

# PROMOTING MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE TO ADDRESS LAND-SEA INTERACTIONS

POLICY BRIEF

2021

## KEY MESSAGES TO POLICY MAKERS AND EXPERTS

- **ESTABLISHMENT:** coastal and marine governance should be flexible and complement the hierarchical approach through collaboration and collective decision-making.
- **COLLABORATION:** accepted and well-functioning collaboration mechanisms should ensure true engagement in the carrying out of multi-level governance.
- **IMPLEMENTATION:** accommodating the European Green Deal during the implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning and other development policies in the Baltic Sea Region requires clear guidance.
- **FOLLOW-UP:** Monitoring and evaluation of coastal and marine policies should observe how the situation in the sea affects the land and vice versa.
- **CAPACITY BUILDING:** coastal and marine governance should have continuous support through building relevant knowledge and skills of planners and other stakeholders.

# Establishing a multi-level governance agenda

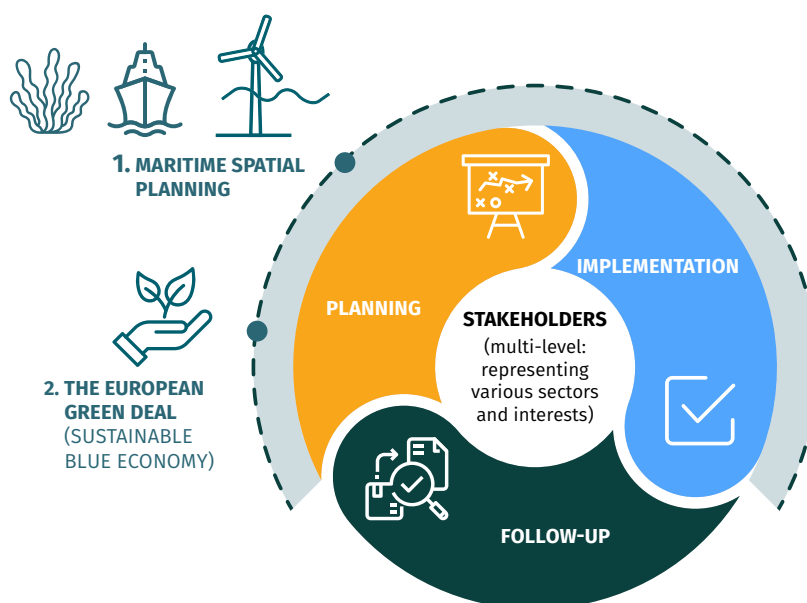
Coastal Zone Management has been in focus for several decades, as coastal areas and resources are used by many sectors and actors, affecting coastal and marine ecosystems. Two major European Union (EU) policy instruments are to play a key role in the near future:

## 1) The Maritime Spatial Planning Directive

The EU [Maritime Spatial Planning \(MSP\) Directive](#), adopted in 2014, introduces an integrative planning approach to analyse and organise human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives. 2021 marked a milestone, as the first maritime spatial plans had to be established in accordance with the MSP Directive. Although land-sea interactions may now be included in MSP processes and reflected in most plans, the perspective still has to be implemented further and the following impacts must be observed.

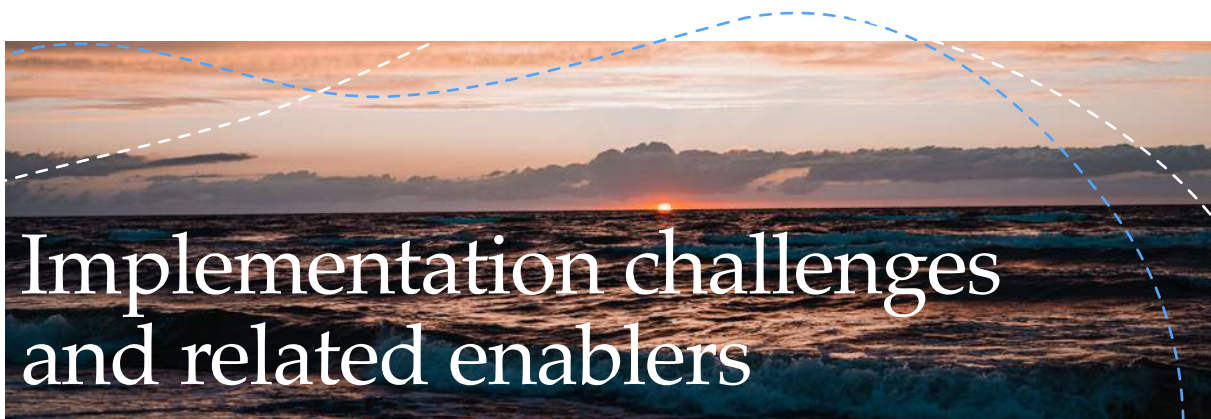
## 2) The European Green Deal

In 2019, the European Commission published the [European Green Deal \(EGD\)](#) – a long-term strategy to tackle climate and environmental-related challenges. The EGD highlights the importance of oceans in mitigating and adapting to climate change and highlights the necessity to implement measures for ecological sustainability and sustainable use. The document also identifies related key policies and measures covering marine and maritime sectors.



