



## Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

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HELCOM 39-2018

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### Background

This document summarizes the status of the ongoing HELCOM projects and external projects with HELCOM involvement, with a focus on their main achievements and outcomes during 2017.

### Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.

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## Information on on-going HELCOM projects and external projects with HELCOM involvement

### 1. [Quality assurance of phytoplankton monitoring in the Baltic Sea \(HELCOM PEG QA\), 2017-2019](#)

**Chair: Ms. Iveta Jurgensone, Latvia**

**At HELCOM Secretariat: Ms. Jannica Haldin, Professional Secretary**

The project is a continuation of '[Quality assurance of phytoplankton in the Baltic Sea \(HELCOM PEG\)](#)' that was implemented in 2014-2016.

The main focus of the project is to ensure and maintain high quality standard of the international Baltic Sea regional phytoplankton monitoring within the HELCOM. This is achieved e.g. by organizing annual training courses (workshop), maintaining the PEG phytoplankton biovolume list, and organizing intercalibrations. The project leads the revision of the HELCOM monitoring guidelines for phytoplankton currently undertaken by the State and Conservation Working Group.

The project also serves as a platform for the review of phytoplankton indicators developed by Lead Countries and dedicates part of annual meetings to this topic. The project furthermore supports the definition of data requirements for phytoplankton indicators and appropriate data reporting format to ensure that the COMBINE database hosted by ICES provides the data needs for HELCOM phytoplankton indicators.

The project has contributed to the second holistic assessment of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS II) project, i.e. updated core indicators and provided information for the assessment tool and contributed to a survey of HELCOM knowledge and research needs for achieving good environmental status.

The annual meeting in 2017 was held in St Petersburg, Russia, 3-7 April 2017. In addition to this 11 PEG members took part in an inter calibration and proficiency test in December 2017 arranged by the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE).

### 2. [Operationalization of HELCOM core indicators \(HELCOM CORE INDICATORS\), 2017-2018](#)

**Project Coordinator: Mr. Owen Rowe, HELCOM Secretariat**

The HELCOM core indicators (as well as pre-core or test indicators) form a vital part of the holistic assessment of the Baltic Sea. These indicators are included in the first version of the State of the Baltic Sea report produced by the HOLAS II project. The indicators provide vital information to the text and overall holistic assessment. Core indicators are used in the integrated assessments of biodiversity, eutrophication and hazardous substances, with other less developed indicators (e.g. pre-core or test) included with a descriptive approach to support the overall report.

The indicators are based on regionally agreed threshold values, proposed by experts and [endorsed](#) at the higher levels of the HELCOM structure (e.g. State and Conservation and Heads of Delegation). Currently there are [35 indicators](#), 14 of which address biodiversity, 9 of which address eutrophication, 2 of which address maritime issues, and 10 of which address hazardous substances. A number of these, for example the HELCOM indicator for metals, separately address multiple related compounds within a single indicator. Additionally, a new pre-core test indicator for the pharmaceutical diclofenac, will shortly be added to the list, and included descriptively in the final State of the Baltic Sea report.

Utilizing the HELCOM expert networks and the lead (and co-lead) country approach, in association with specific data calls or regular data collection through designated databases, all relevant HELCOM indicators are currently being updated to cover the assessment period of 2011-2016. The indicator evaluations are presently undergoing national checking where nominated experts from each HELCOM country assess the data and result evaluation for each indicator.

In the near future the quality checked data sets will enter the integrated assessment for biodiversity, eutrophication and hazardous substances. These indicator evaluations and the integrated assessments will provide vital information during the production of the final State of the Baltic Sea report. All indicator related output for release on the [HELCOM indicator webpage](#) or within the final State of the Baltic Sea report will be presented for technical review by State and Conservation 8-2017 (14-18 May 2018).

Ongoing work alongside main focus includes the development of candidate and pre-core indicators and the development of threshold values for assessment units or indicators that currently lack regionally agreed or endorsed threshold values. Furthermore, a process to create a workspace where the semi-automated evaluation of HELCOM hazardous substances (and the integrated assessment of them) has been established. These processes are ongoing, the completion of the hazardous substances workspace being planned for the end of 2018.

