



## Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature  
Conservation

STATE & CONSERVATION  
10-2019

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### Background

The Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas has held four meetings since STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018 (MPA TG 8 – 11, 2019), in line with the tasks assigned to them by STATE&CONSERVATION 9-2018. The outcomes of the meetings are provided in Attachments 1-4. The main topics of the meetings included:

- 1) Linking red-listed species to habitats.
  - STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018 considered the implementation of not yet accomplished HELCOM actions under the WG and agreed on a process for their implementation (outcome para 8J.2 and Annex 5 to that meeting). Proposed processes included looking into which red-listed species could be reliably linked to which habitat features.
  - Gathered overview of available information and preliminary linking of HELCOM red-listed species to habitats is provided in [document 3N-8](#).
- 2) Updating the guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation.
  - STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2019 noted a need for further discussion on the update of Guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation and agreed that the Contracting Parties can provide comments to Finland by the 26 November 2018, after which an intersessional online meeting will be arranged in the beginning of 2019 (outcome para 3N.50 to that meeting).
  - Update of the guidelines was discussed also in a core team meeting (Att. 5).
- 3) Updating the guidelines for MPA management and designation guidelines.
  - STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018 agreed on a process for reviewing the guidelines to get an overview of the magnitude the update required (outcome para 3N.55 to that meeting): Contracting Parties can provide comments to the document to the Secretariat or their national TG MPA representative by 30 January 2019. Concomitantly the members of TG MPA will individually review the guidelines and share the results by 30 January, after which Finland, as lead country for the Recommendation, will collate the information and present it at a TG MPA meeting in early March where the group will elaborate a way forward.
  - MPA TG 11-2019 agreed to present the updated MPA designation guidelines to State and Conservation 10-2019 for approval process ([document 3N-12](#)).
  - MPA TG 11-2019 agreed that Finland will prepare a document of the current status of the MPA management guidelines to the State and Conservation 10-2019, including identified update needs and the extent of the needed changes ([document 3N-11](#)).
- 4) National frequency of review and/ or update of MPA management plans
  - In STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018, the Contracting Parties agreed to provide information on national frequency of review and/or update of management plans to STATE & CONSERVATION 10-2019, using templates that the Secretariat will provide (outcome para 3N.49 to that meeting).
  - The results of the survey are provided in document 3N-6.

### Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the outcomes of the MPA TG meetings and use them as appropriate.

## Attachment 1

# Memo of the eighth meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPA TG 8-2019)

## Introduction

The eighth Meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPA TG 7-2018) was held as an online meeting on 21 January 2019.

The list of participants is contained in Annex 1 to this Memo.

The Meeting was chaired by Ms. Penina Blankett, Finland.

Ms. Jannica Haldin and Ms. Laura Hoikkala (HELCOM Secretariat) acted as secretaries of the Meeting.

In accordance with agreement in State and Conservation 9-2018, the aims of the meeting were the following:

- 1) To look into the possibility to link species to habitats, especially to provide information on which redlisted species could be reliably linked to which habitat features, and to consider the inclusion of this information in the MPA database (outcome para 8J.2 and ANNEX 5).
- 2) To further discuss the Guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation based on comments provided to Finland (outcome para 3N.50)
- 3) To share information on the state of the review process of the HELCOM MPA management and designation guidelines (**document 3N-10**) (outcome para 3N.55)
- 4) To discuss the draft survey, prepared by the secretariat, on the national frequency of review and/or update of MPA management plans to be sent out to CPs in order to present the information to State and Conservation 10-2019 (outcome para 3N.49).

### 1. *Linking species to habitats*

1.1. The Meeting noted that linking the species to habitats would be a useful approach and agreed that the process could be started from the habitats, listing the biotopes from the Habitats Directive, redlisted biotopes and broad scale habitats from MSFD. The Meeting further noted that spatial distribution of the habitats will be considered at a later phase of the process.

1.2. The Meeting agreed that as the following step the Secretariat will prepare an initial list of habitats by 20 February, allowing 3 weeks for national consideration before the next TG MPA meeting 12 March, and that experts from Contracting Parties will be involved in linking the species to the habitat types. The Meeting agreed that Endangered, Threatened, Vulnerable, Near Threatened and, as far as possible, Data Deficient species from the HELCOM Red List of Baltic Sea species should be included in the process. Fish spawning habitats, habitats hosting important food sources as well as habitat forming benthic species should be considered. It was agreed that due to lack of appropriate expertise and information pelagic habitats will not be considered at this stage.

