



Measures for a safe and clean Baltic Sea

The Baltic Master Action Plan


BalticMaster



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Preface

The threat of oil spills, tanker accidents and environmental degradation in the Baltic Sea is more current than ever. Sea traffic, offshore wind power plants, pipelines, fishing, and tourism are just a few of several interests competing for the limited space of the Baltic.

For two and a half years, 40 organizations from seven countries around the Baltic Sea have worked together in the Baltic Master project. Our unique approach has been to highlight the local and regional perspectives of maritime safety, and establish cross-sectorial collaboration with national and international authorities.

In this document, Measures for a safe and clean Baltic Sea – the Baltic Master Action Plan, we have defined three main challenges for the future of the Baltic Sea. They are based on experiences from the project – and all of them are to be dealt with by us at the local and regional levels.

Uno Aldegren
Chairman of the Political Committee, Baltic Master

P-G Lindencona
Chairman of the Steering Group, Baltic Master

Measures for a safe and clean Baltic Sea – The Baltic Master Action Plan

The Baltic Master project

Baltic Master is an international project. It aims to improve maritime safety by integrating local and regional perspectives. The focus is on the Baltic Sea and issues concerning preparedness, prevention and marine spatial planning.

The main objectives of Baltic Master are:

- To increase the influence of the regional governments and the local authorities on matters of maritime safety. The project defines their ability to participate more effectively.
- To develop transport and communications within a framework of maritime safety, taking into account the diversity of activities in the Baltic Sea.
- To increase preparedness for preventing and managing a catastrophe, through integrating local and regional zones in the planning and implementation processes.

Purpose and target group

The purpose of the Baltic Master Action Plan is to present measures and actions on how to improve the maritime safety in the Baltic Sea. The measures and actions are based on the findings within the project and should be implemented during the next three years .

The primary target group consists of politicians, decision-makers and civil servants at the local and regional level. However, the results are also important for national organizations and EU institutions responsible for developing policies and strategies for increased maritime safety.

The Baltic Master Action Plan will be reviewed by the Baltic Master Political Committee and the Steering Group during the autumn of 2007. When approved by these bodies, the Action Plan will be adopted.

¹ The proposal for a Baltic Master II project is under development and the measures presented in this Action Plan will most probably form the basis for such a project.

Measures for a safe and clean Baltic Sea

1) Initiate proactive on-land contingency planning

Each responsible authority should develop contingency plans for their on-land response. These plans should be connected with other organizations through cooperation and joint exercises. The outline for a proactive contingency plan is described in the Baltic Master 'Recommendations for local and regional preparedness'.

2) Enforce safety regulations

Tools, such as the PSSA (Particularly Sensitive Sea Area) and international legislation, need to be powerfully enforced in order to secure a safe transport system in the Baltic Sea. Local and regional authorities must demand that the responsible national authorities introduce and take safety measures in accordance with the Baltic Master 'Vision of PSSA 2020'.

3) Develop the potentials of coastal management

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) introduce a real possibility to ensure sustainable development and restoration of the coastal zones and marine environments. Through ICZM/MSP we can increase the safety around transportation. Local and regional authorities have an important role when developing and implementing ICZM/MSP strategies and methods.

1) Initiate a proactive on-land contingency planning

Transport by sea is expected to increase dramatically in the coming years and with that comes a higher risk for accidents. This requires increased preparedness for preventing and managing oil spills. The Baltic Master project recommends a proactive preparedness rather than being reactive.

Recommendations for local and regional preparedness

The proactive on-land contingency planning relies on a number of basic recommendations to be found in the Baltic Master 'Recommendations for local and regional preparedness'.

1. Increase the awareness of real threats as well as socioeconomic and ecological costs affiliated with an oil spill
2. Know your responsibility in order to take the right actions
3. Develop contingency plans in cooperation with other responsible organizations across administrative and national borders
4. Exercise!

MEASURE # 1

Each responsible authority should develop contingency plans for their on-land response. These plans should be connected with other organizations through cooperation and joint exercises. The outline for a proactive contingency plan is described in the Baltic Master 'Recommendations for local and regional preparedness'.

Experiences from the Baltic Master project

The main focus for Baltic Master has been to develop the 'Recommendations for local and regional preparedness'. Parallel with this work some specific project partners have taken their own initiatives in improving their on-land response routines. One characteristic of this has been the increased focus on cooperation and management.

The newly initiated cooperation between the Rescue Services of southern Sweden and the Regional Municipality of Bornholm in Denmark is an important example of best practice concerning cross-border on-land contingency planning. Each year approximately 45, 000 vessels pass through the Bornholm strait. The intense traffic has already resulted in the Fu Shan Hai oil spill in 2003 and future accidents will affect both countries on each side of the strait. Strong cooperation will be necessary to meet the further increase in traffic and to sustain safety.

Similarly, in other parts of the Baltic Master project, the Region of Halland in the southwest of Sweden has coordinated its five coastal municipalities, the County Administrative Board and the Region in order to join forces in developing and testing a regional contingency plan applicable to all stakeholders in the region.

