



Baltic SCOPE

Towards coherence and cross-border
solutions in Baltic Maritime Spatial Plans



EUROPEAN UNION
European Maritime
and Fisheries Fund

Evaluation and Monitoring of Transboundary Aspects of Maritime Spatial Planning

a Methodological Guidance



THIS IS A REPORT FROM THE BALTIC SCOPE COLLABORATION

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EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF TRANSBOUNDARY ASPECTS OF MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING A METHODOLOGICAL GUIDANCE

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1. INTRODUCTION & 2. EVALUATION – PURPOSES AND APPROACHES

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents a guidance on evaluation and monitoring transboundary collaboration in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP). An often cited definition states that, “Marine [or maritime] Spatial Planning is a public process of analysing 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” (UNESCO-IOC 2010). Countries conduct MSP for their sea area, or parts of the sea under their jurisdictions. Due to many cross-border characteristics of the uses of the sea (e.g. shipping, energy transfer, fishing) and because marine habitats and species or environmental impacts of human activities do not respect borders of countries, there is a need for countries to collaborate with each other. There is thus a need for transboundary collaboration in MSP.

Transboundary collaboration may, here, refer to two alternate situations. a) One of these is a process in which two or more countries collaborate together to identify issues and topics that require the joint development of solutions to be addressed in national maritime spatial planning.. Countries may also agree to apply similar methods and principles in their national MSP processes. b) Or it may signify a situation where a country takes into account transboundary aspects while preparing its own national MSP. As a minimum, this requires a cooperative consultation and exchange of information between the collaborating countries.

This report uses the expression transboundary collaboration to address both of these alternatives without always making a distinction between each of them.

This report was developed as part of the Baltic SCOPE project (www.balticscope.eu). Baltic SCOPE was developed to enhance cross-border integration and coordination of MSP activities in the Baltic Sea. Baltic SCOPE aimed at increasing collaboration between national authorities and sectoral stakeholders in the Baltic Sea region, in order to help find solutions to cross-border issues and increase the alignment of national maritime spatial plans. The Baltic SCOPE project partnership was made up of MSP authorities from six Baltic Sea region countries: Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Latvia and Estonia. Other project partners were intergovernmental organisations HELCOM and VASAB and two research organisations NordRegio and the Finnish Environment Institute. The project activities focussed on two case study areas. One area was in the Southwest Baltic Sea consisting of the sea areas of Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Poland. The other case study area, the Central Baltic Sea, addressed the bordering sea areas of Sweden, Latvia and Estonia.

The Baltic SCOPE project lasted two years from April 2015 to March 2017. This evaluation framework was prepared during the whole duration of the project. It is based on findings from a literature review on evaluation of spatial planning at sea and on land and, especially, on the material collected during the project. The main purpose of following the Baltic SCOPE process was to come to a conclusion on how one could evaluate such processes. This report is a result of that consideration. The Baltic SCOPE experiences showed that cross-border collaboration is practiced in very different contexts and has very different objectives. For the preparation of the evaluation framework this means that the framework cannot be presented as one standard evaluation protocol. Instead, it has to be flexible and adaptable for different contexts and cases.

The evaluation methodology suggested here can also be applied to the evaluation of national MSP, but then many of the expounded details must be considered carefully and rephrased accordingly.

The report starts with an introduction to the evaluation of policies and spatial planning and typical evaluation approaches (Section 2). Section 3 briefly presents how the evaluation of MSP has been understood and approached in previous works. How this framework for evaluating and monitoring MSP processes was developed is presented in Section 4. Finally, Section 5 presents the Baltic SCOPE evaluation and monitoring framework, which presents the overall philosophy of the framework and detailed methods to be used as well as a set of criteria and indicators to support the evaluation of MSP. Section 5 also discusses governance of the evaluation processes.

There are three annexes to the report. Annex 1 is a set of guidelines for constructing theories of change - a key element of impact evaluation. Annex 2 presents an extensive list of evaluation criteria and indicators. It also includes suggestions for suitable evidence as a basis for monitoring. Annex 3 presents the indicative steps for an evaluation process to support the section on the governance of evaluations (Section 5).

2. EVALUATION – PURPOSES AND APPROACHES

Evaluation in its general meaning signifies the assessment of merit, worth and value of a public process or its products such as public policies and spatial plans. Evaluation often asks if the set targets are met, but evaluations can also address the processes of policy or plan formation as well as the processes of their implementation (Vedung 1997; Vedung 2006).

Evaluating policies and plans requires time and resources. Therefore, it must be ensured that such investments are justified in terms of the difference they might make in succeeding in the processes, policies and plans that are being evaluated. “Evaluation is not an end in itself” as is emphasised in the EU commission’s (DG REGIO) guidance on the evaluation of policies that aims to foster socio-economic development in the EU (European Commission 2013b, 7).

2.1. PURPOSES OF EVALUATION

Evert Vedung’s (2010, 263) argument in favour of evaluations of public policies is that,

“If you carefully examine and assess the results of what you have done and the paths toward them, you will be better able to orient forward. Good intentions, increased funding and exciting visions are not enough; it is real results that count. The public sector must deliver. It must produce value for money.”

Assessing merit, worth and value of public policies should not be understood primarily as a judgement of whether public authorities have been successful or not. The purpose of evaluation should always be to improve policies and plans as well as the processes to prepare and implement them. Evaluations should help policy makers and planners in making well-informed decisions. Therefore, the evaluations should help policy makers and planners to understand what works and what does not and, importantly, why it is so. Similarly, it is important to know for whom policies and plans work and in which contexts (European Commission 2013a). To make evaluations useful, usable and used, the evaluations should be closely integrated with policy making or planning processes to the extent that they become integral parts of the processes (European Commission 2013b). This allows a timely flow of information between the evaluation and planning process. It is also important that the information flows both ways so that the evaluation can be adjusted to possible changes in the process that is being evaluated.

Carneiro (2013), who has developed methodologies for the evaluation of MSP, emphasises that evaluations are an important part of adaptive management cycles as they generate information about the performance of planning processes and thus allow eventual changes in the next planning cycle. That improvement of planning is the purpose of the evaluation of planning: “learning should be the primary outcome of any evaluation”. Consequently, a primary purpose of the evaluation process should be to foster learning.

Evaluations utilise carefully designed and systematically implemented methods that can shed light on various aspects of policies and plans. One of the common questions to be asked is whether the policy or plan reached its targets, but there is much more to be learned. Evaluations that focus also on processes of making and implementing policies and plans increase our understanding, for instance, of the efficiency or equity of the process. Evaluations that scrutinise both processes and outcomes “provide opportunities to learn about the questions to ask, the goals to set and how to frame the issues as well as the instrumental learning about how to design or implement the policy” (Mickwitz 2006, 18).

Who learns from the evaluations then? Obviously the client who commissions the evaluation, but the matter should be understood even more broadly. Stakeholder and public participation in planning and policy-making processes are a normative requirement nowadays. It has also been emphasised that evaluations themselves are often participatory (Carneiro 2013; Hansen and Vedung 2010; Mickwitz 2006). Then any person who is engaged in evaluations can learn from the participation in the evaluation process or at least from the results. In the cases when evaluations

are conducted as part of participatory planning or policy-making processes the evaluation process and results reach a wide audience.

As noted, individuals learn from their involvement in evaluations, but the involved organisations can learn from the process as well. Mickwitz (2006) emphasises the importance of evaluation in enhancing both single loop and double loop learning, that both also contribute to adaptive management cycles (Armitage, et al. 2008; Cundill, et al. 2012; Pahl-Wostl, et al. 2007). In single loop learning one learns to improve for instance spatial planning solutions to be more effective while in double loop learning the actors learn how to develop the planning system in order to perform better in the forthcoming planning cycles.

It is stated here that learning should be the primary outcome of evaluation, but it has other important functions. It is especially important to check for accountability as was indicated in the aforementioned quotation by Evert Vedung. Accountability concerns the liability of those who are in charge of, and conduct, public tasks and spend public resources, the resources should be used wisely and it should be ensured that the goals regarding the quality of process and results are achieved (Mickwitz 2006). There are technical, financial and ethical types of accountability (Carneiro 2013).

Finally, evaluations that improve public knowledge and understanding of policies and plans can help increase trust and legitimacy as well as motivation among the key actors. Obviously, evaluation can also point out serious flaws in processes or goal achievements and raise questions of accountability. In such cases an increase of legitimacy can follow as the evaluation makes improvement possible of policy-making or planning processes and products.

2.2 EVALUATION APPROACHES

Evaluation literature emphasizes that an evaluation is a careful assessment (European Commission 2013a; Mickwitz 2006). This means that the evaluation should be systematic and rigorous to produce understandable and justifiable results. However, evaluations can be conducted in different systematic and rigorous ways. Selection of the methodologies must be fitted to the purpose and demand of the evaluation findings as well as to available resources.

Terryn et al. (2016) observe that usually the evaluation of spatial planning has been based on a strictly linear (or at least cyclical) understanding of planning processes. Consequently the evaluation methods have been structured in simple logical steps to be followed. They remind us, however, that “most spatial developments do not evolve in a linear, circular or causal way, but rather present themselves more and more in a-linear, pragmatic and adaptive ways” (Terryn, et al. 2016, 1085). Concluding from this they, too, suggest that evaluations should be conducted as an integrated part of the planning processes and the methods should be applied to fit the planning contexts (Terryn, et al. 2016).

Terryn et al. (2016) point out that planning takes place in situations that have different levels of complexities (or are not complex at all). This also has implications for evaluations. The following matrix presents how different evaluation approaches can fit to different planning situations.

		EVALUATION APPROACHES	
PLANNING ISSUE	Highly open, undefined, innovative, new	Adaptive	Co-evolutionary
	Simple, regular, defined, well-know	Circular	Participative
		Known, defined, fixed number of agents	Highly dynamic, undefined, volatile
		PLAYING FIELD	

Figure 1: Evaluation approaches in relation to the degree and reasons of complexity of the planning situations (Terryn et al., 2016, 1087)

Circular evaluation (lower left-hand) is suitable for simple planning issues and situations. In such cases it is also well known who the key actors are, what the stakes are and what roles the institutional and non-institutional actors would have in the planning. In other words the playing field is stable and known. An adaptive evaluation (upper left-hand) approach is applicable when the planning issue itself is undefined and possibly changing, but the institutional and societal setting is relatively stable. Participative evaluation (lower right-hand) is apt when the planning issue is simple, but there are uncertainties regarding the actors, stakes and possible roles of the different types of actors. Finally, co-evolutionary evaluation (upper right-hand) approach is needed when both the planning issue and playing field are not well known or are in a process of transformation during the planning process or being transformed by the planning. A continuous evaluation would be needed to encourage learning-by-doing and co-evolution. Here the evaluation would become a part of the interactive process in which involved actors can place their values, problems and concerns. (Terry, et al. 2016, 1087)

As each of these evaluation approaches fits different types of contexts, the approaches, selected methods and the evaluation criteria should be selected to fit the relevant context. Furthermore, it is important that evaluations are sensitive to the evaluated process and how it unfolds and be adapted if necessary, meaning that some of the evaluation criteria can be learned during the evaluation processes (Gomart and Hajer 2003). Circular evaluation looks at how the program meets its intended objectives. Adaptive evaluations probe whether the final results meet the needs of changing contexts and various interests. Participatory evaluations review the ability of interest groups to cooperate in a situation of changing playing fields. Co-evolutionary evaluation asks if the planning itself is becoming more resilient and adaptive to be able to operate when both planning issues and the playing field are volatile (Terry, et al. 2016, 1088).

Evaluations can have different targets, and different timing in relation to the stage of decision making or planning processes; the selected methodology should respect the nature and complexity of the object of the evaluation. These distinctions are discussed in the following sections.

