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The Protect Baltic project is funded by the European Union under Grant agreement ID 101112866. This publication was funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



The Baltic Sea

– unique in the world



Young



Shallow



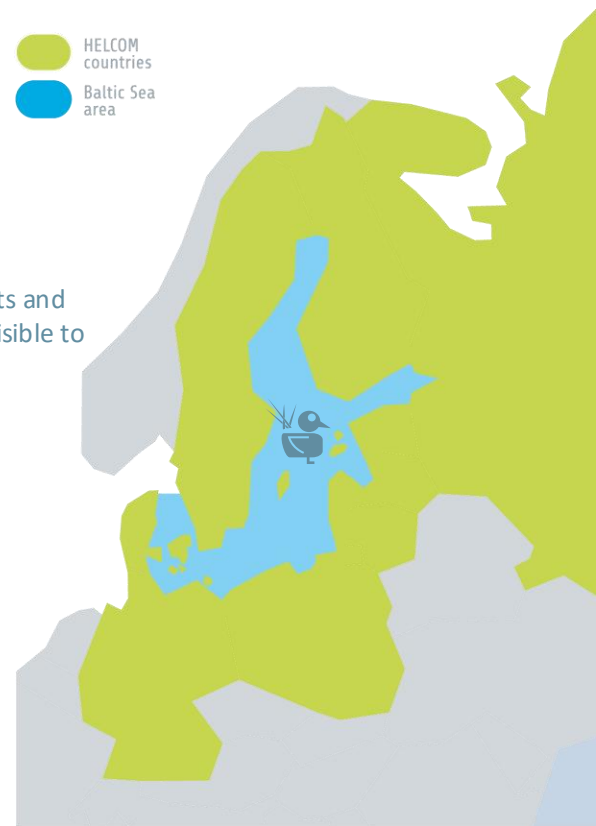
Isolated



Small

But more than anything else, it is variable

Home to **5,000 species** of algae, plants and animals, of which around 3,000 are visible to the naked eye.



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An underwater photograph showing a dense patch of brown and green seaweed on the seabed. The water above is clear and greenish-blue, with numerous small, concentric ripples on the surface, suggesting light reflecting off the water's texture. The seaweed is in the foreground, and the water extends to the top of the frame.

Protection - the why and the what

Credits: Juuso Haapaniemi

The Baltic Sea and Society



Catchment area:
4x area of the sea



9 different countries



Population (catchment):
85 million



One of the most heavily used marine areas in the world



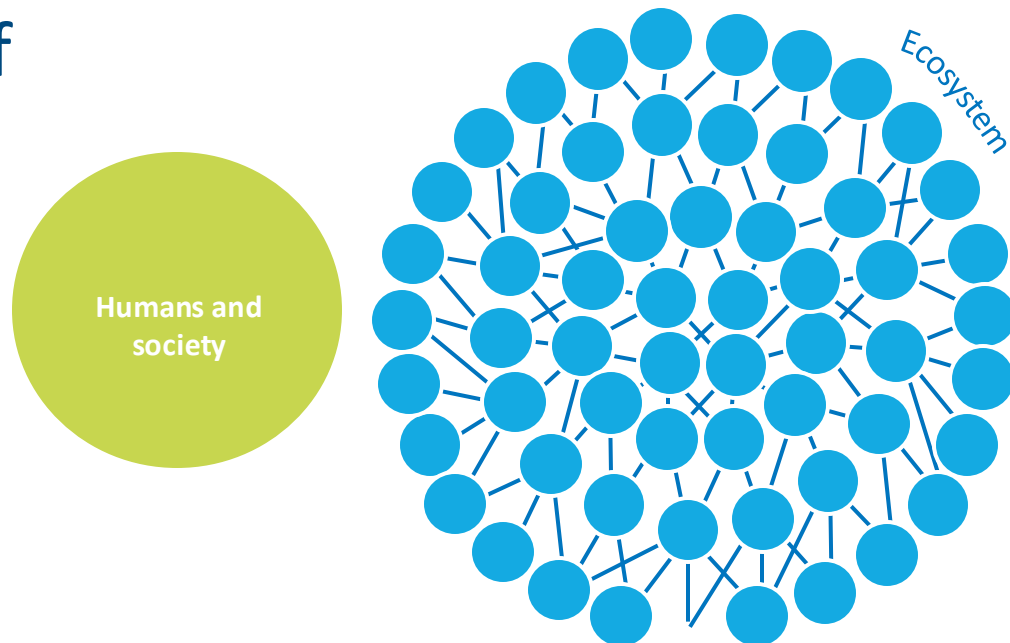
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The Relationship of the Sea and Society



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PROTECT
BALTIC
Preserve Revive Thrive



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The Relationship of Society and the Sea

The relationship between society and the sea is multifaceted and nuanced.