### 2. *Update of Guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation (Finland will present received comments, document: Guidelines for pressure evaluation)*

2.1. To get an indication of the magnitude of the changes that need to be made to the HELCOM MPA management and designation guidelines, the Meeting considered the comments received so far from Germany and Denmark, as presented by Finland.

2.2. The Meeting noted that defining the thresholds for pressures is a complex issue and that the magnitude of the update work depends on how deep into pressure threshold setting the guidelines aim to

go. Currently most of the suggested thresholds are qualitative and subjective in their nature. The Meeting considered that at this point in time qualitative targets might be the only realistic option for several of the identified pressures.

2.3. The Meeting agreed that caveats need to be added to the guidelines and the MPA database, explaining that pressures might be assessed differently depending on their link to and impact on the areas designated conservation objectives.

2.4. The Meeting further agreed that a Not Applicable (NA) option needs to be added to the list, to differentiate between the absence of a given pressure vs. it not being applicable in the area.

2.5. The Meeting noted that OSPAR may have done similar MPA pressure evaluation and the CPs in OSPAR area, together with lead country Finland, could look into this.

2.6. The Meeting agreed that a dedicated meeting dealing with only the update of guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation will be arranged 7 March 14:00- 16:00 EET.

### *3. HELCOM MPA management and designation guidelines (document: Guidelines and presentation 9)*

3.1. The Meeting took note of the information on the state of the review process of HELCOM MPA management and designation guidelines. Germany and Sweden informed the meeting that they will provide comments by the end of January. The Meeting noted that the comments will be compiled by Finland.

3.2. The Meeting agreed that comments should be compiled by section, to give an overview of the need for update per section of the report.

3.3. The Meeting agreed that Finland will, where possible, provide an initial estimation on how time consuming the updated of each section will be based on the comments, and after that a plan on revision of the guidelines will be prepared to be presented at State and Conservation 10-2019.

### *4. Follow-up of action 'update the management plans when necessary and in accordance with other legal requirements with a maximum of 12 years intervals' (HELCOM Recommendation 35/1) (document: survey in PDF format)*

4.1. The Meeting commented the draft survey on the national frequency of review and/or update of MPA management plans, as prepared by the Secretariat. The Meeting agreed that further comments to the questionnaire can be sent to the secretariat ([Jannica.haldin@helcom.fi](mailto:Jannica.haldin@helcom.fi)) by 25 January. Comments and input will be used to amend the survey, which is intended to be sent out on the 1 February to the Contracting Parties.

### *5. Any other business*

5.1. The Meeting welcomed the information that establishing of a MPA Managers Network was approved in HOD-55-2018 and the ToRs are to be prepared and to be presented for State and Conservation with an aim to start the work in fall 2019. The Secretariat aim to prepare draft ToRs by the 12 March meeting of TG MPA for review, and then to State and Conservation 10-2019 meeting for endorsement.

5.2. The Meeting discussed the possibility to apply for funding from BALTCF to support MPA Network benchmarking and noted that the next call will close in June. The Meeting supported that the Secretariat contact the foundation informally to check the possibility to apply for funding.

5.3. The Meeting was informed that the Next State and Conservation meeting will be held in Hamina, Finland.

5.4. Finland informed the Meeting on the extension of two existing NATURA 2000 areas (which are also HELCOM MPAs) and one new MPA area, and that the additional area will be submitted for approval as HELCOM MPAs.

5.5. The Meeting took note of an overview on the discussion at a Sturgeon meeting (18- 19 January 2019, Berlin) by the members of the HELCOM sturgeon project group as presented by Germany. The Meeting noted that there are members from nearly all Baltic Sea countries and that the group has

expressed support for becoming an official HELCOM EG, whose main tasks would relate to implementing the HELCOM Sturgeon Action Plan.

5.6. The Meeting discussed on how to proceed with establishing of HELCOM EN STURGEON. The Meeting noted that approval from the State and Conservation and Head of Delegations are needed.

*6. Next meeting*

6.1. The Meeting took note that the Ninth Meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPA TG 9-2019) will be held online 12 March 2019, 14:00-15:30 EET.

## Annex 1 List of Participants

Name	Representing	Organization	E-mail
Penina Blankett	Chair	Ministry of the Environment	penina.blankett@ym.fi
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## Attachment 2

# Memo of the ninth meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas on update of guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation

## Introduction

The ninth Meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPA TG 9-2019) was held as an online meeting on 7 March 2019. In accordance with agreement in MPA TG 8-2018, the meeting was dedicated to deal with the update of guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation.

The list of participants is contained in Annex 1 to this Memo.

The Meeting was chaired by Ms. Penina Blankett, Finland.

