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Background

The 20th Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (GEAR 20-2019) was held on 15-17 May 2019 in Berlin, Germany, at the premises of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

The meeting was attended by delegations from Denmark, Estonia, EU, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.

This document contains the Outcome of GEAR 20-2019 (without Annexes). Relevant issues not covered by other documents submitted for the Meeting are highlighted in **bold font**. The whole Outcome including all Annexes can be found [here](#). Matters requiring specific action by HOD 56-2019 are also outlined below. The outcome of discussion on the BSAP update will be addressed in a separate document.

HOLAS III

The meeting took note of the guidance paper for discussion and scoping for HOLAS III and agreed to further elaborate the initial proposal of the components of HOLAS III as included in Annex 3 of the Outcome, and invited countries to provide comments and suggestions to these components to the Secretariat (Jannica.Haldin@helcom.fi) by 12 August 2019. A further developed proposed plan will be submitted to STATE&CONSERVATION 11-2019 and GEAR 21-2019 meetings, respectively for review and input. The meeting invited the Secretariat and the relevant Expert Groups to prepare more specific information on identified gaps and development needs for the various work strands as identified in the HOLAS II process or in subsequent work.

The meeting in principle supported the suggestion that intersessional preparatory work for HOLAS III should take the form of three consecutive, interlinking work strands focusing on indicators, dataflows, and assessments and methodologies respectively. The Meeting acknowledged that the work strand on indicators is already established and that work has commenced and invited the Secretariat to prepare a draft for a project proposal for the dataflow strand, to be presented to STATE&CONSERVATION 11-2019 and GEAR 21-2019 for review before being presented to HOD for approval.

ESA workshop

The meeting considered and agreed on the request by EN ESA for HELCOM to co-host a joint workshop on marine ecosystem accounting to be held on 10 October 2019 in Helsinki, Finland. The workshop carries no additional cost to HELCOM. The meeting invited Contracting Parties to nominate national experts to take part in the workshop following the distribution of the official invitation.

Election of Chair

The meeting elected Ms. Andrea Weiss, Germany, as Chair for the Working Group for the period of 2019-2021.

The meeting elected Asker Juul Aagren, Denmark, as vice Chair for the period 2019-2021.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- take note of the outcome in general;
- approve the arranging of the next meeting of GEAR (GEAR 21-2019) on the 6-8 November in Helsinki, Finland;
- support for HELCOM to co-host the joint workshop on marine ecosystem accounting to be held on 10 October 2019 in Helsinki, Finland;
- note election of Ms. Andrea Weiss, Germany, as Chair for the Working Group, as well as Asker Juul Aagren, Denmark, as vice Chair for the period 2019-2021.



Outcome of the 20th Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (HELCOM GEAR 20-2019)

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Outcome of the 20th Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (HELCOM GEAR 20-2019)

Introduction

0.1 In accordance with the outcome of HELCOM GEAR 19-2018 (par. 6.22), the 20th Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (GEAR 20-2019) was held on 15-17 May 2019 in Berlin, Germany, at the premises of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

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

0.3 Ms. Heike Imhoff, welcomed the meeting participants on behalf of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

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

0.5 The Meeting took note that due to upcoming election, Denmark has, for the time being, no mandate to take decisions on issues of highly politically nature, but that Denmark expects that the work can mainly continue as planned.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

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

1.2 The Meeting agreed to consider late documents submitted to the Meeting.

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

2.1 The Meeting took note of the information on meetings of relevance for the GEAR Group (**document 2-1**).

2.2 The Meeting took note of the clarification by Finland that their proposal in relation to changing the term “environmental objectives” to “ecosystem health objective” in the BSAP up process is not correct ([Outcome of HOD 55-2019](#), para. 3.20).

2.3 The Meeting took note that information on the kick-off meeting of the SOM platform is contained as part of document 5-7 to this Meeting.

Agenda Item 3 Regionally coordinated implementation of MSFD

3.1 The Meeting recalled that GEAR 18-2018 agreed to set up a Correspondence Group (CG) MSFD to support broad scale, policy oriented, MSFD coordination for Art. 8, 9, 10, 11, 13 MSFD from a strategic point in GEAR. CG MSFD had its second meeting in February and the third meeting on 16 April 2019. Input for discussions under agenda item 3 has been prepared by CG MSFD.

3.2 The Meeting took note of the overview of national timetables for MSFD implementation as contained in **document 3-1 Rev. 1** and amended it to include missing information from Sweden (**document 3-1 Rev. 2**).

3.3 The Meeting took note of the following additional information:

- Denmark: the text version of the reporting has been delivered to the EU Commission, while electronic reporting period is expected to be finished by the end of June.