### 3. [Project for the development of a workspace for the evaluation of HELCOM hazardous substances indicators and integrated assessment](#)

**Project Coordinator: Mr. Owen Rowe, HELCOM Secretariat**

HELCOM currently has ten operational hazardous substances core indicators. The underlying evaluation of the indicators is carried out (with the exception of the white-tailed eagle) using a script called MIME, developed within OSPAR. The MIME script itself utilises the data submitted to the HELCOM COMBINE database (hosted by ICES) to calculate the HELCOM indicator evaluations. In the first stage of this process raw data are collated at single stations, calculation of results is carried out (calculation and statistical analyses), and time series trends are defined at each station. These data and results are visualised (i.e. trend graphs) and can be displayed on the ICES server (i.e. for checking and use by experts). In the second stage of the process the initial output (i.e. the per station trends) is set against HELCOM-defined threshold values for each indicator to define the status value. These results are aggregated into an indicator result and status per assessment unit (in the case of the hazardous substances at HELCOM level 4 assessment units). This second result is also visualised and can be displayed on the ICES server. A final step using the CHASE tool calculates the integrated assessment for hazardous substances.

Within this project the above tools will be operationalised into a HELCOM workspace for hazardous substances, based in overall structure on the equivalent system used for HELCOM eutrophication indicators (EUTRO-OPER). The outcome of this project will be a flexible workspace through which HELCOM hazardous substances can be evaluated and checked, allowing the expert network and national checkers to review data and evaluations in details. The system will calculate the indicator evaluations as required, based on data submitted to the HELCOM COMBINE database hosted by ICES, and the workspace will be flexible enough to incorporate required future changes such as alteration of threshold values or addition of new indicators/compounds.

The project is ongoing throughout 2018, in close collaboration with both OSPAR and ICES, and a finished HELCOM product should be ready by the end of 2018.

### 4. [Second holistic assessment of Ecosystem Health of the Baltic Sea \(HELCOM HOLAS II\), 2014-2018](#)

**Chair: Ms. Maria Laamanen, Finland**

**Project Coordinator: Ms. Lena Bergström, HELCOM Secretariat**

**Project Manager: Ms. Ulla-Li Zweifel (update of the integrated assessments)**

The HOLAS II project runs from December 2014 to June 2018, the main product of the HOLAS II project is the State of the Baltic Sea report, an update of the overall environmental status of the Baltic Sea and evaluate progress in relation to the goals of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP). The outcome of the project will be developed so that it can also be used by the Contracting Parties being EU member states in reporting under

the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). First results are accessible at the [State of the Baltic Sea web page](#), which also contains a dedicated page for [downloading all reports as pdfs](#).

The current focus of the HOLAS II project is to finalize the updated assessments and present the results in the final version of the report, which is to be published by July 2018.

The main components of the assessment are:

- Distribution of human activities and pressures in the Baltic Sea. Cumulative impacts are assessed using the Baltic Sea Pressure and Impact Index;
- Assessment of good environmental status using core indicators, and integrated assessments of Biodiversity, Eutrophication, Hazardous substances;
- Economic and social analyses to support regional assessments of the use of marine waters and cost of degradation.

Methods and tools for the status assessment for use in HOLAS II have been developed through the EU co-financed projects BalticBOOST, TAPAS and SPICE. The HELCOM core indicators form the basis for the assessment of environmental status and the further development of HELCOM core indicators is part of HOLAS II work. The indicator update process is ongoing with the final versions currently being developed for HOLAS II by mid-2018. These indicators form the basis of the integrated assessments and the final reports for each indicator will also be placed online on the HELCOM indicator site. This process, continuation to CORESET II, is to ensure that a comprehensive set of core indicators are operational for use in the 2<sup>nd</sup> HELCOM holistic assessment.

Indicators are developed jointly by Lead and co-lead countries, with Lead countries taking initiative for the continued work, and reviewed and agreed by the Contracting Parties in relevant HELCOM groups (as agreed at HOD 48-2015 para 3.64). Lead Country offers have been received for the continued development of some 35 indicators and co-Lead country offers were received for all indicators.

