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Background

The HELCOM Expert Network on Hazardous Substances (EN-HAZ), established by HOD 48-2015, was created to support the HELCOM holistic assessment of ecosystem health based on hazardous substances. The initial mandate period of this group, 2015-2018, culminated in the production of 10 HELCOM indicators for hazardous substances and the thematic assessment on hazardous substances for the State of the Baltic Sea report 2018 (HOLAS II). The second mandate period, 2018-2021, focused on further developing assessment structures towards HOLAS III, improvements in the coverage, threshold values, and application of existing HELCOM indicators and assessments (including the integrated assessment of hazardous substances), and a number of emerging topics have also been considered (e.g. screening, sediment cores, SOM work, priority substances). The current Terms of Reference (ToR) for EN-HZ are set to expire at the end of 2021.

During 2020/21 a separate process was carried out under the guidance of the Pressure Working Group to gather relevant information related to how hazardous substances are addressed within HELCOM, to review the background information available and to provide proposals on potential ways forward within HELCOM to improve the manner in which hazardous substances are addressed in the region. This process culminated in the document titled 'Regional policy document on hazardous substances' presented at HOD 60-2021 ([document 5-16](#)). This review process raised the following issues to consider: the need for development of a holistic approach to HELCOM work on hazardous substances, the need to further coordinate regional implementation of various related policies (e.g. WFD, MSFD), the need to strengthen the management cycle for hazardous substances, the need for coordination of regional efforts to prevent contamination of the marine environment by hazardous substances, the need for stronger HELCOM involvement in global initiatives related to hazardous substances, and the benefit of stronger cooperation on hazardous substances between relevant HELCOM bodies (e.g. State and Conservation and Pressure Working Groups).

PRESSURE 14-2021 ([Outcomes paragraph 8.7 - 8.9](#)) discussed practical steps toward implementing some further solutions, concluding that a short-term ad-hoc group within the existing HELCOM structure to support development of proposals towards these aims should be formed (identified as the 'ad-hoc drafting group' hereafter), noting that modifications of existing structures (e.g. EN-HZ) may be more relevant than establishing a new group. HOD 60-2021 ([Outcomes paragraph 5.27 and 5.28](#)) welcomed the review of hazardous substances activities, and the potential proposals for future ways forward, and supported the PRESSURE 14-2021 proposal for the short-term ad-hoc drafting group.

This document contains the draft revised Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Expert Group on Hazardous Substances (EG HAZ). The ToR are set out in the structure utilized under the State and Conservation Working Group and provide a broad overview of general purpose, scope and objectives of the group (some of which may be permanent fixtures or longer-term perspectives than the period of the specific ToR themselves) and

also provides a more detailed and specific listing of tasks that are then utilized to populate the timeline for the specific period of the ToR in question, the latter also facilitating follow up on progress within the group itself. The draft ToR address the coming 3-year period of 2022-2024 and aim to address both existing issues already required for EG HAZ and additionally build in relevant issues from other processes within HELCOM, including the document and proposals developed within the Pressure Working Group.

In addition, to further supporting the harmonization of efforts related to hazardous substances it is also proposed that this revision would include merging the Correspondence Group on Pharmaceuticals (CG PHARMA) with the existing EN-HZ. This approach would pull together existing strands working on contaminants within HELCOM and provide stronger linkages between aspects where there is clear cross-over (e.g. screening or indicators). A proposal on how this approach can be practically applied is made within the ToR, building on the current approach within EN-HZ that has been successful in addressing diverse but clearly related topics.

In addition, to further supporting the bridging of critical expertise within the existing HELCOM structure the revised ToR include the proposal that EN-HZ becomes a joint Expert Group, providing relevant expertise and reporting to both the State and Conservation and Pressure Working Groups (additionally supporting other relevant HELCOM processes, groups or needs that may emerge).

To more adequately reflect the work of the group, the change in mandate, and to bring the nomenclature in line with that of other expert groups it is proposed that the name of the group be changed to Expert Group on Hazardous Substances (EG HAZ).

