



Maritime Spatial Planning Country Profile

Lithuania

Contact

MSP in general

Ms. Algimantė Treinienė
Senior Advisor
Construction and Territorial Planning Policy Group
Ministry of Environment
A. Jakšto 4 /9, LT-01105 Vilnius. LITHUANIA
E-mail: algimante.treiniene@am.lt

Ms. Asta Rokickienė
Senior Specialist
Construction and Territorial Planning Policy Group
Ministry of Environment
A. Jakšto 4 /9, LT-01105 Vilnius. LITHUANIA
E-mail: asta.rokickiene@am.lt

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Mr. Vitalijus Auglys
Head of Pollution Prevention Policy Group
Ministry of Environment
A. Jakšto 4 /9, LT-01105 Vilnius. LITHUANIA
E-mail: vitalijus.auglys@am.lt

Disclaimer

The information contained in this document does not represent the official view of the European Commission. It has been prepared for informational purposes only, and should not be considered legally binding in any nature. The illustrative map shown on the cover and on page 1 should not be interpreted as a legal representation of jurisdictional boundaries.

Last revision date

This version was last reviewed and updated (where necessary) by the European MSP Platform team in April 2024.

Funding attribution

The EU MSP Platform is financed by the EU Commission under the EMFAF. 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



— Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) — Territorial Sea Existing Plans

The Lithuanian maritime space is delimited by the Republic of Lithuania's Government Decree, No. 1597, of 6 December 2004 and includes internal waters, territorial waters, the exclusive economic zone, the sea bottom and the soil underneath, as follows:

- Internal waters (lagoons not included): about 35 km²
- Territorial waters (12-nm zone): about 1 810 km²
- Exclusive economic zone including adjoining zone: about 4 560 km²

Lithuania has one of the shortest shorelines among European countries.ⁱ The country's marine area borders Latvia in the North, the Russian Federation in the South (Kaliningrad oblast) and the Kingdom of Sweden in the West. The nearshore area within a 20 m water depth is part of the "Coastal Strip".

Overview of Maritime Spatial Planning-related uses and issues

- Current uses: a relatively small area accommodates four main navigation routes, the multi-purpose deep-water port of Klaipėda, the port of Šventoji, a UNESCO World Heritage site, Natura 2000 sites, the oil terminals in Būtingė and Klaipėda, offshore military areas, near shore fishery bars and offshore fishing areas.ⁱⁱ
- Future uses: planned underwater high voltage electricity link to Sweden. Certain areas have been investigated for offshore wind energy development and reserved for sand extraction purposes.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Issues: balance between nature protection and recreation.
- The main spatial conflicts have been identified as occurring between nature protection, maritime traffic, oil extraction and fishing.

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) authorities and legislation

General

According to Art. 47 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the exclusive right for the Lithuanian maritime space belongs to the Republic of Lithuania (i.e. owned by the state). Current governance of the sea space is defined by legal acts relating to the use of the sea space and responsibilities of the Republic of Lithuania as stipulated in international legal acts in which it participates. The Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania is

complemented by marine spatial solutions adopted on 11 June 2015 by Seimas (the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania) Resolution No XII-1781.

The current Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania will expire in 2020, therefore a new Comprehensive Plan is currently under development. The new Comprehensive Plan contains the long-term strategic vision for the country up to 2050 and will formulate solutions until 2030.

Planning at national level

- There are more than 20 legal acts (laws and governmental resolutions guiding the use of the marine space).
- MSP is included in the Law on Territorial Planning, 2014.
- MSP applies to the entire marine area of Lithuania including territorial waters and the EEZ.
- 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: Construction and Territorial Planning Policy Group.

Details

The Republic of Lithuania is a signatory state of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. There are more than 20 legal acts, laws and governmental resolutions guiding the use of the sea space.