- Human survival, prosperity and overall quality of life depends on a healthy ecosystem, including through a multitude of regulating, provisioning and cultural ecosystem services (e.g. binding carbon and excess nutrients, providing food, oxygen and recreational opportunities).
- Our relationship with the marine environment is defined by a complex interaction of drivers.
- Society can derive benefits from human activities that may have negative impacts on the marine environment.
- A dynamic tension between the need to protect the ecosystem and the desire to use it for our own benefit.



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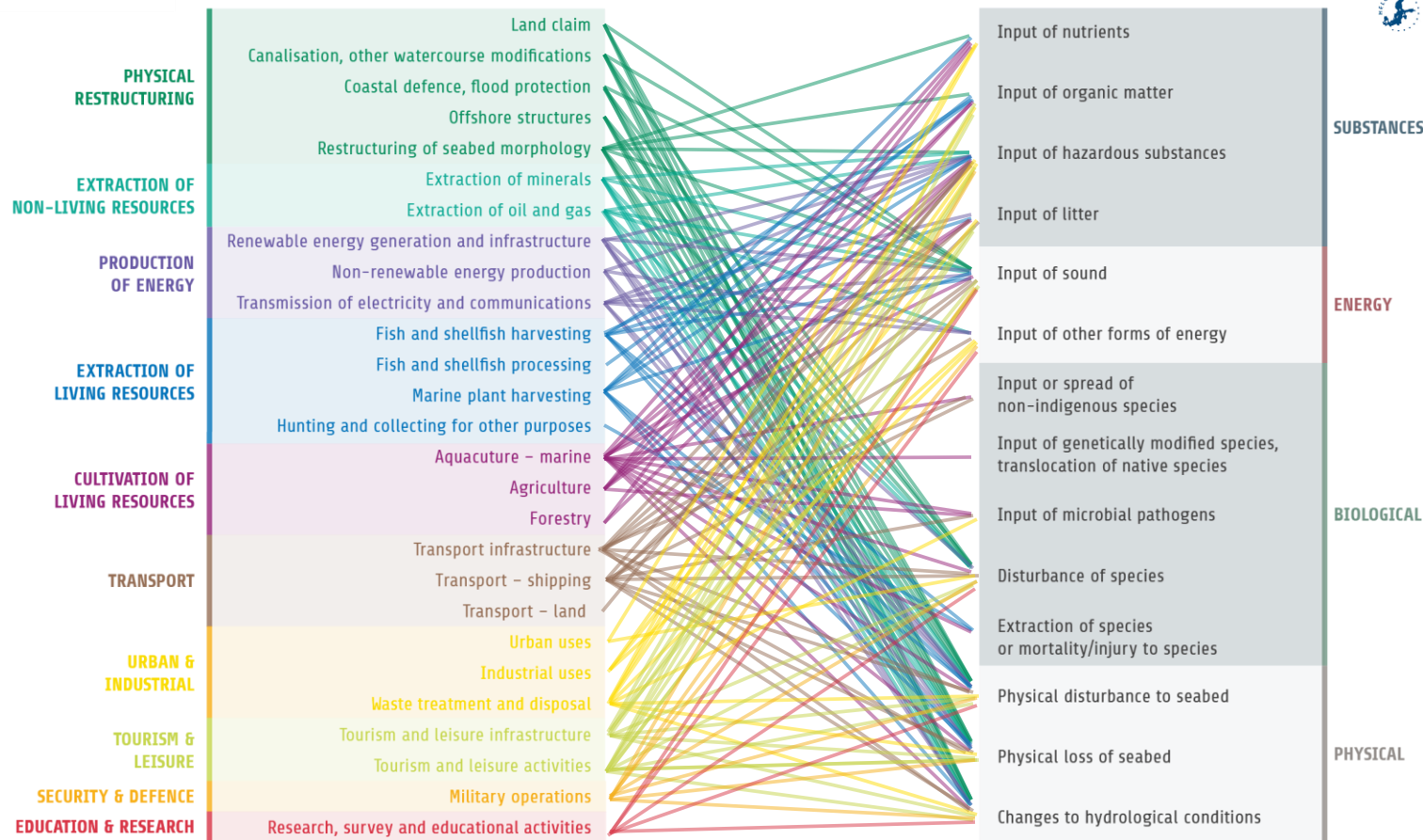


