



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Meeting of the Hazardous substances and litter segment
team

DG BSAP HZ 2-2021

Drafting Group for the Updated Baltic Sea Action Plan

Online, 19 January 2021

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Background

The attached document contains the guidance for drafting the updated BSAP that was agreed by HOD 58-2020 (document 4-11 from HOD 58-2020) and revised by the Secretariat based on the input and additional guidance provided by HOD 59-2020 for the drafting. Parts of the guidance has already been submitted to the Meeting in documents 2-1 and 3-1.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the updated guidance and use it as appropriate in the work of the Segment Team.



Drafting of the updated BSAP

Outline for the updated BSAP

The updated BSAP should be a relatively short document written in a straightforward way but should at the same time provide sufficient supporting information to facilitate future follow-up of implementation.

The outline of the updated BSAP is based on three main components as further detailed below:

- 1) Preamble, consisting of one overarching preamble and an introductory passage for each segment,
- 2) Operative sections for each segment, including segment specific introductory texts and a concrete plan for action as outlined by the relevant measures and actions,
- 3) Supplementary information to the agreed actions.

Aspirations will be differentiated from concrete actions and the operative sections will more clearly present the plan for action. Detailed information and supporting information on the actions will be made available as supplementary material, the format of which will be revisited at HELCOM 42-2021

The updated BSAP should maintain strong links between the BSAP and global processes and commitments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the upcoming Convention on Biological Diversity targets, the European Common Agricultural Policy and the EU Green Deal, with the aim that HELCOM can function as one of the platforms for ensuring implementation of global commitments.

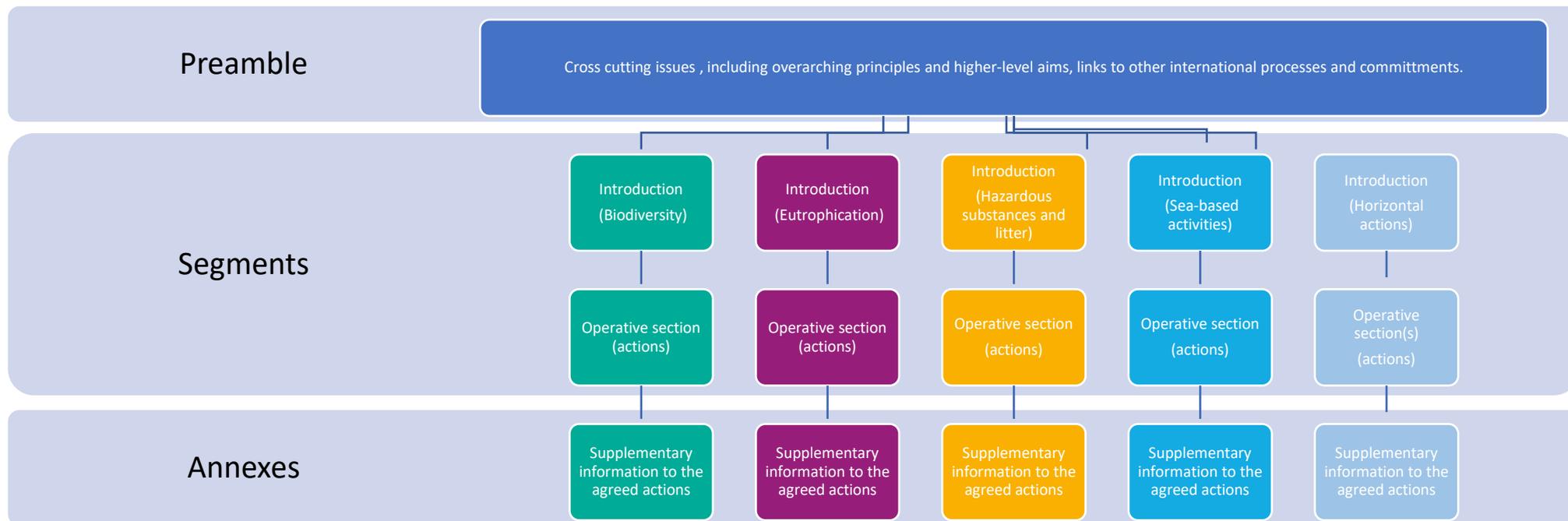


Figure 1. The outline for the structure of the updated BSAP

1) Preamble

Overarching preamble

Suggested length: Maximum 5-10 pages

Division of tasks in spring 2021:

