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Developing a Pilot Maritime Spatial Plan for the Western Coast of Latvia

Authors: Anda Ruskule¹ and Kristina Veidemane¹

1 Baltic Environmental Forum, Latvia



IMPRINT

Authors



Anda Ruskule and Kristina Veidemane
Baltic Environmental Forum, Latvia

Contributions to the chapters:

Edgars Bojārs, BEF-Latvia (offshore wind energy and oil mining)
Ilze Kalvāne, BEF-Latvia (shipping and port development)
Karīna Jansone, University of Latvia (tourism)
Māra Melnbārde, BEF-Latvia (environmental context)
Atis Minde, "BIOR" (fishery)
Solvita Strāķe, Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology (environmental context)
Voldermārs Rains, Association of Underwater Cultural Heritage (socio-economic context)

Maps:

Mikus Ranka, Hydrographic Service of the Maritime Administration of Latvia



Lead Partner

Dr. Nico Nolte
Bundesamt für Seeschifffahrt und Hydrographie (BSH)
Bernhard-Nocht-Str. 78, 20359 Hamburg, Germany
Tel. +49 (40) 3190-3520
Fax.+49 (40) 3190-5000
nico.nolte@bsh.de
www.bsh.de



External Project Coordination Office

Angela Schultz-Zehden
s.Pro – sustainable projects GmbH
Rheinstraße 34, 12161 Berlin, Germany
Tel. +49 (30) 8321417-43
Fax.+49 (30) 8321417-50
asz@sustainable-projects.eu
www.sustainable-projects.eu

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www.baltseaplan.eu

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Executive summary	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Planning organisation and process	5
2.1. Working group of the pilot MSP	5
2.2. Organisation of the MSP process	5
2.3. Stakeholder engagement	6
3. Planning Context	10
3.1. Environmental context	10
3.1.1. Location of the pilot area	10
3.1.2. Sea bottom character	10
3.1.3. Coastline character	11
3.1.4. Climate	11
3.1.5. Hydrological character	11
3.1.6. Ecological value	11
3.2. Socio-economic context	13
3.2.1. Demography	13
3.2.2. Main economy sectors	13
3.2.3. Cultural heritage	14
3.3. Spatial planning documents and relevant strategies	14
3.3.1. National strategies and legislation affecting space	14
3.3.2. International documents and strategies	16
4. Stocktake	17
4.1. Overview of relevant issues	17
4.2. Relevant issues in detail	18
4.2.1. Fishery	18
4.2.2. Shipping and port development	20
4.2.3. Tourism	21
4.2.4. Offshore wind energy	22
4.2.5. Oil mining	23
5. Conflict Analysis	24
6. Methods for dealing with the identified conflicts and Solutions	27
7. Spatial Plan	30
7.1. Aims and objectives	30
7.2. Zoning categories	30
8. Recommendations / Future Steps for Realizing the MSP	35
9. Lessons learnt (negative & positive)	37
References	39
Annexes	41

Executive summary

Latvia aims at introducing Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) by 2014 as a long term national level planning document as it is established by the new Law of Spatial Planning adopted in 2011 and foreseen within the Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy 2030. By now Latvian authorities have had very little experience in planning and governance of the marine area from spatial perspective, which so far has been mainly organised within particular sectors or case by case decisions taken by government, when a space had to be offered for new sea uses.

The “BaltSeaPlan” project, part-financed by the ERDF Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013, has offered for the countries around the Baltic Sea a possibility to test the MSP in practice, learning from international experience and established methodology. Latvia is represented in the “BaltSeaPlan” project by the Baltic Environmental Forum – Latvia (BEF-LV), who has taken the initiative to lead the pilot MSP process in Latvian waters. BEF-LV is a non-governmental organisation, with remarkable experience in various environment related international projects covering also marine issues and management planning of marine protected area. In this field BEF-LV has become famous for its skills in facilitation stakeholders’ dialogue and well-established contacts. Based on this background the stakeholders involvement and participatory approach has become also the leading principle of the pilot MSP in Latvia.

The pilot area for testing of the MSP process in Latvia was chosen in co-operation with the competent authorities to cover the emerging conflicting sea use issues. It includes territorial waters at the Western coast of Latvia as well as its entire Exclusive Economic Zone. From the traditional sea uses fishery and shipping has an essential role in this area – it includes two large ports - Ventspils and Liepāja, specialised on cargo transportation as well as a fishery and yacht port in Pāvilosta. The coastal fishery is important part of the culture and lifestyle of the coastal communities all over the pilot area. Tourism and recreation is developing sector, promoted by the spatial planning documents of coastal municipalities, although the potential of the sea in this sector is not yet fully realized. These sectors have learned over the years to co-exist with each other, however competition for the space and potential conflict situations are arising with new development interests, like off-shore wind park construction and oil extraction. Furthermore the existing and future sea uses have to be co-ordinated with military training activities and last but not least – preservation of the assets of marine biodiversity, coastal landscape and cultural heritage.

The report gives insights in the methodology used for the planning process and stakeholders involvement, describes the planning context – the main facts about the pilot area as well as relevant strategic and planning documents, and informs about the results of the stocktake with particular focus on the key economy sectors – fishery, shipping, tourism and energy production, that are most essential in the spatial planning context within the pilot area. Further on the spatial compatibility of various sea uses and conflict analysis is presented, highlighting the role of stakeholders in resolution of the conflict situations. Based on the obtained information and results of the stakeholder consultation the draft spatial plan for the pilot area is proposed, including zoning map and description of the each zoning category.

We hope that results of the pilot MSP as well as experience what competent authorities and various stakeholders have gained through participation in this process will lay the basis for effective and smooth implementation of the official MSP procedure in Latvia. Taking into account acknowledgeable developments what Latvian authorities have achieved for giving a start of official MSP, we are coming up with few recommendations that could ensure successful implementation of the MSP in accordance with internationally agreed principles as well as respecting specific circumstances and needs of Latvia. We also share our lessons learned, pointing out challenges and successes what we have faced during the planning process. We are concluding that active stakeholders’ involvement has proven to be efficient method for development of MSP in situation when there is lack of knowledge and institutional capacity.

1. Introduction

Latvia is having an about 500km long coastline and a significant share of the Baltic Sea for own use. Since centuries fishery and shipping have been those human activities which have been exploring and benefiting from the sea. The lifestyle of fishermen and their families has been fully dependent on the skills, equipment, weather conditions, and, of course, of the status fish stocks. The favourable geographical location of the country has lead to harbour development and maritime shipping to ensure the trade between countries and regions. That's history.

Nowadays, the global and national policies are more important drivers to push new directions towards development and use in resources including marine space. The need for renewable and other energy resources calls for investigations and exploration of the sea in a new way, thus potentially bringing new income. In contrary, the fish stocks have been lessening due to overexploitation of the resources, thus income for fishermen is threatened. Due to different human activities impact on the sea ecosystem has been recognised. This has lead to range of environmental policy measures that have been adopted to protect the Baltic Sea.

To reconcile all interests and to ensure that sea resources are used sustainably a new tool called marine spatial planning (further in the text – MSP) has been introduced in Europe. Latvia has also recognised a need for this policy planning instrument to coordinate the activities in their marine waters. The importance of the MSP has been pointed out by the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 and the Strategy for Coastal Spatial Development 2011-2017 as well as in the Law on Spatial Development Planning and the Law on Marine Protection and Management. However, the official maritime spatial planning process has not been set up yet. Having in regard inexperience in maritime spatial planning, a pilot case study has been carried out within the BaltSeaPlan project in 2009-2011.

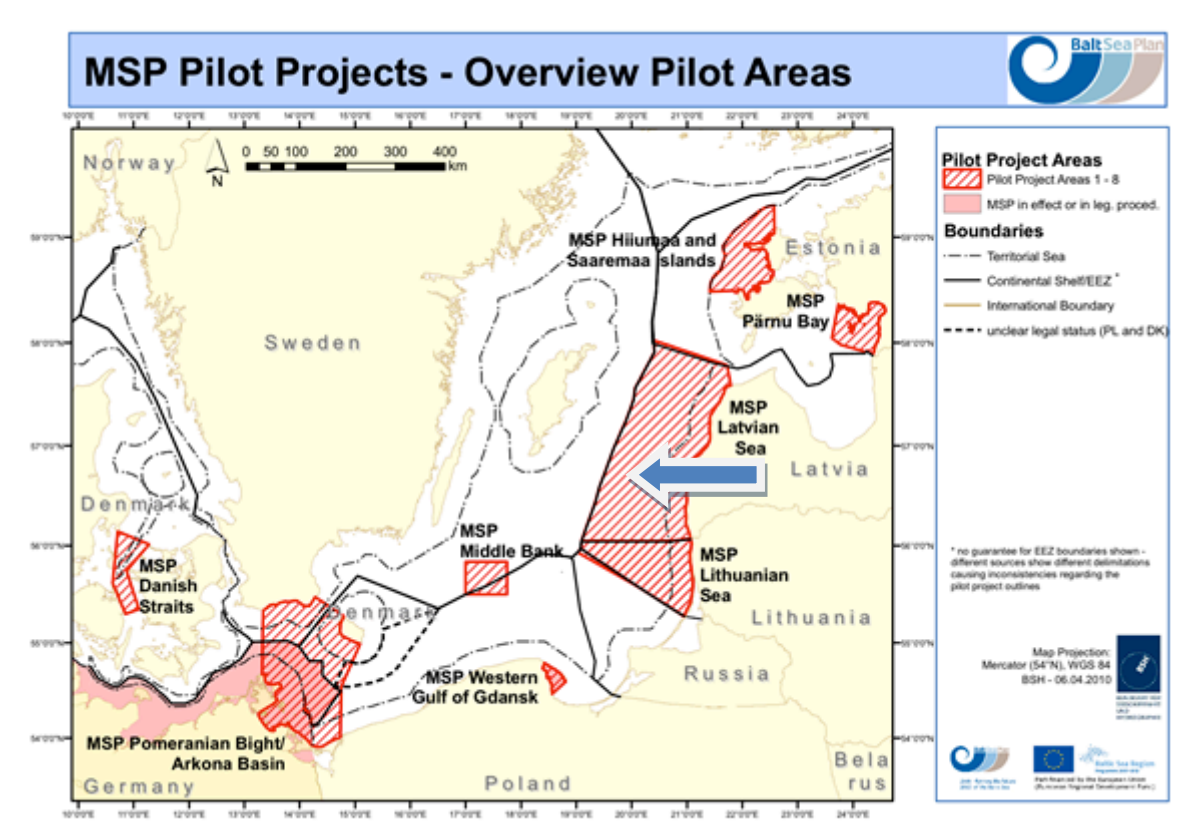


Figure 1.1 Map of all project pilot areas, highlighting area „Western Coast of Latvia”

1. Introduction

The project has identified the Western Coast of Latvia (territorial and exclusive economic zone) as the case study area to test approach, principles and define the potential structure of a national marine spatial plan in future (see figure 1.1.). The Western Coast of Latvia has been chosen as the area which represents all existing traditional sea uses such as fishery, shipping, military and safety concerns, recently established marine nature protection areas and emerging potential developments (energy production, water tourism) in Latvia. It comprises both – territorial waters and exclusive economic zone of the country. To accommodate all interests and related infrastructure in the given area various alternatives shall be reviewed and a compromise shall be achieved.

The work for the pilot MSP has been made with great stakeholder involvement and inputs from all relevant actors. Thus, we see that the presented results in this Report are commonly sharable with all who were attending the events, providing information or posing questions and bringing suggestions. We – project team - acknowledge all the contributions during our work. Further on, we hope that new knowledge we have obtained jointly and established cooperation will ensure that the national marine spatial planning process launched in 2014 would be successful.

2. Planning organisation and process

In Latvia the MSP will be launched officially till 2014 therefore implementation of the MSP for the pilot area Western Coast of the Baltic Sea of Latvia took rather flexible approach in terms of organisation and process. It was built on the experience of the former international projects and the project partners' knowledge and recommendations, adjusted to local conditions and needs.

2.1. Working group of the pilot MSP

Elaboration of the MSP was led by the senior experts of the BEF team working on marine and water management issues, who were in charge also for the overall content work and preparation of the zoning map. A coordination group formed by the representatives of the competent authorities (see chapter 2.2) was directly involved in setting the planning context, providing content advice and comments on the draft proposals. The Hydrographic Service of the Maritime Administration of Latvia had a significant role in the planning process, providing most of the maritime data as well as developing GIS data base and maps for the needs of the pilot MSP. External experts from the Institute of Aquatic Ecology, the Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment - "BIOR", Latvian Ornithological Society and Association of Underwater Cultural Heritage were involved in the stocktaking, providing their expertise in the particular fields.

Significant input for the MSP process was provided also by involved stakeholders, who have supported with information, contributed to the conflict analysis and commented the draft plan (Schultz-Zehden et al. 2008, Ehler and Douvere 2009).

2.2. Organisation of the MSP process

The MSP process was organised according to the overall scheme used all BaltSeaPlan pilot areas adjusted from the Handbook on Integrated Maritime Spatial Planning (INTERREG IIIB CADSES PlanCoast project, www.plancoast.eu and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, 2009. Maritime Spatial Planning: A Step-by-Step Approach towards Ecosystem-based management.

I - Assess the context:

1. Set up of the MSP team and needs for external services, assessment of the existing institutional and legal framework, estimation of the financial resources for development of the pilot MSP;
2. Designation of the MSP area, setting the geographic boundaries;
3. Identification of the stakeholders, mapping of the identified stakeholders (contact lists, communications, awareness raising events);
4. Joint stakeholder meetings to draw the assessment on the strategic policy documents and priorities of the sectorial policies;

2. Planning organisation and process

II - Stocktaking:

5. Data and information collection about ecological, social and economic situation, considering the mid-term and long-term development trends;
6. Spatial mapping of the existing sea uses and identification of the potential conflicts;
7. Assessment of the recognised problems and their potential evolvement in changing economic development and their impact on the environment;
8. Assessment of the legislation and their provisions with regard to the rights for sea uses, identification of the need for potential amendments for solving emerging conflicts;

III - Planning:

9. Conflict solving in reconciliation of all interests (development of different scenarios to be proposed for relevant stakeholder groups);
10. Elaboration of the spatial zoning (cartographic and descriptive parts) and defining the objectives and conditions for each category of the sea use's zone. The stakeholder meeting and intensive consultations are organised within this step and submitted proposals and comments are considered.
11. Performance of the strategic environmental impact assessment

IV - Implementation:

12. MSP implementation and enforcement by endorsing needed amendments or supplements in the legislation as well as relevant decision making to foster the implementation of the MSP

V - Monitoring:

13. Evaluation of the implementation process against the agreed indicators and time schedule, revision of the plan, if needed or starting new MSP process.

Considering the time constraints and resource limitation, the absence of the legislation on MSP procedure in the country, the pilot MSP for the Western Coast of Latvia performed the first ten steps from the described MSP process.

2.3. Stakeholder engagement

From the beginning the project team decided that the development of the pilot MSP shall be organised in **participatory process** with strong involvement of stakeholders from different levels. This would ensure credibility, trust and the integration of needs of all parties. Moreover, to ensure transparency of the process, all relevant workshops and meetings were announced openly on the web page of the Baltic Environmental Forum - Latvia and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development thus everyone had a chance to take active part.

To ensure strong involvement of the policy makers of future MSP, a **coordination group** was established at the beginning of the process. The coordination group was consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (Spatial planning, environmental protection, nature conservation departments), Ministry of Transport (Development planning department), Ministry of Economy (Energy Department), Ministry of Agriculture (Fishery Department), Ministry of Defence (Defence planning unit), Maritime Administration of Latvia, Ministry of Culture (State inspection for heritage protection), Kurzeme Planning region, Association of Local authorities and Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology. During the project implementation time, the coordination group met four times as well as took active part in other events organised by the project.

