



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature
Conservation

STATE & CONSERVATION
10-2019

Hamina, Finland, 6-10 May 2019

Document title	Draft updated MPA designation guidelines
Code	3N-12
Category	DEC
Agenda Item	3N– Development and implementation of Recommendations
Submission date	15.4.2019
Submitted by	Finland
Reference	

Background

At State & Conservation 9-2018 it was decided that Contracting Parties can provide comments to the Guidelines for designation and management of HELCOM MPAs to the Secretariat (laura.hoikkala@helcom.fi) or their national TG MPA representative by 30 January 2019, to identify where and what would need to be updated. By the end of 30 January 2019 Germany and Finland had given their comments to the Designation guidelines document.

MPA TG 11-2019 agreed on the changes and amendments made on the MPA designation guidelines document. The meeting further agreed that designation procedure should be included into the document. The meeting agreed to present the updated document to State and Conservation 10-2019 for approval process.

After MPA TG 11-2019, the Secretariat has included to the document a section on the designation procedure, added requirements of GIS maps and updated the IMO Special Area reference, as requested by MPA TG.

Version with changed tracked (Att.1) and a clean version (Att.2) of the draft MPA designation guidelines are provided.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note and discuss the proposed changes and solutions for the open comments and approve the updated HELCOM MPA designation guidelines

Att. 1

GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNATING MARINE AND COASTAL BALTIC SEA MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (HELCOM MPA¹) AND PROPOSED PROTECTION CATEGORIES

1. General remarks concerning Protection Categories for HELCOM MPAs

1.1 Coastal and nearshore areas within territorial waters:

At present only national legal protection will ensure the conservation of designated HELCOM MPAs. For EU member states the EU-Habitats Directive and the EU Bird Directive can also fulfil the necessary protection requirements. For HELCOM MPAs the following IUCN-Categories² that strongly focus on ecological criteria are recommended for the national implementation:

Ia Strict Nature Reserve, **Ib** Wilderness Area

II National Park

III Natural Monument or Feature

IV Habitat/Species Management Area

V Protected Landscape/Seascape

VI Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources

Furthermore, application of the following international protection categories can be considered in a similar way as a national implementation for the protection of a HELCOM MPA³:

- Biosphere Reserve
- Ramsar Site
- SCI/SAC (EU-Habitats Directive)
- SPA (EU-Birds Directive).

IBAs can also be used for the identification of HELCOM MPAs. Buffer zones of an appropriate width are an option for all HELCOM MPAs.

1.2 Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):

The whole water body of the Baltic Sea consists either of the territorial waters or of the Exclusive Economic Zones of the riparian states. The designation of SPAs or SCIs/SACs by EU member states in their EEZ can also be considered as a national implementation of the protection of the HELCOM MPA.

The Baltic Sea is a **Special Area** identified by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), where the adoption of special mandatory methods for the prevention of sea pollution by oil, sewage or garbage, and prevention of air pollution by ships, as applicable, is required ("MARPOL 73/78 in annexes I, IV, V and VI").

According to IMO, the Baltic Sea needs special protection because it is vulnerable to environmental damage by maritime activities and was therefore identified as **Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA)** except for Russian waters in 2005. Under certain circumstances a PSSA may include a buffer zone.

To achieve internationally accepted shipping regulations for a PSSA or parts of a PSSA, a coastal state has to submit a proposal to IMO's "Maritime Safety Committee". A recognized area can be protected in three ways:

Deleted: BSPA

Deleted: BSPAs

Deleted: BSPAs

Deleted: BSPAs

Formatted: Font: Bold

Deleted: and

Deleted: and

Deleted: BSPA

Deleted: recommended

Deleted:

Deleted: BSPAs

Deleted: With the reservation of a final legal clarification of the applicability of the EU Habitats and Bird Directives within the EEZ, the

Deleted: BSPA

Deleted: noxious liquid substances

Deleted: II

Deleted: An area which

Deleted: and which

Deleted: can be

Deleted: by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO)

Deleted: recognition

Deleted: designed

¹ former BSPA

² <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PAG-021.pdf>

³ HELCOM MPAs in the Kattegat, which belongs to the OSPAR Convention Area, are OSPAR MPAs at the same time.

