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Outcome of Ninth Meeting of the Expert Network on dredging/depositing operations at sea

Introduction

The online meeting took place 30 January. It started at 10:00 and terminated at 12:00 (EET). Participants from Denmark, Germany and Sweden attended the meeting. List of participants is contained in the Annex 1.

Agenda item 1

1.1 The Meeting adopted the agenda of the Meeting.

Agenda item 2

2.1 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of recent meetings relevant to the group's work presented by the HELCOM Secretariat.

Agenda item 3

3.1 The Meeting considered draft Recommendation 36/2 and agreed on that without any changes.

3.2 The Meeting considered an updated draft of the Guideline integrating proposals by Germany.

3.3 The Meeting expressed concern regarding clarity of the proposed additional definition of water bodies in the item 7.1 on page 9 which might be ambiguously interpreted. The Meeting took note that Germany agreed to withdraw that proposal. The Meeting agreed to erase the proposal on the page 9 item 7.1.

3.4 The Meeting also agreed to delete "at least" on page 13.

3.5 The Meeting agreed with the other updates of the Guideline inviting the Secretariat to edit new text to make more reader friendly.

3.6 The Meeting agreed that the draft Recommendation 36/2 and the Guideline can be submitted to HELCOM 41-2020 for final approval.

3.7 Recalling the request by HOD 57-2019 that all national experts nominated to HELCOM DREDS expert group had to reflect on the proposed updates of the Recommendation and Guideline, the Meeting requested the Secretariat to circulate the final version of the documents to the experts encouraging them to provide their views to the Secretariat (Juuso.Haapaniemi@helcom.fi) by **7 February 2020**. The Meeting pointed out that the aim is to submit the Recommendation and Guidelines to HELCOM 41-2020 for approval by 12 February 2020.

Agenda item 4

4.1 The Meeting discussed the status of the 2018 data verification for the consolidated report to LC/LP. The Meeting took note that Germany verified the data without any changes. Denmark also checked the reported data and found some minor errors and provided the corrections directly after the meeting. The Meeting agreed to extend the verification deadline by **7 February 2020** encouraging national data reporters to verify the data and inform the Secretariat (Juuso.Haapaniemi@helcom.fi).

Agenda item 5

5.1 The Meeting discussed the proposal by the EU to include additional parameters to the HELCOM reporting on dredged material ([document 5-1](#)). The Meeting pointed out that the spatial extent of the depositing areas is well covered by the current reporting. Emphasizing that in many cases the area licensed for depositing is much larger than currently used. In such cases identification of spatial parameters as a point is much more informative than attributing operation to the whole licensed area.

5.2 The Meeting also took note that linear depositing sites occur when dredged material is used to fill trenches for underwater cables.

5.3 The Meeting took note that the area affected by the depositing operations can be also assessed utilizing data on type and volume of the deposited material. But such estimation is rather rough with high level of uncertainty and preferred to be avoided in the reporting of initial data.

5.4 The Meeting discussed the proposal to report the nature of bottom sediments at depositing sites pointing out limited information on the matter as well as the need to clarify how detailed this information is to be.

5.5 The Meeting pointed out that general information about lithological type of bottom sediments is available for all sites from maps of bottom lithology. However, Denmark emphasizes that for Danish waters it would be coarse grid resolution map. More specific information can be obtained from newly issued permits but unavailable for the old ones.

5.6 The Meeting also pointed out that type of bottom sediments in the depositing sites might change in case of continuous use of the site for a long time or e.g. for large dredging operations.

Agenda item 6

6.1 The Meeting took note of the information on the state-of-the-art methods to assess impact of dredging operations on the sea floor and benthic habitats.

6.2 The Meeting took note that related research has been recently carried out in Sweden and invited Sweden to share this information with the Secretariat (Juuso.Haapaniemi@helcom.fi). The Meeting also took note that Denmark will look into if such studies exist and in Germany continuous national consultation is taking place regarding operations causing losses and disturbances to the sea floor.

6.3 The Meeting invited national experts to share available national information on the evaluation of impact of dredging depositing operations on the sea floor integrity with the Secretariat (Juuso.Haapaniemi@helcom.fi) by **12 March 2020**.

6.4 The Meeting pointed out that this information could be utilized as a starting point for the discussion on the method to assess impact of dredging depositing operations on the sea floor.

6.5 The Meeting took note that PRESSURE group committed to contribute to the implementation of MD2018 commitment "to develop the necessary regionally coordinated quantitative targets for the reduction of physical disturbance caused by human activities and habitat loss". This contribution will

constitute of the development of a method to evaluate losses and disturbance caused by handling dredged material at sea.

Agenda item 7

7.1 The Meeting took note information on monitoring practices in some HELCOM countries and recalled the requirements of the HELCOM Guideline to report information on monitoring practices.

7.2 The Meeting agreed that the regional overview of the monitoring practices would be a valuable background information for this type of reporting. This information could be also utilized in future for the consolidated report to the LC/LP.

7.3 The Meeting pointed out that at least three countries Denmark, Germany and Sweden have already provided information on national practices to monitor depositing sites and encouraged contracting parties which have not provided this information to submit relevant overviews of nation practices to the Secretariat (Juuso.Haapaniemi@helcom.fi) by **12 March 2020**. The Meeting invited countries also to exchanges examples of related national monitoring programmes.

7.4 The Meeting considered and supported presentation of the fact sheet on dredging/depositing operations at sea in the format of a story map as given in the [document 7-2](#).

Agenda item 8

8.1 The Meeting agreed to continue the work via correspondence and arrange next online meeting tentatively in September 2020, if there will be no any urgent issues raised.

Agenda item 9

The Meeting approved outcomes via correspondence.

Annex 1. List of Participants

Contracting Party	Organization	Name	E-mail address
Denmark	The Danish Environmental Protection Agency	Christina Abel	chabe@mst.dk
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