The maritime spatial planning (MSP) process in Lithuania is covered by the national legislation regulating spatial planning - Law on Territorial Planning - and its secondary legal acts. The revised Law on Territorial Planning adopted on 27 June 2013, which came into force on 1 January 2014, includes stipulations on sea space planning. The same provisions at different levels of planning are included into the Rules for Preparation of Complex Territorial Planning Documents (adopted by the Minister of Environment Order No. D1-8 on 2 January 2014) as an executive legal act, following the revised Law on Territorial Planning. Part of the marine space (up to 20 m Isobath) also falls under the regulation of the Coastal Strip Law.

Based on the stipulations of national legal acts, Lithuanian maritime territories were added into the national legislation by extending the existing Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania by one additional part – marine territories, which included marine spatial solutions for the Lithuanian territorial waters and the EEZ.

Now marine waters form an integrative part of the development of the Comprehensive Plan planning process, which now covers all terrestrial and marine areas.

General applicability (e.g. Territorial Sea, EEZ, other distinctions)

MSP applies to Lithuania's entire marine area, including territorial waters and the EEZ.

Maritime Spatial Plans

Progress

The Comprehensive Plan of the Republic of Lithuania (CPRL) (and its part on “Maritime territories”) was adopted in June 2015. The planning solutions are legally required to be implemented from the point they are made public (following the legal administrative requirements) during the announcement of the Plan’s adoption. The plan is an extension of the terrestrial spatial plan.

The new Comprehensive Plan is developed in 4 stages:

- 1) Assessment of the existing situation - completed in 2019;
- 2) Conceptual development of the CPRL - completed in 2019;
- 3) Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment on the conceptual framework – completed in 2019;
- 4) Development of detailed local concepts (solutions) – completed in summer 2020, consultations in 2020.

The development of the new Comprehensive plan is led by the Ministry of Environment. Once the Comprehensive Plan has been prepared, it will be submitted to the Government, and then to Parliament, for approval. The strategic section called the Concept of Comprehensive Plan of the territory of the Republic of Lithuania (CPRL) was approved by the Parliament on 4 June 2020. The full CPRL (solutions) were drafted and the public consultations arranged during the period 31 August 2020 - 5 October 2020. Currently, the Plan is in finalisation phase, in preparation for submission to the Government.

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

A Comprehensive Plan exists for the Republic of Lithuania (including a section on “Maritime territories”). The “Maritime territories” section, that complements the terrestrial spatial planning, was adopted by the Seimas (the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania) in 2015.

Lithuania has adopted its new Comprehensive Plan (2nd) that includes MSP on 29 September 2021. The plan is now under translation. The Lithuanian version is available at the portal of spatial planning documents: https://www.tpdri.lt/lt_LT/web/guest/sarasas by entering plan number: K-NC-00-17-288, choosing “Rengimo etapas” and then “TPD sprendiniai (aiškinamasis raštas ir brėžiniai)”. Drawings and explanatory part of the plan can be downloaded there. The strategic section called the Concept of Comprehensive Plan for the territory of the Republic of Lithuania (CPRL) was approved by the Parliament on 4 June 2020.

The first maritime spatial plan was elaborated as a part of the Comprehensive Plan for the Republic of Lithuania by including a section on “Maritime territories”. The “Maritime territories” section was adopted by the Seimas (the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania) in 2015. This plan expired in 2020, a new Comprehensive Plan for the Republic of Lithuania has been prepared.

The objectives of the first MSP were: to ensure the transparent, known conditions of the uses of the territory in the whole state and in the space under responsibility of the Republic of Lithuania, and consequently, to implement a plan for the land and sea territory in one document.

Maritime Spatial Plan: The Comprehensive Plan of the Republic of Lithuania (and its part “Maritime territories”)

The Comprehensive Plan of the Republic of Lithuania (and its part on “Maritime territories”), was officially published in the Register of the Legal Acts of the Republic of Lithuania.

Legal basis

The plan is a legally binding document.

