



## Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature  
Conservation

Hamina, Finland, 6-10 May 2019

STATE & CONSERVATION  
10-2019

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<b>Document title</b>	Revision of HELCOM monitoring: Updated overview of deadlines for data reporting listed in HELCOM Monitoring Manual and guidelines
<b>Code</b>	3MA-2
<b>Category</b>	DEC
<b>Agenda Item</b>	3MA – Development and implementation of Recommendations
<b>Submission date</b>	15.4.2019
<b>Submitted by</b>	Secretariat
<b>Reference</b>	

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### Background

STATE & CONSERVATION 7-2017 noted that as the information on deadlines for data reporting have now been removed from the revised Recommendation 19/3, there is a need to review and potentially update the deadline information listed in the manuals and guidelines to ensure timely reporting.

The Meeting also agreed to initiate the review, and possibly update and amend, the deadline information in the manuals, guidelines and in Table 1 of the [Introduction section of the HELCOM Monitoring Manual](#).

STATE & CONSERVATION 8-2018 discussed the need to streamline the reporting requirements in order to minimize double reporting, agreed to add a column containing information on to which database the data should be reported and invited lead country Estonia to prepare a first draft to be presented for further discussion in STATE&CONSERVATION 9-2018.

The Meeting also agreed that the summary table of reporting dates will be sent to the relevant expert networks for their input on optimal reporting dates. The input by the expert networks will be collated by the Secretariat and used to inform further discussion and agreement in STATE&CONSERVATION 9-2018.

The Meeting agreed that, once approved, the list of reporting dates and data recipients will be maintained in the Monitoring Manual and is to be reviewed by the State and Conservation Working Group in each meeting.

STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2019 took note of the initial overview of deadlines for data reporting listed in HELCOM Monitoring Manual and guidelines, as presented by Estonia. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to prepare a revised version of the document, including the information from the Expert Networks and indicator leads, to be shared with State and Conservation contacts.

This document contains the overview of reporting deadlines including comments and suggested deadlines by expert groups and indicator leads, harvested from the responses to HELCOM indicator data solutions questionnaire. Further input provided by the Contracting Parties as part of the review process has been included as comments in the document.

### Action requested

The Contracting Parties are invited to:

- consider the provided information, provide any further input and,
- agree on conceptual guidelines to consider when optimizing reporting and dataflows.

## An initial overview of deadlines for data reporting listed in HELCOM Monitoring Manual and guidelines

In the survey on HOLAS III processes and products one of the main issues highlighted was the data reporting, quality control and harmonization process.

Regarding data reporting the following challenges were highlighted in the HOLASII process:

*"Ad hoc data collections"*

*"Getting data for indicators from national delegations in time."*

*"Harmonization of data for integrated assessment. The new indicators that were added and are indicating the present problems, did not have comparable data from all the countries. More harmonization is needed in data collection and monitoring programs before the next assessment."*

*"To collect sufficient data on human activities"*

*"Getting the data layer up to a good enough level."*

*"Different data from the contracting parties... try to harmonize better in future assessments"*

*"The data delivery should be a smoother and less-complicated process."*

STATE&CONSERVATION 9-2018 discussed the need to even out and spread out the reporting to ease the load of data hosts at times of peak activity (e.g. for MSFD reporting or HOLAS assessments) and agreed that more frequent, more regular reporting facilitates communication between the data host and the reporter, the identification and solving of issues, better governance and control over data quality. The meeting agreed that the aim for all indicator data flows should be regular and frequent.

The revised HELCOM Recommendation 19/3 refers to the reporting deadlines, which have to be defined in the Introduction of the HELCOM Monitoring Manual. In the published version of the HELCOM Monitoring Manual, the data reporting deadlines are identified as they have been agreed in HELCOM COMBINE, MORS, PLC, and illegal oil spills monitoring (see Table 1).

