



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Third Meeting of the Seventh Baltic Sea Pollution Load
Compilation (PLC-7) Project Implementation Group

PLC-7 IG 3-2018

Silkeborg, Denmark, 23-25 May 2018

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Background

The Third Meeting of the Project Implementation Group (PLC-7 IG 3-2017) will be held in the premises of the DCE, Aarhus University, in Silkeborg, Denmark, on 23-25 May 2018. The Meeting will start at 14.00 on Wednesday, 23 May and terminate not later than 16:00 on Friday, 25 May 2018.

The Meeting will be focused on the current project activities in accordance with the PLC-7 project work plan, preparation of periodic PLC-reporting of 2017 data, updating of HELCOM Core Pressure Indicator on nutrient inputs (2015), and finalizing the remaining products of the PLC-6 project, particularly the evaluation of effectiveness of measures, scientific report and executive summary.

Documents for the Meeting, which are restricted until after the Meeting has ended, will be made available in the HELCOM Meeting Portal, on the restricted [PLC-7 IG 3-2017 Meeting Site](#).

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Provisional Agenda (document 1-1).

Agenda Item 2 Matters arising from other HELCOM work

The Project Manager and Secretariat will inform the Meeting of relevant outcomes from recent HELCOM meetings (HELCOM 39-2018, PRESSURE 8-2018, etc.).

The participants are invited to inform the Meeting about issues relevant for the PLC-7 Project.

Agenda Item 3 Finalizing the PLC-6 project

Open issues on reports on “7 big rivers” and “Assessment of inputs of hazardous substances”

The Meeting is invited to consider the remaining open issues and finalize the products for adoption by HOD 54-2018 (document to be submitted). Deadline for submission of decision documents to HOD 54-2018 is 24 May 2018. The Secretariat will inform the Meeting on the status of the reports.

Evaluation of effectiveness of measures to reduce nutrients load and source apportionment based on source oriented approach is a new PLC-6 product. Thus, only the first trial of the regional evaluation can be produced. Compilation of the national data on effectiveness of measures revealed different levels of quantification of the effects in the countries, which disables adequate comparison of either past or expected effects across the region. PRESSURE 8-2018 concluded that one of the main messages of this PLC product would be a suggestion to improve national procedures to enable the collection of relevant data, to report back to HOD the challenges encountered, and to evaluate at a later stage whether another report of the same format should be elaborated by PLC-7.

The Meeting is invited to discuss a suggestion on the new contents of the document (document to be submitted) and agree on the timetable for the work on the document, bearing in mind that a new draft has

to be submitted to PRESSURE 9-2018. The Meeting is also invited to consider the new information provided by the countries.

Overview of methodologies used in the countries for the assessment

Harmonization of methodologies utilized in different countries to identify various parameters of nutrient inputs is crucial for compilation of coherent and compatible assessment data. The PLC-6 project took the task to make an overview of the methodologies based on information supplied by the countries. The overview will serve as a basis for further suggestion on a harmonized approach to the assessment across the Baltic Sea region. PLC-7 IG 2-2017 agreed that most of the countries provided comprehensive information on the used methodologies and invited countries to provide remaining information by 1 February 2018.

The Project Manager will inform the Meeting of the status of compiled information on national methodologies. *The Meeting will be also invited to approve information in the national sections of the compilation and agree on submission of the compilation to PRESSURE 9-2018 for publication* (document to be submitted by the Project Manager).

Scientific report on assessment of progress towards national nutrient input reduction targets, extended outline

HOD 49-2017 supported the suggestion by the PLC-6 team to separate the policy message on the assessment of the progress towards reduction targets from the **scientific report on the assessment**. PLC-7 IG 2-2017 discussed a draft scientific report and provided comments on its structure.

PRESSURE 8-2018 discussed the structure of the PLC-6 scientific report and recommended to reflect the following issues in the report:

- reasons and consequences of changing the nutrient-input values in reference period;
- a brief background information on the BALTSEM model and on calculation of the nutrient reduction targets;
- information on the uncertainty of the raw data;
- separate figures for airborne and waterborne inputs and also data on input by major rivers.

PRESSURE 8-2018 also invited the PLC-7 team to submit the draft scientific report a month before PRESSURE 9-2018 for proper consideration.

The Meeting is invited to discuss and elaborate further the structure of the scientific report and agree on the timeline and procedure for its finalizing in accordance with the recommendations of PRESSURE 8 (document to be submitted by the Project Manager).

Executive summary of the PLC-6 project

The Executive summary of the project was discussed by RedCore 19-2018. The group recommended to shape the executive summary in a form of a coherent narration on various aspects of nutrient loads on the Baltic Sea ecosystem, highlighting the key messages from the major PLC-6 products. The summary layout will be designed in the format of a public brochure.

