



## Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach  
Gothenburg, Sweden, 10-11 May 2016

GEAR 14-201

---

<b>Document title</b>	HELCOM information of relevance to the MSFD CIS work programme 2016-2018
<b>Code</b>	5-1
<b>Category</b>	INF
<b>Agenda Item</b>	Upcoming and emerging issues
<b>Submission date</b>	19.4.2016
<b>Submitted by</b>	Secretariat
<b>Reference</b>	GEAR 13-2016, doc. 5-1

---

### Background

GEAR 13-2016 took note of the proposed HELCOM input to the MSFD CIS work programme 2016-2018 with a view to sharing information on relevant HELCOM activities and issues to create synergies ([doc. 5-1](#)). The document "HELCOM information of relevance to the MSFD CIS work programme 2016-2018" was finalized based on intersessional commenting by GEAR and approval by HODs and submitted to the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Marine Strategic Coordination Group (MSCG) held 7 April 2016.

Based on the new structure of the draft MSFD CIS work programme 2016-2018, available from MSCG 18, the Secretariat has transferred the information from the original submission to the new structure as contained in this document and forwarded to the EU Commission. Quotations and titles from the draft MSFD CIS work programme to which the HELCOM input is specifically linked are marked in blue font and italics. Some new paragraphs of text and activities have been added to reflect on HELCOM activities related to new titles and priorities included in the updated draft MSFD CI work programme. These new paragraphs are marked as yellow. Specific input from HELCOM is primarily reflected in the tables reflecting tasks and output of MSFD CIS Working Groups as previously.

### Action required

The Meeting is invited to:

- take note of the HELCOM input according to the new structure of the draft MSFD CIS work programme 2016-2018.

## HELCOM information of relevance to the MSFD CIS work programme 2016-2018

### *Introduction*

The HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) adopted by HELCOM in 2007 is a joint programme for the Contracting Parties to achieve a Baltic Sea in Good Environmental Status by 2021.

In 2010, HELCOM Ministerial Meeting decided to “establish, for those HELCOM Contracting States being also EU-Member States, the role of HELCOM as the coordinating platform for the regional implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) in the Baltic Sea”. Since this agreement, HELCOM has produced several products that in addition of supporting the implementation of the BSAP can also be used by the HELCOM countries being EU Member States to support implementation of the MSFD e.g. the initial HELCOM holistic assessment (2010), the HELCOM monitoring manual (2014), and the Joint documentation on regional coordination of measures (2016).

The implementation of HELCOM activities is organized through the work of eight main Groups. The HELCOM Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (HELCOM GEAR) was established in 2012 with the purpose to steer on a managerial level the process of implementation of the HELCOM BSAP, to serve as a regional instrument for the national work of the HELCOM EU Contracting States in implementing the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and to coordinate with activities under the Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation. The Group also has the task to ensure coherent and streamlined implementation of the ecosystem approach in such a way that it contributes towards reaching of good environmental status of the Baltic Sea by the year 2020/2021.

Among the technical HELCOM Working Groups, State and Conservation has the responsibility of the monitoring and assessment activities in HELCOM. In 2013, the HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy was updated taking into account also other requirements Contracting Parties have to fulfill. Quantification and identification of pressures from land is carried out under the Pressure Working Group and consideration of measures towards achieving Good Environmental Status is coordinated through work of several HELCOM Groups, including Fish (ecosystem-based sustainable Fisheries), Agri (sustainable Agricultural practices) and the Maritime and Response Working Group. HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group works, among others, on application of ecosystem approach in MSP. The HELCOM working structure thus covers technical aspects of all key components that are also relevant for groups under the MSFD, with the exception of economic and social analysis that is currently considered under projects.

Specific activities are at times taken forward by Working Groups but more typically by time-limited projects or through established HELCOM expert groups and networks.

The Roadmap of HELCOM activities on ecosystem approach, outlines ongoing and planned HELCOM activities until 2021 (Annex 1). The updated roadmap was endorsed by HELCOM 37-2016. The below sections describe activities of HELCOM, ongoing and planned, which are also taken up in the main objectives, headings, and output of Working Groups and Technical groups in the draft work programme of MSFD Common Implementation Strategy in 2016-2018. The activities are numbered according to the HELCOM Roadmap.

