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## Background

This document contains the Outcome of the 17th Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (GEAR 17-2017) held on 23-24 November 2017 in Gothenburg, Sweden.

In addition to the outcomes note in this document the view was brought forward by Denmark that it would be preferable if all the core indicators reports were submitted to HODs for approval. Currently HODs are tasked with approving core indicator thresholds and assessment methods, but core indicator reports are approved by the State and Conservation Working Group.

The suggested dates for the next meeting of the GEAR group are 16-17 April 2018, in Berlin, Germany.

## Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information and consider it as appropriate.



## Outcome of the 17th Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (HELCOM GEAR 17-2017)

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## Outcome of the 17th Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (HELCOM GEAR 17-2017)

### Introduction

0.1 In accordance with the outcome of HELCOM GEAR 16-2017 (par. 6.2), the 17th Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (GEAR 17-2017) was held on 23-24 November 2017 in Gothenburg, Sweden, at the premises of the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management.

0.2 The Meeting was attended by delegations from Denmark, Estonia, EU, Finland, Germany, Poland and Sweden. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex 1**.

0.3 The Meeting welcomed Linda Rydell as the new Swedish representative in GEAR substituting Laura Piriz who is stepping down due to her new commitment as Chair of OSPAR.

0.4 The Meeting was chaired by Ms. Heike Imhoff, Germany, Chair of the GEAR Group. Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, Executive Secretary, Ms. Jannica Haldin, Professional Secretary and Ms. Marta Ruiz, Associate Professional Secretary acted as secretaries of the Meeting.

### Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

1.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda as contained in **document 1-1**.

### Agenda Item 2 Matters arising from other meetings of relevance to GEAR

2.1 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of recent HELCOM meetings of relevance to GEAR, including preparations for the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2018 (**document 2-1**)

2.2 The Meeting noted the views by the EU that the work being done by HELCOM on collating data needs with regards to fisheries and incidental bycatch is of relevance to CFP Data Collection Framework (DCF) being considered through Regional Coordination Groups. A HELCOM Correspondence Group on fisheries data for the purpose of environmental management (HELCOM CG FISHDATA) has been established to a) draft a roadmap and b) further consider the inventory document on data needs and submit the outcome for consideration of FISH 8-2017. Denmark is willing to host a workshop in early 2018 as part of the Correspondence Group work ([Outcome of FISH 7-2017](#), para. 5.15).

2.3 The Meeting noted that Denmark does not have any new information on the status of their study reservation on the draft recommendation on red listed habitats and biotopes.

2.4 The Meeting noted the views by Sweden on the need to code documents (information, commenting or decision) in line with the actions required by the Meeting.

2.5 The Meeting took note of the Outcome of the UN Conference “Our oceans, our future: partnering for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14”, 5-9 June 2017, New York, and of the information by the Executive Secretary on the HELCOM voluntary commitments and presence at the conference (**document 2-2**).

2.6 The Meeting took note of the update on the preparations of the Ministerial Meeting in 2018 as provided by the Executive Secretary. It is envisaged that a full draft of the Ministerial outcome will be submitted to the HODs meeting on 12-13 December next week.

2.7 The possibility of OSPAR contributing to, and being represented at the Ministerial Meeting was emphasised. The Meeting noted the information provided by Laura Piriz, Chair of OSPAR, that Denmark, Germany and Sweden are working together with the OSPAR Secretariat on an input to the HELCOM Ministerial meeting.

2.8 The Meeting took note that OSPAR has decided to have a ministerial meeting in 2020.

2.9 The Meeting noted the relevance of sharing best practices in regional ocean governance and implementation of marine policies between Regional Seas Conventions as well as among RSCs and other cooperation platforms, including sectorial organizations. The Meeting agreed to discuss this issue in GEAR and in the light of the 2018 Ministerial outcome.

2.10 The Meeting noted the information on the upcoming CBD Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) in the Baltic Sea Region, 19-24 February 2018 (**Presentation 1**) to be hosted by Finland in Helsinki and convened by the CBD Secretariat in cooperation with HELCOM. EBSAs described in the workshops will be evaluated by the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific and the Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA). The approval of the potential EBSAs will subsequently be done by the CBD conference of Parties (COP). If approved, EBSAs will be available at CBD EBSA repository ([cbd.int/ebsa](http://cbd.int/ebsa)).

