

Protect Baltic – Generation Sea Meeting

Date: November 21, 2024

Location: Virtual (Online Meeting)

Organized by: PROTECT BALTIC

Led by: Katja Laingui and Paul Trouth

Meeting objectives and purpose

This meeting was convened under the *Protect Baltic* project to gather youth perspectives and integrate their insights into the project's ongoing and future protection initiatives. Youth have been identified as an integral stakeholder for the project.

Specifically, the session aimed to:

1. **Introduce the project** to a youth audience, highlighting its objectives, scope, and importance for the Baltic Sea.
 2. **Engage young professionals**, identifying their views on marine conservation, their emotions about the sea, and how they see their role in addressing the challenges faced by the Baltic.
 3. **Explore innovative strategies** for youth engagement in the project, awareness-raising and outreach.
 4. **Collaboratively brainstorm actionable solutions** through dialogue to address key issues such as ineffective marine protected areas (MPAs), biodiversity loss, and eutrophication.
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Attendees and participants

18 participants attended including young professionals, students and researchers from various countries around the Baltic Sea and beyond. Their expertise ranged from specialists dealing with habitat restoration, students who research specific topics related to marine protection, and policy experts with a focus on MPAs and ecosystem frameworks.

Agenda and detailed summary

Welcome and introductions

The session began with a warm welcome from Katja and Paul, who explained the overarching goals of the *Protect Baltic* project and why youth involvement is crucial for its success.

This was shortly followed by a *tour de table* to introduce the participants, sharing their professional backgrounds, research interests, and

motivations for joining the workshop. Strong themes in their motivation included:

- A strong interest in protecting Baltic biodiversity/marine life.
 - Eagerness to learn about actionable frameworks specifically for restoration and management of MPAs.
 - A desire to network with others working in the field and to find ways to contribute their expertise tangibly to the project.
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Interactive quiz

As an icebreaker to enhance participant knowledge and engage them in the meeting's context, Paul hosted a quiz on the Baltic Sea's unique characteristics and the challenges it faces. This was conducted through Slido.

Some key facts that were discussed included:

- **Geography:** The Baltic Sea spans nine countries, with a catchment area that homes 90 million people, and is geologically young (12,000 years old).
- **Biodiversity:** Home to over 5,000 species (including microspecies), and its brackish nature with saltwater coming in from the North Sea and freshwater from river inflows leaving space for a wide array of biodiversity calling the sea home.
- **Other key issues:** Overfishing, eutrophication, and habitat degradation as key pressures on the sea.

Participants noted how the Baltic's unique environmental conditions amplify the impacts of human activities, underscoring the urgency of the project.

Introduction to Protect Baltic

Project overview

Katja introduced the *Protect Baltic* project, explaining its purpose and significance in addressing the Baltic Sea's environmental challenges. She explained it spans five years from August 2023 until 2028. The project is funded by the European Commission under the Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters umbrella, and that it aims to drive transformative change in marine protection practices across the Baltic region.

She highlighted that we are running the workshop as youth are a key stakeholder and their perspectives are central to the project's long-term ambitions. We are seeking input on how young professionals may wish to

be involved and their views on the Baltic Sea's current challenges and future prospects. But do not wish to prescribe these from a top-down approach, preferring to hear their views on how they wish to be included.

HELCOM's role

Katja elaborated on HELCOM's position as the coordinating organization for the project. Based in Helsinki, HELCOM is an intergovernmental body representing the nine Baltic countries and supporting marine conservation through regional collaboration.

She also noted HELCOM's direct engagement with governments, which strengthens the regional coordination of the project.

Current state of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

The Baltic Sea already has a significant network of MPAs, with 17% of its area designated as protected—a notable achievement, as it was the first region globally to reach 10% MPA coverage. However, Katja acknowledged some significant shortcomings:

- The existing MPAs have not resulted in noticeable improvements in the Baltic Sea's ecological status.
- Designation is often nominal, with limited management, monitoring, and enforcement.
- This was a view shared by some of the youth who fear that designation in their own countries has led to nothing more than paper parks but are hopeful that the regional approach of the project could resolve this by adding some pressure on neighbouring countries to follow good examples.