The whole planning process was built-up on the earlier experience of the Baltic Environmental Forum- Latvia – designation of marine protected areas, development of nature conservation management plans or organising public participation within the river basin management planning. The key success was due to early involvement of stakeholders in the planning process.

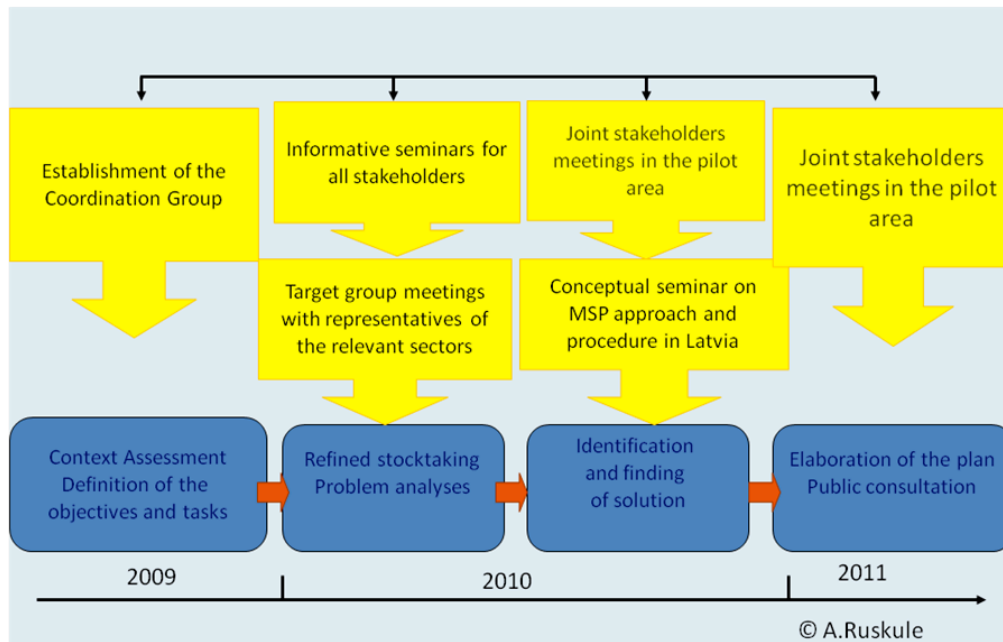


Figure 2.1. Overview on stakeholder involvement in MSP process

The identification and work with stakeholders was performed considering their present and potential future roles in MSP. The main concept was that both - who are affected by or can affect marine spatial use shall be engaged in the development of the pilot plan. The following categories of interest groups were identified:

- > Policy makers and decision makers about sea uses on national, regional or local level;
- > Main sea users representing economy sectors through associations;
- > Potential sea users – energy sector, e.g. wind park developers;
- > Local coastal municipalities and their union – to ensure sea-land interface;
- > Environmental NGOs;
- > Scientists and scientific institutions working on marine issues.

The national governmental level, involving the ministries in charge for management and use of marine areas, has been most actively engaged in the discussions and planning process. This level was represented by the state officials from the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government and the Ministry of Environment (later merged into the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional development); the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Defence. At later stage also the Ministry of Culture has been invited to take part in the process to insure interest for protection of the underwater cultural heritage.

Other national authorities actively involved in the stakeholder discussion where the following: The Maritime Administration of the Latvia, subordinated to the Ministry of Transport; Marine and the Inland Water Administration, the Nature Conservation Agency, the State Environmental Service and Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Centre and Environment State Bureau subordinated to the Ministry of Environment; and State Inspection for protection of the Culture Monuments, subordinated to the Ministry of Culture. At some events also the State Regional development Agency and Health inspection were represented.

The regional governmental level is represented by experts from the Administration of the Kurzeme Planning Region, actively participating in all project meetings.

The local governmental level in the pilot area is represented by the City Councils of Liepāja and Ventspils as well as five local authorities - Rucava, Grobiņa, Pāvilosta, Engure and Dundaga. Although local municipalities in Latvia are not in charge for planning and administration of the marine waters, their development is closely linked with use of coastal waters (e.g. tourism, recreation and coastal fishery). Therefore representatives of the local governments and their building departments have taken active part in the pilot MSP process.

2. Planning organisation and process

Furthermore the local governments were represented at the project events also by The Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments and the Union Latvian Coastal Municipalities.

The main economy sectors involved in the MSP process are fishery, ports, tourism as well as the developers of wind park developers and oil extraction.

The fisheries sector has been represented by several public organisations representing interests of fisherman: Fisherman Association, Latvian Fisherman Federation, and Fisheries Union of the North Kurzeme.

Ports and Shipping sector has been represented by administrations of Liepaja and Ventspils ports, Association of Small Ports, Latvian Seafaring Union and few yacht clubs.

Interests of the tourism sector in the pilot area are represented by the Tourism Information Centres of the Local authorities, Tourism Information Bureau of Leajaskurzeme and Kurzeme Tourism Association. Interests of local entrepreneurs owning guest houses are represented by the association of rural tourism "Lauku ceļotājs". Although all mentioned organisations have been invited for participation in the pilot MSP process, only two tourism information centers and representatives of few yacht clubs have taken part in discussion.

Interests of wind park developers have been represented by the Latvian Wind Energy Association, Latvian Association of Electric Power Industry, State JSC "Latvenergo", wind park developers' companies "Baltic Wind Park", "FCM", "JKenergy" as well as lawyers' bureaus.

Scientific institutions involved in research on marine areas are the Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology, University of Latvia (Faculty of Biology; Faculty of Geography and Earth Science: Department of Environmental management), Institute of Biology, Latvian Maritime Academy, Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment - "BIOR". The most significant contribution for the pilot MSP has provided the Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology and "BIOR".

From the side of **NGOs** active part in the MSP process has taken the organisations, which are focusing in their activities also on marine and coastal environment - "Environmental Protection Club", "Latvian Fund for Nature", "Latvian Green Movement", Association „Baltic Coasts”.

As illustrated in the scheme 2.2., **stakeholder participation** was organised in different ways depending on the context. As MSP is new approach, then a lot of efforts were made to get knowledge into the country, to develop and test the approach in setting objectives of MSP, defining spatial priorities, zoning of the marine space. For that purpose, speakers from Germany and the Netherlands were invited to take part in the conceptual seminars. Moreover, the project team also compiled information from ongoing practices in neighbouring countries and shared this information with stakeholders.

The whole process was accompanied also with awareness raising activities by organising broader events where principles of MSP were explained and a need for marine spatial plan in Latvia debated. To disseminate the information, press releases were sent out and information published on web-sites. During the project a set of information material was also produced and handed out in different occasions.

Regarding the direct input inform of data and expertise on the existing sea uses, the information was supplied by state institutions that hold the spatial and statistical data, e.g. the Maritime Administration of Latvia, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Agriculture, BIOR etc. The data on nature values were provided by the Institute of Aquatic Ecology of Latvia (modeling data on habitat distribution and other ecological information) as well as BIOR (information on spawning areas and distribution of fish species) and Latvian Ornithological Society (data on distribution of bird species).

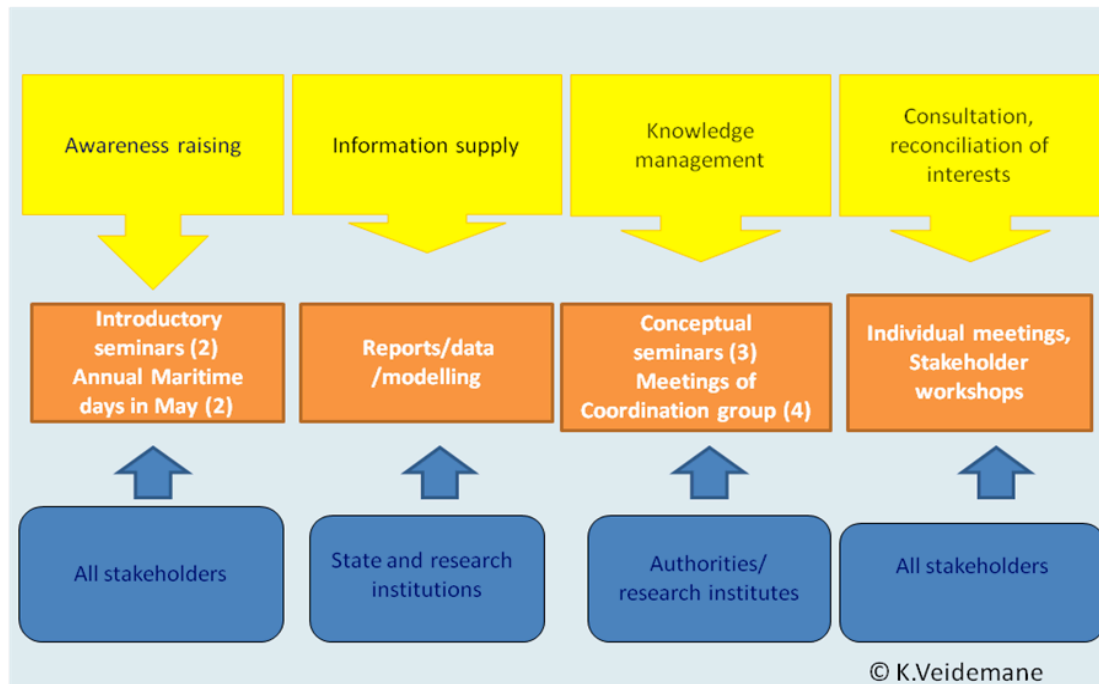


Figure 2.2. Overview on roles and contributions of stakeholders in marine spatial planning

The establishment of common objectives and related spatial allocations was fully based on mutual discussions and reconciliation process among all stakeholders. The work was based on the existing knowledge on sea resources and their use, the defined national priorities and economic interests. To achieve progress and certain agreements a variety of interactive facilitation methods were applied during the meetings. For example, the content input presentations were followed up by the work group discussions. To find different alternatives “world coffee” method was performed.

Different level of the stakeholders took part in the process. The input of the local actors was of the special interests and acknowledged. All together 245 individuals took part at least in one of the events organised by the project.

3. Planning Context

3.1. Environmental context

3.1.1. Location of the pilot area

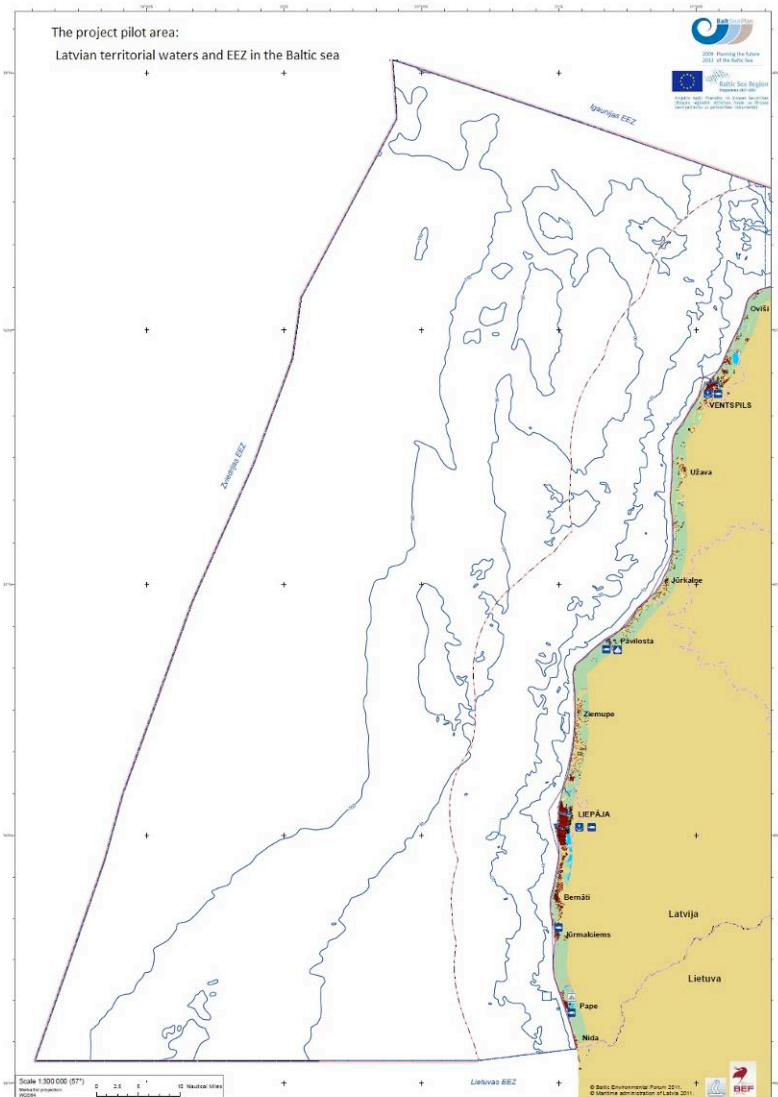
The pilot area of the project is located in the Eastern part of the Baltic Proper (Eastern Gotland Basin). It includes territorial Sea of Latvia from Latvian-Lithuanian border up to cape Ovišrags and entire adjacent Exclusive Economic Zone (further in the text – EEZ) of Latvia. The Area is bordering with Lithuanian territorial Sea and EEZ in the south, with Swedish EEZ in the west and Estonian EEZ in the north. Its total area is about 20 070 km², placing it into the first position according to size among the BaltSeaPlan pilot MSP areas. The area of the territorial Sea within the pilot area is 4568 km². Its coastline border stretches for ca. 200 km.

Location of the pilot area is defined by its extreme coordinates (see map 3.1):

Western: 19° 5,68' E
 Northern: 58° 1,44' N
 Eastern: 21° 45,00' E
 Southern: 56° 2,73' N

The coordinates of the central point:

56° 58,18' N; 20° 31,11' E.



Map 3.1: Latvian project Pilot area
 (Source: Maritime Administration of Latvia)

3.1.2. Sea bottom character

The sea bottom in the pilot area is reaching up to 240 m depth. The slope of the continental shelf in the pilot area is rather even or slightly undulating. More explicit incline starts from 60 m depth. The coastal area with depth up to 20 m covers ca. 1803 km² (9% of the pilot area) and additionally there is 160 km² shallow area up to 20 m depth within the offshore part of the pilot area. Area from 20 – 50 m depth covers ca. 4800 km² (Maritime Administration of Latvia 2011).

The layer of sedimentary deposits covering the crystalline bedrock within the pilot area is ca. 1 km thick in it increases towards south. Sedimentary deposits at the sea bottom are formed by various sorted and unsorted materials including boulders, pebbles, gravel, sand and clay. According to the prevailing sea bottom character the coastal part of the pilot area can be divided in following regions: in the area from Lithuanian border to Liepāja sea bottom is covered by large boulders with smaller and larger sand patches in between; in area between Liepāja and Akmeņrags the sand patches are becoming larger and at certain locations forms the dominant sea bottom type; in area from Akmeņrags to Ventspils the sea bottom is formed by a mosaic of

boulder and sand patches, while upwards from Ventspils sea bottom is covered almost entirely by sand (Ruskule et al. 2009, Strāķe 2010).

