



Document title	Further elaboration of the 'BSAP structure' and disposition of the 'BSAP document'
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Background

One of the main activities of the strategic plan for the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) update, agreed at HOD 54-2018, is to consider an adjustment of the overall structure of the BSAP (cf. activity 2.2). The aim is to endorse a tentative adjustment of the structure at the HOD meeting in December 2019 and to adopt the new structure at HELCOM 2020 (at High-level Segment).

The process of adjusting the BSAP structure is outlined in the strategic plan and involves:

- the GEAR Group in the review of the overarching structure, i.e. segments and goals,
- HELCOM technical Working Groups in the review of the existing HELCOM ecological objectives and development of tentative new objectives.

In the guidance for the BSAP update, agreed at HELCOM 39-2018, it is stated that “**existing segments should remain while new ecological objectives can be developed for additional issues, for example, marine litter, underwater sound and seabed damage and disturbance**”. Based on this guidance the Secretariat prepared a set of examples on how an adjusted 'BSAP structure' could be arranged. The examples were prepared with the view to include the topics covered by the new objectives while making relatively minor adjustments of the segments and goals as such. GEAR 19-2018 supported a proposal that was based on the following adjustments ([Outcome GEAR 19-2018](#), para 3.4):

- hazardous substances, marine litter and underwater noise was proposed to be combined to a revised segment with the tentative name 'Pollution',
- the segment 'Maritime activities' was proposed to be broadened to also include other sea-based activities: fishing, aquaculture, and other activities having an impact on the seafloor, some of which are included in other segments of the current BSAP,
- the segment on 'Eutrophication' was proposed to remain as in the current BSAP,
- the segment on 'Biodiversity' would change in terms of moving fisheries related activities and pressures to segment on 'Maritime activities'.

HOD 55-2018 considered the proposal and tentatively agreed on the following ([Outcome HOD 55-2018](#), para 3.17):

- 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 were tentatively assigned to this segment.

At HOD 55-2018 Finland proposed an alternative structure that would cluster pressures against manageable human activities with the titles 'Land-based sources', 'Maritime sources' and 'Preservation activities'. This approach is based on establishing a matrix of human activities against pressures which is also a main step in the analyses of sufficiency of measures that takes place under the BSAP update. HOD 55-2018 supported to use of the approach as a tool to further clarify how activities and pressures are linked to the different segments. Such mapping is further elaborated in this document to support an agreement on the structure of the BSAP but a quantitative analysis of the activity-pressure linkages having the major negative impacts on the Baltic Sea environment will not be available until later in the BSAP update process (autumn 2019). **Thus, all examples given in this document are provisional.**

For the further discussion it is important to differentiate the structural elements of the BSAP from the development of updated Baltic Sea Action Plan as whole and the following definitions have been introduced in previous documents:

- 'BSAP structure' refers to the structural elements, i.e. the thematic segments, goals, and objectives. The structure of the BSAP provides for an outward communication to the wider community on the overall aims and objectives of HELCOM work. In the current BSAP the same structure is also used to organize the 'BSAP document'.
- 'BSAP document' refers to the full text and content of the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan. The whole plan, which may take the form of a document as well as electronically, will be a substantial record that also outlines HELCOM higher level aims and agreements on actions to reach good status.

This document uses the provisional agreement on a 'BSAP structure' from HOD 55-2018 as a starting point for outlining the 'BSAP document' based on activities and pressures that would tentatively be addressed under each segment. The document furthermore refers to the supporting framework for the BSAP as supported by GEAR which is based on identifying HELCOM action areas, management objectives and ecological objectives ([Outcome GEAR 19-2018](#), para 3.13, [document 3.2](#)). In this context it can be noted that HELCOM Working Groups have initiated the review of existing HELCOM objectives and the development of new objectives, including management objectives for eutrophication, hazardous substances, marine litter, underwater noise, and loss and disturbance to the seabed. The review and development of HELCOM objectives will be an iterative process aimed at coming to an agreement at HOD in December 2019 (document to be submitted later).

In order to hear further views from Contracting Parties in advance of HOD 56-2019, GEAR is invited to deliberate and make a recommendation on the 'BSAP structure' and disposition of the 'BSAP document'.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- consider the 'BSAP structure' provisionally agreed by HOD 55-2018 in light of the further mapping of activities and pressures presented in this document (Annex 1) and the implications for the disposition of the 'BSAP document' (Boxes 1-4),
- consider the tentative HELCOM actions areas which are aimed to be associated with agreements on HELCOM actions in the updated BSAP (Boxes 1-4),
- take note of the tentative type of measures that could form the basis for HELCOM actions for the updated BSAP (Annex 2 and 3),
- recommend to Heads of Delegation the updated 'BSAP structure' and disposition of the 'BSAP document' based on the clarification on how pressure and activities could be linked to the four segments.

