

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) OF THE PÄRNU COUNTY MARITIME SPATIAL PLAN

Outline of the SEA program

1. Subject of the SEA and purpose of the plan

Estonian Government initiated the maritime plans for Hiiu and Pärnu Counties by the decree 11.10.2012 no 441 *The initiation of maritime spatial plans in Hiiu and Pärnu Counties* (planning areas are shown on figure 1). The area covered by the plan currently composed in Pärnu county is 2594,3 km². The SEA for the plan was initiated by the Pärnu County Governor by the decree 19.10.2012 no 551.

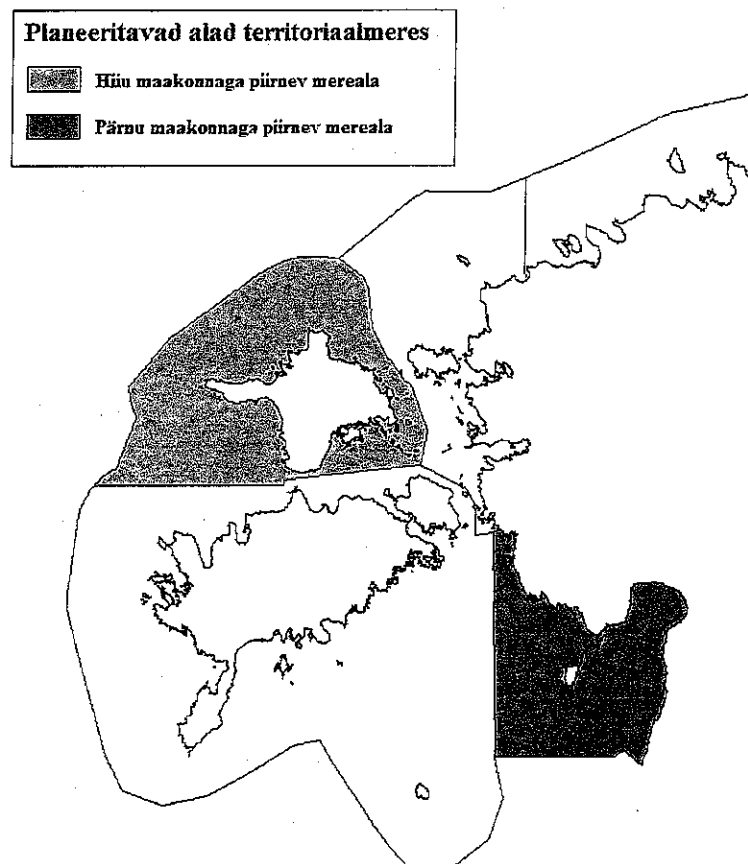


Figure 1. Planning areas for Hiiu (marked with yellow colour) and Pärnu county (marked with blue color)

There are no maritime plans composed in Estonia so far, the maritime plans for Hiiu and Pärnu county are considered to be pilot-projects in the field of maritime spatial planning.

The planning and the strategic impact assessment of maritime areas bordering the Pärnu county are carried out simultaneously, eg the procedures for bot processes are integrated. SEA is conducted according to Estonian Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management Act.

The goal of the Pärnu county maritime plan is to define the use of marine space by following the public planning process and taking into account the diverging interests at sea.

In composing the plan the existing situation is analysed, current activities at sea are mapped and problems in using the marine space are defined. To ensure the protection of marine ecosystems and the achievement of the economic and social goals the zoning of the marine space is proposed.

The planning solution with integrated impact assessment is composed in close co-operation with state institutions, local municipal governments as well as other interested bodies like developers, interest groups using the marine areas in recreational purposes, environmental organisations and NGO-s.

2. Topics analysed in the planning process and in the SEA

In the plan and the SEA, following topics are analysed and collateral impacts assessed:

- **Marine transport infrastructure**
Ports and harbours (and the extensions of the existing ones), piers, shipping fairways and maritime channels (including the deepening/expanding of the existing ones), buoys (lighthouses), cruise ships, maritime safety, pollution control and rescue capabilities.
- **Fisheries (sustainable management of fish stocks)**
Professional fishing and valuing of traditional coastal fisheries, the preservation of traditional coastal settlements and job diversification. Fish stock conservation and reproduction (spawning grounds), traditional fishing-related jobs, beach areas and fishing villages, fishing ports, historical fishing rights, trawling.

- **Recreation and tourism**
Diversifying tourism and recreational activities; improving the access from sea and to sea. Reservation of sailing areas, small harbours and marinas, beach areas, water sports (surf areas, marine rowing etc), diving/snorkeling, recreational fishing, lighthouses, nature tourism (bird watching).
- **Nature Conservation. The preservation and sustainable use of marine environment.**
Natura2000 areas, protected areas, conservation areas, birds (migratory corridors), seal haul-out areas and feeding areas, bats, heritage conservation values Kihnu Strait Marine Park as a potential national park.
- **Heritage and Maritime Archaeology**
The protection and enhancement of heritage conservation values within the planning framework. Defining the sites for burial of shipwrecks.
- **Infrastructure (not related to marine transportation)**
Renewable energy (particularly offshore wind farms and marine cables), marine security and national defense (sea rescue facilities, radars, practice areas), aviation (airport height restrictions), artificial dumping sites, aquaculture, Pärnu city sewage outlet, mining.

3. The possibility of transboundary impacts

The planning area of Pärnu county maritime spatial plan is bordered by the territorial sea of Republic of Latvia.

Currently the activities at sea (fishing, marine travel) follow an effective cooperation framework acknowledged by both national governments.

At present no planned activities with significant impacts on the territorial sea of the Republic of Latvia have emerged.

However, in the process of preparing the planning proposal the need for **objects with the possibility of significant transboundary impacts may occur**, for example :

- offshore wind park sites,
- electrical cables,
- new conservation areas,
- other.