

Usefulness of projects realized within Baltic Sea Region for maritime spatial planning in Poland

Przydatność projektów zrealizowanych w obszarze Regionu Morza Bałtyckiego dla potrzeb morskiego planowania przestrzennego w Polsce

Authors' Contribution:

A – Study Design
B – Data Collection
C – Statistical Analysis
D – Data Interpretation
E – Manuscript Preparation
F – Literature Search
G – Funds Collection

Joanna Przedzrymirska^{ABDEF}Iwona Rakowska^{BCEF}

The Maritime Institute in Gdańsk, Gdańsk, Poland

Article history: Received: 23.06.2015 Accepted: 05.08.2015 Published: 30.10.2015

Abstract: For years, many of the Baltic Sea Region projects touch issues related to the process of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP). The authors of this article decided to investigate whether the Baltic Sea Region projects' outcomes may be deemed useful in terms of the Polish MSP process. Firstly, an identification and review of the range of projects relevant to the needs of maritime spatial planning has been made. As a result, about 300 projects have been identified. Next, the authors obtained information about the data collected (from the Polish part of the Baltic Sea) and used in the selected projects. An analysis of the usefulness of the project results, including the one devoted directly to the MSP process, has been carried out. At the end of the process, the authors elaborated conclusions and recommendations for the future, which would certainly be of use for decision makers.

Keywords: Maritime spatial planning, Baltic Sea Region, projects

Streszczenie: Od lat w Regionie Morza Bałtyckiego realizowane są projekty obejmujące swą tematyką zagadnienia, mające wpływ na proces planowania przestrzennego obszarów morskich (PPOM). Autorki artykułu odjęły próbę dokonania analizy przydatności zabranych i wykorzystywanych danych oraz wyników ww. projektów w procesie planowania przestrzennego polskich obszarów morskich. W pierwszym etapie dokonano identyfikacji i przeglądu projektów powiązanych z zagadnieniem PPOM. W rezultacie powyższych działań zidentyfikowano około 300 projektów. Następnie autorki pozyskały informacje na temat danych (z polskiej części Bałtyku) zbieranych i wykorzystywanych w wybranych projektach, dokonano również analizy użyteczności wyników projektów poświęconych samemu procesowi PPOM. Ostatecznie autorki przedstawiły wnioski i rekomendacje, które mogą być wykorzystane przez decydentów w przyszłości.

Słowa kluczowe: Morskie planowanie przestrzenne, Region Morza Bałtyckiego, projekty

Introduction

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) is a very complex process. It is the main management tool used to sustainably coordinate the use of marine space and resources. It is also a platform for national and international cooperation between different actors, sectors and stakeholders. Since 2014, MSP has been regulated by Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014, establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning (hereinafter referred to as the MSP Directive).¹

The MSP Directive emphasises the role of cross-border consultation process obliging the Member States (MS) to conduct cross-border (transboundary) consultations as part of the MSP process. However, it does not set the precise frames of such consultation, leaving the capacity to use existing mechanisms. Therefore, in the light of usually limited resources devoted to the consultation process by the MS, international cooperation within the framework of projects begins to play a significant and important role of a facilitator in creation of the common (among the MS) agreement on how the cross-border consultation mecha-

nism shall work. It is of particular importance for the regions in which several MS share the same sea, like in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR).

There are several sources of raw data, collection and analysis of which is a must in the MSP process, e.g. statistical sectorial data (shipping, fishery etc.) and records from the on-going monitoring of the Baltic environmental status (hydrological, meteorological, geological, biological and chemical data). At the same time, thanks to intensive and long-lasting research efforts, dozens of national and international projects have been – and will be – implemented where data that could be of use in the MSP process was collected. However, there is no analysis describing the potential and level of importance of the data from the projects for MSP purposes. The authors of the article decided to investigate the issue in the belief that such sources may offer a unique and rich set of additional data to complement standard data sets.

