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Background

This document summarizes the status of ongoing HELCOM projects and those finalized in 2013, with a focus on their main achievements and outcomes during 2013. Hyperlinks to more detailed project descriptions on the HELCOM web-site are provided.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.

Information on on-going HELCOM projects

1. [Quality assurance of phytoplankton monitoring in the Baltic Sea \(HELCOM PEG\), 2011-2013, and \(HELCOM PEG II\) 2014-2016](#)

Project Manager: Ms. Iveta Jurgensone, Latvia

The main aim of the project is to ensure and maintain high quality standard of the phytoplankton monitoring within the HELCOM COMBINE Programme. This is done by organising annual training courses, intercalibration exercises, and jointly harmonising the sampling, treatment and reporting procedures. HELCOM PEG also maintains the phytoplankton [biovolume list](#). The project updates annually an Indicator Fact Sheet on phytoplankton species and develops new reports to HELCOM MONAS.

HELCOM PEG held its annual workshop and training course on phytoplankton in Gdynia, Poland on 8–12 April 2013. The Meeting discussed and made proposals for updating the HELCOM COMBINE Manual. The Biovolume file was updated and sent to ICES. The project is also contributing to the development of core indicators on phytoplankton.

The continuation of the HELCOM PEG project for the period 2014-2016 was approved by HELCOM HOD 41/2013.

2. [Quality assurance and integration of zooplankton monitoring in the Baltic Sea \(HELCOM ZEN QAI\), 2011-2013/14](#)

Chairman: Elena Gorokhova, Sweden

The overarching aim of the project is to ensure and maintain high quality standard of the international Baltic regional zooplankton monitoring within the HELCOM COMBINE Programme and to assure data comparability and their effective usage. This will be achieved by organizing training courses/workshops; revising and updating the COMBINE manual; maintaining intercalibrations; updating taxonomic lists; evaluating applicability of zooplankton-based indices as environmental indicators; and revising recommendations for zooplankton biomass assessment.

HELCOM ZEN QAI has contributed to development of a zooplankton core indicator and an evaluation of pelagic food web indicators within HELCOM CORESET project (2010-2013). The evaluation of region-specific reference values and GES targets is currently being conducted using regional data and the results will be conceptually and methodologically harmonized within HELCOM CORESET II and MORE projects and with OSPAR COBAM.

The HELCOM ZEN QAI project was originally planned to terminate in December 2013, but due to delays in starting the project as well as the longer than expected time needed to analyse the results of the Ring test, HELCOM MONAS 19/2013 supported the extension of the project until December 2014 (there are no financial implications for HELCOM).

3. [Revision of the HELCOM monitoring programmes \(HELCOM MORE\), 2012-2014](#)

Project Coordinator: Manuel Frias Vega, HELCOM Secretariat

The main objective of the project is to develop guidelines for a scientifically sound, well-coordinated, optimised and cost-effective joint HELCOM monitoring programme which provides the necessary data for HELCOM's Baltic-wide indicator-based assessment activities, focusing on the state of the marine environment but also on human-induced pressures impacting the status. The project works closely with the HELCOM CORESET II project, BALSAM and EUTRO-OPER.

During the course of the project, the project plan has been revisited and it was agreed by HELCOM GEAR, that the revision of the HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy from 2005 would be an objective of the project along with the production of an overview of current marine monitoring in the Baltic Sea.

The HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy was revised accordingly (finalized by the fifth meeting 8–9 April 2013) and adopted by the 2013 Ministerial Meeting. The overview of existing HELCOM monitoring was also prepared in 2013, which includes all reported marine environmental monitoring activities. This information can also be viewed in a web map-based tool which was developed under the project.

HELCOM MORE is now continuing its activities by revising the HELCOM monitoring programmes and guidelines, through the production of a joint HELCOM Monitoring Manual which is an online documentation of HELCOM monitoring requirements and Contracting Parties' implementation. The sixth meeting (8-9 October), seventh (a back-to-back meeting with MONAS 19 on 18 November 2013) and eighth (13-14 January 2014) continued the work of the Monitoring Manual which is expected to be ready before summer 2014.