- *The overarching preamble and the introduction will be further considered and developed by DG BSAP in spring 2021, based on the guidance from HOD 59-2020 and comments received in the review processes in 2020.*
- *Further developed drafts will be presented for guidance by HELCOM 42-2021.*
- *The overarching preamble and introduction will be drafted further by DG BSAP based on guidance from HELCOM 42-2021.*
- *Final approval will take place at HOD 60-2021.*

The preamble of the BSAP will address issues that cut across the segments. The preamble should include overarching principles and higher-level aims from the Helsinki Convention, UN SDGs and other relevant policies, for example:

- Implementation based on ecosystem approach;
- Reaching good environmental status;
- Be based on the precautionary principle;
- Sustainable consumption and production;
- Clean and environmentally sound technologies;
- Sustainable use of natural resources;
- Integration of climate change into policies.

Political and legal commitments could be clearly distinguished in the preamble e.g. by highlighting how, for the Contracting Parties that are EU member states, the implementation of the BSAP contributes to the EU Green Deal.

Climate change will be addressed as a component of the preamble, including a paragraph on mitigating the effects of climate change with a focus on the importance of improving and ensuring the resilience of the ecosystem.

In addition, HOD 59-2020 agreed that the overarching preamble should include a paragraph on recognizing the socio-economic benefits of implementing the measures and actions and that the BSAP should include a general statement acknowledging the validity of existing HELCOM Recommendations also after adoption of the updated BSAP.

The preamble should be followed by an introduction explaining the rationale behind and showing the structure and function of the BSAP e.g.:

- what is a goal;
- what is an ecological objective;
- what is a management objective;
- how do the goals and objectives fit together;
- what is the rationale behind the segment division and how do the respective segments support each other;

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- a short explanation of the plan for follow-up in the updated BSAP (including two reporting intervals), tentatively to be included in the introduction. The final placement of the information can be revisited at a later stage of the drafting process.

There could also possibly be a timeline overview of the planned implementation of BSAP measures and actions based on the target years provided in the operative sections. For those with no specified target year, the end year of the BSAP would function as target year. The placing of such a timeline could be in an annex or as supplementary online material in order not to have lengthy duplicate overviews of the measures included in the BSAP.

Segment introductions (biodiversity, eutrophication, hazardous substances and litter, sea-based activities)

Suggested length: As short as possible but can vary across segments.

Division of tasks in spring 2021:

- *The Secretariat is to implement editorial changes and harmonize content across segments, based on the guidance from HOD 59-2020, prior to submission of the introductions to respective Segment Team meetings in early 2021.*
- *The introductions will be further considered and developed in the respective Segment Teams in spring 2021, based on the guidance from HOD 59-2020 and comments received in the review processes in 2020. Special focus in the Segment Teams should be on identifying strategic decisions.*
- *Further developed drafts will be presented for review by DG BSAP and guidance by HELCOM 42-2021.*
- *The segment introductions will be drafted further by DG BSAP Segment Teams and DG BSAP based on guidance by HELCOM 42-2021.,*
- *Final approval of the introductions will take place at HOD 60-2021.*

The updated BSAP will have a layered preamble which will also include segment-specific introductory text.

There should be a strong link between the goals, objectives and actions and the content of the introduction of the respective segment providing clear links to the goals, management objectives and actions for the segment in question.

Wherever possible harmonization across segments should be strived for, though the length of the introductions may vary, and appropriate covering of MAI/NIC commitments in the eutrophication segment should be ensured. The same subheadings should be used for each section to guide the drafting, ensuring that an uninitiated reader can follow the content across segment. These sub-headings function as place holders but could be considered for removal at a later stage, once the texts are in place.

Visualizations/text boxes

The beginning of each segment should include in the same way and order in a text box/visualization:

- goal, ecological objectives and management objectives for segment;
- pressures and activities addressed by segment actions and measures;
- link of segment to relevant climate change parameters and, if possible, key messages;
- action areas;
- link to relevant SDG;
- cross-references with other segments.