1. special routeing measures
2. as an area to be avoided
3. other navigational duties such as piloting
- 2. Guidelines for designating HELCOM MPAs.**
A coastal or marine area of the Baltic Sea Region can be designated as a **HELCOM MPA** if it meets **at least one of** the following criteria and if its proposed protection status corresponds with the afore mentioned protection categories:
 1. **Aim of protection**
In a **HELCOM MPA**, particular protection should be given to the species and natural habitats and nature types of the marine and coastal ecosystems of the Baltic Sea Area to conserve biological and genetic diversity and to protect ecological processes.
 2. **Objects of protection**
 - Areas with high biodiversity,
 - habitats of endemic, rare or threatened species and communities of fauna and flora,
 - habitats of migratory species,
 - nursery and spawning areas,
 - rare or unique or representative geological or geomorphological structures or processes.
 3. **Size:**
The minimum size of a **HELCOM MPA** should be preferably 1000 ha for terrestrial parts and/or 3000 ha for marine/lagoon parts.
 4. **Naturalness:**
The landscape/seascape of a **HELCOM MPA** should be not - or only little - disturbed by man. Ongoing economic activities should follow the principles of sustainable use. An appropriate protection status should be chosen according to the afore mentioned protection categories.
 5. **Pollution:**
The environment of a **HELCOM MPA** should be to a large extend free of pollution. If polluted, activities should be started as soon as possible to distinctly improve the environmental situation through, e.g., technical measures, such as sewage treatment plants etc. Integrated Coastal Management Plans may help to meet these requirements.
 6. **Representativeness:**
A **HELCOM MPA** should be a representative ecological functional entity for a Baltic Sea Region or Sub-Region (see attachment to document EC NAT 3/7) or for a Baltic Sea State.
 7. **Application**
A new **HELCOM MPA** can be designated at any time by the Contracting Parties. The notification of a new **HELCOM MPA** to the **HELCOM Secretariat** should be made by filling the MPA database. Additionally, a short written notification of the new **HELCOM MPA** and a GIS file (ESRI Shapefile converted to ETSR89LAEA projection) containing polygon of the MPA borders in has to be sent to the **HELCOM Secretariat via email (helcom.secretariat@helcom.fi)**. The **HELCOM Secretariat informs the Contracting Parties of the new HELCOM MPA as appropriate.**

Note: HELCOM MPAs already proposed to HELCOM

Not all **HELCOM MPAs** that were proposed to and adopted by **HELCOM so far** fulfil these guidelines for the designation of new **HELCOM MPAs**. For these areas all possible IUCN-Categories should be considered for national implementation. But in

- Deleted: BSPAs
- Deleted: BSPA
- Deleted: BSPA
- Commented [g1]: Objects of protection should be harmonized with the HELCOM MPA selection criteria: <http://www.helcom.fi/action-areas/marine-protected-areas/Background%20of%20HELCOM%20MPAs/selection-criteria>
- Commented [KL2]: Objects of protection should be cross checked with e.g. the EBSA criteria.
- Commented [g3]: Information on Area (ha) limnic, maximum depth (m) and coastline (km), which appear in the pro-forma, are not necessary, especially when using GIS maps. In general, the pro-forma should be replaced by using the MPA database (see point 7. Application).
- Deleted: BSPA
- Commented [g4]: After a review of scientific literature, it seems that marine MPAs should be larger than 3000 ha, especially when considering highly migratory species. Studies recommend an area of at least 10 000 ha to achieve recovery of fish stocks (e.g. cod), spill over effects and greater ecosystem resilience (Halpern 2003, Blyth-Skyrme et al. 2006, Rachor & Günther 2011). However, to keep already designated areas, the preferred size of 3000 ha should be maintained, but HELCOM MPAs should preferably not be smaller than this.
- Commented [g5]: This point should be added to the MPA database.
- Commented [KL6]: Naturalness: does this include eutrophication?
- Deleted: BSPA
- Commented [g7]: This point could be harmonized with the MPA database as well ("Pressures", according to list of MSFD, Annex III).
- Commented [KL8]: This does probably not include eutrophication? The Pollution section should definitely be updated?
- Deleted: BSPA
- Commented [g9]:
- Deleted: BSPA
- Commented [g10]: A pro-forma could be replaced by a
- Commented [KL11]: Application: This could be replaced by a
- Deleted: An application for approval of a new BSPA
- Deleted: A
- Deleted: proposal
- Deleted: for
- Deleted: BSPA
- Deleted: include
- Deleted: map
- Deleted: :
- Deleted: - a completed pro-forma (see example in
- Deleted: - a map with the same precision and quality as
- Deleted: - 4 marked geographical coordinates (lat./long.),
- Deleted: BSPAs
- Deleted: BSPAs
- Deleted: 15 (Rec. 15/5)
- Deleted: BSPAs

any case, if feasible, it should be aimed at a protection status following the afore mentioned protection categories. Management should be oriented on HELCOM BSEP No.105 Planning and management of Baltic Sea Protected Areas: guidelines and tools.

