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<b>Document title</b>	Provisional Annotated Agenda
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<b>Category</b>	CMNT
<b>Agenda Item</b>	1 – 1 - Adoption of the Agenda
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<b>Submitted by</b>	Secretariat and Chair
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## Background

The Eleventh Meeting of the HELCOM *ad hoc* Seal Expert Group (SEAL 11-2017) will be held on 4–6 October 2017 in Gothenburg, Sweden, at the premises of Sankt Jörgen Park Hotel, Spa and Conference, Knipplekullen 8-10, SE-417 49 Gothenburg.

The Meeting will be chaired by Mr. Anders Galatius, Chair of the *ad hoc* Seal expert group.

The Meeting will start on Wednesday, 4 October at 10.00 and will end on Friday, 6 October by 14.00.

The focal items of the Meeting are to review the activities of the Contracting Parties related to implementation of HELCOM Recommendation 27/28: 'Conservation of seals in the Baltic Sea area and to finalize the HELCOM marine mammal core indicators and agree on the update of the indicators.

Meeting documents will be submitted by the Secretariat to the [document library](#) of the [SEAL 11-2017 meeting site](#) via the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#). The Secretariat has prepared [a document template](#) and recommends using the template when submitting documents to the Secretariat.

Those Meeting participants that wish to provide their contributions for the Meeting are requested to submit the documents in electronic format to Associate Professional Secretary Ms. Minna Pyhälä ([minna.pyhala@helcom.fi](mailto:minna.pyhala@helcom.fi)). The Secretariat kindly requests the Contracting Parties and Observers to observe the deadlines for submission of documents to a HELCOM meeting. The basic documents and documents requiring action or a decision to the Meeting should be submitted **by 12 September 2017**. Bulky documents should include abstracts embodying the essence of the proposals and action requested from the meeting. Documents containing comments to the basic documents as well as information documents should be provided to the Secretariat by **27 September 2016**.

Please register for the Meeting by answering the [Participation Survey](#) in the HELCOM Meeting Portal by **27 September 2017**. Instructions for the use of the new Meeting Portal are available on the [HELCOM Website](#).

## Provisional annotated agenda

### Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Provisional Agenda, as contained in documents 1-1 and 1-2.

### Agenda Item 2 Information by the Chair, Secretariat and Contracting Parties

The Secretariat will inform the Meeting of the outcomes of recent STATE & CONSERVATION and FISH group meetings as well and other relevant recent meeting (document 2-1).

The Chair and The Contracting Parties are invited to inform the Meeting of any relevant information.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the Terms of Reference for the Meeting agreed by SEAL 10-2016 and amended and endorsed by STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016 (document 2-2).

HELCOM coordinated the carrying out of a pilot study comparing the assessment of the status of seal populations based on criteria of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) or the Habitat Directive (HD) under the EU cofinanced BalticBOOST project. The aim of the study was to recommend how to harmonize the assessment of seal population status under the two directives. The Meeting is invited to take note of the final report of WP 1.4 Deliverable 1: Pilot study on aligning the assessments of Good Environmental Status in the MSFD/BSAP with assessments of Favourable Conservation Status in the Habitats Directive regarding status for seal populations in the HELCOM area (document 2-3).

### Agenda Item 3 Progress with national management plans

SEAL 7-2013 started the work on harmonizing national management plans as required by the Recommendation 27-28/2 and 'Guidelines for seal management plans' were developed by SEAL 8-2014 (Annex 2 of the [Outcome](#)).

SEAL 9-2015 agreed to review new and revised national management plans to assess the use of the guidelines and that Contracting Parties inform the Secretariat when new plans are adopted and make them available in advance of the annual HELCOM Seal meetings.

Information on the status of national management plans for marine mammals was updated by of SEAL 10-2016 as contained in document 3-1. Contracting Parties are invited to review the information in the document and to inform the Secretariat ([minna.pyhala@helcom.fi](mailto:minna.pyhala@helcom.fi)) on possible new adopted management plans as well as to update information on the current status of management plans for marine mammals **by 13 September 2017** (Point 4 of the Terms of Reference for SEAL 11-2017, meeting document 2-2). As requested by SEAL 10-2016, Contracting Parties are also invited to review the text under 'Additional information'.

### Agenda Item 4 Monitoring and data collection

#### Database for seals

The HELCOM seal database structure and reporting format was modified following the discussion in SEAL EG 10-2016 meeting (Outcome para 5.4) and as recommended by the drafting group to cater for both pointwise and gridded observations. The data request for data until 2015 was submitted in 29 November 2016 and data resulting from the data request was stored to the HELCOM seal database. The Secretariat will present the current status of the database and reported data.