4. [Baltic Sea pilot project: testing new concepts for integrated environmental monitoring of the Baltic Sea \(BALSAM\), 2013-2015](#)

Project Coordinator: Johanna Karhu, HELCOM Secretariat

BALSAM (October 2013 - March 2015) is an EU funded project to enhance the capacity of the Baltic Sea states to develop their monitoring programmes by increasing and improving cross-border coordination and joint activities especially related to monitoring of biodiversity. The project activities have been organised into six work packages. The project consortium has 19 partners and it is coordinated by the HELCOM Secretariat.

For biodiversity, this project will augment the capacity of the Baltic Sea coastal countries in monitoring of marine mammals, water birds and non-indigenous species in ports and biotopes. A decision support tool will be developed for non-indigenous species monitoring in ports for use under the MSFD as well as the IMO Ballast Water Management Convention.

Improvements in shared and coordinated use of research vessels for monitoring between the countries will enhance resource- and cost-efficiency of monitoring in the Baltic Sea region.

Integration of monitoring carried out under different policy frameworks and sectors (e.g. environmental and fisheries monitoring, working together with ICES) and compatibility of data from different monitoring schemes is one of the themes of the project and it will contribute to the integration of monitoring activities in the Baltic Sea region. BALSAM will also provide input to the on-going revision of HELCOM's coordinated monitoring system and the HELCOM MORE and CORESET II projects. BALSAM is supervised by HELCOM GEAR and HELCOM MONAS and HABITAT provide technical guidance to the project.

The project kick-off meeting was held 14-15 November 2013 in the HELCOM Secretariat and the work packages led by work package leaders have also held internal meetings. The next project meeting will be held on the week of 5 May 2014 back-to-back with the MARMONI project seminar in Tallinn, Estonia.

5. [OPERATIONALIZATION OF HELCOM CORE INDICATORS \(HELCOM CORESET II\), 2013-2015](#)

Project Manager: Lena Avellan, HELCOM Secretariat

CORESET II continues the work to operationalize the set of core indicators that was begun in the CORESET project (2010-2013).

Core indicators are science based indicators that will be updated by HELCOM Contracting States. The core indicators measure the progress towards a good environmental status, which is the aim of the BSAP and MSFD, as appropriate. CORESET II has three main priorities;

1. to operationalize the first agreed set of 25 core indicators on biodiversity and hazardous substances,
2. to develop and operationalize the set of 9 pre-core indicators, and
3. to develop candidate and pressure indicators as needed.

The project kick-off meeting was held 15-16 January 2014 in Berlin. The work to operationalize the core indicators will be carried out by national experts, termed Task Managers. The project is supervised by HELCOM GEAR, and HELCOM MONAS provides technical guidance. CORESET II will coordinate closely with the other ongoing HELCOM projects related to monitoring; MORE, EUTRO-OPER and BALSAM.

[6. CONTINUATION OF THE PROJECT FOR BALTIC-WIDE ASSESSMENT OF COASTAL FISH COMMUNITIES IN SUPPORT OF AN ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT \(HELCOM FISH-PRO II\), 2013-2018](#)

Project Manager: Jens Olsson, Sweden

This project continues the work of the HELCOM Projects “Expert network on monitoring and protecting of coastal fish and lamprey species (HELCOM FISH Project), 2008-2010,” and “Project for Baltic-wide assessment of coastal fish communities in support of an ecosystem-based management (HELCOM FISH-PRO) 2011-2013”.

The objectives of the project are as follows:

- a) Knowledge: to update and improve knowledge about occurrence, distribution, population and threat and/or decline of coastal fish based on all relevant data.
- b) Assessment and monitoring: to further develop different assessment and monitoring methodologies for coastal fish, including indicators with targets and reference values.
- c) Recommendations: provide advice to national authorities and ongoing HELCOM work on implementation of coastal fish related actions in the BSAP and MSFD.

