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Background

This document contains the draft Terms of Reference for the HELCOM expert network on Economic and Social Analyses.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to comment on the draft Terms of Reference for the HELCOM expert network on Economic and Social Analyses.

HELCOM expert network on Economic and Social Analyses

Draft Terms of Reference (ToR)

Rationale

Economic and social analyses (ESA) and information have previously only occasionally been included in HELCOM assessments and work, and coherent information across the Baltic Sea region has often been lacking. There is a need to enhance regional collaboration to produce comparable information on the economic and social importance of the Baltic Sea marine environment. The need for further development of ESA has been a highlighted commitment, for example, in the Ministerial Meeting in 2013.

Economic and social analyses are needed to fully apply ecosystem-based management in the Baltic Sea and to support sustainable use of marine resources. They provide a set of tools for examining e.g. the benefits from the use of marine waters, and the costs of degradation and benefits of achieving a healthy marine ecosystem. Economic and social analyses contribute to ecosystem-based marine management, marine spatial planning, pollution mitigation, and integration and implementation of policies.

Overall aims and tasks

The overall aim of the expert network on economic and social analyses is to enhance the regional cooperation on the economic and social analyses related to the Baltic Sea marine environment. This will contribute to using comparable data and approaches across countries. The network will serve as a platform for discussion and information exchange on ongoing and planned ESA work, and it will act to develop and agree on regional approaches for ESA. The work will be set up to support both regional and national ESA work, to fulfil HELCOM and other commitments of the Contracting Parties.

More specifically, the network will:

- Develop and agree on common principles for regional economic and social analyses
- Support HOLAS II with economic and social analysis [as outlines in the Roadmap] as well as contribute to other future assessments as well as regional work on maritime spatial planning
- Work with national and European statistical agencies to generate data on economic indicators in standard format
- Work towards a common understanding for assessing the future development of the Baltic Sea (baseline)
- Identify the needs and possibilities to conduct regionally coordinated studies on the value of marine ecosystem services, cost-effectiveness analysis and cost-benefit analyses for collective approach/measures and support initiation of research projects in this field and propose new activities
- Follow similar developments in other Regional Sea Conventions and contribute to the European level work on ESA by exchanging information and sharing experiences
- Interact with research projects to explore ways to utilize the research knowledge and benefit from the project outcomes

Participants

The expert network will consist of experts nominated by the Contracting Parties and will be open to Observers according to HELCOM procedures. Additional experts and representatives of organizations can be invited to the meetings.

The network will cater for cross-sectorial expertise to carry out the tasks as needed.

Working procedures

The expert network will function under and receive guidance from the HELCOM GEAR Working Group. The network will also interact with other groups/projects in HELCOM, and in particular continue coordination of its activities with the activities within HOLAS II project and seek cooperation with the HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group.

The mode of work for the expert network will be physical meetings and via correspondence and tele-meetings. A chairperson for the network will be elected by the members of the network for a two-year period. The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the network.