2.2.1. Evaluation of Impacts and/or Processes

The evaluation of the impacts of policies and plans is essential for assessing the effectiveness of public policies. The question of effectiveness asks to what extent the set goals have been reached. Mickwitz (2006, 27) argues that the evaluation of effectiveness (i.e. did we reach the intended goals?) is necessary, but “is not enough; a broader perspective based on several criteria and also considering side-effects is required”. Identification of unintended consequences is recognized widely as an essential part of the evaluation of spatial planning especially, because spatial planning typically addresses and affects broad areas and a broad spectrum of human activities (Carneiro 2013; Faludi 2000; Terry, et al. 2016)

It has been noted that identifying and isolating the impacts of spatial planning is a challenging task. Generating impacts of spatial plans is dependent on various factors, especially so in cases of strategic or general level planning, which MSP often is. Only some of these factors that generate impacts follow directly from the spatial plan itself and, further, spatial planning authorities have only a limited mandate to influence most of the maritime or marine sectors. Then the effectiveness of a spatial plan depends on other sectors’ willingness to follow the spatial plan (Faludi 2000). Carneiro (2013) has observed that the current literature on MSP is not paying enough attention to the issue of multi-causality and has not sufficiently discussed the difficulty of isolating what contribution MSP has or can have on observed changes in the use of sea areas. Promotion of wind energy through MSP can serve as an example:

In some countries a designation of a sea area for wind energy production in a maritime spatial plan is not directly linked to permitting of wind energy production or incentive mechanisms to support wind energy production. In such cases whether the designation of an area for wind energy production in the MSP will actualize as wind energy production is dependent on factors such as:

- Economic feasibility of the project (influenced by level of economic incentives, production costs, energy prices).
- Social acceptability of wind energy (an issue that surfaces often during permitting processes).
- Availability of alternative production areas (on land or in other countries).

Identification of impacts of spatial planning asks the evaluators to address the issue of causality. How and to what extent are the observed changes attributable to the spatial plan? Thus, this notion of causality is centred on the idea of attribution (European Commission 2013a), but Carneiro (2013, 226) reminds us that for MSP “[a]ttribution of causality is likely to constitute a major challenge”. In evaluation of spatial planning that takes place in complex contexts, causality is often better to address as a question of contribution, not attribution. Rather than trying to come to a definite conclusion on causality between the intervention and desired outcomes, i.e. the attribution, it is recommended to present plausible evidence or narrative of contribution. This can importantly reduce uncertainty concerning effects of interventions, which is in itself a useful finding for improving performance of policies and plans (European Commission 2013a). From this perspective one should try to identify whether or not the spatial plan is one of the causes of observed change and describe how it is so. Analysis of causal contribution involves also identifying and investigating alternative explanations for observed changes (Carneiro 2013; European Commission 2013a).

Knowing the impacts and effectiveness of policies and plans is essential for continued improvement of public policy making, but focussing only on the impacts is not sufficient. Evaluation of the process of implementation of a policy or plan helps to answer not only whether the results are met, but also helps to understand why it is so. Process evaluation enables to assess the effectiveness of the process and can also help in explaining the observed results (Carneiro 2013). Evaluation of the process of making a policy or a plan gives valuable information for improvement of the processes in the future, i.e. the double loop learning (Mickwitz 2006). Some aspects of policy making and spatial planning processes as well as of processes of implementation have an important intrinsic value, which justifies giving attention to processes in evaluation. An imperative of public participation in policy-making and spatial planning processes is an example of such intrinsic values. Also requirements of transparency and accountability underline the need of focusing on processes (Carneiro 2013; Hansen and Vedung 2010; Mickwitz 2006).

2.2.2. Timing of Evaluation

Evaluations can take place in different stages of policy or planning processes. Impact assessments can check whether and to what extent the set results have been achieved after the policies or plans have been implemented. Such evaluations are called ex post evaluations. Evaluations that take place afterwards can also focus on the processes of collecting feedback from different actors who were involved in the process. Ex post evaluations can also study possibly unintended impacts of policies or plans.

Ex ante evaluations take place typically before or in the very early stages of policy making or planning processes. They try to anticipate possible future impacts of planned policies, in order to help design effective policies and plans. An ex ante evaluation should preferably produce results early enough in relation to the policy making or planning process in order to have a valuable and timely contribution (European Commission 2013b). Strategic Environmental Assessments and the Environmental Impact Assessment are special cases of ex ante evaluations.

Interim evaluations or mid-term reviews take place during the processes of policy making and planning or implementation processes typically in predefined stages. Interim evaluations can check, for instance, whether measures are implemented as planned and whether they are producing the immediate impacts that were anticipated. A more thorough interim evaluation can also help to assess whether the assumptions on a policy or plan's effects were correct or not.

The European Union has strongly promoted better use of policy evaluation by member states. It requires ex ante and ex post evaluations of all EU funded programmes.

In principle, ex ante, interim and ex post evaluations can and should address both impacts and processes. Obviously, timing of the evaluation in relation to timing of the process that is being evaluated gives specific foci for evaluations. Carneiro (2013) characterises different foci of evaluation in relation to different steps of the spatial planning process as depicted in the following picture.

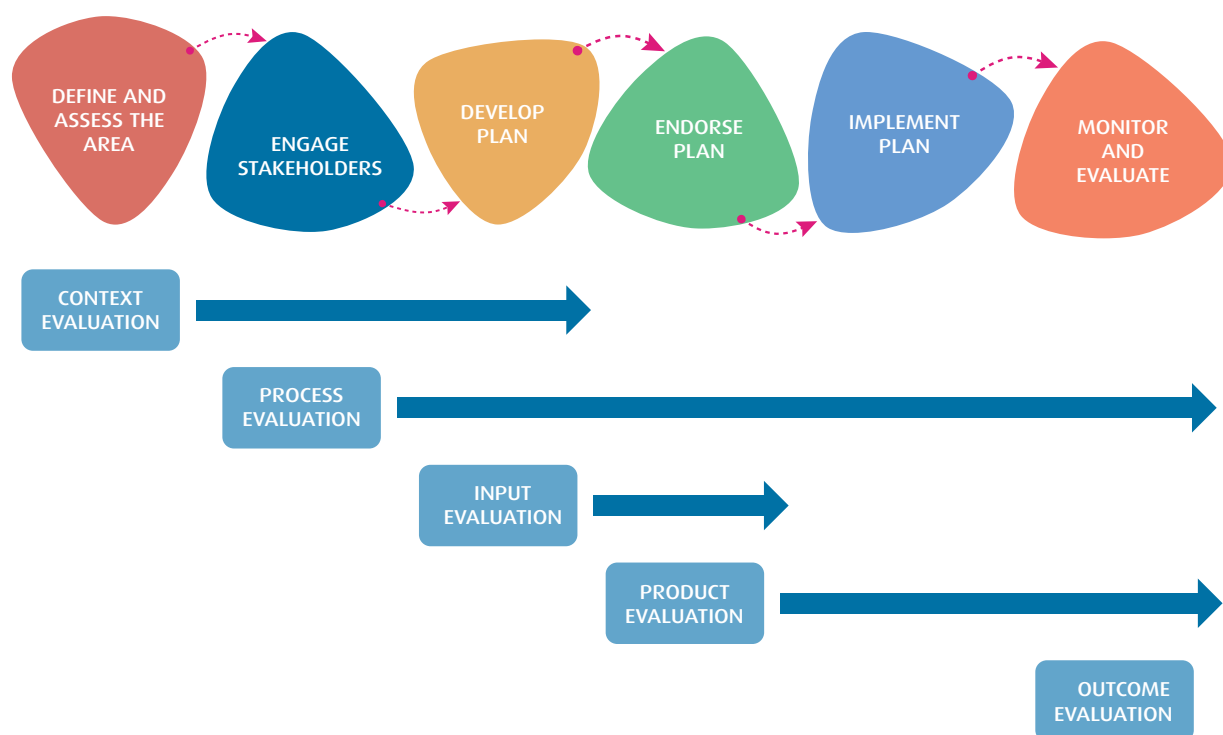


Figure 2: Different focuses of evaluation in relation to steps of the spatial planning process (Carneiro 2013, 215)

2.2.3. Counterfactual and Theory-based Evaluations

Approaches to impact evaluations can be categorized in various ways (Carneiro 2013; Cashmore, et al. 2010; Coryn, et al. 2011; Mickwitz 2006; Vedung 2010). One simple distinction is between counterfactual and theory-based approaches (European Commission 2013a).

An evaluation that takes the counterfactual approach asks does a policy make a difference and typically also tries to quantify the evaluation result (how much difference?). For answering these questions the evaluation first constructs a hypothetical, 'counterfactual' situation in which the policy or the spatial plan does not exist and then assesses what has been the change caused by the actual intervention in comparison to the counterfactual case (Carneiro 2013; European Commission 2013a).

Counterfactual evaluation can provide very strong evidence of the impacts of policy interventions, but for evaluations of policy interventions that are implemented in complex situations, construction of plausible and relevant counterfactual cases can be conceptually challenging and require immense resources, which undermines the strength of the approach in such situations. Using terminology of Terryn et al. (2016), the counterfactual approach may not be the most practical one for situations in which the co-evolutionary evaluation approach would be applied (see Figure 1). In the case of transboundary collaboration in MSP construction of the counterfactual would require consideration of what would happen in respective countries without the collaboration and also what would be the combined outcomes such developments.

Theory-based evaluation has a different starting point. It asks why an intervention produces intended and unintended effects, for whom and in which contexts as well as what mechanisms are triggered by the intervention. The goal is to know why an intervention works and whether it would work differently in different localities (Astbury and Leeuw 2010; Coryn, et al. 2011; European Commission 2013a).

The Baltic SCOPE cases showed that transboundary collaboration takes place in very different contexts can focus on very different topics and can have very different goals. It is justified to

conclude that a theory-based approach is a suitable starting point for building an evaluation and monitoring framework for the evaluation of transboundary aspects of MSP.

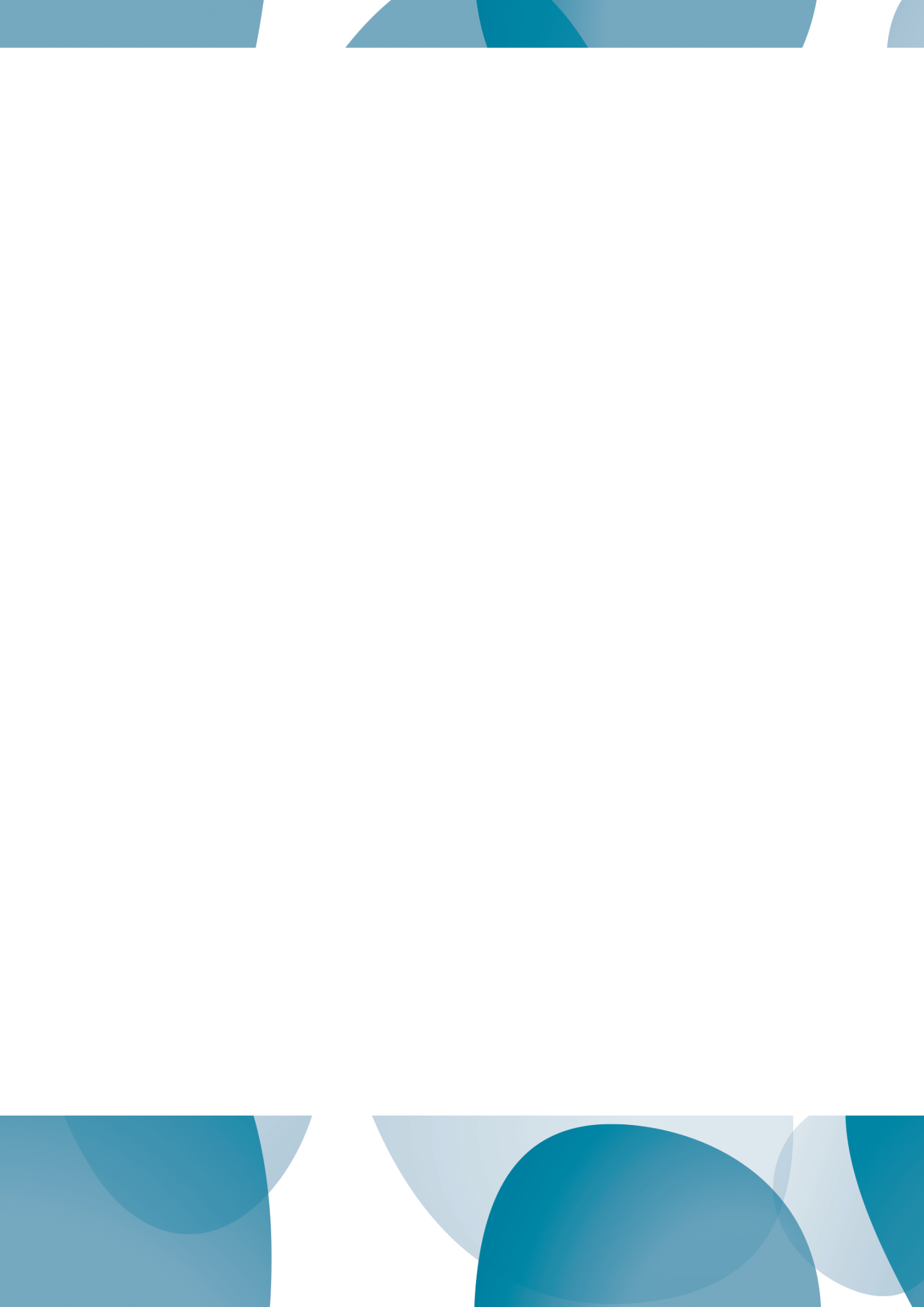
The term theory-based comes from a point that all decisions explicitly or implicitly include an idea – a theory – of how that decision will be implemented and how it will produce the intended results. An important part of the evaluation is then to describe how various components of the evaluated intervention relate to each other and to describe the factors that influence the relations. The aim of theory-based evaluation is to correct the ‘black box’ in evaluations by improving transparency of assumptions behind the evaluation (Astbury and Leeuw 2010; Coryn, et al. 2011).