In light of the proposed changes to the Group's mandate and remit, and should this be approved, it is likely necessary to consider additional nominations to the group to ensure the relevant expertise is available from all Contracting Parties. Furthermore, approaches (national and regional) to support the effective implementation of the proposed work (e.g. projects) would be valuable. One component related to this was briefly discussed at HOD 60-2021 ([Outcomes paragraph 5.29](#)) where the Secretariat was asked to develop a practical proposal related to a possible extension of resources and competence within the Secretariat, and it is considered that this issue should be directly addressed once the ToR are in place so that the roles and tasks within that proposal can be fully aligned.

STATE&CONSERVATION 15-2021 supported the proposal to expand the mandate of the group and agreed to change the name of the group to Expert Group on Hazardous Substance. The meeting supported the suggestion that EG HAZ be jointly guided by State and Conservation and Pressure WGs and agreed on the ToR for the group.

PRESSURE 15-2021 supported the proposal for the expansion of responsibilities and the transformation to being an Expert Group jointly guided by State and Conservation and Pressure Working Groups and endorsed the draft ToR.

Input from previous processes (i.e. EN-HZ 16-2021, the ad-hoc drafting group, STATE and CONSERVATION 15-2021 and PRESSURE 15-2021) have been included in this document and a draft work plan has been added based on the tasks and information outlined in the draft ToR. The work of EG HAZ is planned to strongly support the work at the Secretariat to modernize the HELCOM framework for hazardous substances (a separate project proposal document).

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Terms of Reference for the HELCOM Expert Group on Hazardous Substances (EG HAZ) for 2022-2024.

Terms of Reference for the HELCOM Expert Group on Hazardous Substances (EG HAZ)

Adopted by HOD xx (via State and Conservation and Pressure Working Groups) [x-20xx]

Duration of workplan:

2022-2024.

Background:

The HELCOM expert network on hazardous substances (EN-HZ), established at the HELCOM Heads of Delegation meeting 48-2015, was created to support the HELCOM holistic assessment of the ecosystem health based on hazardous substances. The initial period of this group, 2015-2018, culminated in the production of 10 HELCOM indicators for hazardous substances and the thematic assessment on hazardous substances for the State of the Baltic Sea report 2018 (HOLAS II). The second mandate period, 2018-2021, focused on further developing assessment structures towards HOLAS III, improvements in the coverage, threshold values, and application of existing HELCOM indicators and assessments (including the integrated assessment of hazardous substances), development of new indicators (e.g. copper), and a number of emerging topics have also been considered (e.g. screening, sediment cores, SOM work, priority substances).

In 2021, to better reflect the work of the group and the proposed change in scope and mandate accompanying the approval of the updated ToRs, the name of the group was also changed to Expert Group on Hazardous Substances (EG HAZ).

Purpose:

The purpose of the group is to facilitate and further develop the coordination of regional work on hazardous substances, in support of the implementation of the [Baltic Sea Action Plan](#) (as updated in 2021) and its relevant goals ('Baltic Sea unaffected by hazardous substances and litter') and subsequent commitments. This relates in particular to the following BSAP ecological objectives:

- Marine life is healthy;
- Concentrations of hazardous substances are close to natural levels;
- All sea food is safe to eat;
- Minimal risk to humans and the environment from radioactivity.

These goals and objectives account for a wide variety of chemical substances and human activities, the management of which necessitate a holistic approach, both on land and at sea, involving measures addressing legacy pollutants (e.g. heavy metals, dioxins, organotins) and contaminants of emerging concern (e.g. pharmaceuticals or certain groups of PFASs). Such a holistic approach requires crossover between relevant HELCOM groups and a mechanism for identification of regional priorities using best available scientific knowledge, including a process that clearly acknowledges emerging challenges. In addition to regional cooperation on such issues, cooperation with global treaties will be an important way to address sources of contaminants with inputs occurring beyond the regional boundaries.

The framework for HELCOM monitoring and assessment activities is set out in Articles 16, 17, 18 and 24 of the Helsinki Convention. The Strategy identifies basic principles and common understanding of the good environmental status of the Baltic Sea based on the agreed visions, goals and ecological objectives, and jointly developed quantitative targets and associated indicators. This requires regional coordination and methodological harmonization of national monitoring activities based on the shared best available scientific knowledge. Reliable and region-wise compatible information on the Baltic Sea environmental status should be used in policy making at the international, regional and national levels, ensuring that adequate decisions and necessary measures for pursuing good environmental status of the Baltic Sea are taken.

