



Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy (EGSME)¹

Terms of Reference²

**Adopted by the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials
on 10th of April 2024**

1. Background

The potential for growth in the Baltic Sea Region's maritime economy can be better utilised and its marine ecosystems better protected when the coastal states cooperate and strive towards cohesive efforts in all sectors of maritime action. It is important to maintain an integrated approach and to strive keeping a balance among the economic, social and ecological aspects within the Baltic Sea Region. This allows a better and timely resolution of conflicting interests, the harnessing of synergies and the elimination of obstacles to development.

The basis of such a policy is knowledge, i.e. a comprehensive understanding of maritime and marine principles, interactions and relationships as well as of the various stakeholder interests in the Baltic Sea Region. Through the improvement of knowledge transfer between business, science and education, innovation shall be promoted in the Baltic Sea Region and new employment shall be created with a view to further enhancing a sustainable blue economy in the Baltic Sea Region.

2. Overall aim and key tasks of the Group

The following aim and key tasks form the basis of the work for this group and guides the rotating Chairmanship, as appropriate, in carrying out their agenda:

2.1 Overall aim:

- Promoting, with the aim of increasing, the Baltic Sea Region's competitiveness in different areas of sustainable maritime economy.
- Advocating decarbonised shipping.
- Positioning the Baltic Sea Region as a model region for maritime best practices in, inter alia, innovation, digitalisation and environment protection.

¹ Re-titled on the 21st of March 2018 upon the agreement of the Expert Group members from Expert Group on Maritime Policy to the Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy.

² Adopted by the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) in Copenhagen on 2 June 2009, revised in Moscow on 23 May 2013, in Warsaw on 7 June 2016 and in Stockholm on 16 June 2018. Further endorsed on 8 June 2021 (online meeting under the Lithuanian CBSS Presidency).

2.2 Key tasks:

- Sharing information, experiences and facilitating a cross-sectoral approach and synergies between key actors in the field of maritime economy in the Region.
- Exchanging information regarding development and implementation of national maritime policies of the CBSS Member States and the EU.
- Encouraging a cross-sectoral approach and interaction by strengthening links with the private sector, increasing the involvement of maritime businesses as well as academia and research institutions.
- Providing policy recommendations on sustainable maritime economy.
- Promoting a more coherent approach to issues related to sustainable maritime economy by synergies with relevant regional organisations and policy development across different policy areas.
- Identify and evaluate planned projects in maritime policy within the framework of transnational cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, striving for a holistic and coordinated approach with a view to add value and avoid duplication.
- Promote and strengthen visibility of maritime clusters in the Baltic Sea Region and combine regional interests through bringing regional industries closer to research, innovation and education as well as by facilitating dialogue with decision makers.
- Increase visibility of the importance of sustainable maritime economy and the Group's work by participation in significant events, and campaigns relevant to sustainable maritime economy.

3. Membership

Membership is open to representatives from relevant ministries or equivalent government agencies in all CBSS Member States³ and from the European Commission. Observers⁴ are welcome to the meetings and can be offered the full membership status upon the decision by the EGSME. Other organisations, stakeholders and initiatives from around the Baltic Sea dealing with issues related to the maritime economy are welcome to the meetings upon request and by invitation from the Chair. The CBSS Secretariat provides secretarial function for the Group.

The EGSME may decide to create additional cooperation formats with representatives of regional cooperation forums such as EUSBSR PA Ship, PA Safe, HELCOM Green Team, but also representatives from businesses, academia and other key players of the maritime branch relevant to the EGSME' overall aim and tasks, with an aim to strengthen the coordination and synergies with other regional formats and to avoid any possible duplication of activities.

4. Organisation and Working Methods

The Chairmanship of the group follows the CBSS Presidency rotation. At least two meetings should take place under each EGSME Chairmanship. The Chairmanship may organise written procedures and online meetings to take decisions, as well as additional seminars and/or workshops between or back-to-back with EGSME meetings.

³ List of all EGSME Member States: Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Sweden.

⁴ List of EGSME Observers: Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions - Baltic Sea Commission, HELCOM, VASAB (as of 1 January 2024).

A Trio, composed of the EGSME members of the former, incumbent and incoming EGSME Chairmanship, may meet to ensure the continuity of the work of the Group and to assist in the smooth transition of the EGSME Chairmanships. The Trio may draft a Plan of Activities for a certain period. A Plan of Activities may include, inter alia, the development of maritime economy via clusters' approach, digitalization and real time data exchange, development of measures towards climate-neutral shipping, promotion of sustainable recreational boating.

The work plan for every EGSME Chairmanship period will be drafted by every country holding the Chairmanship. A respective EGSME Chairmanship presents its work plan to the Group. The EGSME Chairmanship assisted by the Secretariat prepares the agenda for the EGSME meetings.

Decisions are taken by consensus. The working language is English. The Group reports to the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO).

The EGSME interacts with authorities managing the funds, institutions and structures of relevance to the activities of the EGSME.

5. Guidelines

The following guidelines will apply:

- Overlapping mandates with bodies under the CBSS umbrella and outside the CBSS are to be avoided.
- The Group takes full account of all EU and regional frameworks.
- The Group cooperates closely and exchanges information with stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region and beyond where appropriate.

6. Timeframe

The mandate of the Group is valid for the duration of three years – 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2027. Duration of the mandate may be further elaborated by the CSO.

7. Evaluation

The EGSME should submit a subsequent evaluation to the CSO by the Group not later than six months prior to the end of the mandate period. This will be done by the CBSS Secretariat and the Chairmanship and shall be approved by the Expert Group. The evaluation will form the basis for the decision on whether to prolong the mandate of the Expert Group. The approval or rejection of such a prolonged mandate will have to be decided by the end of an ongoing mandate period.

8. Resources

Travel costs for meetings will be covered by the participants themselves. Costs for holding meetings will be covered by the hosting country. Upon request by the Group's Chairmanship, and subject to approval by the Director General of the CBSS Secretariat, minor supplementary co-financing can be provided through the Secretariat Expert Group Fund to cover costs related to the EGSME events related to the EGSME meetings, seminars and workshops. The EGSME will be provided with a permanent secretary function from the CBSS Secretariat.