- Estonia: electronic reporting on Art. 8, 9 and 10 was technically approved last week. Monitoring programme tender procedure is currently on going and it is expected that work will commence in June.
- Finland: reporting on Art. 8, 9 and 10 has been finalised in Finnish and Swedish. The update of the monitoring program is progressing according to timetable. Programmes of Measures (PoMs) review has started with an ongoing gap analysis, some results from this process are already available. Current PoMs will be presented on a public webpage, and the first review based on comments received through the webpage will be done in September. The Swedish translation of the webpage is planned for late fall 2019, and an English version is under consideration.
- Germany: reporting on Art. 8, 9 and 10 has been finalised. Work has started on the Monitoring programme, and it is expected that the online monitoring manual might have to be revised due to changes in the reporting requirements. For the PoMs the broad concept for the review and update has been identified, however specific details and approaches are still under discussion and should be in place from the technical side by June, with implementation expected to begin after summer.
- Lithuania: the public procurement on the implementation of MSFD second cycle was delayed and the process has recently started. The plan is to report in the beginning of 2020. Reporting to the EC (Art. 8, 9 and 10) will be done by 31 March 2020. Monitoring programmes (Art. 11) are going to be reported by 15 October 2020. More detailed timetable will be provided as soon as possible.
- Poland: the reporting (Art. 8, 9 and 10) has been finalised with minor errors pending technical approval by EEA. Monitoring programme is on the planning phase, pending formal EU guidance. Programmes of Measures review and update is in the planning phase with some issues related to Art. 18 reporting which are expected to be solved shortly.
- Sweden: reporting (Art. 8, 9 and 10) was done around New Year, and has been approved by the EC. Monitoring program is going to be sent out for public consultation in November. Updated PoMs is on-going and has started with a PoMs gap analysis currently being executed.

3.4 The Meeting took note of the appreciation by the EU regarding the efforts in MSFD reporting made by HELCOM countries and that the EU is currently considering how to improve the reporting process for the 2024 reporting process. The work on updating reporting guidance for updating the monitoring programmes and Programmes of Measures has commenced.

3.5 The Meeting agreed that document 3-1 Rev. 2 is regularly updated with national information prior to GEAR meetings, and invited countries to provide updated information to the Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) prior to GEAR 21-2019.

3.6 The Meeting recalled that GEAR 19-2018 agreed to postpone the discussion on possibilities in providing coordinated HELCOM input to INSPIRE data model process ([document 5-6](#) to that meeting) to GEAR 20-2019, in lieu of the guidance expected to be provided at the TG DATA meeting in December 2018 (Outcome of GEAR 19-2018, para. 5.16).

3.7 The Meeting took note of the information regarding the guidance received from TG DATA as provided by the Secretariat:

- INSPIRE Directive implementation is related to HELCOM work via MSFD, since MSFD Article 19(3) mentions that the datasets used for the MSFD assessments are to be made available, and in compliance with the INSPIRE Directive Implementing Rules.
- The MSFD Technical Group on Marine Data (TG DATA) has developed a document on Recommendations for the publication of datasets under Article 19(3), where the relevant INSPIRE elements have been included. According to this [document](#), the tested HELCOM datasets were INSPIRE compliant in terms of metadata and network services. Thus, the basic implementing rule requirements should be fulfilled with current HELCOM Map and Data

service and Metadata catalogue. However, the HOLAS II datasets are not according to any INSPIRE data specification. It should be noted that for the relevant INSPIRE Annex 3 data specifications, the implementation is not yet required.

- TG DATA meeting in December 2018 discussed on the publication of marine data following INSPIRE and how to connect international organisations metadata catalogues with the European INSPIRE geoportal catalogue, which is a requirement outlined in INSPIRE. There are two options on how to do it:
 - 1) Virtual Member State subsets of RSC catalogues; and
 - 2) Identify Member State in dataset metadata using an agreed method
- It was discussed which option could be better and the meeting also noted that currently no Member State is 'pointing' to RSC portals for INSPIRE purposes. To formally do this, there is a procedure in which a Member State can notify the INSPIRE governing body that they have delegated the task to publish INSPIRE metadata/data on their behalf to RSC. The meeting participants were tasked to provide input on which from the two options would be more preferable way to connect international organisations metadata catalogues with the European INSPIRE geoportal.
- The topic will be further discussed in the next TG DATA meeting which is currently scheduled for October 2019. One of the future lines of work for TG DATA for the time period 2019-2023 is to work towards the INSPIRE harmonisation of marine datasets.

3.8 The Meeting discussed the two options presented by TG DATA and the lack of information related to the possible consequences of delegating the services. The Meeting was of the opinion that the work is not yet mature enough for considering delegating reporting, and as such neither of the two options presented at TG DATA are optimal. The Meeting agreed that more consideration by TG DATA is needed to identify the correct approach for how to involve the RSCs, as well as the legal implications of delegating the services, including regarding data ownership, obligations, and accountability. The following concerns were also raised:

- the recommendation to “delegate” responsibilities on the one hand, and the fact that a MS is not released from its obligations of the INSPIRE directive on the other. It would be useful to obtain a clear advice on when MSFD 19(3) is fulfilled regarding to INSPIRE compliance;
- there would be a need for “model wording” or a model SLA (template) for the proposed type of service level agreements with RSC;
- on how, in the longer term, data should be made available, data flow should operate, and the development of data should be organised so that it meets new INSPIRE requirements.

3.9 The Meeting invited the EU to bring the concerns of the CPs for consideration at TG DATA and invited the EU to provide additional information and guidance to HELCOM Contracting Parties which are also members of the EU on the implications of making the datasets used for the MSFD assessments available, and in compliance with the INSPIRE Directive Implementing Rules, through RSC.

