



Notes from the HELCOM BSAP UP workshop on biodiversity, including extraction of species and spatial measures, for the consideration of proposed new actions (HELCOM BSAP UP WS-BIO 2020), online, 31 August – 2 September 2020

Table of contents

Agenda Item 1 Introduction .....	2
Agenda Item 2 Results of the prior analyses .....	2
Agenda Item 3 Evaluation of the synopses .....	3
Agenda Item 4 Conclusions .....	3
Annex 1. List of participants .....	7
Annex 2. Evaluation of the synopses on spatial conservation (Excel table)	
Annex 3. Evaluation of the synopses on conservation and restoration of species (Excel table)	
Annex 4. Evaluation of the synopses on restoration of habitats (Excel table)	
Annex 5. Evaluation of the synopses on mapping and monitoring (Excel table)	
Annex 6. Evaluation of the synopses on managing human activities (Excel table)	
Annex 7. Evaluation of the synopses on fisheries (Excel table)	

## Notes from the HELCOM BSAP UP workshop on biodiversity, including extraction of species and spatial measures, for the consideration of proposed new actions (HELCOM BSAP UP WS-BIO 2020), online, 31 August – 2 September 2020

### Agenda Item 1 Introduction

1.1 The HELCOM BSAP UP workshop on biodiversity, including extraction of species and spatial measures, for the consideration of proposed new actions (HELCOM BSAP UP WS-BIO 2020) was held online on 31 August – 2 September 2020.

1.2 All Contracting Parties, except for EU and Lithuania, as well as Observers the Baltic Sea Advisory Council, Coalition Clean Baltic, OSPAR Commission and WWF, took part in the workshop. The list of participants is contained in **Annex 1**. The plenary of the Workshop was moderated by Ms. Marie-Louise Krawack and Mr. Norbert Häubner, Co-Chairs of State & Conservation Working Group.

1.3 The HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan adopted in 2007 is currently being updated and the updated BSAP is to be adopted in autumn 2021. To support the selection of new measures and actions for the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan, an invitation to submit synopses on potential new HELCOM actions was put forward in spring 2019 to the Contracting Parties, HELCOM subsidiary bodies, international projects and HELCOM Observers. The aim of the workshop was to evaluate proposed new actions for the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan (Documents 1-1, 1-2 and 1-3, **Presentation 1**).

### Agenda Item 2 Results of the prior analyses

2.1 The Workshop took note of the results of the technical review of synopses conducted by HELCOM Working Groups (Document 2-1, 2-1-Rev.1, 2-1-Rev.2, 2-1-Rev.3, 2-1-Rev.4, 2-1-Att.1, 2-1-Att.1-Rev.1., 2-1-Att.1-Rev.2, 2-1-Att.1-Rev.3, 2-1-Att.1-Rev.4) and the information on which element of the DPSIR (activities, pressures, or state components) the proposed action is targeting.

2.2 The Workshop took note of the results of the sufficiency of measures (SOM) analysis for birds, mammals, benthic habitats and fish (Document 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-5-Rev.1, 2-6, 2-6-Rev.1, **Presentation 2**).

2.3 The Workshop discussed details regarding the SOM analysis and noted inter alia that the analysis provides supporting information for evaluating proposed new actions. It was noted that the SOM analysis is a first attempt to quantify the effects of existing measures on achieving objectives. The Workshop further noted that an opportunity to validate the SOM analysis results by correspondence will be provided to experts and Working Groups during September 2020.

2.4 The Workshop took note that the biodiversity related analyses are all expert-based and that for several topics no topic team has been available to assist the work. The Workshop took note that several of the biodiversity related analyses are based on a comparatively low amount of input data due to low number of responses to the expert surveys.

2.5 The Workshop took note of clarification provided by the Secretariat regarding how the species of birds included in the analysis have been selected. The species were chosen based on regional coverage and representative traits.

2.6 The Workshop noted some unexpected results stemming from the analysis on mammals and birds.

2.7 The Workshop took note that some of the of the results from the biodiversity related topics are consequence of a variety of possible factors, including low number of contributing experts which increases the weight of an individual response, geographic variation in the perception of good status, experts using a

more integrated definition of GES than that provided in the surveys (only abundance), and experts' understanding of good state deviating from the GES threshold.

2.8 The Workshop invited EG MAMA to review the results for marine mammals and, if possible, provide some context to inform the interpretation of the results.

2.9 The Workshop took note of information on the effectiveness of the proposed new measures, based on the effectiveness data collected for the SOM analysis, and from synopses, literature reviews and project outputs provided by the ACTION project (Document 2-2, 2-2-Att.1).

