



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach

GEAR 20-2019

Berlin, Germany, 15-17 May 2019

Document title	Extracts from meetings of relevance for the Gear Group
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Agenda Item	2 – Matters arising from other meetings of relevance to GEAR
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Background

This document contains extracts from relevant HELCOM meetings held since the last meeting of the Gear Group.

- [HOD 55-2018](#), 4-5 December 2018, Helsinki, Finland
- [EN ESA 2-2018](#), 14 December 2018, Helsinki, Finland
- [HELCOM 40-2019](#), 6-7 March 2019, Helsinki, Finland
- [EN ESA 3-2019](#), 9 April 2019, Helsinki, Finland
- [PRESSURE 10-2019](#), 9-12 April 2019, Tallinn, Estonia

Information on the kick off meeting of the SOM Platform ([SOM Platform 1-2019](#)) held on 28 February 2019 in Helsinki, Finland, is contained in document 5-7 to this Meeting.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.

Extracts from meetings of relevance for the Gear Group

HOD 55-2018

Update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan

The Meeting

- took note of the plans and proposed steps by Working Groups to speed up implementation of joint HELCOM actions that have not been implemented yet (document 3-4).
- took note of the clarification that the HELCOM hot spots will be considered in the further implementation of HELCOM actions under the Pressure Group.
- agreed on the proposal by the Maritime Group to delete the joint action for HELCOM to apply for advisor status of HELCOM to Paris MoU on Port State Control.
- took note of the updated information on implementation of national HELCOM actions provided via Working Groups and agreed to endorse the updates by informing the Secretariat by 31 January 2019.
- agreed that the cases of “open ended” national actions in the BSAP are to be considered in the review of the existing BSAP actions, which will continue at the next meetings of the Working Groups.
- requested that future Working Group meetings will provide a separate report or annex to summarize discussions and activities related to the update of the BSAP.
- agreed on the list of HELCOM Recommendations to be reported to support the BSAP update as contained in Annex 2 and further agreed that the Secretariat will propose which Recommendations under the Response Group should be reported early next year to support the analysis of sufficiency of measures in the BSAP update. The meeting took note that Denmark will submit a proposal to the Secretariat on the reporting of Recommendations under the Response Group in the beginning of February 2019. The meeting noted further that Denmark will clarify their national position related to the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG by 18 December 2018.
- mandated the Secretariat to arrange for the reporting and noted that it will be initiated in January-February 2019 and that the reporting period will be six weeks to cater for discussion of the results by the Working Group meetings in spring 2019. The meeting welcomed that several Working Groups have initiated a review of HELCOM Recommendations and noted that this review can take place beyond the timetable of the BSAP update.
- agreed that the reporting of Recommendations will take place via submission of reporting forms by the Secretariat to Working Group representatives, keeping HOD informed. In the case that several national representatives are nominated to the Working Groups the Secretariat will consult HOD in advance to agree which person to engage in the work.
- discussed the possibility to refer to, e.g. implementation of EU legislation when reporting on accomplishment of Recommendations and concluded that the reporting should primarily refer to the implementation through national legislation while supporting information can be provided in the reporting forms to indicate how other legislation partly or entirely fulfils the HELCOM Recommendations.
- agreed to include overarching principles and higher level aims from the Helsinki Convention, UN SDGs and other relevant policies in the pre-amble of the updated BSAP document and also to maintain the ‘Vision’ of the current BSAP. The meeting supported that climate change will be a key component of the pre-amble.
- agreed to include reference to sustainable development targets in the narrative of the updated BSAP document, for example by clarifying which HELCOM actions will contribute to the implementation of specific SDG targets.

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- agreed provisionally to maintain the original segments for the updated BSAP with the following preliminary adjustments, noting that the detailed content to be covered by the segments is still to be further defined and that the agreement on the BSAP structure is aimed for at HOD in December 2019:
 - to address marine litter under the segment on Hazardous substances and to consider changing the name to 'Hazardous substances and marine litter';
 - to include under the Maritime segment a broader set of sea-based activities, e.g. construction work, dredging, extraction of mineral resources, fishing, and consider changing the name of the segment to 'Sea-based activities'. The topics underwater noise and loss and disturbance of the seabed are tentatively assigned to this segment;
 - to use the approach presented by Finland (document 3-9) as a tool to further clarify how activities and pressures are linked to the different segments;
 - to request Working Groups to initiate the development of ecological or management objectives for the topics marine litter, underwater noise, and loss and disturbance of the seabed.
 - took note of the further development of the supporting framework for the BSAP update and that mapping of HELCOM action areas, management objectives and ecological objectives, will continue according to the approach and draft structure presented in document 3-3 in spring 2019.
 - endorsed the guidance to the Working Groups for the review of the existing and proposing new ecological and management objectives as presented in document 3-3.
 - noted the proposal by GEAR 19-2018 to change the term "ecological objectives" to "environmental objectives", and the proposal by Finland to change the term to "ecosystem health objective" and agreed to come back to the issue at a later stage.
 - recalled that HOD have been requested to consider a proposal for the establishment of an ad hoc Expert Group on analyses of sufficiency of measures to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the BSAP update (c.f. document 3-1, activity 2.5). The meeting considered a proposal for how to carry out the analyses of sufficiency of measures as contained in document 3-6.
 - agreed that the work will be carried out via an interdisciplinary platform for the implementation of the analyses (SOM Platform) (Annex 3), which is to engage the existing HELCOM ESA (social and economic analysis) network, national technical experts on the topics to be addressed by the group, and the Chairs of HELCOM Working Groups.
 - requested that the roles of the ESA network in the BSAP update and the Platform SOM should be clarified by amending the ToR for the ESA network.
 - agreed that hazardous substances, non-indigenous species, marine litter, underwater noise, and elements of biodiversity not covered by the HELCOM ACTION project are possible additional topics for analyses of sufficiency of measures, to be carried out by the SOM Platform.
 - supported the use of a Lead Country approach to carry out analyses of sufficiency of measures for topics complementary to the HELCOM ACTION project and to develop syntheses to support the BSAP update.
 - welcomed that Germany is prepared to take the lead on the planned analyses for the topic of marine litter and noted that Denmark, Estonia and Finland are also considering to take the lead on other topics. The meeting agreed Contracting Parties inform the Secretariat of interest and possibility to lead the work on the topics, fully or partially, at the latest by 15 January 2019.
 - took note of the view of Denmark that analyses of social and economic consequences and cost-efficiency of measures should be included in the analyses of all topics considered in the BSAP update. The meeting noted further the view of Germany that analyses of costs should also include aspects of inaction and cost-benefits. The meeting took note of the information on the upcoming meeting of the HELCOM ESA network on 14 December 2018 and invited the meeting to clarify the possibilities to carry out cost-benefit or similar analyses as part of the BSAP update.
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- considered the work plan for the BSAP update as contained in document 3-2 and approved it (Annex 4), noting that it will be updated by the Secretariat when additional agreements regarding the BSAP update are made.
- took note of the information on global developments of relevance to HELCOM work and the BSAP update (document 3-7) and found it a useful overview.
- took note of the HELCOM contribution to the Second World Ocean Assessment so far and identified the HELCOM work on cumulative pressures and impacts as an example of an additional topic for which further regional input could be prepared by the Secretariat.
- took note of the progress in HELCOM voluntary commitments to UN Ocean Conference 2017 including the inclusion of the Baltic Sea EBSAs to the global register of EBSAs based on the recent decision of COP XIV under CBD, and suggested to update the progress also to the UN registry of voluntary commitments.
- discussed potential HELCOM contribution to the next UN Ocean Conference to be organized in 2020 as well as possibly to the upcoming Our Ocean Conference in 2019 in Norway. The meeting supported an idea to submit a commitment to the next UN Ocean Conference, which could, for instance, be related to the BSAP update, in addition to HELCOM presence at conference side events. The meeting further suggested that HELCOM could highlight the action-oriented approach that it has, especially the BSAP and Recommendations, which could inspire the other regional seas for a similar approach.
- took note that HELCOM joined a collective statement by the Regional Seas Conventions and Programmes to the second meeting of the UN Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert group on marine litter and microplastics.
- pointed to the next UN Environment Assembly as another forum of relevance to HELCOM and its activities including related to the BSAP.
- took note and welcomed the Outcome of the joint BONUS-HELCOM Stakeholder Conference titled 'Research and Innovation for Sustainability', held on 6 November 2018 in Copenhagen, Denmark (document 3-8).

