



Document title	Outcome of HELCOM MONAS 19/2013
Code	4-1
Category	DEC
Agenda Item	4 - Matters arising from the subsidiary bodies
Submission date	16.12.2013
Submitted by	Executive Secretary
Reference	HELCOM HOD 39/2012, Minutes of the Meeting, paragraph 3.41 (LD 66)

Background

The Nineteenth Meeting of the Monitoring and Assessment Group (HELCOM MONAS 19/2013) was held in Helsinki, Finland, on 19-21 November 2013 and attended by participants from all Contracting Parties. This document provides a summary of the main outcomes of the meeting, the full Minutes of the meeting of HELCOM MONAS 19/2013 can be accessed [here](#).

The meeting agreed to establish intersessional correspondence activities on monitoring, assessment and measures on marine litter and on monitoring of underwater noise with the view that HELCOM MONAS 20/2014 will devote thematic sessions to those issues based on preparations by and material from the intersessional activities. A separate document on marine litter, e.g. based on the outcome of MONAS 19, will be submitted to the Meeting at a later stage.

The meeting planned how to proceed with the elaboration of a second holistic assessment and stressed that a project should be established to provide a framework and support for the assessment work.

The meeting supported the proposal to publish the thematic assessment of eutrophication in the Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings (BSEP) series, and separate document will be submitted on that.

The meeting agreed on an amended and updated working programme for 2013-2015, noting that the outcome from the HELCOM streamlining activity may imply that it needs to be reconsidered in the near future.

The Meeting re-elected Ms. Anna-Stiina Heiskanen, Finland, as the Chair and Mr. Lars M. Svendsen, Denmark, as Vice-Chair of HELCOM MONAS for the period 2013-2015. HELCOM MONAS 20/2014 will be hosted by EMEP held on 8-10 April 2014 in Oslo, Norway and HELCOM MONAS 21/2014 will be held on 4-7 November 2014 in Estonia.

Action required

- take note of the outcome in general,
- note that MONAS has started planning an activity towards a second holistic assessment of the ecosystem health of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS2) which will be further considered by HELCOM GEAR,
- take note of the election of Ms. Anna-Stiina Heiskanen, Finland, as the Chair of HELCOM MONAS and Mr. Lars M. Svendsen, Denmark, as Vice-Chair of HELCOM MONAS for the period 2013-2015,
- decide and give guidance regarding the future work programme of MONAS taking into account the HELCOM streamlining activity,
- consider holding HELCOM MONAS 21/2014 on 4-7 November 2014 in Estonia, taking into account the outcome of the streamlining process.

Extracts from the Outcome of HELCOM MONAS 19/2013

Streamlining of HELCOM work

Information was provided about on-going activities to streamline the work of HELCOM, including the use of the Roadmap of HELCOM activities. The meeting discussed the new procedure with a three week document submission deadline prior to the meeting and was of the opinion that it is a good procedure for bulky documents but that there should be more flexibility with submission of e.g. shorter documents or outcomes of meetings and workshops that have been held after the document submission deadline since the current procedure results in outdated documents.

The meeting noted that a need for increased collaboration with partner organisations, particularly OSPAR, EEA and ICES, has been identified in the course of the streamlining and proposed that increased collaboration between HELCOM and OSPAR could particularly concern work on indicators (CORESET II – COBAM), assessment of eutrophication (EUTRO-OPER – EUT) and inputs (LOAD/PLC – RID). In addition, the two regional pilot projects BALSAM and North Sea Pilot Project should be part of this increased collaboration between the regions.

The meeting discussed the frequency of HELCOM MONAS meetings in the future and noted that it will be important to time the meetings in accordance with needed HELCOM deliverables and that the timing should thus be carefully planned and could be more adaptive and flexible. The Meeting acknowledged that the frequency of meetings can be affected by which tasks are taken on by MONAS.

Monitoring

The meeting took note of the progress of the HELCOM MORE project for the revision of HELCOM monitoring activities and discussed the initial thoughts on the new HELCOM Monitoring Manual. The meeting noted that the structure of the Manual is designed to also facilitate reporting required by the EU MSFD for those Contracting Parties that are EU member states. Drafts of the main sections of the Monitoring Manual and outline for the Monitoring fact sheets will be intersessionally further developed and discussed at a HELCOM MORE workshop, involving also CORESET II experts, which will be held in Berlin, Germany, on 13-14 January 2014.

