



Document title	Terms of Reference (ToR) for the HELCOM Expert Network on Marine Litter
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Agenda Item	5 - Implementation of the RAP on Marine Litter
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Reference	Outcome of HELCOM HOD 48-2015 (para. 3.63-3.65), document 3-13 HOD 48-2015, Outcome of MONAS 20-2014 (para. 5.29)

Background

PRESSURE 1-2014 noted that the Working Group is expected to be responsible for overall coordination and facilitation of the implementation of the RAP ML at regional and national level once it has been adopted, even though monitoring in the marine environment will be coordinated by State & Conservation, indicators were being developed by CORESET II and measures should be defined by PRESSURE and MARITIME groups. The Meeting discussed how to organize the overall coordination and agreed to come back to this after the adoption of the plan in March 2015.

The adoption of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter was finalized in June 2015 whereby Heads of Delegation, being mandated by HELCOM 36-2015, adopted Annex to RAP listing regional and national actions.

The development of the Action Plan was organized through an *ad hoc* process – dedicated workshops and a meeting of the Marine Litter Drafting Group. In parallel, State and Conservation was working on the marine litter indicators and harmonized monitoring protocols for which purpose a marine litter network was established.

Regarding indicators, HOD 48-2015 agreed that the further indicator development in HELCOM, including on marine litter, will be based on a Lead Country approach and appointed national experts and that the development should be taken forward using HELCOM expert groups, projects and networks as a platform for the development of the indicators.

Within the renewed HELCOM structure and following the adoption of the RAP (HELCOM Recommendation 36/1), the work on marine litter needs to be streamlined and tasks between various working groups clearly delineated. Work plan or Terms of Reference for this work have so far been missing.

The Secretariat proposes that the Expert Network on Marine Litter (EN-Marine Litter) will consolidate the above mentioned different work streams into one, meaning that it will integrate the work on indicators and the network established by State and Conservation WG and will also cover issues related to the RAP implementation. The EN-Marine Litter will only have one list of nominated experts, and the Contracting Parties may indicate the area of expertise offered (e.g. indicator development, overall management, etc.).

The Expert Network will be mobilized to work on specific issues depending on the needs, and for instance, the first meeting of the network will be as part of this Pressure WG Meeting (8 October) to plan further work and discuss RAP implementation. The Expert Network will be called for to work on indicators in the context of the State and Conservation WG.

This document contains draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Expert Network on Marine Litter (EN-Marine Litter) to guide the further work and coordination between Pressure, State and Conservation, and Maritime Working Groups (WG).

Action required

The Meeting is invited to consider and agree on the ToR.

HELCOM Expert Network on Marine Litter

Draft Terms of Reference (ToR)

The call for establishing this network has been raised through the need to (i) facilitate the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter and (ii) develop core indicators to be used for the second HELCOM holistic assessment of the ecosystem health.

The duties of the expert network are to:

- A. Facilitate the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter as part of the work of the Pressure Working Group and in cooperation with Maritime Working Groups and other groups as appropriate;
- B. Act as the platform for discussion and review of HELCOM indicators on marine litter being developed by Lead Countries and appointed experts as part of the work by State and Conservation Working Group;
- C. Update the indicator reports at regular intervals as decided in HELCOM;
- D. Ensure timely and quality assured delivery of indicator based assessments of marine litter;
- E. Update as necessary HELCOM monitoring guidelines for marine litter;
- F. Provide expert input to HELCOM work related to marine litter.

To fulfill these duties the expert network will in the period 2015-2018:

1. Provide its expertise for the Pressure WG to organize and facilitate practical implementation of the regional actions in HELCOM Recommendation 36/1 and follow-up;
2. Support and cooperate with the Lead Parties for the individual regional actions;
3. Support Lead Countries in the further development of HELCOM indicators on marine litter, namely,
 - a. development of a GES-boundary for the pre-core indicator 'Beach litter' with the aim of adoption by the end of 2016 at the latest;
 - b. development of monitoring guidelines to enable coordinated monitoring of beach litter;
 - c. assay existing methods and develop regionally coordinated monitoring programmes for the candidate indicator 'Microlitter in the water column' aiming at shifting it to pre-core indicator and eventually to core indicator;
 - d. assay existing methods and develop regionally coordinated monitoring programmes and collect existing data for the candidate indicator 'Litter on the seafloor' aiming at shifting it to pre-core indicator and eventually to core indicator;
4. Update the indicators reports on marine litter by mid-2017 and further update the reports as relevant by mid-2018, or as otherwise agreed in the HOLAS II project;
5. Provide the expert input needed in order to deliver the thematic assessment on marine litter within the framework of the HOLAS II project by mid-2017 and to the further update of the assessment following the planned national consultation period leading up to the updated assessment to be delivered mid-2018;
6. Support Lead Countries on the development of monitoring guidelines on marine litter.
7. Provide expert input, as may be requested by e.g. Maritime WG, on relevant measures to reduce the sources and impacts of marine litter in the HELCOM area;
8. Seek synergies with other Regional Seas Conventions, namely OSPAR and Barcelona Convention;

The network consists of experts nominated by Contracting Parties and will be open to Observers according to HELCOM procedures.

The expert network will function as a joint network of Pressure WG and State and Conservation WG receiving guidance from both HELCOM working groups according to their mandates (Pressure WG overall coordination

of the RAP ML; State and Conservation indicators, monitoring and assessment) and providing support to other groups, in particular Maritime WG, as may be requested.

The nominated experts will be invited to meet in the framework of meetings of Pressure WG and State and Conservation WG, to be chaired by the Chair/Co-Chairs of these Working Groups, respectively. The expert network is encouraged to work as much as possible via correspondence. However separate physical meetings can be organized if needed.

The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the network.