



Outcome of the Tenth Meeting of the Seventh Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation (PLC-7) Project Implementation Group (PLC-7 IG 10-2020)

Table of Content

Introduction	2
Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda	2
Agenda Item 2 Matters arising from other HELCOM work	2
Agenda Item 3 Data reporting and processing	2
Agenda Item 4 Current activities of the PLC-7 project and coordination with other HELCOM activities including ACTION project	4
Agenda Item 5 BSAP nutrient reduction scheme	6
Agenda Item 6 Planning the PLC-8 project	6
Agenda Item 7 Any other business	7
Agenda Item 8 Future work and meetings	7
Agenda Item 9 Closing the Meeting	8
Annex 1. List of Participants	9
Annex 2. Nominated PLC-7 Project Implementation Group Members	10
Annex 3. Updated timetable for PLC7 project	11
Annex 4. Agenda items for PLC-7 IG 11-2020 meeting	12

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Introduction

0.1 The Tenth Meeting of the PLC-7 Project Implementation Group (PLC-7 IG) took place at the premises of the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management in Gothenburg, Sweden, on 10-12 March 2020.

0.2 The Meeting was attended by representatives from all the Contracting Parties except Lithuania and the EU. Representatives of Russia, EMEP (Norway) and State Water Holding Polish Waters attended the Meeting online. Also, experts from and BNI (Sweden) participated in the Meeting. The List of Participants is contained in **Annex 1**.

0.3 The Meeting was focused on finalizing major PLC-7 thematic reports which are to be delivered by the end of 2020.

0.4 The Meeting was chaired by the PLC-7 Project Manager, Lars M. Svendsen, Denmark, and Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky, HELCOM Secretariat, acted as Secretary.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

1.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda of the Meeting as contained in document 1-1 taking into account the proposal by Sweden (item 1.2).

1.2 The Meeting took note of the proposal by Sweden to discuss reporting of the data uncertainties and share related practices under the agenda item 3.

Agenda Item 2 Matters arising from other HELCOM work

2.1 The Meeting took note of the outcome of HELCOM 41-2020 and PRESSURE 11a-2020. The Meeting also took note of information on the current status of the BSAP update.

2.2 Latvia informed the Meeting of the recently approved LIFE project with one of the work strands related to adaptation of models (SWAT) to assess nutrient losses and quantification of inputs from aquaculture. The other recently approved INTERREG project MEDWwater between Latvia and Lithuania aimed to analyse pharmaceuticals in WWTP effluents and rivers. The Meeting welcomed the information noting that the project results can be available for PLC-8 thematic reports.

Agenda Item 3 Data reporting and processing

Finalizing 2018 annual data reporting including update of spatial data

3.1 The Meeting took note of the information by the Secretariat on the status of 2018 annual data reporting.

3.2 The Meeting discussed distinction of monitored and unmonitored areas for transboundary loads and recommended to report transboundary catchment without such distinction. The information on monitored load in this case is attributed to the monitoring station.

3.3 The Meeting also pointed out that all background information for the reported data is to be verified before the reporting starts.