Methodology

The inventory of over 300 projects has been made from the databases of the following funding sources: HELCOM², 6 and 7 PR³, BONUS⁴, LIFE +⁵, ETC programs⁶, EEA⁷ and Polish national programmes. Identified were 119 projects in topics related or similar to the scope of the study; 73 of them have been analysed in detail in order to investigate if they have used, or have produced, data that is important for the Polish MSP process. The selected projects covered the following topics: Oil spill -10 projects; Biology, chemistry, ecology, hydrology -35; Geology -1; Maritime transport, shipping, ports -6; MSP -2; Underwater noise -2; Other (sewage, agriculture, genetics etc.) -17.

Information about the source data collected/used in the projects was obtained on the basis of a questionnaire circulated to Polish participants of the above-mentioned projects. The questionnaire was sent to 40 representatives from Polish project partner organisations, and 3 project coordinators from HELCOM Secretariat (projects: Lotion, Fish PRO II and Surgeon). 21 responses were collected.

Questionnaire template - in relation to the activities carried out during implementation of the project

1. Have you benefited from generally accessible data (meteorological, hydrographic, geological, biological, economic, e.g. fishing and maritime transport, etc.)?

Yes /No If “Yes”, please describe the data and their source(s).

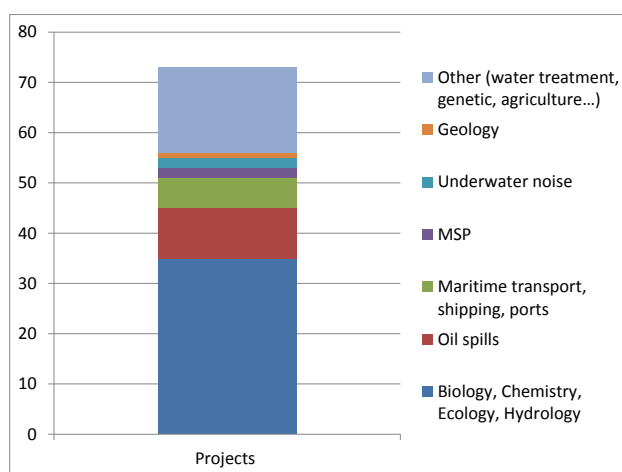
2. Have you collected new data from measurements at Polish sea?

Yes /No If “Yes”, please describe the data and indicate whether the data could be made available for the MSP process.

3. Have you got any information about other projects in which new data was collected from measurements at Polish sea - data that could be useful for the MSP process?

Yes/ No If “Yes”, please give the name/title/acronym of the project.

As a result of the analyses carried out, 27 projects were characterised in detail. The projects were divided into three groups: i) of importance ii) may be of importance and iii) probably not relevant to the MSP. The division was based on whether or not the project is responsible for the new data that is of importan-



Ryc. 1. Selected project by topics

ce for the MSP stock taking for the Polish sea area. A comparison report was elaborated presenting all projects which were divided into current and completed ones, and also divided into the above-mentioned groups. Each project was described on a separate sheet, and in addition to the description and contact details, the following additional information was included: - 'Data' - information gained from the survey, - 'more information' - website, - 'Publication' - information about individual studies, reports, publications and results. There were also links to online publications (if available).

Additionally, an assessment was carried out of several transnational projects in the BSR dedicated to the MSP process that have involved Polish partners (PlanCoast, BaltSeaPlan⁸, PartiSEApate⁹) with the aim of investigating to what extent their outputs contribute to the MSP on a cross-border level. These projects did not deliver new data but used the existing dataset. Nevertheless, their contribution to the development of the MSP process in Poland is unquestionable.

