

Joint HELCOM/OSPAR Task Group on  
Ballast Water Management Convention (BWMC) and Biofouling  
Online, 2-3 December 2021

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<b>Document title</b>	Process of the establishment of a Joint OSPAR HELCOM Expert Group on Non-Indigenous Species (JEG NIS)
<b>Code</b>	2-2
<b>Category</b>	INF
<b>Agenda Item</b>	Feedback from Relevant Bodies, including HELCOM, OSPAR and IMO MEPC
<b>Submission date</b>	18.11.2021
<b>Submitted by</b>	HELCOM Secretariat
<b>Reference</b>	Outcome of TG BALLAST 11-2020, para. 2.5

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## Background

TG BALLAST 11-2020 took note that a proposal for a joint OSPAR-HELCOM expert group on non-indigenous species (NIS) was welcomed in principle by BDC(2) 2020 although a lead country is yet to be identified. The meeting further noted that the proposal has also been discussed within the HELCOM State & Conservation Working Group, with consideration of the matter expected to continue in 2021. The meeting discussed the possible need to liaise also with the ICES Working Group on Introductions and Transfers of Marine Organisms in order to avoid duplicate efforts ([Outcome of TG BALLAST 11-2020](#), para. 2.5).

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 reviewed the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) and 3-year Work Programme of the Joint OSPAR/HELCOM Expert Group on Non-Indigenous Species (JEGNIS) and agreed on an intersessional process for their approval ([Outcome of STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021](#), para. 4J.42-4J.45). In addition, STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 requested the Secretariat to submit the draft ToR to HOD 60-2021 for approval in principle, to avoid any further delays in establishing the group ([Outcome of STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021](#), para. 4J.46). In HOD 60-2021 Estonia expressed a reservation on the draft ToR. The Meeting invited the Secretariat and Estonia to continue discussions bilaterally in order to clarify the position of Estonia ([Outcome of HOD 60-2021](#), para. 5.35-5.36).

Following decisions by STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021, the draft ToR for the JEG NIS were revised based on the input provided by Estonia as well as the provision of missing information such as on the HELCOM data arrangements and circulated for provision of final comments. Input was provided by Denmark and Estonia ([Outcome of STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021](#), para. 4J.42-4J.46).

STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 noted that the work between the JTG BALLAST & BIOFOULING and JEG NIS will be clearly separated to ensure that there will be no duplication of work and the further clarification, regarding what working group would be most appropriate to host the Joint Expert Group, that the intention is for the assessment of NIS under HOLAS III to at least partially be carried out under JEG NIS, which is why it is proposed to be under the State and Conservation Working Group. JEG NIS will also report to OSPAR's Biological Diversity Committee (OSPAR BDC) via the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Co-ordination of Biodiversity Assessment and Monitoring (ICG-COBAM). STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 approved the final ToR of JEG NIS for adoption at HOD 61-2021 (8-9 December 2021). The meeting noted that Estonia is in the process of lifting the study reservation placed at HOD 60-2021 ([Outcome of STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021](#), para. 3J.48-3J.50).

The final ToR of the JEG NIS for 2021-2024 have been submitted to HOD 61-2021 for adoption ([document 6-20](#)).

## Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.