To address these issues, the group will develop plans and documentation towards harmonized monitoring and assessments, develop of a holistic approach for the management of hazardous substances that covers all parts of the management cycle in the Baltic Sea region, provide expert input into HELCOM work related to hazardous substances, and address specific aspects identifies within the following ToRs and workplan. The Work will be guided by the relevant HELCOM Working Groups to ensure solid integration of all developments.

Scope:

The overall scope of the expert group is to facilitate regional cooperation towards the vision, goals and objectives of the BSAP, including identifying and specifying necessary projects according to the needs under the BSAP and subsequent commitments. In addition, a key aim will be to build towards a holistic regional approach for addressing hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea region (i.e. encompassing the details addressed under objectives and tasks), an approach that ensures regular incorporation of new or emerging issues, and is documented in a clear and implementable way within HELCOM and its existing structure. If possible, the option to implement these projects by national funding or joint research applications should also be considered (e.g. EUSBSR or Interreg). Further, the Group is a platform for exchange of experiences as well as harmonization of methods concerning the work with hazardous substances, indicators and integrated assessments. Consideration should also be given to collaborative work with relevant groups (e.g. other HELCOM expert groups or Working Groups) or organizations (e.g. OSPAR, EU, EMEP, CLRTAP, ICES).

Objectives:

The objectives listed below provide a broad overview of relevant issues. These may be long-term/rolling issues that will be permanent fixtures on the ToRs or highly specific tasks identified. The detailed information and requirements to attain these objectives is provided in the subsequent task list that is then utilised to populate the workplan.

- To identify and link national work with HELCOM work and foster an exchange of information related to hazardous substances within the region;
- To provide expert input to relevant HELCOM groups and processes related to hazardous substances;
- To develop a holistic regional approach to address the full management cycle of hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea region;
- To support the improved integration of information on hazardous substances within a causal framework (e.g. loads, measures, etc) into the group's discussion and products;
- Regularly review and maintain an up-to-date overview of substances (including pharmaceuticals) that are considered hazardous and of priority in the Baltic Sea region;
- To support risk-based evaluation for substances where effects may be unknown or there are combined effects, including the further development of biological effects assessments;
- To actively participate in HELCOM processes that address hazardous substances or relevant indicator and assessment development, including providing proposals to HELCOM working groups on requirements such as threshold values and substances of concern:
- To identify funding and project needs and opportunities (national and regional/international) to support the work and objectives of the group.

The expanded scope and tasks of the joint-Expert Group is expected to require an altered way of working to ensure a clear division of tasks (amongst the Contracting Parties, and also between the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat), will require additional resources and potentially new nominations to the group, is expected to involve intersessional work (likely withing topic teams), and will require a high degree of coordination within meetings.

Tasks:

The tasks listed below provide a more detailed and step-wise interpretation of the broad objectives and will be used to populate the workplan for the work of the group for the specific period of the ToRs. The tasks of the group cover a wide range of different aspects related to hazardous substances (or contaminants), and can be considered to include all hazardous substances/contaminants that are not encompassed by other designated HELCOM groups (i.e. excludes: marine litter, underwater noise, radioactive substances and oil spills). The group's activities link to the following tasks:

Information exchange

- Identify, discuss and bring to the fore the outcomes of relevant national and regional projects and/or experience so that best practices can be developed on the regional level;
- To foster an exchange of information related to hazardous substances within the region, both between Contracting Parties and within HELCOM processes and groups;
- Bring relevant information from other regional, international and global processes (e.g. UN, EU, WFD, MSFD, Urban Wastewater Directive, River Basin Commissions, other relevant Conventions etc) to the fore to ensure relevant issues are addressed in HELCOM;
- Where required, participate in relevant regional, international and global initiatives, and if required present HELCOM work and developments related to hazardous substances;
- Bring national concerns and achievements to the forum so that latest developments can be considered and necessary proposals made within the HELCOM working structure.