Conclusions and recommendations

National and international projects (both recently completed and ongoing ones) may be of unique value to the MSP process in the EU. Particular sets of raw data that are unava-

lable in standard data sources, innovative concepts of data presentation/interpretation etc., all of these outcomes create a new value that cannot be obtained by means of standard monitoring and statistical data collection. Therefore, it is recommended that an inventory and analysis of outcomes of recently completed and ongoing projects be carried out at the start of the MSP process (desk-study stock taking). EU-wide online project databases, for example 'Knowledge and Expertise in European Programmes'⁶, can facilitate this type of stock taking. Of course, it is recommended to use the databases of individual programmes, for example: BSR, SBP, HELCOM or VASAB. It is also recommended that MSP practitioners involved in the projects actively exchange information among themselves, but also on databases like the one mentioned above. It seems apparent that projects that have collected, or will collect, environmental data in the future are the most important, because their results directly contribute to the knowledge of the marine environment. Even though the study was devoted to the analysis of projects delivering raw data on the marine environment, it is recommended that the above-mentioned desk-study stock taking be expanded to include projects on the future development of specific marine/maritime uses (e.g. shipping, energy, maricultures etc.). One should be aware that this kind of inventory requires adequate resources, especially in terms of time and skills. As this study has showed, the screening of projects and selection of potentially relevant ones - from 300 to 73, finishing with 27 of them - is a time-consuming process. Making a judgment on whether project outcomes are relevant for MSP requires at least a basic knowledge of the subject. Still, recommended desk-study stock taking may significantly increase the knowledge base of MSP practitioners, providing them with information that is not available from other sources. If performed on a regular basis, such stock taking may become much less time-consuming.

For the purpose of the MSP process in Poland, the results of the 16 projects indicated as 'important for MSP' - i.e. delivering new information about the marine environment in the Polish sea areas - need to be thoroughly analysed as part of the future of the MSP process in Poland. Particularly important projects are:

- i) SAMBAH and BIAS (both projects co-funded by LIFE+ Instrument)- measurement of sound in water;
- ii) ZOSTERA (co-funded by the Polish Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme) "The structure and functioning of the food web in an ecosystem of the Gulf of Puck", BALTIC-C (co-funded by BONUS), INFLOW (co-funded by BONUS), KNOWSEA (co-funded by 7FP), AQUILO (co-funded by the Polish Applied Research Programme) - benthic habitats and organisms, chemical parameters of water;
- iii) BALTIC GAS co-funded by BONUS Programme, AQUILO - geology and morphology, sediments;
- iv) CHEMSEA co-funded by BSR 2007-2014 Programme) - locations of chemical munitions dumped.

Tab. I. Projects identified as 'important for msp in poland' - projects that has collected or will collect in the future environmental data – require thorough analysis

1.	SAMBAH	http://www.sambah.org/
	BIAS	https://biasproject.wordpress.com/
2.	ZOSTERA	http://water.iopan.gda.pl/projects/Zostera/index-pl.html
	BALTIC-C	http://www.baltex-research.eu/baltic-c/
	INFLOW	http://www.inflow-fp7.eu/
	KNOWSEA	http://www.knowseas.com/
3.	AQUILO	http://www.morceko-aquilo.pl/
	BALTIC GAS	http://www.bonusportal.org/about_us/history/bonus_2009-2011/bonus_projects/baltic_gas
4.	AQUILO	http://www.morceko-aquilo.pl/
	CHEMSEA	http://www.chemsea.eu/

A separate group consists of projects based on historical data or customised methods of data presentation showing - on maps or in reports - the results of analyses of natural phenomena, including climate change:

- i) BALTEX / AMBER ECOSU- anthropogenic impacts in the coastal zone;
- ii) Baltic-C - the dynamics of changes in the Baltic chemical parameters (POC);
- iii) BALM - maps showing the 'health of the ecosystem of the Baltic Sea' (species, eutrophication, contaminants), the assessment being made using HOLAS. The image of the whole area of the Baltic Sea and bays including the Bay of Gdansk;
- iv) ELME - report on the status and condition of marine organisms (fish, algae, mussels), i.e. the impact of eutrophication on the state of the sea and its organisms;
- v) HELCOM FISH-PRO II - assessment of fish populations in the Baltic Sea;
- vi) Ferryscope - monitoring of phytoplankton blooms.