Matters arising from the HELCOM Groups

Future meetings and workshops

The Meeting

- approved:
 - the possibility of organizing an intersessional workshop or an extension of the MARITIME 19-2019 meeting in order to make progress on the update of the BSAP (c.f. document 4-1);
 - that the next meeting of the Pressure Group (PRESSURE 10-2019) will be held during week 8-12 April 2019, in Estonia (c.f. document 4-4);
 - the arranging of State and Conservation 10-2019 on 6-10 May 2019 in Finland (c.f. document 4-9);
 - the arranging of a workshop on habitat mapping and modelling to support the implementation of actions under Recommendation 35/1 on System of coastal and marine Baltic Sea protected areas (HELCOM MPAs), by the lead country Finland (c.f. document 4-9);
 - the organization of two interactive workshops on MSP back-to-back, or as part of the HELCOMVASAB MSP WG meetings in 2019 to develop proposals for updated and new regional MSP actions and commitments, and that the HELCOM VASAB MSP 18-2019 meeting will be held in the week of 25-29 March 2019 either in Germany or in Poland (c.f. document 4-29);
 - the possibility of organizing intersessional workshops of the Response Working Group, if deemed necessary, in order to make progress on the update of the BSAP (c.f. document 4-31);

- that RESPONSE 26-2019 will be held in Warsaw, Poland, 11-13 June 2019 (c.f. document 4-31);
 - that GEAR 20-2019 will be held in Berlin, Germany, in the week of 13-17 May 2019 (c.f. document 4-27); and - that MARITIME 19-2019 will be held in Lisbon, Portugal on 24-26 September 2019 (c.f. document 4-1).
- requested the Secretariat to clarify the dates with the hosting countries and avoid overlapping of the meetings of the groups [PRESSURE 11-2019 and STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019].

Election of Chairs

The Meeting

- took note that Mr. Lars Sonesten was re-elected as Chair of the Pressure Working Group for the next two-year period (2019-2020).
- took note that Mr. Norbert Häubner and Ms. Marie-Louise Krawack were elected as Co-Chairs of the State and Conservation Working Group for the time period of 2019-2020 representing the monitoring/assessment and biodiversity/nature conservation components, respectively.
- took note that Ms. Vivi Fleming-Lehtinen and Mr. Dieter Boedeker were re-elected as Vice-Chairs of the State and Conservation Working Group for the time period of 2019-2020 representing the monitoring/assessment and biodiversity/nature conservation components, respectively.
- took note that Ms. Heli Haapasaari was re-elected as Chair of the Response Working Group and that Mr. Alexander von Buxhoeveden and Mr. Ojars Gerke were re-elected as Vice-Chairs of the Response Group for the next two-year period 2019-2020.

Work Plans

The Meeting

- considered and approved the Work Plans for:
 - the Maritime Working Group for 2018-2020 (document 4-3);
 - the Pressure Working Group 2019-2020 (document 4-5);
 - the State and Conservation Working Group 2019-2020 (document 4-10); and
 - the Response Working Group 2019-2020 (document 4-31).

Other topics from the Groups

Maritime Group

The Meeting

- considered and approved the revised HELCOM Recommendation 33/1 on “Unified interpretation in relation to access to and use of HELCOM AIS data” (document 4-2) and agreed to submit it for adoption by HELCOM 40-2019.
- approved the draft revised Recommendation 28E/13 as set out in Annex 1 to document 4-19, and agreed to submit it for adoption by HELCOM 40-2019.

Pressure Group

The Meeting

- supported the joint actions in relation to the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (c.f. document 4-4).
- considered and approved Draft Core Indicator - Inputs of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) to the sub-basins of the Baltic Sea (2016) (document 4-16) and agreed on its publication.

- acknowledged the importance of the project results for PLC-7 and the ongoing work on the BSAP update. The meeting welcomed the offer by Germany to consider to contribute up to 20.000 euro to finance the project.
- invited the remaining Contracting Parties to consider the possibility to co-finance the project and inform the Secretariat accordingly by 31 January 2019 with the view of taking a final decision on the project at the annual HELCOM meeting, in order to let project results to be included into the PLC-7 project assessment.
- approved the revised version of the Terms of Reference for the Expert Network on Marine Litter for 2019-2021 as included in document 4-6- Rev.3 (Annex 5).
- considered and approved the draft Terms of Reference for the Expert Network on Underwater Noise for 2018-2021 (documents 4-7 and 4-7-Corr.1), as contained in Annex 6.

State and Conservation Group

The Meeting

- agreed to come back to the consideration regarding the deletion of Recommendation 21/3 once the guidelines on sustainable tourism have been developed.
- agreed that, following the discussion in the Pressure Group, HELCOM Recommendation 29/2 on marine litter within the Baltic Sea Region can be considered superseded by Recommendation 36/1 on Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, which is to be proposed for a decision by HELCOM 41-2020 (c.f. document 4-9).
- considered and approved the draft HELCOM Recommendation on 'Conservation and Protection of Marine and Coastal Biotopes, Habitats And Biotope Complexes Categorized as Threatened According to the HELCOM Red Lists' (document 4-20-Rev.1) to supersede HELCOM Recommendation 21/4, and agreed to forward it for adoption by HELCOM 40-2019.
- took note of the technical amendments to HELCOM Recommendation 17/2 on protection of harbor porpoise (document 4-23). The meeting took note of the clarification that Sweden can lift their study reservation on the proposal, and that, while Germany cannot lift their study reservation, they are open to a revision of the Recommendation.
- agreed to initiate a process to revise the Recommendation whereby State and Conservation 10-2019 will provide initial revisions to the document, to be submitted to EG MAMA 13-2019 meeting for further revision and to State and Conservation 11-2019 for endorsement and submission to HOD 57-2019 for approval, aiming at adoption by HELCOM 41-2020.
- considered and approved the HELCOM Action Plan for the protection and recovery of Baltic sturgeon (document 4-11) and agreed to submit it to HELCOM 40-2019 for adoption.
- took note of the change of the name of the 'Intersessional Network on Benthic Habitats and Biotopes' to the 'HELCOM Expert Network on Benthic Habitats (EN BENTHIC)' and the election of a new Chair for the network.
- considered and approved the draft updated Terms of Reference for HELCOM EN BENTHIC as contained in document 4-12-Rev.1 (Annex 7).
- considered and reviewed and further developed the draft structure and process of HELCOM climate change work and the draft Terms of Reference for EN CLIME and the proposed work plan (documents 4-24, 4-24. Rev.1).
- highlighted that climate change is an important aspect of the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan and that this is currently not reflected in the document. The meeting invited the Expert Network during their first meeting to consider the possibility to take active part in the update process, e.g. the review of any relevant material related to sufficiency of measures.
- approved the proposed work process, the establishment of the Expert Network on Climate Change and its ToRs (as presented in document 4-24-Rev.2 and contained in Annex 8), with the aim of starting nomination process and holding the first online meeting in early 2019.

Gear Group

The Meeting

- took note of the progress of work related to the review of HELCOM indicators, forming the basis of further development or adjustment work on indicators by 2022 (c.f. document 4-27).
- noted the status of amending HELCOM Recommendation 24/10 on Implementation of integrated Marine and Coastal Management of Human Activities in the Baltic Sea Area, including that it has been circulated to the contacts of the State and Conservation WG for consideration via correspondence, and agreed to aim to have the amendments finalized in time for possible adoption of the document at HELCOM 40-2019 (c.f. document 4-29).