Tentative 'BSAP structure'

Segments and goals

Development of goals and ecological objectives for the current BSAP was based on work initiated in HELCOM in 2003, further developed through the HELCOM EcoQo project, financed by the EU, and culminating in 2006 with the adoption of a HELCOM Vision, Strategic Goals and Ecological Objectives ([HELCOM 27-2006, para 2.1, Annex 3](#)).

The Vision describes the overall ambition, whereas Strategic Goals describe the major threats¹ to the Baltic Sea as identified at that time, and Ecological Objectives describe central characteristics of a healthy sea in a generalised way. With regard to the formulation of goals and objectives, the aim was to communicate HELCOM's ambition with a wider stakeholder community ranging from scientists and politicians to the general public.

With guidance from the HELCOM 2018 Ministerial Declaration to maintain the existing BSAP segments and with the view to maintain the original aim for the BSAP structure to be easy to communicate, proposals for slight adjustments to the BSAP structure were discussed at GEAR 19-2018 (document 3-2). Figure 1 illustrates the original segments and goals, the proposal by GEAR 19-2018 and the provisional agreement by HOD 55-2018. The figure also indicates how new the ecological objectives on marine litter, underwater noise, and loss and disturbance to the seabed would be fitted to such structure. It should be noted that the goals on biodiversity has not been explicitly discussed.

