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Background

The [HELCOM ACTION Project](#) is an EU co-funded project for which HELCOM is the coordinator. The project works closely with the HELCOM *ad hoc* Platform on Sufficiency of Measures (SOM Platform). This document provides a brief conceptual overview of how the topics covered within the ACTION project (i.e. the more technical work packages on by-catch, benthic habitats/seafloor, marine protected areas, inputs of nutrients, and natural time lags) are incorporated into the SOM analysis and methodology.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information and discuss the proposals as required.

Incorporation of results from ACTION project to the SOM model

The ACTION project is an EU co-financed project to support the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan. A major focal point of the project is the development of the Sufficiency of measures (SOM) analysis carried out by work package 6 (WP6), into which the other work packages (WPs 1-5) provide information to support the SOM analysis.



There are four main processes by which results from the ACTION project (i.e. the more technical work packages: WPs 1-5) will enter the SOM analysis. These are summarized briefly below.

Project data (i.e. quantitative data)

This will apply only to ACTION work package 4 (WP4 – Inputs of nutrients). WP4 will provide an overview of the division of activities and pressures related to eutrophication (i.e. nutrient inputs), creating an overview of source apportionment (step 3, identifying main pathways for pressures based on links between activities and pressures). This aspect will be developed based on the national data reported to the HELCOM Pollution Load Compilation (PLC).

To provide relevant information to fulfil the needs of the SOM analysis relating to the effectiveness of measures (step 4), information on load reductions due to full implementation of existing measures is required. The information will be provided per activity: waste water treatment (reductions achieved by implementing the HELCOM Recommendation 28E/5 on municipal waste water treatment), atmospheric nitrogen emissions (based on EMEP data and predictions), agriculture (survey on the nutrient runoff from agriculture guided by HELCOM Agri group), scattered dwellings (joint survey with PLC-7 project).

This type of input to the SOM analysis was described as ‘front-end’ in initial planning presented at the Second Meeting of the ad hoc HELCOM Platform on sufficiency of measures ([document 3-9](#), [presentation 9](#)).

Other aspect where ACTION WPs have contributed to building structural components in the SOM analysis include contribution to some aspects for the surveys and providing relevant information in linking activities-pressures and the contribution of these (such as the information related to benthic habitats).

Literature and report data (i.e. estimates of effectiveness)

Literature data will also be utilized in the SOM analysis (see document 2-1 on proposal to integrate expert responses and literature data) and information from the ACTION project will be relevant here. The information and references gathered by the WPs (1-4) in their project reports will be used to include further data points into the SOM analysis where literature data is included. Quantitative (or readily convertible) information on sufficiency of existing measures, available from project reports or project outputs, will represent viable additional data points to include in the appropriate SOM analysis runs. Furthermore, within the project, WP6 partners are also systematically searching the literature (peer reviewed and policy/public science) with specific terms to identify the sufficiency of measures for the ACTION topics of: by-catch, benthic habitats/seafloor, marine protected areas (MPAs), and inputs of nutrients/eutrophication.

This type of input to the SOM analysis was described as ‘front-end’ in initial planning presented at the Second Meeting of the ad hoc HELCOM Platform on sufficiency of measures ([document 3-9](#), [presentation 9](#)).

Supporting reference material and contextual information

Where references and information are available from the work of the technical WPs (WPs 1-4), yet the material is not able to provide quantitative or convertible estimates of the effectiveness of measures (i.e. data that can enter the SOM literature component, as above), then these publications will be utilized in the reference material for the final report preparation (the overall SOM summary report and the supplementary topic reports). This will provide further clarification and guidance on appropriate interpretation of the SOM analysis results, particularly where other quantitative evaluations are not available and be reflected in the discussion of the model results.

This type of input to the SOM analysis was described as ‘back-end’ in initial planning presented at the Second Meeting of the ad hoc HELCOM Platform on sufficiency of measures ([document 3-9](#), [presentation 9](#)).

Potential time lags due to natural conditions

In the case of WP5 that addresses natural time lags in the recovery towards Good Environmental Status, the information provided by the WP will be integral to the descriptive interpretation of the SOM results when aspects such as time lags and climate change are considered. The output from WP5 is expected to include literature summaries of selected topics (e.g. selected hazardous substances, selected biodiversity aspects, and eutrophication) and how natural conditions influence lags in achieving Good Environmental Status, as well as data assessments and model predictions, for example related to achieving nutrient targets or the impacts of climate change. These detailed assessments and overviews will be combined with more general information on time lags collated within WP6 to provide a descriptive understanding of the SOM model output in light of such future factors.

Proposals on new measures/actions (and cost effectiveness)

A significant amount of work in the ACTION project technical WPs relates to developing knowledge and approaches that are more relevant to potential new measures. This also includes measures that may exist but are currently only tested in small scales and are not widely applied (therefore differentiated from ‘existing measures’). The technical WPs in the ACTION project have contributed to synopses on tentative new measures for the updated BSAP and will further detail aspects related to this (and where available cost effectiveness) in their final reports. Preliminary contributions for new measures/actions have been submitted to the Secretariat and are included in the overview of synopses.

The work in WP1 will explore full application of pingers and the seasonal spatial management of fisheries to reduce/prevent by-catch. WP2 focusses on new measures related to coastal restoration (as detailed in the contribution to the synopses on new measures/actions process) and on possible precautionary approaches to regulate fisheries pressures on benthic habitats. WP3 explores recommendations on new approaches to develop and manage an effective network of MPAs (as provided in synopses proposals). WP4 explores approaches to reduce the inputs of phosphorus by making existing measures more stringent and by harmonizing existing policy initiatives across the region to a more precautionary and ambitious level.