Designation Procedure

The relevant Contracting Party(ies) come to an agreement nationally on which areas to nominate for inclusion in the HELCOM MPA network. These can represent marine protected areas which have been recently designated nationally, or existing marine protected areas not previously included in the HELCOM network. The Contracting Parties then notify the HELCOM Executive Secretary of the nomination by official correspondence and commit to provide and maintain the relevant information on the nominated areas in the HELCOM MPA database and the HELCOM Map and Data services. The HELCOM Secretariat maintains a depository of the received notifications.

Deleted: and management

Commented [KL12]: Pro - Forma for a BSPA: Finland has been using this form. The MPA database doesn't however include all of this information. So is this form needed at all or should the database be updates in order to include all the information.

Formatted: Font: Bold, Not Italic, Underline

Deleted: Attachment 1
Pro - Forma for a BSPA

Deleted: ¶
A¶
1. Country/Territory: Germany/Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
2. Marine region and subregion: North Atlantic - Baltic Sea / Belt Sea¶
3. Biogeographic zone: I A 10, North East Atlantic Realm¶

B¶
1. Proposed name of BSPA: Wismar Bight¶
2. Proposed IUCN management category: V (Protected Landscape and Seascape; SPA, SAC)¶

C¶
1. Characterization of the area (proposed boundaries see enclosed map):¶
Shallow water system with seagrass meadows on soft bottom and fucus stands on local erratic blocks. The included coastal landscape of islands, peninsulas and the coastline show a rich variety of salt meadows reeds, dunes, coastal lakes, cliffs and different types of beaches.¶

¶
2. Aims and objects of protection:¶
Particular protection shall be given to the high biodiversity of Wismar Bight and to ongoing morphodynamic processes that reflect interactions between land and sea very impressively, e.g.,¶
<#>the high biodiversity of macrozoobenthos,¶
<#>the main distribution area of the endemic baltic mussel Cerastobysum hauniense and Ciona intestinalis (tunicata) at the german coast,¶
<#>the important resting site for waterfowl (up to 50.000 individuals of Aythya marila, several thousand individuals of other duck species, waders, geese and swans),¶
<#>the breeding area of waders (dunlin - Calidris alpina schinzii).¶

3. Size: ¶
Area (ha) marine: 57.000. Area (ha) terrestrial: 4.000 ¶
Area (ha) limnic: Total area (ha): 61.000¶
Maximum depth (m): 22 · Coastline (km): 120¶

4. Naturalness:¶
The city of Wismar with its port at the innermost part of the bight is excluded from the BSPA. Outside urban areas the coastal landforms are nearly natural and undyked. The smaller settlements are protected against flooding with dykes or modified dunes. ¶

5. Pollution:¶
The inner part of Wismar Bight is more eutrophic than the outer part which is of the same condition than Mecklenburg Bay. The new treatment plant in Wismar has improved the situation in the last 4 years. Under certain hydrographical conditions the oxidant may decrease to zero.¶

6. Representativeness:¶
The area is representative for the German Baltic coast because of specific coastal landforms like saltmarshes, beach-ridge-systems and active cliffs. Shallow water zones, semi enclosed bays and episodic (wind induced) emerged flats are characteristic for Wismar Bay.¶
¶

Selection criteria - HELCOM MPAs

Commented [g14]: Inclusion of selection criteria in the guidelines as well as in the MPA database should be discussed during the TG MPA online meeting in March.