During year 2013 the project submitted a project proposal for the continuation of its work, which was amended and accepted by HELCOM HOD 41/2013 (see Annex 3 of the [Outcome of HELCOM HOD 41/2013](#)). The project also updated the Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheet: [Temporal development of Baltic coastal fish communities and key species](#) including local indicator fact sheets and contributed to the finalisation of core indicator fact sheets within the HELCOM CORESET project. Furthermore, the project applied for funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers for a workshop and guidelines to map recruitment areas for Baltic Sea coastal fish species and provided a suggestion for a paragraph on coastal fish monitoring for the 2013 HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration.

[7. Review of Fifth Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation for 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting \(HELCOM PLC-5.5\), 2012-2013/14](#)

Project Manager: Mr. Lars Svendsen, Denmark

The overall task of the PLC-5.5 project was to update the Fifth Pollution Load Compilation with data on waterborne (and airborne) inputs to the Baltic Sea up to 2010 for the 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting. The project involves data collection, submission, compilation, filling in of data gaps and preparation of the PLC-5.5 report.

The [Review of the Fifth Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation for the 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting](#) was published in the HELCOM BSEP series (No. 141) in December 2013. The assessment provides information about trends in country-wise inputs to different sub-basins of the Baltic Sea, providing necessary information for Contracting Parties to be able to gauge their progress towards their national nutrient reduction requirements. Work is ongoing to make a more complete evaluation of country-wise progress towards the newly agreed targets, which will be included in the *Updated Fifth Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation* report which is expected to be released in mid-2014.

8. [Sixth Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation \(HELCOM PLC-6\), 2012-2017](#)

Project Manager: Mr. Lars Svendsen, Denmark

The project is an implementation of HELCOM Recommendation [26/2](#) to periodically carry out a pollution load assessment (PLC) including a quantification of waterborne point, diffuse and natural sources.

The overall task of the project is to prepare a comprehensive assessment of the water- and airborne inputs and their sources to the Baltic Sea during the period 1994-2014 with more detailed assessment for 2014 by:

- Updating the 5th Pollution Load Compilation (PLC-5) and the updated PLC report submitted to the 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting (PLC-5.5), including information on nutrient inputs via air and water, as well as their sources.
- Further updating the PLC Guidelines and extending them with new standardized methods, standard values, statistical assessment for improving data quality and quantifying uncertainty on national datasets to ensure more complete, consistent and comparable data between Contracting Parties, and complying with new requirements for follow-up of the fulfilment of nutrient input reduction targets agreed upon within HELCOM.

Project workshops were held on 16-17 January 2013, 16-17 May 2013 and 21-22 October 2012. Main outcomes of the project during 2013 include:

1. An intercalibration activity/ intercomparison activity lead by Denmark was successfully completed and the [final report](#) of the results were published in October 2013
2. A [report](#) on standardized methodology to calculate uncertainties in national datasets, including methodology for filling in data gaps and missing data was prepared by Denmark and published in December 2013.

Further, the project has made much progress with the development of the PLC-6 guidelines, although some sections still require substantial work.

9. [HELCOM Pollution Load User System \(HELCOM PLUS\), 2013-2015](#)

Project Manager: Sriram Sethuraman, HELCOM Secretariat

The main purpose of the project is to modernize the HELCOM pollution load compilation (PLC) database in order to:

- Facilitate the submission, correction, updating and quality assurance of national PLC data reported by Contracting Parties to HELCOM
- Improve and harmonize the quality and completeness of data in the database
- Ensure open access to up-to-date, quality checked PLC water data, and thus make it easier for interested users to access PLC data for viewing and downloading database contents via an application based on a well-defined internet-based interface, as well as facilitate the production of HELCOM assessments in a more timely and cost-efficient manner than is presently possible
- Develop a system which is user friendly, flexible and robust

