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Agenda Item	4 - Matters arising from other HELCOM work of relevance for the Group
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Background

This document contains extracts from the following HELCOM meetings of relevance for the HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices:

1. The 46th Meeting of the HELCOM Heads of Delegation (HOD 46-2014), Helsinki, Finland, 16-17 September 2014,
2. Eight Meeting of the HELCOM Group on the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (GEAR 8-2014), Tallinn, Estonia, 7-10 October 2014,
3. First Meeting of the new HELCOM Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area (PRESSURE 1-2014), Helsinki, Finland, 30-31 October 2014,

The complete outcomes can be found in the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#).

Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.

Outcomes of recent HELCOM meetings of relevance for the Agri Group

HOD 46-2014, Helsinki, Finland, 16-17 September 2014

Agenda Item 3 Streamlining of HELCOM

The Meeting agreed in principle on the Terms of Reference for the new Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices as contained in **Annex 5**, noting the study reservation by Sweden regarding items 2 and 3 and point B. The Meeting invited Sweden to clarify its study reservation by **30 September 2014**.

Agenda Item 4 Matters arising from the HELCOM Groups

Agriculture and Environment Forum (AGRI/ENV FORUM)

The Meeting took note of the outcome of the Sixth Meeting of the HELCOM Baltic Agriculture and Environment Forum (AGRI/ENV 6-2014) (document 4-1), and supported the provisional planning for further work as contained in the outcome, to be taken forward by the first meeting of the new HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices.

The Meeting agreed to hold the first meeting of the new HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices on 18-19 November 2014 and invited the Contracting Parties to consider hosting the meeting and to inform the Secretariat accordingly.¹

The Meeting took note that Finland confirmed the possibility to take the lead for the work on nutrient content in manure, and that Finland is not yet in the position to nominate a participant for the Annex III revision but will come back with the nomination in a few months' time.

GEAR 8-2014, Tallinn, Estonia, 7-10 October 2014

Agenda Item 3 Coordination and information related to the implementation of the ecosystem approach and related policies

Programmes of Measures

The Meeting took note of the information on existing and planned national measures to implement the ecosystem approach, especially related to Programmes of Measures (PoMs):

- Denmark is carrying out a stocktaking of existing measures, carrying out a gap analysis and has prepared a zero draft list of possible new measures. Land-based nutrient input measures are expected to be covered under WFD RBMP programme of measures.
- Estonia: has started with the development of PoM in the frame of a project funded through the EEA Grants and Norway Grants. The public consultation is planned to start from April 2015 and last for 6 months, together with the WFD RBMPs.
- Finland is in the process of preparing the MSFD PoM proposal. Public consultation on the proposal for a PoM is designed to start in January 2015 and continue until the end of March 2015. The hearing will be linked to the hearing on the WFD River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). On 1 October 2014 Finland has launched proposals for RBMPs for public consultation. The RBMPs will be elemental also for the development of the PoM of the MSFD since they contain measures that are crucial for curbing input of nutrients and hazardous substances from the catchment area. The RBMPs public consultation will continue from 1 October 2014 to 31 March 2015 and the MSFD PoM consultation will be linked to it. In the process of drafting the PoM a gap analysis of existing measures, has been

¹ Note by the Secretariat: Some Contracting Parties have indicated that the date set by HOD 46-2014 is not suitable and the new date is 20-21 November 2014.

carried out. A socio-economic analysis method has been developed by scientists and applied with the involvement of marine experts and is about to be finalized. The analysis informs on cost-efficiency and efficiency in filling in the GES gap of proposed measures. About 35 proposed new measures went into the socio-economic analysis. Transboundary impacts of the proposed PoM are being analysed as part of the national SEA.

- Germany shared with GEAR 7 an early preliminary draft list of measures and detailed information on the procedures and the documentation of national programmes of measures. The measures are currently discussed in detail at technical and policy level. A decision on what measures to propose for inclusion in the draft programme of measures for the first MSFD cycle is expected by end of the year. It is planned that the draft programmes of measures are submitted for formal consultation in the federal and coastal state governments in the first quarter of 2015. The six-month public consultation process is to start on 1 April 2015 as required by the Federal Water Act.
- Latvia: Started elaboration of PoMs in a project frame. The project is analyzing the existing measures and policy planning documents, BSAP, including their efficiency. The project will elaborate a national approach for PoMs by the end of October 2014. The results of this feasibility study will be presented for public consultation. Latvia is working actively with development of maritime spatial planning, which is considered an important part of PoM.
- Lithuania: Working on developing PoMs. They are now revising their environmental targets and by the end of the year will have a first draft of proposed measures, including some new measures. They are also planning an environmental impact assessment of their PoMs. An SEA will be carried out nationally.
- Poland: Still looking for funding for PoMs, but have started a gap analysis. Waiting for input from Ministry of agriculture and infrastructure. Will carry out a national SEA. Measures for land based inputs will be taken under the WFD RBMPs. Revision of RBMPs in on-going and public consultation will start in November 2014.
- Sweden: Preparing for a public consultation on PoM components eutrophication and hazardous substances in 1 November 2014. A second consultation will start in February 2015 on biodiversity, underwater noise and marine litter descriptors. Sweden also aims to take into account measures and goals set out in the BSAP but focuses on the national environmental quality standards.
- EC: Development of reporting of Programmes of Measures is on-going. It is linked to WFD reporting to reduce double reporting and makes connections between the two processes. Measures are aggregated under key types of measures, e.g. pressures. Information about individual measures is following the structure of WFD reporting and can be linked to national factsheets.

