

BONUS BASMATI HANDBOOK: Process, Methods and Tools for Stakeholder Involvement in Maritime Spatial Planning

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Executive Summary

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), as with any other type of planning, is not just about the plans and their content, but the *process* of making those plans. Incorporating expert knowledge and the perspectives of different sea users and interest groups through stakeholder involvement (SI) processes is a central element in the design and implementation of marine spatial plans (MSPs). This handbook explores some of the key issues relating to SI in MSP, including:

How to think about involving stakeholders? How to understand their needs? Who to involve? When is the appropriate time to involve them? What methods and tools are needed? What are the drawbacks? And how can a process leader carry out an effective, transparent and fair process?

This handbook provides practitioners with some practical answers to these questions by offering a framework for systematically thinking about SI in the MSP process. The ideas and approaches to SI outlined are based on first-hand experiences from planners in the Baltic Sea Region and cover the whole of the MSP policy cycle.

SI Conceptual Framework:

SI in MSP is intended to help relevant stakeholders to influence and inform the content and direction of a planning process. The 'stairway of participation' represented in Figure 2-1 provides a visualization of different SI objectives and the increasing intensities of power-sharing as one climbs the levels of interaction with stakeholders. **Chapter 2** promotes systematic thinking about SI by answering to the following questions:

- **Why?** Consider the main objectives and purposes for involving stakeholders in the planning process. These reasons can be both 1) **normative**: to promote stakeholders' democratic rights to participate or to empower stakeholders; and 2) **instrumental**: to fulfil legal requirements, to exchange knowledge, or to promote interaction. Purposes can then be subdivided depending on the phases of MSP and events, e.g. informing, collecting information, cross-learning.
- **Who?** Depending on the scope and stage of a planning process, different types of actors will have a stake and should be involved. Stakeholders have different interests and varying capacity/power of influence depending on their legal mandate and resources. Stakeholders can be grouped as institutions/authorities, NGOs, citizens, businesses, other countries, etc.
- **When?** Stakeholders may become relevant at different points in the planning cycle. The Planning Process Loop in Figure 2-2 depicts the policy process as a loop. It shows that SI is never linear but cyclical, with some continuous elements, while other kinds of SI are tied to specific policy phases.
- **How?** Many practical decisions need to be made in the overall SI process, including the selection of venues and SI methods and tools to be used during specific events. Chapters 3 and 4 provide first-hand examples of how countries in the Baltic Sea Region have approached SI.

- **How do all these come together?** The *why, who, when and how* are interconnected and should come together in a detailed strategy, with a timeline, specific targets and events. This can be done in line with a communication strategy tailored to stakeholder groups to clarify how, when and where they should be involved. However, this should not be a rigid strategy but adaptive to emerging needs.

Effective SI processes: General principles based on lessons from the Baltic Sea Region

Chapter 3 examines some important principles for developing effective SI processes, drawing on first-hand experiences from national planners of the Baltic Sea Region (i.e., Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia and Sweden). These principles include:

- **Building the institutional knowledge-base (the responsible team):** SI requires specific knowledge and experiences, therefore, building institutional memory helps develop internal SI skills and expertise (including facilitation). External expertise from consultants, authorities, and the stakeholders themselves complements this internal knowledge.
- **Stakeholder mapping and analysis:** Knowing which stakeholders to involve in planning and keeping them up to date with relevant information is key for a successful SI process. Creating a 'stakeholder list' with contact details of key individuals, groups and institutions can help this process. Performing an in-depth stakeholder analysis can be important for understanding stakeholder priorities and needs which can help incentivize their involvement and determine what approaches, methods and tools to use in SI processes.
- **Strategy:** A strategy with a timeline, targets and events is a necessary tool to organize the SI process. Developing a comprehensive SI strategy or SI pilot plans can lay solid foundations for effective SI processes.
- **Communication:** Both formal and informal methods of communication can be used for keeping individuals, sectors or targeted groups informed of MSP information and activities. Official websites, local newspapers, phone calls, email, Twitter and Messenger can all be effective communication and dissemination tools on different occasions.
- **Designing meetings:** The design of effective SI processes depends on the why and who questions. Many things need to be considered by planners in preparation, including the size of the meeting venue, which day to hold the meeting, the start time of the event and the technical knowledge level of participants.
- **Dealing with feedback:** Addressing stakeholder feedback is mandated by law but is also a valuable source of information. Collecting and processing input, therefore, needs to be systematic and transparent to avoid losing information, maintain stakeholder trust and legitimize decisions.
- **Working across countries:** Neighbouring countries are important stakeholders in MSP and the EU MSP Directive requires coordination across borders. The BaltSeaPlan, PartiSEaPate, Baltic SCOPE and Pan Baltic Scope projects have served as platforms for cross-country interaction. Language and administrative differences, and different stages of planning can make transboundary SI challenging, however, it has offered an opportunity for planners and stakeholders to exchange knowledge and learn from each other's SI methods and practices.

Practical SI methods and tools:

Chapter 4 provides planners with different SI methods and tools that can be adopted during the four main stages of the planning process.

- **Scoping phase:** The scoping phase should start with designing the MSP SI strategy according to the purposes and resources available. Moreover, it is about mapping/contacting stakeholders and defining their role in developing marine plans. In most countries, the informal stakeholder process started long before they were invited to an event. Typically, the kick-off event was a large conference with open and inclusive participation of different stakeholders.
- **Drafting and Consulting phase:** The drafting phase is when stakeholders and planners start identifying concrete planning solutions for which more refined SI tools and methods are needed. Different forms of interaction come into play, such as **on-site visits** (to better understand place-specific characteristics and empower local communities), **online meetings** (with coastal municipalities to inform them about their roles and possibilities), **thematic meetings** (to delve into sector-specific content, needs and technical limitations), **bi-multi-lateral meetings or world-café** (to support interaction between stakeholder groups, identify conflicts and synergies, develop joint solutions), **work in geographical sub-areas**, (to narrow down the focus), **working with maps** (to better visualize possible solutions and enhance discussion), **matrix of interests** (to identify sectoral interests and possible conflicts or synergies with other activities), **scenario-building** (to show what potential implications the plans can have on different stakeholders), **impact assessment** (to ensure MSP includes environmental considerations), and others. Interestingly, planners did not use sophisticated models and digital spatial decision support systems (SDSS) for stakeholder participation as they were considered too complex, rigid and expensive. Additionally, **consultations** occurred far beyond formal requirements and feedback came in multiple forms, from **email, face-to-face discussions on a draft plan, digital maps and open meetings**, etc. Normally, feedback became more detailed, the more the process advanced.
- **Implementation phase:** Not many countries in the BSR are at the implementation stage, therefore, there is not much empirical information about SI in this phase of the process. What is worth noting is that once the plan is completed, it requires government approval, which can lead to a long process of evaluation and revision. Once the plan is approved, planners are required to monitor the implementation of the plan, identifying management and practical solutions with stakeholders, and depending on responsibilities, other administrative roles, such as issuing licenses for different uses.
- **Evaluation and learning phase:** There is little empirical evidence relating to this phase as very few national plans have been fully implemented. Yet, effective evaluation will review the content of the plan, the planning process, how well a plan is working and the plan's overall impact (effectiveness, satisfaction, etc.). The results may provide the basis for learning that can feed into future plans. In the case of Germany, mid-term reviews and qualitative evaluations of its plans have been carried out. The reviews show how the wider context has changed, which may call for revisions in the second round of planning. Specifically, the ambitious national targets set for renewable energies make it fair to expect that a new plan might seek to expand the area set aside for offshore wind farming.

Future direction of SI in MSP:

SI should be considered a continuous process that accompanies MSP at all stages, rather than a single event. As planning teams, socio-economic settings, national interests and priorities change, so do stakeholders and their roles. Therefore, planners have the continuous challenge to be flexible and perceptive of the changing needs of stakeholders and the SI approaches and tools they use. Nevertheless, MSP is unlikely to solve all sea use conflicts and challenges. Therefore, planners need to be pragmatic in their use of SI processes and make decisions with the best available stakeholder knowledge and expertise. This handbook provides many first-hand SI tools and methods to develop and implement effective MSP processes. However, successful MSP will ultimately depend on a combination of carefully chosen SI methods and tools, as well as the ability of process leaders and planners to adopt SI approaches to suit different needs and contexts.



Source: VASAB Secretariat

1 Introduction

This handbook provides good practices and insights on stakeholder involvement (SI) in marine/maritime spatial planning (MSP) from the Baltic Sea Region. Specific tools, methods and approaches are highlighted based on practitioners' own experiences of SI processes. The handbook was developed as part of the BONUS BASMATI project¹ and built on work done in earlier MSP projects, including the BONUS BALTSPEACE², Baltic SCOPE³ and Pan Baltic Scope⁴. SI is neither new, nor unique to MSP, but as MSP is still in an early stage of development, SI is also in its relative infancy (Morf et al. 2019a). The handbook, therefore, pays special attention to key elements of SI processes in MSP, such as providing a detailed analysis of relevant stakeholders during the mobilization stage and hands-on examples of the main tools and methods for working with stakeholders. The handbook is targeted specifically at policymakers and practitioners to help them design and implement more effective SI processes.

How to use this handbook:

Chapter 1 clarifies the focus of this handbook, the terminology used and the context that determines the approaches adopted to foster SI in MSP; including, institutional differences, availability of resources, and other place-specific characteristics and contextual factors that influence the way SI is conducted in different countries. **Chapter 2** provides a conceptual framework of how to think systematically about the SI process in MSP. This section reveals a handful of key principles that help answer the questions: '*why*' integrate stakeholders (what are the purpose and objectives of SI?), '*who*' to invite (which stakeholder groups are relevant?), '*when*' (what is the most appropriate time for SI?), '*how*' (what practical approaches, methods and tools are useful?), and how all of these key principles interconnect. **Chapter 3** sets out how to plan and organize SI work in more detail, bearing in mind the different stages of the MSP cycle and the demands of different contexts. **Chapter 4** illustrates different methods, tools and approaches that have been used by practitioners in the BSR. Finally, **Chapter 5** provides a summary and some perspectives on developing SI further as the practice of MSP matures.

For better guidance, the appendices provide 1) a list of material for further reading; 2) an overview table with the tools introduced in the handbook; and 3) a table with 'country briefs', which highlight the main institutional characteristics and other contextual factors from the countries included here that are important and relevant for carrying out SI.

¹ The BONUS BASMATI project originally aimed at delivering this report in six languages. Due to the length of the report we chose to keep the main report in English and summarize the main findings in national languages. This was deemed most suitable for broad distribution among busy planning practitioners. The Executive Summary is an easy-to-read seven-page document containing the main findings and guidance for reading the main report. It is available in Danish, English, Finnish, German, Latvian and Swedish and can be downloaded from www.bonusbasmati.eu.

² www.baltspace.eu

³ www.balticscope.eu

⁴ www.panbalticscope.eu

1.1 Focus, aim and definitions

MSP (or any type of planning) is not just about plans and their content, but at least as much about the *process* of developing, reviewing and adapting them according to emerging situations and lessons learned. Incorporating expert knowledge and different perspectives by means of SI is a pivotal part of that process.

But how to think about involving stakeholders? How to understand their needs? How to promote an effective, transparent and equal process when stakeholders are diverse and sometimes very different from each other? What methods are used in practice? What are the advantages and drawbacks of common approaches and methods and what are the choices to be made when planning SI?

Box 1 provides definitions and explanations of a few key terms.

This handbook aims to give some answers, helping those responsible for participation in MSP to make the most of SI. A key aim is to enable planners and process leaders to think more systematically about SI in MSP. It gives specific insights to the design of the overall process, the design of events, and the selection of appropriate methods and tools, bearing in mind the purpose and scope of the overall process, specific phases of MSP, the needs of stakeholder groups, and the available resources. As few countries in the BSR have fully completed the MSP planning cycle so far, the handbook concentrates on SI experiences in the preparatory and drafting phases of MSP.

Naturally, the handbook does not claim to provide a comprehensive overview of methods and tools; it merely describes actual experiences that were made in particular settings at a particular time. As such, the voices captured here are very much those of the planners themselves.

Box 1

Key concepts

Stakeholder - A *stakeholder* can be seen as “an entity (group, person, organization, enterprise or administrative unit) with a stake in MSP - those affecting and affected by acts of MSP (recognized as such or not)”, which include institutions/authorities, NGOs, businesses, other countries, and the society at large (Morf et al. 2017, p. 9).

Stakeholder participation, involvement, engagement and integration – Although they mean slightly different things, these terms are often used interchangeably. *Participation* and *involvement* are about allowing different actors some degree of influence over a plan and/or a planning process, while *engagement* and *integration* are more about how to achieve this. *Participation* requires various types of *communication* and *interaction* between planners and participating stakeholders depending on the varying *aims* of participation (e.g., informing stakeholders, sharing knowledge, discussion of a plan/process, making decisions, problem-solving). Both parts expect to gain something from this interaction. These *expectations* may vary greatly, and thus need to be recognized and communicated. Normally, one expectation is to be able to influence both the planning process and the outcomes. Participation processes are delimited by legislation and the available *resources* (i.e., time, money, infrastructure and personnel) and the *capacity* of planners and stakeholders to participate. There may be high expectations but limited resources and capacity.

Facilitator - A *facilitator* leads the interaction with stakeholders through specific events and/or the whole process. Facilitation requires a mandate, but also special skills and a set of tools. The *facilitator* can be a member of the MSP planning team or someone external to the responsible agency. This may be desirable if neutrality is an issue or if there is no capacity within the planning team.

Tools and methods - Tools are concrete instruments in the hands of a facilitator. Methods are ways to approach specific events or interactions by using a set of tools in a more specific way.

Process - The process is the overall procedure for which a combination of methods and tools is applied over time to address different stakeholder groups, in different constellations and places to fulfil the purposes of participation processes and MSP⁵. A process leader may be in place to guide the overall process, who may or may not double as a facilitator during events.

Strategy - A strategy describes why, how and when to involve specific stakeholders in MSP.

⁵ Other approaches with participatory dimensions include Integrated Coastal Zone Management (integrative, participatory, adaptive based on Agenda 21 (UNEP 1992) and its further development (for further reading see e.g. Cicin-Sain and Knecht 1998), the Ecosystem Approach according to the Convention on Biodiversity (COP 5 Decision V/6, UN CBD 1992), or the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation which includes both a digital toolbox, process design and a user community (see Gee et al. 2019, <https://cmp-openstandards.org/>).

1.2 Context matters: the Baltic Sea context for stakeholder involvement

SI is an essential, legally required element of MSP processes⁶. Presently, all Baltic Sea countries and independent regions (except Russia) have undergone one or more stages of public consultation during their MSP processes. Who should be regarded as a stakeholder and how to involve them depends on the specific phase of the MSP process and its institutional context. Stakeholders can include sectors, companies and individual sea users, as well as citizens and organizations with interest in the marine environment, scientists and authorities at various institutional levels. Each stakeholder will bring varying skills and knowledge to the table and has a different capacity to get involved in MSP. Methods for SI, therefore, need to be adjusted to the specific situation and stakeholder group composition.

The institutional context matters a great deal for SI as it affects how SI can be practised. Institutional systems differ between countries, as do legal frameworks, regulations, and how planning and sectoral responsibilities are distributed in public administration. Countries in the Baltic Sea Region have varying degrees of institutional complexity and are at different stages of MSP (Fig. 1-1). In practice, most countries have undertaken more ambitious SI processes than the statutory minimum of one or two consultations.

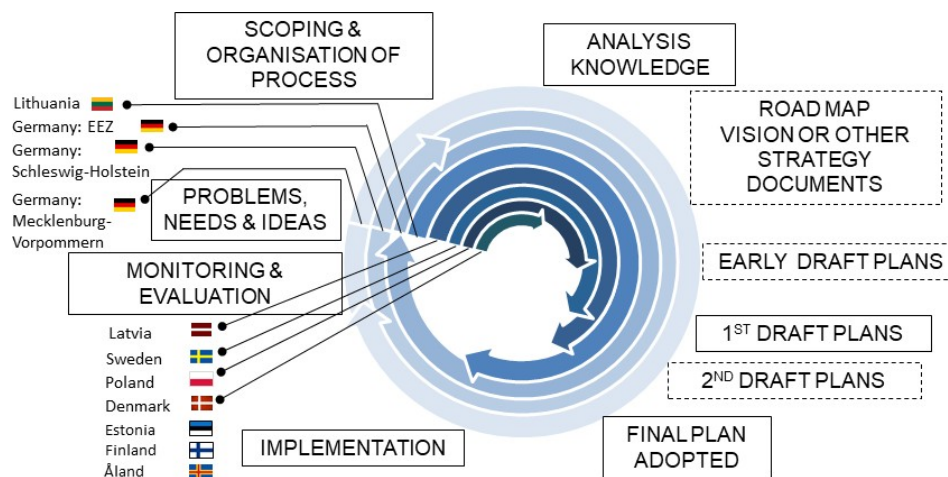


Figure 1-1

MSP status of Baltic Sea countries and independent regions as of spring 2019 (source Morf et al. 2019, adapted)

⁶ Either already enshrined in national legislation or recently introduced as a result of transposing the EU MSP Directive into national law (including cross-border consultation). Usually, international consultation is not structured by domestic legislation, leaving it largely up to the country and the responsible authorities to decide on a suitable format. See Janßen et al. 2018 on cross-border collaboration and Morf et al. 2019t.

In Germany and Sweden, for instance, planning responsibility is divided between national and sub-national levels, whereas the regions have the overall responsibility in Finland. Estonia and Latvia have national MSP processes led by different ministries. Denmark instead showcases a unique institutional set-up of shared responsibility across different ministries and agencies. The Danish Maritime Authority acts as secretariat for the MSP Working Group, coordinating the work and collecting information. Individual ministries are then responsible for involving their own stakeholders and defining the sectoral interests to be considered in the plan. (see 'Country Briefs' in the appendix for details on each country's administrative system). At the same time, options for SI are not only influenced by the institutional set-up. Factors that also come into play include the ambitions for SI, the wider political atmosphere, whether stakeholders are used to participative processes, and not least previous relations with stakeholders, which could be good or bad. The many specific variables, and some initial experience with MSP and SI in other countries, explain why planners in the BSR have chosen to expand SI beyond the minimum required by legislation.

2 Stakeholder involvement: how to think about it systematically

Although SI can look quite different in different countries, the fundamental considerations for making it work are similar. Systematically thinking about SI and organizing it is the key to success in every context. Basic premises include the notion that both planners and stakeholders are hoping to gain from SI (although some gains may not be immediately obvious and take some time to manifest themselves), and that an SI process takes time, money, staff and resources on the part of everyone involved.

This section discusses the fundamental questions of SI, namely, why, who, when and how, based on an initial consideration of the desired level of power-sharing within the MSP process.

2.1 Varying degrees of power-sharing

At its heart, participation is about power-sharing. But at what level? Broadly speaking, everyone would agree that a participative process is an opportunity for stakeholders to learn about a plan and to actively shape the process and its outcomes. However, the degree to which SI can really influence the plan or process can vary considerably. It depends on how much power the MSP authority intends to, or is able to share with stakeholders.

Different degrees of power-sharing come with different intensities of interaction, levels of responsibility and possible influence. A 'stairway' of SI, such as the one presented in Figure 2-1 can come as a useful tool for considering the roles of stakeholders and degrees of power-sharing. This stairway is based on a ladder developed by Morf and colleagues (2019b) using participation literature and Baltic Sea MSP experiences.