Holistic regional approach

- Review the current summary and proposals provided under the '[Regional policy document on hazardous substances](#)';
- Review all HELCOM policy initiatives related to hazardous substances and consider their relevance, compatibility with other policies, and their need for renewal/update/removal;
- Carry out a regional review of priority substances (see task below) based on the approach previously discussed within EG HAZ (data sources: evaluate national data, HELCOM data, COMBINE data, screening data, relevant regional and international lists);
- Design a process by which such a review can be implemented once during a given management cycle (e.g. as follow up to a HOLAS assessment and/or regional screening campaign);
- Initiate and support the development of measures and proposals to address the BSAP objectives;
- Develop a structured and viable holistic regional approach that establishes a clear and structured strategy to address hazardous substances throughout their management cycle in the Baltic Sea region;
- Include relevant processes detailed below to the holistic regional approach (e.g. application of a causal framework, regular screening, review of priority substances and substances of emerging concern).

Substances of priority and emerging concern

- Maintain an up-to-date overview of hazardous substances (including pharmaceuticals, micropollutants, and substances of emerging concern) and their respective monitoring;
- Regularly review the overview of substances that are considered hazardous and of priority in the Baltic Sea region (including evaluation of the relevant MSFD criteria elements), adding or removing substances based on best available knowledge;
- Incorporate regular regional screening (target and non-target), and nationally/internationally derived information, into the review process;
- Engage in discussion, and provide expert opinion on what substances are considered as priority, and where appropriate action is required related to these substances; Ensure that new issues/substances of

concern (including e.g. increases in antimicrobial resistance occurrence), and relevant expert proposals, are highlighted to the relevant HELCOM Working Groups;

- Ensure potential offshore sources of hazardous substances are also addressed via such approaches.

Causal framework

- Maintain awareness of substances of potential risk to the Baltic Sea environment, their sources and pathways, including offshore sources and sources outside of the HELCOM area;
- Collate and exchange information on the use of hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea region, their sources, pathways and loads;
- Evaluate and document potential environmental risk from the identified substances;
- Better incorporate substance input and load information into the group's work (e.g. PLC, EMEP), including within indicator development (e.g. drivers, activities, pressures);
- Support the development and proposal of suitable measures to address hazardous substances or mitigate their impacts, based on the best available techniques and best environmental practices;
- Further develop the hazardous substances work and products to address all relevant stages of the HELCOM causal framework, DAPSIM (e.g. [HELCOM indicator manual, p17](#));
- Explore the potential to develop pressure related evaluations, in cooperation with PLC, inclusive of linking state and pressure components (e.g. status indicators and inputs).

Monitoring

- Review the policy requirements for hazardous substances (linked to the review of priority substances and indicator requirements/development), including the criteria and element requirements of the MSFD;
- Revise existing monitoring guidelines to ensure all relevant parameters for successful indicator assessments is included;
- Review monitoring distribution and structure from the regional perspective and consider existing proposals (e.g. master stations, outputs from BONUS SEAM and FUMARI) and develop proposals to incorporate relevant components;
- Develop monitoring guidelines for all relevant substance or substance groups monitored within HELCOM, and provide guidance on best practice for substances of concern so that harmonized data collection can be beneficial for future assessments;
- In cooperation with HELCOM PLC, develop guidelines for monitoring of hazardous substances in inland waters and at point sources to improve the HELCOM pollution load compilation for hazardous substances;
- Develop relevant monitoring guidelines for other approaches that offer potential insights related hazardous substances (e.g. sediment cores);
- Maintain an updated catalogue of relevant Monitoring and Assessment Guidelines in line with HELCOM processes.