### *MSFD CIS: Objectives & priorities*

#### *1. Achieving good environmental status*

*“The work undertaken by all actors in the context of the MSFD Common Implementation Strategy over the coming two years needs to be geared to answering the question as to where we stand with our progress to reach Good Environmental Status”.*

Several ongoing HELCOM activities are contributing to answering the question how far we are from reaching GES in the Baltic Sea, notably the following.

#### Development of core indicators

HELCOM has developed 24 indicators, with associated GES boundaries being developed, that can be used to evaluate individual indicators or be included in thematic assessments to evaluate progress towards GES in the Baltic Sea region. While features of the indicators such as species and habitats may be specific for the Baltic Sea region, the principles of the indicators can be explored also for other marine regions. Indicator reports are being made available at the [HELCOM web-site](#) as they are finalized.

Ongoing relevant activities on the HELCOM Roadmap in 2016-2018:

- **Further development of core indicators and GES (13)**
- **Pressure indicator development (16)**

#### Development of tools for assessing status of and pressure on the marine environment

HELCOM has worked towards development of tools for assessing the status of the marine environment for more than a decade and has also developed approaches to assessing pressures on the marine environment. Tools for assessment of biodiversity, hazardous substance and impact of pressures are being further developed by projects in 2016. The tool HEAT 3.0 is already in use for assessing the status of eutrophication. The tools are generic in their structure and can be used in other marine regions.

Ongoing relevant activities on the HELCOM Roadmap in 2016-2018:

- **Development of assessment tools (29), which is taking place through the EU co-financed projects HELCOM BalticBOOST (biodiversity and hazardous substances) and HELCOM TAPAS (Baltic Sea Impact Index) projects co-financed by EU.**

#### Assessing the status of the Baltic Sea

A coordinated activity to assess the status of the Baltic Sea is carried out through the HOLAS II project with the aim of producing a 2<sup>nd</sup> HELCOM Holistic assessment. HOLAS II can also be used for purpose of Article 8 reporting in 2018 by EU Member States. Several ongoing HELCOM activities will feed into the project.

Ongoing relevant activities on the HELCOM Roadmap in 2016-2018:

- **Holistic Assessment (HOLAS II) (30)**
- **Thematic assessment on radioactivity (21)**
- **Assessment of submerged hazardous objects (22)**
- **Assessment of the state of pharmaceuticals (23)**
- **Assessment of coastal fish status (24)**
- **Maritime assessment (27)**

## 2. Setting the scene for the Art.17 MSFD updates

*“The Art.17 MSFD updates mark an important milestone in the implementation of the directive as it implies the start of the second cycle. Oversights from the implementation of the first cycle need to be corrected, while success stories need to be emulated”.*

HELCOM activities can contribute to the update of Article 9 and 10 for use by those countries that wish to do so. GES for Baltic Sea region is defined jointly for HELCOM core indicators and development of joint principles for defining environmental targets for seabed habitats and underwater noise is undertaken in 2016.

The HELCOM nutrient reduction scheme is a regional approach to sharing the burden of nutrient reductions to achieve the goal of a Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication. There are two main components of the nutrient reduction scheme: Maximum Allowable Inputs (MAI) of nutrients (indicating the maximal level of inputs of water - and airborne nitrogen and phosphorus to Baltic Sea sub-basins that can be allowed to fulfill

the targets for a non-eutrophied sea) and Country Allocated Reduction Targets (CART) (indicating how much the HELCOM countries need to reduce nutrient inputs compared to a reference period). The regional nutrient reduction scheme is landmark policy tool in HELCOM and progress in its implementation is regularly followed up.

Ongoing relevant activities on the HELCOM Roadmap in 2016-2018:

- **Further development of core indicators and GES (13)**
- **Operationalization of core indicators (19)**
- **Joint principles for environmental targets seafloor integrity and underwater noise (BalticBOOST) (15)**
- **Pressure indicator development (16)**
- **Further development of the follow-up system for HELCOM nutrient reduction scheme (MAI-CART OPER) (17)**

### 3. Prepare the work for the Art.19 evaluation

*“Another important input that will have to feed into this evaluation is the Art.20.3 review of the marine environment in coordination with the European Environment Agency”.*

The outcome of the HOLAS II project will contribute to the review of the status of the marine environment required under Art 20.3b, to be undertaken in coordination with the European Environment Agency and the relevant regional marine and fisheries organisations and conventions.

