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<b>Agenda Item</b>	2 – Scoping for a potential HORIZON grant application
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## Background

GEAR 25-2021 noted the opportunity for HELCOM to apply to the HORIZON call “Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal ([HORIZON CL6 2022 GOVERNANCE 01](#))” under the grant “Multi layer governance performance of marine policies (HORIZON CL6 2022 GOVERNANCE 01 03)” ([GEAR 25-2021 Outcome para. 6.2](#)). The meeting invited Contracting Parties to submit national positions and general comments to the Secretariat in preparation for an intersessional meeting to further discuss a possible grant application. The Secretariat has taken the received feedback and further elaborated potential activities to be included in a proposal to this HORIZON call. This document outlines these potential activities to facilitate a scoping discussion.

## Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information to promote discussion on grant scope.

## HORIZON grant scoping material

The concept of “governance” is rich and multifaceted and is not easily reduced to simple parameters and indicators. Contrary to management, i.e. what is done in pursuit of given objectives and the means and actions to achieve such objectives, governance is about who decides what the objectives are, what to do to pursue them, and with what means, how those decisions are taken, who holds power, authority and responsibility, how risk and success is monitored and addressed and how performance is optimised and who is (or should be) held accountable in case of lack of progress. In lay terms, it could be described as the political processes that exist in and between formal institutions. Governance is a system, structure, and process, not a single activity and therefore successful implementation of a good governance strategy requires a systematic approach that incorporates strategic planning, risk management and performance management. Good governance also needs to ensure transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation. A governance setting is appropriate only when tailored to the specifics of its context and effective in delivering lasting result. The power and the capacity to take decisions have a major influence on the achievement of positive management and measure outcomes. The process of understanding and, where necessary, improving governance is thus at the heart of effective management.

While legal, customary, and socio-political influences can vary across a transnational area such as the Baltic Sea, the key governance decisions in relation to HELCOM are those that most directly relate to biodiversity, natural resources and people.

This project focuses mainly on shared governance, which includes transboundary governance (formal arrangements between one or more sovereign States), and collaborative governance (various ways in which diverse actors and institutions work together). It aims to tackle gaps in the international institutional framework, including the absence of institutions or mechanisms at a transnational level and inconsistent mandates of existing organizations and mechanisms.

Multi-layer governance performance issues largely stem from the insufficient flow of resources (information, skills, funding, etc.) between different levels of governance or between sectoral governance silos. This proposal seeks to improve multi-layer governance in the Baltic Sea region by considering institutions both upstream (i.e., Convention on Biodiversity) and downstream (e.g., local and subnational actors) of HELCOM to identify and reduce blockages in the flow of resources and information in the region. Multiple fora in the HELCOM community have identified difficulty in implementing the Ecosystem Approach (and its extension, Ecosystem Based Management) in the region ([GEAR 24-2021 Outcome para 6.1 – 6.15; HELCOM Stakeholder Conference 2021](#)). The difficulties occur throughout the Baltic Sea governance structure but can be coarsely categorized into upstream and downstream issues.

On the upstream side, the Convention on Biodiversity lays out a set of general principles for parties to the convention to implement. However, the systematic operationalization of these general principles has proved difficult around the world. There exists an insufficient flow of information between the Convention and its parties leading to poor coordination between the governance layers concerning what practical implementation of the general principles looks like. As improved communication between these bodies is unlikely in the near term, this project would aim to **support multi-layer governance coordination by strategically evaluating priorities identified at higher levels of governance in the spatial scale of interest and by effectively communicating the relevant scales of action and responsibility throughout the governance structure**. In the sections below this is achieved through one or more of components 1, 2, and 3.

On the downstream side, HELCOM stakeholders at the 2021 HELCOM Stakeholder Conference raised a wide variety of concerns that often can be traced back to poor multi-layer governance performance in regard to information exchange between different levels of governance (e.g. stakeholders and HELCOM) and different sectors. These deficiencies lead to reduced buy-in by implementing individuals or institutions,

poorer resource efficiency and reduced institutional capacity, and low levels of coordination. The project would aim to **support institutional capacity and insufficient resources by easing the sharing of data and conclusions throughout the governance structure** and **support multi-sector coordination by improving communication and information flow across sectors**. In the sections below a deeper understanding of this issue is achieved through one or more of components 4 and 5, and implemented through one or more of components 6 and 7.

## Potential components

### 1. Review and reflection on the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach including reflection on institutional barriers

Due to the grant requirements and the current focus of the potential HELCOM grant proposal on the Ecosystem Approach, something similar to this component would likely be required. However, options for the scale and approach still provide room for tailoring the work to HELCOM's needs.

