European Commission

European MSP Platform

Maritime Spatial Planning Country Information

Finland

European
MSP Platform

Contact

MSP in general

The Ministry of the Environment
Ms. Tiina TIHLMAN
Ministerial Adviser
Department of the Built Environment
Aleksanterinkatu 7, Helsinki
P.O. Box 35, FI-00023 Government, Finland
Phone +358 29 5250296
E-mail: tiina.tihlman@ym.fi
Web: www.ym.fi/en-US

MSP Data Focal point

Ministry of the Environment
Ms. Maaret Stenström
Senior Environmental Adviser
Department of the Built Environment
Aleksanterinkatu 7
P.O. Box 35, FI-00023 Government, Finland
Phone: +358 400 143 940, +358 29 5250277
E-mail: Maaret.stenstrom@ym.fi

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Ministry of the Environment
Mr. Lasse TALLSKOG
Ministerial Adviser
P.O. Box 35
FI-00023 GOVERNMENT
Telephone: +358 50 413 0550
Fax: +358 9 1603 9395
E-mail: lasse.tallskog@ym.fi

Environmental Impact Assessment

Ministry of the Environment
Ms. Seija RANTAKALLIO
Ministerial Adviser
P.O. Box 35
FI-00023 GOVERNMENT
Telephone: +358 400 143 937
Fax: +358 9 1603 9365
E-mail: Seija.rantakallio@ym.fi

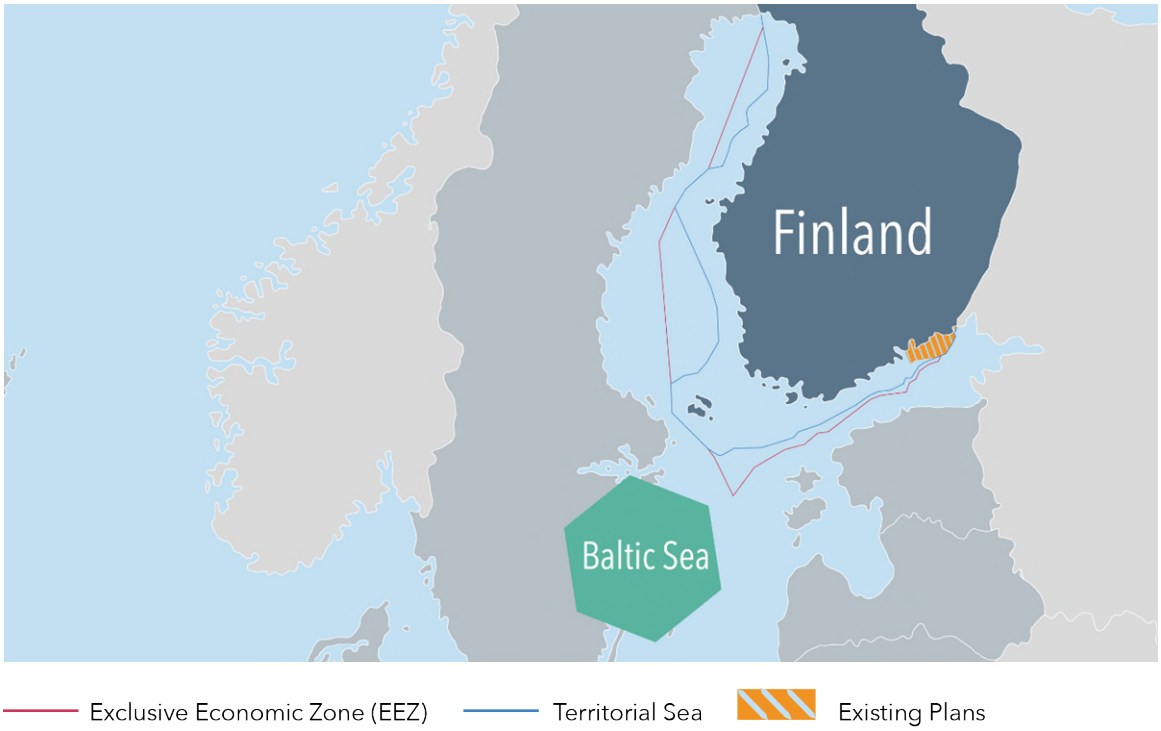
Last revision date

This version was last reviewed and updated (where necessary) by the European MSP Platform team in November 2022.

Funding attribution
The EU MSP Platform is financed by the EU Commission under the EMFF. The EU MSP Platform is a result of the action MSP Assistance Mechanism implemented by CINEA on behalf of DG MARE.

Background Information

Basic facts on Marine Waters



- Territorial sea (12 nm zone): 52 581 km² including coastal waters around Åland 11 764 km2 (the area of islands including Åland Islands is 5 716 km2, and not included in the water area)
- Exclusive Economic Zone: 29 080 km²
- Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone are limited by the adjacent states
- The autonomous territory of Åland has a special planning status in its territorial waters.

Maritime Spatial Planning authorities and legislation

General

MSP regulations were provided in the Land Use and Building Act in 2016. According to the Act, the Ministry of the Environment is responsible for developing maritime spatial planning and for cooperating with other countries, and Coastal Regional Councils are responsible for drafting and approving maritime spatial plans for Territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone.

A Regional Council is a statutory consortium of municipalities. It is responsible for regional development and for drafting regional land use plans. Councils are made up of politically selected representatives from the municipalities.

There are eight coastal Regional Councils, and sixty coastal municipalities. The territorial sea comes under the local municipalities' remit. Local municipal authorities have strong self-governing powers based on local democracy and decision-making, the right to levy taxes, and the mandate for land use planning that also covers territorial sea. Municipalities produce local master plans and local detailed plans.

Regional land use plans also cover territorial sea, and as such, they can be considered as MSP equivalents. They are legally binding and provide a guide for municipalities when drafting local master plans.

The Coastal Regional Councils with maritime spatial planning responsibilities for the Territorial Sea and the Exclusive Economic Zone are:

- The Regional Council of Kymenlaakso
- The Regional Council of Helsinki-Uusimaa
- The Regional Council of Southwest Finland
- The Regional Council of Satakunta
- The Regional Council of Ostrobothnia
- The Regional Council of Central Ostrobothnia
- The Regional Council of Oulu Region
- The Regional Council of Lapland

The Finnish Government governs the Exclusive Economic Zone.

The self-governing province of the Åland Islands is an autonomous region on the southwest coast of Finland, and has a right to pass MSP legislation on its own territorial sea.

Planning at national level

- The maritime spatial planning regulations are implemented in the territorial sea and on the Finnish Exclusive Economic Zone.
- The Land Use and Building Act is implemented in the territorial sea as well as on land.
- The UN Law of the Seas is implemented by national legislation across the Exclusive Economic Zone. It specifies sectoral laws, which are implemented in the EEZ.

National MSP authority

- Ministry of the Environment, Department of the Built Environment

Planning at regional level

- Eight Regional Councils have the maritime spatial planning mandate on Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone. There are already several regional coastal plans in place which are not directly related to MSP but provide approaches for land-sea interaction and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

Regional MSP authority

- Eight coastal Regional Councils and the Åland Islands.

