

BSMSIWG6

Baltic Sea MSI Working Group, On-line Meeting – August 29, 2024

Meeting minutes

Participants:

Denmark	Michael Pfeiffer
Estonia	Gabriela Kotsulim
Estonia	Christjan Kaasik
Finland	Janne Virtanen
Finland	Juho Pitkänen
Finland	Patrick Eriksson
Germany	Carola Heitmann-Bacza
Germany	Elena Maria Gnehm
Latvia	Bruno Spels
Lithuania	Mindaugas Zakarauskas
Lithuania	Emilis Tertelis
Norway	Trond Ski (WWNWS-SC Vice Chair & Navarea XIX Coordinator)
Poland	Piotr Pasztelan
Sweden	Johan von Bültzingslöwen (Chair)
Sweden	Daniel Stjärnström (Sweden Traffic)
Sweden	Lisa Lind
UK	Christopher Gill (Navarea I coordinator)
UK	Matthew Sheldon
UK	Nick Ashton (Metarea I coordinator)
UK	Neil Salter (IMO Navtex Coordinating panel Chair)

Guests:

Sweden – Lena Riedel
Sweden - Gustav Persson

1. Opening statement

The meeting was conducted using Zoom and commenced at 10:00 CET. Brief introduction from the Chair, welcoming everyone. The chair talked briefly about the history of this working group and noted that MSI cooperation in the Baltic Sea celebrates 20 years this year. The group started out as the “Baltico meetings” and has since 2018 been the more official working group under BSHC.

2. Adotion of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

3. Introductions /website

Each member and guest introduced themselves. The website information was looked

through and some corrections were pointed out.

4. Actions from last meeting

The chair could only identify one action remaining from the last meeting.

The issue at hand was the interference between the transmitter Gislövshammar and Varna transmitter at the Black Sea. The issue was kept open until discussions had been made with IMO Navtex coordinating panel chair.

The issue is now **closed** with no solution found. The chair of the IMO Navtex coordinating panel agreed to this action being closed for now. The chair will open the issue in the future if new information should arise.

5. Amendment of the Baltic Sea sub-area border

New issue to the working group. The chair explained the issue. The border as it is now is not logical, from Skaw (Denmark) to the Sweden-Norway border. It cuts over a part of Skagerrak. The border of the sub-area should according to the chair align with the agreed border between the “Baltic Sea area” and the “North Sea area”. This would mean that the border would align with the border between Kattegat and Skagerrak. This is also where the border for the Regional Hydrographic commission (BSHC) is located. They would align with the amendment in place.

The chair has planned to bring this to WWNWS to hopefully get some guidance to the correct way forward, and if possible a decision to amend the border.

A few comments were made by the members of the group.

The Navarea I coordinator asked if an impact assessment has been made, what this change would mean in terms of changed workload when it comes to MSI messages to handle.

The chair replied that no impact study has been made, but that the area in question has had very few coastal warnings handled by the Sweden traffic centre. Sweden traffic handles all coastal warnings in the sub-area. The change of the sub-area would remove the risk of Sweden traffic issuing a “Baltic Sea” navigational warning over an area that is not “the Baltic Sea”.

One question was raised regarding the affect the change would have on Metarea forecast areas. This needs to be more investigated, but the area does not align with any forecast areas in its present form, so the chair argues that this would be an improvement. The new border would go between the Kattegat and Skagerrak.

Norway commented that the new sub-area border should align with the Service area border for navigational warning transmissions. The chair commented that the new suggested border would be less of a diversion from the service area than the current border.

No one in the working group had any objections that the chair would bring this to WWNWS for further guidance and amendment.

Action (chair): Bring issue of sub-area border to WWNWS16 and report back to working group.

6. Reports to WNWWS and BSHC

The reports were quickly looked through. The chair pointed out that there were mistakes in the first version. This will be corrected and will be sent to the IHO.

7. Terms of Reference

The chair reported that the suggested amendments to the ToR and rules of procedure has been approved by the BSHC.

8. METAREA I issues

8.1 S-4XX product implementation

The chair reported that the chair of HSSC has asked if the BSMSIWG could consider coordinating the implementation of S-412 in the Baltic Sea. The question will probably come formally at the BSHC29 in September.

The Meatarea coordinator commented that WMO probably has plans for implementation, but that this group should cooperate with WMO with this issue.

The Navarea I coordinator asked why only S-412 was included in the task, as there are more S-4XX numbers that would have potential impact on MSI. The chair replied that 412 being the warnings regarding weather, it will probably be prioritized, but that he agreed that the other S-4XX numbers probably has a role in MSI. At least S-413 regarding forecasts.

The point was also made that the Baltic Sea not being a MET sub-area.

Action (chair): Reply to formal question from HSSC chair and BSHC that BSMSIWG should not take on the task of coordinating the implantation of S-4XX in the Baltic Sea, but to cooperate with WMO implementation plans for the S-4XX products, and to not limit the action to S-412.