- 3.4 The Meeting took note of the information by Poland that spatial data has also been recently reported.
- 3.5 The Meeting noted that Russian annual reporting for 2018 has been accomplished though some data on point sources and unmonitored areas are unavailable. These gaps will be further filled in during the assessment procedure.
- 3.6 The Meeting took note of the status of Danish data re-reporting. All previously reported data on nutrient inputs from Denmark have been removed from HELCOM PLC water database. Annual data will be re-reported by Denmark by 17 March 2020 at the latest.
- 3.7 The Meeting proposed a disclaimer indicating that the data reported by Denmark for 1995-2017 have been completely re-reported in 2020. In this light, assessment datasets utilized for each assessment are to be recorded and stored.
- 3.8 The Meeting took note that current scientific studies in some countries e.g. Estonia and Latvia will eventually lead to the need to re-report old data.
- 3.9 The Meeting clarified that flows for monitored rivers are reported in the table for monitoring station. Also, the Meeting reiterated the agreement to report retention every year to estimate loads at sea for transboundary areas. Based on that, the Meeting proposed to consider integration to the HELCOM PLC water database an additional procedure for checking the reporting of retention as mandatory parameter.
- 3.10 The Meeting acknowledged difficulties faced by reporting limits of quantification for chemicals which are rejected by the database and requested the data base administrator to investigate the problem and propose relevant improvement of the reporting system.
- 3.11 The Meeting pointed out that spatial borders of sub-catchments should correspond to the areas with estimated and reported loads. Thus, some areas should be aggregated even across the border e.g. between Finland and Russia. Updated spatial data will be provided by Finland within a week.
- 3.12 The Meeting urged all PLC IG members to report and verify spatial data **by 1 April 2020** and requested the Secretariat to contact Russia and Lithuania in this regard.
- 3.13 The Meeting agreed that the following maps will be produced:
- Monitored areas based on monitoring stations at river mouth
 - Transboundary and border rivers
 - Specific runoff (flow) in $l\ s^{-1}\ km^{-2}$ for whole monitored river basins and unmonitored areas
 - Specific load (N and P) kg/ha for whole monitored river basins;
 - Specific load (N and P) from sub-catchments at the border kg/ha
 - Specific load from agriculture (kg/ha)
 - Specific agricultural loads per cultivated area (kg/ha)
 - Background losses (kg/ha)
 - Data coverage for Hg, Cd, Pb and may be some other metals
 - Specific loads of heavy metals for quantified areas.
- 3.14 The Meeting found difficult to publish the retention data at the map and data service without explanation on the methodologies used.
- 3.15 The Meeting was informed about the result of the computation of total P load for Latvian rivers from the available data on dissolved phosphates. The estimation based on an empirical ratio between phosphates and total P revealed either downward trends or stable TP loads for all rivers starting from 1995.

3.16 The Meeting pointed out that the revision of the Latvia data on total P loads in mid-1990's will significantly affect national input trends.

3.17 The Meeting agreed that Latvian data on total P loads are to be re-reported for the period 1995-2002 at the latest **by 27 March 2020** and requested the Secretariat to assist with insertion of data to the HELCOM PLC water database.

Status of the periodic data 2017 reporting

3.18 The Meeting took note of the information on the state of the periodic data 2017 reporting.

3.19 The Meeting took note that the whole set of Danish periodic data starting from PLC-3 assessment will be re-reported **by mid-May 2020**. But, the PLC-7 periodic data will be re-reported **by the second week of April**.

3.20 The Meeting took note that Poland will report PLC-7 periodic data (2018) **by 15 March 2020** except individual indirect point sources which will be reported **by the end of May**.

Data on atmospheric deposition of nitrogen.

3.21 The Meeting considered and discussed a sectoral sources-receptor matrix of atmospheric N deposition on the Baltic Sea in 2017 presented by EMEP as a part of the PLC-7 project.

3.22 The Meeting noted that the Excel spreadsheet with data has been already provided to the Project Manager. The data will be utilized for the source apportionment and further discussed at PLC-7 meetings considering this PLC-7 thematic report.

3.23 The Meeting considered also the information by EMEP on the reasons of changing N deposition data in the reference period (1997-2003) since they were used to set regional reduction targets (document was submitted). The Meeting acknowledged that the main reason of the changes had become an update of the reported emission data (50%), change of meteorological data and the modelling resolution (20%) and upgrade of the EMEP model (30%).

3.24 The Meeting agreed that PLC-IG members will review the report and inform the Secretariat about any comments **by 18 March 2020** (Dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi). The Meeting proposed to submit the report to PRESSURE 12-2020 to endorse its publication on the HELCOM website.

3.25 The Meeting considered a final draft of the EMEP report on Estimation of Country-wise Reductions of Atmospheric Nitrogen Deposition, achievable by 2030 through Implementation of the Gothenburg Protocol / EU-NEC Directive.

3.26 The Meeting specifically considered the effect of the use of 5 years data to identify climate parameters and agreed that this provides scientifically sound information and that uncertainty of the climate parameters does not affect the quality of project outcomes.

Agenda Item 4 Current activities of the PLC-7 project and coordination with other HELCOM activities including ACTION project

Assessment of the progress towards implementation of national nutrient input ceilings

4.1 The Meeting took note of the first results of the assessment of progress towards nutrient input ceilings (NICs) in 2017 presented by the Project Manager.

