



Notes from the Fourth Meeting of the ad hoc HELCOM Platform on sufficiency of measures (SOM Platform 4-2020)

15 September 2020, online

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Introduction

0.1 The Fourth Meeting of the ad hoc HELCOM Platform on sufficiency of measures (SOM Platform 4-2020) was held on 15 September 2020, online. All Contracting Parties except for EU and Russia, as well as Observers the Baltic Sea Advisory Council Europe and Federation of European Aquaculture Producers, took part in the meeting. The list of participants is contained in **Annex 1**.

0.2 The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Urmas Lips, Chair of SOM Platform.

0.3 Ms. Susanna Kaasinen, Ms. Heini Ahtiainen and Mr. Luke Dodd, HELCOM Secretariat, acted as secretaries of the Meeting.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

Documents: 1-1, 1-2

1.1 The Meeting adopted the agenda as contained in document 1-1.

Agenda Item 2 Results of the SOM analysis

Documents: 2-1, 2-1-Rev.1

2.1 The Meeting took note of the first results of the SOM analysis for all nine topics included in the analysis: hazardous substances, litter, input of nutrients, birds, mammals, fish, benthic habitats, noise and non-indigenous species (document 2-1-Rev.1, **Presentation 1**).

2.2 The Meeting took note that the results have been submitted to the four thematic HELCOM BSAP UP workshops organized in August and September 2020 to provide supporting background information for the evaluation of proposed new actions in the workshops.

2.3 The Meeting took note that document 2-1-Rev.1 lists updates and revisions to the reporting and presentation of the SOM results based on review of the results and input gathered e.g. from SOM topic teams and BSAP UP workshops. The Meeting also took note that the results of the SOM analysis will be amended and revised in the autumn 2020 based on additional analyses and feedback received and that the final results should be available in October after input from HELCOM groups and networks and validation of input data by the Working Groups. Instructions, input data and responsibilities for validation are available in [a dedicated folder](#) in the SOM workspace.

2.4 The Meeting discussed the results in general and provided the following comments:

- It is important to include in all figures and graphs the number of experts contributing to the result. Also, standard deviations or confidence intervals should be included in the graphs, where appropriate. Some elements of the assessment, such as the probability to achieve GES/state improvements, includes several data components with a varying number of expert opinions, and in this case, a range could be given. For some topics, the number of expert responses is low, and it should be considered whether these results should be presented in a different way, or whether they should be presented only in the topic-specific report and not the main report.
- In some cases, the standard deviation is large, which indicates a higher uncertainty. This should be taken into account when presenting and interpreting the results. However, large standard deviations

do not necessarily indicate only uncertainty but may reflect the potential varying effectiveness of the individual measures comprising the measure type. The standard deviation is usually higher for measure types that are quite general.

- The effects of COVID-19 on the changes in human activities are not reflected in the scenarios because the literature review was conducted in late 2019 and early 2020, and the projections used to make the scenarios do not consider the effects of COVID-19. In some cases, the effects of COVID-19 could be accounted for by using the low/negative change scenario or the no change scenario as the default development scenario.
- The results are presented for the Working Groups meetings for review and the input data have been sent for validation to the Working Groups and Expert Networks based on the mandates of the groups. The results of all topics could be shared to the Working Group meetings for information, but the groups could be asked to review and comment primarily the topics that concern their group.
- More conclusions and information are needed regarding the most important pressures that affect the gap to GES, and the existing measures in place for those pressures and where are the gaps in terms of measures and pressures.
- Information on the credibility of the results and how they should (and should not) be interpreted should be added.
- Regarding effectiveness of measure types, there are cases where the measure types are largely implemented already and have been for some time. The effect of such measures is therefore already accounted for in the current state and thus they are not included as existing measures in the SOM analysis. Some of these measures may already have been implemented in some countries, but their implementation may be ongoing in some countries, such as the measure type on no special-fee for litter. There may also be some hypothetical measure types which are not expected to be implemented in the time frame of the analysis (by 2030/2035). It would be useful to indicate which measure types have been accounted for in the SOM analysis. It would also be useful to have more information on the most important existing measures to each pressure/state component and the current implementation status of existing measures to highlight the importance of implementing them.
- For some activities, the effectiveness of the measure types sums up to more than 100%. In addition, some measure types for an activity are very similar or overlapping in their content. Both of these are considered in the analysis by taking joint impacts of measure types into account. An explanation on how this is considered in the model will be added to the results documents.
- The use of decimals when presenting the results does not reflect the level of accuracy of the expert-based evaluation, and this will be changed in the final report.