Response Group

The Meeting

- decided to extend the mandate of the Submerged Expert Group until the end of 2020, and encouraged all Contracting Parties to participate and to nominate national contact points to the Submerged Expert Group (c.f. document 4-31).
- approved the establishment of the Correspondence Group on revising the HELCOM Response Manual Volume 2 (CG HNS MANUAL) with the draft Terms of Reference set out in Annex 2 of document 4-31.
- agreed to invite the Contracting Parties to provide comments on this issue to the Secretariat (markus.helavuori@helcom.fi) by 31 December 2019. If no objections are received by this deadline, the amendments to the Response Manual Volume 1, with the changes proposed by Denmark in document 4-36, will be considered to be agreed by HOD 55-2018 and submitted to HELCOM 40-2019 for adoption.
- considered and approved the project proposal for the review of the HELCOM Response Manual, as set out in document 4-33. In addition, the Contracting Parties were invited to consider providing contributions for financing the project.
- welcomed the confirmation by Finland of a contribution of 10.000 euro towards financing the project.
- noted the information by the Secretariat that, despite the generous contribution by Finland, the funding for the project is not yet sufficient. However, with the project proposal now approved by the meeting, the meeting agreed that the Secretariat can investigate the possibilities of completing at least part of the envisaged work with a limited budget, as well as the possibilities of complementing the budget from the regular HELCOM budget, subject to availability of funds. The meeting agreed that consideration should also be given to recruiting a part-time Project Researcher, noting that there is no definite deadline for completion of the revision of the Response Manual. The meeting noted that the recruitment of the Project Researcher would follow the HELCOM common practice.

Fish Group

The Meeting

- adopted the Terms of Reference and approved the draft revised Work Plan for HELCOM FISH Correspondence Group concerning a draft document on BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region (CG Aquaculture), as set out in document 4-17, Annexes 2 and 3.
- welcomed the confirmation by Finland, that they are willing to co-lead the work on BAT/BEP together with Germany.

Data and information strategy

The Meeting

- agreed that document 4-14 [on coordinated reporting and hosting of HELCOM continuous noise monitoring data] will be further elaborated by the Secretariat and considered at the annual HELCOM meeting in March 2019.
- considered and in general approved the draft updated HELCOM Data and Information Strategy (Document 4-18), however, agreed that the updated Strategy should be communicated with all relevant HELCOM groups, striving to submit the HELCOM Data and Information Strategy for adoption to HELCOM 40-2019

HELCOM institutional and organisational matters

The Meeting

- took note of the Audit Report and the Financial Statement of the Helsinki Commission for the financial period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, as well as of the explanatory memorandum (document 5-3) and advised the Executive Secretary to submit them to HELCOM 40-2019 in order to have the accountables officially discharged from responsibility.
- considered the draft budget for the financial period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 (document 5-1) and advised the Executive Secretary to submit it to HELCOM 40-2019 for official adoption.
- recognized the value of HELCOM work for the Contracting Parties for their national purposes and agreed to start discussing future budget development starting from the budget year 2020- 2021, taking into account HELCOM needs and inflation.
- requested the Secretariat to prepare a background document for proposing increase to the budget, separating the needs caused by the inflation and other costs and including information on special contributions by the Contracting Parties and externally funded projects.

Next meeting(s)

The Meeting

- decided that the next meeting (HOD 56-2019) will be held on 18-19 June 2019 in Helsinki. The meeting decided that HOD 57-2019 will be held tentatively on 10-11 December 2019.

[EN ESA 2-2018](#)**Timely HELCOM ESA network matters**

The Meeting

- supported the idea of HELCOM engaging in a joint workshop with two new projects (Presentation 1) and suggested that it would be organized back-to-back with the ESA network meeting.

Update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan

The Meeting

- took note of the strategic plan and work plan for the BSAP update and the planned steps and role of the ESA network (Documents 3 and 7, Presentation 2).

BAU and sufficiency of measures analyses

The Meeting

- took note of the information on the relevant economic and social analyses in the BSAP update, including analyses on the sufficiency of measures (SOM), business-as-usual (BAU) scenarios and cost-effectiveness of measures (Document 2, Presentation 3), as presented by the Secretariat.
- proposed to follow the EU MSFD cycles when deciding the end year of the BAU, e.g. the year 2027 or 2033, but to also account for other analytical and technical issues when selecting the end year, such as the time lag in the effect of actions on the environmental state, and the increasing uncertainty about e.g. the implementation of measures when the end year moves forward. The meeting considered it possible to develop several BAU scenarios with different end years.
- as regards to the measures to include in the BAU, the meeting proposed to include policies that have been decided (existing policies) and measures of these policies that have been implemented, are being implemented, and are planned to be implemented (existing measures) before the end year of the BAU scenario.
- proposed to aim for a common methodological framework and coordinated steps and elements across environmental topics, but recognized that the methods will likely vary between topics due to different characteristics of pressures and due to different level of information available. Sweden emphasized that the method used to propose new HELCOM actions should be coordinated as far as possible to ensure a coherent basis for decision on new actions.
- proposed to use existing and ongoing studies and results on the economic benefits of achieving GES to assess the benefits for the BSAP update, and to organize the work as part of the SOM Platform with necessary resources allocated. The meeting noted that an approach to assess regional benefits using existing studies has been developed in the ESA thematic assessment as part of HOLAS II work and further discussed in the HELCOM SPICE project deliverable on recommendations on regional ESA.
- took note of the issue of linking national and regional level in effectiveness studies of measures and proposed that the matter is discussed in detail in the SOM Platform. Possible solutions were discussed under agenda item 6 on National analyses on the effect, sufficiency and cost-effectiveness of measures.
- took note that one of the tasks for the SOM Platform is to develop syntheses to support the BSAP update and that the Secretariat will circulate a list with ideas for syntheses to the GEAR Group. The list with proposed synthesis topics on existing information to support the BSAP update will also be sent for comments to the ESA network. Comments are welcomed by mid-January and the resulting list will be further discussed the first meeting of the SOM Platform.
- took note of the interest of Russia to seek possibilities to establish a project complementary to the HELCOM ACTION to enhance their participation in the work. In that respect, the meeting recalled the importance of ensuring active contribution of all Contracting Parties to the economic analyses in the BSAP update.

HELCOM SOM Platform

The Meeting

- took note of the Terms of Reference for the HELCOM SOM Platform (Document 6), as presented by the Secretariat.
- considered and planned for the contribution of the ESA expert network to the SOM Platform and BSAP update as specified in the Terms of Reference for the SOM Platform. The Meeting viewed that broad representation of natural scientists, social scientists, economists, Water Framework Directive managers and other managers experienced in developing measures in the SOM Platform is needed.

National analyses on the effect, sufficiency and cost-effectiveness of measures

The Meeting

- took note of the national analyses on the effect, sufficiency and cost-effectiveness of measures, as presented by Contracting Parties (Denmark, Finland, Latvia and Sweden) (Presentations 4-8). The workshop suggested to use the national experiences to select the best practices for the regional analyses to be further elaborated by the SOM Platform for use in the BSAP update.

Invited presentations on BAU and cost-effectiveness

The Meeting

- viewed the two projects [BONUS GO4BALTIC-Presentation 9, and BONUS BALTICAPP- Presentation 10] and potentially other BONUS projects highly relevant for the sufficiency of measures analysis and proposed to Contracting Parties to use the expertise in the BSAP update, noting that Contracting Parties are to nominate participants to the SOM Platform and take a lead for individual topics for synthesis of knowledge and SOM analysis.

Sufficiency of measures for hazardous substances

The Meeting

- took note of the initial ideas for evaluating sufficiency of measures regarding legacy pollutants (Document 4).
- noted that Latvia has come to a similar conclusion on suitable approach to assess pollutants.

Revision of Terms of Reference for EN ESA

The Meeting

- considered and supported the proposed revision of ToR for EN ESA (Document 5), with two changes: 1) the revised ToR should reflect the Ministerial Declaration 2018 items 49 and 50, and 2) the years should be revised in the contribution to the BSAP update from 2019-2020 to 2019-2021. The changes are marked in yellow in the revised document.

HELCOM 40-2019

Update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan

The Meeting

- took note of the status of work on the implementation of the analyses of sufficiency of measures (SOM), including the kick-off meeting of the SOM Platform held on 28 February – 1 March 2019 (document 2-7).
- took note that Mr. Urmas Lips, Estonia, was elected as Chair and Ms. Soile Oinonen, Finland, as Vice-Chair of the SOM Platform.
- noted that the analyses of sufficiency of measures under HELCOM SOM Platform and ACTION project will be coordinated and make use of the same methodological framework for the analyses.
- took note that the approach for analysing sufficiency of measures was discussed in depth at the kick-off meeting of the SOM Platform and that it will be updated by the Secretariat and ACTION project (work package 6) by 31 March 2019. The updated approach will be circulated for comments to the SOM Platform before submission for endorsement at GEAR 20-2019. The technical work packages of the ACTION project will be presented for discussion at relevant HELCOM Working Groups in spring 2019.
- encouraged the Contracting Parties to make offers to lead the work on specific topics by 27 March 2019.

