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Agenda Item	2- Matters arising from other HELCOM and VASAB work
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Background

This document contains extracts from the HELCOM 38-2017, HELCOM HOD 51-2016, STATE&CONSERVATION 5-2016, FISH 5-2016, GEAR 15-2016, PRESSURE 6-2017 and the 7th Meeting of the Project for the development of the second holistic assessment of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS II 7-2017).

The agreements achieved at these meetings have further been discussed and developed at a number of project meetings and workshops:

- Workshop on the HOLAS II eutrophication assessment (HELCOM SPICE Eutro WS 1-2017)
- Workshop on the HOLAS II hazardous substances assessment (HELCOM SPICE HZ WS 1-2017)
- Workshop on the pressure and impact assessment (HELCOM SPICE BSII WS 1-2017)
- Workshop on the HOLAS II Economic and social analyses (HOLAS II ESA WS 2-2017).

The complete outcomes are available in the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#).

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note and make use of the presented information as appropriate.

Information on the outcomes of recent HELCOM meetings

HELCOM 38-2017

High-level segment with a focus on ocean-related Sustainable Development Goals

2.4 In their debate, the high-level representatives referred to the upcoming HELCOM Ministerial Meeting and stressed the importance of taking concrete steps to:

- Plan for renewal of the BSAP in a both ambitious and realistic way with the view that the next HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in 2018 would consider embarking on a renewal process;
- Timely implement the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, consider a ban of microplastics in cosmetic products by the Baltic Sea countries with a timeframe of three years and take other concrete measures on e.g. reducing use of plastic bags, recycling of plastics, and management of storm water;
- Fill in data and knowledge gaps, in particular for marine litter, e.g. on rainwater, utilizing the results of the upcoming studies;
- Utilize the momentum of G7 and G20 processes and within EU on a new Plastic Strategy to address the problem of marine litter;
- Implement HELCOM Recommendation 37/3 on sustainable aquaculture;
- Make the issue of climate change more prominent in HELCOM work, because it affects especially acidification and regional targets;
- Investigate the effectiveness of e.g. mussels farming in removing nutrients from the sea;
- Ensure closer cooperation between HELCOM and other organisations such as Baltfish in the field of fisheries and environment;
- Engage municipalities and other local actors more closely to implementing the BSAP commitments, which could be addressed intersessionally by the Contracting Parties prior to the SDG 14 Conference to formulate a possible voluntary HELCOM commitment to be registered at the Conference;
- Ensure strengthened cooperation with sectorial organisations including in the field of agriculture;
- Further engage HELCOM observers, including private sector, in practical work and new forms of cooperation building on positive experience in HELCOM work such as within clean shipping;
- Use research and innovative approaches, e.g. generated within BONUS, in developing new solutions and techniques to address problems and translate them into policies;
- Utilize the potential for economic growth in efforts to restore the status of the marine environment;
- Engage other regional organisations including Council of the Baltic Sea States and use the potential of the existing initiatives within the Baltic Sea region such as the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region for enhanced cooperation and coordination for strengthened BSAP implementation;
- Identify how to enhance cooperation with regional organisations also outside the Baltic Sea region, especially OSPAR and other regional seas organisations and the Arctic Council;
- Continue the concrete cooperation on HELCOM hot spots, with the aim to eliminate the remaining hot spots, including further joint efforts to remedy the Krasnyi Bor toxic waste landfill with the involvement of NEFCO and other partners;
- Work on enhancing public awareness and education issues.

Next HELCOM Ministerial Meeting

3.1 The Meeting took note of the information by the European Union on possible dates for the next HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in 2018 and supported that the meeting would be organized on 6 March 2018 back-to-back with the EU Environment Council in Brussels. The Meeting invited EU to confirm the possibility to organize the Ministerial Meeting on this concrete date.

3.2 The Meeting decided to organize a regular HELCOM meeting in 2018 back-to-back to the Ministerial Meeting.

3.3 The Meeting exchanged views on the Ministerial Meeting and took note that the Secretariat will circulate a working document on the issues raised in the discussion to the Heads of Delegation.

3.4 The Meeting decided to continue planning concrete topics and possible outcomes of the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting, to be initiated by the Secretariat and Chair intersessionally, with the view to formulate a proposal for HOD 52-2017.

3.5 The Meeting endorsed the updated Roadmap of HELCOM activities on ecosystem approach (document 3-1) and noted it is a living document which will be updated in the future as might be needed.

Work plans/Terms of Reference for groups

4.36 The Meeting considered and adopted the Draft HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group Work Plan 2017-2019 with a slight amendment in the footnote as proposed by Germany (document 4-11-Rev.1).

HELCOM HOD 51-2016

Work plan of the EU Chairmanship of HELCOM

2.1 The Meeting welcomed the work plan of the EU Chairmanship of HELCOM and endorsed it as guidance for future HELCOM activities under the EU Chairmanship (document 2-1).