Selection criteria for HELCOM MPAs ^[1]	Definition
Important feeding area for species	Area where a species regularly feed, either continuously or seasonally.
Important migration route, <u>wintering</u> and resting area for species	Area used by migratory species for migration, feeding or resting.
Important reproduction area for species	Area regularly used for species reproduction or as juvenile nursery grounds.
Threatened or declining habitats/ <u>biotopes</u> based on quantity	Area containing a habitat/ <u>biotope</u> which is endangered, threatened or declining based on the extent of its geographical occurrence.
Threatened or declining habitats/ <u>biotopes</u> based on quality	Area containing a habitat/ <u>biotope</u> which is endangered, threatened or declining based on the quality of the habitat/ <u>biotope</u> .
Threatened or declining species based on quantity	Area containing habitats for the survival and recovery of a species which is endangered, threatened or declining based the extent of its geographical occurrence.
Threatened or declining species based on quality	Area containing habitats for the survival and recovery of a species which is endangered, threatened or declining based on the quality of the species.
Rarity of species or habitats	Area contains either (i) rare or endemic species, populations or communities, and/or (ii) rare or distinct habitats.
Sensitivity of species or habitats	Area that contain a relatively high proportion of sensitive biotopes, biotope complexes or species that are functionally fragile (highly susceptible to degradation or depletion by human activity or by natural events) or with slow recovery.
Area with high natural biodiversity	Area that contains comparatively higher diversity of ecosystems, habitats, communities, or species, or has higher genetic diversity.
Keystone species	Area that contains a species which is important for maintaining the resilience of the ecosystem.
Ecologically significant habitats	Area which 1) has comparatively higher natural biological productivity, or where 2) important ecological processes take place, such as connectivity between life-history stages and linkages between areas: trophic interactions, physical transport, physical oceanography, life history of species (dispersal of larvae/spores).
Representative area	Definition needed, please provide your suggestions to janica.borg@helcom.fi.
Because of geological values	Area contains rare, unique or representative geological or geomorphological structures or processes.
Because of biological values	Definition needed, please provide your suggestions to janica.borg@helcom.fi.
Because of marine values	Definition needed, please provide your suggestions to janica.borg@helcom.fi.
Because of terrestrial values	Definition needed, please provide your suggestions to

Field Code Changed

	janica.borg@helcom.fi.
To protect natural habitat types listed in Habitats Directive Annex I	Self explanatory, no definition needed.
To protect habitats of the species listed in Habitats Directive Annex II	Self explanatory, no definition needed.
To protect special protection areas classified by Member States under the Birds Directive	Self explanatory, no definition needed.

[1] The selection criteria are based on Guidelines for Designating Marine and Coastal Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPA) and Proposed Protection Categories (2003). They were reviewed and slightly modified by HELCOM MPA Task Group and accepted by the State and Conservation Working Group ([Outcome of State and Conservation 3-2015](#)).

Field Code Changed

Possible items for revision are included in:
<http://www.helcom.fi/action-areas/marine-protected-areas/Background%20of%20HELCOM%20MPAs/selection-criteria/>,
at the HELCOM website.

Att. 2

GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNATING MARINE AND COASTAL BALTIC SEA MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (HELCOM MPA¹) AND PROPOSED PROTECTION CATEGORIES**1. General remarks concerning Protection Categories for HELCOM MPAs****1.1 Coastal and nearshore areas within territorial waters:**

At present only national legal protection will ensure the conservation of designated HELCOM MPAs

For EU member states the EU-Habitats Directive and the EU Bird Directive can also fulfil the necessary protection requirements.

For HELCOM MPAs the following IUCN-Categories² that strongly focus on ecological criteria are recommended for the national implementation:

- Ia** Strict Nature Reserve, **Ib** Wilderness Area
- II** National Park
- III** Natural Monument or Feature
- IV** Habitat/Species Management Area
- V** Protected Landscape/Seascape
- VI** Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources

Furthermore, application of the following international protection categories can be considered in a similar way as a national implementation for the protection of a HELCOM MPA³:

- Biosphere Reserve
- Ramsar Site
- SCI/SAC (EU-Habitats Directive)
- SPA (EU-Birds Directive).

IBAs can also be used for the identification of HELCOM MPAs. Buffer zones of an appropriate width are an option for all HELCOM MPAs.

1.2 Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):

The whole water body of the Baltic Sea consists either of the territorial waters or of the Exclusive Economic Zones of the riparian states. The designation of SPAs or SCIs/SACs by EU member states in their EEZ can also be considered as a national implementation of the protection of the HELCOM MPA.

The Baltic Sea is a **Special Area** identified by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), where the adoption of special mandatory methods for the prevention of sea pollution by oil, sewage or garbage, and prevention of air pollution by ships, as applicable, is required ("MARPOL 73/78 in annexes I, IV, V and VI").

According to IMO, the Baltic Sea needs special protection because it is vulnerable to environmental damage by maritime activities and was therefore identified as **Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA)** except for Russian waters in 2005. Under certain circumstances a PSSA may include a buffer zone.