The Meeting considered the proposed revision of the BSAP follow-up system (document 3-1 and 3-1-Att.1, Presentation 2), and noted that it is suggested that the revised system should be based on agreed indicators, follow-up questions and aggregation rules.

The Meeting welcomed the development of the simple indicator-based system to follow-up the implementation of actions of the BSAP. The Meeting underlined that in addition to being a part of the joint documentation of PoMs the system should make clear links also to the MSFD so that it can also serve HELCOM Contracting Parties also being EU members as an interim follow-up of measures in 2018. The Meeting endorsed the further development by the Secretariat of the indicator-based follow-up system and noted that the revised system and an updated assessment will be ready by end of 2015.

The Meeting was of the view that detailed follow-up of results of actions as presented in document 3-1, i.e. the effectiveness of implemented measures, should be clearly linked to the development of pressure indicators and thus also linked to HOLAS II. The Meeting supported the proposal to consult with relevant HELCOM WGs to identify those measures that are suitable to follow-up in terms of their effectiveness and invited the Secretariat to present further details of this stage of the follow-up system at a later time for further consideration.

The Meeting welcomed the results of the work of IG PoM, agreed to change the title of the joint report to Joint document of regional coordination of Programmes of Measures to clearly differentiate from National PoMs, and supported the further development of a joint documentation according to the ToR presented in document 3-4.

The European Commission supported the efforts made for regional cooperation and appreciated the approach to divide measures into national and joint measures as well as additional measures to be brought up in other international fora (EU, IMO, etc.).

The Meeting discussed the purpose of the joint report on PoMs and reiterated that a “roof report” is referring to a joint product that is directly used as a main element of reporting. Based on this definition the Meeting concluded that the joint regional documentation on measures as presented in document 3-4 is not being developed as a roof report but instead it serves to document how the countries are cooperating regarding measures.

The Meeting discussed how to regard the HELCOM recommendations and other HELCOM measures in the joint documentation and noted that these will be documented as contributing to reaching of GES with an understanding that it is up to the Contracting Parties to report on the measures they are implementing nationally to reach their national targets.

The Meeting noted that timetables of national consultations of PoM differ - in some countries national consultations will start soon while in others not until the latter part of 2015 thus leaving limited room for coordination of new measures.

The Meeting took note of the presentation by EU clarifying that the national reporting of measures under MSFD Article 13 will follow a detailed list of questions to be responded in fact sheets and that the measures should be linked to national environmental targets while MSFD reporting on the regional process is only required at a general level. However, countries have the option to develop joint fact sheets for measures that are coordinated at the regional level.

The Meeting underlined that the joint documentation should aim at providing information for the general question regarding the regional coordination process in the MSFD reporting but recognized that there is limited scope for joint fact sheets.

The Meeting considered and discussed the contents for the different topics to be included in the joint documentation and agreed to continue addressing all 10 topics outlined in document 3-4 with the following comments:

- Input of nutrients; that the possibility to propose and agree on new measures has to be investigated in 2015.
- Inputs of synthetic and non-synthetic contaminants and systematic and/or intentional release of substances; an investigation into the needs for joint actions and development of joint approaches for environmental targets for reduction of inputs of contaminants should be carried out. Thereafter it will be possible to decide whether there are grounds for proposing joint actions. Areas of interest for joint actions could be transboundary atmospheric inputs of e.g. mercury and dioxins.
- Accidental pollution; that development of the mentioned Action plan in document 3-4 by 2015 is not yet decided upon and that one of the identified gaps has been related to a lack of the methodology to assess oil pollution.
- Conservation, restoration and reintroduction of species; should also include reference to HELCOM Recommendation 34E-1 “Safeguarding important bird habitats and migration routes in the Baltic Sea from negative effects of wind and wave energy production at sea” and also consider measures outside MPAs
- Selective extraction and incidental by-catch of species; noting that lack of data in particular on by-catch is still a big challenge, therefore any possible plans for measures should be revisited in 2015. The Meeting agreed to approach third parties e.g. ICES, BSAC, BALTFISH, and point out the lack of

data and the need to develop measures and improve data collection for the future which should be achieved through the DCF.

