



Document title	Tributyltin (TBT) and imposex
Code	3J-63
Category	DEC
Agenda Item	3J-Progress of relevant HELCOM expert groups and projects
Submission date	13.9.2021
Submitted by	Secretariat

Background

The document below provides a template filled by indicator leads to provide an overview of progress to STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021. Key aspects such as methodologies, spatial extent changes, assessment scales and threshold values are presented, identifying ongoing work and other relevant issues towards HOLAS III. This process builds on the prior review of indicator development carried out under STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 (summarised in [document 4J-16 Rev.1](#), and detailed within numerous documents under agenda item 4J). The focus of these development works is the completion of indicator development and adjustment work for HOLAS III by the end of 2021, as previously agreed under HOD 57-2019 ([document 4-20, Outcomes paragraph 4.51](#)).

The aspect of threshold values in particular is a key issue as threshold value approval will be carried out at HOD 61-2021, with these same templates being submitted to HOD at the same stage as submission to State and Conservation 15-2021 (to allow for the longer national processes required that culminate in approval at HOD).

The document below addresses a single indicator and as well as the generic 'action requests' relating to endorsement of the proposed application in HOLAS III (and the threshold values proposals, where relevant), specific additional requests or statements are also indicated within the separate sections of the document to help guide where further input/discussion/guidance may be needed.

This template aims to report the indicator development for HOLAS III, allowing for technical guidance and endorsement by STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 and also simultaneously to facilitate the threshold value approval process by HOD 61-2021.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- provide further technical guidance to the indicator leads and experts, including specific requests defined within the document;
- consider and endorse the proposed developments of the indicator for use in the HOLAS III assessment.

Tributyltin (TBT) and imposex

Indicator name
Tributyltin (TBT) and imposex
Scale of assessment for HOLAS III and rational
The assessment scale will not change and will be at Scale 4, as applied in HOLAS II.
Spatial coverage of the indicator for HOLAS III
The spatial coverage is anticipated to increase due to greater data availability in the HELCOM COMBINE data (hosted by ICES), due to longer time series data, due to efforts within EN-HZ to review and update reported data, and due to ongoing work in the Baltic Data Flows project (e.g. national support for Latvia to develop national database solutions and enhanced reporting to COMBINE).
Methodology to be applied for HOLAS III and rational
EN-HZ concluded the review and discussions related to relevant supporting parameters and agreed to maintain AI and CORG, where relevant. The conclusion is therefore that the methodology applied will be identical to that used under HOLAS II.
Threshold value setting logic and rational
The threshold value setting remains in itself identical to HOLAS II. There are however proposals from Denmark to adjust the threshold value for TBT in sediments and consider the addition of biota threshold values. The basis of these changes is that Denmark has carried out extensive national work to propose new threshold values based on updated scientific knowledge and included new relevant data from the Baltic Sea region. The background information and scientific justification for the proposed changes is available in documentation within the EN-HZ 15 and 16 meeting sites and will be included as reference material in all indicator documentation.
Threshold value(s)
<p>TBT: Primary threshold - DK proposal 1.3 µg /kg dw sediment (5% TOC) to replace current QS 1.6 µg /kg dw sediment (5% TOC). The current threshold value has an existing study reservation from Denmark.</p> <p>EN-HZ 16-2021 discussed the proposal and noted that the values of the old and newly proposed threshold values are very close, which was considered as a positive signal since that prior work had been addressing this issue appropriately. They were unable however at the EN-HZ 16-2021 meeting to settle on one single value, requesting that both values were proposed to State and Conservation as above. This would allow further review and input nationally to select if the new proposal could be considered as appropriate for application in HOLAS III. It was proposed that if full regional agreement could not be achieved on the new proposal by State and Conservation 15-2021 then the current threshold value would be retained for HOLAS III.</p> <p>The State and Conservation meeting is requested to endorse the newly proposed threshold values for the HOLAS III assessment.</p>

The EN-HZ 16-2021 meeting discussed the new threshold value proposal from Denmark for TBT in biota (3.0 µg/kg ww for shellfish and fish). EN-HZ noted that this was a positive development and the assessment of TBT in biota was important to further develop. EN-HZ proposed that these threshold values be adopted within the indicator for testing in HOLAS III and that the results would be presented within the results section of the indicator report but not aggregated into the indicator summary or overview status and therefore not included in the CHASE integrated assessment (only the sediment component entering CHSAE).

The State and Conservation meeting is requested to endorse this approach to support ongoing developments within this indicator.

Other significant issues that need to be addressed or presented to State and Conservation

Based on the above development the State and Conservation meeting is requested to endorse the indicator as a full core indicator for application in HOLAS III (e.g. inclusion on CHASE integrated assessments). In HOLAS II the indicator was tested but not included in the integrated assessment.

Latest indicator report or (for new indicators) initially completed indicator template

The latest version of the indicator is available on the HELCOM indicator web page (pre-core tested in HOLAS II), [here](#).