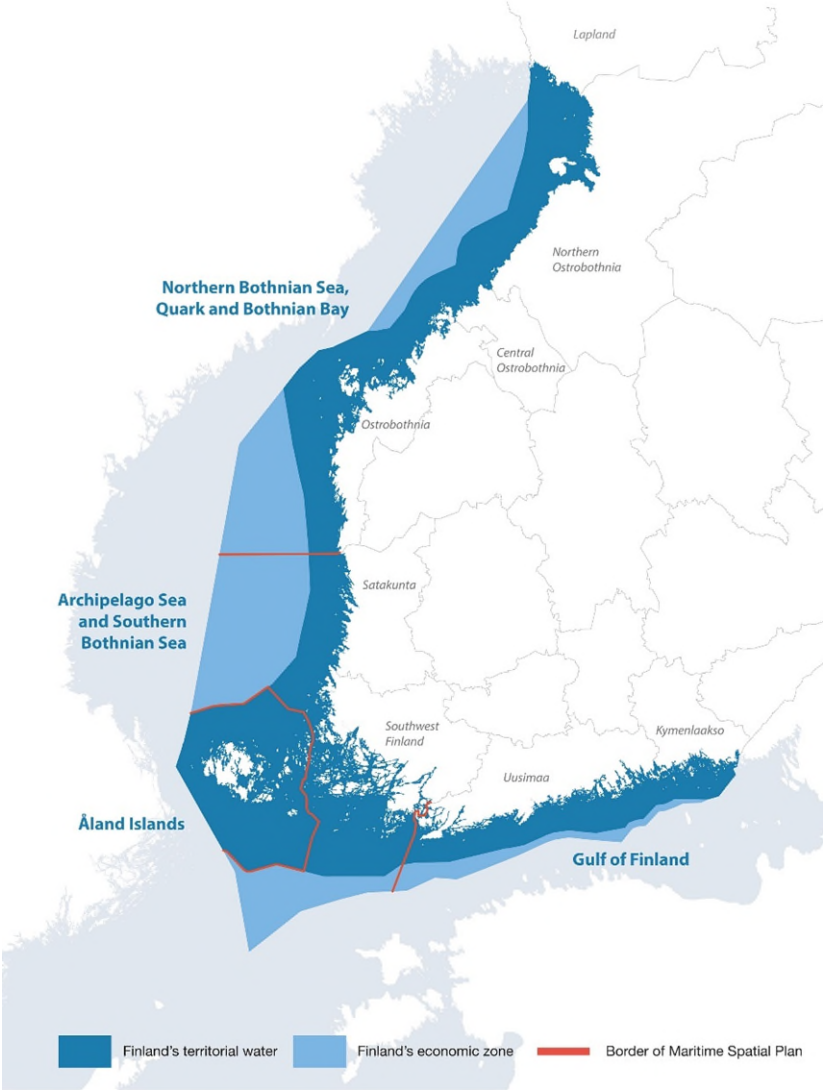
Progress

The Maritime Spatial Planning Directive was transposed into Finnish law in 2016. MSP regulations are covered by the Land Use and Building Act, which is the most important act to steer land-use, spatial planning and construction. Nonetheless, maritime spatial planning is not part of the land-use planning system or land use plan hierarchy of Finland. Maritime spatial plans are strategic and general, non-binding plans that have indirect steering impacts.

Eight Coastal Regional Councils are responsible for drafting and approving maritime spatial plans in the territorial waters and on the EEZ.

There are three maritime spatial plans covering both territorial waters and the EEZ: one for the Northern Bothnian Sea, the Quark and Bothnian Bay drafted by the Regional Councils of Lapland, Oulu region, Central Ostrobothnia and Ostrobothnia; one for the Archipelago Sea and Southern Bothnian Sea drafted by the Regional Councils of Satakunta and Southwest Finland; and one for the Gulf of Finland drafted by the Regional Councils of Helsinki-Uusimaa and Kymenlaakso.

Additionally, MSP plan for the Åland Islands has been developed and **comes into force on 22.03.2021**The MSP of Åland Islands **was developed** according to a separate planning legislation -regulations in chapter 5. §§ 24a and 24b Water Act (1996:61).



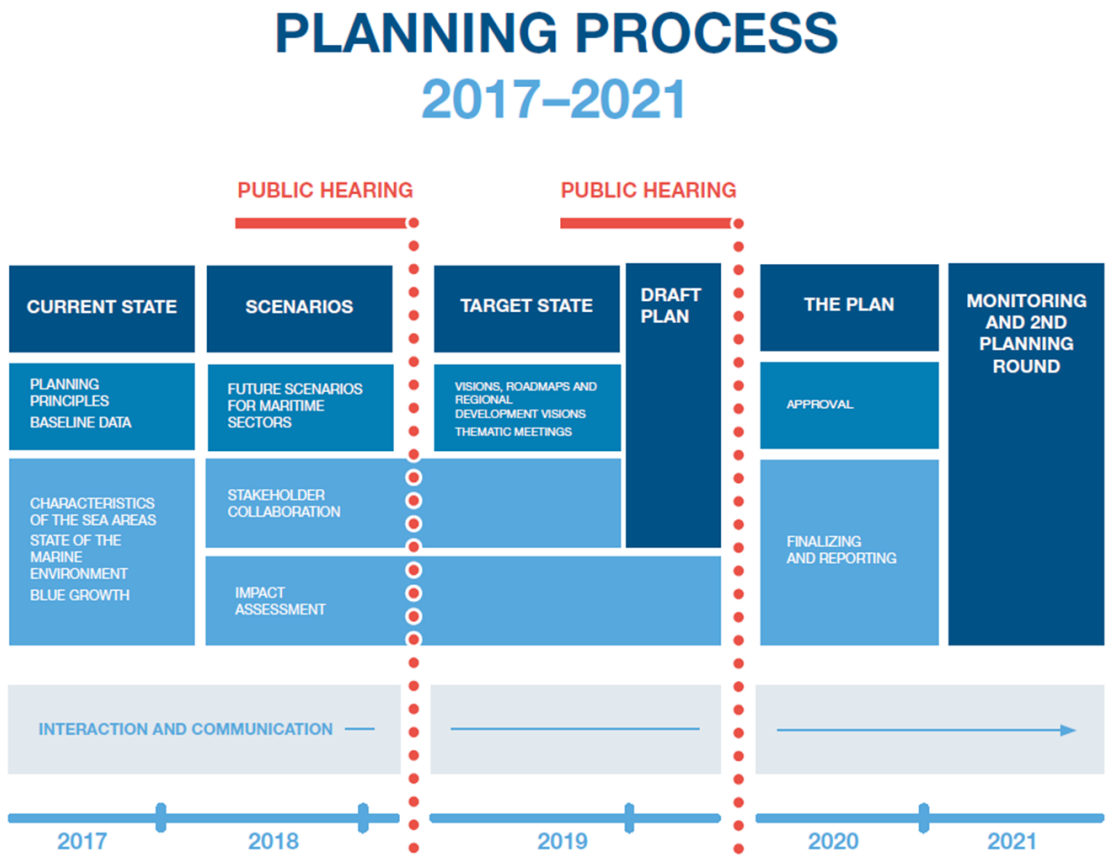
The maritime spatial plan is expected to have an indirect steering effect on the sustainable development of maritime areas and the sustainable use of marine resources. When drafting the plan, specific attention was paid to the following activities, which have been reconciled: energy sectors at sea; maritime transport; maritime industry; fisheries and aquaculture sectors; conservation, protection and improvement of the environment and nature; tourism and recreational use of maritime areas; cultural heritage; extractive sector; blue biotechnology. MSP plan to promote and achieve good conditions for the marine environment.

When drafting a plan, the characteristics of the sea area and land-sea interactions were considered appropriately. Communication and participation were highlighted throughout the planning process, and Regional Councils collaborated with stakeholders.

The Ministry of the Environment developed and guided maritime spatial planning and oversaw cooperation with neighbouring countries.

A national maritime spatial planning coordination group was established to develop maritime spatial plans and to carry out the planning process. Group members include representatives of coastal Regional Councils, the Ministry of the Environment and Åland Island. The aim of the group is to facilitate coherence between the Finnish maritime spatial plans and to supervise the participation and cooperation needed for drafting the plans.

The maritime spatial planning process was developed by the coordination group, in cooperation with different stakeholders. The planning process was divided into the following phases: the definition and data collection phase, the scenario phase, the target phase with vision work, the planning phase and the approval phase. The next planning round and monitoring and evaluation programme for the existing plan are being prepared.



Stocktaking, data and other planning materials were finalised in early 2019, and a public consultation of the baseline material and planning scenarios was carried out in spring 2019.

The vision phase and planning phase were carried out in late 2019 and early 2020, and the second public consultation took place in spring 2020. Finnish Maritime Spatial Plan 2030 was approved by the boards of the regional councils by December 2020.

Details

In addition to strategic non-binding MSP, the Regional Councils oversee the drafting and approval of the regional land use plans which may cover territorial waters as well, while according to the Land Use and Building Act, land use planning is implemented in the territorial sea as well as on land.

At present, the territorial sea is included in the regional land use plans drafted by eight Coastal Regional Councils. These plans set out medium- and long-term objectives for regional land use strategies that guide regional development and steer decisions on issues that are of a trans-municipal or regional nature. Regional land use plans are legally binding.

In drawing up a regional land use plan, special attention is paid to the following: appropriate regional and community structure of the region, ecological sustainability of land use, environmentally and economically sustainable arrangement of transport and technical services, sustainable use of water and extractable land resources, operating conditions for the region's businesses, protection of landscape, natural values and cultural heritage, as well as sufficient availability of areas suitable for recreation.