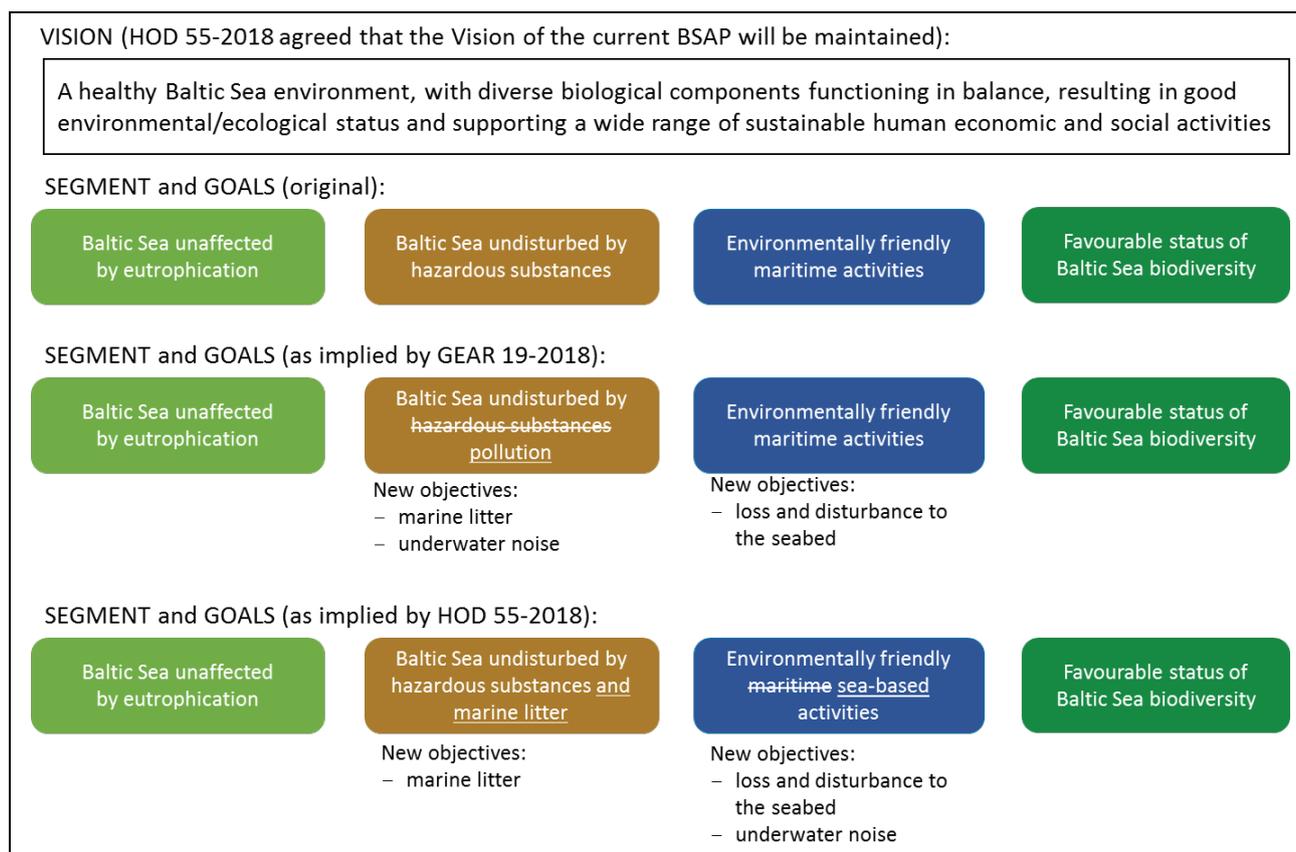


Figure 1. Overall segments and goals as iterated from original BSAP, GEAR 19-2018, HOD 55-2018.

¹ For biodiversity the major threat was described as loss of biodiversity caused by eutrophication, hazardous substances and maritime activities.

Discussion points on the 'BSAP structure'

The Meeting could discuss the points of departure that have been considered when proposing an adjustment of the 'BSAP structure':

- Is it important that the structure of the updated BSAP (segments and goals) stay close to the structure of the current BSAP?
- Should the ambition remain that goals should be easy to communicate?
- Is it important that outward communication of the 'BSAP structure' and 'BSAP document' follow the same structure; or would it be acceptable for them to differ?

Tentative organization of 'BSAP document'

HOD 55-2018 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 supported that climate change will be a key component of the pre-amble (Document 3.2, Outcome, para 3.12). The pre-amble will thus address issues that are cross-cutting across policies as well as across segments of the BSAP.

One of the agreements of the HELCOM 2018 Ministerial Declaration is to use the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for the updated BSAP. Based on a mapping of goals and targets of different relevant policies, HOD 55-2018 agreed to include reference to sustainable development targets in the narrative of the updated BSAP document (Outcome, para 3.13), for example by clarifying which HELCOM actions will contribute to the implementation of specific SDG targets. SDG targets will thus be addressed where they are best associated but will not govern the organization of the document.

In the current 'BSAP document' the text is organized according to the four main existing segments and goals and a number of additional cross-cutting segments (e.g. development of assessment tools and methodologies, awareness raising and capacity building, financing). The potential organization of the plan presented in this document is limited to the main segments and goals while other cross-cutting segments will be discussed at a later stage.

Annex 1 presents an initial mapping of activity-pressures linkages based on considering land-based and sea-based activities vs proposed BSAP segments and the pressures they are causing, and conservation activities vs ecosystem components as used in HOLAS II. Annex 2 provides an illustration of the links and overlaps between activities, segments and type of measures that could be considered for HELCOM actions. The implication for activities and pressures to address under each segment of the 'BSAP document' is presented below.

Tentative list of activities and pressures that are linked to the BSAP segments

Mapping of activities vs pressures currently takes place as part of the analyses of sufficiency of measures (SOM) to support the BSAP update. In the SOM analyses the aim is to quantify the activities that are causing major pressures thereby also supporting the identification of type of measures that could be the main focus for HELCOM actions.

In this document simplified matrices have been used to support the further development of the 'BSAP structure' and 'BSAP document'. These matrices (Annex 1, Tables 1-4) do not take into account all possible activity-pressures linkages but only those that, based on previous HELCOM work (e.g. HOLAS II), can be anticipated to contribute to major impacts on the Baltic Sea ecosystem. The more precise outcome of the SOM analyses in this regard will be available in autumn 2019. Thus, **the list of activities, pressures and tentative actions areas are subject to change.**

If the 'BSAP document' is organized by the proposed four BSAP segments, provisionally agreed by HOD 55-2018, the following can be noted with regard to activities, pressures and potential overlaps (Boxes 1-4, Annex 1 Tables 1-4):

