



Document title	Progress in elaboration of the PLC products
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Background

Strategy for future HELCOM assessments of inputs of nutrients and selected hazardous substances ([Attachment 1](#)) identifies four major products based on PLC data:

- Annual reports on actual airborne and waterborne inputs to the Baltic Sea of nutrients, selected heavy metals and POPs,
- Core pressure indicator on progress to reduce inputs of nutrients to Maximum Allowable Inputs (MAI),
- Assessment of progress towards fulfilment of Country Allocated Reduction Targets (CART),
- Periodic PLC assessment evaluating inputs from different sources in the catchment area for a chosen single year.

This document addresses three of these products and, more specifically, seeks HOD agreement on the timing of PLC-7 as well as on the 2015 edition of the CART assessment and its publication, and seeks HOD guidance for future MAI and CART assessments.

Periodic PLC assessments

PLC-6 is based on the data from 2012 (Poland and Germany) and 2014 (the remaining HELCOM countries). The final report on the current periodic PLC-6 assessment will be delivered during the first part of 2017. Essential data will be made available by October-November 2016, e.g. for use in HOLAS II. The assessment report will focus on source apportionment, evaluation of water and airborne input of heavy metals as well as measures.

Periodic PLC assessments in HELCOM have so far been carried out in a six-year cycle. A fixed timetable allows the Contracting Parties to plan resources for carrying out monitoring and assessment. However, the issue of adjusting the timing of periodic PLC to optimally serve various reporting and policy needs of the Contracting Parties has never been fully resolved, partly as data and information resulting from periodic PLC could be linked to both assessment of the environment and assessment of measures. According to the new PLC strategy, future periodic PLC assessments are to orientate more strongly on evaluation of inputs from different sources and effectiveness of measures.

The timing of PLC-7 has not been decided yet.

As requested by HOD 48-2015, PRESSURE 3-2015 discussed the suggestion to perform the next periodic PLC-7 assessment in 2019, based on monitoring in 2017, which would be in line with the reporting periods of MSFD. Russia agreed with the proposed deadlines for PLC-7 at the meeting, while the other Contracting Parties provided comments in writing after the meeting. Estonia, Germany, Poland and Sweden supported the suggested timetable for the next PLC assessment. Some countries also suggested that the assessment report should be available already in the beginning of 2019 so they could use the assessment data for preparation of national reporting on measures under WFD and MSFD. Germany also suggested to set the

time for the PLC-8 assessment as full monitoring in 2021 and a report in 2023 (MSFD follow-up assessment is due in 2024). Finland suggested that PLC-6 data could be used for the 2019 MSFD reporting and the HOLAS II assessment, and to perform PLC-7 in 2021 with reference data 2019 in order to serve the next MSFD assessment and HOLAS III to be started in 2022 and completed in 2024.

Attachment 2 provides a timeline for planning PLC assessments.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to:

- consider the main purposes of PLC periodic assessment to serve regionally and nationally (assessment of status and pressures and/or evaluation of measures) taking into account the new PLC strategy,
- decide on the timing of the next PLC-7 and discuss the frequency of periodic PLC assessments thereafter (cf. document 4-6).

CART assessment

First edition of the CART assessment

A draft assessment of progress towards fulfilling the Country Allocated Reduction Targets achieved by the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention was presented at HOD 47-2014 and HELCOM 36-2015. HOD 48-2015 considered the document, noted the requests by several countries for additional clarification and established a written procedure for approval of the assessment (Outcome of HOD 48-2015, paras 3.34, 3.35 and 3.38). A round of clarifications was carried out in July-October 2015 and the final draft assessment was circulated by the Executive Secretary with a request for approval by the Contracting Parties. By the time of submission of this document all Contracting Parties have not yet expressed their position on the first CART assessment. The Heads of Delegation will be informed of the situation with the comments by the Contracting Parties and the status of accommodating technical comments in the draft assessment (no document for this Meeting).

Action required

The Meeting will be invited to conclude on the 2015 edition of the CART assessment and its publication.

Future editions of the CART assessment

First assessments of both MAI (Maximum allowable input of nutrients to the sub-basins) as well as CART (Assessment of progress toward country wise allocated reduction targets subject to approval by the Contracting Parties) have already been carried out with the use of a common assessment methodology. However, the assessments have not been fully operationalized yet.

There is a need to automate selected assessment steps, document assessment in an assessment protocol and establish a functional assessment procedure especially for verification and approval of the MAI and CART assessments by the Contracting Parties.

Long-term data arrangements for producing MAI and CART assessments, as part of operationalization, are being improved within HELCOM PLUS project.

PRESSURE 2-2015 recognized the need for automation of the routine procedures of regular assessment of nutrients input to the Baltic Sea as well as setting up an access tool to the assessment data for the Contracting Parties. HOD 48-2015 considered the project proposal to operationalize the MAI-CART follow-up assessments and agreed on its basic principle - automation when feasible and as far as possible. The meeting also emphasized the benefit of providing access to the tools by all Contracting Parties and noted that the project might be possibly implemented in phases.

Attachment 3 to this document contains a draft implementation plan of the HELCOM MAI-CART OPER project including specification of work, timeframe and deliverables realizing the basic principles formulated by HOD 48-2015.

A kick-off project workshop will be held on 1 December 2015 in Stockholm, Sweden, missioned to involve experts from the Contracting Parties into planning how to optimize the assessment process of MAI and CART with focus on automation of selected assessment steps. The workshop will further fine tune project deliverables and discuss at which stages of the assessment process, verification or approval by the Contracting Parties is desirable and how it could be best organized.

Participants of the workshop will have an opportunity to comment on the draft implementation plan for the project. The Meeting will be informed of the outcome of the workshop.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to note the start-up of the HELCOM MAI-CART OPER project including the arrangement of the project workshop on 1 December 2015 and to approve the implementation plan of the project on operationalization of the nutrient reduction scheme follow-up system (MAI-CART OPER, 2015-2017) (*please note that an amended version may be provided as the outcome of the workshop*).

The Meeting might wish to discuss and provide guidance for development of future MAI and CART assessments.