2.5 The Meeting provided the following topic-specific comments:

Hazardous substances

- The linkages in Figure 3 and the difference between Figures 2 and 3 need further explanation. The distinction between Figures 2 and 3 results from an assumption made for assessing the four target substances which is not present when assessing the effect of hazardous substances on other topics.
- Bar graphs could be considered instead of continuous graphs for visualizing the results.
- There could be a time lag of years or decades for reducing the pressure from certain hazardous substances. There are concerns about how well measures implemented prior to 2016 but still having additional effects on pressures after 2016 are covered in the SOM assessment. It was noted that the countries were invited to also provide information on such measures. However, very little information on these measures was received. Discussion on this aspect could be added when presenting the results and the topic team might be consulted for additional input.

- The difference between Tables 2 and 6 needs to be better explained.
- A short description about the issue of long-range emissions could be added.

Eutrophication

- Information on the importance of transboundary sources of nutrients in some sub-basins could be added.
- It would be good to add information on the effectiveness of measure types related to agriculture, but since most of the data was provided by the countries as expected total reduction in input of nutrients from agriculture, this data is not available.
- Information on how supplementary measures from the river basin management plans could be included, when relevant.
- In the BSAP UP workshop on eutrophication, it was pointed out that there was a mistake in how the data on atmospheric phosphorus deposition had been handled. This has now been corrected through the proper inclusion of background inputs as a separate category and the updated data has been sent to the data validation.

Birds

- Although many of the bird species are in good status, the results of the analysis show that high pressure reductions would be needed to maintain GES. Input from the experts in State and Conservation via the data validation procedure would be needed to clarify this unexpected result.

Mammals

- There are unexpected results regarding mammals. Help from experts is needed to interpret the results and point to the issues with the underlying data. The results will be discussed in the upcoming EG MAMA and State and Conservation meetings, and input from the experts in State and Conservation via the data validation procedure is important.
- The number of experts responding to the mammals surveys was low. Some of the results in the pressure-state part might need to be left out, or there could be a more qualitative approach for much of this topic.

Benthic habitats

- It is problematic that some of the most important pressures for benthic habitats, such as effects of eutrophication and non-indigenous species, are not included in the analysis. There is a need to add some qualitative information on the impact that the reduction of these pressures could have.

Noise

- The effects of the construction of wind farms needs to be accounted for somehow for impulsive noise based on the scenarios on changes in human activities.
- Although there is no GES threshold, the analysis can show which measures are likely to reduce the pressure.

2.6 The Meeting took note of the clarification that the analysis will be run once more for all topics in October and the results will be updated accordingly. All comments to the validity of the input data should be provided to the Secretariat/ACTION project **by the end of September** to ensure that they are considered in the update of the results (heini.ahtiainen@helcom.fi, luke.dodd@helcom.fi). After that there is only the possibility to comment on the interpretation of the results. It is expected that the Working Group meetings can contribute to the interpretation of the results.

Agenda Item 3 Report on SOM analysis

Documents: 3-1

3.1 The Meeting took note of the proposal for the outline and contents of the SOM main report (document 3-1, **Presentation 2**).

3.2 The Meeting discussed the SOM main report and provided the following comments:

- The overall focus of the report is good, but the report could still more clearly aim to answer where are the most important gaps in reaching GES, which are the most important pressures in different areas, as well as where are the largest uncertainties and data gaps. The focus should be on the results and not the model.
- Chapter 11 is an important part of the report to highlight what are the lessons learnt in the process, what are the limitations, what could be achieved and what not, and how to take the work forward in the future.
- The order of the chapters could be changed so that section 9 (Activity-pressure input contributions) could be placed before section 8 (Most impactful measures).
- Both alternatives for the presentation of the activity-pressure contributions gained support, as they could be used for different purposes.

3.3 The Meeting took note that some of the results could be summarized over different geographical scales to simplify the main report.

3.4 The Meeting pointed out that an analysis on how well the proposed new measures are aligned with the gaps identified by the SOM analysis would be useful and took note that conducting such an analysis depends on the resources available.

