The Nordic Approach to Maritime Spatial Planning

Fourth draft

Issued on 21 March 2015

Changes from the third draft are highlighted.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document describes a Nordic approach to Maritime Spatial Planning. Its purpose is to form a basis for the coordination of the ways in which the Nordic countries develop their Maritime Spatial Plans. Coordination can deliver the following benefits:

- Better quality and efficiency of the planning process and the resulting plans.
- Better cross-border coherence.
- Easier exchange of knowledge and expertise.
- Better use of planning resources.
- A stronger Nordic presence in international cooperation.

1.2 Background

Maritime Spatial Planning has been developing rapidly in the last 10 - 20 years with a number of international initiatives. The need for an international dimension is particularly acute in Maritime Spatial Planning because of the fluid nature of the environment and many cross-border aspects of stakeholder interests.

UNESCO provides the following definition of MSP:

> *Marine spatial planning is a public process of analyzing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives that usually have been specified through a political process. Characteristics of marine spatial planning include ecosystem-based, area-based, integrated, adaptive, strategic and participatory.*

In the EU directive on establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning (2014/89/EU), the following definition of MSP is given (article 3):

> *'maritime spatial planning' means a process by which the relevant Member State's authorities analyse and organise human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives;*

Already, the Nordic countries have pursued a number of projects and initiatives that provide valuable background and experience to this Nordic approach. Among the most notable ones are the HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group, the Plan Bothnia pilot project and others referred to in appendix A.

The Nordic approach described in this document has been developed through a collaborative effort with participation from government agencies, experts and stakeholders in a number of workshops, held in 2009 to 2015.

1.3 Organizational context

This work is based on a decision by the Ministers of the Environment of the Nordic countries and self-governing areas in 2008 to develop further cooperation between these countries on marine areas. This included the coordination of planning, protection and management of marine areas in the Baltic Sea, the North Atlantic and the Arctic. An ad-hoc group of experts was established and a workshop held resulting in a report in 2010 titled "Nordic Cooperation on the Planning and Management of the Nordic Waters" ("Nordiskt samarbete om planering och förvaltning av nordiska havsområden").

This work on the Nordic approach in Maritime Spatial Planning is overseen by the Marine Group (HAV) of the Nordic Council of Ministers. In 2010, the Marine Group established a network of experts from government agencies and ministries, and initially also from research institutes, called the Network for Marine Environmental Management and Planning (often referred to as "the Nordic MSP Network"). Its principal assignment is to assist HAV in realizing the proposals on management of the Nordic marine environment and its planning. The Network arranged a first workshop on MSP in the Faroe Islands in 2011 (see report "Uses and Management of the Nordic Waters - Today and Tomorrow"). This workshop also provided recommendation for the Nordic Council of Minister's action plan on the Environment 2013-2018, proposing continued activity on coordination and capacity building within Nordic MSP.

Following a second workshop in Reykjavík in November 2013, the Marine Group (HAV) decided to embark on the development of a Nordic approach to MSP (see report "Results of the 2nd Nordic Workshop on Marine Spatial Planning and an update for 2014").

Reports from workshops organized by the Nordic MSP Network are listed in appendix A. The government ministries and agencies involved in the Nordic MSP Network are listed in appendix B along with the names of their individual representatives.

In the Nordic countries, the mandate to carry out MSP rests with different authorities and the boundaries of each authority's mandate differ also between countries. Furthermore, Denmark, Sweden and Finland (including the Åland Islands) are members of the European Union and must therefore adopt the directive (2014/89/EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning. Norway and Iceland are members of the European Economic Area, whereas the Faroe Islands and Greenland have no affiliation with the EU.

It is not least because of this heterogeneity in mandates that coordination between the Nordic countries on Maritime Spatial Planning is needed.

