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<b>Document title</b>	Update of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan
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## Background

The outline for the Ministerial outcome presented at HOD 52-2017 (cf. document 2-7) indicates that a proposal for how update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan is to be done needs to be developed. The aim has been to have a more detailed proposal agreed by HODs while Ministers will focus on essence of the BSAP update (in the Ministerial outcome).

This document contains a proposal for the update of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. The aim is to finalize and agree on the document for adoption by HELCOM 39-2018 to be held on 5 March 2018.

## Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the proposal.

## **Update of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan**

In the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) Contracting Parties agreed to monitor and evaluate the status of its implementation by making use of the indicators agreed upon as well as HELCOM thematic assessments, annual HELCOM indicator fact sheets and other information available.

The 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting was tasked to evaluate the effectiveness of the national programmes and to review the progress towards the ecological objectives describing a Baltic Sea in good environmental/ecological status (GES). Based on this review the BSAP was to be adjusted and the set of indicators with associated targets was to be up-dated to ensure their relevance for achieving the objectives.

It was not possible to accomplish this task by 2013 as a suitable set of indicators was not available. Since then HELCOM has achieved considerable progress in establishing core indicators with associated threshold values. 28 core indicators were used to produce the first version of the second holistic assessment of the ecosystem health of the Baltic Sea, "State of the Baltic Sea" report. The report assesses the progress towards the ecological objectives and provides essential information to be able to reflect on the effectiveness of measures.

The 2018 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting will decide on the update the BSAP.

The aim of the update of the BSAP is to adjust actions based on the newest scientific knowledge about the ecosystems so that GES can be reached and the HELCOM ecological objectives and relevant marine targets of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be met in the Baltic Sea.

The updated BSAP will be adopted by Contracting Parties at the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in [2021].

### ***Guiding principles***

The update of the BSAP will be guided by:

- The fundamental principles of the Helsinki Convention and principles of the BSAP;
- The adopted HELCOM vision "A healthy Baltic Sea environment, with diverse biological components functioning in balance, resulting in a good environmental/ecological status and supporting a wide range of sustainable human economic and social activities"
- Ocean-related UN Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and in particular SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development".

The updated BSAP will more clearly identify how it serves implementation of general and specific provisions of the Helsinki Convention.

### ***HELCOM strategic goals and ecological objectives, and marine targets of SDGs***

The four strategic goals of HELCOM, describing the desired state of the marine environment, will remain in the updated BSAP:

- "Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication",
- "Baltic Sea with life undisturbed by hazardous substances",
- "Maritime activities carried out in an environmentally friendly way"
- "Favourable conservation status of Baltic Sea biodiversity";

The current HELCOM ecological objectives, describing the good environmental/ecological status we want to achieve for the Baltic Sea, will be reviewed, amended as necessary, and new ecological objectives will be developed for additional issues that also need to be addressed to achieve good status. [these issues are being identified in the run up to the 2018 Ministerial Meeting e.g. marine litter and underwater noise]

Marine targets of SDGs will be incorporated to the updated BSAP, guiding development of actions to reach HELCOM objectives.

The core indicators will become part of the updated BSAP.

### ***Existing actions***

In the update of the BSAP, the current BSAP and the two follow-up Ministerial Declarations, from 2010 and 2013, will be taken as the basis and their actions and commitments that have not been assessed as implemented will be included in the updated BSAP.

Actions that do not have measurable and clear targets (and thus so far not assessed with regard to the level of accomplishment) will be developed into more specific actions or set of actions.

Actions may be decided not to be kept if jointly concluded as obsolete or agreed to be superseded by another actions perceived as more effective.

The assessment in [HELCOM Explorer](#) will be updated, and it will be expanded to HELCOM Recommendations to provide a fuller picture of the status of implementation of HELCOM agreements.

Voluntary commitments for the United Nations Conference "Our oceans, our future: partnering for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14" (9 June 2017 in New York) and "Our Ocean conference" (5-6 October, Malta) will be followed-up and reflected in the updated BSAP as appropriate.

### ***New actions***

The updated BSAP will include new joint (regional) and national actions, to be decided on the basis of:

- the 2018 Ministerial Declaration,
- the results of first version of the State of the Baltic Sea report.

The State of the Baltic Sea report shows that, although signs of improvement in the state of the Baltic Sea are seen in some cases, the BSAP goals and ecological objectives have not yet been reached.

One additional conclusion is that some measures already put into operation have not been in place long enough to have an effect. For measures such as reduction of nutrient loads, it will take several decades before full effects can be measured in the environment.

An overview comparing results of the first version of the State of the Baltic Sea report and the implementation of the BSAP show themes where Contracting Parties have come farther in the implementation of the BSAP [XXX] as well as identifies topics that still have received relatively minor attention in HELCOM in terms of measures and management coordination [XXX].

As a next step, HELCOM will carry out an analysis of sufficiency of measures to reach HELCOM objectives and targets, to support selection of new actions.

New findings, as may become available within HELCOM and elsewhere, will be utilized in proposing new actions.

### ***Process and resources***

The update of the BSAP will be carried out by [a project]/[a group] under the guidance of the Heads of Delegation.

Contracting Parties will provide resources for the work, including for analysis and reporting.

HELCOM working groups and expert groups will be engaged in the process of updating BSAP to provide input and utilize the existing HELCOM expertise.

Stakeholders including HELCOM Observers will be invited to the process, building on the success of engagement of stakeholders in HELCOM work and in implementation of the BSAP in particular. This will be crucial for creating ownership and support for future implementation of the updated BSAP.

### ***Timetable***

Preparatory work starts in X

Structure and main components of the updated BSAP in place in XX

Development of detailed content in XXX, and a full draft of the updated BSAP available 9-12 months in advance of the Ministerial Meeting

Ministerial Meeting adopts the updated BSAP in XXXXX