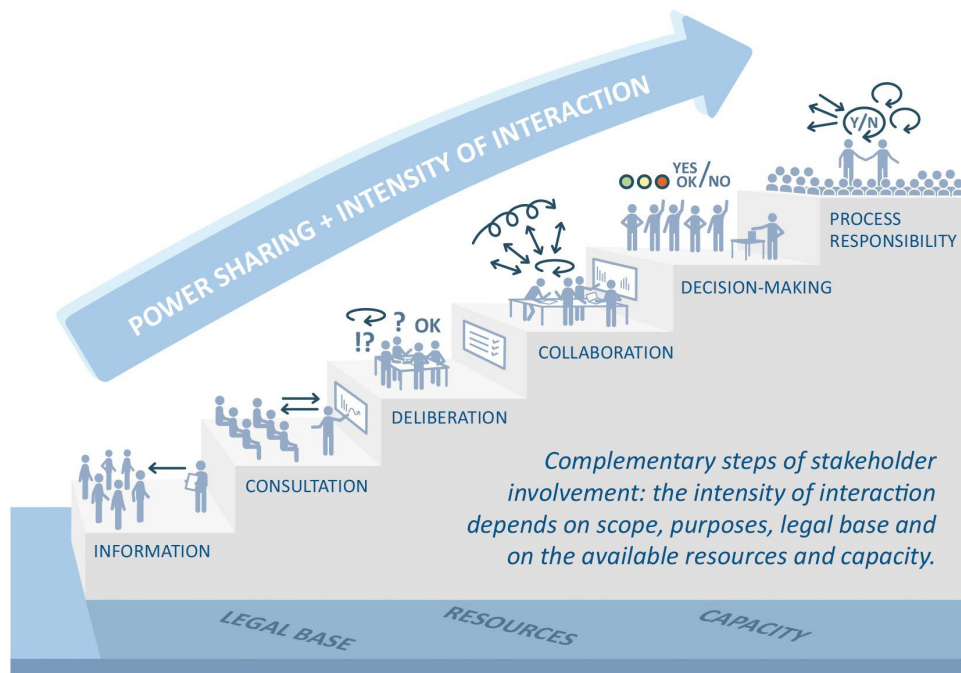


Figure 2-1
Stairway of participation in marine spatial planning. Developed by A. Morf & co-authors using Morf et al. 2019b

Each step up the stairway implies an increasing intensity of interaction, more responsibility and more power being shared between the MSP authority and stakeholders. The intensity of communication also increases as one moves up the stairway. The steps can complement one another; they may also overlap and occur in parallel in the same MSP process. Every step rests on the available *legal base*, the available *resources* and the *capacity* of all participants to engage in the process. *Informing* stakeholders about MSP and plans in one-way communication makes the first basic step. The second (and most common) step is consultation, which consists of requesting and receiving feedback, e.g., on a draft plan. Information and consultation are often legally required and formalized. The third step is *deliberation*, which entails more continuous interaction and dialogue, possibly leading to joint learning. The fourth step is collaboration, where interaction is even more intensive and where stakeholders and the planning authority work together on concrete tasks. The fifth step is *shared decision making*. *Process responsibility* is the last step, which implies that stakeholders actively take responsibility for how the planning and related participation process is carried out. This degree of interaction maximizes stakeholder influence (through shared or delegated power) on the process, plan content, and outcomes.

Since the 'classic' "ladder of citizen participation" developed by Sherry Arnstein (1969), reflections about participation and stakeholder involvement have evolved in many fields of research and practice, including planning, administration, development, environmental and resource management. New ladders, as well as cubes, circles, networks and stairways, have evolved and are used as metaphors to describe different degrees of power-sharing and interaction⁷. The stairway used here was inspired, among others, by the German planner Klaus Selle (1996) and his four-layered stairway with a historical development of participation in planning. It was developed to visualize and emphasize the varying degrees of intensity in interaction and power-sharing. It also illustrates how these steps are complementarity as each builds on the ones below. The levels on the stairway do not imply a quality judgment in that one step is better than another, nor does it suggest an evolution of SI over time towards certain outcomes. It is intended to assist planners in thinking more systematically about the intensity of interaction, the distribution of roles and the degree of power-sharing that could suit a particular planning situation and what this implies. The stairway can either be used as a process planning tool, to determine which intensities of interaction and power-sharing with stakeholders can be appropriate, at what point in time; or retrospectively, to evaluate where a process has ended up in relation to the original ambitions, context, and possibilities⁸.

Where legislation and resources are highly constraining, there may be obvious limits to the intensity of a process or how interactive it can be. If ambitions are high, or legislation leaves room for creativity, the stairway helps to decide where to draw the line and to realistically manage expectations.

Irrespective of where a process is situated, four following fundamental questions will need to be asked at the beginning of all SI processes (or to guide the retrospective evaluation): **Why, Who, When, and How** to involve specific stakeholders? We now go through these one by one.

⁷ For further reflections on planning metaphors and on the development of MSP, see the open access MSP anthology by Zaucha & Gee (2019) including the chapter on a ladder of MSP participation (Morf et al 2019b)

⁸ See also "The Split Ladder of Participation" by Hurlbert & Gupta (2015) for a more analytical tool and a discussion of stakeholders and experts in relation to various types of problems and degrees of trust between actors.

2.2 Why: clarifying the purpose(s) of Stakeholder Involvement

There are different reasons for involving stakeholders, so a crucial starting point is to identify one or a set of purposes of engaging stakeholders in MSP. Is it a legal requirement? Is it a matter of principle? What might everyone gain from such interaction? Are you expecting additional benefits in terms of trust or shared knowledge? Having a clear purpose helps setting the course for subsequent planning. If you can't answer "why", it will be difficult to answer the who, when and how. You might create expectations with yourself, your institution and your stakeholders that might not be met. You may also get unintended or even undesired outcomes because the process has not been designed with a clear purpose. A process may be more or less ambitious, but even if it is a strictly mandatory process, it is worth doing properly.

Often, the simple answer to the "why" question is that SI is required by law. Checking the relevant legislation is thus a good starting point in order to understand the framework within which SI will sit. Which degree of power-sharing is possible or desirable? This might have you consult the constitution of your country or specific acts and ordinances related to planning or MSP. Once the basic opportunities and limitations have been clarified, consider the purpose of SI from both perspectives. What are the desired outcomes of the SI process for planners and stakeholders, both in the short and long term? Stakeholders will have their own expectations of a planning process, for instance, regarding the degree to which they can influence a plan but also what planning should achieve in the longer term. Therefore, communicating expectations, ambitions and challenges to your stakeholders is crucial.

There are two main reasons for involving stakeholders:

- **Instrumental reasons:** SI serves a particular purpose within the MSP process, e.g. to fulfil a legal requirement, to draw on different types of stakeholder knowledge, to promote learning within and across sectors and across multiple scales, and/or to promote acceptance and legitimize the plans.
- **Normative reasons:** SI is done because of certain societal norms, e.g. to promote stakeholders' democratic rights to participate, to empower marginalized stakeholders to contribute to the plan and process (such as giving local fishers a voice), and/or to ensure a more equitable process.

The first, instrumental type reasons are common. Promoting learning and knowledge sharing across levels and sectors was a key reason for a lengthy and broad national SI process in Sweden, with several steps and different forms of consultation beyond the legal minimum. Throughout the planning process, stakeholders provide various types of relevant input, identifying problems and conflicts, providing ideas on how to use or protect certain areas, proposing how to implement the plan, and even providing feedback on the process itself (Morf et al. 2019b book). The normative, emancipatory reasons are often present in legal documents, but enabling marginalized groups often requires special attention and directed efforts.

Usually, there is no simple answer to the "why" question as **purposes overlap and change**. Stakeholder events, for example, will have specific purposes, but they all take place within the overall purpose of enabling stakeholders to contribute to a plan. There may be changing purposes over time, with more instrumental purposes at the forefront in the short term and normative purposes becoming more important as the process and relationships with stakeholders mature. Usually, the main purpose of SI is to produce a legitimate plan of sufficient quality, to do so in a transparent manner and to ensure it is supported by all important stakeholders. Sharing and learning as a way of promoting good social relations may come on top of this, but this is not necessarily the first and foremost objective.

Clarifying the purpose of SI goes hand in hand with **managing expectations on both sides**. An early and open discussion on the ambitions of SI, involving colleagues, political decision-makers and stakeholders, helps to understand expectations and addressing any misunderstandings in good time. For example, stakeholders might expect MSP to deal with conflicts or issues it cannot address, as

they may be new to maritime themes and MSP. The ministry in charge may not support a high degree of interaction for political or financial reasons, or the time constraints of the process may be such that more complex SI is impossible.

Whichever reasons are used to justify SI, **new issues and situations will inevitably arise**. Insights emerging during the process may lead to new purposes that have not been considered before. Experience from the BSR indicates that the minimum requirements for stakeholder involvement set out by legislation may not suffice. Stakeholders hold important knowledge that is needed to develop the plans, and interaction beyond the formal requirements is needed to enable stakeholders to share that knowledge. BSR countries have, therefore undertaken stakeholder processes that go well beyond the minimum requirements. This type of interaction with stakeholders is not always part of an official process using formal channels, but often occurs ad-hoc and informally simply by talking to different individuals and groups.

2.3 Who: knowing your stakeholders

The second step is to establish who the relevant stakeholders are⁹. Stakeholders are numerous and rarely equal¹⁰ – no matter how diligently a process may attempt to even out differences. Knowing your stakeholders from the outset is crucial: understanding their needs, interests and influence, can help to smoothen the process and address conflicts. This can include process design that takes into account the competing interests within and between stakeholder groups, and past incidents between them. Knowing implies understanding the key characteristics of various stakeholder groups, e.g. how they are organized, how much time and capacity they have to participate, and how vocal they are likely to be and whether there are any internal differences. This step should also ensure that no relevant stakeholders are left out.

Stakeholders can be grouped in various ways – for example, authority experts and decision-makers at different levels, marine and coastal users, and civil society at large. Each group plays different roles in the process and may include further subgroups. Some stakeholders have formalized rights to influence the process, others may have strong political support or economic weight. Some may have strong local support, while others may be quite invisible. One reason can be a lack of official representation or that individual stakeholders act independently and dispersed in time and space (e.g. recreational actors). Each stakeholder has different needs, values and aspirations depending on their particular circumstances – something that can change over time.

Depending on the scope of a process (local, regional, national, transnational), different types of actors might have a stake and need to be involved. For instance, fishers can have a considerable range of action and may need to be involved in local, national and transnational planning – depending on the fishery in question. For example, Finnish herring fishers are active on fishing banks in the Swedish Bothnian Sea. The same applies in the Øresund. Moreover, as the strait separating Denmark and Sweden is narrow, local authority planning on both sides is affected by national priorities across borders.

Planners can learn about the various aspects related to stakeholders through careful stakeholder analysis (see section 3.1.2). Here, the “why” of involving them remains significant. What are their interests, stakes, and needs? Importantly, the varying aspirations of each stakeholder (group and subgroup) need to be acknowledged – and how these might affect the design of the process. Knowing your stakeholders will make it easier to keep the process up to date if needs change or new stakeholders enter it. The planning process itself will then deal with their practical spatial needs and how these needs interact with others (mapping).

⁹ Read more Creighton (1983), Freeman (1984), Bryson (2004)

¹⁰ There are distinctive hierarchies between stakeholders as a result of the international, and national laws in place i.e. UNCLOS, Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), MSFD directive; as well as other agreements and political priorities.



Source: Margarita Vološina

2.4 When: the importance of timing

“When” to involve stakeholders is the third important consideration after the why and who. MSP and SI processes are not exactly linear with a clear beginning and end, even if there may be an official one. If MSP authorities are to facilitate learning for the future, they could consider SI as a planning loop passing through different stages, eventually coming back to the beginning. In such a continuous planning loop, the input of knowledge, SI, and decision-making occurs multiple times in every lap¹¹.

The process loop (figure 2-2) can help to structure the process, clarifying what tasks are likely to arise when and what this means in terms of SI. What input is required from which stakeholders when? The diagram depicts a circular policy process (known not just in MSP) containing four main layers. Three layers that continue throughout and the fourth layer with four different functional phases sandwiched in between (4+4). In reality, planning processes are never linear, and the functional phases do not necessarily follow a chronological sequence. Still, draft documents, legal requirements (e.g. for consultation) and formal decisions do lend the process a basic structure over time. The different functional phases also highlight that different types of stakeholder input is required (e.g. in terms of knowledge) over time.



Figure 2-2

The Planning Process Loop of MSP and ICZM. Developed by A. Morf & co-authors

¹¹ There are many different loop graphs available from many MSP projects. To make the tool as universal as possible, we have tried to simplify and emphasise the essentials. For those interested in process thinking and quality management, see the reports by Ehler & Douvère (2009) and by Cormier et al. (2015).

The first layer near the centre (grey arrow around the core) represents the **planning documents** that arise at different stages of the process (e.g. an initial roadmap, a vision, the actual plan, an impact assessment) and the decisions that lead to their existence. The need to produce or revise a plan formally drives the planning process.

The second layer is embedded between the core and the outer layers. It consists of four **key activities** that are interlinked and dominate the planning process at different times:

1. **Scoping (olive):** Setting out the scope of the plan and planning process takes place early in the planning loop. In terms of SI, this includes mapping stakeholders and deciding how to involve them. Scoping may take considerably longer in the first planning cycle, as all responsibilities, contacts, information sources, aims and issues need to be established from the ground up. This particularly applies if many different stakeholders need to be identified and their needs and interests understood.
2. **Drafting and consulting (dark blue):** Stakeholders might contribute to developing draft plans in several ways and in one or several steps. This includes problem and conflict analysis, identification and setting of goals, and providing knowledge and feedback on the plan drafts. This phase can also include the development of a vision and/or different planning scenarios. Consultation can imply both formal and informal SI and different forms of feedback on draft documents (possibly in several rounds). This phase will vary in length, depending on the complexity of the planning process.
3. **Implementation (red):** This takes place through various channels and incentives and is possibly supported by enforcement to make sure the plan is applied. It can also involve concrete contributions from specific stakeholders. Given the life span of most plans, this phase is the longest in terms of time.
4. **Evaluation and learning (orange):** In this last phase of the planning loop, stakeholders can continue to provide their knowledge and feedback on the process (during and after the planning process) and the content of the plan, about how well a plan is working and what its outcomes are (effectiveness, satisfaction etc.). Ideally, from an adaptive management perspective (e.g. Holling 1978) evaluation should be thought about from the very beginning as it requires systematic monitoring and a feedback link into the scoping phase for new and follow-up plans.

The third layer of the process cycle is the necessary **data and knowledge**, which gives rise to the planning evidence that is used to make informed decisions (green arrow). Data and knowledge play an important role throughout the process, although the type of data and knowledge required at different stages and the respective data and knowledge providers (including stakeholders as important knowledge holders) may differ.

The outermost blue layer is the **participation process**. This represents the interface with society and feeds into the production of knowledge and all other activities of the planning process. The more participatory the process and the greater the degree of power-sharing in MSP, the more influential this layer is.

The point to be made here is that SI (mobilization, communication and input) needs to be designed not only according to overall aims and purposes (2.1) or the needs of specific stakeholders (2.2) but also with different the phases of the process and their timing in mind (2.3). This is about when SI is most appropriate, and what kind of activities are taking place that need which contributions.

2.5 How: designing the forms and intensity of involvement

The fourth step in preparing SI is determining “how” to do it. This ranges from organizing the process overall to selecting the specific places, methods, and tools to be used during specific stakeholder events. Here, communication and direct interaction become important, and the capacities and abilities to communicate and facilitate come into play.

Once the “why”, “who” and “when” of SI have been clarified, it is time to consider the “how” question, i.e. which forms of interaction and methods to use for which stakeholder groups, in which constellations, where and how intensively. “How” answers can be highly diverse. How to set up the overall process, how to structure it with what types of events, what type of interaction to use (direct/indirect, formal/informal, oral/written/visual/audio/objects, etc.) and what constellations (e.g. mixed stakeholder groups or not, large or small groups) are important questions to answer here.

Below we outline some basic considerations which are elaborated on in more detail in **chapters 3 and 4**.

The MSP SI toolbox - a continuously growing, broad choice of tested tools: We differentiate between process, methods and tools as follows: specific tools are the hands-on tools that are used during events, such as sticky dots, post-its, flipchart and pens, video recording, maps, Geographical Information Systems. Methods are broader and more conceptual and include, e.g. SWOT analysis, voting, group discussion, scenario analysis, or world cafés. Overall approaches and processes drive and document a process; they encompass stakeholder interaction over planning content and mutual learning in relation to this. Chapters 3 and 4 take up the tools, methods and approaches used in Baltic Sea MSP in relation to different planning phases; the appendix includes further references to participation toolboxes.

Differentiation, according to stakeholder needs: Different stakeholders might require different places, forms, and intensities of interaction, meaning that methods and frequencies of contacts may need to be tailored to specific group needs.

Mobilizing and including stakeholder knowledge may require specialist skills: If stakeholders are invited to provide place-specific and cultural knowledge, specialist skills are needed to document and process it. Preparatory and post-meeting groundwork is needed in the form of meetings and informal chats both on the content and to build trust with knowledge holders. Incorporating such knowledge as planning evidence implies skilful transdisciplinary work, as it will have various formats will need to be cross-checked, validated and translated into different evidence (e.g. users’ values and needs, resource-related facts and trends). Lastly, it will need to be considered on a par with information that is quantitative and GIS-based.

Linking and documenting different forms of interaction: Different forms of interaction have different preconditions and advantages. They also yield different types of responses and require different ways of dealing with these. Informal settings such as individuals chatting at a conference may result in intensive individual exchange and learning but may be difficult to document and make accessible for a broader audience. If stakeholders are consulted on a plan as part of a statutory process, the response is expected to be formal, often in the form of written comments on the plan in a pre-set format. Planners may then respond again formally by explaining how comments are taken forward in the subsequent planning process (e.g. consultation reports as required in Germany and Sweden).

Scaling: Depending on the degree of detail and the amount and diversity of stakeholders aimed at, a process may need to be more or less complex in design. Successful small-scale processes may be scaled up, as the principles are similar, but it is important to think about the different needs that might apply at a larger or cross-border scale or when combining many different stakeholders. Whichever tools, methods and process design are chosen, it is important that the objectives and how much influence is possible to remain clear to all involved. Moreover, there may be a need to empower or balance specific stakeholders and groups – particularly less vociferous and otherwise disempowered ones – to promote fairness and a well-balanced and legitimate plan.

Using the process toolbox requires both knowledge, skills and experience. Especially when talking methods and process, further aspects become important in terms of design: interaction techniques, venues and access, timing, the pedagogical layout of a meeting, how to orchestrate interaction within and across groups at a meeting and in an overall process, the linking of events. Doing this right requires well-developed social skills (including the ability to listen, understand, communicate, translate jargon, etc.) and some kind of pedagogical and/or facilitation training and mentorship.

Process matters: Even if the final goal is always a plan, the quality of the interaction process with stakeholders is at least as important as its content. In order to develop mutual trust, data reliability and the capacity to learn, time, resources, capacity and skill are required, both in terms of process facilitation and documentation (i.e. the foundation of the process stairway and process loop). This should never be underestimated.

2.6 Overall process design & adaptive roadmap: combining the why- who-when-how

After considering the why, who, when and how, it is good to combine all reflections in an overall process roadmap or SI strategy which is communicated publicly. Such a strategy includes a timeline and specific steps for when to communicate with whom in what way. Underway, a strategy document can be a compass, helping to review whether a process is heading down the right path. Finally, after concluding the cycle, it can act as a benchmark to evaluate the overall process and its outcomes and reflect on whether everything went as intended (e.g. satisfaction with the process, what should be done differently next time round)¹².

In order to develop an adaptive roadmap for SI, it helps to think along the timeline of the overall process. The scope of most planning processes narrows over time, both in terms of content and participants and process activities. Graphically, this might look like this (Figure 2-3):

¹² In Wales the SI strategy is called statement of public participation – see: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/statement-of-public-participation-for-the-welsh-national-marine-plan.pdf>

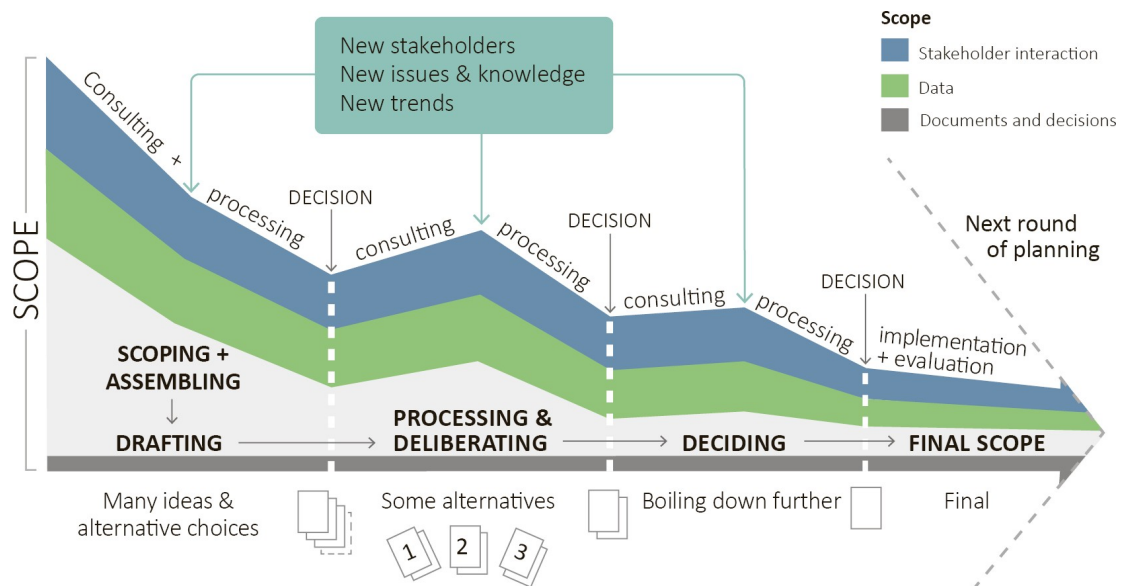


Figure 2-3

The Planning Process Arrow. Developed by A. Morf & co-authors

The Process Arrow depicts a multi-layered process loop stretched out over time (i.e. one full planning cycle). The main three strands of the earlier process loop (figure 2-2) are shown here as partially expanding and compressing layers that flow through the whole process. Continuous stakeholder participation is shown in blue, knowledge processing in green), and the documents and decisions made in grey. It shows that the overall scope of the process progressively narrows over time, but that it periodically widens as a result of consultation and stakeholder interaction phases, e.g. as a result of new stakeholders coming into play (top box in the figure). The diagram helps to clarify the purposes, means of stakeholder interaction and target groups for specific process phases.