Key challenges in the Baltic Sea

Katja outlined some critical issues the Baltic Sea faces:

1. Low water circulation: Due to its shallow nature and limited exchange with the North Sea, the Baltic retains water for decades, allowing pollutants to accumulate over time.
2. Environmental Stressors: The Baltic Sea experiences significant pressures from human activities, including:
 - Eutrophication caused by agricultural runoff.
 - Overfishing, which disrupts the ecosystem.
 - Pollution from various industrial and agricultural sources.
 - Habitat loss due to bottom trawling and other destructive activities.

Katja emphasized the urgent need to address these challenges through coordinated and sustained efforts.

Project objectives

The *Protect Baltic* project seeks to address these by creating MPAs that deliver genuine ecological benefits. Its goals include:

- Reaching the 30x30 target (30% MPA coverage by 2030, with 10% strictly protected).
- But doing so in a way that ensures *ecologically significant protection* by prioritizing areas critical for biodiversity and ecosystem function.

She stressed the importance of adaptive management and stakeholder involvement in achieving these objectives.

Drivers, activities, pressures, and impacts

The project framework analyses the interactions between human drivers, activities, and their ecological pressures, with Katja using fishing as an example. Katja illustrated this with the DAPSIM model depicting how activities and pressures are interconnected.

- We have the driver that humans need to eat, and therefore they fish, but overfishing creates pressure on the environment and leads to a reduced environmental status.
- The project aims to reduce pressures on the ecosystem by introducing targeted measures, including stricter regulations within MPAs and improved governance frameworks. In terms of the example for fishing, it can introduce controls that limit the number of fish that can be taken.

Collaborative and regional focus

Katja emphasized that collaboration is central to the project's success. The *Protect Baltic* initiative includes 17 partners across seven Baltic countries. Notably, Poland could not join due to capacity issues, and Russia's participation is limited due to geopolitical tensions.

The project also received a lot of interest during its first year of operations and will soon add observers and associate partners, including:

- Observers: Organizations like WWF Baltic and Hopespot Gotland (under Syliva Earle's Mission Blue) and projects like Cool Blue.
- Associate Partners: These include the Blue Centre in Gotland and the Swedish Geological Survey, which contribute data and resources for modelling and analysis.

Katja explained that HELCOM's coordination role with access directly to countries and their ministers allows it to bridge the gap between scientific research and policy, facilitating regional coherence in conservation efforts.

Innovative approaches

Katja provided an in-depth explanation of the various work packages (WPs) that structure the *Protect Baltic* project, detailing their individual contributions to the project's overarching goals. The work packages are designed to address different aspects of marine protection, from data collection to governance and communication.

WP1: Coordination and management

- Focus: Ensures that all project activities are well-coordinated across the 17 partners, aligning them with timelines and deliverables.
- Responsibility: Managed by HELCOM's central management team, including Katja and Paul.
- Objective: To oversee the project's progress and ensure alignment with its milestones over the five-year timeline.

WP2: Data management

- Focus: Collecting, harmonizing, and organizing data from the Baltic Sea countries.
- Importance: Reliable data is the foundation of all project activities, ensuring that decisions are evidence-based.
- Key activities:
 - Gathering data from contracting parties and stakeholders.
 - Standardizing and validating datasets for use in other work packages.

WP3: Spatial modelling

- Focus: Applying spatial analyses to identify ecological hotspots, critical habitats, and human pressure zones.
- Objective: To create maps that guide MPA designation and inform our efforts.
- Application: Models will highlight areas where interventions can have the most significant impact on biodiversity. To avoid designation that only creates paper parks.

WP4: Ecosystem services and valuation

- Focus: Assessing the benefits the Baltic Sea provides, through ecosystem services such as carbon storage, fisheries, and recreation.
- Importance: Helps prioritize protection efforts based on the value of the benefits gleaned from ecosystem services in the Baltic.
- Activities: Social scientists from partner institutions looking at nature's intrinsic values as well as anthropogenic values to get an overview of the overall value ecosystem services provides and feeding this information into the project's optimisation framework.

