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The Second Meeting of the PLC-8 Project Implementation Group (PLC-8 IG 2-2020) will be held online 14-16 December 2020. The Meeting will start at 10:00 EET on Monday, 14 December 2020 and is expected to terminate at 16:00 EET on Wednesday, 16 December 2020.

The main themes of the Meeting will be:

- Data reporting
- Finalizing the PLC-7 products
- updating of the PLC Guidelines and statistical methodologies;
- intercalibration activities.

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-8 IG 2-2020 Meeting Site.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Provisional Agenda.

2. Matters arising from other HELCOM work

The Meeting will be informed on the recent HELCOM activities related to the Group's work, with focus on the BSAP update, including outcomes of HOD 59-2020, PRESSURE 13-2020, DG BSAP and its segment teams. The Secretariat will inform on the ongoing work on the BSAP update with the focus on the nutrient input reduction scheme. The information will be orally presented by the Secretariat and, if needed, relevant documents will be also submitted.

3. Data reporting

Annual 2019 data reporting

A new reporting cycle was launched at the end August 2020 by circulating the prefilled reporting templates to Contracting Parties. National data reporters were to validate and amend the reporting templates, including spatial data, by 21 September and complete the reporting by December 2020. The status of the reporting process will be presented by the Secretariat.

The Meeting will be invited to consider current state of the reporting process, discuss and resolve any issue hampering smooth reporting of annual PLC data 2019 (document to be submitted by the Secretariat).

Periodic data reporting (National monitoring activities)

National activities on monitoring of nutrients concentration, water flows and modelling of the diffuse losses of nutrients is a key factor for compilation of reliable data for PLC-8 assessment products. The year 2021 serves as a reference year for PLC-8 project.

PLC-8 IG 1-2020 exchanged information on ongoing national monitoring activities related to the implementation of the PLC-8 project tasks and urged all national data reporters respect deadlines set for data reporting and quality assuring. Participants will be invited to inform the Meeting on the current national monitoring activities and discuss potential obstacles in reporting of reliable periodic data in due time.

The Meeting will be invited to take note of the information.

4. Finalizing the PLC-7 products

Thematic report on main sources and pathways of waterborne nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea – state of the art.

Previous meeting of the PLC implementation group noticed that the periodic data reporting had not been accomplished for all countries. That becomes the major obstacle for producing the assessment report. PLC-7 12-2020 proposed that in case a draft of the thematic report is ready by the PLC-8 2-2020 it can be further considered by PRESSURE WG via correspondence and then adopted for publication at HELCOM 42-2021.

The Meeting will be informed on the state of the thematic report on main sources and pathways of waterborne nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea. The Meeting will be invited to discuss the current state of the report and agree on the next steps to finalize it in agreed timeframe.

Thematic report on 7 big rivers.

A draft thematic report on 7 big rivers will be submitted to the PLC implementation group for consideration and endorsement. After endorsement by PLC-8 2-2020 the draft will be forwarded to PRESSURE group for approval and recommendation for publication in the HELCOM materials. The draft thematic report on 7 big rivers will be submitted by Finland with the assistance by the Secretariat.

Thematic report on input of hazardous substances to the Baltic Sea.

A draft thematic report on input of hazardous substances to the Baltic Sea will be submitted to the PLC implementation group for consideration and endorsement. After endorsement by PLC-8 2-2020 the draft will be forwarded to PRESSURE group for approval and recommendation for publication in the HELCOM materials. The draft thematic report on input of hazardous substances to the Baltic Sea will be submitted by Sweden with the assistance by the Secretariat.

Thematic report on evaluation of effectiveness of measures.

PLC-7 12-2020 acknowledged that almost all data for the content of the report had been available and concluded that an initial draft of the thematic report would be finalized and made available for reviewing by the PLC implementation group before December 2020. The intention was to agree on the draft at PLC-8 2-2020 and forward it to PRESSURE WG for endorsement via correspondence with subsequent approval of its publication at HELCOM 42-2021.

The Meeting will be invited to consider the initial draft of the thematic report in effectiveness of measures and agree on its further consideration by PRESSURE WG. The document will be submitted by Finland.

Methodology report.

PLC-7 12-2020 noted that the information on methodologies applied for the assessment of nutrient inputs had been updated by 5 out of 9 HELCOM countries and encouraged national representatives of the remaining countries to provide required updates by 18 September to the Project Manager. The Meeting agreed that the draft will be finalized by the PLC meeting in December and published as project materials.