2 Common Nordic Specifics and Challenges

The Nordic Countries have a common cultural heritage that is closely linked to the sea. Still, their economies, and hence also their social development, depend heavily on the use of the marine environment for example in food production, transportation, energy production, mineral extraction, recreation and tourism. The variety and intensity of these uses is growing, increasing the need for planning and coordination.

The Nordic countries have long shorelines and long shared borders across marine areas. A coordinated approach is therefore important for sustainable use of marine resources, in balance with protection of the marine environment.

Naturally, ocean currents and ecosystems have no regard for borders drawn across the ocean. Pressures exerted on the marine environment within the jurisdiction of one country are therefore easily carried over to its neighbours, with potentially serious effects on their interests.

The Nordic waters have diverse characteristics with significant seasonal changes. Many of the Nordic countries are exposed to the same changes and diversity in the marine environment and can therefore share methods and knowledge on how to respond appropriately when ecosystems are exposed to human pressure.

Global developments, such as climate change, are also likely to have some similar effects on all the Nordic countries, allowing better results in response and mitigation through collaboration.

While the geographical proximity of the Nordic countries, with shared Nordic waters, gives ample reason to expect benefits from coordination of their Maritime Spatial Planning, there are many other strengths and specific aspects that suggest that Nordic cooperation on MSP would be especially advantageous:

- There is a long tradition of cooperation between the Nordic countries through the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers.
- Common or coordinated strategies have been developed in many fields with a strong incentive and enthusiasm for their successful implementation. Sharing of experiences and know-how is an important part of this cooperation.

- To a large extent, the Nordic countries have a similar legal framework and approach to regulation and regulatory compliance.
- There is also a shared view on governance with an emphasis on transparency and participation.
- The history of the Nordic countries is intertwined, resulting in common cultural and societal values.
- Many aspects of the culture and economy of the Nordic countries depend on a close relationship with the sea and sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole, often labelled “blue growth”.

Important sea basins in the Nordic region, home to large marine ecosystems, include the Gulf of Finland, the Bothnian Bay, the Bothnian Sea, the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea and the Barents Sea, in addition to the North-Atlantic and Arctic Ocean.

3 Key Principles of the Nordic Approach to MSP

In the workshops held to develop the Nordic Approach to Maritime Spatial Planning, the emphasis was on identifying aspects and principles that were specific enough to the Nordic countries to warrant inclusion in a policy document that could justly be labelled as Nordic.

The ecosystem approach is the overarching principle of the Nordic Approach to Maritime Spatial Planning. Multiple definitions of the ecosystem approach exist, but here the definition provided by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity is adopted:

> *"The ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way."*

This definition is supported by the identification of twelve principles, referred to as the Malawi principles, that are generally applicable and the key to implementation of the ecosystem approach. While these general principles also apply in the Nordic context, this document identifies five additional, though somewhat overlapping, principles that the Nordic countries should adhere to when undertaking Maritime Spatial Planning. These principles state that the Nordic countries should conduct MSP in a way that is

cross-sectoral, cooperative and coordinated,

transparent and participatory,

knowledge-based and adaptive,

strategic and proactive,

evaluative and exemplary.

Each principle is described in a section below.

3.1 A cross-sectoral, cooperative and coordinated approach

In keeping with the long tradition of cooperation between the Nordic countries and given the special need for cooperation and coordination in Maritime Spatial Planning, as discussed above and with special focus on cross-border issues, the Nordic countries should, to the extent possible:

- Establish and maintain a good system of cross-sectoral communication and cooperation in order to secure coherence between sectorial strategies, plans and programmes, and mitigate adverse effects.
- Consider the development of economic and social activities that relate to the interaction between sea and land areas, to enhance sustainable development. This could include the development of coastal areas, their infrastructure and uses.
- Coordinate between the planning of land and sea areas to ensure the best possible consistency, while taking into account differences in each country's approach.
- Establish and maintain a good system of international communication and cooperation on shared marine regions/sub-regions and large marine ecosystems.
- Communicate, consult and notify other Nordic countries, regarding intentions, plans and decisions.
- Share data, knowledge and experiences among the Nordic countries and with other countries as appropriate, regarding specific areas, specific issues and methods.
- Use existing forums and develop them further with respect to MSP, such as forums under the Nordic Council of Ministers, HELCOM, OSPAR, VASAB, the European Union, UNESCO, PAME and others.
- ~~Coordinate between land and sea.~~

