits of a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue also include better information about the sea and sea uses, a more comprehensive understanding of MSP, and the development of shared strategic perspectives.

Individual sectors are more sceptical with respect to their involvement in MSP. On the one hand, MSP is considered a useful framework for consenting processes and a tool for balancing and coordinating marine activities, potentially leading to greater fairness in how sea space is allocated. By serving as an incentive for data collection, data sharing and research, MSP is also regarded as improving the marine knowledge base and leading to communication with other sectors. Some sector representatives acknowledged that MSP may lead to better business decisions. On the other hand, MSP is considered by some sector representatives as restrictive and "monopolised by nature conservation organisations". There is also widespread uncertainty as to what MSP really means in practice and what it might entail for the sector or specific stakeholders. There is a disparity, therefore, between the need perceived by MSP planners to enter into a trans-boundary MSP dialogue early and the willingness of individual sectors to cooperate.

Large differences also exist between the sectors themselves. The fisheries and shipping sectors that are experiencing few spatial restrictions at present are most sceptical about MSP and may resist efforts to be engaged in an open dialogue. Personal contacts to individual representatives may be a useful starting point here, supported by a loose concept of working through projects. New, smaller and more place-based sectors such as offshore wind farming, underwater cultural heritage and marine aquaculture tend to be more open to MSP and are motivated to become involved in the planning process at an early stage to help find solutions. At the same time, these sectors have a limited understanding of the benefits of a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue, possibly due to their greater focus on specific sites and associated licensing decisions rather than the trans-boundary impacts of activities. Only a few of the sector representatives interviewed have personally taken part in MSP consultations so far. At the same time, it is becoming clear

that knowledge and understanding of MSP is still insufficient amongst sector stakeholders, pointing to a need for improved communication on the purpose and potential of MSP generally and a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue in particular.

The limited understanding of MSP on the part of the sectors may be due to the fact that marine planners also have varying perspectives of MSP depending on the respective national approach. Whilst some countries strongly rely on zoning, others take a more strategic approach, making it difficult to communicate an overall "MSP message" to stakeholders. MSP is more often understood as being "about fixed zones for a given use", giving MSP a rather rigid image and thus allowing for little flexibility. This is particularly an issue for mobile sea uses where the idea of fixed zones is regarded with suspicion.

Variation in trans-boundary organisation within sectors

The degree of pan-Baltic organisation differs substantially between the sectors. Traditional sectors such as shipping and fisheries show a good level of trans-boundary organisation, but little inclination to enter into a trans-boundary MSP dialogue. This is in contrast to underwater cultural heritage that is well organised and open to dialogue. The offshore energy sector is less well organised, which may be due to the realities of national energy markets. This leads to difficulties in finding common ground on which a pan-Baltic dialogue could be organised. Marine aquaculture is in a weak position nationally, and thus also weak at the pan-Baltic level.

None of the sectors have attempted to actively discuss MSP at the pan-Baltic level, and none have instigated a cross-sectoral dialogue on MSP-related issues. With the exception of the underwater cultural heritage sector[5], no attempts are currently being made to develop a unified sectoral position or voice that could be brought to bear on national MSP processes or introduced into international MSP discussions. In some sectors, there would be scope to extend existing international platforms to initiate such intra-sectoral communication and coordination. However, in other sectors such as shipping and ports, strong fragmentation, competition within the sector and divergent national policy frameworks constitute barriers to such a dialogue.

Despite a growing community of MSP supporters across transnational sectors, difficulties can therefore be expected in securing stakeholders' commitment to an MSP dialogue, at least in the short term.

Lessons for building a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue

Stakeholder involvement in pan-Baltic MSP cannot be taken for granted. One of the first steps towards establishing a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue is to generate greater awareness of the benefits of MSP and build commitment on the part of stakeholders with sectoral interests. This is all the more important as many stakeholders still have no clear understanding of the purpose and potential outcomes of MSP, or the role they could constructively play in MSP processes. It is likely that multiple forms of dialogue will be needed to engage with sectors and stakeholders across the BSR, using formats such as workshops, work in expert groups and informal platforms and approaching different sectors in different ways.

Projects focusing on particular aspects of transnational MSP may be a useful step for sectors to enter into dialogue with other sectors and the MSP community, but any such projects would need to yield tangible results for the participating stakeholders. It is important, therefore, to not overtask a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue in its early stages. It seems sensible to start with more immediate, manageable tasks, delivering good results on those before engaging in more complex matters.

In part, building a pan-Baltic dialogue is a practical matter of establishing structures and processes and securing the necessary commitment on the part of relevant stakeholders. Once a suitable format for the dialogue has been established, it will take additional time to establish routines of communication and working modes. The pan-Baltic MSP dialogue is not necessarily a formal structure, but for stakeholders to commit for the long term, it must be targeted and outcome-based. A clear aim is required that is communicated to all (potential) participants and to which sectors can subscribe. At the same time, informal structures and processes of dialogue need to be complemented by a formal decision-making process and body. This body should be tasked with translating the outputs of the dialogue into tangible practice (e.g. management actions) – a prerequisite for attracting sectors to the dialogue and ensuring their ongoing commitment.

Greater intra-sectoral dialogue is necessary to enable sectors to develop common positions on MSP-related issues. This could be encouraged by an open discussion of MSP, pan-Baltic implications of sea use, and the benefits of taking a trans-boundary perspective. In particular, smaller sectors and those not yet organised at the pan-Baltic level may benefit from this as they may gain more confidence and a stronger voice in the MSP dialogue vis-à-vis other sectors. Participants in a pan-Baltic MSP dialogue need to be confident that processes are transparent and that their contribution will not only be respected, but also contribute to tangible benefits both for MSP and the sectors. One of the initial aims of the pan-Baltic MSP dialogue should therefore be to gradually build more mature forms of cooperation, where joint strategy development and planning specific management actions become possible.

[5]A series of pan-Baltic projects has recently been started under the leadership of the CBSS Heritage group to develop a joint position of the sector in relation to MSP

Abbreviations

BAREC	Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation
BEF	Baltic Environmental Forum Latvia
BSAC	Baltic Sea Advisory Council
BSR	Baltic Sea Region
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
DG MARE	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
EPC	European Parliament & Council
EUCC	Coastal & Marine Union
EUNETMAR	European Networking Group for Maritime Policy
EUSBSR	EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
HELCOM	Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IMO	International Maritime Organization
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
PA	Priority Area
Tab.	Table
VASAB	Vision and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea
WWF	World-Wide Fund For Nature

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Word count: 6700 Page count: 11 Tables:4 Figures: – References: 20

Scientific Disciplines: Socioeconomics section

DOI: 10.5604/12307424.1185612

Full-text PDF: www.bullmaritimeinstitute.com/fulltxt.php?ICID=1185612

Cite this article as: Schultz-Zehden A., Gee K.: Toward Sectoral Stakeholder Involvement in a pan-Baltic MSP Dialogue; BMI 2015; 30(1): 139-149

Competing interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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