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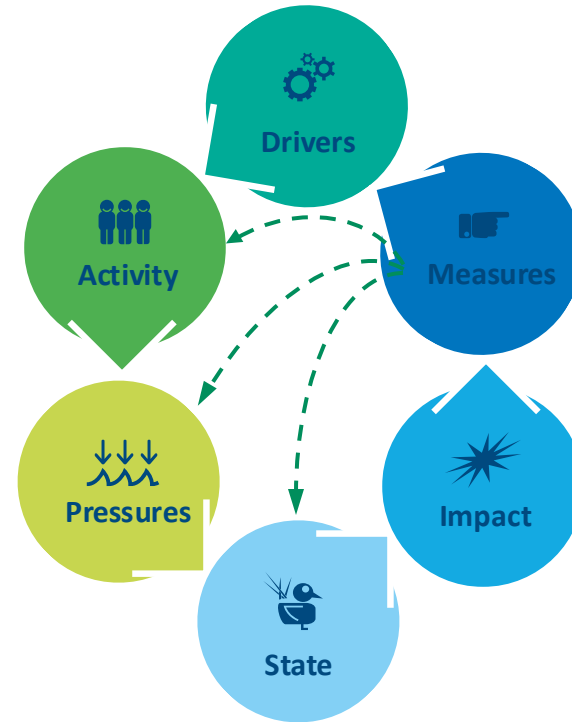
HUMAN ACTIVITIES

PRESSURES



Protection, what is it?

- The practice of protecting, i.e leaving space for, the natural environment from negative impacts.
- This is done by limiting activities and pressures, or improving the status of the environment directly.
- The objectives are to
 - secure biodiversity benefits,
 - enhance ecosystems resilience,
 - maintain or restore its function,
 - ensure that humans can benefit also long term.
- Defined to take place in certain areas and/or certain times, for certain species, habitats or ecosystems.
- Can be done by individuals, groups, governments or international organisations

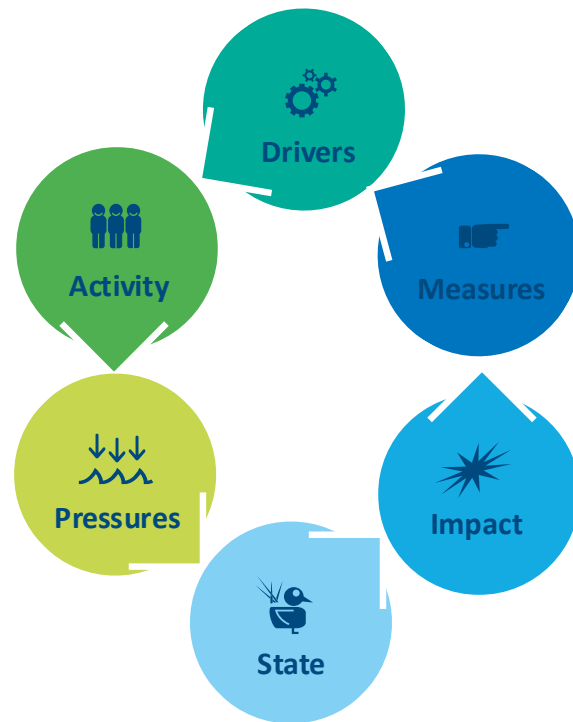


Protection, why do we need it?

Measures for the protection and management of the marine environment have impacts in terms of:

- environmental benefits,
- potential economic or societal benefits, but these can come at a cost.

Several of the sectors utilising the Baltic Sea depends on the quality of the environment (including e.g. fishing, aquaculture, tourism, leisure activities).



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An underwater photograph showing a dense patch of brown and green seaweed on the seabed. The water above is clear and greenish, with visible ripples and light reflections. The text 'PROTECT BALTIC and protection in the Baltic Sea' is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

PROTECT BALTIC and protection in the Baltic Sea

Credit: Juuso Haapaniemi

Global challenges-regional solutions

- Triple planetary crisis.