The Meeting will be invited to consider a draft report on national methodologies applied in the Baltic Sea region to assess input of nutrients, verify the information compiled in the draft and agree on its publication as project material. The document will be submitted by the Project Manager.

Background information report

PLC-7 12-2020 invited Denmark, Sweden and the Secretariat to provide input and updated tables to the draft report considered at the meeting.

The Meeting will be invited to consider a final draft of the report on background information and agree that it is ready for publication as a project material. The document will be submitted by the Project Manager.

PLC-7 executive summary.

Executive summary is the final PLC-7 project product which can be finalized after all thematic reports are drafted and authors of thematic reports providing input. Thus, finalizing of the executive summary is possible when all drafts of PLC-7 thematic reports are available.

The Meeting will be invited to take note of the current state of the executive summary and agree on the further steps to finalize this PLC-7 product. A document presenting the latest updates of the executive summary will be submitted by the Secretariat.

5. PLC-8 activities

Intercalibration

In order to improve the quality and intercomparability of PLC products, regular intercalibration between laboratories conducting chemical analysis are necessary.

The PLC-8 project will perform intercalibration with at least one laboratory from each participating Contracting Party, but altogether up to 20 laboratories are budgeted. The intercalibration will be made for heavy metals (Cd, Cr, Cu, Hg, Ni, Pb and Zn) and for total nutrients and nutrient fractions (total nitrogen, ammonia-N, nitrite-nitrate-N, dissolved and total and phosphorus) from both river and point source (waste water) samples.

PLC-8 IG 1-2020 took note of a proposal on the organization of intercalibration campaign as presented by DCE, Denmark and agreed on its timeline.

PLC-8 IG 1-2020 requested the Project Manager to circulate the invitation to the participants by 17 September to contact national laboratories and inform the Project Manager on which laboratories are appointed for the intercalibration by 15 October 2020. DCE will then request the selected laboratories to register in the campaign on the week 44 2020. The invitation should contain the description of all parameters required for the registration. The expected number of labs involved is 20 labs which means approximately 2 labs per country.

PLC-8 IG 1-2020 further agreed that DCE will prepare a reporting template for labs with all information required for reporting. The Meeting also stressed that concentrations in test samples are to be close to reality and invited Sweden to supply DCE with available data on HMs concentrations reported to the PLC-data base to identify the level of concentrations for test samples. Final decision on the concentrations will be taken in December by the PLC-8 2-2020.

The current status of the process will be presented by the Project Manager. The Meeting will be invited to take note of the current status and agree on further concrete steps of the implementation of the task.

Updating statistical methodologies

PLC-8 IG 1-2020 discussed the revision of the statistical methodology report. The Meeting pointed out that selection of methods for statistical analysis is to be done thoroughly avoiding ones reflecting unnatural relationships within data series. The Meeting also discussed several points related to the uncertainty and discussed the possibilities of national reporters to include uncertainty of national monitoring data in the PLC report.

The Meeting will be invited to consider a presentation on the further advancement of the statistical methods to assess the input of nutrients, to estimated uncertainties of the assessment and to evaluate progress towards regionally agreed targets. The Meeting will be invited to agree on next steps of the updating of the statistical methods and the statistical report.

Updating the PLC Guidelines

PLC-8 IG 1-2020 discussed the scope of the revision of the PLC-water guideline and agreed on a plan for the revision. The Meeting also discussed the need of keeping certain Annexes as part of the Guideline, and decided on the modification, removal and simplifying of some of them.

PLC-8 IG 1-2020 agreed that participants will consider scope of the revision of the Guideline and inform the Project Manager (lms@dce.au.dk) by 16 October 2020.

Summary of these consideration will be presented by the Project Manager. The Meeting will be invited to agree contribution by the project members into the update of the Guidelines.

6. Any other business

The Meeting will be invited exchange ideas and wishes for the first PLC-8 workshop scheduled in the PLC-8 implementation plan for late 2021. Based on this discussion, the Meeting will be invited to agree on the key discussion points for the workshop and propose its exact date as well as possible hosting of this workshop.

Participants are invited to raise any issues related to PLC work which need consideration e.g. latest updates of the HELCOM PLC water database and its tools; state of the PLC related information resources; methodological aspects of the PLC assessment.

7. Future work

The meeting is invited to discuss and update detailed timetable for PLC-8 project (will be presented by the project manager).

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

The Meeting is invited to discuss an agenda of the PLC-8 IG 3-2021 and consider hosting the meeting.

8. Closing of the Meeting

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