One of the key tasks of the HELCOM expert groups will in the future include carrying out the regular updates of indicator reports and to provide timely indicators evaluations for HELCOM assessments. Updated indicator evaluations are needed in early 2017 and early 2018 to provide for finalization of the first results of HOLAS II by mid-2017 and of the updated HOLAS II by mid-2018 and the associated core indicator reports need to be updated accordingly.

The project is guided through a Core team with nominated participants from the Contracting Parties. The project held two core team meetings and nine workshops under the SPICE project in 2017 to support the developments of assessment tools and methods, as well as the Economic and social analyses. The work in spring 2018 will be focused on implementing the integrated assessment tools, updating the summary and supplementary reports, as well as updating indicator and metadata information. The output of the project will be presented for technical review by State and Conservation 8-2017 (14-18 May 2018) and for adoption at HOD 54-2017 (14-15 June 2018).

## **5. The Sixth Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation (PLC-6), 2012-2018**

**Project Manager: Mr. Lars Svendsen, Denmark**

**At HELCOM Secretariat: Mr. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky, Professional Secretary**

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 2012 (Germany and Poland) and 2014 (the remaining countries).

The following project tasks have been accomplished:

- Laboratory intercalibration/intercomparison with the participation of all nine HELCOM countries and published the results in a [report](#);
- Update and extend [PLC-water guidelines](#) including revised annexes describing the revised;
- Update HELCOM [Core pressure indicator](#) on nutrient inputs (MAI follow up).

The assessment of sources and pathways of nutrients to the Baltic Sea was approved by HOD 53-2017 for publication.

The Policy message on progress towards nutrient reduction targets has been submitted to HELCOM 9-2018 for adoption.

The following products will be submitted to PRESSURE 8-2018 for endorsement and subsequent submission to HOD 54-2018 for adoption:

- The assessment of nutrients input by 7 big rivers;
- The assessment of input of selected hazardous substances into the Baltic Sea;
- Evaluation of effectiveness of measures to reduce nutrients input to the Baltic Sea;
- Scientific report on assessment of progress towards nutrient reduction targets.

The following auxiliary material will be prepared:

- Background information used for the assessment (application of fertilizers, livestock numbers and units, units, agricultural land, population, land use, climate parameters etc);
- Overview of the methodologies applied by the Contracting Parties to assess nutrient loads;
- Executive summary of the PLC-6 product;
- Maps and data available through HELCOM map and data service.

The project is planned to be accomplished by August 2018.

## **6. The Seventh Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation (PLC-7), 2017-2020**

**Project Manager: Mr. Lars Svendsen, Denmark**

**At HELCOM Secretariat: Mr. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky, Professional Secretary**

Pollution load data (PLC) is an integral part of HELCOM assessment system, focusing on annual and periodic assessments of inputs of nutrients and selected hazardous substances. The overall objective of the assessment is to follow up implementation of HELCOM nutrient reduction scheme through regular update of pressure indicator report on progress towards fulfilment of Maximum Allowable Inputs of nutrients (MAI) and an assessment of progress towards implementation of Country Allocated Reduction Targets (CART). Nonetheless, PLC-7 assessment has also a specific focus on source apportionment and effectiveness of measures to reduce input of nutrients and selected hazardous substances. PLC-7 assessment will be made in 2019 based on the monitoring data from 2017, which will also serve those Contracting Parties that are EU Member States for their next generation river basin management plans under WFD in 2019/2020.

The expected results are:

- The PLC assessment data set based on annual and periodic reports of water- and airborne inputs of nutrients and selected hazardous substances from 1995 to 2017 (periodic for 2017);
- The updated HELCOM Core Pressure Indicator on nutrient inputs (update of MAI fulfilment follow-up) covering data from 1995 to 2017;
- Updated scientific report on follow up progress toward national reduction targets for nutrients, CART follow-up assessment, covering data from 1995 to 2017;
- A thematic report on sources of nutrients;
- A thematic report on effectiveness of measures to reduce nutrients inputs to the Baltic Sea;
- A thematic report on input of hazardous substances;
- Executive summary of Seventh Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation (PLC-7) including policy messages (also on CART);

- A report on intercalibration on heavy metals and nutrients between at least 1-2 laboratories from each Contracting Party conducting chemical analysis;
- Updated PLC guidelines on nutrients and selected heavy metals, including updated statistical methodologies used for PLC and MAI/CART assessments.