3.1.3. Coastline character

The coastline of the pilot areas has formed by interaction of the sea and land that is influenced by the strong, dominant western and south-western winds, sediment flow along the coast directed towards north and related coastal erosion and accumulation processes. This has resulted in rather smooth coastline, slightly bent outwards at the stretches of sand accumulation and inwards at the stretches where erosion is prevailing. The sediment flow is significantly influenced by piers of the Ventspils and Liepāja ports, resulting in accumulation of sand southwards from the ports and erosion northwards from the ports. Intensive erosion is observed also at other stretches – during 15 years period in average 2-3 m of coast is washed away, while in some locations it reaches 3.5 – 4 m per year. These processes has led to great diversity of coastal types including wide sandy beaches with dunes as well as erosion coasts with up to 20 m high moraine cliffs. The longest and highest cliffs stretch along the coast near Jūrkalne (Eberhards 2003; Eberhards and Lapinskis 2008).

3.1.4. Climate

The climate in the pilot area can be characterised by small yearly average temperature variations, high rate of cloudiness, precipitation and fogs. The period without frost lasts for 143 - 173 days. Snow cover forms only in 25% of winters. The average air temperature in January is from -3 °C up to -3.5 °C, but in July +16.5 °C. Strong winds area observed all the yearlong (dominant are W and SW winds) and also the average humidity is rather stable – ca. 80% - 90%. The maximum of precipitation is observed in autumn and winter season and the yearly average is around 600-700 mm (Bojārs 2009; Ventspils City Council 2011; www.windfinder.com).

3.1.5. Hydrological character

The water temperature in the pilot area varies between 0.5 °C In January up to 17,5 °C in July – August. The water salinity in at the surface is 4.3 - 7.0 ‰ while in 60-70 m depth it reaches 7,0 - 12,4 ‰. Water transparency according Secchi disk is from 1,8 m at coastal waters near Nida up to 8,7 m in Gotland Deep. Formation of ice cover can be observed in the coastal waters, but usually it does not last longer than one month (the average period without ice is 297 days). The highest waves can be observed in autumn and winter season when then they reach up to 13 m. At the shallow coastal waters, where waves are breaking, their average width is 600-700m. The water level fluctuations at the coast are mostly caused by wind. The underwater streams are mostly forming in parallel to the coast, but direction might be influenced by wind – the strongest streams are formed with northern and western wind, when the maximum speed of the streams can reach 70-100 cm/s (Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology, 2009).

3.1.6. Ecological value

The project pilot area is essential for marine biodiversity and contains several areas of very high ecological value. However due to the high costs for marine research, most of the areas are not sufficiently investigated. A bit better knowledge is available about ecological features of the coastal waters up to 20 m depth. A detailed underwater survey using scuba diving and underwater video techniques has been carried out only in small part of the coastal waters (ca. 35 km along the coast up from Lithuanian border), providing actual data on of benthic habitats and organisms in this area. Based on this information as well as general knowledge on limiting factors for distribution of benthic organisms a modelling benthic habitats in the coastal waters of the pilot area have been performed in frame of the project (see map on areas of high ecological value in Annex 2).

The highest biological diversity can be observed within the belt of boulders along the coast forming the reefs (Habitat type of community importance - 1170). According the modelling data the reefs habitats cover almost the whole coastline of the pilot area up to 10-12 m depth. The main habitat forming species in the reefs are macrophyte algae. The macrophyte associations in total are formed by ca. 20 algae species and 30 invertebrate species. Shallow waters at 3-4 m depth are dominated by green algae *Cladophora glomerata* and *Cladophora rupestris*; in depth of 4-8 m 20-70 % of reefs are covered by dense growth of red algae *Furcellaria lumbricalis*, which is considered as the most productive zone in the reefs; in 8-12 m depth the biomass of the macrophyte algae is decreasing, but also there the growths of *Furcellaria lumbricalis* can be observed in association with brown algae *Sphacellaria arctica* and red algae *Coccotylus truncates*, that in some places reach up 19 m depth.

3. Planning Context

Within the areas of macrophytes there are also patches that are dominated by bivalves *Mytilus trossilus* and crustaceans *Balanus improvisus*. The red algae *Furcellaria lumbricalis* is most important macrophyte species in this area. The highest concentrations of the species are found within coastal stretch Nida-Pērkone (between Lithuanian border and Liepāja), where it covers more than 80% of the reefs (Ulsts 1998, Bučas 2009, Strāķe 2010).

The reef areas have inestimable ecological significance, providing habitat and food for different marine organisms, e.g. invertebrates, fish and birds. The growths of red algae *Furcellaria lumbricalis* are the natural spawning grounds for Baltic herring *Clupea harengus membras*, while the colonies of by bivalves *Mytilus trossilus*, that are forming within the reefs, are important food basis for flounder *Platichthys flesus* and turbot *Pleuronectes maximus*.

Fish species are forming important part of marine ecosystem. From fishery perspective the most important fish species in the offshore waters of the pilot area are sprat *Sprattus sprattus balticus* and cod *Gadus morhua callarias*, followed by Baltic herring *Clupea harengus membras*, flounder *Platichthys flesus*, salmon *Salmo salar* and sea trout *Salmo trutta*. In coastal waters the most abundant are herring, cod, flounder, turbot, garfish *Belone belone* and migratory species – salmon, sea trout, smelt *Osmerus eperlanus*, vimba *Vimba vimba*, eel *Anguilla anguilla* as well as some freshwater species like perch *Perca fluviatilis* and bream *Abramis brama*. However, only few of those fish species use the coastal and open Baltic waters of the pilot area for reproduction and recruitment (Minde 2012).

The most important areas for restoration of fish stocks in the Latvian territorial waters and EEZ are Gotland Deep and coastal areas along the whole western coast and especially areas Pape – Liepāja and around Akmeņrags (see map on areas of high ecological value in Annex 2).

The Gotland Deep, where the depth is reaching 80-100 m, is used for spawning of sprat, cod and flounder. Sprat is spawning in the water column above the deep water areas. Its eggs and fry are pelagic and are dispersed by currents to other regions of Baltic Sea. Also eggs and fry of flounder are pelagic, even though the species itself is benthic (Florin and Höglund 2008, ICES 2011). For cod, although it is spawning in the Gotland Deep, this area is not very appropriate and significant for reproduction, because for successful survival and development of its eggs the certain environmental criteria has to be met – the water in the deep layers has to have salinity not less than 11‰ and oxygen concentration not below 2,0ml/l – a state that can be observed in the Gotland Deep only after significant water inflows from the North Sea.

Shallow coastal waters along the Latvian western coast are used as spawning grounds for herring, turbot and garfish as well as nursing ground for young smelt. Herring spawn in the shallow waters in the depths of 1-20m on hard bottom preferably covered by molluscs and macrophytes. The best spawning grounds for herring are found in Pape – Liepāja area and around Akmeņrags where significantly higher survival rate of herring eggs and larvae is observed. Turbot spawns in the depths of 5-40m and it gathers in significant numbers along the Western coast of Latvia before and during the spawning period. Though the spawning stock density increases southwards and is greater in Pape – Pāvilosta area (Minde 2012).

Migratory fish species like salmon, sea trout, vimba and eel as well as freshwater species like perch, pikeperch, roach and bream are using the pilot area as feeding grounds mostly during their later development stages.

The pilot area is intensively used by birds during migration as well as wintering. The coastal waters are crossed by the Baltic Sea - White Sea migration route and during the year it is used by most of the migratory birds that are crossing Latvia. Observations in the southern part of the area have noted 500 000 - 700 000 water birds passing by during the spring migration, reaching up to 1200 individuals per hour. The reef habitats along the coast are providing plentiful food basis for the birds, therefore serving as essential feeding and resting area during migration (Stipniece 2012).

The coastal waters in the southern part of the pilot area (in stretch Nida- Pērkone) are important wintering site for goosander *Mergus merganser* – more than 17 000 individuals of the species have been counted there during winters. In this area same as in coastal waters near Akmeņrags very high concentrations of little gull *Larus minutus* are observed (the registered maximum is near Pape - 8000 individuals in half-hour). The area is also regularly used by divers *Gavia sp.* and black guillemot *Cephus grille* (Stipniece 2012).

The northern-eastern corner of the pilot area is partly including one of the very crucial bird migration areas in the Baltic Sea – the Irbe strait, characterised as “bottle-neck” area. It is one of three most important sites of the velvet scoter *Melanitta fusca* in the Baltic Sea and third important site for divers in Latvia. There are

observed also very high concentrations of long-tailed duck *Clangula hyemalis*, common scoter *Melanitta nigra*, long-tailed duck *Clangula hyemalis* as well as black guillemot and little gull.

For protection of marine biodiversity the following marine Natura 2000 sites were established within the pilot area in 2011 (the national protection status these areas has obtained in beginning of 2010):

- > „Nida – Perkone”, established as pSCI and SPA for protection of reefs as well as two bird species - goosander *Mergus merganser* and little gull *Larus minutus*; potentially important also for twaid shad *Alosa falax*. This is one of the most significant areas for protection of marine biodiversity in Latvia with the greatest examples of reefs.
- > „Akmensrags”, established as SPA for protection of little gull *Larus minutus* and divers *Gavia sp.*, but potentially important also for reefs. The area is particularly significant for migratory birds, wintering birds and for birds in summer during moulting.
- > „Irbe strait” (only partly covered by the pilot area), established as SPA for protection of long-tailed duck *Clangula hyemalis*, common scoter *Melanitta nigra*, velvet scoter *Melanitta fusca*, little gull *Larus minutus*, divers *Gavia sp.*, black guillemot *Cephus grylle*. The area is especially significant for bird migration.

3.2. Socio-economic context

3.2.1. Demography

The total number of population in the coastal municipalities next to the pilot area is ca. 160 000 people. Most of them live in the two largest cities Liepāja (ca. 84 000 inhabitants) and Ventspils (ca. 43 000 inhabitants). The rest of the population is formed by inhabitants of 5 rural municipalities – Rucava’s County (2008 inhabitants), Nīca’s County (3842 inhabitants), Grobiņa’s County (10234 inhabitants), Pāvilosta’s County (3212 inhabitants) and Ventspils County (13440 inhabitants). Ca. 20 settlements are located along the coast next to the pilot area, among which the most significant is Pāvilosta with 1135 inhabitants and its own port used for fisheries and recreation. The average density of population in the local municipalities is 5-10 people per km², except vicinities of the largest towns, where it reaches up to 20-50 people per km². The number of population in the coastal municipalities has decreased in average by 10 % over the last 10 years and, taking into account the general demographic situation in Latvia, it is expected that this decrees will continue also in the coming years (Central Statistical Bureau 2011).

3.2.2. Main economy sectors

The spatial planning document of local, regional as well as national level highlight the transportation and port operations as well as tourism and fishery as essential sectors for the local economy development within the coastal municipalities. These sectors are directly related to the use of marine areas and would be influenced by the MSP.

However the present economic activities in the municipalities bordering the pilot area are only partly related to the sea. Transport and port operations have the highest share in the economy of Ventspils. According data from 2008 this sector creates the 32,5 % of the cities added value and provides jobs for ca. 22,5 % of Ventspils economically active inhabitants, although this figure has steadily decreased over the last ten years. Trade is the second largest sector with ca. 14,8 % inhabitants employed, followed by construction (13,5 % inhabitants employed) and industry (10,3 % inhabitants employed). Tourism is regarded as a growing sector currently involving 3,5 % of inhabitants employed in accommodation, catering and other tourism service providing. In Liepāja, which is the largest city near the pilot area, industry is the main economy sector (with ca. 23,5 % of inhabitants employed (Ventspils City Council 2010), according data from 2009), followed by trade (ca. 15,6 %), transport and port operations (ca. 8%) and construction (ca. 6,2 %). Tourism services and catering takes the fifth place in Liepāja according to people employed in this sector (ca. 3,1 %), while fishery together with agriculture – the six place (ca. 1,7 %) (Liepāja City Council 2010).

Within the rural municipalities important part of local economy is formed by forestry, agriculture, fisheries as well growing tourism sector. Forestry and wood processing has become the most important economy sector in the Ventspils County - the largest rural municipality bordering the pilot area with 63 % of its area covered by forest, although the biggest share of the inhabitants is employed also in the industry sector. Significant economy sectors in this municipality are also the transport, trade and food processing. In other rural municipalities such sectors as industry and transport are less developed. In Pāvilosta’s County the fisheries and

3. Planning Context

fish processing industry is the main economy sector, while in Nīca and Rucava rural municipalities most of the local entrepreneurs are involved in agriculture as well tourism service providing (e.g. guest houses, camping sites, catering, etc.) (Ventspils County Council 2011; www.pavilosta.lv; www.rucava.lv; www.nica.lv).

The presented data shows that from sea related economy sectors the transportation and port operations has high share in local economies of Ventspils and Liepāja, while in Pāvilosta such is fisheries. The tourism has growing potential all over the coastline, although the highest number of tourism related service providers are concentrated in Liepāja and Ventspils.

3.2.3. Cultural heritage

The cultural heritage of the coastal areas bears notable spiritual, historic and scientific value as well as provides basis for tourism development, so essential for the economies of the coastal communities. It involves immaterial assets, such as traditional lifestyle, folklore, local dialects and traditions; typical architecture and cultural landscape of fisherman villages; historical monuments, e.g. lighthouses, old fishermen farmsteads as well as underwater cultural assets represented by shipwrecks.

The Western coast of Latvia at the Baltic Proper buries the great number of shipwrecks. The reason for that are rather difficult shipping conditions due to the straitened coastline and specifics of the underwater relief as well results of warfare. Therefore this part of the coastline in Latvia is also the most attractive for the underwater archaeologists, scuba divers and hunters for treasures. Here can be found shipwrecks from times of Vikings, sailors of Hanseatic League, Duchy of Courland as well as from 19th century, though most of the shipwrecks are from the last century drowned during I and II World Wars. The sites of shipwrecks shall be viewed also as burial places of thousands of people who have lost there their lives. As noted by Association of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (Rains 2011) in the coastal stretch from Pavilosta to Ventspils 84 ships with refugees were sunk during 1944 (785 victims were reported on just one of carriers called Eifel). High concentration of shipwrecks is also near Liepāja - there are found 67 ships as well as few planes, most of them drawn during the II World War. Notable shipwreck area is near Pape besides the former Soviet military polygon, where different types of ships were deliberately sunk to serve as target for warplanes. Several wrecks from different historical periods are found also at reef areas near Bernāti and Akmeņrags.

Protection of underwater cultural heritage in Latvia is not sufficiently organised – there is no official register of shipwrecks indicating their cultural value, no effective system for reporting and protection of existing and newly found wrecks (because of erosion process wrecks from time to time are exposed right at the coastline, however in few days they might be damaged or disappear due to natural processes or human activities) as well as not enough national financing of archaeological investigations. Therefore appropriate solutions have to be developed to ensure protection, research and safety issues (many war time wrecks might be dangerous for visiting because of explosives what can be found there) as well as to provide opportunities for tourism and scuba diving activities at the places where it is admissible.

3.3. Spatial planning documents and relevant strategies

3.3.1. National strategies and legislation affecting space

For the first time, the MSP was mentioned in **the Concept of the Development of the Spatial Planning System** adopted on 15.07.2009 by the Government.

The Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 (adopted by the Parliament on 10.06.2010) states a need to elaborate of the marine spatial plan for territorial and exclusive economic zone of Latvian waters to be interlinked with a terrestrial part of the country that is functionally linked to the sea. The Baltic Sea coastal zone of Latvia has been defined as an area of national interest. The Sustainable Development Strategy also calls for development of the National Spatial Development Strategy for Coastal Zone.

The Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy up to 2030 also points out the development potential of wind parks in the sea.

The National Spatial Development Strategy for Coastal Zone 2011-2017 has been adopted by the Government on 20.04.2011. It also mentions the necessity for a marine spatial plan for coordination of the sea and terrestrial land uses.