- Pressures from land-based activities primarily contributes to eutrophication, hazardous substances and marine litter to the marine environment. The segments on 'Eutrophication' and 'Hazardous substances and marine litter' could thus be mainly focused on actions related to land-based activities as in the current BSAP.
- Pressures from input of nutrients, hazardous substances and litter overlap between land-based and sea-based activities.
- Sea-based activities capture a number of additional pressures that are primarily causing biological and physical disturbance² to the environment (Annex 1, Table 3). The segment on 'Sea-based activities' includes the type of activities that are considered in Maritime Spatial Planning which could have prominent place in such segment.
- Sea-based activities are in general linked to more types of pressure than land-based activities.
- The Maritime segment is no longer visible as a single segment but as one of the activities addressed under sea-based activities.
- When impact from fishing is considered under the segment on 'Sea-based activities', the segment on Biodiversity, becomes focused on management actions to protect and conserve biodiversity, since the main pressures on biodiversity are covered by other segments (Annex 3). Marine Protected Areas would continue to be a prominent management measure.
- Overlaps between segments are unavoidable and the use of cross-referencing between segments of the 'BSAP document' is proposed rather than repeating e.g. objectives, actions areas. Cross-references could also be illustrated.

² Note however that in MSFD Annex III, input of noise is not considered to belong to Biological or Physical disturbance.

Box 1. Eutrophication segment

Goals addressed:

- Baltic Sea unaffected by Eutrophication

[Cross-reference to goal on 'Sea-based activities' for achieving the goal and objectives on eutrophication, Cross-reference to goal on 'Biodiversity' on need to achieve the goal and objectives]

Pressures addressed:

- Input of nutrients and organic matter

[Management objectives and Ecological objectives to be added at a later stage]

Tentative activities addressed:

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Urban land uses (e.g. stormwater)
- Waste treatment and disposal
- Aquaculture

Tentative action areas:

- Sustainable agriculture and forestry practices
- Effective treatment of waste water and airborne pollutants
- Well planned urban land use

Box 2. Hazardous substances and marine litter segment

Goals addressed:

- Baltic sea undisturbed by Hazardous substances and marine litter

[Cross-reference to segment on 'Sea-based activities' for achieving the goal and objectives for achieving the goals for hazardous substances and marine litter, Cross-reference to segment on 'Biodiversity' on need to achieve the goal and objectives]

Pressures addressed:

- Input of hazardous substances
- Input of marine litter

[Management objectives and Ecological objectives to be added at a later stage]

Tentative activities addressed:

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Industrial uses (e.g. oil and gas refineries, industrial plants)
- Waste treatment and disposal
- Tourism and leisure infrastructure and activities
- Production of energy (fossil fuel, nuclear)

Tentative action areas:

- Sustainable agriculture and forestry practices
- Effective treatment of waste water and airborne pollutants
- Life cycle management of products
- Responsible tourism

Box 3. Sea-based activities segment

Goals addressed:

- Environmentally friendly sea-based activities

[Cross-reference to goals for 'Eutrophication' and 'Hazardous substances and marine litter']

Pressures addressed:

- Input of nutrients
- Input of hazardous substances
- Input of marine litter
- Loss and disturbance to the seabed
- Disturbance of species
- Extraction and mortality species
- Introduction of non-indigenous species
- Introduction of underwater noise

Tentative activities addressed:

- Tourism and leisure infrastructure and activities
- Production of energy (e.g. operational wind farms)
- Shipping (e.g. transport and transport infrastructure)
- Extraction of living resources (e.g. fishing, hunting, marine plant extraction)
- Extraction of non-living resources (e.g. mineral extraction, oil and gas extraction)
- Restructuring of seabed morphology (e.g. dredging)
- Aquaculture, marine (including infrastructure)

Tentative actions areas:

- Shipping based on green technology
- Efficient ballast water management
- Effective waste treatment
- Aquaculture practices based on BAT and BEP
- Environmentally safe offshore installations
- Sustainable practices of activities that cause impacts on the seabed
- Responsible tourism
- Mitigating emissions of anthropogenic noise
- Maritime Spatial Planning

Box 4. Biodiversity

Goals addressed:

- Favourable conservation status of biodiversity*

[Cross-reference to need to reach goals of other segments to reach the goal of 'Biodiversity']

Pressures addressed:

- Not applicable

Tentative activities addressed:

- Marine Protected Areas
- Restoration of habitats
- Reintroduction of species
- Conservation and management plans

Tentative actions areas:

- Conservation and protection of ecosystem attributes, including species and habitats, diversity and replication of traits, ecosystem services, genetic variation etc.
- Restoration of habitats

*Note that the goal for the segment on biodiversity has not been discussed in detail.

How would the supporting framework for the BSAP document be affected?

