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Background

The first HELCOM MPA management workshop was held on 10-12 September 2018, at Husby säteri, outside Norrköping in Sweden. The workshop was arranged back-to-back with an EU Natura 2000 biogeographical workshop.

The aim of the HELCOM MPA workshop was to initiate closer cooperation between managers in the HELCOM region, to provide a platform to discuss experiences, and support the exchange of best practices and the identification of gaps and challenges related to marine protected areas management, as well as possibly plan further communication and/or activities.

The workshop produced a number of conclusions and recommendations. The recommendations are related to approaches, tools or guideline that the managers identified are needed, and where HELCOM could provide valuable support, to improve the management on both a national and a regional level, to help ensure that the HELCOM network of MPAs is coherent and effectively managed, thus supporting the implementation of Aichi Target 11. The workshop was very well received and fulfilled its aims.

STATE&CONSERVATION took note of the information on the Outcome of the MPA managers' workshop as presented by Sweden and the Secretariat (document 3N-7, presentations 3 and 4 to that meeting), and thanked Sweden for a well-organized, constructive and fruitful workshop.

Following the success of the 2018 workshop the possibility to hold a second MPA management workshop in autumn 2019 has been explored. The purpose of the workshop would be to pick up on the topic the managers themselves identified as most challenging in the last workshop, and which would, in turn, have the most added benefit from transboundary sharing of experiences and regional level support.

Based on the input of the managers it is suggested that such a workshop focus on stakeholder involvement, looking at main challenges and how they have been solved, benefits of stakeholder involvement and important considerations to take into account when deciding on the level of involvement to aim for in a given MPA. This would also link into the discussions on communication and how to communicate the value and importance of conservation and conservation objectives to a wide audience.

A follow-up to the 2018 workshop would help uphold the momentum for the managers and give the managers concrete benefits. The intention is to also link it to a benchmarking event similar to the one in Sweden where the stakeholder process could be illustrated.

Finland has kindly offered to host such a workshop, which is suggested to take place 9-12 September 2019, in Vaasa, Finland. Additional funds have been secured from the EU Biogeographical process to enable facilitation of the workshop.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- endorse the arranging of the second HELCOM MPA Management Workshop in September 2019.
- nominate managers to participate in the workshop.

Preliminary outline of Second HELCOM MPA Management Workshop, September 2019

Background

The Baltic Sea MPA Network

Although the Baltic Sea region has an extensive network and coverage of MPAs, MPA management and management effectiveness has been identified as an area where significant progress is needed. MPA managers often facing similar challenges across the region, and that management efforts in one protected area can directly affect the effectiveness of another, yet there currently exists little transboundary infrastructure or regional level capacity building to address this.

Baltic Sea MPA Management Workshop 2018

An initial step in the process to support improved marine protected areas management was taken through the MPA management workshop arranged by at Husby säteri, outside Norrköping in Sweden in September 2018. The workshop was arranged by HELCOM and held back-to-back with an EU Natura 2000 biogeographical workshop, with the N2000 workshop building on the work and discussions held during the first three days.

The aim of the 2018 MPA workshop was to initiate closer cooperation between managers in the HELCOM region, to provide a platform to discuss experiences, and support the exchange of best practices and the identification and scoping of gaps and challenges related to marine protected areas management, as well as possibly plan further communication and/or activities.

The setup and outcome of the workshop had as its aim to draw initial conclusions and recommendations on specific issues for more in-depth cooperation in the future, networking and to identify cooperative actions. The workshop consisted of plenary sessions, a field visit and poster sessions. The result of the workshop was an agreed lists of recommendations and actions for further work and implementation (Annex 1), to be taken forward by HELCOM, expert networks and through networking and cooperation.

The workshop utilized a facilitator to support the work, using a number of dynamic approaches to allow the participants to reflected on their experiences in MPA management, current needs and challenges and formulate a shared understanding of the most important issues around MPA management, identifying issues with a regional character where possible (see Annex 1). Drawing on each other's experiences and good practices the managers prioritized possible solutions and, where possible, formulated suggestions for further activities.

The workshop included a field day where participants got the opportunity to visit a multi-management MPA and discuss challenges and success stories with local stakeholders.

The workshop was very well received and the possibility to share experiences was considered so beneficial that a unanimous recommendation for a persistent MPA management network to be established under the auspice of HELCOM was presented by the managers. The proposal for establishing a network was in principle supported by HELCOM Heads of Delegation in December and the Terms of Reference are to be presented for endorsement in this meeting.

Purpose of the Second HELCOM MPA Managers Workshop

The purpose of the second MPA managers workshop, preliminarily planned for 9-12 September 2019, is to pick up on the topics the managers themselves identified as most challenging in the previous workshop and which would, in turn, have the most added benefit from transboundary sharing of experiences and regional level support.

Based on managers input the second workshop will focus on stakeholder interaction in the MPA management process. It will also link to other identified topics such as communication and awareness rising, e.g. how to communicate the value and importance of conservation and conservation objectives to a wide audience. The event would contain a benchmarking session, including site visits and discussions on local management and stakeholder process.