WP5: Coherence of the MPA Network

- Focus: Evaluating the connectivity and coverage of the existing MPA network.
- Key question: Are migratory species, habitats, and biodiversity adequately protected within the current MPA system?
- Objective: Identify gaps in protection and ensure MPAs function as a cohesive network.

WP6: Adaptive Management

- Focus: This WP is a comprehensive package covering governance, restoration, monitoring, and MPA management.
- Subgroups:
 - **Governance:** Developing frameworks for better MPA management and stakeholder collaboration.
 - **Restoration:** Identifying priority areas for active and passive restoration.
 - **Monitoring:** Enhancing capacity for tracking ecological health within MPAs.

Management: Addressing challenges in compliance to ensure MPAs meet conservation goals.

WP7: Legislative frameworks

- Focus: Harmonizing legal definitions and regulations across Baltic Sea countries.

- Objective: To create a cohesive regional approach to MPA management, addressing gaps in enforcement and policy coherence.

WP8: MPA Portal development

- Focus: Upgrading HELCOM's existing MPA Portal to become a centralized hub for MPA management.
- Features:
 - Real-time data integration from various sources.
 - Tools for MPA managers to share best practice and access regional insights.
- Vision: To create a "one-stop-shop" for data, allowing managers to compare strategies and address challenges collaboratively.

WP9: Communication and outreach

- Focus: Raising awareness of the project's goals and results among stakeholders, including youth.
- Activities:
 - Disseminating information through various media, including social platforms and newsletters.
 - Engaging schools and communities to increase ocean awareness and public participation.

WP10: Sustainability

- Focus: Ensuring the project's outcomes remain useful beyond its official timeline.
- Objective: To make tools, frameworks, and data accessible for long-term application.
- Importance: Encouraging young professionals to adopt the project's outputs in future work, securing ongoing impact.

Katja concluded this section by emphasizing how each work package interconnects to achieve a holistic approach to protection. The modular structure allows the project to target specific challenges while maintaining flexibility to adapt to evolving needs.

A global perspective

Paul concluded by highlighting the potential global significance of the project. If successful, *Protect Baltic* could serve as a blueprint for marine protection and conservation efforts in other regions, offering scalable and replicable solutions.

The presentation laid the foundation for interactive discussions, setting a clear context for the project's scope, challenges, and potential solutions.

Youth perspective on the Baltic Sea

Participants were asked to engage in a series of reflective and interactive discussions to share their perspectives on the Baltic Sea. Using Slido, several key questions were posed to gather insights into participants' emotions, aspirations, and concerns regarding the sea.

1. What is the ideal future for the Baltic Sea?

Participants were first asked to envision their ideal future for the Baltic Sea. Their responses revealed a shared aspiration for a healthier, more sustainable ecosystem:

- Key themes:
 - **Sustainability:** A sea that supports sustainable human activities without compromising its ecological balance.
 - **Biodiversity:** A thriving, diverse ecosystem resilient to human pressures.
 - **Effective MPAs:** Participants emphasized the need for MPAs to be genuinely protected and managed, noting frustrations with "paper parks" that lack enforcement.
 - **Awareness and inclusion:** Participants called for increased societal awareness and involvement, suggesting that bottom-up approaches would ensure long-term effectiveness.

One participant elaborated on the importance of bottom-up approaches:

"These approaches involve the local communities and stakeholders in decision-making processes. They create solutions that work for both the environment and the people who depend on it."

Another participant highlighted the need to include ocean literacy in basic education, saying:

"It wasn't part of the curriculum growing up in Poland, even though we are a significant contributor to the Baltic's problems. It's time we bring it into basic education."



Figure 1: What is the ideal future for the Baltic Sea? (n=22)

2. What emotions does the Baltic Sea evoke?

This question aimed to explore participants' emotional connections to the Baltic Sea, uncovering a range of sentiments:

- Emotions expressed:
 - **Concern and sadness:** Overwhelming concern about pollution, biodiversity loss, and the future of the Baltic Sea.
 - **Nostalgia and affection:** Many participants shared personal memories tied to the sea, underscoring its cultural and emotional importance.
 - **Hope and determination:** While concern dominated, several participants expressed hope for restoration and a belief that collective efforts could bring meaningful change.