Introductions should be kept as short as possible and be drafted under the assumption that the reader is informed regarding the topics. To this end, the following concretized guidance is to be considered:

- Topics included in the visualization/text box should not be repeated in the text of the introduction (i.e. objectives, climate change, SDGs, addressed activities, addressed pressures and cross-referencing to other segments);
- Wherever possible visualization should be preferred over text, e.g. *Action areas* currently presented as part of the introductory text could also be included as part of the visualization/information box.
- The section on links to other treaties should be as short as possible.

How to present the content of the current text box needs further development as part of the further process, e.g. SDG targets could be presented in relation to which specific objectives they relate to.

Description of the current state

The section on Current state (included as part of the Operative section of each segment in the first draft of the updated BSAP) should be moved to the general introduction and included as general background for each segment. The brief description of the state of the Baltic Sea is to be based on the latest HELCOM assessments.

Aspirations and strategic decisions

The segment specific introductory text could focus on aspirations and strategic decision for the respective segment and also recall other relevant commitments associated to the respective segment. The aspiration to implement international conventions could also be part of the segment preamble.

The introductions should, wherever possible, strive to outline the strategic framing of the segment and include aspirations and strategic agreements. Actions under each segment formulated in a general way could be used as a starting point for formulating such strategic statements. The final placement of aspirations and strategic agreements within the segments will be decided later on.

2) Operative sections

Operative sections, including the agreed actions, will be presented for each segment and associated goal of the updated BSAP.

With the more strategic and higher-level ambitions being expressed in introductory passages, the operative sections will focus on the plan for action.

Description of desired state

Suggested length: Maximum ½ page

Division of tasks in spring 2021: Same as for segment introductions above.

This section will contain an elaboration of the HELCOM ecological objectives, representing the desired state of the environment or the acceptable level of pressure. The goal and ecological objectives should function as the basis for presenting the desired state.

Actions

Suggested length: No page limitation

Division of tasks in spring 2021:

- *The Secretariat will, to the extent possible, redraft proposed actions based on the comments received from Contracting Parties and through the review process in 2020, prior to the Segment Team meetings in early 2021.*
- *All actions will then be further considered and developed in the respective Segment Teams in spring 2021, based on the guidance from HOD 59-2020 and comments received in the review processes in 2020.*
- *Further developed actions will be presented for review at DG BSAP and for provisional agreement at HELCOM 42-2021 (and possible subsequent intersessional HOD meeting), as they become available.*
- *The actions will be drafted further by DG BSAP Segment Teams and DG BSAP based on guidance by HELCOM 42-2020.,*
- *Final approval will take place at HOD 60-2021.*

Overall, the targets and actions included in the updated BSAP should be practical, realistic, concrete and result-oriented, while maintaining a high level of ambition. In order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the actions included in the BSAP these should focus on targeting the sources of the problems, *inter alia*, human activities such as agriculture or fisheries, rather than dealing with the resulting symptoms. The actions to be included in the updated BSAP should also primarily target the main challenges facing the Baltic Sea environment. To ensure reaching the goal of the plan, actions should contain provisions to address new or emerging pressures.

With regard to the formulation of actions, to facilitate the reading and to clearly outline the plan for action the following has been agreed:

- Initiating words (WE AGREE, WE PROMOTE) will not be used in the operative segments;
- More detailed information on actions such as any lengthier descriptions of rationale behind them and potential effects of their implementation is to be provide as supplementary material;
- Actions should be formulated as concrete as possible in terms of aim or output and should specify a target year for implementation;
- Measures that can contribute directly to improving the state of the Baltic Sea will be presented separate from those actions that are aimed at supporting implementation of actions or other HELCOM activities (e.g. actions related to databases, mapping, assessments, guidelines). However, HOD 57-2019 noted that that it may not always be clear how such a differentiation should be made and that it will be necessary to consider this from case to case.

With this approach the operative sections will include a straightforward plan of actions to be followed up by future reporting, structured according to the objectives and a common outline for each segment.

The formulation of actions should be clear and including similar actions under separate segments should be avoided. When new actions are further developed there is a need to cross-reference with actions included under existing HELCOM Recommendations to ensure synergies as opposed to overlap

When structuring actions and information in the Operative section the following guidance is to be considered:

1. Gather actions of more strategic or aspirational character in the introduction using the distinction of proposals requiring concrete action as opposed to those which do not to guide the

division of topics between the segment introduction (strategic and aspirational actions) and the operative sections (concrete actions and measures). Final decision on the placing will however also depend on the nature of the proposed strategic decisions and aspirations.

2. Avoid duplication with already existing agreements.
3. Explore options for giving actions with a direct effect on the environment higher attention than supporting actions.
4. Consider the possibility of aggregating actions in separate decision documents. Consideration should be given to the content and aim of such separate decision documents to avoid proliferation of action plans.

It needs to be ensured that in the process of structuring the actions under the operational sections, as outlined above, none of the existing actions are lost, nor the level of ambition lowered.

3) Supplementary information to the agreed actions

Suggested length: No page limitations

Suggested division of tasks in 2020:

- The Working Groups are to collect the information for the annexes as outlined in document 5-8 in spring 2021.

- HELCOM 42-2021 is to continue discussion on where to place the information when the next version of the draft updated BSAP is available.

In addition to the main BSAP document additional information and guidance for future assessment of implementation is to be collected as supplementary material. Such information includes:

- rationale behind actions;
- type of action (supporting action/measure);
- tentative information on effect of actions;
- implementing entity (national/joint) and implementation in HELCOM (WG and possible EG);
- indicators to follow-up the implementation of the action.

There is a close link between the information collected for the annexes and the HELCOM Explorer.

Associated action documents, supporting documents and background documents

Documents submitted together with the updated BSAP will be divided into three specific categories depending on their nature, as follows:

- **Associated action documents:** documents which directly relate to implementing actions and measures for achieving the overall visions and objectives of the updated BSAP e.g. roadmaps, topic specific action plans, strategies, Recommendations etc.
- **Supporting documents:** documents which function as support for implementing and achieving the overall visions and objectives of the updated BSAP, but which do not require specific and concrete actions, e.g. the Climate Change Fact Sheet and the HELCOM Science Agenda.

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- **Background documents:** material providing background information for the BSAP and the update process e.g. implementation report of the BSAP 2007-2021, rationale and process of the BSAP update etc.

Associated action documents

Associated action documents in this context include existing HELCOM documents, as well as documents which are to be adopted alongside the updated BSAP, which contain agreement on actions and/or measures e.g. HELCOM Recommendations, roadmaps, topic specific action plans, strategies etc. Documents that are adopted alongside the updated BSAP will remain as separate documents and not merged with the main BSAP document. Such documents will function as concrete support for implementing and achieving the overall visions and objectives of the updated BSAP. These documents complement the BSAP document by offering the possibility to:

- allow for a higher level of specificity in outlining the planned work, setting targets and timelines etc. for a given topic;
- provide a more dynamic format for implementation, as they can be amended and updated as deemed necessary throughout the BSAP period;
- allow for continuity of work as some types of supporting documents e.g. HELCOM Recommendations, are not timebound.

However, the updated BSAP should include strategic decisions and central points from the associated action documents and underline that the follow-up of these documents should also be established when said document is adopted.

Associated action documents that are expected to be adopted together with the updated BSAP include:

- HELCOM Regional Action Plan on Underwater Noise
- Updated HELCOM Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter
- The Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2027
- Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy

In addition to these associated action documents, the revised Annex III part II of the Helsinki Convention could be adopted alongside the updated BSAP and the appropriate process for the adoption of the revised Annex needs to be clarified and is to be revisited at HELCOM 42-2021

Supporting documents

The following supporting documents are to be adopted alongside the updated BSAP:

- Climate Change Fact Sheet
- HELCOM Science Agenda

Background documents

In addition to the HELCOM documents adopted alongside the adoption of the updated BSAP, there is also additional material that can be published as background information for the Ministerial Meeting 2021. Such material includes:

- Implementation of the 2007-2021 BSAP
- BSAP update process

HOD 60-2021 is to decide if the SOM reports will be included as background material for the Ministerial Meeting 2021.