



## Outcome of the eighth meeting of the Sixth Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation (PLC-6) project group (PLC-6 8-2015)

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### Introduction

0.1 In accordance with the decision of the seventh meeting of the HELCOM project *Sixth Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation* (paragraph 7.4, Outcome of PLC-6 7-2014), the eighth meeting of the Sixth Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation (PLC-6) project group (PLC-6 8-2015) was held on 20-21 May 2015 at the premises of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Uppsala, Sweden.

0.2 The Workshop was held back-to-back with a *Workshop on total uncertainties in input estimates* on 18 May 2015 and a *Workshop on transboundary inputs and retention* on 19 May 2015.

0.3 The Meeting was attended by representatives from all Contracting Parties except European Commission and Poland. The data consultants SYKE and BNI, Sweden also attended. The List of Participants is contained in **Annex 1**.

0.4 The primary aims of the Meeting were to agree on the publication of the PLC-6 guidelines on the HELCOM website; discuss, elaborate and agree on a draft table of contents and road map for the PLC-6 report, including which background and supporting data to include; as well as to discuss improvement of pollution input data for follow-up of the HELCOM nutrient reduction scheme.

0.5 The Meeting was chaired by the PLC-6 Project Manager, Mr. Lars M. Svendsen, Denmark and Ms. Minna Pyhälä, HELCOM Secretariat, acted as secretary.

### Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

Documents: 1-1

1.1 The Meeting adopted the Provisional Agenda as contained in document 1-1.

### Agenda Item 2 Information from the Project Manager, Secretariat and Contracting Parties

Documents: 2-1, 2-2

2.1 The Meeting took note of the Outcome of PRESSURE 2-2015 as contained in document 2-2.

2.2 The Meeting noted that PRESSURE 2-2015 initiated a discussion on the timing of the next periodic PLC assessment (PLC-7) and the proposal that it should be based on 2017 data so that the assessment can be used for EU WFD reporting requirements by those countries that are also EU member states. PRESSURE 2-2015 requested Contracting Parties to investigate nationally whether they support carrying out periodic PLC monitoring in 2017 and that PRESSURE 3-2015 should discuss and agree on the schedule of PLC-7 monitoring, reporting and assessment.

2.3 The Meeting took note of the following provisional information by Contracting Parties on their possibilities to carry out PLC-7 monitoring in 2017:

- Denmark: it should be fine
- Estonia: it should be fine
- Finland: there are no obstacles and could, in principle, be carried out
- Germany: it should be fine
- Latvia: not in a position to inform at this stage
- Lithuania: not in a position to inform at this stage

- Russia: currently there are no objections, but the national consultation has not yet finished
- Sweden: it should be possible (one concern is that there would not be time to evaluate the model used for PLC-6 before that).

The Meeting invited all Contracting Parties to carry out national consultations on whether they can carry out periodic PLC reporting in 2017 so that a decision can be made at PRESSURE 3-2015.

2.4 The Meeting took note of the progress of the PLC-6 project, including the status of the road map, as contained in document 2-1.

2.5 The Meeting took note of information by Contracting Parties on their PLC monitoring and assessment activities for PLC-6:

- Denmark: there will probably be no estimates on heavy metals since the monitoring is so limited. Reporting on nutrient inputs will work as planned.
- Estonia: there has been progress with the Norwegian funded project for developing the Estonian catchment area model. An application is being built to combine numerous different national databases. There are plans to model diffuse sources from the 600 WFD water bodies, and this data should then be available for HELCOM purposes.
- Finland: all is going according to plan at the moment.
- Germany: running smoothly as planned
- Latvia: There should be no problems with river loads and points source but there will be some challenges with retention and transboundary loads
- Russia: currently the situation is uncertain. The possibilities to make aggregation of point sources by river basin is being explored. No information on how to deal with unmonitored area and diffuse sources at this stage.
- Sweden: there are challenges with the uncertainty of some of the data used for modelling (especially at local levels). They have made surveys for municipalities to get updated PLC related data, there is a plan to make the data more easily available through a web-based interface.