A participant linked their emotional connection to the region's history:

"I am curious about its history and how it has shaped the cultures and economies of the surrounding countries."



Figure 2: When you think about the Baltic Sea, how do you feel? (n=25)

3. Which environmental issues worry you most?

Participants were asked to list the environmental issues that concern them most about the Baltic Sea. The discussion revealed deep awareness of the challenges:

- Top concerns:
 - **Eutrophication:** A recurring issue caused by agricultural runoff and nutrient loading, resulting in algal blooms and oxygen-depleted zones.
 - **Overfishing:** Seen as a significant threat to marine biodiversity and food chain stability.
 - **Pollution:** Participants highlighted both plastic pollution and chemical contaminants lingering due to the Baltic's slow water turnover.
 - **Habitat loss:** Particularly due to destructive practices like bottom trawling.
- Participant reflections:
 - "Eutrophication is not just an ecological problem; it's also a visual reminder of how we're failing the Baltic Sea."
 - "Protected areas not being truly protected is a massive concern. If we can't enforce basic protections, how can we aim for bigger goals?"

One participant spoke passionately about habitat degradation:

"In Germany, areas like the Greifswald Bay are highly eutrophic and losing macrophyte habitats. Restoration is almost impossible without first addressing water quality."



Figure 3: Which environmental issues worry you? (n=27)

4. How do you see yourself as part of the solution?

Participants reflected on their personal roles in protecting the Baltic Sea, offering a variety of responses rooted in their professional and personal experiences:

- **Awareness and advocacy:**
 - Many participants expressed a desire to focus on education and awareness-raising, emphasizing the importance of societal buy-in for protection efforts.
 - Several participants mentioned developing youth projects, piggybacking on existing Erasmus programs, as well as project educational campaigns to engage their peers.
- **Research and restoration:**
 - Researchers in the group shared their focus on monitoring biodiversity, improving restoration techniques, and assessing ecosystem services.
 - One participant mentioned linking scientific communities with grassroots movements, such as eco-village networks, to create more holistic approaches.

- **Collaboration and networking:**

- Participants saw value in forming cross-border collaborations to address shared challenges.
- A common theme was the importance of connecting youth professionals with established organizations and policymakers.

One participant told how local community work is vital:

"My goal is to create a project that bridges science, policy, and local communities."

Key takeaways:

1. **Strong emotional investment:**

Participants' personal connections to the Baltic Sea drive their motivation to address its challenges.

2. **Prioritization of issues:**

Eutrophication, overfishing, pollution, and ineffective MPAs emerged as the most pressing concerns.

3. **Diverse contributions:**

The group highlighted the need for advocacy, research, and education as complementary approaches to solving the Baltic's issues.

4. **Role of collaboration:**

Participants emphasized the importance of involving youth directly in decision-making processes and creating platforms for cross-disciplinary cooperation.

Brainstorming

Session topics and discussions

Participants took part in a collaborative brainstorming session facilitated by HELCOM team members, using the Miro platform to explore ideas across four key areas: digital engagement, an augmented reality application, ocean literacy toolkit, and youth involvement.

Each section involved group discussions and specific prompts to guide contributions.

1. Digital engagement

The first topic focused on identifying strategies to enhance digital outreach for the *Protect Baltic* project. Participants were asked: *"What type of content would grab your attention and make you want to follow the project on social media?"*

Participants were encouraged to share ideas tailored to specific social media platforms, colour-coded by social media channel on the Miro board.

Platform-specific suggestions:

- **Instagram:**
 - Interactive posts: Create quiz-style questions to engage the audience.
 - Positive news: Share uplifting developments to spread hope.
 - Humour and irony: Include funny or ironic content to entertain and engage.
 - Short positive facts: Share brief, happy, and interesting facts.
 - Success stories: Highlight local and global achievements, blending humour and education.
 - Opportunities for involvement: Provide ways for followers to participate actively.
 - Informative reels: Use reels to showcase projects and their progress in an engaging format.
 - Youth activist stories: Share personal stories from young activists around the Baltic Sea to inspire and connect.
- **LinkedIn:**
 - Project updates: Share information about project statuses.
 - Success stories: Highlight key achievements and milestones.
 - Opportunities for engagement: Post ways for professionals to get involved in relevant initiatives.
 - Accessible events: Promote open-access activities and events.
 - News on events: Keep followers informed about significant happenings in the field.
 - Event registrations: Share links for signing up for relevant events.
 - Educational content: Provide shareable, informative posts to educate the audience.