The Meeting is invited to consider a concept of the Executive summary (document to be submitted by the Secretariat) *and further elaborate the idea* with an intention to submit a draft version to PLC-7 IG 4-2018 and further to PRESSURE 9-2018 in September 2018.

Publication of assessment datasets and detailed assessment results

HELCOM website contains various sub-pages with supporting information for the major products to follow up the implementation of the HELCOM nutrient reduction scheme. These sub-pages are utilized for publication of the assessment datasets, graphs and other details of the assessment results. In addition, new public WEB interface for the PLC-water database and new maps on land-based pollution at HELCOM Map and Data service was endorsed for public use since 31 of May 2018.

The Meeting is invited to consider the information prepared for public use and inform on any inconsistencies in data or other needed corrections (document to be submitted by the Secretariat).

Background information is a substantial part of the PLC-6 report. This information has already been used for some of the PLC-6 project. A specific chapter with background information, which can be utilized for references in different PLC-6 products and other related publications will be prepared.

The Meeting is invited to consider an overview of the data compiled for the chapter and agree on the further steps and timeline for its publication (document to be submitted by Finland).

Agenda Item 4 Current activities of the PLC-7 project

Results of the intercalibration and draft report

In order to improve the quality and intercomparability of PLC products, regular intercalibration between the laboratories conducting chemical analysis is necessary. The PLC-7 project will perform intercalibration with at least one laboratory from each participating Contracting Party, but altogether up to 15 laboratories are budgeted but 31 laboratories are eventually participating. The samples were distributed on 19 February 2018 with the deadline for laboratories to report the results by 14 March 2018.

The Meeting is invited to take note of a draft report on intercalibration (document to be submitted by DCE), discuss the results of the intercalibration campaign, consider any necessary follow-up of the results and agree on the finalization and publication of the report.

Progress in update of the PLC water Guideline and progress in drafting of the report on statistical methods

PLC-7 IG 2-2017 discussed the need to update statistical method -sections of the PLC Guidelines and agreed that a draft statistical report will be submitted to PLC-7 IG 3-2018. Relevant items from the statistical report will further be included into the updated PLC Guidelines. The meeting also agreed on sharing responsibilities and deadlines for updates of the particular chapters as presented in Annex 3 to the Outcome of PLC-7 IG 2-2017. PLC-7 IG 2 also suggested to remove from the Guidelines excessive reporting requirements for annual and periodic data and invited PLC-7 Project members to address questions which require clarification to the authors of the Guidelines' chapters by 1 February 2018.

The Meeting is invited to consider the draft statistical report of the PLC-6 project and identify the items of the statistical report which have to be included into the updated version of the PLC Guidelines.

The Meeting is also invited to consider the current state of the PLC Guidelines' revision and agree on the timeframe which will enable submission of the updated draft of the document to PRESSURE 9-2018 for endorsement with subsequent approval by HOD 55-2018 for publication.

Preparation to the reporting of periodic data 2017

In accordance with the project description 2017 is the reference year for the PLC-7 assessments. It implies reporting of an extended set of the data compared to the annually reported national datasets. The data included into PLC periodic reporting is described in [the PLC-Water Guidelines](#). The periodic reporting includes:

- Indirect point-source loads of Ntot and Ptot and water flows (reported individually (or as aggregated) by sub-catchment and in three categories (wastewater treatment plants, industrial plants and aquacultural plants);
- Diffuse losses of Ntot and Ptot into the fresh water;
- Retention of Ptot and Ntot in rivers and coastal areas; and
- Source apportionment of Ptot and Ntot loads to the sea (with both source- and load-oriented approach).

The reporting is organized in accordance with the timeline and procedures agreed by [HOD 50-2016](#). The document describing the procedures and deadlines for the periodic data reporting and link to reporting templates will be submitted by the Secretariat.

The Meeting is invited to discuss the procedures of periodic data reporting and reporting templates, clarify questionable issues and agree on separate reporting procedure for periodic data 2017 and annual data 2017, bearing in mind that these two reporting procedures will be organized almost simultaneously. Further, the meeting is invited to discuss and agree on the need and the procedures for updating metadata in the PLC-water database.

The Meeting is also invited to identify potential obstacles in periodic data 2017 compilation, which might cause missing of data and/or reporting delay, and specify expected delays wherever it is possible to adjust the Project work plan accordingly.

Spatial component of the PLC data 2017

PLC-6 project elaborated spatial parameters of the data used for the assessment of nutrient loads on the Baltic Sea. The spatial data includes monitored and unmonitored sub-catchment areas, areas with transboundary inputs, point sources and monitoring stations. All spatial features are coded in accordance with the PLC-water database and can be utilized for visualization of various aspects of spatial distribution of nutrient loads on the Baltic Sea. The spatial datasets are available at HELCOM Map and Data Service. The Secretariat took the responsibility for maintaining the spatial data in the up-to-date status. An update of the spatial information is planned in the frame of the PLC-7 project. The data will be updated as they are at 2017, which was agreed as the reference year for the PLC-7 assessment.