3.2 A transparent and participatory approach

The general advances made in the Nordic countries towards an open and transparent society, partly aided by early adoption of new technologies and data, should be applied to the fullest extent possible when undertaking MSP. In particular, the following should be ensured:

- The preparation of a comprehensive plan for the MSP process with clearly defined roles for the actors involved, to the extent possible. An open process, easy access to publicly available information and timely, proactive communications.
- The systematic engagement of stakeholders throughout the process. Everyone affected by the plan should have an opportunity to receive information and be invited to participate in the process.
- Thorough documentation of the process and all decisions made. Strategic Environmental Assessment or similar methodologies should be applied when appropriate.

3.3 A knowledge-based and adaptive approach

The Nordic countries should base their Maritime Spatial Plans on best available knowledge and practices. Information and data should be well structured and of high quality. The knowledge base should be continuously improved, in particular what relates to ecosystems, their function, use and services as well as their economic value. When knowledge is lacking, the precautionary principle should apply.

~~It is important to adapt the planning to special issues and characteristics of each area, such as natural, cultural, biological, ecological, seasonal and landscape characteristics.~~

It is important to adapt the planning to the natural characteristics of each area, such as biological, ecological, seasonal and landscape characteristics. The planning should also be integrated and holistic, taking into account economic and social issues.

The scope and relationship between impact assessments carried out at different planning levels should be clear. Cumulated effects should be assessed, for example through Strategic Environmental Assessment.

3.4 A strategic and proactive approach

The Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers have adopted a number of strategies and policies relevant to Maritime Spatial Planning, for example regarding sustainable development, cultural heritage, landscape, bio-economy, fisheries, energy and issues of the Arctic. When developing MSPs, the Nordic countries should take these strategies and policies into account, for example through Strategic Environmental Assessment.

It is important that each Maritime Spatial Plan has clearly stated goals and that the planning horizon is sufficiently long to ensure that these goals can reasonably be achieved within the plan's time frame.

The ecosystem approach should be applied at the appropriate spatial and temporal scales to recognize the fact that ecosystems change over time.

3.5 An evaluative and exemplary approach

Effective feedback and monitoring is the key to continuous development of the methodologies behind Maritime Spatial Planning. It is therefore important to carry out systematic evaluation of important aspects of the different national MSPs. Collaboration and coordination between the Nordic countries can facilitate such evaluation, such as by coordinating

indicators of impacts. MSP methods and procedures should therefore be organized with this in mind.

It is clear that the Nordic Countries can contribute to international practice and development of MSP by adhering to the above principles and that Nordic Maritime Spatial Plans can serve as good examples and precedents. In carrying out MSP, the Nordic countries should be mindful of this aspect and organize procedures and dissemination accordingly.

Nordic Maritime Spatial Plans and the governance with which they are developed and implemented, will demonstrate how the Nordic countries handle the responsibility they have for their waters.

4 Recommendations

The principles stated in the previous chapter are general in nature and they can be respected in various ways. It is therefore imperative for their successful implementation that everyone involved in Maritime Spatial Planning in the Nordic countries is mindful of the principles when new projects are devised and decisions made.

Many of the principles are implemented through pooling of the resources of the Nordic countries and efficient sharing of knowledge, experience, information and tools.