The spatial planning is carried out at national, regional and local level. **Kurzeme and Riga planning regions** have identified the different uses in coastal area in their regional development programmes/strategies.

In Latvia, strategic issues of the sectors are either set in policy planning documents (strategies, plans, guidelines, concepts) or directly in legal acts (laws or regulations). However, the targets are not really related to exact spatial characteristics. For example, the **Strategy for energy development 2007-2016** highlight available resources in the sea, e.g. wind energy, potential of oil resources. **Strategic Plan for Fishery 2007-2013** also sets the goals according to the quantitative indicators for the open Baltic Sea and for the Gulf of Riga. The national policy on **port development** has been focused on the improvement of the infrastructure in the port areas as well as on the increase of the cargo turn-over.

The Civil Law, part three Property Law defines that the coastal zone shall belong to the State to that point which the highest breakers of the sea reach.

Draft Law on Spatial Development Planning (enforce since 1.12.2011) foresees the set-up of the revised spatial development system to ensure the sustainable and cohesive planning.

The **Law on Marine Protection and Management** (enforce since 18.11.2010) is the legal act to transpose the EC Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) into national legislation including the overall objective to achieve good environmental status of marine waters by 2020. The Law defines marine spatial planning as long-term development planning process focused on marine environmental protection, efficient use of the sea and integrated management as well as development of welfare and economy in balance with environmental protection requirements.

The Law foresees the marine spatial planning as one of the tools to regulate the human activities in space and time in certain part of marine ecosystem. The law stresses that the marine spatial planning process shall apply the ecosystem approach and typical characteristics of the marine ecosystems, comply with the environmental protection and spatial development principles and consider common marine spatial planning principles elaborated by the European Commission and the countries of the Baltic Sea region. During the marine spatial planning process the status of the marine environment as well as trends shall be considered.

The Law also defines activities for which a permit and a licence are required, e.g., exploration of the natural resources, construction, arrangement of artificial islands, structures and installations, including platforms and installations necessary for energy production.

Law on Fishery (enforce since 12.05.1995) determines the management of the fish resources in the territorial waters of Latvia. The fish resources are managed based on statistics, expert judgement and scientific recommendations.

The Law distinguishes the coastal fishery (defined as water up to 20m depth) and fishery beyond the coastal waters to ensure the maintenance of the coastal fishing possibilities. The total allowable catch in coastal fishing shall not be less than the volume of catch allocated for coastal fishing the previous year, but for cod fishing it shall not be less than three per cent and for Baltic herring in the Baltic Sea – four per cent of the total allowable catch specified for the Republic of Latvia. Based on relevant EC regulations, the government determines the volume of the catch, number of fishing gear and its type for each municipality having a coastline.

Law on **Specially Protected Nature Areas** (enforce since 07.04.1993) sets requirements for activities in specially protected nature areas which have been established either in terrestrial or marine coastal area. Based on that, seven marine protected areas were established by the Government on 05.01.2010. The regulation defines that fishery in these areas are implemented based on existing regulations. The regulations also define the harbour areas and their external roads, sediment deposition areas and beach strip as a neutral zone.

Law on Construction delegates the function to the Government to set up the procedure for building activities in the territorial and exclusive economic waters of Latvia.

Law on Subterranean Depth delegates the function to the Government to establish the procedure of the use of subterranean in the territorial sea and exclusive economic zone of the Republic of Latvia. The procedure for the licensing the activities has been established since 2007 and the interest in investigating potential oil resources have been expressed recently.

Law on Protection of Cultural Monuments and Regulations regarding the Registration, Protection, Utilisation and Restoration of Cultural Monuments, the Right of First Refusal of the State and the Granting of the Status of an Environment-Degrading Object has defined the archaeological monuments also those ones which are also

3. Planning Context

under water. However, there has not been identified any underwater object which would have a status of cultural monument.

The Law on Nature Resource Tax affects the activities indirectly. The Law foresees that certain tax shall be paid to the State when using natural resources of the sea.

The Law on Protections Zone defines the types of the protection belts, the criteria for establishment and the restrictions in the protection area. The Law defines the protection belt along the Baltic Sea and Gulf of Riga and related management requirements. The Law defines three categories of the coastal protection belt – dune protection zone, sea protection zone (up to 10m depth) and limited economic activity zone (up to 5km inland).

The Law on Environmental Impact Assessment requires that the strategic environmental assessment shall be carried out for certain programmes or planning documents. It is foreseen that such assessment shall be also carried out for the marine special plan.

The Law on Maritime management and marine safety defines the competencies and functions for safe shipping and supervision.

The Law on Harbours regulates the harbour functions and the management procedures.

3.3.2. International documents and strategies

The following international documents are considered when developing MSP:

a) **UN** and its bodies: The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea - UNCLOS, Convention on Biological Diversity – CBD, The Espoo (EIA) Convention, Aarhus convention, The UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage,

b) **IMO**: Resolution A.720(17) by which the Assembly adopted the Guidelines for the Designation of Special Areas and the Identification of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas, Resolution A. 672 (16) on Guidelines and Standards for the Removal of Offshore Installations and Structures on the Continental Shelf and in the Exclusive Economic Zone, MARPOL Convention, The Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter - commonly called the London Convention, International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC), International Convention Relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties, 1969-INTERVENTION 1969, The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 -COLREGS,

c) **EU**: Bird Directive, Habitat Directive, SEA Directive, EIA Directive, Marine Framework Directive and various regulations mainly referred to fishery,

d) **Council of Europe**: The Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological heritage of Europe, usually referred to as the Valletta Treaty or Malta Convention,

e) **Helsinki Convention**: in particular its recommendations 15/5, 17/3,19/1,19/17,21/4, 24/10, 25/4, 28E/9,

f) other conventions: The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also known as CMS or the Bonn Convention) including several additional Agreements such as EUROBAT to conserve populations of European bats and ASCOBANS related to small cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas.

Regulations of the United Nations Convention Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) are in force in the whole area covered by the plan. In the EEZ third countries have, in line with UNCLOS the freedom of navigation and flight, fishing, laying cables and pipelines and of other, conforming to international law, ways of using the sea, related with these freedoms.

4. Stocktake

4.1. Overview of relevant issues

The stocktake of the existing and potential sea uses was carried out in order to assess the current status quo as well as to outline possible development directions. Furthermore available information on biological and geological features as well as underwater cultural heritage of the pilot area were compiled to assess the vulnerability of certain areas against expected developments as well as to define the most appropriate area for envisaged developments.

Table 4.1. – Data collected for pilot MSP and relevant data providers

Relevant issue	Description of available data	Data provider
Shipping	- Port aquatorium and anchorage areas of Ventspils and Liepāja ports - HELCOM re-survey plan of shipping routes - Recommended shipping routes at the Ventspils, Liepāja and Pāvilosta ports and in the Irbe Strait - Recommended deep water shipping route - Dumping sites of dredged materials from Ventspils, Liepāja and Pāvilosta ports - Area forbidden for shipping - Lighthouses	Hydrographic Service of the Maritime Administration of Latvia
Fishery	- Areas important for coastal fisheries and fish reproduction – coastal waters up to 20 m depth - Priority areas for bottom trawling	Ministry of Agriculture
	- Locations of fishing activities with passive and active fishing gears (2004-2009) - Important fish spawning areas	Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment (BIOR)
Energy production	- Licence areas for exploration and production of hydrocarbons - Areas applied for exploration of hydrocarbons - Planned investigation areas for offshore wind farm development defined by Ministry of Economy - Permits issued for investigation and construction of wind parks	Ministry of Economy
Tourism	Existing and potential yacht ports	Hydrographic Service of the Maritime Administration of Latvia
	- Areas used for water sports - Areas used for paragliding - Areas used for coastal angling - Public beaches	Local authorities
Military practice	- Existing military training polygon M2 - Planned military training polygon Šķēde - Former mined area - Former training polygons for mining	Ministry of Defence Hydrographic Service of the Maritime Administration of Latvia
Nature values	- Marine protected areas (Natura 2000 sites): Irbe Strait; Akmenrags; Nida-Pērkone - Terrestrial protected areas with marine parts (Natura 2000 sites): Nature Park Pape, Nature Park Bernāti; Nature Reserve Užava	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
	- Modelling and field survey data on distribution of benthic habitats (reefs) - Areas potentially important for nature conservation (based on bathymetry data)	Institute of Aquatic Ecology

4. Stocktake

Cultural heritage	• ship wrecks - locations	Hydrographic Service of the Maritime Administration of Latvia
	• cultural historic value of ship wrecks and related burial areas	Association of underwater cultural historic heritage
Cables and pipelines	• Submarine cables in use • Protection belt of cables	Hydrographic Service of the Maritime Administration of Latvia
Other relevant information	• Former dumping grounds of military chemical waste and ammunition • Bathymetry (isobaths of 10, 20, 50 and 100 m depth) • Borders of EEZ, territorial sea, strait base line	Hydrographic Service of the Maritime Administration of Latvia
	• Coastal settlements • Landover data in coastal areas (built-up areas, forest areas; water bodies; road network)	Latvian Geospatial Information Agency
	• Areas of coastal erosion and accumulation	University of Latvia

The spatial data were compiled Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data base and presented in two maps:

- > Map on existing and potential sea use interests (see map in Annex 1)
- > Map on areas of high ecological value (*see map in Annex 2*)

The map on existing and potential sea use interests has been frequently updated.

4.2. Relevant issues in detail

Nowadays the main sea uses sectors in the pilot area are fishery, shipping and port operations as well as tourism and recreation. Intensity of the present sea use is rather moderate compared the south-western regions of the Baltic Sea and Gulf of Finland, therefore competition for the space and pressure on marine environment is not very high. However, the situation is expected to be changing taking into account the big interest for offshore wind energy production and oil mining, which spatially might cover rather large part of the Latvian EEZ and cause conflicts with traditional sea use sectors as well as might have negative impact on marine ecosystem.

4.2.1. Fishery

The framework for national fisheries policy of Latvia is the Common Fisheries Policy of EU. On national level there is a medium term policy document “Strategic plan for fisheries sector for 2007-2013” as well as an action programme based on it. These documents provide ground for strengthening the competitiveness of the national fisheries sector ensuring sustainability of the fishery and protection of marine resources.

The fishery sector in Latvia during the last decade has experienced substantial decline. Since 2004 the total vessel number of the Latvian open Baltic fishing fleet has decreased by almost 50%. Decreasing of the fishing fleet was made in the framework of EU Common Fisheries Policy to adjust the fishing effort to available fish resources. According to data from 2010 the Latvian open Baltic fishing fleet consists of 89 fishing vessels (24 gillnetters and 65 trawlers) (Minde 2010).

Number of people involved in fishery sector from the coastal municipalities near the pilot area has been rather stable during the last years. Statistics on employment by sectors shows that in 2009 there have been 619 people involved in fishery and 933 people involved in processing of fishery production. 360 people were reported as fisherman, however only 60 of them have commercial fishery license, the rest are considered as doing recreational fishery (Central Statistical Bureau 2011). The number of fishing days per year for each fisherman suggests that only for few individuals fishery is the main activity and source of income (see table 4.2.).

Table 4.2.: Number of fishing days per fisherman in 2005-2009 in the Western coast of Latvia (Source: BIOR)

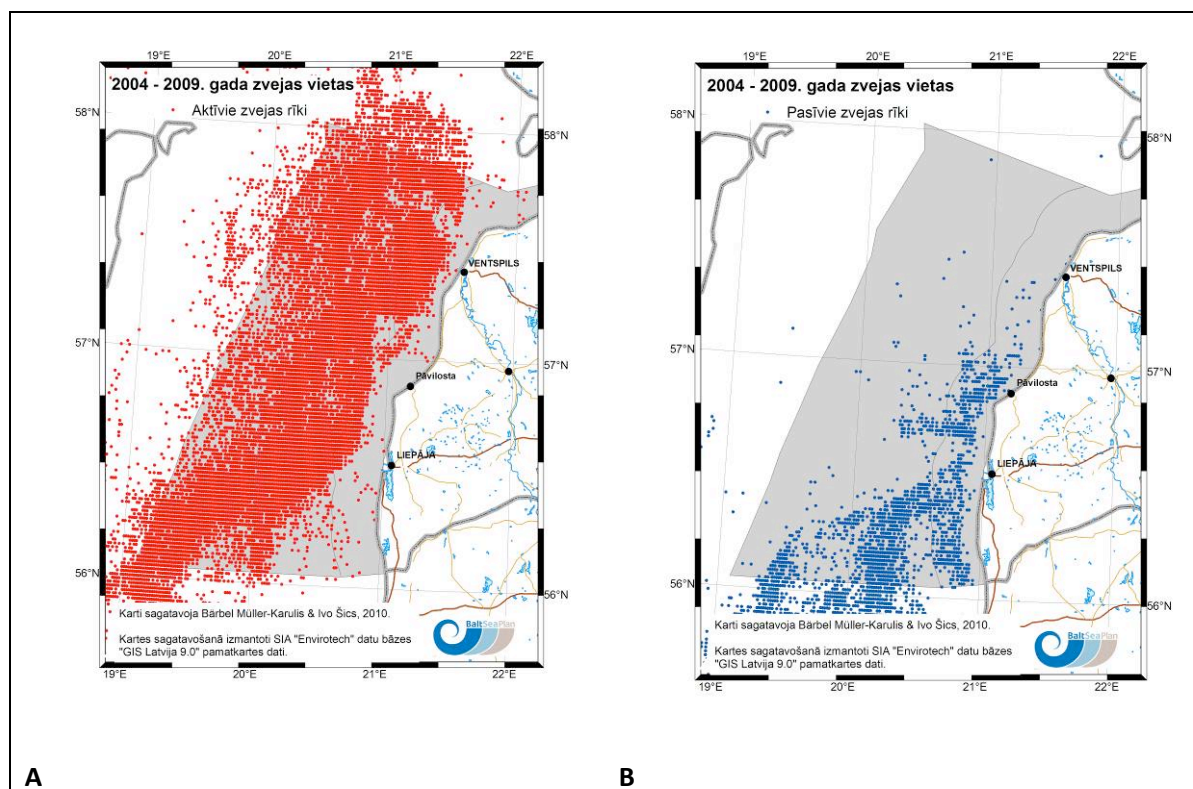
Number of fishing days	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
0-20	151	151	177	191	190
20-40	66	64	57	45	63
40-60	26	23	17	23	25
60-80	16	23	11	2	10
80-100	4	12	6	6	5
>100	10	11	17	7	7

Coastal fishery occurs only in coastal waters that are defined in national legislation as waters from the shore till the 20m depth. Most fishermen in coastal fishery use passive fishing gears - gillnets and longlines. Only few of them use larger fishing gears like trapnets and herring poundnets, because use of such fishing gears in open Baltic coast is associated with rather great risk of losing them during storms and setting and taking out those gears needs additional manpower and is time-consuming.

The fishing effort in coastal waters is greater near more populated areas because the small boats of fishermen are not suitable for journeys far in the sea. The fishery regulation in coastal area is based on limiting of total number of fishing gears per coastal municipality. Therefore fishermen mostly have licences to fish only within the borders of the same municipality they live in.

In open Baltic fishery the main fishing gears used by Latvian fishing fleet are pelagic and benthic trawls and gillnets. Longlines are used only by few vessels. There are also few vessels that use benthic trawls, because the area suitable for benthic trawling is rather small. The main target species of pelagic trawlers is sprat, whereas gillnetters are catching mainly cod.