One option would be to primarily focus on comparing implementation between HELCOM and another RSC. This would provide opportunities to share successful approaches and reflect on how various institutional barriers could be leading to disparate outcomes.

A second option would be to primarily focus on comparing implementation across multiple levels of governance within the HELCOM community by assessing the topic for both HELCOM and one or more CP. This would improve understanding of how national and regional goals and working principles are or are not transferring across levels of governance and could improve coordination on such issues. Project partners could also include members from other levels of governance (subnational, local, or sectoral) to consider similar issues within a CP, depending on interest.

This component fits one expected outcome and one expected impact from the grant text. Further it is an excellent fit for the expected outcome "Better understanding by the policy making community of the institutional barriers such as lock-ins, path dependency, bounded rationality, political inertia and power imbalances in the formulation and implementation of marine policies".

### 2. Localization of Malawi principles to HELCOM

One step that may help in a practical understanding of the Ecosystem Approach is to consider how the Malawi principles can be understood in a practical context in the Baltic Sea region. These more actionable principles can then serve as a base for evaluating HELCOM work in the EA context. This could be considered at the regional level (HELCOM), continental level (HELCOM + other RSC partner), and/or national level (interested national project partners). This would improve coordination between the Convention on Biodiversity and project partners of various governance levels (depending on participation).

This component fits three expected outcomes and two expected impacts from the grant text.

### 3. Redesign/revision of HELCOM EA Roadmap

Following components 1 and 2 (above), it could be possible to redesign/revise the HELCOM EA Roadmap taking into account lessons learned and HELCOM centric EA formulations.

This component fits two expected outcomes and one expected impact from the grant text.

### 4. Mapping the actor network for HELCOM

HELCOM indicators are organized on the basis of ecologically relevant scales. However, management of these pressures and environmental components occur at a wide variety of scales that vary by topic and country. A first step in improving HELCOM applicability to local and

subnational actors, and therefore multi-layer governance efficiency, could be mapping these actors to highlight the interconnectedness of the Baltic Sea, inform local and subnational actors where engagement with regional, EU, or global process are required for issue management, and provide an initial coarse listing of local and subnational actors to whom HELCOM products could be helpful. This would support communication across topic silos, between levels of governance, and improve opportunities for peer-to-peer exchange.

This component fits three expected outcomes and one expected impact from the grant text. Further it is an excellent fit for the expected outcome “The policy making community exploited analyses and better understanding of formal and informal policy governance work streams or processes, including public consultation and encompassing local, regional, national, European and global ocean governance aspects. [underlining added]”

#### 5. Assessing HELCOM data use by local and sub-national actors

When local or subnational stakeholders engage with the Secretariat, it is not uncommon for the stakeholders to be largely unaware of HELCOM and completely unaware of aspects of HELCOM work that is directly applicable to their circumstances. Either independently or, more effectively, in conjunction with component 4 (above), the use and penetration of HELCOM work could be evaluated across multiple levels of government. Component 4 (above) would help identify comparable actors across the HELCOM CPs from which information on data use or data needs could be gathered (e.g. workshop). Comparison of the situation between sectors or countries can guide HELCOM outreach to increase the penetration of relevant HELCOM products or the design of future HELCOM work to increase the applicability of HELCOM work to more of the HELCOM community. This would lead to an improvement in resource use and information transfer within the HELCOM community.

This component fits three expected outcomes and one expected impact from the grant text.

#### 6. Baltic Sea Knowledge and Innovation System platform

The grant text specifically references Knowledge and Innovation Systems (KIS) as valuable tools for multi-level governance. KISs are noted for their value in promoting peer to peer learning, reducing sectoral and national siloing, and reducing knowledge loss. The database could focus on one or more topics where knowledge sharing might be most beneficial/effective. Based on the selected topic, multi-language support may be needed (limited static translations with either no translation or machine translation of entered data). Content maintenance of the database would only occur when funded by projects looking to utilize the database.