Ms. Jannica Haldin and Ms. Laura Hoikkala (HELCOM Secretariat) acted as secretaries of the Meeting.

### 1. *Update of guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation*

1.1. The Meeting took note of the comments from the group members on the draft guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation, as presented by Finland. The meeting considered further edits to the document.

1.2. The meeting considered the ranking of the pressure 'Disturbance to seabed' for MPA. The Meeting discussed the large variety in the actions under the pressure, ranging from leisure boating to bottom trawling. The Meeting considered that splitting the pressure is not feasible at the moment.

1.3. The Meeting noted that the list of pressures is based on MSFD, and that it should also be checked against Natura 2000s.

1.4. The Meeting considered that the thresholds for pressure ranking should be re-considered.

1.5. The Meeting discussed that it should also be considered whether the pressure affects what is conserved in the MPA, as the level of impact varies between species and substrates. The Meeting considered that sensitivity scores could be taken into use when the process is further.

1.6. The Meeting considered to specify in the text that some of the activities inside pressures have much higher impact than others, and that activities could hence be given scores in future, when the relevance of activities in different MPAs is known.

1.7. The Meeting noted that ghost nets should be mentioned in the litter pressure.

1.8. The Meeting considered that for part of the pressures qualitative targets can be used instead of quantitative targets, as, for example, for 'Extraction of, or mortality/injury to, species'.

1.9. The Meeting noted that for pressure 'Extraction of, or mortality/injury to, species' bycatch should be spelled out more clearly and that harbour porpoise has not been included. The Meeting noted that ranking of the pressure should be re-evaluated after including bycatch.

1.10. The Meeting discussed on the ranking of pressure 'Introduction or spread of non-indigenous species'. The Meeting suggested that the ranking of the pressure would be high if harmful nonindigenous species are observed. The Meeting further discussed on how to get back to lower ranking after introduction of non-indigenous species.

1.11. The Meeting noted that if some activities are totally forbidden in all MPAs, those activities could be removed from the list.

### 2. *Any other business*

2.1. The Meeting took note that in HELCOM ACTION project, WP3 concerns effectiveness of MPAs. The project will produce an overview on habitats and activities causing pressure in those MPAs which have management plans. The Meeting noted that linking the work of WP3 of ACTION project to the work done on pressure guidelines would be very useful.

2.2. The Meeting agreed to have an online meeting of a core group to further consider disturbance and other problem areas within late March – early April. The Meeting agreed to aim to get the draft ready to be submitted to STATE & CONSERVATION 10.

2.3. The Meeting agreed that Finland will make the changes suggested by the Meeting to the draft guidelines.

2.4.

### *3. Next meeting*

3.1. The Meeting took note that the Tenth Meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPA TG 9-2019) will be held online 12 March 2019, 14:00-15:30 EET.

## Annex 1 List of Participants

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# Memo of the tenth meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPA TG 10-2019)

## Introduction

The tenth Meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPA TG 10-2019) was held as an online meeting on 12 March 2019.

The list of participants is contained in Annex 1 to this Memo.

The Meeting was chaired by Ms. Penina Blankett, Finland.

Ms. Laura Hoikkala (HELCOM Secretariat) acted as secretary of the Meeting.

The aims of the meeting were the following:

- 1) To consider the background information on linking species to habitats, prepared by the Secretariat based on the MPA TG 8-2019 Outcome, and to agree on presenting information on the progress of the work to STATE & CONSERVATION 10-2019.
- 2) To elaborate a way forward for the review process of the HELCOM MPA management and designation guidelines.

### 1. *Linking species to habitats*

1.1. The Meeting took note of the background document on linking the species to habitats, provided by the Secretariat. The Meeting noted that the tables include all needed information. The Meeting agreed that information on EU habitat directive (HBD) and EU bird directive should be included to the information of all HELCOM redlisted species, thus combining the two last sheets of the excel document. The Meeting further agreed that any possible species on HELCOM Red List that do not fall into any redlisted biotopes should be identified.

1.2. The Meeting agreed that the edited excel document will be presented to the STATE & CONSERVATION 10-2019 meeting with a concluding summary, to be prepared by the Secretary, including e.g. information on the redlisted species that are not included in any redlisted biotope.

### 2. *HELCOM MPA management and designation guidelines*

2.1. The Meeting took note that only Finland and Germany had provided comments to the HELCOM MPA management and designation guidelines. The Meeting noted that there are several small comments but also some suggestions that require a lot of work. The Meeting noted that the updating may need persons assigned specifically to the task. The Meeting noted the comment by Germany that the management guidelines are already comprehensive, though some further changes are needed. The Meeting agreed that the guidelines should be a living document, as many changes needed concern technological developments and legislation, that are constantly changing.

