

Joint HELCOM/OSPAR Task Group on Ballast Water Management Convention Exemptions

Eighth Meeting

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Background

The major role of shipping in the introduction of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens (HAOPs) remains a problem with potential adverse consequences for the environment, economy and human health. To address this problem, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ship's Ballast Water and Sediments (BWMC 2004) and, more recently, the Guidelines for the Control and Management of Ships' Biofouling to Minimize the Transfer of Invasive Aquatic Species (2011). At the regional level, the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (2007) has set the ecological objective 'No introductions of alien species from ships'.

The management of both, ballast water and biofouling of ships is a complex task. The BWMC entered into force on 8th of September 2017 and numerous measures will have to be taken by port state administrations and ship owners to effectively implement the convention. The objective here is to achieve a regionally harmonized implementation of the BWMC.

The implementation of the IMO Biofouling Guidelines allows for a 'win-win' solution, i.e. the absence of biofouling reduces the risk of potential HAOP introductions and increases the ships' performance due to reduced fuel consumption and emissions at the same time. But at the same time, chemical pollution by antifouling paints should be prevented.

COMPLETE is aimed at tackling gaps and proposing operational frameworks and tools for a harmonized implementation of the BWMC, the IMO Biofouling Guidelines, as well as the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), and the development of a common Baltic Sea Region biofouling management strategy.

The target groups are national ministries and agencies of transport and environment; ship owners and their associations; Baltic Sea ports and coastal municipalities; shipyards; marinas and boating associations; HELCOM and its contracting parties. The associated project partners represent the key target groups benefiting from the project outputs.

This document provides an overview of the project, which Kick off meeting will be held on 9-10 November in Helsinki, Finland.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information on the project.

COMPLETE – a new Interreg Project in the Baltic Sea region (01.10.2017-30.09.2020)

COMPLETE -"Completing management options in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) to reduce risk of invasive species introduction by shipping", EU INTERREG Baltic Sea Region, 01.10.2017-30.09.2020.

Aims of the project

COMPLETE is 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. It thereby directly addresses the objective "No introductions of alien species from ships" of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and the Descriptor 2 of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) "NIS introduced as a result of human activities are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystem". With respect to biofouling, not only the risk of species introduction is considered but also the risk of release of hazardous substances from antifouling.

COMPLETE will deliver knowledge and tools to implement HELCOM's new roadmap for regional implementation of the outstanding issues on the BWMC in the Baltic Sea (Outcome of HOD 51-2016, para.6.103) 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.

By addressing key challenges of the BSR, the ultimate goal of the project is to develop operational frameworks and provide user-oriented tools, in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders, in order to make shipping more environmentally friendly.

Challenges concerning the implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention (BWMC) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) that are addressed within the project are:

- Non-indigenous species (NIS) monitoring and surveillance for MSFD and BWMC
- Early warning tools and procedures
- Regional database and information exchange / synergies between MSFD and BWMC
- Update of risk assessment within the HELCOM/OSPAR Joint Harmonized Procedure (JHP)
- Enforcement of the BWMC, decision support, compliance monitoring, training

Concerning biofouling, COMPLETE aims at closing the following gaps:

- Limited information on legal aspects in the BSR, national regulations of biofouling aspects like e.g. cleaning of ship hulls, implementation of EU regulations, etc.
- Limited information on the implementation of the IMO Biofouling Guidelines
- Limited knowledge on antifouling practices and procedures
- Lack of information on common cleaning procedures and facilities
- Lack of cost-efficiency analysis
- Lack of information on quantities of biofouling waste and its handling procedures
- Lack of information on the role of leisure boats and their trailers in primary introductions and secondary spread of NIS

In addition to a review on best practices worldwide and the assessment of their applicability in the BSR, the results of the project may serve as a basis for the development of the above mentioned Baltic Sea Region biofouling management strategy.

Project work packages (WPs)

COMPLETE consists of six work packages:

WP1 Project Management and Administration

WP2 Guidelines for surveillance and monitoring program of non-indigenous species

- Selecting innovative tools for detection of target harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens
- Biofouling assessment protocol for leisure boats
- Assessment of overall biofouling potential and areas of risk
- Integrated monitoring system of non-indigenous species introductions by shipping and other vectors

WP3 Ballast water risk assessment and management systems

- Target species selection criteria and risk assessments
- Advanced risk assessment tool under the HELCOM-OSPAR Joint Harmonized Procedure
- Delivering the regionally harmonized fully operational early warning system
- Decision support system for the Baltic Sea ballast water management
- Training local authorities for the Ballast Water Management Convention

WP4 Evidence-based options for biofouling management in the Baltic Sea Region

- National biofouling regulations, cleaning procedures and facilities
- Catalogue of best practices for biofouling management from within and outside the BSR
- Guidance on antifouling systems, cost-efficiency evaluation
- Benefits of biofouling management on ship speed, fuel consumption and emissions

WP5 Databases and user-friendly information support

- Information system on non-indigenous species and harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens
- Decision support tool for selection of optimal antifouling system and cleaning options
- Interactive user-friendly map on hull cleaning services

WP6 Stakeholder involvement and strategy development processes

- Establishing network of main stakeholders
- Engaging stakeholders into development and use of project products
- Roadmap proposal for harmonized biofouling management in the Baltic Sea Region

Project partners

Project partnership is formed by Kotka Maritime Research Association (KMRA/FI), 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), Environmental Development Association (EDA/LV), Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH/DE), South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (XAMK/FI), University of Tartu (UTARTU/EE), and Keep the Archipelago Tidy Association (KAT/FI). Associated organizations represent shipping companies, port authorities, governmental bodies, NGOs, and research institutions from all Baltic Sea countries.

Project partners have long-term expertise and know-how in innovative solutions for shipping, risk assessment and management systems, surveillance and monitoring. Participation of HELCOM as a full project partner will ensure involvement of relevant institutions from all Baltic Sea countries, harmonizing implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention and elaboration of the Baltic Sea Region biofouling management strategy. The dialog with stakeholders linked with the scientific potential existing in the Baltic Sea region, will be established through an Advisory Board.

Interested parties and stakeholders who are so far not involved in the project are invited to get in contact with the lead partner.

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Further information to be available: www.completeproject.eu