In addition, the government defines national land use guidelines, which should be taken into account throughout the country in all land use decisions and land use planning.

Land Use and Building Act (132/1999) – Unofficial translation of the original Act, PDF format in Finlex, the Data Bank of Finnish Legislation.

Regional Land Use Planning in Finland – Brochure.

Maritime Spatial Plans

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

General

- The first *Maritime Spatial Plan 2030 for Finland* is in force. The Plan consists of three maritime spatial plans covering both territorial waters and the EEZ: one for the Northern Bothnian Sea, Quark and Bothnian Bay drafted by the Regional Councils of Lapland, Oulu Region, Central Ostrobothnia and Ostrobothnia; one for the Archipelago Sea and Southern Bothnian Sea drafted by the Regional Councils of Satakunta and Southwest Finland; and one for the Gulf of Finland drafted by the Regional Councils of Helsinki-Uusimaa and Kymenlaakso.
- The MSP Plan for the Åland Island territorial waters was developed according to separate planning legislation. The plan is provided in Swedish on the following page.

The Maritime Spatial Plan 2030 for Finland

The MSP2030 for Finland contains the following sectors:

- Energy
- Maritime logistics
- Maritime industry
- Fishing and Aquaculture
- Tourism and recreation
- Cultural heritage
- Archipelago
- Extractive sector
- Blue biotechnology
- Nature values
- National defence

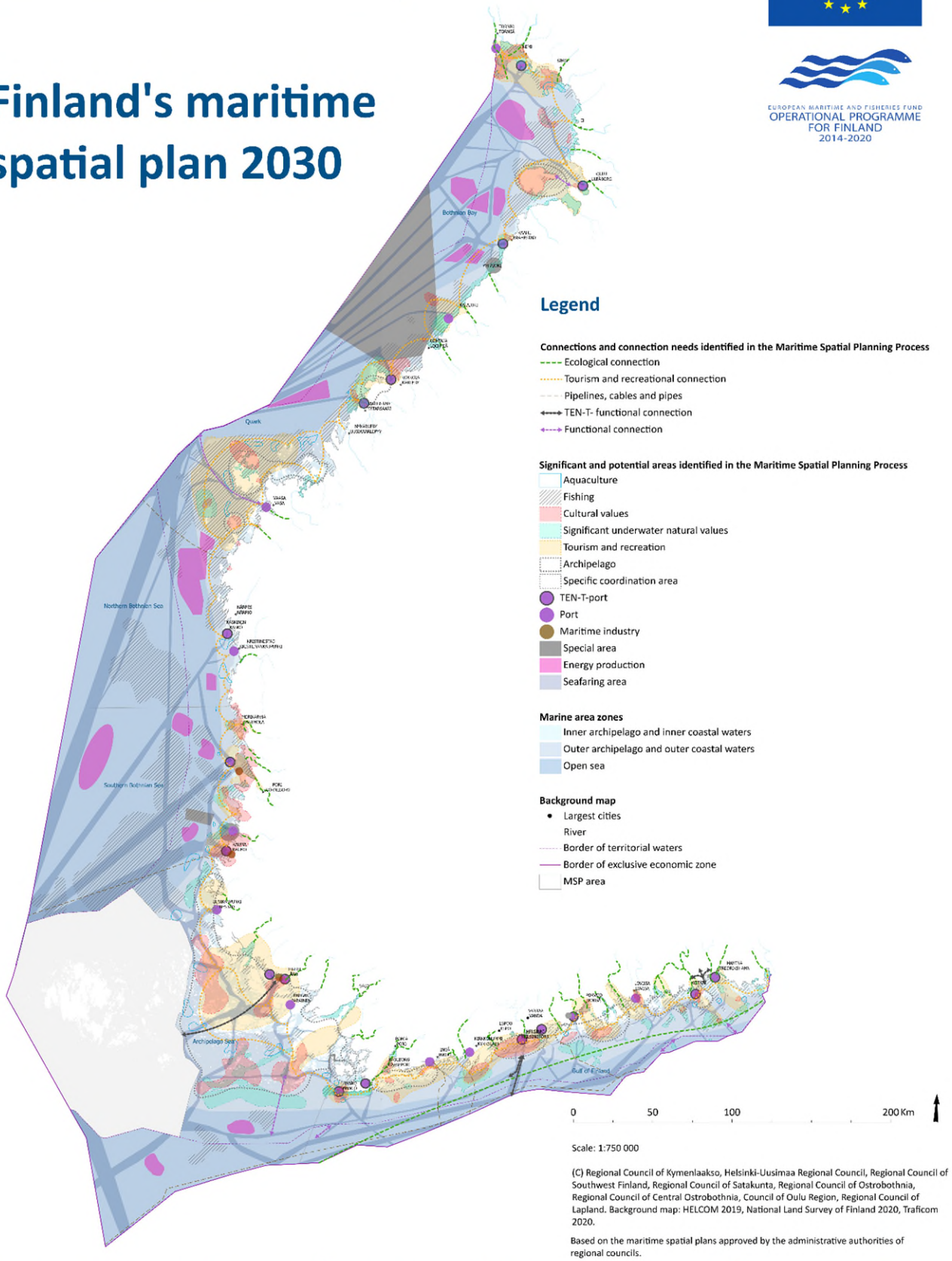
A zoning approach is used in MSP to efficiently designate functions that are appropriate for each zone. This enables planning areas to develop on the basis of their own strengths, ensuring the compatibility of operations while mitigating their environmental impacts and achieving a good marine environmental status.
Maritime spatial planning zones are 1) inner archipelago and inner coastal waters, 2) outer archipelago and outer coastal waters and 3) open sea. The zone division is based on the classification of coastal waters covering the entire coast of Finland.

Zoning covers principles that allow the characteristics of the different parts of the planning areas to be taken into account. Zone use planning takes into consideration, among other things, the marine and water protection objectives that are typical of the areas, marine livelihoods, cultural values, development needs for tourism and recreational use, securing the operating conditions of maritime transport, and international infrastructure and transport connections. The aim is to preserve open seascape and landscape values in the planning and development of all zones.

MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING

Finland's maritime spatial plan 2030

EUROPEAN MARITIME AND FISHERIES FUND
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME
FOR FINLAND
2014-2020



Legend

Connections and connection needs identified in the Maritime Spatial Planning Process
- Ecological connection
- Tourism and recreational connection
- Pipelines, cables and pipes
- TEN-T- functional connection
- Functional connection

Significant and potential areas identified in the Maritime Spatial Planning Process
- Aquaculture
- Fishing
- Cultural values
- Significant underwater natural values
- Tourism and recreation
- Archipelago
- Specific coordination area
- TEN-T-port
- Port
- Maritime industry
- Special area
- Energy production
- Seafaring area

Marine area zones
- Inner archipelago and inner coastal waters
- Outer archipelago and outer coastal waters
- Open sea

Background map
- Largest cities
- River
- Border of territorial waters
- Border of exclusive economic zone
- MSP area

Scale: 1:750 000

Based on the maritime spatial plans approved by the administrative authorities of regional councils.

REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CENTRAL OSTROBOTHNIA · REGIONAL COUNCIL KYMENLAAKSO · REGIONAL COUNCIL OF LAPLAND · Regional Council of Ostrobothnia · POHJOIS-POHJANMAA Council of Oulu Region · SATAKUNTALIITTO Regional Council of Satakunta · Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council · VARSINAIS-SUOMEN LIITTO EGENTLIGA FINLANDS FÖRBUND REGIONAL COUNCIL OF SOUTHWEST FINLAND · Ympäristöministeriö Miljöministeriet Ministry of the Environment

Objectives and nature of the planning and the plan itself

The purpose of maritime spatial planning is to promote the sustainable development and growth of different uses of the marine area, the sustainable use of natural resources, and the achievement of a good marine environmental status.

In order to coordinate the needs of the different uses, they have been examined in maritime spatial planning. The uses under examination include the energy sectors, maritime transport, fishing and aquaculture, tourism and recreation, as well as the preservation, conservation and improvement of nature in particular. In addition, cultural heritage, marine industry, extractive sector and blue biotechnology have been focussed on. Attention has also been paid to the special characteristics of the marine area and the interaction between land and sea. Consideration has also been given to national defence needs.