Aggregated fishing effort data for the last 5 year period show that pelagic trawling occurs throughout almost all Latvian EEZ in Open Baltic except coastal waters, where only coastal fishery is allowed, and the southern part of EEZ, where mostly gillnetters are operating (see figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1.** Location of fishing operations in Latvian EEZ in 2004-2009 (A – pelagic trawling, B – gillnets) (Source: BIOR)

The importance of fishing in the Latvian territorial and EEZ varies by fish species. Sprat, herring and flounder fishing is done more or less close to the vessels home port and the catch is also landed in Latvia. Thus the possibility to fish sprat in the Latvian waters is very important for this fleet segment. Contrary to that cod

4. Stocktake

fishery takes place in much greater area and only half of it is reported from Latvian territorial waters and EEZ (see table 4.3.).

Table 4.3: Catch per species (tonnes) in Latvian waters (excluding coastal zone) and % of the total catch in the Baltic Sea by Latvian fleet in 2005-2009 (Source BIOR)

		2005	2006	2007	2008	*2009
Sprat	%	97,5	97,9	89,1	96,0	84,0
	Catch in LV	63057,8	53486,2	53879,5	54894,4	33864,9
Herring	%	99,9	96,8	93,1	97,6	85,0
	Catch in LV	2458,3	2534,2	2779,5	3157,9	1874,8
Cod	%	61,0	69,6	56,2	50,9	51,6
	Catch in LV	2435,0	3177,0	2401,0	2045,0	1944,0
Flounder	%	96,5	91,0	94,5	96,2	47,8
	Catch in LV	1420,0	815,6	853,6	460,1	141,2

*- 10 month data used

Landing in the coastal waters are very small in comparison with open sea fishery. Structure of the landings in the coastal fishery usually consist of different species and depends on the gear used and season. Highest catches are recorded for flounder, cod, herring, garfish and Vimba (see table 4.4.).

Table 4.4: Catch per species (tonnes) in the coastal fishery in Western coast of Latvia in 2005-2009 (Source BIOR)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Herring	61,8	66,1	34,6	34,8	51,6
Smelt	19,3	13,3	11,0	13,7	37,0
Cod	28,8	106,3	127,2	86,3	76,0
Flounder	247,0	249,4	139,4	116,9	122,4
Garfish	20,0	7,9	14,5	30,3	27,4
Perch	6,7	11,8	10,8	8,7	8,5
Vimba	29,1	20,2	19,4	16,5	18,5
Salmon	4,0	2,0	1,7	1,4	2,6
Sea trout	4,1	4,1	2,4	3,0	3,9
Other	17,4	19,1	14,0	10,5	11,3
Total catch	438,2	500,2	375,0	322,1	359,3

The main risks for the open sea fishing fleet are the considerable age of the vessels and very slow rate of renewal and modernisation of the fleet as well as the size of the fleet that is still too large for sustainable use of fish resources. In coastal fishery greatest risks are increasing fishing costs versus low fish market prices and poor overall economic situation. Fishery is not the main source of income for majority of fishermen. It serves more as important part of the culture of the coastal communities, a traditional way of living that has deep roots in the families of many fishermen. Coastal fishery has big potential in development of tourism in the coastal areas.

4.2.2. Shipping and port development

There are 2 large ports in the pilot area – Ventspils and Liepāja (with status of free ports), specialised on cargo handling with rather small share of passenger transport, and one small port - Pāvilosta that is providing service for fishing fleet and yachts. Ventspils and Liepāja ports belongs to the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), that allows for them to apply for different EU finical programmes for port development.

The national policy for marine transport and port development aims at annual increase of cargo turnover of the ports and improvement of infrastructure and access roads as well as navigation safety. The main strategic documents that address the marine transport sector and port development are the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 and National Development Plan (2007-2013). The Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia envisages increase of cargo turnover up to 130 million tonnes per year in 2030, which is twice as much compared to now (see figure 4.2).

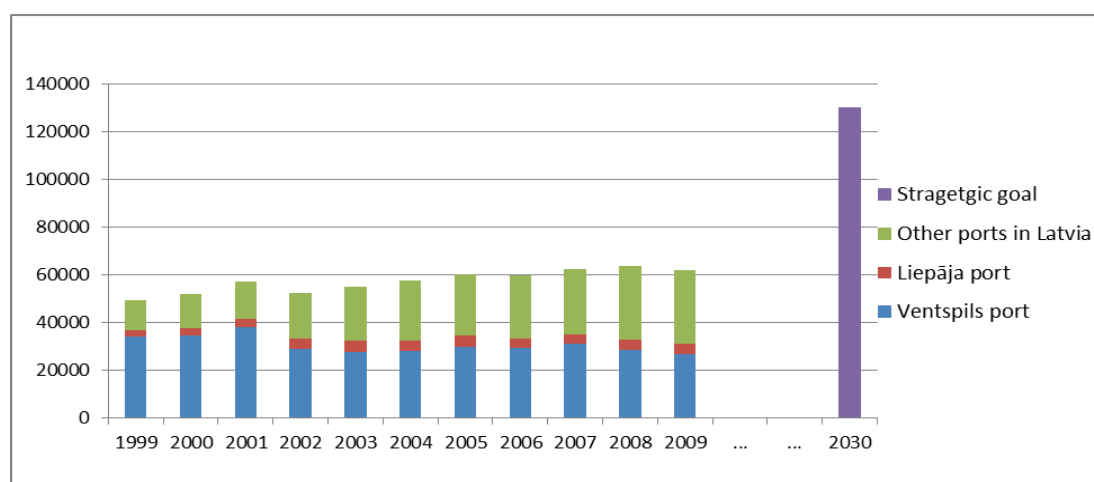


Figure 4.2. Cargo turnover in ports of Latvia and strategic goal (thousand tons per year) Source: Ministry of Transport 2010

Furthermore the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia envisages considerable increase in passenger transportation, which so far is rather undeveloped sector in Latvia comparing to the neighbouring countries. However this mainly relates to Riga, which is the main passenger port in Latvia, although according to the Latvian port development programme, passenger transportation should be increased also in Liepāja and Ventspils.

In 2010 the “Policy Framework for Transport Development (2007-2013)” was signed, defining following priorities for port development in Latvia:

- > increasing the transit cargo turnover by 10 % until 2013;
- > ensuring safety of marine transport in accordance with international standards;
- > expanding the distribution services to other EU member states;
- > speeding up the cargo transportation capacity across the Latvian-Russian border.

Increase in turnover of the containers’ and Ro-Ro cargoes is particularly supported, as it has the highest added value. The “Policy Framework for Transport Development” envisages the increase of such cargoes by 20 % by 2013.

According data from 2010 89 % or 55 million tonnes of all cargoes transhipped in Latvian ports are transit cargoes (Ministry of Transport, 2010). This means that transit cargo turnover in the Latvian ports could increase up to 60,5 million tonnes by 2013. Transit cargoes to Latvian ports come mostly from Russia and Belorussia as well as other former Soviet Republics. Lately there is increase also in transit cargoes from China and India.

When implementing the priorities defined by Latvian transport development policy and reaching its strategic goals, the demand for space for marine transport and port development and completion with other sectors will increase. It is expected that intensity of shipping will increase, which could increase also the collision risk. The expanding of port areas might stimulate also the coastal erosion processes.

4.2.3. Tourism

Tourism is globally fast developing sector and also in Latvia despite economic recession the increase of foreign travellers coming to our country is estimated for ca. 3 % per year (comparing to the previous year). However the largest proportion of travellers to the Kurzeme region is coming from inside of Latvia and in this segment of tourism we are currently experiencing decrease (Pakalniēte 2012).

The entire coastline within the pilot area, like elsewhere in Latvia, is popular destination for tourism and recreation especially in the summer season. This area is also frequently used for water sports – windsurfing, kite-board, paragliding etc. The most popular sights are near Pāvilosta, Jūrkalne and Užava as well as in Liepāja and Ventspils. However the main obstacle for development of these activities is lack of appropriate infrastructure and access roads, therefore performance of such activities in most of the places are not possible from legal perspective. There is also a lack of parking lots, suitable footpaths, signs as well as necessary facilities at the beach.

4. Stocktake

The main national policy planning document for the tourism development in Latvia is the “Tourism marketing Strategy of Latvia for 2010 - 2015” prepared by the Latvian Tourism Development Agency. This document analyses tourism development trends, sets development targets and strategic tourism products, but does not assess the role of the coastal and marine areas within overall development of the tourism sector. The long coastline with sandy beaches and pristine nature areas mentioned among the strength of the sector and resource for nature tourism, however more elaborated development analysis of this tourism segment is not provided as well as no strategic goals set with regard to coastal and marine areas.

Strategic planning of tourism development at the coastal and marine areas is more developed at the regional level. The Kurzeme Planning Region in collaboration with University of Latvia has prepared the “Spatial Plan for the Kurzeme Planning Region: 2006 -2026” and a “Draft Development Strategy for the Kurzeme Region: 2004 - 2013”. These documents highlights the important role of tourism sector in development of the rural areas of the region as well as pays particular attention to the coastal areas, which shall grow as tourism attraction and recreation zones in balance with nature conservation interests. Among activities for promotion of coastal tourism these documents suggest construction of marines for water sports as well as optimisation of public transport at the coastal areas.

Bases on these strategic documents an “Action Plan for the Kurzeme Planning Region: 2010-2013 has been developed, which among others defines the following priority activities (projects):

- > Development of Single Tourism Route along the coast and inland, which includes places for accommodation and catering, souvenir shopping, sightseeing objects, etc.;
- > Development of yacht ports in Kurzeme for promoting balanced development of the region (project in implementation phase partly financed by EEA and Norway Grants);
- > Development and diversification of the possibilities for recreation and sports activities.

Development of tourism in coastal areas is addressed also by the local spatial plans, setting strategic goals and priorities as well as in most of the cases defining areas for tourism and recreation, although more detailed planning of tourism infrastructure objects is usually lacking. Tourism is regarded as development opportunity for the local economies and coastline with its nature assets, landscape and cultural heritage is seen as resource for this development. However the local planning documents do not extend to the adjacent coastal waters, as border of municipalities end with beach.

3.2.4. Offshore wind energy

So far there are no wind turbines constructed within the Latvian Territorial Sea or EEZ. However wind in Latvian offshore area and particularly in the open Baltic Sea is recognised as significant source of alternative energy, therefore there is great interest in offshore wind park development from the side of the policy makers as well as investors. Comparing to inland the marine areas have several advantages: considerably better wind resources (wind energy potential is 2,2 – 2,5 times higher in the offshore areas comparing to the coastal areas) and comparatively more free space. On other side, construction of wind parks in the sea is much more expensive and the legal basis for such activity also has not been fully developed.

The main policy documents for the use of alternative energy sources in Latvia are following:

- > *Energy Development Policy Framework (2007–2016)*, adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2006. The Document stated that the production of wind energy with a total capacity of 135 MW was one of the priority directions to reach higher proportion of renewable energy in Latvia.
- > *Policy frameworks on use the renewable energy resources (2006–2013)*, adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2006, which stressed the potential of wind energy little bit more.

Nevertheless, the both Framework Documents poorly addressed wind energy production; also off-shore wind energy production was still only slightly mentioned.

In the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, adopted in 2010, off-shore wind energy production is mentioned as one of the ways to ensure independency for electricity supply. Theoretically, the wind farms may supply up to 15% of electricity. The strategy suggested that to reach production of 1000 GWh, a marine area of 200 m² would have to be reserved for construction of off-shore wind farms. Also, connections to the terrestrial electricity grid must be ensured.

More realistic targets for off-shore electricity production are defined within the information report on the National Renewable Energy Action Plan for Republic of Latvia, adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2010 (see table 4.5).

Table 4.5.: Planned production of renewable energy in the sea (Source: Ministry of Economy, 2010)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
MW	30	60	100	130	180
GWh	66	130	286	286	391

The legal basis for off-shore activities, including the construction of wind farms, is defined by the Marine Environment Protection and Management Law, adopted by the Parliament in 2011. Based on this law the regulations shall be developed defining the legal procedures for investigations and construction of the wind parks. Permits for construction of wind parks in the sea have been issued to four companies in period from 2006-2010, however due to the change of the legal procedure these permits are not considered any more as actual. Nevertheless one of the companies the “Baltic Wind Park” has started the EIA procedures for construction of the wind park with total capacity of 200 MW, examining for this purpose eight alternative sites with size ranging from 10.1 – 126 km².

According to the present regulations the Cabinet of Ministers is issuing licences for the investigations and construction of offshore wind parks, while the Ministry of Economy is developing the legal frame and permitting procedure. It is planned that an investigation area with the total in size of 1570 km² will be defined by the cabinet of Ministers, where after the state ordered feasibility study the plots with licence for wind park construction will be tendered.

3.2.5. Oil mining

According to geological estimation the oil reserves of 360 million barrels can be found in the Latvian marine waters within the area of 21 500 km², mostly concentrating in the south-western part of the Latvian EEZ (State Geological Service 1996). It is assessed that oil extraction from several larger deposits might be economically reasonable in future, taking into account that oil resources all over the world are getting exhausted and in the same time technologies for investigations and oil extraction is developing. The Cabinet of Ministers in 2000 has designated 7 blocks (with total area of 2675 km²) for oil extraction and 66 blocks (with total area of 17 800 km²) for investigation of the oil resources. Five licences have been issued to different national and international companies for oil investigation and extraction within the Latvian EEZ and two more applications for licences were submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers in end 2010 and beginning 2011 for investigation and extraction of oil resources within the Latvian territorial waters (Bojārs 2011).

5. Conflict Analysis

Identification of the potential conflict areas among different sea uses where based on the stocktaking results presented in the map of existing and potential sea uses (see Annex 1) as well as on discussions at the stakeholders meetings held by the project. Extent of compatibility among different sea uses has been illustrated within the conflict matrix (see table 5.1), reflecting the situation in the pilot area.

The main identified conflicts that have been acknowledged also by the stakeholders are related to new or potential sea uses, e.g. wind park development and oil mining. It is expected that wind parks and oil mining would reduce area for fishery and shipping as well as might have negative effect on biodiversity, fish spawning areas and coastal landscape. Furthermore these two sea uses are not compatible with military training activities and also exclude each other. From the current activities within and near the sea some recreational activities like water sports and coastal angling at certain locations are conflicting with protection of coastal biodiversity and having disturbance for local people. Traditional sea uses like fishery, shipping as well as military trainings have learned to coexist with each other or are regulated by legal acts.

The process of conflict analysis has been very dynamic and obtained picture on actual conflict areas rather floating due to the fact that state policy with regard to use of marine space has not been very clear and information on potential sea uses (e.g. potential wind park areas and polygons for oil investigations and extraction) as well as some present sea uses (e.g. military polygons) was frequently changing. As result the identified conflict areas had to be reconsidered in the course of the planning process (see figures 5.1. and 5.2. – more explicit conflicts are marked in red, while moderate conflicts – in yellow).