Since approval of the PLUS project by HELCOM 34/2013, work has focused on implementation of WP1, which has the task of specifying the revised PLC database model. The PLC database will be converted from MS Access into the new DMBS (MS SQL Server has been suggested) and structural changes to the database will be implemented in order to harmonize the reporting requirements of Contracting Parties according to PLC-6 guidelines. A quality checking system will be implemented later (WP 4) to provide reliable and high quality data for end users. WP 2, undergoing, has the task of implementing the new data model and structure and transfer of the existing PLC data into the new database

Since March 2013, the 3rd and 4th workshops for PLUS project were held in Helsinki, Finland on 15-16 May 2013 and 22-23 October 2013. The meetings focused on finalizing the data model and the Quality Assurance process. The comments and suggestions provided to the data model are being incorporated and the 5th workshop, which will be held on 26-27 February 2014, will finalize and approve the PLUS data model and the functional design specification. The project will proceed with the implementation of the new data model (WP 2) and transfer of the existing PLC data into the new database, once the database model is finalized in the 5th project workshop.

The latest project status reports submitted to the stakeholders can be found in the HELCOM Meeting portal.

10. [Implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan \(BASE project\), 2012-2014](#)

Project Manager: Saija Vuola, HELCOM Secretariat

HELCOM BASE is a project funded by the EU with a budget of 2,5 M€. BASE supports the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) in Russia. It is managed by the HELCOM Secretariat and St. Petersburg Public Organization "Ecology and Business".

BASE is utilizing the experience and results of the activities by the BALTHAZAR Project (Phases I and II). Within BASE, monitoring activities to support and measure the implementation progress within the abovementioned segments are also being carried out.

The implementation of the Project activities is supported by the Project Steering Group (PSG) consisting of representatives of the European Commission, Russia, Denmark, Sweden and HELCOM Secretariat. In addition to the PSG, BASE has a Kaliningrad Working Group coordinated by the Service for ecological control and supervision for Kaliningrad Region. The involvement of authorities in all BASE activities is of utmost importance to the success and sustainability of the project. Moreover, HELCOM has a Memorandum of Understanding with the State Unitary Enterprise "Vodokanal of St. Petersburg" (SUE Vodokanal) regarding BASE activities.

BASE regularly facilitates Russia's contribution to several HELCOM Working Groups and projects (the Monitoring and Assessment Group HELCOM MONAS, the Land-based Pollution Group HELCOM LAND and the Nature Protection and Biodiversity Group HELCOM HABITAT, as well as HELCOM CORESET II, HELCOM MORE, the Pollution Load Compilations, FISH/ENV Forum, AGRI/ENV Forum, and others.)

BASE consists of fifteen different pilot activities addressing three priority areas of the HELCOM BSAP: eutrophication, hazardous substances, and biodiversity and nature protection.

The pilot activities (pilot projects, components) are implemented by experts from Russia with the support of EU experts. Updated information and interim reports from the pilot projects can be found on the project website <http://www.helcom.fi/helcom-at-work/projects/base/>.

The project took stock of its most recent developments in a Project Meeting in December 2013. All pilot project consultants presented the achievements to date. The presentations can be seen in the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#), under the folders [Projects](#) » [BASE](#) » [Project Meetings](#) » [Project Meeting 10 December 2013](#).

A separate BASE progress report has been submitted to HELCOM 35.

11. HELCOM PROJECT GROUP ON BALTIC STURGEON REMEDIATION

Project Coordinator at HELCOM Secretariat – Marco Milardi

The project draws on the BSAP agreement on the restoration of lost biodiversity specifically mentioning the reintroduction of Baltic sturgeon. The project kicked off in November 2013 and is currently in its Inception Phase, funded by the seed money facility of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (PA BIO). The Inception Phase is meant to define the project implementation through a workshop series and aggregate project partners in order to prepare a larger project proposal.