GEAR 19-2019 and HOD 55-2018 supported the further development of a supporting framework for the updated BSAP (Box 4). The review of existing ecological objectives and development of new ecological and management objectives is ongoing by HELCOM technical Working Group. The supporting framework would be affected according to the following if the 'BSAP document' is organized according to above:

- Ecological objectives, which refer to the desired state of the environment, would be cross-referenced for 'Eutrophication', 'Hazardous substance and marine litter' under the section on 'Sea-based segment'.
- Management objectives can potentially be phrased differently for the four segments and/or cross-referencing can be used.
- Actions areas can mainly be phrased differently for the four segments since activities causing the pressures are largely different. Over-lap between land-based, sea-based activities causing eutrophication and hazardous substances however occurs (see ideas for Action areas in Boxes 1-2).

To further develop the supporting framework the Secretariat has initiated a mapping of existing HELCOM agreements vs different activities and pressures (document 2-4, HELCOM 40-2019). This activity is temporarily paused awaiting the outcome of the activity-pressure evaluations carried out to support the SOM analyses, and the further elaboration of the 'BSAP structure'.

BOX 4 Proposed framework for the updated BSAP

Extract from doc 3-2, GEAR 18-2019.

Action areas, are proposed to be identified for each segment. Identifying action areas would provide for a clear link to SDG goals which often refer to specific human activities or drivers. They could be followed up by evaluating implementation of strategic HELCOM actions such as the development of guidance documents (e.g. national guidelines or standards for nutrient content in manure) or of qualitative agreements on measures (e.g. enhance the recycling of phosphorus). The follow-up is likely most suitable to be based on a qualitative implementation check (accomplished or not) but more specific targets could be developed as relevant.

Management objectives are proposed as simple descriptions of the desired change in pressure or conservation status (e.g. reduced input of nutrients, halt the loss of red listed species) as a result of management measures. Management objectives can be followed up by pressure targets with associated indicators (e.g. MAI/CART scheme) or conservation targets for biodiversity (e.g. targets for MPAs). At present there are only a few targets defined for total pressures in HELCOM but the Ministerial Declaration gives direction for development of new pressures targets and for some topics other HELCOM agreements, e.g. recommendations include different type of quantitative targets (e.g. limit values). Follow-up would primarily be quantitative i.e. for Contracting Parties to report on the reduction in relation to the pressure targets.

Ecological objectives identified, as currently, the desired state of the environment. They can be followed-up by core indicators and associated threshold values representing the status of the environment. Status indicators is the major category of the current set of HELCOM core indicators. Follow-up would be quantitative being based on threshold values for HELCOM core indicators.

Annex 1. Provisional activity vs pressure mapping

Table A1. Land-based activities vs Pressure according to tentative BSAP segments

BSAP Segment	Eutrophication
	PRESSURE
ACTIVITY- LAND-BASED*	Nutrients
Agriculture	
Forestry	
Aquaculture	
Urban land use (e.g. storm water)	
Waste treatment and disposal	

*Land-based transport also contributes but has been excluded from the table with the assumption that have a comparatively limited contribution to the pressures.

Table A2. Land-based activities vs Pressure according to tentative BSAP segments

BSAP Segment	Hazardous substances and marine litter	
	PRESSURE	
ACTIVITY- LAND-BASED*	Hazardous substances	Litter
Agriculture		
Forestry		
Waste treatment and disposal		
Production of energy (fossil fuel, nuclear)		
Industrial uses (oil and gas refineries; industrial plants)		
Tourism infrastructure and activities		

Table A3. Sea-based activities vs Pressure according to tentative BSAP segments

BSAP segment	Eutrophication	Hazardous substances and marine litter		Sea-based activities (mainly Biological and Physical disturbance if expressed in terms of Pressure)				
	PRESSURE							
ACTIVITY SEA-BASED	Nutrients	Hazardous substances	Litter	Loss and disturbance seabed	Disturbance species	Extraction mortality species	Intro NIS	Noise
Shipping								
Extraction of living resources								
Extraction of non-living resources								
Production of energy								
Tourism and leisure								

