



Document title	Draft Terms of Reference for the Expert Group on Wildlife Response 2022-2023
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Agenda Item	6 - Matters arising from the HELCOM Groups
Submission date	16.11.2021
Submitted by	Executive Secretary
Reference	Outcome of RESPONSE 29-2021 paragraph 7.10

Background

The HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR) has since 2014 worked to strengthen the cooperation between HELCOM Contracting Parties in the field of oiled wildlife response. HOD 56-2019 approved the prolongation of the mandate for of EWG OWR until the end of 2021.

EWG OWR 17-2021 discussed the proposal on simplifying the name of the Group and RESPONSE 29-2021 approved the draft Terms of Reference for the renamed HELCOM Wildlife Response Group (WILDLIFE) for 2022-2023 with a view to their subsequent adoption by HOD 61-2021. The Meeting also approved the Work Plan for the Group (RESPONSE 29-2021, document 7-2-Add.1).

In light of the efforts to harmonize the names of the various HELCOM sub-groups (c.f. document 7-1), it is proposed that the Group be called the Expert Group on Wildlife Response (EG WILDLIFE).

This document contains the draft Terms of Reference of the HELCOM Expert Group on Wildlife Response (EG WILDLIFE) for 2022-2023, as approved by RESPONSE 29-2021, and as amended by the Secretariat to reflect the proposed name of the Group.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to adopt draft Terms of Reference of the HELCOM Expert Group on Wildlife Response (EG WILDLIFE) for 2022-2023.

Terms of Reference for HELCOM Expert Group on Wildlife Response (EG WILDLIFE) 2022-2023

1. Background

In 2010 the Contracting Parties adopted HELCOM Recommendation 31E/6 on integrated wildlife response planning in the Baltic Sea Area. It recommends the Contracting Parties to apply Guidelines for their wildlife response planning attached to the Recommendation, and requests the Contracting Parties to develop a wildlife response plan integrated into oil pollution contingency plans either on a national or sub-national/local level and exchange the details about its contents with other Contracting Parties.

The 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting agreed to develop and adopt national wildlife response plans by 2016 and agreed to strengthen the work on OWR under HELCOM Response Working Group (WG) through a targeted expert working group and by enhancing cooperation with NGOs and the private sector, inter alia in order to accommodate the involvement of volunteers.

The work of the HELCOM Expert Group on Wildlife Response (WILDLIFE) is carried out under the supervision of the HELCOM Response Working Group and is based on this framework terms of reference

2. Tasks and working mode of EG WILDLIFE

The Expert Group will aim to strengthen the cooperation between HELCOM Contracting Parties in the field of oiled wildlife response. It will act as a forum for the exchange of information on progress and best practices, and facilitate the creation of joint standards and cross-border cooperation in oiled wildlife response. It will also, where possible, facilitate the training of national experts and exchange of training materials.

As a sub-group reporting to HELCOM Response Working Group, the Expert Group has the following tasks:

1. To facilitate the development of national oiled wildlife response plans in cooperation with other authorities and NGOs;
2. To arrange regular (at least once a year) meetings involving all members of the group, allowing for training and information sessions that would provide added value to the national processes;
3. To produce using the Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) approved by RESPONSE 25-2018 as a reporting tool for OWR, at the end of each calendar year, annual reports covering the OWR activities in the Contracting Parties and submit it to HELCOM Response Working Group for adoption. Based on the results from the reports to provide necessary support and encouragement to countries where OWR activities are less developed.
4. To arrange training and information exchange activities to support and promote work of the Expert Group.
5. To contribute to involvement of NGOs and private sector in OWR activities.
6. Other tasks according to the group's needs and vision

Working mode:

To ensure resource efficiency, the group will arrange online meetings and work via correspondence and using the HELCOM Workspace. These meetings shall take place at least once a year but can be arranged more often if necessary. When necessary, face-to-face meetings shall be organized back-to-back with other HELCOM Response Working Group related events.

The Chair may invite relevant experts to attend online meetings with presentations on specific topics.

The group (Chair) will report to HELCOM Response Working Group on progress made.

Prolongation of the Expert Group should be considered at the end of the period of its mandate and based on the results of the work progress.

3. Members of EG WILDLIFE

Each Contracting Party shall nominate at least one representative of the appropriate state body (government or agency) to the Expert Group. The Contracting Parties may choose to nominate further members as they see appropriate.