2.6 The Meeting welcomed information by Finland on the results of monitoring phosphorus deposition on Utö island (which is almost in the Baltic Proper). Based on two years of monitoring, wet deposition is on average 4 kg/km<sup>2</sup> per year. Estimates of dry deposition are 2-3 kg/km<sup>2</sup> based on one year monitoring. The Meeting appreciated that the results are very much in line with estimates used for the PLC-5.5 dataset (which were based on a survey carried out within the PLC-5.5 project). The Meeting was of the view that it would be useful to redo the survey on monitoring of atmospheric inputs of phosphorus also within the PLC-6 project as there may be new information available in Contracting Parties and welcomed the offer of Ms. Tuija Ruoho-Airola to facilitate this survey work.

### Agenda Item 3                      Status of PLC data

Documents: none

3.1 The Meeting took note of the demonstration of the new PLC data upload application and the overview of the reported 2013 PLC datasets that have been uploaded.

3.2 The Meeting took note that there are gaps and errors in the datasets uploaded by Contracting Parties and noted that the Data Consultant will be in contact with each Contracting Party in late May/early June to arrange individual Skype meetings for jointly reviewing and verifying the reported national data. The aim is to complete the verifications before summer holidays.

3.3 The Meeting noted that BNI is currently working on establishing the connection between the reporting templates and the database and welcomed that news that some of the data have already been entered into the new database.

3.4 The Meeting discussed the timetable for completing a PLC 1994-2013 dataset and agreed that the 2013 data should be verified and updated **by the end of June 2015** following the country-by-country consultations (cf. paragraph 3.2). The Data Manager will compile the reported data **by the end of July 2015** and forward it to the Project Manager ([lms@dce.au.dk](mailto:lms@dce.au.dk)) and BNI, Sweden ([bo.gustafsson@su.se](mailto:bo.gustafsson@su.se)), so that they can fill in possible remaining data gaps. Once the data gaps have been filled in, Contracting Parties will be invited to review, correct and endorse the dataset so that it can then be used for updating the MAI and CART assessments.

3.5 The Meeting discussed the reporting of 2014 data and agreed that the Data Manager should provide the Contracting Parties with pre-filled in reporting templates for reporting the 2014 PLC data (annual and periodic reporting) **by the end of August 2015**. Contracting Parties should check and amend the pre-filled in templates **by 25 September 2015** so that the corrections can be included in the database in good time before the reporting deadline.

3.6 The Meeting recalled that the deadline for reporting 2014 annual data is **31 October 2015** and **31 December 2015** for periodic data.

#### Agenda Item 4 Finalization of PLC-6 Guidelines

Documents: none

4.1 The Meeting discussed the finalization of the PLC-6 guidelines and noted that the open issues related to industries will be updated before 27 May 2015 so that the guidelines can be published on the HELCOM website.

4.2 The Meeting took note of the question of Estonia on whether heavy metals should be analyzed from filtered (0.45 µm) or unfiltered water samples and agreed that totals are preferred but both should be acceptable. The Meeting agreed that the following footnote should be added in a footnote to tables 1.1 and 1.2 in the PLC-6 Guidelines:

In accordance to **Annex X** of the EU Water Framework Directive, heavy metals can be reported as dissolved concentration, i.e. the dissolved phase of a water sample obtained by filtration through a 0.45 µm filter or any equivalent pre-treatment.

4.3 The Meeting discussed how to accommodate the reporting of the heavy metal data into the database, noting that some Contracting Parties report total concentrations, and others dissolved concentrations. The Meeting proposed including “dissolved” as a separate parameter in the database and requested the Data Manager to investigate how to best include this information in the database and inform RedCore DG.

4.4 The Meeting took note of updates made to the Annex 2 (instructions for annual reporting) and the status of Annex 3 on instructions for periodic reporting.

4.5 The Meeting discussed the finalizing of the periodic reporting templates and agreed that the latest version should be submitted by the Data Manager to Contracting Parties **by 26 May 2015**. Contracting Parties should provide final comments to the templates **by Monday 8 June 2015 at the latest**.