Agenda Item 4 Follow-up of the BSAP UP workshops

Documents: None

4.1 The Meeting took note that four BSAP UP workshops were held to evaluate the proposed new actions for the updated BSAP and that, for the evaluation, the workshops utilized the evaluation criteria developed by the SOM Platform and endorsed by the Gear group.

4.2 The Meeting took note that the Notes from the BSAP UP workshops are available from the workshop sites as follows:

- HELCOM BSAP UP workshop on hazardous substances and litter for the consideration of proposed new actions (BSAP UP WS-HZ 2020), 24-25 August 2020 ([link](#))
- HELCOM BSAP UP workshop on eutrophication for the consideration of proposed new actions (BSAP UP WS-EUTRO 2020), 26-27 August 2020 ([link](#))
- HELCOM BSAP UP workshop on biodiversity, including extraction of species and spatial measures, for the consideration of proposed new actions, 31 August-2 September 2020 ([link](#))
- HELCOM BSAP UP workshop on maritime activities, including underwater noise, non-indigenous species and response actions, for the consideration of proposed new actions (BSAP UP WS-SEA 2020), 2-4 September 2020 ([link](#))

4.3 The Meeting noted that according to the updated work plan for the BSAP update approved by HOD 58-2020, the outcomes of the BSAP UP workshops will be further elaborated and endorsed by HELCOM Working Groups for submission to HOD 59-2020.

Agenda Item 5 Cost-effectiveness analysis of new measures

Documents: 5-1

5.1 The Meeting took note of and discussed the methodology and progress of the cost-effectiveness analysis (document 5-1, **Presentation 3**)

5.2 The Meeting expressed concern over the timetable of the cost-effectiveness analysis and suggested that at least the interim results could be made available for the Working Group meetings.

5.3 The Meeting took note that while there could be information available on the cost and effectiveness estimates for the individual measures, the information on the cost-effectiveness of sets of measures and results of the cost-effectiveness analysis will not be ready for submission to the autumn Working Group meetings.

5.4 The Meeting took note of the clarification by the Secretariat that the Working Groups are to give recommendations to the HOD 59-2020 meeting in December on which measures to include in the updated BSAP. The first draft of the updated BSAP will be discussed in the HOD 59-2020 meeting but the drafting will still continue in 2021 by the BSAP drafting group (DG BSAP) and HODs. The final decision on the measures to include in the updated BSAP is made by HODs. The information on the cost-effectiveness of new measures would be valuable background information for the Working Groups, but if it is not available in time for their autumn meetings, it could be still considered later in the process.

5.5 The Meeting took note that national cost estimates are being collected through representatives of EN ESA, and that instructions on the cost data collection have been sent to EN ESA contacts. It is not necessary to provide national information on the cost of all proposed measures but all information on the costs is valuable and welcomed by the ACTION project.

5.6 The Meeting took note of the clarification that no short list of the proposed measures has been made but the workshops gave a recommendation to the Working Groups on which actions could be supported for the BSAP.

5.7 The Meeting discussed whether the effectiveness of measures is analysed similarly in the cost-effectiveness analysis as in the SOM analysis. In the SOM analysis they are presented as effects per activity and pressure. Alternatively, they could be presented as impacts of measures, which take into account the activity-pressure contributions. The Meeting took note that if activity-pressure contributions are added and impacts of measures considered, there is a need to take into account the spatial scale as it differs across pressures, but if effects are considered, the spatial scale is the entire Baltic Sea. The Meeting suggested to consider the most appropriate approach for defining the effectiveness for the cost-effectiveness analysis.

5.8 The Meeting took note of the clarification that the sets of measures refer to combinations of measure types which can be linked to cost estimates.

5.9 The Meeting suggested that although a full data validation procedure for the cost-effectiveness analysis cannot be conducted due to time constraints, it would still be valuable to indicate the uncertainties and confidence of the estimates in the final report.

Agenda Item 6 Next steps

Documents: None

6.1 The Meeting agreed that the fifth meeting of the SOM platform (SOM Platform 5-2020) will be organized on 30 November 2020.

6.2 The Meeting agreed that the topics for the fifth meeting will be the final set of results of the SOM analysis of existing measures, the draft reports of results, and the results of the cost-effectiveness analysis.

Agenda Item 7 Notes from the Meeting

Documents: 7-1

7.1 The Notes from the Meeting were finalized after closure of the Meeting and circulated for approval by the participants in writing

Annex 1. List of participants

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