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- took note of the view by Russia that the SOM Platform deals with complex issues and that it might be challenging to commit experts on all the topics addressed by the platform and of the study reservation on the outcome of the kick-off meeting of the SOM Platform. The meeting took note of the clarification that the outcome will be circulated to the Contracting Parties soon.
 - took note that Heads of Delegation will be kept informed of the offers on lead and co-lead countries, which expert groups that will be involved in the work, and progress overall and specifically for different topics of the SOM Platform and the ACTION project. Based on this approach the meeting agreed to proceed with the plans of work for the SOM Platform including making plans for the next meeting.
 - welcomed that Sweden is looking into the possibility to co-lead the work on hazardous substances. The meeting took note that the Finnish Environment Institute is leading the work on analysis of sufficiency of measures in the ACTION project (work package 6) and will also implement the analysis for topics covered by the SOM Platform as long as data is provided.
 - noted that the target year of the updated BSAP will be considered by HOD at future meetings.
 - recalled that a task for the SOM Platform is to prepare synopses to support identification of potential new HELCOM actions to be included in the updated BSAP. The meeting took note that the SOM Platform has prepared a format for the synopses. The meeting agreed that synopses on potential new HELCOM actions can be submitted by the Contracting Parties, HELCOM subsidiary bodies, international projects and HELCOM Observers.
 - took note of the progress in the work by the Secretariat to make use of an activity- pressure matrix for the purposes of the BSAP update, in line with the HOD 55-2018 request (document 2-4).
 - took note that the further mapping will be aligned with and contribute to the analyses of sufficiency of measures. The information will also be included in the updated database for HELCOM agreements (HELCOM Explorer).
 - welcomed the work done so far and noted that comments to the document can be submitted to the Secretariat.
 - took note of the comment by Denmark that reference to specific parts in the HELCOM Ministerial Declarations should always be provided in full in HELCOM documents.
 - recalled that the current BSAP includes a segment on financing and that this issue also needs to be considered in the BSAP update process. The meeting noted that such consideration could possibly build on offers from countries to look into certain aspects. The meeting invited the Contracting Parties to provide ideas and views on how to address this topic to the Secretariat prior to HOD 56-2019.
 - took note of the information on progress in reporting of HELCOM Recommendations to support the update of BSAP (document 2-5).
 - recalled that as agreed by HOD 55-2018 the Agri Group will not report on HELCOM Recommendation 24/3 which is currently under revision in the group and also covered by the provisions of Annex III part II of the Helsinki Convention. The meeting took note that the Agri Group will report on the implementation of Annex III part II as part of the BSAP follow-up.
 - considered the draft progress reports on HELCOM voluntary commitments to the UN Ocean Conference 2017 (document 2-3) as well as comments submitted by Denmark (document 2-8) and agreed that they are submitted to UN via a dedicated website taking into account the comments by Denmark (document 2-8).
 - discussed possible HELCOM voluntary commitments to the next UN Ocean Conference in 2020. The meeting agreed that the update of the BSAP will be a HELCOM commitment to support implementation of SDGs. The meeting suggested that another HELCOM commitment could include cooperation and sharing experiences in carrying out holistic assessments and implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan including the analysis of sufficiency of measures with other Regional Seas Conventions. The meeting also pointed out that HELCOM could make a commitment on contributing to the UNESCO Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2020-2030.

Thematic session on the latest scientific knowledge of relevance for the update of the BSAP

The Meeting

- welcomed the information provided by the projects [document 2-2, document 1-3 and document 2-6] and thanked the presenters and BONUS for their participation.
- reiterated the importance of regional science cooperation and emphasised the need to fill currently identified gaps concerning the link between management, human activities and the environment, and highlighted the relevance and value of the close cooperation between HELCOM and BONUS.
- took note of the information on the Baltic and North Sea Coordination and Support Action (BANOS CSA) (document 2-1) as presented by Andris Andrusaitis, Acting Executive Director of BONUS. BANOS CSA is a project to create a future research agenda for the Baltic Sea and North Sea in which HELCOM is a strategic partner together with JPI Oceans, OSPAR and ICES.
- approved the proposal to develop a HELCOM science agenda, concomitantly with the update of the BSAP. The agenda is to outline existing and foreseen HELCOM regional science needs. The development of the agenda will be the opportunity to provide regional input to the BANOS CSA process. The meeting further agreed that the science agenda will function as a good contribution to support processes under the UNESCO Decade of Ocean Science.
- noted that the OSPAR science agenda is currently being finalized and that this document could be used to inform the development of the respective HELCOM science agenda.

Matters arising from the subsidiary bodies

The Meeting

- adopted the amended HELCOM Response Manual Volume 1, as set out in Annex 2 to the outcome.
- considered the draft revised HELCOM Recommendation 28E/13 on Introducing Economic Incentives as a Complement to Existing Regulations to Reduce Emissions from Ships (document 3- 1), as approved by HOD 55-2018 for adoption.
- took note of editorial and substantial changes to the draft revised Recommendation 28E/13, as proposed by Russia (document 3-22). Following discussion, the meeting was not able to reach a decision and agreed to intersessionally consider the issue further through the Heads of Delegation with engagement of Working Groups as needed. The meeting consequently mandated HOD 56- 2019 to consider and adopt the revised Recommendation. To facilitate consideration of the matter, Russia will submit a document containing justification for their proposed changes, including an explanation on their interpretation of the title of the draft Recommendation.
- considered and adopted the draft revised HELCOM Recommendation 33/1 on Unified interpretation in relation to access to and use of HELCOM AIS data (document 3-2) as contained in Annex 3 to the Outcome. In this context, the Meeting noted a statement made by the EU, that the Recommendation should be without prejudice to Regulation 2002/59 (EC).
- considered and adopted the draft HELCOM Recommendation on Conservation and Protection of Marine and Coastal Biotopes, Habitats and Biotope Complexes Categorized as Threatened According to the HELCOM Red Lists (document 3-3-Rev.1) as HELCOM Recommendation 40/1, superseding the current HELCOM Recommendation 21/4, as contained in Annex 4 to the Outcome.
- considered the revised version of HELCOM Recommendation 24/10 on Implementation of integrated coastal management and maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea area (document 3-14) as well as comments submitted by the EU (document 3-20) and Estonia (document 3-21).
- adopted the revised HELCOM Recommendation 24/10 as contained in Annex 6 to the Outcome.
- adopted the revised HELCOM Action Plan for the protection and recovery of Baltic sturgeon as contained in Annex 7 to the Outcome.