2.2. The Meeting agreed that the request on commenting the guidelines will be sent out again, to the contacts of State and Conservation, with the excel sheet containing the comments from Finland and Germany included as a template for further comments. The Meeting further agreed that the CPs may provide further comments to the guidelines to Finland ([lasse.kurvinen@metsa.fi](mailto:lasse.kurvinen@metsa.fi)) by 29 March, after which

Finland will collate the comments for a document to be sent to State & Conservation by 10 April (deadline for decision documents).

2.3. The Meeting further agreed that the way to present the results to STATE & CONSERVATION 10-2019 will be agreed in the next online MPA TG meeting, tentatively 5 April, dedicated to the MPA management and designation guidelines. The Meeting considered that the document to be sent to STATE & CONSERVATION 10-2019 could either include the excel document with all suggested changes, or only an overview document informing more generally on the comments received and estimation of the scale of the needed update (small/ large), possibly including some examples of larger comments. The Meeting also noted that the discussion on the guidelines can be continued further at the STATE & CONSERVATION 10-2019 meeting.

### 3. *Any other business*

3.1. The Meeting noted that a funding application for a MPA managers workshop in fall 2019 has been sent to EU. The Meeting further noted that should it be funded, the MPA managers ToRs workshop could probably be held in Finland.

3.2. The Meeting noted that following discussions with BALTCF, the MPA topics currently identified for a possible project application were not eligible for funding under the foundation's rules. However, the foundation was positive to potential future cooperation.

3.3. The Meeting noted the work on HELCOM ACTION project work package 3 on Marine Protected Areas. The meeting noted that experts from Lithuania, Estonia and Denmark will focus on the developing a methodology for assessing MPA specific features, measures and pressures. The Meeting welcomed the information that the WP and the method will present its work in STATE & CONSERVATION 10-2019.

### 4. *Next meeting*

4.1. The Meeting took note that the next Meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas will be held online, tentatively 5 April 2019, 13:30-15:00 EET.

## Annex 1 List of Participants

<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
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## Memo of the eleventh meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPA TG 11-2019)

### Introduction

The eleventh Meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPA TG 11-2019) was held as an online meeting on 5 April 2019.

The list of participants is contained in Annex 1 to this Memo.

The Meeting was chaired by Ms. Penina Blankett, Finland.

Ms. Laura Hoikkala (HELCOM Secretariat) acted as secretary of the Meeting.

The aim of the meeting was to elaborate a way forward for the review process of the HELCOM MPA management and designation guidelines.

### 1. HELCOM MPA management and designation guidelines

1.1. The Meeting took note that Germany and Finland had commented the MPA management and designation guidelines before MPA TG 10-2019, and that no further comments to the guidelines had been received after that meeting.

1.2. The Meeting agreed that Finland will provide a preliminary estimate of the magnitude of further work needed based on received comments, to support discussion on resources needs to complete the update.

1.3. The Meeting noted that the time frame of the update will depend on whether the work will be continued by the countries with current resources or if there will be a project dedicated to the task.

1.4. The Meeting noted that the guidelines need to be updated e.g. to account for MSFD and BSAP, as well as account for the wide range of legislative frameworks guiding MPA managers work, in order to be useful for managers.

1.5. The Meeting noted that all Contracting Parties should contribute with expertise to the update process, both to divide the workload and to ensure the regional approach and the usability of the guidelines for managers around the Baltic Sea.

1.6. The Meeting further noted that the MPA managers should be consulted in the update process to identify any gaps and to ensure usefulness of the updated guidelines.

1.7. The Meeting agreed that, in addition to checking the information in the guidelines are up to date, there is a need to evaluate and consider if there are topics or information currently not covered by the guidelines that needs to be added.

1.8. The Meeting noted that Finland has done some gap analysis to the guidelines, and e.g. added text on climate change, but that the missing topics should be further looked into, including Ecosystem functioning and Ecosystem services.

1.9. The Meeting agreed that Finland will prepare a document of the current status of the MPA management guidelines to the State and Conservation 10-2019, using the excel document including the received comments. The Meeting further agreed that Finland will include estimation of the magnitude of the changes to the document cover page and that State and Conservation will be asked to discuss and

agree on the process to update the guidelines and to identify any missing topics that should be included into the guidelines, and that the Contracting Parties will be asked about willingness to provide resources (expert or financial) for the update.

1.10. The Meeting took note that the document on MPA designation guidelines has concrete update suggestions. The Meeting agreed that the guidelines should include, under separate heading, the steps of actual designation process (how the designation process is done in practice), and agreed that the Secretariat will add this section to the guidelines.