Ongoing relevant activities on the HELCOM Roadmap in 2016-2018:

- **Holistic Assessment (HOLAS II) (30)**

### 4. External dimension of EU action and marine litter

*“Directors called for strengthening the external dimension of EU action related to the MSFD. This call comes at a timely moment given the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal 14, the G7 focus on marine litter and the start of the EU Chairmanship of HELCOM”.*

HELCOM adopted in 2015 the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP ML) as HELCOM Recommendation 36/1. Currently, work is undertaken to carry out the actions to reduce the input and presence of marine litter in the Baltic Sea regional as included in the Annex to the RAP ML.

In the development of HELCOM core indicators for marine litter, a regional baseline is planned to be defined as well as GES for different types of litter.

Ongoing relevant activities in the HELCOM Roadmap in 2016-2018:

- **Further development of core indicators and GES (13)**
- **Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter - implementation (44)**

### MSFD CIS: Coordination with other policies

The draft MSFD CIS work programme highlights the importance of coordination with the implementation of other policies.

Ongoing relevant activities on the HELCOM Roadmap in 2016-2018:

- With the view to technically synchronise assessments carried out under the BSAP and different EU directives, a case study based on seal data will be carried out under the HELCOM coordinated EU co-financed BalticBOOST project. The assessment strategies/criteria from the MSFD and the Habitats directive will be used and the outcome compared. And based on the outcome, advice will be given as appropriate.
- The guidance<sup>1</sup> regarding how to consider the WFD assessment criteria and indicators for coastal waters is taken into consideration when developing the HELCOM assessments for e.g. eutrophication, hazardous substances and biodiversity. In this work, issues that would benefit from better coordination between assessments in coastal and offshore waters is being identified and the experienced gained can be shared as relevant.

### Working Groups and Technical Groups

Activities from the HELCOM Roadmap that can be mapped in comparison to the work and output of MSFD CIS Working Groups and Technical groups have been indicated in the respective table included in the MSFD CIS work programme. Numbers adheres to specific activities on the HELCOM Roadmap.

#### Part 1: Working Group on Good Environmental Status (WG GES)

Task	Timelines	Output	HELCOM outputs
1. Follow up to revision of 2010 GES decision 2010/477/EU and Annex III MSFD	Progressively to 2018	Recommendations and possible guidance to be adopted by MSCG.	Participation and contribution to WG-GES
2. Ensure consistency in GES determination at EU level (i.e. agree principles for setting GES threshold values at regional level, establishing common lists of elements, etc.)	Progressively to 2018	Recommendations to be adopted by MSCG	Structures developed for HELCOM core indicators and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Holistic assessment can be shared: <b>Further development of core indicators and GES (13)</b> <b>HELCOM 2<sup>nd</sup> Holistic assessment (30):</b>
3. Revision and finalisation of Common Understanding Document	End 2016	Guidance / Recommendations to be adopted by MSCG	
4. Development of Guidance on Article 8 assessments	End 2016	Guidance / Recommendations to be adopted by MSCG	HELCOM could provide input to the technical guidance on integrated assessments of biodiversity, hazardous substances, e.g. through EU co-financed project BalticBOOST, existing HELCOM assessment frame works for eutrophication, and to the evaluation of pressure and cumulative impacts e.g. through the EU co-financed project TAPAS: <b>Development of assessment tools (29)</b> <b>Operationalization of eutrophication assessment system (18)</b>
5. Work related to assessments feeding into Art. 20.3(b) report	End 2018	Technical advice (together with WG ESA and WG DIKE)	<b>HELCOM 2<sup>nd</sup> Holistic assessment (30):</b> relevant to Article 20.3b regarding state of the Baltic Sea.

<sup>1</sup> e.g. Review of the GES Decision 2010/477/EU and MSFD Annex III – cross-cutting issues (version 5).