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- considered the outcome of FISH 9-2019 (document 3-10) and endorsed the Terms of Reference of the Expert Group on fisheries data for operationalizing indicators used for the purposes of assessment of the marine environment (EG Fishdata).
 - In this context, the meeting requested that the Roadmap on collection of fisheries data in order to assess incidental bycatches and fisheries impact on benthic biotopes in the Baltic Sea be finalized by FISH 10-2019.
 - agreed that this welcome progress in the cooperation between the two bodies involved with management of fisheries [BALTFISH] and marine environment [HELCOM], respectively, should also be reflected in the annual activities report (c.f. document 4-1).
 - considered and adopted the draft updated HELCOM "Guidelines for the annual and periodical compilation and reporting of waterborne pollution inputs to the Baltic Sea (PLC-Water)" (document 3-7) as contained in Annex 8 to the Outcome.
 - considered and adopted the updated draft Terms of Reference for the HELCOM Expert Network on dredging/depositing operations at sea (EN DREDS) for 2019-2021 (document 3-12-Rev.1).
 - welcomed the information on the progress achieved by Denmark and Germany seeking for the consensus on formulation of the principle 8. The meeting agreed to aim for the decision on this principle to use extra reduction to be taken at HOD 56-2019 at the latest to enable the use of the methodology in the PLC-7 assessment.
 - invited Denmark and Germany to make a suggestion on the formulation of the principle 8 for the discussion at PRESSURE 10-2019 by the Contracting Parties with the understanding that the final decision will be made at HOD 56-2019.
 - recalled the request of HOD 55-2018 for the Contracting Parties to consider co- financing of the continuation of the ENIREP project on estimation of reductions of atmospheric nitrogen deposition achievable by implementing the Gothenburg Protocol and the EU NEC Directive and decided to postpone the final decision on the continuation of the project to the HOD 56-2019 meeting.
 - considered and adopted the updated HELCOM Data and Information Strategy, to replace the current HELCOM Data and Information Strategy (document 3-8) as contained in Annex 9 to the Outcome.
 - considered and adopted the HELCOM-VASAB Guidelines on transboundary MSP output data structure in the Baltic Sea (document 3-6) as contained in Annex 10 to the Outcome.
 - took note and considered the information on coordinated reporting and hosting of HELCOM continuous noise monitoring data (document 3-9) and decided on the proposed hosting solution (in ICES) for a HELCOM database on continuous underwater sound.
 - requested the Secretariat to regularly keep the HODs informed of the progress in reporting of the underwater noise database on their monitoring and how the data are analyzed for use in HELCOM.
 - welcomed the information by Sweden that their offer to contribute to the funding of the database is still valid and the information by Denmark that they are investigating the possibility to make a financial contribution as well.
 - agreed on the annual allocation from the HELCOM budget for the database maintenance as indicated in document 3-9 as well as authorized the use of the HELCOM budget to bridge any remaining gap for funding of the database establishment.
 - invited the Contracting Parties to co-fund the establishment of the soundscape planning tool as indicated in document 3-9.
 - endorsed the revised updated Roadmap on HELCOM activities on ecosystem approach (document 3-15-Rev.1).

Activities of the Commission during 2018 and contributions to the work of the Helsinki Commission

The Meeting

- decided that upon finalization by the Secretariat, the HELCOM Activities report 2018 8 [document 4-1] should be published in the Meeting Portal and will be utilized to prepare a publication targeted to the general public in the Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings.

Accounts 2017–2018, budget 2019–2020 and other institutional and organisational matters of the Commission

The Meeting

- Following an open and competitive recruitment process, the meeting agreed on the recommendation of the Recruitment Panel for the post of HELCOM Executive Secretary and decided to appoint Mr. Rüdiger Stempel as the next HELCOM Executive Secretary. The appointment is for an initial period of three years starting from 1 August 2019, with a possibility of a prolongation.
- took note of the Audit Report and the Financial Statement of the Helsinki Commission for the financial period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, as well as of this explanatory memorandum (Annex 12) and officially discharged the accountables from responsibility.
- considered and adopted the draft budget for the financial period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 as contained in Annex 13
- requested the Secretariat to make a proposal for the year 2020-2021 and a budget estimate for the following years, based on the background document (document 5-4) and taking into account the comments from the Contracting Parties for HOD 56-2019. The meeting agreed that the proposal should have four components:
 - A plan for paying equal contributions in monetary terms for the HELCOM budget according to the Convention.
 - A proposal to update the HELCOM budget for the level to cover the current needs, resulting from the HELCOM budget being in freeze since 2012 starting from budget year 2021-2022.
 - A plan for how the future inflation can be taken into account, recognizing that countries may nevertheless need to decide on each draft budget annually. This plan should include an indication of to which cost categories the inflation compensation would be allocated to.
 - Indication of the Headquarter contribution based on the bilateral discussions between the Secretariat and Finland.
- mandated the Heads of Delegation to further discuss and decide on the budget proposal for the financial year 2020-2021 and a long-term budget framework.
- considered the application for observer status to HELCOM by the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation - NEFCO (document 5-1) and granted observer status to NEFCO. Further, the meeting invited an active participation of NEFCO for the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

Any other business

The Meeting

- considered the “HELCOM Green workplace guidelines” (documents 6-1 and 6-1- Corr.1) and adopted them as contained in Annex 14.
- decided to give the guidelines the status of an official HELCOM document, to be published in HELCOM website.
- expressed their appreciation to Mr. Matjaž Malgaj (EU) for his efforts and commitment to the work of HELCOM over the years, noting that he will be stepping down as EU Head of Delegation to HELCOM and therefore no longer attend meetings on a regular basis. The Chair and participants recognized the important contribution of the EU, as one of the ten Contracting Parties to HELCOM.

- took note of the statement by the European Union on financing and legislation as included in Annex 15.

Next meeting(s) of the Commission

The Meeting

- decided to arrange the next meeting of the Commission on 4-5 March 2020 at the Marina Congress Centre in Helsinki, and HELCOM Stakeholder Conference prior to HELCOM 41-2020 on 3 March.
- agreed to discuss the topic of the HELCOM stakeholder conference and the high-level segment of HELCOM 41-2020 in HOD 56-2019.

[EN ESA 3-2019](#)

Timely HELCOM ESA network matters

- The Meeting took note of information on timely matters on in the ESA network.
 - The chair proposed that the network seek HELCOM sanctioning of the workshop [on marine ecosystem services accounting on 10.10.2019 in Helsinki (Presentation 1)]. The Meeting agreed on this. Approval will be requested from WG GEAR and then HOD.
 - agreed that a draft [ToR] will be made by the Secretariat, incorporating these comments, and that Network approval would be sought by correspondence. The updated ToR will then be submitted to WG GEAR.
 - noted document 4-1 submitted to GEAR 20-2019. The document concerns the upcoming HOLAS III process and improvements that might be made from HOLAS II. Topics concerning EN-ESA are being considered for addition/modification including valuation of ecosystem services and linking ESA to environmental assessments
 - Latvia has discussed contributing an ESA expert for SOM thematic groups on NIS and Litter and anticipates that being communicated to the secretariat soon.

SOM approach

- Liisa Saikkonen, SYKE, presented information on the SOM approach developed by the ACTION project and in particular the approach for the activity-pressure linkage matrix and measure-pressure link evaluation (Presentation 3).
- The Meeting
 - recommended not to include priors data with poor geographic or spatial relevance to the activity-pressure survey.
 - discussed SOM Litter and ongoing efforts in Latvia on the topic. The meeting agreed with the approach for a Baltic scale analysis of the topic but noted a key role for national scale efforts in identifying new measures and further supporting BSAP update.
 - discussed the proposed activity-pressure surveys. Concern was expressed that experts won't have the necessary information to complete the proposed activity-pressure surveys by assessing activities' contribution into the total pressure in terms of concrete percentages. However, the ability to provide confidence intervals was seen as helpful. The meeting noted the need for very good guidance to accompany the survey.
 - discussed the proposed measures-pressures survey and recommended that the simpler format, option C, be used, but that option B could be considered as well. Option A was not recommended for further consideration. The proposed survey pilot occurring in May was strongly endorsed by the meeting.
 - noted that priors will be valuable for helping respondents understand the effect of individual measures in measure groups during the measures-pressures survey.
 - agreed that the Network could evaluate survey guidance developed by ACTION.

Update on national analyses on the effect, sufficiency and cost-effectiveness of measures

The Meeting took note of the national analyses on the effect, sufficiency and cost-effectiveness of measures, as presented by Contracting Parties (Germany, Lithuania, Latvia (Presentation 4), Sweden (Presentation 5), Denmark, Finland).

Synergies between HELCOM SOM and National SOM

- Latvia hopes for synergies and hopes to utilize some HELCOM SOM outputs for national assessments. However, the analysis timeframes may not line up.
- The Chair noted that an exchange of methods and preliminary results would be helpful for both national and HELCOM work.
- The Chair requested that the Secretariat make a workspace available for the Network to improve Network communication, and further requested that links to previous ESA meetings across all HELCOM projects be easily available on the workspace.

Closing business

The Meeting agreed to meet again in first half of June. Preliminary agenda items include the outcome of GEAR 20-2019 and presentation of national ESA updates.