In the sub-programme sections of the HELCOM Monitoring Manual data availability, update frequency and access points are described. Still, in most cases, the data reporting deadlines are not defined for the new sub-programmes. Furthermore, in many cases, the sub-programmes do not specify the databases set up or agreed on for data hosting and access. In the HELCOM HOLAS II process, the data were collected as agreed either in the Manual or on the level of expert networks. To guarantee the smooth assessment process in the next assessment cycle, it is time to agree on the deadlines and databases taking into account practices and routines already in place.

To ensure that any set reporting deadlines are feasible the HELCOM Experts Groups were approached to provide their input to the reporting, their answers have been included in Table 1.

Contracting parties were invited to provide further comments to the collated information by 1 April. Input was received from Estonia, Poland and Sweden and has been included as comments in table 1, as well as general comments below.

General comments provided by Sweden:

*We think, that it looks very good! One thing we was wondering about is the link to Eionet. Are the proposed deadlines link with the Eionet rod-databas: <https://rod.eionet.europa.eu/> and more specific to [https://rod.eionet.europa.eu/obligations?country=36&id=&filter=GO&issue=15&client=72&sourcePage=g-PyNoyfvIZVMa2qAO2wi6Pdj-CNTRC&fp=tHC\\_DW8mwJRzrIDxXOeraPqXq-y-tF1SGwKW3Q\\_L-uu50fOtQyt6kCQwK6nbNikH?](https://rod.eionet.europa.eu/obligations?country=36&id=&filter=GO&issue=15&client=72&sourcePage=g-PyNoyfvIZVMa2qAO2wi6Pdj-CNTRC&fp=tHC_DW8mwJRzrIDxXOeraPqXq-y-tF1SGwKW3Q_L-uu50fOtQyt6kCQwK6nbNikH?) If not, would it be possible to do this?*

General comments received from Estonia:

*The general proposal is that reporting dates should be unified as much as possible between different topics. If May is too early and reporting deadline will be the 1st of September for annual reporting, then it could be the same date for all annual reportings.*

*If reporting is required once per 4-6 years, it could be done in the frames of HOLAS process (i.e once per 6 years within HOLAS).*

Table 1. Deadlines for reporting data from coordinated monitoring (<http://www.helcom.fi/action-areas/monitoring-and-assessment/monitoring-manual/introduction>), and input received from experts in the HELCOM Expert Groups.

Programme topic	Sub-programme	Deadline of reporting data from previous years as indicated in Introduction Table 1 (and in the old REC 19/3)	Deadline of data reporting (as stated in the sub-programme sections). TBD=to be decided	Comments and suggested deadlines by Expert Groups and Indicator Leads.	Database, data access point (as stated in the sub-programme). TBD=to be decided
Hydrography	Water column hydrological characteristics	May (1 May)	May; annually		ICES COMBINE
	Water column physical characteristics	-	TBD: Depends on measurement method / device, available near real-time		BOOS, Copernicus marine service (MyOcean). National databases: FI data is open and accessible (Finnish). PL data: Institute of Meteorology and Water Management (IMGW)
	Ice	-	Update weekly, annually		National databases. TBD: Copernicus marine service (CMEMS)
Hydrochemistry	Water column chemical characteristics	May (1 May)	May; annually		ICES COMBINE
	Nutrients	May (1 May)	May; annually TBD: Ferrybox data near real-time?		ICES COMBINE; Algabase. TBD: Ferrybox data to CMEMS and BOOS?
Phytoplankton	Phytoplankton – Pigments	May (1 September)	May; annually TBD: Ferrybox data near real-time?	May is too early to report data, 1 September more realistic. Based on the questionnaire filled in by PEG experts (2017), national reporting deadlines vary from February to July of the following year. The beginning of September should be feasible.	ICES COMBINE; Algabase; SYKE (Earth Observation data), national data centers, SMHI.
	Phytoplankton - Species composition, abundance and biomass	May (1 September)	May; annually / every 2 years	May is too early to report data, 1 September more realistic. Based on the questionnaire filled in by PEG experts (2017), national reporting deadlines vary from February to July of	ICES COMBINE; National data centres, SMHI