The meeting took note of information about the new Baltic Sea Pilot Project: Testing new concepts for integrated environmental monitoring of the Baltic Sea (BALSAM) funded under the New Knowledge for an integrated management of human activities in the sea programme of the EU and noted that it will closely cooperate with the HELCOM MORE and CORESET II projects.

Indicators

The meeting took note of the progress of the work of the HELCOM Phytoplankton Expert Group (HELCOM PEG) and invited Denmark, as well as Russia, to take part in the HELCOM PEG work. The meeting noted that HELCOM PEG is of the view that they are not in a position to develop or evaluate new phytoplankton indicators in projects such as HELCOM CORESET due to lack of funding for these activities, although PEG will function as a communication platform for the members concerning phytoplankton indicators. The meeting stressed the importance of the involvement of phytoplankton experts in HELCOM indicator development work. The meeting noted that the on-going CEN project "Guidance on the estimation of algal biovolume" will develop standard methods and suggested that this could lighten the workload of the HELCOM PEG group on biovolume work and release resources of the group to work on indicator development.

Further, the meeting encouraged PEG to cooperate with OSPAR COBAM working on development of a phytoplankton indicator.

The meeting took note of the progress of the following projects and expert groups, and appreciated their contributions to HELCOM activities such as CORESET, MORE and REDLIST:

- Quality Assurance and Integration of Zooplankton Monitoring in the Baltic Sea (HELCOM ZEN QAI)
- Expert group on Monitoring of Radioactive Substances (MORS EG)
- HELCOM FISH-PRO expert network on Baltic-wide assessment of coastal fish communities in support for an ecosystem-based management.

The meeting considered the progress with implementing the HELCOM CORESET II project and given its guidance from scientific-technical point of view to the further work. and The Meeting agreed that CORESET II issues should be addressed during MONAS meetings, in collaboration between CORESET II experts and MONAS participants and was of the opinion that HELCOM MONAS 20/2014 should focus on CORESET II work e.g. during one day, and a CORESET II workshop could be arranged back-to-back.

The meeting agreed to establish an intersessional correspondence activity on monitoring, assessment and measures on marine litter with the aim to form an expert network and as the first step prepare material for further consideration by a meeting of experts during a thematic session at HELCOM MONAS 20/2014. The meeting welcomed the offer of Germany (Ms. Stefanie Werner, Stefanie.werner@uba.de) to take the lead in the activity on marine litter and invited Contracting Parties to nominate national experts on marine litter to take part in marine litter work and inform Ms. Werner by mid December 2013 with the view that this expert network should provide coordinated input for the thematic session on marine litter of the next meeting of HELCOM MONAS.

ICES has invited HELCOM to participate in a planned ICES-OSPAR group on marine litter monitoring and the meeting was of the opinion that the Baltic Sea regional marine litter expert network to be established under HELCOM could be linked to the ICES/OSPAR group and invited the Secretariat to communicate with the HELCOM experts on the development of the Terms of Reference of the group.

The meeting felt that a good starting point for establishing a foundation for monitoring of underwater noise could be the [BIAS project](#) and welcomed the offer from the BIAS HELCOM contact person Mr. Jukka Pajala (jukka.pajala@ymparisto.fi) to cooperate with HELCOM and take a lead on development of regionally coordinated monitoring and assessment of underwater noise under the HELCOM umbrella. The meeting agreed to initiate an intersessional activity under the lead of the BIAS HELCOM contact person with the view that HELCOM MONAS 20/2014 will devote a thematic session to underwater noise based on preparations by and material from the intersessional activity.

Assessments

The meeting took note of recently published HELCOM assessments and took note of the proposal to publish the thematic assessment of eutrophication in the Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings (BSEP) series so that it can be more easily cited in e.g. MSFD reporting and scientific literature. MONAS contacts will have an opportunity to review and comment the final draft of the BSEP eutrophication assessment.

The meeting welcomed that funding has been secured for initiating the project “Making HELCOM Eutrophication assessments operational” (HELCOM EUTRO-OPER) and encouraged Contracting Parties to actively participate in the project.