- Field highlights: Celebrate and share major events and successes within the industry.
- **YouTube:**
 - Habitat importance videos: Highlight the significance of different habitat types.
 - Restoration examples: Showcase restoration measures through engaging videos.
 - Educational content: Offer research-based, light, and informative videos or documentaries (max. 15 minutes).
 - Shorts and quick facts: Create funny, educational shorts or reels with shareable, interesting facts.
 - Study visit footage: Share videos from study visits related to environmental projects.
 - Community stories: Present narratives from local communities involved in environmental efforts.
 - Shareable shorts: Focus on quick, captivating educational content to increase engagement.
- **TikTok:**
 - Highlight Baltic Sea diversity: Short, visually engaging content showcasing the unique biodiversity of the Baltic Sea.
- **Facebook:**
 - Lack of use: participants noted that Facebook was not really used anymore.
 - Engagement: use messenger chat to network.
 - Project updates: share information about the status of the project.
- **Twitter/X:**
 - None of the participants are using Twitter. In fact, some are completely against its use. Some have started using BlueSky as an alternative.
- **Other:**
 - Suggestion to use Spotify to create podcasts for news or success stories.

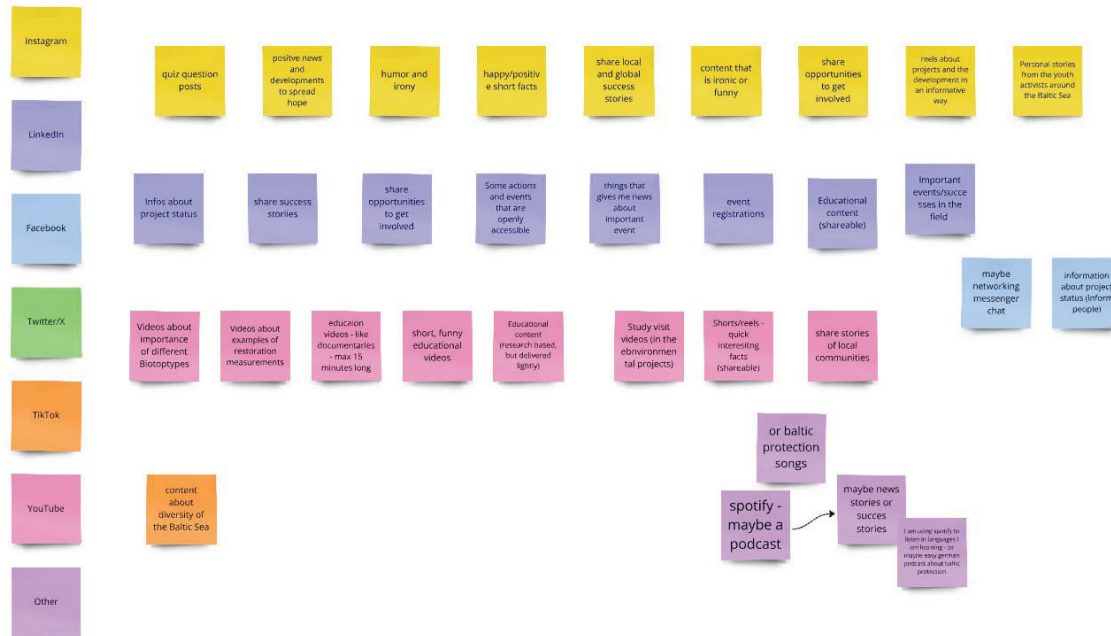


Figure 4: What type of content would grab your attention and make you want to follow our social media channels?