PRESSURE 10-2019

Marine litter

The Meeting

- considered and agreed that HELCOM Recommendation 29/2 can be superseded by HELCOM Recommendation 36/1 (document 3-1) and suggested HELCOM 41-2020 to decide to supersede HELCOM Recommendation 29/2.
- agreed to discuss the proposed actions [to address ALDFG in the Baltic Sea (document 3-5)], including social and economic aspects, at a workshop dedicated to the follow up of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter to be organized back-to-back with PRESSURE 11-2019. The meeting agreed that the Workshop is to be focused on a limited number of issues, not the whole Action Plan except a general follow up, e.g.:
 - ALDFG (including socioeconomic effect of lost fishing gear) and where FISH contacts are invited to participate to discuss further steps on the topic;
 - update of Recommendation on storm water management;
 - possible measures to reduce releases of EPS and XPS to the environment.
- agreed in general to initiate the revision of HELCOM Recommendation 23/5, pending the study reservations by Denmark and Germany to be clarified by 10 May 2019 and informing the Secretariat. The meeting pointed out that the revision should be more thorough than proposed by CCB including also update of the policy relevance and considering also other aspects of stormwater management than micro litter. The meeting agreed to include this topic in the agenda of the next Workshop on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter.
- invited countries to consider taking the lead on the revision of the Recommendation and to inform the Secretariat by 10 May 2019.
- took note of the "Survey of polystyrene foam (EPS and XPS) in the Baltic Sea" as provided by Denmark (document 3-10).
- took note of the study reservation by Sweden for a more thorough consideration of the report. The Meeting invited Sweden to lift the study reservation by 6 May 2019 and to inform the Secretariat.
- agreed that the report provides an overview of the most significant sources of EPS (and XPS) ending up in the marine environment, as requested by action RL9 in the RAP on ML and thus this part of the action is to be considered accomplished once the study reservation by Sweden is lifted.

- pointed out that the report should be communicated also with OSPAR seeking for coordination of the proposed actions.
- agreed that the report can be published on HELCOM website pending the study reservation by Sweden.
- invited countries to provide comments on the catalogue of actions to prevent EPS entering the marine environment, proposed in the report, by 6 September 2019 to Denmark with a copy to the Secretariat. Results of the commenting round will be further discussed at the Workshop which is planned back-to-back with PRESSURE 11-2019 to prioritize regional implementation of proposed actions.
- considered the update of the follow up of the implementation of the Action Plan and agreed on a correspondence procedure after PRESSURE 10-2019. The meeting invited the Contracting Parties to provide written information on relevant national activities to the Secretariat by 7 June 2019. Based on this input and the Outcome of PRESSURE 10-2019, the Secretariat will update the follow-up table reflecting the current status of implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter and make it available through the HELCOM website.
- agreed to organize the 4th Workshop on implementation of RAP ML back-to-back with PRESSURE 11-2019 and invited the Contracting Parties to propose additional themes to those included in paragraph 3.10 for its agenda by 6 September 2019.

Underwater noise

The Meeting

- took note of the draft structure of the HELCOM Regional Action Plan (RAP) on Underwater Noise (document 4-3) and agreed on the proposed structure of the RAP on Underwater Noise with the understanding of the preliminary character of proposed actions and the need for further development.
- agreed that EN-Noise will further elaborate the preliminary actions of the RAP and invited countries to provide written proposals on the matter to the Secretariat by 7 June 2019.
- was of the opinion that the draft action plan should be considered also by HELCOM working groups for their contribution on actions linked to their mandate.
- agreed that a further elaborated version of the draft RAP on Underwater Noise will be submitted to MARITIME 19-2019 for consideration.

Physical damage to the sea floor

The Meeting

- took note of the results of reporting of 2017 data under HELCOM Recommendation 36/2.
- requested the Secretariat to verify the data on capital and maintenance dredging provided by Russia.
- considered and approved the consolidated report for submission to the LC/LP after this final verification.
- discussed the final draft analysis data on handling of dredged material at sea in 2016 and in general endorsed its publication as Baltic Sea Environmental Fact Sheet (BSEFS) after editorial revision of the text. The meeting also agreed that countries can provide written proposals for correction of national data by 19 April 2019 to the Secretariat.

Dedicated session on implementation of HELCOM agreements

The Meeting

- took note of the work plan for the BSAP update for the Pressure Group (DS-11) as presented by the Secretariat (Presentation DS_1).

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- took note of the organization of work for carrying out the analyses of sufficiency of measures (SOM) to support the BSAP update as presented by the Secretariat (Presentation DS_2). The meeting took note that the HELCOM SOM Platform, established by HOD 55-2018, and the HELCOM ACTION project, co-financed by the EU, will address complementary topics and that the implementation of the analyses will be based on the same methodological framework (Document DS-3, Document 7-2).
 - took note of the planned development of synopses on potential new HELCOM actions and that such synopses can be submitted by Contracting Parties, HELCOM subsidiary bodies, international projects and observers as agreed by HELCOM 40-2019. The format for the synopses is included in Annex 3 of the outcome of HELCOM SOM Platform 1-2019, pending guidance on how to provide potential information on cost-effectiveness of the proposed measure. When the guidance is complete the Secretariat will send a notification to the HELCOM contacts with further instructions on how to submit the synopses.
 - took note of the approach for analyses of sufficiency of measures as presented by SYKE Finland, lead partner on SOM analyses in the HELCOM ACTION project (Document DS-3, Presentation DS_3).
 - took note that expert-based surveys and validation of data for the SOM analyses will be directed to HELCOM working groups and expert groups. The meeting noted the request from Denmark to have a clarification on the procedure for the engagement of experts and that Denmark wished to have a possibility to review the input from Danish national experts to the SOM Platform and the ACTION project before it is included in the SOM analyses.
 - took note that Germany is not in favour of the SOM approach which is found highly ambitious and time consuming and that is heavily relying on data that might be difficult to get even for longstanding topic such as eutrophication. Germany highlighted the importance of the development of synopses on new HELCOM actions and encouraged the Contracting Parties and Observers proactively present proposals to PRESSURE 11-2019 in order to allow sufficient time for discussion.
 - took note of that also Estonia is of the view that eutrophication is well covered with information for actions and that the analyses should focus on new challenges and problems.
 - took note of the plans for work package 4 of the HELCOM ACTION project, focusing on supporting SOM on eutrophication, as presented by the lead country Sweden (Document DS-4, Presentation DS_4). The meeting noted that work package 4 will contribute to the SOM analyses by developing and evaluating approaches to determine the effectiveness of measures to reduce nutrient loads to the Baltic Sea. For this purpose, a number of catchments will be used as test cases to better understand where measures have had a positive effect or where no effect is found. Another key activity is to evaluate the compatibility of nutrient reduction targets between WFD and BSAP. PLC data will be utilized for these activities. A workshop with River Basin Management Authorities and HELCOM will be held on 18-20 September 2019 to address potential discrepancies in the targets between the two policies. A second workshop will be held to share experiences between countries with regard to the development of national programme of measures to reduce nutrient input. The progress of work will be presented to and reviewed at upcoming Pressure meetings.
 - took note that Germany appreciated the approach and that there is a national catalogue of measures and their effectiveness related to eutrophication which can be shared. With regard to test cases Germany is of the view that their national catchment areas are likely not best suited due to their relatively small size. Germany furthermore proposed to explore sharing of information with the nutrient Working Group under ECOSTAT (WFD CIS) since they have a similar new task in their work programme 2019- 2021 on investigating WFD nutrient reduction targets and they could contribute with information from previous work on comparing nutrient boundaries.
 - took note of the initial plans for the SOM analyses on hazardous substances and underwater noise (Document DS-6 and DS-12), noting that HELCOM EN hazardous substances and EN Noise will be engaged in the work.

