



Document title	'State of the Baltic Sea' report overview and outline
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Background

The Project for Developing the Second Holistic Assessment of Ecosystem Health in the Baltic Sea (HOLAS II) runs from December 2014 to June 2018. The project will assess the overall environmental status of the Baltic Sea and its pressures, and evaluate progress in relation to the goals of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP). It will be developed so that it can also be used by the Contracting Parties also being EU Member States in the reporting under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). The work of HOLAS II is guided by the HOLAS II core team with representation from the Contracting Parties and the European Commission.

The implementation of the biodiversity assessment is carried out under the HELCOM SPICE project: 'Implementation and development of key components for the assessment of Status, Pressures and Impacts, and Social and Economic evaluation in the Baltic Sea marine region'. The project is co-financed by the EU¹ and runs from January-December 2017.

The biodiversity assessment has been developed under the HELCOM BalticBOOST project and has been guided by the previous workshops [HELCOM HOLAS II Biodiv 1-2015](#), [HELCOM BalticBOOST Biodiv WS 1-2016](#), and [HELCOM BalticBOOST Biodiv WS 2-2106](#). HELCOM Heads of Delegation endorsed the methodology for assessing biodiversity in HOLAS II in December 2016 (HOD 51-2016). This HELCOM workshop is carried out under the SPICE project.

This document contains

- An overview of planned HOLAS II reports
- The table of contents of the HOLAS II Summary report: "State of the Baltic Sea"
- An outline of contents for the chapter on Biodiversity in the Summary report

Actions

Participants are invited to

- familiarize with the content prior to the workshop and use it as a general framing for meeting the aims of the workshop

¹ under the call "Implementation of the Second Cycle of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive: achieving coherent, coordinated and consistent updates of the determinations of Good Environmental Status, initial assessments and environmental targets" (DG ENV/MSFD Second Cycle/2016)

Overview of planned HOLAS II reports

Results from the HOLAS II project are made available at different levels of detail, and shows HOLAS II outputs as well as contributions of several HELCOM projects/networks/expert groups supporting HOLAS II.

- At the lower level the most detailed information is made available, i.e. core indicator reports and fact sheets, to provide a specific understanding how the data and indicator evaluations going into the HOLAS II assessment were derived. The core indicator reports also give information on underlying assessment logic and approaches at indicator level.
- The middle level gives method descriptions on the integrated and cumulative results, e.g. biodiversity assessment or an assessment of cumulative impacts. This is provided as supplementary information to the summary report.
- The overarching level is a summary report. This report provides key messages from all parts covered by the HOLAS II assessment. It also includes results from other HELCOM assessments as relevant.

All results will be made available online as web-material and as pdfs, and the summary report will also be printed.



HOLAS II Publications

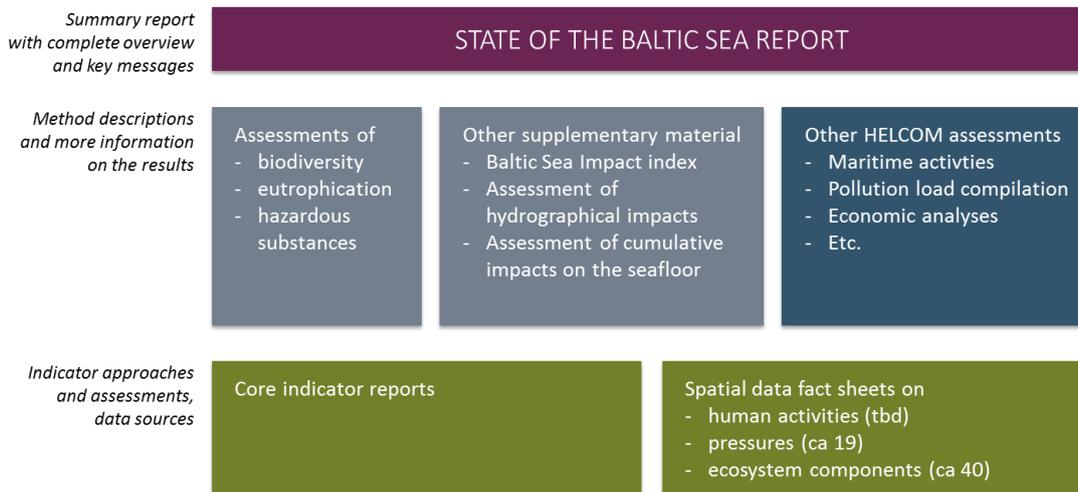


Figure: Overview of HOLAS II publications at different levels of detail. Grey= HOLAS II supplementary reports.

Summary report

The summary report will have circa 90 pages and will give full coverage of the components of the HOLAS II assessments, with a focus on key messages and conclusions. It should be possible to read the summary report in order to get a full overview about the results of the assessments and the conclusions. The summary report will not have details on assessment methods or data sources, and this information will be given in other form (see below).

The manuscript for the Summary report is written by the HELCOM Secretariat and the HOLAS II Core team, and is advised by regional experts on the different themes. The manuscript in progress will be considered by HOLAS II 7-2017 on 4-6 April, in order to agree on the technical information to be included. The manuscript

of the summary report will be submitted for approval by State and Conservation 6-2017 on 15-19 May (Document deadline 24 April) and for endorsement by the Helcom Heads of Delegation 52-2017 on 21-22 June (Document deadline 30 May).