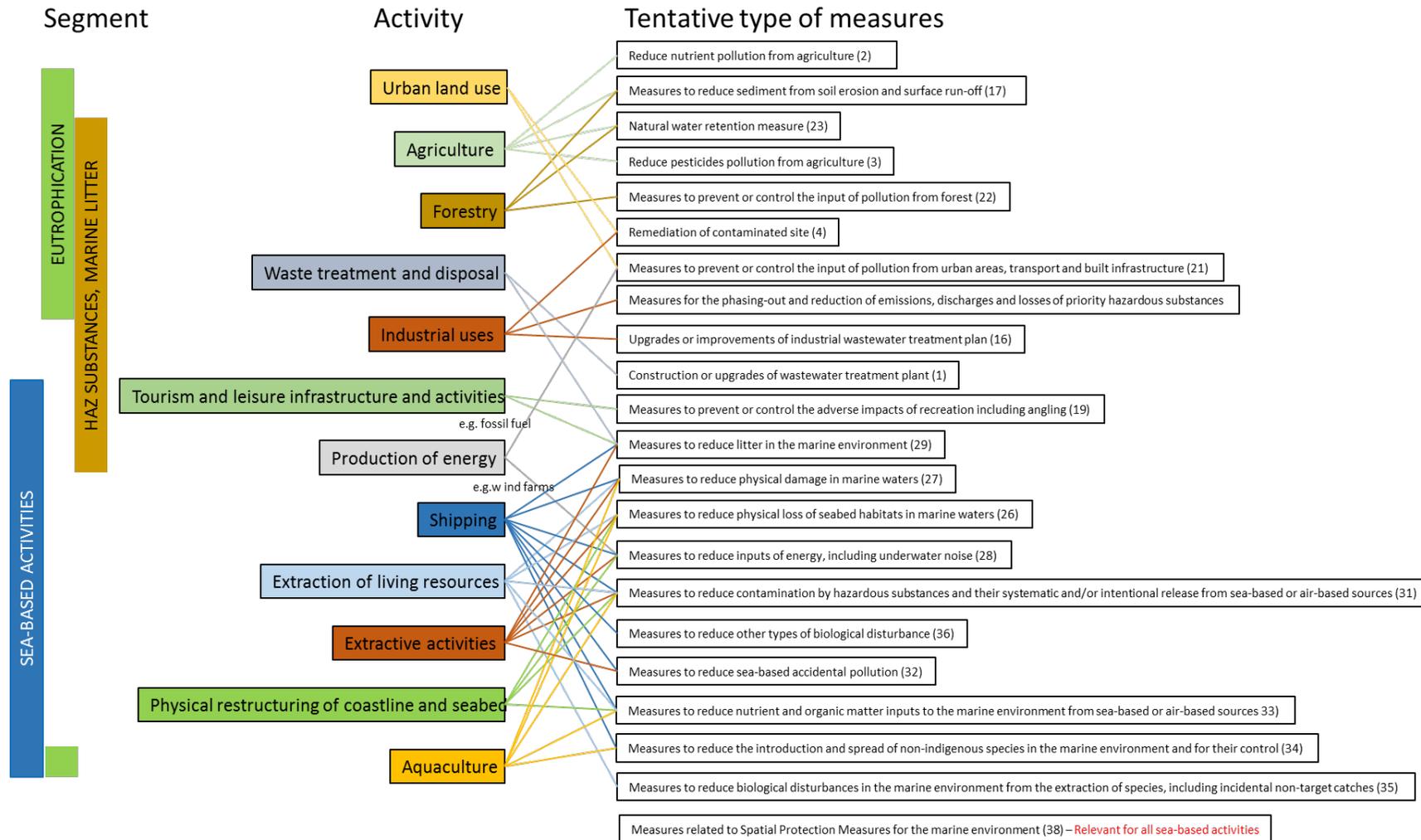
infrastructure and activities								
Restructuring of seabed morphology								
Aquaculture								

Table A4. Conservation activities vs main ecosystem components addressed in HELCOM assessments

BSAP segment	Favourable conservation stauts of Baltic biodiversity				
	ECOSYSTEM COMPONENTS				
ACTIVITIES - CONSERVATION	Birds	Fish	Mammals	Pelagic habitats	Benthic habitats
Restoration of habitats					
Reintroduction of species					
Marine protected areas					
Conservation and management plans					

Annex 2 Tentative type of actions to be addressed for activities causing main pressure to the Baltic Sea

Measures and the numbers within parenthesis are according to Key type of measures under the WFD and MSFD (GD10 - MSFD recommendations on measures and exceptions_25-11-2014). The vertical bars indicate how BSAP segments are tentatively linked to activities.



Annex 3 Tentative type of actions to be addressed with regard to specific conservation activities for biodiversity

Measures and the numbers within parenthesis are according to Key type of measures under the WFD and MSFD (GD10 - MSFD recommendations on measures and exceptions_25-11-2014). The figure is based on ecosystem components as used in HOLAS II.