The Nordic countries can pool their resources by sharing tools that are developed for MSP. These could, for example, be web based map services, statistical methods, guidelines for work procedures and such. Methodologies could also be shared, such as on zoning and how zoning can be used to implement marine protected areas. However, it is not realistic to expect zoning to be fully coordinated across the Nordic countries. Attention should be given to international efforts on standardization of mapping and communication of sea maps.

Coordination and standardisation (even harmonization) in data collection, storing and handling is advantageous but it must allow for different needs and practices in each country and sea basin or region. It is most important to make comprehensive metadata readily available that includes how and why the data was collected and by whom. It should also show how the four dimensions (space and time) are accounted for. Existing systems and initiatives should be considered, including Inspire, Emodnet and Copernicus.

The Nordic countries can benefit from guidance on how ecosystem services and their values can be integrated in maritime spatial planning. Inclusion of ecosystem services in planning is essential for making use of and developing the benefits from the ecosystem. Knowledge of how maritime activities are dependent on the functioning of ecosystems as well as what impact they have on the ecosystems is important. The guidance therefore should include a shared list of ecosystem services that are relevant to MSP and an elaboration on how each service can be influenced or managed by spatial planning and how other means can also affect them. It should also include possible means of restoring ecosystem services that have been lost. Similarly, a list of issues relating to the link between terrestrial and marine spatial planning would be beneficial and have a coordinating effect.

Geographical information in all four dimensions is important. Mapping agencies should serve seaside data using their web technologies. Consistency and continuity between terrestrial and maritime mapping should be ensured.

A systematic scheme for evaluation and comparison of MSPs could be devised, touching on various aspects such as time, scale, sustainability, flexibility, involvement of stakeholders and implementation of the ecosystem approach.

Based on the need for sharing as described above, and its importance in implementing the principles, The Network for Marine Environmental Management and Planning makes the following recommendations:

1. Continued work by the Network

According to the network's mandate, its overarching goal is to develop and support common principles and methods for planning in order to attain an ecosystem based approach in managing the Nordic waters. The network is also supposed to be a forum for dialog and dissemination of information and knowledge in Nordic marine management and planning. Therefore it is recommended that the work of the Network for MSP is continued.

2. A scoping report on data and information in relation to MSP in the Nordic Countries

To find synergies and sharing of experiences in relation to data and information handling and needs in MSP, it is recommended that the current developments in the Nordic countries are analysed and summarized in a report. Similar work in other organisations, such as the EU Commission and the HELCOM-VASAB Joint MSP WG, should be made use of.

3. A project on integration of ecosystem services in maritime spatial planning

To facilitate and strengthen ecosystem-based management it is recommended that a project is launched that will provide guidance on how ecosystem services can be integrated in MSP. The project should focus on MSP in particular, but link to and make use of other initiatives and projects, on-going or completed, on marine ecosystem services.

4. Exchange of people

To further advance MSP competence in the Nordic countries, it is recommended that exchange of jobs, government officials and academic staff and students is encouraged.

Appendix A:
Relevant documents and websites

Reports from Nordic workshops on Maritime Spatial Planning

Marine Spatial Planning in the Nordic region – Principles, Perspectives and Opportunities. Outcomes from the Nordic Forum on MPAs in Marine Spatial Planning, 2009. (NR 2009)

Nordiskt samarbete om planering och förvaltning av nordiska havsområden. Betänkande från ad hoc grupp för havsmiljöförvaltning. TemaNord 2010:504 (TN 2010)

Maritime Spatial Planning in the Nordic Context. Project Report for The Nordic Group of Planning Officials, 2012. (NC 2012)

Bruk och förvaltning av de nordiska havsområdena – i dag och i morgon. Resultat och rekommendationer från en workshop om havsplanering, Tórshavn, Färöarna, 14–16 november 2011. NA2012:901 (NA 2012)

Results of the 2nd Nordic Workshop on Marine Spatial Planning and an update for 2014: Use and Management of Nordic Marine Areas: Today and Tomorrow: Reykjavik, Iceland, 12.-13. November 2013. NA2014:932 (http://dx.doi.org/10.6027/NA2014-932)

