



Document title	Summary of HELCOM TAPAS application
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Agenda Item	Activities of relevant HELCOM projects or processes
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Submitted by	Secretariat
Reference	Outcome of GEAR 11-2015 (par. 4.21) & Outcome of HOD 48-2015 (par. 3.23)

Background

Following the information provided by the EU on the possibility for the HELCOM Secretariat to apply for a grant to support HOLAS II (Outcome of GEAR 11-2015, par. 4.21), and subsequent mandate received by HOD 48-2015 (Outcome of HOD 48-2015, par. 3.23), the Secretariat developed an application to apply for a direct grant from the EU focusing on those components of HOLAS II that have not sufficient resources yet. The title of the grant call is "Assistance in the preparation of a regionally-coordinated assessment for the Baltic Sea region (Art. 8 and Art. 17 MSFD) and establishing links to WISE-Marine".

HELCOM is the coordinator of the proposed project under the grant named "Development of HELCOM tools and approaches for the Second Holistic Assessment of the Ecosystem Health of the Baltic Sea (HELCOM TAPAS)". The project application includes five partners from Denmark, Estonia and Finland as well as ICES.

This document contains information from the summary and the general objectives part of the application and the list of project partners.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the application for HELCOM TAPAS: project to develop HELCOM tools and approaches for the Second Holistic Assessment of the Ecosystem Health of the Baltic Sea.

Summary of HELCOM project application for the direct grant “ASSISTANCE IN THE PREPARATION OF A REGIONALLY COORDINATED ASSESSMENT FOR THE BALTIC SEA REGION (ART. 8 AND ART. 17 MSFD) AND ESTABLISHING LINKS TO WISE-MARINE”

Development of HELCOM tools and approaches for the Second Holistic Assessment of the Ecosystem Health of the Baltic Sea (HELCOM TAPAS)

General objectives: Second Holistic Assessment of the Ecosystem health of the Baltic Sea

HELCOM is developing the Second Holistic Assessment of the Ecosystem Health of the Baltic Sea through the HOLAS II project that started in late 2014 and will run until mid-2018. HOLAS II will assess progress towards reaching a Baltic Sea in a Good Environmental Status since the inception of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) in 2007 and it is being developed according to the HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy¹. The Contracting Parties of the Helsinki Convention being EU Member States have decided to use the outcome of HOLAS II for the purpose of their reporting under Article 8 of Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) in 2018.

A set of commonly agreed core indicators will form the basis for the assessment of status of the Baltic Sea marine environment. HELCOM core indicators have a quantitative definition of Good Environmental Status (GES) that enables aggregation of indicators to arrive at the status of thematic areas. A set of core indicators has already been developed in HELCOM and additional indicators are continuously being developed. Status is assessed based on the core indicators using the HELCOM nested approach which subdivides the Baltic Sea into assessment units at the relevant spatial scale for each indicator. The environmental status will be based on aggregation of indicators with specific assessment tools which will be developed and tested as part of other HELCOM activities.

The assessment of pressures and impacts will cover the spatial distribution and trends of single and cumulative human activities, pressures and impacts. By using pressure indices, which are further developed in this project, HELCOM will assess cumulative impacts on ecosystem components of the Baltic marine environment. In addition, the holistic assessment will address social and economic impacts and measures, with the intention of linking them to the human activities and pressures and the state of the marine environment.

The HOLAS II project will thus provide an assessment of the overall status and health of the Baltic Sea. In this regard it will address the eleven MSFD descriptors for good environmental status and the assessment of pressures and impacts will be built on the outcome of the review document for MSFD Annex III². A first version of the assessment is planned to be ready by mid-2017 to serve national MSFD consultation purposes. The assessment will be updated by mid-2018. The aim is to perform the status, pressure and socio-economic assessments on data for the period 2011-2016 while trend assessments will use as long data series as are available. The assessment results and associated data will be made publicly available on the HELCOM website.

¹<http://www.helcom.fi/Documents/Action%20areas/Monitoring%20and%20assessment/Monitoring%20and%20assessment%20strategy/Monitoring%20and%20assessment%20strategy.pdf>

² Review of the GES Decision 2010/477/EU and MSFD Annex III – cross-cutting issues (version 4)
DG Environment, document GES_13-2015-02 prepared 14/04/2015.

Specific objectives

The HOLAS II project is already ongoing since December 2014 and the aim of HELCOM TAPAS is to further develop four themes required for the successful development of the Second Holistic Assessment of the Ecosystem Health of the Baltic Sea.

1. **Theme 1 - Baltic Sea pressure and impact indices (BSPI/BSII).** Contracting Parties have agreed that these HELCOM indices for assessing the spatial distribution of cumulative pressures and impacts from multiple human activities should be further developed to align with the MSFD and the new development of its Annex III. Also novel improvements, such as temporal aspects, improved spatial extent and improved impact weight scores, will be explored and developed. The development of the indices requires specific resources that are not available through other ongoing projects.
2. **Theme 2 - Spatial information on ecosystem components.** The development of the BSPI/BSII as well as other HELCOM activities (e.g. Red list assessment, indicator development) requires availability of data on spatial distribution of specific ecosystem components. While such information exists to various degrees on a national level it has in most cases not yet been compiled to Baltic-wide maps, which is required for regional assessments. The maps will serve both status and impact assessments. Under this theme a HELCOM indicator for assessing the distribution, pattern and extent of benthic biotopes will also be further developed.
3. **Theme 3 - Framework for economic and social analyses (ESA) in the Baltic Sea region.** Economic and social analyses (ESA) have so far had a limited role in HELCOM regional collaborations but its further development has been highlighted in existing agreements³. This theme will contribute to the capacity building by the development and testing of a common conceptual framework for economic and social analyses in the Baltic Sea. The outcome will be presented as part of the HOLAS II outcome. It will support a coherent MSFD ESA reporting by Baltic EU member states in 2018 (so far such coherence has been lacking according to evaluation of the MSFD Article 8 reporting in 2012⁴).
4. **Theme 4 - Workspaces for data and information access.** The fourth specific objective is to establish and test workspaces on the HELCOM website as a possible technical means for making assessment data and information available online enabling open access and efficient reuse of the collected data. This technical solution is an extension to the existing HELCOM Map and Data service infrastructure, hosted by the HELCOM Secretariat. The experiences gained will be used to specify what further development is required in order to deliver compliancy in terms of data services and make a contribution to WISE-Marine, following relevant data sharing standards and practices.