2.11 The Meeting welcomed the upcoming workshop noting that it is a science based forum and that it aims to identify and delineate EBSAs in the region. EBSA can provide further useful information that can be used for transboundary actions to safeguard the species and habitats in these areas including within spatial planning processes as may be decided individually or collectively by the countries concerned. However, identification and designation of EBSAs on their own has no legislative consequences.

2.12 The Meeting noted the suggestion by Sweden that the identified EBSAs could be evaluated in relation to the ecosystem services they provide.

2.13 The Meeting reminded that State and Conservation contacts are to be informed of the call of attendance to the workshop issued by the CBD Secretariat. The Meeting noted that the selection of experts will be conducted by CBD based on nominations made by the Contracting Parties.

### **Agenda Item 3 Coordination and information related to the implementation of the ecosystem approach and related policies**

3.1 The Meeting noted that there is no further additional national information on matters of relevance for the GEAR Group.

#### *Roadmap of HELCOM activities on ecosystem approach*

3.2 The Meeting noted that the Roadmap of HELCOM activities on ecosystem approach is a living document which will be updated in the future as needed. The updated Roadmap is available in the HELCOM website ([link](#)) ([Outcome of HELCOM 38-2017](#), para. 3.5).

3.3 The Meeting noted that Germany will provide written comments to the Secretariat regarding input for updating the Roadmap **by 1 December 2017**.

3.4 The Meeting took note of the information that the Roadmap will be updated for the next HELCOM meeting, mainly to demonstrate accomplishment of the activities and that a major update of the roadmap can be foreseen based on the outcome of the Ministerial Meeting 2018.

#### *Coordination of monitoring in the Baltic Sea region*

3.5 The Meeting exchanged information on the national plans to follow-up on the results of the EC assessment of the EU Member States' monitoring programmes under the MSFD as follows:

- Denmark: on the early stage of updating the national programme. Efforts are being put towards identifying how to fulfil the monitoring requirements with regards to the revised Commission Decision on GES as well as HELCOM indicators.
- Estonia: updating the national monitoring programs based on the results of the Commission assessment has started and is expected to progress further in spring 2018. HELCOM indicators needs are to be covered by the programme as well as the EU ones.

- Finland: a first strategic discussion has recently taken place. There is a presume timetable to reply to EU by the end of 2018.
- Germany: has started a review of its monitoring programmes based on the recommendations of the EU Commission's Art. 12-evaluation and the experiences gained in the latest assessments for the 2018 reporting. The review is expected to result in priorities for the revision of monitoring programmes and the planning of the revision process early in 2018.
- Poland: there is a lack of minimum requirements (parameters, frequency) for fulfilling the commitments for the HELCOM joint coordinated marine monitoring program and the indicator monitoring. Drafting a HELCOM Recommendation on this issue would be desirable such as the HELCOM Recommendation 37-38/1 on PLC Water.
- Sweden: common methods on new monitoring, e.g. microlitter and underwater noise, are needed before starting regular national monitoring. Work is on-going to use satellite monitoring. Cooperation with Finland is on-going on habitat mapping as well as on satellite monitoring.

3.6 The Meeting noted the views by EU that HELCOM has made significant improvements regarding the development of monitoring requirements and guidelines, and that it is for countries to utilize the joint results at national level as appropriate for MSFD purposes.

3.7 The Meeting discussed the issue from the point of view of regional coherence and agreed to further consider how to include minimum monitoring requirements for the different monitoring programs in the monitoring guidelines and add a reference to these to HELCOM Recommendation 19/3.

3.8 The Meeting noted the views by EU on the need to carefully consider the needs and requirements to be covered by the monitoring programme before embarking on updating the monitoring programmes.

#### *Definition of Good Environmental Status*

3.9 The Meeting discussed the setting of priorities and the way forward to fill the current gaps in relation to those aspects requiring regional cooperation based on the information contained in **document 3-4** (specifically in figure 1 and annex 1).

3.10 The Meeting noted that the Secretariat will investigate the possibilities to produce a table with all HELCOM indicators and their respective threshold values.

3.11 The Meeting noted the views by Germany of having the expert and intersessional networks involved in the process of identifying and also filling the gaps in relation to regional cooperation needs.

3.12 The Meeting noted the views by Denmark that the document is not explicit enough to agree on a way forward. A more detailed gap analysis is needed, not only for the criteria for which there is currently equivalent HELCOM indicators but also for assessing how well existing HELCOM core indicators fit the requirements of the respective descriptors and criteria. Denmark is of the opinion that coverage and appropriateness of the indicators should be agreed at HODs level.