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- took note of the initial plans for SOM analyses for marine litter as introduced by the lead country Estonia (Document DS-7) and noted that outstanding issues addressed in the document will be addressed at an upcoming online meeting in April.
 - took note of the plans to quantitatively link human activities to pressures as part of the SOM analyses (Document DS-8). Such linking will make use of a grouping of sub-basins since use of all 17 sub-basins from HELCOM assessment level 2 is not feasible for practical reasons.
 - noted that the proposed grouping in document DS-8 has been somewhat modified compared to the version previously circulated for comments through the SOM Platform. This change was made to better account for the variation of pressures generated by bottom contacting fishing activity in Eastern Gotland Basin which resulted in the sub-basins associated to Germany being split into different groups.
 - took note of the clarification that the establishment of the activity-pressure linkages will not require national data; experts from the HELCOM Working Groups and Expert Groups are anticipated to be able to make an evaluation using the proposed grouping of basins.
 - took note of the task for the Pressure Working Group to review and revise existing HELCOM ecological objectives for eutrophication and hazardous substances, to propose new ecological objectives for marine litter, underwater noise and loss and disturbance to the seabed, and to propose management objectives for all these topics (Document DS-2, Presentation DS_5).
 - noted this is an iterative task and that the outcome of the discussion on HELCOM objectives will be used as basis for continued elaboration by State and Conservation (ecological objectives) and Fish Group (ecological and management objectives for loss and disturbance of the seabed), and that the task also be further discussed at the next meeting of the Pressure Group with the aim of coming to an agreement at HOD in December 2019. DS17. The meeting agreed to split into four groups to discuss the review and development of HELCOM objectives during the meeting. The resulting outcome of the group discussions is included in Working Paper DS-WP.1.
 - briefly reflected on the outcome of group discussion in plenum and noted the following:
 - Ecological objectives for eutrophication and hazardous are proposed to remain as they are, possibly with minor modifications, with the reasoning that they are still relevant and in several cases not achieved yet, and that there is an important value to stay close to the current objectives since they are commonly recognized.
 - One view was that hazardous substances segment in the updated BSAP should not be combined with marine litter.
 - Several groups proposed that management objectives could be linked to sources/sector rather than pressures. This approach can potentially result in long lists of management objectives but could be further explored, e.g. to have one overarching management objective and a list of more detailed associated objectives than can support the follow-up of HELCOM objectives and development of actions.
 - Loss and disturbance to the seabed was recognized as closely linked to ecological objectives on biodiversity and that further consideration is needed to differentiate between an ecological objective for “loss and disturbance” and status of benthic habitats in general. It was proposed that the State and Conservation Working Group discuss this matter further.
 - It was noted that in some cases the management objectives drafted in the groups are formulated as actions rather than objectives and that there is a need to differentiate between these two subjects.
 - For underwater noise some differing views were expressed. Since noise will always exist in the environment one view was that such objectives could focus on designating places with no noise. The use of the word “quiet/quieter” was also supported since it speaks to the wider community.

- When the discussion on objectives advances it was found important to harmonize the objectives between topics, i.e. so that managements objectives are formulated in a similar way for segments of the BSAP.
- took note of the progress on implementation of joint HELCOM actions (Document DS-9).
- discussed the proposed categorization of joint and national actions regarding needs for rephrasing in case they are not implemented by 2021 and will be transferred to the updated BSAP.
- supported to rephrase existing actions as needed so that they are measurable and time-bound and possible to follow-up in terms of progress.
- took note of the view by CCB that the countries should rather look into new measures than rely on existing measures from other policies.
- took note of the comment by WWF that when rephrasing the actions, it is important not to weaken them but only make them clearer.
- encouraged the Contracting Parties to take a lead on reformulating some of the actions that need concretization.
- took note of the consideration by Germany that they may offer the lead for two actions related to national programmes to achieve nutrient reductions and their effectiveness and the action related to pharmaceuticals.
- expressed the view that it would be useful to know the structure of the updated BSAP as soon as possible to have an overview on where the actions would fit in the new structure e.g. to support the lead countries in making proposals for reformulation of the actions. The meeting noted that the adjustment of the BSAP structure is ongoing and will be further discussed by Heads of Delegation in June 2019.
- took note of the proposals to concretize agreements from the HELCOM 2018 Ministerial Declaration (Annex 1, Document DS-10).
- took note of the clarification from the Secretariat that the updated BSAP is envisioned to include new actions as well as the existing concrete actions that are possible to assess in terms of accomplishment and which have not been implemented by 2021. Aspirational and general paragraphs from the existing plan and follow-up Ministerial declarations will remain valid but will not need to be transferred to the updated plan. This refers to e.g. paragraphs from MD 2018 that have been labelled as “general” in document DS-10.
- took note of the comment by Estonia that the Ministerial Meeting commitment on ecosystem services is also relevant to follow up by the Pressure Working Group.
- took note of the list of agreements that have previously been assigned as too general to be assessed as part of the follow-up system of the HELCOM actions (Annex 2, Document DS-10).
- agreed on a written procedure to provide comments to documents DS-9 and DS10 to the Secretariat by 6 May 2019 and furthermore agreed to have an online meeting to further elaborate on the proposals in the document on 21 May 2019. The meeting took note that the Secretariat will provide additional instructions for the commenting round. The meeting took note of the clarification by the Secretariat that the final proposal by PRESSURE 11-2019 is to be approved by HOD 57-2019.
- took note of the outcome of reporting on HELCOM Recommendations under Pressure WG adopted after 2007 (DS-5 Rev2 and DS-5 Rev2Att1), noting that the current implementation has been reported by all countries. The meeting agreed on the evaluation of implementation of the HELCOM Recommendations, noting that coherence check of the collected information has not been completed by the Secretariat yet due to the time constrains and that the Secretariat may contact Contracting Parties with requests for clarification.
- took note of the correction by Denmark for their reporting on Recommendation 31E-4 and that the answer to action “Existing landfills not fulfilling the criteria of proper landfilling practices required for obtaining a permit should be closed, or restored in accordance with the national legislation” should be changed from “not applicable” to “yes”.

- took note of the review of HELCOM Recommendations adopted before 2007 that has been carried out with the aim to identify Recommendations that should be reported to support the SOM analysis (DS-1-Rev.1). The meeting proposed to report on the Recommendations as indicated in Annex 2, by 6 September. The meeting tasked the Secretariat to send out templates for reporting on the selected actions in the Recommendations.
- took note of the study reservation by Russia for the reporting of HELCOM Recommendations adopted before 2007. The meeting took note that the process to compare the Russian BAT requirements with the requirement of HELCOM Recommendations is ongoing and will be completed by the end of May. The meeting took note of the information Russia will thus clarify their study reservation by end of May 2019.
- acknowledged the importance of following up on the Recommendations to track the progress and supported that recommendations older than 2007 under the Pressure Group should be considered for thorough review and tentative revision.

Following up the progress towards HELCOM targets to reduce nutrient loads

The Meeting

- took note of the Overview of applied methodologies for the PLC-6 assessment, reported by the Contracting Parties (document 6-5), welcomed the Overview and agreed on its publication as supplementary material for the PLC-6 project.
- agreed on the publication of the report ["Sources of nutrient input to inland waters" (document 6-2)] as supplementary material for the PLC-6 project after the correction proposed by Germany [to be provided by 10 May 2019].
- welcomed the report [on PLC-6 Background Information (document 6-6)] and agreed on its publication as supplementary material for the PLC-6 project after all requested corrections have been received [to be provided by 10 May 2019].
- The suggestions to advance the HELCOM Nutrient Reduction Scheme and its follow-up system (document 6-1) were thoroughly considered.
- took note of the comment by Russia that PLC-water database should contain only originally reported data and not overwriting reported values by assessed ones.
- did not support item 1.3 of document 6-1 and invited national data reporters to rereport estimated (corrected) data to PLC-water database on voluntary basis. The meeting also requested RedCore DG and PLC-7 Implementation Group to consider options to store assessment data separately from the PLC-water database.
- noted that Estonia encouraged the Contracting Parties to work together to harmonize approaches, but the Meeting also warned countries that application of a too general model might result in losing important details.
- also discussed the problem of border rivers where the load shared between countries is based on modelled percentages and agreed that in many cases that is the only possible solution.
- supported the incorporation of nutrient input ceilings into the updated BSAP and tasked RedCore DG to prepare suggestions for the BSAP update.
- agreed that separate trend analysis will be made for air- and waterborne inputs but without evaluation against reduction targets, which could be done nationally.
- pointed out that calculation of targets for individual rivers might be useful to communicate with river basin management authorities, but it should not be a priority for PLC work due to time constraints.
- in general agreed to make the results of trend analysis (simple linear trends) for individual rivers available for the Contracting Parties.
- reiterated that RedCore DG is to keep communicating with IN-EUTROPHICATION to align relevant HELCOM core indicators.

