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Background

The structure of the updated BSAP, including its goals and objectives, has been discussed at HOD 55-2018, HOD 56-2019 and HOD 57-2019 resulting in a provisional agreement to adjust the structure and on a set of new and revised objectives. HOD 56-2019 also supported that the operative sections of the updated BSAP should be shaped around the ecological objectives, management objectives and the associated actions for the achievement of the BSAP goals ([Outcome, para 2.23](#)).

HOD 57-2019 also discussed the style of writing of the updated BSAP. Accordingly, the updated BSAP should be a relatively short document written in a straightforward way but should at the same time provide sufficient supporting information to facilitate future follow-up of implementation ([Outcome, para 3.27-3.28](#)). Aspirations will therefore be differentiated from concrete actions and the operative sections will more clearly present the plan for action. Detailed information and supporting information on the actions will be made available as supplementary material.

This document summarizes the considerations and agreements so far on the outline, content and style of the updated BSAP. The provisional agreement on the structure and objectives for the updated BSAP are included in Annex 3.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the document when preparing proposals for new and revised actions for the updated BSAP.

Outline of the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan

The outline of the updated BSAP is based on three main components as further detailed below:

- 1) Preamble, consisting of one overarching pre-ambble and an introductory passage for each segment,
- 2) Operative sections for each segment, including the plan for action,
- 3) Supplementary information to the agreed actions.

1) Preamble

Overarching preamble

The preamble of the BSAP will address issues that cut across the segments. HOD 55-2018 agreed that the preamble should include overarching principles and higher-level aims from the Helsinki Convention, UN SDGs and other relevant policies, for example:

- Implementation based on ecosystem approach;
- Reach good environmental status;
- Be based on precautionary principle;
- Sustainable consumption and production;
- Clean and environmentally sound technologies;
- Efficient use of natural resources;
- Integration of climate change into policies.

Climate change will also be addressed as a key component of the preamble.

Introductory passage for each segment

In the current BSAP text of preambular character is included under the operative section for each segment. HOD 57-2019 supported that the updated BSAP will instead have layered preamble that will also include segment-specific introductory text. Such text could focus on aspirations and strategic decision for the respective segment and also recall HELCOM recommendations and other relevant legislation associated to the respective segment.

With the more strategic and higher level ambitions being expressed in introductory passages, the operative sections will focus on the plan for action.

2) Operative sections for each segment

Operative sections, including the agreed actions, will be presented for each segment and associated goal of the updated BSAP:

- Biodiversity: Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient
- Eutrophication: Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication
- Hazardous substances and litter: Baltic Sea unaffected by hazardous substances and litter
- Sea-based activities, including maritime issues: Environmentally sustainable sea-based activities

A preliminary overview of the pressures and activities that are anticipated to be addressed through actions under each segment is included in Annex 1. It still remains to be agreed if there should be separate sections for e.g. monitoring and assessment, awareness raising, financing, such as in the current BSAP, or whether these aspects should be addressed under the respective segment as relevant.

Each operative section will be initiated by a brief description of the state of the Baltic Sea based on the latest HELCOM assessments ([Outcome HOD 56-2019, para 2.23](#)). This will be followed by an account of the

HELCOM ecological objectives, representing the desired state of the environment or the acceptable level of pressure. The agreed actions will be sorted as appropriate according to the new and revised HELCOM objectives.

With regard to the formulation of actions, to facilitate the reading and to clearly outline the plan for action the following was agreed by HOD 57-2019:

- Initiating words (WE AGREE, WE PROMOTE) will not be used in the operative segments.
- More detailed information on actions such as any lengthier descriptions of rationale behind them and potential effects of their implementation is to be provide as supplementary material (see also section3);
- Measures that can contribute directly to improving the state of the Baltic Sea will be presented separate from those actions that are aimed at supporting implementation of actions or other HELCOM activities (e.g. actions related to databases, mapping, assessments, guidelines).
- Actions should be formulated as concrete as possible in terms of aim or output and should specify a target year for implementation.

With this approach the operative sections will include a straightforward plan of actions to be followed up by future reporting, structured according to the objectives and a common outline for each segment.

3) Supplementary material

In addition to the main BSAP document additional information and guidance for future assessment of implementation can be included as supplementary material. Such information could summarize the agreed actions and also include e.g.:

- rationale behind actions,
- tentative information on effect of actions,
- if feasible, indicators to follow-up the implementation of the action.

