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| <b>Document title</b>  | Overview and provisional timeline of preparatory work processes to support the Third State of the Baltic Sea report |
| <b>Code</b>            | 5-1   |
| <b>Category</b>        | INF   |
| <b>Agenda Item</b>     | 5 - Activities of relevant HELCOM projects or processes   |
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| <b>Submitted by</b>    | Secretariat   |
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## Background

This document gives an overview of the work processes identified as needed to support the HOLAS III assessment, presented as three consecutive overlapping internal projects, including a preliminary timeline illustrating the internal relationship between the preparatory projects as well as the relationship between the preparatory projects and the HOLAS III assessment.

In the proposed timeline development work takes place prior to the start of the assessment process (which in turn is outlined in [document 5-2](#) to this Meeting) and is envisaged as a preparatory phase focusing on improving infrastructure to support the next holistic assessment. The preparatory phase is structured along three distinct but interlinked projects: consolidation and development of indicators, establishing and improving data flows, and refining and further developments of the assessments. The preparatory phase is proposed to run from the beginning of 2020-to the end of 2021, in a staggered structure.

The provisional timeline and preliminary plan outlined in this document are directly linked to the proposed further work on HELCOM indicators (approved as outlined in HOD 57-2019 [document 4-20](#)) and the project plan for the second step of the preparatory work, related to data reporting and data flows (provisionally approved, pending funding, as outlined in HOD 57-2019 [document 4-21](#)). Both steps are outlined in brief in this document. Full information can be found in the respective dedicated documents.

The plan presented in this document has been endorsed by GEAR 20-2019, STATE&CONSERVATION 11-2019 and GEAR 21-2019. Following endorsement at GEAR 21-2019 the proposed work was submitted to HOD 57-2019 for approval.

HOD 57-2019 took note that Russia placed a study reservation on the preliminary plan for HOLAS III, including the preparatory work. The meeting invited the Secretariat to be in direct contact with the Russia to find a constructive way forward, and for Russia to clarify their positions by end of January 2020, with the aim to submit the preliminary plan and associated documents for approval to HELCOM 41-2020, thus enabling the work to continue.

The plan and timeline contained in this document retains the general overall structure of the work to support the publication of the State of the Baltic Sea report as presented at GEAR 21-2019 and HOD 57-2019. However, to facilitate the work leading up to HELCOM 41-2020 and in the effort to accommodate the Russian position expressed at HOD 57-2019, the two phases originally proposed to be included in the HOLAS III process have now been separated into two separate work processes. Consequently, the direct mention of HOLAS III has been removed from the titles etc for the preparatory work process presented in this document.

The provisional plan included in this document was approved at HELCOM 41-2020.

Following the approval of the provisional plan work on the draft project plan for the third step of the preparatory phase has begun and can be found in document 5-4 to be submitted to this Meeting.

### Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the approved provisional timeline and preliminary plan, noting that changes might occur as the process is further refined.

## Support and preparation for the HOLAS III assessment

Early planning for the HOLAS III process has been identified as important for the successful implementation of the next holistic assessment, but also for a number of related HELCOM processes. These include consolidation and further development of indicators, improving dataflows, improvements and further developments of the cumulative impacts and economic and social analysis and to ensure the continued policy relevance of the work and the assessments. The provisional plan divides the work into two main work processes, the preparatory work and the holistic assessment.

Some of the main points which have been identified and incorporated into the preparatory work are as follows:

- Wherever possible **overlap between development, data collection and assessments should be avoided.**
- Set up as many **frequent and regular data flows** as possible prior to the start of HOLAS III, **minimize ad hoc data calls and data dumps.**
- Ensure **clear structure and timelines for approval processes** to avoid iterative assessment runs.

This document outlines the preparatory work planned to support the Third Holistic Assessment (HOLAS III) and which focuses on improving infrastructure to support the actual assessment work. The preparatory phase is structure along three distinct but interlinked projects: consolidation and development of indicators, establishing and improving data flows, and refining and further developments of the assessments. The preparatory phase is proposed to run from the beginning of 2020-to the end of 2021, in a staggered structure, where the first two projects have been approved and provisionally approved, respectively, at HOD 57-2019.

This division of the work is intended to give more time for preparation and more evenly spread the need for input by the expert and resource allocation the Contacting Parties.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship internally between the projects included in the preparatory work as well as the relationship between the preparatory work and the HOLAS III assessment. Each of the work processes and main steps included under the preparatory phase in the Gantt chart below are further elaborated in the respective sections of this document.

|                      |  | 2020  |    |    |    | 2021 |    |    |    | 2022 |    |    |    | 2023 |    |    |    |
|----------------------|--|---|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|
|                      |  | Q1  | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1   | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1   | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1   | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| Preparatory work     | Indicator development/consolidation              |   |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      | Establishing and ensuring dataflows              |   |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      | Refining and further developments of assessments |   |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
| HOLAS III Assessment | Indicators                                       | Data collection                             |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Data approval                               |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Indicator evaluations                       |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Approval of indicator evaluation results    |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Update indicator reports                    |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Updating indicator report metadata and maps |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Approval of indicator reports               |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      | Indicator based integrated assessments           | Run integrated assessments                  |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Validating and approving results            |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Prepare supplementary information           |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Approval of report content                  |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      | Cumulative impacts assessment                    | Data collection                             |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Data approval                               |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Running indices                             |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Metadata descriptions, maps etc             |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Validating and approving results            |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Prepare supplementary information           |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Approval of report content                  |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      | Economic and social analysis assessment          | Data collection                             |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Data approval                               |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Analysis                                    |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Validation and approval                     |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Prepare supplementary information           |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Approval of report content                  |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      | Report   | Collate and write summary report text       |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Create synthesised figures                  |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Approval of report content                  |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|                      |  | Website production                          |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
| Layout               |  |   |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
| Publication          |  |   |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |

