



## Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature  
Conservation

STATE & CONSERVATION  
13-2020

Online, 5-9 October 2020

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<b>Document title</b>	Draft structure and content of proposed HELCOM LIFE MPA project
<b>Code</b>	3N-3
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<b>Submitted by</b>	Secretariat

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*This document was submitted after the deadline. The TG MPA 15-2020 meeting, which finalized the latest review of the plan, took place 25 September 2020.*

### Background

This document contains the latest draft of the proposed project structure and preliminary activities and tasks of the proposed HELCOM LIFE MPA project. The project represents a major, and comprehensive, regional effort focused on MPAs and it has the potential to significantly advance the regions work in this regard, both within and outside the project. The current proposal has been developed in the framework of the new EU Biodiversity Strategy, the actions and measures currently proposed for inclusion in the updated BSAP (as well as HELCOM Recommendations 35/1, Rec 37/2 and Rec 40/1), while also considering proposed upcoming new CBD targets etc. The proposed project would aim to support the Baltic Sea region, and the individual Contracting Parties, in their efforts to implement these international commitments. A preliminary cross-check of the content of the proposal against the various commitments shows a very high convergence of the planned activities.

The proposal has been developed using the scoping exercise at STATE&CONSERVATION 11-2019 as well as priorities and needs identified through previous HELCOM processes as a basis. The proposed work is divided across 5 main work packages:

MPA Capacity

MPA Coherence

MPA Effectiveness

MPA Management

MPA Monitoring

In addition work packages on Project management and on Dissemination are envisioned.

Due to COVID-19 and the consequent changes in timelines for global and international process the to aim is for the proposal be submitted for the 2021 LIFE call, under the new LIFE programme.

The main next steps is to identify:

**HOW** the tasks could be done (available tools, methods etc).

**WHO** might possess the knowledge, expertise or interest in taking the task forward (i.e. identifying possible partners and link to relevant tasks).

**WHAT** we foresee as the end product of the various tasks/workstrands (concretizing possible deliverables).

Please note that at this stage suggestions are in not binding. As the preparations progress the Secretariat will prepare an overview of workflow and timeline for the work.

The process for developing the proposal so far:

STATE&CONSERVATION 10-2019 discussed the possibility to produce a MPA related project proposal for LIFE 2020 call. The meeting supported the idea and agreed that initial scoping for such a proposal should begin as early as possible, building on already existing or identified gaps in MPA work in the region.

STATE&CONSERVATION 11-2019 convened a planning session on topics that could be included in the proposed MPA related project proposal for LIFE 2020 call and considered the possible scope and structure of the proposed project and acknowledged the importance of having a thought through objective. The meeting discussed the duration of LIFE projects and took note that also long term projects (over 5 years) can be funded. The Meeting took note that the total costs of such project would be at least 1 million euros and that LIFE projects have a set upper limit for how much of the co-financing can be covered by time of existing experts. The meeting acknowledged that the aim is to get good regional coverage and that HELCOM would be the coordinator of the planned project. The meeting invited the Secretariat to further develop the structure and topics to be included and to share the plan for further input with TG MPA and State and Conservation early spring of 2020. The Meeting further invited the Secretariat to cross-check the identified topics against each country PAFs as well as against the the Nature Action Plan and the [N2000 Biogeographical Process Road map](#) for knowledge exchange and cooperation in the marine regions. STATE&CONSERVATION 11-2019 further considered that a prioritized list of topics will be useful to guide HELCOMs work irrespective of the project application.

First draft of the project outline was sent to CPs for commenting on 17 December 2019 for review and commenting, intended to function as a stepping stone in the project planning process, enabling further discussion and elaboration.

STATE&CONSERVATION 12-2020 took note of the progress on planning a HELCOM led MPA project for submission under the EU LIFE funding instrument invited further comments to the initial proposals are welcomed and can be sent to the Secretariat to be further considered in TG MPA.

TG MPA 13-2020 welcomed the updated project plan for MPA LIFE application and noted that the intention would be to submit the application to the 2021 LIFE call. The meeting noted that it is not yet possible to give an overview of the cost or resource needs for the project as the resources and needs required from the Contracting Parties will depend on the tasks included in the project and the level of commitment by different countries. The meeting agreed that, where possible, estimations on the resources needed to perform a given task can be added to the excel table by CPs as part of the continued process.

The meeting emphasized the need to involve sufficient amount of expertise from the CPs to carry out many of the tasks within the suggested project. The meeting invited the Contracting Parties to identify tasks/topics where national expertise would be available or for which the CPs would be interested in taking lead and to share contact information of possible partners for the project, including names of institutions, with the secretariat

The meeting noted the point that HELCOM coordination is crucial for a successful project outcome and a specific group to oversee the work would be of importance. The meeting agreed to come back to this later in the process, when guidance for the 2021 call is available.

The meeting noted the comment that LIFE projects are generally applied projects with strong local anchoring of implementation of measures. While HELCOM projects by default cannot be applied in the classic LIFE fashion, it is hoped that the regional scope and comprehensive partnership, the link to the EU

biodiversity strategy and the fact that many of the planned deliverables can have local application could be considered as strengths in the application process.

The Meeting agreed on the following plan for taking the work forward:

1. The Contracting Parties and Observers will inform the Secretariat ([jannica.haldin@helcom.fi](mailto:jannica.haldin@helcom.fi)) on their interest to participate in the project; give a resource estimate needed and provide further comments to the project proposal by **24 August 2020**.
2. The Secretariat will collate the comments and submit them to the Contracting Parties and observers by **31 August 2020 at the latest**.
3. Meeting of TG MPA dedicated to the MPA LIFE application will be held online on **4 September 2020 (provisionally 10:00-16:00 EET)**.
4. The outcome of the TG MPA meeting will be submitted to STATE & CONSERVATION 13-2020 (5-9 October) for guidance for further development.

TG MPA 14-2020 (4 September 2020) and TG MPA 15-2020 (25 September 2020) discussed the current content of the proposal, including the comments received following the TG MPA 13-2020 meeting and provided further input to the proposals as included in **Attachment 1** of this document.

Please note that due to the very short time in-between the TG MPA 15-2020 meeting and submission to STATE&CONSERVATION 13-2020 most of the changes suggested at the meeting have not yet been implemented.

### Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- Consider the proposal and provide input to the how, who and what sections.
- Agree on a way to take the work forward, including the need to establish a process for drafting and building a consortium, as well as consider a timeline for budget discussions etc, with the aim of submitting a concept note for the LIFE 2021 call.