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Background

In 2015, the HELCOM Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (HELCOM RAP ML) was adopted with the aim of achieving a significant reduction of marine litter by 2025 and to prevent harm to the coastal and marine environment. Action RL 5 of the [HELCOM RAP ML](#) outlines to “establish a dialogue and negotiate on solutions with business and industry to (i) develop design improvements that reduce the negative impacts of products entering the marine environment, and (ii) reduce over-packaging and promote wise packaging”.

In order to address this, a workshop was organized on the 15th of June 2018 in Berlin, Germany. In order to create synergies with other on-going projects in the Baltic Sea region, the workshop was organized by HELCOM as well as the INTERREG BSR project “EcoDesign Circle” (2016-2019, <https://www.ecodesigncircle.eu/>).

The aim of the workshop was to engage in a dialogue and enhance cooperation with and among designers, representatives of industry, research institutions, civil society organisations, national authorities and other stakeholders. It discussed how ecodesign principles, methods, tools, approaches and circular systems can be specified and applied to contribute to the reduction of marine litter in the Baltic Sea Area and which measures and framework conditions can support it. The workshop aimed to identify design solutions optimizing the use of products at the end of their life.

This document contains a list of principles to improve the different phases of the design process in terms of reduction/prevention of marine litter generation steamed from the workshop. The workshop report is included as Annex to the document (separately: *4-5-Annex Report on the workshop on marine litter and eco-design*).

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- take note of the workshop report and disseminate its findings with its relevant national partners;
- discuss the design principles and agree on their use to promote eco-design in the region with the aim to reduce littering of the marine environment e.g. through HELCOM guidelines or other tools;
- provide feedback on possible way forward on how to further address eco-design and marine litter within HELCOM.

Principles for design reducing / preventing marine litter

(Outcomes from the HELCOM-Interreg-Workshop on 14th June 2018 and follow-up survey)¹

1. Design phase

- D.1 Design with the practicability of the product in mind
- D.2 Minimise the number of components.
- D.3 Minimise material diversity
- D.4 Use inseparable joints for components made of the same or a compatible material in order to prevent littering
- D.5 Practice collaboration, sharing and partnering, and the involvement of stakeholders in the problem definition and the solution design process, design is not an isolated process. Reach out to other sectors and countries to learn about their best practice examples.
- D.6 Seek to work with other disciplines, practice systemic thinking
- D.7 Avoid using parts that require frequent replacement/repair
- D.8 Minimize losses within the life cycle of a product
- D.9 Design products and services for a circular economy and rule out – as far as possible – waste
- D.10 Plan for continual improvement
- D.11 Design the business system; consider product-service systems
- D.12 Consider packaging in the design phase

2. Materials

- D.13 Use materials with low environmental impact in the entire life cycle of a product
- D.14 Use recyclable non-toxic materials
- D.15 Use recycled materials
- D.16 Minimize composites
- D.17 Identify / label materials

S.1 Inform designers about the aspects of biodegradability in the marine environment

3. Products and Packaging

- D.18 Provide information on packaging about the materials used in the products and its packaging

¹ Comments:

D stands for a recommendation on a design level, S. stands for a recommendation on a systemic level.

Several recommendations can be allocated to several life cycle phases / aspects.

Please keep in mind that each recommendation depends on the context. It is important to apply those recommendations with the biggest impact (to reduce / prevent marine litter).

- D.19 Reduce packaging to what is necessary for the product (consider, amongst others, transport before and after use and the use phase)
- D.20 Avoid pre-portioned single use packaging (designers, industry, conscious decision of customers)
- D.21 Enable reuse of packaging
- D.22 Integrate marine litter aspects into packaging design
- D.23 Favour products intended for immediate (and local) consumption, which require less durable packaging

4. Logistics

- D.24 Product design should consider the logistics of transporting and the transport distances of materials etc. of the product.

5. Business Models, Marketing and Information

- D.25 Communicate environmental excellence of the product (customer group specific)
- S.2 Introduce a label that indicates designs which use resources as efficiently as possible and which integrate environmental impacts, such as marine litter, into the life cycle of the product

6. Use phase

- D.26 Foster emotional connection to products
- D.27 Create timeless aesthetic
- D.28 Design upgradeable products
- D.29 Design products that can be customized
- D.30 Design for maintenance and easy repair
- D.31 Design for reuse
- S.3 Encourage low-consumption user behavior by developing and supporting awareness-raising campaigns

7. After use

- D.32 Design smart waste systems
- D.33 Design the recycling business model of a product
- D.34 Locate unrecyclable parts in areas easy to remove
- D.35 Design for safe disposal [*if no further cycles of the product, its parts and its materials is possible*]

8. Embedding environment and systematic issues

- S.4 Raise awareness on own influence on the marine litter issue among designers and all other life cycle actors
- S.5 Support and inform broader public (including all life cycle actors) on best practice examples in (i) re(design) / circular design, (ii) sustainable production and business

models for a circular economy and (iii) good consumer behavior to reduce /prevent waste.

S.6 Include environmental costs in the price of products to incentivise the purchase of products that produce less environmental costs

S.7 Create a regulatory framework that enables ecodesign policies, sustainable production and consumption. Also consider the ban of high environmental impact products, such as certain single-use items.