Indicators

- Act as the platform for discussion and review of HELCOM indicators on hazardous substances to support Lead and Co-Lead Countries and appointed experts developing them;
- Review threshold values and methodological requirements in line with any new developments that occur (e.g. EU processes, better scientific knowledge, national processes), and with respect to other commitments by Contracting Parties (e.g. under the EU);
- Propose new indicators of relevance to the region (e.g. to address emerging issues or substances), inclusive of threshold values, and an approach for their development;
- Identify areas where it is relevant to collaborate or harmonise with external organisations (e.g. OSPAR or the EU) and inform the relevant Working Groups, e.g. when setting new threshold values, reviewing existing ones, developing new indicators;

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- Further develop the hazardous substances indicators within the HELCOM causal framework, DAPSIM (e.g. [HELCOM indicator manual, p17](#)), for example to better address loads/inputs, sources and trends;
 - Identify possibilities to develop pressure (e.g. input) indicators, including relevant input limits;
 - Update the core indicator reports at regular intervals, as decided in HELCOM;
 - Ensure timely and quality assured delivery of indicator-based assessments of hazardous substances, including integrated assessments.

Assessments

- Support and validate the development of the hazardous substances tools for the automated calculation of HELCOM hazardous substances assessments (indicators and integrated assessments);
- Further develop a regional approach to address the need for trophic level and tissue specific correlations/correction factors;
- Further develop assessment(s) of biological effects (including linkages to the EG MAMA health team) to address multi-factor (combined) pressures and risk evaluations;
- Further develop the applications of sediment core analyses, including for addressing the evaluation of historic hazardous substances inputs, background concentrations, emerging substances, and the effect of measures;
- Support relevant groups addressing contamination hotspots (marine and terrestrial) and dumped munitions that have potential direct or indirect inputs to the Baltic Sea environment;
- Address the assessment requirements of acute pollution occurrences and support other HELCOM groups (e.g. IWGAS and RESPONSE) to define appropriate monitoring and assessment procedures that also meet policy requirements.

These overall tasks provide the framework to guide the work of the Group on implementation which depends on availability of resources. If possible, the Group might be a platform to develop and apply for external funded projects in order to accomplish the listed objectives.

Reporting

- The Chair(s) will report to State and Conservation and Pressure Working Groups regularly, i.e. for the information document deadline of each working group meeting. The activity report should consist of information on activities and developments which have taken place since the previous report, a list of links to the meeting sites of previous meetings or workspaces containing documents, and a list of aspects on which decisions or guidance from those working groups are required. A template for the reporting will be provided by the Secretariat. Relevant Comment and Decision documents will also be submitted to Working Groups as the need emerges.

Membership

The Group will consist of experts nominated by Contracting Parties and will be open to Observers according to HELCOM procedures.

Validity of ToR

The work of the group is open ended in that the requirement for a group to address hazardous substances in line with the objectives of the BSAP is ongoing. However, the ToRs and in particular the workplan will be reviewed and, as necessary revised, every three years.

This review and revision is to take place in line with the relevant HELCOM meetings prior to the end of 2024.

Organization of work

The expert Group will function under and received guidance from the HELCOM Working Groups State and Conservation and Pressure and in accordance with 3-year workplan approved by these groups.

The Expert Group will elect a Chair or co-Chairs for the group for a 3-year term.

The mode of work for the expert Group will be mainly via correspondence and online meetings, with physical meetings being organized as needed and via request to the relevant Working Groups. It is proposed that physical meetings may take the form of meetings that address one of a few specific topics (similar in purpose to workshops) where progress would be best achieved in such an environment.

To support the integration of a broader range of expertise and topics, meeting agenda items will be clustered to group related topics as far as possible and thereby allow relevant experts to join. In addition, to strengthen the development on specific topics voluntary 'topic teams' within the Expert Group will be established, i.e. topic teams addressing biological effects or sediment cores, or the development of the holistic approach.

The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the Group. The meetings, documents and products will be handled at HELCOM Meeting Portal workspaces dedicated to this purpose. The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the Group.

Workplan

The table below provides an overview of the tasks identified above in the ToRs, and includes relevant links to the updated BSAP 2021. Timeline of work (ongoing and dedicated focus for tasks/actions).

