



Document title	Outcome of drafting groups on proposals on the review, revision and development of new HELCOM objectives
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Background

According to the Strategic plan for the BSAP update an adjustment of the overall structure of BSAP should be carried out (Strategic Plan, activity 2.2). A task for HELCOM Working Groups is to review existing HELCOM objectives, to develop new objectives of marine litter, underwater noise and seabed loss and disturbance (Outcome HOD 55-2018, para 3.17), and to develop management objectives as a supporting framework for the BSAP update (Outcome HOD 55-2018, para 3.18).

PRESSURE 10-2019 initiated the task by discussing existing ecological objectives and potential new ecological and management objectives as guided by document DS-2.

The Meeting split into groups to discuss the following:

- Eutrophication and Hazardous substances: review of existing ecological objectives, proposal on management objectives
- Marine litter: proposal on new ecological and management objectives
- Underwater noise: proposal on new ecological and management objectives
- Loss and disturbance to the seabed: proposal on new ecological and management objectives

This document includes all proposals discussed by the groups and they should thus be seen as alternatives that need further elaboration.

The Meeting made the following reflection on the outcome of group discussions in plenum:

DS18. The Meeting briefly reflected on the outcome of group discussion in plenum and noted the following:

- Ecological objectives for eutrophication and hazardous are proposed to remain as they are, possibly with minor modifications, with the reasoning that they are still relevant and in several cases not achieved yet, and that there is an important value to stay close to the current objectives since they are commonly recognized.
- One view was that hazardous substances segment in the updated BSAP should not be combined with marine litter.
- Several groups proposed that management objectives could be linked to sources/sector rather than pressures. This approach can potentially result in long lists of management objectives but could be further explored, e.g. to have one overarching management objective and a list of more detailed associated objectives than can support the follow-up of HELCOM objectives and development of actions.

- Loss and disturbance to the seabed was recognized as closely linked to ecological objectives on biodiversity and that further consideration is needed to differentiate between an ecological objective for “loss and disturbance” and status of benthic habitats in general. It was proposed that the State and Conservation Working Group discuss this matter further.
- It was noted that in some cases the management objectives drafted in the groups are formulated as actions rather than objectives and that there is a need to differentiate between these two subjects.
- For underwater noise some differing views were expressed. Since noise will always exist in the environment one view was that such objectives could focus on designating places with no noise. The use of the word “quiet/quieter” was also supported since it speaks to the wider community.
- When the discussion on objectives advances it was found important to harmonize the objectives between topics, i.e. so that managements objectives are formulated in a similar way for segments of the BSAP.

Outcome of group discussions on the review, revision and development of new HELCOM objectives, PRESSURE 10-2019

Group on eutrophication and hazardous substances

General considerations:

- General support to maintain purpose of HELCOM objectives to be aspirational and easy to communicate to the general public
- Consider a cross-cutting objective related to climate change, e.g. 'Baltic Sea resilient to climate change' – noting that it will be difficult to follow-up and assess such objective. Possibly such objective could be overarching.
- Consider the development of management objectives related to sources/sectors rather than pressures e.g. 'Sustainable agriculture...'; this would give good opportunity to follow-up with HELCOM actions.

Eutrophication

Proposals on revisions of existing ecological objectives:

- Eutrophication state variables are well covered by the objectives – no need for new objectives
- Main view: Keep as they are. It is valuable to keep well known objectives.
- Tentatively exchange the word 'natural' - but no proposal was provided at this time

Proposals on management objectives:

- 'Nutrient input close to natural level'
- 'Minimum input of nutrients from human activities'
- 'Minimize input from agriculture' etc... (i.e. pinpoint sectors) – noting that this will result in long lists of management objectives
- 'Reach the maximum allowable input of nutrients' – would provide a link to existing agreements but it was noted that this will not be understandable by the wider community
- 'Reach input of nutrients that are compatible with ecological objectives'

Hazardous substances

Proposals on revisions of existing ecological objectives:

- Main view: Keep as they are. Valuable to keep well known objectives.
- Consider minor revisions of
 - o Healthy wildlife; minus: vague, plus: easy to understand message.
 - o Is the radioactivity objective still up to date, i.e. is it relevant to mention Chernobyl? Make it more general?
 - o Expand objective All fish safe to eat; 'All fish and shellfish safe to eat' alternatively 'All seafood safe to eat'
- Consider to develop a new objective for pharmaceuticals – on the other hand it could be considered as covered by the general objective related to concentration of hazardous substances

Proposals on management objectives:

- 'Minimize input of hazardous substances'
- Consider additional objective for synthetic substances with formulation of zero input target.
- Keep formulation of management objective similar as for nutrients.
- Can an objective address emerging substances? (e.g. In terms of preparedness)
- Mechanisms are there but not working well.

Group on loss and disturbance to the seabed

Ecological objectives:

- 'Healthy seabed habitats'
- 'Maintaining natural seabed conditions'

Management objectives:

- 'Sustainable use of sea beds'
- 'Maritime spatial planning'
- 'Encourage sustainable fishery practices'
- 'Restoration of seagrass beds'
- 'Methods for ecological sustainable mineral extraction'
- 'Minimise areas affected by (anthropogenically induced) hypoxia'
- 'Remediation of fibre banks'

Group on Underwater noise

Proposals on ecological objective:

- 'Undisturbed marine environment by anthropogenic noise'
- 'A [more] naturally quiet Baltic Sea'
- 'Introduction of energy including underwater noise is at levels that does not adversely affect the marine environment'
- 'Input of underwater noise in the Baltic Sea does not exceed levels that are consistent with GES for species identified as sensitive to noise in the region'

Proposals on management objective:

- 'Reduce input of anthropogenic noise to the Baltic Sea'
- 'Identify and address most biological relevant sources of anthropogenic noise to the Baltic Sea'
- 'Consider noisy activities in temporal and spatial planning'
- 'Support the development and application of quieting technologies addressing relevant noise introducing activities'

Group on Marine litter

Proposals on ecological objective:

- 'Baltic Sea environment is free of marine litter'
- 'Production and consumption patterns in the Baltic Sea area assure litter-free environment'
- 'Wildlife in the Baltic Sea safeguarded from marine litter'

Proposals on management objective:

- 'Zero waste goal is a priority for production and consumption'
- 'Products are designed to ensure that material flow is free of leakage to the environment'
- 'Producers and consumers mind litter-free environment'
- 'All aspects of litter are addressed in management cycle e.g. size, material, source'