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<b>Document title</b>	Timeline and organization for the further development of core indicators
<b>Code</b>	6-1
<b>Category</b>	INF
<b>Agenda Item</b>	6 – Core indicators and other activities under the Seal Expert Group teams
<b>Submission date</b>	20.11.2015
<b>Submitted by</b>	Secretariat

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## Background

In June 2015, the [HELCOM HoD 48-2015](#) meeting agreed on GES (good environmental status) boundaries for 19 core indicators (study reservations in place for Germany and Denmark), shifts in category from candidate to pre-core indicators and on the continued core indicator work (paragraphs 3.63-3.67). HOD 48-2015 agreed that further indicator development in HELCOM will be based on a Lead Country approach (doc. 3-13 and 3-21), and the Contracting Parties were invited to inform their willingness to take on the Lead or co-lead in the continued indicator development and to appoint national experts.

This document presents the timeline and organization for the further development of core indicators as well as the future organization of core indicator work.

## Action required

The Meeting is invited to

- take note of the general information on further development work of core indicators,
- plan for the timely delivery of indicator evaluations based on monitoring data to the HOLAS II project,
- discuss the indicator specific development needs and plan for the development work.

## Timeline for indicator development work

The continued core indicator development work is currently planned in accordance with the major milestones of the HOLAS II project. To include indicators in the 2<sup>nd</sup> holistic assessment it is anticipated that they have to be presented for review at State and Conservation 5-2016 (to be held on 7-11 November) and for endorsement by HELCOM HOD to be held in December 2016 (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Timeline for the continued development of indicators during 2015-2016 and carrying out the next update of the core indicator evaluations.

2015	2016				2017	
Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Setting up Lead Country-approach work Further development work initiated	Development work (presented to expert meetings as relevant)	Development work (presented to expert meetings as relevant)	Development work (presented to expert meetings as relevant)	State & Conservation 5-2016 (17-11 November) to review indicators and proposed GES-boundaries. HOD December 2016 To agree on GES boundaries and protocols to be used in HOLAS II	Completing indicator evaluations for the first version of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> holistic assessment to be prepared by mid-2017	

<sup>1</sup>The final HOLAS II report to be prepared by mid-2018 will be based on data from the years 2011-2016. The first version of the report, which is to be ready by June 2017 and used in national consultations, will most likely be based on data for 2011-2015. Data for the last year to be included (2016) can be added during all of 2017 in order to be included in the final report that is planned to be published in June 2018.

## Organization for indicator development and long-term indicator work

The short term development work, needed to operationalize core indicators and develop targets currently lacking, is to be done through a Lead Country approach as agreed at HELCOM HOD 48-2015 (para. 3.63-3.67). Contracting Parties have informed on their possibility to take on the lead for the specific indicators in a Lead or a Co-Lead role, and nominated specific national experts as representatives.

To ensure that all Contracting Parties are involved in the continued development work, the Lead Country is to communicate the ongoing development to the relevant HELCOM working groups (WG), expert groups (EG), expert networks (EN) and projects that will act as communication platforms for discussing and reviewing. The nominated Lead Country representatives are anticipated to participate in the relevant HELCOM expert meetings to communicate the development work. The HOD 48-2015 meeting requested all HELCOM groups, projects and networks to prioritize their role as platform for development of indicators and also as providers of support for HELCOM assessments and to make arrangements for the work as necessary (para 3.65 in the outcome).

The specific tasks for Lead/co-Leads and groups/networks/projects will differ between the indicators depending on the current level of development. In general, the development of indicators will concern **development of GES-boundaries** as appropriate and further development of **assessment protocols** and should in a first step be carried out by end of 2016. It applies to all agreed HELCOM indicators, including the most developed core indicators, that the **data-flow needs to be further developed** and that an operational data-flow system for calculating the indicators need to be tested.

The task of the HELCOM groups, networks and projects to which the indicators are assigned will be to follow and review the on-going development of indicators but also to consider the long-term updating requirements of the core indicator reports and to allocate time to test the indicators with data and HELCOM assessment tools as part of the HOLAS II project. Thus, the expected contribution continues until 2018 and beyond and

relevant groups, networks and projects will be asked to consider whether their Terms of Reference should be revised to reflect the new task placed on them by HOD 48-2015. Terms of reference for new networks or re-initiated networks have been drafted and have been considered by Pressure 3-2015 (marine litter network) and were considered at State and Conservation 3-2015 (hazardous substance network, and a proposal for a new network on eutrophication to be initiated when the EUTRO-OPER project ends by 2015).