The Plan is a strategic development document which identifies, in general terms, the areas' opportunities for multipurpose use and supports the harmonisation of maritime operations.

The Maritime Spatial Plan 2030 for Finland is a strategic development document illustrated by a map. Map markings are used to show the values of marine areas and existing activities and potential future sites for new activities and their alternative placement in all of Finland's marine areas. The plan is not legally binding but assessment of its indirect and direct impacts and effectiveness forms part of the planning process.

Designated uses, areas and connections

The maritime spatial plan identifies the needs of the marine environment and the wellbeing of maritime actors equally, without placing them in an order of importance. The sectors examined have different societal and community values, which the plan seeks to foster.

The planning solutions are based on the best available information, such as surveys, studies, modelling, expert assessments and regional characteristics.

Energy

MSP identifies potential areas for offshore wind power development in terms of energy production. Potential areas are mainly located in the outer archipelago and outer coastal water, and open sea zones. The offshore wind farm layout optimisation takes into account ecological, socio-cultural and economic factors.

In offshore wind power development, it is important to pay attention to marine livelihoods such as fishing, landscape values, natural values and cultural values, recreational use, seafaring and defence.

The MSP also indicates existing national and international pipelines, cables and pipes as well as those under development.

It is important to pay attention to the impact that placing pipelines, cables and pipes has on the marine environment and underwater cultural heritage when developing the infrastructure connections.

Maritime logistics

MSP identifies the internationally significant TEN-T core network ports and comprehensive network ports as well as other regionally important ports. Seafaring areas, further connections on the mainland, smooth transport flow and safety are central to the conditions determining the operation and development of ports. The port markings also cover other operations which depend on port areas such as industry and logistics centres.

The seafaring areas indicated in the plan are mainly Class 1 and 2 merchant shipping fairways and other busy marine areas.

Maritime industry

Maritime industry is identified as fundamental to entities comprising maritime livelihoods, maritime clusters. Maritime industry operations are often centralised in the vicinity of large ports. Maritime industry is identified as a significant sector in terms of regional development.

Fishing and Aquaculture


MSP identifies potential areas for coastal net fishing and open sea trawling in terms of professional fishing. Other professional fishing, such as trap locations, have been considered as part of the planning process, but they are not represented on the plan map.

MSP identifies potential areas for fish farming in terms of aquaculture. The map marking indicates the potential areas for further rearing. The modelling produced by the Natural Resources Institute Finland has been utilised when identifying areas.

In aquaculture development, the needs regarding the entire aquaculture production chain, such as infrastructure connections, ports and areas required by different production phases, must be considered. The new possibilities offered by new technologies to locate aquaculture in such a way that the load, which can be directed towards the sea and the marine environment, is as low as possible, forms the basis for the development of aquaculture. The objectives of water management and marine management may limit the exploitation of potential fish farming areas.

Tourism and recreation

For tourism and recreation, MSP identifies areas potential for regional development. The archipelago and coastal areas are nature and culture attractions, and the tourism and recreation map also include areas significant for recreational fishing and hunting.

MSP identifies internationally, nationally or regionally important and potential tourism and recreational connections where attention must be paid to the accessibility and creation of functional entities.

Cultural heritage

The MSP identifies significant clusters of cultural values, which include, for example, nationally valuable landscape areas, nationally significant built cultural environments (RKY), underwater cultural landscapes, traditional coastal fishing areas and entities related to marine cultural heritage, such as military history, seafaring, traditional biotopes, landscape as well as coastal and archipelago.

When developing the areas, it is also important to preserve the characteristics of the area, sensitivity and enhancement of cultural values, accessibility of areas, natural values, value of the open sea landscape as well as marine livelihoods.

Archipelago

MSP identifies important functional archipelago entities of marine areas, which combine the local archipelago culture, year-round settlement and recreational settlement, several marine industries, biodiversity and cultural environment.

The preconditions for permanent residents should be promoted, and the vital archipelago culture, diverse business life and year-round accessibility of the areas should be considered when developing the areas. The infrastructure in the area should be developed to support the vitality and characteristics of the area.

Extractive sector

In the vision work phase, the mining industry is identified as a sector of the future, and has also been examined in the report on the current state of the Blue Economy. During the first planning round, no mineral potential was indicated in the plan. There is still insufficient underlying data for identifying potential areas and because the mining sites are small, it poses further challenges when indicating potential in the maritime spatial plan.

Blue biotechnology

In the vision work phase, blue biotechnology is identified as an important sector for the future, and it has also been examined in the report on the current state of the Blue Economy. During the first planning round, no blue biotechnology potential was indicated in the plan given that there is a lack of more detailed research and reports.

Nature values

Maritime spatial planning identifies areas with significant valuable underwater natural areas, which are potential production areas of ecosystem services. The survey used to obtain the information was the Finnish ecologically significant marine underwater areas (EMMA). The valuable areas are significant especially in terms of the biodiversity, vulnerability and uniqueness of biotopes. Geologically diverse and natural state areas are also included. The area definitions rely mainly on

the data collected during the VELMU programme: The Finnish Inventory Programme for the Underwater Marine Environment.

Maritime spatial planning identifies ecological connections that are significant in terms of the interaction of the land and sea or otherwise significant in terms of biodiversity.

MSP does not indicate existing areas of the Natura 2000 network, national parks or other nature reserves whose protection and implementation is guided by other legislation.

National defence

Safeguarding the operations of Finland's defence forces has been taken into account in the MSP. Attention has been paid to restricted marine areas in line with the Territorial Surveillance Act and to firing and military training areas. Of the uses of marine areas set to grow in the future, offshore wind power construction will require harmonisation with the needs of national defence.

Maritime Spatial Plan: Åland

General

Territorial Sea 12 nm zone: 11 764 km^2

Governance

The Territorial Sea is under the jurisdiction of local municipalities. Local municipal authorities have strong self-governments based on local democracy and decision making, the right to levy taxes, and the mandate for land use planning. The Government of Åland has the planning mandate for the sea areas, more specifically the areas of the common-water areas (planning sea-use recommendation). There are privately owned water areas on Åland, and in these areas, the owner(s) can plan the sea-uses as long as they are abiding by other current legislations. The privately-owned water areas are to be included in municipal master plans.

Contacts for MSP in general:

The Government of Åland
Mr. Mikael WENNSTRÖM
Senior Biologist, Water Resources Management
Department of Social Affairs, Health, and Environment
Självstyrelsegården
Strandgatan 37, AX-22100 Mariehamn, Finland
Phone +358 18 25455, +358 18 25000
E-mail: mikael.wennstrom(a)regeringen.ax
Web: https://www.regeringen.ax

Maritime spatial planning legislation

The maritime spatial planning directive was transposed into Åland's legislation in 2018. MSP regulations are provided as a part of the Water Act, which is the most crucial legislation to steer water usage and the development of the freshwater and sea area. Maritime spatial plans are general, non-binding plans drafted and approved by the Government of Åland (Ålands landskapsregering). The Government of Åland oversees the development of a maritime spatial plan over common Territorial waters until March 2021. The plans should promote the sustainable development of marine areas and the sustainable use of marine resources and promote the good environmental status of the sea areas. Energy sectors at sea, maritime transport, the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, conservation, protection, and improvement of the environment and nature, tourism, and recreational use of marine areas should be specifically focussed on, among other activities, and reconciled.
When drafting a plan, special attention should be given to the characteristics of the sea area and the land-sea interaction. Communication and participation are highlighted throughout the planning process, and the Government of Åland is expected to engage stakeholders and work together with them in drafting the plans.

Åland takes part in the Finnish national maritime spatial planning coordination group to develop maritime spatial plans and in the planning process and facilitates coherence of the Åland and the Finnish maritime spatial plans and the MSPs of Sweden, Estonia, and other BSR countries.

Land-use plans and the Territorial Sea

According to the Land Use and Building Act, land use planning is implemented on land, and the territorial sea is planned according to the Water Act.
At present, the territorial sea is not fully included in the master plans of the municipalities. These master plans set out medium-term and long-term objectives for regional land-use strategies that guide regional development and steer decisions on trans-municipal or regional nature issues. The master plans are not legally binding. Hence, it is essential for the MSP, designated by the Government of Åland, to collaborate with the municipalities to implement the Land-Sea Interaction aspect in the MSP process fully.

General applicability

The maritime spatial planning regulations are implemented on the common waters of the Territorial Sea. The master plans of the municipalities are to include privately owned waters.