### Agenda Item 3 Evaluation of the synopses

3.1 The Workshop took note of the Criteria for evaluation of new actions' that have been developed by the SOM Platform and endorsed by the Gear Group, and the guidance for their implementation (Document 3-1, **Presentation 3**).

3.2 The Workshop noted that, in the evaluation, the focus is on the environmental effectiveness of the proposed new actions while political and economic aspects will be considered at a later stage.

3.3 The Workshop was divided into six breakout groups and invited to discuss the proposals for new actions and evaluate them based on the criteria.

3.4 As part of the evaluation, the participants were invited to express their individual expert views on supporting and prioritization of proposed measures through a voting procedure.

3.5 The Workshop discussed the proposals for new actions and evaluated them based on the criteria as included in **Annexes 2-7**.

### Agenda Item 4 Conclusions

4.1 The Workshop encouraged Contracting Parties and Observers to provide detailed proposals related to amending and combining synopses, or addressing identified gaps, where indicated by the Workshop and that these should be submitted to the HELCOM Secretariat ([susanna.kaasinen@helcom.fi](mailto:susanna.kaasinen@helcom.fi)) at their earliest convenience but no later than 28 September 2020.

4.2 The Workshop noted that no new assessment of effectiveness will be conducted for those proposals already covered by the workshop.

4.3 The Workshop further noted that for new proposals prepared in response to identified gaps, the technical review and the effectiveness evaluation will be conducted by the respective Working Groups.

#### 1) *Spatial conservation*

4.4 The Workshop recognized that there is a need to view and consider the actions under spatial conservation jointly, to better communicate the internal relationship between the actions including linking steps towards measure and measures. The Workshop invited the Secretariat to consider this forward.

4.5 The Workshop acknowledged that while it is of high importance to have quantified targets for conservation measures (e.g. spatial coverage), the core of the conservation actions should be the ecological relevance (and thus their contribution to improved state) of the protected areas and the network as a whole.

4.6 The Workshop considered possible gaps in the existing and proposed measures for the updated of the BSAP and the following possible gaps were lifted:

- the need for more concrete quantitative targets for spatial coverage of no-take zones
- management is largely not considered in the proposals for new measures, especially spatial management of biodiversity outside of MPAs (spatial/temporal conservation measures, e.g. seasonal closures, limiting of harmful activities etc.) is of high importance.
- concrete actions regarding enforcement of spatial conservation targets.

- spatial scales of MPA designation.
- for quantitative metrics: relative increase within categories rather than overall targets?
- elaborate on the outreach aspect of MPA designation (private landowners etc.)

## 2) *Conservation/restoration of species*

4.7 The Workshop concluded that all proposed synopses were supported to be included as part of the updated BSAP, either as separate or as merged actions.

4.8 The Workshop suggested merging all actions related to eel as a general “eel package” rather than including the actions as stand-alone measures. The Workshop further suggested to merge the bird synopses *Identify and limit the negative effects on migratory birds from wind and wave energy production at sea* and *Produce sensitivity maps for threatened wintering and breeding bird species according to the HELCOM Red List 2013 for the whole Baltic Sea region* and carried out the evaluation to these two actions as one merged action. The Workshop also pointed out that ‘Step towards measure’ would be a better category for the latter rather than ‘Monitoring/Data/Assessment’. The Workshop highlighted the importance of not losing relevant information if/when different synopses would be merged.

4.9 The synopsis *Address and protect all biogenic structures* was considered as difficult to assess, due to several gaps in the proposal. The Workshop suggested that this measure would be part of a wider set of measures for MPAs.

## 3) *Restoration of habitats*

4.10 The Workshop concluded that, while the number of proposed restoration measures for the updated BSAP are high, they are to be first considered individually, and once agreement on which measures to include in the updated BSAP has been reached these measures could be merged or included under a broader umbrella.

4.11 The Workshop considered that measures and approaches related to habitat restoration could possibly be developed into a more comprehensive document e.g. an action plan.

4.12 The Workshop highlighted that to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of habitat restoration measures it is highly relevant to account for synergistic effects.

4.13 The Workshop acknowledged that the effectiveness of many habitat restoration measures is highly dependent on an overall improvement in environmental status (e.g. improved water quality).

4.14 The Workshop highlighted the difference between passive recovery (i.e. exclusion of harmful human activities) and active restoration (construction or modification of habitat) and stressed that the former is more broadly applicable while the latter can have a very large effect but this effect is most often local in nature.