- Global Biodiversity Targets
- EU Biodiversity Strategy
- Baltic Sea Action Plan



30% of marine area under protection,
1/3 under strict protection, by 2030.



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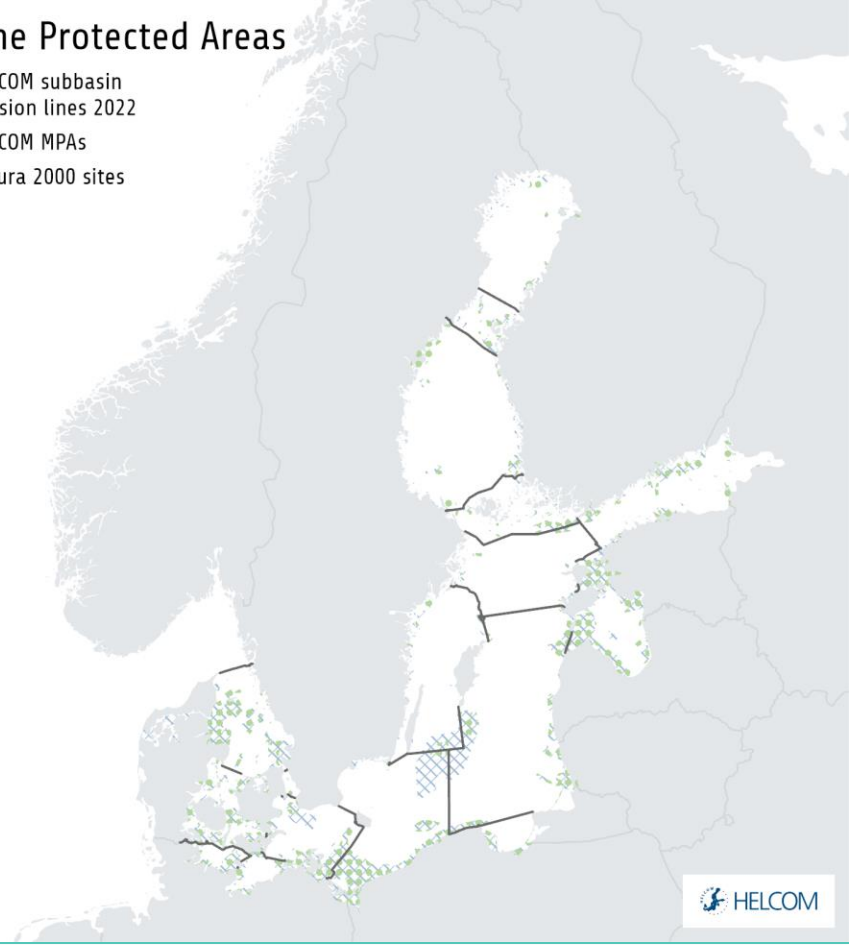
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- HELCOM subbasin division lines 2022
- HELCOM MPAs
- Natura 2000 sites

Current situation – the good

- First region in the world to reach the global 10% target.
- As of December 2022, the Baltic MPA network covers approximately 16.5% of the Baltic Sea.
- Included in this are 178 HELCOM MPAs, amounting to about 13.2% of the Baltic Sea.

