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<b>Document title</b>	Revised joint decision support tool on alien species introductions via Ballast Water
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<b>Category</b>	INF
<b>Agenda Item</b>	3 - Ballast water
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## Background

A decision support tool on alien species introductions via Ballast Water was adopted in 2013 by the coastal countries of the Baltic Sea and North-East Atlantic regions as part (chapter 6) of the joint harmonized procedure on granting exemptions from ballast water treatment provisions of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention) of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

The tool comprises a database on observations of alien species and physical features in ports, a list of target alien species, a list of all marine alien species observed in port surveys in the region and an agreed risk assessment model. It will allow administrations and ship owners to quickly identify routes that may qualify for exemptions to the application of ballast water management for ships (regulation B-3) and those that are unlikely to.

[A revised version of the online tool](#) was released on 9 July 2014 based on funding from the ALIENS 3 and BALSAM projects. It has been transferred to HELCOM servers during spring 2014.

The revised online tool will in the future be jointly administered by the [HELCOM](#) and [OSPAR](#) Secretariats. It has been developed with funding through the [HELCOM ALIENS 2](#), [ALIENS 3](#) and [BALSAM](#) projects by the HELCOM Secretariat and Germany ([BSH/Brockmann consult](#)).

The further development of the tool will be supported by the Joint HELCOM/OSPAR Task Group on Ballast Water Management Convention Exemptions (HELCOM/OSPAR TG BALLAST), which will follow up the implementation of the "Harmonized Procedure" in general.

## Action required

The Meeting is invited to:

- take note of the release of the revised tool,
- consider improvements and potential sources of funding for such improvements.