#### Lead countries and nominated representatives for marine mammal indicators linked to SEAL EG, as of 17.11.2015

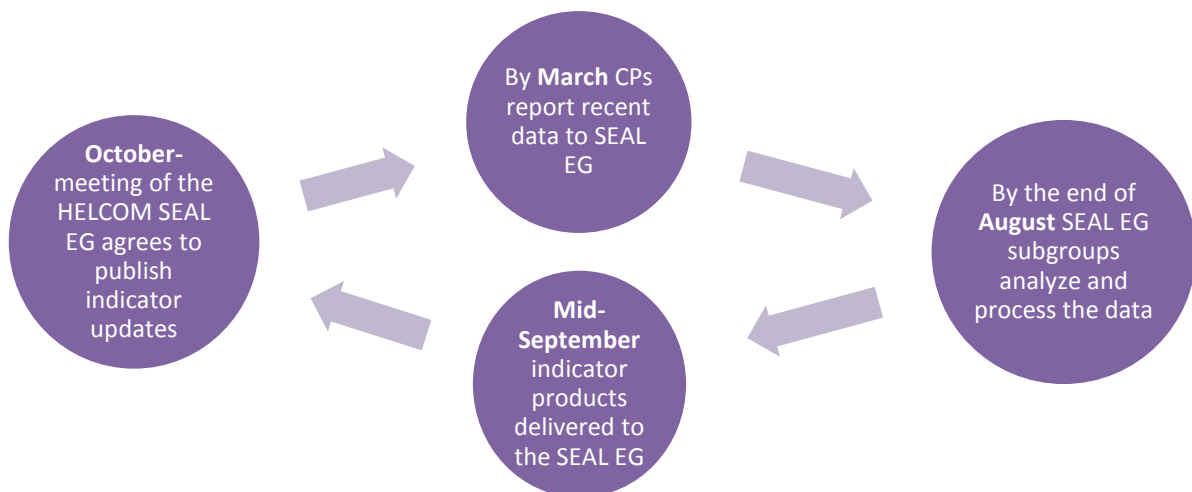
Indicator (C)- core (PC) – pre core (cand) - candidate	Lead Country	LC rep.	Co-lead Country	CLC rep.
Distribution of Baltic seals (C)	<b>Finland</b>	Markus Ahola	<i>Denmark</i>  <i>Sweden</i>	Anders Galatius, Jonas Teilman, Morten Olsen Tero Härkönen, Olle Karlsson, Karl Lundström
Population trends and abundance of seals (C)	<b>Sweden</b>  <b>Finland</b>	<b>Tero Härkönen,</b> Olle Karlsson, Karl Lundström  <b>Markus Ahola</b>	Denmark	Anders Galatius, Jonas Teilman,
Nutritional status of marine mammals (C)	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Tero Härkönen,</b> <b>Karin Hårding,</b> Charlotta Moraeus, Britt-Marie Bäcklin, Karl Lundström	<i>Finland</i>	Kaarina Kauhala
Reproductive status of marine mammals (C)	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Tero Härkönen,</b> <b>Karin Hårding,</b> Charlotta Moraeus, Britt-Marie Bäcklin, Karl Lundström	<i>Finland</i>	Kaarina Kauhala
Harbour porpoise distribution and abundance (cand)	-	-	<i>Denmark</i> <i>Finland</i> <i>Germany</i>	Anders Galatius Penina Blankett Ursula Siebert/Andrea Fais

## Indicative development tasks of indicators linked to SEAL EG

For all indicators, further development of data-arrangements is needed. The SEAL EG is to ensure timely delivery of indicator evaluations to the second holistic assessment, and should thus be involved in specifying the data-arrangements.

During CORESET II, SEAL EG proposed an overall framework for updating of core indicators that can be used as a basis for further planning (Figure 1.), while also considering the timeline of the HOLAS II project (Table 1).

The indicator specific indicative development tasks for the marine mammal core indicators are included in Table 2.



**Figure 1.** Framework for updating of marine mammal core indicators.

**Table 2.** Indicator specific indicative development tasks for the marine mammal core indicators.

Indicator (C) - core (cand) - candidate	Indicative development tasks
Distribution of Baltic seals (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ringed seal GES-boundary to be further developed,</li> <li>– Comment at S&amp;C 2-2015 (FI) that the boundary cannot be so tightly linked to the ice coverage.</li> </ul>
Population trends and abundance of seals (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Elaborate the assessment protocol as it is needed to provide information on confidence of the evaluation as well as min-max values</li> </ul>
Nutritional status of marine mammals (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Explore data availability for other species than grey seal</li> <li>– Elaborate the assessment protocol as it is needed to provide information on confidence of the evaluation as well as min-max values</li> </ul>
Reproductive status of marine mammals (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Explore data availability for other species than grey seal.</li> <li>– Elaborate the assessment protocol as it is needed to provide information on confidence of the evaluation as well as min-max values.</li> </ul>
Harbour porpoise distribution and abundance (cand)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The indicator is planned to be based on acoustic monitoring, for which method development is ongoing.</li> <li>– To discuss which elements of the indicator can be developed in the short term to determine if any input to HOLAS II can be expected.</li> </ul>

[Information on ongoing discussions on the possible revision of the EU Commission Decision on criteria and methodological standards on good environmental status of marine waters \(2010/477/EU\)](#)

A review of the so called EC GES-decision has been ongoing during 2014-2015 to evaluate the need for a possible revision to clarify the assessment requirements. The decision whether to go ahead with a revision based on the review is expected in November 2015 from the EU Marine Directors meeting.

The sections relevant to the SEAL EG relate mainly to the review of Descriptor 1, for which a review manual has been prepared as well as a report from a workshop further discussing open issues. Documents available for download in EC CIRCABC; [D1 manual](#) and the [workshop report](#).

Noteworthy for the discussions of SEAL EG are, among other things, the proposed changes to the minimum requirements for elements to be assessed. The proposal is that an assessment of the status of the groups are to be provided for species groups.

Biodiversity Components	Biodiversity groups (assessment units): Species group
<b>Mammals</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Small toothed cetacean</li> <li>2. Deep divers toothed cetacean</li> <li>3. Baleen whales</li> <li>4. Seals</li> </ol>

The aim of the HELCOM second holistic assessment of the ecosystem health of the Baltic Sea, developed in the HOLAS II project, is to provide HELCOM Members that are also EU Member States with a roof report for their Article 8 reporting in 2018. Thus it should be considered how the structure of the core indicators can best be developed to provide these species group assessments in a timely manner.