Moreover, the following needs to be said about SI strategies:

Transparency: Any involvement strategy or adaptive roadmap produced can and should be made available to the participants, clarifying roles and phases of involvement (e.g. explaining which parts of the process will be open and which will take place behind closed doors). This promotes transparency and helps to keep expectations realistic.

Learning process and living document: A process is rarely linear or straightforward, planners constantly need to keep an eye on how things are running. MSP takes place in a complex context, and any SI strategy may require adaptation based on changing contexts (e.g. political elections, new planning issues), the timing of the process (e.g. delays and syncing with important events/crucial actors schedule), the resources available (e.g. budget cuts, available personnel) and the stakeholders (e.g. new trends identified or new interests arising). Stakeholder mapping needs to be updated as the process unfolds and new problems arise, new stakeholders enter the game, new tools are developed, or methods work differently than intended. It is important that the original involvement strategy is not forgotten as the process continues but is repeatedly reviewed and adapted based on the learnings along the process unfolds.

2.7 Challenges & enablers: knowing where to look for them

SI implies a learning process for everyone. If you don't get it quite right at first, learn from the experience and do it better next time. Nevertheless, it can be helpful to know the most important challenges for SI: awareness and mobilization of stakeholders, language and terminology, conflict and trust, time and timing, resources and capacity and not least having to do this across borders. Sometimes it is sufficient to just be aware of potential challenges and address them if and when they arise. Sometimes there are preventive strategies that can be taken to avoid them or reduce their impact on the process. Time, resources, skills and capacity for process leadership are key enablers, as is the ability to share and learn from experience.

Despite the best-laid strategies, things may not always go as smoothly as expected. Common challenges experienced in Baltic Sea MSP and some enablers to overcome them are listed below¹³.

Stakeholder awareness and mobilization: Especially in the first MSP cycle, awareness is a key challenge. Informing and mobilizing stakeholders to take part in the process is crucial but can be demanding, both if the overall pool of stakeholders is rather small or very large. Stakeholders may not be interested, other processes may have led to fatigue or attract higher attention or are even considered sufficient for SI purposes. Some stakeholders may be more difficult to motivate than others for varying reasons, but the opposite can also occur if strongly motivated or highly vociferous stakeholders are involved. There may simply be too many stakeholders to deal with at once, and a planning process may not be ready to include them and deal with their input due to limited time or capacity, so the process has to be divided into several parts.

Language and terminology (technical languages): Language differences come into play in cross-border contexts and can be a significant constraint in terms of additional resource requirements (e.g. translation budgets) as well as time (e.g. more time required to understand and agree on a terminology). Language differences (terminology, jargon) also apply within and across science, users, administrations, and the everyday language of the general public. Making sure everyone talks about the same thing using the same terms, and stakeholders understanding each other's options and constraints is an essential part of the process. A lack of shared understanding can seriously delay progress or even escalate into conflict (e.g. competing stakeholders are unaware of the other side's constraints and simply think them unwilling to compromise). Dealing with this requires both interdisciplinary knowledge of facilitators and awareness, patience, listening and repeatedly asking questions.

Escalation of conflicts and distrust: Some MSP processes may lead to or even start from a situation of conflict between stakeholders. A new technology or marine use may have entered the scene and its impacts are becoming apparent, or there may be long-standing competition between incompatible uses. There may also be a history of conflict or personal dislike between stakeholders. If conflicts remain unaddressed, they can escalate and affect trust in the process and the resulting plan. Trust is easily lost and takes time to rebuild. Planners need to act swiftly, but they also need to be aware of what an MSP process can realistically achieve. If a conflict arises during an event, they should first analyze the situation as fast as possible (who-where-what-why) and then try to de-escalate the interaction. If possible, they should mediate and broker solutions later on. Conflict management is worth a handbook in itself; there are many different approaches. Here we present just a few general observations with a focus on MSP, without claiming completeness. Conflicts are usually multidimensional, including both *content, behaviour and attitudes* of conflicting parties (see Rapoport 1960 and later developments in conflict research). An MSP process can best deal with some of the conflict dimensions. These are usually related to spatial interaction and technical aspects of sea use. Longer deliberative moments can address the value dimensions of conflicts. Skilful facilitation can also keep behavioural escalation between participants on a debate level, e.g. by setting out ground rules for interaction at meetings. Other conflict dimensions may need to be referred

¹³ See also challenges and enablers movie www.baltSPACE.eu and related papers (Morf et al. 2019, Gee et al. 2019) and the Lessons Learned from the Baltic SCOPE project (Kull et al. 2017).

to appeal or court. A collaborative approach to conflict (Morf 2006) implies first developing a shared problem picture before moving on to discuss possible alternative solutions¹⁴. Choosing meeting settings carefully and alternating approaches and stakeholder constellations can help to overcome lock-in situations. Generally, good facilitation practice focusing on trust, listening, equality, transparency and open communication helps to overcome the likeliness of interpersonal clashes, but this will not address the heart of some conflicts as such. See to it that you have backup within your own organization and higher up if things get rough. For a systematic reflection on spatial conflict management strategies, we also refer to the results from the MUSES project¹⁵ and an upcoming ICES report (Gee et al., forthcoming).

Time and timing issues: this is one of the crucial challenges and but also a key enabler of a participatory planning process. There is almost always time pressure, at least towards the end of a process, but also if there are projects or deadlines. Especially the exploratory preparatory stage or more complex processes with large groups of stakeholders and cross-border components can experience time constraints. Timing can be an issue in the case of cross-scale involvement when processes do not align and are at different stages and synchronization may be difficult. Timing may also be an issue when SI comes too late and all relevant decisions regarding the plan have already been taken.

Resources and capacity: It is rarely the case that the resources available cover everything necessary for an ideal process. Besides time, a shortage of financial resources will limit the scope and scale of SI. The same is true when human resources are insufficient, e.g. too few planners or lack of facilitation skills. Lastly, the lack of political support may keep down the ambitions of SI. Conversely, sufficient financial, human and political resources are an enormous advantage.

Multi-level and cross-border interaction: These magnify all other difficulties. Problems usually relate to institutional constraints (finding the right frameworks for mutual involvement), mutual understanding of MSP systems and SI, and the scope of SI. Continuous communication is key to enable understanding across levels and borders.

Overall, key enabling factors to meet the above challenges include 1) time and resources, 2) capacity and skills to facilitate participation, 3) political support and mandate from the competent authorities, 4) using peers and stakeholders as an asset, 5) working in teams to learn from each other, 6) anticipate and manage conflicts.

Section 2 provided ways of thinking about SI in a systematic way. To help structure and plan for SI, we have described four key questions to ask (why-who-when-how), provided a tool to think about the degree of power-sharing in MSP, and suggested ways of thinking about changing SI requirements over time (the process loop and the process arrow). We furthermore suggested an SI strategy as a useful way to guide and communicate the SI approach and presented key challenges and enablers of SI to be aware of. From this point onwards, we delve on concrete SI experiences in MSP from the overall process to tools and methods used by Baltic Sea countries in different planning phases.

¹⁴ For instance, e.g. the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation has an overall approach that let the stakeholders develop the situation picture, and prioritise together, before entering a discussion on solutions. See: <https://cmp-openstandards.org/>

¹⁵ <https://muses-project.com/>

3 How to do SI: General principles based on lessons from the BSR

In chapters 3 and 4, the handbook gets more practical. Drawing on first-hand experiences from planners of the Baltic Sea Region (i.e. Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia and Sweden), the following sections should help planners select appropriate settings, methods and tools for SI. At the time of writing (late 2019), most BSR countries were in their first planning cycle, except for Germany. Therefore, most practical experiences referred to, come from the first three phases of the MSP cycle. However, many tools are versatile and can be applied universally.

We use a functional and chronological sequence to structure the following sections. Chapter 3 takes on more generic aspects that emerge when moving through the MSP process. We start with general preparations for SI work, including an SI strategy, stakeholder mapping and analysis, and practical issues related to who should do what. We then move onto considerations surrounding communication and fairness in stakeholder representation. Chapter 4 elaborates on specific methods.



Source: Unsplash

3.1 Preparing for SI: map, analyze and plan!

Thorough preparation for SI is key to secure the quality of the process and outcomes. Taking time over this initial stage pays off later on, e.g. by providing clear criteria and rules for engaging stakeholders and enabling targeted communication. How SI is organized largely depends on the institutional setting in which MSP takes place, including planning traditions, as well as on the resources available. Initial reflections should, therefore, help to assess what is realistic within the given setting and time frame.

3.1.1 The SI team: Internal or external expertise?

Handling stakeholders requires specific kinds of skills. Facilitation requires a good understanding of processes, and how to organize them, e.g. organizing events, facilitating meetings and establishing communication channels with different stakeholder groups and keeping them informed. Gathering information and knowledge from stakeholders demands additional skills. Receiving knowledge, and applying it is often challenging due to the technical or special nature of every piece of information. Getting support from experts is therefore useful when addressing stakeholders and interpreting the information they bring. Forming a team for SI work is thus a complex task of picking the right skills from within and outside the planning team. In doing so, it is useful to first assess what kind of skills may already be available within the competent authority. Likewise, it is useful to build on the institutional memory, using the knowledge and contacts acquired from previous and related processes.

Furthermore, institutional memory is strengthened when there is continuity in SI teams, where the same staff is present throughout the process and future cycles. This helps to maintain a consistent approach throughout the MSP process, reduce the chances of losing information, and build trustful relations with stakeholders. In Germany, for instance, the core planning teams have remained the same for many years, making them well aware of stakeholders' needs and characteristics; while stakeholders have built close ties with the planning teams.

Countries across the Baltic Sea Region have used different approaches for building the planning and SI team. Generally, these differences are seen in the: a) composition of inner (mostly in-house) planning teams; and b) the use of external expertise.

In-house expertise: different models are possible

In the case of Sweden, the MSP team is quite large and is the most diverse unit in the Swedish marine authority (SwAM) in terms of expertise. It brings together economists, biologists, geologists, planners, lawyers, civil engineers and others. Team members were placed in different thematic groups according to their expertise, which was considered beneficial for the SI process.

In other countries, the inner team is much smaller. In Estonia, only one person was employed to work with MSP at one point, and three people in Latvia. These countries relied significantly more on external expertise, also for facilitating SI.

Germany (EEZ) also has a small team comprised of only two to three in-house staff. The core team is supported by other staff within the competent authority and staff hired on a project-base. Nevertheless, the team is managing SI entirely in-house without relying on external expertise.

Denmark is a particular case due to the unique institutional set-up with shared responsibility for MSP across several ministries. Here, 'in-house' expertise includes the five to six people responsible for coordinating the MSP within the Danish Maritime Authority, but also the approximately 25 people from different agencies and ministries that participate in the national MSP Working Group. In this case, expert knowledge comes, to some extent, directly through the different competent ministries. Yet, they are also responsible for conducting their own SI process with actors relevant to their sectors.

Using external expertise & consultants

External expertise can take many forms throughout the SI process. It is brought to the process by stakeholders themselves, e.g. in terms of the knowledge they contribute and their ability to interpret specialist knowledge. It can also be brought in by fellow planners other ministries and authorities, or anyone else involved in the process. It can also be commissioned specifically to consultants or other authorities, e.g., to carry out specialized studies or producing a draft plan. Consultants are in many cases, hired for facilitation at different events. External contributions can be linked to varying degrees of involvement, and consultants or stakeholders can work with the in-house team in SI in varying ways. When receiving external facilitation, it is crucial to clarify roles in advance to secure accountability in the process.

Example: Internal or external expertise - a mixed picture from BSR countries

In **Latvia**, one planner from the 'inner team' is in charge of the overall technical/sectoral issues. However, as Latvian planners recognize, "knowing that this is a cross-sectoral process, we understood that we can never do this alone". A working group was set up with 15 individuals from different ministries and agencies to work with the first drafts of the plan. After this, many more experts were sub-contracted to give input to the second draft of the plan. Involving 40 to 50 individuals with expertise in shipping, environment, ports, shipping safety, or cartography as experts was a way of bringing in stakeholder expertise in a direct way. Larger meetings were facilitated by the inner team, also with the support of experts. For example, sectoral experts were present in bilateral meetings with stakeholders: "If meeting the shipping sector, we brought along a shipping expert". (Latvian planners)

Estonia outsources different parts of the planning work, including facilitation. In terms of knowledge, external expertise comes into the process from other authorities, such as the Ministries of Environment, Economics (especially the energy department), Agriculture (which deals with fisheries and aquaculture), and research institutions, such as the Marine Systems Institute. NGOs have also proven to be important partners in terms of knowledge generation. For SI, "consultancy is helping us a lot with official communication, with contacts and with getting information" (Estonian planner).

Sweden, aside from the large in-house expert group, has used external expertise for facilitation and knowledge generation. SwAM has formal agreements with other agencies and organizations that are involved in the process. Three people from the Swedish Geological Survey (SGU) work full-time with MSP and consultants have been called in to assist process facilitation.

In **Denmark**, the Danish Maritime Authority coordinates the collection of information while a private consultant was responsible for organizing workshops with universities, coastal municipalities and sector interest groups during the scoping phase. The practical work of making the plan is also outsourced to an external company.

Expertise in SI and generally in planning issues can also be generated through international projects. The ties between planners across the Baltic Sea Region are particularly strong due to the different collaboration projects such as Baltic SCOPE and Pan Baltic SCOPE and through macro-regional collaboration in MSP through the HELCOM-VASAB MSP working group. The MSP platform and dedicated events are also good sources of information and external expertise.

Lastly, there might even be passionate volunteers, i.e. individuals and organizations with a strong interest in contributing to a planning process. Such persons can draw on specific knowledge and save you time and resources, not least by tapping into their own networks. At the same time, it is important to be aware of their underlying motivation, possible conflicts they may be part of, and how their involvement might affect and be perceived by other stakeholders, e.g. by influencing the perceived impartiality of the MSP process. Their capacity to support the process should not be underestimated, but planners should be alert not to lose control over the process by delegating core responsibilities without keeping a clear idea of what is happening.

Example: Passionate volunteers in Estonia

The role of individuals and their inner drive cannot be underestimated regardless of what institution or stakeholder group they represent. “We have a lot of good partners with a spark in their eyes who want to do as much as they can” to help. For instance, a consultant has a “clear interest in national planning processes and a passion for MSP and data, but is not hired to do this work”. Similarly, an NGO has often provided “pro-bono ‘expert opinion’ on Impact Assessments and help us facilitate public discussions”. Another example is a scientist who “is a very keen partner, willing to help us with writing project applications, and giving us as much information as possible for the MSP process”. The inner motivation of individuals and the personal relations that have been established with the planners have been of real help in the planning process. (Estonian planner).

Key Recommendations

- Map and mobilize internal and external institutional/organizational memory to build the team responsible for MSP and SI.
- Consider the different types of knowledge that are needed for MSP when forming the SI team, including sufficient facilitation skills.
- Utilize external expertise to complement the inner team’s capacities considering the various perspectives relevant in the planning process (e.g., sector knowledge, place-based cultural aspects).
- Keep an eye on the limitations of external experts responsible to manage parts of processes and be ready to step in if necessary.

3.1.2 Stakeholder mapping and analysis – knowing your stakeholders

Knowing your stakeholders well and keeping up to date with them is key for a successful SI process. A first and fundamental step is to identify or ‘map’ all the various individuals, groups and institutions with a stake in MSP that you want to involve in your MSP process¹⁶. A **stakeholder list** can include:

- Authorities: state / Institutional stakeholders (ministries, agencies, sub-national governments, politicians)
- Industry and businesses (established users, newcomers – private and public companies)
- NGOs and user organizations
- Citizens (individuals, interest groups)
- Research institutions
- International organizations (e.g. IMO, EU, HELCOM, VASAB, ICES)
- Representatives from neighbouring countries (administrations, industry, NGOs)
- and others

Be aware that stakeholders act at different geographical scales and that groups can be highly diverse internally, e.g. making use of the sea in different ways or having access to different technologies or knowledge. The above groups will need to be subdivided further according to, e.g. sectors (conservation, transport, fishing, energy, etc.), size and scale (global companies, companies with local impact), etc¹⁷. A first list should be made during the scoping phase, but this should be a ‘living list’, continuously updated to incorporate new stakeholders along the process.

Once you have a full list, you may want to describe stakeholders according to their stakes and interests in space. You may also want to characterize them further, e.g. in terms of how they might be affected by the plan or how dependent they are on a particular resource or space. Descriptive information can be captured in a simple table like this:

Example, Stakeholder table

Stakeholder name (group, enterprise, individual)	Contact details	Stakes/interests (use rights, permits, etc.)	Impact of the plan on the stakeholder

Once the list is made, it is recommended to make a map (either physical or mental) of the geographical distribution of the stakeholders. This should help identify gaps and ensure that the whole territory and place-specific knowledge is considered.

¹⁶ We present practical experiences of stakeholder mapping here, to find out more relevant techniques and tools see: 1) BaltSeaPlan report, link: <http://www.baltseaplan.eu/index.php/Reports-and-Publications;809/1>, or 2) “Marine Spatial Planning: A step by step guide”, link: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000186559>, or 3) OECD guide to stakeholder involvement, link: https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/nuclear-energy/stakeholder-involvement-in-decision-making_791983ee-en#page25

¹⁷ Various examples are available to help you identify relevant stakeholders, for example the statement of public participation in England, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-planning-statement-of-public-participation/marine-planning-statement-of-public-participation>

Example: Stakeholder mapping

Approaches to stakeholder mapping differed across countries, both in terms of the depth of the exercise and **who** was considered relevant.

In *Denmark* for instance, organizations were considered the most relevant stakeholders rather than individual persons or companies. Similarly, *Germany (EEZ)* only considered the so-called “bodies of public interest” in the beginning– i.e. those bodies with a public stake in the EEZ. Most of these sectors were represented by the respective public authorities, but in some cases also companies e.g. telecommunications, offshore wind. The initial stakeholder list also included local coastal municipalities as well as the coastal federal states. Over time, the stakeholder list grew considerably to include other interests – for instance, fisheries and research sectors. During the consultation stage, the process is open to anyone willing to contribute.

In the state of *Mecklenburg-Vorpommern*, Germany, the policy was always to keep the process as open as possible. “There has not been a catalogue of stakeholders we wanted; it was always open to everyone” (German planner).

Conversely, *Sweden* did a thorough job mapping stakeholders and planning its SI process from the beginning. An SI strategy was developed together with a stakeholder analysis and a communications plan. In *Latvia*, stakeholder mapping was also carried out in connection with an overall SI strategy. Stakeholders were identified according to the sectors they represented and categories distinguishing between state institutions, research, private companies and so on. However, the SI also followed the snowball principle, by asking stakeholders to point out other relevant actors. According to a Latvian planner “this is useful, since often there are stakeholders you don’t know to begin with - for instance when talking to the port authorities, they could tell us better who the private investors are”. Latvian planners also referred to the relevance of institutional memory when mapping stakeholders, as they also approached contacts they have collected during previous projects.

Often, a simple list may not suffice, but a stakeholder analysis may be necessary to characterize stakeholders and their roles. This means using the assembled list of stakeholders and asking different types of questions, depending on the planning scope and aims. For example:

- What are their interests and needs in the marine space and environment, what exactly is “at stake” for them?
- What information are they likely to hold that is relevant for the planning process?
- How can they contribute to the process – e.g. in terms of resources and capacity?
- Are they well-organized (e.g. interest group with a strong lobby), or less organized (e.g. dispersed group)?
- Are they experienced in SI processes, or have they never participated in such processes before?
- What are their attitudes towards MSP and state-led management processes?
- Are they keen and willing to be involved or are they sceptical?
- Are there any past incidents between stakeholders or groups – previous conflicts, personal likes and dislikes you should be aware of?

Answering these or similar questions is very helpful when deciding what to communicate to which stakeholders, when, and what forms of events or meetings and process facilitation you may need.

Example: Stakeholder analysis: Sweden and Latvia

Sweden conducted a comprehensive stakeholder analysis to better understand the specific needs of stakeholders and decide **how** and **when** to approach them. This analysis gave detailed consideration to the attitudes of stakeholders, whether they can be present at a certain time of the week or the year, or whether they can come to a specific place. For example, fishers are out at sea on Wednesdays, and thus not able to participate on that day. Or Gothenburg (where SwAM is located) might be too far for certain stakeholders to travel, and therefore meetings were organized in different locations.