The theory-based evaluation approach can already prove useful during planning and implementation of policies or spatial plans as it forces to think ahead what concrete and pragmatic steps and actions need to be taken in order to meet the targets. The approach can, further, help in teambuilding (know what expertise is needed to make a successful spatial plan), staff buy-in (explicate the benefits of the planning) and stakeholder engagement (transparency on expected impacts and side-effects of the planning). Also for policy-makers a theory-based approach can increase understanding of how the policy or spatial plan can reach its objectives as well as inform them on possible bottlenecks for progress. This will help in designing and implementing the intervention and also in establishing a performance monitoring framework (Astbury and Leeuw 2010).

Theory-based evaluation needs to form an understanding of the logic on how the intervention is expected to produce its intended results. Typically this is done with the assistance of a theory of change¹ that describes the logic of intervention and the steps and mechanisms on how impacts are to come about (see e.g. Astbury and Leeuw 2010; Coryn, et al. 2011; Hansen and Vedung 2010; Mayne 2012).

¹ also known as program theory or intervention theory.





3. EVALUATION OF MSP

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Maritime Spatial Planning was introduced in the early 2000's as a new kind of process and tool for governance of the use of sea areas. Since then the practice of MSP has evolved. Evaluation to support the implementation of MSP has been a discussed theme almost from the beginning. Evaluation of MSP has mostly been mentioned as an important element of MSP, but papers presenting concrete evaluation methodologies have been rather few in numbers (Carneiro 2013). Much of the literature on MSP evaluation has emphasised the outcome evaluation, but there are also papers that promote the evaluation of processes.

Earlier projects and existing literature give theoretical insights and practical experiences on the evaluation of MSP processes. Earlier EU funded projects such as TPEA, MASPNOSE, BaltSeaPlan, PlanBothnia and PartiSeaPate have all addressed evaluation in one form or another. TPEA and MASPNOSE produced evaluation frameworks and PlanBothnia elaborated on monitoring of MSP. Evaluation approaches of MSP have been developed also in several academic papers (Carneiro 2013; Day 2008; Douvere and Ehler 2011; Fletcher, et al. 2013; Kelly, et al. 2014; Soma, et al. 2014; Stelzenmüller, et al. 2013; Vos, et al. 2012).

Some scholars have already reviewed the development of evaluation thinking in MSP. Especially useful reviews have been conducted for the TPEA project in 2014 (TPEA 2014, see: <http://www.tpeamaritime.eu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/TPEA-Evaluation-Report.pdf>) and Carneiro's (2013) development of MSP evaluation methodology.

As a summary of the review of MSP evaluation approaches the TPEA evaluation points out the diversity of evaluation approaches (e.g. focus can be on ecological or planning aspects; emphasis is on process or outcomes) and concludes also that because of diversity of the contexts in which MSP is practiced there cannot be a ready-made or standardised protocol for evaluating MSP that could be applied universally. Each evaluation has to be tailored to the context (TPEA 2014).

The TPEA evaluation report (TPEA 2014) draws from the review of the following general principles:

- Evaluation of MSP should cover all stages of the MSP process from preparation of planning to follow-up of implementation.
- Evaluation should be based on a clear understanding of the focus and scope of the evaluation, which helps in defining clear objectives for the evaluation.
- Evaluations should cover context, process, outputs and outcomes.
- Evaluation criteria should be matched by suitable indicators.
- Stakeholder involvement is important for a successful evaluation.

The following table (Table 1) presents two evaluation frameworks as suggested by the TPEA evaluation report (2014) and Carneiro (2013). These can be taken as key outcomes of the two attempts to develop MSP evaluation methodology and they have inspired the list of criteria and indicators of this Baltic SCOPE evaluation framework (see Annex 2). The two approaches include similar elements with slightly different emphases. The TPEA approach, for instance, is more detailed regarding legal, administrative and institutional aspects, which are especially critical for the success of transboundary collaboration in planning. These issues are also emphasised in the list of criteria and indicators of the Baltic SCOPE evaluation framework (see Annex 2). Carneiro's evaluation framework puts more emphasis on the content of the plan itself without neglecting the importance of process evaluation. This framework is mainly meant for the evaluation of national MSP and in that context scrutinising the contents of the plan is important. In the transboundary context the collaboration between countries is not expected to produce an actual spatial plan as much as the intention is to produce jointly defined principles and possibly jointly defined planning solutions that would eventually be implemented in national MSP. This message came strongly also from the Baltic SCOPE project experiences.

Table 1: Topics and criteria of two MSP evaluation frameworks (Carneiro 2013; TPEA 2014).
The TPEA framework is designed for the evaluation of transboundary processes while Carneiro's is more focused on national MSP

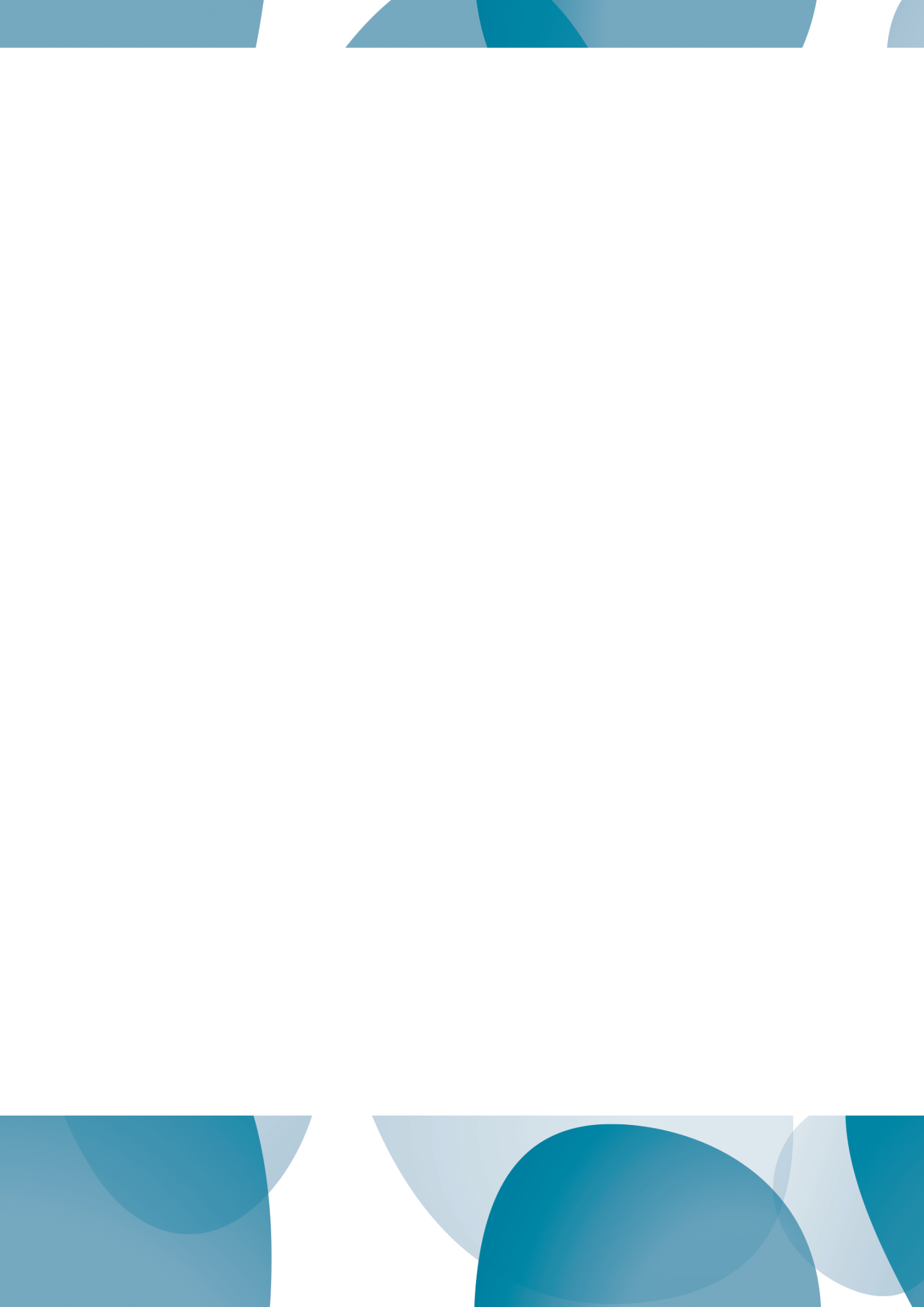
TPEA transboundary evaluation framework (TPEA 2014)	Carneiro's evaluation framework (Carneiro 2013)
Process evaluation: Preparation phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal and administrative framework • Institutional capacity and cooperation • Transboundary MSP area • Formulation of strategic objectives Process evaluation: Diagnosis phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area characteristics • Uses & activities and cross-border relevance of coastal and maritime issues • Governance framework • Area of common interest Process evaluation: Planning phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific objectives • Planning alternatives (options and scenarios) • Planning documents Data and information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data availability and quality Stakeholder engagement	Evaluation of the organisational performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning service quality • Organisational quality Evaluation of the plan-making process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder participation • Validity of data and analyses • Consideration of alternatives • Prospective impact assessment • Adequacy of resources (for plan-making) Evaluation of plan contents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal coherence • Relevance of plan for the region or country • Conformance with planning system • External coherence • Guidance for implementation • Approach, data and methodology • Quality of communication • Plan format Evaluation of plan implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribed steps and outputs • Adequacy of resources (for implementation) • Utilisation Evaluation of plan outcomes and impacts
Communication	
Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles, responsibilities and decision-making • Resources • Implementation 	
Outcomes and impact evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of objectives • Wider benefits 	

UNESCO's International Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO) has been promoting MSP and developing methodologies of MSP. In 2009 it published a step-by-step guidance for MSP (Ehler and Douvère 2009) and in 2014 a guide to evaluate marine spatial plans was published (Ehler 2014). The evaluation guide focuses mainly on outcome evaluation, but raises also important questions regarding processes. The IOC-UNESCO guide covers the whole sequence of evaluation from the planning of evaluation via the actual evaluation to the communication of the evaluation results. These are all also addressed in the TPEA evaluation report (TPEA 2014), but the IOC-UNESCO guide takes one important step further by discussing the use of evaluation results and taking corrective measures. The IOC-UNESCO guide is structured into eight steps of evaluation and a section on how to use the evaluation results (Table 2).