4.2 The Meeting welcomed the presented results noting that minor correction of the data is possible as a result of the update of Latvian data on P loads in the period before 2002. These updates might also influence assessment results of some neighboring countries. Rereporting of Danish data 1995-2017 will also affect the assessment results.

4.3 The Meeting agreed that the draft assessment results will be submitted to PRESSURE 12-2020 including updated policy message and supplementary information consisting of tables with progress assessment for all countries and plots of input trends for each country and sub-basin 1995-2017.

Updating background information

4.4 The Meeting discussed the questionnaire on population in the BS catchment area and agreed on that as given in the **Attachment 1**.

4.5 The Meeting invited members of PLC-7 IG to reply to the questionnaire **by 1 May 2020** to the Project Manager (lms@dce.au.dk) with copy to the Secretariat (dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi; Juuso.Haapaniemi@helcom.fi).

4.6 The Meeting discussed progress in compilation of the agriculture related data for the background report noting that currently the information from Estonia, Denmark and Russia is missing.

4.7 The Meeting invited these countries to provide requested information **by 1 May 2020** to Sweden (Katarina.Hansson@ivl.se) with copy to the Secretariat (dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi; Juuso.Haapaniemi@helcom.fi).

4.8 The Meeting agreed that the information on the number of aquaculture and scattered dwellings would be derived from PLC water database and requested the Secretariat to update related tables of the background report and present them to the PLC-7 meeting in June 2020.

4.9 The Meeting agreed that climate parameter's figures do not need any updates since PLC-6 background report.

Background losses of nutrients

4.10 The Meeting considered document 4-1 illustrating proposal by Germany to update section related to background nutrient losses of the PLC-Guideline and thanked Germany of the work done.

4.11 The Meeting agreed that the presented document is a good starting point for the update of the PLC-Water Guideline which will be launched next autumn in the frame of PLC-8 project.

4.12 The Meeting invited members of PLC-7 IG to provide comments on the document and reference values reflecting various parameters used to identify national natural background losses **by 1 May 2020** to Germany (julian.moennich@uba.de) with copy to the Secretariat (dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi; Juuso.Haapaniemi@helcom.fi). The Meeting recalled that data on natural background losses have been already updated for 2017.

Assessment of inputs of selected hazardous substance

4.13 The Meeting discussed an initial proposal on the content of the thematic report on input of hazardous substances and welcomed the proposal (document 4-3).

Progress in the work on assessment of the main sources and pathways of nutrient input to the Baltic Sea, including input by big rivers

4.14 The Meeting discussed the scope of the thematic report on 7 big rivers and agreed that the report will be an update of the PLC-6 thematic report on big rivers based on extended input time series 1995-2017.

4.15 The Meeting proposed to integrate apportionment of nutrient sources for the 7 river basins to the thematic report. The Meeting invited the project manager to investigate data availability and propose the way how the data can be integrated to the thematic report.

ACTION project: Evaluation of the potential reduction of nutrient input from point sources (SYKE)

4.16 The Meeting considered the assessment of the potential reduction of nutrient input from point sources presented by Finland (SYKE) and highly valued the report.

4.17 The Meeting proposed in addition to the current evaluation to examine potential reduction in wastewater sector, in case stricter requirements for nutrients removal would be introduced.

4.18 The Meeting proposed to include annex with the data on individual WWTP used in the evaluation to the published version of the report with references to the data sources.

ACTION project: River catchment analysis (SYKE)

4.19 The Meeting considered the ACTION project report illustrating example of effectiveness of measures to reduce input of nutrients in the river basins.

4.20 The Meeting acknowledged that data required to accomplish the study had not yet been provided by Denmark and invited Denmark to provide the missing data as soon as possible.

Implementation of the task on evaluation of effectiveness of measures to reduce nutrient loads

4.21 The Meeting discussed the state of the PLC-7 report on evaluation of effectiveness of measures to reduce input of nutrients and concluded that almost all information required for the report as it was agreed by PLC-7 IG had been already compiled.

4.22 The Meeting invited Finland to submit an extended table of content for the final report to PRESSURE 12-2020 with the intention to receive guiding feedback for finalizing the work in autumn 2020.

4.23 The Meeting recalled the questionnaire on scattered dwellings intended to compile missing information for the assessment of effectiveness of measures to reduce nutrients.