Task	Action	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	Ongoing
1	Link national work and HELCOM work to exchange information related to hazardous substances within the region													
1.1	Share national experiences to support implementation of best practices	EG HAZ meeting		EG HAZ meeting		Ongoing								
1.2	Bring relevant information from other regional, international and global processes to the fore in HELCOM											Relevant input to 3		Ongoing
1.3	Where required, participate in relevant regional, international and global initiatives											Relevant input to 3		Ongoing
1.4	<i>BSAP 2021 HL2: Develop national programmes with a particular focus on hazardous substances which are not adequately regulated by other policies.</i>													Ongoing
2	Input to relevant HELCOM groups and processes related to hazardous substances													
2.1	Regular reporting to WGs (PRESSURE and STATE&CONSERVATION) and interaction with other relevant groups (and HOD if relevant)		WGs		WGs	Ongoing								
3	Develop a holistic regional approach to address the full management cycle of hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea region													
3.1	Review the current summary and proposals provided under the													NA

Task	Action	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	Ongoing
	‘Regional policy document on hazardous substances’													
3.2	Review all HELCOM policy initiatives related to hazardous substances and consider their relevance, compatibility with other policies, and their need for renewal/update/removal													NA
3.3	Summarize and evaluate best approaches for direct cooperation and integration with other relevant ongoing international processes						Link to 1							NA
3.4	Further development of conceptual approach to evaluate new substances and review priority substances based on the approach previously discussed within EG HAZ								Link to 6					Ongoing towards 2025
3.5	Further develop the causal framework (DAPSIM) aspect of hazardous substances within which the holistic approach is to be established (including measures).													NA
3.6	<i>BSAP 2021 HL3: Submit to HELCOM by 2023 an account listing, as detailed as possible, the planned and implemented measures to reduce releases of hazardous</i>							WG	HOD					NA

Task	Action	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	Ongoing
	<i>substances in the environment, including available knowledge on their effects.</i>													
3.7	<i>Guided by the Working Groups, support the development of following BSAP 2021 actions (see list of them below the table), in particular related to developing measures or suitable follow-up actions: HL4, HL5, HL6, HL7, HL8, HL11, HL12, HL14, HL15, HL16, HL17, HL18, HL19, HL20, HL25, HL26, HL27, HL29 and HL30.</i>	Support WGs	Link to strategic approach	Link to strategic approach	Link to strategic approach	Support WGs	2025 and ongoing							
3.8	<i>BSAP 2021 HL1: Develop a regional strategic approach and, on the basis of that approach, an action plan for HELCOM work on hazardous substances by 2024</i>				WGs		WGs		WGs		WGs		2024 HOD	NA
3.9	<i>BSAP 2021 HL11: Organize continuous follow-up of the work on hazardous substances under various global and EU policies as well as in Regional Sea Conventions (RSCs) starting from 2024, and actively influence these processes by promoting international actions identified as necessary to</i>									Link to strategic approach	Link to strategic approach	Link to strategic approach		Ongoing

Task	Action	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	Ongoing
	<i>improve the environmental status with respect to hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea.</i>													
4	Improved integration of information on hazardous substances within a causal framework (e.g. loads, measures, etc) into the group's discussion and products													
4.1	Develop an improved understanding of hazardous substances within a causal framework (including offshore sources) to support an evaluation of drivers, sources, activities, pathways and load so that aspects such as risk and measures can also be better addressed. Improve cooperation with other relevant groups (e.g. IWGAS, PLC, EMEP).					Link to 7			Link to 7			Link to 3		Ongoing
4.2	<i>BSAP 2021 HL6: Establish a chemical product register to be built upon, e.g. the EU REACH (EC1907/2006) framework, by 2025</i>									Relevant input to 3		Support WGs,		2025
4.3	<i>BSAP 2021 HL22: Improve knowledge base on occurrence of pharmaceutical substances in the environment, their persistence and harmful effects and ensure availability of this information for broad expert community by 2025.</i>								Relevant input to 3, 5 and 6			Relevant input to 3		2025