- It is obligatory for the state governmental institutions, taking decisions at national level, related to the use, management and protection of the territory of the country, forming regional policy, spatial integrated maritime policy.
- It includes planning conditions for national level special plans, long term programmes and strategies, and lower level comprehensive and special plans.
- Development of strategies of economic sectors, other strategic plans and programmes of state institutions have to rest upon solutions of the Comprehensive Plan of the Republic of Lithuania.^{iv}

Legal impact

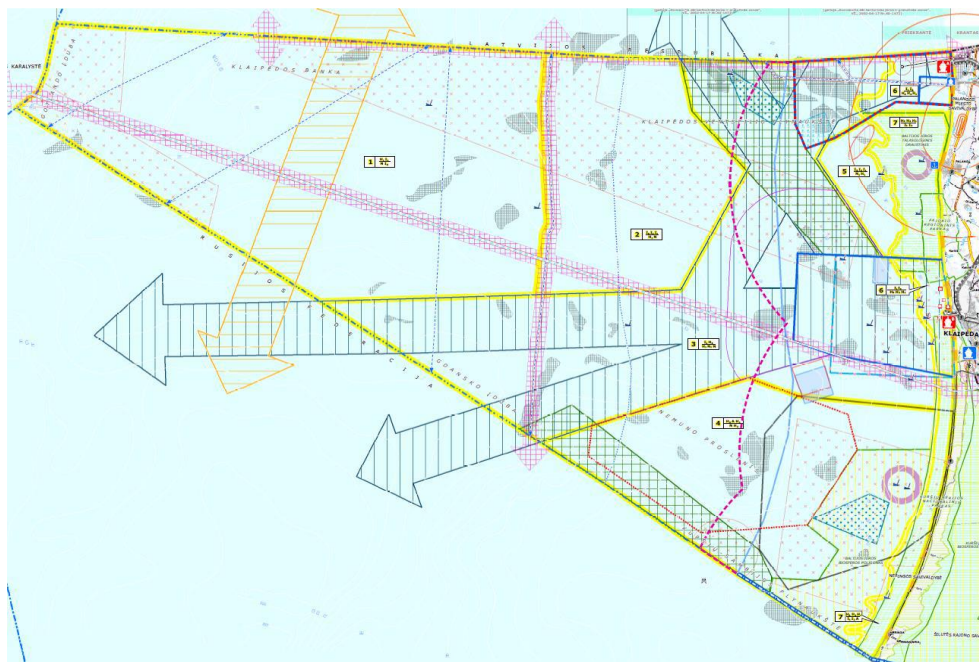
It serves as a legal basis for the protection and use of the sea space as well as for the further development of regulatory frameworks for the different uses of the sea.

Area covered

The Comprehensive Plan of the Republic of Lithuania, part on “Maritime territories”, covers the entire maritime area of Lithuania including territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone. It is important to acknowledge, that after complementing the Comprehensive Plan with the part on “Maritime territories”, this document now comprises both terrestrial and sea space planning solutions in one single document.

During the elaboration of the project commissioned to add ‘Maritime territories’ to the CPRL, a set of relevant maps was prepared:

- (Maritime) Spatial development concept and functional priorities of the territory
- Economic activity development (including its prioritisation)
- Ensuring ecological balance and preserving the cultural heritage
- Technical infrastructure development
- Areas reserved for national needs
- Regional policy (covering the near shore zone mainly).



Map: Scale: 1:200 000

Historic development

The Programme for the Project of complementing the Comprehensive Plan of the Republic of Lithuania with the part on “Maritime territories” was prepared in 2011 by the Planning Organiser (MoE/LT), and was based on the Seimas Resolution (2011). After its approval by the “Inter-ministerial Commission for Reconciliation of Strategies, Plans and Programmes of Economy Fields”, the plan was adopted by the Order of the Minister of Environment. Terms of reference were prepared and a team of consultants to prepare the Plan was selected in an open call. The drafting of the territorial planning document began in December 2011 and the final document was adopted by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on 11 June 2015.

Objectives of the plan

The objectives of the planning process were: (1) to ensure the availability of transparent prior knowledge of the conditions of use of the territory in the entire state territory and in the space under responsibility of the Republic of Lithuania, and to implement a consequent planning process for land and sea territory in one single document.

By (2) extending the existing (mainly terrestrial) plan, supplementing it with marine spatial solutions that would allow the creation of preconditions for development of maritime economic activities in need of the sea space while maintaining a good status of the marine environment and providing the necessary territorial regulations for safeguarding cultural heritage at sea.