During the second round of SI, *Latvia* adopted a targeted approach based on stakeholders' 'degree of influence', inspired by the BalticLines project. This is not an example of a detailed stakeholder analysis but shows how the specific characteristics of stakeholders played a role in **who** was prioritized and **how** they were approached. In a planner's words "the ministry did a rating and mapping according to the expected influence in the later process of MSP and their capacity to make decisions that affect the overall process". As a result of this analysis, the ministry decided to focus their efforts mostly on two sectors, shipping and energy. Accordingly, scenario-building exercises were conducted to model how the two sectors can co-exist under different circumstances.

The so-called wind diagram illustrated in Fig 3-1 shows how the multidimensionality of stakeholders and differences between stakeholder groups could be visualized based on deeper stakeholder analysis. Gathering this type of data requires some effort, e.g. by means of surveys, interviews, or workshops; it also requires some expertise in processing it (e.g. grading each dimension on a scale from high to low). Each dimension is represented on an arrow and the degree is marked by a point on this arrow. Connecting the points for each stakeholder group leads to a pentagon and provides a simple visualization of its 'profile'. In the figure, the two shaded pentagons provide the profile of two different stakeholder groups: the fishers in blue, and the coastal residents in orange. The advantage of a wind diagram is that relevant dimensions can be combined in one picture and compared across several stakeholder groups. Understanding the different characteristics of stakeholder groups then allows for more targeted SI and gives you greater sensitivity with respect to the characteristics and needs of specific groups. You can, of course, make your own guesses, but any thorough analyses, e.g. of influence, attitudes, etc. will take time and needs to be done by people with relevant expertise.

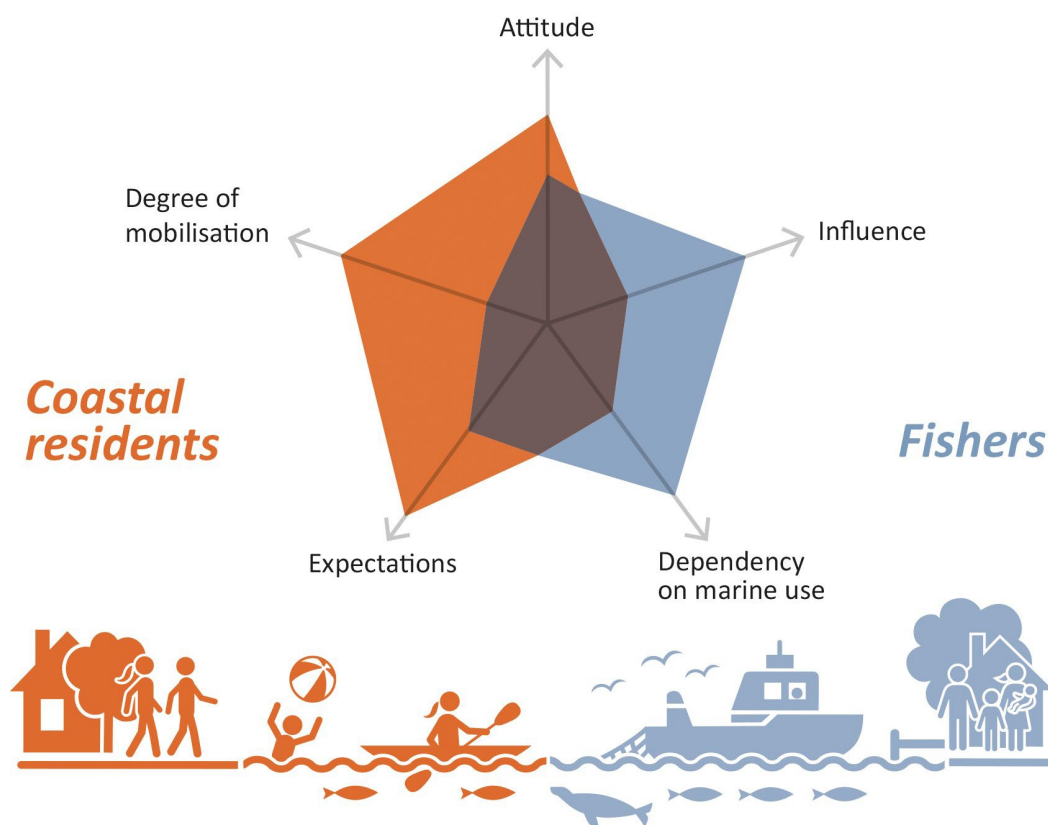


Figure 3-1
 Stakeholder analysis wind diagram: stakeholders are multidimensional and may not just have different use interests and attitudes, but also differ in relation to how they can be included in a SI process (influence, mobilization, expectations from process). Developed by A. Morf & co-authors

Finally, it is useful to keep a **stakeholder database** containing contact details and keeping track of who has been contacted, on what date, or participated in an event. This must bear in mind data protection regulations and should be regularly updated.

Key Recommendations

- **Stakeholder mapping** is an important first step in SI – not the least to justify who was involved and to identify any gaps. Map out potential organizations and names and develop this into a living stakeholder list.
- **Build on the institutional memory for mapping stakeholders:** talk to colleagues in your organization and institutions working with issues related to MSP. There may be existing networks of stakeholders.
- **Stakeholder analysis** is useful to understand who might come to the table, with what expectations and needs, and who will be able to influence the process, and in what way.
- **Consider the appropriate timing and setting to involve different stakeholders.** The stakeholder analysis should help you identify their relevance in each part of the process.
- **Stakeholders have their own organizational memories** – consider the different levels of experience between stakeholders in similar SI processes.
- Consider using a **stakeholder database** containing contact details to keep track of who has been contacted, on what date, or participated in an event.

3.1.3 A strategy for stakeholder involvement

As mentioned in chapter 2, a written strategy for SI is crucial. This should answer the why, who and when questions, and possibly provide some details on the how question (specific tools and methods). A strategy guides the process and helps to assess whether the desired outcomes have been reached. It influences who is involved or left out, what information is taken on board, and which stakeholders need to be called in at a given point in time. The strategy needs to be flexible enough to allow for changing situations, emerging needs, and including new stakeholders. Using tables and the tools presented in chapter 2 – ‘stairway of participation’, ‘planning process loop’ and ‘planning process arrow’ (Figures 2-1; 2-2; 2-3) are useful to think through the process systematically. The examples below show how Sweden and Estonia planned their SI process.

Example: Stakeholder involvement strategies in Sweden and Estonia

The *Swedish* marine authority did a thorough job developing a strategy for SI in conjunction with an overall communication strategy. With the help of a communications advisor, Sweden designed a plan for each step, with a clear timetable and goals for each step and event. “MSP is mostly about communication - you need to have a dedicated communications advisor and build relations with stakeholders long before consultations begin”. In the SI strategy, the purpose of each phase of the process was clearly defined. Likewise, before every event and meeting, the purpose(s) were clearly set out and specific methods were chosen. The steps set in the strategy were generally followed, but there have been small adjustments along the way “especially to the methods” used. A positive experience, according to Swedish planners, was to have a communications expert that can share practical methods and instruct planners how to use them (Swedish planners).

Estonia took a more exploratory approach. The responsible ministry began MSP with two pilot plans in the Hiiu and Pärnu regions, which served as a base for designing the national MSP and SI processes. An ad-hoc approach to SI was used for the two pilot plans without having any clear strategy. Nevertheless, the two processes differed significantly from each other. In Hiiu there was an expert-driven process led by a group of different national and local authorities and NGOs. In Pärnu, experts acted as a supervisory body and instead had an extremely inclusive process with numerous meetings with different stakeholder groups. The two approaches influenced the way decisions were made: “in Hiiu decisions were made very quickly, and sometimes not very well substantiated, so often they had to be re-evaluated. In Pärnu, it was very hard to make decisions, they wanted to be very democratic and make everyone happy”. Having learned from these experiences, Estonian planners designed the national strategy somewhere in between the two pilot models. “We need to be good at drawing the line because we can always talk and do more research, but at some point, we need to stop and make decisions”. Moreover, the strategy had to be “revised every now and then in order to make it as comprehensive as possible”. At the time of the interview, the planner explained that the strategy would be revised once more after the consultation phase.

3.1.4 Building consistent relationships

The ultimate aim of SI should be to build long-term relationships with stakeholders. This will help with the cyclical nature of the MSP process. Communicating this from the beginning also makes it more worthwhile for stakeholders to invest in the process. Long-term relationships naturally build over time, both through direct personal contacts (e.g. at meetings) and through indirect contacts (e.g. information, newsletter).

To build consistent relationships, targeted meetings are useful. At the same time, the power of simple chats with stakeholders without any particular agenda should never be underestimated. Signalling openness and willingness to be engaged is very useful if MSP. But it is important to be aware that informal contact can also imply lobbying.

Key Recommendations

- **Design the SI strategy** considering the level of ambition, the available resources, the legal framework, opportunities and limitations.
- **Develop a timeline:** Include different events, activities and define when to contact and communicate different stakeholder groups, for what purpose and in what planning phase.
- Consider **integrating SI timeline** into the overall MSP communication strategy.

3.2 Communicating with stakeholders: it is all about the right mix for the purpose

SI requires a variety of means of communication for raising awareness about MSP (mainly informing) and for collecting information and feedback (consulting, interacting, collaborating) (see Box 3-2). Apart from the official channels of communication and the official, formal meetings, much of the interaction with stakeholders is informal. It occurs through informal meetings, phone calls, emails, etc. Different stakeholder groups and individuals may be able or willing to communicate with planners in different ways. Not everyone feels comfortable in large events or sending written feedback. Many stakeholders and the broader public might not even provide input at all but still have the right to be informed about MSP, including its objectives, processes and results.



Source: VASAB Secretariat

Box 3-2

Common forms and tools for stakeholder outreach

- Official billboard: Particularly important for announcing the formal start of the process, the objectives, the opportunities, and important decisions made throughout the process. Today, this is often the authority homepage.
- Sector journals, magazines, daily news, public media: Particularly useful for popularising MSP, involving local communities and informing on decisions made. Also useful in specialized newspapers targeting specific stakeholders.
- Place specific local papers/forums/billboards: one-way communication towards specific local target groups.
- Social media: useful for raising awareness on MSP with the general public, for informal and fast communication.
- Skype and phone calls: useful for day to day communication, quickly gathering information, expert opinions, and clarifications. Highly interactive.
- Emails: can be used both formally and informally, to communicate day to day issues, but also to provide written / visual material.
- Face to face interaction: useful for trust-building. Can take a variety of forms, formally and informally, and in different settings. Highly interactive.
- Video conference: used similarly as above instead of physical meeting, or complementary possibility to a physical meeting. It is useful when reaching stakeholders located far from the authority's premises.

The types of communication vary depending on which level of the stairway the interaction is occurring e.g. one-way communication or deliberation (see Fig 2-1 in section 2.1).

Examples: reaching out – mixed types of communication

According to *Latvian* planners, various channels are used to communicate with stakeholders: “We published official information on ministerial page and on a special MSP page - at the time, we had a special Twitter account to publish information about the meetings and some important moments in the process.”

A *German* planner explains: “We try to go to the people and not wait for them to come to us”. People who are not participating in the conferences can always send a letter to the planning authority or send comments directly through a web portal. We try to reduce the obstacles - there should be an easy entry point so that people don't feel shy or that the obstacles are too high because it is technically too difficult to participate.”

In *Denmark*, the different relevant ministries are in charge of communicating with their sectoral stakeholders, which serves as a filter for the input received. The Danish Maritime Authority can communicate directly with stakeholders but has chosen a more reactive approach. For instance, they participated in meetings with municipalities and local residents to discuss zoning solutions for aquaculture.

A *Swedish* planner responsible for a sectoral group explains: “With some of them I communicate through Twitter or SMS, so this was very informal”. Similarly, a *Latvian* planner explains that some stakeholders are very close to the process, so they even chat through WhatsApp and Facebook. In *Estonia*, a planner explains: “We have direct, ad-hoc communication with our partners, we just pick up the phone and call them.”

There is, however, a risk of having too much informal communication with stakeholders. A planner from *Estonia* explains: “You have to be careful also with this kind of communication. We have to be careful not to harm anyone's interests or promise things that cannot be delivered”. Therefore, “there needs to be a balance between things that can be solved right away on the phone, and things that have to go through a formal process”. Along these lines, a *Latvian* planner explains that different forms of communication depend not only on stakeholder groups but on purpose. In their words: “If a fast response is needed, we send an email or call, but for final decisions, they get emails with files to inform them what has been decided”.

Several countries also utilized newspapers and other media. *Latvia* used local media for press releases about the first draft and informed the general public how they contribute to it. However, they admit that “it has been hard to reach ordinary people, they don't easily grasp what the plan is about”. Over five years, “the ministry received 3-5 questions from the public, and mostly regarding the state of the sea, pollution, or questions that are already regulated otherwise.”

Sweden used a communications advisor, who advised planners on how to use classical and other forms of communication. One example is the slogan “manga ska samsas om havet”, which successfully transmitted the message that “everyone [using the marine space] has to tolerate each other and get on well together”. This phrase is used every time an email is sent, “it has been around for a very long time and we often use it whenever we start a meeting”. There was even an MSP song, sometimes sung by planners, that received quite a few laughs in meetings.

Key Recommendations

- Consider using **different communication packages** for different stakeholder groups and regions in order to reach different stakeholders and across your territory.
- Use both the **stakeholder analysis and a strategy**, and relate to the intensity of involvement (stairway in Figure 2-1) and process phase (planning process loop and arrow in Figures 2-2 and 2-3) when choosing the appropriate forms of communication and packages.
- When choosing communication channels, consider the **amount of information** that needs to be transmitted and the responses you expect from stakeholders.
- Be **creative and innovative** in the way you communicate and think outside the box (e.g. using slogans)
- Using **professional communicators**, e.g. for press releases or web-based communication

3.3 Designing stakeholder meetings and events

3.3.1 General considerations

Meetings are a common tool for involving stakeholders in MSP. While some objectives can be achieved from a distance (e.g. email, phone), face to face interaction remains important, particularly in the early stages of MSP. The benefits are not restricted to planners but also extended to stakeholders, e.g. learning and building an MSP community. Meetings are of varying types, but therein are some general principles to consider irrespective of time and place. It is worth investing time preparing meetings to get the best possible results and to keep stakeholders on board. The SI strategy can lead the way in preparing for specific events. Yet every meeting needs to be tailored using specific settings and the right mix of methods and tools. These will depend on:

- ✓ Why: the purpose of the event and your objectives
- ✓ Who: the respective stakeholder group/s and depending on scope and stage of the MSP process.
- ✓ How: according to the relationship built with the specific stakeholder group/s, as well as in relation to practical/organizational issues (place, method, tools, etc.)
- ✓ When: the phase of the planning process (progress achieved so far).

General rule: the purpose of the meeting defines who is involved, the setting, the methods, and the tools.

The **purpose** depends on when in the MSP process the meeting is taking place, i.e. whether it is in the scoping, drafting, consultation, implementation, or evaluation phase. In terms of **who is involved**, it is important to know your stakeholders and be aware of any constraints they might face. “For instance, you can’t meet the fisheries on Wednesdays because they’re out at sea” (Swedish planners). The **format and setting** of a meeting can be crucial. The venue should be accessible, and the methods should suit the group you will be interacting with. Preparation also means considering the various tools that will be needed, such as flipcharts, whiteboards, group exercises, etc. In Sweden, planners once “used a meeting room with specific windows where every roll-up paper fitted

into every section of glass – you have to be inventive and adaptive and see what fits best for the group.” The **methods and tools** to be used will differ depending on the purpose of the meeting (e.g. to collect information from stakeholders, to come up with a planning solution), and the issues to be discussed. Spatial issues, for example, might be easier to discuss while drawing on maps or using touchscreen-based digital tools. Tools will also differ depending on the level of interest stakeholders bring to the table. “Some agencies and actors are simply not interested or affected enough” (Swedish planners). Others might have national interests at stake and can use their weight to exert pressure.

Be firm but flexible in your planning: As a Swedish planner stresses: SI means “you have to stand on both your feet” – be organized and plan ahead and know what you are doing and why, but also be flexible and plan for the unexpected.

3.3.2 Suit your stakeholders: key considerations

(Combining) purposes

The purposes of meetings can be to inform stakeholders, collect information, co-working, etc. Often stakeholder events combine various purposes, i.e. inform stakeholders and gather information. In such cases, stakeholder events can be structured into different parts. Estonia’s meetings with coastal communities provide a good example. These were organized in two parts: the first was open to a broad audience mostly to inform about MSP and respond to questions; instead, the second part was devoted to work on concrete issues in small roundtables of some 8 people each.

The format of an event

Stakeholder groups are different. Thus it helps to think in advance of the best way of approaching them and the topics that should be brought to the table. Approaching authorities, especially at a higher political level, require respecting certain protocols. In Estonia, for instance, addressing authorities requires a more formal setting and typically includes slide presentations and questions- and-answers (Q&A) sessions. The discussion tends to be general at this level but can also touch on specific technical issues such as Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) or the Ecosystem- Based Approach (EBA). In contrast, “there is no point in talking about the EBA or the MSP Directive with coastal communities” (Estonian planner). “Here we don’t make it too formal; we make it as familiar as possible, we use maps and do hands-on work on local issues”. The latter case requires a welcoming setting to make everyone feel comfortable to participate. The way to approach stakeholders can change in line with larger social and political debates. Therefore, continuous communication with stakeholders is important to understand the impact of changing contexts.

The importance of location

On-site visits and organizing various forms of events and communication packages for specific regions are good ways to reach stakeholders across the country. Especially in large countries like Sweden, where stakeholders are geographically dispersed, it should not be expected that they can participate in gatherings far from their base. Swedish planners organized three tours around the country for different planning phases. In some occasions, physical meetings were replaced with video conferences. Stakeholders feel more engaged when they see that planners come to them. Attendance may also rise if travel costs are low.

Time and timing

If travel cannot be avoided, for example, for a kick-off conference, events should be organized in places that are easy to reach. In such cases, the agenda needs to allow enough time for travel, e.g. by choosing to start the conference at lunchtime. According to Finnish planners, larger stakeholder events should be organized in major cities, preferably Helsinki, and not start at 8:00 o’clock in the morning.

Formal and informal events

Both formal and informal meetings are important – and useful in their own ways. Estonia, for instance, runs two parallel processes: A formal one with authorities to consult on the outline of the plan, the timeline, the key goals of MSP and objectives for different sectors, and an informal one through public discussions. This informal exercise with the coastal communities was useful for mapping culturally significant areas. In the Estonian case, it was important to separate the formal from the informal processes and to separate authorities from the larger community. According to Estonian planners, approaching authorities and coastal communities require completely different approaches, forms of communication, methods and tools, and the discussion is at a very different level of detail. More formal approaches are used for authorities, and the topics are more policy-oriented and general, while more informal approaches are used for coastal communities where the focus is on local issues. (Estonian planners).

Germany also runs both formal and informal processes. The formal process is guided by law and involves, e.g. the official announcement of the intention to revise a plan, and the formal public consultation on draft plans which runs according to a set format. During the revision of the EEZ plans, the informal process made use of smaller thematic meetings with selected stakeholder groups prior to the formal process, in addition to many conversations with relevant authorities, scientists and others. The informal process is an advantage in the second planning cycle, as stakeholders are more familiar with MSP. Moreover, having the same staff working in the planning team has kept existing relations and levels of trust built in the prior process. Thus, stakeholders are willing to be engaged informally. In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, there is also an informal process, which is not unlike an ongoing conversation with stakeholders. Also, in this case, stakeholders, after two MSP cycles, have developed a good understanding of the process and willingly contact the planning authority with specific issues or proposals.

Size matters

The size of stakeholder meetings has an impact on group dynamics and ultimately determines the results of an event. When starting something new (e.g. phase, focus area, MSP as such), a bigger meeting to brainstorm and collect ideas works well. Large conferences/events also work well when the purpose is to bring stakeholders together or to provide information to large groups. Working on concrete and technical issues calls for more focused meetings which are generally smaller. Roundtables and workshops with selected groups of experts enable participants to talk freely, reveal detailed information and co-develop planning solutions.

Kick-off events in most countries have been organized in the form of large conferences. After the first large meeting in Latvia, the ministry organized several smaller bilateral and trilateral meetings to delve into detailed discussions with sectoral stakeholders. Workshops and seminars proved useful for detailed discussions in Sweden. Similarly, in Estonia, cross-sectoral discussions were limited to no more than 10 people.

Although an event may be designed for a specific size, unintended number of participants may result in positive outcomes.

Example: how an unintended small meeting became a success

In the consultation phase, Sweden planned a large stakeholder meeting. Participation, however, did not exceed some 15 people. This unintended situation resulted in a very open cross-sectoral discussion, “because it was a small meeting with very different stakeholders it resulted in very good discussions”.