3.10 The Meeting took note of the follow up work to Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848, prepared by DG GES as contained in **document 3-2**.

3.11 The Meeting considered initial proposals for next steps and priorities for HELCOM work as contained in the document and was of the view that the document complements HELCOM documentation on indicators work and policy matches and can be used as a reference in the future in the HELCOM context to help managing the follow-up work.

3.12 The Meeting considered how to use the DG GES process to improve mutually linkages of EU and RSC work and was of the view that the document is a very useful tool to understand and plan national and regional work.

3.13 The Meeting took note of the clarification request by Denmark on the role of the RSC on the setting up of threshold values for those indicators for which threshold values are to be set at EU level.

3.14 **The Meeting took note of the response by the EU that setting threshold values at the EU level is not a top down process and as such cannot function without input from the national and RSC levels. Input from national and regional work to the EU level work is to be provided through the TGs. Although the TGs develop a EU wide common framework, there is a need to reflect the specificities of the different regions e.g. in the threshold values.**

3.15 **The Meeting took note of the comments by Germany and Poland that, as no EU level threshold values for MSFD indicators have yet been defined, the process by which EU level threshold values can be adopted as threshold values for HELCOM work has not yet been considered.**

3.16 The Meeting acknowledged that the interactions between the different levels (from RSC EGs to EU MSCG), although both necessary and valuable, can be complex. The Meeting highlighted the importance of ensuring that input from the expert level is disseminated to the EU level and vice versa.

3.17 The Meeting supported the continued participation of HELCOM representatives in the TGs which are supporting the work to develop threshold values and methodological standards at EU level. The Meeting encouraged countries to represent HELCOM and its work when attending relevant meetings at the EU level.

3.18 The Meeting took note of the suggestion by EU that a way to work to ensure compatibility between work processes under the RSC and RSCs is to use the planning document (**document 3-2**) and workplan for the CIS work at EU level when planning future work.

3.19 The Meeting took note of the document on the strategic follow-up to Commission Decision 2017/848/EU based on the document 5-4 to GEAR 19-2018 (**document 3-3**) as well as the comments to the strategic follow-up by the CG MSFD (**document 3-4**). The Meeting took note of the comment by Denmark that, in line with what has been agreed in the HELCOM Workplan for indicators (HOD 54-2018 document 4-5), the priorities listed in the document must be explicitly addressed as the basis for future indicator work.

3.20 The Meeting discussed the examples of issues for discussion as raised in document 3-4 and provided the following expert views:

- focus should be on primary criteria;
- a better insight into the use of risk-based approach would be useful;
- proposed to keep the document as a living document and that countries provide input to the questions raised and considered it a good input when participating in EU level discussions;
- presented the proposal to include the BSPI in the discussion;
- that the development of threshold values consistent with European Union legislation (point d. in document 3-4) is not possible on certain occasions.

3.21 The Meeting took note of the clarification by the EU that if a secondary criterion is considered relevant by a Member State then, in its assessment process, it has been considered and given the same weight as a primary criteria.

3.22 The Meeting agreed to come back to the questions raised in **document 3-4** to the next GEAR meeting. The Meeting further agreed that countries will provide comments to **document 3-4** to Sweden (Linda Rydell, linda.rydell@havochvatten.se) by **14 October 2019** to be used as basis for discussion in GEAR 21-2019.

3.23 The Meeting took note of the request from CG MSFD to the Secretariat to contact other RSC to get an overview of what approaches others have used regarding the update of the monitoring programmes.

3.24 The Meeting took note that the Secretariat has received feedback from OSPAR indicating that preliminary discussions have commenced but that further work has yet to be considered.

3.25 The Meeting took note of the overview of the EU Commission conclusions on MSFD PoMs as contained in **document 3-5** which has been updated from GEAR 19-2018 (document 5-5) to include information from Denmark, Estonia and Latvia (based on the Commission's technical country reports). The table under achieving GES has also been updated with EU Commission draft conclusions on the regional coherence of the PoMs (overall) and of the timelines for achieving GES (MSCG_24-2019-13).

3.26 The Meeting took note of the document on regional coordination in relation to the update of MSFD PoMs (**document 3-6**).

3.27 **The Meeting discussed the guiding questions for regional coordination and actions included in the document and agreed on a general work plan as outlined below (para. 3.27-3.29), to be executed taking into consideration timetables and work being done under corresponding work strands under the BSAP update, with the aim to support the Contracting Parties who are also EU Member States in taking regional coordination of the review and update of national programmes forward as follows:**

- the Secretariat to inform ACTION project (work package on reasons for not reaching GES) that the outcomes of their work could be useful for GEAR in its strategic planning for MSFD purposes and include specifications in Art. 14. Include a technical projection of when GES could be achieved;
- highlight to SOM platform any opportunities to improve synergies with national PoMs work (such as structuring lists per Descriptor).

3.28 The Meeting also agreed that in, or prior to, the next GEAR 21-2019, the GEAR WG will:

- compile ideas from MS on how to consider Art. 14 MSFD;
- consider the draft reporting guidance on PoMs;
- discuss potential use of Art. 15 MSFD – prepare teaser document with aspects to be discussed and examples of topics;
- discuss preparation for joint documentation in support of CPs MSFD Art. 13 reporting on PoMs.