**Commented [A1]:** SE: Works fine with us.

**Commented [A2]:** PL: Water column physical characteristics: TBD: Depends on measurement method / device, available near real-time (PL data: Institute of Meteorology and Water Management (IMGW),

**Commented [A3]:** SE: Works fine with us.

**Commented [A4]:** PL: Water column physical characteristics: TBD: Depends on measurement method / device, available near real-time (PL data: Institute of Meteorology and Water Management (IMGW)

**Commented [A5]:** SE: Works fine with us.

**Commented [A6]:** PL: Nutrients: TBD: Ferrybox data near real-time? (TBD: Ferrybox data to CMEMS and BOOS?).

**Commented [A8]:** EE: 1st September is OK for phytoplankton (also in rows below)

**Commented [A7]:** SE: May works, but could be specified to be 30.5. each year. Same for all phytoplankton parameters.

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				the following year. The beginning of September should be feasible.	
Zooplankton	Zooplankton - Species composition, abundance and biomass	May (1 September)	Annually; TBD: May or September		ICES COMBINE, SMHI, National data centres
Fish, shellfish and fisheries	Fish - Coastal fish	-	End of June annually;		Common coastal fish indicator database COOL ( <a :="" a="" are="" data="" databases.<="" href="http://bio.helcom.fi/apex/f?p=108:5:::" in="" indicator="" national="" ra="" stored="" support="" the="" to=""></a>
	Fish - Migratory fish	DCF Data reported to DG MARE annually	Update annually; TBD: deadline of reporting		national databases; TBD (Catch sampling data of salmon available in ICES Regional database; modelled data available from the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute)
	Fish - Offshore fish	Data are available annually at different times for different surveys	Update annually; TBD: deadline of reporting		ICES databases (DATRAS, ichthyoplankton, BALTIC RDB, secure VMS database, ICES standard graphs)
	Commercial shellfish	DCF Data reported to DG MARE annually	Update annually; TBD		National databases held at institutes; TBD
	Fisheries bycatch	DCF Data reported to DG MARE annually	Update annually; TBD: deadline of reporting		Data collated by ICES (InterCatch; Regional Database, RDB); database is currently under construction (RDB ES)
Birds	Birds - Marine breeding birds abundance and distribution	-	Every 6 years	Update every 6 years not agreed so far.	BALSAM database and platform (in the future)
	Birds - Marine bird health	-	TBD: 3-year or 5-year intervals suggested		TBD; currently national databases
	Birds - Marine wintering birds abundance and distribution	-	Coastal/inshore: annually; TBD: deadline of reporting	Offshore survey data will be held in ESAS database (probably hosted by ICES) in future. Annual update not agreed so far.	National databases; database under development; Joint ICES database
Mammals	Mammals - Seal abundance	Not operational yet, annual reporting planned from 3/2015 onwards	Annually, or as soon as data have been analysed and quality assured		HELCOM SEAL expert group

**Commented [A9]:** PL: National database is filled by the end of May / March (open sea / transitional and coastal respectively).  
By 1 September is in accordance with present reporting to ICES DOME database by Poland

**Commented [A10]:** EE: Should be 1st of September as phytoplankton

**Commented [A11]:** PL: National database is filled by the end of May (open sea).  
By 1 September is in accordance with present reporting to ICES DOME database by Poland.