8.2 *Baltic Sea MET sub-area*

Historically, the Baltic Sea has not been a sub-area in the Met-organizations. Sub-areas are not used by the WMO organisations in the same way as in the IHO. There are forecast service areas instead.

However, the Baltic Sea is a suitable area to become a “sub-area” to METAREA I, as reported by the METAREA I coordinator. And the issue will be discussed at the upcoming WWMIWS meeting. The METAREA coordinator will report back about this issue at the next working group meeting.

Action (METAREA I coordinator): Report to BSMSIWG meetings about the issue of a potential MET sub-area in the Baltic Sea.

9. NAVAREA I

The Navarea I coordinator reported on NSMSIWG issues.

He also asked members to provide closed polygons for their coastline and Sea area.

Action (All): If possible, to provide shape-files with closed polygons with each nations waters.

Action (Navarea I coordinator): Combine the provided polygons into one file and report back to the working group.

10. Procedures

10.1 *List of positions*

The chair reminded the working group about the prior discussions in the group to encourage national coordinators not to include a list of positions to a named military exercise area in order to save transmission time.

10.2 *NAVTEX statistics*

The chair also showed the Navtex statistics for 2023 and emphasized the need for planned operations to be informed in Notice to Mariners and that every national coordinator needs to be aware of the problem of maintaining the Navtex time-slots. The number of coastal warnings over Navtex is increasing constantly, reaching over 1000 for the first time 2023.

10.3 *Priority classes*

Sweden traffic showed a slide with the different priority classes (Routine, Important and Vital) with instruction text on how to decide what priority class to use on a specific warning.

The chair said that there are Vital warnings transmitted that really does not qualify as vital warnings. The chair of IMO Navtex coordinating panel explained that this is a global issue. Many areas struggle with warnings with a questionable priority class setting.

Action (Sweden Traffic): Sweden traffic will see to it that all operators is educated on the correct procedures regarding the different priority classes, in particular regarding the procedure regarding Vital warnings.

Action (All): Make sure that the National coordinators and MSI providers understand implications and instructions regarding priority classes.

11. NAVTEX issues

The guests at the meeting, Lena and Gustav are working with the project of modernizing the Swedish Navtex transmitters and software. Some equipment is about 50 years old and needs replacement. The software will also be modernized. They will be invited to coming meetings to report about the process.

12. S-124

12.1 *S-124 implementation coordination in the Baltic Sea area.*

The chair explained that BSMSIWG was given the task as an action from BSHC26 to coordinate the implementation of S-124 in the Baltic Sea sub-area.

12.2 *S-124 status of each country*

The chair asked all participants about their nations development status regarding S-124.

Denmark: No information (Michael was not in the meeting at the time)

Germany: Challenge with different authorities in charge. No timeline but hoping to have a production system by 2026.

Poland: Have had issues with updating API. Will start to work on production system mid-2025. No exact plan.

Lithuania: No timeline. No plan to create production system. Waiting to buy system on the market.

Latvia: No timeline. Focus on S-101 and 102. No plan for own development.

Estonia: No timeline. Active partner in MaDaMe project. Waiting for outcome from the project.

Finland: New system planned. Plan to start development in the beginning of 2025. Plan to be operational by 2026.

Fintraffic is taking part in the MaDaMe project and has a testservice running.

Sweden: Development planned to start beginning of 2025. Also active participating in MaDaMe project. Hoping to be operational by 2026.

12.3 *MaDaMe information*

The working group was briefly informed about the MaDaMe project. A presentation is available for download at the working group website. <https://www.bshc.pro/working-groups/bsmsiwg/>

12.4 *Production code information*

The chair informed the working group where information regarding S-100 production codes can be found. <https://registry.iho.int/producercode/list2.do>

Action (All): Check if your country has a production code. If not, consider applying for a production code.

12.5 *Way forward*

The chair had a suggested way forward to make sure that the Baltic Sea sub-area is S-124 operational by 2026.

The suggestion is that National coordinators in countries that does not have an operational service make agreements with counties that has operational service in order to have service coverage in the Baltic Sea.

No member opposed this suggestion.

Action (All): Consider the suggested way forward and make comments at the next meeting.

13. SAR Warning information

Sweden traffic informed the working group about the possibility to transmit SAR information over NAVTEX and encouraged national coordinators to use this functionality.

14. Information regarding current and upcoming operations or changes in the area

No information

15. Any other business

No information

16. Next meeting

BSMSIWG7

The Chair plan to have one virtual meeting prior to the face to face meeting (see below). BSMSIWG7 will be a **virtual meeting**, probably around **May 2025**.

BSMSIWG8

Germany has offered to host an **in-person meeting** in **Hamburg** during **6-10 October 2025**. The meeting is planned to be a joint meeting with the NSMSIWG. The chair welcomed this invitation and gladly accepted. The timing is very good considering that it is close to 2026 when a S-124 service is hopefully operational in the Baltic Sea.

The meeting was closed at approximately 1230 CET.

/Johan von Bültzingslöwen
Chair of BSMSIWG