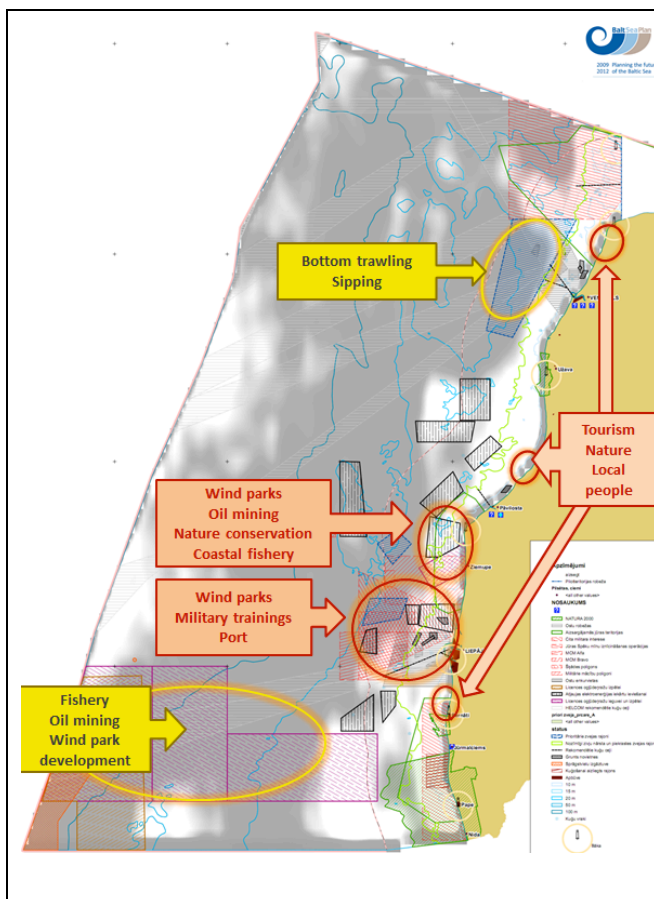


Figure 5.1. Identified conflicting sea use area – October 2010

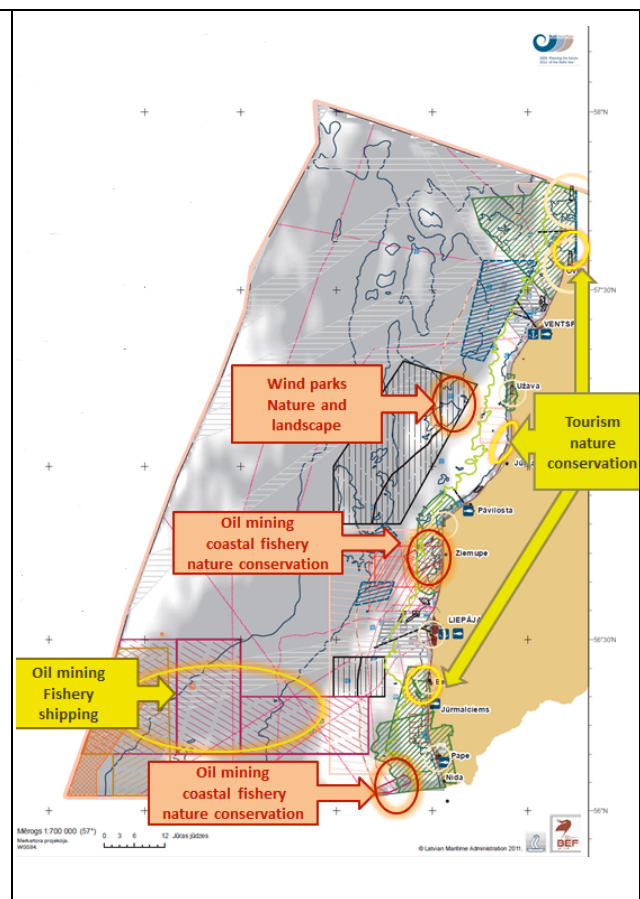


Figure 5.2. Identified conflicting sea use area – June 2011

5. Conflict Analysis

Table 5.1 Conflict matrix of sea uses in the pilot area

	Coastal fishery	Gillnet fishery in open sea	Pelagic trawling in open sea	Bottom trawling in open sea	Shipping	Port operations	Dredging	Dumping of dredged material	Yachting	Motorboats and water scooters	Water sports (kite board, windsurfing)	Coastal angling	Recreation at the sea	Scuba diving	Nature tourism, bird watching	Coastal tourism infrastructure	Military training polygons	Coastal observation systems	Cables	Wind parks	Oil extraction	Dumped explosives and chemical weapons	Nature conservation: benthic habitats	Nature conservation: birds	Protection of areas for fish regeneration	Protection of coastal landscapes	Protection of underwater cultural heritage	Protection of coast against erosion
Coastal fishery	-	-	-	-				●	●	●	●		●									-						
Gillnet fishery in open sea	-	-								-	-	-	-			-						-			-			-
Pelagic trawling in open sea	-		-							-	-	-	-			-									-			-
Bottom trawling in open sea	-			-						-	-	-	-			-						-			-			-
Shipping					-					●		-	-	●								●						
Port operations						-				●												-						●
Dredging							-					-	-	●		-												●
Dumping of dredged material	●							-								-						-			●			
Yachting	●								-																			
Motorboats and water scooters	●	-	-	-						-	●	●	●									-		●				
Water sports (kite board, windsurfing)	●	-	-	-						●	-	●										-						
Coastal angling		-	-	-	-		-			●	●	-										-						
Recreation at the sea	●	-	-	-	-		-			●			-									-						
Scuba diving					●		●							-													●	

5. Conflict Analysis

	Coastal fishery	Gillnet fishery in open sea	Pelagic trawling in open sea	Bottom trawling in open sea	Shipping	Port operations	Dredging	Dumping of dredged material	Yachting	Motorboats and water scooters	Water sports (kite board, windsurfing)	Coastal angling	Recreation at the sea	Scuba diving	Nature tourism, bird watching	Coastal tourism infrastructure	Military training polygons	Coastal observation systems	Cables	Wind parks	Oil extraction	Dumped explosives and chemical weapons	Nature conservation: benthic habitats	Nature conservation: birds	Protection of areas for fish regeneration	Protection of coastal landscapes	Protection of underwater cultural heritage	Protection of coast against erosion
Nature tourism, bird watching																						-						
Coastal tourism infrastructure		-	-	-			-	-														-				•		•
Military training polygons																					•			•				
Coastal observation systems																					•	•	-					
Cables																												
Wind parks																												
Oil extraction					•																							
Dumped explosives and chemical weapons	-							-		-	-	-	-		-	-												
Nature conservation: benthic habitats																												
Nature conservation: birds																												
Protection of areas for fish regeneration		-	-	-				•																				
Protection of coastal landscapes																												
Protection of underwater cultural heritage																												
Protection of coast against erosion		-	-	-		•	•																					



Compatible sea uses

Sea uses that are compatible under certain conditions

Conflicting sea uses

• Spatial solutions or conditions for sea use are necessary

- sea uses that spatially are not overlapping

6. Methods for dealing with the identified conflicts and Solutions

The planning process, including the conflict analysis and solution finding, has followed the methodological guidelines described in handbooks on MSP the PlanCoast¹ project and IOC² (Schultz-Zehden et al. 2008, Ehler and Douvère 2009). Since elaboration of the pilot plan has been strongly based on participative approach, also the identification of conflicts and potential solutions was carried out in close collaboration with competent authorities and other involved stakeholders.

The initial list of potential conflicting issues have been obtained from four thematic meetings with representatives of fisherman, wind park developers, ports as well as coastal municipalities and tourism. Stakeholders of the each group have been commenting on their concerns with regard to other sea uses and expected conflict situations (see table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Expected conflicts from perspective of particular sea use sectors

	Conflicting sectors	Main conflicting issues
Fishery	Wind parks	Limitations for fishery within territory of wind parks: Fishermen expect to be compensated for the loss of income. Coastal zone (up to 20 m depth) and fish spawning areas should be regarded priority area for fishery, where no wind parks should be allowed.
	Oil mining	Minor limitations for fishery foreseen, but might have negative impacts on fish stock and spawning grounds
	Shipping	Fishing with stationary fishing gears might be not allowed on intensively used shipping routes
Shipping & ports	Wind parks	Not acceptable on frequently used shipping routes
	Fishery	Fishing with stationary fishing gears on shipping roots shall be avoided
	Military trainings	Military shooting polygons should not overlap with port area (case of Liepaja port)
	Shipping	Demarcation of official shipping routes would be against the rights shipping freedom
Wind parks	Energy	Connection possibilities and capacity of existing and planned electricity power grid are not enough for ambitious wind park development plans
	Military trainings	Wind parks should not overlap with shooting polygons
	Shipping	Navigation through wind parks might be limited depending on situation and size of the ship
	Oil mining	Area licensed for investigation and oil mining are not available for wind park development
Coastal municipalities & tourism	Coastal infrastructure	Lack of access roads and parking lots cause conflicts between tourists, local inhabitants, anglers and nature conservation
	Ports	Ports do not have sufficient infrastructure for recreational boats (lack of marinas);

¹ PlanCoast, 2008. Handbook on Integrated Maritime Spatial Planning.

² Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, 2009. Maritime Spatial Planning: A Step-by-Step Approach towards Ecosystem-based management.

6. Methods for dealing with the identified conflicts and solutions

	Nature conservation	Intensive tourism and water sports should be kept away from the sites important for bird resting and moulting or vulnerable coastal habitats
	Fishery	Illegal, not marked fishery nets that are placed in front of ports or areas used for water sports
	Wind parks	Potentially visual negative impact on landscape at the sites important for tourism and recreation, if placed closer than 30 km from coast
	Military trainings	Not enough coordination/ information on schedule of military trainings

Further potential conflict issues were illustrated in the conflict map (see figure 6.1) and jointly discussed at the 2nd stakeholders' meeting in October 2010. In order to stimulate the direct opinion exchange among different sectors and finding consensus on solutions for conflicting issues the stakeholders were divided in four mixed groups and invited to discuss the conflicts related to four sectors – fishery, wind park development, shipping & ports and tourism using the “world café method”. This method prescribes that after discussing the conflicts for one “sector”, group moves to the next “sector”, while facilitator stays with the same sector and introduce outcomes of the previous discussion to the next group who complements that with their own proposals (see picture 6.1). Discussion was facilitated by the project team who also compiled results and presented back to plenary. As result of this discussion some conflicts were eliminated while for other technical solutions were proposed.

Figure 6.1: Discussions at the 2nd stakeholders meeting on sea use conflicts using “world café method”



Discussion on solutions for conflicts and approaches for prioritisation of the sea uses in the pilot area were followed up in the next meetings with competent authorities in January and March 2011 as well as in 3rd stakeholders meeting, June 2011 where the first zoning proposal has been presented.

Finding from the meetings were reflected also in the conflict matrix (see table 5.1), which has highlighted the situations where spatial solutions are needed, if particular sea uses exclude each other or it is enough with technical or regulatory solutions in case of compatible sea uses interests. The conflict matrix has also revealed the cases when incompatible interests might overlap in reality (e.g. issued permit for oil mining in Natura 2000 site with reef habitats) where an appropriate decision has to be taken on political level or very strict legal requirements would have to be established.

As an outcome of the described stakeholder consultation process the following sea uses have been noted as spatially incompatible:

- > Stationary construction (e.g. wind parks, oil mining platforms) should not be allowed in military training polygons and on frequently used shipping routes.
- > Wind park development is not possible within the polygons licensed for investigation of oil resources and oil mining, since this permits gives exclusive rights for use of the area for certain period.

For activities that under certain conditions can be compatible the following priorities have been proposed:

- > Priority for shipping routes over potential wind park areas and fishery activities.
- > Priority for coastal fishery and regeneration of fish resources in coastal waters up to 20 m depth.
- > Priority for nature conservation at the Natura 2000 sites or other areas of high biological value (e.g. reefs, bird resting and moulting sites).
- > Priority for landscape over wind park development in areas of outstanding natural landscapes up to 20-30 km from coast.

Additional problematic issues that has emerged during discussions:

- > Local municipalities should have the right to plan development of coastal infrastructure also in the coastal waters to insure balanced development of tourism and coastal fishery and to minimise negative effect on coastal ecosystems. Appropriate distance from the coast has to be defined, which could be assigned as planning competence of local authorities.
- > Solutions needed for avoiding negative impact on underwater cultural heritage sites from mechanical destruction or illegal scuba diving activities (sites should not be indicated in the zoning maps to avoid undesirable attention).
- > Solutions needed for minimising coastal erosion process dumping by dumping of dredged material closer to the coast in order to feed the sediment flow along the coast, in the same time ensuring that such activities would not have adverse effect on area important for fish reproduction.
- > Stationary constructions placed in coastal waters might have disturbing effect on the military coastal observation system, established for defence as well as early warning purpose in case of accidents. The coastal observation system covers entire territorial waters, therefor establishment of stationary constructions in this zone shall be coordinated with the Ministry of Defence.

7. Spatial Plan

7.1. Aims and objectives

The pilot marine spatial plan for the EEZ and territorial waters at the Western coast of Latvia is a strategic planning document which aims at defining directions for balanced use of marine space by setting priorities for certain uses within certain areas.

Following the principles for maritime spatial planning developed by HELCOM, VASAM and EU Integrated Maritime Policy the pilot MSP for the EEZ and territorial waters at the Western coast of Latvia aims to:

- > Promote economic development of Latvia based on sustainable use of marine space and its nature resources.
- > Balance different sea use interests within the pilot area, ensuring efficient use of marine space.
- > Preserve marine ecosystem and its functions by applying ecosystem-based approach in the MSP process.
- > Ensure stakeholder participation in the MSP process, thereby increasing the knowledge and understanding among representatives for different sea use sectors about the complexity and interactions of the use of marine space, reducing conflicts between different sea uses as well as stimulating responsible attitude towards use of the sea space and its resources.
- > Create a management model for marine space that is based on sustainability principles.

The specific objectives for the pilot plan arise from information gained about present and potential sea uses within the area as well as conflict mapping and discussions with involved stakeholders at a series of events organised by the project. The plan is focussing on the following objectives that address the priority conflict issues:

- > To define the most appropriate locations for the wind parks in the pilot area, that would not cause disturbance for navigation, military trainings, coastal observation system, as well as would have the least negative impact on fishery sector, biodiversity, coastal landscape and recreation possibilities.
- > To find solutions for minimising negative impact of investigation of oil resources and oil mining on coastal biodiversity, fish resources and areas important for their regeneration, as well as to prevent disturbance to navigation and military trainings.
- > To seek for solutions for balanced development of coastal fishery, tourism and recreation in the coastal waters.
- > To ensure that sites important for protection of underwater heritage is not threatened by activities causing mechanical destruction or uncoordinated (illegal) scuba diving.
- > To seek for solutions for dumping of the dredged material closer to the coast in order to feed the sediment flow along the coast and diminishing the coastal erosion process, in the same time ensuring that such activities would not have adverse effect on area important for fish reproduction.
- > To ensure that cumulative effects of the sea use activities would not endanger marine biodiversity and in particular the protected underwater habitats and important areas for bird concentration.

7.2. Zoning categories

Zoning of the pilot area has been prepared based on information on existing sea use activities (fishery, shipping, port operations, military trainings, cables), protected nature areas, potential sea use activities (wind park development and oil extraction), as well as taking into account data on bathymetry, ecological features (e.g. distribution on benthic habitats and areas important for

regeneration of fish resources), location of ship wrecks, and former dumping grounds of military chemical waste and ammunition.

For zoning of the pilot area the following zoning categories have been used:

- > **Priority use zone:** defines sea uses, which shall be treated as priority in particular area and what limitations it poses for other sea uses. Priority sea uses are defined based on following criteria:
 - Priorities that are defined by legal acts or national policy planning documents (e.g. nature conservation, port operation, oil mining, etc);
 - Natural conditions that determines that particular area is the most suitable for particular sea use (e.g., areas important for coastal fishery and regeneration of fish resources; nature conservation at the areas with protected reef habitats or other nature assets; areas with suitable preconditions for wind park development (e.g. depth, geology and wind speed) and no/minor conflicts with other sea uses).
 - Agreements achieved among competent authorities and other stakeholders in the course of the planning process.
- > **Reserve zone for particular use:** defines sea uses which can be considered as priority, if agreements with other sea uses achieved and no major conflicts faced; or if additional investigations are needed in order to ascertain, what is the most appropriate sea use at particular area.
- > **No-go areas:** defines restrictions for particular sea uses (e.g. areas that are forbidden for shipping due to safety reasons).
- > **General Use zone:** all sea uses are admissible, as long as they are not against legal requirements defined by national or international law, do not cause substantial conflicts with other sea uses or do not have considerable negative impact on marine environment.