6. Link to assessments and monitoring under other EU legislation and policies	Ongoing		
7. Link to related work of RSCs and regular review of their work with relevance to GES	Ongoing		Participation and contribution to WG-GES
8. Analysis of current environmental status and predominant pressures and impacts (Article 8.1 a & b) (together with WG DIKE)	End 2017	Guidance / Recommendation for reporting	Participation and contribution to WG-GES

### Part 2: Working Group on Data, Information and Knowledge Exchange (WG DIKE)

**Commented [A1]:** Note: Edits in the table shows proposed changes by the Secretariat submitted to MSCG

Task	Timelines	Output	HELCOM outputs
1. <u>Oversee development of Geographical</u> system for handling and disseminating MSFD information	End 2016	Operational <u>dissemination</u> system for use in WISE-Marine, <u>operational input systems in MS and RSCs</u>	Geographic <u>information</u> system for dissemination of regional assessment results developed <u>e.g.</u> through Theme 4 of EU co-financed HELCOM TAPAS project. <u>Thematic workspaces</u> for <u>access to underlying data</u> and information
2. Revised reporting arrangements for Art. 8, 9 and 10	Mid-2017	Reporting sheet, guidance and tools/mechanisms	
3. Reporting products relating to the main topics of MSFD implementation (GES, assessment, targets, monitoring, measures)	End 2018	Dissemination products for use in WISE-Marine	
4. <u>Oversee the development and implementation of</u> shared data and information systems between MS, RSC and EU levels	Mid 2018	Operational data and information systems within RSCs <u>for storing and disseminating data used in indicators</u>	HELCOM indicator data products to be made compatible for inclusion in WISE-Marine through Theme 4 of EU co-financed HELCOM TAPAS project. <u>Geographic information system for dissemination of data products and thematic workspaces</u> for <u>access to underlying data</u> and information.
5. WISE-Marine portal for access to MSFD data and information, linked to BISE, EMODnet, Copernicus, RSC systems and other systems	Phase 1 by the end of 2016 Phase 2 by the end of 2018	Operational WISE-Marine giving access to MSFD-relevant information <u>and data products from MS, RSCs and other sources</u>	<u>Geographic information system for dissemination of data products and thematic workspaces</u> for <u>access to underlying data</u> and information.

6. Review, streamline and harmonise, where appropriate, reporting streams under EU policies and international conventions	Progressively to 2018	Streamlined and harmonised reporting of marine relevant data and information	
7. Revised reporting arrangements for monitoring programmes under Art. 11	End 2019	Reporting sheet, guidance and tools/mechanisms	

### Part 3: Working Group on Programme of Measures and Socio-Economic Analysis (WG POMESA)

Task	Lead	Link with MSFD provisions	Timelines	Output	HELCOM outputs
1. ESA Initial Assessment 2010 guidance review	UK	art 8.1b-c, 8.2, 8.3	end of 2016	updated ESA 2010 guidance, mainly on chapter 5	The development of ESA framework in HOLAS II, partly through the EU co-financed TAPAS project : <b>Social and economic analysis of HOLAS II (31)</b>
2. Integrate socio-economic expertise within the 2018-assessments and targets	tbc	art.8, art.9, art.10	end of 2016	sharing experience s paper, questionnaire	<b>In HOLAS II, a regional network of ESA experts works together with expertise on status and pressure to link assessment under Article 8a-8c</b>
3. Exchange of experience on PoMs	tbc	art.13, art.18, art.19	by 2018	sharing experience s paper, questionnaire, common understanding	<b>“Joint documentation of regional coordination of Programmes of Measures in the Baltic Sea area” (34)</b> . The Joint documentation has identified common issues and future joint actions. They are planned to be started and at least partly implemented in the period 2016-2018.

### Part 4: Technical Group on Marine Litter (TG Litter)

HELCOM output is primarily foreseen to contribute to item 3.2 in the work plan of TG Litter: **Implementation support on open issues, including monitoring guidance and harmonizing protocols for assessments**

The development of HELCOM core indicators for marine litter will consider defining of a baseline as well as GES for different type of litter, and regionally coordinated monitoring and monitoring guidelines. Currently, HELCOM indicators in marine litter are planned for beach litter, litter on the seafloor, and microlitter in the watercolumn.