4.24 The Meeting took note that the questionnaire contains also prefilled tables. PLC-7 IG members will be invited to check whether the prefilled information is still valid and update it, if needed.

4.25 The Meeting invited members of PLC-7 IG to reply to the questionnaire (**Attachment 2**) by **1 May 2020** to Finland (antti.raike@ymparisto.fi) with copy to the Secretariat (dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi, Juuso.Haapaniemi@helcom.fi).

4.26 The Meeting agreed that the report on the used methodologies is to be produced as a background information for PLC-7 products. The Meeting also agreed that the report is to be based on the revised version of the one compiled for PLC-6 project.

4.27 The Meeting encouraged PLC-7 IG members to review the report and provide updates to the Project Manager (lms@dce.au.dk) by **1 June 2020**.

Agenda Item 5 BSAP nutrient reduction scheme

Update of the input ceiling's values and drafting the text of the HELCOM nutrient input reduction scheme

5.1 The Meeting discussed technical aspects of the proposal to update input ceiling's values as a part of the work to update the HELCOM nutrient input reduction scheme.

5.2 The Meeting recalled that Finland remains firm in their wish to see separate input assessment for Archipelago Sea including related input ceilings. A proposal on the input ceilings for the Archipelago Sea will be developed for the Workshop on the update of the nutrient input ceilings.

Rephrasing of actions for the BSAP update

5.3 The Meeting took note of the current status of the work on BSAP commitments.

Agenda Item 6 Planning the PLC-8 project

6.1 The Meeting took note of the PLC-8 project proposal approved by HELCOM 41-2020 and discussed organization of project work and obstacles which might affect timely delivery of the project results.

6.2 The Meeting proposed that the results of assessment of progress towards NICs will be delivered to each country when the national datasets are ready for the assessment, if they are not affected by transboundary loads.

6.3 The Meeting proposed to combine PLC-7 meeting in September with kick off PLC-8 meeting and take over accomplishment of remaining PLC-7 tasks in the frame of PLC-8 project further on.

Agenda Item 7 Any other business

Development of the PLC-Water database

7.1 The Meeting discussed the document describing definitions of PE parameters used to characterize WWTP and their reporting to PLC water database. Based on the provided document, the Meeting proposed that the “organic design capacity” (ODC) expressed in PEs will be used for background information and the “population equivalent” for reporting loads in the periodic templates. Related definitions will be integrated in the PLC water guideline during the update in the frame of PLC-8.

7.2 The Meeting thanked Sweden and Finland for the background report on various types of PEs used for characterization of WWTPs.

7.3 The Meeting took note of the information by the database administrator on the latest developments and corrections of the HELCOM PLC water database and reporting application.

Development of a structure for the web page for nutrient input reduction scheme for the new HELCOM website

7.4 The Meeting pointed out that HELCOM web site requires further development and improvement and requested the Secretariat to work on that systematically.

Agenda Item 8 Future work and meetings

Provisional themes for the next PLC-7 meeting.

8.1 The Meeting proposed to resume discussion on the uncertainty of the reported loads at the next PLC-7 meeting and invited all PLC-7 IG members to present information regarding this on that meeting.

8.2 The Meeting took note of the updated overview of the project implementation timetable presented by PLC-7 project manager and agree on that as **Annex 3**.

8.3 The Meeting also invited the Secretariat to prepare the content for the Executive summary and present it at the PLC-7 11-2020.

Preparation for PRESSURE 12-2020

8.4 The Meeting **agreed** on the following documents which are to be submitted to PRESSURE 12-2020: draft policy message on NIC assessment with supplementary report; revision for input ceilings and the HELCOM nutrient input reduction scheme; extended content of the thematic report on effectiveness of measures; ENIRED II report; MAI-CART OPER final report; EMEP report on difference in N deposition data calculated in 2012 and 2019 for the reference period 1997-2003.

8.5 The Meeting also discussed organization of the workshop on the update of input ceilings and proposed the following:

- prepare a document presenting proposal to update NIC values to the workshop in advance;
- submit the document on changes of N deposition data by EMEP as a background for the update NICs;

- submit the assessment of NIC 1995-2017 in tables and plots without policy message;
- record presentations on the key issues and submit to the workshop in advance;
- invite participants to provide questions prior to the meeting.