The project aims to boost the information campaign with already existing flyers (in all languages of Baltic Sea nations) launched by HELCOM HABITAT. Information will be disseminated via several tools such as the HELCOM webpage and national webpages. Flyers can also be copied and distributed to stakeholders of the fishery sector (electronically and as prints). Respective contacts should be established on a national basis including fisheries officers as multipliers.

Rewards should be paid for the provision of catch reports in which the fate of the fish has to be indicated. Without such an offer response to the flyers would be extremely low.

The project will also coordinate national activities in sturgeon restoration. Such activities will include:

- evaluation of the status of regional legal prerequisites and activities concerning sturgeon protection and remediation measures,
- development of an Action plan for the Restoration of the Baltic sturgeon,
- initiation of habitat evaluation in interested countries,
- expansion of breeding and dissemination plans,
- development and implementation of a common strategy towards the remediation.

To determine intercultural differences in stakeholder attitude and compliance a questionnaire will be designed to be used on a national basis. The final analysis is designated to provide detailed information about the attitude of stakeholders towards nature conservation, their assessment of their own role in this process, their compliance. This will be the first study on this matter over the entire Baltic, providing information also about the required communication strategy to improve the responsiveness and responsibility towards such programmes.

12. COMPLETING THE BSPA NETWORK, AND THE DATA AND INFORMATION ON THE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS OF THE BALTIC SEA (HELCOM PROTECT), 2013-2014

Project Researcher: Janica Borg, HELCOM Secretariat

The PROTECT project was initiated in April 2013, and its main goal is to assist the HELCOM Contracting Parties with improving the network of Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPAs) and to gather data and compile reports on the BSPAs. In 2013 the main task of the project was to assist the Contracting Parties with updating the data on BSPAs in the BSPAs database, and to compile the report "[Overview of the status of the network of Baltic Sea marine protected areas](#)", which was published as a background document for the HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting in October 2013. This report summarizes the current situation of the BSPAs network and highlights problems such as missing management plans or management plans in need of review.

Another task of the PROTECT project was to assist Lead Party Finland with drafting a new recommendation which will supersede Recommendation 15/5 System of coastal and marine Baltic Sea protected areas (BSPA), from 1994. The new recommendation reflects technical updates of BSPA data, reviewed definitions of criteria for BSPA selection, as well as assessment criteria for ecological coherence and management aspects. A revised draft of the new recommendation is presented at HELCOM HOD 45 in February 2014.

In 2013 PROTECT project gathered feedback from Contracting Parties regarding the current HELCOM BSPAs database. The feedback stated that the database is outdated, and that a new BSPA database is needed. Two options for a new BSPA database were identified, for implementation within the second stage.

A desk study of methods for assessing ecological coherence is planned within the PROTECT project 2nd stage, and an analysis of ecological coherence is planned for 2014. Also planned for 2014 is a review of the content of the BSPAs management plans. These activities will be covered by the PROTECT project second stage still awaiting a funding decision by the NCM.

13. Making HELCOM Eutrophication Assessments Operational (HELCOM EUTRO-OPER), 2014-2015

Project Manager: Vivi Fleming-Lehtinen, HELCOM Secretariat

The EUTRO-OPER project aims toward a regularly updated high-quality thematic assessment of eutrophication status, produced through an operational and streamlined process. It is a continuation to the CORE EUTRO process, stemming from the EUTRO-, EUTRO PRO- and TARGREV projects, which have since 2005 developed the indicator coreset, GES targets and assessment methodology, ending up in the latest update of eutrophication status in the Baltic Sea in 2007-2011 (<http://www.helcom.fi/baltic-sea-trends/eutrophication/latest-status/>).