3.13 The Meeting noted the views by Finland on the difficulties to agreeing on a more detailed document earlier in September of 2017 prior to the EU WG GES meeting and that the version is detailed enough to serve current purpose.

3.14 The Meeting noted the views by Sweden that this work could be linked to the future work on indicators, cater for a closer cooperation with OSPAR on indicators as well as the need to open the discussion on integration rules at an early stage and in a coordinated manner with other RSC's and the EU.

3.15 The Meeting noted the clarification by the EU that JRC is working on the criteria lists for the reporting purposes, not with regards to the revised Commission Decision. Therefore, the reference on the criteria elements to be drafted by JRC is to be deleted from the table contained in Annex 1.

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3.16 The Meeting noted that Denmark, Finland, Germany and Sweden consider the lists of criteria elements as a good starting point of the work on regional cooperation with regards to the Commission Decision as they may also be needed for preparing monitoring programs.

3.17 The Meeting agreed that the Secretariat will include the feedback provided by the Meeting into a revised document with the request to countries to contribute to the process by providing national proposals for practical procedural steps to be taken or guidance on how to take the work forward **by 16 February 2018**.

3.18 The Meeting agreed that based on the input received a document containing collated proposals for a way forward for filling the current gaps with regards to regional cooperation will be prepared by a drafting group by **2 March 2018**, which will be circulated to countries for final revision **by 30 March**, to be subsequently submitted to the next GEAR meeting for consideration. Germany is invited to explore the possibility to lead the work of the drafting group.

#### *Future of HELCOM indicators*

3.19 The Meeting took note of and considered the document on the future of HELCOM indicators, taking into account comments from State and conservation 7-2017 and Contracting Parties (**document 3-3, Presentation 2**). The Meeting took note of the clarification that the aim of the document is to initiate discussion on the subject and on taking steps towards the development of a clear and defined process for the maintenance and development of the HELCOM indicators in the future.

3.20 The Meeting appreciated the timely start and relevance of considering the future of the indicators when preparing for the work to be conducted after HOLAS II. However, the Meeting was of the view that the presented document combine both strategic questions and technical details making it difficult to structure the discussion of the key strategic issues in GEAR.

3.21 The Meeting agreed that a strategic discussion and analysis to address what has been achieved so far and what needs to be done (a consolidation phase) is of utmost importance and a basis for further work on new indicators. The Meeting acknowledged that there is still a lot of work ahead, therefore, there is a need to focus on prioritized issues, which for countries that are EU Members States is directly linked to the revised GES Decision.

3.22 The Meeting took note of initial comments by a number of Contracting Parties on options for frequency of update of the core indicator reports as included in document 3-3, indicating proposals for Option 5, or a combination of Option 4 and 5, noting that a similar proposal had been discussed at OSPAR for alternating indicator updates. The Meeting also noted that policy needs for the regularity of updating and the scientific requirements need to be considered and appropriately matched.

3.23 The Meeting discussed climate change and the relevance for HELCOM indicators. Discussion included views that other types of evaluation for climate change may be relevant and while specific indicators for this subject could be considered climate change may have relevance across all HELCOM indicators.

3.24 The Meeting provided the following advice for further preparing a basis for discussion and decision on the future of HELCOM indicators:

- possible synergies in indicators development with OSPAR should be included in the planned work,
  - future work should rely less on individual experts alone and more on expert groups, and that the role of these groups, and their engagement in the indicators work could be strengthened,
  - frequency of the pressure assessments to be developed in time for the PoMs reporting/development,
  - a good interface is needed between policy and science with clear steering for indicators development being vital,
  - include focus on further development of existing HELCOM indicators.
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3.25 The Meeting noted the Danish view to have the HODs involved in the process at an early stage of indicator development and a proposal to discuss whether the inclusion of an additional year of data to the indicator assessment is appropriate in future holistic assessments.

3.26 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to provide a re-worked document on this subject that will take a more general view and will separate policy and resource related matters from technical or scientific issues. The new document should also take into account the comments of GEAR 17-2017. The Meeting agreed that the revised document will be prepared **by 18 December**, where possible in the form of a questionnaire. Contracting Parties will provide their responses **by 15 February** to the Secretariat ([Owen.Rowe@helcom.fi](mailto:Owen.Rowe@helcom.fi)). Contracting Parties will also provide feedback on the perceived urgency of the identified strategic needs.