8.6 The Meeting agreed on the themes to be discussed at the next PLC-7 meeting as given in the **Annex 4**.

8.7 The Meeting agreed that the next PLC-7 11-2020 will be held 15-17 June 2020 and welcomed the provisional offer by Latvia to host the meeting in Riga.

8.8 The Meeting tentatively agreed that PLC-7 12-2020 will be combined with PLC-8 kick-off and welcomed the offer by Germany to host the meeting in Berlin 7-10 September 2020. The Meeting suggested that it will start at 12.00 CET on Monday and close on Thursday afternoon.

Agenda Item 9 Closing the Meeting

The Meeting agreed to approve the Outcome via correspondence.

Annex 1. List of Participants

*) online participation

Representing	Name	Organization	E-mail
Chair of the Group	Lars M. Svendsen	DCE - Danish Centre for Environment and Energy, Aarhus University, Denmark	lms@dce.au.dk
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Annex 3. Updated timetable for PLC7 project

March 2020

Table 1: Overview of the main tasks and the planned start and end for each task. "1/2017" indicates first quarter of 2017. The column "Finalized" indicates when tasks has been finalized. Where the deadlines are foreseen to change from the planned PLC-7 project it is marked with italic in column "End". Added several task as compared to the PLC-7 project description (with Italic). Change since last meeting marked with yellow.

PLC- 7 task	Start	End	Finalized
• Project management (including about 12 project team meetings)	1/2017	4/2020	
• Workshops (2 workshops are planned)	1/2017	2/2020	1/2020
• Monitoring and compilation of national annual/periodical data	1/2017	4/2017	4/2017
• A. Reporting of quality assured national annual data incl. QA	3/2018	2/2019	3/2019
• B. Reporting of quality assured national periodic data incl. QA	4/2018	2/2020	
• A. Establishing the annual assessment data set 1995-2017	1/2019	2/2019	3/2019-02/2020
• B. Establishing the periodic assessment data set 1995-2017	2/2019	2/2020	
• Assessment of sources of nutrients	4/2019	3/2020	
• Assessment of the effectiveness of measures	1/2019	2/2020	
• Assessment of inputs of selected hazardous substances	3/2019	3/2020	
• <i>Updating background and methodology reports, big rivers assessment</i>	3/2019	3/2020	
• Compilation of the executive summary and policy messages	3/2020	4/2020	
• Updating guidelines and statistical methodology report	1/2017	1/2018	4/2018
• Intercalibration on heavy metals and nutrients	3/2017	2/2018	4/2018
• <i>Finalizing PLC-6 assessment products</i>	1/2017	2/2018	1/2019
• <i>Update Core indicator on nutrient inputs 1995-2015</i>	1/2017	1/2018	2/2018
• <i>Update Core indicator on nutrient inputs 1995-2016</i>	1/2018	4/2018	4/2018
• <i>Update Core indicator on nutrient inputs 1995-2017</i>	4/2019	4/2019	4/2019
• <i>Update Core indicator on nutrient inputs 1995-2018</i>	3/2020	4/2020	
• <i>Elaborate BSEF waterborne inputs of nutrients 1995-2017</i>	2/2019	3/2019	3/2019
• <i>Update BSEF waterborne inputs of nutrients 1995-2018</i>	2/2020	2/2020	
• A. <i>Update assessment of progress towards input ceilings (1995-2017 data) "indicator"</i>	4/2019	2/2020	
• B. <i>Update scientific report on progress towards CART 1995-2017</i>	1/2020	3/2020	

Annex 4. [Agenda items for PLC-7 IG 11-2020 meeting \[June-2020\]:](#)

- Periodical data 2017 an source apportionment
- Status on annual reporting 2018 data
- Provisional evaluation of reported 2018 data
- Preparing for reporting 2019 data
- Spatial data
- BSAP nutrient reductions scheme – other issues related to BSAP update
- NIC assessment
- MAI 2018 indicator
- BSEF waterborne nutrient inputs 1995-2018
- Big rivers report
- Methodology on uncertainty
- HZS report
- Natural background lossess
- Background information report
- Methodology report
- Questionnaire on measures?
- Items related to ACTION project?
- HZS indicator?
- Planning PLC-8 project