4.6 The Meeting discussed the procedure for future updating of the PLC guidelines, which have usually been updated as part of the work of the periodic assessment projects (i.e. PLC-5 and PLC-6). Since the guidelines have now been substantially restructured and improved, the Meeting

was of the view that it would be more resource efficient that the guidelines are updated more regularly as needed, in a way similar to the procedure used by the MORS expert group for updating of guidelines on monitoring of radioactive substances.

4.7 The Meeting suggested that RedCore DG should take over the task of reviewing and proposing revisions of the guidelines as needed and that substantial proposed changes would be presented to PLC project meetings and/or Pressure WG for endorsement.

## Agenda Item 5 Preliminary outline for the PLC-6 assessment

Documents: 5-1, 5-2, 5-3, 5-WP1, 5-WP-Rev.1

5.1 The Meeting took note of the draft strategic overview of future PLC assessment products and the processes and timetables for their operationalization (document 5-1) and agreed to take it into account when elaborating a first draft outline and list of main contents for the PLC-6 assessment.

5.2 The Meeting recalled the list of users and their requirements of PLC data, data products and assessments as elaborated by PLC-6 7-2015 (document 5-2).

5.3 The Meeting also recalled the overview of PLC data deliverables and how they fulfil PLC-6 expected outcomes as prepared by PLC-6 7-2015 (document 5-3).

5.4 The Meeting took note of the initial ideas by the Project Manager for contents of the PLC-6 assessment as contained in document 5-WP1.

5.5 The Meeting discussed what the overall contents of the PLC-6 assessment should be, taking into account documents 5-1, 5-2, 5-3 and document 5-WP1.

5.6 The Meeting discussed the main data requests from different users and agreed that the PLC-6 assessment should aim to provide the information that is of greatest interest, i.e. contribution from different sources to the total inputs.

5.7 The Meeting acknowledged that the PLC strategic document highlights that the periodic assessments should avoid duplication/overlap with other PLC assessment products, but was of the opinion that it is useful to have some general information also on total inputs to the sea (not only source apportionment), especially since the other assessment product might be updated before finalization of the PLC-6 report and therefore cover a different time period. The Meeting agreed that any overlapping information should be kept very brief and to refer to the other PLC assessment products for further details.

5.8 The Meeting acknowledged that there might not be complete coverage of all data/issues requested from Contracting Parties (i.e. heavy metal inputs and information on effectiveness of measures). Since there is a very tight schedule for completing the PLC-6 report, there is a need to accept that there may be some blank or patchy sections in the report.

5.9 The Meeting discussed the content and structure of the PLC-6 assessment report, especially the additional supporting and background information needed, including deadlines for compiling the information as contained in document 5-WP1-Rev.1.

5.10 The Meeting agreed that the Project Manager will make a proposal of suitable formats in which Contracting Parties should provide the requested supporting information and that RedCore DG should review and further elaborate the list before it is circulated to Contracting Parties for commenting and endorsement.

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## Agenda Item 6                      Improvement of pollution input data for follow-up of the HELCOM nutrient reduction scheme

Documents: none

6.1                      The Meeting took note of the publication of the [core pressure indicator on nutrient inputs](#) which assesses progress towards fulfillment of maximum allowable inputs (MAI) to the Baltic Sea sub-basins.

6.2                      The Meeting took note that a draft assessment of fulfillment of country-wise allocation of reduction targets (CART) will be submitted to HOD 48-2015 for approval. The web-based assessment is available on restricted pages on the HELCOM website (<http://helcom.fi/baltic-sea-action-plan/progress-towards-reduction-targets/>), and can be accessed using the following login information when prompted: **Username:** hcdomain1\monasweb and **Password:** Mon4sw5b.

6.3                      The Meeting reviewed the CART follow-up assessment and made some clarifications and editorial corrections. The Meeting noted that it is unrealistic to include all possible combinations of country by basin graphs in figure 2 and agreed that an Excel file should be included with the basic data, and an explanation of how each Contracting Parties can make their own figures.

