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Background

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) relates closely with other EU regulatory/policy frameworks such as the Water Framework Directive, Habitats and Birds Directives, the Nitrates Directive and the Common Fisheries Policy. It relates also to the work carried on within the Regional Seas Conventions.

When establishing the MSFD it was foreseen that its implementation process would build on the experience, achievements and networks of the existing Regional Sea Conventions (RSCs) governing Europe's seas: Barcelona Convention (UNEP MAP), Bucharest Convention (BSC), Helsinki Convention (HELCOM) and OSPAR Convention (OSPAR). The HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (2007), the OSPAR North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (2010) and the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols provide regulatory/policy frameworks for regional cooperation.

A corresponding request for cooperation as a means for regional coordination, using existing regional institutional cooperation structures and including non-EU countries, has consequently been laid down in MSFD Article 6. Coordination and cooperation within and between the RSC has received support from the highest EU policy sphere.

In 2013, Marine Directors in Dublin recognised the need to further strengthen the role of the relevant Regional Sea Conventions in the MSFD implementation. They also recognised the need for EU Member States and the European Commission to discuss the further streamlining between the MSFD CIS work programme in the Regional Seas Conventions to which they are a party, including looking at timelines, with a view to receiving Regional Seas Conventions' input for developing regional components of the CIS work programme.

In 2014 the EU Commission invited the RSCs to discuss its analysis and conclusions from the Article 12 assessment.

In 2015, Marine Directors agreed on "Harmony between EU level and regional-level implementation of RSC" as one principle of work.

To kick off a structured discussion on streamlining activities, Denmark, Germany and Sweden, as EU Member States with coasts in two marine regions, the OSPAR and HELCOM Secretariats and the European Commission initiated an informal brainstorming in 2013; given the similar work carried out under both Conventions and their already established cooperation. The result of the brainstorming was presented in a living document. Its content was not to be seen as a formal position, but rather as food-for-thought. That document structured opportunities for streamlining activities according to substance, structure and procedure.

This summary of on-going cross-regional coordination presents to OSPAR CoG and HELCOM GEAR progress regarding coordination between OSPAR and HELCOM. It presents on-going coordination work in five fields of work: data management, monitoring, indicators and targets, assessments and programmes and measures. The summary of coordination has been prepared by Germany and Sweden. It has been shared in advance with Denmark. It has an MSFD focus and certainly does not pretend to be all-inclusive, documenting all activities improving coordination between the Conventions.

Denmark, Finland, Germany and Sweden are Contracting Parties in both Conventions. For these states coordination between HELCOM and OSPAR is crucial from a resource efficiency view point.

This document contains a brief summary of ongoing cooperation and coordination between the OSPAR and HELCOM Regional Seas Conventions.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to note of the information.

Cross-regional cooperation and coordination between HELCOM and OSPAR

Data management

Substance: RSC-Data portals content and form

Procedure: Harmonisation HELCOM Map and Data service and OSPAR ODIMS

Status: On-going adaptation and aligning in order to be compatible with relevant European developments such as WISE-MARINE and EMODnet, also taking into account INSPIRE requirements by taking part in the INSPIRE Marine pilot project meetings

Substance: Pollution load

Procedure: Harmonisation HELCOM PLUS and OSPAR RID

Status: Await finalisation of HELCOM-PLUS (by BNI) and OSPAR evaluation of pros and cons

Substance: Atmospheric load

Procedure: Same data host NILU and EMEP

Status: Arrangements made

Substance: MPA

Procedure: Modernisation of OSPAR & HELCOM MPA databases

Status: Modernisation process did not deliver full harmonisation. The Databases are not identical due to variety in detail level. However, the existing OSPAR database structure was taken into account in revision of the HELCOM MPA database, e.g. by using same code lists and attributes where possible to achieve best possible coherence.

Substance: Ballast water & alien species

Procedure: Online tool to support decision on granting exemptions under regulation A4 of the Ballast Water Management Convention and harmonised port survey

Status: HELCOM and OSPAR have adopted a Joint Harmonised Procedure. The HELCOM/OSPAR Task Group on Ballast Water Exemptions is to oversee the practical implementation of the Joint Harmonised Procedure.

