Baltic Sea CBD EBSA workshop in Helsinki 19-24.2.2018

14th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group
12-14.3.2018 Copenhagen, Denmark
Penina Blankett, Ministry of the Environment
What is EBSA?

- The application of the EBSA criteria is a scientific and technical exercise, carried out in a workshop.
- EBSA process is iterative and ongoing, there may be additional areas described as meeting the EBSA criteria in future regional or sub-regional workshops.
- EBSAs are not Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and the CBD process of describing EBSAs does not require, legally or otherwise, that they should be designated as MPAs.

There has been 13 regional EBSA workshops, covering more than 74 per (82%) cent of the world’s ocean.
CBD EBSA criteria (annex I, decision IX/20)

1. Uniqueness or Rarity
2. Special importance for life history stages of species
3. Importance for threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitat
4. Vulnerability, Fragility, Sensitivity, or Slow recovery
5. Biological Productivity
6. Biological Diversity
7. Naturalness

These criteria can be ranked:
• High,
• Medium,
• Low,
• Don’t know

Photos: Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife,
Baltic Sea EBSA workshop

- Ca. 30 participants from seven HELCOM countries and NGOs,**
- CBD and HELCOM Secretariat
- Duke University Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab Team with support from the Finnish Environment Institute.
- Training Day 19.2
- Workshop days 20-24.2.
- The workshop was co-chaired by Ms. Penina Blankett, Finland, and Mr. Dieter Boedeker, Germany.

**Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and Sweden

BirdLife International, Coalition Clean Baltic, Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, ICCA (Indigenous Peoples’ and Community Conserved Areas and Territories) Consortium, UNEP- World Conservation Monitoring Centre, WWF Finland
Workshop work:

• Participating experts were invited through a selection process, based on nominations by CBD National Focal Points of the Baltic Sea countries as well as by relevant organizations, using the CBD selection criteria focusing on scientific and technical expertise and experience as well as gender balance.

• The workshop focused on the geographic area covered by the Helsinki Convention.
Outcome of the Baltic Sea EBSA workshop (1/2):

• Each area has been described using the EBSA template,
• Annex highlighting unique and vulnerable ecological and biological features of the Baltic Sea.
• Information on the identified gaps and needs for further elaboration in describing areas meeting EBSA criteria, including the need for the development of scientific capacity and scientific collaboration.

Example of the EBSA template (not Baltic Sea template)
Outcome of the Baltic Sea EBSA workshop (2/2)

Describing nine areas meeting the EBSA criteria:

1. Northern Bothnian Bay
2. Kvarken Archipelago
3. Åland Sea, Åland Islands and the Archipelago Sea of Finland
4. Eastern Gulf of Finland
5. Inner Sea of West Estonian Archipelago
6. Southeastern Baltic Sea Shallows
7. Southern Gotland Harbour Porpoise Area
8. Fehmarn Belt

- Five of these areas are transboundary areas, covering waters of two or more countries.
- The described EBSAs cover 23% of the Baltic Sea waters.
- The workshop could not consider the marine areas of the Baltic Sea countries not attending the workshop.
- The workshop also discussed the significant diversity of indigenous peoples and local communities in the Baltic Sea region.

Photo: Metsähallitus Parks&Wildlife
Southern Gotland Harbour Porpoise Area

- 29242 km²

- The main area identified by the SAMBAH Life+ project

- Important also for wintering birds as well as for harbor seals and shallow banks.
The use of EBSA outcome in HELCOM area -> MSP:

• EBSAs are expected to contribute to fulfilling the regional goal of producing and applying maritime spatial plans that are coherent across borders and apply the ecosystem approach

• could be utilized as green infrastructure features that ensure the protection of the state and biodiversity of the marine ecosystem as well as improve its functioning while promoting ecosystem services

• the topic of “green infrastructure” has been discussed and will be followed-up in the HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working
Next steps:

- Submitted for consideration to the 22nd meeting for SBSTTA* 2-7 July 2018, Montreal, Canada
- For approval to CBD COP 14, 10-22 November 2018, in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

Once approved:
- included in the CBD EBSA repository (www.cbd.int/ebsa)
- Summary report transmitted to United Nations General Assembly as well as other relevant UN/International organisations.

Side-events could be organized at CBD SBSTTA and COP to share the information about the regional workshop and described EBSAs as well as other relevant activities of the HELCOM countries.

The outcome is an opportunity to highlight the fact that despite the known marine environmental problems, the unique semi-enclosed Baltic Sea does have a great ecological or biological significance.

* CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
Thank you for your attention!

Photo: Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife