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<b>Document title</b>	Provisional Annotated Agenda
<b>Code</b>	1-1
<b>Category</b>	DEC
<b>Agenda Item</b>	1 - Adoption of the Agenda
<b>Submission date</b>	21.1.2020
<b>Submitted by</b>	Secretariat and Chair
<b>Reference</b>	EN Benthic 3-2019 outcome paragraph 6.1

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## Background

In accordance with the outcome of the Third Meeting of HELCOM Expert Network on Benthic Habitats (EN BENTHIC 3-2019), the Extra Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Network on Benthic Habitats (EN BENTHIC 3a-2019) will be held online on 5 March 2020 10:00-13:00 EET.

The Meeting will be chaired by Ms. Antonia Nyström Sandman, Chair of the Expert Network on Benthic Habitats.

The Meeting is dedicated to the follow up on the Terms of Reference of the Expert Network:

Meeting documents will be submitted by the Secretariat to the [document library](#) of the [EN BENTHIC 3a-2020 meeting site](#) via the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#). The Secretariat has prepared [a document template](#) and recommends using the template when submitting documents to the Secretariat.

Those Meeting participants who wish to provide their contributions for the Meeting are requested to submit the documents in electronic format to Associate Professional Secretary Ms. Laura Hoikkala ([laura.hoikkala@helcom.fi](mailto:laura.hoikkala@helcom.fi)) by **26 February 2020**.

Please register for the Meeting by answering the [Participation Survey](#) in the HELCOM Meeting Portal by **26 February 2020**. Instructions for the use of the new Meeting Portal are available on the [HELCOM Website](#).

## Provisional Annotated Agenda

### Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Provisional Agenda, as contained in document 1-1.

### Agenda Item 2 Work plan for 2019-2021

The Meeting is invited to follow up on the tasks set for the network in Terms of Reference for EN BENTHIC (document 2-2), as follows:

#### *2.1 Habitat mapping (workplan item 1)*

The Meeting is invited to discuss the following workplan items related to habitat mapping:

Workplan 1.1: Share information on and summarize existing and planned national benthic habitat mapping methods and programmes.

- The Meeting is invited to take note that the HELCOM workshop for habitat mapping, looking into the methods of mapping and monitoring, took place back-to-back to the Meeting, 12-13 November In Helsinki.
- The Meeting is invited to take note that a second HELCOM habitat mapping workshop, focusing on the modelling and use of the data, has been planned to take place in spring 2020.

Workplan 1.2: Facilitate common approach for identifying habitats in relevant classification systems (HUB; EUNIS and N2000) that exist in several/most HELCOM countries in order to prioritize future work for mapping and assessment.

- The Meeting is invited to take note of the collated information on national priority habitats (document 2-1). Those Contracting Parties that have not yet sent the information on national priority habitats are invited to do so by sending the filled [excel template](#) to the Secretariat ([laura.hoikkala@helcom.fi](mailto:laura.hoikkala@helcom.fi)).
- The Meeting is invited to take note that the aim is to identify a collection of habitats (HUB and N2000) that exist in several/most HELCOM countries (linked to activity 4.2.1).
- The Meeting is invited to take note of the document by SPICE project on practical guidance how different hierarchical levels of habitats (e.g. broader and more-detailed HELCOM underwater biotopes) can be tackled within the same assessment (document 2-3), and to discuss how data driven validation of translation between different habitat classification systems (resource intensive) could in theory be achieved, and propose a best way forward.

#### *2.2 Habitat maps (workplan item 2)*

The Meeting is invited to discuss the following workplan items related to habitat maps:

Workplan 2.3: Review existing data availability and formats.

- The Meeting is invited to take note of the proceedings with metadata overview as presented by Germany, and discuss how the information can be used for the production of harmonized habitat maps.

Workplan 2.5: Supporting the development and updating of the existing HELCOM habitat maps and outline a procedure for updating the layer(s) in the HELCOM data and map service on a regular basis, if possible in cooperation with other data collection initiatives (e.g. EMODNET) and organizations (e.g. OSPAR).

- 2.5.1 The Meeting is invited to take note of the information on how the current maps have been prepared and are maintained as presented by the Secretariat, and plan a way forward.
- The Meeting is invited to consider points that need to be taken into account and agree on a way forward for developing proper habitat maps.
- 2.5.2 The Contracting Parties are invited to look into and inform the Meeting on available funding options for such a project.

#### Workplan 2.6: Share information on the process of identification of conservation values

The Contracting Parties are invited to share information on the process of identification of conservation values.

#### *2.3 Habitat monitoring (Workplan item 3)*

The Meeting is invited to discuss the following workplan items related to habitat monitoring:

#### Workplan 3.1: Share information on and summarize existing and planned national benthic habitat monitoring, monitoring methods and programmes.

#### Workplan 3.2: Review existing methods and techniques for benthic habitat monitoring and survey to support assessment of extent and quality of habitats.

- The Meeting is invited to take note of the information on existing methods and techniques collated in advance to and during the habitat mapping workshop (document 2-4).
- The Meeting is invited to take note of the progress and output of the BONUS SEAM project, as presented by Henrik Nygård, Finland, and consider the linkages to the work of the Expert Network.
- (3.2.1) Building on existing work, the Meeting is invited to consider a way forward, where possible linking to work on descriptor 6 at the EU level, e.g. under TG Seabed. Progress on EU level to be shared at each meeting.

#### Workplan 3.3: Facilitate further development of monitoring and survey methods suitable for different habitat types and assessment needs (especially BSAP, MSFD and HD).

- The Contracting Parties are invited to inform the Meeting on any possibilities for a project for further development of monitoring and survey methods.

#### Workplan 3.4: Develop joint HELCOM guidelines for monitoring and survey strategies, building on existing work.

- The Meeting is invited to review the Recommendations and guidelines for Benthic Habitat monitoring in the Baltic Sea, produced by Baltic Sea Pilot Project (BALSAM), consider whether the work is still up to date, and should need for updating be identified, agree on a way to update the guidelines (document 2-5).
- 3.4.1 Scoping exercise at the annual meeting in 2019, including possibility to link with OSPAR survey on soft bottom grab sampling and possible extension (i.e. other habitat types or substrates) of such processes within the HELCOM area:
  - o The Meeting is reminded that State & Conservation 9-2018 discussed the possibility to assign national resources to the initiative of expanding the OSPAR questionnaire on soft-bottom sampling and regional harmonization of approaches to include the HELCOM region and was of the opinion that currently, in light of e.g. the HELCOM monitoring guidelines, such an initiative is not considered to bring added value to the processes within HELCOM.

#### *2.4 Assessments (Workplan item 4)*

The Meeting is invited to discuss the following workplan items related to assessments, and to agree on a way to forward the listed issues:

workplan 4.1: Review existing methods and techniques for assessing extent and quality of habitats and biotopes, including integration and aggregation methods.

- Use outcome of review under activity 3.2.1. Build on existing work and where possible link to work on descriptor 6 at the EU level, e.g. under TG SEABED. Progress on EU level to be shared with each meeting. Review to support the state of the Baltic sea assessment process.

Workplan 4.2: Recommend a list of biotopes or habitats of regional interest representing all relevant broad habitat types.

- The Meeting is invited to discuss and agree on a list of habitats of regional interest, taking into consideration the collated information on national priority habitats, organized according to sub basins/assessment units (document 2-1). Those Contracting Parties that have not yet sent the information on national priority habitats are invited to do so by sending the filled [excel template](#) to the Secretariat ([laura.hoikkala@helcom.fi](mailto:laura.hoikkala@helcom.fi)).

Workplan 4.3: Support the development of thresholds in order to assess quality and extent of benthic habitats, particularly with relevance for regional coordination.

- Build on existing work and where possible link to work on descriptor 6 at the EU level, e.g. under TG SEABED. Progress on EU level to be shared with meeting.
- The Contracting Parties are invited to collect national information on thresholds and approaches, such as national indicators used, and to share it with the meeting and discuss strong and weak points.
- The Contracting Parties are invited to share experiences on assessing the extent of adversely affected area and identifying issues, challenges and possible solutions.

Workplan 4.4: Identifying possible new indicators.

- Support the indicator review and update process (agenda item to be added at every meeting).
- The Contracting Parties are invited to share information on newly proposed indicators from scientific publications, projects both inside and outside of the Baltic Sea.

Workplan 4.5: Support Lead countries to further develop and review benthic habitat indicators, in close cooperation with other relevant HELCOM initiatives and initiatives outside HELCOM, e.g. OSPAR and ICES.

- The Meeting is invited to take note that the benthic habitat indicators will be further considered in the [Indicator workshop of HELCOM Expert Network on Benthic Habitats](#), taking place 16 March 2020 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

### Agenda Item 3                      Any other business

The Meeting is invited to consider any other business of relevance for the group.

The Meeting is invited to decide on the time and place of the next meeting of the group.

### Agenda Item 4                      Outcome of the Meeting

A draft Outcome of the Meeting will be presented by the Secretariat for consideration and approval by the Meeting participants. The final Outcome, together with documents and presentations considered at the Meeting, will be made available on the [EN BENTHIC 3a-2020 Meeting Site](#) under [Meeting Documents](#) on the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#).