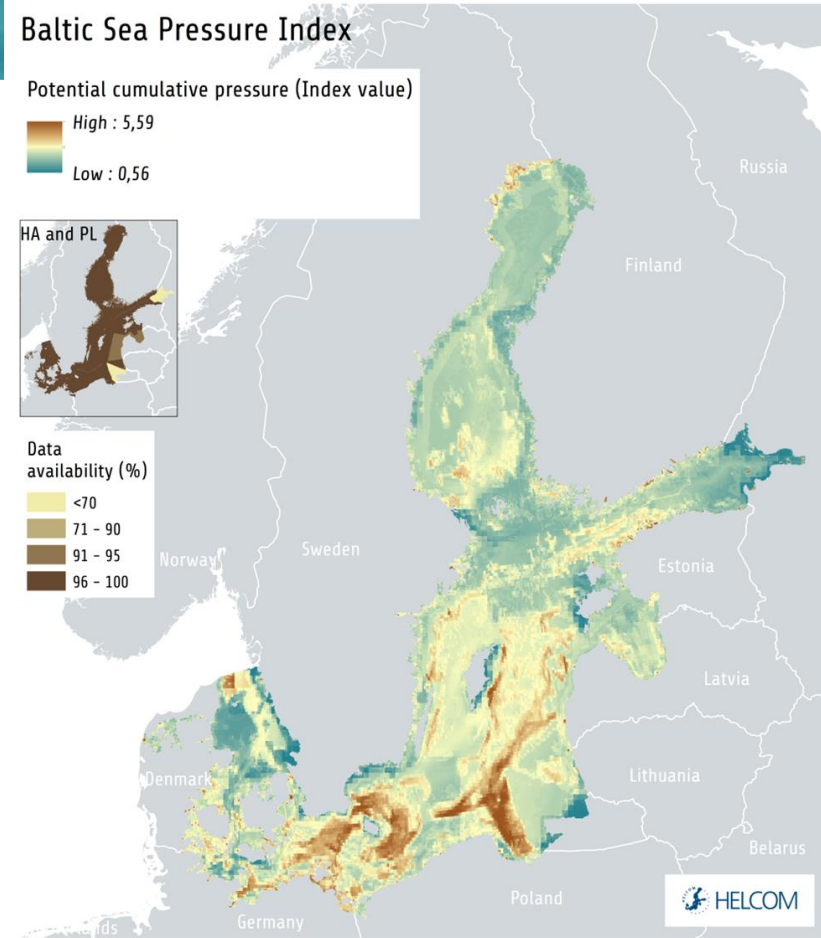
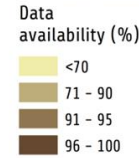
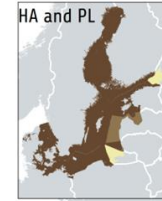
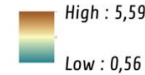


Current situation – the not so good

- Incomplete knowledge base for decision making and designation.
- Gaps in governance.
- Insufficient use of adaptive management.
- It took 30 years to get where we are, now we need to double it in 7 years.
- But it isn't about getting to 30%, it's about getting there in a way that actually provides the biodiversity benefits.

Baltic Sea Pressure Index

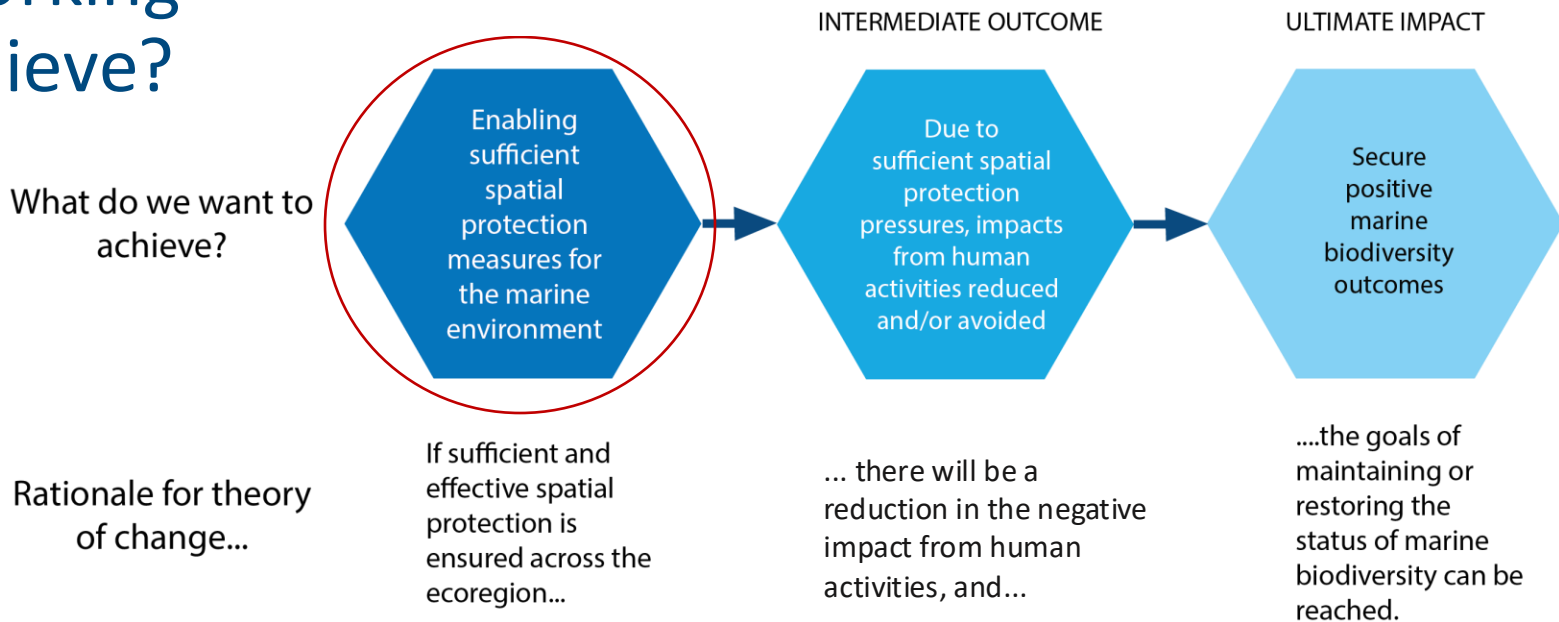
Potential cumulative pressure (Index value)