**Commented [A12]:** EE: Could be done in the frames of HOLAS process (once per 6 years).

**Commented [A13]:** EE: Could be also reported in HOLAS process once per 6 years.

**Commented [A14]:** EE: If not agreed, could be done as for breeding birds: once per 6 years (in the frames of Holas process)

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	Mammals - Health status	-	Every 6/3 years		National datacentres; HELCOM (not yet available)
	Mammals - Harbor porpoise abundance	-	Every 6 years (Belt Sea)		DK – NOVANA database (Belt Sea); national data centre (Belt Sea)
Concentrations of contaminants	Contaminants in water Radioactive substances	30 October (1 September) 1 September (1 September)	Annually; TBD: reporting deadlines	Why a different date (30 <sup>th</sup> October) for contaminants in sea water compared to biota and sediment?  The deadline 1st September is not optimal since it seems to be too tight for many countries to be able to send in data for contaminants (practically all POPs) in biota collected the previous year. A later deadline would improve that possibility. However for practical reasons if the deadline for HELCOM data is postponed that needs to be done also for the OSPAR data.	Contaminants: ICES DOME Radioactive substances: HELCOM MORS
	Contaminants in sediment Radioactive substances	1 September (1 September)	Annually (1 September)	The deadline 1st September is not optimal since it seems to be too tight for many countries to be able to send in data for contaminants (practically all POPs) in biota collected the previous year. A later deadline would improve that possibility. However for practical reasons if the deadline for HELCOM data is postponed that needs to be done also for the OSPAR data.  Optimal for radioactivity	Contaminants: ICES DOME Radioactive substances: HELCOM MORS
	Contaminants in biota Radioactive substances	1 September (1 September)	Annually (1 September)	The deadline 1st September is not optimal since it seems to be too tight for many countries to be able to send in data for contaminants (practically all POPs) in	Contaminants: ICES database (Combine?) Radioactive substances: HELCOM MORS

**Commented [A15]:** EE: 6 years should be feasible as for other reporting.

**Commented [A16]:** EE: No special reasons, it's currently set so in the monitoring programme.

**Commented [A17]:** EE: What is the deadline for Ospar reporting? We would prefer the same reporting date as for other Helcom parameters, ie 1st of September (also in rows below).

**Commented [A18]:** PL: The deadlines for reporting are fine for PL

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				biota collected the previous year. A later deadline would improve that possibility. However for practical reasons if the deadline for HELCOM data is postponed that needs to be done also for the OSPAR data.	
				Optimal for radioactivity	
Inputs	Eutrophication: Nutrient inputs from atmosphere	Modelling results approved at the EMEP steering group meetings in September (2 years in arrears)	Annually	The deadlines are according to the Recommendations (37-38-1 and 37-38-2) for PLC assessments.	EMEP database
	Contaminant inputs from atmosphere	Modelling results approved at the EMEP steering group meetings in September (2 years in arrears)	Annually		EMEP database
	Eutrophication: Nutrient inputs from landbased sources	31 October; Modelled results reported by 31 December.	Annually 31 October, modelled results 31 December. For periodic reporting every 6 years.	The deadlines are according to the Recommendations (37-38-1 and 37-38-2) for PLC assessments.	HELCOM PLC database
	Contaminant inputs from landbased sources	31 October	Annually 31 October		HELCOM PLC
	Eutrophication: Nutrient inputs from seabased sources	-	Not defined as a sub-programme yet	The deadlines are according to the Recommendations (37-38-1 and 37-38-2) for PLC assessments.	
	Contaminant inputs from seabased sources	-	Not defined as a sub-programme		
	Acute pollution	15 February	Annually (to other Contracting Parties by the end of January; revised data by 15 February).	Oil spills: Reporting date depends on the date for the meeting of IWGAS and RESPONSE meetings.	HELCOM Secretariat

**Commented [A19]:** SE: We do agree

**Commented [A20]:** PL: The deadlines for reporting are fine for PL

**Commented [A21]:** EE: In Rec 37-38-2 (airborne inputs) reporting deadline is referred to EMEP and 30 September; however, currently the reporting deadline in EMEP is 31 July (<https://projects.nilu.no//ccc/submission/index.html>).

**Commented [A22]:** EE: In PLC-7 IG 2-2017 meeting outcomes is set: 6.2. data should be approved by 1st of March on the following year of the reporting year (ie 14 months after the end of the monitoring year).