2. Augmented Reality (AR) App development

The second topic focused on an educational AR app to promote MPA awareness. Participants were asked: *"What would you like to see in an app that presents data and information about the Baltic Sea?"*

Participants were then asked to list desired features but also to comment on the look and feel of the app.

Features:

- Map overview & navigation:
 - Interactive map showcasing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
 - Clickable map to explore different MPAs and their features
 - View of contamination sources (e.g., agriculture)
- Project & monitoring updates:
 - Information on ongoing projects and restoration measures in the MPA
 - Details on monitoring actions being carried out
 - Active restoration measures and progress tracking
- Regulations & management:
 - Overview of allowed and restricted activities within the MPA
 - Information on the managing body of each MPA
 - MPA Guide assessment explaining the reason for designation

- Species & biodiversity:
 - Species found in each MPA with photos, trivia, size, and observation tips
 - Clickable species for detailed information on their role and importance
 - Animals and plants in the MPA, their conservation status, and protection measures
- Community & engagement:
 - List of benefits the MPA provides to local communities
 - Information about nearby places such as museums for further learning
 - Links to local events and marine community activities
- Educational & shareable content:
 - Shareable content including map views, statistics, and summaries
 - Educational content about threats and protection measures
 - Trivia and interactive features for continuous engagement (e.g., countdowns, current weather)
- Gamification:
 - Fun, game-like feature (e.g., Pokémon Go-style) to encourage exploration of MPAs
 - Track and "collect" MPAs as you visit or learn about them
- Practical & on-the-go information:
 - Easy access to MPAs near your location
 - Valuable information for travellers, including nearby attractions and educational opportunities

Look and feel:

- User-friendly interface:
 - Simple and intuitive dashboard, easy navigation
 - Easy login and seamless sharing options
- Engagement & accessibility:
 - Advertisement through social media and QR codes to encourage interaction
 - Mobile-friendly for on-the-go users and quick access to information



The third topic was on an ocean literacy toolkit. Participants were asked: *"What kinds of material, content and graphics would you like to see in an information kit about MPAs?"*

- **Educational content:** Provide information on sustainable certifications (e.g., MSC), food webs, and marine ecosystems. Include interactive content like games, puzzles, and fun facts about ocean organisms to engage and inform users.
- **Engagement & action:** Guide users on how to become ocean advocates and take real-world actions, such as supporting MPAs, making sustainable product choices, and participating in citizen science. Offer simple tips for everyday environmental actions.
- **Tools and resources:** Create useful and engaging materials like a notebook, postcards, or wall calendars with key ocean facts, tips, and important information. Consider offering short videos, expert interviews, and eye-catching statistics.
- **Gamification & rewards:** Develop an app that encourages users to take local conservation actions, earning points and rewards like discounts or small prizes.

- **Certification & responsibility:** Highlight the importance of responsible consumption (e.g., what fish to buy schemes) and educate on the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in managing MPAs.
- **Course & certification:** Offer an online course (similar to "Environaut") that provides certification upon completion, focusing on ocean literacy and practical conservation efforts.



Figure 6: What kinds of material, content, and graphics would you like to see in an information kit about MPAs?

4. Youth involvement

The fourth topic was about how participants viewed their own engagement as part of a solution to the challenges facing the Baltic. They were asked *"In your eyes, what would it look like to have meaningful involvement within the project?"*

Participants emphasized inclusive strategies for youth engagement:

- **Interviews & community engagement:** Youth can participate in conducting interviews with local stakeholders and community members to gather insights and share knowledge about environmental issues, as well as facilitate discussions and meetings.
- **Support in scientific and educational content:** Involvement in translating, editing, and visually representing scientific content, providing opportunities to contribute to social research projects and creating educational materials.