1.11. The Meeting agreed on the changes and amendments made on the MPA designation guidelines document, including the ones made to the selection criteria, and agreed to present the updated document to State and Conservation 10-2019 for approval process. The Meeting agreed that Finland will submit the document to the State and Conservation 10-2019.

## 2. *Any other business*

2.1. The Meeting agreed that the Secretariat will prepare a suggestion to State & Conservation 10-2019 to apply for project funding from LIFE 2020. The planned project, should it get funded, would address and tie together open issues identified regarding MPAs, including the pressure and management guidelines, coherence of the MPA network with improved criteria, update of the MPA database and MPA managers network.

## Annex 1 List of Participants

<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
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# Memo of the extra meeting of the Core Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas Pressure Guidelines (MPA TG 10E-2019)

## Introduction

The extra Meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPA TG 10E-2019) was held as an online meeting on 4 April 2019.

Jannica Haldin, Juuso Haapaniemi, Lasse Kurvinen Matti Sahla and Penina Blankett participated the meeting and Laura Hoikkala acted as secretary of the Meeting.

The meeting was dedicated to deal with the update of guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation.

### 1. *Update of guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation*

1.1. The Meeting considered how to proceed with updating the guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation.

1.2. The Meeting noted that the document is currently a combination of pressures and impacts and further noted that the impact of a pressure is defined by the sensitivity of a given conservation objective, and that these will differ between MPAs. The Meeting agreed that for the sake of consistency in the reporting to the database, and the usability of the information, the update should focus on pure pressures, and include all relevant pressures.

1.3. The Meeting discussed how to define the ranking of pressures to be included (high, medium or low), and considered that the ranking should be ecologically relevant and that whenever possible the categories should be set in relation to a natural reference level.

1.4. The Meeting considered at what level the pressures should be presented, e.g. fishery is too high a level as different types of fisheries have highly different impacts.

1.5. The Meeting noted that some Contracting Parties have highlighted the importance of assessing impacts in their comments to the guidelines and agreed that assessing impacts are the ultimate aim of the process. The Meeting considered that currently an explanation on why the focus of the guidelines are on pressures should be included in the introduction and at later stage, once the sensitivity of the conservation objectives has been established, cross tabulations on the impacts of pressures on ecological components should be added to the database. This type of information would be needed when there are resources to update the database to increase the usability of the database.

1.6. The Meeting considered some of the pressures listed in the database (and the document) that are in fact activities, and agreed to try to link these activities under proper pressures, in line with the division of activities to pressures used in HELCOM for HOLASII and the Baltic Sea Action Plan update. As an example, input of water will be moved under 'Changes in hydrological conditions'.

1.7. The Meeting considered that in the future, when the MPA database is updated, reviewing all regulations would be beneficial e.g. for identifying differences and inconsistencies and identifying totally banned actions. The effectiveness of the MPAs depends on the legislation, which should be evaluated.

1.8. The Meeting also noted that when the area for certain conservation features is smaller than the total area of the site (e.g. trawling in N2000 areas, where there are no reefs), or protection is temporally limited, the impact evaluation in database may give false interpretations. To avoid this the

ultimate aim of assessing pressures for MPAs should be a spatial presentation of the distribution of pressures. Similarly, for assessing impact, spatial distribution of the conservation features etc is needed to get an ecologically valid representation of the overlap of pressures and conservation features and the subsequent impact.

1.9. The Meeting considered the 'Disturbance and loss of seabed' and agreed that decision on how to proceed could be postponed to see results from work under EU processes (ICES advice and TG Seabed) to ensure consistency.

1.10. The Meeting considered what is normal pressure for hunting and agreed that any hunting is a pressure and that relation to levels of natural mortality could be used in ranking.

1.11. The Meeting noted that assessing pressures is a technical exercise in identifying presence/absence, as well as magnitude, of a given pressure, whereas the implications of the pressures, i.e. their effects (positive or negative) are only evaluated when evaluating impacts (e.g. for a pressure assessment the presence/absence of hunting and the magnitude should be evaluated, whereas the effects of hunting should be evaluated as part of the impact assessment, hunting may have positive impacts on non-target species).

1.12. The Meeting noted that the document also aims to harmonize the way HELCOM Contracting Parties understand different pressures.

1.13. The Meeting noted that the task to complete the update requires a lot of work and it is not feasible to try to complete the task by State and Conservation 10. Thus, the Meeting agreed to inform State and Conservation on the proceedings and needs for further improvements and not yet present the document for approval.