



Document title	Proposal on process for developing a potential strategic decision on (quantitative) reductions of marine litter
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Background

The attached document contains a proposal by Sweden on a process for developing a potential strategic decision on (quantitative) reductions of marine litter, to be included in the BSAP.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to

- consider the proposal to start a discussion on a HELCOM quantitative reduction target for marine litter;
- decide on a process for developing a proposal for quantitative reduction target for marine litter.

SE proposal on process for developing a potential strategic decision on (quantitative) reductions of marine litter, to be included in the BSAP

Background

In HELCOM Ministerial Declaration 2018 HELCOM Contracting Parties committed to the following:

‘WE RE-COMMIT to preventing and reducing marine litter from land and sea-based sources and to achieving a significant quantitative reduction by 2025. To that end WE COMMIT to regional work on developing baselines and threshold values for maximum levels of marine litter in the Baltic Sea, in close coordination with work undertaken by Contracting Parties in other relevant fora. If additional efforts are needed to achieve those levels, WE COMMIT to developing ambitious, regionally coordinated, quantitative targets to reduce input of litter’.

Marine litter is also a key issues of the German HELCOM Chairmanship. In document 4-13 to PRESSURE 13-2020 they propose, as an ambition, an overall reduction target corresponding to a zero-emission target for macro and micro litter from land and sea-based sources to be defined until 2030.

In order to strengthen ongoing HELCOM work on marine litter, carried out e.g. through the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP-ML), and in order to specify what is meant by the tentative BSAP management objectives for marine litter, especially “Significantly reduce amounts of litter and micro plastics on shorelines and in the sea”, we propose to start a discussion on how to formulate a strategic decision on marine litter in the BSAP, preferably in the form of a quantitative reduction target with a target year.

Setting reduction targets would make it possible to show progress towards achieving HELCOM objectives for marine litter, even though the tentative BSAP objective of “No harm to sea life from marine litter” may be more difficult to reach within the implementation period of the updated BSAP.

A quantitative reduction target adds clarity in communication on HELCOMs ambitions for marine litter and would also make BSAP politically and publicly interesting.

Proposal

We propose that the HELCOM Expert Network for Marine Litter is tasked to develop a proposal for a potential strategic decision on (quantitative) reductions of marine litter, to be included in the BSAP.

The work could take as a starting point and reference

- relevant regional threshold values for marine litter for example the recently decided threshold value for beach litter at the EU level;
- reduction requirements following from for EU MS in the EU Single Use Plastics Directive (Directive 2019/904), noting that this targets only a fraction of litter items;
- the results of the HELCOM Sufficiency of measures (SOM) analysis, which indicates the reduction that will be possible, based on impact assessment and feasibility analysis to achieve through the implementation of existing measures in HELCOM and under other relevant policies;
- SDG 14.1 “by 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution”

The work could also learn from, and be inspired by, ongoing discussions in OSPAR NEAES update process to define the tentative NEAES operative target (S4.O3), where (analysis for) quantitative reduction targets

have been proposed, as well as the discussions on reduction targets within the Technical Group Marine Litter (in the EU CIS-MSFD).

Proposing a regional reduction target requires definition of a baseline (year and numbers), specifying what litter categories to include. It might also be necessary to include a reflection on what type of work (measures, implementation) would be needed to achieve the proposed target.

A timeline would need to be defined for this process and any reviewing steps needed.