



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature
Conservation

STATE & CONSERVATION
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Document title	DRAFT HELCOM Network for Marine Protected Area Management (EN MPA MANET) Terms of Reference (ToR)
Code	7J-7
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Background

HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2018 concluded the following:

WE WELCOME the significant progress made towards increasing the geographical coverage of the HELCOM marine protected areas (HELCOM MPAs) network. **WE RECALL** the HELCOM commitment to step up efforts to establish an ecologically coherent and effectively managed network of HELCOM MPAs in accordance with HELCOM Recommendation 35/1. **WE ALSO COMMIT** to improving the understanding of the role of MPAs for ecosystem services, in order to enhance cost-effectiveness of MPAs management and yield the greatest environmental benefits. **WE ALSO AGREE** to strive for full achievement of Aichi Target 11 regarding the management, ecological representativeness and connectivity of the HELCOM MPAs network;

Implementation of commitments and initiatives with regards to marine conservation are still in progress in the region. Although the HELCOM region is a global leader when it comes to MPA coverage, MPA management and management effectiveness has been identified as an area where significant progress is still needed.

The first HELCOM MPA management workshop, held in September 2018, presented a unanimous recommendation for a persistent MPA management network to be established under the auspice of HELCOM arose from the workshop. This proposal was presented to the State and Conservation 9-2018 which endorsed the establishment of a regional MPA management network under the auspice of HELCOM and requested the Secretariat to present the proposal to HOD 55-2018 for consideration. The meeting agreed that should HOD 55-2018 endorse the proposal, Terms of Reference will be drafted intersessionally to be presented for approval by State and Conservation 10-2019. HOD 55-2018 in principle supported the proposal.

This document contains the draft Terms of Reference for a HELCOM Network for Marine Protected Area Management (EN MPA MANET) prepared by the Secretariat in line with the request by State and Conservation 9-2018.

Contracting Parties are kindly invited to review the draft Terms of Reference and provide input in writing as needed, preferably by **2 May 2019** to the Secretariat (laura.hoikkala@helcom.fi). The Secretariat will prepare an amended version based on comments which will be presented at the meeting for endorsement.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- review and approve possible changes based on comments received prior to the meeting.
- endorse the draft ToRs and agree to forward them to HOD 56-2019 for approval.

DRAFT HELCOM Network for Marine Protected Area Management (EN MPA MANET) Terms of Reference (ToR)

Adopted by Heads of Delegation x-201x

Background:

The HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2010:

WE AGREE to develop and apply by 2015, management plans and/or measures⁵ for already existing BSPAs; and that every new BSPA designation should within five years be followed by the establishment of a management plan and/or measures;

The HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2013 stated:

WE DECIDE to re-enforce action to achieve by 2020 an ecologically coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas for the Baltic Sea as decided in the BSAP and the Moscow Ministerial Declaration.

WE AGREE to strengthen the efforts to implement the decision made at the HELCOM 2010 Moscow Ministerial Meeting to develop and apply by 2015, management plans and/or measures for already existing Baltic Sea Protected Areas; and to follow every new BSPA designation by the establishment of a management plan and/or measures within five years;

The HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2018 concluded the following:

WE WELCOME the significant progress made towards increasing the geographical coverage of the HELCOM marine protected areas (HELCOM MPAs) network. **WE RECALL** the HELCOM commitment to step up efforts to establish an ecologically coherent and effectively managed network of HELCOM MPAs in accordance with HELCOM Recommendation 35/1. **WE ALSO COMMIT** to improving the understanding of the role of MPAs for ecosystem services, in order to enhance cost-effectiveness of MPAs management and yield the greatest environmental benefits. **WE ALSO AGREE** to strive for full achievement of Aichi Target 11 regarding the management, ecological representativeness and connectivity of the HELCOM MPAs network;

HELCOM Recommendations **35/1: System of coastal and marine Baltic Sea protected areas (HELCOM MPAs)** directly deals with management of MPAs, whereas HELCOM Recommendations *40/1 Conservation and protection of marine and coastal biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes categorized as threatened according to the HELCOM Red Lists* and *37/2 Conservation of Baltic Sea species categorized as threatened according to the 2013 HELCOM red list* indirectly deal with MPA management through threatened species and habitats. HELCOM Recommendations *27/28-2 Conservation of seals in the Baltic Sea Area*, *34E/1 Safeguarding important bird habitats and migration routes in the Baltic Sea from negative effects of wind and wave energy production at sea* and *17/2 Protection of Harbour Porpoise in the Baltic Sea Area* all focus on management and conservation measures targeting specific species groups, most of which are also relevant in a number of MPAs in the Baltic Sea. HELCOM recommendation *15/1R Protection of the coastal strip* focuses on conservation and protection of near shore and coastal areas, which also takes into account MPAs.