Ongoing relevant activities on the HELCOM Roadmap in 2016-2018:

- Further development of core indicators and GES (13)
- Operationalization of core indicators (19)
- Review and revision of monitoring guidelines (2)

Regarding items 3.5 *Communication exchange platform for regional sea action plans*, HELCOM has through the development of the RAP ML already established cooperation in this regarding other Regional Sea Conventions (e.g. OSPAR, Barcelona Convention, Black Sea Commission is also invited) and is interested of doing so also in the future.

#### Part 5: Technical Group on Marine Noise (TG Noise)

HELCOM work has greatly benefited from TG Noise work, and synergies have already been captured e.g. through the joint meeting of OSPAR/HELCOM/EU groups on noise in September 2015.

Ongoing relevant activities on the HELCOM Roadmap in 2016-2018:

- HELCOM will within the BalticBOOST project develop principles for target setting for impacts of underwater noise, the principles could be of use in other marine region. This could be HELCOM specific output in 2016. (15)

Tasks	Timeline	Output	HELCOM outputs
Support Member States and Regional Sea Conventions in the implementation of assessment methodologies and monitoring programmes	2017	TG noise advice	
Work with Regional Sea Conventions on the development of noise registers	continuous		Development of the joint HELCOM/OSPAR register agreed and ongoing
Work with Regional Sea Conventions on developing a joint monitoring programme for ambient noise	continuous		A joint monitoring programme for the Baltic Sea region has been proposed to HELCOM by the Life+ BIAS project and is under consideration by State and Conservation Working Group.
Extract relevant outcomes from ongoing and future projects and initiatives for the implementation of MSFD	2016-2017	Communication paper to MSCG	Relevant outcomes from the HELCOM BalticBOOST project will be available at end of 2016.  <b>Joint principles for env. targets for Sea floor integrity and underwater noise (BalticBOOST) (15)</b>
Contribute to WG GES in the preparation of Member State future assessments	2016	Comments on Art.8 EU guidance	

under Art. 8 & 9 and Art.11 monitoring			
Contribute to WG ESA in the preparation of Member State future assessments, measures and associated targets under Art. 8, 10 and 13.		Comments of ESA paper	
Further work on the characterisation of the underwater noise impact on marine fauna, including work on defining 'harm' in relation to specific marine species	2016-2017	Workshop (2016) & TG noise advice for further work on pressure indicator, in particular with regard to key species	Relevant outcomes from the HELCOM BalticBOOST project will be available at end of 2016.

#### Part 6: Technical Group on Marine Data (TG Data)

HELCOM could provide overall input via participating in the TG DATA meetings and provide input on technical specifications regarding linking HELCOM indicator data products and services to a joint WISE-Marine infrastructure solution.

#### *Regional Sea Conventions*

*"The MSFD requires that Member States "use existing regional institutional cooperation structures, including those under Regional Sea Conventions (RSCs), covering that marine region or subregion" in their implementation process, given that the objectives of these conventions and the MSFD are similar. This means that there needs to be a certain alignment of the processes between the CIS process and that of the RSCs, namely the Oslo-Paris Convention (OSPAR), the Helsinki Convention (HELCOM), the Barcelona Convention (UNEP MAP) and the Bucharest Convention (BSC)".*

*"Synergies within and between marine regions should therefore continue".*

To reach coherency in monitoring, assessment and actions is the key objective of activities listed and agreed in the Roadmap of HELCOM activities on the ecosystem approach.

Existing coordination contributing to synergies include:

- Joint ICES/OSPAR/HELCOM working group on birds,
- Joint meetings between HELCOM and OSPAR on development of indicators
- Joint databases (HELCOM and OSPAR on noise)
- Harmonized databased (HELCOM and OSPAR on Marine Protected Areas).
- Contribution to operationalizing Marine-WISE (HELCOM EUTRO-OPER project)

# Roadmap of HELCOM activities on ecosystem approach

Version 1 February 2016

■ Agreed and resources allocation secured  
■ Agreed but no resources allocated yet  
■ Agreed and resources partly secured  
■ Need has been indicated

Annex