The last point, to agree on 'indicators' for when an action is to be considered as accomplished would greatly facilitate the future follow-up and reporting but will depend on availability of time. An example of how supplementary material could be collated in tabular form is provided in Annex 1. The supplementary material could also be provided in the form of fact sheets if more practicable.

Regional action plans (RAPs) for specific topics in the updated BSAP

Documents that are adopted alongside the updated BSAP, e.g. HELCOM Recommendations, roadmaps, topic specific action plans etc., will remain as separate documents and not merged with the main BSAP document. HOD 57-2019 however agreed that the updated BSAP should include strategic decisions and central points from the RAPs and that they could be adopted in the revised RAP on marine litter and the new RAP on underwater noise, which is under development. The Meeting underlined that the follow-up of the RAPs should also be established when they are adopted.

Drafting of the updated plan

HOD 57-2019 requested the Secretariat to prepare a first drafts of the pre-amble and the introductory text for the respective segment with regards to state of the environment. The Meeting furthermore agreed that lead countries should be identified for development of each segment of the BSAP update and that the Secretariat will support the drafting of these segments.

The proposal on actions for the updated BSAP will in 2020 continue to be developed by HELCOM Working Groups through the review existing actions and proposals on new actions to be considered at BSAP UP workshops in spring 2020 and further worked on at autumn meetings in 2020. The formulation of actions should consider the agreements outlined under sections 2 and 3 in this document.

Annex 1 Provisional structure of updated BSAP

Preliminary activity-pressure linkages based on mapping of land-based and sea-based activities vs proposed BSAP segments and the pressures they are causing; from document 2-4, HOD 56-2019. Goals have been updated based on outcome of HOD 57-2019. Verification of the lists will be carried out through information on main activities contribution to pressures collected through the analysis of sufficiency of measure.

Box 1. Eutrophication; input from land-based activities

Goal addressed:

- Baltic Sea unaffected by Eutrophication

Pressures addressed:

- Input of nutrients and organic matter

Cross-references with other segments:

- Reaching the objectives for eutrophication is a necessity to meet the goal of a 'Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient'.
- Reaching the goal and objectives for sea-based activities is a requirement for reaching the goal for eutrophication.

Tentative activities addressed by HELCOM actions:

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Urban land uses (e.g. stormwater)
- Waste treatment and disposal (including waste water treatment)
- Aquaculture, land-based

Box 2. Hazardous substances and litter, input from land-based activities

Goal addressed:

- Baltic sea unaffected by Hazardous substances and litter

Cross-references with other segments:

- Reaching the objectives for hazardous substances and litter is a necessity to meet the goal of a 'Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient'.
- Reaching the goal for sea-based activities is a requirement for reaching the goal for hazardous substances and litter.

Pressures addressed:

- Input of hazardous substances
- Input of litter

Tentative activities addressed by HELCOM actions with regard to;

- 1) Input of hazardous substances:
 - Agriculture (e.g. pesticides, pharmaceuticals)
 - Forestry
 - Industrial uses (e.g. oil and gas refineries, industrial plants)
 - Waste treatment and disposal (including waste water treatment)
 - Production of energy (fossil fuel, nuclear)
 - Transportation
- 2) Input of litter:
 - Industrial uses (e.g. oil and gas refineries, industrial plants)
 - Waste treatment and disposal (including waste water treatment)
 - Tourism and leisure infrastructure and activities
 - Urban uses (e.g. construction sites)
 - Transportation (e.g. release from tires)

Box 3. Sea-based activities, including Maritime

Goal addressed:

- Environmentally sustainable sea-based activities

Cross-references with other segments:

- Reaching objectives for sea-based activities a necessity to meet the goal of a 'Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient'.
- Reaching the goal for sea-based activities is a requirement for reaching the goal for eutrophication and hazardous substances and litter.