The Contracting Parties are invited to report 2016 data on seals via an excel template (document to be submitted at a later stage) to the Secretariat by **4 October 2017**.

#### Distribution maps for marine mammals for HOLAS II

Ecosystem component maps for marine mammals have been made as part of the Baltic Sea Impact Index (BSII) of the HOLAS II assessment. The Meeting is invited to review and comment on the latest version of the marine mammals maps in order to provide best available information on seal distribution to be used in the 2018 version of the BSII (document to be submitted later).

#### Monitoring guidelines

The Meeting is invited to take note that the monitoring guidelines for reproduction status of seals have been published and are available via the [HELCOM website](#).

SEAL 10-2017 discussed the monitoring guidelines on distribution and abundance and noted the proposal by Finland to combine the two guidelines into one document. The meeting agreed to add a recommendation to the guidelines considering new areas, and welcomed the offer of Denmark to update the guidelines. Denmark is invited to inform on the progress in updating the guidelines on monitoring of abundance and distribution of seals.

Germany together with Sweden are invited to present further improved guidelines for monitoring reproductive and nutritional status of marine mammals.

Mr. Mart Jussi is invited to submit a format for submitting telemetry data to the Secretariat ([minna.pyhala@helcom.fi](mailto:minna.pyhala@helcom.fi)) in advance of SEAL 11-2017 by **13 September 2017**.

#### Agenda Item 5 Work on Baltic Sea harbour porpoise

The Meeting is invited to review the status of the [HELCOM-ASCOBANS harbour porpoise database](#) (latest updates (2015 data) to the database were included November 2016). The Contracting Parties are invited to report updates to the database by filling in the [reporting form](#) and sending it to the Secretariat ([minna.pyhala@helcom.fi](mailto:minna.pyhala@helcom.fi)).

SEAL 9-2015 agreed that each Contracting Party should designate a contact person for updating data to the database. Those Contracting Parties that have not yet nominated a contact for updating the database are invited to do so as soon as possible and inform the Secretariat ([minna.pyhala@helcom.fi](mailto:minna.pyhala@helcom.fi)) by **13 September 2017**.

SEAL 10-2016 took note of the suggestion by Germany on an east-west border for the high and low-density areas of harbour porpoises for collection of incidental sightings for the harbour porpoise database. Contracting Parties are invited to submit possible comments on the suggestion to Germany ([Michael.Daehne@meeresmuseum.de](mailto:Michael.Daehne@meeresmuseum.de)). Germany is invited to present a revised document to SEAL 11-2017.

SEAL 10-2016 took note of a data format for a meta-database on acoustic monitoring prepared by Germany and invited Contracting Parties to submit possible comments to Germany ([Michael.Daehne@meeresmuseum.de](mailto:Michael.Daehne@meeresmuseum.de)) by the end of October 2016. Germany is invited to submit the latest information on the meta-database for consideration of the Meeting.

Ms. Penina Blankett, Finland, is invited to report on activities related to Baltic Sea harbour porpoises under ASCOBANS and the Jastarnia Plan.

State & Conservation 6-2017 considered the proposed Guidelines for reporting on the implementation of the [HELCOM Recommendation 17/2](#) for countries being also ASCOBANS parties and agreed on the final version of the Guidelines ([document 2N-4](#)). The meeting proposed including the guidance as an attachment to Recommendation 17/2, and that the reporting requirement of the Recommendation should be revised to

take place every fourth year. The meeting agreed to proceed with this updating after the ASCOBANS reporting format has been published on the ASCOBANS website, and decided to come back to this issue at State & Conservation 7-2017.

Finland is invited to inform the meeting of the status of publication of the reporting format on the ASCOBANS website.

The Meeting is invited to update Recommendation 17/2 (document 5-1) as needed, including the addition of the Guidelines as an attachment.

Contracting Parties are invited to inform of any relevant national activities concerning harbour porpoise.

## Agenda Item 6                      Human induced pressures and management of marine mammals

### Registered mortality of marine mammals

The Seal expert group has agreed to annually update information on registered seal mortality. A questionnaire requesting data for 2016 has been circulated to Contracting Parties. Contracting Parties are invited to update the reported information (document to be submitted later) and send it to the Secretariat ([minna.pyhala@helcom.fi](mailto:minna.pyhala@helcom.fi)) **prior to SEAL 11-2017**.

The Meeting is invited to review the existing information and provide updates, especially for year 2016.

Denmark is invited to look into mortality data from previous years from Kattegat and to provide data for the year 2015 **by 13 September 2017** (Point 9 of the Terms of Reference of SEAL 11-2017, meeting document 2-2).