3.29 The Meeting further agreed that prior to or in the GEAR 22-2020, the GEAR WG will:

- exchange initial ideas for measures;
- discuss possible transboundary impacts on other countries waters in the context of SEA;
- start identifying possibilities for joint measures, which can possibly feed into the BSAP update;
- start preparing a HELCOM joint documentation in support of CPs MSFD Art. 13 reporting on PoMs.

3.30 The Meeting took note that additional information can be found in the working document 3.WP1.

3.31 The Meeting agreed to establish a drafting group for preparing the above documentation and discussion points for GEAR meetings. The Meeting took note that Denmark, Germany, Poland and Sweden all expressed interest to take part in the work of the drafting group.

3.32 The Meeting took note of the views by EU on the need to clarify the relationship between national measures and HELCOM and EU instruments in the reporting. The relevance for HELCOM countries to have a common documentation for the process was also pointed out.

3.33 The Meeting took note of the provision by EU of a list of reported measures per descriptor (Art. 16) as contained in **Annex 2**.

Agenda Item 4 Activities of relevant HELCOM projects or processes

4.1 The Meeting took note of the guidance paper for discussion and scoping for HOLAS III (**document 4-1** and **Presentation 1**) which includes background information on HOLAS II design, structure, and contents.

4.2 The Meeting took note of the preliminary overall timeline and that the proposed steps are tentative.

4.3 The Meeting noted that the proposed timeline outlines a HOLAS III process in which development work takes place prior to the start of the assessment process, which strives to have assessment results and supporting material in place for approval to make them available for national reporting purposes and which includes only one iteration of assessment. The Meeting noted that as a result of the proposed timeline the year 2016, which was already included in HOLAS II, would be included also in HOLAS III to ensure that the assessment covers a six year period. The Meeting agreed to come back to this question and endorsing the timetable in GEAR 21-2019.

4.4 The Meeting discussed components of HOLAS III, including aspects possibly missing, needing further development or benefitting from a different approach based on the work done under HOLAS II and start considering what might be needed for HOLAS III in terms of e.g. MSFD requirements.

4.5 **The Meeting agreed to further elaborate the initial proposal of the components of HOLAS III as included in Annex 3 to this Outcome, and invited countries to provide comments and suggestions to these components to the Secretariat (Jannica.Haldin@helcom.fi) by 12 August 2019. The Secretariat will collate and, if possible, cluster the received information and link it to the relevant work strand in the preliminary timeline, with the aim of submitting a further developed proposed plan to STATE&CONSERVATION 11-2019 and GEAR 21-2019 meetings, respectively. The Meeting invited the Secretariat and the relevant Expert Groups to prepare more specific information on identified gaps and development needs for the various work strands not covered by the indicator work, as identified in the HOLAS II process or in subsequent work. The Meeting further agreed to continue the discussion on the topic in GEAR 21-2019.**

4.6 **The Meeting in principle supported the suggestion that intersessional preparatory work for HOLAS III should take the form of three consecutive, interlinking work strands focusing on indicators, dataflows, and assessments and methodologies respectively. The Meeting acknowledged that the work strand on indicators is already established and that work has commenced and invited the Secretariat to prepare a draft for a project proposal for the dataflow strand, to be presented to STATE&CONSERVATION 11-2019 and GEAR 21-2019 for review.**

4.7 **The Meeting took note of the reflection of the Secretariat on the need of ensuring economical and human resources to support the work on HOLAS III.**

4.8 The Meeting took note of the information by the EU that it is not foreseen to open new calls that could eventually contribute to provide financing to this process until 2020.

4.9 The Meeting took note of the comment by EU that the required information for Art. 8 MSFD reporting in 2024 should be prepared in conjunction with the preparation of HELCOM indicator reports and thematic assessments, to facilitate electronic reporting in 2024.

4.10 The Meeting took note of the information related to HELCOM Indicators workshop as contained in **document 4-4**.

4.11 The Meeting took note of the outcome of the workshop as summarised by the Secretariat (**Presentation 2**).

4.12 The Meeting agreed that the draft Terms of Reference for the second workshop on indicators are shared with GEAR contacts as well as participants from the first workshop for commenting by **24 May 2019** (Owen.Rowe@helcom.fi) for its subsequent submission to HOD 56-2019 for consideration.

4.13 The Meeting agreed that if the need arises a revised document compiling additional comments provided by countries will be submitted to HOD 56-2016. For that purpose, the Meeting invited countries to provide additional comments to the Secretariat (Owen.Rowe@helcom.fi) by **10 June 2019**.

4.14 The Meeting **considered** the timeline for preparation for GEAR 21-2019 with regards to the outcome of the second indicator workshop and concluded that the dates proposed by the first workshop make meeting GEAR and HOD document deadlines very challenging. The Meeting agreed to move the workshop to 16-18 October 2019, in line with the alternative option presented also at the first Indicator Workshop.

4.15 The Meeting agreed that the Secretariat will draft a summary of the workshop outcomes and ToR for the Second HELCOM indicator workshop, supported by revised short- and long-term aims per theme from the workshop discussion (topic summaries), and prioritization of topic areas identified at the first HELCOM indicator workshop.