PLC-7 project has been launched in June 2017. Two project meeting has been organized since launching of the project. Currently, in accordance with the project implementation plan, the main project activities are update of the PLC Guideline and intercalibration. The project also follows up annual PLC data reporting.

## 7. [Estimation of reductions of atmospheric nitrogen deposition achievable by implementing the Gothenburg Protocol/EU-NEC Directive](#)

### **Project implemented by EMEP**

Airborne deposition of nitrogen is a substantial contribution to the total input of this nutrient into the Baltic Sea environment. It originates from nitrogen emissions from HELCOM countries as well as beyond the Baltic Sea catchment area. The reduction of the air emissions of oxidized and reduced nitrogen is the subject for Gothenburg Protocol (revised in 2012) and EU NEC Directive 2016/2284.

The data on air emission and subsequent deposition of nitrogen on the Baltic Sea water area is the task fulfilled by the Meteorological Synthesizing Centre of the Co-operative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long Range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP). The EMEP compiles various data on nitrogen air emission from all countries and other sources and model transmission of the compounds and their deposition. The EMEP database is unique compilation of the emission data which allows not only trace changes in emissions and deposition of nitrogen during the past decades but also estimate future reductions in case of implementation of requirements of Gothenburg protocol and EU NEC Directive.

The estimation of reductions of atmospheric nitrogen deposition achievable by implementing the Gothenburg protocol and the EU NEC directive with project to 2020 and 2030 years has been carried out within the project, as relevant information for the assessment of total potential of the nitrogen input reduction into the Baltic Sea and effectiveness of measures to be undertaken.

The final product of the project is calculation of nitrogen deposition to Baltic Sea basin and its sub-basins in 2020 and 2030. The data will be utilized to assess input of nutrients by HELCOM PLC-7 project.

The report has been delivered and is currently being evaluated by PRESSURE group member via correspondence.

## 8. [Project for Baltic-wide assessment of coastal fish communities in support of an ecosystem-based management \(HELCOM FISH-PRO II\), 2013-2018](#)

**Project Manager: Mr. Jens Olsson, Sweden**

**At HELCOM Secretariat: Ms. Jannica Haldin, Professional Secretary**

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:

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

During the year 2017, the project held its annual meeting in February ([Outcome of FISH-PRO II 4-2017](#)) and has, *inter alia*:

- worked on elaboration of the third thematic assessment of coastal fish status;
- contributed to the development and operationalization of the HELCOM core indicators on coastal fish;
- contributed to the second holistic assessment of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS II) project, i.e. updated core indicators and provided information for the assessment tool;
- contributed to the BalticBOOST project, including development of a database and data arrangements for coastal fish; and
- produced a project proposal for the continuation of the project.

In addition, the Project Manager participated in the sixth meeting of HELCOM Fish.

The project proposal for FISH-PRO III was approved by HOD 53-2017.

## 9. [Horizontal Action "Spatial Planning" Support 2 \(HASPS II\), 2016-2018](#)

**Project Coordinator: Mr. Ville Karvinen, HELCOM Secretariat**

**Project Researcher: Mr. Juuso Haapaniemi, HELCOM Secretariat**

HASPSII aims to support objectives assigned in the Horizontal Action "Spatial Planning" of the EUSBSR and is co-funded by the EU Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme. It is co-led by HELCOM and VASAB and it builds on the coordination activities started within the previous HASPS project in 2015–2016.

The main focus of the project is to improve coordination, stakeholder involvement and achievement of the strategic targets of the HA Spatial Planning by enhancing the links between the HA and implementation of the Regional Baltic MSP Roadmap and the EU MSP Directive (for EU countries), strengthening an outreach and integration of the HA to other regional and European activities, and promoting and enabling future flagship projects.