Key Recommendations

- Design stakeholder meetings according to 1) the overall phase of MSP, 2) the purpose of the meeting (to collect information, provide information or co-create knowledge), and 3) the specific needs and attitudes of different stakeholder groups.
- Consider the format of the event (formal, informal), the location and venue (accessibility), and timing (both the right day, and time of the day).
- Determine the size of the event according to its purpose and the audience
- Prepare sufficiently before stakeholder meetings and make use of skilled facilitators.

3.3.3 Interaction matters: to mix or not to mix stakeholders

The SI process can be influenced by whether you choose to meet stakeholders separately or across sectors, levels and regions. There are advantages to both (see Box 3-3-3). The purpose and level of detail expected in the discussions can be reasons to choose one approach over the other. It may also depend on pre-existing relations with stakeholders and their relations with each other. There may also be a need to empower specific groups before letting them meet other, more vociferous ones. There are three main choices for meetings:

- A. **Individual:** the work, and interaction occurs in thematic groups, or directly with individual stakeholders.
- B. **Bilateral meetings:** two different stakeholder groups come together, in addition to the planners.
- C. **Mixed (multilateral) meetings:** A diverse group of stakeholders come together.
- D. **Re-mixing:** A combined approach of individual and mixed settings within a single event

In many countries, different types of meetings are employed at different stages. A mixed kick-off or information event is often followed by individual meetings to obtain specific information. These are often followed by mixed meetings, e.g. to discuss different planning options. Mixing, unmixing and remixing groups can occur throughout the process and at specific events. Facilitation is key to generate a safe space for listening, dialogue and mutual learning.

Box 3-3-3

Advantages and disadvantages of mixed versus individual stakeholder meetings

Advantages of not mixing stakeholders

- ✓ Creates a safe space for a specific group/stakeholder
- ✓ Reveals underlying motives and information that cannot be shared in larger groups
- ✓ Can isolate a problem for better understanding
- ✓ Explores issues in depth without boring others with details (e.g. sectoral, technical)
- ✓ Empowers specific groups

Advantages of mixing stakeholders:

- ✓ Stakeholders gain a broader understanding of what is at stake and the difficult task planners have.
- ✓ Stakeholders can learn about other stakeholders' interests and positions.
- ✓ Conflicts across sectors can become evident.
- ✓ Helps to identify synergies and potential opportunities.
- ✓ Can create arenas for exchange between different sectors.
- ✓ Can spark innovative ideas
- ✓ Can lead to compromises and shared solutions

Disadvantages of not mixing stakeholders:

- ✓ No direct voices/knowledge from other groups (hides potential counterarguments)
- ✓ May get stuck in a particular "bubble"

Disadvantages of mixing stakeholders:

- ✓ Discussions may remain at a general level
- ✓ Stakeholders may refrain from speaking up about issues that can generate conflict with others
- ✓ Greater potential for conflict escalation
- ✓ Needs more careful facilitation
- ✓ Can drift into other discussions that are unrelated to MSP

A. Individual meetings

Working with individual stakeholders (e.g. organization, key enterprise, key individual) at a time can help build initial relations, letting stakeholders develop their viewpoints in a safe environment or exploring specific issues in greater depth (e.g. the needs, requirements, and challenges of a particular sector). It can also be a last resort in case-specific key stakeholders cannot sit at the same table or find it difficult to share information while others are present, e.g. where there is an issue of trust between stakeholders. Latvian planners explain that meeting stakeholders alone is necessary when discussing detailed issues, particularly when identifying agreements on technical matters e.g. shipping priority zones. Germany also had individual, informal meetings with particular sectors to understand their positions and objectives and to give them the opportunity to outline their preferred spatial scenarios. Meetings like these can make sectors feel appreciated and included.

Under certain circumstances, it may be useful to keep groups apart for a while. For instance, authorities might need to develop their own viewpoints before meeting private stakeholders. Swedish planners explain that the plan comes as one voice from the state, but the state is divided into several ministries and agencies, some of which have never heard of MSP before. For this reason, the lead authority saw the need to generate a common understanding among state actors before involving other stakeholders. Besides MSP, sectoral authorities work with stakeholders for other purposes and thus “the agencies cannot lose their face in front of their key stakeholders, so rather meet the agencies separately first” (Swedish planners).

B. Bilateral meetings

Bilateral meetings can be useful for identifying and exploring conflicts, synergies and solutions – even addressing conflicts that are outside the scope of MSP.

Example: Bilateral meetings are important for problem-solving

In Estonia, bilateral meetings were useful to solve concrete conflicts between stakeholders. For example, they brought together the fisheries and surfers associations, which had been in a long-standing conflict regarding mutually interfering activities. A compromise was achieved. In the planner’s words: “Even though (the national MSP process) was not the right level of detail to discuss the issue, and even though it did not have a ‘spatial solution’, we decided to include it because it was really important to both parties. This is the beauty of the process, some things might not be directly related to MSP, and may not end up in the plans, but you end up creating other kinds of synergies throughout the process”. This is a clear example of the importance of building relations with stakeholders and thinking outside the box to be able to build a consensus on the overall plan. The planner emphasizes “I find the process more important than the end result. It can make you and stakeholders think about things in a different way.”

A complex cross-border example can be borrowed from the Baltic SCOPE project, where a territorial conflict between Denmark and Poland emerged as the two countries embarked on their national MSP processes. The so-called Grey Zone is a disputed area in the border between the two countries, south of the island of Bornholm. While solving the conflict is not within the competence of planners, the dispute has direct implications on their ability to carry out their work in the area. For this reason, planners from the two countries invited their respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs to a bilateral dialogue to find a workable solution for planners. This dialogue led to the agreement, that planners of both countries would jointly plan for the disputed area. The bilateral dialogue between the ministries proved to be successful in providing a temporary solution for the planners, but also in accelerating the conflict resolution at a higher political level. (Giacometti et al. 2017)

C. Mixed meetings

Mixing stakeholders in meeting is useful for them to get to know each other, for receiving general information, and for consensus building. Mixed meetings bring different opinions and priorities to the table: “It is important to mix stakeholder groups to show that they are not alone in the sea, that it is a shared sea and a busy place” (Latvian planners). Mixed meetings can also help stakeholders empathize with the difficult task planners have in finding the right balance between interests: “Often stakeholders say, ‘you have to do this - take this into account’, not knowing that there are a thousand other comments on the same issue and place” (Swedish planners). A mixed meeting can generate a different dynamic when it is not ‘the planner against the stakeholder’, but a more complex dialogue emerges. For instance, “if someone attacks you, you may get support from another stakeholder” (Swedish planners).

By bringing stakeholders together, the underlying conflicts between them may emerge more easily. “Sometimes we need to be brave, we need to hear the conflicts” (Swedish planners). As a German planner neatly explains “We put them all in one room. It is most helpful to see if they start a discussion and whether they finally compromise or not. For me as a planner, this is helpful to get an idea where the main conflict actually is - because what they say in the first instance might be a façade but not the core of the conflict”.

“Sometimes, it is crucial to mix, or at least have someone representing a sector to make sure certain uses don’t interfere with other sensitive or priority interests” (Latvian Planners). This also helps to avoid unnecessary work. For instance, by bringing a representative from the Ministry of Defence, Latvia made sure they will not veto their decisions afterwards – “they can already know where wind farms will be banned because of national security”. Finally, mixing stakeholders also helps to identify possible synergies and opportunities for collaboration, which may lead to further exchange between them outside of the planning sphere and brought back together again in the same meeting.

D. Re-mixing

A combination of mixed and single stakeholders can be used to profit from the advantages of both options. This occurred in transnational meetings within the Baltic SCOPE project. On a few occasions meetings were organized, inviting a diverse group, but then stakeholders were divided into sector groups.

3.4 Dealing with stakeholder input

3.4.1 Requesting and processing input

As mentioned before, stakeholders can provide valuable input to the plan, the MSP process and possible broader outcomes. In many countries, dealing with official stakeholder feedback is regulated by law, and there are minimum requirements for publication, e.g. for producing a report. How to request and process stakeholder input in a systematic manner is thus an important question.

Collecting and processing input needs to be systematic, transparent and based on equal opportunity to contribute – especially during the formal phases of consultation on a draft plan. Collecting, processing and providing feedback to stakeholders can be a monumental task and should not be underestimated in terms of time and capacity. Steering input collection can make it easier to process information. However, the way input is received is not homogenous nor fully predictable. During the early scoping and drafting phases, feedback loops can be more situation-specific and stakeholder-oriented, while consultation rounds demand a clear structure that allows planners to deal with the often enormous quantities of input received. Choices can include whether to opt for digital or analogue formats (e.g. an online portal for submitting input), different forms of making available relevant documents (printed or online), asking questions about the plan or just letting people find their own ways of responding.

Examples: Dealing with feedback – important and requires resources

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in Germany had a two-stage process of presenting the draft plan. It combined formal and informal instruments. Two rounds of formal consultation took place, plus several regional conferences, and various events with associations, NGOs and municipalities. During the formal consultation, more than 2,600 individual statements were received on the plan draft, raising around 10,000 issues in total; more than 600 of them specifically related to MSP. Thus, German planners stress the need for sufficient technical capacity to deal with all this information. It must be clear from the start “what to do with these statements” and “what would they mean for your plan and how do you change things”. Formal feedback on the draft plan (national and federal) is received via an online system. Comments are made public, and planners respond to each comment that is received. The responses (and suggested amendments to the plan) are also made public, so everyone can trace how their point was taken into account and based on what reasoning. (German planners).

In Sweden, planners have compiled some 2,500 pages of comments from stakeholders. Besides the individual responses required by law, Swedish planners have elaborated a 280-page report to evaluate the input from the consultations. During an intermediate phase, responses were not just collected in written form but also through meetings in smaller contexts, where it was easier to discuss and reason around different options.

In Estonia, planners have chosen to communicate some of the discussions around a cultural profile of certain regions in the local media and newspapers. In some cases, however, responses to stakeholders can lead to “endless feedback loops, endless responses”, but according to the Estonian lead planner “we can decide when we enough information has been given and stop responding - and if they are dissatisfied they can always take it to court”. However, to avoid escalation, “public relations takes much more than what is required by law”.

According to Latvian planners, “we were not obliged to give feedback, but we understood that we have to do it since we need them again”, therefore they “update them and talk about the most up-to-date topics”. During formal consultations, however, Latvia is required to respond. Yet, most of the feedback was delivered informally by “email, send a file-sharing the decisions made, and by phone”. Exceptionally, when decisions are made, they sent in written format to formalize the decision.

3.4.2 Using stakeholder input in a balanced way

Planners have the difficult task to consider and balance the interests of all stakeholders. Ideally, decisions are made on the basis of transparent criteria and fair consideration of relevant interests. In Estonia, the Planning Act even mandates that “the interests of one sector cannot be prioritized over another”. However, MSP is never neutral, as it unfolds in the context of existing international, national and sub-national institutional structures, laws and policies, e.g. fisheries policy, UNCLOS, or the MFSD. Such structures build hierarchies between sectors and interests and define a restricted playing field for marine users. Given these complex contexts, treating stakeholder input equally is a challenging task and may not be possible.

Examples: Balancing interests

As a Swedish national planner revealed, “we were acting as if it was a blank sheet of paper, but it is not a blank sheet, it never is”. “It has taken quite some time to understand all the pre-existing regulations and priorities”. Another Swedish planner adds: “the tricky thing is to be able to judge stakeholders’ interests according to where they are in the hierarchy”. Moreover, a stakeholder’s interest might also be of public interest. The planner explains: “When does the interest of a company become a local interest, or regional interest, or national interest or even an international interest? it depends on how you look at it”.

According to a planner from Estonia “old sectors feel that they have privilege and are more important because of historical reasons - so it is a challenge to balance the interests when new activities are coming into play”. A Swedish planner explains that “handling conflicts of interest is a lot about handling people and opinions”. So, there is no rule of thumb, but to avoid making decisions in favour of the overrepresented groups requires a highly “transparent process and as many consultations as possible” insists the Estonian planner. Also, they add that the plan should not be too rigid to enable future potential uses and developments.

3.4.3 Dealing with the internal bias

Another important issue is dealing with the planners’ own bias or possible conflicts of interest within the planning authority. Each country has a different competent authority for MSP, ranging from an environmental and resource management authority (Sweden) to a ministry responsible for spatial planning (Germany EEZ/MV), a marine licensing authority (Germany/EEZ), a shipping authority (Denmark), a ministry of finance (Estonia) or a ministry of environment and regional development (Latvia). Thus, the strategies for avoiding bias have differed considerably as well. The key point is to be as transparent as possible with any decision-making and also with the provision of data and information, offering as much opportunity for other stakeholders to act as a corrective. At the same time, be realistic in acknowledging the institutional constraints of the respective administrative context and constraints imposed by any political priorities.

Examples: Dealing with internal bias

The Swedish MSP authority, SwAM, for instance, is also the fisheries authority, and so they need to be careful to not favour the fisheries sector. For this reason, the process was organized in the form of a project that was separated from other activities. They selected different project leaders for the marine planning process and the impact assessment. The process itself was felt to have been fairly democratic, involving five official consultations and one informal dialogue, so six opportunities overall for many different stakeholders to provide input.

In Germany (EEZ), the MSP authority falls under the ministry responsible for spatial planning, but the authority is also responsible for marine licensing, e.g. for offshore cables, wind farms and for the allocation of sites for wind energy developments. Tasks are assigned to separate departments, and different staff deals with MSP in an effort to keep the MSP process independent. A balanced approach to SI also goes a long way towards reducing perceived bias.

In Latvia, the MSP process influenced decisions regarding the sea to become more evidence-driven. "Before MSP, the maritime organization was the only one that had access to geodata, and that data was used as 'the official geodata'. Now we have data that everyone has access to, and we have a plan with different uses and interests, enabling more data-driven decision-making." The aim is to provide open access to maps and data of interest areas, enabling businesses to see where to invest.

Denmark has a two-track strategy, in which the Danish Maritime Authority collects information from stakeholders, while at the same time sectoral ministries communicate with them directly about MSP and receive input. This is particularly relevant in Denmark as the sector ministries are responsible for reporting what kind of input and data they want to be included in MSP. Therefore, they can decide what input from stakeholders they want the Danish Maritime Authority to take into account.

Key Recommendations

- Give some thought to how to deal with formal and informal stakeholder input or feedback. There may be legal requirements for dealing with stakeholder input during the consultation.
- Dealing with stakeholder feedback can be very time-consuming; make sure to allocate resources for this.
- Ensure that stakeholders are informed of how their feedback is used.
- Make your decision-making as transparent as possible to avoid accusations of organizational bias.

3.5 Stakeholder involvement across borders: complicated but crucial

International consultation is important in MSP. The EU MSP Directive requires member states to coordinate their plans across borders. In that sense, planners have a dual role: one in mobilizing stakeholders internally and another as stakeholders in other countries' consultation processes.

At the present stage of MSP development, there is limited experience with cross-border SI, but this is rapidly evolving. A handful of projects have served as a platform for cross-border collaboration and SI in the BSR, such as BaltSeaPlan, PartiSEApate, Baltic SCOPE and Pan Baltic Scope. These projects have demonstrated that there is great potential for learning from planners and stakeholders from across borders. However, because countries are at different stages of the MSP process, coordinating this exchange is often challenging (Kull et al. 2017; Giacometti et al. 2017).

Language is a challenge for cross-border SI, however, BSR countries presently translate their plans and the impact assessment documents in line with the Espoo convention. Recently, Estonia and Sweden, among other countries, have used project partner meetings to organize back-to-back consultation meetings with stakeholders in other countries. For instance, the Finland-Åland-Sweden case in the Pan Baltic Scope project has facilitated cross-border SI with sectors¹⁸.

Example: cross-border collaboration projects promoting participation

According to Swedish planners, projects and working together at a practical level has boosted mutual learning, despite plans and processes being different. Building such relationships has been important for problem-solving across borders. Today, planners feel confident of picking up the phone or send an email to their international colleagues.

Latvian planners explain that international projects have had an enormous influence on stakeholder work. For instance, the Baltic SCOPE project enabled planners and also many stakeholders to meet with their counterparts in other countries. Stakeholders could identify common interests and sector-specific challenges. In the BalticLines project, planners and stakeholders participated in the MSP challenge game, and other international activities which opened a window to a large group of people involved in topics surrounding MSP.

This chapter provided hands-on examples of how planners in the BSR countries dealt with more general aspects of SI. Chapter 4 delves into concrete tools and methods related to specific planning phases.

¹⁸ Finland-Åland-Sweden case in the Pan Baltic Scope: <http://www.panbalticscope.eu/activities/cross-border-collaboration-and-consultation-to-support-national-msp-processes/finland-aland-sweden-case/>

4 How to do SI: Methods and tools used in the BSR

This section describes different methods and tools that are used for SI in the BSR at different stages of the MSP process. Rather than an alphabetical list, they are organized in two different ways:

Firstly, we use the different stages of MSP to illustrate which approaches and methods were used in different countries and when. We begin with the first steps of SI in the scoping phase, moving on to the drafting and consultation phase before ending with some examples and considerations for the implementation and evaluation phases. Of course, many methods or considerations can also come into play at other stages.

Secondly, we also cluster the methods and tools into the following three main types:

- A. those related to the interaction process,
- B. those collecting and structuring content,
- C. those adding an analytical or synthesizing aspect to the mere content collection.

These types may, however, overlap. An experienced facilitator can combine them to support each other. An obvious example is to use visual tools in combination with presentations. In Latvia, planners recognize that “drawing on a map and including scenarios is good because people can see and listen to explanations. Once they can see, they can understand better what might happen”.

This is just a ‘first cast of the net’ to catch important tools and approaches. The list is based on planners’ experiences, but many more tools and approaches exist. See Appendix 7.2 for overview tools and methods.



Source: Andrea Morf

4.1 The scoping phase: how does it all begin?

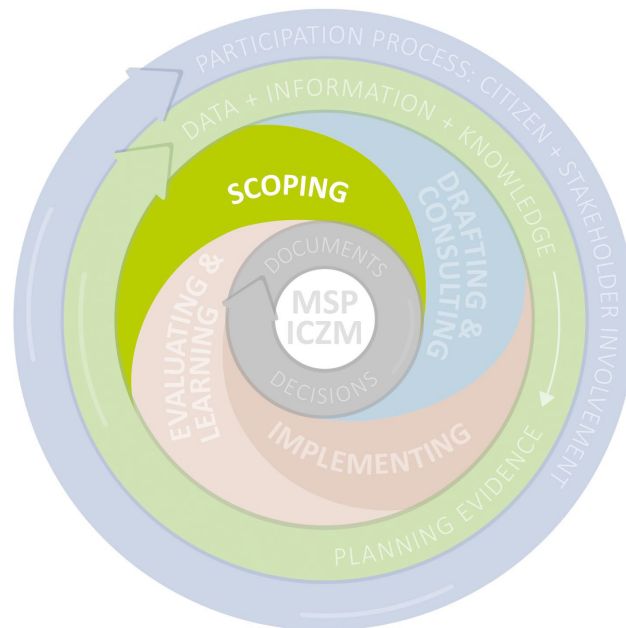


Figure 4-1

Scoping Phase: Planning Process Loop of MSP and ICZM. Developed by A. Morf & co-authors

The precise moment, when an MSP processes begins is often difficult to pin down. Formally, a government's communiqué officializes the start of a planning process. How this is done is often standardized in the legislation. In Germany, for instance, the Federal Spatial Planning Act foresees that the competent authority must publicly announce 'the intention to plan' or to revise a plan. Similar legislation applies in the federal states. Government decisions can take time or be postponed, and legislation and even the competent authority might change. Informally, however, MSP and SI processes often begin before the official date. In Sweden, legislation for national MSP was not yet in place in 2013; still, SwAM started informing and consulting domestic authorities and international contacts about MSP. A more extreme case occurred in Estonia, where MSP started in 2010 and even resulted in two pilot projects, while the official process only began in 2018. Normally several preparatory and informal meetings with stakeholders take place before the intention to plan is officially announced.

At this point, good communication with stakeholders is crucial as this will set the tone for the forthcoming process. At the same time, it is important to be clear about what can be expected from the participation process.

First impressions: Meeting stakeholders for the first time

The purpose of the kick-off meeting will determine the setting and scope of the event. The purpose of the first meetings will most likely be to explain what MSP is, its objectives, and how the process may look like. It may also intend to get to know stakeholders and for them to meet each other. Ideally, this first meeting would also clarify the different roles and responsibilities.

Choosing the approach for the first event will also depend on the degree of previous interaction with stakeholders and how well stakeholders already know each other. The choice is essentially between a large kick-off event or smaller, more group-specifically targeted meetings designed to inform stakeholders and perhaps collect some initial information about what is going on in the sectors.