The main objectives of the plan were:

1. to maintain equilibrium between economic and ecological development, create conditions for territorial cohesion, sustainable development of the state's territory, coherent spatial, functional integration, and policy implementation, solving complex territory-related problems and tasks
2. to form a healthy and harmonious environment for creating better living conditions in the whole country
3. to form a common integrated policy of development for different fields of activity
4. to protect, restore and rationally use natural and recreational resources, and values of natural and cultural heritage
5. to reserve territories for infrastructure and other development needs of various activities in the maritime territories
6. to promote investments for economic development, preserving and restoring values of natural, cultural heritage and recreational resources
7. to reconcile the interests of natural and legal entities, municipalities and the State as well as the rights of people under international law with regard to the use of the maritime territories and under the exclusive rights of the Republic of Lithuania for the air space over its territory, seabed and subsoil, continental shelf, and Exclusive Economic Zone.

Designated uses / areas

The plan serves as a principal framework for further planning and regulating economic activities.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

A complete SEA for the MSP was prepared, including national and transnational consultations with Lithuanian stakeholders as well as with Sweden and Latvia.

Public Participation

During all stages of the planning process the information was made public and the materials of the plan were publicly available on the webpage of the planning organiser – the Ministry of Environment. Additionally, the Plan was publicly presented during national and international conferences, and specific public hearings have been organised in order to inform people of the Plan. Information about this planning process was also made public through mass media channels.

Direct stakeholder meetings were held during the concept development step and during the development of specific spatial solutions. The official public consultation took place during the concept phase, including the scoping of the SEA. The draft reports on spatial solutions and the SEA were also published and made available for comments.

In January 2013, the first round of public consultations was carried out.

The documents were also made available for display in the Klaipeda University and at the Ministry of Environment. A special public event was held with NGOs on 21 January 2013, and with public authorities on 23 January 2013.

Transboundary Consultation

Transboundary consultations were conducted with Latvian stakeholders, and relevant information was sent to the Ministry of Environment in Latvia. The SEA study was of a transboundary character and therefore followed the pattern of cross-border consultations as well. Sweden was involved in the transboundary SEA procedures.

Harmonisation with other plans

Harmonisation with other plans was achieved through planning conditions and consideration of the procedure. The "Inter-ministerial Commission for Reconciliation of Strategies, Plans and Programmes of Economy Fields and Inter-ministerial Experts" working group has been involved throughout the entire preparation period of the Plan. A regular procedure for approval of planning documents was followed based on legal requirements (by sending the documents to the relevant institutions for consideration). All the relevant planning documents were taken into account while preparing the Plan. At the same time, according to the hierarchy of planning documents in Lithuania, the Comprehensive Plan of the Republic of Lithuania is of top priority and sets out pre-conditions for other plans to consider when being developed.

Monitoring & Review

The periodical review of spatial planning documents and the monitoring of actions will proceed as defined in the national Law on Territorial Planning.

A copy of the MSP was sent to the European Commission as part of the national efforts to implement Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014, about establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning, (under the requirements of Art. 14 of the Directive).

Electronic resources

The maps, SEA study and the text (in Lithuanian) are available on the website of the Ministry of Environment (www.am.lt).

Various indicators for planning practices can be located via the statistics tool *TPSIS* (<https://tpsis.am.lt/pradzia>). In addition, the nature monitoring website, *GAMTA*, provides data with regards to marine management, as well as information about projects, reports and publications that might be useful (<http://gamta.lt/cms/index?lang=en>).

Last but not the least, the sea port of Klaipėda can provide an insight to the harbour activities, regulations and development plans (<http://www.portofklaipeda.lt/en>).

New Comprehensive Plan of the Republic of Lithuania

Lithuania has adopted its new Comprehensive Plan (2nd) that includes MSP on 29 September 2021. Conceptual Framework which contains functional priorities and spatial concepts has been developed and reviewed through an environmental impact assessment study. Currently, specific solutions are being developed.