Outcomes of working groups' meetings

6.59 The Meeting took note that Germany appreciated the contribution of Sweden related to the concept of green infrastructure as a tool for integrating environmental considerations in MSP as it was reflected in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4 of the outcome of the last HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG Meeting. The German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation currently runs a complementary research and development project which also deals with implementing Ecosystem Approach in MSP. This R&D approach has a special focus on transferring scientific data on spatial claims of ecosystem components and their sensitivities into concrete planning objectives and principles to provide scientific input to MSP of the German EEZ. Identifying and establishing priority areas for nature conservation purposes and strengthening ecological connectivity of MPAs is also part of this project. By 2017 the Agency envisages first results. Germany was of the opinion that this method provides valuable knowledge for strengthening nature conservation concerns in MSP and recognizes the high potential of developing and making use of synergies between the approach of R&D project and other HELCOM-Parties for the implementation of Ecosystem Approach. Therefore, Germany would welcome the opportunity for a fruitful exchange of views and experiences on these issues at the occasion of the next meeting of the HELCOM-VASAB Group.

Underwater noise

6.88 The Meeting welcomed the report "Noise Sensitivity of Animals in the Baltic Sea", agreed on its publication in the Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings series (document 6-6), and proposed that the report should be shared with other RSCs and the CBD. The Meeting took note that Finland and Germany will provide editorial comments to the Secretariat.

STATE&CONSERVATION 5-2016 and 5E-2017

HELCOM MPA database

3N.1 The Meeting took note of the present status of HELCOM MPA database web application, (document 3N-3) and recalled that Contracting Parties can update MPA information anytime as new information becomes available or new sites are nominated.

3N.3 The Meeting discussed the arranging of a workshop to ensure harmonized reporting to the MPA database by the Contracting Parties (e.g. how to report regulatory activities that are not included in management plans). The Meeting considered the possibility of arranging such a workshop back-to-back with the Red List workshop and State and Conservation 6-2017 and welcomed that Sweden is prepared to host such workshop in the case it is practically feasible to convene both workshops during the same week. If not feasible an alternative time and venue for the MPA workshop will be discussed at State and Conservation 6-2017.

Action 'How to consider MPAs in Maritime Spatial Planning and vice versa'

3N.9 The Meeting took note of the information by the co-Chair Ms. Penina Blankett about communication with HELCOM VASAB Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Working Group concerning how to consider MPAs in Marine Spatial Planning. The Meeting also noted the plan to present the work on HELCOM MPAs at the next meeting of the Baltic MSP Forum, and welcomed the offer of the co-Chair to circulate the presentation to State and Conservation contacts for information.

Endorsement of HELCOM indicators

4J.15 The Meeting took note that Denmark retains the reservations on 'Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) and dioxins and furans' for PCB-118 but can lift the reservations for the sum of congeners, and that the reservation is retained for 'TBT and imposex'.

4J.16 The Meeting took note that Germany can lift the specific study reservation on the core indicators 'Oil-spills affecting the marine environment'.

4J.17 The Meeting took note of the comments by Germany on the core indicators 'Abundance of coastal fish key functional groups' and 'Abundance of key coastal fish species' (document 4-41) and noted that Germany retains the study reservation on these indicators. The Meeting noted that lead country Sweden and Germany will discuss the issue bilaterally in early December to explore if some issues could still be clarified before HOD 51-2016. Germany however thanked the Lead Country and the FISH-PRO II project and appreciated the work done.

4J.18 The Meeting took note of the clarification on the origin of the metabolite GES-boundary for the indicator 'Polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) and their metabolites' (document 4J-37). The Meeting noted that Denmark is not in a position to lift their specific study reservation on this boundary.

4J.22 The Meeting endorsed the proposed GES boundary for Cd and Pb in offshore assessment units for the 'Metals' core indicator (document 4J-9), except for the proposed secondary GES boundary value for fish liver for which a study reservation was placed by Denmark (Cd) and Estonia (Cd and Pb). The Meeting took note that Poland and Sweden can lift their specific study reservations on the GES boundaries for Cd and Pb.

4J.46 The Meeting considered the pre-core indicator 'Total nutrients' (document 4J-38) and endorsed the assessment protocol and endorsed to shift to core indicator, taking note of study reservations placed by Denmark and Poland.

4J.47 The Meeting took note of the progress in developing an indicator on 'Beach litter' (document 4J-27, presentation 7). The Meeting endorsed, in principle, the proposed indicator concept and the proposed interim definition of GES. The Meeting also endorsed, in principle, the proposed shift of status of the indicator

from pre-core to core indicator, taking into account the Danish reservation and Germany's request to further harmonise the indicator with the OSPAR monitoring protocol.¹

4J.50 The Meeting considered the pre-core indicator 'Cumulative impact on benthic biotope' (document 4J-12) and endorsed the assessment protocol and endorsed the shift of the indicator status from pre-core to core indicator, taking note of a specific study reservation by Denmark due to the lack of data and current state of the indicator.