To achieve internationally accepted shipping regulations for a PSSA or parts of a PSSA, a coastal state has to submit a proposal to IMO's "Maritime Safety Committee". A recognized area can be protected in three ways:

1. special routing measures
2. as an area to be avoided

¹ former BSPA

² <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PAG-021.pdf>

³ HELCOM MPAs in the Kattegat, which belongs to the OSPAR Convention Area, are OSPAR MPAs at the same time.

3. other navigational duties such as piloting

2. Guidelines for designating HELCOM MPAs

A coastal or marine area of the Baltic Sea Region can be designated as a HELCOM MPA if it meets at least one of the following criteria and if its proposed protection status corresponds with the afore mentioned protection categories:

1. Aim of protection

In a HELCOM MPA particular protection should be given to the species and natural habitats and nature types of the marine and coastal ecosystems of the Baltic Sea Area to conserve biological and genetic diversity and to protect ecological processes.

2. Objects of protection

- Areas with high biodiversity,
- habitats of endemic, rare or threatened species and communities of fauna and flora,
- habitats of migratory species,
- nursery and spawning areas,
- rare or unique or representative geological or geomorphological structures or processes.

3. Size:

The minimum size of a HELCOM MPA should be preferably 1000 ha for terrestrial parts and/or 3000 ha for marine/lagoon parts.

4. Naturalness:

The landscape/seascape of a HELCOM MPA should be not - or only little - disturbed by man. Ongoing economic activities should follow the principles of sustainable use. An appropriate protection status should be chosen according to the afore mentioned protection categories.

5. Pollution:

The environment of a HELCOM MPA should be to a large extend free of pollution. If polluted, activities should be started as soon as possible to distinctly improve the environmental situation through, e.g., technical measures, such as sewage treatment plants etc. Integrated Coastal Management Plans may help to meet these requirements.

6. Representativeness:

A HELCOM MPA should be a representative ecological functional entity for a Baltic Sea Region or Sub-Region (see attachment to document EC NAT 3/7) or for a Baltic Sea State.

7. Application

A new HELCOM MPA can be designated at any time by the Contracting Parties. The notification of a new HELCOM MPA to the HELCOM Secretariat should be made by filling the MPA database. Additionally, a short written notification of the new HELCOM MPA and a GIS file (ESRI Shapefile converted to ETRS89LAEA projection) containing polygon of the MPA borders in has to be sent to the HELCOM Secretariat via email (helcom.secretariat@helcom.fi). The HELCOM Secretariat informs the Contracting Parties of the new HELCOM MPA as appropriate.

Note: HELCOM MPAs already proposed to HELCOM

Not all HELCOM MPAs that were proposed to and adopted by HELCOM so far fulfil these guidelines for the designation of new HELCOM MPAs. For these areas all possible IUCN-Categories should be considered for national implementation. But in any case, if feasible, it should be aimed at a protection status following the afore mentioned protection categories. Management should be oriented on HELCOM

Commented [g1]: Objects of protection should be harmonized with the HELCOM MPA selection criteria: <http://www.helcom.fi/action-areas/marine-protected-areas/Background%20of%20HELCOM%20MPAs/selection-criteria>

Commented [KL2]: Objects of protection should be cross checked with e.g. the EBSA criteria.

Commented [g3]: Information on Area (ha) limnic, maximum depth (m) and coastline (km), which appear in the pro-forma, are not necessary, especially when using GIS maps. In general, the pro-forma should be replaced by using the MPA database (see point 7. Application).

Commented [g4]: After a review of scientific literature, it seems that marine MPAs should be larger than 3000 ha, especially when considering highly migratory species. Studies recommend an area of at least 10 000 ha to achieve recovery of fish stocks (e.g. cod), spill over effects and greater ecosystem resilience (Halpern 2003, Blyth-Skyrme et al. 2006, Rachor & Günther 2011). However, to keep already designated areas, the preferred size of 3000 ha should be maintained, but HELCOM MPAs should preferably not be smaller than this.

Commented [g5]: This point should be added to the MPA database.

Commented [KL6]: Naturalness: does this include eutrophication?

Commented [g7]: This point could be harmonized with the MPA database as well ("Pressures", according to list of MSFD, Annex III).

Commented [KL8]: This does probably not include eutrophication? The Pollution section should definitely be updated?

Commented [g9]: This information is also given in the MPA database: "Representative area" is one of the selection criteria for HELCOM MPAs and should therefore appear under "selection criteria" ("general information of MPA" in the database). Moreover, a detailed description of the MPA is found under "biotopes", "biotope complexes".