Project management

The work of the project will be carried out by a project team consisting of the HELCOM Secretariat as project coordinator and five additional partners: SYKE (Finland), NIVA (Denmark), EMI (Estonia), SEI Tallinn (Estonia) and ICES.

The development of the holistic assessment is guided by a HOLAS II project core team with representation from the Contracting Parties, and overall the work is taken forward with the use of expertise of HELCOM groups, chairs, lead countries, and the HELCOM Secretariat, as well as by ongoing HELCOM projects (See Figure 1) The project will complement this expertise with resources to the HELCOM Secretariat and to

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<http://www.helcom.fi/Documents/Ministerial2013/Ministerial%20declaration/2013%20Copenhagen%20Ministerial%20Declaration%20w%20cover.pdf>

⁴ Commission Staff Working Document. Annex Accompanying the document Commission Report to the Council and the European Parliament "The first phase of implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) - The European Commission's assessment and guidance {COM(2014) 97 final}".

external partners that will carry out the technical development of the four themes under the guidance from the HOLAS II core team. Dedicated workshops will be organized for experts from HELCOM countries to take part in the development of the project components and in their testing.

HELCOM, through its Secretariat will facilitate linking the project activities to the overall activities under HOLAS II and other relevant activities within HELCOM expert groups and ensure that guidance by the Contracting Parties is communicated to the partners.

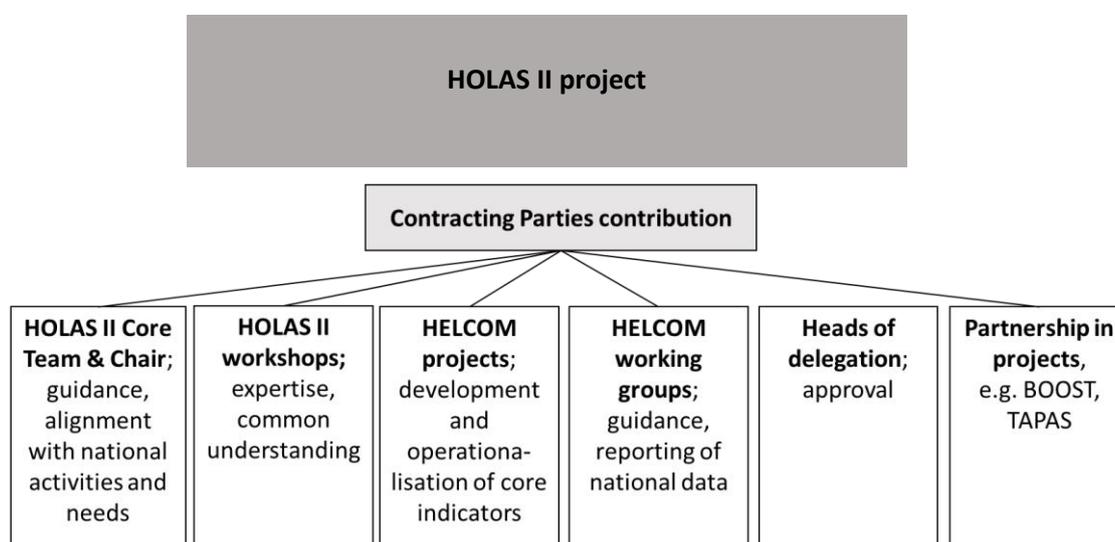


Figure 1: Overview of the contributions of the Contracting Parties to the HOLAS II project.

The consortium of partners have worked previously with the development of assessment tools and core indicators in HELCOM and taken part of the national MSFD implementation process, and have technical expertise on the specific subjects of this application. For each theme, a lead partner has been identified to clarify responsibilities (see Table 1).

The duration of the project, if funded, is 18 months. The total cost of the project is 418 221 €, including 250 000 € requested amount of EU financing, i.e. 59.78 % rate of the total budget. Planned starting date is 1 January 2016 (see Table 2).

Table 1 – Partners in the HELCOM TAPAS project application.

Theme	Lead Partner	Contributing partners
1 - Baltic Sea pressure and impact indices (BSPI/BSII).	SYKE	HELCOM, NIVA
2 - Spatial information on ecosystem components	HELCOM	EMI
3 - Framework for economic and social analyses (ESA) in the Baltic Sea region	SYKE	HELCOM, SEI Tallinn
4 - Workspaces for data and information access	HELCOM	ICES

Table 2 – Budget breakdown for the Themes of the HELCOM TAPAS project application.

Cost category	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Total €
Personnel	95 378	70 053	96 426	74 495	336 352
Travel and subsistence	10 039	4 000	11 890	3 580	29 509
Purchase costs of Equipment					0
Purchase costs of goods and services including rent of equipment					0
Sub-contracting / External assistance					0
Other direct costs	10 000	5 000	10 000		25 000
Indirect costs / overheads	8 079	5 534	8 282	5 465	27 360
Total eligible costs	123 497	84 587	126 598	83 540	418 221