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| Agenda Item | 1 - Adoption of the Agenda |
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| Submitted by | Secretariat and Chair |
| Reference | |

Background

The Sixth Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Network on Benthic Habitats (EN Benthic 6-2021) will be held online on 15 June 2021. Links to the online meeting will be sent closer to the start of the meeting.

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

The Meeting will start on Tuesday, 15 June at 09.00 CET/10.00 EEST and will end by 16.00 CET/17.00 EEST. A provisional timetable for the meeting will be provided in the meeting site.

The Meeting will focus on advancing the work on indicators and assessments, with a particular focus on HOLAS III and associated deadlines.

Meeting documents will be submitted by the Secretariat to the document library of the [EN Benthic 6-2021 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 Laura Kaikkonen (laura.kaikkonen@helcom.fi) by **7 June 2021**.

Please register for the Meeting by answering the [Participation Survey](#) in the HELCOM Meeting Portal by **11 June 2021**. Instructions for the use of the 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 Information by the Chair, Secretariat and Contracting Parties

The following items will be briefly introduced, and discussion taken, if required.

- Further information, regional or national, to share with EN BENTHIC. *Please provide information in advance of or at the meeting.*

Agenda Item 3 Cumulative impact on benthic biotopes

EN BENTHIC 5-2021 considered the progress and remaining open issues in developing the Cumulative impact on benthic biotopes indicator and took note that the indicator leads will submit a comment document to STATE&CONSERVATION 14-2021 on issues requiring input from the WG drawing on the outcomes of the Meeting.

The Meeting will be invited take note of the guidance from STATE&CONSERVATION 14-2021 and to use it as appropriate.

EN BENTHIC 5-2021 further took note that the next version of the indicator report will be updated according to the guidance from STATE&CONSERVATION 14-2021 and the updated report will be presented to EN-BENTHIC 6-2021 for review.

The Meeting will be invited to consider and agree on the updated indicator report.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information presented by the indicator leads and to finalize any open issues in order to present progress on the indicator STATE&CONSERVATION 15-2021.

Agenda Item 4 Progress on other indicator and assessment work

The Meeting is invited to take note of the progress on other indicator and assessment work and support further development of this with the HOLAS III process and deadlines in mind.

Condition of benthic habitats

EN BENTHIC 5-2021 considered the assessment concept for the state of benthic habitats presented at EN BENTHIC 4-2020 ([document 6-2 to that meeting](#)) and invited participants involved in the development of the proposed schematic and the Condition of Benthic Habitats indicator (Sweden, Finland and Estonia) to carry out intersessional work towards applying a suitable and aligned methodology in a series of spatially distributed test cases.

The Meeting will be invited to take note of progress in developing the assessment concept and to consider proposing its use in thematic assessment in HOLAS III.

State of the soft-bottom macrofauna community

EN BENTHIC 5-2021 recalled that in HOLAS III, BQI could not be applied in all basins, namely Arkona-Bornholm, due to lack of consensus on the threshold values. The Meeting invited the indicator leads to continue the discussion on the threshold values intersessionally with Sweden, Denmark, Poland and Germany on the assessment units and application of threshold values and assessments for other currently un-assessed regions (including potential division of existing assessment units).

The Meeting will be invited to take note of the progress on setting the threshold values.

Assessment of benthic habitats for HOLAS III

A concept for how benthic habitats could be assessed under HOLAS III was presented and discussed at STATE&CONSERVATION 14-2021.

The Meeting will be invited to take note of the proposal, take note of the comments and discussion from STATE&CONSERVATION 14-2021, and support the further development of the proposed approach towards HOLAS III with a view to submitting a revised version to State and Conservation 15-2021.

Agenda Item 5 Any other business and next meeting

The Meeting is invited to consider any other business presented by the participants.

The Meeting is invited to agree on the time of the next meeting.

Agenda Item 6 Outcome of the Meeting

A draft Outcome of the Meeting will be shared with the participants after the meeting and published online once finalized.