The project pilots the production of assessment products through efficient data flow processes, where Contracting Parties need to report their data only once in order to serve the requirements of all obligations, including the BSEP as well as EU Directives for all and EU countries of HELCOM, respectively. During the project, the entire assessment process, from monitoring and data aggregation to assessment calculation will be defined and documented and the practices as well as responsibilities of QA/QC guidance and review will be defined.

The project will continue to improve the quality of the existing eutrophication status core indicators through enabling use of remote sensing and ship-of-opportunity data. Gaps in the present indicator coreset will be filled through development of new indicators. The work on the assessment tool HEAT 3.0 will be continued. In addition, steps toward coordination of harmonizing the coastal and open sea assessment will be taken.

The project kick-off meeting will be held during spring 2014 (date not determined).

14. Encouraging the use of Maritime and Land-based Spatial Planning in all countries around the Baltic Sea and develop a common approach for cross-border cooperation, 2013-2014

Technical assistance under HA Spatial Planning of EUSBSR

Project Data Coordinator: Manuel Frias Vega, HELCOM Secretariat

“Encouraging the use of Maritime and Land-based Spatial Planning in all countries around the Baltic Sea and develop a common approach for cross-border cooperation” is a project funded by EUSBSR Horizontal Action Spatial. The overall aim is to carry out activities to contribute to developing coherent Maritime Spatial Planning based on ecosystem-approach in the Baltic Sea, in close transboundary cooperation and cross-sectorial fashion. The project will help reaching the objectives assigned in the Horizontal Action Spatial of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (to encourage the use of Maritime and Land-based Spatial Planning and develop a common approach for cross-sectoral cooperation in the Baltic Sea), co-lead by HELCOM and VASAB.

One of the expected results will be to elaborate a MSP-relevant data development feasibility study. It will consist of a reorganization of the HELCOM data & maps website and HELCOM map service to give MSP data more visibility. The aim is to access data, particularly MSP data, in an easier and more user-friendly way.

An online survey about HELCOM data has been carried out in 2013. The objective of the survey was to ask for feedback about HELCOM data and analyse how the accessibility of MSP data and data in general can be improved from the HELCOM website and map service. The result of this survey shows that there is an increasing demand of accessing MSP-related data (i.e., oil spills, shipping traffic, etc.). The final results of this survey will be published in the HELCOM website and it will be part of the project deliverable.

The second expected result of the project is to further developing the HA Spatial website hosted by HELCOM. The objective of this development will be to enable a more efficient search for MSP related information; give an image of unity and coordination and to update MSP-related information easier. Among the information that is now scattered in different places are: MSP roadmap, data, general info on MSP, contacts, relevant decision of the Ministerial Meetings, etc. An analysis of the current website and a proposal for improving it will be presented as a deliverable.

Further, contribution was provided to developing the [Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap 2013-2020](#), adopted by the Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting.

[A workshop on MSP and fisheries "fishing for space"](#) was organized on 14 November 2013, back-to-back with DG MARE's MSP Workshop series, dedicated to fisheries and aquaculture.

15. [Test, further development and operationalization of the HELCOM biological survey protocols and A-4 risk assessments in the Baltic Sea \(HELCOM ALIENS 3\), 2013 -2014](#)

Project contact person: Hermanni Backer, HELCOM Secretariat

The overall aim of HELCOM ALIENS 3 project ("Test, further development and operationalization of the HELCOM biological survey protocols and A-4 risk assessments in the Baltic Sea") is to provide the HELCOM Contracting Parties with the possibility to test the regionally harmonised A4 exemption process before the entry into force of the Ballast Water Management Convention.

For that purpose the project tests, further develops and operationalizes the harmonized system for granting exemptions (according to Regulation A-4) to any requirements to apply regulation B-3 (Ballast Water Management for Ships) or C-1 (Additional Measures to those on Section B of the Convention) of the BWMC in intra-Baltic traffic, developed within the HELCOM ALIENS 2 project.

Work is divided into three work packages: WP 1: Pilot port surveys, WP 2: Testing and developing the decision support tool including the criteria and the list for the determination of target species WP 3: Project Management and Coordination.