Implementation of commitments and initiatives with regards to marine conservation are still in progress in the region. Although the HELCOM region is a global leader when it comes to MPA coverage, MPA management and management effectiveness has been identified as an area where significant progress is still needed.

To this end the first HELCOM MPA management workshop was held in September 2018. The workshop sparked closer cooperation between managers in the HELCOM region, and provided them with a platform to discuss experiences, exchange best practices and identify gaps and challenges related to marine protected areas management in the region. A unanimous recommendation for a persistent MPA management network to be established under the auspice of HELCOM arose from the workshop. This proposal was presented to the State and Conservation 9-2018 which endorsed the establishment of a regional MPA management network under the auspice of HELCOM and requested the Secretariat to present the proposal to HOD 55-2018 for consideration. The Meeting agreed that should HOD 55-2018 endorse the proposal, Terms of Reference will be drafted intersessionally to be presented for approval by State and Conservation 10-2019.

HOD 55-2018 in principle supported the proposal.

Identified challenges

The Baltic Sea marine protected areas (MPA) network consist of areas protected purely under national legislation, Natura 2000 areas with a marine component and HELCOM MPAs. The two latter overlap to a significant degree. 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 face 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.

MPA management has to take into account a large number of commitments and overlapping legislation which needs to be fulfilled in any given Baltic Sea MPA. How to in practice ensure that these commitments are all accounted for has been identified as one of the main impediments in the work of MPA managers in the Baltic Sea region.

Prior to the work initiated by HELCOM there has been limited exchange of experiences and best practices between MPA managers across borders. Opportunities for sharing lessons learned locally or nationally have not been adequately utilized and the lessons not fully processed nationally or regionally to enable the use of these experiences to provide for improvement in the future. MPA managers have expressed that there is a general lack of overview on methods, best practices and guidelines best suited for the region.

These challenges all indicate that there is a need for a more unified regional approach to MPA management, from communication and sharing practical experiences to use of vocabulary, setting of target and objectives to monitoring, and cross border management.

Purpose of the Network

At the regional level the MPA management work supports the implementation of international agreements and marine policies, fostering partnerships with relevant marine conservation actors and key regional or international organizations and initiatives (e.g. ASCOBANS, EU Biogeographical process etc.). The network's purpose to strengthen the capabilities of its members and partners, avoid duplication and strengthen information flow between the Baltic Sea MPA managers and the policy level.

The network is to provide expert input to HELCOM work related to MPA management, as well as conservation of habitats, biotopes and species in general, and specifically on the activities identified in these ToR's.

This relates in particular to the following BSAP Ecological Objectives:

- natural marine and coastal landscapes,
- thriving and balanced communities of plants and animals, as well as
- viable populations of species.

- restoring and maintaining sea floor integrity at a level that safeguards the functions of the ecosystems;
- that habitats, including associated species, show a distribution, abundance and quality in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climatic conditions; and
- a water quality that enables the integrity, structure and functioning of the ecosystem to be maintained or recovered.

The principal benefits of EN MPA MANET are to have the opportunity for:

- a) stronger links between managers working with MPAs in the region,
- b) improved transfer of valuable information, best practices and experiences
- c) an improved transfer of research results and products between partners and to the policy level.
- d) improved advice and information on necessary actions and measures and on how HELCOM's policies could be adapted in order to support MPA management.
- e) a clear mechanism for demonstrating organizational commitment to addressing MPA management related challenges.
- f) stronger MPA knowledge, capacities and awareness of decision-makers, relevant economic sectors stakeholders and the general public to ensure better policy implementation at national regional and international levels.

Scope:

The overall scope of the group is the management of Baltic Sea MPAs, on an individual, national and regional level, accounting for both management of individual areas and the network.

The work supports the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), relevant HELCOM Recommendations and subsequent commitments.

Objectives:

The network will work to facilitate regional cooperation and exchange of experiences, facilitate mutual understanding and foster the development of, and actively contribute to achieve, an efficient, representative, connected, integrated and effectively managed network of Baltic Sea MPAs.

This will include strong and active networking of MPA managers and other actors at all levels, knowledge and capacity building and improving awareness, and to strengthen MPA policy implementation and funding. This work includes, but is not limited to, the needs of the BSAP and subsequent commitments.