Pressures addressed:

- Input of nutrients
- Input of hazardous substances
- Input of marine litter
- Loss and disturbance to the seabed
- Disturbance of species
- Extraction and mortality species (e.g. extraction of target species, incidental catches)
- Introduction of non-indigenous species
- Introduction of underwater noise

Tentative activities addressed by HELCOM actions:

- Shipping (e.g. transport and transport infrastructure)
- Production and transport of energy (e.g. operational wind farms, transmission cables)
- Tourism and leisure infrastructure and activities
- Extraction of living resources (e.g. fishing, hunting, marine plant extraction)
- Extraction of non-living resources (e.g. mineral extraction, oil and gas extraction)
- Restructuring of coastline and seabed morphology (e.g. dredging)
- Aquaculture, marine (including infrastructure)

Box 4. Biodiversity

Goal addressed:

- Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient

Cross-reference to other segments:

- A healthy and resilient Baltic Sea ecosystem is the ultimate objective of the Baltic Sea Action Plan against which its entire performance is measured¹.
- Achieving the goal of a "Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient" requires that the goals of all other segments are met.

Pressures addressed:

- Not applicable; human activities and associated pressures are addressed in other segments.

Tentative activities addressed:

- Marine Protected Areas
- Restoration of habitats
- Reintroduction of species
- Conservation and management plans

¹ Note that this sentence is a proposed rewrite of the what was written in the original document 2-4 to HOD 56-2019. Original text was: Biodiversity serves as a holistic controlling element for the performance of the whole Action Plan.

Annex 2. Example of supplementary information to the BSAP document

Actions to improve the state of the Baltic Sea, Eutrophication

Action	Target year	Rationale	Potential effect (if available)	Implemented by	Indicator for achievement
Implement recycling measure X	2027	Output from wastewater treatment plants is the second largest contribution to input nutrients to the Baltic Sea. Recycling of nutrients is furthermore...	The action is estimated to result in the reduction of input nitrogen and phosphorus to the Baltic Sea with X tonnes per year	Contracting Parties	Implementation of recycling measure X by Contracting Parties [further specification as relevant for the action]

Supporting actions, Eutrophication

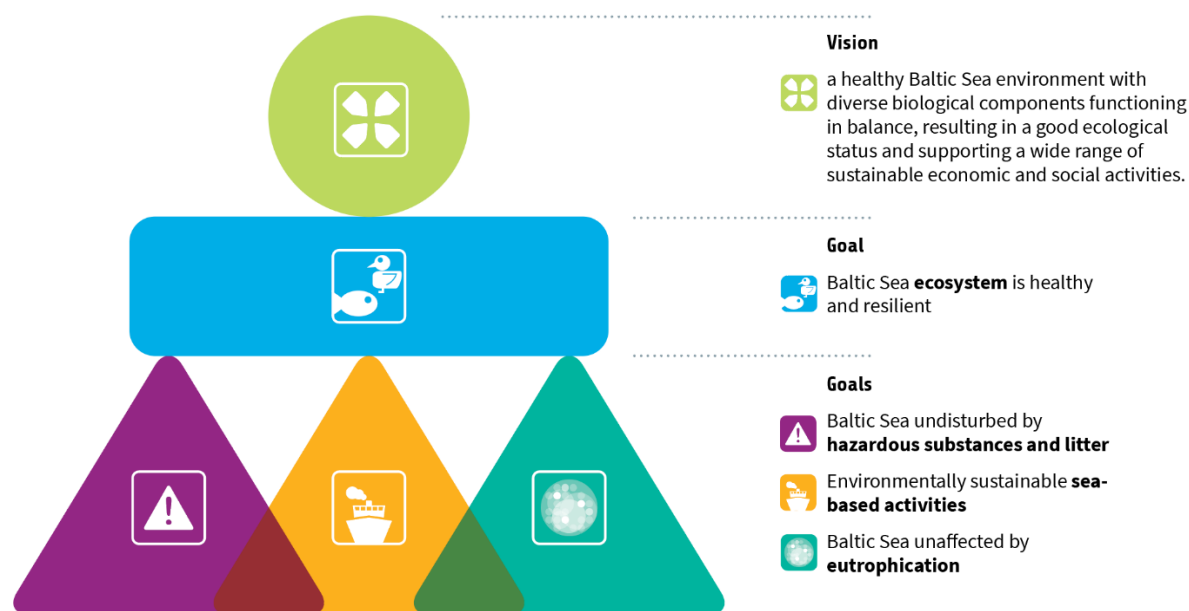
Action	Target year	Rationale	Implemented by	Indicator for achievement
Develop regional principles and a risk assessment framework to manage internal nutrient reserves	2022	Large amounts of nutrients have accumulated in the Baltic Sea during the past decades and the flux of in particular phosphorus may hinder the recovery of the Baltic Sea from eutrophication. To assess the potential management of internal nutrient reserves...	HELCOM	Agreed principles and risk assessment framework agreed in HELCOM

Annex 3. Provisional agreement on the structure and objectives of the updated BSAP.