Objectives of the plan

The conceptual framework of the new Comprehensive Plan establishes general objectives for spatial development and provides solutions that define the main directions for spatial development and the country's territorial and functional priorities.

Three key aspects have been identified for the concept (aspiration) of Lithuania's territorial development. After the evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan's specificity, it was necessary to examine aspects related to territorial expression or closely related to territorial decisions. These aspects are:

- vibrant urban structures
- viable ecosystem
- efficient and biologically productive territories.

Through implementing these visions by appropriate measures, the State's competitiveness will be increased, a high-quality living environment (in its broader sense) will be created, the consequences of climate change will be mitigated, and adaptation to climate change will be achieved.

One of the strategic topics is "Responsible use of the sea and coast". For this, the following specific objectives have been set:

- safe, clean and efficient naval transport
- coherent energy policy
- healthy marine environment: one of the essential conditions is a functional environment with a good quality of natural and cultural resources
- sustainable fisheries and aquaculture
- climate resilience.

Designated uses/areas

With regard to maritime spatial planning, the Conceptual Framework has identified two functional areas:

- COASTAL: Existing uses are shaped by recreation, sustainable forestry, agriculture and fishing, with priority uses being recreation, conservation and fishing, as well as transport
- OFFSHORE: An area where environmental interests intersect and opportunities to expand other activities are prioritised for nature conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

The development of the sea area's usage structure is determined by its relations with the nearby urban centres, especially with Klaipėda, a state-category and support-type metropolitan centre, and the function of Klaipėda as a port. The international East-West transport corridor, passes through Klaipėda. The preconditions for priority development

are in the Šventoji-Būtingė region, where the oil terminal is already operating, the reconstruction of Šventoji port is being started, and one of the options for the construction of an external deep-water port is being explored.

Each functional area is then split into functional districts dedicated to specific activities: shipping, fishing, recreation, nature conservation, military exercises, energy infrastructure, or other infrastructure.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been completed for the Conceptual Framework. The SEA has compared two alternatives of the proposed plan. The Full Environmental Report is available for download at: <http://www.bendrasiplanas.lt/2019/10/02/strategic-environmental-assessment-sea/>

Public Participation

For the development of the Comprehensive Plan, a core development team was formed, comprised of 13 transdisciplinary expert groups, which would engage in a broader discussion. Most particularly, the public forums, organised approximately every two months, which enabled the continuation of discussions, 'anchoring' the main topics and raising awareness beyond the involvement of experts.

The draft version of the full CPRL (including solutions) were displayed for public consultation during the period 31 August 2020-5 October 2020. On 5 October 2020, the Ministry of the Environment held a closing event-conference, during which the last public comments were registered.

Transboundary Consultation

Transboundary consultations were organised in the frame of the SEA procedure. The current version of the SEA report does not assess transboundary impacts from maritime activities. A transboundary consultation meeting was organised on 03 October 2019 in Vilnius.

Electronic resources

The information on the development of the new Comprehensive Plan is available at <http://www.bendrasiplanas.lt/>.

Aspects of the MSP process



Ecosystem-based approach (EBA)

The Comprehensive Plan of the Republic of Lithuania (and its part on “Maritime territories”) was developed according to the terrestrial spatial legislation. The law does not include an ecosystem approach, however, the existing MSP highlights the importance of natural conditions and biodiversity values.

The MSP emphasises the importance of ecological balance, stability, and the use of a natural framework for planning. The natural framework is based on properties of marine landscapes, distribution of most valuable sites for biological diversity, sedimentation and hydrodynamic conditions, i.e. elevations, depressions and slopes, nearshore of the Curonian spit and mainland coast. Several geomorphological zones are distinguished: Nearshore; Klaipėda-Ventspils and Curonian-Sambian plateaus; Gdansk and Gotland basins and their slopes. The most valuable elements of biodiversity are macro algae habitats on the stony bottoms (*Furcellaria lumbricalis*); fish of commercial importance – cod, herring, sprat and flounder; migrating and wintering birds, especially long-tailed duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) and velvet scoter (*Melanitta fusca*); four species of marine mammals: seals and porpoises. During the development of MSP, there have been discussions of establishing new and/or expanding Natura 2000 sites. The debate was made possible due to ongoing research and new data on biological values in marine areas.