Table 2: Eight steps and related tasks of the evaluation process, including corrective measures (Ehler 2014)

Step 1: Identify the Need for Monitoring and Evaluation and Prepare an Evaluation Plan
Task 1: Identify the need for performance monitoring and evaluation; Task 2: Identify who should be on the performance monitoring and evaluation team; Task 3: Develop a performance monitoring and evaluation plan; Task 4: Engage stakeholders.
Step 2: Identify Measurable Objectives of the Marine Spatial Plan
Task 1: Identify measurable objectives in the marine spatial management plan
Step 3: Identify Marine Spatial Management Action
Task 1: Define different types of marine management actions
Step 4: Identify Indicators and Targets of Performance for Marine Spatial Management Actions
Task 1: Identify governance indicators for management actions; Task 2: Identify socio-economic indicators for management actions; Task 3: Identify ecological and biological indicators for management actions; Task 4: Identify interim targets.
Step 5: Establish a Baseline for Selected Indicators
Task 1: Build baseline information for selected indicators.
Step 6: Monitor Indicators of Management Performance
Task 1: Develop a data collection plan; Task 2: Collect data relevant to each indicator.
Step 7: Evaluate the Results of Performance Monitoring
Task 1: Prepare a data evaluation plan; Task 2: Analyse and interpret the data; Task 3: Write the evaluation report.
Step 8: Communicate the Results of the Performance Evaluation
Task 1: Develop a communications plan; Task 2: Summarize the evaluation report; Task 3: Present the evaluation findings to stakeholders and decision makers.
Using the Results of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Adapt the Next Cycle of Marine Spatial Planning
Task 1: Propose changes in management objectives and management actions; Task 2: Propose reallocation of resources to management actions that work; Reduce/eliminate resource allocation to management actions that don't work; Task 3: Communicate recommended changes of existing spatial management plan to decision makers, planning professionals and stakeholders; Task 4: Identify new information or applied research that could reduce uncertainty in the next round of MSP.







4. PREPARATION OF THE BALTIC SCOPE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

4. PREPARATION OF THE BALTIC SCOPE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The Baltic SCOPE project (see Introduction) activities focussed on two case study areas (see Figure 3).

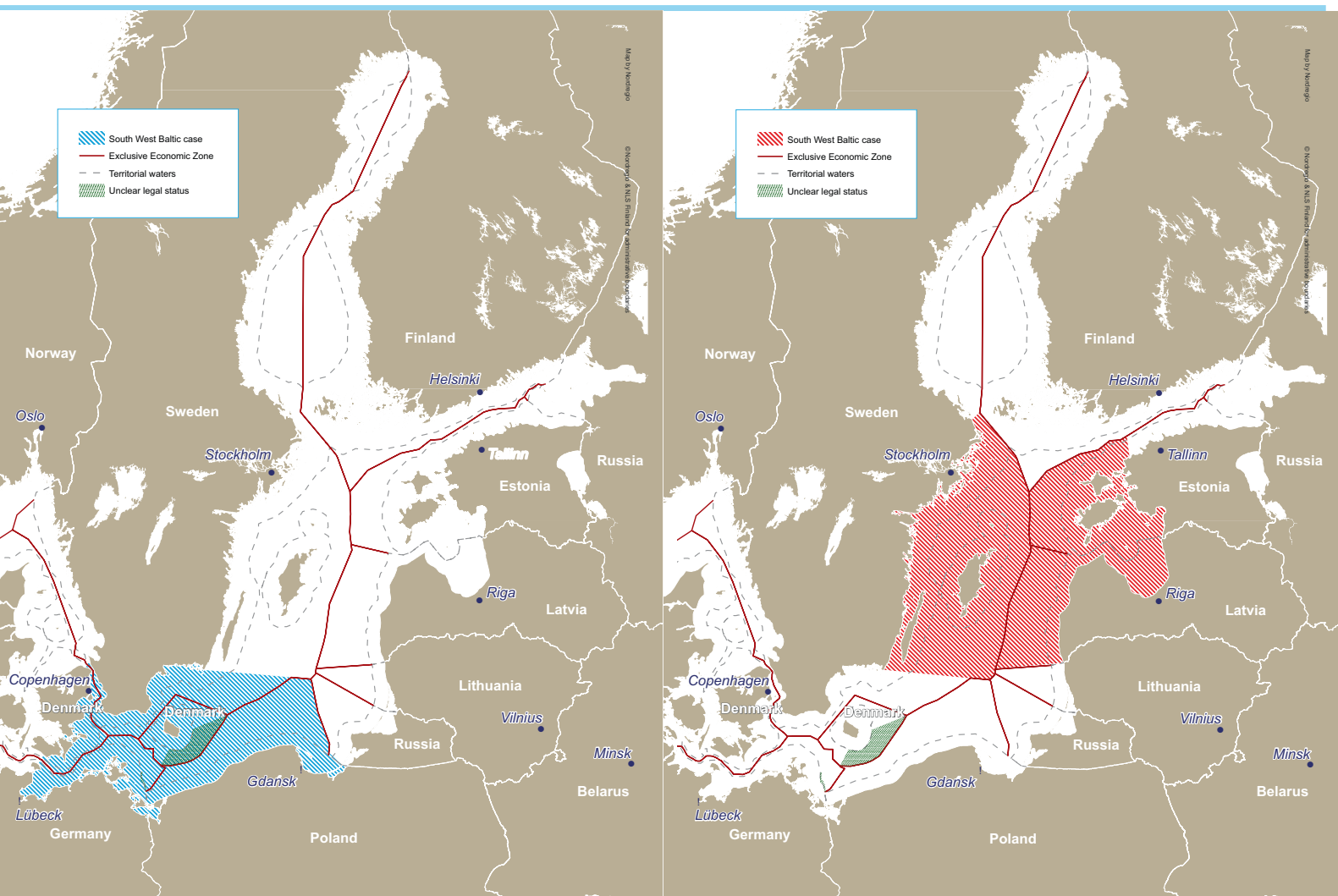


Figure 3: Baltic SCOPE case study areas. The Southwest case study on the left (blue area) and the Central Baltic case study on the right (red area)

The Baltic SCOPE project lasted two years from April 2015 to March 2017. This evaluation framework was prepared during the whole duration of the project. It is based on findings from a literature review on the evaluation of spatial planning at sea and on land (Section 3) and, especially, on the material collected during the project.

The material collected during the project consists of observations and interviews. The purpose of the interviews and observations during Baltic SCOPE was to try to identify factors that influence success of transboundary collaboration. Observations were conducted during six so-called planners' meetings, in which the MSP authorities from different countries collaborated with each other in the two case study areas. The interviews consisted of three group interviews and two individual interviews, which were recorded and later transcribed. Furthermore, two group works were organised among the project's spatial planners to collect ideas and feedback. The first group work commented on evaluation criteria and indicators for a draft evaluation framework. In the second group work the planners identified the most important outcomes for transboundary MSP collaboration and how one could verify that they are met.

The qualitative material that was collected in the observations and interviews was analysed with NVivo software.

The main purpose of following the Baltic SCOPE process was to come to a conclusion on how one could evaluate such processes.

Various differences between national approaches of conducting MSP were recognised by the planners as being the key issues that hinder collaboration across borders or is at least making it complicated. MSP has different legal statuses in different countries and it has different objectives. There are also practical differences: countries prepare and implement MSP with different timing and countries have different planning practices (e.g. terminology, mapping conventions, data, spatial analyses). A significant challenge to note is that not all of the countries even had a nominated competent authority for MSP when the project started.

As solutions to overcome the problems caused by these differences, the planners suggested developing more compatible planning approaches including data collection, analyses and mapping practices. The planners underlined the significance of continued collaboration and discussions across border. This would result in shared understanding of cross-border topics and the differences of MSP organizational tactics in each country. Increasing understanding of different countries' approaches is key for overcoming the differences in planning practices.

One important theme that came out from the analysis of collected material is the interplay of international and national processes, which is strongly linked to existing international and national sector policies. It was suggested by the planners that they should better utilize the existing cross-border collaboration and networks of sector agencies. This would help them in addressing sector-specific issues in cross-border MSP collaboration. The importance of this comes from recognition that spatial planners have limited leverage to influence the sectors directly through the spatial plans. The limitation of spatial planning in influencing different sectors also relates to existing international legislation and agreements such as those that are governed by the International Maritime Organisation, the EU (e.g. Common Fisheries Policy) or the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas.

National context was recognized also as central for successful cross-border collaboration. The planners pointed out that cross-border MSP outputs can be implemented only through national MSP processes, but it was also reminded that cross-border issues should be explained to national sector agencies and sector-specific decision-making and planning processes as well.

Importance of national priorities regarding the use of marine areas or maritime sectors was also brought up. On the one hand, existence of national priorities helps representation of the country's interests in cross-border collaboration. On the other hand, it is important to be aware of the priorities of other countries.

There were differences between the Baltic SCOPE cases due to different contexts. In the Southwest case study area where the sea is intensely used for multiple purposes the planners could identify areas that require more detailed analysis and scrutiny. In such areas the planners could also identify some concrete cross-border planning solutions to be carried over to national MSP processes. The Central Baltic case study operated in a sea area that is less intensively used. There were some difficulties in finding concrete issues to be addressed via spatial planning. Instead of concrete cross-border planning solutions, the planners in this area focused more on developing compatible planning practices and collaboration processes. One example of this is the case's emphasis on developing ecosystem-based planning practices. An output of this work was a set of checklists to support countries in implementing the ecosystem approach in MSP.

In sum, the Baltic SCOPE experiences showed that cross-border collaboration is practiced in very different contexts and has very different objectives. For preparation of the evaluation framework this means that the framework cannot be presented as one standard evaluation protocol. Instead, it has to be flexible and adaptable for different contexts and different cases.





5. BALTIC SCOPE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

5. BALTIC SCOPE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Evaluation literature emphasizes that evaluation is a careful assessment (European Commission 2013a; Mickwitz 2006). This means that the evaluation should be systematic and rigorous to produce understandable and justifiable results. Systematic and rigorous evaluations are time consuming. Therefore, those who commission and use evaluation findings always need to find a balance between best available methods with what is the expected use of the evaluation findings as well as with available resources. There is a need to make strategic choices. These may concern the timing of the evaluation (ex ante, interim and/or ex post), extent of the methodology and the amount of resources to be invested (European Commission 2013b).

The Baltic SCOPE evaluation framework presents a suggestion for a generic methodology to evaluate transboundary aspects of MSP. It is acknowledged that an actual evaluation process has to be adjusted to the context and to the knowledge needs. Therefore, elements of the evaluation framework can and must be used selectively according to the needs. The methodology can be applied also to evaluations of national MSP, but then adaptation needs to be considered very carefully. One especially applicable element is to address the seriousness of challenges regarding isolation and identification of the impacts of MSP (see Section 2.2.1). The construction of theories of change is suggested here as a promising approach to address the question of contribution.

5.1. BALTIC SCOPE EVALUATION APPROACH

The Baltic SCOPE project experiences (Section 4) showed that transboundary aspects of MSP and how they can be addressed varies significantly depending on the context. Literature review conducted in the beginning of the project (Section 3) also pointed out the difficulty of isolating impacts of spatial planning from the developments (or lack of development) that would have taken place even without the spatial plan (e.g. Carneiro 2013; Faludi 2000; Rae and Wong 2012). These points have implications on the Baltic SCOPE evaluation approach. Section 2.2 above, presented typical distinctions in evaluation approaches that evaluations take as their starting points (or the organisation that commissions the evaluation has made). The overall purpose of the Baltic SCOPE evaluation framework is to support learning ways to address transboundary aspects of MSP.