Objectives of the plan

The plan aims to strengthen the region's marine area's nature, cultural heritage, natural and ecosystem resources use as well as the shipping, aquaculture, fishing, and potential for Offshore Windfarms. Known environmental risks such as eutrophication, maritime accidents, and sedimentary pollution have been recognised. The plan also aims to address issues concerning the marine strategy and water framework directives and ecosystem-based planning goals of the European Union.

Designation

Guiding and strategic areas have been designated according to relevant studies of the current environment and future needs. Studies used and conducted in planning include studies of the seabed's geology, sea's environmental status and ecology, maritime safety, noise pollution, and particularities of the sea. Designations are planned to enhance the coexistence and synergies of different functions. The MSP is separated into two categories: the guiding and strategic plans and the administrative borders.

Fishing

A fishing area is marked on the MSP according to the EU regulation. The area in the MSP is calculated from the baseline in which commercial Finnish and Swedish fishing vessels can fish as long as they are following current rulings, legislation, and quotas. The area that is marked on the map is four nautical miles outside the baseline, except the area of Bogskär, which has a three nautical mile border.

Cables and pipelines

A schematic overview of the most important cable and pipeline connections between Åland and neighbouring regions and connections between regions has been marked in the MSP.

Maritime cultural heritage

Known cultural heritage loci at sea were buffered with a 1km radius, generalised, and designated into regional zones of cultural heritage importance.

Potential Offshore Windfarms

In the MSP, areas are marked where it is currently deemed most appropriate to place offshore wind farms (OWF). When designing offshore wind power, the conditions for maritime traffic safety must be taken into account, and any consequences, e.g. ship radar and maritime traffic management radar surveillance, must be explored.

To find coexistence opportunities, e.g. between offshore wind power and other activities, the marking for offshore wind power partly overlaps with the fishing areas and nature, culture, and environmental areas. It is up to the operator to find solutions between offshore wind power and other activities.

The areas for OWF marked in the MSP is that of which is deemed most suitable based on the following criteria:

- The depth should be between 10–70 m
- Wind conditions must be good, with an average wind speed of 8 m / s 100 m above sea level.
- Areas smaller than five sq km are not marked in the MSP

Areas have not been marked on the maps if they overlap with the following criteria:

- Shipping areas with a 1.5 km buffer
- Cultural landscapes (Holmar av Krononatur) with a 3 km buffer
- FINIBA areas with a 500 m buffer
- IBA areas with a 500 m buffer
- Protected areas with a 500 m buffer
- Maritime wrecks with a 1 km buffer
- Recreational buildings with a 10 km buffer
- Residential buildings with a 15 km buffer
- Lighthouses with a 1 km buffer
- Migratory bird areas

The suggestions for placement are indicative. The exact location of wind turbines can be determined only after careful investigations of, e.g. bottom quality, plant and animal life, the possible occurrence of wrecks, and more. This means that there may be areas within the now marked areas where it will not be possible for wind turbines to be built. Correspondingly, there may be areas outside the areas now marked where they will be permitted if investigations show that it does not conflict with other needs and other uses.

Potential aquaculture

Sustainable fish farming continues to be considered important for Åland. The fact that the MSP does not mark potential fish farming areas at present does not mean that future opportunities are excluded for this industry. There is currently no basis, such as the provincial government's location plan, which would enable fish farming in common waters. The provincial government develops a location plan in close consultation with the industry and other relevant actors.

Algae cultivation has the potential to become a new industry in the near future, and the MSP thus proposes areas with potential for macroalgae cultivation (bladderwrack and *Ulva*). The marked areas are locations where either the bladderwrack or *Ulva* has the most significant production potential or the most effective potential for nutrient uptake in Ålands sea areas. The areas are marked based on the results of an EU-funded project whose goal was to identify solutions for growing algae in the Baltic Sea in a sustainable way (EU project GRASS). Shipping areas have a 1500 m protection buffer where areas for potential aquaculture of algae cultivation are not marked.

Shipping

The main shipping routes were designated based on previously defined fairway areas and IMO areas as well as airways with a 250 m wide buffer. Other shipping areas were designated based on available AIS line data acquired from HELCOM for shipping traffic for 2019. A density of 150 or more vessels per year was designated as shipping areas in the MSP.

Protected areas

Åland has approved and joined the Convention on Biological Diversity. According to the convention, the parties must protect at least 10% of their coastal and marine areas. The EU's goal is for 30% of land and water to be protected by 2030. The target of 10% protection has been set in the Åland Development and Sustainability Agenda. According to the strategic development goal "Ecosystems in balance and biodiversity", at least 10% of the coastal and marine areas must be protected by 2030. Åland has currently protected 2.8% of its water areas. Work is underway to map and identify high-value sea areas and underwater nature as a basis for protecting areas according to the objective. Implementing protected areas would contribute to Åland fulfilling both the development and sustainability agenda goals and goal 14 in the UN's Agenda 2030 on the conservation and use of coastal and marine areas and marine resources in a sustainable way.

In the MSP, protected areas on public waters are marked for the areas that the provincial government has already established as protected areas. The protected area marking consists of a composition of:

- Nature reserves
- Natura 2000 sites

- HELCOM protected areas (Baltic Sea Protected Areas, BSPA)
- RAMSAR
- Bird protection areas

Valuable nature, culture, and environment

The marking serves as a compilation of several important natural, cultural, and environmental values in common waters. The total area is approximately 27% of the common waters. The marked areas are important for the Ålanders, e.g. for household fishing, small-scale commercial fishing, hunting, recreation, cultural heritage, and tourism. It is essential that these areas are preserved for Ålanders and local needs. The intangible cultural heritage should be protected in these areas. Large-scale industries or large-scale exploitation activities are not recommended in these areas if they risk adversely affecting nature, the environment, or local needs. The definition of values for the area is defined below.

Internationally and nationally important bird areas

Including FINIBA and IBA areas. The areas are important for migratory birds, nesting, and resting places. The areas are identified by BirdLife Finland, which includes the Åland Birds Association. The areas are particularly important for species worthy of protection and internationally important biodiversity areas.

Seal areas

The areas are important density areas, e.g. grey seals. The areas are based on the Finnish Institute of Natural Resources' mappings of grey seal density, and within the areas, there are so-called "seal islets" that are important for grey seals. Marine mammals are sensitive to underwater noise.

Underwater biotope for red algae and bladderwrack communities

The areas are identified with documented occurrences of deep bladderwrack belts or species-rich red algae communities. Both the bladderwrack and the red algae communities are essential for fish spawning and nurseries and contribute to healthy fish stocks. Both ecosystems are sensitive to eutrophication.

Valuable underwater areas

The areas include rich deposits of underwater reefs and reef environments. These areas are sensitive to human activities, e.g. to underwater noise and eutrophication. The areas have varying bottom structures, and the hard bottom material and rich red algae communities also benefit herring spawning. The deeper areas can also offer important areas for cod. The areas also include important areas around nesting sites. As the areas are relatively undisturbed, they generally function as important areas for several bird species.

Fish spawning and nursery areas

The areas are a compilation of information that the provincial government's fisheries agency has collected from various studies and models that are potentially important for fish spawning and nurseries.

Areas with natural values

Based on a scientific analysis where the best available information and knowledge about the underwater natural values, areas with high species diversity, minimal impact on human pressure, and areas that could be considered valuable to preserve for ecosystem services were identified. From the areas identified in the analysis to be valuable to preserve, it was decided to mark a comprehensive area northwest/north of Åland that includes several smaller areas together. The area northwest/north of Åland has been marked on the basis that the area has existing data from underwater mapping, i.e. one can confirm the analysis result with underlying data. The area of natural values identified with the help of the analysis also has minimal impact on exploitative activities, at the same time as there are high biodiversity and minimal impact from other negative environmental effects. Therefore, it is important that the area is preserved to benefit the current and future Åland population and local needs.

Culture and nature

The marking refers to areas that have important connections to cultural-historical islands and islets, as well as important areas for several bird and marine species. The area marked in the proposal is important for the public

and the local population, holds cultural-historical values, and is important, e.g. small-scale commercial fishing, household needs fishing, hunting, recreation, tourism, and nature.

