



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Heads of Delegation
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Submitted by	Executive Secretary
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*Note that this document was submitted after the established deadline.
It will be decided by the Meeting whether the document can be discussed or is postponed to the next meeting.*

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the attached proposal for a project to support preparations for the 2018 Ministerial Meeting with regard to analysis of causes of non-good status of the environment in HOLAS II such climate change and nutrient loads, and to address nutrient reduction potential, and involvement of municipalities, and decide as appropriate.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Title of Project

Proposal for a project to support preparations for the 2018 Ministerial Meeting to analyze the HOLAS II first results, especially causes for not reaching good environmental status and other material especially with regard to climate change and, nutrient reduction potential, and on the involvement of municipalities.

2. Project Manager(s)

3. Proposing Party

Contracting Party _____
 Commission _____
 Subsidiary body _____
 Heads of Delegation _____
 Executive Secretary X

4. The body supervising the project

Heads of Delegation and Executive Secretary

5. Target and activities

Background

The next HELCOM Ministerial Meeting will take place on 6 March 2018. The Contracting Parties have considered potential topics for the Ministerial Meeting and recognized that both the 2nd HELCOM holistic assessment of the ecosystem health (HOLAS II) and the nutrient reduction scheme provide possibilities to take stock of HELCOM achievements in improving the status of the marine environment and to consider strategic directions for further HELCOM work (HELCOM 37-2016). Furthermore, HELCOM 38-2017 stressed the importance of taking concrete steps to, e.g.

- make the issue of climate change more prominent in HELCOM work, because it affects especially acidification and regional targets,
- use research and innovative approaches, e.g. generated within BONUS, in developing new solutions and techniques to address problems and translate them into policies,
- engage municipalities and other local actors more closely to implementing the BSAP commitments.

The first results of HOLAS II should be further analyzed in order to better understand the reasons for not reaching a good environmental status yet, which may relate to climate change, historical reasons, insufficient measures etc. Once the reasons are analyzed and identified, this can provide background information for the Contracting Parties to take further actions and measures.

Regarding climate change, last time HELCOM assessed climate change in the publication "Climate change in the Baltic Sea Area. HELCOM Thematic Assessment 2013" ([BSEP 137](#)). The report was a result of collaboration between HELCOM and the BALTEX community (its successor is called Baltic Earth) and was based on BACC II book "Second Assessment of Climate Change for the Baltic Sea Basin".

The assessment was followed by a HELCOM Workshop on Baltic Sea region climate change and its implications in 2013 in Warnemünde, Germany, bringing together Baltic Sea region climate change scientists and marine environment-related experts and managers. A specific aim of the Workshop was to begin to specify more stringent actions and supplementary measures, as called for by the HELCOM Ministerial Meetings in 2007 and 2010 (the Workshop conclusions are contained in [HELCOM 34-2013 document 3-5](#)).

HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in 2013 agreed to make the assessment of regional climate change and its implications on the Baltic Sea ecosystem a regular activity, collaborating with Baltic Earth in this respect, with the aim to make it an indicator-based assessment. According to the Roadmap of HELCOM activities on ecosystem-approach (cf. [HELCOM 38-2017 document 3-1](#)), the next climate change assessment is scheduled to start in 2018. However, no planning for the assessment has taken place from the HELCOM side yet.

The first results of the State of the Baltic Sea report covers to some extent climate change and its implications. Furthermore, Aa number of ongoing BONUS projects address implication of climate change for the marine environment and management, including with regard to nutrient reduction (cf. document 2-2).

Within 2017 new information with regard to eutrophication and reduction of nutrient inputs will become available. The State of the Baltic Sea report includes fresh results on the eutrophication status (document 2-6), data on nutrient inputs up to 2014 are included in the draft MAI core indicator assessment (document 3-7-Rev.1), and additional information on source apportionment and effectiveness of measures is being collected within PLC-6.

New measures for shipping (NECA and sewage discharge ban) have recently been decided which will result in substantial reduction of nutrients (notably nitrogen). In the BONUS projects research is ongoing to identify nutrient reduction potential in agriculture and other sectors.

Despite progress with implementing measures and reducing inputs of nutrients, the Baltic Sea is still highly eutrophied. The current State of the Baltic Sea report does not yet include all relevant information with regard to -input and sources of nutrients as it will become available only for the updated version of HOLAS II. The new information will allow to deepen the analysis and strengthen the links between status of eutrophication, activities on land and of climate change in the updated State of the Baltic Sea report.

Last but not least, the role of municipalities and local actors in implementing the Baltic Sea Action Plan, and recently also Sustainable Development Goals, have been raised on a number of occasions. Various initiatives have been undertaken in the Baltic Sea region during the past years demonstrating possibilities for implementing additional measures to protect the marine environment on a local level.