The project also supports the work of the joint HELCOM/OSPAR Task Group for Ballast Water Management Convention Exemptions (HELCOM/OSPAR TG BALLAST). It is also linked to and supported by other activities, including BALSAM.

During 2013 the project has i.a. carried out port sampling in four ports and organized two coordination meetings, drafted a proposal for further development of the decision support tool, contributed to the work of HELCOM (especially within WP4 of BALSAM project) and the joint HELCOM/OSPAR TG BALLAST through meeting preparations and dissemination material.

A draft final report of the project will be available in early spring 2014.

The project is coordinated by the HELCOM Secretariat.

Information on HELCOM projects finalized in 2013

1. [Environmental monitoring of the Black Sea with focus on nutrient pollution \(Baltic2Black\), 2011-2013](#)

Project Researcher: Miia Mannerla, HELCOM Secretariat

HELCOM was a partner in an EU project of the Black Sea Commission (BSC) with the role of transferring its know-how on monitoring and assessments related to eutrophication to the Black Sea region. In addition, one of the aims was to assist the Black Sea region in taking first steps towards a nutrient reduction scheme with model-based nutrient reduction targets similar to the one included in the Baltic Sea Action Plan. The project also involved mentoring by the HELCOM Secretariat staff of the BSC staff regarding working practices of the Secretariats. The project was funded by DG ENV of the European Commission.

The main mode of work in the project was joint workshops. The third expert workshop was organized on January 31 – February 1, 2013, focusing on nutrient loads from land to the sea. The fourth and final project workshop was held on 27-28 November, 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey. The workshop aimed to continue and deepen the knowledge that has been shared during the project's three-year lifespan on eutrophication monitoring and assessment between the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea expert networks, and to bind together the lessons learnt during the project. HELCOM experts presented ongoing, new and upcoming projects in the Baltic Sea area, including BALSAM and EUTRO-OPER project, and introduced the recent developments in the monitoring revision work. Also development needs, regarding the application of the new eutrophication assessment tool "BEAST" (based on the HELCOM assessment tool HEAT), was discussed. Furthermore, potential future cooperation between these two marginal semi-enclosed brackish sea regions sharing similar environmental challenges was discussed.

2. [Development of HELCOM Core Set indicators \(HELCOM CORESET\), 2010-2013](#)

Project Manager: Samuli Korpinen, HELCOM Secretariat

The project developed a set of core indicators for the follow-up of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan. The core indicators also support the EU Member States in the Baltic Sea in implementing the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The work focused on core indicators for hazardous substances and biodiversity. The work was carried out under the supervision of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (GEAR) which steered the overall work defined in different work packages. The HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Group (MONAS) were giving advice to the project from a technical and scientific point of view.

In 2012, the project published an interim report ([BSEP 129 A](#) and [B](#)) on process and grounds for the selecting of core indicators and on the descriptions of preliminary indicators identified in the expert working groups. The core indicators were adopted by HELCOM HOD 41 in June 2013. The final report of the project summarizes information on the adopted core indicators ([BSEP 136](#)). More detailed information has been made available in the core indicator reports that were placed on the HELCOM web site in late 2013.

The project was a flagship project 3.4 of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

3. [Project for elaboration of HELCOM Red List of Species and Habitats/Biotopes, 2008-2013](#)

Project Manager: Tytti Kontula, HELCOM Secretariat

Project Officer: Lena Avellan, HELCOM Secretariat

The HELCOM Red List project was adopted by HELCOM HOD 26/2008 and was funded by HELCOM and in 2011-2012 the biotope work was co-funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers and Sweden. The Steering Group of the project was chaired by Anna Karlsson from the Swedish Species Data Center.