A first version of the summary report will be made publicly available by June 2017. A web-site is under development where results and downloadable pdf files are presented. The final version of the report will be published by June 2018, as a printed report and a downloadable pdf. For the final version, data from 2016 will be included so that the assessment period covered by HOLAS II is 2011-2016. However, no new themes of information will be added. In addition, the following types of publications are planned:

Supplementary material

Supplementary material will be published in parallel with the summary report. The supplementary material will reflect the same results as presented in the summary report, however more details on the results can be presented. The supplementary report also give information on the assessment methods, data and indicators used. The more detailed results can for example be additional graphs or zoomed-in results for certain geographic areas. The main purpose of the supplementary material is to provide information on how the assessments have been carried out from a more technical perspective in order to provide full transparency on the methods and data used.

Tentative titles of the planned supplementary material
Integrated assessment of biodiversity in the Baltic Sea
Integrated assessment of eutrophication in the Baltic Sea
Integrated assessment of hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea
Cumulative impact assessment for the Baltic Sea
Hydrographical impacts in the Baltic Sea
Cumulative impacts on the seafloor in the Baltic Sea

Supporting material

The supporting material consists of other HELCOM products that contribute to the work of HOLAS II, recognizing the fact that the HOLAS II assessment builds on data and indicators produced by a large number of projects, expert groups and networks. Selected material from these sources, e.g. core indicator reports, will be reflected in the summary report when directly applicable for this purpose, and the original sources will be referred to for more detailed information on methodologies, indicator descriptions and underlying data. Due to the fact that many of these reports and fact sheets are periodically updated as part of the HELCOM monitoring and assessment strategy, the versions that are used in HOLAS II will be saved together with the other HOLAS II assessment products so that they can be distinguishable and can be reached from the same web page.

The basis for the supporting material is the core indicator reports and spatial data fact sheets. Other key material used are the forthcoming Maritime assessment, Pollution Load Compilation, and the TAPAS Economic and Social analyses reports.

Web pages

In parallel with the publication of the summary report, a web page will present key messages from HOLAS II directed towards different user groups. The web page will also collect all supplementary material as well as supporting material so that they can be easily downloaded in one page, and give links to databases and other data product of relevance.

Table of contents of Summary report: “State of the Baltic Sea”

A more detailed overall outline of the summary report is available in the Outcome of HOLAS II 6E-2017. A more detailed outline of planned sections concerning biodiversity is given below to show the framing of this workshop.

- All titles are working titles and could be changes during the writing process but are included here to be as descriptive as possible
- Numbers in brackets give the indicative number of words for each section (these have been added after HOLAS II 6E). In addition, each section will have key information in maps, figures, tables and/or illustrations

This workshop will focus on results from the status assessment of biodiversity, as given in **Document 3**.

- 0. Summary (1600)**
- 1. Introduction (1600)**
- 2. How the assessment was achieved (“methods”, 600)**
- 3. Human activities and the environment (2600)**
- 4. Pressures on the Baltic Sea**
 - 4.1. Non-indigenous species (1000)**
 - 4.2. Fishing and hunting (2000)**
 - 4.3. Eutrophication (2700)**
 - 4.4. Hazardous substances (3000)**
 - 4.5. Seabed habitat loss and disturbance (800)**
 - 4.6. Hydrographical impacts (400)**
 - 4.7. Marine litter (800)**
 - 4.8. Underwater noise (1000)**
 - 4.9. Cumulative spatial distribution of pressures (800)**
- 5. Biodiversity and food webs**
 - 5.1. Introduction to Baltic Sea biodiversity (800)**
 - 5.2. Benthic habitats (800)**
 - 5.3. Pelagic habitats (800)**
 - 5.4. Fish (1600)**
 - 5.5. Marine mammals (800)**
 - 5.6. Sea birds (800)**
 - 5.7. Summary of results from a food web perspective (800)**
- 6. Cumulative impacts in the marine environment (2200)**
- 7. Will measures so far take us to good status? (1000)**
- 8. Conclusions and future outlook (1200)**

More detailed content of the chapter on Biodiversity in the Summary report

Summary text on biodiversity

- What is the overall status of key species and habitats in the Baltic Sea?
- Is the situation improving or getting worse? (when possible to say based on older data)
- What are the differences between different sub-basins of the Baltic Sea?

5.1 “Introduction to Baltic Sea biodiversity” (800 words)

- species distribution and species composition in the Baltic Sea (to the extent that it does not duplicate information from chapter 1)
- overview information of habitat types including threatened habitats
- overview information on protection status and threatened species
- introduction to the ecosystem components addressed below, to explain the core indicators and their purpose

5.2 Benthic habitats (800 words)

- Results from integrated assessment using the BEAT tool
- Results at indicator level
- Evaluation including temporal aspects, as relevant

5.3 Pelagic habitats (800 words)

- Results from integrated assessment using the BEAT tool
- Results at indicator level
- Evaluation including temporal aspects, as relevant

5.4 Fish (1600 words)

- Results from integrated assessment using the BEAT tool
- Results at indicator level, including relevant ICES indicators
- Evaluation including temporal aspects, as relevant

5.5. Marine mammals (800 words)

- Results from integrated assessment using the BEAT tool
- Results at indicator level
- Evaluation including temporal aspects, as relevant

5.6 Sea birds (800 words)

- Results from integrated assessment using the BEAT tool
- Results at indicator level
- Evaluation including temporal aspects, as relevant

5.7 Summary of results from a food web perspective (800 words)

- Mainly based on illustration that summarizes the information above
- Reflection on key ecosystem components in the Baltic Sea food web, compared to the marine seas
- Text summarizing the status of different ecosystem components based on the more detailed information above with evaluation of the results from a food web perspective
- Reflection on changes in the health of Baltic Sea key organisms, showing also the current development stage of indicators on individual health and condition for different species