- Introduction of NIS; noting that the development of an action plan has been agreed and that MARITIME should be asked whether the time-plan is realistic.
- Input of energy including underwater noise; noting that focus in the short-term should be on starting monitoring on noise and building sufficient knowledge and data base.

The Meeting agreed that the work on the joint documentation should be carried out in a staged approach with the preparation of state of play report in December 2014 to be available for feeding into the national consultations. The state of play report should be filled in as far as possible and e.g. refer to HELCOM acquis, the implementation status of the BSAP based on available information and describe the scope of the upcoming components for coordination and joint action to be further explored in 2015.

The Meeting agreed in principle to use the template presented in [Annex 3 of document 3-4](#) to present the information on each topic addressed in the joint documentation, removing the question regarding costs of measures.

The Meeting agreed that a stock-taking of measures should be initiated as soon as possible to support the overall coordination process on Programmes on Measures. The stock-taking exercise will be carried by filling the tables already available on the IG PoM workspace under the coordination of lead countries (paragraph 3.17), however noting that not all countries will be able to inform on new measures in autumn 2014. It was underlined that the information exchange on planned measures is a continuous process and fundamental to enable coordination.

The Meeting further agreed that the final documentation will be completed by the end of 2015, to be available for use as a regional contribution to EU Member States in their reporting to the European Commission. In the final report a stock-taking of existing and new measures should be carried out for all topics addressed.

The Meeting welcomed the offers from the Contracting Parties to Lead the topics of the joint report and facilitate the coordination as follows:

- Sweden: underwater noise.
- Poland: Inputs of synthetic and non-synthetic contaminants and systematic and/or intentional release of substances
- Lithuania: Introduction of non-indigenous species
- Germany: Input of Litter; and support for Spatial protection measures, and to support any Lead on the topic Conservation, restoration and reintroduction of species.
- Finland: Nutrient inputs and will explore the possibility to take the lead for Spatial protection measures
- Estonia: Physical loss and damage to the seafloor
- Secretariat and IG PoM Chair will cooperate on accidental pollution; the Secretariat will provide the HELCOM acquis and information on ongoing HELCOM activities while the IG PoM Chair will coordinate the stock-taking of measures.

The Meeting noted that for the agreed topics “Selective extraction of species and by-catch” and “Conservation, restoration and reintroduction of species” there is no offer on Lead Contracting Party. The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to consider if they are ready to take on a Leading role and information the Secretariat as soon as possible.

The Meeting welcomed the offer by the Secretariat to fill the agreed template of the joint documentation with information on impacts of threatened species and biotopes as contained in the latest HELCOM Red Lists as well as information on the HELCOM acquis and the link to HELCOM state indicators.

The Meeting agreed that the role of Lead countries will be firstly to coordinate the stock taking exercise and fill in as many fields in the agreed template as possible not covered by the Secretariat by 28 November. IG PoM will convene a Skype meeting on 12 December to review the information with the view of having the state of play report completed in December 2014. The Meeting noted that Sweden will initiate the public consultation on eutrophication and hazardous substance by 1 November will thus not be able to make use of the draft report in its first consultation.

The Meeting took note of the CCB proposal on SEA directive and Espoo Convention requirements in MSFD Programme of Measures as contained in document 3-2 and recalled the Outcome of HOD 46-2014 inviting GEAR to consider possible steps on the flexible solution to consider cross-border issues of Programmes of Measures.

The Meeting was informed that all Contracting Parties being EU Member States plan to make a national SEA, however noting that in Lithuania it has not yet been decided on. The Meeting recalled that an assessment of transboundary impacts is an inherent component of the SEAs.

The Meeting agreed that an English summary should be prepared when national PoMs are taken forward for public consultation and shared in a suitable way. The Meeting further agreed that the summaries, as a minimum, should include a list of new measures in the national PoMs and a summary of the transboundary impacts of the national PoMs identified in the national SEAs as well as national contact persons for further information in each Contracting State.

The Meeting proposed the following way to take further the issue of international information sharing and consultations:

- active information exchange on national PoMs through IG PoM
- to consider the possibility to convene a meeting, possibly as an ad hoc workshop, with all HELCOM Contracting Parties participating to discuss the transboundary impacts jointly e.g. in mid-2015
- to use a bilateral consultation approach as appropriate, as already planned e.g. by Sweden and Finland, and Sweden and Denmark

The Meeting agreed that further arrangements of consultations related to transboundary impacts should be discussed by GEAR, while continuous information sharing on national PoMs will be in the realm of IG PoM.