Commented [g10]: A pro-forma could be replaced by a completed fact sheet for the HELCOM MPA in the MPA database:
Precise names of federal states could be replaced by "Territorial Waters" or "EEZ". "Sub-basins" can replace "subregion". Do we need the information on the Biogeographic zone?
Characterization of the area is achieved by "species", "biotopes" and "biotope complexes" in the HELCOM MPA fact sheet of the database.

Commented [KL11]: Application: This could be replaced by a CP sending a letter to the secretariat, nominating xx new areas, with an area of xx, plus some additional information, as well as adding the information to the MPA database and sending e.g. a shape file to be added to the map service?

BSEP No.105 Planning and management of Baltic Sea Protected Areas: guidelines and tools.

Designation Procedure

The relevant Contracting Party(ies) come to an agreement nationally on which areas to nominate for inclusion in the HELCOM MPA network. These can represent marine protected areas which have been recently designated nationally, or existing marine protected areas not previously included in the HELCOM network. The Contracting Parties then notify the HELCOM Executive Secretary of the nomination by official correspondence and commit to provide and maintain the relevant information on the nominated areas in the HELCOM MPA database and the HELCOM Map and Data services. The HELCOM Secretariat maintains a depository of the received notifications.

Commented [KL12]: Pro - Forma for a BSPA: Finland has been using this form. The MPA database doesn't however include all of this information. So is this form needed at all or should the database be updates in order to include all the information.

Selection criteria - HELCOM MPAs

Commented [g13]: Inclusion of selection criteria in the guidelines as well as in the MPA database should be discussed during the TG MPA online meeting in March.

Selection criteria for HELCOM MPAs ^[1]	Definition
Important feeding area for species	Area where a species regularly feed, either continuously or seasonally.
Important migration route, wintering and resting area for species	Area used by migratory species for migration, feeding or resting.
Important reproduction area for species	Area regularly used for species reproduction or as juvenile nursery grounds.
Threatened or declining habitats/biotopes based on quantity	Area containing a habitat/biotope which is endangered, threatened or declining based on the extent of its geographical occurrence.
Threatened or declining habitats/biotopes based on quality	Area containing a habitat/biotope which is endangered, threatened or declining based on the quality of the habitat/biotope.
Threatened or declining species based on quantity	Area containing habitats for the survival and recovery of a species which is endangered, threatened or declining based the extent of its geographical occurrence.
Threatened or declining species based on quality	Area containing habitats for the survival and recovery of a species which is endangered, threatened or declining based on the quality of the species.
Rarity of species or habitats	Area contains either (i) rare or endemic species, populations or communities, and/or (ii) rare or distinct habitats.
Sensitivity of species or habitats	Area that contain a relatively high proportion of sensitive biotopes, biotope complexes or species that are functionally fragile (highly susceptible to degradation or depletion by human activity or by natural events) or with slow recovery.
Area with high natural biodiversity	Area that contains comparatively higher diversity of ecosystems, habitats, communities, or species, or has higher genetic diversity.
Keystone species	Area that contains a species which is important for maintaining the resilience of the ecosystem.
Ecologically significant habitats	Area which 1) has comparatively higher natural biological productivity, or where 2) important ecological processes take place, such as connectivity between life-history stages and linkages between areas: trophic interactions, physical transport, physical oceanography, life history of species (dispersal of larvae/spores).
Representative area	Definition needed, please provide your suggestions to janica.borg@helcom.fi.
Because of geological values	Area contains rare, unique or representative geological or geomorphological structures or processes.
Because of biological values	Definition needed, please provide your suggestions to janica.borg@helcom.fi.
Because of marine values	Definition needed, please provide your suggestions to janica.borg@helcom.fi.
Because of terrestrial values	Definition needed, please provide your suggestions to

	janica.borg@helcom.fi.
To protect natural habitat types listed in Habitats Directive Annex I	Self explanatory, no definition needed.
To protect habitats of the species listed in Habitats Directive Annex II	Self explanatory, no definition needed.
To protect special protection areas classified by Member States under the Birds Directive	Self explanatory, no definition needed.

[1] The selection criteria are based on Guidelines for Designating Marine and Coastal Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPA) and Proposed Protection Categories (2003). They were reviewed and slightly modified by HELCOM MPA Task Group and accepted by the State and Conservation Working Group ([Outcome of State and Conservation 3-2015](#)).

Possible items for revision are included in:

<http://www.helcom.fi/action-areas/marine-protected-areas/Background%20of%20HELCOM%20MPAs/selection-criteria/>,
at the HELCOM website.