4.16 The Meeting considered and agreed on the request for HELCOM to co-host a joint workshop on marine ecosystem accounting to be held on 10 October 2019 in Helsinki, Finland (document 4-3).

4.17 The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to nominate national experts to take part in the workshop following the distribution of the official invitation.

4.18 The Meeting considered the updated Terms of Reference for the HELCOM expert network on Economic and Social Analyses (document 4-2).

4.19 The Meeting agreed on the ToRs as included in **document 4-2 Rev. 1**.

4.20 The Meeting acknowledged that once the plan for HOLAS III becomes more established there might be a need to further revise the ToRs of the network to outline the work to be carried out for the third holistic assessment of the state of the Baltic Sea. The Meeting agreed to come back to this issue once the plan for HOLAS III has been established.

4.21 The Meeting took note of the advances of the ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning as part of the Pan Baltic Scope project (document 4-5).

4.22 The Meeting was of the view that there is a good opportunity for cooperation in relation to the study of the linkages between state-pressure-activity for which both the project and HELCOM work currently have ongoing work, e.g. through the BSAP update process.

4.23 The Meeting highlighted the importance of drivers and the need to account for drivers also in HELCOM work on a broader scale, e.g. BSAP and HOLAS III.

4.24 The Meeting took note of the information that there is work starting to develop Europe wide guidelines for Ecosystem Based Approach in MSP.

4.25 The Meeting welcomed the information that STATE&CONSERVATION 10-2019 invited the Secretariat to approach the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG with a proposal for closer cooperation, with the first proposed step being a joint scoping workshop.

Agenda Item 5 Implementation and update of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan

5.1 The Meeting took note that HOD-55-2018 approved the workplan for the BSAP update as contained in **document 5-1**.

5.2 The Meeting took note of the organization of work for the SOM analyses and the inception report of the HELCOM ACTION project (**document 5-1, document 5-3** and **Presentations 3** and **4**).

5.3 The Meeting took note of the agreement to develop synopses on potential new HELCOM actions for the updated BSAP and further noted that HELCOM 40-2019 agreed that such synopses can be submitted by Contracting Parties, subsidiary bodies, international project and observers.

5.4 The Meeting took note of the clarification that the term “synopses” refers to proposals on new HELCOM actions for the updated BSAP while the collection of data and information required for the SOM analyses is carried out by Topic Teams under the SOM Platform as agreed by the kick-off meeting of the SOM Platform ([Outcome HELCOM SOM Platform 1-2019](#)) as well as by partners of the ACTION project

5.5 The Meeting noted that the format and template for the synopses will be distributed to HELCOM subsidiary bodies as well as published on the HELCOM web-site to make it available also for external contribution such as international projects as agreed by HELCOM 40-2019.

5.6 The Meeting noted that the Working Groups will review the incoming proposals on new HELCOM actions and underlined the need for Working Groups to be prepared to identify gaps and complement the proposed actions as needed. The Meeting further noted that HELCOM Working Groups will validate the data and information used in the SOM analyses, tentatively at autumn meetings 2019.

5.7 The Meeting took note that for the SOM analyses on biodiversity a lead country is only available for fish. The Meeting noted that STATE&CONSERVATION 10-2019 supported to gather the required information for the SOM analyses by convening either one dedicated biodiversity workshop or a series of workshops back-to-back with upcoming meetings of HELCOM expert groups (e.g. EG MAMA, JWG Birds, IN Benthic in autumn 2019).

5.8 The Meeting took note of the lack of a lead country to support the SOM analyses for non-indigenous species. The Meeting appreciated the proposal that the topic could be led by the Secretariat and the initial plans for work for the topic (**document 5-4**).

5.9 The Meeting supported the proposals for continued work on biodiversity and non-indigenous species, however encouraged countries to still consider leading them.

5.10 The Meeting considered the approach for analysing sufficiency of measures and welcomed the development of a structured approach to support the development of the updated BSAP (**document 5-6** and **Presentation 5**).

5.11 The Meeting took note that there are two type of time lags to consider in the analyses; the time lag between implementation of a measure and the reduction in a pressure and the time required for the state to recover after the reduction of a pressure. The Meeting noted that the measure-pressure time lag will be considered as part of the analyses as outlined in step 2 in document 5-6 while time lags between pressure-state will foremost be addressed in the interpretation of results.

5.12 The Meeting took note that Germany would prefer if the methodology could consider alternative approaches to estimating effect of measures, in particular with regard to eutrophication, since not all countries will be able to contribute to the quantitative approach presented in document 5-6.

5.13 The Meeting took note that WP4 of the ACTION project, which focuses on eutrophication, is currently preparing an approach to collating input to the SOM analysis, utilizing the results from HELCOM PLC6 that would require less information from countries on the effect of measures. The SOM Platform will be informed on the outcome of the ongoing discussion and countries which are not partners of the ACTION project are also welcomed to contact the Secretariat for further interaction with the project. The two planned ACTION WP4 workshop, one for WFD and another for MSFD can also be used as platforms to discuss these.

5.14 The Meeting took note that analyses of cost and cost-effectiveness of measures will only take place once a first selection of potential actions has been made, i.e. after mid-2020.