Examples: Initial meetings with stakeholders

In **Estonia**, a large conference in 2015 was meant to formalise the start of MSP, however, regulations changed delaying the entire MSP process. Finally, the official national planning process began in 2018. Unofficially, however, MSP had already started in 2010 when the first licenses for offshore wind power were introduced. Although no licenses were granted at the time, this marked the beginning of MSP and SI. Even the two pilot plans in Hiiu and Pärnu regions were completed outside of the formal process, starting in 2012.

Sweden: to kick off the official national process, the authority invited stakeholders to a large conference in Stockholm. According to the lead planners, this was positive, as it helped to get to know each other personally and to understand diverse positions. Sweden chose to first work with responsible national sector agencies and only later with non-governmental stakeholders. Planners said that they could also have done it differently, “we could have been braver” and have invited companies as well and more agencies to the kick-off conference.

Latvian planners organised a series of formal meetings to kick-off the national process with all ‘inter-institutional working groups’, which were broad meetings gathering different kinds of stakeholders. The first meetings were confusing – “nobody knew how everything would turn out, what was expected of them, how they could provide anything useful, and some even had the expectation that MSP is a sort of magic wand that would solve all problems”. The next meetings were held in coastal cities with local authorities, fishermen, port authorities etc., to provide background information and discuss different sector needs. This proved to be useful to make stakeholders aware that “they are not alone in the sea”, but also to foster long-term thinking, build expectations, clarify the input needed from stakeholders, and to “break the ice” between them.

Denmark did not organise one large kick-off meeting. Instead, individual ministries and their agencies had direct contact with “their” stakeholders, with special focus on the users. The secretariat also organised kick-off workshops with selected groups; coastal municipalities, sectors and universities.

Germany (EEZ) initially assumed that the first planning process for the EEZ would primarily be administrative, helping to implement relevant sector policy, such as the expansion of offshore wind. No kick-off conference was held. The initial step was to contact all relevant national public bodies, federal states, industrial and environmental organisations, and neighbouring countries, to establish their respective interests and “stakes” in the EEZ. Two meetings were subsequently organised, one for the North Sea and one for the Baltic Sea, to discuss the scope of the strategic environmental assessment, which brought together federal and state authorities, associations, research organisations and business representatives.

Key Recommendations

- Prior to the official start of MSP, informal interaction with stakeholders may help to get a picture of what sort of event would be most appropriate to kick-off the process.
- Consider a broad approach when meeting stakeholders for the first time. The earlier they are involved, the more they feel appreciated.
- Clearly inform stakeholders about the legislation, objectives and the structure of the process to avoid wrong expectations.

4.2 The drafting and consulting phase and how to engage with stakeholders

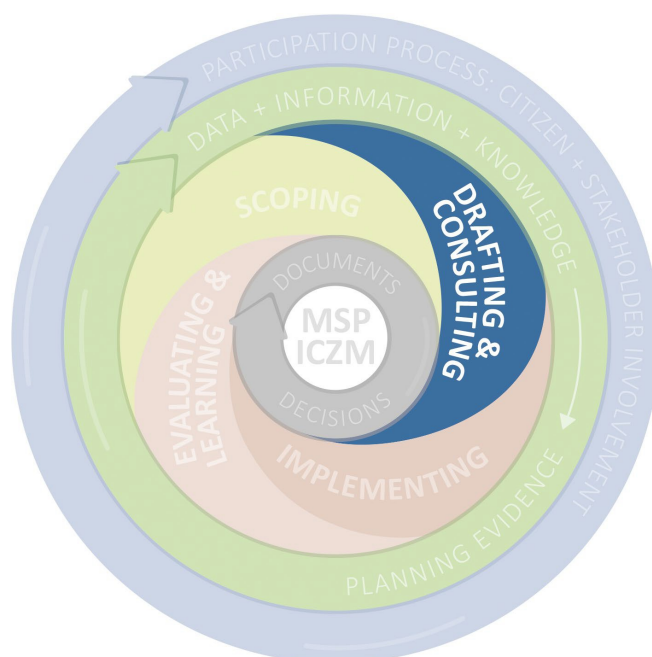


Figure 4-2

Drafting and Consulting Phase: Planning Process Loop of MSP and ICZM. Developed by A. Morf & co-authors

As the planning process proceeds into the drafting phase, concrete planning solutions become the central focus. Concrete planning options have to be negotiated. Various types of interaction come into play, including mapping tools to visualise marine space or zoning options. During the drafting phase, it may also be important to be well acquainted with the planning area and to consider more carefully under what circumstances to meet stakeholders. Choices will likely need to be made between individual versus mixed meetings, and sectoral versus cross-sectoral groups. Choices may also involve ad-hoc groups and groups that have work on an issue over a longer period. Finally, as more information is collected, methods must be found that allow planners to compile and analyse it in the best possible way.

4.2.1 Process and interaction related tools, methods and strategies

On-site visits and face to face meetings

On-site visits, and generally touring the whole national or coastal territory can be important for planners to better understand place-specific preconditions, needs and interests and to indicate a participatory approach. Swedish planners, for example, explained that visiting municipalities and informing about the MSP process was crucial for showing their intention to conduct an inclusive process, rather than developing a plan that is imposed from above. On-site visits can be especially useful in more complex problem situations and conflicts, as both planners and stakeholders can gain a more diverse and hands-on experience of both context and different problem dimensions.

Online meetings – reduce travel stress and leave the intensity of interaction to the participants

Another way to reach across a larger territory is to use digital material and interaction tools accessible to local authorities and other stakeholders. In Sweden, national planners made recorded presentations and arranged Skype meetings with different municipalities to brief them about the MSP process. Sometimes this was preferable to physical meetings, as it allowed local stakeholders to discuss issues amongst themselves, without being observed by the national authority. Instead, they could discuss freely and re-connect online when they had further questions.

Dividing up the drafting process thematically or geographically

A. Thematic working groups

Thematic working groups are particularly useful to delve into the details of one specific sector or theme, such as fisheries, shipping, energy or environmental considerations. This could also be bi-sectoral where sectors need to explore their interaction, e.g. conservation and fisheries. According to a **Swedish** planner, thematic working groups were “non-threatening environments where stakeholders talked freely”. Agencies in the thematic groups were able to express their disagreements without having others in the group defending competing interests. Thematic groups early in the process are very useful to collect as much information as possible from each sector.

In **Denmark**, stakeholders' interests are collected directly through the ongoing interaction between industry and ministries and agencies and are then transferred to the coordinating team of the Danish Maritime Authority. In special cases, additional processes are needed when dealing with a specific area or development, e.g. addressing interests from the shipping and energy sectors in relation to planning offshore wind farms.

For **Germany (EEZ)** the responsible national authority is also organising thematic working groups prior to the formal consultation on the draft plan to explore sectoral interests and planning preferences.

B. Working with sub-areas

Working with the whole marine space at once can be overwhelming and discussions often remain at a general level. Focusing on smaller or pilot areas is useful for resolving concrete issues. Experiences from Estonia show that working with pilot areas can help planners learn to conduct MSP and SI processes first at a more manageable scale, and with a smaller group of stakeholders. At a later stage, issues discussed in detail can be generalised for the whole national territory. Working with sub-areas was also useful at a cross-border level, once the so-called “hotspot” areas had been identified.

Examples: Dividing and discussing

Pilot plans in sub-areas in Estonia

Before starting the official planning process, Estonia worked with two pilot plans in the Hiiumaa and Pärnu counties. Although planners admit that “today we would do them differently”, these plans were done with the best available knowledge at that time and with no previous experience of such processes. Therefore, the pilot plans “provided a good learning experience for us [the planners]”.

Based on these pilot plans, planners developed a methodology for other Estonian counties; which was then generalised to the national level when the responsibility for MSP was transferred to the national level. In the end, Estonia will have a single national plan but taking the county approach was useful for the national planners “to get more detailed information and hands-on discussions on concrete issues”.

Baltic SCOPE – interest areas

Planners involved in the Baltic SCOPE transnational collaboration in MSP identified several sub-areas or ‘focus areas’ in the south-west Baltic Sea. These areas were selected because there were interesting issues to be addressed at a cross-national level, particularly areas with multiple overlapping interests. Figure 4-2-1 shows the different areas selected.

The Kriegers Flak area, for instance, is a hotspot for the construction of offshore wind farms at the tri-national border between Sweden, Germany and Denmark. The same area, however, is also important for shipping, gravel extraction and other potentially conflicting interests.

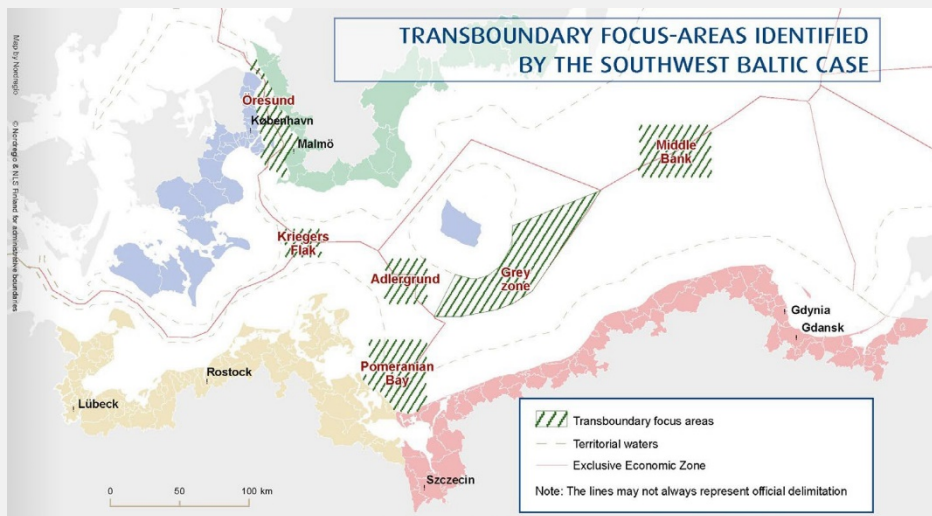


Figure 4-2-1

Transboundary Focus Areas in the South West Baltic Case. Source: Giacometti et al. 2017

Clustering and moving content and people: world café

Many different versions of the 'world café' method have been tested in the BSR. It was seen as a useful method to get different stakeholder groups to interact with each other. The method can be used in different ways, and basically involves rotating groups of stakeholders between tables and topics. One way to use the method is to set up each table with a different question and rotate the same group from table to table, so every participant will end up contributing to each question. Another one is to change the composition of the groups as they move from table to table. Interactive large group methods such as world cafés are fairly labour-intensive and take some planning. The questions need to be well thought through, and facilitators need to be clear in explaining the procedure, and good at collecting the material. World café-like methods are useful in making people meet in different constellations, breaking the ice, and coming to know each other's views. Is it also a good way to collect information from many participants through structured brainstorming. It is recommended to have both a facilitator and a note-taker at each table to guide the discussion, document what is being said and ensure everyone gets a chance to speak.

4.2.2 Content related tools and methods: showing and assembling information

Content-related tools allow planners to collect different types of knowledge and present it for discussion. They include very simple methods to collect information from stakeholders but also tools designed to visualise and collate information – for example feeding into the development of a draft plan.

A. Maps for input and discussion

Using maps is a good way to initiate discussions and help stakeholders to think spatially. Still, sometimes maps can be misleading (e.g. indicating conflicts in places where there are none) or lead discussions in irrelevant directions (e.g. focussing on place-specific details on a map instead of the topic at hand). Despite these drawbacks, maps were seen as worth using to trigger and support discussions. As a planner from Germany states, "maps facilitate discussions much more than textbooks." Meeting and talking over maps was very good for the drafting process in Sweden. A planner explains: "We got a lot of information and we wanted participants to talk freely". Likewise, an Estonian planner states that maps are "something that people relate to and can talk around".

Interactive maps have been used to some degree. Within the Pan Baltic Scope project, interactive maps on a website were developed with detailed information about the interests and characteristics of many areas. Although these maps were not for stakeholders to comment on, they were used during consultations and were then improved, so that they could be used by a broader audience in open access. The Swedish national MSP authority also financed small municipal projects that created their own interactive maps together with the respective county administrative boards. An interesting initiative in Estonia's '**crowd-sourcing map**', "an ArcGIS web solution, where anyone can put forward ideas on an online map "whenever they wish." Reviewing citizens' input to such interactive maps can be "time-consuming, but we figured that not everyone is willing to talk freely in meetings, so it is easier for some to put the ideas in writing in a map" (Estonian planner).

Nevertheless, not all stakeholders are used to work with maps, and some may have problems orienting themselves and thinking spatially. When it comes to interactive or digital maps, these can be too difficult to use for older participants who are not used to a touchscreen (Estonian planners).

B. A matrix (or table) of interests

Cross-tabulation of things that need systematic analysis in relation to each other is a simple, but very effective tool that has many uses. It is often called a 'table' or 'matrix of interests' and is widely used to map and contrast different interests. There are many different ways to carry out such an exercise. Commonly, such matrices were developed either for a whole marine basin or for specific sub-areas, to point out and assess the relationships between different uses.

At an early stage, a simpler matrix can help to identify the presence of specific interests, e.g. a 'degree of interest' (Example A - below). This matrix helped to visualise whether different uses were of 'strong' or 'low interest' in specific areas. More complex matrices help to systematise the relationships between interests: for instance, two interests may be in 'conflict', they may be 'competing', or they may 'coexist' (Example B below)

Estonian planners reveal that "these matrices are very good to visualise the issues". However, they did not always use them since the number of apparent conflicts is limited. **Latvian** planners expressed that such matrices are very useful but can also be hard to use with some stakeholders, because they may "interpret the words [in the matrix] too strictly", and "not everyone understands the complexity and the possibilities for trade-offs". However, they do think the matrices are useful when working with professionals. In **Sweden**, different approaches to these matrices were used. Swedish planners point out that it is useful to couple the use of a matrix of interests with maps to place them in space¹⁹ (Example B). In this case, they started from a specific sector's perspective, e.g. energy, to contrast this with other uses. On the map, the stakeholders marked all those places where energy developments can have an impact on other interests and vice versa. These connections were distinguished according to 'conflict', 'competition', 'coexistence' or 'other'. The figure shows the result of such a mapping exercise developed in a series of workshops with the sector.

The matrix of interest tool was also used extensively in a transnational setting in the Baltic SCOPE project (Examples A and C) where participants were mainly planners. In this instance, the method was not only used to draw out information but also to address the identified conflicts (Example C).

¹⁹ Example Energy:

<https://www.havochvatten.se/download/18.55c45bd31543fcf8536b08a8/1462955030649/karta-tematisk-havsplanering-energi.pdf>

Example Fish: <https://www.havochvatten.se/download/18.55c45bd31543fcf8536b08a6/1462955030273/karta-tematisk-havsplanering-fiske.pdf>

Example: Matrix of interest – three different applications – with and without maps

Below are three different examples from Sweden and from the Baltic SCOPE project

I. Baltic SCOPE cross-border and cross-sector interest mapping

Planners from the Baltic SCOPE partner countries used the matrix of interests in sub-areas of the Baltic to identify converging uses. The exercise consisted of collecting the different sectoral interests in specific sub-areas to visualise potentially overlapping interests, conflicts and synergies that exist or may emerge as a result of the planning process.

In the matrix below the focus areas are listed across the top together with the countries involved in each (e.g. PL, DK, DE, SE). The different interests are listed in the left-hand column. Then each cell is coloured according to the degree of importance of a particular interest, in a specific cross-border area, e.g. dark blue indicates 'strong interest', light blue 'low interest', and so on. In addition, rows on the bottom of the matrix are reserved for indicating the existence of any planning restrictions, regulations, and other comments.

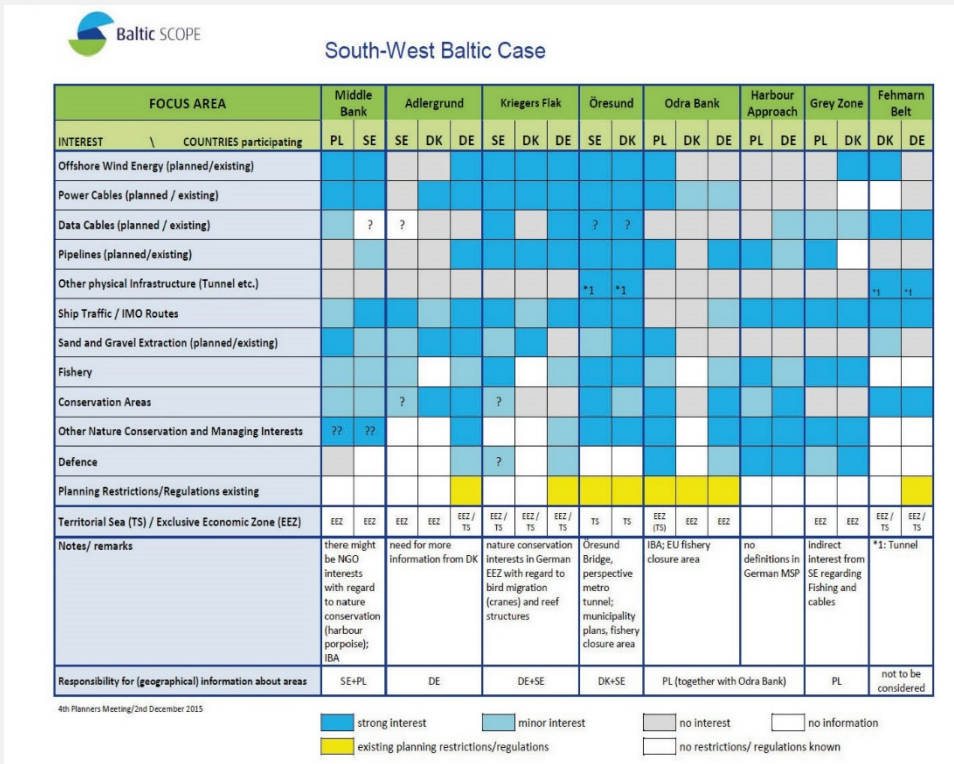


Figure 4-2-2-1: Matrix of national interests in focus-areas of the Southwest Baltic case study. Source Giacometti et al (2017)

II. Thematic conflict/synergy/coexistence mapping between energy and other uses from Sweden

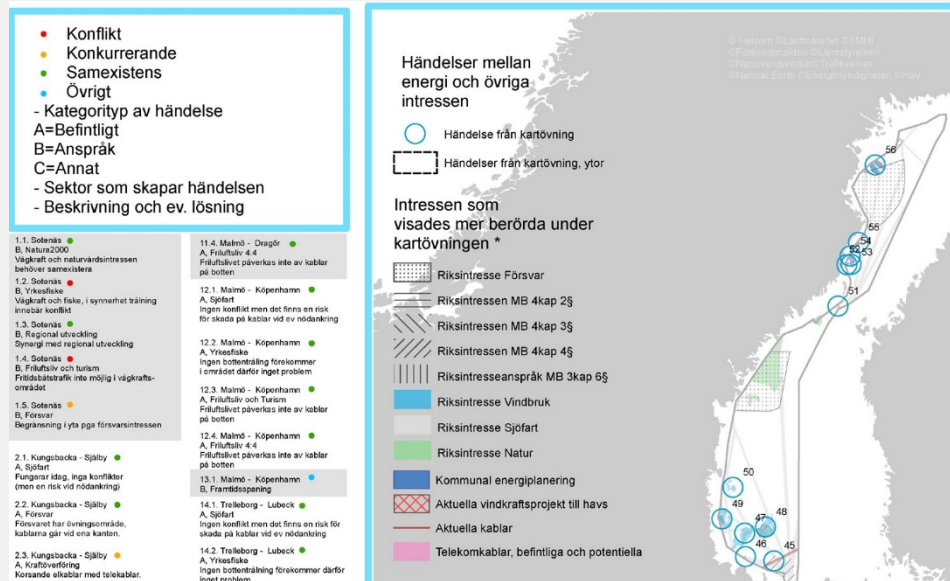


Figure 4-2-2: Relationship between energy sector interests with other interests: Results of exercise with the thematic group on energy for the Swedish MSP. Source: Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, SwAM (2016).

<https://www.havochvatten.se/download/18.55c45bd31543fcf8536b08a8/1462955030649/karta-tematisk-havsplanering-energi.pdf>

III. Baltic SCOPE cross-border matrix of overlapping interests

More elaborate matrices were then used to add details on the specific relation between each pair of interests in one area.