The following are more precise emphases and their justifications in the Baltic SCOPE evaluation framework:

- Co-evolutionary evaluation is a suitable evaluation approach to be applied in complex situations such as addressing transboundary collaboration in MSP.
 - Baltic SCOPE examples showed that transboundary collaboration in MSP takes place in very different contexts can have different objectives depending on the transboundary cases and takes place in situations where outcomes of transboundary collaboration are highly dependent on how different countries own MSP process progress. Both planning issues and playing fields are dynamic and highly open (see Figure 1, Section 2.2).
- Evaluation of transboundary collaboration would benefit from taking a theory-based approach (Section 2.2.3)
 - The theory-based approach helps to anticipate and later test why an intervention produces intended and unintended effects, for whom and in which contexts as well as what mechanisms are triggered by the intervention and in which contexts.
 - The theory-based approach can help in planning of transboundary collaboration (what can be the expected results, what are possible time-spans, what are the most likely difficulties in achieving the results).

- Evaluation of transboundary collaboration in MSP should focus on both process and impacts (Section 2.2.1)
 - Evaluation and follow-up of the process helps to improve the processes in the future. A focus on processes is also important for transparency and puts emphasis on democratic aspects of transboundary collaboration.
 - Evaluation of impacts in MSP in general and in transboundary collaboration in MSP in particular is not an easy task. However, a focus of evaluation on impacts when theory-based approach to evaluation is applied before and during the collaboration can significantly help in understanding how the collaboration can produce impacts and what impacts can be reasonably expected.
 - A focus on impacts is significant in terms of accountability.
- Evaluation of transboundary collaboration in MSP should take place from early stages of transboundary collaboration – preferably from the very beginning (Section 2.2.2)
 - Evaluation and monitoring of the progress from the beginning of the collaboration produces knowledge that can help in adapting the collaboration practices.
 - The suggested theory-based approach forces to think beforehand how the collaboration can produce its impacts. This will help in selecting the best way of collaborating, but also in correcting the collaboration if the collected evidence indicates a need for that.

5.2. THEORY-BASED EVALUATION METHOD

A theory-based evaluation focuses first on describing plausible mechanisms through which a policy intervention can produce its impacts and then later to collect evidence to test if implementation of the intervention took place as was anticipated (and why so) as well as whether the anticipated results were achieved and what the unintended impacts were (Coryn, et al. 2011; Hansen and Vedung 2010; Mayne 2012; Weiss 1997). A theory-based evaluation does not usually produce numerical results as much as it produces narratives. Its results provide important insights into how the transboundary collaboration can work and later why did it work as it did (European Commission 2013a).

The key element of the theory-based evaluation is the theory of change. The term theory-based, as explained in Section 2, comes, in fact, from a realisation that all decisions and plans are based explicitly or implicitly on an idea – a theory – of how that decision or plan will be implemented and how it will produce the intended results. Theories of change are often described as simplified, often linear and mechanical models (Figure 4). These are descriptions of how an intervention produces the intended impacts. Obviously, policy processes and the generation of their outcomes are not always, or even usually, as linear and as neat as depicted in the following figure (see e.g. Astbury and Leeuw 2010; Coryn, et al. 2011; Hansen and Vedung 2010; Mayne 2012).

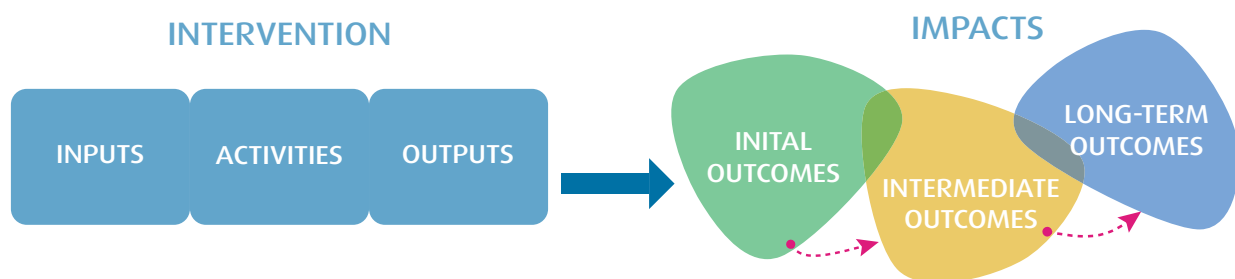


Figure 4: A simple description of a theory of change (Coryn et al 2011, 201)

Inputs are required resources (e.g. human, financial, institutional); activities are the actions taken to define and reach the objectives (e.g. transboundary negotiations, actual collaboration between planners, workshops with stakeholders or spatial analyses) and outputs are immediate results of action (e.g. decisions made on transboundary planning principles or actual planning decisions). Initial outcomes are changes in knowledge, skills and ability of key actors. Intermediate outcomes are typically behavioural changes (e.g. a change in a national MSP) and long-term outcomes (sometimes called simply impacts) are for example a full or partial solution to the perceived problem that the collaboration was set to address (e.g. improved coherence across the border) (Coryn, et al. 2011, 202).

Table 3: Examples of plausible theories in change for transboundary collaboration in MSP

Output of transboundary collaboration	Immediate outcome	Intermediate outcome	Impacts
Agreement on a transboundary planning solution	Acknowledgement of the transboundary need for national MSP	A change in the national MSP	Improved coherence of planning of maritime activities
Establishment of a transboundary collaborative body	Naming of national (and sector/interest) representatives	Actual transboundary collaboration	Improved transboundary collaboration

Mayne (2012) follows the same approach to understanding the theory of change, but adds some essential considerations in order to reach the objectives of theory-based evaluations of knowing why an intervention produces intended and unintended effects; for whom and in which contexts; what mechanisms are triggered by the intervention; how various components of the evaluated intervention relate to each other and what are the factors that influence the relations (Figure 5).

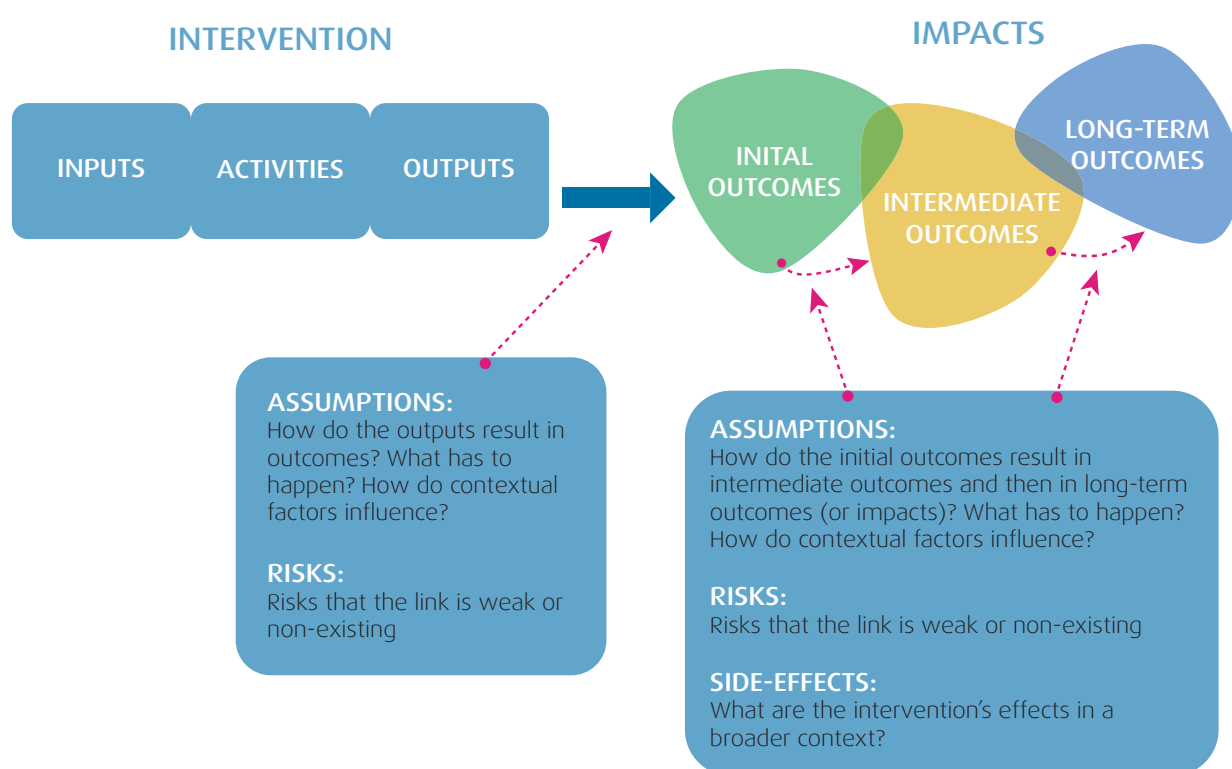


Figure 5: Theory of change with considerations of factors that influence a logical sequence of events. Modified from Coryn et al. 2011 and Mayne 2012

Weber (2006, 120) reminds us that in putting a focus on mechanisms there is a temptation “to focus too much on input-output relationships, on linear chains of causality and on building tightly knit models of arrows and boxes”. Instead, while focusing on mechanisms there is a need for theories of change that allow for ambiguity to address complexity and situatedness. Astbury and Leeuw (2010, 375) suggest that “a more explicit focus on underlying generative mechanisms might help to counter [...] toward oversimplified versions of program theory in the form of linear logical models”.

Theory-based evaluations have often relied on a deliberative or consultative approach to deal with different understandings of and preferences for the process to be evaluated in order to help find one jointly agreed upon theory. Hansen and Vedung (2010) point out that because of substantive and multilevel complexities and political conflicts this is not always possible.

It is not always even advisable to reduce perceptions on the intervention into one theory of change only. This is especially important in interventions that “involve several groups of actors in very different working situations and with very different expectation to the intervention” (Hansen and Vedung 2010, 296). Implementation of MSP takes place typically in that kind of situation as success of the plan’s implementation is dependent on how the plan changes behaviour of a number of actors in various marine sectors. Hansen and Vedung (2010) emphasise that an approach that handles alternative, parallel theories of change are needed in complex and conflict-prone interventions that operate nation-wide, multisite and multilevel.

A theory of change is the key element and starting point of the theory-based evaluation. Producing alternative theories of change in collaboration with key actors helps to identify possible impacts and challenges in a systematic and transparent way. This can significantly help in identifying relevant and effective ways of addressing transboundary aspects of MSP.

A description of theories of change is the starting point of a theory-based evaluation. The actual evaluation tests to what extent the actual cause of events followed the theories of change (including whether the goals were reached) and especially tries to explain why. The theory-based evaluation can be implemented in the following five steps (modified from Coryn et al. 2011, 205 and European Commission 2013, 56-57):

- Formulate plausible theories of change to reflect different actors’ understandings (see Annex 1).
- Formulate and prioritise evaluation questions around a theory of change:
 - How can you know that the different steps of the theories of change (will) actually take place? What evidence do you need?
 - Choose relevant evaluation criteria and indicators (see Section 5.3 and Annex 2).
- Collect evidence relevant for answering the evaluation questions (see Section 5.3 and Annex 2).
- Analyse the evidence to test the theories of change:
 - Which links in the theory of change are strong? Is this conclusion based on a strong logic or empirical evidence supporting the assumptions? Is this conclusion widely accepted by relevant actors? And similarly, which links are weak?
 - Does the observed pattern of outcomes and factors leading to them validate the theory of change? Do/did things unfold as anticipated?
 - Is it likely that any of the external significant factors have had a noteworthy influence on the results observed?
 - What are the main weaknesses in the descriptions of the theories of change? Would additional data or information be useful?
- Draw conclusions:
 - Identify breakdowns (links that did not exist) and respective corrective actions.
 - Identify side effects and unintended impacts (also identify who was affected).
 - Determine effectiveness of implementation (were the objectives reached and to what extent?).
 - Describe and explain cause-effect associations between elements of the theories of change (why things unfolded as they did). Describe also why external factors influence/d the outcomes.