The project has contributed to the work of the Joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group and their sub group, the MSP Data Expert Group, by facilitating meetings and producing information documents on Ecosystem Approach in MSP, focusing on the concepts of Green Infrastructure and Blue Corridors. The project has also supported linking of the HELCOM HOLASII process into MSP, especially focusing on the Baltic Sea Impact and Pressure Indices. HASPSII is also following up on the CBD Baltic Sea Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas as the results of the workshop are expected to have use in the future MSP work in the region.

## 10. [Coherent Linear Infrastructures in Baltic Maritime Spatial Plans \(BalticLINes\), 2016-2019](#)

**Project Coordinator: Mr. Manuel Frias, HELCOM Secretariat**

**Project Researcher - Data Expert: Mr. Florent Nicolas, HELCOM Secretariat**

**GIS Application Developer: Mr. Andžej Miloš, HELCOM Secretariat**

The overall objective of this Interreg funded project (March 2016 – February 2019) is to increase transnational coherence of shipping routes and energy corridors in Maritime Spatial Plans in the Baltic Sea Region. This prevents cross-border mismatches and secures transnational connectivity as well as efficient use of Baltic Sea space. Thereby Baltic LINes helps to develop the most appropriate framework conditions for Blue Growth activities (e.g. maritime transportation, offshore energy exploitation, coastal tourism etc.) for the coming 10-15 years increasing investors' security.

HELCOM is leading the development of the [first Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure \(MSDI\) prototype](#) in the Baltic Sea. The prototype will be the first step towards a more efficient way to access MSP data from the original sources via compliant online standard services and formats.

During 2017, the project identified and evaluated what kind of data planners need and what data is available in each country. This task was the continuation of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Data Expert Sub-Group. The project also studied the existing systems providing interoperable data and the current technology standards. Interviews were carried out to analyse the needs of potential users of the system.

The development of the prototype MSDI started in 2017 based on the data identified and the study on existing decentralized systems. The project held two partner meetings in Helsinki and Gothenburg where the status of the system was presented.

## [11. Environmental impact of low sulphur ship fuel: measurements and modelling strategies \(EnviSuM\), 2016-2018](#)

**Project Researcher: Mr. Alexey Bakhtov, HELCOM Secretariat**

The EnviSuM project, co-funded by the EU Interreg, is studying technical efficiency and socio-economic impacts of clean shipping solutions. It addresses measurement and modelling strategies to assess present and future cost and the health and environmental effects of ship emissions in view of the IMO emission regulations. The EnviSuM project will provide tested and analysed results on the efficiency of the different clean shipping solutions allowing the project consortium to make recommendations benefiting the environment, the health of the people of the Baltic Sea Region while still supporting the maritime businesses and promoting economic growth.

The project supports the general aims of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea (Helsinki Convention) to achieve Good Environmental Status of the sea, and specifically it contributes to the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (2007) and the follow up Ministerial commitments (Declarations from Moscow 2010 and Copenhagen 2013) to achieve the Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication by offering scenarios and building knowledge on the most efficient and cost-effective solutions for further reduction of emissions and deposition of pollution to the Baltic Sea from ships.

The EnviSuM is coordinated by University of Turku and it involves 12 partners from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Norway, Poland, and Sweden. In addition, there are 17 associated organisations, including Russian partners. Project runs from March 2016 to February 2019.

- As part of HELCOM's contribution an overall HELCOM/EnviSuM [report/brochure](#) on the present status and prospects of the use and availability of Alternative fuels by ships operating in the Baltic Sea was prepared in October-December 2017. The first draft was circulated before Christmas to the HELCOM Green Team as well as EnviSuM contacts. So far several substantial answers with contributions to the report have been received and incorporated in the text. An updated draft will be circulated before the EnviSuM partner meeting on March 21<sup>st</sup> in St. Petersburg, and upon consent with the partners, presented at the EnviSuM workshop organized on margins of the Baltic Sea Day Forum on March, 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Final draft report will be submitted to GREEN TEAM 2 (May 17<sup>th</sup>, Turku) and to HELCOM Maritime 18-2018 in Hamburg (25-27 September 2018) for approvals.
- To support the Lead Partner with WP1 (management and administration) a [project summary](#) was prepared in English and consequently translated to [Russian](#). English version was submitted to HELCOM MARITIME 17-2017 (October 2017, St. Petersburg).
- A [policy brief](#) "Sulphur Emission Control Area (SECA) regulation's benefits exceed the costs. Both are distributed unevenly" was translated to Russian, put on the EnviSuM web page and also forwarded to interested organizations.