## Preparatory Phase Work Process

The preparatory phase in figure 1 is suggested to include three distinct but interlinked projects (as illustrated in figure 2). Each step is complimentary to the following steps and, to varying extents, the consecutive steps build on each other. This is the case where e.g. indicators outline new and improved data needs, information on indicators and data to be included in the assessment inform the process on modifying and improving assessment methodology or tools etc. In accordance with this the steps outlined under the preparatory phase are staggered, allowing the planning for each consecutive step to build on more concrete information coming out of the previous work. More information on the steps can be found under the relevant section for each project and a separate in depth workplan is presented for approval for each project prior to the start of the project. For [indicator workplan](#) was approved at HOD 57-2019. The [project plan for the dataflow project](#) was also presented at HOD 57-2019 and the Meeting in principle approved the project, pending securing of funding to cover the work.

|                   |  | 2020 |    |    |    | 2021 |    |    |    | 2022 |
|-------------------|--|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|------|
|                   |  | Q1   | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1   | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1   |
| Preparatory phase | Indicator development/consolidation              |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |
|                   | Establishing and ensuring dataflows              |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |
|                   | Refining and further developments of assessments |      |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |      |

**Figure 2. Provisional timeline preparatory phase and associate projects.**

### Step 1: Indicators (Q2 2018-Q3 2021) (HELCOM Indicator project)

The first step focuses on core indicators and this work strand is already generally established, the next stage of the work approved at HOD 57-2019. The work has commenced as outlined in the section on indicators below and is planned to continue until late 2021.

#### *Review of existing indicators (Q1 2018- Q4 2019)*

This part of the process is outlined in the plan approved by HOD 54-2018 and can now be considered largely finalized.

#### *Further developments and consolidation (Q1 2020-Q4 2021)*

The work to take place as part of this process is planned and prepared as part of the work of the indicator review, largely guided by the work of the two indicator workshops. It focuses on finalizing already initiated and ongoing work on indicators, as well as on those indicators agreed on as being priorities for HOLAS III, based both on the policy priority and the technical feasibility. For those indicators and topics which have been part of the prioritization process a work plan has been developed for each indicator. **Any indicator not ready by the end of 2021 they will not be included in HOLAS III.** The work planned and approved under the HELCOM Indicator project can be found outlined in the last step of the [project plan](#).

### Step 2: Establishing and ensuring data flows (Q3 2020-Q1 2022) (HELCOM DataFlow-project)

Step number two focuses on establishing consistent and functional dataflows, as well as data handling and data storage infrastructure to support the assessments. Data collation and validation was identified as one of the most time consuming and resource intensive aspects of the HOLAS II process, and as such further development of this work and associated infrastructure will bring direct added value to the assessment process.

Establishing as many frequent and regular data flows as possible prior to the start of HOLAS III also minimizes the need for ad hoc data calls during the assessment process and ease the load on national and regional data hosts at times of peak activity (e.g. for MSFD reporting). More frequent, more regular reporting facilitates communication between the data host and the reporter, the identification and solving of issues, better governance and control over data quality. This step is partially guided by the work on indicators (e.g. what indicators and in what format are likely to be included in the assessment, are there gaps in the dataflows and how can these be filled prior to the assessment phase etc.) but it also expands to include those assessments under HOLAS which are not based on core indicators, namely the pressure and impact indices and the

economic and social analyses (ESA). This work will be based on the initial gap analysis of existing assessment dataflows prepared by the Secretariat, presented at State and Conservation 9-2018 and 10-2019. Q1 2022 has been included in the project timeline in order to solve any issues identified as data reporting starts. The work planned and approved under the HELCOM DataFlow project can be found in the [project plan](#).

#### Step 3: Refining and further developing assessments and methodology (proposed Q1 2021-Q1 2022) (HELCOM MetDev project)

The third step of the preparatory phase is proposed to focus on refining and further developing assessment tools (HEAT, BEAT and CHASE) and methodology, including spatial aspects, aspects on sensitivity and confidence, further developments of cumulative impacts assessment and economic and social analyses (ESA) as well as modification and refinements of the integrated assessment tools following the incorporation of new data strands stemming from step two and possible new or consolidated indicators stemming from step one.

Consequently the MetDev project is proposed to consist of three distinct work package, corresponding to the three work strands for which further development would be beneficial:

- Work package 1: Cumulative impacts assessment
- Work package 2: Economic and social analysis.
- Work package 3: Indicator driven integrated assessment tools

GEAR 20-2019 further invited the Secretariat and the relevant Expert Groups to prepare more specific information on identified gaps and development needs for the various work strands not covered by the indicator work, namely the Cumulative Impacts assessment and the ESA work, as identified in the HOLAS II process or in subsequent work. GEAR 21-2019 agreed to continue the discussion on the topic in GEAR 21-2019 with the intention to develop a concrete proposal for step 3, building on the work done in step 1 and 2, for consideration at HOD 58-2020 and approval at HOD 59-2020, with the aim to start the work in early 2021. Further elaborated proposals for taking the work under work packages 1 and 2 can be found in document 5-4 to be submitted to this meeting.