A follow-up workshop to the one held in autumn 2018 will ensure that the momentum for the managers is maintained. It will also, should the network get final approval in STATE&CONSERVATION 10-2019 and in HOD 56-2019, function as the first physical meeting of the newly launched regional MPA managers network, and contribute to establishing the network more securely, showcasing concrete benefits to the managers.

Objective

The ultimate objective of the workshop is to:

- give the MPA managers the possibility to share experiences and learn from each other's experiences with stakeholder involvement,
- strengthen the managers network
- increase the capacity of the managers in the region when it comes to stakeholder interaction and involvement.

The event will focus on identifying the main challenges managers in various areas and countries experience in relation to stakeholder interaction and explore how these can be solved through sharing success stories and best practices. The workshop will also look at benefits of stakeholder involvement and consider important considerations to take into account when deciding on the level of involvement in a given MPA. If a good speaker can be secured a session on methods or tools to support the stakeholder interaction processes, and experiences in other regions/global level will also be included.

Link to HELCOM objectives

The planned workshop process promotes the exchange of knowledge and cooperation on MPA management beyond national borders. Giving the managers a forum to exchange experiences and tools/methods to support stakeholder interaction help improve stakeholder involvement. Improved stakeholder involvement and interaction has the two-fold benefit of facilitating the MPA managers overall work, and by doing this allows for more efficient and constructive work processes, and improving the effectiveness of the given protected area, which has a positive effect on the resident habitats and species as well as increases the overall efficiency of the protected areas network. These aims are fully aligned with the HELCOM priorities to ensure an effectively managed MPA network in the Baltic Sea.

Scientific/Social background

Stakeholder engagement has long been recognized as a core element of successful MPA design, planning, and management. From a socio-economic perspective, effectively managed and broadly supported MPAs evolve to become natural assets. However, stakeholder involvement is not a simple matter and conservation efforts meet resistance for a range of reasons which can fuel social conflicts and engender

resistance to management policies and regulatory frameworks, thereby creating barriers to success. For MPA managers the challenge is to regularly make high quality decisions while remaining responsive to the needs, interests and concerns of the public that may be affected by those decisions. Advances in the field of public participation offer a range of participatory planning approaches, facilitative techniques and lessons learned for managers seeking stakeholder involvement in MPA management. The benefits of stakeholder collaboration are well founded: increased transparency and accountability, better decision-making, enhanced social equity and justice, improved public/private sector relationships and creation of durable solutions to complex environmental challenges. Yet no single approach or methodology works for every scenario. Managers must carefully assess, understand and adapt to the unique social and political landscape within which an MPA is embedded. Ultimately, any successful stakeholder engagement process accommodates a diversity of interested parties and produces outcomes that are widely acceptable and thus sustainable over the longterm.

Workshop Content

Using a mixture of facilitation (to lead the sharing of experiences, identify challenges and finding current best practices and solutions) and dynamic presentations giving a broader perspective on the topic and bring in some novel ideas was very well received by the managers at the 2018 workshop. It stimulated discussion, helped to focus the process and clearly identify and prioritize topics to be lifted from one session to another. The intention is to have a facilitator guiding the work on day 2 and 4. The intention is to utilize the same facilitator as for the previous workshop, as she is familiar with the previous work and the dynamics of arranging the workshop.

The 2019 workshop will use a similar approach, potentially also with one or two invited speakers (suggestions is a presentation by MEDPAN and possibly an expert on best practices on stakeholder involvement with a broader perspective).

Stakeholder involvement in MPA management processes

- Mapping challenges, finding overlaps and common issues between areas
- Share success stories, best practices (including the outcome of the Second Boreal Seminar and the Marine and Continental Kick off seminars), currently used solutions and their strengths and weaknesses
- Considerations regarding commitments related to level of stakeholder involvement
- Best practices and method

In line with discussions at the Second Boral Seminar in 2016 this main theme closely links to:

Communication and awareness raising

- Content: what is it we want to communicate? And how does it relate to what endusers want to hear? And what they should hear?
- Methods: classic or innovative? What methods are best in order to communicated different issues? And what methods to use when communicating with different stakeholder groups?
- Channels: what channels can we use? And which ones are most appropriate?

The report of the 2018 MPA Management workshop and the resulting key messages and recommendations can be found [here](#).

Target Audience

Individuals working directly with national MPA management from all Baltic Sea countries, in line with the previous workshop. The workshop is foreseen to have a maximum of 35 participants (+- 3 participants from each Baltic Sea Country), most probably around 25.

Expected results

The workshop links fully or partially to the following issues highlighted by the managers as obstacles in their work:

1. *Most managers struggle with the same or similar issues and challenges, irrespective of their country.*

The workshop functions as a stepping stone to build capacity on a regional level to tackle issues identified by the managers themselves.