4.15 The Workshop concluded that many of the proposed measures require further information and testing before large scale implementation can be considered and proposed that relevant aspects under such proposals should be included in the annex of the science agenda.

4.16 The Workshop did not finalize the work on all proposed new measures and agreed to continue the work in an intersessional session of the breakout group, with the intention of finalising the assessment of effectiveness prior to the STATE&CONSERVATION 13-2020 meeting.

## 4) *Mapping and monitoring*

4.17 The Workshop highlighted that, overall, the consideration of foodwebs is weak in the BSAP and that this is a highly relevant aspect for status assessment.

4.18 The Workshop suggested that in order to strengthen the section on monitoring in the updated BSAP needs and gaps could be sources from the process of reviewing the national monitoring programs under the update of Article 11 under the MSFD. A first step would be to collate the information on monitoring gaps from the respective countries and identify any shared gaps, as these might benefit from a regional approach.

#### 5) Managing human activities

4.19 The Workshop considered possible gaps in the existing and proposed measures for the updated of the BSAP and the following possible gaps were lifted:

- Ecosystem based management (EBM): ways forward to ensure ecosystem-based management of areas outside of protected areas? It was recognised that while MSP is an important part of the EBM, EBM is a bigger broader concept and needs a dedicated management platform. Implementation of EBM will likely require not only displacement of human activities, but that activities are actual limited. The following gaps all related to the implementation of EBM.
- Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA): what is the actual effect of EIA results on project approval rates?
- Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA): Dedicated work to support the used of assessment of cumulative impacts in management and in MSP.
- Recreational fisheries: the need for consistent collection and reporting on information on catches and effort as well as loss of recreational fisheries gear
- Loss and disturbance to seabed: there is a lack of concrete measures limiting direct pressures to seabed habitats including those from bottom touching gear.

#### 6) Fisheries

4.20 The Workshop highlighted the need for clear and concise titles for all the actions.

4.21 The Workshop emphasised the need to consider the seven coastal fish measures as a package and consequently all related three measures (no take zones, seasonal closures and catch regulations) were evaluated together as a package (results are available under the synopsis 3. *A set of 7 measures for coastal fish: Coastal fish measure 5. Seasonal closures*).

4.22 The Workshop highlighted the importance of addressing all European eel related actions as a package.

4.23 The Workshop noted that merging actions 14 *Collect representative data on by-catch of birds, mammals and non-targeted fish species on species level* and 15 *Agree to collect fisheries data on both large and small-scale vessels* should be considered.

4.24 The Workshop emphasised that action 8 *Mandatory use of acoustic deterrent devices or other effective mitigation measures to minimize bycatch of the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*)* should be considered as a package together with measures on alternative gear development and closed areas (MPA actions).

4.25 The Workshop was of the opinion that the following synopsis would still benefit from clarification/further editing:

7. National environmental permitting authorities to take into account possible impacts on weak migratory fish stocks, particularly salmon, as recognized by ICES or nationally, and ow this may compromise the ability to reach agreed river specific fish populations targets

8. Mandatory use of acoustic deterrent devices or other effective mitigation measures to minimize bycatch of the Baltic Sea harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*)

10. Ensure effective implementation of the Landing Obligation (LO) as required by the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)

12. Development of strategies for preventing fishing gear loss in the Baltic Sea by analysing the fishing strategic context and available options for fishing gear marking

4.26 The Workshop noted that throughout the process of considering synopses, proposals have been made regarding the possible combination or merging of actions that address a related topic. It was noted that doing so might potentially create new gaps, if elements of combined proposals are left out.

4.27 The Workshop noted that CCB has recognized gaps related to measures on salmon and specifically salmon specific upstream measures for individual rivers. The Workshop welcomed the intention by CCB to submit a document in this regard to FISH 12-2020.

4.28 The Workshop noted that the lack of data for coastal fish is another gap that may need to be addressed.

4.29 The Workshop noted that FISH 12-2020 should carry out a further gap analysis and that coordination between the relevant HELCOM Working Groups is important in ensuring that all gaps are addressed.

4.30 The Workshop noted a question regarding the possibilities of considering possible gaps further in 2021 after HOD 59-2020 has decided on the actions to be included in the updated BSAP and when a more holistic assessment of the draft BSAP is possible.

## Annex 1. List of participants

Name	Representing	Name of organization	Email address	Breakout groups					
				1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Marie-Louise Krawack</b>	Denmark	Ministry of Environment and Food	makra@mfvm.dk	X		X	X		
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