Implementation of the MSP and the EGD policies will bring up various new challenges and situations that require engaging stakeholders from different maritime and related economic sectors, interest groups and experts from various planning and management levels (local, regional, national and the Baltic Sea Region and beyond). Moreover, both processes should be aligned with the existing traditions and procedures of land-based planning, sectoral planning, water and nature strategies in coastal areas.

Thus, the applicable governance model should be flexible, complementing the traditional approach, which relies on well-established governance levels and institutional set-up. **Multi-level Governance (MLG)** implies the coordination arrangements and agreements that facilitate planning and decision making across all relevant governance levels within and beyond the borders of the governable territory and in coordination with non-governmental stakeholders.



The establishment of MSP has been a tremendous exercise for many countries and regions as a first time experience. The initial stock-taking, including data collection, creation of a marine knowledge base and stakeholder mobilising has required great efforts from planning authorities. With the adoption of the plans, a number of new challenges are expected, which need to be addressed continuously.

## Compliance

Permitting and licensing of maritime activities is place and sector specific. Yet, any major activity will affect others. **Therefore, it is important that the agreements reached in the planning processes are followed through also in the granting of permits for sea uses.** The relevant supervisory authority should be given a clear assignment on implementation.

## Transparency

A lack of detail and specific conditions in adopted planning documents can create a practice of granting exceptions, consequently, non-observance of the plans. Transparency in the implementation process should be observed. **Any decision leading to deviation from the adopted plans should be on public display.**

## Collaboration platforms and mechanisms

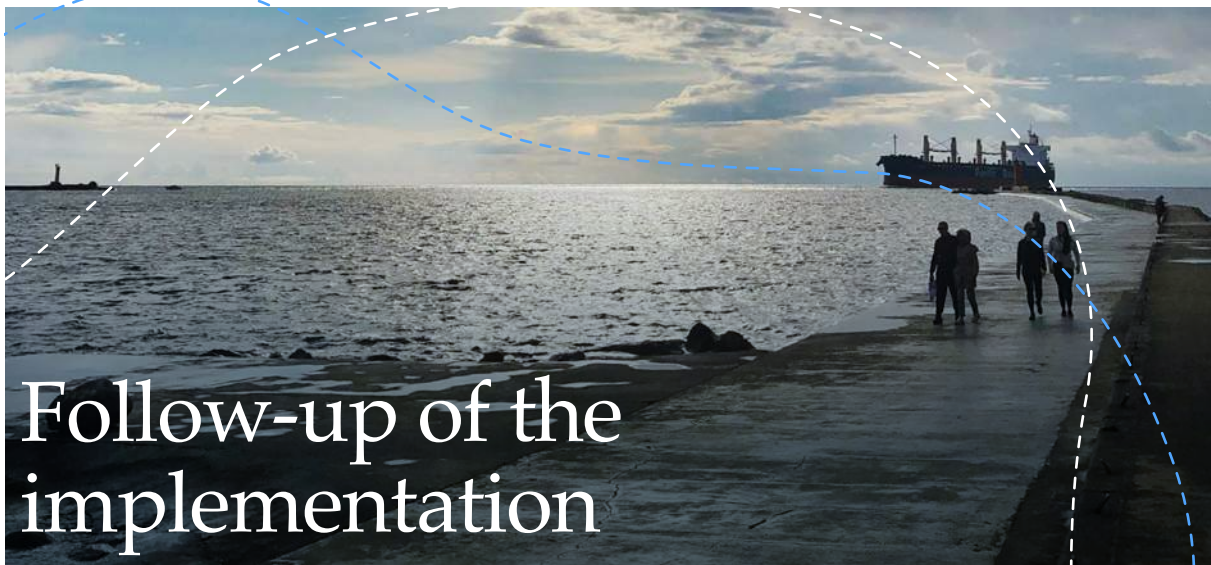
Coastal and marine stakeholders are brought together to cooperate at varying degrees of intensity during the planning phase. Even more intensive interaction and comprehensive collaboration platforms between sectors are needed after a plan is adopted (e.g., implementation guidance). **Accepted and well-functioning collaboration mechanisms that are integrated into the formal processes should be in place to ensure true engagement in the implementation phase of MLG.**

## Transboundary and cross-border aspects

MLG should ensure consistent planning and implementation not only across administrative scales but also promote coherence between land and sea planning realms. Although the solutions should be case- and place-specific, **true collaboration and engagement of relevant parties beyond a single administrative unit is important** to ensure synergies in planning results and implementation efforts.

