



Document title	Progress on setting up a regional registry for impulsive noise
Code	4-22
Category	DEC
Agenda Item	4 - Matters arising from the HELCOM Groups
Submission date	20.11.2015
Submitted by	Executive Secretary
Reference	2013 Ministerial Meeting decision 25(B)

Background

2013 HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting agreed that the level of ambient and distribution of impulsive sounds in the Baltic Sea should not have negative impact on marine life and that human activities that are assessed to result in negative impacts on marine life should be carried out only if relevant mitigation measures are in place, and accordingly as soon as possible and by the end of 2016, using mainly already ongoing activities, to among others, set up a register of the occurrence of impulsive sounds.

This document provides information on the steps taken to set up such a register.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to:

- take note of the progress in setting up the registry for impulsive underwater noise,
- agree that HELCOM joins the OSPAR registry of impulsive noise to be hosted by ICES,
- note that the work on reporting details is still ongoing and is aimed to be finalized by HELCOM EN-Noise in close cooperation with OSPAR and ICES.

[Progress on setting up a regional registry for impulsive noise](#)

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The initial steps required to set up the registry were included in the agreed [work plan](#) on preparing a roadmap to building a knowledge base on underwater noise, and were subject of consideration at PRESSURE 3-2015. There, the Meeting noted the guidance provided by State&Conservation 2-2015 (Outcome of State &Conservation 2-2015, para. 4J.13.2) that the continued development of the candidate core indicator 'Distribution in time and place of loud low- and mid-frequency impulsive sound' is to be taken forward closely linked to further development of a regional registry and that developing such a regional registry was considered important.

PRESSURE 3-2015 also noted information about the OSPAR and ICES work on establishing a register of the occurrence of impulsive sound that was discussed in a joint expert meeting of OSPAR, HELCOM, EU and ICES experts on noise 1 October 2015. Pressure 3-2015 agreed that HELCOM should join the planned OSPAR regional registry of impulsive noise to be hosted by ICES, keeping in mind that technical details would need to be solved during 2016. Furthermore, it was agreed that Contracting Parties are to provide an initial indication of when data could be made available to the registry as well as informing on the expected time delay in reporting data.

As a follow up to the Pressure 3-2015 discussions, a virtual meeting between HELCOM EN-Noise experts and ICES technical staff was held 16 November. The experts concluded in general that the data-model developed for the purposes of OSPAR is also suitable for HELCOM purposes, and agreed to test the model in practice using test datasets.

Reference documentation related to the expert work on the impulsive noise registry is available in the [underwater noise workspace](#) created to facilitate the work of the HELCOM EN-noise.

The work to set up the regional registry is supported by the EU co-financed [HELCOM BalticBoost project](#) (September 2015-November 2016).

Costs implications for HELCOM in setting up the registry would be limited to sharing with OSPAR maintenance costs of the joint database (estimated at a range of 5,000 EUR total, subject to confirmation) as OSPAR has already undertaken arrangements with ICES regarding the costs of the database development and set up. Any changes to the structure of the database as proposed in the current form, may have financial implications. At this stage no such changes are proposed by experts as indicated above.