- **Research & data analysis:** Youth can conduct research into the effectiveness of different restoration measures, analyse data from the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), and contribute to literature reviews and assessments related to Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).
- **Project coordination & stakeholder management:** Opportunities to help coordinate projects, manage stakeholders, and contribute to the development of restoration measures. This includes bringing new partners into the project, such as working on establishing a Polish partner for collaboration.
- **Engagement in policy and decision-making:** Youth can actively participate in policy implications and negotiations, being part of the implementation of measures and contributing to policymaking. This also includes actively involving young people in decision-making processes, such as through a youth council with voting rights.
- **Organizing events and spreading awareness:** Organizing workshops at universities or schools to spread awareness and engage peers, as well as facilitating educational trips (e.g., on sailboats) to share knowledge about MPAs and biodiversity.
- **Gamification and interactive tools:** Youth involvement in developing gamified content, like games based on internship activities, and using interactive tools such as maps of ongoing projects with associated blogs to keep people informed.
- **Building partnerships and expanding outreach:** Establishing partnerships with organizations such as the Sustainable Oceans Alliance Germany to better engage the younger generation and spread the message about marine conservation.
- **Creative engagement:** Encouraging youth to take part in creative activities like photo competitions to raise awareness and promote engagement with marine biodiversity.



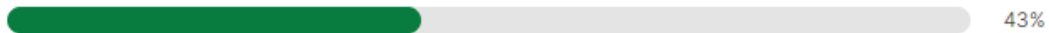
Figure 7: In your eyes, what would it look like to have meaningful engagement in the project?

Demographic and engagement questions

Participants were asked some final questions in relation to, suitable age categories for youth and young professionals, their age, location, social media use and desire to continue engaging with the project. The results of these are outlined below in figures 8-14.

There was a mixed reaction to the age range to categorise youth, but this was mainly down to participants not yet seeing the category differentiation between youth and young professional that we were outlining.

Yes - 3 votes



No - 4 votes



Figure 8: Is the age range 15-24 suitable to categorise "youth"?

In terms of age categories for young professional, one participant felt that the lower range of 18 was too young since many 18-year-olds are still in higher education without much professional experience to draw on.

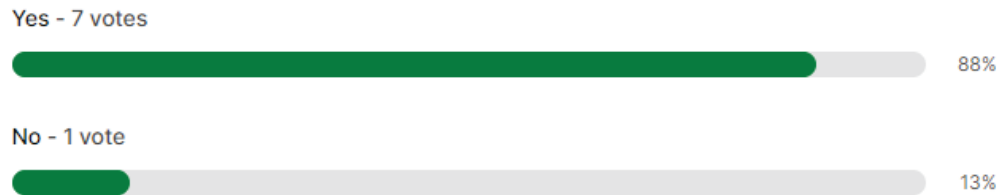


Figure 9: Is the age range 18-35 suitable to categorise young professional?



Figure 10: How old are you? (n=8)



Figure 11: Where are you from? (n=8)



Figure 12: Where do you live? (n=8)

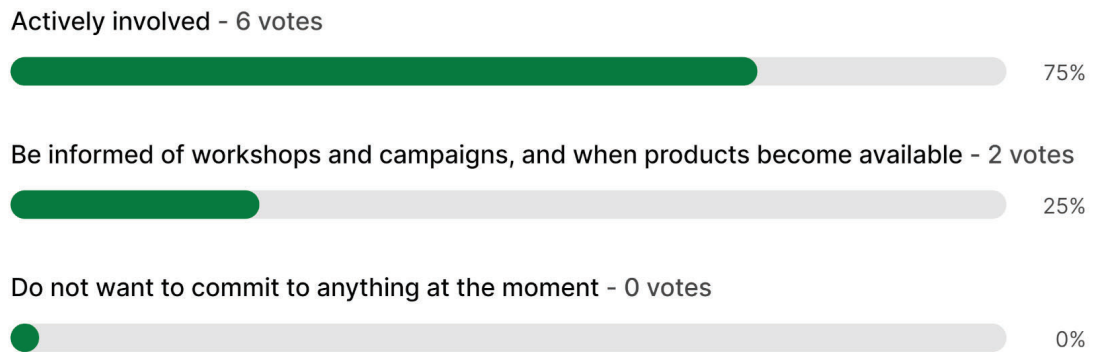


Figure 13: How would you like to interact with the project? (n=8)