Structure of updated BSAP

HOD 55-2018 agreed that the Vision of the current BSAP will remain in the updated BSAP and HOD 56-2019 agreed on a provisional adjustment to the BSAP structure to better reflect the topics that are currently addressed in HELCOM. The updated goals are illustrated in the figure below and include:

- to address litter primarily under the segment on hazardous substances and change the associated strategic goal to *'Baltic Sea unaffected by hazardous substances and litter'*;
- to include under the maritime segment a broader set of sea-based activities and change the associated strategic goal to *'Environmentally sustainable sea-based activities'*. The topics underwater noise and loss and disturbance of the seabed are primarily assigned to this segment as they mainly originate from activities that will be addressed under this segment.
- to revise the goal of the biodiversity segment to *'Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient'*.



Tentative illustration of structure of the updated BSAP; work in progress.

Agreement on HELCOM objectives for the updated BSAP

HELCOM 41-2020 agreed on a set of objectives for the updated BSAP, taking note that there may be a need for adjustments to individual objectives or proposals on additional objectives as found relevant in the further BSAP update process. HOD 57-2019 agreed that actions should be part of the updated BSAP segments, not of the objectives and removed from the latter. Until the segments have been drafted, actions that have been formulated as part of the objectives are kept as a memorandum item in the footnotes.

Goals	Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication	Baltic Sea unaffected by hazardous substances and litter	Environmentally sustainable sea-based activities	Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient
Ecological objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concentrations of nutrients close to natural levels - Clear waters - Natural level of algal blooms - Natural distribution and occurrence of plants and animals - Natural oxygen levels 	<p>Hazardous substances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concentrations of hazardous substances close to natural levels - All seafood safe to eat - Healthy marine life - Minimal risk to humans and the environment from radioactivity <p>Litter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No harm to marine life from litter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No or minimal disturbance to biodiversity and ecosystem - Activities affecting seabed habitats do not threaten the viability of species' populations and communities - No harm to marine life from manmade noise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Viable populations of all native species - Natural distribution, occurrence and quality of habitats and associated communities - Functional, healthy and resilient food webs
Management/conservation objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimize input of nutrients from human activities 	<p>Hazardous substances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimize input and impact of hazardous substances from human activities² <p>Litter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prevent generation of waste and its input to the sea, including microplastics - Significantly reduce amounts of litter on shorelines and in the sea - ³See footnote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimize loss and disturbance to seabed habitats⁴ - Minimize noise to levels that do not adversely affect marine life⁵ - No introductions of non-indigenous species - Minimize the contribution to eutrophication and hazardous substances and litter - Enforce international regulations – no illegal discharges - Safe maritime traffic without accidental pollution - Effective emergency and response capabilities - Minimize harmful air emissions - Zero discharges from offshore platforms - Ensure sustainable use of the marine resources - ⁶ See footnote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectively managed and ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas - Minimize disturbance of species, their habitats and migration routes from human activities - Human induced mortality, including: hunting, fishing, and incidental bycatch, does not threaten the viability of marine life - Effective and coordinated conservation plans and measures for threatened species, habitats, biotopes, and biotope complexes - Reduce or prevent human pressures that lead to imbalance in the foodweb

² Longer version, words in brackets to be addressed through actions: Minimize input and impact of hazardous substances from human activities [by elimination, substitution, and source management]

³ Previous proposal no longer included as an objective, to be addressed through actions: [Products are designed, produced, used and reused, recycled and disposed by applying principles of circular economy]

⁴ Longer version, words in brackets to be addressed through actions: Minimize loss and disturbance to seabed habitats [by pressure reduction, prevention, and mitigation measures]

⁵ Longer version: Minimize noise to levels that do not adversely affect [noise sensitive species and do not injure] marine life

⁶ Previous proposal no longer included as an objective, to be addressed through actions: MSP applying an ecosystem- based approach throughout the Baltic Sea