## [12. Open-source tools for regional risk assessments for improved European preparedness and response at Sea \(OpenRisk\), 2017-2019](#)

**Project Manager: Mr. Valtteri Laine, HELCOM Secretariat**

OpenRisk is a two-year project focused on developing risk assessment (RA) tools for accidental maritime spills. The project is co-financed by the European Commission DG ECHO (Civil Protection Financial Instrument, project ECHO/SUB/2016/740178/PREV26). It runs for 2 years (2017-18).

The lead partner of the OpenRisk project is HELCOM. The other partners of the project are World Maritime University (WMU), MARIN and Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE).

The project is also supported by the BONN Agreement (North Sea), the Copenhagen Agreement (Nordic seas), REMPEC (Mediterranean) and the Lisbon Agreement as well as the Kystverket (Norwegian Coastal Administration), all of which aim to participate in project events.

The objective of the OpenRisk project is to take the first steps in developing a toolbox of joint and open methods that enable frequent assessments of spill risks from maritime accidents and adequacy of response capacity.

The expected end-users of the project outcome are Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR) authorities of Europe.

The main deliverables of the OpenRisk project are as follows:

- Guideline for Pollution Prevention and Response on risk assessment and management based on the ISO 31000 Standard;
- Baltic Sea Case Study;
- Four Inter-regional workshops, including reports.

### 13. Development, promotion and sustainable management of the Baltic Sea Region as a coastal fishing tourism destination (RETROUT), 2017-2020

**Project Manager: Mr. Mika Rahikainen, HELCOM Secretariat**

RETROUT is a 3 –year project focusing on trout rivers, sustainable trout fishing tourism and trout river restoration. The 3.2 Meur project is funded via the Interreg Baltic Sea programme, started its work in October 2017 and will finish in October 2020. HELCOM is the lead of WP 4 on status and management of sea trout rivers and stocks.

The RETROUT Partnership consists of County Administrative Board in Stockholm (Lead Partner, SE), Royal Institute of Technology(KTH) (SE), Haninge municipality (SE), Baltic Environmental Forum Estonia (EE), University of Tartu (EE), NGO Estonian Fishing Tourism (EE), Kurzeme Planning Region (LV), Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment - “BIOR” (LV) , Klaipeda University (LT), Fishery service under the ministry of Agriculture of the republic of Lithuania (LT), National Marine Fisheries Research Institute (PL), Tourist Association "Northern Kashubia" Local Tourist Organisation (PL), Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, HELCOM (Intergovernmental), Ventspils Regional Municipality (LV).

The aim of WP 4 is to assess the pressure of recreational fishing on sea trout stocks, to compile information on the status of sea trout rivers and stocks in the Baltic Sea region, to evaluate different river restoration methods and technological solutions and to recommend best practices and management options.

The gained experience will be synthesized in a dedicated Baltic Toolbox with a set of river restoration measures to be published as a HELCOM report with pan-Baltic recommendations, including a section with case studies. The main results will be translated into local languages for national dissemination.

In summary, the WP will:

- Develop a common, standardised methodology of habitat monitoring and electrofishing (4.1);
- Perform a scenario study including (4.2)
  - assessment of recreational fishing pressure
  - assessment of status of sea trout rivers and stocks
  - comparison of different management options;
- Evaluate completed restoration projects to identify success factors (4.2);

- Demonstrate efficient river restoration measures and implementation methods (through demonstration projects) (4.3);
- Develop a Baltic Toolbox for River Restoration to be used at the pan-Baltic level and by local, regional and national authorities. (4.4)

The following face to face meetings are planned under WP 4:

- Monitoring and assessment method workshop in Lithuania (by June 2018);
- Pan-Baltic meeting on river restoration and trout management (tentatively during period 6);
- Study visits to demonstration sites in Estonia, Latvia/Lithuania, Sweden and Poland (exact number to be determined).