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Biological effects of contaminants	TBT / Imposex	-	TBT – update annually; Imposex: not defined, TBD. Update annually	Optimal frequency,	TBT: ICES; Imposex: not defined, TBD
Litter	Macrolitter characteristics and abundance/volume	-	Not defined; TBD	Proposal: May; annually. Ideal situation would be to report seasonally, in order to follow the situation in-situ.	Currently: EEA and MARLIN databases + national databases, ideally only to one database.
	Litter microparticle abundance/volume	-	Not defined; TBD		National databases
Underwater noise	Ambient noise	-	Sub-programme under development; TBD		National databases
	Impulsive sounds	-	Sub-programme under development; TBD		National databases
Non indigenous species		(See Phytoplankton and Zooplankton)	Annually; TBD: deadline of reporting	NO. Data is reported to AquaNIS annually in spring (usually in March when the ICES working groups meet). In addition, new observations are constantly added to AquaNIS when the observations are made. A consolidated method to evaluate NIS information stemming from other benthos, plankton and fish monitoring programmes is sorely missing.	ICES database; HELCOM-OSPAR port survey database; AquaNIS; National databases (UT Estonian Marine Institute, Estonian Environment Agency)
Seabed habitat distribution and extent	Habitat-forming species and substrates	-	Annually; TBD: every 6 years / on request		national databases
	Seabed habitat physical characteristics	-	As needed (seabed mapping for topography and substrate are done more or less continuously, but the work is slow and it takes time to cover large sea areas);		national databases

- Commented [A24]:** EE: Could be 1 Sept if other data are also reported then.
- Commented [A25]:** PL: TBT is reported together with other HZ substances in Poland.
- Commented [A26]:** SE: Would be nice if data for imposex could be managed by ICES as well, since ICES is doing this for Ospar already.
- Commented [A23]:** SE: It would be possible for us to deliver this data in October each year. It would be good if a specific deadline could be defined.
- Commented [A27]:** EE: Seasonal data and fluctuations could be assessed based on annual reporting (if seasonal data are required in reporting instead of annual averages). As joint monitoring programme is not yet in place on marine litter, the seasonal reporting can't be available, eg when monitoring is carried out once a year.
- Commented [A28]:** PL: In Poland data are reported to the national database only. The data are not reported to EEA neither MARLIN. No suggestions.
- Commented [A29]:** PL: In Poland data are reported to the national database only. The data are not reported to EEA neither MARLIN. No suggestions.
- Commented [A30]:** EE: AquaNIS is not yet decided as Helcoms official NIS database. Official reporting deadline could be the same as decided for other biota (May or 1st of September). New NIS findings should be reported (to whom - AquaNIS? to NIS expert-group?) immediately (constantly) after their discovery.
- Commented [A31]:** EE: Could be reported in HOLAS process.



			TBD: every 6 years / on request		
Benthic community species distribution and abundance	Hardbottom Species	-	Every 6 years		national databases
	Softbottom fauna	- (partly it should be 1 September)	Every 1-6th years; TBD: reporting frequency		national databases; ICES COMBINE
	Softbottom flora	-	Not defined, TBD		national databases
Contaminants in seafood*		-	Programme topic under development		national databases
Benthic physical loss and damage*		-	Programme topic under development; TBD		national databases; TBD
Cumulative impacts on benthic habitats				Most of the underlying data used in the cumulative assessment is not regularly updated, only available on request or the updating procedure is not defined yet. This should be regulated uniformly to a regular update every 6 years at least according to the reporting cycles of the different policies.	

**Commented [A32]:** EE: Here and below: every 6 years could mean the reporting in the frames of Holas process.

**Commented [A34]:** PL: Polish data are reported to ICES DOME database every year before 1 September for the previous year.

**Commented [A33]:** EE: Every 6 years is preferred.

**Commented [A35]:** EE: I agree, could be reported and assessed in HOLAS process.

\* These programme topics are not listed in the chapter "Data and reporting" Table 1 in the Introduction of the HELCOM Monitoring Manual.