For example, the Baltic Sea Challenge, launched by Turku and Helsinki in 2007 for actions to protect the Baltic Sea, nowadays involves a large number of other cities and municipalities, as well as businesses, research and education institutions, NGOs and labour unions. The Baltic Sea City Accelerator is one of the environmental initiatives of the [Zennström Philanthropies foundation](#), to identify cost-effective, smart and innovative solutions to local water and wastewater management challenges. HELCOM requirements including reduction of nutrient inputs are not always known, or easy to translate to local implementation.

Targets

The project will further analyse the first results of HOLAS II with special emphasis on review and synthesize the available information on the implication of climate change and its implications on both to the status of the marine environment and management in the Baltic Sea (e.g. management of MPAs, MSP, nutrient reduction scheme) as well as eutrophication (and other themes pending resources).

The project will and develop a set of recommendations suggestions how the issue of climate change can be taken forward in HELCOM work based on the current knowledge. As far as possible and relevant, material from outside the region will also be reviewed. The project will also investigate how to arrange the next thematic assessment on regional climate change and identify resource needs.

The project will also demonstrate progress with regard Secondly, the project will review, analyse and synthesize the available information on the status of eutrophication and the achieved reduction of nutrient

inputs in various sectors at sea and on land and associate it to the implemented measures/policies as far as possible. The main aim of the synthesis will be to ~~demonstrate progress~~ and identify potential for further reduction, also

~~Utilizing outcomes of the BONUS projects (as far as available) will be utilized in the work. Another aim is to reflect on implications of climate change and present internal loading and related time perspective to achieve good environmental status for eutrophication. The material is to serve communication purposes.~~

~~The analysis~~ could potentially be used for the update of HOLAS II ~~chapter on eutrophication~~.

Thirdly, all HELCOM requirements with regard to nutrients will be compiled and presented in the form of a “check list” for municipalities, cities and local actors, to provide HELCOM guidance on what actions can be taken on a local level to contribute to the implementation of the nutrient reduction scheme.

Activities

The project is mainly a desk study and will be carried out by expert(s), service of which will be contracted to the Secretariat.

In the work, contacts will be established with Baltic Earth as well as the relevant BONUS projects to investigate which results can be made available for the study, in addition to the published material. A number of relevant BONUS projects have not been completed yet and their results may not be published within the timeframe of this project.

Further, the “check list” for municipalities will be developed in communication with relevant initiatives involving municipalities in order to ensure it is useful and serves the purpose. Possible future activities to cover other HELCOM requirements and to engage municipalities into the BSAP implementation may be explored.

The project will follow the [HELCOM risk assessment procedure](#).

6. Expected results

The project will support the preparations for the 2018 Ministerial Meeting by analysing the first results of HOLAS II with emphasis on the implication of climate change and eutrophication. Other themes can be added as far as additional resources become available. The project will also result in providing the following material for consideration by the Contracting Parties:

- recommendations on how to consider regional climate change and its implications in HELCOM work;
- ~~synthesized communication material on eutrophication and nutrients;~~
- “check list” of HELCOM requirements with regard to nutrients for municipalities and local implementation.

The material is to be prepared for policy purposes, thus, it will also contain clear messages and will present information in new ways for clear communication.

7. Consistency with HELCOM priorities yes no

Consistent with the outcome of HELCOM 38-2017 including the high-level segment with regard to future work and the Ministerial Meeting in 2018

8. Timetable (including number of Project Team meetings)

The project will start in August 2017 and will be finished by the Ministerial Meeting (6 March 2018).

The first drafts of the material will be presented to the meetings of the State and Conservation 7-2017 and Pressure 7-2017 (both in October 2017), and final drafts to the Heads of Delegation meeting in December 2017.

9. Budget (taking into account financial year from 1 July to 30 June)

9.1 Total Costs

26.000 EUR (6 man months)

9.2 Sources of financing divided per financial year

HELCOM budget (for 2017-2018)

10. Additional requests (manpower, equipment, facilities, etc.)

10.1 From the Contracting Parties

Contracting Parties may consider providing additional resources/expert support so also other themes of the HOLAS II first results could be covered, as well as support in engaging BONUS projects so their results could be made available for the purposes of this project.

10.2 From the Secretariat

The Secretariat will ensure coordination of the project with other ongoing HELCOM processes, including PLC-6 and update of HOLAS II.

11. Procedure of nomination of the Project team members

Executive Secretary will employ expert(s) for the desk study.

12. Signature of the Project Manager(s)

13. Opinion of the Chairs of the relevant body

14. Opinion of the Executive Secretary

This is the initiative by the Executive Secretary.

15. Decision of the Heads of Delegation

(Reference is to be given to the relevant Minutes of the Heads of Delegation's Meeting)

_____ to establish _____ not to establish