2. *There is currently little exchange of experiences and best practices between managers across borders and lessons learned locally or nationally are currently not being adequately shared and processed nationally or regionally to provide for improvement in the future. The work would greatly benefit from such exchange.*

The workshop directly addresses this by providing a platform for managers to share information and experiences (both challenges and success stories/best practices).

3. *Stakeholder interaction and involvement is one of the major challenges but also provide some of the most significant success stories.*

The workshop directly addresses these by taking it up as a main theme. In the 2018 workshop stakeholder involvement as a topic appeared on both the list of main challenges and the list of success stories, which implies there is concrete lessons to be learned from sharing local experiences on a regional scale.

4. *There is a need for a more unified approach to MPA management on a regional level, from communication, use of vocabulary, setting of target and objectives to monitoring, and cross border management.*

The workshop, and the MPA managers network, functions as a first step towards a more unified approach on a regional level. It also begins the process to consider communication.

Concrete results

The process and results of the workshop is to be presented as a concise report, including key messages and recommendations made by the workshop, as well as, wherever possible identifying concrete next steps or needs of the managers which can be advanced also after the end of the workshop.

Preliminary Outline of Workshop Programme

Please note that the outlined program is preliminary.

Day 1 (half day)

- Start with lunch (to allow for travel to the location)
- Introduction to the workshop
- Setting the scene and getting to know the participants (facilitator)
- Presentation by HELCOM
- (Presentation on experiences with working with a manager's network by MED PAN)
- Presentation on stakeholder involvement best practices/methods or tools to support the stakeholder involvement process

- Joint evening event

Day 2

- Breakfast
- Session 1 Stakeholder interaction, experiences and challenges (facilitated)
- Lunch
- Session 2: Success stories (mapped against identified challenges) and best practices (facilitated)
- Coffee
- Obstacles and solutions
- Dinner
- Joint evening event

Day 3

- Breakfast
- Site visit
- Lunch
- Site visit cont.
- Dinner
- Joint evening event

Day 4 (half day)

- Breakfast
- Revisiting the discussion and outcome from day 2.
- Concluding comments
- Lunch
- Departure

Contributions

Parks & Wildlife Finland will provide the needed support for the site visit, as well as a venue for the workshop. HELCOM Secretariat, together with P&WF and the facilitator will lead the content and practical planning, as well as the execution.

Additional contribution have been provided by the EU Biogeographical process towards covering facilitation of the workshop, as well as catering and possibly travel costs of invited speakers.

The event will be promoted using the HELCOM communications channels and network.

Annex 1. Main conclusions from the discussions at the HELCOM MPA Management Workshop 2018.

Main conclusions:

- there are a large number of commitments and overlapping legislation that need to be taken into account and fulfilled in any given MPA. This is currently one of the main impediments in the work of MPA managers.
- most managers struggle with the same or similar issues and challenges, irrespective of their country.
- there is currently little exchange of experiences and best practices between managers across borders and the work would greatly benefit from such exchange.
- stakeholder interaction and involvement is one of the major challenges but also provide some of the most significant success stories.
- lessons learned locally or nationally are currently not being adequately shared and processed nationally or regionally to provide for improvement in the future.
- there is a need for a more unified approach to MPA management on a regional level, from communication, use of vocabulary, setting of target and objectives to monitoring, and cross border management.
- there is a general lack of overview on methods, best practices and guidelines best suited for the region.
- the MPA database is mostly view as a one way channel to report information to the policy level, not as a tool to support the managers in their work. However, the database contains much of the information that was highlighted as needed by the managers during the workshop.

Recommendations to HELCOM:

Regional platform for MPA managers

- start a MPA management network under the auspice of HELCOM, supported by the Secretariat, to provide managers with a forum to share information, experiences, initiatives and consortia for project work across borders. The network could also be used as a platform for identifying common management challenges on regional level and facilitate the work on e.g. cross-border management.

Tools

- For HELCOM to produce and provide easily accessible HELCOM MPA information material aimed at the general public to support joint communication across the regions with stakeholders and administration.
- Explore if the MPA database can be used to store and share information on e.g. objectives and targets from the management plans in a structured way, e.g- using a template. This would significantly facilitate access to information and cooperation across borders.

Guidelines

- For HELCOM to provide an overview of scientific evidence and recommendations for impact assessment procedure, including the effects of human activities and cumulative impacts on the environment,
- For HELCOM to provide an overview of scientific evidence to support, as well as regional guidelines and recommendations for, monitoring methods and standards for use in MPAS management.
- For HELCOM to provide an overview and recommendation for methods used when assessing management effectiveness that can be used on individual MPAs and on a network level.
- For HELCOM to produce guidelines based on best practices to support effective and efficient processes within MPA management.

- Provide an overview and recommendation for setting relevant conservation objectives.
- For HELCOM to facilitate the development of a regional framework which can account for different requirements and commitments into account. Develop guidelines for producing multi-management plan using said framework.
- In general any guidelines produced should ideally take into account other commitments and global recommendations etc. (e.g. IUCN, Habitats Directive, Agenda 2030, Aichi targets, CBD).