Annex 1 presents a set of questions to make a step-wise description of the theory of change. The same table can be used as a basis for consecutive steps 2-5 of the evaluation.

5.3. INDICATORS TO SUPPORT EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF TRANSBOUNDARY COLLABORATION IN MSP

A set of evaluation criteria and respective indicators are necessary for a systematic and transparent evaluation. Annex 2 presents a list of criteria and indicators that can be used in evaluation of transboundary collaboration in MSP.

The list has been developed based on literature on the evaluation of MSP and especially based on interviews and observations conducted during the Baltic SCOPE project. Input for making the framework has also been collected from project partners in two working groups that were organised during the project (see Section 4).

The set of criteria and indicators is structured into five categories (Table 4 and Figure 6). The first one refers to the general conditions given to transboundary collaboration. The next three categories are structured according to the stages of transboundary collaboration. The last category includes two crosscutting themes that are essential for all steps of MSP collaboration, namely participation and communication.

Table 4: Topics and criteria for evaluation

Topic	Criteria
Conditions for transboundary collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal and administrative conditions for transboundary collaboration
Preparation of jointly identified planning options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National and international context of transboundary collaboration • Definition of objectives for collaboration (content and quality) • Identification of transboundary issues and areas • Planning alternatives • Data and knowledge
Implementation of transboundary agreements (in national plans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement and implementation of transboundary agreements • Structures and conditions for cross-border implementation
Follow up and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up of the implementation • Review of the plans
Cross-cutting themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder participation • Communication across borders and levels

Monitoring of all of the collaboration steps and also of participation and communication proceedings is necessary. The list of criteria and indicators also presents possible sources of evidence to measure or verify the indicator. The evidence forms the basis for monitoring.

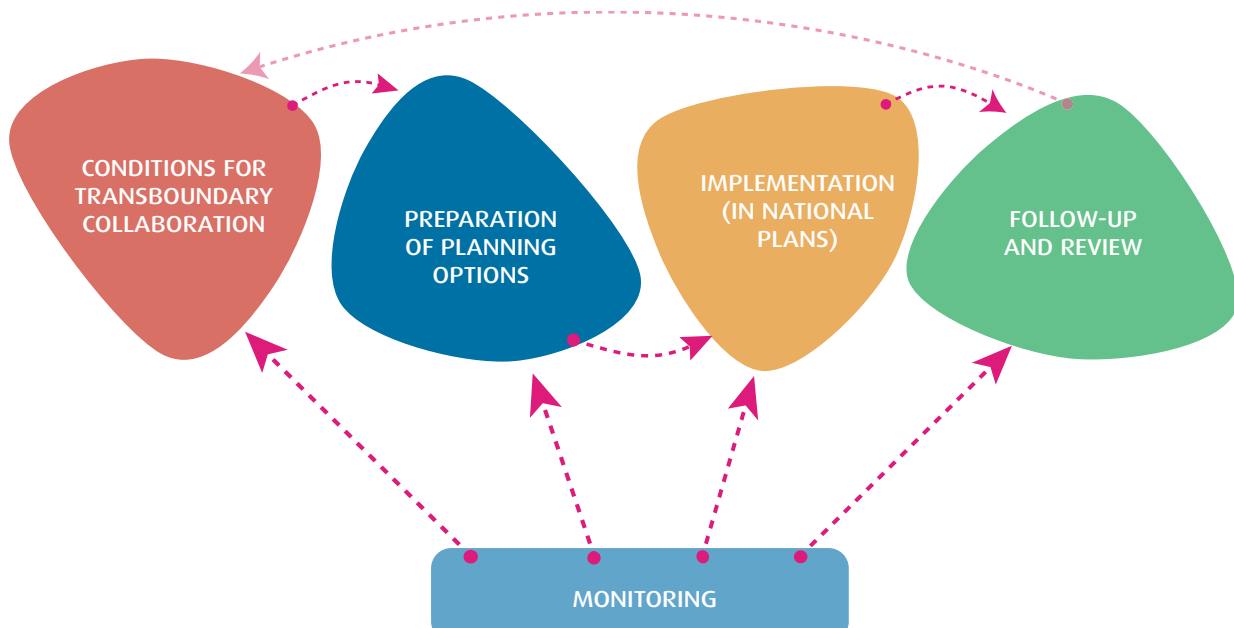


Figure 6: Topics and foci of the evaluation framework

The list of criteria and indicators presented in Annex 2 is very extensive, which would correspond with a very broad scope of evaluation (see Section 5.4.1) and/or of different cases of transboundary collaboration in MSP. It is obvious that all of the indicators or even all of the criteria are not applicable to all cases of transboundary collaboration in MSP. Furthermore, it is possible that the chosen scope of evaluation covers only specific parts of the collaboration processes. Each evaluation thus has to define its own set of criteria and indicators to produce relevant results. The list presented in Annex 2 can serve as a starting point.

The way the criteria and indicators are phrased assumes that they are used for evaluation of the case, in which two or more countries actually collaborate in a similar way as in the Baltic SCOPE project. The indicators can be modified to assess how an individual country has taken into account transboundary aspects of the national plan. Furthermore, the set of criteria and indicators can also inform evaluation of a national planning process or a national plan, but then the selection and rephrasing of the indicators has to be done carefully.

The way the indicators are phrased in the list presents a maximum requirement for the topic addressed by the indicator, which may seem demanding. The actual use of the list in an evaluation should be used to answer whether the requirement presented in the selected indicator has been met (yes, partly, no). Whether the indicator was relevant or applicable must also be considered (N.A.).

The extensive list of indicators covers the whole process of transboundary collaboration including the conditions for operation such as resources, mandates, objectives and time schedules given to the MSP authorities for taking into account transboundary aspects of MSP. These conditions are to a large extent given by high-level decision makers at ministries, governments and possibly even by parliaments. It must be noted then that the evaluation of MSP does not focus only on assessing the performance of the spatial planning authorities, but also addresses the general conditions given for the collaboration.

There are also indicators that refer to reaching and implementing transboundary agreements. The Baltic SCOPE experience showed that spatial planners can identify such needs while collaborating with their colleagues from neighbouring countries, but making such decisions is beyond the mandates of spatial planners. Spatial planners can take these needs to higher-level decision makers, which actually happened as a result of the Baltic SCOPE project. Performance in respect to these indicators depends on these higher-level decision makers.

5.4. ORGANISATION OF EVALUATION

There are certain issues that need to be dealt with in the governance of evaluations. These pertain to defining the scope of the evaluation and key resource questions such as who is in charge, who performs the evaluation and how much should be spent on evaluations. Finally, there is a need to decide on the roles the stakeholders are given in the evaluation (European Commission 2013b).

Annex 3 presents possible steps for conducting a theory-based evaluation of transboundary MSP processes to give an understanding of how to organise the evaluation.

5.4.1. Scope of Evaluation

Defining the scope of the evaluation is the most important first decision to be made. The evaluation should be given certain boundaries in terms of institutional, temporal, sectoral and geographical dimensions (European Commission 2013b). For defining the scope one should ask what is going to be evaluated and when? Definition of the scope of the evaluation must also take into account the expected uses of the evaluation results.

Regarding the evaluation of transboundary collaboration in MSP the decision on the scope can inquire, for instance:

- Should the evaluation only focus on particular parts of transboundary collaboration? It could include data sharing, stakeholder engagement, and definition of common planning solutions. Or should the evaluation cover all aspects of the process?
- Should the outcome evaluation focus on what contribution the transboundary collaboration has on respective national MSP processes or national planning outputs?
- Should outcome evaluation focus on the contributions of the transboundary collaboration on observed changes in the use of sea areas?

Regarding the success of the evaluation, the scope should ideally be defined in a rather strict way to give it a clear focus and task. However, the Baltic SCOPE experience showed that transboundary collaboration itself does not always have clearly defined objectives or problems that it sets to solve in the beginning. These are learned and defined while the collaboration proceeds. Therefore, an exact definition of the scope of the evaluation cannot always be given in the early stages of transboundary collaboration, but should be defined while the process unfolds. This would suggest that the evaluation should be conducted in close co-operation with the planners.

European Commission's (DG REGIO) evaluation guidance (for evaluating regional development programs) makes an important point regarding the definition of the scope of the evaluation. The guidance emphasises that for an evaluation to be useful, the organisation who commissions the evaluation as well as the evaluators should have a clear understanding of what future decisions are likely to be informed by the evaluation results (European Commission 2013b, 31).

Another pragmatic limitation for defining the scope of the evaluation is set by the availability of resources and time for conducting the evaluation. Evaluation questions and scope should be realistic in relation to the resources.

5.4.2. Resources for Evaluation

Evaluations should be conducted in systematic and rigorous ways to produce reliable and relevant results. Selection of the methods must be fitted to the purpose and demand of evaluation findings, but the practical limitation of the availability of resources cannot be ignored either. However, the amount of resources to be used for evaluations should not be the sole determination of the scope of evaluation or the methodological choices. The most important question for planning and commissioning of evaluations is to identify the expected use(s) of evaluation findings and fit the resources accordingly.

Resources for evaluations are more than just the money to be spent. End-users of the evaluation findings as well as other actors involved in the evaluation can give valuable inputs and information for the evaluation. They are resources, as well.

Who is in charge or who is the client for evaluation is critical regarding the usefulness and actual use of the evaluation findings. It is recommended that the person (or a function in administration) that commissions the evaluation should be in high enough position to initiate corrective actions to the policies or plans that are being evaluated (European Commission 2013b). Regarding MSP this would be, for instance, the minister in charge of MSP, a representative of the ministry or a high ranking officer in the spatial planning authority.

The set of evaluation criteria and indicators presented in Annex 2 includes several indicators that help to assess the overall conditions (e.g. resources, time schedules, mandates) for addressing transboundary aspects in MSP by the spatial planning authorities. Individual officers who collaborate with spatial planning officers of the neighbouring countries cannot influence these overall conditions. Therefore, only the persons or organisations that have a responsibility of such matters can correct possible flaws regarding those indicators. If they are the ones who commission the evaluation, the findings are reported directly to the appropriate level.

The evaluation team is, of course, the critical resource for the evaluation. Often evaluations are conducted by consultants who operate under a contract with a public organisation who is responsible for the policy or planning process that is being evaluated. If an external evaluator conducts the evaluation, it is important that the evaluation is conducted with close and frequent contact with the client. This way the evaluation results are immediately available and it is also possible to adjust the evaluation, if the evaluated process is reorganised. Information should thus flow in both directions between the evaluator and the client.

Ordering the evaluation from an external consultant is not the only possible way of commissioning evaluations. In some cases the public bodies have their own evaluation units. Then it would be advisable that the evaluation is conducted as an in-house service (European Commission 2013b). The officers who are running or supervising the policy-making or spatial planning process can also conduct the evaluation in-house. In such arrangement some of the officers should have experience in evaluation methods. If it is decided that the evaluation is conducted in-house and only limited expertise in evaluation methods is available, it is advisable to hire a consultant to facilitate the evaluation process.

Purpose and timing of the evaluation determines to some extent whether the evaluations should be conducted internally or externally. The European Commission's (2013b, 39) evaluation guidance advises that "[i]t may be preferable to rely more on internal resources for formative evaluation inputs or for ex-ante exercises but depend more on external resources for the ex-post evaluation".

Formative evaluations aim at improving the design and performance of policy-making or spatial planning processes usually while they are conducted. Ex ante evaluations have similar objectives, but they are conducted before the processes and also have predictive aims. The theory-based evaluation approach suggested in this evaluation framework can be used for both formative and ex ante evaluations. It could, therefore, be conducted in-house by the MSP authority or could be organised as a close collaboration between the evaluator and spatial planning authority.

