



Document title	Estonian comments regarding BSAP implementation and updating HELCOM working structure based on that
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Background

Documents 2-1 and 7-1 of the HELCOM Heads of Delegations meeting (HOD 61-2021) both address the issue of implementation of the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan. The HELCOM Working Groups have had initial discussions on the implementation of the actions of the Baltic Sea Action Plan in autumn 2021, depending on the timing of the meetings, and the 2021 BSAP has been taken into account in revising the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Expert Groups that have been submitted to HOD 61-2021. The detailed planning for the implementation of the BSAP actions will be utilized in revising the ToRs and Work Plans of the Working Groups by the end of 2022. Possible changes to the HELCOM structure as well as the decision to continue the time-limited mandates of the Agri and Fish Groups beyond 2022 (c.f. Agenda Item 7) will affect sharing the responsibility between the Working Groups and the renewal of the ToRs and Work Plans. However, this should not affect planning the concrete steps or finding the leads for the implementation of the actions.

The previous restructuring of the HELCOM Working Groups took place after the 2013 Ministerial Meeting. HOD 54-2018 agreed that the current working structure should be in place until the completion of the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan and may be revisited in 2021 in light of the results of the update process of the BSAP. Document 7-5 proposes a timeline for considering the renewal of the HELCOM working structure.

With this document Estonian would like submit its general comments on the Sea Action Plan implementation and on updating HELCOM working structure based on the updated plan for the upcoming years (doc 2-1 and 7-1). Also, in order to trigger discussions on the effective working structures of HELCOM, Estonia presents a possible alternative for that purpose.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the Estonian proposal and discuss accordingly.

Estonian comments regarding updating HELCOM working structure

Estonia expressed its views regarding the implementation of the BSAP at the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2021. One of the issues raised was how to ensure the effective follow up of the implementation of the new BSAP.

At HELCOM level, Estonia is looking forward to an effective follow up system enabling transparent tracking of progress of the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan. We are all aware, that the previous action plan was only partially implemented and unfortunately we still don't know the reasons why. We believe, that it is crucial to understand our failures and learn from them.

We would also like to see more ambition and responsibility of Contracting Parties. We need to know, how the new Action Plan contributes to the implementation of the Convention and how the Contracting Parties comply with fundamental principles and obligations set in Article three of the Convention.

We support the general idea, and that the more detailed discussions on the implementation of the actions are planned for the spring 2022 Working Group meetings.

Prioritization of the actions based on the implementation years is important, and first things should be done first, but we should not forget, that some actions could take longer time and thus might need earlier start as well.

Regarding the HELCOM working group structure, Estonian is in position, that the current system needs updating. For example State&Conservation as it is now, might not be the best format due to overwhelming amount of topics and documents and limited time.

We have discussed internally and generating a proposal (see table 1) how to reorganize HELCOM groups according to BSAP thematic structure.

We see, that as the BSAP actions are organized according to topics, the implementation work could also be done in the same way, this could provide better follow-up system and implementation rate. Also, we see the advantage, that when reorganising our work according to the chapters and action groups in new BSAP would help us to stay focused, targeted and objective oriented as all this information for management purposes is already available in the new BSAP.

	Commission meetings/ministerial meetings				
	Heads of Delegations				
Working groups	Biodiversity	Eutrophication	Haz Sub /Litter	Sea based	Horizontal
Number of actions per working group	35 actions	36 actions	32 actions	63 actions	28 actions
Expert groups	1) Conservation expert group 2) Ecosystem based management expert group	1) Nutrient expert group 2) Agricultural expert group 3) Wastewater expert group	1) Haz Sub expert group 2) Marine litter expert group	1) Maritime expert group 2) Response expert group 3) Fisheries expert group 4) Noise expert group 5) Seabed expert group	1) Climate change expert group 2) Monitoring expert group 3) Maritime Spatial Planning expert group 4) ESA expert group 5) Knowledge and awareness raising expert group
Possible expert networks, correspondence groups etc.					

Table 1 Estonian proposal regarding new HELCOM working structure based on updated BSAP