Detailed description of zoning categories is included in table 7.1. Zoning map of the pilot area see in Annex 2.

In addition to zoning categories the zoning map includes also information on actual sea uses, which cannot be moved and that impose limitations to other sea use activities. This includes:

- > Natura 2000 sites;
- > Existing dumping sites of dredged material;
- > Former dumping sites of military chemical waste and ammunition;
- > Lighthouses;
- > Shipwrecks.

As additional information layers borders of territorial sea and EEZ, bathymetry, coastal settlements, build-up areas, ports and fishery centres are presented.

7. Spatial Plan

Table: 7.1. *Description of zoning categories*

Code	Type	Title of the zone (use priority)	Description	Activities that needs co-ordination/approval by authorities	Activities that are prohibited by law or not recommendable
1.	P	Priority: coastal fishery and infrastructure development for tourism and coastal fishery (planning competence of local municipalities)	Coastal waters up to 1 nm from coastline, defined by mean water level (or 5-10 m depth), where sea use planning on more detailed (local) level is necessary, to insure development and maintenance of necessary infrastructure for recreation, tourism, coastal fishery and protection of coastline against erosion.	Establishment of any permanent infrastructure has to be co-ordinated with local authority and authority in charge for fish resources - MoA (in case of negative impact on fish spawning areas, losses to fishery sector has to be estimated and compensation paid) as well as other competent authorities - MA, REB, etc.	Activities that are forbidden according to individual rules of protected areas, other legal acts other legal acts (e.g. Law on Protection Belts) as well as spatial planning documents of local authorities.
2.	P	Priority: Nature conservation and regeneration of fish resources	Areas that are included in strict protection zones of the protected areas	According to individual rules of protected areas	According to individual rules of protected areas
2.1.	P	Priority: Nature conservation and regeneration of fish resources	Strict protection zone of Marine Protected Area „Nida-Pērķone”	Tourism and water sports in accordance with individual rules of protected area	Activities that may cause destruction of reef habitats, e.g.: - Wind park development, - Extraction of oil and mineral resources - Deepening of shipping routes, - Establishment of new dumping sites of dredged material - Aquaculture - Trawling -
2.2.	P	Priority: Nature conservation and regeneration of fish resources	Nature reserve „Užava”	Tourism and water sports in accordance with individual rules of protected area	- Activities that may cause destruction of reef habitats, (see.2.1.) - Using of water scooters - Organisation of competitions for motor boats, water scooters and water-skiing, - Organisation of military trainings; - Trawling -

3.	R	Reserve area: nature conservation (to be investigated)	Areas where according to hydrological information protected habitats types of Community interest might be found. Survey of benthic habitat shall be carried out in order to assess, if this area qualifies for designation as offshore Natura 2000 site.		All activities that might cause physical destruction of benthic habitats (e.g. establishment of permanent constructions, bottom-trawling etc.), until nature features of the area are assessed.
4.	P	Priority: coastal fishery and fish reproduction, nature conservation, coastal landscape and tourism	Coastal waters from ca. 5-20 m depth except areas with priority for nature conservation, shipping and port operations.	Establishment of stationary constructions (e.g. wind park construction, oil mining platforms) and extraction of mineral resources – EIA procedure required as well as co-ordination with MoEPRD, MoD, MoA, MoT, MA, MIWA)	Bottom trawling
5.	P	Priority: military trainings	Military training polygon “Šķēde”	Shipping, yachting, bottom trawling according safety rules and taking into account actual information on schedule of military trainings	Stationary constructions (wind parks, oil mining platforms)
6.	P	Priority: military trainings and nature conservation	Overlapping area of Marine Protected Area „Akmeņrags” and military training polygon “Šķēde”	Coastal fishery, shipping, yachting according safety rules and taking into account actual information of military trainings	- Stationary constructions (wind parks, oil mining platforms) - Bottom trawling
7.	P	Priority: Coastal defence and observation	Territorial sea, which covers the area observed to ensure safety operative information on ship accidents	Establishment of stationary constructions (e.g. wind park construction, oil mining platforms) shall be co-ordinated with MoD	
8.	P	Priority: Offshore wind energy	Area outside territorial sea up to 40 m depth, where are suitable conditions and interest to establish wind parks	Wind park construction, applying of EIA procedure; Shipping and fishery, according to safety rules of particular wind park (after it is established)	Extraction of mineral resources and oil mining
9.	R	Reserve area: offshore wind energy	Area that is included in investigation area for wind park development defined by MoE.	Wind park construction, applying of EIA procedure and, in case of territorial sea – in co-ordination with MoD and local authorities; Shipping and fishery, according to safety rules of particular wind park (after it is established)	

7. Spatial Plan

10.	P	Priority: shipping and port operations	Intensive shipping routes and port areas		
10.1	P	Shipping	HELCOM recommended shipping routes,	Fishery, water sports, using of motor boats in accordance to safety rules	Stationary constructions that are not related to navigation (e.g. wind parks, oil mining platforms)
10.2	P	Port operations	Port area, roadstead, dumping sites of dredged material		- Any activity that is not in accordance to port exploitation rules - Stationary constructions that are not related to port operations and navigation (e.g. wind parks, oil mining platforms)
11.	P	Priority: Oil investigation and extraction	Areas licensed for oil investigations and extraction and where it is not in contradiction with other sea uses or nature conservation interests.	Oil investigation and extraction, applying EIA; Shipping and fishery in accordance to safety rules	Wind park construction
12.	P	Priority: Bottom trawling	Areas defined by MoA as important for bottom trawling (only suitable areas in Latvian EEZ)		Stationary constructions (wind parks, oil mining platforms)
13.	N	Restricted are for shipping	Area where according to navigation maps shipping is forbidden due to safety reasons		- Shipping - Fishery - Scuba diving
14.	G	General use zone with <i>priority</i> for fishery		Establishment of stationary constructions (e.g. wind park construction, oil mining platforms) and extraction of mineral resources – EIA procedure required as well as co-ordination with MoEPRD, MoD, MoA, MoT, MA, MIWA)	

Abbreviations:

- Zoning type: P – priority use zone; R- reserve area for particular use; N – No-go area; G – general use zone
- Competent authorities: MoEPRD – Ministry of Environment and regional Development; MoD – Ministry of Defence; MoA – Ministry of Agriculture; MoT – Ministry of Transport; MoE – Ministry of Economy, MA – Maritime Administration; MIWA – Marine and Inland Water Administration of the State Environmental Service; REB - Regional Environmental Board

8. Recommendations / Future Steps for Realizing the MSP

Currently Latvia is developing the official procedure for implementation of the MSP and the concept on division of responsibilities for MSP among competent authorities. The process is led by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (further in the text - MoERD), who is in charge for introducing MSP in Latvia. An inter-ministerial working group is established, under co-ordination of the MoERD, to ensure that all sectors are represented and can contribute to the process. According the recently adopted law on Spatial Development Planning the official process for elaboration of MSP for Latvian territorial waters and EEZ shall start not later than 1 January, 2014. Baltic Environmental Forum-Latvia is participating in the working group in order to transfer the knowledge and experience gained in the BaltSeaPlan project for developing the official MSP procedure. The project work, outputs and recommendation are highly acknowledged and taken into the consideration in the development of the draft concept.

However, for ensuring efficient implementation of the MSP process, that is based on internationally agreed MSP principles and would help to minimise existing inter-sectoral conflicts, we would like to draw particular attention to the following aspects:

1. **Clearly defined national priorities** on marine spatial use at national level, cross-sectorial level and even sectorial level for conflict solving between competitive activities and interests in Latvian maritime arena. The policy priorities should be specified with nationally agreed quantitative development targets and indicators. In particular the priorities has to be clarified with regard to such sea uses as offshore wind energy production, oil extraction, fishery and regeneration of fish resources, military and security interests for coastal observation and ensuring of safety as well as nature conservation and preservation of unique coastal landscapes as national value and source for recreation and tourism development. In existing policy document priorities are mostly set as directions and trends for single sectors, not considering their spatial compatibilities or incompatibilities.
2. **Sea use development should be sustainable and based on eco-system approach.** The sectoral policies should respect requirements set under *Law on Protection and Management of Marine Waters* and Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). MSP should be used as instrument to avoid cumulative effects of the sea use activities on marine biodiversity as well as promote ecological connectivity of marine habitats and species distribution.
3. **Impact of climate change should be respected in the planning process** and adequate adaptation measures foreseen. One of important problems to be address is increasing risks of coastal erosion and related needs for coastal protection measures – for this purpose a model of sediment flow along the coast has to be elaborated to define appropriate sites for feeding of sediment flow and beach replenishment as well as impact of such measures on coastal habitats and fish spawning grounds shall assessed.
4. **MSP process shall be adaptive** – applying latest available scientifically based knowledge. The present knowledge on marine ecosystem functionality, distribution of benthic habitats and other important marine biodiversity features within the project pilot areas is rather low, based on very scattered field data and some modelling results, which is the major obstacle for applying the eco-system approach to the MSP. A system for co-ordination and assessment of water quality, biodiversity and coastal erosion processes including continuous monitoring and regular updated date base should be established. Decision support systems including modelling tools have to be developed. Socio-economic assessment, including monetary valuation, of marine ecosystem services and impacts of MSP should be undertaken to backstop political decision making process on sea use activities. Due to high costs of marine research, the national research programme dedicated to marine issues shall be launched. Obtained information and knowledge shall be shared between public bodies with no costs.
5. **Common GIS data base on** all existing and planned activities in the sea as well as also geological, hydrographical data (depth, streams, water temperature ect.) should be developed and regularly updated including by a competent authority assigned for this task. Data base should be established according EU standards (Inspire directive) and available for the MSP development and permitting process on sea use activities.

8. Recommendations / Future Steps for realising the MSP

6. **Sea and land integration has to be achieved via the planning process** to bridge the development interests and towards integrated coastal zone management. Proper coordination has to be achieved between MSP as a planning instrument at national level and territorial planning of coastal municipalities – a planning instrument of local level. National interests reflected in the MSP have to be transposed into local territorial plans, as well as local territorial plans have to be taken into account in elaboration of the MSP. Planning competence of the local authorities has to be extended into the coastal waters (ca. 1 nautical mile) to enable development of coastal infrastructure and sea related tourism activities, as well as port development and coastal fishery. Accordingly the coastal zone should be planned on more detailed level, corresponding to the scale of local territorial plans.
7. **Pan-Baltic thinking perspective has to be applied in the national MSP process**, to regard the Baltic Sea as one planning space and ecosystem to be shared. Collaboration has to be achieved among the countries around the Baltic Sea for setting commonly agreed environmental, economic and social quality objectives and targets. Cross-border co-operation has to be applied for planning of the sea use activities at boarder areas. In particular collaboration with other countries is needed for ensuring connectivity of linear planning elements, e.g. development of transnational energy transmission infrastructure for connection of the offshore wind parks, which could serve as a basis for decisions on envisaged wind park capacities, as well as intelligent corridors sea transport and technical infrastructure. Furthermore, cross-country agreements should be signed on boarder between Latvia – Lithuania and Latvia Sweden in EEZ in order to avoid cross-border sea use conflicts.

9. Lessons learnt (negative & positive)

Through the process of elaboration of the pilot MSP the project team has experienced the following challenges:

> **Uncertainties with regard to institutional set-up for MSP:**

At the beginning of the project there was no competent authority for MSP assigned and division of responsibilities were rather uncertain. The Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government was in charge for spatial planning issues, but had no experience and responsibilities over the marine areas, while implementation of the EU Integrated Maritime Policy (further in the text- IMP) was responsibility of the Ministry of Transport and its subordinated institution - the Maritime Administration of Latvia, historically dealing with use of marine waters by ensuring the safe navigation and owning most of the maritime data, but no competence in spatial planning. Certain interests in planning of marine space had also the Ministry of Economy, steering the process for licensing the use of offshore energy resources, e.g. oil extraction and wind park development. The Ministry of the Environment was in charge for implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive – the environmental pillar of the EU IMP and development of National Marine Strategy, which foresees MSP as one of the management measures. The inter-ministerial debate on division of the responsibilities for governance and planning of the marine waters has been rather intensive, however this situation has motivated all concerned authorities to take active part in the project activities and elaboration of the pilot plan, using this as a discussion platform for solving unclear questions.

In order to ensure representation of the all sea use interests and back-stopping of the pilot MSP on official level the project team established a co-ordination group for the planning process, involving representatives of the all competent authorities.

At the later stage of the project the official process for implementation of the MSP in Latvia was started, led by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (formed by joining the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government and Ministry of Environment in beginning of 2011) who called up the inter-ministerial working group to coordinate this process. A bit earlier (in beginning of 2010) the Ministry of Transport has established the inter-ministerial working group to co-ordinate the implementation of the EU IMP. The both working groups are working in close co-operation (formed almost by the same people), involving also the representatives of the BaltSeaPlan project to take over the project experiences and results.

> **Uncertainties with regard to legal basis for MSP**

At the beginning of the project there was also no legal base for development of the MSP, therefore the project pilot case study could be regarded only as experimental. Although introduction of the MSP in Latvia the first time was mentioned in the Concept of the Development of the Spatial Planning System adopted on 15.07.2009 as well as envisaged by the Law on Marine Protection and Management (enforce since 18.11.2010), the official legal basis for starting the MSP process would be launched only with adoption of the new Law on Spatial Development Planning (entered into force 01.12.2011). At the same time official procedure for issuing licences on investigation and construction of the off-shore wind parks also was in permanent development, changing conditions for potential wind park developers as well as the whole concept for allocation of the space and related legal procedure. These uncertainties have caused confusions among the stakeholders, certain mistrust and mixing of the pilot case with the official MSP procedure.

> **Weak data infrastructure**

The scattered and limited data and information sources actually restricted the implementation of the pilot MSP in according to the all guiding principles. Ecological data on species, habitats, their status in the whole territorial and EEZ waters are very scarce thus the ecosystem based approach could not be implemented to full extent. Zoning of the wind park development areas as emerging economy branch was rather based on other criteria and the real evaluation shall be performed during the environmental impact assessment procedure related to particular site selection.

> **Lack of tradition/experience in cross-sectorial discussions and priority setting**

This pilot MSP was the first try in Latvia to apply integrated cross-sectorial spatial planning principles within the marine waters. The previous experiences in planning of marine areas were targeted only to particular sectors, e.g. navigation, fishery, oil mining, allocation of space for potential wind parks or implemented from perspective of nature conservation, i.e. management plan for Marine Protected Areas. As a result there has been very little experience in cross-sectorial discussions and searching for win-win solutions or compromises among representatives of different competent authorities – each sector regards its own goals and targets as national priority, which other sectors should respect. Setting of spatial priorities (for particular use within particular area) has turned out as rather difficult concept, not always understood and accepted. Therefore, especially in the beginning of the project, the gains from MSP were not to full extent realised and case by case solutions generally were more accepted (e.g. for introducing new sea use activity like wind park development).