OVERLAPPING INTERESTS BY COUNTRY (E.G. PL VS. DE) / STATUS: A=EXISTING B=CLAIM C=PLANNED	STATUS: CONFLICT, COEXISTENCE, OR COMPETING	DESCRIPTION OF CONFLICT ANALYSIS	POSSIBLE/PROPOSED SOLUTION
(SE, PL) Raw Material Extraction (A) and (SE, PL) Offshore Wind Farm (B)	COMPETING	Sand and gravel extraction in the same place as offshore wind farms is not possible.	Share information and try to harmonize countries' offshore wind farm requirements before granting permits for sand extraction in the area.
(SE) Raw Material Extraction (B) and (PL) Raw Material Extraction (B)	COEXISTENCE	Oil and gas extraction in Poland and CO2 storage in Sweden.	Need further investigation.
(PL) Raw Material Extraction (B) and (SE) Other (A)	CONFLICT	Possible conflict: Poland plans for extraction of oil and gas - Sweden has made a political decision not to.	Create a common way of illustrating the area. Inform each other about plans and intentions in the future.
(SE, PL) Dumped Munitions (A)	COMPETING	Dumped munitions on Swedish EEZ are possibly migrating into Polish waters because of currents. Might be a problem but can be solved together.	State plans in text, illustrate in the area.
(SE) Offshore Wind Farm (B) and (SE) Maritime Transport Routes (A)	CONFLICT	Offshore wind farms and shipping cannot occur at the same place. The DW route is very important, also important for the re-routing of Klaipeda route.	Take away the national interest area for wind power within the DW route.
(PL) Fishing Areas (A) and (PL) Military Training (A)	CONFLICT	Military use hinders fisheries in the area south of the Southern Middle Bank.	Dialogue is needed.

Figure 4-2-2-3: Overlapping Interests in the Southern Middle Bank cross-border area.

Source: Giacometti et al. (2017).

C. Showing and discussing plan drafts

In addition to maps, and at a more advanced stage of the process, showing a draft plan, or parts of it, at a meeting is a useful door opener for in-depth reflection – and a type of informal consultation. Stakeholders are eager to see draft plans and planners are eager to have something concrete to show them. The first draft plan in Sweden provoked a lot of discussion on specific issues. Many meetings took place to discuss it. Along similar lines, Estonian planners comment that “if we have something on paper, people know what you are planning and it is easier to speak up and have opinions - so, with the first draft, we hope to have the most involvement”.

D. Formal consultation on a draft plan

While informal discussions on draft plans can take place in many ways, formal consultation is usually a set requirement within the MSP process. A Swedish planner emphasises that consultations are not negotiations but aim to review the draft proposals and receive feedback from stakeholders and the public. There may be one or several rounds of consultation, depending on how the draft plan is shaping up and whether all its provisions find acceptance by the stakeholders. In Germany (MV), a draft plan had to be changed quite significantly after protests from stakeholders concerning the large areas set aside for offshore wind. A revised version was more broadly accepted in the second round of consultation.

During consultation, the level of detail often increases, as specific aspects become the focus of discussion and the need for providing general information decreases. A planner from Sweden explains that during the last consultation round, “after a 6-year process, we no longer talk so much about what MSP is anymore, nor explain the legislation, we rather focus on the changes made”.

Formal consultation will often have a more prescribed format, e.g. who must be involved, how many rounds it can have, and how long a consultation period may last. In Germany, legislation sets out how the public consultation process has to be organised, leaving little room for deviation. The law states, for example, that the public must have opportunity to comment on the draft plan and associated SEA early, that any documents must be publicly displayed for at least a month, and that a suitable time frame must be set for comments to be received. Comments must be submitted via an electronic system. The law also requires the consultation of neighbouring states, in line with the 2014 EU MSP Directive. The advantage of the electronic system is that responses of the planning authority to the comments can easily be made public, leading to greater transparency of decision-making.

Informal and formal consultation on a draft will ideally go hand in hand, reducing great surprises in the formal consultation. During the first cycle of MSP in the German EEZ, there was some criticism that stakeholders were confronted with an almost final draft plan at two hearings specifically organised for the purpose. A second round of consultation thus followed. Learning from this experience, and also from many MSP projects and other processes, stakeholder communication and consultation has been substantially adapted for the current second planning cycle.

4.2.3 Analytical and synthesising tools, methods and platforms

The tools and methods in this category combine process and content-related aspects, with the general aim of informing complex decisions and enabling a discussion of different planning alternatives. Although all methods and tools inform the decision-making process in one form or another, some assist more specifically in reaching agreements between stakeholders.

Scenarios and scenario-building with stakeholders are a commonly used method. According to Latvian planners, scenarios are good to start roundtable discussions. Latvian planners elaborated quite advanced scenarios to showcase potential developments, including two extreme projections and two more balanced ones. The intention was to provoke stakeholders, and indeed they immediately responded, particularly to the extreme scenarios. According to Latvian planners, a scenario exercise requires a great deal of background work, both in terms of mapping and analysing the results. “This is perhaps the best method to receive content, and to reach agreements”, Latvian planners conclude.

Impact assessments

An SEA is an integral part of the planning process. It supports decision-making on the plan in that it ensures the drafting stage includes environmental considerations, making sure environmental concerns are taken into account at a strategic level and long before the licensing stage of any developments. As such, it is a useful analytical tool that can take account of much of the available environmental data, including, e.g. existing environmental designations, but also aspects such as cumulative pressures and impacts of uses. Sustainability appraisals are another way of carrying out impact assessments, taking into account socio-economic and environmental considerations.

Cost-benefit and risk analysis were also mentioned as useful methods to help to make decisions. Sweden did such an analysis at the scale of each of their three plans, including the Swedish part of the Southern Baltic Sea. According to Latvian planners, scenarios, cost-benefit analysis, and **risk analysis** methods work particularly well with private sector actors.

Spatial decision support systems (SDSS)

Spatial decision support systems (SDSS) are digital tools, often a combination of geographical information system (GIS) based map layers and some type of modelling or impact analysis table

designed to support decisions on the most effective use of space. These tools are rather complex, they require strong computing capacity and need to be operated by a specialist to understand and calibrate the underlying models. Therefore, they are not easy to use interactively with stakeholders. Although such systems have been used for a planning process in some cases (e.g. Symphony in Sweden), they have not been used for SI processes in any of the other Baltic Sea countries involved in the BASMATI project.

Latvian planners were sceptical with respect to the usefulness of SDSS for stakeholder work and emphasised that the human factor is always necessary to assess different kinds of situations and make decisions. Likewise, Swedish planners chose not to use them for SI, arguing that they can be too rigid. “They can be useful if you have blank paper, so you add different layers and information and it gives a result – but if issues and regulations are more complex, it is not useful - it doesn’t catch the fine, detailed issues”. Stakeholders may look at them suspiciously and consider them ‘black boxes’. As planners from several countries explained, it is more useful to come with simple maps which are easy to relate to. SDSS tools are also costly, which is an issue for many authorities. There are a number of technical issues related to different standards used for data collection, which depending on the sector and region can be different too.

4.3 The plan is done – reflections on the political process for approving the plan and its implementation

4.3.1. Implementation

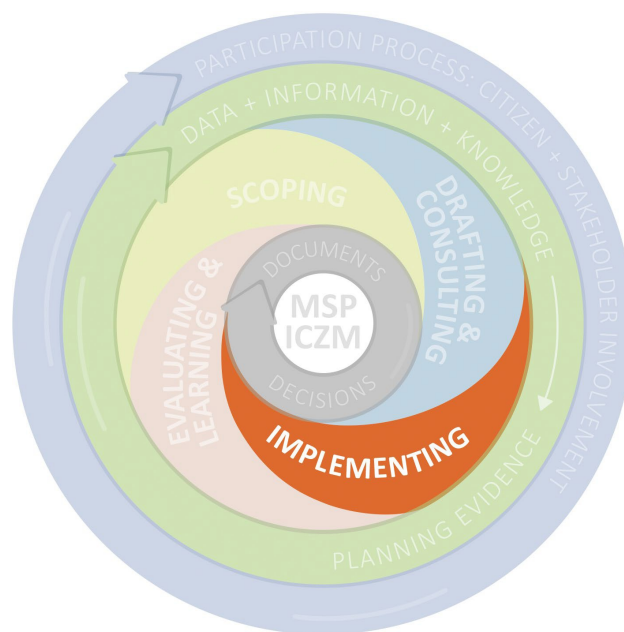


Figure 4-3

Implementing Phase: Planning Process Loop of MSP and ICZM. Developed by A. Morf & co-authors

Once the final plan is done, the ball is in the court of the government or other responsible authority to review the content and approve the plan. Thus, it is important to keep a continuous dialogue even with those that have the final say. Different processes apply in different countries: in Poland and Germany, ministries are responsible for issuing a decree to be published in the Federal Gazette for approval; in Latvia, the parliament has to formally approve the plan. In Sweden, it is the national government and the national expert authority.

According to Swedish planners, a challenge at this stage is that “the task may be assigned to a person who may have never heard about MSP, a person who might have googled MSP but that’s it”. Staff turnover in government administrations seems to be a key challenge when keeping governmental decision-makers and experts informed throughout the planning process. As a Swedish planner explains: “We have constantly informed the government, but they constantly change people”. The planner adds: “Two things can happen, either they do it very fast, because they cannot handle thousands of pages of details, or they start a very long process of reviews”.

When it comes to implementing the plan, SI takes a fundamental shift. Now it is no longer about developing the plan, but about doing what is said in the plan and keeping the data and information base up to date. It includes management, administration and licencing, often occurring in sectors other than the planning sector and out of the hands of the responsible planning authority. Still, a continuous dialogue with stakeholders should be maintained to ensure that the plan is implemented by all relevant actors. At this stage, discussions are likely to be about specific concerns, new priorities or technologies, or any other changes occurring in the sectors, politics, society and the environment. Policies might shift, for example, towards more offshore renewable energies; new users may approach the planning authority seeking pilot areas and test sites. The day to day tasks of the planners will shift too, depending on how a planning authority is structured and responsibilities are distributed internally. In Germany, for example, the planning authority for the EEZ is also the licencing authority, although different departments and staff are in charge. During the implementation phase, the focus is therefore on ensuring compliance with the plan, monitoring the broader environment (natural, social) and actively tracking developments in the sectors – maintaining the good relations that have been built with the various stakeholders during the planning phase.

Example: Changing an adopted marine plan in Estonia – a case of court appeal

On 11 October 2012, the Government of Estonia initiated MSP in the territorial waters around Hiiu island. The draft plan included areas designated for offshore wind farms, giving preference to the area north of Hiiuma. Several island residents were not satisfied with these designations. After the MSP was adopted on 20 June 2016, opponents to the plan filed an appeal at the administrative court, arguing against the visual impact of the turbines and their potential impact on natural values around the island. The governor, however, endorsed the plan, determining the selected areas as suitable for offshore wind farming. Once the plan was endorsed, Hiiu municipal council began to implement it. However, protesters did not stop at the first ruling but appealed to the court in Tallinn. That court ruled again in favour of the established plan, and also decided that some of the opponents had no right to challenge the plan in court. Later a new agreement was reached with the company responsible for the wind farm. Once again, this new agreement was also controversial, and a group of opponents filed a complaint to the Estonian (highest) National Court. Eventually, on the 8th of August 2018, the National Court determined that the offshore wind designations should be removed from the Hiiu plan. The overall plan remains valid, but without offshore wind farm designations. Today, there is uncertainty on whether any wind power areas will be built²⁰.

²⁰ Source: MSP Platform conflict fiche, <https://www.msp-platform.eu/story-2-estonia-offshore-wind-and-tourism#overlay-context=story-1-netherlands-offshore-wind-and-tourism> (accessed 23 January 2020, edited)

4.3.2. Evaluating the process and impacts - evaluation starts while still in the process!

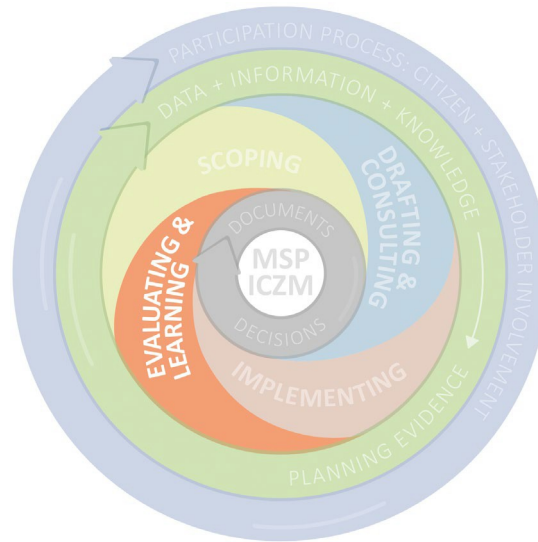


Figure 4-4

Evaluating and Learning Phase: Planning Process Loop of MSP and ICZM. Developed by A. Morf & co-authors

While compliance or outcome evaluation can only be done once a plan has been in place for some time, process evaluation can (and should) in fact set in earlier and be more continuous. Gaining feedback from participants should be a matter of course; it is also relatively easy to obtain, for example, via a handout given to participants at the end of a meeting. Doing this while memories of an event are still fresh is a good way of learning how to improve next time – and is essential for tracking and documenting the process. Evaluation results can usefully be communicated back to the participants, and also help in any formal evaluation that may be conducted before a new planning cycle begins. Digital tools can be helpful, such as online feedback forms. For more in-depth process evaluation, it may be useful to ask for scientific support, e.g. to do participant observation or periodic interviews with participants and stakeholders or to follow the process in other ways.

Germany has carried out mid-term reviews of its marine spatial plans and also a qualitative evaluation of its 2009 EEZ plans. An important aspect of such reviews is to illustrate how the wider environment of the plan might have changed, and whether this warrants a revision or not. In Germany, ambitious targets have been set for renewable energies, so it is fair to expect that a new plan might seek to expand the area set aside for offshore wind farming. Alignment of revised plans with those of neighbouring countries is also becoming a bigger issue. Keeping in touch with stakeholders throughout the lifetime of a plan (including other authorities or ministries) means that planners keep their finger on the pulse at all times, so the review should not yield any huge surprises in terms of the current framework for the plan.

5 Outlook: SI – A never-ending story...

MSP is a cyclical process, requiring different types and intensities of SI at different times. In this sense, SI is a never-ending story. Rather than a single event, or a series of events during a certain planning stage, SI accompanies MSP at all stages, including – importantly – the implementation stage. Like MSP, SI is also an adaptive process: Circumstances change, planning teams change, socio-economic settings change, groups change, and planning priorities change, meaning that the dynamics within and between stakeholders, the planning team, and SI processes can also change, sometimes quickly. SI is thus a continuous task which requires planners to be flexible and perceptive of the needs and interests of stakeholders. At the same time, it is important not to lose sight of the purpose of SI. SI cannot be expected to resolve every conflict, just like the resulting MSP plan is unlikely to fully satisfy every stakeholder. Planners and the participating stakeholders have a job to do, and the task of the planning team is to ensure the process runs as well as possible, leaving everyone satisfied that the outcome is the best that could be achieved in the respective circumstances.

Rather than formal conclusions, we use this chapter to provide some final thoughts based on the experiences brought together in the previous sections and the first-hand experience from the Baltic Sea Region.

We firstly emphasise that MSP is a multi-layered process with many overlapping phases. SI is an integral part of this that will be more or less intense at different times. All forms of SI involve some degree of power-sharing and it is up to the planning authority to decide how far to take this within the available regulatory frameworks.

Crucial questions to be asked before embarking on SI are why, who, when and how. The key guiding question at the start is why to involve stakeholders at all and what is expected of their involvement. Answering the 'why' question will ultimately guide the who and when but especially also the how of SI. An SI strategy is a useful way of formalising this and helps to guide the subsequent process.

SI is not something to do lightly or in an ad-hoc manner. It should be taken seriously and planned for accordingly. This means taking the time to get to know one's stakeholders, e.g. through a mapping exercise and an initial assessment, but also through the process itself by keeping in touch with them and monitoring their involvement and satisfaction. The better you know your stakeholders, the more you can tailor the process and choose appropriate methods, settings and tools.

Successful SI in the sense of satisfied stakeholders and planners has a lot to do with choosing the right methods and tools. This choice should be guided by the purpose of SI at any given time – for example, whether a meeting is more about informing stakeholders, stakeholders getting to know each other, co-designing a planning scenario or resolving a local conflict. The right mix of stakeholders and tools is a powerful combination that can bring many benefits to the MSP process.

Time, resources, capacity and facilitation skills are crucial contributors to SI. If capacity is an issue, it is better to do fewer stakeholder meetings well rather than being overly ambitious and alienating stakeholders. Remember that not all of the necessary skills have to be available within the core planning team; facilitation skills, in particular, could come from external experts or another ministry or authority with experience in this field. The same applies to process evaluation, where scientific advice may be helpful.

Like MSP, SI is a learning process, so don't be afraid to try out new things or to make mistakes. The learning loop of SI is continuous; the important aspect is to take the time to reflect on what has gone well and what could be improved. The German experience (EEZ) is a case in point, where lessons from the first planning cycle were used to change the SI process for the second planning cycle.

It is a good idea to keep records and to document each step of the way – what was done, when, how, and why, and did it meet the set objectives? Did you have enough flipcharts, venue, invitation letter, catering, facilitator at an event? Sharing this learning process with scientists and peers is another way of developing SI in a reflective way. If you have an SI strategy, this can be updated based on the insights gained. Documentation is also important for reasons of transparency, and not least to create your own institutional memory – e.g. to help any new team members or other planning groups understand what has been done.

Achieving a good result within the timeframe and resources available requires planners to be ambitious but pragmatic when collecting information. High ambitions in the SI process is essential for achieving better MSP results and to gain the trust and support from those stakeholders who will ultimately make use of the common sea resources. However, planners from many countries have emphasised the importance of being pragmatic and knowing where to ‘draw the line’. As an Estonian planner neatly puts it “we can always talk, talk, talk, and do more research, but at some point, we need to stop and make decisions”.

Academic MSP literature often discusses whether SI processes can make MSP more democratic, or MSP decisions more balanced. Based on the experiences in the BSR, we would say the jury is still out on this, not least because this has not been fully evaluated in the countries. Swedish planners think that compared to how it was before, the process of marine management has become more democratic, balanced and even transparent at least to some degree. In their opinion, before MSP, sea use was managed sector by sector, and it was not possible to see who was involved and whether anyone influenced the process. A large number of meetings held during the Swedish process certainly changed this, as there were plenty of opportunities to give opinions and stakeholders have been part of the process from the beginning.

At the same time, SI is not a silver bullet that will automatically lead to a fair process or a balanced outcome. Involvement is not the same as fairness, and MSP itself is not a fully democratic endeavour as the outcomes to be achieved are usually politically guided. Ultimately, in the BSR, a plan is a political instrument that operates within set constraints, and not something that arises in a fully bottom-up process.

The message from the BSR region, however, is that the process of SI may be just as important as a result, e.g. building trust and discovering potential synergies amongst stakeholders. The SI process certainly creates something that has not been there before (Estonian planner). In times of social media, greater transparency in administrations can be an easy win, although it is hard work and the challenges of working with stakeholders should not be underestimated.

For additional guidance, in the appendix, you will find the following: 7.1. suggestions for further reading and different tools and handbooks, 7.2. an overview table with all the tools and methods presented in this handbook, and 7.3. a table with ‘country briefs’ describing the planning systems of the countries referred to in this handbook.