#### 14. [Communication support for BALEX DELTA 2018, 2017-2019](#)

**Project Manager: Ms. Therese Larsson, Sweden**

**Communications Expert: Ms. Sanna Saari, HELCOM Secretariat**

The HELCOM BALEX DELTA exercise has been conducted annually for nearly 30 years. The exercise is organized as a practical exercise of the response capability and alarm procedures of the Baltic Sea countries. The exercises are hosted by the Baltic Sea coastal countries in alphabetical order.

BALEX DELTA 2018 is a two year EU funded (DG ECHO's Civil Protection Mechanism Exercise Programme) project, led by the Swedish Coast Guard, running from 1 May 2017 to 30 April 2019. The actual exercise will take place 27-30 August 2018 in the Karlskrona area, in Sweden. .

The first partner meeting of the project was held in May 2017 followed by a kick-off meeting in August 2017 and an initial planning conference in 2018. The project is steered by the Core Planning Team, which had two meetings in autumn 2017.

HELCOM is responsible for the publicity part of the project.

In 2017, within the publicity part of the project, a [workspace](#) in the HELCOM Meeting Portal was set up for sharing and archiving project documents. Also an official [web page](#) has been established containing most important information on the exercise and project, and will be updated regularly with latest news and project updates. The web page is intended as an information hub for participants of the exercise, as well as for others interested in oil response related issues. A brochure has been produced for sharing short information on the project and exercise and a first version of a communication plan has been drafted.

#### 15. [Advanced manure standards for sustainable nutrient management and reduced emissions \(Manure Standards\), 2017-2019](#)

**Project Manager: Ms. Susanna Kaasinen, HELCOM Secretariat**

Manure Standards is a two-year (10/2017–09/2019) project aiming to provide farmers, advisors, authorities and policy-makers enhanced capacity to govern and to turn manure use towards improved sustainability and resource-efficiency. The project is financed by Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme. Manure Standards is coordinated by Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke) and in addition to HELCOM it includes partners from 9 countries around the Baltic Sea.

The project has five work packages:

- WP1 Project Management and Administration
- WP 2 Guidelines for manure sampling and analysis
- WP 3 Guidelines for manure calculation systems
- WP 4 Impact assessment of implementing the new manure standards
- WP 5 Actions for implementing the new manure data on farms and in policies

HELCOM is leading work package 5. The 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting agreed to establish by 2016 national guidelines or standards for nutrient content in manure and develop by 2018 guidelines/recommendation on the use of such standards. The work package led by HELCOM aims at helping Contacting Parties to implement this commitment. HELCOM Agri group will also provide the link between the scientific results of the project and the authorities and policy makers as agreed in AGRI 3-2016.

The project kick-off meeting was held on 23-24 October 2017 in Helsinki. The project was presented and discussed in the AGRI 5-2017 meeting on 9-10 November 2017 in Helsinki. The first activities in the project include a series of national kick-off events to engage the stakeholders, comparing the calculation methods for manure nutrient content from Baltic Sea countries and finding pilot farms.

## 16. Completing management options in the Baltic Sea Region to reduce risk of invasive species introduction by shipping (COMPLETE), 2017-2020

**At HELCOM Secretariat: Ms. Marta Ruiz, Associate Professional Secretary**

COMPLETE is an EU INTERREG Baltic Sea Region project aimed at minimizing the introduction and spread of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens by shipping through the development of consistent and adaptive management strategies and tools for the Baltic Sea region by addressing both major vectors: ballast water and biofouling.

COMPLETE will deliver knowledge and tools to implement HELCOM's roadmap for regional implementation of the outstanding issues on the BWMC in the Baltic Sea and will also assist relevant authorities in implementing Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council, aiming to protect native biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The COMPLETE project to run for 3 years (2017-2020) consists of six working packages:

- WP1 Project Management and Administration
- WP2 Guidelines for surveillance and monitoring program of non-indigenous species
- WP3 Ballast water risk assessment and management systems
- WP4 Evidence-based options for biofouling management in the Baltic Sea Region
- WP5 Databases and user-friendly information support
- WP6 Stakeholder involvement and strategy development processes

HELCOM will lead Activity A 3.2: Advanced risk assessment tool under the HELCOM-OSPAR Joint Harmonised Procedure. Additionally, HELCOM will be involved in the following Activities (A):

- A 2.4: Integrated monitoring system of non-indigenous species introductions by shipping and other vectors;
- A 3.1: Target species selection criteria and risk assessments;
- A 5.1: Information system on non-indigenous species and harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens;
- A 6.2: Engaging stakeholders into development and use of project products;
- A 6.3: Roadmap proposal for harmonized biofouling management in the Baltic Sea Region.