4J.58 The Meeting took note of the progress on the indicator 'Litter on the seafloor' (document 4J-3, Presentation 9). The Meeting endorsed the shift of the indicator from candidate to pre-core indicator, taking note of the study reservation by Denmark.

4J.60 The Meeting took note of the progress on the indicator 'Distribution in time and space of loud low- and mid-frequency impulsive sounds' (document 4J-28) and endorsed the shift from candidate to pre-core indicator.

4J.62 The Meeting took note of the progress on the indicator 'Continuous low frequency anthropogenic sound' (document 4J-2) and endorsed the proposed indicator concept and assessment protocol.

4J.67 The Meeting took note of the progress in developing the candidate indicator on 'Microlitter in the water column' (document 4J-44).

4J.68 The Meeting considered and endorsed the proposed arrangement for approval of the data and core indicator evaluations for use in HOLAS II integrated assessments (document 4J-26), noting that Poland will inform its view at GEAR 15-2015

[Endorsement of the assessment of pressures and impacts in the second holistic assessment of the Baltic Sea \(HOLAS II\)](#)

4J.81 The Meeting considered and agreed on the method to calculate the Baltic Sea Impact Index (BSII) (document 4J-18, presentation 13) and endorsed its use in the HOLAS II project, taking note that Denmark agrees on the method, but cannot endorse its use in HOLAS II at this time.

FISH 5-2016

Fisheries and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)

5.41 The Meeting took note that Sweden is developing Marine Spatial Plans under the lead of SwAM. An initial dialogue on a first draft of the plan will be initiated in late 2016 and continue during the first half of 2017, including dialogue with neighbouring countries in April/May 2017. Formal consultations will ensue at the end of 2017 and continue during the first half of 2018. The plans will include designations of priority areas for fisheries and important fish habitats in the Swedish waters of the Baltic Sea.

5.42 The Meeting took note that Denmark is also engaged in MSP and although the work is chaired by the Danish Maritime Authority (DMA), the Danish AgriFish Agency is responsible for the part on MSP and fisheries including, i.a. how activities of smaller boats should be considered.

5.43 The Meeting took note that fisheries spawning areas in Finland have been mapped in the Baltic Sea and data is distributed via the Finnish VELMU marine biodiversity mapping.

5.44 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to present work on MSP and fisheries at the next meeting.

¹ Please note that beach litter was a pre-core indicator proposed to be shifted to core indicator but not adopted as such by HOD 51-2016 (Outcome of HOD 51-2016, Annex 3, Table 4).

GEAR 15-2016

Continued work on Economic and Social Analyses (ESA) in HELCOM

4.2 The Meeting noted a status update on the economic and social analyses in HOLAS II, being based on use of marine waters approach and the assessment of the cost of degradation of the marine environment, and discussed the proposed roadmap for further regional socio-economic analyses in HOLAS II and in HELCOM up until 2021 as contained in document 4-2, Presentation 2.

BalticBOOST components related to environmental targets

4.9 The Meeting noted that under the HELCOM BalticBOOST project, two work packages have had the task to develop guidelines on how to define environmental targets: WP 3.1 related to pressures acting on seabed habitats, and WP 4 related to underwater noise. The Meeting recalled that GEAR 14-2015 provided initial guidance to the work.

4.10 The Meeting took note of a proposal on the principles for defining levels of underwater noise that are consistent with GES for noise sensitive species as well as decision support trees for establishing environmental targets for ambient and impulsive noise as contained in document 4-4, Presentation 4. The Meeting recalled that the principles and decision support trees were discussed at PRESSURE 5-2016.

4.17 The Meeting supported the national testing of the decision support trees and for the HELCOM EN-Noise to further develop them according to the conclusions from the HELCOM underwater noise workshop and in close coordination with the MSFD TG Noise and OSPAR.

HELCOM PRESSURE 6-2017

5.10 The Meeting pointed out that the information on the activities on exploitation of mineral resources should be included into the HOLAS II project, and particularly socio-economic analysis as well as information on the effects of this type of human activity on the marine ecosystem.

HOLAS II 7-2017

3.2 The Meeting took note that written comments from the core team on the meeting documents under agenda items 4 to 8 can be submitted to the Secretariat by 13 April 2017 (lena.bergström@helcom.fi). The comments will be considered when finalizing the summary report for submission to State & Conservation 6-2017 (15-19 May) that will aim at the technical endorsement of the first version of the 'State of the Baltic Sea' report. GEAR 16-2017 (23-24 May) will consider recommending to HOD 52-2017 (20-21 June) to publish the report.

8.12 The Meeting recognized the many possible analyses that can be made based on the results on status and pressures that are now available and proposed that the 'Conclusions and future outlook' could be further developed towards the update of the report in 2018.