Agenda Item 4

Activities of relevant HELCOM projects and processes

Development of a core set of HELCOM indicators

The Meeting took note of the outcome of CORESET II 2-2014 (document 4-2), the follow-up of linking Contracting Parties national indicators to HELCOM core indicators including the proposal from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to reconsider some of the core indicators agreed at HOD 41-2013 (documents 4-1 and 4-1-Rev.1) and the Danish appraisal of applicability of HELCOM–OSPAR monitoring indicators (document 4-3) (Presentation 4), as presented by Ms. Lena Avellan, Project Manager of CORESET II.

The Meeting proposed that all Contracting Parties would provide comments to the indicators, similarly to the Danish appraisal (document 4-3), to allow for communication between Task Managers, national experts not involved in CORESET II as well as relevant experts on the national management level to resolve any potential concerns.

The Meeting concluded that there will be some HELCOM core indicators where monitoring will not be ecologically relevant to be carried out by all countries and that this needs to be clearly reflected in the indicator report. The Meeting welcomed the work on assessment units in this context and noted that defining which assessment units the indicator applies to is an important task for TMs to carry out within CORESET II.

The Meeting welcomed the information that the work on hazardous substance indicators has progress and that several hazardous substances experts participated in CORESET II 2-2014 and worked on the recommendations in the outcome of the meeting and also began planning the next meetings and deadlines for the remaining work.

The Meeting agreed that work on HELCOM hazardous substances indicators should be aligned with the implementation of the Environmental Quality Standards Directive.

Second holistic assessment of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS II)

The Meeting noted that HELCOM HOD 46-2014 approved the project description for HOLAS II.

The Meeting agreed to come back to the discussion of HOLAS II project at the next meeting of GEAR.

PRESSURE 1-2014, Helsinki, Finland, 30-31 September 2014

Agenda Item 4 Progress with pollution load compilation

The Meeting took note of on-going activities related to monitoring and assessment of inputs of nutrients and hazardous substances, which are supported by a number of HELCOM projects and until now have been supported by LOAD Expert Group and LOAD Core Group, as presented by Ms. Minna Pyhälä, HELCOM Secretariat (Presentation 5, document 4-1).

Agenda Item 5 Follow-up of the HELCOM nutrient reduction scheme

The Meeting considered and supported the proposal for the overall framework and contents of the nutrient reduction scheme follow-up system presented by the Chair of LOAD, Mr. Lars M. Svendsen (Presentation 6, document 5-1).

The Meeting highlighted that PLC is core work of the group however recognized that to enable more policy discussions in the meetings a core expert group needs to be established to coordinate the technical PLC activities, building on the former LOAD expert group and LOAD Core Group.

The Meeting reviewed the final draft of the core pressure indicator on nutrient inputs for assessing progress towards the maximum allowable inputs (MAI) of the HELCOM nutrient reduction scheme (Presentation 7, documents 5-2 and 5-2-Rev1).

The Meeting endorsed the core pressure indicator and agreed that it should be submitted to HELCOM HOD 47-2014 for approval. The Meeting noted that the indicator will be updated with data up to 2012 once the input data has finalized and that a final version will be presented to the meeting of HELCOM 36-2014 in March 2015.

The Meeting supported the suggestion that the core pressure indicator could be updated annually once the data flow and updating procedure has been made operational.

The Meeting considered the draft proposal for content of an assessment for following-up on progress towards the country-wise allocation of nutrient reduction targets (CART), taking into account also the suggestions from LOAD 8-2014 (Presentation 8, document 5-3).

The Meeting supported the suggestion that it could be more reasonable to update the CART follow-up assessment every three years since it requires more data than is available on an annual basis as well as further development of assessment methodology. However, the Meeting agreed to have a closer look at the assessment and PLC schedule at a later stage and that it should take into account the timetable for with EU WFD and MSFD reporting requirements.

The Meeting noted that HOD 46-2014 requested PRESSURE to consider how to start cooperating more closely with transboundary river basin commissions in order to engage them in the work on CART and PLC.

The Meeting invited interested Contracting Parties to consider nominating national members to the Reduction Scheme Core Expert Group, including participation in the upcoming meeting on 10 November 2014 and to inform the Secretariat (Minna.pyhala@helcom.fi) by **7 November 2014** accordingly.

The Meeting elected Mr. Lars M. Svendsen, the former Chair of LOAD, as Chair for the Reduction Scheme Core Expert Group to take up the position once the establishment of the group is approved by HOD.

Agenda Item 6 Other joint measures to address nutrients

The Meeting considered the draft HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable handling of sewage sludge (document 6-3) and appreciated work done by the lead countries Germany and Sweden so far.

The Meeting was of the view that the draft recommendation requires further work i.a. to take into account the upcoming proposal for EU regulation for fertilizers as well as comments by the Contracting Parties and Observers. The Meeting suggested that a workshop gathering relevant national experts should be arranged during spring 2015 to further review and elaborate the recommendation.