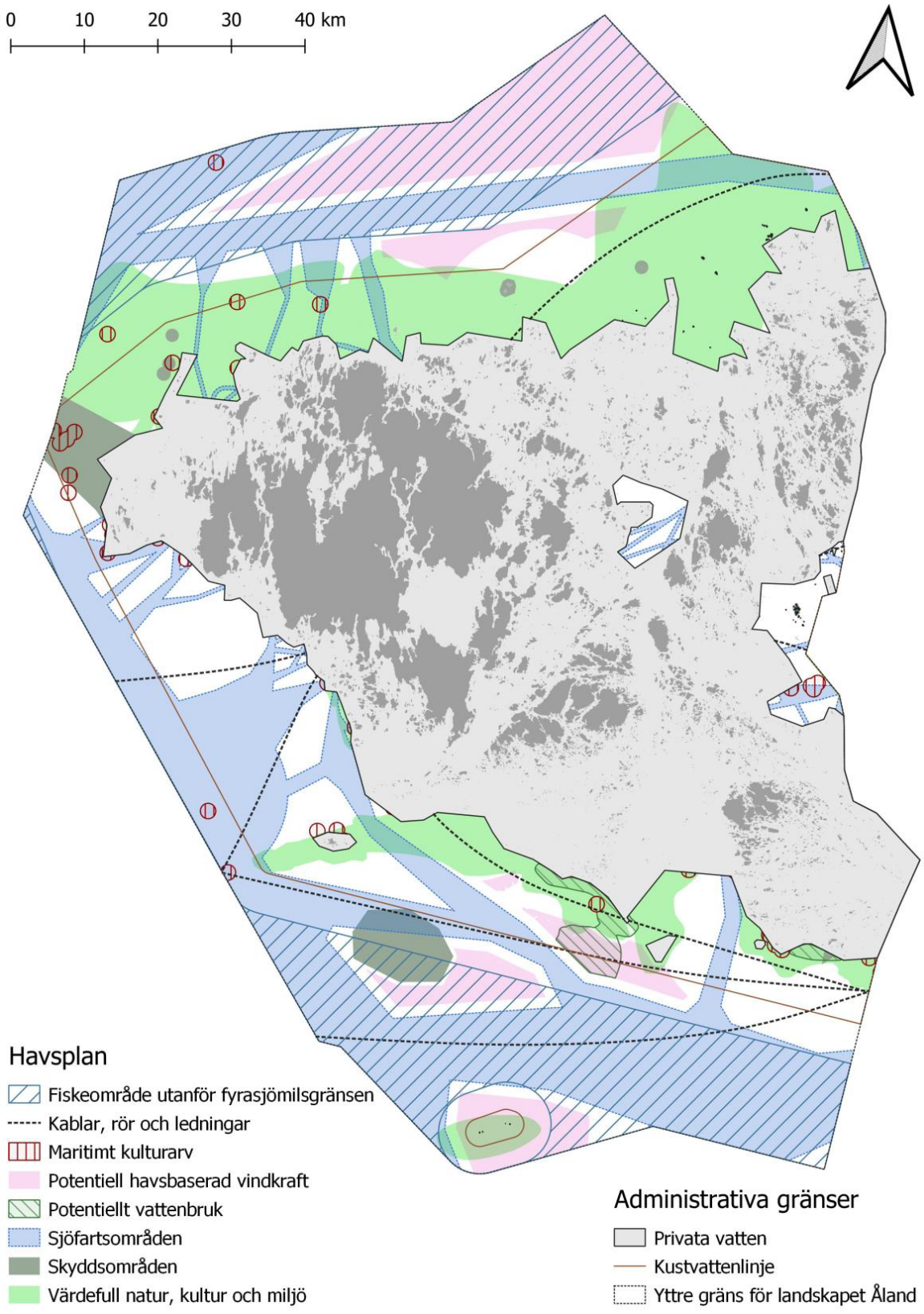


Figure. Maritime Spatial Plan of the Åland Islands (Government of Åland, 2021)

Pilot plans or projects

Not legally binding:

- Bothnian Sea Transboundary Pilot Project between Finland and Sweden (Plan Bothnia project, 2010-2012).

Maritime Spatial Plan: Regional land use plan for the Sea, Kymenlaakso Region (MSP equivalent)

A first regional land use plan for the territorial sea of the Kymenlaakso Region was drafted and approved by the Regional Council of Kymenlaakso and ratified by the Ministry of the Environment. The regional plan does not fully incorporate the MSP Directive's goals. For example, it does not cover the EEZ, but it is a first attempt at integrated spatial planning of the sea area.

The regional land use plan contains the following sectors:

- Shipping
- Offshore renewable energy production
- Fishing
- Aquaculture
- Tourism (incl. recreation and sports)
- Underwater cultural heritage
- Nature protection
- Military

Legal basis

The legal basis for regional land use plans is included in the Land Use and Building Act. The legislation is applicable to the territorial sea as well as to land areas. The binding regional land use plans must take into account the National Land Use Objectives in a way that promotes their implementation.

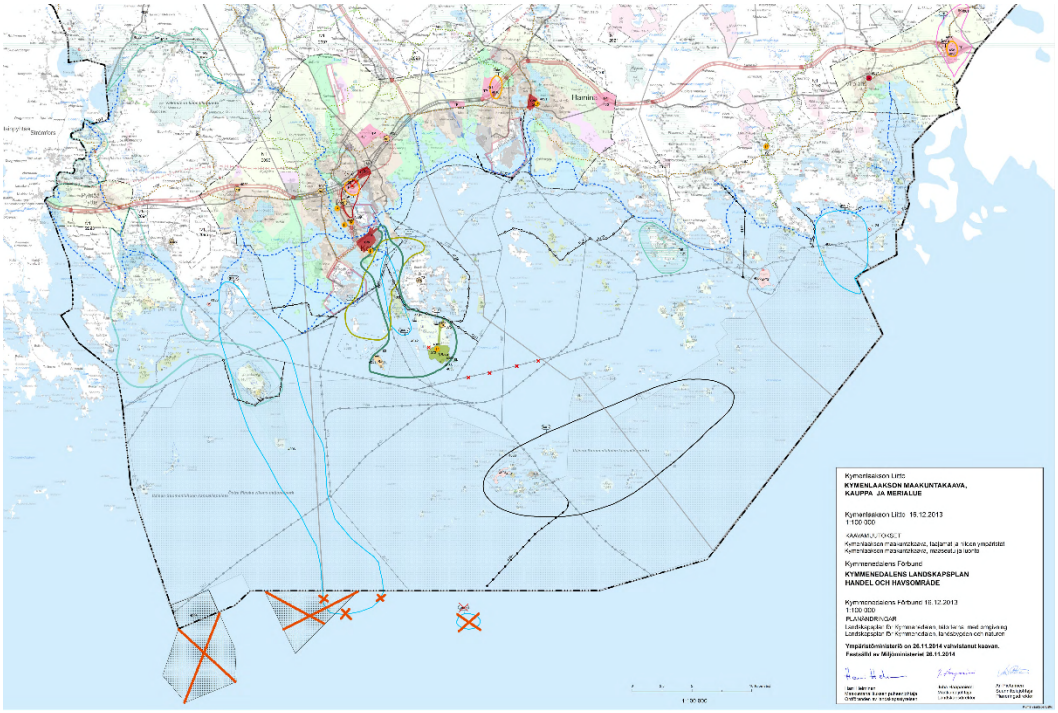
The regional plans set out the principles of land use and community structure and designate specific areas necessary for regional development. Areas are designated as reserved only to the extent and accuracy required by national or regional land use goals or by harmonising the use of land in more than one municipality.

Legal impact

The plan sets binding guidelines for municipal land use plans and other authorities' land use related planning. The Regional Council's highest decision-making body approved the plan on 16 March 2013.

The plan was ratified, with some changes by the Ministry of the Environment, on 26 November 2014. Most notably, the land use reservations within the EEZ were crossed out, as the Land Use and Building Act is not applicable to the EEZ.

Area covered



Map: Part of the ratified regional land use plan of the Kymenlaakso Region (Ministry of the Environment 2014)

The plan's area covers the Kymenlaakso Region. A total area of 1,822 km^2 of territorial sea is included in the plan, covering ca. 25% of the total surface area of the region. The plan does not cover the EEZ as the Land Use and Building Act is not currently applicable to the EEZ.

Historic development

The planning process took place from May 2012 to November 2014.