- pointed out that the input ceilings for individual rivers will bear a purely tentative character and are used for evaluation of effectiveness of measures.
- took note of the position of Germany that the proposal of these tentative ceilings for individual rivers would be a good starting point for communication with river basin commissions, e.g. at the coming Workshop with the authorities. Germany also requested to use a more sophisticated methodology to arrive at ceilings for rivers compared to the methodology suggested in document 6-1.
- agreed that the tentative results of the estimation of the ceilings for individual rivers will be validated by the Pressure group before the Workshop via correspondence.
- welcomed the offer of the Chair of RedCore DG to estimate, together with PLC-7 Implementation Group, the changes in input ceilings caused by updating the transboundary data and present the results to PRESSURE 11-2019.
- did not support changing the Baltic Sea sub-basins within the current PLC assessment. Though, the Meeting in general agreed that the Baltic Sea model could be advanced in the future by taking into account the results of several ongoing national projects of which the Meeting was informed about.
- agreed that a trial calculation of separate load for the Archipelago Sea will be made by PLC-7 without changing of general follow up of the HELCOM Nutrient Reduction Scheme.
- agreed that taking climate change into account in the HELCOM nutrient reduction scheme is an immense, resource-demanding task and agreed that the theme should be included into the HELCOM science needs.
- agreed that coastal retention is the task for the update of the Baltic Sea nutrient flux model in future and also suggested to include this task into the HELCOM science needs.
- in general welcomed the approach to the advancement of the HELCOM nutrient reduction scheme and its follow-up presented in document 6-1 and requested RedCore DG to amend the document to be in line with the recommendations of PRESSURE 10-2019 for submission to HOD 56-2019.
- welcomed the proposal by Denmark and Germany on the formulation of principle 8 (document 6-8) and decided to submit the proposal to HOD 56-2019 for final approval.
- recommended to PLC-7 IG to apply the methodology for accounting extra reduction in the assessment after the approval by HOD 56-2019.
- FEAP introduced document 6-7 on a suggestion to revise sub-basins used for assessment of nutrient inputs.
- discussed the proposed subdivision and was of the opinion that the proposal can hardly be implemented, as it does not cater for the current management plans, and that the proposed subdivision would require enormous resources to update the regional model and, consequently, the nutrient reduction scheme.
- The PLC Project Manager presented the Status of the 2017 periodic PLC data reporting (document 6-3). The meeting took note of the status of PLC-7 periodic data reporting.
- recalled that 2017 is the reference year for the PLC-7 assessment and that the information will be further utilized as background data to evaluate the effectiveness and sufficiency of measures to implement the BSAP.
- encouraged all countries to finalize their data reporting.
- took note of the status of 2017 annual data reporting (document 6-9) and recalled that the data is used for the annual update of the HELCOM core indicator on nutrient loads on the Baltic Sea and the assessment of the progress towards national nutrient input reduction targets.

Measures to reduce nutrient loads

The Meeting

- discussed the Draft vision and objectives for Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy (document 7-4) with focus on potential recycling of phosphorus in the waster sector and agreed on submission of the draft to HOD 56-2019 for consideration as contained in Annex 3.

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- took note that the AGRI 7-2019 meeting had updated the workplan for elaborating the strategy and suggested to organize a workshop on nutrient recycling measures, tentatively in January 2020, and had welcomed the offer by Finland to host the workshop. The meeting had also taken note that the Interreg project platforms SuMaNu and BSR Water will contribute to the organization of the workshop.
 - Finland introduced the report Draft evaluation of effectiveness of measures to reduce nutrient input (document 7-12, Presentation 2). The meeting took note of the report and agreed that the compiled information is a valuable contribution to the work to evaluate the effectiveness of measures and provides a background for decision making.
 - recommended to utilize the document as background information for planning further work to evaluate the sufficiency of measures under ACTION project. The meeting also recommended to utilize the EMEP data on reduction of nitrogen deposition achievable by implementing the Gothenburg Protocol and the EU NEC Directive to evaluate future reduction potential.
 - welcomed the report pointing out that the evaluation contains a lot of assumptions which cause high uncertainty of the calculated figures and, thus, they have indicative character.
 - agreed that written comments on the draft evaluation of effectiveness of measures to reduce nutrient input should be sent by 3 May 2019 to Finland with a copy to the Secretariat. The meeting also invited the Contracting Parties to propose a new approach to implement the task to compile information on effectiveness of measures to reduce nutrient input.
 - requested RedCore DG and PLC-7 Implementation Group to enhance collaboration with the HELCOM ACTION project on the issue of effectiveness of measures and invited Sweden as leader of ACTION project WP4 to cooperate with PLC-7 project and RedCore DG. The immediate aim is to discuss and conclude whether the existing information from PLC-6 could be utilized to prepare sufficient input to the SOM analysis under the BSAP update, and what additional information might be needed from the countries.
 - Further, the meeting invited PLC-7 to develop a proposal, which could also include a targeted questionnaire, on addressing the effectiveness of measures within the project for PRESSURE 11-2019.
 - took note of the preparations for the Workshop with river basin authorities (document 7-1), recalling that it is a joint activity with the ACTION project WP4. The dates for the Workshop are fixed to 18-20 September 2019 in order to ensure synergy with the Project and efficiency of the resource use.
 - welcomed the offer by Latvia to host the Workshop.
 - agreed to provide information on contacts of potential participants to the Workshop and also proposals on the particular themes to be discussed by 3 May 2019 to the Secretariat
 - Germany introduced the launching of the ad hoc Group MINUTS (document 7-11) and the preliminary plans of the Group's future work. The meeting took note of the information and invited those countries, who have not yet nominated experts to the Group, to inform the Secretariat on the nominations.
 - welcomed the offer by Finland to co-lead the work on drafting the regional principles and risk assessment framework for management of internal nutrient reserves.
 - also welcomed the offer by PA Nutri to support the work of the group.
 - took note of the information on the current status of the decision on project proposal to estimate reductions of atmospheric nitrogen deposition achievable by implementing the Gothenburg Protocol and the EU NEC Directive (document 7-9).
 - confirmed the need in the project results and that the information is vital for the quantitative analysis of the sufficiency of measures. The meeting agreed that the scenario, including calculation of the reduction achieved in 2030, is the most suitable for the current needs.
 - took note of the offers by Estonia, Finland and Sweden to consider co-financing of the project and to inform the Secretariat by 3 May 2019. The meeting also encouraged other countries to consider cofinancing.

- requested the Secretariat together with RedCore DG to draft a project proposal by 3 May 2019 and circulate it to HELCOM Heads of Delegation for approval.
- encouraged the Contracting Parties to assure data quality used for modelling the reduction.

Remaining HELCOM hot spots and follow up of their deletion

The Meeting

- considered the proposal to delete Hot Spot No. 67 - Kaliningrad Wastewater Treatment Plant, presented by Russia (document 9-1).
- welcomed the information submitted by Russia and decided to propose to HOD 56-2019 to delete Hot Spot No. 67 from the HELCOM hot spot list.
- considered the updated proposal to delete the Hot Spots Nos. 69, 49 and 50 from the HELCOM list, presented by Russia (document 9-2).
- After a discussion, the meeting concluded that Hot Spot No. 49 could not be deleted, as the available data shows still significant environmental impact of this hot-spot.
- recommended Russia to provide more monitoring data on soils and ground water contamination to assure that Hot Spot No. 50 does not pose environmental risk. The meeting decided to propose to HOD 56-2019 to delete Hot Spot No. 69 from the HELCOM hot spot list.
- took note of the information on the current state of the toxic wastes landfill Krasny Bor, Russia (document 9-3 and Presentation 4).
- took note of the comments by CCB and WWF on the lack of information on the monitoring results available online and composition of hazardous substances/contaminants in the stored waste.
- took note of the statement by representative of Krasny Bor that monitoring data is partly available at the website and the data on the wastes' composition can be provided by request.
- thanked for the presentation on the status of the Krasny Bor landfill.
- also took note that the first phase of the hot spot reclamations - a comprehensive investigation of the landfill area - is starting in summer 2019 and that the active phase of reclamation of the entire area is planned for 2024-25.

Any other business

The Meeting

- elected Mr. Ari Kangas (Finland) as Vice-Chair of the Group for a 2-year period.

Future work and meetings

The Meeting

- agreed that the PRESSURE 11-2019 will be held on 23-25 October 2019.
- agreed that the 4th RAP ML Workshop will be held on 22 October 2019 preceding PRESSURE 11-2019.
- agreed tentatively that PRESSURE 12-2020 will be held during the week 20-25 April 2020 and welcomed the offer by Finland to host the meeting.