Document title	First draft for BSAP segment preamble – sea-based activities
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Agenda Item	3 – Implementation and update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan
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Submitted by	Secretariat

Background

HOD 57-2019 discussed the style of writing of the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP). Accordingly, 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 (Outcome, para 3.27-3.28). Overall the updated BSAP should maintain strong links with global processes and commitments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the upcoming Convention on Biological Diversity targets and the EU Green Deal, with the aim that HELCOM can function as one of the platforms for ensuring implementation of global commitments. A holistic approach should be used when viewing and addressing the effects of human activities and subsequent pressures affecting the Baltic Sea. Aspirations are to be differentiated from concrete actions and the operative sections more clearly present the plan for action. Detailed information and supporting information on the actions will be made available as annexes to the respective segment.

The Secretariat was tasked to prepare an outline of how the updated BSAP will be structured to facilitate the drafting process. A proposal was shared for information with the Working Group meetings in spring 2020 and later approved by HOD 58-2020 (Outcome, para 4.6-4.16). According to the Work Plan for the BSAP update, the first full draft is to be available at HOD in December 2020.

The updated BSAP will have a layered preamble which will also include segment-specific introductory text. HOD 57-2019 requested the Secretariat to prepare a first draft of the introductory text for the respective segments.

Such text could focus on aspirations and strategic decision for the respective segment and also recall other relevant legislation associated to the respective segment. This introduction should not contain more than 1200 words and will be supported by reference boxes and visualizations. 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. Each operative section will be initiated by a brief description (maximum ½ page) of the current state of the Baltic Sea based on the latest HELCOM assessments (Outcome HOD 56-2019, para 2.23 and HOD 58-2020, para 4.8 and document 4-11) . This will be followed by an account of the HELCOM objectives, representing the desired state of the environment or the acceptable level of pressure (maximum ½ page). The agreed actions will then be sorted thematically.

This document contains the first draft of the segment specific introduction for sea-based activities, as prepared by the Secretariat at the request of HOD 57-2019. The first drafts for each segment are presented to the respective Working Groups for comments in autumn 2020 and then to GEAR 22-2020 and HOD 59-2020. Further work on the segment specific text will be undertaken by the Segment Teams under the DG BSAP.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- review the segment specific preamble text for sea-based activities, in line with the guidance provided,
- endorse it for submission to GEAR 22-2020 and to HOD 59-2020 for review, noting that the drafting will continue in the DG BSAP in spring 2021.

Segment sea-based activities - Environmentally sustainable sea-based activities

Sea based activities include all human undertakings at sea, from recreational boating, construction work and dredging, to fisheries and the extraction of minerals, oil and gas. Hence, achieving the overall strategic goal of the segment requires cooperation on a wide range of topics and involves several objectives and actors.

Ecological objectives are agreed on to ensure no or minimal disturbance to biodiversity and the ecosystem [such as avoiding harm to marine life from man-made noise, and ensuring that activities affecting seabed habitats do not threaten the viability of species, populations or communities].

Management objectives describe the desired effect of managing the human activities at sea. [Examples include for example halting the introduction of non-indigenous species, minimizing inputs of nutrients, hazardous substances and litter at sea, eradicating illegal discharges and preventing accidental pollution. They also encompass ensuring effective emergency and response capabilities, minimizing harmful emissions to the air, zero discharges from offshore platforms and the sustainable use of marine resources.]

The objectives are to large part met through international regulations and agreements. In addition, national development of environmentally sustainable marine spatial plans is a potentially important contributor to achieving the overarching goal.

The conduct of human activities and infrastructure at sea matters

As a wide range of human activities are involved in the segment, it is not possible to list them comprehensively, but the most widely distributed ones can be identified. Key pressures associated with these include emissions and discharges in connection to shipping, seabed disturbance or habitat loss from dredging and construction work, underwater noise caused by various activities and the introduction of non-indigenous species.

The Baltic Sea is one of the most intensively navigated areas of the world, and the number and size of operating ships keep growing. Today, there are typically around 1,500 commercial ships *en route* in the Baltic Sea at any given moment. While shipping is the most efficient, environmentally friendly and cost-effective mode of transport, there are risks involved, as well as consequences for the environment. Another activity on the rise in the Baltic Sea is the installation of offshore wind farms, and potentially also other forms of marine energy production. Related environmental concerns include for example impacts of underwater noise during construction, and disturbance effects from the installations during their operation. The laying of cables and pipelines has also been increasing in the past decades. Physical disturbance of the seabed is caused by a number of activities such as trawling, mineral extraction, dredging as well as shipping. Other examples of activities associated with environmental impacts include the extraction of fish, tourism, leisure activities, and more.