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What are we working to achieve?



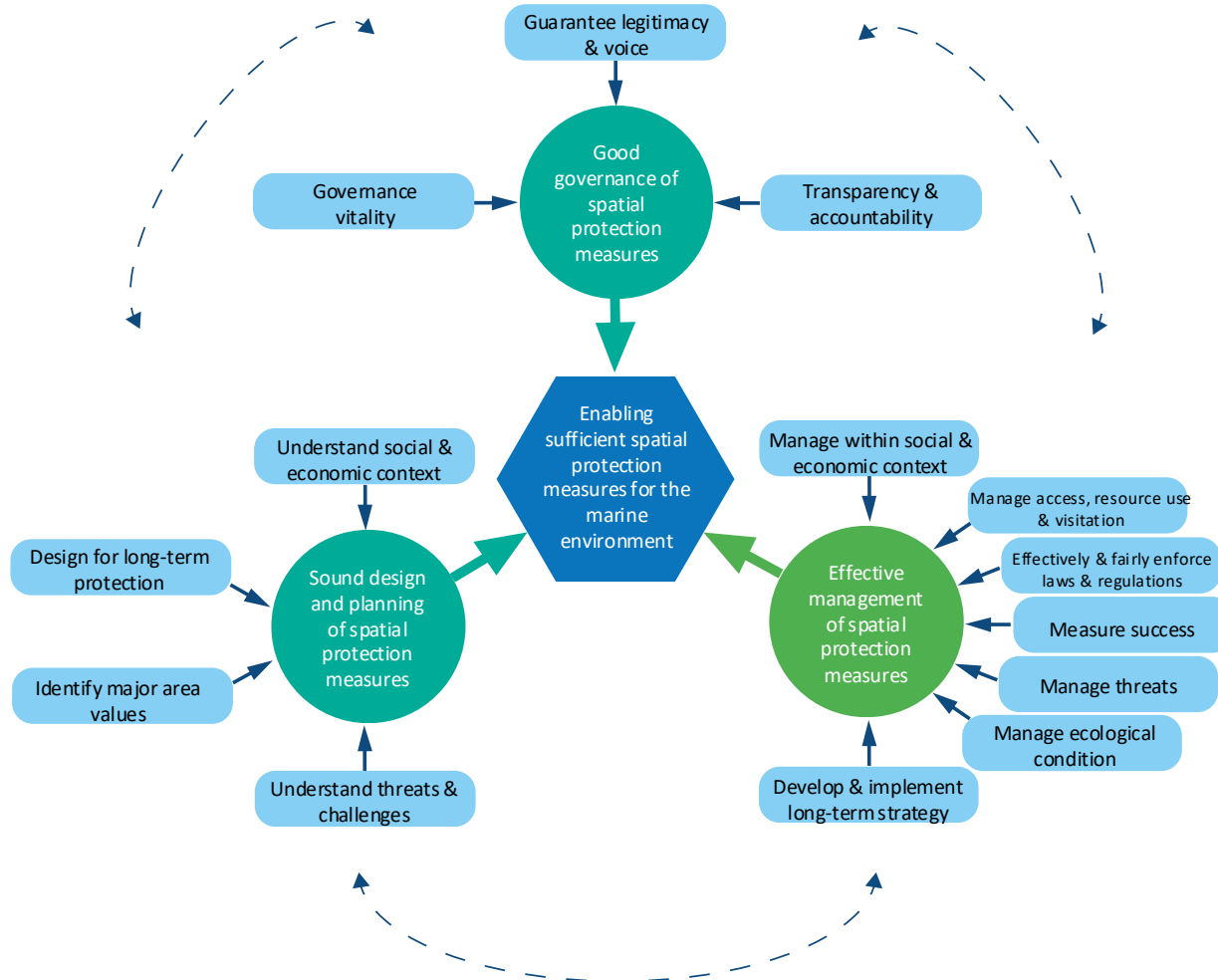
