



# Revised draft Regional Action Plan on Underwater Noise

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# Background

- 2013 HELCOM Copenhagen ministerial declaration includes UW noise as a pressure, which should be monitored and regulated
- Regional Baltic Underwater Noise Roadmap 2015-2017
- 2018 HELCOM Brussels Ministerial declaration requests a Regional Action Plan (RAP) on Underwater Noise
- 2019 Draft RAP commented by PRESSURE, MARITIME and HOD
- 2020 Revised RAP
  
- Aim for RAP to be aligned with BSAP update process





# Actions grouped into addressing five categories

- Impulsive noise below 10 kHz
  - Major sources: Seismic surveys, explosions, pile driving, military sonars
- Low frequency continuous noise
  - Major sources: commercial ships and leisure boats
  - Minor sources: oil and gas platforms, offshore wind farms, bridges etc.
- Other noise, currently not covered by monitoring, but where concern is that effects could be significant
  - Major sources: Seal scarers, echosounders and commercial sonars/surveying
- Third parties (external to HELCOM)
- Voluntary national actions





# Impulsive noise I

## Measures to improve monitoring

- 1 Update and improve common HELCOM guidelines for register of impulsive noise events in the Baltic Sea
- 2 Identify important habitats and biologically sensitive areas and periods in the Baltic Sea region, where the introduction of high-energy impulsive noise is likely to have negative impact.

## Measures to improve assessment of impact

- 3 Establish common methodology for the assessment of negative impact from impulsive noise
- 4 Further develop the HELCOM impulsive noise pre-core indicator towards an operational core indicator
- 5 Develop and implement one or more HELCOM impact indicators for impulsive noise

### Key issues:

Increase the quality and quantity of data in the noise register and improve assessment of impact





# Impulsive noise II

## Measures to reduce impact

6 Assessment of effectivity of potential measures as basis for HELCOM best practice guidelines in methods for mitigation of impact from impulsive noise

7 Establishment of common HELCOM best practice guidelines in methods for mitigation of impact from impulsive noise

8 Establishment of common reporting system for planned activities likely to produce impulsive noise.

9 In areas, which have already been defined as important or critical habitat for noise sensitive species, there should be an obligation to establish adequate operational and technical noise mitigation measures.

10 Establishment of common HELCOM criteria for injury and behavioural disturbance from impulsive noise, as well as common exposure limits.

### Key issues:

Improve methods for mitigation of impact

Target regulation at sensitive species, areas and time periods





# Continuous low frequency noise I

## Measures to improve monitoring

11 Operationalisation of the common database for monitoring data on continuous underwater noise

12 Development of common guidelines for reporting of continuous noise levels in the Baltic Sea

13 Establish a common framework for modelling past, present and future noise levels in the Baltic

14 Identification of important habitats and biologically sensitive areas and periods in the Baltic Sea region, vulnerable to elevated levels of continuous noise introduction

## Key issues:

Increase the quality and quantity of monitoring data





# Continuous low frequency noise II

## Measures to improve assessment of impact

15 Establishment of a common methodology for assessment of impact of activities generating continuous noise

16 Further develop the HELCOM continuous low-frequency sound pre-core indicator towards an operational core indicator

17 Support research on effects of continuous noise on marine biota

18 Develop and implement one or more HELCOM impact indicators for continuous low-frequency sound

19 Assessment of effectivity of potential operational and technical measures as basis for the guidelines on management

### Key issues:

Improve assessment of impact, to allow targeting of sensitive areas, species and time periods





# Continuous low frequency noise III

## Measures to reduce impact

20 Preparation of guidelines on management of introduction of elevated continuous noise levels in noise sensitive and biologically important areas in the Baltic Sea based on the HELCOM input to the establishment of environmental targets for underwater noise

21 Raising awareness of and cooperation with shipping companies and boat owners on speed management for their vessels including different aspects of adjusting and planning for vessel speed and engine load optimised for the reduction of underwater sound.

22 Enhance Baltic Sea wide cooperation of port authorities to introduce novel initiatives, such as harbour fee systems, in order to set incentives for quiet vessels.

23 In coordination with IMO, work towards establishing a standard for ship classification based on noise emissions and apply such classification to navigation in the HELCOM area.

## Key issues:

Develop, in coordination with IMO, methods to effectively reduce *impact* of ship noise







# Other noise sources I

## Measures to improve monitoring

24 Identification of other noise sources with significant impact on the marine ecosystems but not covered by the measures targeting impulsive and continuous noise

25 Identification of important habitats and biologically sensitive areas and periods in the Baltic Sea region, vulnerable to elevated levels of noise from other sources than those covered by existing pressure indicators.

## Measures to improve assessment of impact

26 Compile and assess available information about potential impact caused by noise from leisure boats

27 Development of HELCOM indicators suitable for monitoring noise sources identified under measure 18.

28 Development of common guidelines for assessing impact from echosounders, sonars and other sources not covered by 2.1 and 2.2

29 Support for research on pressure and impact from echosounders and other low-level, but abundant sound sources.

## Measures to reduce impact

30 Develop and agree on common guidelines and regulation of the design and use of acoustic deterrent devices





# Actions involving third parties

## Measures directed at coordination and harmonisation

31 Establish a discussion between HELCOM and IMO about binding requirements and voluntary actions for use of noise reducing technologies and operating practices for ships in the Baltic

32 Establish platforms to share best practices on policy options within member states and between authorities, the private sector and NGO's. Improve public awareness, so that political decision makers, local administrations and civil society are adequately informed about the underwater noise challenges.

33 Strengthen the cooperation with OSPAR on development of common and/or compatible indicators, databases and assessment methodologies

34 Maintain and strengthen cooperation with the European Union expert group TG-Noise on issues of mutual interest

35 Establish a discussion with producers of echosounders and fishfinders about establishing standards for echosounders, fishfinders and engines of leisure boats.

### Key issues:

Establish actions that cannot be unilaterally implemented by HELCOM

Assure regulation is compatible with regulation in OSPAR and other relevant areas





# Voluntary national actions

- Conduct research on impact
- Share knowledge and experiences
- Increase awareness
- Regulate activities through national law, when applicable

## Key issues:

Increase knowledge on impact: where, when and which species?

Increase knowledge in the public, to increase acceptance of regulation

Implement targeted regulation fitted to local conditions and requirements