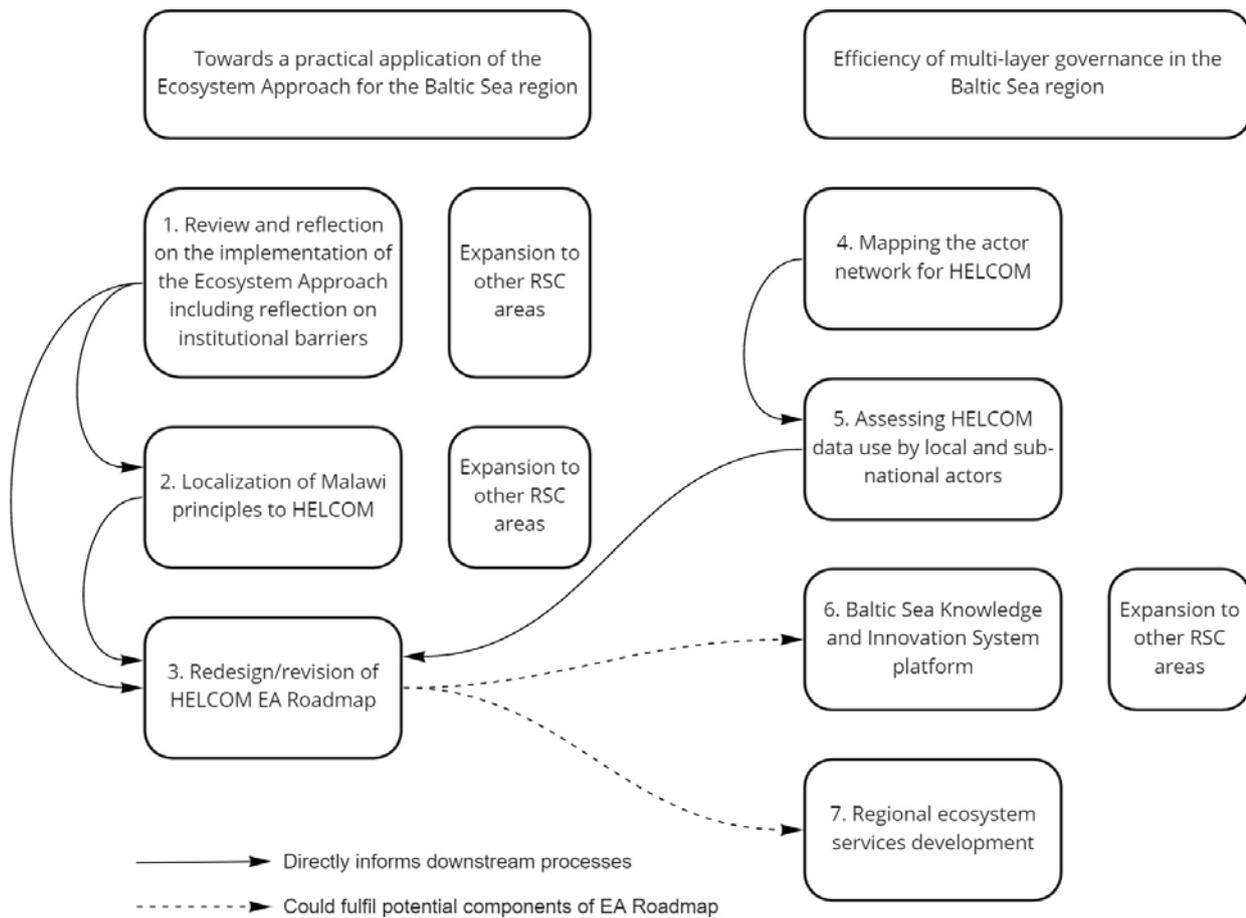
This component fits two expected outcomes and three expected impacts from the grant text. Further, it is an excellent fit to the expected impact “More informed and engaged stakeholders and end users including primary producers and consumers thanks to effective platforms such as Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS)”.

#### 7. Regional ecosystem services development

EN ESA considers ecosystem services to be the best option for integration of environmental and societal considerations in marine management. Currently a framework is under development by HELCOM BLUES and HELCOM MetDev but significant implementation work will still remain, particularly in operationally linking ecosystem function into the broader framework. A fully functional regional ecosystem services approach would provide a valuable resource for cross sectoral communication and planning, and multi-layer governance coordination between HELCOM, the CPs, and relevant subnational institutions.

This component fits one expected outcome and one expected impact from the grant text.

### Relationships between potential components



### Potential project partners

- Barcelona Convention

Similar consideration of EA has occurred in the region and appear to be at a similar development level on the topic as HELCOM. Further their success with direct stakeholder engagement could provide a useful opportunity for exchange during e.g. component 1 (above). Components 2 and 6 could also easily be extended to cover other RSCs.

- Ministries and associated research institutions

Broadly relevant throughout the proposal.

- Sectoral groups

As relevant depending on interest in e.g. component 5 and 6.