

**VALUABLE PRACTICE: Co-creation of scenarios for the future of maritime areas****Description**

For MSP to support the objectives of the European Green Deal (EGD) they need to be forward-looking. The Finnish MSP authorities, together with 350 stakeholder representatives, developed three possible and alternative scenarios for the future of the maritime area until 2050 and assessed their impacts. The scenarios discuss the changes in the operating environment and the needs and views of interest groups regarding the future development of the Finnish maritime area. They considered drivers related to climate change, environmental protection, condition of the maritime area, security situation, international trade, urbanization and development of maritime logistics, energy, fishing and aquaculture and tourism sectors.

The scenarios take a holistic view on the future development of maritime areas. The end results guide towards varied and consistent thinking over some alternative future options and thereby enhance the conditions for interpreting and understanding current phenomena and enhancing the planning of operations and the ability to respond. By describing the possible characteristics of the future operating environment and identifying the potential risks and opportunities, MSP planners can recognize tangible actions that could be guided or influenced to reach the desired vision for the future. In addition, actions that need to be done, regardless of which future ends up unfolding, can be identified.

The advantage of the scenario work was that maritime stakeholders did not stick to their usual roles of defending their rights. Instead, they considered the potential of their sector and the use of marine space in different alternative future scenarios. This also increased understanding among stakeholders of the needs of other maritime sectors. After the scenario phase, the stakeholders moved on to reflect on the future of the maritime space that they collectively want to achieve.

The practice consisted of the following steps:

- ✓ First, the alternative future scenarios were drafted based on information collected in expert interviews (15 in total). The interviews aimed to build a comprehensive view of the marine areas by focusing on high-level experts from different marine sectors and other societal sectors. Consistency analysis was used as the method for forming the scenarios from the collected information.
- ✓ The scenarios were presented to actors from all marine sectors in national and regional workshops. The aim was to identify what do the alternative futures mean for the sectors that the participants are representing.
- ✓ Two workshops were organized in each of the planning regions. The first workshop focused on the scenarios from the regional perspective. In addition, preliminary discussions of the impacts of the scenarios on the marine sectors and to different areas were held. The second workshop focused on the impacts of the scenarios on all marine sectors and the sustainability of the sea areas (including the environmental status of the sea areas, sustainable blue economy, and the welfare of people).
- ✓ The scenarios and their estimated impacts were modified based on the results of the workshops and shared to all stakeholders who participated in the work for commenting. After this the scenarios were finalized and presented in the draft of the MSP plan.

Practice typology

(v) Process-related practice (i.e. creation of working groups)

Topics addressed

Main	A. Climate change mitigation
Secondary	D. Biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration

Sectors/Activity involved

Multisector. The scenarios considered drivers related to climate change, environmental protection, condition of the maritime area, security situation, international trade, urbanization and development of maritime logistics, energy, fishing and aquaculture and tourism sector.

Stakeholders involved

The scenario work followed the principle that everyone had the right to participate in the workshops. In practice this meant that all authorities, organisations and private actors, whose areas of activity are covered by the plan, and the public interested in MSP could participate in the workshop. The invitation to participate was widely distributed to all possibly relevant actors. In addition, expert interviews of representatives from the key sectors were organized and an open opportunity to comment on the drafted scenarios was provided as a part of the public hearings process.

The main purpose of the stakeholder involvement was the co-creation of the scenarios and to increase stakeholder engagement in the MSP process from an early stage. The work provides MSP a structured format for thinking over alternative future options from multiple perspectives, which supports the application of an ecosystem-based approach in the planning of marine areas. The approach is also a learning experience for the MSP planners involved: it provided a valuable opportunity to enhance their knowledge on the current state of the marine realm and the future possibilities through discussion with the stakeholders.

Geographical scope

The future scenarios were created at the national (Finnish maritime area) and regional (three regional MSP areas) scales, but they widely consider issues relevant for the whole Baltic Sea basin.

Governance context

The scenario work was organized as a part of the first planning cycle by the authorities responsible for the MSP in Finland (the eight coastal regional councils and the Ministry of the Environment) together with consulting firms Capful and WSP Finland.

How this MSP practice can support the EU Green Deal

The work supports MSP in reaching the objectives of the EGD by enhancing the planning of maritime space usage through an ecosystem-based approach. The approach does not focus on a single objective and instead supports planners in evaluating how objectives related to topics such as marine renewable energy, sustainable sea-food production and biodiversity and ecosystem protection, including habitat restoration, could be reached in the future through actions done in MSP today.

The scenario phase of the first cycle of Finnish MSP supported the representation of marine stakeholders in planning process, thus legitimizing their knowledge and experience in decision-making. The approach provides an opportunity to combine existing ecological data with information collected from the stakeholders to produce socially acceptable solutions for existing complex challenges which go beyond single thematic objectives of the EGD. The co-creation of knowledge supports open and participatory MSP as well as increase the adaptiveness of MSP.



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Challenges/gaps/inconsistencies still to be addressed

The challenge in all participation is the ability to incentivize all significant stakeholder groups to engage into the co-creation process. The process was unable to engage stakeholders with significant decision-making power such as politicians and the local public of coastal municipalities into the scenario planning process.

New topics and interactions between the topics can always be added to the framework of the scenario work to widen the consideration of additional aspects of possible futures and their effects on all relevant marine activities.

Replicability /Elements which can be capitalised

The co-creation approach to building futures scenarios is replicable to other countries without any significant challenges. The application of the approach is independent of the country or the sea basin but will require the planners to be knowledgeable of the topics that are relevant to consider and the stakeholders to involve in the context of their MSP process.

There are some things that need to be considered when evaluating the feasibility of the practice.

- ✓ Sufficient allocation of time and financial resources needs to be covered. The availability of good quality data and information of relevant stakeholder groups facilitates the implementation. The absence of these factors will likely raise the requirements for financial commitments to produce them. Inclusion of multiple perspectives from different stakeholder groups into the process supports the formulation of well-founded scenarios relevant for the sea basin in question.
- ✓ The practice needs to be adequately located into the MSP development timeline, so that it best serves the whole planning process. Correctly timed allocation of coordination resources enables the incorporation of the practice and the execution of comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- ✓ Institutional trust can play a significant role in stakeholder engagement making it another relevant factor to consider when replicating the practice.
- ✓ The specific ways that the scenario work is done need to be carefully considered. For example, the presented practise employed a “blank canvas” approach where the discussion was based around identified potential scenarios of the sea basin, instead of focusing on drafts of the MSP plan. This proved to be a successful method for encouraging ideation from all the stakeholder groups present. In addition, the approach steered the thinking of the stakeholders away from individual agendas that they are most familiar with and opened the discussion for all participants and topics.
- ✓ The specific methodology used for creating the scenarios cannot be openly shared as it is company property of the consulting company responsible for drafting the scenarios.