Experiences from Baltic Master show that exercises and the formation of strategic cooperation in the field of on-land response is a successful and cost efficient way of increase preparedness.

2) Enforce safety regulations

We need to take the increase in maritime transportations seriously by developing and installing systems for safe transportation at sea. These systems should ensure that accidents will not happen and that severe pollution connected to transport, such as illegal discharges, do not occur. We already have a major part of the legislation in place, but it needs to be actively enforced by the member states.

Vision of PSSA

Classing the Baltic Sea as a PSSA should be seen as an opportunity to protect the Baltic Sea. The countries in the Baltic Sea Region should work more progressively with the PSSA and continuously develop new protective measures.

Developing the PSSA should take into account, for example, the numerous sensitive areas in the Baltic Sea, maritime traffic monitoring schemes, waste handling, etc. One important protective measure is the organization of a joint traffic monitoring scheme which includes surveillance and control as well as the monitoring and steering of vessels. The monitoring scheme should cover the entire Baltic Sea and rely on the same system for all states involved

Observing existing legislation

The maritime field does not primarily suffer from a lack of rules or legislation, the problem is rather the observance of them. Therefore, one field of action is the implementation and enforcement of all existing regulations. The member states should be required to improve the observance of existing regulations.

MEASURE # 2

Tools, such as the PSSA and international legislation, need to be powerfully enforced in order to secure a safe transport system in the Baltic Sea. Local and regional authorities must demand that the responsible national authorities introduce and take safety measures in accordance with the Baltic Master 'Vision of PSSA 2020'.

¹ The 'Vision of PSSA 2020' is under construction and will be presented during the Baltic Master conference 'Time to Act!' For more information contact Henrik Nilsson (henrik.nilsson@regionblekinge.se)

Experiences from the Baltic Master project

Conclusions from the Baltic Master report 'Regional and local priorities in the Baltic Sea Particularly Sensitive Sea Area' emphasize the fact that "prevention is the best way of minimizing threats at sea. It includes enforcement of regulations related to environmental protection, construction of safer vessels, improved sea pilotage, obligatory monitoring."

In Baltic Master it is the political will to make the Baltic Sea "as safe at sea as in the air" thus, urging the states around the Baltic Sea to take action, implement existing legislation and to decide on more and powerful protective measures.

It is necessary to concentrate the activities on the system, tools and monitoring solutions and to conduct in-depth risk analysis of potential accident occurrence within the framework of existing vessel traffic monitoring systems in the Baltic Sea. A good example for the Baltic Sea is to be found in the Gulf of Finland where a thorough ship reporting system connected to VTS closely monitors the seaborne traffic. Smaller such services and systems are in place in other areas of the Baltic Sea. The need for more such services should be assessed and developed in areas with a high traffic density.

At the same time, ships in the Baltic Sea are recommended to avoid two sensitive areas south of Gotland. These areas make up important habitats for fish and birds. The recommendation to avoid these particular areas has proven to be poorly respected by the traffic passing through. Thus, it should be totally prohibited for ships to disturb these valuable habitats and more sensitive areas of a similar type in the Baltic Sea should be protected.

3) Develop the potentials of coastal management

The marine ecosystem is fragile and under considerable stress. Human usage of the sea as well as environmental changes, such as climate change and species extinction, exerts tremendous stress on the marine environment. In order to save the seas, action needs to be taken. However, we lack readily available tools for realistic and sustainable management of the oceans, marine areas and coastal zones. We have to determine which measures need to be taken and how they can be implemented. In other words, we need to go from vision to action.

Tool and manual for coastal management

In order to organize and develop the coastal zones and marine areas in accordance with a sustainable approach, the concepts of ICZM and MSP need to be fully applied and implemented. Today, however, functional tools and methods are lacking and many local and regional as well as national authorities are uneasy with the subject. In many member states it is unclear which authority bears the responsibility for ICZM and MSP.

The Baltic Master project has developed a tool and manual for marine area spatial planning and has also realised a case study focusing on the implementation of integrated coastal zone management in the planning processes of a local authority. The lesson learnt is that ICZM/MSP is one important method for local and regional authorities when trying to increase maritime safety.

MEASURE # 3

ICZM and MSP introduce a real possibility to ensure a sustainable development and restoration of the coastal zones and marine environment. Through ICZM/MSP we can increase the safety around transportation. Local and regional authorities have an important role when developing and implementing ICZM/MSP strategies and methods.

Experiences from the Baltic Master project

Baltic Master has been working simultaneously with developing a tool and manual for Marine Spatial Planning while trying to implement the use of these techniques in some of the partner organizations.

The municipality of Trelleborg in southern Sweden has been carrying out a comprehensive analysis of its coastal and marine waters in order to; **1)** detect conflicts and problems; **2)** analyze the development when faced with external threats such as climate change, increased transportation and oil spills; and **3)** find solutions for the long-term use of the coastal zone and marine waters.

The case study in Trelleborg is an example of how to define and structure the needs, conflicts and problems within the local authority in order to find solutions and minimize risks as well as environmental degradation. In other words, it is one method for coordinating the economic, social and ecological needs and threats in the coastal zone in order to ensure sustainable development.