Tab. II. Projects based on projects based on historical data or data collected using customized methods (eg. A device installed on ships) presented on maps or in reports

1.	BALTEX/AMBER, ECOSUPPORT BALTEX	http://www.baltex-research.eu/projects/
2.	Baltic-Ch	http://www.balticnest.org/balticnest/research/completedprojects/bonus/balticc.4.3186f824143d05551ad127d.html
3.	BALSAM	http://helcom.fi/helcom-at-work/projects/balsam
4.	ELME	http://cordis.europa.eu/result/rcn/50751_en.html
5.	HELCOME FISH-PRO II	http://helcom.fi/helcom-at-work/projects/fish-pro
6.	Ferryscope	http://www.bonusportal.org/bonus_projects/innovation_projects/ferryscope

Familiarisation with other projects, considered during the investigation as "Maybe relevant" and "Probably not relevant" is also recommended. For example, COCOA¹⁰, which is planned to develop management guidelines aimed at improving the

ecological status of coastal ecosystems that have been degraded by eutrophication. The results of the projects in these categories may also be of importance for MSP - a final decision on their use should therefore be the responsibility of the individual experts participating in the MSP process in Poland.

The analyses conducted as part of this study do not indicate if any of the sources of funding (national and international programmes) examined, have a preference for projects aimed at acquiring data useful for MSP in Poland. One would expect that programmes devoted to basic research like BONUS or to environmental protection like LIFE + would be the most useful in that respect, but when looking at the projects that were analysed, many still originate from other sources. It is therefore strongly recommended to screen all sources of funding that are available at the time when the recommended desk-study stock taking is taking place.

Undoubtedly, the important role of transnational projects (BaltCoast, PlanCoast, BaltSeaPlan¹¹, PartiSEApate¹²) for the MSP process in the BSR cannot go unnoticed. All of them have put forward a dialogue on cross-border (transboundary) consultations at a level that is unique on the European Union scale. Sharing data at a cross-border level (BaltCoast, PlanBothnia), pilot draft maritime spatial plans (PlanCoast, BaltSeaPlan), novel methodologies for a strategic environmental

impact assessment (BaltSeaPlan) and recommendations on MSP governance in the BSR – all of these outcomes have been delivered in the relatively short space of time of 10 years for a relatively small part of the EU, like the BSR.

It is no exaggeration to say that the success of international projects in the BSR was the inspiration for the creation of the MSP Directive. The Baltic Scope project financed by the EU DG Mare and BaltSpace project financed by the BONUS Programme are clear evidence that the BSR became a leader in raising the importance of the cross-border consultation process in the MSP in Europe. These efforts shall be continued in all aspects that are crucial for a shared management of the common space of the Baltic: research and scientific cooperation in topics like ecosystem approach, environmental impact assessment etc., data exchange and harmonisation, innovative and effective means of participation in cross-border consultations and governance. Initiatives that have recently been undertaken (BalticLINES and Baltic Integrid projects' proposals that have passed the 1st stage of the INTERREG BSR Programme application process) indicate that international cooperation within the framework of projects for the benefit of the MSP process in the BSR, is a powerful means for maturing this process and one which should be continued.

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Word count: 2200 Page count: 4 Tables: 2 Figures: 1 References: 12

Scientific Disciplines: Socioeconomics

DOI: 10.5604/12307424.1164053

Full-text PDF: www.bullmaritimeinstitute.com/fulltxt.php?ICID=1132407

Cite this article as: Przedzrymirska J., Rakowska I.: Usefulness of projects realized within Baltic Sea Region for maritime spatial planning in Poland: BMI 2015; 30(1): 47-50

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Competing interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Corresponding author Iwona Rakowska, Maritime Institute in Gdańsk, Gdańsk, ul. Długi Targ 41/42, tel. +48 301 16 41; e-mail: irakowska@im.gda.pl