3.27 The Meeting took note of the list of indicator Lead/co-Lead countries and nominated national experts, as contained in **document 3-2**.

3.28 The Meeting noted that there has been no change in status regarding the roles of Lead and co-Lead countries as included in document 3-2.

3.29 The Meeting noted that Denmark, Germany and Sweden will provide final confirmation in relation to their role as Lead and co-Lead country on several indicators by **1 February 2018 (document 3-2 and 3-8)**.

#### *State of the Baltic Sea report update process and consultations*

3.30 The Meeting noted the three reports on marine litter developed in the frame of Theme 2 of the SPICE project with the support and guidance of the HELCOM Expert Network on Marine Litter (**document 3-5**).

3.31 The Meeting noted that the document has also been submitted to the upcoming HOLAS II meeting to be held on 28-29 November 2017 for consideration.

3.32 The Meeting noted that the results of the Theme 2 of the finalized SPICE project are planned to be published as a project report (along with other results).

3.33 The Meeting considered how these results could be used in the update of 'State of the Baltic Sea report, June 2017' in view of the proposals contained in the document.

3.34 The Meeting noted that EU welcomes the work conducted on marine litter as reflected in document 3-5 and their request to make this work available to EU work on marine litter through TG Litter

3.35 The Meeting welcomed the document and the work conducted within theme 2 of the SPICE project, but considered it too soon to decide on how to include contributions from the project as contained in document 3-5, in the update of the marine litter section in the 'State of the Baltic Sea' report, also noting that the issue will be discussed further at the upcoming HOLAS II 8-2017, to be held on **28-29 November**.

3.36 The Meeting invited the HOLAS II project to further develop a proposal in cooperation with the experts, on how the results from the SPICE project Theme 3 could be included in the update of 'State of the Baltic Sea report, June 2017', noting that the proposal will be evaluated further in upcoming meetings of HOLAS II and State & Conservation.

3.37 The meeting emphasised the need to have a parallel process with State & Conservation contacts for technical evaluation of the results and quality assurance of the SPICE results related to marine litter, in order to consider how to utilize these results as such in other HELCOM work.

3.38 The Meeting noted the information on the process of developing weighting values of aggregated pressure layers for use in the BSII index (**document 3-7**). The Meeting noted that a workshop to agree on weighting factors for use in HOLAS II is to be held on 7 December 2017.

3.39 The Meeting welcomed the efforts made to improve the methodology, however, requested the Secretariat to explore the possibility of calculating the BSII both with the original values

and the weighted values and presenting both results to the workshops on validating the results of the BSPI&BSII for evaluation by experts of the Contracting Parties.

3.40 The Meeting noted the ongoing consultations of the State of the Baltic Sea report and their deadlines (regional and national) as well as the plan for how to process the information received (**document 3-6**).

3.41 The Meeting took note of the overall strategy for updating the first version of the 'State of the Baltic Sea' report as contained in **document 3-1** and **Presentation 3**.

3.42 The Meeting discussed the timeline of the 'State of the Baltic Sea' update with the inclusion of the GEAR 18-2018 meeting, and agreed on it.

3.43 The Meeting noted that Denmark lifts their study reservation on the process of update the State of the Baltic Sea report (**document 3-1**).

3.44 The Meeting noted that in relation to the drafting of the conclusions chapter, first discussions on this chapter are to be held at HOLAS II 8-2017 aiming at presenting a draft chapter at the HOLAS II meeting to be held in April 2018.

3.45 The Meeting noted the interest of countries to contribute and exchange views on the content of the chapter on conclusions and future outlook in cooperation with the HOLAS II project, as well as regarding the drafting of policy messages based on the results from HOLAS II.

3.46 The Meeting endorsed the submission of document 3-1 to HOD-53-2017 including information on discussed updates to sections on marine litter and noise as well as updated ESA section.

#### **Agenda Item 4 Activities of relevant HELCOM projects or processes**

##### *HELCOM project components related to environmental targets*

4.1 The Meeting noted that, following HODs agreement, as recommended by the GEAR Group, the final report of the BalticBOOST project related to estimation of the extent and impact of physical disturbance on the seafloor from different human activities is available on the HELCOM website ([link](#)).

4.2 The Meeting noted that GEAR 16-2017 supported the publication of the report as a HELCOM BSEP in 2018 and Contracting Parties were invited to submit comments to the report for consideration when the report is finalized as a BSEP.

