

Baltic InteGrid report from the workshop "Energy challenge for the Baltic Sea 2050"

30-31 October 2018, Copenhagen (Denmark)

The international workshop "Energy challenges for the Baltic Sea" was co-organised by two Baltic Interreg projects: **Baltic LINES and Baltic InteGrid**. The goal of the workshop was to outline offshore energy trends and potential future scenarios for offshore energy generation and transmission development in the Baltic Sea region. The workshop aimed to advise maritime spatial planners to best integrate spatial demands of the offshore energy generation and transmission system, with other maritime uses, while including energy sector needs in the period between 2030 and 2050. This report conveys main outcomes of the workshop contributing to the Baltic InteGrid project findings. Detailed review on the workshop is to be prepared and published by the Baltic LINES project.

The workshop was attended by 40 international energy and MSP experts with the aim to discuss the demands of the energy sector and investigated best spatial solutions for the offshore wind energy (OWE) development in the Baltic Sea Region. Three interactive sessions grasped the themes: (1) the development of the offshore wind energy and associated targets; (2) future trends of the energy technology; (3) the development of interconnectors and grids. The topics were introduced by a keynote speakers and followed by group discussions and work on the spatial aspects using the MSP Challenge simulation game (<https://www.msp-platform.eu/practices/msp-challenge-simulation-game>). During the session dedicated to interconnectors and grid, the Baltic InteGrid project presented its vision of the Baltic Offshore Grid (BOG) for 2050. Moreover, during this session outcomes of the consultations of the Maritime Spatial Planning Recommendations elaborated by the Maritime Institute in Gdansk were presented. Number of stakeholders from the policy making, commercial and research practice, from MSP and energy activity, have been contacted prior to the workshop to provide feedback on the recommendations to the MSP process. A valuable output for the team working on the MSP recommendations was a prioritisation of the recommendations. Throughout the survey, responders were given opportunity to reflect on recommendations provided and to suggest additional ones. The workshop served as a final consultations event.



Source: Twitter #BalticLINES



Photo: Marija Lazić

Workshop outcomes

The workshop resulted in following outcomes:

- Gathered inputs for the offshore energy development scenarios through the discussion with interest groups/stakeholders. Where expectations of the energy sector and view on the potential spatial consequences, have been delivered by the energy experts and planners attending the workshop.
- Development of inputs for the MSP Challenge game for other purposes on the Baltic Sea. During the workshop in Copenhagen the data base on suitable areas for placing the offshore wind farms was updated by the stakeholders/attendants who has been directly involved in development of a national maritime plan. Such an update created picture of the real/planned scenarios of country while giving as well potential areas for future development of the OWF.
- Inputs for recommendations to the MSP process in the Baltic Sea countries. Provided insights how to best meet energy sector needs in national marine plans from the industry stakeholders' perspective and way to enhance the maritime spatial planning process derived from the stakeholders involved in the planning activity;
- NorthSEE project and North Sea experience was shared. Shared experience brought planners closer to the response on the "What would be transnational needs and solutions for the Baltic Sea?".

Specific outcomes for Baltic InteGrid project - Results of a consultations of the Baltic InteGrid MSP recommendations

The recommendations focus on policy and regulation, information sharing and management aspects of the MSP considered from the point of view of both maritime spatial planning authorities and practitioners, and the offshore energy authorities and operators. Where recommendations pursued following elements:

1. A need for unified (at policy and management level) approach towards the sector in all countries around the Baltic Sea.
2. An unified approach to the MSP process for all maritime uses, for Baltic Sea countries
3. A need for enhancing cooperation and data/information sharing between sectors and between OWE sector and MSP authorities, likewise cross-border cooperation in order to support an international offshore meshed grid development.

In the course of consultations a survey was conducted where stakeholders were asked to rank listed recommendations by the importance, where 1 – meant not important, 2 – moderate and 3 – of high importance. According to the stakeholders' responses, of high importance were following recommendations:

Policy:

- ✓ OWE sector perspective the prerequisite should be to have politically accepted development plans with defined targets (long and short terms).
- ✓ MSP process should take into consideration objectives and targets from the OWE sector
- ✓ Consider to form a coordination grid body that will facilitate the Baltic wide (among countries) synergies and alignment of necessary investments.
- ✓ Consider to organize and employ face-to-face and/or online discussions between each sector alone before joining the cross-sectoral consultations during MSP process consultation.

Management:

- ✓ Ensure an early stakeholder engagement in the process. A more segmented system with strong links or communication may produce integrated and easier decision-making.
- ✓ Inform planners about all possible constraints that are related to your infrastructure (buffer zones for cables and transformer stations etc.).

- ✓ Take into consideration within the investment plans possible co-existence of OWE and other uses, or multi-use concept with other uses (e.g. environmental protection, aquaculture, fisheries, tourism).
- ✓ Ensure that your OWE targets are accepted at the governmental level and well communicated at a local one.

Information sharing:

- ✓ Create a mechanism (including financial scheme, e.g. cost sharing) enabling making use of commercial monitoring data collected for the purpose of OWE investments, including data collected for EIA.
- ✓ Make data as much as possible available publicly: it increases your chance to engage stakeholders, it helps investors to verify potential OWE infrastructure, it enhances trust and cooperation.
- ✓ Establish an efficient data and information management at the Baltic sea scale.

Based on own experience, **responders' recommendations to the MSP practitioners and MSP process, in regards to the offshore energy sector** are:

- Present a final location of the Baltic Grid including the position of the main "plug in" offshore stations.
- Consideration should be given to technological advancements in the future. There has been considerable change in OWE technology over the last 20 years, and this means the impact of OWE today is not the same as it was at the start. Any standards, guidance or MSP should be flexible to recognise and accommodate technological changes in the future.
- Establish a process that allows upgrades to MSP based on lessons learned, technical advances, etc.
- Allow OWE project development in non-MSP areas, if there are no major conflicts with other interest groups. Such applications shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Restrictions in use of maritime areas (e.g. Natura 2000 sites) should equally apply to all uses.

Changes which responders would make in current the MSP process in their own country, would be:

- Improvement of the information sharing and public involvement;
- Early and close preparation of SEA along the MSP process;
- Elaboration of a monitoring and evaluation system with clear indicators;
- Better integration of the ecosystem based approach in the MSP process;
- Use of scenarios and alternatives in MSP;
- Flexibility of the plan, as technology and economy is changing faster than even expected.

According to the responses **the most critical barriers/obstacles** for planning the space for energy sector are:

- Lack of knowledge and a public information campaign regarding the facts, pro's and con's associated with all (ongoing and potential) marine uses (e.g., environmental impact analyses of shipping, fishing, gravel extraction, military exercises, OWFs, etc.).
- Lack of transparency of OWE development projects to the public (e.g. EIA information, etc.). An open dialogue of the OWE planners with the public will eventually reduce the criticism and apprehensions by the public towards OWE and potentially turn in an understanding of and appreciation for the benefits of OWE.

Emerging from stakeholders' perspective, **solutions for minimizing bottlenecks** could be done through well-established exchange of available research and monitoring data between the energy sector and planning authorities, as well as environmental authorities. Such cooperation would be of benefits for all parties OWE and environmental authorities while also easily available for planning authorities.