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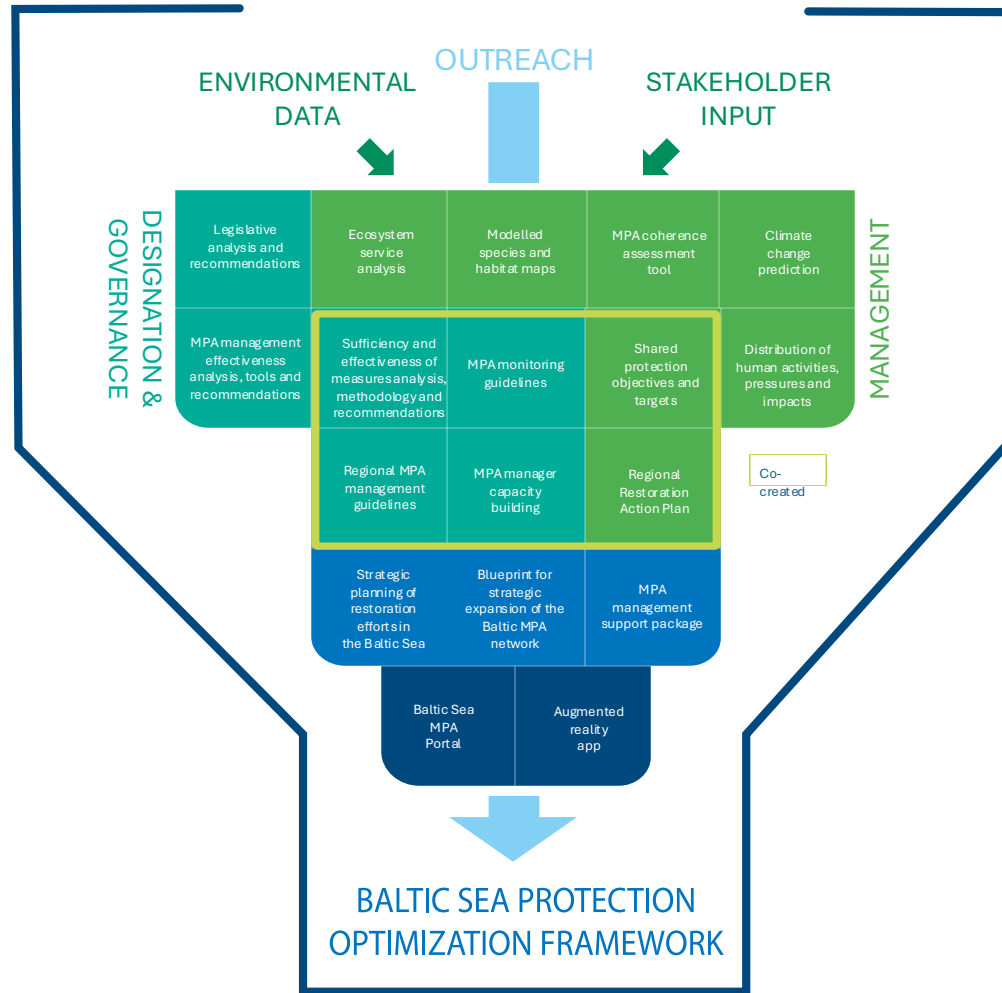


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How do we get there?