4.3 The Meeting noted that EU and Germany have provided comments to the report following the invitation by GEAR 16-2017.

4.4 The Meeting noted that due to time constraints Finland has not yet had the possibility to address the received comments. The Meeting noted that due to lack of time Denmark did not have the possibility to provide comments.

4.5 The Meeting took note of the wish by Denmark to view the received comments and, if needed, provide further comments to the report.

4.6 The Meeting agreed that Finland will explore the possibility of taking on board additional comments by Denmark to the report and inform Denmark accordingly by **1 December 2017**.

4.7 The Meeting invited Finland to provide a revised version of the report, including all received comments, to GEAR 18-2018 meeting.

4.8 The Meeting took note of the outcome of the HELCOM-OSPAR Joint Session on underwater noise held on 5 October 2017 in Gothenburg (Sweden), aiming at further cooperation between both Regional Sea Conventions e.g. by sharing status of work and discussing further work on underwater noise as input to the European process (**document 4-1**).

4.9 The Meeting noted the progress of the SPICE project (**Presentation 4**), especially in relation to the further development of the draft guidelines to define environmental targets for pressures affecting seabed habitats presented to GEAR 16-2017 ([document 5-3](#)) commented by EU and Germany. Also the work conducted on marine litter and ESA was presented.

4.10 The Meeting noted that due to the current status of the work under Theme 4 it is difficult to say how it might feed into the HOLAS II update process.

4.11 The Meeting noted the views by the EU on the need to link the on-going work on HELCOM benthic state and impact indicators with the on-going work within Theme 4.

4.12 The Meeting noted the views by Denmark that due to the complex nature of the topic it should be emphasized that the work should progress in small steps to ensure consolidation.

4.13 The Meeting noted the information provided by the EU that further work on impacts on habitats at EU level is to be conducted within the frame of ICES structure where EU Member States as well as RSCs are invited to participate. Additionally, due to the complexity of the topic certain aspects may be considered within the EU WG GES. The setting up of an EU Technical Group on this issue is also under consideration.

4.14 The Meeting noted that the HELCOM SPICE Workshop on microlitter was held on 7–8 November in Helsinki. The workshop enabled sharing the results of the work conducted as part of the Theme 2 of the SPICE project as well as gathering experts to identify gaps and ways forward in marine litter monitoring and assessment in the Baltic Sea, with a special focus on sampling and analysing of microlitter (**document 4-4**).

#### *Economic and Social Analyses (ESA) in HELCOM*

4.15 The Meeting recalled that ESA work within the HELCOM SPICE project is to contribute to the update of HOLAS II 'State of the Baltic Sea' report in 2018.

4.16 The Meeting noted the outcome of the HELCOM workshop on economic and social analyses supported by SPICE held on 1 November 2017 in Riga, Latvia, where the work under Theme 3 of the HELCOM SPICE project was presented (**document 4-5**).

#### *Recommendations from the Baltic SCOPE project*

4.17 The Meeting noted that the two-year (March 2015-March 2017) [Baltic SCOPE project](#) focused on achieving coherence between the marine spatial plans in the Baltic Sea.

4.18 The Meeting noted that the project has developed recommendations (**document 4-2**), to achieve improved collaboration in different MSP fields between states and that during discussion at HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 14-2017 it was noted that some of the recommendations are relevant for the work of other HELCOM groups.

4.19 The Meeting noted that HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 14-2017 suggested to establish a task force to make a proposal on relevance of the Baltic SCOPE project recommendations to the mandates of HELCOM groups. The meeting further took note of the suggestion by the Co-Chairs to invite representatives of other HELCOM groups to the meeting of MSP WG to present issues relevant to MSP which are currently under the mandate of those groups.

4.20 The Meeting welcomed the information that EU is exploring the possibility of using shipping data for environmental assessment purposes e.g. JRC is using AIS data for the purpose of bottom trawling identification ([link](#)) and within EMODNET as proxy of underwater noise caused by shipping activities.

4.21 The Meeting discussed the need to explore the link between MSP and GES, how MSP work take into account the work to reach GES, as well as identifying how well human activities data collected under the MSFD might fit for MSP purposes.

4.22 The Meeting expressed concern regarding to the limited extent to which environmental aspects are included in MSP in general, as well as the extent to which the ecosystem approach, in particular when it comes to biodiversity data and the achievement of good environmental status, has been considered in the recommendations of the Baltic SCOPE project.