National representatives are invited to inform on any modifications of national monitoring systems which might cause changes of spatial distribution of the data on waterborne inputs of nutrients into the Baltic Sea, e.g. moving of monitoring stations, establishing of new observation points, closing of direct points reported in 2016 or established of new ones, etc.

The Meeting is invited to agree on the procedure to update the spatial PLC data by the end of 2018.

Discussion on phosphorus deposition

As one of the main driving forces for eutrophication, the riverine input of phosphorus into the Baltic Sea is strictly controlled and monitored by its riparian countries. In contrast, the phosphorus deposition from the atmosphere is assumed to be originating mostly from natural sources, therefore no frequent monitoring of emission and deposition exist. But, as it is known, that atmospheric deposition is not negligible for the eutrophication of marine systems, a constant background input of 15 kg P/km²/y was assumed by HELCOM in 2007. Based only on data from several monitoring stations in the catchment and coastal zone of Baltic Sea, this deposition rate was revised to 5 kg P/km²/y, which is the assumption used in BSAP from HELCOM Ministerial Declaration in 2013. As verification of this deposition rate is requested, Germany has initiated a monitoring program on 2 onshore and 2 offshore stations over the period of at least one year.

PRESSURE 8-2018 took note of the information by Germany on measurements of airborne P deposition at coastal stations and concluded that the obtained information is very useful for estimation of phosphorus input to the Baltic Sea. PRESSURE 8-2018 invited all countries to provide available information and recommended to the PLC-7 project team to update the information on P-deposition on the Baltic Sea utilizing the most up-to-date data.

National representatives in the HELCOM PLC-7 project are invited to inform the Meeting on any available data on P-deposition on the Baltic Sea and on the data which might be available for the PLC-7 assessments in future.

The Meeting is invited to discuss the currently assumed level of P-deposition on the Baltic Sea and agree on a need of its revision for the PLC-7 assessment, as well as the availability of data on phosphorus deposition, bearing in mind that this revision is to be reflected in the updated PLC-Water Guidelines.

Agenda Item 5

Data reporting

Result of the 2015 data reporting and update of the MAI indicator

PLC-7 IG 2-2017 discussed the results of the 2015 data reporting and agreed on the consequent procedure of data approval. PLC-7 IG 2-2017 also agreed that old data, which have already been included into the assessment datasets but bear “not assured” marks, can also be considered as approved.

RedCore 19-2018 considered the status of the 2015 annual data, including that all national datasets had been reported and invited all Contracting Parties to approve the remaining data by 19 March 2018. RedCore 19-2018 also agreed that the update of the MAI indicator with 2015 data should be made by 4 May 2018. All national 2015 datasets were approved by the indicated deadline.

The Meeting is invited to consider a draft update of the MAI indicator and the dataset behind the indicator (document to be submitted) and agree on its submission to HOD 54-2018 for endorsement and publication.

The status of the annual data 2016 reporting and approval

The Meeting discussed the status of 2016 data reporting and agreed that almost all countries have reported complete datasets. The Meeting invited data reporters to approve the national datasets by 4 May 2018. This will enable the elaboration of the assessment dataset, publication of Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheet on input of nutrients in 2016, and update the MAI indicator in due time by December 2018.

The Meeting is invited to consider the results of the reporting of the data on nutrient inputs in 2016 (document will be submitted by the Secretariat) and agree on the actions and deadlines needed to finalize national dataset to launch the assessment procedure.

Agenda Item 6

Any other business

Public access to the PLC data

PRESSURE 7-2017 in principle agreed to open public access to the quality-assured data on monitored and unmonitored areas in the PLC-6 database. The meeting had also pointed out that the access-page of the public web service should contain **a disclaimer indicating that the PLC-water database contains the data reported by the countries which might be manually corrected during the input assessment procedure.**

PRESSURE 8-2018 provided feedback on the functionality of the interface, developed for public access to the PLC-Water data and endorsed its public access from 31 of May 2018. PRESSURE 8-2018 suggested to provide the link to the interface from the HELCOM Map and Data Service and invited all stakeholders interested in the use of the data to test the interface and provide feedback on it to BNI (alexander.sokolov@su.se).

The Meeting is invited to discuss feedback on the public interface of the PLC-Water database and agree that all spotted errors have been corrected so that the public access to the database can be opened.

The Meeting is invited to discuss any other business.

Agenda Item 8

Future work and meetings

The Meeting is invited to review the list of project contacts (document to be submitted) and update it as necessary.

The Meeting is invited to discuss and take note on an updated PLC-7 timetable.

The Meeting is invited to discuss main issues for the agenda of the next PLC-7 IG meeting and consider hosting the meeting.

Agenda Item 9

Closing of the Meeting

The Secretariat will prepare a draft outcome of the Meeting for consideration and approval by the Meeting.