> **Lack of Pan-Baltic perspective in thinking about use of marine resources**

In discussions with stakeholders and competent authorities we have faced difficulties to perceive the Baltic Sea as one planning space and ecosystem where commonly agreed goals and target would have to be achieved and implemented in the MSP process. The national authorities are not ready at this stage to step back from their national sovereignty rights to decide on the use of marine space and resources – the common responsibilities and benefits are not yet realised. Therefore we see a necessity for much more active involvement of the national and local stakeholders within the international debate about the future of the Baltic Sea in order to widen thinking perspective.

Despite the experienced difficulties we can conclude that the work on the pilot case has resulted as very positive experience for the project team as well as involved stakeholders:

- > Active stakeholder's involvement has proven to be efficient method for development of MSP in the situation when there is no experience and designated competent authority, holding the necessary information and skills.
- > The stakeholders have shown great responsiveness and interest in the process as well as readiness to contribute with their knowledge and opinion.
- > The process of elaboration of the pilot MSP as well as the achieved results (compiled information, data, opinions, assessments and proposed zoning) has provided significant input for the development and introducing the official of MSP in Latvia.

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Annexes

- **Annex 1:** Map on existing sea uses and potential interests in sea use in Latvian territorial waters and EEZ in the Baltic Sea
- **Annex 2:** Map on areas of high ecological value in Latvian territorial waters and EEZ in the Baltic Sea
- **Annex 3:** Map on zoning of Latvian territorial waters and EEZ in the Baltic Sea

Existing sea uses and potential interests in sea use in Latvian territorial waters
and Exclusive economic zone in the Baltic Sea.



2009 Planning the future
2012 of the Baltic Sea



Baltic Sea Region
Programme 2007-2013

Projekts daļēji finansēts no Eiropas Savienības
(Eiropas reģionālā attīstības fonda un Eiropas
kaimiņattiecību un partnerības instrumenta)

Legend

Fishery intensity in period 2004-2009

Lower fishery intensity

Higher fishery intensity

Areas important for fishery - bottom trawling

Areas important for fish reproduction and coastal fishery

Nature conservation

Natura 2000

Licences and Permits

Licences for oil investigation

Licences for oil investigation and extraction

Proposed/licenced areas of investigation for wind parks

Military areas

Military training polygon M2

Planned military training polygon Šķēde

Dumping sites

Dumping sites of dredged material

Former mined areas

Former training polygons for mine laying

Former dumping site of explosives and chemical weapons

Shipping

Port aquatorium

Port anchorage area

Recommended shipping routes

Recommended deep-water shipping routes

HELCOM re-survey plan of shipping routes

Restricted area for shipping

Shipwrecks

Submarine Cables

Submarine cables in use

Submarine cables not in use

Isobaths

Lighthouse

Borders

Exclusive Economic Zone

Territorial sea

Strait base line

Border of pilot area

Town, village

Small cargo and yacht port

Big port

Fishing centre

Potential yacht port

Built-up area

Scale 1:300 000 (57°)

Mercator projection.
WGS84.

0 2.5 5 10 Nautical Miles

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Areas of high ecological value in Latvian territorial waters and Exclusive Economic zone at Baltic Sea coast.

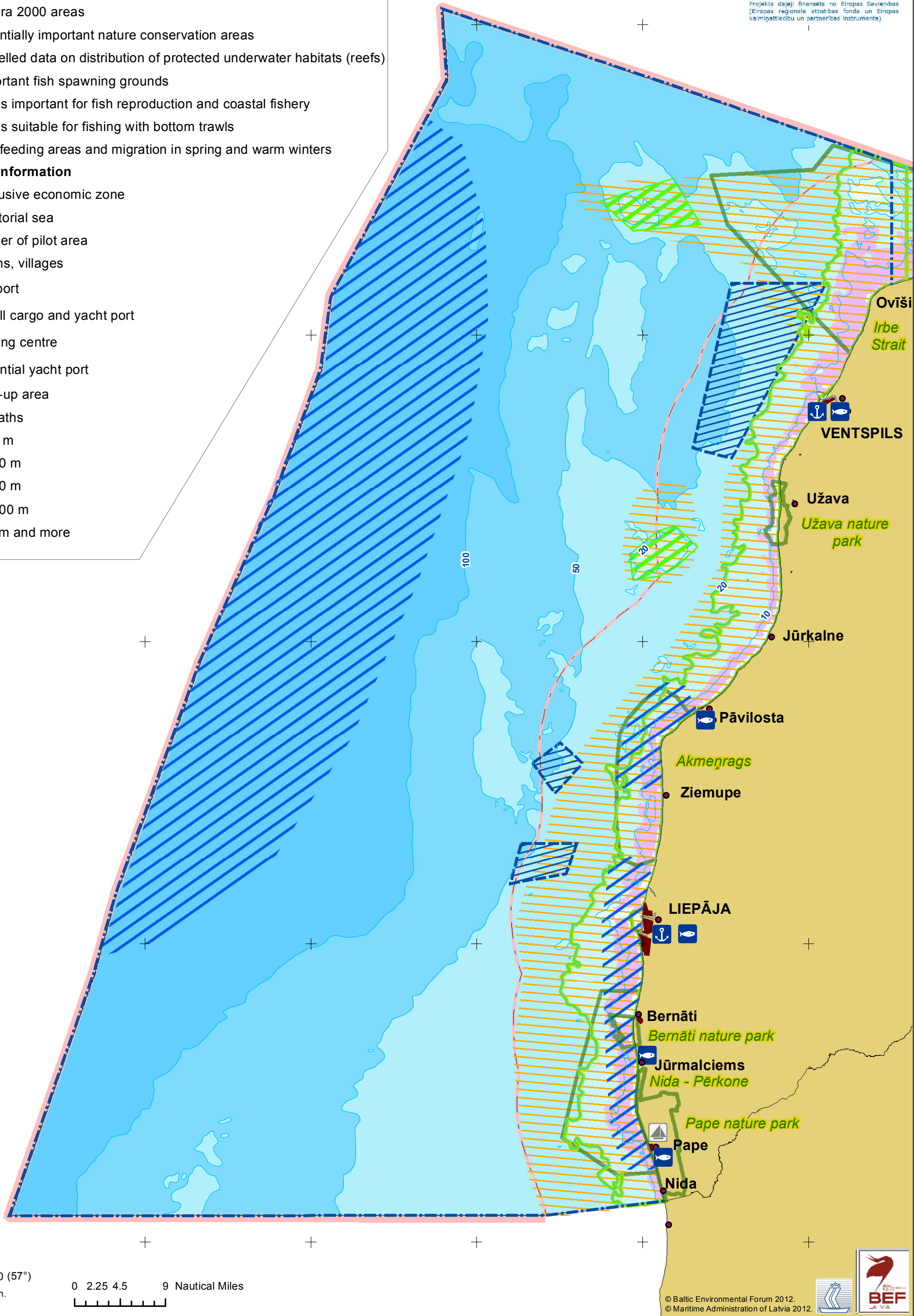


Legend

- Natura 2000 areas
- Potentially important nature conservation areas
- Modelled data on distribution of protected underwater habitats (reefs)
- Important fish spawning grounds
- Areas important for fish reproduction and coastal fishery
- Areas suitable for fishing with bottom trawls
- Bird feeding areas and migration in spring and warm winters

Additional information

- Exclusive economic zone
- Territorial sea
- Border of pilot area
- Towns, villages
- Big port
- Small cargo and yacht port
- Fishing centre
- Potential yacht port
- Built-up area
- Isobaths
- 0-10 m
- 10-20 m
- 20-50 m
- 50-100 m
- 100 m and more



Scale 1:700 000 (57°)

Mercator projection.
WGS84.

0 2.25 4.5 9 Nautical Miles

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Pilot maritime spatial zoning plan of Latvian territorial waters and Exclusive economic zone in the Baltic Sea.



2009 Planning the future
2012 of the Baltic Sea



Baltic Sea Region
Programme 2007-2013

Projekts daļēji finansēts no Eiropas Savienības
(Eiropas reģionālās attīstības fonda un Eiropas
kaimiņattiecību un partnerības instrumenta)

Legend

Zoning categories

- Priority: Coastal infrastructure for tourism and coastal fishery (planning competence of local municipalities)
- Priority: Nature conservation
- Reserve area: Nature conservation (to be investigated)
- Priority: Coastal fishery and fish reproduction, nature conservation, coastal landscape and tourism
- Priority: Military training
- Priority: Coastal defence and observation
- Priority: Offshore wind energy
- Reserve area: Offshore wind energy
- Priority: Shipping and port operations
- Priority: Bottom trawling
- Priority: Oil investigation and extraction
- Priority: Protection belt of submarine cables
- Restricted area for shipping

For information only:

- Natura 2000
- Potential oil extraction polygons, submitted for approval
- Dumping sites of dredged material
- Recommended shipping routes
- Lighthouse
- Shipwrecks
- SubmarineCables
 - Submarine cables in use
 - Submarine cables out of use
- Isobaths

Borders

- Exclusive Economic Zone
- Territorial sea
- Latvia MRCC
- Border of pilot area
- Towns, villages
- Small cargo and yacht port
- Big port
- Fishing centre
- Potential yacht port
- Built-up area

Scale 1:300 000 (57°)
Mercator projection.
WGS84.

0 2.5 5 10 Nautical Miles

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The BaltSeaPlan project in general

Activities

BaltSeaPlan activities were designed to support all major aspects of maritime spatial planning within the Baltic Sea region:

> Improving the joint information base / stocktaking for maritime spatial planning:

A forum for dialogue bringing together spatial planners and scientists to identify sources of data / information. Compiling current uses, conflicts and natural values of the Baltic Sea. Filling data gaps, exchange of data, improve integration of ecological and socio-economic data sets, identify relevant modelling methods, clarify MSP data needs.

> Including Spatial Planning in National Maritime Strategies

Assessment of national frameworks, methodologies and sectoral strategies that influence the use of sea space (e.g. energy, fishery, transport, tourism, as well as nature conservation)

Developing recommendations on spatial issues within National Maritime Strategies.

Exploiting the visions to foster a national cross-sectoral debate, discussing goals & targets for dealing with space and filling gaps in national sectoral policies & strategies

> Develop a Vision for Maritime Spatial Planning in the Baltic Sea 2030

taking into account transnational interdependencies and cumulative impacts

initiate a Baltic Sea region wide campaign as to discuss the BaltSeaPlan Vision 2030

> Demonstrate MSP in 8 pilot areas

- Danish Straights / T-Route (DK)
- Pomeranian Bight (DE/DK/SE/PL)
- Western Gulf of Gdansk (PL)
- Middle Bank (SE/PL)
- Lithuanian Sea (LT)
- Latvian Sea (LV)
- Pärnu Bay (EE)
- Hiiumaa and Saaremaa Islands (EE)

> Lobbying and capacity building for MSP

- stakeholder involvement & participative planning methods
- BaltSeaPlan series of guidelines & policy recommendations
- workshops & conferences for decision-makers

Partners

Germany

- Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH), Lead Partner
- Ministry of Energy, Infrastructure and Regional Development of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
- WWF Germany, Baltic Sea Unit

Poland

- Maritime Office in Szczecin
- Maritime Office in Gdynia
- Maritime Institute in Gdańsk

Denmark

- Department of Bioscience, Aarhus University (formerly National Environmental Research Institute – NERI)

Sweden

- Royal Institute of Technology (KTH)
- Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

Estonia

- Estonian Marine Institute of University of Tartu
- Baltic Environmental Forum Estonia

Lithuania

- Klaipėda University Coastal Research and Planning Institute (CORPI)
- Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania

Latvia

- Baltic Environmental Forum Latvia

BaltSeaPlan Publications

BaltSeaPlan Reports

- BaltSeaPlan Findings
- BaltSeaPlan Vision 2030 – Towards the sustainable planning of Baltic Sea space
- Become a Maritime Spatialist within 10 Minutes (EN, DE, LV, LT, PL, EE)
- BaltSeaPlan Bulletin #1
- BaltSeaPlan Bulletin #2
- BaltSeaPlan Project Flyer (EN, DE, LV, LT, PL, EE, SE)

Impact Assessments

- 1 - Strategies with relevance for Estonian maritime space
- 2 - Strategies with relevance for German maritime space
- 3 - Strategies with relevance for Latvian maritime space
- 4 - Strategies with relevance for Lithuanian maritime space
- 5 - Strategies with relevance for Polish maritime space
- 6 - Strategies with relevance for Russian maritime space
- 7 - Strategies with relevance for Swedish maritime space
- 8 - Implications of the international and national policy context for Baltic Sea space and MSP

Pilot MSP reports

- 9 - Developing a Pilot MSP for the Pomeranian Bight and Arkona Basin
- 10 - Developing a Pilot MSP for the Middle Bank
- 11 - Developing a Pilot SEA for the Western Gulf of Gdansk
- 12 - Preparing for a MSP at the Danish Straits
- 13 - Towards a Pilot MSP for the Pärnu Bay
- 14 - Towards a Pilot MSP for the Saaremaa and Hiiumaa Islands
- 15 - Towards a Pilot MSP for the Lithuanian Sea
- 16 - Developing a Pilot MSP for the Western Coast of Latvia

MSPs and SEA

- 17 - Pilot MSP for the Western Coast of Latvia (LV)
- 18 - SEA for the Western Gulf of Gdansk (PL)

Technical reports

- 19 - Modelling for MSP – Tools, concepts, applications
- 20 - Data exchange structure for MSP
- 21 - Effects of underwater noise on harbour porpoises around major shipping lanes
- 22 - Remote sensing methods for detecting small fishing vessels and fishing gear
- 23 - Legal and planning options for integrating fisheries into Maritime Spatial Planning
- 24 - Stakeholder Involvement in MSP
- 25 - SEA in MSP: Recommendations from the German and Polish experience
- 26 - Fisheries in the MSP context
- 27 - Seabed and habitat mapping in the Hatter Barn area
- 28 - BaltSeaPlan Web-advanced tool in support of MSP
- 29 - Case Study: Systematic site selection for offshore windpower with Marxan in the pilot area Pomeranian Bight
- 30 - Case Study: Site selection of fisheries areas for MSP
- 31 - Recommendations for legislative action regarding the MSP in Europe

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) has become a widely acknowledged and necessary tool for co-ordinating spatial use and balancing of interests in the sea. In view of expanding activities such as offshore wind energy parks and growing shipping traffic and at the same time increasing needs to protect the marine environment a systematic, integrative and forward-looking planning is required in order to safeguard the sustainable development of the seas. Currently, however, this tool is far from being established practice.

The 3.7 million € INTERREG IVB project “**BaltSeaPlan**” (2009–2012) has been the largest project in recent years dealing with maritime spatial planning throughout the Baltic Sea Region. Under the lead of the German Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH) and covering partners from all Baltic Sea countries (except Finland) the project has not only developed pilots in 8 demonstration areas, but also advanced methods, instruments & tools as well as data exchange necessary for an effective maritime spatial planning.

The results of BaltSeaPlan are published in a series of reports all available for free download under www.baltseaplan.eu.

Latvia is having a 500 km long coastline and a significant share of the Baltic Sea with numerous traditional as well as newly upcoming activities competing for its space. The importance of MSP has been underlined in numerous strategies as well as laws, but is not yet readily implemented. The **BaltSeaPlan Report №16 “Developing a Pilot MSP for the Western Coast of Latvia”** describes experience of the Baltic Environmental Forum in testing how maritime spatial planning could be carried out in Latvia and thus developing a basis for the process and potential structure of a national maritime spatial plan in future. The pilot plan was developed with substantial stakeholder involvement and inputs from all relevant actors. It does not only set a sample for the national maritime spatial planning process to be launched in 2014 in Latvia, but should also be seen as a good practice for an MSP process to be launched elsewhere.
