



Terms of Reference for the Baltic Sea Region MSP Data Expert Sub-Group (BSR MSP Data ESG)

Approved via correspondence in January 2024 by the HELCOM Heads of Delegation.

Purpose

Data and information are crucial components of maritime spatial planning, which also create a basis for cross-border consultations and ensures coherence of maritime spatial planning throughout the Baltic Sea. The purpose of the BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-Group (hereinafter – Sub-Group) is to provide methodological support to HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG in relation to MSP data and facilitate the data exchange throughout the Baltic Sea. The expert group also serves as a liaison for MSP data related processes in the European Union, thus supporting the implementation of respective regulation in the Baltic Sea region.

Duties

The duties of the Sub-Group are to:

- a. facilitate the work of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG and assist with implementation of the WG's workplan in relation to MSP data and information,
- b. by request provide expert advice to HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG on MSP data and information related issues,
- c. identify main issues/gaps related to MSP data and information, including transboundary issues, recommend respective solutions and follow up their realization,
- d. prepare a list of BSR National MSP Data Contact Points, incl. contact persons/details (Country Fiches),
- e. prepare an overview on national state of play of MSP data, including an overview of:
 - available (relevant) data incl. metadata, problems with ownership, legal issues, licenses, cost etc.
 - data services (accessibility etc.)
- f. maintain up-to-date regional MSP data framework, including:
 - data exchange processes and procedures,
 - harmonization of MSP "Output Data",
 - technical support and requirements for MSP "Input Data",
- g. establish links to MSP data related projects, ensuring integration of the best available knowledge in the regional MSP data framework and implementation of the most recent solutions in national and regional MSP data exchange systems,
- h. further develop BASEMAPS data structure and interface,
- i. maintain actual state of information contained in the BASEMAPS in accordance with the Guidelines on transboundary Baltic Sea Regional Spatial Data Infrastructure.

Expected outcomes

- A. List of National MSP Data Contact Points and contact persons,

- B. Regularly updated overview on national state of play of MSP data,
- C. Up-to-date status of regional MSP data framework,
- D. Operational regional map service BASEMAPS, complying with modern technical and methodological requirements and providing access to valid MSP data,
- E. Up-to-date status of regional MSP output data,
- F. Description of issues/gaps related to MSP data and information and recommendations on solutions to resolve them.

Other outputs of the Expert Sub-Group's work are specified in the 2-year workplan of the Group, regularly updated by the Group and approved by HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG and depend on the requests by HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.

Organization of work

The work of the Sub-Group is organized in accordance with HELCOM and VASAB rules of procedures. The Sub-Group reports to HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.

The Sub-Group consists of MSP data experts/planners representing all Baltic Sea Countries, including GIS/SDI (Spatial Data Infrastructure) experts appointed by competent national authorities representing respective countries in HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.

The Sub-Group elects a Chair for a two-year period. The Chair prepares the agenda of Sub-Group's meetings with the support by the HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats. The Chair is entitled to invite external guests to Sub-Group's meetings if they contribute to the implementation of the Sub-Group tasks. The Chair also reports on behalf of the Sub-Group to HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG and represents the Sub-Group at other expert fora, ensuring communication with respective expert community beyond the Sub-Group.

The Sub-Group meets up to 4 times a year if deemed necessary. Sub-Group meetings are organized in online or face-to-face format, ensuring resource efficiency. Meetings are organized by invitation to host Contracting Parties with the support of the HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats. Organization of Sub-Group's meetings back-to-back with other relevant events, including HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, is preferred. Intersessional communication is maintained by e-mail.

The HELCOM Secretariat provides technical and administrative support for the Sub-Group work with the assistance of the VASAB Secretariat. The work of the Sub-Group is also supported by PA Spatial Planning of the EUSBSR in accordance with its working plan.

The Sub-Group is encouraged to establish links with other existing and forthcoming relevant forums and activities, including respective EU expert groups.

The current Terms of Reference are to be reviewed periodically, every four years, or as the need arises.