6.4                      The Meeting took note of information by the Secretariat that Poland had intended to participate in the PLC-6 meeting, but were unable to join and therefore raised the following questions/issues via e-mail:

- Clarification for the unusually large and unjustified Polish responsibility for the reduction of TN and TP loads
- How to account for the fact that Polish WFD water quality requirements (good environmental status) are fulfilled in their rivers
- Wish to present the current Polish monitoring data regarding nitrates and phosphates which indicate decrease in concentration over the period 1998-2013
- Wish to present Polish modeling studies during 1998-2005
- Wish to give a presentation on Baltic Regime Shift
- Methodological reconsideration of HELCOM 2013 reduction targets (due to availability of new better multiannual data as well as internationally approved modeling tools).

6.5                      The Meeting invited Poland to participate in the next meeting of RedCore DG to review and clarify the issues of concern for Poland. Once there is a better understanding of the issues, RedCore DG can recommend which is/are the appropriate forum/fora for discussing the different issues (i.e. PLC-6 project group meeting and/or Pressure WG meeting).

6.6                      The Meeting noted that the discussion of revising the nutrient reduction scheme and fair burden sharing of reduction requirements is a political discussion and should be discussed once there is a decision from the HOD level that the nutrient reduction scheme (including the principles and methods) should be revised.

6.7                      The Meeting discussed the outcomes of the workshop on transboundary inputs and retention and the workshop on uncertainties in national datasets.

6.8                      The Meeting had the understanding that the transboundary river basin commissions are not involved in coordinating measures (i.e. elaboration of river basin management plans), but rather that their work focuses on monitoring of water quality and flow. The Meeting agreed that the compilation of PLC data, including monitoring of water quality in transboundary rivers, should be coordinated with the transboundary river commissions at a national level.

6.9                      The Meeting was of the view that the discussion on uncertainties in input data is at an initial stage and that there is need to carry out further work to investigate the degree of uncertainty from

different sources and to develop methodologies for making comparable estimates of uncertainties. The Meeting was of the view that that this work on improving the understanding of uncertainty should be further investigated via e.g. a project.

6.10 The Meeting recalled that BNI has been working on developing a project application under EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region for improving data on transboundary inputs and noted that this issue will be discussed in the next RedCore DG meeting. The Meeting invited BNI to inform on the progress of this work at the next meeting of the PLC-6 project group.

## Agenda Item 7 Future work

Documents: 7-1

7.1 The Meeting reviewed the list of PLC-6 project contacts (document 7-1) and updated it as contained in **Annex 2**.

7.2 The Meeting discussed further work of the project and agreed that the Roadmap should be updated with the deadlines for reporting additional supporting information which are listed in document 5-WP1-Rev.1.

7.3 The Meeting agreed to arrange the next meeting of the PLC-6 project at the Secretariat in Helsinki, Finland, on 27-28 October 2015 and felt that the 29 October 2015 should be reserved for a possible PLUS project meeting.

7.4 The Meeting agreed that the following issues should be discussed during the next PLC-6 project meeting:

- status of reporting annual PLC 2014 data,
- possible QA issues related data reporting,
- review of the availability of background and supporting data and information and planning next steps for their compilation,
- review of available information on measures, and
- further elaboration of the assessment outline.

## Agenda Item 8 Any other business

Documents: 8-1

8.1 The Meeting took note of the progress of the PLUS project as contained in document 8-1 and welcomed the demonstration by Mr. Alexander Sokolov, BNI, Sweden, of the good progress with development of the web application for reporting PLC data and initial quality assurance steps.

8.2 The Meeting thanked Sweden for the excellent arrangements and generous hospitality during the Meeting.

8.3 The Meeting thanked Minna Pyhälä, HELCOM Secretariat, for her exceptionally good and skilled contributions to the HELCOM PLC related work over the past years and wished her success for the future.

## Agenda Item 9 Closing of the Meeting

9.1 The Meeting adopted the draft Outcome of the Meeting. The Outcome, together with the documents and presentations considered by the Meeting are available in the HELCOM Meeting Portal.

## Annex 1 List of Participants

Name	Representing	Organization	E-mail
<b>Chair</b>			
Lars M. Svendsen	Denmark	Danish Centre for Environment and Energy, Aarhus University	lms@dce.au.dk
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## Annex 2 List of nominated PLC-6 project members

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