Substance: Registers of underwater noise

Procedure: Joint register for impulsive noise, same data host, joint indicator development and assessments

Status: Joint Meeting of OSPAR's Intersessional Correspondence Group on Underwater Noise (ICG-Noise), HELCOM Expert Network on Underwater Noise (HELCOM EN-Noise) and EU Technical Group on Underwater Noise (EU TG-NOISE) (ICG Noise-HELCOM EN Noise-EU TG NOISE 1-2015) 30 September 2015 discussed the OSPAR regional registry for impulsive sound developed at ICES and considered the possibility for HELCOM to join the same registry. Pressure WG agreed on HELCOM joining in the OSPAR register, the issue has been

clarified with ICES (the host), and HOD 49-2015 will be informed accordingly. Arrangements are being put in place to take the work forward.

Indicators and Targets

Substance: Presentation of assessment data

Procedure: Comparable structure of OSPAR Factsheets & HELCOM reports

Status: the Conventions' factsheets have been considered in EU DIKE and alignment needs identified.

Substance: Descriptor 1 and Marine Birds

Procedure: At the joint COREBAM meeting opportunities for cooperation were identified for 3 indicators

Status: A single joint group has been agreed and established ICES/OSPAR/HELCOM JWG BIRD. The first meeting will be held 9-13 November.

Substance: Descriptor 1/6 Benthic Habitats

Procedure: COREBAM identified opportunities for cooperation

Status: BH3 indicator is developed in a coordinated manner.

Substance: Descriptor 6 and Fisheries pressure

Procedure: VMS analysis for both OSPAR and HELCOM

Status: Joint data call and requests for ICES advice was made in a coordinated way (previously invested expertise has been utilized, process has been speeded up and funds have been saved).

Substance: Descriptor 9 and Hazardous substances

Procedure: HELCOM and OSPAR cooperate via networks of experts

Status: HELCOM State & Conservation 3-2015 will consider the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the new HELCOM Expert Network of Hazardous Substances, in the draft ToR close cooperation with OSPAR MIME is proposed.

Substance: Descriptor 11 and Underwater Noise

Procedure: Take advantage of a new issue and pool resources

Status: Impulsive noise indicator development is closely linked to the development of the joint regional registry (see Registry underwater noise). Information exchange between HELCOM, OSPAR and the BIAS project on the issue took place at the joint meeting of respective expert groups 30 September 2015.

Monitoring

Substance: Illegal spills, accidents and traffic

Procedure: Response and Bonn Agreement

Status: Harmonized reporting forms on reporting of illegal spills.

Substance: Access to Monitoring programs and data

Procedure: OSPAR-JAMP and HELCOM Monitoring Manual Learning from each other

Status: OSPAR is developing CEMP. HELCOM is maintaining the Monitoring Manual.

Assessments

Substance: HOLAS & IA2017

Procedure: See advantages regarding harmonisation timing to facilitate for those HELCOM countries being EU members

Status: Timing has been harmonised.

Substance: HOLAS & IA2017

Procedure: Clarifying content to avoid double work where Conventions overlap

Status: SE and DK have been asked to propose the way forward with Kattegat and The Sound. SE and DK have had meetings and agreed on following the EU MSFD definition of The North Sea. This means the inclusion of Kattegat and parts of the Sound in the IA2017 assessment.

Programmes and Measures

Substance: Marine Litter

Procedure: Taking advantage of each other processes

Status: HELCOM has adopted RAP-ML. Currently, Contracting Parties have the possibility to lead on single measures.

Substance: Marine Litter

Procedure: Dissemination of results from OSPAR implementation of measures to HELCOM and cooperation on common actions included in the RAPs

Status: Cooperation between RSCs initiated. Informal meeting on cooperation between the RSCs (OSPAR, Barcelona and HELCOM secretariats and countries straggling neighbouring seas) regarding regional action plans on marine litter. Meeting in Paris, France, 18 September 2015, follow up meetings planned.