4.23 The Meeting welcomed the information on a proposal for new MSP-project in the Baltic Sea Region, PanBaltic SCOPE to be financed by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) (**document 4-3**). The project consortium consists of 12 partners from the Baltic Sea region and is led by the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) and it aims at starting in January 2018.

4.24 The Meeting noted the information that an EU call is to be opened in early 2018 to contribute to the implementation of the MSFD.

4.25 The Meeting noted the possibility of applying for EMFF funding also for the purpose of marine protection.

### **Agenda Item 5 Future work and any other business**

5.1 The Meeting discussed the way forward in investigating reasons why good environmental status under the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), in relation to the HOLAS II assessment, will not be reached by 2021.

5.2 The Meeting agreed to come back to this issue at GEAR 18-2018.

5.3 The Meeting discussed how to conduct an exercise on “lessons learnt” from the HOLAS II process.

5.4 The Meeting noted that OSPAR has conducted a lessons learned exercise using a questionnaire sent to Contracting Parties both on the procedure as well as on the content of the Intermediate Assessment 2017.

5.5 The Meeting noted the views by Denmark and Sweden that the OSPAR questionnaire could be used as a basis for the HELCOM exercise. The role of the HOLAS II Core Team should be explored, as well as the results of the consultation process. The timeline of this process is also to be considered with the understanding that the update HOLAS II report is currently ongoing.

5.6 The Meeting noted the proposal by Sweden to elaborate the HELCOM questionnaire to include questions on the analysis of the flow of information in project, time management and planning, the engagement of relevant stakeholders in the process, as well as the use of open ended questions. The possibility of including questions on the quality of the product could be included. Instead of a questionnaire, a workshop could be organised.

5.7 The Meeting noted the views by Denmark and Germany that the results of the questionnaire could also be used to inform on the process of further development of indicators in HELCOM.

5.8 The Meeting noted the idea by Finland that one of the possible ways forward could be an evaluation carried out by a group of international experts. The Secretariat informed that external expert view was used prior to the streamlining of HELCOM processes in 2014.

5.9 The Meeting noted the views by Denmark on the need to address how project work and results feed into the HELCOM process, using the HOLAS II process as an example.

5.10 The Meeting agreed to establish a drafting group with Denmark, Germany and Sweden to adapt the OSPAR questionnaire to address HELCOM specificities and in line with the input provided by the plenary. Contracting Parties are invited to inform about additional willingness to participate in the drafting group to the Secretariat ([Marta.Ruiz@helcom.fi](mailto:Marta.Ruiz@helcom.fi)) **by 1 December**. The outcome of the drafting group work will be presented to the HOLAS II Core Team meeting and at GEAR 18-2018.

5.11 The Meeting agreed that the questionnaire will then be shared on-line with parties involved in the development process of the HOLAS II report, with GEAR collating and evaluating the outcome of the questionnaire for discussion on the course of action and ways to improve the next HOLAS process, which could also be used for other future HELCOM work, at GEAR 19-2018.

5.12 Contracting Parties are invited to provide proposals for focal points for the agenda of the next GEAR meeting to the Secretariat ([Marta.Ruiz@helcom.fi](mailto:Marta.Ruiz@helcom.fi)) by **1 December**.

5.13 The Meeting agreed to convene the next physical meeting of the Gear Group on 16-17 April 2018 and welcomed that Germany will host the meeting in Berlin.

5.14 The Meeting invited the Secretariat to explore the possibility to provide a coordinated HELCOM input to the INSPIRE data model process on-going at EU level.

5.15 The Meeting noted that Denmark encourages Contracting Parties to inform the GEAR group when send material in public consultation in relation to the second cycle of the MSFD.

5.16 The Meeting welcomed the information on examples of the most recent regional work carried out by the Contracting Parties on the topics covered by the BONUS call 2017 (Synthesis) (**document 5-2**).

5.17 The Meeting updated the contact information for GEAR as contained in **document 5-1 Rev.1**.

5.18 The Meeting thanked Sweden for excellent hosting of the Meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 6 Outcome of the Meeting**

6.1 The Meeting adopted the draft outcome of the Meeting. The final Outcome of the Meeting, together with the documents and presentations considered by the Meeting are available in the [HELCOM Meeting Site](#).

## Annex 1 List of Participants

Representing	Name	Organization	E-mail
<b>Chair</b>			
<b>Germany</b>	Heike Imhoff	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety	<a href="mailto:Heike.Imhoff@bmub.bund.de">Heike.Imhoff@bmub.bund.de</a>
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