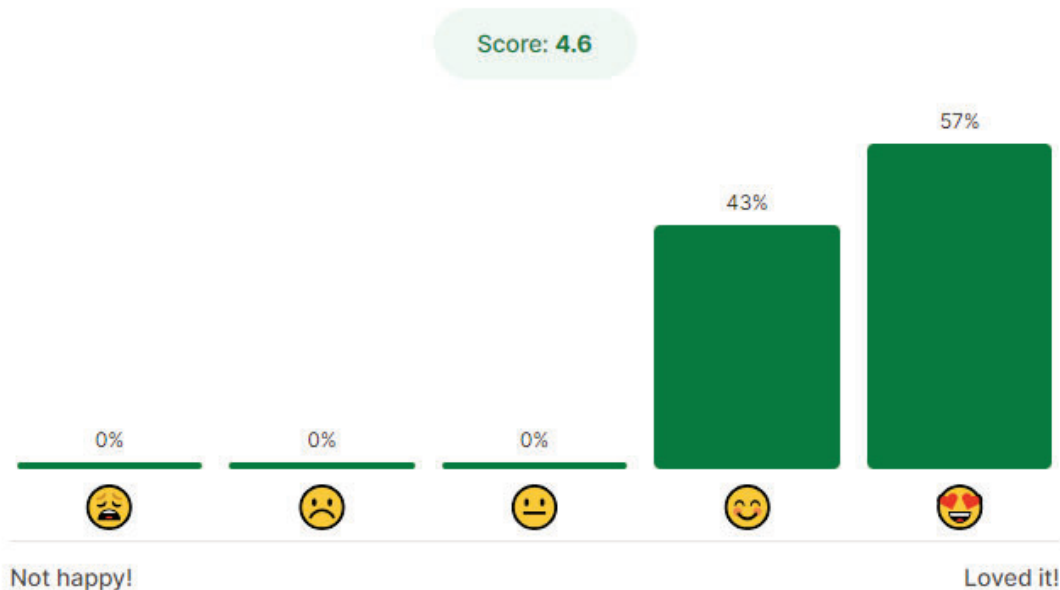


Figure 14: How would you rate this workshop? (n=8)

Conclusions

Key action points for youth engagement

1. Establish direct youth channels for decision-making:

- Formalize bottom-up approaches by integrating youth representatives into regional planning and governance structures.
- Create youth advisory panels to provide ongoing input on MPA management, restoration priorities, and policy coherence.

2. Enhance digital and educational outreach:

- Develop **interactive digital platforms** and social media campaigns tailored to youth interests, including informative reels, gamified learning, and success stories.
- Launch **ocean literacy toolkits** for schools and youth organizations, emphasizing actionable insights on marine protection and sustainability.

3. Build collaborative platforms for cross-disciplinary networking:

- Organize regional forums and workshops to connect youth with policymakers, local communities, and researchers.

- Utilize existing programme, such as those under Erasmus+, to foster international collaboration among young professionals.

4. Promote grassroots and local community involvement:

- Empower youth to lead local projects, such as citizen science initiatives or restoration activities, that bridge scientific findings with community needs.
- Support projects that highlight sustainable practices, like eco-tourism or community-based marine protection.

5. Encourage youth-driven technological solutions:

- Develop augmented reality (AR) apps and gamification tools to engage youth in exploring MPAs and biodiversity hotspots.
- Create shareable educational content on digital platforms, tailored for on-the-go learning and advocacy.

6. Amplify youth advocacy through storytelling:

- Highlight personal narratives of young activists and professionals working on Baltic conservation efforts to inspire broader participation.
- Use multimedia formats to showcase the historical, cultural, and ecological importance of the Baltic Sea.

7. Support capacity-building initiatives:

- Provide access to workshops, internships, and mentorships in marine conservation for young professionals.
- Invest in skill-building programmes focused on restoration techniques, data analysis, and marine policy.

8. Align with formal education systems:

- Collaborate with educational authorities to integrate Baltic Sea awareness and ocean literacy into school curricula.
- Utilize the Blue Schools Network to expand outreach and foster early engagement among younger audiences.

By adopting these actions, Protect Baltic can ensure meaningful and sustained youth participation, leveraging their passion and innovative potential to address the Baltic Sea's ecological challenges.