Sea-based activities impact on and are impacted by climate change

Many sea-based activities occurring in the Baltic Sea are sources of carbon emissions that contribute to global warming. On the other hand, climate change can also have an impact on all activities. Reduced ice-coverage and more extreme weather conditions may increase the risk of accidents and unintentional cargo losses. Such conditions also present additional challenges to response operations combatting spills at sea and on shore. Port operations, exploration activities, fisheries, construction work and many other activities are also likely to be affected, underlining the importance of adapting to the situation and increasing resilience to climate change in the Baltic Sea.

ACTION AREAS

[*tentative, to be replaced by more specific wording when new information is available*:] Key actions areas of the segment focus, *inter alia*, on minimizing the inputs from the transportation sector regarding nutrients, hazardous substances and marine litter. Other focal areas include ensuring best practises and regulations to

avoid harm to marine life from underwater noise, reducing the level of disturbance to the seabed from sea-based activities, and enforcing regulations to halt the introduction of non-indigenous species.

HELCOM plays an important role in cooperation with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in the development of new, internationally applicable regulations designed to protect the sensitive environment of the Baltic Sea. HELCOM will also continue its efforts to facilitate the development of coherent and environmentally sustainable marine spatial plans for the Baltic Sea region.

Connection to other segments

Reaching the objectives for sea-based activities contributes to achieving the goals of the segments "Eutrophication" and "Hazardous substances and litter", as well as the goal of the "Biodiversity" segment to achieve a Baltic Sea ecosystem that is healthy and resilient.

Connection to other treaties

Due to its international character, shipping is regulated mainly by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which is a United Nations Specialized Agency.

[other relevant examples to be added as well?]

National and regional recommendations and regulations developed within HELCOM are important in complementing the international regulatory frameworks.

Link to relevant SDG

Work in the sea-based activities segment contributes to meeting a number of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan both on the national and regional levels will be of great importance in meeting these commitments and the SDGs as a whole.

Operative section – HELCOM leads for sustainable sea-based activities

Description of current state

Although there has been significant progress in many areas of sea-based activities, it is clear that further actions are needed. In addition, a number of currently unregulated pressures are to be addressed. Many pressures can be reduced, or even eliminated, by regulation and technical innovation. Another important component is to formulate and implement actions so that they can support the development of environmentally sustainable economy and social activities.

International regulations concerning emissions and discharges from ships have become more stringent over the past years. Energy efficiency of ships is improving overall and a downward trend is also evident for other types of emissions and discharges. The improvements are largely attributed to tightened regulations under the IMO MARPOL Convention and notably the designation of the Baltic Sea as a NO_X emission control area.

Nevertheless, shipping still contributes to roughly 300.000 tonnes of nitrogen oxides, 10.000 tonnes of sulphur oxides, and 10.000 tonnes of particulate matter to the Baltic Sea. There are also several more areas in need of improvements, both for the protection of the marine environment and for safety at sea. Addressing underwater noise and marine litter, as well as discharges of food waste and grey water from ships are important. Other examples of areas where the Baltic Sea region has a key role are the development and promotion of green technologies, innovation to optimize the shipping sector regarding logistics and automation, and in improving the efficiency in detecting and recovering hazardous oil spills. The risk of accidents, together with new chemical products being transported in the Baltic Sea and the increasing likelihood of extreme weather conditions under climate change, demonstrate the continuous need to develop the response capacities and cooperation of HELCOM Contracting Parties. Underwater noise from various sea-based activities, the discharge of cargo residues and the use of toxic anti-fouling systems are examples of other threats to the Baltic Sea for which the current regulatory framework is relaxed at best.

Description of desired state

HELCOM has the ambition to work continuously for the Baltic Sea to be a forerunner in the field of environmentally sustainable maritime activities, including shipping as well as infrastructure.

Implementing the actions of the sea-based activities segment aims to reach:

[*3-4 sentencess, to be developed*]

- Best practices and guidance to mitigate and minimize negative effects on marine life
- -xx
- An ecosystem-based maritime spatial planning that is aligned with objectives form good environmental status

The development of environmentally sustainable sea-based activities is one of the key factors for enabling the vision of the Baltic Sea Action Plan to reach a healthy Baltic Sea environment, and for supporting a wide range of sustainable human economic and social activities in the Baltic Sea region.