5.15 The Meeting took note that with regard to estimating the contribution of pressures from different activities the spatial considerations in the SOM work is limited to at most six main sea areas but also wider sea areas may be used for some SOM topics (see, PRESSURE 10-2019, document DS-8).

However, spatially more specific information will be provided in the assessment of impacts on the seabed.

5.16 The Meeting discussed how MSP can be considered in the SOM analyses and noted the proposal that draft MSP plans could be used to support the projection of human activities. Some MSP plans also include e.g. restrictions to activities in certain areas which can be considered as a measure to protect and improve the environment and included as such in the SOM analyses. The Meeting proposed to consider further how to integrate MSP in the SOM analyses.

5.17 The Meeting noted that the collection of data and information by Topic Teams and the ACTION project is guided by the WP6 of the ACTION project and the Secretariat ensuring that data and information is provided in the required format. The Meeting recalled that the SOM analyses will be carried out jointly for all topics through the implementation of one model that is developed to cater for the assessment of the topics covered under the SOM Platform and ACTION project.

5.18 The Meeting acknowledged that the approach will be associated with considerable uncertainties due to lack of data and information but recognized that as long as the methodology, use of data and display of resulting uncertainties is transparent the approach will provide a valuable contribution to the BSAP update. Based on the results and accompanying evaluation of probabilities it will be possible to evaluate if the results are certain enough to support the selection of new HELCOM actions.

5.19 The Meeting discussed the tentative end year of the BAU scenario, noting that three tentative targets years are of interest to consider; 2027 which is the end year of the third management cycle of the EU Water Framework Directive, 2030 to coincide with the target year for the majority of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or 2033 to coincide with development of PoMs of the EU MSFD cycle. The Meeting did not come to a conclusion on the target year.

5.20 The Meeting endorsed the use of the approach as presented in document 5-4 for continued work to analyse sufficiency of measures in HELCOM.

5.21 The Meeting took note of the information on the further elaboration of the 'BSAP structure' and disposition of the 'BSAP document' as contained in **document 5-5** and **Presentation 6**.

5.22 The Meeting recommended that the structure of updated BSAP should remain close to the current structure and that the aim should remain for the goals and objectives to communicate the core ambition of HELCOM work to the wider community.

5.23 The Meeting took note of considerations that 'Hazardous substances and marine litter' could be two separate segments or at least that listed pressures and activity areas should be divided according to the two headline topics as the current mix can be misleading. The segments should as a minimum be labelled 'Hazardous substances and litter' since the segment as such is focused on land-based activities.

5.24 The Meeting considered the 'BSAP structure' provisionally agreed by HOD 55-2018 in light of the further mapping of activities and pressures and their tentative distribution under the four segments in the 'BSAP document' as presented in Annex 1 and Boxes 1-4 in **document 5-5**.

5.25 The Meeting welcomed the background information and clarification on how activities and pressures could be linked to the BSAP segments. The Meeting supported in general the proposed disposition of the BSAP document and further elaborated on the tentative content as included in **Annex 4**.

5.26 The Meeting took note of the view from Poland to consider also hydromorphological changes in the updated BSAP, possibly linked to the segment on sea-based activities.

5.27 The Meeting took note that the State and Conservation Working Group proposed to consider by-catch under the segment on biodiversity since by-catch is considered in several Recommendations linked to the Group and that by-catch is considered under Descriptor 1 on biodiversity in the MSFD. The Meeting considered that fisheries and associated actions should rather

be kept to the segment on sea-based activities while this does not hinder that the topic in the future will be addressed by the State and Conservation Working Group.

5.28 The Meeting supported the use of action areas, management objectives and ecological objectives as a framework for developing the BSAP document, and found it useful to link the state, pressures, activities and actions. The Meeting furthermore supported that the follow-up of objectives and actions should be clarified as part of the updated BSAP.

5.29 The Meeting proposed that the tentative action areas on biodiversity are further elaborated.

5.30 The Meeting considered the outcome of drafting groups at PRESSURE 10-2019 and State and Conservation 10-2019 on proposals on the review, revision and development of new HELCOM objectives (**document 5-8**) and made the reflections as contained in **Annex 5**.

5.31 The Meeting recalled that the 2018 HELCOM Ministerial Declaration includes a number of paragraphs related to activities under the mandate of the GEAR Group (Annex 1 to **document 5-2**). These paragraphs give the direction for HELCOM work in the upcoming years, but some need further specification in order to be turned into concrete tasks for the Group or associated networks. The aim is that the concretized actions that are not carried out by the end of 2020 will be included in the updated BSAP to be agreed in 2021.

5.32 The Meeting agreed to postpone the discussion on the initial proposals for concretized actions based on the Ministerial Declaration 2018 to the next GEAR meeting, and invited countries to provide comments to the proposals contained in document 5-2 to the Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) prior to the meeting.

5.33 The Meeting further agreed to invite ESA to consider in their upcoming meeting to be held on **3 June 2019**, the revision and update of the ESA roadmap into a more structured and detailed document, dividing what approach HELCOM takes for the assessment of measures and state of the environment, and what could be/will be done for the valuation etc. The review and update of the roadmap could function as an intermediate step before proposing concrete wording for the BSAP update.