## Guidance need for EGD and MSP in the Baltic sea region.

The EGD is a complex policy document with multiple related sectoral documents. The key derived policies include The [Biodiversity Strategy](#), [Offshore Renewable Energy Strategy](#), [as well as the Sustainable Blue Economy Strategy](#). These documents set challenging spatial targets and outputs that impact the coastal and maritime planning up to 2030. On the other hand, maritime and coastal planning can serve as an enabler of the EDG by elaborating solutions that will lead to the development of a clean, circular Blue Economy, preserving biodiversity in the marine environment, facilitating the supply of clean energy, provisioning healthy and environmentally friendly seafood and strengthening coastal communities. **Stakeholders need more clear guidance on how these new policies could be integrated into multi-scale maritime and Sustainable Blue Economy policies and in the implementation of maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region.**



## Follow-up of the implementation

Monitoring and evaluation should enable a follow-up of the diverse impacts of maritime and coastal plans in order to support timely decisions and adaptive management measures. The follow-up should cover all spatial levels, as well as relevant themes and encompass the complexity of land-sea interactions.

### Creating a follow-up structure

Follow-up is particularly challenging in the land-sea interface as it involves multiple land and sea-based sectors and levels – from local to national, cross-border with shared ecosystems and activities. Moreover, different planning processes are not harmonised in timing and content. The recent MSP processes show inconsistencies among policy targets and conflicting goals, which is challenging to harmonise through planning alone. An active multi-stakeholder supervisory body is recommended to support the follow-up process.

### Addressing data and knowledge gaps

The stocktaking and establishment of environmental and socio-economic baselines for spatial or development planning has revealed important data and knowledge gaps. The identified shortcomings should be addressed when revising monitoring programmes and data collection schemes.

### Consistent and synergies in monitoring

As the resources allocated to monitoring and evaluation are limited, it is recommendable to supplement MSP-related monitoring by concurrent and complementary monitoring and evaluation carried out based on other legal obligations, e.g. strategic environmental assessment, marine strategies.

### More frequent evaluation

Spatial and/or development plans take a long-term perspective, e.g., the EU MSP Directive requires that the plans are reviewed at least every 10 years. Authorities and experts are increasingly confident that ex-post evaluation alone is not sufficient, and interim checkpoints are necessary. Thus, evaluation should occur more frequently than required by EU law.



Implementation of spatial and development plans in land-sea interface constitutes most often place-specific and project-based activities at a local or regional scale. Thus, existing national or large region-wide plans will be supplemented by or down-scaled to local and detailed planning to determine the specific conditions and placement of activities. To assure the quality of planning, adequate capacities need to be available to avoid irreversible damage to marine and coastal ecosystems, as well as to ensure the provision of ecosystem services.

## Knowledge sharing

Information and knowledge base is very crucial to implement evidence-based planning and sound decision-making. During recent years, huge data and information volumes have been collected and studies conducted. The available **knowledge base** has to be **easily accessible** and clearly presented to all involved stakeholders and the public to avoid disputes and long court cases that can delay planning and decision-making. The new research and scientific support shall be steered towards **substantiating MSP** especially on opposing topics that would support scientific and sound decision-making, for example, on trade-offs between fishery and wind energy, and environmental goals, Sustainable Blue Economy ambitions and local values (particularly, heritage, maritime culture, local tourism, etc.).

## Skills and proficiency

Several capacity-building activities (training, courses, workshops etc.) have been implemented in the past in the Baltic Sea Region. However, planner and stakeholder communities are not fixed entities but rather are dynamic due to frequent fluctuations in personnel, thus hindering the professionalism in the field. From vocational education of maritime sectors up to specific course modules and university programmes are needed **for training or upgrading of newcomers' skills**.

## Targeted activities

Capacity-building activities shall be offered according **to the roles and responsibilities of individual target groups** in coastal development and related planning and decision-making processes. The difference in knowledge needs between future experts/students, political decision-makers, planning experts, sector experts, societal actors such as NGOs and marine users shall be respected and covered accordingly.

## Mutual learning

Establishing an **'MLG-MSP practitioner network'** by engaging regional and/or local level representatives would strengthen collaboration and MLG spirit.

The capacities of public authorities vary widely across countries, institutions, sectors and governance levels. Setting up the planning objectives and tasks also implies mandates and means to achieve them. A planning framework should define roles and responsibilities in a way that promotes mutual learning across levels and sectors.

This policy brief is an outcome of the Interreg Baltic Sea region project **“Land-Sea-Act – Land-sea interactions advancing Blue Growth in Baltic Sea coastal areas”**, implemented 2019–2021.

**Output of Activity 4.1.**

**Suggested citation:** Land-Sea-Act project 2021. Policy Brief “Promoting multi-level governance to address land-sea interactions”. Link: <https://land-sea.eu/results/>

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The policy brief is an outcome from discussions of the International Expert Panel of the Land-Sea-Act project and project partners moderated by Kristina Veidemane (Latvia).

**The panelists include:** Alda Nikodemusa (VASAB), Andrea Morf (Sweden), Anna Aldegren (Sweden), Anne Nummela (Finland), Anneli Kivisaar (Estonia), Elina Veidemane (VASAB), Inara Stalidzane (Latvia), Jacek Zaucha (Poland), Marta Czarnecka Gallas (Poland), Steen Schønemann (Denmark).

Experts from the project partners were contributing at the meetings as well as distilling the key messages presented here.

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