The aim of the project was to prepare complete HELCOM Red Lists according to the IUCN criteria of biotopes and species “under water and swimming on the water”. The following species groups were assessed: macrophytes, benthic invertebrates, water birds, fish and lamprey species, and marine mammals. A check list of all macroscopic species in the Baltic Sea was created as a first product of the project ([BSEP 130](#)). The final assessment results have been presented in a HELCOM Red List of species in danger of becoming extinct ([BSEP 140](#)). The work on biotopes included development of a biotope classification system HELCOM HUB ([BSEP 139](#)) that covered the entire Baltic Sea area. The threat assessment of biotopes was based on the HELCOM HUB and the criteria were adapted to suit Baltic Sea conditions. The outcome of the assessment was presented in a Red List of Baltic Sea underwater biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes ([BSEP 138](#)). Information sheets were created for all the species and biotopes that were red-listed. The products of the project were delivered to the 2013 Ministerial Meeting.

4. [CoopP \(Cooperation Project on Maritime Surveillance\), 2013](#)

Project contact person: Hermanni Backer, HELCOM Secretariat

The project “Test Project on cooperation in execution of various maritime functionalities at sub-regional or sea-basins level in the field of integrated maritime surveillance (Cooperation Project- CoopP) supported the policy process of the European Commission to create a Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) for the EU maritime domain. The Cooperation Project was based on the understanding that the CISE will be a functional environment benefiting operational public authorities having responsibilities at sea.

The Cooperation Project aimed to support further cross-border and cross-sectorial operational cooperation between public authorities in the execution of the defined maritime functionalities:

- define and agree on a selection of use cases with related information services and attached access rights,
- define common data formats and semantics,
- contribute to the cost-benefit analysis of integrated maritime surveillance.

CISE can potentially influence HELCOM work, i.a. regional information exchange in the case of oil pollution accidents. As a way to develop regional Baltic Sea exchange of maritime information in the long run HELCOM, through the Secretariat and HELCOM RESPONSE group, was a partner in this initiative.

The Final Conference of the project was held on 11 December 2013 and the project was finalized in December 2013.

5. [BALTIC IMPULSE CLUSTER, 2012–2013](#)

Baltic Impulse, operational from September 2012 until September 2013, was a cluster of nine environmental projects running under the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007– 2013. The aims of the cluster was to support the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan by ensuring further use of and wider access to project outcomes; to intensify exchange of experiences and ideas; and to further develop cooperation through cluster partner workshops.

The main cluster outcome is a [synthesis report](#), *Sustainable resource management for a healthy Baltic Sea*, and the recommendations cover the use of waste biomasses for energy production; good farming practices and the involvement of farmers; better management of waste water; and improved governance frameworks, among others.

The projects involved in the cluster are Baltic Compass, Baltic Deal, Baltic Manure, BERAS Implementation, COHIBA, PURE, PRESTO, SMOCS and Waterpraxis. There were also 15 partners involved, the main ones being Baltic Sea Action Group, Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) and HELCOM.

6. [Managing fisheries in Baltic marine protected areas \(BALTFIMPA\)](#), Inception Phase, 2012-2013

Flagship project under EUSBSR PA BIO

Project Researcher: Marco Milardi, HELCOM Secretariat

The main objective of the BALTFIMPA project is to assist, on a regional level, the HELCOM Contracting States to comply with their obligations to fulfill conservation objectives of marine protected areas in the Baltic Sea. BALTFIMPA shall thus analyze possible conflicts between fisheries and conservation objectives in MPAs (including Baltic Sea Protected Areas and areas of NATURA 2000), taking into account the protected species, and it will identify fisheries management measures accordingly.

The Inception Phase, funded by the European Union and supported by EUSBSR PA BIO led by Germany, is currently completed. Its main objective was to implement the generic tool for fisheries management but also to plan the following work packages. At the same time, the Inception Phase further detailed the project and attempted to secure the financial support by applying for additional funding for larger scale project. This action was supported by a Finnish ministerial grant.

The funding decision for the Implementation Phase of the project is due in spring 2014.