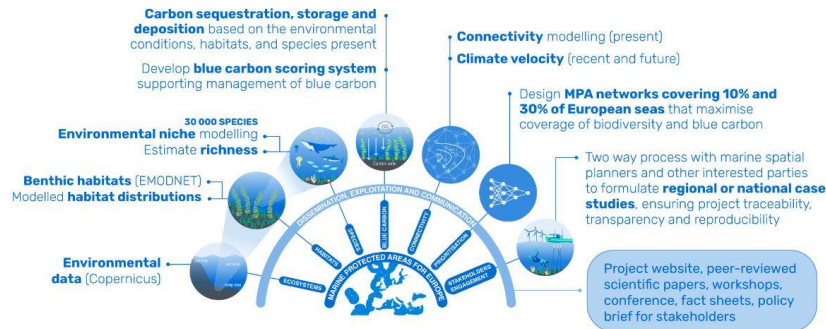


What is
PROTECT
working o

Strength in numbers



- Uses a holistic set of measures, include the range of biodiversity, prioritising areas using systematic conservation planning software.
- Enables alternative weighting of variables and multiple scenarios and thus support wider marine spatial planning.
- Dedicated stakeholder workshop in the afternoon session of the conference.



Other sister projects



Mission Ocean

The project carries forward the EU's Restore of Ocean and Waters Mission.

With a 2030 target, the mission aims to protect and restore the health of our ocean and waters through research and innovation, citizen engagement and blue investments.

<https://missionoceanwaters.eu/#/>



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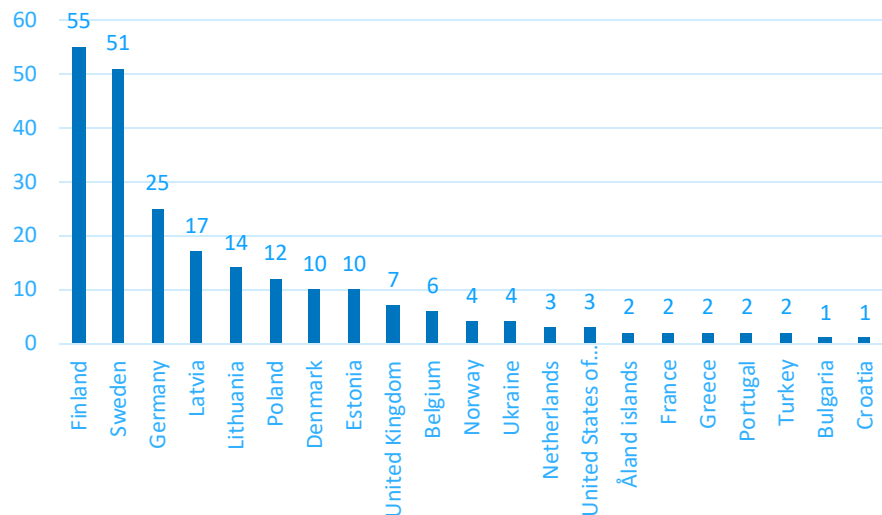
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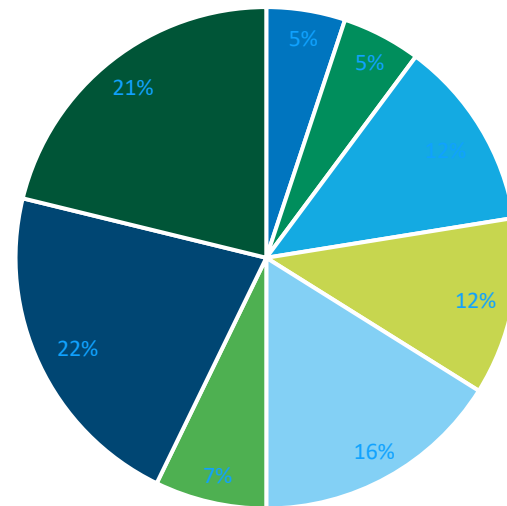
PROTECT BALTIC and stakeholders

-the 2024 Baltic Stakeholder Conference

Participants per country (n=233)



- Civil society
- Educational institution
- Environmental NGO
- International organization
- National authority or ministry
- Regional body
- Scientific and research institutes
- Other



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A large flock of birds, possibly terns, is captured in flight over a body of water. The scene is set during sunset or sunrise, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow. The birds are silhouetted against the bright sky, with their wings spread in various stages of flight. The water reflects the light from the sun, creating a shimmering path. The overall mood is serene and natural.

Together, you are building a legacy
of sustainability and ecological harmony.

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