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Agenda Item	3 – MIME R-script as core indicator assessment protocol
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Background

The proposal to apply the OSPAR assessment method (referred to as the 'MIME R-script') also in HELCOM core indicators as the assessment protocol was first presented and discussed at the CORESET II hazardous substances and bio-effects meeting (CORESET II HZBF 2015) in February 2015, as noted in [paragraph 3.6-3.8 of the outcome](#). As a basis for the discussion, Sweden submitted a [meeting document](#) comparing the OSPAR approach to the HELCOM approach, which at the time is based on a national approach developed in Sweden. The CORESET II HZBF 2015 meeting concluded that the methods produce comparable results, and did not identify any problems with switching to the OSPAR approach. It was also noted that the OSPAR approach automates some of the calculation steps, and is thus less labour intensive than the approach used until then.

Applying the OSPAR assessment method in HELCOM core indicators was further discussed at the first meeting of the HELCOM expert network on hazardous substances (EN-HZ 1-2016) ([points 6-10 in the outcome](#)). The method comparison document from 2015 was updated with further clarifying comments and submitted by Sweden as a [meeting document](#). The workshop recommended using the method developed in OSPAR MIME as the HELCOM core indicator assessment protocol (point 7), and identified that further intersessional work is needed to clarify some remaining details regarding e.g. data checks and formats.

Two intersessional online meetings were consecutively organized and the progress made during the intersessional work was presented at the EN-HZ 2-2016 meeting as a [meeting document](#). The intersessional work focussed on applying the OSPAR MIME R-script on two HELCOM core indicators using the OSPAR criteria with the main aim to identify any problems with applying the script to COMBINE data. It should thus be noted that the test have not used HELCOM GES boundaries. The OSPAR criteria excluded a significant amount of data in the first test run and were considered to be too strict. Based on a second extraction from COMBINE, the tests were re-run with more lenient criteria. The [test results can be viewed online](#) showing the results per station in the output designed for OSPAR purposes. Among other details it was noted that the script requires data points to be identified to a station name in the ICES station dictionary, and that in the future countries should report uncertainty values related to each measurement.

The EN-HZ 4-2016 meeting discussed the issue further, and agreed that the applicability of the protocol needs to be considered by the respective indicator lead country representatives in order to conclude on a final proposal to State and Conservation 5-2016. The Co-Chairs provided guidance via e-mail on how to consider the approach (7 September). The [assessment methodology](#) is also described among the online test results.

This document presents further comments from the Co-Chairs and is intended as a discussion base.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information and use it to conclude on the suitability of the R-script to be used for HELCOM core indicators and develop a proposal to be submitted to STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016. The Meeting may wish to comment on and discuss specific technical details of the script.

OSPAR assessment method

Co-Chairs comments concerning the MIME method as assessment protocol for the hazardous substance core indicators

Within the OSPAR Working Group on Monitoring and on Trends and Effects of Substances in the Marine Environment (MIME) a method for assessing contaminant data has been developed and used for several years. The method is transparent and reviewed by MIME participants.

The method assesses both trend and status for contaminant monitoring data in sediment and biota.

Within the work with the HELCOM Core indicators for hazardous substances there is a need for a common method to evaluate the contaminant monitoring data. Development of a suitable assessment method is time consuming. To adopt the already established MIME-method that is developed for similar data-sets would be an efficient way of moving forward in the process. In addition the method would also provide comparable results between OSPAR and HELCOM regions.

The output of the assessment provides a representative value for each station, based on the one sided upper 95% confidence limit. The method also evaluates possible temporal trend and the output can be used for status assessment. Work has also been done on spatial aggregation of data in assessment units (within MIME) which would be valuable to further explore, and possibly adopt for assessment of the core indicators. The status values from the assessment method can be used as input to the CHASE tool.