Whether the evaluations should be conducted internally or externally depends also on the issues dealt with in the respective policies or spatial plans. If it is anticipated that the process will address or make decisions on controversial issues, an external evaluation will probably be better received. An in-house evaluation of a controversial process will shed doubts on reliability and impartiality of the evaluation.

It is difficult to assess how much money should be spent on the evaluation without knowing the purposes and expectations for the evaluation (European Commission 2013b). As the Baltic SCOPE experience showed, the transboundary collaboration between countries can take very different forms and have different purposes. Consequently, evaluations of such processes would be very different.

It is generally estimated that evaluation of a rather routine policy or planning process would require a relatively small amount of money in proportion to the resources for the whole process –

normally less than 1%. For evaluations of extensive and new types of policies or spatial planning processes, and if there are high learning expectations and substantial investment in stakeholder participation, the costs are likely to be relatively high in proportion to the overall program costs – up to 10% (European Commission 2013b). The EU Commission's (DG REGIO) guidance document points out that ex ante evaluations usually have a rather limited time and limited possibility of acquiring data for the evaluation. Then also the required resource is not that high in comparison to evaluations that come in later stages. Especially interim evaluations if they have strong formative ambitions may require a lot of evidence and extensive stakeholder engagement, which both increases the costs and time needed. Ex post evaluations do not necessarily require substantial resources depending on the scope given for the evaluation. In conclusion, the most important factor that determines the required budget is the nature and scope of the evaluation (European Commission 2013b).

5.4.3. Roles of Stakeholders in Evaluation

There are two broad reasons why stakeholders should be involved in evaluation processes. The first is that stakeholders, with their knowledge and information, are a resource for the evaluation. Secondly, there is always a number of people and organisations that are affected, positively or negatively, by the policies or spatial plans being evaluated. Therefore, they have an interest in the evaluation results and outcomes.

Stakeholders are a resource for evaluations in their capacity to provide information and insights that help design and implement the evaluation. It has been suggested that stakeholders should be involved in all stages of evaluation processes (Carneiro 2013; European Commission 2013b). In early stages their input can be valuable in defining the scope of the evaluation and in outlining the key evaluation questions.

Stakeholder input is needed also in formulating theories of change (Hansen and Vedung 2010; Mayne 2012). As was pointed out in Section 5.2, the evaluators should not aim at producing only a single theory of change on the addressed topic as often there are alternative understandings of what impacts are generated and how. Hansen and Vedung (2010) even point out that elucidation of different understandings of how interventions might play out and different valuations of the impacts is often one of the most important results of theory-based evaluations.

Deciding on evaluation criteria and indicators is a critical stage in the evaluation process. These to a large extent will determine what kind of evidence is collected, i.e. what will be monitored, and, consequently, defines the scope of the evaluation results. The stakeholders should be involved in the design of the set of criteria and indicators as well as in the collection of evidence. As can be seen for instance in the suggested set of possible criteria and evidence (Annex 2) input from stakeholders is needed for many of the indicators.

Finally, the stakeholders should be given an opportunity to comment on the evaluation results (Carneiro 2013). Participation of the stakeholders in different stages of evaluation aims at ensuring that there is ownership of evaluation findings (European Commission 2013b).

Ensuring stakeholder engagement in evaluations of transboundary collaboration has some specific challenges. The question of different languages is an obvious practical challenge, resolving of which requires resources for the translation of documents. Getting stakeholders motivated to take part in the evaluation of transboundary processes is another more difficult problem. The Baltic SCOPE project experience showed that it took some effort to get relevant stakeholders involved in discussing transboundary MSP issues and that it did not succeed completely. Collecting information, evidence and feedback from stakeholders for the evaluation should be organised as part of stakeholder's engagement in the transboundary MSP process itself.



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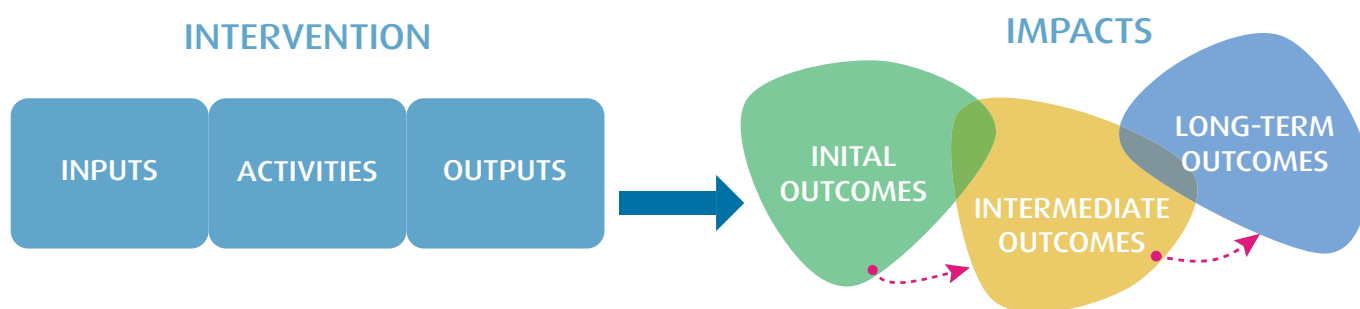
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ANNEX 1: THEORY OF CHANGE TABLE

The following table guides the construction of theories of change. It is structured into sections on the intervention and on the impacts following the sequence of the figure below. For planning interventions and necessary actions to reach long-term outcomes the tables can be used backwards, starting from the end.



Intervention

Inputs: What inputs are needed?	Inputs: Other actors and support needed?	Inputs: Risks and contextual factors
Activities: What inputs are needed?	Activities: Other actors and support needed?	Activities: Risks and contextual factors
Outputs: What are the expected outputs?	Outputs: Target groups, other actors and support needed?	Outputs: Risks and contextual factors

Impacts

Initial outcomes: What are the intended immediate changes?	Initial outcomes: Target groups, other actors and support needed?	Initial outcomes: Risks and contextual factors
Intermediate outcomes: What are the intended intermediate changes?	Intermediate outcomes: Target groups, other actors and support needed?	Intermediate outcomes: Risks and contextual factors
Long-term outcomes: What are the intended impacts?	Long-term impacts: Target groups, other actors and support needed?	Long-term outcomes: Risks and contextual factors



ANNEX 2: LIST OF EVALUATION CRITERIA AND INDICATORS, TOPICS FOR MONITORING

The set of criteria and indicators is structured into six categories. The first one refers to the general conditions given to transboundary collaboration. The next three categories are structured according to stages of transboundary collaboration. The last category includes two cross-cutting themes that are essential for all steps of MSP collaboration, namely participation and communication.

Topic	Criteria
Conditions for transboundary collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal and administrative conditions for transboundary collaboration
Preparation of jointly identified planning options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National and international context of transboundary collaboration • Definition of objectives for collaboration (content and quality) • Identification of transboundary issues and areas • Planning alternatives • Data and knowledge
Implementation of transboundary agreements (in national plans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement and implementation of transboundary agreements • Structures and conditions for cross-border implementation
Follow up and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up of the implementation • Review of the plans
Cross-cutting themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder participation • Communication across borders and levels

The list of criteria and indicators presented in Annex 2 is very extensive, which would correspond with a very broad scope of evaluation (see Section 5.4.1) and/or of different cases of transboundary collaboration in MSP. It is obvious that all of the indicators or even all of the criteria are not applicable to all cases of transboundary collaboration in MSP. Furthermore, it is possible that the chosen scope of evaluation covers only specific parts of the collaboration processes. Each evaluation thus has to define its own set of criteria and indicators to produce relevant results. The list presented in Annex 2 can serve as a starting point.

The way the criteria and indicators are phrased assumes that they are used for the evaluation of the case, in which two or more countries actually collaborate in a similar way as in the Baltic SCOPE project. The indicators can be modified to assess how an individual country has taken into account transboundary aspects of the national plan. Furthermore, the set of criteria and indicators can also inform evaluation of a national planning process or a national plan, but then the selection and rephrasing of the indicators has to be done carefully.

The way the indicators are phrased in the list presents a maximum requirement for the topic addressed by the indicator, which may seem demanding. The actual use of the list in an evaluation should aim at answering whether the requirement presented in the selected indicator is met (yes, partly, no). Whether the indicator was relevant or applicable, must also be considered (N.A.).

The extensive list of indicators covers the whole process of transboundary collaboration including the conditions for operation such as resources, mandates, objectives and time schedules given to the MSP authorities for taking into account transboundary aspects of MSP. These conditions are to a large extent given by high-level decision makers at ministries, governments and possibly even by parliaments. It must be noted then that the evaluation of MSP does not focus only on assessing the performance of the spatial planning authorities, but also addresses the general conditions given for the collaboration.

There are also indicators that refer to reaching and implementing transboundary agreements. The Baltic SCOPE experience showed that spatial planners can identify such needs while collaborating with their colleagues from neighbouring countries, but making such decisions is beyond the mandates of spatial planners. Spatial planners can take these needs to higher-level decision makers, which actually happened as a result of the Baltic SCOPE project. Performance in respect to these indicators depends on higher-level decision makers.

Conditions for transboundary collaboration ¹			
Criterion	Indicators	Yes, Partly, No, N.A.	What can be the sources of evidence? Comments on the indicators
Legal and administrative conditions for transboundary collaboration	Legal instruments are in place for transboundary collaboration in MSP		Evidence: act and ordinance/designation order
	Participating countries have given a mandate to a specific authority to cooperate in transboundary MSP		Evidence: ordinance/designation order, evidence from planning authorities
	Financial and human resources are allocated for transboundary collaboration		Evidence: state budget, evidence from planning authorities It was commented by Baltic SCOPE planners that specific funding for transboundary collaboration is seldom given. A funded project for transboundary collaboration such as Baltic SCOPE is a special case
	Priorities and objective for the cross-border collaboration have been defined and agreed		Evidence: meeting memos, terms of reference or similar documentation
	It is decided how the results of cross-border collaboration will be utilised within in the development of national MSPs		Evidence: meeting memos, terms of reference or similar documentation, evidence from the planning authorities Need to be adjusted to national legal and administrative procedures and to the different timing of MSP processes

Preparation of jointly identified planning options			
Criterion	Indicators	Yes, Partly, No, N.A.	What can be the sources of evidence? Comments on the indicators
National and international context of transboundary collaboration	Different national MSP regulatory and administrative systems have been scrutinised and described for the transboundary collaboration process		Evidence: report, background study, etc. This was emphasized in interviews and meeting observations a lot. Need to know planning and licencing systems of your neighbours. On the level of understanding key terminology (e.g. permitting procedure and role of MSP in it). Need to know legal status of and approach to MSP (binding/non-binding, strategic/technical)
	Participating countries have informed their neighbours about any ongoing or coming national MSP process		Evidence: documentation, meeting notes This came out in interviews and observations several times. Need to inform neighbours (in early stages)
	Cross border tasks and responsibilities agreed to collaboration are shared between participating countries		Evidence: meeting memos, evidence from the planning authorities
	International MSP regulations and policies have been reviewed		Evidence: report, background study, etc. International regulations such as UNCLOS and IMO regulations, Baltic Sea region MSP collaboration in HELCOM/VASAB
	Existing international and sectoral networks have been identified and involved in the process		Evidence: report, background study, agreement with intl. organisations to support cross-border collaboration There are several international networks and on-going collaboration that can help cross-border collaboration. Sector-specific international collaboration is common

¹ The conditions for transboundary collaboration are typically given by high level decision makers to planning authorities.