Task	Action	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	Ongoing
4.4	<i>BSAP 2021 HL21: Introduce by 2027 measures based on the best available scientific knowledge and technologies to restrict the use and prevent releases of perfluorinated alkyl substances, phenolic compounds with endocrine disrupting effects and chlorinated paraffins.</i>								Relevant input to 3 and 5			Relevant input to 3		2027
5	Review and maintain an <i>up-to-date overview of substances</i> (including pharmaceuticals) that are considered hazardous and of priority in the Baltic Sea region													
5.1	<i>BSAP 2021 HL9: Establish procedures by 2025 to utilize information obtained under various policies and policy frameworks addressing the use of chemicals (e.g. Stockholm Convention, SAICM successor, REACH Regulation, Water Framework Directive, Industrial Emissions Directive etc) to prioritize measures targeting regional contaminants and to identify emerging pollutants of high concern.</i>								Relevant input to 3			Relevant input to 3		2025
5.2	<i>BSAP 2021 HL10: Establish a mechanism for managing the HELCOM list of priority substances starting from 2025 and respond to screening and assessment results pointing out</i>								Relevant input to 3			Relevant input to 3		2025

Task	Action	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	Ongoing
	<i>regional challenges for the Baltic Sea environment and contaminants of emerging concern.</i>													
5.3	<i>BSAP 2021 HL23: Identify priority pharmaceuticals by 2024 utilising the best available knowledge on their releases into the aquatic environment, environmental effects and available data on their use in the region, for efficient risk reduction and for subsequent integration of these substances to HELCOM assessments, as indicators of the state of the Baltic Sea and environmental pressure.</i>									Relevant input to 3				NA
5.4	Maintain a regularly updated overview of hazardous substances (including pharmaceuticals, micropollutants, and substances of emerging concern) and their respective monitoring that is supported by a broad information base (i.e. screening and national/international lists or overviews) and can													Ongoing

Task	Action	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	Ongoing
	inform relevant follow up actions.													
6	Support <u>risk-based evaluation</u> for substances where effects may be unknown or there are combined effects, including the further development of biological effects assessments													
6.1	BSAP 2021 HL28: Address substances of emerging concern by commencing recurrent screening campaigns starting from 2021 including broad analytical techniques such as suspect screening and non-target screening methods.			Relevant input to 7					Relevant input to e and 5			Relevant input to 5 and 5		Ongoing
6.2	BSAP 2021 HL13: By 2028 develop further relevant monitoring for the biological effects of hazardous substances in order to facilitate a reliable ecosystem health assessment.					Link to 7			Link to 7					2028
6.3	Further develop assessment(s) of biological effects (including linkages to the EG MAMA health team) to address multi-factor (combined) pressures and risk evaluations;		Link to 7											Ongoing
7	Actively participate in HELCOM processes that address hazardous substances or relevant indicator and assessment development, including providing proposals to HELCOM working groups on requirements such as threshold values and substances of concern:													
7.1	General topics where input required to HELCOM processes													Ongoing

Task	Action	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	Ongoing
7.2	Develop, review and improve the HELCOM indicators on hazardous substances to ensure relevant substances are addressed, indicators are operational and that threshold values remain valid. Increase harmonization between relevant organizations or regions where appropriate.													Ongoing
7.3	Support indicator development within a causal framework to also address relevant drivers and pressure indicators where viable and appropriate.			Link to HOLAS III										Ongoing
7.4	HOLAS III – data													NA
7.5	HOLAS III – indicators													NA
7.6	Further develop and maintain operational hazardous substances assessment tools.													Ongoing
7.7	Further develop the applications of sediment core analyses, including for addressing the evaluation of historic hazardous substances inputs, background concentrations, emerging substances, and the effect			Link to HOLAS III										Ongoing

Task	Action	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	Ongoing
	of measures (including relevant guidelines);													
7.8	HOLAS III – Thematic Assessment													NA
7.9	Review of indicators and gap evaluation to support new indicator development and priorities or required adjustment.													Ongoing towards HOLAS IV
7.10	Further develop a regional approach to address the need for trophic level and tissue specific correlations/correction factors													Ongoing towards HOLAS IV
7.11	Address the assessment requirements of acute pollution occurrences and support other HELCOM groups (e.g. IWGAS and RESPONSE) to define appropriate monitoring and assessment procedures that also meet policy requirements													Ongoing towards HOLAS IV
7.12	Support relevant groups addressing contamination hotspots (marine and terrestrial) and dumped munitions that have potential direct or indirect inputs to the Baltic Sea environment;													Ongoing
7.13	<i>BSAP 2021 HL24: Develop guidance for the</i>													2025