Agenda Item 6 Election of Chair

6.1 The Meeting elected Ms. Andrea Weiss, Germany, as Chair for the Working Group for the period of 2019-2021.

6.2 The Meeting elected Asker Juul Aagren, Denmark, as vice Chair for the period 2019-2021.

6.3 The Meeting thanked Ms. Heike Imhoff, Germany, her dedication and efforts as Chair of the GEAR Group and wished her a fruitful continuation of her other duties.

Agenda Item 7 Future work and any other business

7.1 The Meeting exchange their views on interaction and cooperation of the HELCOM and the EU technical groups, especially on the expert group level ([Outcome of GEAR 19-2018](#), para. 6.11).

7.2 The Meeting agreed that there is generally good representation of HELCOM and HELCOM CPs in the work of the TGs and highlighted that the work and experiences of HELCOM can also be brought forward from the point of view of individual Contracting Parties in relevant meetings, which does not require specific representation by HELCOM.

7.3 The Meeting took note of the views by the EU that a way to work to ensure compatibility between work processes under the RSC and EU is to actively contribute to the workplan for the CIS work at EU level when planning future work.

7.4 The Meeting invited the Chairs of the relevant Expert Groups as well as indicator leads to take part in the work of the TGs and where possible share information on the work and processes of HELCOM work on the relevant topics.

7.5 **The Meeting reflected that it would be beneficial for HELCOM processes to have more time to reflect on planning and delivered results. It is challenging to maintain the pace of HELCOM processes and that national resource limitations have restrictive consequences with regards to maintaining the work load of HELCOM work. The Meeting considered that e.g. the prioritization process taking place for indicator development is a way to work to ensure that use of resources is targeted.**

7.6 The Meeting checked and updated the information in the list of contact addresses of GEAR (**document 7-1 Rev 1**). Taking into account the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, (EU) 2016/679), the Meeting agreed that the GEAR contact address list will be made available on the HELCOM Meeting Portal upon receipt of consent for publication by all contact persons.

7.7 The Meeting agreed to convene the next physical meeting of WG GEAR **6-8 November 2019**, starting at 13h on 6 November and finalising at 15h on 8 November.

7.8 The Meeting welcomed the offer by Finland to host the meeting. Finland specified that the meeting will be held in Helsinki in the vicinity of the Senate Square.

7.9 The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to consider their possibilities to host future meetings of the Group.

7.10 The Meeting thanked Germany for excellent hosting of the Meeting.

Agenda Item 8

Outcome of the Meeting

8.1 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
Chair			
Germany	Heike Imhoff	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety	Heike.Imhoff@bmub.bund.de
Contracting Parties			
Denmark	Asker Juul Aagren	Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark	askja@mfv.dk
Denmark	Nathia Brandtberg	Ministry of Environment and Food	nathb@mfv.dk
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EU	David Connor	European Commission	david.connor@ec.europa.eu
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Germany	Kristine Brüggemann	Consultant for German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation	kristine.brueggemann@tiho-hannover.de
Germany	Marina Carstens	Ministry of Agriculture and Environment Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	m.carstens@lm.mv-regierung.de
Germany	Andrea Weiss	MSFD - Secretariat Function for the Ministry of the Environment c/o Federal Environment Agency	andrea.weiss@uba.de
Lithuania (on-line)	Agnė Lukoševičienė	Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania	agne.lukoseviciene@am.lt
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HELCOM Secretariat			
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Annex 2 List of reported new measures per descriptor (Art. 16)

See Excel file.

Annex 3 Components of HOLAS III

Initial Scoping for Planning HOLAS III

Topic	Missing	Improve	Revise	Comments (including possible sources)
Comparability of results		(x)		Ensure that, wherever possible, results are comparable between assessments (between successive assessment).
BSPI/BSII		x		Ensure that the indices are fit for purpose.
Continuous update of indicators	x			Resources needed to automatize indicator evaluation.
Trends		x		Important for interpreting indicator results.
Compare indicator and the results of the indices	x			E.g. for ecosystem component layers with corresponding indicator evaluation results.
Structure of report and results		x		Ensure the results are, to the extent possible, optimized for national use.
How to capture progress in a six-year period?				More focus on understanding, analyzing and presenting the results.
Use same structure as HOLAS II				Using a similar structure to HOLAS II allows for more focus to be put on analysis,
Indicator and assessment tools fit for rev. Com. Dec.		x		Should be part of the intersessional preparatory work.
Only one assessment				
Indicator evaluations and supporting material available in time for national reporting.				Strive to fit the timetable to have approved products in time for national processes
Use of SOM and ACTION project products and results for HOLAS III	x	x		Consider how to pick up on work that has been done intersessionally between HOLAS II and HOLAS III
How to address include expert judgement assessment				E.g. for invasive species
Benthic habitats	x	x		Need to consider a possible alternative timeline for approval?
Food web aspects	x	x		Food web aspects need to be significantly improved.