Definition of objectives for collaboration (content and quality)	Specific objectives for the quality of the transboundary collaboration process and expected results are defined clearly (SMART: specific, measurable (or verifiable), achievable, relevant and time-bound)	Evidence: report or other documentation, etc., evidence from the planning authorities
	The jointly defined objectives for the cross-border collaboration take into account the national policy objectives	Evidence: report, background study, etc., evidence from the planning authorities Interviews and observations show that cross-border collaboration is on a more stable ground if national priorities and objectives are known.
	The jointly defined objectives for the cross-border collaboration take into account international policy objectives	Evidence: report, background study, etc., evidence from the planning authorities International regulations and policies have often been referred to in interviews and observations
Identification of the transboundary issues and areas	Common criteria on how to identify transboundary issues, impacts and areas has been agreed	Evidence: report, other documentation, meeting memo, etc, evidence from the planning authorities This was applied in the Baltic SCOPE planners' meetings in the Southwest case study. Mentioned as important in interviews and observations
	Transboundary conflicts and potential areas of synergy have been identified	Evidence: report, other documentation, evidence from the planning authorities Identification of issues and places were discussed a lot in the meetings and interviews.
Identification of the transboundary	Specific geographical areas that require transboundary collaboration have been identified	Evidence: report, other documentation, evidence from the planning authorities Identification of issues and places were discussed a lot in the meetings and interviews.
	Collaborating planners have jointly identified and agreed on which topic areas they can find an agreement on and those that they cannot agree on (including issues that are beyond mandates of the planners)	Evidence: topic papers, thematic meetings, evidence from the planning authorities Baltic SCOPE evidence showed that there can be several issues that the planners cannot decide on. These issues need to be taken to higher level decision-makers
	National contextual specificities have been identified and discussed	Evidence: report, background study, etc., evidence from the planning authorities Planning contexts and issues (and priorities) may be different in different countries. Cross-border collaboration should acknowledge this. Flexibility was seen as important
	Transboundary environmental ² challenges and opportunities have been identified and recognized	Evidence: report, other documentation, SEA directive, Espoo convention, HELCOM-VASAB guidelines already exist Observations and interviews highlight the need for common understanding and common methods.

Planning alternatives	A number of potential planning alternatives and their respective strengths and weaknesses have been identified and discussed	Evidence: report, other documentation, meeting memos
	The environmental, social and economic impacts of proposed planning alternatives has been assessed	Evidence: report, other documentation SEA and Espoo convention and other international environmental commitments have been mentioned a lot In interviews and observations economic impacts of changing shipping lines has been important. Not that many other economic issues covered. Transboundary collaboration was discussed, how it may produce economic efficiency benefits
Data and knowledge	Collaborating planners have jointly defined the objectives and rules regarding the sharing of data and knowledge	Evidence: report, other documentation, meeting memos, evidence from the planning authorities
	New knowledge and data on transboundary issues has been created and shared	Evidence: report, other documentation
	Data and knowledge are analysed jointly	Evidence: report, other documentation A key thought among planners in the preparation phase
	Countries have identified existing transnational data-bases	Evidence: report, other documentation, e.g. HELCOM, ICES, EMODNET, etc.
	Countries have harmonised knowledge practices and the presentation of data regarding transboundary topics	Evidence: report, other documentation The interviews and observations indicate some objectives for data collaboration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of trying to understand and present things in a way that supports the shared understanding of scale, detail, visualization – need to be agreed • Methodological agreements, similarly understood practices, even on the level of similar attribute tables

² Ingroup interviews other possible themes such as economic and social considerations were also discussed. The conclusion was that such issues are difficult to handle in transboundary collaboration between planners. Often discussed in a national MSP context.



Implementation of transboundary agreements (in national plans)			
Criterion	Indicators	Yes, Partly, No, N.A.	What can be the sources of evidence? Comments on the indicators
Acknowledgement and implementation of transboundary agreements	National maritime plans address the transboundary issues and places identified in cross-border collaboration		Evidence: plan itself (a chapter in the plan document), documentation of consultation process
	Jointly developed cross-border solutions are included in national maritime plans		Evidence: plan itself (a chapter in the plan document), documentation of consultation process The clearer the agreed solution is the easier it is to check if it is included (SMART objectives: specific, measurable (verifiable), achievable, relevant, time-bound)
Structures and conditions for cross-border implementation	All participating countries nominate an authority responsible for the implementation of jointly agreed transboundary solutions		Evidence: legal documents, documentation of the planning process
	The roles of national, regional and local authorities in the implementation of transboundary solutions have been clearly defined		Evidence: planning documents, legal documents Implementation of specific solutions can be delegated to different sector authorities
	A schedule for implementing jointly agreed cross-border solutions has been developed and is acknowledged in a national maritime plan		Evidence: planning documents
	Specific indicators for assessing the success of implementation are defined		Evidence: planning documents Indicators can be quantitative or qualitative and should correspond to the objectives set for the collaboration
	Financial and human resources are allocated for implementing the transboundary solutions		Evidence: state budget, evidence from the planning authorities Financial resources will probably not be targeted specifically for implementation of transboundary solutions

Follow up and review			
Criterion	Indicators	Yes, Partly, No, N.A.	What can be the sources of evidence? Comments on the indicators
Follow-up of the implementation	Follow-up actions have been decided		Evidence: memo or similar documentation, evidence from the spatial planning authorities
	A transboundary platform for continued cross-border collaboration and monitoring is established		Evidence: meeting memos of the platform The planners working in Baltic SCOPE suggested that there should be a platform for the practitioners to collaborate in the Baltic Sea area. Presently collaboration takes place mainly through project funding, which is sporadic. HELCOM-VASAB working operates with higher level issues
	Monitoring and evaluation processes address the environmental, social and economic impacts of the actions implemented		Evidence: follow-up reporting
	Any difficulties in implementation and achieving the objectives of proposed solutions have been identified		Evidence: follow-up reporting It was pointed out by the Baltic SCOPE planners that it has to be acknowledge that countries have different types of MSP – some countries have binding and some non-binding MSPs
Review of the plans	Counties have agreed on a process to review the transboundary aspects of MSP		Evidence: documentation of the agreement
	A transboundary event or process is organised to review transboundary aspects of MSP		Evidence: reviewed national MSP, specific report on transboundary aspects Timing should be according to planned reviews of national plans

Crosscutting themes: stakeholder participation and communication			
Criterion	Indicators	Yes, Partly, No, N.A.	What can be the sources of evidence? Comments on the indicators
Stakeholder participation	A stakeholder involvement plan has been developed		Evidence: the plan published
	Stakeholder analysis has identified the relevant stakeholders from different sectors and levels (statutory and non-statutory)		Evidence: list of stakeholders w. contacts, justification of stakeholder identification In the context of transboundary collaboration the relevance of the stakeholders has to be considered carefully. Baltic SCOPE evidence indicates that it may be difficult to identify the stakeholders and get them committed to transboundary collaboration when all countries are only making their first MSP. Even in countries that have already partaken in MSP it was difficult to get some sectors interested in participating in transboundary MSP events
	Stakeholders have been consulted and had equal opportunity to participate actively in the process		Evidence: documentation of the process (all steps), feedback from stakeholders The important points should be defined and justified in the stakeholder involvement plan
	Stakeholder participation has been representative		Evidence: documentation of the process (all steps), feedback from stakeholders Representative in relation to findings of stakeholder identification (representation for society, sectors)
	Stakeholder input has been gathered, analysed and taken into account as appropriate		Evidence: documentation of the process (all steps), evidence from the planning authorities
	Cross border and cross-sectoral stakeholder events have been organized		Evidence: Description/documentation of method/ events including number of stakeholders involved Proper set of methods to involve stakeholders (events as one method among others)
	Stakeholders are satisfied with the extent of their participation and their impact on the process		Evidence: customer feedback, survey, number of complaints There are two dimensions of stakeholder satisfaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • process satisfaction • result satisfaction
Communication across borders and levels	A communication strategy for the transboundary collaboration has been agreed amongst participants		Evidence: documents
	There has been regular communication with relevant/ interested stakeholders and the general public regarding transboundary collaboration via a range of different available communication channels		Evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should match to the strategy • feedback from stakeholders • results and feedback from communication and discussions • media coverage • number of stakeholders reached • When there is something to communicate, need not to exhaust people
	Communication has targeted other relevant processes and organisations and stakeholders involved in cross-border activities (e.g. HELCOM-VASAB working group, sector-specific cross-border collaboration)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence: minutes of meetings from other organisations

ANNEX 3. STEPS OF AN EVALUATION PROCESS

The table below presents an example of the steps of the evaluation. More detailed evaluation questions are presented in Section 5.2.

Steps	Possible methods	Outputs
Define the scope and purpose(s) of the evaluation and define evaluation questions (by the public body that commissions the evaluation)		Terms of Reference for the evaluation
Ex ante		
Familiarize with the context and objectives of the spatial planning program	Desk study, meetings with the planning authority reps	Detailed evaluation plan, identification of key actors and stakeholders
Formulate theories of change to reach the objectives in collaboration with the planning authority reps	Desk study + a workshop	Draft theories of change
Test the theories of change with other actors (e.g. stakeholders and sector authorities)	Workshop and/or interviews	Theories of change (joint understanding of possible results and impacts of the evaluated intervention and understanding of differences among the actors)
Define evidence and indicators for follow-up programs (need to match with evaluation criteria as defined in the ToR)	Desk study + (possibly) a workshop or focus group with key actors	Set of indicators and identified sources of information (evidence)
During the processes of planning and implementation		
Monitor the evaluated process and its outputs	Desk studies to analyse documents, observation of the planning process, interviews of key actors, workshops or focus groups to collect evidence	Evidence for the process evaluation (and outcome evaluation for interim outcomes)
Ex post (or during the processes, if there are interim evaluations)		
Monitor impacts	Desk studies to analyse documents and evidence that was collected, interviews of key actors, workshops or focus groups to collect evidence	Evidence for the outcome evaluation
Assess the theories of change against the evidence	Desk studies, workshops, focus groups	Updated understanding of how the plan produces impacts and what impacts, who are affected
Draw draft conclusions and recommendations	Desk studies, workshops, focus groups	Draft results of the evaluation and feedback on them
Communicate evaluation results	Reporting and dissemination to decision-makers, planners and key actors	Final results are communicated to decision-makers, planners
Decide and implement corrective actions (by the public body that decides about spatial planning)		Improved planning process and plan

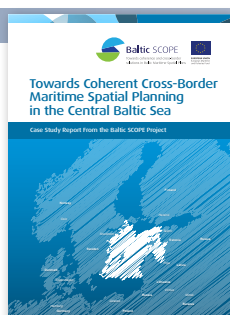
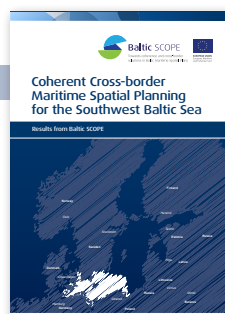


LIST OF THE PRODUCTS PREPARED DURING THE BALTIC SCOPE COLLABORATION:



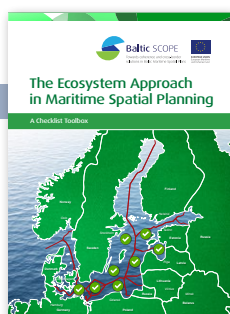
Recommendations on Maritime Spatial Planning Across Borders

Coherent Cross-border Maritime Spatial Planning for the Southwest Baltic Sea - Results from Baltic SCOPE



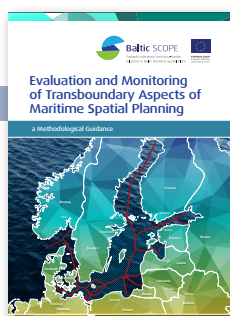
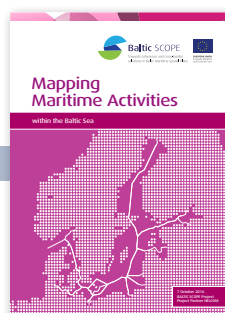
Towards Coherent Cross-Border Maritime Spatial Planning in the Central Baltic Sea - Case Study Report From the Baltic SCOPE Project

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The Ecosystem Approach in Maritime Spatial Planning - A Checklist Toolbox

Mapping Maritime Activities within the Baltic Sea



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Joint results achieved by cooperation between the authorities responsible for Maritime Spatial Planning in the Baltic Sea Region with support of regional and research organizations.

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