Objectives of the plan

The plan aims to strengthen the region's marine nature, cultural heritage, use of natural and ecosystem resources, as well as the shipping, military and tourism sectors. Known environmental risks such as eutrophication, seafaring accidents and sedimentary pollution have been recognised. The plan also aims to address issues concerning the Marine Strategy and Water Framework Directives, Maritime Spatial Planning Directive and ecosystem-based planning goals of the European Union.

Designated uses / areas

Binding land use areas have been designated according to relevant studies of the current environment and any future needs. Studies used and conducted in planning include studies of seabed geology, the sea's environmental status and ecology, seafaring safety and noise pollution, as well as peculiarities and aspects specific to that sea. Designations are planned to enhance the coexistence and synergies of different functions.

Cultural heritage, nature conservation and natural resources

Known cultural heritage sites at sea were categorised, generalised and designated into regional zones of cultural heritage importance.

Valuable geological seabed formations have been categorised, generalised and designated.

The military has closed some island military facilities, which have been designated to new land uses for nature conservation, tourism and recreation.

Biologically diverse seabed areas and island areas have been categorised and designated so as to create functioning ecosystems. Ecosystem areas that are able to better withstand the use of natural resources (incl. dredging and depositing of material) have been identified. Previous deposit areas were shrunk in size in order to better protect the functioning of ecosystems. A balance between natural habitat preservation and natural resource exploitation has been achieved.

Fishing and Aquaculture

Primary fishing and aquaculture areas have been designated according to national strategies.

Shipping

Main shipping routes and harbours were designated. Regional recreational boating routes and harbours were designated.

Military

Functioning military areas both on islands and inland have been designated. Important nature conservation areas within the military areas have been designated as secondary functions.

Tourism and Recreation

Main tourism and recreation possibilities have been designated, especially those nature areas that can withstand tourism, islands that facilitate the use of cottages and closed military facilities.

Planning regulations

There are regulations in place for the different designations. These regulations are binding and set out in detail what land uses are allowed, what is to be taken into account for their use and what administrative procedures are required in more detailed planning.

Single-use and combined-use functions are designated as either primary or secondary functions. Some land uses are explicitly restricted in certain areas (such as dredging or depositing material in biodiverse areas). Detailed planning or project planning in certain designated areas requires detailed surveys, studies and formal hearings before project approval.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Land Use and Building Act regulates that an environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the land use plan must be carried out before the plan is approved. The EIA recognised that certain land use restrictions and planning guidelines will preserve and enhance cultural heritage and nature values as well as ecosystem services. The development of tourism, fishing and aquaculture will strengthen the regional economy. However, tourism development will increase the pressure of human activity on the environment.

Public Participation

Broad public participation was held throughout the planning process. Several workshops were held with relevant national and local stakeholders. A total of 12 public hearings were held in the six municipalities of the region.

Harmonisation with other plans

The Land Use and Building Act requires the harmonisation of regional land use plans with neighbouring regional plans whenever possible.

Monitoring & Review

The Regional Council will monitor the progress of the plan and commence new planning when deemed necessary.

Electronic resources

Kymenlaakso Regional Council maintains a map service for its regional plans (in Finnish):

http://www.kymenlaakso.fi/tietopalvelu/kartat-ja-paikkatieto

Aspects of the MSP process

Ecosystem-based approach (EBA)

The ecosystem-based approach is considered a leading principle of the Finnish Marine Strategy that aims to secure a healthy and functioning marine ecosystem.

Maritime spatial planning in Finland is based on the ecosystem paradigm developed and implemented by the VASAB-HELCOM Working Group on Maritime Spatial Planning based on the Malawi Principles. When applying the ecosystem-based approach, maritime spatial planning is based on goals related to the status of the marine environment. Such goals determine growth limits for operations in marine areas, as well as ensuring the sustainability of maritime activities. Planning is implemented at the appropriate level, step by step, ensuring that the ecosystem is considered throughout the process. Application of the EBA in MSP in Finland has been studied in more detail, report is available.

Land-sea interactions

Land–sea interactions were taken into account when preparing the maritime spatial plan. During the vision work phase of the maritime spatial planning process, land–sea interactions were discussed with maritime stakeholders, and in terms of mainland-based activities, such as industry, communities, agriculture and forestry, the direct and indirect impacts on marine areas were made visible. Stakeholders' views on key sector-specific factors affecting land–sea interaction are visible in the sector-specific roadmaps created during the vision work phase.

Coastal regions have planned for land and coastal areas, but also for islands and offshore marine areas. The integration of the land-sea Interaction depends on the specific aspects of the coastal and marine area under planning, as these interactions can differ across the regions.

In general, LSI in Finland is covered not only by regional spatial plans but also regional strategies and development plans. Plans and strategies designed for the marine transport and ports network cover the area from land to the boundaries of the territorial waters. Separately, the nature conservation plans cover both land and water. ICZM and regional coastal strategies also cover island areas and, in some cases, the open sea.

Land-sea interaction in plans is strong, because the Land Use and Building Act is implemented on territorial waters as well, and plans usually cover both land and sea. Nevertheless, there are some regional land use plans *focusing on sea areas*: Kymenlaakso kauppa ja merialue kaava (Kymenlaakso trade and marine spatial plan); and Lappi meri- ja rannikkoalueen tuulivoimakaava (Lapland marine and coastal wind energy spatial plan). In other cases, marine areas are planned in the scope of regional plans covering both terrestrial and marine areas (Helsinki-Uusimaa, Southwest Finland, Satakunta, Ostrobothnia, Central Ostrobothnia, and Oulu Region).

Coherence with other processes

Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)

The MSFD was transposed into national legislation in 2011. The MSFD implemented in Finland by means of the Act on the Organisation of River Basin Management and the Marine Strategy and Government Decree on the Organisation of the Development and Implementation of the Marine Strategy. The preparation of the national Marine Strategy began in 2011 and covers Finnish territorial waters and the EEZ. The last step of the strategy is a draft programme of measures for managing human activities for the period of 2022-2027, which was developed at the end of 2020.

Although the preparation process of the MSFD and Marine Strategy was characterised by cross-sectoral cooperation, MSP activities have been carried out separately to those of the MSFD. The environmental goals of Finland's national Marine Strategy are taken into account in MSP. MSP and national land use planning can have an indirect positive impact on several descriptors of the good status of the marine environment. These include loss of biodiversity, the state of commercial fish stocks, changes in marine food webs, seabed destruction and disturbance, changes in hydrographical seabed characteristics, the control of alien species, levels of harmful substances in the marine environment, increases

in marine litter, and amounts of energy and noise carried into the sea. As the MSP in Finland has been carried out under the Land Use and Building Act, a participatory process is required by Finnish law on Land Use and Building.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)

Finland's ICZM strategy does not include MSP but it includes several sectors as well as the Finnish coastal sea, islands and to some extent also the open sea areas. The strategy proposes a comprehensive, strategic and regional approach to coastal activities. The sustainable development of coastal areas is deemed to require long-term planning in which the options for the use of areas and various activities, as well as the natural conditions of the area, can be taken into account in a comprehensive and balanced manner. Preparation for the future development of coastal areas, as well as for extreme circumstances, such as the impacts of climate change, plays a key role. The strategy emphasises the coastal zone as an integrated functional entity.

In addition to inland and coastal areas, most coastal area regional plans also cover island and marine areas. Participation activities are carried out according to the same legal framework (Finnish law on Land Use and Building).

Strategic Environmental Assessment

According to the 'Act on the Assessment of the Impacts of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment' (200/2005), the authority responsible for a plan or programme shall ensure that its environmental impacts are examined and assessed appropriately during the preparation process if the implementation of the plan or programme may have significant environmental impacts. The strategic Maritime Spatial Plan 2030 for Finland has no legal effect, and therefore, it does not provide a framework for decisions to approve or issue permits to projects. Thus, SEA requirements do not meet the Finnish MSP.

The authorities responsible for the maritime spatial plan must ensure that the environmental impacts are studied and assessed to a sufficient extent during its preparation. The impact assessment of Finnish MSP takes into account the ecological, economic, social and cultural aspects. The review takes into account the direction of the impact – positive or negative change – and its significance. The maritime spatial plan is a strategic document, meaning that it can only have indirect impacts. Impact path analyses of the sector have been carried out by comparing the key content of the maritime spatial plan with any executive processes and the impacts of implementation in terms of the vision, roadmap and planning solutions.