Task	Action	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	Ongoing
	<i>environmental monitoring and analysis of pharmaceuticals identified as indicators of the state of the Baltic Sea by 2025.</i>													
7.14	Review and update all relevant Monitoring and Assessment guidelines to ensure up to date and providing complete coverage.													Ongoing
8	Identify funding and project needs and opportunities (national and regional/international) to support the work and objectives of the group													
8.1	Identify national, regional or international funding opportunities to support the work.													Ongoing

[Additional BSAP 2021 actions not directly or only partially included in the work plan above.](#)

These actions listed below either require additional guidance and input from the Working Groups on their full implementation, or are actions for which WG level implementation will likely require support from EG HAZ.

BSAP 2021 HL4: Strengthen and update HELCOM recommendations for industrial releases of hazardous substances by applying information produced under the EU Industrial Emissions Directive and other sources in order to sufficiently protect the Baltic Sea environment.

BSAP 2021 HL5: Decrease the emissions of hazardous substances from small scale emitters in urban areas (municipal entities, businesses and private households) by chemical-smart purchasing strategies, substitution and awareness raising campaigns.

BSAP 2021 HL6: Establish a chemical product register to be built upon, e.g. the EU REACH (EC1907/2006) framework, by 2025.

BSAP 2021 HL7: Launch educational and information campaigns by 2025 to raise public awareness regarding responsible handling of hazardous substances in household chemicals and articles to prevent their release into the environment.

BSAP 2021 HL8: Introduce requirements regarding content of chemicals of high regional environmental concern in public procurement procedures by 2025 and provide support for follow-up.

BSAP 2021 HL11: Organize continuous follow-up of the work on hazardous substances under various global and EU policies as well as in Regional Sea Conventions (RSCs) starting from 2024, and actively influence these processes by promoting international actions identified as necessary to improve the environmental status with respect to hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea.

BSAP 2021 HL12: HELCOM participation starting from 2023 as member in Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management High Ambition Alliance (SAICM HAA) to support international cooperation on global chemical challenges that influence the state of the Baltic Sea. Identification of global challenges that are of importance for the Baltic Sea that HELCOM will put on the SAICM HAA agenda.

BSAP 2021 HL14: Encourage the use of alternative less toxic metals and other materials to replace lead in fishing gear and shooting bullets with the aim to minimize harmful use of metallic lead.

BSAP 2021 HL15: In order to decrease dioxin emissions, establish information campaigns and other instruments which focus on the quality and species of firewood, and what is burned in small-scale combustion appliances, by 2025.

BSAP 2021 HL16: Enhance implementation of the UNEP 2013 Minamata Convention on Mercury by those Contracting Parties that are parties to this Convention and encourage its ratification by HELCOM countries that are not yet parties to the Convention.

BSAP 2021 HL17: Undertake all possible measures to reduce mercury emissions from energy sector by 2028.

BSAP 2021 HL18: Control concentration of mercury in dredged material and undertake possible measures to prevent its release during dredging operations and handling of dredged material.

BSAP 2021 HL19: Introduce the ban of the use of mercury-based amalgam in dentistry by 2030, except when deemed strictly necessary.

BSAP 2021 HL20: Establish by 2023 and maintain procedures (rules) to handle mercury containing wastes to prevent entering of the contaminant to the environment, including public information on the procedures (rules).

BSAP 2021 HL25: Organize an information campaign on what not to flush by 2025 (addressing chemicals, pharmaceuticals and litter).

BSAP 2021 HL26: Strengthen the collection of unused pharmaceuticals from the public in the Baltic Sea region by 2026.

BSAP 2021 HL27: In cooperation with health care institutions, increase awareness and knowledge of consumers about pharmaceuticals containing substances that are persistent and harmful for the environment, when scientifically justified information is available.

BSAP 2021 HL29: Limit the use of firefighting foam containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at sea and in the catchment area and promote sustainable alternatives by 2027.

BSAP 2021 HL30: Minimize the release of biocides from antifouling products to the marine environment, and preferably by 2027 replace use of biocidal antifouling products with biocide-free alternatives on structures, equipment and recreational craft in cases not already subject to the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships when available and environmentally and technically feasible.