



Document title	Securing consistent long-term management of the HELCOM indicator catalogue
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Background

The HELCOM indicators are a critical component of HELCOM work. They provide a mechanism for addressing the effectiveness of the measures put in place and for regular synthesising of common regional monitoring data into an evaluation of progress. Without the indicators, and the assessments of state and pressures they feed into, there is no way to address progress under the goals of policies such as the BSAP. Indicators can also be used to indicate status and advancement towards other commitments such as the SDG, as well as, for Contracting Parties who are also EU member states, support the national reporting under the MSFD.

At the start of indicator development within HELCOM the work took place via projects such as CORESET I and CORESET II, and has since been supported by other large regional projects (e.g. the EU co-financed SPICE project). However, the increase in the number of individual indicators, the establishment of associate HELCOM structures (e.g. numerous topic specific Expert Groups) and the approach for indicator development (e.g. application of lead country approach) has advanced significantly in the last 10 years. In addition the long term maintenance and management of indicators has now been formalized through the approval of the [HELCOM Indicator Manual](#).

The indicator work in HELCOM can roughly be divided into three parts, where the first constitutes the development and approval of indicators, the second the indicator evaluation and use of the evaluation results for assessment purposes, and the third constitutes the review, update, consolidation and further development of indicators, which takes place in the interim between assessments. Each of these phases has proven to be equally relevant and necessary in order to ensure a fully functioning and policy-levant catalogue of indicators. As a consequence of this, work with, or on, the indicators within HELCOM is now no longer tied to a specific internal project but is a continuous workflow, where projects, often several occurring simultaneously, are used to further specific work strands such as the development of an individual indicator. It is thus no longer considered realistic nor sustainable to continue management of the catalogue of HELCOM indicators at the HELCOM Secretariat on a project basis.

In line with the HELCOM indicator manual the Secretariat is to maintain the overall HELCOM indicator catalogue, including managing the associate processes and workflows (for further specification please see the [Manual](#)). This includes providing support and facilitating the work of the indicator leads, the relevant Expert and Working Groups and the Contracting Parties, as well as supporting the preparation and execution of major assessment processes such as HOLAS and PLC. All of the above tasks are currently being handled by the HELCOM Indicator Coordinator, hired under the HELCOM Indicators project.

In addition to the tasks already being handled under the umbrella of the position of indicator coordinator, there is a need to ensure that knowledge and expertise on the methodologies and tools for the integrated

assessments associated with the indicators is available at the Secretariat long term. This is a task which until now has not been directly housed under any position, but which has become progressively more relevant as the growing number of indicators increases the complexity of the integrated assessments, and as the automation of the tools improves.

In relation to the processes outlined above, and to secure the level of quality and the policy relevance of the indicator work also in the future, there is a need to ensure centralized, consistent, and long-term management of the indicators at the HELCOM Secretariat. In light of the periodic changes of Professional Secretaries overseeing the various assessment processes, the value of securing institutional memory and consistent approaches is even higher. Such retention of knowledge assists in ensuring smooth management of indicators and safeguarding technical and policy understanding to support the planning and execution of future assessments.

It is thus the proposal of the Executive Secretary to shift the current position of indicator coordinator from project based to an initial 4-year contract, in practice shifting the position to Secretariat General Staff category, from January 2022, at the end of the current HELCOM Indicator project. This would secure the vital expertise of the current indicator coordinator for the full duration of HOLAS III as well as the post-process review. In addition, to appropriately reflect the broader tasks and the increased responsibility of the position (i.e. functioning as the Secretariat representative responsible for the maintenance and development of the integrated assessment tools), it is proposed that the title be changed from coordinator to manager.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to approve the shift of the financing of the position of HELCOM Indicator Coordinator from project based to an initial 4-year contract, in practice shifting the position to Secretariat General Staff category, as well as shift the title to Indicator Manager.