The combined impacts of maritime industries and marine area in relation to ecosystems have been assessed from the perspective of planetary boundaries and the carrying capacity of the Baltic Sea. The overall impacts have also been assessed from the perspective of economic and socio-cultural impacts, including land–sea interaction.

The impact assessment covers the significant direct and indirect impacts of maritime spatial plans for the sectors considered in maritime spatial planning. The impact assessment is based on an examination of the change caused by the maritime spatial plan compared with a situation that would prevail if the plan did not exist. The review has been carried out by planning area.

The maritime spatial plan covers the Finnish territorial waters and the exclusive economic zone of Finland, which also include many Natura 2000 areas. The maritime spatial plan identifies potentials for existing and new operations that may have an impact on the nature values based on which areas have been included in the Natura 2000 network. Assessments in accordance with the Nature Conservation Act must not be prepared until its connection with projects and plans, such as planning and permit procedures, that may compromise the nature values on which the protection of Natura 2000 areas is based.

The Impact assessment of the Maritime Spatial Plan 2030 for Finland is available to be downloaded.

An Environmental Impact Assessment is compulsory for all major offshore development projects.Stakeholder Involvement

According to the Land Use and Building Act, stakeholders must be involved in the maritime spatial planning process. The maritime spatial planning process is based on a collaborative approach. The following parties have participated: ministries; regional environmental authorities (ELY Centres); municipalities, towns and cities; local and regional level politicians, national-level agencies, institutes and research centres; maritime and coastal industries; sector-specific interest groups, federations and associations; private expert organisations and research institutes; ports; museums; and universities and other higher education institutions.

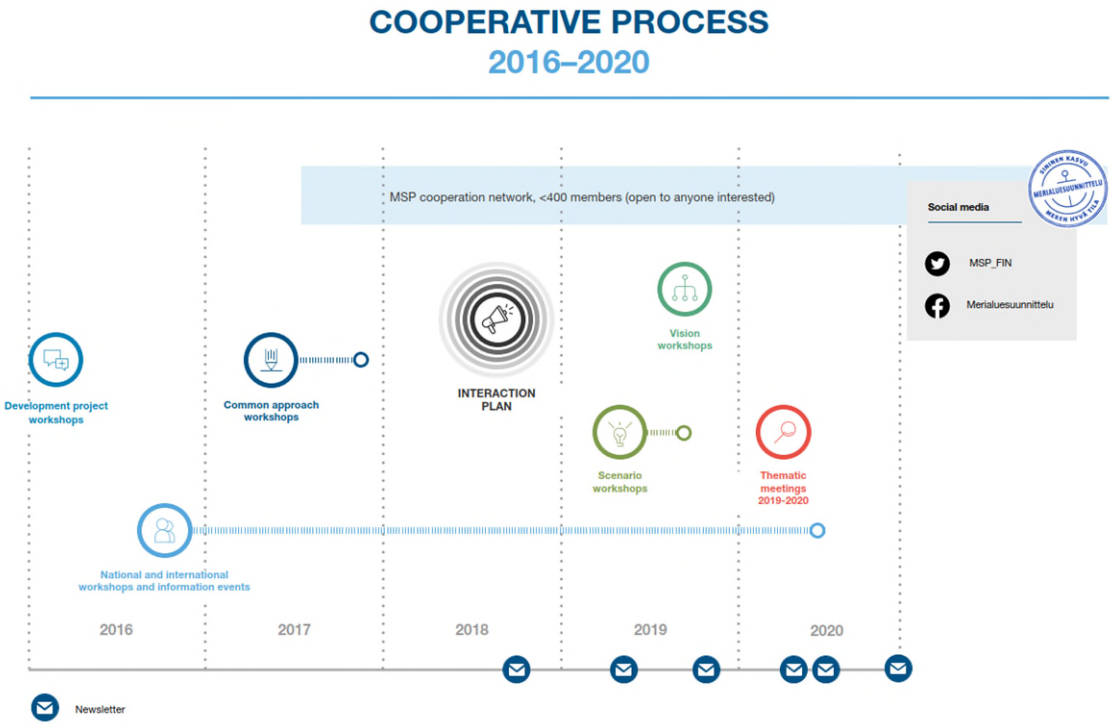
The maritime spatial planning Cooperation Network has served as an information sharing channel. Anyone interested in maritime spatial planning can join the network at www.merialuesuunnittelu.fi. At the time of completion of the plan, the network had 380 members, who were informed by means of regular newsletters.

During the start-up, data collection and planning phases of maritime spatial planning, stakeholders discussed maritime spatial planning themes and the content and presentation of the plan, as well as the actual planning process, among other aspects. This created a common understanding of how to plan and what must be included. In addition, based on workshops, an Interaction Plan was prepared to provide an overview of maritime spatial planning and the influencing opportunities of stakeholders and citizens.

The future scenarios, visions, target states and roadmaps were prepared in cooperation with stakeholders. During the scenario phase, the cooperation network met at national and regional workshops. In the autumn of 2019, a sustainable use Vision 2050 was prepared for marine areas, as well as regional target states and sector-specific roadmaps for 2030. Thematic regional and national discussions were also held. Stakeholders were also able to participate in the scenario and vision work on a digital platform and had an opportunity to present their opinions on the draft plans. A hearing on the situational picture and scenario work was organised in the spring of 2019, and a hearing on the vision work, draft plan and impact assessment was held in the spring of 2020.

During the maritime spatial planning process, the Ministry of the Environment and the Coordination Group organised several national briefing events and workshops between 2016 and 2020. Regional Councils organised dozens of regional workshops and regularly informed regional council boards and assemblies on the progress of maritime spatial planning.

Information about the planning phases and the completion of the planning was provided on the merialuesuunnittelu.fi website and via social media channels. The planning material was available on the www.merialuesuunnittelu.fi website, and the approved plan was available in dated format on the www.merialuesuunnitelma.fi website. Information about maritime spatial planning was also published on the websites of regional councils and the Ministry of the Environment.



Information on MSP is published on the webpage of the Finnish Environmental Administration (in Finnish Swedish, and English). The Ministry of the Environment (MoE) has also ordered and published analyses on MSP in Finland ("Merialueiden suunnittelu Suomessa: Nykytilanne ja kehittämishaasteita", 2013; and "Merialuesuunnittelun lähtökohtia", 2017), which are publicly available, but targeted to stakeholders with a professional interest in the topic rather than the general public. EU-funded projects have contributed a great deal to bringing the topics to the general public: organising information days and seminars and placing information boards in public places (for example in nature conservation areas, cruise ships etc.).

According to the legislation on MSP, stakeholders will be involved in the planning process.

Transboundary cooperation

According to the legislation on MSP, the Ministry of the Environment is responsible for cooperating with neighbouring countries with the aim of ensuring that the maritime spatial plans are coherent

and coordinated across the relevant marine region. The Ministry cooperates closely with regional councils who drafted and approved the Finnish Maritime Spatial Plan 2030 for Finland.

There was close cooperation with the other Baltic Sea countries during the planning process to coordinate maritime spatial plans. Separate consultation meetings were held twice during the planning period, in 2018 and 2020. The various MSP projects in which the regional councils have participated have also involved cooperation. Information about maritime spatial planning in Finland has been presented at several international events, and an international hearing on the draft plans was held during the spring of 2020.

Finland is a member of the Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group, which is established to ensure cooperation among the Baltic Sea Region countries for coherent regional Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) processes in the Baltic Sea.

Cooperation with third countries

According to the legislation on MSP the Ministry of the Environment is responsible for cooperation with third countries.

Russia is a member of the Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group, and they have also cooperated on some scientific and maritime spatial planning development projects and events.

Sources

Consulted references

Finland HELCOM-VASAB Country Fiche, S September, 2022

Maritime spatial plan for Finland 2030; https://www.merialuesuunnittelu.fi/en/

Relevant legislative acts

- **Erreur ! Référence de lien hypertexte non valide.** - Unofficial translation of the original Act, PDF format in Finlex, the Data Bank of Finnish Legislation.
- Regional Land Use Planning in Finland – Brochure.
- More information on Regional Land Use Planning can be found via this link.
-

Access to MSP data (Electronic resources) for Åland

- https://www.regeringen.ax/demokrati-hallbarhet/hallbar-utveckling/marin-kustomradesplanering-havsplanering
- Electronic map (available in Swedish): https://aland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=3fe10bf5d03c409ead0aa103f01301b3
-