A Nordic Model for Maritime Spatial Planning. Results of workshop 1 in Mariehamn, Åland, 2014 (WS1 2014)

Other relevant documents

Baltic Sea Broad-scale Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Principles. Adopted by HELCOM HOD 34-2010 and the 54th Meeting of VASAB CSPD/BSR. http://helcom.fi/Documents/HELCOM%20at%20work/Groups/MSP/HELCOM-VASAB%20MSP%20Principles.pdf

Bernhard Heinrichs, Kira Gee. Necessary common minimum requirements for Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea. Contribution to the PLAN BOTHNIA work package “Region-wide recommendations on minimum requirements for MSP systems” (component 5.2.4.). Final report. 2012.

Commission of the European Communities 2008: Communication from the Commission. Roadmap for Maritime Spatial Planning: Achieving Common Principles in the EU. COM(2008) 791 final. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0791:FIN:EN:PDF

Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014L0089&from=EN

Ehler, Charles, Fanny Douvere. Marine Spatial Planning: a step-by-step approach toward ecosystem-based management. Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and Man and the Biosphere Programme. IOC Manual and Guides No. 53, ICAM Dossier No. 6. Paris: UNESCO. 2009 (English). http://www.unesco-ioc-marinesp.be/msp_guide

HELCOM & VASAB (2013). Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning. Working Group Report 2010-2013. 63 pp. http://www.helcom.fi/Documents/Ministerial2013/Associated%20documents/Background/Joint%20HELCOM-VASAB%20MSP%20WG%20Report%202010-2013.pdf

Helhetlig forvaltning av det marine miljø i Barentshavet og havområdene utenfor Lofoten (forvaltningsplan). https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumenter/stmeld-nr-8-2005-2006-/id199809/?docId=STM200520060008000DDDEPIS&ch=1&q= og https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumenter/Report-No-8-to-the-Storting-20052006/id456957/

Helhetlig forvaltning av det marine miljø i Barentshavet og havområdene utenfor Lofoten (forvaltningsplan), oppdatering. https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumenter/Report-No-8-to-the-Storting-20052006/id456957/

Helhetlig forvaltning av det marine miljø i Norskehavet. https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/ryddemappe/rydde-tema/hav--og-vannforvaltning/havforvaltning/helhetlig-forvaltningsplan-for-norskehav/id454723/

Helhetlig forvaltning av det marine miljø i (norsk del av) Nordsjøen og Skagerrak. https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/meld.-st.-37-2012-2013/id724746/?docId=STM201220130037000ENGEPIS&ch=1&q=

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management. Marine Spatial Planning and Maritime Affairs Division. Marine spatial planning -

Current status 2014 National planning in Sweden's territorial waters and exclusive economic zone.

Relevant web sites

European Commission. Maritime Affairs. Maritime Spatial Planning. http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/maritime_spatial_planning/index_en.htm

The Nordic Council of Ministers, The Marine Group. http://www.norden.org/aeg

UNESCO Marine Spatial Planning Initiative. http://www.unesco-ioc-marinesp.be/msp_guide/about_the_guide

HELCOM, Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission. http://helcom.fi/

VASAB, Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea. http://www.vasab.org/

OSPAR Commission. http://www.ospar.org/

PAME, Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment. http://www.pame.is/

Plan Bothnia. http://planbothnia.org/

Appendix B:
The Network for Marine Environmental Management and Spatial Planning

(To be added)

Appendix C:
Abbreviations and acronyms

Emodnet	The European Marine Observation and Data Network
HELCOM	Helsinki Commission, The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission
Inspire	Infrastructure for Spatial Information
MSDI	Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure
MSP	Maritime (or Marine) Spatial Planning
OSPAR	The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
UNESCO	(Fr: Organisation des Nations unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VASAB	Visions and Strategies around the Baltic Sea