The meeting discussed how to proceed with the elaboration of a second holistic assessment and agreed that it should be developed so that it can also serve as a regional “roof report” that could be reported by the Baltic Sea EU member states under the MSFD for second cycle initial assessment in 2018. The meeting stressed that a project should be established to provide a framework and support for the assessment work. A draft outline of the contents of the assessment and project initial ideas are contained in [Annex 4 of the Outcome of the meeting](#). The meeting mandated the Secretariat to prepare a draft project proposal and to investigate options for funding the project, and requested the Secretariat to forward the draft outline and draft project proposal to HELCOM GEAR 6/2014 for further discussion and elaboration.

Matters related to pollution loads and BSAP nutrient reduction scheme

The meeting took note of the overview on progress with the activities of HELCOM LOAD expert group, and pollution load compilation (PLC) related projects (PLC-5.5, PLC-6 and PLUS).

BNI and the Chair of HELCOM LOAD presented the revised maximum allowable nutrient inputs (MAI) and country-wise allocation of reduction targets (CART) of the BSAP nutrient reduction which were adopted by the 2013 HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration, including the implications for monitoring and assessment of pollution inputs so that progress towards the agreed CARTs can be evaluated.

The meeting noted that additional information is needed in order to be able to follow-up on the fulfilment of the new CARTs and discussed how such follow-up should be carried out and whether it could be included in the development of the core pressure input on nutrient inputs. These issues are the main topics to be discussed at the HELCOM LOAD 7/2014 meeting in March 2014 and the meeting suggested that a document on identified challenges, needs and implications for following up the new CARTs should be presented to the meeting, and the elaboration and review of the follow-up system taken up also by GEAR in relation to harmonization with other reporting requirements (e.g. MSFD).

To ensure more active participation of atmospheric experts from the Contracting Parties in the future work of HELCOM LOAD and to promote better use of the EMEP report within the work of HELCOM MONAS, the meeting proposed that a thematic session on atmospheric emissions and depositions should be arranged during HELCOM LOAD 7/2014. This would also be a good opportunity to disseminate information about the BSAP nutrient reduction scheme to national experts working with the Gothenburg Protocol.

The meeting welcomed the information that the PLC-5.5 project final report (Updated Fifth Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation) will include an evaluation of the progress of countries toward the reviewed CART and requested that a first draft of the report, including all tables and figures, should be submitted to HELCOM LOAD 7/2014 and HELCOM MONAS 20/2014 for consideration.

Matters related to HELCOM Recommendations

The meeting agreed on the re-activation of the process to revise the HELCOM Guidelines for the disposal of dredged and supported the arranging of an expert workshop for this purpose in early 2014 with a view to finalize the revision prior to HELCOM MONAS 20/2014.

The meeting discussed the implementation of Recommendation 12/1 *Procedures for granting permits for monitoring and research activities in the territorial waters and exclusive economic zones, fishing zones or continental shelves* noting that the getting of permits is not functioning smoothly. The meeting emphasized that the establishing of a list of contact persons for seeking permits should be a priority of the BALSAM project and welcomed that Lithuania will also provide input based on an analysis being carried out of abnormalities in granting permits for foreign research vessels in territorial waters.

Future work of HELCOM MONAS

The meeting agreed on an amended and updated working programme for 2013-2015 as contained in [Annex 5 of the Outcome of the Meeting](#) and noted that the outcome from the HELCOM streamlining activity may imply that it needs to be reconsidered in the near future.

The meeting re-elected Ms. Anna-Stiina Heiskanen, Finland, as the Chair of HELCOM MONAS and Mr. Lars M. Svendsen, Denmark, as Vice-Chair of HELCOM MONAS for the period 2013-2015, and recalled that Ms. Wera Leujak, Germany, is the second Vice-Chair of HELCOM MONAS for the period 2012-2014.

HELCOM MONAS 20/2014 will be hosted by EMEP held on 8-10 April 2014 in Oslo, Norway. HELCOM MONAS 21/2014 will be held on 4-7 November 2014 in Estonia. Latvia has offered to investigate the possibility of hosting the meeting of HELCOM MONAS 22/2015 or 23/2015 in Riga, Latvia.