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<b>Document title</b>	Proposal for action on MSP and MPAs
<b>Code</b>	6-1
<b>Category</b>	DEC
<b>Agenda Item</b>	6 - Planning future work and a new Work Plan
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## Background

This document contains a proposal for a new action to consider Marine Protected Areas in Maritime Spatial Planning and vice versa.

The proposal was prepared by State and Conservation Working Group within a coordination process of regional and national measures initiated by the HELCOM Group on the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (Gear).

The Gear coordination process has aimed at 1) coordinating preparation of national programmes of measures (PoMs), for HELCOM countries being EU member states under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, 2) suggesting possible future joint actions that are still needed within HELCOM based on possible common elements in the national PoMs. Overall, ten topics have been addressed, ranging from inputs of nutrients, marine litter and underwater noise to accidental pollution and nature conservation measures, etc. Joint documentation of regional coordination of Programmes of Measures in the Baltic Sea Area is being prepared to capture this coordination process.

A workshop was held on 28 October 2015 in Warsaw, Poland, to further develop the actions still needed, including the one presented in this document.

The proposed action was presented to HOD 49-2015, pointing out that the next meeting of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG could consider the action.

The HOD Meeting agreed on the action, taking note of a formal study reservation by Germany.

## Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the proposal for the activity on MPAs and MSP.

**ACTION: How to consider MPAs in Maritime Spatial Planning and vice versa?****Background information:**

*The Ecosystem approach provides guiding principles for Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP). MSP is to consider any restrictions and regulations to MPAs provided through MPA management plans. Some activities are however allowed within MPAs, while conservation objectives may be affected by activities causing pressure outside the MPAs. Thus, MPA/MSP interaction is not delimited by the MPA borders and there is a need to consider activities both inside and outside MPAs in the MSP context and vice versa.*

*MPAs will be properly taken into account in MSPs and vice versa contributing to the application of HELCOM-VASAB Regional broad scale regional MSP principles.*

**Proposed timetable:** *The action could start in 2016. Tentatively development of regional guidelines could take up to 3 years.*

**Possible steps for implementation:**

- 1) *Contracting Parties in HELCOM VASAB MSP WG could be invited to inform on how MPAs have been considered so far in national MSP plans as well as any background information already compiled by the group with a view to sharing information with State and Conservation.*
- 2) *set up a workshop or back-to-back meeting with State and Conservation and HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group to discuss how the action can be jointly taken forward.*

*The workshop could explore options for how to acknowledge MPAs in MSP and vice versa (possible options are protocol/guidance, amended workplans, ad hoc meetings etc.*

*In the longer-term some form of joint regional guidelines could tentatively be developed.*

The action is related to:

- recommendation I) in HELCOM Recommendation 35/1 on HELCOM MPAs “include HELCOM MPAs as areas of particular ecological significance in coastal and maritime spatial planning processes and incorporate their management provisions in spatial plans and Integrated Marine and Coastal Management Strategies, respectively“
- HELCOM-VASAB Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea area.

This proposal stems from the State and Conservation WG; HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group has not yet been consulted.

Scope for coordination with OSPAR in short-term: yes, OSPAR could be invited to join