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6.2 Interviews

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- Estonia: Ministry of Finance
- Finland: Regional Councils in Finland
- Germany: Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (Bundesamt für Seeschifffahrt und Hydrographie, BSH)
- Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (MV), Germany: Ministry for Energy, Infrastructure and Digitization
- Latvia: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
- Sweden: Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM)

7 Annex

7.1 Further reading

- ✓ Slocum, N. (2003), Participatory Methods Toolkit: A practitioner's manual. Joint publication of the King Baudouin Foundation and the Flemish Institute for Science and Technology Assessment (viWTA) in collaboration with the United Nations University – Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU/CRIS). Link: http://archive.unu.edu/hq/library/Collection/PDF_files/CRIS/PMT.pdf
- ✓ Engage 2020: Action catalogue online decision support tool. <http://actioncatalogue.eu/>
- ✓ Institute for Development Studies: People working together around the world to generate ideas and action for social change: <https://www.participatorymethods.org/>
- ✓ Chatty, D. Baas, S., & Fleig, A. (2003) Participatory Processes Towards Co-Management of Natural Resources in Pastoral Areas of the Middle East: A Training of Trainers Source Book Based on the Principles of Participatory Methods and Approaches. Prepared and Tested in Collaboration with the Project “Range Rehabilitation and Establishment of a Wildlife Reserve in the Syrian Steppe” GCP/SYR/009/ITA. FAO sourcebook online: <http://www.fao.org/3/ad424e/ad424e00.htm#Contents>
- ✓ Participedia: A global community sharing knowledge and stories about public participation and democratic innovations. Link: <https://participedia.net/>
- ✓ Natural Resources Management and Development Portal (USAid): Participatory Approaches Resources. Link: <https://rmportal.net/library/content/tools/biodiversity-conservation-tools/putting-conservation-in-context-cd/participatory-approaches-resources>
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7.2 The tools in overview

Tool/ method/ approach	Purposes & potentials of using it	Phases	Prerequisites (P) & limitations (L) for using it
Guiding questions for process planning: why, who, when, how? Chapter 2	To know what you are doing and why: establish the purpose of planning and participation and based on this systematically plan SI. Evaluate the participation process.	All, especially scoping	P: Understanding of and agreement on purposes among those responsible for the process. L: Legislation can be limiting.
Stairway of participation Section 2.1	To establish the type and intensity of interaction with stakeholders in a given/planned planning process (both for planning or evaluating)	All, especially scoping and evaluation	L: Figure implies simplification in terms of process functions and interactivity, only the main participation process functions are included. L: Legislation may invest specific actors with more or less rights to be involved.
Planning Process Loop Section 2.4	Systematic, reflected process planning in relation to different functions of a planning process	All, especially scoping	L: Simplification, process loops out and in
Planning Process Arrow Section 2.6	Systematic, reflected process planning in relation to changing scope over time towards decision making	All	L: Simplification, the process splits and condenses many more times
Stakeholder mapping Section: 3.1.2	Identifying all relevant stakeholders to involve. Contacting stakeholders and generating awareness. Point of departure for developing stakeholder network Simple, easy tool to gain an overview of stakeholders. Can be sorted.	Scoping Updates needed	P: Revision/update needed. P: Needs to be scale sensitive, as stakeholders operate at various geographical scales. P: Important to consider why to involve stakeholders to be able to know whom to involve. L: A mere list may be too simple for advanced process planning (advanced analysis necessary, see stakeholder analysis)
Stakeholder analysis Section: 3.1.2	Describing stakeholders more in-depth in relation to their specific interests, needs and other relevant characteristics, to decide how they are affected by planning and how and when to approach and engage them. Planning the overall involvement process including facilitation. Ensuring broad stakeholder representation and possibilities to empower those with special needs.	Scoping and drafting Updates needed	P: Requires skills in qualitative and quantitative social sciences, data collection and analysis. P: Data need to be stored and processed systematically. P: Revision/update needed.
Stakeholder involvement strategy Section 3.1.3	Making the most of SI in relation to specifically established purposes (e.g. broad public awareness, well-informed planning decisions). A systematic plan of who is involved and what kind of communication on what is occurring throughout the planning process. Allows follow-up to determine whether desired outcomes are achieved. If shared with participants: clarifying roles, managing expectations, promoting transparency, accountability and legitimisation of process.	Scoping All (updates, valid throughout the process)	P: Requires consideration of why, who, when, how and what methods (purposes, target groups) P: Timeline thinking, process thinking P: Communication resources and expertise necessary. P: Revision/update needed.
Formal communication Section 3.2	Officially interact with stakeholders and decision-makers for varying purposes, formally regulated: e.g. informing, consulting, decision making, appeal). Makes sure that the formal requirements are met (legislation). Promotes traceability and transparency of the planning process.	All	L: Not necessarily ideal means of communication with all types of stakeholders. L: May miss information (qualitative, emotional) that formal methods and channels of communication are not made for. L: Legal requirements set the minimum and possibly also the maximum.
Informal communication Section 3.2	Informal interaction with stakeholders, e.g. to explore their views and needs and collect information they may not want to share in formal settings. Contact with stakeholders that are not able/willing to engage through official channels, contact less obvious stakeholders.	All	P: Trustful relationship, safe space. Time, capacity and resources. L: transparency limited if communication not documented and made available to others. May at times be in conflict with the above, but can assist problem-solving over the long run.

Stakeholder meetings Section 3.3	Interact directly with stakeholders and gain first-hand information. Possibility to facilitate cross-sector interaction. Multiple purposes are possible (e.g. informing, collecting knowledge, consulting, collaboration – see ladder & questions), depends also on the overall purpose and the planning phase.	All	P: Design stakeholder meetings according to overall phase, purpose and specific needs and attitudes P: Prepare sufficiently before stakeholder meetings, and make use of skilled facilitators. P: Careful consideration of stakeholder group constellation and the relation to them and between them. P: Determine the size of the event according to your purpose. Bigger meetings suitable for brainstorming, getting to know each other, informing while concrete/focused issues suitable for smaller groups P: Be prepared for the unintended to happen.
Kick-off events /suit your stakeholders Section 3.3.2	Awareness rising, initiate SI, establishing first contacts. For single and cross-group interaction (broad or narrow depending on purposes and stakeholder needs).	Scoping	P: Information and awareness, facilitation skills. L: Previous stakeholder interaction experiences, awareness. L: Available time and resources.
Individual meetings Section 3.3.3	In-depth knowledge and mutual learning between planners and stakeholder (group) on specific issues and needs. Detailed discussions needed: problem analysis and finding/negotiating solutions.	All	P: Common understanding of what to discuss. P: Skilled facilitation, commitment and resources of participants. L: Available knowledge, resources and clear mandate of those present
Bilateral meeting Section 3.3.3	Deeper understanding between two different groups/sectors (bilateral learning). Specific problems/interactions to address that only concern a specific constellation.	All	P: Common understanding and possibility to isolate problem and focus. P: Skilled facilitation, commitment and resources of participants. L: Available knowledge, resources and clear mandate of those present.
Mixed group meeting Section 3.3.3	Linking user groups/levels for: establishing contacts, networking, mutual learning, deliberation and consensus-building (multilateral interaction and learning). Identify synergies and concrete issues to address across user groups/sectors/levels. Discover and discuss possibilities for collaboration and solutions across sectors. Increase awareness for different perspectives and needs to balance in MSP.	All	P: May require negotiation skills, methods to make sure that stakeholders get equal opportunities to participate. L: Complexity of group may lead to confusion and reduce possibilities to identify easy solutions at first.
Feedback /Dealing with stakeholder input Section 3.4	Ensuring feedback on responses by stakeholders (e.g. scoping documents, plan drafts during consultation or accepted plans and plan processes). Continuous update on process status. Promote transparency and keeping in contact with stakeholders.	Drafting, consulting, implementing, evaluation and learning	P: possibility to process and present input– requires method and data processing capacity, communication capacity and resources and time. P: Strategy on how to deal with input and what kind of feedback to provide. L: Need to know when to stop. L: legal requirements, capacity to address all comments systematically
On-site visits Section 4.2.1	Better understanding of place-specific needs, interests, prerequisites and other types of relevant context (get “a feeling for the place”). Grasp and discuss place-specific problems and solutions “in the landscape”, combining multiple sources of information, also non-verbal and qualitative.	All, but especially scoping & drafting	P: Practical preparations and travel resources and time needed. P: Need to consider accessibility for all participants. P: Complement with online participation. L:Stakeholders may not discuss issues openly if the MSP authority is physically participating.
Face to face meetings Section 4.2.1	Direct interaction with stakeholders (possibility to “get a feeling for each other”). Develop contacts and network and start building trust based on direct interaction. Provide a better understanding of one or several specific groups. Possibility to interact intensively (deliberation, collaboration). Tool of direct interaction to moderate the process - complementary with online/indirect interaction (see online meetings and indirect tools)	All, but especially scoping	P: Requires good preparation, social skills and/or skilled process facilitation. P: Promotion of equality and accessibility for all types of participants. L: Some people prefer not to interact face to face – others are the opposite.
Online meetings Section 4.2.1	Digital outreach throughout the larger geographical area where it is difficult to get all everyone around the table. Multiple purposes: information, feedback, discussion, planning of event. Reduce travelling and travel costs. Tool of interaction to moderate the process - complementary with direct interaction.	All	P: Workable connection and technology. P: Good meeting discipline and enhanced listening among participants. P: Skilled, structured leadership of meeting L: Different stakeholder groups can have different accessibility to digital infrastructure. Some prefer digital interaction, others prefer a direct one.
Thematic focus Section 4.2.1-A	Getting a better understanding of specific sectors or specific themes (based on specific needs and opportunities) both for knowledge collection but also for drafting. Possibility to collect specialist information and discuss technical details that might be beyond a more mixed group.	Mainly scoping & drafting, possibly also implementation and evaluation	P: Possibility to divide people and problem up into specific topics. P: Skilled facilitation, commitment and resources of participants for group work L: Available knowledge, resources and mandate of those present.
Geographical focus Section 4.2.1-B	Focus on a specific area and concrete issues, at that specific spatial scale. Focus on identified problem hotspots where there is a commitment to address them. Possibility to scale up to another level, place-specific approach (across scales/borders). Smaller geographical and social context might make issues more easily manageable.	Mainly scoping & drafting, possibly also implementation and evaluation	P: The problem at hand applies to specific subareas, all relevant stakeholders from this area are around the table and have a mandate to participate and inform/negotiate. P: Commitment, facilitation and resources for group work L: Available knowledge, resources and mandate of those present.

World-café (rotating round table discussions) Section 4.2.1 (& 2.5)	Tapping into the knowledge of larger groups in an effective and systematic manner. Mixing planners and stakeholders in various configurations, depending on the issue at hand. Getting participants to get to know each others' faces and perspectives. Creative and brainstorming focused interaction, opening up (rather than closing down) the topics.	Scoping, drafting	P: Process planning and structure required. P: Facilitation skills required P: Systematic documentation required (physical or electronic). L: Number and range of participants, the settings and available time and resources.
Maps for input and discussion Section 4.2.2-A	Activating stakeholder discussions and helping stakeholders to think spatially. Maps, such as interactive maps, can also have more direct purposes such as for consultation or crowd-sourcing information. Maps can be a powerful tool to help people relate to issues/places and uncover synergies and conflicts. Can also help stakeholders to talk more freely. Starting with an empty map can be fruitful to collect input and ideas.	All	L: Maps can be misleading or take discussions in irrelevant directions. L: Not all stakeholders are familiar with maps or digital geo tools. P: May require preparations and also familiarity with the maps/eventual systems to be used among the organising planners
Matrix/table of Interests Section 4.2.2-B	Interest mapping, identification of mutual impacts and relationships in terms of e.g. conflicts, synergies, mutual dependency. Need to systematically set out, visualise and grade (existing and potential) interests according to various dimensions (e.g. importance, impacts). Versatile to adapt to many different questions, scales and context. Pairing with other tools possible (e.g. maps for visualisation). Professional (more complex) and stakeholder interaction (simpler analyses).	Scoping & drafting	L: Understanding of working with tables required (technical-analytical thinking) and what their limitations are (how strictly to interpret content). P: Sufficient knowledge and understanding the matter to be analysed required (e.g. interests, conflicts and trade-offs) and facilitation skills to work with tables, especially when developing the tables together with stakeholders.
Plan drafts for input and discussion Section 4.2.2-C	Feedback on concrete plan content. Discussion and in-depth reflection on the overall picture and proposed options "Boundary object" to discuss planning options.	Drafting	P: Well-developed plan draft. L: What is in the plan is up for discussion. Legislation may limit possibilities for plan consultation.
Consultation summary Section 4.2.2-D	Written documentation of input and decisions, feedback on review statements, transparent decision making => for stakeholders and for later process evaluation	Consultation, evaluation	P: Possibility to process and present stakeholder input in a report (systematic in a format that can be shared) L: Legal requirements, capacity to address all comments systematically
Scenario work and scenarios for discussion Section 4.2.3	Explore future options and potential developments with stakeholders Stimulate ideas and discussion about the future, works best with actors used to thinking about their own future. Potential to receive content from stakeholders as well as for reaching agreements.	Scoping and drafting	P: Intensive preparations needed, both in terms of content and stakeholder mapping. P: Purpose of the exercise must be clear. L: Risk of oversimplifying complex issues. L: Need to understand what scenarios are, what the knowledge base is (no black box) and what the purpose of a specific scenario exercise is.
Impact assessments as a process and as a document to go with a plan proposal Section 4.2.3	Assess and compare different types of impacts to make more well-informed decisions on proposed plans/planning alternatives. Can be linked to scenarios. Impact assessment after implementation.	Drafting, evaluation.	P: Requires advanced data and analytical capacity, i.e. data and technical skills L: Capacity, resources, time available. Often regulated by law – i.e. environmental impacts.
Cost-benefit and risk analysis as a process and as a document to go with a plan proposal Section 4.2.3	Assess and compare costs, benefits, risks and other impacts to make more well-informed decisions on proposed plans/planning alternatives. Can be coupled to scenarios. Impact assessment after implementation.	Drafting, evaluation.	P: requires often some kind of more advanced data and analytical capacity, i.e. data and technical skills L: capacity, resources, time available.
Spatial Decision Support Systems (SDSS) Section 4.2.3	Exploring the most effective use of space-based on computerised modelling. Using large amounts of quantitative and geographical data. Numerous possibilities to explore alternatives.	Drafting, to be fed with results in other phases	P/L: technically complex, requires training to use and make judgements whether the model is correct. Required expertise may affect perceived transparency for SI process (black box). P: not an SI tool by itself (see below) - limited experience so far for SI. P: Sufficient amount of reliable data needed to run underlying models. L: Costs, modelling and data processing capacity. L: Rigid models risk missing complex situational aspects.

7.3 Country Briefs

Country	Denmark (source: SI handbook, p. 48 & VASAB Country Fiche)	Estonia (source LSI report)	Finland	Germany (EEZ and federal states)	Latvia	Sweden
Boundaries	A state plan is developed which extends from the baseline over both territorial waters and EEZ. Municipal planning onshore and in inner waters and for specific coastal infrastructure.	A state plan is developed for the whole area of the Baltic Sea under Estonia's jurisdiction. This also includes the EEZ and coastal areas on land. No overlap with municipal plans in coastal and territorial waters.	Eight coastal Regional Councils draft three MS plans covering territorial waters and EEZ; 1) Northern part of the Bothnian Sea, Quark and Bothnian Bay, 2) The Archipelago Sea and Southern part of the Bothnian Sea, and 3) Gulf of Finland. MS plans overlap with land-use planning in territorial waters.	The federal German MSP plans cover the EEZ only. There is one plan for the North Sea and another for the Baltic Sea. No overlaps with any other spatial plans. The plans for Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (MV) and Schleswig-Holstein (SH) are integrated regional development plans that cover the entire territory of the state including their territorial waters (up to 12 NM).	A state plan is developed for the whole area of the Baltic Sea under Latvia's jurisdiction. 2 km of marine coastal waters overlap with municipal spatial plans (no plans adopted or in elaboration phase so far).	National state plans in the EEZ and the outer territorial waters up to 1 NM from the baseline. 3 plans for different marine areas: Gulf of Bothnia, Baltic Sea, Western Sea. 11 NM overlap of national with municipal planning in territorial waters and onshore.
Enactment for MSP	Act on Maritime Spatial Planning establishes the framework for spatial planning in Danish marine areas. The plan will have a binding status. It will be general, leaving room for variation depending on the sector and coastal municipal planning.	Planning Act of Estonia. Regulation for MSP in force since July 2015. An ordinance from the Government of Estonia for developing the plan was given to start the official process. Prior to the national MSP process, two legally binding marine county plans were adopted for Hiiu Island and Pärnu Bay area, which will remain valid also when the national MSP comes into force (except for offshore wind energy in the Hiiu plan which was abolished in 2018). Guiding plan for authorities but can include binding decisions	Land Use and Building Act Chapt. 8a: 67a§, 67b§, 67c§, 67d§ (1999/132; (17.6.2016/482) (Maankäyttö ja rakennuslaki) General-level strategic plans that are non-binding.	Raumordnungsgesetz des Bundes (Federal Spatial Planning Act) of 22 December 2008, last amended on 20 July 2017 (amended to include the requirements of the EU MSP Directive) Binding plan. Respective state planning legislation exists for MV and SH; the basic provisions made by the Acts are similar.	In accordance with the Spatial Development Planning Law (in force since December 1st, 2011). MSP has also been elaborated according to Regulation No. 740 of the Cabinet of Ministers on the Procedures for the Development, Implementation and Monitoring of the Maritime spatial plan (in force since 30 October, 2012). Guiding for authorities but can include binding decisions	National marine and land planning: Environmental Code (SFS 1998:808) Chapters: 3. National interest areas and sustainable land/water management principles, 4. MSP amendment in 2014 (§10) MSP ordinance (SFS 2015:400) Directional for authorities (non-binding) but can include binding provisions if needed to fulfil the purpose of the national marine plan. Local and regional planning: Planning and Building Act SFS 2010:900. Comprehensive plans are directional, zoning plans and area regulations are binding.

<p>Responsibilities for MSP</p>	<p>The Danish Maritime Authority acts as coordinating secretariat for an MSP Working Group. Sector ministries are responsible for involving stakeholders and defining the sector interests to consider in the plan. Emphasis on cross-agency collaboration and distributed responsibilities. Danish Parliament adopts the plan.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Finance, and the Minister of Public Administration lead the process, national sector authorities contribute. The national spatial plan is adopted by the Government of the Republic.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Environment is responsible for legislation, general development and international cooperation. Coastal regional councils draft MS plans. The MSP process must be done in collaboration with stakeholders. Regional Council Assemblies adopt the plans.</p>	<p>The Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (BMI) is responsible for MSP in the EEZ. The authority responsible for the planning process is the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH). Federal government adopts the plan. In MV the responsible authority is the Ministry for Energy, Infrastructure and Digitization. In SH it is the State Chancellery.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development leads the process, national sector authorities contribute. The Latvian Government is responsible for adopting the MSP.</p>	<p>SwAM leads the <i>national process</i>, national sector authorities contribute. Coastal County Administrative Boards (CAB) assist the national MSP process, coordinated by 3 Lead CABs: Västra Götland, Kalmar, Västernorrland. The CABs also control municipal plans and monitor national interests and cross-municipal harmonisation. The Swedish government adopts national MSP. <i>Local</i> authorities (municipalities) and their collaborations develop the plans. Local parliaments adopt municipal/cross-municipal plans.</p>
<p>Stages of public hearing and review</p>	<p>Upcoming (2020) hearing will be open for all. So far, the involved stakeholders have been authorities and interest organisations rather than individual citizens.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of reference for the plan and SEA program (May 2017). • 1st draft of MSP and SEA report (April-May 2019). • 2nd draft of MSP and SEA report (planned for late 2019). • Final plan and SEA report (planned June-July 2020). • Possibly extra public hearings in regions and local governments during the process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two public consultations will be organised. • International consultation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal request to other authorities and public bodies to provide information • Informal consultation of sectors, e.g. during sector-specific meetings. • At least one round of formal public consultation on the draft plan; possibly a second round in case of significant amendments to the first draft, including public hearings. • Consultation of authorities and other bodies acting in the public interest, including neighbouring MSP authorities. • Comments received are considered by the planning authority and the draft plan is amended accordingly. 	<p>Consultations and hearings (2015-2016). 1st edition draft and SEA (May 2016). Inter-institutional consultations (June 2016-October 2017); Final version of plan and SEA May 2019</p>	<p><i>National level (EEZ+)</i>: Dialogue (non-statutory). Consultation (statutory). Review (statutory). <i>Regional/municipal (territorial waters)</i>: Dialogue (depending on plan type) Consultation (statutory) Public exhibition (statutory)</p>
<p>Process status</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the drafting stage of its first marine plan. • To be sent to hearing in 2020 and then to be completed by March 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official process started in May 2017. Baseline studies carried out in 2016. Expected adoption date: October 2020. • Two pilot marine spatial plans developed in 2012 – 2016 around Hiiu island in Pärnu Bay area (both in territorial waters). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the current state including ecology (status of the sea, biodiversity), Blue Growth and characteristics of the three planning areas was done by May 2019. • Future scenarios for Blue Growth and Impact Assessment were completed in fall 2019. • Collaboration with stakeholders started in spring 2018 and is an on-going process. Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first planning process began in MV in around 2001; in the EEZ it began around 2004. • The first plan in MV came into force in 2005, the second, revised plan in 2016. • The first EEZ plans came into force in 2009 (North Sea and Baltic Sea). The revision process began in 2018; 2019 saw a series of informal sector meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan adopted by the Latvian Government on May 14, 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transboundary dialogue underway since 2013. • Status baseline report (2014), final version (2015). • Sector interest mapping with national authorities and cross-sector conflict & synergy analysis (spring 2016). • Consultation on Roadmap report (2015) final version (October 2016).

			<p>continues beyond the planning phase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target setting dialogues and roadmaps will be done during 9/2019 – 2/2020. The first consultation phase in 4-5/2019, second consultation phase in early 2020. Regional Council Assemblies approve the plans by March 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft plan is set to be published in early 2020. Public review/formal consultation, as well as cross-border consultation will follow in 2020. • The new plans are expected to be completed in 20. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public dialogue with national stakeholders on draft of maps (December 2016-spring 2017). • 1st draft on public review in spring 2018. Cross-border consultation meeting June 2018. • Cross-border consultation and public plan review spring 2019. • Submitted to the Government Dec. 2019. Adoption planned for 2020/21. <p><i>Regional and municipal planning at varying stages.</i></p>
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