Towards this end the objectives of the Network are :

1. to foster exchange of information, experiences and expertise in order to enhance MPA effectiveness, MPA management effectiveness, facilitate the work of MPA managers and support transboundary management efforts;
2. to identify and help fill gaps in terms of knowledge, capacity building, or communications and to support development of regional understanding and harmonization of methods and processes;
3. to support local, national and regional level work related to MPA management and to identify and link national work with HELCOM work;
4. to support managers in their need to adapt to changing contexts by being adaptive and focus on a bottom-up approach;
5. to reinforce the link between local experience and decision-making processes and function as a think tank in order to shorten the distance between MPA managers and policies;

6. to engage with other key stakeholders in order to improve effectiveness of MPAs and their management;
7. to support regional assessments of MPA management and link to relevant European directives, especially the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Habitats and Birds directive;
8. to provide a platform for applying for financial support for MPA management related work,

Activities and Tasks:

The activities of the group cover a wide range of aspects related to work with MPAs. Sub groups might be defined in order to work more thematically, under the umbrella of the network, in order to facilitate intersessional work. The group's activities and tasks link to the following priority MPA-related topics:

- establishing and supporting collaboration platforms to facilitate dialogue and networking between managers, experts, stakeholders and scientists. This will allow better integration of the existing scientific, practical, and traditional knowledge about key MPA issues
- maintaining a dedicated online space functioning as platform for collaboration and space and distribution of documentary resources, e.g. field study reports, cross-sectional analyses, methodology guidelines, workshop proceedings and focus papers on MPAs.
- making available up-to-date the knowledge to MPA managers, informing them about developments in the fields of MPA management, policy and decision-making, funding opportunities especially at regional, European, and international levels, as well as about technical and strategic activities of the network, and facilitate communication and direct support between members and possible partners.
- incrementally developing and implementing a regionally coordinated capacity-building programme, together with possible partners, by integrating the different capacity-building activities formats (regional workshops, trainings, small exchange visits, etc.),
- supporting harmonized management and monitoring in MPAs across the region and the development and use of management guidelines and simple monitoring protocols that can be easily implemented by MPA managers in different parts of the region.
- continue to update the HELCOM MPA database with relevant information on the regions MPAs.
- developing a "bottom-up" approach through ad hoc external communication to improve awareness, inform authorities, decision-makers, the general public, the key economic sectors about, but not limited to:
 - The value of MPAs (ecological and socio-economic),
 - The challenges, added value and success stories of MPA effective management
 - The benefits of strongly protected areas,
 - And also about the value of a human network of MPA managers and actors.
- identifying and engaging, especially through national networking mechanisms, with members and partners to scale-up communication and advocacy at local and national levels, by providing ready-to-use toolkits & arguments on key topics and issues. This will particularly help to reach wider audience at those levels including general public and stakeholders (small-scale fishermen, tour operators...).
- identifying and specifying data and knowledge needs. Wherever possible the network can address these needs through projects developed with national funding or joint research applications'

These overall tasks provide the framework to guide the work of the network, the implementation of which depends on the availability of resources. If possible the network might be a platform to develop and apply for external funded projects in order to accomplish the listed tasks and objectives

Reporting

The Chairs(s) will report on the group's activities to the State and Conservation WG regularly, i.e. for the information document deadline of the spring State and Conservation meeting each year. The activity report should consist of information on activities and developments which have taken place since the previous report, a list of links to the meeting sites of previous meetings or workspaces containing documents, and a list of aspects on which decisions or guidance from State and Conservation are required. A template for the reporting will be provided by the Secretariat.

Work plan

A time limited work plan will be prepared and approved by the Network and State and Conservation WG. At the end of its validity the workplan will be reviewed and updated in the network meeting prior to the end date of the workplan, to be presented for approval by State and Conservation WG.

Validity of ToR's

The work of the network is open ended. These ToRs should be subjected to review and revision as needed and are to be presented for endorsement at the working group level and approval by Heads of Delegation.

Organisation of work

The network will consist of experts nominated by the Contracting Parties and will be open to Observers according to HELCOM procedures. The network will report to and receive guidance from the State and Conservation Working Group.

Some of those activities could be directly implemented by HELCOM and/or the network, or led by HELCOM Contracting Parties, with the support from the HELCOM Secretariat as facilitator/coordinator.

The mode of work for the expert network will be mainly via correspondence and online meetings facilitated by the Secretariat, with a physical meeting taking place as needed. Sub groups might be defined in order to work more thematically. A Chair will be elected by the network. The products will be handled at HELCOM Meeting Portal workspaces dedicated for the aim. The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the network