The new Comprehensive Plan also considers the importance of viable ecosystems and particularly a healthy marine environment.



Land-sea interactions

Before the introduction of new legislation on MSP, Lithuania had the Law on Coastal Zone (2002) – that was taken into account during planning. The Law on Coastal Zone focuses on the preservation of the coastal zone, to ensure sustainable use of coastal resources and to provide public access to recreational resources.

Land-sea interactions have been addressed for specific sectors: wind power development was linked to the potential of connectivity with the grid system; shipping routes were linked to the expansion of ports; regarding environmental protection, a network of the Natura 2000 sites in coastal zones was established.



Stakeholder Involvement

The Comprehensive Plan is developed in two main steps – concept development and the spatial solutions.

During the development of the new Comprehensive Plan, broad public and stakeholder engagement activities are being implemented. The overall aim is to engage a broad audience into the planning process, starting with political representatives and going all the way to students who are very likely to be involved in the actual implementation and further adjustment of this document in the future. There are several dozens of actors involved in the project, who are driving the entire process and are involved in different ways and with different roles.



Transboundary cooperation

Within the EU projects BaltSeaPlan (2009-2012) and PartiSEApate (2012-2014), cross-border consultation took place between Germany, Latvia and Lithuania and/or Poland and Sweden. Transboundary consultations were conducted with Latvian stakeholders and relevant information was sent to the Ministry of Environment in Latvia. The SEA study was of a transboundary nature and therefore followed the pattern of cross-border consultations as well. Sweden was involved in the transboundary SEA procedures.

Currently, transboundary cooperation is mainly implemented via the HELCOM-VASAB MSP working group which meets twice a year.

Coherence with other processes

Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)

Lithuanian's elaboration of the Programme of Measures (PoMs) was completed in 2015 (<http://vanduo.gamta.lt/files/Final%20report.pdf>). The Programme of measures under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive has been prepared on the basis of assessments of the current state of the marine environment established for the environmental objectives of the Baltic Sea environment. In order to achieve the goals, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the Programme of Water Field Development 2017-2023 and its action plan, which determines specific measures to improve the environmental status (<https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/78e05820eea211e692c5977c7316c9b5>).

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)

In recent years, a very positive breakthrough occurred regarding the Lithuanian coastal zone management policy. The Law of the Coastal Zone was adopted by the Lithuanian Parliament on 2 July 2002. It was followed by the National ICZM Programme, which was approved by the Ministry of Environment in September 2003. Such radical measures were taken after a series of devastating erosion events occurred on the Lithuanian coast. Particularly devastating was the hurricane "Anatole" of December 1999, which nearly wiped away the beaches along the entire coastal zone of the country.^v

Environmental Impacts Assessment

Environment Impact Assessment is compulsory for all major offshore development projects.

Sources

Consulted references

- VASAB Country FICHE (2019):
https://vasab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Country-fiche_LT_March2019.pdf
- Povilanskas, R. & A. Urbis (2004): National ICZM strategy and initiatives in Lithuania. G. Schernewski & N. Löser (eds.): Managing the Baltic Sea. Coastline Reports 2.

Relevant legislative acts

- Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania and its part “Marine territories”, adopted 2015; link to the Register of the Legal Acts of Lithuania
<https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/2dd8caa0b37711e48601d026d7145559>
- Law on Territorial Planning, status of link from 2019:
<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/dde75b13095011e78dacb175b73de379?jfwid=wny8rfncr>
- Rules for Preparation of Complex Territorial Planning

ⁱ Povilanskas, R. & A. Urbis (2004): National ICZM strategy and initiatives in Lithuania. G. Schernewski & N. Löser (eds.): Managing the Baltic Sea. Coastline Reports 2.

ⁱⁱ PartiSEApate: http://www.sustainable-projects.eu/downloads/Booklet_Country_Fichessmall.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} See VASAB Member State fiche, Lithuania

^v See Povilanskas, R. & A. Urbis (2004)