The Meeting is invited to consider and discuss the possible double reporting for harbour porpoise mortalities in the HELCOM/ASCOBANS database and document 6-1 (Point 9 of the Terms of Reference of SEAL 11-2017, meeting document 2-2).

### Underwater noise

HOD 52-2017 agreed on the “HELCOM input to the process of establishing environmental targets for underwater noise” pending the clarification of the study reservation by Germany and Russia and was of the opinion that it could serve as regional input to other fora, including other Regional Sea Conventions as well as European processes. The meeting agreed that the provision of examples on how the decision support trees can be applied and the comparison of the natural and anthropogenic noise level will be prepared by relevant HELCOM groups in the future development of the subject on underwater noise. The meeting agreed that the approach will be further developed once more experience is gained through testing of the decision support trees and more data becomes available and that the HELCOM Fish Group and SEAL EG will be engaged, and cooperation with ASCOBANS on this topic will be established ([Outcome](#) of HOD 52-2017, para. 3.17-3.21).

The Meeting is invited to discuss how to cooperate with HELCOM EN-Noise on this issue (document to be submitted later).

## Agenda Item 7                      Core indicators, HOLAS II and other activities under the Seal Expert Group teams

### Marine mammal core indicators

The Meeting is invited to take note of the publication of the core indicator ‘[Distribution of Baltic Seals](#)’ on the HELCOM website in July 2017.

Lead Country Sweden is invited to present the latest version of the core indicator ‘**Population trends and abundance of seals**’ (document to be submitted later), which has been endorsed for publication by STATE &

CONSERVATION 6-2017, but is pending approval of Denmark. The Meeting is invited to take note of the core indicator report and amend it as needed.

The Lead Country representatives and the health team are invited to present the latest versions of the core indicator reports on **'Nutritional status of seals'** and **'Reproductive status of seals'** (documents to be submitted later), which have been endorsed for publication by STATE & CONSERVATION 6-2017 but are pending updating based on comments from the meeting. The Meeting is invited to take note of the core indicator reports and amend them as needed.

STATE & CONSERVATION 6-2017 identified the candidate indicator 'Harbour porpoise distribution and abundance' to be of high priority. Sweden offered to co-lead the work together with Lead country Germany. The meeting requested the Secretariat to send an invitation to the ASCOBANS Jastarnia group for support to develop the indicator on harbour porpoise abundance.

Germany is invited to present the status of work with developing the core indicator on **'Harbour porpoise distribution and abundance'**. The Meeting is invited to take note of the information and provide input to further developing the indicator report.

Germany is invited to inform the meeting of further work on the development of the pre-core indicator **'Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gears'**.

The final version of the HOLAS II assessment 'State of the Baltic Sea' report will be published in mid-2018. The core indicators, which form the basis of the HOLAS II work, should be updated with data for 2016 by early 2018. The Meeting is invited to discuss and agree on how to update the core indicator reports with 2016 data.

#### Other work under the intersessional teams

The leaders of intersessional teams Mr. Ivar Jussi for seal populations, Mr. Olle Karlsson for seal distribution and Ms. Ursula Siebert for seal health, are invited to present information on the recent activities of the teams, including the status of development of new indicators for the health status of seals and porpoises.

#### Agenda Item 8 Evaluation of Recommendation 27-28/2

STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016 considered the draft evaluation of HELCOM Recommendation 27-28/2 and endorsed the criteria and assessment. The meeting welcomed the work carried out by the Seal Expert Group and noted that the effectiveness of the Recommendation, although not fully implemented yet, is overall satisfying.

The Meeting is invited to identify work still needed in order to support the full implementation of the Recommendation in advance of SEAL 11-2017 by using, i.a. the STATE&CONSERVATION 5-2016 evaluation of the Recommendation (document 8-1).

#### Agenda Item 9 Any other business

The Meeting is invited to take note and update, as needed, the list of contacts and observers of the ad hoc Seal expert group (document 9-1).

The Meeting is invited to agree on the Terms of Reference of the next meeting including main tasks and objectives as well as the arrangements of intersessional activities, to be submitted for endorsement by STATE & CONSERVATION 7-2017.

The Meeting is invited to decide on the time and place of the next meeting of the group.

The Meeting is invited to consider any other business of relevance for the group.

## Agenda Item 10 Outcome of the Meeting

A draft Outcome of the Meeting will be presented by the Secretariat for consideration and approval by the Meeting participants. The final Outcome, together with documents and presentations considered at the Meeting, will be made available on the [SEAL 11-2017 Meeting site](#) under [Meeting Documents](#) on the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#).