Project partnership is formed by: Kotka Maritime Research Association (KMRA/FI) (Project Coordinator), Klaipėda University (KU/LT), Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), Finnish Environment Institute, Marine Research Centre (SYKE/FI), University of Gdansk (UG/PL), University of Helsinki, Department of Environmental Sciences (UH/FI), Chalmers University of Technology (CHALMERS/SE), Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH/DE), South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (XAMK/FI), University of Tartu (UTARTU/EE), Keep the Archipelago Tidy Association (KAT/FI) and the Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology (LIAE/LV).

Associated organizations represent shipping companies, port authorities, governmental bodies, NGOs, and research institutions from all Baltic Sea countries.

The Kick-off meeting of the project was held on 9-10 November, in Helsinki, Finland. Subsequently, an on-line meeting to discuss the progress of work was held (17 January 2018). It is envisaged that the project consortium meets physically on 25-26 April 2018 in Riga, Latvia.

## 17. Pan Baltic Scope, 2018-2019

PanBaltic SCOPE is a two-year project coordinated by the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, funded by EASME, and involves 12 main partners. The project brings together eight maritime spatial planning (MSP) authorities from seven HELCOM countries with the aim of developing a coherent national maritime spatial planning initiative in the Baltic Sea region, creating a lasting macro-regional mechanism for cross-border MSP cooperation.

The project will focus on cross-border collaboration and consultation to support national MSP processes, help advance the implementation of the ecosystem-based approach, encourage data sharing, and explore the integration of land-sea interactions into MSP actions. The project outcomes will offer support for the implementation of EU MSP directives, objectives defined in the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy, Blue economy initiatives, the EU2020 Strategy, the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, VASAB Long Term Perspective, and the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region (LTP). The project will also add to continued development of regional economic and social analyses in support of the ecosystem approach, as have been initiated in the State of the Baltic Sea report (HOLAS II).

Objectives include: building on previous MSP-related initiatives, establishment of a cross-border planning forum, facilitation of cross-border activities, development of approaches and tools to contribute to coherent MSP, careful integration of the ecosystem-based approach into MSP activities, clear examination of land-sea interactions, and opening a forum for sharing best practices and knowledge.

The Project is formed of five interlinked work packages:

- WP1.1 Cross-border collaboration and consultation to support national MSP processes;
- WP1.2 Advancing the implementation of the ecosystem-based approach and data sharing;
- WP1.3 Integrating land-sea interactions into MSP;
- WP2.1 Management and coordination;
- WP 3.1 Communication and dissemination.

The project will hold the internal kick-off meeting on 27-28 February 2018.

## 18. Operationalization of the nutrient reduction scheme follow-up system (MAI-CART OPER), 2015-2017

**Project implemented by: Mr. Bo Gustafsson, Baltic Nest Institute Sweden, in cooperation with Mr. Lars Moeslund Svendsen, Danish Centre for Environment and Energy Denmark**

The project has been implemented in accordance with the ToR and allocated resources. As far as only two thirds of the estimated project budget have been available only basic modules for operationalization of the work to follow up implementation of the HELCOM nutrient reduction scheme were developed, namely:

- queries to the PLC databases;
- supporting tool for filling gaps in waterborne inputs;
- establishing a data set of annual net input of N and P;
- statistical evaluations of trends and fulfilment;
- time-series graphics and tables outputs.

All developed modules have been tested on data compiled in the frame of PLC-6 project and utilized for implementation of the PLC-6 project tasks no documentation has been prepared. Developed modules were not integrated into software tools and technical documentation has not been elaborated.