Design

Structure

Content

How to improve integration of information		x		Integration of various datalayers, as well as improved storytelling for the report
Effectives of measures				Use the results of SOM and ACTION
Climate change	x			How to include climate change in the assessment and the reports. From EN CLIME
More focus on activities, sources, distribution etc.		x		From SOM work.
Report structure				Review the HOLAS II reporting structure.
Indicators				
Resource needs				Start securing resources, consider opportunities to further work etc. under possible projects.

Annex 4 Tentative distribution of activities and pressures in the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan

The tentative distribution of activities and pressures is based on the provisional agreement at HOD 55-2018 on the BSAP structure and the further mapping of activities and pressures as included in document 5-5, GEAR 20-2019.

Eutrophication segment

Goal addressed:

- Baltic Sea unaffected by Eutrophication

[Cross-reference to goal on 'Sea-based activities' for achieving the goal and objectives on eutrophication, Cross-reference to goal on 'Biodiversity' on need to achieve the goal and objectives]

Pressures addressed:

- Input of nutrients and organic matter

Tentative activities addressed:

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Urban land uses (e.g. stormwater)
- Waste treatment and disposal
- Aquaculture

Tentative action areas:

- Sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and forestry practices
- Effective treatment of waste water
- Well planned urban land use

Hazardous substances and litter segment

Goal addressed:

- Baltic sea undisturbed by Hazardous substances and marine litter

[Cross-reference to segment on 'Sea-based activities' for achieving the goal and objectives for achieving the goals for hazardous substances and marine litter, Cross-reference to segment on 'Biodiversity' on need to achieve the goal and objectives]

Pressures addressed:

- Input of hazardous substances
- Input of litter

Tentative activities addressed:

- Agriculture (e.g. pesticides, pharmaceuticals)
- Forestry
- Industrial uses (e.g. oil and gas refineries, industrial plants)
- Waste treatment and disposal (waste water treatment)
- Tourism and leisure infrastructure and activities
- Production of energy (fossil fuel, nuclear)
- Urban uses (e.g. construction sites)

- Transportation (e.g. tyres)

Tentative action areas:

- Sustainable agriculture and forestry practices
- Effective treatment of waste water and airborne pollutants
- Effective waste management
- Life cycle management of products
- Responsible tourism

Sea-based activities segment

Goal addressed:

- Environmentally friendly sea-based activities

[Cross-reference to goals for 'Eutrophication' and 'Hazardous substances and marine litter']

Pressures addressed:

- Input of nutrients
- Input of hazardous substances
- Input of marine litter
- Loss and disturbance to the seabed
- Disturbance of species
- Extraction and mortality species
- Introduction of non-indigenous species
- Introduction of underwater noise

Tentative activities addressed:

- Tourism and leisure infrastructure and activities
- Production and transport of energy (e.g. operational wind farms)
- Shipping (e.g. transport and transport infrastructure)
- Extraction of living resources (e.g. fishing, hunting, marine plant extraction, incidental catches)
- Extraction of non-living resources (e.g. mineral extraction, oil and gas extraction)
- Restructuring of coastline and seabed morphology (e.g. dredging)
- Aquaculture, marine (including infrastructure)

Tentative actions areas:

- Shipping based on green technology
- Safe of navigation
- Sustainable fishing practices
- Response to maritime accidents
- Efficient ballast water management
- Effective waste treatment
- Aquaculture practices based on BAT and BEP
- Environmentally safe offshore installations
- Sustainable practices of activities that cause impacts on the seabed
- Responsible tourism
- Mitigating emissions of anthropogenic noise
- Ecosystem based Maritime Spatial Planning

Biodiversity segment

Goal addressed:

- Favourable conservation status of biodiversity*

[Cross-reference to need to reach goals of other segments to reach the goal of 'Biodiversity']

Pressures addressed:

- Not applicable

Tentative activities addressed:

- Marine Protected Areas
- Restoration of habitats
- Reintroduction of species
- Conservation and management plans

Tentative actions areas:

- Conservation and protection of ecosystem attributes, including species and habitats, diversity and replication of traits, ecosystem services, genetic variation etc.
- Restoration of habitats

Coherent network of MPAs

Annex 5 Reflections by GEAR 20-2019 on proposals for the review, revision and development of new HELCOM objectives

GEAR 20-2019 considered the outcome of drafting groups at PRESSURE 10-2019 and State and Conservation 10-2019 on proposals on the review, revision and development of new HELCOM objectives (document 5-8) and made the following reflections:

- the proposed objectives for biodiversity are being developed in the right direction however should consider the difference between habitats, communities and population since there are now overlaps between the proposed objectives;
- for the proposed objective on 'Ecosystem function and development'; consider using the word succession instead of development;
- when further elaborating on the objectives it should be recalled that they should be easy to communicate;
- align the development of ecological objectives with other ongoing HELCOM work, e.g. development of indicators;
- harmonize the terminology between objectives of different segments;
- with regard to management objectives for litter that refers to products etc., remove the word "marine" since the litter is not marine until it enters the sea;
- the term 'Wild-life' as proposed in relation to hazardous substances, litter and noise; consider a term that also embraces biodiversity more generally;
- with regard to noise, consider limiting the objective to underwater noise;
- clarify the link to MSFD descriptors, noting that this can take place at a later stage when the objectives are more developed;
- take note of and check against objectives that are currently developed by OSPAR.